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Yemen

YEMEN – May 2003

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[Tables](#)

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[Historical Tables](#)

- [January 2005](#)
- [December 2004](#)
- [November 2004](#)
- [October 2004](#)
- [September 2004](#)
- [August 2004](#)
- [July 2004](#)
- [June 2004](#)
- [May 2004](#)
- [April 2004](#)
- [March 2004](#)
- [February 2004](#)

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk Category	Year Ago	Current 05/03	One Year		Five Years	
			Ahead		Ahead	
			Worst Case	Best Case	Worst Case	Best Case
Political Risk	60.0	62.5	60.0	64.0	55.0	69.0
Financial Risk	35.0	35.0	31.0	33.0	30.0	36.0
Economic Risk	39.5	36.5	33.0	35.0	30.0	38.0
Composite Risk	67.3	67.0	62.0	66.0	57.5	71.5
Risk Band	Mod.	Mod.	Mod.	Mod.	High	Low

POLITICS

Government Stability

The iron grip in which President Ali Abdullah Salih and his General People's Congress party (MSA) hold the Republic of Yemen was underlined at the general election on April 27.

As with the two previous parliamentary elections held in the 13 years since unification in 1990, the MSA emerged from the polls in overwhelming control of the lower house of parliament (the Assembly of Representatives or Majlis al-Nuwaab). The upper house of parliament, the Shura Council, is appointed by the president.

In the previous election to the Assembly of Representatives in 1997 the MSA took 187 of the 301 seats, which, coupled with the majority of the 55 seats taken by so-called independents, gave President Salih control of more than two thirds of the parliament.

The election in April this year merely served to underline that absolute control.

With all but four of the independents coming out of the closet, the MSA secured 238 seats in its own right, and confirming Yemen as a de facto one-party state.

General Election Results		2003	1997
Parties		Seats	Seats
General People's Congress	MSA	238	187

Historical Analysis

- May 2003
- September 2002

Yemeni Alliance for Reform	Islah	46	54
Yemeni Socialist Party	YSP	8	-
Nasirite Popular Unionist Organization	TWSN	3	3
Arab Socialist Rebirth Party	Baath	2	2
Non-partisans/Independents		4	55
Total Seats		301	301
<i>Turnout (in percent)</i>		76.3	61.0

President Salih was elected with 96.3% of the vote in September 1999 in a contest at which the main opposition candidate was proscribed from standing, and the only other candidate was from the MSA. He is expected to reappoint Dr Abd-al-Qadir Abd-al-Rahman Ba-Jammal (of the MSA) as prime minister.

Democratic Accountability

Nevertheless, Yemen did hold a multiparty election, which is a good deal more than can be said for most other Arab countries. Suffrage is universal for males and, unusually for an Arabic country, females of 18 and over—making an electoral roll of some eight million, comprising 3.4 million women and 4.6 million males. In all, 1,396 candidates contested the 301 constituencies, of which 405 were non-aligned and 11 were women.

The biggest difference between this year's election and that of 1997 was that the opposition tried to make a fight of it. The YSP joined in this time, whereas it boycotted the 1997 election on the grounds that the MSA would fix the result anyway. In addition to the YSP's intervention, the opposition parties set up an umbrella group, the Ahzab al-Liqa al-Mushtarak, or Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), to strengthen their chances by ensuring there were no duplicate opposition candidates in the more important seats.

Campaigns

The ruling GPC promoted itself on its achievements so far. Experience, unification, freedom and democracy figured highly in its manifesto titled: "For Endorsing Development and Democracy and Building a Modern State."

The Islamic reformist Islah party, in its developing partnership with the others in the JMP, was more concerned to focus on economic problems, and called for a freer democracy, greater transparency and further private investment.

The left-wing TWSN called for green-ish "balanced sustained development" and emphasized the struggle against bureaucratic corruption.

The YSP, descended from the Marxist rebels who ultimately ejected the British some decades ago, was mainly concerned to promote left-wing reforms, particularly to ending discrimination and furthering democracy, and also gave the nod to encouraging private-sector investment.

Fraud

Why the opposition was unable to make any headway against the MSA, despite

popular discontent with the state of the economy and the government's cooperation with the USA in rooting out al-Qaida and other terrorist groups in the country, is a hotly debated topic. The MSA's bland reaction was that the results merely confirmed the electorate's faith in its good governance. For the opposition parties, though, the results were produced by the same kind of manipulations that compelled the YSP to stand aside in 1997 and bombarded the electoral commission (the SECR) with a raft of protests.

These included allegations of fraud, gifts of land and the timely provision of water pipes, hijacked ballot boxes, arrests of campaigners, and other intimidation, and as well as numerous violations of electoral law. Mohammed al-Mikhlaifi, of the YSP claimed that in some 18 key seats, the MSA "prevented officials from approving the results." Against that background, the turnout figures cannot be used as a reliable measure of support for the parties involved or participation in the election process.

Violence

Yemen is a country where large numbers of people, especially outside of the urban areas normally carry guns. Consequently, elections are usually tense affairs. This time around the effect was all the greater because of the ongoing crackdown on terrorism.

To enhance security on election day, the government deployed over 100,000 military and police personnel in the 301 constituencies and President Salih warned the nation, "today ... is a day in which carrying of arms is forbidden." According to official reports, four people were killed over the election period and some 20 people were injured across the country. In the most recent set of elections, local elections in 2001, 30 people were reported killed.

Reactions

Many foreign observers were present for the contest, from the European Union, the United States and elsewhere. The National Democratic Institute from Washington, US, was particularly concerned about "critical flaws," in the election, while other international observers also expressed reservations.

The most important reaction, though, was that of Quick US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who, taking account of the constitutional referendum in Qatar as well, noted, the results were "significant milestones...on the road to democracy and representative government."

The importance of that assessment to President Salih is that it signifies that despite his opposition to the US-UK invasion of Iraq, the USA intends to stand by his government for so long as his government stands by the USA in its "war on terror".

This is a real positive in that it provides Yemen with additional stability at a time of some considerable internal disruption, not only as a result of the government's efforts in rooting out Islamist terrorists, but also in its efforts to establish the rule of law in the more remote, tribally dominated, regions of the country, and to encourage foreign interest, investment, and trade.

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TABLE 1

COUNTRY RISK, RANKED BY COMPOSITE RISK RATING

(January 2005 versus February 2004)

Rank in 01/05	Country	Composite Risk Rating 01/05	Composite Risk Rating 02/04	01/05 versus 02/04	Rank in 02/04
<i>Very Low Risk</i>					
1	Norway	92.3	92.3	0.0	1
2	Switzerland	91.3	91.0	0.3	2
3	Luxembourg	90.0	90.3	-0.3	3
4	Brunei	88.8	88.3	0.5	4
5	Sweden	88.5	87.0	1.5	7
6	Singapore	88.3	87.5	0.8	6
7	Finland	87.5	86.8	0.8	9
8	Denmark	87.0	86.0	1.0	11
9	Canada	86.8	87.8	-1.0	5
10	Ireland	86.0	87.0	-1.0	7
11	Austria	85.5	86.0	-0.5	11
12	Japan	85.0	86.0	-1.0	11
12	Kuwait	85.0	86.3	-1.3	10
14	Netherlands	84.5	85.5	-1.0	14
15	Iceland	84.3	80.0	4.3	27
15	United Arab Emirates	84.3	84.3	0.0	16
17	Belgium	83.8	85.3	-1.5	15
17	Taiwan	83.8	83.3	0.5	17
19	Australia	83.0	81.8	1.3	22
19	Hong Kong	83.0	83.5	-0.5	17
21	Botswana	82.8	80.3	2.5	25
22	Cyprus	82.5	83.3	-0.8	17
23	Korea, Republic	82.0	80.8	1.3	24
23	New Zealand	82.0	81.0	1.0	23
23	Oman	82.0	78.5	3.5	34
26	Bahamas	81.5	78.8	2.8	32
27	Saudi Arabia	81.0	77.8	3.3	38
28	Malta	80.8	79.5	1.3	29
29	Chile	80.5	76.5	4.0	46
30	Bahrain	80.3	79.8	0.5	28
31	Slovenia	80.0	80.3	-0.3	25
<i>Low Risk</i>					
32	Italy	79.8	78.8	1.0	32
32	Malaysia	79.8	77.8	2.0	38
34	Qatar	79.5	78.5	1.0	34
35	Namibia	79.3	77.8	1.5	38
35	Spain	79.3	79.3	0.0	30
37	Germany	78.8	82.3	-3.5	21
38	United Kingdom	78.3	83.5	-5.3	17
39	Trinidad & Tobago	78.0	78.5	-0.5	34
40	United States	77.3	77.0	0.3	43

41	Lithuania	77.0	74.8	2.3	53
41	Russian Federation.	77.0	76.0	1.0	50
43	Latvia	76.8	77.8	-1.0	38
43	Libya	76.8	76.3	0.5	48
43	Portugal	76.8	79.3	-2.5	30
46	Czech Republic	76.5	76.8	-0.3	45
46	Morocco	76.5	76.3	0.3	48
46	Slovak Republic	76.5	74.8	1.8	53
49	Algeria	76.0	65.5	10.5	86
50	France	75.8	78.3	-2.5	37
51	China, Peoples' Rep.	75.5	77.5	-2.0	42
51	Estonia	75.5	74.8	0.8	53
51	Mexico	75.5	73.8	1.8	57
54	Croatia	75.3	72.5	2.8	60
54	Hungary	75.3	76.5	-1.3	46
56	Jordan	75.0	71.8	3.3	63
57	Poland	74.3	75.8	-1.5	51
58	Panama	74.0	72.0	2.0	62
59	Tunisia	73.8	73.5	0.3	58
60	Kazakhstan	73.5	74.0	-0.5	56
61	South Africa	73.3	71.5	1.8	65
62	Thailand	73.0	77.0	-4.0	43
63	Costa Rica	72.0	72.3	-0.3	61
63	Greece	72.0	75.0	-3.0	52
65	India	71.8	71.0	0.8	66
66	Bulgaria	71.5	71.8	-0.3	63
66	Gabon	71.5	66.5	5.0	80
66	Romania	71.5	70.5	1.0	69
69	Azerbaijan	71.0	65.0	6.0	89
70	Uruguay	70.8	66.5	4.3	80
71	Guatemala	70.5	70.0	0.5	70
71	Israel	70.5	73.5	-3.0	58
73	Brazil	70.0	66.5	3.5	80
73	Egypt	70.0	68.5	1.5	76
73	Iran	70.0	71.0	-1.0	66
<i>Moderate Risk</i>					
76	Ukraine	69.8	69.0	0.8	75
76	Vietnam	69.8	69.3	0.5	74
78	Belarus	69.5	65.5	4.0	86
78	El Salvador	69.5	70.8	-1.3	68
80	Peru	69.3	69.8	-0.5	71
81	Philippines	69.0	69.5	-0.5	73
82	Jamaica	68.8	66.5	2.3	80
82	Yemen, Republic	68.8	67.0	1.8	79
84	Gambia	68.3	68.3	0.0	77
84	Syria	68.3	69.8	-1.5	71
86	Argentina	67.5	66.5	1.0	80
87	Ghana	67.3	62.0	5.3	103
88	Moldova	67.3	64.5	2.8	92
88	Turkey	67.3	62.0	5.3	103
90	Ecuador	67.0	63.3	3.8	96
91	Bolivia	66.8	66.5	0.3	80
91	Paraguay	66.8	63.8	3.0	94
93	Albania	66.5	65.0	1.5	89
93	Armenia	66.5	62.5	4.0	99
93	Suriname	66.5	65.5	1.0	86

96	Cameroon	66.0	62.8	3.3	97
97	Mongolia	65.5	63.8	1.8	94
98	Kenya	65.0	67.5	-2.5	78
98	Venezuela	65.0	60.0	5.0	111
100	Mozambique	64.8	61.3	3.5	108
100	Senegal	64.8	64.8	0.0	91
102	Dominican Republic	64.3	58.3	6.0	118
103	Colombia	64.0	61.8	2.3	106
103	Honduras	64.0	59.3	4.8	113
105	Mali	63.8	59.5	4.3	113
105	Papua New Guinea	63.8	59.5	4.3	113
107	Cuba	63.3	60.0	3.3	111
107	Indonesia	63.3	61.8	1.5	106
107	Tanzania	63.3	58.0	5.3	121
110	Bangladesh	62.8	62.8	0.0	97
111	Congo, Republic	62.5	59.3	3.3	113
112	Guyana	61.8	62.5	-0.8	99
113	Uganda	61.0	62.5	-1.5	99
114	Togo	60.8	58.3	2.5	118
115	Niger	60.3	57.3	3.0	123
116	Madagascar	60.0	62.0	-2.0	103
116	Pakistan	60.0	64.3	-4.3	93
		<i>High Risk</i>			
118	Zambia	59.8	62.3	-2.5	102
119	Angola	59.5	56.8	2.8	126
120	Korea, D.P.R.	59.3	53.5	5.8	132
120	Lebanon	59.3	55.8	3.5	128
122	Myanmar	59.0	58.3	0.8	118
123	Nicaragua	58.8	54.5	4.3	131
124	Burkina Faso	58.5	57.3	1.3	123
125	Nigeria	58.0	57.0	1.0	125
126	Malawi	57.8	54.8	3.0	129
126	Sierra Leone	57.8	52.3	5.5	133
128	Ethiopia	57.5	59.0	-1.5	117
128	Serbia & Montenegro	57.5	54.8	2.8	129
128	Sri Lanka	57.5	60.3	-2.8	110
131	Sudan	56.5	56.0	0.5	127
132	Cote d'Ivoire	54.3	58.0	-3.8	121
132	Guinea	54.3	61.0	-6.8	109
134	Guinea-Bissau	52.5	50.8	1.8	135
135	Haiti	51.0	52.3	-1.3	133
		<i>Very High Risk</i>			
136	Congo, Dem. Republic	49.3	50.5	-1.3	136
137	Somalia	43.5	45.5	-2.0	137
138	Liberia	40.8	42.8	-2.0	139
139	Zimbabwe	36.0	35.5	0.5	140
140	Iraq	23.8	43.5	-19.8	138

Middle East & North Africa

For all historical risk ratings and economic data (back to 1984 for most countries), please go to www.CountryData.com

COUNTRY	CURRENT RATINGS			COMPOSITE RATINGS					
	Political Risk 1/05	Financial Risk 1/05	Economic Risk 1/05	Year		Forecasts			
				Ago 2/04	Current Month 1/05	One Year		Five Year	
						WC	BC	WC	BC
Algeria	61.5	45.5	45.0	65.5	76.0	64.8	73.5	53.0	80.8
Bahrain	75.0	43.5	42.0	79.8	80.3	77.5	82.5	67.0	81.5
Egypt	64.0	40.5	35.5	68.5	70.0	66.0	71.8	59.0	77.5
Iran	60.5	44.5	35.0	71.0	70.0	65.5	73.3	55.5	78.3
Iraq	31.5	9.5	6.5	43.5	23.8	23.3	47.0	23.3	61.3
Israel	64.5	37.0	39.5	73.5	70.5	67.5	73.8	63.5	79.8
Jordan	72.0	39.0	39.0	71.8	75.0	72.0	78.5	66.5	77.5
Kuwait	77.0	46.0	47.0	86.3	85.0	80.3	86.8	75.0	87.5
Lebanon	61.0	31.5	26.0	55.8	59.3	54.0	62.0	45.0	63.5
Libya	64.0	46.0	43.5	76.3	76.8	71.8	79.5	62.5	84.0
Morocco	72.5	42.5	38.0	76.3	76.5	74.0	79.3	65.0	83.3
Oman	77.0	43.0	44.0	78.5	82.0	80.8	83.5	72.8	85.8
Qatar	73.5	37.5	48.0	78.5	79.5	77.5	81.8	72.5	83.0
Saudi Arabia	67.0	47.5	47.5	77.8	81.0	73.3	81.5	63.0	86.0
Sudan	47.0	30.5	35.5	56.0	56.5	53.5	59.5	48.0	64.5
Syria	60.5	39.0	37.0	69.8	68.3	65.5	70.3	58.8	76.3
Tunisia	73.5	37.5	36.5	73.5	73.8	69.8	74.5	61.5	75.8
Turkey	70.0	33.5	31.0	62.0	67.3	62.3	68.5	58.5	76.0
United Arab Emirates	78.0	44.0	46.5	84.3	84.3	79.3	84.8	73.5	86.5
Yemen, Republic	62.0	38.5	37.0	67.0	68.8	65.5	70.0	57.5	73.0

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