

Forum: United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Issue #2: Measures to address the situation in Yemen

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Introduction

Yemen, a country with a rich history dating back thousands of years, has been embroiled in a complex and devastating conflict since 2014. The republic has faced numerous challenges, including religious and cultural divisions, the rise of militant groups, and a severe humanitarian crisis. The conflict began in 2014 when The Houthis, a terrorist group, overthrew the internationally recognized government. This sparked a proxy war between Houthis and the Saudi-led military coalition supporting the government. The involvement of other combatants, such as militant Islamist groups and separatists backed by the

United Arab Emirates, has further complicated the situation. The war has had a devastating effect on the civilians of Yemen, with over 150,000 deaths and the displacement of more than four million individuals. The country is facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, made worse by Yemen's already existing issues like poverty, unemployment, corruption, hunger, disease, and attacks on civilians. Despite efforts by the United Nations, the agreements haven't seen advancement and the situation is deteriorating.

Definition of Key Terms

Houthis - A rebel group who aims to govern all of Yemen

Proxy War - a war fought between groups or smaller countries that each represent the interests of other larger powers, and may have help and support from these

Coalition- the joining together of different political parties or groups for a particular purpose, usually for a limited time, or a government that is formed in this way.

Air Attacks - An attack by armed planes on a surface target

Ceasefire - An accord in which groups of people who are fighting agree to refrain from fighting.

Human Rights - the basic rights to fair and moral treatment that every person is believed to have

Civil War - a war fought by different groups of people living in the same country.

General Overview

1994 Civil War

On May 22, 1990, Yemen was unified, joining the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen). This unification led to tensions between the two sides, resulting in a civil war. The consolidation ended 150 years of division for the Yemeni people, whose territory had been previously split between the British and Ottoman Empires. The newly joined country was governed by Ali Abdullah Saleh assuming the presidency and Ali Salem al Beidh as the Vice President. Disputes between Saleh and Beidh in politics arose from their inability to share power equally. The disagreement worsened with retaliatory assassinations aimed at politicians. This escalation led to Beidh's resignation and move to Aden, where he contested the northern leadership. In efforts to salvage the unity, Ali Abdallah Salih and Ali Salem Beidhan signed a peace agreement in Jordan on February 20, 1994. Yet, despite these efforts, civil war erupted just weeks later.

President Saleh's Resignation

In January 2011, following the overthrow of President Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, and amid protests in Egypt, thousands of people gathered in Sanaa and other cities in Yemen. They demanded that President Saleh step down from his position, calling for democracy and voicing their concerns about poverty and corruption within the government. The protests in Yemen were organized by a coalition of rival groups within the country. In response to the protests, President Saleh promised not to run for reelection when his term ended in 2013, and he assured the public that his son would not succeed him as president. Yet,

demonstrators rejected Saleh's promises and continued to protest, pledging not to end their protest until he stepped down as president. After continuous conflict, including a bomb attack on President Saleh, he signed an agreement on November 23 to transfer power to Vice President Hadi.

Houthis' Takeover in 2014

In July 2014, President Hadi made significant cuts to fuel subsidies, sparking protests in Sanaa. These protests turned violent in September, when Yemeni security forces fired on demonstrators, killing many and escalating tensions. The Houthis took advantage of his weakness and later that month, Houthi fighters took control of Sanaa, seizing important government buildings. Fighting between government forces and Houthi fighters in the capital intensified by January 2015, and the rebels eventually took control of the presidential palace. This resulted in President Hadi's resignation on January 23, which left the nation without a leader. On February 6, 2015, the Houthis formally took over by removing the governing body and appointing a five-member presidential council. In retaliation, on February 15, the UN Security Council passed a resolution objecting to the rebels' actions.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has been heavily involved in the situation in Yemen, primarily due to the potential expansion of Iran's influence in the region. In March 2015, Saudi Arabia began an air campaign to oust the Houthis and restore the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, who had been forced to flee abroad. This coalition received support from the US and the UK. The intervention aimed

to prevent The Houthis from advancing toward Hadi's stronghold in southern Yemen. However, Saudi Arabia has also been accused of committing war crimes during this conflict, including airstrikes that have hit civilian targets. As the main leader of the coalition against Yemen, Saudi Arabia plays a crucial role in the ongoing conflict.

United States

The United States has been involved in the situation in Yemen primarily through its support of the Saudi-led coalition. In 2015, they supported Saudi Arabia, and in 2017 the Trump administration authorized arms sales to Saudi Arabia worth \$110 billion. In February 2021, President Joe Biden announced an end to U.S. support for Saudi-led offensive operations in Yemen and revoked the Houthis' designation as a terrorist organization. The US has been criticized for contributing to Yemen's humanitarian crises, which is considered one of the worst in the world. The U.S. continues to be deeply invested in combating terrorism and violent extremism in Yemen, having carried out nearly four hundred strikes in the country since 2002.

United Arab Emirates

Since 2015, the UAE has been involved in the situation in Yemen primarily through its participation in the Saudi-led military coalition fighting against the Houthi rebels. In 2015, the UAE took charge of security in southern Yemen, becoming a key U.S. ally in counterterrorism operations in the region. The UAE hired American mercenaries to conduct targeted killings of its political enemies, resulting in over 100 assassinations between 2015 and 2018, most of which were of civilians unconnected to terror groups. The UAE has also built local forces in Yemen that have clashed directly with The Houthis and the Yemeni government.

However, in late 2021, The Houthis launched several drone and air strikes against the UAE in response to UAE-backed forces fighting the Houthis for control of the Red Sea port city of Hodeidah. The UAE has significantly reduced its military presence in Yemen since 2019 but still projects power through the local forces it has built and armed.

Iran

Iran has played a significant role in supporting the Houthis, the group that took control of northern Yemen in 2014, has received weapons, funding, and training. Iran's support for the Houthis aligns with its broader regional policy, which includes opposing Western and Israeli interests and expanding its sphere of influence. By supporting the Houthis, Iran has been able to pressure Saudi Arabia, which leads a coalition against the Yemeni group. The Houthis have used Iranian missiles, drones, and other weapons to target Saudi Arabia and ships passing through the strategically important Bab el-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea. This has allowed Iran to exert pressure on global trade and regional security without incurring significant costs. As the war continues, Iran plays a crucial role in the situation in Yemen.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has actively been involved in the situation of Yemen, providing significant military support to the Saudi-led coalition that has been bombing the country since 2015. The UK has licensed over £17.6 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia since the start of the conflict, with BAE Systems alone having 6,700 employees stationed in the country. In addition to arms sales, The United Kingdom has provided logistical support and intelligence to the Saudi-led coalition. This support has enabled the coalition to carry out airstrikes which to

this day, 119 attacks have collided in Yemen. The United Kingdom's extensive military support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has made it complicit in the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in the country.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
1994	Civil War breaks out between Northern and southern Yemen, just years after reunification. The southern army is defeated, solidifying Yemen's unification under President Ali Abdullah Saleh
2000	Al-Qaeda gains prominence in Yemen, which leads to a series of terrorist attacks
2004	Troops battle against a Shia insurgency led by Hussein al-Houthi in the north
2011	Arab Spring protests spread to Yemen, leading to former president President Saleh's resignation
2014	Houthi rebels overrun the capital Sanaa, sparking a prolonged Civil War
March 2015	Saudi Arabia leads a coalition against the Houthis, with ISIS carrying out attacks in Yemen.
2017	Southern Yemeni separatists seize control of Aden, country's second biggest city
2018	Power-sharing agreement is proposed to end the conflict

	in Southern Yemen
2019	Houthi rebels launch an attack on Marib, the last stronghold of Yemen's internationally recognized government
2020	UAE withdraws from Yemen but maintains its influence
2021	Houthi rebels conduct missile and drone strikes targeting Saudi Arabia and the UAE
2023	A delegation of Houthi officials and Omani mediators visit Saudi Arabia for a five-day round of negotiations.
November 2023	The Houthis declared war on Israel and attacked American commercial ships while hijacking an Israel-linked cargo ship in the Red Sea, holding 25 crew members hostage.

UN Involvement

Resolution 2216 (2015)

“Imposes a targeted arms embargo against individuals or entities designated by the Committee; designates two additional individuals as subject to targeted measures (assets freeze, travel ban and targeted arms embargo); adds violations of the targeted arms embargo and obstruction of the delivery, access to and distribution of humanitarian assistance as designation criteria; and increases the Panel of Experts on Yemen to five members” (S/RES/2216 (2015) | United Nations Security Council). The resolution aimed to remove the Houthi rebels from seized areas, and prevent the supply of arms, promoting peace.

January 12, 2024, Statement

On January 12, 2024, the United Nations issued a statement condemning the air strikes carried out by the United States and United Kingdom in Yemen, citing violations of International Humanitarian Law. The press release was delivered by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres. The message emphasized the vital need to comply with the UN Security Council resolution 2722 (2024), stating that “Attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea area are not acceptable, as they endanger the safety and security of global supply chains and have a negative impact on the economic and humanitarian situation worldwide” (*Following Air Strikes, Secretary-General Urges Adherence to International Law, Avoidance of Acts That Could Exacerbate Situation in Yemen | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*). The press release called for an immediate ceasefire by the Houthis and urged all parties to halt actions that violated international law. The UN's ultimate goal is to de-escalate the conflict, and to ultimately guide Yemen towards peace and security.

Resolution 2451 (21 December 2018)

The UN Security Council passed Resolution 2451 in 2018 to support the Stockholm Agreement between the Yemeni government and the Houthis. The resolution aimed to implement ceasefire measures, facilitate the exchange of prisoners, and establish arrangements for Taiz. It urged both parties to refrain from fighting and called for proposals on monitoring the ceasefire and increasing the UN presence in Hodeidah.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Stockholm Agreement

In 2018, the UN held peace talks in Stockholm, which resulted in the Stockholm Agreement. However, the agreement has not been fully implemented. All sides have violated its terms; while Houthi forces initially redeployed troops as agreed, fresh clashes in Hodeidah soon threatened to break the tenuous ceasefire. Despite these challenges, this Stockholm Agreement remains a crucial step towards resolving the situation in Yemen.

Humanitarian Aid

Efforts have been made to implement the Humanitarian Response Plan in Yemen. In 2019, Yemen received \$3.64 billion in aid. However, due to the violence and communication challenges within the country, the funding has significantly declined. In 2023, only \$1.38 billion was received, marking a 62% reduction from the sum obtained in 2019. Other organizations, such as the European Union, have also contributed significantly to helping the situation in Yemen, allocating €1.5 billion since the beginning of the war in 2015. In 2024, the EU further allocated €125 million in humanitarian aid to support vulnerable communities. Despite these efforts, Yemen continues to struggle.

International Pressure and Awareness

Increased global awareness and pressure have proven to be powerful tools in attempting to resolve the issue. Supporting journalists and photographers through crowdfunding to report on the conflict and advocating for government action to resolve the crisis are crucial steps. International pressure on the warring parties provides strong leverage, especially on Saudi Arabia and Iran, whose involvement has escalated the conflict. Media coverage has also played a pivotal role in addressing the issue. International newspapers have been reporting on the issue ever since it started in an attempt to raise awareness and inform the public.

Possible Solutions

Peace Conference

A peace conference with all relevant parties to the issue, such as the Yemeni government, Houthi rebels, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and other international governments, would aim to find a common ground and reach compromises addressing the conflict's root cause. Through peaceful discussions, the conference would work towards a settlement that ensures the participation and representation of all Yemeni political groups. Topics would include power-sharing arrangements, disarmament of armed groups, and fostering unity and trust among the parties to establish lasting peace and stability in Yemen.

International Monitoring of Ceasefire

Implementing an international ceasefire monitoring mechanism could serve as a solution to the conflict in Yemen. Utilizing monitoring teams to oversee and verify ceasefire agreements would ensure effective implementation. Regular reporting and communication could help reduce the number of attacks on civilians and infrastructure, ensuring safety. Monitoring of peacekeeping agreements would not only prevent violence and escalation but also contribute to lasting peace and stability in Yemen.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

Measures to address the situation in Yemen are closely linked to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1. SDG 1 aims to end poverty and all its manifestations by 2030. If the conflict persists, Yemen will have the greatest depth of poverty, second poorest imbalance in gender development, lowest calories per capita, and second poorest income inequality of any country in the world. SDG 1 advocated for levels of poverty to be manageable and if the issue in Yemen

persists, these levels will not only become a problem for Yemen but for the world.

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Appendix

I. United Nations Digital Library

A. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1659590?ln=es>

1. This site offers the full text of Security Council Resolutions, including the details of the resolution and its implementation

II. CFR's Global Conflict Tracker

A. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>

1. follows the latest developments in Yemen's civil war

III. Al Jazeera Daily News on Yemen

A. <https://www.aljazeera.com/where/yemen/>

1. Al Jazeera is a 24-hour news channel. This website provides the latest news on Yemen

IV. UNMHA Stockholm Agreement

A. <https://unmha.unmissions.org/stockholm-agreement>

1. Full text of the Stockholm Agreement