

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN YEMEN

Name: Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen

Year of Origin: 1960s¹

Founder(s): [Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani](#), Mohammed Abdulla Al-Yadomi, Abdulla Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, Ali Mohsen al-Amar

Place(s) of Operation: Yemen

Key Leaders:

- [Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani](#)
- Mohammed Abdulla Al-Yadomi: Chairman of the Supreme Authority of Islah²
- Abdul Wahab Al-Anesi: Secretary-General³
- Mohammed al-Saadi: Assistant secretary-general for political affairs⁴
- Yahya Lutfi al-Fusayl: senior leader⁵

Associated Organization(s):

- Al-Islah⁶
- Da'wat Al-Islah⁷
- Islah⁸
- Yemeni Congregation for Reform⁹

The [Muslim Brotherhood](#) first emerged in Yemen in the 1960s and 1970s, when U.N.-sanctioned [Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani](#)—the founder of the Brotherhood’s branch in Yemen—led a group of

¹ Leslie Campbell, “Yemen: The Tribal Islamists,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/yemen-the-tribal-islamists>.

² Khalid Al-Karimi, “Major parties react to Houthi killings,” *Yemen Times*, September 11, 2014, <http://www.yementimes.com/en/1815/news/4322/Major-parties-react-to-Houthi-killings.htm>.

³ Badr al-Qahtani, “Yemen’s Islah Party: ‘We Rectified Political Confusion by Renouncing Muslim Brotherhood,’” *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), September 16, 2016, <http://english.aawsat.com/2016/09/article55358448/yemens-islah-party-rectified-political-confusion-renouncing-muslim-brotherhood>.

⁴ Badr al-Qahtani, “Yemen’s Islah Party: ‘We Rectified Political Confusion by Renouncing Muslim Brotherhood,’” *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), September 16, 2016, <http://english.aawsat.com/2016/09/article55358448/yemens-islah-party-rectified-political-confusion-renouncing-muslim-brotherhood>.

⁵ “Abd Al-Majid Al-Zindani,” Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Watch, January 17, 2015, <http://www.globalmbrwatch.com/wiki/abd-al-majid-al-zindani/>.

⁶ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki, “Saudi Arabia Blacklists Yemeni Groups,” *Yemen Times*, March 13, 2014, <http://www.yementimes.com/en/1763/news/3590/Saudi-Arabia-blacklists-Yemeni-groups.htm>.

⁷ “List of groups designated terrorist organisations by the UAE,” *National* (Dubai), November 16, 2014, <http://www.thenational.ae/uae/government/list-of-groups-designated-terrorist-organisations-by-the-uae>.

⁸ Stacey Philbrick Yadav, “Working Paper: Yemen’s Muslim Brotherhood and the Perils of Powersharing,” Brookings Institution, August 2015, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2015/07/rethinking-political-islam/Yemen_Yadav-FINALE.pdf?la=en.

⁹ Stacey Philbrick Yadav, “Working Paper: Yemen’s Muslim Brotherhood and the Perils of Powersharing,” Brookings Institution, August 2015, http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2015/07/rethinking-political-islam/Yemen_Yadav-FINALE.pdf?la=en.

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clerics to establish a religious schooling system in northern Yemen.¹⁰ Following the 1990 merger of North and South Yemen, Zindani co-founded Islamist political party al-Islah (“Congregation for Reform”) with the support of then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh.¹¹ Since its founding in the 1990s, al-Islah has remained one of the leading political parties in Yemen, vacillating at times between an opposition party and a government ally.¹² Saudi Arabia designated al-Islah as a terrorist organization in 2014. In 2015, however, Saudi Arabia reportedly began providing the group with financial and artillery support to fight [Houthi](#) rebels.¹³ Al-Islah has longstanding ties to the Brotherhood, but the group declared in 2013 and again in 2016 that it is not associated with the global Brotherhood movement.¹⁴ Al-Islah reportedly declared again in 2018 that it had no affiliation with the Brotherhood.¹⁵

The history of the Brotherhood in Yemen is intricately tied to the work of its founders and most significantly to Zindani. In the 1960s, Zindani established a number of schools, called “scientific institutes,” mimicking the madrassas school system in [Afghanistan](#) and [Pakistan](#). Through an ascetic Wahhabi-Salafist curriculum, the school aimed to counter the wave of secularism coming from the socialist-run South Yemen.¹⁶ In the 1980s, Zindani and a number of his students went to Afghanistan to join the mujahideen in their fight against Soviet forces. In addition to serving as an adviser to Osama bin Laden and other [al-Qaeda](#) leaders in the 1990s, Zindani has also spoken at [Hamas](#) events, including at a Hamas fundraising conference in 2006.¹⁷ Zindani was designated by the United States and United Nations in 2004.¹⁸

¹⁰ Leslie Campbell, “Yemen: The Tribal Islamists,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/yemen-the-tribal-islamists>.

¹¹ Leslie Campbell, “Yemen: The Tribal Islamists,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/yemen-the-tribal-islamists>.

¹² Leslie Campbell, “Yemen: The Tribal Islamists,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/yemen-the-tribal-islamists>.

¹³ [Matthew Hedges and Giorgio Cafiero, “The GCC and the Muslim Brotherhood: What Does the Future Hold?,” Middle East Policy Council, Spring 2017, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/gcc-and-muslim-brotherhood-what-does-future-hold>; Hussein Ibish, “Saudi Arabia’s New Sunni Alliance,” *New York Times*, July 31, 2015, \[https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/01/opinion/hussein-ibish-saudi-arabias-new-sunni-alliance.html?_r=0\]\(https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/01/opinion/hussein-ibish-saudi-arabias-new-sunni-alliance.html?_r=0\); Angus McDowall, “Sectarian hate takes root as Yemen anti-Houthi forces push on Sanaa,” Reuters, October 21, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-marib-insight-idUSKCN0SF1AF20151021>.](#)

¹⁴ Badr al-Qahtani, “Yemen’s Islah Party: ‘We Rectified Political Confusion by Renouncing Muslim Brotherhood,’” *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), September 16, 2016, <http://english.aawsat.com/2016/09/article55358448/yemens-islah-party-rectified-political-confusion-renouncing-muslim-brotherhood>; “Rebels in Yemen abduct Sunni rivals amid Saudi airstrikes,” CBS News, April 15, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/rebels-in-yemen-abduct-sunni-rivals-amid-saudi-airstrikes/>.

¹⁵ Saeed Al Batati, “Yemen’s Islah party distances itself from Brotherhood,” Gulf News, January 9, 2018, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/yemen-s-islah-party-distances-itself-from-brotherhood-1.2154324>.

¹⁶ Leslie Campbell, “Yemen: The Tribal Islamists,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/yemen-the-tribal-islamists>.

¹⁷ “Union of Good,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, November 12, 2008, <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/terrorist-illicit-finance/Pages/protecting-union-of-good.aspx>.

¹⁸ “United States Designates bin Laden Loyalist,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, February 24, 2004, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/js1190.aspx>; “United States Designates bin Laden

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Today, al-Islah operates a number of different wings, including political, charitable, and paramilitary wings.¹⁹ Islah fighters and Islah-affiliated paramilitary groups are particularly concentrated in the country's north, where the group—backed by Saudi Arabia—has taken up the fight against extremist Houthi rebels.²⁰ The UAE has accused al-Islah of seizing 75 percent of the military equipment provided by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.²¹ Beginning in December 2015 and continuing through 2016, the UAE allegedly contracted a group of U.S. mercenaries to carry out a series of assassinations of al-Islah members in Yemen as part of a mission to “disrupt and destruct” the party. Between 25 and 30 members were reportedly killed.²²

In June 2017, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states cut diplomatic ties with Qatar over its support of the Muslim Brotherhood and other extremist and terrorist groups. Though al-Islah supports Yemen's fight against Houthi rebels, the party began to face substantial opposition from the Yemeni state and its Gulf allies, which include the UAE and Saudi Arabia, due to its own links with the Muslim Brotherhood. The UAE and its military proxies in Yemen reportedly began engaging in clashes with al-Islah, and in October, Yemeni security forces raided the Islah headquarters in October and arrested 11 of its leaders.²³

In December 2017, al-Islah engaged in diplomatic talks with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and reports surfaced that the party had severed ties with the Muslim Brotherhood.²⁴ This was confirmed in January 2018 when Islah leader Mohammed Al-Yadomi stated that the party “has no organizational or political ties with the Muslim Brotherhood” and that its priority was to support Yemen's internationally recognized government in its fight against Houthi rebels.²⁵

Loyalist,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, February 24, 2004, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/js1190.aspx>.

¹⁹ AFP, “Yemen: Shiite, Sunni militants fuel chaos,” *Daily Mail* (London), December 14, 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3359718/Yemen-Shiite-Sunni-militants-fuel-chaos.html>.

²⁰ Angus McDowall, “Sectarian hate takes root as Yemen anti-Houthi forces push on Sanaa,” Reuters, October 21, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-marib-insight-idUSKCN0SF1AF20151021>.

²¹ “UAE accuses Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen of seizing resistance weapons,” Middle East Monitor, April 6, 2016, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20160406-uae-accuses-muslim-brotherhood-in-yemen-of-seizing-resistance-weapons/>.

²² Aram Roston, “A Middle East Monarchy Hired American Ex-Soldiers To Kill Its Political Enemies. This Could Be The Future Of War,” BuzzFeed News, October 16, 2018,

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/aramroston/mercenaries-assassination-us-yemen-uae-spear-golan-dahlan>.

²³ “Brothers no more: Yemen's Islah party faces collapse of Aden alliances,” Middle East Eye, October 21, 2017, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/uae-yemen-islah-aden-959249443>; “Yemen Islamist party members arrested, ratcheting up members,” Reuters, October 11, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security/yemen-islamist-party-members-arrested-ratcheting-up-tensions-idUSKBN1CG1J1>.

²⁴ Ali Mahmood, “UAE and Saudi Arabia hold talks with Yemen's Al Islah party,” *Naitonal* (Abu Dhabi), December 14, 2017, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/uae-and-saudi-arabia-hold-talks-with-yemen-s-al-islah-party-1.684549>; “Yemen Islah party sever ties with Muslim Brotherhood,” *Al Arabiya*, December 15, 2017, <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2017/12/15/Yemen-Islah-party-sever-ties-with-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>.

²⁵ Saeed Al Batati, “Yemen's Islah party distances itself from Brotherhood,” *Gulf News*, January 9, 2018, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/yemen-s-islah-party-distances-itself-from-brotherhood-1.2154324>.

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Al-Islah fighters have continued to clash with militants in Yemen.²⁶ Militants have also attempted to assassinate al-Islah political leaders. In August 2018, local al-Islah leader Arafat Hazam survived after unknown militants attached a bomb to the bottom of his car. Al-Islah blamed the Interior Ministry and the Aden Director of Security for failing to stop assassination attempts against the party.²⁷

In addition to acting primarily as a political bloc, al-Islah also maintains a charitable wing, Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW).²⁸ The CSSW has ties to both Zindani—who reportedly founded the organization²⁹—and deceased al-Qaeda operative [Anwar al-Awlaki](#), who served as vice president of the organization from 1998 to 1999.³⁰ In 2004, New York federal prosecutors charged that the U.S. branch of the organization had acted as a front for al-Qaeda.³¹ The CSSW boasts partnership with a number of different international organizations, including UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and others.³² The organization released a newsletter in 2009 showing that Zindani had been a featured speaker at one of the group’s charitable events.³³

History:

- **September 13, 1990:** Zindani co-founds al-Islah.³⁴
- **1993:** In al-Islah’s first parliamentary elections, the group wins 62 out of 301 parliamentary seats. Zindani founds Al-Iman University in Sanaa.³⁵

²⁶ Agence France-Presse, “Two children killed as fighting flares in Yemen’s Taz,” *Ahram Online*, April 25, 2019, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/330633/World/Region/Two-children-killed-as-fighting-flares-in-Yemens-T.aspx>.

²⁷ “Another Islah official survives assassination attempt in Aden,” *Al-Sahwah.net*, August 8, 2018, <http://alsahwah-yemen.net/en/p-21692>; “Yemen: Al-Islah holds government responsible for assassination attempts,” *Middle East Monitor*, August 10, 2018, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180810-yemen-al-islah-holds-government-responsible-for-assassination-attempts/>.

²⁸ “Yemen: Houthis Shut Groups, Detain Activists,” *Human Rights Watch*, December 13, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/13/yemen-houthis-shut-groups-detain-activists>.

²⁹ “Susan Schmidt, “Imam From Va. Mosque Now Thought to Have Aided Al-Qaeda,” *Washington Post*, February 27, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/26/AR2008022603267.html>.

³⁰ “Susan Schmidt, “Imam From Va. Mosque Now Thought to Have Aided Al-Qaeda,” *Washington Post*, February 27, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/26/AR2008022603267.html>.

³¹ “Susan Schmidt, “Imam From Va. Mosque Now Thought to Have Aided Al-Qaeda,” *Washington Post*, February 27, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/26/AR2008022603267.html>.

³² “Globally,” CSSW, April 9, 2013, <http://csswyemen.org/e/index.php/d-p/4511>.

³³ J.M. Berger, “Exclusive: U.S. Gave Millions to Charity Linked to Al Qaeda, Anwar Awlaki,” *IntelWire*, April 14, 2010, <http://news.intelwire.com/2010/04/us-gave-millions-to-charity-linked-to.html>.

³⁴ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki, “Saudi Arabia Blacklists Yemeni Groups,” *Yemen Times*, March 13, 2014, <http://www.yementimes.com/en/1763/news/3590/Saudi-Arabia-blacklists-Yemeni-groups.htm>.

³⁵ Steven Erlanger, “At Yemen College, Scholarship and Jihadist Ideas,” *New York Times*, January 18, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/19/world/middleeast/19yemen.html>.

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- **1997:** After distancing itself from the Saleh government, al-Islah formally joins the opposition movement.³⁶
- **1993-1998:** Zindani serves as an adviser to Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders.³⁷
- **1999:** Al-Islah participates in Yemen's first direct presidential elections.³⁸
- **December 2011:** Al-Islah joins the coalition government in Yemen.³⁹
- **2013:** Al-Islah declares it has no affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴⁰
- **2013—2014:** Participates in the Yemeni National Dialogue.⁴¹
- **April 2015:** Aligns itself with the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, in opposition of the Houthi takeover.⁴²
- **2015 – 2016:** The UAE allegedly hires an American security firm to carry out assassinations of al-Islah members in Yemen as part of a mission to “disrupt and destruct” the party. Between 25 and 30 members are reportedly killed.⁴³
- **September 2016:** Al-Islah renounces its association with the Muslim Brotherhood. Yemeni observers doubt the announcement since the party had previously announced it had no ties to the Brotherhood in 2013.⁴⁴
- **October 2017:** Backed by the UAE, Yemeni security forces raid the al-Islah headquarters and arrest 11 of its leaders.⁴⁵

³⁶ Leslie Campbell, “Yemen: The Tribal Islamists,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/yemen-the-tribal-islamists>.

³⁷ “Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities,” U.N. Security Council, accessed March 27, 2015, http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/individuals_associated_with_Al-Qaida.shtml.

³⁸ Leslie Campbell, “Yemen: The Tribal Islamists,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/yemen-the-tribal-islamists>.

³⁹ Stacey Philbrick Yadav, “Yemen’s Muslim Brotherhood and the Perils of Powersharing,” Brookings Institute, August 2015, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Yemen_Yadav-FINALE.pdf.

⁴⁰ Badr al-Qahtani, “Yemen’s Islah Party: ‘We Rectified Political Confusion by Renouncing Muslim Brotherhood,’” *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), September 16, 2016, <http://english.aawsat.com/2016/09/article55358448/yemens-islam-party-rectified-political-confusion-renouncing-muslim-brotherhood>.

⁴¹ Leslie Campbell, “Yemen: The Tribal Islamists,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed May 30, 2016, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/yemen-the-tribal-islamists>.

⁴² “Yemen: Huthis have carried out wave of detentions and torture - new report,” Amnesty International UK, May 18, 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/yemen-huthis-have-carried-out-wave-detentions-and-torture-new-report>.

⁴³ Aram Roston, “A Middle East Monarchy Hired American Ex-Soldiers To Kill Its Political Enemies. This Could Be The Future Of War,” BuzzFeed News, October 16, 2018, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/aramroston/mercenaries-assassination-us-yemen-uae-spear-golan-dahlan>.

⁴⁴ Badr al-Qahtani, “Yemen’s Islah Party: ‘We Rectified Political Confusion by Renouncing Muslim Brotherhood,’” *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), September 16, 2016, <http://english.aawsat.com/2016/09/article55358448/yemens-islam-party-rectified-political-confusion-renouncing-muslim-brotherhood>.

⁴⁵ “Brothers no more: Yemen’s Islah party faces collapse of Aden alliances,” Middle East Eye, October 21, 2017, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/uae-yemen-islam-aden-959249443>; “Yemen Islamist party members arrested, ratcheting up tensions,” Reuters, October 11, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security/yemen-islamist-party-members-arrested-ratcheting-up-tensions-idUSKBN1CG1J1>;

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- **December 2017:** Al-Islah leaders engage in diplomatic talks with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and reports surface that the party has again announced that it has severed ties with the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴⁶
- **January 2018:** In an interview with a Saudi newspaper, al-Islah leader Mohammed Al-Yadomi states that the party “has no organizational or political ties with the Muslim Brotherhood” and that its priority is to support Yemen’s internationally recognized government in its fight against Houthi rebels.⁴⁷
- **July 2018:** U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Matthew Toler meets with al-Islah’s chairman of the Supreme Yemeni Congregation for Reform Mohammed Abdullah Al-Yadumi in Riyadh. Toler praises al-Islah’s role in promoting the political process in Yemen.⁴⁸
- **November 2018:** UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed meets with al-Islah supreme council president Mohammed Abdullah al-Yadomi and the party’s secretary general, Abdulwahab al-Ansi, to discuss developments in the war in Yemen.⁴⁹

Violent Activities:

Many of the militias fighting the Houthis in northern Yemen are affiliated with al-Islah.⁵⁰ Al-Islah has also been implicated in a series of violent terrorist attacks through its founder, [Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani](#). Among attacks associated with Zindani and the Brotherhood chapter is the October 2000 attack on the *USS Cole*, which killed 17 Americans.

- **October 12, 2000:** Al-Qaeda suicide bombers attack the *USS Cole* at a Yemeni port, killing 17 Americans.⁵¹ Zindani allegedly issued a religious decree ordering the attack.⁵²

⁴⁶ Ali Mahmood, “UAE and Saudi Arabia hold talks with Yemen’s Al Islah party,” *Naitonal* (Abu Dhabi), December 14, 2017, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/uae-and-saudi-arabia-hold-talks-with-yemen-s-al-islam-party-1.684549>; “Yemen Islah party sever ties with Muslim Brotherhood,” *Al Arabiya*, December 15, 2017, <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2017/12/15/Yemen-Islah-party-sever-ties-with-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>.

⁴⁷ Saeed Al Batati, “Yemen’s Islah party distances itself from Brotherhood,” *Gulf News*, January 9, 2018, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/yemen-s-islam-party-distances-itself-from-brotherhood-1.2154324>.

⁴⁸ “US ambassador meets leaders of Al-Islah party in Riyadh, praises ‘Muslim brotherhood of Yemen,’” *Middle East Monitor*, July 11, 2018, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180711-us-ambassador-meets-leaders-of-al-islam-party-in-riyadh-praises-muslim-brotherhood-of-yemen/>.

⁴⁹ Khalil Dewan, “UAE and Yemen’s al-Islah: Meeting of enemies doesn’t mean peace,” *Middle East Eye*, November 16, 2018, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/uae-and-yemens-al-islam-meeting-enemies-doesnt-mean-peace>.

⁵⁰ Peter Salisbury, “Yemen on the Edge: ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Factional Fighting, Lying Politicians, Proxy Wars, and a Small Team of U.S. Soldiers Serving an ‘Indefinite’ Mission,” *Vice News*, October 12, 2016, <https://news.vice.com/story/what-are-us-special-operations-forces-doing-in-yemen>.

⁵¹ “A Claim For The Cole,” *CBS News*, June 20, 2001, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-claim-for-the-cole/>.

⁵² Michael Slackman, “Yemeni Allegedly Decreed Cole Strike,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 2003, <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/jan/15/world/fg-yemen15>.

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- **March 2006:** Zindani pays a legal team to prosecute *Yemen Observer* editor Mohammad al-Asadi for reprinting Danish cartoons of the prophet Muhammad. Zindani's legal team calls for the death penalty for Asadi.⁵³
- **January 14, 2010:** Zindani threatens to call for violent jihad if U.S. troops enter Yemen to fight al-Qaeda.⁵⁴
- **September 13, 2013:** Zindani tells Yemenis to emulate Egyptian and Libyan protests in response to the online video "Innocence of Muslims." Protests erupt in Yemen hours after Zindani's announcement.⁵⁵
- **June 2017:** The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states cut diplomatic ties with Qatar over its support of the Muslim Brotherhood and other extremist and terrorist groups. Al-Islah begins to face substantial opposition from the Yemeni state and its Gulf allies, which include the UAE and Saudi Arabia, due to its own links with the Muslim Brotherhood. For example, the UAE and its military proxies in Yemen reportedly begin to engage in clashes with al-Islah.⁵⁶
- **June 16, 2018:** Al-Islah calls on its followers to launch an *intifada* ("uprising") against Houthi militants in Yemen's Al-Hudeidah province where the Yemeni army and militants are fighting.⁵⁷
- **April 2019:** Al-Islah's militia clashes with members of the Salafist movement in Taz, killing at least five and wounding 91.⁵⁸

Ties to Extremist Groups:

Al-Qaeda: The Brotherhood in Yemen is linked to al-Qaeda through al-Islah's leader, [Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani](#). In the 1980s, al-Zindani fought alongside Osama bin Laden against the

⁵³ "Cleric's Lawyers: Death to Yemeni Publisher of Mohammad Cartoons," Fox News, March 9, 2006, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2006/03/09/cleric-lawyers-death-to-yemeni-publisher-muhammad-cartoons/>.

⁵⁴ Robert F. Worth, "Yemen: Clerics Oppose U.S. Troops," *New York Times*, January 14, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/15/world/middleeast/15briefs-Yemen.html?ref=world>.

⁵⁵ Nasser Arrabyee, Alan Cowell, and Rick Gladstone, "Turmoil Over Contentious Video Spreads," *New York Times*, September 13, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/14/world/middleeast/mideast-turmoil-spreads-to-us-embassy-in-yemen.html>.

⁵⁶ "Brothers no more: Yemen's Islah party faces collapse of Aden alliances," Middle East Eye, October 21, 2017, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/uae-yemen-islah-aden-959249443>; "Yemen Islamist party members arrested, ratcheting up members," Reuters, October 11, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security/yemen-islamist-party-members-arrested-ratcheting-up-tensions-idUSKBN1CG1J1>.

⁵⁷ Ali Aweida, "Yemen party urges anti-Houthi 'intifada' in Al-Hudeidah," Anadolu Agency, June 16, 2018, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/yemen-party-urges-anti-houthi-intifada-in-al-hudeidah/1176427>.

⁵⁸ Agence France-Presse, "Two children killed as fighting flares in Yemen's Taz," Ahram Online, April 25, 2019, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/330633/World/Region/Two-children-killed-as-fighting-flares-in-Yemens-T.aspx>.

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Soviets in Afghanistan.⁵⁹ Zindani went on to advise Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders.⁶⁰

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS: Al-Islah has at times fought alongside AQAP and ISIS in Yemen, according to findings by Saudi Arabia. Since acknowledging the alliance between the three groups in March 2016, Saudi Arabia claims to have reconsidered its strategy in Yemen and its support for the Brotherhood-linked party.⁶¹

Hamas: The Brotherhood in Yemen is linked to Palestinian-based Hamas through al-Islah's leader, Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani. In 2006, Zindani gave a speech at a Hamas fundraising conference in Yemen. During the conference, the crowd pledged "millions of riyals" for Hamas, according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury.⁶²

Designations by Governments and Organizations:

United States

February 24, 2004

The Department of the Treasury designated "Shaykh Abd-al-Majid al-Zindani" as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT).⁶³

United Nations

February 27, 2004

The U.N. Security Council designated "Abd-Al-Majid Aziz Al-Zindani" as an individual associated with al-Qaeda.⁶⁴

Saudi Arabia

March 7, 2014

⁵⁹ Evan Kohlman, "In Too Deep," *National Review*, January 17, 2003, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/205561/too-deep-evan-kohlmann>; Margaret Coker, "Yemeni Sheik Courts, Warns Foreign Governments," *Wall Street Journal*, January 12, 2010, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB126321683002124521>.

⁶⁰ "Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities," U.N. Security Council, accessed March 27, 2015, http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/individuals_associated_with_Al-Qaida.shtml.

⁶¹ David Igantius, "A 30-year-old Saudi prince could jump-start the kingdom — or drive it off a cliff," *Washington Post*, June 28, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/a-30-year-old-saudi-prince-could-jump-start-the-kingdom--or-drive-it-off-a-cliff/2016/06/28/ce669a3e-3c69-11e6-a66f-aa6c1883b6b1_story.html.

⁶² "Union of Good," U.S. Department of the Treasury, November 12, 2008, <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/terrorist-illicit-finance/Pages/protecting-union-of-good.aspx>.

⁶³ "United States Designates bin Laden Loyalist," U.S. Department of the Treasury, February 24, 2004, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/js1190.aspx>.

⁶⁴ "Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities," U.N. Security Council, accessed March 27, 2015, http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/individuals_associated_with_Al-Qaida.shtml.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN YEMEN

Saudi Arabia lists Al-Islah as a terrorist organization.⁶⁵

In Their Own Words:

Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani, March 1, 2011

Addressing several thousand anti-government protesters in Yemen:

“An Islamic state is coming!... [President Saleh] came to power by force, and stayed in power by force, and the only way to get rid of him is through the force of the people.”⁶⁶

Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani, January 15, 2010

“The U.K. request for an international conference on Yemen is meant to pave the way for a U.N. Security Council resolution to approve an occupation of Yemen and to put it under a U.N. mandate.”⁶⁷

Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani, January 11, 2010

“We accept any [international security] cooperation in a framework of mutual respect and common interest. But if someone occupies your country ... a Muslim has a duty to defend [against such invaders].”⁶⁸

Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani, January 11, 2010

“I am a general lecturer and a writer of books. If someone says they listened to my lectures or read my books, am I to blame if he then, say, divorces his wife, or if he attacks someone? If that’s the case, then all teachers and professors should be accused.”⁶⁹

Abd al-Majeed al-Zindani, February 2002

“Who is the terrorist and what is terrorism? I think it applies to anyone who is against Western or American policy.”⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Ali Ibrahim Al-Moshki, “Saudi Arabia Blacklists Yemeni Groups,” *Yemen Times* (Sana’a), March 13, 2014, <http://www.yementimes.com/en/1763/news/3590/Saudi-Arabia-blacklists-Yemeni-groups.htm>; Hussein Ibish, “Saudi Arabia’s New Sunni Alliance,” *New York Times*, July 31, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/01/opinion/hussein-ibish-saudi-arabias-new-sunni-alliance.html?_r=0.

⁶⁶ Laura Kasinof and Scott Shane, “Radical Cleric Demands Ouster of Yemen Leader,” *New York Times*, March 1, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/02/world/middleeast/02yemen.html>.

⁶⁷ Steven Erlanger, “At Yemen College, Scholarship and Jihadist Ideas,” *New York Times*, January 18, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/19/world/middleeast/19yemen.html>.

⁶⁸ Margaret Coker, “Yemeni Sheik Courts, Warns Foreign Governments,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 12, 2010, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB126321683002124521>.

⁶⁹ Scott Peterson, “In Yemen, a university tied to ‘American Taliban’ and underwear bomber,” *Christian Science Monitor*, January 12, 2010, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0113/In-Yemen-a-university-tied-to-American-Taliban-and-underwear-bomber>.

⁷⁰ Susan Sachs, “A NATION CHALLENGED: MILITANTS; Yemen Fears Being Singed by a Home-Grown Firebrand,” *New York Times*, February 15, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/15/world/a-nation-challenged-militants-yemen-fears-being-singed-by-a-home-grown-firebrand.html>.