



ANTI-PERSONNEL
LANDMINES

**THE HIDDEN SERIOUS KILLER
CONTAMINATING
THE LAND OF YEMEN**

Indiscriminate weapons killed and injured thousands of civilians in Yemen, and many thousands still lie underground in wait for many more victims for decades after the war...



EMBASSY OF
The Republic of Yemen
The Hague

By
Wadhah Hadi

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The Devastating Dilemma Of Anti-Personnel Landmines

We are all aware of the dangers of landmines and their long-term repercussions in societies, especially in areas of inflamed conflicts where many innocent civilians, including children and women, fall victims to those internationally prohibited weapons, in particular landmines including anti-personal mines and improvised explosive devices IEDs.

Although the use of anti-personal mines has been banned by more than 150 states parties to the “**Ottawa Treaty**”, which prohibits using, developing, producing, acquiring, stockpiling, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, antipersonnel mines, yet such weapons are still being widely used in many conflict areas, especially by insurrections, coup militias, and armed non-state actors that continue using explosive devices to destroy the safety of innocent civilians and many others post conflict.

In any conflict anti-personal mines and explosive devices including improvised explosive devices harm way more innocent civilians than military personnel. During the conflict civilians have no ability to gain access to food and clean water



facilities, in particular displaced populations who become not even able to return home because of landmines.

Landmines also undermine efforts of humanitarian communities and organizations functioning with often limited capacity to restore safe corridors for food security to prevent conflict induced hunger, leaving civilians in critical conditions facing high possibilities of famine wide spreading.

Unfortunately, civilians, being injured by landmines, are often left with no secure access to health facilities. Normally, they have no other choice but to go for amputations of damaged limbs and then start a long journey of months to come for treatment and rehabilitation, and even that probably denied if they could manage to survive during conflict.

Landmines likewise endanger the lives of civilians for decades to come after the war, with generations of maimed people having complex repercussions on their families and the communities by becoming incapable to readjust to life and thus becoming socially isolated and more dependent on others.

In addition, landmines will far undermine society groups to easily overcome peace obstacles by causing potential impediments with economic developments, environmental



sustainability and social inclusion and cohesion, leading to incompatibility to achieve human well-being sustainable development for many decades after the war.

Afterall, with destruction of strategic infrastructures and civilian areas such as agricultural fields, and with possible thousands of landmines and explosive remnants of war remain in wait for destruction, thousands of square kilometers of land become at risk of any productive use, resulting in far-reaching repercussions on individuals, families and the society in general for many years to come post war.

Yemen:

A State Party To Ottawa Convention

The “**Ottawa Convention**”, often known as the Mine Ban Treaty, is an international treaty established as part of the international response mechanism to the humanitarian crises occur due to proliferation of anti-personnel mines.

The Mine Ban Treaty is not only prohibiting the use, production, development, and transfer of anti-personnel mines, but also requires ratified parties, to destroy stockpiles of anti-



personnel mines with the possibility to retain minimum number of APLs for training purposes in mines detection, clearance, and destructionⁱ.

The convention entered into force on 1 March 1999, and as of January 2018, the number of states parties signed or ratified to the ban treaty increased to 164 countries, including the Republic of Yemen ratification to the convention by 1 September 1998, and entering into force on Yemen by 1 March, 1999ⁱⁱ.

Compliance And Measures Taken By Yemen

Since entering the convention into force for Yemen on 1 March 1999, Yemen showed great commitments to the convention, adhering to obligations entitled by the convention ratification on 1 September 1998.

Yemen took forward practical steps by submitting several reports showing the necessary measures taken by the government, including submission of the initial transparency report on November 1999, covering details of the stockpiling destruction, as per article 4, retaining mines as per article 3, and mines clearance as per article 5ⁱⁱⁱ.



On November 2019, Yemen further reiterated its full commitment to the implementation of the convention provisions and took note of the issues been reflected at the 2019 Oslo 4th Review Conference and adopted the Oslo Action Plan 2020-2024, which was reviewed by states parties at the 2019 Oslo Review Conference on the mine treaty^{iv}.

At the national level, the first step taken through Prime Ministerial decree following the convention ratification was the establishment of the National Mine Action Committee (NMAC) in 1998 as the initial national forward step taken to the mine action response.

The National Mine Action Committee [NMAC] is the official body formulating relevant policy, allocating resources, and developing the national mine response strategy.

Following the establishment of NMAC, Yemen established the Executive Mine Action Center [YEMAC] in January 1999 in the capital Sanaa. YEMAC is NMAC's official implementation and coordination body responsible for a range of mine action projects in field.

Additionally, regional executive mine action branches and national training centers were set up in southern governorates



mainly in Aden and Hadramaut, with field implementation responsibility for the mine action response strategy.

Following, the military coup perpetrated by the Houthi militia, in cooperation with the remnants of the previous Government on 21 September 2014, resulting in takeover of capital Sana'a and government institutions, the center (YEMAC) was relocated to the temporary capital of Aden, becoming a major center to oversee the work of branches in Hadramout governorate and the new Taiz branch within the framework and scope of the liberated governorates.

Yemen adopted measures that vary from one governorate to another according to a set of needs and requirements as per the national comprehensive strategy plan. Thus, Yemen formed a set of mine action projects covering many areas of importance, including social and economic impacts, mine risk education, and impact of mines and unexploded ordnance covering physical effects, psychological impacts, and social economic impacts.

Yemen also expedited the process of voluntary destruction of stockpiles. On 30 March 2005, Yemen reported destruction of all stockpiles of APLs, also in total destroyed 78,000 mines and reported retaining of 3,760 AP mines for training purposes.



As for the mines that were brought in for training purposes, their fate had become unknown due to the coup and control of militias in Sana'a governorate as the Government of Yemen had already made clear to the Compliance-based Cooperation Committee during participation in the APMBC.



A picture showing clearance activities in destroying 8,500 Houthi mines recently conducted in Shabwa governorate by teams of the joint national programme with the Saudi-sponsored project MASAM.



The Houthis: The Coup Perpetrators And Use of Landmines

Following takeover of the capital Sanaa on 21 September 2014, the Houthi militia, supported by forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, implemented unilateral actions inter alia, dissolving parliament and taking over Yemen's government institutions, which have seriously escalated the situation, leading to illegitimate seizure of power.

According to state reports, in 2014 Yemen was almost on the verge to announce completing the last stage of demining activities taking place in less populated areas and locations far from the population as per the ongoing process of the national implementation measures post treaty into force for Yemen^v.

During the course of the military expansion of the coup militia and their allies, the Houthis planted landmines in all territories they reached out, including the borders with Saudi Arabia, along the western coast and close by western areas, and in and around key cities including key transport routes between key cities and linking back to Sanaa.



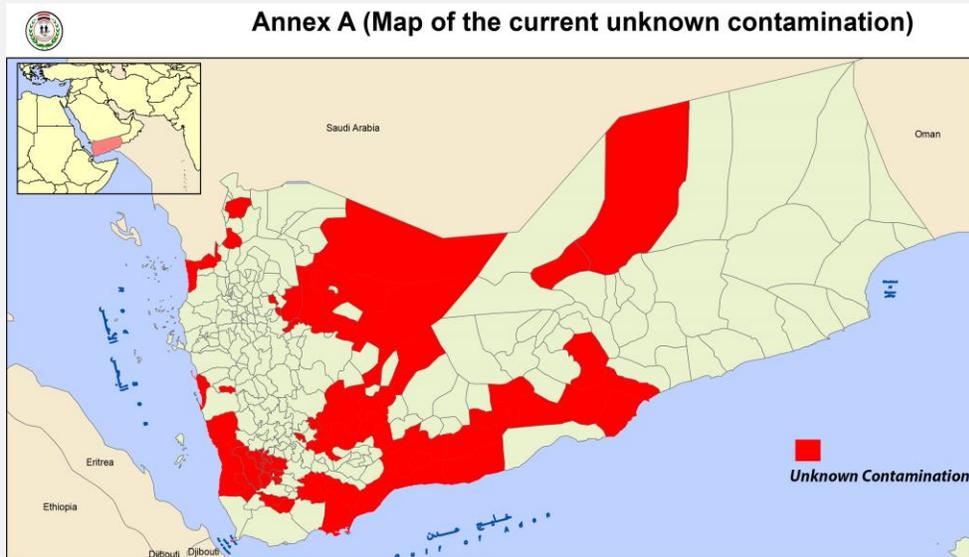
After the launch of the military Campaign by the Arab

Coalition to restore the legitimate government and state institutions in Yemen in March 2015, the Houthis and their allies continued planting landmines in many areas of the country in an attempt to impede the progress of the national armed forces against the Houthi-held sites.

Several media reports indicate that the Houthi militia has planted more than 1 million mines as of 2019. Likewise, official reports indicate that demining efforts led destroying a total of 111,801 mines, ERW, IEDs and 11 sea mines following Houthi mines planting for the same period of time.

A report by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy stated that the Houthi militia had planted hundreds of thousands of landmines during the following three years after the launch of the Arab Coalition in 2015, covering many territories including Marib in 2015, Midi and Harad in 2016, Saada and borders with Saudi Arabia in 2016, Taizz and Hodeida in 2017, and planting thousands of mines while their withdrawal from Aden Lahaj, Albayda, Abyan and Adalle between 2015 and 2016^{vi}.





A photo showing the geographical distribution of the size of the unknown contamination requiring NTS operations based on the Yemen commitments in Oslo conference.

Governorate	Districts
Abyan	Zingibar , Shoqrah , Ahwar , Al Wade'a , Lawdar , AlMahfad , Mudiyah, Khanfir
Aden	Dar Saad, Khur Makser, Al Mualla , Al Shaikh Othman , Al Buraiqeh , Al Mansura, Alshaeb and Maoun Island
Al Dhale'	Qa'atabah , Morees , Damt , Al Hussein , Juban
Al Hodaydah	Al Khawkhah , Hays, Al Tuhayat , Al Durayhimi , Zabid and Main city
Al Jawf	Al Ghayl , Al Maton ,Al Matammah , Al Hazm ,Khabb wa alsha'af , Alutmah , Al Maslub
Amran	Harf Sufyan , Raidah
Hadramout	Mukalla , Bawzeer , Al-Shihr , Alrbdah alshreefeh , Brom , Mayfa, Hajr , Downen
Hajja	Haradh , Medde , Horan
Ibb	Al Nadera , Al Odain , Al Qafr, Al Radhma
Lahij	The contamination in Lahij started since the governor reached by rebels in 2015 and now all areas the left behind from the rebels are a high impact areas and districts as the following (saber, toban , Al-Hawtah, Al-Milah, Al-mossen , AlQabbaytah,Al-Maqatirah and Albaha). Emergency case now in Lahj for the possibility to achieve the way back for refuges so they can back to their villages and



	open roads for them beside clearing cities and villages with securing the water resources and the infrastructure of the governate.
Sa'ada	the contamination areas are as following (Al Kitaf , Al Boqe'e , Hardh , Mede , Haydan , Almraheed , Aleb , bagim , Al Safraa , Al Dhaher ,Majaz)
Mar'ib	After Marib reached from the reples the contmation reached the following districs (Main City, Sirwah, Harib, Al Abdiyah , Mahliyah, Medghal , Harib Al Qaramish , Majzer).
Shabwah	During the conflict against the rebels the following areas are high impacted as following (Bayhan , Usaylan , Ain , Azan , Habban , Alseed , Wasaab , Al Rawdah)
Al Bayda	the contamination areas are as following (Na'man , Nati' , Al Malagim , Al Sawadiyah , Qafeh , Mukayras , Al Zahir , Al Taffah , Dhi Na'im , Rada')
Taiz	18 Districts out of 23 in Taiz are now involved in the contamination and they are as following (Al Makha District, Dhubab, Al Waziyah, Mawza , Salah, Sbr Al moadm , Al Misrakh , Maqbanah , Habnan , Jabal Habashy , Almacher , Ash Shamayatayn , Al saliw , Al Qahirah , Al Taizyah , Sharab Alrawanah , Sharab Alsalam)

A table showing the areas and districts of the unknown contamination as the map above indicates.

According to a report, published by **Human Rights Watch** titled “**Yemen: Houthi-Saleh Forces Using Landmines**”, it was stated that the YEMAC had reported demining and destruction of 65,272 landmines, including 20,807 Anti-personnel mines between 21 July 2015 and 2 March 2017 in Aden, Abyan, Lahj, al-Dhale, and Taizz ^{vii}.

In fact, official reports from the government of Yemen



indicates that the Houthis started laying mines far prior their coup in 2014. Since 2004, the Houthis have been in fighting against the government in unwinnable six sporadic insurrections continued till 2010. It is believed that during the Saada six rounds of wars, the Houthis planted the soil in the governorate with thousands of mines in an attempt to hinder the advancement of the national military forces.

Universal Condemnation Of Targeting Innocent Yemenis

There is a growing concern over the uninterrupted extensive use of mines by the Houthi militia, with several reports of use of mine, including a variety of anti-vehicle and anti-personnel mines.

The Houthis use mines with no strategic military purposes, but rather in indiscreetly pattern, leading into more targeting civilian populations especially women and children, representing the deliberate and systematic killing of innocents.

On 25 September 2015, Médecins sans frontières (MSF) confirmed that most landmines and unexploded ordinance victims were children^{viii}.



Another report by **MSF** showed that in one hospital in the city of Mocha during the final months of 2018, more than 150 mine civilian victims were treated; one third of those victims were children^{ix}

[a picture underneath from MSF showing a mine victim].



14-YEAR-OLD NASSER AT MOCHA HOSPITAL

01/03

Nasser (centre) and his father Mohammed (left) in one of the inpatient wards at MSF's surgical hospital in Mocha.

AGNES VARRAINE-LECA/MSF

On 31 January 2017, the Panel of Experts in accordance with resolution 2266 [2016], confirmed in its report to the UN Security Council the use of Houthi-Saleh militia forces of mines and improvised explosive devices^x. Preceding to the January 2017 report, the UN Panel of Experts said in 2016 that the Houthis had planted mines during their withdrawal from Southern areas, and only in Aden the mines killed 222 and injured others in 114 incidents^{xi}.



On 20 April 2017, a report issued by the by **Human Rights Watch** confirming the widely use of the Houthi militia and their allies of banned landmines in Yemen. **Human Rights Watch** held the Houthi-Saleh militia forces responsible for dispersing landmines in many different areas in Yemen, causing the death of hundreds of civilians, including women and children, and threatening the return of millions of people displaced in the country^{xii}. This report was proceeded by a statement from the Arab Federation of Human Rights on the Saudi News Agency, on 19 April 2017, reporting the responsibility of the coup militias for planting 500,000 anti-personnel mines in several areas in Yemen, causing the death of 700 people^{xiii}.

On 21 October 2018, the Monitoring progress in eliminating landmines, and other explosive remnants of war [ERW] stated in a brief repot, based on media outlets, that in 2017 the Houthi planted mines killed 147 people, including 18 children and 11 women and injured 244 people, including 33 children and 20 women. The largest proportion of the incidents happened in Taiz governorate with 77 killed and 178 injured^{xiv}.

Relying on several sources including the annual report of the International Committee of the Red Cross 2016^{xv}, the Monitor



indicated that through the years to the end of 2017 the total number of mines/ERW casualties was 9,118 people.

The Monitor also indicates that the number of casualties of mines/ERW started to increase through the year 2015 and more than doubled in 2016, which is the time of the military expansion of the Houthis and their allies, commencing from the Capital Sanaa and heading Southwest along the costal line and South and Southeast territories.

The Houthi Terrorism And Mass Production Of Landmines

After closing doors of the National Dialogue for negotiating political transition in Yemen and after closing the Houthis all possibilities of negations, the militia forces then started battling for control of the country. In April 2015, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo on the Houthi militia and ally forces loyal to former president Saleh.

All Security Council resolutions and the international community calls since 2015 have not just dissuaded Iran from continuing to provide the Houthis with the necessary technical and military support. In fact, lately many officials made it very



evident that Iran is increasing its military support to the Houthis recent months.

The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on 9 July 2020, announced that the US Navy had intercepted and seized an Iranian ship transferring weapons to the Houthis.



Secretary Pompeo @SecPompeo · Jul 9

US government account

On June 28, U.S. and partner forces interdicted a vessel off the coast of Yemen carrying illicit Iranian-origin cargo including surface-to-air and land-attack missiles, anti-tank missiles, hundreds of RPGs and rifles, & many other advanced weapons. The UN must [#ExtendTheEmbargo](#).



Also, besides military support, Iran smuggles its agents into Yemen to assist the Houthis with the needed technical experiences and capacity to enable local weapons manufacturing and military equipment reconfiguration, including antipersonnel mines and IEDs.

On September 2018, a new report, published by the Conflict Armament Research, under the title “**Mines and IEDs**

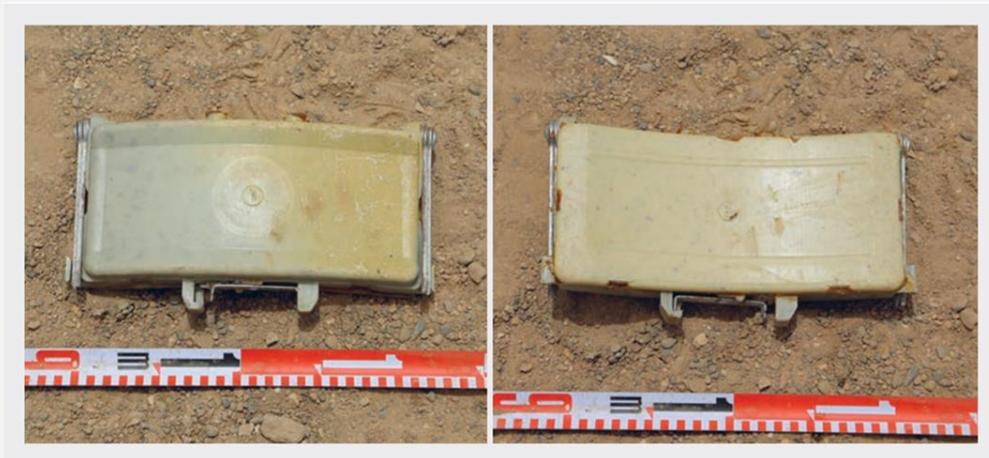


Employed by the Houthi Forces on Yemen’s West Coast by Conflict Armament Research, found that the Houthis had the capacity to standardize and mass produce mines and IEDs with components originated in Iran^{xvi}.

The report provides extensive investigation-based details proving mines and IEDs being domestically manufactured by the Houthis. The report documented a wide range of recovered materials during the coalition advances in the western coast and found that the vast majority of mines and IEDs are produced by the Houthis.

SMALL DIRECTIONAL MINE

DIMENSIONS – HEIGHT: 100 MM - LENGTH: 215 MM - WIDTH: 40 MM



Figures 17 and 18

Houthi-manufactured directional mine (left and right), probably based on the Chinese Type GLD 150A directional mine. Documented by a CAR field investigation team in Mokha, Yemen, July 2018.

An image from the CAR report illustrates some of the recovered materials during the mission’s investigation in the western coast in Yemen.



PMN ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE

DIMENSIONS – HEIGHT: 57MM • DIAMETER: 112MM

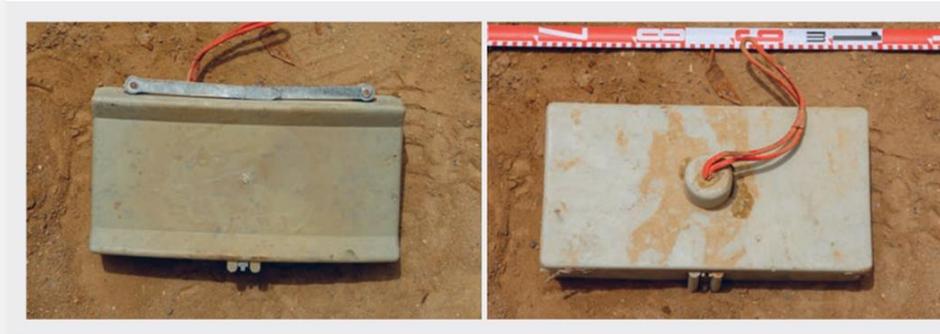


Figures 1 and 2

PMN anti-personnel mine (left and right) from an unknown manufacturer.⁵
Documented by a CAR field investigation team in Mokha, Yemen, July 2017.

LARGE DIRECTIONAL MINE

DIMENSIONS – HEIGHT: 155 MM • LENGTH: 300 MM • WIDTH: 85 MM



Figures 21 and 22

Houthi-manufactured directional mine (left and right).

Documented by a CAR field investigation team in Mokha, Yemen, July 2018. The mine shares some design features with an Iranian-manufactured M18A2 directional mine.

More images from the CAR report illustrates some of the recovered materials during the mission's investigation in the western coast in Yemen.



The report suggests that since the recovered mines and IEDs are standardized and serialized, it is likely possible that these materials are mass produced by the Houthis. The report also relied on footages released by the Houthis showing several identical mines and IEDs under construction.

In fact, the passage of time proves that the Houthis and their allies were long preparing for their coup and terrorizing Yemenis. In January 2013, Yemeni coastline security intercepted the cargo vessel “**Jihan 1**” which proved to be heading to the Houthis with military equipment including explosives and electronic components. The U.N. Panel of Experts on Iran, which investigated the incident, stated that Iran was at the center of the Jihan operation^{xvii}.

Houthi Landmines Further Exacerbate The Dire Conditions And Undermine Humanitarian Efforts

Landmines/IEDs and ERW are all dangerous materials and contact of any person or even proximity to such materials lead to detonation causing death or serious injury. In fact, these materials are not only restricted to killing and injuring people,



they are also blocking access to people in need, blocking them in poverty and denying them any external assistance. This is true in Yemen. The landmines blocking of humanitarian assistance and medical aid to vulnerable population, including women and children, is particularly sever in Yemen besides often killing people.

The Houthis are planting landmines indiscreetly, even without any discernable pattern, in the cities, villages, along the roads, along the coast lines, in schools, hospitals, homes, and farmlands. They even pay little heeds to agricultural fields and coastal areas cutting the majority people in these areas from the least means of livelihoods.

In a long report, published by AP on 24 December 2018, the Health Minister dr. Nasser Baoum said, *“Mines have caused a huge problem. It’s OK for an army person to be injured during battle or to be hit by a mine, but for a child to be hit while she’s in the field or on the way to fetch water, that’s a tragedy.”*^{xviii}

Everyday people die in areas which become devoid of medical care due to widespread mines planting. Remote and rural areas, for example, between Taiz and Hodeidah are considered



frontlines, and in these areas people with critical conditions such as mine victims, pregnant women, and contacted infections and diseases have no access to adjacent medical facilities in Mokha city neither have the ability to afford traveling to Aden or secure safe passage for humanitarian community to reach out to them.

Falling waters during rainy seasons contribute to exacerbating worsening the situation with flooding in valleys wash away mines and ERW, causing widespread contamination and increasing the number of accidents among civilians.

Human Rights Watch, in its report published on 22 April 2019, indicated that according to information gathered from the **Civilian Impact Monitoring** landmines, planted in villages, wells, and roads, killed 140 civilians, including 19 children in Taiz and Hodeidah governorates. Further, HRW stated that landmines refrained people from accessing farmlands and wells and made displaced people unable to return home and harvest crops.

Yemen is witnessing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world with almost 80% of population already relying on humanitarian aid. More than 7 million people face the risk of starvation if they continue having no access to food assistance.



Also, the conflict has displaced more than 3 million people already left food insecure and with constrained access to clean water facilities. Diseases and pandemics including Cholera and now COVID-19 are wide spreading with increasing levels of malnutrition and already limited access to health facilities. These problems require urgent humanitarian responses to prevent deterioration and the Houthi landmines always undermine humanitarian efforts and further exacerbate the dire conditions and making matters worse.

The HRW researcher Priyanka Motaparthi says the Houthi mines have *“not only killed and maimed numerous civilians, but they have prevented vulnerable Yemenis from harvesting crops and drawing clean water desperately needed for survival.”*^{xix}

Mine Clearance: Challenges in Dangerous Areas

The Houthis irresponsibly contaminated the land of Yemen with hundreds of thousands of landmines if not millions. They have not built anything since their coup and takeover the capital city of Sanaa but planted the soil with landmines in an



overwhelming scale that never witnessed anywhere after the second world war except for what had been achieved by the Islamic State forces in Iraq and Syria.

This reflects the seriousness of the situation facing the conflict and its post war repercussions for many years to come on the security and safety of civilians in Yemen.

Officials from the national demining program YEMAC and regions' local authorities explaining on the contamination level reveal that this is a real humanitarian catastrophe considering mines are planted at an extremely high intensity in all the areas seized by the Houthis.

Measures and practical steps taken by the government always face great difficulties, including the inability to reach all contaminated areas because of the continued conflict. Moreover, the Houthis also plant camouflaged mines in various forms, such as the form of stones, which are difficult to identify, meaning that skills of clearance groups are required to develop to the necessary capacity to enable safe detection and dismantling of landmines.

Notwithstanding the threat posed by landmines and explosive devices, including IEDs and ERW such as unexploded or



abandoned ordnance, abandoned military equipment, the government managed to continue implementing the necessary field mechanisms to alleviate the large-scale threat.

In a report published by the reliefweb on 4 April 2020, under the title “**Supporting a Safe Yemen for Over 20 Years**” the UNDP shows continues support to Yemen to promote and continue clearance efforts. The report also shows YEMAC’s achievements in 2019 in removing over 66,000 pieces of ERW throughout the country, impacting the lives of 126,000 people.

The Center cleared many square meters of land in 11 governorates among the emergency response operations, allowing safe and secure accessibility to farmlands.

The program also cleared areas in Hodeidah and the Red Sea Mills, allowing 51,000 tons to be disseminate safely to Yemenis in need.

In addition, the Saudi supported project MASAM, announced on 16 October 2020 that since the project launch until 16 October 2020, the project managed to clear 192 thousand landmines, unexploded ordnance and explosive devices.



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