



## **Background Paper**

Committee: World Health Organization (WHO)

Topic B: Solving the extensive emergency health situation in Yemen

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The world's largest humanitarian crisis is not in Syria, it is in Yemen. About four years ago, the Republic of Yemen, (a country at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula in Western Asia), now known as the poorest country in the Arab region, got involved in a conflict that has killed nearly 10,000 people, and pushed millions into starvation and disease. The conflict started in the spring of 2011, when a political transition was supposed to bring stability to Yemen because the Yemeni people wanted a positive change. Instead, it created chaos in the country. It all started when President Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to hand over power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, in November 2011. This conflict has been going on for years, but it increased when the Saudi-led coalition got involved. After this movement happened, the president struggled with various problems, including huge military attacks, massive unemployment, suicide bombings, corruption, food insecurity, and shocking diseases. All of these factors combined helped to spark the war.

The war is divided into two main adversaries: the Houthis, a political Shia rebel group loyal to Saleh, and the forces loyal to the new Hadi Government. In 2014, Houthi forces took over the capital city of Sanaa. The next year, Houthis and Saleh loyalists tried to take control of the entire country, which forced Mansour Hadi to escape to Saudi Arabia. Consequently, those actions were considered an immediate threat, which led to a military campaign and an alliance created with Sunni Saudi Arabia, which felt threatened by Shiite Iran. A Saudi-led coalition launched an intervention in 2015, which led to an alliance of nine countries from West Asia, and Africa, in response to calls from the Yemeni president. Each country contributed in a different way, with Pakistan and Somalia supporting the coalition's military missions. This political alliance sought to restore Hadi's government, but it was not possible to take back the north of the country, or the capital of Sanaa. Other countries have been involved too. While everything was happening, fighters from al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and affiliates from ISIL took advantage of the chaos.

The Yemeni population has been the most affected by the destruction of the infrastructure of the country. The streets are contaminated with garbage, and they are hobbled by restrictions of fuel imports, and a lack of food. This has led to 17 million Yemenis facing famine and many other diseases like cholera, from the lack of clean water. For this and many other reasons, these people need urgent humanitarian assistance. The World Health Organization (WHO) is the committee in charge of helping all people obtain the highest possible level of health. This committee defines the

concept of health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease. Many important associations, including this committee, are working for the benefit of the 80% of the population affected. “Yemen’s health workers are operating in impossible conditions,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “These doctors and nurses are the backbone of the health response – without them we can do nothing in Yemen. They must be paid their wages so that they can continue to save lives.”

In conclusion, it is extremely important to support a solution for the benefit of humans and the planet. As a result of the ongoing armed conflict happening in the country, the majority of the people are not able to afford clean water, food, or health treatments. This is a very important and critical situation that needs to be the subject of discussion among the member nations in order to help the Yemeni population.

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