



Embassy of the  
Republic of Yemen

# FAMILIAR BUT DISTINCT:

Understanding the Houthi Ideology  
and its Consequences on Yemen

Hussein Al-Houthi Fascicles, the Intellectual and Cultural Document

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Are the Houthi principles and ideology extremist, contrary to what some Western activists believe?*

The *Dracaena Cinnabari*, commonly known as the Socotra “Dragon Tree,” is native to the island of Socotra, off the coast of Yemen, and is a unique form of plant life exclusive to Yemen. When one cuts into its bark, the resin runs bright red, which had made it infamous in the ancient world. Its branches, supported by a weighty trunk, spread out several feet, resulting in the display of its large canopy – an adaptation after thousands of years to support young saplings from the heat of the sun. Despite its similarities to several other dragon trees indigenous to other arid lands, the Socotra tree is distinctly Yemeni.



The *Dracaena Cinnabari*, commonly known as the Socotra “Dragon Tree,” is native to the island of Socotra, off the coast of Yemen. Source: MXCity



Source: AFP

Analogous to the Dragon Tree, the Houthis are a radical or extremist group that is definitively only found in Yemen; but they are arguably like other terrorist organizations that exist elsewhere and which are motivated by backward, extremist or sectarian beliefs. The Houthi ideology started as a seed derived from the goals of the Iranian Revolution and was shaped by the ideas of “The Believing Youth” group<sup>a</sup>, which formed in 1998 and was one of the earliest iterations of the Houthi project. The tenets of that group, with the influence of Hussein Badr El Din Al-Houthi, has resulted in the Houthis’ Fascicles (i.e., set of books published in installments as separate pamphlets or volumes), whose essence can be summarized by its slogan, **“God is Great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse the Jews, Victory to Islam.”** It regards Iran and Hezbollah as masters of resistance to an American empire, but calls on its followers to be even more assertive, as members of an honorable lineage, one that praises Osama bin Laden as a leader.

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<sup>a</sup> The Believing Youth (BY): The Group was established in 1998 in Sa’dah Governorate, which is the old name of Ansar Allah, of the Houthi Movement. The Believing Youth Group was established by Mohamed Azzan, who defected from the Group. He was succeeded by Hussein Badr El Din Al-Houthi



Source: Middle East Institute

Notable about its foundation is its emphasis on the disadvantaged, particularly the youth. For more than two decades, the Houthis have sought to influence the mindset of a generation of young Yemenis to support the tenets of Iran and its terrorist network and to hate the United States and Israel. Since taking up its rebellion in Yemen, the Houthis have been able to recruit more than 70,000 children under the age of 15 to attend radicalization centers and programs aimed at training them to face the Houthis' enemies on the front lines. The Houthis are proud of these camps and know that their effects will last for generations.

This radical thought process is used to target and hurt the most marginalized people in Yemen. Yemen's women and children, Jews and Baha'i population have been the most affected. The basis of Al-Houthi's Fascicles takes direct aim at these groups, proclaiming them as hypocrites, apostates, traitors and/or tempters. Furthermore, the rebel group takes physical action by seeking to eliminate all it deems unworthy.

This research analyzes the Houthis' warped ideology in depth, aiming to not only illustrate how the group bears similarities to other Iranian-backed terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, but also to show its uniqueness and negative impact on the Yemeni people. Moreover, this research will further demonstrate the threat that the Iran-backed Houthi militias pose to the world, and the lasting effect it could have on future generations (as the Embassy has rightfully asserted in recent years).<sup>1</sup> The Houthis are more than just a political movement, but are radical extremists that seek to infect all parts of Yemeni society, including religious, cultural, socially, with its warped ideology and ultimate dismay for the ideals of unity, coexistence and acceptance.

This research also will more closely identify the movement's pipeline, starting with its ideological birth to examine its peculiar tenets, to reveal its intended audience, and to conclude by taking a deep dive into the substantial danger this group poses to the Yemeni community and the wider world. Before the Houthis undemocratic seizure of Sana'a, political entities did not recognize the true ideological and political threat posed by the rebel movement. The Houthis were allowed to participate in the National Dialogue Conference in 2013-14. They were given representation in the newly formed government. Nevertheless, the rebel group continued to spread hatred and violence throughout Yemen, aiming to change the hearts and minds of innocent men, women and children. This paper aims to inform those who still forget or fail to recognize this true menace that the Houthis present, and to aid those who are still working towards peace in Yemen or other germane peace initiatives. The international community cannot allow the Houthis to continue their attempted rein of terror. It will take a consorted effort by the international community to thwart their efforts.



Image of the Houthi Fascicles.

## THE SEEDS

“What do we do? I tell you, brothers, cry out, do you not have a cry to shout: {God is Great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse the Jews, Victory to Islam}. Isn't this a cry that any of you can make? Rather, it is a great honor. If we now launch it in the hall, then this school will be the first to shout this cry, which of course, God willing, will be a cry not in this place but in other places, and you will find those crying with you, God willing, in other regions.”

From: “The Cry in the Face of the Arrogants”, p. 580



Hussein Al-Houthi, author of the Fascicles that act as the guiding principles for the Houthi rebels.  
Source: AKG Images

The basis of the Houthi ideology rests in Hussein Al-Houthi's Fascicles, a document of more than 2,000 pages that Al-Houthi claims is inspired by the Qur'an, thus giving him the name "Speaking Qur'an and Martyr Leader" by his followers. They are widely syndicated throughout Yemen, even more so with the creation of audio and video formats on YouTube and Al-Masira, the group's official television channel.

The Fascicles explain all matters of Houthi thoughts and practices, including the organization's relationship with local, regional, and international members, as well as its view on societal diversity in the public square. These topics range from religious topics such as the interpretation of Holy Qur'an verses and the responsibility of the descendants of the Prophet, to international relations such as the danger of US involvement in Yemen.



Compounded by the warped ideology and support of Iran, the Fascicles present a dangerous threat that seeks to indoctrinate and inculcate young and “marginalized” Yemenis and thus radicalize them through reeducation. It emphasizes the divine selection of its followers to be led in *jihad* against the United States, Israel and their supporters. The Houthis seek to reeducate the Yemeni youth with their extremist and radical ideals to have a lasting impact on Yemen for generations to come.

## **A Deep Relationship with Iran**

Over the past several years, the international community has widely recognized the undeniable connection between the Houthi militias of Yemen and the regime in Tehran. From the moment that Yemeni President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi took office in 2012, Yemeni forces, in partnership with the US Navy, have seized numerous ships of advanced Iranian-made weaponry headed for the Houthis in Yemen. Despite United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216 banning the export of weapons to the Houthis, Iran persists in its efforts to deliver weapons.

In 2017, former US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley first publicly presented Iranian weapons exported to the Houthis in Yemen.<sup>2</sup> In 2019, UN experts reported that the Houthis had received new, advanced weaponry, which included Delta drones and land-based cruise missiles.<sup>3</sup> Just this past November, Arab Coalition forces in cooperation with the legitimate government of Yemen intercepted more than one hundred Iranian Dehlavieh anti-tank guided missiles off the coast of Yemen.<sup>4</sup>



Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul Salam meeting with Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.  
Source: Islamic Republic News Agency

These weapons have been used to target civilian centers in Yemen and neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia. The Houthi militias have launched hundreds of ballistic missiles in Yemen, with some targeting civilian areas. Several civilians have been killed by these attacks, including women and children, and even more have been injured.

Even as the international community has attempted to tighten its grip on the Iranian exportation of weapons to the Houthis in Yemen, there have been reports that the regime in Tehran has begun using its proxies in Somalia to export weapons to the Houthis in Yemen.<sup>5</sup>

But the links run deeper than just logistical, economic and military support, as Iran uses the Houthis as a tool to export its warped ideology throughout Yemen. Since the Houthis signed a contract with the Iranian regime in 2015, the relationship has only expanded.<sup>6</sup> The Houthis have appointed an Ambassador to Iran, who presented his official credentials to the President of Iran. In 2019, Mohammad Abdul Salam, Houthi Spokesperson, met with Iranian Foreign Minister

Mohammed Javad Zarif and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in Tehran. From these meetings, Iranian leaders reaffirmed Iran's support for the Houthis' (illegal) cause.<sup>7</sup>

Hussein Al-Houthi did not hide his affinity for the Iranian regime, often praising Ayatollah Khomeini for the progress and openness he achieved as a part of the Islamic Revolution. As proof of Khomeini's worthiness, Al-Houthi spoke on the achievements he saw during a visit to Iran, stating, **"Khomeini is a man of the type who performs the prayer, a man whose perfection is a religious perfection according to God's guidance. What happened to Iran? After the Islamic Revolution, and under the leadership of this religious man, who is not a religious man who understands religion in a limited way away from life. In a short period he built hospitals, bridges and factories."** (Surat Al-Maedah, Lesson 2, page 469)

The Iranian Revolution and radical ideology preached by Khomeini are the foundation for the Houthis' anti-Western beliefs. Several of Al-Houthi's Fascicles praise Khomeini as a **"great, sincere man, a man who really shook the West, a man who terrified America and terrified all arrogant countries, and terrified Israel with his wisdom and courage."** (World Jerusalem Day, page 621)

Al-Houthi also regarded Iranian society as one "that managed to build itself" in the face of Western hostility, aggression, and sanctions. Thus, American antagonism is not seen as intimidating, but rather a badge of honor.

Iranian leaders have relied on their ideological influence to further build and solidify relations with the Houthis. In a meeting with Houthi leaders, Ali Khamenei praised the group for what he regarded as the "vigilance, steadfastness, and jihadist spirit of the Yemeni people in the face of aggression."<sup>8</sup> The leaders then confirmed via a letter from

Abdul Malik Al-Houthi that Khamenei's mandate was an extension of the Prophet Mohammed and Imam Ali, calling Iran "the guardianship of the Islamic jurist."

Iran has manipulated the Houthis to establish control over various parts of the Middle East via proxy. Notably, former Iranian intelligence chief Haider Moslehi stated, "Iran really controls four Arab capitals," after the Houthis took over Sanaa in 2015.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the fact that Iran has demonstrated that it does not want peace in Yemen under any circumstance, the Houthis have remained unwavering in their commitment to the appeasement of the regime in Tehran. After the death of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, Abdul Malik Al-Houthi issued a statement expressing his condolences to Iran, and supporters took to the streets threatening to take military



Houthi supporters protest in the streets of Sana'a, Yemen after the death of Iranian military commander Qasem Soleimani and Iraqi military commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. Source: Reuters/Khaled Abdullah

action to avenge him.<sup>10</sup> According to a Wilson Center report, Ali Akbar Velayati, Chief Advisor to Ali Khamenei, the Houthi movement is an achievement of the Islamic awakening that Iran fully supports.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the US House of Representatives and US Senate introduced Concurrent Resolutions 50 and 21, respectively,<sup>12</sup> acknowledging and warning of Houthi cooperation with Iran and severely criticizing the Houthis' violations of human rights and the use of violence against civilians. This is further to the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which broadly recognizes Iran's asymmetric activities in the region, including funding and providing lethal training to Houthi fighters in Yemen.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, The Houthis and Iran have cultivated a deep relationship based on a radical ideology that poses a grave threat to innocent Yemeni men, women and children, and the greater region.

## **Hezbollah Influence on Houthi Ideology**

The Houthi Fascicles give high praise to Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed extremist group based in Lebanon, noting their common ground in terms of its anti-Western, anti-Israel ideology, going as far as calling it an "axis of resistance." Al-Houthi states that the Hezbollah leaders are **"the masters of the Mujahideen in this world, they are the ones who gave martyrs, they are the ones who really preserved the face of the nation."** He goes on to state that Hezbollah has become "the strongest enemy of America and Israel..." (The Cry in the Face of the Arrogant).



Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul Salam led a delegation to meet with Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah.

Similar to his personal praise of Ali Khamenei's leadership, Al-Houthi bestows the same importance on Hezbollah's leaders. He repeatedly mentions Hezbollah leaders by name, most notably Hassan Nasrallah (the Knight of the Arabs). (Al-Maeda Lesson 1, page 447). Al-Houthi often imitated him in his oratory style, vocabulary, dress and the exchange of praise in official speeches. Al-Houthi calls on his followers to walk in the example of Hezbollah and its terrorist attacks against "apostates and hypocrites," especially Jews and their culture and media.

The relationship between the two groups has only expanded over time. It has evolved to the point where the Houthis continue to openly campaign for donations in support of Hezbollah's nefarious activities. The Houthis have already raised approximately \$300,000 to support Hezbollah, while Yemenis living in their controlled areas continue to suffer from a lack of essential aid.<sup>14</sup> During Ramadan 2019, the Houthis used a radio station to raise funds to support what they called the "Lebanese Islamic Resistance." The radio director,

Hammoud Mohammed Sharaf, praised the move as “support from the faithful Yemenis to Lebanese resistance.”<sup>15</sup> The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace also reported in 2010 that the Houthis enjoy military training from Hezbollah advisers, alongside Iranian ones.<sup>16</sup>

Leaders of both organizations have enjoyed meetings with each other. In 2018, Hassan Nasrallah met the Houthis’ spokesman, Mohammed Abdel Salam, in Lebanon, where Salam thanked Nasrallah for his solidarity with the Yemeni people and called him a master of resistance.<sup>17</sup>

Following the US Department of State’s lead, many countries have designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. Notable countries include the United Kingdom, Germany Austria, Colombia and the Gulf Cooperation Council member states.

## **The Houthi Slogan**

**God is Great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse to the Jews, Victory to Islam.** The Slogan, outlined in the Fascicle *Cry in the Face of the Arrogant* is the basis for the Houthis’ ultimate goal of victory and empowerment in Yemen. Al-Houthi requires his followers to repeat the slogan and follow in the footsteps of Iran and Hezbollah in the face of their adversaries, namely the United States, Israel and Jews. He frames this against prior Yemeni generations, who he states have put “an order of silence... to protect the interest of the people,” against the misdeeds of the United States.

The slogan was not fully formed and used until January 2002, when Hussein Al-Houthi chanted it in the hall of Imam Al-Hadi School in Maran, Sa’dah Governorate. He states:



Houthi supporters march and wave posters of the Houthi rebel flag.

**If we know that we can act, and that many actions are in our hands, and this cry (God is Great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse on the Jews—because they are the ones who move the world, who spoil this world, Victory to Islam) it will leave its mark, it will leave a huge impact on the souls of people. What is the effect? Discontentment, which the Jews avoid through all possible means.”**  
(Cry in the Face of the Arrogant, page 579)

Al-Houthi instituted the slogan chanting at schools to emphasize the importance of reeducating the Yemeni population, from the educated young population to the educated elite, to establish dominance in Yemeni thought. It has reached the elementary and high schools, where students are forced to recite the slogan every morning.

In addition to the slogan being forced unto young Yemeni children, many experts and news publications have recognized the sheer maliciousness of it. It is explicit that Al-Houthi’s slogan presents a deeper animosity for the Jews than raised by its backers in Tehran. The Khomeini slogan says “Death to America and Death to Israel,” while the Houthis’ slogan adds “curse on the Jews.”<sup>18</sup>



Further, Al-Houthi exclaims that chanting the slogan will instill fear into the souls of the enemy. On page 590 of his Fascicles, Al-Houthi emphasized, **“If Yemenis want to be safe from the evil of America, so let them all shout in its face, and say: There would be no terrorism in our country. But what is happening? An order of silence from the old to the young, and all of it is presented under the title ‘in order to protect the interest of the people.’”** He later goes on to state that if people fail to cantillate the slogan, then they are worse than the enemy.

His Excellency Dr. Ahmed BinMubarak, Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen to the United States, published a compelling article in *The Hill* on the lasting effects of the conflict on Yemen. In this article, H.E. Dr. Ahmed BinMubarak explained that one does not have to look much farther than the slogan printed on the Houthi flag to see the evil they wish to express.<sup>19</sup>

The Houthi militias have forcibly indoctrinated thousands of innocent Yemeni children into believing that their backward teachings are revelations from God and will guide them to victory. If this continues, Yemen will have a generation educated in religious hatred, discrimination and sectarianism.<sup>20</sup>

## **The Divine Selection of the Houthis**

In his lectures, Hussein Al-Houthi emphasizes the idea of the divine selection of the Houthis, that they are the one group of Yemeni society who are exclusively entitled to rule and lead, to be given loyalty and obedience, and from whom a true understanding of the Qur’an and Islam should be derived. In Fascicle One, he states: **“This is what is necessary when guided by religion. I leave in you that to which if you adhered, you will never be lost after me, the book of God and my descendants, which is a safety valve of aberrance**

**in all areas of religion, in all areas of life."** (Surat Al Imran, Lesson 1, page 379)

This tenet of the divine selection or divine right of the Houthis is predicated on their perception of themselves as the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), entrusted as holy men with religious and social authority, and has been central since the group's founding as the Believing Youth in 1998. Al-Houthi targeted Yemeni youth with this ideology, pushing for the return of the Imam's rule, directly in contrast to the goals of Yemen's 1962 revolution and the country's constitution, thus rejecting the values of equal citizenship under the law.

This entitlement was further affirmed when Al-Houthi professed, **"If the Shia Imamate, as we see it now, are they not distinguished from among all Arabs with their high position among the Arabs! Do they not hold their heads high among Arabs in Iran and in Southern Lebanon! Those who have the mandate of Imam Ali, we, the Zaidis, will deserve to be a force greater than them because our loyalty is to Imam Ali and the descendants of the Prophet."** (Surat Al Maedah, Lesson One, page 457)

By comparing the Houthi rebellion to "successful" movements in other places, Al-Houthi declares that Yemen should follow their lead. Al-Houthi preached that **"The Twelver doctrine sects are respected, they have a State and strong parties, they have great capabilities, newspapers, magazines, presses, media, and many other things to fill the world with, Al-Makarima, who consider themselves Shiites, and Bohra in India, who consider themselves as Ismaili Shiites, they are all sects in good positions."** (Surat Al Imarn Lesson One, page 379)

Mohammed Azzan, founder and former secretary-general and now defector of Believing Youth, states that this tenet was exported



Caption: Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, head of the Houthi rebel movement. Source: Presstv.com

directly from Iran after Al-Houthi and his father returned to Yemen from a trip in 1992. After this visit, Azzan noted that Al-Houthi began to emphasize the mandate of the people of the Hashemite family (the prophet's descendants) to which he belonged, and that only the return of the Imam to Yemen would pull the country from its state of misguidedness.<sup>21</sup> He added that the Houthi movement exploits religious, doctrinal, sectarian, tribal, and regional emotions, and the principle of the guardianship of Islamic Jurist to recruit members and supporters.

The Houthis apply this tenet in their *zakat* (fifth) regulations – in which they assert that the Houthis have the authority to seize and use 20% of Yemen's economic gains and natural resources, including its industries in oil, minerals, gold, fisheries, animal products, honey, agricultural crops, commercial profits and livestock, among others. These regulations further plunge the Yemeni population into poverty while subsequently increasing the power of Houthi leaders in their controlled areas. This further drives the Yemeni population,

especially its youth, to sympathize and join the Houthis, in order to gain access to these resources.

## Houthi Call for Jihad

Hussein Al-Houthi has insisted that they were in a religious conflict with the West, calling on his followers to fight the true jihad and retaliate against those who wish to destroy Islamic societies. He states, **"The word jihad is now transformed into the word terrorism, a Mujahid is a terrorist and the word jihad is terrorism...The Americans are the terrorists, they are the sources of terrorism and they are the roots of terrorism. They, as Imam Khomeini, may God have mercy on him, said about them, he said that America is the Great Satan."** (Terrorism and Peace, page 1489)

Al-Houthi argued that the world cannot heal and move forward with the continued presence of evil countries such as the United States, saying **"We will not do anything until all evil has ended from this**



Houthi rebels burning the United States of America and Israel flags during a protest in the streets of Yemen.  
Source: Mohammed Huwais / AFP/Getty Images

**arena, from this world, there will be no America, there will be no Israel, there will not be any state that we fear, and there will be no party to fear, then we will work."** (The Seriousness of the Stage, page 1650)

The Houthis' extremist ideology supports terrorism and violence and is used by the rebel militia to incite relentless hostilities against the innocent Yemeni people, who they believe to be agents of America. Al-Houthi echoes this sentiment by stating, **"Replacing the word-jihad-with the word terrorism, who is a Mujahid is a terrorist, and the meaning of him being a terrorist, is that he has done something that gives America the legitimacy to strike against him, which gives an agent of America the legitimacy to strike against him. Whoever chants this slogan (Cry) in this mosque, he is a terrorist, so he should be struck, who told him to talk about jihad? He is a terrorist so let him be struck. Who told him to open a school here that educates young people according to the spirit of the Qur'an? And whose spirit is jihad, if he is a terrorist, let him be struck."** (Terrorism and Peace, page 1488)



Soldier surveying damage after a Houthi missile attack on mosque in Marib, Yemen. Source: Reuters/Ali Owidha

The Houthi militia's practices are no different than that of a terrorist group. Since the group's inception, it has committed numerous egregious attacks on mosques and other places of worship, targeting innocent men, women and children. The US State Department's 2019 report on International Religious Freedom in Yemen states that on Eid, the Houthis raided mosques in Sanaa, Hajjah, Dhamar and Ibb Governorates and kidnapped worshippers because they celebrated Eid al-Fitr on June 4, according to the government's declaration, while the Houthis considered the holiday to be on June 5.<sup>22</sup> In January 2020, the group targeted a mosque in Marib province with a ballistic missile that killed 116 soldiers and injured dozens while they were praying.<sup>23</sup>

This behavior has also led the Houthis to sympathize, and even cooperate with, other known terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and (Islamic State in Iraq & Syria—ISIS) Yemen operations. Al-Houthi has praised Osama bin Laden in the past, writing, "**Osama bin Laden<sup>b</sup> will not be the savior of the nation even if he is sincere, and if his intentions are good, it is the fixed Sunnah of divine existence, and the reason is that he is not a descendant of the Prophet.**" (The Descendants of the Prophet, page 1731) Nevertheless, the two groups cooperate, most often in the exchange of prisoners, ranging from low-level security to high-level organization leaders, such as al-Qaeda leader Mazen Souda.<sup>24</sup>

Houthi leadership preaches and promotes the use of violent *jihad* to support the Houthis' struggle. It is what the Houthi rebels are teaching young Yemeni children in school and demanding the men and women to live by in their controlled regions.

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<sup>b</sup> Osama bin Laden: Al-Qaeda leader responsible for the terrorist operations that targeted several countries, including the attacks of September 11, 2001. On May 02, 2011, Former US President Barak Obama announced the death of Bin Laden. The Organization appointed Al-Zawahiri as his successor.



Houthi tribesmen hold their weapons as they chant the Houthi death slogan in Sana'a, Yemen. Source: AP/Hani Mohammed

## THE ROOTS

“ America wants us to fight terrorism, any terrorist book, any terrorist school, or any school for memorizing the Qur’an and is classified as terrorist by America. Are they not the ones who draw our interests, and we surrender? Even though it is not real interests... Let the young people shout in the face of America and you will see how America will be nice to you. ”

From: To Follow the Example of the Children of Israel, page 589

## The Indoctrination of Yemeni Youth

In order to have a generational hold on the Yemeni population, the Houthis have long targeted youth for recruitment, raising them in ideological schools so that they are willing to fight on the front lines as they grow older. Al-Houthi realized this when creating the Houthis, instituting its slogan at a local school to attract children and teachers to his message.

According to the Houthi TV channel Al Masira, children are educated in various summer camps and religious centers that bombard their minds with Houthi ideology and Houthi interpretations of the Qur'an.<sup>25</sup> Children are required to recite the slogan and memorize the Fascicles as part of their assignments. Governorates across the Houthi-



Children attending Houthi summer schools in Sana'a, Yemen



controlled areas contain hundreds of these camps and schools, with the Hajjah Governorate having nearly 300 such camps.<sup>26</sup> The camps have grown increasingly full – according to Yemen’s Minister of Information, H.E. Mr. Muammar al-Eryani. The Houthis recruited nearly 70,000 children under the age of 18 in the summer of 2019.

Al-Masira often reports<sup>27</sup> on the children’s summer camps in governorates such as Ibb<sup>28</sup>, Sana'a<sup>29</sup>, Capital's secretariat,<sup>30</sup> Al-Bayda<sup>31</sup> and other Houthi-controlled areas. These reports often show children delivering speeches containing extremist sentiments, and Al Masira’s coverage often showed the group took children on visits to graves of children killed on Houthi fronts to motivate them to follow their example.

Al-Houthi has explicitly written on the need to teach Muslim students sectarian thinking. In one of his speeches, Al-Houthi criticized former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his call to spread religious tolerance and understanding between Muslim and Jewish children so that they might live in future harmony and peace. Al-Houthi stated, **“We care about children, as Kofi Annan said while preaching to Muslim leaders: We do not want the Jewish child to fight with the Muslim child, and the Jewish child cries and the Muslim child cries! If they all coexist in a world like what he says: if a state of prosperity, mutual respect and peace prevails for everyone!! These are all lies, all lies, they want to kill in us, kill in us all the feelings of aggression through education and then terrorism.”** (Loyalty and Hostility, page 1562-1563)



A young Yemeni boy with an assault rifle during Houthi gathering in Sana'a. Source: AFP

The Houthis pull their methods from Iran and Hezbollah. The schools often show speeches from not only Al-Houthi himself and other Houthi leaders, but their equivalent peers in Iran and Lebanon. Lesson plans often follow a curriculum similar to the Hezbollah-run Mustafa schools in Lebanon, which also teach children to be in combat against the West, Israel and Jews. Hezbollah, in turn, has unequivocally supported the Houthi movement.<sup>32</sup>

The extremist ideology often fuels children as young as 15 to participate in the ongoing conflict, encouraged to fight on the front lines alongside adults. The Houthis often negotiate with local parents to have their children fight, paying them nearly \$100 USD a month.<sup>33</sup> There is no discrimination in who gets approached, as General People's Congress (GPC) member Abdul Salam al-Dahbali

stated that his son was approached by the Houthis without his knowledge, forcing his family to flee Taiz Governorate to escape them. If the parents disagree, the Houthis may also kidnap the children. According to the Rasd Coalition, from 2014 to 2019, the Houthis abducted nearly 1000 children under the age of 18.<sup>34 35</sup>

When children go to the frontlines, the Houthis give them a “paradise key,” similar to the Iranian recruitment of children during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The children are told that Al-Houthi has given them the key to paradise in exchange for jihad, the logical and holy conclusion to the Houthi ideology. The children that have survived often go on field trips to the graves of children that did not, motivating them to follow their “holy example.”



Young Yemeni boys at Houthi gathering. Source: Altarbawey.net

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The 2010 UN report<sup>36</sup> found that half of the Houthis' fighters were as young as 18 years old. Ms. Leila Zeroki, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict from 2012 to 2017, confirmed that in 2014, the Houthis had increased the recruitment of children. Human Rights Watch<sup>37</sup> also declared that the Houthis had increased the level of their recruitment of children similar to other terrorist organizations such as AQAP, and that the Houthis had recruited a seven-year-old boy and sent him to a militia checkpoint in Sanaa carrying a machine gun.

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Houthi child soldiers participating in a demonstration of battlefield techniques. Source: Reuters

Thus, the Houthi ideology has quickly taken root in a generation of Yemenis, provided that they survive the conflict. The generation has been taught to support an imam-backed governing style where Houthis are the primary benefactors, and all other Yemenis will receive after them.



Houthi textbooks used to educate children with radical ideology.

## THE BRANCHES

“ Should we be silent about cursing them? We will curse Jews and Christians, we will curse America and Israel, we will curse their supporters until this is established in our circles, among the nations, the Yemenis, and what is it to us if others have cried out or did not cry out. ”

From: The Cry in the Face of the Arrogant, page 579

The Houthis' dangerous ideology and rigorous education system have seeped into the everyday life of Yemenis forced to live in the rebel-controlled areas. With the support from their radical backers

in Tehran, the Houthis are able to carry out attacks and campaigns against marginalized groups of Yemeni society.

These despicable attacks range from harassment and forced segregation to abductions, convictions and even death. The Houthis seek to control anyone inside the country, including workers whose mission it is to support the 80 percent of Yemenis who depend on some form of humanitarian assistance. As outlined in the previous sections, the Houthis do not intend to create an inclusive and diverse environment, where people of different faiths, religions, backgrounds, and ethnicities can coexist. Instead, their leaders teach their followers to commit deplorable acts against those who cannot defend themselves.

The Houthis have made clear that they will not end their behavior at any cost, even in the face of various countries and international organizations such as the United Nations.



Sana'a, Yemen. Source: Weather-Atlas.com

## The Attacks on Jews

Al-Houthi's Fascicles contain extensive anti-Semitic rhetoric and content, calling for the eradication of the Jewish people and further disseminating falsities about them as a people.

Al-Houthi's Fascicles make clear one message: that Jews are the enemies of Yemen. (Loyalty and Hostility, pages 1555-1666) He states, **"Arab countries and all Islamic countries will not be safe from Jews except through their eradication and the elimination of their entity."** (World Jerusalem Day, page 619)

In fact, Al-Houthi tasks his followers with being more aggressive than Iran and Hezbollah towards Jews, calling his militia the most capable by saying, **"Don't we criticize Arab regimes, we criticize other Arabs and most of them are Sunnis; ok we are Shiites, and the Shiites have really emerged as the worst enemies of Israel and America. Iran, Hezbollah, have emerged as the strongest sworn enemy of America and Israel, and its best media outlets are creating awareness among Muslims ... We, the Shi'ites, the Zaidis, should be more aware than the Iranians, than Hezbollah...The Zaidis believe they are the righteous sect, their awareness should rise to the highest level; they should be among the most capable sects facing the Jews."** (World Jerusalem Day, page 654)

Furthermore, Al-Houthi continues this sectarian argument in the same Fascicle when he states that only a descendant and follower of the Prophet, following in the footsteps of Ali bin Abi Talib can defeat the Jews, unlike the "King of Morocco and the King of Jordan, who handed over leadership to Israel." (World Jerusalem Day, page 631)

This rhetoric most affects the Yemeni Jewish minority, of which there are several in Houthi-controlled areas. Al-Houthi portrays

them as people who expect a “divine selection” in their own right, and who would persecute other Yemenis if given the chance. These stereotypes are throughout the Fascicles, notably in the *Surat Al-Ma’ida*, where he speaks about a Jew telling a Muslim that he would “not walk behind you unless we would attempt murder if we could.” Al-Houthi has thus supported considerable discriminatory regulations against the Yemeni Jews, stating that they are not people qualified for citizenship and leadership. (The Guardianship, page 1619)

Al-Houthi’s preferred curriculum not only teaches young children violent and extremist ideas, but it also instills a deep hatred for religious minorities. Al-Houthi states, **“Where are the curricula that educate our children to hold animosity against America and Israel? To hold animosity against Jews and Christians? Where is the action – from which ministry – to make the people have the level of steadfast, even for a month if they enter a war with Israel?”** (The World Day of Jerusalem, page 642)



Young Houthi boy holding assault rifle at a rally in Sana’a, Yemen. Source: AP



The Houthis' anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions have had tangible effects on the Yemeni Jewish population, which has declined considerably as persecution continues. According to the US Department of State Report<sup>38</sup> on International Religious Freedom's section on Yemen, only 50 Yemeni Jews remain in the country – largely unable to practice due to Houthi interference. Reports also show that the Houthis have seized the homes of Yemeni Jews for use as education camps, continuing a cycle of hatred.

This rhetoric has also integrated into Yemeni society: During a trip to a Jewish community in the Amran Governorate, *New York Times* journalists<sup>39</sup> were approached by Yemenis who asked why they were friendly towards “a dirty Jew.” The Jewish community indicated that they were unable to communicate with other members of their village due to this mentality.

In some instances, the Houthis will displace Jews in order to use their homes as recruitment facilities. The Embassy of Yemen in Washington received a complaint from a rabbi who claimed the Houthis “had taken over my house and all Jewish homes in the village of Raydah in Amran Governorate, north of Sana'a, and turned them into schools and religious centers to indoctrinate and recruit children.”

The Houthis have shown that they do not have any respect for the Jewish people in Yemen, and more broadly, around the world. Their attacks, both physical and rhetorical, have negatively impacted the rich and storied Jewish history and Yemen.

## The Attacks on Women

The Houthis deny several rights and freedoms to women, believing that these rights do not exist. They thus regard women's rights movements and laws as "American-Israeli made" and "an aberrance and a waste of the nation." (To Follow the Example of the Children of Israel, page 593)

Al-Houthi states that the West wants **"to have mercy on these women, and to rid these women of this humiliation, provide them with projects, provide them with electricity, provide them with water projects, and provide them with centers that nurture motherhood and childhood. You provide them with everything, and do not tell them: That progress, that freedom is the true participation in that she seeks to crowd out men inside their offices, inside the offices of government departments."**



Women Houthi supporters carrying weaponry and chanting. Source: Realyemen.net

The Houthi ideology regards women as corruptors of the workplace and seducers. Paradoxically, they assert instead that such a denial is for the protection of women in general: And Al-Houthi cites in his Fascicles unverifiable accounts of harassment and rape of European women due to their entrance into the workplace. (To Follow the Example of the Children of Israel, page 594)

These beliefs have made the average Yemeni woman's everyday life much more dangerous. In 2019, Nabil Fadhil, the head of the Yemeni Organization against Human Trafficking,<sup>40</sup> stated that he had received reports from families and former detainees that the Houthis were kidnapping women under accusations of prostitution and treasonous connections with Saudi Arabia. Fadhil also received reports that the Houthis torture and abuse these kidnapped women in illegal prisons.

According to Rasd Coalition,<sup>41</sup> from September 2014 to May 2019, it documented 220 cases of abduction, disappearance and torture of women. Yemeni women, human rights activists and foreign humanitarian workers were harassed, kidnapped and imprisoned by the Houthis. The Houthis often target Yemeni women's rights advocates or female human rights activists, including 87 political activists, 30 female students, 10 Baha'is, six human rights activists and two female journalists. Sana'a accounted for the largest proportion of 204 cases. Various international organizations, such as Amnesty International, have called on the Houthis to release these women and to stop attacks on women activists.

The Houthis have also targeted women foreign aid workers who come to the country to help with the humanitarian crisis. In 2015, Nooran Hawass, a French national working for the Red Cross,

was kidnapped, along with two Yemeni employees of the same organization, in the Hada area of Sana'a. However, while her Yemeni colleagues were released soon after, she remained in custody for 11 months. That same year, the Houthis kidnapped another French citizen, Isabel Prem, along with her Yemeni translator, Shirin Makawi, for six months for an undisclosed reason.

## **The Attacks on the Baha'i People**

Despite the Bahai's' origins in the Middle East, the Houthis consider them and the Baha'i faith as American-Israeli made, used to divide and weaken Islam, and that the Houthis must confront them to unite the sects. (Islam and the Culture of Following, page 1510)

According to a recent Anti-Defamation League publication, this animosity stems from similar teachings of Hezbollah, whose curriculum describes Baha'is as agents of Jews and enemies of Islam.<sup>42</sup>

As such, the abuse of members of the Baha'i faith is widespread across Houthi-controlled areas. This abuse ranges from discriminatory jailing to kidnappings. The Houthis have imprisoned several Baha'is, including leader Hamed bin Haydara. After there being no details of his whereabouts<sup>43</sup> and sentenced to death, the Houthis finally released him and five other Baha'i leaders in late June 2020.<sup>44</sup>

Further, the Houthis attempted to charge twenty Baha'is with espionage and apostasy. The Houthi court sentenced three to death in this case.<sup>45</sup> In another case, the Houthi militias abducted the Baha'i spokesman in Yemen on his way to the market and took him to an unknown location.<sup>46</sup>

The Houthis have increasingly targeted Baha'i women and children in abductions and imprisonments. In 2016, the Baha'i University reported that the Houthis raided a Baha'i youth group meeting and kidnapped 60 attendees, including 19 women. They released these youths only after they signed away their possessions and pledged to not carry on with religious or social activities.<sup>47</sup>

In the 2019 International Religious Freedom Report, the US Department of State addressed the Houthis' human rights violations against Baha'i supporters. Specifically, the report highlighted that the Houthi prosecutor called for the expulsion of all Baha'is currently living in Yemen and banned any future re-entry.<sup>48</sup> The US House of Representatives acted by adopting Draft Resolution 823, placing responsibility on the Iranian regime for directing the Houthi rebels to persecute and harass the Baha'i minority in Yemen.<sup>49</sup>



Six influential Baha'is released from prison after being wrongfully detained by the Houthi authorities.  
Source: Baha'i World News Service

## Attacks on the Press and Democracy

The Fascicles of Al-Houthi are incompatible with democracy due to their goal of restoring the Imam as leader and establishing the Houthis as divine interlocutors. Al-Houthi regards democracy as a destructive system to Islamic society, where political parties “enslave” opinions. Thus, the Houthis’ largely ideological war against the Yemenis also includes a political war against the Yemeni government and political system, resulting in the 2014 coup. Al-Houthi states that democracy was “transmitted by the West within our society, to disperse us and scatter us from a call for freedom, parties, press, opinion, and the other opinion.” (Surat Al-Imran, Lesson Fourteen, page 1109)

The Houthis believe that freedom of opinion and therefore freedom of the press is “slavery,” which is why they target Yemeni journalists for their reporting, arguing that they are spies for the West. Al-Houthi states, **“The word freedom of opinion and other opinion differs greatly from the word *ijtihad*, because *ijtihad* embraces and unites a nation; but freedom, opinion, and other opinion tear a nation apart and disperse it.”** (Islam and the Culture of Following, page 1511)

Following the collapse of the Saleh-led government, there were reports that claimed that Yemen enjoyed substantial freedom of the press, where journalists were able to operate with unprecedented liberties until the Houthi undemocratic coup in 2014.<sup>50</sup> The Houthis quickly restricted journalistic freedoms, arresting, torturing and assassinating those who refused to cooperate. According to H.E. Mr. Muammar al-Eryani, Yemeni Minister of Information, the Houthis blew up several television stations and closed more than 300 media sites, including international publications, in the initial days of the coup.<sup>51</sup>

## الصحفيون المخطوفون يضربون عن الطعام حتى إطلاق سراحهم



حسن عناب



عصام بلغيث



عبد الخالق عمران



توفيق المنصوري



هشام ترموم



صلاح القاعدي



هشام اليوسفي



هيثم الشهاب



هارث حميد



أكرم الوليدي

Ten journalists held since 2015 by the Houthi rebels are now facing execution for false allegations. The ten journalists are (from left to right): Hassan Enab, Essam Belgheeth, Abdel Khaleq Omran, Tawfiq al-Mansouri, Hisham Tarmoom, Salah Al-Kaadi, Hisham al-Yousefi, Haitham al-Shihab, Hareth Homaid, Akram al-Walidi. Source: Reporters Without Borders

There have even been reports of the Houthi rebels ordering and carrying out assassinations against Yemeni journalists. For example, Yemeni journalist Mohammed Al-Absi was assassinated in Sana'a while leading an investigation into companies illegally importing oil in order to help fund the Houthi war effort. Yemen Life, owned by Houthi spokesman and lead negotiator Mohamed Abdelsalam, is most known for their illicit business activities. Al-Absi's report highlighted that Abdelsalam used income generated from illicit business activities to bribe families and recruit their child as soldiers.

## Arms, Not Peace

**“ If you want to be safe from those, follow their rule.  
They are the ones who say if you want peace, bear arms. ”**

To follow the example of the children of Israel, page 590

The Houthis have largely discounted any peace negotiations; in fact, they have ignored the terms of every peace agreement they have entered. Since 2014, the Houthis have forsaken local, regional, and international peace talks, ranging from the Peace and National Partnership Agreement (PNPA) with the Yemeni government to the UN-facilitated Stockholm Agreement. Instead, they have continued to violate the agreement with attacks on peace negotiators, most notably the Head of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC), and Commander of the International Observer Team to monitor the ceasefire in the city of Hodeidah, Dutch General Patrick Cammaert.<sup>52</sup>

For years, the Houthis have faced only mild international pressure by countries to implement these agreements, which they in turn perceived as a “green light” to extend the war and to expand the international humanitarian response to benefit them. Various reports have revealed how the Houthis have largely interfered with the work of UN organizations rather than facilitate the UN’s work to help the millions of desperate Yemenis living under their oppressive control. This has been exploited by the Houthis to enrich themselves and to protract the conflict. The Houthis have also consolidated this mismanagement with the establishment of the Supreme Council for the Administration and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs by November 2019.



The Iranian regime has supported the Houthis' behavior with military training and weaponry, varying from drones to land-based cruise missiles, according to a 2019 report by UN experts.<sup>53</sup> Several other global leaders, such as Nikki Haley, former US Ambassador to the United Nations, have claimed<sup>54</sup> that the similarities to this weaponry and Iranian products are uncanny. The Houthis have used these weapons to target Yemen and Saudi Arabia, usually civilian populations. Several hundred civilians have been killed just by Iranian-supplied ballistic missiles in Yemen, and many more civilians have also been injured.

The Houthis have also extended the conflict into the Red Sea, attacking US warships,<sup>55</sup> humanitarian ships and oil tankers alike.<sup>56</sup> Of most concern today is the state of the Floating Storage Offloading (FSO) oil tanker *Safer*, which sits outside the Port of Ras Issa in the Red Sea. The UN has claimed<sup>57</sup> that without immediate review and repair of the disintegrating ship, the one million barrels of oil that it is carrying could spill, or at worst, explode, causing a major environmental disaster. However, the Houthis have made false promises and have denied United Nations inspectors access to the ship to and assess the situation and provide recommendations for FSO *Safer's* maintenance to avert any potential calamity.



Iranian weapons bound for the Houthis in Yemen intercepted by the Arab Coalition.  
Source: Saudi Joint Forces Command

## Intellectual and Cultural Document

The Intellectual and Cultural document came directly from Hussein al-Houthi's Fascicles and is considered the constitution and centerpiece for the current Houthi rebels' beliefs and principles. The document explicitly reads, **"This is an agreement between the Zaidis in general and among them the Mujahideen and in the forefront Mr. Abdul Malek Al-Houthi and some of the Zaidi scholars, led by the Eminent Sheikh Abdel Rahman Hussein Shayim and the Eminent Sheikh Hussein bin Yahya Al-Houthi."** Some Zaidi Sheikhs endorsed this document, which was written and signed by Abdul Malek Al-Houthi in 2012. The document states, **"God chose the descendants of the Prophet and made them a gift to the nation and heirs of the Book after the Messenger of God until judgment day; and God has prepared in every age one who will be a beacon for His servants and able to lead the nation and advance it in all fields."**

The document affirms the idea of divine right given to descendants of the Prophet over all other Yemenis, in a clear indication that Abdul Malek Al-Houthi is the rightful leader.

The document consists of several clauses, namely the Sunnah of the Prophet, divine selection, principles of jurisprudence, *ijtihad* and Islamic scholastic theology. On divine selection, the collection reads, **"The path of guidance, deliverance and safety from aberrance is adherence to the al-Thaqalayn (the two weighty things): God's book, the source of guidance and the light and to a lesser degree, the descendants of the Messenger of God and the readers of the book until the day of proclamation and who are God's authority in his land."** The principle of selection is meant to undermine the legal

**“ The Houthi Fascicles are a complete detriment to Yemeni society, and only will help in the further spread of hatred and violence throughout the country. ”**

His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Awad BinMubarak, Ambassador of Yemen to the United States of America

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democratic and political system in Yemen, which is based on justice, equality, participation, and equal opportunity.

Similar to Hussein Al-Houthi Fascicles, these documents promote extremist and terrorist actions and call for members of the Houthi movement to fight their enemies, especially the foremost “leaders of heresy, represented in this time of ours by America and Israel, and whoever helped them, supported them, and stood by their side.”

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research is an analysis of how the beliefs of the Houthis are influenced by known terrorism facilitators such as Iran and Hezbollah, and how the Houthis have endeavored to instill their ideology within Yemeni society, primarily through the re-education of Yemeni youth, and to impose it onto the daily lives of Yemenis, especially those they deem “marginalized.” This is only a sample of Al-Houthi’s Fascicles, which have regrettably propagated hatred and violence throughout the country. This is contrary to the goal of the many Yemenis who long for the strengthening of democracy and their human rights.

The continuation of this conflict only serves to benefit the Houthis, as the Yemeni people either grow weary of the conflict, are inspired to join the organization or simply die. The Houthis aim to become a successor to the Iranian regime in the line of Khomeini and Khamenei, and to expand their terrorism in a manner similar to Hezbollah and Nasrallah. The Houthis deify their leader, calling him a *Manar al-Huda* (the guidance torch) and a savior to the nation – a worthy successor to restore Yemen as an imam-based nation.

The international community must join the efforts of local organizations to disrupt the Houthis’ ideological pipeline targeting Yemeni youth, and rehabilitate the intellectual environment that supports a free and democratic state governed by a constitution and laws allowing for diversity in Yemeni society to flourish. Only by attacking the roots of this problem will Yemen be able to escape the branches and vines of the Houthis.

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[Click here](#) to be directed to Abdul-Malik Badreddin al-Houthi’s Intellectual and Cultural Doctrine.



President of the Republic of Yemen, His Excellency Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi. Source: Reuters

## Recommendations

It is imperative that the Houthi ideology be studied in depth and accurately comprehended before making any decision to perhaps sympathize with the group. Perplexingly, some Western activists and officials continue to express sympathy with the Houthi group directly or indirectly, even erroneously portraying their existence as a result of political and social injustice, while totally ignoring the Houthis' ideological and idiosyncratic underpinnings. Before issuing any rule or taking any side, it is necessary to fathom their ideology, thoughts and beliefs, to grasp their true effect on Yemeni society, and to realize that they harbor an ideology that threatens both the regional and international community. Any tolerance for the extremist ideology of the Houthi group increases its power and persistence, and gives it an opportunity to further propagate its distorted ideology.

Such tolerance portends the eventual coming of Hezbollah's scenario in Lebanon: a "state within a state" in Yemen. Hezbollah is considered

to be at a competitive level with the Lebanese government, a status the Houthis seek to attain by prolonging the war and exhausting the international community so that it will accept them as a *fait accompli*. As such, Yemen needs the efforts of the international community for the following:

**1. Sanctions:** International leverage must be applied against individuals, companies, media institutions and restrictions must be placed on social media to stop the spread of the Houthi extremist ideology by targeting:

**Individuals:** Imposing sanctions on individuals who try to spread this extremist ideology, and religious scholars and sheikhs who appear directly on the Houthi channels. These individuals should be considered as working to poison the minds of children, attempting to recruit them and spreading hatred that instills the Houthi ideology.

**Companies:** Companies working to import oil, loot and smuggle antiquities and engage in other commercial activities that enrich Houthi warlords and further fuel the civil war with the Yemeni people.

**Media Institutions:** There is already the tainting of children's minds from Houthi educational curricula and the reprehensible recruitment of child soldiers by Houthis from their summer camps. But at another wider level, the Houthi media has also played a significant deleterious role. Al-Masira TV is considered the official media outlet of the Houthis, and as the American scholar Ms. Hannah Porter affirms in her latest research, the Al-Masira channel has produced programs with strong production values similar to those of Hezbollah's al-Manar channel. The channel also operates from Lebanon and is directly supervised by Hezbollah elements. The channel regularly broadcasts the speeches of Hussein Al-Houthi, Abdul Malik Al-Houthi, Hassan Nasrallah and the Iranian religious leadership. It also broadcasts regular reports

on the Houthi summer camps along with songs and poetry praising war, rousing speeches from young children and other disturbing propaganda. This broadcast material is replete with extremist content and incendiary language, including calls to kill Jews, Christians, and Muslims or Yemenis considered hypocrites or traitors. It also aims to maximize the Khomeini imamate project

**Extremist Social Media Accounts:** The group uses social media platforms to spread its malign ideas and negative agenda and to recruit new group members. Most Houthi leaders use Facebook and Twitter to spread the group's vile rhetoric. Continuing to leave space for those leaders of the group, both political and religious, to spread their extremist ideas, will continue exposing the lives of many Yemenis to more death and danger and should be forbidden by these social media companies.

**Entities:** All countries must classify the military wing of the Houthis as a terrorist organization to make it stop its extremist practices. If this doesn't work, harsh measures must be taken. In 2016, the Arab League designated Hezbollah as a terrorist group, following the actions of many Western countries. If we look at the reasons that led to Hezbollah's designation and compare them with the Houthis' actions and aspirations, we will see that the Houthis engage in identical practices. Therefore, the Houthi militia's military wing should be also designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the international community.

**2. Direct UN and international pressure on the Houthis:** There must be broad pressure applied to stop the Houthis from spreading their extremist ideology among Yemenis and to abide by all agreements, peace initiatives, UN Resolution 2216, obligations to the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and outcomes of the National Dialogue

Conference. Indeed, international pressure has not reached the level necessary to make the Houthis respond to, comply with and implementing what they have agreed to. Instead, the Houthis have been violating ceasefires and attacking Yemenis or inciting violence against Jews, Baha'is, women and journalists.

**3. Rehabilitating the People After Restoring the State:** The Houthis have taken away the rights and equality of all other groups in Yemen. Because of this, Yemen was sentenced to a state of constant chaos and absolute destruction. In order to restore the Yemeni state, we have to be active in producing reforms that target preserving minorities, including:

**Initiatives that help women and children:** The Houthis have specifically oppressed the rights of these groups, and the Yemeni government has a responsibility to its people to help restore rule of law that protect them.



Prime Minister of the Republic of Yemen, H.E. Dr. Maeen Abdulmalek Saeed. Source: [www.mofa-ye.org](http://www.mofa-ye.org).



**Combatting the recruitment of terrorist organizations:** Under the Houthis, terrorist organizations have felt as if they can act outside the law. The government need to act with its partners in the Middle East and around the world, including the US, to put institutions in place.

**Eliminating extremist ideology throughout the state:** The government must work with religious organizations to spread the true form of Islam and accept other faiths.

**Building and strengthening the Yemeni army:** There must be sound reform plans to build a national Yemeni army that serves the citizens, the constitution and the law. Strengthening the Yemeni army is seen as strengthening the state, which will play its part in confronting outlaw groups and will not allow for another competitive force.

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**“ Therefore, the military wing of the Houthis should also be designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the international community. ”**

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The following is an English version of Abdul-Malik Badreddinal-Houthi's Intellectual and Cultural Doctrine referenced in the research paper above. In order to provide readers with a more complete view of the radical and irrational teachings being promulgated by the Houthi rebels, we found it pertinent to share al-Houthi's full doctrine. It is important to note that the views expressed in the document are not shared by the legitimate and internationally recognized government of Yemen as well as the vast majority of the Yemeni people.

## **In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Compassionate**

### **Intellectual and Cultural Doctrine**

**Praise be to Allah Almighty, Who says: (And hold fast by the covenant (rope) of Allah all together and be not disunited), and prayers and blessings of Allah be upon His Prophet Mohammad and his Family.**

**On Friday, 03/17/1433 AH [02/10/2012], a meeting was held by the Committee commissioned with drafting of the Covenant of the Zaidis, including the Mujahideen, in the forefront of whom stands Mr. Abdul-Malik Badreddin al-Houthi, a number of Zaidi scholars and their followers, including the most revered scholars Abdul Rahman Hussein Shaim and Hussein Bin Yahya Al Houthi. During the meeting, the Committee concluded as follows:**

**First: Concerning the fundamentals of religion, we believe that Allah is the One and Only. He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is none comparable to Him. Allah has full knowledge of all things is Ever-Determiner over everything. He is the First, the Last, the Manifest, and the Hidden as no vision can encompass Him- neither in this world nor in the hereafter- but he encompasses all vision. Allah is the Kind, the All-Aware, and the Independent, to Whom parts, organs, hands, feet and any other tool, as well as movement, dormancy, disappearance, and transition may not be applied, Who is not contained by Time or Place.**

**We also believe that Allah Almighty is the Utterly Just, the Wise, Who never oppresses or wrongs His slaves. Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability, does not impose acts, but has given His slaves free will “Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve.” (Al-Kahf: 29); He only punishes people for their sins “ and no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden” (Al-Anaam: 164) “And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives” (Al-Najm: 39).**

**We believe that Allah is honest in His promise to believers and threat to sinners and that He will not break His promise and threat; Allah Almighty says, “The word will not be changed with Me and never will I be unjust to the servants” (Qaf: 29). Heaven is the everlasting shelter of those who obey Him, and Hell is the everlasting destiny of those who Allah inflicts His punishment on. Intercession is not awarded to disbelievers, oppressors and the defiantly disobedient (Committers of the grievous sins); it is Awarded as promised by Allah Almighty: “ and they cannot intercede except on behalf of one whom He approves. And they, from fear of Him, are apprehensive.” (Al-Anbeya: 28) “For the wrongdoers there will be no devoted friend and no intercessor [who is] obeyed.” (Ghafir: 18)**

**We believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Day of Judgment, and the greatest and the last of Messengers, Prophet Mohammad- may the prayers and blessings of Allah be upon him- and his Book, the Quran, sent by Allah to this Ummah to guide the believers and remain as an everlasting miracle that cannot be changed, replaced, increased or decreased “Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord who is] Wise and Praiseworthy.” (Fussilat: 42). This is our Great Quran, our Constitution, and our Book of Guidance at all times.**

The Imam chosen as the successor of the Prophet, may the prayers and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family, is his brother and guardian, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali bin Abi Taleb, then Al-Hassan, then Al-Hussain, then their descendent Imams, such as Imam Zaid, Imam AL-Qassem Bin Ibrahim, Imam AL-Hadi, Imam AL-Qasem AL-Ayani and Imam AL-Qassem Bin Mohammed and then those Imams who follow their method.

Guidance, surviving and safety from error is to uphold two classes [the Quran and the Prophet Family]: the Book of Allah- the source of guidance and light- “By which Allah guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darkneses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path” (Al-Maida: 16) “ for it is an intercessor whose intercession will be accepted. Whoever gives it the lead it will take him to paradise. Whoever leaves it behind, then it will drive him to the fire. It is a guide that shows the best path. It is the book that contains details and explanations, and accomplishments. It is a criterion and not a useless thing. Its wonders do not end and its rare facts do not become old. In it there is the torch of guidance, and the lighthouses of wisdom. It serves as proof of veracity of knowledge... end of Hadith”

and the smaller class, relatives of the messenger of Allah (the guides of nation) as a parallel to the Book until the day of judgment (Almighty told me the two classes will not depart until they come to AL-Hawdh—a pool of purified water specified only for righteous people on the day of Judgment), and they are the Arguments of Allah on earth.

The promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, fighting unjust rulers, and standing against the oppressors are of the greatest religious duties imposed on all people. People must be loyal to Awlia Allah (pious people who are beloved by Allah) and must fight the enemies of Allah such as leaders of disbelief, America and Israel and their supporters who stand against Islam and Muslims. "You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger" (Al-Mujadila: 22).

Second: Learning and teaching the religion of Allah is a religious duty commanded by Allah- some of it is Fard Ain (Individual obligation) and some is Fard Kifayah (Communal obligation)- as this duty results in learning religion and complying with the duties commanded by Allah. The divine scholars who do what they teach are awarded a special position. Allah Almighty says: “Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do.” (Al-Mujudila: 11) and “Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"” (Az-Zumar:9). Therefore, they should be honored and revered.

Criticism to scholars is not intended to the scholars of the Family of the Prophet of Allah (Ahl Al-Bayt) and their Shi`a who perform good deeds or to their knowledge. It is intended to those who believe that Jihad (fight) should not be conducted, that good deeds should not be ordered, and bad deeds should not be forbidden; those who believe in silence and in obeying those who should not be obeyed.

Jihad for raising the Word of Allah is a duty required from all and commanded by the Book of Allah Almighty and the Sunnah of His Prophet, may the prayers and blessings of Allah be upon him. Moreover, Jihad was also conducted by the Imams of Ahl Al-Bayt, may the peace of Allah be upon

them, and is only denied by the ignorant who transgresses the path of Ahl al-Bayt, may the peace of Allah be upon them.

Generally, everyone agrees to the approach of Ahl Al-Bayt, may the peace of Allah be upon them, in their fundamentals and beliefs, which have been followed by the rightly guiding Imams (Al-A'emma Al-Hudat) since the dawn of Islam, whether antecedent or subsequent, although we prefer the approach of the antecedents, such as Al-Hadi and Al-Qassem, as it is closer to the Quranic approach and the human instinct instilled by Allah.

#### **Prophet's Sunna:**

Our position towards Sunna is similar to that of Imam Al-Hadi, may the peace of Allah be upon him, which is described in his Anthology "The Book of Sunna", where he requires that Sunnah should only be considered valid if it is consistent with Quran, within the framework of Quran, connected to Quran, but not overruling nor contradicting with Quran. It must also be connected with the rightly guided Imams of Ahl Al-Bays (Prophet Mohammad family) in their capacity as the trustees of the Sunnah who determine valid or invalid Sunnah. This pertains to Sunna deeds attributed to the Prophet of Allah, may the prayers and peace of Allah be upon him and his family, despite not being continuously recurrent or the agreed upon. The agreed upon, which is knowingly attributed to the Prophet of Allah is deemed self-evident. Allah Almighty says in this regard: "Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination," "So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you."

#### **Divine Selection (Estifaa):**

Concerning Divine Selection (Estifaa), we believe that Allah Almighty selects those He favors from among His worshipers, whether as groups or as individuals. Allah Almighty says in this regard: "Indeed, Allah chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imran over the worlds," (Al Imran: 33), while the Prophet said, "Indeed Allah has chosen Isma'il from the children of Ibrahim, and He chose Banu Kinanah from the children of Isma'il, and He chose the Quraish from Banu Kinanah, and He chose Banu Hashim from Quraish, and He chose me from Banu Hashim". We believe that Allah Almighty has chosen the family of the Prophet (Ahl Al-Bayt) to be the rightly guided Imams of this Ummah and the successors of the Prophet in maintaining the Book of Allah until the Day of Judgement and that Allah chooses and prepares in each age to guide His worshipers and be able to rule and be in charge of all matters related Ummah "For every innovation that arises after me - by which is sought the weakening of the faith - there will be a guardian from the people of my house in charge of it (faith) who will defend it, he will speak by inspiration from Allah and will proclaim the truth and illuminate it, he will repulse the plot of the plotters and speak out in defense of the weak ones, so pay heed O possessors of insight and rely upon Allah." Our approach in validating and appointing this Imam is the same that is followed by Ahl Al-Bayt, may the peace of Allah be upon them.

### **Fundamentals of Fiqh (Jurisprudence):**

Concerning the fundamentals of Fiqh, we reject and criticize everything that contradicts with the Holy Quran or replaces Al [the family of] Mohammad. However, we accept and do not object or

oppose anything that is consistent with the Holy Quran and can be used to understand Sharia provisions, within the framework of Al Mohammad, while noting the serious role of being faithful to Allah Almighty and accepting everything that leads to the righteous path: “if you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion” (Al-Anfal: 29); “And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good” (Al-Ankaboot: 69); “And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.” (Mohammad: 17).

### **Ijtihad (Interpretive Reasoning):**

Concerning Ijtihad, that which leads to division and disagreement in religion, belief in Allah and other Sharia fundamentals or to contradiction with Ahl Al-Bayt or causes damage to the unity of the Muslims and the composition of the Ummah, which must conform to the command of Allah: “And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful,” (Al Imran: 104) or violates the command of Allah to obey them and make them the Walis of the Ummah- must be rejected, dismissed and refused as it corrupts religion.

On the other hand, Ijtihad which exerts all efforts and capacities to research the provisions of religion and the Sharia [Islamic Law] of Allah, while complying with the approach of the Holy Quran and Ahl Al-Bayt, without causing conflict in Ummah or disagreement with those whom we should obey under the command of Allah, and who Allah has chosen them as guardians (Walis) of the Ummah, and the Ijtihad which is governed by the regulations set and followed by the Imams, may the peace of Allah be upon them, is accepted, required and needed to gain religious knowledge, especially in respect of newly emerging matters.

### **Ilm al-Kalām (Theological Rhetoric):**

Concerning the criticism against Ilm al-Kalām, this branch of knowledge does not refer to religion fundamentals (Osool) or the doctrines followed by the infallible Imams. It refers to the in-depth study and the style followed by the philosophers, the Isolationist (Mutazala) and others in accordance with their methodology and their method, which is different to the method and approach of Ahl al-Bayt peace be upon them.

This is our doctrine and our united vision in these matters, which must be invoked by other visions and be referred to for matters that may be problematic for this or that party

May Allah guide us all to His righteous path, and may this Ummah be united and blessed under the name of Mohammad and his family, prayers and peace of Allah be upon them. May Allah reward me with guidance and success.



**Praise be to Allah**

**Issued on 03/21/1433 AH**

**Corresponding to February 13th, 2012 AD**

**This embodies our vision and doctrine.**

**Written by Abdul-Malik Badreddin al-Houthi**

**03/22/1433 AH [02/14/2012]**

**Hussain Yahia Al-Houthi, may Allah bless him  
may Allah bless him**

**Abdul-Rahman Shaim,**

**Hussain Majdudin Al-Mu'ayyad, may Allah bless  
him Al-Rabidi, may Allah bless him**

**Ali Ali Masoud**

**Praise be to Allah for the righteous path and united thought and word. It is certain that the persons in disagreement seek the word of truth. It is commonly known that the disagreement involves matters that do not constitute prejudice to or deviate from the fundamentals of the pure Sunna or the Holy Quran. We need to adhere to the continuously recurrent of the understanding reached by the antecedents, the pure ahl Al-Bayt, the Prophet and Al-Hadi (rightly guided Imam), may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon them. These doctrines have been issued by the seeker of the mercy of Allah, Mohammad Mohammad Al-Mansour, who reviewed the commandments in Rabi Al-Awwal 1433 AH.**

**Mohammad Mohammad Al-Mansour**

**Hmoud bin Abbas Al-Mo'ayyad**



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