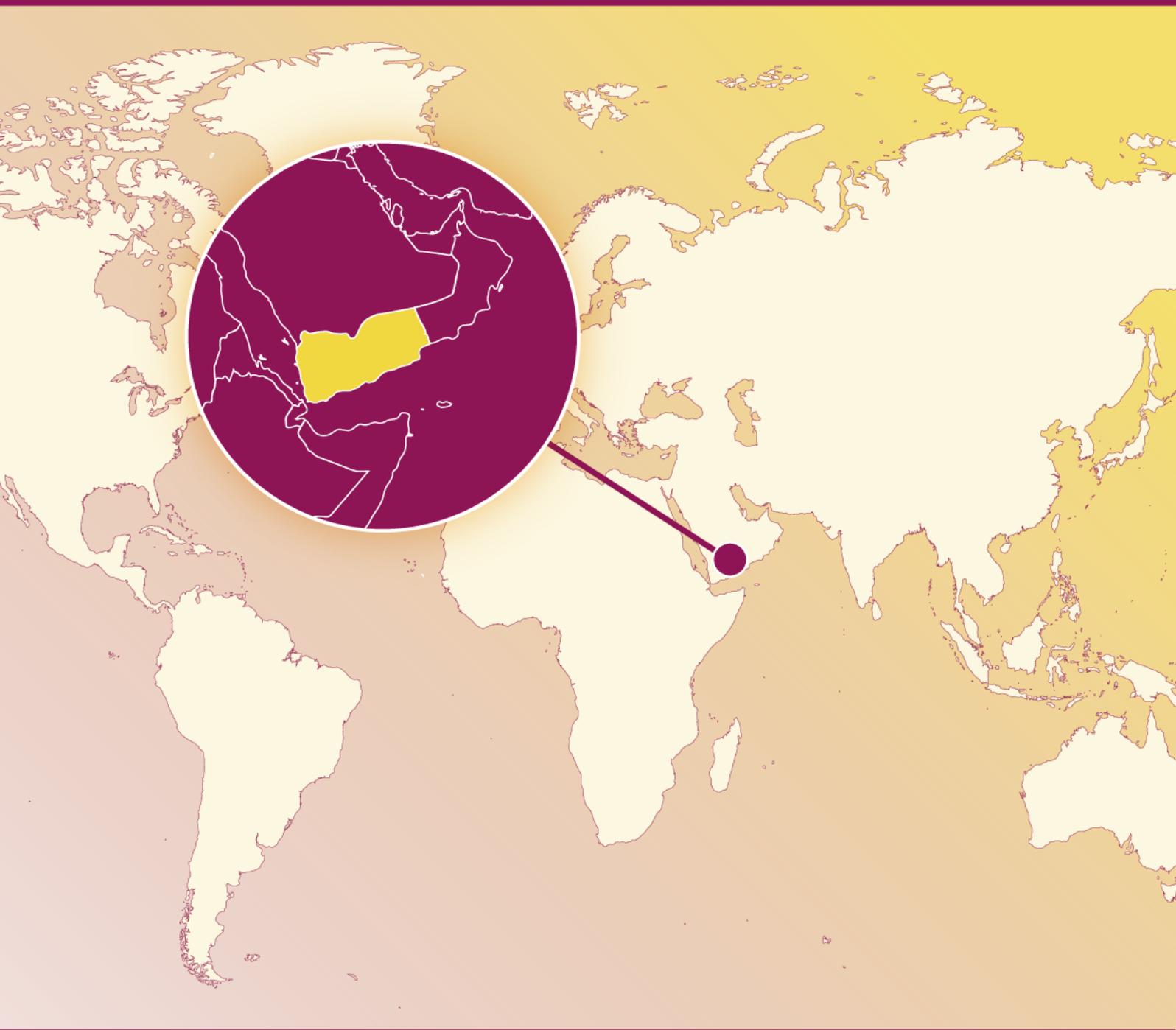


# YEMEN

## Violence Against Health Care in Conflict

2022



**SAFEGUARDING  
HEALTH  
IN CONFLICT**



# Letter from the Chair



The more than 1,900 incidents of violence against health care in war and situations of political unrest described in this report are by far the highest number documented by the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition since it began reporting a decade ago. The more than 700 assaults by Russia on health care in Ukraine are the most committed in a single year in one country.

Russia's atrocities in Ukraine have brought global attention to assaults on health care in war, highlighting pervasive violations of long-standing humanitarian norms. But in less visible conflicts and civil strife, the numbers of acts of violence and the stories behind them are equally grim: doctors imprisoned – and sometimes killed – in Myanmar and Iran for treating people in need of care; female health workers in Afghanistan harassed and sometimes beaten as they seek to provide health care for women and children; community health workers murdered in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere as they go door to door to immunize children against polio and other infectious diseases.

In the face of the profound harms communities and health workers endure from this violence, the international community has long been passive, even ignoring commitments it has made to prevent attacks and hold perpetrators to account. Impunity for the violence has continued, and even the tracking of attacks has faltered. The World Health Organization's (WHO) system for collecting and disseminating data on attacks on health care in emergencies is plagued by inadequate reporting, lack of transparency, and resistance to reform. After being criticized for reporting zero attacks in Ethiopia despite evidence of looting or damage to hospitals and health centers during the conflict in Tigray, the WHO removed Ethiopia from its public dashboard on attacks on health care.

If we mobilize, however, the war in Ukraine could prove an inflection point. Never have calls for accountability for attacks on health care been as loud and sustained as now. We have an opportunity to press for justice for the people of Ukraine in the face of these atrocities and to extend that demand to people everywhere. The time for accountability for these devastating assaults on health care throughout the world is *now*.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Len Rubenstein". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Len Rubenstein  
Chair, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition



## REPORTED INCIDENTS AND MOST COMMONLY REPORTED CONCERNS



↓ Source: 2022 SHCC Health Care Yemen Data

## OVERVIEW

The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) identified 24 incidents of violence against or obstruction of health care in Yemen in 2022, a similar number to 20 in 2021. In these incidents, at least seven health workers were killed and five others kidnapped. Health facilities were damaged at least 12 times and this often led to their closure, impacting the population's access to health care. This factsheet is based on the dataset [2022 SHCC Health Care Yemen Data](#), which is available for download on the Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX).

## THE CONTEXT

Saudi coalition air strikes continued to impact health facilities in Yemen's northeastern governorates in 2022. Armed violence by Houthi forces affected health care providers in Yemen's southern governorates despite the start of a [UN-mediated truce](#) between Houthi and anti-Houthi forces in April, which succeeded in reducing overall levels of violence. While the truce was slated to end at the beginning of October 2022, it has informally continued until mid-April 2023.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST OR OBSTRUCTION OF HEALTH CARE IN 2022

Incidents spread from nine of Yemen's governorates in 2021 to 14 in 2022, with new cases reported in Ad Dali', Aden, Al Bayda', Al Hudaydah, Al Jawf, Hajjah, Ibb, and Sana'a governorates, reflecting the ongoing armed violence in the country. Most incidents affected health care providers from the national health structure, with one reported incident directly affecting an INGO.

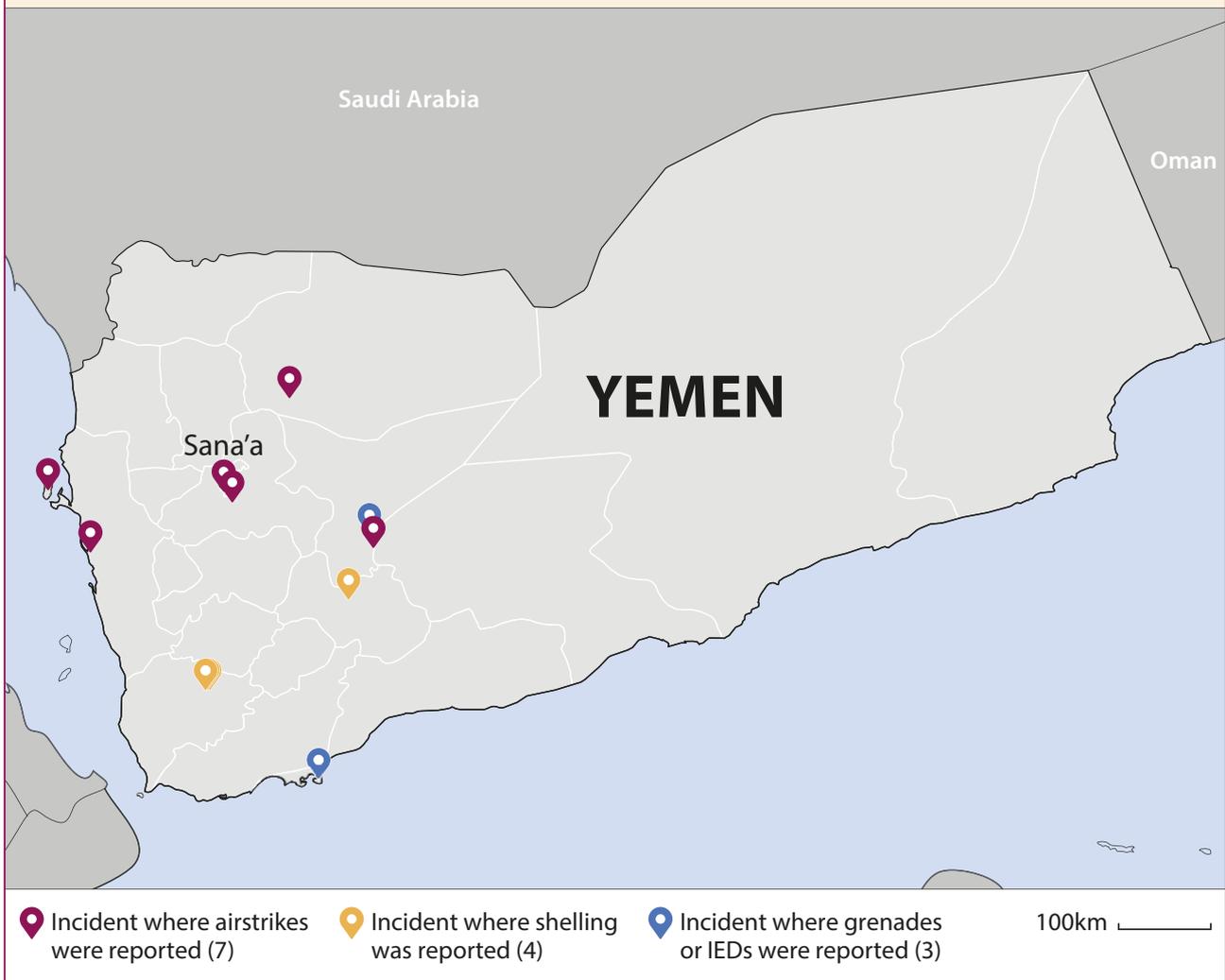
Saudi-led coalition air strikes damaged health facilities on seven occasions in 2022, an increase from four in 2021. All seven air strikes took place between January and March in the northeastern Al Hudaydah, Al Jawf, Amanat Al Asimah, Shabwah, and Sana'a governorates. On January 19, two hospitals in al Wahdah district in Amanat Al Asimah were damaged in air strikes. Five incidents were attributed to Houthi rebels, a similar number to 2021. Houthi rebels shelled a hospital in Taiz, stormed a health center in Ibb, kidnapped a health



worker in Amanat Al Asimah, killed a security guard in Hajjah, and planted landmines near a hospital in Marib in June that detonated and injured a demining project engineer.<sup>1</sup> Two incidents were attributed to Yemeni police. One such incident involved a doctor who was tortured to death while in police custody in Hadhramaut in June; in the other, an ambulance carrying injured 1st Giants Brigade fighters was shot at and damaged by police after clashes erupted in Aden in July. Gunmen suspected to belong to the Taiz Military Axis, which is under the command of the Yemeni army, stole an ambulance in September. Other attackers were not identified.

## Locations of explosive weapons use impacting health care in Yemen, 2022

Health facilities in Yemen's northeastern governorates were damaged in Saudi-led coalition air strikes, and health facilities in the country's southern governorates were damaged in shelling, grenade, or improvised explosive device (IED) attacks.





## HEALTH FACILITIES DAMAGED

---

All 12 incidents where health facilities, including hospitals, a warehouse, and a health institute, were damaged involved the use of explosive weapons, including air strikes, grenades, and shelling. Together with the seven incidents involving Saudi-led coalition air strikes, four additional incidents involved shelling, damaging hospitals in Al Bayda' and Taiz governorates. Direct damage to health facilities not only endangers the safety of health workers and patients, but can also lead to the irreparable damaging of equipment necessary for vital care, making the provision of such care more difficult. Other incidents involved the use of explosive weapons near health facilities that impacted access to health care. In June, a car bomb exploded inside a Southern Transitional Council-affiliated Security Belt Forces vehicle parked outside a hospital in Ad Dali', leading to clashes between gunmen wearing military clothing and Security Belt Forces; in the same month, a landmine detonated near a hospital in Marib.<sup>2</sup> In December, grenades were thrown at a health INGO's office in Aden governorate by unidentified attackers, damaging a generator, water pipes, and a fuel tank, which limited the INGO's ability to focus on supporting the health sector.<sup>3</sup>

## HEALTH WORKERS KILLED OR KIDNAPPED

---

Seven health workers were reported killed in 2022, compared to three in 2021. Together with the doctor tortured to death while detained at a police station, two hospital guards were killed by unidentified attackers while providing security outside hospitals in Hajjah and Taiz. Four health workers were killed in unclear circumstances in October.

Five health workers were kidnapped in three incidents in 2022, similar to the number in 2021.<sup>4</sup> In May, three INGO health staff were kidnapped from their marked vehicles at a checkpoint by tribesmen in Lahij. They were taken together with their vehicles to a nearby location, where they were held all day until they were released after tribal mediation. In November, a health worker was kidnapped by armed men while working inside a hospital in Ibb and a hospital director was abducted by Houthi forces in Amanat al Asima. The fate of these two individuals was not reported. Violence against health workers impacts health providers' ability to maintain safe staffing levels and protect staff well-being.

## THE IMPACT OF ATTACKS ON HEALTH CARE

---

In February 2023, the WHO reported that 46% of all Yemeni health facilities were only partially functioning or completely out of service due to shortages of staff, funds, electricity, medicines, supplies, and equipment. As of 2023, at least 10 million people are estimated to have no access to health care services. Moreover, an estimated 2.9 million women of reproductive age lack access to maternal, child care, and reproductive services, while an estimated 1.1 million children suffering from malnutrition are facing deteriorating health or even death.

According to the ICRC, in February 2023, although a large number of the estimated 4.2 million people who have been displaced by the conflict need urgent and regular access to health care services, such access is challenging. Women and children represent nearly three-quarters of the civilians displaced by the conflict.



- 
- 1 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2023 Report Dataset: 2022 SHCC Health Care Yemen Data. Incident numbers 33010; 35311; 36680; 35264; 33018.
  - 2 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2023 Report Dataset: 2022 SHCC Health Care Yemen Data. Incident numbers 33016; 33018.
  - 3 Insecurity Insight. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2023 Report Dataset: 2022 SHCC Health Care Yemen Data. Incident number 36269.
  - 4 Insecurity Insight Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition 2023 Report Dataset: 2022 SHCC Health Care Yemen Data. Incident numbers 32908; 36295; 36680.

# SAFEGUARDING HEALTH IN CONFLICT

The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition is a group of more than 40 organizations working to protect health workers and services threatened by war or civil unrest. We have raised awareness of global attacks on health and pressed United Nations agencies for greater global action to protect the security of health care. We monitor attacks, strengthen universal norms of respect for the right to health, and demand accountability for perpetrators.

[www.safeguardinghealth.org](http://www.safeguardinghealth.org)

---

Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition  
615 N. Wolfe Street, E7143, Baltimore, MD 21205  
SHCC administrator, [safeguardinghcc@gmail.com](mailto:safeguardinghcc@gmail.com)