

A young girl with a black headscarf and a dark shirt with yellow floral patterns is peering through a green tarp. She has a serious expression. The background is a textured green tarp.

# They were Rendered Homeless

A Report on the incident of mass forced  
displacement of (20) civilian families  
Jebel Al Fors - Crater - Aden

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The logo for the American Center for Justice (ACJ) is a white circle containing the letters 'ACJ' in blue and red, with 'AMERICAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE' written in small black letters below.

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Day: Tuesday / Date: October 12, 2021 / Location: Crater District - Aden Governorate

## Introduction:

- The historical city of Aden, which is located in the south of Yemen, covers an area of (760) square kilometers and consists of (8) districts with a population of (865,000) people.
- After the Houthi group took control by force of arms over the capital, Sana'a, in September 2014, and took control of the northern and central cities of the country, all the way to Aden in early 2015 where they took control of parts of it, the Arab coalition intervention and government forces took back the city and a number of its neighboring provinces.
- The UAE supported armed formations loyal to it, represented by the Giants forces, elite forces and security belts. These forces were formed away from the structure of the ministries of defense and interior of the legitimate government. These forces received military training and extensive financial and logistical support from the UAE, which these forces owe their allegiance to and receive orders from; as a result, these forces were able to engage in an armed confrontation with the government forces at the end of 2019, which ended with the expulsion of the legitimate government from the city and gaining their control over it.

## Security Situation in Aden:

The city of Aden witnessed a series of assassinations that targeted politicians, teachers, clerics, activists, leaders of the resistance, and leaders of the Islah Party and Salafists. Despite the tight security grip of the Transitional Council forces in Aden, none of the perpetrators of those operations has been arrested. Meanwhile, Aden witnessed the arrest of hundreds of civilians in secret prisons run by the UAE where horrific violations were committed against detainees and forcibly disappeared persons, many of whom are still in prison until the moment we wrote the report.

## The beginning of the displacement events:

-On October 2, 2021, armed clashes took place between two factions affiliated with the Transitional Council. The first faction was led by Imama al-Nubi the former commander of Camp 20, and the second was the Security Belt Forces in the Crater District, Al-Taweel Street, which caused deaths and injuries among civilians, as well as the destruction of private property such as homes, cars and shops, in addition to creating terror among the civilian population and placing them under siege while preventing movement due to the clashes which lasted for (4) days.



These events were not the first between the armed factions of the Transitional Council as they were preceded during the same year by several clashes between those factions in the Sheikh Othman district and other areas due to the difference over interests and the sharing of power and revenues in the city of Aden.

-Jabal al-Fors overlooks the area of Crater, which was an arena for armed clashes between the two factions that used light, medium and heavy weapons. These clashes ended with the control of the Security Belt forces of the Transitional Council over the city and the loss of al-Nubi's faction and his group. The forces of the Transitional Council accused the group of Imam al-Nubi saying that gunmen belonging to Imam al-Nubi were stationed at the top of the mountain (Jabal al-Fors) and opened fire during the clashes that took place in the city.



-About (200) families have lived in Jabal Al-Fors for several years, including a number of families belonging to marginalized groups. As a result of the war and the difficult living conditions, these families built these houses in a random way and made these houses their permanent residence despite their lack of basic services and their distance from the city.



-About a week after the clashes in Crater, on October 12, 2021, the homes of citizens in Jabal al-Fors were stormed by armed groups wearing military clothes, accompanied by women police affiliated with the forces of the Southern Transitional Council. They raided and searched homes under the pretext of searching for wanted persons in connection with the events. They informed the residents of the houses to vacate them within two days only, and they didn't bring any official notification or warning from the judicial authorities with the justification that these buildings were random and that they had directives to remove them.

-Two days later, the houses were raided again and their residents were expelled by force of arms and threats by armed men affiliated with the Transitional Council and boarding military vehicles, about 4 vehicles. The armed men broke the doors and windows while the citizens were displaced from their homes and expelled into the open.

-On the second day, some citizens returned to their homes because they had no alternative places to live in. Then the gunmen returned to them and prevented them from going back to their houses and burned some houses to express their anger at the citizens for not complying with their instructions to evacuate these houses. They also forced some of the citizens under threat to burn down their homes themselves.



## •The Field Visit of the Center's Team to the Location of the Incident



- After the American Center for Justice (ACJ) team had received a report of the displacement of civilian populations in Jabal al-Fors, Crater area, the team coordinated with field sources to ensure a safe transition. The field visits to Al-Taweel Street happened after the clashes that took place in the area between factions affiliated with the Transitional Council had stopped. The center's team inspected the material damages that affected private properties, including houses, shops and cars which were burned. The damages varied between serious, medium and light.
- Despite the difficulty of reaching the top of Mountain (Jabal) Al Fors and the security risks, the monitors of the American Center for Justice (ACJ) were able to reach the places of residence of those families who were displaced from their homes after their properties had been burned and looted. The team inspected the extensive damage and destruction to those houses, met with a number of victims, and documented the testimonies of witnesses who witnessed these violations, as follows:



### 1-VICTIM (A.S.S)

He lives in Jabal al-Fors – Crater. He reported that he had been residing since 2003 with his family of 9 sons and daughters, one of whom is married and has 4 children, and that there are many residents, living in approximately 200 homes, who have been residing in Jabal al-Fors for many years from different governorates. He also stated that there were no prior problems, and they were not attacked before this incident, expelled from their homes, or notified to vacate the homes in advance. On October 12, 2021, a group of soldiers affiliated with the transitional forces came and entered his house and the neighboring houses under the pretext of inspection and asked them to vacate the houses within two days. He left the house with his family for one day where they went to the house of one of their relatives, and then they went back home again because they had no other place to stay at. “The gunmen returned on the second day and threatened us saying we had to leave the house or they would burn the house. When I begged them and told them



that there was no refuge for me and my family and that my financial conditions did not allow us to rent another house, and that we would be homeless, they burned all the empty houses and told us to leave or they would burn our house.”

### 2-VICTIM (A.A.A)

He has been living in Jabal al-Fors for more than (15) years. His wife reported that during the recent events in the city of Crater, the clashes between two factions affiliated with the STC, an armed group affiliated with one party climbed near her house and they carried out shelling with weapons on



the other side, which is in the middle of the Crater area, while she was at home alone. She went out to ask these gunmen to stop shelling and shooting from the vicinity of her house because of her fear that the other party would respond as well and that she or her house would be damaged, but then they refused to leave and asked her to get in the house. This happened approximately on October 2 and lasted for about 4 days, the clashes and the tense situation in Crater. Then about a week after the end of the problems in the Crater area, one of the security personnel and the women's police came to her and asked to search the house, which they did. They also asked her about the people who shot from the vicinity of her house and asked if they were here relatives. She told them that she did not know them at all, and their faces were covered at that time. Two days later, the soldiers came back and asked her and the residents nearby to vacate the houses within two days on the pretext that their homes are slums and that they had higher instructions to clear slums. Then she and the people went out to the neighboring houses and went to the homes of relatives, and she went to the house of one of her acquaintances near Jabal al-Fors. A day later, she returned to her home. Then the gunmen came. They threatened and asked her and the residents who returned back to their homes to leave. She tried to win their sympathy and begged them saying that she had no one and she was a lonely woman who only had this house which her husband built with the help and support of good people. Then they left her, but they went and burned the empty houses and the slums of the marginalized, and they forced people to burn their own homes under threat.

## **Witnesses' testimony:**

1-WITNESS (A.A)

One of the people of the Crater district who lives near Jabal al-Fors area, stated that the mountain had not been inhabited at all for a long time.

It was an archaeological site with caves and was uninhabited. Then houses and random construction were established by some people years ago. He also stated that as the governor of Aden province directed to evacuate homes and remove random construction, the residents were evicted in implementation of the governor's directive, with the recent events being used as a pretext to expel residents from their homes.

#### 2-WITNESS (R.M.A)

One of the residents of Crater on the opposite side of the mountain spoke to us and said that there were many families from different governorates in Jabal al-Fors. Some were residents and others were displaced because of the war, and that the population was displaced on October 12-2021. According to what was said, the place was designated as a military barracks, and that the mountain (Jabal al-Fors) overlooks Mount Al-Ma'ashiq, a sensitive site where the Yemeni government is currently located.

#### 3-WITNESS (W.S.R)

One of the people from Crater told us that about a week after the events which took place in Crater area on October 2, 2021, a group of security personnel went up to Jabal al-Fors area, which is located in Crater, to search the houses on the pretext that one of the parties to the problems that occurred in Crater was hiding in the mountain (Jabal al-Fors) and that he fled the mountain while he was being chased by the other party from the other side of the mountain. There were armed men who shot from the top of the mountain at that time where the area had many families residing before the war, and their numbers increased and expanded with the conditions of war by land grabbing and random construction. Homes were searched by force of arms and people were notified of the evacuation of homes within two days. Then the population was displaced by force, threat and burning their homes.

## The Role of Local Authorities and Organizations towards the Forcibly Displaced from their Homes:

### Reasons for Enforced Displacement

The events took place in the area of Crater between two armed factions affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council. The forces of one of the parties (Imam al-Nubi), who was the former commander of Camp 20 and was affiliated with the STC forces but recently defected from them, climbed Mount (Jabal) Al Fors and shot on the other side. This pretext is what made the Transitional Council forces a justification for the displacement of dozens of families from their homes and as a result they were rendered homeless.

### ACTS ACCOMPANYING THIS VIOLATION:

ACJ team monitored, during its field visit and meeting with victims and witnesses, a number of violations committed by the Transitional Council forces, including acts accompanying the main act of mass displacement, and those

### VIOLATIONS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

- Threatening the people by force of arms.
- Destruction of property and burning of homes.
- Forcing people to burn their own homes.
- Terrorizing civilians and intimidating them, especially children and women.
- Separating and displacing children from their parents due to the displacement incident.
- Denial of the right to education.
- Causing substantial damages to civilian properties on Taweel Street, including homes, shops and cars, as a result of the clashes within the populated civilian neighborhoods.

## Findings :

•After the field visit to the scene by the American Center for Justice team that examined the damage caused to civilians and interviewed some victims and witnesses, we concluded the following:

1-The displacement of more than (20) families living in Jabal Al-Fors, coming from different governorates and some of them belong to the marginalized community while the number of houses that were burned reached (20) houses.

2-One day after the displacement incident, on October 13, it became clear to us that some of the displaced people returned to their homes where they set up alternative tents and took them as housing because they became homeless and did not have the financial ability to rent a house.

3-The number of (20) families became homeless after their homes had been burned and they were displaced while their children are deprived of continuing their education.

4-Dozens of houses, shops and transportation means for citizens in Al-Taweel Street, Crater area, were damaged as a result of the clashes.

5-Three civilians were killed and wounded while dozens of members of the conflicting forces were killed and wounded.

6-The complete absence of the governmental role and relief organizations towards the victims.

## Recommendations:


- 1-The forces of the Southern Transitional Council should stop displacing civilians in Jabal al-Faras, ensure the return of the displaced families, urgently compensate those affected by the events, and stop all forms of violations against civilians in the areas under their control.
- 2-The Arab coalition forces must completely stop any support for armed formations that operate outside the framework of the legitimate government.
- 3-We recommend the National Committee to Investigate Alleged Violations to Human Rights in Aden to open an investigation file into the crimes of forced displacement by the forces of the Transitional Council of civilians in Jabal al-Fors and the previous displacement of the people of the northern and eastern regions during the last period, as well as the incidents of the displacement of groups of marginalized people in the city of Al-Dhalea during the last period.
- 4-We recommend relief organizations to go to the mountain (Jabal al-Fors) in Aden, inspect the damage and provide assistance to the victims.



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