Yemen’s Western Coast: Between Propaganda and Real Motives!

(Translated)

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At the beginning of October last year, Yemen’s government forces regained control of areas in the Dhubab and Kahbub mountains in the Bab al-Mandab Strait, roughly a month after the Houthis had seized them. This was part of a military operation they named “Operation Dawn of Yemen,” stating its goal was to recapture areas under Houthi control that had been lost during recent events, ultimately aiming to reach the capital, Sana'a, and restore state institutions, according to their claims. These developments occur amidst continuous military escalation in Yemen, considered the most extensive since the end of the relative calm that followed the announcement of the UN truce in April 2022.

On Sunday, 15 November 2026, the Southern Giants Brigades, Shabwa Defense Forces, Thunderbolt Brigades, and others announced their withdrawal from the coastal areas of Al-Mudaraba and Ras al-Ara toward the areas of Khor Omaira and Al-Saqiya, heading to Aden. Statements in local and international media regarding this withdrawal varied significantly. Salem Thabet Al-Awlaki, the recently appointed Minister of Information in Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed’s government, described it as a military repositioning aimed at enhancing combat efficiency, fortifying vital areas, and securing supply lines—pointing to the step's importance for breaking the siege on Taiz—and stated that military and security formations across all fronts stand united to protect gains, restore state authority and its institutions, and end the Houthi rebellion, asserting that field developments will only increase their resilience, organization, and steadfastness. In contrast, Yemen’s military and strategic expert Brigadier Thabet Hussein Saleh views the withdrawal as a military retreat that could grant the Houthis field, strategic, and moral gains. How reminiscent this is of the past! This is not the first tactical withdrawal and repositioning; it has been preceded by numerous and repeated withdrawals during which the Houthis expanded their areas of control.

For the Houthis, however, Saba News Agency in Sana'a described what happened as a “complete liberation of the western coast” and a defeat for the coalition-backed forces, clarifying that the retreat resulted from a successful military flanking operation on the Kharaz front in Al-Mudaraba, which tightened the noose around those forces and forced them to flee.

Reuters described the retreat as a major setback for the Saudi-backed military campaign, even representing the end of a six-week-long counteroffensive to retake the coast. Western coverage also linked the Houthis’ control of Bab al-Mandab with Iran's continued disruption of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, considering this “dual pressure” as isolating Gulf oil producers from the main shipping routes toward the Suez Canal. AFP cited military and governmental sources stating that Houthi forces are now positioned 60–80 kilometers from the city of Aden, prompting government forces to build fortifications and dig trenches around it. The newspapers Al-Araby Al-Jadeed and Al-Quds Al-Arabi quoted military sources and analysts reporting that the forces in Dhubab and Bab al-Mandab faced an imminent threat of encirclement following Houthi advances toward the Kharaz and Khor Omaira areas in Lahj, which would have severed supply lines coming from Aden.

Analyses published by Saudi and Arab newspapers, such as Al-Jazeera newspaper, attributed the retreat to domestic causes stemming from divisions within the structure of the local forces, including multiple command structures, weak coordination between fighting formations, and the absence of large numbers of personnel from the fronts compared to other formations that receive more regular salaries. Meanwhile, media outlets of the government forces, the Southern forces, and the Transitional Council mentioned a “defensive tactic,” stressing that the top priority is securing the capital Aden and the southern

governorates and reorganizing the defense lines in Ras al-Ara and al-Mudaraba, while emphasizing the continuation of operations on other fronts like al-Waz'iyah and Kahbub to break the siege on the city of Taiz, as Al Jazeera Net indicated. Meanwhile, the Mocha Center for Studies pointed out that the withdrawal was characterized by surprise and confusion and was accompanied by a displacement of residents toward al-Khawkhah for fear of arrests, raising questions about the existence of hidden political disagreements between the components of Yemen's government and the Coalition, and fears that this retreat would lead to entrenching a reality of divided influence and dashing hopes of breaking the siege on Taiz, as noted by the British website Middle East Eye.

Upon reflecting on the answer to the question "The Scope of Military Developments in Yemen" dated 27 September 2026, issued by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, the eminent scholar Ata Bin Khalil Abu al-Rashtah, wherein he stated: "Reflecting on the past and ongoing Houthi attacks on Yemen's western coast, and the fact that the Houthis are on the verge of seizing control of the entire coastline, yet neither America nor Saudi Arabia is intervening to aid the Yemeni government in Aden, despite the fact that the Houthi attacks have also affected it too... all of this indicates that the Houthi occupation of most of Yemen's western coast is with American and Saudi approval. This appears to be driven by three objectives: First: To involve the Houthis in governing Yemen and grant them a primary role in the government, thereby gradually removing British agents from power in Yemen... Second: This matter is a means of enticing the regime in Iran and paving the way for a more lenient stance towards America... Third: It is a strategic fighter's pause, as America faces midterm elections...", and the consequences thereof, the results of which were announced ten days prior to the government forces' withdrawal from the coast. And now, the Houthi expansion and their completion of control over Yemen's most important coastal strip overseeing the Bab el-Mandeb Strait has become clearly apparent. The observer of the answer to the question realizes the significant international interest and intervention in everything that transpires in Yemen.

This reveals to the people of Yemen the intense American-British conflict being waged through their local and regional tools, and that the people of Yemen are the fuel for this conflict and have suffered immensely from it for many long years. These battles have yielded nothing but the loss of souls, the shedding of blood, the destruction of resources, the widening of the rift among the people of faith, the growth of division, and the weakening of strength—all in service of the disbelieving colonialist!

Therefore, there is no way out for Yemen except by getting rid of these tools that enable the warring colonialists to remain and extend their influence. This can only be achieved by working with Hizb ut Tahrir to establish the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) on the Method of the Prophethood, which Allah (swt) has promised: ﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾ **"Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth"** [TMQ Surah An-Nur: 55], and which the Messenger of Allah (saw) gave glad tidings of: **«ثُمَّ تَكُونُ خِلَافَةٌ عَلَى مِنْهَاجِ النُّبُوَّةِ» "Then there will be a Khilafah (Caliphate) on the Method of the Prophethood"** (Narrated by Ahmad)." **End Quote.**

We call upon the people of understanding among the people of Yemen—whom the Messenger of Allah (saw) praised for their Iman, wisdom, and fiqh (understanding of Shariah)—to work with us to realize the promise of Allah (swt), the All-Powerful, the All-Mighty, and the glad tidings of His Messenger (saw), so that we may succeed in both abodes, and that is the great success.