

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

Issue 4 — 16th September - 15th October 2020

Three missed opportunities to establish autonomy SOUTHERN TRANSITIONAL COUNCIL UNDER CLOUD

Yemen today can be compared to a rudderless ship with several captains at odds with each other steering it onto the rocks where disintegration is inevitable.

The Houthis in the north are trying to motor full speed ahead with the establishment of a fundamentalist Shia theocracy supported by Iran. The internationally recognized government, led by Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, is rearranging chairs on a ship that's going down by trying to set up a government where ministerial positions are shared equally between North and South - but the Southerners will never share power with hardline Islamists. The Southern Transitional Council (STC) cannot make up its mind about autonomy. It declared self-rule, rescinded the declaration after two months and is now once again saying that secession from the North is the only solution to the country's unrest.

While the Houthis are speaking through the barrel of a gun, for the rest of the country the Riyadh Agreement brokered in November last year to enable the STC and Hadi's government to share power is the only game in town. But this game is on an extended time out period.

In return for rescinding the self-rule declaration on July 29th, the STC agreed to abide by the Riyadh Agreement and a new government should have been formed within 30 days. This has not happened. STC leaders are ensconced in their residences in Riyadh and its head, President Aidaroos Qassem Al-Zubaidi, is addressing meetings in Aden through video calls.

As the political stalemate continues, Yemen is in the grip of the world's worst humanitarian crisis, eloquently described by Tim Loughton, the Chair of the British All Parliamentary Group on Yemen, as the most lethal and complex cocktail: an extended and seemingly insoluble civil war with international ramifications; various other man-made disasters; numerous natural disasters and potentially catastrophic environmental ones; an economic meltdown; and now, on top of it all, a deadly pandemic that Yemen was least prepared and equipped to deal with.

The STC missed three golden opportunities to advance the case for Southern statehood: in 2015 when the Houthis were kicked out of Aden, in 2016 when the STC was set up, and in 2020 when it rescinded the self-rule declaration.

Commenting on these watersheds in the movement's history FOSY's Chairman Abdul Galil Shaif Kasim pointed out that in 2015 the Houthis, having overthrown Hadi's

government, decided to invade South Yemen so that they could exert political and military control over the whole of Yemen. But the Southern movement (Hirak) and its local Adeni supporters who were adamant about establishing their own state in the South fought back and with Emirati forces, part of the Saudi-led coalition, drove the Houthis out of Aden after they had been in the city for at least one month.

Hadi immediately appointed Al-Zubaidi as governor of Aden and other Southerners to leadership positions throughout the South. These Southern governors could have taken control of state institutions. Hadi fired Al Zubaidi and other southerners because of the influence of Islah with the presidency. Their inaction was a missed opportunity to take over state institutions while they were in authority.

The formation of the STC in Aden 2016 inspired hope that an independent state in the South was no longer a fata morgana. The movement had huge support throughout the south and the weakening authority of Hadi's government, which had become a government-in-exile based in Saudi Arabia, placed the STC in an ideal negotiating position on the regional and

international stage. But once again it failed to step up to the plate and its weakness in taking decisive political action during the last five years enabled Hadi to make political and military inroads into Hadhramaut, Shabwa and parts of Abyan.

Though the STC are nominal allies in a Saudi-led military coalition fighting the Houthis, the rivalry between the STC and Hadi's government has led to a civil war within a civil war and the historic struggle between the south and the central government continues, opening old wounds.

Pressure from the Saudis prompted the STC's declaration of self-rule in Aden in 2020, a move designed to influence the coalition to put more pressure on Hadi, to be abandoned in the hope that the Riyadh Agreement, always honoured more in the breach than in the observance, would finally be implemented. This lost the STC credibility within its own ranks and with the southern population. Southerners see themselves cheated out of their own state while others feel that ending the military conflict means accepting that independence is a long process and that kicking the ball into the long grass may be the only option feasible for now.

The STC's survival as a political force for independence



For full coverage of the UK Parliament debate on the crisis in Yemen see pages 3 and 4.

CHRONOLOGY

Sept 16: The UN humanitarian chief warns that “the spectre of famine” has returned to Yemen and for the first time singles out Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait for giving nothing to this year’s \$3.4 billion appeal.

Sept 17: The head of the local branch of Al-Islah party in Al-Azariq district, Ahmed Bin Ahmed Ali, is killed in the village of Mutha’dah in Al-Dhale.

Sept 18: Yemen’s Minister of Human Rights Mohammed Askar warns against the military escalation mounted by the Houthis in several governorates and cites statistics documenting the death and injury of 700 civilians and the uprooting of over 11,000 families in the last 60 days following attacks in Marib, Al Jawf and Al- Dhale.

Sept 19: The UAE hired thousands of mercenaries and deployed 450 of them in Yemen to carry out high-profile assassinations, the International Institute for Rights and Development and the Rights Radar Foundation reveals.

Sept 20: Hundreds of people on Socotra demonstrate against the normalization of relations between Israel, the UAE and Bahrain. Socotra may be used by the Israelis as an intelligence gathering base.

Sept 21: A US State Department Inspector General report finds that “the department did not fully assess risks and implement mitigation measures to reduce civilian casualties and legal concerns associated with the transfer of weapons to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.”

Sept 22: UAE-backed Hadrami Elite Forces fire shots to disperse angry protesters who demonstrated against the deterioration of public services in Hadramaut.

Sept 23: The Red Cross opens a hospital in Aden to treat COVID-19 cases.

-A UK Defence minister admits that training of Saudi Typhoon pilots is continuing despite Riyadh using these British-made jets to conduct air strikes in Yemen.

-The UN says that critical aid had been cut at 300 health centres across Yemen owing to a lack of funding, with lifesaving food handouts also reduced.

Sept 24: The situation in Yemen is debated in the British House of Commons.

-The Yemeni Abductees’ Mothers Association says Sadiq Ahmed Yahya Al-Ghawi died after five months of torture at the hands of the Houthis.
-Sabafon, a major Yemeni mobile operator, is relocating its main offices

will be dependent on the way it explains the current complexities to its supporters and on the effectiveness of whatever new government, when and if it is formed, in providing critical services to the public. Many Southerners have become more concerned about the deteriorating economic situation, lack of electricity and clean water, and less concerned about the structure of their state.

The conflict will most likely continue until both the STC and the Yemeni state have weakened significantly to provide the coalition with an opportunity to shape the political road map of Yemen in its own political and economic terms. But not all Southerners accept the controlling hand of Saudi Arabia and the UAE and some describe the coalition’s forces as occupation forces. Other Southern leaders and movements may replace the STC as the main player in South Yemen’s political game. (See *Issue 3 of South Yemen Update for a guide to the South’s political parties and groups*). Some Southern politicians hostile to the STC are making alliances with Turkey and Qatar which could lead to the creation of a new coalition. *The Arab Weekly* reported that Turkish intelligence activities, under the umbrella of humanitarian work, have increased, possibly preparing the ground for Turkish intervention in the southern provinces.



President Al-Zubaidi chairs a meeting of the STC Council by video link from Riyadh

Riyadh knows that there is no military solution to the war in Yemen. At one point it was spending \$5 billion a month supporting Hadi’s government. Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman ignored Yemen’s history of frustrating invaders. He thought it would be short and sharp. Five years on, it has proved to be anything but. Now, with the possibility of a Biden victory in the U.S., which could spell the end of Washington’s support, there is more impetus to find some kind of resolution that will allow the Saudis to secure their border and minimize Iran’s support for the Houthis.

It is time for the STC to stop selling, bargaining, compromising and trading with Southern statehood. It has to ensure the South emerges from this brouhaha with a sovereign state. It has lost three major battles but the war can still be won. Every great crisis presents a great opportunity.

STC leader calls to secede from the North

On October 7th, the head of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), President Aidaroos Qassen Al-Zubaidi called for the secession of southern Yemen from the north claiming it was the only solution to the country’s unrest.

Speaking during a meeting with the Russian Ambassador to Yemen, Vladimir Dedushkin, in the Saudi capital Riyadh, where he resides, Al-Zubaidi said: “The people of the south have a live and present issue, for which no temporary or transient solutions can be found.”

“There is no solution to that conflict, except by returning to its roots and causes, represented by responding to the demands and aspirations of the people of the south, to restore their state and identity.”

For the past months, Al-Zubaidi has been residing in Riyadh which is sponsoring the Riyadh Agreement between and the Yemeni government. Abu Dhabi has been supporting the STC’s efforts to secede from Yemen, bypassing UN resolutions and the international community’s consensus which calls for the preservation of Yemen’s security, safety and unity.

When the STC was set up in 2016 its aim was to establish an independent sovereign Southern state with Aden as its capital. Al-Zubaidi promised Southerners that he would continue the struggle by all means, politically and militarily, to accomplish this goal. “I will not let you down or let our martyrs down,” he said. *Middle East Monitor*.



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Please support FOSY’s petition to British MPs

Yemen is disintegrating; help save the south by supporting an independent Southern state.

Visit: www.friendsofsouthyemen.org/fosy-petition/

Yemen debated in British House of Commons

MPs AWARE OF CONTINUING CRISIS – NO SOLUTIONS PROPOSED

Yemen has become the victim of the most lethal and complex cocktail: an extended and apparently insoluble civil war with international ramifications; various other man-made disasters; numerous natural disasters and potentially catastrophic environmental ones; an economic meltdown; and now, on top of it all, a deadly pandemic that Yemen was least prepared and equipped to deal with.

That was the conclusion of British MPs who took part in a debate on the situation in Yemen in the House of Commons at the end of September.



Tim Loughton, MP

Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con) the Chair of the All Parliamentary Group on Yemen summarized the country's problems in his opening remarks. Out of a population of some 30 million, 24 million people rely wholly or partly on aid and desperately need protection now. The International Committee of the Red Cross projects that the most likely scenario is that COVID-19 could infect nearly 16 million people and kill more than 42,000, making the fatality rate in Yemen one of the highest in the world. Forty-two air strikes in July alone particularly impacted and killed civilians with drones dropping grenades on civilian targets. Since 2015, air raids have hit water and health facilities more than 200 times. The water shortage has brought big challenges for food supply, as farmers cannot irrigate their crops, and more than 90% of Yemen's food is now imported.

Added to that, the Red Sea faces a potential environmental catastrophe from the FSO *Safer*, a 45-year-old oil tanker loaded with more than 1 million barrels of crude oil, anchored 60 km off the rebel-held port of Hodeidah and left to decay for the last five years, with no agreement over access for engineers. There is the added challenge of getting aid in through blockaded ports under fire or via the main airport, which has now closed again, as well as the everyday problems of corruption and bureaucracy on all sides using access to aid as a military weapon. The Houthis tried to impose a tax on aid supplies coming in. NGO buildings have been looted and aid workers arrested. The aid itself is now seriously in question. So far this year, only 37% of the requested funding in the humanitarian response plan has been met, as some of the most generous donors previously—including the US, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait—have reduced or withdrawn their funding at the worst possible time.

South Yemen Update highlights some of the issues raised during the debate:

John Howell (Henley) (Con) There have been many letters originating with Oxfam, which puts the blame almost entirely on Saudi Arabia. I say that this is one-sided because the Houthi rebels are being funded by Iran. Unless we can stop the Iranian funding of the Houthis it is useless to put all the blame, and an arms embargo, on Saudi Arabia.



Sam Tarry, MP

Sam Tarry (Ilford South) (Lab) It is the view of many constituents in Ilford South that this Government should hang their head in shame at their central role in helping to create the world's worst humanitarian crisis by training, equipping and enabling the Saudi regime to bomb innocent Yemeni civilians. In the past five years alone, Britain has licensed more than £5 billion-worth of arms—mainly in the form of bombs and planes—to Saudi Arabia. In that same period, 60% of all civilian deaths in Yemen have been caused by the Saudi-led coalition's bombing. Saudi Arabia is estimated to have spent about £55 billion every year on this failing war: that is almost four times the current GDP of Yemen and enough money to have secured the livelihoods of generations of Yemenis.

Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central) (SNP) There should be a place of safety in this country for Yemenis who reach these shores but that has not been the case. In mid May the Home Office tried to put Yemenis on a removal flight. A Yemeni constituent the Home Office tried to remove, not long after I was first elected in 2015, eventually got sanctuary in Glasgow, but I wish that many more Yemenis who reach these shores were able to get that peace of mind and safety.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) The right to freedom of religion and belief has been widely denied in Yemen. There is no room for any open church activities or private worship, and those who wish to convert from Islam can face the death penalty. The Baha'i community, about 2,000 of whom are in Yemen, are facing severe persecution in territories under the de facto governance of the Houthi movement.

and operations from Houthi-held Sanaa to Aden, citing harassment and blackmail by the Houthis.

Sept 25: The road linking Taiz to the outside world is on the brink of collapse owing to heavy rains and neglect.

Sept 26: The coalition destroys a Houthi defence system in Sanaa. -The Houthis fire missiles at a military parade held by the internationally recognized government killing scores of soldiers.

Sept 27: Delegates from the Yemen Government and the Houthis agree to release 1,081 conflict-related individuals, in accordance with the lists of agreed-upon names.

-A coalition of humanitarian groups calls on the Trump administration to rescind a months-long suspension of aid to northern areas of Yemen, warning that unless it is done immediately it will cause further suffering and claim innocent lives.

Sept 28: The UAE reportedly transfers 100 STC fighters from Aden to Socatra.

-The Slough based New Focus Youth Group raises £485 for Yemen through a football tournament.

Sept 30: Hundreds of retired military personnel in Aden block the roads leading to the oil company and oil ports demanding that payments of their pensions be expedited after they stopped in January.

-An Iranian delegation consisting of parliament members plan to escort ships carrying humanitarian aid to Yemen

Oct 1: Yemen's internationally recognized government and the STC agree on a prisoner swap of 200 detainees.

-110 doctors working at the Ibn Sina General Hospital in Mukalla resign after payment of their salaries is repeatedly delayed.

Oct 2: The SFO *Safer*, the rusting oil-storage vessel moored off Yemen's Red Sea coast, could rupture or explode, Western officials say, warning of an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe if it breaks apart.

-*Middle East Eye* reports hundreds of Sudanese soldiers entered Saudi Arabia en route to Yemen, suggesting Khartoum is increasing its involvement in the Yemeni conflict.

Oct 3: The Yemeni government condemns the Houthis' recent targeting of banks and money transfer shops in areas falling under their control, describing the Houthis as a "criminal gang".

-Yemeni officials and tribal leaders report that fighting between government forces and the Houthis has killed at least two dozen people in the past three days in Marib province and the key port city of Hodeidah.

Oct 4: The Yemeni Physicians and Pharmacists Syndicate announces that 63 doctors have died of COVID-19.

-A missile launched by the Houthis lands in Jazan, southwestern Saudi Arabia. There were no casualties.

Oct 5: The US Democratic presidential candidate, Joe Biden, pledges to end America's support to the Arab Coalition

if he becomes president.

-The closure of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) critical vaccination programme for livestock puts hundreds of thousands of destitute Yemeni farming families at risk.

Oct 6: The UN calls for an immediate end to clashes near Yemen's main port of Hodeidah after a surge in fighting.

-ABNA News Agency reports that coalition forces sustained heavy losses in lives and equipment in battles that on the southwestern fronts in Marib province.

Oct 7: The head of the STC calls for the secession of southern Yemen from the North, claiming it is the only solution to the country's unrest.

-The UN reports more than 90,000 people have been displaced in Yemen's flashpoint Marib province since January owing to intense fighting between the government and the Houthis.

-The Yemeni Teachers Syndicate says the Houthis have killed at least 1,579 educators, and wounded 2,642 more, since taking over the capital and other major cities in 2014.

Oct 8: Yemen's Houthi movement says Twitter has suspended accounts linked to the group's Al Masirah news channel.

Oct 9: Fuel prices triple in Yemeni areas held by the Houthis after they order the shutdown of official gas stations.

Oct 10: King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center distributes food baskets to most needy families, benefiting 14,940 people.

Oct 11: Fighting between the Yemeni government forces and the Houthis rages in the northern province of al-Jawf.

Oct 12: The Arab coalition intercepts and destroys an explosive-laden drone launched by the Houthis towards Saudi Arabia's Najran city.

- The Saudi Project for Landmine Clearance (Masam) in Yemen dismantles 1 antipersonnel mine, 417 anti-tank mines, and 1,439 unexploded ordnance — totalling 1,857 mines — during the first week of October.

- Reports from maritime security consultants say a tanker loading crude oil from a Yemeni port has been hit by a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) sea mine.

Oct 13: The World Health Organization (WHO) announces that about 200,000 suspected cases of cholera have been recorded in Yemen during the first nine months of 2020.

-In a meeting with the UN's Special Envoy to Yemen, the Yemeni president pledges his "permanent support" for the UN's efforts to establish peace in his war-torn country.

- The Houthis kill two civilians and injure several in another attack on healthcare centres in Hodeidah.

Oct 14: Yemeni President Hadi rejects a peace proposal presented by UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths.

Wayne David (Caerphilly) (Lab) There are recent reports that the Houthis may be close to seizing Ma'rib, a city of some strategic importance that contains many displaced persons, and there is real concern about their safety. The city could well see a whole range of human rights abuses if the situation is not rectified. What diplomatic efforts are the Government making to protect civilians in that city?



Flick Drummond, MP

Mrs Flick Drummond (Meon Valley) (Con) I welcome rumours that the Saudis may be holding talks with the Houthis. There are many sides in this war and only by engaging with all of them can we bring about a lasting peace. I am glad that UN special envoy Martin Griffiths recently held talks with Iranian diplomats in Geneva.

Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) (SNP) As well as pressing for a ceasefire, the UK Government need to explain why they are not following the examples of Canada, Germany, Denmark, the UN, the US Congress and the European Parliament, among others, in calling for an embargo on arms sales to Saudi Arabia, in line with international guidelines on not selling arms to those involved in conflicts that target civilians.

Alexander Stratford (Rother Valley) (Con) We should not talk about Yemen without mentioning its influential place in history. It was the mighty Ma'rib dam built in the 8th century BC that collapsed, causing a migration of 50,000 people into the Arab peninsula, which affected and influenced so much of the world's great events. There are the great UNESCO sites, such as Shibam, which is known as the skyscraper city. Its 500 mud brick buildings over 98ft high are at risk from the civil war, so we must think about the cultural as well as the humanitarian losses.

Fleur Anderson (Putney) (Lab) The Government claim to be one of the largest humanitarian donors to the crisis in Yemen so why did the UK cut its contribution to the Yemen pledging conference by £40 million this year? Overall, international funding at the pledging conference fell £1 billion short of the UN's target. As a result of these funding shortages, 12 out of 40 major programmes in Yemen have been cut or reduced.



James Cleverly, MP

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly) The UN projects that, by the end of 2020, 1.2 million more people in the south of Yemen alone will be classified as severely food-insecure. The Government recognise that, which is why we have appointed senior official Nick Dyer to be our envoy for famine relief. I raised this issue when I met David Beasley of the World Food Programme earlier this month. The primary cause of this issue is the conflict and the additional pressure imposed by COVID-19.

Please consider the imminent offensive by the Houthis towards Ma'rib. If the coalition were to disengage from this conflict, who would stop that? Who would protect the people of Ma'rib? That is why we work closely with Saudi Arabia.

We recognise the concerns about our arms sales policy. We have reviewed it in the light of the Court of Appeal decision, and all sales are measured against the revised set of criteria [**Official Report, 28 September 2020, Vol. 681, c. 1MC**]. We are working to support Martin Griffiths in pursuing a nationwide ceasefire, and we welcomed Saudi Arabia's unilateral ceasefire earlier this summer. What did we see in return for its ceasefire? We saw attacks by the Houthis, backed by Iran, into Saudi Arabia and within Yemen. Oh that it were so simple that we could just disengage from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the conflict in Yemen would cease. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. I am the Minister responsible for the women, peace and security agenda in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and we seek to make sure that all voices, particularly the voices of those who are most directly impacted by conflict —unfortunately, the simple truth is that that is women—play an increasing and important role.

This situation, unfortunately, is going to remain one of the most difficult on the agenda of the FCO. We will not sit back and allow the people of Yemen to suffer without our doing everything we are able to do to help them. That is why we are seeking to get a ceasefire and supporting Martin Griffiths and the United Nations in their efforts to secure that ceasefire, and that is why we are maintaining our expenditure in aid and lobbying other countries to do so.

The following MPs also spoke during the debate:

Layla Moran, Oxford West & Abingdon (LD), Jerome Mayhew, Broadland (Con), Claudia Webbe, Leicester East (Ind), Kim Johnson, Liverpool Riverside (Lab), Patricia Gibson, North Ayrshire and Arran (SNP), Rachel Hopkins, Luton South (Lab), Zarah Sultana, Coventry South (Lab), Jim Shannon, Strangford (DUP), Alyn Smith, Stirling (SNP).

UN Oral Intervention: Failures in humanitarian aid to Yemen

The Next Century Foundation made the following oral statement to the 45th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

The Next Century Foundation voices serious concern about the efficacy of efforts to provide Yemen's people with humanitarian aid, especially with regard to:

1. Delays in the delivery of aid, caused by unnecessary restrictions in the process, especially during unloading and distribution of cargo;
2. The use of humanitarian aid for political ends or for profit, by factions which seize control of the aid, and either monetize it or condition its distribution politically;
3. Regional disparity of distribution of the humanitarian aid, made evident by the lack of provision of effectively any aid to North Yemen, and the insufficient supply of aid to large parts of South Yemen.

With regard to the above, the Next Century Foundation urges warring factions to respect international humanitarian law, and ensure that the following conditions are met:

- i. Humanitarian aid must, without delay, be made available to the people of Yemen. To this end, the naval blockade of Yemen by the coalition led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and supported by the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, must be lifted.
- ii. The Houthi allied warring factions must provide effective guarantees that aid, if provided, does not again become unevenly distributed.
- iii. Humanitarian aid should be provided to North Yemen, and reach the interior of the Southern territories of the country.

The Next Century Foundation appeals to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and The Houthi movement (Ansar Allah) that they both cooperate with the United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen in an effort to enact these (or similar) conditions.

The Next Century Foundation believes that meeting on a non-political level can lubricate the wheels of diplomacy. All who participate are determined to act through an unofficial network creating forums for people of opposing sides. The sole aim of the Foundation is to apply a solvent for the fear, insecurity and lack of trust that have so often bedevilled more public exchanges. The NCF works primarily but not exclusively to support and host peace initiatives concerning the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. It does occasionally work in other arenas as need arises, e.g., former Yugoslavia. The NCF is independent. Funders may determine projects but do not determine policy.

Next Century Foundation's website: <https://nextcenturyfoundation.org/>

NEWS IN BRIEF

Yemeni cultural minister calls for protection of ancient archaeological sites

Yemen's Minister of Culture, Marwan Dammaj, stressed the importance of taking necessary measures to prevent attacks on ancient archaeological sites in the war-torn country.

Dammaj comments came after inspecting a number of historical sites in the Al-Wadi and Al-Jouba districts of Marib province along with the Director of Culture and Tourism. The minister discussed the effects of the war on these sites that are considered national treasures, including the looting and smuggling of artefacts. Dammaj said the ministry was working on establishing a cultural center that included equipping a museum that would ensure the protection and preservation of artefacts.

Arab News

Yemen: YJS reports 22 press freedom violations in 3 months

The Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate (YJS) has detailed 22 violations of press freedom in the country between July and September 2020, ranging from arrests and threats to assaults and banned coverage. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) joins its affiliate in warning warring parties against intolerable attacks against the press. In its latest report on press freedom violations in Yemen, YJS points again at Yemen's internationally recognized government of President Hadi and the Houthis who lead the de facto government in Sana as those mainly responsible for the attacks against media workers. The government committed nearly half of all registered violations while the Houthi group is currently holding 16 journalists who were kidnapped, many of whom had been held for more than five years, according to the YJS. Nabil Hasan al-Quaety was killed in Aden in June. He was a supporter of an independent southern state and his killing was condemned by the STC.

Houthis Commit Series of Violations against Education Sector

The Houthis in Yemen are pressing on with their project to transform the war-torn country's education institutions into centers that aid with the indoctrination of generations into Iran-inspired ideology. Schools are being exploited to recruit young children, teachers, and academics and deploy them to battlefronts. The group introduced arbitrary amendments to curricula that glorify Houthi ideals. More so, a campaign of Houthi-staged arrests and kidnappings targeted students and teachers. The Yemeni Teachers Syndicate says the Houthis have killed at least 1,579 educators, and wounded 2,642 more, since taking over the capital and other major cities in 2014.

Sharq Awsat

UNFPA: 20 percent of Yemenis suffer from mental health disorders

Twenty per cent of people in Yemen suffer from mental health disorders, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Yemen said in a statement issued on World Mental Health Day. The fund said the figures are based on a study conducted by the Family Counselling and Development Foundation in 2017, noting that the number is likely to have increased due to the coronavirus pandemic and nearly six years of war in the country. The statement added that the proportion of psychiatrists per population is insufficient, while some of the few existing mental health services have closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It called for "greater investment" in mental health this year since it is "most timely and opportune for Yemen as humanitarian actors tackle the reduction of funding and challenges imposed by COVID-19 that are hampering the scaling up of quality and specialized services for mental health."

Positive response to FOSY's petition on change.org

FOSY's petition on change.org: *Yemen is disintegrating; help save the south by supporting an independent Southern state* has received a very positive response. The text of the petition states:

The United Nations has characterized the current situation in Yemen as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. After five years of systematic bombardment and military conflict on many fronts hundreds of thousands have been killed, 80 per cent of the population is dependent on emergency food and medical aid, two million people are displaced and homeless and millions are at risk of famine and disease.

Every ten minutes a Yemeni child is killed by indiscriminate bombing. The UN estimates that if fighting lasts until 2022, the conflict will have caused the death of 500,000 people. So far it has claimed over 100,000 lives.



The Houthis, followers of the Zaidi sect of Islam, overthrew the internationally recognized government in 2014 and imposed an autocratic extremist Islamic regime in more than 70 per cent of the north of the country. The oil-rich Marib Province is on the verge of falling to the extremists. The UN has through its envoys recognized the Houthis as a serious partner in the negotiations. The UN also recognizes there is no military solution to this conflict.

Yemen as a state has ceased to exist. The internationally recognized government is in exile in Saudi Arabia and has limited power on the ground. The Southerners will never agree to be in the same state as the Houthis who are inducing famine as a weapon of war and preventing essential supplies of food, medicine and fuel from reaching the people. Human rights organizations have accused the extremists of assassinations, arbitrary detention, kidnapping, sniper attacks even on young children, torture in secret prisons and imposing a discriminatory religious tax.

Friends of South Yemen (FOSY) is calling on the UK and European governments to save the South of the country by calling for the immediate cessation of armed conflict and all hostilities and engage all parties to negotiate a political resolution to the conflict. FOSY believes that in the current circumstances a fundamental solution is to formally recognize a South Yemeni state, with Aden as its capital, based on the borders of the state which existed before the union with the north in 1990. It is clearly accepted that this union has failed to materialize and that unity with the Houthis is not an option.

To enable this, the UK government should act robustly to understand that the Houthi occupation of the North of

Yemen is a political and military reality which makes the unification, which the UN and the internationally community has been fruitlessly pursuing, impossible. Two states living side by side is the only viable solution to destructive wars and political instability. Considering the UK's historical role in the situation in Yemen through its colonial occupation of the South for over a century it needs to play an active role in restoring peace to the region for the benefit of all Yemenis. Dialogue between the different parties should be rooted in the recognition of the rights of Southerners to determine their future.

Sign the petition for Southern statehood. Without a political solution to the Yemeni crisis the civil war will continue, the humanitarian crisis will escalate and a child will continue to die every ten minutes.

Some of the signatories gave their reasons for signing:

Ione Edwards: Because injustice somewhere is injustice everywhere. As a world citizen I have a responsibility to stand for the rights of others.

Omer Abdul Qader: South Yemen must be recognised.

Muna Taher: Because Yemeni lives matter. What is happening is inhumane and must cease. As a result of the coalition war, dire poverty, immense hunger and economic collapse have resulted. Our people need to breathe and enjoy a prosperous life in a country that offers them this.

Faraz Choudhry: I have signed very cautiously because although this can be towards stopping the destruction, bloodshed and oppression of South Yemen it worries me how this will play out in the wider geopolitical context and what advantage the UK will gain if they were to act to support South Yemen. The Houthis are backed by Iran but the exiled national government are backed and supplied by the Saudis who themselves are in the pockets of whom?

Abdul Khayum: The people of Yemen have suffered unspeakable atrocities. We all must do everything possible to bring an end to this conflict and bring peace and stability to Yemen.

Christine Paterson: I feel that we cannot allow this situation to continue. Each child is precious and deserves to have hope. There should be the freedom to choose the government through democratic means.

Kaltun Elmi: I am standing for our children, elders, brothers and sisters in Yemen who deserve peace and rights. Stop the war now!

Julie Pearn: The UK has a historic responsibility and must play an active role towards peace and stability for the suffering population of Yemen.

Hamzah Al-Yazidi: South Yemen (South Arabia) has been under North Yemeni occupation since 1994. Everything related to the civilization and culture in South Yemen has been systematically destroyed by North Yemen. It is time to liberate the south.

Mark Numan: Because what is happening in Yemen is a crime.

Pramod Bhatnagar: South Yemen has little in common with the north both in terms of culture and resources.

Please support FOSY's petition to British MPs

Yemen is disintegrating; help save the south by supporting an independent Southern state.

Visit: www.friendsofsouthyemen.org/fosy-petition/