



# The Political Thought of Yemen's Houthi Movement

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### Abstract

This research paper focuses on the Houthi movement in Yemen, also known as “Ansar Allah.” This movement is a religious group that belongs to the Yemeni Zaydi sect, which constitutes one of the three major branches of Shi'a branch of Islam. The study seeks to answer the following questions: What is the Houthi movement? What are its religious beliefs and political ideas? Additionally, it explores the movement's relationship with the tribes of Yemen, as well as its religious and political views toward these tribes. It also examines the movement's ideology regarding restricting governance and power to the descendants of the Yemeni Hashemite family to which the movement belongs, and how it rejects modern political participation based on elections and peaceful exchange of power. The Houthi's adherence to the law of “Khums” will be examined as well. Further, it analyzes how the Houthi movement uses violence and theocratic religious theories to forcefully and violently implement its political goals.

### Introduction

Yemen is currently experiencing a dangerous era in its history; one in which its national security, unity, civil peace, and the fabric of its society are threatened. Local violent religious groups are spread throughout the country and are in possession of very heavy weaponry – the Houthi movement took the weapons of the Yemeni government in 2014, and now the armed groups in southern Yemen have more weapons than the Yemeni state itself. Al-Qaeda, another armed group, has existed in Yemen since the beginning of the century. Yemen is also suffering from economic and social crises, and a deep political conflict between civil parties. All of these serious issues have escalated since the Houthi movement seized the Yemeni state and toppled its capital, Sana'a, on September 21, 2014, through a military coup. Undeniably, the Houthis' military coup has caused the country to spiral into violence and chaos, causing regional powers to intervene militarily.

### The Houthi movement (Ansar Allah) in Yemen

First and foremost, the Houthi movement and its religious-political thought is a complex problem that requires exploring ideological, political, historical, and military elements.

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The majority of the faith-based leaders and some ideologist supporters of the Houthi Movement belong to an ethnic group whose owners believe they are descendantsof Ali ibn Abi Talib, the cousin of the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) and claim that their origins come from the clan of Bani Hashim in Mecca to which the Prophet Mohammad and Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib belonged. This movement emerged in the Marran area in the Sa'ada governorate of Yemen and used armed violence in its first confrontation with the Yemeni state in 2004 (Humaid, 240) <sup>[i]</sup>. Its political, military, cultural and social activity appeared in this governorate from an early stage. In the beginning, the movement attempted to present ideas of the Zaydi doctrine, like restricting guardianship to the family of Al-Bayt,<sup>1</sup> through religious and cultural sermons at mosques and some public places in the rural and tribal areas of Sa'ada. The movement did not change its cultural ideology. Rather, the founder of the Houthi movement, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, was trying to promote religious ideas that suggested that he had the right to rule Yemen. The Houthi movement is still seeking to consolidate its rule in the northern areas of Yemen because these areas were a historical stronghold for Zaydi families). The rule of some Imam Zaydi families

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<sup>1</sup>- "Arabic: "People of the House,") designation in Islam for the holy family of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly his daughter Fāṭimah, her husband 'Alī (who was also Muhammad's cousin), their sons al-Ḥusayn and Ḥasan, and their descendants." (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ahl-al-Bayt>)

continued in some of these rugged areas for periods intermittently during the past centuries "(Dashela, p. 135).<sup>[iii]</sup>

It must be pointed out that the Houthi movement is not a minority, as some Western researchers think, but it is rather an integral part of the traditional Zaydi sect that had ruled Yemen for intermittent periods. The leaders of this movement were involved in power; and this will be clarified in this research. For instance, before the Yemeni revolution of 1962, the Houthis and Hashemite families, in general, were essential partners in the state led by a member of the Hashemite Zaydi family— first, by Imam Yahya Muhammed Hamideddin, and then his son Ahmed Yahya Muhammed Hamideddin, who continued to rule the northern Yemeni regions until 1962. After the Yemeni revolution against Imam Ahmed in 1962, the Hashemite Zaydi sect was not excluded from power; rather, this sect to which the Houthis belonged had become a part of the new republican regime and took many seats in the government. In addition to this, the Awqaf and Justice institutions were under the supervision of the Hashemite Zaydi sect, and they also had a strong presence in the educational, economic, media, military, security, and diplomatic institutions. For example, Ahmed Aqabat was the Minister of Justice, Hammoud Abbad, the minister of Religious Endowments, Tariq Al-Shami the head of the information service of the General People's Congress (the ruling party). Moreover, Yahya Al-Mutawakkil was the assistant secretary-general for political affairs in the General People's

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Congress and the interior minister in the government of the Yemeni former president, Saleh.<sup>[iii]</sup> Yahya al-Houthi, the brother of Hussein al-Houthi, the founder of the Houthi movement was a member of the ruling party, the General People's Congress. They were also elected members of the Yemeni parliament. It is clear that the leaders of the Houthi movement and the Hashemite class in general were partners in power. Therefore, talking about oppression against the movement of al-Houthi is not true. Researchers who are specialized in Yemeni affairs should realize this point. Obviously, the Houthi movement is a religious group. It has a political project and wants to rule Yemen in accordance with a religious basis. The current conflict between the Houthi movement and the Yemeni government confirms that Houthis want to rule Yemen by force.

## **Reasons for Establishing Al-Shabab Al-Muemen (The Believing Youth)**

After 1990, Hussein al-Houthi named [his movement] Al-Shabab Al-Muemen (The Believing Youth). After 1997, he withdrew from the Yemeni Parliament, of which he had been a member since 1993. “The Believing Youth Forum” had changed into an armed organization [...] It is the military wing of the Houthi movement since 2000. (Jazza, p. 3)<sup>[iv]</sup> The following are the reasons for establishing Al-Shabab Al-Muemen (The Believing Youth):

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- To restore the centrality of the Imamate, which is part of the Zaydi doctrine, that was neglected due to the republican system and democratic governance.
- To benefit from the Khomeinist revolutionary ideology, therefore resurrecting the Imamate in Yemen through an alliance with Tehran.
- To overthrow the Yemeni republican system and democratic governance with the argument that it is contrary to Islamic faith, specifically to the Zaydi doctrine and subject the Yemeni people to the authority of the Hashemite dynasty from a religious standpoint and a theocratic political perspective.
- To transform Yemen into an entity of the axis of resistance under the slogan: "Death to America, Death to Israel, A curse on the Jews, victory for Islam."

## Intellectual Foundations

Mohammad Azzan, one of the founders of Al-Shabab Al-Muemen (The Believing Youth) from whom the Houthi movement emerged, confirms that there are two currents in the Zaydi doctrine: the first was known as the "Salihya," which is related to Al-Hassan bin Saleh bin Hay, who died in 169 Hijriyah. This current is characterized by tolerance, flexibility, and avoidance of fanaticism and exaggeration in the



legitimization of political theories. The second current is “Al-Jaroudi,” which believes that the Imamate is a divine right that is specific to the sons of Fatima, the wife of Ali ibn Abi Talib. This current believes that the people have no choice but to accept the authority of the Imam, and that the Imam has an absolute right to conduct matters. The Shura<sup>2</sup> is required as a kind of advice, but not binding on the imam. This means that there should not be a democratic election and political parties. The people are obligated to follow the Imam, as he represents the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him). The ideology of this trend affirms that the Imam is supported by God. He knows and realizes what they do not know and realize, even if he is not infallible. <sup>[v]</sup>

The Houthi movement exploits the following verse to pass its political goals: “Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allah His Apostle and the (fellowship of) believers those who establish regular prayers and regular charity and they bow down humbly (in worship),” (Al-Quran Surah 5. Al-Maida, Ayah 55). The Houthis say this verse was revealed to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib. Thus, according to the Houthi movement, he is more entitled to caliphate after the Messenger and then his descendants: the sons of Fatima, daughter of Mohammed (peace be upon him). The

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<sup>2</sup> - “The principle of consultation, in particular as applied to government. ‘the cooperation of all is the basic pillar of shura’ (Oxford dictionary) <https://www.lexico.com/definition/shura>

Houthis believe that Yemenis should be ruled by a descendant of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) whom they call an Imam.

So, the intellectual foundations of the Houthi movement are based on the Wilayat3 project. This movement is a part of the Jarudi sect, relative to Abu al-Jaroud (Al-Sadiq, p. 23)[vi] “The Jarudiyah is a part of Zaydi Shia Islam. And the Houthi movement [loudly] declares that it belongs [to the Zaydi doctrine].” (P. 24). The Zaydi doctrine was given this name in relation to Zayd ibn Ali Zain al-Abidin bin Al-Hussein bin Ali, who led a popular revolution in Iraq against the Umayyads during the rule of Hisham bin Abdul Malik (al-Dowsari, p. 21).[vii] The term of the Zaydi state used for the authority which had established by Al-Imam Al-Hadi Yahya bin Al-Hussein in 910, Yemen. He had arrived in Yemen in 897. He is considered the founder of the Zaydi state in Yemen. (al-Jabarat, p. 11). [viii]

“In 1997, Badreddin al-Houthi objected to a democratic election. For several years, Badreddin al-Houthi and his sons devoted themselves to the organization of Al-Shabab Al-Muemen (The Believing Youth) and continued to practice their activities. The former Yemeni President, Ali Saleh allowed the spiritual father of the movement Badreddin al-Houthi to return from Iran to Yemen. Then, the movement of al-Houthi was cooperating with the government to resist tribal leaders, political factions,

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<sup>3</sup>- “Wilayat”, Houthis who belong to the Hashemites claim that they are the most deserving of ruling Yemen because they are belonging to the Ahl al-Bayt.

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and religious movements. After that, the conflict erupted between the movement of al-Houthi and the Yemeni government in 2004” (Abu al-Rub, p. 287).<sup>[ix]</sup>

Since the emergence of the Houthis as a rebel movement in Yemen, they have used the idea of themselves as a minority to achieve the following agendas: the first is to grant them the right to distinguish them from Yemenis; the second is to raise a sympathetic space with them. Thus, the Houthi political project has tried to portray its issues as related to human rights, when really it is committing acts of violence. (Hassan, p.53)<sup>[x]</sup>

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As previously mentioned, the Houthi movement seeks to rule as the right of the Hashemite sect, and the imam must be from the family of Al-bayt. This theocratic theory is based on the jurisprudence of the Zaydi branch of Islam, to which Houthis belong. This branch rejects democracy and the peaceful exchange of power through elections. In the political thought of the Houthi movement, there is no need for democracy in Yemen, and here is the root of the problem. The most important thing is that many academics, writers, and intellectuals of the Hashemite Zaydi sect who had been involved in the political process and participated in political parties in the past recently backed away from

their previous positions and began to support the Houthi's political thought, and this is also another problem. "Hussein al-Houthi himself rejects pluralism in any sense of its meaning in thought or in the branches of jurisprudence. (al-Daghshi, pp. 119-121).<sup>[xi]</sup> He invokes the Almighty saying (All together hold fast the rope of Allah (Faith of Islam) and be not divided among yourselves.)"

The Houthi movement adheres to many themes to which the Shiites adhere, such as the entitlement of Ahl al-Bayt to the caliphate, and prefer the hadiths that talk about Ahl al-Bayt only. (al-Daghshi, p25). The political ideology of this movement caused Yemeni people to reject it because this robs them of their political and civil rights. The Houthi political philosophy divides people on ethnic grounds, so that the Hashemite sect members have priority in government, while the members of the Yemeni society from other classes have nothing to do but obey the Houthi imam. Moreover, this political ideology contradicts the basic principles of human rights. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) in Article (20) emphasized that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law." (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).<sup>[xii]</sup>

According to the Zaydis, the imamate, or general guardianship for Muslims, is confined to adult males descending from the "Batinen," which means the lineage of Hassan or Hussein, the sons of Ali bin Abi Talib).

[xiii]Therefore, the Yemeni civil political parties ask the following question: How can political partnership with the Houthi movement be possible, while it claims that it is more entitled to rule? Nobody has the right to contradict or argue about the issue of the rule. The leaders of the Houthi movement do not know that Yemenis live in the 21st century, an era of political, cultural, economic, and civil rights transformations.

### **Houthi Social Philosophy and the Issue of al-Khums**

The Houthi movement and Hashemite families in general claim that they belong to the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him). The claim itself is not particularly problematic; however the Houthi movement has brought the country into wars and committed violations against Yemenis under the pretext of genetic superiority. They also claim that they are more entitled to knowledge and religious, political, and social standing, and the rest of the Yemenis must serve them. The movement devotes all its capabilities to ruling Yemenis by force and practicing various forms of violations against them. Some of these violations are as follows: the expulsion of the Jews from Yemen, the recent deportation of some members of the Baha'i community, spreading chaos, overthrowing the country's institutions as well as practicing torture in prisons against anyone who opposes the movement's ideology.

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“A Yemeni human rights organization has warned that there are 10,000 detainees at risk of contracting COVID-19 in areas under the control of the Houthi movement, calling for the immediate release of “all kidnapped persons before the pandemic sweeps secret detention centers and public prisons (DW).”<sup>[xiv]</sup> The Houthi movement has also shut down the partisan press, and imprisoned journalists and political activists. “According to the latest human rights reports by the Yemeni Network for Rights and Freedoms in cooperation with 13 international organizations, the Houthi movement has committed 389 violations during the month of January 2020 only. This is a comprehensive statistic of crimes and violations committed by the Houthi movement, divided between direct killing, arbitrary arrest, and enforced disappearance, which affected civilians in all areas controlled by the Houthi movement.” (The Yemeni Network for Rights: 389 violations against civilians in the country within a month)<sup>[xv]</sup>

Today, people over the world demand freedom, equality, rule of law, civil rights, and the necessity of activating international laws to combat the criminalization of racism and class discrimination, while the Houthis announce a new law (Khums) to obtain the money, as the Houthi movement granted what it describes as Hashemites 20% of the Republic's national income. According to the new system of “al-Khums,” 20% of Yemen's income will be collected for what the movement calls “Hashemite families,” which means dividing Yemeni society into

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Hashemites (which make up the upper class according to the intellectual logic of the Houthi movement), and the tribes and other classes. Through this law, it becomes clear that the movement wants to distribute public wealth and define rights and duties based on ethnic and class bases. This is inconsistent with the human rights laws guaranteed by the Yemeni constitution and international covenants that affirm equal citizenship in all rights and duties.

The Yemeni activist Hamadan Al-Alea says: “the Houthi movement has enshrined the idea of (Hashemite) ethnic selection by repeating the reference to ‘Bani Hashem’ three times in the law of al-Khums. This shows the contradiction between the declared slogans of this movement and its embrace of the ideology of superiority and distinction through descent on the rest of Yemeni societal components. He also stressed in his speech before the Human Rights Council in Geneva, at the 44th session, which was held on 3-July-2020, “[...] that the Khums is nothing but the economic manifestation of the racism that Yemenis have been suffering from for a long time.” <sup>[xvi]</sup>

## Ethnic Discrimination in the Thought of the Houthi Movement

In fact, the ethnic discrimination used by the Houthi movement is not just racism from the endeavors of populist people, such as Nazism in Europe or the Apartheid regime in South Africa or even the caste system in India. Indeed, the racist ideology of the Houthi movement is like Nazism, because it collides with the basic values of democracy. The leaders of this movement consider themselves as the guardians of the people, and those who oppose their thought, are considered contrary to Islam. So this movement is a theocratic movement because it claims that Houthis' genes are distinct. An important document to read to get additional information about the political viewpoints of the Zaydi sect and the Houthi movement is the "intellectual document" which was signed in March 2012 by a number of Zaydi religious scholars. Researchers of the Yemeni affairs can also return to reading the books of "Al-Shafi" by Abdullah bin Hamzah, one of the Zaydi references, in addition to the lectures by Hussein Al-Houthi, the founder of the Houthi movement. All these books confirm their theory of divine selection.

The following are some manifestations of ethnic discrimination in the Houthi movement



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- The Hashemite Zaydi class use names that indicate racism, for instance; “Sayyid<sup>[4]</sup>,” “Sharif” (a descendant of Muhammad through his daughter Fatima.), and “Muzaffar” (the Victorious), while other names are given to the rest of the society. Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi says in his lecture entitled “The Meaning of Prayer on the Prophet”: “Everyone knows the fame of the family of Imam Ali [...] in Yemen they are known by special names (Sayyid).” (Al-Houthi, p. 5).<sup>[xvii]</sup>
- A non-Hashemite cannot marry a Hashemite woman except in rare cases.
- Imposing Khums for the Hashemite families.
- Distinguishing Hashemite graves from the rest of the people.

## The Conflict between the State and Houthis and the Scenario of Toppling Sana'a

After six rounds of conflict (2004-2009) between the Houthi movement and the Yemeni state, the Houthis gained control over most of the Sa'ada governorate. This military achievement gave Houthis the opportunity to expand their activities (Al-Arousi, p. 104).<sup>[xviii]</sup> During the Yemeni youth revolution in 2011, the Houthi movement participated in this revolution in a formal way. On the other hand, it had used weapons to

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<sup>[4]</sup>. “A Muslim claiming descent from Muhammad, especially through Husayn, the prophet's younger grandson.”

bring down areas in some northern governorates. It did not stop at the point of eradicating its opponents in Sa'ada (Al-Arousi, p 105), but it also took over the provinces of Amran and Sana'a and accused its opponents of terrorism. In addition to this, it used the slogan of combating extremism to oppress its opponents. The Yemeni government remained silent, and some Yemeni political parties also supported the Houthi movement's military acts, including Ali Saleh's General People's Congress Party. (Al-Arousi ,p 105).

The movement of al-Houthi used several slogans in order to overthrow the government of Yemen. It sometimes told the Yemeni tribes and citizens that it was not against them, but against specific political parties in Sa'ada. It called these parties "the takfiris"<sup>5</sup>, and after it overthrew Sa'ada governorate, it headed towards Amran. When the Houthis reached the center of the city, they told the tribes that they were against the tribe of al-Ahmar. They started to bomb some private and educational civil institutions and the homes of some political opponents, including the homes of Sheikh al-Ahmar, the leader of the Yemeni Hashid tribe, and the headquarters of some political parties like the Islah party.

Furthermore, when the Houthi movement controlled Amran by force, it looted the 310 Brigade and liquidated the Brigade commander, Hameed al-Qushaibi. After that, it was calling it the government of

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<sup>5</sup>- "It derived from the word kafir (unbeliever), and is described as when "one who is a Muslim is declared impure".<https://cutt.ly/AfQJ7h6>

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Saturday because the government made Saturday an official holiday. Then, the Houthis stormed Sana'a and arrested the president of Yemen and the members of his government, and headed towards Aden. The Houthi movement's military coup has spread violence and civil strife across the country. Furthermore, the Houthi's armed rebellion brought regional intervention which is still ongoing till this moment.

### **The Houthi Movement and the Tribe**

During the September 26<sup>th</sup> Revolution in 1962, some Yemeni tribes had supported the Hashemite dynastic regime represented by the Hamid ed-Din family, while other tribes supported the new republican movement represented by a group of Yemeni liberals. For example, Saudi Arabia sided with the Hashemite dynastic regime and Egyptian regime supported the revolutionist republican stream. This conflict lasted for eight years. In the end, power was shared between the Republican stream and the Imamate and its supporters.

Historically, the Zaydi Hashemite sect relies on the tribe to stabilize the pillars of its religious rule. The Zaydi sect could not rule without the support of the tribes; history and current events prove that. The Houthi movement realized the importance of the tribe and its pivotal role in conflict resolution, so it did not antagonize the tribe at the beginning. Of course, the movement belongs to the Zaydi sect which is concentrated in

some rugged mountainous areas in the northern regions of Yemen where tribes are scattered. Therefore, it began to focus on the remote tribal areas of Sa'ada, Al-Jawf, Hajjah, and Dhamar because these governorates are the main centers for the supporters of the Zaydi sect, then Sana'a and Amran in a lesser way.

The tribe is indispensable because the Yemeni society is a traditional, conservative tribal society. The Houthi movement's first action was to attract tribes by buying loyalties, enticing, and sometimes using oppression to subjugate the tribes. It is obvious that there are trade-offs between buying loyalty and repression. The movement cannot continue in this way because it will not be able to find a sustainable equilibrium between those two options. Thus, "it is necessary to realize the complex relation between the Houthi movements as a religious-political group and the tribe, which is an essential component of the Yemeni social structure." (al-Arami, Al-Safir Al-Arabi)<sup>[xix]</sup> In fact, the Yemeni tribe does not object the establishment of a Yemeni civil state. If the tribe perceived that there was a real state, it would likely support it.

It is clear that the tribe is one of the most important components of Yemeni society; the Houthi movement knows that it does not have a political future without the support of the tribe. Therefore, it is still approaching tribes and trying to spread its ideology among them and explain its false historical grievances based on religious fallacies. However, it fails in convincing them. Besides, the movement threatens its

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tribal opponents and uses the state weapons to suppress them. As a result of the absence of education, the spread of ignorance and illiteracy in the northern regions in particular, the movement was able to spread its ideology among certain tribes, which caused some children and youth to join the movement's military wing.

Moreover, the Houthi movement formed the so-called "Tribal Cohesion Council" chaired by Deifullah Rassam. It also announced the "Tribal Honor Document" in 2015. According to this document, the tribal sheikhs who oppose the sectarian ideology of Houthis should be abused. The Houthis would blow up their homes and possibly imprison them as they did with many tribal sheikhs in Amran, Sana'a and Dhammar. For instance, "they destroyed the house of tribal sheikh AbdulJaleel Al Hothaiyfi." [xx] After the Arab Coalition intervened in Yemen on March 26, 2015, the Houthi movement began to use the language of defending the homeland and confronting aggression, which made some tribesmen join the movement. Thus, the relationship between the tribe and the Houthi movement is clearly not based on respect, but rather on pay off and intimidation.

## Houthi-Iranian Relations

The Iranian intervention in Yemen began after the success of the Iranian revolution in 1979. This revolution was welcomed by the

supporters of Zaydism. There were demonstrations of support for Khomeini in the streets of Sa'ada City, Yemen. These demonstrations provoked the Yemeni government, causing it to launch a campaign of arrests against the demonstrators.<sup>[xxi]</sup>“After the 1979 revolution in Iran, the Iranian Embassy started sending invitations to young Yemeni men to visit Iran and get introduced to the Iranian revolution experience in the 1980s. Many [Zaydi] men were interested, mainly Mohammad Azan, Abdul Karim Jadban and Hussein al-Houthi, founder of the Houthi group. Some Zaydi scholars like Badr Din al-Houthi who is Hussein's father, visited Iran.” (Maysaa, Open Democracy)<sup>[xxii]</sup>

It is clear that the Iranian government stands with the Houthi movement politically, militarily, security and informally—through the well-known Iranian media outlets such as Al-Alam TV and some other media outlets. For example, “Al-Alam TV broadcasts more than 47 programs on the Houthi movement” (Al-Faruq, p. 44)<sup>[xxiii]</sup> as well as the daily programs and extensive coverage of the movement's military and cultural activities. The rapprochement between the Houthi movement and the Iranian regime became evident after the peaceful Yemeni Youth Revolution in 2011, and after hosting many followers of the Houthi movement on Iranian television networks. After 2011, Iran “intensified its presence in Yemen by inviting activists and youth of the revolution to visit Iran or holding some conferences related to the Yemeni revolution in Beirut.” (Ibid.) Iran intended through these meetings to enable Houthis to

control the Northern provinces, and to strengthen them militarily in order to pressure Saudi Arabia and threaten its national security. Iran also believes that the presence of a military arm in Yemen, similar to Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Badr Corps in Iraq is an effective card in its bargaining with the West in order to obtain nuclear weapons. (Humaid, p.203) <sup>[xxiv]</sup>

Iran succeeded in implementing its plan when the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, was overthrown by the Houthi movement on September 21, 2014. Indeed, "the representative of Tehran in the Iranian parliament, Ali Reza Zakani, who is close to the Iranian leader Ali Khamenei, was ecstatic during his speech in front of the Iranian parliament when he said: "three Arab capitals are now under the control of the Iranian Islamic revolution," indicating that Sana'a had become the fourth. (Iranian official: Sana'a is the fourth Arab capital to join the Iranian revolution) <sup>[xxv]</sup>

The Houthi movement used the slogan of death "Allah is Greater, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse on the Jews, Victory to Islam" (Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse on the Jews). <sup>[xxvi]</sup> This slogan was inspired by the slogans of the Iranian Khomeini revolution. Hussein al-Houthi found the "velayat-e al-Faqih<sup>6</sup>", which Khomeini used as a suitable solution to ascend to power even if he was not a descendant

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6 - Khomeini's Concept of Governance of the Jurisconsult "(Wilayat al-Faqih)

of Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) – a solution which is not present in Zaydi doctrine. Moreover, his life in Tehran enabled him to seek political and economic aid and military assistance from Iran, and this has been happening since 2004. Since June 2004, Al-Shabab Al-Muemen (The Believing Youth) have turned into military militias with an ideological dimension. (Farghali, website of Hafryat) <sup>[xxvii]</sup> Recently, Iran recognized the Houthi movement as the legitimate representative of the Yemeni people and received its ambassador. The Secretary-General of the Arab League condemned this act. <sup>[xxviii]</sup> This recognition is considered evidence of Iran's support for the Houthi movement to settle its own scores with some regional powers at the expense of the Yemenis' safety and territorial integrity.

In conclusion, Yemen is clearly located in a strategic geographical area, and the arrival of the Houthi movement or other radical groups like Al-Qaeda to power poses a serious threat to the Yemeni civil peace and international navigation. Yemen will not be stabilized as long as this religious movement is at the head of power and has weapons for the following reasons:

- A-** The Houthi movement is trying to confiscate the rights of others by restricting the rule to the family of Al-Bayt and using religion to justify its political thought. It wants to take approximately 20% of the income of Yemeni people, in the name of the Law of Khums, for the family of Al-Bayt.



- B-** The Houthi movement wants to enforce the idea that Yemenis have no choice but to obey Houthis by arguing that obeying the Houthis means obeying Allah. Yemenis refuse this theory.
- C-** The leaders of the Houthi movement consider themselves as persecuted if they not in power, and if they are in power, they must be obeyed. This is illogical.
- D-** The disputes between Yemenis and the Houthi movement are not completely political, as some imagine. These disputes are in the ideological thought of this movement based on the exclusion of the other. The Houthi movement tries to confiscate the rights of others to equality, a right guaranteed by all divine laws as well as man-made laws.
- E-** The continued control of this group over the power in Yemen means a repetition of the scenario of Joseph Kony, who was fighting in the name of God and led the guerrilla war in Uganda previously.

Thus, it becomes clear that the Houthi movement, like any theocratic group, uses violence and false religious theories as a means to achieve its political goals, which exposes Yemen and the region to waves of violence and permanent political conflict. Therefore, if international resolutions related to the conflict in Yemen are not implemented, it seems that the Lebanon-Iraq scenario will be repeated in Yemen, which would mean the recurrence of sectarian quotas. This will weaken Yemen and help spread corruption, and harm the Yemeni citizen.

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## About The Paper

This research paper focuses on the Houthi movement in Yemen, also known as "Ansar Allah." This movement is a religious group that belongs to the Yemeni Zaydi sect, which constitutes one of the three major branches of Shi'a branch of Islam. The study seeks to answer the following questions: What is the Houthi movement? What are its religious beliefs and political ideas? Additionally, it explores the movement's relationship with the tribes of Yemen, as well as its religious and political views toward these tribes. It also examines the movement's ideology regarding restricting governance and power to the descendants of the Yemeni Hashemite family to which the movement belongs, and how it rejects modern political participation based on elections and peaceful exchange of power. The Houthi's adherence to the law of "Khums" will be examined as well. Further, it analyzes how the Houthi movement uses violence and theocratic religious theories to forcefully and violently implement its political goals.

## Vision

To be one of the main sources and reference for researchers and those interested in Yemeni affairs, in order to provide wider support for democratic process.

## Our Message

To produce a highly professional and impartial studies and reports, and share them with specialists in the Yemeni affairs in various aspects; political, humanitarian and cultural.



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