

Challenges of the Current Yemeni Situation **and Possible Peace Opportunities for 2022**

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▪ **Introduction:**

Wars and conflicts with the passage of time have exhausted the peoples of the entire earth. Everyone aspires to peace that responds to their hopes and wishes, and guarantees them a good life without fear of shells of all kinds, bullets, bombs or nuclear weapons. These tools frighten adults, eliminate the innocence of children, and destroy facilities, undermine civilizations, and end the historical legacy of nations.

Hence peace remains a great principle in the life of nations, and its role is great in the lives of individuals, and in giving them the ability to produce and give in all aspects of life. It can transform the ugly into beautiful, and change the bad into good which is a special characteristic of a person when he is characterized by psychological stability in his life. This stability will not be achieved without the availability of the principle of peace in the reality of his society and environment.

Based on this, it can be said that achieving comprehensive development in the reality of peoples is closely linked to the achievement of the peace process, since the essence and basis of comprehensive development is the human being, and it is on his own that this desired development is achieved in all aspects of life or not, and to the extent of its stability and psychological and mental comfort he shall produce and develop, without that, it becomes complicated and difficult, and life remains stagnant and backward.

The current reality of Yemen comes with its destructive conflict and wars, through which the peace process faces many obstacles, which have become an impenetrable barrier to achieving peace, while stopping the conflict requires the participation of all parties for the sake of peace, realistic action, and a comprehensive view of the Yemeni crisis so that

efforts aiming at achieving Stopping the war, and bringing the desired peace to all Yemenis can be achieved after a long suffering with the bitter conflict that left a country suffering in various aspects of life.

The importance of the topic:

The role that peace occupies in the life of societies can never be neglected as an was created to live in peace, security, and contentment, and he did not exist in order to be killed and annihilated. Things that can be achieved in times of peace is many times as much as what can be achieved in bloody conflicts, devastating wars and human disasters, and here the importance of the topic of this research can be summarized in the following points:

- 1- The complicated situation that Yemeni society has reached as a result of the war and the long conflict.
- 2- The important and pioneering role of knowledge and scientific research in contributing to solving the problems of society.
- 3- Peacebuilding is a pluralistic task that requires the concerted efforts of all people in all sectors.
- 4- The culture of peace is an extension of the democratic process.
- 5- The topic of this research is one of the most important and prominent topics that occupy public opinion on the national and regional arena.
- 6- The urgent need to restore hope to Yemeni society members in the search and investigation of possible peace opportunities in the current stage and future stage.

7- The peace process is an important culture that needs development and growth through human development based on stability, freedom and justice, and peace cannot be imposed from abroad.¹

All the above points confirm that the peace process in any society can only take place after the rejection of violence and conflict, with the need for all national trends to unite and be convinced of the importance of peace and stability for the homeland and society, in addition to recognizing the other, and appreciating each side for the other party away from clashes, intransigence and intolerance in decision-making.

▪ **Research Problem:**

The problem of this study revolves around the complex situation in Yemen at the present time, and the search for possible opportunities to establish peace among Yemeni society. Hence, the problem is crystallized in answering the following questions:

- What are the main challenges facing stopping the conflict and establishing the peace process inside Yemen?
- What are the effects of the conflict process inside Yemen?
- What are the available and possible opportunities in the field of peace for Yemen in the coming period?

The General Objective of the Research:

This research seeks to identify the most prominent challenges that stand in the way of ending the conflict inside Yemen, and to identify the most prominent possible opportunities in the field of peacemaking among Yemeni society.

The UN envoys to Yemen and their experiences in stopping the conflict:

¹ See, Mohamed Mahmoud Mustafa: Developing the social values of youth as an entry point for personal development". Research published in the Twelfth Scientific Conference, Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University 1999, p. 217

It is important here, through this research, to address the role of the UN envoys to Yemen, especially during the current conflict period, and their experiences to try to stop the conflict, resolve the Yemeni crisis and reach peace between the conflicting parties, by giving a brief overview of each envoy, and the most prominent findings he reached, as follows:

1- Jamal bin Omar:

The United Nations appointed its diplomatic representative, Jamal bin Omar, as the United Nations envoy to Yemen in 2011, and he continued his mission until April 2015. He also led the mediation between the parties to the conflict in 2011, and then negotiations to conclude a power-sharing agreement in 2015, but some considered him lenient with the Houthis, which did not help him to succeed in his mission in Yemen.

Bin Omar played a pivotal role in supervising the transfer of power between former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the opposition, and his phase was interspersed with a number of UN resolutions that concerned Yemen, including the resolution to place Yemen under Chapter VII in February 2014, and the imposition of sanctions on some Obstacles to the political process in Yemen, but Ibn Omar was unable to find a political transfer of power in accordance with the Gulf initiative. Bin Omar did not succeed in his mission, although his appointment as an international envoy to Yemen was initially welcomed by various Yemeni parties, but with time confidence in his policy declined accusing him of leniency with the Houthis; and as a result, the country entered into a bloody civil war, and Saudi Arabia, led by a coalition against the Houthis, intervened under the name "Decisive Storm", on March 26, 2015, after which Bin Omar submitted his resignation after five years of faltering in the path to conflict resolution.

2- Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed

The Mauritanian diplomat, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, was appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to succeed Jamal Bin Omar to stop the war and end the conflict through a peaceful political solution². In Kuwait, Ould Cheikh announced a road map included security measures stated as per resolution no. 2216 with formation of a national unity government working to restore basic services and revive the Yemeni economy. According to this map, the national unity government will prepare for a political dialogue that defines the necessary steps to reach a comprehensive political solution, including the electoral map, and define the tasks of the institutions that will manage the transitional phase, with the completion of the draft constitution.³

During the period of his mission, Ould Cheikh was keen to solve the Yemeni crisis to stop the conflict through negotiations that included the warring parties in Geneva and Kuwait, but they did not succeed in making peace because of the Houthis (Ansar Allah) and their reservations about those initiatives at the time. Ould Cheikh was unable to continue to solve the crisis and reaching a peaceful political agreement, while some parties, most notably (Ansar Allah) refused to deal with him; so he returned to activate the humanitarian side to compensate for the failure he suffered on the political side. Ould Cheikh tried to carry out the mission tactfully, and succeeded in bringing the Houthi side to Geneva for the first time, and failed on other times, and days before the end of his term of office, the international envoy to Yemen, Ould Cheikh, stressed that the solution to the conflict and crisis in Yemen cannot be achieved through military resolution, and indicated that all trends and parties in Yemen bear the responsibility for not reaching a solution one way or another.

² Office of the special Envoy of the UN General Secretary, April 2021

³ UN website, International Envoy presents a roadmap to end the conflict in Yemen, June/2016

With the continued stumbling between the parties, and the intransigence of some parties, and their refusal to deal with him and demand his change, Ismail Ould Cheikh left in January 2018, and the British Martin Griffiths was appointed as his successor.



3- Martin Griffith:

The British Martin Griffith is one of the most prominent UN envoys to Yemen, and he is one of the political figures affiliated with the West, unlike his previous predecessors, and was chosen mainly based on his experiences in the field of conflict resolution, negotiation and humanitarian affairs. He is also the Executive Director of the European Institute of Peace in Brussels.

Upon his appointment as a UN envoy to Yemen in February 2018, many Yemenis had renewed hopes for the possibility of developing solutions to the civil war in the country. He began his work by holding a number of meetings with different parties and political parties in Yemen as he saw that his basic mission was related to hear different points of view to form a clear vision to get rid of the complex conflict in Yemen.

In mid-April 2018, Griffiths announced before the UN Security Council his intention to present a framework to the Council for negotiations within two months with the aim of ending the conflict. Accordingly, three important trends for this plan were subsequently announced, which centered on:

- 1- Disarmament and negotiations

- 2- The existence of a transitional phase that includes the participation of everyone in the government.
- 3- Holding elections, then granting the Yemenis freedom to solve their issues, such as the southern issue, but at the same time he stressed the commitment of the United Nations to reach a solution within the framework of preserving Yemeni unity.



But that plan collided with the Houthis' rejection, and it turned out to be difficult to implement, and on May 15, 2019, Griffiths gave a briefing to the Security Council, which angered the Yemeni government and President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who sent a letter to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, describing Griffiths' briefing as "An example of a flagrant violation of the mandate granted to him". President Hadi protested in it the "actions, provocations and abuses" of the UN envoy.

In one of his statements, Griffiths indicated saying: There is an opportunity before us to bring peace to Yemen, and this opportunity comes at a time when the country is going through some of its most difficult days, and then entered the Corona virus pandemic, threatening to deepen and increase the suffering of Yemenis. There is no better time for the parties to commit to silence the guns and end the conflict through a peaceful political solution⁴.

- Mr. Hans Grunberg

⁴ Office of the Special envoy of the UN General Secretary, April 2021

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has appointed the Swedish national, Mr. Hans Grunberg, as the new envoy of the United Nations to Yemen, to succeed the previous envoy, Griffiths, as many analysts and politicians described him as an experienced diplomat, who had worked in Swedish and European missions abroad, and on the same path he held positions in Cairo Jerusalem and Brussels, as Hans made clear in his first briefing, that he intends to listen to as many Yemeni men and women as possible, stressing that the path to be followed must be guided by the aspirations of the Yemeni people. The Special Envoy called on encouragement of external parties to reduce escalation, and the need for these parties' entry to be based on supporting a Yemeni-led political settlement, noting that achieving peace and stability in Yemen is necessary for the stability of the entire region, and revealed that he will begin his initial consultations with Yemeni, regional and international actors.



He also looks forward to meet leaders of the Houthis (Ansar Allah), and other actors in Sanaa, as well as other political actors across Yemen, while Mr. Hans revealed plans to meet with regional leaders in Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Kuwait, Tehran, Cairo and other places, and his willingness to spend as much time as possible in Yemen and with the Yemenis. The Special Envoy stressed that he will spare no effort in trying to bring together actors across the parties to the conflict, and to engage

Yemenis from all political viewpoints and societal components and from all parts of the country to the discussion under the auspices of the United Nations with the aim of finding common ground and resolve their differences "without resorting to force". In his briefing, he explained that the peace process has been stalled for a long time, as the parties to the conflict have not discussed a comprehensive political settlement since 2016. This pause has left Yemenis stuck in a state of war indefinitely, without a clear way forward. Therefore, it is imperative for the parties to the conflict to enter into a peaceful dialogue with each other, facilitated by the United Nations, on the terms of a comprehensive settlement, in good faith, without preconditions.⁵

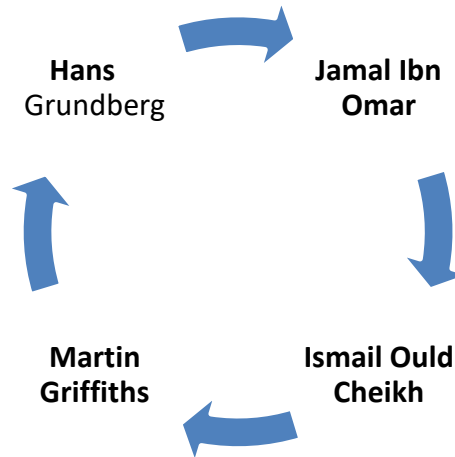
While "Grundberg" did not mention Resolution (2216) as a reference for the solution, while the Houthis demanded the withdrawal from the cities, and the handing over of heavy weapons. This resolution is one of the three references to a political solution in Yemen that the government repeats, in addition to the Gulf initiative and its executive mechanism, and the outcomes of the national dialogue.

In his briefing, the new envoy, Grundberg also focused on the fact that the parties to the conflict have changed from what they were in 2015, and said, "The hotbeds of military confrontation have changed over time, and the combatants have taken turns to take offensive roles". He also indicated that he will be guided only by the mandate granted to him through related resolutions of the Security Council. It seems that the new envoy is proceeding with his vision of a solution by bypassing the resolution, and not keeping negotiations between the two main parties, the Houthi group (Ansar Allah) and the Yemeni government. He noted, "I will spare no effort in trying to bring together actors across the conflict lines and involve Yemenis from all political points of view and societal

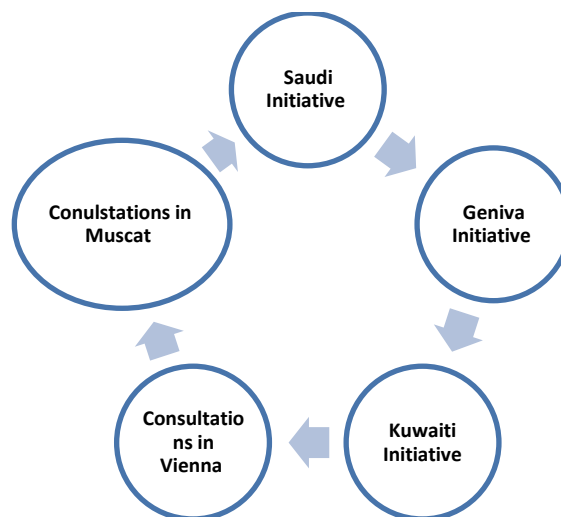
⁵ United Nations Office of Political Affairs, September, 2021 ad

components and from all parts of the country" as well as experts in Yemeni affairs.

Figure (1) shows the four UN envoys to end the conflict in Yemen



- **Peace Initiatives for Yemen**



- **Saudi Initiative:**

In March 2021, Riyadh presented an initiative to end the war in Yemen, which included: a nationwide ceasefire, opening Sanaa airport to specific destinations, allowing fuel and other goods to enter Houthi areas through

the port of Hodeidah city on the Red Sea, and resuming the stalled political negotiations to end the conflict.

This initiative intersects with two initiatives: the American initiative put forward by the US envoy to Yemen Timothy Linderking, and the initiative presented by the United Nations envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, while the Houthis did not present a clear, public position on the Saudi initiative, but they did provide a response through the Sultanate of Oman regarding the Saudi initiative. According to sources familiar with the talks, the Houthis are calling on the Saudis to cease fire through three steps:

- 1- Stop the air strikes.
- 2- Cease-fire along the Saudi-Yemeni border.
- 3- Cease-fire inside Yemen

Considering that the Saudi air strikes are one of the important countermeasures that impede the Houthis' efforts to invade Marib, the Houthis' offer is an attempt to reach the Ma'rib Governorate, by neutralizing the air strikes in support of the government forces and the popular resistance, so the talk about it stopped after the Houthis' request, and their rejection of international calls to stop the attack on the city of Marib, which affects nearly two million displaced people in the city - according to the reports of international organizations and the Yemeni government⁶.

Second: Muscat Consultations:

Lenderking and Griffiths arrived with the Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, Chris Murphy, and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan in the Omani capital, "Muscat", after obtaining initial approval from the Houthis regarding an initiative submitted for a ceasefire in Yemen, it begins with stopping the "Houthi

⁶ <https://abaadstudies.org/news>

attack” on Marib, in exchange for lifting the siege on Sanaa airport, and allowing imports to enter the Houthi-controlled ports (Hodeidah & Saleef) in the west of the country, then a comprehensive ceasefire for several weeks followed by sitting at the negotiating table with the Yemeni government, but after several days, Lindking and Griffiths left Muscat, declaring the failure of intensive consultations. The Houthis even refused to meet with the envoys alongside Saudi officials, and Griffiths tried to hide the disappointment at the end of those talks. Unfortunately, we are not in the place we would like to reach an agreement."

When the Houthis came close to agreeing to accept the agreement, they returned again and rejected the proposed offer, and the refusal came back after consulting the Houthi negotiators in Muscat with the "military wing of the group", which confirmed that the increasing attack towards the "city of Marib", if successful, would change the calculations of the negotiations, although this has become difficult for the Houthis to be achieved after several months of resuming the attack on the city.

At one point in the Saudi-Houthi negotiations, Western diplomats were indicating that they had reached an agreement on nearly 90% of the files presented, including the full opening of ports in Houthi areas and Sanaa airport, which would lead to a ceasefire. The talks in Amman were administered by the Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul Salam, who lives in Muscat and has been assigned as the lead negotiator⁷.

Third: Vienna Consultations:

Iran and the international powers (known as the P5+1) reached an agreement in 2015, called the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" or the "Iranian nuclear agreement", which refers to several stages preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions imposed on it for decades. However, the United

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States of America withdrew from the agreement in 2018 in an attempt to implement a policy of maximum pressure on Tehran to force it to renegotiate, with more concessions.

Quick consultations also began for Washington's return to the agreement in the spring of 2021 under the administration of current President "Joe Biden," as the Biden administration's policy was that "if Iran returns to strict compliance with its obligations, the United States will do the same." However, the administration also indicated that it intends to address "Iran's destabilizing regional behavior, ballistic missile development and proliferation", a goal that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has strongly rejected, deeming these issues "non-negotiable" in these talks, while the future may open more Negotiations based on the principle of "more for more". So that the United States returns to the agreement and cancel the related sanctions, then the United States will be able to impose additional American sanctions on the table as incentives for more Iranian concessions. To achieve this, Saudi Arabia and Iran began conducting secret consultations in Baghdad, which some leaks indicate that Tehran I asked Riyadh to support the agreement in "Vienna" in exchange for pressure on the Houthis to end missile and drone attacks on the kingdom, which have already intensified since the start of the "Vienna Consultations" and the attack on the city of Ma'rib. Iran has also communicated extensively over the past years with the UAE, which is an influential regional actor in southern Yemen.

Contrary to its strong rejection of the nuclear agreement, the Gulf states seem to be more accepting of it- as per the view of the Americans - at the present time. Democratic US Senator Chris Murphy believes that the success of the "Vienna Consultations" will represent a step forward to end the war in Yemen, and said after his visit to the region that "Tehran's nuclear agreement with world powers is very important, and perhaps

decisive for peace in Yemen," and added, "I think that A dialogue with the Iranians that comes through restarting the JCPOA would be beneficial to push peace path in Yemen forward". Also, achieving progress in the "Vienna" consultations will mean achieving similar progress in the consultations between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Baghdad. At the same time, the location of the Houthi battle in Marib governorate is at the heart of these transformations and consultations related to Iran, as Iran sees the Houthi control of Marib as a victory for the axis of resistance it leads, and a full-fledged consolidation of a long-term and influential presence in the politics and national security of the Arabian Peninsula.

Challenges facing the UN envoys to Yemen:

Many obstacles and challenges have emerged before the UN envoys regarding their role in Yemen, the most prominent of which are:

1. The economy, its challenges and manifold problems among Yemenis.
2. The goals of the coalition that it seeks to achieve through its participation in Yemen, and the ambiguity of some of them.
3. Weakness or low adequate representation of the various local trends within Yemen⁸.
4. The deep intellectual and political differences between the many political parties and blocs within Yemen.
5. Weakness or lack of trust among the many conflicting parties within Yemen.

Some also emphasize the existence of other challenges, the most important of which are:

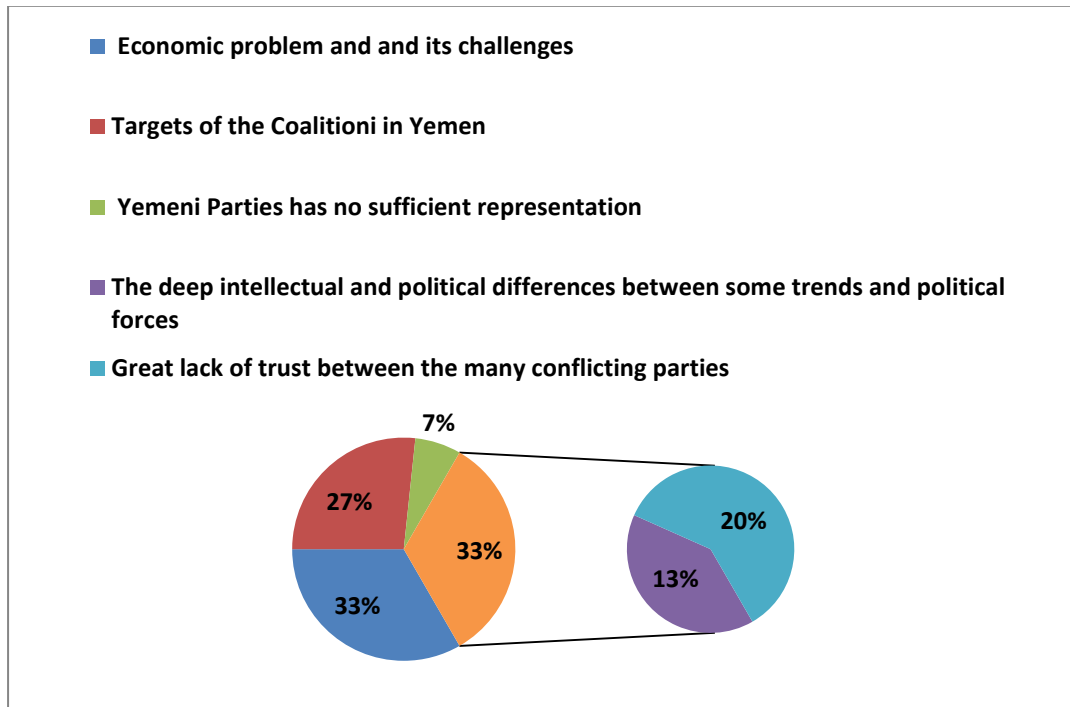
The ongoing military escalation of the Houthi movement.

- Increasing and multiplicity of the Houthi Group.
- Variety of political and ideological parties ruing the war period.

⁸ Analysis- a peacemaker is required in Yemen, 2012

- Some external and international parties, such as the United States, the European Union, Iran and the UAE, are interfering.

Figure (2) shows the most prominent and important challenges facing the mission of envoys to Yemen



❖ Trends of UN envoys in resolving the crisis and ending the conflict:

Based on the monitoring and follow-up of the work and activities of each of the UN envoys to Yemen, it can be said that the focus of efforts and the direction that was evident for each of the UN envoys appeared as follows:

A table showing the UN envoys to Yemen and the area they focused on in addressing the Yemeni crisis

UN envoy	Effort focus and trend	His view of the Yemeni situation
Jamal bin	Focus on the	The possibility of a solution is

Omar	political side	available with the complexity of the political scene
Ismail Ould Cheikh	The political and then the humanitarian side	The complexity of the situation, the affirmation that the solution is the responsibility of all Yemeni parties, and the adoption of the comprehensive settlement approach
Martin Griffiths	The humanitarian side and the political side	The need for more pressure from the international community on the parties to the conflict, and the need to benefit from the efforts of the United States, and to address the crisis in stages
Hans Gru	Political side as observed from through his statements	A complex situation that requires the involvement of all parties, and the use of the largest possible time to resolve the Yemeni crisis

▪ **The International Community and its role in the Yemeni conflict:**

Despite all the efforts made by some international parties to resolve the Yemeni crisis, the reality confirms that there is a poor understanding on the part of the international community of what is happening in Yemen, which has led to the failure of the approach taken by the international community to reach the desired peace in Yemen, and this does not mean that the international community is against peace; rather, it means that the current approach of the international community in managing the Yemeni crisis may be dominated by the bureaucratic approach, while the situation on Yemeni soil is affected by regional changes, the impact of

developments in the nuclear file, presidential elections, and international developments in the same context of what is happening Among the effects of the Democrats' rise to power, and the position adopted by current US President Joe Biden towards the Houthi group (Ansar Allah), by denying the terrorist status in its regard.

Accordingly, the peace agreement in Yemen does not require a mere change of the UN envoy, despite the long experience of this or that envoy in conflict management and conflict resolution, and extensive knowledge of the current situations in managing the conflict inside Yemen, a policy that considers four aspects⁹:

- 1- The policy that rejects the Houthis (Ansar Allah), which some describe as obstinate, especially with their rejection of the basic condition for establishing peace and restoring stability, which is agreeing to disarmament as a first major gesture that shows their good intentions. Hence, the new envoy should understand the lesson well that pressure on the Yemeni government to make concessions will only lead to more intransigence on the other side, and even more surprisingly, the international envoys view the group as an equal to the government.
- 2- The need for a serious study of UN Security Council Resolution No. 2216, which is the cornerstone of the work of the UN Special Envoy as previous experience, in light of the efforts of the international envoys to Yemen, confirms the limitations of their decisions, which may not be compatible with the changes in the situation in the current Yemeni reality, as the Security Council is required to issue new resolutions that pressure the Houthis (Sana'a authority) to implement all its previous commitments, in addition to its acceptance to sit with the recognized government at the

⁹ See, Yemen and International Envoys, Majalla <https://arb.majall.com>

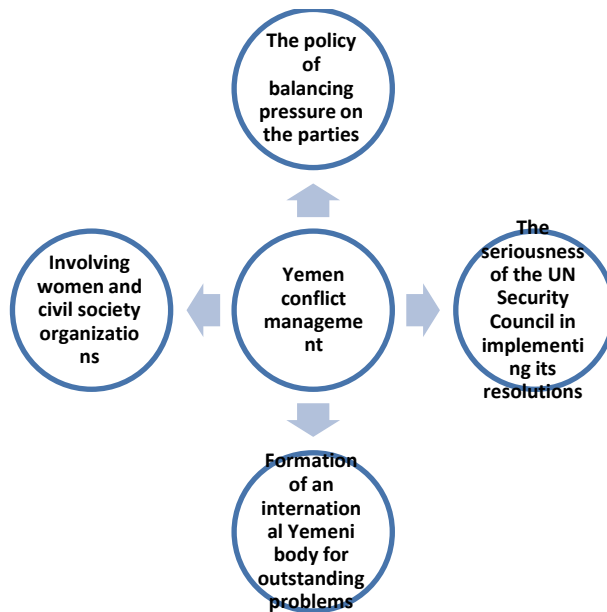
consultations table to reach understandings that support Yemen from its complicated situation.

- 3- Quickly finding solutions to the outstanding national tasks, most notably: restoring state institutions, supporting the role of the central bank inside Aden, and searching for measures to revitalize official and service institutions.



The necessity of involving civil society organizations in bringing about the peace process within Yemeni society, and giving sufficient space for the participation of women in the negotiating fields, as they play an important role in building the real peace that all Yemenis aspire to.

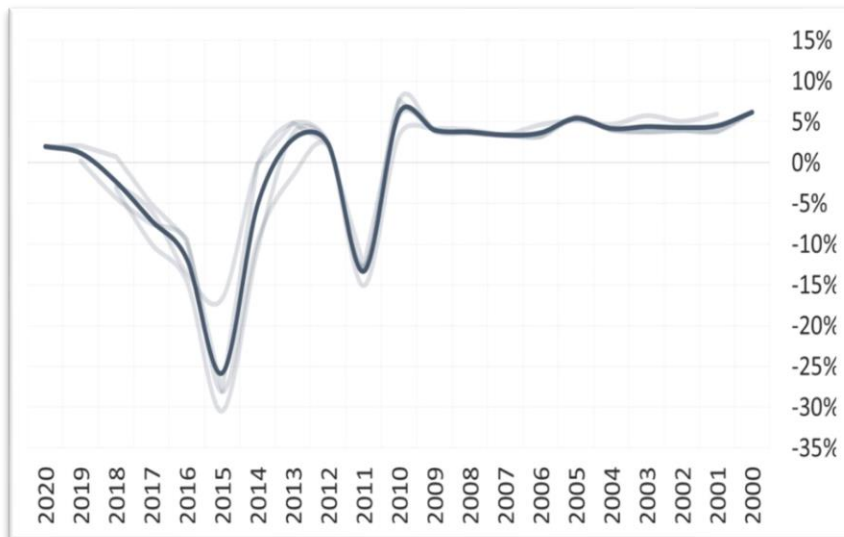
Figure (3) shows the proposed method for managing the conflict inside Yemen and supporting the peace process



▪ **Hope to achieve peace and stop the conflict inside Yemen:**

It is not an exaggeration when it is said that many Yemenis are losing hope in finding peace opportunities between the conflicting parties inside Yemen, as the Stockholm Agreement in 2018, which was managed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and then the efforts made by the United States since the beginning of 2021 to advance the peace process failed. Among the Yemenis, the most complex problem is that these and other efforts have not been able to reach a political formula to end the conflict inside Yemen.

Illustrative Figure # (4) indicates the extent to which the peace process has deteriorated in Yemen



In his last briefing to the Security Council, the former United Nations envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, acknowledged, “Over the course of the conflict, the number of armed and political actors has multiplied, fragmented, and in the meantime, foreign interference has grown, and has not receded. Solutions that were possible to resolve the conflict years ago are no longer possible now. Then he indicated an attempt to what could be done by saying, "I think that perhaps an international dialogue process should take place to reformulate the realistic objectives of the negotiation process".



Then, days after US President Biden announced the new US special envoy to Yemen, Timothy Lenderking appeared in Riyadh urging a cease-fire, which indicated that US efforts began to go in line with international efforts, including those efforts made by Martin Griffiths, including visiting Iran for the first time. When talking about ending the war and the beginning of the peace phase in Yemen, there must be a change in the military balance of power on the ground, where one party controls another, and there are constant threats that contribute to the continued feeding of the conflict and war inside Yemen.



Four people have assumed the position of the UN envoy in Yemen to end the internal conflict, which is a quite number. Unfortunately, everyone ends up failing in his mission, starting with Jamal bin Omar and ending with envoy Griffiths, then the new envoy (LenderKing) who came to conclude an agreement called the Joint Declaration, which is specified in:

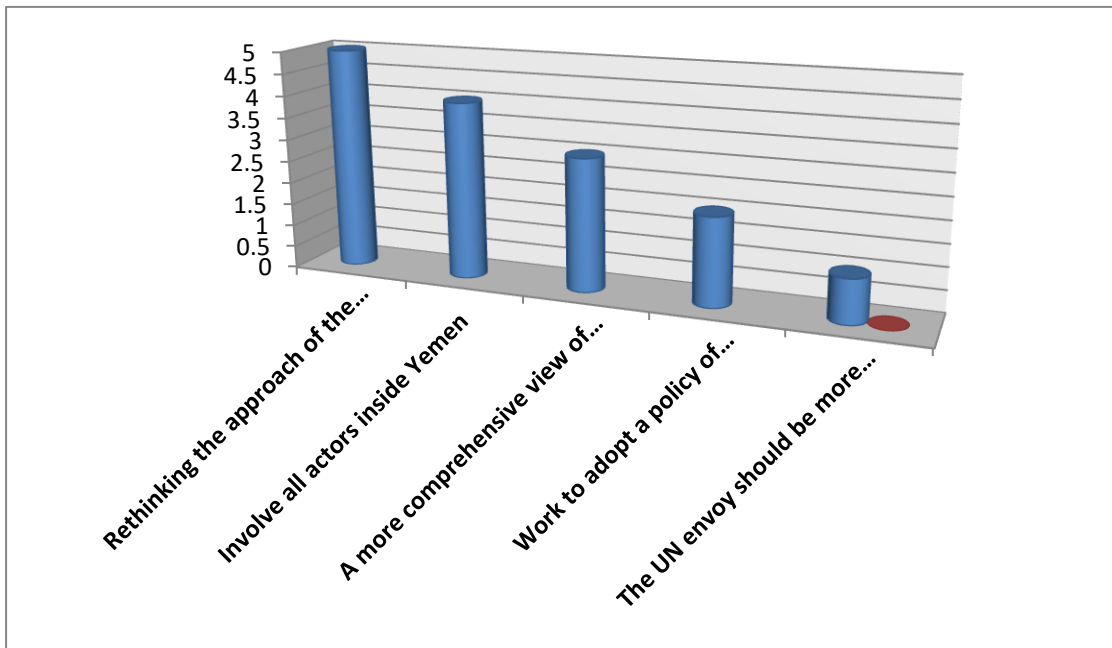
- Cease-fire between the conflicting parties.
- Opening of Sana'a airport.
- Liberalize imports in Hodeidah.
- Resumption of peace talks.

It can be said, based on many of the intensive follow-up to the opinions, analyzes, and scientific reports of the research team, that the opportunity to replace Griffiths comes to represent a new and favorable opportunity to

avoid the shortcomings and mistakes that occurred in managing the conflict and resolving the Yemeni crisis, through the following:

- 1- Reconsidering the United Nations approach to ending the conflict in Yemen.
- 2- That the UN envoy be more realistic in taking decisions.
- 3- That the Yemeni situation and the actors within it be considered more comprehensively.
- 4- Working to adopt a policy of balance to put pressure on the conflicting parties.
- 5- Involving all the local actors inside Yemen, and not neglecting the European Union, as a party that is closer to the neutral regarding the Yemeni issue.

A figure illustrating the proposals and perceptions put forward for managing the Yemeni crisis and ending the conflict



It can be said that if the international community is serious about the process of establishing peace in Yemen, including the United States of America and its important role in this aspect, it is important to work to bring all parties to the negotiating table, and to emphasize the imposition of serious and deterrent sanctions on anyone who works to obstruct a process Peace in Yemen, and this applies to any party inside Yemen.

▪ The conflict and its effects on the Yemeni economy:

For years, Yemen has been witnessing a phase of widespread turmoil and instability. These various problems and crises have accumulated, leading to the outbreak of conflict and war between the conflicting parties inside Yemen, and then the intervention of the Arab coalition countries led by Saudi Arabia on March 26, 2015 after Ansar Allah (Houthis) took control of Sanaa in September 2014, despite the severity of the violence and destruction resulting from these disturbances, as the preliminary statistics of the United Nations indicated that more than 330,000 people were

killed, and tens of thousands were wounded and injured on both sides of the conflict, including a large number of civilians, children, women and men¹⁰.

However, the most significant impact on Yemenis in general is the confinement and undermining of institutional systems in Yemen, with the weakness and collapse of the economy and social integration, and the disappearance of basic services, which led to massive economic deprivation, pushing millions of Yemenis to the brink of starvation and suffering in life.

A group of Yemeni social and economic development experts from the public, private and academic sectors took the initiative in an attempt to identify the most important current challenges in Yemen, within the activities of the Yemeni Development Leaders Forum held in the Jordanian capital, Amman, between April 29 and May 1, 2017. As part of the “Reimagining” initiative the Yemeni Economy”, which aimed to identify the economic, humanitarian, social and development priorities of Yemen during and after the war. The participants in the Yemeni Development Leaders Forum addressed the priorities that they considered to be the most important issues that Yemen is currently facing. Three urgent priorities were identified: the food crisis and the challenges facing the banking sector, and the collapse of basic services¹¹.

While it is worth noting that the participants stressed the main cause of the humanitarian catastrophe suffered by the Yemeni people, which is the continuation of the war, and that without urgently reaching a comprehensive peace agreement that guarantees the cessation of the cycle of war and armed conflicts in Yemen, the recommendations received will not have the desired effect. UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner has

¹⁰ See, Anwar Elansy, War in Yemen- Internal complications and Self-Financing resources of the conflict- March 25, 2021

¹¹ <https://sanaacenter.org>

indicated that the war in Yemen has made it lose \$126 billion in potential economic growth, while the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that about 80% of the population in Yemen is dependent on assistance and protection, including more of the 14 million with extreme need.

Considering these exceptional and difficult circumstances that Yemen is going through, the participants in the Development Leaders Forum recommended the following:

- 1- The countries and organizations that made their pledges at the high-level conference in April should fulfill the pledges as a matter of urgency.
- 2- That the international humanitarian response be accompanied by development interventions that support the economy and livelihoods, seek to create new job opportunities and support entrepreneurship.
- 3- The international community is required to support the Yemeni institutions which are still active such as Social Fund for Development, public work project and social insurance fund in addition to the active NGOs while taking care to politicize such institutions and their protection from polarization by different parties.
- 4- Whenever possible, cash transfers should be prioritized when providing humanitarian assistance rather than distributing in-kind items to enhance the resilience of the local market and not to collapse.
- 5- The necessity of employing modern technology in the distribution of cash aid, which contributes to reducing costs, trapping corruption, or avoiding duplication of aid disbursement to the same people.

- 6- Focusing on women and empowering them when providing cash transfers, as participants believe that Yemeni women are more careful than men in spending transfers and prioritizing their families.
- 7- Establishing platforms and mechanisms for coordination and consultation, and exchanging experiences between the Yemeni private sector, donors and organizations working in the relief field, as such mechanisms are currently absent, while cooperation and coordination would greatly benefit the humanitarian efforts in Yemen.
- 8- Strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations in the areas of transparency, oversight, and monitoring to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches its beneficiaries in an effective and practical manner.
- 9- Working on searching for innovative mechanisms through which donors can help reduce the costs borne by importers of basic commodities, which in turn helps reduce their price in the market, and to this end the development leaders see:
 - ✓ Support for the proposal announced by the World Bank Group in April 2017 to help importers secure foreign currency to import food into Yemen
 - ✓ Establishing a mechanism to cover the rising costs of shipping insurance to Yemen caused by the country's high risks.
 - ✓ Improving the management of the ports of Hodeidah and Aden to increase the efficiency of operations in the two ports, and to address the problems faced by importers in the two ports, such as the monopoly of transport and shipping services from the port of Aden, and the need of Hodeidah port for new cranes to compensate

for the damaged ones, which will increase the port's carrying capacity.

- ✓ Ensure freedom of movement between major cities by putting pressure on the various warring parties to secure main roads and monitor checkpoints, which in turn will facilitate commercial movement¹²

This report (on policies) emphasized that reaching a lasting peace agreement in Yemen depends on two important economic issues. The first issue revolves around the distribution, control and sharing of economic resources as essential factors for achieving peace or not, since the largest part of the existing conflict revolves around control on resources. Therefore, these issues must be directly addressed during the upcoming peace negotiations. The second issue is that the lack of peace agreements in general with provisions and mechanisms that achieve comprehensive economic stability at the stage following their signature threatens to erupt war again during that critical stage. The last of which is the failure that occurred after the signing of the Gulf initiative.¹³

The United Nations Development Program also believes that the investment sector in Yemen should focus on specific areas such as: agriculture, inclusive governance, and empowering women¹⁴. In the same context, the resident representative of the UNDP in Yemen “Arock Lotsma” stated the importance of treating what is called “Deep development deficit” in Yemen, such as: gender inequality, noting that “it is fair to say that whatever gender indicator Yemen uses is always downward”, and at the same time, plans to support recovery must be developed fruitfully even as the conflict continues.

¹² <https://sanaacenter.org>

¹³ <https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications>

¹⁴ The Yemeni Scene, peace by 2022, a report- 2021

Meanwhile, the Development Pioneers Forum held its sixth meeting in the Jordanian capital, Amman, during the period from January 25 to 27, 2020, during which the forum discussed macroeconomic issues and urgent financial issues that could fail the attempt to implement any peace agreement in Yemen after its signing. These deliberations resulted in the following main recommendations addressed to the Yemeni negotiating parties, and the international supporters of the peace process, regarding the economic clauses to be included in the peace agreement:

The Economic Topic and the Peace Agreement in Yemen:

- Determining the economic priorities of the government after the agreement between the parties and agreeing on clear steps to redefine the state's economic approach, provided that this new approach is within the framework of a comprehensive reform program that reflects a broad economic vision.
- Agreeing on specific mechanisms to end the division of the main state institutions that play a pivotal role in Yemen's economy, including the Central Bank of Yemen
- Formation of a socio-economic council tasked with formulating public policies that respond to the requirements of the stage
- Commit to clear, comprehensive, and sustainable procedures for paying public sector salaries in a measured manner, as well as agreeing on deliberate measures to rehabilitate and integrate combatants
- Ensuring the rapid and equitable collection of local revenues according to clear procedures for all, agreeing on a mechanism for appointing new heads of revenue departments, and establishing an effective accountability mechanism

- Agreement on a mechanism for dividing the revenues of crude oil and liquefied natural gas exports
- Agreeing on an effective governance framework for the economic recovery and reconstruction process
- Reopening the ports, airports and land ports, and removing all restrictions imposed on the movement of goods and travelers across all borders of Yemen¹⁵

The form of the possible political system in Yemen

Many experts and political analysts say that the federal system can represent the strongest opportunity available for Yemen to rise, enjoy peace, and become an effective state, and it is the only guarantor of the continuity and stability of Yemen's unity and sovereignty, while maintaining its relations with countries in the region and abroad in a positive and secure manner. A step towards ending the war without adopting the federal system is a new preparation for another conflict later inside Yemen.

Certainly, the establishment of a federal system after the ceasefire will require a transitional phase that may be prolonged, as it will provide a test of the applicability of the peace agreement, and there will be an opportunity to create a draft constitution that can be relied upon as a basis for a peace agreement, according to a participatory decision-making process based on consensus among all Yemeni trends, as there must be a referendum through a modern federal state. There are several elements that are supposed to be considered, centered on the following:

- Supporting the equitable distribution of wealth and power
- Creating strong institutions through broad partnerships in good governance

¹⁵ Yemen Peace Forum, Amman Jordan

Federalism is compatible with the process of sharing power and wealth fairly between the parties and centers of power inside Yemen, and any success in these agreements is not achieved except in the context of this system, including the “Riyadh Agreement” and through an independent national body or authority with joint representation¹⁶.

Federalism is also considered an important political system because it has a better chance of acceptance from the conflicting parties, and it is an actual way out that was previously reached from the “National Dialogue Conference in 2013.”

It hardly requires real and serious international pressures, accompanied by a movement of effective national figures who play the role of tribal and social mediator with the consent of the internally conflicting parties, in order for everyone, led by the Sana’a authority (the Houthis) to accept and return to negotiation, and to arbitrate peace in Yemen. Based on this, the American envoy should have the opportunity to work seriously with the United Nations and the international community to issue an international resolution through the Security Council committing to support the ceasefire, which represents an important opportunity to return to the negotiating table, based on the adoption of a federal state acceptable to all parties, and everyone’s reservation within Yemen.

In the sense that any solution to end the war in Yemen without clarity of objectives and implementation methods may lead to the continuation of the war, and the failure to bring peace between the conflicting Yemeni parties, will not achieve the desired results from stopping the war, and the United Nations envoys must work to expand the scope of national participation within Yemen, in the negotiations to reach a solution regarding the Yemeni situation, work to involve the different parties to

¹⁶ See, Olfat eldabey- Opportunities of Biden Administration to support peace in Yemen- Analysis – Fekra Forum- 2021

the greatest extent possible, and to banish the prevailing view that the parties to the conflict are nothing but two parties.

Although peace inside Yemen still needs a longer time, but the opportunity has become greater than before, as pressures continue over all parties and conflicting trends, whether external or internal. The situation has reached an advanced stage of complications and suffering that all segments of Yemeni society have reached.

Opportunities for peace in Yemen and the possibility of employing such opportunities

The truth that must be recognized is that the opportunities of peace are not far off, and they will certainly increase if the following are done:

- 1- The support of the United States and the international community to stop the war between the Yemeni parties, with continuous and serious pressure on all parties.
- 2- Taking new United Nations measures and policies in managing the Yemeni situation, and reaching an agreement between the parties, as the approach adopted by the United Nations may no longer achieve positive results regarding the conflict in Yemen.
- 3- Yemen needs more support from the international community and its leaders, with more relief aid and humanitarian support, and more accountability for human rights violations¹⁷.
- 4- That the leadership of each political party be convinced of the importance of ending the conflict in Yemen and the beginning of a new phase in which each party guarantees its interests and relations with the other, and that survival is in the interest of the nation and society

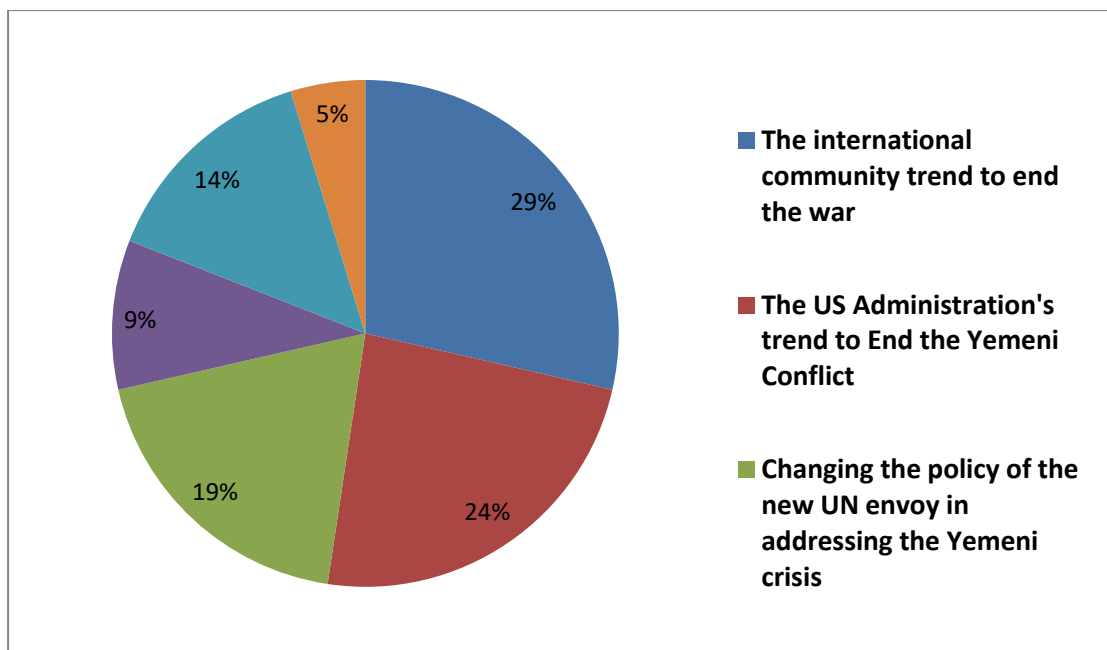
¹⁷ A report, from the statements of the American envoy to Yemen, Political Settlement to end the war, December 2021

- 5- The participation of the international community in consolidating this conviction, and its application of more pressure on the conflicting parties to stop the war, negotiate among themselves, and establish peace
- 6- Benefiting from the orientations of the Biden administration regarding the Yemeni issue, which can give a strong opportunity to end the conflict, and work to establish peace among Yemeni society, as it focuses its policy on Yemen, emphasizing the efforts of the United Nations in this path
- 7- That the negotiations on the Yemeni issue include a larger segment of participants with important popular bases within society, which will motivate the warring parties to negotiate and reach possible agreements.
- 8- The US administration escalates its diplomatic activity in this direction and pushes for an international approach to stop the conflict, while engaging the tribal role in Yemen, and not ignoring it because of its importance to many Yemenis in the field of rapprochement and reconciliation between the conflicting parties, and in a manner that enhances finding possible solutions in calming down conflict and enhance stability.
- 9- Searching for quick solutions to the collapse of the Yemeni economy and the rise in living standards, and addressing the frustrations that Yemenis suffer from before finding a comprehensive solution. Such influences can complicate the conflict and cause the emergence of new military and political factors.
- 10- Speeding up the agreement between the international community and Iran on the one hand, as well as between Saudi Arabia and Iran on the other hand.

11- Opening a serious dialogue with the UAE to know the level of its ambitions in Yemen, and to include its interests in any future agreements to ensure obtaining its support for a peace agreement

12- Presenting an initiative to reach a comprehensive political settlement, which is considered the closest to a solution in stages, which is presented by the new envoy as an opportunity for a solution, in contrast to what his predecessor, Martin Griffiths, was, where the solution was fragmented |and a reason for some progress of the "Ismail Ould Cheikh" track, as he presented a comprehensive solution vision in the Kuwait consultations.

A figure illustrating the most prominent opportunities in support of stopping the war and establishing peace in Yemen, based on most experts and politicians' opinions



With all that was previously presented in the Yemeni issue, and the possibility of establishing peace, peace opportunities will remain available in the year 2022, where the ability to benefit from the previous experiences of United Nations envoys experts in the field of political action and crisis management at an international level, regardless of the results they came out with. In addition, most Yemenis have come to

believe that a military solution is no longer the way to get rid of what Yemen is going through. Rather, many parties to the conflict are hoping to come up with a solution and an acceptable outcome from the long-standing Yemeni situation, in addition to the keenness and trend of the international community to close the conflict and end the war. Within Yemen, which has become a concern for the entire world, because of the importance that Yemen represents geographically, economically, and security between the countries of the region and the world.

Economic recommendations

Overcoming the economic impacts of the conflict in Yemen will require many years of coordination among the government, the parties to the conflict, the private sector, society and international partners. It is certain that the peace agreement will be essentially a political agreement, and therefore cannot include details of what needs to be done at all levels, but the members of the Development Pioneers Forum believe that the signatories to the peace agreement must find solutions to the central economic issues, and that they should be included in the peace agreement. The following are the most prominent of those issues:

- provisions related to the economy
- 1- Agreement on the economic priorities of the transitional government: There must be agreement on the general outlines of the priorities of the new government's program including giving priority to public expenditures that promote economic recovery and stimulate growth, in addition to giving priority to important sectors such as the electricity sector.
 - 2- Determining the government's priorities in the political agreement so that the fate of the consensual government that was formed from the various political parties in accordance with the Gulf initiative is not repeated, as that government did not have real political support

for its priorities at that time. As a result, its program was far from the political reality of Yemen at the time, which made its efforts ineffective. Therefore, the political agreement must be clear, not only about how the government will be formed, but also about the priorities that it must address.

- 3- Ending the division of state institutions: It must be agreed on clear mechanisms and a time frame to address the division of state institutions, especially those that play an essential role in the economy of Yemen, with a commitment to work within the scope of these institutions after restoring their original status.
- Formation of a Socio-Economic Council: It was recommended to establish a council that brings together the government, the private sector, and civil society and assign it to formulate economic policies.
 - Redefining the economic philosophy of the state: The period immediately following the peace agreement could provide an opportunity to start developing and formulating a new vision for development, and then put a long-awaited program of comprehensive structural economic reforms on its light, provided that it is a foresighted vision that avoids repeating the failures of the past represented for example, but not limited to, excessive dependence on oil revenues, the marginalization of rural areas and the growing severe food trade deficit. The peace agreement can pave the way for this process by clarifying the structure of this process¹⁸.

Real peace in Yemen will remain elusive unless both sides accept that they have nothing to gain no matter how much they continue to fight.

¹⁸ <https://sanaacenter.org/ar/publications-all/main-publications- Economic priorities of a permanent peace agreement in Yemen>

However, this has not yet been achieved. Reaching that end will not require cutting off US support for Saudi Arabia, but rather threatening to double this support unless the Houthis honor their UN commitments and are willing to relinquish most of the territory they initially seized. If Washington is serious about ending the war, it must come to terms with this uncomfortable reality¹⁹.

¹⁹ Michael Knights, Real Plan for ending the war in Yemen- May 2019

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