

**Forum:** Security Council (SC)

**Issue:** Situation in Yemen

**Presidents:** Collin Chen (President), Ashley Sheng (Deputy President)

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## Introduction

The Republic of Yemen is a country located on the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula, the second largest Arab country in the region (right after Saudi Arabia). The majority of the 31.5 million residents are practitioners of Islam, of which 65% are Sunni and 35% are Shia. Yemen is currently in a state of negative peace between two major factions vying for control over the country: the Houthi rebels backed by Iran, and the internationally recognized government backed by a coalition led by Saudi Arabia. Following the Houthi takeover of the Yemeni capital of Sanaa in 2014, a coalition consisting of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Morocco, and other Arab states launched Operation Decisive Storm in 2015 with the intention of stopping the Houthi takeover. The civil war has displaced 4.5 million people internally and left 21.6 million in need of assistance, many humanitarian organizations report that the situation in Yemen is one of the worst humanitarian issues in the world. A fragile ceasefire between the Houthis and the Presidential Leadership Council (hereinafter referred to as the "PLC") was arranged by the UN in April of 2022, however skirmishes and smaller scale conflicts continue.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Armed Conflict

Armed conflicts are differentiated into two kinds, international and non-international conflict. International armed conflicts refer to the force between two or more Member States while the latter are between governmental and non-governmental organizations or between two non-governmental organizations (ICRC, 2008). For instance, the war between the Yemeni government and Houthis is considered as a non-international conflict by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). There are no other forms of armed conflict recognized by the international community.

### Houthis

Houthis refers to a religious and political group of people that are involved in external movements. The name is labeled by Abdul-Malik al-Houthi's name, the leader of the Houthis. Although the group was established in the 1990s, it launched its first fire towards the Republic of Yemen in 2014. The Houthis allied with Ali Abdullah Saleh, the first president of Yemen to conquer power and took over the capital city. This aroused many of Sahel's loyalties to join Houthis which increased its power and influence around neighboring countries, including Saudi Arabia and Iran. According to the United Nations Security Council Resolution (S/2015/125) on 20 February in 2015, Houthi have been causing threats to the Yemeni government and endangered international peace as they remain involved in the Yemeni Civil War and The attack on the Red Sea.

### **Coalition**

A coalition is a group of people joined together with the same goals to form an ally, usually for governing purposes. In 2011, Iran was accused of providing military support and sharing intelligence with the Houthis to expand their possible effects on the Yemeni government, rather than providing direct financial support. Iran considers the influence between the countries, such as the United States and Yemen's geographic region which it borders with Houthis to do so. As for the Yemeni government, its coalition with non-state actors, including the Security Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is well known. The council aimed to reduce the number of injuries and violations from external forces by providing assistance and keeping track of international security.

### **Civilians**

A Civilian is defined as a person who is not responsible for military purposes or police force. It consists of a large range of people such as children, women, and indigenous people. They are the most vulnerable and often experience the most challenging obstacles which include starvation, human rights violations, and displacement. According to the United Nations news report in 2020, out of 233,000 deaths estimated, 131,000 died because of indirect causes during Yemen's war (United Nations, 2020). As a matter of course, the long-term civil war has brought humanitarian crises to civilians in Yemen.

### **Humanitarian Aid**

Humanitarian aid is defined as supplies or assistance from non-state actors to the affected people, regarding natural disasters or warfires. It covers a broad range of supplies which includes food, water, shelter, and health care. Humanitarian aids play a critical role in supporting the Yemeni people because there are a total of 233,000 deaths estimated by the United Nations in 2020. Among these deaths, more than 3,000 are children and 131,000 of them died because of starvation and the lack of food. The ongoing war increases the number of deaths which the Humanitarian Coordinator of Yemen, Altaf Musani, sees as a violation of human rights (United Nations, 2020). The United States, the

European Union (EU), and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) have been providing items, such as shelter kits and 3.4 billion in funding for displaced people.

### **Insurgent**

Insurgent is a group of people who are against a lawful group for rebellion or to gain larger authority (Cambridge Dictionary). In Yemen, Houthis and Al-Qaeda are obvious examples of insurgent groups that build up tensions and start conflicts to expand their territory. Insurgency often occurs in Yemen because of its political instability and lack of consensus towards sharing power.

### **Intervention**

Intervention stands for inference of other states' affairs to influence other countries, achieve benefits, or change one's mind. For example, Yemen has been experiencing intervention led by Saudi Arabia and its coalition to support and fight against the Houthis.

### **Vessel**

Vessels are large ships that carry items, including food, machineries, and garments. The Red Sea serves an important role for vessels to pass through and is bordered by the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. Since there are 50 to 60 vessels that pass through each day, the attack on the Red Sea from Houthis would affect marine transportation which further leads to a lack of supplies and global economic loss.

### **Navigation**

Navigation refers to the accurate way to direct the vessels. The term "safety navigation" has been mentioned by each Member State in the speech because the European Union recorded that the Red Sea holds 20% of the global trade each year. The huge amount of products unavailable to cross over the Red Sea had caused a loss to the international economy.

### **Violation**

Violation refers to an act that breaks the rule, agreement, or principles that should be treated with respect (Cambridge Dictionary). In developing countries, vulnerable groups often experience human rights violations, such as sexual abuse, human trafficking, and discrimination which might further violate the International Humanitarian Law.

## **Background Information**

## History of Ansar Allah

Ansar Allah, better known as the Houthis, are a minority group in Yemen that adhere to a sect of Shia Islam, known as “Zaydiyyah” (sometimes spelt “Zaidiyyah”). Conflict between the Zaydis and the Yemeni government extends as far back as the first world war after the collapse of the Ottoman empire (which held somewhat limited control over the modern-day territory of Yemen) to the present day. The Zaydis were able to gain independence from the Turks in 1911 and forced the Turks to provide concessions to the Zaydis. The Zaydis then remained as de facto rulers of the Yemeni region until 1962 when the Imam (spiritual and political ruler) of the Zaydis was overthrown and exiled.

### *Modern History of the Houthis (1990-2012)*

Yemen was split after the 1962 revolution into two states: the YAR in the North and the People’s Republic of South Yemen in the South. In 1990 the two states reunified into one country and became more democratic, allowing the nationalistic Zaydis to form their own political party. This party was known as the “Al-Haqq” Party and sought to promote the interests of the Zaydis while preventing the further spread of Wahhabi ideas into Yemen. Naturally, the Al-Haqq party lost to the larger and more powerful Islah Party, which was pro-Wahhabi, leaving the Al-Haqq with a minor governmental role. Disillusioned with the new government, an Al-Haqq party member known as Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi formed the Believing Youth, a group for Zaydi youths to connect. The group grew in popularity and increasingly criticized Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, disagreeing with Saleh’s support for the USA’s war on terror and invasion of Iraq in 2003, which the Believing Youth saw as neo-imperialism. President Saleh began to suppress the Believing Youth and issued a warrant for Hussein al-Houthi’s arrest in 2004. Hussein al-Houthi died in September of that year after months of fighting between the Believing Youth and the government. Seeing the brutality of the Saleh government, the rebellion continued to grow more violent as rebels began to arm themselves via the black market. This rebellion in the North coupled with protests in the South called into question the legitimacy of the current government, and in November of 2011 (following the example of other Arab Spring protests), pressured Saleh to leave office. Vice-president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi became president in February of 2012, but the Islah party and former president Saleh both retained influence on Yemeni politics.

### *Modern History of the Houthis (2012-Present)*

In order to counteract a budget deficit, President Hadi cut fuel subsidies in 2014, raising the prices for Yemeni civilians. This proves to be incredibly unpopular and as a result protests re-emerge and the situation escalates quickly, with Yemeni security forces opening fire on protestors in September, eventually leading to a Houthi takeover of the capital of Yemen, Sanaa, and another port city in October of 2014. President Hadi is put under house arrest and

negotiations between the government and the Houthis fail, leading to a resignation by President Hadi in 2015, who then fled to the southern port city of Aden and rescinded his resignation, accusing the Houthis of staging a coup. The Houthis continue to fight government forces and expand their influence towards the south, prompting President Hadi to flee to Saudi Arabia. Hadi seeks help from other Arab nations, and a Saudi-led coalition of Arab states launches missile strikes against the Houthis (who now control the North of Yemen). Fighting continues for the next seven years, with Iran backing the Houthis and the Saudis backing the Hadi government. Missile strikes are utilized by both sides while the humanitarian situation in Yemen worsens due to a lack of funding and the war in Ukraine. In April of 2022, a UN brokered ceasefire begins and peace talks begin once again. Hadi hands over power to a council and the Saudis begin direct talks with the Houthis in 2023, coming close to an agreement until the invasion of Israel by Hamas in October of 2023. The Houthis launch missile strikes against Israel in line with their “Defenders of God” policy and continue to target commercial ships passing through the red sea, angering the USA and the UK, who launch retaliatory strikes against the Houthis.

## The Arab Spring

The Arab Spring was a series of mass protests that swept across the Arab world in the 2010's, sometimes removing decades-old authoritarian regimes from power. The protest started in Tunisia after a local vegetable salesman set himself on fire to protest against the corruption and abuse of the Tunisian police. The act went viral and soon protests erupted, pressuring the authoritarian president out of power. The protests then spread across the region in countries such as Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria. In some cases, such as Egypt, Yemen, and Tunisia, the protests were capable of ousting powerful politicians whereas in Syria and in Bahrain protests were brutally suppressed.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

The Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional organization that partners with six Arab countries, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. It has been working on strengthening economic relationships and sustainable development, hoping to enhance coordination and fair treatment since 1988. Until now, it has been holding one-third of the oil reservation and energy exporting which plays an important role in global trading.

### People's Democratic Republic of Algeria (Algeria)

Algeria is a country that highly participates in economic, political, and environmental development. Amar Bendjama, the delegate of Algeria, has recognized the increased tensions and instability in its region. Nations should not overlook the use of weapons and its possibility of harming civilians. Although the UN's past actions have brought positive effects, it calls for Nations to be aware of organizations that can interfere with this issue. Considering more than 20,000 people died in the Gaza War, Algeria voted abstain for the Resolution (S/RES/2722(2024)).

### **The Republic of Ecuador (Ecuador)**

Ecuador passes through the equator consisting of a diverse environment and culture. There are a total of 14 groups of indigenous people and 871,000 migrants estimated in Ecuador. Even though it has a different cultural aspect, there is a lack of development and insufficient resources. Thus, it works on developing democracy, climate change, human rights, and economy which highlights the importance of legislation and the safety of navigation. In addition, it urged Member States to prevent the use of explosive weapons, and voting on inclusive agreements is required.

### **The French Republic (France)**

France, the largest country in Western Europe, holds great power among its 23 administrative regions and is one of the top ten importing and exporting countries. It has been involved in two major events in Yemen which include the attack on the Red Sea and the Saudi Arabia intervention in Yemen. Firstly, it mentions that France itself shot down one Houthis drone that was threatening its ship. Hence, it also recalled all states to ensure the safety of navigation by taking appropriate measures and criticized anyone who supported the Houthis.

However, the report from Human Rights Watch has shown a large scale of Yemen civilians' deaths and bombarded areas caused by Saudi Arabia. France has been providing arms since it believes that it should help the coalition fight terrorism with an old contract signed. It also declared that no evidence was found to prove it was France's arms that had been used to interfere with Yemen. The intention behind the "defensive act" was still questionable in the fact that the most recent contract was signed in 2018 which might violate the Arms Trade Treaty.

### **Co-operative Republic of Guyana (Guyana)**

The discovery of oil in 2015 has brought immense potential for Guyana's economic growth. It comprises various natural resources such as oil, gold, and timber and these items became the main exports of Guyana. Accordingly, it recognized the negative impacts that the increased attacks on the Red Sea can bring. As the third time serving as a member of the Security Council, it hopes to "partner with peace and security" and be more inclusive towards women and children (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Cooperative Republic of Guyana, 2024).

## State of Japan (Japan)

Being one of the main contributors of technology development and manufacturing, Japan has paid plenty of attention to the Resolution (S/RES/2722(2024)), believing that this can bring correspondence towards transporting and shipping goods. Additionally, it condemned Houthis for hijacking Galzay Leader vessels made from Japan and its 25 crew members. They have been misplaced for forty days which Japan urged neighboring countries around Yemen to be engaged, such as the Sudi Arabia. It does not tolerate any form of harm toward innocent people and encourages all Nations to take appropriate measures.

## The Republic of Malta (Malta)

Malta noted itself as a bridge-building country that address international challenges to the Security Council. It puts in efforts on administration, country resilience, and human health. Vanessa Frazier, the delegate of Malta recalled back to the calm situation in Yemen for the past 18 months and avoided the involvement of arms. In addition, it highlights the limited humanitarian aids delivered to civilians which further leads to Yemen's population crises under the regulation of international law.

## Republic of Mozambique (Mozambique)

Mozambique, a country where there are sufficient resources, such as land, water, minerals, and natural gas has a strong tie with the United Nations Security Council. The joining in the Security Council symbolizes an important stage for Mozambique which recognized the leading role that the United Nations Charter has played towards terrorism and maritime security. It expressed its concern about the escalating tension on the issue of the Red Sea and calls for free movement and the right to transport goods.

Besides, it has adopted the National Action Plan on Women and is involved in peacekeeping operations. By establishing these actions, Mozambique aims to enhance peace, security, and prosperity of all Nations.

## Russia Federation (Russia)

On January 10, 2024, Russia proposed three amendments towarded the Houthis attack on the Red Sea. The amendment added a preambulatory clause about the avoidance of establishing new international law, bearing in mind Member States' rights while ensuring the safety of the vessels, and added languages regarding the conflict in Gaza. This is because it believes that the US and UK have preferred more forceful solutions and named it an "international coalition" to make allowance for their actions. In addition, Russia relates this event to the ongoing war in Gaza which further criticizes the US for allowing attacks from Israel. By eliminating the conflict between Israel and Hamas, it would solve the

root problem of the attack on the Red Sea. Even after Russia claimed its stance, the amendment submitted still failed as the US and UK voted against it.

### **The Republic of Korea (Korea)**

The Republic of Korea is in the top ten ranking of import goods and top six rankings of exporting goods which its economy is highly linked with transporting on marine areas, especially the Red Sea. The Republic of Korea forbids the attack from the Houthis on the Red Sea in the fact that it has caused negative effects on human life and the economy. Korea does not only vote for the UN Resolution (S/RES/2722(2024)), but is also a part of the Operation Prosperity Guardian and signed the Joint Statement. It contributes by supporting the Member States, aims for safe navigation, and called Houthis to release the *Galaxy Leader*, a vessel that is seized by Houthis and its crew.

### **People's Republic of China (China)**

China is one of the countries around the world that contains the largest population and is the second largest contributor to both the UN's regular and peacekeeping budget. It tends to be very good at addressing its point of view and has been seeking long-term peace and aims to respect the safety of navigation. China recognized the attack by Houthis has made the situation worse and limited the access of transportation abroad. Even so, it has voted abstain for Resolution (S/RES/2722(2024)) because it believes that the content contains ambiguous language that might cause negative effects or unpredictable consequences.

Moreover, China has been supportive to Yemen by delivering messages to the GCC and the UN Peace talk on the Saudi-led intervention in 2015. Even so, it is not willing to challenge Saudi Arabia for its interference since China hopes to maintain stronger relationships with Saudi Arabia.

### **The Republic of Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone)**

Sierra Leone has experienced several civil wars that were identical to Yemen's situation. It aims to protect freedom, guarantee the seafarers' safety, and keep legal orders which helps build up the consent around the world. The United Nation news records that Sierra Leone agreed on the amendment proposed by Russia and voted in favor of the Resolution (S/RES/2722(2024)).

### **The Republic of Slovenia (Slovenia)**

As Slovenia became a non-permanent member of the Security Council, it noted four priorities which it would like to achieve, conflict prevention, population protection, and peace (Republic of Slovenia, 2024). It also aims for the implementation of the International Humanitarian law. With these



goals established, it noted the turbulence in Yemen caused by the Houthis attack which voted in favor of the Resolution (S/RES/2722(2024)) for further actions.

### **The Swiss Confederation (Switzerland)**

The Security Council provides Switzerland a good opportunity to demonstrate its framework on ensuring good quality education, industries, and economic stability. Besides stressing the importance of delivering goods and the population crises, it also thanked the United States and Japan for their effort in maintaining marine safety. According to the Office of the United States Trade Representative, the trade between Switzerland and the United States brought a total of 185.9 billion dollars in 2022. The Red Sea is not only a route where States deliver supplies, but fair trade also helps build up relationships with other countries.

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

The United States, being one of the permanent members of the Security Council abided by 44 allies, is strongly against any form of threats that disturbs the transport of humanitarian aids, such as fuel and food. It eliminates encouragement given to the Houthis to undertake attacks on the Red Sea.

“We won’t hesitate to take further action to protect our troops and our facilities and international commerce.” a declaration from President Joe Biden (The White House, 2024). Considering the attack from the Houthis, the US strike approximately thirty places in Yemen and defeated twenty Houthi missiles and drones collaborating with the UK. During the fire, F-18 fighter jets were used which is seen as an offensive attack by Israel and Houthis.

### **The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)**

The United Kingdom has been associated with the United States to fight against the Houthis since the UK believes that Houthis actions are illegal and harmful. There has been an increase in transportation fees and time, as well as the price of the food. Deep concerns and warnings have been given to the Houthis and that attacks for self-defense are necessary for the UK. Even so, it does still hope to restore stability and reduce the tensions between Nations.

In order to accomplish its aim, the UK is also the major involvement in the Operation Prosperity Guardian established by the US. It is an international operation that forms partnership between Nations to ensure the safety of the Red Sea.

## **Timeline of Events**

Date	Description of event
May 22, 1990	<p>Yemeni Unification:</p> <p>Yemen was once split into two, People’s Republic of Southern Yemen (Southern Yemen) and The Yemen Arab Republic (Northern Yemen) which was unified to form the modern Republic of Yemen.</p>
May 21, 1994	<p>Northern and Southern Yemen Splitted:</p> <p>Merging the Northern and Southern troops after the unification and sharing power was challenging for Ali Saleh, the head of the government which ended up in reunification.</p>
February 27, 2012	<p>Abd-Rabbuh Mansur Hadi became the President</p> <p>Thousands of Yemeni people protest to force Ali Abdullah Saleh from resigning. Soon, Abd-Rabbuh Mansur Hadi was elected as the new president.</p>
August 18, 2014	<p>Houthis Takeover in Yemen:</p> <p>The Houthis abused hostages and took over the capital city of Yemen, Sanaa.</p>
September 16, 2014	<p>The Beginning of the Yemen Civil War:</p> <p>Houthis insurgency after taking over Sanaa.</p>
January 22, 2015	<p>President Hadi Fleed Away</p>
March 26, 2015	<p>Saudi-led coalition Intervention:</p> <p>The Saudi-led coalition fired against both Yemeni civilians and Houthis.</p>
March 25, 2015	<p>The Battle of Aden:</p> <p>The Houthis threatened Aden, a port city in Yemen.</p>
2019	<p>Saudi-led coalition reduced military force:</p> <p>The Saudi-led coalition reduced its military support in Yemen due to the increased force of Houthis.</p>
February 22, 2021	<p>Battle of Marib:</p> <p>A fierce conflict between the Yemeni government and Houthis happened in Marib.</p>
November 19, 2023	<p>Houthis hijacked <i>Galaxy Leader</i>:</p> <p>Houthis attack the Red Sea and hijacked the <i>Galaxy Leader</i> and its 25 crew members</p>

## Relevant UN Resolutions and Treaties

- Security Council Resolution 2014 (2011) [ Middle East ], 21 October 2011 (**S/RES/2014 (2011)**)
- Security Council Resolution 2051 (2012), 12 June 2012 (**S/RES/2051 (2012)**)
- Security Council Resolution 2140 (2014), 20 February 2015 (**S/2015/125**)
- Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015), 14 April 2015 (**S/RES/2216 (2015)**)
- Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024), 10 January 2024 (**S/RES/2722 (2024)**)

## Possible Solutions

**Creation of a Houthi Autonomous Region.** The causes of the Houthi rebellion seem to come from their disapproval of the current government of Yemen and their marginalization in Yemeni society. Thus, a solution that would benefit both the government and the Houthis would be the creation of a semi or fully autonomous region in the traditional homeland of the Zaydis, where the Houthis would be free to continue their Zaydi traditions free from the influence of Wahhabism and manage internal affairs while the government would continue to administer the rest of the country. This solution may not be accepted by the Houthis as they are currently in possession of many major cities, including Sanaa (the capital). If the Houthis believe that they are winning, they may push for more concessions from the government or even the creation of a completely separate international entity.

**Houthi Participation in Government.** The most likely solution to the problem would be greater Houthi participation in the government of the Republic of Yemen. As mentioned above, the causes of the 2014 rebellion were rooted in Houthi dissatisfaction with the government, thus it a greater amount of participation by the Houthis would give the Houthis a platform from which to express their grievances without the use of armed force. This solution would reunify Yemen under the Republic of Yemen and give the Houthis the political influence they want, satisfying both sides.

**Division of Yemen into North and South Yemen.** Seeing as the Houthis control the cities in the North of Yemen while the Republic of Yemen controls the South, the Houthis may push for their own sovereign state and divide the country into two. The Houthis would then administer the North (as they are currently) and the Republic would continue to rule the South, thus cementing the status quo. This agreement favors the Houthis and is unlikely to be accepted by the Republic of Yemen as it is a return to pre-1990's version of Yemen.

## Questions for Further Research

Should the Houthis insurgents be allowed into the government?

How should the international community assist in the reconstruction of Yemen?

Should war criminals on both sides be prosecuted for their crimes?

What should be done about the Houthis if missile attacks continue in the Red Sea?

Does the expansion of the conflict in the region warrant international intervention?

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