TA'IZ
City Profile

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Urban Profiling Yemen

This project is part of a Profiling Project that aims to develop city profiles of 7 cities in Yemen. cities include Aden, Sana'a, Sa'dah, Ta'iz, Al Hodeidah, Al Hawtah and Zinjibar. All profiles and data developed in this profile are accessible on the Yemen Mapping and Data Portal.

yemenportal.unhabitat.org/

Sa'dah
Sana'a
Al Hodeidah
Ta'iz
Zinjibar
Al Hawtah
Aden

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ANNEXES

Acronyms

ADSL	Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
AOAV	Action on Armed Violence
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management Services
CCIF	Cleanliness and City Improvement Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFP	Community Focal Point
CSO	Central Statistics Organization
DNA	Dynamic Needs Assessment
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EC	European Commission
ERC	Emirates Red Crescent
ESSSC	Environment Studies and Society Service Centre
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GIA	General Investment Authority
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GOAM	Yemen's General Organization of Antiquities and Museums
GoY	Government of Yemen
GPC	General People's Congress
GSMA	Global System for Mobile Communications
HeRAMS	Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System
HH	Household
HF	Health Facility
HLP	Housing, Land, and Property
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IBRD	IBRD
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRG	Internationally Recognized Government
ISDN	Integrated Services Digital Network
ISIL-YP	Islamic State of Iraq and Levant – Yemen Province
JMP	Joint Meeting Parties
JRC	Joint Research Center
KI	Key Informant
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LAEO	Literacy and Adult Education Organization
LAL	Local Authority Law
LC	Local Council
LCWS	Local Corporation of Water and Sanitation
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MAI	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
MC	Mercy Corps
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEE	Ministry of Electricity and Energy
MoE	Ministry of Education

MoHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoLA	Ministry of Local Administration
MoPHP	Ministry of Public Health and Population
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MoT	Ministry of Transportation
MoTEVT	Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training
MPWH	Ministry of Public Works and Highways
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MSWM	Municipal Solid Waste Management
MTIT	Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organization
NSSWM	National Strategy for Solid Waste Management
NWRA	National Water Resources Authority
NWSSIP	National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Program
PiN	People in Need
PTC	Public Telecommunication Corporation
PV	Photovoltaic
SAF	Small Arms Fire
SA/LW	Small Arms/Light Weapons
SC	Security Council
SFD	Social Fund for Development
SLA	State Land Authority
SPC	Supreme Political Council
SRC	Supreme Revolutionary Committee
SWM	Solid Waste Management
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Organization for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNOSAT	UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Program
UNVIM	United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen
USA	United States of America
UXOs	Unexploded Ordnances
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WEES	Water Emergency and Environmental Sanitation
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WMF	World Monument Fund
WSLC	Water and Sanitation Local Corporation
WSS	Water Supply and Sanitation
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
YAR	Yemen Arab Republic
YEMAC	Yemen Executive Mine Action Center
YER	Yemeni Rial (currency)

Executive Summary

Taiz city, located near the port city of Al Makha on the Red Sea, is the Capital of Ta'iz Governorate. It is the third most populated city in Yemen after Aden and Sana'a. This City Profile (CP) examines Ta'iz city, which includes the districts of Al Mudhaffar, Al Qahirah and Salah. The CP further analyzes and describes the situation in the city of Ta'iz across a variety of sectors. It addresses key themes and findings made prominent by the impact of the ongoing conflict, its toll on the city's population, and ability of institutions to provide basic services. Each section paints a picture of the prevailing situation and the needs of the city's residents through triangulation of different data types and sets, including secondary data analysis which draws on available publications and media reports, remote sensing, and structured interviews with community leaders and sector experts. The aim of this profile is to provide partners with the widest possible canvas of relevant information, assisting them in their operating programming and strategic policy development. Key findings include:

- **A multitude of (armed) actors are present throughout the city, crime levels are reported as high, and social tensions result in frequent incidents of violence.** The local population resorts to informal societal mechanisms to resolve disputes, primarily turning to tribal sheikhs. Local governance mechanisms are either incapacitated or inefficient and the population continues to perceive inequality, injustice, and an evident lack of inclusion.

- **Efforts to develop mechanisms and models for local governance and social cohesion are crucial.** It is essential to liaise and coordinate with local tribesmen as they have significant influence, both in terms of the population generally as well as in terms of being able to facilitate the work of the local council. As the situation in Ta'iz has become increasingly complex and fragmented due to the diversity of (armed) actors, the local council and other parts of the local authority have been undermined in implementing their mandate. However, local councils have played an extremely important role in alleviating the impact of the conflict as they played mediating roles between armed groups (which resulted into local ceasefires), facilitated safe pathways for humanitarian aid to arrive on the frontlines, and facilitated prisoner exchanges between warring factions.

- Ta'iz is one of Yemen's richest cities when it comes to natural, cultural, historical and architectural heritage. **Primary data reports that about two-thirds of sites are currently partially functioning in Ta'iz city while one-third is estimated fully functioning.** Although since March 2015, many sites have been damaged from conflict, a relatively small percentage of the government's budget was allocated for renovation and restoration of cultural projects prior to the current conflict. The ability to mount reconstruction work and conservation without assistance is low, and a comprehensive management strategy, including training of staff are required.

- **Limited access to residential and non-residential land and poor infrastructure services are two particularly salient challenges in Ta'iz city. Housing affordability rather than availability appears to be the most pertinent issue in the city;** an approximate 80,000 homes are inhabited, while 7,800 housing units remain vacant in the city. Deteriorating means to monetary security and the surge of economic challenges mean that Ta'iz's population simply cannot afford paying rent. According to primary data, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), followed by returnees, face the most frequent challenges in satisfying shelter and housing needs. In addition to conflict-related damages (78% of the housing stock), the city is subject to severe seasonal flash flooding causing significant damage to property.

- **Ta'iz city has been in a long-term state of blackout with clear evidence of a continuing lack in electricity, placing a substantial burden on various sectors and gravely undermining availability of city-wide services.** The destruction of Asifrah, Ta'iz's primary source of electricity, along with damage to high-voltage lines connecting Ta'iz to Mocha's and Al Hodeidah's power plants have all contributed to diminished energy supply in the city. Additionally, a total of 313 energy facilities have broken down, rendering the public grid both undependable and ineffective.

- **Less than half of the total amount of Health Facilities (74) in the city are reported to be without damage.** Major surgery services cannot be performed in the city; neither services in terms of minor surgery and lab services nor maternal and child healthcare are available in one out of three districts. Power shortages have negatively affected health facilities as hospitals are struggling to pay for the diesel fuel needed to run their generators. Sewage and wastewater management issues, landfill sites in the proximity of the city, and a great number of polluting factories further negatively impact the health sector. Reportedly, over two-thirds of the population does not have access to water for drinking purposes; common issues reported include issues with access as well as availability as water is not frequently found in the market or is too expensive to purchase.

- **Approximately half of communication facilities in Ta'iz city are not functioning and all districts face difficulties in terms of availability of communication services.** Damage to ICT infrastructure and shortages of diesel are reported as primary reasons for internet availability in the city which has experienced ICT blackouts since the onset of the conflict. Furthermore, high tariffs are reported an issue across districts.

- **While significant investments have been made to develop the road network and transportation infrastructure in the city, Ta'iz is facing challenges associated with poor traffic management, lack of road hierarchy, inadequate design, and poor road safety. More than half of the roads within Ta'iz city have sustained some degree of damage.** Barriers faced by the population in terms of transportation services are mainly insufficient money (as well as the cost of transportation), the security situation hindering access, and logistical constraints. IDPs face the biggest challenges obtaining transportation services across districts, while returnees, the host and non-host community are also amongst the groups facing the biggest challenges.
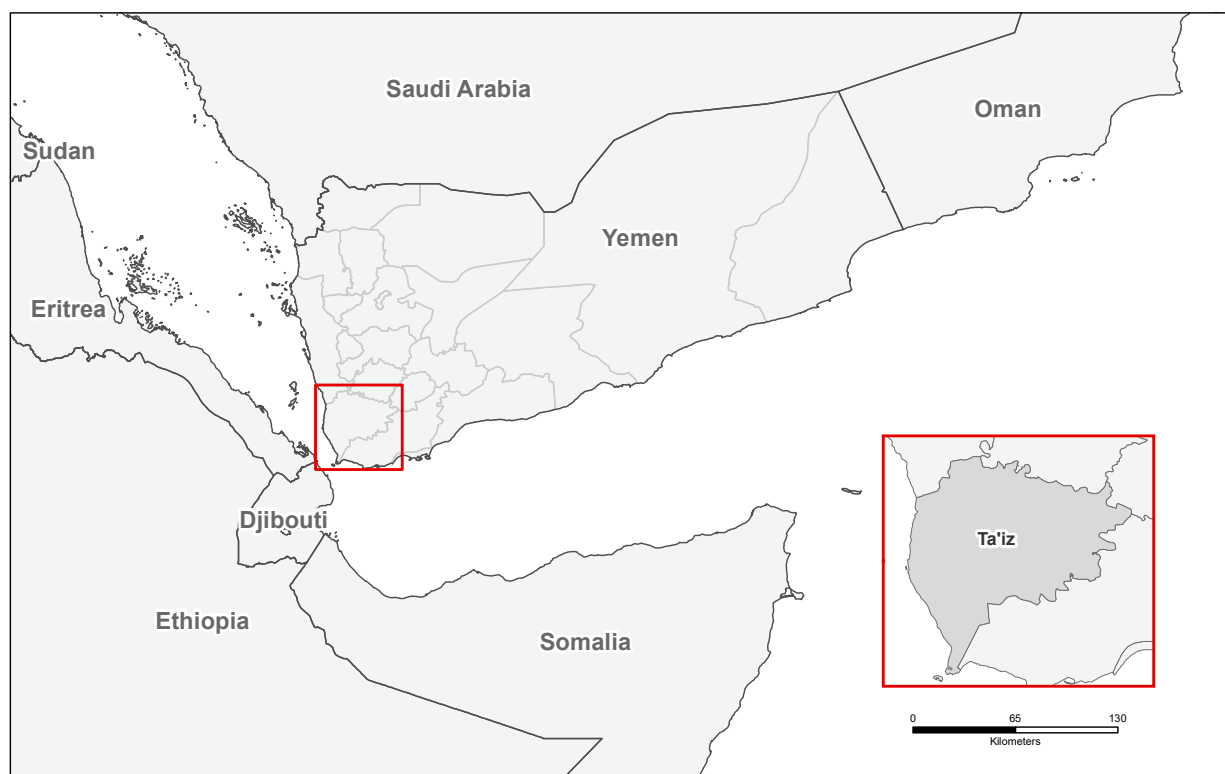
Introduction

Ta'iz is the capital of Ta'iz Governorate, which is located in southwestern Yemen. The governorate borders with the Red Sea in the west, Al Hodeidah and Ibb Governorates in the north, Ad Dali' Governorate in the east and Lahj Governorate in the south. The governorate includes mountains and highlands, as well as lush green plains stretching towards the Red Sea. Ta'iz is the third most important city in the country (after Aden and Sana'a), and the third most populous city. Ta'iz is located around 265 km south of the capital Sana'a[1], picturesquely situated at an elevation of about 1,400 meters above sea level at the feet of a 3,000 meters high mountain, known as Jabal Sabir. Ta'iz lies at the junction of two important all-weather highways, the east-west road from Al Makha on the Red Sea coast, and the north-south route to the national capital of Sana'a, via Ibb and Dhamar. Another road, the N1, links Ta'iz with Aden. The city covers an area of approximately 22km2, was once one of Yemen's cultural hubs and is still densely populated despite the outbreak of the conflict which included frequent heavy artillery shelling, airstrikes, and armed clashes in the city.

Historically, Ta'iz is a young city as most of its concrete buildings were built after 1962, the year the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) was established.[2] Ta'iz is famous for its old citadel sitting on a mountain spur above the city center, which hosts a National Museum and a number of old mosques of which the most famous are the Ashrafiya, the Muctabiya, and the Mudhaffar.

On 30 October 1918, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Imam Yahya Mohammad Hamid Al Din declared northern Yemen an independent state and in the 1920s, the Imam had expanded power to the north into the southern Tihamah plains. Long an important administrative center, Ta'iz city was ruled as an emirate by a member of the Al Wazir house; the province came under the personal rule of the crown prince in 1944. From 1948 to 1962, when the republic was established, Ta'iz was the residence of the Imam and the administrative capital of the country.

Historically, the city was known for its coffee production which was considered some of the finest in the region in the early 20th century. In the 1960s, Ta'iz was the first city in the country to have a citywide purified water system built by the United States of America (USA).[3] Prior to the outbreak of the conflict, the city was long a thriving commercial hub and had been developing into a center of industry since the 1970s.

Figure 1: The geographical location of Ta'iz city within the borders of the Republic of Yemen.

Ta'iz ,Date Created: 06 April 2020, Datum/Projection: WGS_84, Data sources: OCHA

Disclaimer: The boundaries, names and designations used in this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by iMMAP.

1   Yemen News Agency (SABA), "Tourist Attractions In Taiz", September 13, 2004, https://www.saba.ye/en/news78012.htm (accessed November 18, 2019).

2   P. Robinson et al., Yemen, (Cavendish Square Publishing, LLC, 2018), 22 – 23.

3   Ibid.

People and Conflicts in Ta'iz

Figure 2: Conflict Timeline

TA'IZ
WITHIN YEMEN CONTEXTUAL
TIMELINE OF CONFLICT

THE CITY OF TA'IZ was Yemen's capital from 1175 until the end of Rasulid dynasty in 1454, and intermittently later, until falling to Ottoman armies in 1516.

1918
End of Ottoman rule. In 1948, Ta'iz became the second capital - after Sana'a - until the fall of the Mutawakklite Imamate in 1962.

1962
A revolt erupted against the rule of the Zaydi imams. Followed by an eight-year civil war that split the country between Royalists—aiming to restore the Zaydi monarchy—and the Republicans, a force made up of a mix of Zaydi and Shafi'i fighters. Ta'iz fought on the side of the Republicans, which in turn split into two factions in August 1968: One faction was leftist—mostly from Ta'iz—and the other was nationalist and conservative, from Sana'a and the north. The latter took control eventually.

1963
The General Union of Ta'iz Workers was formed, which grew into the General Union of Yemeni Workers, recognized by the Arab Confederation of Trade Unions in 1965.
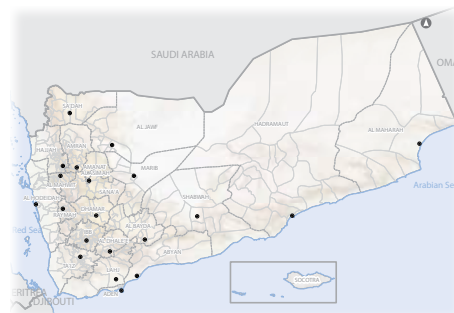
FEBRUARY 18, 2011
Anti-government demonstrations took place in several Yemeni cities- starting from Ta'iz- and it reached a height when an eight-day protest culminated in the "Friday of Rage".

MAY 28 – 7 JUNE, 2011
The Battle of Ta'iz (2011) erupted during the 2011 Yemeni Revolution, which started by mostly peaceful demonstration, then developed to an armed conflict between forces loyal to Yemeni leader Ali Abdullah Saleh and opposition protesters, backed by armed tribesmen and defecting soldiers in Ta'iz.

JUNE 8, 2011
Opposition tribesmen took control of Ta'iz

MARCH 26, 2015
The Saudi-Led Coalition (SLC) launched an intervention after the situation rapidly developed into an armed conflict and Houthis invaded the south.

APRIL 22, 2015
Saudi Arabia announced that it would end almost a month of air strikes. Hours later, Houthi fighters captured an army brigade base loyal to the government in Ta'iz following heavy fighting, which was shortly followed by an airstrike which hit the brigade headquarters.

APRIL 26, 2015
A group of tribal and Islamist fighters (pro-Hadi forces) took back several districts in Ta'iz amid heavy fighting that left some 20 civilians dead and dozens wounded. The World Health Organization (WHO) put the death toll at 19 civilians, after the local Al-Thawra hospital was hit.

MAY 25, 2015
Houthi fighters pushed back pro-Hadi forces in heavy street clashes in Ta'iz city.

AUGUST 5, 2015
Pro-Hadi forces at Ta'iz had received reinforcements from the south, allowing them to capture most of the city.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2015
The United Nations (UN) said 95 civilians have been killed in the past two weeks in Yemen's southwestern city of Taiz where a collapsing health care service and outbreak of dengue fever are compounding a dire humanitarian situation.

NOVEMBER 17, 2015
Yemen's exiled President returned to Aden to rally forces and