Review of Houthi Educational Materials in Yemen
2015–19

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With a Foreword by Eldad J. Pardo, PhD

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Foreword

This report on the educational materials taught by Yemen’s Ansar Allah organization, known as the Houthi movement,¹ constitutes one of the most concerning of IMPACT-se’s assessments of Middle Eastern curricula. The combination of the textbooks’ graphic depiction of deceased children, prevalent hatred, glorification of violence as the only solution for resolving conflicts, the indoctrination of children to sacrifice their lives, and the overall Manichean worldview, run contrary to UNESCO standards of peace and tolerance and are unacceptable in any society.

The research provides a rare glimpse into education in areas under the control of a leading Iranian proxy organization. It acts as a case study for and sheds light on the worldview and tactics of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards as it works to recruit and coordinate its client organizations across the Arab world.

Until 2014, Yemen was considered an exception to the disappointing developments of the Arab Spring. The initially exhilarating wave of pro-democracy protests across the Arab world soon catapulted one country after another into chaos, bloody civil wars, or new dictatorships, both Islamist and secular.

Yemen appeared to be an exception. In cooperation with the United Nations and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, President Ali Abdullah Saleh stepped down peacefully in November 2011. The National Dialogue Conference later followed, culminating in an agreement by all parties to make Yemen a federal nation. Potential separatists in the north and south were still clamoring for more power, but a ray of hope appeared to be on the horizon.

Yemen, famous for millennia as being a place of happiness (Arabia Felix, Arabie Hereuse), was stable and hopeful. Regional specialists optimistically speculated that Yemen was, “the first Arab nation expected to take the federal route, a process that may be repeated in other countries as well, such as Syria, Libya and Iraq.”²

An opportunity emerged for the revolutionary leadership in Tehran, as it inserted itself into the challenges facing the Arab world. The Iranian constitution requires Iran’s “Holy Regime”³ to fulfill “the ideological mission of jihad in Allah’s way; that is, extending the sovereignty of Allah’s law throughout the world.”⁴ The constitution specifies that the mission is assigned to the Army of the

¹ The Houthis is the name of the tribe that established the movement and continues to lead it.
³ Persian: nezam-e moqaddas.
Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.\textsuperscript{5} Following its 1979 Revolution, Iran developed a “militia doctrine” aiming at the creation of loyal militias wherever possible in the region.\textsuperscript{6}

Determined to take advantage of perceived Arab weakness, Iranian Islamists falsely dubbed the pro-democracy uprisings wave as an “Islamic Awakening” rather than “Arab Spring,” and began to arm and direct radical groups they had recruited as viable proxies within the chaotic power vacuum.\textsuperscript{7} This was followed by fomenting civil, sectarian and ethnic wars and insurgencies.

In this regard, Yemen was not an exception.\textsuperscript{8} An established client in Yemen would allow Iran’s Revolutionary Guards to disrupt or shut down a key international trade route to Europe and the US (enabling the transportation of Gulf oil and industrial goods to and from India and Eastern Asia).\textsuperscript{9} Iranian influence in Yemen threatens Egypt, constitutes a springboard for attacking Saudi Arabia and poses potentially grave risks to the Emirates, Somalia, Eritrea and Djibouti.\textsuperscript{10}

Iran explored relationships with other potential proxies in Yemen before 2014, such as the Southern Secessionist movement. But the Houthis, with whom Iran already had decades-long dealings,\textsuperscript{11} appeared to be the only viable group to implement their strategy.\textsuperscript{12} For the Houthi movement to become a stable and advantageous proxy for Iran in the long run, it would have to become a “competent governing and political force in Yemen.”\textsuperscript{13} The Houthi population would also need to be loyal and “speak Iranian.” For these two reasons, as is true for other Iranian proxies in other parts of the world, education became a focal point for Tehran’s empire builders. There are indications that the Iranians are involved in education both at university and K–12 levels in Yemen. Hundreds of Houthi students study in Iran in places such as the ideological Al-Mustafa International

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\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} Johnston, “Could the Houthis.”
Recently, the Yemeni Teachers Syndicate complained that Iranians have been involved in shaping the Houthi curriculum. With this in mind, the present Houthi educational materials offer a window into the inner workings of the Iranian influence in the Arab world.

The connection to Iran—the power behind the Houthis—is downplayed in the examined educational materials. Instead, Iran is presented as one of many allies and partners victimized by the West. These include both Sunni and Shi’ite Islamists. Established patterns of Iranian hate messaging are widespread.

One learns from the report that Yemeni national identity and symbols are emphasized throughout the educational materials (flags, artifacts, architecture, archeology, nature). Iraqi fighters against ISIS carry the Iraqi flag and are not depicted as pro-Iranian militias. A description of Egyptian citizens in the Sinai Peninsula being bombed by Israel appears to refer to ISIS-affiliated insurgents operating in the area. Similarly, Houthi children are encouraged to express their solidarity with Somalia rather than Al-Shabab, Iran’s locally allied militia that is also an Al-Qaeda affiliate. The depiction of a Syrian child by the Houthis is another example of this tendency to retain national identities.

The example alluding to Iran focuses on Khomeini’s revolution, which is awarded much praise alongside a diatribe against the US and Israel. Iranian friendship is emphasized via a twelve-year-old boy named “Salman of Iran,” seemingly referring to Salman Al-Farisi, the first Persian convert to Islam in Arabia during the times of Prophet Muhammad. Salman became “the symbol of the role that Persia and Persians would play in the future of Islam.” The text presents Iran as part of an “Islamic Arab environment.” It laments that Israeli and American conspiracies portray Iran “as an enemy of the Arabs” because of the support it extends to those who fight them, particularly the Palestinians. Hezbollah is not mentioned in the examined material; Lebanon is presented in only the context of the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

17 Shaul Shai, “The Somali Al Shabaab and Iran’s Al Quds Connection,” International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), August 2020, https://www.ict.org.il/Article/2589/The_Somali_AI%20_habaab_and_Iran’s_Al_Quds_connection#gsc.tab=0.
The portrayal of Iran as a friend of the Arabs (implicitly including Sunnis) in Houthi educational materials reflects what Iranian students actually learn in school. The Iranian curriculum depicts Arab-Sunnis as part of Iran’s global-Islamic mission—not as enemies. Traditional Shi’ite antipathy of Sunnism has softened in Iranian textbooks by shifting hostility toward the West and Israel. The Sunnis are considered to be fully legitimate Muslims—significant elements of the “true program”—even as anti-Shi’ite historical Sunni figures are criticized in those historical contexts. There are the “Islamic Revolution” and “Islamic Republic,” but not “Shi’ite,” “Imami,” “Ja’fari,” “Husseini,” or “Alawi” revolutions. In contrast to this, Shi’ite concepts and famous characters remain at the center of the ideology.19

The Iranian curriculum shares the view of its proxies in uniting the Muslims against Western enemies:

_The world of Islam will be able to appear on the international arena as a single and powerful nation and be saved from the enemies’ evil and the foreigners’ dictates only when it avoids internal dispute—however small and transient._20

Who will lead the Muslim nation? Iranian nationalism in the Iranian curriculum is much more emphatic compared to Yemeni nationalism in the Houthi educational material. The centrality of Iranians in Islam is celebrated; glorious Persian empires venerated; Iran’s leadership in the Muslim world accentuated; and internal divisions within Islam, largely ignored.21 Iran’s curriculum has been described as a death-seeking curriculum fomenting hate and war against the West.22 For many years, Iran has prepared for an imminent apocalyptic war led by the returning _Mahdi_, the savior of Shi’ite Islam supported by ideas of religious mysticism, still being taught.23

Most likely, because the Houthis are Zaydi Shi’ites (not Twelvers), or Arabs (not Persians) and do not officially share the Khomeinist religio-political ideology, ‘ed as one among many regional friends with whom the Houthi share everlasting victimhood—originating from all things American. There is no mention of Hezbollah—the “gold standard of the IRGC’s manufactured

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groups”—in the examined material. In the Syrian curriculum there is an emphatic dissociation regarding Iran, which favors Russia as Syria’s genuine ally; in contrast, Iran is harshly criticized and its role obscured. Unlike the Houthis and the Syrians, Hezbollah’s official publications, while presenting the organization as Lebanese, are also open about its Iranian affiliation. Indeed, Iran’s supreme leader is officially also Hezbollah’s.

But the association with Iran in the Houthi educational material exists in other ways that are both implicit and indirect. These are expressed through the focus on America and Israel as arch-enemies using Iranian terminology for the United States, (e.g., the Great Satan). In this world, the US intelligence services created ISIS as a proxy. There are calls of “Death to Israel,” describing it as a cancerous growth and cursing Jews while accusing them of nefarious conspiracies. Within such a world, the Houthi materials feature extreme antisemitism as well as anti-Christian and anti-Sunni messaging.

Particularly troubling are excerpts describing the pressure being exerted on those who wish to have peace and avoid participation in the war (while serving Iranian interests). This is only one example of Iranian policies sending other nationals to their deaths in wars, in place of their own citizens.

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Iran maintains influence in the region, in part, through education created with each of its clients. The Houthi educational materials thus offer an opportunity to study a critical aspect of a problem that looms large in the Middle East and beyond.

What is particularly useful about this case-study is that it demonstrates how Iranian educational policies in the region are specifically tailored for each client. In the Houthi case we see a nucleus of Yemenite radical devotees being sent to study in ideological universities in Iran. Education for the

Houthi children at large, while focusing at this point on shared principles of the Iranian bloc, downplays Tehran’s direct influence and leadership.

Hate for common enemies is a major unifying tool as is the expected sacrifice, heroism and death for a common cause. Other groups belonging to the Iranian camp from various nationalities are portrayed in the Houthi educational material; the connection of these groups to Tehran is ignored. Iran is depicted as part of the Islamic-Arab environment. Mimicking the Iranian curriculum, the materials use Khomeinist terminology to display openness toward all Islamic revolutionaries and deplore sectarianism. For example, hate is directed toward the Saudis, but not their Sunni affiliation. Crude hate toward Christians and Jews is emphatic. The shades of evil assigned to various enemies are calibrated to fit the Iranian and Houthi regional and global visions while cultivating local affiliations.

There can be little doubt about the pernicious nature of bad education and the dire consequences of the war curricula pushed by Iran on the region's future. Numerous studies on Iranian curricula since the 1979 Khomeini Revolution show a correlation between what is being taught in schools and what follows in proxy wars currently being fought. At the very least, as far as education is concerned, it is high time to bring to the forefront the damage of Iranian ambitions.

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March 2021.
Introduction

The Houthi movement (formally called Ansar Allah) is one of the dominant political and military forces active in Yemen today. Widely believed to form part of the pro-Iranian block across the Middle East, it started as a political movement representing Yemen’s Shi’ite Muslim minority in the 1990s, concentrated in the country’s heavily populated northwestern region. It has since gained strength to become a powerful military organization, its rising influence culminating in the takeover of the Yemeni capital city of Sanaa in 2014. The Houthis have subsequently fought off a Saudi-led military campaign aimed at removing them from power, while simultaneously making strides to consolidate their control of the Yemeni state.

Education has been one of the main focal points of the Houthis’ agenda since the movement’s inception. While at first this focus was centered on the Yemeni Shi’ite community, it has since spread and now penetrates educational messaging at a national level, as the movement has expanded its influence. In 2018, Yemeni media reported that the Houthi movement was operating an extensive network of summer camps and classes, as well as other forms of extracurricular activity with photos of materials purportedly used in those settings being disseminated in Arabic-language media. Furthermore, Houthi education appears to have pervaded the mainstream Yemeni education system. In 2017, Yahya al-Houthi, Education Minister of the Houthi-led government, announced reforms to the national school curriculum, allegedly to reverse changes made following the 2011 Yemeni Revolution. Critics have argued that these reforms were undertaken to introduce Houthi content to the curriculum. By 2019, Qatar-based Al Jazeera reported that Houthis were also appointing educators and supervisors at schools and universities in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

In 2016, a monthly magazine entitled: Jihad was aimed at children in Yemen and authored by the “Imam Al-Hadi Cultural Foundation,” a group evidently associated with the Houthi movement. The Saudi-based Al Arabiya news channel claims it is affiliated with that organization. The magazine’s contents are unmistakably in line with the Houthi movement’s worldview and politics, repeatedly invoking its symbols, disparaging its enemies and supporting its war effort, though the extent of the magazine’s efficacy as a wider institutional propaganda tool is unclear. The magazine

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is distributed on various social media platforms as well as on an official website,\textsuperscript{32} where thirteen complete issues are freely available dated 2016 to 2018. In addition, more recent content attributed to the magazine, dated 2020, has been seen circulating on social media; however, the official status and authenticity of this newer content is unclear. Previous research has already been conducted into this content by Washington-based think tank MEMRI, which released a brief report reviewing the magazine in 2019.\textsuperscript{33}

In this short report, Houthi educational materials will be analyzed and measured against UNESCO-derived standards of peace and tolerance. Due to the difficult political situation in Yemen, as well as the Houthi organization’s military nature, it is difficult to ascertain what constitutes a full body of Houthi educational materials and hard to verify the material. Information regarding the Houthi educational materials is fragmented and obtained from various sources.

All thirteen complete issues of \textit{Jihad} magazine available at the time of research—from 2016 to 2019—are examined in this report. Moreover, twelve individual documents of educational material, attributed in Yemeni media and elsewhere to Houthi-operated schools and summer camps, are surveyed. While a sample this small does not allow for a thorough analysis of Houthi educational material, it is more than sufficient to shed light on key issues and identify central themes, as demonstrated by the examples portrayed in the report.

\textsuperscript{32} Links available upon request.

Main Findings

IMPACT-se’s review of educational materials linked to the Houthi movement in Yemen identified the following patterns:

- The United States is described as the “Greater Satan,” a universal force of evil and the puppeteer behind all the atrocities afflicting the region. The US is the enemy of all Arabs and Muslims. The American flag is commonly used as a symbol of oppression. Children must defend themselves against it.

- The Houthi slogan, “Allah is the greatest—Death to America—Death to Israel—Curse on the Jews—Victory to Islam” is taught in an Arabic numeral exercise.

- ISIS (created by the US), Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel are all taught to be instruments of the American conspiracy to maintain US hegemony over Muslims and Arabs.

- Images of graphic violence including pictures of dead children are seen in material for pre-teens. In math lessons, children add rifles to solve problems.

- Direct or indirect participation in violent jihad against the American aggressor is taught as being the duty of every Yemeni civilian. Those who advocate for peaceful conflict resolution are presented as cowardly, idiotic or treacherous.

- Death in battle against the enemies of Islam is glorified. Children are taught of the bliss that awaits martyrs in paradise, and that the martyrs' loved ones do not feel the need to mourn for them.

- Jews are a subject of disproportionate focus as a unique enemy of Islam and the people of Yemen. The material declares Jews as “those who Allah commanded us to be their enemies.”

- Holocaust-related imagery such as a yellow Star of David and barbed wire are used in lessons on how to oppose all forms of normalization with the “Zionist-American hegemony.”

- Yemeni identity is subtly conveyed and strengthened through imagery such as flags and architecture, but Yemeni patriotism is downplayed in favor of Islamic solidarity.

- Shi’ite identity is downplayed and differences between Shi’ites and Sunnis are intentionally blurred.

- Discussion of overseas affairs focuses solely on regions in Iran’s sphere of influence—Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Israel and the Palestinian Territories, Somalia and the Sinai Peninsula, as well as Iran itself.

- Few mentions or allusions to the Iranian government or to its allied governments and organizations.

- Little to no information about the Houthi movement itself or domestic opposition to it within Yemen.

- Women are portrayed covering their hair and fulfilling traditional gender roles.
Conclusions

IMPACT-se’s study of Houthi educational material found alarming violations of international standards of peace and tolerance; they pervade all of the available material and reflect unmistakable trends in the narrative and messages the materials seek to convey. Of these, the most prominent issues found are as follows:

- **Violent and graphic content.** Houthi educational materials are rife with violence and imagery of death, irrespective of the age of the target audience. The purpose of this graphic content is to portray the Houthis’ enemies as monstrous and inhumane. This includes verbal content, such as describing the Houthis’ adversaries as a “machine of death, which strives to grind us to dust”; as well as visual content, such as illustrations and even photographs of dead children.

- **Antisemitism.** The Houthi material depicts Jews as a universal evil and an enemy of the Yemeni people and the religion of Islam, both as a group of people and as individuals. It is worth noting that Yemen’s Jewish community numbers a few dozen individuals at most, and Israel has no known involvement in the warfare in Yemen. Yet, Yemeni children are encouraged to fight “the tyranny of the Jews,” and the Saudi-led coalition facing the Houthis is described as “allies of the Jews and the Christians” [awlia’ al-yahud wa-n-nasara], a direct reference to a Qur’anic verse which condemns such alliances (example 21). Personal friendship with Jewish people is portrayed negatively (example 29); a section supporting the boycott of Israel features Holocaust-related imagery such as a yellow star of David and barbed wire (example 30); and the material declares Jews to be “the most hostile people to the believers,” “cursed by Allah,” and “those who Allah commanded us to be their enemies” (example 28). The Houthi slogan, “death to Israel, curse on the Jews,” is repeatedly shown throughout the materials (example 13), further reinforcing the message.

- **Anti-American hatred.** The United States is taught to be the foremost enemy of the Yemeni people, as represented by use of the epithet “the Greater Satan” (i.e. greater than Israel, “the Lesser Satan”), as well as the Houthi slogan, “Death to America.” All other adversaries the Houthis identify—from Saudi Arabia to Israel to even the Islamic State—are stated to be American puppets, collaborators or allies, and the US flag is commonly used in visual imagery as a symbol of oppression, colonialism, or simply the enemy. The US is consistently named as the main aggressor in the Yemen conflict and blamed for all the atrocities perpetrated as part of that conflict. Moreover, the materials extend the scope of the US’s evildoing beyond the borders of Yemen: among other things, Houthi materials hold the US directly responsible for the creation of ISIS (example 7), and for the Somali Civil War

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34 Surah 5 (Al-Ma’idah), 51. Some translations render this as “friends of the Jews and Christians.”
As for the US’s motivations, those are not explained beyond the need to expand, steal and control.

- **Demonization of the Other.** The adversaries of the Houthis—the Saudi-led coalition—are presented as an inhuman, absolute evil. Their war with the Houthis is portrayed as a campaign of absolute destruction aimed to maximize human suffering. Enemy soldiers and decision-makers are rarely alluded to: the enemy consists of bomber planes and warships. Materials often delve into conspiracy theories, including accusations of Israel bombing Egyptians in Sinai and destroying Al-Aqsa (example 15); the United Arab Emirates deliberately eradicating marine and plant life in Socotra (example 16); Saudi Arabia being an American puppet and ally of the Islamic State (example 18); and the Houthi movement’s political rivals in Yemen being “Hypocrites,” that is, enemies of Islam (example 17).

- **Rejection of peace and glorification of (violent) jihad.** As Houthi educational material portrays the Yemen conflict as a defensive battle against absolute evil, children and students are offered no alternative method of resistance other than violent jihad. Peace is explicitly dismissed as a form of “capitulation,” and people who advocate for it are framed as fools, cowards and even traitors. The Houthi movement’s war effort is religious as well as moral, and therefore children are encouraged to join it as soon as they are able, to fulfill their religious duty. Military themes appear even in unrelated contexts, such as in math exercises (example 26). Death in battle, or martyrdom, is further glorified, and children are told of the bliss that awaits the martyrs in paradise, and that the martyrs’ loved ones do not feel the need to mourn for them (example 21).

*Jihad* magazine thinly veils hateful content by also providing useful information and neutral content such as drawing lessons, math exercises and informative texts about various scientific topics. Some examples of this are provided in this report.

Yemeni identity is imparted, to some extent, through imagery of traditional Yemeni architecture, such as mosques and mud brick townhouses (example 22); depictions of traditional Yemeni dress, including the janbiyah dagger worn by men (example 14); and the Yemeni landscape, including landmarks such as the island of Socotra (example 16) and the ancient city of Ma’rib. The flag of Yemen is shown occasionally (example 9). However, these symbols of Yemeni identity are left in the background and not directly alluded to or taught. This means that for the most part, Houthi materials respect the boundaries of the Yemeni state and identity, rather than explicitly encouraging separatism. Yet, at the same time, there is no attempt to cultivate and stimulate particular Yemeni patriotism, focusing rather on Islamic identity—implicitly, in its Shi’ite form—and the need to fight against foreign invasion.

There were surprisingly few references to Iran and or to Shi’ite Muslims as a community, in the Houthi content, in contrast to the overwhelming emphasis on demonization of Houthi foes. Some of the language used in Houthi material is strongly reminiscent of unmistakably Khomeinist rhetoric,
associated with the Iranian government; this includes describing the US as “the Greater Satan” (ash-shaytan l-`akbar), and characterization of the Houthis’ adversaries as “the Forces of Arrogance” (istikbar).\(^{35}\) In addition, one example openly praises the 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran as having freed the country and made it stronger (example 14). Furthermore, it can be seen that Jihad magazine’s monthly ‘letters from around the world’ section covers all the countries located within Iran’s sphere of interest—that is, Lebanon,\(^{36}\) Syria, Iraq and Bahrain\(^{37}\) —but conspicuously hides their Shi’ite identity, as can be seen in the examples from Iraq (example 8) and Syria (example 7), where Shi’ites are not mentioned at all.

Gender is rarely addressed in the Houthi materials. On the whole, women are portrayed less often than men, especially in texts and images which involve strategizing, fighting and politics, where women are virtually nonexistent. In illustrations, women and girls are unfailingly portrayed wearing a head covering. However, in some reader-submitted photos, preteen girls with exposed hair are shown. Female characters are not seen partaking in roles which blatantly defy gender stereotypes; they are mostly found in domestic environments and contexts, and often depicted cooking or otherwise taking care of the home. As a whole, Houthi materials perpetuate gender stereotypes and do not attempt to challenge them, nor do they attempt to explicitly foster mutual respect and equality between women and men.

The Houthi materials grossly violate the ideal of peacemaking, entirely dismissing peace as an option in international conflict resolution, and condemning those who advocate for it as cowardly, foolish or traitorous. Instead, violent jihad, sacrifice in battle, and supporting the war effort in any way possible is held up as an ideal and a central virtue.

Likewise, the researched content violates multiple international standards of peace and tolerance by actively inciting children to violence against the Enemy, as well as glorifying those who partake in such violence. Minor disputes and offences may also be resolved with immediate violence, as is seen with the example of Imam Zayed seeking to kill a Jewish man for insulting the Prophet. Violence on its own is never censured in the context of fighting the Enemy, although the Enemy is constantly accused of using undue violence itself, an allegation which is often bolstered by graphic and provocative imagery of death and blood.

There is an apparent focus on cultivating feelings of hate against the Houthis’ designated enemies, who are portrayed as far more than casual rivals, but as an immutable evil which must be confronted at all costs. Jews are a particular object of hate, characterized on the one hand as contemptible for being spiritually and religiously inferior to Muslims, and on the other hand as a terrifying power, controlling global affairs, including in Yemen. The US, blamed for practically all atrocities which occur in Yemen, the Middle East and around the world, is a focal point for hate.


\(^{36}\) \textit{Jihad}, Vol. 8 (August-September 2017), p. 15.

Children are taught that the US is a global, satanic force against which they have no power, and which they are condemned to fight until death. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are reduced to oppressive puppet regimes, acting on behalf of a foreign power against their people’s interests. Both these entities—as well as the Yemeni opposition to the Houthi movement—are all framed as enemies of the faith, and perpetrators of unforgiveable crimes.

The proliferation of hatred in this content is not limited to the “Other” as a group of people, but also targets individual Others. Opponents of the Houthis are not seen as individuals with whom to interact on a human level; there is no representation of or even any allusion to American, Israeli, Saudi, or Emirati individuals. Instead, personal friendship with Jewish people is framed negatively; while non-Yemeni Sunnis such as Palestinians and Somalis are discussed without mentioning their Sunni identity. Rather than showing a positive human interaction with the Other, these Houthi resources discourage children from initiating such interactions.

The Houthi content fails at maintaining the principle of unbiased information, while selectively conveying ideas which serve to maximize the negative portrayal of Houthi enemies; there is a particular focus on recounting war crimes and atrocities, distorting and falsifying historic facts and figures in order to advance conspiracy theories and libels and further demonize their designated enemies. While some respect is afforded to people of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds—from Lebanon to Iran to Somalia—they are all exclusively Muslims believed to be suffering under American oppression. Tolerance toward non-Muslims is not taught, even in a historical or theological context. There is no reference to the internal diversity of Islam, including the divide between Sunnis and Shi’ites.

Houthi materials fail to reach the standard of sound prosperity and cooperation. There is an attempt to cultivate sympathies with Shi’ites outside of Yemen, as well as with other Islamic peoples perceived to be oppressed by the US, such as Egyptians of the Sinai and Somalis. However real such sympathies may be, they do not translate into a call for actual regional cooperation but only seem to promote the idea that the US is a global menace bringing misery to countless people. There appears to be no interest in the wellbeing of Houthi children at all; rather than educating their children to become emotionally and socially sound adults, providing such extremely violent and graphic material only serves to traumatize them into embracing the Houthi movement’s military and political campaign.
Selected Examples

Content Note: This document contains graphic imagery.

**Violent and Graphic Content**

1. *Jihad, Vol. 0 (October 2016), p. 34.*

In a comic strip titled “the Emigrants,” a boy who escaped from his village due to war describes the enemy as “a machine of death, which strives to grind us to dust.” The enemy referred to in the magazines appears to be a conflation of both Saudi and American forces so it is difficult to determine which is being referred to here as the “forces of arrogance.” Notably, this character is named Saber, literally meaning “he who withstands (hardship),” while the main character is named Jihad.

“Hello, brother Saber. How are you?”

“Hello to you too, my friend. I’m fine, Allah be praised.”

“Please accept this modest gift. Saber, though you people deserve more. You are the epitome ofsteadfastness and dignity.”

“That’s right, brother. We will hold fast, and never surrender.”

“Thank you, brother Jihad. This aggression will not shake our convictions towards our motherland. We will defend it against the Forces of Arrogance who try to conquer it. We will hold fast, not matter the cost, against this machine of death which strives to grind us to dust.”
This magazine inserts a violent story about an anthropomorphic cloud that witnesses “the Enemy” bombing a school. The cloud is later horrified to find the lifeless body of their friend who was a student at the school, buried by the rubble next with their classmates. The story is accompanied by graphic illustrations visualizing the violence.

The cloud carried on her journey, but it was not long before she heard behind her the noise of a great explosion with the sound of warplanes flying. The cloud said to itself: “The Enemy must be bombing the area of Jum‘ah bin Fadel with their missiles!”

The cloud returned and saw a huge black cloud rising from the Sajid’s destroyed school building.

[Bottom right] There were a lot of men trying to extract the children from under the rubble and to give medical aid to those injured. The cloud searched for Sajid and saw him next to one of the walls of the collapsed school.

His torn body was lying there, and next to him were the bodies of his three friends, all of whom had departed from this life.

A section titled “The Picture Speaks” features a photo of what appears to be a dead girl with the caption: “she was killed on her way to school by an airstrike of the Saudi aggression.”

![Image](image1.jpg)

*The Picture Speaks*

Little girl Ishraq died as a martyr while on her way to school, by airstrikes of the Saudi Aggression.


A comic strip titled “The New House” features a village destroyed by “the Enemy’s jets” in its first panel. The image depicts a blood-soaked hand emerging from the rubble, and a toy doll just out of its reach, implying a little girl has been crushed to death by the bombing.

![Image](image2.jpg)

In our previous strip: [The family] believed the jet planes would not bomb the village. However, neighbor Ali confirmed that the invasion is targeting everyone, and that they must all leave their home. The family left their home, heading to the mountains along with everyone else. After they reached the caves in the mountains, the jet planes began attacking the village. The youth and the men rushed to rescue the victims left by the bombing. Who knows what will happen to them next?
Anti-American Hatred


A poem describes the suffering of the children of Yemen in graphic detail and encourages them to dedicate their lives to waging war against the United States.

To every child who cried and wept
And suffered at the loss of a mother and a father
Who is hungry and thirsty and naked and sick
And grows up under the tyranny of fear
Remember your calamity every day
And never forget who caused it
Breathe in your wounds, embrace your weapon
Riot like volcanoes in anger
Make ready for your adversary, embark upon your revenge
Resist, in spite of sorrow and weariness
Your enemy, my child, is America
For if you cut off the head—the tail will die.
The US is demonized in a cartoon strip of a Houthi supporter named Jihad who declares that the US is only interested in its own development and freedoms, while it crushes those overseas. This is in reaction to arguments from other children who state that the United States is a civilized country and a democracy, and therefore cannot be “the Enemy.”

Debate between Friends

“America depends on knowledge, whereas we depend on our hollow emotions.”

“You people speak of a civilized country like America as if it’s an enemy. You’re forgetting it’s a democratic country.”

[Jihad:] “America is indeed a civilized country, but it opposes the development of other nations. It’s democratic for itself, but doesn’t believe other peoples have the right to self-determination.

America exploits knowledge to oppress and humiliate other peoples. It utilizes knowledge to steal other nations’ abilities and conquer territories.”
Children are presented with a letter signed by “Fadi from Syria,” describing the atrocities perpetrated by the Islamic State—referred to by its Arabic pejorative Daesh. The US is accused of having “sent” the Islamic State as its “agents” to destroy Syria and spread extremism. The US is therefore blamed for the atrocities committed by the Islamic State.

Fadi from Syria

Peace be upon you, Allah’s mercy and His blessings, my dear friends.

I am Fadi, from Syria. I was called to speak to you today about my wounded homeland, which has been abused by the forces of arrogance and colonialism. America and her allies were not satisfied with merely destroying my country, but also sent terrorism and extremism through her agents, to lead a life of depravity in my country. Indeed, Daesh has perpetrated the most heinous of crimes against our people in Aleppo, killing, slaughtering, and severing body parts. Things reached the point where they mutilated the face of a citizen by slicing off his nose. My friends, he is now suffering from problems when eating and drinking as a result of this.

The magazine features a supposed eye-witness account of a Mosul native, signed Nuri al-Mawsili, who describes the takeover of the city by the Islamic State (referred to by the Arabic pejorative Daesh) and its subsequent recapture by (Iran-backed) Iraqi forces. The text states that the Islamic State was created by “the American intelligence.”

*Daesh in my Town*

One morning, in the year 2015, I awoke, along with all the people of Mosul, to find an event unlike any of which we’ve imagined or seen in movies or cartoons. Takfiri groups, created by the American intelligence and named Daesh, took over the city and declared it to be the capital of their state, which they claimed to be the “Islamic Caliphate.” . . .

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38 Broadly meaning “those who label other Muslims as infidels,” a common derogatory term for Sunni Islamic extremists in general and in particular *jihadists* such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS.
Two pages are dedicated to the “dos” and “don’ts” of “combating colonialism” with the US flag being depicted as the symbol of colonialism and foreign intervention which must be fought against at all costs. In one illustration, soldiers in uniform are shown raising the Yemeni flag while stomping the American one, in an image that is evocative of the raising of the American flag at Iwo Jima. Another picture shows demonstrators holding up the Houthi slogan: “Allah is the Greatest—Death to America—Death to Israel—Curse on the Jews—Victory to Islam.” A third shows the ancient city of Ma’rib, a national symbol of Yemen and its history. On the second page, children are taught that the “Invaders and occupiers” “strive to spread chaos, murder and crime across the land,” and seek to enslave the occupied populations and deny their rights.

YES!

Revolutionaries and Mujahideen against Colonialism

[Right:] Fight to free their country from invaders and stop any foreign string pulling or meddling in their country’s affairs.[Center:] Want their people to enjoy its own land’s wealth and resources.

[On the signs carried:] “Allah is the greatest—Death to America—Death to Israel—Curse on the Jews—Victory to Islam.”

[Left:] Lead the battle so that their people may enjoy freedom and dignity.
NO!

Invaders and Occupiers

[Top right:] Strive to occupy the land, take over the country and meddle in its affairs.

[Top center:] Want to deny the people’s rights and freedoms they are trying to occupy, and make them into no more than slaves and instruments.

[Top left:] Strive to erase the identity and history of the occupied country.

[Bottom right:] Strive to spread chaos, murder and crime across the land.

[Bottom center:] Try to empower foreign agents, the corrupt and the unjust, to rule the people and do as they please.

[Bottom left:] Strive to keep the people ignorant, to prevent any renaissance or the development of civilization.
A comic strip encourages children to commemorate the “American-Saudi aggression” in Yemen. One of the characters suggests teaching school students about “the dangers of America finding its way into Yemen.”

“My friends, tomorrow is the second anniversary of the American-Saudi aggression on our beloved motherland. We must make our stand.”

“We’ll visit the wounded in the hospital. We’re going to need to gather a sum of money, to buy symbolic gifts for them.”

“All of us will take part in that!”

“We can also prepare a special school broadcast about the subject. To let students in our school know about the dangers of America finding its way into Yemen.”
A passage tells the story of a little girl who is killed by an airstrike on her way to school. As her friend weeps for her, she decides that “the American Aggression” conspires to prevent Yemeni children from receiving education, as it “has the power to uncover all of [its] schemes.”

While I was on my way to school, my friend Ishraq got there ahead of me. Before I reached the school I heard the sound of a great blast, and a jet plane hovering in the sky. I realized the Aggression had attacked a nearby area. I hastened my pace, as did a crowd who started to gather, when suddenly I saw my friend Ishraq. She was stained by her own blood, and her school uniform turned dark red in color. She had passed away.

I noticed her notebooks and school textbooks scattered around her. I knew, in my heart of hearts, that the American Aggression fears that we may take lessons from its heinous crimes. It fears that we may expose its gruesome nature with our pencils and notebooks, and with our love of learning, which has the power to uncover all of [the Americans’] schemes.

What happened to my friend Ishraq, and what happens every day to schoolchildren across our beloved motherland, will not dissuade us from continuing our studies. It will not dissuade us from marching forward to defend our country and challenge all the designs being conspired against it.
A story entitled “America is Stealing our Treasures” features a Somali boy who describes how the United States destroyed his country to “steal its wealth.” The text accuses the US of excessive involvement in the Somali Civil War, describing it as having invaded the country “to conquer its lands.” It claims the US “supported criminal gangs” and accuses it of encouraging the drug trade and assassinations. The text concludes by declaring the US “the murderer of nations” and calls for violent jihad against it as the “only way to fight injustice.”

America is Stealing our Treasures

My country Somalia enjoys abundant treasures . . . American forces entered Somalia to steal its wealth and treasures, to conquer its lands and oppress its sons. They introduced discord between the sons of Somalia, supported criminal gangs . . . and encouraged the trade of drugs and assassinations . . . My family and I immigrated to Yemen because of the state America put Somalia in, due to America’s ambitions and its criminal enterprise, an enterprise of Arrogance. However, Yemen too has become coveted by the invading and occupying forces. This proves that America is the murderer of peoples, the usurper of wealth.

America and its tyranny will not dissuade us from continuing our jihad and struggle against her oppression and Arrogance, for jihad is the only way to move the [Islamic] Nation forward and free the people suffering from injustice.
13. Arabic language textbook (title unknown, circa 2018).\textsuperscript{39}

A spelling exercise asks students to write down the slogan of the Houthi movement: “death to America, death to Israel, curse on the Jews,” as well as “America is the Greater Satan.”

\textit{Reading and writing sentences}

\textit{Feel free to read the following sentences and then rewrite them to the left:}

\textit{There is no god but Allah}
\textit{Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah}
\textit{Allah is the greatest}
\textit{Death to America}
\textit{Death to Israel}
\textit{Curse on the Jews}
\textit{Victory to Islam}
\textit{We are at your service, Messenger of Allah}
\textit{Ali is the Companion of Allah}
\textit{We are Ansar Allah [Houthi movement]}
\textit{Glory to Allah and to his Messengers and to the Believers}
\textit{America is the Greater Satan}

The magazine features an imaginary postcard from an Iranian boy named Salman which praises the 1979 Islamic Revolution for toppling the Iranian monarch, who is described as an “agent for America,” and for making Iran an “independent … strong country.” However, the text warns children that the US and Israel are attempting to incite the Arabs and the Muslims against Iran, in order to protect Israel, described as a “cancerous tumor.” The text concludes that the young generation must “maintain the line of the Revolution” to eliminate Israel, and frustrate “the schemes of the Greater Satan,” that is the US.

**Salman from Iran**

...I was born and raised in the time of the Islamic regime, which was established after the triumph of the popular revolt led by Imam Khomeini, Allah be pleased with him, against the monarchist Shah, who was an agent for America. One of the blessings of that revolution is that it freed and built our country, so that now we are a free, independent, respected, industrialized and strong country with full sovereignty and presence in all matters. Yet, American-Israeli conspiracies against my country never cease, as do efforts to smear us, to isolate us from our Islamic Arab environment, and to portray us as enemy of the Arabs and the Muslims instead of Israel.

...Therefore, it is our responsibility, as the upcoming generation ... to maintain the line of the Revolution, until the elimination of the cancerous tumor of “Israel,” and the schemes of the Greater Satan, “America,” are frustrated...
Demonization of the Other: Israel, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Political Rivals


Israel is described as “the cancer which was seeded in the body of the [Islamic] nation,” in a story told from the perspective of an Egyptian boy living the Sinai Peninsula. The story calls for the “Colonizer” to be driven from the land through active resistance. Israel is referred to as the protégée of America, described as the “Greater Satan.” The story contains supposed eye-witness accounts of Israeli soldiers committing acts of wanton aggression against Egyptians in Sinai, despite the fact that Israel and Egypt have been at peace for 40 years.

_Fahmi from Sinai_

*This is Israel, the cancer which was seeded in the body of the [Islamic] Nation. This is the protégée of the Greater Satan, America, who does not hesitate to perpetrate the most heinous of crimes against us. But we will resist, and we know victory will come, my friends. The Colonizer will be driven from our land, no matter how long it takes.*
Students are taught that the Emiratis occupied the island of Socotra, located off the coast of Yemen, and destroyed its wildlife to build military bases. This is presented in a cartoon strip depicting a conversation between Yemeni children and a character called Jihad who states that the Emiratis must be exposed for their “lies and their crimes.” The Yemeni boy also states that the Emiratis “murder women and children.” This example highlights the natural heritage of Socotra as a Yemeni island, including the endemic Socotra dragon tree (*Dracaena cinnabari*), found nowhere else on Earth.

“Allah . . . look at all those sea creatures, killed en masse . . .”

“Allah! It’s the Occupier’s crime, mass killing to build military bases . . .”

Jihad, having climbed to dry land: “Thieves, murderers and criminals! Why all this hatred? Friends, have you seen the crimes of the Emirati occupation against our precious islands?!”

“It’s all been documented. We must expose their lies and their crimes for the whole world to see!”

[Emirati ship:] “I’d also like some flat land to build a military base. Don’t worry, you pretty and rare trees, we’re going to take good care of you . . .”

[Yemeni child, left:] “This is the enemy which murders children and women!”
Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, are taught to be hypocrites (munafiqun)—infidels pretending to be Muslims—and therefore they are the enemies of Islam. An illustration features the portrait of Yemeni president Abdrabbuh Hadi, implying that the political opponents of the Houthis are also enemies of Islam.

The Hypocrites—who are those?

The Hypocrites are as Allah said of them—“They are the enemy, so beware of them. May Allah destroy them; how are they deluded?” [63:4]. Why all this warning . . . Because they are among the Muslims, puncturing their safety from within. They may take the form of religious groups considered to be representative of religion, such as the Daesh [Islamic State], Al-Qaeda and the takfiri [see example 8] organizations affiliated with Al-Islah party [Muslim Brotherhood-associated group in Yemen]; or they may take form of political regimes, as is the case in the regimes of most Arab and Islamic states. An example of this is the Saudi regime. It is important for Muslim society to be able to recognize the features of the Hypocrites, so as to not be fooled by them. This is especially in our current state of affairs, where beloved Yemen . . . by America and Israel, and carried out . . .

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A young boy and his friends attack an enemy ship, which carries the flags of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the Islamic State.

*Jihad Repels the Aggression at Sea*

[Right:] “Jihad, look! There’s the Enemy, attacking innocent people once more!”

[Left:] “It’s the Arrogant Enemy. Only the language of force will push them back... Are you ready, friend?”
In a comic strip about children debating the role of the Arab League, Arab states are accused of attacking countries “opposed to colonialism,” such as Yemen, while collaborating with Israel and America and acting as their “puppets.” It is stated that “the Zionist Entity” represents the “true enemy” of Arabs, and that “oil funds are soaked with the blood of our Arab and Muslim peoples,” a reference to Saudi Arabia and the UAE participating in war against the Houthis.

Jihad: “How much do you think Israel has been attacking the Palestinian people? And to what extent has America been intervening in the affairs of Arab states?"

Sami: “Well, Israel is occupying the territory of Palestine. And America invaded Iraq, destroyed Syria and caused problems all over the world.”

Jihad: “Worse still is that this abuse, destruction and occupation, being perpetrated by the global Forces of Arrogance, is being paid for by collaborating Arab governments and the puppet regimes of the Forces of Arrogance in the region.”

Sami: “The oil funds are soaked with the blood of our Arab and Islamic peoples.”

Jihad: “That’s right, Sami. And add to that, that the states which form the Arab [League] today are prepared to form an alliance and fight... but not against the real enemy of the [Islamic] Nation, the Zionist Entity, but against those countries which oppose colonialism, and peoples who oppose injustice and capitulating to the occupation. The aggression on Yemen only serves to prove this.”
Rejection of Peace and Glorification of Jihad


In a “dos and don’ts” section, children are told that the ideal person is one who commits *jihad* and prepares to meet Allah in the afterlife.

Do

Be one of the Good Doers, and take on their features, as described by Allah in the Noble Qur’an:

1. They take the Qur’an as their guide.
2. Perform prayer.
...

[In yellow font] 5. Perform jihad in Allah’s path, in their possessions and their souls.
6. Have full faith in the Afterlife, preparing to meet Allah.
A story titled “The Song of Martyrdom” recounts the life of a fighter who joined the ranks of a militant organization to fight the forces invading Yemen. Martyrdom is described as a “lofty position” and as a “victory.” The Saudi-led coalition is identified as “allies of the Jews and the Christians.”

This is a reference to the Qur’an (5:51): “O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you—then indeed, he is [one] of them.”

And when the allies of the Jews and the Christians retreated from the position, with their tails between their legs, the mujahedeen began searching for their brother. However, they did not recover him, for the Enemies had taken him prisoner.

The mother recovered the body of her son, the martyr, from Sanaa. On her way back, she pictured his lofty position at his Lord’s side, living the life of comfort Allah had promised the righteous martyrs. This was sufficient solace for her. The language of tears conveyed her longing to him, and her happiness at his victory, in which Allah manifested His providence, and the glory and the dignity of the Nation of the Qur’an.
A man trying to dissuade his fellow villagers from joining jihad is labeled a fool, a coward and is insinuated to be an enemy spy. It is stated that the enemy wishes to make the people of Yemen into slaves, and therefore surrender or even neutrality is not an option. Interestingly the character of the suspected spy is named Marwan, originally the name of a historic Umayyad caliph (623-685 AD) despised by Shi’ites.
[Marwan:] “What you’re saying is crazy! You reckless fools! You can’t go to battle with those outdated weapons! You will open the gates of hell and war on yourselves . . . you will all die in a single blow . . . and this village will turn to ashes scattered in the wind . . . It’s much better if you surrender . . . o that you may live in peace . . . [Hamzah:] “Anyone who doesn’t trust in Allah, and is scared of the unjust ones, is a fool. They are feeblener than a spider’s web. We will never give in to them, because we are the just ones. They are scared of the awesome power of our faith. That’s the secret to our victory, for justice is on our side.”

[Marwan:] “Stay neutral! Don’t join the fighting, fellow villagers . . . I’m saying this because I fear for you . . . I will leave now, you’re clearly insane!”

[Village man:] “Marwan, cease this stupid thinking. The Enemies are destroying our motherland, and you expect us to stay neutral?! Take your chances and think: if we don’t fight, we will become slaves to them and they will occupy us, for we’d have given up justice and standing up to them.”

. . .

[Hamzah:] “I’d like to warn [Marwan] before I leave [to war], to demand that he stop spreading lies and rumors and scaring people. This is not the time for that. This is the time to rally for jihad and defense of the motherland.”

[Ahmad:] “Of course he’s spreading false rumors, and in doing so he’s serving the Aggression—but he’ll never be able to push us back. Look at the people and all the convoys of mujahideen they assembled . . . we will never push them back no matter what he says.”

[Hamzah:] “That’s true, and yet the Aggression has spies, and we should warn people to be on the lookout for them.”

[Hamzah:] “The convoy started to move out. I will now join them. Please pray for me, to achieve victory or martyrdom.” After he left, Ahmad and Sami began searching for Marwan.

Join us for our next installment, Allah willing.
A comic strip tells children that “unjust ones and sinners” are not to be respected as human beings and are legitimate targets of contempt.

[Grandfather:] “Indeed... And there is another important issue, Ammar, which we all need to understand, little darlings: contempt is a serious matter. Therefore, we must never, ever, treat anyone with contempt. The Believers, amongst themselves, absolutely never treat each other with contempt.”

[Boy:] “Yes grandpa, I promise you that I will respect everyone, all people.”

[Girl:] “Except the unjust and the sinners, my dear grandfather.”

An exercise teaching Arabic spelling asks students to write out words forming the sentences “Israel is my enemy” and “jihad is the foundation of success.”

How to write letters in words

Read the words, then rewrite them in the empty boxes next to them. Pay attention to the position of the letter inside the word.

[Top row, right:] I—I treat as enemy—Israel [together reading: “Israel is my enemy”]

[Top row, center:] a well—on that day—I [or you] came

[Top row, left:] Jihad—foundation—the success [together reading: “jihad is the foundation of success”]

Fighting the “American-Saudi aggression” is presented as a religious duty in a short comic strip, depicting a Yemeni father who decides to go to war against the “Aggression,” whose goal is “to subjugate Yemen to (the American-Saudi) hegemony.” His child attempts to join him but is told to stay home and care for his mother and sister, reinforcing traditional gender roles.

[Radio:] “The capital Sanaa is being bombed by the American-Saudi aggression warplanes. Numerous martyrs and wounded reported.”

[Father, top left:] “We will not be humiliated like this! They want to subjugate Yemen to their hegemony. We will wage jihad and protect our country!”

[Father, bottom right:] “My dears, Allah commanded us to wage jihad against the unjust, and allowed us to fight those who attack us. Therefore, I am going to join the heroes of the Army and the Popular Committees.”

[Child:] “I will go with you, dad!”

[Father:] “You’re a brave boy, Ahmad. One day you will take your part in serving the Faith and the Motherland. But for now, take care of your mother and your sister.”

Lesson Eight: 7

... Example of plural

Muhammad bought 3 rifles on Friday. On Sunday, he bought 4 rifles.

How many rifles did Muhammad buy in total?

Solution: On Friday he bought 3, on Sunday he bought 4.

Therefore, $3 + 4 = 7$ rifles.

...
27. Mathematics textbook (title unknown, circa 2016).\textsuperscript{43}

An exercise teaching Arabic numerals uses the Houthi slogan, “Allah is the greatest—Death to America—Death to Israel—Curse on the Jews—Victory to Islam,” as an item which students need to count. Other items featured include wrenches and ambulances.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Image of the exercise from the textbook.}
\end{figure}

\textit{Lesson Four: 3}

\textit{In the name of Allah Almighty, put a $\bigcirc$ around the figure which represents the number 3:}

\textit{Write down the number represented by each of the following figures:}

\[
[ ] [ ] [ ]
\]

\textit{Example of plural forms:}

\begin{align*}
(1) + (2) &= (3) \\
\text{Ask Allah for providence and sum up the following:}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
1 + 1 &= \\
1 + 2 + 2 + 1 &= \\
1 + 1 + 1 &=
\end{align*}

Children are taught that Jews are prophet killers and the most hostile people to the believers as they have been cursed by Allah. Children are instructed not to befriend Jews and, instead, be wary of their “schemes.” These statements appear in an activity on Qur’anic understanding.

Who are they?
- They incurred the wrath of Allah and He cursed them.
- Killers of the prophets.
- Allah ordered us not to befriend them, to declare animosity to them, and to beware of their schemes.
- The most hostile people to the believers.

Who are they?
*The Jews.*
Children are presented with a text which recounts the life of Imam Zayd bin Ali, an early Islamic figure venerated by the Zaydi sect of Shia Islam practiced in Yemen. Imam Zayd is said to have confronted the Umayyad “tyrant” ruler Hisham, for maintaining friendship with a Jew who cursed the Prophet. It is emphasized that the Umayyad rulers, widely seen as sinners in the Shi’ite community, were friends with Jews with indications that this was a negative trait. Upon hearing the slurs that the Jew was making against the prophet, the Imam’s first reaction was to kill him rather than engage in conversation, teaching children that issues should be solved violently.

... Another time, Imam Zayd approached the tyrant Hisham, and there was a Jew at his side, who was one of his friends; indeed, the Umayyads were friends of the Jews. This Jew was making slurs against the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings upon him and his family). Imam Zayd was infuriated and was about to kill the Jew, but the soldiers of the Umayyad tyrant prevented him from doing so.

“Zayd, do not harm our Jewish friend!” said Hisham.

“You will find me where you hate most,” Imam Zayd retorted, and stormed out, wondering how it is possible, that the ruler of the Muslims befriends a Jew—who slanders the Messenger of Allah—and does nothing...
Two pages are devoted to boycotting Israel and opposing any efforts of Israeli-Arab normalization. Israel is characterized as a “colonizing, stealing, oppressing occupier” who “must be confronted” and not be recognized or accepted “in any way.” It is further states that Israel is part of a wider “Zionist-American” intervention in the region which seeks to take over it. Children are presented with a “do” page, describing all the ways in which they must boycott Israel—including refusing to engage in any dialogue with the “Zionist entity”—and a “don’t do” page, where they are warned not to interact with Israeli or Israelis in any way. This page features a black Star of David on a round yellow background, lined with barbed wire, heavily evocative of common Holocaust imagery, and the text “Forms of NORMALIZATION with the Enemy.” Children are also shown a cartoon of an Arab shaking the hand of a blond man, possibly a representation of Former US President Donald Trump who facilitated the normalization between Israel and a host of Arab states, or of an Israeli official, and warned not to “recognize the Zionist-American hegemony,” nor “concede the principle of jihad and resistance in the face of the enemy.”

Don’t do

[Center] Forms of normalization with the Enemy:
[From the top, counter-clockwise] Declaring hostility and willingness to confront anyone who confronts the Occupation’s designs and the Zionist-American hegemony
Calling off economic boycott and fight those who endorse it
Visiting the Zionist Entity, under any pretext or circumstances
Supporting its economy and exploiting the resources and wealth of [Arab] nations and the [Islamic] Nation for [the Zionist Entity’s] benefit
Conceding the principle of jihad and resistance against the Zionist-American Enemy, and capitulating to it
Recognizing the Zionist Entity and the legitimacy of American intervention and hegemony on all nations

Normalization:
To establish natural relations with the Enemies of the Nation, who wage war against its faith, steal its wealth, kill its sons and occupy its land.

A poem by Yemeni poet Dheifallah al-Dureib entitled “I am the Little Boy” instructs children to defend their homeland from “the Jews,” who “act with tyranny,” among more innocuous statements such as behaving well at school.

My life I shall give without hesitation * My nation I shall defend

However much the Jews act with tyranny * I will not be treated unjustly

**Neutral or Positive Examples**


A section teaches children about air pollution and its causes. The text is informative and explains that cars and the burning of coal and fuel are a major source of air pollution.

Air pollution starts with the burning of coal and fuel at large factories. The smoke emanating from those factories pollutes the air.

Air pollution means there are bad gases in the air, which have a negative impact on our health. Today, vehicles, especially cars, are a major cause of air pollution.
The planets

Our Solar System includes eight planets. A planet is an object that orbits in a circle around a star. The planet remains in its orbit because of gravity between planets.

... 

Earth: The third planet in the Solar System. It is the only planet which harbors life, as it has [liquid] water and [the right] temperature.

... 

For eighty years scientists included Pluto as the ninth planet of the Solar System; however, in 2006, they decided that the definition of planet—a large spherical body which travels in a clear orbit around a star—does not apply to Pluto, which does not have a clear orbit. Therefore, scientists removed Pluto from the list of Solar System planets, and it was reclassified as a [dwarf] planet.
A comic strip teaches children to respect people with disabilities and to remember that they are all unique human beings with a sense of morality.

[First panel:] On the next day

“Stop making fun of him!”

[Bottom right panel:] “Why would you want that? Yesterday you made fun of him just like we did!”

[Bottom left panel:]

“Why don’t each of us put ourselves in his shoes? Would we be fine with people making fun of us then? Are you all so certain that you’ll never have to deal with a disability, or a sickness, for as long as you live? He’s a human being, he has a conscience and he’s unique. I am proud to call him my friend. I will not have anyone make fun of him!”
A comic strip teaches children to use polite language, to listen to others and not interrupt them, to respect other people and to not impose their opinion on others.

*I am a smart child. Therefore, when I talk to others:

[Top right:] I always use good, polite language.

[Content of conversation] “Excuse me, do you by chance have a pencil?” “Certainly, here you are.” “Thank you very much.”

[Top left:] I listen to the full story and not interrupt the speaker.

[Bottom right:] I do not mock or publicly reprimand others.

[Bottom left:] I do not impose my opinion; I have a dialogue.
A comic strip teaches about the importance of public cleanliness, showing the community coming together to clean their neighborhood and beautify it with greenery, as well as honoring the cleaning workers, who protect the community’s health.

[First panel] Thus, the cleaning campaign took off, and the people of the neighborhood complied. Everyone in the neighborhood started cleaning the front of their homes and the street.

[Second panel] After telling her neighbors about the importance of cleanliness, Umm Zahra helped by baking fatayer [savory pies] and handing them out to the community.

[Bottom right panel] “Today we honor the cleaning workers, for the esteemed service they provide us, and for protecting the health of our community.”

[Bottom left panel; man:] “There’s one thing missing . . . [Woman:] “We need to beautify the neighborhood with greenery and decorations!”
Methodology

IMPACT-se utilizes a content analysis research method to examine textbooks according to the following condensed criteria of UNESCO’s standards for peace and tolerance in school education:

1. **RESPECT**: The curriculum should promote tolerance, understanding and respect toward the “Other,” his or her culture, achievements, values and way of life. ⁴⁴

2. **INDIVIDUAL OTHER**: The curriculum should foster personal attachment toward the “Other” as an individual, his or her desire to be familiar, loved and appreciated. ⁴⁵

3. **NO HATE**: The curriculum should be free of wording, imagery and ideologies likely to create prejudices, misconceptions, stereotypes, misunderstandings, mistrust, racial hatred, religious bigotry and national hatred, as well as any other form of hatred or contempt for other groups or peoples. ⁴⁶

4. **NO INCITEMENT**: The curriculum should be free of language, content, and imagery that disseminate ideas or theories which justify or promote acts and expressions of violence, incitement to violence, hostility, harm and hatred toward other national, ethnic, racial or religious groups. ⁴⁷

5. **PEACEMAKING**: The curriculum should develop capabilities for non-violent conflict resolution and promote peace. ⁴⁸

6. **UNBIASED INFORMATION**: Educational materials (textbooks, workbooks, teachers’ guides, maps, illustrations, aids) should be up-to-date, accurate, complete, balanced and

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⁴⁴ As defined in the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance Proclaimed and signed by Member States of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Articles 1, 4.2. See also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Peoples (1965), Principles I, III. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

⁴⁵ The goal of education for peace is the development of universally recognized values in an individual, regardless of different socio-cultural contexts. See Ibid., Article 6. See also, on exchanges between youth, the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principles IV, V.


unprejudiced, and use equal standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples.\textsuperscript{49}

7. \textbf{GENDER}: The curriculum should foster equality and mutual respect between women and men. It should refrain from stereotyped gender roles.\textsuperscript{50}

8. \textbf{SOUND PROSPERITY and COOPERATION}: The curriculum should educate for sound and sustainable economic conduct and preservation of the environment for future generations. It should encourage regional and local cooperation to that effect.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{49} Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Article V.14.

\textsuperscript{50} The preamble to the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, notes the Convention on the Elimination of Any Form of Discrimination against Women and emphasizes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to gender.

\textsuperscript{51} Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Articles III.6, and IV.7. On the imperative for developing “systematic and rational tolerance teaching methods that will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance,” see the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Article 4.2. On education for international cooperation, see also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principle II.
**List of Analyzed Material**

The following educational materials attributed to the Houthi movement have been analyzed by IMPACT-se for research in this study. Digital versions of texts are available upon request.

*Jihad* (monthly publication), Imam Al-Hadi Cultural Foundation (*mu’assasat al-‘imam al-hadi ath-thaqafiyyah*):

1. Vol. 0, Muharram 1438 (October 2016).
10. Vol. 9, Muharram 1439 (September-October 2017).

**Other materials featured in this report**: