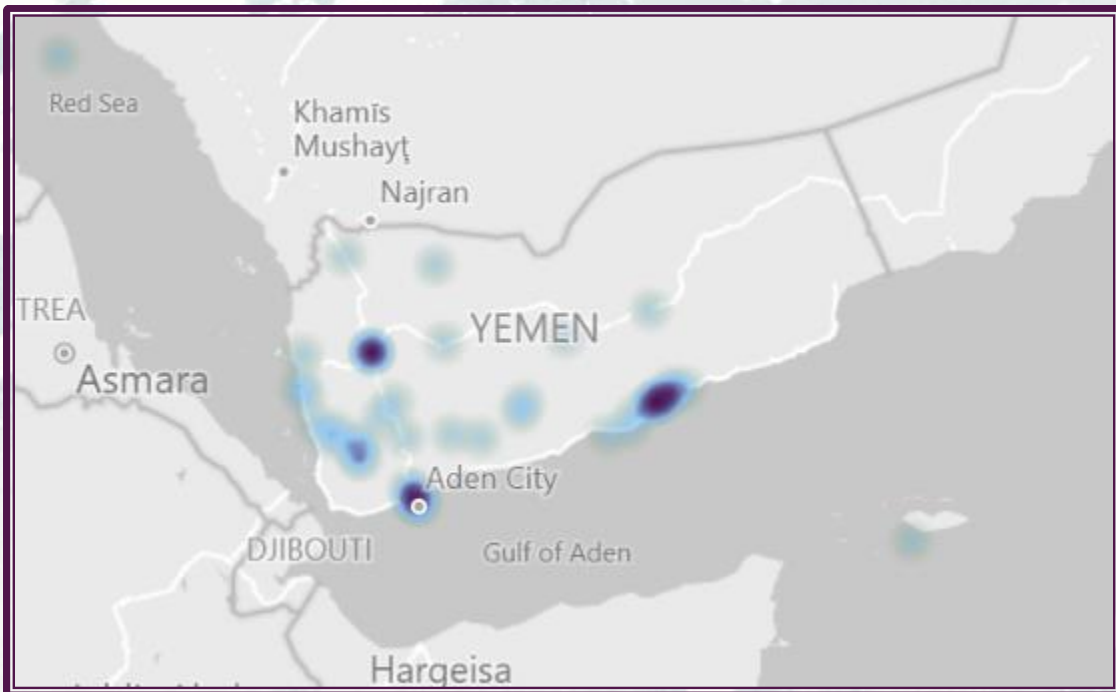




SARI Global Weekly Report: Yemen

30 December 2024 – 06 January 2025

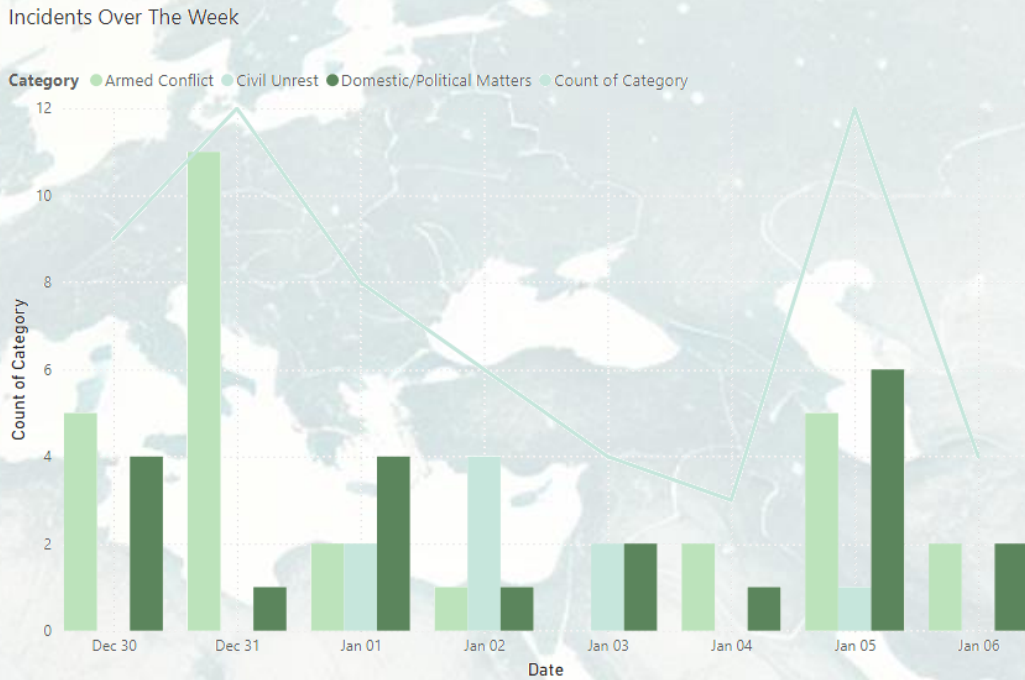


Weekly Overview

- The entry into the new year was marked by heightened conflict between AA forces, Israel and US/UK coalition with strikes on AA military sites and Israel's strategic shift toward targeting critical infrastructure in AA-controlled areas, broadening the scope of conflict.
- The UN Envoy visit had coincided with AA announcement of further detainment of alleged spies, highlighting the issue of imprisoned humanitarian workers, while the IDF said they will be increasing their scope on intelligence gathering in Yemen.
- Tensions in Hadramout between the tribes and STC-aligned bodies indicate a wider rift as the STC continues to dominate southern areas as well as Aden, where a new STC-backed force established a checkpoint at Maashiq Palace at the expense of other IRG forces.



Incidents over the week display a broad distribution of armed conflict domestic/political matters and civil unrest, with a big spike in Armed Conflict due to AA exchanges with Israel and US/UK coalition.



Political Developments

Ansar Allah (AA) arrests on accusations of espionage

On 6 January, AA said they had made a number of arrests of Yemeni nationals accusing them of working for the British and Saudi intelligence services. A statement issued by the AA said that British and Saudi intelligence agencies were attempting recruit and train espionage elements with the intention of monitoring and surveillance on missile and drone sites, military and security locations, and the movements of AA leaders. Similar statements were made when AA detained UN personnel on 10 June, 2024.

This comes amidst announcements by IDF Chief of Staff, Herzi Halevi that Israel will channel additional resources to the Military Intelligence Directorate (AMAN) to gather intelligence on AA in Yemen. Reports highlight a drive by the IDF to recruit Yemeni Israeli Jews and recent Yemeni immigrants to assist their operations.



Strategic Takeaways | This represents a continuation of arrest and propaganda campaigns consolidating internal control and framing external powers as active threats to Yemen's sovereignty. This further boosts the group's narrative in fighting infiltration and imperialist actions by Western powers.

Operational Implications | The arrests and subsequent confessions increases the risk on multi-national Yemeni, that have **allegedly trained** in Saudi Arabia. Further arrests and accusations of espionage stagnate efforts that are **undergoing** to release several UN and NGOs staff currently detained in Sanaa.

UN Envoy Visit

On 6 January, the United Nations envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, landed in Sanaa to negotiate with AA officials, marking his first visit since in May 2023. According to his spokesperson Ismini Pala, his visit will seek to improve the peace negotiations and to secure the release of UN and other humanitarian staff and others currently being detained in Sanaa by AA.

Strategic Takeaways | The emphasis on securing the release of detained UN and humanitarian staff by the Ansar Allah (AA) highlights the precarious situation facing aid organizations in the region, reflecting the broader challenge of ensuring operational safety and neutrality

Stakeholder Analysis & Local Dynamics

Hadramout Tribes

There has been a build-up of disillusion amongst Hadramout tribes, exemplified by protests demanding more representation and share of the resources, conferences declaring independence and a significant assault on the tribal formations.

- On **27 December**, the Hadramout General Conference accused the Southern Transitional Council (STC) of imposing hegemony over Hadhramaut through its members in the Presidential Leadership Council, and reinforcing its exclusion from governance and share of its resources.
- On **28 December**, the Hadramout General Conference held another conference addressing self-rule similar to that held in Mukalla on 7 December.
- On **5 January**, the Hadhramaut Tribal Alliance (HTA) formation stationed west of Mukalla came under a multi-pronged attack, including a barrage of projectiles launched from the sea near the coast of Ambah, a military convoy of armoured vehicles deploying around the alliance point located in the Rajima.



- On 6 January, the Hadramout General Conference said that despite the Second Military Region denial of the attack, evidence points to their involvement.

Stakeholder Analysis | The STC's attempts to assert control in Hadramout have led to tensions with existing local governance structures. In 2024, the STC held an expanded meeting in Mukalla amid rising tensions, addressing issues related to declining services and economic challenges. The STC's presence and activities in the region have introduced a parallel power structure, complicating governance and service delivery.

Operational Implications | The intensifying tensions in Hadramout could disrupt humanitarian and development operations in the region. The multi-pronged attack on the HTA on 5 January underscores the volatility of the security environment, posing risks to both local communities and external actors. Additionally, the STC's parallel governance structure complicates coordination between local and international stakeholders, potentially leading to fragmented service delivery. Tribal calls for self-rule may further destabilize the region, as tribal alliances consolidate their opposition to external influence.

Recommendations | Facilitation of a neutral platform for discussions between the STC, Hadramout tribes, and the Presidential Leadership Council to prevent further escalation and encourage collaborative governance.

STC and IRG Forces

On 31 December, Southern Transitional Council (STC)-affiliated security forces reportedly took control of a checkpoint belonging to the Presidential Protection Forces at Maashiq Palace, the seat of the internationally recognized government (IRG) in Aden. In response, the forces withdrew inside the palace compound to avoid a confrontation. The reasons behind this action by the STC remain unclear.

The STC forces seized one of the palace gates, which had been under the control of the Presidential Protection Battalion. In response, the protection forces withdrew. Following the seizure, STC forces established their presence at the newly occupied position.

Stakeholder Analysis | The relationship between the IRG and STC is likely to remain contentious, with both sides unwilling to compromise on their core objectives. The STC's push for secession and the IRG's insistence on unity create a zero-sum dynamic that complicates efforts to reach a lasting political settlement. Without a renewed and enforceable agreement that addresses the root causes of their conflict, the IRG and STC will continue to operate in opposition, further fragmenting Yemen's political landscape.



Operational Implications | Local actors, including tribes, business communities, and civil society organizations, are also affected, as incidents like these undermine trust in the IRG's ability to maintain order. The withdrawal of the Presidential Protection Forces avoided immediate confrontation, but continued actions by the STC to consolidate control could provoke future clashes, further destabilizing Aden and impacting humanitarian operation

Recommendations | International actors should establish or reinforce channels of communication with both the STC and IRG to ensure operational continuity and secure access to affected areas. Additionally, security protocols for staff and assets in Aden should be reviewed including contingency plans for rapid evacuations and route assessments in areas near contested zones, such as the vicinity of the Maashiq Palace.

International Conflict

Confrontation with Israel

There have been no additional Israeli attacks since [26 December](#), which targeted critical infrastructure Sanaa Airport, Al-Hudaydah seaport, Al- Katib power station, and the Ras Isa terminal, reportedly leading to a number of casualties.

Following the attack, Israeli officials continued rhetoric threatened further attacks, which will likely be followed through. Drawing from successful operations against Iranian proxies in Lebanon and Syria, Israel may shift from precision strikes to a larger-scale, sustained operation if AA attacks persist, potentially likely mirroring its past interventions in the region.

Strategic Takeaways | Statements from Netanyahu indicate that Israel has the scope, mandate and willingness to take on the Houthis. Likely to target their leaders, a model that worked in degrading Lebanese Hezbollah.

AA Attacks on Israel

AA attacks will likely be undeterred by Israel, the US, and the UK targeting of infrastructure and military installations, increasing the likelihood of an expanded Israeli campaign in Yemen. Drawing from successful operations against Iranian proxies in Lebanon and Syria, Israel is shifting from precision strikes to a larger-scale, sustained operation if Houthi attacks persist, potentially mirroring its interventions in the region.

- On [31 December](#), AA allegedly targeted Ben Gurion Airport, Nevatim Airbase, a power station with drones and ballistic missiles. The IDF reportedly intercepted the attacks with debris falling in [Ramat Beit Shemesh](#) and no casualties were reported.



Strategic Takeaways | The Israel-Houthi conflict will likely embolden the Houthis domestically. Years of bombing campaign from Saudi Arabia, supported by the British and US did little to prevent Houthi advancements. Israel attacks will feed into their propaganda. Unlike Hezbollah they are less constrained by their constituents. Yemen being and Zaydis being dominant in the Houthi controlled territory.

US & UK Coalition Strikes

A series of raids between 30 December 2024 and 5 January 2025 were carried out by the US and UK Coalition, targeting AA-controlled areas. According to [CENTCOM](#) the targeted sites were locations AA used to launch attacks on US military ships and merchant vessels, such as command and control facility and advanced conventional weapon (ACW) production and storage facilities that included missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAV).

- On 30 December, the US targeted [Tuhayat District](#), Hodeidah Governorate.
- On 31 December, the US launched six airstrikes targeting radar sites, command facilities, and military targets in the [22 May Complex](#), [Al-Siyana Complex](#), [Ministry of Defense](#) and [Al-Ardi Complex](#) in Sanaa Governorate, resulting in no reported casualties.
- On January 5, the US-UK coalition launched four airstrikes targeting eastern Saada in Saada Governorate, allegedly targeting underground Advanced Conventional Weapon storage facilities.

Strategic Takeaways | Unlike Israel, the US and UK coalition continue to primarily strike considered military installations rather than national infrastructure.

Recommendations | Areas affiliated with AA launch sites, government buildings, and locations of strongholds should be avoided.

Frontline Conflict

There were no major changes in frontline confrontations between along Taiz and Marib frontlines. There were several civilian and combatant casualties resulting from landmines and UXOs, during the reporting period such as in [Al-Dhuraihmi](#), [Hays District](#) and [Ad Durayhimi](#), Al Hudaydah.

On 31 December, confrontations were recording between border guards in the Al-Qahr area of Baqim in Sa'ada reportedly killing a Yemeni civilian and an African migrant. Notably, some media outlets misperceived this as a resurgence of conflict between AA and Saudi Arabia, attributing them to US and Israeli initiatives. However, these attacks are unrelated to such issues; they are merely violations of the ceasefire and exacerbate border tensions.



Confrontations between Al Qaeda Arabian Peninsula and Southern Transitional Council (STC) continued over the reporting period in the following incidents:

- On January 6, the AQAP claimed to have shot down a Southern Transitional Council (STC) forces drone in Al-Masinaa, in Shabwah, resulting in no reported casualties.
- On January 6, 2025, the AQAP claimed responsibility for an IED attack on Southern Transitional Council (STC) forces in Mudiyah, Abyan, resulting in unspecified casualties.

Operational Implications | The continued presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs) in Al Hudaydah pose a risk to civilians and combatant forces alike, due to the [alleged](#) random planting. Additionally, AQAP and other combatants have notably increased more drone and anti-drone capabilities, while the modus operandi for AQAP continues to be IED attacks targeting STC forces. Both incidents signify limited access to Abyan and areas of Al Hudaydah governorates, which remain active conflict zones.

Activism Activity & Unrest

A series of protests took place between 30 December 2024 and 06 January 2025 over recurring issues such as shortages of essential services, corruption and demonstrations over the Palestine-Israel conflict.



Map displayed locations of civil unrest and domestic matters in Aden

Most notably the following protests took place in **Aden**:

- On 2 January, protesters in Ash Shaykh Othman and Mansura areas of Aden governorate demonstrated against prolonged power outages caused by fuel shortages. Roads were



blocked, and frustration grew as residents demanded urgent solutions to fuel shortages that were crippling essential services, including electricity and water supply.

- On 2 January, unions, professional federations, military representatives, and civil society groups gathered outside the UN building in Aden to demand economic stability and justice. Protesters called for immediate interventions to address rising inflation, unpaid salaries, and deteriorating public services, emphasizing the urgent need for both government and international action.
- On 3 January, in Aden, civil society organizations joined professional unions and advocacy groups to stage a second day of protests outside the UN building. The demonstrators demanded a clear action plan to address Yemen's economic collapse, pushing for immediate solutions to unpaid wages, inflation, and fuel shortages.

Strategic Takeaways | The growing public frustration over fuel shortages, prolonged power outages, and unpaid wages underscores the immediate need for humanitarian assistance in addressing basic services like electricity, water, and economic relief. For NGOs, these protests signal the necessity of adapting programs to prioritize energy access, economic support, and advocacy for systemic reforms.

Operational Implications | The protests pose challenges such as restricted movement due to roadblocks and heightened security risks during demonstrations. NGOs may face difficulties accessing affected communities and distributing aid amidst public unrest. Additionally, the protests outside the UN building point to rising expectations for international actors to address these crises, potentially increasing scrutiny of NGO activities and demands for accountability.

Recommendations | Protests outside the UN building suggest that NGOs should take precautions measures before visiting, such as assessing the conditions of the exterior of the UN compound and similar protest-prone areas before visiting. Non-descript vehicles to minimize visibility and avoid drawing attention while moving through protest zones or high-tension areas. Movements and operations outside peak protest hours to reduce exposure to roadblocks and confrontations.

Hazards and Environmental Risk

During the reporting period, hazards and environmental risks remain widespread throughout the country. This week, car crashes were a particular feature, reiterating the risk of road travel in in Lahj Governorate and Jabal Ras area of Al-Hudaydah.

Other incidents of note include:

- On January 2, 2025, a gas cylinder explosion in a home in Al-Salam neighbourhood, in Mukalla City, in Hadhramaut Governorate, caused significant damage to the house and resulted in severe injuries to the homeowner's son.



- On January 5, 2025, a commercial fire broke out in Bab as Salam area, in Sanaa Governorate, causing significant damage before being contained
- On 30 December, one person was killed and three injured by a hand grenade explosion in Sharab Ar Rawnah district, Taiz Governorate.
- On January 6, security forces in Mukalla City, in Hadhramaut Governorate, raided and shut down a local liquor factory. The raid resulted in the arrest of two individuals and the seizure of locally produced liquor and factory equipment.