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The Impact of **Local Conflicts** on the **Political Process** and **Political Stability** in Yemen

Analytical Report

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Table of Contents

No.	Details	Page No.
1	Executive Summary	3
2	Introduction	4
3	Definition of Local Conflicts	5
4	Patterns of Local Conflicts	5
5	Causes of Local Conflicts	6-8
6	The Implications of Conflicts on Public Life	9-10
7	The Impact of Conflicts on the Political Process	10-12
8	Potential Future Repercussions	13
9	Findings	13
10	Recommendations	14-15
11	- Recommendations for Local Authorities	14,1
12	- Recommendations for the Internationally Recognized	15,1
13	- Recommendations to Regional and International Partners and the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen	15,2

The Impact of Local Conflicts on the Political Process and Political Stability in Yemen

Executive Summary

This report examines the impact of local conflicts on the political process within the broader context of Yemen's conflict. It explores the interplay between local conflicts and their national and regional dynamics. It highlights how these conflicts jeopardize the future of the state and the prospects for sustainable peace. Findings of the report reveal a reciprocal relationship between the fragility of state institutions and the escalation of local conflicts. The weakened role of the state and its institutions has contributed to the emergence of local conflicts. These conflicts have, in turn, negatively affected official institutions. Moreover, the report identifies that the interests of certain political and social entities have at times been drivers of conflict, compounded further by regional and international interventions.

Local conflicts are fueled by the overlapping dimensions of local, national, and regional factors. These conflicts are no longer merely limited-scope conflicts. They have become part of a complex web of overlapping conflicts. This has been exacerbated by the conflicting interests of various actors. Local conflicts have undermined the legitimacy and role of official institutions. They also have disrupted the provision of basic services, deepened societal divisions and created a significant barrier to the political process and efforts to restore stability.

The report concludes that addressing local conflicts is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving the desired political stability in Yemen. Any sustainable peace process must consider the local dimensions of the conflict and their complexities.

Thus, in view of the findings of the report, it offers practical recommendations which can be summarized as follows:

strengthening local governance and empowering local councils; promoting inclusive community dialogues; enhancing and reforming the role of official institutions; and developing national reconciliation strategies with the support of regional states and the international community. External actors' interventions should be oriented toward the mitigation of conflicts.

Introduction

Yemen has endured a protracted conflict for several years, a struggle that runs parallel to a series of localized sub-conflicts. The intensity of these local conflicts tends to increase as the broader conflict persists. This is especially true with the waning role of state institutions. It is also affected by the emergence of new non-state actors and the deterioration of public services. Dwindling local resources make things worse. These circumstances are exacerbated by the state's failure to address these challenges effectively. Such conditions generate diverse incentives for certain actors to fill the vacuum left by the state in pursuit of their own interests. Some actors compete over interests and resources that would otherwise be managed as public goods by state authorities. This, in turn, contributes to the further weakening of official institutions. It engages them in secondary conflicts that divert their attention from their core responsibilities. It also provides pretexts for the continuation or expansion of conflict.

These local conflicts may result in a decline or even suspension of public services. They may lead to the undermining of road security and freedom of movement. There may be a rise of discriminatory rhetoric threatening coexistence, social cohesion, the political process, and overall stability. Such outcomes also erode the relationship between citizens and the state.

This report aims to highlight the impact of local conflicts on Yemen's political process and the achievement of political stability. It does so by examining the nature of these conflicts. It also examines their root causes and their repercussions on the overall situation within territories under the control of the Internationally Recognized Government of Yemen. The report excludes areas controlled by the Ansar Allah group. The conflicts in those regions have predominantly assumed a national character that transcends the local dimension. The primary focus of this analysis is the local dimension. Furthermore, significant field-based challenges and security constraints impede secure access to reliable information from these territories. This may potentially compromise data accuracy and source integrity.

This report adopts a descriptive methodology. It draws on both primary and secondary sources for data collection. A total of 29 in-depth interviews have been conducted with researchers, human rights activists, civil society actors, political figures, as well as local and tribal leaders from diverse backgrounds. These interviews covered four Yemeni governorates: namely, Hadhramaut, Shabwah, Taiz, and Aden. These governorates have been selected on the basis of the frequency and scale of conflicts experienced over the previous decade, geographic distribution, the diversity in the nature of conflict, and their varying collective experiences in managing such conflicts. Special attention was paid to ensuring the inclusion of women and youth in the consultation process. However, participant responses were not balanced, with five women participating and constituting 21,7 percent of the total respondents. In addition, a desk review was conducted of the principal studies and publications addressing local conflicts in Yemen. This review draws upon research centers and Yemeni, Arab, and international sources.

Given the inherent sensitivity surrounding conflicts, this report has deliberately avoided detailed characterization of positions, interests, underlying causes, or direct stakeholders involved in individual conflict cases. The primary objective of this report is to examine the impact of local conflicts on the political process and the efforts aiming to achieve stability in Yemen.

Local Conflicts in Yemen

In the Yemeni context, [local conflicts](#) are defined in this report as disputes that have a specific geographical scope. They arise among community components within a designated locale. These conflicts may be tribal, political, economic, or related to public services. They are distinguished by their deep entrenchment in local customs, traditions, and social norms. Often, such conflicts are embedded within a broader network of interconnected disputes. They are intricately intertwined with the dynamics of national and regional conflicts.

Patterns of Local Conflicts in Yemen

Local conflicts in Yemen vary in terms of their causes, consequences, modes of expression, and mechanisms of resolution. Broadly speaking, they can be categorized as follows:

1. **Conflicts over Resources:** These involve conflicts over land, water— as in Taiz ⁽¹⁾ for instance—and natural resources such as oil and gas as in Hadhramaut and Shabwah ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾.
2. **Political Conflicts:** These types of conflict relate to struggles for power and political influence among various political components and forces. This pattern is prominent in all four target governorates, as reported by the majority of respondents.
3. **Tribal conflicts:** These may occur between tribes themselves or between tribes and government authorities, often concerning the distribution of resources ⁽⁴⁾, as seen in Shabwah and Hadhramaut.
4. **Service-related conflicts:** These often arise as both a consequence and a catalyst for further conflict. Conflicts may stem from deteriorating services, for example, electricity in Hadhramaut ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾. They may also result from competition over [access to basic services](#) including water, electricity, education, and healthcare. Such conflicts are particularly acute in marginalized areas and densely populated cities. In these areas, the provision of services may be leveraged as a means of pressure against citizens or political forces whose demands do not align with those in control of service delivery ⁽⁷⁾.
5. **Conflicts of a [tribal or regional nature](#):** These are rooted in the political instrumentalization of regional or tribal differences, where historical and ideological factors play a crucial role. Initially manifesting within a broader political framework, such tensions often evolve into cover for conflicts at various levels. These

1 - Interview with Maha Awn, Head of Kayan Foundation for Peace and Development, Taiz, on 17 April 2025.

2 - Interview with Samah Al-Khadhr, Yemeni Women's Union, Shabwah, 23 April 2025.

3 - Interview with Mohammed Ba-lateef, Party Official, Hadhramaut, 26 April 2025.

4 - Interview with Madaniyah Adlan, politician at the Southern Transitional Council and the Hadhramaut Inclusive Council, Hadhramaut, 20 April 2025.

5 - Interview with Aswan Bahussain, Hadhramaut Inclusive Conference, Hadhramaut, 26 April 2025.

6 - Interview with Hussien Hashim, Security Official, Hadhramaut, 24 April 2025.

7 - Interview with Mohammed Ba-lateef, Party Official, Hadhramaut, 26 April 2025

sources. Occasionally, these escalate to violence and result in fatalities. In some instances, tribes have resorted to blocking roads to press specific demands ⁽⁸⁾.

In Yemen, local conflicts are interwoven within a complex web of intersecting realities. This makes it difficult to draw clear distinctions between tribal, political, or service-related conflicts. These patterns have become frameworks that are frequently mobilized to serve the divergent interests of competing actors. They are also used to attract public support and construct conflict narratives removed from genuine popular demands and national interests. This pattern has become particularly apparent since 2014, although it is rooted in earlier historical conflicts, the details of which fall outside the scope of this report.

The Causes of Local Conflicts in Yemen

After a decade of war in Yemen, the causes of local conflicts have become increasingly numerous and intertwined. This makes it difficult to distinguish them as separate issues. It is also difficult to address them effectively without returning to their roots. These causes are highly interdependent and overlapping. For the sake of clarity, they can be categorized into several key factors as follows:

- **The Fragility of the State and Weak Institutional Capacity**

In the wake of the full-scale outbreak of conflict in Yemen and its evolution into a conflict with regional dimensions, particularly following the intervention of regional actors on 26 March 2015, the already limited ability of the state to provide security and essential services to its citizens has suffered further erosion. This decline has resulted in diminishing public trust in the government and its institutions across many areas ⁽⁹⁾. In the absence of effective local governance and robust security institutions, non-state actors—often armed groups—have come to dominate and exert significant influence over local affairs ⁽¹⁰⁾ ⁽¹¹⁾. Local respondents frequently emphasized that “the proliferation of conflicts is rooted in the ongoing war and the absence of effective state authority” ⁽¹²⁾.

“There are also direct conflicts attributed to corruption, the lack of respect for the rule of law, lack of justice, and violations of human rights across various domains. The absence of the state, its bodies, government, institutions, and agencies compounds these issues” ⁽¹³⁾. It was noted that “if there were a functioning state, conflicts over territories would not arise, as these would simply be recognized as state-owned lands” ⁽¹⁴⁾.

8 - Interview with Khalid Saleh, Security Official, Shabwah, 19 April 2025.

9 - Interview with Abdul Hadi Al-Tameemi, Deputy Governor of Hadhramaut Governorate, Hadhramaut, 20 April 2025.

10 - Interview with Maha Awn, Head of Kayan Foundation for Peace and Development, Taiz, on 17 April 2025.

11 - Interview with a researcher and human rights activist, Taiz, 27 April 2025.

12 - Interview with Hesham Saeed, Government Employee, Taiz, 17 April 2025.

13 - Interview with Mohammed Qasem Nuaman, Head of the Yemen Center for Human Rights Studies, Aden, 21 April 2025.

14 - Interview with Khalid Saleh, Security Official, Shabwah, 19 April 2025.

With the dwindling presence of official institutions and the weakening of central authority, emerging power groups have sought to compete for oil resources. They have also sought to compete for strategic areas of influence, and both political and economic interests⁽¹⁵⁾⁽¹⁶⁾. This occurs alongside a lack of consensus among political and social forces. In some instances, political elites and parties use citizens' basic needs as a pretext to legitimize their conflicts. They mask elite power struggles under the guise of public demands⁽¹⁷⁾.

The majority of respondents characterized ongoing conflicts as essentially struggles for influence and interests among the political elite. Even if such core motivations are often concealed by claims of responding to public needs, these claims are used to garner citizen support. It was noted, for example, that the conflict sharply intensified following the change in local authority in Shabwah in ۲۰۲۲. The conflict also intensified after the resource crisis triggered by the Ansar Allah group's attacks on oil ports in Hadhramaut during the same year.

"Power and influence are central to these conflicts. To assert political positions, unlawful means are employed, including armed violence, threats against opponents, and manifestations of racism and regionalism among the population. The manipulation of public services is also used as a tool to assert political positions"⁽¹⁸⁾.

• Services and Rights

Demand for basic services and rights represents one of the direct causes of conflict. This is particularly true in the absence of effective official institutions⁽¹⁹⁾. Failure to respond to such demands has recently led to overt political conflicts⁽²⁰⁾. This is especially evident amid worsening humanitarian conditions, the distribution of power among political actors⁽²¹⁾ and the absence of a clear political horizon for the country⁽²²⁾. When these demands are unmet, alternative forms of expression often emerge. These issues then turn into burgeoning focal points of conflict, much like a snowball effect. This dynamic is frequently exacerbated by the use of media outlets affiliated with various parties to the conflict for purposes of political propaganda. Some observers noted that the provision of services is at times wielded as a means of political pressure, as was the case with electricity in Hadhramaut⁽²³⁾.

"They cut off all diesel supplies to the governorate, which are produced by PetroMasila Company located in the hills of Hadhramaut Governorate. They prevented crude oil

15 - Interview with Samah Al-Khadhr, Yemeni Women's Union, Shabwah, 23 April 2025.

16 - Interview with Mohammed Al-Hashirah, Secretary-General of the Student Association for Development, Shabwah, 24 April 2025.

17 - Interview with Hussien Hashim, Security Official, Hadhramaut, 24 April 2025.

18 - Interview with Mohammed Qasim Nuaman, Head of the Yemen Center for Human Rights Studies, Aden, 21 April 2025.

19 - Interview with a Leading figure in the Hadhramaut Inclusive Conference, Hadhramaut, 21 April 2025.

20 - Interview with Hussien Hashim, Security Official, Hadhramaut, 24 April 2025.

21 - Interview with Mohammed Ba-lateef, Party Official, Hadhramaut, 26 April 2025.

22 - Interview via Google Meet with Abdul Hadi Al-Tameemi, Deputy Governor of Hadhramaut Governorate, Hadhramaut, 20 April 2025

23 - Interview with Mohammed Ba-lateef, Party Official, Hadhramaut, 26 April 2025.

demands” (24).

• External and Regional Interventions

The governorates covered in this report are administered by local authorities that maintain close relations with influential regional actors on the Yemeni scene. These areas also witness competition for influence among unofficial armed groups, with such rivalries often reflecting broader conflicts that extend beyond the local context.

“Such power struggles are frequently a manifestation or extension of the competition between the two allied states in Yemen, each according to its own interests” (25). In this context, one respondent noted that some local forces do not act independently but rather serve as executive arms in conflicts that transcend the governorate’s boundaries. “Sometimes, factions loyal to these actors operate merely as proxies in local conflicts” (26). A female respondent expressed her concern regarding the role of these interventions in exacerbating, rather than resolving, the conflict. She noted, “external interventions only intensify the conflict and do not resolve it” (27). Several respondents believe that resolving these conflicts is not solely linked to local will. Rather, it hinges on a political decision made by influential international and regional actors involved in the Yemeni file. “The resolution of these conflicts depends on a political decision. This decision is held by the countries of the Arab Coalition, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It is also held by the Quartet Committee assigned by the Secretary-General, which includes the United States and the United Kingdom” (28).

• Other Causes

There are two key reasons that figured prominently in most respondents’ answers. They viewed the roots of the conflicts in Yemen on the national level as extending beyond local causes. The first, as described by the respondent, is “Ansar Allah-led coup against the Yemeni government,” which they regarded as the main cause. All subsequent causes were seen as mere consequences. “The immediate cause of the conflict is the military coup by the Ansar Allah Movement (Al Houthis). This coup triggered subsequent political, security, social, and economic crises that, in turn, gave rise to other conflicts” (29).

The second reason concerns the accumulation of historical discord among Yemen’s political forces. The effects of such discord persist today and shape how those actors interact and trust one another. “If we look back through history, we find that these

24 - Interview with a Leading figure in the Local Authority of Hadhramaut, Hadhramaut, 21 April 2025.

25 - Interview with a Leading figure in the Hadhramaut Inclusive Conference, Hadhramaut, 21 April 2025.

26 - Interview via Google Meet with a leading figure in the Local Authority, Wadi Hadhramaut, 20 April 2025.

27 - Interview with Gamilah Murai, of the Yemeni Socialist Party, Taiz, 17 April 2025.

28 - Interview with Mohammed Qasim Nuaman, Head of the Yemen Center for Human Rights Studies, Aden, 21 April 2025.

29 - Interview with Sarah Qasim, Researcher in Political Thought, Taiz, 17 April 2025.

conflicts are layers and remnants of unresolved or unaddressed historical grievances”⁽³⁰⁾.

The Implications of Conflicts on Public Life

Local conflicts have severely affected citizens' daily lives in various forms, depending on the intensity of the conflict. These impacts include armed violence, road blockades, suspension of educational processes, and damage to public property⁽³¹⁾. Repercussions also include hate speech expressed through sit-ins and demonstrations. Some of these cases reached judicial authorities⁽³²⁾. There has been incitement on social media platforms, prevention of service delivery, and restrictions on citizen movement. Electricity service interruptions have occurred⁽³³⁾, and gatherings have been forcibly prevented⁽³⁴⁾. Additionally, unofficial checkpoints have been established on roads, obstructing the flow of commercial movement⁽³⁵⁾. Services have been suspended as a pressure tactic. Citizens have faced sieges restricting their mobility⁽³⁶⁾.

In certain conflict zones, resources lie under the control of one party while their beneficiaries are governed by another. Resources are therefore instrumentalized as tools of siege and coercion, with ordinary people as the primary victims. A case in point is the water basins located in areas held by the Ansar Allah group in Taiz. Water from these basins is prevented from being pumped to the city that remains under government control⁽³⁷⁾.

These vital services are directly correlated with the local state of war or truce. As long as hostilities continue, fuel supply routes are cut and electricity as well as other services come to a halt. Once a cease-fire is reached, usually through tribal mediation, fuel is pumped and services resume⁽³⁸⁾. Conflicts also block humanitarian relief. The trucks of merchants carrying basic commodities are also blocked⁽³⁹⁾.

“The conflict has had a profound effect on citizens. Numerous development projects financed by the local authority from diesel price differentials have stalled. Key institutions such as hospitals, schools, service centers, and bakeries used to receive diesel at subsidized rates. Each of these facilities touches people’s daily lives. Their

30 - Interview with Dr. Sami Mohammed Qasim, Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Aden, Aden, 21 April 2025.

31 - Interview with Maha Awn, Head of Kayan Foundation for Peace and Development, Taiz, on 17 April 2025.

32 - Interview with a researcher and human rights activist, Taiz, 27 April 2025.

33 - Interview with Samah Al-Khadhr, Yemeni Women’s Union, Shabwah, 23 April 2025.

34 - Interview with Aswan Ba-Hussien, Hadhramaut Inclusive Conference, Hadhramaut, 26 April 2025.

35 - Interview with Hussien Hashim, Security Official, Hadhramaut, 24 April 2025.

36 - Interview with Hisham Saeed, Government Employee, Taiz, 17 April 2025.

37 - Interview with Sarah Qasim, Researcher in Political Thought, Taiz, 17 April 2025.

38 - Interview with Kholoud Mohammed, Yemeni Women’s Union, Shabwah, 19 April 2025.

39 - Interview with Khalid Saleh, Security Official, Shabwah, 19 April 2025.

owing to shortages of the diesel that powers generators”⁽⁴⁰⁾.

“Some children have been denied schooling because of vendettas”⁽⁴¹⁾.

“The conflict has destabilized conditions in the governorate. As a result, people have been displaced and infrastructure has been destroyed. Economic conditions have generally deteriorated. Both external and internal trade, including imports and exports, have become extremely difficult”⁽⁴²⁾.

Respondents in all the targeted governorates agreed on a fundamental dilemma: the underlying causes of these conflicts have not been resolved. Even when hostilities cease, the solutions adopted merely manage the symptoms. By doing so, the root causes remain unresolved, sowing the seeds of future violence. Conflicts have eroded the values of coexistence and fueled regional and tribal tendencies. This threatens social peace in the long term, especially under the influence of the media narratives disseminated by parties to the conflict.

“The reasons for conflict have not come to an end yet. Rancor and hatred persist across various governorates”⁽⁴³⁾.

“The causes of conflict persist and will not come to an end except with the presence of an effective state that is engaged with its citizens.”⁽⁴⁴⁾.

“Far from ending, the causes of conflict have deepened. What began as demands for rights has shifted into calls for self-rule”⁽⁴⁵⁾.

Generally speaking, the impact of conflict on citizens’ daily lives extends beyond immediate suffering. But rather it diverts their attention from vital national issues, diminishes their participation in peacebuilding, and strains their relationship with official authorities. Hence, it undermines stability, security, and development.

The Impact of Local Conflicts on the Political Process

Local conflicts are a direct reflection of the disintegration of the national political system. They feed on major divisions and reproduce them at the local level. They can be considered one of the immediate consequences of broader national conflicts⁽⁴⁶⁾. As the struggle continues, new local forces and alliances emerge. These are difficult to control. They deepen chaos and undermine state authority. This situation confuses both national and local authorities⁽⁴⁷⁾. It distracts them from their responsibilities and from addressing the crises resulting from the primary conflict. Local conflicts can escalate into national issues. For example, the water crisis in Taiz has become

40 - Interview with a Leading figure in the Hadhramaut Inclusive Conference, Hadhramaut, 21 April 2025.

41 - Interview with Yassir Mohammed, Ataq Court of Law, Shabwah, 21 April 2025.

42 - Interview with Gamilah Murai, of the Yemeni Socialist Party, Taiz, 17 April 2025.

43 - Interview with Dr. Sami Mohammed Qasim, Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Aden, Aden, 21 April 2025.

44 - Interview with Mohammed Qasim Nuaman, Head of the Yemen Center for Human Rights Studies, Aden, 21 April 2025.

45 - Interview with Mohammed Ba-lateef, Party Official, Hadhramaut, 26 April 2025.

46 - Interview with a researcher and human rights activist, Taiz, 21 April 2025.

47 - Interview with a leading figure in the Hadhramaut Inclusive Conference, Hadhramaut, 27 April 2025.

a subject of negotiation between the internationally recognized government and the Ansar Allah group ⁽⁴⁸⁾. Another example is the impact of the conflict in Hadhramaut on electricity services in Aden ⁽⁴⁹⁾. This occurred following the cessation of fuel supplies to Aden due to the conflict taking place in Hadhramaut.

Local conflicts have weakened the capacity of [official institutions](#) to perform their core functions. They have also constrained governance in Yemen. This has adversely affected the political process. It has diminished the unity and centralization of decision-making. It has encouraged local parties, particularly armed groups, to assert control over territory through force. It has also led to the emergence of contradictory projects. These projects do not promote the stability and unity of the country. This is true whether within a centralized or federal framework. Conflicting parties seek to expand their influence through broader regional alliances. This further exacerbates political and military fragmentation in the country ⁽⁵⁰⁾.

In light of the diminishing authority of the central state, there have been increasing calls for autonomy or federalism. These calls reflect radical shifts in Yemen's political structure. These changes are seen as “a dangerous indicator of the fragmentation of Yemen. Service-related demands and rights issues are transformed into political ones aimed at achieving self-governance. This may drive further disintegration and collapse” ⁽⁵¹⁾. “Internal conflicts provide opportunities for external intervention. These interventions impact the conflict and the overall situation in Yemen” ⁽⁵²⁾.

Moreover, local conflicts lead to “the spread of chaos and instability, and the disintegration of the social fabric. This results in a crisis of trust between the community and the government” ⁽⁵³⁾. It threatens national cohesion and undermines future reconciliation efforts. “Citizens' convictions have changed, leading to ideological and social divisions within even the same family. Divisions also occur among tribes and between security forces” ⁽⁵⁴⁾. Political components have emerged, fragmented and divided. This is true even among the local residents of the same region. As a result, “citizens are left lacking security and peace” ⁽⁵⁵⁾.

Local conflicts threaten the future of the political system in Yemen. They do so by undermining opportunities for national consensus. They weaken state institutions and create negative repercussions such as hatred and animosity. These conflicts also impact

48 - Interview with Maha Awn, Head of Kayan Foundation for Peace and Development, Taiz, on 17 April 2025.

49 - Interview with Aswan Ba-Hussien, Hadhramaut Inclusive Conference, Hadhramaut, 26 April 2025.

50 - Interview with Samah Al-Khadhr, Yemeni Women's Union, Shabwah, 23 April 2025.

51 - Interview with Hussien Hashim, Security Official, Hadhramaut, 24 April 2025.

52 - Interview with Abdul Hadi Al- Tameemi, Deputy Governor of the Hadhramaut Governorate, Hadhramaut, 20 April 2025.

53 - Interview with Maha Awn, Head of Kayan Foundation for Peace and Development, Taiz, on 17 April 2025.

54 - Interview with Al- Muqadam (dignitary figure) Omar Bashqar, Sheikh of the Al-Barshid Tribe and Member of the Local Council in the Governorate, Hadhramaut, 19 April 2025.

55 - Interview with Dr. Sami Mohammed Qasim, Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Aden, Aden, 21 April 2025.

the governance of legitimacy and the state⁽⁵⁶⁾. They generate societal and political divisions that hinder the establishment of a national consensus regarding Yemen's future. Furthermore, they obstruct the building of state institutions⁽⁵⁷⁾. They also entrench regional and tribal identities at the expense of national identity. This nurtures geographic and political divisions that push citizens toward narrower affiliations instead of national belonging. This dynamic obstructs the achievement of a comprehensive national project⁽⁵⁸⁾. It leads to a generation filled with grievances marked by racism⁽⁵⁹⁾, making local conflicts one of the foremost challenges to building a unified state. They undermine national consensus and exacerbate geographic and political divisions.

Local conflicts weaken the state. In the absence of central authority, local and tribal powers emerge. Alarming, tribalism has begun to manifest in various governorates, with conflicts increasingly taking on overtly tribal dimensions⁽⁶⁰⁾.

In this context, efforts to build peace and achieve political stability in Yemen face significant challenges. These challenges are due to the persistence and complexities of local conflicts. Political actors are preoccupied with conflicting [domestic agendas](#) and ties to regional powers.

Resolving these conflicts is seen as the cornerstone for achieving security, stability, and prosperity at both the governorate and national levels. This can be achieved by building the capacities of local communities and social figures to enhance mediation roles and attempt to reduce conflicts⁽⁶¹⁾.

Delayed intervention by authorities in resolving conflicts often complicates them further. At times, these authorities are viewed as part of the problem rather than the solution. "Issues faced by the governorate have primarily been service-related and rights-based, with the Presidential Council being the initial responder to these problems. Unfortunately, members of the Presidential Council have become parties to the conflict"⁽⁶²⁾. Authorities sometimes intervene too late. "Authorities intervened but they were unable to resolve conflicts as they have become complicated and beyond their control"⁽⁶³⁾. This situation erodes citizens' trust in official institutions. These institutions fail to fulfill their roles. This leads individuals to seek refuge in narrower affiliations such as tribal connections. At the same time, the authorities' focus on resolving conflicts without a comprehensive strategy limits their capacity to manage economic and social issues.

56 - Interview with Dr. Sami Mohammed Qasim, Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Aden, Aden, 21 April 2025.

57 - Interview with Maha Awn, Head of Kayan Foundation for Peace and Development, Taiz, on 17 April 2025.

58 - Interview with Samah Al-Khadhr, Yemeni Women's Union, Shabwah, 23 April 2025.

59 - Interview with Ahmed Ali, Head of Al-Maali Foundation for Development, Shabwah, 26 April 2025.

60 - Interview with Dr. Sami Mohammed Qasim, Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Aden, Aden, 21 April 2025.

61 - Interview with Naif Khamis, Director of Programs and Projects at Steps Foundation For Civil Development, Shabwah, 21 April 2025.

62 - Interview with a Leading figure in the Hadhramaut Inclusive Conference, Hadhramaut, 21 April 2025.

63 - Interview with Gamilah Murai, of the Yemeni Socialist Party, Taiz, 17 April 2025.

This exacerbates state crises and adversely affects economic, political, and social stability in the country⁽⁶⁴⁾.

The continuation of the repercussions of local conflicts in the future is highly probable unless genuine and radical solutions are implemented. Some respondents believe that certain local conflicts have later evolved into broader conflicts⁽⁶⁵⁾. Thus far, these conflicts have highlighted various negative social phenomena. These include racism and tribal and regional influences. These phenomena currently and will continue to impact social peace and overall stability in the country⁽⁶⁶⁾.

Potential Future Repercussions

The ongoing local conflicts in Yemen, if left unresolved without comprehensive solutions, pose serious risks. They could significantly impact the country's political, social, and economic landscape in various ways. The most prominent repercussions include the following:

- Deepening societal divisions and reinforcing regional and tribal identities at the expense of a unified national identity. This threatens social cohesion and complicates efforts to achieve national reconciliation.
- Weakening and further eroding state institutions, thereby undermining efforts to rebuild the state and restore political stability.
- Sustaining external interference in fueling local conflicts, turning Yemen into a battleground for regional and international rivalries.
- Deteriorating humanitarian conditions and exacerbating the suffering of citizens. This is due to using essential services as tools of pressure in the conflict.
- Increasing demands for solutions that alter the current structure of the Yemeni state, as outlined in the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference. This poses a serious risk to stability and national unity. It also paves the way for scenarios of collapse in the short and long terms.

Recognizing these implications and addressing them from now is a critical step towards building a stable, secure, and inclusive Yemen for all its citizens.

Findings

Based on the analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted to prepare this report, the key findings can be summarized as follows:

- Local conflicts in Yemen are no longer limited in scope. They have evolved into complex crises interwoven with political, economic, and social dimensions.

64 - Interview with Kholoud Mohammed, Yemeni Women's Union, Shabwah, 19 April 2025.

65 - Interview with Al- Muqadam (dignitary figure) Omar Bashqar, Sheikh of the Al-Barshid Tribe and Member of the Local Council in the Governorate, Hadhramaut, 19 April 2025.

66 - Interview with Mohammed Qasim Nuaman, Head of the Yemen Center for Human Rights Studies, Aden, 21 April 2025.

- The decline in the presence of state institutions has created an institutional vacuum exploited by local actors. This has led to weakening citizens' trust in the state as a unifying authority. This vacuum, further deepened by the conflicts, has eroded the capacity of formal institutions to perform their roles and shaken public trust in them.
- Local conflicts in Yemen have become deeply intertwined with regional and international dynamics. They have turned the country into a battleground for settling conflicts among regional powers. This further complicates local conflicts and makes their resolution more challenging.
- Local conflicts have exacerbated societal and political divisions in Yemen. They pose a threat to social cohesion and national unity. They also undermine prospects for building broad political consensus.
- These conflicts have disrupted essential services and worsened the humanitarian situation across most Yemeni regions. Basic services have been used as tools of pressure in the conflict, intensifying citizens' suffering and increasing economic and social pressures.
- As a result of ongoing conflicts, there has been a growing demand for alternative governance models, ranging from expanded decentralization to federalism and self-rule.
- Civil society, tribal and social leaders, and women have been the most active players in resolving local conflicts, except for those with broad political dimensions. In contrast, official authorities have generally failed to resolve local conflicts and, in some cases, have been accused of being part of it.

Recommendations

In light of the aforementioned findings, and in an effort to mitigate the impact of the current local conflicts and prevent the outbreak of further conflicts, the report presents the following recommendations and proposals. It should be noted that these recommendations cannot be successfully implemented if confined to the entities they are directly addressed to. They require coordination among all relevant stakeholders, with support from the international community and civil society.

To local authorities:

1. Reactivating local councils and granting them the necessary powers and resources to play their role in providing basic services and managing local affairs. This includes ensuring their financial and administrative independence to the extent appropriate to their role, and providing qualified personnel, thereby enhancing their ability to fill the void resulting from the weakness of central state institutions and preventing the infiltration of informal forces. In the future, fair representation of social and political components in the formation of these councils should be considered to avoid exclusion and enhance community trust.
2. Supporting community dialogue initiatives that include various local groups, such as tribes, women, youth, civil society organizations, and the private sector. Establishing community-based committees with advisory and mediatory roles can serve as effective mechanisms resolving local conflicts, leveraging both traditional methods

and modern approaches, while emphasizing their compatibility with the principles of justice and equity.

3. Ensuring the effective participation of youth, women, and civil society in local decision-making processes. They should also be involved in policy development and performance monitoring. They should take part in peace-building efforts, given their pivotal role in strengthening social cohesion and stability.

To the Internationally Recognized Government of Yemen:

1. Developing a national strategy that takes into account the interconnectedness between local and national conflicts and addresses the roots of the conflict through transitional justice mechanisms, compensation, and reconstruction. The current Consultation and Reconciliation Commission could be the nucleus of this strategy, to avoid duplication of structures and conflicting jurisdictions.
2. Restructuring the judicial and security apparatus to enhance their independence and efficiency, restore citizens' confidence in them, and make them capable of dealing with conflicts in sound legal ways.
3. Agreeing on a decentralized model that ensures a fair distribution of powers and resources between the center and other regions across the country. This model should provide a clear legal framework that defines the powers of each level of government and should take local specificities into account.
4. Formulating national policies for managing resources and basic services (such as water, electricity, education, health) within a framework of decentralization. Such policies should ensure fairness, efficiency, and flexibility in implementation. They should also activate the role of the Ministry of Local Administration and governorate councils in this context.
5. Adopting strict measures to combat corruption in the management of public resources, thereby enhancing citizens' trust and reducing the use of resources as tools in the conflict.

To Regional and International Partners and the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen:

1. Given Yemen's strategic geopolitical significance and the critical importance of its stability, international and regional partners must assume an active role in supporting local dialogue initiatives. These efforts should be viewed as fundamental entry points for addressing and resolving the broader national conflict. Regional and international partners must leverage their influence to facilitate consensus among Yemeni factions.
2. Directing aid towards sustainable development projects that enhance the resilience of local communities, while supporting the capacities of local actors, including local authorities and civil society organizations, and enabling them to play a pivotal role in peacebuilding efforts.
3. Strengthening coordination between international actors working in Yemen, in cooperation with the Office of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen. This is to ensure the integration of efforts and avoid duplication, while supporting local and national Yemeni solutions, and providing expertise and training in the areas of peacebuilding, transitional justice, governance, and accountability.

Introduction to partners



The Saba Youth Development Foundation is a civil society organization led by young people and women who represent a unified youth component that supports young people and women as active partners in development and peacebuilding. The foundation focuses on supporting the participation of young people and women in peacebuilding and political participation.



Save the Children

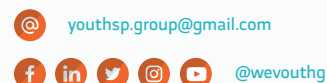
Save the Children is an international non-governmental organization. The organization implements humanitarian programs in more than 100 countries around the world and works through humanitarian and development cooperation programs, with intervention programs covering all community institutions, including civil society and local community institutions, to address the challenges facing children, youth, and local communities. The organization's programs and projects focus on meeting the basic needs of children and youth and building the capacities of local communities, including vulnerable communities.

In Yemen, Save the Children works in several governorates through its offices and national team in the areas of education, protection, health, food security, livelihoods, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene.



مجموعة الدعم الشبابية
Youth Support Group

Youth Support Group is a coalition of youth platforms and networks working in the field of peacebuilding (Youth for Peacebuilding Platform, Youth Consensus for Peace and Security, Youth Consultations of Aden, Yemeni Youth Leadership Network, and Shabab Wae Platform). It was established at the invitation of the Youth for Peacebuilding Platform and the Sheba Youth Foundation.



Analytical Report Consultant
Tawfiq Al-Jund

Editor of the Arabic section at the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, he has worked as a writer and editor for numerous Yemeni and Arab media outlets since 2000. He has prepared, either independently or in partnership with other researchers, a number of studies, research papers, and analytical reports related to Yemeni political history, human rights, social accountability, education issues, and gender.

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Sheba Youth Foundation for Development