

South Yemen Update

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

Newsletter of the Friends of South Yemen

South Yemen Update Issue - 44

June 2024

RECOGNITION OF SOUTH YEMEN

The STC has been on a charm diplomatic offensive since its establishment in 2017, in an attempt to persuade the rest of the world to accept the southern right to statehood. So far diplomatically the quest for recognition has not yet materialised into a positive meaningful result. STC determination however appears to be paying off. The STC has pursued a flexible and positive approach to accommodate the policies of its main regional partners and engage with the current internationally recognised government under the Riyadh agreement. The STC has members in the Government and the PLC. It has also made its presence felt internally and externally on the case for self determination. The recent visit to the UK by the STC president Aidarous Al-Zubaidi and his talk in Chatham House and his subsequent meeting at the foreign office and more recently the US ambassador are indicators of STC presence in the political international stage. The recent reconciliation conference in Aden between the various Southern groups under the umbrella of the STC and the restructuring of the organisation was seen by many as significant progress for the STC.



STC President Aidarous Al-Zubaidi

Undoubtedly, the current step by step approach towards international recognition is not widely supported by the more radical members of the STC because of the STC inability to take over the institutions of power in a very similar manner to the Houthis. These more radical elements believe that the STC reliance on the regional and international community for Southern recognition could undermine STC support base, particularly if yielding no potential positive

results. This indeed could potentially have a negative impact on the whole Yemen crisis.

Despite the diplomatic offensive to push for recognition of the South to return its statehood, the West has remained mainly vague towards southern statehood so far. Some western politicians say that recognition of South Yemen as a state may strain relations within the region. Whilst the West do recognise the facts on the ground, they have failed to see the only viable solution on the negotiating table is a transitional phase to bring about peace that would lead eventually to a two state solution. Failure to achieve a positive outcome for Southerners may force the Southern transitional Council to potentially take a more radical approach.

Let us look at the legality of a two state solution under current international law:

According to Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States, 1933, a state as a person of international law must have had or can have a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and the ability to enter into relations with the other states. The question therefore is whether the South meets these conditions for statehood.

South Yemen has a population of 5 million people. It's also worth noting that South Yemen was once an independent state, having gained independence through a revolution from British rule in 1967 and recognized by the international community as an independent state with full UN status. In 1990 South Yemen represented by the PDRY voluntarily entered the union with its neighbour North Yemen represented by the YAR to form the Republic of Yemen. Immediately following the merger, concerns were raised by the YSP leadership that the south was being marginalised prompting Southerners to seek state policies to address these grievances. As a consequence of no action to address these grievances, the war broke out in 1994 between Northern and Southern forces and inevitably many saw this as the end of the contract of voluntary union.

The Northern regime defeated the Southern army and was now in charge of the whole country by virtue of war rather than the voluntary union. But of importance here is the realization that Even if one considers that unification still prevailed after the 1994 war and that reform was possible, one must however recognise that the subsequent overthrow of the Sanna regime in Yemen by the Houthis in 2014 is definitely the end of the unification project between two states and the two political parties that no longer play an effective role in the country.

Furthermore the Houthis were not content with taking over Sanna and in 2015 advanced their military hold on the country by invading Aden, in an attempt to invade the South . The southern resistance movement fought back with regional support and pushed the Houthis back to the North of Yemen . This was the final burial of the unity project . It is widely recognised that the Unity project has failed to materialise for the benefit of the people of Yemen and is no longer the voluntary partnership envisaged in 1990.

Southerners have in 2015 for the first time militarily since 1990 taken control over southern territory while the Houthis have installed their own power base in the North. They believe they have a good given right to govern Yemen and are pursuing a Shia, Zaidi religious doctrine for governance .

The people of the South 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.

In this context with southern army and security built are in charge of the south. The South has a genuine opportunity to build a more progressive state than that led by the Houthis and any justification for unity in the current military , economic and political circumstances is simply irrational and illogical . I make this argument in the context that the Houthis have already established their own state with their own government, army, banking system and have control of at least 70 percent of the North.

So to be more precise in the argument for self-determination. The South has now a definite territory that was bequeathed to it in 1967 during its independence from Britain. The voluntary contract to unify the country has been destroyed by events and there are now new political forces in power with old ones diminishing into oblivion. South Yemen therefore under this international definition meets the criteria for statehood.

European Commission's Criteria

The Guidelines on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, adopted by the European Commission (EC) members in 1991, contain additional requirements for state recognition. Under these criteria, respect for the articles of the United Nations Charter, commitments to the rule of law, democracy, human rights, and safeguards for the rights of ethnic and national groups and minorities were among the new prerequisites for state recognition.

Safe to say that the independence of South Yemen can also meet the EC definition. The recognition of South Sudan, Brexit and the referendum for Scotland are examples of self determination. This list is not exhaustive.

State self determination are espoused in the 1960 Resolution 1514 (XV) of the UN General Assembly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

In short, the international community's refusal to acknowledge South Yemen as a sovereign state and their inability to accelerate the peace process has allowed the Chinese to raise their own presence in the scene .The

diminished role of the west has given the Chinese the opportunity to play a bigger role to bring about a diplomatic solution between the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Regional states can seize the opportunity and take the lead in recognizing the statehood of South Yemen and lead the rest of the world too.

Further reasons for South Yemen's independence could include the potential for more effective governance and administration tailored to the specific needs and priorities of the southern population. We as the STC representatives could argue that a decentralized political system could lead to more responsive and accountable political system, fostering greater socio-economic development and stability. Additionally, we know that we can deliver better economic outcomes with better resource allocation and distribution arguing that control over local resources could lead to more equitable and sustainable development practices. We can also stress to western politicians the importance of self-determination and sovereignty, asserting that the people of South Yemen have the right to determine their own political future and pursue their aspirations for independence

*Dr. Abdul Galil Shaif
Author of history of South Yemen*

CBY announces measures targeting Houthi economy

Today, the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) in the capital, Aden, announced the implementation of several measures targeting the economy of the Iran-backed Houthis, including sanctions on some of the largest commercial banks in the country.

In its decision, a copy obtained by the South24 Center, the CBY suspended dealings with six banks that it said had not responded to instructions to move their headquarters from the Houthi-controlled Sanaa to Aden.



A currency Exchange worker sits in Sanaa

The targeted banks included Tadhamon Bank, Yemen Kuwait Bank, Shamil Bank of Yemen and Bahrain, Al-Amal Microfinance Bank, Al-Kuraimi Islamic Microfinance Bank, and the International Bank of Yemen.

"The suspended banks did not comply with the laws and regulations against money laundering and terrorist financing and continued to deal with the Houthis, which is designated as a terrorist group," the statement said. The decision comes just two days before the end of the sixty-day deadline, announced by the central bank on April 2, for Sanaa-based commercial banks, Islamic banks, and microfinance banks to transfer their main headquarters to Aden.

A source working at the Sanaa-based CBY told the South24 Center in a previously published report that four of these banks had informed the CBY in Aden of their refusal or inability to move their headquarters, citing multiple reasons including a lack of cash liquidity. In a separate decision, the Aden-based CBY gave institutions and individuals 60 days to deposit old denominations of Yemeni riyals printed before 2016. A source at the bank told South24 that this measure is a prelude to issuing replacements for these older currency notes.

The decision intended to target the Houthis, who for nearly four years, in their areas of control in North Yemen, have prohibited the use of the new Yemeni riyal currency printed by the internationally recognized government.

The Houthis' actions have caused a significant disparity in the value of the Yemeni riyal between the regions they control and those under the control of the Yemeni government, with the exchange rate of the US dollar at 530 Yemeni riyals in Sanaa, compared to 1,750 riyals in Aden.

The Houthis accuse the Yemeni government of printing the Yemeni riyal without adequate foreign exchange backing. However, food prices remain relatively consistent between Houthi-controlled areas and those under the Yemeni government's control, while millions of Yemenis stand on the brink of famine.

In a speech broadcast on Al-Masirah TV today, Houthi leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi accused the United States of launching an economic war against Yemen, calling it a service to Israel and a response to his group's positions and military operations against ships. Al-Houthi said: "I advise Saudi Arabia to be careful not to involve America in putting pressure on banks in Sanaa and entering into a dangerous plot."

In November 2022, oil exports came to a halt in Yemeni government-controlled areas after Houthi drone attacks targeted oil ports in Shabwa and Hadramout in South Yemen.

Read more at: <https://south24.net/news/newse.php?nid=3994>



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Design: Yusef Alabbadi