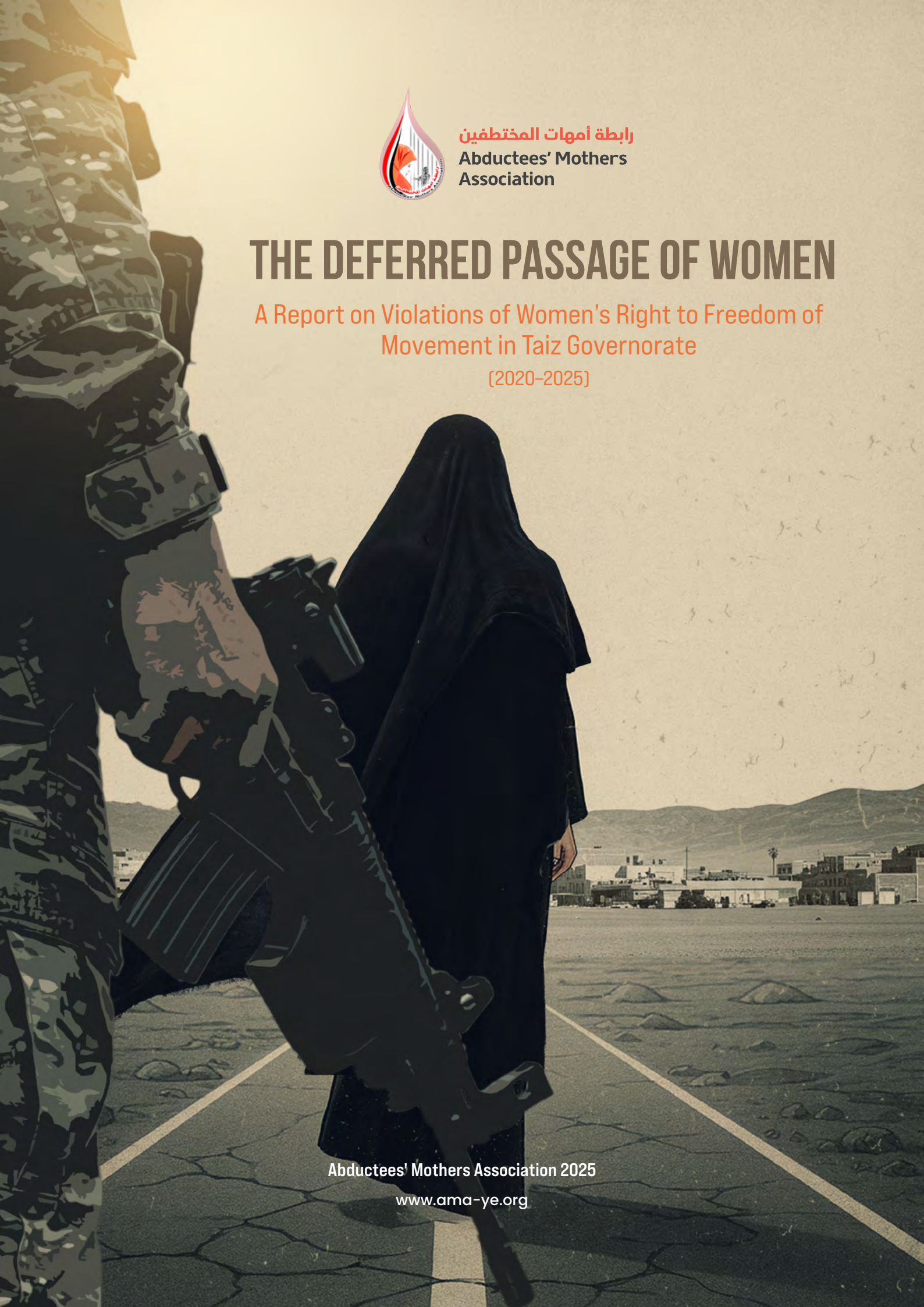

رابطة أمهات المختطفين
Abductees' Mothers Association

THE DEFERRED PASSAGE OF WOMEN

A Report on Violations of Women's Right to Freedom of Movement in Taiz Governorate

(2020–2025)

Abductees' Mothers Association 2025
www.ama-ye.org

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A Report on Violations of Women's Right to Freedom of Movement in Taiz Governorate

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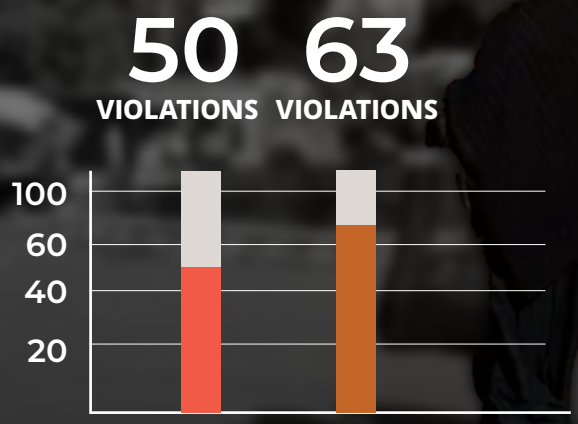
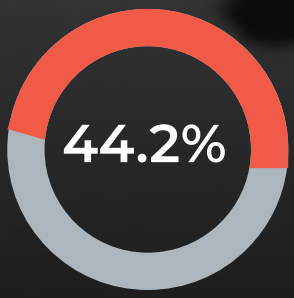
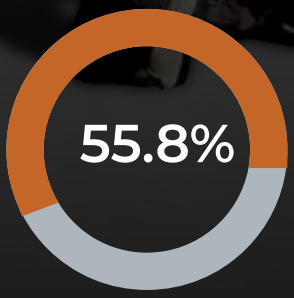
Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report reveals a mixed qualitative-quantitative approach involving 41 in-depth interviews with victims / witnesses, direct observation, and the analysis of supporting documents, conducted in adherence to the principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and the duty to do no harm. It exposes a systematic pattern of violations of women's right to freedom of movement in Taiz Governorate within a defined geographical scope,







- Houthi group
- internationally recognized government

This report reveals a mixed qualitative-quantitative approach involving

41

interviews with victims / witnesses

direct observation, and the analysis of supporting documents

specifically the roads leading to and from the city of Taiz through the Al-Qasr Roundabout, Al-Hangar, Al-Hawdh, Al-Ma'afir, and Al-Ruba'i checkpoints. The highest concentration of violations occurred at the Al-Qasr Roundabout, followed by Al-Hangar and then Al-Hawdh. The report documented 113 acts of violation, committed within multiple incidents during the period 2020–2025, and classified them as follows:

The report documented **113** acts of violation during the period 2020–2025

stoppage and delay	Unlawful search	Property damage	Insult and verbal abuse
35	27	12	10

Financial extortion:	Theft/confiscation of property	Threats	Sexual harassment	Arbitrary detention
10	09	05	04	01

Movement obstruction/arbitrary stoppage and delay: 35, Unlawful search: 27, Property damage: 12, Insult and verbal abuse: 10, Financial extortion: 10, Theft/confiscation of property: 9, Threats: 5, Sexual harassment:, Arbitrary detention: 1

The report highlights the recurring patterns of "routines of control" (such as obstruction and inspection), which, though less severe than other violations, are the most repetitive and cumulatively harmful. Findings indicate that responsibility is distributed between checkpoints and forces affiliated with the Houthi group, which accounted for 63 violations (55.8%), and those affiliated with the internationally recognized government, responsible for 50 violations (44.2%). Acts of extortion and detention were particularly concentrated at Houthi-controlled checkpoints, while financial violations were most prevalent at the Al-Qasr Roundabout. These practices have transformed the road space, under conditions of war and institutional fragmentation, into a structure of everyday control where security authority intersects with customary norms and the parallel economy.

This dynamic severely restricts women's access to education, employment, and civic participation and exacerbates the vulnerability of women from families of the abducted and forcibly disappeared. The report also implemented complementary activities, including regular field monitoring, the development of a preliminary map of hotspots, and traceable documentation. It concludes with multi-level practical recommendations: Legislative: Criminalize unjustified restrictions on movement, prohibit requiring a "male guardian (mahram)" for travel, and regulate search and confiscation procedures through verifiable records and receipts subject to judicial review. Institutional: Standardize checkpoint procedures under independent civilian oversight, mandate human rights training for security personnel, and adopt digital receipts and documentation tools. Community-level: Establish systematic documentation linked to hotspot mapping, build local protection networks, launch legal awareness campaigns, and refer field data to national and UN complaint mechanisms, as well as sanctions mechanisms where applicable. These measures collectively aim to redefine the road as a safe and shared space of citizenship.

Key Terms of **the Report:**

KEY TERMS OF THE REPORT:

Public Space:

The shared, open domain (roads, squares, passageways) where rights are exercised and regulatory rules are applied based on the law.

Public Road (in this report):

The main network surrounding the city of Taiz, connecting the city center with its outskirts and the eastern part controlled by other forces. This includes high-density paved arterial sections, road right-of-way and shoulders, and stopping points.

Legitimate Security Control Procedures:

Measures legally permitted at a checkpoint only (e.g., identity verification, preventive searches limited by necessity and proportionality, and documenting the procedure in an official report) without imposing behavioral, appearance-based, or customary requirements.

Obstruction of Movement (Detention/Delay):

Disruption of passage without lawful justification or for a duration exceeding what is necessary, thereby infringing on the freedom of movement and access to services.

Illegal Search:

Examination of persons or possessions outside proper procedural frameworks (absence of lawful grounds, lack of an official record, exceeding the necessary scope, violation of privacy).

Mahram as a Passage Requirement:

A condition imposed by certain checkpoints that prevents women from traveling alone, requiring the presence of a permanently designated male guardian (e.g., father, brother, or son) or their explicit consent/authorization. This requirement is based on religious and customary interpretations, and sometimes on an expanded reading of personal status laws concerning guardianship. Its application on roads constitutes a practical restriction on women's right to freedom of movement and is sometimes used as a means of denial or extortion at checkpoints.

Spatiotemporal Mapping:

Tracking the distribution of violations by location and time to identify patterns, guide prevention and accountability measures, and plan safe routes.

Checkpoints/Entry Points:

Temporary or permanent control locations where inspection and verification authorities are exercised within legal limits (jurisdiction, purpose, and official reports).

Actor:

Any natural person or organized entity whose action or inaction is linked to a violation or protection of the right of passage (perpetrator, commander, facilitator, or supervisor).

De Facto Authorities (Non-State Armed Groups):

Armed organizations that manage areas outside the control of the central government and exercise control through checkpoints without legal authorization from state institutions.

Government Forces:

Military or security units affiliated with the recognized legitimate government, exercising control within their jurisdiction and adhering to institutional procedures and discipline.

Houthi Group:

An armed group that emerged from the Believing Youth Movement (Harakat al-Shabab al-Mu'min) in Saada during the 1990s and was led by Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi, hence becoming known as the "Houthi." After a series of conflicts with the Yemeni government between 2004 and 2010, the movement, in the context of the political changes accompanying the National Dialogue Conference in 2013, reintroduced itself as "Ansar Allah" to emphasize its ideological and political dimension and to expand its identity from a familial framework into a project with a religious-national discourse. Meanwhile, the name "Houthi" continues to be used in official references and media reports.

Currency Type as a Pretext for Control:

Using characteristics of banknotes (old/new) as a pretext to restrict passage or to confiscate money outside the formal rules governing circulation and control.

Financial Extortion:

Coercing a traveler to pay money or provide a benefit in exchange for passage or the return of possessions, sometimes under labels (e.g., "fees") not based on any legal provision.

Accumulated Harm / Routine Violence:

Cumulative harm resulting from repeated "minor" acts (obstruction, humiliating searches, insults) that reshape victims' relationship to the street as a dangerous space and limit their participation.

Gender:

Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes considered appropriate for women, men, girls, and boys. These roles and expectations are socially learned, can change over time, and vary across cultures and societies.

Politicization of the Right to Movement:

Transforming the freedom of movement from a public right into a privilege subject to checkpoint discretion, thereby nullifying the practical effect of legal provisions.

Checkpoint Rule / Control:

The expansion of instantaneous discretionary power by checkpoint personnel in place of the law, resulting in decisions on prohibition, search, or confiscation outside legal limits.

Checkpoint Economy:

Parallel revenue-generating practices at crossing points (illegal fees, confiscations, bribes) that "reprice" passage outside official state channels.

Hotspots:

Locations/times where violations recur with high intensity, necessitating special preventive and oversight measures.

Mixed Approach (Qualitative–Quantitative):

A design that combines testimonies and field observation on one hand, and counts, tables, and frequencies on the other, in order to support findings with both observational and analytical data.

Non-Repetition Guarantees:

Legal and procedural measures (standardizing control procedures, independent civil oversight, documentation and digital receipts, body-worn cameras) aimed at preventing the recurrence of violations.

INTRODUCTION

Public space, in any society, serves as a revealing measure of the strength of citizenship, respect for fundamental rights, and equality of presence among different social groups. Roads and squares are not merely neutral physical locations; they reflect power balances and manifestations of gender-based discrimination when the balance of rights and law is disrupted. Particularly in the Yemeni context, shaped by the impacts of war and institutional fragmentation, public space is increasingly redefined as a domain of control and restriction of movement. Security considerations merge with social structures, producing systematic restrictions that directly affect the essence of the right to mobility and participation.

Against this backdrop, this report, issued by the Abductees' Mothers association, presents a human rights documentation and analytical effort aimed at protecting women's right to freedom of movement and supporting accountability initiatives. The geographical scope covers Taiz Governorate and the main entry and exit routes to and from the city through the Al-Qasr, Al-Hangar, Al-Hawdh, Al-Ma'afir, and Al-Ruba'i checkpoints, key transit points where safe passage and access to work and essential services are determined. The report focuses on violations affecting mobility and restrictions on public roads, primarily including: unjustified stoppages or delays, searches conducted outside legal frameworks, confiscation and extortion, verbal abuse and threats, and occasional detention. These practices make daily passage a repeated test of safety and dignity and indicate a systematic, routine pattern of conduct at certain checkpoints rather than isolated incidents.

Women's accounts and witness testimonies highlight the fragility of public space in Taiz with regard to this right. Despite their historical presence in education, employment, and civic engagement, women's movement continues to be monitored, restricted, and confined within stereotypical roles that encourage withdrawal rather than participation. Checkpoints have become sites of daily control, redefining women's presence in public spaces as a threatened exception while reinforcing men's dominance over the public domain. This dynamic reshapes the conditions of equal citizenship from within the very fabric of everyday life.

The report adopted a mixed qualitative–quantitative approach, including in-depth interviews with victims and witnesses, direct observation of transit routes, and analysis of supporting documents and reports. All activities were conducted with strict adherence to ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, do-no-harm principles, and supporting refences. This approach resulted in a Spatiotemporal map of hotspot locations and a comparative analysis illustrating similarities in the "routines of control" among actors and differences in the nature of violations (such as areas of confiscation and extortion). The findings are firmly grounded in documented evidence without relying on assumptions unsupported by the data.

The findings are situated within a binding legal framework grounded in the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security, alongside the Yemeni constitutional and legal framework. This framework establishes the obligations of all parties, including actual authorities, to ensure safe and unimpeded passage and to uphold legal safeguards for any inspection or control measures. Building from the general to the specific, the introduction sets the stage for the report's sections: the theoretical and legal framework, methodology and its limitations, field findings and hotspot map, comparative analysis of patterns of violations and actors, and finally conclusions and practical recommendations directed at law enforcement, armed actors, international organizations, and local communities. The recommendations aim to ensure the immediate cessation of violations, redress for harms, guarantees against recurrence, and the reaffirmation of public roads as a shared right, not subject to individual discretion.

Methodological **Design**

I. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

- The report is grounded in the principles of international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), and UN Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security (1325 and subsequent resolutions).
- It is framed within the context of armed conflict and its impact on public space, with particular emphasis on women's movement and safety.
- The analysis is linked to the concepts of the right to personal security, freedom of movement, and protection from gender-based violence.
- Local context: Relevant Yemeni constitutional and legal provisions, including the Yemeni Constitution, the Penal Code, and the Personal Status Law.
- Specific context of Taiz Governorate:
  a. War geography: frontlines, armed checkpoints, and contested areas of control.
  b. Social fabric: a significant presence of women in public life and the economy, contrasted with increasing restrictions and violence amid the conflict.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

1. Documentation: Record violations against women in public spaces, including harassment, extortion, arbitrary stoppages, physical abuse, and restrictions on movement.
2. Analysis: Examine patterns of violations, identify responsible actors (formal, informal, or armed), and assess the impact on women and their families.
3. Advocacy: Provide a reliable database and accurate information that civil society and human rights organizations can use to support protection efforts and advocacy initiatives.
4. Recommendations: Develop practical recommendations for the state, armed actors, and the international community.

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Type of Methodology:

- Qualitative–Quantitative Approach: Combining in-depth interviews, individual testimonies, violation mapping, and statistical-observational data.

2. Data Collection Tools:

- In-depth Interviews: With women victims, their families, and activists.
- Narrative Documentation: Recording selected victim testimonies.
- Quantitative Analysis: Measuring the prevalence of violations numerically (number of cases, type of violation, location, and time).
- Field Observation: Direct monitoring of behaviors at security checkpoints and on public roads.
- Document Analysis: Reviewing reports from local and international organizations, official or media data, and UN reports.

3. Sample Size:

- In-depth Interviews: 41 cases, including direct victims or witnesses from different neighborhoods of Taiz.

4. Scope of the Report:

- Main public roads to and from the city of Taiz (entry and exit routes).

5. Ethical Considerations:

- Obtaining informed consent from participants.
- Ensuring confidentiality and privacy (anonymizing names and altering details that could put victims at risk).
- Adhering to the do-no-harm principle.

IV. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

1. Executive Summary: Provides a concise overview of the key findings and recommendations.
2. Introduction: Outlines the background of the phenomenon in Taiz, the rationale for the report, and its significance for civil society.
3. Methodology: Details the tools, sample, selection criteria, and limitations of the report.
4. Theoretical and Legal Framework:
    - International standards on women's rights.
    - Relevant Yemeni legal framework.
    - Types of violations addressed by the report.
5. Field Findings:
    - Patterns of violations.
    - Responsible actors.
    - Temporal and geographic mapping (identification of hotspot locations).
6. Analysis:
    - Social, psychological, and economic dimensions of the violations.
    - Impact on women's participation in public life, the economy, and education.
    - Intersection of violations with the issue of abducted and forcibly disappeared persons (impact of the absence of the provider, husband, or son).
7. Case Presentations: Detailed individual testimonies (15 selected cases).
8. General Conclusions: Highlight the most serious trends and their implications.
9. Conclusions.
10. Recommendations.
11. Annexes.

AXIS ONE:
General Framework

The violations faced by women in public spaces across Taiz Governorate constitute a deeply entrenched form of gender-based violence. These violations are not limited to verbal or physical harassment; rather, they reflect a broader social structure that systematically excludes women and places them in a position of vulnerability within the public sphere.

FIRST: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Legal and Human Rights Framework

The violations faced by women in public spaces across Taiz Governorate constitute a deeply entrenched form of gender-based violence.[1] These violations are not limited to verbal or physical harassment; rather, they reflect a broader social structure that systematically excludes women and places them in a position of vulnerability within the public sphere.

During the years of war, and under the siege imposed on the city by the Houthi group, the main access points and roads were closed, and alternative routes were opened. Women traveling along these routes were subjected to grave violations throughout ten years of conflict, and these violations did not cease even after the reopening of the Al-Qasr–Al-Kamb access route in mid-2024, one of the city's main entry points.

From a legal and human rights perspective, these violations constitute a direct infringement of several fundamental rights guaranteed by the International Bill of Human Rights, including the right to dignity, bodily integrity, and freedom of movement. These rights are explicitly enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)[2], which, in Article 3, obligate State Parties to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights; in Article 9, guarantee the right to liberty and personal security; and in Article 12, protect the right to freedom of movement and the freedom to choose one's residence[3]. These provisions are further reaffirmed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The State's failure to provide protection, or to establish clear legal mechanisms criminalizing harassment and violence in public spaces, reflects a profound deficiency in fulfilling its international obligations and contributes to perpetuating a climate of impunity that renders public spaces unsafe for women.[4]

(1) Rubio-Marín, R. (Ed.). (2006). What happened to the women?: gender and reparations for human rights violations

(2) Joseph, S. (2022). International covenant on civil and political rights (ICCPR). Edward Elgar Publishing.

(3) Joseph, S., & Castan, M. (2013). The international covenant on civil and political rights: cases, materials, and commentary. Oxford University Pres

(4) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). (2017). General recommendation No. 35: Gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19. United Nations.

2. Regional Context and Structural Overview

At the regional level, reports issued by United Nations bodies and Arab human[1] rights organizations indicate that weak institutional protection mechanisms and the absence of strict legal deterrence in public spaces undermine women's right to personal security and freedom of movement while contributing to a climate of impunity. The severity of this situation is further amplified in countries affected by armed conflict, where restrictions multiply due to the militarization of roads and the proliferation of checkpoints and security barriers, which transform measures intended to protect security into practices that restrict fundamental rights. These practices include arbitrary detention or delay without legal justification, arbitrary searches, confiscation, and financial extortion, all of which undermine the principle of equality before the law and threaten the right to freedom of movement as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).[2] Within this framework, this report examines the situation in Taiz Governorate as a microcosm illustrating how barriers, in the context of war and institutional fragmentation, evolve into a complex structure of control that restricts women's mobility and limits their safe participation in public life. This situation calls for urgent legal and institutional responses to ensure safe and equitable passage for all citizens, both women and men.

3. Legal and Cultural Dimensions of Violations of Women's Rights

The severity of the violations experienced by women in public spaces lies not only in the direct acts themselves but, more importantly, in what they reveal about a deeper, discriminatory structure governing the relationship between society, women, and the public space. Public spaces intersect multiple forms of authority, security, social, and cultural, which continuously redefine the boundaries of women's participation, subjecting their presence in these spaces to surveillance and restriction. In this context, practices such as arbitrary detention and search or persistent harassment become instruments for reproducing symbolic control over women and excluding them from public space, thereby denying them their right to equal civic participation.

An analysis of the social and cultural context indicates that these practices are grounded in an imbalanced system of values that reinforces women's subordination and justifies restrictions on their mobility under the pretexts of custom, security, or "moral preservation."[3] As a result, public spaces themselves become extensions of this discriminatory structure rather than exceptions to it. Furthermore, the institutional absence of effective legal protection or the weak enforcement of existing legislation transforms the State's silence into a form of indirect complicity in these violations, leaving women exposed to danger without guarantees of redress or accountability.

(1) United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Means of Enhancing the Role of Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: Case Studies on Palestine, Lebanon, and Iraq, (New York, 2009), p. 12.

(2) United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). (2019). Brief: Guaranteeing the Right to the City: Cities Free from Violence against Women [Summary: Guaranteeing the Right to the City: Safe Cities Free from Violence against Women]. Beirut.:https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/ltknwlwjy_kd_ljl_lmdn_amn_mkfhan_llnf_dd_lmr_0.pdf

(3) University of Wisconsin--Madison. Law School. (1995). Wisconsin Women's Law Journal (Vol. 10). Students of the University of Wisconsin Law School.P4-19

The core issue here does not lie in individual incidents but in a structural system of control that redefines citizenship on unequal gendered grounds. Women in public spaces are not treated as full-rights civic actors; rather, they are subjected to daily surveillance that regulates their presence and dictates their movements, transforming what should be an exercise of rights into a continual test of safety and dignity. Addressing this phenomenon therefore requires dismantling the cultural and institutional structures that allow it to persist through legal, administrative, and societal reforms that restore women's status as full-rights citizens in a public sphere that must be safe and open to all, without discrimination or guardianship.

In this context, the "Map of Violations Against Women Activists in Taiz Governorate", previously prepared by the Abductees' Mothers Association, represents an important reference. Through desk research, individual interviews, and focus group discussions, the report documented a wide range of violations, including harassment, threats, hate speech, bullying, financial extortion, gender-based discrimination, restrictions on freedom of movement, and employment exclusion. The report monitored a total of 93 violations across the five targeted districts, emphasizing that these practices do not merely constitute direct violations of activists' rights, but also contribute to undermining the civil space and restricting women's participation in public, human rights, and media life. This aligns with the findings of the present report, which highlight deeper patterns of violations within the same context.

4. Intersection of Human Rights, Ethical, and Social Dimensions

Field testimonies and data documented in the report indicate that the violations committed against women in public spaces are not merely individual acts or isolated incidents. Rather, they are structural practices reflecting a moral and institutional imbalance in the way women are treated as full-rights citizens. When a woman is stopped, searched, subjected to arbitrary treatment, or her movement is conditioned by customary standards with no legal basis, this not only constitutes a violation of her right to freedom of movement and personal security, but also reveals a deterioration in the public value system that should uphold human dignity without discrimination(1).

In this sense, the human rights dimension intersects with the ethical and social dimensions, as these incidents expose a deeply rooted culture of discrimination that justifies restricting women under the pretexts of custom or protection, and normalizes daily practices of control over their bodies and choices. The persistence of such a culture fosters implicit acceptance of violations and weakens the collective sense of justice(2), transforming public roads from shared civic spaces into unequal arenas of authority and influence.

(1) Lennox, R., & Jurdi-Hage, R. (2017, January). Beyond the empirical and the discursive: The methodological implications of critical realism for street harassment research. In Women's Studies International Forum (Vol. 60, pp. 28-38). Pergamon.

(2) Fileborn, B., & O'Neill, T. (2023). From "ghettoization" to a field of its own: A comprehensive review of street harassment research. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 24(1), 125-138

Accordingly, defending the right to freedom of movement and safe passage is not merely a legal demand but also an ethical and social commitment that redefines society's relationship with women as equal actors in the public sphere, not as subjects of protection or surveillance. Respect for this right serves as a measure of how deeply the values of equality and dignity are embedded in both the legal and social systems.

The effects of these violations go beyond the individual level to impact society as a whole. Studies indicate that fear of public spaces leads women to limit their movement and avoid certain places or times of day, thereby reducing their participation in public, political, and economic life. This phenomenon creates an unspoken "female veto," confining women to the private sphere and depriving them of the full enjoyment of citizenship and community participation. These effects are particularly severe in the context of Taiz, which continues to suffer from war and security challenges. The streets have become multi-risk spaces, marked by the militarization of public space, the presence of armed individuals, and weak legal oversight, all of which exacerbate women's vulnerability and reinforce the notion that their presence in public spaces is an exception fraught withdanger.(1)

Recalling these three dimensions, human rights, ethical, and social, underscores that violations against women in public spaces are not isolated incidents. Rather, they are manifestations of a deep, oppressive structure shaped by the interplay of war, prevailing cultural norms, and state weakness. Addressing this phenomenon therefore requires a comprehensive approach that begins with reforming the legislative framework and developing accountability mechanisms, extends to transforming cultural norms through education that instills respect for human dignity, and culminates in social policies that guarantee women their right to public spaces as shared and safe environments.

(1) Useche, S. A., Colomer, N., Alonso, F., & Faus, M. (2024). Invasion of privacy or structural violence? Harassment against women in public transport environments: A systematic review. PLoS one, 19(2), e0296830.

5. The Gap Between International Human Rights Discourse and Women's Experiences in Taiz

At the level of Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security (1325 of 2000 and subsequent resolutions)[1], an additional dimension becomes evident. For the first time, these resolutions recognize that "Sustainable peace and security would not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women"[2] and go further by obliging parties to conflict to take measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence. Here, a tragic paradox emerges: while international discourse repeatedly emphasizes "protection" and "participation," public spaces become exclusionary for women, with the absence of protection translating into a forced withdrawal from public life. Can we truly speak of women's participation in peacebuilding when they cannot even walk safely in the streets?

Human rights reviews indicate that part of the challenge in addressing violations against women in public spaces lies in the limited international and local recognition of the seriousness of these acts within the broader framework of grave human rights violations. While conflict-related crimes, such as sexual targeting during war, have received extensive attention in human rights literature, daily violations in public spaces, such as restrictions on movement, arbitrary searches, and humiliating practices, are often treated as isolated incidents or social issues, despite directly impacting the rights to human dignity, personal freedom, and freedom of movement [3]

his disparity in legal recognition does not diminish the severity of the real-world impact of these practices; rather, it underscores the need to broaden the concept of rights-based protection to encompass all forms of violations that restrict women in public spaces, a point recognized by the Abductees' Mothers Association. Whether these violations occur in the context of armed conflict or daily life, they should be understood as part of an integrated system of infringements on fundamental rights guaranteed under both international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

(1) United Nations Security Council. (2000). Resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325). Retrieved from
(2) United Nations Security Council. (2000). Resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325). Retrieved from. https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000).
(3) Buss, D. E. (2009). Rethinking 'rape as a weapon of war'. Feminist Legal Studies, 17(2), 145–163. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10691-009-9118-5

SECOND: THE CONTEXT OF ARMED CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON PUBLIC SPACES

It is necessary to situate this report within the context of armed conflict and its implications for public spaces, particularly regarding women's mobility and safety, as follows:

1- Armed Conflict and the Reshaping of Public Spaces

Armed conflict in Taiz Governorate represents a central context for the reshaping of public spaces, transforming roads, especially main access points and checkpoints such as Al-Qasr, Al-Hangar, Al-Hawd, Al-Ma'afir, and Al-Ruba'I, into areas where security control intersects with civilian hardship. Instead of serving as safe corridors for movement, these access points have become high-risk sites where systematic violations of women's right to freedom of movement occur. The primary risks include stoppage or delay, searches outside legal frameworks, confiscation or financial extortion, humiliation and threats, and sometimes temporary detention. Additionally, customary requirements that violate dignity, such as the mandatory presence of a "mahram" (male guardian) or refusal of certain currency, further exacerbate the situation. The seriousness of these practices lies in their embodiment of the militarization of civilian space and the transformation of public roads into a field of dominance and violation, limiting women's ability to access education, work, and essential services. Consequently, protecting these access points and ensuring safe passage through them constitute a critical test of all parties' commitment to the principles of national and international human rights law, particularly regarding freedom of movement, equality before the law, and the right to human dignity.(1)

(1) Mohammed, A. (2020). A Crisis With No End in Sight: How the ongoing crisis in Taiz Governorate continues to put civilians at risk

2. Violations of Women's Rights in Armed Conflict Contexts

The armed conflict in Taiz has contributed to the expansion of patterns of violence against women beyond the direct combat context, affecting their daily lives in public spaces and at access points. The militarization of public spaces and the multiplicity of controlling authorities have transformed what should be a guaranteed civil right to free movement into a domain of violation and restriction. Documented testimonies show that women face systematic practices during their movement, including unjustified detention, arbitrary search, confiscation or extortion, humiliation, and temporary detention. These acts violate their dignity, as well as their rights to freedom of movement and personal security. Thus, the conflict has become a continuous source of reproducing structural discrimination and violence,[1] with women at access points treated not as free citizens but as subjects of surveillance and control. This reality underscores the urgent need for all parties to commit to protecting civilians and ensuring women's safe passage, in full accordance with the principles of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.[2]

3. Scope of Application of International Humanitarian Law to Access Points

International humanitarian law (IHL) recognizes the protection of civilians during armed conflict and obliges all parties to respect their dignity and facilitate their safe passage. However, the restrictions and practices occurring at access points, such as unjustified stoppage, searches conducted outside legal frameworks, confiscation or extortion, and degrading treatment, fall within an area that requires complementarity between IHL and international human rights law (IHRL) to ensure effective protection. While IHL establishes general obligations to refrain from harm and to preserve life and dignity, IHRL (including the rights to freedom of movement, non-discrimination, and procedural safeguards) provides the normative basis for holding such restrictive practices accountable when imposed without legal justification. Accordingly, this report adopts a dual framework: the obligation of conflict parties to facilitate civilian movement and prevent degrading treatment under IHL, and the duty to respect freedom of movement and non-discrimination under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and related standards. Together, these frameworks inform practical recommendations to address protection gaps at checkpoints and to ensure the safe and unhindered passage of women.[3]

(1) Cockburn, C. (2010). Gender relations as causal in militarization and war. International Feminist Journal of Politics, 12(2), 139–157. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616741003665169

(2) Enloe, C. (2014). Bananas, beaches and bases: Making feminist sense of international politics (2nd ed.). University of California Press

(3) International humanitarian law, although it grants special protection to civilians, has not given women the recognition they deserve regarding the dangers of public spaces during wartime. It is true that the Geneva Conventions (1949) and their Additional Protocols provide for the protection of civilians, including women, but this protection has often been framed from the perspective of "motherhood," "honor," or "rape as a weapon of war," while harassment in the streets or restrictions on freedom of movement remain outside the classification as an international crime. This raises a critical question: Aren't everyday harassment and organized harassment at checkpoints or on sidewalks a form of violence that falls under international protection? And why does it continue to be marginalized in legal literature?

4. Militarization of the Social Sphere

The armed conflict in Taiz has not only caused material destruction but has also reshaped the relationship between society and public space. Armed checkpoints scattered along roads have ceased to function merely as security inspection points; they have evolved into social arenas that reproduce power in its most coercive forms. Women, in particular, are subjected to violations under the pretext of security, reinforcing patriarchal dominance that deprives them of their right to safe mobility.(1) The conflict thus acts as a multiplier of patriarchal structures, where political violence intersects with social violence, transforming public roads into spaces for asserting control and displaying power.

5. Psychological and Social Impacts on Women

Documented testimonies indicate that the daily passage of women through high-risk checkpoints and crossing points causes cumulative psychological harm, generating a persistent sense of fear and humiliation. This continuous exposure leads to chronic psychological distress that affects women's behavior, confidence, and relationship with public space. The social impact of these experiences manifests in various avoidance behaviors, including changing travel routes, limiting movement without accompaniment, or refraining altogether from travel for purposes of work, education, or medical care. At the societal level, women face direct losses in educational and income opportunities due to repeated delays and missed appointments, while social isolation deepens as a result of stigma and blame. Women from the families of the abducted and forcibly disappeared are particularly vulnerable to re-traumatization due to the frequency of their movements between institutions in pursuit of services and assistance. These consequences extend to the wider family unit, leading to strained household relationships, increased caregiving burdens, and reduced participation of women in public life. These findings underscore the urgent need for trauma-informed psychosocial and legal referral pathways, the establishment of specialized support services near checkpoints, and the integration of protection standards that safeguard psychological well-being and dignity within control and inspection procedures. Such measures are essential to mitigating the cumulative impact of violations on women's mental health, and on their social and economic inclusion.(2)

6. The Right to Freedom of Movement and the Reconfiguration of Public Space

The armed conflict in Taiz has not been limited to confrontations between military forces; it has also evolved into a struggle over the very right to exist within public space.(3) Checkpoints and crossing points have become mechanisms of control that effectively determine who is allowed to pass, under what conditions, and by what means. In this context, women have been gradually stripped of their

(1) Manchanda, R. (2001). Women, war and peace in South Asia: Beyond victimhood to agency. SAGE Publications.

(2) For more: Nordstrom, C. (1997). A different kind of war story. University of Pennsylvania Press

(3) Pankhurst, D. (2003). The "sex war" and other wars: Towards a feminist approach to peace building. Development in Practice, 13(2–3), 154–177. https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520302945

right to safe movement through informal daily practices that, while not codified in law, are enforced with an authority that surpasses legal frameworks—restricting their mobility and undermining their dignity as citizens entitled to equality before the law. Field testimonies reveal that these practices, ranging from arbitrary detention and unlawful searches to extortion and verbal abuse, are no longer isolated incidents. They have become the practical translation of conflict dynamics that reshape the boundaries of public space according to the logic of power and control. Accordingly, this report seeks to demonstrate how the war has politicized the right to movement, transforming it from a guaranteed freedom into a selective privilege subject to the authority of the checkpoint rather than the rule of law.(1)

7. War as a Process of Reconfiguring Public Space and the Right to Movement

The armed conflict in Taiz has led to a reorganization of public space in ways that have directly infringed upon women's freedom of movement on public roads. Checkpoints and crossing points, established as part of wartime measures, have become focal sites where these transformations are most visible. Field testimonies document a consistent pattern of practices, including unjustified detention, searches conducted outside legal frameworks, informal or customer conditions for passage, confiscation and extortion, and degrading treatment. These actions produce cumulative effects that impose additional burdens on women's mobility, such as the need for male accompaniment, rerouting travel, or restricting movement altogether, thereby limiting access to education, employment, and essential services. Claims of occasional leniency by some actors when women are present do not alter this reality, as such behavior remains situational, informal, and lacks any human rights reliability or sustainable protection. It does not negate the documented and systematic nature of restrictions occurring at checkpoints and along public routes. Therefore, situating this report within the context of armed conflict is not intended to generalize its effects without evidence, but rather to clarify how movement procedures have been politicized and administered as a daily form of power that redefines the boundaries of freedom and dignity.(2) These practices systematically restrict women's participation in public life in measurable, tangible ways. This understanding maintains focus on the essence of the human rights mandate: to document violations related to freedom of movement, identify responsible actors and patterns of abuse, and address legal and institutional protection gaps to ensure safe and unimpeded passage.(3) This must be achieved without exaggeration or minimization, and in full accordance with the principles of non-discrimination and the preservation of human dignity.

(1) For more: Ní Aoláin, F., Haynes, D. F., & Cahn, N. (2011). On the frontlines: Gender, war, and the post-conflict process. Oxford University Press

(2) For more: Carol Cohn, Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures, translated by Ruba Khaddam Al-Jami, Dar Al-Rahba for Publishing and Distribution, 1st edition, (Damascus, 2017), p. 19.

(3) Dr. Amira Ismail Al-Obaidi: the Effects of Wars on Women's Reality, American International of Peer-Reviewed journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences, American International Academy for Higher Education and Training, Issue 19, Part 3, June 2024.

THIRD: THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMING

Any approach to addressing violations against women in public spaces cannot be effective without returning to the fundamental principles underpinning modern human rights thought: personal security, freedom of movement, and protection from gender-based violence. These are not abstract ideals but concrete measures of how deeply the concepts of statehood and citizenship are embedded in practice.

1. Personal Security as a Fundamental Right

Personal security, as articulated in Article (9)[1] of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), is a right no less essential than the right to life. Yet in Yemen, particularly in Taiz Governorate, women's security remains a deferred or conditional matter. A woman who leaves her home for university, work, or the market is acutely aware that she is entering a space where the law neither protects her nor restrains potential aggressors. This constant awareness of danger, even before any act of violence occurs, in itself constitutes a violation of the right to personal security[2]. It transforms everyday life into a silent state of emergency, confining women within a perpetual "psychological precaution" that precedes every step they take in public.[3]

(1) United Nations General Assembly. (1966). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR . Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-right

(2) Abu-Lughod, L. (2010). The active social life of "muslim women's rights": A plea for ethnography, not polemic, with cases from Egypt and Palestine. Journal of Middle East Women's Studies, 6(1), 1–45. https://doi.org/10.2979/mew.2010.6.1.

(3) United Nations General Assembly. (1993). Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (A/RES/48/104). Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-violence-against-women

2. Freedom of Movement and Its Practical Limitations at Checkpoints

Article (12) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) affirms the right of every individual to liberty of movement and freedom to choose their place of residence. However, in Taiz, this right is subject to practical restrictions at the checkpoints and crossings covered in this report. These restrictions are enforced through measures that strip the right of its legal substance, including arbitrary stops or unjustified delays, searches conducted outside procedural frameworks, and informal requirements with no legal basis, such as demanding the presence of a male relative as an escort or manipulating acceptance of certain currencies. Additionally, women are often subjected to confiscation, extortion, and degrading treatment. These restrictions render passage dependent on the discretion of the checkpoint personnel rather than on the law itself, turning access to work, education, and essential services into a costly and burdensome ordeal for women. The report emphasizes that the authority of checkpoint personnel is limited to legitimate security procedures, such as preventive searches conducted within the bounds of the law, and does not extend to imposing behavioral, appearance-based, or moral standards that fall outside their legal jurisdiction. Accordingly, this assessment examines violations occurring at checkpoints as a specific category of public-space violations and holds the responsible entities accountable for any restriction lacking a lawful basis. This approach ensures safe passage for women, in line with both national and international obligations.

3. Protection from Gender-Based Violence

Protection from gender-based violence is a matter recognized by the international community as one of the most severe forms of discrimination. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) defines gender-based violence as: "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women."[1] This recognition has been reinforced through legal protections, most notably by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, which remains one of the most significant instruments concerning the status and protection of women during armed conflicts. The resolution rests on four key pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and relief and recovery.[2]

When applying this definition to the lived reality of women in Taiz Governorate, we find that violations such as harassment, extortion, intimidation, and other similar acts are precisely "acts of violence" in the legal sense. Even when they do not reach the level of direct physical assault. these acts leave deep psychological impacts and cause recurring suffering that drives women to withdraw from public spaces or restrict their own mobility.

(1) United Nations General Assembly. (1993). Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (A/RES/48/104). Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-violence-against-women

(2) Judge Suwar Muhammad Al-Rashdan, *Women's Rights under the Rules of International Humanitarian Law: An Analytical Study*, 1st edition, Al-Yazouri Scientific House for Publishing and Distribution, Jordan, 2024, p. 81.

4. Deficiencies in the Legal Framework and Social Discourse

Despite the clarity of the Yemeni constitutional framework regarding women's rights in general[1] and in particular the provisions of Article (24), which stipulates that the state shall guarantee equal opportunities for all citizens in the fields of political, economic, social and cultural activities; Article (41), which guarantees equality among all citizens in rights and duties without discrimination; and Article (48), which safeguards personal freedom, dignity, and prohibits any violation thereof, the reality reveals a serious gap between law and practice. Yemeni legislation, foremost among it Law No. 12 of 1994 on Crimes and Penalties, although it contains general provisions such as Article (273) on acts contrary to public morals, Article (274) on public acts offending modesty, and Articles (249–252) criminalizing assaults against bodily integrity, has failed to develop a specific legal framework that criminalizes sexual harassment in all its forms or other forms of harassment in public spaces. This legislative vacuum renders the constitutional guarantees of dignity, equality, and freedom of movement mere suspended commitments, lacking effective enforcement mechanisms. It perpetuates a state of impunity that forces women to navigate public life in a fragile and threatening environment.

Consequently, the core critique lies in the fact that national law often treats such acts as "moral" or "disciplinary" issues rather than as crimes violating fundamental human rights. The legal provisions intended to ensure protection from harassment and related offenses are framed in vague, morality-based terms, leading many people to fail to recognize that their actions are, in fact, criminalized by law. Moreover, in prevailing social discourse, street harassment is often trivialized as "reckless youthful behavior," when in reality it constitutes a political violation of women's right to exist freely in public spaces. It is an act that reproduces and reinforces gender hierarchy where the man is seen as the rightful owner of public space, and the woman as a conditional guest within it.

5.Redefining the Problem and Questioning the Concepts

Linking the report to these three core concepts redefines the problem from a human rights perspective. Violence, assault, or restrictions imposed on women in public spaces are not merely breaches of civic behavior; they constitute a comprehensive violation of fundamental rights. Such acts represent an infringement on personal security, as they instill a state of constant fear. This report specifically addresses violations of freedom of movement occurring at checkpoints and crossing points, treating them as a defined segment of public space, rather than as a general discussion of the broader social phenomenon. Accordingly, the problem is redefined in human rights terms as follows: Acts occurring at checkpoints, including arbitrary stops or unjustified delays, searches conducted outside legal frameworks, confiscation or extortion, informal passage requirements lacking legal basis, and degrading treatment, amount to a comprehensive violation of fundamental rights.

(1) For more details, see: Abdul-Bari Taher, "The Status of Women in Yemeni Constitutions and Legislation between Constitutional Text and Practical Implementation," Research Summaries and Policy Study, published on Saturday, November 9, 2024, accessed on August 27, 2025, at the following link:: https://khulasat.org/ar/posts/yemeni-woman-in-law

They undermine women's personal security by creating an unpredictable environment of fear; they restrict freedom of movement by transforming passage from a guaranteed right into a privilege subject to the discretion of checkpoint authorities; and they violate the principles of non-discrimination and human dignity. This framework confines analysis and accountability to the scope of the report, identifying the nature of the restrictions imposed at checkpoints, determining the responsible authorities, and assessing whether these practices have evolved into a systematic pattern that can be monitored, documented, and subjected to accountability without relying on general social assumptions or unverified statistics.(1)

Through this linkage, the report also challenges the concepts themselves: How can we speak of personal security when half of the population lives in constant fear of the road? How can we claim freedom of movement when women must plan every step as if embarking on a military operation? And how can there be protection from gender-based violence when restriction and intimidation have become normalized as part of everyday life?(2)

(1) Some researchers argue that this phenomenon manifests as behavior regardless of a woman's clothing in public, and that 90% of women in Yemen are exposed to harassment, even though 99% of them wear full coverings and all forms of modest dress. Consequently, this behavior constitutes a blatant violation of freedom of movement, as it forces women onto restricted paths or isolates them from public spaces. It is also a violation of the right to protection from gender-based violence, as it reinforces a culture of impunity. See: CEDAW Committee. (1992). General Recommendation No. 19: Violence against women. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm

(2) Freedman, J. (2016). Sexual and gender-based violence against refugee women: A hidden aspect of the refugee "crisis". Reproductive Health Matters, 24(47), 18–26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rhm.2016.05.003

AXIS TWO:
Analysis of Field Data

This report is based on both quantitative and qualitative data, yet it goes beyond mere documentation to pose broader questions about justice, power, and social norms. Within this framework, the field data, which can be considered as scattered testimonies reflecting daily suffering, revealed patterns of authority manifested in the details of passage, searches, and extortion.

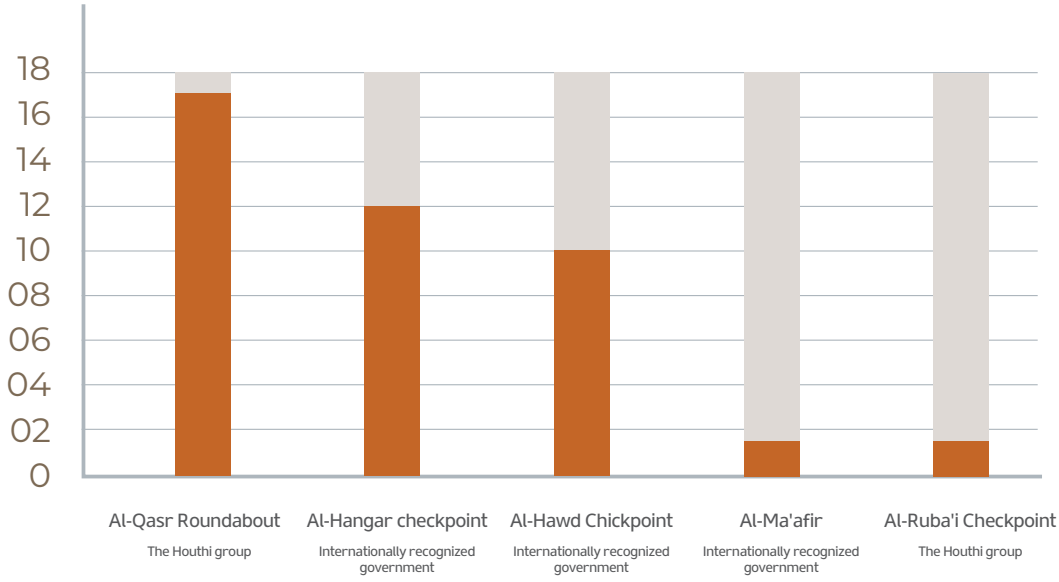
Since critical human rights analysis should not stop at documenting violations but must also examine the structures that produce them, it was necessary to raise questions such as: How do checkpoints transform into instruments of informal governance? How is the right to movement reduced to a negotiable privilege? How are the body, currencies, and timing reshaped as resources of control? The answers to these questions can yield lessons that are generalizable to similar contexts.

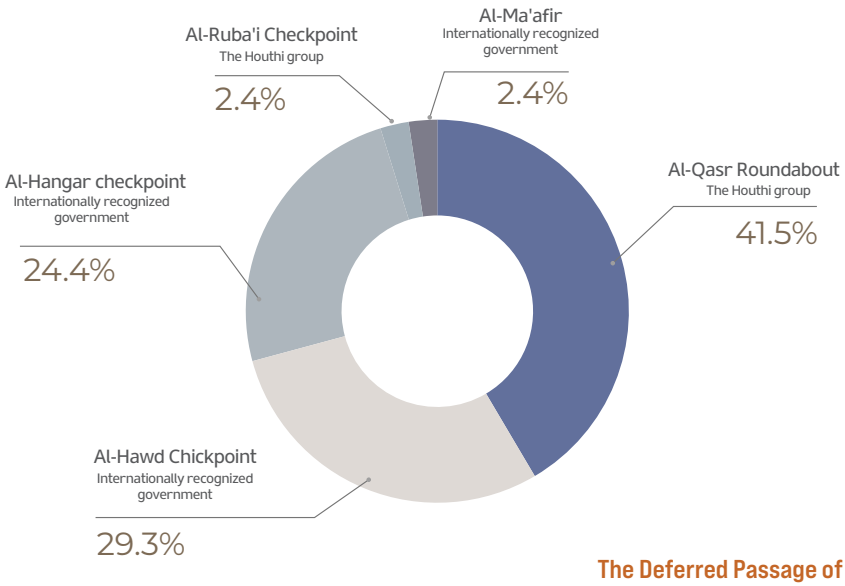
1) STRUCTURAL READING OF PATTERNS AND MEASUREMENT BIASES

The internal structure of the data reveals a dual matrix:

1. Spatial distribution of incidents across specific checkpoints: al-Qasr roundabout (Houthi Group) recorded 17 incidents (approximately 41.5% of the total), Al-Hangar Checkpoint (internationally recognized government) recorded 12 incidents (29.3%), Al-Hawd Checkpoint (Internationally recognized government) recorded 10 incidents (24.4%), while Al-Ma'afir Checkpoint (internationally recognized government) and Al-Ruba'i Checkpoint (Houthi Group) each recorded one incident (approximately 2.4% per checkpoint).

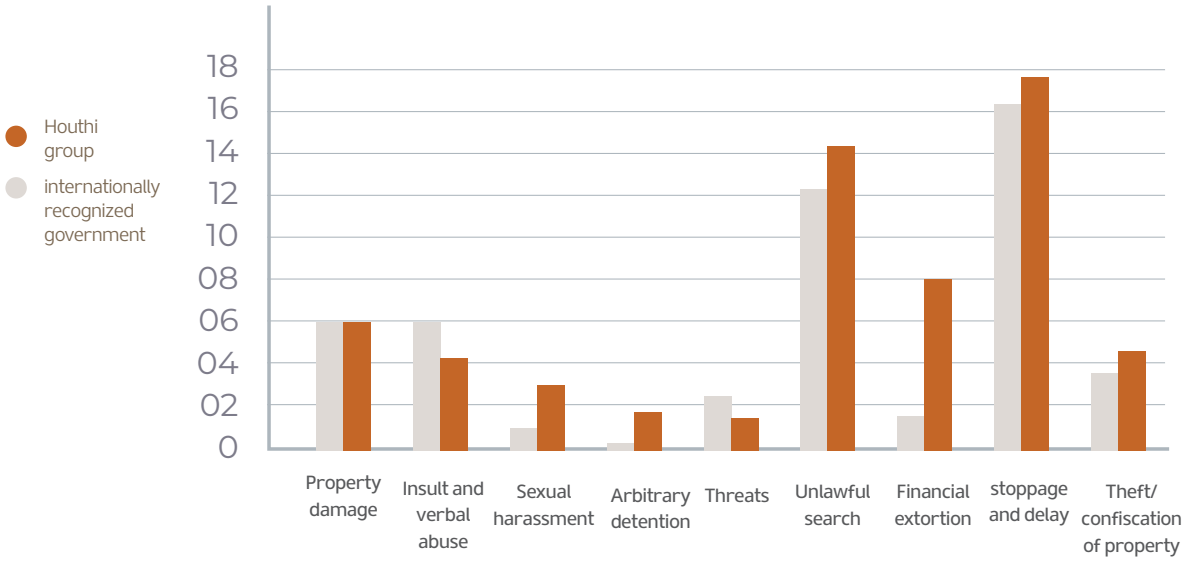
infogrrarphic Shows Spatial distribution of incidents across specific checkpoints





2) A qualitative breakdown of the types of violations attributed to two actors ("the Houthi group" and "the internationally recognized government") across nine categories, most notably: "Restriction of movement (stoppage/delay)" totaling 35 instances; "Illegal search" totaling 27 instances; followed by "Destruction of property" (12), "Insult and verbal abuse" (10), "Theft of property" (9), "Financial extortion" (10), "Threats" (5), "Harassment" (4), and "Arrest/detention" (1).

infographic shows Violations by type and perpetrator.



3) It is important to note that the total number of repeated violations across categories (113) exceeds the total number of documented incidents at specific locations (41). This indicates that a single incident may involve multiple violations (cumulative aggregation). Interviews also revealed qualitative observations linked to certain categories, such as "cases due to the absence of a male guardian" in the context of movement restrictions, and "due to the type of currency and confiscation of funds," including payments of old currency as transit bribes in the context of extortion. These details enrich the analysis with contextual insights beyond purely quantitative data.

This framework helps distinguish between the "density of friction points" (spatial focus) and the "routine of violations" (qualitative focus), which are two distinct dimensions: the former reflects the geography of control and passage while the latter reveals the logic of daily exercise of authority. Critically, the data highlight the phenomenon of "governance through obstruction": the most frequent violations are not necessarily the most harmful in a physical sense, but they are the most consistent and intrusive in everyday life (obstruction, searches, humiliation, deliberate unjustified delays). These violations shape collective memories of fear and impose patterns of caution and forced adaptation on people's movements.

This observation is significant for policymakers, as measuring transitional justice should not be limited to grave violations alone. It must also capture the "mundane harms" that perpetually reproduce subjugation, underlining the need for administrative and legal measures to prevent recurrence.

Infographic of incidents according to their description.

The report documented

113

acts of violation

during the period 2020–2025

Obstruction of movement (unjustified stoppage, delays, etc.)	35
Illegal search	27
Property damage	12
Insult and verbal abuse	10
Financial extortion	10
Confiscation of property (gold, money)	09
Threat	05

2) Extortion and Confiscation at Checkpoints: A Hidden Economy Undermining Women's Rights

The data document ten instances of "financial extortion," alongside explicit cases of "confiscation of funds." Confiscated amounts ranged from 5,000 to 2,000,000 Yemeni riyals, with one case including five grams of gold. The treatment varied depending on the type of currency, with sums ranging between 15,000, 50,000, 55,000, 70,000, and 100,000 Yemeni riyals, including both "old" and "new" Yemeni currency. Additionally, one victim had 100,000 Saudi riyals confiscated.(1)

Women passing through checkpoints are subjected to payments that function either as extortion for alleged offenses, bribes to secure passage, or to end abuses carried out under the pretext of preventive searches. Some payments are made in exchange for release following unlawful detention, while others are labeled as fines or confiscations, including cases involving medications and sums such as 55,000 riyals paid by one victim.

Interviews indicate that all sums were in old currency issued in areas under Houthi control(2), except for one case attributed to the Hangar checkpoint. This is not only a financial observation but also a sovereign one, highlighting the exercise of "authority over currency" at checkpoints, including the confiscation of amounts in new currency issued by the internationally recognized government.

The interviews reveal more than criminal violations; they map a micro-economy of checkpoints operating under a logic of "preferential levies" Here, travelers are not merely moving bodies but "carriers of value" — cash, goods, medications — from which part can be extracted through a combination of threats and flexible legal interpretations (currency type, possessions, searches).(3)

Moral stigmatization compounds the impact, as seen in cases involving male guardians. This pattern resembles "informal taxation" imposed by de facto authorities in a fragmented war economy, where checkpoints serve as revenue collection points and networks of loyalty. Environments with multiple armed actors, fragmented territories, and disrupted supply chains inevitably produce "transit markets," where time, risk, and liquidity are repriced at checkpoints,

(1) The ongoing rivalry between branches of the Central Bank of Yemen since September 2016 has led to a split in monetary policy, thereby increasingly undermining the stability of the local currency. This has recently resulted in a rapid and complete collapse of the Yemeni rial-based currency system, leading to the widespread use of foreign currencies in domestic financial transactions, primarily the Saudi riyal and the US dollar.
The War for Monetary Control Enters a Dangerous New Phase- Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, 21 January 2020For more details, see: Anthony Biswell and Wadhah Al-Awlaqi : Yemeni Economic Bulletin:
https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications-all/analysis-ar/9500

(2) or more on these practices, see: Mohamed Ahmed Al-Humairi, The War Economy in Yemen: The Economic Measures of the Ansar Allah ("Houthi") after September 2014, Arab Democratic Center, January 23, 2018, at the following link: https://democraticac.de/?p=51726&utm_source=chatgpt.com

(3) Many policy and academic sources indicate that the Houthi group has transformed checkpoints and roads into a revenue-collection tool to finance the war under labels such as "war effort," through fees and levies on trucks and travelers, as well as confiscation of goods, as part of the "war economy."
For more details, see: Hamdi Bishr Ali, Sacred Violence: The Economic Influence of Militias and Regional Security, 1st edition, Al-Arabi Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 2019, pp.

and law becomes a negotiable resource.[1] These findings suggest that tackling extortion cannot rely on partial measures alone (such as awareness campaigns or complaint mechanisms). Effective interventions must address the "transit infrastructure" itself: unifying procedures, ensuring transparency in search protocols, independent civilian monitoring, and financial traceability.

Documenting "value" should extend beyond cash to include essential goods (medications, accessories, gold, and other commodities), as their confiscation or destruction multiplies harm, producing both direct financial loss and non-monetary losses, such as health or humanitarian benefits that cannot be compensated with money alone.

Some incidents date back to early 2024 and were not fully captured in the analysis, which focused primarily on later events. For clarity, the following table summarizes the documented incidents referenced above:

NO	Victim	Amount	location	Date	Type of Currency and Other Assets	The Authority Controlling the Checkpoint
1	M.M.A	50000	Al-Qasr roundabout	2.4.2025	Old Yemeni Riyal	The Houthi group
2	F.M.Q	100000	Al-Qasr roundabout	5.4.2024	Saudi Riyal	The Houthi group
3	S.A.H	100000	Al-Qasr roundabout	5.5.2025	Old Yemeni Riyal	The Houthi group
4	B.F.H	50000	Al-Qasr roundabout	10.3.2025	Old Yemeni Riyal	The Houthi group
5	T.A.S	20000	Al-Qasr roundabout	5.2.2025	Old Yemeni Riyal	The Houthi group
6	F.M.M	15000	Al-Qasr roundabout	5.2.2024	Old Yemeni Riyal	The Houthi group
7	Jihan	5000	Al-Qasr roundabout	15.9.2024	Old Yemeni Riyal	The Houthi group
8	A.H.S	70000	Al-Qasr roundabout	1.8.2025	New Yemeni Riyal	The Houthi group
9	A.S.M	2000000	Al-Qasr roundabout	24.5.2025	Old Yemeni Riyal + 5 grams of gold	The Houthi group
10	L.A.M	55000	Al-Qasr roundabout	26.11.2024	Old Yemeni Riyal + medicines	The Houthi group

(1) Some researchers argue: "Economically, the state of neither-war-nor-peace in Yemen plays a dual role, especially on the economic level. While all militias and armed forces on the ground accumulate their economic gains linked to the war economy, the economic conditions of ordinary citizens continue to deteriorate. The failure of conflict parties to reach common understandings on currency unification, ending the split of the central bank, and harmonizing the tax and customs systems leads to the continuation of an already collapsed economy and the worsening of humanitarian suffering, described by the World Bank as the most severe in the world."
See: Walid Al-Abara, Yemen: The Repercussions of "No War and No Peace" on Socioeconomic Conditions, on the website of the Arab NGOs Network, at the following link: https://annd.org/ar/publications/details/

The evidence indicates an effective monopoly over checkpoint revenues by the Houthi group, reflecting a systematic pattern of levies that infringes upon both the right to freedom of movement and the dignity of travelers. The concentration of these collections at specific sites, most notably the Al-Qasr Roundabout, has created a parallel transit economy in which the most vulnerable groups bear the greatest burden. Monitoring records include a documented incident at the Al- Hangar Checkpoint, where a payment of 5,000 Yemeni riyals was extracted. Such practices underscore the urgent need for robust administrative and legal guarantees to curb bribery and extortion in all their forms and manifestations.

3) THE MALE GUARDIAN (MAHRAM) AND CURRENCY: LEGITIMIZING VIOLATIONS AT CHECKPOINTS

Details concerning the "detention of some women for not being accompanied by a male guardian (mahram)" in the context of movement restrictions reveal that the checkpoint is not a space for legitimate security management, as it should be, but rather a stage for reproducing gender norms as a means of control. Consequently, the female body becomes conditional upon the presence of a male guardian in order to gain the "eligibility to cross," thereby formalizing moral domination under the guise of "security procedures." From a critical perspective, this cannot be viewed as an isolated incident but rather as an administrative logic: transforming social values (such as guardianship and the mahram requirement) into a "rule of passage." This process undermines women's autonomy, converting mobility and employment into negotiable privileges rather than guaranteed rights.(1) The issue extends beyond the requirement of a male guardian as a condition for crossing; it also encompasses the scrutiny of what women carry in terms of money or personal belongings. The use of "currency type" as a pretext for approval or confiscation, along with repeated searches of personal items, demonstrates that movement along the road is not a simple act, but a daily experience laden with restrictions and threats.(2) This dual politicization of the body and currency reflects a recurring system in which routine procedures such as inspection, questioning, or denial of passage become tools for reproducing inequality and instilling in women the sense that their presence in public space is conditional and beyond their control. Such dynamics turn what might appear to be minor details of daily life into manifestations of what can be described as "everyday authoritarianism"; a form of recurring and cumulative violence that transforms the road into an unsafe space and forces women to internalize violations as part of the cost of mobility.

(1) For more: the Amnesty International report titled Yemen: Huthis ‹suffocating› women with requirement for male guardians, September 1, 2022.https://www.amnesty.org/ar/latest/news/2022/09/yemen-huthis-suffocating-women-with-requirement-for-male-guardians/

(2) Khalid Abdullah: Yemen: Warring Parties Restrict Women's Movement
Movement Barriers Violate Political, Social, Economic Rights, Human Rights Watch report, March 4, 2024, at the following link:https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2024/03/04/yemen-warring-parties-restrict-womens-movement?utm_source=chatgpt.com

This pattern can be generalized to other contexts: when central authority fragments, local actors become increasingly inclined to merge moral and economic systems of control over people's freedoms, particularly freedom of movement. Control over the "right to mobility" thus provides both symbolic and material means of extortion. The practical consequences are manifold: longer travel times, the creation of alternative routes to avoid checkpoints, families being forced to alter women's travel patterns, and money itself becoming a burden, its type and amount determining whether it facilitates passage or provokes suspicion. In this way, movement itself becomes a daily experience charged with both symbolic and material threats and forms of extortion, reinforcing the notion that women's presence in public spaces remains conditional and constrained. These practices exemplify what the literature terms "everyday authoritarianism" (Griffiths, 2021), in which violence does not require extraordinary events to manifest; it is continually reproduced through the mundane details of life, inspection, waiting, and arbitrary approval or denial.[1] Historically, evidence from other conflict-affected contexts shows that dismantling this logic cannot be achieved through awareness campaigns alone. It requires re-centralizing and standardizing the rules of passage (through unified oversight frameworks and judicial or civilian monitoring) and creating accountability mechanisms that remove checkpoint actors from the "state of exception" that turns each checkpoint into an isolated zone of discretionary authority.

4) SHARING OF VIOLATIONS BETWEEN PARTIES: COMMON PATTERNS AND QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCES

The typological matrix shows that many of the recurrent violations affecting women in public roads are almost evenly distributed between the Houthi group and the internationally recognized authorities. For instance, obstruction of movement (18 vs. 17), unlawful searches (15 vs. 12), and destruction of property (6 vs. 6) reveal a clear symmetry in the routine of control.

(1) The article discusses the gendered dimension of military checkpoints in the West Bank. It explains how women's movement through these checkpoints is not only subject to security standards but also influenced by considerations of male guardianship, religion, and gender. At times, money is confiscated, or privacy is violated as a prerequisite for crossing. This analysis establishes the idea that checkpoints are not innocent security stations but spaces where physical and symbolic restrictions are imposed on women.
Griffiths, M. (2021). Women and checkpoints in Palestine. Security Dialogue, 52(2), 157–174. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010620918529

This interchangeability suggests that the logic of the checkpoint as a tool of governance transcends ideological differences. It simply provides an operational mechanism for managing suspicion and uncertainty, enforcing compliance, and extracting information or resources. However, important distinctions exist: financial extortion appears significantly more frequently under Houthi-controlled areas in this sample (9 vs. 1), as does arrest/detention (1 vs. 0).

By contrast, the internationally recognized authorities tend to show slightly higher rates of insult and verbal abuse and threats. These variations may reflect differences in financial and hierarchical structures (who is more dependent on cash revenues, and who maintains greater or lesser organizational discipline), cultural differences within enforcement bodies (symbolic/verbal violence vs. direct economic coercion), or variations in perceived risks and constraints.

It is noteworthy that the total number of violations by actor, as indicated in the analytical chart presented earlier, shows 63 violations attributed to the Houthi and 50 to the internationally recognized authorities. These figures should not be read vertically against the number of spatial incidents (41), but rather as indicators of pattern density. Accordingly, violations committed by checkpoints under Houthi control represent 55.8% of all documented cases, while those attributed to government-controlled checkpoints account for 44.2%.

From a transitional justice perspective, this disaggregation is significant because it supports institutional accountability, rather than focusing solely on individual responsibility. When patterns of obstruction and unlawful searches appear nearly identical, this points to an established operational norm, not isolated misconduct. Conversely, the concentration of financial extortion and detention under one actor allows for the design of targeted interventions, such as financial oversight mechanisms, civilian monitoring of checkpoints, and regulatory restrictions on confiscation practices.

The broader, generalizable lesson here is that the multiplicity of authorities in conflict settings does not necessarily lead to "diversity" in types of violations, but rather to a functional division of practices: some violations become standardized across actors, while others serve as sovereign markers unique to a particular side. This reality demands differentiated accountability tools, rather than uniform, one-size-fits-all remedies.

5) EROSION OF TRUST: INSTITUTIONAL FAILURE TO PROTECT WOMEN

Interviews indicate that victims have taken limited measures to confront the violations they were subjected to, primarily due to fear and concerns about potential restrictions or retaliation following disclosure, either against themselves or their relatives. Some victims reported receiving threats after revealing information about confiscated funds or attempting to reclaim what had been taken from them. The majority of victims, however, settled for the mere cessation of abuse, finding no accessible legal or judicial pathways for redress. Interviews recorded only one instance in which an activist pursued administrative procedures that resulted in a commitment by the local authorities to address the incident and issue directives to prevent recurrence, without filing formal complaints or ensuring accountability for the perpetrator.

Conversely, data from the Women's Access to Justice in Taiz Governorate report[1] reveals that the challenges women face extend beyond violations in public spaces to the very structure of institutional mechanisms themselves. Women in Taiz encounter overlapping barriers in their engagement with law enforcement and judicial bodies. Field interviews conducted with police, prosecutors, judges, and lawyers portray a concerning picture of weak protection, procedural ambiguity, and entrenched negative biases that, in practice, restrict women's access to justice and redress. This institutional dimension aligns with the findings of the current report, which documents recurring patterns of daily violations at checkpoints, together forming a continuous cycle: violations in the public sphere followed by institutional incapacity within the justice system. As a result, women experience two layers of harm: the first, to their freedom of movement and dignity; the second, to their right to protection and effective reparation.

(1) Report: Challenges to Women's Access to Justice in Taiz Governorate – 2024 – Prepared by: Suleiman Ghaleb, Protection and Rehabilitation Center.

6) INTERSECTION OF ROAD VIOLATIONS WITH THE ISSUE OF THE ABDUCTED AND THE FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

The violations faced by women on public roads in Taiz Governorate cannot be understood in isolation from the broader tragedy of the abducted and the forcibly disappeared.(1) The abduction or disappearance of a husband, son, or father deprives the family of its primary breadwinner and deepens women's vulnerability in the public sphere. From a legal perspective, this situation constitutes a compound violation: the crime of enforced disappearance, recognized as a crime against humanity under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006), intersects with acts of gender-based violence occurring on the roads. Together, they create a coercive cycle of systematic humiliation, as many of the practices documented reflect elements of enforced disappearance itself.

Women who have lost their family breadwinners often find themselves compelled to go out into the streets to secure basic needs for their families, facing armed checkpoints and social attitudes that perceive them as "vulnerable and unprotected." This forced absence of a male guardian translates into increased exposure to arbitrary stops, harassment, financial extortion, and, at times, denial of passage for not being accompanied by a mahram (male guardian). As such, public roads become spaces where the consequences of enforced disappearance are continuously reproduced, women relive the impacts of this grave crime daily through intensified fear and humiliation. Interviews even document cases where women were questioned or penalized because their husbands were believed to have worked, or still work, with one of the conflict parties, including instances of confiscated money.

From the perspective of family relations, many of the women victims are wives, mothers, or daughters of the disappeared, which means that violations occurring on the roads are not separate incidents but are organically linked to the broader suffering of families. The road thus becomes a daily stage that reminds women of the absence of their loved ones and compounds their suffering by exposing them to further violations. This highlights the severity of the phenomenon: the violations committed against these women are not isolated acts but part of a systematic process of dismantling the social and familial fabric.(2)

(1) See for more: Mwatana Organization for Human Rights: They Are Not Here: Incidents of Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearance under the Authority of the Ansar Allah (Houthi) Armed Group in Yemen, published on May 2, 2027, viewed on August 29, on the organization's website at the following link:: https://www.mwatana.org/reports/they-are-not-here?utm_source=chatgpt.com

(2) Human Rights and Information Training Centre Report: "Taiz Governorate Documents 632 Cases of Abduction and Enforced Disappearance Over a Decade of War," 28 June 2025, at the following link:: https://hritc.co/32306

This intersection demonstrates that the issue of the abducted and the forcibly disappeared is not a separate file, but rather a factor that exacerbates violations against women in public spaces. From a human rights standpoint, this necessitates a comprehensive response that recognizes the compound impact of these violations, by ensuring effective protection for women who are primary caregivers, integrating families of the disappeared into psychosocial and legal support programs, and holding all responsible parties accountable for both crimes. Treating these issues separately undermines protection mechanisms while addressing them together exposes the structural nature of violence and strengthens the report's evidentiary value in human rights fora.

7) GENERALIZABLE CONCLUSIONS

First: The data indicate that "routine harm", such as obstruction of movement and unlawful searches, constitutes the most effective mechanism of subjugation, as it accumulates psychological and material costs distributed across the population on a daily basis. Therefore, any report or reform policy should assign these patterns the same weight as grave violations, since their cumulative impact on the social contract is no less severe.

Second: The "checkpoint economy" emerges as a rent-extraction system that transforms mobility into an opportunity for collection. Consequently, technical solutions, such as body cameras for personnel, standardized digital receipts for any confiscation, easily accessible complaint channels, and an independent civilian oversight committee, are not optional improvements but rather anti-rent structures essential to governance reform.

Third: "Mahram and currency", the legitimization of violations through checkpoint procedures, illustrates that dismantling such abuses requires a combination of legal and procedural reforms: legally prohibiting the requirement of a mahram (male guardian) as a condition for women's passage on public roads, and introducing financial and procedural guarantees that ensure confiscation processes are formally recorded and traceable.

Fourth: The comparison between actors suggests the need for targeted interventions: where routines are similar (e.g., obstruction or searches), unified standards, training, and occupational safety measures should be enforced; where practices are specific to one actor (e.g., extortion or arbitrary detention), tailored deterrence and monitoring mechanisms should be developed.

Finally, from a transitional justice perspective, the above translates into three key objectives: (a) Reparations that take daily, routine harm seriously; (b) Institutional accountability that addresses systemic norms rather than isolated incidents; and (c) Guarantees of non-repetition that re-engineer the right to movement as a public function governed by transparency and accountability, rather than as a negotiable privilege determined by the discretion of scattered checkpoints.

AXIS THREE: Summary of Selected Incidents

The following incidents illustrate unlawful practices faced by women on public roads. Below is a brief overview of selected cases, highlighting their legal and humanitarian dimensions:

1) Victim: A.H.S.

On the afternoon of 1 August 2025, A.H.S. was returning from Taiz city accompanied by her brother, carrying some vegetables and basic household supplies. Her only intention was to return home to the Huban area (administratively part of Taiz but under Houthi control). However, her short trip abruptly turned into a harsh experience of humiliation and abuse. Upon reaching Al-Qasr Roundabout, they were stopped by Houthi-affiliated soldiers. They were subjected to a thorough search, during which the soldiers confiscated not only their identification cards but also the vegetables and tools they carried. Additionally, the soldiers extorted 15,000 Yemeni Rials (old currency) under the pretext of preventing the import of "foreign food items," relying on unfounded justifications.

The abuse did not end with the confiscation. The victim and her brother endured verbal insults and a humiliating wait of approximately one hour before being released after signing an unlawful pledge. A.H.S. left the checkpoint weighed down by fear and humiliation, having been subjected to an illegal levy simply for passing through a militarized checkpoint.

Humanitarian Dimensions

The victim and her brother experienced deep humiliation and distress due to verbal abuse and forced detention. The confiscation of property and money resulted in direct financial losses (vegetables valued at 70,000 Yemeni Rials plus 15,000 Yemeni Rials extorted). The incident instilled fear in the victim and her family, reinforcing the perception that even their most basic rights are constantly at risk. Such daily incidents exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and insecurity within the community.

National Legal Dimensions

Yemeni Constitution, Article 41: Guarantees equality and non-discrimination among citizens. The victim experienced illegal discriminatory treatment. Yemeni Constitution, Article 48: Protects personal freedom and prohibits arbitrary detention Yemeni Penal Code, Article 7: Criminalizes theft, looting, and financial extortion Yemeni Constitution, Article 57: Ensures freedom of movement, which was violated by the forced detention of the victim.

International Legal Dimensions

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):
- Article 3: Right to personal security.
- Article 13: Right to freedom of movement.
- Article 17: Protection against arbitrary deprivation of property.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):

- Article 9: Prohibition of arbitrary arrest and detention.
- Article 12: Guarantees freedom of movement.
- International Humanitarian Law (Geneva Conventions): Prohibits looting and extortion in armed conflicts.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): The incident constitutes a dual violation against women, exposing them to gender-based economic and social violence.

2) Victim: H.M.A.

On the morning of 29 April 2025, H.M.A. left home with her husband in their private car, heading toward the Huban area in Taiz city. She intended only to run a routine family errand, but her life was abruptly disrupted upon reaching the Al-Qasr checkpoint, controlled by Houthi forces. Personnel at the checkpoint stopped them and requested their identification cards. When one soldier noticed that her husband held a new electronic ID card, he deemed it a "sufficient reason" for detention. H.M.A. and her husband were taken aside and subjected to an informal interrogation and a humiliating search lasting a full two hours. During this time, the victim and her husband experienced fear and intimidation, including subtle accusations questioning their identity and loyalty. They were allowed to continue only after the husband signed an unlawful pledge, and they were finally released at 12:00 PM.

This incident is not isolated but reflects a broader pattern of violations faced by women and families in conflict-affected areas of Yemen, where checkpoints serve as centers of repression and obstruction of rights, rather than safeguards for security.

Humanitarian Dimensions

- The victim experienced humiliation and distress, particularly during the unlawful personal search.
- Being with her husband did not protect her from detention; it intensified her sense of powerlessness and insecurity.
- The incident caused psychological harm, as the forced waiting induced fear, anxiety, and intimidation.
- Children and family members are also affected, as experiences like this instill the belief that moving within their own city is inherently risky.
- National Legal Dimensions

- Yemeni Constitution, Article 48: Guarantees personal freedom and prohibits arbitrary arrest or detention.
- Yemeni Constitution, Article 57: Confirms freedom of movement and residence for all citizens.
- Yemeni Constitution, Article 41: Ensures equality among citizens and prohibits discrimination.
- The treatment of H.M.A. constitutes a direct violation of these provisions and highlights a lack of the rule of law.

International Legal Dimensions

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):
- Article 9: Right to personal liberty and security; prohibits arbitrary arrest or detention.
- Article 12: Right to freedom of movement.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 13: Everyone has the right to freedom of movement within the borders of a state.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): The victim's experience constitutes a form of gender-based discrimination, as it reinforces restrictions on women and adversely affects their participation and daily life.

3) Victim: W.B.

On the evening of Friday, 7 March 2025, journalist and human rights activist W.B. was traveling from Aden to Taiz to attend an event marking International Women's Day, where she had been officially invited as a representative of UN Women. Around 5:00 PM, upon reaching the Al-Hangar checkpoint, managed by the Military Police at the western entrance of Taiz city near the Central Prison (under the control of the internationally recognized government), she was stopped and detained for approximately 30 minutes on the pretext that she was traveling without a male guardian ("mahram").

During the detention, the activist was subjected to abusive questioning and humiliating remarks by some checkpoint personnel. A soldier asked why she was residing in Aden and insisted on knowing the "head of the neighborhood" where her family lived and his phone number. When she explained that her work as a journalist and activist required frequent travel, she was met with mockery and insistence on preventing her passage. One soldier attempted to justify the procedure by claiming that "religion requires this", while another colleague demanded she be allowed to pass. Despite the intervention of a female police officer advocating for her, the responsible soldier insisted on continuing the detention.

> The activist had to make phone calls to provincial officials and fellow activists to mobilize support and expose the treatment she was receiving. She was allowed to continue her travel only after direct pressure and contact with responsible authorities.

Legal Dimensions of the Violation

What W.B. experienced constitutes:

- Arbitrary and temporary detention without any legal basis (30 minutes). Restriction of freedom of movement, protected under Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Gender-based discrimination through the imposition of the "mahram" requirement, violating the principle of equality and non-discrimination under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Verbal abuse and moral humiliation through arbitrary questioning and mockery, constituting a violation of human dignity.

Humanitarian Dimensions

- Psychological and moral impact: feelings of humiliation and shame in a public space in front of other travelers.
- Professional impact: risk to the activist's reputation and credibility as a human rights defender, particularly since she was traveling to a women's rights event.
- Social impact: reinforces the stigma of restricting women's freedom and linking it to unlawful concepts of the "mahram."

Actions Taken by the Victim

The activist did not remain silent in the face of the violation:

- She filed complaints with the Governor of Taiz and several local and international organizations, including reporting the case to the Consultation and Reconciliation Commission. She publicly shared the details of her experience through media and social media, affirming that she would not waive her rights. She also spoke openly at the event on 8 March 2025, in front of a wide official and women's audience, connecting her personal experience to the broader violations faced by women in Yemen.
- She highlighted the case in international forums to expose the practices women face at checkpoints, even in areas under government control.

These steps prompted official responses, including assurances from the governor that such violations would not be repeated. The victim later observed improved treatment at the checkpoint, as she was no longer questioned about the "mahram."

4) Victim: K.A.S.

On the morning of Saturday, 27 July 2024, K.A. Al-Selwi, a 30-year-old nurse from Al-Selow District, Taiz Governorate, left her home heading to Taiz city accompanied by her sister and a friend. Her purpose was to continue her university studies and take final exams, a demanding journey taking more than three hours over rugged mountain roads. However, her journey did not proceed safely. Upon reaching the Al-Hangar checkpoint, managed by the Military Police in the Al-Dhabab area of Sabir Al-Mawadim District, the soldiers stopped the car, removed the passengers, and detained them while conducting humiliating searches of their personal bags, citing suspicion of drug possession (shabu). The search extended beyond ordinary items, including interference with personal clothing.

One of the companions, a bride, carried a locked bag containing her personal belongings. She was threatened with forceful opening if she did not comply. Under pressure, she was compelled to open the bag, and its entire contents were thoroughly searched and tampered with. Throughout this period, the victim and her companions were detained for approximately 30 minutes in an atmosphere of intimidation and humiliation, before being allowed to continue their journey.

The victim stated, «I felt humiliated seeing strangers search through my personal clothes and threatening my friend to forcibly open her bag. We were carrying only ordinary belongings, yet we were treated as if we were criminals. The situation was harsh, and the time we were detained was full of fear and anxiety, especially as I frequently travel between the village and the city. I did not dare file a complaint, fearing worse violations in the future.»

Humanitarian Dimensions

Although there was no direct physical assault, the humanitarian impact was severe: the victim and others experienced humiliation, violation of privacy, and harm to human dignity.

Legal Dimensions

- Arbitrary detention: The 30-minute detention without legal justification constitutes a deprivation of liberty, violating Article 9 of the ICCPR.
- Illegal search: Tampering with personal belongings and clothing without a judicial warrant violates Article 17 of the ICCPR.
- Treatment undermining dignity: The manner of searching and threatening to forcibly open bags constitutes humiliating treatment, violating Article 7 of the ICCPR and Article 5 of the UDHR.
- Restriction of freedom of movement: Obstructing and delaying the victim's travel constitutes a violation of Article 12 of the ICCPR.

Actions Taken and Results

The victims and their families were unable to file formal complaints due to direct security risks and fear of further violations, especially as the victim continues to travel frequently between her village and Taiz city under the control of the same violating authority (National Army/Military Police).

5)Victim: B. A. Al-Sharabi

In the early hours of Wednesday, 17 July 2024, Ms. B. A. Al-Sharabi, 45 years old, left the city of Taiz heading to her village in Sharab Al-Rawna District, traveling via a rugged mountainous road through Jabal Habashi District. She carried personal belongings and a small amount of goods she had purchased in the city, intending to sell them in her village to secure a modest income to support herself and her family.

At around 4:00 a.m., while traveling in a car through a checkpoint controlled by the Houthi group in Hajda, Maqbanah District, she was intercepted by the checkpoint personnel. They forced all passengers to disembark, unloading her belongings onto the ground. Her bags and luggage were searched in a humiliating manner, and knives and daggers were used to tear her items. Her clothing and goods were damaged, and a significant portion destroyed. Items belonging to three families sitting next to her were also ruined.

After two hours of detention and coercion, she was only allowed to continue her journey after paying an unlawful sum of five thousand Yemeni riyals, under the pretext of "customs" (extortion).

Her ordeal, however, did not end there. After traveling just two kilometers, she arrived at the Al-Rubaie checkpoint, also controlled by the same group. The incident repeated: she was forced to disembark again, and her remaining

belongings were further destroyed through deliberate tampering. The checkpoint personnel informed her that passage depended on the approval of the "supervisor," who was asleep at the time. She remained detained with the other passengers until 8:00 a.m., when the supervisor arrived and demanded an additional ten thousand Yemeni riyals. Upon paying, she was released, but nearly all of her merchandise had been damaged, resulting in substantial losses.

Ms. Al-Sharabi emerged from this experience physically and psychologically exhausted, deprived of her source of income, and humiliated in front of her children and fellow passengers. She summarized her ordeal, «My suffering is not mine alone; it is the suffering of many women who travel these routes filled with Houthi checkpoints. We are forced to risk traveling in the darkness of night to earn a living, but we pay the price with our dignity, our money, and our safety.»

6) Victim: Safa'a

In the early hours of 22 August 2025, while Safa'a (30 years old), a human rights activist, was returning to the city of Taiz after a short visit to her relatives in the Al-Nashmah area to accompany her ailing sister. Her car was stopped at the Al-Hangar checkpoint, operated by the Military Police of the legitimate government. She was accompanied by her cousin Ahmed Abdullah and his wife Fatima.

Although her journey bore no suspicion, the soldiers stopped her abruptly and demanded that she provide documents proving her familial relationship with her companions, such as a marriage certificate or a family document. When she was unable to produce these papers at that moment, she and her companions were detained in a small room at the checkpoint for over an hour, subjected to verbal abuse and harsh treatment characterized by condescending behavior and psychological intimidation.

During the detention, Safa'a experienced extreme fear and humiliation, especially as the soldiers insisted on treating her as a suspect simply for not possessing documents proving her family ties. She was not informed of any legal basis for her detention, was not charged with any specific offense, and was not presented to any judicial authority. She was only released following the intervention of a military commander who had a prior acquaintance with her family, without any formal justification or legal procedure.

Humanitarian Dimensions:

- The incident left a deep psychological impact on Safa'a, who now suffers from ongoing anxiety and fear of security checkpoints, severely limiting her freedom of movement within her city. For her companions, particularly her cousin's wife Fatima, the experience caused intense psychological trauma and a phobia of military checkpoints, reflecting the widespread fear of armed authorities within civil society. Such violations extend beyond the immediate incident, leaving lasting effects on victims and their families, restricting their freedoms and creating a pervasive sense of insecurity in their own homeland.

Legal Dimensions:

- What Safa'a experienced constitutes arbitrary detention, in violation of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states: "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention." The illegal search and humiliation also constitute violations of Article 17 of the same Covenant, which prohibits arbitrary or unlawful interference with a person's privacy, honor, or dignity.
- Under Yemeni law (Criminal Procedure Code), no person may be detained without a judicial order or clear legal justification; what occurred at the checkpoint represents an abuse of authority and a breach of the rule of law.
- The absence of accountability mechanisms or follow-up procedures after the incident perpetuates impunity and undermines citizens' trust in security authorities.

7)Victim: M. M. A.

On 2 April 2025, M. M. A. went out with her husband in their private car, heading to the Al-Hawban area to visit relatives. The trip was expected to be short and safe, but upon reaching a checkpoint at Al-Qasr Roundabout, under the control of the Houthi group, the course of their day changed entirely.

The soldiers at the checkpoint stopped them and demanded that the husband hand over his phone for inspection. Although such a search exceeded the limits of administrative inspection and lacked any judicial authorization or legal justification, the soldiers searched the device thoroughly until they found a private conversation containing the word "Houthi." The word carried no threat or political intent, yet it was used as a pretext for their temporary detention.

> The couple were ordered out of their vehicle and taken to a temporary detention site attached to the checkpoint. During their detention, they suffered anxiety and fear for their safety, particularly because the woman was given no legal explanation for what was happening; only that the mere presence of the word in a phone conversation could be considered a "crime." After several hours of waiting, they were released only after the husband paid a monetary "fine" of 50,000 old Yemeni riyals, clearly reflecting an act of financial extortion under the guise of security procedures.

Humanitarian Dimensions:

- The victim felt deeply humiliated and violated, as the soldiers searched her husband's phone and accessed their private conversations, disregarding their right to privacy.
- She experienced severe psychological distress due to being held in an unknown location and the uncertainty about what might happen next, a fear that is particularly acute for women given their heightened vulnerability in such contexts.
- The incident disrupted their daily lives; they now fear passing through military checkpoints and feel that their privacy and freedom of movement could be violated at any time.
- What was meant to be a simple family visit turned into a traumatic experience that instilled lasting fear and anxiety in both of them.

Legal Dimensions:

- The incident constitutes arbitrary detention, in violation of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which affirms that "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person."
- Searching a mobile phone without judicial authorization is a clear violation of Article 17 of the same Covenant, which prohibits arbitrary or unlawful interference with an individual's privacy, family, or correspondence.
- The extraction of money under the pretext of a "fine" amounts to coercive bribery and financial extortion, a form of corruption that violates Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees equality before the law, as well as Yemeni laws that criminalize taking money without judicial authority.
- Forcing citizens to pay money for their release without any legal basis constitutes a breach of the rule of law and reflects a systematic pattern of impunity.

8)Victim: Nora

On 19 March 2025, while Nora and her husband were returning from Ibb Governorate to the city of Taiz, their journey was interrupted at a Houthi-controlled checkpoint near Al-Qasr Roundabout. What was supposed to be an ordinary trip home turned into an experience filled with fear and humiliation.

The soldiers stopped them and requested their identification cards. Upon searching the husband's belongings, they found a work identification card bearing the logo of the United Arab Emirates, as he works there. This was immediately used as a pretext to detain and interrogate them.

The couple were held for several hours at the checkpoint, during which they were subjected to humiliating searches and verbal abuse. They were insulted with offensive labels, being called "Daesh members" and "followers of the aggression," while soldiers shouted threats and intimidation at them. Nora and her husband endured moments of intense psychological terror, particularly as they were given no explanation for their detention other than the husband's possession of an official work ID that had no connection to any political or security activity.

The interrogation and verbal abuse continued for approximately three and a half hours. When the soldiers found no evidence of wrongdoing, the couple were released without apology or explanation, left with a deep sense of injustice and humiliation.

Humanitarian Dimensions:

- Nora suffered severe psychological shock as a result of the arbitrary detention and public humiliation, feeling transformed from an ordinary citizen returning home into someone treated as a criminal without cause.
- The incident profoundly affected her sense of personal safety. She now fears passing through checkpoints, knowing that any ordinary aspect of her life could be used as a pretext for detention and humiliation.
- For her husband, what was once a source of pride, his work ID representing his labor and livelihood, suddenly became a liability that placed him and his family at risk, fostering a deep sense of injustice and lack of protection.
- The suffering did not end with the detention itself; it left lasting psychological scars. The couple now live with persistent anxiety and fear of travel and movement.

Legal Dimensions:

The treatment of Nora and her husband constitutes arbitrary detention in violation of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees the right to liberty and personal security and prohibits arbitrary arrest or detention. The verbal insults and baseless accusations ("Daesh," "followers of the aggression") also constitute a violation of Article 7 of the same Covenant, which prohibits cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

- Furthermore, the search of their personal belongings without legal grounds or judicial authorization violates Article 17 of the ICCPR, which protects individuals from arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, honor, and dignity.
- The incident also reflects discrimination based on professional or perceived affiliation, prohibited under Article 26 of the ICCPR, which affirms equality before the law and protection against all forms of unjustified discrimination.
- Under Yemeni law (Criminal Procedure Code), any detention must be carried out pursuant to a judicial order and based on a clear accusation. Therefore, this detention was unlawful and constitutes an abuse of authority.

9)Victim: Mayar G. S.

On the morning of 26 January 2025, Mayar G. S., a 25-year-old young woman, was on her way with her colleagues to the city of Taiz to carry out human rights work and attend a meeting related to the organization they work with. The trip appeared ordinary, but upon reaching a checkpoint known as "Al-Hangar" in the Al-Dhubab area, the experience turned into a moment of grave violation.

The checkpoint personnel stopped their vehicle. Instead of acting in accordance with the legal procedures that safeguard the right to freedom of movement, protected under the Yemeni Constitution and international conventions, Mayar and her colleagues were detained without any legal justification other than the claim that they were women traveling without a "male guardian" (mahram) and without a formal "work assignment letter." This unlawful reasoning constituted a direct violation of women's right to freedom of movement, work, and participation in public life, which are rights guaranteed under Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Articles 15 and 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and under the Yemeni Constitution itself within its chapter on rights and freedoms.

Mayar and her colleagues were held for approximately thirty minutes, during which they were subjected to unlawful searches and questioning without any judicial authorization or official order, turning the experience into one filled with fear and intimidation. They were only released after their organization intervened and confirmed their identities and human rights work as though human rights activism had become an accusation rather than a profession.

Mayar's experience does not represent an isolated incident but rather reveals a systemic reality faced by women activists in Yemen, where their presence in the public sphere is treated as a violation of social norms, despite national and international legal guarantees of equality and non-discrimination. Article 41 of the Yemeni Constitution explicitly guarantees equality of citizens in rights and duties, yet such practices amount to gender-based discrimination in violation of constitutional provisions and Yemen's international obligations. Although the detention was brief, its psychological impact was profound, leaving a sense of stigma, insecurity, and an implicit message that the path for women activists is filled with obstacles. These practices may amount to systematic gender-based persecution, opening the door to accountability under international human rights law and even international humanitarian law, given that the checkpoint is operated by an armed group functioning within the context of an armed conflict.

Humanitarian Dimensions:

- The experience of fear and helplessness in the face of an unaccountable armed force.
- A sense among women that their mere presence in public spaces is treated as a crime.
- The resulting social stigma that may hinder their activism and personal lives.

National Legal Dimensions:

- Clear violation of the Yemeni Constitution (Article 41 – Equality; Article 48 – Personal Freedom).
- Infringement of women's right to work and to participate in public life.

International Legal Dimensions:

- Violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 9 and 12).
- Breach of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Articles 2, 15, and 16).
- Intersection with International Humanitarian Law, as the checkpoint is operated by an armed group functioning in a conflict setting.

10)Victim: Yasmin

On the morning of 23 October 2024, Yasmin, a 31-year-old woman, was returning from Aden to Taiz. Her heart was filled with longing to see her mother, who was waiting for her to be by her side during the final days of her pregnancy. All she had in mind was to reach her home in the Al-Rawda neighborhood and prepare to welcome her newborn, but instead, she suddenly found herself facing an unexpected ordeal.

When the vehicle carrying Yasmin, her husband, and their children reached the Al-Hangar checkpoint in Al-Dhubab, they were stopped by soldiers affiliated with the internationally recognized government. The soldiers took their identification cards, recorded their personal details, and ordered them to pull over. Minutes dragged into hours, and each time her husband inquired about the reason for the delay, the answer was the same: "Wait." The family remained detained there for two full hours, anxious and uncertain, without any legitimate reason and without any respect for their dignity or humanitarian circumstances. They were only allowed to proceed after the soldiers confirmed that "there was nothing against them."

Legal Dimensions:

This incident was not merely a delay; it was a blatant violation of the presumption of innocence and of several fundamental rights, including:

- The right to liberty and personal security, guaranteed under Article 48 of the Yemeni Constitution and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
- The right to freedom of movement, enshrined in Article 57 of the Yemeni Constitution and Article 12 of the ICCPR.
- Furthermore, the unjustified detention of a pregnant woman and her family constitutes a violation of the most basic principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which obliges states to protect women from discrimination and inhumane treatment.

Humanitarian Dimensions:

The consequences of this incident extended far beyond the two hours Yasmin spent at the checkpoint. She and her family felt powerless and humiliated, as though their simple act of traveling within their own country had become a crime. The fear of similar future violations imposes deep psychological and social restrictions on women, further isolating and marginalizing them from public life.

Although the incident did not involve physical violence or verbal abuse, it exposes the nature of the constraints faced by women and families in conflict-affected areas where safe movement has become a rare privilege, and checkpoints have turned into places of rights violations instead of protection.

For Yasmin, a pregnant woman deprived of reaching her home and her mother at a critical time, the experience left her and her children with feelings of helplessness, humiliation, and lingering fear and insecurity.

11)Victim: S. A. H.

On the morning of Tuesday, 11 June 2024, S. A. H., a university student, went out with her friends on their way from Al-Hawban to Taiz City to go shopping. They boarded a small public transport vehicle (a minibus), unaware that their short trip would turn into a humiliating experience that violated their human dignity. When the minibus reached the Houthi-controlled checkpoint at Al-Qasr Roundabout – Sala – Taiz, the armed men stopped the vehicle and ordered all the women to get off. Instead of protecting them and facilitating their safe passage, the checkpoint personnel subjected the women to verbal abuse, insults, and degrading language, solely because they were traveling "without a male guardian (mahram)". This represents a blatant violation of women's right to freedom of movement and personal autonomy.

The harassment did not end there. S. A. H. and her friends were detained for half an hour, subjected to humiliating searches, and had some of their belongings confiscated. In addition, an illegal monetary fine of 20,000 Yemeni Riyals (old currency) was imposed on the minibus driver. S. A. H. left the checkpoint carrying a deep sense of humiliation and stigmatization, having been forced into silence and compliance under the threat of armed force.

Humanitarian Dimensions

- The victim and her friends experienced public humiliation and degradation, leaving a deep psychological impact.
- The fear of repetition of such incidents has instilled in them a permanent sense of insecurity.
- The fine imposed on the driver constitutes a form of economic extortion, exacerbating civilian hardship.
- Targeting women solely for traveling without a "male guardian" reinforces gender-based discrimination, restricting women's freedom of movement, public participation, work, and education.

National Legal Dimensions

- The incident constitutes a violation of Articles (41, 48, and 57) of the Yemeni Constitution.
- The acts committed, extortion and ill-treatment, constitute criminal offenses under the Yemeni Penal Code.

International Legal Dimensions

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): Violations of Articles (9 and 12), guaranteeing liberty, security of person, and freedom of movement.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): Violations of Articles (3 and 13), which affirm the right to life, liberty, and freedom of movement.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Reaffirms that any restriction on a woman's freedom of movement on the basis of gender, including requiring a "male guardian," constitutes a form of discrimination.
- International Humanitarian Law (Geneva Conventions): Prohibits insults, extortion, and arbitrary detention of civilians in conflict zones.

Actions Taken

No formal complaint was filed by the victim or her family, either out of fear of retaliation or due to a lack of public trust in the effectiveness of complaints under the control of the de facto authorities. As a result, this violation went unaccounted for, reflecting a broader climate of impunity that encourages the continued perpetration of such abuses against women and activists in Taiz.

12)Victim: F. M. Q.

On the morning of 5 April 2024, F. M. Q., a widow, boarded a bus bound for Al-Hawban to complete the procedures for purchasing a piece of land and begin building a home for her orphaned children. She was carrying 100,000 Saudi Riyals, a sum she had saved from her late husband's salary, who had died at the border, and from the "martyrs' grants" provided to their families. Before reaching her destination, the bus was stopped at a Houthi-controlled checkpoint, where all passengers were subjected to inspection and were detained for approximately half an hour. During the search, the victim's entire amount of money was confiscated without any receipt or legal procedure. When she pleaded and appealed for compassion, she was met with explicit threats, "If you don't keep quiet, you will be imprisoned, and we will make you disappear." The driver was then ordered to continue driving, leaving the victim stripped of her money, emotionally devastated, and deprived of the purpose of her journey.

Legal Analysis

This analysis is presented in accordance with internationally recognized standards applicable to the protection of civilians, without prejudice to domestic law.

1. Right to Liberty and Personal Security: The acts constitute violations of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees the right to liberty and security of person. Furthermore, they infringe upon the right to freedom of movement and protection from arbitrary searches, interference with privacy, and unlawful seizure of property. The arbitrary confiscation of the victim's money, threats of imprisonment and enforced disappearance, and the extortionate nature of the act collectively breach multiple protections under international human rights law.

These acts also violate Articles 1 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which affirm the inherent dignity of all human beings and prohibit cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The threat of enforced disappearance constitutes a particularly grave violation under international human rights law, as it instills fear and prevents victims from seeking justice.

2. These acts are criminalized under the Yemeni Constitution and national legislation, which prohibit arbitrary detention, theft, and extortion by state or non-state actors. As previously noted in similar cases, such conduct exceeds any lawful preventive search authority and represents a serious abuse of power.

Legal Conclusion

The combined acts, arbitrary search and detention, theft of property, and threats of imprisonment and enforced disappearance, constitute multiple grave violations of the victim's rights. If shown to be part of a broader or recurrent pattern, they may amount to a systematic practice of extortion and abuse at checkpoints targeting civilians.

Humanitarian Impact

- Economic: The loss of 100,000 Saudi Riyals, which represented the family's only housing capital, directly undermines the victim's and her orphaned children's housing and livelihood security.
- Psychological: The victim suffers from shock, chronic fear, and feelings of powerlessness and humiliation resulting from the threats and coercion.
- Social: The incident disrupted the family's efforts toward stability and self-reliance, exacerbating poverty, vulnerability, and the risks faced by orphaned children.

13) Victim: Sh. A. S.

On the morning of 6 August 2025, Sh. A. S. was returning with her mother from a medical trip in Sana'a. Upon reaching the Al-Qasr Roundabout checkpoint, which marks the dividing line between the territories controlled by the internationally recognized government and the Al-Hawban area, the bus carrying them was stopped. The soldiers asked about their "mahram". When they learned that the two women were traveling alone, they ordered them off the bus and began to search their personal belongings in front of the other passengers in a humiliating manner, using offensive and degrading language that violated their dignity and privacy. They were detained for approximately four hours before being allowed to continue their journey. During this time, their identification cards were photographed without any explanation or legal justification.

Legal Dimensions

Under National Law: This act constitutes an arbitrary restriction on freedom of movement, in violation of the principle of procedural legality stipulated in the Yemeni Code of Criminal Procedure, which prohibits search or detention without lawful authorization or clear legal grounds. The degrading search conducted by male soldiers on female travelers further violates the principle of respect for human dignity and contravenes established procedural norms requiring the presence of a female officer when searching women. Such actions amount to abuse of authority and unlawful search. The use of offensive and discriminatory language based on gender represents a violation of Article 41 of the Yemeni Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law without discrimination.

Under International Law: The incident constitutes a breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), specifically, Article 12, which guarantees freedom of movement; Article 9, which prohibits arbitrary detention; and Article 26, which ensures equality and non-discrimination. It also contravenes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Articles 1 and 5, which affirm that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and prohibit cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The conduct of the security personnel further violates the principle of respect for human dignity as enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which obliges States Parties to take appropriate measures to protect women from discrimination and violence.

Humanitarian and Social Dimensions

Violation of Personal Dignity:The search was not merely a security measure; it was a symbolic assault on the dignity of women. Scattering personal female belongings in public left a psychological impact far more profound than any physical detention.

Public Humiliation and Stigmatization: Shatha and her mother experienced feelings of helplessness and humiliation under the gaze of other passengers, an act of psychological and social violence that fosters fear and shame.

Gender Discrimination: The demand for a "mahram" reflects a patriarchal mentality that views women as lacking the legal and social capacity to move or decide independently, thereby subjecting them to stereotyping and moral scrutiny.

Erosion of Trust in Justice: The victim's refusal to file a complaint, citing "lack of trust in the competent authorities," reveals an institutional vacuum that leaves victims without effective protection and enables the recurrence of such violations.

Lasting Human Impact: This experience has deeply affected the victim's perception of travel, instilling a persistent sense of fear and transforming the road, which should lead home, into a space of ongoing threat.

14) Victim: Alhan

On an ordinary morning in 2024, Alhan, a young activist from Taiz, was on her way to the city accompanied by her sister and aunt. As their bus approached the Al-Hangar checkpoint at the entrance to Taiz, soldiers were inspecting those entering and leaving the area. One of the soldiers requested to search the passengers' belongings. Alhan pointed to a small carton box containing women's items, mobile phones, and medicinal liquids, and politely asked that it be opened carefully. However, in an apparent display of authority, the soldier raised his dagger and attempted to stab the box, shouting angrily, "We are the state, and you must respect us!" Although the dagger was not directed at her personally, the act was enough to instill fear and humiliation in the victim. Another soldier intervened, asked his colleague to stop, and proceeded with a calm and respectful inspection before concluding curtly, "You may go."

The bus moved on, but the road to Taiz felt longer than usual, for the wound was not in the carton but in the dignity of a woman who was humiliated simply for demanding respect.

Legal Dimensions

The incident at Al-Hangar checkpoint cannot be considered a routine security procedure. It constitutes an unlawful search and use of force without justification, in violation of the Yemeni Code of Criminal Procedure, which requires legality, proportionality, and respect for human dignity during searches. The public humiliation and the act of brandishing a weapon amount to an explicit threat to physical integrity, contravening the principle of protection from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment as guaranteed by the Yemeni Constitution and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Articles 7 and 9.

Humanitarian Dimensions

Behind this seemingly minor incident lies a profound human story: that a woman can be treated as a suspect simply for objecting, and that the presumption of innocence can be dismissed in a public space where security becomes a tool of intimidation. The fear triggered by the flash of the dagger and the shouted phrase "We are the state" extended far beyond that moment of inspection, leaving a deep psychological scar, a sense that the road is no longer safe, and that a word of protest may be met with a weapon. In her silence and refusal to file a complaint, fearing futility or reprisal, Alhan embodies the struggle of thousands of women who live between the duty to endure and the fear of humiliation. Her story stands as a mirror of a broader reality of what happens when the state is reduced to an angry voice wielding a dagger instead of the law.

15) Victim: Siham

In early June 2021, Siham was racing against time to reach the Republican Hospital in Taiz, after receiving news that her mother was in the intensive care unit following a heart attack. She had traveled from Sana'a with her son, focused solely on reaching her mother before it was too late. However, at the Al-Hangar checkpoint, the city's gateway and the dividing passage between rural and urban areas, the journey was halted. The soldiers requested their identification cards, and when one soldier looked at her son's ID and noticed his surname, "....," his expression changed, and he shouted, "This surname is from Sana'a... you are not from here!" Siham attempted to explain that her husband and children were from Taiz, and that she had come only to visit her sick mother, but the response was harsh, "Even if you have a thousand patients, no one leaves without admitting the truth!" She and her son were removed from the vehicle and detained for four hours amid insults and regional accusations. The stress caused her blood pressure and blood sugar to spike, and she felt dizzy to the point of almost collapsing. She had no choice but to endure the situation until a relative who works in the army intervened and informed the checkpoint to release them. Siham reached the hospital in the evening but left the city the following day burdened with fear. Since that incident, as she reports, she has never returned to Taiz without being accompanied by a family member from Taiz, and she does not bring her children or husband with her.

Legal Dimensions

What Siham experienced constitutes arbitrary detention, verbal humiliation, and regional discrimination, clearly violating Yemeni and international law:

Under National Law: Article 48 of the Yemeni Constitution prohibits restricting anyone's freedom except according to the law and through judicial procedures. The Yemeni Code of Criminal Procedure requires a lawful reason and legal necessity for detention and criminalizes humiliation or mistreatment during official duties. The soldiers' actions also constitute regional discrimination, violating the principle of equality enshrined in Article 41 of the Yemeni Constitution.

Under International Law: Article 9 of the ICCPR prohibits arbitrary detention. Article 12 of the ICCPR guarantees freedom of movement without discrimination. Article 7 of the ICCPR and Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) prohibit cruel or degrading treatment. The soldiers' conduct also violates the principle of non-discrimination under Article 2 of the ICCPR and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Humanitarian Dimensions

Siham's incident was far more than a routine stop; it left a deep psychological and social impact:

Public Humiliation and Violation of Dignity: Stopping a woman who was medically vulnerable, under extreme stress, and subjecting her to insults based on regional origin, transformed the encounter into an experience of profound humiliation.

Social Division and Discrimination: The issue of her surname reproduced regional divisions that threaten Yemen's social fabric, where merely a name can create suspicion.

Enduring Fear and Loss of Trust: Siham no longer feels able to visit her city or allow her children to do so, due to psychological fear of recurrence and a loss of trust in justice institutions.

Extended Humanitarian Impact: The violation extends beyond the individual, affecting her family and social connections. As she reports, the incident has prevented her and her family from maintaining familial ties and visiting relatives, demonstrating how the impact of a single violation can ripple across families and communities.

AXIS FIVE: Conclusions

Analyzing violations at checkpoints and along roads cannot be limited to treating them as isolated incidents. They must be understood as indicators of a parallel governance system emerging within the conflict where security checkpoints have transformed from traffic-control tools into institutions producing sovereignty, redistributing resources, and asserting control over public spaces.

Treating these figures purely statistically or outside their political, social, and legal context would lead to superficial conclusions that fail to capture their structural impact. The most recurrent violations, ranging from restrictions on movement to arbitrary inspections, reflect an entrenched pattern rather than sporadic exceptions. This pattern carries a dimension of authority that cannot be addressed simply by documenting events or counting occurrences. The report "Map of Violations against Women Activists in Taiz Governorate" confirms that violations against women are not isolated incidents but part of a systematic structure targeting civilian spaces and undermining women's participation in public life. Documenting forms of violation, detention, threats, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, and extortion, reveals a recurring pattern that reproduces fear and exclusion as tools of control. The alignment of these findings with this report's conclusions strengthens the evidence of an entrenched system of violations that extends beyond individual incidents. Addressing it requires deep interventions targeting the structural framework itself, rather than merely condemning its manifestations.

> **Through a critical legal and human rights lens, several key conclusions emerge, situating the issue in its broader context and providing a foundation for renewed political and normative reflection:**

RECURRENT VIOLENCE:

Impact of systematic violations on collective memory and public space
Violations extend beyond direct infringements of individual rights under international law. They establish recurring control mechanisms that entrench fear and reshape individuals' relationships with both the state and public space. The issue extends beyond depriving citizens of their right to freedom of movement or confiscating their property; it also generates a persistent sense of helplessness and insecurity, producing a form of "routine violence" that structures daily life and dictates its rules. The pattern's significance lies not only in its immediate impact but in its capacity to create a collective memory burdened with humiliation, turning individual incidents into a socially and legally compromised system where conventional justice cannot restore dignity or redress victims.

INSTITUTIONALIZED EXTORTION:

Checkpoints and the parallel war economy (undermining women's rights)
From another perspective, incidents of financial extortion and confiscation reveal a parallel economy emerging at the heart of the conflict, where passage through checkpoints is no longer a neutral act but has become an opportunity to redefine value and produce a new form of coercive rent, turning cash, goods, and personal belongings into instruments of extortion. This highlights that the logic of war does not merely monopolize violence, but also seeks to monopolize channels of movement and economic liquidity. It becomes evident that the checkpoint is no longer primarily a tool for inspecting individuals, but has evolved into an institution of extortion, humiliation, and domination, imposing arbitrary conditions and redistributing resources according to loyalty and control. While these practices may appear superficially simple or of limited significance, they reveal a political economy of war that transforms suffering into a renewable resource, rendering human rights accountability ineffective if the economic dimension is not recognized as an integral part of the system of violations.

Symbolic and Material Control:

Legitimizing violations through the mahram and cash On a third level, the profound implications of practices related to imposing "mahram" conditions or confiscating cash according to its type, or using it as tolls, or interfering with individuals' belongings, cannot be ignored. These practices reflect a fragmented sovereignty based on nontraditional or informal tools.

Women are reduced to bodies under surveillance, permitted to pass only with the mediation of a male guardian, and currency is reduced to notes conditional upon variable authoritarian approval. In both cases, we are witnessing mechanisms for reproducing power in the minutiae of daily life, embedding contested social values into movement rules that take the form of customary law. These practices, with their human rights implications, can only be understood as a re-engineering of social and economic relations in the context of war, reinforcing discrimination against women and undermining property rights and the right to equality before the law.

The danger of these practices lies in their transformation of cultural and social frameworks into direct instruments for controlling movement and asserting dominance, making sovereignty a daily exercise tested in every journey or financial transaction.

Dual Authority and the Integration of Violations

At the level of comparing actors, the data reveal that repeated violations are not monopolized by any single party, but form a common pattern practiced almost identically by competing forces, with variations in certain practices such as extortion or arbitrary detention. This suggests that the checkpoint, as a tool of control, has transcended ideological affiliations and become an operational structure. This "competitive integration" among armed actors indicates a convergence in the logic of authority, which regards control of movement as a resource for dominance.

Accordingly, accountability for these violations cannot remain limited to individual condemnation or partial documentation, but must target institutional responsibility that exposes structural similarities and symbolic variations, recognizing that collective violations reflect institutional regularity rather than isolated deviations.

Disrupted Justice: Checkpoints as Extra-Legal Legislative and Executive Authority

Testimonies and field interviews indicate that security checkpoints have exceeded their function as transit or preventive inspection points, becoming, in the daily perception of victims, autonomous authorities deciding who passes and who is detained, effectively confiscating the role of official institutions (the state). Hence, this report uses the term "checkpoint rule" as a documented, realistic description, accurately capturing the transfer of decision-making power from state institutions to armed actors who manage public space with instantaneous authority unconstrained by legal norms. In this context, legal guarantees dissolve, replaced by the logic of force and domination, whereby the decision of a soldier or armed individual becomes final and unreviewable. This reality signifies not only the collapse of the principle of legitimacy and erosion of trust in the judiciary but also establishes a state of legal uncertainty that reshapes citizens' relationship with the state. Here,

the question of transitional justice arises urgently: how can the harm be addressed when it extends beyond direct physical violations to affect the very foundation of the legal and social relationship as a whole?

Transitional Justice: Addressing Routine Harm

Answering the previous question requires recognizing that, in this context, transitional justice must engage with what can be termed "routine harm": the cumulative damage caused by the daily repetition of seemingly minor violations, which affect individuals' sense of belonging and relationship with the state while having deep and enduring consequences. Justice that does not account for this type of violation will remain incapable of healing collective memory or restoring individual dignity. Therefore, reparation programs must incorporate victims' testimonies regarding daily humiliation and develop forms of non-material compensation, such as guarantees of non-repetition, procedural reform mechanisms, and symbolic recognition of affected individuals. On this basis, the role of transitional justice extends beyond merely prosecuting perpetrators or redressing individual harm; it also entails restructuring the relationship between authority and citizens on the principles of equality and dignity.

Generalizable Lessons

Finally, these patterns are not unique to the Yemeni context but represent a model that could recur in any conflict environment characterized by multiple actors and fragmented sovereignty. Wherever armed forces multiply, checkpoints emerge as alternative governance institutions. Wherever legal institutions fail, passage becomes a resource for extortion and control. Thus, these phenomena convey a universal lesson: protecting rights during conflict cannot be reduced to a ceasefire or a political agreement. It requires dismantling the daily structures of violence that reproduce war in the details of everyday life. This constitutes the greatest challenge that any transitional justice initiative must confront boldly if it seeks to build a future grounded in dignity, freedom, and the rule of law. In this context, the Yemeni experience demonstrates that arbitrary inspections, the imposition of illegal "fees," and the detention of travelers have become routine practices on the roads, increasing the cost of movement for women and making passage itself a source of repeated harm.[1] Breaking this pattern requires written rules governing stops and searches, accessible complaint mechanisms, and actual accountability for personnel and leadership.[2] This conclusion is supported by detailed evidence of illegal fees, extortion, and detention at multiple checkpoints in Yemen, particularly in Taiz (as the geographic focus of this report) and by documentation describing the "road war" as a systematic environment of extortion and control.

(1) Salah Ali Salah and Casey Coombs: The War on Yemen's Roads: Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies https://sanaacenter.org/publications/main-publications/19304?utm_

(2) The Century Foundation. (2023). A three-part formula to persuade armed groups in Yemen to respect human rights. The Century Foundation. https://tcf.org/content/report/a-three-part-formula-to-persuade-armed-groups-in-yemen-to-respect-human-rights/

AXIS SIX: Recommendations

The facts presented in this report go beyond describing isolated violations occurring on public roads; they highlight a structural imbalance that renders public spaces hostile to women and undermines the legitimacy of the law itself. Therefore, any serious approach to addressing these issues must move beyond mere documentation and condemnation toward rebuilding protection mechanisms and ensuring access to justice. The greatest challenge lies not only in halting practices of obstruction, harassment, and extortion, but also in reforming the institutional structures that allow such practices to persist, and in empowering victims to move from a position of vulnerability to one of agency. Accordingly, these recommendations serve as a bridge between diagnosis and action. They integrate measures for reforming law enforcement institutions, activating civil society, mobilizing media and community awareness, and building channels of advocacy both locally and internationally, ensuring that justice transforms from suspended texts into a tangible practice in the lives of women and society at large.

FIRST: RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT BODIES (SECURITY AND JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES)

It is evident that building legal legitimacy in any transitional context cannot be achieved without reforming law enforcement institutions as they constitute the primary interface through which citizens experience the meaning of justice. From this standpoint, the recommendations directed to these institutions must go beyond general slogans and translate into concrete mechanisms that restore citizens' trust in the rule of law:

1. Regulating Procedures for Passage and Inspection

Issue clear and binding regulations governing the operation of checkpoints, explicitly defining the precise criteria for stopping, searching, and detaining individuals. These regulations should be subject to judicial and constitutional oversight. Any open-ended authorization granted to security personnel without a legal basis serves only to widen the gap between society and the state.

2. Human Rights Training for Security Personnel

Require all law enforcement officers to undergo intensive training programs on international human rights law and international humanitarian law, with a focus on the principles of human dignity, non-discrimination, and the right to freedom of movement. It is not sufficient for a security officer to learn enforcement procedures; they must also understand the philosophy of rights underlying them and overcome the ingrained fear of the supremacy of legal norms.

3. Establishing Internal Oversight Units

Within security institutions, including the military police, independent units should be established to investigate complaints submitted by citizens regarding violations. These units must operate transparently and publish periodic reports so that citizens feel their voices are heard and that there is an institutional pathway for holding perpetrators accountable.

4. Enforcing the Principle of Command Responsibility

Hold security and military commanders accountable for violations committed under their authority, in accordance with the principle of "responsibility for orders" established in international law and reaffirmed by national legislation recognizing a commander's responsibility for subordinates. This principle prevents the use of the pretext that violations are merely individual acts.

5. Restoring the Judiciary as the Guarantor of Rights

Strengthen the authority of the public prosecution and courts to monitor law enforcement decisions, ensuring that any act of arrest or inspection does not become an arbitrary exercise of power. The existence of an independent judiciary supervising the work of security agencies is not a luxury, it is a necessity for the protection of fundamental rights.

SECONDLY: RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is uniquely positioned to transform individual testimonies into a collective narrative and to build pathways for social accountability that extend beyond the boundaries of formal institutions. Its strength lies in its ability to engage with victims not as mere numbers, but as active participants in the production of truth.

1. Community-Based Documentation of Violations

Encourage local initiatives to collect and document individual testimonies concerning daily violations while training local actors to use secure tools for data storage and to ensure the confidentiality of witnesses. This documentation will later serve as a foundation for any transitional justice process.

2. Building Solidarity Platforms

Establish community support networks that connect victims, ensuring that no individual remains isolated in their experience, but rather feels part of a shared collective memory. Solidarity extends beyond psychological support to include advocacy campaigns and policy engagement.

3. Promoting Legal Awareness

Launch awareness campaigns to inform citizens of their fundamental rights and to clarify the limits that no authority is permitted to exceed. Awareness of rights is the first condition for resisting violations as silence in the face of abuse often stems from ignorance or fear.

4. Social Accountability

Exert pressure on authorities through parallel reports and public forums that regularly expose the scope and impact of violations. Civil society must not remain a neutral observer, but rather an active participant in the production of truth and in shaping a broader human rights discourse.

THIRD: RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

International and local organizations occupy a unique position by virtue of their expertise, resource networks, and cross-border connections. From this standpoint, they can play a critical role in dismantling the system of violations through specialized and professional mechanisms:

1. Transforming Documentation into an Accountability Tool

It is not sufficient to record incidents in technical reports. Such documentation must be linked to international accountability mechanisms, including submission to the National Commission to Investigate Alleged Violations to Human Rights, Special Rapporteurs, or relevant United Nations offices. Data must be transformed into legally admissible evidence that can be used in judicial and investigative processes.

2. Providing Psychological and Legal Support to Victims

Deliver direct assistance to victims, whether through legal consultations, facilitating access to justice mechanisms, supporting and following up on their cases before the courts, or through psychosocial support programs that help restore victims' confidence in their ability to reclaim their rights.

3. Advocacy in International Forums

Leverage the international networks of human rights organizations to highlight and publicize violations, ensuring that the issue evolves from a local concern into a matter of international public awareness. This visibility creates additional pressure on the parties responsible, particularly given the longstanding institutional and regulatory gaps.

4. Building Local Capacities

Train local actors on monitoring and documentation mechanisms in line with international standards, in order to cultivate a generation of human rights defenders capable of advancing the cause from within, without relying solely on external intervention.

FOURTH: RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO MEDIA AND GUIDANCE INSTITUTIONS

The media sector plays a crucial role in transforming isolated incidents into matters of public concern and in shaping collective awareness about violations and the need to confront them. Meanwhile, religious and social guidance institutions possess immense moral authority capable of reshaping ethical attitudes toward such practices and mobilizing efforts to curb unlawful behaviors.

1. Developing a Human Rights-Based Media Discourse

Move beyond superficial news coverage toward in-depth investigative reporting that exposes the full structure and dynamics of violations. The media should evolve from merely transmitting news to serving as a platform for accountability; one that raises critical questions and connects incidents to their legal and political context.

2. Protecting Victims from Stereotyping

Avoid media narratives that portray victims as mere statistics or as objects of pity. It is essential to present them as individuals with dignity, people whose voices and experiences deserve respect and recognition.

3. Mobilizing Public Opinion

Utilize media platforms to raise awareness that daily violations are not isolated or personal issues but collective concerns that affect society as a whole. The broader the circle of public awareness, the narrower the margin for impunity.

4. Renewing Guidance Discourse

Religious and social guidance institutions must emphasize that human dignity is an absolute value and that its violation is unjustifiable under any circumstances. Linking everyday violations to moral and religious prohibitions strengthens society's ethical resilience in confronting them.

FIFTH: RECOMMENDATIONS ON ADVOCACY

In contexts characterized by multiple violations and complex actors, advocacy represents the essential tool for transforming individual pain into a public cause and isolated incidents into an organized framework for collective pressure. Advocacy empowers victims' voices with political and legal force and redefines violations as public matters rather than individual incidents. From this perspective, the first steps of effective advocacy must begin locally through civil society organizations and victims' networks where individual documentation is transformed into a collective narrative capable of generating public pressure and exercising moral authority over national institutions. This process is then reinforced through media and human rights campaigns that bring the issue to the forefront of public attention, making it increasingly difficult for political actors to ignore or circumvent it.

However, the effectiveness of advocacy is not complete without its international dimension. When local testimonies are presented in United Nations forums and regional bodies and translated into a consistent human rights and legal language aligned with international standards, they gain additional weight, placing responsible actors under dual pressure: internal pressure from civil society and external pressure from international institutions and global public opinion.

Advocacy also enables the building of cross-level alliances: between victims and their local organizations, between civil society and the media, and between these actors and international organizations. This interconnection prevents issues from being isolated and ensures their sustained presence on the reform agenda.

Therefore, any pathway toward justice and transitional processes cannot succeed if it neglects the role of advocacy. As a strategic practice, advocacy redefines the relationship between victims and authority, positioning the broader society as a partner in the construction of truth and accountability. Advocacy serves as the bridge between documentation and accountability and between collective memory and structural change, representing the sole guarantee that the issue of dignity remains at the core of any peace process.

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