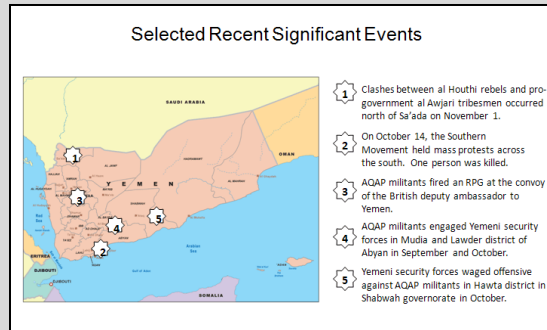


Yemen

Recent Significant Events



Click image to enlarge

Current Situation

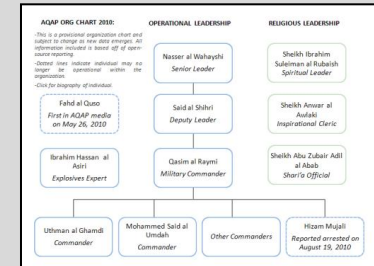
Yemen's population faces high levels of poverty and unemployment coupled with low levels of education. Oil, Yemen's primary source of public revenue, will run out by 2017 and Yemen's capital, Sana'a, will be without water in 2015. Corruption and resource constraints limit the government's capacity to properly address the desperate socio-economic conditions. The government also faces three security threats: the al Houthi rebellion in the north, the southern secessionist movement in the south, and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

There is currently a ceasefire in place between the al Houthi rebels and the government; however, minor violations of the ceasefire terms may lead to the seventh iteration of fighting. Increased incidents of violence in the south, both in attacks on the government and repressive actions taken by security forces, have resulted in mass demonstrations and a rise in popular support for the Southern Movement. AQAP has taken advantage of the discontent and portrays itself as the protector of the people. Recent statements from the group have threatened Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the West. Over the course of the past year, AQAP has intensified its attacks on government targets in south Yemen.

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP):

AQAP formed in January 2009 as a merger between the Yemeni and Saudi al Qaeda branches. Operatives work in cells throughout the country and rely on tribal support for shelter. The group seeks to establish an Islamic state and has executed attacks on Western interests.

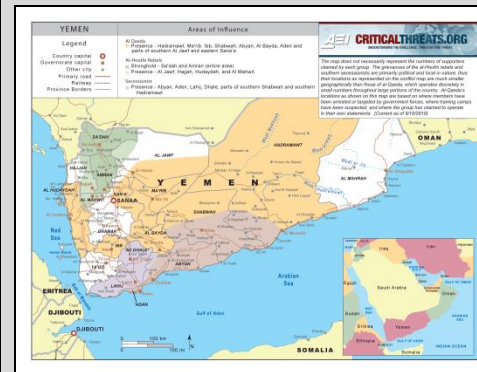
See [here](#) for more information.



Click image to enlarge

Al Houthi Rebellion: The al Houthi rebels, drawn from Yemen's Zaydi Shiite population, are primarily active in Yemen's northern Sa'ada and Amran provinces and have engaged in paramilitary activity against government forces and pro-government tribes. *See [here](#) for more information.*

Southern Movement: The Southern Movement is an umbrella group for southern-based secessionists who regularly demonstrate against the Yemeni government, protesting their perceived marginalization in the unified state. Parts of the movement engage in militant activities. *See [here](#) for more information.*



Click image to enlarge

Conflict Map

Shared geographic space has not resulted in direct cooperation between the three security threats. The combined effect of the northern and southern challenges to the Yemeni government has enabled AQAP to operate freely.

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Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

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Recent Significant Events

- AQAP claimed credit for the October 29 parcel plot that targeted flights from Yemen into the U.S.
- The vehicle of an intelligence officer named on a list of officials to be targeted by AQAP exploded on October 28.
- Suspected AQAP militants killed a Yemeni intelligence official in Mukalla in Hadramawt governorate on October 25.
- 30 alleged AQAP militants ambushed a military convoy in Mudia district in Abyan governorate on October 16. Two soldiers were killed. Two tanks and three military vehicles were reportedly destroyed in the RPG attack.
- Two AQAP militants were killed on October 16 when they tried to execute a suicide attack on a military convoy en route to Mudia district in Abyan.



Click image to enlarge

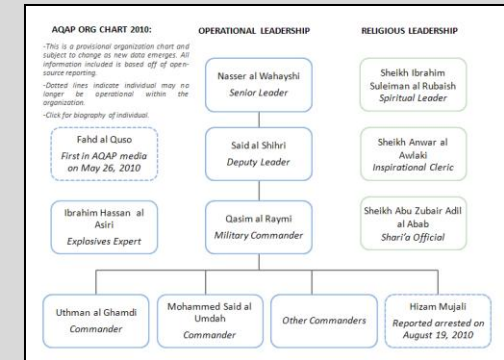
History

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) officially formed in January 2009 with the merger of the Yemeni and Saudi al Qaeda franchises. The merger was necessary from the perspective of Saudi al Qaeda leaders because the Kingdom has effectively denied al Qaeda a haven in the country since 2004. Today, the group uses Yemeni territory as its safe haven, relying on the shelter of local tribes. AQAP operatives have even begun to marry into tribal groups to earn their loyalty.

AQAP's primary goals are to defeat the "Crusader" occupation of all Islamic lands, weaken the governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and establish an Islamic state on the Arabian Peninsula. Despite its regional focus, AQAP has become a growing transnational threat. The group has intensified its hostility towards the United States, most notably by launching the failed 2009 Christmas Day bombing and the October 2010 parcel plot.

Estimates of AQAP's strength range from a low of 50 operatives to a high of several thousand. Its members come from multiple countries, including Yemen, Saudi, Egypt, Pakistan, and Somalia.

Leadership



Click image to enlarge

Important Considerations

Capabilities: AQAP has historically targeted western interests in Yemen; however, the Christmas Day attack and October 2010 parcel plot showed that the group has international capabilities.

English-language outreach: AQAP is the first al Qaeda franchise to publish in English. Anwar al Awlaki, an American-born cleric, is hiding in Yemen with AQAP militants and advocates for the Muslim community to wage violent jihad.

Guantanamo Detainees: Yemen continues to be a destination for former Guantanamo detainees, some of whom are part of the AQAP leadership.

U.S. Policy: Saleh is a partner in the war on terror and the U.S. has provided various forms of assistance to Yemen.

Gulf of Aden Security Review: A daily briefing on the situation in Yemen and the Horn of Africa. Please click [here](#).

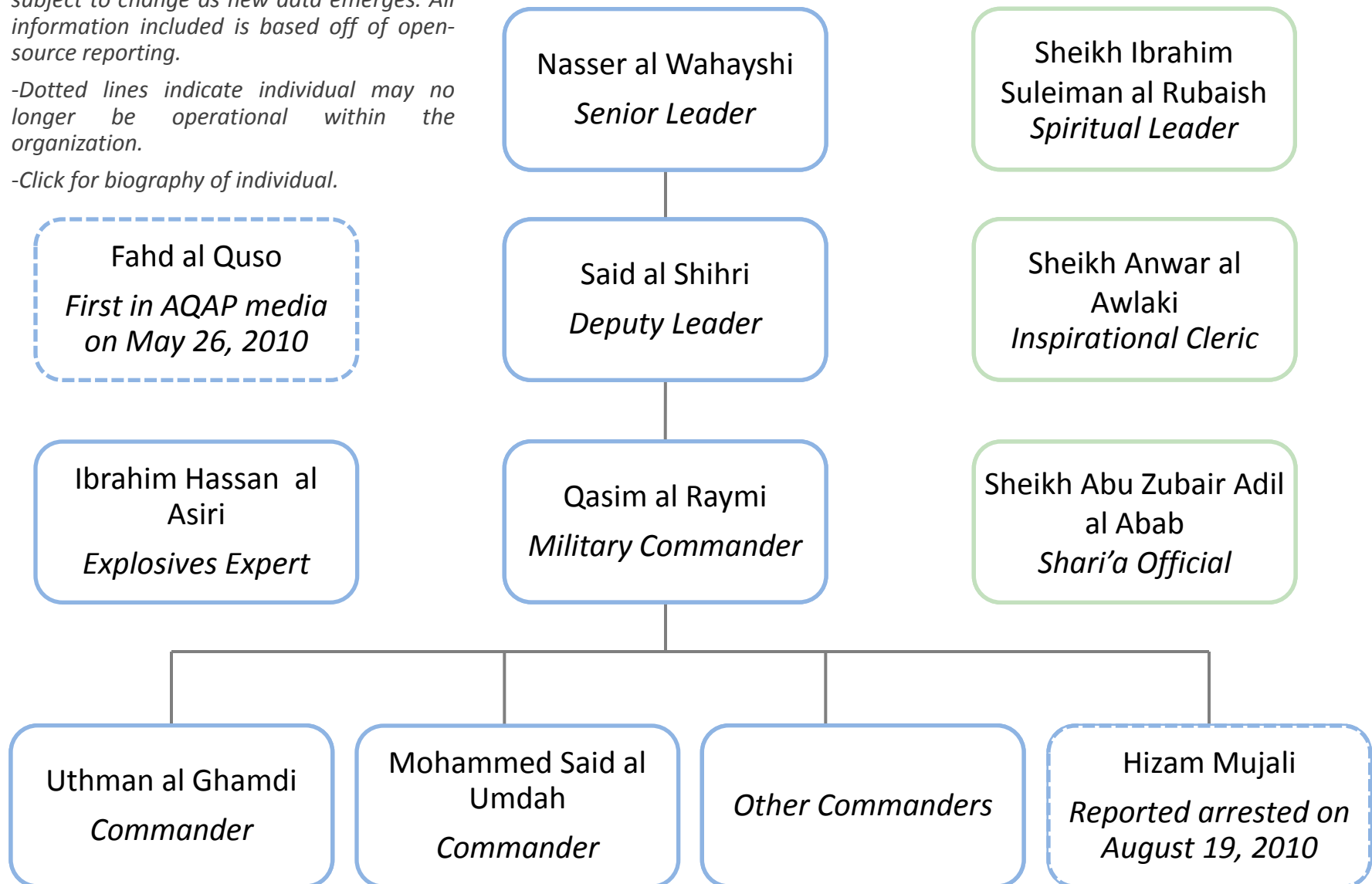
AQAP ORG CHART 2010:

-This is a provisional organization chart and subject to change as new data emerges. All information included is based off of open-source reporting.

-Dotted lines indicate individual may no longer be operational within the organization.

-Click for biography of individual.

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP



Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula Leadership

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Nasser al Wahayshi

Nasser al Wahayshi, also known as Abu Basir, is the senior leader of AQAP and once served as Osama bin Laden's personal assistant. He fled to Iran after fighting in the battle of Tora Bora in December 2001. Wahayshi was arrested in Iran in early 2002 and was extradited to Yemen in 2003 with eight others. He broke out of a maximum-security prison with 23 other militants in February 2006 in Yemen's capital city of Sana'a. He was officially recognized as al Qaeda in Yemen's leader on June 21, 2007, though he was likely serving as the head by mid-2006. Wahayshi oversaw the January 2009 merger of al Qaeda's operations in Yemen and Saudi Arabia and has since led the group's efforts to destabilize the Yemen and Saudi governments as well as AQAP's recent transnational attacks, such as the attempted Detroit airline bombing in December 2009.

On January 19, 2010, the U.S. Treasury and State departments designated Wahayshi as a terrorist under Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations and Executive Order 13224, respectively. Wahayshi was featured in an interview in the first issue of AQAP's English-language magazine, *Inspire*.

Said al Shihri

Said al Shihri, also known as Abu Sufyan al Azdi, is the deputy leader of AQAP. He was captured in Pakistan in December 2001 and was later sent to Guantanamo (#372). On November 9, 2007, Shihri was transferred to Saudi Arabia's terrorist rehabilitation facility. He is believed to have coordinated the September 2008 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a. In January 2009, Shihri became the deputy leader of AQAP and on May 27, 2009, the Defense Intelligence Agency listed him as "re-engaged in terrorism." On September 27, 2009, Shihri released a statement calling for donations to AQAP.

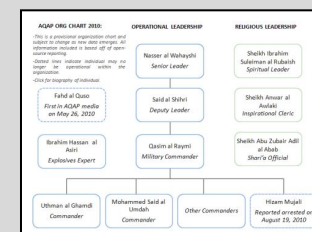
On January 19, 2010, the U.S. Treasury and State departments designate Shihri as a terrorist under Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations and Executive Order 13224, respectively.

Recently, Shihri has called for the overthrow of the Saudi government and has ordered individuals working for Saudi princes or officials to assassinate them. He was featured in the fall issue of AQAP's English-language magazine, *Inspire*.

Qasim al Raymi

Qasim al Raymi, also known as Abu Hurayrah, is the military commander of AQAP. He was one of the al Qaeda suspects to escape in the February 2006 prison break, which is when he became the deputy leader of al Qaeda in Yemen. In a June 21, 2007 audio statement he announced al Qaeda in Yemen's reestablishment and named Wahayshi as the leader. Raymi is believed to have masterminded the July 2, 2007 suicide car bomb that killed eight Spanish tourists in Ma'rib province. He appeared in the January 2009 video announcing the establishment of AQAP and reportedly ran a training camp in Abyan. The U.S. Treasury and State departments designate Raymi as a terrorist under Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations on January 19, 2010 and Executive Order 13224 on May 11, 2010, respectively. Raymi has recently spoken out against the Yemeni government and accused Saleh of serving U.S. interests.

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Chart*



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Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula Leadership

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Hizam Mujali

Hizam Mujali was a commander in AQAP. He was reportedly a member of the 15-man cell that launched the attack on the French tanker, the *Limburg*, on October 6, 2002. In 2003, Mujali resisted arrest and killed a Yemeni police officer. He was one of the al Qaeda suspects to escape in the February 2006 prison break. He later turned himself in to the authorities and struck a deal with them renouncing al Qaeda in exchange for his freedom. He then reconnected with Qasim al Raymi.

On August 19, AFP reported that Mujali had surrendered himself after counterterrorism forces surrounded his hideout in Arhab, north of the capital.

Uthman al Ghamdi

Uthman al Ghamdi, also known as Uthman Ahmed Uthman al Umairah, is a Saudi commander in AQAP and a former Guantanamo detainee ([#184](#)). He served in the Saudi military as a soldier and is considered a deserter. He traveled to Afghanistan on a forged passport in early 2000 and trained for about six weeks in al Farouq camp. Ghamdi stayed in Kandahar for about six months and then fought north of Kabul for about fifteen months until the withdrawal in November 2001. He stayed in Tora Bora for a few weeks and then left for the Pakistani borders. Ghamdi was arrested at a checkpoint in December 2001 and handed over to U.S. authorities. Ghamdi was transferred to Saudi Arabia on June 24, 2006. Saudi Arabia listed Ghamdi as one of its most-wanted terrorists in February 2009.

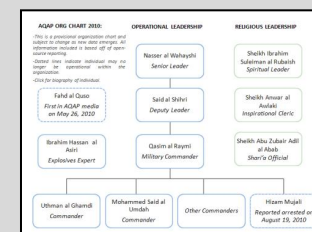
Ghamdi recently appeared in a documentary-style video released by AQAP's media, al Malahem Foundation, at the end of May.

Mohammad Said al Umdah

Mohammed Said al Umdah, also known as Gharib al Ta'azi, is an AQAP commander. He was one of the al Qaeda suspects who broke out of the Political Security Prison in Sana'a in February 2006.

Recently, Umdah recounted AQAP operations in Aden and Ma'rib governorates during June and July in an audio recording produced by AQAP's media arm, the al Malahem Foundation.

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Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula Leadership

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Sh. Ibrahim Suleiman al Rubaish

Ibrahim Suleiman al Rubaish is a Saudi cleric who serve as the spiritual leader for AQAP and is a former Guantanamo detainee ([#192](#)). Rubaish trained at the al Farouq camp in Afghanistan and fought in Tora Bora. He was captured near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in late 2001 and was then handed over to American authorities. He was later transferred from Guantanamo to the Saudi Arabian terrorist rehabilitation program on December 13, 2006. Rubaish managed to escape across the Saudi-Yemeni border and re-connected with al Qaeda. In February 2009, Saudi Arabia added Rubaish to its 85 most-wanted terrorists list.

Rubaish has spoken out strongly against the Saudi government, accusing Saudi rulers of attempting to gradually move away from the Islamic identity of the country.

Sh. Anwar al Awlaki

Anwar al Awlaki is an American-born inspirational cleric in AQAP. He is a radical cleric who preaches in support of violent jihad against the West. Awlaki's lectures are readily available over the internet in English and have served as inspiration for many terrorists and would-be terrorists, including Faisal Shahzad, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, and the London 7/7 bombers, among others. The FBI investigated him for his connection to 9/11 hijackers.

After the Christmas day attack, Awlaki has been featured in AQAP media productions, especially in the new English-language magazine, *Inspire*. Awlaki has also delivered AQAP lectures in Arabic.

The U.S. State Department added Awlaki to its list of terrorism supporters under Executive Order 13224 for his role in AQAP on July 16. The CIA has listed Awlaki on its "capture or kill" list, despite his American citizenship.

Awlaki is currently believed to be in Shabwah governorate in Yemen under the protection of the Awalik tribe.

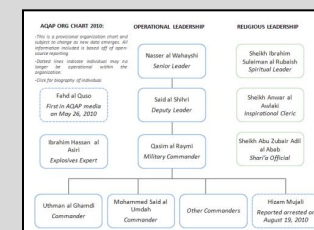
See [here](#) for a background on Awlaki.

Sh. Abu Zubair Adil al Abab

Abu Zubair Adil al Abab, is a *shari'a* official for AQAP.

He has spoken out against the Yemeni government, criticizing President Saleh's failure to implement *shari'a* law in Yemen.

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Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula Leadership

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Fahd al Quso

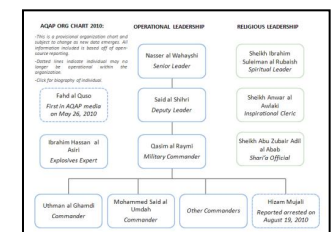
Fahd al Quso is a Saudi citizen, born in Aden, Yemen, who first appeared in AQAP media on May 26, 2010. Quso is believed to have trained in al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan in the 1990s. He is directly connected to the 2000 USS *Cole* bombing. Yemeni authorities had arrested Quso in connection to the USS *Cole* bombing, but he escaped from prison in April 2003 and was re-arrested on March 10, 2004. Quso was freed in 2007. He has been indicted in New York for his role in the October 12, 2000 USS *Cole* bombing. The U.S. is offering a \$5 million reward for information.

Quso was reported killed in a U.S. drone strike in North Waziristan in Pakistan on September 8, but this information has not been confirmed. It is not clear whether Quso had actually left Yemen.

Ibrahim Hassan al Asiri

Ibrahim Hassan al Asiri, also known by the name Abu Saleh, is the main explosives expert and primary bomb-maker for AQAP. Asiri is originally from Saudi Arabia, where he was imprisoned for attempting to join the Islamist insurgency in Iraq. He entered Yemen in 2007, when he met Nasser al Wahayshi. In February 2009 Asiri was first on Saudi's list of 85 most-wanted terrorism suspects. Asiri is credited with crafting the explosive device, worn by his brother, used in the attempted assassination of Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayef August 2009. He is also credited to be responsible for manufacturing the bomb used in the 2009 Christmas day bombing by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab and, most recently, the two parcel bombs attributed to AQAP that were discovered in London and Dubai in October 2010. Asiri is believed to be hiding in Yemen's Ma'rib governorate with AQAP leader Nasser al Wahayshi. He was interviewed in the September 2009 issue of Sada al Malahem, AQAP's Arabic online magazine.

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Southern Movement

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Recent Significant Events

- Clashes between armed Southern Movement demonstrators and Yemeni security forces in Mudia district of Abyan governorate killed one person on October 14. The Southern Movement held mass demonstrations across the south marking the 47th anniversary of the beginning of the south's rebellion against British colonial rule.
- On October 5, Southern Movement supporters protested in cities in Dhaleh and Lahij. A spokesman said, "We want to send through this strike a message to the friends and neighbors of Yemen..."
- Yemeni security forces arrested ten separatists accused of anti-government activities in Lahij on September 28.
- An estimated 8,000 people participated in demonstrations across the south on September 24. A statement read, "resolving the southern cause is essential to resolving all problems facing Yemen..."

See the [Southern Movement Tracker](#).



[Click image to enlarge](#)

History

The Southern Movement is an umbrella movement for a southern-based secessionist movement. Mass anti-government demonstrations in the major southern cities such as Aden, Zinjibar, and Dhaleh, characterize the movement. Smaller militant factions have targeted government personnel and buildings in the south and attacks often take the form of ambushes on convoys or grenade attacks on structures.

Secessionist strongholds are located in the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) and the roots of the conflict can be traced back to the unification with the Yemen Arab Republic in May 1990. In 2007, southern military officers protested and demanded the reinstatement of their pensions. Others joined the retired officers and accused the Sana'a government of economic and political marginalization of the south; illegal land seizures; and forced retirements from civil and military positions.

On July 23, 2009, at least 16 people were killed at a demonstration in Zinjibar, sparking massive protests. Since then, the movement has increasingly gained popular support.

See [here](#) for a background on the Southern Movement.

Leadership

Ali Salem al Beidh: Beidh is a former Vice President of Yemen. Beidh led the south in its bid to secede from Yemen in the early 1990s but fled the country in 1994 when the secession failed. He remains the nominal head of the Southern Movement from his self-imposed exile in Germany. Beidh declared himself president of the south in 2009, but is reportedly in poor health.

Tariq al Fadhli: Fadhli is widely seen as the day-to-day head of the Southern Movement. He fought in Afghanistan in the 1980s and was a one-time confidant of Osama bin Laden. Fadhli was part of President Saleh's government until he defected in 2009 to lead the Southern Movement. His bin Laden and Saleh ties, though, have created suspicion.

Movement Groups: The Southern Movement is decentralized, with five to seven groups most actively pursuing the Movement's cause. The largest, Fadhli's Council for Leading the Peaceful Revolution, has unsuccessfully attempted to merge the other groups.

Tamah Family: The Tamah family has played an influential role in the Movement, particularly Taher Tamah, who leads one of the more militant Southern Movement groups.

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Al Houthi Rebellion

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Recent Significant Events

- Clashes between al Houthi rebels and pro-government al Awjari tribesmen occurred north of Sa'ada on November 1.
- Qatari commission charged with oversight of the al Houthi ceasefire agreement met with representatives from both sides and formed a eight panels to supervise implementation of the terms on October 25.
- Sheikhs from Ma'rib governorate, primarily from the Jahm tribe, declared loyalty to the al Houthi rebels after meeting with a leader on October 3.
- Al Houthi rebels and the Yemeni government agreed to an extended timetable for the implementation of the Qatari-brokered ceasefire on August 27.



Click image to enlarge

History

The al Houthi family belongs to the Zaydi sect of Shi'ite Islam and the Hashemite line (i.e. it traces its bloodline to the Prophet). The Hashemite Zaydis ruled northern Yemen until 1962. Though Yemeni President Saleh is also a Zaydi, he is not Hashemite and presents himself instead as a secularist. Saleh fears that Hashemite claims to the Imamate could damage his legitimacy within the Zaydi community that dominates the government and armed forces.

Accordingly, the Zaydis have accused the Yemeni government of marginalization and formed a political and paramilitary group in the mid-1990s to counter the government. The group, which operates mainly in Yemen's northern Sa'ada and Amran provinces, ramped up protests against the government after Saleh aligned himself with the U.S. in the wake of 9/11. Authorities responded in 2004 by attempting to arrest, and later killing, the group's leader Husayn Badr al Din al Houthi. The two sides have fought on and off ever since.

A ceasefire has been in effect between the sides since February 11, 2010; however, the truce has been unsteady.

See [here](#) for a backgrounder on Yemen's battle with the al Houthi rebels.

Leadership

Abdul Malik al Houthi: Abdul Malik assumed the leadership of the al Houthi rebellion after his father's death in 2006. Little is known about his personal life. Abdul Malik has ordered his followers in recent years to lay down their arms to respect ceasefire agreements with the government but has been unable to strike a lasting, long-term agreement with officials in Sana'a. Abdul has in the past alluded to the possibility of secession. He denies any connection between his group and al Qaeda.

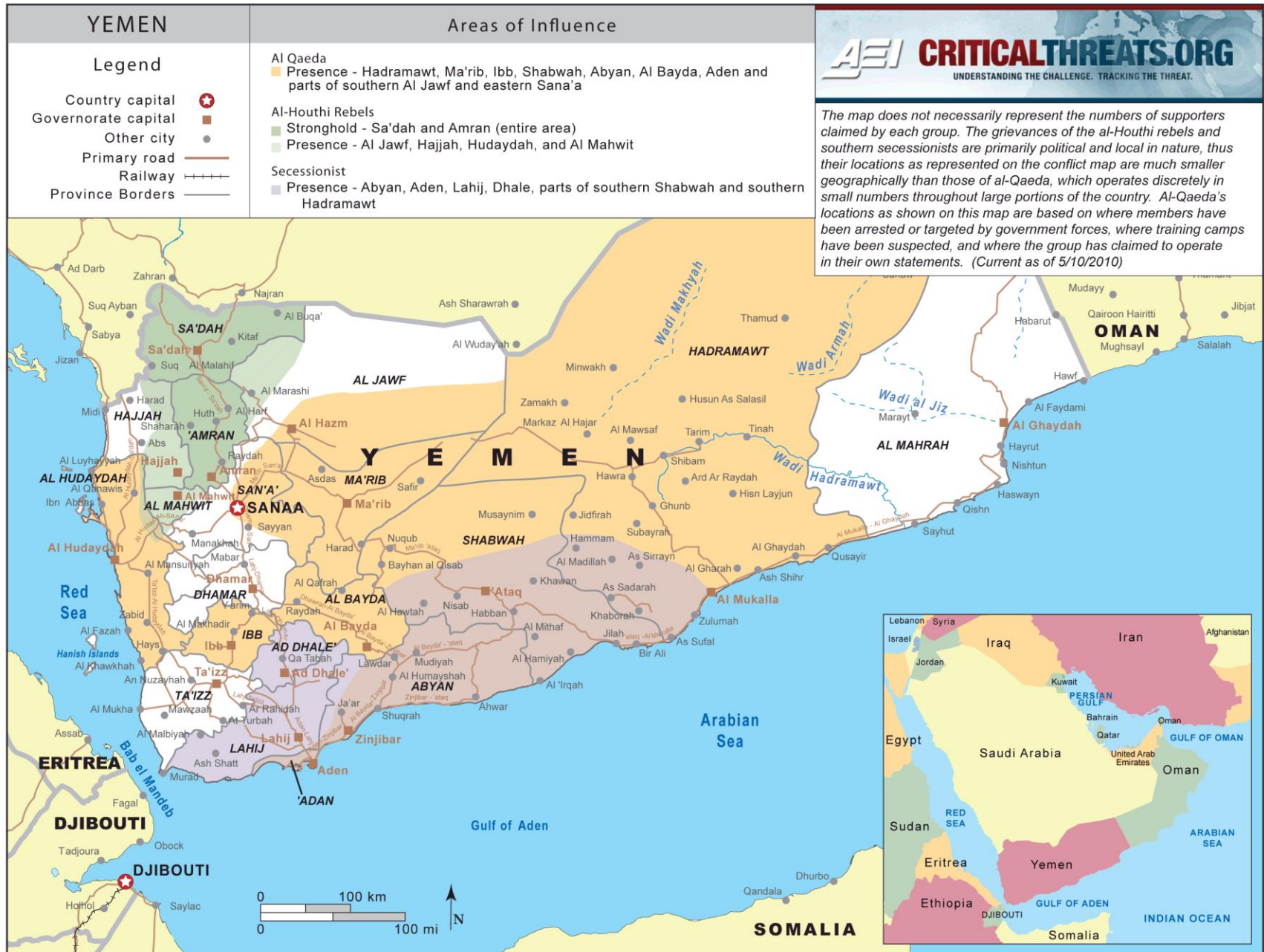
Youssef al Midani: Youssef serves as the deputy leader of the al Houthi rebellion and is the cousin of Abdul Malik al Houthi. He has often been reported to have assumed the leadership of the group after erroneous reports of Abdul Malik's death.

Yahya al Houthi: Yahya, Abdul Malik's brother, is also an influential figure in the rebel movement and served as a Yemeni MP before fleeing the country. He currently lives in exile.

Mohammed Abdul Salem: Salem serves as the rebellion's spokesman. Little is known about his background.

See [here](#) for a profile of the al Houthi Movement.

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