

Research Report

Forum: Junior Security Council

Issue: The situation in Yemen

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Position:

Introduction

A crisis with 2 million children under the age of 5 are suffering from acute malnutrition. A crisis with 80% of a country's population needing humanitarian aid. There are approximately 230,000 people who have died from the causes of the Yemen Crisis according to a 2019 UN Report. Among those 230,000 people, are allegations that 85,000 children have died from starvation. A fight caused many years of social tension, economic problems and failed leadership, there are many social and political sides to this issue due to the different perspectives regarding this humanitarian disaster. But one thing is for sure, everyone funding the war and creating a bigger crisis must stop. A fight for religious reasons and power from the outside, mixed emotions about former governing bodies leads to everyone getting harmed from the crisis.

With key issues such as an ecological crisis, large government bodies funding parties of the Yemeni Civil War, causing events such as the Saudi Arabia led coalition, and the 2017 cholera outbreak effecting 600,000 people and killing more than 2,000 could be summed up to a pandora's box in the Middle East. Other key issues include unlawful airstrikes, usage of banned weapons, cases of torture, detention, blocking aid, and using children as child soldiers. Treaties and visible efforts have not been made to solve this crisis and this humanitarian crisis could be regarded that it is well forgotten from today's media.

A solution is needed urgently, with the ever rapidly increasing number of casualties and more aggressive protests due to international and regional fights of power. Just because one's enemy believes in another form of the same religion; it doesn't mean that it is a threat to their power. The people in Yemen need our help. The world requires a solution applicable for all nations.

Definition of Key Terms

Refugee

A refugee, as defined by the United Nations High-Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is an individual who fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another nation. They are not limited to any specific nation, ethnic background, but are many times subjected to discrimination.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

An internally displaced person can be defined as an individual who has been forced to flee from their home, in particular the result of avoiding the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, and violations of human rights. This individual is not a refugee as they have not crossed an international-border. Therefore, they are not considered a refugee by governments, as they have not yet sought asylum.

Shia (Shiite) Islam

Shia Islam is a branch of Islam which the creation traces back to 632 A.D, when Prophet Mohammed died. Shia Islam believes that the rightful person to precede the Prophet should be in his descent, therefore at a large scope, Shiite Muslims are followers of Ali ibn Abi Talib. This branch is most popular in Yemen and Iran, with 10~15% of Islam being this branch.

Sunni Islam

Sunni Islam is a branch of Islam which also traces back to the death of the Prophet Mohammed. Sunni Islam believes that the rightful person to precede the Prophet should be Abu Bakr after an election. Leaders of Sunni Islam (Khalifs) are not recognized in Shia Islam.

Ceasefire

A ceasefire is a military order to 'cease firing.' This is like an armistice, which is not a treaty or agreement to end the war, but is a period of time in which both parties are not fighting. In the case of the Yemen Civil War, the Hudaydah truce was a ceasefire achieved in 2019 for the lifeline of half of the country. However, many violations still took place.

Background Information

Yemen, the poorest country in the Middle East with no water or resources was originally a divided country. With North and South Yemen, approximately 50% Shiite Muslims and 50% Sunni Muslims residing in each divided territory respectfully. When they were reunited in 1990, with Ali Abdullah Saleh from the North becoming the head of state. There were continuous conflicts due to the fact that they believed in different branches of the same religion.

34 years of dictatorship and corruption passed and 2011, the Arab Spring also comes to Yemen. The Arab Spring was a pro-democratic movement with protests against corrupt governments in the Middle East. Due to years of economic damage, this led to the then Vice President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi becoming the new president. However, President Saleh is supported by the Shiite Muslims and Houthis, and President Hadi is supported by the Shia Muslims. President Saleh successfully overthrows President Hadi, who flees to Saudi Arabia, a Shia Muslim majority country. This makes a Civil War turn into international conflict. Saudi's Allies such as Senegal, Morocco, Qatar are against the Houthis and Saleh in Yemen. The reason behind this being that Iran, an enemy of Saudi Arabia is allegedly funding the Houthis.

With both sides, Iran and Saudi Arabia not acknowledging involvement, forces such as the U.S joining, Al Qaeda and Ansar al-Sharia causing even more civilian damage, Yemen is not fighting a civil war. Yemen could be defined as just hosting the war for major powers all over the world. In 2015, Saudi Arabia led an intervention in Yemen and continues to airstrike 'sometimes accidentally' civilians, which is a war crime. A resolution has not been met, and the Yemen Crisis continues to be largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with more than two million displaced people.

Key Issues

As a humanitarian crisis, the Yemeni situation is a crisis which is creating ongoing problems such as failure to provide basic public services and failure to manage the economy of the country. While Yemen is torn in half because of religious and political disputes, the civilians are the ones who are caught in the middle.

Some key issues of the Yemen Crisis include the Cholera virus, un-announced human right threatening airstrikes, an on-going famine leading to acute malnutrition for children, and obstruction of import for the country as a whole.

Others include the causes of actual existence of the crisis, such as military funding from the U.S to Saudi Arabia for lower tax on oil, Houthi's radical actions even when former-President Saleh tried to achieve a peace negotiation, and children being the victims. Because of these casualties, both major parties; the Houthis and the Hadi government want each other to stop fighting and give in.

As seen with the COVID-19 virus, the media has been the main point of influence. However, there is too little media and journal coverage throughout the world, due to the current situation in Yemen being dangerous for journalists. This could also be a key issue, as limited media coverage in places like the DRPK tend to be lenient towards inhuman actions because there is no international backlash towards them.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Houthis

The Houthis are rebels against the Hadi government, are officially known as Ansar Allah (Partisans of God). As they follow a branch of Shia Islam, they were active in previous North Yemen. Their name comes from Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi, who led an uprising in 2004 against the Sunni majority. Houthi died, but his family continue to influence the Shiite Muslims in Yemen. Control most of Northern Yemen, they have been able to convince many other minor armed forces against Sunni Muslims and the Hadi government. Houthis were also behind the assassination of former President Saleh. Through brief explanation of the Houthi's background, we can assume that they are entirely influenced by their religion, their motifs to prevent Sunni Islam's spread and for repressed people in former North Yemen who

believes in Zaidism. Although there is religious support by local people, it doesn't mean that everyone is happy about the conflict in Yemen.

Hadi Government

The Hadi government is the internationally recognized government of Yemen, led by President Hadi. During the Yemeni revolution, the Houthis and the Hadi government had a united goal, to overthrow former President Saleh. However, following the Houthi takeover of Yemen's capital Sana'a, sides drastically change from a political-problem to a political and religious dispute. The Hadi government receives funding from international parties due to it being the recognized government of Yemen. Despite many attempts to reform, the current position of the Hadi government is unknown with most information of President Hadi frozen at 2017.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a pro-Sunni Muslim country in the middle east with many allies from the west and also in the Middle East. This is due to its rich recourses such as oil, which is one of the main reasons why the U.S is backing Saudi Arabia on the intervention of the Yemeni Crisis. Saudi Arabia's main goal in the Yemen Crisis was to stop the Houthis who were allegedly funded by Iran according to U.S reports. However, regardless of Iran participation, the goal for the ongoing war in Yemen according to analysts are long forgotten, as seen with U.S diplomats speaking that Iran wasn't actually deeply participating in the war, with most rebel weapons coming from decades of arms supply. Saudi Arabia's current goal is to restore order in Yemen by winning the war against the Houthis, but the same is for the Houthis, creating this conflict since 2011.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Year	Description of Event
1990	The Reunification of Yemen

- Ali Abdullah Saleh transitions from North Yemen's president to president of the Republic of Yemen. Houthis gradually gain power and unofficial support from President Saleh.

2000

High Tensions between Saleh's Government and

the Houthis

- Starting in June 2004, Saleh's government starts arresting hundreds of Houthi members and Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi is killed in September. This happens because of President Saleh's recent agreement on a border deal.
- Houthi's brother takes over the Houthi rebels and clashes last until 2007. Thanks to Qatar a ceasefire agreement is met.
- However, not even one year after the ceasefire has taken place, fighting breaks out between the government and rebels. By July 2008, Saleh calls an end to the fighting in the Saada governate which is Houthi dominated.
- al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is another rising force who, is not allied with the Houthis uses this conflict and humanitarian disaster as an opportunity to create an Islamic State.

2011

Yemeni Revolution

- 2011, as a result of President Saleh's misuse of power, failure to restore economy and politics, the Arab Spring reaches Yemen. It lasts until 2012 when President Hadi is given the spot as President.
- During the Yemeni Revolution, tribal leaders and high-ranking military powers called for

former President Saleh to step down, and in November 2011, former President Saleh signed an international agreement stating that he will step down if he, his relatives, and other officials do not receive any backlash.

- Similar pro-democracy movements happened in Egypt, North Africa, which led to the downfall of many corrupt officials in governments.

2014~2019

Major Conflicts and Escalation to a Humanitarian Crisis.

- A bombing campaign called by the Saudis an intervention of the war, funded by the U.S through finance and weapons often leave not only Houthi rebellions at harm, but also civilians. This contributes to the amount of internally displaced people throughout Yemen.
- In July 2017, 320,000 cases of Cholera were reported, possibly because of the lack of humanitarian aid being available.
- In December 13, 2018, a ceasefire was called for a truce in one of the ports of Yemen called Hudaydah. However, not long after violations of the ceasefire were reported.
- Other treaties such as the Riyadh Agreement from Saudi Arabia and the UAE were signed but, it is unsure of when these treaties would be violated again.

Previous Attempts to solve the issue

The Omani initiative was a 2015 proposal by Oman, a neighboring country with Yemen, that did not actively participate in the civil war. Houthis accepted the plan while Saudi Arabia

and the Hadi government did not attempt to negotiate. Ceasefires were always some viable peace options, but do not promise peace itself. For example, the May 2015 truce, which was supposed to be a five-day ceasefire for humanitarian aid to enter the country, ended up with dozens killed on the fourth day, despite the ceasefire. On the 13th of December, 2018, the Stockholm agreement was signed. However, multiple violations persist. Another recent attempt to solve this issue would be the Riyadh Agreement, signed by both the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Key details of this agreement include that Saudi Arabia will actively help in formation of different groups in North and South Yemen, and that the official government will return to Aden.

Although there were many attempts to soften the burden of war, no attempts have been actively made in favor of the civilians that don't have protection or any international status. A new resolution from the U.N's Security Council, on 26th February, 2020 was passed, on placing sanctions on Yemen.

The problems with all of these peace attempts, is that not all the parties' perspectives are heard, which causes misunderstanding and more aggressive behavior for exclusion. In the Stockholm agreement, both the main people involved with the Southern Movement and alQaeda were excluded. Yes, the Houthis and the Hadi Government could've been the most pressing issue, but it is also true that numerous amounts of different parties are also contributing to the scale of the crisis.

Possible Solutions

The most crucial aspect in a humanitarian crisis is the protection of civilians, in the Yemen Crisis's situation, children. This can be achieved with the usage of quality education, SDG 4. However, education is hard to be achieved with unstable economy and politics, especially amidst an internationally funded war. Therefore, the ideal situation of the absence of war; peace must be achieved first.

A proposal could be the division of different parts of Yemen. However, fundamental problems still exist, with questions about the economy. There are things that can't be fixed from just stopping the civil war itself. The infrastructure is another problem, but the division of Yemen could bring a solution to the Crisis, with humanitarian aid from all over the world after the division. This does bring up some problems, such as the IDPs residing inside of different places of Yemen or the numerous refugees that left the country, to

facing troubles coming back to a divided Yemen, which would be governed according to each ruling party.

Another solution could be for either one of the three major parties to dissolve, so that peace treaties or other solutions could be easily found. For example, if al-Qaeda no longer has activity in Yemen, the only parties that need to make a treaty are the Houthis, and the Saudi Arabian government. Yes, it is unknown if the Houthis will still accept the treaties, but it is much easier to have agreements with less parties involved.

Lastly, there should be visible progress in reports regarding this issue and more aggressive media broadcasting. If the only gateway from Yemen to the world and the world to Yemen is the media, more media coverage is needed every year. It is unacceptable that the timeline of a President of an officially recognized government that receives extensive funding are stopped at 2017. There will come a day that the U.N gives up the title of 'the worst humanitarian disaster' to Yemen.

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