

Houthi missiles hit Mocha as UN Yemen envoy visits city

Thu, 2021-11-11 02:31

AL-MUKALLA: Three missiles fired by the Iran-backed Houthis on Wednesday struck Yemen's Red Sea port city of Mocha during a visit by the UN's special envoy to the country.

Residents claimed three large explosions had rocked areas on the edge of the city, causing damage to private properties.

"The missiles hit areas close to farms and residential areas on the city's outskirts. I think the missiles were aimed at a security facility in Mocha," an official, who wished to remain anonymous, said.

UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg was reportedly in Mocha meeting with local officials, political leaders, and civil society representatives when the aerial attacks took place on Wednesday morning.

His discussions had centered around the humanitarian crisis in the Red Sea area, growing displacements, and the impact of Houthi attacks on peace and public facilities. The UN ambassador also held talks with Brig. Gen. Tareq Mohammed Saleh, nephew of former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, and commander of the National Resistance in the country's western coast, on efforts to end the war.

In September, the Houthis launched a number of missiles and explosive-rigged drones toward Mocha port as officials were preparing to reopen the strategic dock. The strikes damaged parts of the newly repaired infrastructure, disrupting traffic and the reopening ceremony.

On Tuesday, during a rare visit by a UN official to the besieged city of Taiz, Grundberg met with the governor of Taiz and local political party leaders.

On his trip to Taiz, the envoy said: "We see people that are having their freedom of movement severely restricted; we see people that are affected by the declining economic situation, the frequent interruptions in the delivery of basic services like water and electricity, and a general state of insecurity."

BACKGROUND

UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg was reportedly in Mocha meeting with local officials, political leaders, and civil society representatives when the aerial attacks took place on Wednesday morning.

The Houthi missile strikes on Mocha came hours after the group's officials had slammed Grundberg for visiting government-controlled areas, accusing him of giving a morale boost to its opponents.

Abdul Kader Al-Murtadha, head of the Houthi prisoner exchange committee, tweeted that the UN envoy had failed to broker a new prisoner swap between

the movement and the Yemeni government. "It is clear that his mission is to conduct some visits to the mercenaries' areas to raise their morale more than anything else," Al-Murtagh said.

The UN Security Council on Tuesday imposed sanctions on three Houthi military leaders, accusing them of undermining peace and stability in Yemen and committing humanitarian abuses.

The council's 2140 Yemen Sanctions Committee added Saleh Mesfer Saleh Al-Shaer, Muhammad Abd Al-Karim Al-Ghamari, and commander of the Houthi 5th Military Region, Yusuf Al-Madani, bringing the total number of blacklisted Yemeni figures to nine.

The three leaders were blacklisted for their alleged roles in orchestrating systematic human rights crimes, including the arbitrary abductions of opponents and activists, commanding military units that shelled and attacked Yemeni cities including Marib, and smuggling weapons.

The committee said: "As of 2021, Al-Madani was assigned to the offensive targeting Marib. Persistent Houthi repositioning and other violations of the ceasefire provisions of the Hodeidah Agreement have destabilized a city that serves as a critical thoroughfare for humanitarian and essential commercial commodities."

Al-Shaer, Al-Ghamari, and Al-Madani are included on the Arab coalition's list of most wanted Houthi leaders.

Meanwhile, the killing of a pregnant journalist in the port city of Aden on Tuesday was condemned by local Yemeni officials and foreign envoys who demanded that the perpetrators be brought to justice.

Yemeni writer Rasha Al-Harazi and her husband Mahmoud Al-Atemi, also a journalist, were in their car when a blast ripped through it, killing her and critically wounding Al-Atemi.

The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate described her death as "an unprecedented horrific crime," and called on local authorities in Aden to launch an immediate probe into the incident.

Yemeni Prime Minister Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed said he had ordered an investigation by security authorities, and he vowed to put an end to terrorism.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Houthi](#)

[Yemen](#)

Israeli military complicit as settler violence hits record-high, UN experts say
UN Security Council sanctions three leading Houthis

[Israeli military complicit as settler violence hits record-high, UN experts say](#)

Author:

Ephrem Kossaify

ID:

1636584247501750700

Thu, 2021-11-11 01:43

NEW YORK: UN human rights experts on Wednesday condemned the record-high levels of violence carried out by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories this year.

They also criticized the Israeli government for its lack of action to curb the attacks and protect Palestinians. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel, as an occupying power, has an obligation to protect the population

under occupation.

Instead of intervening to halt the violence, however, Israeli security forces and private security companies “respond to settler-related violence by ordering Palestinians to leave the area, including Palestinian-owned land, or even actively support the settlers,” the experts said.

According to the UN, 410 attacks by settlers have been recorded so far this year, during which four Palestinians were killed. This compares with 358 recorded attacks last year and 335 in 2019.

“These settler attacks are primarily directed against rural Palestinian families living on small farms or in villages and towns in the occupied West Bank, located in close proximity to Israeli settlements,” the independent experts said.

“Many of these Palestinians reside in the so-called ‘Area C’ of the West Bank, which is under complete Israeli security and civil control, and where Israel’s de facto annexation stratagem is most evident.”

The experts, who include Michael Lynk, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967, said that the violence takes various forms, including “physical violence, shooting with live ammunition, torching of fields and livestock, theft and vandalization of property, trees and crops, stone-throwing and tenacious intimidation of herders and their families.”

In the fall, they added, Palestinians farmers harvesting their olive crops are often threatened and attacked by settlers armed with rocks and pipes, and their olives are stolen or destroyed.

The experts also told how settlers set their sheep and cattle grazing on private and public land confiscated from Palestinians “as an initial step to drive Palestinians away from their land. If Palestinians attempt to keep their land, they are frequently met with violence.”

The investigations into most cases involving attacks by settlers between 2005 and 2019 were closed by Israeli authorities with no charges filed, according to Yesh Din, an Israeli human rights organization.

The UN experts warned that the escalating violence is not simply the result of “a few bad apples” among the settler population.

“The deep-state support provided by Israel to the illegal settlement enterprise, including to the more than 140 settlement outposts established throughout the West Bank in defiance of even Israel’s own laws, has fueled this coercive environment and encouraged violence,” they said.

They appealed to the international community to accept its responsibility to address the situation by imposing measures to end the impunity with which the settlers act, and restore respect for the international rule of law.



Main category:
[Middle-East](#)

[UN Security Council sanctions three leading Houthis](#)

Author:

Ephrem Kossaify

ID:

1636575340670853300

Wed, 2021-11-10 23:14

NEW YORK: The UN Security Council imposed sanctions on three leading members of the Houthi militia on Tuesday.

The individuals were targeted for “directly threatening the peace, security and stability of Yemen” through their roles in the offensive against Marib, attacks against Saudi Arabia, and violations of international law by appropriating public assets to arm the militia.

The council said Saleh Mesfer Saleh Al-Shaer, the Houthis’ assistant minister of defense for logistics, has helped the militia to smuggle weapons to arm itself. It added that in his role as “judicial custodian,” he has also for the past three years been directly involved in the widespread practice of illegally confiscating the assets of people detained in Houthi prisons or forced to flee the country.

He “has used his authority and a Sana’a-based network comprising members of his family, a special criminal court, the national security bureau, the central bank, the registrar services of the Yemeni Ministry of Trade and Industry, and some private banks in order to arbitrarily dispossess selected private individuals and entities of their wealth without any due judicial process or a possibility of redress,” the council added.

Muhammad Abd Al-Karim Al-Ghamari, the Houthi military chief of staff was added to the sanctions list because of the leading role he played in masterminding militia attacks. The Security Council said that in addition to posing a direct threat to peace, security and stability in Yemen, including in Marib, he is involved in cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia.

The third individual targeted by the sanctions is Yusuf Al-Madani, commander of the Houthi forces in Hodeidah, Hajjah, Al-Mahwit and Raymah, who this year was assigned to the offensive in Marib.

Yemen has been ravaged by civil war since the Iran-backed Houthis took over Sanaa in 2014. They have repeatedly rejected calls for a ceasefire.

The assault on oil-producing Marib began in February and has intensified in recent weeks. It has caused the displacement of millions of people who sought refuge there after fleeing fighting in other parts of the country.

The Yemeni government and Saudi officials have warned that should Marib fall to the Houthis, it could become a launchpad for further strikes against Saudi Arabia’s oil infrastructure and other civilian targets.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Yemen](#)

[Houthis](#)

110 Houthis killed in Arab coalition strikes on areas near Marib
Over 130 Houthis killed in Arab coalition strikes on areas near Marib

[Iraqi farmers feel the heat of extreme climate events](#)

Wed, 2021-11-10 00:45

MOSUL / BOGOTA: Caked in the fine yellow dust kicked up by his tractor-drawn planter, Farman Noori Latif jumps down to survey his work. He has spent the morning sowing wheat seed on his farm near the banks of the Tigris River, just south of Mosul in northern Iraq.

It is late in the season to be sowing wheat, but the 30-year-old has been holding out for a much-needed spell of autumn rain. The earth might still be parched under the baking sun but it is now or never if he wants his crops in the ground before winter sets in.

“Today is November 2 and the weather is hot. It shouldn’t be like this,” Latif told Arab News as he inspected the soil he and his family have farmed for four generations. “We are supposed to have this weather in September, not now.”

Latif is not alone in fighting a losing battle against the elements. The UN Environment Program’s sixth Global Environmental Outlook report, published in 2019, ranked Iraq fifth on the list of countries most vulnerable in terms of water and food availability and extreme temperatures.

All along the banks of the once mighty Tigris River, farmers and fishermen have seen their livelihoods evaporate in recent years, forcing many among the rural population to abandon the land in search of work in the cities.

IRAQ'S TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES RIVERS



ARAB NEWS

"We have lost everything due to the lack of rain and the hot weather," Ameer Khthir Yousif, a 30-year-old farmer and fisherman selling his catch on a Qayyarah roadside, told Arab News.

"We farmers depend on the Tigris River for our agriculture. If the situation continues, everyone here will leave farming to find other sources of income."

Average temperatures in Iraq have risen by at least 0.7 degrees Celsius over the past century, and extreme heat events are becoming more frequent. According to the World Bank, mean annual temperatures in Iraq are expected to rise by 2 C by 2050, and mean annual rainfall to decrease by 9 percent.

Iraq's 2020-2021 rainy season was the second-driest in 40 years, according to

the UN, leaving the country's aquifers unreplenished and raising the salinity of the remaining groundwater.

"The groundwater has dried out here," Latif said. "I have a well that is 30 meters deep without any water in it. All the wells here have dried out. Even if there is water in any of these wells, it will be red in color or salty."



Hazim Mahamad Ebrahim, 60, a farmer from Hoot Al-Fouaqni, Qayyarah, Mosul.
(AN Photo/Kareem Botane)

Soil degradation is causing dust storms to increase in scale and frequency. Between 1951 and 1990, Iraq experienced an average of 24 days a year with dust storms. In 2013, there were 122, according to the UN.

In an op-ed for the Financial Times, published on Oct. 31 to coincide with the start of the COP26 UN climate summit in Glasgow, Iraq's President Barham Salih said the economic and environmental effects of climate change are "by far the most serious long-term threat" facing the country.

"Very high temperatures are becoming more common, drought more frequent and dust storms more intense," Salih said. "Desertification affects 39 percent of Iraq's territory and increased salinization threatens agriculture on 54 percent of our land."

Neighboring countries are also experiencing more frequent droughts and rising temperatures, leading to regional water disputes. Iraq's water ministry said this year that water flows from Iran and Turkey had fallen by 50 percent during the summer.

“Dams on the headwaters and tributaries of the historic Tigris and Euphrates Rivers – the lifeblood of our country – have reduced water flow, leading to shortages,” Salih said. “According to Iraq’s Ministry of Water Resources, our country could face a shortfall of as much as 10.8 billion cubic meters of water annually by 2035.”



Farman Noori Latif, 30, a farmer and contractor from the village of Muhssin, Qarach area, Makhmur, Qayyarah, Mosul. (AN Photo/Kareem Botane)

Salih said he is all too aware of the threat climate change poses to a country utterly reliant on oil revenues, whose booming youth population is simmering with pent-up frustration.

“Iraq’s population is projected to double from 40 million people today to 80 million by 2050, just as our income, largely based on oil production, will be drastically reduced as a result of the world abandoning fossil fuels as it moves to sustainable, clean energy,” he said.

“The loss of income may very well result in migration to cities whose infrastructure is even now incapable of supporting the existing population. This migration may well result in extremism and insecurity as young people are unable to find jobs that give them a decent standard of living.”

FASTFACTS

*** Average temps. in Iraq have risen by at least 0.7 degrees since 1921.**

*** Iraq's 2020-2021 rainy season was the second-driest in 40 years.**

*** In 2013, Iraq experienced at least 122 days with dust storms.**

Mohammed Abdullah Ibrahim, who has farmed his patch of land in Qayyarah for decades, said he has seen dramatic changes in the climate during his lifetime.

"I have been a farmer since the 1970s and I have never seen it this bad before," the 64-year-old told Arab News.

Water shortages have forced local farmers to abandon many of the water-intensive fruit and vegetable crops once grown here. Among those that still grow, yields have halved, said Ibrahim.

"Before, it was sufficient," he added. "You could grow enough and make a profit. In the past, we were employed only in farming; we did not need a job or salaries. But things have changed now. We have to find another job to make a living.

"If the situation continues like this, we will be entering a very dark future. The young generation will end up unemployed."

Ibrahim's neighbor, Hilal Faraj Mohamoud, has also observed a significant change in the local climate. "The heat wave we had last year, we have never had it like that before," he told Arab News. "I am 56 years old; I have never experienced heat like that in my life.



Hilal Faraj Mohamoud, 56, a farmer from Hoot Al-Fouaqni, Qayyarah, Mosul.
Credit: (AN Photo/Kareem Botane)

“I know many farmers who have left their land and given up on farming. If the situation continues, I am afraid we will all move to the cities and leave farming behind, migrating from the villages because there will be nothing left for us to stay for.”

It is not only arable crop farmers who are struggling in the fierce heat. Sparse pasture, limited fodder and a shortage of fresh water have forced livestock farmers to sell or even cull their animals.

“Our animals have begun dying due to drought and the lack of rain,” Jamal Ali, a 49-year-old shepherd from Makhmur, told Arab News.

“Animals are very expensive these days. We have to buy fodder for our sheep and cows because our land cannot produce enough food for them due to the late rainy season and drought. We had to sell our sheep in order to compensate (for the loss). We have lost 50 percent of our income from animals and farming due to climate change.”

Dehydration has led to serious veterinary health problems among livestock, affecting their reproductive health.

“The changing climate has created many diseases among the animals,” said Ali. “The most common is birth defects. It is all due to the lack of rain and water.”



Rayid Khalaf Al-Wagaa, 51, a farmer and mayor of Hoot Al-Foqani, Qayyarah,

Mosul. (AN Photo/Kareem Botane)

Rayid Khalaf Al-Wagaa, mayor of the Qayyarah village of Hoot Al-Foqani, said the federal government in Baghdad has done little to subsidize farming and help prevent climate-induced rural displacement.

“We have lost more than 100,000 hectares of land due to the lack of rain and water. We have fewer animals compared to before, especially sheep,” he said.

“About 50 or 60 farmers have left here so far. We need support from international organizations as we already know that the government has limited capabilities. We hope they can do something for us, otherwise the number of animals and farmers will decline in the coming years.”

Although the Iraqi government has launched a UN-backed National Adaptation Plan to improve the country’s resilience to climate change, few of the benefits have trickled down to sun-scorched farming communities along the Tigris.

Kneeling in the powdery earth to uproot a spindly yellow plant, Latif said Iraq’s farmers urgently need outside help if their way of life is to survive the relentlessly changing weather patterns.

“We have lost our hope in the Iraqi government; we want foreign countries to help us,” he said. “We do not have any other means of making a living. Farming is our only hope and without it I cannot imagine how it will be.”

Twitter: [@kareem_botane](https://twitter.com/kareem_botane) / [@RobertPEdwards](https://twitter.com/RobertPEdwards)



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Middle East](#)

[Iraq](#)

[farming](#)

[Editor's Choice](#)

Saudi Arabia's green oil: Ancient meets modern as the 'smart farmers' of Jouf reap a rich olive harvest
Iraqi farmers fight to save cattle from drought

[Jordan's crown prince meets Egyptian president in Cairo](#)

Tue, 2021-11-09 21:45

CAIRO: Jordan's Crown Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi discussed strategic ties between the two countries as they met in Cairo on Tuesday.

During the meeting which was held at Al Ittihadiya Palace, President El-Sisi and Prince Al-Hussein discussed the deep-rooted ties between Jordan and Egypt and the importance of advancing cooperation and coordination.

The crown prince conveyed King Abdullah's greetings to El-Sisi who did the same and also commended the King's efforts in bolstering Jordanian-Egyptian ties.

The crown prince stressed the importance of partnership between the two countries in vital sectors, noting Jordan's interest in enhancing economic cooperation, especially on investments in the tourism sector.

He commended Egypt's progress across a number of sectors, particularly in mega development projects, stressing the need to exchange expertise on micro, small, and medium projects.

The Egyptian president expressed keenness on strengthening cooperation in tourism and development projects, in addition to achieving economic integration.

He also noted that Egypt and Jordan share the same positions on various issues and developments.

A number of Jordanian and Egyptian officials attended the meeting.







Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Jordan](#)

[Egypt](#)

[Abdel Fattah El-Sisi](#)

[Crown Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah](#)

Jordan's garment sector is top destination for Bangladeshi women workers
Egypt to open the world's largest spinning factory in 2022