



# *The UAE's Secret Prison Network in Yemen*

In March 2016, a year after the Saudi-led coalition's invasion of the country, 15,000 UAE-backed troops occupied Southern Yemen. Shortly after, satellite imagery of the region revealed secret, UAE-run, prisons across the Aden and Bureiqa districts part of what is known as the 'security belt' established by UAE-backed forces. It is now estimated that at least 25 UAE-run prisons are present in Yemen.<sup>1</sup>

These unofficial prison networks hold an estimated 583 detainees on grounds of perceived opposition to the government of the United Arab Emirates. Prisoners were not informed of the reasons for their arrest, were not charged, were denied access to lawyers and held incommunicado for prolonged or indefinite periods. Some remain missing.

Torture and mistreatment of prisoners is rife throughout these prisons. Inmates across the prison networks have been subjected to extreme psychological and physical violence, including, but not limited to: rape, electrocution, waterboarding and sleep deprivation. One prisoner told the Associated Press: "They tortured me without even accusing me of anything. Sometimes I wish they would give me a charge, so I can confess and end this pain. The worst thing about it is that I wish for death every day, and I can't find it."<sup>2</sup>



***49 prisoners have reportedly died as a result of torture.***



***On inspection of the prisons, UN investigators found poor hygienic conditions, limited ventilation, confined spaces and enforced sleep deprivation.***



***In September 2018, the prisoners went on hunger strike demanding basic human rights.***



***Amnesty International have said that the allegations amount to war crimes.<sup>3</sup>***

<sup>1</sup> <http://samrl.org/pdf/455the%2520forgotten%2520land%25202.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/7994b4508e9c4a5eaf8a1cca9f20322f-tincidunt-ut-laoreet>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/20/yemen-sexual-abuse-uae-run-jails-prisoners-allegations>



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