

South Yemen Update

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

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The Houthis and the Politics of Sabotage: Why Partnership with the Arab Coalition is Crucial for Peace

After years of devastating conflict in Yemen, the path to peace remains elusive—not because of a lack of effort by international mediators or the Yemeni people's desire for stability, but because of the calculated intransigence of the Houthi leadership. Over time, the Houthis have perfected the art of sabotaging peace negotiations by setting unrealistic preconditions, fully aware that such demands will be rejected.

This is not diplomacy; it is theatre. At every opportunity, the Houthis make demands that are deliberately provocative: full control of state institutions, exclusive rights to revenue from ports and taxes, and unilateral recognition as the sole legitimate authority. These are not starting points for compromise—they are roadblocks designed to derail progress. When their demands are inevitably declined, the Houthis revert to a familiar narrative: We tried.

This cycle allows them to justify continued conflict, mobilize support through a façade of victimhood, and entrench their control over territories already suffering from economic collapse and humanitarian crisis. Their continued attacks on international shipping—most notably the missile strike on the MV Galaxy Leader in November 2023—further damage an already fragile economy and threaten global trade routes.

Beyond Yemen's borders, the Houthis pose an escalating threat to international peace. Their repeated attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea, such as the January 2024 targeting of the Marlin Luanda oil tanker, the use of Iranian-supplied ballistic missiles, and the targeting of civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia and the UAE represent flagrant violations of international law. These actions are not isolated provocations—they form part of a broader regional destabilization strategy that endangers global maritime trade, energy security, and the broader stability of the Gulf.

In stark contrast, the Southern Transitional Council (STC) has made sustained and credible efforts toward peace. While asserting the rights and aspirations of the South, the STC has adopted a pragmatic approach to dialogue, coalition building, and governance. It has participated in UN-sponsored peace talks, cooperated with regional initiatives, and taken tangible steps to reduce tensions on the ground.

Importantly, it recognizes that peace must be built not on imposed unity, but on equitable representation.

Dr. Nasser Al-Khubaji, Chairman of the Political commission and Head of the Negotiations Affairs Unit of the Southern Transitional Council, explains, "This is a complex phase marked by ongoing security threats, economic hardship, and deliberate attempts to side-line the South from the political process... The STC refuses to accept imposed visions that do not reflect the aspirations of the southern people to restore their state and identity."



Dr. Nasser Al-Khubaji, Chairman of the Political commission and Head of the Negotiations Affairs Unit of the Southern Transitional Council

The STC's position is grounded in the lived experience of the South. Since the 1990 unification and particularly following the 1994 civil war, the South has suffered political marginalization, economic neglect, and governance structures that ignored its identity and autonomy. Today, the STC is taking meaningful steps to reform and stabilize liberated areas—rebuilding institutions, improving service delivery, and fighting for transitional justice. This effort includes strengthening the roles of local security and military institutions in close partnership with the Arab Coalition.

That partnership is strategic and essential. The coordinated efforts between the STC and the Arab Coalition have been critical in countering Houthi subversion. They have helped secure key infrastructure, combat extremist groups, and reduce instability in

liberated zones. Politically and militarily, the Arab Coalition's support has bolstered the STC's ability to serve as a credible and stabilizing actor. It also sends a powerful message: The Houthis' politics of sabotage will not triumph over unity and legitimacy.

Together, the STC and the Arab Coalition are advancing a peace framework based on justice, fairness, and inclusivity. Unlike the exclusionary tactics of the Houthis, this approach recognizes the diversity of Yemen and the historical grievances of the South. It advocates for genuine representation, not symbolic participation; for self-determination, not imposition. The STC's vision is not to dominate, but to contribute to a future where all Yemenis—north and south—can shape their own destinies through dialogue and mutual respect.

The international community must stop rewarding obstruction with deference. Instead, it must support those engaged in good-faith efforts toward peace, and apply consequences to those who repeatedly sabotage progress. This includes pressuring the Houthis to disarm, respect international law, and genuinely participate in negotiations. It also means giving diplomatic, financial, and political backing to local actors like the STC who have proven their commitment to reform and stability.

Above all, the partnership between the STC and the Arab Coalition remains one of the most vital bulwarks against chaos. It is a partnership grounded in mutual respect, shared security interests, and a vision for a just peace—not one imposed by force, but one built on dialogue, fairness, and accountability. Without it, the Houthis' strategy of coercion and sabotage could dangerously prevail. But with it, there is still a path toward a truly inclusive, sustainable peace.

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