

ISSUE DESCRIPTION

COMMITTEE Security Council
ISSUE Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen
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Introduction

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a complicated situation that has been ongoing for several years. The crisis began with political disquiet during the Arab Spring in 2011. Later power struggles and rebellious rivalries expanded into a civil war. The battle began in 2015 with clashes between Yemeni government forces and the Houthis. The conflict escalated when a Saudi-led coalition came in militarily to support the Yemeni government. The war has triggered a terrible humanitarian crisis, which includes displacement, food insecurity, and healthcare system collapse. Before the civil war, life in Yemen was not easy, but after 2015 it was horrible. By 2021, two-thirds of the Yemen population, which means approximately 20 million people, needed humanitarian aid. Therefore, Yemen now is one of the world's largest humanitarian crises.

Definition of Key Terms

Houthis – Shiite rebel group

AQAP – Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

GCC – Gulf Cooperation Council

MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières

STC – Southern Transitional Council.

General Overview

Previously in 1994 just a few years after the reunification of Yemen a civil war emerged between the two unintegrated armies of the north and the south (encounter), which led to a short battle that resulted in the defeat of the southern army and this bolstered Yemen's reunification.

In 2000, the first president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh made a significant diplomatic agreement with Saudi Arabia, known as the Treaty of Jeddah, which focused on boundary demarcation. Simultaneously, Saleh's purpose was to manage the internal security concerns by attempting to disarm a Shiite minority group, the Houthi rebels. However, this decision had a big influence on future stresses.

Between 2004 and 2007 Houthi rebellions began after rising tensions over Saleh's border agreement. This period caused several intense fights between the Houthi rebels and the government forces. The conflict increased rapidly and in June of 2004 when Saleh's government launched a massive arrest of hundreds of Houthi members and offered a bounty for the arrest of the leader of Houthis, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi. The enmity lasted until June of 2004 when al-Houthi was killed. In the years following 2004, the violence continued, but now Hussein's brother, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi took the lead of the rebels. The situation prompted a ceasefire treaty pact in March of 2006 facilitated by Qatari intervention resulting in the abdication of the Houthi rebel's top military commander. Despite the temporary peace, occasional clashes between the government and the Houthis continued. Saleh's authority granted public pardons to 600 Houthi fighters in March of 2006, and the president secured re-election in 2006. Nonetheless, tensions flared up again in early 2007, leading to five months of fighting until a ceasefire compact was once again concluded.

Between 2008 and 2012, Yemen experienced a series of conflicts and political shifts. In 2008, in spite of the ceasefire in the Houthi-dominated Saana governorate, fighting continued, leading to an official end announced by then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh in July. In the years 2009-2010, the Yemeni military initiated "Operation Scorched Earth" to suppress the Houthi rebellion in Saada. All at once, Houthi rebels engaged in cross-border clashes with Saudi forces. After rounds of negotiations, Saleh's government reached a ceasefire agreement with the Houthi leader, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi in February 2010. At the same time as this period, the Yemeni military also carried "Operation Blow to the Head", targeting both rebels and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). In September 2010, government forces besieged the governorate of Shabwa in southeast Yemen to root out AQAP militants. The Arab Spring reached Yemen in 2011, marked by protests ordering an end to Saleh's 33-year rule. Even with some concessions, Saleh refused the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) brokered deal that led to clashes in Sanaa

involving the influential Hashid tribal federation and army commanders. In June 2011, Saleh was seriously injured in a bombing and sought medical treatment in Saudi Arabia. In September he returned to the presidential palace in the middle of renewed clashes. Saleh did not sign papers until November 2011, in that time he made a deal and allowed his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, to assume power and form a unity government. In February 2012, Hadi was sworn in as president for a two-year term after winning an uncontested election. These events marked a violent period of political and social chaos in Yemen.

In 2013- 2014 AQAP launched assaults across Yemen and the armed confrontation began and established its foundations in complex political, sectarian, and regional dynamics. The Houthi rebels, take charge of the capital city, Sanaa, and numerous other regions in the country, demanding the existing political order. This became noticeable as a consequential turning point in Yemen's modern history and set the stage for an elongated and destructive conflict.

2015 was the year when the country found itself in a situation that is irreversible and continues to affect the world to this day. In March, a covenant of Arab states led by Saudi Arabia initiated a military intervention in Yemen in response to the advance of Houthi rebels, who had taken control of the capital, Sanaa, and other major areas. The coalition aimed to restore the internationally recognized government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi (the second president of Yemen). This encroachment led to intensified fighting across Yemen, with airstrikes targeting Houthi camps and ground battles between Houthi forces and pro-government reserves supported by the Arab states. In the face of the military intervention, the conflict reached a deadlock, with neither side able to achieve a determinant victory. Efforts to reach a political settlement, including peace talks arranged by the United Nations, faced numerous challenges and throwbacks. The conflict also contributed to the spread of diseases, including a massive cholera outbreak. The breakdown of healthcare infrastructure and sanitation systems exacerbated the situation, leading to thousands of deaths and millions of suspected cases. While conflict deepened and the cholera spread out, the humanitarian crisis, which was disastrous, got way worse. The fighting, combined with airstrikes and a naval blockade imposed by the coalition, resulted in extended civilian casualties, displacement, and annihilation of infrastructure. Yemen faced critical shortages of food, medicine, and other essential supplies, leading to what the United Nations described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. In the main, 2015 was an essential year in Yemen's conflict, marked by increasing violence, a deepening humanitarian crisis, and ongoing efforts to find a resolution to the elongated conflict.

The humanitarian crisis got way worse than it was before 2015. The situation has reached dire proportions, impacting millions of lives, since 2015 more than 4.5 million people have been

forced to leave their homes. Besides this approximately 21 million individuals are currently in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, the scale of suffering in Yemen is astonishing. The ongoing war has had a disastrous impact on the country's healthcare infrastructure. Hospitals have been forced to close because of the damage from airstrikes, lack of funding, and shortages of essential medical supplies. In addition, many healthcare professionals have fled the country, further crippling the healthcare system and leaving millions of Yemenis without access to appropriate medical care. Yemeni civilians face numerous challenges in accessing healthcare services, compounding the already terrible situation. Travel restrictions, imposed by both government forces and armed groups, make it difficult for people to reach healthcare facilities, particularly in conflict-affected areas. The strife has also caused a mental health crisis, with many individuals experiencing trauma, anxiety, and depression due to the violence and displacement. The lack of mental health services magnifies the suffering of those affected, leaving them without the support they need to cope with their experiences. Children are among the most vulnerable groups affected by the conflict, facing an unbalanced impact on their health and well-being. Malnutrition, disease, and recruitment by armed groups are significant threats to children's safety and development. Women also face unique challenges in accessing healthcare, including maternal health services, family planning, and gender-based violence. In spite of these challenges, international organisations, donor countries, and humanitarian agencies have mobilized to provide aid and support to Yemen.

At the forefront of the response to this dilemma are the efforts of organisations like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), whose activities in Yemen are among the most spacious worldwide. In the middle of the chaos and violence, MSF teams are tirelessly working to provide lifesaving medical care to those affected by the conflict. Furthermore, in treating individuals injured in the violence, MSF teams are addressing the long-term influences of the war, which include alarming rates of malnutrition, inadequate vaccine coverage, limited access to essential maternity services, and complicated mental health needs. The consequences of these challenges are devastating, intensifying the already dire situation faced by Yemen's population. In the year 2022 alone, MSF admitted more than 108.000 people to hospitals across Yemen, providing critical medical care and support to those in need. Over and above that, MSF teams carried out a dumbfounding 36.500 surgical interventions, addressing urgent medical needs and saving countless lives in the process. Despite the enormous challenges and risks, MSF remains committed to delivering essential healthcare services to the people of Yemen. However, the humanitarian needs in Yemen continue to outpace the available resources, highlighting the urgent need for continued international support and solidarity to relieve the suffering of millions affected by the ongoing conflict. In addition to the MSF organisation, many other associations

are trying every day to help the people in Yemen, who are fighting for their survival. For example, UNHCR, Save the Children, or Islamic Relief USA.

Many parents decide to force their daughters into marriage at a very early age due to the humanitarian crisis. It could seem like a solution since the girl would live a full life and the parents would have money to raise their other children with the dowry the girl's husband gave, but in many cases, this decision results in death. Some of the girls die on the honeymoon night because they are too young, and their bodies cannot deal with non-consensual sexual intercourse. Based on the source, 9% are married before the age of 15, and 32% of girls are married before their 18th birthday. Nevertheless, this is not the only reason for child marriage in Yemen. Child marriage is a deeply ingrained issue driven by various factors including poorness, gender inequality, lack of education, and societal norms. Girls, often viewed as inferior to boys, are married off at a young age, sometimes as a means of economic survival for families. Conflict makes this problem worse, as families may see marriage as a way to protect their daughters or prevent boys from joining armed groups. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and humanitarian crisis have further worsened the situation, leading to increased vulnerability among children. In the face of efforts to address child marriage, Yemen continues to face significant challenges to this harmful practice.

Major Parties Involved

Saudi Arabia: The country led the coalition of Arab states in military interference to support the government of the second president of Yemen, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

United Arab Emirates: The UAE is part of the Saudi-led coalition.

Iran: Supposedly, supported the Houthis with weapons, funds, and training, but Iran denied every direct involvement.

United States of America: The USA provided logistical and intelligence support to the Saudi-led coalition.

United Kingdom: The UK sold arms to Saudi Arabia and gave technical assistance to the coalition

Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Sudan, and Morocco: The aforementioned countries took part in the Saudi-led coalition and provided different levels of military support.

Qatar: In the beginning, they were part of the Saudi-led coalition, but later they retreated.

Türkiye: At first supported the Saudi-led coalition, but later criticized the intervention and demanded a diplomatic solution.

France: France sold arms to Saudi Arabia and provided technical assistance to the coalition.

Russia: Russia presumably provided limited support to the Houthis, including arms and diplomatic backing, but Russia denied it

Pakistan: Originally, the country supported the coalition, but later represented a neutral stance and stopped sending groups to Yemen.

Timeline of Events

1900s - Ali Abdullah Saleh became the president of the Republic of Yemen. Concurrently the Houthis slowly gain power.

1994 - The civil war between the north and the south encountered victory of the northern army and bolstered Yemen's reunification.

2000 - Saleh made an agreement with Saudi Arabia focused on the boundary demarcation, which was called the "Treaty of Jeddah", and he also tried to disarm the Houthis.

June 2004 - Saleh's government arrested hundreds of Houthi members.

September 2004 - Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi was killed.

March 2005 - the Houthis had a new leader Hussein's brother, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, and the group continued fighting with the government.

2006 - Saleh won the election and granted amnesty to 600 Houthi rebels.

2007 - After five months of intense fighting between the government and the rebels, they made a ceasefire agreement with the help of Qatar.

2008 - Besides the ceasefire agreement, they continued fighting, but in July, Saleh announced an end to the battle in Saada.

2009 - The Yemeni military established the “Operation Scorched Earth” to defeat the Houthis in Saada.

February 2010 - They renewed the ceasefire agreement. At the same time, the Yemeni military executed “Operation Blow to the Head”. It was a crackdown on both the Houthis and AQAP.

September 2010 - Saleh’s government laid siege to the governorate of Shabwa to eradicate the AQAP militants.

2011 - “Arab Spring Reaches Yemen” – In January protests broke out against Saleh’s 33-year rule, which led to a violent crackdown and following political turmoil. By November 2011, Saleh agreed to assign the power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

2012 - In February Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi took the presidency unopposed.

2014 and early 2015 - “Post-Arab Spring” - Yemen underwent a National Dialogue Conference, which led to a regional restructuring and President Hadi’s resignation in 2015.

2015 - “Saudi-led Coalition and Civil War”

March 2015 - The Saudi-led coalition of Arab states initiated “Operation Decisive Storm” in support of the presidency. The United States declared its purpose to aid the Arab states' efforts.

April 2015 - The coalition announced the end of the operation and instead of fighting they tried to move on to another phase called “Operation Restoring Hope”. Even with the statement the coalition with USA help continued the bombing of the Houthis. The Houthis occupied the city of Ataq. Saudi Arabia boosted their border security.

May 2015 - The government and the Houthis made a formal covenant. The coalition and the Houthis clinched a five-day “humanitarian ceasefire”. President Barack Obama called together a GCC meeting to solve the crisis in Yemen.

August 2015 - The Houthis took charge of the whole Shabwa governorate.

2017 - Both sides (the government and the Houthis) broke the ceasefire agreement and the Houthis took responsibility for firing Saudi Arabia. Humanitarian agencies denounced the Yemen crisis as one of the worst humanitarian situations in the world. Thousands of people died and were injured because of the war, cholera, or famine. In December Saleh died on the battlefield.

2018 - By March, 22 million Yemen civilians needed humanitarian aid. Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, the second president of Yemen, met with Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE Crown Prince. The United Nations- mediated negotiations, the Yemeni government and the Houthis signed the Stockholm Agreement.

2019 - The wars continued. In an exertion to end the battle between the two coalition partners Saudi Arabia and UAE, in Yemen, the Yemeni government and the STC made a power-sharing agreement.

2020 - In March, the Saudi coalition carried out a disciplinary air strike on Saana. This happened because the UN hurried to keep up the cease-fire during the COVID-19 pandemic to stymie its spread in Yemen.

2021 - “President Biden Takes a New Path”

February 2021 - The USA ended their participation in the Yemen war including their militants and their help with arms.

April-May 2021 - The strikes and counterstrikes continued and increased.

August 2021 - The UN announced that two-thirds of the population, which means 20 million people are in humanitarian crises and fight for their lives daily.

September 2021 - civilians in Yemen went out to the streets and rampaged because of the crumble of Yemen’s currency and the unavailability of essential daily necessities.

December 2021 - WFP reduced the food aid to Yemen.

January-February 2022 - the Houthis set in motion a series of assaults against the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

March 2022 - the WFP announced that the humanitarian situation worsened in Yemen because of the Russian–Ukraine war.

April 2022 - the UN arranged a ceasefire agreement for two months between the two warring parties. Because of that, the Yemen government made public some transfer of power, and with that Saudi Arabia and UAE supported Yemen with 3 billion dollars.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) INITIATIVE

In 2011 the assembly suggested that the enterprise tried to facilitate a peaceful transition of power in Yemen following the Arab Spring protests. It led to the quitting of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the establishment of a transitional government led by President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

NATIONAL DIALOGUE CONFERENCE

Ordered in 2013-2014, the National Dialogue conference brought together various political factions, including the government, opposition groups, and civil society members, to discuss Yemen's future. The solution was a consensus document outlining key issues, including the structure of the state and the drafting of a new constitution.

STOCKHOLM AGREEMENT

Signed in December 2018, the Stockholm Agreement was arranged by the United Nations and aimed to weaken violence in Yemen, particularly in the port city of Hodeida. It included provisions for ceasefire, prisoner exchanges, and the establishment of a joint committee to oversee the execution of the agreement.

RIYADH AGREEMENT

Accomplished in November 2019 between the Yemeni government and the STC, the Riyadh Agreement aimed to end disharmony between government forces and southern separatists. It outlined power-sharing arrangements and security measures for the southern region of Yemen.

Possible Solutions and Approaches

There are potential solutions that could help Yemen reduce its suffering and promote peace and stability. First and foremost, an all-inclusive ceasefire agreement must be reached, halting all hostilities and allowing for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the millions in need. Diplomatic efforts should focus on bringing all parties to the negotiating table to discuss a political settlement that addresses the root causes of the conflict.

International actors, including regional powers and the United Nations, must play a central role in facilitating dialogue and conciliation efforts.

There should be cooperative efforts to address the minor harms of various Yemeni factions, including political representation, economic development, and social inclusion.

Humanitarian aid must be increased to provide lifesaving assistance to Yemen's civilian population, particularly in the areas of food security, healthcare, and refuge.

Eventually, efforts to combat terrorism in Yemen must be pursued in parallel with peacebuilding initiatives. This involves targeting extremist groups such as AQAP and ISIS.

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