



## Security Council

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### **Letter dated 14 January 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith an executive summary of the results of the investigations into the terrorist attack that targeted the Prime Minister and the cabinet members at Aden International Airport on 30 December 2020 (see annex). The summary indicates that the teams and committees tasked with investigating the attack have obtained conclusive evidence proving the responsibility of the Houthi militia for this crime. Given that the attack targeted a civilian facility (Aden Airport) and directly threatened the safety of civil aviation and air navigation systems in Yemen, it undoubtedly falls within the framework of terrorism in accordance with national, regional and international laws.

I would like to reiterate that this is not the first time that the Houthi militia has carried out these kinds of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The Houthi militia previously targeted civilian airports in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For instance, the Houthi militia targeted Abha Airport on 12 July 2019, wounding more than 26 people in the arrival hall (according to a statement by the official Saudi News Agency), in addition to the horrific crimes that it committed against our people in the areas under its control or in the areas of contact.

Investigations proved that the attack was aimed at killing government members and the local authority of the Aden Governorate. The missiles were directed precisely for this purpose, which would have led (if the objectives of the attack had been achieved) to a state of chaos, and the internal consequences would have been disastrous at the political, economic and humanitarian levels. In the course of the political process, this attack would have completely ended hope in that process.

The new Yemeni Government, targeted by the attack, is a peaceful government formed according to the Riyadh Agreement signed between the Yemeni Government and the Southern Transitional Council in November 2019, after long negotiations sponsored by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for more than a year and a half since August 2019 to end the conflict and return to the political path in Government-controlled areas. It represents a model for consensus among Yemenis to end the war, restore the political path and pave the way for a comprehensive peace agreement in Yemen in general. Targeting this Government and trying to kill its members is aimed at creating a climate of mistrust and fuelling conflict, thus multiplying the political, humanitarian and economic crises in Yemen.



I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex made available to the members of the Security Council for their immediate valuable consideration and issued as a document of the Council.

*(Signed)* Abdullah Ali Fadhel **Al-Saadi**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

**Annex to the letter dated 14 January 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

[Original: Arabic]

**Executive summary of the findings of the investigation conducted by the Ministry of the Interior of Yemen and its auxiliary teams into the terrorist attack on and attempted murder of the Prime Minister and the members of the Government in Aden International Airport on 30 December 2020**

**Summary**

On December 30, 2020, after Yemenia flight IY535 from Riyadh had landed with the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet on board, and during the welcoming formalities, Aden International Airport was hit by three short-range ballistic missiles, as detailed below. Seventeen civilians were killed and 138 wounded, including airport staff, passengers and members of the welcoming party. Those killed included three staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Three other ICRC staff members were injured; they had been in the departure hall waiting to board the same aircraft on flight IY612 for Cairo.

The bombardment also caused significant material damage to the airport terminal infrastructure, not to mention endangering the safety of air navigation and civil aviation more generally.

**Details of the attack**

*First missile*

- At 1324.34 hours, the first missile hit the VIP lounge at coordinates 7852N, 38 P 503968; see image 1.
- The missile penetrated the concrete wall and exploded on the ground floor of the hall, creating a hole with a diameter of 2 metres in the form of a falling arc. This shows clearly the trajectory of the missile from its entry point to its detonation point on the floor of the hall; see images 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- The hall was severely damaged as a result of the explosion; see images 6 and 7.

**Image 1**



**Image 2**



**Image 3**



**Image 4**



**Image 5**



**Image 6**



**Image 7**



## Image 8

*Second missile*

- The second missile, which was aimed at runway 1, landed at 1325.9 hours. The aircraft had been scheduled to land on runway 1 but was moved to runway 2 near the pavement around the hall owing to the large numbers of people who had come to meet the arriving passengers; see image 9.
- The point of impact is about 30 metres from the impact site of the first missile and some 50 metres from the location where the plane landed.
- The crater created by the impact of the missile is some 3 metres wide and 1.3 metres deep; see image 10.
- The projectile is believed to have been a high-speed missile. In the crater, it appears to be inclined, indicating its angle of entry. The point and angle of entry match the direction and angle of the blast; see image 11.
- The thick concrete wall of the pavement absorbed the impact shocks, cushioning the damage to the airport.
- The warhead contained an incendiary substance, as can be seen from the image, the extent of the flames and the burnt debris that was left at the site.

Image 9



Image 10



Image 11



*Third missile*

- The third missile landed at 1325.33 hours, at a site some 15 metres from the first missile and some 50 metres from the location where the aircraft landed; see image 12.
- The diameter of the crater is smaller than that of the other two missiles, at some 75 cm, and the depth is 35 cm; see image 13.
- The explosive charge of the third missile was different from that of the first and second missiles, and the debris found near the point of impact is also of a different type.

**Image 12**





Image 13



Image 14 – Missile blast sites in comparison



### Projectile specifications

The following findings were made by examining the size, depth and diameter of the craters, analysing the missile debris, and examining the images and footage captured by the surveillance cameras at Aden Airport:

- A short-range ballistic missile was used, with a range of between 90 and 160 km, mounted with an explosive warhead weighing between 50 and 70 kg, corresponding to the Russian BM-30 SMERTCH missile or Iranian missiles *Fajr-3*, *Quds* or *Badr*, which are manufactured by the Iranian Pasdaran corps.

### Bombardment trajectories and angles

On tracking and examining the trajectories and impact angles of the missiles, the following facts emerge:

- The first and third missiles entered at the same angle and were parallel. Their impact sites were some 15 metres apart, with a 40-degree angle and a 50-degree impact angle. The second missile followed a trajectory close to the impact sites of the first and third missiles, with a 35-degree angle and a 55-degree impact angle; see images 15, 16 and 17.
- The three missiles entered from the north and slightly to the west.

Image 15



Image 16



Image 17



**Information collected by the security and intelligence services**

The information contained in the reports of the military intelligence services, the National Security Service and the Political Security Agency, before and after the terrorist crime, includes considerable data related to the planning and execution of the incident, including the following:

- Missile launch sites and pads were installed and transported in the areas under Houthi control north and north-west of Aden.
- A number of Houthi leaders, accompanied by experts believed to be non-Yemenis, mobilized in the areas north and northwest of Aden. Some of those movements took place on the same day of the incident.
- The attack on Aden International Airport, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet coincided with particularly violent attacks to the north of Aden Governorate, at the front lines in Dali‘ Governorate.
- Eyewitnesses in various areas to the north and north-west of Aden that they saw and heard missiles being fired at Aden, something that has been confirmed by authenticated social media footage.

### **Legal framework**

- International agreements relating to the protection and safety of civil aviation
- The 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings
- The Arab Counter-Terrorism Convention
- International humanitarian law (Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols).
- The Yemeni Criminal Code (Act No. 12 (1994)).

### **Findings**

Having inspected the shrapnel that has been collected, examined the epicentres of the explosions and reviewed all the reports that we have received from competent parties and other sources, we have made the following findings:

- The projectile was a short-range ballistic missile with a range of 90–160 km.
- The missile warhead was laden with 50–70 kg of highly explosive trinitrotoluene (TNT), judging by the diameter of the warhead as measured from the shrapnel debris, as well as from the depth and width of the crater caused by the explosion, and taking into consideration the type of ground and concrete on which the explosion occurred.
- The three missiles were launched from at least 100 km away, based on the impact angle and the depletion level of the fuel.
- An advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) was used to direct the missile to its target with great accuracy. Such advanced navigation has a close-to-zero error rate. In Yemen, the only party that possesses it is the Houthi militia, which acquired it through Lebanese and Iranian experts or from other countries in the region.
- The Houthis are the only party that uses this type of ballistic missile, and they have previously launched attacks using missiles of similar quality and design.
- The trajectory of the missiles used in the attack on Aden International Airport confirms that the missiles came from the north and slightly to the west.
- Following thorough inspection, field visits and a review of the reports of experts who examined the crime scene, and based on the available evidence, it is clear that the party that possesses such technologies is the Houthi group.
- The Houthi group has previously used similar missiles to target populated areas in Ma‘rib Governorate and to target local and military leaders in various areas.

- Based on their range, direction of travel and trajectory, it is beyond doubt that the missiles were launched from areas under Houthi control, using the same technologies and navigation systems deployed in similar attacks within Yemen or against Saudi Arabia, particularly those used to target civilian airports.
- Although the analysis of the collected debris is still ongoing, initial findings and comparison with missiles used elsewhere show that the components of the missiles used to target the Prime Minister and Cabinet are very similar to those used by the Houthis in the past.
- The investigators have collected accounts from citizens in Houthi-controlled areas confirming the findings of the criminal investigations conducted by the Yemeni authorities.

Accordingly, we, the Yemeni Government, can say that there is conclusive evidence confirming the responsibility of the Houthi group and their supporters for the terrorist attack on the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The judicial agencies, the national investigation committee and the Yemeni security and intelligence services are continuing their investigations with a view to bringing the case before the judiciary.

### **Effects**

The terrorist attack perpetrated by the Houthi group caused numerous deaths and extensive property damage, particularly as follows:

- Seventeen civilians were killed, including travellers who happened to be in the departure hall and other people who were in attendance to greet the Prime Minister and the members of the Yemeni Government. Fourteen died on the spot; three died after being rushed to hospital. They included ICRC staff.
- 138 civilians were injured, including travellers and members of the welcoming party. Of those people, 21 are in a serious condition, 42 have medium injuries and 75 have light injuries.
- The terrorist attack caused severe damage to the infrastructure of Aden International Airport, not to mention the damage resulting from threats to the safety of civil aviation.

The Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs has invited the United Nations panel of experts established pursuant to the Security Council resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#) to carry out an urgent visit to Aden in order to investigate the facts and circumstances of the incident. It has expressed its readiness to provide all necessary assistance so that the team can investigate the terrorist crime.

### **Conclusion**

The Government of Yemen calls on the Security Council to fulfil its functions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and, in particular:

- To designate as an act of terrorism, and to condemn as such, this attack against an exclusively civilian facility, and to take all necessary measures against such a terrorist act in accordance with international humanitarian law and counter-terrorism laws;
- To take firm measures against the States that support the Houthis, including the Government of Iran, which has continued to overtly provide all forms of technical and material support to the Houthis.

The Government of Yemen welcomes any and all support and cooperation from the Security Council and the international community, especially in matters related to

the ongoing investigation, and in building and strengthening the capacities of law enforcement institutions, the judiciary and the national commission of inquiry, in order to enable them to fulfil their functions by investigating and holding accountable the perpetrators of this crime and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

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