

Republic of Yemen  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Office of the Minister

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**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen extends its warmest greetings to Human Rights Watch:**

In reference to the letter from Human Rights Watch of 23 November 2016 requesting information about the criminal air strike by the Saudi-led coalition of the security directorate of Al Zaydia, Al Hodaida Province, we state the following:

- On Saturday 29/10/2016 at 9:00pm, coalition forces targeted the Al Zaydia security directorate, encompassing two separate buildings. Each building houses offices, annexes, and two temporary detention quarters. In the men's section, security uses these quarters to hold in preventative custody individuals charged in both criminal and civil cases. In the women's section, the two quarters, which did not house any women inmates, are used to hold in preventative custody individuals charged in cases of terrorism and threatening the stability of the nation and citizenry.
- Three airstrikes bombed the security directorate three times:
  - The first airstrike targeted the back wall of the women's detention quarters, housing about 22 inmates, held in custody for cases pertaining to terrorism and hostility. The People's Committees administer these quarters.
  - The two last airstrikes targeted the two quarters holding in preventative custody individuals charged in both criminal and civil cases, pending prosecution before the court, and in cases undergoing research and investigation by judiciary police. Eighty-four (84) individuals lost their lives, suffered wounds, or have gone missing. It was unequivocally clear that the objective of the first strike of the women's detention quarters was to facilitate the escape of the prisoners, implicated in cases of terrorism, extremism, and aggression. Meanwhile, the security forces were occupied in relief and rescue operations of those harmed by the repeated airstrikes of the detention quarters in the men's section.

- The targeted building is a judiciary, security, and police establishment. Claims to the effect that this establishment housed military leaders, officers, or any military activities – or even military vehicles – are false. Rather, vehicles at the site belonged to the security establishment and served security patrol and transport of people. There were also cars – civil vehicles – at the site belonging to the administrative staff on shift at the security directorate, as evinced by images broadcasted by various news outlets at the time.
- Of the total number (126) of individuals present in the building, 62 bodies were found as per the following:
  - 44 corpses are in hospitals awaiting identification.
  - 18 bodies have been identified and handed over to the victims' families.
- We still cannot determine the number of prisoners who fled or whose lives were lost in the bombing, their corpses so charred that they remain difficult to identify.

#### **Statistical Breakdown: People Present at the Site Targeted by the Bombing**

	<b>Present in the Security Office</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Deaths</b>	<b>Injured</b>	<b>Unidentifiable or escaped</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Detainees of the General Prosecutor</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Approximate</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Detainees in custody – criminal cases</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Detainees in custody – security cases</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Staff in the targeted establishment</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>126</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>33</b>	

- Moreover, investigations concerning 3 bodies found in the wreckage are ongoing to ascertain why they were present at the site of the massacre:
  1. Shouai Muhammad Ali Ismail (his body was handed over)
  2. Moussa Saeed Ahmad Saeed (his body was handed over)
  3. Ismail Darwish Ahmad Jimayi (his body was handed over)
- The Yemeni authorities undertook an investigation regarding this massacre as per the following:
  - 1 – The Ministry of Interior, represented by General Director of the Al Hodaida Province Police, undertook an investigation.
  - 2 – The Yemeni Parliament tasked a committee to investigate the facts. The committee visited the location of the crime and inspected it. It also met with relatives of the fallen and the leaders of both judiciary and local authorities.

From the above, it is clearly evident that the scale of the crime and the direct targeting of security establishments and quarters full of detainees represent an explicit violation of international law and the rules of war. We would like to note that this is not the first time that aggressors target security establishments and civil judiciary facilities, in an act amounting to a war crime.

We must also state that the Peoples' Committees, formed by the sons of any given region, are the ones who undertake and administer security activities in accordance with the law. In this regard, they assist the concerned security entities in fulfilling their duty to maintain security and stability, during Saudi aggression, but this does not render their places of work legitimate military targets for the aggressing forces.

**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to take this opportunity to express its warmest greetings to Human Rights Watch.**

[Signature and stamp of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Yemen]