Implementing Stockholm
The Status of Local Security Forces in al-Hodeidah
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The Yemen Polling Center

The Yemen Polling Center (YPC) is an independent organization providing social science research services. YPC was established in 2004 as the first polling center in Yemen and received registration certificate no. 147 from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in December 2005.

YPC designs and implements services to fulfill the research needs of and to inform national and international institutions, non-profit organizations, corporations and government agencies. It conducts public opinion surveys, focus groups, interviews, demographic studies and market research employing quantitative and qualitative methods for development projects, international organizations and foundations, publications, business groups and financial institutions.

YPC has repeatedly proved its quality research capabilities and consistency. In 2010 it won Gallup’s World Poll Partnership and Best Partner in the Middle East and North Africa Awards. This was followed in 2013 by Gallup’s Most Valued Partner Award and in 2014 by the Gallup Award for Consistency.

As a member of the World Association for Public Opinion Research and the American Association for Public Opinion Research, YPC is committed to excellence in social science. Since its inception, YPC has conducted dozens of research projects on issues ranging from satellite television and radio consumption to attitudes toward human rights and women’s rights to political reform, corruption, public health and other governance-related studies.

YPC’s dedicated and experienced team cooperates with dozens of experts, consultants and university professors in Yemen and abroad. Its personnel and technical resources allow the center to conduct surveys of varying sizes in Yemen while adhering to international standards for data quality. It has surveyed nearly 170,000 Yemeni citizens in face-to-face interviews. Yemen is a religious and conservative society, so male-female interactions are limited. YPC is able to interview females because approximately half of its interviewers are themselves women.

YPC has carried out numerous internationally funded projects and has cooperated with various national and international organizations, including the European External Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme, the United States Agency for International Development, the U.S. National Democratic Institute, the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, London-based ORB International, the World Bank and the Yemeni Ministry of Local Administration.
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About This Report

Implementing Stockholm: The Status of Local Security Forces in al-Hodeidah is part of a series published within the framework of Rebuilding Peace and Security, a project funded by the European Union’s Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace and implemented by the Yemen Polling Center (YPC) between 2016 and 2019. The project builds on the premise that security in Yemen is both provided and undermined by the large number of diverse actors involved in the effort. Measures to address security concerns therefore cannot be standardized, but should instead be adapted to address local and regional challenges.

The publication series concentrates on different areas in Yemen to shed light on local security providers, examining the condition of local formal and informal structures, levels of cooperation between security providers and challenges to security provision. Implementing Stockholm focuses on local security providers, namely police, aqils and Ansarallah supervisors in al-Hodeidah governorate.

This report draws on a variety of data sources. Quantitative data were collected as part of nationwide representative surveys (excluding Saada and Socotra) conducted by YPC in November 2012, May 2017 and April–July 2019. Another set of data was collected between October 2018 and July 2019 through key informant interviews with military and police officers, state security officials, sheikhs, aqils, members of armed groups and journalists. Finally, YPC field researchers assembled data from observing security incidents and responses by security providers between January and April 2019.

1 Soudias and Transfeld, Mapping Popular Perception; Heinze and Albukari, “Opportunities for SSR in Yemen”.
2 Due to the volatile political and security situations in Yemen and the high-risk activities involved in data collection, especially information on security institutions, YPC, a seasoned data collection agency, has adopted safety measures and protocols to ensure staff safety and to mitigate risks to them. These risk management measures directly impact research methodologies as they restrict research to areas that are deemed safe by field researchers and influence the selection of interview partners.
3 Interviewees were selected on the basis of a simple random sample from among 44,339 primary sampling units, i.e., villages in rural areas and neighborhoods in cities. Ten interviews (of five women and five men) were conducted in each unit. The sample reflects Yemen’s rural/urban population distribution, with 68 percent of the interviews conducted in rural areas, half of them with females, half of them with males. All the surveys were conducted face-to-face, and all interviewers were from the area they canvassed to guarantee that they could speak and understand the local dialect. Female interviewers questioned female respondents. The nationwide representative surveys conducted between April and July 2019 had a sample of nearly 4,000, with the July sample from al-Hodeidah numbering 450, with a margin of error of 4.62.
Remaining gaps in knowledge were closed by drawing on the expertise of the authors of this report as well as that of field researchers based in al-Hodeidah.

Doing field research on matters related to security and security institutions is a great challenge in Yemen under the current circumstances. Interviews with members of the security establishments proved to be particularly challenging due to the sensitive nature of the questions. Many feared that YPC would pass the information along to the enemy. There were moments when interlocutors changed their mind and withdrew from the interviews for fear of reprisal. In other instances, high-ranking individuals surprisingly agreed to sit for interviews.

The security establishment interviews conducted October 2018 to July 2019 covered seven Yemeni governorates, each of which presented unique problems and obstacles. Conducting research in al-Hodeidah became increasingly difficult with the push by Saudi-led coalition forces into the governorate in summer 2018 and because of the international attention the governorate also received in the context of the talks held in Stockholm in December 2018. Security stakeholders from al-Hodeidah who had fled to Marib and Cairo were also interviewed.

All interlocutors have been anonymized to protect their identity and security and to help ensure that YPC can continue its work as a result of establishing relationships of trust.
Main Findings

- The survey results obtained by the Yemen Polling Center do not indicate overwhelming support among the population of al-Hodeidah governorate for Ansarallah, the de facto authority in the governorate. A plurality view Ansarallah as a militia rather than a legitimate state actor. A third said the group is undermining security.

- When asked which actor should have authority over security provision, 24 percent cited the police and security forces, whereas only 7 percent said Ansarallah. The percentage that prefers the police and security forces is only close to half the national average.

- Ansarallah took advantage of the institutions already in place and adjusted them to serve its own interests. In particular, to establish its own system of control, the group introduced a system of supervisors to existing semi-formal institutional arrangements.

- In areas under Ansarallah’s control, aqils now operate under Ansarallah supervisors, have less responsibility for security concerns and no longer provide government services to their communities. In al-Hodeidah areas controlled by military forces supported by the Saudi-led coalition, the aqils — along with the police — are said to have been sidelined by those militaries.

- Nearly all respondents in urban areas confirmed that there is a police station in their neighborhood and said that it was functioning. Forty-three percent said they would first inform the police in case of an emergency, while 2 percent said they would notify Ansarallah authorities.

- Among Yemeni governorates in 2019, al-Hodeidah had the highest rates of insecurity and the highest rates of citizen concern about their living conditions. Half of al-Hodeidah respondents to Yemen Polling Center surveys had lost their job or their income, and nearly all respondents reported that their children did not go to school.

- In the current political context, the manner in which local security forces function essentially renders them “Ansarallah security forces.” Without reforms or restructuring, there are no neutral “local forces” to whom Ansarallah could hand over security for the city of al-Hodeidah.
Introduction

Almost a year after Ansarallah and the internationally recognized Yemeni government under Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi signed the Stockholm Agreement, progress is finally being made on implementation of the deal, struck in December 2018. Of note, officers loyal to the Hadi government and fighters from Ansarallah’s militia deployed in October 2019 to staff joint checkpoints on the frontlines east of the city of al-Hodeidah. The move represented the first tangible progress toward implementation of the accord’s provisions.

The erection of the joint checkpoints followed Iran-sponsored attacks on Saudi Aramco oil facilities at Abqaiq and Khurais on September 14, 2019, for which Ansarallah falsely claimed responsibility in an attempt to inflate its military capabilities. To head off a major retaliation after the attack, Ansarallah on September 30 released 290 prisoners as part of the Stockholm deal and proposed a cease-fire to Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, the Saudi government publicly announced that it is in indirect peace talks with Ansarallah.

Implementation of the Stockholm deal is an opportunity for Ansarallah to demonstrate its capacity to negotiate and adhere to agreements. This sends an important signal to all parties to the conflict, because to date, Ansarallah’s track record with regard to implementing agreements is null.

Despite some positive signals, real success for the Stockholm Agreement hinges on the warring parties redeploying their forces away from al-Hodeidah ports and the city so that supposedly neutral local security forces can take over. The great uncertainty surrounding implementation of the agreement is the degree to which Ansarallah has penetrated al-Hodeidah’s security structures, thus casting doubt on the true loyalty of the local forces.

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4 Al Masdar Online English, “Hodeida.”
The Stockholm Agreement: The City and Ports of al-Hodeidah

Ansarallah seized Yemen’s capital in September 2014 and the following month entered al-Hodeidah, its sights set on the country’s largest port. Indeed, the city of al-Hodeidah and its ports eventually fell under Ansarallah’s complete control. In spring 2018, the Saudi-led coalition that had intervened in the Yemeni civil war in March 2015 on the side of the government to oppose Ansarallah launched a Red Sea offensive with the aim of reclaiming the west coast of the country, including the city and ports of al-Hodeidah. The coalition hoped that increased military pressure on Ansarallah would lead to overall progress toward its primary goal of reinstating Hadi in Sanaa, the capital. The military offensive was eventually halted by a ceasefire agreement after the forces supported by the Arab coalition entered the governorate but before they were able to take a hold of the ports and the city. The following UN-led peace talks resulted in the Stockholm Agreement, signed December 13, 2018. After that, Martin Griffiths, the UN special envoy for Yemen, put his energies into promoting implementation of the provisions of the agreement involving redeployments from the ports, city and environs of al-Hodeidah. Other provisions of the accord included prisoner swaps and de-escalation in Taiz.

The warring parties agreed to the redeployment of all forces associated with the conflict parties from al-Hodeidah’s major ports as the first step in implementing the agreement, followed by troop redeployments from the city. In terms of the latter, the agreement mandates that all parties “commit to remove any military manifestations from the city” and that security “shall be the responsibility of local security forces in accordance with Yemeni law.” It further states that “legal lines of authority shall be respected and any obstructions to proper functioning of local state institutions, including supervisors, shall be removed.”5 This is where, in part, uncertainty comes into play concerning the status of the local security forces that are supposed to fill the void once the combatants have redeployed.

On May 11, 2019, six months after the peace talks in Stockholm, Ansarallah unilaterally redeployed forces from three ports on the Red Sea: al-Hodeidah, Ras Isa and Salif. Although the unilateral withdrawal was accepted by the UN special envoy as satisfying the redeployment provision of the Stockholm agreement, the Yemeni government did not accept the handover as

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5 See the agreement at https://osesgy.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hodeidah_agreement_0.pdf.
such. The forces’ unilateral withdrawal was met with widespread scepticism, particularly by the Hadi government, because Ansarallah was said to have handed port management to its members in the Coast Guard. The scepticism appeared to be justified given that all the security establishments in the governorate had gradually come under Ansarallah’s control beginning in October 2014.

Supervisors: Ansarallah’s Security System

In establishing control over al-Hodeidah, Ansarallah had relied on the security network developed by former president Ali Abdullah Saleh in state institutions (military, police and intelligence) as well as on non-state actors (aqils and sheikhs). In short, Ansarallah took advantage of the institutions already in place and modified them to serve its own interests. One mechanism of control it imposed consists of a system of supervisors that the group introduced to existing semi-formal institutional arrangements.

While on the one hand, Ansarallah filled important positions with loyalists, on the other, it installed supervisors in every institution as well as in neighborhoods and districts. The supervisors hail primarily from northern areas, predominantly Saada and Hajjah, and use noms de guerre instead of their real names. Their absolute authority within state institutions puts them above ministers and governors in the hierarchy. All major decisions must be approved by a supervisor, who answers only to his governorate-level supervisor.

Although extremely opaque, Ansarallah’s supervisor system appears to follow a highly centralized schematic. One can discern neighborhood-, district- and governorate-level supervisors along with social and security supervisors, but the chain of command above the governorate level remains murky to outside observers. According to the Stockholm Agreement, Ansarallah must redeploy all its supervisors. Assuming the departure of the supervisors, the major concern becomes whether the security apparatus remaining in place meets the requirements in terms of independence for further implementation of the deal.

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6 Al Jazeera, “UN: Houthis withdraw from key Red Sea ports ‘partly as agreed.’”
7 Jalal, “Yemen’s peace process?”
Police: An Urban Security Provider

The requirements of the Stockholm Agreement as concern the city of al-Hodeidah and the ports of al-Hodeidah, Ras Isa and Salif raise the issue of the status of the police as a “local security force” in al-Hodeidah governorate. After Ansarallah’s takeover of the governorate in 2014, the police remained an important security actor in urban areas, but they, like other state institutions, were captured by Ansarallah, with Saleh’s networks in the security institutions facilitating their seizure. After Ansarallah took al-Hodeidah city, police officers who opposed the movement were forced to leave town, but not every police officer who remained in the city appeared to be loyal to Ansarallah.

According to a police officer deployed to lead a police station in territory reclaimed by forces loyal to the Arab coalition in al-Hodeidah governorate, police officers in Ansarallah-controlled areas had to act in a neutral fashion or risk arrest. Indeed, in interviews conducted in March 2019, two police officers revealed in their answers that their compliance with Ansarallah rule stemmed from their loyalty to the state in the face of foreign aggression (i.e. the Saudi alliance) rather than any loyalty to Ansarallah itself. Thus they accepted the Ansarallah government in Sanaa and the consequences of its authority for state institutions.

The police have been able to remain the most effective security provider in the city, despite Ansarallah’s presence, because of the experience of its leadership, according to a Yemeni journalist based in al-Hodeidah. Indeed, one of the police officers interviewed confirmed that the old leadership in large part remained in place, but also that it is too weak to make decisions of any consequence. The officers collectively confirmed the presence of Ansarallah-appointed supervisors in state institutions. A police officer who seemed favorable toward Ansarallah explained, “Due to the emergence of the other party [Ansarallah], the police entered into a joint leadership.” He further explained that Ansarallah did not take wholesale control of police institutions, but instead shared responsibility with the police in providing security to the community. An exiled police officer interviewed said that the police had in fact become weak

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8 YPC interview with a police officer from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 30 January 2019.
10 YPC interview with a journalist, al-Hodeidah, 29 January 2019.
11 YPC interview with a police officer from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 30 January 2019; YPC interview with a journalist, al-Hodeidah, 29 January 2019; YPC interview with a journalist from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 2 February 2019.
and marginalized under Ansarallah’s rule and that their “real” role should be restored. He mentioned that their biggest problem in terms of their own performance was interference by informal actors, presumably meaning Ansarallah members.\textsuperscript{13}

YPC researchers observed six police stations in al-Hodeidah that remain under Ansarallah control. According to YPC observers, officers attached to the stations are active at checkpoints in the area, secure public spaces, conduct investigations into minor offenses (such as theft) and more serious crimes (including murder), and help resolve conflicts involving inheritance, domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape and land conflicts. Observers stated that the police are not involved in the protection of children or youths or the prevention of human trafficking and investigations into it.\textsuperscript{14} According to civic figures participating in focus group discussions in al-Hodeidah, the police only become active when the individual reporting an incident has good connections to Ansarallah.\textsuperscript{15} A political motivation for police action was also underlined by YPC observers, who suspect that one of their roles includes covering up war crimes committed by Ansarallah.

Unrelated to Stockholm, police stations in areas that had fallen under the control of forces supported by the Saudi-led coalition since mid-2018 have been “restored” to the internationally recognized government.\textsuperscript{16} Officers from these stations who fled their positions with the change in authority saw the vacancies they created filled by individuals recruited by the al-Amalka Brigades, UAE-supported forces from southern Yemen loyal to the coalition. A police officer interviewed in Cairo who had been appointed to head one of the restored police stations asserted that coalition military forces are undermining the work of the police; and indeed a military officer confirmed that the military performs police work in these areas.\textsuperscript{17} He said that not all police officers in the areas outside Ansarallah’s control are cooperating with the coalition-aligned forces, but at the same time, they are not being arrested for their neutrality or lack of cooperation.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{13} YPC interview with a police officer from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 30 January 2019.
\textsuperscript{14} Observations of a YPC field research team at al-Hodeidah police stations, February–May 2019.
\textsuperscript{15} YPC focus group discussions with civic figures, al-Hodeidah, 17 February 2018.
\textsuperscript{16} YPC interview with a police officer from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 30 January 2019; YPC interview with a journalist from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 2 February 2019.
\textsuperscript{17} YPC interview with a police officer from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 30 January 2019; YPC interview with a military officer from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 1 January 2019.
\textsuperscript{18} YPC interview with a police officer from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 30 January 2019.
Aqils and Supervisors: Community-Level Security

At the community level, the aqil — the neighborhood authority figure who serves as a link between state security providers and residents — is an important component of security provision. Typically, residents select their aqil, or the aqil inherits the post from his father. Aqils are formally acknowledged by local councils, with which they cooperate on government service provision. On security matters, aqils coordinate and cooperate with local police stations. Their responsibilities include mediating minor disputes, reporting security incidents to the police, assisting in identifying individuals and generally serving as a link between the community and state institutions. Aqils are especially important in rural areas, because they assume the functions of the police where the police presence is weak. Under Ansarallah’s rule, the aqil continues to play a vital albeit changed role in urban areas. The function of the aqil has changed to a lesser degree in rural areas.

According to interviews with aqils as well as observations by YPC researchers, aqils in urban areas, in addition to distributing propane gas and humanitarian aid in their communities, have mobilized fighters for Ansarallah and shared intelligence with supervisors installed in neighborhoods, where the supervisors play a role similar to that of the aqils. In some places, supervisors have replaced aqils entirely. Supervisors receive financial and material incentives and have their own budget, according to the al-Hodeidah-based journalist. Some interviewees alleged that supervisors have extorted local businessmen and sold humanitarian aid.

The majority of interviewees and participants in the focus group discussions underlined the repressive nature of the supervisor system. To wit, supervisors summarily arrest anyone who appears to dissident, and they pass along intelligence to their superiors on those deemed suspect and their supposed loyalties. Phones are searched for evidence of dissidence, such as photos of officials aligned with the Saudi coalition. Residents who attempt to resolve a security issue without involving supervisors put themselves at risk of being arrested. The supervisors use the fight against ISIS (Daesh) to justify repressive actions and illegitimate arrests.

Before the takeover by Ansarallah, aqils were viewed as figures operating on behalf of the community by acting as the people’s link to state services and state institutions, to which the

19 YPC interview with a journalist, al-Hodeidah, 29 January 2019.
aqils were subordinate. Under Ansarallah’s system, aqils now operate under Ansarallah supervisors, have less responsibility for security concerns and no longer provide government services to communities. In short, Ansarallah has empowered them as informants and a mechanism of control. Thus, aqils have become more powerful, but also less relevant for security provision, and are often viewed as spies. In al-Hodeidah areas controlled by forces supported by the Saudi-led coalition, the aqils — along with the police — are said to have been sidelined by military forces.20

The Community: Aqil, Yay; Ansarallah, Nay

Al-Hodeidah in 2019 is the governorate with the highest rates of insecurity and the highest rates of citizen concern about their living conditions. Half of al-Hodeidah respondents to Yemen Polling Center surveys had lost their job or their income, and nearly all respondents reported that their children did not go to school. Despite reports of a cease-fire in the city of al-Hodeidah, 48 percent of residents cited clashes in their areas as their primary concern. A third had experienced displacement.21

Despite the cease-fire agreed to in the context of the Stockholm talks, civilians continued to fall victim to mortar attacks and sniper fire.22 Four such instances were recorded in early 2019 by YPC researchers, who reported that the cases were individual examples of frequently occurring incidents. Security providers were not reported by the researchers to have played a facilitating role in these episodes, and beyond efforts to cover up the incidents, they did little to investigate or intervene. YPC researchers suspect that the conflicting parties launched strikes

20 YPC interview with an aqil from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 18 February 2019.
21 YPC nationwide representative survey, al-Hodeidah portion conducted July 2019.
22 In his October 2019 briefing, UN special envoy Griffiths stated, “The presence and work of UNMHA [United Nations Mission to Support of the Hudaydah Agreement] in Al-Hudaydah, and the ways it has tailored — sometimes subtly and sometimes radically — its operations to the needs on the ground are indeed more groundbreaking than I think many of us have realized. In that context, the leadership shown by Lieutenant General [Michael Anker] Lollesgaard, his staff and now Lieutenant General [ret. Abhijit] Guha in prioritizing the establishment of a joint operations center, along with the two parties, . . . has already resulted in a tangible reduction in ceasefire violations.” See https://osesgy.unmissions.org/briefing-special-envoy-un-secretary-general-yemen-open-session-security-council.
against civilian targets in order to place blame on their opponent and then accuse them of breaching the cease-fire agreement.23

Figure 1: Interaction with Ansarallah supervisor, July 2019

Figure 2: Which actor should hold authority over security provision, July 2019

Which actor should hold authority over security provision?

- Police and security forces: 24%
- Don't know: 54%
- Other: 1%
- Aqil: 7%
- Ansarallah: 7%
- Local councils: 6%
- Refused to answer: 1%

Figure 3: Interaction with the police, July 2019

How do you deal with the police?

- Do not deal with this actor at all
- Act neither carefully nor openly with this actor
- Act openly with this actor because you have trust
- Act carefully with this actor because of a lack of trust
Survey results do not indicate overwhelming support for Ansarallah among al-Hodeidah’s population. A plurality view Ansarallah as a militia rather than a legitimate state actor. A third
said the group is undermining security. Underlining the repressive nature of Ansarallah rule, women participating in focus group discussions in al-Hodeidah reported to not even feel safe in their own homes, as raids in search of political opponents increased in early 2018. On average, a third less al-Hodeidah residents, compared to residents in all Ansarallah-held areas, support Ansarallah supervisors. In fact, al-Hodeidah locals appear to avoid supervisors as much as possible (Figure 1). When asked specifically if the supervisor should hold authority in the area, a third stated that the supervisor should have no authority, compared to 4 percent of al-Hodeidah residents, who believe the supervisor should hold authority. Al-Hodeidah is the area under Ansarallah control where residents are engaged or engage least with supervisors.

When asked which actor should have authority over security provision, 24 percent cited the police and security forces, whereas only 7 percent said Ansarallah (Figure 2). The percentage that prefers the police is only close to half the national average. Indeed, many participants in the focus group discussions with civic figures echoed the sentiment that the police are not effective and that security incidents should be resolved by the people themselves instead of reporting incidents to the police. Although al-Hodeidah residents also tend to avoid dealing with the police (Figure 3), the population continues to view them positively (Figure 4). YPC research reveals that despite Ansarallah’s takeover, the police remain a relevant security provider from the perspective of women and men living in al-Hodeidah city. Nearly all respondents in urban areas confirmed that there was a police station in their neighborhood and said that it was functioning. Forty-three percent said they would first inform the police in case of an emergency, while 2 percent said they would notify Ansarallah authorities.

The aqil is the most trusted security figure in al-Hodeidah. Residents do not see the aqil, as the link between community and state, assuming complete authority in their area. Seventy-six percent do, however, believe that the aqil should have at least some authority in their area. Given this view, the aqil should remain an integral component of any transitional security arrangement (see Figure 5).

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24 YPC focus group discussions with civic figures, al-Hodeidah, 17 February 2018.
25 YPC focus group discussions with civic figures, al-Hodeidah, 17 February 2018.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Local security forces, namely the police and the aqils, remain legitimate in the eyes of al-Hodeidah residents. This suggests that with adequate political and material support, the police together with their informal partners could play a significant role in a transitional security arrangement in urban areas of al-Hodeidah. The profile of local police and informal actors, however, has undergone change after Ansarallah’s penetration of security structures. In the current political context, the manner in which local security forces function basically renders them “Ansarallah security forces.” Without reform or restructuring, there are no “local forces” to whom Ansarallah could hand over security for the city.

Currently, residents of al-Hodeidah are avoiding authorities as much as possible and taking their personal security into their own hands. Civic figures who participated in focus group discussions in al-Hodeidah underlined the need for awareness campaigns on how residents can better protect themselves and training in first aid. Residents have little knowledge of how to respond in case of emergencies of various types, such as medical emergencies or war-related injuries. While civic engagement in itself has become a security risk in Ansarallah-held al-Hodeidah, interview participants suggested developing cartoons and drawings that could be distributed to residents through social media. Many stressed the importance of civil society actors there. Activists and journalists pointed to the responsibility of civil society organizations and leaders to raise awareness about community safety and human rights despite the scope of their activities being restricted. Many also underlined the need to train police in community policing and the rule of law.26

No doubt, civil society figures should play a role in shaping a transitional security arrangement in line with the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. Committees bringing together civic figures, local politicians, aqils and the police administration could draw up models for future local security arrangements. For these committees to be accepted by the population and to be effective, the selection process of members is key. Members could be determined through a dual-track system with both a top-down (selection) and bottom-up (election) process and including consideration of figures who have remained in the city and those who were forced out. Such committees cannot, however, be effective without the backing of all the

26 YPC focus group discussions with civic figures, al-Hodeidah, 17 February 2018; YPC interview with a journalist from al-Hodeidah, Cairo, 2 February 2019.
warring parties. While civil society should play a role in shaping the transitional security arrangement, it is clear that the residents of al-Hodeidah want state institutions to have authority over security provision. These institutions must be responsive to the needs of the community.
Bibliography


