



CHATHAM HOUSE

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE  
T: +44 (0)20 7957 5700 E: [contact@chathamhouse.org.uk](mailto:contact@chathamhouse.org.uk)  
F: +44 (0)20 7957 5710 [www.chathamhouse.org.uk](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk)

Charity Registration Number: 208223

## MENA Programme: Yemen Forum Workshop Report

# Yemen: Strategies for Change – Playing the Policy Game

October 2011

The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of Chatham House, its staff, associates or Council. Chatham House is independent and owes no allegiance to any government or to any political body. It does not take institutional positions on policy issues. This document is issued on the understanding that if any extract is used, the author(s)/ speaker(s) and Chatham House should be credited, preferably with the date of the publication or details of the event. Where this document refers to or reports statements made by speakers at an event every effort has been made to provide a fair representation of their views and opinions, but the ultimate responsibility for accuracy lies with this document's author(s). The published text of speeches and presentations may differ from delivery.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report from a one-day workshop held in Cairo in October 2011 which brought together Yemeni youth activists and international policymakers. The workshop aimed to increase mutual understanding of each of these groups' roles in the transition process in Yemen: participants discussed mutual perceptions and their respective priorities for change.

### Perceptions

**Yemeni activists** perceive the role of the international community in Yemen negatively, seeing Western and Gulf states as acting in their own self-interest, prioritising the security dimension and failing to actively address the acute concerns of Yemeni citizens around human rights violations and the need for root and branch political change.

Within **international policy circles** there remains a perception that the Yemeni youth movement is divided and lacks clear priorities for transition.

Steps can be taken by both sides to improve communication and mutual understanding, including increased outreach and transparency on the part of the international community and more tailored advocacy strategies by Yemeni activists in order to 'speak to the interests' of policymakers.

### Priorities

The widespread and acute effects of the current conflict and economic crisis on the Yemeni population impede the work of civil society activists towards establishing a new political future for Yemen. Activists struggle to focus on long-term strategic goals while **bringing an end to the violence** is the overwhelming priority.

However, there is a unifying vision for the movement in the desire for democracy, equality, citizenship, protection for human rights and the ultimate goal of a civil state.

**Yemeni activists** largely agree on the most urgent priorities: the removal of the regime; stopping the current conflict and stopping attacks on protesters; addressing the humanitarian situation; and addressing the 'southern question'.

**International actors** have diverse interests at stake in Yemen including counter-terrorism, long-term stability and poverty reduction, and these elements sometimes work at cross-purposes. This apparent lack of clarity on

priorities increases Yemenis' negative perceptions of the international community's role.

## Moving forward

**Youth activists** need to nominate leaders and agree on representation; improve their advocacy and communications strategies; tailor their messages and 'speak to the interests' of policymakers, in particular security concerns; and improve their documentation of human rights abuses.

**Policymakers** need to build diverse networks and invest in relationships; improve their own outreach and transparency; and engage more directly with Yemenis' concerns about human rights violations and military aid to factions of the Yemeni security services.

## Action Points

The following points for international policymakers and Yemeni activists are **short-term actions** for advancing the **long-term goal** of reshaping Yemeni politics to be more democratic, inclusive and accountable.

- Increase frequency of meetings between Yemeni civil society activists and international representatives and ensure diversity of participation;
- Design consultative processes during the transition period to prioritise inclusivity;
- Training and support for Yemeni NGOs in documenting human rights abuses, developing advocacy strategies and speaking to the media;
- Develop a central resource where people can access manifestos of the youth movement and clear, accessible information explaining the role of international organisations in Yemen.

## INTRODUCTION

In Sana'a, the unresolved conflict between different factions of the political elite continues, yet many Yemenis are ploughing their efforts into trying to create an alternative system of government. The revolutionary movement is primarily driven by young people, who continue to defy armed forces loyal to President Ali Abdullah Saleh in order to protest. However, despite their resilience, many Yemenis feel that the international community does not sufficiently support their revolution, nor recognise its potential for positively shaping Yemen's future. Low on the list of priorities for most countries, international attention on Yemen is perceived by many youth activists to be focused on preventing the outbreak of civil war and containing the threat of terrorism.

In October 2011, the Chatham House Yemen Forum convened a week of workshops in Cairo for Yemeni civil society activists, in association with NGO partners including Resonate! Yemen and Saferworld. Participants were active in a variety of fields in the civil society sphere – including human rights, development, journalism and political activism in Yemen's protest camps – and they came from different regions of Yemen, including Sana'a, Taizz, Mareb, Hadramawt and Aden.

During the workshops, participants attended sessions focused on primary research about youth grievances in Yemen; dialogue with international policymakers; and training on devising advocacy strategies, speaking to the media and coalition building. The following report is a summary primarily of Day Two of the workshop series, when international policymakers from a number of Western and Gulf governments and international organisations participated in discussions with the Yemeni activists, with the aim of increasing mutual understanding of each of these groups' roles in the transition process in Yemen. There were no designated panellists and participants were free to speak in English or Arabic, with the intention of enabling a genuine exchange of perspectives and the full equality of all participants.

The meeting was held under the Chatham House Rule and the views expressed are those of the participants. The following summary is intended to serve as an aide-mémoire to those who took part and to provide a general summary of discussions for those who did not.

### The Chatham House Rule

‘When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.’

## **SESSION 1: PERCEPTIONS**

During the first session, participants discussed their differing perceptions of various groups involved in Yemen's transition, including both domestic actors (such as the established political parties and the youth movement) and international actors (such as the Gulf states and individual Western countries).

As an initial exercise, participants were divided into small groups, consisting of both activists and policymakers. Each group was asked to choose five words to describe the actions and behaviour of one of 15 key individuals or groups currently involved in the transition in Yemen. The feedback from this exercise then prompted a deeper discussion, within a full plenary session, of how the participants viewed each other's role.

### **Perceptions of international actors**

International actors were described in either ambivalent or primarily negative terms. Individual countries (including the UK, US and Saudi Arabia) and international institutions (such as the World Bank, IMF and the UN) were seen as interfering in Yemen according to their own self-interest. The positive contribution of international actors in their role as major aid donors was recognised, but appeared secondary to negative interest-driven interference.

### **Perceptions of Yemeni actors**

Few positive words were found for the traditional political parties or the elite factions in Yemen – the official opposition of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), the ruling General Congress Party (GPC), General Ali Mohsen and the Al-Ahmar and Saleh families were all seen very negatively.

Other groups and individuals such as the youth movement, Southerners, women, and Tawakkul Karman were described in mostly positive terms. Youth activists were seen as 'ambitious' in their demands for change. Nevertheless, the youth movement was also described as 'divided' and 'lacking awareness', descriptors which became a focus for discussion.

### **Is the youth movement divided?**

Many Yemeni participants were keen to challenge the view that the youth movement is divided. Several participants described the progress that has been made over the last few months towards unifying the movement, with

four main coalitions emerging from the numerous groups that sprang up at the beginning of the revolution. Regular meetings continue across the country to increase coordination and, although there is substantial divergence on detailed policy areas, there is nevertheless a unifying vision for the movement in the desire for democracy, equality, citizenship, protection for human rights and the ultimate goal of a civil state. One participant noted that she was surprised to hear that the international community perceived Yemeni youth as divided, since the established political parties are far more factionalised than the youth movement.

### **Is the international community working to safeguard human rights in Yemen?**

Yemeni participants expressed strong frustration with the international community's seeming reluctance to act on human rights violations committed by the Yemeni government. They perceived a wide gap between the West's claim to be the standard bearer for democracy and human rights and the actions of Western governments on the ground in Yemen. Some youth activists perceived international actors as blocking or slowing down the revolution by continuing to support President Saleh's family and providing them with military aid. The United States and Saudi Arabia were the most criticised, but the EU, UN and the UK were also perceived as unwilling or unable to act or speak out effectively against human rights violations in Yemen.

While all participants emphasised a high degree of concern about the ongoing violence in Yemen, several policymakers also sought to give candid answers to questions about the actions of the international community in Yemen. One policymaker pointed out that 'the international community' doesn't function very well as a community, and struggles to come to an agreement on almost every issue. Despite this, the collective backing received by the GCC initiative represented an unusually high level of international consensus, as well as a relatively high level of interference in a sovereign state.

In general, policymakers acknowledged that collective action by the international community was slow and took time to organise, but they pointed to recent efforts, such as UN statements that have emphasised the importance of human rights. One participant expressed the need to 'be careful what you wish for' as international involvement in an internal conflict can have unintended consequences: any movement or faction perceived to have international backing can suffer from legitimacy problems. Conversely, the fact that Yemen's 2006 presidential elections were validated as relatively

fair by international observers has complicated efforts by the international community to press for regime change.

Participants acknowledged that policy towards Yemen is often shaped by national interest and, particularly in the US, Yemen is getting less and less policy space. US officials confront a range of simultaneous global challenges and their basic priorities in Yemen boil down to counterterrorism and security. While US policy is the most focused on counterterrorism, the biggest priority for other international actors in Yemen is nevertheless preventing civil war and ensuring stability.



## SESSION 2: PRIORITIES

Despite the apparent intractability of the conflict in Yemen today, this is also a moment of opportunity for Yemeni youth activists, as they enjoy generally favourable public opinion: it was noted that even many regime players themselves now claim to support the goals of the youth revolution. The youth movement's consensus on and promotion of clear policy priorities has the potential to influence both the domestic and international political arenas.

The workshop's second session tried to identify mutual priorities, drawing together common concerns within the group as a whole. It was clear that policymakers were looking to hear specific ideas and clear policy priorities from Yemenis in order to help inform their work. Specific questions that policymakers asked the youth activists to address included: federalism; transitional justice; the practicalities of elections; the possibility of compromise in the transition process; and what steps the international community could take if the next UN resolution fails to effect change.

For their part, it was clear that all the Yemeni participants felt strongly about their cause and the pressures they currently face and were keen to communicate the full scale of the injustices that they are suffering. This was the first opportunity for several Yemeni participants to speak directly to international decision-makers, and their tendency to overlook the request to focus on specific policy solutions highlighted one of the challenges that could face the youth movement in developing a better international advocacy strategy.

### Urgent questions

One Yemeni participant noted that the youth movement has devoted a considerable amount of time to developing their short-term and long-term priorities; there are numerous documents that record the results of these discussions<sup>1</sup>. The first priority is clear and remains the removal of the regime. However, as the security situation has deteriorated and repression of the protesters has increased, many Yemeni participants now feel that their priorities have to adjust to reflect the urgent need to stop the fighting, stop the attacks on protesters, and address the serious humanitarian problems - including the lack of food, water and power - that many ordinary Yemenis are suffering. Several participants expressed the view that it was difficult to concentrate on long-term strategic issues given the current situation.

As such, several Yemeni participants cited the priority need to put pressure on the UN (in particular) to acknowledge and condemn human rights violations, and to pressure Western governments (the US government, in particular) to stop supplying military aid to Saleh's family.

For several Yemeni participants, the resolution of the southern question was also seen as a priority equal to regime change: for them, the issue of southern oppression is exceptional yet has been long ignored, and now urgently needs to be addressed. There was nevertheless broad consensus among Yemeni participants as a whole that this was a high priority issue.

### **Diversity versus consensus**

Some Yemeni participants expressed the view that there is strength in diversity, and that they should not lose the sense that individual opinions matter. It is clear that many Yemenis are keen to ensure that the movement remains as representative as possible, and does not exclude contentious or minority perspectives.

However, several policymakers strongly expressed the view that in order for the youth movement to have influence on the international stage, they need to put forward clear priorities and plans that the international community can work towards supporting. International officials are often 'time-poor' and they need 'point people' who can provide a reliable and clear channel of communication.

The discussion revealed the need to strike a balance between inclusive representation among the youth and the need to convey clear messages to the international community, in order to have more influence on the international stage.

### **What the international community needs from Yemeni activists**

Policymakers consistently expressed the need for clear representation on the part of the youth, as until now they feel that 'they do not know who to talk to'. And yet this also reflects their own time constraints, and their failure to build diverse networks; many youth activists signalled their own willingness to talk to policymakers but said they themselves did not know how to make contact with the right people in Western embassies in Sana'a.

---

<sup>1</sup> E.g. <http://muftah.org/?p=1334>

In addition, policymakers voiced the need for the youth movement to agree on a set of priorities – despite the fact that several Yemeni activists present at the meeting had played a role in authoring and disseminating documents articulating their demands and priorities, and had already spoken about them during the meeting. Several members of the international community also emphasised the importance of careful record-keeping and documentation of human rights violations as they occur – this is key for both meeting stringent US requirements for evidence regarding the mis-use of military assistance, and for the possibility of providing evidence in future prosecutions.

### **Other international priorities**

While discussion focused on priorities for Yemenis, it was also noted that US policymakers in particular are very concerned by the control and unification of the military and security services in Yemen.

### **SESSION 3: BREAKOUT GROUPS**

During this afternoon session, participants broke into four focus groups to discuss the following issues: Political Settlement in Yemen, Revolution vs. Reform, New Visions for Governance, and Humanitarian Aid and Economic and Development Assistance. The purpose of this session was for each focus group to talk in more detail and to formulate five action points to share in the following plenary session.

#### **Political Settlement in Yemen**

Participants in the focus group on Political Settlement discussed the role of the UN, the GCC, and the Yemeni military in the political transition. Participants expressed their frustration regarding the lack of UN action on Yemen, both for political reasons and due to the monopoly that Libya and Syria have had in the UN Security Council during the 'Arab Spring'. Several participants argued that the GCC plan was the only viable way to reach a peaceful solution, both from the perspective of the UN and that of President Saleh.

Discussion focused on what could be done to force President Saleh to relinquish power, including through sanctions and asset freezes, halting military assistance, and sending aid directly to the people instead of through the government. Participants also considered how investigations could be conducted into the human rights violations which have been committed during the protests and how to prevent President Saleh and his family from enjoying impunity for such abuses.

Participants agreed on the need:

- To improve the documentation of human rights violations, including those committed by units that receive US military assistance;
- To continue discussions regarding the relationship between western military aid and the military dynamics of the transition;
- To improve communication between the international community and Yemeni youth;

- For further resolutions or sanctions from the United Nations, if the first United Nations Security Council resolution does not lead to a quick and peaceful transition<sup>2</sup>;
- An international and independent investigation into human rights violations that have been committed since the beginning of the uprising and before it (in Sa'dah and the south).

## Revolution vs. Reform

Discussion in this group revolved around the question of whether current events in Yemen constitute a revolution or a political crisis. Several participants argued strongly that a revolution is taking place as there are a number of diverse groups now focused on regime change (including the Southern Movement, groups in Sa'dah, and the youth) and all have taken to the streets to make their demands, which can't be solved through negotiation.

However others took different views, such as that the revolution is concurrent with a political crisis, or that a revolution is not yet taking place but there is a shared ambition for radical change. There is a desire for a comprehensive solution which effects deep change and the building of strong institutions. The GCC deal is perceived as aiming only to change who is in power, thus addressing the 'political crisis' and not the demands of the revolutionaries.

Participants then focused on defining critical steps for the post-political settlement period in Yemen. They agreed upon the importance of the following points of action:

- Restructuring the military, as an independent Yemen will not be possible without reintegration of the military;
- Drafting a new constitution;
- Creating independent institutions in the country;
- Holding a national dialogue under international sponsorship, the goal of which would be to reach a radical solution to the issue of the south while affirming the right of southerners to self-determination, whether

---

<sup>2</sup> UN Resolution 2014 was adopted on 21 October 2011:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10418.doc.htm>. President Ali Abdullah Saleh has since signed an agreement brokered by the Gulf Co-operation Council to initiate a handover of power to a transitional government:  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/11/2011112355040101606.html>.

the end result be through a federation, a state consisting of two regions, or two independent countries;

- Crafting a plan for transitional justice, whether through a national dialogue, courts, or another form of reconciliation, in order to address the mass violations that have been committed.

### **New Visions for Governance**

The discussion of the focus group dealing with New Visions for Governance revolved around the governance issues that arise from the great diversity in Yemen – especially with respect to the social, economic, and political disparities between North and South – and how centralized government has not adequately addressed, and indeed even exacerbated, these issues. The general consensus supported the need for decentralization and strengthened local governance.

However, it was also pointed out that decentralization has the potential to aggravate certain problems, such as the unbalanced distribution of resources in Yemen, the structure of the security apparatus, and the issue of corruption. For example the decentralization of the Yemeni Ministry of Health led to the diffusion of corruption throughout the system, rather than a general decrease in corruption. It was asserted that a process of consultation has already been taking place in Yemen regarding implementing a system of federalism, and that representatives of the Houthis have signalled in meetings with the Southern Movement that they would agree to support a move towards federalism.

It was also agreed upon by most participants that a parliamentary system based on proportional representation lists, rather than presidential system of governance, would be preferable for Yemen. Emphasis was placed upon the need to develop an electoral system with great care, especially taking into consideration tribal dynamics in the country.

It was affirmed that in determining an appropriate model of governance for Yemen which will meet the demands of all Yemenis – Northerners and Southerners alike – two different goals must be balanced: security and stability, and representing the interests of diverse groups. It was also stated that realistic voices from the youth movement are calling for a 1-2 year period of consultation including all groups in society to begin after the transition of power (such as when power is given over to the Vice President), followed by a new constitution, then referendums, and finally elections.

Participants decided to define what aspects of governance were not currently meeting the needs of Yemenis and to suggest solutions to these issues. It was pointed out that there was significant overlap between the suggestions of this break-out group and those of the Revolution vs. Reform break-out group, revealing the consensus around several critical steps for building the future Yemen. Participants agreed upon several key issues facing Yemen and possible solutions to these issues as follows:

- Problem: Concentration of political power in the central government.

Solution: Participants agreed that devolution of power must occur but differed regarding which model would be most appropriate for Yemen. Discussion included debate over federalism vs. confederalism, as well as over different models of parliamentary systems that may be appropriate for the Yemeni setting.

- Problem: Lack of representation and opportunities for participation in decision-making processes, as the current system is very exclusive and replete with corruption.

Solution: Participants determined that a process of consultation would be needed which would specifically aim to include all Yemenis, especially youth and women. It was also agreed that this process would need to include mechanisms to deliver real results, including social services and rule of law, as well as mechanisms for resolving disputes.

- Problem: The affiliation of the military with the old regime.

Solution: De-politicization of the military, security, and intelligence apparatuses, including through civilian oversight and the removal of the competing factions within these bodies.

- Problem: Lack of capacity for local governance.

Solution: Participants recognized the need for capacity-building at a local level to enable local governments to deliver services and to ensure security. They also asserted that this process must be accompanied by an increase of financial resources and independent control of these resources at the local level.

## Humanitarian Aid and Economic and Development Assistance

The participants of the Humanitarian Aid and Economic and Development Assistance break-out group decided to divide themselves into two groups: the first to discuss the topic from a short-term perspective, and the second to discuss the topic from a long-term perspective.

The group which focused on humanitarian aid and economic and development assistance from a short term perspective agreed upon the following points:

- Creation of a new fund in addition to the Friends of Yemen Fund, as funding represents a major challenge at this time<sup>3</sup>;
- Utilizing the mechanisms that are currently in place in Yemen for delivery of aid, and strengthening these mechanisms;
- Using local organizations, businesses, and other local mechanisms for delivery of aid, rather than foreign groups;
- Improving coordination between different organizations for more efficient distribution of aid;
- A presence of donor organizations on the ground in Yemen, as many of these organizations have pulled their staff out of Yemen;
- A sense of urgency in implementing all of these aspects.

The group which dealt with humanitarian aid and economic and development assistance from a long-term perspective defined several key obstacles facing Yemen at this time and suggested solutions to overcoming said obstacles as follows:

- Problem: Unemployment, especially among Yemeni youth  
Solution: Investing in education, studying abroad, and trainings to prepare youth for better employment opportunities
- Problem: Lack of investment  
Solution: Creating new legislation to attract investors; ensuring that both the natural and social environments are appealing to investors
- Problem: Unfair distribution of wealth

---

<sup>3</sup> The Friends of Yemen is a diplomatic coordination mechanism and there is no Friends of Yemen Fund. No money has yet been pledged at a Friends of Yemen meeting, although plans



Solution: Support for the civil society in Yemen to combat corruption and other injustices, as these organizations do not currently have the experience and skill necessary for dealing with such issues, especially in outlying regions of the country. Additionally, steps must be taken to eradicate corruption by rebuilding government institutions.

As a whole, this break-out group defined their over-arching goal as achieving stability, prosperity, and justice in Yemen.

---

for a multilateral donor trust fund were mooted in early 2011. The Friends of Yemen process was suspended in spring 2011, pending the outcome of the current transition.

## SESSION 4: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The last session of this workshop focused on how the participants – and other Yemeni civil society activists and international policymakers – could work towards achieving some of their priorities in the next twelve months. However, this was a challenging discussion: the dominating concern for both Yemenis and the international community at the moment is the immediate security situation, a problem which can likely only be resolved by action at the highest political levels. Nevertheless, certain clear themes emerged from the discussion.

### Advocating for Yemen on the world stage

Several proposals were made for how Yemeni activists can bring attention to their cause both amongst international policymakers and amongst a wider international public.

- Yemeni activists to tailor their messages to international organisations and policymakers, attempting to address the differing priorities and requirements of different groups: activists need to ‘speak to the interests’ of international actors.
- There is a view outside Yemen that the youth movement is no longer an influential actor in the transition process, and Yemeni activists need to counter this by making clear, concrete demands detailing how they would like the transition to proceed and by ensuring they propose solutions when communicating with international policymakers. One participant also suggested that the youth movement needs to improve their own relationships with groups who are seen as more powerful or more established by Western policymakers: established political parties, the Houthis, or the Southern movement.
- Policymakers would find it useful if coalitions of activists could nominate representatives.
- Building on the successful ‘Support Yemen’ project with a website linking to all Yemeni revolution social media pages to help unify the voice of Yemeni youth<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> ‘Support Yemen’ video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3w1wjiLb5Q>

## Reaching out from the international community to Yemeni civil society

It is also clear that international actors need to reach out to the youth movement and better communicate their work and priorities in Yemen. While it was often repeated by policymakers that they were eager to communicate with Yemeni youth, there is clearly a lack of both information dissemination and meetings. In Sana'a many diplomats rarely leave their embassies and they almost never travel outside of the capital.

- Yemeni youth activists continue to feel that the international community is not recognising that they are part of a 'revolution' rather than simply the cause of a 'political crisis', and feel scepticism about the motivations of international actors in Yemen. The international community will need to make a specific effort to remedy these negative perceptions.
- One suggestion to improve communication is for each international agency and government to write a one-page document – in accessible language – to explain their priorities in Yemen.
- Decision-making among international policymakers is often a contested process, and their approach to Yemen is frequently not unified, with diverse interests at stake – e.g. counterterrorism, long-term stability and poverty reduction. However there needs to be an effort to reduce where these elements work at cross-purposes.

## Moving forward with the transition process

There was also discussion of how to move forward with transition, and how to create inclusive processes.

- Better documentation of human rights violations is key for transitional justice: better networks (between local and international NGOs) need to be created for reporting on violations and in order to set the groundwork for 'watch-dog' organisations to monitor corruption in future.
- Yemenis can benefit from further observing the Egyptian experience, even if it is not entirely successful – for example in the area of how to make demands for a transitional council or how to appoint a committee to draft a new constitution.

- It is important that consultative processes during the transition period are designed in order to be inclusive. For example, activists based in Sana'a can make a specific effort to involve rural populations in consultations.
- A return to a concept such as the '10 point plan' designed by reformist ministers and promoted by Resonate! Yemen could be useful<sup>5</sup>.

### **Acting to address the humanitarian crisis**

Several participants foregrounded humanitarian concerns as a priority, making the following suggestions:

- There is potential for the private sector in Yemen to be more involved in humanitarian action. One proposal for doing so is the creation of a British-Yemeni business forum as there are many Yemeni businessmen based in the UK who are keen to help Yemen.
- Diaspora Yemenis could also be involved in helping with the humanitarian effort through the creation of a Yemeni-supported NGO based in the West to focus on short-term humanitarian work.

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.yemen-today.com/go/investigations/3864.html>

## CONTINUING THE WORK OF THE YEMEN FORUM

The Chatham House Yemen Forum project has two years of funding committed to doing a series of events following this workshop targeting political inclusion and youth. Suggestions were solicited for how the project should proceed<sup>6</sup>.

- Suggestions for topics to be discussed in further meetings included the southern question, human rights violations, and alliance-building.
- To improve inclusivity and ensure the voices of marginalised groups are heard Yemeni participants could organise local consultations before taking part in meetings with international policymakers.
- A discussion between Yemeni activists before meeting with international policymakers is useful, particularly as Yemeni activists from different organisations and regions of Yemen are not often able to meet together. This would aid coordination of messages communicated to the international community.
- A conference of foreign donors and Yemenis to discuss the economic situation would be helpful for ensuring the international community is ready to help Yemen solve its economic problems in the case of regime change.
- Involve youth from the political parties, not only the independent activists.
- Give participants access to materials prior to workshops so they can be prepared to discuss certain topics in depth.

---

<sup>6</sup> These suggestions do not imply Chatham House endorsement, but will be taken into consideration when planning our work.

## **ABOUT THE YEMEN FORUM**

The Yemen Forum is a specialist global network that pursues policy solutions for Yemen. The collective knowledge and influence of Yemen Forum members raises awareness, shares expertise and supports governments in forming policies that directly address the causes of conflict, poverty and poor governance in Yemen. The current phase of the project has two major strands: political economy analysis, and the politics of inclusion and legitimacy.

[www.chathamhouse.org/yemen](http://www.chathamhouse.org/yemen)

## **ABOUT THE MENA PROGRAMME**

The Middle East and North Africa Programme, headed by Dr Claire Spencer, undertakes high-profile research and projects on political, economic and security issues affecting the Middle East and North Africa. To complement our research, the MENA Programme runs a variety of discussion groups, roundtable meetings, workshops and public events which seek to inform and broaden current debates about the region and about UK and international policy. We also produce a range of publicly available reports, books and papers.

[www.chathamhouse.org/mena](http://www.chathamhouse.org/mena)