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RESEARCH REPORT

THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH
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THE ISSUE OF THE YEMEN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

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Basic Overview of the Issue

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen is the worst in global history. The country has been facing this issue for almost 9 years and the immense decrease in economic well being is severe. Yemen can not comply with any needs of the public nor the state. Almost 80 percent of the population, 24 million people require humanitarian aid; 14.3 million of them being in acute need. The humanitarian need rates are rising and the public is in the most threatening situation they have ever been in.

The crisis began in 2011, with the revolts against former President Abdullah Saleh, who had been leading Yemen for over three decades. As Saleh left the office in 2012, the two oppositions, namely president Hadi's supporters and the Houthi Rebels started to go against each other and the events went out of the political landscape. Furthermore, the violence broke out in 2015, and since then there has been severe damage to both the economy and the public's well being. The Yemeni government is failing to comply with its people's basic survival needs, protection, and livelihoods alongside essential basic services. The impact the crisis has had on Yemen, and overall the international community, is huge since it is the largest man-made humanitarian crisis in the entire history of the world. The Yemen crisis has collapsed the economy and also changed the public's lives drastically in ways such as rising poverty rates, the amount of humanitarian need and being displaced. This crisis has affected many groups including children, women, the marginalized, the displaced and the refugees in an incredibly severe way that can not be overlooked.

Explanation of Important Terms

Humanitarian crisis

A humanitarian crisis occurs when the humanitarian, physical, economic or environmental damage from an event, or series of events, overwhelm a community's capacity to cope. It may also be defined as an immense breach of human rights conducted by a state or an organization that affects numerous people alongside the parties themselves.

Humanitarian action

According to the principles and good practice of Human Donor Ship which is a treaty signed by various Member States, humanitarian action includes the protection of civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities, the provision of food, water and sanitation, shelter, health services and other items of assistance, undertaken for the benefit of affected people and to facilitate the return to normal lives and livelihoods.



Acute need

According to the Meriam-Webster Dictionary, it is the act of being, needing or providing short term medical care.

Famine

It is the extreme scarcity of food in which people fail to comply with their nutrition needs.

Detailed Background of the Issue

History of the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen

Terrorism became a big issue in Yemen starting with seventeen U.S. personnel being killed by the Al Qaida, which is a Sunni Islamist multi-national military terrorist organization founded by Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and several other Arab volunteers during the Soviet-Afghan War, in 2000 and has rapidly increased since then. In 2011, uprisings and protests began against then-president Saleh. Yemen's Gulf neighbors; Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, as well as the United States of America, financially supported Saleh's vice president to make him resign which caused more conflict in the area. With Saleh resigning, the country divided into two, those who sided with the new president or the rebels, thus the Civil War began. The aforementioned process both led to the capital's economy to collapse and to the humanitarian disaster Yemen is facing today.

Relations with United Nations at the Time of the Events

The United Nations took several actions regarding the matter. They aimed to resolve the issue as a whole and overcome the dispute. Although all the contributions helped, it did not work sufficiently enough to undertake the crisis completely. To overcome this crisis, the UN and its partners are dedicated to sending crucial humanitarian and development assistance. The United Nations is embodied through its 21 resident and non-resident agencies, funds, and specialized programs regarding the Yemen humanitarian crisis.

Regarding the political aspect behind the issue, the United Nations Security Council backed a Yemeni National Dialogue Conference (NDC) facilitated by UN Special Envoy Jamal Benoma with participation from Yemen's both political parties (including the restive south and the Houthi political party) and the civil society. The United Nations Security Council also adopted Resolution 2216, sanctioning the political aims of Houthi military surrender and return to political talks led by the United Nations.



Humanitarian Needs and their Severity

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has been deteriorating for over 4 years and it remains to be the worst humanitarian crisis the world has faced. A large percentage of Yemen's population is in the need for humanitarian aid and the rates keep rising over time. 24 million people facing this problem make up 80 percent of the population and 14.3 million of them are in instant acute need of various items and help. The Yemeni government is failing to comply with the needs of its people due to its flawed economy. These needs include nutrition, healthcare, education, housing, and supplies. Although the crisis occurred due to a civil war and conflict in the region, it has gotten much more crucial. The state of Yemen cannot fulfill the basic survival needs and protection of its citizens, and furthermore, can not assure the essential services including the wellness of their livelihoods.

Basic Survival Needs

An estimated amount of 20 million people are food insecure and 10 million people are facing life-threatening levels of hunger. For the first time, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) has confirmed pockets of catastrophic hunger in some locations, with 238,000 people affected. 7.4 million people need services to handle or avoid malnutrition. An estimated total of 17.8 million people need access to safe water and sanitation, and 19.7 million people lack access to efficient healthcare. Poor sanitation and water lead to various life-threatening diseases, including cholera which is an infectious disease that causes severe watery diarrhea, which left an immense number of people ill in the region.

Protection of Civilians

There is a huge protection crisis going on in Yemen since almost all of the entire population is facing a serious risk for their safety, well-being, and most basic human rights such as access to nutrition, housing, healthcare, and education. Since 2015, tens of thousands of people were killed and, as previously verified by the United Nations, 17,700 of them were civilians that were in no relation with the two opposition sides. The number of displaced people is predicted to be 3.3 million with a vast increase from previous years which was caused because of the ongoing war. The ongoing conflict in the territory is causing extensive destruction to public and civilian groundwork in ways such as bombings and attacks.



Livelihoods and Essential Basic Services

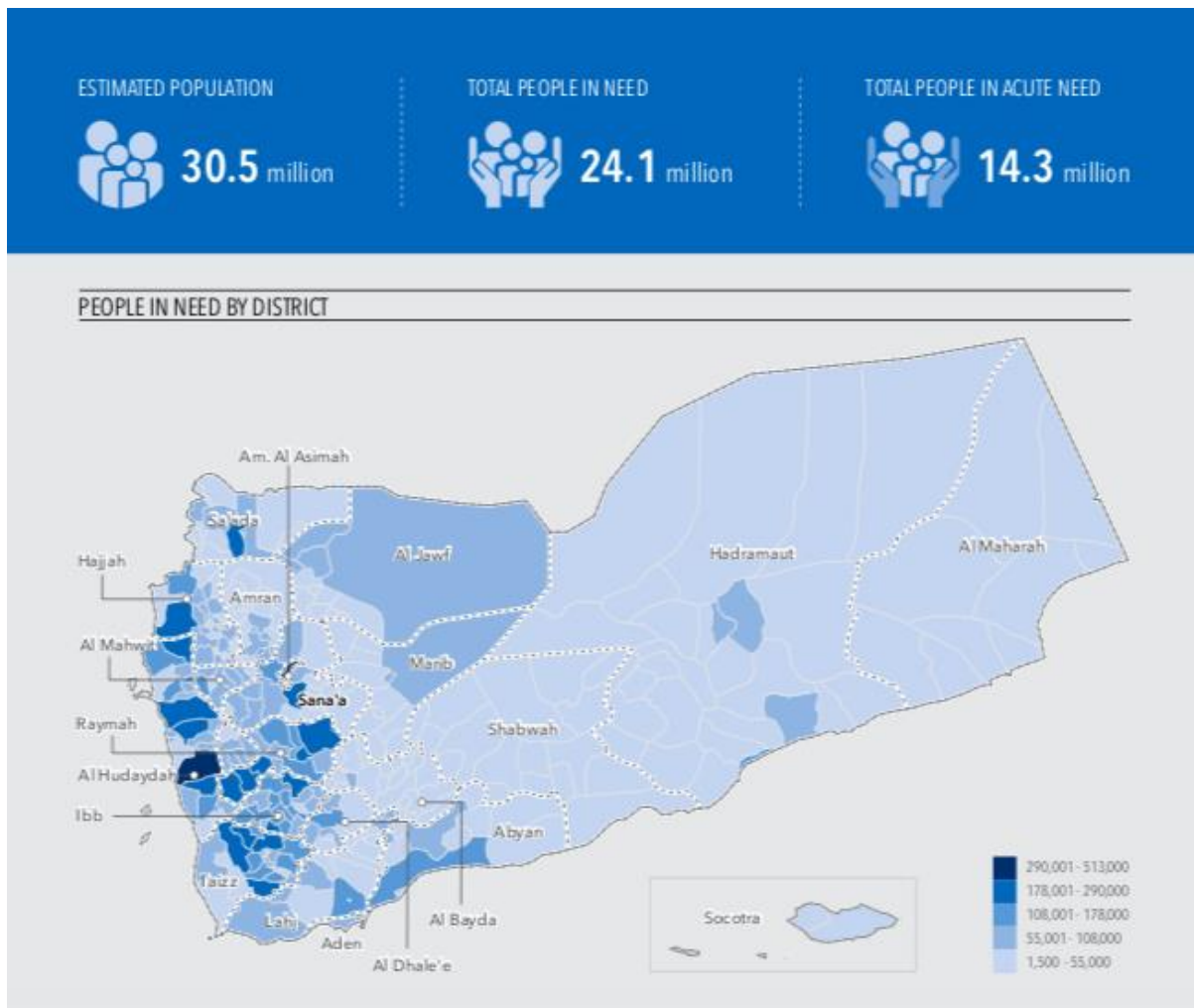


Figure 1: The graph showing the statistics of people who are in need according to their regions.

As Yemen's economy is the worst it has ever been and is on the verge of collapsing, employment opportunities have clashed immensely. The state's economy slandered about 50 percent since 2015 when the conflict first started. The fiscal deficit that began towards the end of 2016 has led to major gaps in the operative budgets of basic services and salary payments. All of the mentioned gaps led to people losing the ability to fulfill basic services.

Major Groups Affected

The main groups that were affected by the Yemen humanitarian crisis are:

1. **Children:** Children are one of the most vulnerable groups and are highly affected by the conflict. Great protection risks, an immense nutrition crisis, and interrupted schooling are the main obstacles children face in the region.
2. **Displaced people:** As an outcome of the conflict, 4.3 million people have been displaced



- in the past three years. Protracted displacement decreases resilience and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, resulting in higher needs and negative coping mechanisms.
3. **Women:** Women and girls suffered greatly from gender-based violence (GBV), poverty, and violations of basic rights before the conflict. After nearly five years of conflict and economic decline, women and girls are now facing an even more complex, higher risks of GBV and vulnerabilities such as no access to necessary sanitary products or hygiene.
 4. **Refugees:** The situation for refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants deteriorated in 2018. An estimated 150,000 individuals arrived in Yemen in 2018, despite conflict and grave risks.
 5. **Marginalized people:** Marginalized groups have existed in Yemen for centuries but are now increasingly struggling to survive due to the discrimination against them during the ongoing crisis.

Impact of the Crisis

With more than half of the population now food insecure, Yemen is facing the world's largest food security crisis. Economic influences are in a significant role, including constraints on the supply and distribution of goods, lessening purchasing power, exchange rate volatility and related issues. As the conflict increases, there has been an increase in unselective attacks and various violations of international humanitarian law, which are taking a ruthless toll on civilians. Tens of thousands of people have been killed or injured since 2015. From March 2015 to October 2018, health amenities reported more than 70,000 conflict-related casualties. Evidence shows that the defense environment is becoming even more dangerous. Year-on-year estimates of civilian casualties verified by Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights increased by 11 percent between

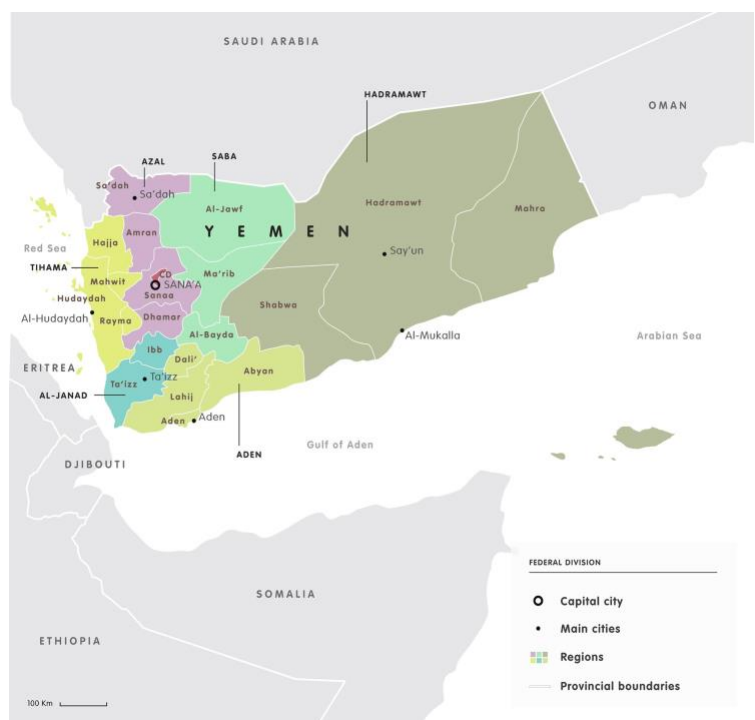


Figure 2: The map of Yemen.



September 2017 and August 2018. More than half of these fatalities happened in people's own homes, at the market, or in cars and buses. Serious violations of children's rights continue, with the number of incidents more than doubled when compared to last year in conflicted areas such as Al Hudaydah, Sa'ada, and Shabwah. The impact of the crisis on the Yemeni people is alarming as a whole, therefore, it should be resolved immediately.

Major Parties Involved

Saudi Arabia

Since the very beginning of the civil war, Saudi Arabia was involved with internal matters in Yemen. It first began when they backed Hadi in the 2012 elections going against Saleh. Afterward, in 2015 Saudi Arabia provided soldiers and weaponry on the borders to the rebels. In response to this, the Houthi leader backed by Yemeni forces responded with a counterattack. This war led to the civil war and therefore led to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Saudi Arabia is still siding Hadi and his supporters.

Iran

After the Saudi and United States backed elections, Iran supported the coup d'état that was to be lead by the Houthis. Soon afterward, the coup d'état led to the opposition of Houthis against Hadi's supporters, therefore, leading to the arising conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Iran became a key figure in the civil war by being the vast and most important supporter of the Houthis. All crises led to the humanitarian issues the state is facing today; making the country one of the most important states regarding this issue.

United States of America

The United States of America has been very active in the issue of the crisis in Yemen. Since the beginning, they have financed and supported Saudi Arabia's actions and are continuing to do so. Although it shows a token to end the conflict, none of the actions taken by the government of the United States contributed to resolving the issue. The United States also financed Saleh's vice president to make him resign from the presidency, which led to the conflict between the two oppositions in the region.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

The ongoing dispute in Yemen is an outcome of the failure of the political transition, from the resigning president Saleh to the new system and ruler, just after the Arab Uprising in 2011. GCC works to stabilize the political situation in Yemen resulted in the previously mentioned transition deal. Even though its application remains insufficient before its involvement in the war, the GCC did not contribute to settling the war.

Areas of control in Yemen

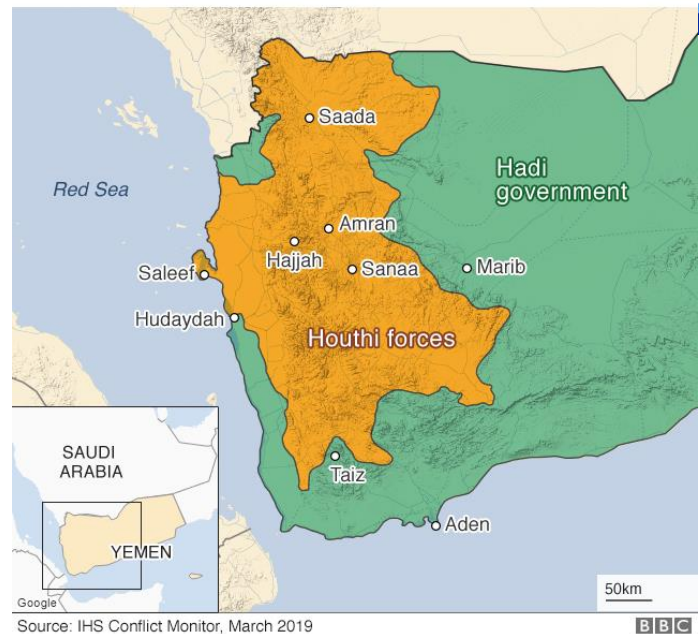


Figure 3: Areas of control in Yemen

The Houthis

The Houthis are rebels who conducted the Houthi movement and they are Zaydi Shiites. Shiite Muslims are the minority community in the Islamic world, they significantly differ in beliefs from the Shiites who dominate in Iran, Iraq, and elsewhere. The Houthis have been present in Yemeni soil since 1994. They have rebelled against president Hadi, which started the conflict. The reason behind this rebellion was religious, as Shiites the Houthis did not approve of a Sunni president. They have been opposing to Hadi's supporters and government ever since the conflict started.

Chronology of Important Events

Date	Description of Event
April 2018	UN Secretary-General assemblies advanced pledging conference in Geneva, raising \$2 billion for humanitarian action
June 2018	Major Military growth occurs in western Yemen, mainly in Al Hudaydah Hajjahh and Taizz.



September 2018	Economic crisis increases, including rapid depreciation of Yemeni rial
October 2018	UN Security Council reflects Yemen under the “conflict and hunger” agenda established by resolution 2417
December 6, 2018	Integrated Phase Classification confirms 20.1 million Yemenis food insecure – including 238,000 people in Phase 5
December 2018	Political consultations take place in Sweden Parties accept Stockholm Agreement and ceasefire enters into force in Hudaydah. UN Security Council sanctions Stockholm Agreement

Relevant International Documents

- [Adopted by the Security Council at its 8572nd meeting, 15 July 2019, \(S/RES/2481\)](#)
- [Adopted by the Security Council at its 8469th meeting, 26 February 2019, \(S/RES/2456\)](#)
- [Adopted by the Security Council at its 8444th meeting, 16 January 2019, \(S/RES/2452\)](#)
- [Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council, 27 September 2019, \(A/HRC/RES/42/31\)](#)
- [Al Hudaydah Agreement, UNMHD, 16 January 2019](#)
- [Stockholm Agreement, 13 December 2018](#)

Past Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There have been many attempts to solve the issue. However, none of them were sufficient to overcome it due to the dispute between both sides. There have been numerous speeches and general statements given on the issue by the United Nations. In addition, there are also many resolutions aiming to solve this crisis. All of these have been discussed in the previous sections of the report. However, most of these resolutions were not put into action because of the disorder the ongoing war has created.

There was a meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden with representatives from both groups to resolve the dispute between both sides. This meeting ended with the Stockholm Agreement which did not overcome the issue by itself, however, it was still helpful. Moreover, there was the Hudaydah Agreement which aimed to do the same as the Stockholm Agreement but failed to do so because they



were falsely formed without fully regarding the opposing views of the representatives from each party.

In regard to the humanitarian aspect of the crisis, there are pre-existing facilities working to help the Yemeni people but, as the issue does not get enough international recognition, the funds and volunteers are not adequate to help the vast number of people that are in need. There are various campaigns conducted by the United Nations and many others, but they are, once again, not enough to resolve the issue.

Solution Alternatives

As excepted by various sources, the only sustainable solution to resolve the issue as a whole seems to be to end the conflict in the region. When trying to find solutions, keeping this fact would help immensely. One of the core solutions to overcome this issue would be to arrange an applicable meeting between the two sides of the conflict including president Hadi's supporters and the Houthis which will lead to creating an effective agreement. This conflict could also be carried out on an international basis and there could be a conference held between representatives of each country to find a common legal ground. There could also be a fair referendum held for the election of the political leader and the system of the country by the supervision of UN officers or other organizations that are considered to have a neutral stance on the issue. In order to find a viable solution to end the conflict, past failing solutions should be considered and improved in order to come up with viable and sustainable solutions to overcome this issue.

Whilst this agreement would be solving the conflict, there should also be action taken regarding the humanitarian aspect of the issue. There could be more effective organizations in the area to specifically help those who are in severe need such as displaced people, women, children or the marginalized. As most people are in the need of nutrients or health care there could be healthcare and nutrition provided to the public by the United Nations, in cooperation with all the Member States through the United Nations. There could be safe and neutral zones created in the area to keep the items in place which would also contribute to the transportation needs of the mentioned items.

Since the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is not getting enough recognition internationally, there could be various campaigns to inform people from all around the world on the issue. Raising awareness will help get easier excess to volunteers or funding while trying to overcome the issues.

Overall, handling the issue from different aspects will be the most beneficial since this issue has been going on for over 5 years.



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Useful Links

- An article about the Yemen Humanitarian Crisis by Bloomberg: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-22/who-s-to-blame-for-pestilence-near-famine-in-yemen-quicktake>
- A report about the Yemen Crisis by UNICE: <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis>
- The United Nations report on Yemen: <https://yemen.un.org/en>
- A cite containing all the relevant UN document regarding Yemen: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/yemen/>
- The Human Rights Watch Chapter on Yemen: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/yemen>
- An article on the Yemen Humanitarian Crisis by UN News: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1032811>
- An overview of the Yemen crisis by the Relief Web: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2019_Yemen_HNO_FINAL.pdf