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## Unrest in Southern Yemen: Military Parade and Police Stations Under Fire

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Turmoil continues to undermine any future prospects of stability in Yemen. One can say that the country's four years of ongoing conflict continue to fail in differentiating between those who are civilians and those that are not. Not even peripheral areas that are situated in remote of the contested

areas have escaped the fires. Last week, between Thursday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of August and Friday, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the southern parts of Yemen witnessed three separate attacks that were perpetrated by three different actors in the areas which fall under the control of the Saudi-backed government. The exact number of fatalities is very contested; however, estimates suggest that around 71 people lost their lives and dozens were injured.

The first attack targeted Sheikh Othman police station in the port city of Aden. It was perpetrated in Omar al-Mokhtar neighborhood during a morning police rollcall. According to estimates, more than 11 people lost their lives and several others were injured. The attack involved suicide bombers using a car, a bus and motorcycles loaded with explosives. Although initially no one rushed to claim responsibility for this attack, the Islamic State noted on Friday that it targeted "apostates" loyal to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In spite of the significance of this attack, it received scant media coverage in contrast to the second attack.

The second attack targeted a military parade in the city of Aden. It involved an airstrike that was carried out by the Houthis against the UAE-sponsored Yemeni Security Belt forces. The attack took the lives of more than 40 people and left several others injured. Amongst the fatalities, General Muneer al-Yafee, a senior military commander and a prominent figure of the southern separatists movement, lost his life while reportedly giving a speech. According to the Houthis, the military parade was part of a plan to launch an assault against the Houthi-held areas. However, the government repudiated this narrative by claiming that it was a graduation ceremony for newly recruited soldiers. The Houthis also stated that they fired a long-range missile that targeted the port city of Damam in the north of Saudi Arabia, hundreds of kilometers away.

The third attack was launched by Al-Qaeda militants and targeted Al Mahfad military base in the province of Abyan. The attack lasted for hours, in which Al-Qaeda gunmen stormed the base and engaged in heavy confrontations that took lives of more than 20 soldiers. According to observers, Al-Qaeda took advantage of the two attacks that occurred on Thursday and launched the assault on the military base. The exact number of the militants is unknown. However, some of the Yemeni soldiers were killed during the assault while the others escaped after the coalition's Air Force intervened.

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