



VIIMES

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Internship Research Project

On

Yemeni puzzle: Comprehensive Review of the Crisis with Emphasis on Humanitarian Dimensions



Photo credit: Hani Mohammed/AP

By

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to draw an impartially objective picture of Status Quo of Yemeni crisis with emphasis on the humanitarian dimension and its deep interconnexion with a political reality and feasible recommendations for a better future.

The paper begins with tracing the historical background that led to the current crisis. The emphasis of the research is on the humanitarian aspects of the Yemeni conflict. A large-scale humanitarian crisis, economic turmoil, infrastructure damage, collapse of health and education systems are insupportable consequences of the protracted conflict in Yemen. This “forgotten war” led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of “forgotten” people. The imposed war began on 26 March 2015 when a Saudi coalition of nine Arab states intervened in Yemen. It produced long-lasting effects for innocent civilians, including food shortages and deteriorating living conditions, psychological trauma.

The Yemen crisis comprises of two intertwined developments. The first one is domestic: between the North and the South; between the Yemen Government and Houthis in the North. The second one has an international dimension: between the Saudi-led coalition and Houthis; between terrorists and Yemenis. Particular attention is paid to external actors such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran, Russia, the U.S. The performance of the UN and other related international organizations during the humanitarian crisis has been analyzed based on facts and figures.

The concluding sections of the research address the possible outcome of the conflict and its influence on the Middle East and beyond. Feasible recommendations for a potential peaceful solution to the Yemeni conflict are proposed.



Introduction

Yemen is the cradle of Arab civilization. Since the progenitors tend to have a tougher time, the history of Yemen has never been straightforward and throughout its existence Yemen has been facing a unique confluence of crises. Notwithstanding all foreign interventions Yemeni nation had always been striving for keeping its own identity and independence. Features of the current crisis are its politicization, partisanship and injustice.

This research project attempts to examine various components of Yemeni puzzle in order to draw a factual picture of the imposed war and the forgotten innocent people of Yemen. The paper begins by tracing the historical background that led to the current crisis. The emphasis of the research is on the humanitarian aspects of the Yemeni conflict. Particular attention is paid to external actors whose interventions are rather contradictory. On the one hand, they serve as mediators of conflict and provide humanitarian aid, while on the other they complicate the resolution of the resulting tangle of contradictions. The concluding sections of the project address the possible outcome of the conflict and feasible recommendations for a potential peaceful solution to the Yemeni conflict.

The objective of the research project

The aim of this research project is to draw an impartially objective picture of Status Quo of Yemeni crisis with emphasis on the humanitarian dimension and its deep interconnexion with political reality and feasible recommendations for a better future. As a matter of fact, every side of the conflict attempted to reflect their suitable narrative, even in some cases using fake news in the media to justify their policy. The project research is relied on publicly available information with the utmost thoroughness to verify the credibility of sources, by crosschecking, to ensure the authenticity of information and documents

Nothing in the research project that follows should be interpreted to judge any parties of the conflict. The views expressed in the publication are the sole responsibility of the individual author. They do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the VIIMES, its staff members or sponsors.

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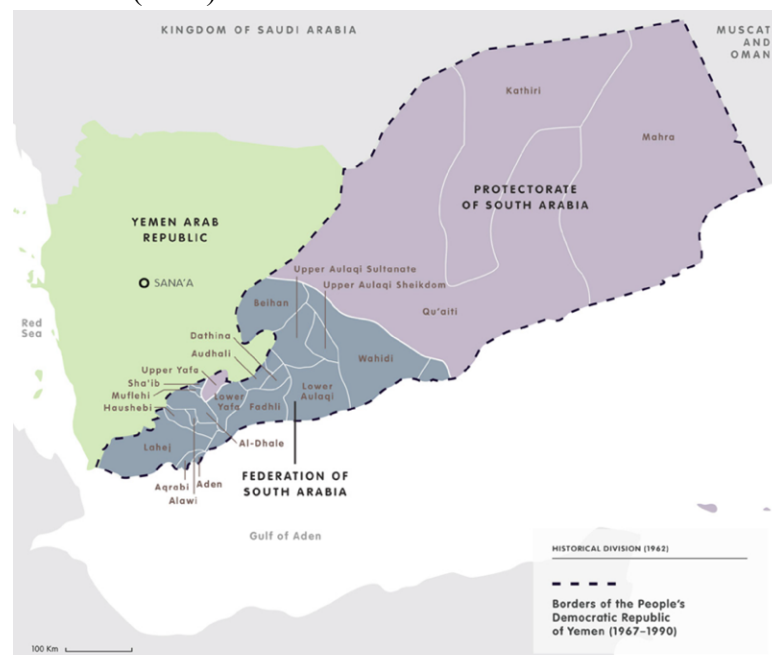
Historical Background of the Yemen Crisis

In retrospect, Yemen was characterized by a pagan life until Islam expanded into the country. The first reference to a united Yemen dates back to the eighth century BC. The great Hamdan tribe, ancestors of the Hashid and Baqil tribes, accepted Prophet Muhammad's invitation to embrace Islam, and the entire tribe was converted to Islam on a single day by Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law Ali. In order to facilitate the governance of Yemen, Prophet Muhammad divided it into vilayets (Sana'a, Jand and Hadramawt) and appointed rulers.

The line separating north and south was the result of a division of spheres of influence by the British and the Ottoman Empires. In 1918, in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the First World War, the Zaydi Imam, Yahya Muhammad Hamid al-Din established the Mutawakkilite a Kingdom in northern Yemen that was ruled for a millennium by a theocracy, the Imamate, which drew its social and political support from the Zaydi Shi'a tribes of the northwestern highlands. The kingdom lasted until 1962, when a military coup in Sana'a dethroned the imam and formed the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR).¹

The North established a republican Government that included tribal representatives. It enjoyed modest oil revenues and remittances from its citizens working in the oil-rich Arab States of the Gulf. But the Imamate's economic survival rested on the exploitation of the relatively richer, predominantly Shafi'i Sunni midlands. Meanwhile in the South, Aden was administered as part of British India, and in 1937 became a British colony in its own right. In effect, the strategic port of Aden was run directly. The larger part of South Yemen was a British protectorate until November 1967. After independence, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) with a Marxist–Leninist system was established.

Figure 1. Historical division (1962)

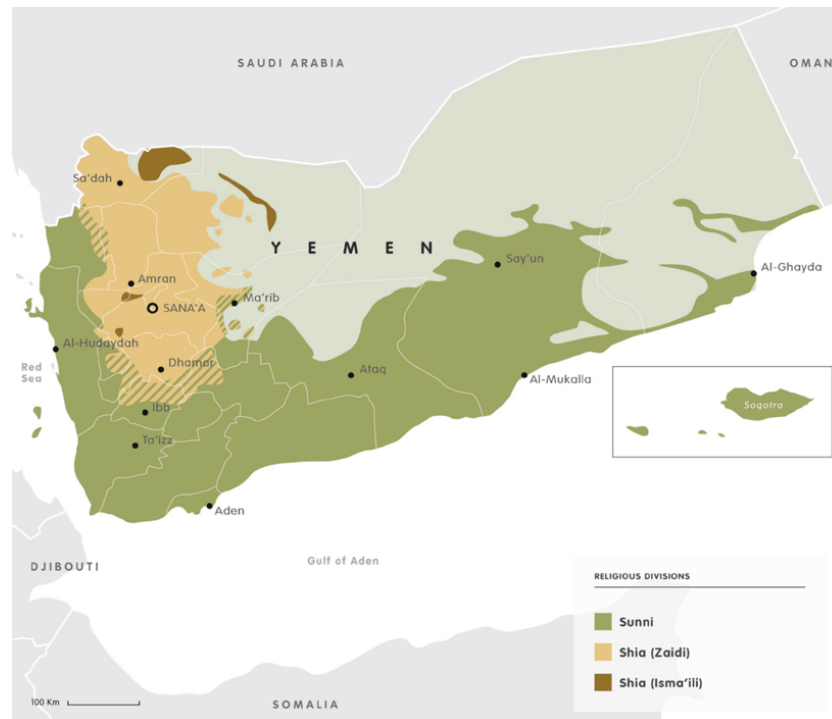


Source: European Council of Foreign Affairs, 2015

¹ Alwazir, A.Z. The Yemeni Uprising: A Product of Twenty Years of Grassroots Mobilization // Academia. URL: https://www.academia.edu/28143257/The_Yemeni_Uprising_A_Product_of_Twenty_Years_of_Grassroots_Mobilization

The religious factor had a significant impact on the formation of Yemen's statehood due to the Imamate long period lasted from 897 to 1962. In the 1960s, rebellions were made by the Arab nationalist movement “Free Yemenis” against theocratic rule in the North and British occupation in the South ushered in decades of political and economic turmoil throughout Yemen.

Figure 2. Religious division



Source: European Council of Foreign Affairs, 2015

The civil war continued until 1970, with one of its main causes being US, Saudi and Jordanian support for the monarchy in North Yemen. By that time, there was already an involvement of foreign countries. On 29 September of the same year, the new government of the North Yemen was recognized by the UAE and the USSR. The UK and the US did not jump on the issue of recognizing the independence of North Yemen. Egypt supported the revolutionary spirit, as well as supplying troops and arms to Yemen. Saudi Arabia and Jordan in turn supported the Al-Badri Government of Yemen. Republican and advanced civil society forces were concentrated in the major cities. In turn, the countryside, i.e., the tribes supported the monarchist and theocratic royalist governance.

As Ali Abdullah Saleh became President in 1978 after Ahmad al-Gashmi's assassination, the rough balance between the interests of highland and lowland areas began to erode. The former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Gerald M. Feierstein noted that Saleh reintroduced the exploitative taxation system, which had not been in place since the rule of the Imamate². By the late 1980s, oil exploration near the border between the two countries – Marib Governorate in the north and Shabwa Governorate in the south – spurred interest in developing agreements to exploit the resources and boost the economies of both countries.

² Feierstein, Gerald M. Yemen: The 60-Year War // Middle East Institute. URL: <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-02/Yemen%20The%2060%20Year%20War.pdf>



Ultimately, on November 30, 1989, the Presidents of the two countries signed the Treaty of Aden and the outline of Yemen Constitution was signed. In a global rally that took place in the metropolis of Aden on May 22, 1990, the Presidents Ali Abdullah Saleh and Ali Salim al-Bayd announced the establishment of the Republic of Yemen. As a result of the unification, two ideologically opposed States merged into one. Sana'a became the seat of Government, with Saleh serving as interim President. In effect, there was never any actual unification. The two militaries were never put under unified command, and President Saleh constantly sought ways to consolidate his power at the expense of the Yemeni Socialist Party³. Saleh's famous expression was "ruling Yemen is like dancing on the head of snakes".

As a Yemeni researcher Atiaf Zaid Alwazir noted, over a year after the creation of a united Yemen, Saleh's ruling party, the General People's Congress, supported the establishment of the Yemeni Congregation for Reform, known as Al-Islah. This third party was aimed to shift the balance of power and strengthen the Saleh's political position. "Al-Islah party brought together three different groups: the Muslim Brothers who were active under the General People's Congress in the North, prominent Northern tribal leaders including Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmar, and Salafis such as Sheikh Abdulmajid al-Zindani", Atiaf Zaid Alwazir stated.

With the Government's tacit support for hardline Salafis, they enabled to build new schools even in areas that were historically Zaydist, such as Sa'ada province near Yemen's northern border with Saudi Arabia. The Zaydis, with their strong revolutionary motivation, posed a more immediate threat to both the Saleh's rule and neighboring Saudi Arabia.

Clashes between North and South exploded at the beginning of May 1994 following a series of political assassinations, an imbalance in economic distribution in favor of the North and failures to unite the two armies. A brief civil war in 1994, which followed the collapse of political negotiations, failed to resolve the basic issues that led to the conflict.

Similarly, these core issues kept plaguing north-south relations and constitute the basis for southerners' opposition not only to Hadi's Government, but also more broadly to the idea of Yemeni unity. The social and economic consequences of the civil conflict have been severe for southerners. Aden itself was looted by the victorious hill tribes, southern civil servants and the military were sacked, and southerners accused northerners of ransacking the South's resources. As a result, two profoundly different narratives about the outcome of the conflict took shape. "According to one version, the war ended the notion of division and strengthened national unity. The other version stated that the war ended the notion of unity and ushered in a period of Northern occupation of the South", April Longley Alleyne highlights⁴.

The outcome of the 1994 civil war contributed to the growth of an organized opposition movement in the South. What began as a series of peaceful protests in 2006 has evolved into a broad-based, by and large peaceful but occasionally violent Al-Hirak protest movement. In parallel in the North, with the expansion of Salafism and an emerged threat to "identity erosion" in the early 1990s the Believing Youth Movement was established. Their aim was to protect

³ Alwazir, A.Z. The Yemeni Uprising: A Product of Twenty Years of Grassroots Mobilization // Academia. URL: https://www.academia.edu/28143257/The_Yemeni_Uprising_A_Product_of_Twenty_Years_of_Grassroots_Mobilization

⁴ Breaking Point? Yemen's Southern Question // International Crisis Group. URL: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/133795/114%20Breaking%20Point%20-%20Yemens%20Southern%20Question.pdf>



Saada's religious and cultural traditions from Salafist ideology. In response to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Believing Youth Movement shifted its focus to political activities.⁵ It began issuing public statements against the central Government, directly attacking President Saleh in his sermons. The movement later evolved to be known as the Houthis (or Ansar Allah or Partisans of God, after its leader Husain Badr al-Din Houthi (1956-2004)).⁶

The Saleh's Government's failure to defeat the Houthis, armed Saidi rebels prompted the Al-Hirak movement to intensify its own campaign in a more aggressive manner. As the Arab Spring began in 2011, southerner support for Al-Hirak and renewed calls for secession from the North intensified again. On 27 January 2011, a mass demonstration was organized against the leadership of President Saleh after 22 years in power, sparking riots which continued throughout the year.

Demonstrations in Yemen have reinforced deep-seated problems between the central Government and the northern periphery and the southern region. On 23 November 2011, Saleh signed a transfer of power agreement brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Riyadh⁷. According to the agreement, Saleh would hand over his powers to a former general from South Yemen, Vice President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi and step down as President by February 2012 in exchange for immunity from prosecution⁸. In effect, the external actor in the form of the GCC became an influential player within domestic politics.

Another aspect of such involvement was the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) as a core component of the GCC initiative designed to negotiate a new social contract. The UN Special Envoy J. Benomar played an important role in its success. As a part of the peace plan, all the major domestic political actors in Yemen, previously semi-legal, were legitimized. In January 2014, the 565 delegates from all groups and parties, organized in nine working groups (including on security and the military, the southern question, rights and liberties, and the question of federalism), negotiated an outcome document with 1,400 recommendations as the basis for the Constitutional assembly's work⁹. Furthermore, of the utmost importance was the establishment of a new federal structure with 6 regions. It was the first step in the process of fulfilling the grievances of the southern separatists and the Houthis. However, the concept of such a federal division was resisted, as they preferred a federation of two large entities corresponding to the two reunification states of Yemen¹⁰.

⁵ Boucek, Christopher. War in Saada: From Local Insurrection to National Challenge // Carnegie Endowment. URL: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/war_in_saada.pdf

⁶ International Crisis Group (ICG). "Defusing the Saada Time Bomb," Middle East Report, May 27, 2009). http://www.observatori.org/paises/pais_64/documentos/86_yemen_defusing_the_saa_da_time_bomb.pdf

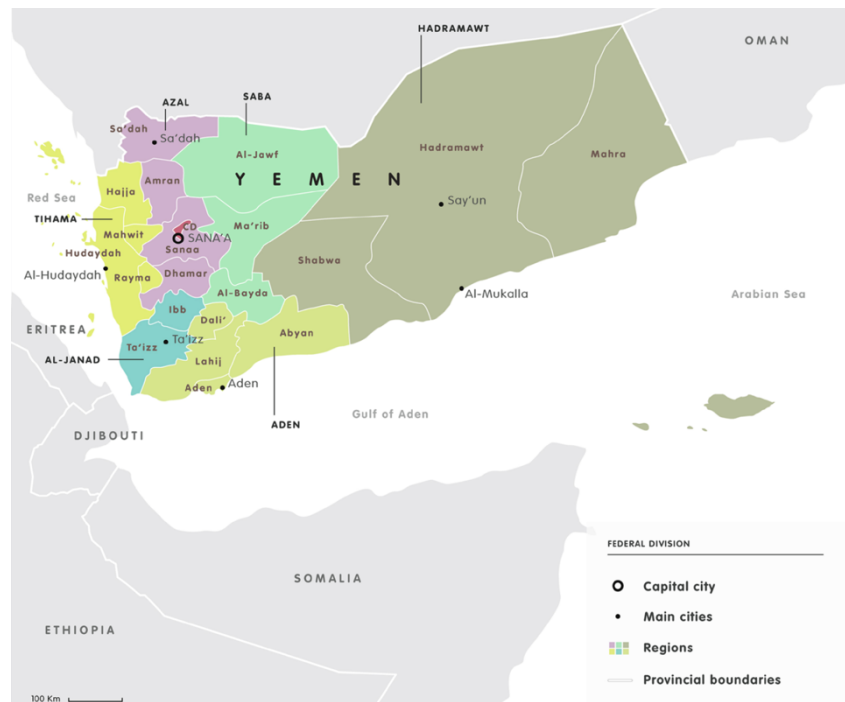
⁷ Agreement/Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative // Peace Agreements. URL: <https://www.peaceagreements.org/generateAgreementPDF/1401>

⁸ Yemen's Saleh signs deal to give up power // Reuters. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-idUSTRE7AM0D020111123>

⁹ War in Yemen: Revolution and Saudi Intervention // CSS. URL: <https://almasdaronline.net/uploads/books/files/Almasdaronline-5358.pdf>

¹⁰ Feierstein, G. (2017). Is There a Path Out of the Yemen Conflict?: Why it matters. Prism : a Journal of the Center for Complex Operations.

Figure 3. Federal division



Source: European Council of Foreign Affairs, 2015

The elections were boycotted by groups marginalized by the Saleh's Government, such as the rebel Houthis in the north and Al-Hirak in the south, and, therefore, were faced with considerable unrest since it was seen as part of an "illegitimate" political process initiated under pressure from the GCC. Seeking more radical reforms, protesters argued that the elections would not result in a decisive and meaningful break with the past, as in Tunisia and Egypt. Nonetheless, Hadi was subsequently elected as President of the Yemeni Republic.



How the Yemen Crisis Started

There is a very common narrative of a military involvement of Houthis in Sana'a, which led to a new phase of the conflict. Accordingly, after a month-long protest Houthis entered Sana'a and captured it within 5 days. Then, the Houthi takeover on 21 September 2014 became de facto rulers of the capital, which marked a qualitatively new phase of the conflict and the onset of the Civil War.

Another variation of September events is that Houthis entered Sana'a bloodlessly in order to fight with Al-Islah, which imposed Wahhabi values vis-à-vis Yemeni identity. The argument for holding such a position is that the lead coordinator of the GCC Initiative in Yemen, UN Secretary-General Benomar, who was preparing and promoting the entire plan since April 2011, had never reported that Houthis carried out a coup against the transitional President Hadi, thereby violating the terms of the GCC Initiative.

On 21 September 2014, Houthis signed an UN-brokered peace deal with the President to expand their political role. According to the "Peace and National Partnership Agreement", a new Government was appointed, comprising representatives of the Houthis and the Southern Movement.¹¹ However, the agreement was only partially implemented. President Hadi gained international support in opposing Houthis, which culminated in US-led sanctions against Houthi leaders as well as former President Saleh¹².

The imposed war in Yemen began on 26 March 2015, when without the UN's approval a military intervention by a Saudi coalition of nine Arab states (the KSA, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt and Sudan), supported by the US and the UK. The operation "Decisive Storm" was aimed to counter the Houthi movement and reinstate a globally recognized Government¹³. The transition of the military phase of the crisis to foreign actors had an extremely negative impact on the domestic political situation, causing a de facto split of the country into North and South¹⁴. So far, there have been two tales of the Yemen crisis. The former is a domestic one: between the North and the South, between the Yemen Government and Houthis in the North. The latter is a foreign policy one: between the Saudi-led coalition and Houthis; between terrorists and Yemenis.

These narratives need to be objectively and impartially investigated. As a result of thorough investigations, the UN is expected to give such a comprehensive, factual and evidence-based report. However, it is barely possible to get it soon due to high political stakes of the crisis and geopolitical situation around the Yemen crisis.

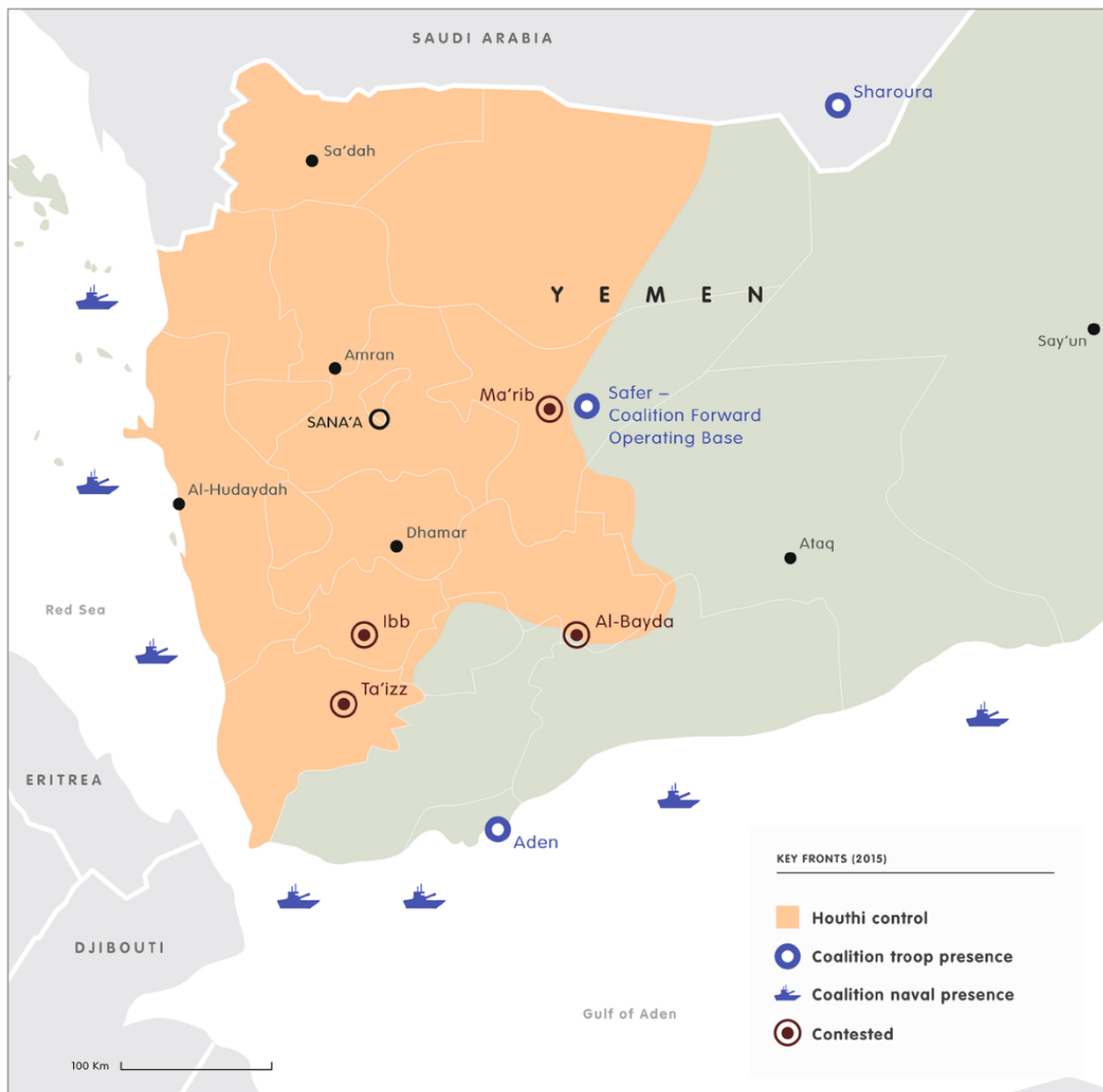
¹¹ The Peace and National Partnership Agreement 21 September 2014 // The United Nations. URL: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/YE_140921_PeaceNationalPartnershipAgreement_en.pdf

¹² War in Yemen: Revolution and Saudi Intervention // CSS. URL: <https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse175-EN.pdf>

¹³ Saudi Arabia launches Yemen air strikes as alliance builds against Houthi rebels // Guardian. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/26/saudi-arabia-begins-airstrikes-against-houthi-in-yemen>

¹⁴ Serebrov S. Yemen Crisis: Causes, Threats and Resolution Scenarios // RIAC. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/papers/Yemen-Policybrief14-en.pdf>

Figure 4. Key Yemeni fronts in 2015



Source: European Council of Foreign Affairs, 2015

Humanitarian Consequences of the Yemen Crisis: forgotten war and forgotten people

A large-scale humanitarian crisis, economic turmoil, infrastructure damage, collapse of service delivery, health and education systems as well as the social fabric are insupportable consequences of the protracted conflict in Yemen. This “forgotten war” led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of “forgotten” people. Imposed war produced long-lasting effects for innocent civilians, including food shortages and deteriorating living conditions, psychological trauma.

In 2018, world news agencies were flooded with headlines “the UN says Yemen is facing the worst famine in the world in 100 years” where Yemen was drowning in the blood of war.



Photo credit: EPA. Behind the shield Yemeni innocent children wait to receive food rations provided by a charity in Sanaa.

In 2021, the UN humanitarian office stated that Yemen remained the world's worst humanitarian crisis with nearly 80% or more than 24 million people need humanitarian assistance and protection (an increase of 13% in comparison with 2020) and more than 13 million were in danger of starving to death¹⁵.

By 2022, the humanitarian situation remains alarming. According to UNOCHA “Yemen 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview” report, the overall population of Yemen is 31.9 million, among whom 23.4 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, 4.3 million are displaced since March 2015, 19 million are estimated to face acute food insecurity, 2.2 million children are likely to experience wasting. It further reports that some 7.4 million people need shelter and non-food item (NFI) support, including 1.8 million women, 1.8 million men, 1.9 million girls

¹⁵ Yemen remains 'worst humanitarian crisis': UN office // Anadolu Agency. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/yemen-remains-worst-humanitarian-crisis-un-office/2106553>

and 1.9 million boys¹⁶. This comprises social groups with particular vulnerabilities, among them one million people with disabilities and 600,000 old people.

31.9 million	23.4 million	4.3 million	19 million	2.2 million	236 thousand
Population of Yemen	People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance	People Internally Displaced in Yemen since March 2015	People Projected to Face Acute Food Insecurity in 2022	Children Likely to Experience Wasting	Refugees Under UNHCR's mandate since 2015

Human casualties

According to the United Nations Development Programme report, by the end of 2021, deaths over the Yemen conflict were estimated to be 377,000 – approximately 60% of which were indirect and caused by issues associated with conflict like a lack of access to food, water, and healthcare¹⁷. In 2021, armed violence resulted in 2,508 civilian casualties, including 769 fatalities and 1,739 injuries, an average of nearly seven civilian casualties a day. Over 25% of all casualties were children and women – 130 children and 57 women killed and 291 and 155 injured respectively, according to the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP). The “Assessing the Impact Of War In Yemen: Pathways for Recovery” report stated that a Yemeni child under the age of 5 died every 9 minutes because of the conflict in 2021. Needless to say, that psychological and social impacts on these children would last long even for decades.



Photo credit: UNDP

Use of explosive weapons

As reports of “Action on Armed Violence” (AOAV) state, Yemen is the 6th most affected country for incidents of explosive weapon use so far, and the 5th most affected for civilian casualties of explosive weapon use over the last decades¹⁸. Started recording attacks on Yemen in 2010, AOAV has registered 1,696 incidents and 18,370 civilian casualties (7,762 killed, 10,608 injured) up to November 2022. Civilians account for 64% of the total 28,680 registered victims. 88% (16,145) of civilian casualties were in populated areas. Once explosive weapons had been used in populated areas, 92% of the 17,542 recorded fatalities were civilians.

Air strikes damaged most during this period: 62% of all civilian casualties were caused by this type of explosive. As statistics of AOAV illustrates:

¹⁶ Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022 (April 2022) // UNOCHA. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-needs-overview-2022-april-2022>

¹⁷ Assessing The Impact Of War In Yemen: Pathways for Recovery // UNDP. URL: <https://www.undp.org/publications/assessing-impact-war-yemen-pathways-recovery>

¹⁸ Assessment of explosive weapon use in Yemen // Action on Armed Violence. URL: <https://aoav.org.uk/?s=yemen>



Air-launched weapons caused 58% (10,742) of civilian casualties

- Air strikes: 53% (9,694) of total civilian casualties

Ground-launched weapons caused 26% (4,700) of civilian casualties

- Shelling: 9% (1,669) of total civilian casualties

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) caused 14% (2,507) of civilian casualties

- Non-specific IEDs: 7% (1,230) of total civilian casualties

The worst bleeding year in this period was 2015, with AOAV recording 6,298 deaths and injuries from explosive violence in Yemen. See *Table 1* below for details.

Table 1. Incidents of explosive weapon use in Yemen from 2010 to November 2022 (not including stockpile explosions, accidental detonations, malfunctions)

Year	Civilian casualties	Count of events
2010	92	7
2011	943	149
2012	312	135
2013	392	46
2014	482	46
2015	6298	216
2016	2713	151
2017	1670	203
2018	1807	227
2019	1345	144
2020	683	105
2021	867	133
2022	766	134
Grand Total	18370	1696

Source: Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)

Perpetrators of these attacks were most of those involved in the Yemen conflict. AOAV's database of explosive weapon uses in Yemen demonstrates attacks committed by progovernment militia, Houthis, Saudi-led coalition, as well as terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS (Daesh).

Air strikes casualties

The non-profit organization "Yemen Data Project" focused on attacks the Saudi-led coalition strikes from 26 March 2015 to 31 March 2022. It reported that airstrikes reached a total of



25,054. Furthermore, civilian casualties from those attacks reached 19,226¹⁹, where the total number of fatalities was 8,983, including 842 women and 1,424 children. The estimated number of wounded was 10,234, of whom 604 were women and 963 were children.

The most bloody air raids

1. October 8, 2016, in Sana'a the Saudi-led coalition targeted Al-Kubra Hall, a public building. Civilian casualties reached approximately 832, with 137 fatalities and 695 injured people
2. April 20, 2015, in Sana'a the Saudi-led coalition targeted Missiles Brigade Camp. Civilian casualties reached approximately 734, with 87 fatalities and 647 injured people.
3. March 20, 2015, in Sana'a ISIS targeted a place of worship. Civilian casualties reached approximately 482, with 137 fatalities and 345 injured people.
4. January 21, 2022, in Saada (military security target – Reserve Prison). Civilian casualties reached approximately 327, with 91 fatalities and 236 injured people.
5. July 19, 2015, in Adan Houthi rebels urban residential. Civilian casualties reached approximately 206, with 156 fatalities and 50 injured people.

Impact of Yemen crisis on children

Not only explosive weapons cause the physical destruction but it also leads to psychological trauma with long-term social and security consequences. In 2018, a Germany-based think-tank “Center For Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient” surveyed 902 children and found that 712 of them (79%) experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms²⁰. According to global organization “Save the Children”, ongoing raging conflict in Yemen has had a “devastating impact on the mental health of an entire generation of children, pushing some to the brink of depression”²¹. In its great survey, some 1,250 children (age 13-17), parents and adult caregivers were interviewed about their mental wellbeing. The results presented herein included that around one in five of the children were reported to be always afraid, 52% said they were never feeling safe when they were apart from their parents, and 56% of questioned stated that they did not feel safe when walking alone.

Although the children in Yemen face the same signs of trauma as children in other conflict zones, such as bed-wetting, nightmares, hypervigilance, grief, depression, anxiety, aggression and withdrawal, specific scope and dimension of Yemen crisis has enormous additional psychological impacts. These issues may severely affect a child's development, impairing their ability to be involved in daily life and preventing them from excelling at school, forming relationships and attachments, or finding a sense of security.²²

Facts and figures on famine, disease, and shortage of food and medicine

According to UN World Food Programme, 19 million people are currently classified as being as food insecure, with around 7.1 million in emergency. Poor sanitation and waterborne

¹⁹ Yemen Data Project. URL: <https://yemendatapoint.org>

²⁰ Fawziah al-Ammar. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among Yemeni Children as a Consequence of the Ongoing War // CARPO. URL: https://carpo-bonn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/10_carpo_brief_final.pdf

²¹ Five Years Of War In Yemen: More Than Half Of Children Feel Sad And Depressed // Save the children. URL: <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/five-years-war-yemen-more-half-children-feel-sad-and-depressed>

²² The impact of explosive violence on children in Yemen // AOAV. URL: <https://aoav.org.uk/2020/the-impact-of-explosive-violence-on-children-in-yemen/>

diseases left hundreds of thousands of people extremely ill. With famine menacing 161.000 lives, humanitarian aid become the only support for millions across the country while millions suffer from shortages of food, water and medical care. Approximately 2.2 million children under 5 require treatment for acute malnutrition fighting for their lives every day. That includes 538.000 children under 5 are suffering from severe acute malnutrition, and 1.3 million pregnant and lactating mothers.

Figure 5. People in need by sector

SECTOR	PEOPLE IN NEED	PEOPLE IN ACUTE NEED	BY SEX & AGE			
			MEN	WOMEN	BOYS	GIRLS
 CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM)	1.8M	1.6M	0.4M	0.4M	0.5M	0.5M
 EDUCATION	8.5M	1.2M	-	-	4.5M	4.0M
 FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE	19M	7.3M	4.4M	4.2M	5.3M	5.1M
 HEALTH	21.9M	12.6M	5.0M	4.8M	6.1M	5.9M
 NUTRITION	8.1M	2.9M	-	2.6M	2.7M	2.8M
 PROTECTION	17.2M	9.2M	4.3M	4.1M	4.5M	4.3M
 REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS MULTI SECTOR (RMMS)	0.3M	0.3M	0.2M	0.1M	0.0M	0.0M
 SHELTER/NON FOOD ITEMS (NFI)	7.4M	4.4M	1.8M	1.8M	2M	1.8M
 WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)	17.8M	11.2M	4.3M	4.3M	4.7M	4.5M

Source: UNOCHA

Education

As UNICEF claims, over 2.4 million school-age girls and boys are currently out of school, and many of the 870,000 displaced Yemenis have had their education drastically interrupted by numerous displacements. Some 8.5 million school-age boys and girls urgently need support to continue their education. One in five schools have been destroyed, damaged or are being used for purposes unrelated to education, such as providing temporary shelter for internally displaced people. Two-thirds of the teaching workforce – more than 170,000 teachers – have not been paid regular for four years.²³

“In the worst affected areas of Hodeida, only one in three students is able to continue their education and less than a quarter of all teachers are present in school”, Meritxell Relaño, UNICEF Representative in Yemen, stated on November 30, 2018.²⁴

*Photo Credit: UNICEF/Marish
12-year-old Ahmed looks at the ceiling of his school, Hajjah, March 2021*



²³ Yemen: Education Disrupted: Impact of the conflict on children's education in Yemen // UNICEF. URL: <https://weshare.unicef.org/Package/2AMZIFHNJI1M>

²⁴ Conflict shuts a third of schools in Yemen's port city of Hodeida // UNICEF. URL: <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/conflict-shuts-third-schools-yemens-port-city-hudaydah>



Disease amid a collapsed public health system

Outbreak of diseases especially cholera and other water-borne diseases are triggered by a lack of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. High rates of morbidity and mortality, as huge numbers of people cannot access basic services, including life-saving medical care. In addition, 21.9 million people need support to access essential health services, and some 17.8 million people will need support to access clean water and basic sanitation needs.

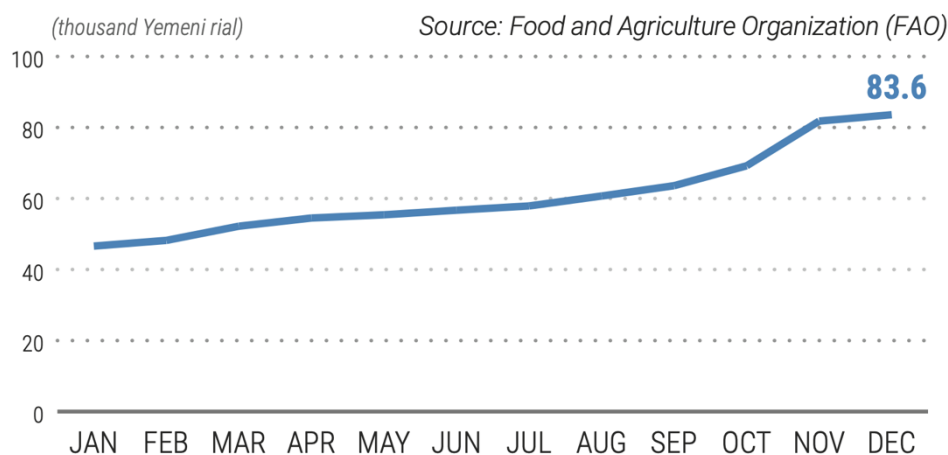
In April 2017, Yemen suffered the world's worst cholera outbreak, and of the 2.3 million cases, 25% of those were children under five. In total, the number of deaths reached some 3.795. Meanwhile, poor availability of clean water and sanitation in Yemen increases the risk of disease. Around 9.58 million children do not have access to safe water, sanitation, or hygiene. Three quarters of households cannot afford soap.²⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has put an additional burden on Yemen's already fragile health system, with only 51% of health facilities functioning. According to the "Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System" up to 2020, access to health services remained limited. The situation exacerbated by the imposed war, that has damaged almost 50% of health facilities, and a lack of other basic services.

Economic Damages

The devastation of Yemen through attacks has resulted in the near total destruction of Yemen's critical infrastructure and economic collapse. Yemen's economy has shrunk by just over half since the conflict erupted. According to World Bank, some 71% to 78% of Yemenis currently live below the poverty line, with women being the most vulnerable²⁶. In addition, the disruption of infrastructure and financial services has severely affected private sector activities. Just over 40% of Yemeni households struggle to buy even the minimum amount of food.

Figure 6. Minimum food basket prices in 2021



Source: UNOCHA

²⁵ Report "Yemen Five Years On: Children, Conflict And Covid-19" // UNICEF. URL: https://www.unicef.org/mena/sites/unicef.org/mena/files/2020-06/EMBARGOED%2026%20June%200001%20GMT_Yemen%20five%20years%20on_REPORT.pdf

²⁶ The World Bank In Yemen // World Bank. URL: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/yemen/overview#1>



According to the UNDP, by the end of 2021 the conflict had cost Yemen \$126 billion in lost output, pushing 15.6 million people into extreme poverty.²⁷ With imports into the areas controlled by the Ansarallah limited and no efforts to promote macroeconomic stability, the socioeconomic situation is anticipated to worsen further in 2022, leading to increased humanitarian needs²⁸.

Small and medium-sized enterprises account for the vast majority of businesses in Yemen, but by 2018, over half of them remain fully or partially closed²⁹. Furthermore, youth unemployment remains particularly high, with about 24%.

The sharp economic collapse has been most visible in the depreciation of the Yemeni riyal (YER) that, among other parameters, was caused by the imposed sanctions. Traditional sources of foreign exchange, such as remittances, oil exports and bilateral funding flows, remain depressed³⁰.

Yemen relies heavily on foreign exchange reserves to finance imports of goods. Until 2015, these were hydrocarbons, mainly crude oil and gas, with hydrocarbons accounting for 90% of the country's total exports and 40% of the country's revenue source³¹. As the conflict has steadily reduced income and profit opportunities, Yemenis have increasingly relied on remittances from abroad to cover basic expenses. In 2019, remittances to Yemen amounted to US\$ 3.8 billion, representing 13% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and by 2021 some government officials unofficially estimate it will reach US\$ 6 billion, despite some decline during the COVID-19 pandemic³².

In conclusion, the Central Bank of Yemen remains woefully undercapitalized and lacks the resources necessary to implement policies that could address many of Yemen's economic challenges and ensure stability. Foreign exchange injections from donors, development partners and international financial institutions are urgently needed to support imports of essential goods and prevent further devaluation of the Rial. However, the effective functioning of the Central Bank is hampered by its fragmentation: its branches in Aden and Sanaa have pursued conflicting policies, resulting in divergent exchange rates. These disagreements accelerated the economic downturn in Yemen with ongoing challenges for commercial and humanitarian organizations, which are forced to navigate two contexts³³.

²⁷ Assessing the Impact of War in Yemen: Pathways for Recovery // UNDP. URL: <https://www.undp.org/publications/assessing-impact-war-yemen-pathways-recovery>

²⁸ Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen // UNOCHA. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-response-plan-2022-april-2022>

²⁹ Small and medium-sized enterprises damage assessment: Yemen. // International Labour Organization Regional Office for Arab States. URL: https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_644720/lang--en/index.htm

³⁰ Yemen: Country Program Overview // Relief Web. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-country-program-overview>

³¹ Report “Yemen 2021 In Review” // UNOCHA. URL: <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/yemen/card/4C8PObZqXF/>

³² Ibid.

³³ Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022 (April 2022) // UNOCHA. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-needs-overview-2022-april-2022>

Role of outside players in the Yemen Crisis

Yemeni geography might be characterized as a blessing and a curse. Its advantageous strategic location has always been a source of attraction for foreign countries. Yemen is situated on the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which separates Yemen and Djibouti, in a broader sense – Asia from Africa. Bab al-Mandab Strait is the shortest trade route to link Europe to the Indian Ocean. Approximately 9% of total seaborne-traded oil and refined products is accounted for by Strait³⁴. The oil exploration in Yemen in the late 1980s is another motive for external actors' involvement.

Yemeni history has always been connected with engagement of outside countries as showed by the recent Saudi-led Arab intervention. The internationalization of the protracted Yemeni conflict led to more conflicts of outside players' interests, which frequently overlap. This in turn complicated an already insupportable situation and generated new tangles of contradictions. The point of this paragraph is to see whether the role of outside players in Yemen is *destructive* or *constructive* and its involvement might be deemed *intervention* or *intermediation*.

Figure 7. Key players in Yemeni conflict



³⁴ The Bab el-Mandeb Strait is a strategic route for oil and natural gas shipments, August 27, 2019 // US Energy Information Agency (EIA): <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=41073#>.



Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's involvement in Yemen rooted in history. The Saudi-Yemeni war in 1934 resulted in territorial changes. Three provinces Jizan, Asir, and Najran were transferred to Saudi Arabia while Al-Hodeida was come under Yemeni control. Thus, the border between the two States was established, albeit it was finally demarcated only in 2000 by the Treaty of Jeddah³⁵ as part of a mutual long-term strategy and concessions by both sides.

There are two main objectives that Saudi Arabia pursues in Yemen. First, of fundamental importance is to ensure the security of its southern border and the oil pipeline through Yemen's Hadramawt. Second, Yemen conflict is seen by many analysts as being a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In this regard, it is paramount for Riyadh to promote its geopolitical interests, in particular by competing with Iran. In his recollections of personal meetings with the late Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, President Hadi noted that as early as in 2012, Saudi Arabia's attitude towards the Houthis was based on the following premises³⁶: "Iran wants to thwart the Initiative for two reasons: 1) because that Initiative was proposed by the Gulf States, and 2) because it was signed in Riyadh, and Iran is against the success of any peace initiatives coming from Saudi Arabia [...] Iran wants to turn Yemen into a corridor for the purpose of destabilizing Saudi Arabia and seizing Mecca and Medina, which is a part of its strategy; its other objective is to establish control over maritime navigation via the Mandeb Strait."³⁷

Initial calculations to get a quick victory, primarily due to the military superiority of Saudi-led Arab coalition, was wrong. Thus, the military action has resulted in challenge of the nation's reputation and image, which is problematic in the context of the large-scale national agenda of Saudi Vision 2030. The constant bombardment in Yemen contradicts the development program project of the future "Neom"³⁸. Saudi Arabian expenses of the ongoing military action in Yemen are in the region of \$6-8 billion per month³⁹. It raises the question: how long will the Saudi leadership be willing to continue combat operations instead of halting the fight and overcoming the humanitarian crisis in Yemen?

UAE

On November 23, 2011, UAE was a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and Implementing Mechanism designed to transfer Saleh's power to Hadi⁴⁰. The UAE's presence expanded in 2015 when the UAE joined the Saudi-led coalition, albeit largely as a symbol of support for the Saudis. However, shortly afterwards the UAE has diverged from Saudi Arabia's course to some extent.

³⁵ Feierstein, Gerald M. Yemen: The 60-Year War // Middle East Institute. URL: <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-02/Yemen%20The%2060%20Year%20War.pdf>

³⁶ Serebrov S. Yemen Crisis: Causes, Threats and Resolution Scenarios // RIAC. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/papers/Yemen-Policybrief14-en.pdf>

³⁷ Jameeh M. Al-Rais al-Yamani: musammimun ala al-hall al-askari // Al-Quds al-Arabi, September 11, 2017.

³⁸ According to Saudi Arabian "Vision 2030", Neom is the newest attempt in combining technology, entrepreneurship, science, and innovation to create a city with limitless opportunities. See more: <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/v2030/v2030-projects/neom/>.

³⁹ HSE Lecture "Yemen: the forgotten war. Origins and Possible Consequences" with Serebrov S.N. // YouTube, April 2022. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2cByJS75_o&list=LL&index=2&t=1673s

⁴⁰ Agreement/Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative // Peace Agreements. URL: <https://www.peaceagreements.org/generateAgreementPDF/1401>



Unlike Saudi Arabia was trying to secure the support of groups within the Muslim Brotherhood that were backing al-Islah, the UAE is a vocal opponent of the Muslim Brotherhood. Abu Dhabi is training special task force units (Al-Hizam Al-Amni and Nukhbat Hadramiyah) in South Yemen to fight AQAP and Muslim Brotherhood extremists.

Moreover, the UAE established close cooperation with Al-Hirak. In particular, the UAE created several political and military entities to solidify its presence and control, including Southern Transitional Council (STC) in 2017 headed by Aidarus al-Zoubaidi and in March 2020, the Political Bureau of the National Resistance, headed by Brigadier General Tariq Saleh, which administers several non-state armed groups thought to include a total of about 200,000 fighters⁴¹.

From the early stages of the war, the UAE concentrated its efforts on southern and eastern Yemen, from Aden to Hadramawt Province. It has deployed military forces stretching from Mocha Port on the Red Sea to Mukalla in the east. At sea, the Emirates controls Yemen's Socotra Island in the Arabian Sea and Perim island in the middle of the Bab al-Mandab⁴².

Some analytics claim that the UAE is pursuing an ambitious strategic programme to ensure that DP World, a Dubai-based company, gains control of Yemen's ports and the Bab al-Mandab Strait. This could ensure that the area becomes a hub for UAE commercial activity, while allowing the Emirates to play the role of regional protector, controlling the flow of arms and support for proxy groups⁴³. Moreover, the UAE's military involvement in Yemen burnished their reputation as a capable military force.

Iran

Unlike Saudi Arabia, there is no history of Iranian involvement in Yemen in the modern era. In 2011 and 2012, Iran's role shifted during the Arab Spring and subsequent political upheaval. During this period, Tehran increased its support for the Houthis, although Iran did not participate in the international community's effort to facilitate the political negotiations leading to Saleh's departure in 2011.

According to Saudi Arabia's version, the Houthis' victory is the result of Iran's aggressive policy of exporting its influence throughout the Middle East region through local Shiite communities, which in Yemen are represented mainly by the Zaydis. The Houthis allegedly aim to establish a pro-Iranian regime in Yemen that is hostile to Saudi Arabia and the West. The insertion of Yemen's complex inherently internal conflict into the larger Shia-Sunni conflict has allowed the KSA authorities to position their military intervention as a defense of Sunnism against a Shia enemy⁴⁴.

Iran has been accused of providing more sophisticated weapons, extended-range Scuds, and anti-ship missiles to the Houthis. According to CNN, there was a confidential UN report in

⁴¹ Feierstein, Gerald M. Yemen: The 60-Year War // Middle East Institute. URL: <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-02/Yemen%20The%2060%20Year%20War.pdf>

⁴² Strategic Considerations of the UAE's Role in Yemen // Arab Center Washington DC. URL: <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/strategic-considerations-of-the-uaes-role-in-yemen/>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Sergei N. Serebrov. Yemen: Expert Commentaries And Notes On The Current Crisis // Kunstkamera. URL: https://lib.kunstkamera.ru/files/lib/978-5-88431-323-1/978-5-88431-323-1_23.pdf



2018 which did not identify a supplier of the weaponry but said missile debris inspected by UN experts was of Iranian origin⁴⁵.

Thus, the point is that the nature of the Yemen conflict is not the Sunni-Shite confrontation, since Zaydism had an intermediate position between Shi'ism and Sunnism and has little in common with the dominant Shiite school of Iran, Jafarism.

U.S.

Among the world's key players, the United States has the largest military capability in the Middle East. Washington provided logistical support to Saudi Arabia during the military operation in Yemen. U.S. involvement in Yemen was generally a subset of American relations with Saudi Arabia until 2001, when concerns about the rise of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula became a driving force in US-Yemen relations⁴⁶.

As the former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen G.M. Feierstein put, the U.S. saw North Yemen as a bulwark against communist expansion from the NDRY into the Arabian Peninsula and a threat to Saudi stability. The NDRY broke off relations with the US in October 1969 and did not re-establish them until April 1990, weeks before the announcement of the Yemeni unification agreement. The U.S. and Saudi Arabia jointly formed a military assistance mission to North Yemen, including the subsequent sale of F-5 fighter jets⁴⁷.

The United States has an ambiguous political interest in Yemen. In particular, they admit their interest in exporting more weapons to the Gulf region. Nonetheless, the local conflict in Yemen has not been a priority, and the administration has no leverage over main parties to help resolve it. Furthermore, the United States has used targeted drone attacks in Yemen for more than a decade as part of the war against terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS (Daesh). This policy resulted in the larger number of civilians killed by drones⁴⁸ which fiercely criticized by humanitarian and human rights organizations, as well as political opposition within the country.

Another phenomenon that the Trump administration has brought to Yemeni politics is an attempt to resurrection of the Iranian threat. Washington demonized Tehran by positioning the Houthis as religious extremists on a par with the AQAP. Allegations spread out that Iran is supplying weapons to the Houthis on fishing boats to bypass the tight blockade are fueling the hawks' position in Washington. Trump's decision to place Ansar Allah on the U.S. list of designated terrorist groups would jeopardize humanitarian efforts in Yemen with a suffering population on the brink of starvation, as the United Nations warned.⁴⁹

In the broader context, there is a trend towards a gradual reduction of both U.S. influence on the Middle Eastern politics and its military presence in the region. The U.S. "National Security

⁴⁵ UN report accuses Iran and Saudis over Yemen // CNN. URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/15/politics/un-report-iran-saudi-yemen/index.html>

⁴⁶ Feierstein, Gerald M. Yemen: The 60-Year War // Middle East Institute. URL: <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-02/Yemen%20The%2060%20Year%20War.pdf>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ What Biden's Visit to Saudi Arabia Means for Yemen // Carnegie Middle East Center. URL: <https://carnegie-mec.org/2022/07/12/what-biden-s-visit-to-saudi-arabia-means-for-yemen-pub-87483>

⁴⁹ Trump's Legacy In Yemen: Why Terrorist Listing May Jeopardize Peace Talks // Political Violence at a glance. URL: <https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2021/01/25/trumps-legacy-in-yemen-why-terrorist-listing-may-jeopardize-peace-talks/>



Strategy”, published in October 2022, lists China as the main competitor among global priorities⁵⁰. In this regard, geopolitics in Indo-Pacific region is of the paramount importance for Washington as opposed to the Middle East. Nevertheless, for the Washington administration, the U.S. is entering a phase of great power competition with China (and, to a lesser degree Russia). In this regard, this competition will be global, and as a result, all areas of the world are potentially vital to the U.S. If the U.S. leaves these regions, Biden believes there will be a vacuum that will be filled by Russia or China. Moreover, in this competition, one of the strongest cards the U.S. has is its alliance system, which needs to be kept and strengthened. Consequently, they have to keep countries like Saudi Arabia by its side even if it means turning an ever more blind eye to all of the problems that Saudi Arabia is creating in the region and for the U.S.⁵¹ (even if it means to bomb Yemen to smithereens⁵²). All these implications lead to the conclusion that the U.S. is not going to step back from Yemen.

China

Given the gradual downward trend in the U.S. presence in the Middle East, the regional position of the U.S. might be, to some extent, taken by China, which has consistently expanded its presence in the Middle East and Africa. The U.S. and China have two fundamentally different approaches to engaging with the States of the Middle East. While the U.S. continues signing arms deal with Saudi Arabia and UAE⁵³, China advances in economic deals. On December 9, 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping made a landmark visit to Riyadh and reached a strategic partnership agreement with Saudi Arabia⁵⁴ and made the joint statement for cooperation and development between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and China⁵⁵. While the U.S. is focused on the military and security purposes of regional involvement, China has the economic orientation towards the Middle East; an option that could meet the humanitarian perspective.

Given its prominent position, Yemen is expected to be of key importance to China's Belt and Road Initiative, also known as the New Silk Road⁵⁶. The strategic location of Yemen's islands and the ports of Aden and Mocha should put Yemen in an ideal position to forge partnerships and acquire business opportunities that will ensure its economic viability. As Yemen's main trading partner, China has a huge economic presence in the country and can play a significant economic role in Yemen's post-war reconstruction through its 'Belt and Road' initiative⁵⁷. On July 14, 2017, China sent the first batch of humanitarian aid in Aden and announced a grant of

⁵⁰ The U.S. National Security Strategy, October 2022 // The White House. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/8-November-Combined-PDF-for-Upload.pdf>

⁵¹ Interview with Dr. Trita Parsi, MSNBC Columnist, the executive vice president of the Quincy Institute.

⁵² While MBS undermines America, Joe Biden has his back on Yemen // MSNBC. URL: <https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/yemen-biden-war-powers-resolution-bernie-rcna61893>

⁵³ U.S. approves massive arms sale to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates to counter Iran // PBS. URL: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/u-s-approves-massive-arms-sale-to-saudi-arabia-united-arab-emirates-to-counter-iran>

⁵⁴ China's Xi Promotes Mideast Security, Energy Ties at Saudi Summits // Voa News. URL: <https://www.voanews.com/a/china-s-xi-promotes-mideast-security-energy-ties-at-saudi-summits-/6870507.html>

⁵⁵ Statement of the Riyadh Summit for Cooperation and Development between the GCC and the People's Republic of China // Saudi Press Agency. URL: <https://www.spa.gov.sa/2408192>

⁵⁶ Yemen and the Curse of Geography: Bab al-Mandab Disputed by Great Power Rivalries // Carnegie Endowment. URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/84558>

⁵⁷ China and Yemen's Forgotten War // United State Institute for Peace. URL: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/01/china-and-yemens-forgotten-war>



\$22.5 million as relief assistance to Yemen⁵⁸. In this respect, it might be a gradual step, based on economic interests, to move towards the provision of humanitarian aid. To some point, it would be a deal of trust for Yemen. In other words, China is anticipated to provide the humanitarian assistance in order to both attract Yemen for larger economic cooperation and secure one of the New Silk Road's transit routes.

Such an economic policy is accompanied by China's impartial approach in military conflicts in order to maintain trustful relations with the nations of the Middle East and make strides in improving their cooperation. For that matter, after the joint statement of China and GCC related also to the three disputed island in the Gulf⁵⁹ and Iran's subsequent response with strong dissatisfaction, Chinese Vice Premier went to Iran.⁶⁰ This move was designed to cease tensions, demonstrate impartial attitude, and secure the region. In retrospect, China has consistently supported regional and international initiatives to mitigate the Yemeni conflict, including the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the National Dialogue Conference and UN-led peace talks.

In the context of the current growing role of China in the conflict and post-conflict regulations as well as in geopolitics of the Middle East in general, and given the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen, it is important to see whether there is a fundamental and substantial change in China's Middle East policy.

Russia

Russia's role in the Yemen crisis has been the persistent promotion of all peacekeeping projects in the country and providing humanitarian aid to the population. Moscow has gained a reputation for adhering to international law, respecting sovereignty and demonstrating intolerance of neo-colonialist scenarios. This, in turn, opens up prospects for reaching out to all major actors in Yemen, which is the key to resolving the crisis.⁶¹

As regard to Russian position vis-à-vis Yemen in international relations, particularly in UN SC, it is recalled that the Soviet Union had historically tried to balance its relations between North and South Yemen. Closer relations had undoubtedly been with the South. According to one estimate, military assistance began in 1968 and the parties signed an agreement on economic and technical assistance in 1969. The Russians signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in November 1979. At the same time, the Soviet Union was engaged in maintaining ties with North Yemen, especially as an entry point into relations with Saudi Arabia. The Soviet Union helped develop the port of Hodeida and provided military assistance by supplying MiG-21 aircraft to YAR when the Saudis and the US refused to build Yemen's military capacity⁶².

⁵⁸ The first batch of China's humanitarian aid arrives in Yemen // China.org.cn. URL: http://www.china.org.cn/world/2017-07/14/content_41214147.htm

⁵⁹ Iran summons Chinese envoy for statement on disputed islands // Middle East Monitor. URL: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20221211-iran-summons-chinese-envoy-for-statement-on-disputed-islands/>

⁶⁰ China tries to mollify Iran after Xi's deal-making trip to Saudi Arabia // The China Project. URL: <https://thechinaproject.com/2022/12/14/china-tries-to-mollify-iran-after-xis-deal-making-trip-to-saudi-arabia/>

⁶¹ Serebrov S. Yemen Crisis: Causes, Threats and Resolution Scenarios // RIAC. URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/papers/Yemen-Policybrief14-en.pdf>

⁶² Feierstein, Gerald M. Yemen: The 60-Year War // Middle East Institute. URL: <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-02/Yemen%20The%2060%20Year%20War.pdf>



Despite Russia's historical close involvement in Yemen, its role in the Yemen conflict is modest. Moscow's position is to bring Yemen to the negotiating table as soon as possible and restore its sovereignty. Russia was the only country that did not support UN Security Council Resolution 2216. This resolution gave legitimacy to a foreign intervention by citing Houthi aggression as the cause of the Saudi-led intervention. Russia's then Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Vladimir Churkin, said he could not vote for the resolution because it all failed to correlate with what was really happening in Yemen. He continued that “the text failed to take into account proposals his country had made and to call on all sides to halt fire, did not provide for due reflection on consequences and lacked clarity on a humanitarian pause”⁶³.

⁶³ Security Council Demands End to Yemen Violence, Adopting Resolution 2216 (2015), with Russian Federation Abstaining // UN, April 14, 2015. URL: <https://press.un.org/en/2015/sc11859.doc.htm>



The role of the United Nations and other international organizations in the Yemen Crisis

As the humanitarian situation in Yemen deteriorates, the number of the United Nations aid reports increases exponentially with concerns about whether the aid has fulfilled immediate real needs and whether all has been delivered directly and fully to the needed people in Yemen. Yet, what is in fact behind these documents? Should the role of UN and other international organizations in the Yemeni crisis be deemed *provocative* or *preventive*, *impartial* or *instrumentally used*?

From a historical perspective, Yemen became a member of the UN in 1947. Twenty years later, in 1967, the Democratic People's Republic of Yemen was approved for membership of the UN. After unification in 1990, a united Yemen became the representative of the Yemeni people.

The role of international organizations in Yemen is multifaceted. Since the crisis started there are currently 22 UN entities alone (see *Table 2* below). They operate on a wide range of humanitarian issues, including assistance with food, medicine, affordable education, housing and the like. There are specialized UN associations, in particular the UNMHA, to ensure the sustainable implementation of agreements.

Table 2. United Nations Entities in Yemen

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
The International Labour Organization (ILO)	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
The International Monetary Fund (IMF)	The United Nations Information Centres (UNIC)
The International Organization for Migration (IOM)	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	The United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA)
The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OSESFY)	The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	The United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV)
The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)	The World Food Programme (WFP)
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	The World Health Organization (WHO)
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	The World Bank

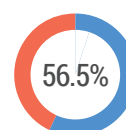
The activities of many of these organizations have already been presented in this research project. Given the main focus of this work on the humanitarian dimension of the Yemeni crisis, it is worth elaborating on the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) engagement, particularly *the Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) 2022* aimed at aiding people in the basic areas of life in Yemen. It is a matter of disappointment that, according to report of December 2022, the YHRP funding requirements were 56.5% met (of the US\$ 4,27 billion, only US\$ 2,41 were received). The worst-case scenario with the most people in need



was in sectors such as health, food security & agriculture (FSAC), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), protection⁶⁴. It is further reported that the most major donors were the United States, Germany, and Saudi Arabia (for more information see *Figure* below).

**YEMEN****Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) 2022 - Funding Status**

End of year 2022

FUNDING
REQUIREMENTS
FOR YHRPUS\$ 4.27
BILLIONTOTAL FUNDING
RECEIVED
TO YEMENUS\$ 2.75
BILLIONTOTAL FUNDING
RECEIVED
FOR YHRPUS\$ 2.41
BILLIONTOTAL FUNDING
RECEIVED
OUTSIDE YHRPUS\$ 341.5
MILLIONUNMET YHRP
FUNDING
REQUIREMENTSUS\$ 1.86
BILLIONLEVEL OF FUNDING
AGAINST YHRP
REQUIREMENTS**HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING RECEIVED BY CLUSTER**

Sector/Cluster	Overall covered	Funding Received	Requirements	Unmet Funding
FSAC ¹	58%	1,212.2	2,100	887.8
Nutrition	39%	170.7	442	271.3
Health	68%	270.5	398	127.5
WASH ²	27%	81.6	302.2	220.6
Education	12%	32.0	275.7	243.6
Shelter and NF ³	23%	51.4	224.9	173.5
Protection	57%	115.6	202	86.4
CCCM ⁴	3%	2.3	86	83.7
Refugees & Migrants ⁵	57%	31.6	55.8	24.2
Coordination	46%	21.7	47.3	25.6
Logistics	84%	38.4	45.6	7.2
RRM ⁶	51%	10.2	20	9.8
Emergency Telecom.	27%	0.9	3.4	2.5
MPCA ⁷	76%	52.2	69	16.8
Multiple Field clusters		83.0	NA	NA
Not reported		237.8	NA	NA

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING RECEIVED BY DONOR

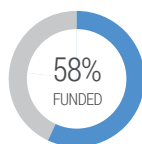
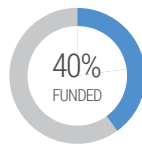
Donor	US\$ million
United States	1,088.3
Germany	324
Saudi Arabia*	211.7
ECHO	166
Int. Dev. Association	85.7
United Kingdom	64
Canada	53.2
Sweden	41.1
CERF	40
Private	36.5
Global Fund**	34.4
Netherlands	31
Japan	30.3
UAE	23.6
Norway	22.9
Denmark	21.3
Others	20
Korea, Republic of	18.8
France	15.7
World Bank	15.3
Switzerland	13
Not reported	12.3
Kuwait***	8
Ireland	7.7
UNICEF Nat. Committees	6.6
Belgium	5.6
Médecins du Monde	4.3
Australia	3.2
Finland	1.3
Spain	1.1
Morocco	1

Total of \$4.3M from: Austria, Luxembourg, Iceland, Qatar, Poland, Jersey Overseas Aid, UN Joint SDG Fund, Philippines, Malaysia, United, Bulgaria, UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund, Guyana, UNF, Slovenia, Lithuania, Greece, Azerbaijan, Cyprus

*Including \$8.6M from King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center

**Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

***Including \$5M from Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development

FoodUS\$ 887.8 M
Unmet funding**Non-Food**US\$ 981.5M
Unmet funding**FUNDING OUTSIDE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN RECEIVED BY TOP 5 DONORS**

Donor	US\$ million
Saudi Arabia	277.3
UAE	16.5
United States	9.5
UK	9.2
ECHO	8.1

¹ Food Security and Agriculture; ² Refugees & Migrants Multi-Sector; ³ Rapid Response Mechanism; ⁴ Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; ⁵ Non-Food Items; ⁶ Camp Coordination and Camp Management Sector; ⁷ Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
Creation date: 31 December 2022 Sources: Financial Tracking Service (FTS) For more information: ochayemen@un.org www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int

Apart from the UN specialized agencies, there are other international organizations operating in Yemen and aiding war-torn people to struggle with consequences of the military actions. In particular, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is

⁶⁴ Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen // UNOCHA. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-response-plan-2022-april-2022>

actively involved in humanitarian assistance throughout Yemen. Besides the standing complex programme called “Operational Plan”, there is “Disaster Response Emergency Fund” (DREF), allowing to fund directly to local humanitarian actors. According to “Yemen Country Plan 2022” of IFPC, out of 174.000 population, 18.900 were assisted for a total of 553.281 (CHF)⁶⁵.

It should be also recalled that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is mandated to represent the collective voice of over 1.5 billion Muslims of the world with a membership of 57 states and with headquarter in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. As the Preparatory Meeting for the OIC 49th Council of Foreign Ministers on February 5, 2023 demonstrated, the central issues for the OIC were the Palestinian case and situation in Afghanistan⁶⁶. Despite the unprecedented graveness of Yemeni people and high expectation of the OIC, the Yemen crisis is not the main agenda of the conference, which hinders the resolution of the humanitarian crisis.

International organizations, including the UN’s Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, UNICEF, International Committee of Red Cross, World Food Programme, Médecins Sans Frontières, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, are providing aids, although they all have consistently expressed concerns and called on Saudi Arabia to stop air strikes and blockade so that humanitarian aid can be entered the country and be delivered to Yemenis⁶⁷.



Photo credit: OCHA/Muath Algabal | A 12-year-old boy carries soap supplied by the UNICEF in Sana’a in Yemen. (September 2018). Although UNICEF contributes and provides assistance, many analysts believe that UNICEF can do more for Yemeni children, who face not only hunger but also the psychological trauma due to the humanitarian tragedy which resulted in the loss of their love ones including their parents or their classmates being turned to ash.

It is difficult to judge fairly about the annual reports on how many people in need were targeted, including the unarmed, non-combatant civilians who managed to receive humanitarian aid, since humanitarian crisis only deteriorated, which led to more long-term psychological consequences. In order to make the process more transparent, the OCHA or Red Crescent, as well as other international organizations, should break down the funds data and give a comprehensive report of aid recipients and detailed costs, where and how the money was allocated and distributed among Yemenis.

⁶⁵ Yemen Country Plan 2022 // International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent. URL: https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/Yemen_Country_Plan_2022.pdf

⁶⁶ Preparatory Meeting for the OIC 49th Council of Foreign Ministers Kicks Off // OIC, 05/02/2023. URL: https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=38371&ref=26200&lan=en

⁶⁷ The Yemen Crisis: Impacts and Prospects // China Institute of International Studies. URL: https://www.ciis.org.cn/english/COMMENTARIES/202007/t20200715_2732.html



Another crucial point for international organizations, primarily for the UN, is to develop and subsequently take crisis prevention measures for the specific Yemen conflict. How can the global community avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen? How can the conflict be peacefully and urgently resolved?

The United Nations role as a mediator and negotiator

The United Nations role as a mediator traced back to 1960s. The third Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant, pursued a peace initiative to monitor the situation in Yemen since the outbreak of civil war in 1962. Consequently, it resulted in the first and only United Nations observation mission in Yemen (UNYOM)⁶⁸ which was established by UN Security Council resolution 179 in July 1963 (till September 1964)⁶⁹. The objective of UNYOM was solely to monitor and certify the implementation of the disengagement agreement between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Republic⁷⁰.

Amid the uprisings in Yemen which began in early 2011, the United Nations supported negotiations between the Government and the opposition, paving the way for any possible agreement. Thus, Yemen's then-president Ali Abdullah Saleh signed the agreement brokered by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Riyadh on 23 November 2011. The GCC initiative was supposed to transfer power from the government of Saleh Abdullah Saleh. It is important to note that the UN Secretariat approached the Yemeni settlement process as primarily overcoming internal divisions and sought to achieve it primarily by the Yemenis themselves, giving them relative freedom to determine the role of each actor up to the final event of the roadmap plan – general elections for new authorities⁷¹.

Another important step to keep peace in Yemen was taken on 21 September 2014, when Houthis signed an UN-brokered peace deal with the president to expand their political role. According to the “Peace and National Partnership Agreement”, a new government was appointed, comprising representatives of the Houthis and the Southern Movement.⁷² In parallel, attempts to implement the GCC initiative have been ongoing since 2011. With the help of international mediators and the UN special ambassador for November 2011 to March 2015, Jamal Benomar, the plan struggled most of the way through and continued to make progress towards its final destination. A turning point was the Saudi-led intervention in March 2015 that derailed the GCC transition plan.

In April 2015, UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2216 with the Russian Federation abstaining. Notwithstanding the important points highlighted in the resolution, it lacked adequate reflection of the grave impact on civilians in Yemen of the ongoing hostilities and did not sufficiently articulate the objective of establishing a mandatory and regular humanitarian pause. Moreover, the UNSC Resolution 2216 cited the Houthis as the main cause of the crisis

⁶⁸ United Nations Yemen Observation Mission in Yemen (UNYOM) // The United Nations. URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unyombackgr.html>

⁶⁹ Resolution 179 (1963) / [adopted by the Security Council at its 1039th meeting, of 11 June 1963 // The United Nations. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/112178>

⁷⁰ The United Arab Republic is a political union between Egypt and Syria from 1958 till 1961.

⁷¹ Agreement/Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative // Peace Agreements. URL: <https://www.peaceagreements.org/generateAgreementPDF/1401>

⁷² The Peace and National Partnership Agreement 21 September 2014 // The United Nations. URL: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/YE_140921_PeaceNationalPartnershipAgreement_en.pdf



in Yemen and Houthi aggression as the cause of the Saudi-led intervention, without taking into account the complex hybrid nature of the Yemeni conflict. Given that the peace process is framed by resolution 2216, we have compiled a *Table 3* of key resolutions for the period from 2011 to 2014. All subsequent resolutions are derived from the UNSC Resolution 2216. It should be noted that there were not votes against resolutions.

Table 3. Key information of the United Nations Security Council resolutions related to the situation in Yemen from 2011 to 2014.

Number of Resolution	Concise description of resolution	Voted for	Abstained
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2014 (2011) ⁷³	Resolution called to cease fire in Yemen, to sign GCC initiative, to provide humanitarian aid to Yemeni people; expressed its concern over the presence of AQAP.	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, the Russian Federation, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America.	
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2051 (2012) ⁷⁴	Resolution called to cease fire in Yemen and to provide humanitarian aid to Yemeni people; expressed its concern over the presence of AQAP; reiterated the need to implement the GCC initiative and hold a National Dialogue Conference.	Azerbaijan, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, the kingdom of Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America.	
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2140 (2014) ⁷⁵	Resolution encouraged the international community to continue providing humanitarian assistance to Yemen; imposed a travel ban and asset freeze for a period of one year from the date of the adoption of this resolution against individuals or entities designated by the Sanctions Committee who engage in or provide support for acts that threaten the peace, security and stability of Yemen; and established for initial period of 13 months the Panel of Experts.	Argentina, Australia, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America	
United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015)	Resolution imposed a targeted arms embargo against individuals or entities designated by the Committee; designated two additional individuals as subject to targeted measures (assets freeze, travel ban and targeted arms embargo); added violations of the targeted arms embargo and obstruction of the delivery, access to and distribution of humanitarian assistance as designation criteria; and increased the Panel of Experts on Yemen to five members.	Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela	The Russian Federation

⁷³ Security Council Resolution 2014 (2011) adopted on 21 October 2011 // The United Nations. URL: [https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2014\(2011\)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2014(2011)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False)

⁷⁴ Security Council Resolution 2051 (2012) adopted on 12 June 2012 // The United Nations. URL: [https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2051\(2012\)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F2051(2012)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False)

⁷⁵ Security Council Resolution 2140 (2014) adopted on 26 February 2014. // The United Nations. URL: <https://clck.ru/33ULLB>



Following the numerous diplomatic mediation efforts by the United Nations the Stockholm Agreement (under UN SC resolution 2451 (2018)) between the Yemeni Government and the Houthis was reached on 13 December 2018⁷⁶. It included a mutual immediate cease-fire in the city of Hodeida, the ports of Hodeida, Salif and Ras Issa; a prisoner exchange, a mutual redeployment of forces away from Hodeida Port, and a joint committee to have consultations on the contested city of Taiz.

Another UN-brokered truce was achieved in April 2022. The terms of the truce included facilitating the entry of 18 vessels carrying fuel into Hodeida ports and allowing two commercial flights per week to and from Sana'a airport to predetermined destinations⁷⁷. In addition, conditions involved the convening of a meeting between the parties to agree on opening roads in the city of Taiz and other locations to improve the freedom of movement of civilians within Yemen⁷⁸. After two-months ceasefire the current UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, said, “The aim of this truce is to give Yemenis a necessary break from violence, relief from the humanitarian suffering and, most importantly, hope that an end to this conflict is possible”.⁷⁹

On 22 September 2022, realizing that the cease-fire envisaged in the above truce was not likely to be extended and, therefore, in a bid to influence the situation, 30 international non-governmental organizations, including “International Medical Corps”, “Handicap International - Humanity & Inclusion”, “Save the Children” operating in Yemen, signed the Joint Statement with a call on the international community for taking an immediate action to⁸⁰:

- Engage all parties to the conflict to support and sustain an expanded truce and find a fully inclusive and sustainable political solution to the conflict.
- Deliver on their funding commitments to ensure a full and equitably funded humanitarian response designed to address the root causes of humanitarian crises in Yemen.
- Support the meaningful and active engagement of Yemeni civil society, including women and youth, as part of the ongoing truce discussions and across all tracks of any future peace process.

Notwithstanding additional civil society efforts, on 2 October 2022, the UN-mediated truce in Yemen came to an end as the warring sides rejected a proposal by Hans Grundberg to extend and expand the agreement⁸¹. By and large, the six months of ceasefire have brought a number of tangible benefits to Yemenis, including improved access to humanitarian assistance, expanded economic opportunities and a significant reduction in casualties across the country. Notably, the death toll from political violence between April and September 2022 was lower than in any other month since January 2015⁸². The only hope for now is that a new sustainable truce can soon be reached that will save the lives of innocent Yemenis.

⁷⁶ Stockholm Agreement // UN Mission To Support The Hodeida Agreement. URL: <https://unmha.unmissions.org/stockholm-agreement>

⁷⁷ Yemen: two-month ceasefire begins with hopes for peace talks // Guardian. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/03/yemen-two-month-ceasefire-begins-un-hopes-for-peace-talks>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Yemen's Warring Parties Begin First Cease-Fire in 6 Years // The New York Times. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/02/world/middleeast/yemen-cease-fire.html>

⁸⁰ Joint statement by 30 NGOs operating in Yemen // Oxfam. URL: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/joint-statement-30-ngos-operating-yemen-occasion-77th-united-nations-general>

⁸¹ Statement From The Un Special Envoy On The Negotiations To Extend And Expand The Nationwide Truce In Yemen // Office Of The Special Envoy Of The Secretary-General For Yemen. URL: <https://clek.ru/33ULMK>

⁸² Violence in Yemen During the UN-Mediated Truce: April-October 2022 // Relief Web. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/violence-yemen-during-un-mediated-truce-april-october-2022>



Impacts of the Yemen crisis on the Middle East and beyond

The multidimensional, complex and hybrid conflict in Yemen, which involves several regional States as well as outsiders, is clearly shaping the landscape and has a serious impact on the geopolitics of the Middle East. Nonetheless, this part of the research project outlined three implications of the Yemeni crisis for the Middle East. Given the destabilizing nature of the conflict, the consequences of the following are all detrimental for regional and world stability.

The first implication is a proliferation of terrorism. States at war are more susceptible to terrorist threats due to the political vacuum. Despite the ongoing Yemeni counter-terrorism operations, there are several terroristic groups in Yemen. Since 2010, there have been some 52 reported attacks by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) alone with a death toll of 297 civilians. As for ISIS (Daesh), 37 attacks, using improvised explosive device, with a total of 500 deaths have been recorded since 2015⁸³. Terrorism has neither border nor boundary so it threatens both regional and extra-regional States. Standing firm in Yemen allows militants to spread terror in other States. As Yemeni political analyst Adel Dashela said in the context of ongoing terroristic attack in the south of Yemen, neither the South separatists nor the Yemeni Government could defeat radical groups. “Countering such extremist movements requires strategic cooperation between key players, the international community and Yemeni Government forces. The situation could spiral out of control...”⁸⁴.

The second dimension is the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen which resulted in the emergence of large numbers of refugees which fled the imposed war and sought asylum in other countries. It is reported that there have been 236,495 Yemeni refugees only under UNHCR’s mandate since 2015⁸⁵. It peaked in 2022 when the overall number of refugees was 40,900. The most “popular” asylum countries are in Africa. These are Djibouti, Somalia, and Ethiopia. Among European countries, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom lead the way in sheltering Yemeni refugees. Non-governmental organizations concerned about the discriminative approach of Western countries towards refugees from Yemen and other Middle eastern States⁸⁶. Given the recent crises in the different parts of the world, human rights activists pose the questions: why are some asylum seekers welcomed with “open arms” policy while others have to climb over military-controlled border fences⁸⁷ fighting for survival? As a Syrian journalist Okba Mohammad clearly noted, “A refugee is a refugee, whether European, African or Asian”⁸⁸. Indeed, there is no place for both islamophobia and racism when it comes to saving human lives.

⁸³ Assessment of explosive weapon use in Yemen // Action on Armed Violence. URL: <https://aoav.org.uk/?s=yemen>

⁸⁴ Эксперт рассказал, чем опасен конфликт в Йемене для всего Ближнего Востока // РИА Новости. URL: <https://ria.ru/20190904/1558290395.html>

⁸⁵ Refugee Data Finder. Yemen // The UN Refugee Agency. URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=OCzj88>

⁸⁶ A welcome for Ukrainian refugees, but not those from the Middle East // The Loop. URL: <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/a-welcome-for-ukrainian-refugees-but-not-those-from-the-middle-east/>

⁸⁷ In forests on Poland-Belarus border, migrants fight for survival // Reuters. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/forests-poland-belarus-border-migrants-fight-survival-2021-10-14/>

⁸⁸ Europe's different approach to Ukrainian and Syrian refugees draws accusations of racism // CBC. URL: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/europe-racism-ukraine-refugees-1.6367932>



Photo Credit: James Jeffrey/IPS. A Yemeni man is watching over an infant in the refugee camp.

Third, there is a range of economic implications. Mutual attacks by Saudi Arabia and Houthis on their territories caused oil prices to spike. The Saudi-led intervention's overnight sudden strike on March 25, 2015, surged the price of WTI crude which surpassed \$50 (oil prices rose by 13%)⁸⁹. After Houthi attack on Saudi oil structure – the Abqaiq crude processing plant and nearby Khurais oil field – on September 14, 2019, Brent soared nearly 13% (over \$68 per barrel)⁹⁰. In addition, the Yemeni conflict led to energy supply problems. Given the strategic importance of Bab al-Mandab Strait, the attacks on a key oil export port – Al Hodeida – caused troubles for global oil supply. It should also be mentioned that nowadays Al Hodeida port has become an aid lifeline for imports into Yemen – food, medical supplies, and hygiene products etc. are delivered through this port. In the region of 80% of imported goods flowed through Al Hodeida before the airstrikes in 2015⁹¹.

The involvement of several regional States in the conflict puts them in a precarious position. In other words, the fighting goes beyond Yemen and affects neighboring States. As UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported, the Yemen conflict witnessed a worrying development in the form of increasing cross-border attacks not only from but into neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE⁹², which have had a negative impact

⁸⁹ Oil Markets Blow Yemen Crisis Out Of Proportion // Oil Price. URL: <https://oilprice.com/Energy/Oil-Prices/Oil-Markets-Blow-Yemen-Crisis-Out-Of-Proportion.html>

⁹⁰ The Yemen War: An Underestimated Risk For Oil Prices // Oil Price. URL: <https://oilprice.com/Energy/General/The-Yemen-War-An-Underestimated-Risk-For-Oil-Prices.html>

⁹¹ Statement on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team in Yemen, on the Critical Importance to Maintain Al Hudaydah Port Open // Relief Web. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/statement-behalf-humanitarian-country-team-yemen-critical-importance-maintain-al>

⁹² Humanitarian Response Plan Yemen Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2022 April 2022 <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-response-plan-2022-april-2022>



of humanitarian assistance. In particular, in early January 2022, UAE air defense systems intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles launched by Ansarallah⁹³.

The last but not the least, ongoing attempts to split Yemen into zones of influence between regional powers (for instance, it is going to be a struggle zone for influence between the UAE and Saudi Arabia in the south⁹⁴) will inevitably divide the whole of Arabia and lead to an explosion of horrendous force in the entire situation in the Middle East.

In conclusion, in a broader context, the Yemeni conflict claims to go down in the history as another example of how the international system failed to effectively and timely resolve humanitarian crises and conflicts in general. What such a trend illustrates is that the deep-seated structural problems can age into calamity.

⁹³ UAE' Air Defense System Again 'Intercepts & Destroys' Ballistic Missile Attack Launched By Houthis – Defense Ministry // Eurasian Times. URL: <https://eurasianimes.com/uae-air-defense-system-again-intercepts-destroys-ballistic-missile-attack-launched-by-houthis-defense-ministry/>

⁹⁴ Эксперт рассказал, чем опасен конфликт в Йемене для всего Ближнего Востока // РИА Новости. URL: <https://ria.ru/20190904/1558290395.html>

Future Outlook of the Yemen Crisis

Based on the analysis above, it is difficult to definitely expect a quick resolution to the Yemen crisis. Considering the factual information, three possible scenarios could be anticipated for the development of the crisis.

First, *the pessimistic scenario* involves the splitting of the State into North and South Yemen (under the almost patronage of Saudi Arabia and the UAE respectively); a humanitarian collapse with the overwhelming majority of civilians in need; and the proliferation of terrorism, and the creation of a separate pro-terrorist State. In other words, at worst it will result in the loss of statehood and Yemeni identity. Instead of a coherent socio-cultural and state institutionalization, sub-formations will emerge from the wreckage of a formerly flourishing Yemen.

Second, *the most probable and realistic scenario* is that the status quo is maintained, which, based on previous years' experience, would lead to deteriorating humanitarian crisis; the continued presence of Saudi-led military intervention; a lack of political compromise between North and South, between the Government and the Houthis; and the presence of terrorist groups that continue to carry out terrorist bombings.

Third, *another probable scenario* is that Houthis have the full control over the North and specifically strategic ports such as the Bab-el-Mandab, while other sides attempt to have a full control of the South. Some analysts are of the view that there are serious divisions among the parties involved in confrontation with Houthis, which creates a challenge to govern the South. A new round of confrontations leads to an intensification of hostilities and, therefore, more civilian casualties.

Fourth, *the most optimistic scenario* includes the achievement of an UN-brokered political compromise between the Government with the South and the Houthis by including the latter two in the Government, as envisaged in the transition plan; the withdrawal of the Saudi-led military intervention; the defeat of terrorists; termination of the political influence of external regional actors; and the economic prosperity through oil exports, trade and foreign investment.



Photo Credit: Sebastiano Tomada/Getty Reportage



Feasible recommendations for a better future

Part A. Generic recommendations

The traditional methodological approach is to make “how-to” recommendations. However, recommendations in the context of this research project will be based on “how not to” guidelines⁹⁵. For this purpose, the main reasons that have led into a cul-de-sac in the Yemen crisis are highlighted. For ease of narrative, these reasons are defined as mistakes. The approach is that only by addressing these mistakes progress can be made towards a peaceful resolution of the Yemen conflict.

- It is a mistake to perceive Yemen as *a failed State*

The concept of failed States is that such States are incapable of fulfilling their key role of ensuring a domestic order, through the monopolistic use of force on their territory. For this reason, failed States are assumed to have a so-called patronage by foreign countries. As a cradle of Arabic civilization, the majority of scholars believes that Yemenis will never accept such an approach, including regional and outside actors intervene in Yemen to protect their own interests and impose the outcome of the Yemen conflict in their favor. However, this crisis can only end with an agreement among the Yemenis themselves.

- It is a mistake to base on the UNSC Resolution 2216 ideas as primary ones to peacefully resolve Yemeni conflict

The UNSC Resolution 2216 cited the Houthis as the main cause of the crisis in Yemen and Houthi aggression as the cause of the Saudi-led intervention, without taking into account the complex hybrid nature of the Yemeni conflict. The resolution was designed to prevent the humanitarian situation in Yemen from leading to calamity. However, the catastrophic humanitarian crisis which paralyzes people only deteriorates. In this regard, of the utmost importance and urgency is to find new peaceful initiatives that will take into account the humanitarian catastrophe as a result of aggression and unjustified decisions and remedial actions of international organizations such as the UNSC.

- It is a mistake to view Houthis as a key obstacle to resolve the Yemeni conflict

The Yemen conflict is a tangle of contradictions between the North and the South; between the Yemen Government and Houthis in the North; between terrorists and Yemenis. The conflict was further complicated by the Saudi-led military intervention. For these reasons, the unresolved issue with Houthis is just one of the puzzles of the complex Yemeni conflict. In essence, Houthis were somehow forced to react to an externally imposed proselytizing alien mentality which was aimed at erasing the Yemen national identity.

- It is a mistake to regard the Yemen conflict as a Sunni-Shiite one

To some extent, positioning the Yemeni conflict as a Sunni-Shiite conflict is a kind of simplification. The insertion of Yemen's complex internal conflict into the larger Shiite-Sunni

⁹⁵ This “how not to” approach was offered by Daniel W. Drezner and Amrita Narlikar in the article “International relations: the ‘how not to’ guide” as an introductory part of *International Affairs* (Volume 98, Issue 5, September 2022). See more: <https://academic.oup.com/ia/issue/98/5>



conflict could allow Saudi Arabia's authorities to position their military intervention as a defense of Sunni Islam against a Shiite enemy. However, the ideology of the Houthis, who are predominantly Zaydis, is not based on religious tenets but on the Yemeni identity. Framing the Yemen conflict in the Sunni-Shiite confrontation assigns a new misleading dimension to the conflict, which further distances it from an urgent resolution.

Yet, the main and perhaps overarching recommendation that would prevent many humanitarian crises is to take a Hippocratic Oath to conduct international relations. In medicine the Hippocratic Oath instructs doctors: "First, do no harm"⁹⁶. In the framework of international relations, the Hippocratic Oath would demand politicians and policy-makers to implement policy with the minimum risk of people's lives.

Part B. Practical recommendations

- Brokering an immediate sustainable cease-fire stopping the bloodshed of Yemenis specifically children under the full control and supervision UN peacekeepers.
- Mandating the WHO for the thorough investigation of the public health crisis specifically on the affected children with physical and mental trauma.
- Mandating the FAO for the immediate assistance providing food supplies specifically with international shortage of food due to the Ukraine crisis.
- Mandating the UNICEF to prepare a thorough report by physical presence in Yemen in order to gather real data about humanitarian catastrophe vis-à-vis Yemeni children.
- Mandating the UN to have a comprehensive, factual and evidence-based report of the roots and event sequences of Yemeni conflict in order to prevent occurrence of such a crisis in the future and provide the efficient piece initiative.
- Requesting the OIC to have an impartial comprehensive report of the Yemeni humanitarian crisis and to provide immediate financial assistance to Yemenis.
- Requesting the OCHA as well as other international organizations in Yemen to break down the funds data and give a comprehensive report of aid recipients and detailed costs, where and how the money was allocated and distributed among Yemenis.
- Enlightening scholars, intellectuals and researchers of think tanks to mobilize joint efforts and bring the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen to decision makers' attention in order to prevent further miscalculations and deterioration of humanitarian situation.

⁹⁶ Ibid.



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