

**Country/entity** Yemen

**Region** Middle East and North Africa

**Agreement name** Agreement to Solve the Problem regarding al-Ma'ashiq Palace

**Date** 29 Feb 2016

**Agreement status** Multiparty signed/agreed

**Interim arrangement** Yes

### **Yemeni Civil Wars (1994) (2011 - )**

The Republic of Yemen was formed in May 1990 after the merger between the Yemeni Arab Republic (YAR) in the north and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in the south. The unification process was rushed and the final agreement between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and President Ali Salem al-Beidh was based on the imperfect promise of equality. Following the merger, integration of the militaries and civil services was at best incomplete or at times entirely non-existent. When Saleh's General Congress Party (GPC) allied itself with the newly created Islamist Islah ('reform') party in 1993, the former ruling party of South Yemen – the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) – was effectively side-lined in the 1993 General Elections. Violence involving the use of heavy weaponry and aerial bombardment erupted in April 1994 and on the 21 May 1994 Vice President al-Beidh declared the secession of the south, citing political centralization with the northern highland tribes, violence against the YSP and economic discrimination. In the midst of fighting, negotiations in Cairo, Egypt, collapsed. The war ended with the military victory of the north, and on the 1 October 1994, Ali Abdullah Saleh was elected President.

Despite the unification of Yemen in 1990, political power during the 1990s and 2000s remained centralized with the northern highland tribes, particularly the villages from which President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his confidants stemmed. The system of clientelism established through the ruling General People's Congress party maintained relative loyalty among the fractured political allegiances of Yemen's traditional tribal leadership. However, diminishing oil reserves and the shrinking opportunities for access to rent increased economic and political marginalization in Yemen's peripheral communities. The degree of regionalism of conflicts is further defined by other local grievances. In the northern governorate of Sa'dah, a backlash was provoked among the local Zaydi Shi'a against Sunni Salafist cultural incursions resulting in six wars between 2004 and 2010. In the southern governorates of Hadramawt, Shabwa, al-Dhali and Abyan, civil and military personnel forcibly retired after the 1994 Civil War began protesting and eventually formed the secessionist Southern 'al-Hiraak' movement in 2007. Furthermore, tribal grievances have spurred attacks on oil companies and government installations to extract rents. Various takfiri groups including al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula have also increased their presence since 1995.

The Yemen Spring in early 2011 allowed all these movements to express their joint displeasure. Moreover, factionalism in the regime split the already weak military and thus allowed the Houthis, the takfiris and tribal-based militia known as popular committees, to assert themselves militarily. Mandated by the UN-sponsored Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the National Dialogue held from March 2013 to January 2014 aimed at guaranteeing power-sharing among the different parties. However, the GCC Initiative only included formal political parties that did not accurately reflect political realities. Furthermore, provisions lacked adequate transitional justice and provided former-President Saleh, as well as others, full amnesty. As a result, little faith was placed in the process by formerly marginalized groups such as the Zaydi Shia Houthi rebels (Ansar Allah) and al-Hiraak who opted to increase their bargaining power vis-à-vis the state by strengthening their own territorial enclaves. In September 2014 the Houthis succeeded in capturing the capital Sana'a and gradually expanded their control southward. The subsequent UN-mediated Peace and National Partnership Agreement between transitional president Hadi and the Houthis on a federal, democratic Yemeni state, failed to be implemented as the Houthis successfully dissolved the parliament and deposed Hadi in January 2015. Following the Saudi military intervention to restore the Hadi government in March 2015, ceasefire attempts continuously failed. A two-year

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|------------------------|---|
| <b>Stage</b>           | Pre-negotiation/process   |
| <b>Conflict nature</b> | Government/territory  |
| <b>Peace process</b>   | Yemen Inter-group Agreements  |
| <b>Parties</b>         | Southern Resistance in Krater;<br>al-Ma' ašhiq guards   |
| <b>Third parties</b>   | -   |
| <b>Description</b>     | Short agreement on the transfer of checkpoints to the Southern Resistance from the al-Ma'ashiq Guards (al-Ma'ashiq) is the Presidential Palace in Aden. Other provisions include adding martyrs to the list of martyrs in Aden; evacuate the wounded; assign a committee to follow up on the wounded; integrate the Southern Resistance into the Army; pay the al-Ma'ashiq Guards; to begin the work of those troops trained in Saudi Arabia. |

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**Agreement document** [YE\\_160229\\_Agreement to Solve the Problem regarding al-Ma'shiq Palace\\_EN.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#) | [Download PDF](#)

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### Local agreement properties

**Process type** Formal structured process

**Rationale** This agreement take place early in 2016 and generally fits with some of the procedural practices that begin to work themselves into agreements at both national and local level throughout April. This agreement echoes a recognition of practices around the handover or exchange of checkpoints or military spaces. There is also clear repetition in the forming of a local committee to follow up on and implement or monitor a specific focus within the provisions of the agreement (evacuation and welfare of the wounded), which similarly appears to be a universal standard in the country. By the party representation, this also appears to reflect a confidence among local actors in the capacity of groups to lead the delivery of provisions. This agreement conveys a sense of autonomous resolution to it. Particularly as a government affiliated guard are one of the parties, there does not seem to be too much involvement from other actors in terms of brokerage / leverage.

**Is there a documented link to a national peace process?**

Yes

**Link to national process: articulated rationale** As a complex conflict, a link to the national process is being inferred by the involvement of the palace guards as a signing party. It is possible to consider them as a local governance actor with a clear stance towards the wider conflict. Further, in terms of the link to the national process, the city of Aden at this time is still supposed to be held by the government and officially it is, however this agreement comes after a sustained period of fighting in the city involving a number of militia groups pushing for real control in what is an increasingly fractured key southern city. Part of the provisions of the national process and the NDC were originally to slowly reduce the influence and control of militia groups in Sana'a and other key cities. This factor makes this agreement around the presidential palace fairly important in regard to that context. Further, part of controlling cities like Aden in the south is key to the wider national process aims of the government. There is further connection to the national level in the sense that the agreement follows a period whereby the government struggled to pay the bills generated by its attempt to rebuild the national military. In the provisions of this agreement, the delivery of overdue salaries to one of the parties (the presidential guard) is described as necessary as soon as the agreement is delivered. There is also ambiguous reference to an outside group trained in Saudi Arabia coming in to 'begin their work' at the beginning of March, which further shows an outside influence from national level. It is very possible that this is in reference to attempting to make President Hadi's rule in the city more comprehensive rather than only official. At this time in security terms, while local militia and terrorist groups appear to be dominant, government control is reliant on coalition countries ensuring the national security agenda in the city. The party of guards should of course also be seen as affiliated with the central state and there is mention of official endorsement regarding the evacuation of the wounded, which likely refers to guards of the palace.

**Name of Locale** Aden

**Nature of Locale** City

**GPS Lat/Long (DD)** 12.785706, 45.018624

**Participant type** Central state actor  
Local armed group

**Mediator, facilitator or similar** No mention of mediator or similar

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**Local issues**

**Ritual/prayer and process (including use of scripture)** No specific mention.

**Grievance List** Page 1, 7. Deliver salaries to all the al-Ma ‘ āshīq guards immediately upon receipt [of this document].

**Cattle rustling/ banditry** No specific mention.

**Social cover** No specific mention.

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