

# Southern Yemeni Armed Groups

Brian Carter

*Salafi-Jihadism Deputy Team Lead and Analyst*

Critical Threats Project | American Enterprise Institute

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# Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) and the Southern Transitional Council (STC)

- **The STC is a political organization that backs military forces and seeks to lead an independent southern Yemeni state.**
- **The STC is part of ROYG, but it also competes with ROYG in southern Yemen.**
- **The ROYG Military and Security Committee's efforts to reform the security sector faces major challenges due to the STC-ROYG competition.**



**STC President Aydarus al Zubaidi**



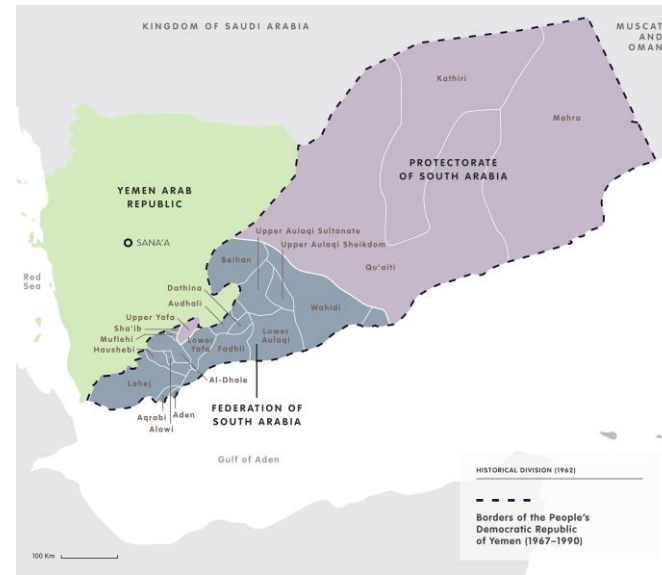
**Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) President Rashad al Alimi**



**Former ROYG President  
Abdurabbuh Mansour Hadi**

# Legacy of Armed Conflicts and Political Allegiances

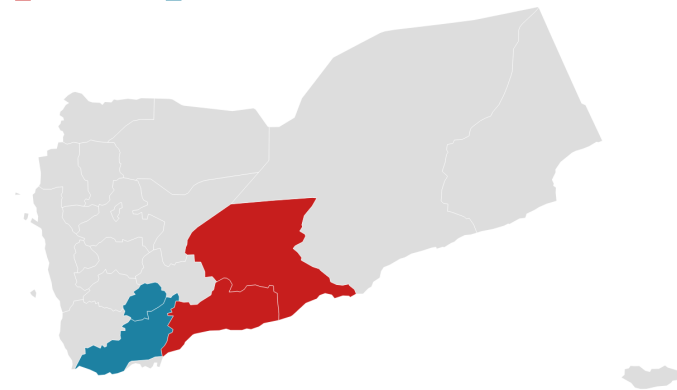
- Armed conflicts in southern Yemen drive political allegiances today.
- Geography also defines political allegiances and relationships.
- The STC is strongest in Aden, Dhaleh, and Lahij, but it is attempting to expand its role in the east.
- Personal dynamics also play a role.



Source: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2015.

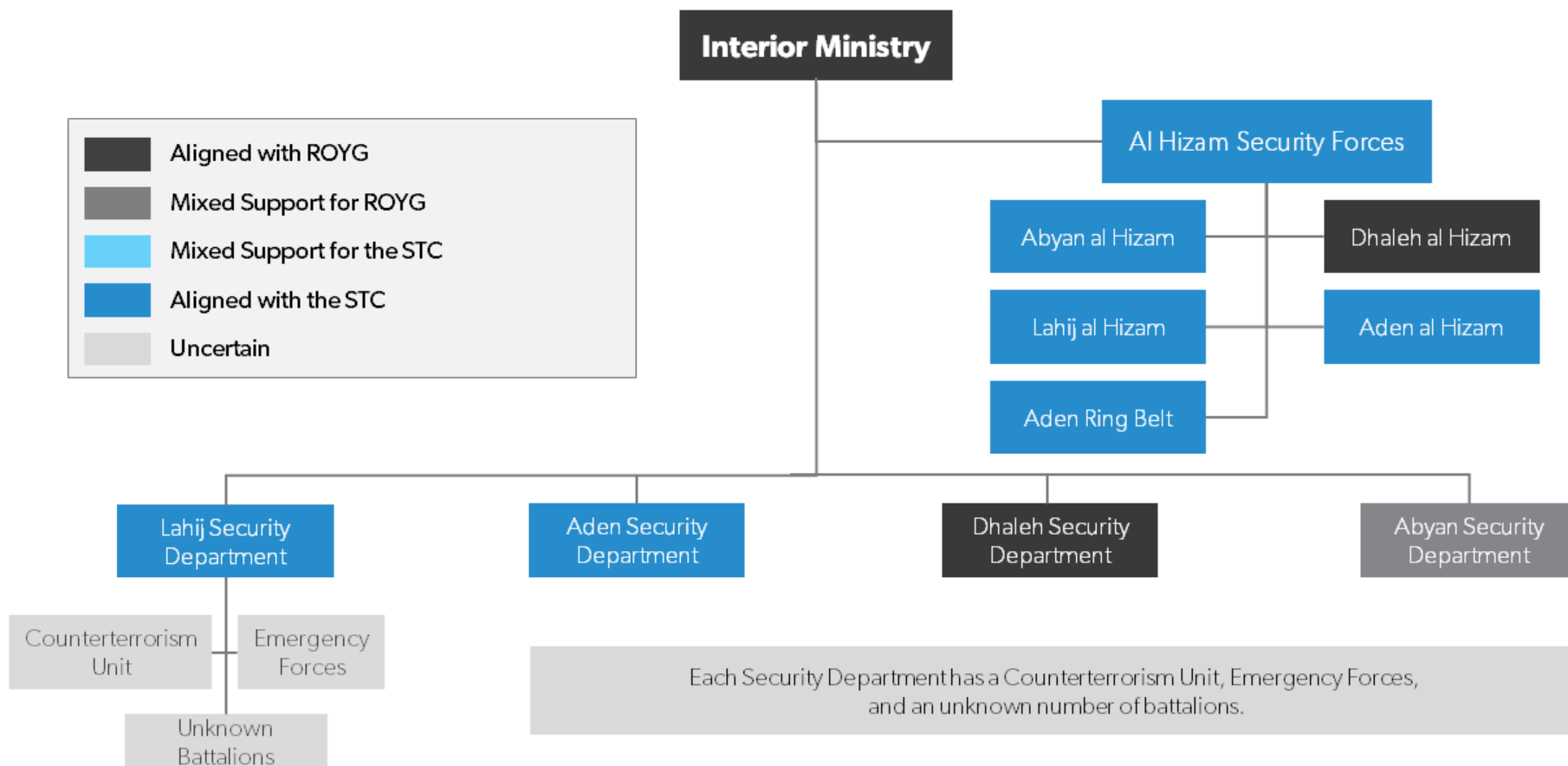
## Geographic Divides in South Yemen

■ Abyan and Shabwah ■ Dhaleh and Lahij



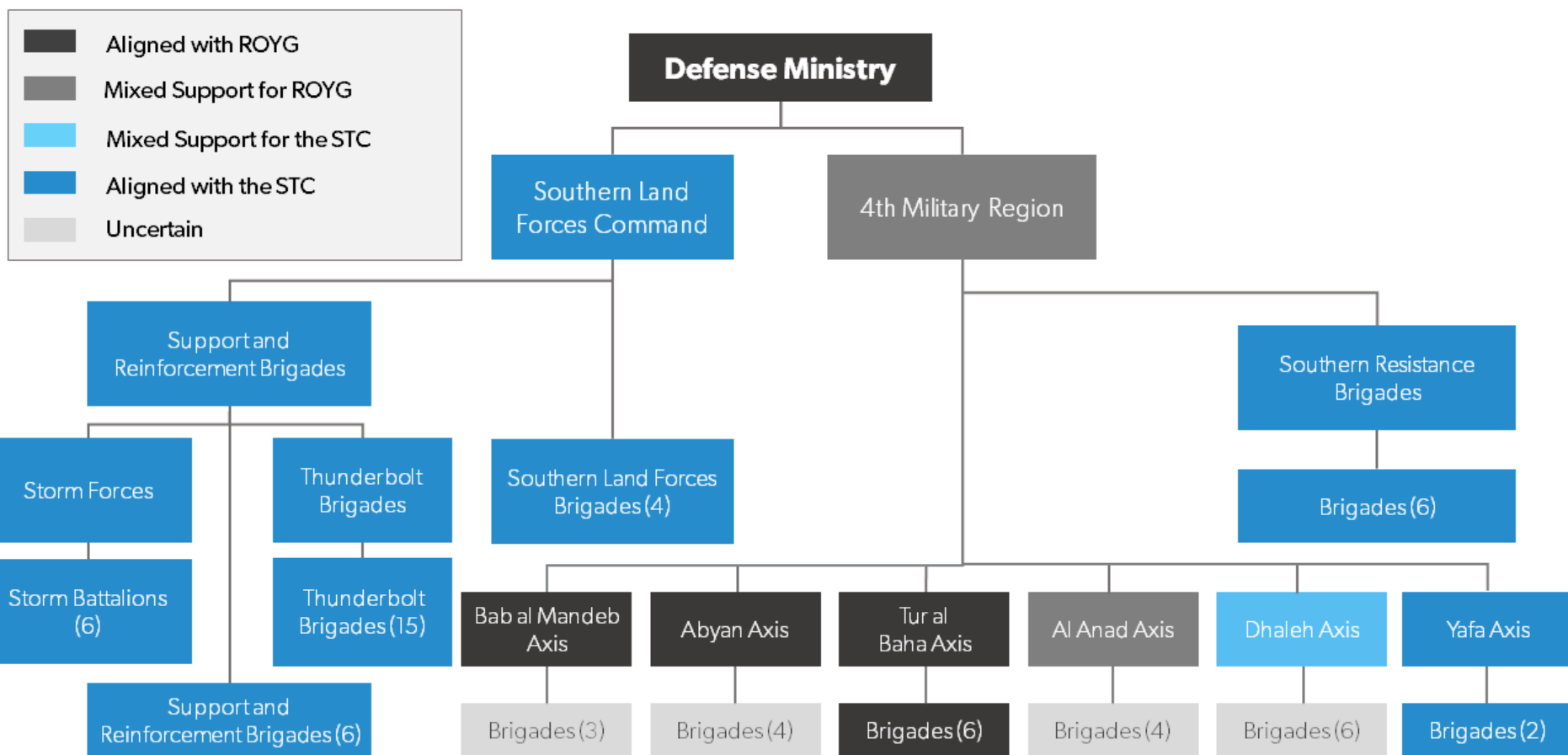
Map: Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute • Source: Author's Research • Map data: © OSM • Created with Datawrapper

## Formal Structure vs. Informal Allegiances: The Interior Ministry in Southern Yemen



Source: Author's research.

## Formal Structure vs. Informal Allegiances: The Defense Ministry in Southern Yemen



Source: Author's research.

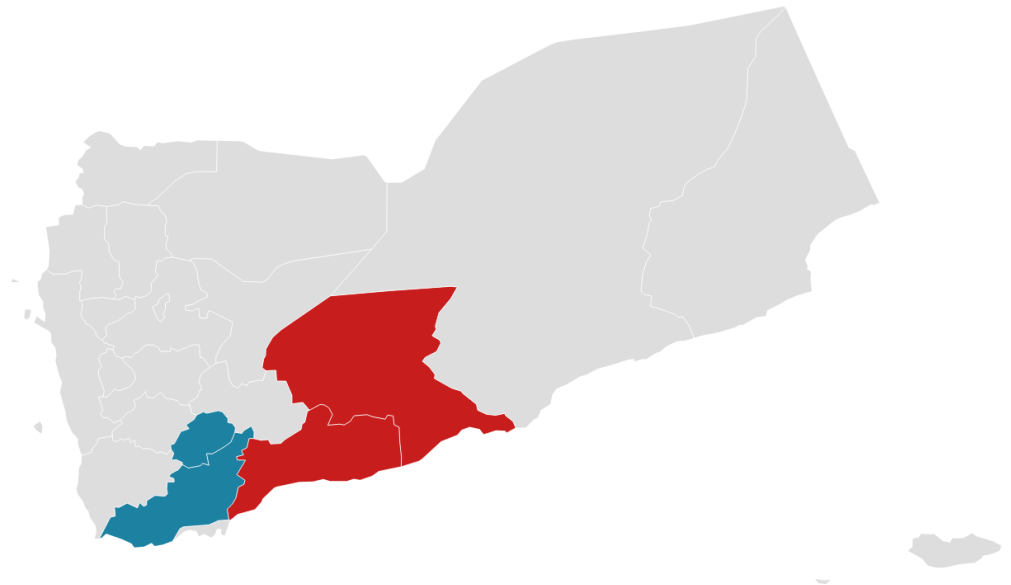
Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate quantity of the unit.

# Political Division in South Yemen

- Today's political allegiances and divides reflect southern Yemeni history.
- Two primary southern factions trace their roots to 1986.
- The 1994 civil war solidified political divisions in southern Yemen.

## Geographic Divides in South Yemen

■ Abyan and Shabwah ■ Dhaleh and Lahij

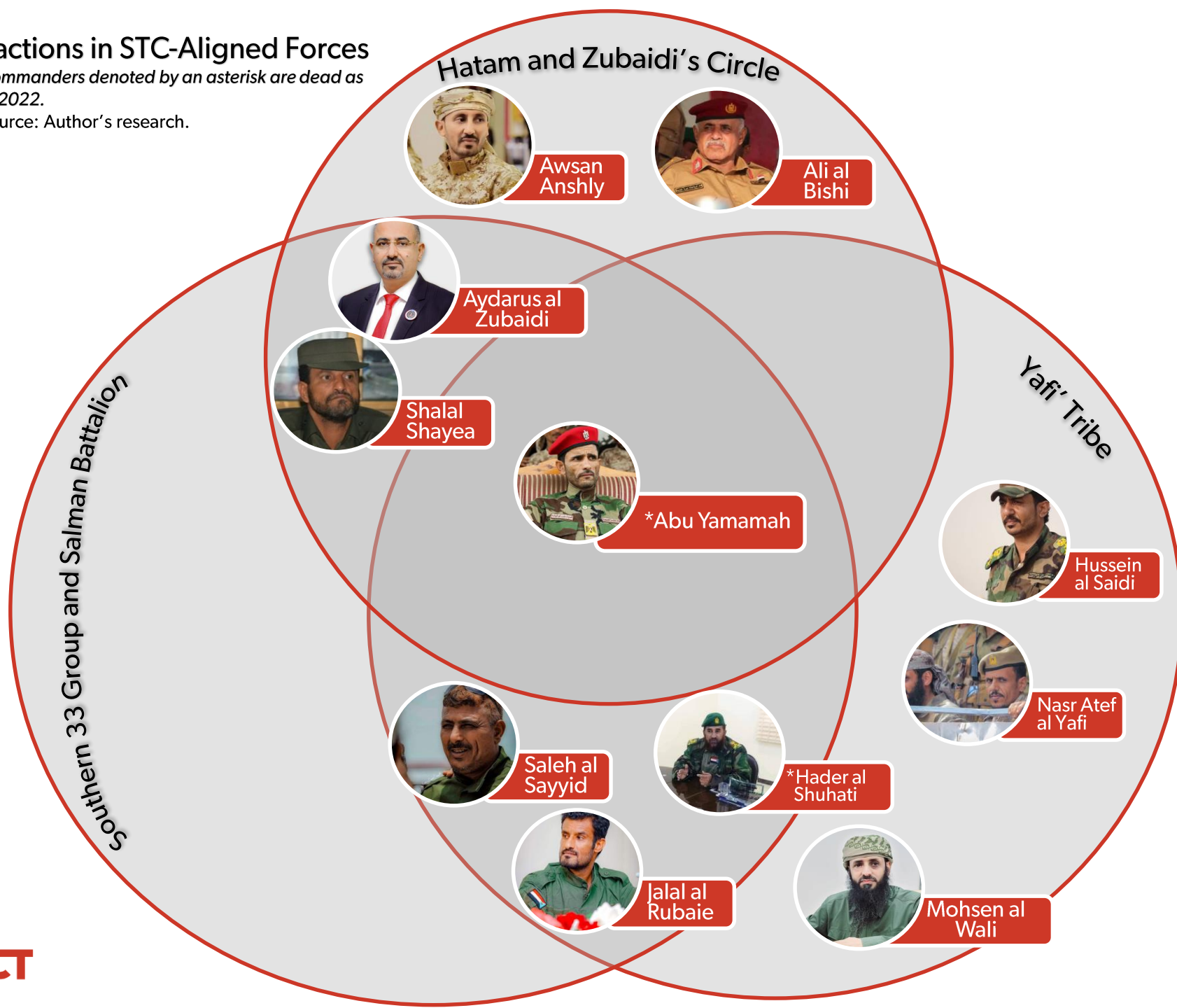


Map: Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute • Source: Author's Research • Map data: © OSM • Created with Datawrapper

# Factions in STC-Aligned Forces

Commanders denoted by an asterisk are dead as of 2022.

Source: Author's research.



# Friction Within STC-Backed Forces

- The STC is not a unitary actor, and there is friction between different STC-backed commanders.
- This friction is likely based both on geographic divides and personal allegiance.



Al Hizam Commander and  
Former Support and  
Reinforcement Brigades (SRB)  
Commander Mohsen al Wali



Aden al Hizam  
Commander and al Hizam  
Deputy, Jalal al Rubaie



3rd SRB Commander  
Nabil al Mashoushi



4th Military Region  
Commander, Fadl  
Hassan al Omari



Abyan Front Commander  
and 5th SRB Commander,  
Mukhtar al Nubi



# Relationships Between STC-Backed and ROYG-Backed Forces

- STC-backed and ROYG-backed units have both cooperated and clashed on the ground.
- Both local and national politics have driven shifts in levels of cooperation and animosity.



Tur al Baha Axis  
Commander Abu Bakr  
al Jaboli



Facilities Protection  
Forces Commander  
Ahmed bin Afif



9th Thunderbolt  
Commander Farouk al  
Kalouli



Abyan Security Chief Ali  
Nasser Bouzid Baazab

# Looking Ahead

- How do allegiances among commanders continue to change after President Hadi's removal?
- What is the ROYG Military and Security Committee able to accomplish?
- The STC's agitation in Shabwah, Hadramawt, and Mahra is an effort to expand STC power at the expense of the rest of the PLC. How does this effort impact internal PLC dynamics? Will its effects embolden the Houthis and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula?

# Facebook and Map

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# Defense Ministry Officers in Southern Yemen

- These are all Defense Ministry officers above the Brigade level.\*\*\*\*



Support and Reinforcement  
Brigades Commander Saleh  
al Sayyid\*



Southern Resistance  
Brigades Commander  
Shalal Shaye'a\*



Storm Forces  
Commander Awsan  
Anshly



Southern Land Forces and  
Thunderbolt Brigades  
Commander Ali al Bishi



4th Military Region  
Commander Fadl  
Hassan al Omari



Yafa Axis Commander  
Abdulaziz al  
Mansoori\*\*



Bab al Mandeb Axis  
Commander Abdul Ghani  
Ali Mohi al Din al Subayhi



Abyan Axis  
Commander Abu Bakr  
Hussein\*\*\*



Tur al Baha Axis  
Commander Abu Bakr  
al Jaboli



Al Anad Axis last known  
Commander Thabet  
Jawas



Dhaleh Axis  
Commander Ali  
Muqbel Saleh\*\*\*

\* These commanders are also commanders within the Interior Ministry.

\*\* This commander is also commander of the 4th Thunderbolt Brigade.

\*\*\* These commanders are also governors.

\*\*\*\* Most commanders also command individual brigades. Sayyid, Shaye'a, and Anshly do not.

# Interior Ministry Officers in Southern Yemen

- These are all Interior Ministry officers above the brigade level.



Al Hizam Commander  
Mohsen al Wali



Aden Security Chief  
Mutahar al Shuaibi



Dhaleh Security Chief and  
Dhaleh al Hizam Commander  
Ahmed Qaid al Qubba



Lahij Security Chief  
Saleh al Sayyid\*



Abyan Security Chief  
Ali Nasser Bouzid  
Baazab



Abyan al Hizam  
Commander Abdullatif  
al Sayyid



Lahij al Hizam  
Commander Hussein al  
Saidi



Aden Ring Belt  
Commander Naji al  
Yahri



Aden al Hizam  
Commander Jalal al  
Rubaie\*



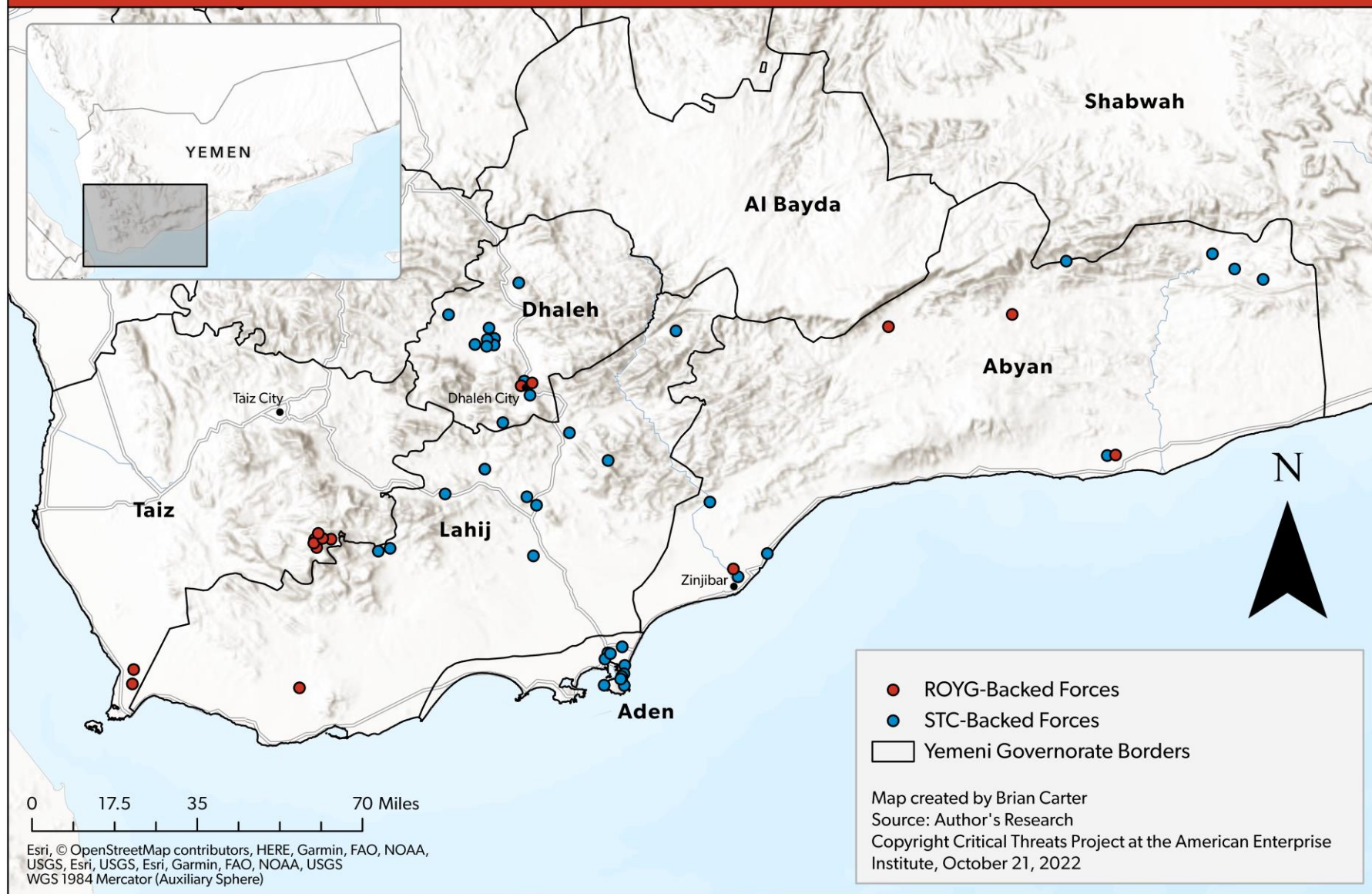
Counterterrorism  
Forces Commander  
Shalal Shaye'a\*

\* Jalal al Rubaie is also the deputy al Hizam Security Forces commander.

\*\* These commanders also hold commands in the Defense Ministry.

# Approximate Locations of Armed Groups in Southern Yemen

As of October 21, 2022





# CRITICAL THREATS

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*Salafi-Jihadism Deputy Team Lead and Analyst, Critical Threats Project*

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