

**Country/entity** Yemen

**Region** Middle East and North Africa

**Agreement name** Agreement between the Tribes of ‘Ubaydah and Ansar Allah

**Date** 4 Dec 2014

**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

<b>Stage</b>	Framework/substantive - partial
<b>Conflict nature</b>	Inter-group
<b>Peace process</b>	Yemen Inter-group Agreements
<b>Parties</b>	Ansar Allah (the Houthis) as the first party and the 'Ubaydah Tribes and those under their auspices in Ma'rib governorate from the valley to the city as the second party
<b>Third parties</b>	-
<b>Description</b>	Agreement between the Ubaydah tribes in the wadi and medina districts of Ma'rib, central Yemen and Ansar Allah (the Houthis) three months after the occupation of Sana'a by the Houthis. Agreement guarantees access and secures infrastructure facilities by the local tribes.

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**Agreement document** [YE\\_141204\\_Agreement between the Ubaydah Tribes and Ansar Allah\\_EN.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#) | [Download PDF](#)

**Agreement document (original language)** [YE\\_141204\\_Agreement between the Ubaydah Tribes and Ansar Allah\\_AR.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#)

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### Local agreement properties

**Process type** Formal structured process

**Rationale** The practice of a body of societal figureheads and tribal seniors representing the wider tribe and the people in the region they protect is a clear formally established local practice which also exists in this arrangement. The support from this body for the agreement seems clear, as they pledge to 'exert' all possible efforts in representing the tribal party to the agreement. This seems particularly decisive given the context of the original positions of the Abidah and Murad tribes. As two of the most powerful of the Ma'rib tribes, they originally formed an unlikely alliance putting aside historical differences to mount a resistance against Ansar Allah at the beginning of the conflict. There is a clear non-state element to this process with Ma'rib tribes being clear in their commitments to seek self governance, pushing for self representation in negotiations, with less concern around the control or authority of Hadi's central government. There is also a level of locally formalised practice in the agreement provisions in the form of mutual understanding around assurances that roads will be safely accessible, along with public infrastructure and that certain areas will be recognised as safe spaces immune from violent acts.

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

**Link to national process: articulated rationale** The wider peace process is not specifically mentioned in the text. There is also no further research which indicates a clear structural link to the national peace process.

**Name of Locale** Wadi and Medina districts of Ma'rib

**Nature of Locale** Region

**GPS Lat/Long (DD)** 15.473768, 45.321942

**Participant type** Local armed group  
Domestic religious organisation/leader or other elder

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

**Mediator (references)** No clear reference to a mediator or actor playing a supporting role of any kind. The representatives of the tribal party will not be considered as such, in view of the fact that as part of the broader tribal/regional network, their interests are involved and they are still clearly part of one side in the agreement.

**Type of mediator/facilitator/similar**

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## Local issues

**Ritual/prayer and process (including use of scripture)** Page 1, Untitled Preamble: In the name of him, the gracious, the merciful Praise be upon him, and prayer, and peace be upon his Prophet, and the God of the good and virtuous

**Grievance List** Page 1, Untitled Preamble: as well as to what this governorate has suffered in the past in regards to a denial of development, a lack of security and stability

[Summary] (1) A general effort by both parties to co-exist peacefully in conditions of cooperation, mutual respect, good relations and with recognition of brotherhood; (2) The securing of roads by the second party (Abidah tribes) for the first party (Ansar Allah/Houthis) and the second party will lead the enforcement of this, with all groups condemning any other group who launches an attack on the road; (3) The second party will ensure the security of public infrastructures and supplies, including: oil, gas, electricity and any other production; (4) The second party is expected to secure the roads from active banditry, preventing attacks or the creation of checkpoints. This will be part of ensuring that Muslims are not robbed, that travellers are not intimidated and public and private properties are safe from theft; (5) The second party must end affiliation with al-Qaeda and actively make efforts to cease assisting or supporting the group in any way; (6) use of Shari'ah to encourage the two parties to exist side by side with tolerance, freedom of expression and in peace; (7) all parties agree that areas and villages that have pledged involvement in this agreement must be viewed as areas free of fighting and the first party will not attack these areas, unless agreed upon with the other party; (8) If any of the terms set out are broken by any tribe or other faction, all groups involved in the agreement will be held responsible; (9) Every party involved recognises the right to freedom of expression and opinion by their members and this will not have any adverse impact on the party; (10) Both parties recognise that the agreement does not absolve provincial security and military officials from their responsibility of securing the province; (11) The first party will support the second party in securing outstanding monies on the basis of land rights and laws; (12) The first party will ensure the preservation of private property belonging to anyone who signs the agreement; (13) The first party more generally commits to begin renewed relations with any group that signs the agreement.

**Cattle rustling/ banditry** Page 2, Fourth: The second party is committed to secure the road and prevent any attacks or establish checkpoints or sectors in their country to rob Muslims, loot public and private property or intimidate travellers.

**Social cover** Page 2, Fifth: Fifth: The second party is committed not to accept al-Qaeda, include them, or provide them with assistance or support because they are a great danger to people and the country.