

The untold casualties of war
Malte Ian lauterbach

When journalists report on wars and conflicts, we often talk in numbers. So-and-so many people die, so-and-so, many were injured, and on and on and on. This, intended or not, causes the reader to see statistics, not faces. But every number, every uptick means a person, a life, a friend, a foe, a soul, a future partner, an inventor, a human, lost. Since the outbreak of the 2011 war in Yemen, hundreds of thousands of people, including thousands of dreams, lives, memories, ideas were lost. Assuming that 120-thousand civilians have passed since 2011, this means that every day, roughly 32 people die on average, both directly or indirectly, by example, through the famine. This is a pattern that should not be repeated, which shouldn't have even existed in the first place. But it is not surprising that the number of people who die from non-state terrorism is increasing by almost tenfold in each decade. There are nearly 3 million Yemenis displaced, families, divided. When I talked to the Yemeni man who calls himself Aaron, which roughly means mountain of strength, he didn't speak much. Instead, he had me talk. Who I was, where I came from. He did not talk about what he witnessed, where he got those burn marks. I knew. And he knew. His wife knew. All together we knew, what happened, but not why it happened. Why Houthi rebels struck their house, their daughter, their memories, their dreams with a rocket. She was eight years old. But perhaps what comes across most strongly when I talk to Aaron, who fought to defend his country for three years, is how one can maintain their hope and faith in humanity, that even in the darkest times, he still believes in the meaning of love, in the family, in love, in humanity itself. He is, undoubtedly, a great man. We can learn something about human behavior from Aaron's story. Hope is a powerful tool, to have strength, to survive, to live. And to fight. Even when there are no reasons to fight. There are times when it's necessary to fight for love, to love another person, to love ourselves. All that remains is the face and the name, of the daughter they called Hana, happiness. But, in the context of the events, Hana is merely a number on a board. Another cog in the military-industrial murder complex. A death, invisible to most. But we can fix that. And I started here, with the story of Hana. And there are thousands more stories, waiting to be told. As so often happens in our collective history, we have lost the names of people, to the history books. We cannot allow this to happen anymore, we need to put a face to the numbers. We must face the numbers. Not only that, but we need to connect the dots. We need to bring life to the dead, the stories to the stillborn, the memories to the lost. We need to tell the stories of Hana, Abdullahi, Suleiman, Ali and other Yemenis, whose names and stories you will never read in the history books, the stories of Yemenis like Kareem, Salah, Marqib, and Kamal who will never forget those they lost. Furthermore, we need to tell the stories of Awaad, who didn't make it, to tell the story of Abu Khamis, who asked to be buried next to his family, so that they will ever be comforted. How many lives can we tell about before we drown in the numbers? How many people can someone erase, before the numbers destroy them? How many children will be lost before we open our eyes? When all is lost, everything that stays is memories, writing, thoughts ideas. Writing is the last battle, because it is the last thing left when everything else is gone. The

only thing that stands between life and death, is the pen. After everything is lost, we are forced to remember. We are forced to remember what happened, what was lost, and what was left. And we are forced to remember the name, the face of the one who died. We are forced to remember the names, the faces of those who survived. The face of love, the face of humanity itself. And who knows, perhaps we will remember what it means to live. I know that every day, I find myself, I am forced to remember. I am forced to remember that I am still here, and that I have a duty to tell the stories of the dead, the stories of the living, the stories of the survivors. And so I write, and I will continue to write, until they find a cure. Thank you.

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