



Abaad Observatory for Early Warning and Strategic Indicators

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Yemeni Warning to the Houthis Against Joining Iran's War: The New Government and the Test of State Authority

A strategic reading for decision-makers in Yemen

Abaad Observatory for Early Warning and Strategic Indicators

Turning raw monitoring into risk indicators, opportunities and trackable scenarios



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Red

High general risk

100

Days to test government
performance

3

Intersecting crises: Aden, Iran,
humanitarian pressure

Methodology and Analytical Approach

Abaad Observatory for Early Warning and Strategic Indicators adopts a multi-stage monitoring and analysis methodology designed to transform raw materials, news items, reports and dispersed data into indicators that can be understood, measured and assessed. The aim is to help decision-makers, researchers and relevant stakeholders read ongoing developments in Yemen and anticipate their possible trajectories.

The methodology begins with collecting monitored materials from media sources, official statements, local and international reports, organizational outputs and available field indicators. These materials are then classified into key tracks: political, economic, social, military, security, rights and humanitarian indicators.

After classification, the materials are analyzed across four main levels: event intensity, indicator direction, level of impact and early-warning significance. The Observatory does not treat news items as isolated incidents, but rather as signals that may reveal broader trends, rising risks or exploitable opportunities.

The Observatory uses artificial intelligence tools to support the processing of raw information, sorting of materials, detection of recurring patterns, classification of indicators and generation of initial readings that help the analytical team produce faster and more structured situation assessments. AI is not used as a substitute for human judgment or editorial responsibility, but as an assisting tool whose outputs are subject to human review, consistency checks, editorial refinement and political and strategic interpretation before the final version is approved.

Fixed Editorial Note

This report is not intended to provide a monthly news archive or simply restate all developments in chronological order. It seeks to produce an analytical reading directed at decision-makers. Accordingly, issues are arranged according to their level of impact and strategic significance, not merely according to the date on which they occurred.

Therefore, some events that may appear limited in media volume may receive greater analytical weight if they are connected to the future of the state, the monopoly of force, unified security command, the settlement track, or the rights and humanitarian situation.

Executive Summary

February 2026 was a highly sensitive transitional month. The formation of the new Yemeni government and its gradual return to Aden coincided with regional escalation linked to Iran, as well as clear Yemeni warnings to the Houthis against engaging in any military adventure that serves Tehran's agenda. February was therefore not only the month of a new government; it was a dual test: the state's ability to consolidate its presence in Aden and its ability to prevent Yemen from becoming a platform in a regional war.

The central monthly indicator is the intersection of two tracks: an internal track related to restoring state institutions and unifying military and security decision-making after the dissolution of the Southern Transitional Council, and a regional track related to the Houthis' position in Iran's confrontation with Saudi Arabia, the United States and Israel, and the resulting risks to the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab.

The indicators show that the new government received clear Gulf, European and UN support. Yet it faced an immediate security test in Aden, where remnants of the dissolved STC attempted to use street pressure, incursions and field mobilization to disrupt the government and portray it as unable to operate from the temporary capital.

At the same time, the Houthis remained the most serious regional threat. Indicators included military mobilization, heightened readiness, reinforcements toward the Saudi border, Marib and Hodeidah, and the extension of the EU naval mission Operation Aspides for another year.

Overall Risk Indicator

Overall risk level in February: Red / High.

The indicator is elevated because the new government began its work in an unstable environment: Aden remains vulnerable to disorder and the political use of the street; the Houthis are signaling alignment with Iran; the Red Sea is becoming a field of international deterrence; and rights and humanitarian pressure continues through the files of detainees, journalists, migration and humanitarian funding.

The most urgent risk does not lie in a single event, but in the possible convergence of three crises: regional escalation that Iran may push the Houthis to exploit; security fragility in Aden that obstructs the government; and humanitarian and rights deterioration that weakens confidence in any future political process.

Key Transformations in February

First, a clear political transformation emerged with the formation of the new government, the taking of the oath and the announcement of its priorities. The criterion for judging it shifted from political representation to practical performance during the first 100 days, especially in services, security, the economy and the return of state institutions to Aden.

Second, Aden shifted from a symbolic temporary capital into a real test of the government's ability to operate from within Yemen. Attempts to storm Maasheeq Palace and the closure of dissolved STC offices revealed that the contest over the city has not ended; it has moved from direct military control to political and security pressure.

Third, the confrontation with Iran became an organizing frame for reading Houthi behavior. Yemeni warnings to the Houthis against joining Iran's war indicate that the government understands that any Houthi escalation in the Red Sea or toward Saudi Arabia would transform Yemen from a domestic file into an open regional arena.

Key Transformations in February - Continued

Fourth, the economic track appeared as a conditional opportunity. There were reports of possible Saudi support exceeding USD 5 billion, development projects in Aden and prospects for economic integration with the Gulf. Yet these opportunities will remain limited unless translated into services, salaries and institutional stability.

Fifth, the rights and humanitarian file remained strongly present. The release of journalist Mohammed Al-Mayyahi was a limited positive indicator, but it did not erase the continued detention of UN personnel, violations against journalists, migration risks and the rising number of people in need of humanitarian assistance.

What February's Indicators Mean for Decision-Makers

February's indicators mean that the Yemeni state has entered the performance-testing phase, not merely the decision-making phase. The dissolution of the STC and the formation of the government are no longer sufficient in themselves. The required task is to translate decisions into stable security, a functioning government in Aden, tangible services and a unified political message toward the Houthis and Iran.

They also mean that the Red Sea file is no longer a separate maritime issue; it is directly linked to the legitimacy of the Yemeni state. The more the government is unable to impose sovereignty over coasts, ports and crossings, the greater the role of international powers in managing the file on its behalf.

They also indicate that any political settlement with the Houthis without clear implementation guarantees may reproduce violence, because the indicators show that the Houthis treat the region, war and humanitarian issues as leverage, not as pathways to sustainable peace.

Rising Risks and Available Opportunities

Rising Risks

- First risk: Houthi involvement in Iran's war, whether through the Red Sea, the Saudi border or escalation against Israel, which could open the door to broader regional and international military responses.
- Second risk: disorder in Aden. Remnants of the dissolved STC may use protests, incursions or incitement to disrupt the new government and prevent it from establishing an effective governance model.
- Third risk: failure of government performance during the first 100 days, especially if no improvement appears in services, salaries, security and anti-corruption measures.
- Fourth risk: continued rights violations against journalists, the forcibly disappeared and detainees, weakening the legitimacy of the parties and increasing domestic and international pressure.
- Fifth risk: accelerated humanitarian deterioration, with expectations that the number of people in need may increase by about three million, alongside shrinking UN contracts and operations in Houthi-controlled areas.

Available Opportunities

- First opportunity: turning the new government into a rapid performance model in Aden through a measurable 100-day plan covering security, services, salaries, ports and the airport.
- Second opportunity: investing Gulf, European and international support in building state institutions rather than in temporary arrangements with armed power centers.
- Third opportunity: building a clear Yemeni narrative on the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab that places the Yemeni state as a central partner in protecting navigation, not merely as an arena for international operations.
- Fourth opportunity: turning the prisoners and detainees file into a humanitarian and political entry point for confidence-building, instead of leaving it as a tool of mutual leverage.
- Fifth opportunity: developing a Yemeni-Gulf economic partnership that begins with services, energy, salaries and investment projects in Aden and liberated areas.

Early-Warning Matrix

Indicator	Risk level	Trend	Meaning	Suggested response
Houthi involvement in Iran's war	Red	Rising	Turns Yemen into a regional confrontation arena	Diplomatic warning and security/maritime deterrence
Stability of Aden	Red	Volatile	Tests the government's ability to operate from inside Yemen	Unified security and service plan
New government performance	Orange	Rising	Legitimacy depends on achievement in the first 100 days	Monthly measurable performance dashboard
Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab	Red	Rising	International file affecting trade and energy	Dedicated Yemeni maritime-security unit
Detainees and journalists	Orange	Persistent	Rights and humanitarian pressure on any settlement	Negotiation priority and independent documentation

Possible Scenarios

- Scenario One: Controlled government consolidation in Aden. Probability: Medium. The government succeeds in holding its meetings, activating its service program, stabilizing security and neutralizing attempts to create disorder. This scenario strengthens government legitimacy and weakens remnants of the STC.
- Scenario Two: Houthi escalation linked to Iran. Probability: Medium to High. The Houthis exploit Iranian tensions to raise readiness, resume threats in the Red Sea or pressure the Saudi border. This scenario raises the cost of war and pushes the Yemeni file into a broader regional confrontation.
- Scenario Three: Political and security disorder in Aden. Probability: Medium. Networks affected by the return of the state use street pressure, incursions and incitement to obstruct the government and portray it as incapable. The required response is law enforcement combined with an inclusive southern political track.
- Scenario Four: Relative containment of escalation. Probability: Medium. Regional and international pressure prevents the Houthis from fully engaging in Iran's war, while low-intensity tension continues in the Red Sea and on several fronts.

Recommendations for Decision-Makers

- 1. Establish a 100-day government performance dashboard with monthly indicators on services, salaries, security, revenues and ports/crossings.
- 2. Consolidate Aden as a model of government performance through a unified security and service-delivery plan, while preventing the use of the street or weapons to obstruct state institutions.
- 3. Treat any Houthi involvement in Iran's war as a threat to Yemeni and regional national security, not merely as a media or solidarity position.
- 4. Build a specialized Yemeni unit to monitor the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab, integrating maritime security, diplomacy, intelligence and economic analysis.
- 5. Link Saudi, Gulf and international support to measurable government performance indicators so that assistance does not become political cover without livelihood impact.
- 6. Make the files of prisoners, the forcibly disappeared and journalists a negotiating and rights priority, while demonstrating the state's commitment to closing violation files in areas under its authority.
- 7. Develop the Observatory's economic and social monitoring tools, because political and security stability will not endure without addressing salaries, services and prices.

Concluding Situation Assessment

February 2026 was the month of the new government under the pressure of a possible regional war. The government entered Aden carrying the promise of state recovery, but it immediately faced a dual test: preventing internal disorder from disabling it, and preventing the Houthis from turning Yemen into a platform in Iran's war.

The bottom line for decision-makers is clear: the success of the new government will not be determined by the number of statements supporting it, but by its ability to produce a governance model in Aden, monopolize security decision-making, distance Yemen from Iran's wars and convert external support into services felt by citizens.