

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The Question of Yemen

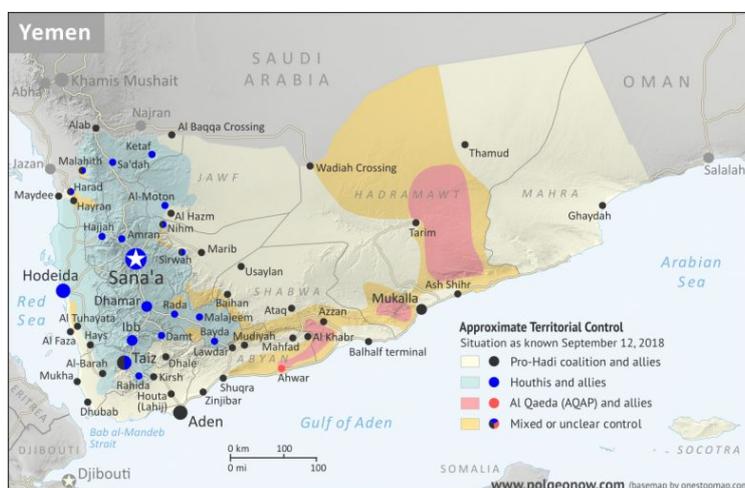
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Introduction

The Yemen Crisis, also known as the Yemeni Civil War, is an ongoing war happening in Yemen. The crisis is one of the least reported and misinformed wars to take place in the media age. It can also be said to be part of the Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy conflict. The crisis began in 2014, after the unsuccessful stabilization of the country as a result of the Arab Spring. Due to the Arab Spring, the lifelong Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh gave up power to his deputy president, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. The already insecure nation's condition became further disastrous when Hadi lost control of the northwestern part of Yemen to part of the Yemeni army which was loyal to Saleh and the Houthi; Shia rebels.

Hadi feared that the Houthi would create a new Shia country and subsequently strengthen Iran's power. Therefore he asked for help from the Gulf Cooperation Council and Saudi Arabia, who decided to intervene with aerial strikes. These aerial strikes have destroyed countless major ports and hospitals, as well as more than half a million homes. Aerial strikes, guerilla warfare and other violence in the nation has caused great civilian suffering.



Control in Yemen as of spring 2018.

Civilians in Yemen are said to be in the world's worst famine¹. Two thirds of the population are food insecure, of which 8.4 million are severely food insecure and another 10 million are close to joining that category by the end of the year. In the words of UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock, "we are

¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1020232>

losing the fight against famine.” The conflict has left more than 2 million Yemeni people internally displaced and a reported 1.1 million cases of cholera since 2017.

Definition of Key Terms

Proxy War

A proxy war² is a war fought between two sides of which neither directly engage in combat. This means that both sides fighting represent a larger cause or nation. A proxy war can also be when the fight is taking place on territory which neither side controls.

Arab Spring

A set of uprisings started in Tunisia, in which a nation’s people protested and demanded a change from lifelong leaders to democracy. These protests started because of oppressive regimes and a general low standard of living.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

An internally displaced person is a person who has been forced to leave their home as a result of conflict or environmental disaster. Differs from refugee, as a refugee has left their home country and a IDP is still in their home country.

Famine

Famine is the extreme lack of food or situation where there is not enough food for great numbers of people. Famine also refers to a long time where this is present and causes many illnesses and death.

Coup d’état

A sudden, violent, illegal take over or seizure of a nation’s government.

Cholera

Cholera is a highly infectious bacterial disease which infects the small intestine and can often be fatal. It causes severe vomiting, dehydration and diarrhea, and is caught through unclean water³.

Explanation of the Question

² <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/proxy-war>

³ <https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/cholera-faq#1>

Background

The country of Yemen was historically divided between the Ottoman and British empires in the 20th century. North Yemen gained independence after WWI while South Yemen was a British protectorate called Aden Protectorate until it too gained independence in 1967⁴. Historically, the two sides of the nation have fought for decades over ideology, territory and political theories. In the year 1990, the two states unified to become the nation of Yemen⁵. Ali Abdullah Saleh became the first president of the new nation.

Beginning in the 2000's, there has been an increasing al-Qaeda presence in Yemen. Numerous attacks have been made in Yemen and out of Yemen.

The war in Yemen has roots in the Arab Spring of 2011. Yemen joined the uprisings of the Arab Spring and began protesting in January of 2011. People were protesting against poverty, unemployment, corruption and Saleh's plan to amend the constitution to eliminate the presidential term limit, which would make him president for life. President Saleh and his military forces attempted to control and stop the protests which led to the death of an estimated 200-2000 people. After being seriously injured in a bombing in June 2012, President Saleh stepped down from power and Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, his deputy, came into power in February of 2012.

President Hadi was faced with many problems from the very beginning of his rule. There were an increasing number of attacks by al-Qaeda, a separatist movement in the south, corruption in the government, unemployment and food insecurity. Furthermore, the new president found that a large part of the military was loyal to Saleh. In addition, there was a rise in disinformation, as the high illiteracy rate in Yemen causes a great deal of the population to rely on the news outlets which each have different political agendas⁶.

The Houthi and Saleh joined forces and slowly started taking control of rural parts of former North Yemen. After two years of instability in the nation, Hadi's transitional process was interfered with as the Houthi and Saleh took control of the nation's capital Sana'a in September 2014. They declare themselves to be in control of the nation after a coup d'état and appointed a new presidential council. After Hadi escaped the capital, he fled to a stronghold in Aden.

Beginning of a Civil War

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14704951>

⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yemen/The-age-of-imperialism>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/26/yemen-war-journalists-silenced-conflict-reporters-activists-abduction-torture>

During the beginning of 2015, the Houthi continued their expansion and gained control of more of the country with the goal of controlling the entirety of it. On March 21 2015, after gaining control of the Yemeni government, the Houthi mobilized with the intent to overthrow Hadi and in the next few days began covering ground towards Aden⁷.

Hadi was forced to flee the country while a coalition led by Saudi Arabia begin to strategize on how to stop the Houthi group which they believed to be militarily supported by Shia-islamic Iran. The states which made up the coalition were all Sunni states from the Arabian Gulf. A civil war is seen to have been started by the coalition which proceeded to start airstrikes and impose a naval blockade in the hopes of stopping the Houthi advance on Aden and restoring President Hadi's government. The USA, UK and France supported the coalition through logistical and intelligence support. At the same time, separatists from former South Yemen ally with Hadi's loyal troops to help stop the Houthi advance.

The militants from AQAP and other tribal affiliates took advantage of the turmoil and started seizing territory in the south of Yemen. They have also executed many deadly attacks in Aden and throughout Yemen.

Since the beginning of the civil war in 2015, the state of the nation has only intensified although knowledge about the situation is hard to find as the countries involved such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia make it hard for foreign journalists or writers to access the country⁸. During 2016, the first outbreak of cholera hit Yemen, killing thousands of people.

In November of 2017, missiles launched in Riyadh propelled the coalition to strengthen its blockade of Yemen in an effort to stop the smuggling of weaponry to rebels⁹. Although the UN warned of the consequences including possible famine, the coalition held firm for weeks. This triggered a further spur in food insecurity, a high increase in prices of basic needs and a crash in the service industry. The coalition loosened its blockade on rebel-occupied ports after many weeks, but the damage was already done.

During the same month as the missiles on Riyadh, the former president Saleh changed his mind about being allies with the Houthi after dozen people die in a mosque they attacked. Saleh reached out to Saudi Arabia and the coalition while the Houthi accuse him of taking over. This led to Saleh trying to escape, but ending up being killed in December 2017.

In January 2018, the South separatist movement accused the government of corruption and mismanagement, and hence tried and succeeded in seizing control of Aden. Hadi's government was

⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yemen/Mounting-challenge-to-the-Salih-regime#ref1111242>

⁸

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/yemen-war-death-toll-saudi-arabia-allies-how-many-killed-responsibility-a8603326.html>

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423>

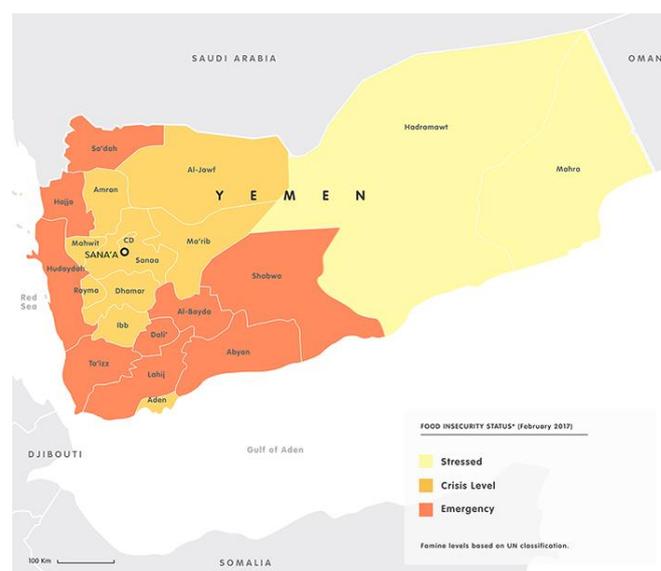
forced to move temporarily to Saudi Arabia. This was complicated as Saudi Arabia supports Hadi's government, while another member of the coalition, the UAE, remained aligned with the southern separatists.

In October of 2018, the US called for a cease-fire due to the humanitarian crisis in the country. By November, Saudi Arabia and the Houthi had agreed to this. However, the cease-fire did not last long, as one day later, fighting recommenced in the port city of Hodeidah¹⁰.

Current Situation / Humanitarian Crisis

Due to the crash of government in Yemen, the country's currency has collapsed, leaving the price of food to become unbearably high for the citizens. The poverty in the country has increased from 49% of the population in 2017 to 79% in 2018. This has led to extreme famine in the country which brings problems such as malnutrition, starvation and disease. Save the Children has stated that five million children are at risk of starvation¹¹, and that 50,000 children may have died during 2017 to starvation and disease¹². The country has seen three outbreaks of cholera during the war¹³, of which more than a million people

Food insecurity in Yemen.



have been infected and thousands have died.

Key Member States and NGOs Involved and Their Views

Yemen / Hadi

The government of Yemen which is led by President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi has the most international support in being the official government of Yemen. The GCC coalition has been supporting Hadi's government since 2015.

¹⁰

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/20/yemen-hodeidah-fighting-resumes-saudi-led-coalition-houthis-airstrikes>

¹¹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/19/middleeast/yemen-save-the-children-intl/index.html>

¹² <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/yemen-civil-war-latest-starving-famine-mothers-hungry-children-saudi-arabia-iran-proxy-wars-middle-a8333921.html>

¹³ <http://www.emro.who.int/pandemic-epidemic-diseases/cholera/outbreak-update-cholera-in-yemen-11-october-2018.html>

Houthi / Saleh

The Houthi people belong to a sect of Islam called Zaidi which is present almost solely in Yemen. They are from an Islamic minority in the Shia group. This group of Houthi makes up about one fourth of the population.

The former president Saleh joined forces with the Houthi after his resignation of presidential role in 2012. Many loyal military leaders left with him. The Houthi/Saleh alliance was strongly supported by Iran until Saleh's death in 2017.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

AQAP is an aggressive Sunni-Islamist organization which is part of Al-Qaeda¹⁴. AQAP is strongly active in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. They are to blame for countless deadly attacks within Yemen, mainly targeting the USA.

Iran

The Yemeni civil war has been said to be part of the Iran-Saudi Arabian proxy war. Saudi Arabia has accused Shia-Iran of backing the Shia-Houthi takeover both financially and militarily in order to get more Shia-islamic influence in the Arabian Gulf. However, Iran has denied all connection to the Houthi and has the official stance of supporting Hadi's government.

Saudi Arabia

The Yemeni civil war has been said to be part of the Iran-Saudi Arabian proxy war. Saudi Arabia started and is the leader of the coalition formed to back Hadi's government and stop Houthi expansion. The coalition is made up of all Sunni-islamic countries.

USA

During the beginning of the conflict, the US supported the Saudi-led coalition through logistical and intelligence support. Since then, the US has also started drone strikes, sent special forces into Yemen, and sold weapons to its allies. The US has supported the coalition, although they have disagreed on the intensity of the bombing campaign. The US supports reinstating Hadi's government. US involvement can be said to be directly part of the US war on terror.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
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¹⁴ <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/16/middleeast/aqap-fast-facts/index.html>

1990	North Yemen and South Yemen unify into one state; Yemen
2000's	Al-Qaeda gains standing in Yemen
2010-2011	Arab Spring
June 2011	Protesting in Yemen increases
November 2011	President Saleh gives up power after 33 years as president. His deputy, Hadi, comes into power
February 2012	Hadi inaugurated as president
January 2014	The National Dialogue Conference writes a new constitution
September 2014	Houthi take control of Sana'a, Yemen's capital
February 2015	Hadi flees to Aden after the Houthi reject the new constitution
March 2015	Saudi-led coalition start airstrikes and imposes naval blockade at Hadi's request
June 2015	Latest Al-Qaeda leader in Arabian Peninsula, Nasser al-Wuhayshi, is killed
December 2017	Saleh is assassinated
January 2018	Southern Yemeni separatists seize control of Aden with the support of the U.A.E.
October 2018	USA calls for a cease-fire
November 2018	The Houthi, Saudi-Arabia and USA agree to a cease-fire
November 2018	Fighting recomences between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations has been involved in the ongoings in Yemen since the uprisings of 2011. The UN has pushed for stabilizing governments and economy. Failed UN-sponsored peace-talks in 2016 and September 2018 have not stopped the UN from moving forward. The Saudi-led coalition agreed in November 2018 to UN peace-talks which are set to happen in Sweden soon.

- Security Council Resolution 2140, 26 February 2014 (**S/RES/2140**)
 - this resolution stated the UN's support of a new governmental system being put into place after the Arab Spring.
- Security Council Resolution 2216, 14 April 2015 (**S/RES/2216**)
 - this resolution demanded the Houthi to leave all seized territory and give up all stolen weapons. It also placed an arms ban on the Houthi group.
- Security Council Resolution 2402, 26 February 2018 (**S/RES/2402**)
 - this resolution is the most recent renewal of the sanctions on Yemen. These sanctions have been renewed multiple times. These sanctions include the arms embargo, a travel ban and an assets freeze on those threatening peace in Yemen.

Possible Solutions

No matter what the political solutions may be, humanitarian aid is imperative to the survival of the nation's population. Therefore, no matter the solution, humanitarian aid should be allowed into the country and help be given to the IDPs and refugees from Yemen. Also, it is imperative that a lasting ceasefire be called in order to bring in humanitarian aid. UN-sponsored peace talks can be said to be one of the best steps towards peace in the nation.

The first possible solution is that the UN be given temporary control of the nation's government until new elections can be held. The UN would aim to stabilize the country through negotiations while bringing in humanitarian aid through different UN and non-UN associated organizations.

The second possible solution is the full reinstatement of Hadi's government through international and UN support. Another possible solution would be splitting the country back into two separate states; North and South Yemen. This could be said to be the only way forward, should both governments not agree to negotiations and the need for peace.

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