

# South Yemen Update

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

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## Participating in the Washington conference on South Yemen

Around-the-clock travelling and preparing to attend the conference organised by the new American Centre for South Yemen Studies, participating in a first-ever independent conflict resolution academic conference that examines the potential and challenges of a South Yemeni State.



We have struggled as individuals to get the message on South Yemen across to an international audience and hence we tend to message the usual suspect of loyalists. In this conference I believe we conveyed the message effectively and professionally as a collective.

Led by Summer Ahmed STC representative in the US, of course a huge benefit when women are involved in conflict resolution and leadership because women are instrumental in state building and have so much to offer with much less ego than our men activist.

The leadership that Summer contributes to our Southern cause is remarkably different and significantly important. She Builds the platform not for herself but rather the interest of the message. She believes in the collective action of the team rather the ego of individuals.

Summer is motivated, dynamic, passionate and described by a number of her colleagues in the conference as an outstanding hard worker.

I watched her throughout the event, engaging, creative and focused. Summer is a breath of fresh air in the STC who sees a future where women and men help each other to build a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous South Yemen: She adds value to our struggle in a way that is inclusive and much more strategic and where others in leadership position can learn so much from her positive approach and her ability to bring the best out of people.

Anyone can sit in an office and give orders and delegate tasks, but there is more to test leadership than that. Summer had a major positive impacts not only on me but the team members she works with. The team who work under good leaders tend to be happier, more productive and more connected to their organisation and cause – and this has a positive ripple effect on all involved in the delivery of the message.

The huge audience the conference attracted internationally demonstrates that we have in the South talent that can advance the clarity and impact of our message.



*Dr Abdul Shaif with two other Conference speakers*

Many brilliant South Yemenis have become disengaged or stagnant in their work because of the attitudes of those with big egos and often nothing to offer, it may be time to reassess and reform our strategies and Summer Ahmed is a good sign of better things to come. Undoubtedly, the team engaged other fantastic individuals but this article is focusing on my brilliant sister Summer.

The South Yemeni community has a number of brilliant woman inside and outside the country and like Summer they can collectively spark new and huge energy, fuel great ideas, and inspires people in the South to live in security, prosperity and dream big.

## Aden Conference IN Washington D.C.: 8th Anniversary of The Liberation of Aden

The American Centre for South Yemen held a landmark event in Washington, DC, on July 20th, 2023. This day marked the 8th anniversary of the liberation of Aden, a pivotal moment in South Yemen's history that has had a significant impact on the geopolitical and socio-cultural dynamics of the region. The conference was held to commemorate the liberation of Aden that defined the resilience and strength of the people of South Yemen in the face of adversity.

The one-day conference will did provide an enriching opportunity to explore and understand the intricate facets of South Yemen's history, society, and unique political landscape. The event brought together scholars, diplomats, community leaders, and students to share their insights, experiences, and research findings on the critical events surrounding Aden's liberation. The event was well attended and had wide coverage in social media with significant debate and contribution by thousands of social media users alleviating the discussion to a much wider audience.

The conference was opened by a speech made by the leader of the STC Aidarous Al-Zubaidi, He tackled head on the need to fight terrorism and extremism and called on the conference to extend the STC message of peace and recognition for a South Yemeni state



STC Leader Aidarous Al-Zubaidi

This event offered an invaluable platform for an informed discourse on South Yemen's trajectory since the liberation of Aden. Fostering a better understanding of this region's complexities and potential is particularly crucial in the ever-evolving global political climate. The attendance of community leaders and experts debated many of the issues in relation to the Yemeni crisis but in particular the need for a peace process that is inclusive and that must include recognizing the aspirations of South Yemenis to establish their own state in South Yemen.

The speakers were broadly supportive of an inclusive peace process that recognizes the right of South Yemen to statehood? One of the speakers made the point that international law is clear that the people of South Yemen have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. South Yemen has a permanent population, a defined territory, a transitional council, and the ability to enter into relations with the other states.

It was further debated that South Yemen has a population of 5.5 million people. It's also worth noting that South Yemen was once a state in its own right, having earned independence from British rule in 1967 and recognized by the UN as an independent state, including the USA and other permanent members of the security council. South Yemen elected to unite with Northern Yemen voluntarily in a merger in 1990. Immediately following the merger, concerns were raised by the leaders of South Yemen of being marginalized and excluded, the war broke out in 1994 and South Yemen was invaded by North Yemen, prompting South Yemenis to seek its independence from the North. The overthrow of the government in North Yemen in 2014 by the Houthis and the second failed invasion of the South by the Houthis impacted on Southerners to call for recognition of a Southern state.



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