



# Peace Process Support in Times of Crises

The National Dialogue Support Programme  
in Yemen 2014-16. A Project Report

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# Imprint

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## Abbreviations

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>AA</b>        | Ansar Allah   |
| <b>BF</b>        | Berghof Foundation  |
| <b>CDC</b>       | Constitution Drafting Committee   |
| <b>CoH</b>       | Cessation of Hostilities  |
| <b>DCC</b>       | De-escalation and Coordination Committee  |
| <b>ESC</b>       | Executive Security Committee  |
| <b>EU</b>        | European Union  |
| <b>FCO</b>       | Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)  |
| <b>FFO</b>       | Federal Foreign Office (Germany)  |
| <b>GCC</b>       | Gulf Cooperation Council  |
| <b>GIZ</b>       | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit   |
| <b>GPC</b>       | General People's Congress   |
| <b>ICG</b>       | International Crisis Group  |
| <b>JMP</b>       | Joint Meeting Parties   |
| <b>KSA</b>       | Kingdom of Saudi Arabia   |
| <b>MFA</b>       | Ministry of Foreign Affairs   |
| <b>NDC</b>       | National Dialogue Conference  |
| <b>NDSP</b>      | National Dialogue Support Programme   |
| <b>PNPA</b>      | Peace and National Partnership Agreement  |
| <b>SSG</b>       | Strategy Support Group  |
| <b>UAE</b>       | United Arab Emirates  |
| <b>UK</b>        | United Kingdom  |
| <b>UN OCHA</b>   | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs                                  |
| <b>UN OSESGY</b> | Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen                                      |
| <b>UNSC</b>      | United Nations Security Council   |
| <b>US</b>        | United States   |
| <b>YSP</b>       | Yemeni Socialist Party  |
| <b>ZIF</b>       | Center for International Peace Operations<br>( <i>Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze</i> ) |

# Executive Summary<sup>1</sup>

The National Dialogue Support Programme (run by Berghof Foundation in cooperation with the Political Development Forum Yemen) has been providing support to Yemeni stakeholders and mandated structures during the preparation and implementation of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) since early 2012. We continued to support the Yemeni peace and transition process between February 2014 and December 2016. The aim of the project was to strengthen and protect the political transition process by supporting locally-owned and inclusive structures and mechanisms for political dialogue, informed decision-making and trust- and consensus-building. While our overall aim remained to support the Yemeni peace and transition process, we repeatedly had to respond to the political dynamics in Yemen which changed dramatically and at times very quickly between February 2014 and December 2016.

In early 2014, the first phase of the project focused on supporting the implementation and follow-up discussions of the NDC (*Phase I – February to July 2014: NDC Implementation and Follow Up Discussions*). Over the following months, we provided support to the Yemeni parties by establishing inclusive dialogue formats at the national and regional/local level to continue the discussion around the implementation of the NDC outcomes, the rebuilding of the state and the transition to federalism. Main mechanisms were the multiparty Focus Group, which was established to discuss and build consensus among the main Yemeni parties about the many questions that remained open after the NDC. At governorate level, local multiparty dialogue fora (which had been established in 2012/2013) were transformed into regional dialogue structures to support the involvement of the newly created regions in the federalization process. In addition, the programme offered process support and thematic expertise to key Yemeni stakeholders and mandated structures in the implementation of the NDC outcomes (among others to the Constitution Drafting Committee and the National Body).



Sana'a, Yemen | Rod Waddington | CC BY SA 2.0

When the situation deteriorated during the second half of 2014 and Ansar Allah effectively took control of Sana'a, a phase of crisis management began (*Phase II – August to December 2014: Crisis Management*). Major developments during this phase were the signing of the National Peace and Partnership Agreement in September 2014 and the discussions around the formation of a new government, ending with a compromise on a technocratic government announced in November 2014. During this period, the project focused on helping the Yemeni parties in their efforts to prevent a complete derailing of the transition process. It provided support to the Yemeni parties through the multiparty dialogue mechanisms at national and regional level. In addition, a high-level deadlock-breaking meeting was organized in Potsdam at the end of 2014, which produced a number of recommendations to address the obstacles in the transition process and to support the implementation of agreements among the Yemeni parties.

Ultimately, however, the situation could not be contained and the conflict escalated amid provocative actions of the parties in early 2015. A full-scale war ensued between the Yemeni government with support from the international coalition led by Saudi Arabia on the one hand, and Ansar Allah and troops affiliated with former president Ali Abdullah Saleh on the other hand (*Phase III – January to June 2015: Military Escalation of the Conflict*). While the beginning of the airstrikes in March 2015 put many programme activities temporarily on hold, the multiparty Focus Group decided to reconvene one month later. Representatives of the various parties agreed that they would like to use this inclusive dialogue mechanism to try to limit the impact of the war and to support efforts for a political solution to the conflict. In parallel, the regional dialogue fora started discussions around de-escalation measures and peacebuilding activities at the local level.

A first round of UN-led negotiations took place in Geneva in June 2015 but could not yield any results. In the aftermath, attempts intensified to prepare a ceasefire and to find a political solution to the conflict, among others through another round of UN-led negotiations taking place in Biel in December 2015 (*Phase IV – July 2015 to April 2016: Peace Efforts I*). During this phase, the Berghof Foundation/NDSP started a series of inclusive and informal consultation meetings in order to complement and support the official UN-led negotiations. The meetings were organized in collaboration with the UN, but as track II events they allowed for an open and constructive engagement of the Yemeni participants. As of November 2015, regular consultation meetings were organized outside the country around key topics of the peace process. In parallel, the multiparty Focus Group (which had renamed itself into Strategy Support Group (SSG) to reflect its focus on supporting the peace process) continued its discussions in Sana'a. This way, a complementary but inclusive discussion could be upheld between parties present in Sana'a and Yemeni stakeholders who were based outside the country for political and security reasons. The programme further organized multiparty discussions and worked on concepts related to the formation of a military and security committee to oversee the withdrawal of armed forces and handing over of weapons as foreseen in UN SC 2216. Based on inputs from key Yemeni military experts from both sides, the SSG discussed and further developed these concepts in Sana'a and bilateral meetings were organized with party representatives outside Yemen. In addition, efforts continued at the local level in Taiz where members of the regional forum, with support from the local coordinator and the team in Sana'a, managed to support confidence-building measures and facilitated an exchange of prisoners between the parties.

Direct talks had started between Ansar Allah and Saudi Arabia in March 2016 on de-escalation measures at the border. The preparations to a new round of UN-led negotiations in Kuwait thus began with a number of positive signals (*Phase V – April to August 2016: Peace Negotiations and Failure*). Although it seemed that a solution was close, the talks faltered and failed in July/August 2016. In the preparation phase and during the official negotiations, BF/NDSP facilitated a number of complementary informal consultation meetings (focusing on the “Southern issue”, the transition roadmap and the political dialogue) and parallel discussions of the Strategy Support Group in Sana'a. The conceptual suggestions on the Military and Security Committee had been taken up and discussed as a compromise option by the delegations in Kuwait and some initial agreement could be reached. Despite attempts by the UN to activate de-escalation structures at the local and national level, the Kuwait process could not contribute to easing the situation in Taiz where fighting intensified. The programme sustained its local peacebuilding efforts in Taiz and various committees worked on preparing local ceasefire arrangements and sought to organize further exchanges of prisoners.



Intense efforts were undertaken to revitalize the official negotiations during the second half of 2016 based on the Kerry Initiative, the more intense engagement of the so called Quartet and the UN-Roadmap which was presented to the parties based on the Kerry Initiative (*Phase VI – August – December 2016: Peace Efforts II: The Roadmap Process*). But in the end all these initiatives failed and the UN-led process entered a serious deadlock in late 2016. Despite the paralysis in the official process, BF and NDSP were still able to bring together representatives from all Yemeni parties. Informal consultation meetings continued in Sana'a, Jordan and Germany. Topics included the importance of strengthening local administration for service provision and local security, and options to support an inclusive peace and reconciliation process (focusing also on the design of the process after an initial agreement). In addition, consultations took place with representatives from Taiz in order to discuss mechanisms to ease the situation there and to develop options for the implementation of an eventual local ceasefire. Following this meeting, efforts increased at the local level in Taiz and cooperation was intensified with a committee of influential sheikhs who were cooperating with our local team to support the opening of passages, temporary truces and prisoners' exchange.

In terms of its objectives and impact, the project achieved in many aspects as much as the political situation allowed and evolved into a unique support mechanism which could be sustained despite the full-scale escalation of the conflict. In 2014, we effectively provided support to the Yemeni parties in establishing multi-stakeholder mechanisms at national and local level and offered additional process support to key Yemeni stakeholders and mandated structures in the implementation of the NDC outcomes. When the situation deteriorated towards the end of 2014 and in early 2015, the programme adapted flexibly to the political dynamics and focused its efforts on supporting the Yemeni peace process.

Based on strong relations of trust, which had been established with the Yemeni parties, their requests for support continued and inclusive meetings could be convened also in an overall situation of poisonous mistrust prevailing between the conflict parties. Ideas and suggestions developed in the framework of our activities were repeatedly taken up in the context of the UN-led peace process. The Yemeni parties kept referring to the outcomes of the discussions organized by the programme and acted on recommendations developed during the meetings. Several mechanisms had initially been established for shorter periods but were extended based on the expressed needs and requests by Yemeni and international actors. The utility of the services offered was thus apparent regarding the content, structures/mechanisms and feedback from the participants in the respective activities.

Due to the political and security situation worsening in 2014 and the outbreak of the war, most international actors withdrew from Yemen. Embassies closed and international NGOs stopped their engagement. With the UN activities being bound (and at times limited) by SC mandates and internal or political hurdles, one of the assets of the project was its ability to respond to needs quickly and flexibly. Despite the impact of the war on the team and the enormous logistical, political and security challenges, the programme could continue to respond to needs and demands as they arose, at times with little time for preparation and still in a very cost-effective way.

Throughout the project implementation, close cooperation and regular information exchange was upheld with the Federal Foreign Office and the German Ambassador to Yemen. Close coordination was established also with the UN OSESGY throughout the project's duration and the UN requested continuous and intense support from the programme. These close and cooperative relationships were a major asset for the project activities, allowing it to feed directly into the UN-led process and to evolve into a unique support mechanism able to engage continuously with all Yemeni parties across the divide.

# 1 Introduction: the National Dialogue Support Programme

## *Background of the Report*

This report details the work of the National Dialogue Support Programme (NDSP) in Yemen during the period of 2014-16. Originally set up in 2012, the NDSP provided process, facilitation and logistical support, negotiation and dialogue trainings, as well as analysis papers, coaching and public education materials to the National Dialogue Conference (NDC). In 2014, when the NDC came to its end, we refocused our activities to strengthen and protect the political transition process in Yemen by supporting the implementation of the NDC as well as follow-up dialogue processes. However, the implementation of the NDC outcomes faltered during 2014 and the underlying political conflicts escalated gradually into a full-blown military conflict during the last months of 2014 and early 2015.

The outbreak of the war led to substantial and rapid changes in the political and security environment in which the NDSP had to operate. By publishing this report, we want to document these challenges and share some lessons learned on how to deal with them (as well as how to adapt a support programme).<sup>1</sup> Beyond its main purposes of documentation and information-sharing, we think that the report offers some interesting insights into innovative and responsive track II dialogue formats and their potential to complement official negotiations. Based on a substantive and mutual collaboration with the UN Special Envoy for Yemen and his office, we can also draw some initial lessons on the benefits and challenges of this very interesting track I / track II collaboration. Finally, as the NDSP is based on a partnership initiative of the Berghof Foundation with the Political Development Forum in Yemen, we also would like to shed some light on the benefits of such a partnership between an insider and an outsider actor. Thus, we hope that the report will be of interest not only to the experts, peacebuilders and diplomats working on Yemen, but also to a broader community of practitioners, researchers and activists who are interested in supporting peace and conflict transformation processes.

## *The National Dialogue Support Programme*

Since its inception in June 2012, the National Dialogue Support Programme (NDSP) has offered technical and process-related support to the main political stakeholders and mandated structures in Yemen. Initial support was already given in March and May 2012. First, when the Berghof Foundation and the Political Development Forum Yemen brought key Yemeni decision-makers together in Germany (the so-called “Potsdam Meeting”) and, second, when five major factions of the Southern Movement met in Jordan (Dead Sea Meeting). On both occasions, those in the meetings discussed the framework, main principles and mechanisms of the national dialogue process.

After these successful first steps, the NDSP was established as a German-Yemeni partnership initiative in order to provide ongoing support: 1) during the preparation phase leading to the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), 2) during the 10-month period of the NDC and – starting in early February 2014 – the NDC follow-up and implementation phase. When the situation deteriorated throughout the second half of 2014 and the war broke out in early 2015, the activities of the programme were adjusted to support efforts to find a political solution to the conflict in Yemen.

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<sup>1</sup> The report is based on an end-of-project report to the German Federal Foreign Office.

Since the escalation of the crisis at the end of 2014, we organised a series of inclusive multiparty consultations in- and outside the country to support consensus-building among the Yemeni actors. These high-level meetings are organized in close cooperation with the Office of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen to complement and strengthen official negotiations through an informal track II dialogue process. The project further provided thematic support to help the Yemeni parties to develop concrete problem-solving mechanisms and to identify pathways not only to end the war but out of the crisis. In this context, crucial issues such as interim security measures and confidence-building mechanisms, the restoration of state institutions, elements of a transition roadmap, mechanisms of inclusion and the division of powers, the “Southern issue”, the organization of a future political dialogue in Yemen, as well as ways to strengthen local governance structures were addressed and discussed.

While this report only covers our period of engagement until 2016, the Berghof Foundation and the Political Development Forum, with the continued support of the German Federal Foreign Office, are maintaining activities to strengthen and contribute to efforts to revive the Yemen peace process in the framework of the follow-up of this project.<sup>2</sup>



Protestors gathered at Change Square, in the capital city of Sana'a | Photo by Sallam | CC BY SA 2.0

### *Structure of the Report*

Chapter 2 gives a brief outline of the reasons for the Yemeni war, the main actors, and the main developments since the start of the transition in 2011. In addition, it summarizes the main objectives, principles and approaches of our engagement (our strategic approach). In Chapter 3, we will describe and categorize the main political developments in Yemen during 2014 to 2016. In Chapter 4, we will outline how we adjusted the project objectives and provide a comprehensive summary of the activities undertaken throughout the project duration. Finally, chapter 5 will assess the impact of the programme and its utility for the Yemeni stakeholders. We conclude this report with a brief outlook beyond December 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding current activities, see <http://pdsp-yemen.org/> or <https://www.berghof-foundation.org/nc/en/programmes/middle-east-north-africa/supporting-political-dialogue-and-transition-in-yemen/> (retrieved 8 June 2018).

## 2 The Yemen War and Our Strategic Approach

The current Yemeni war started, in the first place, based on a conflict around power between the political elites of the North, or to be more precise: of the Northern highlands. There are, however, a number of additional structural conflicts adding additional layers and dynamics to the war:

- a) The previous governance system established under the former (and long-time) president Ali Abdullah Saleh was based on clientelism and political-economic patronage; with declining oil and (external) rent incomes this system became dysfunctional and the downside of weak state institutions (lack of basic services, economic development, etc.) began to show. This prepared the ground for public and elite discontent, culminating in the mass demonstrations of 2011;
- b) Yemen displays a strong regionalism where the centre (Sana'a) and the surrounding highlands for a long time exploited the resources and income of the South, the lowlands and the coastal areas. While regional grievances have been high in almost all regions of Yemen, frustration in the Southern regions (the former South Yemen) was particularly high as the South has been a formerly independent state. Many, if not the vast majority, of the Southerners perceived the unification of 1990 as failure (especially after the civil war of 1994);
- c) Regional competition, especially the Saudi-Iranian struggle for hegemony over the region, impact on the country's politics.

To give the reader a better understanding of the main actors in the Yemeni conflict arena, *Figure 2* provides a snapshot of the main parties and leaders.

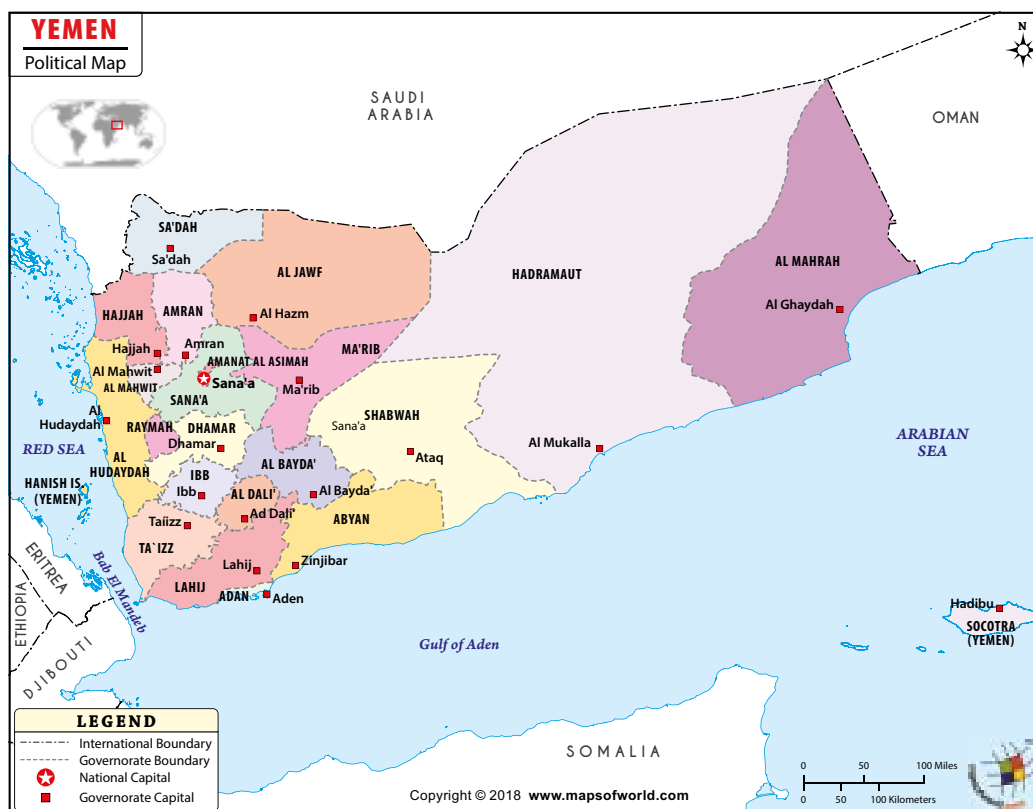


Figure 1: Yemen Political Map (Source: Maps of World)

Figure 2: Main actors and party leaders (Source: Berghof Foundation).

## Yemeni political parties and movements and their leaders

### General People's Congress (GPC) Party

The GPC was the ruling party in Yemen since its foundation in 1982 and dominated political life, government and parliament.

#### Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh<sup>3</sup>

Ali Abdullah Saleh took over the presidency of North Yemen in 1978 and founded the General People's Congress (GPC) Party in 1982. He became president of the unified Republic of Yemen from 1990 until early 2012, when he stepped down according to the transition agreement brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC Initiative). However, protected by an amnesty regulation, Saleh still exercised substantial power. His alliance with Ansar Allah brought him back on the political stage.

#### President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi

Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi is the current internationally recognized president and a former military commander from the south. He was vice president in Ali Abdullah Saleh's government for two decades. After the Yemeni revolution, the GCC initiative foresaw the transfer of power from Saleh to Hadi. In February 2012, Hadi was elected president in a sole candidate referendum. In 2015, Hadi fled the country and remains in exile (mostly in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

#### Islah Party

The party was founded by Muslim Brotherhood members, tribal leaders and religious scholars in 1990 and supported by Saudi Arabia. A socially conservative party, it advocates for the application of Islamic practices to reform the Yemeni society.

#### Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar

Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar is a general of the Yemeni army and has been on different sides of Yemeni politics during his long military service. For the most part, he was close to the Islah party. In 2011, Mohsen ended his long-term alliance with Saleh and expressed his support for the protest movement. After the takeover of Sana'a by Ansar Allah and Saleh in 2014 and 2015, he was leading the military operations of the internationally recognized government. In April 2016, he was appointed vice president.

#### Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP)

The party was established in 1978 in the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in the South. It was a union of a number of socialist parties' organizations and national fronts. It was the ruling party in the South until Yemen's unification in 1990. After unification, the party lost in importance; programmatically it changed gradually to democratic socialism. Together with Islah and some other smaller opposition parties, the YSP is a key member of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP).

#### Ansar Allah ("The Houthis")

Ansar Allah is a religious movement that advocates the revival of Zaydi and Hashemite order. Its origins are in Saada, where the founder of the movement, Hussein al-Houthi, was able to gain support among the youth and tribes. Since 2004, Ansar Allah (or: "the Houthis") have been engaged in several rounds of war with the Saleh government in Sana'a. While they participated in the NDC during 2013-14, they felt that some of their key concerns have not been addressed, which contributed to a new war since 2014/early 2015.

#### Abdul Malik Al-Houthi

Abdul Malik al-Houthi was born in 1982 in the Northern province of Saada. His father, Badreddin al-Houthi, was a notable religious scholar of Yemen's minority Zaydi Shia sect. His older brother was Hussein al-Houthi, a member of parliament, who founded "the Houthis" movement (Ansar Allah) in 2004. After Hussein's death, his brother Abdul Malik became the leader of the Houthi movement.

#### The Southern Movement (Al-Hirak)

The origins of the Southern Movement date back to the civil war of 1994, which many Southern leaders considered as the end of the Yemeni unification. However, al-Hirak appeared as a social and political grassroots movement only in 2007, when a group of former state employees and (forcefully) retired military officers started to protest. The movement afterwards radicalized and started calling for the liberation of the South and for an independent Southern state.

<sup>3</sup> *Editorial remark:* In December 2017, Saleh was killed after he had declared the end of his alliance with Ansar Allah, which led to a short, but fierce battle in Sana'a.

In the course of 2011, when massive street protests took place and the danger of a civil war was looming, regional and international mediators negotiated a settlement that would allow for a substantial political transition process in Yemen. In November 2011, the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Initiative was finally signed. *Figure 3* shows the main steps foreseen in this initiative:

**Yemen’s transition process according to the implementation mechanism of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative:**

- ≡ Resignation of President Saleh (who was granted an amnesty for past activities) and transfer of power to former vice-president Hadi
- ≡ Forming of a national unity government composed of the GPC (the president’s party) and the main opposition block JMP
- ≡ Presidential elections (with President Hadi as the only candidate)
- ≡ Holding of a National Dialogue Conference (NDC) for a period of 6 months
- ≡ Drafting of a new constitution based on the outcomes of the NDC; approval of the constitution by public referendum
- ≡ New election law passed by parliament;
- ≡ Finally – after two years – the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections.

Figure 3: GCC Initiative, based on BF sources.

According to the implementation mechanism of the GCC Initiative, the NDC was the centre-piece of the transition process as it was meant to provide the basic framework and main principles for solving Yemen’s long-standing internal conflicts and for the drafting of the new Yemeni constitution.

The NDC had a hopeful beginning and a strong buy-in from most political and regional actors (with the exception of the Southern independence movement), but in the end it failed to create sufficient trust among the parties that the political transition process would address the root causes of the conflicts. In addition, after concluding the NDC, there was a lack of mutually accepted (inclusive) mechanisms – and indeed little political interest – to manage the gradually escalating violence in a peaceful manner.

*Figure 4* shows the main steps taken during the transition phase and includes the outbreak of the war and major negotiations.

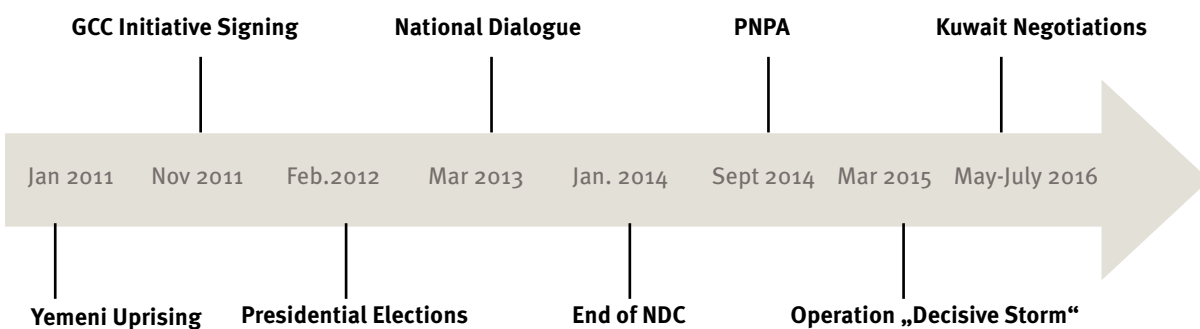


Figure 4: Timeline of Yemen’s transition and negotiation processes; source: BF.

### *Our Strategic Approach and Principles of Engagement*

Originally, the aim of the NDSP was to strengthen and protect the political transition process in Yemen by supporting locally-owned and inclusive structures and mechanisms for political dialogue, informed decision-making and trust- and consensus-building. With the outbreak of the war, our objectives had to be slightly modified to

- ≡ help the conflict parties to identify options to overcome deadlocks in the peace process at the national level as well as at the local/regional level;
- ≡ support building and strengthening consensus on key issue areas of the peace process (interim security arrangements, restoration of state institutions, and resumption of political dialogue); and
- ≡ provide hands-on expertise and thematic capacity-building for the Yemeni stakeholders on issues related to the peace and political transition processes.

In addition, a number of key values and strategic considerations (principles of engagement) have informed our work:

First, *substantive impartiality*: We do not prescribe specific solutions to Yemen's internal problems but offer a range of options, without prejudgments. Especially in the face of the massive polarizations caused by the war, we consider it as highly important that there are (formal and informal) spaces where Yemenis can meet, reflect and be in dialogue with each other.

Second, *inclusivity*: We engage with all relevant stakeholders and do encourage discussions that are responsive to the concerns and interests of all Yemeni parties. Based on the criteria of participation that were agreed upon for the NDC, we engage with representatives from the main political parties and movements, but also with independent women and youth. In our consultation meetings, we aim for a balance between high-level decision-makers (who have the power to implement) and independent personalities (who have the power and freedom to think out-of-the-box).

Third, *Yemeni-led process*: In addition to our impartiality, we also consider it very important that responsibility for and ownership of the outcomes of our activities rest with the Yemeni stakeholders. The fact that NDSP is a partnership initiative with PDF Yemen was very helpful in this regard; and allows for an innovative complementarity between insider and outsider perspectives.

Fourth, *complementarity with track I*: Our activities are based on close coordination and complementarity with the UN to ensure that we support the formal negotiations (UN) and the international community (particularly through the German FFO). A close track II / track I collaboration serves the purpose to prepare the parties and the UN as main facilitator of official negotiations, to identify areas of consensus and to generate new ideas and problem-solving mechanisms (especially in situations of deadlock).

Fifth, *flexibility and responsiveness*: NDSP has been able to adapt to rapid changes in the political environment and to act quickly upon requests of urgent and/or specific support.

### 3 Political Developments: From Dialogue to War to Negotiations to War

#### *Fast Changing Realities in Yemen*

During the project phase at the centre of this report, from mid-February 2014 until end of December 2016, the political situation in Yemen changed dramatically and at times very quickly. While our overall project aim (to strengthen and protect the political transition process in Yemen by supporting locally-owned and inclusive structures and mechanisms for political dialogue, informed decision-making and trust- and consensus-building) remained valid, we repeatedly had to respond to changing political developments.



Consultation Meeting in Beirut, July 2016 | © Berghof Foundation

In the following, we will outline the main phases of the project according to the evolving political dynamics:

- Phase I: February – July 2014 (NDC Implementation and Follow-up Discussions)
- Phase II: August – December 2014 (Crisis Management)
- Phase III: January – June 2015 (Military Escalation of the Conflict)
- Phase IV: July 2015 – April 2016 (Peace Efforts I: Searching for a Political Solution)
- Phase V: April/May – August 2016 (Peace Negotiations and Failure)
- Phase VI: August – December 2016 (Peace Efforts II: The Roadmap Process)



## Phase I: February – July 2014 (NDC Implementation and Follow-up Discussions)

This first project phase was marked by two major developments: first, at the political level the implementation process of the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) had started; second, the political-military confrontation between Ansar Allah (“the Houthis”) and the Islah party escalated in the North (mainly around Amran) and spilt over to Sana’a and the political elites.

### *Implementation of the NDC Outcomes*

The implementation process of the NDC started very quickly in early 2014. Immediately after the official conclusion of the NDC on 25 January 2014, President Hadi on 27 January established a committee consisting of 22 members to determine the number of regions in the new federal republic of Yemen. This committee concluded on 10 February that the new Yemen should be divided into six regions. This decision – which has been described as hasty by some and as pre-fabricated by others – increased the existing divisions and lack of trust between the parties, especially between President Hadi and Islah on the one side and Ansar Allah and the wing of the GPC that was affiliated to former president Saleh on the other side.

On 8 March 2014, a Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) was appointed and started its work, which, during the first half of 2014, included a one-week retreat in Taiz (in March 2014) and a 17-day retreat in Germany (June 2014). In April, President Hadi appointed the 82 members of the “National Body for the Monitoring and Supervision of the Implementation of the NDC Outcomes” (National Body) whose major task was to ensure that the draft constitution would be in line with the spirit and outcomes of the NDC.

However, the mandate and composition of the National Body have been widely criticized and Ansar Allah refused to participate. In consequence, the National Body has not been able to perform its task.

### *Multiple Security Challenges and Threats*

During this phase, the security situation in the country remained very fragile, with multiple armed clashes and Al-Qaeda operations in different parts of the country. In the North, the armed confrontation between militias linked to the Houthis (Ansar Allah) and their tribal allies mainly from the Bakil tribal confederation on the one hand and Islah party militias linked to the al-Ahmar family and Salafi forces on the other hand could not be stopped despite numerous mediation efforts. The security situation became extremely tense when Ansar Allah forces took over the capital of Amran on 8 July, and killed the army chief, who was also a high-ranking member of the Islah party. This raised concerns of whether the Houthis would aim at attacking Sana’a, too. While the situation in Amran gradually stabilized, new confrontations between both parties occurred in al-Jawf and Marib governorates.

In the South, the situation remained tense, although no major armed confrontations with the Southern Movement occurred. With regard to Al-Qaeda-linked cells, intensive military operations in Shabwa and Abyan drove Al-Qaeda forces towards Hadhramaut. Al-Qaeda showed on several occasions that they are operative in Sana’a (targeting governmental infrastructure but also diplomats and other internationals) and continued to target military and security personnel and infrastructure in the South (especially in Hadhramaut). In the meantime, deep internal frictions became apparent in the formerly ruling GPC party, especially during the month of June, when it seemed as if troops loyal to President Hadi and of former president Saleh would clash with each other.

### *Lack of Trust and of Unified Political Vision*

These ongoing clashes underlined how little the main actors in Yemen did trust each other and how internally divided they were. The GPC was split between members loyal to Hadi and to Saleh; the coalition of opposition forces JMP was deeply divided on some policy issues (i.e. the South) between Islah and YSP; the traditional parties continued to marginalize Ansar Allah, which also

resorted increasingly to military options instead of political means. Mistrust was still generally very high between the North and the South. While the NDC had provided a forum to address this lack of trust and to engage in creating common platforms and options, since January 2014 there had not been any effective mechanism that could fulfil this role.

### *UN Security Council: Sanctions Committee and Panel of Experts*

On 26 February 2014, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2140 that affirmed its commitment to support the political transition process. But it also strengthened its ability to enact targeted sanction by establishing a Sanctions Committee and a Panel of Experts with a view to apply measures against individuals or entities engaged in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability of Yemen.



A member of the armed houthi movement currently in control of the capital following a coup in Sept. 2014 | Rod Waddington | CC BY SA 2.0

## **Phase II: August – December 2014 (Crisis Management)**

The second phase of the project started in summer 2014 and lasted until the end of the year. While it included some positive developments such as the completion of the draft constitution, the overall political situation deteriorated further. There were many efforts to solve and manage the crisis in these months, but they finally failed.

### *The Take-Over of Sana'a by Ansar Allah*

In July 2014 President Hadi and the government announced the reduction of fuel subsidies. Ansar Allah used this opportunity to mobilize their followers and large parts of the frustrated population who felt affected by the price increase. These demonstrations deepened the existing divides in the population and underlined the high level of frustration with the lack of tangible improvement of development and living conditions resulting from the NDC. They further showed Ansar Allah that they had a political base in Sana'a; ultimately, the demonstrations forced the government to backtrack and it opened the doors for Ansar Allah to expand its effective political and military rule into Sana'a (e.g., by controlling main streets and strategic institutions such as ministries, security infrastructure and media). During September, fighting in Sana'a increased (with reportedly more than 300 people being killed) while efforts were ongoing to break the

impasse. With support from the UN Special Envoy Jamal Benomar, these negotiations ended on 21 September 2014 with the signing of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement (PNPA) by the major Yemeni parties.

### *September 2014: The Peace and National Partnership Agreement (PNPA)*

The PNPA was initially seen as a good compromise as it addressed key weaknesses and gaps in the post-NDC transition roadmap and encompassed not only political, but also military and economic steps to be taken; among them the following agreements:

- ≡ appointment of two additional political advisors to President Hadi, one from the Southern Movement, one from Ansar Allah;
- ≡ expansion of the Shura Council and a gradual increase of Ansar Allah representatives in central and regional governance institutions;
- ≡ the establishment of a new government (led by a non-partisan prime minister) based on a consensus between all major forces;
- ≡ a review of the lifting of subsidies and other economic policies (with a focus on state budgeting policies and corruption practices);
- ≡ modifications and a stronger mandate for the “National Body for the Monitoring and Supervision of the Implementation of NDC Outcomes”;
- ≡ withdrawal of Ansar Allah forces from Sana’a and a gradual demobilization process under the framework of the NDC outcomes (especially from the Security and Army Restructuring Working Group).

Although the PNPA created a temporary safety net to the political transition process, the problem quickly re-emerged, showing that the main issues had not really been resolved: Implementation of agreements remained slow and the mistrust of the parties undermined a new effective partnership. Ansar Allah consistently flagged the shortcomings of the transition, especially regarding those issues that were of crucial importance to them, such as the number and shape of the newly created regions and their effective integration into the decision-making structures. Meanwhile, the other parties blamed Ansar Allah for not adhering to the agreement (by withdrawing their security forces or effectively starting to demobilize their forces). Other parties claimed that this would ultimately prove that Ansar Allah were not interested in real power-sharing but simply wanted to deepen and extend their control over the country.

Irrespective of the different motivations of Ansar Allah and the other parties, the increasing level of mutual “blaming” and the exclusionary nature of respective interpretations of the Yemeni parties show clearly that the level of trust between them was at a record low.

### *The Formation of a New Government in October and November*

Following the signing of the PNPA, the deepening level of mistrust became obvious again when, on 7 October, President Hadi nominated his chief of staff (and former head of the NDC Secretariat), Ahmed Ben Mubarak, as new prime minister, a move that was fiercely rejected by Ansar Allah. This step raised questions as to whether or not consultations had taken place before or whether informal agreements simply had not been honoured. After Mubarak stepped back, Khaled Bahah was appointed as prime minister by President Hadi on 13 October – this time with the agreement of the Houthis.

The formation of the government required another long round of negotiations. While it was agreed that the government should be primarily a technocratic government, the initial negotiations were based on a formula of 9-9-6-6+4 (regarding the distribution of seats: nine for GPC, nine for JMP, six for the Houthis, six for Hirak and four for President Hadi). However, intensive negotiations continued about the nomination of particular personalities.

At the end, the new government was announced on 7 November and included 35 ministers (of whom one was a close NDSP project partner, and three were members of the multiparty Focus

Group on State Reform). After initial reservations from GPC and Ansar Allah, parliament approved the government on 12 November.

Tension quickly increased again, however, after the UN Security Council approved sanctions against former president Ali Abdullah Saleh and two Houthi commanders on 7 November.

### *UN Security Council Sanctions*

On 7 November 2014, the same day the new Yemeni government was announced, the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee (based on UNSC 2140) blacklisted Yemen's former president Ali Abdullah Saleh and two Houthi rebel military leaders Abd al-Khaliq al-Houthi and Abdullah Yahya al-Hakim for threatening the peace and stability of the country and obstructing the political process.

### *High-Level-Consultation Meeting in Potsdam (Potsdam II)*

Against the background of the increasing tensions described above, the NDSP invited the senior leadership of the main Yemeni parties (at the level of secretary generals and presidential advisors), including the Southern Movement (from inside and outside the country) to a consultation meeting in Potsdam, Germany. The overall aim of the meeting was to strengthen and safeguard the political transition process in Yemen and to re-establish consensus on the principles and mechanisms for the implementation of the NDC outcomes.

Discussions focused on challenges of the political transition processes and obstacles in the implementation of past agreements. Although some differences (especially with regard to the "Southern issue") could not be bridged during the – occasionally very emotional – discussions, the meeting ended finally with a number of concrete and important recommendations for an improved implementation roadmap. These recommendations confirmed the need to move the transition process ahead, including some modifications of and additions to the mechanisms that had been agreed upon so far (for more details on Potsdam II, see also *chapter 4. "Activities"*).

### *Conclusion of the Draft Constitution*

Although the last months of 2014 had demonstrated the imminent difficulties and fragility in the Yemeni transition process, the year seemed to end on a good note. On 31 December, the chair of the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC), whose 17 members had spent a lengthy retreat in the United Arab Emirates (from 22 October onwards and extended several times), announced that the CDC had finalized the draft constitution. (Although it still took another week before the draft was officially handed over to President Hadi). Rumours quickly emerged that the constitutional draft would include the division into six regions which sparked intensive discussion and fierce criticism from Ansar Allah. The division of the regions, Ansar Allah argued, was not part of the CDC's mandate but would have to be determined by the National Body as agreed in the Peace and National Partnership Agreement.<sup>4</sup> This perceived „breaching“ of the CDC mandate by insisting on the constitutional division into six regions as defined after the NDC was one of the triggers of the serious deterioration of the political process in January. (Others argued that the regions were not actually part of the constitutional draft but merely mentioned in a provisional clause, which was to be discussed by the National Body.) Nonetheless, if the political crisis which unfolded in January 2015 and which escalated into a full-scale civil war can eventually be ended, the regions' issue remains one of the main topics to be resolved among the steps towards completing the transitional phase (based on a revision of the draft constitution in a political dialogue process following a peace agreement).

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<sup>4</sup> Article 10 of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement states: "The National Body, through its oversight of the Constitution Drafting Commission, shall, among other things, address the structure of the state in a manner that adheres to the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference."

## Phase III: January – June 2015 (Military Escalation of the Conflict)

During this phase the political and military situation escalated into a full-fledged war, first between Yemeni parties and then with involvement of neighbouring and regional actors. A first ceasefire and negotiation process was initiated by the UN in February/March 2015 but faltered quickly.

### *Full-Scale Political Escalation*

The downward spiral of escalating violence, which had already started in the second half of 2014, continued in the first half of 2015 – and with increasing speed. The tight security grip of Houthi and allied forces over Sana'a and provocative incidents such as the temporary kidnapping of the NDC general secretary and presidential chief of staff, Ahmed Ben Mubarak, in January 2015 had poisoned the relations between the parties. When fighting broke out around the presidential palace and led to the resignation of the government and President Hadi (on 22 January), it had become nearly impossible to reach a sustainable negotiated solution out of the crises. After President Hadi was able to escape his house arrest in Sana'a and to move to Aden on 20 February, a new cycle of negative events unfolded: In Aden, President Hadi withdrew his resignation (stating that he had resigned under pressure), declared that he still is the legitimate president and called the political events that had unfolded since September 2014 an illegal coup (including the UN-brokered Peace and Partnership Agreement of 21 September 2014). On the other hand, the Houthis and allied forces declared the reinstatement of the president as an illegal act and proclaimed that they would consider him (and everyone who engages with him) as a criminal.

These dynamics of mutual de-legitimization, coupled with competing narratives about the course and causality of events, ultimately led to a complete breakdown of trust between the main parties. Although UN-led talks in Sana'a were ongoing in February and March, they could not achieve a substantial breakthrough, which could have contained the downward spiral of events.

### *The War Begins*

This polarized situation escalated into full-scale war in the second half of March 2015. Two major events contributed to this development: a) on Friday, 20 March 2015, four suicide bombers attacked two major mosques in Sana'a leaving more than 140 people dead and 380 injured; and b) Ansar Allah forces were successively mobilized to move into Aden under the slogan of fighting Al-Qaeda. As a consequence, President Hadi was forced to leave Aden, and a coalition of nine countries, led by Saudi Arabia (including Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Sudan), and (initially) backed by the USA, started its military operations on 26 March 2015. A first phase, "Operation Decisive Storm", ended on 21 April, but was quickly followed by a second military operation "Operation Restoring Hope" which was only partly interrupted by a five-day humanitarian ceasefire in mid-May.

In parallel to intensive aerial bombardments conducted by the Arab coalition, heavy internal fighting broke out in several places all over the country. The fiercest battles took place in Aden and Dhale (mostly between armed groups and militias who were related either to President Hadi or to the Southern Movement on one side and militias related to Ansar Allah and regular army units that were loyal to former president Saleh and/or Ansar Allah on the other side) and in Marib, Dhamar and Taiz (in these places it was mostly Islah-affiliated militias and related tribes fighting with militias related to Ansar Allah and army units that were loyal to former president Saleh and/or Ansar Allah).

### *UN SC Resolution 2216*

On 14 April 2015, the UN SC adopted Resolution 2216 by 14 votes and 1 abstention (Russia). Resolution 2216 imposed sanctions on individuals who it said were undermining the stability of Yemen and demanded that all parties in the embattled country, in particular the Houthis, immediately and unconditionally end violence and refrain from further unilateral actions that threatened the

political transition. The Council also demanded that the Houthis withdraw from all areas seized during the latest conflict, relinquish arms seized from military and security institutions, cease all actions falling exclusively within the authority of the legitimate government of Yemen and fully implement previous Security Council resolutions.

Acting under chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Council also called upon the Houthis to refrain from any provocations or threats to neighbouring states, release the minister of defence, all political prisoners and individuals under house arrest or arbitrarily detained, and end the recruitment of children.

On 15 April 2015, UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Jamal Benomar, stepped down amidst criticism from the Yemeni and regional parties. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed was appointed as successor shortly afterwards.

### *First Round of Peace Negotiations in Switzerland*

While first UN-brokered efforts failed in May, consultations with the government in exile and political parties from inside Yemen took place in Geneva (proximity talks) from 15 to 19 June 2015. Although the fact that the meetings took place was by itself a significant step, it was not possible to achieve any concrete outcomes.

## **Phase IV: July 2015 – April 2016 (Peace Efforts I: Searching for a Political Solution)**

During this phase, efforts to prepare a ceasefire and another round of negotiations intensified. In order to complement the official UN-led negotiations, the Berghof Foundation/NDSP started a series of inclusive and informal consultation meetings. The meetings were organized in collaboration with the UN, but as track II events to allow for an open and constructive engagement of the Yemeni participants.

### *Second Round of Peace Negotiations in Switzerland*

After the first round of talks in Switzerland (Geneva) had failed, it took six months before the Yemeni parties would come back to the table. The second round of consultations in Switzerland (Biel) from 15-20 December 2015 was more successful than the first round. The parties agreed not only to have direct negotiations but also on key agenda items. They formed some working groups, among them a De-escalation and Coordination Committee (DCC).

However, violations of the ceasefire showed that the mistrust among the parties remained high, particularly on the ground. Especially the Hadi/coalition forces tried to gain ground by a series of military offences. At the end, they resulted in little territorial gains. Several factors thus seem to have contributed to a paradigm shift in the beginning of 2016: On the one hand, the frustration about little military achievements on the ground was intensified by internal disputes between President Hadi and his former vice president and prime minister, Khaled Bahah, between Islam and Salafis as well as between forces loyal to Hadi and Southern resistance forces. It further became apparent that KSA on the one side and UAE on the other side increasingly followed different strategic approaches and pursued diverging objectives. In addition, the fact that the militarily much stronger KSA-led coalition could not contain the cross-border attacks launched by the Houthis on an almost daily basis also played a role. On the other hand, the Houthis seemed to increasingly act on the basis of an understanding that the main party that could guarantee their political survival are the Saudis.

In early March 2016, both sides started to engage in substantial direct negotiations in the South of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. While they agreed on a local truce along the border, humanitarian assistance for the Saada region and prisoner exchange, many observers were certain that key political topics were discussed as well. These direct Houthi-KSA negotiations contributed positively to the third round of negotiations that started on 21 April in Kuwait.



Consultation Meeting, Jordan, December 2015 | © Berghof Foundation

In order to support the UN-led negotiation efforts, the programme had initiated consultation meetings with Yemeni eminent personalities in collaboration with the Office of the Special Envoy to support and complement the process at track II level.

### *BF Consultation Meetings in Jordan and Lebanon*

After a meeting between the Berghof Foundation/NDSP and the UNOSESGY Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed in Berlin in July 2015, a closer collaboration at the track II level was initiated. BF/NDSP started a process of informal consultation with eminent Yemeni personalities in order to generate new ideas and to discuss options and mechanisms for the negotiations, political dialogue and transition process that is to follow.

The first meetings were organized in Jordan and held in November 2015 (“elements for a political solution to end the war and implementation of UNSC Res 2216”), in December 2015 (“the restoration of state functionality”) and in March 2016 (“strengthening inclusivity and partnership as key elements in the Yemeni peace process”). The UN OSESGY and the German FFO participated in these meetings as observers.

During this period, BF worked also on concept papers related to the formation of a military and security committee to oversee the withdrawal of armed forces and handing over of weapons as foreseen in UN SC Res 2216. Yemeni military experts wrote the papers and Yemeni parties discussed them (inter alia in Cairo and Sana’a, January and February 2015) (see also *chapter 4. “Activities”*).

## **Phase V: April/May – August 2016 (Peace Negotiations and Failure)**

This phase began with a number of very positive signals leading up to and during the official negotiations in Kuwait. A solution seemed very close. But by July, the talks had faltered and, again, failed.

### *The Kuwait Talks*

The talks in Kuwait (the third round of peace talks after negotiations from 15 to 19 June 2015 in Geneva and from 15 to 20 December 2015 in Biel) started on 21 April 2016. Direct talks between

Ansar Allah and representatives of KSA had facilitated these negotiations and helped setting the frame for a cessation of hostilities between the warring parties (which officially started on 10 April). However, the direct talks were still going on when the Kuwait talks were supposed to start (on 18 April) and the CoH was violated on several occasions. The AA and GPC delegation(s) thus initially refused to join the talks. Only after high-level political interventions (including from the UN SG), did the delegations accept and the talks started three days late.

Based on UN SC Resolution 2216, the talks focused on five main agenda points: a) the release of prisoners and other confidence-building measures, b) the withdrawal of AA, c) the handing over of medium and heavy weapons, d) the restoration of a functioning state and e) the resumption of political dialogue. From the beginning, the talks were marked by low trust and limited willingness to overcome initial negotiation positions. The government delegation was demanding substantial progress on the security track before being willing to consider discussions on the political track. The AA/GPC delegation on the other side requested a comprehensive solution encompassing both, the political and security track. The latter asked for an agreement on a national unity government which would oversee the withdrawal of armed formations and to which they would hand over their weapons. The UN suggested a sequenced process, which they hoped would be acceptable to both sides.

As a result of the lack of trust between both sides even the structure of the talks (working in three committees, with the first focusing on security, the second discussing the political track and the third seeking agreement on confidence-building measures) faltered. The delegations refused to meet in plenary and the talks were held unilaterally with the UN as go-between (proximity talks). Further direct and indirect negotiations between AA and KSA resulted in some compromise ideas, but alienated both the GPC delegation and the government delegation alike.

Yet despite several weeks without substantial progress, there was still high hope that an agreement could be reached. On 6 June, a high-ranking UAE official even declared in front of his troops that the war in Yemen had ended and that the UAE troops would disengage. As became clear later on, this announcement was premature. The military situation on the ground escalated further and the parties were not able and willing to bridge their differences. As a result, the UN OSESGY declared a temporary break in talks at the beginning of July and asked the parties to consult with their leadership hoping to create a new positive dynamic. After the delegations returned to Kuwait on 16 July, however, it became evident that they were lacking the will or ability to compromise.

### *The Failure or Interruption of the Talks*

As the military conflict escalated further on the ground (especially in and around Taiz), AA and GPC announced on 28 July the formation of a “High Political Council” that would replace the Supreme Revolutionary Committee, comprising 10 members equally divided between the Houthis and GPC to “manage the country’s affairs” in all political, military, economic and administrative matters. The government delegation concluded that this step constituted crossing a red line and decided to leave the negotiations. The UN OSESGY denounced it as a unilateral step in violation of UN SC Res 2216, too.

In a last attempt to save the negotiations, the UN OSESGY provided both sides with a peace proposal that outlined a possible sequencing of security and political actions required by both sides. While the government quickly agreed to the proposal, the AA and GPC delegations refused it and demanded a comprehensive solution. On 6 August, the UN Special Envoy announced the end of the talks but suggested their resumption after one month.

### *BF Consultation Meetings*

In the preparation phase and during the official negotiations, BF/NDSP facilitated a number of complementary informal consultation meetings. These focused on the Southern issue (“mechanisms for inclusion of the Southern question in the political dialogue and transition processes”, May 2016 in Jordan), the political dialogue and transition roadmap (“the resumption of the political dialogue and the roadmap for the political transition process”, June 2016 in Jordan) and on



the political dialogue (“the political dialogue: main principles, formats and mechanisms, July 2016, Lebanon) (for more details see *chapter 4. “Activities”*).

## Phase VI: August – December 2016 (Peace Efforts II: The Roadmap Process)

During this phase, efforts undertaken aimed to safe or revitalize the official negotiations, but in the end all initiatives failed. The humanitarian situation worsened dramatically during 2016.

### Impact of the War on the Yemeni Population in 2016

At the end of December 2016, according to the UN OCHA, more than 14 million Yemenis struggled with access to sufficient food (54% of the total population of 26 million), out of which more than 7 million were actually malnourished. The overwhelming majority of the Yemeni people lacked access to safe water or adequate sanitation and were without access to health care. In addition, basic infrastructure (health facilities, roads, electricity, etc.) have been destroyed, and the bombardments and internal fighting resulted in – at least – 46,353 casualties – with 7,354 people killed and 38,999 persons injured. The number of displaced has grown to over 3.3 million. Diseases such as cholera were spreading, with more than 12,000 cases reported (all figures from UN OCHA, 31.12.2016).

### *Formation of the “Quartet”*

After the failed negotiations, the US, UK, KSA and UAE intensified (and formalized) their regular meetings, a format which became known as the Quartet. It seems that the quartet states wanted to coordinate peace (and war) efforts and identify options to push for a political solution. While the Quartet was very active during the last weeks of the Obama administration – especially with regard to the so-called Kerry Initiative – it lost importance after the US election in November 2016.

### *The Kerry Initiative and UN Roadmap*

On 25 August 2016, following a meeting of foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the UK, the US and the Special Envoy in Jeddah, US Secretary of State John Kerry, announced an agreement on a “renewed approach to negotiations” that would “simultaneously” address security and political tracks. While the initiative thus constituted a significant step towards the AA/GPC position, its details were not made public. According to information obtained by the BBC (Arabic), the initiative foresaw a tight timetable of implementing the sequenced roadmap (as elaborated by the UN) and a transfer of power from President Hadi and his vice president (Ali Mohsen) to a newly formed national salvation government. The fact that both, President Hadi and Ali Mohsen, were to resign led to a strong refusal by the Hadi government.

Nonetheless, the UN Roadmap remained the most important blueprint for the negotiations and the UN Special Envoy elaborated the initiative further. However, during 2016 both sides lacked the necessary trust and flexibility to accept it as a framework for another round of talks.

### *BF Informal Consultation Meetings*

Despite the official deadlock, BF and NDSP were still able to bring representatives from all Yemeni parties together. During an informal consultation meeting in Jordan in October 2016, the importance of strengthening local administration for service provision and local security was discussed; followed by a meeting of “wise Yemeni men and women” on “options to support an inclusive peace and reconciliation process” (Berlin, December 2016) (see *chapter 4. “Activities”* for more details).

## 4 Objectives and Activities of the National Dialogue Support Programme

The overall aim of the project was to strengthen and protect the political transition process in Yemen by supporting locally-owned and inclusive structures and mechanisms for political dialogue, informed decision-making and trust and consensus building.

For this larger purpose, we pursued three specific project objectives:

- ≡ First, to support and strengthen formally mandated mechanisms at the centre, but also regional fora, in their efforts to follow-up with inclusive political dialogues on key issues of the political transition process in order to take informed and consensual decisions.
- ≡ Second, to support trust and consensus-building through informal multiparty mechanisms, which help to understand the diverse interests of the key stakeholders and to generate options as complementary contribution to the formal decision-making bodies.
- ≡ Third, to provide hands-on expertise and thematic capacity-building for the Yemeni stakeholders on issues related to the political transition process.

As a *result of the war* that broke out in early 2015, we had to *slightly modify* the first two objectives (the third objective remained valid). From then on, we pursued:

- ≡ First, to help the conflict parties identify options to overcome deadlocks in the peace process at the national level as well as at the local/regional level.
- ≡ Second, to support building and strengthening consensus on key issue areas of the peace process (interim security arrangements, restoration of the state, and resumption of political dialogue).
- ≡ Third, to provide hands-on expertise and thematic capacity-building for the Yemeni stakeholders on issues related to the peace and political transition processes.

For a more detailed description of the project implementation, we cluster the support activities in the following three areas according to their main focus and their target level (mandated structures/high-level party leadership, capacity-building activities with second tier party representatives and technical experts, local level/community outreach):<sup>5</sup>

1. Support to mandated structures (NDC follow-up and implementation mechanisms) & high-level political/peace process support and consensus-building activities (4.1)
2. Informal dialogue facilitation, problem-solving/capacity-building activities and technical support (4.2)
3. Support to regions, local level peacebuilding and outreach activities (4.3)

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<sup>5</sup> These clusters reflect modifications of objectives and activities during the implementation period in light of deteriorating political dynamics and the outbreak of war.

## 4.1 High-Level Political/Process Support and Consensus-Building

### Support to Mandated Structures (NDC Follow-Up and Implementation Mechanisms)

#### *NDC General Secretariat*

After the conclusion of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in January 2014, the General Secretariat (GS) of the NDC continued to serve as support structure for those structures mandated to implement the NDC outcomes, namely the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) and the “National Authority for the Implementation of the NDC Outcomes” (in brief: National Body). On request of the NDC General Secretariat, we continued our close cooperation with the NDC General Secretariat through support to its personnel (technical personnel and facilitators for the three working groups of the CDC), the provision of expertise as well as particular support activities (such as a reflection and strategy workshop).

From 28 February to 2 March 2014, we organized a workshop focused on lessons learned and strategy-building with key personnel of the General Secretariat and the heads of the NDC working groups. Its aim was to build on previous experiences and support the NDC General Secretariat in adjusting its role towards supporting the implementation of the NDC outcomes. The workshop further gave room to discuss challenges and needs related to the provision of technical assistance to the mandated NDC implementation mechanisms in a situation of political uncertainty and lack of clarity with regard to the implementation of the NDC outcomes.

In early 2015, several meetings took place with the General Secretariat, which had requested a close cooperation with our programme on outreach and public information activities to prepare for the constitutional referendum. Several activities were in the pipeline involving the regional fora in various governorates (see below for a summary on the regional fora). With the situation escalating further in January 2015, however, these planned activities could not materialize.

#### *Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC)*

On several occasions, we drafted and provided resources and materials in support of the work of the CDC. In March 2014, we compiled a mapping/briefing paper for the CDC on comparative cases of constitution-drafting processes in countries that underwent substantial political transitions as well as an overview of related handbooks and resource articles. In addition, we provided to the CDC members a folder with specific background material that was developed by our programme during the NDC (for the state-building working group) on comparative aspects of federal systems, power-sharing, resource-sharing, and transitional challenges.

From 25-27 May 2014, we supported the General Secretariat as main partner in designing and implementing a preparatory workshop for the CDC ahead of its study trip to Germany (organized by the GIZ). In this context, we organized support by two senior Yemeni experts on local governance in federal systems (Ameen al-Maqtari) and natural resources and resource-sharing models (Rashid al-Kaff). In addition, the CDC was presented with discussion outcomes of the Focus Group on State Reform related to federalism and discussions were organized between representatives of the Focus Group and the CDC members (please see below for more information on the Focus Group).

During May 2014, we supported the GIZ in the preparation of the CDC study trip to Germany with background information, advice on additional resource persons and a mapping of the key tasks and most crucial challenges faced by the CDC (written by a CDC member).

On request of the CDC, we identified an international expert (from Ethiopia) who stayed with the CDC from 31 August to 4 September 2014 to provide input and expert advice on a number of different issues related to federalism. A particular focus of discussion was on the role of the second chamber in federal systems and on the role and special status of federal capitals (namely Sana’a and Aden).

### *Commission to Consider and Address Land Issues in Yemen (Land Commission)*

In the context of the implementation of the 20 points to build trust and foster reconciliation, which had been expanded into the 20+11 points during the NDC, the Yemeni Land Commission had been established in January 2013 by Presidential Decree No. 2. The mandate of the commission was to “to address issues related to land (...) in the Southern Governorates in order to complete the National Dialogue and National Reconciliation and as required by the Public Interest.” With only few of the demands included in the 20+11 points having been realized during the NDC, the Yemeni government was tasked with following up on the implementation after the conclusion of the NDC.

Based on previous support from a former German Trust fund expert, which BF had organized for the Land Commission already in 2013, further support was requested for the Land Commission through the Embassy and Federal Foreign Office. From 30 August to 7 September, BF organized a study tour for the Land Commission to Germany in cooperation with UNDP Yemen to provide technical assistance to the commission. During the week-long study trip, the commission met with senior German experts to gain insights about the German experiences in land and property restitution and had the opportunity to internally reflect on and discuss some options and steps for the commission to enhance its effectiveness.

## **High-Level Political/Peace Process Support and Consensus-Building Activities**

### *Potsdam II Meeting*

In December 2014, we planned, organized and facilitated a high-level consultation meeting that took place from 6 to 10 December in Germany (Potsdam II). The meeting brought together an inclusive group of 16 participants, representing the most influential stakeholders and senior leadership of the main Yemeni parties (among them five secretary generals and four presidential advisors, including representatives of the Southern Movement from inside and outside the country, yet with the exception of the YSP).

After the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and the formation of a new government could not overcome the major blockades in the political transition process, the aim of the workshop was to discuss options as to how these challenges could be addressed. The discussions focused on the main obstacles in the political transition process end of 2014 and in the implementation of past agreements. Although some differences (especially regarding the Southern issue) remained during the partly very emotional discussions, the meeting ended on a good note and with a number of concrete and positive recommendations for an improved implementation roadmap.

These recommendations confirmed mutual concerns regarding the fragile situation of the political transition at the end of 2014 and the need to move ahead with the political transition process, including some modifications of and additions to the mechanisms previously agreed upon. Due to the quick pace of events by December 2014, however, the recommendations could not be implemented.

### *Yemen Panel at Indian Ocean Conference and Reflection Workshop*

In the context of a major international conference on the Indian Ocean organized by the German Foreign Office on 9 June (“The Indian Ocean – a Maritime Region on the Rise”), we organized a Yemen panel and invited representatives of the different political parties and groups. These included a Southern Movement leader (Lutfi Shatara), two high-level GPC leaders (Dr. Abdulkarim Al-Eryani, Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi), a Germany-based affiliate of Ansar Allah (Saif Al-Washali), and an independent political expert (Amat Ali Al-Soswa). The focus of the panel was to discuss the current situation and to reflect on options for a political solution.

This panel was followed by a one-day reflection workshop on 10 June with some additional Yemeni experts and politicians from GPC Hadi, GPC Saleh/Ansar Allah and the Socialist party. The objective of this reflection workshop was to discuss what type of short- and medium-term options could be identified that would contribute positively to a political solution. The discussions focused on options for confidence-building measures to support the Geneva talks and a revival of the political process in the mid-term. The participants further discussed principles for the transition process in the longer term (“National Partnership”). In addition, the group developed a number of concrete suggestions to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation.

### *Focus Group on State Reform*

The Focus Group on State Reform was set up directly after the end of the NDC as an informal multiparty forum that would discuss major issues not finalized during the NDC. Main topics of discussion in 2014 evolved around the establishment of the federal system, among others the distribution of powers in the new federal system, interim mechanisms for the transition to federalism, mechanisms to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and options for resource-sharing. First meetings took place in Jordan at the end of January and in Sana’a during the month of February. Throughout 2014, the Focus Group comprised 25 participants representing the main stakeholder groups (women, youth, GPC, Islah, YSP, Nasserites, Southern Movement, Houthis, al-Haqq party, al-Rashad party) and some additional experts. It met numerous times in small working groups and regularly (once a month) in plenary.

Highlights in the discussions of the Focus Group in 2014 included:

- ≡ a study trip to Ethiopia with members of the Focus Group (April 2014) and experts from the different Yemeni regions (October 2014) to discuss options for the design and structure of the federal system and related concerns;
- ≡ a joint paper on “The Federal State Engineering Matrix Document” which summarized the vision of the Focus Group and was discussed with representatives of the various political parties and constituencies (including Hiraq, women and youth), with the CDC and with representatives of the various regions (it was discussed among others in Aden and Taiz/al-Janad region);
- ≡ a reflection workshop in Jordan to incorporate the feedback collected on the vision paper and to discuss challenges and develop recommendations for the transition to federalism in December 2014;
- ≡ and a series of meetings to analyse the process around the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and the challenges of implementation between September and November 2014.

Throughout 2014, membership in the Focus Group had to be adjusted several times. After a few meetings of the group, a number of Focus Group members were appointed to the Constitution Drafting Committee (including the chair of the CDC) and had thus to be replaced. In November 2014, four members of the Focus Group had been appointed ministers in the new government. Other parties expressed a wish to upgrade their representation to more high-level party members. With the outbreak of the war in spring 2015, several members changed once again due to the evolving political dynamics (see Strategy Support Group below). The Focus Group had continued to meet monthly in late 2014 and early 2015 until the war broke out. After a short interruption due to the beginning of the air strikes, the representatives of the various Yemeni parties and components who were members of the Focus Group decided that they would want to use this inclusive mechanism to support a peaceful solution to the conflict and approached the programme team to continue organizing meetings of the Focus Group. The group took up its regular meetings again as of 15 April 2015. Initially, discussions focused mainly on humanitarian concerns but later in 2015 shifted towards options to enhance confidence and support the political process. Short input and scenario papers were prepared to support the discussions in plenary and smaller subcommittee meetings.

### *Strategy Support Group (including subcommittees)*

After the Focus Group had taken up its regular plenary meetings again in April 2015 (usually once or twice a month) and continued meetings in smaller thematic subgroups, the group members decided to change the name of the group in July summer 2015. They renamed the Focus Group into the Strategy Support Group (SSG) in order to reflect the changing character of the group as a strategic resource to the efforts of the Yemeni stakeholders in the conflict to find a peaceful solution.

At this time, the SSG included two representatives from the Yemeni Socialist Party and one YSP representative from Tahama, two representatives from al-Haqq Party, two representatives from GPC, two representatives from Ansar Allah, two representatives from Islah, one representative each from Nasserite Party, Watan Party, Justice and Building Party and Union of Popular Forces (head of political office) as well as several representatives for independent youth and for independent women. Several parties opted for representation at the level of secretary general and other key positions.

After the beginning of the war, representatives of the Hadi government, Rashad party and the Southern Movement were no longer able to participate. Despite this, the SSG was (and continues to be) the only multiparty mechanism continuing to meet in Sana'a to discuss options to support a political solution since the multiparty talks at the Moevenpick hotel in Sana'a broke down at the end of February 2015. Its composition varied slightly (with the above-mentioned composition remaining in place until end of 2016), however, it constituted a forum as inclusive as possible under given conditions in Sana'a.

After the group decided to change its name to Strategy Support Group in July 2015, it held numerous meetings and convened specific thematic subgroups (up to four meetings took place in some months).

- ≡ In its first meetings in summer 2015, the SSG discussed the outcomes, prospects and challenges of the official talks in Geneva in June. Members of the respective delegations presented their views. The group further discussed its new role, objectives and structure. Three working groups were formed on a) political initiatives, b) the security situation, and c) comparing the two reference documents UN SC Res 2216 (of April 2015) and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement (of September 2014) in order to develop suggestions for implementation mechanisms and potential compromise positions.
- ≡ Between August and November 2015, the SSG focused on analysing the security situation and developing options for political initiatives to address it. Based on the draft papers and an initiative put forward by the YSP, the SSG developed a concrete suggestion for the implementation of UN SC Res 2216 with regards to the security track (focusing on an executive security committee acceptable to all conflict parties overseeing the process of disarmament and withdrawal). After the initiative had been discussed in further meetings in different formats with the various parties, the SSG also met with members of the UN Envoy's team and its security advisor to share the outcomes of the discussions in January 2016. The security committee continued to be discussed in SSG meetings until shortly before the Kuwait talks where the suggestion was discussed by the delegations.
- ≡ The suggestions of the SSG on the implementation of a security mechanism (through the establishment of an interim security committee) were also discussed at the first consultation meeting in Jordan in November 2015 (for more information on the consultation meeting, see below). After the consultation meeting, the SSG discussed its outcomes. Based on the good experiences made with these dual discussions (inside and outside the country) surrounding the first consultation meeting, this mechanism was adopted for subsequent meetings: the SSG would discuss the thematic issues of the consultation meetings before each meeting and add to the outcomes after the respective meetings. This way, an inclusive discussion could be ensured taking the position of all stakeholders into account in a situation where some parties could not attend talks in Sana'a while others had difficulties to join for discussions outside the country (due to travel restrictions, visa issues and logistical challenges).

- ≡ In November and December 2015, the SSG also discussed the outcomes of the Muscat talks, exchanged on the upcoming talks in Switzerland and developed ideas as to how the SSG could support the UN-led process. Similarly, the SSG sought to accompany the peace talks in Kuwait between May and August 2016, developed ideas to support the process and identified potential consensus areas between the parties. Members of the delegations or high-level party representatives were involved in these discussions to present the respective views as well as progress and challenges in relation to the talks. Members of the UN Envoy's team attended some of the meetings as observers when staff members were present in Sana'a.
- ≡ Between January and October 2016, discussions furthered a new initiative for a political dialogue, refining its potential structure, formats and mechanisms after a future agreement as well as the role of the National Body. With the Kerry plan, and later the UN Roadmap being presented in October 2016, discussions in the SSG focused on the elements of the suggested process, its challenges and implementation mechanisms as well as the needs and concerns of the parties to support a peace agreement.
- ≡ Further issues of discussion in 2016 included upcoming political developments, such as the formation of the high political council between AA and GPC in August 2016, for example. The group further focused on the inclusion of the South in the transition process as well as on options to enhance local governance.

#### *High-Level Consultation Meetings to Support the Peace Process (Eminent Personalities Meetings)*

Based on a meeting with the UN Special Envoy and his team, these high-level consultation meetings were organized in close cooperation with the Office of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, as of autumn 2015. Between November 2015 and December 2016, eight consultation meetings of eminent personalities took place in Jordan, Lebanon and Germany (with meetings continuing in 2017 and 2018).

The main topics in 2015 and 2016 were: (i) elements for a political solution to end the war and implementation of UN SC Res 2216, (ii) the restoration of state functionality, (iii) "strengthening inclusivity and partnership" as key elements in the Yemeni peace process, (iv) mechanisms for inclusion of the Southern question in the political dialogue and transition processes, (v) the resumption of the political dialogue and the roadmap for the political transition process, (vi) main principles, formats and mechanisms of the political dialogue, (vii) the relevance of local governance for sustainable peace, and (viii) options to support an inclusive peace and reconciliation process.

The aim of these meetings is to offer a space where the Yemeni parties can develop ideas and discuss options to support the political process. They further provide the opportunity to explore potential areas of compromise and support consensus-building on crucial issues of the peace process. The meetings serve as an informal track II process where the parties can express their opinions more freely without the constraints and pressures of official negotiations. The meetings are not meant to substitute official negotiations but seek to complement and strengthen the UN-led negotiations. BF/NDSP organizes and facilitates the meetings; representatives of the Office of the Special Envoy and the German Ambassador participate as observers.

All invitees to the consultation meetings participated in a strictly personal capacity and do not represent any particular party, movement or grouping. At the same time, the organizers ensured that the participants were fairly balanced and reflective of Yemen's major social, political and geographical stakeholders. All meetings were held under Chatham House Rule, i.e. the participants are encouraged to share the content of the discussions, but respect the principle of not attributing any stated ideas or opinions to individuals or particular groups.



Consultation Meeting in Jordan, March 2016 | © Berghof Foundation

#### **First Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities: 1-4 November 2015, Jordan**

At the first consultation meeting, 13 eminent Yemeni personalities (men and women) participated. They are recognized among the major political stakeholders and society, and are known to be able to formulate more independent and consensual positions.

The aim of the meeting was to provide the space for developing ideas about how to get out of the impasse in the peace process at the time and to discuss options for reviving the political process.

According to this overarching aim, the meeting had the following two main objectives:

- ≡ Providing space for an open and constructive discussion regarding the substance and main elements/options for a political agreement as well as on possible implementation mechanisms;
- ≡ Identifying follow-up steps in order to a) elaborate further some of the substantive options generated during the discussions, and b) to communicate the outcomes of the discussion to the main Yemeni and international stakeholders in order to inspire further discussions on substantive issues relevant to them.

As this was the first consultation meeting of this kind and Yemeni parties had not met in such an inclusive format since the outbreak of the war, the participants developed a joint communication strategy. On the last day of the meeting, the group released a press statement on different media and social media outlets.

#### **Second Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities: 7-10 December 2015, Jordan**

The second meeting brought together 14 Yemeni eminent personalities. Based on the discussions of the first meeting, the thematic discussion of this second consultative meeting focused on the principles, options and process for the restoration of the Yemeni state, including questions related to the understanding and principles of “national partnership”, interim and long-term power-sharing arrangements, as well as guarantees and implementation mechanisms.



### **Third Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities: 23-26 March 2016, Jordan**

The third meeting took place in March 2016 with a group of 15 Yemeni eminent personalities. The meeting was devoted to discuss “improved inclusivity and partnership models” as key elements of a Yemeni peace process. In order to prevent the discussions from becoming too abstract, we linked them to three specific areas: a) interim security arrangements; b) restoration of state functionality; and c) resumption of political dialogue. Small thematic papers (“think pieces”) were prepared ahead of the meeting to kick-start the discussion.

### **Fourth Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities, 10-13 May 2016, Jordan**

The fourth meeting focused on options and mechanisms for an effective inclusion of the South in Yemen’s peace and transition processes. Although the Southern issue is a sensitive topic, we decided to take it up in one of the consultation meetings due to its high political relevance for the overall peace process and prospects to restore peace and stability in Yemen. The war had a strong impact on the already difficult relationship between the Southern and Northern regions of Yemen and created additional challenges not only for the inclusion of the South into the peace process, but also for the future of Yemen’s political transition. While the NDC outcomes had encompassed some important guarantees for the South, key questions about state-building and resource-sharing had remained open and the division of Yemen into six regions had spurred substantial criticism in the South (as well as in the North).

Against this background, the objective of the meeting was to provide a space for discussion on how the NDC outcomes and the effects of the war affected North-South relations in Yemen. The meeting further sought to bring together a mixed group of Northerners and Southerners to identify possible options and mechanism that could improve the inclusion of Southern stakeholders and perspectives into the Yemeni peace process and thereby aid the resumption of the political transition.

The 19 participants represented different political perspectives and parties/movements from the South and the North. Different factions from the Southern Movement took part as well as Southern Salafi and independent Hadhrami voices. The Northern perspectives included GPC (GPC/Saleh and independent), Ansar Allah, Islah and independent youth and civil society voices.

### **Fifth Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities, 29 May - 01 June 2016, Jordan**

The fifth consultation meeting took place shortly after the delegations convened in Kuwait for another round of UN-led peace talks. The discussion therefore focused on the political processes that were to follow the Kuwait negotiations: the resumption of political dialogue and the roadmap for the political transition processes.

The main objectives of the meeting were:

- ≡ to facilitate a discussion about the main elements, sequencing and options of the transition roadmap (including the completion of the draft constitution, elections, etc.);
- ≡ to broaden understanding between the parties about the role and objectives of political dialogue within the larger transition process; and
- ≡ to generate ideas about mechanisms and “architectures” that would support an inclusive and effective dialogue process.

The 16 participants represented different political parties and movements (including Islah, GPC/Hadi, GPC/Saleh, Ansar Allah) and included representatives of the Southern Movement, advisors to President Hadi, business women, independent youth and women, one minister as well as former governors and diplomats.

**Sixth Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities, 16-19 July 2016, Lebanon  
(including an additional half-day to discuss a Southern representation mechanism)**

The meeting took place during the Kuwait talks and focused on the political dialogue that is due to take place after the signing of a peace agreement. As former discussions had underlined, the political dialogue process after an initial agreement of the conflict parties would be highly relevant to solve contested issues related to state-building and the South. Furthermore, the political dialogue would also offer a unique opportunity for peacebuilding and internal reconciliation after the devastating war.

The meeting thus aimed at discussing how to organize such a dialogue in order to be sufficiently inclusive and what options there were to design it in a way that it would be flexible enough to allow for a variety of different formats and mechanisms. The group discussed the main principles and options for the design of the political dialogue process, including possible mechanisms for different (parallel and sequenced) dialogue tracks, criteria for participation, consensus-building and problem-solving options as well as deadlock-breaking mechanisms and safety nets.

The 20 participants included members of the parties (YSP, GPC/Saleh, GPC/Hadi, Nasserites, al-Haqq, Justice and Building), two representatives from Ansar Allah, independent intellectuals, women and youth, former ministers, representatives of the Southern Movement, and a member of the former General Secretariat of the NDC.

**Seventh Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities, 29 September – 3 October, Jordan  
(including an additional day for a discussion on Taiz)**

Participants of previous consultation meetings had repeatedly brought up the issue of governance and peacebuilding at the local level. The seventh meeting therefore focused on the importance of local dynamics and local actors for the negotiations and the peace process. Strengthening local governance is crucial in order to improve service provision while negotiations are ongoing and it is a main factor in ensuring support for a subsequent peace process and its implementation.

Accordingly, the following main questions were discussed at the meeting:

- ≡ What are options and steps to improve local governance systems in terms of inclusive policy-making and enhanced performance of key tasks (i.e. service provision)?
- ≡ What are opportunities for local peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives; what are the main challenges and limitations of local engagement?
- ≡ What are the key needs and priorities with regard to delivery of basic services; what is required to improve service provision?

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss these questions and to identify options and concrete steps to improve the situation on the ground in order to enhance the prospects for a peaceful solution in Yemen.

The 18 participants included members of the parties (GPC/Hadi, GPC/Saleh, Islah, Nasserites), one minister as well as a number of former ministers and governors, advisors to governors and personnel of local governance structures, Southern representatives from Aden and Hadhramaut as well as independent women and youth.

Following the workshop, a half-day meeting took place on 3 October with participants from Taiz. The objective of this meeting was to discuss options for improving the current situation and for identifying steps to strengthen local peacebuilding initiatives.

**Eighth Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities, 13-17 December, Germany**

At the time of the meeting, discussions around the roadmap, which had been presented by the UN Envoy, seemed to be entering a deadlock and fighting was about to escalate further between the parties. The composition of the group was adjusted in order to take into account the difficult

political situation. Thus high-level representatives were invited who are known to be more neutral in order to discuss how the UN-led negotiations, particularly the roadmap, could be strengthened.

Discussions focused on key fears and concerns of the respective parties and options were developed as to how these could probably be addressed within the framework of a national peace and reconciliation process. The discussion centred on the relevance of the guiding principle of national partnership and how it could be strengthened and implemented. In addition, the role of the National Body as embodiment of the national partnership and as leading entity to organize an inclusive political dialogue was discussed in more detail. Finally, the meeting explored what Yemeni and international actors could do to encourage and support principles of collaboration, partnership and inclusivity.

The meeting outcomes included a rather sophisticated and solution-oriented outline of the political dialogue structure taking into account the needs and concerns of the various parties. The 13 participants included more independent affiliates to various parties and independent voices, among them five former ministers, high-level members of CDC and NDC General Secretariat, former Yemeni personnel of regional organizations as well as independent youth and women.

### *Continuous Consultations and Direct Engagement with Yemeni Parties*

Throughout the period covered by this report, meetings were held with representatives of the political parties in order to inform them about our activities, exchange about the political dynamics and maintain the trusted relationships which had been established with our programme. Many of these meetings took place in Sana'a with NDSP co-director Ali Saif Hassan in order to exchange information and to brief about and discuss our activities (often in an informal manner, sometimes during Qat sessions). In addition, a number of more formalized meetings took place between party representatives and members of the Focus Group, and later on the Strategy Support Group. Additional meetings with party representatives were held outside Yemen – for example during delegation visits to Germany and occasional visits to Cairo and Riyadh after the Hadi government and Islah leadership had left Yemen. Meetings with representatives of the Southern Movement took place mostly in Aden, and occasionally in Beirut or Germany. Meetings were held with all major Yemeni parties (Ansar Allah, GPC, Islah, al-Haqq, Nasserite, YSP), often at Secretary Generals' and first-tier leadership level.

### *Support to the Special Envoy's Team*

While we had limited engagement with the former UN Special Envoy, Jamal Benomar, during the multiparty negotiations of February and March 2015 in Sana'a, closer cooperation was developed with UN Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Cooperative initiatives started mostly through his key advisor particularly on our efforts in Taiz to initiate a mechanism for local humanitarian temporary truces and prisoners' exchange. The first meeting with the new UN Envoy took place on 13 May with NDSP co-director Ali Saif Hassan in Sana'a. During this meeting, we briefed the Envoy on our programme and its current activities and were invited to provide some background support to his ongoing efforts around planned negotiations. Starting with the coordinated efforts in Taiz, regular exchanges took place the Envoy's team. The cooperation with the UN OSESGY intensified after the idea of collaborative consultation meeting of Eminent Personalities was first discussed. Since then, regular exchanges took place; UN OSESGY team members were present at all consultation meetings outside the country and regularly met with the team in Sana'a or attended sessions of the SSG whenever possible. Concrete suggestions of the SSG and consultation meeting discussions have since found their way into official UN-led talks and negotiations (for more information, please refer to *chapter 5 "Impact of the Programme and Lessons Learned"*).

## 4.2 Informal Dialogue Facilitation, Problem-Solving and Capacity-Building

### Informal Dialogue Facilitation and Problem-Solving

#### *Mapping Transition Challenges*

During September 2014, we commissioned a member of the Focus Group on State Reform, to summarize the visions and challenges of effective local participation in the newly created regions in the transition process towards a federal state based on input from researchers in the respective Yemeni regions. The summary paper served as background information for the internal discussion of the Focus Group and the discussion in the regions (see below for further information).

In addition, we contracted a member of the Focus Group with long-standing experience to analyse the open questions and unsolved issues related to federalism with respect to the NDC outcomes document (which he had co-authored). The mapping paper was distributed to the political parties and a shorter version was placed on the NDSP website. The paper further served as an input to the discussion of the Focus Group at the workshop dedicated to the challenges in the transition to federalism held in Jordan in late 2014.

#### *Interim Security Arrangements*

One immediate problem that arose in the first peace talks in Geneva in June 2015 and in subsequent discussions was related to a lack of trust and guarantees that would allow for the withdrawal of forces and handing over of weapons as demanded by the UN SC Resolution 2216. Ansar Allah and army representatives argued that they would not hand over their weapons (to the other conflict party), which was partly based on concerns about the security of their cadres. Following discussions with the Islah leadership in Riyadh in June 2015, we started to work on interim security or stabilization measures in July 2015. The topic was further discussed with a Yemeni government delegation visiting Germany in July 2015. In parallel, the Strategy Support Group in Sana'a started an intense process of working on suggestions for possible interim security mechanisms for Yemen.

As a first step, we contracted two international experts (Dr. Nat Coletta and Dr. Florian Qehaja) to write short papers outlining the conceptual framework of and international experiences with interim security measures. These were translated into Arabic and shared with the various parties. In August and September, the SSG discussed a proposal for a peace initiative tabled by the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP). The SSG developed it further and focused on the suggestion of an interim executive mechanism (ESC). This was to be initiated by the UN but staffed with neutral Yemeni experts and take over responsibility for the initial security arrangements and arms management as outlined in UN SC Resolution 2216.

The suggestion was then discussed with the leadership of the political parties in Yemen including GPC (Saleh wing) and Ansar Allah. In September and October, the initiative was shared with the UN and international diplomats. The proposal of an Interim ESC then was further discussed at the First Eminent Personalities meeting in Jordan in November 2015 (as well as during later consultative meetings). As the idea received positive feedback from all sides (including the UN who encouraged us to continue working on this topic), we contracted two outstanding Yemeni security experts who are closely related to each of the two conflicting parties. We asked them to develop further details about the mandate, tasks and structure of the ESC, including its relation to the UN and the government. After a revision from our side, the two papers were distributed in early December 2015 as non-papers to the two negotiation teams who were already preparing for the next round of talks. In order to discuss the ideas further with the conflicting parties, we initiated a number of meetings/workshops. We invited GPC (Hadi wing) and Islah representatives to a one-day workshop in Cairo (with UN participation) on 31 January to discuss the ESC and

to get their respective feedback. A similar meeting was planned with GPC (Saleh wing) and Ansar Allah in March in Muscat, but was cancelled on short notice by the parties. Instead, two separate and short meetings with representatives from GPC/Saleh and Ansar Allah took place in Sana'a on 19 and 20 March 2016.

### *Addressing the Southern Issue in the Political Dialogue and Southern Representation*

Throughout most of 2015 and 2016, the Southern issue was a “frozen” topic. Southern representation at the Kuwait talks was very limited and the UN Special Envoy stated at the opening of the Kuwait talks that the Southern issue would be addressed at a later stage. However, it is clear that the question of Southern representation will need to be solved in order to allow the Southern issue to be addressed constructively. Both the high-level of diversity in the South (i.e. different regions, parties and affiliations) and various internal conflict lines (between different political visions for the future of the South, between competing leadership circles and between different regions and areas) makes this necessary. The call for self-government in the South might have a strong appeal to many, yet there was no single platform within the Southern Movement, which could be best characterized as a grassroots movement that attracts many but lacks organizational structures and a unified leadership. The question of how the Southern Movement (Hirak) can be represented in a future dialogue therefore needed to be addressed. It is also obvious, however, that any credible solution has to come from within the Southern Movement and requires substantial dialogue within the Hirak.

Discussions at the fourth and fifth consultation meeting made it evident once again that the question of Southern representation is of huge importance for a future political dialogue in Yemen. It also became obvious that there is lack of consensus within the South and within the Southern Movement on what constitutes legitimate criteria for representation. Therefore, we asked one of the participants of the consultation meetings who is a well-respected member of the Southern-Movement to summarize the discussions and to suggest a number of criteria for Southern representation. A first draft paper (written in cooperation with Basharaheel Basharaheel) was finalized in June 2016 and circulated for feedback.

In order to follow-up on this discussion and to broaden it further, we arranged for (and facilitated) a small dialogue among the Southern participants of the sixth Consultation Meeting in Beirut following the meeting. They represented different Hirak factions and regions. The participants talked about current efforts and challenges to establish a Southern platform; they also commented constructively on the input paper, which had been prepared in advance. It was agreed that participants would take responsibility for including the comments into the draft paper for further circulation within the Southern Movement in order to stimulate a dialogue about criteria for representation.

### *Strengthening Local Governance*

Another issue that came up repeatedly during consultation meetings and discussions with parties related to the need to strengthen local governance. Participants highlighted that there is a strong link between the local and national level. Local dynamics strongly influence (positively or negatively) on the negotiations/peace process. While local dynamics of escalation might complicate future talks (as they did in the past), mediation efforts, de-escalation mechanisms and peace initiatives at the local level also have the potential to contribute to trust-building and the establishment of safety nets. The implementation of ceasefire and peace agreements requires local buy-in and support as well as local implementation and monitoring mechanisms, particularly as formerly centralized state institutions have

been weakened considerably by the war and remaining governance services are highly dependent on local structures. In addition, it is unlikely that a future government in Sana'a would be able to provide the desperately required basic services, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts throughout the country any time soon. On the contrary, the majority of the Yemeni population will depend on local service provision and governance.

We therefore initiated a process of discussion on how to protect and gradually improve local governance structures and service provision. We started to facilitate respective discussions among members of the SSG in Sana'a and among youth (see below). In addition, we asked one of the participants of the consultation meetings who has vast experience with local governance as former mayor and governor to write a short analysis paper on the need to engage and strengthen the local level. One of the consultative meetings focused specifically on the topic.

### *Broadening Participation and Capacity-Building by Facilitating Policy Dialogue of Youth*

On direct request of the UN OSESGY, we organized and facilitated a first meeting for 31 participants (young politicians and independent youth) from 27 to 29 June 2016 in Sana'a. The participants were partly recommended by the party members of the SSG, partly by the UN office in Sana'a (especially with regard to independent youth). The UN participated as observers. Based on the constructive discussion at the first meeting, we established a youth component of the Strategy Support Group. They would meet regularly in Sana'a to provide inputs and ideas for the peace process from the perspective of Yemeni youth

The youth representatives in these discussions repeatedly stressed the importance of ending all hostilities and accelerating a transitional process supplemented by international and local guarantees. They further proposed some mechanisms in that regard which would also strengthen the role of the youth in supporting the peace and transition process. Some concrete ideas developed by the youth SSG to strengthen the transitional and state-/peace-building processes in the short and longer term process included: monitoring and accountability mechanisms, creating a political youth council (including all political parties and independent voices) to advocate for the interest of youth with political parties and powerful actors, and steps for youth participation in decision-making at the local level.

## **Capacity-Building and Technical Support**

### *Delegation Visits to Germany*

Between 2014 and 2016, we repeatedly supported Yemeni delegations who were planning visits to Germany to exchange with representatives of the Foreign Office and other ministries, parliamentarians and further governmental or non-governmental organizations. The support offered ranged from providing advice about potential interlocutors to organizing meetings for the delegations and/or roundtable events where members of the delegation would meet a wider group of German-based Yemen experts and professionals. These visits included: a delegation of the Yemeni government headed by Badr Basalmah who was then Minister of Transport in July 2015, a delegation from the Supreme Revolutionary Committee in December 2015 headed by Naif al-Ganis, a visit by the Yemeni Foreign Minister, Abdulmalek al-Mekhlafi, in October 2016; and a visit by former Prime Minister Khaled Bahah with his delegation in early November 2016. Ansar Allah had planned delegation visits to Germany at various occasions and support was offered to facilitate these meetings but they ultimately did not take place until end of 2016, for a variety of reasons. Around workshops and events in Germany, several times meetings were arranged with Yemeni stakeholders and the Foreign Office.

### *Conflict Analysis Workshop with SSG*

On 13 April 2016, we organized a facilitated discussion with April Longley, the senior Yemen analyst at the International Crisis Group. Based on the ICG report published in April 2016 on Yemen, the

discussion focused on the positions and interest of the key stakeholders to the conflict and options for a political solution. For the members of the SSG group (see above), who represent a broad spectrum of political parties, the discussion was very useful and provoked out-of-box thinking.

### *Team Meetings, Trainings and Other Capacity-Building Activities*

In addition to numerous smaller meetings, we organized one meeting with the entire team in Jordan in December 2015 between the staff members in Sana'a, Taiz and Berlin. The meeting served the purpose of jointly planning activities, ensuring close coordination in a situation where visits to Sana'a were no longer possible and providing space for internal capacity-building and exchange of lessons learned. In addition, members of the team and participants from several activities were supported in taking part in external training activities to strengthen dialogue and mediation capacities or to participate in peer- to-peer exchange formats.

## **4.3 Support to Regions, Local Level Peacebuilding and Outreach Activities**

### **Support to Regions**

#### *Regional Dialogue Fora to Strengthen Ownership and Support to the NDC Implementation*

Based on the local dialogues structures that we helped to establish since early 2013 (with funding from the Instrument for Stability of the EU), we supported their transformation into regional fora adapting the format to the newly created six regions in early 2014. The local dialogue structures had been established in Taiz, Hodaidah, Dhamar, Aden and Mukalla, mostly major centres of the newly announced regions. The focus of the regional fora was, on the one hand, to discuss and accompany the preparation of the constitutional referendum (which at the time was planned for 2015). On the other hand, while the decision for a transition to a federal system had been taken in the NDC (mainly based on a compromise among the political elite also in order to accommodate demands in the South), the local and regional level had hardly been involved in the process. Mistrust in the regions was rising in early 2014. The discussions in the regional fora were therefore to focus on the design of the federal state in order to support an intra-regional discussion and to facilitate an inclusion of the regional entities in the discussion at the central level (mainly through exchanges with the mandated structures for the NDC implementation, namely the CDC and National Body).

The escalation of the conflict in late 2014 and early 2015 strongly affected the work of the regional fora in Azal, Aden, al-Janad and the occasional activities which had been planned to take pace in Hadhramout, Saba and Tahama region. The focus was therefore shifted to discussing the impact of the war at the local level and to developing options for local de-escalation and confidence-building. While the Aden forum ended its activities in early 2016, the Azal forum continued to discuss local peacebuilding mechanisms in regular meetings until April 2016 (and later supported the process of collecting experiences about tribal conflict resolution mechanisms and efforts in the region). The al-Janad forum continued to be active in local peacebuilding activities, humanitarian mediation efforts and confidence-building until the end of the period covered by this report (see below for further information).

#### **Azal Forum (Sana'a, Saada, Amran and Dhamar Governorates)**

Since its transformation into a regional forum in August 2014, the Azal forum comprised 17 influential members of the main political and social components in the four governorates (five Saada, four Dhamar, four Sana'a, and four Amran). At the end of 2014 and in early 2015, the security situation continued to deteriorate in the Northern governorates which made it difficult for some of the participants to attend the meetings. Nonetheless, meetings of the Azal forum continued in January and February 2015, focusing on steps to support the implementation of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and to develop its vision with regard to the draft constitution.

After the beginning of the air strikes, the members of the Forum sustained their meetings (although sometimes in smaller groups) and met mostly every four to six weeks. They discussed options to defuse tension in the region and sought to use their contacts across the conflict lines to facilitate communication between all major political and social groups. Throughout 2015, the members of the forum were keen to contribute to local peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and discussed several options with our forum coordinator. Indeed, members continued to reach out to the political parties, social dignitaries and local government representatives; they also contributed to settling local disputes involving youth or contested mosques.

However, probably due to its vast geographic space and as some former members of the forum had not re-engaged after the outbreak of the war, the Azal Forum did not develop a similar level of activities or commitment as the fora in other regions (see Taiz/al-Janad regions below). After we had phased out our support for the Azal Forum in early 2016, we cooperated with members of the forum in spring 2016 to collect information on tribal arrangements around Sana'a. These arrangements had obviously prevented the outbreak of violence in the region and around Sana'a. A paper was the outcome of this information gathering (based on a collection of smaller studies). It explored whether and how these tribal mechanisms could be used as a preventative peace-building mechanism and how this function could be strengthened.

#### **Aden Forum (Lahj, Al-Dhale, Abyan and Aden Governorates)**

The Aden Forum had been established based on the local dialogue forum in Aden in July 2014. It comprised 21 members representing the main political and social groups in the region. Monthly meetings of the forum were held in January and February 2015. Participants underlined the importance of such joint discussions in a situation where the security and political dynamics were quickly deteriorating as overall tensions were increasing and sectarian tension in particular were rising. The members expressed the challenges they were facing as Southerners due to increasing regional and sectarian rhetoric and provocations. The Aden forum was most affected by the war and activities had to be suspended when Ansar Allah entered the South in March 2015. Communication with the local coordinator and members of the forum was upheld. However, no collective action was possible until October 2015, when a first forum meeting after the start of the war took place. While objectives and possible activities of the forum were discussed, the priorities identified were very broad and ambitious (restoring governance, security, basic services, etc.). Due to the highly polarized and very difficult situation in Aden, the forum could ultimately not identify or agree on practical steps.

After some planning meetings in November, a final closing symposium was planned for December in partnership with the al-Rasheed Center (headed by Dr. Saleh al-Basorra, a former SSG member) but had to be postponed for security reasons. The event was finally held on 7 and 8 February 2016 with the third day being delayed to 11 February (again for security reasons). The 25 participants included politicians, members of the peaceful Hirak, academics, civil society representatives, youth and women. The main topics were the need to build joint visions for the future of the South, to overcome fragmentation of Southern leadership and to agree on a mechanism for Southern representation. The members further emphasized that a Southern dialogue process (or conference) was needed to form new political consensus in the South as a basis to stabilize the political and security situation, rebuild structures and services at the local level and to allow for effective representation and partnership of the South.

#### **Al-Janad Forum (Taiz and Ibb Governorates)**

During its first meetings at the regional level in July and August 2014, the al-Janad Forum was formed comprising 25 members (10 Ibb and 15 Taiz) from the main political and social groups in the region. In January 2015, the al-Janad Forum at the al-Saeed Foundation for Science and Culture in Taiz organized a seminar on the role of the regional forum in the context of increased social and political tension. Mohammed Qahtan, a high-level and prominent Islah leader, was the keynote speaker. More than 130 persons representing the broad social and political spectrum in Taiz and Ibb





Street Sana'a | Rod Waddington | CC by SA 2.0

governorates attended the seminar, including Dr. Abdulrageeb Fatah, Minister of Local Administration, Shawqi Hayel, Governor of Taiz, and Jubran Basha, the Undersecretary of Ibb governorate.

Regularly monthly meetings were held from January to March 2015 focusing on the respective vision of the forum members vis-à-vis the draft constitution, which the members planned to present to the CDC and National Body. The forum members further formed a small committee to contact Ansar Allah and request their participation in the forum and to prepare next steps to register the forum.

Following the start of the coalition's airstrikes on 26 March 2015, the coordinator and the facilitator of al-Janad Forum, along with some members of the forum, have been active and trying to engage in actions that would lead to ease the humanitarian situation and reduce tension (in Taiz) and/or to prevent the eruption of violent confrontations (in Ibb). With the outbreak of the war, the al-Janad Forum developed into a conflict prevention and mediation support mechanism. Based on the outstanding commitment, courage and credibility of our local team comprised of our local coordinator, human rights lawyer Maeen al-Obaidi, and Nabil al-Hakimi, a professional facilitator, very concrete steps were undertaken in 2015 to ease the situation. The multiparty forum thus was not only able to continue functioning even during the war, but it was instrumental in reaching out to the main fighting forces. Based on this outreach, the forum members and our staff were able to engage them in a discussion about options for a humanitarian ceasefire in Taiz. This group managed to get in touch with the main actors and engage with them regularly, despite all the difficulties prevailing in Taiz (lack of security, no transportation, frequent breakdown of communication networks, etc.).

Together with members of the forum, two committees had been established, one to facilitate and monitor the distribution of humanitarian assistance, and one to establish a mechanism for short-term local truces that would allow for the delivery of goods and humanitarian assistance (comprised of retired military officers). Regular contacts were maintained and negotiations were undertaken with all parties. A framework agreement related to local truces was developed in June and until July had been signed by most of the local political party leaders (including Islah and GPC). However, Ansar Allah objected, arguing that there were not sufficient guarantees to stop the war, and pointed to the failure to ensure the halt of air strikes (which of course was out of reach for

any actor in Taiz). Starting in October, the forum reached out to the parties in order to facilitate the exchange of prisoners between both sides as a humanitarian and trust-building step. In November, Ansar Allah and GPC nominated a respected GPC leader to represent their team in these efforts who was at the same time the secretary general of the al-Janad Regional Forum, coordinating closely with our representative in Taiz. Following long weeks of negotiations about procedures and guarantees, a first success was achieved with both sides exchanging lists of names of prisoners (Ansar Allah presented a list of 353 persons held with the Popular Resistance and the Popular Resistance presented a list of 423 persons held with Ansar Allah and the GPC).

Throughout the year 2015, the al-Janad Forum had, together with our excellent local team, developed into an effective local peace-building mechanism, which had developed plans for local and temporary truces, a structure to monitor and regulate the distribution of humanitarian aid, and a mechanism for the exchange of prisoners.

## Local Level Peace-Building

### *Support to Local Dialogue Structures and Peace-Building Initiatives in Taiz*

As it was initially agreed that we would wind down our activities in the regions after 2015, we phased out two of the three fora during the first two months of 2016. Activities in Taiz were continued, however, due to the very crucial situation in Taiz and the important contributions our project made and could continue to make to efforts easing the situation and identifying local mechanisms related to trust-building, temporary truces or humanitarian access. Since the end of 2015, the local dialogue forum had been active in the areas of confidence-building measures and the exchange of prisoners. Our local coordinator, Maeen al Ubaydi, had been nominated as chair of a committee that would facilitate the exchange of prisoners. After months of back and forth negotiations, both sides finally agreed in May 2016 and exchanged the list of names of prisoners. Based on these lists, a substantial exchange of prisoners took place on 18 June 2016, when 108 prisoners close to Ansar Allah and 85 prisoners close to the Popular Resistance were released. A second round of exchange was agreed upon by both sides, but could not materialize until the end of 2016.

In addition, we had a number of meetings with eminent social figures from Taiz in Sana'a (including prominent business people, the deputy governor of Taiz, and former parliamentarians mostly associated with GPC and the Popular Resistance). They informed us about different initiatives and requested our support to better coordinate their efforts. We agreed to support them in their efforts to solidify their diverse engagements. Initially, we hosted a number of planning meetings (Taiz sheikhs' coordination committee) at our offices in Sana'a during June and July 2016. We also agreed to support them in organizing a wider meeting for sheikhs in Taiz, where they were planning to call on both sides to stop the war and to start discussions on follow-up mechanisms to complement a ceasefire and to support de-escalation and prisoner exchange activities. We also linked their initiative with the activities of the Taiz/al-Janad Dialogue Forum.

After a number of planning meetings at our offices in Sana'a, the sheikhs formed a small committee to travel to Taiz in July 2016. They established contacts and organized high-level meetings with both sides (field commander Ansar Allah, governor of Taiz, leaders of popular resistance, eminent social figures, etc.). They issued an official statement about the purpose of their visit and received positive feedback from both sides. However, as the military confrontation escalated further (with the capture of al-Sarari village by the Popular Resistance) and the peace talks in Kuwait faltered, these activities had to be slowed down. The committee managed to open a safe passage for Taizi citizens but this success was short-lived, as it seems that the passage was closed again after a few days. Throughout the second half of 2016, the committee continued its efforts – in coordination with members of the al-Janad forum and our local team – to reach out to the parties to agree on openings of safe passages and crossings for civilians and to facilitate prisoners' exchange.

To support the discussion on local peacebuilding issues in Taiz and to prepare for the implementation of a respective ceasefire agreement, a military and security expert was commissioned to write a paper on options for monitoring mechanisms for an eventual ceasefire.



Man walks down a street in the Old City, Sana'a | Rod Waddington | CC by SA 2.0.

In addition, a half-day meeting of eminent personalities from Taiz was organized following the seventh consultation meeting on request of the UN team (see above for further information). The discussions focused on options to ease the humanitarian situation in Taiz (by supporting the respective local efforts through a group of eminent personalities outside the country) and on mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of a ceasefire in Taiz.

## Outreach Activities

### *Broadcasted TV dialogue on NDC implementation*

While public outreach during the NDC had been more limited than initially foreseen, shortly after the conclusion of the NDC there were hardly any public outreach programmes available to inform about the follow-up discussions after the end of the NDC. To address this gap, we developed a media format to increase public outreach with support from a senior advisor to the programme who is also a renowned journalist. The weekly dialogue began in February 2014 and was broadcasted by the Yemeni National TV on prime time (Saturday, 8 pm) and repeated three times per week each. It was called “*Ma ba’ad al-hiwar*” (what comes after the dialogue) and brought together one or two thematic experts and a group of youth to discuss issues related to the outcomes of NDC and implementation challenges.

The TV programme has been hosting high-level party and government officials, academics, MPs, members of the National Body, members of the CDC, and political analysts and social activists. Among others, the following persons attended<sup>6</sup>:

<sup>6</sup> We note the respective positions at the time of broadcasting.

- ≡ Ahmed Bin Mubarak, general secretary of NDC and office director of President Hadi;
- ≡ Judge Saleh Nasser Taher, head of Land Commission (committee concerned with resolving the land issue in the South);
- ≡ Judge Nasser Ali Allaw, member of the Dismissals Commission (committee concerned with resolving the issue pertaining to dismissed civilian and military personnel in the South);
- ≡ Dr. Rashid al-Kaff, former deputy oil minister and expert on oil and gas; minister of oil at the time;
- ≡ Hassan Zaid, secretary general of al-Haqq Party; head of JMPs at the time;
- ≡ Abdulmalik al-Mekhlafi, former secretary general of Nasserite Party, member of shura council and secretary general of Arab National Conference and head of Guarantees Committee at NDC;
- ≡ Maeen Abdulmalik, member of the Regions Committee (committee to determine the number of federal regions);
- ≡ Mohamed Abu Lahum, secretary general of Justice and Development Party;
- ≡ Dr. Hameed Ali al-Awadhi, under secretary for political affairs, foreign ministry;
- ≡ Dr. Abdulrasheed Abdulhafez, professor of law, Sana'a University and member of CDC;
- ≡ Ali al-Sarari, advisor to the prime minister for political and media affairs;
- ≡ Ghalib Mutalq, minister of state for the implementation of NDC outcomes;
- ≡ Dr. Abbas Mohamed Zaid, member of CDC;
- ≡ Abdullah Nouman, secretary general of Nasserite Party;
- ≡ Mohamed Saleh Garah, member of shura council;
- ≡ Abdul Aziz Jubari, member of parliament;
- ≡ Ali Abo Hulaiqah, chair of Legal and Constitution Affairs Committee of the parliament;
- ≡ Saeed al-Mamari, head of political portfolio, Islah Party;
- ≡ Mohamed al-Bukhaiti, Ali al-Emad, Hamza al-Houthi, members of Ansar Allah political council;
- ≡ Mohamed Marim, professor of law and constitution;
- ≡ Dr. Ali Naji al-Awaj, head of faculty for international law, Sana'a University;
- ≡ Al-Khansa al-Shabai, member of the National Body;
- ≡ Ali Saif Hassan, co-director NDSP.

Throughout 2014, this dialogue was the only TV programme that continued to raise issues relevant to the political development in the country (with a short interruption when Ansar Allah had taken control of Sana'a, putting pressure on or closing down TV channels and media stations). The full episodes are available on youtube ([www.youtube.com/user/NDSPYemen](http://www.youtube.com/user/NDSPYemen)) and NDSP's website at <http://pdsp-yemen.org/>.

## 5 Impact of the Programme and Lessons Learned

Measured against its original objectives, the project achieved as much as the political situation allowed in many respects. Importantly, it evolved into a unique support mechanism which could be sustained despite a full-scale escalation of the conflict. In 2014, the programme effectively provided support to the Yemeni parties in establishing multi-stakeholder mechanisms at national and local level and offered additional process support to key Yemeni stakeholders and mandated structures in the implementation of the NDC outcomes (for more information, see the section below on “Interaction with Mandated Structures, Support Requests and Buy-In for Multiparty Mechanisms”).

When the situation deteriorated towards the end of 2014 and in early 2015, the programme adapted flexibly to the political dynamics and focused its efforts on supporting the Yemeni peace process with significant impact on the UN-led peace process. Based on strong relations of trust established with the Yemeni parties, requests for support from the Yemeni parties continued and inclusive meetings could be convened also in a situation of poisonous mistrust prevailing between the conflict parties (for more information, see the section below on “Project Design and Adaption to Political Dynamics”).

Ideas and suggestions developed in the framework of our activities were repeatedly taken up in the context of the UN-led peace process. The Yemeni parties kept referring to the outcomes of discussions in the context of the programme and acted on recommendations developed in the meetings and activities. Several mechanisms had initially been established for shorter periods but were extended based on the expressed needs and requests by Yemeni and international actors. The utility of the services offered was thus apparent concerning the content, structures/mechanisms and feedback from the participants in the respective activities (for more information, see the section below on “Impact/Utility of Ideas and Mechanisms”).

With the political and security situation worsening in 2014 and the outbreak of the war, most international actors withdrew from Yemen. Embassies were closed and international NGOs stopped their engagement. The UN activities were bound by Security Council mandates (and thus limited in terms of what they could and could not do) and at times struggled to respond to needs quickly and flexibly due to political or internal hurdles and regulations. Despite the impact of the war on the team and the enormous logistical, political and security challenges, the programme on the other hand could continue to respond to needs and demands as they arose, at times with little time for preparation and still in a very cost-effective way (for more information, see the section below on “Effectivity, Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness”).

Throughout the project implementation, close relationships of cooperation and regular information exchange were upheld with the Yemen team at the Federal Foreign Office and the German Ambassador to Yemen (and his deputy in 2014). In addition, intense coordination was established with the UN OSESGY throughout the project duration with the UN requesting continuous and intense support from the programme. Complementary smaller projects were implemented with support from the EU, the Swiss MFA and the FCO and exchange of information was upheld with further partners (for more information, see the section below on “Partnerships, Complementarity and Coordination”).

### *Interaction with Mandated Structures, Support Requests and Buy-In for Multiparty Mechanisms*

Throughout the project, Yemeni mandated structures and main stakeholders not only requested the services and support of the programme on many occasions, but clearly made use of those services. For instance, with the initiation and facilitation of the “Focus Group on State Reform”,

a multiparty mechanism had been agreed upon and established that supported the Yemeni decision-making process on sensitive questions of state reform, transition to the federal system and constitutional design. (Outcomes of the Focus Group have been presented to the CDC, to the leadership of the main political parties and to regional representatives; in addition, members of the Focus Group and high-level political representatives have been involved in public debates organized by the programme and in the TV show). In hindsight, the relevance and utility of the Focus Group became also clear during the war of 2015, when the members started to meet in order to discuss options for local de-escalation and for supporting a political solution at the national level despite the most difficult conditions.

The mandated structures of NDC implementation repeatedly approached us with suggestions for cooperation and support in 2014 and early 2015. Examples include the lessons learned and strategy-building workshop with the General Secretariat of the NDC, the discussed cooperation and outreach activities with the secretariat and the regional fora in preparation of the constitutional referendum as well as the support to the GS, the CDC and the National Body with personnel, facilitation support, mapping papers and expertise. The support offered to the Yemeni Land Commission is another relevant example in this context.

In addition, the role of Local Dialogues / Regional Fora in the implementation of NDC outcomes has been clarified (intra-regional discussion on the role of the regions in the federal system and design of the federal system), and regular feedback has been sought between the national (federal) and local levels. One example are the discussions of the Focus Group paper on the proposed state structure at the national and local level. In addition, we started the process of consultations of key stakeholders at governorate level in the process of implementation of a federal structure (for this purpose, a joint meeting of the regional fora established a smaller contact committee that was tasked with reaching out and improving interaction with regional and national bodies, including the National Body and the CDC).

Despite these relatively successful outcomes, the overall political deterioration stood in the way of pursuing these discussions further. Due to the increasing mistrust and escalating violence, we could no longer support Yemeni key stakeholders to take ownership and leadership in the implementation of the NDC outcomes at local, (federal) and national level as of autumn 2014; basically because the whole notion of implementation and implementation mechanisms became politicized and part of the escalating conflict. With the transition process derailing more and more after Ansar Allah had taken control of Sana'a in August 2014, the NDC outcome implementation lost relevance vis-à-vis the need for crisis management mechanisms in response to the deteriorating situation.

Other planned areas of engagement, such as the stated objective to identify options for engagement with main stakeholders in highly sensitive conflict areas (Southern issue and Saada) were pursued throughout the project implementation, yet in a different manner than we had originally foreseen. Regular interaction and contacts were upheld with the AA political office as well as with Southern Movement representatives. Several activities were pursued to discuss the involvement of the South in the negotiation and political dialogue process, such as consultation meetings and regional forum discussions in Aden. In addition, we explored options to support a track 2 process between KSA and Ansar Allah, yet these could ultimately not be realized. Regular exchange and consultations with Ansar Allah and Southern Movement representatives were mostly realized through meetings of co-director Ali Saif Hassan in Sana'a and Aden (and partly in Beirut, Cairo and Germany). Involvement of representatives of Ansar Allah and the Southern Movement was ensured in all major activity areas to the extent possible (restrictions were mostly due to logistical/travel challenges but also at times difficult for political reasons).

Throughout the project duration, we continued to engage with all major Yemeni parties at leadership level and provided various kinds of support to the Yemeni parties. This included facilitation and expert support for particular thematic and process-oriented discussions as well as technical and logistical support for delegation visits, among others (for more information, please refer to *chapter 4. "Activities"*).

### *Project Design and Adaption to Political Dynamics*

Throughout, the programme was able to adapt continuously to the rapidly changing realities. This was particularly noteworthy when the situation quickly deteriorated towards the end of 2014 and early months of 2015. Shortly after it became clear that the PNPA had not been sufficient to address the challenges and obstacles in the transition process and that the trust between the parties was eroding further, the Potsdam II meeting was organized in order to discuss options to avoid a further escalation of the situation. While the Potsdam meeting was already taking place in a situation where it was difficult to halt the downward spiral of events, all participants considered the willingness of all major parties to engage as an important step. Nonetheless, the meeting's recommendations could not be implemented, as events were unfolding too quickly. Nor could the meeting ultimately prevent the escalation of violence despite its high-level participation and inclusivity.

Initially, the Focus Group had been established to support the crucial follow-up discussion on implementing the NDC outcomes, including the various issues related to state-building and the highly political questions around the transition to a federal system, which had remained open after the conclusion of the dialogue. Following the outbreak of the war, however, the Focus Group already continued its meetings as of April 2015 and could quickly transform into a mechanism to support efforts for finding a political solution to the conflict. High-level meetings with the various conflicting parties were pursued systematically as of June 2015 in order to explore options for supporting the peace process. Coordination with the UN OSESGY were intensified to link respective efforts.

As of August 2015, preparations started for the consultation meetings of eminent personalities outside the country, with the aim of supporting the UN-led peace process and of complementing the SSG meetings. After a failed attempt to organize a meeting in Germany in September 2015, regular consultation meetings took place as of November 2015. Complementary formats in- and outside Yemen helped to realize as much inclusivity in the discussions as possible. Although representatives of the Hadi government, the Islah party, Rashad party and the Southern Movement were no longer represented in the SSG after the outbreak of the war, they could participate in outside meetings (with the exception of the Rashad party) where, at least initially, representatives of Ansar Allah could not participate, among others due to travel restrictions. With the parallel formats and the purpose of the meetings becoming more and more known to the parties, initial hesitation of Islah and Ansar Allah to participate in the consultation meetings outside the country could be overcome.

Another example for the ability to adapt to changing circumstances was the continuation or reactivation of the regional forum activities in Aden, Dhamar and particularly in Taiz/al-Janad. While the war strongly affected the regional forum discussions, concrete options to support local de-escalation and peacebuilding efforts were developed nonetheless in Dhamar and particularly in Taiz and Ibb. The al-Janad Forum even developed into a sustained mechanism to facilitate communication and interaction between the parties in Taiz and successfully implemented confidence-building and prisoners exchange activities in 2015 and 2016 – in probably one of, if not the highest intensity conflict area in Yemen since the war broke out.

### *Impact/Utility of Ideas and Mechanisms*

From the consultation meetings and the regular discussions of the SSG in Sana'a, several ideas were taken up directly in the UN-led peace process. Based on feedback from the UN team, these discussions actively prepared and contributed to the talks held in Kuwait between May and August 2016. For example, while the major elements of an eventual peace agreement remain to be determined, it seems that a partial compromise could be reached on the mechanism for the security track, with the ESC – which was outlined by the SSG and in outside meetings with the parties – remaining a major reference for the conflict parties and the UN team. The ESC was included also in the roadmap presented by the UN during the second half of 2016. In addition, interlocutors from the main Yemeni parties repeatedly referred to outcomes of the consultation meetings and SSG discussions in their statements or told us about discussions of the respective reports in their circles.

While several efforts in Taiz – to open passages for civilians or to allow humanitarian access – failed to materialize until the end of 2016, other very concrete confidence-building measures were indeed achieved. In 2015 and 2016, the programme was able to support the exchange of almost 200 prisoners between the conflict parties thanks to the commitment and persistence of the local team, the regional forum members and the committee of Sheikhs. In addition, seeds for longer-term efforts were planted, pertaining, among others, to local monitoring mechanisms for supporting the implementation of an eventual national peace agreement at the local level in Taiz and the activation of eminent Taizi personalities to support peace efforts in Taiz.

The repeated extension of structures and mechanisms established by the programme in our assessment also reflects the utility of our respective services. One example is, again, the Focus Group on State Reform and later the Strategy Support Group. While the mechanism had initially been established particularly for the phase directly after the conclusion of the NDC, it was extended several times, because of the critical importance of upholding the only remaining multi-stakeholder mechanism where the different parties continue to meet in Sana'a until this day. While the consultation meetings in coordination with the UN had been planned as a series of events since their inception, they have developed into the major informal track 2 mechanism supporting the UN-led peace process (in conjunction with the SSG meetings in Sana'a). Upon demand of Yemeni stakeholders and UN alike, additional consultation meetings have been (and continue to be) undertaken, underlining their apparent importance and utility to the Yemeni parties and the UN OSESGY.

In addition, the local peacebuilding activities in Dhamar and al-Janad were repeatedly extended in order to respond to local needs, building on well-established mechanisms at the local level and based on request of the UN team.

The feedback from the Yemeni parties about our programme activities was very positive throughout the period covered in this report as demonstrated by the repeated support requests summarized above. In addition, the readiness to participate in the various formats offered despite the escalation of the situation shows a high degree of trust and reliability they see in our programme. Positive feedback from high-level representatives of all parties across the conflict divide is another indicator for the success of the multipartial approach taken by the programme.

### *Effectivity, Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness*

Our programme team in Sana'a and in Taiz have been strongly affected by the war – at a personal level with family members being injured or private houses being destroyed, and in terms of difficulties concerning traveling, communication, logistics, rising costs for basic goods and commodities and daily working conditions. Nonetheless, the commitment, courage, political wisdom and professionalism of our Yemen-based team members have allowed upholding our programme activities in an effective manner despite the challenges related to the war. Even the restrictions placed on all sorts of civil society activities in Sana'a could mostly be avoided for our activities based on skilful handling and negotiations of our co-director in Sana'a.

In addition, well-established modes of cooperation and coordination between the Yemen and Germany based teams and a high degree of ownership and responsibility by the team in Yemen contributed to the fact that the implementation of programme activities was only partly affected by the travel restrictions for German-based team members to Yemen since early 2014. The closure of Sana'a airport and the complicated and risky travel through Aden still placed a strong burden on the implementation of our activities. Traveling between Sana'a and Aden remained extremely tedious due to numerous checkpoints, bad road conditions and security risks along the way. Nevertheless, participants and team members could participate in activities outside the country despite considerable hurdles in bringing Yemeni participants to outside meetings due to the travel situation and increasing visa restrictions placed on Yemeni nationals. In spite of the enormous logistical challenges posed by the war, we managed to ensure cost-effectiveness by keeping costs for short-notice changes limited thanks to the huge commitment of the team members to not give in to complicated political, logistical and bureaucratic hurdles. Instead all possible (and at times seemingly impossible) alternatives were explored, often at very short notice and at any



time. Ultimately, this commitment and the trust of long-term participants and partners made it possible to realize and uphold programme activities in difficult times.

### *Partnerships, Complementarity and Coordination*

The close and excellent cooperation with the Yemen team at the Federal Foreign Office and the German Ambassador was vital for the success of the programme. The provision of political support as well as the readiness to help flexibly with visa procedures and requests for approvals of short notice changes in the financial plans played a major role in allowing for the successful implementation of workshops, meetings and activities. Regular coordination meetings took place at the German Foreign Office throughout the project's implementation – bilaterally as well as in Yemen taskforce meetings and coordination formats with other European and international stakeholders. In addition, the German Ambassador attended major workshops outside the country as an observer, which was not only very helpful for the coordination of follow-up activities and strategic focus but also sent a strong signal to the Yemeni participants that the German Foreign Office is highly committed to supporting the Yemeni peace process. The German political and financial support to the programme was a major asset. Despite occasional (politically motivated) criticism from one or the other Yemeni conflict party, Germany has an excellent reputation in Yemen as a multipartisan actor that had not taken sides in the conflict. The historically close ties between Yemen and Germany (with no colonial past in the region) and the perception as a foreign actor with major influence in the European Union and good relationships among regional actors but little of a hidden agenda also feed into this reputation. Germany would thus be well placed even to enhance its role in providing mediation and negotiation support to the Yemeni peace process in the future.

As mentioned earlier, close relationships were also developed with the UN OSESGY team. Actually, a unique cooperation approach was developed through the consultative meetings of eminent personalities and the SSG discussions, which, as a track II mechanism, succeeded in effectively accompanying and directly feeding into the UN-led peace process. Topics of the meetings as well as participants' lists and formats were closely coordinated with the UN team in advance, members of the OSESGY attended meetings in Sana'a and outside the country as observers and comprehensive reports were shared with the UN team including discussion outcomes and recommendations. In addition, the Taiz activities and the Youth SSG were developed directly in response to needs and requests for support expressed by the UN team. Engagement on the Southern issue was also closely coordinated with the UN team and partially also responded to the fact that the UN itself could not engage due to political restrictions of its mandate. At the same time, the UN clearly recognized the risk of freezing the Southern issue while the peace process with the main conflict parties had not yielded major results (or insisting on an inclusion of the Southern issue later on in the process, an approach which had proven to be difficult already during the unity government and the NDC). Feedback from the UN team on our activities, whether in bilateral talks or international forums (including the Security Council), repeatedly underlined the utility and importance of this partnership. The close cooperation with the UN was also a major asset for the programme success as ideas and recommendations could be channelled directly into the track I activities.

Regular exchanges took place with other international stakeholders, such as the EU, the FCO, the State Department, other UN agencies, KSA and regional think tanks and international NGOs still working on Yemen (such as the EIP or International IDEA, for example).

### *Peace Support in Times of Crisis: Grounded in Local Process and Links to Track I*

The overall assessment of our support activities is highly positive internally as well as among Yemeni and international actors. Yet there are obvious limits for peace support activities in times of crisis. Throughout the period covered by this report and until this day, there are hardly any encouraging news from Yemen (with the exception of the Kuwait talks in 2016, where a political agreement seemed to be in reach). Instead, the humanitarian and economic situation has

been continuously eroding, and after 2016 the efforts to revive negotiations among the Yemeni parties to end the war and prepare the ground for restoring the Yemeni state and complete the political transition process have failed (until late 2018). While UN-efforts are ongoing to support a political solution to the conflict, the escalation of the war around Hodeidah port has serious risks for a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation and has added another layer of complexity for confidence-building measures between the Yemeni parties and for peace talks to yield sustainable results any time soon. Despite these obvious limits in achieving a sustainable political settlement to the war in Yemen, track II actors can meaningfully contribute and support efforts based on the following lessons learned and key principles:

- ≡ *Helping to maintain channels of communication between the parties and to identify mechanisms and options for addressing some of the root causes of the conflict:* through the continuous engagement with the Yemeni parties and the high levels of trust gained in the programme activities, channels of communication could be kept open between the parties at the local, regional and national level. While these efforts are not enough to allow for a meaningful restoration of the Yemeni peace process, they can play a key role in feeding into the UN-led peace process once it gains traction supporting consensus-building among and within the parties and facilitate efforts to overcome major hurdles in the complex and manifold issues which need to be addressed for a sustainable end to the Yemeni war (regarding interim security arrangements, outstanding discussions around the future form of the Yemeni state, the relationship between local and central level, a solution to the Southern issue and many more).
- ≡ *Linking peace process support with grounded efforts to sustain meaningful work in times of crisis:* track II efforts to support the national level peace process inherently depend on progress at the track I level in order to be able to feed in ideas and support a broader process of consensus-building. The programme activities have thus confirmed that a grounded approach is crucial in allowing for sustaining activities and meaningful work in times of crisis. Continuous engagement to support inclusive approaches at the local and national level in various thematic areas (from facilitating discussions around easing the financial and humanitarian situation with Yemeni bankers and traders, supporting de-escalation measures in Taiz, developing options for strengthening service delivery, inclusive governance and safety at the local level, etc) have thus contributed to maintaining meaningful and grounded efforts based on which support activities for the peace process can be intensified depending on opportunities arising despite at times very volatile and fragile progress at track I level.
- ≡ *Working based on clear values, principles and strong partnership:* continuity, credibility and groundedness were key in allowing to sustain our engagement although the situation in Yemen kept deteriorating and the political process was blocked and paralyzed for most of the time covered in this report. Stressing on our key principles and working in close partnership between PDF and Berghof contributed to reassuring the Yemeni parties of the serious and sustained efforts of the programme to support them in developing options to ease the situation and revive the peace process through a multi-partial and grounded approach. Despite the poisonous mistrust between the parties, we could thus maintain a perception that our efforts are genuine, rooted in the Yemeni reality and allowing for constructive and realistic options to be discussed taking the concerns and needs of the respective actors into account.

## 6 Outlook

At the end of 2016, Yemen was at a crossroads and ran into the danger of becoming locked in the logic of war. Since the failure of political negotiations in Kuwait in the summer of 2016, the political process could not be revitalized. At the same time, the humanitarian tragedy is unfolding with unprecedented levels of human suffering. The long-term implications for state-building are very negative, and possibly very expensive. The parties lack the vision for a negotiated settlement, but do agree that there is no viable alternative.

In 2017, the Berghof Foundation with its Yemeni partner Political Development Forum (PDF) has started a third phase of the programme (which is likely to continue until end of 2019). The project aims to effectively support Yemeni and international efforts for a political solution that provides the basis to end the war, to resume an inclusive political dialogue and to relaunch the political transition process.

In order to realize this aim, the project has the following four specific objectives:

- ≡ to offer and enhance opportunities for problem-solving between Yemeni decision-makers to overcome deadlocks in the peace and transition process and to define areas of potential cooperation (high-level dialogue formats, consultation meetings);
- ≡ to strengthen substantive consensus building of the Yemeni parties on key issues of the peace and stabilization process (thematic and process support) and to support informal inclusive multiparty dialogue structures (such as the SSG or other multiparty think tanks) as well as mandated structures for the political dialogue (the National Body or other transitional multiparty dialogue formats);
- ≡ to provide thematic or process related capacity and strategy building to key stakeholder groups to strengthen the peace process and the implementation of future agreements or interim provisions/arrangements;
- ≡ to support peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives in Taiz and to strengthen implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

In 2017, the joint programme by Berghof and PDF was renamed into Political Dialogue Support Programme in order to reflect its orientation towards reviving a political dialogue inclusive of the Yemeni parties, movements and stakeholder groups to find a sustainable solution for a peaceful Yemen after an initial cessation of hostilities would have been reached.

While the prospects for a cessation of hostilities and an end of the war appear dim at the time of writing, the main Yemeni parties not only seem to agree that there needs to be a negotiated settlement at a certain stage but also seem to be losing over time. The longer the war lasts, the more complicated and multi-layered the conflict is becoming and it will be difficult to initiate and sustain a process yielding a durable political solution acceptable to key stakeholders, catering to the needs of the Yemeni people and restoring their dignity. All the more important it seems to build on small but tangible steps which can help to rebuild trust, to continuously create spaces where constructive options can be discussed between the parties and to uphold fora where ideas can be developed to feed into and support the peace process and the following political dialogue once efforts to bring the parties to the negotiation table can gain traction again.

## Annex 1: Project Team (2014-2016)

| Title                          | Names   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Sana'a Team</i>             |   |
| Director                       | Ali Saif Hassan   |
| Project Coordinator            | Alia Eshaq /Azd I-Kadasi  |
| Office Manager                 | Hesham al-Mekhlafi /Ala Fadhl   |
| Financial Officer              | Zaid Qahtan   |
| Taiz Coordinator               | Maeen al-Abidi  |
| Regional Coordinator           | Mohammed al-Ghorbani  |
| Research/Translation           | Hakeem Azzadeen   |
| Assistant Activity Coordinator | Amria al-Maqaleh  |
| Driver/Logistics               | Ahmed Shiathel  |
| Office Support                 | Hammza Sharabi  |
| <i>Berlin Team</i>             |   |
| Director                       | Oliver Wils   |
| Co-Director MENA               | Sonja Neuweiler   |
| Advisor                        | Alia Eshaq  |
| Project Officer                | Nadine Francis-Pohle/ Basma Abdelaziz                                     |
| Controllers                    | Sophie Hoffmann/ Malte Tepe   |
| Senior Advisors                | Abdulghany al-Eryani / Nabil al-Sofee / Djamila Rajaá / Nadya al-Kwkabani |

## Annex 2: Recommended Literature and Background Information

### **On the inner workings of Yemeni society and Politics:**

Victoria Clarke: *Yemen: Dancing on the heads of snakes*, Yale University Press 2010.

### **On the regional dimension (highland versus lowlands and coastal areas) of Yemeni conflicts:**

Stephen W. Day: *Regionalism and Rebellion in Yemen: A Troubled National Union*, Cambridge University Press 2012.

### **On the Southern issue:**

Noel Brehony: *Yemen Divided: The Story of a Failed State in South Arabia*, I.B. Tauris 2013.

### **On the Houthi wars:**

Marieke Brandt: *Tribes and Politics in Yemen: A History of the Houthi Conflict*, C Hurst & Co Publishers 2017.

*For more specific and recent analysis on Yemen, see the very informative reports by:*

April Longley Alley from International Crisis Group (various reports).

Ginny Hill and Peter Salisbury from Chatham House (various reports).

### **On the National Dialogue Conference:**

Erica Gaston: *Process Lessons Learned in Yemen's National Dialogue*, USIP Special Report 342 February 2014. [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR342\\_Process-Lessons-Learned-in-Yemens-National-Dialogue.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR342_Process-Lessons-Learned-in-Yemens-National-Dialogue.pdf). Yemen, in: *National Dialogue Handbook. A Guide for Practitioners*, Berghof Foundation 2017.

## Annex 3: Overview of Main Activities and Meetings 2014-2016

| <b>Date</b>       | <b>Activity</b>  |
|-------------------|--|
| 22.02.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" with Maeen Abdulmalik (Member of the Committee to Determine the Number of Federal Regions)  |
| 25.02.2014        | Focus Group Meeting to draft a plan on how to convey the outcome of the discussions and interact with political components, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 28.02.-02.03.2014 | Strategy and Lessons Learned Workshop, with the General Secretariat of the NDC and Heads of Working Groups, Dead Sea, Jordan   |
| 01.03.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" with Amin -Makhtary (Deputy Minister for Local Administration)  |
| 04.03.-06.03.2014 | Focus Group Meeting on resource sharing, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 05.03.-06.03.2014 | Joint Conference involving representatives of the Local Dialogue Fora in Southern Yemen (Aden and Hadhramout) to identify the most pressing needs to be addressed in the South, Aden   |
| 08.03.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" with Ali Saif Hassan (Co-director NDSP)   |
| 15.03.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" with Mohammed al-Hawri (Deputy Minister for Planning and International Cooperation) and Ahmed al-Sarhi (political activist/businessman) |

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|------------------------------|--|
| 22.03.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the establishment and working mechanisms of the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC), with Dr Olfat al-Duba’i (Member of the CDC) and Hatthem Bamohrez (expert in political development )                       |
| 29.03.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on international relations in the federal state of Yemen with Dr. Hamed -Awadi (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs)  |
| 05.04.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the work and discussions of the CDC, with Dr Abdulrashed Abdulhafid (Member of the CDC) and Dr Abdulbaqi Shamsan (Professor at Sana’a University)  |
| 10.04.-14.04.2014            | Focus Group Meeting with experts from the newly established Yemeni regions, on “Transition to Federalism. Comparing basic elements of federal systems and studying aspects of the Ethiopian federal model”, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia                                  |
| 12.04.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the main elements of the new constitution with Dr Ahmed al-Gabri (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs)  |
| 19.04.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the work of the Secretariat of the National Dialogue Conference and technical support for the constitution drafting process with Ahmed Bin Mubarak (NDC General Secretary and Office Director of President Hadi) |
| 26.04.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the Southern Issue and the work of the Land and Dismissals Commissions with Saleh Nasr (President of the Land Commission) and Nasr Alaw (Member of the Dismissals Commission)                                    |
| 03.05.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the establishment, mandate and mechanisms of the National Body, with Hassan Zaid (Secretary General of al-Haqq Party) and Salah Batees (Member of the National Body)   |
| 04.05.-06.05./<br>08.05.2014 | Focus Group Meeting to draft a common working document related to the Yemeni federal system outlining options for the powers of the respective federal units, Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 10.05.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the work and new mechanisms of the Friends of Yemen Group with Waheed al-Shami (Member of the Friends of Yemen Group)  |
| 17.05.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the Southern issue and the implementation of the 20 points+11 with Abdullah al-Yafee (Member of the Shura Council and NDC member)  |
| 20.05.-27.05.2014            | Workshop in preparation of the study trip of the Yemeni Constitution-Drafting Committee to Germany, Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 24.05.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on outputs of the dialogue and matrix of the Ministry of Interior on Security Restructuring with Saqr al-Samawi (Member of the NDC) and Dr. Abdulmonam al-Shibani (General Manager at the Interior Ministry)        |
| 24.05.-25.05.2014            | Focus Group Meeting to draft a common working document related to the Yemeni federal system outlining options for the powers of the respective federal units (continued), Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 25.05.-26.05.2014            | Expert Meetings with the CDC (ahead of the study trip to Germany on federal systems) on local governance and resource-sharing in federal systems, Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 27.05.2014                   | Focus Group Meeting with members of the CDC to share outcomes of their discussions and insights from the study tour to Ethiopia, Sana’a, Yemen   |
| 31.05.2014                   | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?”, on NDC recommendations relating to good governance, with Esaam al-Qaisi (Member of the NDC) and Abdullah Moamar (Professor at Sana’a University)   |

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|-------------------|--|
| 07.06.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on Dialogue outputs and confidence-building with Ali Saif Hassan (Co-director NDSP)   |
| 06.07.2014        | Focus Group Meeting on the draft document on Federalism and to discuss steps for engaging with main political parties, Sana’a, Yemen   |
| 14.06.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on NDC outcomes relating to sustainable development with Dr Alkhansa al-Shaibee (Member of the NDC) and Salah al-Maqtari (Professor at Sana’a University)   |
| 18.06.-20.06.2014 | Closing ceremony of the local dialogue in Taiz and workshop to discuss transition to a regional forum, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 21.06.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on NDC outcomes relating to rights and freedoms with Maged Fadael (Member of the NDC) and Waddah Al-Jalil (Rapporteur of the Rights and Freedoms Working Group/journalist)  |
| 22.06.-24.06.2014 | Team Meeting NDSP, Amman, Jordan   |
| 29.06.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the role of mosques to promote tolerance and dialogue with Ahmed Ataia (Member of the NDC) and Mohammed Moftah (President of the preparation committee for al-Oma party)   |
| 05.07.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on The Southern issue with Khaled Baras (Member of the National Body)   |
| 12.07.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the escalation and events in Amran with Abdullah Dobalah (Journalist) and Saleh Mojali (Military and Security Expert)  |
| 15.07.-17.07.2014 | Official launch of Regional Fora in the Yemeni regions of al-Janad and Aden and workshops with representatives from Focus Group (national level) and regional level on the designing the federal state, Aden and Taiz, Yemen   |
| 19.07.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on Public Private Partnerships with Mazen Aman and Rafat al-Akhali (both NDC members)   |
| 02.08.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?”, on price reforms and lifting subsidies on oil derivatives with Dr Ali Kulaib (Professor of Economics at Sana’a University)   |
| 09.08.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” discussing the Yemeni national interest and aspirations for the transition phase with Zaid al-Shami (Member of the Islah party) and Hussein Hazeb (Member of the GPC party)   |
| 14.08.2014        | Official launch of the Yemeni Regional Forum in Azal and discussion on national-regional level interaction in the new federal system, Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 16.08.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the National Body and the main challenges of the coming transition phase with Tareq al-Basha (Member of the National Body) and Abdulbaqi Shamssan (Professor at Sana’a University)   |
| 23.08.2014        | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the recent escalation and mobilization by Ansar Allah against lifting subsidies on oil derivatives, with Missa Shugaaldin (Journalist) and Ali al-Sarari (Advisor of the Prime Minister) and Dr Yasser al-Hawri (Member of al-Haq party) |
| August 2014       | Several meetings were organized throughout the month for the Focus Group to start meetings with the main Yemeni political parties and components (including women and youth), to support consensus-building on the federal state, Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 31.08.-04.09.2014 | Expert Meetings with Assefa Fiseha and CDC to discuss issues related to federalism, mainly role of second chamber in federations and status of federal capitals, Sana’a, Yemen   |
| 30.08.-07.09.2014 | Study tour (in partnership with UNDP), “Providing technical assistance to the Yemeni Land Commission and drawing on German experiences in land and property restitution”, Berlin, Germany  |

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| September 2014    | Meetings between Focus Group and members of the Regional Fora to discuss the summary paper on the federalization process and challenges in the respective regions, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 06.09.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" on the escalation of Ansar Allah and the visit of the presidential committee to Saada with Abdulaziz al-Jubari (Secretary General of the Justice and Building party) and Ali al-Emad (Member of Ansar Allah)  |
| 13.09.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" on the presidential initiative presented to Ansar Allah with Mohammed al-Bukhaiti (Member of Ansar Allah)   |
| 29.09.2014        | Meeting with members of Azal Forum, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 30.09.2014        | Focus Group meeting on Peace and National Partnership Agreement, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 22.10.-28.10.2014 | NDSP team members attending training on transition to federalism with experts from the regions, Addis Ababa/Hawassa, Ethiopia  |
| 08.11.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" on the security situation, the formation of the new government and the implications of the Security Council resolution imposing sanctions with Ali Saif Hassan (Co-director NDSP)   |
| 08.11.2014        | Meetings of the Focus Group with senior leadership of the Yemeni Socialist Party on "The Federal State Engineering Matrix Document" at the YSP headquarters, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 15.11.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" on the formation of the "Bahah" government and the obstacles in the transition process with Galeb Motlaq (Minister of State for the Implementation of the NDC outcomes)   |
| 22.11.2014        | Meetings of the Focus Group with senior leadership of the Nasserite Party on "The Federal State Engineering Matrix Document" at the headquarters of Nasserite Party, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 22.11.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" on the implementation of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and the challenges around the NDC outcome implementation with Dr Mohammed Qaraa (Member of the Shura Council), Hamza al-Houthi (Member of Ansar Allah) and Dr Ali Naji (Professor at Sana'a University) |
| 29.11.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" on the status and main elements of the draft constitution with Mohamed Marim (Professor of Law and Constitutional Law) and Mohammed al-Gabri (Professor at Sana'a University)   |
| 01.12.-02.12.2014 | Workshop with the Focus Group on the transition to federalism process with experts from the regions, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 02.12.2014        | Meetings of the Focus Group with senior leadership of the Southern Movement on "The Federal State Engineering Matrix Document" at the residence of Hirak leader Yassin Makawi, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 06.12.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" on "political convergence" and the principle of National Partnership with Ali al-Lahabi (Member of the GPC party), Saeed al-Mamari (Member of the Islah party) and Ali al-Emad (Member of Ansar Allah)  |
| 06.12.-10.12.2014 | High-Level Workshop with senior leadership of Yemeni parties and components ("Potsdam II Meeting"), Potsdam, Germany   |
| 13.12.2014        | TV show broadcast, "What comes after the NDC?" on "political convergence" and polarization in the media discourse with Essam al-Qaisi (journalist and researcher), Fatima Motahar (Member of the Journalists Syndicate) and Ghamdan al-Yusafi (journalist and researcher)  |
| 18.12.-22.12.2014 | Focus Group workshop on challenges in the transition to federalism process in Yemen, Dead Sea, Jordan  |



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| 20.12.2014            | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on Parliament-Government relations with Mohammed al-Absee (journalist and political activist) and Saqr al-Samawi (Member of the NDC)   |
| 27.12.2014            | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the role of Yemeni women in the realization of National Partnership as a guiding principle with Dr Alkhansa al-Sha’bee (Member of the National Body) and Belqis al-Lahabi (Member of the NDC)                         |
| 03.01.2015            | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the draft constitution with Dr Ali Abo Holaiqa (President of the Legal Affairs Committee in Parliament) and Abdullah al-Qadasi (General Secretary of Nasserite party)   |
| 10.01.2015            | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the main elements of the draft constitution and the steps in preparation of the public referendum with Mohammed Zaid (Member of the NDC) and Tareq al-Basha (Member of the National Body and NDC member)              |
| 10.01.2015            | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum meeting and workshop on opportunities and challenges for al-Janad in the transition to federalism process, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 17.01.2015            | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the reality of rights and freedoms (and status of implementation of NDC outcomes in this regard) with Maged Fadael (Member of the NDC) and Radiyah al-Mutawakel (political activist and President of Moatana NGO)     |
| 24.01.2015            | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” with Dr Nabil al-Shargabi (Professor at Hodeidah University), Rana Ghanem (Member of the National Body) and Mohammed al-Emad (political activist and writer)   |
| 26.01.2015            | Azal Regional Dialogue Forum meeting on recent political developments and efforts by the various parties to overcome the crisis facing Yemen, Sana’a, Yemen   |
| 31.01.2015            | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on options for dialogue among the main political forces to overcome the crisis with Abdo al-Ghanadi (Speaker of GPC party), Mohammed Alaw (Member of the National Body) and Mohammed al-Bokhaiti (Member of Ansar Allah) |
| 31.01.2015            | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on the modes of work of the dialogue forum and measures to register the forum at the Social and Labour Ministry as an independent organ for al-Janad region in line with the outcome of the NDC, Taiz, Yemen                           |
| 31.01.-01.02.2015     | Aden Regional Dialogue Forum meeting on recent political developments in the South and the country as a whole, discussion of the principles of work of Aden regional forum, Aden, Yemen   |
| 07.-08.02./11.02.2015 | Aden Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting on the importance of joint vision-building for the future of the South, the question of a Southern representation mechanism and steps to overcome fragmentation of Southern leadership, Aden, Yemen                                |
| 08.02.2015            | Focus Group meeting on assessing the political situation and security in light of increasing polarization, Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 21.02.2015            | TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on political situations and implications of the house arrest and following escape of President Hadi to Aden with Mohammed al-Qobati (Member of Parliament) and Mohammed al-Bokhaiti (Member of Ansar Allah)              |
| 21.02.2015            | Aden Regional Forum, on the current political situation and implications for the South, Aden, Yemen   |
| 23.02.2015            | Azal Regional Dialogue Forum, on the Yemeni draft constitution, Sana’a, Yemen   |

- 28.02.2015 TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on the UN role and potential in supporting a political process and options to find a political settlement with Faris Tawfiq (Political activist/researcher), Adel Shujaa (Member of the GPC party) and Aabad al-Mahdari (Journalist)
- 28.02.2015 Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on the Yemeni Draft Constitution, Taiz, Yemen
- 02.03.2015 NDSP Team Meeting, Sana’a, Yemen
- 04.03.2015 TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on political negotiations to end the crisis with Ali al-Asali (Member of Nasserite party), Hezam al-Assad (Member of Ansar Allah) and Ahmed al-Subaihi (Member of the Council of Southern Revolutionary Forces)
- 15.03.2015 Aden Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting, Aden, Yemen
- 18.03.2015 Azal Regional Dialogue Forum on options to contribute to local conflict transformation, Sana’a, Yemen
- 19.03.2015 Azal Regional Dialogue Forum on local efforts to ease the humanitarian situation, Sana’a, Yemen
- 21.03.2015 TV show broadcast, “What comes after the NDC?” on political conflict and the risk of terrorism raising in time of political and security vacuum with Samir Hashim (Attorney and political activist), Qais -Ja’dabi (Writer and political activist) and Abdulallah Al-Mohamade (Lawyer)
- 21.03./23.03.2015 Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on options to contribute to local conflict transformation, Taiz, Yemen
- 24.03.2015 High-Level Consultation Meeting on creating a platform to support the political process, Sana’a, Yemen
- 16.04./19.04.2015 Meeting of the Focus Group on the humanitarian situation and options to strengthen relief efforts, Sana’a, Yemen
- 19.04.2015 Azal Regional Dialogue Forum on local efforts to ease the humanitarian situation, Sana’a, Yemen
- 28.04.2015 Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on the humanitarian situation and options to ease it, Taiz, Yemen
- 12.05.2015 Azal Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting with participants from Amran, Saada and Sana’a, on efforts to reach out to parties and options to engage more strongly in the humanitarian field, Sana’a, Yemen
- 13.05.2015 Meeting with UN Special Envoy to Yemen Ismail Oud Sheikh Ahmed, Sana’a, Yemen
- 14.05.2015 Focus Group Meeting on confidence-building measures and consultations to strengthen UN Negotiation efforts, Sana’a, Yemen
- 14.05./16.05./19.05./  
20.05./26.05.2015 Taiz Forum Meetings on drafting a ceasefire agreement for humanitarian purposes and on options for members of the regional forum to help regulating and monitoring the distribution of humanitarian items, goods and services, Taiz, Yemen
- 06.06.2015 Smaller sub-committee meetings of the Focus Group with Ansar Allah on the issue of extra-legal incarcerations and on the humanitarian situation, Sana’a, Yemen
- 07.06.2015 Taiz Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting on the humanitarian and military situation in Taiz and efforts to communicate with the various political parties to adopt a truce, Taiz, Yemen
- 09.06.2015 Facilitation of the Yemen Panel “Managing Crises in the Indian Ocean Region: The Case of Yemen”, Conference of the German Federal Foreign Office “The Indian Ocean – A Maritime Region on the Rise”, Berlin, Germany
- 09.06.2015 Focus Group Meeting on options to revive the political process, Sana’a, Yemen

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|-------------------|---|
| 10.06.2015        | Analysis and Reflection Workshop “Yemen: Current Situation, New Initiatives and Options for Inclusive Political Negotiations”, Berlin, Germany  |
| 11.06.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on options to ease the humanitarian and military situation, Taiz, Yemen  |
| 16.06.2015        | Taiz Forum Meeting on options to ease the humanitarian and military situation and to discuss efforts to reach out to the various political parties to adopt a truce and to prepare reports about the humanitarian situation and the relief efforts while Taiz is under siege, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 12.06.-17.06.2015 | Riyadh Consultations with Yemeni Government and with Saudi think tanks, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  |
| 29.06.2015        | Expert Consultation “ <i>Mediation und nationaler Dialog – zur aktuellen Situation im Jemen</i> ”, 16 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Subcommittee on Civil Crisis Prevention, Bundestag, Berlin, Germany  |
| 02.07.2015        | Focus Group Meeting on options for inclusive dialogue after the Geneva talks, Sana’a, Yemen   |
| 08.07.2015        | Azal Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting on the role of the forum to support local de-escalation measures and peace-building, Sana’a, Yemen   |
| 06.07.-10.07.2015 | Yemeni Government Delegation Visit with Badr Basalamah (Minister of Transport, Yemen), Hussam Sharjabi (Acting Minister of Finance), Dr Maeen Abdulmalek (Member of CDC), Berlin, Germany   |
| 10.07.2015        | Expert Roundtable with a delegation of the Yemeni Government “The Current Situation in Yemen: Challenges and Opportunities for Reviving the Political Process”, Berghof Centre, Berlin, Germany   |
| 15.07.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting on efforts to ease the humanitarian and military situation, Taiz, Yemen  |
| 28.07.2015        | Strategic Support Group Meeting (formerly Focus Group) on the new role, objectives and structure of the group. Three working groups were formed on a) political initiatives, b) the security situation, and c) comparing the two reference documents UN SC Res 2216 (of April 2015) and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement (of September 2014), Sana’a, Yemen |
| 30.07.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on the political, security and economic situations and local peacebuilding measures, Ibb, Yemen  |
| 01.08.-02.08.2015 | Strategic Support Group Meeting (SSG), “Interim Security Arrangements and Challenges of Security Transition in Yemen”, Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 04.08.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum meeting on options by the forum to support mediation between the parties to keep Ibb as a “safe zone” from war, Taiz, Yemen  |
| 06.08.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting, to coordinate the organization of a press conference on forum efforts to ease the situation in Taiz, Taiz, Yemen  |
| 08.08.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Press Conference on efforts of the forum to ease the situation in Taiz, Taiz, Yemen  |
| 13.08.2015        | Azal Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting to discuss working mechanisms of the forum and options for supporting local conflict resolution and peacebuilding, Sana’a, Yemen   |
| 17.08.-18.08.2015 | Sub-Group Meeting of SSG about options and mechanisms to improve the security situation, Sana’a, Yemen  |
| 18.08.2015        | Meeting with UN Special Envoy to Yemen Ismail Oud Sheikh Ahmed and team, Berlin, Germany  |
| 27.08./31.08.2015 | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting to talk about the current situation in Taiz and to discuss the role in supporting local de-escalation, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 07.09.2015        | Sub-Group Meeting of SSG on analysing the security situation and developing options for political initiatives for addressing it, Sana’a, Yemen  |

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| 16.09.-17.09.2015 | Strategic Support Group Meeting on the overall security situation and options to support a political framework, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 22.09.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting to discuss a draft ceasefire agreement to be proposed to parties, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 03.10.-07.10.2015 | Riyadh Consultations with Yemeni Government, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  |
| 10.10.2015        | Aden Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting, Aden, Yemen  |
| 11.10.2015        | Strategic Support Group Meeting on UN SC Res 2216 and PNPA, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 12.10.2015        | Strategic Support Group Meeting on options to ease the security situation, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 13.10.2015        | Strategic Support Group Meeting on UN SC Res 2216 and PNPA and mechanisms to support implementation, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 17.10.2015        | Strategic Support Group Meeting on efforts to ease the security situation, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 18.10.2015        | Strategic Support Group Meeting for a joint conflict analysis (based on paper by ECFR), Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 26.10.2015        | Strategic Support Group Meeting to review the work of the SSG, discussion of draft papers that were elaborated by the working groups and discussion of the coming high-level consultation meeting in Jordan, Sana'a, Yemen                                   |
| 27.10.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting on local peacebuilding efforts, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 28.10.2015        | Azal Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting on local peacebuilding efforts, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 01.11.-04.11.2015 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Yemeni Personalities (in coordination with UN OSESGY) on steps to end the war and interim security arrangements, Dead Sea, Jordan  |
| 02.11.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting on local peace-building efforts, Taiz, Yemen  |
| 11.11./17.11.2015 | Strategy Support Group Meeting on options to support consensus-building ahead of upcoming peace talks of the conflict parties in Switzerland, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 21.11.2015        | Strategy Support Group Meeting on challenges and implementation mechanisms of UN SC Res 2216, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 05.12.-07.12.2015 | NDSP Team Meeting, Berlin, Germany   |
| 07.12.-10.12.2015 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Yemeni Personalities (in coordination with UN OSESGY) on options and steps for the restoration of state functionality in Yemen, Dead Sea, Jordan   |
| 23.12.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on exchange of prisoners, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 26.12.2015        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on exchange of prisoners, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 29.12.-30.12.2015 | Strategy Support Group Meeting on options and steps for the restoration of state functionality in Yemen and to discuss outcomes of the consultation meeting on the topic as well as review of the peace talks in Switzerland in December 2015, Sana'a, Yemen |
| 17.01.-18.01.2016 | Strategy Support Group Meeting on the resumption and format of political dialogue and the establishment of an interim security committee, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 20.01.-30.01.2016 | Strategy Support Group Meeting in subgroups, to develop suggestions and options papers on the resumption and format of political dialogue and the establishment of an interim security committee, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 30.01.-31.01.2016 | Strategy Support Group Meeting with UN security advisor to discuss interim security arrangements and internal discussion meeting, Sana'a, Yemen  |

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| 31.01.2016        | Bilateral Consultation Workshop with representatives of Yemeni Government and Islah party on interim security arrangements, Cairo, Egypt  |
| 07.02.-08.02.2016 | Final Symposium of the Aden Regional Dialogue Forum on the current needs and challenges in South Yemen as well as on visions for the future of the South, Aden, Yemen   |
| 17.02.-18.02.2016 | Strategy Support Group Meeting on the outcomes of the two working groups on political dialogue and security committee, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 14.03.2016        | Meeting of the multiparty Strategy Support Group, on the formation of an Executive Security Committee and interim security arrangement, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 19.03.-20.03.2016 | Bilateral Consultation Meetings with GPC/Saleh and Ansar Allah on the formation of an Executive Security Committee and Interim Security Arrangements, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 23.03.-26.03.2016 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Yemeni Personalities (in coordination with UN OSESGY), on "Improved inclusivity and partnership models" in the Yemeni peace process, Dead Sea, Jordan   |
| 13.04.2016        | Conflict Analysis Workshop with the Strategy Support Group and April Longley, Senior Yemen Analyst at International Crisis Group, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 14.04.2016        | Strategy Support Group Meeting on options to support the upcoming peace talks between the Yemeni conflict parties in Kuwait, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 19.04.2016        | Strategy Support Group Meeting on steps to resume the political dialogue, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 07.05.2016        | Strategy Support Group Meeting on potential areas to enhance consensus and overcome deadlock in the Kuwait talks of the Yemeni conflict parties, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 26.05.2016        | Strategy Support Group Meeting on potential areas to enhance consensus and overcome deadlock in the Kuwait talks of the Yemeni conflict parties (continued), Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 10.05.-13.05.2016 | 4 <sup>th</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Yemeni Personalities (in coordination with UN OSESGY) on options for inclusion of the South in the Yemeni peace and transition process, Dead Sea, Jordan,   |
| 02.06.2016        | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum on confidence-building measures, Taiz, Yemen   |
| 15.06.2016        | Strategy Support Group Iftar Meeting on the outcomes of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities in Jordan and the progress of the Kuwait talks with inputs from the delegation advisors, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 18.06.2016        | Meeting with members of the al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum to facilitate a substantial exchange of prisoners, following months of negotiations led by our local coordinator, Maeen al-Obaydi, in the framework of confidence-building measures in Taiz (108 prisoners related to Ansar Allah and 85 prisoners related to the Popular Resistance were released), Taiz, Yemen |
| 29.05.-01.06.2016 | 5 <sup>th</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Yemeni Personalities (in coordination with UN OSESGY) on the resumption of political dialogue and the roadmap for the political transition process in Yemen, Dead Sea, Jordan   |
| 16.07.-19.07.2016 | 6 <sup>th</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Yemeni Personalities (in coordination with UN OSESGY) on the resumption of political dialogue after a future agreement of the conflict parties, Brummana, Lebanon   |
| 22.07.2016        | Launch of the "Together for Taiz Initiative", meeting to establish and support a group of high-level social figures to create a local peacebuilding initiative and develop steps towards de-escalation of the situation in Taiz with representatives of all parties (after a series of preparatory meetings in Taiz and Sana'a), Taiz, Yemen                                  |

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| 27.07. -29.07.2016 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of a youth branch of the multiparty Strategy Support Group (Youth SSG) on the potential role and contribution of youth in the peace process in Yemen, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 03.08. -04.08.2016 | Strategy Support Group Meeting to discuss the outcome of the 6 <sup>th</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Personalities, on options to strengthen local governance and on the implications of the formation of the high political council between AA and GPC, Sana'a, Yemen |
| 31.08.2016         | Strategy Support Group Meeting to discuss the political situation after the failure/interruption of the Kuwait talks and to develop options for transitional institutional structures (National Body), Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 29.09. -02.10.2016 | 7 <sup>th</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Yemeni Personalities (in coordination with UN OSESGY) on options to strengthen local governance, Dead Sea, Jordan  |
| 03.10.2016         | Consultation Meeting with influential figures from Taiz on options to support peacebuilding and de-escalation efforts in Taiz, Dead Sea, Jordan  |
| 22.10.2016         | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting to support confidence-building and local de-escalation measures in Taiz, Taiz, Yemen  |
| 25.10.2016         | Youth SSG Meeting on the current situation of the peace process and possible steps forward, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 29.10.2016         | Strategy Support Group Meeting, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 28.11. -29.11.2016 | Youth SSG Meeting on options for youth to support and participate in the peace process (in the short and medium term), Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 29.11.2016         | Al-Janad Regional Dialogue Forum Meeting to coordinate and support local peacebuilding measures in Taiz, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 01.12.2016         | Strategy Support Group Meeting, Sana'a, Yemen  |
| 08.12.-12.12.2016  | 8 <sup>th</sup> Consultation Meeting of Eminent Yemeni Personalities "Yemen at a crossroads – what can be done to support an inclusive peace and reconciliation process?", Berlin, Germany   |
| 25.12.-26.12.2016  | Youth SSG Meeting on the current political situation, implications for youth and youth participation in the peace process, Sana'a, Yemen   |
| 28.12.2016         | Strategy Support Group Meeting to analyse and review the work and effectiveness of the SSG and plan for future meetings, Sana'a, Yemen   |

