**IMUN 2023 Research Report - Security Council**

**Security Council Issue #3: The Situation in Yemen**

The civil war in Yemen began in 2014, when the Houthi insurgents, (a Shiite rebel group), believed to be funded by Iran and have a history of going against Sunni governments, took over Sana’a, Yemen’s capital. One of their demands being that there be a new government in Yemen, this led to negotiations, which ultimately failed causing the insurgents to take over the presidential palace in January 2015. The result of this was that the leading President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government resigned. Hadi later withdrew his resignation, causing challenges for the UN-backed transitional council in Aden (port city in southern Yemen). Due to a Houthi offensive, he sought exile in Saudi Arabia and governed as an exiled president.

After the Houthi initial take over, a coalition by several gulf states (lead by Saudi Arabia) formed in March, launched a campaign involving economic isolation and air strikes against the Houthi rebels, which had international involvement as well, namely U.S. logistical and intelligence support. Due to the interventions of regional powers in the conflict, it forced Yemen into a proxy struggle fueled by a broader Sunni-Shia divide.

Additionally, to prevent Iran from supplying the Houthis Saudi Arabia launched a Naval blockade, however in response Iran sent a naval convoy, this militarization of Yemen’s waters garnered attention from the US navy, who continued to seize Yemen-bound Iranian weapons. This blockade was the center of the humanitarian crisis present within the conflict, and it appears that all sides of the conflict are reported to have violated human rights and international humanitarian law. Furthermore the UAE and Saudi Arabia launched an air campaign which caused 19,000 civilian casualties from 2021-2022, which was countered by Houthi air strikes on both Saudi Arabia and UAE.

In 2018, parties, namely the Internationally recognised Yemeni Government and Houthis, to the conflict met in Stockholm, which dealt largely with the humanitarian crisis, particularly in the port city of Hodeidah, which is a crucial entry point for humanitarian aid into the country. The agreement was broken into three parts: the Hodeidah Agreement, the Taïz Understanding, and a prisoner swap agreement. The parties agreed to a ceasefire in the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif, and Ras Issa, and redeployment of forces on both sides; an opening of humanitarian corridors for the movement of aid through these ports; and a prisoner swap aiming to release more than 15,000 prisoners and detainees. They also agreed to discussions regarding creating a humanitarian corridor that would allow humanitarian aid into Taïz.

Later on in February 2021, an offensive attack was launched on Marib by the Houthi, which was the last stronghold of the Yemeni internationally recognised government. In addition, the Houthi rebels conducted missile airstrikes on Saudi Arabia targeting oil tankers and facilities, causing the coalition to respond by attacking Sana’a. This was one of the deadliest clashes since 2018, severing the peace process thus far.

The conflict has taken a huge toll on Yemeni civilians, as the humanitarian crisis in Yemen has one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, as a result of the impact that the eight years of conflict has had on the national socioeconomic system, which is currently on the edge of collapse. The conflict has left more than ⅔ of the population in need of humanitarian assistance, and more than 80% of the population struggling to access food, safe drinking water and adequate health services. In addition almost 4 million people have been displaced and due to the destroyed civilian infrastructure millions are at risk of famine and disease.

The humanitarian crisis is largely fueled by the economic crisis present within the nation, caused by the splitting of the nations into two main economic zones, one controlled by the Houthis and the other Saudi-backed government. This was further shown by the steep depreciation of the Yemeni currency, specifically in the government controlled areas, resulting in a reduced purchasing power for citizens to buy basic necessities, causing widespread protest across southern Yemen causing security forces to intervene.

To summarise, there are several actors involved within the conflict with various ideologies. The Houthi rebels, aligned with Shia Islam, control much of northern Yemen and receive support from Iran. The internationally recognized Yemeni government, led by President Hadi, is backed by a Saudi-led coalition with support from Western nations, including the United States. The Southern Transitional Council (STC) seeks independence for southern Yemen and is supported by the UAE. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), a Sunni extremist group.

**Recent Developments in the Conflict:**

Straying away from previous US policy, Biden announced an end to US support for the Saudi Coalition operation, and revoked its designation of the Houthis as a terrorist organisation. However the US continues to sell weapons to other nations in the region to respond to the Houthi attacks. The previous president, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, resigned and one of his advisors Rashad al-Alimi, who has close ties with Saudi Arabia chairs the new council.

A ceasefire was agreed upon in April of 2022, brokered by the UN, which was renewed twice and both sides have refrained from major military action up until now. The peace talks were mediated by Oman and resumed in April 2023. Also in April 2023, talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia, mediated by China, led to a breakthrough agreement and re-established diplomatic relations between the two sides, which could accelerate efforts to renew the lapsed cease-fire, however the conflict has remained at bay as of recently.

**Focus of Debate:**

Debate should focus on both a political and humanitarian solution. Hence in order to come to a viable solution, it's important to improve the structures that are already in place that are aimed at achieving similar objectives. It's important to note that the actors involved emphasize that a political resolution is the key for long-lasting stability. The initial step in conflict resolution is conflict resolution in peacebuilding which is defined as a long-term process of encouraging people to talk and repairing relationships, hence the initial step at conflict resolution should be ensuring that the parties involved are willing to enter into negotiations to find a long term solution. Additionally talks between the respective parties need to be established to discuss a more sustainable political solution. Furthermore regional involvement should be conducted in a more constructive manner rather than fueling the conflict through proxies.

Stability can also be achieved in the ongoing humanitarian crisis, as currently there are over 100 humanitarian organizations active in the region, hence there should be initiatives and infrastructures in place to increase their effectiveness. It is important to note that in 2016 the UN Verification Inspection Mechanism was established, which was a program that allowed for the free flow of commercial items. Although this failed at the time, delegates should focus on similar humanitarian solutions that would improve access to basic essentials and provide some stability to the Yemeni Economy.

**Past Resolutions:**

* Resolution 2216 (2015): Houthi withdrawal from government institutions and establishment of UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism
* Resolution 2402 (2018): Called for an immediate ceasefire in Yemen
* Resolution 2451 (2018): Endorsing of the Stockholm Agreement

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