



# THESSISMUN



20<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

## **Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)**

### **First Committee of the General Assembly**

Topic Area A

The demilitarization of the Middle East –  
The situation in Yemen



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### **Study Guide**

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*“The Demilitarization of the Middle East – The Situation in Yemen”*



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## 1. Welcoming Letter

Dear Participants,

We are more than excited and happy to welcome you in this year's ThessISMUN 2023 and in particular to our committee, the United Nations 1<sup>st</sup> Committee of the General Assembly, also known as the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC). We are sure that you also have this passion and enthusiasm in you and that you will show it through your participation in this simulation. It is of utmost importance and also honor for us to serve as the Board of this year's simulation of DISEC, a committee that plays a crucial role in the international security agenda.

Our agenda this year, contains intriguing topics of debate, which mainly concern the international community given its difficulty in handling and solving them. Concerning the Topic A of our Agenda, we aim at creating a framework and policies regarding the ongoing critical issue of the demilitarization of the Middle East, on the occasion of the armed conflict that has been plaguing Yemen for over a decade. Our objective is to examine the various components of the problem, pinpoint its causes and create effective strategies to cut its thread in multiple stages. It is a matter that requires multidimensional analysis, as it is interwoven with our globalized security.

Regarding Topic area B, we are going to focus on the ongoing situation of the Russo-Ukrainian war and how that conflict is affecting the nuclear weapons and nuclear power, not limited only to these two countries but also to the rest of the states that have nuclear power in their possession. The status of nuclear weapons has always been a crucial issue not only for the agenda of this committee, but for the whole global community in general. Thus we expect from you to come with ideas and solutions for this topic of utmost importance.

We do hope you find this Study Guide useful. We have strived to provide you with the fundamental background information, as well as with summarized details and further bibliography, for those wishing to further expand their knowledge in preparation for the conference. Through this Study Guide, we hope that you will be ready for an exciting experience with heated and vivid debates.



Finally, we want to ask all of you to not only carefully read this guide, but also the Rules of Procedure (RoP), as you cannot play the game if don't know the rules. It goes without saying that we are very much looking forward to meeting each and every one of you in person; it is in these conferences where amazing memories are forged and strong friendships are built. As your chairing team we cannot wait for it to start!

Kind regards,

*The Board of the 1st Committee of the General Assembly*

**Nikolaos Tsironis**, *Chairperson*

**Olga Rodatou**, *Vice-Chair*

**Adriani Nikolaou**, *Vice-Chair*



## 2. The 1<sup>st</sup> Committee of the General Assembly

The 1st Committee of the General Assembly (Disarmament and International Security Committee) was established in 1993 and constitutes one of the main Committees of the GA. The role of the Committee is circumscribed in Article 11, Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter.

*“The General Assembly may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and **may make recommendations** with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both”. As per this article, the mandate of the 1st Committee of the General Assembly is highlighted as, **“to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.”***

The body’s pivotal responsibilities are interconnected with issues of disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace, all of which greatly affect the international community. The Committee further seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime. Any arising disarmament and international security matter falls within the ambit of the Charter relating to the powers and functions of the 1st Committee. It implements the following principles when drafting its documents or in session:

- The general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security.
- Principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments.
- And, last but not least, the promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

The Committee works closely together with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. Moreover, it is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage.



### 3. Introduction to the Topic

The Middle East has been a key geopolitical point in modern history. Being rich in oil, gold and other essential materials, surrounded by the Suez Canal, the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea, located between Europe, Africa and Asia, the Middle East has been for centuries a land of conflict and war. Many nations over the years have fought for a place in the area to claim as their territory. In the past 50 years, the warring zones in the Middle East have increased dramatically, with new conflicts, civil wars, coups and insurgencies happening almost on a daily basis. Because of the continuous wars, one of the main issues of the area is the vast circulations of arms and advanced weaponry; a wide variety of weapons can be found in every corner of the Middle East, from small handguns to military-grade arms, missiles and even drones used to launch bombs. However, the vast circulation of weapons has caused many of them to end up in the hands of militias and terrorist organizations; those weapons are then used to further intensify and escalate the combat, which may also lead to the loss of innocent civilians.

One of the most characteristic cases of the aforementioned situation is the Middle Eastern country of Yemen. Being separated into two nations and unified only in 1990, Yemen is now facing one of the worst civil wars humanity has ever seen. For the past 9 years, the paramilitary Islamist Houthi movement has been fighting against the Legally Established Government of Yemen for domination over a country rich in oil and natural resources. The case of the Yemeni civil war and its effects on the developing state of Yemen and the broader Middle Eastern area will be examined in this Study Guide. Under those circumstances, organized crime and corruption blossom and civilians are facing one of the worst humanitarian crises of the 21st century. Despite many attempts of the UN and third countries to intervene and de-escalate the situation, ceasefires and talks between the two sides did not bear fruit, due to substantial differences in their political approach and lack of communication. The situation in Yemen is not just about a civil war, rather than a sequence of political instability, military violence and the battle for domination over a suffering country; a battle that dates back to the 1950s.

## 4. Definitions

### 4.1. General

Before proceeding with the agenda analysis, it is critical to define all individual key terms related to the Topic Area. As a result, both the argumentation and the national policy research shall be conducted in a clear and clarified way.

- a. **Middle East<sup>1</sup>**: A geopolitical area which is located in the region where Southeast Asia comes in contact with Africa to the west and with Europe to the north. It consists of 18 countries. Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen are among them. The term "Middle East" is sometimes used to refer to Afghanistan, the Comoros, Djibouti, Maghreb, Pakistan, Sudan, and Somalia. Lastly, the Middle East includes countries that share characteristics such as ethnic communities, geographic features, religious beliefs, and political history.
- b. **Demilitarized zones<sup>2</sup>**: An area, which both parties to an armed conflict have agreed to not occupy or use for military purposes. In times of peace or conflict, the establishment of demilitarized zones can be achieved through a verbal or written agreement.
- c. **Militia<sup>3</sup>**: An organization for military purposes. It consists of citizens who possess limited and inadequate military training. This organization is available for emergency service, usually for local defense.
- d. **Proxy war<sup>4</sup>**: A conflict in which a third actor participates indirectly in a pre-existent war, with the aim to expand its influence or power by affecting the strategic outcome of the war in its favour.

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<sup>1</sup> "Middle East Countries 2023." Accessed January 14, 2023. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/middle-east-countries>.

<sup>2</sup> "Demilitarized Zones | How Does Law Protect in War? - Online Casebook," accessed January 14, 2023, <https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/demilitarized-zones>.

<sup>3</sup> "Militia Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary," accessed January 14, 2023, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/militia>.

<sup>4</sup> G.W. Brown, I. McLean, and A. McMillan, "The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations," Oxford Reference (Oxford University Press, 2018).



## 4.2.Key Factors

### A.Yemen

Located in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen is one of the most conflicted states in the Middle East. Divided into North and South Yemen (1970), with opposite political systems, the two Yemeni states were finally unified in 1990<sup>5</sup>. However, due to the political unrest and disputes, the high volume of arms circulating in the country, the territorial disputes and the frequent coup d'états<sup>6</sup>, Yemen has been in a constant warring situation since the 1950s, which ended up in the Yemeni Civil War, which dates back to 2014 and is active until today. The Civil War has its roots in the 2011 Yemeni Revolution and the Arab Spring Movement has been characterized as 'one of the 8 deadliest wars of the 21st Century'<sup>7</sup>.

### B. Other participating countries

The unstable and warring situation in Yemen has been backed by third states, supporting the side of their choice with the supply of arms, troops, hybrid weapons, and financial and humanitarian aid. More specifically:

#### B1.USA

The United States have quite a strong presence in the Middle East and has diplomatic relations with most states, excluding Iran. The US has many times attempted to demilitarize the Middle East, yet without any outcome<sup>8</sup>. The United States is recognizing the legitimate governing body of Yemen, the Presidential Leadership Council and has officially condemned the Houthi movement and the earlier events of the Arab Winter. Since the Yemeni Civil War erupted, the US has provided Yemen with more than \$4.5 billion in humanitarian assistance to counter the famine and acute food insecurity, especially after 2022 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, when wheat prices skyrocketed. The USA

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<sup>5</sup> 'Yemen - Government and Society | Britannica'. Accessed 5 January 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yemen/Government-and-society>.

<sup>6</sup> 'Yemen - History | Britannica'. Accessed 5 January 2023 <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yemen/War-of-secession-and-political-unrest>

<sup>7</sup> '8 Deadliest Wars of the 21st Century | Britannica'. Accessed 5 January 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/list/8-deadliest-wars-of-the-21st-century>.

<sup>8</sup> Demilitarizing U.S. Policy in the Middle East- Accessed 5 January 2023 <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/demilitarizing-u-s-policy-in-the-middle-east>

is also part of a coalition supporting Yemen against the Houthi movement, alongside Saudi, France and other Arabian and western states<sup>9</sup>. ‘The US has also conducted 376 drone strikes in Yemen, which have killed between 1390 and 1779 people overall’, according to data from the think tank ‘New America’<sup>10</sup>. President Biden announced in 2022 that the US would no longer be part of the Saudi-led coalition. It is also important to mention that the US Embassy in Sana’a, Yemen’s capital suspended its operations in 2015 and the US-Yemen relations are being operated by the US Ambassador in Yemen who is now located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.<sup>11</sup>

## B.2. Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran seems to always be involved in some sort of conflict in the Middle East. The Iran-Iraq War is still considered one of the biggest Middle Eastern territorial conflicts, as the two sides were colliding to win access to the Persian Gulf<sup>12</sup>. Also, the seizure of the US Embassy in Teheran by Iranian students and militias deteriorated the diplomatic relation between the US and Iran. The International Court of Justice issued two decisions on the case; the first one, on December 15 1979 stated that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran should ensure the release and the safety of the hostages, while also taking action to protect the US Diplomatic officials in Tehran. The second judgment, issued on May 24 1980, declared the militants and the Iranian students involved in the US Embassy takeover as ‘agents of the Iranian Government’<sup>13</sup>. However, not only does Iran have no diplomatic relations with the US, but the two countries support opposite sides of the Yemen Civil War. Iranian forces are suspected to assist the Houthi-led Movement in Yemen<sup>14</sup> and have been caught by

<sup>9</sup> ‘The Saudi-Led War in Yemen’, Friends Committee on National Legislation. Accessed 5 January 2023 <https://www.fcni.org/issues/middle-east-iran/saudi-led-war-yemen-frequently-asked-questions>

<sup>10</sup> New America. ‘America’s Counterterrorism Wars’. Accessed 5 January 2023. <http://newamerica.org/international-security/reports/americas-counterterrorism-wars/>

<sup>11</sup> United States Department of State. ‘U.S. Relations With Yemen’. Accessed 5 January 2023. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-yemen/>.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Iran-Iraq War | Causes, Summary, Casualties, & Facts | Britannica’. Accessed 5 January 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iran-Iraq-War>

<sup>13</sup> ‘Summaries | United States Diplomatic and Consular Staff in Tehran (United States of America v. Iran) | International Court of Justice,’ accessed February 21, 2023, <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/64/summaries>.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Iran “Likely” Smuggling Weapons to Yemen’, Al-Jazeera. Accessed 5 January 2023 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/9/iran-likely-smuggling-weapons-to-yemen-confidential-report>



the United States Navy 5th Fleet supplying them with rifles, missiles and other types of arms, breaking the Arms Embargo.<sup>15</sup>

### B.3. Saudi Arabia

After the Houthi Movement took over Sana'a in 2014, former Yemeni president Hadi fled to Saudi Arabia, to ask for a backup in order to regain his position. A coalition of nine Arab countries was created, led by Saudi Arabia and backed by western forces, in order to eliminate the power of the Houthis and restore peace and order in the area. Saudi Arabia was also motivated to provide help to the legitimate government of Yemen, since the Houthi movement is supported by Iran one of Saudi Arabia's biggest regional competitors in the financial and political sector<sup>16</sup>. Saudi Arabia has provided Yemen's legitimate governing body with troops and weaponry, while also imposing a sea and land blockade on Yemen to restrict the illegal access to weaponry from the Houthi side of the war. However, it has been stated that 'the blockade is also restricting the flow of vital humanitarian goods.'<sup>17</sup>

### B.4. Al-Qaeda

'Al-Qaeda is a militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden in the 1980s'<sup>18</sup> The group started as a supply network during the Afghan war against the Soviet Union, but after the war ended in 1989, the organization switched its course to opposing what its leaders considered 'Corrupt Islamic regimes and foreign presence in Islamic lands'<sup>19</sup> The group is allegedly connected to many other Islamist paramilitary organizations such as Jihad, Taliban and the Islamic state. Al-Qaeda has caused various terrorist attacks all over the globe, with the most widely-known being the plane crash on the World Trade Center in 7/11/2001. Al-Qaeda is heavily involved in Yemen, a conflict known as the Al-Qaeda Insurgency in Yemen, where separatists wished to avoid the North and South Yemen unification and assisted by the aforementioned terrorist organization attempted to divide the country,

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<sup>15</sup> 'Illegal Iranian Flow of Weapons to Yemen', U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE. Accessed 5 January 2023. <https://www.state.gov/illegal-iranian-flow-of-weapons-to-yemen/>

<sup>16</sup> "The History of Saudi-Iranian Competition," July 27, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/history-saudi-iranian-competition>.

<sup>17</sup> 'The Saudi-Led War in Yemen', About the Saudi Blockade. Accessed 6 January 2023.

<https://www.fcni.org/issues/middle-east-iran/saudi-led-war-yemen-frequently-asked-questions>

<sup>18</sup> Al-Qaeda | History, Meaning, Terrorist Attacks, & Facts | Britannica'. Accessed 6 January 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/al-Qaeda>.

<sup>19</sup> 'Al-Qaeda | History, Meaning, Terrorist Attacks, & Facts | Britannica'. Accessed 6 January 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/al-Qaeda>.

spreading chaos. Al-Qaeda is also partially involved in the 2011 Revolution and in the Arab Spring and Winter Movements and is supporting the Houthi movement, alongside Iran, in the Yemen Civil War.<sup>20</sup> Al-Qaeda in Yemen, or by its new name, ‘Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)’ is heavily influencing the war and is one of the Houthi’s primary backers.

## 5. Historical Background

### 5.1 Causes and results of the potential demilitarization of the Middle East,

After the end of WWII in 1945, and a series of conflicts, battles and interconnected campaigns for control over northern Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, crises continued to erupt between the local states with the often intervention of external partners. More specifically, The Iran Crisis of 1946, between Iran and the Soviet Union, the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, and the Kurdish-Turkish conflict, with Kurdish groups fighting for independence as early as 1978, might be some of the lesser-known events that led to the main conflicts of the Middle East. These crises have shaped the situation and the territorial borders as we know them today; the Arab-Israeli Conflicts (1948-2006)<sup>21</sup>, the Iran -Iraq War (1980-1988)<sup>22</sup>, the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991)<sup>23</sup> and the Syrian Civil War (2011-present<sup>24</sup>). These events have significantly altered the balance between the countries in the Middle East, while we can also observe how the main alliances and hostilities are being formed in the area. It is also evident that often the collisions were centered on gaining access to a body of water or oil reserves and the circulation of oil. An example is the 1956 Suez crisis, which began after Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, a vital waterway connecting European and Asian countries. Israel signed a deal with the United Kingdom and France (who would, later on, intervene as peacemakers) and the three countries invaded the Egyptian territories soon after. Another case is the one of the Iran-Iraq war, which was fueled by the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf in the late 1960s and the territorial

<sup>20</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. ‘Yemen’s Tragedy: War, Stalemate, and Suffering’. Accessed 6 January 2023. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis>.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Arab-Israeli Wars | History, Conflict, Causes, Summary, & Facts | Britannica’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Arab-Israeli-wars>

<sup>22</sup> ‘Iran-Iraq War | Causes, Summary, Casualties, & Facts | Britannica’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iran-Iraq-War>.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Persian Gulf War | Summary, Dates, Combatants, Casualties, Syndrome, Map, & Facts | Britannica’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Persian-Gulf-War>’.

<sup>24</sup> Syrian Civil War | Facts & Timeline | Britannica’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War>

configuration of the region. The dispute also evolved to the point of the two countries attacking each other's tankers in the Persian Gulf (the Tanker War). Last but not least, the Persian Gulf War, where Iraq invaded Kuwait, caused great instability and insecurity in the Persian Gulf waters and had a negative impact on global oil prices.

As a result, the Middle East has been in a continuous warring state for over 80 years now, with recurring battles, territorial disputes and reconfiguration and external factors influencing the course of events. It is important to highlight that a significant percentage of weaponry used in the combats, especially after 2015<sup>25</sup>, has been imported to Middle Eastern countries and not produced internally, despite various bans and cease-fire agreements. In 2019 alone, the USA exported approximately 3.1 billion weapons to Saudi Arabia<sup>26</sup>. Although there have been many attempts to cut down on the flow of weaponry towards Middle Eastern states, especially by the US, significant progress has not been made to replace weaponry-based relations with pragmatic diplomacy and communication<sup>27</sup>. The area remains hostile, with tension and crises sparking daily.

## 5.2. The Situation in Yemen

By the end of WWII in 1945, North Yemen was under an Imam regime, while in the South the British still had control of the area. A few years later Britain announced that it would leave southern Arabia and that independence would ensue no later than 1968. This announcement refueled the violent political conflict and for the next two years the protectorates of Aden fought for the control of South Yemen<sup>28</sup>.

In North Yemen, after the son of Imam Ahmad, Muhammad, took over the governance, military officials staged a coup d'état and declared the creation of the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen).

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<sup>25</sup> 'Middle East Sees Biggest Import of Arms in Last 5 Years: Report', accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/15/global-arms-transfers-level-off-but-middle-east-imports-grow>

<sup>26</sup> 'Middle East: U.S. Weapon Sales Volume by Country 2019', Statista, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1006329/middle-east-us-weapon-sales-volume-by-country/>.

<sup>27</sup> 'Demilitarizing U.S. Policy in the Middle East', accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/demilitarizing-u-s-policy-in-the-middle-east>.

<sup>28</sup> "Pre-Independence Violence in South Yemen 1965-1967," accessed January 15, 2023, <https://www.onwar.com/data/yemensouth1965.html>.



The new Republic called upon Egypt for military assistance, while the Imam was provided with help by Saudi Arabia.

However not all Yemenis were supportive of the Egyptian intervention and their decisive role in the Arabian Peninsula, and a new movement the National Liberation Front (NLF), started to arise and meet support from the southern tribes. As the time of liberation in 1968 came closer, the tension escalated into war between the various independence movements, for the governance after the British withdrawal. With the NLF being the winner of the war, the independence of South Yemen was granted on November 30, 1967. The state adopted Marxist and communist practices, and after drifting towards the Soviet Union, was renamed the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

In North Yemen, a full-on war between royalists and republicans was also seeing the involvement of Saudi, Iran, Egypt and even the USA and the UN. In 1970 a compromise was reached that the Imam and his family would leave Yemen and never return, while the country would adopt a republican government.

The compromise government embarked on a journey of modernization of the institutions and political growth. However, due to public dissatisfaction, two of the compromise presidents were assassinated in 1977 and 1978. After months of political unrest, Ali Abdullah Saleh was chosen as the next leader and his political party, the General People's Congress (GPC), helped Yemen enter the age of oil.

The idea of the two independent Yemeni states unifying did not take long to appear, although the political differences posed a major issue. After short lived clashes at the border and peace agreements, the Unification Agreement of 1990<sup>29</sup> finally made the creation of the modern state of Yemen possible. Two main events made the unification happen; the discovery of oil and natural gas in both countries, and the fact that Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of the Soviet Union declared that he would no longer support the governments of a few eastern European states or South Yemen. The lack of funding meant that South Yemen's regime would soon collapse and the only way to avoid this would be the unification with North Yemen. 'Adopted by the legislatures of the two Yemeni states on May 22, 1990, the constitution of the new republic was declared in effect on that date.' The country's political system would be democracy and Sana'a would be the capital. Elections were set to take place on November

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<sup>29</sup> Charles Dunbar, "The Unification of Yemen: Process, Politics, and Prospects," *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 3 (1992): 456–76.



30th 1992 and until then Saleh would serve as the transitional president. Despite the economic crisis and internal challenges, the country was facing, the elections took place in April 1993 with Saleh's party winning the majority of the seats.

In the years that followed Yemen faced severe internal political collisions and civil wars, while the country's economy was freefalling. The war of succession and the territorial disputes with Saudi Arabia had a toll on Saleh's regime and the country's financial situation. After Al-Qaeda's attack on World Trade Centre on September 11th, 2001, Yemen's relations with other countries shifted abruptly. Saleh declared a 'full-on war on terrorism' alongside US President George W. Bush, and Yemen had to face a new threat inside their territory; Al-Qaeda's insurgency and their links to Iran and Afghanistan. Protests broke out in Sana'a, Aden and many other cities in the spring of 2007. With Al-Qaeda in the north and rebellions in the south, the situation got out of hand in 2011, with the outbreak of the Arab Spring pro-democracy movement, and Saleh's control of the country was highly questioned. Saleh repeatedly refused to step down, even after military units were deployed in Sana'a to manage the protests. Meanwhile, the Houthi movement started to make its appearance and in cooperation with AQAP take over several cities in the southern part of the country.

In November 2012 Saleh finally agreed to transfer power to Vice President Hadi, after many failed plans of the Gulf Cooperation Council for Saleh to peacefully leave the government. Hadi would remain in power for 2 years, rewrite the constitution and then proceed to elections. However, the country was heavily divided, and many public movements were mobilized by Houthi rebels. The Houthi movement took over several buildings in Sana'a in September 2014 and refused to withdraw from the city. The civil war had officially begun.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> 'Yemen - History | Britannica'. Accessed 12 January 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Yemen/History>.

## 6. Legal Framework

### 6.1. International Humanitarian Law

International Humanitarian Law is a set of rules aimed at delimiting an armed conflict but also at protecting the participants, civilians and non-combatants. International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is a segment of the International Law which consists the body of rules governing relations between States.<sup>31</sup> International Humanitarian Law is consisted by four main conventions, which are called “The four Geneva Conventions of 1949” and three Additional Protocols to these conventions. Those conventions cover a wide range of protection of participants in an armed conflict, but they also delimit and define the type of armed conflict, a judgment on which the respective protection of participants is based. More precisely<sup>32</sup>:

- **The 1<sup>st</sup> Geneva Convention** protects wounded and sick soldiers on land during war.
- **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Geneva Convention** protects wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel at sea during war.
- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Geneva Convention** applies to prisoners of war.
- **The 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention** affords protection to civilians, including in occupied territory.

The segment of the definition of the armed conflict is being covered by the Additional Protocols of the conventions, as follows:

- **Additional Protocol I**, international armed conflict

An international armed conflict occurs when one or more States have recourse to armed force against another State, regardless of the reasons or the intensity of this confrontation. No formal declaration of war or recognition of the situation is required. The existence of an international armed conflict, and as a consequence, the possibility to apply International Humanitarian Law to this situation, depends on what actually happens on the ground. It is based on factual conditions. Apart from regular, inter-state armed conflicts, Additional Protocol I extends the definition of international armed conflicts in order

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<sup>31</sup> “International Humanitarian Law,” accessed January 3, 2023, [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/international-humanitarian-law\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/international-humanitarian-law_en).

<sup>32</sup> “The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Their Additional Protocols - ICRC,” 00:00:00.0, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions/overview-geneva-conventions.htm>.

to include armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination, alien occupation or racist regimes in the exercise of their right to self-determination.<sup>33</sup>

➤ **Additional Protocol II, Non-international armed conflict**

Under the common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions, non-international armed conflicts consist the armed conflicts in which one or more non-State armed groups are involved. Depending on the situation, hostilities may occur between governmental armed forces and non-State armed groups or between such groups only. As the four Geneva Conventions have universally been ratified now, the requirement that the armed conflict must occur "in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties" has lost its importance in practice. Indeed, any armed conflict between governmental armed forces and armed groups or between such groups cannot but take place on the territory of one of the Parties to the Convention. Furthermore, two requirements are necessary for such situations to be classified as non-international armed conflicts:

- The hostilities must reach a minimum level of intensity. This may be the case, for example, when the hostilities are of a collective character or when the government is obliged to use military force against the insurgents, instead of mere police forces.
- Non-governmental groups involved in the conflict must be considered as "parties to the conflict", meaning that they possess organized armed forces. This means for example that these forces have to be under a certain command structure and have the capacity to sustain military operations.<sup>34</sup>

## 6.2. International Conventions - concerning Yemen

As far as, the crucial situation in Yemen is concerned, many attempts have been made, not only in the field of negotiation between the parties, but also at a conventional level, by the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA). The UNMHA is an advance team of UN personnel arrived in Hudaydah city on 22 December 2018 and commenced the provision of UN support for the implementation of the Hudaydah Agreement.<sup>35</sup> On 16 January 2019, the Security Council unanimously

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<sup>33</sup> "International Armed Conflict | How Does Law Protect in War? - Online Casebook," accessed January 3, 2023, <https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/international-armed-conflict>.

<sup>34</sup> "Non-International Armed Conflict | How Does Law Protect in War? - Online Casebook," accessed January 3, 2023, <https://casebook.icrc.org/glossary/non-international-armed-conflict>.

<sup>35</sup> "Background," UNMHA, September 21, 2020, <https://unmha.unmissions.org/background>.

adopted Resolution 2452<sup>36</sup> authorizing the establishment of this new Special Political Mission that brings together a variety of personnel, including military, police and civilian staff, from around the world to deliver on its mandate, with a focus on providing support to the functioning of the RCC and related mechanisms as part of monitoring the ceasefire.

In the light of recent events in Yemen, a convention has been made in Sweden on 13 December 2018, which is called the *Stockholm Convention* and it is an accord between the parties to the conflict in Yemen<sup>37</sup>. The convention has three main components:

- **The Hudaydah Agreement:** An immediate cease-fire shall enter into force in the city of Hodeidah, the ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa and the governorate upon signature of this agreement.<sup>38</sup>
- **A prisoner exchange Agreement:** Agreement for the exchange prisoners, detainees, missing persons, arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared persons, and those under house arrest.<sup>39</sup>
- **The Taiz Agreement:** A statement of Understanding in Taiz, from which several obligations for the parties deriving such as the form of a joint committee etc.<sup>40</sup>

### 6.3. United Nations' Undertakings in the Middle East

The United Nations have long recognized the need to establish a demilitarized zone in the Middle East, given the constant tension, the opposite interests of the local states, the frequent collisions and war threats. Therefore, the UN has held three sessions of 'The Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction', with the latest session being held in November 2022<sup>41</sup>, in an attempt to create a safer and less hostile environment in the Middle East.<sup>42</sup> Regarding the Situation in Yemen, the United Nations has been engaged, since the

<sup>36</sup> "Security Council Resolution 2452 - UNSCR," accessed February 6, 2023, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2452>.

<sup>37</sup> "Stockholm Agreement," UNMHA, September 21, 2020, <https://unmha.unmissions.org/stockholm-agreement>

<sup>38</sup> "Hudaydah Agreement," OSESGY, July 7, 2019, <https://osesgy.unmissions.org/hudaydah-agreement>.

<sup>39</sup> "PRISONER EXCHANGE AGREEMENT," UNMHA, September 21, 2020, <https://unmha.unmissions.org/prisoner-exchange-agreement>.

<sup>40</sup> "Taiz Agreement," UNMHA, September 21, 2020, <https://unmha.unmissions.org/taiz-agreement>.

<sup>41</sup> 'Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of nuclear weapons - Third Session (2022) | United Nations'. Accessed 6 January 2023.

<https://meetings.unoda.org/me-nwmdfz/conference-establishment-middle-east-zone-free-nuclear-weapons-third-session-2022>

<sup>42</sup> Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of nuclear weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction- Third Session (2022). | United Nations. Accessed 6 January 2023.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/705/49/PDF/N2270549.pdf?OpenElement>



insurgency began in Spring 2011 and been engaged in the dialogue between the two political groups while trying to maintain stability and peace in the country with various Security Council resolutions [i.e., Resolutions 2014 (2014), 2051 (2012) and 2216 (2018)]. In 2012, the UN Secretary General established the Office of the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Yemen and throughout the years has tried to implement a ceasefire, which led to the Stockholm Agreement in 2018 and ultimately the establishment of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) in January 2019. The United Nations has also offered humanitarian aid, with medical equipment and food, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Cholera outbreak.<sup>43</sup> Even before the War, the situation in Yemen was characterized as ‘the largest humanitarian crisis in the world’ with more than 14 million people in need of humanitarian aid and over 3 million displaced from their homes.<sup>44</sup>

## 7. The Situation in Yemen Today

### 7.1. The ongoing armed conflict of Yemen

The Houthi revolutionists—Shiite rebels with connections to Iran and a history of overturning the Sunni government—took control of Sana'a, Yemen's capital and largest city, in 2014 and seized authority in return for lower gasoline prices and a new administration. In January 2015, the rebels took control of the presidential palace after unsuccessful negotiations, forcing President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his cabinet to resign. With U.S. logistical and intelligence backing, a coalition of Gulf governments led by Saudi Arabia initiated a campaign of economic isolation and airstrikes against the Houthi insurgency in March 2015<sup>45</sup>. Fighting has persisted after Hadi withdrew his resignation and returned to Aden in September 2015. In the summer of 2016, a UN initiative to mediate negotiations

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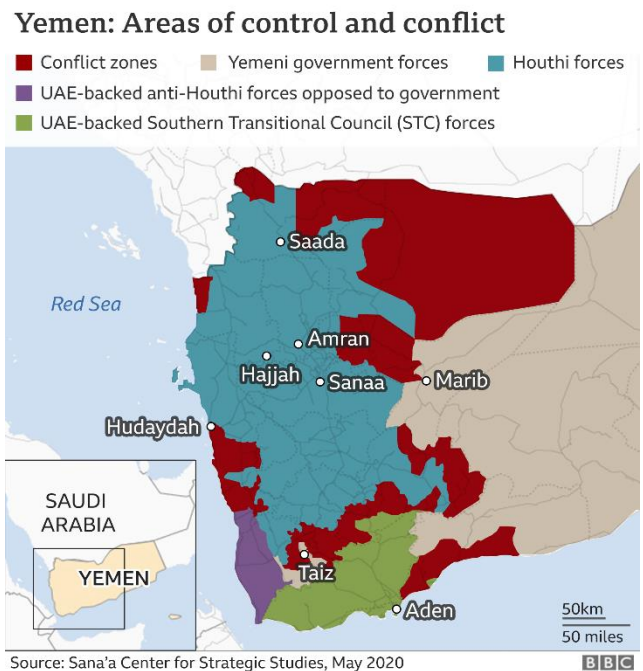
<sup>43</sup> ‘Special Envoy Yemen | Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs’. United Nations. Accessed 6 January 2023. <https://dppa.un.org/en/mission/special-envoy-yemen>

<sup>44</sup> ‘The United Nations in Yemen | United Nations in Yemen’. Accessed 6 January 2023. <https://yemen.un.org/en/about/about-the-un>

<sup>45</sup> “War in Yemen,” Global Conflict Tracker, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>.

between allied Houthi rebels and the globally acclaimed Yemeni government failed.<sup>46</sup> Hadi is said to have been living in exile in Saudi Arabia as of December 2017.

In July 2016, the Houthis and the old Ali Abdullah Saleh government—which had been in place for over thirty years before it was overthrown in 2011—announced the creation of a "political council" to rule Sana'a and much of northern Yemen. Saleh, however, split with the Houthis in December 2017 and urged his supporters to use force against them. Within two days, Saleh was dead, and his army was routed. The country risks being entangled in the larger Sunni-Shia division as a result of regional powers, like Iran and Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia intervening in Yemen's conflict. Since April 2015, a Saudi naval blockade in the Gulf of Aden has stopped many Iranian arms supplies to Houthi militants. Iran has sent its own naval convoy in response, which raises the possibility of a military confrontation between the two nations.<sup>47</sup>



The opposing forces in Yemen's destructive civil war made a rare progress in April 2022. They agreed to an UN-mediated cease-fire after eight terrible years of combat that greatly reduced the hostilities that had plunged an already destitute nation into a severe humanitarian catastrophe.<sup>48</sup> Some observers permitted themselves to harbor the hope that the two-month cease-fire may be the start of a more extensive peace process, even though it was uncertain, whether it would even last that long. In the best-case scenario, they thought, it might even result in a political settlement for a conflict that has

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Stephen Pomper and Michael Wahid Hanna, "How to End Yemen's Forever War," Foreign Affairs, December 9, 2022, Available at: [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/yemen/how-end-yemens-forever-war?check\\_logged\\_in=1&utm\\_medium=promo\\_email&utm\\_source=lo\\_flows&utm\\_campaign=registered\\_user\\_welcome&utm\\_term=email\\_1&utm\\_content=20230105](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/yemen/how-end-yemens-forever-war?check_logged_in=1&utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=lo_flows&utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&utm_term=email_1&utm_content=20230105).

pitted Iran-backed Houthi rebels against the internationally recognized Yemeni government and an allied Saudi-led coalition, which has benefited greatly from logistical, intelligence, and armament support from Washington throughout much of the conflict. The Houthis control large portions of the country. However, the twice-extended cease-fire deal expired on October 2, 2022, and since then the Houthis have initiated several attacks on the infrastructure that serves Yemen's oil exports. It remains an unknown issue whether Yemen's tenuous break from all-out war will last or not.<sup>49</sup>

## 7.2. Foreign Intervention in Yemen and its impact

Yemen, a small country at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, has been engrossed in political turmoil and upheaval<sup>50</sup> since its government was ousted from power in 2014 by the Houthis, a minority Shiite tribal group. Shortly after foreign intervention<sup>51</sup> started, with Saudi Arabia joining the fight besides the remaining Yemeni government authorities against the Houthis, Iran started offering material and financial assistance to their ally, the Houthis, in 2015, but not direct military intervention. The crisis that followed is still running rampant presently and is regarded to be among the worst humanitarian crises of our time.

Numerous nations have been engaged both directly and indirectly in Yemen's civil unrest with the most prominent players being Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. One of the foreign states that originally entangled in the crisis in Yemen was Saudi Arabia<sup>52</sup>. The Houthis, who had just overthrown the Saudi-backed Yemeni President Abdo Rabbu Mansour Hadi, were the target of the Saudis' initial airstrikes in 2015. Several countries, including the UAE, Morocco, Senegal, Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Sudan established a coalition, led by Saudi Arabia in order to intervene in Yemen after the calls of the overthrown Yemeni President for military aid. The US, the UK, and France mainly provide the coalition with weaponry and information, as part of their support. Saudi Arabia's deliberate status as the driving power of this alliance is more than just the re-installment of Hadi's rule. The majority of academics concur that Saudi Arabia is aiming to assert its position as a leading factor in the Middle East through the Yemeni turmoil. Within this context, Saudi Arabia is

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> "War in Yemen," Global Conflict Tracker, accessed January 14, 2023, <https://cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>

<sup>51</sup> "War in Yemen: Implications for Regional and U.S. Security | Wilson Center," accessed January 14, 2023, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/war-yemen-implications-regional-and-us-security>.

<sup>52</sup> "The Saudi-Led War in Yemen: Frequently Asked Questions | Friends Committee On National Legislation," accessed January 14, 2023, <https://www.fcnl.org/issues/middle-east-iran/saudi-led-war-yemen-frequently-asked-questions>.



capable of engaging in a proxy war with Iran, which has been accused of assisting the Houthi movement in the north, by using the situation in Yemen as a front. Geographically, the Houthi rebel base is located in Yemen's northern provinces, which directly border Saudi Arabia. If the region's unrest crosses over the border and prompts more Saudi engagement, this might pose a domestic threat. The UAE's<sup>53</sup> interest is also mostly geopolitical. Despite being a member of the Arab African coalition, the UAE has been actively backing the southern separatist movement, which stands in opposition to Hadi's objective of unifying the nation. Due to the coalition's current concentration on eliminating the Houthi rebellion, this has not been a significant issue in terms of the coalition's engagement. But once that objective is achieved, that is when the many ideologies will really begin to manifest themselves. The UAE started pulling out its troops from Yemen in 2019 on the basis that the 90,000 Yemeni forces it had trained were now capable of standing on their own in defending Yemen against the Houthis. As mentioned before, the US along with the UK and France, are deeply involved in the Yemen Crisis especially by being great donors of military arsenal. Support for the Saudi-led coalition and US-conducted drone operations are two methods that the US has shown its engagement.<sup>54</sup> Since the President Biden's policy statement on Yemen in February 2021<sup>55</sup>, the US has quit supporting offensive operations, by Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies, and modified its missile and air defense posture within Saudi Arabia. However, the United States has not stopped selling weapons to countries in the region, as a response to Houthi-led attacks. Lastly, Iran<sup>56</sup> has proved its involvement in Yemen by supporting the Houthis. Iranian assistance mainly consists of arms shipments, military manufacturing components, and the transfer of expertise for ballistic missiles and drone technologies. The results of this assistance were demonstrated by the Houthis' development of armed capabilities and the series of terrorist attacks it launched, since 2017, targeting civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and dozens of attacks on commercial vessels and oil tankers in international waters.

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<sup>53</sup> Melissa McLaughlin, "A Geopolitical Analysis Of Foreign Intervention In Yemen," The Organization for World Peace (blog), July 31, 2019, <https://theowp.org/a-geopolitical-analysis-of-foreign-intervention-in-yemen/>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid 4

<sup>55</sup> Jeremy M. Sharp, "Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention," November 23, 2021, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/R43960.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> "How Iran Helped Houthis Expand Their Reach," War on the Rocks, August 23, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/how-iran-helped-houthis-expand-their-reach/>.

In conclusion, third party intervention in Yemen's war has transformed an otherwise localized conflict into a contest over regional influence and further polarized the Middle East, making this conflict both more complex and difficult to end.

### 7.3. Means of attack used in Yemen

The civil war in Yemen<sup>57</sup> and the foreign intervention of other countries- both regional and non-regional- has resulted in Yemen being the fifth worst-affected state by explosive violence over the past decade. According to statistics, explosive weapons has been the main cause of almost 90% of civilian deaths and injuries in the area. As mentioned before, foreign intervention has been a huge factor in the intensity of the conflict in the area. The country has been divided into two opposing sides with each one of them being supported with weaponry arsenal and military operations by different players. Specifically, Houthi troops have engaged in combat with the Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) and its allies in the Arab-led Coalition by employing a range of conventional and non-conventional weapons and ad-hoc methods. Iran<sup>58</sup>, as a supporter of the Houthi occupation in Yemen and a great rival of Saudi Arabia, has progressively provided more and more military assistance to the Houthis. Iranian assistance primarily consists of the supply of weapons, parts for the manufacture of military equipment, and the sharing of technical expertise for missile system and drone technology. Proof of the efficiency of this aid are Houthis' growth of military capabilities and their increased series of terrorist acts since 2017. Moreover, the Houthi Movement has been using many unorthodox methods<sup>59</sup> for prosecuting the ongoing conflict, such as the modification of soviet missiles and the usage of ad hoc unmanned vehicles such as "suicide" or "kamikaze" drones to attack the Arab-led Coalition Patriot missile defense systems.

On the other hand, the Arab-led Coalition is supported by great military powers<sup>60</sup> such as the USA, the UK, and France- countries that provide great military assistance in a plethora of domains, such as intelligence, drones, airstrikes, and high-tech weaponry. In addition to that, many countries (i.e., Egypt,

<sup>57</sup> "Yemen," AOVAV (blog), accessed January 14, 2023, <https://aoav.org.uk/explosiveviolence/yemen/>.

<sup>58</sup> "How Iran Helped Houthis Expand Their Reach," War on the Rocks, August 23, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/how-iran-helped-houthis-expand-their-reach/>.

<sup>59</sup> "Unconventional Houthi War Tactics – Navanti Group," accessed January 14, 2023, <https://navantigroup.com/yemen/2018-9-27-unconventional-houthi-war-tactics/>.

<sup>60</sup> "WASHINGTON: U.S. Stepping up Weapons Shipments to Aid Saudi Air Campa..." archive.ph, April 7, 2015, <https://archive.ph/NWWbw>.



Morocco, Jordan etc.) have participated in the operation with fighter jets and ground forces<sup>61</sup> or have made their airspace, territorial waters<sup>62</sup>, and military bases available to the coalition (i.e., Djibouti, Somalia etc.).

## 7.4. Terrorism and International Organized Crime

Yemen has a 6.13 criminality score, according to the Global Organized Crime Index, ranking 39th out of 193 countries. Yemen is a major source, transit and destination for human trafficking and smuggling. The trafficking networks collaborate with partners from Somalia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia and act under the influence of the United Arab Emirates. The issue, also, expands to the area of organ trafficking from Yemen to Egypt, with many participating hospitals that exploit people living in poverty and share profits. Many local tribes are actively kidnapping, raping, and killing civilians and treating them like slaves, imprisoning them in inhumane conditions and ‘subjecting them to violence’.<sup>63</sup>

The illicit drug trade has also been on the rise, since the beginning of the war in 2015. Being located inside the Persian Gulf, close to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, Yemen has seen an alarming increase in illegal transit, sale and usage of heroin, cannabis, and hashish, with the latter being often used by Houthis, alongside Captagon pills<sup>64</sup> provided by the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, to influence, lure and control youth involvement in the conflicts. Despite various attempts from Yemeni and Saudi authorities to seize the illicit trade of Captagon pills and other narcotics<sup>65</sup>, the circulation of illegal substances by the Houthi movement is on the rise.

The Houthi movement is, also, heavily contributing to the fact that Yemen is one of the largest arms-trafficking markets globally, with various types of light and medium weapons that are easy to acquire,

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<sup>61</sup>“Egypt Navy and Air Force Taking Part in Military Intervention in Yemen: Presidency - Politics - Egypt,” Ahram Online, accessed January 14, 2023, <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/126179/Egypt/Politics-/UPDATED-Egypt-navy-and-air-force-taking-part-in-mi.aspx>.

<sup>62</sup> “SOMALIA: Somalia Finally Pledges Support to Suadi-Led Coalition in Ye...,” archive.ph, April 7, 2015, <https://archive.ph/gMlfq>

<sup>63</sup> ‘Criminality in Yemen - The Organized Crime Index’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://ocindex.net/>.

<sup>64</sup> “Saudi Arabia Seizes over 14 Mln Captagon Amphetamine Pills Coming from Lebanon | Al Arabiya English,” accessed February 21, 2023, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/06/26/Saudi-Arabia-seizes-over-14-mln-Captagon-amphetamine-pills-coming-from-Lebanon>.

<sup>65</sup> “Yemeni Authorities Destroy Large Quantities of Hashish, Pills Linked to Houthi Gangs in Hajjah | Arab News,” accessed February 21, 2023, [https://www.arabnews.com/node/2035746/page\\_view\\_event/aggregate](https://www.arabnews.com/node/2035746/page_view_event/aggregate).

not only on social media and open markets, but also widespread use of heavy-duty weapons and drones. The flow of arms in Yemen has increased rapidly over the past few years; videos that have circulated online, have shown militias in Yemen armed with weaponry of American, Saudi, Jordanian and even German and Swiss origin<sup>66</sup>. The trade of weapons has become a significant part of the war economy, but it is important to highlight that not all those weapons are bought or smuggled. Many of them are also left behind by other military groups or obtained while in transit towards other countries. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process<sup>67</sup> has not taken place in Yemen throughout all the years of war, which has led to more than 60 million weapons being possessed by inhabitants in Yemen, according to a 2018 UN estimate.<sup>68</sup>

Yemen is also a ‘transit hub’ for smuggling arms into Somalia and Palestine. Simultaneously, officials of the Houthi movement are members of large oil corporations, which allows them to supply the movement against the official Government of Yemen, and also to facilitate oil trading illegally, resulting in billions of dollars in financial losses.

The war has resulted in Yemen becoming one of the ‘most at-risk countries for money laundering and terrorism financing’. The country’s economy heavily relies on the oil sector, but agriculture is the country’s largest employment sector. However illegal trade and activities take up most of the country’s revenue unofficially. Especially the arms black market, which is dominated by paramilitary groups, the mafia, criminal and trafficking groups, takes up a great part of the country’s money circulation.

Additionally, the blossoming of terrorism in Yemen is a devastating consequence of the war. The presence of Al-Qaeda is outshining all other terrorist groups in the region. Long before the war started, in 1998 the first combats between Al-Qaeda and the Yemeni Government started, with the Islamist militia trying to take over parts of the country. This first attempt to gain control of the country is also known as the Al-Qaeda Insurgency in Yemen. After the Arab Spring movement in 2011 and many Yemenis protesting in support of a more democratic Yemen, Al-Qaeda powers in Yemen backed off,

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<sup>66</sup> ‘US Arms Sold to Saudi Arabia and UAE End up in Wrong Hands’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2019/02/middleeast/yemen-lost-us-arms/>.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration’, United Nations Peacekeeping, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration>.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen and Libya’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf>.

until they reemerged alongside the Iran-backed Houthi powers. In recent years their influence and attacks have been significantly lower and less damaging. Comparing the 2019<sup>69</sup> and 2020<sup>70</sup> reports on terrorism of the US Department of State, it is visible that although the methods of attack have not changed, the incidents are lower in number. However, the war has also seen the involvement of other terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State, mainly in 2015, ISIS-Yemen and many Iran-supported militias, such as the Lebanese Hezbollah and IRGC-QF, who have strong relations and is highly suspected that they are backed by the Houthi Movement as well. Although their attacks were less fatal in 2020, by the end of the same year, due to the Houthi-terrorism cooperation, the Government of the Republic of Yemen controlled less land than in 2019.

## 7.5. Humanitarian crisis and Treatment

Following a decade of localized armed conflicts that led to a severe humanitarian and protection crisis throughout the nation, Yemen has experienced a protracted armed conflict for seven years running. The civilian population, which is battling not only the effects of the fighting but also those of a deteriorating economic situation, is impacted by numerous dynamic front lines. According to IOM, more than 157,500 people would have been displaced in 2021, as a result of the fighting in Marib, Al-Bayda, Hodeida, Shabwah, Taiz, Al-Jawf, and Hajjah. Since the beginning of the conflict, an estimated number of 4.3 million people have fled their homes. What is more, 3.3 million of them, are still displaced and 1 million returnees.<sup>71</sup> Thousands of civilians have also lost their lives or their possessions. Thousands of people remain detained by the parties to the conflict and many others are missing.<sup>72</sup> The UN estimated that by the end of 2021, the conflict in Yemen would have caused over 377,000 deaths, with 60% of them the result of hunger, lack of healthcare and unsafe water. It says that more than 10,200 children have been killed or wounded as a direct result of the fighting. Yemen

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<sup>69</sup> ‘Yemen - United States Department of State’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/yemen/>.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Yemen - United States Department of State’, accessed 11 January 2023, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2020/yemen/>.

<sup>71</sup> “IOM Yemen: Situation Report July 2021 - Yemen | ReliefWeb,” August 24, 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/iom-yemen-situation-report-july-2021>.

<sup>72</sup> “War in Yemen,” Topic, International Committee of the Red Cross, August 5, 2021, <https://www.icrc.org/en/war-yemen>.

has also suffered from one of the largest cholera outbreaks ever recorded, with 2.5 million suspected cases and about 4,000 related deaths since 2016.<sup>73</sup>

This devastating armed conflict not only has caused a great loss of many Yemenis but also has developed one of the greatest famines that the world has ever seen. In Yemen, a food insecurity crisis, which started during the Yemeni Civil War, has persisted since 2016. As of December 2020, the UN Humanitarian Office estimates that the war has resulted in an estimated 130,000 deaths from indirect causes, such as a lack of food, healthcare, and infrastructure.<sup>74</sup> According to Save the Children's estimates from the previous three years, 85,000 children died from starvation. In May 2020, UNICEF referred to Yemen as having "the largest humanitarian crisis in the world" and calculated that over 24 million people, or 80% of the population, required humanitarian aid

Richard Ragan the UN World Food Program Country Director mentioned that : *“More than two-thirds of Yemen’s 30 million people need humanitarian assistance. More than half face crisis or above hunger levels. Soaring food prices—bumped up even higher with the war in Ukraine—have added another layer of hardship on a population that grew most of its food half a century ago. Today, Yemen imports 90 percent of it—sourcing nearly half of its wheat in 2021 alone from Russia and Ukraine.”*<sup>75</sup>

In this context, there are many institutions, agencies and organizations that aim at combating the consequences of the humanitarian crisis, by providing their assistance and know-how in order to tackle economic crisis, the lack of hygiene services and famine. One of the most significant is the United Nations World Food Program. The World Food Program is the main humanitarian organization providing food assistance in countries in situation and working with communities to strengthen and improve nutrition. WFP programs focus on relief, recovery, development assistance and special operations. Two-thirds of his work takes place in countries affected by conflict where people are times more likely to be undernourished than those living in countries without conflict. In collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for

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<sup>73</sup> “Yemen: Why Is the War There Getting More Violent?,” BBC News, September 23, 2014, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423>.

<sup>74</sup> “UN Humanitarian Office Puts Yemen War Dead at 233,000, Mostly from ‘Indirect Causes,’” UN News, December 1, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1078972>.

<sup>75</sup> “Yemen: Looking beyond Today’s Hunger Crisis | World Food Programme,” accessed January 5, 2023, <https://www.wfp.org/stories/yemen-looking-beyond-todays-hunger-crisis>.



agricultural development, the helps people in many countries who have poor nutrition and do not enjoy of the right to adequate food, as conferred by Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. World Food Program was awarded with Nobel Peace Prize 2020<sup>76</sup> for its beneficial impact of its efforts to battle famine and support people who have the legal right to adequate food.

## 8. Closing Remarks

After many years of war, terrorism, civil disputes, and suffering, it is safe to say that the Middle East is one of the most disputed areas worldwide. The wealth and the significant geopolitical position of the Arabian Peninsula and the surrounding area have long been desirable to states even outside the Middle East. Of course, there will always be nations and minority groups with colliding interests, but how far can a collision of interests go? The situation in Yemen is not just about the governance of the nation; it is a battle between democracy and terror, between liberty and corruption. The seeds of war have infiltrated the Yemeni society and affected millions of people. But is war the solution for war? And more importantly, are diplomacy and foreign intervention competent enough to eliminate this dispute? How will the vast circulation of weaponry fix the situation, establish, and protect peace and stability in Yemen and the Middle East? The future of Yemen is uncertain. The answer to the Yemeni crisis, an answer that would save millions of people from their suffering and contribute to de-escalating the tension in the southern Middle East, has yet to be found.

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<sup>76</sup> “The Nobel Peace Prize 2020 - Press Release - NobelPrize.Org” accessed January 5, 2023, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2020/press-release/>.

## 9. Points to be addressed

1. What possible measures could be taken to counter foreign intervention in Yemen's Civil War, especially, in the domain of military assistance?
2. How can the UN intervene in order to promote peace talks and negotiations between the two opposing sides?
3. Do you consider the voluntary annual share of information on weapons transfers within the U.N. Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) to be adequate regarding the prevention of weapon deals, weapons supply by third parties and especially illegal weapon deliveries to Islamic extremist groups in Middle East and specifically, Yemen?
4. What cultural and infrastructure reconstruction will be in need for the recovery of Yemen in view of Post-conflict Measures?
5. How could the States aim in the humanitarian aid for Yemen?
6. How can the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Programs succeed in Yemen, while minimizing the risk of escalating the combat and not putting the lives of the agents contributing to the Programs in danger?
7. By which means could the involvement of terrorist and paramilitary groups in the Yemeni Civil War be eliminated and what preventative and punitive measures could be taken, to confine their possible future involvement?
8. What steps need to be taken to prevent the escalation of the already existing Middle Eastern conflicts, while also ensuring the global circulation of oil and the safety of Middle Eastern international waterways?
9. In which ways could the UN reinforce its resolutions regarding the situation in Yemen, and how could the continuation of the UN 'Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction' assist the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East?

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