

# The Black Forest Summit

*"Shaping Tomorrow Today"*

November 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>  
Karlsruhe, Germany

Study Guide

## **United Nations Security Council**

*Yemen – Peace in a forgotten war*





## Welcome Letter

Dear delegates,

We warmly welcome you all to the United Nations Security Council of KaMUN – The Black Forest Summit 2019! We are happy and honored to be in charge of this Committee, especially because we two have the joy of chairing together for the second time, the first time being at HamMUN 2018 last November.

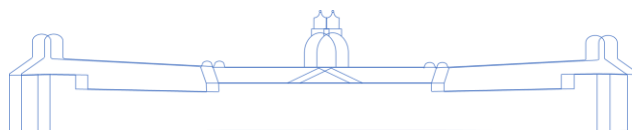
My name is Daria. I am currently pursuing a master's in International Development with a focus on Middle Eastern Studies in Paris, the city where I had the pleasure to discover Model UN three years ago. My MUN journey has since then been eventful and marked by amazing experiences and wonderful encounters, which justifies my enthusiasm for all the conferences I am lucky enough to attend. It is a true pleasure for me to chair the Security Council alongside Niklas, and I sincerely hope that the delegates will enjoy debating within this committee as much as I do. I have never been to Karlsruhe before, but judging by the hospitality I received during my previous trips to Germany I look forward to the start of the conference and to meeting everyone!

My name is Niklas. I am 21 years old and I study law in Heidelberg, soon in my seventh semester. KaMUN – The Black Forest Summit 2019 will be my third time chairing a Security Council. In my law studies I have an emphasis on public international law which is linked to my interest in the UN and the topic of peace which the Security Council deals with. The high stakes involved, and the constant danger of vetoes make the Security Council an exciting experience for me. Apart from doing MUN, I play the trumpet in an orchestra and I love to spend as much time as possible with my friends.

Yemen is a complex topic. Finding a consensus and passing a resolution is nothing we can take for granted. But that is the main reason why we are excited for the thrilling debate! We look very much forward to meeting you all. In case there is anything we can help you with, do not hesitate to contact us via [UNSC@Kamun.org](mailto:UNSC@Kamun.org). See you all soon!

Kindest regards,

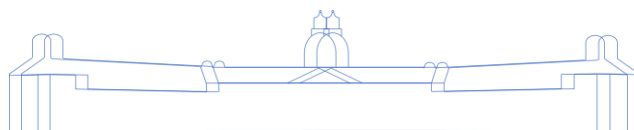
Daria and Niklas





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## About the United Nations Security Council

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, Art. 7 of the Charter of the United Nations (UNC). Its core mandate is the maintenance of international peace and security.<sup>1</sup>

The Council consists of 15 member states. According to Art. 23 UNC, the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America are permanent members of the Council (commonly known as the P5) while the other ten countries are non-permanent. The ten non-permanent members are elected by the United Nations General Assembly for a term of two years.<sup>2</sup> As it is the case in most UN bodies, the Council's member states are chosen based on a geographical distribution system to ensure an equal representation of all continents: Three from the ten non-permanent member states come from the African continent, two from the Asia-Pacific Group, one from Eastern Europe, two from the Latin American and Caribbean Group and two from the Western European and Others Group.<sup>3</sup>

The current ten non-permanent members are: The Kingdom of Belgium, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Indonesia, the State of Kuwait, the Republic of Peru, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of South Africa.<sup>4</sup>

The Security Council is the most powerful body within the United Nations system: It is the only organ able to take measures that are legally binding for all 193 UN member states under Art. 25 UNC. Therefore, it has many competences and possibilities to fulfill its purpose.

At first, the Council takes the role of a supporter and mediator under Chapter VI of the Charter whenever there is a dispute between member states. The Council can help to facilitate the dispute, for example by calling upon the parties to settle their conflict in a peaceful way (Art. 33 UNC), by investigating the dispute (Art. 34 UNC) or by giving recommendations (Art. 36 UNC).

Most important for the purpose of our sessions are the Council's core competences that are described in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Actions covered by Chapter VII apply whenever the Security Council determines "the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the piece, or act of aggression" according to Art. 39 UNC. The measures can be taken as a response to a conflict

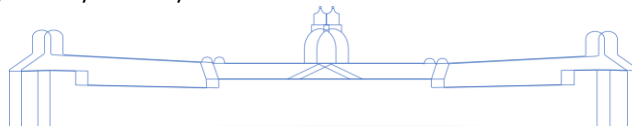
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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations. About the Security Council. (Last accessed 2019, February 01). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations. Current Members. (Last accessed 2019, February 01). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members>

<sup>3</sup> CFR Staff. The UN Security Council. (2018, September 24). Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council>

<sup>4</sup> The United Nations. Current Members. (Last accessed 2019, February 01). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members>





between states, to a civil war or to other threats such as terrorism. A “threat to the peace” is the most broadly used term. It can apply to inter- and intra-state conflicts or to other threats to the international security such as terroristic acts or prohibited proliferation of arms. A “breach of the peace” requires the use of armed forces. To qualify any form of violence as an “act of aggression”, it has to happen between states.<sup>5</sup>

When the Security Council is acting under Chapter VII, it can take measures according to Art. 40, 41 and 42 UNC. Art. 40 UNC refers to provisional measures. Art. 41 lists measures not involving the use of armed force. The list is not exhaustive; other prominent steps are the implementation of economic sanctions against the perpetrators in the conflict or even the establishment of ad-hoc Criminal Courts such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).<sup>6</sup> Finally, as an ultima ratio, Art. 42 UNC authorizes the Security Council to deploy armed forces in the region of conflict to maintain or to restore peace and security.

The Security Council has one special rule with regards to its voting procedure: the infamous Veto-power of the P5. Art. 27 UNC states that all decisions on substantive matters require an affirmative vote of nine members including all votes of the P5, meaning that if one of the P5 objects, any resolution fails. This is by far the most controversial rule of the UN Charter and it has led to multiple times where the Council had to stay inactive in the face of international crises.

In case the Council is not able to pass a resolution on a certain topic, the committee can still decide to adopt and publish a Presidential Statement, drafted by the respective President. These statements address the topic at hand and contain official recommendations given by the Council but are - unlike resolutions - not legally binding.<sup>7</sup>

Pursuant to Art. 29 UNC, the Council has the power to establish subsidiary organs for the support in its tasks. These subsidiary organs range from Sanctions Committees to Investigative Bodies to different Working Groups.<sup>8</sup> The most prominent one is the consultative United Nations Peacebuilding Commission which was founded in 2005.<sup>9</sup>

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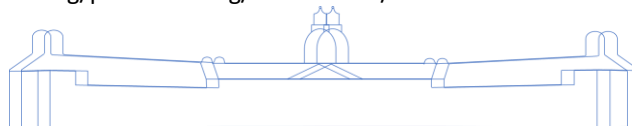
<sup>5</sup> The United Nations. FAQ. (Last accessed 2019, February 01). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/faq#threat>

<sup>6</sup> Resolution S/RES/827 (1993). The resolution can be found here: ICTY. The Tribunal - Establishment. (Last accessed 2019, February 01). Retrieved from <http://www.icty.org/en/about/tribunal/establishment>

<sup>7</sup> The United Nations. Presidential Statements. (Last accessed 2019, February 01). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/presidential-statements>

<sup>8</sup> For a full list see: The United Nations. Subsidiary Organs: Overview. (Last accessed 2019, February 01). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/subsidiary-organs-overview>

<sup>9</sup> The United Nations. United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Mandate. (Last accessed 2019, February 01). Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/commission/mandate>





When the Council decides to take actions, it is not limited to the cooperation with single UN member states. According to Art. 53 UNC, it can also use the help of regional organizations for the enforcement of any measures such as the EU, the Arab League, the African Union or NATO.<sup>10</sup>

## Topic: Yemen – Peace in a forgotten war

### Introduction

The conflict in Yemen is often called “the forgotten war”.<sup>11</sup> Yet, the UN labels it as the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, news coverage – at least in the west – on the small war-torn Middle East country is not as frequent as one would think.

The conflict in Yemen began as an intra-state conflict in 2014 when the group of the Houthi started a rebellion. The Houthis are a politico-military Shiite-Muslim movement. They conquered the country’s capital and other areas and expelled the current president out of the country in order to increase their dominance. Soon other states began to interfere: A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia engaged in warfare with the Houthi who are (allegedly) supported by Iran. Western nations backed up the Saudi-coalition by delivering arms to the participating countries. Terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda’s Yemen branch AQAP and the Islamic State (also referred to as Daesh) used the chaos to spread their influence. Other separatist movements emerged from the unrest. The different players in Yemen slowly turned the conflict into a complicated mess, everything at the expense of the Yemenis.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), nearly 80 percent of the Yemeni population – roughly 24 million people – are in need of humanitarian help. Over 17 million people lack access to safe drinking water and nearly 20 million access to healthcare. Food insecurity affects approximately 20 million people. As of March 2019, the UN registered at least 17,000 Yemeni civilians as dead or injured as a cause of the unrest.<sup>13</sup> Until the end of 2019, 131,000 Yemeni people will have died from the side effects of the conflict and supposedly one child dies every twelve minutes as a direct or indirect cause of the war.<sup>14</sup>

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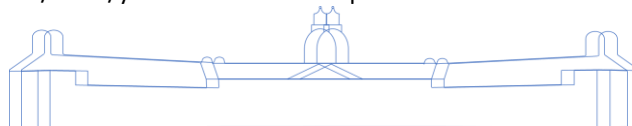
<sup>10</sup> CFR Staff. The UN Security Council. (2018, September 24). Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/un-security-council>

<sup>11</sup> Sommerlad, J. Yemen civil war: The facts about the world's 'forgotten war'. (2018, October 15). Retrieved from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/yemen-civil-war-explained-facts-saudi-arabia-bombing-uk-forgotten-war-deaths-refugees-a8584356.html>

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. About OCHA Yemen. (Last accessed 2019, August 23). Retrieved from: <https://www.unocha.org/yemen/about-ocha-yemen>

<sup>13</sup> UN News. Humanitarian crisis in Yemen remains the worst in the world, warns UN. (2019, February 14). Retrieved from: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1032811>

<sup>14</sup> Reinl, J. Yemen death toll to surpass 230,000 by end of 2019: UN report. (2019, April 26). Retrieved from: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/yemen-death-toll-surpass-230000-end-2019-un-report>



The country's infrastructure has suffered severely from the last years. The government has not been able to fulfill its duties. It becomes evident that Yemen is and has been at the brink of total collapse for years now and that the situation will only worsen if the war continues. The international community and first and foremost the United Nations Security Council as the prime guardian of peace and security in the world must desperately take more decisive measures to save the Yemenis from more fights and suffering.

## Profile of Yemen<sup>15</sup>

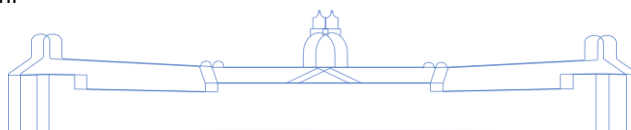
Since the unification of the former Yemen Arab Republic in the north and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in the south in 1990, the country located in the Middle East is called Republic of Yemen. The capital is Sana'a. Its only direct neighboring countries are Saudi Arabia and Oman. The Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden furthermore connect the country with Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt.



Figure 1 Map of the Middle East. Source: Radio Onda D'Urto. Yemen: Ancora Bombe E Raid Aerei Nella Guerra Per Procura Con L'Iran (2015, March 27). Retrieved from: <http://www.radiondadurto.org/2015/03/27/yemen-in-guerra-nella-disattenzione-delloccidente/>

As of July 2018, Yemen approximately had 28.6 million inhabitants, with the majority of them living in the western region of the country. The dominant ethnic group in the country is Arab. Main religion is Islam with ca. 99 percent of the population being Muslims. An estimated 65 percent of these are Sunni and 35 percent Shia.

<sup>15</sup> The World Factbook. Yemen. (2019, August 14). Retrieved from: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html>





Yemen is a presidential republic. The current legitimate head of state is President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi who was elected by popular vote in February 2012 as the successor to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Yemen is a low-income country, a fact that worsened due to the eruption of today's conflict. Before 2014, the country was mainly dependent on its oil and gas resources; the revenue from that sector accounted for roughly 25 % of Yemen's GDP.

## History of the conflict

### The Path to the 2015 Crisis

#### Events leading to the 2011 Revolution

Yemen has always been at the mercy of political turmoil. However, the current Yemeni Crisis witnessed its first sparks under the regime of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. In fact, with his policies becoming tougher and leaning progressively towards dictatorship, the country saw the rise of tension amongst the population, the Houthi, and the Hirak movements. The Houthis are an Islamic political-religious group first formed by members protesting against legislative elections held in 1993. Led by Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi, they emphasized their anti-foreign policies and their anti-constitutional beliefs especially after the events of 9/11.<sup>16</sup> However, the capture of their leader by governmental forces in 2004 led the Houthis to establish themselves as an entrenched militia that leaned towards more revolutionary ideals arranging the uprising of 2011.<sup>17</sup> Hiraks, on the other hand, were formed by military and government officials, whose positions were forcibly revoked after the north-south civil war of 1994. As with the Houthis, President Saleh aimed to end the movement by banning protests, arresting Hiraki leaders and reducing the intervention of Hiraki members in the South. However, attacking the Hiraks further provoked the Houthi movement and the Yemeni population. These events also led to the call for independence in 2011.<sup>18</sup>

#### 2011-2012

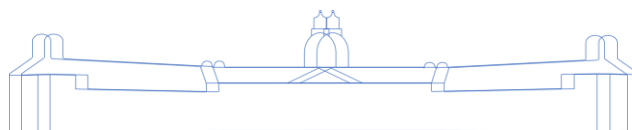
Despite the vivid protests and the state's violent response, President Saleh did not fulfil his promises of stepping down. He was thus targeted as a dictator who robbed the little wealth of the country. The accumulation of these events led to the culmination of the Yemeni Revolution, "Al Intifada", which forced Saleh to resign on the 25th of February 2012. Yemen was moving

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<sup>16</sup> Al Batati, Saeed. Who are the Houthis in Yemen? (2015, March 29). Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/08/yemen-houthis-hadi-protests-201482132719818986.html>

<sup>17</sup> Salisbury, Peter. Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian 'Cold War'. Research Paper. (2015, February). Retrieved from: [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field\\_document/20150218YemenIranSaudi.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/field_document/20150218YemenIranSaudi.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.







towards what is now known as the Yemeni crisis. Abdul Mansur Hadi, previous Vice president, was elected to office in 2012.<sup>19</sup>

### 2014-2015

On February 2014, an UN-sponsored national dialogue was established to decide the future of the country. Despite the killing of two Houthi envoys, the negotiation took place and a new constitutional document was presented. It described a new federal system in which Yemen would be broken down into several regions.<sup>20</sup> In spite of the successful negotiations on matters of political freedoms and civil rights, the National Dialog Conference (NDC) did not propose clear steps for the newly set federal state to undertake in order to resolve the conflict in the south. This led to violent repercussions and loss of power of the Hadi government, while the Houthis and the Hiraks, main opposers of the outcomes of the NDC, started their advance. The current instability allowed multiple forces to intervene. Groups like Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) as well as Daesh took advantage of the lack of an effective transitional government to align their troops on the Yemeni borders. In parallel, the Houthis, initially lacking military power but gaining the support of those perceiving them as an uncorrupted movement, disturbed the balance of power by allying themselves with former President Saleh. Having acquired the military troops that were still faithful to Saleh, the Houthis captured the capital Sanaa and moved towards Aden, the current temporary capital of Yemen, in January 2015.<sup>21</sup>

## The Yemeni Crisis

Depicted as a source of instability, Yemen was always seen as an inferior country amongst the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Its members, notably Saudi Arabia, had always been on the forefront of involvement when it came to Yemen's continuous instability. After the Battle of Aden, which took place in March 2015 between the Houthis and the Yemeni forces, President Hadi fled to Riyadh on the 25th of March 2015. On the same day, Saudi Arabia and the newly formed coalition of Arab Nations directed their first attack on the Houthi insurgents. Likewise, Saudi Arabia led the coalition by launching a series of airstrikes against Houthi targets in Yemen.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Saudi Arabia accused the belligerents of being backed up by Iran, an accusation,

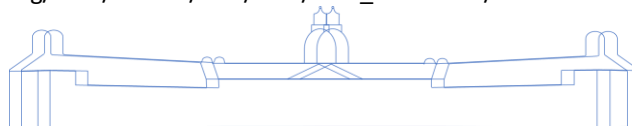
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<sup>19</sup> Al Jazeera. Profile: Yemen's Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. (2015, February 22). Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/02/2012219133034774204.html>

<sup>20</sup> Schmitz, Charles. Yemen's National Dialogue. MEI Policy Paper. (2014, February). Retrieved from: <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Charles%20Schmitz%20Policy%20Paper.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Transfeld, Mareike. Yemen's transition to political stability was doomed to fail. Here's why. (2015, October 27). Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/10/27/yemens-transition-process-was-doomed-to-fail-even-before-the-houthi-takeover/>

<sup>22</sup> Salisbury, Peter. Yemen and the Saudi-Iranian 'Cold War'. Research Paper. (2015, February). Retrieved from: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/field/document/20150218YemenIranSaudi.pdf>





which was enough to aggravate fellow GCC countries, with the exception of Oman, into targeting the Houthi Forces.<sup>23</sup> Despite the role of these interventions in protecting the transitional government and in driving out the Houthis from conquered regions, the campaign titled “Decisive Storm” dramatically increased the criticality of the situation of the Yemenis. It resulted only in a slight progress offset by a huge rise in humanitarian needs.<sup>24</sup> By the 28th of March, Saudi Arabia managed to enforce a no-fly zone and gain total control of Yemen’s Airspace. The only infraction to the no-fly zone occurred on the 29th of March when Pakistan evacuated the Pakistani Nationals from Yemen. The “liberation” of controlled areas allowed extremist groups like Al-Qaeda and Daesh to establish their power in these areas and profit from the raging conflict. Al-Qaeda solidified its position by attacking a prison in the city of Al Mukalla, forcing the pro Hadi forces to handle conflicts on multiple fronts, in the South and North.

On the 14th of April 2015, the Security Council passed its first resolution on the issue, taking action and condemning the Houthis for their advancements.<sup>25</sup> Since then, the civil war began to witness the involvement of multiple foreign forces, most notably the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America. The latter actively supported the coalition by providing them with military and financial resources as well as vigorously leading operations against Daesh and Al-Qaeda. In July 2016, the Houthi forces and the government of former President Saleh, announced the formation of a “political council” to govern Sanaa and most of northern Yemen.<sup>26</sup> The situation remained stable until 2017, when Former President Saleh opened up to the possibility of a peace treaty with the Saudi-led coalition. He was however found dead outside of Sanaa on the 4th of December 2017 with the Houthis admitting to the crime. This event had multiple repercussions on the condition of the war. Having lost the full support of those faithful to Saleh, the Houthis were now at the centre of the conflict with only the support of Iran and Hezbollah, a Shia Islamist political party and militant group based in Lebanon. Despite their situation, they emerged victorious after engaging the pro-Saleh forces in the Battle of Sanaa of 2017.

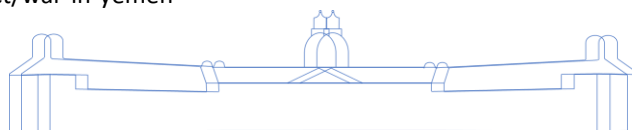
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<sup>23</sup> Stenslie, Stig. “Decisive Storm”: Saudi Arabia’s attack on the Houthis in Yemen. Expert Analysis. (2015). Retrieved from: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/191021/fdae163be3c9b498ae792fb7bd161c81.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Williams, Carol J. With Russia abstaining, Security Council punishes Yemeni rebel leaders. (2015, April 14). Retrieved from: <https://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-un-yemen-arms-embargo-20150414-story.html>

<sup>26</sup> Global Conflict Tracker. War in Yemen. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/interactives/global-conflict-tracker?marker=23#!/conflict/war-in-yemen>



## Parties involved



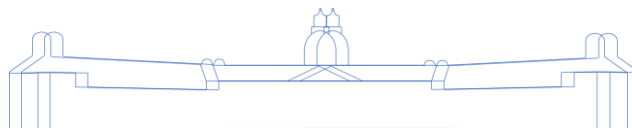
Figure 2 Parties involved. Source: Jahaf, Ahmed. Countries Participating in the War On Yemen. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://ajahaf.com/countries-against-yemen/>

### The Saudi-led Coalition and the Hadi Government

The Houthi insurgency has been strongly condemned by Saudi Arabia, leading to military operations against the rebel forces. The insurgency is perceived as a major threat to the kingdom, which sees the Houthis as a hostile neighbour backed by a regional rival, Iran. Additionally, Saudi Arabia seeks to avoid the possible establishment of a Shia-governed country in Yemen, in light of Saudi Arabia being a predominantly Sunni country. Meanwhile, the coalition aims to restore the power balance in Yemen and return it to the Hadi Government. Although it remains unknown whether Saudi Arabia's decision to support the Hadi Government will open the way for peace talks between the rival parties in Yemen, there is no doubt that Saudi Arabia will continue to play a major role in Yemen crisis on account of its abundant wealth and strong political influence.

### The Houthis and Iran

The Houthis are currently in crisis with little to no direct support. With the majority of their forces surrounded in Hodeidah, the Houthis have decided to keep fighting no matter the number of casualties and the created repercussions. Iran is the Houthis' firmest supporter on an international level and their greatest financial resource. Apart from the economic support that the country provides to the group, many claim that Iran has militarily reinforced the insurgent movement. Iran is likewise passively jeopardizing Saudi Arabia and UAE economically and militarily, as it secures better relations with the Houthi rebels. Furthermore, the Houthis benefit





from the support of Hezbollah. The latter believes that the Saudi-led coalition is a political tool used by Saudi Arabia to gain power in Yemen.

### **The United States of America (USA)**

Over the last decade, the presence of the United States in Yemen has become inevitably notorious due to their interests in the region. Yemen is considered as one of the key countries in regard to the safe transportation of oil from the Arabian Peninsula and more specifically from Yemen's neighbouring country, Saudi Arabia. Yemen also shares borders with US allies and has strategic access to the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el Mandab Strait. Sustaining security and stability in Yemen is viewed by the US as a crucial step towards ensuring the secure passing of oil through the country and the control of the international oil trade.

### **Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)**

Coordinating multiple terrorist attacks in many of the biggest cities of Yemen and out of the country's borders, AQAP is fighting against the Houthis, the government forces and American anti-terrorism troops which are currently based in the country. However, both AQAP and the Islamic State are losing ground due to the continuous actions of the US and the UAE who are emphasizing on forcing out the terrorist groups. The fate of these groups is yet undetermined as none of the parties involved can predict how they will act after the termination of hostilities.

## **Current situation**

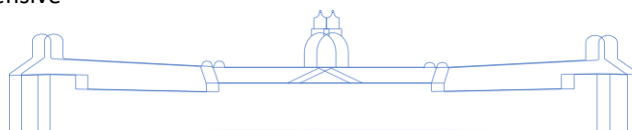
The current situation does not seem to offer any serious prospect of improvement: The war is still raging and the consequences of the past years are taking their toll on the country on all levels. The insufficient humanitarian aid, the Houthis refusing to back down, constant air strikes from the coalition and the repeated disruptions of UN-led peace are just a few factors that are steadily dragging the country closer to the brink of total destruction.

On the 13th of June 2018 the Saudi-led coalition launched an attack on Al Hodeidah with the goal of retaking both city and port. During this operation titled "Golden Victory" the coalition also presented the Houthis with the opportunity to withdraw, allowing the UN to lead negotiations and support all efforts towards an unconditional peaceful withdrawal of the Houthis, but to no avail.<sup>27</sup>

In turn, the UN has correspondingly made various attempts to control the Al Hodeidah port, a supply route that provides 70 % of imported aid ranging from food to medicine. On the 23rd of June 2018, the efforts of the UN special envoy Martin Griffiths led to the coalition's agreement

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<sup>27</sup> McKernan, Bethan & Wintour, Patrick. Yemen: Saudi-Led Coalition Orders Halt To Hodeidah Offensive. (2018, November 15). Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/15/yemen-saudi-led-coalition-orders-halt-to-hodeidah-offensive>





to an operational pause that would last one week and thus allow the UN envoy to meet with the Houthi leaders in hopes of convincing them to an unconditional withdrawal.<sup>28</sup> Afterwards, a UN peace talk agreement was set up between President Hadi and a Houthi delegation, and was meant to occur in Geneva on the 6th of September, with the goal of finding a peaceful solution to the ongoing conflict in Hodeidah. However, despite the UN's efforts to solve the situation at hand peacefully, the Houthis refrained from participating in the Geneva talks for three consecutive days and demanded that the UN transfer their wounded via a non-UN affiliated aircraft, and without inspection. With their request denied and their refusal to appear at the peace talks, the coalition has since taken up its siege of Hodeidah.<sup>29</sup>

In December 2018, another attempt to start the peace process has been made with the gathering in Stockholm of the parties to the conflict. The series of talks resulted in the Stockholm Agreement, which aimed at restoring complete government authority on multiple ports as well as proceeding to a prisoner exchange.<sup>30</sup> However, the agreement was followed by reports of successive airstrikes in Hodeidah province by coalition forces and of Houthi fighters using protected positions, such as hospitals, to stage fighting.<sup>31</sup> The break-up of this agreement only exacerbated tensions between the Saudi-Arabian coalition and the Houthis, making any prospect of peace seem impossible.

However, the coalition, which until then seemed united, suffered a serious rift on August 5 2019, when Southern separatists violently seized the port city of Aden – the seat of Yemen's internationally-recognized government – leaving dozens of victims. The separatist fighters claimed membership in the Security Belt – a militia aligned with the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) – and were therefore trained and equipped by the UAE. Although the STC claimed that the goal of this operation and their presence in Aden was to “maintain stability”,<sup>32</sup> the Saudi-led coalition ordered an immediate ceasefire, threatening to bomb the separatists. The threat proved effective and the STC forces vacated the government institutions less than two weeks after the seizure but refused to quit the military camps which gave them effective control of the city.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, a march was organized by the people of neighbouring

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

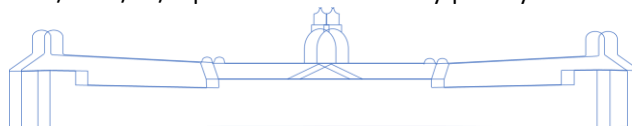
<sup>29</sup> Nebehay, Stephanie. Yemen peace talks collapse in Geneva after Houthi no-show. (2018, September 08). Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-un/yemen-peace-talks-collapse-in-geneva-after-houthi-no-show-idUSKCN1LO08Z>

<sup>30</sup> Stockholm Agreement. (2018). Retrieved from: [https://osesgy.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/stockholm\\_agreement\\_-.pdf](https://osesgy.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/stockholm_agreement_-.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Dijkstal, Haydee. Yemen And The Stockholm Agreement: Background, Context, And The Significance Of The Agreement. (2019, May 31). Retrieved from: [https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/23/issue/5/yemen-and-stockholm-agreement-background-context-and-significance#\\_ednref](https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/23/issue/5/yemen-and-stockholm-agreement-background-context-and-significance#_ednref)

<sup>32</sup> Beaumont, Peter. Scores' Killed In Yemen As UAE-Backed Fighters Seize Parts Of Aden. (2019, August 14). Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/aug/14/scores-killed-in-yemen-as-uae-backed-fighters-seize-parts-of-aden>

<sup>33</sup> Al Jazeera. Separatists Withdraw From Key Posts In Yemen's Aden. (2019, August 17). Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/separatists-withdraw-key-posts-yemen-aden-190817083027397.html>





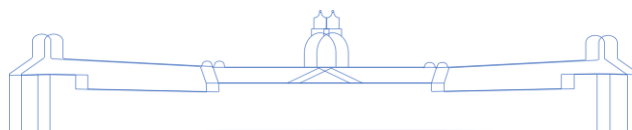
southern provinces to show their support to the separatist fighters.<sup>34</sup> To ease this climate of tensions, Saudi Arabia made a call for dialogue, which the STC has welcomed, although no date has been set yet. As for now, the situation remains tense and keeps all parties on their guard, as another standoff between UAE-led and Saudi-led forces could be heavily disruptive, especially if they spread in other parts of the South.



Figure 3 Foreign Powers in and around Yemen. Source: European Council on Foreign Relations. Current Front Lines (June 19). (2019). Retrieved from: [https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Yemen\\_Houthi\\_Control19-Curent\\_Front\\_Lines-01.jpg](https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Yemen_Houthi_Control19-Curent_Front_Lines-01.jpg)

On the humanitarian level, deeming the situation as catastrophic is an understatement. On the one hand, famine and hunger are engulfing the country. In fact, as before the crisis Yemen's essential foods and fuel were imported, the current blockade has now led to an increase of the price and the decrease in accessibility of these commodities. As a result, the hyperinflation has made it difficult for people to purchase food and critical supplies even when available. All these

<sup>34</sup> Al Jazeera. Yemen: Thousands March In Aden In Support Of Separatists. (2019, August 15). Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/yemen-thousands-march-aden-support-separatists-190815120556086.html>





factors are causing Yemen to witness “*the worst famine in 100 years*” according to the UN,<sup>35</sup> with 18 million people out of Yemen’s population (29 million) “[not knowing] *where their next meal will come from*”.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, the shortage of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation led to the largest cholera outbreak in recent history. In fact, cholera is usually found and spread in places with inadequate water treatment and hygiene and poor sanitation. Therefore, the first wave of cholera outbreak occurred in the winter of 2016 and the second in summer of 2017. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 1.3 million cases of suspected or confirmed cholera have been reported in Yemen since April 2017, with over 154,000 cases in 2018<sup>37</sup> and 2,510 associated deaths.<sup>38</sup> About 30.5 % of the suspected cases are children under the age of five.<sup>39</sup> The WHO and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have led a three-phase campaign to supply Yemenis with oral cholera vaccines. As of August 13, 2018, about 88,000 people reached the second phase of this campaign.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, the access to healthcare is problematic, notably due to the lack of operational funds and the difficulties in importing medicine and critical supplies. Another aspect hindering the access of Yemenis to healthcare is the cost of a hospital visit, with people borrowing money or cutting costs to save up for transportation to the hospital and the medical fees. In fact, even when medical care is free in public health facilities, many cannot afford the cost of public transport, and some even sell their belongings to buy medicine.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> UN News. Looming Famine In Yemen Could Put Two Million Mothers At Risk Of Death – UN agency. (2018, November 01). Retrieved from: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/11/1024652>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

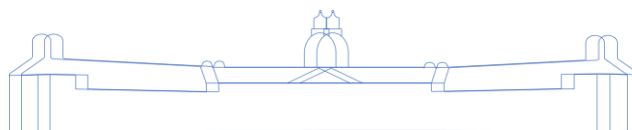
<sup>37</sup> NBCUniversal News Group. Three Stats That Reveal the Scale of the World’s Worst Humanitarian Crisis. (2018, October 28). Retrieved from: [www.nbcnews.com/news/world/yemen-crisis-three-stats-reveal-scale-world-s-worst-humanitarian-n923741](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/yemen-crisis-three-stats-reveal-scale-world-s-worst-humanitarian-n923741)

<sup>38</sup> The World Health Organization. Outbreak Update – Cholera in Yemen, 11 October 2018. (2018, October 14). Retrieved from: [www.emro.who.int/pandemic-epidemic-diseases/cholera/outbreak-update-cholera-in-yemen-11-october-2018.html](http://www.emro.who.int/pandemic-epidemic-diseases/cholera/outbreak-update-cholera-in-yemen-11-october-2018.html)

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> ReliefWeb. UN Targets Half a Million Yemenis in Battle-Scarred Hudaydah with Cholera Vaccine - UNICEF - Yemen. (2018, August 06). Retrieved from: [reliefweb.int/report/yemen/un-targets-half-million-yemenis-battle-scarred-hudaydah-cholera-vaccine-unicef](http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/un-targets-half-million-yemenis-battle-scarred-hudaydah-cholera-vaccine-unicef)

<sup>41</sup> NBCUniversal News Group. Three Stats That Reveal the Scale of the World’s Worst Humanitarian Crisis. (2018, October 28). Retrieved from: [www.nbcnews.com/news/world/yemen-crisis-three-stats-reveal-scale-world-s-worst-humanitarian-n923741](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/yemen-crisis-three-stats-reveal-scale-world-s-worst-humanitarian-n923741)





## Previous UN-involvement

### Previous resolutions<sup>42</sup>

In **S/RES/2014** from October 2011 – the first resolution focusing on Yemen –, the Council endorses the initiative by the Gulf Cooperation Council for a peaceful transition in the country and reminds all participants of the conflict to abide by international law. In S/RES/2051 from June 2012, the Council urges all the conflict parties to continue the transition process and threatens the use of measures under Art. 41 UNC, should the situation not get better.

In **S/RES/2104** from February 2014 the United Nations established a Sanctions Committee that had the task to determine perpetrators threatening the peace in Yemen who should receive travel bans and frozen assets. The sanctions regime has been prolonged ever since via S/RES/2204 (2015), S/RES/2266 (2016), S/RES/2342 (2017), S/RES/2402 (2018) and S/RES/2456 (2019).

In **S/RES/2201** from February 2015, the Council condemned all acts of violence committed by the Houthis and prompted them to abide by the GCC initiative. The Council reacted to the continued insurgency by imposing an arms embargo on all Houthi-forces and others loyal to former president Saleh in S/RES/2216 from April 2015.

In **S/RES/2451** from December 2018, the Council approved the Stockholm Agreement that has been negotiated earlier that December. It furthermore established a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of said Agreement.

Lastly, the Council formed the “**UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement**” (UMHA) – a part of the Stockholm Agreement aiming at keeping a ceasefire in said city – in January 2019 via S/RES/2452. Its mandate was extended in July 2019 by S/RES/2481, the newest resolution on Yemen by the Council.

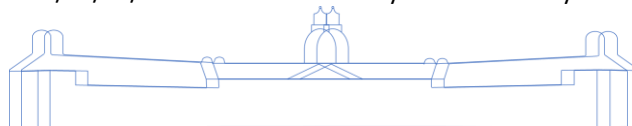
### Failed resolutions

Despite the double-digit number of resolutions on Yemen, the Council is being heavily criticized for the three year-inactivity between 2015 and 2018 and for its failure to take more drastic measures.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For a full list of all 13 resolutions by the Council on Yemen (with download links) see: Security Council Report. UN Documents for Yemen: Security Council Resolutions. (Last accessed 2019, August 22). Retrieved from: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un\\_documents\\_type/security-council-resolutions/?ctype=Yemen&cbtype=yemen](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/security-council-resolutions/?ctype=Yemen&cbtype=yemen)

<sup>43</sup> e. g. Beckerle, K. Where Does the UN Security Council Stand on Yemen? (2018, November 8). Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/11/08/where-does-un-security-council-stand-yemen>







In addition to that, Russia vetoed a draft resolution by the UK<sup>44</sup> in February 2018. The draft contained a section that criticized Iran for its alleged support for the Houthis. Russia showed itself not convinced by the presented evidence. Instead, the Council adopted the Russian draft without this passage which became S/RES/2402.<sup>45</sup> Russia itself plays a relatively neutral role in the conflict and therefore seeks to not interfere too much by taking a strong stance against a major participant like Iran.

Finally, some highly unusual behavior occurred when debating the draft resolution that later became S/RES/2451: The US threatened to veto the draft if clauses calling for a guaranteed flow of humanitarian aid and for the need of accountability regarding crimes committed by all sides of the conflict are not removed. It is assumed that the US intended to protect its allies Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates who are being accused of violating international humanitarian and international human rights law in Yemen by their military strikes. The clauses indeed got cut out.<sup>46</sup>

## Questions a resolution should address

The conflict in Yemen challenges the international community in numerous ways. More decisive action is urgent to reinstall peace in the region and to prevent further civilian casualties. As the conflict has destabilized the entire country, the delegates of the Council will have to consider multiple questions when drafting a resolution on the topic. They should combine immediate action with a long-term strategy in order to sustainably rebuild the country. Delegates should find answers to the following questions. Obviously, a single resolution cannot address every aspect of nation-building at once, yet delegates should have ideas for every phase of the reconstruction of Yemen in order to develop a holistic vision for the issues at hand.

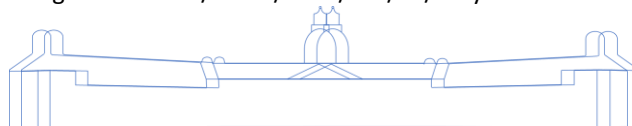
- How can the Council arrange more immediate humanitarian help for Yemeni civilians, especially taking the famine and the recent cholera outbreak into account?
- What actions should the Council take to solve the conflict in Yemen? What role should the Saudi-led coalition play in the further conflict resolution? If the Council decides to take matters into its own hands, what measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter should the Council take?
- How can the proliferation of arms into the region be limited? Should the international community be allowed to deliver arms to countries participating in the Saudi-intervention or to other conflict parties?

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<sup>44</sup> To see the draft resolution: [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2018/156](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2018/156)

<sup>45</sup> Gladstone, R. Russia Vetoes U.N. Resolution to Pressure Iran Over Yemen Missiles. (2018, February 26). Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/26/world/middleeast/iran-yemen-security-council.html>

<sup>46</sup> Borger, J. UN agrees Yemen ceasefire resolution after fraught talks and US veto threat. (2018, December 21). Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/21/un-yemen-ceasfire-stockholm-resolution-us>





- How can the Council assure that president Hadi is able to retake office? What role should the Council play in the shaping of the political future of Yemen in general?
- How shall the Council fight terrorism in the country?
- In what way could the Council assure that those who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and other grave human rights violations on all sides during the conflict are held accountable for their actions?
- How can the Council help to reconstruct the country once peace returns? How can the international community foster economic growth?
- How should the Council react to the alleged support of the Houthis by Iran<sup>47</sup> and by Qatar?<sup>48</sup>

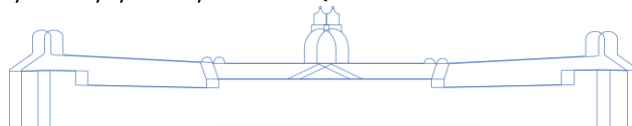
## Further Reading

1. The final report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen, the Yemen Sanctions Committee established by the Security Council in 2014. The report from the 25th of January 2019 contains a summary and analysis of relevant actions committed by the major players of the conflict: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2019\\_83.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2019_83.pdf)
2. A report of the UN Secretary-General from the 3rd of June 2019 with the title “Children and armed conflict in Yemen”: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2019\\_453.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2019_453.pdf)
3. A report from August 2019 by the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts – a working group established by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – that documents human rights violations and abuses in Yemen since September 2014: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/A\\_HRC\\_42\\_17.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/A_HRC_42_17.pdf)

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<sup>47</sup> Feierstein, Gerald M., Iran’s Role in Yemen and Prospects for Peace. (2018, December 6). Retrieved from: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/irans-role-yemen-and-prospects-peace>

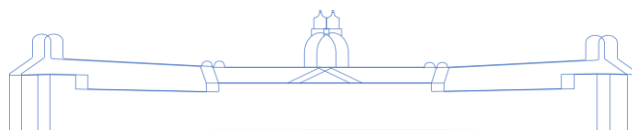
<sup>48</sup> Egypt Today staff. How did Qatar back the Houthis in Yemen? (2017, August 3). Retrieved from: <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/15264/How-did-Qatar-back-the-Houthis-in-Yemen>





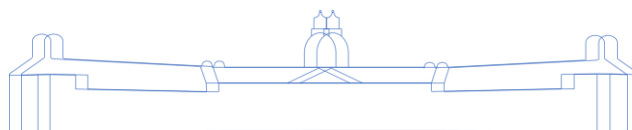
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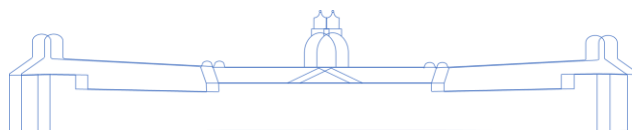


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