

South Yemen Update

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



The British Parliament's motion represents a positive shift towards

A: Introduction

The value of this modest study lies in subjecting the British Parliamentary Motion No. (1933) issued on September 16, 2025, on the issue of the people of the South to study and analysis, leading to highlighting the most important meanings and implications hidden behind the textual structure of the motion, which highlights the positive shift in the British position towards the issue of the people of the South.



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1- The importance of the study:

It highlights an important political shift in the British Parliament's position towards the issue of the people of the South by highlighting how the southern issue moved from a realm of international neglect to gradual recognition.

It provides an analytical reading of the opportunities for the motion to influence the path of the political solution in Yemen and the South in particular.

- It enhances the academic understanding of international relations in local conflicts.

It embodies the success of the Southern Transitional Council in creating strong political and diplomatic relations with the British Parliament.

- It also indicates the positive role of the representative of the Southern Transitional Council in Switzerland and head of the Friends of South Yemen Organization, the economic expert Dr. Abdul Galil Shaif, in following up on the Parliament's decision to issue the motion until its issuance on September 16, 2025.

2- The objectives of the study:

- Analyzing the political content of the British Parliamentary Motion.
- Exploring the implications of Parliament's support for the right to self-determination in the south.
- Studying the potential impact of the motion on regional and international positions.
- Evaluating the opportunities to translate this position into executive policies.
- Providing recommendations to enhance the political benefit from this British move.

3- Reasons for the study:

The international community has long ignored the aspirations of the southerners for self-determination.

The growing political activity of the Southern Transitional Council in strengthening and developing its relationship with the British Parliament, leading to the success of this important motion.

- The need for a deeper understanding of the role of Western parliaments in shaping international opinion on crises.

4- The study problem:

The study problem is represented by the following central question: To what extent does Motion No. 1933 reflect a real shift in British policy towards the issue of the people of the south? What are its repercussions for the future of the right to self-determination in the south?

5- Study hypotheses:

The motion expresses a real change in the British political vision towards southern Yemen.

The British Parliament has come to view the southern issue as an independent political issue, rather than a branch of the general Yemeni conflict.

- This parliamentary recognition will gradually impose itself in the United Nations deliberations on peace in Yemen and the South in particular.

6- Study Methodology:

The study relies on the analytical descriptive approach, benefiting in an integrated manner from the spirit of all approaches, through analyzing the content of Memorandum No. 1933, comparing it with several previous contexts, and deducing the political and strategic implications arising from it, with the help of the literature of international relations and conflicts for independence.

B- Study Introduction:

The issue of the people of the South is one of the most pressing issues within the framework of the Yemeni crisis that has been protracted since the unification of Yemen in 1990, especially after the Yemeni occupation of the South in the summer of 1994.

The situation remained characterized by ongoing conflict and political stalemate, with local, regional, and international voices emerging calling for a reconsideration of the issue of self-determination for the South as part of a comprehensive and sustainable solution.

The early Motion No. 1933 issued by the British Parliament on September 16, 2025, represented a significant turning point in the position of one of the most prominent international powers towards the South, with its political signals and implications that should be studied and analyzed from an academic perspective to gauge its potential impact on the course of the issue of the people of the South.

C- Study Points

The study points are embodied in the following:

First: Recognizing the human suffering in Yemen, and the South in particular.

In this context, the motion refers to the concern of the British Parliament, stating:

"The British Parliament expresses its deep concern about the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which has caused immense suffering for millions of people."

This text, on the surface, appears to be a traditional part of the usual Western humanitarian discourse regarding Yemen, but it carries an important dimension in its timing and context. The parliament does not only speak about the crisis, but also describes it as ongoing, indicating the failure of previous policies, including those adopted by the United Nations or led by regional actors.

The reference to millions of people also demonstrates the expansion of the scope of suffering to include the south in particular, which is an implicit prelude to highlighting that central solutions are no longer effective and that there is a need to reconsider the foundations and basis of the crisis, including the southern issue. All of this will pave the way for dismantling forced political unity as one of the causes of the crisis, opening the way for holding the British government accountable for its previous positions and justifying the change in its stance.

Second: Highlighting the historical status of South Yemen.

In this context, the memorandum refers

to the aspirations of the people of the South for self-determination, stating:

"Attention is drawn to the historical status of South Yemen and the continuing aspirations of the people of the South for recognition of their right to self-determination."

This clause is one of the most important and profound points of the motion politically. Moreover, the use of the term "historical status" can only be understood by noting that the South was an independent state prior to unification in 1990, which constitutes an implicit recognition of the legitimacy of the Southern proposal rejecting the current unification.

This recognition gains additional value when issued by a legislative institution in a major power, as it creates a shift in the international narrative from an internal crisis in a country that was the product of forced unification to a conflict between two entities with separate political histories.

All of this will lead to the creation of a legal and legitimate prelude to the idea of independence based on historical foundations, contributing to the legitimacy of the demand for self-determination to restore the South's sovereign right in international forums. It also opens the way for a re-evaluation of the forced unification of Yemen, which occurred as a failed political deal rather than as an unquestionable fait accompli.

Third: Recognizing the aspirations of the South for self-determination and the restoration of the state.

In this context, the Motion indicates that sustainable peace in Yemen depends on the aspirations of the southern people, as stated in the following statement:

((It is believed that any lasting and sustainable peace in Yemen must fully take into account the aspirations of southern Yemen))

This point moves the STC from sympathy to recognition of aspirations, and this in itself is a fundamental shift. The Motion does not merely acknowledge the existence of southern demands, but rather considers that any political settlement will not be sustainable unless the aspirations of the southern people are met. This represents a qualitative development because the British Parliament is redefining the concept of peace in Yemen to include political justice for the south, not just a cessation of fighting or humanitarian solutions.

All of this will lead to a new situation that places the south before the determinants of the final solution, at the core and body of the solution, rather than on the margins. It will also redefine the demands of the south from political positions to sovereign rights that must be met. All of this will link the stability of Yemen to an effective recognition of the issue of self-determination for the south and the restoration of its state.

Fourth: Ensuring the representation of the south in the peace negotiations.

In this context, the Motion refers to ensuring southern representation in the negotiations, stating:

"and to ensure their representation at the negotiating table."

This point strikes at the heart of the failures of previous UN tracks. Previous negotiations, such as the Kuwait Consultations, the Stockholm Agreement, and the Riyadh Agreement, were largely devoid of genuine representation of the South as an independent political party, despite its dominant military, geographic, and popular presence on the ground. Therefore, the parliament here is not talking about including the South as an appendage, but rather demanding guaranteed independent representation, which means that it views the South as a sovereign party to the solution and not merely a subordinate component.

All of this will lead to direct pressure on the United Nations to change the negotiation mechanisms in preparation for the participation of the Southern Transitional Council, headed by Brother President and Leader Aidarous Qassem Al-Zubaidi, President of the Transitional Council, Supreme Commander of the Southern Armed Forces, and Vice President of the Presidential Leadership Council, as a representative of the overwhelming majority in the South to participate independently in the solution, not subordinate to anyone. This means that any solution imposed without genuine southern representation will be incomplete and internationally illegitimate.

Fifth: Calling on the British government to exert strong pressure in the Security Council.

In this context, the Motion refers to Parliament's call on the British government to exert pressure in the Security Council to impose the aspirations of the southern people in the peace process, stating:

"It calls on the government of the United Kingdom, as a permanent member of the Security Council, to exert pressure on the United Nations to ensure that the peace process in Yemen is swift and comprehensive of the political aspirations of southern Yemen."

This call goes beyond Parliament's role as a supervisory body to hold the British government directly diplomatically responsible for the southern issue. The Motion leverages Britain's permanent membership in the Security Council to push for amending the paths of the UN solution. This is an indication that the issue of the southern people will become an actual item on the UN agenda if this type of political pressure from within the major powers continues.

This will open the door to greater internationalization of the southern people's cause, which will represent a breakthrough in the international community's traditionally reserved position on the issue of independence and push for the appointment of special international representatives for the southern issue within UN missions.

Sixth: Encouraging dialogue between Yemeni, southern, regional, and international parties.

In this context, the Motion refers to the British government's call to encourage dialogue between all parties and actors, such as the Arab coalition countries led by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the sisterly United Arab Emirates, and other regional and international actors, to achieve a just and peaceful future based on self-determination, stating:

"It also calls on the government to encourage dialogue between all Yemeni parties, regional actors, and international partners, with the aim of achieving a just and peaceful future based on self-determination."

This formulation establishes a new approach to understanding the Yemeni crisis, considering it a multi-level crisis: internal, regional, and international, and one that can only be resolved through the integration of roles by introducing the principle of self-determination for the South as a pillar of peace.

This is an unusual expression in Western discourse regarding Yemen, and it may have legal repercussions in the medium term, especially if it is activated in subsequent UN resolutions. All of this will enable the Southerners to open up to broader international dialogues, allowing the Transitional Council to possess new tools of pressure through international diplomacy and legitimizing the demands of the South within the concepts of justice and global peace.

D- Study Results

The most prominent results of the study are embodied in the following:

1- A qualitative shift in the British position towards the issue of the people of the South.

The Motion demonstrates a qualitative shift in British political discourse towards southern Yemen, for the first time, when the parliament of a major power recognizes the aspirations of the southerners for self-determination and the restoration of their sovereign right. This reclassifies the issue of the people of the South from an internal demand to

an independent political and sovereign issue deserving of international treatment.

2- Re-describing the Yemeni crisis as a complex, multi-issue crisis.

The Motion implicitly assumes that the Yemeni crisis is not merely a conflict between the legitimate government and the Houthis, but rather a complex crisis that includes within it the issue of the people of the South as an independent and sovereign issue in its own right.

This will facilitate reshaping the international community's understanding of the essence of the Yemeni crisis.

3- By integrating the South into the equation of the international solution by calling on the British Parliament to ensure representation of the South at the negotiating table, the southern issue moves to the stage of international recognition of the necessity of its representation in the political decision-making process, which will strengthen the position of the Southern Transitional Council as the legitimate representative of the overwhelming majority of southerners.

4- The Motion opened the door wide towards a greater, real internationalization of the issue of the people of the South, and may lead to the right of self-determination to restore the southern state becoming part of the international discussion on the future of Yemen, and the South in particular. This internationalization poses both a challenge and an opportunity, as it enhances legitimacy but obliges the southerners to work within strict international legal and diplomatic frameworks.

5- Direct parliamentary pressure on the British government to take international action. The Motion does not limit itself to recommendations, but rather holds the UK government responsible for exerting pressure on the United Nations. This means that Parliament seeks to expand Britain's influence in the Yemeni file and the South in particular, rather than merely record a humanitarian or moral position.

6- Strengthening the legitimacy of the Transitional Council and organizations supporting the cause of the people of the South.

This is achieved through the British position, which constitutes its indirect political support for the Southern Transitional Council, as an implicit recognition of the Transitional Council's success in presenting the cause of the people of the South through convincing and internationally acceptable diplomatic means.

7- Legally grounding the right of self-determination for the South within the international framework through the use of expressions such as the right to self-determination and the historical status of the South, which gave the Motion the opportunity to contribute to reintroducing the concept of self-determination into the international debate on Yemen and the South in particular, based on the principles of international law and United Nations charters.

E- Study Recommendations

The most prominent recommendations of the study are the following:

- 1- The necessity of rapid diplomatic action by the Southern Transitional Council to benefit from the British parliamentary momentum and expand the circle of recognition through other European parliaments (French, German, and the European Union).
- 2- Emphasizing the objectivity and flexibility of the Southern Transitional Council's political discourse to be an institutional, coherent discourse based on a legal and human rights discourse that is convincing to the international community.
3. The STC should prepare comprehensive legal files on the historical status of the South and its right to self-determination to restore its state in accordance with international law, and submit them to international bodies.
4. The STC should support southern organizations abroad, especially research centers and civil society organizations, to act as soft power lobbying tools within Western public opinion.
5. The British government should follow up on translating the parliamentary Motion into executive policy, by adopting it within the British Foreign Office and the UK's positions in the Security Council.
6. Convincing the British government to appoint a British special envoy for South Yemen, or lobbying within the Security Council to include the South as a major independent file in the work of the UN envoy to Yemen.
7. Emphasizing the need for the British government to exert pressure on the United Nations to reshape the negotiating structure to include the South as a major independent party.
8. The Security Council should adopt the inclusion of the right to self-determination to restore the state of the South within the agenda of any future peace initiative in Yemen and the South, based on international conventions.
9. Pressuring the international community to recognize the issue of the people of the South as an issue with political, sovereign, and historical dimensions, independent of the conflict between the government and the Houthis.
10. Pressuring the United Nations to restructure the political solution map in Yemen so that the South has an independent negotiating track within the three tracks (political, security, and humanitarian).
11. Convincing the United Nations to maintain effective neutrality towards the Yemeni parties and avoid imposing forced unity that contradicts the aspirations of the local people.
12. Pressuring the international community, the United Nations, and the Security Council to support the paths of self-determination for the South to restore its independent state in accordance with international law, as this serves the common interests of the region and the world.
13. Intensifying comparative studies to benefit from some similarities between successful cases of self-determination

(such as South Sudan and East Timor) and the situation in South Yemen, which differs from them in that it was a state and not part of a state.

14. Producing policy papers directed at the international community explaining the risks of the continued marginalization of the South in any future peace process.

15- Stimulating the production of master's and doctoral theses on international law and self-determination to restore the southern state.

16- Documenting the historical and political narrative of the south by strengthening its sources with Western sources and in an international language, to ensure its presence in any international discussion.

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“Without recognition of past injustices, there can be no path to justice.”

At a high-level roundtable hosted by Independent Diplomat (ID) in Geneva, Southern Transitional Council (STC) representative Abdul Galil Shaif delivered a strong message: transitional justice in Yemen must confront the deep-rooted legacy of the 1994 war and the exclusion of southern voices. “The South has lived through war, dispossession, and marginalization. Ignoring this history risks repeating it,” Abdul Galil stated.

Held in the margins of the UN Human Rights Council, the event brought together diplomats, civil society, and experts to examine Yemen's transitional justice process. It was attended by Deputy Minister Dr. Mohammed Sarea Ali Ba Sarda and his team, representing the Ministry of Legal Affairs and Human Rights — a clear signal of growing national interest in advancing the conversation.

Panelists emphasized the urgent need to expand transitional justice beyond narrow legal frameworks and recent violations. Sahar Ammar (SwissPeace) highlighted the political manipulation of transitional justice processes since 2011, while Liza al-Hassani addressed the systemic exclusion and violence faced by women in Yemen. Abdul Galil Shaif insisted that existing mechanisms — such as the National Commission of Inquiry — have had a limited framework to address the South's political and economic grievances and warned that any future process must acknowledge the legitimacy of southern claims to self-determination.

The event established the STC as central actors in the Geneva-based transitional justice discourse and opened space for follow-up expert-level engagement to ensure southern experiences, socio-economic rights, and competing narratives are not sidelined in future peace processes.



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