

## The Deterioration of the State Building in Yemen

Sherif Heikal<sup>1,\*</sup>, Asaad Abdulkareem Qahtan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, GSIAS & Law School, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea

<sup>2</sup>PhD Candidate, GSIAS, Middle East and African Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies,  
Korea

\*Corresponding author: [cherif\\_heikal@yahoo.com](mailto:cherif_heikal@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

This article aimed to identify whether the politicized Yemeni tribes after the unification played a negative role in transforming the building of the unified Yemeni state into a failed state during the rule of late President Saleh's period. Although the peoples of Yemen in the north and south were eager to achieve Yemeni unity and get Yemen out of the focus of conflict and strive towards a more stable reality in which law prevails within the modern Yemeni state, the unity failed. Tribal and political leaders were part of the patronage network that weakened the unified state and its institutions, also creating an unstable culture and obscuring the concept of Yemeni unity, especially in southern Yemen after the summer war of 1994. The Yemeni scene today comes to confirm that Yemeni unity was based on politicized tribal pillars, and therefore the status quo cannot be resolved in the absence of the modern Yemeni state and the continuity of politicized tribal forces. So, this study discusses the Yemeni reality and the accumulations that led it to consider a failed state by highlighting the political stability in the light of the Yemeni institutional capacities.

**Keywords:** State Building; Yemen; Political Tribalism.

### I. Introduction

This article aimed to identify whether the politicized Yemeni tribes after the unification played a negative role in transforming the building of the unified Yemeni state

into a failed state during the rule of late President Saleh's period. Although the peoples of Yemen in the north and south were eager to achieve Yemeni unity and get Yemen out of the focus of conflict and strive towards a more stable reality in which law prevails within the modern Yemeni state, the unity failed. Tribal and political leaders were part of the patronage network that weakened the unified state and its institutions, also creating an unstable culture and obscuring the concept of Yemeni unity, especially in southern Yemen after the summer war of 1994.

The Yemeni scene today comes to confirm that Yemeni unity was based on politicized tribal pillars, and therefore the status quo cannot be resolved in the absence of the modern Yemeni state and the continuity of politicized tribal forces. So, this study discusses the Yemeni reality and the accumulations that led it to consider a failed state by highlighting the political stability in the light of the Yemeni institutional capacities.

## **II. Political Stability**

Reality speaks of long decades and corruption in all areas within the unified Yemeni state and before the achievement of unity as well. Despite the hopes on which the union between the northern and southern parts was built, it was looking forward to a bright reality, but the opposite happened. Yemen, despite possessing many ingredients such as its strategic location, labor force, diversity of terrain, vast agricultural areas, and many other ingredients, yet ranks among the list of the poorest countries in the world, i.e., a country that still lives below the poverty line, a fragile state due to institutional corruption and tribal politicization.

Over nearly two decades, corruption spread under the previous regime, as it was reflected in various aspects of public and private life, in the absence of a system of control and accountability. There has been a rise in corruption and nepotism in government, which has led to poor government performance and even corrupt forces controlling public funds.

The absence of political awareness and the absence of cultural awareness of the Yemeni citizen in general also remains a state of help in the deterioration of cultural and political life, which in turn also created poverty and ignorance in Yemen. Saleh established politicized tribal blocs and created discordant political blocs to intensify the ongoing conflict and disputes between them. So, the state administration in Yemen became just a political game controlled by the strongest and played by those with influence and power. This is what Saleh sought throughout his reign.

Yemen, with its different regions and diverse terrain, in many stages, emerged from it many competencies and those who can build it, but President Saleh and his party took the initiative to marginalize the competencies of the people of different regions, creating regionalism and taking control of the (Sanhan) Directorate of his hometown, which is the birthplace of the tribal blocs loyal to him and who distributed positions in the state on most of them.

After achieving unity, he deliberately marginalized the south miserably and unjustly. His ruling party, which established it as a source of strength to maintain the seat of power, created through it, opened up and shared influence with its relatives, exchanging decision-making joints, and managing businesses and investments that could constitute an important tributary to the economy. The Yemeni nationalist, but Saleh took it as private interests, and this created a Yemeni political, cultural, and economic atmosphere fraught with conflicts, which in turn accumulated and showed its results today on the ground.

And the fact that the political parties assume their duties within the unified state, but the majority were seeking to beautify the image of the president and to flatter it with the helpless Yemeni citizen, also led to a general weakness in the components of the development of society and ignorance of the generation after generation about the affairs of the general administration of the state.

In economic terms, the capabilities of the Yemeni citizen have been exhausted and he is unable to meet his needs. Such as public and health services and education, which is a prominent feature during the rule of President Saleh, and because of that, many Yemenis turned to emigration as the only recourse to improve their lives and the lives of their families in search of a decent life.

We find that Yemen has suffered a lot from the political absurdity and the tribal politics that were established by the deposed Saleh during his rule. For its interests through a network of pragmatic utilitarian alliances that strike the law and the means of expression by imposing force.

As know now that Yemen has failed politically and economically because of its weak foundation, which exposes it as a highly fragile state. Despite the need to meet the World Governance Indicators (WGI), Yemen has consistently embraced political tribalism, sidelining the urge to preserve freedom and control corruption. Here the researcher in this chapter discusses Yemen's weak foundations, drawing crucial lessons from international indices. It uses the WGI factors to depict the failure of the state due to its politicized tribes, while also focusing on civil unrest, the threat of terrorism, and economic performance. Due to its tribalism level, Yemen's political arena has shifted to promoting individualism, which denies many citizens the opportunity to enjoy their rights. The escalated terrorist attacks on the nation have also exposed many Yemenis to great danger. Accompanied by the embrace of corruption, the country's progress and political stability remain unbalanced. Improvement is unlikely as prominent tribal leaders continue to practice absurdity. Due to these factors, Yemen remains a failed state whose foundations are fragile.

### **III. Institutional Capacities**

#### **3.1. Executive Institutions**

Yemen has witnessed distressing political unrest since the civil war's eruption in 2015. The United Nations (UN) categorizes the country as facing the worst humanitarian

crisis, with 80 percent (roughly 24 million) of its population needing humanitarian assistance.<sup>1</sup> Based on the Fragile States Index (FSI) rankings, Yemen leads as the most fragile nation with a 113.5 score. Researchers link the fragility with “prolonged civil war and humanitarian catastrophe.”<sup>2</sup> Despite the push for the Yemeni government to resolve it, the civil war continues to ravage the country, extending to tribal divisions, and limiting the success of strategies, such as Operation Golden Victory (OGV). Accompanied by the tribal power that influences its society and politics, the nation has “no more than 20 percent of Yemenis who belong to a tribe with armed capabilities.”<sup>3</sup> Such powerful tribes have continued to place “pressure on the state in the areas of Factionalized Elites and State Legitimacy.”<sup>4</sup> By analyzing Yemen using the WGI, one understands how the nation’s foundations are currently weak, exposing it to high fragility. Yemen remains a highly fragile nation with low economic and political stability, drawing from its political tribalism, terrorism and riot threats, infringed freedom, and lack of effective corruption control measures.

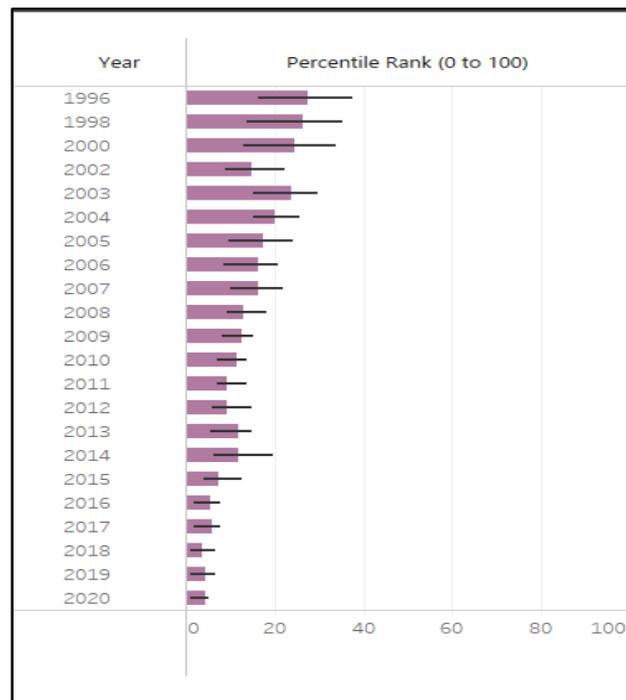
---

<sup>1</sup>. Hani Albasoos and Buthaina Al Hinai, “Understanding the root causes of the conflict in Yemen.” *Bussecon Review of Social Sciences* (2687- 2285) 2, no. 2 (2020), 14.

<sup>2</sup>. Lucas Winter, “Fragile State: Yemen in Conflict,” *Current History* 109, no. 731 (December 1, 2010): 395–400.

<sup>3</sup>. Charles Schmitz, “Understanding the role of tribes in Yemen.” *CTC Sentinel* 4, no.10 (2011), 18.

<sup>4</sup>. Christina murphy, “Yemen Takes Top Position as Most Fragile State | the Fund for Peace,” *Fundforpeace.org*, (2019).

**Figure 1: Voice and Accountability in Yemen.<sup>5</sup>**

**Source: World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators.**

As revealed in Figure No. 7, the voice and accountability (VA) indicator focused on the perceptions about the citizens' abilities in selecting their preferred government. It also encompasses the "freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, Yemen's fragility and weak foundations exist from the low VA scores, which by 2019, were at a 5.9 percentile rank.<sup>7</sup> Under the "Freedom in the World 2020" rankings, Yemen records 11 out of 100 when dealing with political rights (1/40) and civil liberties (10/60).<sup>8</sup> Despite the need for fair political participation and pluralism, Yemen

<sup>5</sup>. In addition to freedom of expression, freedom of association, and free media, it measures whether a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government.

<sup>6</sup>. Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, "The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues." *Policy Research Working Paper* 5430, (2010), 4.

<sup>7</sup>. Robert Forster, "Yemen's 'Handshake Moment': What Other Peace Processes Can Tell Us about the Riyadh Agreement," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, (2019).

<sup>8</sup>. Freedom House, "Yemen: Freedom in the World 2020 Country Report." *Freedom House*, (2020).

has not allowed the free existence of political parties, with reports showing their severe repression from armed groups and other authorities. For instance, in 2019, “the Houthi-controlled Specialized Criminal Court in Sanaa issued death sentences against 30 academics,<sup>9</sup> and political figures associated with opposition groups.”<sup>10</sup>

In a report by Amnesty International's Director of Research for the Middle East, "This trial is a mockery of justice, and only confirmation that the judiciary, especially the Specialized Criminal Court, is turning into a means of repression, and it is unable to guarantee impartial justice." Since the Houthi de facto authorities took power with their control of the justice system in 2015, they have gradually used the Specialized Criminal Court in Sana'a to target people they view as their opponents or even their critics.

In light of the continuing escalation of the armed conflict in Yemen, the flagrantly unfair trial of these defendants is part of a broader pattern of using the judiciary to settle political scores.”<sup>11</sup>

We see that corruption, which is at the fore in the Yemeni scene, is one of the causes of the absence of the affective state and its weakness in the face of the rebel Houthi coup,

---

<sup>9</sup>. Among them is Youssef Al-Bawab, a 45-year-old father with five children, a university professor specializing in linguistics, and a political figure who was arbitrarily arrested in late 2016. He was formally charged in April 2017. The legal measures were taken against him during his detention and against others, in the case itself has serious flaws, including enforced disappearance, excessive pretrial detention, and unjustified delays during his trial, incommunicado detention, allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and lack of access to legal advice and medical care. Amnesty International.

<sup>10</sup>. Ibid. Amnesty International, (2019).

<sup>11</sup>. For example, in heartbreaking case, a Yemeni citizen, Asmaa Al-Omeisy, 23, a mother of two, was sentenced to one year in prison. 15 years after her conviction for aiding a hostile state, and despite Amnesty International's prolongation and call once again by the de facto Houthi authorities to rescind her conviction and sentence and release her immediately, the case remains in the hands of the Houthi rebel groups against the Yemeni judiciary.

which created a reality for most of the rightists in northern Yemen. Tribes to exchange common interests at the expense of the Yemeni state and its internal and external stability.

The nation has also not held any parliamentary elections since 2000, with the 2012 presidential election only featuring one candidate. Reports also show a lack of electoral opportunities and political rights in Yemen, posing citizens unable to select their preferred government.<sup>12</sup> By denying citizens the freedom to elect their government, Yemen forms a weak foundation in the VA.

Regarding freedom of elections, Yemen witnessed many stages in which freedom of expression was ignored and absent. After Saleh took power a few years after the union between the north and south, the Saleh regime began to tighten the noose and curb opponents and began a campaign of assassinations targeting high-ranking and important figures in the Yemeni Socialist Party.

The fragility and weak foundations extend to media freedom. When discussing the media's independence and freedom, reports depict Yemen as a nation controlling most of its terrestrial radio and television stations.<sup>13</sup> Since the civil war's outbreak, any surviving media outlet in Yemen has faced self-censorship, with the belligerents controlling them. Currently, Yemen remains a tribal nation, with its authorities backing the Houthis. Through the process, the latter has shifted to reportedly blocking "certain news websites, online messaging and social media platforms, and satellite broadcasts."<sup>14</sup> Besides, the Hadi and Saudi-led coalition government forces have, under several circumstances, arrested or harassed reporters. The war has proved dangerous for Yemeni journalists, who have to endure enforced disappearances or violent attacks from all the conflict's sides. Although the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in its 2019 report had

---

<sup>12</sup>. Ibid. Amnesty International, (2019).

<sup>13</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>. Ibid.

indicated journalists' torture and mistreatment in Houthi forces' custody since 2015 without any trial, the government has failed to push for such acts' alleviation.<sup>15</sup> With the war ongoing and the government unwilling to promote media freedom, Yemen continues to exist on a fragile foundation that cannot sustain its prosperity.

Yemen has failed to uphold its citizens' civil liberties. Researchers argue that the nation's civil society remains individualized due to allowing tribal leaders to shape it. Through modernization, "tribal leaders feared that civil society organizations would replace their role as mediators between state power and individual citizens/tribesmen."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, they have extended tribal politics to control various civil society associations in the nation, prompting the government to disregard the judiciary's independence and citizens' freedom. Although Yemen has a historical record of allowing its citizens to enjoy some freedom, that has changed. The Houthi government officials are arresting people protesting over exorbitant commodity prices and low living standards.<sup>17</sup> While Yemen hosts several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the latter's ability to operate remains restricted by the tribal leaders and armed groups' interference. For instance, in 2019, Houthi officials arrested human rights advocates.<sup>18</sup> The judiciary has adopted the same approach, with studies showing that authorities often fail in judicial rulings' enforcement, primarily when issued against political or prominent tribal leaders. Despite the urge to establish effective court systems and uphold civil societies, the politicized tribe in Yemen continues to infringe on civil liberties, making it fragile. It is unable to

---

<sup>15</sup>. Ibid.

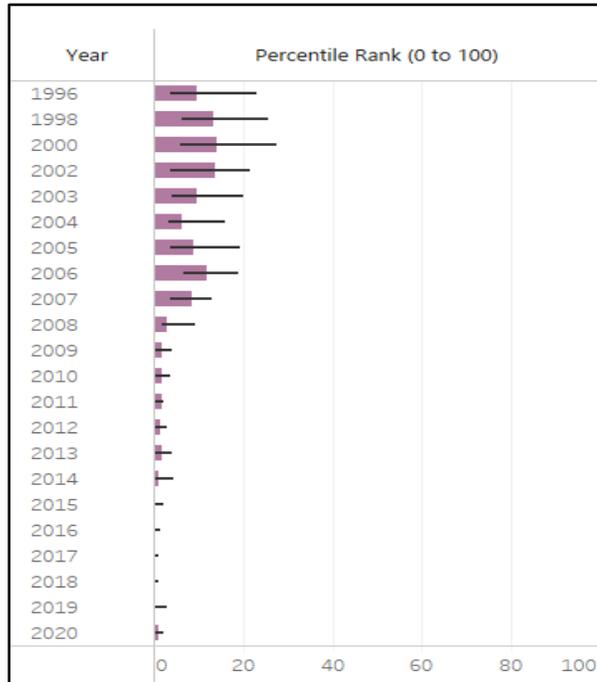
<sup>16</sup>. CHARLES SCHMITZ, "Combating Terrorism Center at West Point," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, October 31, (2011).

<sup>17</sup>. Freedom House, "Yemen: Freedom in the World 2020 Country Report."

<sup>18</sup>. Waleed Alhariri "War's Elusive End – the Yemen Annual Review 2019," *Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies*, January 30, (2020).

stand in the face of any tribal rebellion because Yemeni tribal tendencies have their customs and laws that prevail over the state and those in it.

**Figure 2: Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism <sup>19</sup>**



**Source: World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators.**

As shown in figure number eight Yemen It is one of the world's least stabilized countries for almost two decades. A nation's political stability depends on the low threats it receives from terrorism and politically motivated violence. However, Yemen's absence of violence/terrorism and political stability (PV) was at 2.85 percent by 2019, depicting the citizens' reduced perceptions of its political stability.<sup>20</sup> A growing threat that the country currently faces is terrorism and unending riots. Yemen has made it among the ten nations most impacted by terrorism. It ranks sixth with a 7.581 score in the global

<sup>19</sup>. Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism measures perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically motivated violence, including terrorism.

<sup>20</sup>. Ibid.

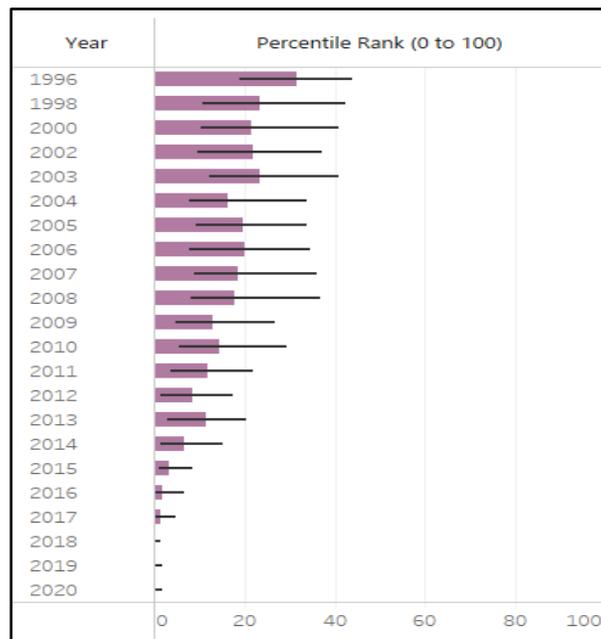
terrorism index (GTI).<sup>21</sup> Although the country has faced civil unrest for decades, 2011 became its turning point following the Arab Spring. The protests' abrupt escalation led to the ousting of President Saleh, who the protestors accused of violence and corruption.<sup>22</sup> Such riots exposed Yemen to a weak economy, institutions, and even infrastructure. They also caused fragmentation within the nation's security apparatus, creating a security vacuum for other armed non-state groups like the Houthis and terror groups, including Al Qaeda, to take advantage.<sup>23</sup> Despite the interim government establishment, with the primary motive to establish crucial reforms, the riots have attracted the authority's decentralization, hindering Yemen's political stability. Some critics have also cited the later former president's influence and lingering shadow as promoting such riots to weaken the country. Such cases have exposed Yemen to fragile situations, with its citizens doubting its future stability.

---

<sup>21</sup>. Global Terrorism Index, "Measuring the Impact of Terrorism 2020." Institute for Economics & Peace (2020), 24.

<sup>22</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>. Ibid.

**Figure 3: Government Effectiveness in Yemen<sup>24</sup>**

**Source: World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators.**

As is shown in figure number nine the Yemeni government is one the most ineffective government in the world for more than two decades. In that regard, it is worth mentioning that the Yemeni government has failed to lay effective foundations for riots and terror threats' elimination. By 2019, the country experienced a 31 percent mortality increase compared to 2018 due to terrorism, raising it to 555 deaths.<sup>25</sup> Reports show that terrorist attacks escalated by 67 percent, with Ansar Allah leading in causing violence. Although death rates have declined by roughly 66 percent, terrorism is rising. Following the civil war outbreak in 2015, Yemen has recorded approximately 100 000 fatalities, with 12 percent involving "civilians killed in targeted attacks."<sup>26</sup> In 2019 alone, the war led to

<sup>24</sup>. GE reflects perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.

<sup>25</sup>. Global Terrorism Index, "Measuring the Impact of Terrorism 2020," 24

<sup>26</sup>. Ibid.

nearly 23,000 deaths. While the number was 25 percent lower than in 2018, several stakeholders considered 2019 as the war's second-deadliest year. It also displaced roughly 400,000 citizens in 2019, with the UN describing the situation as "the world's worst humanitarian tragedy".<sup>27</sup> As a leading terror organization in Yemen, Ansar Allah has accounted for 75 percent of all the terrorism deaths, with 2019 experiencing a 65 percent increase. Another active terror group is Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which caused 25 deaths in 2019.<sup>28</sup> The terror attacks and civil war depict Yemen as a fragile state, which cannot attain political stability.

The unending riots and terror threats have led to the Riyadh Agreement, which critics feel may still fail. When signing the power-sharing agreement in November 2019, Yemeni President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and "the break-away Southern Transitional Council (STC)" indicated that the deal was a "strategic step in the liberation war."<sup>29</sup> They all wanted to protect Yemen and its citizens from the unending Houthi militia attacks to build political, security, and even developmental successes. However, according to the available reports, before signing the agreement, President Hadi's ally 'attempted to force a re-shuffle on the Hadi government by also seizing Aden.'<sup>30</sup> Although its proponents view it as the solution to the governance problem, which has occurred due to armed groups' proliferation in Aden and Southern Yemen, critics disagree, citing the strict frameworks that the agreement is creating southern representatives. The latter maintains that even with the Riyadh Agreement, the involved parties do not have a clear process that the STC will use to push its independence agenda within the central government's

---

<sup>27</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>. Robert Forster, "Yemen's 'Handshake Moment': What Other Peace Processes Can Tell Us About the Riyadh Agreement." Available at SSRN 3561618 (2019), 1.

<sup>30</sup>. Ibid.

framework.<sup>31</sup> Yemen may continue experiencing riots and politically motivated terror threats through such unresolved issues, limiting its ability to attain political stability.

A government should ensure that despite the political pressures that it faces, it implements quality policies. The approach should help its economy to grow effectively.<sup>32</sup> However, as revealed in Figure number 9, Yemen only had a government effectiveness (GE) of 1.92 percent by 2019, showing its failure to have effective mechanisms to rescue its economy.<sup>33</sup> Data obtained from the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) shows that “in 2015, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by 32.9 percent.”<sup>34</sup> Since the civil war’s eruption, Yemeni private and public enterprises and infrastructure have experienced damage, disrupting the nation’s investment and economic activities. By 2016, the nation’s GDP dropped by 12.8 percent due to the suspension of its exports.<sup>35</sup> The negative economic performance extends to the liquidity crisis and the public budget deficit expansion. Instead of supporting the Public Investment Program (PIP), the Yemeni government suspended it and reduced public institutions’ operating expenses and maintenance. It also stopped the Social Welfare Fund (SWF), which was crucial for supporting “the poorest and most vulnerable people.”<sup>36</sup> Despite all the reductions, the Yemeni public budget deficit escalated to “YER 1.59 trillion during January 2015-August 26 due to tax revenue drought, interruption of oil and gas export revenues and

---

<sup>31</sup>. Ibid, 6.

<sup>32</sup>. Kaufmann, Daniel, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi. “The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues.” *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* 3, no. 2 (2011): 220–46.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>. Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation. “Yemen Economy in Lines: Overall Socioeconomic Developments.” *Yemen Socio-Economic Update* 20, (2016 Nov.), 1.

<sup>35</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>. Ibid. 2.

suspension of donor support.”<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, the government has not implemented any effective policies to save its economic performance, depicting it as a failed state.

The Yemeni government has also failed to develop policies to control its inflation rate and foreign trade. Since the nation faces tribal politics, its leaders have sidelined others, limiting the latter’s influence and input on saving the economy. For instance, “the tribes close to Sana’a” have remained key players in the country’s national politics, isolating those from the eastern desert.<sup>38</sup> Researchers argue that such tribal wars have contributed to the unending conflicts that Yemen faces today. By 2015, the nation’s inflation rate was 30 percent. However, the rate reduced to 7 percent in 2016, which analysts maintain is still bad for a nation’s economic performance.<sup>39</sup>

According to the World Food Program (WFP), Yemen recorded stable prices for several commodities in early 2016. However, that changed from October 2016 when petrol, cooking gas, and even diesel prices increased by 23, 72, and 26 percent, respectively.<sup>40</sup> Accompanied by foreign trade restrictions, the Yemeni economy continues to face destabilization, with the existing tribal political leaders focusing on trades that only benefit them. Instead of improving the Yemeni government’s effectiveness, former President Saleh extended tribalism to modern-day politics, preferring some tribes in the “high-level military officials’ appointments.”<sup>41</sup> Due to tribal politics, Yemen’s foundation has relied on individuality, limiting the government’s focus on controlling inflation rates and improving foreign trade.

---

<sup>37</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>. Schmitz, "Understanding the role of tribes in Yemen," 21.

<sup>39</sup>. Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation. “Yemen Economy in Lines: Overall Socioeconomic Developments,” 3.

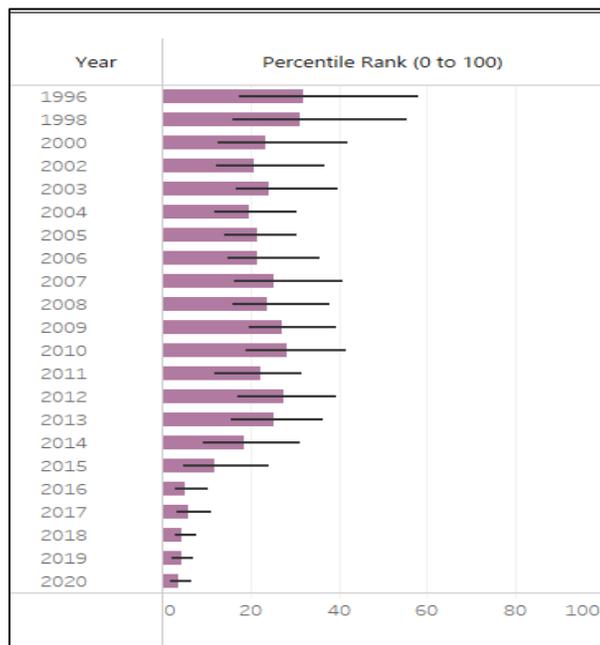
<sup>40</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>. Ibid.

### 3.2. Legal Institutions and Law Enforcement

An effective legal system is essential for closing the gap between what is written down and what is done in practice. As well as protecting rights and resolving conflicts peacefully, effective and equitable courts are safeguards against abuses of power. Well-functioning legal institutions are important to elicit voluntary compliance by signaling legitimacy. In addition to reducing transaction costs, they make it easier for behavior to be predictable and the process to be certain, thereby supporting the necessary commitment to modernize socioeconomic relationships.

**Figure 4: Regulatory Quality<sup>42</sup>**



**Source: World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators.**

As it is shown in figure number eleven the regulatory quality (RQ) requires the government’s formulation and implementation of sound regulations and policies. A successful process would permit the private sector’s development.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately,

<sup>42</sup>. RQ reflects a perception of how well the government formulates and implements sound policies and regulations for the benefit of the private sector.

<sup>43</sup>. Kaufmann et al., "The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues," 4.

Yemen lags in the approach, with its RQ currently standing at 4.33 percent.<sup>44</sup> Many Yemenis in the diaspora have always wanted to mobilize relief and assist in the nation's reconstruction. However, since they operate like the private sector, the government has resolved to use repressive mechanisms to suppress their push. Although many scholars usually assume the lack of any restrictions when transferring diaspora resources to an under-resourced state like Yemen from the developed nations, Yemen has taken the opposite direction.<sup>45</sup> The tribal leaders encourage their supporters to reject any aid from outside the country, arguing that the international community is taking advantage of their plight. Although it is false, many Yemenis believe their leaders, posing a barrier to those in the diaspora to succeed in their efforts. The government has also shifted to promoting intra-community conflicts aided by the high tribalism rates.<sup>46</sup> Through its actions, Yemenis abroad cannot have a conducive business atmosphere to help save their nation's growth. Instead of opening avenues for its citizens to participate in the private sector development, the Yemeni government is creating barriers, making its foundations highly fragile.

Many Yemenis are currently gasping for hope, owing to their alienation by the government. In every nation, the youth form a strong foundation for growth and future prosperity. Initially, young Yemenis had breathing space through the civil society organizations (CSOs), which allowed them to "express their grievances and attempt to effect change."<sup>47</sup> However, the tribal political arena has led to space's oppression, causing the youth to turn against each other and failing to focus on the government's contribution

---

<sup>44</sup>. Ibid, 96.

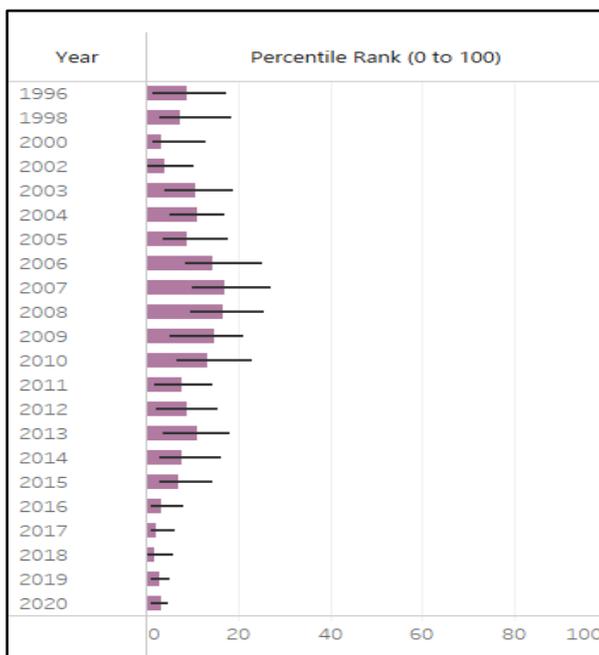
<sup>45</sup>. Dana M. Moss, "A diaspora denied: Impediments to Yemeni mobilization for relief and reconstruction at home." *Politics, Governance, and Reconstruction in Yemen* (2018), 55.

<sup>46</sup>. Ibid, 56.

<sup>47</sup>. Ala Qasem, "Gasping for hope: Yemeni youth struggle for their future." *Politics, Governance, and Reconstruction in Yemen* (2018), 44.

to their future. The latter is not investing in youth, with the high unemployment rate above 10 percent depicting a severe scenario. Food insecurity is also high in Yemen. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in its 2016 Global Hunger Index Report (GHIR), placed Yemen “among the poorest six countries, out of 118 nations globally”.<sup>48</sup> Besides, the Health Resources Availability Mapping System (HRAMS) evaluation shows Yemenis as having inaccessibility to essential social services. Through such cases, the youth and general Yemeni population remain sidelined by the government, posing a massive threat to the country’s future and political stability.

**Figure 5: Rule of Law in Yemen**



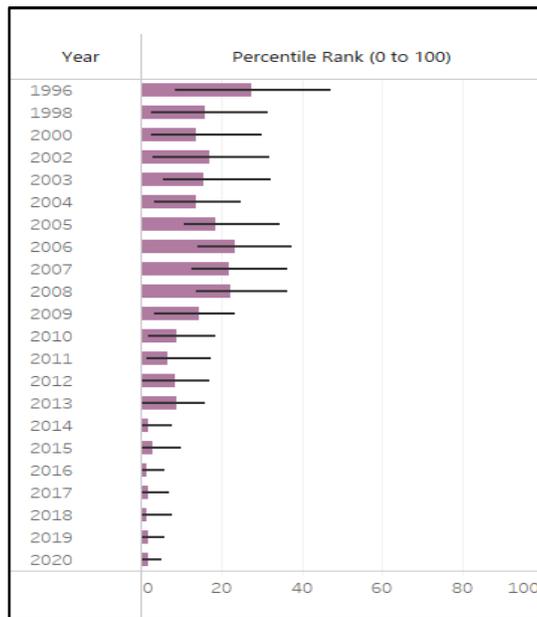
**Source: World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators**

A nation’s growth also depends on its government’s rule of law (RL). As is shown in figure number twelve how the rule of law deteriorated over time and it is for more than two decades one of the worst ranks in the world. Rule of law allows citizens to adhere to the established regulations since their governments respect the court system

<sup>48</sup>. Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation. “Yemen Economy in Lines: Overall Socioeconomic Developments,” 4.

and do not influence the police’s work.<sup>49</sup> Apart from the ineffective court system, the Yemeni government promotes arbitrary detention and has a high record of undocumented cases. It has also permitted the establishment of several unofficial detention centers. Besides, state institutions, intelligence, and security agencies, such as the Political Security Organization (PSO), have become split into Hadi and Houthis-controlled parallel structures.<sup>50</sup> The government should also ensure that it protects its citizens from insurgencies and war, primarily when the involved parties use illegitimate force. While it remains on paper, the Yemeni government has offered ample ground for the involved agencies to launch attacks indiscriminately.<sup>51</sup> The nation’s police have become divided into different sects, each affiliating to either Hadis or Houthis. Therefore, it is almost impossible for the Yemenis to develop positive perceptions about their government’s RL, making the nation highly fragile.

**Figure 6: Control of Corruption in Yemen**



**Source: World Bank, The Worldwide Governance Indicators**

<sup>49</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>. Freedom House, “Yemen: Freedom in the World 2020 Country Report.”

<sup>51</sup>. Ibid. (Freedom House).

As shown in figure number twelfth Yemen is one of the most corrupted countries in the world for almost two decades. Hence, corruption is another fragile foundation that Yemen operates on and has negatively affected its growth. Citizens often expect the government to control corruption (CC), which, in Yemen, the perception is only at 5.7 percent.<sup>52</sup> Since 2011, the Yemenis have “protested the corrupt elite, exclusion from political and economic matters.”<sup>53</sup> They are calling for the government to introduce reforms that can curb financial and political corruption. By 2020, the Yemeni corruption index was at 15 points. According to researchers, Yemen’s high corruption rates depict “an abuse of power for personal favor or gain.”<sup>54</sup> Due to corruption, Yemen has recorded uneven development, exposing nearly 34 percent of the nation’s population to living below the poverty line. For instance, during his tenure, the UN indicates that President Saleh amassed roughly “\$60 billion in assets through corruption.”<sup>55</sup> Some reports have also associated the leader with tribalism in his administration, prompting corruption due to low or no accountability. Through the high corruption, the country is experiencing increased tax noncompliance, with many citizens evading taxes.<sup>56</sup> Despite the penalty rate that the government has established, corruption continues to hinder its implementation. With the growing corruption, Yemen faces instability in its growth, creating a weak foundation for its future and depicting its failure.

---

<sup>52</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>. Albasoos and Hinai, "Understanding the root causes of the conflict in Yemen," 15.

<sup>54</sup>. Mohammed Mahdi Obaid and Noraza Mat Udin. "Corruption and Tax Noncompliance Variables: An Empirical Investigation from Yemen." *International Journal of Financial Research* 11, no. 4 (2020), 53.

<sup>55</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>. Obaid M, and M, Udin. "Corruption and Tax Noncompliance Variables: An Empirical Investigation from Yemen," 54." *International Journal of Financial Research* 11, no. 4 (2020): 52-63.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Yemen, successive regimes failed to deepen the foundations of the rule of law following the concept of partnership, equal citizenship, and justice, which can be said that it led to the major exploitation of politicized tribal forces and provided an opportunity for many corrupt politicians to assume many tasks within the Yemen state, where Yemen has failed as a state due to its political tribalism, inability to control terror, and riot threats and corruption, and the growing infringed freedom. Although the government insists on upholding its citizens' civil rights, it creates barriers that limit political and pluralism attainment. The nation's media has no freedom, with tribal leaders individualizing the push for upholding human rights.

Unfortunately, the process has extended to the judiciary, which operates under the government's influence, failing to rule on proper mechanisms to promote freedom. Accompanied by the civil war and prolonged terrorism threat, Yemen's political stability remains imbalanced, with citizens considering the situation fragile. The country's economy is worsening through the dropping GDP and high inflation rates. Unluckily also instead of dealing with such pressing issues, Yemen continues to conduct its national policies based on tribal lines. Corruption was also a challenge, exposing the nation to high economic losses. Despite the need to stabilize Yemen, such factors depict a fragile country due to its weak foundations.

#### **References**

- Albasoos, H., & Al Hinai, B. (2020). Understanding the root causes of the conflict in Yemen. *Bussecon Review of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 14-20.
- Forster, R. (2019). Yemen's 'Handshake Moment': What Other Peace Processes Can Tell Us About the Riyadh Agreement. Available at SSRN 3561618.
- Freedom House. (2020). Yemen: Freedom in the World 2020 Country Report. Freedom House.

- Global Terrorism Index. (2020). *Measuring the Impact of Terrorism 2020*. Institute for Economics & Peace.
- Kraay, A., Kaufmann, D., & Mastruzzi, M. (2010). *The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues*. Policy Research Working Paper 5430.
- Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2011). *The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and analytical issues*<sup>1</sup>. *Hague journal on the rule of law*, 3(2), 220-246.
- Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation. (2016). *Yemen Economy in Lines: Overall Socioeconomic Developments*. Yemen Socio-Economic Update 20, (2016 Nov.)
- Moss, D. M. (2018). *A diaspora denied: Impediments to Yemeni mobilization for relief and reconstruction at home*. *Politics, Governance, and Reconstruction in Yemen*, 55.
- Murphy, C. (2019). *Yemen Takes Top Position as Most Fragile State*. *Fragile States Index Annual Report*. Fund For Peace.
- Obaid, M. M., & Mat Udin, N. (2020). *Corruption and tax noncompliance variables: An empirical investigation from Yemen*. *International Journal of Financial Research*, 11(4), 52-63.
- Qasem, A. (2018). *Gasping for hope: Yemeni youth struggle for their future*. *POMEPS Studies*, 29, 43-45.
- Charles, S. (2011). *Understanding the role of tribes in Yemen*. *CTC Sentinel* 4, no.10.
- Charles, S. (2011). *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, October 31, (2011).
- Waleed Alhariri, W. (2020). *War's Elusive End – the Yemen Annual Review 2019*, Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, January 30, (2020).
- Lucas, W. (2010). *Fragile State: Yemen in Conflict*," *Current History* 109, no. 731 (December 1, 2010).