

Message from the Director of the Security Council

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the XXVI Dayton Model United Nations (UN) Conference! My name is Christian Cooper and I will be your Director for Security Council (SC) during DAYMUNC XXVI.

The SC was created in the UN Charter and serves primarily to maintain peace and security throughout the world. The SC holds several duties in maintaining international peace and security and is the only branch of the UN that can pass binding resolutions, meaning Member States must uphold and follow the direction of the resolution. This makes the SC one of the most important bodies of the UN. The SC is made up of fifteen Member States, with five being permanent members and the other ten serving two-year terms that represent every region in the world.

This background guide will help serve as starting point for your research into the two topics that will be discussed. These topics are relevant to current issues and are greatly affecting the world. Please stay up-to-date on your Member State's policies that relate to international security, peacekeeping, and the threat towards a global free press. Lastly, DAYMUNC is a learning conference, so please do not be afraid to approach the Dais and ask questions if you have any. My staff and I are eager to help Delegates get prepared for the upcoming National Model UN Conference.

The topics for SC during DAYMUNC XXVI are:

1. The Famine in Yemen
2. The Rise of Political Violence affecting Free Expression and the Threat towards Journalists

I am excited and looking forward to what you all will bring to committee!

Sincerely,

Christian J. Cooper
Director of SC
DAYMUNC XXVI

Topic 1: The Famine in Yemen

Introduction

Famine and hunger is a current international crisis that results from several conflicts occurring throughout the world. Most of the areas affected by this international crisis of famine and hunger is focused in the Middle East. More specifically, the continuous famine occurring in Yemen is a direct consequence from the ongoing Yemeni Civil War. Beginning in 2015 and after the rebel group Houthis took over the Yemeni presidential palace, a Saudi Arabia-led coalition with the support from Yemeni President Abdrabbu Mansour Hadi bombed many areas under Houthi control.¹ Due to the severity of the conflict, members of the international community have joined the fighting occurring in Yemen. Also, due to the unrest occurring, terrorist organizations see an opportunity of spreading their ideas in the area, causing an up rise among terrorist activity in the region.²

Still ongoing, many Yemeni civilians have been affected by the current civil war, causing one of the worst humanitarian crisis the world has ever seen. During this conflict, a vast humanitarian crisis has begun as many Yemeni people are starving from lack of food and water. The Famine Early Warning System stated that Yemen is the area with the highest concern to food insecurity.³ Overall, 22 million people, which is about 75% of the Yemeni population, are in need of some form of humanitarian aid.⁴ As a matter of fact, 60% of the population, or 18 million people, do not have access to the amount of food they need to survive, and 53% of the population, or 16 million people, have no ability to obtain clean drinking water.⁵ Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) contributes to the lack of drinking water by targeting desalination plants, thus leading to a more increased water security.⁶ Figure 1 below outlines how the risk of famine will increase if nothing is done to combat this crisis.⁷

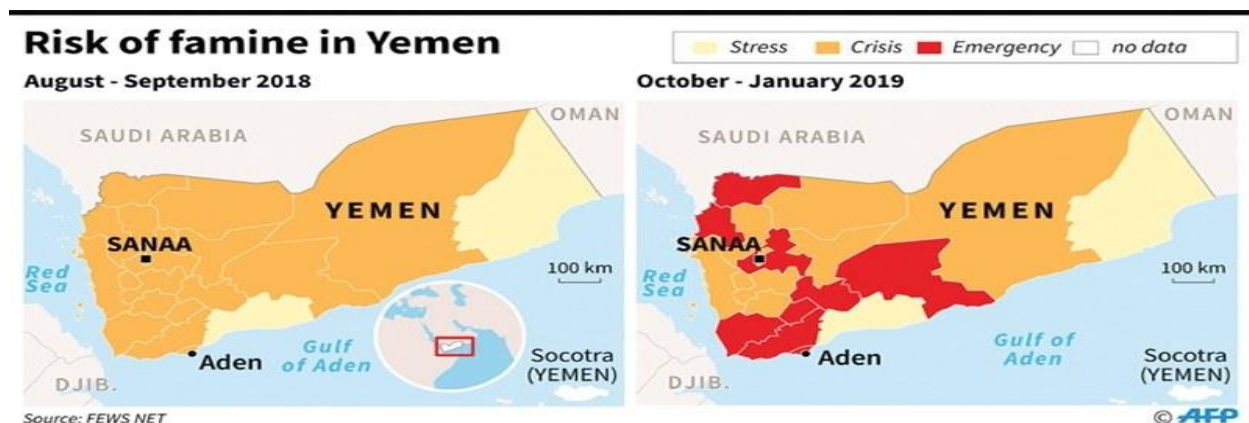


Figure 1. Level of risk for Famine in Yemen from 2018 to 2019

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/09/yemen-the-forgotten-war/>

² <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/terrorists-are-tightening-their-grip-yemen-28842>

³ <http://fews.net/east-africa/yemen>

⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/focus/yemen>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ <https://www.cfr.org/background/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-aqap>

⁷ <http://fews.net/east-africa/yemen>

This lack of food and water has caused millions of men, women, and children to suffer at their greatest extent. Food and water are a necessity in order for people to survive. The International Rescue Committee has plans in place to provide food, water, and other types of aid to Yemen, but because of the fighting, are unable and not permitted to dock at Yemeni ports.⁸ If the crisis is not confronted, then millions and millions of innocent Yemeni civilians, including children, will suffer and die.

Existing Framework

The United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC) have already taken numerous steps towards fighting the terrible famine occurring in Yemen. The method that the SC has taken in solving this conflict is attempting to end the Yemeni Civil War. To counter against the political uprising brought about by the Houthi rebel group, the SC passed SC resolution 2201 (2015), deploring the Houthi's actions of storming the Presidential Palace and dissolving the Yemeni parliament.⁹ They also took into consideration the recommendations put forth by the Gulf Cooperation Council to issue a National Dialogue conference to settle transition of power issues between Hadi's former government and the new Houthi government.¹⁰

Noting the increasing violence and humanitarian disaster arising in Yemen, the SC established stronger initiatives and sanctions against the Houthis. Nevertheless, there was the adoption of SC resolution 2216 (2015), which called upon the Houthis and their allies to return all land seized back over to the original Yemeni government.¹¹ This also provide more mandates for the sanction committee, allowing more sanctions to be applied to the Houthi and their government.¹² However, neither party has abided by the previous SC resolutions and mandates, resulting in food insecurity and the starvation and hunger of millions of Yemeni people. Nonetheless, members of the international community are still unable to provide aid, food, and water to these millions of people because of the civil war.

As an outcome of recent conflicts affecting human rights and food security, the SC began connecting the link between food insecurity and areas of conflict. SC resolution 2417 (2018) doesn't specifically apply to Yemen, but it outlines that armed conflicts prevent civilians from receiving any form of humanitarian aid, including food.¹³ The resolution also denounces parties who use starving civilians as leverage in their fighting by unlawfully denying them any form of humanitarian aid.¹⁴ Along with this resolution, the SC receives briefings based upon the famine in Yemen and communicates closely with other UN organizations to combat this issue. For example, the SC works in conjunction with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA provides monthly briefings on the Yemeni crisis to the SC, however, they are

⁸ <https://www.rescue.org/country/yemen>

⁹ https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7b65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7d/s_res_2201.pdf

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7b65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7d/s_res_2216.pdf

¹² Ibid

¹³ https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7b65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7d/s_res_2417.pdf

¹⁴ Ibid

unable to get much of their aid to Yemen because of the blockage of ports by the Houthi government. OCHA, along with the SC, note that all parties involved in the Yemeni Civil War are to blame for this humanitarian crisis, where all parties are also violating international law and human rights.¹⁵

Conclusion

While the UN and the SC have made significant progress in addressing the civil war in Yemen, they have yet to provide and succeed in providing humanitarian aid, especially food and water, to the Yemeni civilians. This bares the idea of SC giving itself more power to address areas affected by lack of food and water as a consequence from violence and conflict. As stated, millions of Yemeni people need assistance and food brought to them as soon as possible, and the current fighting among all parties involved in the Yemeni Civil War need to bear responsibility for this drastic and terrible humanitarian crisis.

Questions to consider for Future Research

1. What is your Member State's current stance on the Yemeni Civil War?
2. Does your State support UN intervention into Yemen?
3. What possible solutions does your Member State believe are useful in solving humanitarian crisis?
4. What programs is your State a part of that help assist other areas that are experiencing a lack of food and water?
5. What safeguards does your State believe should be in place for Non-governmental and Inter-governmental Organizations to assist the people of Yemen?

¹⁵ <https://www.unocha.org/yemen/about-ocha-yemen>

¹⁸ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/10/1023592>

One example of the rising political violence affecting journalists is the recent killing of a former Saudi Arabian journalist and contributor to the United States of America's Washington Post, Jamal Khashoggi. Exiled from Saudi Arabia for being a critic of their government, Khashoggi traveled to the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey and disappeared.¹⁹ It was later reported that Khashoggi was killed by members of the Saudi government in their consulate in Turkey, causing major rifts between Saudi Arabia and Turkey.²⁰ This rift is due to Turkey wanting to hold an investigation into Khashoggi's disappearance and the Saudis believing that it is their responsibility to conduct the investigation since it happened in their consulate. Because of this conflict, the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, declared that diplomatic immunity should be waived and stated that the UN should lead its own investigation into the matter.²¹

Existing Framework

A relatively new arising issue, the SC has done barely, if not, anything to address the issue between political violence and journalists. However, many other bodies of the UN have attempted and partially succeeded in addressing the dangers the media faces. For example, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is mandated provide a free media and promote the ideas of freedom of expression, which provide a transition to peace and international security.²² UNESCO works diligently to advertise the importance of a free media, which is evident in their International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).²³ The IPDC promotes the safety of journalists in areas of conflict and support the idea of countries establishing media pluralism and independence.²⁴

This rapid increase of violence towards journalists is unprecedented, and the SC must act accordingly. Nonetheless, the SC has reacted to some events that pose as violence against freedom of expression and the media. SC resolution 1738 (2006) addressed attacks towards journalists in conflict zones.²⁵ Furthermore, the resolution strongly condemned attacks on journalists and urged the international community to treat them the same as the would innocent civilians.²⁶ With this, the SC reiterated its commitment so securing a global free press by recognizing media freedom organizations like Reporters without Borders.²⁷ With focusing on media freedom and in collaboration with organizations such as Reporters without Borders, the SC has begun taking steps to protecting and ensuring the safety of journalists and other members of the media around the world.

More recently and due to the continuous rise of the political violence in the past decade, using SC resolution 1738 (2006), UNESCO established the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*. The *UN Plan of Action* calls on governments to work with media outlets

¹⁹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/10/1023722>

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/10/1023411>

²² <https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression>

²³ <https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc/>

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7b65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7d/Civilians%20SRES1738.pdf>

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to combat the increase of violence to journalists and media workers.²⁸ With this plan, the international community are able to cooperate with each other in order to diminish the overall threat. In comparison, the *UN Action Plan* also reemphasizes the importance of *Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which ensures that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are individual and collective rights.²⁹ Thanks to the current *UN Plan of Action*, the recognition of the violence against the media has become a frontline in securing international peace and security.

Conclusion

When it comes to the political violence against freedom of expression and freedom of press, the SC has done very little to combat it. This is primarily due its' unprecedented rise in the current political climate of the world, with more and more spaces having nationalized mindsets and polarizing views. With the most recent killing of Saudi journalist and *The Washington Post* contributor Jamal Khashoggi, the political violence towards the media now takes priority in the SC because of its possible negative impact on international peace and security.

Questions to consider for Future Research

1. Does your State support a free press?
2. Would your Member State take any ensuing steps to improving the SC power to address the political violence occurring with the media?
3. Would your State support UN-led intervention in areas of conflict that pose a serious threat to journalists?

²⁸ https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/un-plan-on-safety-journalists_en.pdf

²⁹ Ibid