

**Committee:** Security council

**Topic:** Question of Yemen

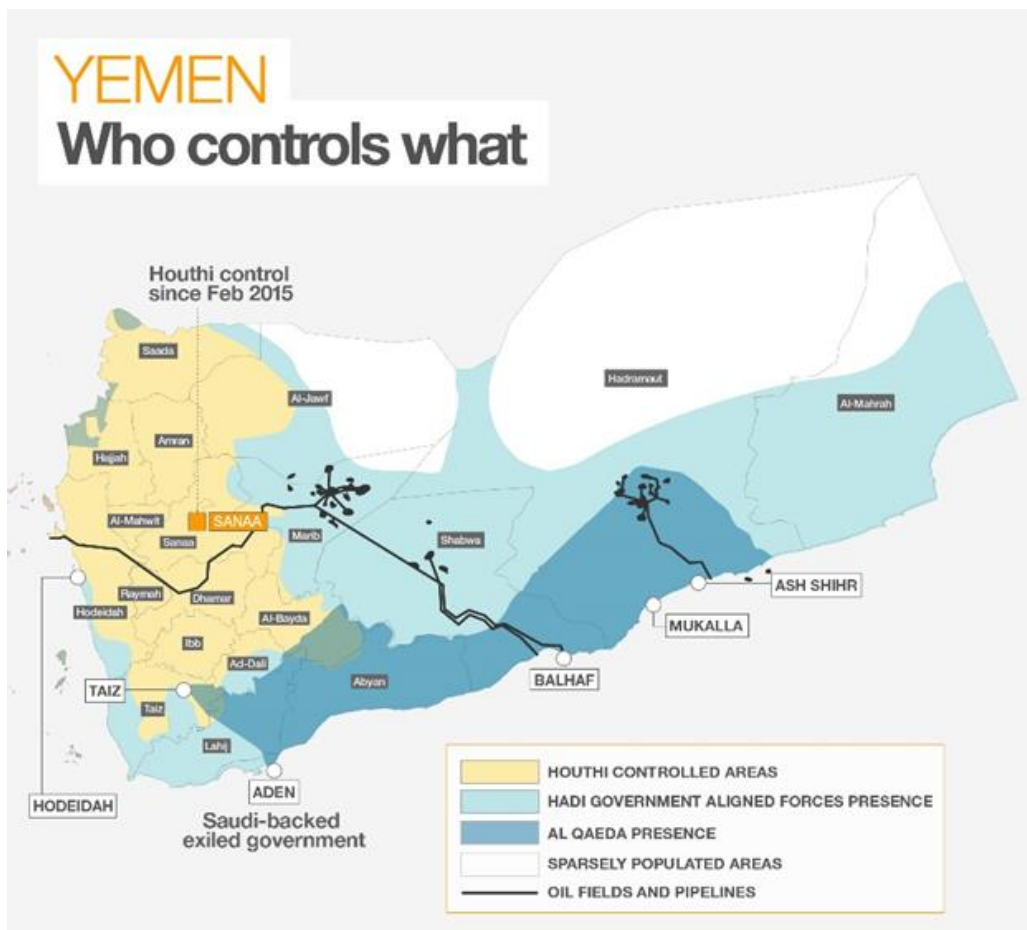
**Chair:** Anna Stone

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**Summary:**

Yemen is a country in the Middle East, to the east of North Africa and south of Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iraq. The country was formed in 1990 when south Yemen and north Yemen joined together after many years of fighting. In 2014 a civil war erupted when the Houthi rebels, allied with troops loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, captured much of the country, including the capital, Sanaa. A coalition assembled by Saudi Arabia launched an air campaign against the rebels in March 2015 to try to restore the internationally recognised government of President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Following this a Saudi Arabian led coalition has been bombing the country and attempting to remove the Houthi rebels from power and restore the exiled government.

As a result of the conflict, life in the country has become extremely difficult for the civilians of the country with UNICEF reporting that 11.3 million children in Yemen need humanitarian assistance. Now, coronavirus threatens their lives too and many struggling to access necessities like food, water, and shelter.



## Definition of key Terms:

**Houthi rebels** – Shia anti-government fighters, supported by Iran, wishing to take over the country.

**Civil war** - A civil war is when citizens or groups of people from the same country fight against each other.

**Exile** - the state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons

## Background Information:

Despite joining together in 1990, the north and south of the country continued to disagree. Fighting between the government and the Houthi rebels continued. The situation reached its pinnacle in 2011 when protests led to the president at the time, Ali Abdallah Saleh, resigning and his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, taking over. Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi is the official president of Yemen, but the rebels disagree with him and his government. Hadi struggled to maintain peace and the fighting began. The rebels took advantage of the new president's weakness and began to take control of areas. Many supported them because they weren't happy with their country's leader. At the end of 2014, the country descended into civil war, when the rebels - backed by Iran - took over the capital city of Yemen, Sanaa. President Hadi fled to neighbouring Saudi Arabia, which leads a group of nine countries, in a coalition, in support of the Yemeni government. When President Hadi fled, he set up a temporary capital in Aden and has still not been able to return to Sanaa. In March 2015, Saudi Arabia and its supporting countries started to bomb Yemen. They wanted to remove the Houthis and reinstate the legitimate government. The US, UK and France supported these strikes. The UK and others have called for ceasefires in Yemen and want Saudi Arabia and its allies to end the war against the Houthis. But the UK continues to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia, which leads the pro-government forces, so this helps the fighting to continue. Many people have been critical of this.

The effects of the civil war cause several problems for the country. For example, socio-economic problems, disrupted economic activity and hydrocarbon exports, along with significant damage to infrastructure and a wide suspension of basic public services. The loss of oil receipts has created an acute foreign exchange shortage, while government revenue has plummeted. Yemen's economy contracted by 50% from the start of the civil war on 19 March 2015 to October 2018. Due to the lack of money within the country, one of the largest problems have been the lack of money to be able to pay civil servants salaries which has had a profound effect on the education system. Roughly three quarters of public-school teachers in 11 governorates have not been paid for over two school years which has caused a disruption for around 3.7 million children. Yemen's social and political insecurity is directly linked to that of its food and water insecurities. Yemen is the most food insecure country in the Middle East and has the eighth-worst hunger rate globally with over 10 million Yemenis vulnerable. Yemen's food and water production capacity is limited and therefore relies on the international market to supply 60% of its food's needs. Yemen's population is expected to double over the next 20 years which will provide added pressures to all these sectors of their country.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved:

**Iran:** The Iranian government has been intermittently accused of supporting the Houthis with weapons and launching a robust media campaign against the Saudi coalition. Yet, at least in the public eye, Iran has denied direct involvement in the fight.

**Saudi Arabia:** This campaign has come at a high cost, the Revolution Mohammad Ali al-Houthi estimated that Saudi Arabia spends \$ 60 billion annually in the fight against the Yemenis.

**Kuwait:** This tiny, oil-rich country contributed 15 fighter jets to Saudi's coalition.

**Bahrain:** 15 Bahraini fighter jets are involved. In September, reports also emerged that five Bahraini soldiers had been killed in a missile attack by Houthi militants.

**Pakistan:** By April, the country had agreed to back an arms embargo for the Houthis and talks were underway to send war ships to Yemen. Today, it contributes both warships and aerial support to Saudi.

**Qatar:** Along with 10 fighter jets, 1,000 Qatari troops had been deployed in Yemen by September, one of whom became Qatar's first casualty earlier this month.

**UAE:** In September, the UAE stepped up involvement in airstrikes using the 30 warplanes they've sent to Yemen. They've also suffered several ground troop casualties.

**Jordan:** Though the involvement of the Hashemite Kingdom has been more low profile, Jordan has contributed six fighter jets to the Saudi coalition.

**Sudan:** In addition to three jets, Sudan sent 300 troops to the Yemeni port city of Aden in October, Reuters reported, to "help maintain security." This month, Al Monitor reported Sudan received \$2.2 billion from Saudi and Qatar for joining the fight.

**Egypt:** Four Egyptian warships were deployed at the beginning of the coalition, along with up to 800 ground troops, according to a Reuters report in September.

**Morocco:** The North African country has six fighter jets in Yemen, one of which the Houthis claimed to have downed early in the campaign, on March 11.

**US:** the current president, Biden, announced in his first major foreign policy speech that "The war in Yemen must end,". As a result, the US will be supporting offensive operations, including the sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, this will not affect operations against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

**UK:** Has been supplying arms, ammunition, and training to the Saudis for many years. As a result, the British government has been accused both at home and abroad of complicity in the deaths of innocent Yemenis.

**UN world food program:** even though the organisation has cut its food rations, it has provided to 12 million people who are in need due to the extreme food shortage and everyday necessities.

**UNICEF:** finds ways to provide relief and emergency support to those who need it. Support includes vaccines, water, nutrition, and school supplies. During the COVID-19 crisis, UNICEF has provided testing equipment, respirators, and face shields. It is also helping train 30,000 healthcare workers in hygiene and prevention.

**Doctors Without Borders:** Another way people are helping during the Yemen Crisis is through Doctors without Borders. The organization consists of numerous doctors that travel to foreign countries in hopes of providing any medical assistance needed. Currently, the organization operates within 13 hospitals in Yemen. As numerous medical facilities have been shut down, Doctors Without Borders provides limited medical assistance that is needed during humanitarian crises.

## Timeline of Events:

1990's – After the reunification of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh transitions from president of North Yemen—a post he had held since 1978—to president of the Republic of Yemen. At the same time, the Zaidi-Shia group Ansar Allah—or the Houthis—gradually gain power; the group's rise has the tacit support of President Saleh.

1994: Civil War – Just years after the reunification of Yemen, the unintegrated armies of the north and the south face off, resulting in a brief civil war that resulted in the defeat of the southern army and shored up Yemen's reunification.

2004-2010: Houthi Rebellion

Tensions run high between Saleh's government and the Houthis—led by Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi—after Saleh's border deal with Saudi Arabia. Al-Houthi eventually leads a rebellion against the Yemeni government in 2004.

June-September 2004 – Starting in June 2004, Saleh's government begins arresting hundreds of Houthi members and issues a reward for Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi's arrest. Fighting continues until al-Houthi is killed in September.

March-June 2005 – Fighting between the Houthis—now led by Hussein's brother, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi—and government forces surges, leaving hundreds dead. Fighting ceases after the sides reach an agreement, resulting in the surrender of the Houthis' top military commander.

2009-2010: Operation Scorched Earth – In August 2009, the Yemeni military launches Operation Scorched Earth to crush the Houthi rebellion in Saada. Saleh's government agrees to a ceasefire with Abdul-Malik al-Houthi and the rebels in February 2010.

2011: Arab Spring Reaches Yemen

June 2011 – Saleh is seriously injured in a bombing and travels to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment.

September 2011 – Saleh returns to the presidential palace amid renewed clashes. It is not until November 2011 that he signs a deal that has his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, assume power and form a unity government.

February 2012 – Hadi is sworn in for a two-year term as president after an election in which he stood unopposed.

Post-Arab Spring: Unity Government and Houthi Takeover

February 2014 – A presidential panel approves a political transition plan for Yemen that organizes the country into a federation of six regions.

August 2014 – Following two weeks of anti-government protests, President Hadi dissolves his cabinet and overturns a controversial rise in fuel prices.

September-October 2014 – The Houthis take control over most of Yemen's capital, Sanaa. The following month the rebels seize the Red Sea port city of Hodeida.

January 2015 – After being placed under house arrest by the Houthis, Hadi resigns as president.

February 2015 – The Houthis take control of the Yemeni government, a move swiftly denounced by the United Nations. President Hadi flees the presidential palace in Sanaa and escapes to Aden.

March 2015 – The Islamic State claims its first major attacks in Yemen, setting off two suicide bombs at Shia mosques in Sanaa. President Hadi flees Aden and takes refuge in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi-led Coalition and Civil War

March 2015: Operation Decisive Storm. The coalition launches air strikes against Houthi targets, deploys small ground forces, and imposes a naval blockade. The United States announces its intention to aid the coalition's efforts.

April 2015: The coalition declares an end to Operation Decisive Storm. The Saudi-led coalition continues to bomb Houthi positions and the United States increases its arms sales for the Saudi campaign in Yemen.

April 2015 – Houthis capture the city of Ataq. The Houthi fighters also condemn a UN Security Council resolution imposing an arms embargo on the group, calling the decision an act of "aggression."

September 2015 – President Hadi returns to Aden after Saudi-backed government forces and those loyal to Hadi recapture the port city from Houthi forces.

April 2016 – The United Nations sponsors talks between the Hadi government and the coalition of Houthis and former President Saleh's General People's Congress.

October 2016-May 2017 – Both sides of the conflict allegedly break ceasefires. The United Nations and others try to broker peace talks and political resolutions. The Houthis claim responsibility for firing missiles into Saudi Arabia, including at the capital, Riyadh.

May-November 2017 – Humanitarian agencies and watchdogs decry the Yemen crisis as one of the worst humanitarian emergencies in the world. There are thousands of civilians dead and wounded, an outbreak of cholera, and a potential famine that would leave thousands on the brink of starvation.

December 2017 –The Houthis control much of northern Yemen but face stiff opposition from the Saudi-led coalition. President Hadi—whose loyalists control much of south Yemen—has called for a popular uprising against Houthi rule in the north.

February 2018 – The United Nations appoints longtime British diplomat Martin Griffiths as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen.

March-May 2018 – Fighting escalates along Yemen’s western coast and dozens are killed in Saudi air strikes and security raids.

June-July 2018 – The coalition launches an offensive on the port city of Hodeida.

August-October 2018 – International furor over the Saudi-led coalition’s war in Yemen grows after an air raid strikes a school bus, killing 40, mostly children. UN efforts to mediate between the Yemeni government and the Houthi rebels in Geneva, Switzerland are fruitless.

December 2018 - After UN-mediated talks, the Yemeni government and the Houthis sign the Stockholm Agreement. However, the Stockholm Agreement fails to achieve its goals and neither side agrees to withdraw from Hodeida.

August 2019 - the Houthis launch “Operation Victory from God” against Saudi-led forces. The attacks result in Saudi Arabia losing about half of its output capacity and, while the Houthis take credit for the aggression, the international community blames Iran because it was thought to have provided the technical expertise needed to carry out such attacks.

January-February 2020 – Fighting between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis picks up. Houthi forces carry out missile attacks on military training camps and in Saudi Arabia’s southern provinces.

March 2020 – The United Nations urges maintaining the cease-fire during the COVID-19 pandemic to prevent its spread in Yemen.

April-May 2020 – In April, Saudi Arabia initiates a unilateral two-week cease-fire to mitigate the risks of the new coronavirus pandemic. Days later, Yemen records its first known case of COVID-19. Despite the cease-fire, the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition are accused of carrying out attacks. In the south, the STC once again demands self-rule, breaking its agreement with the national government.

November 2020 - Saudi Arabia and the Houthis have reportedly initiated back-channel talks, with Saudi officials indicating their willingness to sign a cease-fire deal and end the Saudi air and sea blockade in exchange for the creation of a buffer zone between Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen and the kingdom’s borders. The Houthis later claim to have fired a missile at the coastal Saudi city of Jeddah.

December 2020 – The STC and the Hadi government formalize a new power-sharing agreement in Aden. Just weeks later, as the new cabinet arrives in Aden from Saudi Arabia, an attack on the airport kills at least two dozen people, but no ministers.



January 2021 – The Trump Administration uses the December attack to justify designating the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). The Houthis are still able to consolidate control over 70-80 percent of the Yemeni population and threaten Marib, a stronghold near the northeast corner of their control zone.

February 2021 – President Joe Biden announces changes to US policy toward Yemen, including revoking the Houthi FTO designation, declaring an end to US support for the Saudi-led coalition's offensive operations in the conflict, appointing Timothy Lenderking as a special envoy for Yemen, supporting the UN-led peace process, and providing assurances to Saudi Arabia regarding the defence of its territory.

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events and Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The **Stockholm agreement** agreed in Sweden on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and the Security Council endorsed the agreement under the **resolution 2451** (2018). It has three main components:

- **The Hudaydah agreement** has the mandate to lead and support the running of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC), overseen by a member of the UN to manage the governorate-wide ceasefire and monitor that all are abiding to the agreement, redeployment of forces, and mine action operations. It also states that the UN will work with the parties so that security of the city of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa is assured by local security forces in accordance with the Yemeni law.
- **The prisoner exchange agreement** - states that have agreed to release all prisoners, detainees, missing persons, arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared persons, and those under house arrest in relation with the events in Yemen whether they are Yemeni or from other coalition countries.
- **The Taiz agreement** declares that a joint committee should be formed from representatives of the Civil Society also including participation from the UN, naming those who will be involved.

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** – Member states should repeal Amnesty Law No. 1 of 2012 and comply with international human rights law prohibiting immunity for those responsible for serious human rights violations in respect of which States are required to bring in perpetrators to justice

**Economic and Social Council** - The Committee has urged all member nations to adopt a comprehensive gender equality act, and introduce temporary special measures, including a quota system, to promote the representation of women in decision-making positions in all spheres.

**Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**- The state party should take immediate steps to prevent acts of torture and ill-treatment throughout the country and to announce a policy of

eradication of torture and ill-treatment by State officials. The State party should ensure that all allegations of torture and ill-treatment are investigated promptly, effectively, and impartially, and that the perpetrators are prosecuted and convicted.

## Possible Solutions

- An expansion of long-term aid and development programmes to Yemen, which involves providing local communities with education and skills for economic growth,
- charitable aid funded by donations from the public through organizations such as the world food programme or the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
- Multilateral aid given through international organisations such as the international finance corporation or the world bank.

All donations for international aid should be processed and distributed by the UNHCR to prevent the usage of international aid for political purposes by combining resources, directly investing in the least developed regions, and ensuring the efficient use of the UN's media team to create an effective response.

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