



7 Years of War, what comes next?

| Reuters

*A welcome to
our readers*

Ayad Qassem

*Yemen Enters
a New Phase*

Dr. Nabeel Khoury

*How have the
political and
military maps
changed?*

Farida Ahmed

*What can be learned
from history?*

Dr. Noel Brehony

*Paths for post-conflict
Recovery in Yemen*

Ahmed Salem Bahakim

South24 Quarterly[©]
South24 Center for News & Studies
Aden

Year 1, Vol. 1, Issue 1
ISSN: 2791-3708
Copyright 2022

Contact:
info@south24.net
southarbia24@gmail.com

www.south24.net

A Welcome To Our Readers !!!

As part of our ambitious vision to develop publications by “South24 Center for News and Studies” covering every aspect of Yemeni affairs, and analyse put-forth by Yemeni and international experts and specialists, it is our pleasure to launch the first issue of South24 Quarterly Magazine, May 2022.

Unfortunately, this comes as Yemen’s distressing civil war has entered its eighth year. The military conflict in Yemen is still raging on, while the humanitarian situation exacerbates with growing numbers of victims and displaced persons across Yemen. Moreover, the near famine crisis has been aggravated by the currency crisis and deteriorating economic conditions. The competing parties are still far from reaching a sustainable and verifiable cease-fire agreement. Military threats have escalated across Yemen’s borders as Saudi Arabian and Emirati cities come under fire by the Iran-backed Houthi missiles and drones. Peace efforts and mediation led by the international community and the UN Special Envoy to Yemen Hans Grundberg have so far failed to de-escalate this war. Despite the two-month fragile truce announced in April 2022.

Yemen’s compounded crises pose a rising challenge to efforts searching for solutions by a growing number of regional and international actors engaging the Yemeni file. The deep-rooted challenges in Yemen, especially political rivalries, act as drivers of this conflict at the local level, while regional and international events further influence the direction of the conflict.

In our first issue, it is our honour to provide the opinions of veteran experts and diplomats, locals and foreigners, with in-depth knowledge of Yemen and understand well the nature of local structure and its political, economic, social and humanitarian dimensions. Their insight expands on historical background to the political Unity between South and North Yemen and developments that shape the current conflict.

Additionally, there are religious dimensions to the conflict linked to persistence of terrorism. These threats continue to cast a shadow over Yemeni society through successive governments, regional interventions and international crises spilling into Yemeni territory. These include the Arab Spring of 2011, Iran’s nuclear ambitions, and the current crisis in Europe following the Russian incursion into Ukraine.

We are hopeful the views and discussions in our publications contribute to developing new approaches to help reach a wider understanding of the local and relevant issues, leading to potential solutions. [S24](#)

Ayad Qassem
South24 Chairman

Contents

A welcome to our readers
Ayad Qassem

SOUTH 24

South24 Quarterly[®]

Guest Opinion

Yemen Enters a New Phase
Dr. Nabeel Khoury

Aden
contact: info@south24.net
www.south24.net

Historical View

What can be learned from the history
of the PDRY for a path forward?
Dr. Noel Brehony

Editor: Fernando Carvajal
Director of Research

Graphics: Ahmed Al-Banna

Featured Articles

How have the political and military maps
changed over more than seven years of war?
Farida Ahmed

S24 Chairman: Ayad Qassem

Paths for post-conflict Recovery in Yemen
Ahmed Salem Bahakim

Year 1, Vol. 1, Issue 1
ISSN: 2791-3708
Copyright © 2022

Guest Opinion

Yemen Enters a new Phase

Dr. Nabeel Khoury

The deposing of President Hadi and Vice President Ali-Mohsen al-Ahmar on 9 April was long overdue but when it was finally done it was done quickly and without undue ceremony(1). The new presidential council for Yemen was created equally quickly, within the context of a GCC-sponsored conference in Riyadh. Unlike many GCC meetings in the past, this one produced tangible results which could have a profound impact on the war in Yemen. The

**““If it were done when ‘tis done then
‘twere well it were done quickly.”
This quote from Shakespeare’s Macbeth is quite
apt for what happened in Riyadh this month.”**

agreed upon two-month truce was itself a good sign and, accompanied by a promised partial lifting of the siege, could well set the stage for serious peace negotiations. In principle, the council idea is appropriate for the Yemen conflict. Its impact however may be positive or negative depending on how it is viewed by its component factions and how the Houthis/Ansar Allah chose to deal with it. As in Shakespeare’s tragedy, the removal of one leader sometimes shakes up the whole chess board.

First, the positive aspects

The domestic side to the Yemen conflict needed from the beginning a gathering of the main protagonists, the leaders of the various regions and factions competing for power in the country. This is something that did not happen in the national dialogue(2) of 2014, where over five hundred delegates hammered out agreements on everything from women’s rights to voting rights and government structure and institutions. It failed however to get the main sides to the conflict to agree on a federal structure and the borders and rights of each region. In the end, the struggle for power was not settled to anyone’s satisfaction and the final recommendations of the NDC became irrelevant.

The presidential council now brings together the main protagonists, at least from what has been known until April 7 as the Shar’iyah (Legitimacy). On the surface of it, it’s Riyadh III looks like another attempt to bridge the gap between Hadi’s GPC-led government and the south, represented mainly by the STC. Add

to that Tareq Saleh, nephew of late president Ali Abdullah Saleh (d. 2017) and commander of the Joint Forces, which includes the Giants Brigade (never part of Hadi’s coalition) and tribal representation from Hadramawt, Ma’rib and Sa’dah(3) for extra measure. The result looks like even regional representation, a potential national coalition, minus of course Sanaa and the Houthis – and there of course lies the rub, to use another Shakespeare line.

The removal of president Hadi and VP Ali-Mohsen was in and of itself a good thing. Whether for peace or war, Hadi proved a non-leader – he lacked motivation, he surrendered himself totally to Saudi influence and therefore he never took initiative and could neither impose himself on the south, nor come to a workable arrangement with its leaders. Vice President Ali-Mohsen al-Ahmar was never a potential national leader because of his partisanship and opaque nature leading many Yemenis to distrust him. Rashad al-Alimi, a pragmatist and historically a good manager, is well suited for presiding over a presidential council – he can mediate differences and coordinate efforts,

Dr. Nabeel Khoury is non-resident Senior Fellow Atlantic Council’s Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. Served as Deputy Chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Sanaa (2004-2007).

1 Yemen’s president steps down in effort to end 7-year civil war. NPR, April 9, 2022

<https://www.npr.org/2022/04/09/1091859815/yemens-president-steps-down-in-effort-to-end-7-year-civil-war>

2 Schmitz, Charles. Yemen’s National Dialogue. Middle East Institute, March 10, 2014. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/yemens-national-dialogue>

3 Conflict in Yemen’s north threatens political transition. The New Humanitarian, 24 février 2014. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/254422>

whether for peace or for war. Al-Alimi will also work well with both Saudi leadership and the UN Special Envoy. Regionally, the fact that the Riyadh conference was sponsored by the GCC is probably a sign that Riyadh and Abu Dhabi avoided a clash of opinion and leadership and decided to work well together on next steps. Al-Alimi is also a good choice because he is able to work with both. A change in leadership was in order and, on that front alone, what happened in Riyadh was positive.

The Pitfalls

If the various leaders who met in Riyadh, both regional and Yemeni, agree on a diplomatic path forward and if the Houthis agree to take part in national reconciliation talks with the council – two big ifs – than Riyadh will have set a new and promising course. Pitfalls abound however, and many stumbling blocks lie ahead. Al-Alimi has to manage divergent views and allegiances within the newly formed Presidential Leadership Council (PLC), put forth a comprehensive negotiation plan and manage talks with Houthis based on this plan. He will also be under pressure to devise an alternate plan for war should peace negotiations falter.

The council has the “Made in Riyadh” label written all over it. Yemeni factions will have to prove that this is more than a shotgun wedding

and that they are indeed capable of bridging the gaps between them and inspiring their followers on the ground to do the same. A new Yemen can only emerge if Yemenis can truly own the process.

and the people in charge of approving flights and shipments are politically motivated the process could quickly flounder. Internal sieges and fronts, primarily around the city of Ta’iz and Ma’rib will have to be carefully removed to allow for the free movement of people and goods – after seven years of war this will not be easy.

Finally, and once and for all, a vision of the future Yemen will have to be hashed out: will it be a unified country or will it have to be divided, and if united what kind of a federal structure can endure the mistrust and the need for each region to have enough resources and access to the sea. This vision will have to be endorsed by the Houthis/Ansar Allah; peace depends on that. The alternative is a return to a new phase of the war which has the potential to be far more destructive than what Yemen has seen thus far.

These are difficult problems but not impossible to resolve with enough goodwill on all sides. UN Special Envoy Hans Grundberg deserves credit for the work he’s done so far, his mediation task ahead is a tough one indeed – if he succeeds where others have failed, he will have done Yemen and the region a great favor. [S24](#)

Historical View

What can be learned from the history of the PDRY for a path forward?

Dr. Noel Brehony

When looking at the future of the south it is best to start with what can be learned from the rise and fall of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) between 1967 and 1990, the experience of unity and how events since 2011 have shaped attitudes in Yemen, south and north, and the region.

The early years of the People's Republic of South Yemen (PRSY) were difficult – it became the PDRY in 1970. The National Liberation Front (NLF) had been set up only in 1963 and took power less than five years later. Its leaders -in their late 20s/early 30s - did not take over a pre-existing state but an amalgam made from the Aden Colony and mixture of emirates, sheikhdoms etc, that had largely been left to their own devices by the British and pressured into joining the South Arabian Federation, which did not include Hadhramaut and Al-Mahra. Aden's economy had been decimated by the closure of the Suez Canal (1967-75) on which the port's and traffic and income depended; the loss of British subsidies and jobs; and the damage done in the fighting between the NLF and its rivals in 1967. Up to 100,000 people are thought to have left the former South Arabia, including many businessmen, civil servants and middle-class professionals. The PDRY inherited a large army whose loyalty to the regime was uncertain. Few observers thought the new regime could survive.

The NLF in 1978 became the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), modelled on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Abdullah Ba'Dhib School of Socialism (named in memory of the influential leader of Adeni communists) trained party cadres. With extensive support from Moscow, the purged and reformed armed forces became an effective and loyal fighting force. The regime was determined to transform

South Yemen imposing its policies from the top down. A start was made in constructing a socialist economy; agriculture was reorganized; a much better level of government services was provided than under the British or in the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) in the north. Leaders tried to abolish tribalism and create a modern secular state. Women's rights were second only to those in Tunisia in the MENA region. An expanded state sector contributed to employment; there was little corruption. By the early 1980s when the PDRY reached its apogee it had clearly established itself as a progressive, if impoverished state.

However, there were serious flaws that eventually contributed to its demise. The most important was the inability of the so-called "historical leaders", all key figures in the NLF before 1967, to solve their differences by peaceful democratic means or subsume their personal ambitions to the "collective leadership" to which they claimed to belong. Leaders built power bases along their regional spheres that seemed to reflect tribal loyalties of the pre-Independence South Arabia.

Policy differences were over the extent of state control over the economy and how to balance relations with the Soviet Union and wealthy neighbors. Aden's support for revolutionary movements in Oman, the Gulf and even Saudi Arabia cut off potential sources of support from the oil-generated booms of the mid 1970s and 1980s (apart from remittances provided by the large South Yemeni diaspora).

Unity with the YAR was the most divisive issue. Southerners under 50 will not remember the daily speeches from PDRY leaders (as did YAR leaders) that put unification of the two Yemens as the main policy priority. Unity was popular to judge by the enthusiastic joy that greeted the decision in 1989 to unite. Yet, for some PDRY leaders unity should be achieved by extending the rule of the YSP to the north. When the YSP was set up in 1978 it had included a secret northern branch made of like-minded politicians, who were in leading (but undeclared) positions

in the top YSP structures. The change of name from PRSY to PDRY was seen as a statement that the regime in Aden aspired to rule all of Yemen. Regimes in Aden and Sana'a interfered in the affairs of the other; politicians who fell out of favor in one country would move to the other. North and South fought border wars in 1972 and 1979, each instance followed by signing unity agreements that were not implemented.

Other southern leaders believed the PDRY should delay unity until it was strong enough to avoid being swallowed by a YAR which had four times the PDRY's population. In the 1970s, Salim Rubayya Ali (Salmin), head of state in Aden, and President Ibrahim al-Hamdi in Sana'a had an understanding that they would pay lip service to unity whilst focusing on building their own regimes and using their good personal relations to solve all the unavoidable day to day problems generated by two regimes within the same country. In the early 1980s there was a similar understanding between Ali Nasser Muhammad and Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Differences of policy became personified in the disputes between ambitious leaders. Salmin in the 1970s saw himself as a head of state rather than one of equals within the "collective leadership", and sought to appeal over the heads of the NF (the L was dropped after independence) to people directly. He opposed the formation of the YSP, which would have restricted his freedom of movement. His execution in June 1978 followed the assassination of the YAR President Ahmad al-Ghashmi as result of an explosion of a briefcase carried by an emissary from Salmin, who was said to be taking revenge for the assassination of his friend Ibrahim al-Hamdi in 1977. This was a clear example of how the politics of the north and south were intertwined.

His successor – and long-time rival – was Abd al-Fattah Ismail, but he was removed in 1980 and exiled to Moscow by an alliance of leaders from Lahj and Abyan. Some saw him as a "northerner" who favored other northerners (a term that started to be used in Aden in the 1970s to refer to people whose families had moved from the north to Aden in the 20th century).

Others opposed his determination to take the PDRY in a socialist and more pro-Soviet direction or resented his keeping of two of the top three posts: President and Party Secretary.

Following Ismail's departure, Ali Nasser Muhammad, who had been prime minister since 1970, took over the two positions, thus combining the three key offices in his own hands. At first, all was well, and much was achieved between 1980-1983 as result of his pragmatic economic policies and ability to better manage relations with Soviet Union, the Gulf states and the YAR. However, he alienated colleagues who accused him of seeking absolute power and favoring loyalists from Abyan (and Shabwah), many of whom occupied senior positions in the military. His opponents, again with extensive support in the armed forces, were mostly from what was then Lahj plus some of the so-called northerners. Gradually his opponents increased their power and in 1984 Ali Nasser was forced to step down as Prime Minister (with a neutral Hadhrami figure Haydar al-Attas as his replacement). That was not enough, and tension rose between the two sides rapidly in 1985 after Ismail returned to Aden. A showdown seemed inevitable: it was a question of which side would move first. That proved to be Ali Nasser (claiming to forestall a coup) on 13 January 1986. The resulting civil war killed at least 5,000 people and greatly damaged the economy, reputation and legitimacy of the regime. The YSP was weakened by the loss of two thirds of the party leadership – those killed and those who went to the YAR with Ali Nasser (such as former president Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi).

Ali Salim al-Beidh, the last of the historical leaders of the NLF, also from Hadramawt, held the PDRY together for four years, but faced internal divisions and problems posed by the presence of a large number of Ali Nasser's supporters in the YAR and support for him in Abyan and Shabwah. The Soviet Union was disintegrating, with Gorbachev encouraging the PDRY to adopt his reforms (Glasnost and Perestroika). Sana'a was much stronger in 1989 and Ali Abdullah Saleh saw the chance to press for unity. Unity was agreed too fast, and the six-month transition period was far too

short to integrate two different political systems. Under the deal, Sana'a supported the PDRY payroll and gave the YSP temporary share of power. But the 1993 elections showed the YSP still retained the loyalty of a majority in the south but had little support in the north. Saleh saw the chance to marginalize the YSP. The civil war of 1994 – in which some of Ali Nasser's supporters fought against the south – ended the PDRY.

Implications for the future of south Yemen

Southerners take pride in the achievements of the PDRY despite its short existence. They recognize the flaws but feel that the YSP regime showed that a modern state could be created in the south and that the South has a distinctive national identity. I have argued elsewhere⁽⁴⁾ that southern nationalism was strengthened by the way the Saleh regime treated the south following unity, during the civil war and then by the removing the vestiges of the southern state after 1994, notably the sacking of ex-PDRY military officers and officials and the abuses that were detailed in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) and its recommendations in 2013. ⁽⁵⁾That treatment gave rise to the peaceful southern movement – hirak from late 2006. ⁽⁶⁾ Southern nationalism was further strengthened by the Houthis attack on Aden in 2015 – which, like the 1994 war, was seen as another attempt by the north to assert control over the south and its resources. As result of developments during the war, in particular the support by the UAE of the Southern Transition Council (STC) and militias associated with it, southern nationalism has been further strengthened and given a well-organized movement in the form of the STC with potentially the means of restoring a southern state or creating a distinct southern region within a federal or confederal Yemen.

However, the history of the PDRY provides some important lessons. First, the PDRY

regime was powerful and determined enough to impose its authority on parts of the south but was unable to find a system that would allow room for open debate about policy options or a system that could control the ambitions of the historical leaders, who built power bases in their home regions and when in office placed people from these regions in key positions in the armed forces. Those divisions were exposed in 1986 and many observers point to similar regionally based differences today between the STC on one hand and southerners supporting the International Recognized Government (IRG) on the other. Some of this may be exaggerated, but 1986 is a warning of what might occur if the differences are allowed to widen. The Riyadh Agreement of November 2019 provides a way forward but, so far, there has been too much distrust between the IRG and STC to implement it fully. That could now change following the handover of power from President Hadi to a Presidential Council ⁽⁷⁾, that includes STC president Aydarous al-Zubaidy.

The NLF, NF and YSP were dominated by politicians from Lahj, Abyan and to a lesser extent Aden, governorates where the bulk of the southern population is located. Hadhramawt and al-Mahra were under-represented in the membership and leadership and at times seemed almost semi-detached from the rest of the south. Two Hadhramis were in the top two positions in the PDRY between 1986-1990 but because of their individual qualities not their power bases – military officers from Lahj were powerful figures behind the scenes. It is now forgotten that in 1968 an extreme left-wing movement tried to set up a separate regime in Hadhramawt, and that Hadhramawt had not been part of the federation of South Arabia before independence. There are parallels today in the concentration of STC power and support in the western part of the south and the support in Hadhramawt for a governing system that would give Hadhramis a much greater say in

⁽⁴⁾ Noel Brehony, The Role of the PDRY in forming a South Yemeni Identity in Helen Lackner (ed) Why Yemen Matters: a society in transition, Saqi London 2014 pp.123-141.

⁽⁵⁾ Yemen's national dialogue conference concludes with agreement. BBC, 21 January 2014. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25835721>

⁽⁶⁾ See <http://www.southernhirak.org/p/abouthirak.html>

⁷ Yemen president hands powers to new leadership council. Al-Jazeera, 7 Apr 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/7/yemen-president-transfers-powers-saudi-calls-for-houthis-talks>

their own affairs and in decisions over how their resources are allocated. It is not clear which trend - STC, IRG or local - has the greatest support, and the situation has been complicated by the presence of military units reportedly loyal to Islah in the Wadi Hadhramawt (and Shebwa).

Many in al-Mahra appear to think that all Yemeni governments, whether in Sanaa or Aden, neglect their interests and would prefer to rule themselves. The lesson is that organizations aspiring to control the south need to win the consent of a majority in all parts of the south. The STC has been building support recently in Shabwah, Hadhramaut and al-Mahra. STC leaders will need to recognize that other organizations can be locally important supporting southern nationalism, which do not want to be part of the STC. The failures of the unity agreement of 1990 indicate that new governing arrangements are unlikely to work unless they are carefully negotiated, and sufficient time is allowed for the creation of institutions that are durable and have the consent of a majority of citizens.

Then there is the question of the relationship with the much more populous north. Whatever southerners may feel, it will be difficult to create a stable southern state or southern region without the consent or at least acquiescence of a majority in the north, especially given the oilfields in Shebwa and Hadramawt. Even the gas from Ma'rib in the former north is exported through a pipeline running via Shabwah to the Gulf of Aden coast and is likely to be the single biggest source of foreign exchange earnings for Yemen. As far as I can determine, Houthis seek a united Yemen and before 2014 it appeared that many in the north Yemeni political establishment believed that Yemen should remain as one state. Many southerners are living and working in Sana'a and other northern cities and seem to prefer unity. Southerners call for a referendum to determine their future: Houthis support the idea but only if all Yemenis are allowed to vote. The very limited polling that has been

done tentatively suggested in 2017 that whilst a majority in the south want separation an overwhelming majority in the north do not (8). Both Houthis and the IRG seek a single Yemeni state, even if it now seems that when the current war ends there will be at least two states or two very loosely linked federal regions.

The PDRY became too dependent on one external state. A future south should seek to diversify sources of external support. North and South Yemen cannot escape their geography and will need to deal with powerful neighbors. Saudi Arabia tried to destabilize the PDRY in its early years and prevent unity in 1990, while then backing the south politically and financially momentarily during the 1994 war. Saudi Arabia today wants a united Yemen or at least a united IRG and STC. The UAE clearly supports the STC but has been careful not to endorse the STC's aim of southern independence, and whatever UAE leaders may feel about the future of the south they are likely to give priority to their relationship with Saudi Arabia. These two countries have the resources to provide the level of financial support that Yemen will need once the war ends for reconstruction and will want their interests taken into account. Yemen will need to involve the wider international community in its post-war recovery, but that community has yet to be persuaded that re-dividing Yemen will produce a stable state.

This is not an argument against a separate southern state: that is a matter for Yemenis. For most of its history, Yemen has not been a unified state and the south, whilst not being a state in any recognizable form before the twentieth century, was only ruled by a regime in Northwest Yemen for a few decades in the 17th century until 1990. On the other hand, the NLF might not have defeated its opponents in the 1960s without the support of a friendly regime in the YAR and training and support from Egyptian Intelligence Service based in the north. A stable Yemen, divided or not, will require the consent of all Yemenis who will need to co-operate

(8) For example: <https://yemenlg.org/resources/perceptions-of-the-yemeni-public-on-living-conditions-and-security-related-issues/?msclid=71a44053a9d811ecbe1dc0cb02ac0d15>.

where possible and acknowledge the rights of those that disagree with them. Much has changed since 1990 and, very clearly, southern nationalism is far too strong to be ignored. It has proved itself significant enough for the south to be included in any negotiations to end the war and devise governing structures for a post-

conflict Yemen. But Yemenis, whether from the south or north, should learn from the history of the PDRY and relations between Sana'a and Aden before during and after the life of the PDRY when negotiating those structures. [S24](#)



Photo | Raad Alrimi - South24 Center

Featured Articles

How Have the Political and Military Maps in Yemen Changed Over More than V Years?

Farida Ahmed

Nearly eight years since the coup d'état(1) by Houthi rebels against the regime in Sanaa and start of the Yemen civil war(2). The conflict continues without an imminent political breakthrough amid the fragile situation, and deterioration of economic and humanitarian conditions. The near absence of the State exacerbates the political and military crisis across Yemen. However, some regional and international actors, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), express genuine interest in support of a peace process to end to the Yemeni crisis.

So far this year UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, expanded his efforts through three weeks of talks with Yemeni parties in Amman(3). According to Grundberg's updates in late March(4), discussions focused on determining the urgent and long-term priorities for political, security, and economic paths. It seems the new Envoy is more aware than his three predecessors about the importance of opening the door to consultations with different political and civil forces. Prior to Grundberg's arrival, consultations were confined to mainly two parties represented by president Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi's government and Houthis, within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 2216. However, it is worth mentioning that lack of understanding of the dynamics among political and military parties

on the ground threatens to derail the peace process.

Moreover, it may no longer be acceptable to frame the peace process merely through the three main references (the GCC Initiative (GCCI) and its executive mechanism, the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), and UNSC Resolution 2216) or frame the discourse by these outdated agreements. The political and military reality has radically changed over seven years of war. Thus, any attempt to impose these on political forces which emerged since start of this war may undermine options for engaging a comprehensive peace process. Other references, such as the Riyadh Agreement(5) of November 2019, should be considered in absence of new UN resolutions that address current conditions.

The paper discusses changes in the political and military map of the Yemeni conflict, and looks at actors emerging during nearly eight years of the Yemeni civil war since September 2014. It aims at clarifying describing and explaining expansion or contraction of forces present across Yemen. The paper also addresses the initiatives presented by regional and international parties and reactions by local actors.

Initial frontlines

Soon after the conclusion of the NDC in early 2014, former President Ali Abdullah Saleh (d. 2017), formed an alliance with Houthi leaders. The alliance of convenience came after six years of war in Sa'dah(6) between Houthis and Saleh's regime ending in late 2009. It seemed

Farida Ahmed is the Executive Director of South24 Center for News and Studies, researcher and journalist in political affairs. Currently, she is a Master's student in Political Science.

(1) How Yemen's capital Sanaa was seized by Houthi rebels. BBC, 27 September 2014

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-29380668>

(2) Yemen's Houthis pull back from central Aden. France24, 03 March 2015. <https://www.france24.com/en/20150403-yemens-houthi-fighters-pull-back-central-aden>

(3) See https://twitter.com/OSE_Yemen/status/1507012506300006413?s=20&t=ICacco6rlvqMJU4IvGjaZQ

(4) Grundberg begins his consultations to formulate a "framework" to solve the Yemeni crisis | Middle East. <https://aaw-sat.com/home/article/3517601-غروندبيرغ-يبدأ-مشاوراته-لبلورة-«إطار-عمل»-لحل-الأزمة-اليمنية>

(5) See <https://www.saudiembassy.net/sites/default/files/Riyadh%20Agreement%20Fact%20sheet.pdf>

(6) Salmoni, Barak et al. Regime and Periphery in Northern Yemen: The Huthi Phenomenon. RAND, 2010. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG962.pdf

a fragile alliance that was not connected by a common ideological base, but merely a tactical one. Initial signs of the alliance and its purpose came on 1 August 2014 when Houthis called for protests against the lifting of fuel subsidies by the government led then Prime Minister Mohammed Basundwa(7). However, Saleh's days were numbered, he was assassinated in December 2017 in Sana'a by his allies, in what leaders like Mohammed Ali al-Houthi claimed avenged the killing of Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi (d. 2004).

The military and the political map was then shaped by Houthis. While Saleh saw Houthis as an instrument to return to power, the rebels found a way to monopolize power at the Capital Sana'a.

The shift in the political equation occurred when President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi fled from Sanaa to Aden and withdrew his resignation in February 2015. As Houthis controlled Sanaa, they believed it was the beginning of a new stage in northern Yemen in which authority would be shared by Houthis and Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC). The allies perceived a confrontation against political forces in South Yemen, where the Southern Movement (Hirak) enjoyed wide popular support since its establishment in 2007.

From a wider perspective, other political actors also felt the shift in the political establishment, including the alliance formed leading to the 2006 presidential election under the umbrella of the Joint Meeting Party (JMP)(8). The alliance suffered from internal tension among the political hegemon al-Islah Party and rivals like the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), the Zaydi al-Haq party, the Unionists and Syrian Ba'ath among others. The beginning of the weakening

and dismantling of the political bloc emerged with the fall of Amran to Houthis in July 2014(9). Al-Islah accused its JMP partners of silence and gloating. As consequence of the victory in Amran, Houthis managed to neutralize other forces and tribes supporting their political rivals. Eventually this victory helped Houthis gain military power, primarily through new tribal alliances within Hashid Confederation(10), subsequently leading to coup d'etat on 21 September 2014 and taking of the capital Sana'a.

On 26 March 2015 the regional component entered the conflict in the form of the Saudi Arabia-led military Coalition to Restore Legitimacy. The Coalition was originally composed of nine Arab states(11), established under the request of President Hadi(12). The Coalition provided military equipment to resistance forces fighting Houthi-Saleh forces in Aden and other areas of Yemen, along with financial support as part of Operation Decisive Storm (Asifat al-Hazm). It is noteworthy to mention that while the role of the Arab Coalition introduced a wider regional component, Iran's alliance with Houthis preceded the expanded role played by members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Prior to 2014, Tehran had penetrated the Sa'dah-based Houthi group. Links between the al-Houthi family, under patriarch Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Tehran extend as far back as the early 1990s. More recent cooperation came to light when Yemen's Civil Aviation and Meteorology Authority and the Iranian civil aviation signed a Memorandum of Understanding in late 2014 to cooperate in areas of air transport, agreeing to operate 14 flights per week by Mahan Air and Yemen Airways(13). The first flight from Tehran arrived on March 1st, 2015. According to the then Yemeni Government's Spokesman Rajeh

(7) Yemen rage boils over 'unliveable' price hike. Aljazeera, 1 Aug 2014. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2014/8/1/yemen-rage-boils-over-unliveable-price-hike>

(8) Browers, Michaelle Origins and Architects of Yemen's Joint Meeting Parties. International Journal of Middle East Studies Vol. 39, No. 4 (Nov., 2007), pp. 565-586 (22 pages). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30069488>

(9) Deen, Maysaa Shuja al-. Fall of Amran sends shock waves across Yemen. Al-Monitor July 21, 2014. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2014/07/fall-of-amran-yemen-and-the-repercussions.html>

(10) See <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/yemen-s-tribes-and-tribal-confederations.html>

(11) See https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4F-F96FF9%7D/s_2015_217.pdf

(12) Yemen's Hadi seeks UN military support to deter Houthis. Aljazeera, 25 Mar 2015.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/3/25/yemens-hadi-seeks-un-military-support-to-deter-houthis>

(13) Al-Ayam newspaper - 28 weekly flights between Yemen and Iran: The agreement may have been planned for non-civilian activities, see <https://www.alayam.info/news/63TQWDFG-5O41X4>

Badi, Iran aimed at “establishing a military air bridge to support the Houthis militarily and logistically(14).” Smuggling of weapons(15) to the Houthis continues across land and sea during the war as well as expanded diplomatic relations between Sana’a and Tehran.

New forces, old faces

Houthi military control has not been limited to Sanaa and the periphery, as they insist their goal is to control all of Yemen’s territory. The Houthi-Saleh alliance attempted to seize Aden (16) in March 2015 in a battle that was considered a second invasion against South Yemen. This didn’t differ much from the first invasion during the 1994 civil war, causing civilian casualties and displacing thousands.

A survey of the resistance gathered in Aden to confront Houthi-Saleh forces, we see that forces consisted of ordinary Adenis, elements from Hirak, some military units affiliated with President Hadi and Salafi elements. The role played by the Arab Coalition cannot be ignored, in particular the UAE who provided military and logistic support to liberate Aden and other southern provinces since April 2015.

The battle for liberation consequently led to creation of new armed groups. In the immediate aftermath following liberation of Aden in July 2015(17), a number of small armed groups emerged throughout neighborhoods in Aden, such as in Mansoura and Crater, along with groups in Abyan and Lahj. The Security Belt forces appeared as one of the better organized groups by 2016. One of the high-profile groups that emerged was the Amalaqa (Giants) Brigades(18) led by a number of Salafi commanders from Subaiha, Lahj. Initially

deployed along the Red Sea coast in the west, the Southern Giants Brigades and the Tihami Resistance played a prominent role in fighting Houthi forces and liberating districts in Taiz and Hodeida along with military forces affiliated with the Yemeni Army led by General Ahmed Seif Al Yafei, later assassinated by the Houthis in February 2017.

The liberation of Aden from Houthi-Saleh forces was just the first test for newly formed Southern forces. Elements like Security Belt Units in Aden, Lahij, and Abyan, later affiliated with the STC, and the Hadrami and Shabwani Elite Forces eventually focused on terrorist elements like Ansar al-Sharia and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) elements in Abyan, Hadramout and Shabwa from 2016-2019. Again, the Arab Coalition played a major supportive role, in particular the UAE. “The Security Belt Forces affiliated with the STC continued playing an important anti-terrorism role”, said a report by the US State Department published in 2020.(19)

In December 2018 Guards of the Republic, or what are known as the National Resistance, was formed by Tariq Saleh, nephew of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The forces were first created in the interim capital Aden after Tareq Saleh fled Sana’a following his uncle’s execution by Houthis. Tareq managed to attract elements belonging to the former Republican Guards, Special Forces, and Central Security. New recruits helped create new brigades to cooperate with Giants Brigades and the Tihami Forces leading to formation of the Joint Forces, under Tareq’s command.

On 11 May 2017, after being dismissed as governor of Aden, Aidarous Al- Zubaidi

(14) Accusations of Iranian flights of moving weapons to the Houthis | Arabic news | Aljazeera Net (aljazeera.net) Illegal

(15) Iranian Flow of Weapons to Yemen. US Department of State, December 23, 2021.

<https://www.state.gov/illegal-iranian-flow-of-weapons-to-yemen/#:~:text=On%20December%2020%2C%20the%20United,to%20the%20Houthis%20in%20Yemen.>

(16) See <https://adengad.net/public/articles/557970>

(17) See <https://www.dw.com/en/yemens-vice-president-declares-liberation-of-aden/a-18591267>

(18) See <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/yemen-giants-brigades-uae-backed-who>

(19) See <https://www.skynewsarabia.com/middle-east/1278439-النخبة-الشيوانية-أدوار-وأهداف>

established the STC. Aidarous rose to prominence following the assassination of Jafar Muhammed Saad, whose convoy was targeted in Tawahi by ISIS militants(20). The idea behind establishing a southern political entity was surfaced around October 2016, primarily to preserve military and political gains on the ground, as stated by al-Zubaidi(21). Naturally, the STC represents a large segment of the Southern population. It is an extension of a movement that began in 2007 as Hirak. The STC enjoys wide popular support across Southern provinces as it expands the umbrella and embraces allies from within other political groups.

Initiatives and agreements

While formation of the Government of Reconciliation by the Houthis-Saleh alliance(22) and the emergence of the STC had profound impact on the direction of the current conflict, two agreements have widely shaped Yemen's political establishment. The Stockholm meeting of December 2018 (23) and the Riyadh Agreement of November 2019 (24) continue to shape the peace process and political relations.

The Stockholm Agreement produced three main goals: an agreement on Hodeidah and its ports (Salif and Ras Issa), an executive mechanism on activating the prisoner exchange agreement, and a declaration of understandings on Taiz(25). The UN Security Council issued Resolution 2451 calling all parties to implement the articles of the agreement, and welcomed the negotiations framework under the auspices of the Office of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen(26). However,

Houthis have failed to uphold their commitment to the plan. The government of Yemen has since said the agreement severely harmed the Yemeni people as it gave Houthis the opportunity to strengthen control over the ports of Hodeida and receive more Iranian weapons(27).

The Riyadh Agreement aimed to heal the rift between the Yemeni government and the STC. The bulk of the agreement focuses on political aspects of the conflict, such as changes in the government composition and provincial governors. It also includes a military and security annex. A month after signing the agreement, the UAE announced it would withdraw its military forces from Aden and hand over control of Bureiqa base to Saudi Arabia. This move by the UAE directly increased pressure on Saudi Arabia and positioned the Kingdom as the sole guarantor of stability among Houthi rivals.

Although military components of the agreement have yet to be implemented, the political components led to the forming of a coalition government in December 2020 (28) and appointments of pro-STC governors in Aden(29) and Shebwa (30). The STC was given five seats in the cabinet, now committing southern support for the legitimate government.

Conclusion

As the war enters its eighth year, it is clear the map of Yemen has changed. Political and military actors have shaped the current since the outbreak of the war in 2014. The situation is more complicated than the international community thought during its attempts to

(20) ISIS claims responsibility for the assassination of the governor of Aden, Major General Jaafar Saad (mc-doualiya.com)

(21) STC's President, Aidarous Al-Zubaidi, in an exclusive interview with "Sputnik" - July 19th, 2018, Sputnik Arabic (sputniknews.com)

(22) See <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/7/29/yemen-houthi-saleh-council-formation-criticised-by-un>

(23) See <https://www.government.se/articles/2018/12/stockholm-agreement-gives-hope-of-peaceful-solution-in-yemen/>

(24) See <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-riyadh-agreement-on-yemen-arrangements-and-chances-of-success/>

(25) See https://osesgy.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/Ins_lkml_ltfq_stwkhwm_0.pdf

(26) <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/461/13/PDF/N1846113.pdf?OpenElement>

(27) Will Updates in Yemen Thwart the Stockholm Agreement? (independentarabia.com)

(28) See <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security/yemens-president-separatists-announce-new-power-sharing-government-idUSKBN28S2P5>

(29) <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/mena/yemeni-president-swears-in-stc-secretary-general-as-aden-governor-1.1062416>

(30) <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-12-25/yemen-president-fires-governor-of-oil-rich-shabwa-province>

solve the crisis. This requires re-evaluating the approach adopted by Western governments as the nature of the conflict has changed. The continuation of the conflict is likely to exacerbate the humanitarian disasters, as Yemen is now the world's worst humanitarian crisis according to the United Nations Population Fund(31).

The immediate lessons from the protracted conflict aim to explain the process for implementing a more practical approach to

the multiple conflicts. The establishment of the Political Leadership Council (PLC) (32) on 7 April 2022 offers a new opportunity through an old instrument. The PLC may have come under such criticism, but current circumstances may call for a more patient approach as the international community expresses support for Dr. Rashad al-Alimi and the seven other members of the council. S24



Photo | Abdullah Al-Shadli - South24 Center

(31) See <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/ar/news/> اليمن-يعيش-أسوأ-كارثة-إنسانية-على-مستوى-العالم،-والمأساة-تتعمق-أكثر-فاكثر-مع-استمرار-الصراع

(32) See <https://www.npr.org/2022/04/09/1091859815/yemens-president-steps-down-in-effort-to-end-7-year-civil-war>

Pathways For Post-Conflict Recovery in Yemen

Ahmed Salem Bahakim

By the end of 2021, over 22.2 million Yemenis needed humanitarian protection or aid, with 11.3 million in desperate need. There were 17.8 million individuals who were food insecure, with 8.4 million at danger of being hungry. The country's humanitarian crisis has been partly exacerbated by conflict-induced economic and political collapse: the World Bank estimates that Yemen's GDP dropped by 48.6 percent between 2015 and 2020. More than half of the private sector workforce has been laid off by commercial enterprises. The government has suspended most public sector operational expenditures, including wages for Yemen's 1.2 million civil workers, due to dwindling government income(1).

As a result of the breakdown of governmental services, 16 million people now lack access to safe drinking water, and 16.4 million have little or no access to healthcare. To some extent, the Yemeni government can build an institutional framework using the blueprint left by the Executive Bureau; it can also learn from local institutional models such as the Social Fund for Development, Public Work Projects, and the Social Welfare Fund, which have the advantages of deep community understanding, national reach, and a professional workforce. Nonetheless, as Yemen's history of reconstruction efforts has demonstrated, the country now lacks a stable crisis management structure(2).

Until now, every crisis or conflict response has had to start from scratch. In light of this, the Yemeni government should prepare to establish a proactive institutional structure to cope with current and future crises, rather than reacting haphazardly to unfolding problems. While there are no indicators that the combat will stop any time soon, however, it is critical to begin setting the basis for a stronger framework for recovery once the combat has ended.

Recovery approaches in anemic post-conflict countries

Despite a variety of articles on post-conflict recovery, there is no widely acknowledged theoretical framework for post-war recovery in the literature. Although this technique resulted in long-term peace and development in the aftermath of previous conflicts, research reveals that it has lately proven ineffectual when applied to fragile nations still enduring repeated violence. For decades following WWII, the Cold War foreign policy of Western nations were based on a commitment to economic liberalization. Bilateral and multilateral development agencies used a paradigm that stressed the free market above long-term development, was inclusive, nationalized, and driven from the ground up by local communities(3).

Governments in post-conflict developing nations were frequently pressured to adopt a certain model for funding and delivering basic public services a model that was largely taken from Western European states in the 1950s with minor modifications. In unstable, low-income nations, the rebuilding governance model that

Ahmed S. Bahakim holds a bachelor's degree in Systems Engineering & Informatics and MBA in Business Administration (Germany). He works at the Public Electricity Corporation (PEC) in Aden. He has participated as a researcher in several papers related to renewable energy, power sectors, and energy efficiency in the EU and Yemen.

(1) WorldBank. Yemen: Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment. 5 12, 2016.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/yemen/publication/yemen-economic-outlookoctober-2016> (accessed 03 2022).

(2) WorldBank. Yemen's Economic Outlook. 10 11, 2017.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/yemen/publication/yemen-economic-outlookoctober-2017>. (accessed 03 2022).

(3) Fitzgerald, Caitlin S. Reassessing Neoliberal Economic Reform in Post Conflict Societies: Operation Iraqi Freedom. 2010. ,

https://about.illinoisstate.edu/critique/Documents/Spring2010%20docs/Fitzgerald_Caitlin.pdf (accessed 03 2022).

delivered such excellent results in Europe had far less success. Even effective rebuilding approaches in some regions are not universally applicable in all post-conflict circumstances, implying that there is no universal blueprint for post-war reconstruction. These nations thus have a hard time establishing a culture of national reconstruction among civil officials and the broader public.

Donors divert financing from state channels to nongovernmental groups or private sector enterprises when these governments fail to fulfill international donors' standards for sustained support. This weakens the state even more: without funding, it is unable to establish capacity and will be unable to maintain itself once international assistance ceases. Furthermore, a state's legitimacy in the eyes of its population is harmed if it is not participating in delivering essential services to its own residents. In the same way that previous post-war rebuilding models necessitate state capacity, adopting similar models to post-conflict emerging states would fail to achieve sustainable and equitable growth, development, or enduring peace.

Previous recovery actions in Yemen

Yemen was the poorest country in the Middle East and one of the least developed countries in the world even before the on-going crisis. The adult literacy rate was 65 percent, while the gross national income per capita was \$2,213 (at constant 2005 purchasing power parity). Approximately 70% of the population lived in rural regions, and while farming and herding accounted for less than 10% of GDP prior to the present crisis, they were the primary source of income for approximately half of Yemenis. In 2012, overall public expenditure in rural regions was for 4.8 percent of GDP, nearly no rural Yemeni households were linked to the national

electricity system, and the typical household spent 65 minutes per day procuring water.(4)

Yemen has been mired in repeated political, social, and economic problems for decades when these events occurred. The central government and regional leaders have had a long history of animosity, and tensions have long existed between the country's northern and southern regions. Both North and South Yemen witnessed repeated cycles of turmoil in the three decades leading up to their 1990 unification. Since late 2014, the war has been ongoing. Meanwhile, Yemen has been hit by a series of natural catastrophes, notably the floods in Hadramawt and al-Mahra in 2008. Even though the state's ability to offer public services has been hampered by conflicts and disasters, successive Yemeni administrations have sponsored rebuilding, rehabilitation, and humanitarian response projects(5). Following the 2009 flood, the Hadramawt & al-Mahra Recovery Fund was established; the Abyan Recovery Fund was established following AQAP's 2012 takeover of Abyan; and the Executive Bureau was established following the 2011 revolt. Each of these endeavors was plagued by a lack of independence and openness, insufficient finance, and a lack of coordination among those participating in the recovery effort. A brief history of these initiatives and their outcomes will be analyzed in the following headlines.(6)

Hadramawt & Mahra recovery fund

The remnants of a tropical storm from the Indian Ocean landed in Yemen's eastern provinces in October 2008. The overall cost of damage and losses was estimated to be \$1.6 billion. In response to the floods, the government established the Hadramawt and al-Mahra Recovery Fund (HMRF) and appointed an

(4) (UNDP), United Nations Development Programme. "Human Development Report 2011 ." 2011. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/271/hdr_2011 (accessed 03 2022).

(5) United Nations Children's Fund. «At a Glance: Yemen.» 12 31, 2013. https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/yemen_statistics.html (accessed 03 2022).

(6) Jabareen, Yosef. Conceptualizing 'Post-Conflict Reconstruction' and 'Ongoing Conflict Reconstruction' of Failed States. International Journal of Politics, Culture, 2012.

(7) Ministers, Presidency Of Council Of. Experience of the Fund of Reconstruction for Hadhramout and Al-Mahrah. 2008. <https://understandrisk.org/wp-content/uploads/Experience-of-the-Fund-of-Reconstruction-for-Hadharmout-and-Al-Mahrah-After-the-Rain-and-Flood-Disaster-of-October-2008.pdf> (accessed 03 2022).

executive director to oversee its activities. In collaboration with local authorities, the HMRF was tasked with planning and implementing recovery. The government, local contributions, external funds, and in-kind grants all contributed to the HMRF's support. The money didn't go straight to the recovery fund; instead, it went through the ministries of planning and finance(7).

The HMRF was designed to be financially and administratively self-sufficient. 226 public projects were also rehabilitated and rebuilt thanks to the HMRF. Financial constraints limited the government's ability to make such transfers: the recovery fund received just YR 42 billion (US\$210 million at the 2009 exchange rate). The HMRF failed to properly utilize the resources available to it, even with the cash it did get. According to a report to the HMRF board, the HMRF spent just YR 29.5 billion [US\$137.2 million] between 2009 and 2013, accounting for only 70% of the total cash available to it. Overall, the recovery operations after the 2009 floods were a qualified success. The HMRF was successful in engaging local authorities and civil society organizations in discussions, according to a World Bank evaluation study, because of their direct access to governors(8).

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) seized control of vast swaths of the governorate of Abyan in 2011. They held the governorate for about a year before the Yemeni army recovered control. The conflict in Abyan resulted in significant devastation of public and private property, as well as thousands of deaths, injuries, and displacements. The damage was expected to be YR 125 billion [US\$581.4 million]. In July 2012, the government created the Abyan Recovery Fund (ARF) by presidential decree to begin the recovery process and to address the area's pressing humanitarian needs. The government gave the ARF YR 10 billion

[US\$46.5 million] to set up a framework and undertake damage assessments in partnership with local governments. Despite three changes in executive management, the ARF made little attempt to improve its capacity to absorb this financing from the government and donors. The ARF operated aimlessly since it had no fixed action strategy(9).

Executive Bureau conflict

Protests connected to the Arab upheavals of 2011 put President Ali Abdullah Saleh's administration under a lot of pressure to keep it from collapsing. They did, however, urge the construction of an Executive Bureau, which would assure assistance effectiveness through increasing state capacity, based on their previous experience in Yemen. The Bureau was divided into three sections. The third unit, an assessment and monitoring unit, was responsible for reporting on the flow of funds and project implementation status(10).

Donors and the Yemeni government agreed on a joint responsibility framework in 2012, detailing both parties' major activities and responsibilities. Both parties decided to establish the Executive Bureau to aid in the execution of the mutual accountability framework, with the World Bank taking the lead in coordinating the bureau's administrative, budgetary, and operational needs. Donors and the Yemeni government, however, continued to argue regarding the Executive Bureau's mandate. This caused a delay in the establishment of the Executive Bureau, which was supposed to give support during the changeover period but didn't start operating until December 2013 and wasn't fully functioning until early 2014. Houthi rebels seized the capital later that year, relocating Hadi's administration to Aden and restricting its capacity to govern.

(8) Reduction, Global Facility for Disaster Risk. "Recovery Framework Case Study." 8 2014. https://www.gfdrr.org/sites/gfdrr/files/Yemen_August2014.pdf (accessed 03 2022).

(9) Net, Saba. «Cabinet Approves Draft Decree on Setting up Abyan Reconstruction Fund.» 10 2012. <http://sabanews.net/en/news274497.htm> (accessed 03 2022).

(10) Al-Dawsari, Erica Gaston and Nadwa. "Waiting for Change: The Impact of Transition on Local Justice and Security in Yemen." United States Institute of Peace. 2013.

<https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW85-Waiting-for-Change.pdf> (accessed 03 2022).

Because of the disagreements over the mandate, the Executive Bureau was created with a contradictory identity: it was billed as independent, but it was under the direction and supervision of the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, with its offices housed at the Ministry of Planning; it was supposed to speed up aid absorption, but the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation remained the point of contact and responsible body for all aid coordination. The Executive Bureau was stripped of all legal authority to perform a meaningful role, and it became a supporting organization that aimed to coordinate between government institutions and donors(11).

The Executive Bureau lacked the political clout needed to overcome the difficulties of project oversight or influence line ministries. One of Prime Minister Khaled Bahah's first initiatives after taking office in November 2014 was to empower the Executive Bureau and remove the flaws that hindered the bureau's capacity to perform as intended. He started by requesting an amended Republican regulation that would require the bureau to report directly to the Prime Minister and alter its mission. The re-designed Executive Bureau was never built. Despite its flaws, the Executive Bureau was a forward-thinking institution(12).

Corporate Approaches for Recovery

This paper proposes the creation of a permanent and independent Public Recovery Authority (PRA) to empower and coordinate the work of local recovery offices established at the local level in war or disaster-affected regions. This authority would be in charge of all recovery responsibilities, including present and future post-conflict or catastrophe recovery planning, as well as managing important national projects. Following any calamity or end of hostilities, this suggested public recovery authority should

work on a multilevel by establishing local recovery offices on the ground. Assessment, planning, local funding, fundraising, project implementation, monitoring, reporting, and coordination might all be taken up by these local offices within their local scope(13).

The recovery authority should be open to the public while remaining separate from the cabinet. A presidential order establishing its mission, power, and tasks should be issued. For example, a project costing less than US \$5 million may be designed, approved, contracted, and paid by the local office, however any project costing more than that would need to be approved by the PRA. Officials from the donor community (both within the Gulf Cooperation Council and among other foreign donors); representatives from the cabinet; and representatives from the recovery authority's board of directors should be included. The statute creating the Social Fund for Development is an excellent example of separating the board's tasks from the authority's executive administration.

The board of directors should hire the recovery authority's executive director and all personnel through a competitive, merit-based, and transparent procedure. The same recruitment method should be used to staff local offices so that recovery work can be completed efficiently and quickly. External financing can be managed by the recovery authority by creating a pool fund for all contributors. It should also be audited on a regular basis by a third-party entity in accordance with international auditing standards(14) In general, the recovery authority has to develop a long-term strategy for restoring, consolidating, and prioritizing restoration funds from Yemeni sources.

Creating a Unit for Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and assessment is an important part of the recovery process. International donors demand robust financial monitoring

(11) Clausen, Maria-Louise. "State-building in Fragile States: Strategies of Embedment." Aarhus University. 2016. http://politica.dk/fileadmin/politica/Dokumenter/ph.d.-afhandlinger/maria-louise_clausen.pdf (accessed 03 2022).

(12) Ibid

(13) (OCHA), United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid. "Humanitarian Needs Overview." 12 2017. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/yemen_humanitarian_needs_overview_hno_2018_20171204_0.pdf (accessed 03 2022).

and reporting systems that allow them to report on the effective use of their funds to their constituents(15).

Although donors and the central government can maintain their own oversight and auditing mechanisms, the recovery authority should establish its own monitoring and evaluation unit, which would use an internal monitoring and evaluation system that would be suitable for all external donors and international organizations. This unit can work in tandem with the Yemeni government's existing monitoring and assessment agencies, such as the Central Organization for Control and Auditing, the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption, the Supreme Judicial Council, and the High Authority for Tender Control.(16)

Conclusion

The proposed recovery authority employs a multi-level, mixed-institution model, with clear roles for all stakeholders. It stresses national ownership of the process, stringent monitoring, strong cooperation among recovery partners, and a long-term strategy to build state capability. For this and future crises, this method offers the best potential of creating a transparent,

successful, and long-lasting recovery effort. The fight is still ongoing at the time of writing, thus the solutions presented here may appear to be a fantasy exercise.

Difficulties will undoubtedly develop, particularly given Yemen's very unstable post-conflict situation. However, all parties involved in Yemen's ultimate recovery must start envisioning and planning for a bright future now. Work on arranging conversations between foreign donors and financial sources, establishing the groundwork with Yemeni government political leaders and technocrats, gaining buy-in of local authorities and NGOs, and preparing for the beginning of a future recovery effort may begin immediately. S24

(14) Ibid

(15) Gonzalez, Anthony. "How to build a results monitoring framework." 9 2019. https://datajourney.akvo.org/blog/how-to-design-a-results-monitoring-framework?utm_term=monitoring%20and%20evaluation&utm_campaign=&utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_acc=7028243667&hsa_cam=2077694068&hsa_grp=133875886761&hsa_ad=565141476703&hsa_src=g& (accessed 03 2022).

(15) Ibid



SOUTH 24

South24 Quarterly
South24 Center for News & Studies

All rights reserved ©