



مركز دراسات النزاع والعمل الإنساني  
Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies



Arab Center Washington DC  
المركز العربي واشنطن دي سي

# The Conflict in Yemen: Current Situation and Future Prospects

14 - 15 February, 2022

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# The Conflict in Yemen: Current Situation and Future Prospects

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# Timetable

## Day 1: Monday, 14 February 2022

OPENING SESSION	
16:00 – 16:10 (Doha) 13:00 – 13:10 (GMT) 8:00 – 8:10 (EST)	<p><b>Welcoming Remarks</b></p> <p><b>Sultan Barakat</b>, Director, Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies <b>Rafat Al-Akhali</b>, Co-founder, DeepRoot Consulting <b>Khalil E. Jahshan</b>, Executive Director, Arab Center Washington DC</p>
16:10 – 16:20 (Doha) 13:10 – 13:20 (GMT) 8:10 – 8:20 (EST)	<p><b>Keynote Remarks</b></p> <p><b>H.E. Timothy A. Lenderking</b>, US Special Envoy for Yemen, US Department of State</p> <hr/> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Sultan Barakat, Director, Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies</p>
16:20 – 16:35 (Doha) 13:20 – 13:35 (GMT) 8:20 – 8:35 (EST)	<p><b>Opening Remarks</b></p> <p><b>Yemeni Government Perspective</b></p> <p><b>Mohammad Al-Amrani</b>, Director, Technical Office for Consultations, and Member of Yemeni Government Negotiating Team</p> <hr/> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Sultan Barakat, Director, Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies</p>
16:35 – 16:50 (Doha) 13:35 – 13:50 (GMT) 8:35 – 8:50 (EST)	<p><b>Q&amp;A Session</b></p>
10 Minutes Break	

PANEL 1 - Mapping the Conflict: Causes, Actors, and Dynamics	
17:00 – 18:00 (Doha) 14:00 – 15:00 (GMT) 9:00 – 10:00 (EST)	<p><b>Peter Salisbury:</b> “Conflict Trendiness and Future Trajectories”</p> <p><b>Maysaa Shuja Al-Deen:</b> “The Dilemma of Federalism in Yemen”</p> <p><b>Andrea Carboni:</b> “Taming the Snakes: Cohesion, Fragmentation, and Violence in Wartime Yemen”</p> <p><b>Ibrahim Jalal:</b> “The NDC’s Institutional Design and Implications on Representation, Negotiations and Outcomes”</p> <hr/> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mona Hedaya, Research Fellow, Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies</p>
18:00 – 18:20 (Doha) 15:00 – 15:20 (GMT) 10:00 – 10:20 (EST)	<p><b>Q&amp;A Session</b></p>
<b>10 Minutes Break</b>	

PANEL 2 - Evolving Gulf Interventions and Policies Toward the Conflict in Yemen	
18:30 – 19:30 (Doha) 15:30 – 16:30 (GMT) 10:30 – 11:30 (EST)	<p><b>Nadwa Al-Dawsari: “Houthi-Iran Relations and the Consequences of the Evolution of the Houthi Movement”</b></p> <p><b>Kristian Coates Ulrichsen: “Evolving Saudi and Emirati Policies Toward Yemen in 2022”</b></p> <p><b>Dania Thafer: “How Saudi-Iranian Talks Could Affect the Yemen War”</b></p> <p><b>Majed Al-Ansari: “Gulf Mediations in Yemen: Prospects and Limits for a Peace Process”</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Moderator: Rafat Al-Akhali, Co-founder, DeepRoot Consulting</b></p>
19:30 – 19:50 (Doha) 16:30 – 13:50 (GMT) 11:30 – 11:50 (EST)	<p><b>Q&amp;A Session</b></p>
19:50 – 20:00 (Doha) 16:50 – 17:00 (GMT) 11:50 – 12:00 (EST)	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p>



## Day 2: Tuesday, 15 February 2022

Time	OPENING SESSION
16:00 – 16:20 (Doha) 13:00 – 13:20 (GMT) 8:00 – 8:20 (EST)	<p><b>Keynote Remarks</b></p> <p><b>H.E. Hans Grundberg</b>, UN Special Envoy for Yemen</p> <hr/> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Khalil E. Jahshan, Executive Director, Arab Center Washington DC</p>
16:20 – 16:35 (Doha) 13:20 – 13:35 (GMT) 8:20 – 8:35 (EST)	<p><b>Opening Remarks</b></p> <p><b>The AnsarAllah Perspective</b></p> <p><b>Abdul Malik Al-Ejri</b>, Member of the Political Bureau for Ansar Allah</p> <hr/> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Khalil Jahshan, Executive Director, Arab Center Washington DC</p>
16:35 – 16:50 (Doha) 13:35 – 13:50 (GMT) 8:35 – 8:50 (EST)	<p><b>Q&amp;A Session</b></p>
<b>10 Minutes Break</b>	

PANEL 3 - Reactivating the Peace Process: Lessons Learned and Pathways Forward	
17:00 – 18:00 (Doha) 14:00 – 15:00 (GMT) 9:00 – 10:00 (EST)	<p><b>Asmahan Alalas:</b> “Yemen’s Path to Peace: Between the Consequences of War and Future Challenges”</p> <p><b>Ahmed Alshami:</b> “Saudi-Yemeni Relations: Nature, Consequences, and Lessons Learned to Revive the Peace Process”</p> <p><b>Thania Paffenholz:</b> “Pathways to Perpetual Peacebuilding in Yemen”</p> <p><b>Stacey Philbrick Yadav:</b> “Civil Action and Post-Conflict Justice: Forward-Looking Lessons from the Transitional Period”</p> <hr/> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Imad K. Harb, Director of Research and Analysis, Arab Center Washington DC</p>
18:00 – 18:20 (Doha) 15:00 – 15:20 (GMT) 10:00 – 10:20 (EST)	<p>Q&amp;A Session</p>
10 minutes Break	

<b>PANEL 4 - The Future of Yemen: Recovery, Reconstruction, and Development</b>	
<p>18:30 – 19:30 (Doha) 15:30 – 16:30 (GMT) 10:30 – 11:30 (EST)</p>	<p><b>Sultan Barakat and Rafat Al-Akhali:</b> “Building the capacity of public leaders in times of war: the case of HIKMA fellowship”</p> <p><b>Sabria Al-Thawr:</b> “Opportunities and Challenges for Inclusive Recovery, Reconstruction, and Development”</p> <p><b>Abdulghani Jaghman:</b> “Governance and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Yemen”</p> <p><b>Helen Lackner:</b> “Long-term and War-related Constraints to Yemen’s Socio-economic Development”</p> <hr/> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Sultan Barakat, Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies</p>
<p>19:30 – 19:50 (Doha) 16:30 – 13:50 (GMT) 11:30 – 8:50 (EST)</p>	<p><b>Q&amp;A Session</b></p>
<p>19:50 – 20:00 (Doha) 16:50 – 17:00 (GMT) 11:50 – 12:00 (EST)</p>	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p>



**Participants**

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**Abstracts**



## Abdulghani Jaghman

Abdulghani Jaghman is a Researcher and Consultant in natural resource and sustainable development. Jaghman has over 20 years of experience in oil field development and project management in Yemen, the Gulf states, and Europe. He holds an MBA in Knowledge Management from the University of Sheffield and a PhD in Governance and Sustainable Development from the Bucharest Academy for Economic Studies.

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### Governance and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Yemen

Governance has emerged as one of the most important concepts in developing countries aiming to achieve sustainable economic development. This paper focuses on highlighting the most critical features of governance during post-conflict reconstruction. By using Yemen as a case study, it finds that political stability, absence of violence, government effectiveness, and government integrity are the most sensitive variables that can hinder or advance the overall progress of the economic and governance indicators, institutional strength and economic quality. The paper proposes a post-conflict reconstruction framework directed at the government of Yemen that begins first by ending the conflict and advancing peace dialogue, then by improving the safety and security of the Yemeni people, supporting justice and reconciliation organizations, and stabilizing and growing the economy.



**Ahmed Alshami**

Ahmed Alshami is an economic researcher, human rights activist, and the Executive Director of Arabian Rights Watch Association (ARWA). Ahmed graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Economics from George Mason University in the United States and has 15 years of experience working in the oil, banking, real estate, and investment sectors in Yemen and internationally. More recently, he was a civil society representative in the Economic Committee in Sana'a until the end of 2019. Ahmed is now dedicated to humanitarian and human rights advocacy and has participated in advocating for a number of initiatives that focus on confidence building, peace building, and neutralizing the economy.

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## **Saudi-Yemeni Relations: Nature, Consequences, and Lessons Learned to Revive the Peace Process**

Given the shared geopolitical, security, and economic dimensions between the two nations, this article contends that Yemen offers strategic depth for Saudi Arabia. Yemen has a distinctive geopolitical significance due to its geographical proximity to Saudi Arabia, and the fact that it oversees one of the world's most important shipping lines. This explains why Saudi has intervened in Yemen many times in recent years, which some may interpret as a desire to enhance regional dominance/influence. However, this article argues that these interventions – including the ongoing intervention – also falls within the framework of national security to maintain a minimum level of influence in Yemen. This can be said to be, in the eyes of some decision-makers, an extension of the kingdom in terms of monitoring and influencing events on the ground. The article will examine the most crucial stages of Saudi-Yemeni relations, addressing Saudi Arabia's policies and Yemen's response to them during these stages, and highlighting lessons learned for the peace process. It will also provide an overview of the current war, including Saudi Arabia's role and the policies it is pursuing. The article concludes by offering a set of recommendations for restoring the peacebuilding process.



**Andrea Carboni**

Andrea Carboni is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Global Studies of the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom and a Humanitarian Analyst for Mercy Corps. He holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Sussex. His research interests include the politics and the institutions of contemporary Yemen. He previously worked as a Researcher for the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), and as a freelance consultant for several research institutions.

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## **Taming the Snakes: Cohesion, Fragmentation, and Violence in Wartime Yemen**

Prior to the outbreak of the Yemeni civil war, Ansarallah - commonly known as the Houthi movement - and a faction of the General People's Congress that was aligned with the former Yemeni president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, entered into an unlikely alliance. The Houthis and Saleh parted ways in 2017, culminating in a failed uprising that led to the death of the former president. The article applies the socio-institutional framework developed by Paul Staniland to analyse the evolution of the alliance and the outbreak of violence within the territories under the control of the Houthi movement and its local allies. It argues that changes in the nature of the ties between leaders of the respective armed groups and between the leaders, the cadres, and their respective social bases can explain the emergence of violence within the alliance. Rather than seeing them as uniform units, each of the groups which formed the alliance can be conceived as competing networks of elites and social groups with different levels of internal cohesion. The resulting violence, involving the Houthis, Saleh's faction, and an array of local armed groups, reflects mechanisms of increasing control and fragmentation at both central and local levels.





## Asmahan Alalas

Asmahan Alalas is an Associate Professor of History at Aden University. Dr. Alalas is an academic and activist specializing in women's studies, modern history and cultural heritage, and peace and security issues. Since 2018, Alalas has been a member of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen's advisory group and she participated in the peace consultations in Stockholm in the same year. Alalas has lectured for over 35 years at Aden University, and has been widely published on history, culture, women's issues, good governance, and capacity building. She has also authored five books. Alalas is a member of Feminist Solidarity for Peace and the Development Pioneers Forum. She holds a PhD in Modern and Contemporary History from the Institute of Arab Research and Studies in Cairo.

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### **Yemen's Path to Peace: Between the Consequences of War and Future Challenges**

This paper outlines and critically analyses the trajectory of the Yemeni conflict and peace process. It describes the failure of the internationally sponsored peace efforts due to different obstacles and inflexibility on both sides of the conflict. It also advances the perspective that the war in Yemen is exacerbated by the international community's fear of the war's impact on the viability of Yemen's maritime ports, through which international commercial interests are expressed. As a result, the international community is seeking to narrow the areas of confrontation and the permanence of war to ensure the preservation of multiple interests. Additionally, regional parties supporting both sides to the conflict are seeking solutions to stop the war in a way that will bring them an effective presence in Yemen's strategic position. The paper also argues that the military's "repositioning" strategy has become a remarkable trend in managing political and military contradictions and drawing up a different map of the country.



**Dania Thafer**

Dania Thafer is the Executive Director of Gulf International Forum, an institute based in Washington, DC that provides analysis on political, economic, social, and security issues of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, in addition to Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. Her expertise is on the Gulf region's security, US-Gulf relations, and the political economy of the GCC states. She is also a Professorial Lecturer at the School of Foreign Service's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University. Thafer has been widely published on matters concerning the GCC and the Middle East. She has co-authored two edited books *The Arms Trade, Military Services and the Security Market in the Gulf States: Trends and Implications* and *The Dilemma of Security and Defense in the Gulf Region*. Thafer is currently writing a book focused on the effect of state-business relations on economic reform in the GCC states. Her commentary has appeared in international media outlets including *The New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *BBC World*, *The Washington Post*, *Forbes*, *Al Jazeera*, and others. Previously, she was responsible for building relationships with military officers and diplomats from the Middle East at the National Defense University's Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies. Thafer has a Master's degree in Political Science from New York University and PhD in Political Science, specialized in the Political Economy and International Relations of the Arab Gulf states from American University in Washington, DC.

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## How Saudi-Iranian Talks Could Affect the Yemen War

Recently, Baghdad hosted several rounds of talks between Riyadh and Tehran aimed at lowering tensions and perhaps resolving some issues between the two principal rivals in the Gulf. This presentation will tackle how these talks could affect the ongoing Yemen War. It will assess various plausible outcomes for Saudi-Iranian détente, and will take into account major regional events that will affect the Yemen War, such as prospects for returning to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal) and current regional recalibration.



**Helen Lackner**

Helen Lackner has been involved with Yemen for half a century; she lived and worked in development in the three Yemeni states which have existed in that period, and now concentrates on analysis, hoping to contribute to an improvement in the situation of Yemenis. The second edition of her book *Yemen in Crisis, the Road to War* will be published by *Saqi* in August 2022, with an update and a new chapter on the humanitarian situation. In spring Routledge will publish her book *Yemen: Poverty and Crisis*.

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## **Long-term and War-related Constraints to Yemen's Socio-economic Development**

There are a multiplicity of analyses of the Yemeni crisis and proposals for the country's post-war reconstruction, many of them idealised and unrealistic. This paper seeks to offer a different perspective by focusing on the multiple, complex problems that will arise once the country returns to a semblance of recognisable governance. It details the different types of intrinsic and extrinsic constraints that will need to be addressed, which arise out of: water scarcity and climate change, demographic changes, the multi-level fragmentation of the country, the socio-economic impact of years of aid dependence, the types of development policies imposed by the external financiers, and the amount of aid that is likely to be available for Yemen (which are expected to be below the country's needs and expectations). Finally, the paper will briefly offer some suggestions to address these constraints, insofar as they can be pursued regardless of the war's outcome.



**Ibrahim Jalal**

Ibrahim Jalal is the youngest Non-resident Scholar in the Gulf and Yemen Programme at the Middle East Institute (MEI) and a Research Fellow at the Yemen Policy Center. He has engaged in relevant Track II discussions and consulted with several organisations, including ODI and the UN. His research has appeared in Peace Research Institute Oslo, Palgrave, MEI, ODI, and The International Institute for Strategic Studies's Strategic Comments. Jalal earned an MSc in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies (IMSIS) with a concentration in Conflict Studies from the Universities of Glasgow, Charles and Dublin as an Erasmus Scholar and an MSc in Strategy and Diplomacy from the National University of Malaysia (UKM) with distinction.

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## **The NDC's Institutional Design and Implications on Representation, Negotiations and Outcomes**

This paper examines the implications of the institutional design of Yemen's National Dialogue Conference (NDC) on representation, negotiations dynamics, and the dialogue's outcomes, by using the State-building Working Group (SBWG) as an illustrative case study. The preliminary findings are three-fold. First, while the NDC might have been the most inclusive dialogue in Yemen's recent history, the selective selection of groups and grievances reveals considerable gaps in the pursuit of sustainable, comprehensive solutions necessary for the country's transformation. Second, although the institutional design enabled non-elite to face traditional centers of power as equals, it remains weak in several key areas. Third, despite the conclusion of more than 1,800 recommendations through consensus-building mechanisms, one of the most controversial issues related to two working groups (federalism) was essentially unresolved during the NDC, and instead pushed forward by the ruling elite despite manifested opposition during the dialogue process. This, in turn, reflected Yemen's evolving security and transitional landscape, thus arming destabilising entities, including militias, capable of and intend on undermining dialogue outcomes at times of state fragility.



## Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen is a Non-resident Senior Fellow at Arab Center Washington DC (ACW), and a Baker Institute Fellow for the Middle East at Rice University. His research focuses on rule of law and due process in Middle Eastern and Arab Gulf states, issues of internal security and stability, and contemporary and early 20th century Middle Eastern history. Ulrichsen was previously a Research Group Member at the Middle East Center, London School of Economics and Political Science, and currently serves also as an Affiliate Professor at the University of Washington's Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies. He holds a PhD in History from the University of Cambridge. Select publications include *The United Arab Emirates: Power, Politics, and Policymaking (2016)* and *Qatar and the Arab Spring (2014)*.

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### **Evolving Saudi and Emirati Policies Toward Yemen in 2022**

This paper will examine how Saudi and Emirati policies toward the conflict in Yemen have evolved, with a focus on post-2019 developments, and assess how the changing relationship between Saudi Arabia and the UAE more generally may impact on their positions toward Yemen and any potential shift toward post-conflict dynamics in the country.



**Majed Al-Ansari**

Majed Al-Ansari is the Director of the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS). Previously, he was a Professor of Political Sociology at Qatar University and headed the Policy Department at the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI). He received his Doctoral and Master's degrees in Social Change from the University of Manchester and wrote a thesis entitled *A Minority of Citizens: The Effects of Religious, Social and Political Values on Trust in Expatriates in Qatar*. Al-Ansari's research interests include public opinion surveys, social capital, political and religious values, charity work, and current affairs. He has contributed extensively as a political analyst on various media outlets including *Al Jazeera*, *BBC Arabic*, *Russia Today*, *Al Araby TV*, and *Qatar TV*.

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## **Gulf Mediations in Yemen: Prospects and Limits for a Peace Process**

The Arabian Gulf's expanded mediation capabilities have been highlighted in the post-Arab Spring and post-Gulf crisis era, particularly in Kuwait's mediation in the Gulf crisis and Qatar's mediation in Afghanistan, that can be utilized more effectively in Yemen. This paper argues that the GCC could play a third-party mediation role to advance a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned peace process that can be supervised by an international U.N. mediator actor. It begins by identifying the characteristics of an optimal mediator in the Yemeni context. Then, it outlines the trajectory of Arabian Gulf mediation, its unique features, and its key actors and their motivations. Finally, it critically assesses their interventions, and discusses challenges on the way for an inclusive and effective mediation process in the Yemeni context.



## Maysaa Shuja Al-Deen

Maysaa Shuja Al-Deen is a Senior Researcher at the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies. Her writing and analyses have been featured in numerous media outlets such as *Jadaliyya*, *Assafir Al Araby*, *Al Araby Al Jadeed*, and *Al-Monitor*. Shuja Al-Deen holds a Master's degree in Islamic Studies from the American University in Cairo. The focus of her thesis was the radicalization of Zaydism.

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### The Dilemma of Federalism in Yemen

The decentralization of Yemen has persisted as a central issue in the country's political conflicts since 1994. This paper traces the development of the debate on the decentralization of the Yemeni state between intellectuals and political parties, identifying watershed moments in the process (notably in 1994, 2000, 2001, 2007, and 2011). It demonstrates the role of this debate and the Six States Plan in catalyzing the ongoing Yemeni civil war, and argues that federalism remains one of the most crucial means to ending the war.



## Nadwa Al-Dawsari

Nadwa Al-Dawsari is a Non-resident Fellow at the Middle East Institute. Before joining the institute, she was the Yemen Country Director for Center for Civilians in Conflict, a Senior Non-resident Fellow at the Project on Middle East Democracy, and a Founding Director of Partners Yemen, a local affiliate center of Partners Global. Earlier in her career, she worked as a Senior Program Manager at the National Democratic Institute in Yemen, managing elections monitoring and tribal conflicts programs. Al-Dawsari has over 20 years of field experience in Yemen, where she conducted extensive research providing deeper insights into the internal dynamics of the conflict in the country. Her publications have been featured by the Middle East Institute, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), the Atlantic Council, *Lawfare*, Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED), *The Washington Post*, and the Center for Civilians in Conflict, among others. Al-Dawsari holds an MA in Development Studies from the University of Leeds and a BA in English Literature from Sana'a University in Yemen.

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### **Houthi-Iran Relations and the Consequences of the Evolution of the Houthi Movement**

This paper summarizes the evolution of Houthis and their political ideology. It discusses the limitations of current diplomatic efforts as Houthis continue to escalate and expand militarily. More importantly, the paper argues that Iran has seen decades of its investment materialize with the rise of the Houthis in Yemen. It highlights that both the Houthi movement and Iran share a political ideology and long-term vision to expand influence in the Middle East.





**Peter Salisbury**

Peter Salisbury is the International Crisis Group’s senior analyst for Yemen. He has worked as a journalist, researcher and analyst with a focus on political and economic issues in *the Middle East and North Africa* for the past 15 years. His work has appeared in the *Economist*, *the Financial Times* and *the Washington Post*, and he has consulted to the UK government, the United Nations and the World Bank. He has provided consultation to the UK’s Department of International Development, the United Nations, and The World Bank. Salisbury has also produced a number of short- and long-format documentaries on Yemen for VICE, a youth-oriented media network.

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## **Conflict Trendiness and Future Trajectories**

Four key trends have emerged in Yemen’s regionalised civil war in recent years. Firstly, the Houthis’ de facto authorities in Sanaa have increased control over their own territory and have expanded their abilities as a military force. Secondly, there has been a continuous deterioration of Yemen’s Saudi-backed, internationally recognised government’s position – led by President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi – as a credible governance and military actor. Thirdly, there has been a noted rise in the military and political stature of UAE-aligned forces, who have fought against both the Houthis and the government. Fourthly, Yemen has increased in its significance in regional power struggles between the U.S. and its allies on one hand, and Iran and its allies on the other. More recently, events in January 2022, including battlefield reversals, cross-border Houthi attacks on the Gulf, and increased coalition air strikes in Houthi controlled territory, only served to strengthen these trendlines. This article will outline these trends and analyze how it will affect policymaking and mediation options for Yemen.



**Rafat Al-Akhali**

Rafat Ali Al-Akhali is a Fellow of Practice for Strategic Projects at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford,. As a co-founder of DeepRoot Consulting, Al-Akhali has been closely engaged in advising key stakeholders on political, economic, and development priorities in Yemen. During 2014-2015, he has served as Minister of Youth and Sports in the Government of Yemen. Previously, he led the Policy Reforms team at the government's Executive Bureau for Acceleration of Aid Absorption and Support for Policy Reforms. He has served as a Senior Consultant and Analyst for a number of international organizations and was a member of the Accessions Division at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva. Al-Akhali earned his second master's degree in public policy (MPP) at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, UK. His first master's degree was in Business Administration (MBA) from Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales (HEC) Montréal, Canada.

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## **Building the capacity of public leaders in times of war: the case of HIKMA fellowship**

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has caused significant fragmentation at all levels of Yemeni society. Transitioning from conflict to peace will require a critical mass of public leaders who are able to move beyond divisions and reach across conflict lines to identify and work together towards common interests. Since the start of the peace-building process in Yemen, formal structures active in the process have marginalized the roles of local capabilities, especially youth, in enhancing peace. Yemen needs a new vision for building a comprehensive and sustainable peace, and young leaders can play a pivotal role in bringing this vision to life. This paper will present the case of the Hikma Fellowship, an innovative program designed to empower Yemen's emerging public leaders in turbulent times. The paper seeks to provide a background on the program, discusses the importance of local capacity building in Yemen, recount the results it has achieved, and detail challenges of ensuring inclusivity in the Yemeni peace process. The paper concludes by suggesting a new way to move forward in order to build a comprehensive and sustainable peace in the country.



**Sabria Al-Thawr**

Sabria Al-Thawr is a university lecturer at Sana'a University and a researcher at the Gender Development Research and Studies Center (GDRSC). She has worked over the past 18 years with various local and international development agencies in the themes of developmental and humanitarian research, gender protection, conflict analysis, and peacebuilding. She has published on gender and displacement, gender-based violence, conflict and peacebuilding, and minorities and citizenship rights. She is currently a spokesperson in Action Network on Forced Displacement, a global network on forced displacement linked to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF). She is a core member and researcher at the Middle East Research Network on Internal Displacement (MERNID).

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## **Opportunities and Challenges for Inclusive Recovery, Reconstruction, and Development**

The peace process in Yemen has been mainly tackled at the national level, involving high-level representatives of conflicting parties, government officials, and the international community. Little attention has been given to lower-level peace process led by local actors, which has enjoyed both moments of progress and dynamism and of stagnation. These efforts have engaged multiple local mediations forums and individuals at the community level. However, there are other social segments affected by the war who are not engaged in these efforts, meaning that their issues and their potential role in achieving durable solutions are left unaddressed. Around four million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Yemen are perceived as a burden on the local communities and authorities: despite aid and relief being provided to these communities for more than 7 years, there have been no efforts presenting sustainable solutions, or including IDPs in peacebuilding efforts in a post-war Yemen context. This paper discusses possible approaches to engage local level actors, including IDPs, in the current peace process and subsequent stages of recovery and reconstruction.



## Stacey Philbrick Yadav

Stacey Philbrick Yadav is Associate Professor of International Relations at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. For close to two decades, she has written about the politics of Yemen, with a focus on opposition activism both within and outside of partisan frameworks. Her work includes *Islamists and the State: Legitimacy and Institutions in Yemen and Lebanon* (2013), and articles in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Middle East Journal*, *Middle East Law and Governance*, and others. She serves on the steering committee for the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS), where she has edited a collected issue on the war in Yemen, and on the executive board of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies. Philbrick Yadav holds a PhD in political science from the University of Pennsylvania.

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### Civil Action and Post-Conflict Justice: Forward-Looking Lessons from the Transitional Period

The transitional period in Yemen -- in which the country's former President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was negotiated out of office -- offers a series of powerful lessons for those envisioning a post-conflict Yemen today. Between 2011 and 2014, a series of internationally brokered and conceived institutions and practices were adopted to address injustices produced by prior conflict and violations of human rights. The voices that were -- and were not -- incorporated into these peace modalities and transitional institutions had an undeniable and lasting impact on the dynamics of contention in the current conflict. Despite their weaknesses, these frameworks remain a reference point for many civil actors today. This paper seeks to shed light on this reality, explain its causes, and discuss its implications on peace. Based on a series of interviews, focus groups, and participant observation among Yemeni civil actors, this paper argues that undue consideration of the perspectives and priorities of conflict actors in the crafting of post-conflict institutions is not just compromising peace today, but peace will be unthinkable in Yemen if actors fail to substantively address questions of justice.



**Sultan Barakat**

Sultan Barakat is the founding director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies. He is a Professor at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, and an Honorary Professor in the Department of Politics at the University of York, where he founded the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU) in 1993 and led it until 2016. He previously served as a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center for Middle East Policy and as the Director of Research at the Brookings Doha Center. Recently, he has led Track I and Track II mediation efforts in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria. Between 2008 and 2014, he was a founding Expert Panel Member of the Global Peace Index. Barakat is member of the Advisory Board of the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute in London, and a member of the joint UK's Economic and Social Research Council.

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## **Building the capacity of public leaders in times of war: the case of HIKMA fellowship**

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has caused significant fragmentation at all levels of Yemeni society. Transitioning from conflict to peace will require a critical mass of public leaders who are able to move beyond divisions and reach across conflict lines to identify and work together towards common interests. Since the start of the peace-building process in Yemen, formal structures active in the process have marginalized the roles of local capabilities, especially youth, in enhancing peace. Yemen needs a new vision for building a comprehensive and sustainable peace, and young leaders can play a pivotal role in bringing this vision to life. This paper will present the case of the Hikma Fellowship, an innovative program designed to empower Yemen's emerging public leaders in turbulent times. The paper seeks to provide a background on the program, discusses the importance of local capacity building in Yemen, recount the results it has achieved, and detail challenges of ensuring inclusivity in the Yemeni peace process. The paper concludes by suggesting a new way to move forward in order to build a comprehensive and sustainable peace in the country.



**Thania Paffenholz**

Thania Paffenholz is the Director of InclusivePeace, a Geneva-based Think and Do Tank operating globally in providing evidenced-based support to peace processes. With 30 years of experience as both an academic and policy/ practice advisor, Paffenholz is internationally renowned for her work on and in support of peace and political transition processes worldwide. In recognition of her work, Paffenholz received the prestigious Wihuri International Prize in 2015. Paffenholz has roots in Europe and Africa and lives in Kenya and Switzerland. She holds a PhD in International Relations with focus on mediation and conflict transformation.

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## **Pathways to Perpetual Peacebuilding in Yemen**

This paper will critically appraise peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts in Yemen by identifying flaws in recent and current approaches and outlining potential options to make peacemaking and peacebuilding in Yemen more meaningfully inclusive and effective. Peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts since the 2014 National Dialogue Conference have significantly narrowed by being more focused on formal negotiations between the two conflict parties, have struggled to produce results, and have generally stalled. Consultative mechanisms have been sharply criticised as being superficial, and the array of unofficial peacebuilding initiatives that emerged over the course of the conflict have struggled to influence high-level talks. Whilst a number of suggestions for more effective and inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding in Yemen have been proffered, none fully grasp the perpetual nature of peacebuilding or that peacemaking should not be exclusively or primarily be defined in relation to formal processes. Drawing on the Perpetual Peacebuilding paradigm which envisions peace as an ever-developing process manifested in a series of (re-)negotiations of the social and political contract, this paper presents suggestions for revitalizing, enhancing, and expanding peacemaking and peacebuilding through a series of critical questions for how to rethink a Yemeni peace process.

# About us

## Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies

The Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies is an independent research and study center that works to generate world-class knowledge and policy engagement in the field of conflict and humanitarian response. CHS produces rigorous and interdisciplinary research on the causes and impact of conflicts, humanitarian crises, state fragility, and war-to-peace transitions in the Arab world and beyond. CHS work combines theory and practice as well as dialogue activities to assist in efforts, including mediation and negotiation, for more effective conflict response. CHS places special emphasis on building local and regional capacities to encourage productive dialogue and the creation of effective networks to promote a culture of peace and justice. The CHS is the first of its kind in the Arab World.

## Arab Center Washington DC

Arab Center Washington DC (ACW) is a nonprofit, independent, and nonpartisan research organization dedicated to furthering the political economic, and social understanding of the Arab world in the United States and to providing insights on US policies and interests in the Middle East and North Africa. As a Washington-based authoritative research center on the Arab world, Arab Center Washington DC provides Arab perspectives and diverse expert opinions to US policymaking conversations through independent evidence-based research and analysis. Our work is guided by a strong belief in the importance of democracy in the Arab world, respect for human rights and civil liberties, and the just and peaceful resolution to conflict. ACW is affiliated with the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) headquartered in Doha, Qatar, and its network of research centers and academic institutions around the world.

## DeepRoot Consulting

DeepRoot is a boutique consulting firm passionate about Yemen's development. Our goal is to help our clients anchor their interventions in a deep understanding of Yemen's local and national contexts as well as international best practices. Our leadership team has more than 20 years of combined experience working in Yemen and abroad, in the public, private and non-profit sectors. We have worked with multi-national corporations and international development agencies, served in senior government positions, and led start-up civil society organizations. With solid academic backgrounds from leading international institutions, our team couples cutting-edge practices with a deeply rooted understanding of the Yemeni context to offer insightful and practical advice that leads to impact.

## Contacts



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