Country/entity	Yemen
Region	Middle East and North Africa
Agreement name	Agreement regarding the Exchange of Prisoners, Detainees, Remains and Missing Persons
Date	18 Jan 2018
Agreement status	Multiparty signed/agreed
Interim arrangement	Yes

Agreement/conflict level Intrastate/local conflict

Yemeni Civil Wars (1994) (2011 -)

The Republic of Yemen was formed in May 1990 after the merger between the Yemeni Arab Republic (YAR) in the north and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in the south. The unification process was rushed and the final agreement between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and President Ali Salem al-Beidh was based on the imperfect promise of equality. Following the merger, integration of the militaries and civil services was at best incomplete or at times entirely non-existent. When Saleh's General Congress Party (GPC) allied itself with the newly created Islamist Islah ('reform') party in 1993, the former ruling party of South Yemen – the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) – was effectively side-lined in the 1993 General Elections. Violence involving the use of heavy weaponry and aerial bombardment erupted in April 1994 and on the 21 May 1994 Vice President al-Beidh declared the secession of the south, citing political centralization with the northern highland tribes, violence against the YSP and economic discrimination. In the midst of fighting, negotiations in Cairo, Egypt, collapsed. The war ended with the military victory of the north, and on the 1 October 1994, Ali Abdullah Saleh was elected President.

Despite the unification of Yemen in 1990, political power during the 1990s and 2000s remained centralized with the northern highland tribes, particularly the villages from which President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his confidants stemmed. The system of clientelism established through the ruling General People's Congress party maintained relative loyalty among the fractured political allegiances of Yemen's traditional tribal leadership. However, diminishing oil reserves and the shrinking opportunities for access to rent increased economic and political marginalization in Yemen's peripheral communities. The degree of regionalism of conflicts is further defined by other local grievances. In the northern governorate of Sa'dah, a backlash was provoked among the local Zaydi Shi'a against Sunni Salafist cultural incursions resulting in six wars between 2004 and 2010. In the southern governorates of Hadramawt, Shabwa, al-Dhali and Abyan, civil and military personnel forcibly retired after the 1994 Civil War began protesting and eventually formed the secessionist Southern 'al-Hiraak' movement in 2007. Furthermore, tribal grievances have spurred attacks on oil companies and government installations to extract rents. Various takfiri groups including al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula have also increased their presence since 1995.

The Yemen Spring in early 2011 allowed all these movements to express their joint displeasure. Moreover, factionalism in the regime split the already weak military and thus allowed the Houthis, the takfiris and tribal-based militia known as popular committees, to assert themselves militarily. Mandated by the UN-sponsored Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the National Dialogue held from March 2013 to January 2014 aimed at guaranteeing power-sharing among the different parties. However, the GCC Initiative only included formal political parties that did not accurately reflect political realities. Furthermore, provisions lacked adequate transitional justice and provided former-President Saleh, as well as others, full amnesty. As a result, little faith was placed in the process by formerly marginalized groups such as the Zaydi Shia Houthi rebels (Ansar Allah) and al-Hiraak who opted to increase their bargaining power vis-à-vis the state by strengthening their own territorial enclaves. In September 2014 the Houthis succeeded in capturing the capital Sana'a and gradually expanded their control southward. The subsequent UN-mediated Peace and National Partnership Agreement between transitional president Hadi and the Houthis on a federal, democratic Yemeni state, failed to be implemented as the Houthis successfully dissolved the parliament and deposed Hadi in January 2015. Following the Saudi military intervention to restore the Hadi government in March 2015, ceasefire attempts continuously failed. A two-year

Stage	Framework/substantive - partial
Conflict nature	Government
Peace process	Yemen Inter-group Agreements
Parties	First Party Represented by Mr. Zia-ul-Haq Idris Munawar Al-Ahdal Resistance Coordination Council (Paradise of Prisoners) of Taiz Governorate - (described in agreement text as 'Representative of the Prisoners Committee of the Governorate of Ta'iz') Second Party Represented by Mr. Abdelqader Hassan Al-Mortada Chairman of the National Committee Prisoners Affairs & Missing Persons - (described in the agreement text as 'Representative of the Prisoners Committee of Sana'a')
Third parties	-
Description	This is a short but detailed and comprehensive exchange agreement between the Houthi (Ansar Allah) affiliated National committee for Prisoners and the Taiz governorate committee for prisoners. The agreement sets out provisions for exchanging firstly the names and information around detained prisoners as part of an extensive exchange of fighters from conflict across the governorates of Taiz and Ibb. It also provides for the exchange of information and names regarding the dead, including places of burial and exchange of any other information regarding remains.

Agreement document	YE_180118_Agreement_regarding_the_Exchange_of_Prisoners_etc_EN.docx (3).pdf (opens in new tab) | Download PDF
Agreement document (original language)	YE_180118_Houthi-PC agreement on exchange of prisoners_AR.pdf (opens in new tab)

Local agreement properties

Process type	Informal but persistent process
Rationale	This appears to be one of the earliest noted agreements involving prisoner exchange we have, yet there is an argument that this both sets a precedent for further prisoner exchange agreements and also continues some culture of signing. Another agreement takes place later the same year at national level which encourages wide spread exchange of prisoners throughout the country, similarly to this agreement which mentions similar ideals around consideration of exchange across a wide geographic range. There are also other local agreements signed in the years leading up to this which involve provisions that include cultural practices for exchanging information regarding the dead or remains of fighters from both sides, which this agreement also addresses. There are no formal frameworks of support for this agreement and while the process is set out in an orderly way in terms of brokerage and implementation, the proposed set of steps appear to have a level of openness/flexibility to them.
Is there a documented link to a national peace process?	Yes
Link to national process: articulated rationale	In the case of this complex local conflict within the wider Yemeni conflict, the decision has been made based on the fact that at least one of the representatives here could in some ways be viewed as being affiliated with local governance actors and with a clear stance towards the wider conflict. Resistance groups in Taiz are affiliated with a wider umbrella group of fighters and army sects, at this stage with a clear affinity and stance in the conflict.
Name of Locale	Governorates of Ta'iz and Ibb
Nature of Locale	Region
GPS Lat/Long (DD)	13.669200, 44.168646
Participant type	Local state actor Local armed group
Mediator, facilitator or similar	Mediator or similar referred to
Mediator (references)	Abd al-Tayif Āhmad Sālih al-Murādī and Bisām Āhmad al-Briq are described as the mediators/ 'brokers' of the agreement.
Type of mediator/ facilitator/similar	Unclear/Other

Local issues

Ritual/prayer and process (including use of scripture)	Page 1, Paragraph 1, ... the honest desire of the two sides for cooperation according to the will of Almighty Allah Page 1, 4- ...They also pledge that the signing of this agreement is a true pledge to Allah and that clarification and credibility are the basis of this agreement and its implementation. Page 2, Allah is the Conciliator and the Wise
Grievance List	Page 1, 6- The two sides agree that each side will provide special announcements with the names of those who died or killed on both sides as well as the names of those buried including the areas of burial, the numbers of buried, the bodies analysed during the war whose names are unknown, as well as the number of unidentified the location of their remains.
Cattle rustling/ banditry	No specific mention.
Social cover	No specific mention.