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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Riyadh Agreement the only game in town**

The Riyadh Agreement, signed a year ago on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, has been honoured more in the breach than in observance. But, according to the Chairman of Friends of South Yemen (FOSY) Abdul Galil Shaif Kasim it is 'the only game in town' to bring the civil war to an end and solve Yemen's intractable problems.

The agreement was designed to defuse hostilities between the Internationally Recognized Government (IRG) led by Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Southern Transitional Council (STC) in southern provinces under the STC's control and refocus efforts on fighting the Houthis and reviving state institutions.

The deal calls for both sides to pull their forces out of Aden and Abyan and redeploy them to reinforce fighting the Houthis. It also calls for the formation of a government of political competence seating no more than 24 ministers whose members are appointed by the President in consultation with the Prime Minister and the political components, provided that the ministerial portfolios shall be equal between the southern and northern provinces, within thirty days of the signing of the agreement.

Despite naming a new governor and security chief for Aden, the formation of a new government has been slow due to disagreements about the distribution of ministries. The IRG and the STC blame the General People's Congress and the Islah party for the delay. They are unhappy with their portfolio of ministries and have refused to name their ministers.

Commenting on the continued delays in implementing the agreement Kasim said: "I must emphasize that despite the imperfections of the Riyadh agreement, a regional facilitated process is for now the only game in town to bring the warring factions in the liberated area in Yemen, particularly the South, together to forge an inclusive political solution. Failing to achieve this means the other alternative, an intensification of the war on many fronts that potentially benefits the Houthis and the state of Iran. In my opinion the International Community should unite and exert pressure on these factions to begin implementation and support the regional efforts. This process has taken too long and further delay will damage the credibility of the agreement and greater distrust between these parties. Public confidence in those negotiating the agreement's implementations is dwindling and some see the delay as an opportunity for corrupt politicians to prolong military conflict for their own personal benefits."

Speaking on the anniversary of the signing of the agreement Hadi said: "Implementing the Riyadh Agreement is the key to overthrowing the Houthis, foiling Iran's designs in Yemen, and building an efficient federal system in the country."

The commander of the Arab coalition forces in the central province of Marib, Maj. Gen. Yusef Al-Shahrani, pledged continued military support to Yemeni army forces and allied tribesmen battling against the Iran-backed Houthis.

