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UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

President

Hermes Agelopoulus

Deputy President

Derek Chan

Deputy President

Eugene Choi

Special Committee on Indigenous Issues

Forum:

Issue: Measures to promote inclusive cooperation between national governments, companies

and extractive industries, and indigenous peoples

Chairs: Hermes Agelopoulos, Derek Chan, Eugene Choi

Introduction

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This Forum was created by resolution 2000/22 on July 28th 2000. Its main purpose is to solve indigenous issues (as the name suggests) such as their Economic and social development, preservation of culture and environment, and basic human rights such as education, property ownership, and health. Moreover, the forum raises awareness and promotes the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system as well as provide advice, recommendations, funds and agencies of the UN to the Forum through ECOSOC.

Indigenous issues are worldwide problems that pertain to the Indigenous groups of a certain continent. Relevant problems in this Forum are fair treatment in economic and society as well as representation in the society. Famous examples include the history between the United States Government and Native Americans and Aboriginal Australians and the Australian Government.

As a result, the indigenous population were often abused and treated as second class citizens by newcomers from other countries. The indigenous population were never included in the legislative and executive process which would create laws that work well with the situation of the indigenous population and establish laws that would ensure their rights as well as new policies that would not exclude them from any form of participation in the country that is theirs.

Definition of Key Terms

Colony

When a group of people leave the country they formerly inhabited and settle in a different land that is still subjected to and connected to the country they formerly lived in. In relation to the word, colonization is the act of creating a colony.

Colonialism

When a country controls or influence greatly another nation, making it dependent on the parent country.

Indigenous

When a group of people are native to a place or country. For example, Native Americans.

Extractive Industries

A business that makes money by removing raw materials from the ground for it to be used by customers. Some examples include oil and gas extraction as well as mining.

General Overview

Governments

Controversy surrounding the issue

When the word "Indigenous People" is brought up, the word generally implies that a form of conquest has occurred and now Indigenous people have become strangers in the land they have lived on before the era of colonization. Therefore, when issues about Indigenous people are being discussed, there needs to be a comprehensive understanding of colonialism. The problem is that many countries that have Indigenous People often did indescribable things to these people. As a result, when resolving indigenous issues in a specific country, those despicable actions enacted by the government will be brought to light and often face controversy.

The aim is not to find more atrocious acts committed by a government towards a specific group of people and create a way to condemn those nations. Instead, the focus is how can International Community can help bring change in countries that have not included their Indigenous population in their country's lawmaking and law enforcement process.

By excluding this group of people from a very important part of the country, the government is implying that Indigenous people are not considered members of this country and can lead to abuse towards Indigenous People.

Companies & extractive industries

Unfair treatment

The rights of indigenous peoples have always been omitted by companies and extractive industries because they treat profit as their first priority. Enormous projects like mining and timber extraction deal detrimental effects on the environment and regions traditional to certain indigenous peoples. This not only depletes natural resources, but also hinders ethnic culture, knowledge, and languages. Due to the large labor force extractive industries need to bring in, these indigenous groups typically find themselves displaced, isolated, and overlooked by the state. Such a process of marginalization also potentially increases poverty rates.

Attempts made by other nations to combat this issue

Many nations and regions gradually came to realize such an issue from time to time and took different measures to secure the wellbeing of indigenous groups. For instance, in Australia, many companies like the Argyle Diamonds are required to recognize the indigenous peoples as landlords if any extractive work is conducted on their traditional territory. Furthermore, in Canada, indigenous groups have signed various agreements with the Canadian government and other relevant authorities and industries, whereas all sides are required to outline conditions that need to be further agreed upon prior to development projects. Recently, nations are also being directed towards the corporate social responsibility initiatives to upgrade rights for indigenous communities.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
July 28, 2000	UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues International (UNPFII) established
September 13, 2007	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples(UNDRIP)
March 23-25, 2009	International Conference on Extractive Industries and Indigenous Peoples, take place in Manila, Philippines
December 11, 2017	Panama's largest indigenous tribes teamed up with the United Nations (U.N.) program Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, or UNREDD to help monitor indigenous lands and curb the trend of forest loss.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

In order to solve this issue, the UN constantly worked to promote indigenous rights through past resolutions and declarations. They also formed partnerships with extractive industries to convince the industries to further cooperate with indigenous people through negotiations.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 13 December 2007

- EU and UN Framework partnership to prevent land and natural resources from contributing to violent conflict (2008)
- Rights of Indigenous Peoples Resolution presented 18 December 2014 A/RES/69/159
- Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 23 December 2015 A/RES/70/232
- OECD Meetings on mining regions in Chile, October 2017

Possible Solutions

One of the most basic solutions can be simply recommending willing governments to ensure that all companies need to receive permission from indigenous groups before exploiting their lands for commercial uses as well as treat them as equals. If necessary, government appointed personnel should negotiate with selected representatives from those communities in a likely event of a dispute of some sort. All conditions need to be agreed upon mutually with absolute consensus, because it only takes the wrongdoing of one party to break a contract and shatter relations in the long term.

Such companies do possess the right to employ indigenous people (obviously with their consent too). When it comes down to this, countries or whatever ministries that are in charge of this can also be urged to abide by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Such legal norms outlined on the declaration provide the foundation for indigenous rights and protect them from discrimination. This prevents companies from abusing them through ways such as extending working time beyond the legal limits or paying relatively little salary in comparison to their jobs.

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Forum: Security Council

Issue: Writing Chair Reports for TASMUN - Situation in Yemen

Chair: Claire Toh & Henri Reyes

Introduction

Dubbed "the worst in the world" by UN agencies ever since the eruption of the Arab Spring in 2010, the crisis in Yemen manifests itself not only as a messy conflict between various parties but as a grave humanitarian crisis and blatant disregard for war ethics.

The conflict stems from religious divide within the nation, with a rebel group known as the Houthis emerging from the Arab Spring with resentment towards the economic and political reforms it brought. Backed by Iran, a country sharing the Houthis adherence to Shiite Muslim, the rebels fight against the Yemen government, endorsed notably by Saudi Arabia. The Saudis, backed by various Middle Eastern countries and world leaders like the US and UK, currently face controversy surrounding their airstrikes on Yemen soil, only adding to the complexity of the situation. With neither side willing to give in and the ever-looming threat of Al-Qaeda, the crisis in Yemen shows no signs of stopping.

Along with the militarial aspect of the conflict, the war between the Houthis and the Yemen government brings with it an alarming humanitarian crisis. UN estimates total casualties since 2016 alone at 11,000. Many of these casualties were due to Saudi-led coalition airstrikes. Yemen ranking 168 out of 188 on the Human Development Index in 2015, measuring general quality of life, does little to aid the 42% of its population in poverty, approximates the Rural Poverty Portal. Citizens with cholera and other diseases lack proper medical assistance amidst a raging war. Demonstrable violations of the laws of war, including 18 unlawful strikes on civilian sites, only help to worsen the condition for the innocents caught in the crossfire.

Definition of Key Terms

Sectarian conflict

Sectarian conflicts are communal conflicts arising from the perceived differences in the sects within a particular region of a nation--in the case of Yemen, the conflict stemming from fundamental belief-oriented disputes that have manifested themselves in war.

Proxy War

A proxy war is defined as a war where none of the parties directly engages in the combat. The term can also be used when defining two warring sides engage in a conflict in a territory where neither side claims to control.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

This term refers to anyone who has lost their home and is currently on the loose within their home country. A refugee would be referring to one that is encountering the same situations but has already crossed the borders of his/her home country.

Houthis

The Houthis are one of the major rebelling forces of Yemen. It is a Shia rebel faction in conflict with the Yemeni government and Al-Qaeda since 2004. Strongly in line with Shiite beliefs (specifically a sect known as Zaydi), the Houthis are militarily and financially endorsed by Iran, which shares similar religious beliefs.

General Overview

Historical context

Yemen

Originally ruled by a monarch in the north and the British in the south, Yemen suffered from numerous coups sentencing the country to decades of violence. President Saleh, later ousted from the presidency following the Arab Spring, is inaugurated in North Yemen during this time. It is worth noting that estimates place North Yemen's population at around 12 million, while both north and south unified in 1990, existing tensions between the nation and regional enemies, as well as domestic issues persisted-notably the 1992 food price riots, has since accentuated with the dawn of 2010. The unification was short lived, however, when president Saleh subdued a rebelling South Yemen proclaiming independence led by former vice president Ali Salim al-Baid, reasserting control over the region.

Following this coerced reunification, Saleh leads guerilla strikes on Shia rebels at odds with his actions towards al-Baid and other South Yemen leaders in Aden, who had deemed the North as "ignoring the needs of the south". The time between this dissolution of South power and 2010, minor conflicts between factions sprung up throughout the country. Riots on humanitarian issues like food prices and cuts on fuel subsidies ensue, as well as the displacement of persons due to conflict numbering in the thousands. Saleh wins another election, Al-Qaeda attacks threaten US navy operations and the tourism

industry, and by the time the Arab Spring rolls around Yemen is stirring with a need for reform. This is where the current civil war picks up, and where peace and security are more important than ever before.

Saleh presidency

On the 5th of December, President Saleh was assassinated following his public separation from the Houthis, whom which he had previously declared allies. Saleh's death contributed greatly to accentuate already turbulent conditions in Yemen for citizens--but his largest changes took place during a rule of 33 years prior to 2012, at which point he handed off the presidency to his vice president Hadi. He was considered by many a dictator, plundering billions of dollars from the nation and managing the country's economic situation poorly, especially during the Arab Spring.

Up to 2012, however, Saleh experienced large success in his presidency; re-elections in both 1983 and 1988, as well as being named the president of a unified Yemen in 1990, allowed Saleh to continue rule untouched for the most part. Saleh connected with world leaders like the United states, speaking with president George W. Bush on a \$400 million relief packaged to be delivered to Yemen, securing Saleh's position in international affairs as in the interest of Yemen. However, 2010 and the Arab Spring brought protests demanding constitutional reform in countries across the Middle-East/North Africa area--Yemen was no exception. Opposition to rule was stirred up in this time and culminated in a missile strike on capital, injuring Saleh and marking the tipping point for his decision to turn things over to Vice President Hadi.

Hadi presidency

The shift of power from Saleh to Vice President Hadi in 2012 was, as Rosie Perper from Business Insider puts it, "an internationally brokered move to foster stability in the region." In a time when AI-Qaeda were at their strongest than ever before, political unrest threatened national authority and the civil war had reached new heights, the transfer of Hadi both satiated the mounting resentment of Saleh's rule and gave Yemen hope for a brighter future. However, that hope was not met with the corresponding changes that Yemen needed. While Hadi struggled to "keep Yemen afloat", both socially and economically, the growing presence of AI-Qaeda and corruption stifling reform resulted in widespread poverty and unemployment. Eventually in 2014, the Houthis looking to exploit weakness in the Yemeni government, saw their opportunity and captured Sana'a. Hadi fled the city, calling it an unconstitutional coup d'état. He later returned when Saudi-led forces recaptured the city--but war with the Houthis was far from over.

Proxy war

Founded upon religious beliefs and a growing need for reform, Yemen's civil war has grown from a historically domestic issue into a far-reaching, international proxy war fuelling both sides.

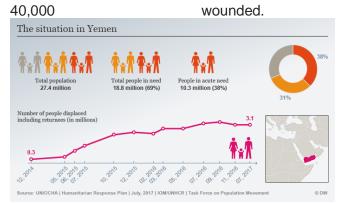
The Houthis, Shiite Muslim in nature, are primarily backed by a likewise Shiite Iran. Originating from North Yemen, Iran has been accused of smuggling increasingly potent weapons to Houthi rebel groups, including "antiship and ballistic missiles, deadly sea mines and even explosive boats that have attacked allied ships in the Red Sea or Saudi territory across Yemen's northern border", according to Officer Kevin M. Donegan, a United States vice admiral situated in the region. Both Saudi Arabia and the Hadi government have criticized Iran's actions and point to Iran's use of the Houthis as a "puppet group" masked in a "relationship of mutual convenience", "akin to the Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah", according to Adam Baron, a visitor at the European Council on Foreign Relations. Such a relationship has been denied by Iran.

The Hadi presidency, the other major side to the battle, was backed by Saudi Arabia--in turn endorsed by nine African and Middle-eastern countries, as well as the US and UK--in 2015. The countries relayed financial, militarial and humanitarian aid through Saudi Arabia, a neighboring country the crisis. It is unsure how much of this aid has actually been delivered (see *Possible Solutions* for more information). However, countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are taking matters into their own hands, conducting airstrikes targeting Houthi strongholds--though incidences of failed airstrikes costing civilian lives raises questions on the countries' intentions. Furthering this controversy is the Saudi's naval blockade, stemming the flow of resources into Yemen, including humanitarian aid.

As well as Saudi Arabia and its allies, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) launched an initiation they call "Operation Decisive Storm", an effective war on the Houthis and their supporters in Yemen to help the country stabilize and prevent another humanitarian catastrophe. While less direct than measures employed by Saudi Arabia and its allies, the GCC's broad intentions make it worth keeping an eye on.

Problems raised

According to the Rural Poverty Portal in 2015, "an estimated 42 percent of the people [in Yemen are poor, and one Yemeni in five is malnourished". Furthermore, "only 0.7 percent of rural people have access to sanitation services", according to the same source. These numbers have no doubt since increased in recent years. Further illustrating the intensity of the civil war in recent years is casualties: since of 2016, about 4,000 have been killed and 7,000 wounded, according to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)--the majority of which were due to coalition airstrikes. Total numbers equate to 10,000 dead with over



Demonstrable violations of the laws of war are rampant throughout Yemen, including but not limited to: "laying banned anti-personnel landmines, mistreating detainees, and launching indiscriminate rockets into populated areas in Yemen and southern Saudi Arabia, killing hundreds of civilians". Such acts, as reported by the Human Rights Watch in 2016, refer solely to those committed on the Houthi side. However, the Hadi presidency and its backers have their share of war crimes: the Human Rights Watch also investigated 18 apparently unlawful strikes, some of which used US or UK-supplied weapons, on 14 civilian economic sites. The strikes "killed 130 civilians and wounded 173 more"; such attacks, seemingly deliberate, only add to and accentuate the poverty many Yemeni citizens already are in.

Along with war crimes, the cholera outbreak in Yemen, deemed one of the worst in the world by the UN, currently afflicts 400,000 Yemeni citizens and has killed roughly 1,900. This is especially alarming due to the shortage in medical supplies, notably Doctors Without Borders retracting aid after two years, threatening the Yemen national blood bank. Furthermore, the airport in Sana'a, has been closed since 2016 to hinder arms shipments to Houthi forces. Its closure also blocks humanitarian aid to Yemen--evoking a sense of panic to the rising number of Yemeni citizens without substantial healthcare.

Key Players

Saudi Arabia

As discussed earlier, Saudi Arabia is the main backing force behind the Hadi presidency, funneling resources donated by allies through to Yemen directly. Their alliance with the Yemeni government dates back to the summer of 2015, where they helped Hadi supporters restore control of Aden after losing it to Houthi forces in the area. By early 2017, their pro-government forces had secured sections of the Red Sea, yet remained stalled in Central Yemen.

However, Saudi Arabia's motives have been questionable in recent times. The inexperience of Saudi pilots, fearful of enemy ground fire, leads to high-altitude bombing runs. This results in decreased accuracy and higher chances of accidental civilian bombing, of which Saudi Arabia has done on numerous occasions. While not an easily fixed problem the consistency of these 'accidental bombings' invites skepticism on Saudi Arabia's true motives; as Mark Mazzetti and Eric S chmitt for the New York Times put, "American advisers suggested how the pilots could safely fly lower, among other tactics. But the airstrikes still landed on markets, homes, hospitals, factories and ports." The Saudi's naval blockade

has also posed issues for the civilian population through bottlenecking imports, including humanitarian aid--in November 2017, Saudi Arabia agreed to partially relax its naval blockade preventing aid from entering the country, but the issue of starvation and poverty still remains.

But do the Houthis *themselves* give reason for the Saudis to participate to such an extent in Yemen's civil war? As April Longley Alley of the International Crisis Group reasons, "The Houthis do pose threats to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's (KSA) national security interests, not least because they are unlikely to allow KSA to pull the strings in Yemen or have the influence KSA once had.. but whatever diagnosis of the threat, the reaction was a war of choice that is having devastating consequences for Yemen and Saudi security."

Al Qaeda

The Al Qaeda is a terrorist group that is currently thriving in an environment of state collapse, growing sectarianism, shifting alliances, security vacuums, and a burgeoning war economy. This terrorist group consists of subgroups that targets the people of different countries in the middle east that is currently going through crisis. The Yemeni civil war hence created conditions that enabled the Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to expand its power. The process of counterterrorism against AQAP slowed as the Saudi-led coalition and Hadi government prioritized the civil war. AQAP took advantage of the focus on the fight against the al Houthi-Saleh bloc and seized control of Yemen's third-largest port city for over a year. The protracted war and absence of national political resolution aided the AQAP to remerge. They were able to adapt to the rapidly shifting political terrain, modifying into an insurgent movement capable of controlling territory and challenging state authority. AQAP was able to work within local norms, forging alliances with Sunni allies, assimilating into militias and embedding themselves in a political economy of smuggling and trade that spans the carious fighting factions, including the former President Saleh alliance. It had controlled territory in South Yemen and appears embedded in the fabric of opposition to the Houthi/Saleh alliance (dominant in North Yemen), that is fighting the internationally recognised, Saudi-backed interim government of President Hadi.

United States

The United States, indirectly involved with perpetuating the Yemen conflict by supporting Saudi Arabia with weaponry, wrestles with the dilemma of being criticised for war crimes while maintaining a long-lasting relationship with Saudi Arabia. It should be noted that they have accepted the international definition of war crimes to include "'practical assistance, encouragement or moral support' [as] sufficient to determine liability for war crimes", as stated in an email between US and Yemen officials referencing a 2013 war crimes trial (Warren Strobel, Jonathan Landay for Reuters). Since March 2015, they joined the Saudi-led movement backing the Hadi presidency, supplying over \$22.2 billion in weapons sales, with \$1.29 billion in precision munitions replenishing Yemen-based supplies. As of 2017, Saudi Arabia agreed to another \$7 billion worth of these precision munitions, a generally frowned-upon sale considering the growing controversy due high civilian casualties.

Caught in conflicting interests, the Obama Administration considered both sides of the narrative. They believed the ensuing chaos from the Yemen civil war would allow gains from terrorist groups, yet still decided to support the Saudi effort with "refueling, logistics and intelligence support in 2015" to 1) "show solidarity with a longstanding ally" and 2) "reassure Riyadh [Saudi Arabia's capital] in the wake of [their differing stances on] the Iran nuclear deal" (Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt for the New York Times). Concerning the US' relations with Iran, Adam Baron, a visitor at the European Council on Foreign Relations warns, "there is nothing the Iranians would like more than to drag the US into Yemen". Both rising civilian casualties attributed to Saudi-led bombings and UN criticism of such led the US to second-guess its unqualified support of Saudi Arabia, deciding to deintensify military operations supporting Saudi bombings in June 2016, as well as blocking the sale of 16,000 guided munitions December of the same year.

All in all, as a world leader and one deeply involved in the Situation in Yemen, the US is caught in a predicament--they must deeply consider the ramifications of their actions in both support and military operations, maintain relationships with allies, all while contributing to humanitarian efforts in the region.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
1978	Ali Abdullah Saleh president of North Yemen
1986	President Muhammad flees country, sentenced to death Saleh declares state of emergency
May 1994	Northern forces capture Aden
May-July 1994	US navy vessel damaged in Al-Qaeda attack
October 2000	Saleh wins elections
September 2006	Saleh launches fresh attacks against Shia rebels in Sadaa province
August 2009	Arab Spring began
2010	Bombs found on Yemeni US-bound plane
October 2010	
June 2011	Protests become prevalent within the country
September 2014	Houthi rebels take control of Sana'a
26 March 2015	GCC airstrikes commence
April 2015	Resolution 2216 passed (Russian Federation abstains)
11 May 2015	Saleh declares alliance with Houthis
17 May 2015	Houthis boycott dialogue at capital
June 2016	US drone strike kills leader of the AQAP
November 2016	Houthis form new government, ignoring UN peace process
29 January 2017	Trump authorizes raid on Yakla
5 December 2017	Former President Saleh killed by Houthi rebels
Jan 24, 2018	Yemen Al-Qaeda leader calls for attacks on Jews

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Resolution 2014 (passed unanimously in 2011)

This resolution calls to an end to violence, acceptance of the GCC's peace plan with orderly transfer of power. The resolution condemns the so-called human rights violation by authorities and abuses by other actors, in Yemen following monts of political strife, the UNSC demanded that all sides adopt the actions mentioned above.

Resolution 2140 (passed unanimously in 2014)

This resolution welcomes the progress within Yemen's political transition and expressed strong support for completion of future decisions, such as drafting a new constitution, and holding a referendum as well as general elections. The UNSC encourages all the country's constituencies, including youth and women's groups, to continue their active and constructive engagement in Yemen's political transition.

Resolution 2201 (passed unanimously in 2015)

This resolution demands members of the Houthi group to withdraw from government institutions. This releases President Hadi and other members of the same party from house arrest and engage in good terms in UN-brokered negotiations designed to keep the fracturing Middle Eastern country on a steady path towards democratic transition.

Resolution 2216 (passed in 2015// Russian Federation Abstained)

This resolution reinforced the main points of resolution 2014 and included sanctions on key figures in militia operations. The resolution further states that all parties must immediately and unconditionally end violence and refrain from further unilateral actions that threatened the political transition.

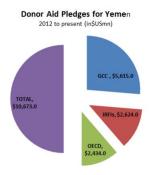
Possible Solutions

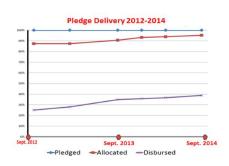
The consensus within the international community, as with many topics discussed in Model United Nations, is that if a simple and effective solution existed it would have been discovered by now. It's ultimately up to delegates to come up with creative, thoughtful solutions that, through debate and lobbying, are refined to a state that deserves genuine consideration in implementation--but a few possible areas of improvement are discussed briefly here.

Concerning Al-Qaeda and their movement, the International Crisis Group conducted a report on the terrorist group in Yemen, the solution to which they describe as "an overarching political settlement that has buyin from the country's diverse constituencies, including Sunni Islamists". Delegates should further expand and specify what this 'political settlement' will entail. As implementation of such a 'settlement' will take time, they recommend taking steps restricting Al-Qaeda's growth, including the improvement of governance in impoverished areas as well as consolidating the military power that has sparked such controversy in its usage. Methods to decrease civilian casualties as a byproduct of military-based attempts at combating Al-Qaeda, such as was the case with the 29 January 2017 raid on their affiliates in the Yakla area of the Al-Bayda province, should also be of the highest importance.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has sparked numerous inventive strategies to more efficiently transport aid into and across the country. One such project, underway since 24 January, 2018, is a road costing \$5 million that links the North and South of Yemen. This critical road infrastructure, the ambassador of Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Operations (YCHO) predicts, "will create 15,000 new job opportunities for the people of Yemen and... will link comprehensive humanitarian relief efforts from north to south" (Noor Nugali, for Arab News). Other methods of ensuring safe and timely delivery of aid could be utilizing drones to deliver supplies in mass quantities across the country, or implementation of short-term, fertile agricultural alternatives to the war-torn farmland that currently limits food growth in Yemen--though the economic ramifications of both should be further investigated.

Another possible issue concerning the humanitarian crisis that could be addressed in solutions is the disparity between pledged donation amounts and how much has actually been delivered to Yemen itself. As the World Bank estimates, since September 2012 over \$10.6 billion has been pledged by donors supporting Yemen's transition, yet just shy of 40% has actually been delivered, mostly as direct budget support from countries like Saudi Arabia. This poses issues not only to the citizens of Yemen who desperately need such aid, but puts the accountability and efficiency of both organizations and countries responsible for distributing these resources into question. As demonstrated in the visual, donations--especially those supporting economic reform or humanitarian assistance--appear sufficient on paper but lack in execution.





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