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Monday, 13 April 2026 - 25 Shawwal 1447 AH

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**Exclusive - Houthis Restore Slavery
in Yemen**



People walk in a market street in Yemen's southwestern city of Taiz on November 13, 2018. (AFP)

Sanaa: Asharq Al Awsat (/taxonomy/term/107636)

07:56-13 July 2019 AD 10 - Thul-Qi'dah 1440 AH

(https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Exclusive%20-%20Slavery%20in%20Yemen&url=https://english.aawsat.com/node/1810456)

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Modern slavery is prevalent in Yemeni regions under the control of the Iran-backed Houthi militias, including the capital Sanaa.

Sources close to the group told Asharq Al-Awsat that several civilians have been forced into slavery by prominent Houthi leaders. More than 1,800 Yemenis work as servants and slaves at the residences and workplaces of high-ranking Houthi officials.

These including militias leader Abdulmalek al-Houthi, his brother Abdulkhaliq and their relatives Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, Hamza al-Houthi, Abdulkarim al-Houthi, Mohammed Abdulkarim al-Houthi,

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Yehya Badreddine al-Houthi, Sheikh Ashraf al-Kabsi, Abdulrab Saleh Jarfan, Hassan Amer and others.

The Houthis are working tirelessly to restore slavery in Yemen, nearly 70 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and decades after the 1962 revolution in Yemen. The revolt called for liberation against all forms of oppression and slavery.

Several local reports have confirmed that slavery witnessed a rise in Yemen during the past four years when the Houthis staged their coup against the legitimate government. Crimes linked to modern slavery vary from actual slavery, abusing people's poverty and hunger, forced marriage, human trafficking and the forced recruitment of children, women and African migrants.

Yemeni activists revealed that since the coup, the Houthis sought to segregate Yemeni society into rulers and subjects, and masters and slaves.

They told Asharq Al-Awsat that the Houthis are attempting to cement these ideas in society by having the Houthi family seize all aspects of the state and its institutions.

“We do not doubt this segregation because it is the literal implementation of racist ideology that is based on modern slavery and the divine right to control rule, money and the affairs of the people,” they said.

A member of the lawyers syndicate in Yemen told Asharq Al-Awsat that some Houthi elders and social figures still enslave the poor, bind their freedoms and force them to work without pay. They are also forced to the battlefield to fight for the Houthis.

The Houthi discrimination against the people is based on color, race and ancestry, he said on condition of anonymity.

The masters, who call themselves the “Hashemites”, are now at the top of Yemen’s social class. They believe themselves to be of the purest ancestry and have given themselves the privilege of ruling the country and accumulating wealth. They are followed by tribes, workers and farmers. This class is often looked down upon and discriminated against by the Houthis.

Slavery is outlawed by Yemeni law, said the lawyer. Perpetrators can face no less than ten years for

buying, selling or depriving a human of his free will.

Since their coup, the Houthis have sought to turn back the hands of time and take back Yemen to the era of the oppressive imamate and all forms of slavery.

A civilian, who works for a pro-Houthi tribal leader in Saada, told Asharq Al-Awsat: “I have been working for years at the sheikh’s house without pay. I cannot go back to my family or do anything out of my own free will.”

“I do not know the meaning of freedom,” he said.

He revealed that he is responsible for all the house work, as well as farming. He noted that the number of servants and slaves rose remarkably under Houthi rule, attributing it to the increase in poverty, unemployment and hunger, all of which were sparked by the coup.

Experts confirmed that poverty, starvation tactics, oppression and systematic Houthi exploitation have forced civilians into slavery.

The Minister of Awqaf in the legitimate government had previously called for the need to uncover the Houthis’ misleading

practices, expose their discrimination against the people and their dividing of society into masters and slaves.

According to an international report, more than 40 million people around the world, including 85,000 in Yemen, are victims of slavery. It said the war-torn countries of Yemen and Syria account for 76 percent of slavery cases in the Arab world.

A US State Department report had also previously confirmed modern slavery in Yemen, accusing the Houthis and the al-Qaeda group of promoting slavery and human trafficking. Sexual abuse, slavery and child recruitment are among the most glaring examples of human trafficking in Yemen, it said.

Features (<https://english.aawsat.com/home/features/section/2501>)

**Iran, Lebanon Bore Brunt of
Missiles and Drones Launched
During War**

(<https://english.aawsat.com/features/5261156-iran-lebanon-bore-brunt-missiles-and-drones-launched-during-war>)



People stand next to a Synagogue, which was damaged in a strike, amid the US-Israeli conflict with Iran, in Tehran, Iran, April 7, 2026. Majid Asgaripour/WANA (West Asia News Agency) via Reuters

11:45-11 April 2026 AD 23 - Shawwal 1447 AH



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Some three-quarters of the airstrikes during the Middle East war targeted sites in Iran or Lebanon, according to an AFP analysis of data from ACLED, a non-profit that tracks political violence worldwide.

At least 7,700 strikes or series of strikes by missiles, drones, rockets or bombs, were recorded by the US-based conflict research group between the start of the war on February 28 up to April 8, when a fragile ceasefire concluded between Tehran and Washington came into effect.

ACLED collected and vetted its data from sources that it considers reliable, such as news reports, social

networks, institutions, and other NGOs.

This count, which includes attacks that were intercepted, cannot be considered an exhaustive list from the conflict.

- Iran -

Approximately four out of 10 recorded attacks targeted Iran, mostly attributed to the Israeli military. According to AFP's analysis, in only a third of the cases could the target be identified as military or linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the regime's ideological army.

A third of the attacks had no identified target. April 6 and 7 -- the two days preceding the ceasefire -- saw the highest number of strikes.

- Lebanon -

Lebanon, where Israel has been conducting a campaign triggered by the Iran-backed movement Hezbollah on March 2 launching an offensive, accounted for a third of the attacks, according to ACLED data as of April 3.

The vast majority were carried out by Israeli forces, while nearly 10 percent were Hezbollah attacks

against Israeli positions in the south of Lebanon.

Israel asserts the two-week ceasefire agreed between the United States and Iran does not apply to Lebanon and it has continued to bombard the country.

- Israel -

One in seven attacks targeted Israel, most of which were intercepted. The attacks were in almost equal proportions from Iran and Hezbollah.

- Other countries -

The main countries targeted by Iran were Gulf states, primarily the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain. In Iraq, 40 percent of the attacks were against Kurdish groups and 20 percent against US interests.

Qatar and Oman were targeted to a lesser extent.

In Syria, ACLED recorded approximately one hundred incidents, but these were mainly the result of Iranian missiles and drones being intercepted by Israel. Several dozen similar incidents were recorded in the West Bank and Jordan.

In Türkiye, four missile launches were intercepted by NATO to protect its Incirlik airbase, where US troops are stationed.

- Most common targets -

Israel targeted 15 bridges or their approaches in Lebanon and around 20 in Iran.

Attacks against energy infrastructure in Iran were most intense during the second and third weeks of the conflict, as well as during the week of the ceasefire announcement.

Iran's key petrochemical complex at Assalouyeh, already targeted in mid-March, was struck again on April 6 by Israel. Numerous Iranian fuel depots were also hit.

ACLED reported four strikes near Iran's only nuclear power plant, in Bushehr.

Military bases housing US personnel were targeted around 50 times in total, primarily during the first two weeks of the conflict.

US-Iran: More Than Four Decades of Enmity

(<https://english.aawsat.com/features/5261108-us-iran-more-four-decades-enmity>)



A person holds a placard representing a US flag, with an image of Iran's new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei on a billboard in the background, on the day of a ceremony marking 40 days since Ali Khamenei was killed in Israeli and US strikes, in Tehran, Iran, April 9, 2026. Majid Asgaripour/WANA (West Asia News Agency) via Reuters

08:28-11 April 2026 AD 23 - Shawwal 1447 AH



The United States and Iran have been sworn enemies since the 1979 revolution and the hostage crisis at the US embassy in Tehran.

On Saturday, the arch-foes are set to hold talks in Islamabad to end more than a month of war in the Middle East, as a fragile ceasefire holds despite deep mutual mistrust.

- 1979: Hostage crisis -

On November 4, 1979, student activists demanding the extradition of Iran's deposed monarch -- Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was undergoing medical treatment in the US -- take staff hostage at the US embassy in Tehran.

The move comes seven months after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Some 52 hostages are held for 444 days.

In April 1980, Washington breaks off diplomatic relations with Iran and imposes restrictions on commerce and travel. Nine months later, the last hostages are released.

- 2002: 'Axis of evil' -

On April 30, 1995, US president Bill Clinton announces a complete ban on trade and investment with Iran, accusing it of supporting terrorism.

The US cites Iran's backing of regional armed groups including Hezbollah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Foreign companies that invest in Iran's oil and gas sector are targeted.

On January 29, 2002, US president George W. Bush says Iran, Iraq and North Korea belong to a terror-

supporting "axis of evil".

In April 2019, the US designates Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, the ideological arm of its military, a "terrorist organization".

- 2018: US walks out of nuclear deal

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In the early 2000s, revelations of undeclared nuclear sites in Iran spark fears Tehran is trying to make nuclear weapons, claims it denies.

A 2011 report by the UN nuclear watchdog IAEA, collating "broadly credible" intelligence, says that Iran "carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device" until at least 2003.

In 2005, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ends a freeze on uranium enrichment. Tehran insists its nuclear program is solely for civilian purposes.

A decade later, an accord with six world powers -- China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States -- on Iran's nuclear program is reached in Vienna.

It gives Tehran relief from crippling economic sanctions in exchange for guarantees that it will not make an

atomic bomb. The deal is endorsed by the United Nations.

US President Donald Trump pulls out of the pact in 2018, reinstating sanctions on Iran and companies with ties to it.

A year later Iran starts to backtrack on some of its commitments under the deal.

Diplomatic efforts fail to bear fruit. UN sanctions are reimposed on September 28, 2025. The accord lapses in October.

- 2020: Top general killed -

On January 3, 2020, the US kills top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad.

Trump says Soleimani had been planning an "imminent" attack on US diplomats and forces in Iraq.

Iran retaliates with missile strikes on bases in Iraq hosting American forces.

- 2025: Nuclear sites bombed -

During the 12-day war between Israel and Iran, the US strikes three major Iranian nuclear sites on June 21, 2025.

Trump says the sites have been "obliterated", but the true extent of the damage is not known.

- February 2026: Khamenei killed -

Trump threatens to strike Iran in response to its deadly crackdown on a massive protest movement that began in late December 2025, though the focus of his threats soon shifts to Tehran's nuclear program.

He sends a US "armada" to the region. The two countries resume indirect talks under Omani mediation in early February 2026.

On February 28, the US and Israel launch coordinated strikes killing supreme leader Ali Khamenei and hitting Iran's military and nuclear infrastructure.

Tehran vows to avenge Khamenei's death, launching waves of missiles at its Gulf neighbors hosting US forces and effectively closing the vital Strait of Hormuz, through which one-fifth of the world's crude flows.

- April 2026: high-level talks amid shaky truce -

The US and Iran reach a fragile two-week ceasefire at the start of April, with thousands killed and displaced,

and the global economy severely disrupted after over a month of war.

Top delegations from the two countries are to meet on Saturday in Islamabad, Pakistan, which brokered the truce.

The teams led by US Vice President JD Vance and Iranian parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf express mutual distrust, and remain at odds on key demands.

The ceasefire is set to expire April 22 unless the talks reach an agreement.

Features (<https://english.aawsat.com/home/features/section/2501>)

**Iran Revolutionary Guards Officers
Reject Iraqi Calls to Halt Attacks**
(<https://english.aawsat.com/features/5260972-iran-revolutionary-guards-officers-reject-iraqi-calls-halt-attacks>)



A man gestures with picture of Iran's slain supreme leader Ali Khamenei next to Iranian and Iraqi flags from atop a truck during celebrations welcoming the two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran in Baghdad's central Tahrir Square on April 8, 2026. (AFP)

London: Ali Saray
(/taxonomy/term/157821)

18:09-10 April 2026
AD 22 - Shawwal 1447
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Iraqi sources said officers from Iran's Revolutionary Guards, who oversee armed factions in Iraq, have rebuffed attempts by Shiite politicians to halt attacks inside the country.

Since the outbreak of the US-Iran war, they have effectively acted as a "shadow military supervisor" in Baghdad, maintaining a "pressure front" against Washington and preparing for a breakdown in negotiations.

Asharq Al-Awsat reported on March 24 that officers from the Quds Force, the foreign arm of the Revolutionary Guards, had deployed to Iraq to run attrition operations and set up an alternative operation room.

According to the sources, Quds Force officers have moved between Iraqi cities to oversee attacks, help

factions develop locally made drone munitions, and provide missile-related expertise, with targets updated continuously.

Daily target lists

One source said Revolutionary Guards officers provided Iraqi armed groups with daily lists of targets, munitions volumes, and strike timing.

They oversaw the deployment of specialized cells installing drone launch platforms and surveillance units in safe houses at new locations, avoiding coordinates previously tracked by US aircraft before and during the war.

By the fourth week of the war, one source said, the structure of the “resistance” in Iraq had shifted. Core factions moved to a new model built on semi-independent networks that are difficult to dismantle.

A person close to the factions described a system that distributes roles across specialized field cells operating flexibly in complex security environments.

Iraqi sources said the Revolutionary Guards engineered faction networks to ensure plausible deniability through layered structures that provide deterrence and ambiguity.

Some cells were tasked with cross-border attacks targeting interests in neighboring Arab states, as the indirect confrontation widened across overlapping regional arenas.

An unidentified strike hit a house in Khor al-Zubair in Basra, about 150 km from Kuwait, destroying a radar and a launch platform. Members of a cell, including a commander from Kataib Hezbollah, were killed along with two others.

The Revolutionary Guards denied carrying out attacks on Gulf Arab states on Thursday, but “is capable of using Iraqi groups to carry out this task,” a source close to the factions said.

In the final week of the war, before a temporary ceasefire, Iranian officers ordered the redeployment of faction units that had withdrawn from Nineveh and Kirkuk, telling them to retake positions ceded to other forces under US strikes, revealed the sources.

Revolutionary Guards officer does not answer calls

Two figures from the ruling Coordination Framework and the Iraqi government said leaders of four Shiite parties had held talks in recent weeks with Iranian officials

inside Iraq to press for a halt to attacks on US interests, but were ignored.

One influential Quds Force officer in Baghdad “does not answer calls from Iraqi politicians, even allies within the Coordination Framework,” the sources said, adding that he communicates only with operational commanders in armed factions.

The contacts reflect attempts to contain escalation and prevent Iraq from sliding into a broader conflict, as pressure mounts on the government to rein in armed groups. But “local political will is diminishing to an unprecedented level,” an Iraqi official said.

Security officials have voiced frustration over what they described as the “growing dominance” of officers from the Revolutionary Guards.

A senior Iraqi official, speaking at a private security meeting, said: “How is it possible that we cannot stop this man? Who is this ‘Abu so-and-so’? Why can’t we arrest him, or at least stop these attacks?”

Leaders within the Coordination Framework said the issue may largely stem from poor

communication, noting that Iranian officials rely on strict security protocols.

‘Military supervisor’

Figures within the Coordination Framework said field officers linked to the Revolutionary Guards are effectively becoming a “military supervisor” running a conflict front with the US from inside Iraq, regardless of Iraqi considerations.

They said Iran’s refusal to halt attacks signals it sees little hope in talks with Washington and that the “front is ready to ignite”.

Iraqi officials said the situation underscores the scale of the challenge facing security institutions in areas beyond the state’s direct control.

The US State Department said Iraqi militias receive government financial, operational, and political cover, and that authorities have failed to curb them or limit their attacks, according to a statement issued on Thursday.

Politicians within the Coordination Framework said the conduct of Revolutionary Guards officers reflects Iran’s intent to keep Iraq as a

pressure front against the United States as the Pakistan-mediated negotiation kick off.

But they warned that this risks pushing Iraq's political system toward chaos, accelerating its regional isolation.

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