Yemen: 'At least 20 killed including bride' after airstrike by Saudi-led coalition hits wedding party

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<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/yemen-airstrike-wedding-party-killed-injured-bani-qayis-saudi-coalition-latest-updates-a8317826.html>

At least 20 people including the bride were killed when an air strike by the Saudi-led coalition hit a wedding party in northern [Yemen](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/Yemen), health officials have said.

The dead were mostly women and children gathered in a tent set up for the wedding in the Bani Qayis district, according to Khaled al-Nadhri, the leading health official in the north-western Hajjah province.

Hospital chief Mohammed al-Sawmali said the groom and 45 other wounded people were brought to the local al-Jomhouri hospital.

Thirty of those injured were reported to be children, with some in critical condition having suffered severed limbs and shrapnel wounds.

Footage that emerged from the scene of the airstrike showed scattered body parts and a young boy in a green shirt hugging a man’s lifeless body, screaming and crying.

Health ministry spokesman Abdel-Hakim al-Kahlan said ambulances were initially unable to reach the site of the bombing for fear of subsequent airstrikes as the jets continued to fly overhead after the initial strike on Sunday.

“We take this report very seriously and it will be fully investigated as all reports of this nature are,” a spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition said.

Al-Masirah, the TV station of the armed Houthi movement which controls the area and much of northern Yemen, claimed on its Twitter account that 33 people had been killed and 55 wounded.

More than 10,000 civilians have been killed and tens of thousands wounded in three years of war in Yemen.

The civil war broke out after the government of Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi was pushed out of the capital, Sana’a, by the Houthis in March 2015. It led to a military intervention by the Saudis and others.

Some 22 milllion people, or 80 per cent of the population, are [in need of humanitarian aid](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/yemen-civil-war-closing-ports-saudi-arabia-aid-famine-houthis-hodeidah-un-official-saleef-a8162251.html), the UN has said.

UN officials have accused the [Saudi Arabia](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/SaudiArabia)-led coalition of war crimes and of being responsible for most of the killings. Air strikes have hit weddings, busy markets, hospitals, and schools.

For its part, the coalition has blamed Iranian-backed Houthi rebels and said they have used civilians as human shields.

Earlier this month the UK approved a [£170m aid package](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-yemen-aid-package-starvation-civil-war-houthis-saudi-arabia-food-supplies-un-a8286711.html) for several million Yemenis at risk of starvation.

In November last year Theresa May’s government was criticised for allowing arms deals with Saudi Arabia worth billions of pounds.