



4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

FORUM: Security Council

TOPIC: Addressing The Sovereignty of Yemen

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POSITION: Deputy Presidents

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Hello, and welcome to this year's AMLMUN! My name's Paola Papaconstantinou and I am a 16 years old student, studying at Anavryta. I am thrilled to be a chair of the Security Council especially with such an interesting topic. While enjoyable, for this topic you will need careful research and a deep understanding of it. That is why I strongly advise you to have a look at this paper as it can be very helpful to your preparation in order to have a fruitful debate during the conference! Don't forget to have fun and if you have any questions feel free to ask for help!

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Hello, and welcome to AMLMUN! My name is Greg Kasteroudis and I am 17 years old and a student in Anavryta. This is my first time being a chair and I am excited to share this experience with you in the Security Council. This year's topic is a relatively recent one which makes it even more interesting. Be sure to use the information we have gathered to prepare accordingly for the fruitful debate that will follow! Have fun and let us know if you need any help!

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TOPIC INTRODUCTION

For the past three decades, Yemen has been the center of many political and violent conflicts, not being able to sustain a functional and stable government for a considerably long period of time. Its sovereignty is currently under threat, causing conflicts between nations and one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with millions in need of aid and basic services collapsing. The concept of sovereignty, which its understanding is crucial for this subject, establishes basic rules for how countries are allowed to interact with one another, allowing countries to control what happens inside their borders and preventing them from interfering with the internal matters of other nations.

Taking into consideration the specific parameters that define a sovereign country, Yemen's sovereignty is being challenged due to internal conflicts and interference in the state's affairs from other nations. While its government, the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) is recognized as the official governing body and has contributed to Yemen being labeled as a sovereign state, in practice there are



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other factions meddling in the country's matters like the Houthis- Supreme Political Council (SPC), the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and significant involvement of the terrorist groups Al-Qaeda and ISIS. An important factor to Yemen's lack of sovereignty is also involvement of foreign nations like Saudi Arabia, Iran and the US.

Yemen's lack of sovereignty dates back to 1994, when Yemen went through its first civil war, which ended with South Yemen on the losing side. The civil war took place right after Yemen gained its independence from the UK and after its unification in 1990.

A decade later, provoked by the border agreement made between Alim Abdullah Saleh's government and Saudi Arabia and by Saleh's attempts to confiscate Houthis' weapons, Hussein Baddredin al-Houthi led the Houthi rebellion. The conflicts went on for many years under many forms, which resulted in thousands of casualties and a big part of the population to be displaced. The climax being the arrival of the Arab Spring in Yemen, when around 2000 people were killed during protests. It is at this point that Saleh gives up his role of president to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, who would go on to rule for 2 years, after which he would be forced to resign momentarily by the Houthi forces.

The following few years, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen reached a severely alarming level, following continuous fights between the two sides and their allies, leaving millions starving, infected by cholera and many more dead, all the while no side seems to back down, breaking multiple ceasefires.

As of today, Yemen's state remains divided, facing the interference of foreign countries, all the while its citizens struggle with survival, since the humanitarian aid funds have been greatly decreased and the population ravaged by bombings, armed conflicts and the Covid-19 outbreak back in 2020.

While one of the most significant consequences of the Yemeni civil wars is the severe humanitarian crisis it has generated, it is crucial to acknowledge the impact it has had on the relationships among various countries, extending beyond just the Middle Eastern region. The conflict has led to a breakdown in relations between nations such as the United States, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has implemented numerous measures to limit the power of the Houthis, receiving substantial assistance and support from the United States, while Iran has been actively backing the actions of the Houthis and providing aid. As a result, tensions have nearly intensified into a conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran which could have led to further involvement from nations such as the US, escalating the conflict to a global scale.

At the same time, terrorist group activity continues to rise, with the Islamic State being active in Yemen's territory since 2015 and leading a series of attacks against the general public while Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) although losing in influence, has found a way to continue its attacks against the Southern



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Transitional Council (STC) using drones and other unmanned remotely controlled weapons.

Recently, the spotlight has once again dropped on the Houthis, after their declaration of war against the state of Israel and the increase of pirate attacks by the organization in the Red Sea, demanding a ceasefire in Gaza. At the same time, Houthi activity has been observed in the Indian Ocean, attacking shipping routes. The group has also interfered with the alliances of foreign countries, restricting Saudi-Arabia from entering the Prosperity Guardian operation, led by the US, in order to stop the attack on ships.



Map of Yemen and neighboring countries¹

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

AL-QAEDA In The Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

AQAP is a branch of Al-Qaeda that emerged in 2009 and has been active in the region since. It counts to about 3000 members and has claimed many lives, both in the region² and outside of it, taking responsibility for many attacks inside of Europe (2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris). AQAP has gained much power due to the Yemeni civil

¹ Google Maps. "Yemen." *Google Maps*, 2019, www.google.com/maps/place/%CE%A5%CE%B5%CE%BC%CE%AD%CE%BD%CE%B7/@15.3360497. Accessed 30 June 2025.

² Engel, Andrew. "Yemen's Forever War: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula." *The Washington Institute*, 2025, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/yemens-forever-war-al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula. Accessed 29 July 2025.



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war, which left the country unstable and with no general military in all areas, letting AQAP take control of many cities.

Arab Spring

The Arab Spring was a massive movement rising simultaneously in many Arabic countries, consisting mostly of younger citizens, fighting against authoritarian regimes. Although its cause was just, the result of the Arab Spring in each country differed, with many spiraling into armed civil wars. One of those countries was Yemen which, after the Arab Spring reached it in 2011, following the resignation of long-time ruler Saleh failed to complete its transitional phase and conflict sparked between the Houthi and the new Hadi administration.

Armed Forces of Yemen (AFY)

The name of the entirety of combat units of Yemen. It consists of both regular military forces, as well as border patrols and the special forces of Yemen. The ministries of Defense and Interior are responsible for controlling it.

Civil War

A war is classified as civil when the two, or more sides, consist of primarily citizens of the same country, fighting for political or social matters of that country. Yemen has experienced three civil wars, with the most important one still going on to this day. It started with a Houthi takeover of the country's capital, Sana'a in 2014 and has now entered its fourth stage following the Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping routes.

Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)

The Secretary of State of the US is responsible for designating an organization as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. For an organization to be named as one it needs to first of all not originate from the US and to engage in terrorist activity within the US or threaten to do so. Unlike for the SDGT label, there are more legal frameworks for an FTO and it is generally a more serious title. It doesn't allow material support, condemning it as illegal, and disallows entry into the country for the targeted groups while also encouraging friendly nations to do so as well. The Houthi organization has, as of recently, been moved from the SDGT category into the FTO after its refusal to stop the Red Sea shipping routes attacks.

General People's Council (GPC)

A Yemeni centrist political party led by Ali Abdullah Saleh, which won the largest representation in the House of Representatives in 1993. It continued to hold political influence and importance, winning more than a hundred seats in each election until the 2010s'. It was about that time in 2011 when a civil war ravaged it, with the result of it being its alignment with Houthi forces.



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Gulf States

The Gulf States are the countries bordering the Persian Gulf. Out of all of them, the ones that are actively engaged in the Yemeni situation are Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Oman, with Saudi Arabia and UAE taking part in armed and military conflicts and operations while Qatar and Oman have taken a more neutral approach, participating only in negotiation attempts. The first two are against the Houthis and have limited their cross-border aid in fear of it reaching Houthis.

Houthi Rebellion

The Houthi Rebellion is a movement that started in 2004 following a border agreement between the Saleh administration and Saudi Arabia. It consists of several conflicts over 6 years at first, and later 4 more years under the Arab Spring and ending with the unofficial Houthi takeover of the government in 2014. The Rebellion resulted in hundreds of deaths from both sides and also had a part in the complete division of the Yemeni citizens into the different political parties of Yemen.

Houthis (Ansar Allah)

³An armed political and religious group which champions Yemen's Shia Muslim minority, the Zaidis (an Islamic branch). The group emerged in the 1990s and takes its name from the movement's late founder, Hussein al-Houthi. The current leader is his brother, Abdul Malik al-Houthi. The Houthis largely follow the Zaidi school of Shia Islam, which has similarities to but differs from, the Twelver Shia Islam practised in Iran.



Humanitarian Crisis

A Humanitarian Crisis is any event (war, famine, pandemic, natural disasters) that threatens human life and well being on a grand scale. The Yemeni humanitarian crisis officially started in 2015 following the escalation of the Yemeni civil war. Yemen was already a poor country due to past military conflicts but the civil war brought it to its limits⁴, displacing millions while about 13 million at the time were in need of immediate aid and food supply. The crisis is ongoing and has escalated further due to lack of funding for the World Food Program that is operating within Yemeni territory.

³ Photo: "The emblem of the Houthis"

[Redirecting.\(2025\).Google.com.https://www.google.com/url?q=https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houthis&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1755891154724634&usg=AOvVaw0sNRD_e4-2u1eb_r111Yb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houthis&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1755891154724634&usg=AOvVaw0sNRD_e4-2u1eb_r111Yb)

⁴ Doctors Without Borders Organisation. "A Timeline of Crisis and Conflict in Yemen." *Doctors without Borders - USA*, 2018, www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/timeline-crisis-and-conflict-yemen.



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Internationally Recognised Government (IRG)

Refers to the institutions of the Yemeni state that are recognized by the international community. The IRG is based in the interim capital of Aden and is led by an eight-member Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) chaired by former Interior Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Rashad al-Alimi.

ISIS-K (Islamic state of Iraq and Syria- Khorasan)⁵

An extremely violent and active sector of ISIS, it has taken hundreds of lives, while injuring the same amount or more. It mainly claims responsibility for attacks in Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Russia but has also threatened European countries and the US. It is officially considered a global terrorist organization since 2021.

Presidential Leadership Council (PLC)

⁶The executive body of Yemen's internationally recognized government. It is chaired by Rashad al-Alimi and has a membership of eight, including representatives from the STC.



Prosperity Guardian Operation

An operation specifically designed to limit the amount of successful Houthi-led attacks against ships using the red sea shipping routes. It is US-led and has adopted a defensive character, not launching counter attacks but focusing on preventing the maximum numbers of attacks possible. Many critical stakeholders and bordering nations such as Egypt have refused to join, while Saudi Arabia has been forced to abstain from joining by Houthi threats of attacks.

Sana'a

The capital of Yemen, founded over 2,5 thousands years ago, with a population of about 3,4 million. It has sustained considerable damage, during the civil war, due to its title as capital of Yemen, making it a target for any movement and organization that tries to gain political power. As of 2014, the Houthis are in control of Sana'a.

Southern Transitional Council (STC)



⁵ US National Counterterrorism Center. "National Counterterrorism Center | Terrorist Groups." *Dni.gov*, 2025, www.dni.gov/nctc/terrorist_groups/isis_khorasan.html.

⁶ Photo: "The emblem of the PLC"

Presidential Leadership Council. (2022, October 6). Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidential_Leadership_Council



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⁷A United Arab Emirates-backed secessionist political organization founded and led by Aydarus al-Zubaydi. The STC claims to represent the will and interests of the southerners which include autonomy of southern Yemen.

Sovereignty

The power of a country to control its own government. A sovereign nation must possess supreme authority over its territory and population, free from external control, and capable of engaging in international relations. Although the actual political situation of Yemen is very complicated and no party is in control of every part of its territory, Yemen is officially considered a sovereign nation.

Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT)

The US State Department is responsible for designating an individual or a group of people as global terrorists. This label disables them from engaging in various economic and political activities but it does not stop them from entering the country using a visa. It is also legal for individuals to openly support an SDGT, unlike a FTO. The Houthis have been labeled as an SDGT during the Red Sea attacks, although later, they were named an FTO instead.

Sunni Muslims⁸

The largest branch of Islam, consisting of about 90% of the muslim population. They strictly follow the Sunnah and believe the first four caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali) were the righteous successors of Muhammad. Religious law is taught in four main schools, Hanafi, Maliki, Safi'i and Hanbali. Their main focus is on the community and its prospering. Saleh's administration was primarily focused on Sunni values.

Supreme Political Council (SPC)

⁹An additional constitutional collective executive body was established on July 28th, 2016, by the Houthi movement in alliance with the pro-Houthi faction of the General People's Congress (GPC)to rule areas of Yemen under their control opposed to the internationally recognized Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) in Aden. The most important of those areas were Sana'a, the capital of



⁷ Photo: "The emblem of the STC"

Southern Transitional Council. (2021, March 5). Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Transitional_Council

⁸ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Sunni | Definition, Beliefs, & Practices." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, www.britannica.com/topic/Sunni.

⁹ Photo: "The emblem of the SPC"

Wikipedia Contributors. (2025b, August 15). *Supreme Political Council.* Wikipedia; Wikimedia

Foundation.



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Yemen, the Northern Highlands meaning the starting grounds of Houthi and certain regions of Taiz and of the Red Sea Coast.

World Food Program (WFP)

An operation aimed to help solve different humanitarian crises around the world, concerning mostly food deprivation. More specifically for Yemen, it has been active in its territories since 2019, following a famine alert and is still operating today. It has overall¹⁰ helped millions of malnourished Yemeni citizens, mostly in Houthi-free zones. Unfortunately, it is facing funding problems and the staff is put in daily danger, so its progress is much less than what it could have been.

Zaydi Shia Muslims¹¹

Zaydi muslims are a small branch of Shia Islam, that reside primarily in Yemen. Their name derives from that of a great grandson of Muhammad, Zayd Ibn Ali and they believe their leader (Imam) should also be a descendant of the prophet but not without the appropriate qualities, requiring him to be just and wise. They only acknowledge the first five imams and their religious law is taught in schools similar to those of Sunni Muslims. They are known for their social and political activism, often being the faces of revolutions. The Houthis are Zaydi Shia Muslims.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As we all know, the matter is directly connected to Yemen and its challenged sovereignty. It has historically been separated into two regions: north and south, each having its own political, religious, and social identity. North Yemen was mostly Zaidi Shia Muslim, and South Yemen was primarily Sunni Muslim. Following its unification, tensions immediately intensified

¹⁰ World Food Programme. “Yemen Emergency.” *WFP.org*, 2022, www.wfp.org/emergencies/yemen-emergency.

¹¹ Minority Rights Group. “Zaydi Shi'a in Yemen.” *Minorityrights.org*, Oct. 2023, minorityrights.org/communities/zaydi-shia/.

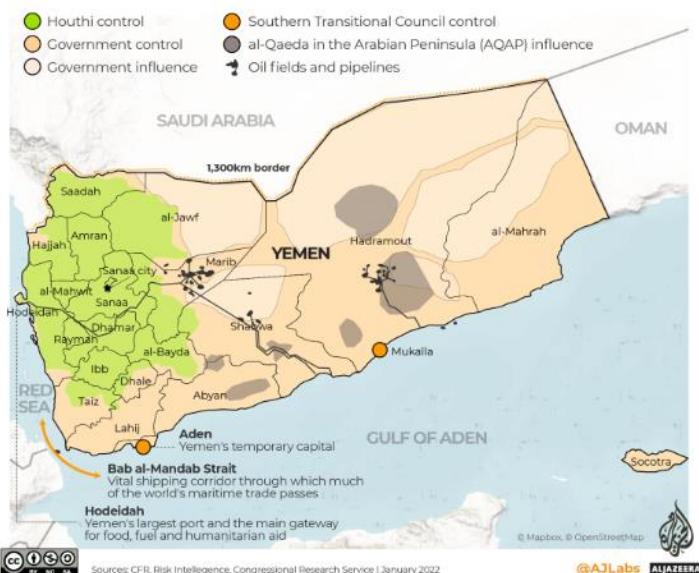


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YEMEN

Who controls what

Seven years since the launch of the Saudi-led campaign, the bulk of Yemen's northern highlands, as well as the capital city of Sanaa, remain under the control of Houthi rebels.



between several political factions seeking for complete control over the nation's governance.¹²

- First, we have the IRG (Internationally Recognized Government), which was eventually renamed Presidential Leadership Council - PLC (the executive body of the IRG) after collaborating with the STC. The PLC is Yemen's official governing body. Its main goal is not yet clear as

PLC members have differing opinions on power-sharing in their controlled regions; on whether Yemen should stay unified, divided into two states, or form a federation (and if so, how many federal regions); and on whether these complex issues should be addressed prior to, during, or after negotiations with the Houthis. The PLC's principal purpose is to defeat or negotiate with the Houthis to stop the continuing civil war. They seek to retake all of the Houthi-controlled territory, including the capital Sanaa, while also attempting to engage the Houthis in a political process. Through a variety of measures, such as continuous operations against the Houthis, their cooperation with the Saudi-led coalition for intelligence and air support, their involvement in UN-led peace negotiations, and their efforts to unite all anti-Houthi forces under a single leadership, they are frantically attempting to achieve their objective. They have achieved a number of things thus far, including the defense of important strategic regions (Aden, the temporary capital, and Marib, Yemen's main oil-rich province), international recognition as the legitimate government, and the provision of diplomatic representation, peace talks, and military assistance from other countries.

- However, in reality, the Houthis are the group with the most power. Their main goal is to establish their own political model and take control of Yemen, or at least a significant part of it. According to their view of Zaidi Shia Islam, the Houthis seek to establish a new state based on "revolutionary" or Islamic

¹² Photo: "Map that shows who controls what in Yemen"

Haddad, M. (2022, February 9). *Yemen's war explained in maps and charts*. Aljazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/9/yemens-war-explained-in-maps-and-charts-interactive>

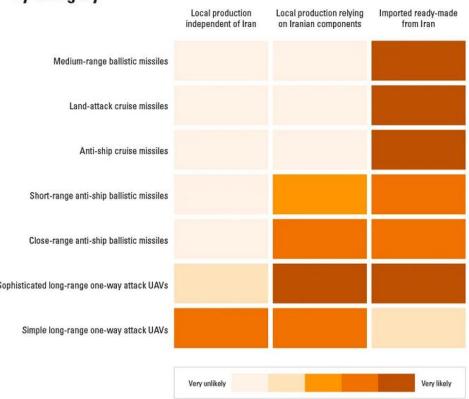


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principles within the framework of the Internationally Recognized Government. They strongly oppose any peace agreement that retains foreign military forces in Yemen and demand the removal of all foreign involvement from the nation. The Houthis claim that they are open to peace talks, but only if foreign forces withdraw from Yemen, treat them as equal partners rather than as rebels, and give them complete control over the future political structure. They have so far made steps to effectively withhold their governance. They now control most of northern Yemen, including Sanaa and Al Hudaydah (strategic port city) and have developed a large militia-style army, ballistic missiles and drones (some supplied or designed with Iranian assistance), and advanced air defense systems that enable them to shoot down Saudi and American drones. Their influence is so strong that in fact they act like a government in areas of Yemen that are under their control by collecting taxes, running courts, police services, even issuing ID cards, managing education, and more. The education they provide is evidently religion based, promoting social rules based on their beliefs and Iranian ideology.¹³

- Lastly there is the Southern Transitional Council (STC) who despite partnering with the IRG, forming the PLC still aims to govern southern Yemen autonomously. By joining the PLC, even with non-aligned agendas they are entitled to a portion of national political power and can also access international legitimacy and resources and influence Yemen's future political structure from within the government rather than as an external rebel force. Thanks to the Riyadh Agreement, the STC has also gained a temporary ally to aid in the Houthi war. Despite its participation in the PLC, the STC still exists as a separate political group. Similar to the Houthis, they have set up a government-like system to control the southern parts of Yemen, including local governments, checkpoints, taxes, public services, and security forces that have been armed and trained by the United Arab Emirates. By keeping diplomatic offices overseas and taking part in international conferences and peace negotiations, the STC is actively working to establish international legitimacy for what it seeks.

Figure 2: Houthi dependence on Iranian weapons systems, by category



Source: IISS

©IISS

¹³ Photo: "Houthi Dependence on Iranian weapons system"

Made in Yemen? Assessing the Houthis' arms-production capacity. (2019). IISS. <https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/missile-dialogue-initiative/2025/04/made-in-yemen-assessing-the-houthis-arms-production-capacity/>



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Saleh's administration

Probably the most important person in the recent history of Yemen, Ali Abrabbuh Saleh, born in 1942, first rose to power in 1978 as president of North Yemen, after all former presidents were assassinated, and remained in power for the next 33 years. He continued to get elected the next two elections (1982 and 1988) and also established the General People's Congress as his political party. He unified Yemen in 1990 and went on to become its first president. Although he was supported by both north and south region citizens, he had a clear bias for the north. His leadership was first questioned in 1994 during the first civil war of unified Yemen, when southern Yemen tried to seize control. The attempt was suppressed by Saleh's military force.

Saleh generally solidified his control through tribal and military bias, appointing relatives and close friends in positions of power to ensure his safety and political influence. Although elected into power, Saleh ruled like an authoritarian, putting his own well-being and wealth over those of his citizens, failing to improve the living condition of most Yemeni citizens. He never remained allies with a specific part, movement or organization other than his own. Prime example being his alliance with Iraqi president Saddam Hussein during the Gulf wars (1990-1991), even though it led to harsher economic conditions and expulsions for thousands of Yemeni workers. Just ten years later, following the terrorist attack of 9/11, Saleh backed the U.S.'s Global War on Terror, allowing bombardments within Yemen's borders targeting Al-Qaeda members. He continued to cooperate with the U.S. during the late 2000s, in order to root out the hidden AQAP members in Yemen, gaining 10 times the aid he was already getting (about 300 million dollars by 2010). At the same time, there have been many allegations about him aiding and protecting certain AQAP members in exchange for political favors.

Entering the 2010s, Saleh was getting huge backlash from protesters, which only worsened after the Arab Spring reached Yemen. He was eventually forced to resign from his role in 2011, ending his 33 year rule. Even though he was no longer the president, he remained politically active, forming a surprising alliance with the Houthis in 2014, helping them take over Sana'a and sending Hadi into exile. The alliance did not last long, since in December of 2017, Saleh tried to bring back Hadi with the help of Saudi Arabia, practically betraying the Houthis, which cost him his life since he was assassinated while fleeing the capital.

First Yemeni Civil War (1994)

Technically the second Yemeni civil war (The first started in 1962 and lasted 8 years but was before Yemen's unification), it lasted no more than three months but still had about 10,000 casualties. It broke out during the May of 1994 between the General People's Congress (GPC), which was biased towards the north and the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) which formed in the southern part of the country due to the inequality of resources and life quality in comparison to the north. The war ended with the YSP dissolving and its leaders fleeing the country.



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Since the war started with the bombardment of the country's capital, Sana'a, which was populated by civilians of both sides, the casualties were massive for both the GPC and the YSP. Although Saleh granted amnesty to all members of the YSP, most of them never returned to Yemen. The war also had disastrous effects on the country's economy and poverty rates.

War Aftermath (1994-2004)

The next ten years, Yemen faced a plethora of problems, both economic and social. Firstly, the country's economy wasn't in a good position. The cost of the war was huge and the resource inequality between the north and the south parts of the country was now bigger than before the war. Poverty and unemployment rates rose sharply. At that point, its strongest resource was its oil. So when it started selling it to other countries, the prices surged so people needed subsidies to be able to afford it. So when those subsidies were cut short, people fell deeper into poverty. Protests started, which ended with 22 killed in 2000.

At the same time Yemen faced another problem. In 2000 the first terrorist attack from Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) took place, claiming the lives of 17 U.S. sailors. Yemen's government cooperated with the U.S. and arrested two suspects, Jamal AL-Badawi and Fahd Al-Quso.

Houthi Rebellion (2004-2010)

The rebellion officially started following the attempted arrest of Hussein on the 18th of June, 2004. The situation only got worse due to the bounties issued by the Yemeni government on Hussein. His death on the 10th of September, 2004, along with 20 of his followers, did not put an end to the fighting, since his brother, Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi took over the rebellion army. The army was small, no more than 200 fighters initially but grew figuratively larger after bombardments by the Yemeni government. During the first phase of the rebellion alone (June-September 2004) about 500-1000 people died from both sides.

After Abdul-Malik's takeover, the violent fighting stopped for a while, restarting in early 2005, ending in June with the surrender of a Houthi commander Abdullah Al-Ruzami. The government recorded about 500 deaths that year, along with 2700 injured and more than 270 million dollars lost in damages. Conflicts began once again in late 2005 between the Houthi and a pro-government tribe, the Hamdan. This time they ended after president Saleh granted amnesty to over 600 Houthi fighters. Almost a year later in January of 2007, Houthi resumed attacks on military sites. The fighting ended with a ceasefire brokered by Qatar in June. Once again, the fighting resumed about a year later with Saleh announcing its end in July of 2008. This time about 70000 citizens were misplaced. On the 11th of August, 2009, the last phase of the conflicts began with the operation Scorched Earth. The Yemeni government deployed more than 30000 troops along with combat vehicles both in Yemeni and



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Saudi territory, with Saudi Arabia troops intervening as well. The operation lasted a little longer than six months ending in February of 2010.

In total, the Houthi Rebellion resulted in more than 20000 casualties, including civilians, and about 150000 displaced in the region. The Houthis benefited from the conflicts since the Yemeni government began making arrests based on tribes, making more people join the Houthi movement, turning it from a small force into a formidable enemy. The rebellion also paved the way for the Arab Spring that started next year in Yemen.

Second Yemeni Civil War (2011-Present day)

Arab Spring in Yemen (2011-2012)

A large almost simultaneous uprising in many different middle eastern countries that began in Tunisia and Egypt in 2010 and reached Yemen a year later. The Yemeni civil war of 2011 started shortly after the Arab Spring reached Yemen and was roughly an immediate result of it. The protests in Yemen began on the 27th of January of 2011 in the Sana'a Change Square when about 16,000 protesters demanded the immediate resignation of president Ali Abdullah Saleh, who at that point, was in office for more than 30 years.

The protests went on for months, until eventually on March 18 of 2011, the military forces of Yemen opened fire on the protesters, killing over 50 and injuring many more. That day is now known as the Friday of Dignity. This action made many tribal leaders stop supporting Saleh.

In order to stop the chaos created, the Gulf Cooperation Council proposed a solution, that being Saleh giving up his position while ensuring his political immunity in the process. At first Saleh was skeptical about the offer but on November 23 of 2011 accepted it, with vice president Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi taking his role, being officially elected in February 2012. That concluded the Arab Spring in Yemen.

Aftermath of Arab Spring (2012-2015)

After Hadi's uncontested election, the Yemen government launched the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), a body composed of citizens and members of all political and social groups and organizations like the Houthi. It proposed ideas concerning the restructure of the government and the military as well as ensured inclusivity and protection of weaker groups. It was recognised by the UN Security Council in November of 2013.

The NDC seemed biased towards the old administration, with many propositions concerning ex-president's Saleh amnesty and others requesting southern autonomy being ignored. This led to many groups, hostile towards



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Saleh, like the Houthis, to lose trust in the NDC and the whole transitional government.

Around late 2014, the Houthis started revolting many frustrated citizens and later seized Sana'a, with the help of Saleh in an unlikely alliance. On September 21 of 2014 they managed to take over key state institutions demanding Hadi's resignation. The UN tried to broker a power-sharing agreement and although the Houthis agreed, they were constantly attempting to take full control of the country. After they put Hadi in house arrest, he resigned, allowing them to become Yemen's unofficial government, a move condemned by the UN. Later the same year Hadi escaped to Aden and undid his resignation, calling the Houthis take over a coup and announcing he is the official president.

Interference of Saudi-led Coalition (2015-2021)

Shortly afterwards, on 26 of March of 2015, Saudi Arabia began operation Decisive Storm in order to restore Hadi's government. The offensive centered operation initiated bombardments, naval blockades and later on ground attacks as well. Although Operation Restoring Hope was announced and put into action, the attacks did not stop. The Houthis did not back down, claiming another city, Ataq, under their control, while also having Saudi Arabia in a tough position by killing three border patrol officers, forcing them to tighten their border security and surveillance. Later that year, the Yemen government retook control of Aden, allowing for Hadi's return. At the same time, Saleh formed an alliance with the Houthis in order to return to power. The next two years, many ceasefires momentarily took place, but were eventually broken, mostly by the Houthis. In 2017, after Saleh attempted to betray the Houthis, he was assassinated while trying to flee the capital.

From 2018 to 2019, a fight over political influence broke out between the UAE and Saudi Arabia, with the UAE backing the Southern Transitional Council (STC), which was attacking Hadi's government in Aden, Saudi Arabia's ally. In March of 2018 a bombardment of a wedding killed president of the Houthis Saleh Ali al-Sammad. The action was heavily critiqued as inhumane and inappropriately violent. In November of 2019, the UAE and Saudi Arabia finally reached an agreement for the distribution of power between Hadi's administration and the STC. The agreement did not last long, since the next year the STC resumed attacking Hadi's government while a Houthi attack on the Aden airport that killed a dozen individuals made the Trump administration assign the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).

Change in US' and Saudi Arabia's stances

Following the election of U.S. president Joe Biden, the Biden administration revoked the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) label given to the Houthis while also



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ending all cooperation with Saudi Arabia in offensive operations. The goal was to follow the UN's peaceful approach at ending the war. In order for Saudi to not retaliate, the U.S. promised to protect its borders.

At the same time, Houthis were attacking the Marib governorate, a stronghold sheltering about 1 million internally displaced individuals. Marib was also the last region the official government was in control of. Saudi Arabia was also attacked by the Houthis, with oil facilities being bombed and shot at by drones. Saudi Arabia responded with its own missiles while the U.S. condemned the Houthis' actions. The Houthis then proceeded to reject a ceasefire proposal by the U.S. A month later, the Biden administration decided to remove an extremely advanced air-defense system that was set up in Saudi Arabia, resulting in 8 civilians being injured by Houthi attacks. The following months, tensions grew larger in the Marib governorate, as Houthi were making slow but steady progress in rooting out the last government forces. Oman tried to broker a peace between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis but the Houthi negotiators refused to talk with the recently appointed UN special envoy for Yemen. On the 18th of September of 2021, the Houthis executed 8 people with the charge of being a part of the Saudi bombings that killed Houthi supporter president Saleh Ali al-Sammad. In December of 2021, the World Food Program officially stopped sending food aid to Yemen due to lack of funding. The famine problem worsened from that point on.

The situation between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis continued to deteriorate, with ballistic attacks from both sides, until March of 2023, when China managed to broker a truce between Saudi Arabia and Iran, a close ally of the Houthis, which enabled peace talks and better diplomatic relations. Only a month later, Saudi representatives were already able to visit Houthi-controlled Sana'a and talk with Houthi officials. Following that, the Yemeni government agreed with the Houthis on a prisoner swap, with 869 individuals being returned to their alignments. In December of 2023, the U.S. launched operation Prosperity Guardian to ensure the safety of vessels crossing the Red Sea shipping routes from Houthi attacks. It was made clear that the operation is only defensive and counter-attacks will not take place. Saudi Arabia is surprisingly not participating in the operation while some participants have chosen to remain anonymous. Relations between Saudi Arabia and Houthi have remained more or less friendly, unlike the U.S.'s second change in stance, since in 2024, Biden re-designated the Houthis as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SPGT).

Current Situation

As of right now, following the bombardments of Gaza in February 2024 the Houthi leader has stated that the attacks on the Red Sea shipping routes will not stop and will only worsen until all aggression in Gaza is put to an end and humanitarian aid reaches its citizens. Saudi Arabia remains the only member state to continue giving important aid to Yemen, since all other support has been decreased and sent to places of more urgency.



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At the same time, Houthis claimed their first attack on the Indian Ocean, expanding the reach of their attacks on ships passing through. The attacks have greatly increased in frequency since the launch of operation Prosperity Guardian. The Houthis have also prevented Saudi Arabia from joining the operation with threats of attacks. The U.S. has warned the Houthis while Saudi Arabia requested that the U.S. shows restraint when facing Houthi attacks. Yemen is also troubled with the unexpected death of Khalid Batarfi, leader of AQAP and the problems that could arise from his successor, Saad bin Atef al-Awlaki.

Humanitarian Crisis (2015-Present day)

The crisis, which started in 2015 following the Houthi take over and Saudi Arabia's violent response, has only gotten worse ever since and is still taking place to this day. As of now, more than 19 million people are in need of aid while a little less than that face difficulty finding food. Out of those, almost 7 million are in danger due to malnutrition. At the same time, about 5 million people have been internally displaced, most of them being women and children.

The Health-care sector is also falling apart, mostly due to the recent cholera outbreak that is ravaging the country, claiming the lives of 861 people with over 25000 infected. The lack of working health facilities (about half of them out of order) is contributing to the problem.

The situation is not going to get better if no external intervention is made seeing that the budget has not reached the targeted amount of 4.3 billion dollars, falling short by over 25% of the needed amount.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Al-Qaeda

Yemen has been a haven of safety for Al Qaeda since the late 1990s, with its leader, Osama Bin Laden, originating from the southwestern part of the nation. The reason why Al-Qaeda thrives in Yemeni soil is due to the fact that it holds the most unorganized, ungoverned regions in the entire globe, and the government has put the struggle against terrorist organizations as a secondary priority compared to the civil war. Al Qaeda in the Arabic Peninsula (AQAP) is considered the most significant winner of the failed political transition and the ongoing civil war. The AQAP adapted to the fast-changing political landscape, evolving into a rebel force capable of dominating territory and challenging governmental authority.¹⁴ Its main success stems from its displayed pragmatism: following local norms, forming alliances with Sunni allies, and

¹⁴ Photo "Political Violence Involving AQAP in Yemen"

Roy, E. (2023, April 6). *Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Sustained Resurgence in Yemen or Signs of Further Decline?* ACLED. <https://acleddata.com/2023/04/06/al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula-sustained-resurgence-in-yemen-or-signs-of-further-decline/>

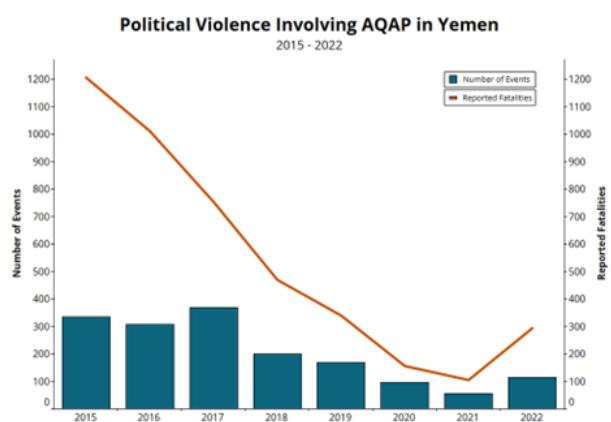


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submerging itself in a political economy of smuggling and trade that includes all fighting factions, including the Houthi/former President Saleh coalition.

Al Qaeda plays a significant role in the distrust among the three political groups. Since Al-Qaeda is seen as one of the most infamous US opponents, all Yemen's political groups have accused one another of working and collaborating with the group in order to provoke an attack from the US. For example, during the 2011 rebellion against the Saleh government, he accused his opponents of working with the terrorist group in order to overthrow them. To prove his argument, he withdrew his troops from regions where Al Qaeda was operating, allowing Al Qaeda to gain power. The context for such allegations is that the United States had been attacking Al-Qaeda in

Yemen since the early 2000s, frequently carrying out drone and missile attacks against its members.



Relations between the United States and the AQAP have had a significant impact on Yemen's political situation. Al-Qaeda mocked the Saudi government for claiming to lead Sunni Muslims while collaborating with the US in drone and missile strikes against

AQAP in Yemen. However, Saudi Arabia launched a war on the Houthis/Zaydi Shia Muslims (who are the main ideological enemies of AQAP/Sunni Islamists due to religious reasons) in 2015. This reality influenced AQAP's policy shift toward the country. Following that, AQAP gave orders not to strike Yemeni forces allied to the Hadi administration or Saudi-led coalition forces battling the Houthi movement. The goal was to unite forces in favor of the anti-Houthi parties in the conflict. After that, AQAP directly battled the Houthis in several engagements, including Aden (2015), the southern governorates of Lahj, Abyan, and Shabwa, and the northern governorates of Marib and Taiz. At the time, weaponry flowed easily from the Saudi coalition to Al-Qaeda. The Saudi-AQAP collaboration came to an end when Saudi Arabia encouraged Donald Trump's victory in the November 2016 US presidential elections, prompting Washington to shift its emphasis back to the fight on terror in Yemen. In January 2017, Trump started a large military operation in the central governorate of Al-Bayda, as well as drone strikes targeting Al-Qaeda militants, who were fighting with government troops and against the Houthis at the time. The following AQAP operations against the Houthis were autonomous.

Since no US-Houthi talks had been made in order to battle AQAP, the group took this as an opportunity to form closer relations with the Houthis in order to



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combat US attacks and impact on their control. This, although unexpected due to the parties being opponents, is justified because of the close ties between Iran and AQAP. The first hint of collaboration occurred with the release of a number of AQAP members from Houthi jails in return for the Houthi authorities' release of Iran's cultural attaché and the alleged oil supply to the Houthis by the terrorist organization. There has been no proof of any kind of alliance between the Houthis and AQAP. AQAP sources deny any friendly involvement with them, highlighting their attempts to block the Houthi advance in Al-Bayda and their alliance with Saudi Arabia.

Later, Al-Qaeda turned its attention to a new battle against the UAE-backed STC in the southern governorates after its formation in 2017. Now, the STC is considered the main enemy of the terrorist organization after it lost its capacity to move in Shabwa when Islah-aligned troops were forced out and STC operations in Abian were led in order to explicitly target the group. Given the STC's renewed efforts to position itself as a government in areas of the former southern state, including its so far unsuccessful attempt to drive out Islah-aligned forces from Hadramawt and Al-Mahra, Al-Qaeda's policy towards the STC is not likely to change.

China

China's ambition to maintain tight strategic ties with Saudi Arabia is the major factor influencing its stance on the Yemen dispute. The United Nations-led peace talks and the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) political transition process have both received support from the Chinese government. However, because of the countries' relationship, Beijing has reluctantly agreed to the Saudi-led military assault in Yemen. Saudi Arabia poses a crucial key for China's gateway towards the Sunni Muslims and Eastern world and is also a significant oil provider. One month after the Houthis took over Sana'a, China voted in favor of Security Council Resolution 2201. In 2015 Saudi airstrikes against the Houthis occurred, and even though Beijing opposed such behavior, Beijing's people did not protest in any way in order to keep its close ties with the Saudi government. China fully supported all UN Security Council resolutions on the Yemen conflict, including resolution 2216, and has taken active measures to combat the growing humanitarian crisis in Yemen, being a member of the Friends of Yemen conference and providing funds towards the Yemeni government, the UN's World Food Programme, and the World Health Organization. China has also contributed to the economic reconstruction process of Yemen, aiding financially and investing in Chinese projects to develop Yemen's electricity, oil, and gas sectors, and infrastructure.

France

The French government, like most countries, fully supports Yemen's official government and strongly condemns any Houthi attacks on the Yemeni people and in the Red Sea. However, France has indirectly contributed to the ongoing conflict in Yemen. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are two of the most important



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export markets for French weapons. Therefore, with these two nations having active roles in the war, French weapons are used in order to commit numerous crimes against international law. In order to combat this, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights made a complaint against the French arm manufacturers stating that “Even though all warring parties must be held accountable, arms manufacturers play a special role in the conflict, considering that their continued weapons exports enable the illegal attacks on Yemeni civilians.” It's important to note that not only has France been one of the major arms suppliers of such countries, but also many more, such as Italy, Spain, and the UK.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE, being in the Saudi-led coalition, seeks to defeat the Houthis. Along with Saudi Arabia, the UAE took control of Yemen's important waterways, which led to investments in ports and military sites in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. This enabled both nations to defend their maritime borders, maintain regional authority, and advance their commercial interests. However, starting in 2018, things began to shift as the country began to pursue its own agenda. The UAE seized control of important southern ports and the surrounding territories and joined forces with the southern separatist organization. Of course, this did not accord with the coalition's goals, and the alliance quickly disbanded, leaving each side to defend themselves on their own. Relations between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have not been ruptured, even though each nation holds different priorities regarding the Yemeni conflict.

Oman

Oman has been heavily impacted by the Yemeni conflict, with a major refugee influx prompted by the humanitarian catastrophe. Oman is one of the few nations that welcomes Yemeni refugees, even providing free medical care to injured individuals, causing a significant economic hit on the nation. Also, Oman has suffered from the terrorist group formed in Yemen, Al-Qaeda, which has created a massive security issue for the country. Oman's stance on the conflict is peaceful, with the country refusing to join the Saudi-led coalition, hosting peace talks with the Houthis, and condemning any use of military force. Oman's claim that peaceful talks are the solution was called into question when reports of transporting weaponry for the Houthis surfaced. The Omani government denied all claims and has kept friendly relations with all Yemen's political groups and foreign countries involved. Despite the smuggling allegations, the Yemeni people view Oman as a peacemaker, and foreign parties consider the nation as a third party who could help resolve the issue.

Kuwait

Kuwait is an active member of the Saudi-led coalition, supporting Saudi involvement in Yemen's politics. The Houthis' seizure of Sana'a was widely viewed by Kuwait as a dangerous assertion of Iranian supremacy in the Arabian Peninsula that

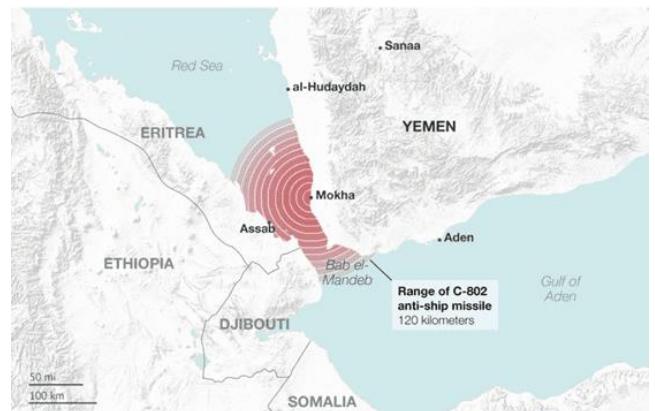


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needed to be stopped. Later on, Kuwait's involvement became more diplomatic and less military. Backed by the UN, the nation hosted peace talks involving Houthi representatives. Although the efforts were futile, they emphasized Kuwait's stance on the matter. Like Oman, Kuwait is considered a helpful peacemaker.

Iran

Iran's influence has played a significant role in the progression of the Yemeni civil war. Iran's major objective at the beginning of the conflict was to obtain significant control over the country and its key waterways, giving them leverage over world shipping. To do this, Iran first allied with the Southern separatist movement, which had taken control of such territories. Later, Iran's objective changed, and it became interested in the Houthi movement due to its strong antagonism to the United States. Iranian help for the Houthis began about 2009, with successive years of support in the form of arms and expertise. This relationship grew after the Houthis took control of Sanaa in September 2014, with Iran being the sole nation to recognize the Houthis and establish formal diplomatic relations with them.



The Iranian government officially denies any participation in assisting the Houthi movement, despite the fact that foreign sources confirm this. Iran's involvement provides material assistance to the Houthis, which has been a major key element in their success over the years. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC—a branch of the Iranian military) has provided the terrorist group with conventional and chemical weapons, as well as drones and cruise missiles, allowing them to threaten ships passing through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The Houthis' maritime capabilities benefit Iran's interests in the Red Sea and threaten global trade. These dangers continue despite the naval embargo placed on the Houthis. In truth, the estimated range of Houthi anti-ship missiles may have risen since 2017, owing to increasing supply and Iranian cooperation.¹⁵

Israel

Israel's aggression towards Yemen stems from their hostile relations with the Houthis. Over the years there have been many bilateral attacks, with the latest being on the 24th of August 2025. Israel conducted air strikes against the capital of Yemen, Sana'a, who is under Houthi control. The strike was aimed towards the Presidential Palace, a fuel depot and power stations, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries. Israel

¹⁵ Photo "Range of C-802 anti-ship missile"
(*A New Threat to Red Sea Shipping*, n.d.)



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claims that the attack had been in response to Houthi missiles that were fired towards Israel, with the president publicly stating that "Anyone who attacks us - we attack them. Anyone planning to attack us - we attack them. I believe the entire region is learning the power and determination of the State of Israel,".

Russia

For many years, Russia had no special interest in the dispute and did not favor one side over the other. Russian officials continue to point out their neutrality, meeting on a regular basis with representatives of the internationally recognized government, the Houthis, and the southern separatists. However, following Russia's extensive invasion of Ukraine, the Houthis, with their strong anti-Western beliefs and assaults on Western vessels, have gained notable attention from the Kremlin, leading to the establishment of military collaboration. Russia's interest in the Houthis stems from the fact that they deflect Western focus away from aiding Ukraine. While publicly denying any military support to the rebels, Russia, along with Iran, is one of the few countries actively dealing with the Houthis, even diplomatically. The Houthi leadership claims to have shared interests with Russia in the Middle East, and Moscow has urged Washington to rethink its decision to name Ansar Allah a terrorist organization. Hopes for Russia's assistance in bringing the conflict to an end are likely unfounded, owing to the current state of Russia's war with Ukraine. Aside from that, Russia sought to maintain positive relations with Yemen since the nation is one of Russia's top grain importers, and Russia needs additional allies in the Middle East. Finally, Russia has offered the Yemeni people humanitarian help and has proposed that to settle the long-running internal Yemeni conflict, discussions and an inclusive national discourse are required.

Saudi Arabia

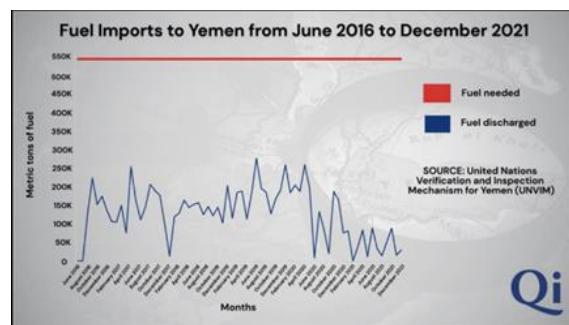
Saudi Arabia is a strong backer and ally of the IRG. The reasons for Saudi Arabia's determined efforts to return the IRG to power (including the formation of a Saudi-led coalition with the UAE in 2015 to restore Hadi to office) are important to Saudi Arabia's ascent to prominence in the Middle East. One of the causes is the alarming growth of the Houthis on Saudi Arabia's southern border, who are backed by Saudi Arabia's key regional rival, Iran. Another geoeconomic cause is the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off the coast of Yemen, which is a vital oil shipping channel between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The Saudis wanted to be sure they had control of it. This marine channel helps Saudi Arabia transfer millions of barrels of oil each day and is crucial to the global oil supply.

Although the Saudi-led coalition provided optimism for the future of the Yemeni conflict, hopes were rapidly dashed. In March 2015, the coalition launched attacks on Yemeni territory, indiscriminately attacking people and civilian infrastructure. The same month, it imposed a naval blockade on Yemen, which contributed significantly to the escalation of one of the most serious humanitarian



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crises. The blockade still persists, despite the fact that various international agencies, such as the United Nations Food Program, have repeatedly advocated the need to dismantle it. The blockade prevented the flow of crucial commercial and humanitarian products into the nation, causing thousands of people to die as a result of malnutrition. Since 2016, the embargo has blocked commercial flights into and out of Yemen's largest international airport, which is located in the capital, Sana'a.



These flight restrictions have hampered medical evacuations for tens of thousands of severely ill Yemeni people, as well as the entry of important medications and medical supplies into the nation. Finally, the Saudi-led coalition's limitations on fuel imports are a major cause of the economic crisis, making basic necessities costly. The naval blockade allows Saudis to restrict the entry of ships delivering oil into Yemeni ports. According to UN statistics, Saudi Arabia severely restricts gasoline imports to quantities well below Yemen's needs. In November 2021, Saudi Arabia let only 3% of Yemen's monthly fuel needs into the nation, and only 5% in December.¹⁶

The relationship between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia is an important aspect of the war. The Houthis have repeatedly assaulted Saudi borders in reaction to the coalition's operations in Yemen. However, if the Saudis lifted their bombardment and embargo of Yemen, the Houthis would have little reason to provoke their stronger neighbor into fresh strikes. If the Saudis stopped their military action against Yemen, the Houthis would be unlikely to launch further cross-border raids.

United Kingdom (UK)

For years, the UK's engagement was described as consultative, logistical, or economic. Arms sales to Saudi Arabia, diplomatic backing for the Saudi-led coalition, and the deployment of British military troops to aid Saudi operations have all been explained as strategic alliances and counterterrorism efforts.

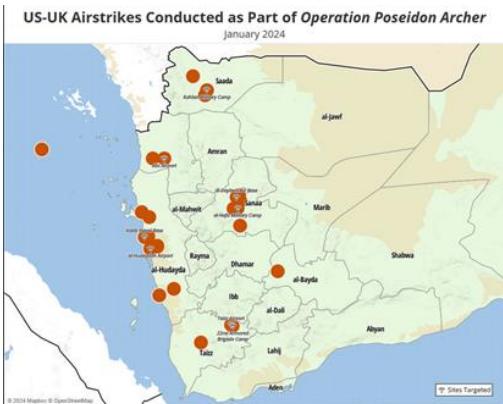
The United Kingdom's undeclared war on Yemen consists of a variety of kinds of assistance for Saudi Arabia. British defense companies have contributed significantly to the Saudi war effort, supplying maintenance, weapons, and expertise. BAE Systems, the primary provider of the Royal Saudi Air Force's Tornado planes, which have formed the foundation of Saudi aerial assault capabilities, has maintained a consistent presence within Saudi command structures. British military personnel, acting under vague orders, have trained Saudi pilots and given operational support for attacks that have frequently targeted civilians. The United Kingdom's backing for Saudi Arabia's deadly war was not without controversy. The Campaign Against Arms Trade

¹⁶ Photo "Fuel Imports to Yemen from June 2016 to December 2021"
Mark, K. (1992). *Australian and New Zealand Booksellers and Publishers 1992*.



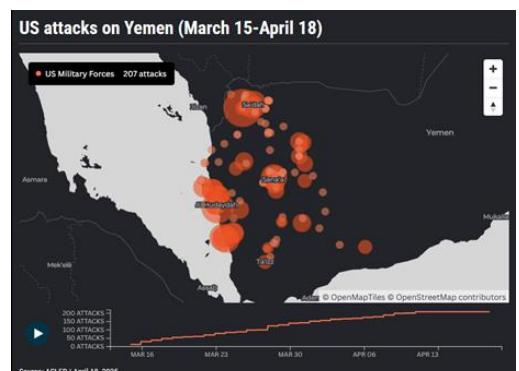
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(CAAT) filed a court challenge in 2016 about the government's arms export licenses to Saudi Arabia, and the judicial review caused the government to reevaluate its arms export policies. In 2024, despite the UK's passive stance, the US, along with the UK, conducted air strikes against the Houthis in response to the Houthis' attacks against international and commercial shipping, as well as naval vessels transiting the Red Sea. The strike was supported by an international coalition.¹⁷



Houthi assaults in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, as well as combat terrorism. The United States' involvement in this conflict is clear. Over the years, the country has regularly bombed or launched air attacks against the Houthis and AQAP, resulting in the loss of innocent lives and infrastructure. Through 2024, US forces have halted Houthi-launched projectiles, prevented attempted Houthi vessel seizures, led coalition patrol operations, and struck Houthi targets in Yemen. As part of Operation Prosperity Guardian, US forces took responsibility for the Red Sea presence and intelligence-sharing activities in February 2025. On March 15, 2025, US soldiers initiated an offensive aimed at forcing the Houthis to stop assaulting and removing their ability to harm marine traffic. The Houthis resisted, bombing US Navy ships and shooting down US unmanned aircraft, fueling the ongoing US-Houthi battle on Yemeni land.

The United States was also the first to identify the Houthis as a terrorist group. In 2021, President Donald Trump recognized the Houthis as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity (SDGT) and Foreign Terrorist Organization. President Joe Biden reversed these actions before redesignating the Houthis as SDGTs in 2024. President Trump classified the Houthis as an FTO in March 2025. The US battle against the Houthis consists of many US-led operations against the terrorist group.¹⁸



- On March 15, 2025, roughly two months into his second term, US President Donald Trump initiated Operation Rough Rider, an air bombing operation

¹⁷ Photo "US-UK Airstrikes Conducted as part of Operation Poseidon Archer"

Wikipedia Contributors. (2025, May 6). *US–UK airstrikes on Yemen*. Wikipedia; Wikimedia Foundation.

¹⁸ Photo " US Attacks on Yemen (March 15- April 18) 2023"

Hussein, M. A., & Chughtai, A. (2025, May). *Animated maps show US-led attacks on Yemen*. Al Jazeera <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2025/5/1/animated-maps-show-us-led-attacks-on-yemen>



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reportedly aimed at Houthi locations in Yemen that has killed approximately 300 people.

- On April 18, a US strike on Yemen's Ras Isa petroleum terminal killed at least 80 people and injured 150 others in one of the country's bloodiest attacks by US forces.
- Ten days later, on April 28, US Marines targeted a migrant holding center in Saada, killing at least 68 individuals. The center had been hosting around 115 individuals, primarily from African countries, who had been imprisoned while attempting to travel into Saudi Arabia to find work.

Trump's bombing campaign in Yemen builds on Biden's Operation Poseidon Archer, which began on January 12, 2024, with attacks coordinated with the UK.

However, the US's activities throughout this conflict were damaging and beneficial. The United States supports efforts by the United Nations and coalition partners to secure a durable cessation of hostilities between the parties, as well as a negotiated, inclusive settlement that leads to a united, representative government led by the legitimate Republic of Yemen Government. In addition to diplomatic efforts to foster national unity and discussion, the United States invests in Yemen's people and economy. The United States is one of Yemen's top suppliers of humanitarian and developmental aid, and it collaborates closely with United Nations agencies, international partners, and various US and local non-governmental organizations.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
22 May 1990	Reunification of Yemen
4 May-7 July 1994	First Yemeni Civil War
12 June 2000	Treaty of Jeddah between Saleh and Saudi Arabia
18 June 2004	Houthi Rebellion begins
10 September 2004	Al Houthi's death
22 May 2006	Saleh's amnesty to 600 Houthis
27 September 2006	Saleh's re-election
16 June 2007	Houthi-Government Ceasefire with the help of Qatar
29 April 2008	The ceasefire is broken
11 August 2009-12 February 2010	Operation Scorched Earth
20-24 September 2010	Government-led Shabwa siege to root out AQAP forces
27 January 2011-27 February 2012	Arab Spring in Yemen
21 February 2012	Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi wins the election
25 February 2012	Formal resignation of Saleh



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21 January 2014	National Dialogue Conference concerning Yemen's constitution
21 September 2014	Houthi takeover of Sanaa
22 January 2015	Hadi's resignation
6 February 2015	The Houthi take control of the Yemeni government and Hadi reclaims his title and condemns the Houthi government
20 March 2015	Islamic State attacks with two suicide bomber resulting in many casualties. Hadi flees the country
26 March-21 April 2015	Operation Decisive Storm led by Saudi Arabia against Houthi
22 April 2015-present	Operation Restoring Hope
12 May 2015	5-day humanitarian ceasefire proposed by the Obama administration
22 September 2015	Hadi returns to Aiden and reclaims ground from the Houthi
4 October 2016	Ceasefires are broken-Houthi ballistic missile attack on Riyadh
10 March 2017	Situation in Yemen is officially considered a Humanitarian Crisis
4 December 2017	Saleh is assassinated during battle between his supporters and Houthi forces
28-31 January 2018	Battle of Aden-STC takes control
16 February 2018	The UN appoint a Special Envoy in Yemen
13 December 2018	Signment of the Stockholm agreement
5 November 2019	Signment of the Riyadh agreement between the STC and the Yemeni government
1-30 March 2020	Back and forth attacks and raids between Saudi and Houthi forces
March 2020	Trump administration halts 73 million dollar humanitarian aid from going to Yemen
10 April 2020	First recorded Covid-19 patient in Yemen
13 April 2020	Saudi-proposed ceasefire due to Covid-19
21 June-July 2020	STC takes control of government facilities and returns to power-sharing rule
15-16 October 2020	Prisoner Swap of about 1000 individuals (largest prisoner swap)
30 December 2020	Aden airport attack following official Hadi-STC power-sharing agreement



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1 January 2021	Houthi's titled as an FTO by the Trump administration
4 February 2021	Biden administration revokes the Houthi FTO statement and changes policy concerning Yemen
22 March 2021	Houthi's reject a ceasefire proposed by Saudi Arabia
April-August 2021	Continuous clashes between Houthi's and Saudis and failed diplomatic attempts resulting in US weaponry withdrawal from Saudi Arabia
27 September 2021	Meeting between U.S. delegation and the Saudi leaders
November 2021	Houthi's occupation of U.S. embassy in Sanaa
December 2021	WFP cuts food aid due to lack of funding
30 March 2022	Saudi Arabia announces seize in all military operations in Yemen
2 April 2022	2 month ceasefire brokered by the UN to enable the Ramadan
7 April 2022	Hadi transfers his rule to the PLC
April 2022	Houthi representatives sign an action plan to prevent the enrollment of children in military forces
2 October 2022	End of the UN truce marking the least amount of casualties since the Houthi rebellion
10 March 2023	Iran-Saudi Arabia negotiations with the aid of China
14-16 April 2023	Exchange of 887 prisoners
1 August 2023	1.2 billion given to the PLC in financial aid by Saudi Arabia
August 2023	Sudden increase in AQAP related drone attacks against the STC
14-18 September 2023	Oman aids in diplomatic talks between Houthi delegation and Saudi officials in Riyadh
7 November 2023	Declaration of war from Houthi leader against Israel following Gaza attacks
8 November 2023	Attack on a U.S. drone over the Red Sea
19 November 2023	Capture of Israeli ship named "Galaxy Leader" by Houthi forces
18 December 2023	Launch of Operation Prosperity Guardian by the US to protect shipping routes



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31 December 2023	UN representatives announce progress in Houthi-PLC peace agreements and ceasefire
17 January 2024	Houthis renamed SDGT by the Biden administration
16 February 2024	The above changes takes effect
14 March 2024	Houthi leader threatens increase in Red Sea attacks, expressing concern for Gaza situation
15-20 March 2024	Houthi forces threaten Saudi with missile attacks if it enters Operation Prosperity Guard
25 March 2024	Leader of AQAP Khalid Batarfi dies unexpectedly, leaving Saad Bin Atef al-Awlaki in power
24 August 2025	Israel carries out air strikes towards Sana'a

RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) (2001)

The Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) is a resolution of the US Congress which allowed the US to use military force against those responsible for the attacks of September 11th. Such terrorist groups that were held accountable for the attacks are the Taliban and AQAP, although this joint resolution has been used as an excuse to use force against other groups like the Houthis.

Economic de-escalation Agreement (2024)

The Economic de-escalation Agreement was reached between the Yemeni official Government and the Houthis on the 23th of July 2024 in order to mitigate the risk of an economic escalation of the situation while making efforts towards putting Yemen through a political process.

The Economic de-escalation Agreement stated the following:

1. The removal of all measures against Yemen's Banks that were put by both the official government and the Houthis.
2. The re-activation of certain flights of 'Yemenia Airways' that were seized by the Houthis (flights from Sana'a to Jordan were increased to three per day and flights to Cairo and India should operate as needed).
3. Frequent meetings held by both parties in order to discuss further economic and humanitarian matters based on the UN roadmap.

Hudaydah Agreement (2018)



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The Hudaydah Agreement was signed as part of the Stockholm Agreement on the 18th of December 2018 between the official Government of Yemen and the Houthis in order to address control over the City of Hudaydah and the Ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa.

The Hudaydah Agreement stated the following:

1. All armed troops in Hudaydah and its ports, Salif and Ra's Isa, must immediately halt fire, and both parties' reinforcements must be removed.
2. The Re-deployment of both military forces in these cities to agreed-upon places.
3. A Redeployment Coordination Committee, directed by the UN, will supervise the re-deployment and cease-fire. The committee chair will report to the Security Council on a weekly basis.
4. The parties will enable citizens and products to transit freely between the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif, and Ras Issa, as well as humanitarian relief to be delivered through those ports.
5. The revenues of the ports must go to the Bank of Yemen and their security will be given as responsibility to local forces.

Riyadh Agreement (2019)

The Riyadh Agreement was signed on the 5th of November 2019 by the internationally recognized government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and the Southern Transitional Council (STC) in order to ease military tensions between the two sides and smooth over differences between Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E.

The Riyadh Agreement stated the following:

1. The formation of a technocratic government of 24 ministers, divided equally into southern and northern individuals with no previous history of hostility towards the other side. The president will also appoint governors and directors of security of Aden, Abyan and Al-Dhale'a. The state's affairs and security issues will be handled in Aden.
2. The return of all forces placed in conflict areas (Aden, Abyan and Shabwa) and their replacements with local security forces as well as the transfer of all government military forces and Transitional Council military formations in Aden to camps outside of the city, supervised by the Coalition. The First Presidential Protection Brigade will continue to protect the presidential palace.
3. Security and counter-terrorism forces in Aden will be reinforced with members of the STC, as well as the Ministries of Interior and Defence. The creation of the Installation Protection Force, which will protect vital civilian infrastructure in all liberated governorates, the ports of Mukalla, Al-Dhabba, Al-Mocha and Balhaf facility.¹⁹

¹⁹ See "Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue"



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The Stockholm Agreement (2018)

The Stockholm Agreement was signed on the 13th of December of 2018, between the Official Government of Yemen and the Houthis in the city of Stockholm. The agreement is divided in three parts; the Hudaydah Agreement, the Prisoner Exchange Agreement and the statement of understanding on Taïz.²⁰

The agreement stated the following:

1. The Hudaydah Agreement.
2. The immediate release of all prisoners, detainees, missing persons, arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared persons, and those under house arrest, held by both parties in relation to the Yemeni issue with no exceptions. Each party should provide the other with a list with the names of their prisoners (Prisoner Exchange Agreement).
3. The formation of a joint committee with representatives from both parties. The committee shall report to the UN regularly and submit the names of the members (Taïz Agreement).

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

First Houthi-Saudi talks (2015-2016)

Geneva

The first attempt for peace talks between Houthi representatives and Saudi officials sponsored by the UN, which took place during the summer of 2015 (15th-19th of June). The talks were based on the Security Council's resolution 2216. No progress was made since the Houthi delegation refused to cooperate with representatives from the Yemeni government and thus no ceasefire or general agreement was reached other than some proposed humanitarian pauses.

Muscat

This was the first instance of direct conversations between Houthi and Saudi delegations (September 2015) and, although not formal, was a big step towards friendlier relations. Oman was responsible for this achievement with the introduction of the "Oman Peace Plan".

Biel

The continuation of the Geneva peace talks in a nearby location (December 2015). The Hadi government, Houthi and General People's Council (GPC) delegations participated in the sessions. Problems began quickly with Houthi representatives refusing to discuss until the Saudi-led coalition agreed

²⁰ See "Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue"



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to a ceasefire. The only result of the peace talks was a temporary agreement on humanitarian aid in Taiz but it was soon abandoned since the military committee overseeing it was not to be trusted.

Kuwait

Another round of peace talks sponsored by the UN, which took place in Kuwait city. It originally started on the 21st of April of 2016 but negotiations were paused and delayed multiple times, starting the first hour of the talks due to lack of progress. The talks were based on the Security Council's resolution 2216, which demanded the disarming and retreat of Houthi forces. Disagreements quickly arose concerning the order in which the proposed ideas should be acted upon. More specifically, the Houthi delegation argued that the power-sharing agreement should be made and signed before they withdrew from seized cities and gave up weapons while the Hadi government requested the opposite. In the end no agreement was able to be made and the peace talks closed without producing a result.

National Dialogue Conference (2014)

The National Dialogue Conference (NDC) operated from March 18 of 2013 until January 24-25 of 2014, taking place in the Mövenpick Hotel in Sanaa with the purpose of stabilizing the country's situation, following the Arab Spring and its aftermath. About 565 representatives participated in the conference from all political parties in Yemen as well as the Houthis and social groups (mainly women and younger men), with Hadi overseeing the process. Although it failed its main purpose seeing as the Yemeni conflict is ongoing and the situation hasn't gotten better neither for the involved groups nor for the civilians, it was a first step towards the solution of the problem without unnecessary violence.

While in action, thousands of recommendations were made, with some of them being accepted and constructed upon, though most of them were rejected by the Houthi who believed they were not represented equally. The main result of the NDC was the division of Yemen into six regions, creating the Federal Republic of Yemen. At the same time, it has battled some issues unrelated to the Yemeni civil war, such as the under-representation of young men and women in political matters as well as the difficulty they are facing in acquiring a governmental position. The decisions made, although practical, were acted upon in a symbolic manner, changing nothing in the Yemeni political situation.

The reason the NDC failed in completing its main tasks was mostly due to practical errors and ignorance by the Gulf Cooperation Council concerning Saleh. More specifically, the goals of the NDC were too ambitious for its budget and active time, while the necessary preparations to ensure trust between the many political parties participating were not successful, further incommoding negotiations. Lastly, its attempt to function as a transitional phase and to subsequently limit Saleh's power and influence failed, due to the fact that too many liabilities were placed upon Hadi,



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overwhelming him and enabling Saleh to remain in control of the situation. At the same time, some political parties were influencing Hadi's opinions and actions, due to him being "uncharismatic" as characterised by the general public of Yemen.

The Riyadh Agreement (2019-2020)

A power-sharing and security pact signed by the Hadi and STC leaders in Riyadh on the 5th of November of 2019 brokered by the UAE and Saudi Arabia with the goal of easing tensions between the Hadi government and STC forces after intense fighting in Aden.

Although the agreements of the pact were acted upon, it was not without complications and general difficulties. Firstly, the STC was recognised and included in the national government through a 24-minister cabinet. With that said, the role of the STC representatives was mostly symbolic since they didn't have any control over some important ministries and the cabinet was mainly divided, with both sides boycotting decisions. Also, the integration of STC forces into government bodies was programmed but never came to be due to heavy lack of trust between sides and because STC never gave up Aden, as was agreed.

The pact ultimately failed, holding a symbolic role rather than a practical one however a temporary stabilization of the southern front was achieved and the intentions of the broker countries became clearer, with Saudi Arabia prioritizing unification of the Yemeni government and UAE attempting to maintain their influence over the divided state.

The Stockholm Agreement (2018)

An agreement signed on the 13th of December of 2018 under Resolution 2451 which attempted to implement three actions.

The first point was the immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of armed forces from Hodeidah monitored by the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA). Although in paper the agreement was in effect, there were multiple cases of ceasefire breaches, especially from Houthi forces (over 10.000 recorded armed assaults) which resulted in about a thousand civilians losing their lives or being heavily injured. There were also concerns about the trustworthiness of the UN monitorship.

The second agreement was a prisoner swap, which saw some progress with the prisoner swap of 2020 (681 Houthi fighters and 400 government aligned fighters).

The last action agreed upon was to allow humanitarian aid to reach Taiz and Hodeidah and even though some progress was made, the overall result felt short compared to what was agreed.

The Stockholm Agreement had some very impactful results like the set up of the UNMHA but the immediate actions that were taken like the ceasefire were not reinforced appropriately and failed achieving a perfect result and avoiding human life losses.

UN Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015)



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Adopted by the SC on the 14th of April of 2015, its main essence was the end of any and all armed conflicts and limit the arms trade in relevant regions. The resolution was passed following a 14-0-1 vote, with only Russia abstaining.

It primarily targeted the Houthis, demanding they withdraw and give back the areas they have taken over. Moreover, the supply of military equipment, firearms and ammunition to any of the fighting parties was prohibited, with regular inspections on suspicious cargo heading towards the country. Also, it requested the unhindered access of humanitarian aid to all civilians in the fighting regions to minimize the amount of side casualties. Lastly, it required all stakeholders to implement previous resolutions regarding the Yemeni conflict into their policy.

All in all, the resolution was called out by critics for being biased, in favour of the Saudi-led coalition, since other than the neutral requests, concerning civilian safety and past resolutions, its main points impaired Houthi interests, presenting them as a terrorist organization rather than a rebel force, a more neutral label.

UN Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024)

Adopted by the SC on the 10th of January of 2024, it aimed to put a halt to the Houthi attacks on cargo ships. The resolution was passed following a 11-0-4 vote, with Algeria, China, Mozambique and Russia abstaining.

It was focused around the recurring and unprovoked attacks by Houthi forces on cargo ships navigating through the Red Sea shipping lines. It firstly demanded the stop of the attacks and the release of an Israeli ship, the “Galaxy Leader”, and its crew members. It also highlighted the ships’ right on self defense if said attacks occur, reminding the shipping lines are international and any ship has the right to cross them. Airstrike responses to attacks were also approved, ruled as self defense, as proposed by the UK.

The resolution has not yet seen any real results, other than the release of the “Galaxy Leader” crew, since the Houthi attacks continue, as a response to the Gaza situation and no action has been taken against them, despite U.S. attempts on the matter (including the Prosperity Guard Operation).

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Regional Conference on Yemen

A regional conference would bring together foreign nations involved in the conflict, such as Saudi Arabia, to address their concerns, achieve mutual agreements, and focus on stability, de-escalation, and assistance for the Yemeni people. Such a meeting may be held and funded by organizations like the United Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council, or even nations like Oman, which act as peacemakers.

National Council (STC, Houthis, PLC)



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A national council would aim to bring the political groupings battling for Yemen's government closer to unification. This short-term power-sharing council would oversee rebuilding and security, as well as assist the factions in reaching an agreement on common issues. This national council would, of course, include Houthi, PLC, and STC representatives and could be overseen by the UN.

Third-Party Peacekeeping

The role of third-party peacekeeping in this conflict is significant. Even though some nations, like Oman, are actively working on peacekeeping, there are plenty more that could draw attention to their initiatives. Countries like Switzerland or Sweden could lead a coalition of neutral nations backed by the UN, the African Union, or the Arab League that would oversee the crisis by policing conflict areas, monitoring ceasefires, and mediating disputes.

Limit Arms Sales

Limiting weapons sales is an important step toward resolving the Yemeni dispute. Arms trade and external backing from foreign states to countries participating in the conflict or Yemeni political factions is a critical issue that is causing the war to escalate further. The United Nations Security Council, in collaboration with the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), could coordinate efforts to track arms shipments and perform yearly checks on leading exporting nations such as the United Kingdom and France in order to impose stronger export limits.

Autonomy under national umbrella

Granting regional authority under a national umbrella may reduce tensions among Yemen's political factions. A decentralised federal system would aid in the governance of the country as well as the unification of an autonomous Yemen. With the help of The United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the European Union (EU) and through national conferences such arrangements could be made.

UN-led peace talks

UN-led peace negotiations are critical to resolving the current situation. Yemen's political groups and other nations may be able to reach an agreement through peaceful discussions. This would make up for prior similar efforts that were rendered futile owing to the exclusion of key factions. Such peace discussions can be backed by the United Nations and neutral nations such as Oman, as well as countries that play major roles in the conflict without bias.

War crimes investigations

The conflict in Yemen is marked by uncontrolled attacks, airstrikes on people, sieges, torture, and child army recruiting. By conducting war crimes investigations, states and parties that abuse their power can be held responsible. Even if this does



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not resolve the issue, it will undoubtedly improve the situation and send a strong message about the morality of such actions. The investigations should be conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court.

Terrorist Financing Crackdown

Yemen's financial instability has enabled several terrorist groups, including AQAP and ISIS, to exploit it. This problem can be addressed by a targeted crackdown of their funding sources by imposing fines on facilitators and strengthening Yemen's financial institutions. Such safeguards should be combined with anti-corruption efforts to prevent help and resources from being diverted to militants. The UN Counter-Terrorism Committee and the US Treasury Department (OFAC) may be appropriate organisations to take action.

Transparency

Ensuring openness is critical to resolving the issue, as many Yemenis distrust both domestic and international players as a result of years of corruption and secrecy. It would also give valuable information into governments' activities. Transparency will not repair everything immediately, but it is the first step toward restoring faith in government. The UNDP and the World Bank can undertake this role, and each nation and political party may work independently to make their agendas clearer to the public.

Humanitarian aid

In order to combat the rising humanitarian crisis created by the Yemeni conflict, countries and organizations must highlight the importance of humanitarian aid and prioritize it no matter the nation's stance on the matter. By providing free access to food, clean water, medical care, and shelter we can support Yemen's vulnerable populations. Organizations that should take action are The World Food Programme (WFP), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNICEF, and individual aid from nations.

UN-protected zones

Establishing UN-protected zones in conflict-affected areas such as Hodeidah will assist to end the humanitarian catastrophe that has killed thousands of Yemenis. Such zones will safeguard individuals caught in the fire while also providing them with clean water and food. These zones might also include schools, clinics, and marketplaces, offering the Yemenis with their basic needs. These zones can be established by the UN Peacekeeping and Security Council, with the assistance of humanitarian NGOs.

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