

South Yemen Update

Dream no small dreams for they do not have the power to move the hearts of men

Newsletter of the Friends of South Yemen

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Houthi attack on UAE heralds a new page in the war

The Houthi attack on the UAE heralds a new page in the war. With their attack on the UAE on January 17 the Houthis opened another front in the seven-year war in Yemen.

With this latest escalation peace is certainly not on the horizon and the innocent Yemeni people continue to be plagued by armed conflict and the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The Houthis did not expect the Southern Transitional Council (STC) to engage militarily in the Shabwa region, mainly because the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG) and its army failed to protect Shabwa from their incursion.

But the UAE-backed Giants Brigades moved quickly into Shabwa, defeated the Houthis and drove them back into North Yemen. For the vast majority of Yemen's conflict, the Giants Brigades have been active in Yemen's west, fighting in Taiz, Hodeidah and down the western coast. However in December they moved east to Shabwah following the sacking of the province's governor, Mohammed Saleh bin Adyo, who is suspected to support the Islah party.

Their military defeat was seen by the Houthis as clear involvement of the UAE in the war and this prompted them to launch a series of missile and drone attacks on Abu Dhabi.

The first strike, on January 17, set off fires at the airport and in a nearby industrial area, killing three people. Although two subsequent attacks were intercepted by Emirati and American missile-defence systems, the message from the Houthis is designed to send a clear and concise signal to the UAE not to engage militarily against them. They are blaming the UAE for their defeat in Shabwa which has thwarted their ambitions to advance into South Yemen and strengthen their negotiating position.

In response to the first attack on the Emirates, as well as ongoing drone and missile strikes on their own territory, the Saudis undertook ferocious airstrikes that, according to observers on the ground, killed and wounded scores of people in Houthi strongholds. This does not seem like a road the Emiratis want to go down. Instead, an Emirati F-16 destroyed a missile launching site the Houthis used in their second attack on Abu Dhabi. It is clear that they would rather be highlighting what is happening inside the Emirates, from Expo 2020 Dubai and a raft of new business friendly to the promise of the Abraham Accords. Yet the Emiratis are not likely to continue responding modestly to future Houthi blows, meaning the war in Yemen may be entering another new stage.

The Houthis have overstretched themselves in various regions in Yemen and, with Iran's backing, have been



targeting Saudi Arabia. They have now demonstrated that their military capabilities are not limited to targeting the Saudis but can also reach the UAE and beyond. Within the next few weeks they will face their biggest military challenge in Marib as the Giant's Brigade has now joined the IRG's army in the fight for the last major city in North Yemen not under Houthi control. The Houthi attack

on the UAE and their continued attacks on Saudi Arabia have attracted global outcry but the international community has done nothing to advance the resolution of the conflict. The current UN resolution on Yemen is not fit for purpose but no new resolution has been put forward.

The head of Britain's Gulf parliamentary group David Jones said that Western powers need to unite and take a more "hard-headed approach" to Iran's involvement in Yemen. Jones wants a British military force to be ready to intervene in Yemen if the political and humanitarian crisis intensifies.

The United States threatened the Houthis with new sanctions. "We've taken a number of such actions, including in recent weeks and months alone, and I suspect we will be in a position to take additional action given the reprehensible attacks that we've seen emanate from Yemen from the Houthis in recent days and weeks," said State Department Spokesperson Ned Price.

The UAE decided to withdraw their forces from Yemen in 2018 but it has remained an influential player through its backing of the STC. The attacks by the Houthis will no doubt influence the UAE to reengage in the war in a much more effective way - possibly militarily.

The Houthis will continue their attacks against the UAE which has the military backing of the USA. On February 1, the US said it would deploy a guided missile destroyer and state-of-the-art fighter jets to help the UAE defend itself against Houthi attacks. France has decided to reinforce Emirates' defences, including Rafale jets, to counter any future aggression. The international community is very concerned about the global markets and the UAE is critical to the world global economy. The Houthis have made a big mistake by attacking the emirates, which may see a powerful international response against them.

The UAE is OPEC's third-largest oil producer and one of the world's biggest trade and tourism hubs. The Houthis are now threatening a major ally of the West in the Gulf and this makes them a significant economic and political threat to the international community. With the continued backing of the West of the Arab coalition and Iran's support for the Houthis the war will continue on several fronts pushing Yemen further and further towards the abyss.

United Nations: 2,000 children recruited by Houthis died fighting



UN experts said in a new report that nearly 2,000 children recruited by the Houthis died on the battlefield between January 2020 and May 2021, and the Iranian-backed rebels continue to hold camps and courses encouraging youngsters to fight.

In the report to the UN Security Council circulated at the end of January the experts said they investigated some summer camps in schools and a mosque where the Houthis disseminated their ideology and sought to recruit children to fight in the seven-year war.

"The children are instructed to shout the Houthi slogan 'death to America, death to Israel, curse the Jews, victory to Islam,'" the four-member panel of experts said. "In one camp, children as young as 7 years of age were taught to clean weapons and evade rockets."

The experts said they documented 10 cases where children were taken to fight after being told they would be enrolled in cultural courses or were already taking such courses, nine cases where humanitarian aid was provided or denied to families "solely on the basis whether their children participated in fighting or to teachers on the basis of whether they taught the Houthi curriculum," and one case where sexual violence was committed against a child who underwent military training.

The panel said it received a list of 1,406 children recruited by the Houthis who died on the battlefield in 2020 and a list of 562 children recruited by the rebels who died on the battlefield between January and May 2021.

"They were aged between 10 and 17 years old," the experts said, and "a significant number" of them were killed in Amran, Dhamar, Hajjah, Hodeida, Ibb, Saada and Sanaa.

The 303-page report said violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are "the norm rather than the exception" in the Yemen conflict, citing arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment "committed by all parties."

Migrants continue to be particularly vulnerable to abuses and human rights violations, the experts said, and in Houthi-controlled areas, detention and the judicial system are used "to quell any opposition or perceived dissent, especially by journalists, women and religious minorities."

The annual UN report, covering the year to December 5, 2021, said the Houthis and paramilitary forces loyal to them continue to violate the UN arms embargo.

"Most types of uncrewed aerial vehicles, waterborne improvised explosive devices and short-range rockets are assembled in Houthi-controlled areas using locally available materials."

The experts said evidence shows that weapons components and other military equipment "continue to be supplied overland to the Houthi forces by individuals and entities based in Oman."

The United States and Saudi Arabia have accused Iran of supplying weapons to the Houthis in violation of the arms embargo. The experts reported the seizure of some Iranian-made weapons, but Iran denies any involvement in providing weapons to the Houthis.

CHRONOLOGY

Jan 16: The Houthis reject a UN request to release an Emirati-flagged vessel they seized earlier this month saying the ship was carrying "military assets".

-Yemen's army, alongside the Giants Brigade and popular resistance, liberates strategic locations in the northwestern front of Marib.

Jan 17: The Houthis claim attacks in Abu Dhabi that triggered a fuel tank blast killing three people.

-Emirati Foreign Minister Abdullah Bin Zayed asks Secretary of State Tony Blinken to re-designate the Houthis a terrorist organization.

Jan 18: As many as 20 people have reportedly been killed in Sanaa by coalition airstrikes on Houthi positions.

-The GCC Secretary General Dr. Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf renews his call to the international community to confront Houthi terrorism.

Jan 19: The Arab coalition announces a large-scale military operation against the Houthis.

-US President Joe Biden says he is considering re-designating the Houthis as an international terrorist organization.

Jan 20: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) announces the death of one of its commanders, Salih bin Salim bin Ubayd 'Abolan, in a US airstrike in Yemen.

-The Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, expresses grave concern about the impact of the Houthi attacks on the prospects of peace.

Jan 21: A Saudi-led coalition air strike hits a detention centre run by the Houthis, killing at least 70 detainees.

-The Giants Brigades, Yemeni southern troops backed by the United Arab Emirates, suspend their operations in the north after weeks of aiding the Saudi-backed government forces in their battle to capture the southeastern province of Shabwah from the Houthis and advancing into rebel-held areas of Marib to the north.

Jan 22: United Nations Secretary-general Antonio Guterres condemns airstrikes in Yemen.

-The Houthis call on foreign companies to leave the UAE.

Jan 23: Most of Yemen faced a third day without internet after air strikes on Hodeidah.

-The US Navy says it seized a boat in the Gulf of Oman carrying fertiliser used to make explosives. The same ship was caught last year smuggling weapons to Yemen.

Jan 24: Houthis renew attack on Abu Dhabi with ballistic missiles.

-US forces stationed at a base near Abu Dhabi, use multiple Patriot missile batteries to intercept missiles fired by the Houthis.

Jan 25: Violence in Yemen continues to escalate, raising casualties and spilling across the war-torn country's

borders, the Special Envoy for the country and the Humanitarian Coordinator warns.

Jan 26: The Houthis threaten to attack the Dubai Expo.

-The Yemeni army and Giants Brigades forces take complete control of strategic sites in Marib province.

Jan 27: The British government hosts a meeting with senior officials from Oman, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the US to discuss ways to bring peace to Yemen.

Jan 28: The Giants Brigades repositions its forces after driving the Houthis out of Shabwa and beginning a push north towards Marib.

-A leaked document that purportedly reveals a desire by Saudi Arabia to end its involvement in the Yemen war, has been published by the Lebanese *Al-Akhbar* newspaper.

Jan 29: UN experts say in a new report that nearly 2,000 children recruited by the Houthis died on the battlefield between January 2020 and May 2021.

-An agreement for the "Renewable energy use to improve the quality of life in Yemen" project was signed between the Saudi Development and Reconstruction Project for Yemen (SDRPY), the Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND) and Selah Foundation for Development with the aim of implementing the project in five Yemeni governorates.

Jan 30: The Houthis call for talks with the Yemeni government to resolve the eight-year military conflict.

Jan 31: Egypt condemns the latest ballistic missile attack on the UAE by the Houthis.

-The United States will deploy a guided-missile destroyer and state-of-the-art fighter jets to help defend the UAE after attacks by the Houthis.

Feb 1: The Saudi government stresses its support for the efforts of the UN envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, in reaching a comprehensive political solution to the crisis in the country.

-UN investigators uncover a pattern of abuse, rape and arbitrary detention against women activists in Houthi-held areas of Yemen.

Feb 2: The UAE says it destroyed three drones with "hostile" intent - the fourth similar incident in three weeks as tensions with the Houthis intensify.

-The Houthis raid and shutter five radio stations in Sanaa.

Feb 3: Western powers need to unite and take a more "hard-headed approach" to Iran's involvement in Yemen, the head of Britain's Gulf parliamentary groups says.

Feb 4: The Arab Coalition conducts 14 targeted strikes in Marib and Hajjah to deter the Houthis.

Feb 5: The UAE establishes a new camp in the city of Hadibo, the capital of the Socotra archipelago.

Feb 6: A top US general moves forward his planned trip to the UAE to help the Gulf state bolster its defences following a series of attacks by the Houthis.

Feb 7: The UN praised 'very positive

International organisations in Yemen: A scandalous tale of corruption

The United Nations, its affiliated organizations, and hundreds of official employees working in the liberated areas have been linked to suspicions of corruption of various forms through the United Nations agencies operating in the country, especially in Sanaa and Aden.

The organizations and agencies of the United Nations declare absolute transparency in their system of governance and decentralization within their institutions operating in Yemen and conflict areas. But the truth is the exact opposite. Official reports and international press investigations revealed major corruption cases involving many workers and some reports revealed policies for employees to usurp their positions to exploit humanitarian aid and development projects.

Human Rights Watch published a report based on interviews with humanitarian workers, donors, experts and beneficiaries. It revealed that international organizations and agencies operating in areas controlled by the Houthis were always responsive to any of their conditions and demands.

Some directors of United Nations agencies have argued that their acceptance of these conditions was prompted by the need to benefit from the opening of roads and the delivery of aid. It was part of a prior plan to transfer much of the aid allocated to specific areas in Sanaa or the liberated areas through the local authorities, but many employees were bribed to transfer aid to other areas.

The reports also confirmed that the Internationally Recognised Government did not accept allowing aid organizations to operate without preconditions. This violates the norms of those independent international organizations that glorify transparency. However, the managers dealing with the Houthi regime used to sign contracts, which included partnership with elements of the authorities in Sanaa and Aden by dealing with some suspicious companies.

The corruption that befell the United Nations institutions was not limited to humanitarian institutions and employees of international organizations. There were multiple political pressures on the political partners to participate in some international meetings that did not correspond to the national interests or will of the people in southern Yemen.

The United Nations may be powerless to reform its institutions - or it may not be powerless, and it is turning a blind eye to this form of administrative and political corruption that has affected the fate of peoples in the Arab region especially in Yemen.

On the humanitarian level, the efforts of the United Nations have failed miserably in providing the minimum level of protection to civilians who are exposed to all forms of violations described in international humanitarian law.

Many reports indicate the involvement of the offices and missions of the United Nations and their international partner agencies in many cases of administrative and financial corruption through approving suspicious deals to buy food and other supplies intended for the displaced. Spoiled, expired or poor quality food has been bought in complete violation of the specifications of procurement contracts. This has been done in collusion with official organizations where the organization's employees work within the regime's areas in exchange for large financial commissions for some of their workers. Hundreds of cases of poisoning have been documented in refugee camps after the consumption of food distributed by the United Nations.

Large sums of money were disbursed for hotel reservations for United Nations workers. Grants of thousands of dollars were made to many organizations involved in supporting the war in Yemen, including institutions run by the Council of Ministers through their families headed by women leaders and suspicious companies.

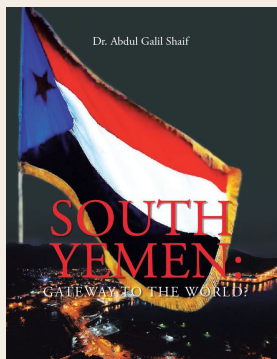
Data issued by the United Nations also revealed that its office in Sanaa spent astronomical sums without justification for the expenses and wages of workers, including an amount of four million dollars as rents for offices and accommodation for workers in two Sanaa hotels. The United Nations justified the accommodation of its employees in hotels as a security precaution.

The United Nations office also agreed to disburse huge amounts of funds for projects in some areas, when these funds were allocated to the southern regions.

This was the case with the Humanitarian Affairs Grant (OCHA) of 150 million dollars to implement water projects in the areas controlled by the STC in the southern governorates. These funds were redirected by corrupt UN officials to institutions and organizations managed by influential figures in Sanaa.

It seems that the decision to relocate the headquarters of the organizations from Sanaa to Aden was not implemented with unconvincing pretexts due to the state of corruption that will be revealed if the relocation takes place! It comes within the framework of sharp criticism of the United Nations office in Yemen for siding with the authority in Sanaa and for not conveying the true picture in reports submitted to the United Nations. NGOs criticized the United Nations reports that avoided mentioning the words "Power Sharing Government" when talking about the southern regions that are under the control of the Southern Transitional Council. This was done at the request of the Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and this means that the reports of the United Nations coordinator were being audited by the Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs before their submission to the UN.

**Extract from South Yemen: Gateway to the World
DEMISE OF THE YEMENI SOCIALIST PARTY**



Following the 1994 war, the YSP lost much of its own relevance in Yemen and particularly in the South where the STC has to some extent absorbed many of its rank and file members.

The YSP lost much of its power base as a consequence of losing the 1994 war and in a sense their biggest mistake was their own internal fighting throughout the late 70s and 80s. The YSP lost many of its own radical supporters into other party structures because they went into an unequal 1990 unification deal without thinking through the consequences of such unification. The catastrophe of 1986 and the failed unification process, and its outcomes in a military defeat are the narrative of history many people in South Yemen

are currently using to describe the YSP. When it comes to its leftist achievements in the south, current political narrative has forgotten the left's golden age that inspired the imagination of Yemeni and Arab intellectuals and was feared by the region and the international community – a golden age that brought in the family law, agricultural reforms, industrialisation, better education and health care.

The YSP is not remembered for the positive things it achieved in the South. It is remembered mainly for all its negativity and ruthless internal fighting. The YSP today suffers from the reality of the political fragmentation of the past and the cumulative outcome of the many mistakes made by its leadership and the complete ignorance of learning from the past and reorganising itself to meet the political needs of the new circumstances. It is fair to note that the YSP structures have either withered away while other party organs have significantly weakened and fractured, altering their historic place in South Yemen's political life with very low membership and very little influence in the ongoing conflict if any at all.

Their membership has engaged with other political structures with very little attention to the leftist politics of the past and no clear political or economic direction and as their political clout continues to decline, their popular base has been left vulnerable to polarization by more effective and better mobilised and organized local power structures. The future of the YSP is bleak unless it can find new ways to reactivate itself as a party that stands for something in a conflict that is likely to bring about new power brokers.

Click here to order a copy of the book: <https://www.authorhouse.com/en/bookstore/bookdetails/833319-south-yemen-gateway-to-the-world>

WHERE ARE THE BRITISH?

When South Yemen's revolutionaries liberated the country from British colonial rule in 1967 the British government had a moral and economic obligation to leave behind something better. The British had a strategic interest in helping the South Yemeni people build a free and prosperous society. A democratic South Yemen with a thriving port and great economic potential would have been a much better alternative to the one that was left behind. For six decades, the British ruling class at a diplomatic level on the ground and in London proved unable to take in this simple message. The British should for the interest of the United Kingdom rethink their failed policy in that part of the world and become the vehicle to end the war and help South Yemen economically to regain its rightful place in the world. The new proposed partnership based on cooperation and economic mutual interest will be the best possible tool to eradicate extremism and terrorism. South Yemen is desperate for an economic partnerships that delivers real benefits, such as jobs, for the masses. "The boots we need on the ground are those of constructors, not the anarchy that was left behind. While there is profound truth that the revolutionaries themselves are to blame for the worst possible political and economic outcome, the British also made the catastrophic diplomatic mistake of letting down the people they ruled for over a century. Time for a rethink?" **Abdul Galil Shaif**



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discussions' between all sides of the Yemen conflict over the threat posed by an ageing oil tanker moored off the western port of Hodeida.

- Yemen's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Mubarak holds talks with the US Acting-Ambassador to Yemen about boosting bilateral cooperation and the Houthis ongoing military escalation.

Feb 8: The Houthis should learn from recent military losses in Marib that the war is unwinnable and rejoin the peace process, US envoy Tim Lenderking says.

Feb 9: Yemeni political activists reveal that Qatari authorities arrested Yemeni political and human rights activist Saleh Al-Jarmouzi after an interview in which he condemned the Saudi-led attacks and the UAE escalation against his country.

Feb 10: The Norwegian Refugee Council says that civilian casualties in Yemen have nearly doubled since the end of the sole United Nations-backed independent monitoring group investigating possible rights violations and other abuses.

Feb 11: The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announces that it will soon reduce the volume of food aid provided to 11 million Yemenis due to a lack of funding.

Feb 12: Unidentified gunmen abduct Akem Sofiol, the director of the United Nations Office for Security and Safety in Aden.

-U.S. F-22 fighter jets arrive in the United Arab Emirates as part of an American defense response to recent missile attacks by the Houthis.

Feb 13: The UN World Food Program (WFP) warns of rising poverty among Yemeni families amid continued fighting across the war-torn country.

-GCC Secretary General Dr Nayaf Al-Hajraf says the Houthi militia hold full responsibility for using civilians as human shields at their military sites.

Feb 14: The Saudi-led coalition urges civilians in government buildings in Sanaa to immediately evacuate.

-The Arab coalition says it destroyed a communications system used to launch and control weaponised drones against civilian targets.

-King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) Project (Masam) for clearing mines in Yemen, dismantled, during the second week of February 2022, a total of 1,812 mines planted by the Houthis across Yemen, including 116 anti-personnel mines, 1,398 anti-tank, 224 unexploded ordnance and 74 explosive devices. Since the beginning of the project, as many as 320,558 mines have been dismantled.

-Tribal leaders in South Yemen say they negotiating with the abductors of five UN workers to secure their release. They said the abductors demanded a ransom and the release of some militants imprisoned by the internationally recognized government.