



Research paper | March 2022

The STC in the Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath's Media Discourse

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MA Applied Linguistics (Media Discourse Analysis)

Cover: Composite images including the Al Arabiya logo. (Image sources: Getty, Al Arabiya, STC media) – South24

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Summary

I would like to start this research paper by a brief definition of Media Discourse which is also known as Media Content despite some few research differences between the two terms.

Media Discourse has been later called Media Content especially with the emergence of social media outlets in our Arab region and the world. It includes the traditional media production such as TV, Radio and newspaper in addition to the modern media production related to new media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others.

The research attempts to study the traditional visual media discourse of the two Saudi TV channels, Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath, and to explore how they address the news related to the STC in South Yemen as well as the events in which the STC acts as a participant. This study is based on analyzing the news coverage of the Yemeni affairs and the discussions around them in the talk show programs in addition to the relevant interviews with Yemeni officials. The methodology of the research will rely on suggesting some assumptions by raising a number of questions.

The researcher reached some important conclusions about how Al- Arabiya and Al-Hadath cover the STC's news and the way they present it by attempting to limit its role except for what is related to the Riyadh Agreement signed between the internationally-recognized Yemeni government and the STC Under the auspices of Saudi Arabia to unite the Yemeni ranks in the war against the Houthis.

One of the most important conclusions after analyzing the content of the two channels' YouTube Pages is that they ignore hosting figures affiliated with the STC in the talk show programs which are specialized in discussing political and military Yemeni files and analyzing different developments. They just host representatives

of the "internationally-recognized government" who are mostly based outside Yemen or host non-Yemeni figures. The researcher noticed that the two channels avoid keeping in their achieves any content which criticizes the Islah Party (the Muslim Brotherhood's branch within the Yemeni international-recognized government). However, it seems that there is a new openness tendency towards the STC recently which was clear by hosting its President, Aidarus Al-Zoubaidi in an exclusive interview that featured the flag of the former Southern State which the STC calls for restoring. The interview explicitly gives Al-Zoubaidi the opportunity to speak about the STC's goals of restoring the former Southern state, the STC'S relationship with the Arab Coalition, in addition to other important conclusions which were clarified at the end of the research.

Introduction

Usually, a number of journalists and supporters of the STC raise many questions about how Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath cover the Southern developments in general and the STC's news and events in particular. The STC is considered the Coalition's main and most decisive ally in its war against the Houthis. The peak of such acts took place in August 2019 when Al-Hadath published fabricated photos that featured soldiers chasing peaceful young men and claimed that those violations were committed by security members affiliated with the STC. In fact, they were old photos that exposed the acts of Ali Abdullah Saleh's security bodies against peaceful activists affiliated with the Southern Movement "Hirak"¹. Moreover, the STC's supporters believe that the two channels completely ignored the assassination of France Press' journalist Nabil Al-Quaiti, on June 2nd 2020, who was affiliated with the STC and played a big role during the war in covering the scenes of confrontations from the frontlines, especially in the western coast fronts. The STC's supporters believe that Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath completely ignored the incident² which rattled the media circles even on the global level where it enjoyed large scale coverage.

¹ Mansour Saleh exposes the scandal of Al-Hadath on air. (YouTube)

² Extensive criticism against Saudi channels for ignoring coverage of the assassination of the martyr of truth " Nabil Al-Quaiti" (sa24.co)

However, in a remarkable recent development, Al-Hadath's interview with Al Zoubaidi could probably mean the inaccuracy of the prevailing belief among the STC's supporters that Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath channels ignore the council and its news. This interview is the most important along the two channels' history in dealing with the STC and its figures at the media level. Although a large part of the interview was dominated by the idea that sought to unify all efforts and mobilize all parties against the Houthis as well as the attempt to extract an STC's stance towards this, there were few questions with an aim to know the STC's future ambitions and goals in addition to its vision for the current stage and the post- Houthi War.

However, a strange event accompanied this interview after it was fully broadcast on its screen and on its YouTube Channel. The Hadath then deleted the 20minutes- video and republished it later after removing about 5 minutes that included criticism against behavior and stances of the Muslim Brotherhood (The Islah Party) which is part of the internationally-recognized government and about its "negative" role in the war against the Houthis after questions from the anchor in that regard.

In this study, the researcher tried to analyze the full interview including the deleted parts and to clarify the reasons behind such omission. The interview was dealt in a special way as the researcher analyzed it according to Conversation Analysis methodology in addition to the analysis methodology illustrated below.

The research questions

The idea of the study is hovering around several assumptions the researcher attempts to confirm or deny by raising a number of questions as follow:

- Do Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath deal with the STC's news?
- How do Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath deal with the STC's news?

- To what extent are Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath interested in the STC news?
- Do Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath support the STC's media discourse?
- Do the Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath host the STC's supporters to talk about it?
- Do the Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath host the STC's supporters to talk about Yemeni affairs?
- Do Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath talk about the STC's positive aspects?
- How do Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath look at the STC?
- What are the reasons behind the channel's new openness approach towards the STC by hosting its president in an exclusive interview?
- Did the recent events in the region contribute to Al-Hadath's openness approach towards the STC especially after the Houthi attacks against Abu Dhabi?

The research methodology

To answer the aforementioned questions, the researcher studied and analyzed the media discourse of the two channels' content on YouTube by using Critical Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis. The two methodologies are used by top research centers in Analyzing media discourse and content, television in particular. This is in addition to the Conversation Analysis methodology which was used by the researcher to analyze Aidarous Al-Zoubaidi interview with Al-Hadath.

The topic of research

In his analytical paper, the researcher relied upon analyzing the media discourse of both Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath. He made this by analyzing all videos of the two channels' programs that deal with the Yemeni affair in detail. He reviewed exclusive interviews as well as talk show and analysis programs published in their YouTube channels till 21-12-2021 for Al-Arabiya and 13-12-2021 for Al-Hadath.

First: Al-Arabiya TV

The Arab satellite channel, Al-Arabiya, is the most important among the Saudi Middle East Television Group and among the Saudi news channels. It is part and parcel of the Saudi media network. Its headquarters is located in Dubai. It was first broadcast in 2003 and is still active until now³.

In this paper, the researcher implemented the aforementioned research methodology described on all videos of Al-Arabiya's YouTube channel that addressed the political and military Yemeni affairs. The list of the programs includes "(Muqabala Khasa)" (Exclusive Interview), "Panorama", "Soal Mubashir" (Direct Question) (and "Zakira Seyaseya" (The Political Memory").

Muqabala Khasa (Exclusive interview)

Al-Arabiya conducted several interviews with different Arab and international figures as part of its program "Muqabala Khasa" published on its YouTube channel⁴. as for the Yemeni affairs which top the KSA's interests at the Arab and regional levels, the channel conducted only 3 interviews with Yemeni figures in "Muqabala Khasa" Program until 21/2/2021.

The first interview was with Riyad Yassin, Ambassador of Yemen to France as his official position as a Yemeni politician and Ambassador for the internationally-recognized government and not as a Southern politician. The interview didn't more or less mention any Southern agenda or issues related to the STC⁵.

The second interview, conducted by Al-Arabiya's "Muqabala Khasa" was with Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak using his official position as a Minister of Foreign Affairs in the internationally-recognized government and not as a politician who belongs to the South Yemen in which the STC is active. The interview focused on

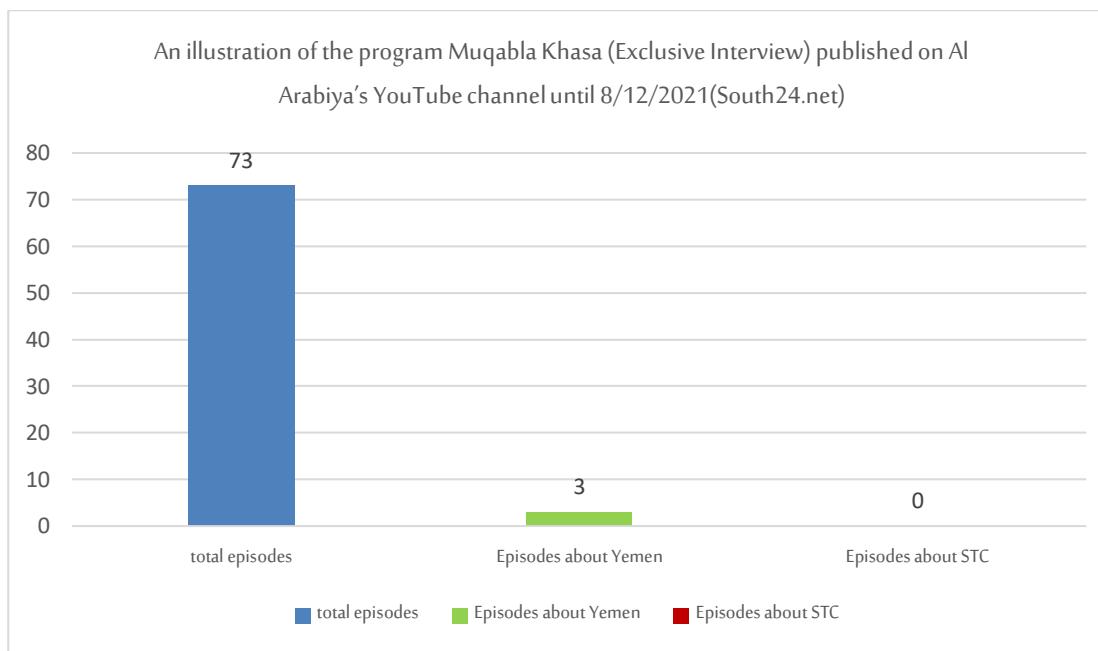
³ [Al Arabiya Channel - Wikipedia](#)

⁴ [Al-Arabiya YouTube](#)

⁵ [An interview with the Yemeni ambassador to France, Dr. Riad Yassin - YouTube](#)

the political moves made by the government with the European Union in light of its diplomatic campaign against the Houthis. The interviews ignored any mention of the STC even indirectly⁶.

The third interview was with the Yemeni Defense Minister Mohammed Al-Maqdashi, published on 02/12/2021 and lasted for just 18:17 minutes. Its main topic was “the war against the Houthis in Yemen”.



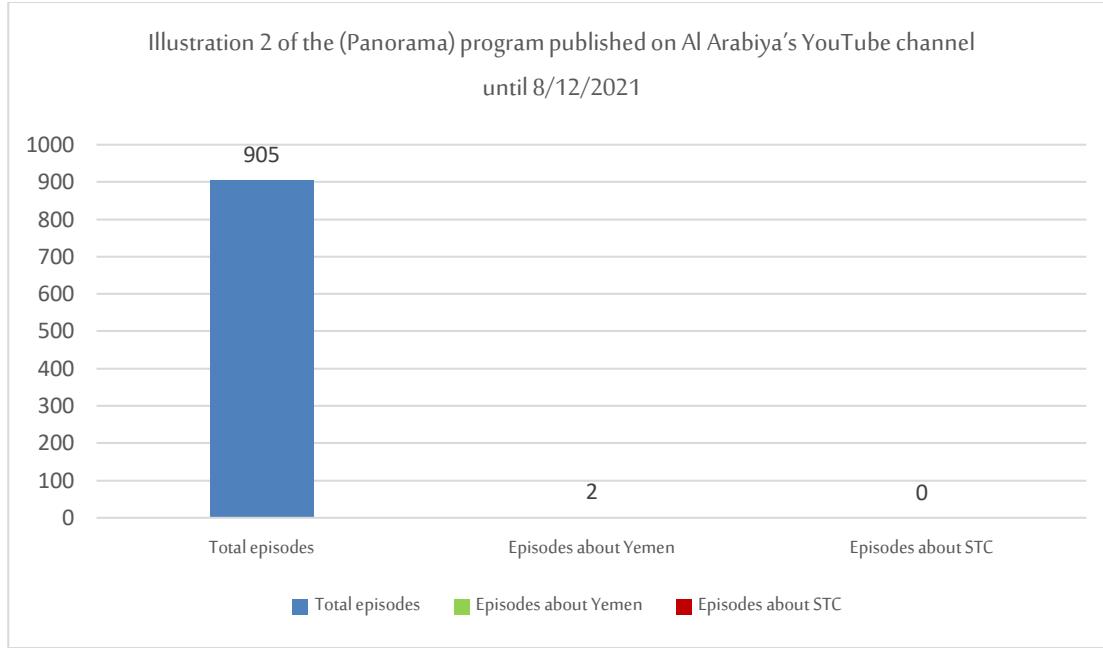
Panorama

On the YouTube channel of the talk show program “Panorama”⁷, there are 905 videos until 8/12/2021. They include just two videos about the war against Houthis with the following titles:

- The Houthi Militia transforms the Sanaa Airport to military barrack.
- The first Omani delegation reaches Sanaa for talks with the Houthis about peace.

⁶ An exclusive interview with Dr. Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yemen - YouTube

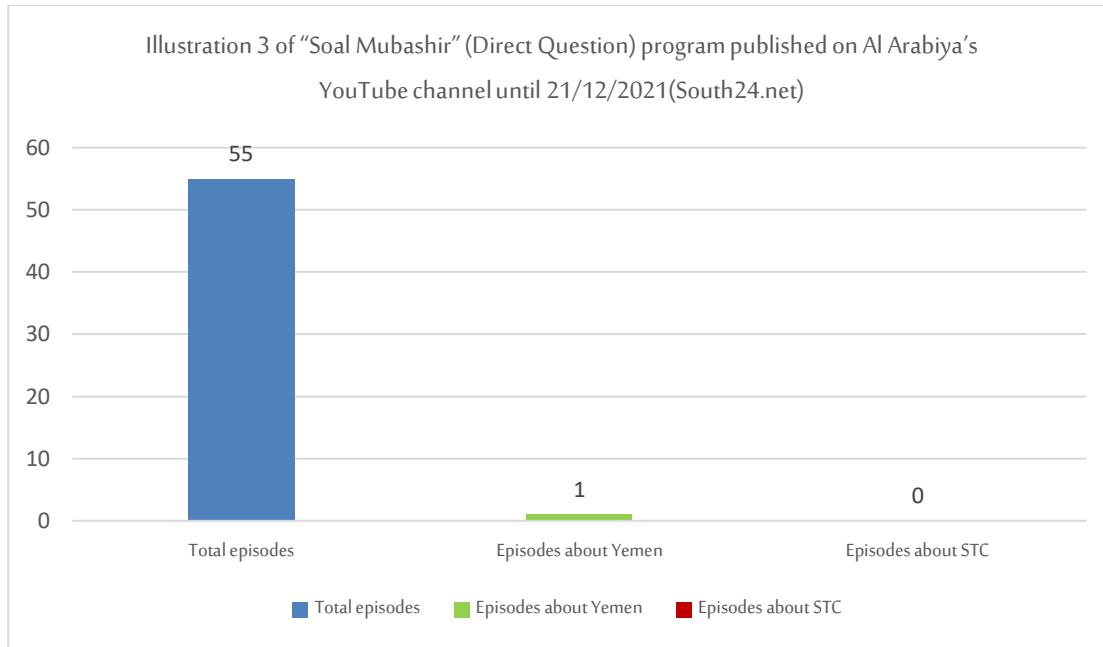
⁷ Panorama-YouTube



Soal Mubasher

The YouTube page of the Al- Arabiya's program, Soal Mubasher, includes 55 episodes until 21/12/2021 in which there is one episode only about Yemen under the title "Yemeni Prime Minister reveals the essence of the Riyadh Agreement⁸. The episode talks about the details of the Riyadh Agreement between the internationally-recognized government and the STC from the perspective of this government represented by the PM Maeen Abdulmalik who belongs to a Northern governorate and who has no relation with the STC.

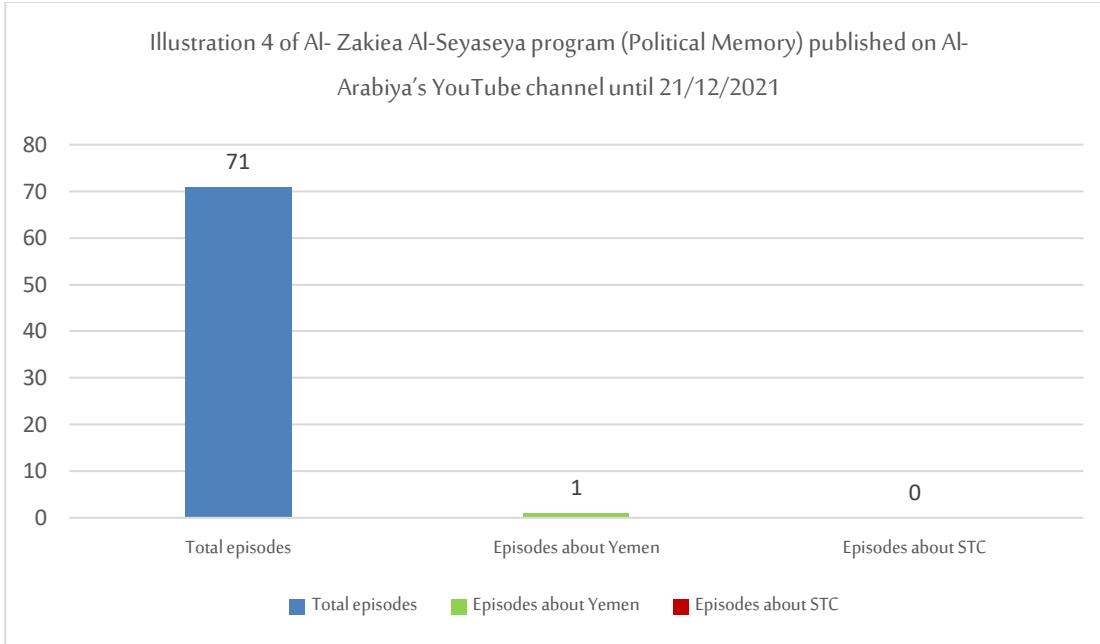
⁸ [Soal Mubashir \(Direct Question\)/Yemeni PM reveals the essence of the Riyadh Agreement-YouTube](#)



Al Zakira Al Seyaseya

The talk show program “Al Zakira Al Seyaseya”⁹ hosts influential Arab figures who participated in the last year’s events so as to convey their testimonies and opinions about many issues on the local, regional and international levels. Al-Arabiaya’s YouTube page has 71 episodes of “Al- Zakira Al-Seyaseya”, including one 7 parts-interview only with Haider Abu Bakr Al-Attas, the first Yemeni PM after the Unity who testified and gave his opinions about many events. The interview, throughout its seventh parts, didn’t mention the STC despite Al-Attas’s affiliation with Southern governorates where the STC enjoys wide popularity.

⁹ [Al-Zakira Al-Seyaseya \(Political Memory\)-YouTube](#)



Second: Al-Hadath TV

Al-Hadath is considered the second news Channel after Al-Arabiya among the Saudi MBC Group which broadcasts its programs from Dubai. The channel allocates one daily program to serve as the only window that overlooks the Yemeni affairs and discusses different Yemeni files under the title “The File/Al Hadath Al Yemeni) like what it has done with the Iraqi affairs.

Al Hadath Al Yemeni

A comprehensive daily coverage of the Yemeni political and military affairs, which includes news, analysis and interviews. The channel's YouTube page includes (536) videos for Al Hadath Al Yemeni¹⁰ from 21/5/2015 to 13/12/2021 at 6:07 pm. Part of the program's episodes on YouTube is about the Riyadh Agreement. Two of a total 536 episodes have the name “the Transitional” or “the Southern Transitional” which refers to the STC as follow:

¹⁰ [Al Malaf Al Yemeni \(the Yemeni File\)-YouTube](#)

The first episode

It includes the words "Transitional and Southern" under the title "Al- Hadath Al Yemeni: The Southern Transitional: the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement and confronting Iran)¹¹ with a total duration (54:31) min. It was published on 31/1/2020. The episode has the following axes and subtitles:

- The UNSC session about the UN Mission in Al Hodeidah.
- The STC: implementing the Riyadh Agreement and confronting Iran
- Aden... Sharp collapse of the Yemeni Riyal in the interim capital.

The duration of the first axis (UNSC session about the UN Mission in Al Hodeidah) is (11:10). It discussed the details of UNSC's session to consider the renewal of the United Nations Mission in Hodeidah. The anchor hosted the Media Coordinator of the government delegation to the Stockholm Talks, Baligh Al-Mikhlafi who belongs to the Northern governorates.

The second axis (the STC: implementing the Riyadh Agreement and confronting Iran) lasted only for (2:34) as the anchor talked about the STC's renewal of its commitment by the Riyadh Agreement's full articles during the third session of the STC'S National Assembly in the "interim capital of Aden", which was held under the slogan "the Creative Implementation of the of the Riyadh Agreement's Articles". Then, a "two-minute" report was presented by the channel's correspondent in Aden, Radfan Al-Dabis. It was limited at showing the STC's commitment to implementing the Riyadh Agreement and the positive impact of its implementation in the battle with the Houthi group. No STC's representatives or pundits were hosted to comment on these developments.

After presenting various written news about non-Yemeni issues, the anchor talked again about the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement. She hosted the Yemeni political analyst Basem Al-Hakimi from Aden without mentioning his

¹¹ Al-Hadath Al Yemeni: the STC: the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement and confronting Iran-You Tube.

position. The mechanism of implementing the Riyadh Agreement was discussed during 7 min and 16 sec (7:16).

In the third axis of the episode (Aden Sharp collapse of the Yemeni Riyal in the interim capital Aden), the anchor discussed various news about Yemen such as the collapse of the currency and the Houthis. She hosted the economic analyst Abdulhamid Al-Masagidi and the political pundit Fahad Al-Sharafi to discuss that. She concluded the episode by a report from Al-Jawf governorate prepared by Al-Hadath correspondent Mohammed Al-Arabi about the developments of the war between the internationally-recognized government and the Houthis in Yemen.

Given its title, the episode is the only one which was thought to be fully allocated to talk about the STC and its strategy against Iran in Yemen or the nature of its partnership with the Arab Coalition's states but this didn't happen.

The second episode

The second episode has the title "Al- Hadath Al Yemeni: The KSA confirms that the resumption of the Riyadh Agreement boosts the confidence between the government and the STC"¹² It dates back to 29/7/2020. It was the second episode of "Al-Hadath Al Yemeni" in which the STC was mentioned through the term "Transitional". The episode lasted (24:58) min, and talked again about the Riyadh Agreement. The anchor mentioned the full name of the "STC" at the beginning. The episode included the following axes:

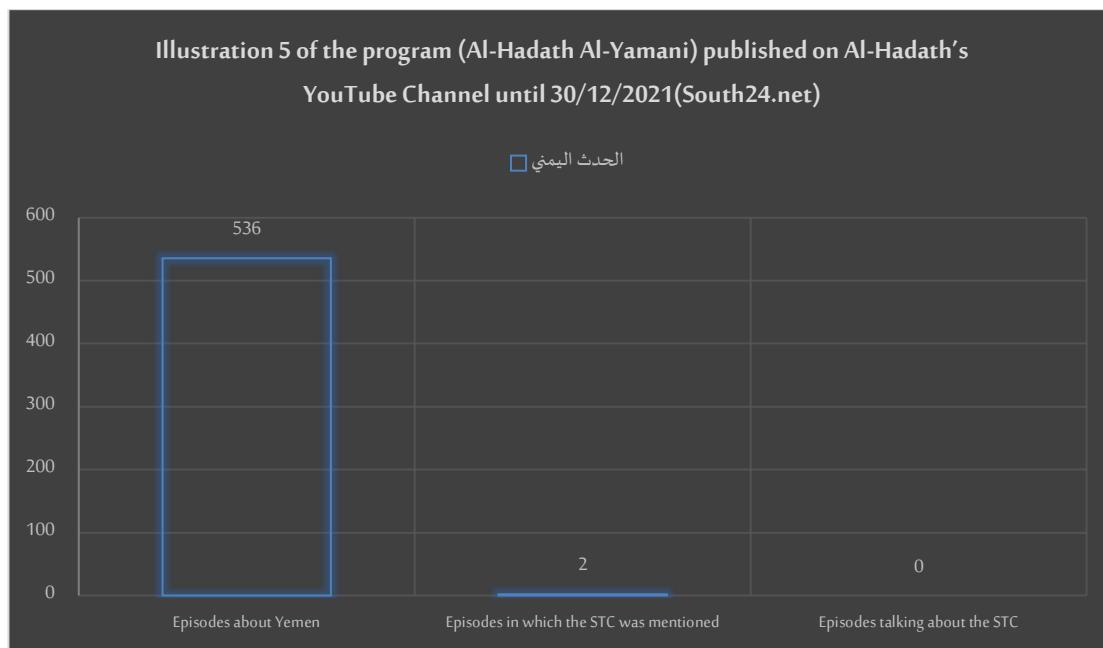
- The first axis: The resumption of the Riyadh Agreement boasts the confidence between the government and the STC.
- The second: axis: implementing the Riyadh Agreement is a basic step towards peace in Yemen
- The third axis: The Yemeni government: consultations to guarantee the representation of political forces in the government.

¹² Al- Hadath Al Yemeni: The KSA confirms that the resumption of the Riyadh Agreement boosts confidence between the government and the STC)

The first axis revolved around the resumption of the Riyadh Agreement and the need to implement it in addition to the STC's announcement about voluntarily giving up autonomy to pave the way for implementing the articles of the Riyadh Agreement and other details related to accelerating the implementation mechanism. The channel hosted the Saudi writer and analyst Hammoud Al-Ruwais to discuss several points about the mechanism of implementing the Riyadh Agreement. The duration of this axis was (10:40) min.

The second axis (USA: implementing the Riyadh Agreement is a basic step towards peace in Yemen) which lasted for 6 min and 6 sec (6:06), reviewed the positive reaction of major states about the Riyadh Agreement. The political analyst, Faris Al-Bayl, from the Northern governorates, was hosted to talk about this.

In the third axis, which lasted 8 min and 18 sec, the anchor discussed the (Yemeni government's consultations to guarantee the representation of political forces in the government and other topics of the Yemeni file. The guest was the political pundit Najeeb Ghallab, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, who is also from the Northern governorates.





The STC President Aidarus Al Zoubaidi with Al-Hadath's anchor on 20/1/2022

Al-Zoubaidi Interview with Al Hadath

On Thursday evening on 20/1/2022, Al-Hadath broadcast an exclusive interview with STC's President, Aidarus Al-Zoubaidi. It was a remarkable development which constituted an openness approach towards the STC by the Saudi channel. It raises many questions such as: What is the purpose of the interview? What are its motives? What are their relationships with the Houthi attack on Abu Dhabi and the developments of the events inside Yemen and regionally as well as other questions the researcher attempted to analyze according to the aforementioned research methods.

After the channel broadcast the full interview on its screen, which lasted 20 min and 16 sec (20:16), it republished it on its YouTube page after deleting part of it to become 15 min and 39 sec (15:39).¹³ Four questions and answers were deleted

¹³ An exclusive interview/Major General Aidarus Al-Zoubaidi, the STC's President in Yemen-YouTube

from the original interview (the 4th, the 8th, the 9th and the 11th) in addition to the introduction of the 7th question.

This paper made full analysis of the full interview broadcast by Al-Hadath on its screen, and republished on the YouTube page of the independent satellite channel "Aden" affiliated with the STC.¹⁴ The interview included 23 questions as follow:

The first question

After welcoming the guest, the anchor began its exclusive interview by asking Al-Zoubaidi about the latest developments in the region and referred to the Houthi attacks against the UAE. She didn't kick off the interview by asking about the STC or by introducing it although the guest is a prominent political figure who represents the top of the STC. It was an opportunity to learn more about the recent council.

In response to this question, Al-Zoubaidi thanked the Arab Coalition states for all their efforts in Yemen to eradicate the "Houthi terrorist organization" according to him. He then called the international community to add the Houthis in the "Terrorism List" after they targeted the KSA and the UAE.

The first question and the guest's answer show that the purpose behind the interview is clarifying the STC's perspective about the war against the Houthis and to declaring its stance against any measure which could be taken by the Arab Coalition against the Houthis.

The second question

The question was about adding the Houthis to the list of terrorist organizations. She quoted the words of President Biden that his administration considers redesignating the Houthis as a "terrorist organization". It seems that the anchor

¹⁴ Exclusive interview with President and Leader Aidarous Al-Zoubaidi in Al-Hadath-YouTube

aimed at knowing the STC's view about such a tendency which has been promoted by the Arab Coalition's media outlets that tried to mobilize the Arab and global public view for such a purpose. The STC's President expressed his endorsement to such an approach considering it "a common goal among all Honorable international forces that seek peace" according to his description.

The third question:

The anchor asked Al Zoubaidi about the possibility of adopting a new strategy in the face of recent developments in the region. He answered that this is really a new stage which requires hard work from the international community and the Arab Coalition to confront the Houthis.

The fourth question:

The anchor: "In addition to the roles played by the international and the Arab Coalition, don't you think that the most prominent role lies on the shoulders of the Yemeni forces themselves, the Yemeni fighters? Doesn't this, in your opinion, require the unification of all anti-Houthi ranks, whether at the military or political level?"

Al-Zoubaidi: "the KSA exerted awesome efforts along with the UAE to unify the efforts of all forces including the internationally-recognized government, the STC and the parties in the face of the Houthis. They of course exerted efforts in the field but there are some wings within the government itself that don't want the success of the operation. Forces which affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood permanently frustrated the Coalition. However, the KSA till now try to gather all Yemeni forces to unify them in one rank and one front against the Houthis so as to completely end the Houthi presence in Yemen".

The deletion of this important question by Al-Hadath in addition to three other questions from the interview which was published on its YouTube channel¹⁵ raises many questions. This makes us wonder about the reasons or motives behind the removal of this essential question although Al-Zoubaidi's praised the role of the KSA and the UAE in unifying the internal Yemeni ranks to confront the Houthis.

The major reason behind deleting the question is probably related to Al-Zoubaidi's comments about parties inside the presidency and the government that are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, and accusing them of thwarting the unity of the internal Yemeni ranks.

Some could attribute this to the explicit talk about the "government" and its inclusion wings which belongs to the Muslim Brotherhood, the group that is banned by Saudi Arabia, could embarrass Riyadh, the first backer of the "internationally-recognized government" Furthermore, Al-Hadath is part of the official Saudi media outlets, and it may preferer keeping such statements in its media archive.

The fifth question

The interviewer asked the guest about the forces in Abyan and if there are obstacles against their unification to head to Al-Bayda and liberate it from the Houthis. In his response, Al-Zoubaidi said that all forces have to head to the fighting fronts. He added that the STC called for implementing the Riyadh Agreement and making all the military forces head to fight the Houthis. He said that the STC does not mind unifying the forces to fight the Houthis if they are adequately supplied and secured. He added that the STC has concerns about entering the depth of the Northern governorates in which it has no grassroot incubator. He pointed out that the STC talked with the Coalition in that regard and conveyed clear military plans to it.

¹⁵ An exclusive interview/Major General Aidarus Al-Zoubaidi, the STC's President in Yemen-YouTube

The sixth question

The anchor asked about what had been agreed upon between the KSA and the STC. He replied that it was agreed that the KSA does its best, including military efforts, along with the UAE forces to eradicate the Houthis. This gives observers the impression that there are new plans which were agreed upon in Riyadh to confront the Houthis.

The seventh question

The anchor: “In the context of your words, you said that the Muslim Brotherhood are who thwart those efforts. Some say that the STC also plays a negative role in this regard by escalation from every now and then. This leads to not maintaining the unity of anti-Houthi ranks. What do you think?”.

Al-Zoubaidi: “If the STC attempts to thwart or obstruct, why did he go to Riyadh in the first place? We control most of our governorates including the capital Aden. If we wanted to obstruct it, we would not have gone to Riyadh and Autonomy would have continued. However, upon invitation from the KSA and the UAE during this war, we went to Riyadh and signed the Riyadh Agreement. We call the KSA, the sponsor of the agreement, to implement its articles”.

It is remarkable that the introduction of this question was omitted from the interview in Al- Hadath's YouTube channel, specifically the following sentence “In the context of your words, you said that the Muslim Brotherhood are who thwart those efforts.” The reason for this omission seems incomprehensible for observers, especially if we talk about the media professional standards in publishing interviews as they are. Note that this interview was broadcast in full on the channel's screen without deleting the questions or answers and without cutting out parts or introductions of specific questions.

However, the reason for such reduction may be that the channel's officials probably felt embarrassment or faced pressure from superior figures who are in

charge of decision making or drawing the channel's ideology, especially that the deleted words came out from the anchor's mouth, not the guest's. The introduction to this question was a response to Al-Zubaidi's reply to the fourth question, in which he talked about the "Muslim Brotherhood's wing within the "internationally-recognized government" which thwarts the Saudi efforts to unify the internal Yemeni ranks against the Houthis.

There is an important question that imposes itself after deleting the introduction of this question and the omission of the 7th question which is: "Why didn't Al-Hadath feel embarrassment towards publishing its question which accused the STC of playing a "negative role" in the context of unifying the efforts against the Houthis?

The 8th question

The anchor: "By mentioning the Riyadh Agreement, I would like to ask you what hinders the implementation of its military and security aspect while its political side was implemented and its economic one is under way.

Al-Zoubaidi: In fact, the military part has been implemented. The KSA announced this in the first stages. But there is an aspect which has not been implemented related with appointing governors and security chiefs in the liberated governorates, and also this applies to the military aspect there. We maintain our fronts unlike the other party, In Marib; the fronts were penetrated while Shabwa fell months earlier due to the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood within the government there. Our forces are fully stationed from Bab Al-Mandab to the western coast to Shabwa. No front which has Southern forces has fallen till now. No one meter has fallen, but we are achieving progress in the Houthi depth. This gives credit to the Southern forces. The Arab Coalition is aware of that".

This question and answer were omitted from Al-Hadath's YouTube Channel. The reason behind this is probably to avoid Al-Zoubaidi's sharp criticism against the Muslim Brotherhood who still controls decision making positions within "the

internationally recognized government” amid accusations against them of not implementing the Riyadh Agreement and their military failure in Shabwa and Marib.

The 9th question

The anchor: “You blame the Muslim Brotherhood. Naturally, there are differences between you and them. Don’t you think that there are priorities? Thus, we could have a dangerous enemy and a more dangerous enemy, so we have to unite in order to eradicate the more dangerous one?”

Al-Zoubaidi: “We signed the Riyadh Agreement to unite the efforts of everyone. However, not implementing the agreement obstructs this. Who is the obstructor? They are part of the “in internationally-recognized government” and not us. If I have the authority to make a republican decision, I won’t waste one minute, and we will all go to the fighting fronts. The STC always behaves in a positive way with the Arab Coalition forces led by the KSA whether at the military, security and political levels. As for the economic level, all resources are still in the hands of the internationally recognized government and President Hadi”.

This question and answer were also fully removed from Al-Hadath’s YouTube channel for probable similar reasons.

What is surprising is that the interviewer described the Muslim Brotherhood by “the dangerous enemy” to the STC and that the Houthis is more dangerous than the “Muslim Brotherhood”¹⁶ and thus, according to her, the STC has to unite with the dangerous enemy represented by the Muslim Brotherhood to eradicate the more dangerous one represented by the Houthis.

¹⁶ The term "Muslim Brotherhood" is used by Yemeni politicians to describe the forces affiliated with the Yemeni Islah Party, an Islamist party established in September 1990, following the union between South and North Yemen. This party is the Yemeni branch of the international organization.

In his answer, Al-Zoubaidi didn't deny what the anchor said. He even added that the STC signed the Riyadh Agreement for unifying the efforts. He accused parties in the "internationally-recognized government" of obstructing the agreement.

The 10th question

The anchor: in this context, some accuse you of not being Proficient in selecting the proper time to implement your project, or that you can't determine your priorities well, and this is one of the factors that always contributes to the defragmentation of ranks. How do you reply?

This important question reminds the reader of the accusations raised by many STC's opponents that the timing of its escalation against the government is always wrong and that it has to delay its national demands until overcoming the Houthi coup.

In his reply to that question, Al-Zoubaidi said that the STC has a national project "Land and Human" (Ard & Insan) and that it is not a wedding party to select a fixed time. He added that people are the one who should determine its fate and that unless the Arab project, they would have declared their project clearly. He stressed that the STC vowed to be with the KSA and the UAE till the end of the tasks and goals of Operation Decisive Storm (Asifat Al- Hazm)

The 11th question

The anchor talked about the Southern forces and used the term" the military formations affiliated with the STC instead of using the term "forces".

She added: In which directions are you moving today, and on which fronts do you intend to move?"

This question implicitly indicates the desire of the Yemeni federal state's supporters for the Southern forces' moving forward to fight in the Northern governorates. The Southern forces' stopping at the Southern governorates' borders could be justified by many as a prelude for "separation" according to them.

The STC's President confirmed that by saying: "the goal of the forces affiliated with the STC is to secure the future Southern state or the Southern governorates under the current situation. He said that the STC does not mind going with the Arab Coalition to any place if necessary.

Al-Zoubaidi: "our forces are of course ready to move to any required location, especially that we talked with the Southern people that we stand on the side of the Arab Coalition in any fatal war. We aim at securing the Southern state and the Southern governorates. However, this doesn't exempt us to do our tasks along with the Coalition forces by going to any other locations where our presence is required".

The 12th question

"Why do you believe that your role is confined in the South?"

In his answer, Al-Zoubaidi said that their role is not limited to the South, adding that the Southern Giants Brigades went to the western coast and liberated 3 districts in Shabwa. This made the Houthis target Abu Dhabi according to him. Through this question, it seems that the anchor wanted to know the future plans and the intentions of the military forces affiliated with the STC and whether they have any intentions to go to North Yemen to fight the Houthis there.

The 13th question

In his answer to the anchor's question about the role which will be played by the STC to maintain the maritime navigation in the Gulf of Aden, Al-Zoubaidi said that

the STC currently doesn't have coast guards or navy and that it needs regional and international support to establish coast guards so as to secure the Gulf of Aden's coasts and the Arabian Sea from piracy, the African immigration and terrorists. By this question, observers of the political and military developments in South Yemen can understand that the media circle began to be convinced that the STC became a reliable force not only for securing the Southern governorates but in playing an important role in securing the boards of the Southern maritime for Yemen and Bab Al-Mandab.

The 14th question

The anchor asked Al-Zoubaidi about the Stockholm Agreement, and if it is still applicable. He answered that the STC believes that the agreement, from the beginning, aimed at protecting the Houthis after the Giants Brigades were at the outskirts of Al-Hodeidah. He added that it serves the interests of the Houthis, and describes the agreement as being almost "dead".

The question aimed at knowing the STC's opinion as part of a campaign backed by the Arab Coalition towards abolishing the Stockholm Agreement between the government and the Houthis.

The 15th question

After the anchor listed the international community's attempts to save the Houthis through the Stockholm Agreement and the US Special Envoy's tour in the region to activate the political solution, she asked Al-Zoubaidi about the possibility of the STC's return to the negotiation table.

Al Zoubaidi replied that their goal is peace and dialogue which is one of the STC's principles. He added that they will accept making negotiations with any party in order to reach peace and security in the region. However, Al Zoubaidi believes

that the Houthis are evaders and rely on The principle of "Taqiyya"¹⁷ and that their favorite choice is to continue war. He added that the Houthis can't meet the requirements of Northern people. He described war as being the Houthis' typical way.

All of this denotes that the STC reached He reached the conviction of the difficulty of negotiating with the Houthis, and that the Houthis are not qualified to establish a lasting peace with it.

The 16th question

The question discussed the possibility of sitting around the negotiation table ultimately adding that the war against the Houthis won't last forever.

The 17th question

The anchor asked Aidarus Al-Zoubaidi about his opinions on the latest developments in the region and whether they will press the international community and the US Administration on particular which is still hesitant to re-designate the Houthis in the Terrorist List.

Al-Zoubaidi said that the US administration made a mistake by thinking that the Houthis is "impeccable from terrorism" adding that if they were more patient, the real face of the Houthis would have emerged. He said that "if the US re-designated the Houthis in the "Terrorist List", he is sure that many countries will follow the same way. He stressed that no negotiations could be conducted with them in case of being re-designated.

The 18th question

The anchor: "Well, in the long run, if you return to the negotiation table as the STC, upon which base will you go to negotiate? From calling for establishing a

¹⁷ In Shia Islam, Taqiya or Taqiyya (Arabic: تَقْيَا taqiyyah, literally "prudence, fear") is a precautionary dissimulation or denial of religious belief and practice in the face of persecution. ([Wikipedia](#))

federal state consisting of six regions as stated in the output of the National Dialogue, or a federal state from two regions? Or will you go further by calling for complete secession of the south?"

Al-Zoubaidi: "Our STC's political program set out three options which will be decided by Southern people. The first is the return to the pre 1990 recognized borders. The second one is establishing a federal state where every state governs itself but under a central government. The third choice is continuing the existing Yemeni Unity. The people will decide that through a self-determination referendum sponsored by the United Nations. We leave those options to the Southern people".

For observers and those who are interested in the STC's moves and Yemeni affairs, this daring question demonstrates the future intentions of the STC regarding continuing in the Yemeni Unity or restoring the pre-Unity Southern state. The importance of the question also is that it was raised by a media platform affiliated with the KSA, the leader of the Arab Coalition which used to underscore its stance that supports the "Yemeni Unity".

In his response, Al-Zoubaidi avoided speaking on behalf of the Southern people about the options and threw the ball into the people's court to select one of the solutions suggested by the STC.

The 19th question

The anchor: "*what option do the Southern people want in your opinion?*"

Al-Zoubaidi: "*I don't like to get ahead of things, but I think they strive for restoring their full sovereignty of their state whose capital is Aden*".

This controversial question may not express at the media level the ideology of Al-Hadath towards the STC. But it either came in the context of expressing sympathy

towards the STC's demand or knowing the STC's intentions towards the Yemeni Unity.

The 20th question

The anchor: “*Well, regardless of the people’s desire, do you think that the circumstances are suitable for that? or does the international community welcome today the separation of any territory or region, even through a referendum? We saw the Kurds voted in Favor of Kurdistan’s separation from the Federal State. We also saw a similar vote in Catalonia in Spain. However, they failed to achieve complete separation simply because the international community does not want that.*”

Al Zoubaidi: “*I hope that you be more optimistic as the Southern people have strong will and the international community will respond to them if they firmly demand taking their full right. The international community can’t act on behalf of the Southern people. If they decide to restore their state, the international community has to obey this demand. The UN was established for peoples the right to self-determination regarding sovereignty over their lands*”.

Through the question and the answer, observers can see the STC's preference and insistence on restoring the former Southern state more than other possible solutions of the form of the Yemeni state in the coming period which may include a country consisting of 2 or 6 regions.

The 21st question

The anchor: “*Well, returning to the reports which talked about cooperation between the AQAP and the Houthis, the evidence in such reports is based on the fact that the Houthis have not targeted the AQAP who in turn have not targeted regions affiliated with the Houthi contro, but they have focused on the regions belonging to the internationally-recognized government, especially in Aden. How can you justify that?*”

Al-Zoubaidi: "*There is a conflict between us and the Muslim Brotherhood. There are leaders at the top of the authority, who of course belong to the Muslim Brotherhood designed the AQAP and ISIS to be in South only. They kept providing the Americans and the west with information that the AQAP is based in the South not in the North and that most of them are Shafi'iis and Sunnis. This has been designed by the Muslim Brotherhood Party, top of whom is the Vice President, without naming him of course. They tried to convince the world that the AQAP and ISIS members are in South Yemen not North. This is of their making, and they are still making and producing them. Our rival and enemy in South in general are the Muslim Brotherhood who produces these terrorist organizations*".

This question was deleted from the interview published in Al-Hadath's YouTube Page on the internet¹⁸. It is the third question which is being omitted for including content that talks about the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen who hold presidential positions in the internationally-recognized government.

The interviewer tried to show that the AQAP only targets the areas controlled by the "government" and not the "Houthis". But observers realize that the AQAP targets the areas under the control of the STC and figures who in most cases are affiliated with its institutions.

Al Zoubaidi replied that there is a conflict between the STC and the Muslim Brotherhood within the internationally-recognized government, top of whom is the Vice President for his relationship with the AQAP. Such direct accusation reflects the depth of the gap between the internationally-recognized government and the STC. It also denotes the difficulty in finding out common points between them to establish a strong and solid front "against the Houthis" sought by the Saudi led-Coalition unless the two sides give concessions.

¹⁸ [An exclusive interview/Major General Aidarus Al-Zoubaidi, the STC's President in Yemen-YouTube](#)

The 22nd question

The interviewer: "*In Aden, a parity government was formed, and you hold the security file. Why haven't we seen security stability there? Why haven't we seen development? Why haven't we seen a government which can act as a role model for the other areas?*"

Al Zoubaidi replied that they face double institutions in Aden and that the Houthis have focused on Aden recently and tried to make bombings like the AQAP and ISIS. He added that the STC and its affiliated forces do their best despite the very little capabilities they have. He said that the Coalition, especially the UAE trained these forces in Aden to combat terrorism and establish security, but the capabilities are still very scarce until this moment.

As for the economic aspect, Al-Zoubaidi agreed with the question about the lack of development. He implicitly attributed this to the absence of the government's role which, according to him, has to assume its role in the economic aspect.

The 23rd question

In this last question, the anchor asked Al-Zoubaidi about his justification of the UN role describing it as being "languid". She accused the UN of trying to maintain the bad current status in Yemen. He replied that the role of the UN is extremely limited and almost "absent" in Yemen. He again indicated that the situation in Aden is very difficult and catastrophic, adding that the economic conditions are weak and exhausting, and that the currency is in a state of permanent collapse. He concluded that citizens are the ones who pay the price of all of that.

Conclusion

- Although Al-Hadath allocates a daily special coverage of the Yemeni file with all its contradictions under the name of “Al-Hadath Al Yemeni” whose YouTube’ channel include 536 videos till 6:07 pm on 12/12/2021, there are only two episodes including the words “the Transitional” and “the Southern Transitional” which refer to the STC.
- Although the aforementioned two episodes referred to the STC in their titles, they didn’t talk about it except for the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement only.
- Al-Hadath, in its daily program “Al- Hadath Al Yemeni” hosts Northern guests and ignores the Southern figures to talk about the Riyadh Agreement. This often in some way leads to highlighting the Northern perspective which is not satisfied about the STC.
- Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath look at the STC from one angle which is the Saudi-sponsored Riyadh Agreement and the mechanism of its implementation.
- Despite the long hours of daily coverage by Al-Hadath to discuss Yemeni news, the presence of the STC in this coverage is rare and almost absent. If there is a presence, it is often related to the Riyadh Agreement.
- The name of the STC has been absent from the titles of the news and talk show episodes on Al-Arabiya except for rare cases.
- The two channels (Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath) have not hosted pundits or political and military figures in exclusive interviews or within the hours that cover the Yemeni file to talk about the STC specifically.

- The two channels (Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath) have not allocated any of its talk show programs to speak about the STC AS a political and military Yemeni entity.
- The two channels don't host any political analysts or figures affiliated with the STC as part of its daily coverage of the Yemeni file Except for rarely.
- The three Southern politicians hosted by Al-Arabiya in its political programs (Al-Attas, Bin Mubarak and Yassin) didn't talk about the STC as being the most active party in the South. They only spoke about the internationally-recognized government's point of view.
- It is remarkable that two of the three Southern politicians hosted by Al-Arabiya in exclusive interviews (Al-Attas, Bin Mubarak) differ in many visions and positions with the STC, most notably regarding the position on Yemeni Unity.
- Al-Arabiya hosted Haider Abu Bakr Al-Attas in its program ““The Political Memory”(Al-Zakira Al-Seyaseya) to just talk about his political memories before and after the Unity. This appearance which highlighted some historical crises in the former Southern state came in conjunction with the STC’s launch of what is known as the “Southern Dialogue”¹⁹. The publication of these interviews dragged a lot of criticism”²⁰.
- Al-Arabiya hosted the Yemeni PM, Maeen Abdulmalik, in its program “Soal Mubashir ”(Direct question) to talk only about the Riyadh Agreement from the internationally-recognized government’s perspective while the second party of the agreement was ignored.

¹⁹ South Yemen: The Southern National Dialogue kicks off in mid-August (south24.net)

²⁰ NewsYemen - Al-Beidh responds to Al-Attas' accusations regarding the killing of Abdel Fattah Ismail (newsyemen.net)

- The two channels are interested in the job titles of the political and military hosts who appear in their programs, as all the analysts hosted by the two channels often enjoy a prestigious position in the internationally-recognized government, including (Adviser) for example.
- Introducing the governmental job titles of the two channels' guests demonstrates that Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath are not interested in hosting the independent political and military Yemeni pundits who don't belong to the internationally-recognized government. Thus, the Yemeni political and military analysis remains hovering around the internationally-recognized governments point of view which drastically differs with the STC's and even with the Houthi's.
- It seems that the main purpose behind conducting the TV interview with the STC's President was to promote the STC's stance towards the war against the Houthis at the media level in conjunction with the Coalition's field endeavors in Yemen.
- It seems that Al-Hadath has a pre-judgment claiming that the STC plays a negative role in unifying the Yemeni ranks in the face of the Houthis.
- The Saudi media policy makers admit the "Muslim Brotherhood's" domination over the internationally-recognized government as the anchor described them as "the dangerous enemy".
- The deletion by Al-Hadath's YouTube channel of four questions from Al-Zoubaidi interview which addressed the role played by the Muslim Brotherhood raises doubts about the professionalism of the channel and shows its possible succumb to upper political pressure.

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16. The term "Muslim Brotherhood" is used by Yemeni politicians to describe the forces affiliated with the Yemeni Islah Party, an Islamist party established in September 1990, following the union between South and North Yemen. This party is the Yemeni branch of the international organization.
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Research paper

The STC in the Al-Arabiya and Al-Hadath's Media Discourse

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