



Yemen — Va-PoReg Country Report

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[Abstract before 1900: Between the 12th BC and 6th AD Yemen was considered the center of civilization and wealth in the near east region. In pre-Islamic times, the area that is now known as Republic of Yemen was described as Eudaimon Arabia or Arabia Felix – Happy Arabia – and ruled by several indigenous dynasties in different kingdoms. The coming of Islam around 630 AD changed the country permanently until the 20th century.¹ Between 1900 and 05/22/1990 have separate histories: see Yemen, North and Yemen, South.]

05/22/1990 Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: After the unification as Republic of Yemen the former leaders of south and north Yemen were assigned as president and vice-president.² Per FH, for 1990 and 1991, the country scores between 11 and 14 as not free, which we also interpret as not free. According to FH, for the years 1992 and 1993, a score between 9 and 10 makes the country not free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather not free. Political liberties were absent according to LIED. V-Dem's PCLI classifies political liberties as not really present in 1990 and as ambiguous from 1991 onward. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate.

04/27/1993 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral (Personalist) Autocracy: On this date the first parliamentary elections after unification took place. They were classified by election monitors as the first free, multiparty polls in Yemen despite minimal irregularities.³ In this pivotal electoral event, the General People's Congress (GPC) emerged victorious in 123 constituencies. The Islah Party followed with 62 seats, with its support mainly derived from its tribal rather than its Islamist components. The Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) secured 57 seats, predominantly in the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) territories.⁴ Following August 1993, Vice President al Beidh left Sanaa (capital de jure) to Aden (capital de facto), effectively withdrawing from the political process.⁵ On 05/04/1994 civil war started between the two Yemeni forces and their supporters. On 05/04/1994, the southern air force bombed Sanaa and other areas in the north, as a response to a major tank battle a few days prior; the northern air force responded by bombing Aden. Vice President al-Beidh was officially dismissed.⁶ On 07/07/1994 Northern troops and Jihadist forces led by Tariq al-Fadhli entered Aden on 07/04/1994, factually ending the conflict. As a result, Saleh gained control over all of Yemen.⁷ On 10/01/1994 Ali Abdullah Saleh was elected by parliament for a five-year term. On 09/23/1999 Saleh was reelected in the first direct presidential elections.⁸ He held the position until 2012.⁹ Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi took his position.¹⁰ On 02/21/2012 Vice President Hadi won presidential elections with 99.8% of the vote. He was the only candidate and thus uncontested. His candidacy was backed by the ruling party, as well as by the parliamentary opposition.¹¹ Since 04/27/2003 there have been no parliamentary elections (Macmillan 2022d). This regime change event is coded as a strategic restructuring because the incumbent transitional elite did not exit but actively managed the transition by participating in the elections to legitimize their rule within a new institutional framework. Even though the elections carried the risk that a new elite would come to power, the previous elite remained fundamentally the same. The direction is unclear. Even though the elections were classified by some election monitors as the first free multiparty elections, we have strong doubts about this assessment based on the following data from our comparative sources LIED, V-Dem, and FH. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held, which

contradicts the findings of LIED, because it classifies multiparty executive and legislative elections as absent since 2009. Furthermore, according to LIED, only executive elections were held in 2012 and 2013, yet these were not classified as multiparty. During the entire period elections were not competitive according to LIED. In addition, V-Dem's CEI indicates that elections were not really clean from 1993 to 1996. Between 1997 and 2011 the elections scored no cleanliness. Since 2012 a return to not really cleanliness outcomes is acknowledged. The overall conditions were somewhat free and fair until 1996, before they switched to no real freedom and fairness the following six years. Between 2003 and 2011 the scores are classified as ambiguous. Since 2012, not real freedom and fairness is scored again (V-Dem's EF&FI). Per FH's evaluation for this regime period, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. As classified by FH for 1994-2002, the country is scored from 11 to 14 as not free, which corresponds to our interpretation of not free. Per FH's evaluation for 2003-2008, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. According to FH's classification for the rest of the assessed regime period, a score between 11 and 14 makes the country not free, which we also place in the not free category. Moreover, according to LIED political liberties were not achieved. V-Dem's PCLI indicate an ambiguous presence for the entire time except in 2012 political liberties are classified by us as somewhat present. As per Polity5's categorization, the executive experienced minimal limitations on decision-making, placing it in the first intermediate category. Until 1996 and From 2011 to 2014, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. For the remaining years, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. GWF classifies the regime as a personalist autocracy.

09/21/2014 End Electoral (Personalist) Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On this date, Houthi Rebels, who are aligned with Iran, occupied Sanaa. A power-sharing agreement between the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebels led to the resignation of Prime Minister Mohammed Basindwa and other cabinet members followed by a temporally cease-fire agreement. A new government was established with Baha as prime minister in December 2014, while Hadi remained president. The Houthis rejected to ratify a draft constitution aimed to end the civil war and continued with new attacks on the capital.¹² The new cabinet under Hadi and Khaled Baha, that existed for less than a month, was forced to resign on 01/22/2015. As classified by FH for this regime period, the country is scored from 11 to 14 as not free, which corresponds to our interpretation of not free. For that period, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, while V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties were not really present.

02/06/2015 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start No Central Authority: The Houthi rebels established a rival administration in Sanaa on 02/06/2015 that was not recognized internationally. Hadi withdrew his resignation and temporarily governed from exile (Macmillan 2022d, Lansford 2021). Having lost control over large parts of Yemen to the rebels, the Hadi government continued to govern from Aden backed by a Saudi-led military coalition. Since 2016 peace negotiations have made no progress.¹³ The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is one of the most drastic in the world, famine, diseases like cholera, lack of access to safe water or sanitation are dominating the country.¹⁴ Beginning on 01/28/2018, separatists loyal to the Southern Transitional Council seized control of the Yemeni government headquarters in Aden in a coup d'état against the Hadi government. The 26 members of the STC include the governors of five southern governorates and two government ministers. The STC works toward the separation of southern Yemen from the rest of the nation – as it was before 1990. By 07/01/2023 the situation continued to be defined by a political stalemate between the conflict-parties. As the line of control resembles that of the border between the former countries of North and Southern Yemen before their unification, the situation seems to approach a de facto desintegration and reinstatement of the two distinct entities. As both parties to the civil war do, however, still claim to fight for authority over all of Yemen, we will for now continue to list Yemen as one entity with no central authority. Based on our observations, no multiparty executive or legislative elections were held during

this period. This is, however, not final and may change according to the developments on the ground. According to FH's classification for the assessed regime period, a score between 11 and 14 makes the country not free, which we also place in the not free category. Political liberties were absent according to LIED and not really present according to V-Dem's PCLI. Since 2022, LIED does not provide any data. Since 2016, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also absent.

No Central Authority as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional sources (Alley 2010, Khalili 2009, Ingrams 1938, Ismael 1981, Robbins 1939)

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_history_of_Yemen

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Yemen

³ <https://merip.org/1993/11/elections-and-mass-politics-in-yemen/>; http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2353_93.htm

⁴ <https://merip.org/1993/11/elections-and-mass-politics-in-yemen/>

⁵ https://web.archive.org/web/20130616022328/http://www.yca-sandwell.org.uk/history_7.htm

⁶ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemeni_Civil_War_\(1994\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemeni_Civil_War_(1994))

⁷ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemeni_Civil_War_\(1994\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemeni_Civil_War_(1994))

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1999_Yemeni_presidential_election

⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemeni_Civil_War_\(1994\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemeni_Civil_War_(1994))

¹⁰ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abed_Rabbo_Mansur_Hadi

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdrabbuh_Mansur_Hadi

¹² https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Yemen_2015D?lang=en

¹³ <https://www.cfr.org/background/yemen-crisis>

¹⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis>

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