



# Integrated Country Strategy

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**YEMEN**

**FOR PUBLIC RELEASE**

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## 1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Despite the challenges produced by seven years of war and a resulting humanitarian and regional security crisis, the United States remains committed to engagement in Yemen that advances key priorities. A unified and prosperous Yemen, at peace with itself and its neighbors, is essential to our security. Yemen's strategic location along essential maritime routes, its position next to important U.S. allies, and the existence inside Yemen of terrorist threats against the U.S. homeland make stability in Yemen a key U.S. national security interest.

Over the next four years, the U.S. Mission to Yemen / Yemen Affairs Unit will use this Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) to guide our work to advance a negotiated end to the conflict; stabilize the economy and strengthen key institutions; shape flexible assistance; improve regional security and deny space to destabilizing actors; and strengthen our management platform to meet future needs.

Yemen hosts multiple conflicts pursued by a variety of actors. The Houthis control most of northern Yemen, including Sana'a, while the legitimate government has established itself in the southern port city of Aden, which it declared its temporary capital. Internal conflict with the separatist Southern Transitional Council has challenged the government's ability to govern effectively from Aden and prompted the Saudi-brokered Riyadh Agreement, aimed at strengthening government cohesion. Key aspects remain unimplemented but the April 2022 establishment of a Presidential Leadership Council encompassing disparate political elements offers an opportunity to strengthen the government, backed by over \$3 billion in Saudi and Emirati pledged economic and humanitarian assistance. Fighting between government and Houthi forces tends to be most active in the city of Ma'rib, the last major government stronghold in the north and gateway to key oil and gas fields. Fuel imports through Hudaydah port and access to the city of Taiz, Yemen's third largest, are other core areas of contention. UN efforts to mediate a resolution began in September 2014 and continue to date. In February 2021, the Administration appointed a Special Envoy for Yemen to energize international efforts to end the war and address Yemen's humanitarian crisis.

Although the challenges are substantial, we will remain focused on supporting UN efforts to extend a truce achieved in April 2022 into a negotiated end to the conflict and restore a unified and inclusive government to Yemen. We will push the parties to compromise, urge military de-escalation, and help shape targeted sanctions to pressure those who threaten the peace, security, and stability of Yemen.

We will also support key institutions and areas of the country, with an aim of reversing the trend towards fragmentation by establishing building blocks for resilient governance, secure borders, economic stability, improved service delivery, accountability for human rights abuses and violations, and deeper citizen involvement and buy-in to community-based democratic practices. This approach will be focused on key government institutions and areas under

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government control while humanitarian assistance will continue to benefit all of Yemen's population in need. It also aims to keep relatively stable localities from slipping into greater humanitarian need.

Security assistance will seek to strengthen Yemen's control of its borders and improve the capabilities of key partners to prevent extremist groups that threaten the U.S. homeland from taking advantage of power vacuums resulting from the conflict. We will also continue to press for urgent action to address the threat of an oil leak or explosion from the FSO Safer, a derelict vessel off Yemen's Red Sea coast.

Public diplomacy messaging and programming will bolster all lines of effort and also focus on mitigating and countering anti-American sentiment. Finally, we will strengthen our management platform to build capabilities to support continued YAU engagement in exile and to prepare for the eventual return of operations to Yemen.

## 2. Mission Strategic Framework

**Mission Goal 1:** The Yemeni parties to the conflict achieve an inclusive, negotiated settlement with UN and USG support.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** The parties agree to political talks and a durable cessation of hostilities, facilitated by direct YAU advocacy and the work of the UN and U.S. Special Envoys for Yemen.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Yemen maintains its territorial integrity and regains a unified, legitimate, and representative government that exhibits increased transparency, inclusivity, accountability, improved central and local governance.

**Mission Goal 2:** The United States leads efforts to address the conflict's economic drivers and to restore a stable and open Yemeni economy capable of supporting private sector development and international trade.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** U.S. assistance enables the Central Bank of Yemen and Ministry of Finance to increase transparency and improve monetary and fiscal policy; anti-corruption efforts resume; private sector confidence in Yemen increases, with the United States as a preferred partner.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** U.S. advocacy contributes to durable de-escalation of economic contention and targeted efforts to revive a functioning economy that empowers women and enables inclusive growth.

**Mission Goal 3:** The United States builds a stronger foundation for sustainable peace in collaboration with other development and humanitarian partners through flexible assistance that bolsters the ability of Yemenis to meet their own needs and manage conflict.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Yemenis benefit from strengthened sustainable local governance that improves resilience and reduces dependence on donor and humanitarian assistance.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** The Yemeni people have reliable access to improved services, including access to health, education, nutrition, food, and water and sanitation.

**Mission Goal 4:** Yemen secures its own borders, contributes to regional security in both the maritime and land domains, and prevents exploitation of ungoverned spaces in Yemen by internal or external actors.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Yemenis benefit from strengthened sustainable local governance that improves resilience and reduces dependence on donor and humanitarian assistance.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** The Yemeni people have reliable access to improved services, including access to health, education, nutrition, food, and water and sanitation.
- **Mission Objective 4.3:** Yemen rebuilds its domestic security sector to protect the population against internal threats; rebuilt Yemeni ground and maritime forces become capable of protecting the population against external threats; Yemen's counterterrorism forces cooperate with USG and regional partners to counter violent extremist organizations (VEOs) that threaten Yemen, the region, and the U.S. homeland.

**Management Goal 1:** The management platform and operational processes flexibly support current and future Yemen Affairs Unit mission objectives and diplomatic engagement.

- **Management Objective 1.1:** The YAU has appropriate resources and support to meet its strategic objectives.
- **Management Objective 1.2:** The YAU operational platform and processes are normalized while operations continue in exile in Saudi Arabia.

### 3. Mission Goals and Objectives

**Mission Goal 1** | The Yemeni parties to the conflict achieve an inclusive, negotiated settlement with UN and USG support.

**Description** | Yemen's conflict is in its eighth year, with neither side close to a total military victory. The political and security vacuum has left room for other internal conflicts to fester, including north-south tensions that strengthen the Houthis' hand politically and encourage their intransigence. The current stalemate in Ma'rib despite a protracted and destructive Houthi offensive and Coalition counteroffensive, meanwhile, underscores the need to redouble UN-led efforts to mediate a political settlement. U.S. engagement will focus on advancing this process and shaping efforts to build an inclusive foundation for durable peace and improved governance, while maintaining pressure on those who threaten Yemen's peace, security, and stability. We will encourage all involved to seek meaningful input from women, civil society and marginalized communities in advancing the peace process.

**Objective 1.1** | The parties agree to political talks and a durable cessation of hostilities, facilitated by direct YAU advocacy and the work of the UN and U.S. Special Envoys for Yemen.

- **Justification** | UN-supported political dialogue and a durable halt to the fighting –with strong support from the United States – could reopen the pathway to resolving Yemen's conflict. The Mission is uniquely placed to deepen these efforts through direct advocacy with Yemeni political and civil society actors and diplomatic partners, engagements which help inform Washington's understanding of the complexities of Yemen's political, sectarian, and tribal landscape and its interface with regional and international developments. We will continue to press for the meaningful participation of an inclusive range of political and civil society voices, including women and marginalized communities, in the political process.

Achieving progress on political talks and ceasing hostilities is critical to enabling Mission efforts to improve governance, restore the economy, promote self-reliance, secure borders, and counter violent extremism. A cessation of hostilities is arguably the most critical intervention to allow for the growth of representative and effective government institutions (Objective 1.2) that meet their people's needs (Objective 3.2). It is needed to de-escalate economic tensions and empower inclusive growth (Objective 2.2), and it is essential to reestablishing security throughout Yemen's territory and across its borders (Objective 4.3).

- **Linkages** | Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) 1.2 and supports UN Security Council Resolution 2014 adopted on 21 October 2011.

- **Risks** | There are a wide array of potential spoilers, including the Houthis, extremist groups, tribal elements, political competitors, war profiteers, and neighboring countries, any of whom could seek to derail developments that runs counter to their interests. Establishment political actors could reject more inclusive talks that they may see as threatening their prerogatives. Economic deterioration and insecurity could compound political transition challenges. The capacity of Yemeni political, security, and military institutions, and of the international community, to counter these forces and guarantee any cessation in hostilities is limited. Continued Houthi unwillingness to engage in the political process, the opacity of Houthi internal dynamics, and lack of direct USG access to and influence on the Houthis, is the biggest obstacle to achieving Objective 1.1.

**Objective 1.2** | Yemen maintains its territorial integrity and regains a unified, legitimate, and representative government that exhibits increased transparency, inclusivity, accountability, and improved central and local governance.

- **Justification** | Incomplete implementation of the November 2019 Riyadh Agreement and ongoing conflict with the Southern Transitional Council continue to frustrate efforts to restore a unified, inclusive, and representative government to the areas nominally controlled by the ROYG. The April 2022 establishment of a representative eight-person Presidential Leadership Council offers an opportunity to continue to focus advocacy with Yemeni and regional actors on Riyadh Agreement implementation as a necessary step to advance reforms to increase transparency and accountability. We will hold senior ROYG officials to their commitments to undertake such reforms. We will also advocate for women's meaningful participation in government, civil society, and politics, and for protecting Yemen's minorities and other vulnerable populations. We will prioritize the fight against corruption as we identify and hold accountable actors that abuse human rights.

The political process and cessation of hostilities envisaged under Objective 1.1 could open the way for meaningful participation of women, young people, and rural populations in, and improved access to, government. Monitoring of Objective 1.1 outcomes could help ensure that the political arrangements that emerge lay the groundwork for representative, legitimate, and effective government that meets the needs of the Yemeni people and reduces their reliance on foreign assistance (Objective 3.1). The performance of key economic (Objective 2.1) and security (Objective 4.3) institutions will be key benchmarks.

- **Linkages** | MENA JRS Goal 1.2 and 4.1 and supports UN Security Council Resolution 2014 adopted on 21 October 2011; U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption.
- **Risks** | Continued episodic violence and instability in ROYG controlled areas fueled by non-state actors, however, could shrink the space for civil society voices, with even less space available in the rest of the country due to Houthi repression. Claims of



authority or autonomy and diversion of resources by regional political actors could undermine the viability of central government institutions and heighten their dependence on foreign support. This dependence, if prolonged, risks ceding sovereign decision making and undermining the accountability to citizens that would come with a durable social contract over governance. While we have a willing partner in the ROYG in efforts to end child soldier recruitment, the same cannot be said of the Houthis, who continue the practice wittingly and willfully.

**Mission Goal 2 |** The United States leads efforts to address the conflict's economic drivers and to restore a stable and open Yemeni economy capable of supporting private sector development and international trade.

**Description |** The deterioration of Yemen's economy has heightened its reliance on external support and key economic policy institutions' dependence on external technical assistance. Contention between the Houthis and the ROYG over resources, and Yemen's bifurcation into two monetary zones, along with the inadequacy of export revenues and unpredictability of external support, have challenged efforts at economic stabilization. Against this backdrop, Yemen's private sector has demonstrated remarkable resilience, and key institutions like the Central Bank of Yemen have demonstrated steady improvements in capacity and governance. Mission objectives build on these strengths while addressing challenges, with focused efforts to improve monetary and fiscal policy, strengthen anti-corruption, and de-escalate economic contention.

**Objective 2.1 |** U.S. assistance enables the Central Bank of Yemen and Ministry of Finance to increase transparency and improve monetary and fiscal policy; anti-corruption efforts resume; private sector confidence in Yemen increases, with the United States as a preferred partner.

- **Justification |** Given the critical role that the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) plays in stabilizing Yemen's economy, and in support of the U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption, the ROYG-affiliated CBY in Aden will continue to be a principal focus of USAID-funded technical assistance. Technical assistance will also continue to support the Ministry of Finance in its efforts to improve revenue collection and expenditure management. Assistance will enable reforms, capitalizing on the ROYG's commitment to increase accountability and transparency, and reinforce U.S. leadership in donor coordination frameworks aimed at addressing Yemen's multiple economic and development challenges.

While the CBY's reach is currently limited to ROYG-controlled areas, improved CBY capacity could produce more effective monetary policy nationwide if current barriers to coordination are reduced or eliminated (Objective 2.2). Strengthening the CBY provides the institutional setting needed counter terrorism finance and money laundering

(Objective 4.3). Effective economic policy directly strengthens the Yemeni people's resilience (Objective 3.1) and improves perceptions of governance (Objective 1.2).

- **Linkages** | Middle East and North Africa Joint Regional Strategy Goal 3.1 and 3.3; Open Government Partnership (OGP); UN Convention against corruption; U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption.
- **Risks** | New CBY leadership has helped restore confidence and enabled more effective coordination of monetary policy and fiscal policy with the Finance Ministry. But this confidence remains tenuous, and past ROYG mismanagement and non-transparent use of public funds could justify continued donor hesitancy to provide sizable and timely infusions of resources. Vested interests and spoilers could point to this gap in seeking to scuttle reforms. The ROYG's tough fiscal circumstances, and prolonged absence of budgetary and balance of payments support, could renew pressure on the CBY to resort to printing money, exacerbating inflation and undermining economic stability, in turn further eroding confidence and reducing the likelihood of external support. The most fundamental challenge, and focus of Objective 2.2., will remain the limited reach of Aden-based institutions to affect economic conditions nationwide.

**Objective 2.2** | U.S. advocacy contributes to durable de-escalation of economic contention and targeted efforts to revive a functioning economy that empowers women and enables inclusive growth.

- **Justification** | Yemen's private sector and market economy continues to function despite the conflict, albeit with significant constraints, and could provide a foundation for rapid post-conflict recovery. Yemen has extensive natural resources, a vibrant diaspora, and entrepreneurial business communities that could contribute extensively to post-conflict economic reconstruction, which regional and international donors are prepared to support. Yemen's seaports, particularly the large, natural harbor of Aden, have immediate access to some of the world's busiest sea lanes. The value of these economic assets has also made them a point of contention. Mission efforts will focus on de-escalating that contention and empowering these assets to inclusively deliver dividends for the Yemeni people.

In recognition of the role of the economy in driving conflict, the UN Special Envoy is expected to pursue an economic track in parallel with pursuit of a ceasefire and launch of political talks (Objective 1.1). U.S. funding for the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) overlaps Objective 2.2, by facilitating entry of legitimate commercial shipping to the key non-government-controlled ports of Hudaydah and Salif, and Objective 4.2, by ensuring compliance with UN Security Council Arms Control Resolutions 2140 and 2216. Improved coordination on banking supervision is critical to effective anti-money-laundering/countering the finance of terrorism (AML/CFT)

(Objective 4.3). Without effective security in the Bab al-Mandeb (Objective 4.2), the strategic strait connecting the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, Yemen's ability to capitalize on its maritime and other natural resources will be severely constrained.

- **Linkages** | MENA JRS 3.2; UN Security Council Arms Control Resolutions 2140 and 2216.
- **Risks** | The USG has limited leverage over the Houthis, whose taxation, graft, and patronage networks provide a significant financial base they would see put at risk by efforts to unify monetary policy and strengthen supervision of the financial sector. Deepening economic crisis could destroy the resilience of Yemen's private sector and economic institutions, rendering the nation insolvent and insurmountably raising the costs of external financial support and reconstruction. Past efforts to de-escalate these areas of economic contention have seen limited successes, underscoring the need to recalibrate approaches to avoid repeating past failures.

**Mission Goal 3** | The United States builds a stronger foundation for sustainable peace in collaboration with other development and humanitarian partners through flexible assistance that bolsters the ability of Yemenis to meet their own needs and manage conflict.

**Description** | The humanitarian and development challenges in Yemen are daunting. Reunifying Yemen in the near term remains elusive. Food insecurity and malnutrition is only worsening, with projections that up to 19 million people, out of a population of 30 million, will likely face acute food insecurity before the end of 2022. Without a viable political resolution and system strengthening economic development investments, the humanitarian situation may further deteriorate. It is unlikely resources will be able to keep pace with the humanitarian needs. The USG can contribute to stabilizing target areas of the country and reversing the trend towards fragmentation by establishing the building blocks for local governance, enhancing basic service delivery, and deepening citizen involvement and buy-in to community-based democratic practices. The USG cannot resolve Yemen's development challenges alone and must continue dialogue and partnership with the GCC, European Union, and other donors to ensure greater collaboration and less duplication among the international community programs. The USG will prioritize consultation-informed and locally led programming that engages Yemenis, in particular women and marginalized communities, to ensure sustainability and alignment with Yemen's dynamic environment.

**Objective 3.1** | Yemenis benefit from strengthened sustainable local governance that improves resilience and reduces dependence on donor and humanitarian assistance.

- **Justification** | The development and humanitarian situation in Yemen is not monolithic: there are significant differences in humanitarian, early recovery, and development needs throughout the south which requires a targeted and differentiated response in the various geographies of the country.

This includes utilizing a conflict sensitive approach in addressing and mitigating the underlying causes of conflict within and between communities. An integrated programming approach that goes hand-in hand with improved basic service delivery (Objective 3.2) promotes greater local governance, community development and resilience. Governance is a cross-cutting issue that must be weaved into each sector approach as the foundation for recovery and development.

- **Linkages** | MENA JRS Goal 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4; U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption; U.S. Summit for Democracy
- **Risks** | The localized approach presents the risk of minimizing national policy interventions which could have broader societal impacts. Several macro-economic issues will be addressed through actions outlined in Goal 2. Limited and targeted development policy-related actions are part of the action plan and are delineated under Objective 3.2.

**Objective 3.2** | The Yemeni people have reliable access to improved services, including access to health, education, nutrition, food, and water and sanitation.

- **Justification** | Improved service delivery strengthens citizens' belief in the ability of self-governance to provide for their basic needs. While humanitarian assistance will still be needed in the foreseeable future to address the immediate needs of Yemenis, strengthening self-reliance reduces that need and puts communities on the path to early recovery.

Greater local governance strengthens local resilience and helps pave the way for community-based conflict-mitigation, inclusion and stability. The closer the governance structures are to the governed the greater their legitimacy and citizens' engagement. Therefore, improved service delivery pairs with peacebuilding, and conflict mitigation and creates space for inclusion of the most vulnerable (Objective 3.1).

- **Linkages** | MENA JRS 1.2 and 4.2
- **Risks** | The risk of deteriorating services is a loss of commitment to local governance and resilience, which can easily be exacerbated by local, regional and national conflict. Improved community-based service delivery must be coupled with key national policy reforms to slowly restore the legitimacy of higher-level governance structures. A localized approach does not address larger national development challenges such as water management and conservation.

**Mission Goal 4** | Yemen secures its own borders, contributes to regional security in both the maritime and land domains, and prevents exploitation of ungoverned spaces in Yemen by internal or external actors.

**Description** | Yemen's conflict remains a stalemate. No party appears on a clear path to military victory, although the Houthis appear determined to continue waging a war of attrition. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as the principal members of the Saudi-led Coalition, continue military operations in Yemen, combatting not only Houthi forces, but also violent extremist organizations like AQAP and ISIS-Y. Meanwhile, Houthi forces continue to fire ballistic missiles and UAVs into population centers and target critical oil refining infrastructure in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, and to threaten the maritime domain. While the Houthis recently agreed to facilitate planned international efforts to remove the oil from the FSO *Safer*, which risks a catastrophic spill in the Red Sea that could threaten freedom of navigation through the *Bab al-Mandeb* strait, they have previously shown their willingness to leverage their control over the dilapidated vessel to extract additional concessions from the international community. The USG can leverage partnerships and funding from the Department's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) program and Counterterrorism Bureau (CT) Bureau to build the capacity of key ROYG institutions like the Coast Guard, Border Guard, Ministry of Interior (MOI), and the MOI Immigration, Passport, and Naturalization Agency (IPNA). It can also support international efforts to address the risk posed by a spill from the FSO *Safer*.

**Objective 4.1** | Yemen is a less permissible environment for destabilizing actors who smuggle illicit drugs, weapons, and/or persons and seek to conduct cross-border attacks against neighboring countries.

- **Justification** | There are significant trafficking routes, both terrestrial and maritime, between Yemen and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula as well as the Horn of Africa. These trafficking routes enable localized instability to affect regional and global security and lawful international commercial activity. Mission activities will focus on building the capacity and readiness of two key institutions – the Yemen Coast Guard and Yemen Border Guard – to conduct interdictions of weapons and other illicit materiel and secure Yemen's land and maritime borders. In carrying out interdictions, both institutions will comply with international search and seizure laws and take action to identify and act upon any potential human rights risks during operations. The Mission will bolster Yemeni Coast Guard and Border Guard recognition that respect for individual rights helps create a more secure, stable, and prosperous region.

While the Mission objectives of achieving a durable cessation of hostilities (Objective 1.1) and regaining a unified government (Objective 1.2) will ultimately be necessary to fully deny access to destabilizing actors, incremental security capacity improvements in

ROYG-controlled areas under Objective 4.1 can still challenge these actors' access while the larger conflict continues. As illicit flows of finance and goods are inextricably linked, Objective 2.1 actions to strengthen anti-money laundering/countering the finance of terrorism will buttress counter-smuggling efforts.

- **Linkages** | CENTCOM FY 22-26 Country Security Cooperation Plan for Yemen, Tab H to Appendix 19 (Security Cooperation), Annex C, USCENTCOM Campaign Plan (CCP) 1000-21 dated September 30, 2021.
- **Risks** | The current and foreseeable incapacity of Yemeni government institutions to effectively monitor large areas of its territory due to the Houthi insurgency and other civil conflicts allows for the spillover of smuggling and other illicit activities into the rest of the Arabian Peninsula overland or into the Horn of Africa via maritime approaches. Increased human trafficking and weapons and drug smuggling via maritime approaches would exacerbate existing security challenges and extend them beyond the region. Increased Coast Guard and Border Guard capacity, however, might be ineffective to counter these threats beyond limited areas unless the government restores effective control over its territory. In addition, necessary cooperation from neighboring states to interdict smuggling traffic might not be forthcoming.

**Objective 4.2** | Yemen-based threats to the *Bab al-Mandeb* are mitigated, ensuring freedom of navigation and free flow of commerce.

- **Justification** | The Bab al-Mandeb strait and Red Sea are critical maritime routes for lawful international commerce. As such, Yemen's and other regional conflicts affecting the strait could produce spillover effects on global commerce and security. Mission activities will extend Yemen Coast Guard (YCG) cooperation with U.S. Naval Forces, extend YCG capacity in the Red Sea, and seek to mitigate risks and plan for contingencies related to a potential catastrophic spill from the FSO Safer.

Preventing threats to maritime security undergirds efforts to achieve durable economic de-escalation and revive a functioning economy by maintaining safe access to Yemen's ports and pursuit of ocean dependent livelihoods in sectors like fisheries (Objective 2.2). Extending cooperation with the Yemen Coast Guard (YCG) builds on activities under Objective 4.1 to include more routine patrols from ROYG-controlled Red Sea YCG, and communication and professional exchanges with U.S. Naval Forces.

- **Linkages** | CENTCOM FY 22-26 Country Security Cooperation Plan for Yemen
- **Risks** | Iranian lethal aid to the Houthis in the form of weapons, technology and know-how poses a direct risk to Yemen's stability and a threat to its neighbors. Increased Iranian involvement and influence in Yemen via the Houthis and extension of Houthi territorial control could pose a direct threat to the Bab al-Mandeb strait. Meanwhile, Houthi control of the dilapidated oil tanker the FSO Safer, permanently

moored off Ras Issa near the port of Hudaydah, will continue to risk an ecological disaster and protracted disruption of maritime traffic if the Houthis renege on their agreement to facilitate international efforts to remove the oil from the vessel.

**Objective 4.3** | Yemen rebuilds its domestic security sector to protect the population against internal threats; rebuilt Yemeni ground and maritime forces become capable of protecting the population against external threats; Yemen's counterterrorism forces cooperate with USG and regional partners to counter violent extremist organizations (VEOs) that threaten Yemen, the region, and the U.S. homeland.

- **Justification** | The collapse of effective government control over large swaths of territory and continued civil conflict pose significant challenges to the domestic security sector. This underscores the importance of rebuilding key government security institutions and, while those institutions remain limited in range and capacity, of leveraging partnerships to counter regional threats emanating from and impinging Yemen. In response, the Mission will leverage a range of partnerships and funding sources, including Counterterrorism (CT) Bureau Terrorist Screening and Interdiction (TSI) programs and CT funding and LEGATT and Department of Justice resources to build ROYG anti-money laundering/countering the finance of terrorism (AML/CFT) capacity.

Building security sector capacity necessarily reflects the cross-cutting nature of security challenges. Cooperation with key Yemeni partners in achieving Objectives 4.1 and 4.2. – the Yemen Coast Guard and Border Guard – constitutes a key component of broader efforts to reestablish domestic security. This is inextricably linked to the security of Yemen's borders and maritime domain, and traveler screening depends on effectively controlled ports of entry. AML/CFT capacity extends to efforts to counter financing of other illicit activities, to include the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and human beings, with all these efforts aimed at rendering Yemen a less permissive transit point for illicit smuggling between East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. To be fully successful, progress towards Objective 4.3 must proceed in parallel with Objective 1.2, Yemen regaining a unified legitimate government, and Objective 3.1, Yemenis benefiting from strengthened local governance. Security gains can enable improved governance, and vice versa, and ultimately enable more routine and frequent Mission travel to Yemen in pursuit of all ICS Objectives.

- **Linkages** | MENA JRS Goal 1.1; Bureau of Consular Affairs Strategy Goal 1.2
- **Risks** | Should sub-objective benchmarks not be achieved, violent extremist organizations such as AQAP or ISIS-Y could gain strength and again use Yemen as a base from which to plan and execute attacks against U.S. and partner interests regionally and globally. This risk is particularly acute in Yemen's ports and territorial waters, as demonstrated by the 2000 attack on the USS Cole, as well as more recent Houthi attacks on maritime shipping. Increasing Houthi conduct cross-border UAV and

ballistic missile attacks demonstrate the risk of protracted loss of government control over Yemen's territory.

#### **4. Management Goal and Objectives**

**Management Goal 1:** The management platform and operational processes flexibly support current and future YAU mission objectives and diplomatic engagement.

**Description:** As a post in suspended operations, the YAU has unusual needs and a unique operational platform. The YAU is a tenant in Mission Saudi Arabia, a "mission within an embassy," while maintaining diplomatic engagement on Yemen to foster peace and the eventual return to Yemen. Mission Saudi Arabia provides some ICASS support to the staff in the YAU: motor pool, housing, general services, human resources, IT support, medical, mail, residential security, etc. The Post Support Unit in Charleston, SC provides financial management support. The management officer is the sole YAU management official and provides ICASS support to LE Staff caretakers remaining in Yemen and is the liaison with Mission Saudi Arabia, USAID, the Post Support Unit, the bureau, and others to ensure appropriate support to the Mission to Yemen and the YAU.

YAU diplomatic engagement expanded greatly since President Biden designated a Special Envoy for Yemen in 2021, and recent developments – the first real progress since the start of the civil war in 2014 – will keep Yemen and the Yemen Affairs Unit in the spotlight. Post anticipates increased demands on the management platform and its capacity to carry out services in support of these activities. The YAU, currently located in Riyadh, is subject to a USDH staffing cap of 21. Most YAU sections have only one officer or are minimally staffed, with limited or no support staff and without back up coverage despite intense requirements to meet Washington priorities. To meet operational requirements and increased diplomatic engagement, the management platform must increase staffing.

The management platform is complicated due to intense security issues in Yemen and Houthi aggression against current and former employees of the Embassy in Sana'a. Yemen is an active conflict zone. Between February 2015 and October 2021, the USG-owned embassy compound in Sana'a was guarded by LE staff local guards and the mission had 233 authorized positions through June 30, 2022. In October 2021, the Houthis detained 32 LE staff and breached and looted the compound, which had been sealed since the 2015 evacuation. As of March 2022, they remain in control of the compound and continue to detain 13 current and former LE Staff. As this situation continues, the YAU management and operational platforms must flex to meet mission objectives.

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**Management Objective 1.1** | The YAU has appropriate resources and support to meet its strategic objectives, including increased travel into Yemen.

- **Justification** | As diplomatic engagement increases, the YAU must have appropriate facilities and human resources to support these activities.
- **Linkages** | 3 FAM 3773 travel to countries where the United States is engaged in contingency operations or where operations are suspended; 12 FAM Diplomatic Security; 3 FAM Personnel.
- **Risks** | Diplomatic engagement could be hindered if the YAU management platform and YAU staffing are inadequate. Additionally, recruitment and staffing efforts could suffer as a result of inadequate facilities and intense workload due to insufficient staffing.

**Management Objective 1.2** | The YAU operational platform and processes are normalized while operations continue in exile in Saudi Arabia.

- **Justification** | The lack of management section staffing since the 2015 evacuation resulted in numerous issues identified in several recent OIG reports. LE Staff position descriptions must be rewritten and reclassified to comply with GTM/OE standards. The LE Staff have not had access to OpenNet since the evacuation, which has resulted in training and other systemic issues, and security challenges in Yemen limited communications with the LE Staff over the years. Policies and support operations need to be reviewed and adjusted to bring post current with Department developments since 2015, ensure cybersecurity practices protect Department systems and processes, institutionalize operational changes, and incorporate DEIA principles. If local security conditions allow access to USG systems, LE Staff must gain access to OpenNet and receive training for systems, processes, and policies developed since 2015.
- **Linkages** | The operational platform of the Mission underpins the work of all ICS goals. OIG audits of Posts in Suspended Operations; OIG Management Assistance Reports; 14 FAM Asset Management; 3 FAM Personnel; GTM/OE Policy on Employment of LE Staff at Posts in Suspended Operations.
- **Risks** | Failure to adjust operations and policies to Department of State standards will result in inefficiencies, potential risks to employees, and potential risk to the USG if practices are not congruent with Department of State cybersecurity standards, GTM/OE standards, and local labor laws.