

Yemen Crisis

United Nations Security Council

I. Introduction

The Security Council, founded in 1945, is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN). It had its first meeting as a council on January 17th, 1946, in London, England. The council is constituted by fifteen countries and five of those countries are permanent members. The permanent members are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and they all count with a veto power to veto any "substantive" resolution. However, a permanent member's abstention or absence does not prevent a draft resolution from being adopted. ("What is the Security Council?"). The current non-permanent members are Belgium, Estonia, Dominican Republic, Niger, Germany, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Vietnam, and South Africa (for our simulation purposes, some of these countries will not be part of the Security Council). Countries that are members of the United Nations and not current members of the Security Council are still able to participate during the meetings if the Security Council considers that the country is being affected by the conflict ("Current Members Security Council").

The Security Council's main objective and responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. In order to carry out its responsibility, it has been given the power to set forth agreements, send troops, and mediate during disputes for peaceful resolutions. It also has the power to give sanctions that help restore international peace that was lost. Those sanctions can be from financial penalties and restrictions to the severance of diplomatic relations ("Sanctions Security Council").

A country that has received a sanction from the Security Council but still has an ongoing conflict that endangers international peace is Yemen. The conflict in Yemen began in the year 2011 when President Saleh was overthrown and it has become one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. It has become an international conflict since it has not only affected Yemen but to that region. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran have gotten involved and it seems that it's never going to end. There is a current civil war between the Houthi movement and the Hadi government supported by the Saudi-led Coalition ("Crisis in Yemen"). The Houthi movement has received backing from Iran through provisions of guns, missiles, military training, and funds since 2014. The prolonged war has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and currently, there are over fourteen million people that are in danger of starvation and have zero to no help (McKernan).

The Saud-led Coalition could ask even more countries to join and that would, in turn, cause Iran to put extra pressure in Yemen and expand the war in the Middle East. The conflict continues to violate human rights and international peace is being affected. The war can escalate and it is important that the Security Council manages to find a solution to end the war.

II. History and Description of the Issue

Vocabulary

Before even trying to find solutions to tackle the issue, there are some key concepts that must be understood to properly finding a solution approved by all. The main catalyst for the start of the Yemen Crisis was the Arab Spring, a series of pro-democracy uprisings in several Muslim countries. It began with first protests against the government and the first being on December 17, 2010, when Mohamed Bouazizi decided to set himself on fire outside of a government building (History.com Editors). It is also important to note the concept of a humanitarian crisis as Yemen's conflict can be considered one of the worst ones. A humanitarian crisis is a singular or series of events that affect the overall health, safety, and well-being of a large community of people. According to Dominic Macsorley, CEO of Concern Worldwide, Yemen is the worst humanitarian crisis. People are suffering from malnutrition and there are no health care services around to help people. People are also getting extremely sick with an outbreak of cholera that began in 2018 and has affected thousands of children are dying because of this (Giovetti).

Origins and Causes

There have always been tensions in Yemen since it was previously divided into the northern Yemen Arab Republic and the southern People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and later joined together in 1990. The north was culturally and politically very different from the south which was governed by the United Kingdom until 1967. The north was mostly populated by Zaydi Shia, another branch of Islam, while the south had mostly Sunni (McKernan). Mixing the two groups together into a country brought a lot of conflicts and even caused the Zaydi Shia population up north to create a group to protect its culture from the perceived marginalization they felt from the government. In the 1990s Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi founded the Houthis and from the marginalization, clerics began to militarise their own people and armed conflicts surged. Between 2004 and 2010, the Houthi movement turned into a militia and had several direct conflicts with the Yemen government in Saada, a city up north of Yemen (Durac). Then because of the Arab Spring and the president Ali Abdullah Saleh, who lasted 21 years in the presidency, was forced to reside. He gave his power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi and that is when the Houthis decided to take advantage of the change of government and took control over the north of the country (McKernan). Hadi was also incapable of solving the economic and political issues in Yemen and that made it easier for the Houthis, who seized Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, without violence.

After seizing Sanaa, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates decided to create a coalition to support the Yemen government against the Houthi movement. The coalition is composed of the other seven Arab countries and has had support from the US, UK, and France. The Saudi-led coalition began an air campaign mainly composed of airstrikes. It has been predicted that the airstrikes have killed up to ninety thousand people. In 2014, Iran decided to help the Houthis and by providing them with guns, missiles, military training, and funds, the conflict still exists today. It is estimated that Iran has aided with several millions of dollars per year to the Houthi movement (Durac).

Impact

People, such as Macsorley, have stated that the war in Yemen is the gravest humanitarian crisis the world has ever seen. Millions of people have been affected since it began in 2011. People have been displaced from their homes because of the current confrontations between the two sides. Most of the buildings have been destroyed by Saudi-led airstrikes that have been indiscriminate towards both sides: civilians and Houthis.

Because of conflicts and people moving for their lives, rations of food have diminished and over fourteen million people are at risk of starvation (World Report). Human rights are being violated and very little is being done about it. Around fourteen million people are suffering from severe malnutrition and three hundred and sixty thousand of them are children younger than five years of age. The airstrikes have damaged most of the hospitals and schools and it has caused a disturbance in the educational and health services in the country. As of September 2019, about two million kids are out of school with no education that can help them in the future ("Yemen Crisis"). The lack of hospitals and sanitation has created the worst cholera outbreak ever recorded, reporting over 1.3 million people with the disease. These people are severely at risk of dying and there aren't any health services that can help and cure them ("Crisis in Yemen").

International Laws have also been violated by both sides. Unlawful airstrikes are a serious issue since there can be civilians at the landing spots. There have been about ninety unlawful airstrikes that have hit buildings, killed civilians, and even hit a bus with 26 children. There have been indiscriminate artillery attacks to cities, randomly hitting neighborhoods of pure civilians. There have been banned weapons that have been used in the war such as landmines and cluster grenades.

People are being tortured from both sides and Houthis have impeded the access of humanitarian organizations that are trying to bring help to the population. Access to food and medical supplies has been denied to the population by the Houthis and women children are getting affected the most. Children are being brought to the conflict and forced to become child soldiers. Women and girls are at even higher risk of violence since there is no legal protection, leaving them to domestic and sexual violence (World Report).

III. International Response and Bloc Analysis

The Security Council has already tried to find a solution to this issue in December 2018, when it tried to bring both sides of the conflict together in Stockholm, Sweden. The talks were about demilitarising the city of Hodeidah. It was all going to plan in the ceasefire of the cities, but the Houthis disguised their fighters as coastguards and the other parts of the agreement haven't been followed (Wintour).

The failed Stockholm Agreement showed a lot of potential as possibly being the catalyst to stopping the ongoing conflict. It was made of three parts. The first part, as previously stated was the ceasefire of the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif, and Ras Issa. The second part was



allowing the movement of humanitarian services across the country in an effort to bring food and supplies to the population. Finally, the third part was allowing for a prisoner swap between the two sides, this part was aiming to free 15,000 total prisoners (“Yemen and the Stockholm Agreement”).

The Security Council is the only organ of the UN trying to tackle the issue. UNICEF has helped by giving over nine million people with emergency cash assistance. It is trying to educate adults and children about mines and explosive remnants of war and also establishing new learning spaces since most schools have been destroyed (“Yemen crisis”).

Other non-governmental organizations are also helping such as Oxfam International, an organization that through donations is sending essential aid to communities in both the north and south of Yemen. They are building latrines and repairing water systems to improve sanitation and giving out cash to families so that they can buy food from the markets (“Crisis in Yemen”).

IV. Committee Mission

In accordance with the efforts made by several organizations trying to solve the issue at hand, the Security Council needs to focus and find a possible solution that can stop the Yemen Crisis from still continuing. If the committee is to fail again, international peace could be gravely endangered since the war could explode and expand into many more countries around the gulf. Hostilities between Iran and Saudi Arabia keep getting stronger and it is just a matter of time before another great world war happens.

The committee should focus on looking at possible agreements that both sides would be willing to accept to firstly allow humanitarian access to the people in Yemen. Seeking to stop both sides from breaking several international laws is a must and finding a way to assure this is key. As well, stopping the war to ensure international peace would be the Security Council’s priority since it will help stop the suffering of millions of people.

Further questions to consider:

1. How can organizations that want to provide sanitation and health care avoid getting their services blocked by the Houthis?
1. What are other solutions could NGOs do to help the current situation of the Yemeni?
2. What are Iran’s motives supporting the Houthi movement?
3. How can the differences between the Sunni and Zaydi be addressed?
4. What measures can the coalition take to reduce the number of indiscriminate airstrikes?
5. What role does Al-Qaeda have in this conflict?

V. Annotated links for further research

Country Links

1. [UN Member States](#)

This link provides an overview of each country in the United Nations.

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2. [The World Factbook](#)

It provides general information about all the nations of the world.

Committee Links

1. [UN Member States](#)

This link provides an overview of each country in the United Nations.

2. [Security Council](#)

Official website of the Security Council.

3. [OSESFY](#)

Website of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. It shows all the resolutions the Security Council has made on Yemen.

Topic Links

1. [How to End the War in Yemen](#)

This link provides an argument on how they think the war in Yemen could stop.

2. [Six Reasons the Crisis in Yemen's South Matters](#)

States 6 events that are happening from the war in Yemen. These events could affect the entire world to some degree.

3. [New Hope for a Resolution of Yemen Crisis](#)

This link talks about the possibility of the coalition opening a window for a return of the political process.

4. [Yemen Crisis: Causes, Threats, and Resolution Scenarios](#)

It is the Russian International Affairs Council's view on the topic. They analyzed the causes and the dangers while also stating possible scenarios with solutions.

5. [Draft UN Resolution Pushes for Yemen Peace](#)

Brief summary of the resolution that momentarily brought peace to Yemen.

6. [Analysis: The Divergent Saudi-UAE Strategies in Yemen](#)

This link shows the motives and objectives of both Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the Yemen conflict.

7. [The Iranian Role in Yemen](#)

Article about the involvement of Iran in Yemen.

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8. [Why is Yemen at War?](#)

Video by Aljazeera explaining the conflict.

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