

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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REPORT BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Yemen: Huthis 'suffocating' women with requirement for male guardians

The Huthi de facto authorities must end their mahram (male guardian) requirement, which bans women from travelling without a male guardian or evidence of their written approval across governorates under Huthi control or to other areas of Yemen, Amnesty International said today. Increasingly since April, tightened Huthi restrictions have hindered Yemeni women from carrying out their work, especially those who are required to travel. The restraints imposed by the mahram requirement also apply to Yemeni female humanitarian workers who have struggled to conduct fieldwork, thereby directly impacting access to aid for Yemenis in need and particularly for women and girls.

"The Huthi de facto authorities must immediately lift the mahram requirement. This restrictive rule

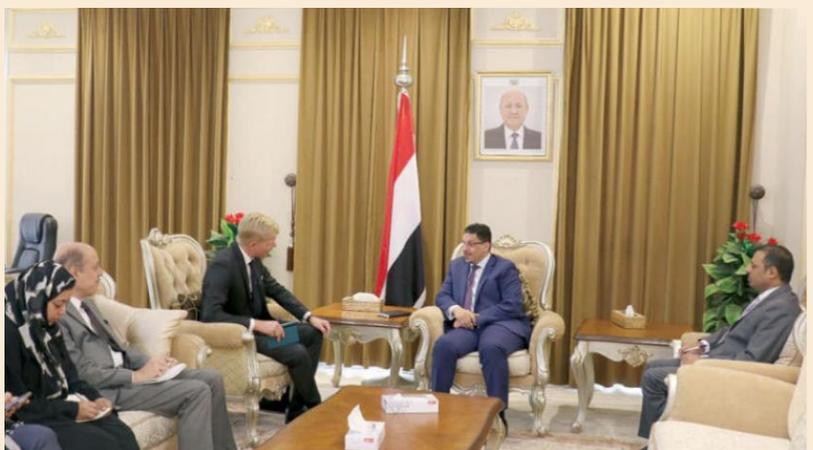


constitutes a form of gender-based discrimination and entrenches the discrimination faced by women in Yemen on a daily basis. Yemeni women urgently need to be able to move around the country freely in order to work, to seek health care and to give or receive humanitarian aid," said Diana Semaan, Acting Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa. "The international community should pressure the Huthis to stop imposing mahram restrictions on women. Yemen is already facing a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, and there is now a very real risk that women and girls will stop receiving aid if women humanitarian workers continue to be banned from travelling without a male guardian." Under international humanitarian law, all parties to the armed conflict in Yemen, including the Huthis, must facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of impartial

humanitarian assistance to civilians in need and ensure the freedom of movement of humanitarian relief personnel without discrimination. The mahram restriction is contrary to this obligation. The mahram requirement, which is not part of Yemeni law is being enforced by the Huthis through verbal directives. Since April, the Huthi de facto authorities have increasingly insisted on the mahram requirement to restrict the movement of women across areas they control in northern Yemen, including Saada, Dhamar, Hodeidah and Hajjah governorates, and Sanaa.

United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen Meet in Riyadh

The United Nations special envoy to Yemen met in Riyadh the Yemeni Foreign Minister Ahmed bin Mubarak and the Chairman of the Consultation and Reconciliation Commission, Muhammad al-Ghaithi, and his deputy after holding talks with the Speaker of parliament Sultan al-Barakani. Official sources reported that bin Mubarak discussed with the envoy the UN truce and peace efforts in light of the recent Houthi attacks in the Ad-Dhabab area in Taiz and their continuous ceasefire violations. A Yemeni news agency, quoted bin Mubarak as saying that Yemenis await the militias' commitment to open the main roads to Taiz. However, the Houthis challenged the international community by trying to block the main highway and recently paraded a show of military force in the Hodaidah area. The foreign minister warned that the Houthi behavior threatens the truce and the initiatives and efforts



Yemeni Foreign Minister during his meeting with the UN envoy in Riyadh

to expand and extend it unless there are firm stances against militia actions. He further stressed that militias must implement the clause on opening roads and end all violations and war mobilization, adding that the Houthis must not exploit the government's commitment and the coalition's support.

STC FORCES DRIVE ISLAH FORCES OUT OF SHABWA

The Islah Islamic political party has continued to have some influence in Shabwa and in Hadramaut during the leadership of ex-president Hadi and his vice ex-president Ali Mohsin Alahmar. This influence was projected through their army brigades in these two governates. However recently the Shabwa Defense Forces and the Giants Brigades managed to take control of Shabwa, pushing the Islah-affiliated units



STC Forces take control of Shabwa

out of the governate with the support of the governor of Shabwa, who took the decision to remove leading army commanders loyal to the Islah party.. Islah's one representative on the Presidential Leadership Council Al-Alimi, previously the director of the presidential office, responded by resigning his position from the presidential council. The Islah party as a consequence called for the removal of Shabwa's governor.

Although there continue to be reports of military hostilities in Shabwa the fighting is largely over, at least for the moment. Islah has lost its influence in the important governate of Shabwa. And undoubtedly the STC military wing the giant brigade has taken military control with the aim of reducing the influence of the Islah party in the governate of Hadramaut.. It is likely that the Giant brigade will continue the push forward towards taken control of the eastern region of South Yemen. The South Yemeni flag was raised in government buildings in Shabwa as proof of the military victory. These military incursions are proving to be a big test to the unity of the presidential council and its ability to maintain a strong military opposition to the Houthis who may see this as an opportunity to enhance their relationship with Islah for the benefit of their own military conquests.

In 2014, the Iran-backed Houthi group seized Sanaa and spread their influence and dominance in other northern provinces including taking over the South by invading Aden in 2015. The opposition to the Houthis in Aden and in other provinces in the south was fierce and as a consequence the Houthis were defeated militarily in the South. Currently, they hold control of Yemen's north except for some districts in the rich oil governate of Marib and Taiz. The STC did see this an

opportunity to declare their own state in the South but instead decided to work with the international community and engage in a peaceful transition to power. They could have applied the same approach but realized that the initial struggle currently is to defeat the Houthis. The STC military success in Shabwa and the proposed incursion into Hadramaut will allow the power sharing government to benefit from oil and Gas resources in these areas. A leading STC member in Shabwa said , the southern flag will soon be raised in the the headquarters of the First Military Region, just as it was raised on the headquarters of the Shabwa led Islah Special Forces.

Besides their military muscle, the STC currently enjoy substantial political power represented by Aidrous Al-Zubaidi, the leader of the STC and deputy head of the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC), which has been the UN-recognised authority in Yemen since April this year. The STC have politically crafted a situation that allows them to technically make these gains by using the internationally recognised authority and maintain their military influence through their brigades. The current presidential council has so far supported the military incursion into Shabwa reducing the influence of the Islah party, possibly with the support of regional and international power. "Like Shabwa, Hadramout is rich in oil and would be a vast revenue-generating source.



FOSY can report that the leader of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) met influential members of the STC in Aden to discuss the latest military and political developments and the security situations in Shabwa governorate, and the districts of Valley and Desert of Hadhramaut.. Mr. Salem Thabet Al-Awlaqi presented a comprehensive report on the situation emphasising the STC full support for the governor of Shabwa , and the STC condemnation of the continuing attempts by the rebellious forces in their attempt to destabilize the situation in Jordan and Arma'a districts, and the continued mobilization of these militias from the First Military Division and the Yemeni Mareb governorate towards Shabwa, calling on the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) to take a decisive position on these militias and cease their mobilizing operations towards Shabwa and the Valley areas of Hadramaut. He further stressed the importance of enabling the people of Shabwa to

manage the affairs of their governorate in all the fields, and their legal right to derive benefits from its resources, in addition to secure and protect it the governate from the interference of any political forces.

In a separate context, the STC presedentail council reviewed the risks of environmental pollution caused by the steel-hulled ships stuck in the coasts of the capital, Aden, the governorates of Hadramout, and Socotra as they listened from the minister of transportation and the minister of Agriculture and Fish Wealth to the procedures that have been taken by these two ministries to dislodge the shipwreck, remove hazards and sue the owners of those streel-hulled ships for the risks and hazards caused the marine environment.

STC Leader welcomes Fadi Ba'um

Aidarous Qassem Al-Zubaidi, leader of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) held a meeting with Fadi Ba'um, Head of Political Bureau of Revolutionary Movement Council. This meeting was a significant step forward in bringing politicians to closely work under the umbrella of the STC . His return to Aden was in response to the invitation by Al-Zubaidi to all leaders and commanders of Southern splinter groups to return to South Yemen. Present in the meeting were Major General Ahmed Saeed Ben Brik, chairman of the National Assembly of the STC, and Mr. Marwan al-Hamumi, Member of the Assembly.

The STC is politically making efforts to bring together all factions supporting the establishment of a southern state together under its umbrella. In many ways learning the lessons that a divided movement will not bring about the required change. Lessons must be learned from the 14 October revolution and the divisions between the NLF and FLOSYP that led to military conflict. The revolution brought British colonialism to an end and a Southern independent state was established. The dream of independence brought with it many traumatic blows revealing sharp ideological factionalism between the various revolutionary groups and ever-present destabilization campaigns and military clashes between South and North Yemen. Today is a violent reminder that broad societal change would not occur easily or without repercussions. That said the STC is practically working and aspiring to establish a state in the South that brings all southerners together with prosperity, justice and hope as its guiding force. For me, there is every indication that STC plan for the future is a sign of the transition towards recognizing the good of the Revolution as well as lessons learned from a negative past. With the deterioration of living conditions in the



STC Leader Aidarous Al-Zubaidi meets Fadi Ba'um Head of Political Bureau of Revolutionary Movement Council

South and intolerable corruption of the current political establishment and limited opportunities and high levels of poverty for so many people in the South, there are now positive lessons to be learned from the 14th October Revolution and the mistakes made by its leaders. It is now more important than ever for the Southern people represented by the STC to take pragmatic steps to build a progressive state that works for all its people and not just its leaders. Whilst we celebrate the 54th Anniversary of independence, the current levels of poverty, inequality, violence, and lack of opportunity across the governorates of the South, reveal that political independence is often a hollow prize if not reinforced by efforts to remake society along the lines of greater equality and justice for all.

The head of the presidential council of Yemen, Dr. Rashad Muhammad Al-Alimi, visited the Joint Forces Command of Coalition in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, received by the Commander of the Joint Forces, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Lt. Gen. Mutlaq Bin Salem Al-Azima, and a number of officials at the Coalition. He was briefed on the current situation, led by Saudi Arabia, in support of Yemen, its people and leadership, and was presented with a detailed report on the current negotiations and military situation in Yemen. Dr. Al-Alimi expressed his deep thanks and appreciation to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman, and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, deputy prime minister and minister of defence, for their support to Yemeni people and standing with them in various fields to restore security and stability.

FOSY reports that his recent visit to the United Arab Emirates and now to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is designed to get the economic support package promised by the two countries to help bolster the weakening economy and stabilise the local currency. He is expected to return to Aden soon with some positive outcomes.



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