

Civilians in war-torn Yemen 'under fire on all sides' – UN rights chief

12 February 2018 – Raising alarm over continuing civilian casualties in the midst of increased hostilities in war-ravaged Yemen, the United Nations human rights chief underscored that all parties to the conflict are obliged under international humanitarian law to ensure that civilians are not harmed.

The situation in Taizz governorate – located in south-west Yemen – is of particular concern.

“Civilians are under fire on all sides, as Houthi and affiliated forces carry out sniper attacks and indiscriminate shelling, and the Saudi-led Coalition continues to conduct airstrikes,” the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, said in a [news release](#) Monday.

“For the civilians in the city of Taizz, the conflict is not just escalating but inescapable.”

Between 1 and 8 February, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) verified that 27 people were killed and 76 injured in Yemen – more than double the number of civilian casualties confirmed during the previous week.

The actual number could be higher.

Among those killed were three children who lost their lives in shelling by Houthi forces in Al Qahirah district (northern Taizz) on 6 February; and a woman working as field monitor for the Yemen National Commission of Inquiry in Salh district on 8 February.

Elsewhere in the country, eight civilians – including a woman and a child – were killed and 32 injured on 4 February when three airstrikes hit a Ministry of the Interior building in Bani Al Harith district, in Amanat Al Asimah Governorate.

OHCHR officials who visited the scene said that there did not appear to be any military objects near the building, which had previously been hit in January 2016.

Also in the first eight days of February, OHCHR document sniping and indiscriminate shelling by Houthi forces in frontline areas in Hudaydah and Hajja governorates, and airstrikes by the Coalition on areas under the control of the Houthi forces, including in Sana’a, Sa’ada, Hudaydah and Amran Governorates.

Underscoring the obligation on all parties to the conflict to ensure that civilian populations are not harmed, the UN human rights chief reiterated that “any intentional, direct attack against civilians or civilian objects is considered a serious violation of international humanitarian law.”

Since March 2015 and as of 8 February, OHCHR has documented 15,467 civilian casualties, with 5,974 killed and 9,493 injured.