



Formal Redelegation Request to ICANN/IANA – .YE ccTLD

Date: September 9, 2025

Dear IANA Functions Operator,

We request that ICANN and IANA initiate a formal review of the delegation of Yemen's country-code top-level domain (.YE) and proceed to redelegate it in accordance with RFC 1591 and ICP-1, because the current operator no longer serves the local Yemeni Internet community as a whole.

Basis in ICANN/IANA policy and practice

RFC 1591 establishes that a ccTLD manager "is a trustee for the delegated domain, and has a duty to serve the community" and must be equitable, just, honest, and competent for the entire local community [1].

ICP-1 (ICANN's Internet Coordination Policy) outlines evaluation criteria for (re)delegations, including service to the local Internet community, operator competence/neutrality, and the overarching public interest [2].

IANA Root Zone Database lists TeleYemen as the .YE manager [3]. Since 2015, TeleYemen's infrastructure has operated under Houthi militia control following the takeover of Sana'a, meaning .YE's effective governance is under a non-state armed group, not community-representative institutions [4].

Demonstrable governance failures

Failure to serve the local Internet community (RFC 1591).

The .YE namespace excludes the internationally recognized government, independent institutions, and civil society, who are forced onto generic TLDs (.com, .net, .org). Meanwhile, militia-run portals occupy .gov.ye, .edu.ye, .net.ye, and .com.ye. This is not community-wide service; it is service to a single faction. [3][4][5]

Loss of neutrality and use of .YE for propaganda and information control.

Under .YE, sites such as saba.ye and mmy.ye disseminate militia messaging while the same authority wields control over telecommunications to censor, surveil, and hack activists and NGOs—contrary to the neutrality and public-interest duties of a ccTLD trustee. [5][6][7][8]

Human-rights-linked risks that undermine trust and stability.

Documented patterns include abduction, detention, and killing of independent journalists, as well as detentions of UN/NGO staff in areas under militia control. A ccTLD manager associated with such abuses cannot be considered a trusted or stable steward of a national namespace. This degrades trust in .YE locally and internationally and raises DNS-wide concerns. [9][10][11]

Requested action (within ICANN’s mandate under ICP-1)

1. Initiate a formal IANA review of the current .YE delegation against RFC 1591/ICP-1 criteria (community service, neutrality, competence, public interest).
2. Temporarily redelegate .YE to a neutral international trustee (e.g., an agreed independent operator under ICANN/IANA supervision) until a stable, legitimate, and representative national authority exists to assume stewardship.
3. Affirm the core principle that a ccTLD must serve the entire local Internet community, not a single armed faction, and that the DNS must not normalize militia control of national identifiers.

We are prepared to supply additional documentation and to facilitate contact with Yemeni civil-society groups and technical stakeholders who can attest to the exclusionary and repressive operation of .YE under the current arrangement.

Sincerely,

FreeTheDotYE Campaign

contact@freethedotye.org

<https://freethedotye.org>

References

- [1] Postel, J. RFC 1591: Domain Name System Structure and Delegation (1994).
- [2] ICANN. ICP-1: Internet Domain Name System Structure and Delegation (ccTLD Delegation and Redelegation).
- [3] IANA Root Zone Database — .YE (Manager: TeleYemen).
- [4] Wilson Center, “Who Are Yemen’s Houthis?” (overview of the 2014–2015 takeover and control of Sana’a).
- [5] saba.ye (Houthi-run SABA “state” outlet); mmy.ye (Houthi military media portal).

[6] ARTICLE 19 & allied NGOs: Statements on Internet blocking and censorship in Yemen.

[7] Counter-Extremism/technical reporting on Telecom control enabling surveillance in Houthi-held areas.

[8] Civil-society/technical analyses linking TeleYemen control to censorship/monitoring.

[9] CPJ / RSF reports: kidnapping, detention, and killing of journalists in areas under Houthi control (incl. spikes reported in 2025).

[10] AP / HRW: Detention of UN and NGO staff by Houthis (multiple incidents 2024–2025).

[11] ICP-1 practice notes and past IANA cases (e.g., .SO redelegation) demonstrating action when a ccTLD fails to serve its local community.

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