

The Hikma Fellows



Hanan Abbas

Hanan is a professor of criminal law at the University of Sana'a and a researcher on criminal policy to confront terrorism. She is the head of the Women's Department for Rehabilitation and Skills Development in the General People's Congress (GPC), and is a member of the party's Standing Committee and its General Secretariat. Hanan also works as the executive director of the Forum for Advancement and Progress, and she is the editor-in-chief of the Progressive Media Center. Additionally, she is the director of the Kana'an Association for Palestine, which advocates in support of the Palestinian cause and provides assistance to Palestinians in Yemen.



Mutlaq Al-Akhali

Mutlaq is a lawyer, politician, and human rights activist. He is a member of the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party, and has held various positions within the party since joining at a young age in 2004. A graduate of the Law College of Taiz University, Mutlaq previously led the party's student sector and youth union. Mutlaq was one of the most prominent activists in the 2011 revolution, serving as the official spokesman of the Revolutionary Council in Taiz city's Freedom Square. He represented the Socialist Party in the Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation group in the National Dialogue Conference in 2013, and he is the director of the Studies and Documentation Department in the Civil Aviation & Meteorology Authority.



Huda Al-Sarari

Huda is a lawyer and one of the most prominent human rights defenders in Yemen. She heads the Defense Foundation for Rights and Freedom (DFRF), which since 2015 has provided legal defense for cases of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in the governorates of Aden, Lahj, and Abyan. Huda has made significant contributions to identifying and recording severe rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, in part through her work with the National Committee to Investigate Allegations of Human Rights Violations. She contributed to the establishment of the Mothers of Abductees Association in Aden, and she established an association to support the families of victims of assassinations in Aden. Huda was awarded the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity in 2019 and the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders in 2020.



Ammar Al-Aulaqi

Ammar is the Deputy Minister for Environmental Affairs in the Ministry of Water and Environment, a position he has held since 2014, and the recently-appointed chair of the Environmental Protection Agency. Ammar received a degree in environmental engineering from Dalhousie University in Canada and worked in the private sector in the oil and gas field before entering the public sector. He has contributed to many civil society initiatives in his native Shabwa governorate and throughout Yemen, including as a founding member of the “People Want” movement in 2011 and as founder and chairman of the “Change and Build” forum in 2012. Ammar is one of the founding members of the Development Champions Forum.



Akhlaq Al-Shami

Akhlaq is the Secretary General of the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and a member of the Political Office of Ansar Allah. Her early political and human rights work focused on the six rounds of war and accompanying arrests that took place in Sa’ada governorate between 2004 and 2010. Akhlaq participated in the peaceful youth revolution in 2011, served as a member of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in 2013 representing Ansar Allah in the Sa’ada Working Group, and participated in the 2014 popular revolution. In addition to her political work, Akhlaq has also been engaged in numerous initiatives to preserve Yemen’s cultural and intellectual heritage.



Salem Al-Awlaqi

Salem is a political activist and a member of the presidency of the Southern Transitional Council (STC). He served as the official spokesperson of the STC between 2017 and 2019. Salem has been politically active from a young age, and as a member of the student union in Aden University he participated in the formation of the university’s Coordination Unit for the Liberation and Independence of the South in 2010. Salem was actively involved in the Peaceful Southern Movement from 2008 to 2015, and he served as a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Inclusive Southern Conference in 2013. He also worked as programs director for the Democratic Youth Foundation from 2013 to 2015, and as the spokesperson for the Southern Resistance Council in Shabwa governorate in 2015.



Shadi Basurra

Shadi is an associate professor at Birmingham City University, UK, and head of the master’s program in computer science. Shadi is a founder and board member of the Al-Rashid Center for Research in Aden, and has served as the center’s chairman since 2018. He has also worked as a research consultant specializing in Yemeni affairs with numerous international institutions, including the Future Center for Advanced Research Studies in the UAE, the Berghof Foundation in Germany, and the Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance, among others. He previously worked as a researcher for Sony, and many of his scientific research papers have been published in international conferences in Canada, China, America, and Britain.



Shatha Al-Harazi

Shatha is an expert in the area of mediation and peace. She has worked with the United Nations for more than eight years, and currently serves as Political Affairs Adviser and Governorate Affairs Adviser in the Office of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen. Shatha is the only Yemeni directly involved in mediation work in track I negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Yemen. Prior to joining the UN envoy's team, she was an independent youth member of the National Dialogue Conference (2013-2014), where she was elected as a member of the Presidency and Rapporteur of the Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation Group. Shatha received the 2012 Global Trailblazer award from former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's organization Vital Voices. In her previous capacity as a journalist, Shatha's reporting was published in The Guardian, The Washington Post, and several other international publications.



Hisham Al-Maswari

Hisham is a Yemeni writer, journalist, political activist and prominent member of the Yemeni Congregation for Reform, also known as the Islah party. Hisham currently works as a program producer and runs political programs for the Yemen Shabab Channel. A graduate of the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Sana'a, Hisham has been politically active since an early age and he was a prominent activist during the 2011 revolution, where he was a leading member of the "January 15 Gathering," a youth-led incubator for young leaders from different parties. Hisham has written for many news websites and he has been a frequent commentator on various Yemeni and Arab channels, including Al-Arabiya, Al-Jazeera, and BBC.



Yasmin Al-Qadhi

Yasmin is a journalist and human rights defender. She is the chairperson of the Marib Girls Foundation, which specializes in peacebuilding and sustainable development for women, and she also serves as Director of Girls' Education in the Education Department in Juba district of Marib governorate. Yasmin has a long track record in volunteering and working with civil society and non-governmental organizations, including as head of the Anti-Corruption Unit in Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC). She is also a member of the Women Solidarity Network and the Women of Peace Initiative. For her longstanding efforts to counter child recruitment, resolve local conflicts, promote peace and develop local strategies to reject extremism and terrorism, Yasmin received the US State Department's International Women of Courage Award in 2020.



Akram Al-Ameri

Akram is the acting Secretary General of the Inclusive Hadhramout Conference, and president of the Court of First Instance in Hadhramout governorate since 2017. He has represented the Conference in numerous political dialogues and workshops in Yemen and abroad, and served as Vice President of the Drafting Committee for the preparation of the Hadramout Inclusive Conference in 2016. From 2017 to 2019, he served as Vice President of the Conference's Political Department, then Assistant Secretary General, and throughout 2020 he was the official spokesperson for the Hadhramout Inclusive Conference's delegation for the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement. Akram has been a judge since 2013, having received his master's in Judicial Sciences from the Higher Judicial Institute in Sana'a in 2013. He received his bachelor's degree in Law from the Faculty of Law, Aden University, and since 2015 he has also headed the Shaheed Bin Habrish Foundation for Development in Hadhramout.



Husam Qasem

Husam has been actively involved in development, peacebuilding, political participation and good governance in Yemen since 2004. He worked recently with UN Women as a counselor for advocacy and networks, and during the Kuwait negotiations in 2016 he was a member of the national delegation's technical and logistical support team. Husam was one of the independent youth representatives during the National Dialogue Conference in 2013, and head of the Recovering Funds and Looted Land group. He holds a bachelor's in Business Administration from the University of Aden, and has worked with several international and local organizations and governmental institutions including USAID, the Child and Youth Advisory Committee, and the Center of Youth Care in Aden University.



Samah Radman

Samah is the director of the Planning Department in the Women's National Committee (WNC) and a political activist interested in women's issues and empowerment. Samah is a member of the Central Committee of the Nasserist Unionist People's Organization, and represented the party in the National Dialogue Conference (2013-2014), where she was a member of the Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation group. Samah has participated in many political conferences and civil society activities in Yemen. She is a founding member of the Yemeni Women's Pact (Tawafuq) that supports Yemen's peace process, and a member of the Women's Solidarity Network that addresses women's issues.



Ahmed Alshami

Ahmed is a human rights and political activist and executive director of Arabian Rights Watch Association (ARWA). Ahmed graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Economics from George Mason University in the United States, and has 15 years of experience working in the oil, banking, real estate and investment sectors in Yemen and internationally. More recently, he was a civil society representative in the Economic Advisory Committee in Sana'a until the end of 2019. Ahmed is now focused on humanitarian and human rights advocacy, and participated in the formation of the Public Diplomacy Organization, which aims to engage with and give a voice to Yemeni expatriate communities around the world.



Yahya Al-Thulaya

Yahya is the head of the General Authority for the Book, Publication and Distribution within Yemen's Ministry of Culture, a position he has held since 2019. He has been involved in political work since a young age, including as chair of the Unified Media Committee for Political Parties in Amran governorate in 2012. He has worked with several human rights organizations, and headed the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD) office in Amran. As a journalist, Yahya covered the Sa'ada War from 2004 to 2010, and he worked as a media official for the Youth Revolutionary Council in Amran. He has chaired and participated in a number of election management committees, and served as secretary to the governor of Amran, director of the Ministry of Culture branch in Amran, and in 2017 he served as a special advisor to the chief of staff in the Defense Ministry. Yahya received his bachelor's in political science from Sana'a University.