

## **Yemen Safe Passage Group**

### **YSPG Strategy 15.2.18**

How can YSPG help create Scenario 3 (see Solving Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis, YSPG Scenario Analysis 15 Feb 2018)

#### ***A. Continue to exert pressure for:***

- 1) Safe passage of trade and aid, especially commercial imports of food, fuel and medicines, while exposing specific delays or attacks against trade infrastructure. Extended role for UNVIM and exposure of Saudi / Hadi moves to undermine it by the imposition of parallel inspection systems. Re-opening of Sana'a airport (and ensuring Aden also remains open), if this proves not to materialise through YCHO. Exposure of the adverse consequences of counter-terrorism measures and 'bank de-risking' on Yemen's private sector and NGOs, which has created black markets and encouraged corruption.
- 2) Support for international actions in support of the Yemeni Riyal (such as the International Trade Facility), while pointing out problems and dangers of any one-sided initiatives that only benefit part of the country.
- 3) Continued but more extensive documentation of the systematic destruction being wrought by both air and ground campaigns, focusing on both short and longer-term effects on livelihoods and Yemen's economy. Recognition of the importance of independent witnesses on the ground, drawing attention to any continuing attempts at a media blackout and the denial of access for human rights workers. Publicise on-the-ground media coverage when and where this takes place. Seek to raise the level of debate about the problems facing media coverage of the conflict and the humanitarian / economic crisis.
- 4) Highlighting the disastrous consequences of an attack against either Hodeidah or Sana'a. Hodeidah as a 'safe port' (which we pushed earlier and developed an outline operational plan) has proved to be a major opportunity missed. This issue may well currently be 'toxic' for the Houthis at this stage after the last UN plan failed to move far in the direction of addressing Houthi concerns. May well be worth re-visiting once direction taken by new UN Special Envoy is clearer.
- 5) Urge the re-opening of a UK diplomatic mission in Sana'a (however limited). Emphasise that peace will only be sustainable if inclusive and that direct communication with the Houthis and other parties is essential for this

#### ***B. New positions to build on current developments:***

- 6) Support a push for a new UNSC Resolution to move on from the constraints of UNSCR 2216 on any realistic peace settlement, and to open the political space for the new Special Envoy

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- 7) Encourage independent high-profile monitoring of YCHO and any attempts to make this an initiative benefitting only the non-Houthi areas. Encourage and support the establishment of such a monitoring mechanism by INGO consortia. Specifically, encourage close monitoring of the 17 safe passage corridors (cited within the YCHO plan) which the Coalition has announced will be added to the no-strike list for bombing targets - we understand US senior officials and DFID believe these safe-passage corridors are a military strategy not a humanitarian one. Such monitoring would best be done by agencies on the ground. If the no-strike assurances prove serious, it would protect much of Yemen's essential road infrastructure from attack and allow the rebuilding of critical bridges and road sections.
- 8) Encourage arms trade campaigners to monitor the content of arms contracts (and if possible shipments of arms) for equipment needed for an urban ground assault. Urge HMG (and other Western governments) to follow the example of others (Germany, Norway) in banning / restricting arms sales,
- 9) Propose ways to address the Saudi narrative (and in some cases the reality) on the threat of Iranian arms, in the interests of facilitating a settlement. This could include a UNIFIL-style operation on the South coast to counter arms smuggling, backed by satellite monitoring (as is already done to track illegal fishing movements), much of which is already in place. While aimed primarily at arms smuggling, it would also undermine the operations of the 'spoilers' of the peace process. Important to stress extent to which a changed strategy is in Saudis own interests - the current strategy focused on military victory is not making Saudi safer, but just the opposite.
- 10) Consider the implications of the massive post-conflict reconstruction needed - its increasingly immense cost and the need to re-instate / expand livelihoods to allow the proliferating militias to demobilise, but also the economic opportunities (the 'peace dividend') which if articulated more clearly could act as an incentive towards peace for some currently acting as spoilers. Just who will finance Yemen's reconstruction and to what extent remains problematic.
- 11) Continue exchange and collaboration with the US-based Yemen Peace Project which has been active in seeking a rethink of the US government position on arms sales. This is now increasingly contested in Congress and is likely to be key to the next phase of developments. Also continue engagement with Crisis Action in UK, who have successfully publicised Yemen's plight to new audiences and potential influencers.