

**Country/entity** Yemen

**Region** Middle East and North Africa

**Agreement name** Letter to Presidential Mediation Council on Terms of Ceasefire from Sheikh al-Hajuri

**Date** 11 Jan 2014

**Agreement status** Unilateral document

**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>           | Ceasefire/related   |
| <b>Conflict nature</b> | Inter-group   |
| <b>Peace process</b>   | Yemen Inter-group Agreements  |
| <b>Parties</b>         | Sheikh Yahyā bin ‘Alī al-Hajūrī, Head of the Dar al-Hadith Madrassa in Dammaj.  |
| <b>Third parties</b>   | Presidential Mediation Council (recipient of the letter)  |
| <b>Description</b>     | Five point letter providing the conditions for the evacuation of the Dar al-Hadith Madrassa under al-Hajuri following sustained clashes with Ansar Allah (Houthi militias) in the area (approximately 6 months). The five points highlight the need for the evacuation of the students of the school within 4 days; a helicopter for al-Hajuri; reparations from the state for the loss of property and land; resettlement to Hudaydah governorate. |

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**Agreement document** [YE\\_140111\\_Letter from Sheikh al-Hajuri on Terms of Ceasefire\\_EN.pdf \(opens in new tab\) | Download PDF](#)

**Agreement document (original language)** [YE\\_140111\\_Letter from Sheikh al-Hajuri on Terms of Ceasefire\\_AR.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#)

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### Local agreement properties

**Process type** Isolated example

**Rationale** While there is a more general practice of local agreements between the Houthis and other groups at this time, this type of letter agreement following a ceasefire is a distinct or isolated example in the sense it is by one party to a mediator of a previous agreement. It could however also be considered as part of this broader culture of the time of local peace agreement-making due to the issues the letter seeks to address.

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

**Link to national process: articulated rationale** The local ceasefire agreement between Ansar Allah (Houthis) and the Salafists of the Dar al-Hadith Madrassa in Dammaj which precedes this agreement was mediated by the Presidential Mediation Council. In this context, the link would be inferred by the involvement of this state body acting as a mediator, which this agreement in the form of letter is addressed to. The provisions of this agreement also refer to the safe conditions which are necessary in order to implement both the safe evacuation of the students and the infrastructural guarantees which are an extension of the original ceasefire agreement, in this way reference to the 'state' and 'the council' implicitly refer to the function of the national body, and its role as an enforcer of the related ceasefire agreement/process. Page 1, 4. That we will be compensated with whatever the council and the state deems appropriate, god save them, to build some mosques, houses, wells, and health clinics. Page 1, 5. Fair compensation for losses of the war in terms of possessions, homes, and recognition of the martyrs of Dammaj as accounted to the state , and care and treatment for all those wounded during the first quarter of this year.

**Name of Locale** Dammaj Valley (Town)

**Nature of Locale** Other

**GPS Lat/Long (DD)** 16.886860, 43.814555

**Participant type** Local community/civilian group(s)/civil society organisations

**Mediator, facilitator or similar** Mediator or similar referred to

**Mediator (references)**

**Type of mediator/facilitator/similar** Unclear/Other

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## Local issues

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| <b>Ritual/prayer and process (including use of scripture)</b> | <p>Page 1, Untitled Preamble, In the name of Allah, the Beneficial, the Merciful</p> <p>Page 1, Untitled Preamble, Praise be to Allah and I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and peace and blessings be upon the messenger of Allah.</p> <p>Page 1, Untitled Preamble, Based on the words of Allah Almighty, ((and fitnah is worse than killing)) and the messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: ((that is good for those who have suffered fitnah)), we put to the venerated mediation council, Allah save them, the following:</p> <p>Page 1, 4. That we will be compensated with whatever the council and the state deems appropriate, god save them, to build some mosques, houses, wells, and health clinics.</p> |
| <b>Grievance List</b>   | <p>[Summary] (1) Ending all violence and conflict in the affected areas; both in Dammaj and in the areas involved in the transfer of students to Hudaydah (2) Immunity from Houthi threats to the people in Dammaj and those settling in new areas as part of the relocation (3) A safe exchange of those killed (4) Ensuring the continued existence and function of the religious institute Dar al-Hadith (5) Implementation of compensation to and covering: civic infrastructures, those killed in the conflict, their families and those wounded in the first quarter of the year.</p>   |
| <b>Cattle rustling/ banditry</b>                              | No specific mention.  |
| <b>Social cover</b>   | No specific mention.  |

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