

# What AQAP's Operations Reveal About Its Strategy in Yemen

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Apr 23, 2015

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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**While airstrikes in Yemen are changing the nature of AQAP's battlespace, they are not yet fundamentally altering the strategic calculus behind a campaign that took shape well before the Saudi-led intervention.**

**T**he recent takeover of Yemen's fifth largest city of al-Mukalla by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) highlights the growing strength of the organization. While AQAP has certainly taken advantage of the more chaotic environment as a consequence of the Houthis' war in the south and the Saudi air campaign, the group has in fact been gearing up its own overt military campaign since last summer. Therefore, even if there is an eventual ceasefire between the Houthis and the Saudis, AQAP will continue fighting and operating on its own terms.

## BACKGROUND

**S**tarting in late July 2014, AQAP made a concerted media effort for the first time to actively report and take credit for its military operations on an almost daily basis. This differed from its past pattern of only commenting on large-scale operations. In part, AQAP did this to bring attention to its new military campaign, two years after it had been kicked out of southern cities by the Yemeni military and local popular committees after governing from the spring of 2011 to the summer of 2012. ...

**Read the full text of this article at the *War on the Rocks* website (<http://warontherocks.com/2015/04/what-aqaps-operations-reveal-about-its-strategy-in-yemen/>) .**

*Aaron Y. Zelin is the Richard Borow Fellow at The Washington Institute and founder of the website [Jihadology.net](http://Jihadology.net).*

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