

**Country/entity** Yemen

**Region** Middle East and North Africa

**Agreement name** Agreement Between the Houthis and the Arhab Tribes

**Date** 9 Feb 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

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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>         | The Representatives of the Two Sides:<br>Sheikh Faris Mujahid Al Jabari<br>Sheikh Mansour Ali Al Hanq  |
| <b>Third parties</b>   | The Committee Tasked with Resolving the Conflict and Its Effects in Arhab:<br>Gen. Ali bin Ali Al Jaifi, Committee Head and Commander of Reserve Forces<br>Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Badr Al Din<br>Sheikh Rabees Ali Wahban<br>Sheikh Abdulkareem Ahmad Al Maqdashy<br>Sheikh Mardhi bin Ka'lan<br>Sheikh Naif Al Awaj<br>Sheikh Hunain Muhammad Qatinah<br>Sheikh Ahmad bin Ahmad Mijawhan<br>Sheikh Naji Murait<br>Gen. Abdulqadir bin Ali Hilal<br>Sheikh Omar Al Arhabi<br><br>Guarantors:<br>1. Sheikh Nabeeh Muhsin Abu Nashtan / Sheikh Muhammad Jaber Al Jamrah<br>2. Sheikh Muhammad Sawa / Sheikh Muhammad Nawfal<br>3. Sheikh Fadhel Al Qaseer / Sheikh Hayel Saeed Muhsin Marih<br>4. Sheikh Muhsin Abu Hadi / Sheikh Abdullah Muhammad Sinan<br>5. Hisham Radman / Sheikh Ali Alwan Al Marrani<br>6. Abdoh Mahmoud Al Subahi / Sheikh Dakam Muhammad Sawa<br>7. Muhammad Ali Al Mahras / Sheikh Mabkhout Bakir<br>8. Sheikh Ali Nawfal / Sheikh Ali Muhammad Radman |
| <b>Description</b>     | Ceasefire agreement between the Houthis and the Arhab tribes providing for ceasefire modalities, in addition to other points addressing: (1) return of fighters from outside the district; (2) reparation of martyrs by the state (as to end blood feuds); (3) freedom of thought, ideology; (4) the law and the constitution provide for the means of resolving disputes; (5) exchange of dead and prisoners.   |

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**Agreement document** [YE\\_140209\\_Arhab Agreement\\_EN.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#) | [Download PDF](#)

**Agreement document (original language)** [YE\\_140209\\_Arhab Agreement\\_AR.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#)

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## Local agreement properties

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| <b>Process type</b>  | Formal structured process  |
| <b>Rationale</b>   | <p>The agreement between Ansar Allah and the Arhab tribes displays the clear formalities and parts of a ceasefire process, whilst also outlining a number of clear culturally accepted local practices. Many of these additional provisions centre around cultural practices relating to combatants; ensuring the return of fighters with safe passage to other areas, respect of the dead involving financial reparations and mutual exchange of the deceased and their remains, with a general recognition for the need to have freedom of cultural and religious expression between groups in the post-agreement period. All of this is supported by a mediation committee, the composition of which follows local practices by the presence of sheikhs and societal notables affiliated to the signing parties. The distinction in this agreement however is that there is an explicit government presence in the mediation committee described in the document. The committee is to generally monitor and ensure the standard parts of the process or ceasefire modalities. The document also outlines that the committee will be responsible for supervising the movement of fighters back to their original locations. Further, the body supports the agreement in that it proposes that the martyrs are the responsibility of the state and that their families should therefore be paid reparations. The body also pledges to supervise the exchange of the dead and any remains. The state is also broadly described as being responsible for over all implementation of the agreement and where the provisions are unsuccessful, is outlined as being responsible for resolving any further issues in line with the law and the constitution.</p> |
| <b>Is there a documented link to a national peace process?</b> | T  |
| <b>Link to national process: articulated rationale</b>         | <p>While there is no direct reference to the wider peace process in the text and no further research which indicates a clear structural link to the national peace process, the document expresses a clear recognition of state responsibility in this agreement. It details a public issue emanating from another area which became the source of tension that started the conflict in Arhab. This detail appears to structurally tie the state to this agreement, both financially and in terms of implementation and monitoring. The Presidential mediation committee is also headed by General Ali bin Ali al-Jaifi, Commander of Reserve forces and advocated for by President Hadi. It seems implicit that the state will implement the values of the national process by enforcing national law and the constitution in order to resolve any further issues stemming from the process.</p>  |
| <b>Name of Locale</b>  | Arhab district, Sana'a governorate   |
| <b>Nature of Locale</b>  | Region   |
| <b>GPS Lat/Long (DD)</b>                                       | 15.370046, 44.198870   |
| <b>Participant type</b>  | Local armed group  |

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

**Mediator (references)** A Presidential Committee is described as having the responsibility of resolving the conflict and its effects in Arhab.

**Type of mediator/facilitator/similar**

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**Local issues**

**Ritual/prayer and process (including use of scripture)** Page 1, Untitled Preamble: With the help and guidance of Allah,  
Page 1, Seventh: They shall solve the problems between them that might, Allah forbid, appear in the future through dialogue, brotherly understanding, and the principles of brotherhood and forgiveness among all.

Page 2, Ninth: The implementation of the provisions of this agreement and adhering to them is guaranteed by the state and is its responsibility through Gen. Ali Al Jaifi, the commander of the Reserve Forces. Gen. Al Jaifi shall rely on Allah and on the committee to do this

Page 2, Ninth: We pray that Allah guide all of us during this new period of brotherhood, tolerance, coexistence, cooperation, and freedom of belief and affiliation.

Page 2, May Allah guide us all.

**Grievance List** [Summary] beyond a ceasefire and ceasefire modalities; agreement also provides for (1) all fighters and fighting groups must leave Arhab and return to their own areas/districts (2) reparations from the state for the families of martyrs (as to end blood feuds); (3) freedom of thought, ideology; (4) the law and the constitution provide for the means of resolving disputes; (5) exchange of dead and prisoners.

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

**Social cover** No specific mention.

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