

Research Report
Model United Nations
Development Programme
XXV. Annual Session



**LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES
(LAS)**

**ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF HUMAN
RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN YEMEN**

DAMLA AKIR





Basic Overview of the Issue

The conflict at hand in Yemen has grown into one of the most devastating humanitarian catastrophes of today's world. The current state of the dispute can be dated back to the merger of North and South Yemen in 1990, which culminated in decades of conflict under President Ali Abdullah Saleh. During this period, the Houthi movement, which represents the Zaidi Shia minority in northern Yemen, initiated building up power, originally with Saleh's assistance. However, links deteriorated in the beginning of the 2000s after Saleh attempted to disarm the Houthis, which led to numerous conflicts from 2004 to the present. The situation escalated over the 2011 Arab Spring, when large-scale demonstrations drove Saleh to officially give up control to his deputy representative, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Hadi's government was facing challenges regarding financial fragility along with corruption. In 2014, the Houthis took control over the capital, Sanaa, taking advantage of the government's vulnerabilities, seeking more ownership and reform. In early 2015, the Houthis overtook the government, forcing Hadi to depart to Saudi Arabia. This stimulated the coalition monitored by Saudi Arabia to initiate a military enforcement, transforming the dispute into an international conflict. The war has culminated in severe human rights violations, negatively affecting millions of civilians. Civilians have faced the brunt of arbitrary bombings, airstrikes, and warfare, which have struck suburban areas, schools, hospitals, and markets. The Houthis have been responsible for numerous human rights violations such as the use of landmines, child army recruitment, and unjust imprisonments. The coalition's boycott on Houthi-controlled regions further aggravated the crisis by prohibiting the supply of food, fuel, and medical supplies, bringing millions to the edge of malnutrition. Meanwhile, accusations of assault, sexual abuse, and enforced disappearances have been reported. The prolonged dispute has also harmed the healthcare system of Yemen. Consequently, it is evident that the conflict in Yemen makes the region one of the most crucial regions to establish peace and stability. It is important to highlight that determining and tackling the root causes of these transgressions will be essential in achieving the goal of peace and negotiations.

Explanation of Important Terms

Human Rights Violations

The breach of core liberties and rights that belong to every person regardless of their



religion, ethnicity or language, such as the freedom of torture, the right to life, and having the right to acquire justice. One of the main intentions of international law is to prevent such transgressions regarding human rights. (*United Nations*)

Terrorism

Although there isn't a specific definition of terrorism, there have been established "terrorist aims" that directly correlates with terrorism. These "terrorist aims" are defined by; "Seriously intimidating a population, or Unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or Seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation" (*European Union*)

Refugee

Refugees are defined as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." (*1951 Refugee Convention*). Throughout the ongoing war, refugees have emerged into a major problem internationally since the conflict in Yemen has forced thousands of citizens to be refugees and seek humanitarian conditions.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

"Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border." - (*Definition of Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*) Currently, an estimated 4.5 million individuals, approximately 14% of the population, are displaced; the majority having undergone numerous displacements over the course of years.

Civilians in Armed Conflict

Individuals who are not in the army and not armed are referred to as civilians. Civilians are frequently severely affected by war. Their protection is mandated by international humanitarian law. (*International Humanitarian Law Databases*)



The Houthis

The Houthis, "an armed group" referred to as Ansar Allah (supporters of God), are currently in possession of most of Yemen, particularly the national capital of Sanaa and several districts in the north and west near Saudi Arabia. Although the Houthis initially formed in the 1990s, they achieved notoriety in 2014 when they seized Yemen's government, forcing it to resign and unleashing a devastating humanitarian crisis that the United Nations declared as "the world's worst humanitarian crisis", in March 2023. (*Al Jazeera*)

Detailed Background of the Issue

Yemen's civil war, emerged in 2015, can be considered as one of the most severe wars in the modern world. The war not only affected the governmental authorities but also had notable, negative effects on citizens in terms of their well being along with the financial disruptions. The crisis began with disagreements between Yemeni authorities and the Houthi rebellion, which is additionally known as Ansar Allah. In September 2014, the Houthis took authorization at Sana'a, shifting from a rebel organization to an official governmental group. On March 26, 2015, a Saudi-led coalition of ten nations, including nations such as the United Arab Emirates, commenced combat operations in Yemen with the objective of reinstating President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi's leadership. Over the last nine years, war and recession have brought damage on civilians, driving millions to evacuate their homes and leaving two-thirds of the population in desperate need of humanitarian support.

Impact on Civilians

Damage on Infrastructure and Civilian Casualties

Thousands of civilians have been murdered or harmed, with the Yemeni people suffering the greatest burden of the armed conflict. The suffering has been rendered severe by the destruction of vital infrastructure, which include schools, hospitals, and water sources. Yemen has grown into a conflict zone where civilians are frequently caught in the conflict due to coalition combatants' disproportionate airstrikes, Houthi rebels' bombardment, and disputes between regional militias.

Enforced Immigration

More than 4 million people have been forced into evacuation by the conflict, driving



households to seek protection in improvised settlements with no access to fundamental amenities. Individuals that are internally displaced (IDPs) frequently suffer from the shortage of food, inadequate facilities, and health threatening risks.

Humanitarian Crisis

Malnourishment and Food Insecurity

Two-thirds of the population, meaning more than 20 million people are in desperate need for humanitarian aid. Nearly 2.2 million children below the age of five are negatively affected by extreme malnutrition (Human Rights Watch, 2023), indicating the astonishingly significant prevalence of malnutrition. The crisis has gotten worse as a consequence of the blockade of vital terminals, which hindered the accessibility of necessities.

Challenges in Health Care

Yemen's healthcare system is in jeopardy of failing. About 46% of healthcare institutions are still in use, and those that are are frequently understaffed and underpaid. Cholera and dengue fever are among the avoidable diseases that have spread as a result of poor hygiene and the disintegration of water facilities. (World Health Organisation, 2024)

Environmental Struggles

Yemen's extreme weather, which includes flooding and excessive precipitation, made internal displacement greater in regions including the provincial governments of Ma'rib, Ta'iz, and Ibb. It additionally contributed by worsening the nutritional and economic scarcity . The UN Food and Agriculture Organization reports that at least 31 people have died, 37 have suffered injuries, and three have gone missing as a result of the April floods. The United Nations Population Fund reports that 109,830 people were displaced by climate change between January and August. According to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) index score, Yemen was ranked as one of the nations most at risk from climate change and among the least equipped to cope with its effects.

Gender-Based Violence and Vulnerable Groups

Women's and Girls' Rights

In regions governed by the Houthis, Yemeni women remain subject to prohibitions on



their freedom of movement, since authorities mandate they must travel alongside a mahram, meaning male relative. Women are forbidden from traveling without a male guardian or written consent from them in accordance with the mahram requirement. According to Amnesty International, Yemeni women have been unable to work due to intensified Houthi regulations over the mahram requirement, particularly for those who are obliged to travel. Yemeni women employed by humanitarian groups are likewise subject to these limitations, which has hindered their ability to carry out fieldwork and affected Yemeni women's and girls' access to humanitarian assistance.

Harms against Children in Armed Conflict

Children suffer tremendously as a result of Yemen's ongoing warfare and humanitarian crises. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reports that over 11,200 children have been murdered or harmed, over 3.1 million have been forced to relocate, and 11 million children in Yemen seek humanitarian aid. Parties in dispute have assaulted schools and hospitals, disrupting children's education and health infrastructure. The legal framework of Yemen officially allows for the domestic abuse of infants. Children have been disproportionately harmed through warring parties' assaults on food and water infrastructures as well as their weaponization of water. In order to obtain the opportunity to go and wait in queues to provide water for their families, many kids were forced to leave school.

Arbitrary Detention, Torture, and Enforced Disappearance

Houthi forces, the Yemeni government, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and other armed organizations supported by the UAE and Saudi Arabia have all arbitrarily imprisoned, tortured, and mistreated enslaved throughout Yemen. Official and unofficial detention facilities around Yemen have held hostage hundreds of Yemenis. Forces aided by the UAE, especially the Southern Transitional Council (STC), have maintained at least two provisional detention centers and have continued to arbitrarily arrest and forcefully imprison people. Even though the Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognized government exchanged 887 detainees in April, various sides to the dispute kept continuing to arbitrarily custody and abduct many more civilians, including activists and human rights defenders.



Economic Collapse

Hyperinflation and Currency Devaluation

Yemen's economy, which was already precarious prior to the conflict, has begun to collapse under the weight of the fighting. Hyperinflation has arisen from a significant decline in the value of the local currency. Millions of Yemenis struggle to afford fundamental necessities as an outcome of the collapse of numerous companies and a rapid increase in unemployment.

Impact on Livelihoods

The violence has significantly harmed the agricultural sector, which is an essential means of income for many Yemenis. Destroyed infrastructure for irrigation, constrained market accessibility, and climate-related disruptions have created difficulties for landowners.

Major Parties Involved

Houthis(Ansar Allah)

The Houthis, which have claimed their power in northern Yemen, have been a prominent actor in the dispute since 2014. They have been alleged of perpetrating war crimes along with human rights violations including employing child soldiers and planting landmines in residential areas. Their influence over significant regions, particularly the capital city, Sana'a, is considered to be an obstacle to the efforts to find diplomatic negotiations.

Yemeni Government

The Yemeni government, under the leadership of President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, has played a significant part in the dispute, however in a less powerful way. Following the Houthi invasion of Sana'a in 2014, the administration was challenged to maintain authority until fleeing to Saudi Arabia for help. Its failure to confront pervasive corruption, unemployment, and disparities in society prior to the conflict increased the struggle that motivated the Houthi rebellion. The Yemeni people have become victims of assault, relocation, and a breakdown of vital infrastructure as a result of the government's ineffective leadership, intensifying the humanitarian catastrophe.



Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has also been a significant nation in the Yemen conflict with its contributions, coordinating a military coalition that seeks to reinstate the Hadi administration. The coalition executed out several airstrikes, most of which struck households, causing thousands of civilian deaths and massive damage. Saudi Arabia's embargo of Yemeni ports, intended for blocking Houthi transportation routes, has resulted in shortage of food, medication, and fuel, putting millions of people at risk of malnutrition. For Yemenis, Saudi Arabia's involvement has escalated the dispute into a war zone for regional power disputes, worsening the catastrophic circumstances.

United Nations (UN)

In facilitating peace negotiations as well as providing humanitarian assistance, the UN has always been vital. Millions of Yemenis have benefited from life-saving support from institutions such as UNICEF, UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP). Although it continues to possess limited authority to implement resolutions, the UN Security Council has also sanctioned those who are hindering negotiations for peace. As a result, the UN has helped many civilians with their support of vital supplies and other humanitarian assistance.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, delivers essential support to dislocated Yemenis, refugees, and those seeking asylum throughout Yemen's 20 affected regions. Their support contains supplies and assistance such as sheltering equipment, financial help for basic necessities such as medication and food, and vital aid materials including blankets and solar lamps. UNHCR additionally aids healthcare organizations and provides legal, psychosocial, and protection assistance, while focusing on gender-based violence reduction and support for women and children. These initiatives have the goal of easing the conditions of those facing the struggles of the war zone.

Iran

Another significant external nation that supports the Houthi forces in both financial terms and politically is Iran. Considering Iran's support for the Houthis operating as an obstruction on Saudi and Emirati hegemony in Yemen, this cooperation has accelerated the dispute into a regional power conflict, resulting in catastrophic human rights violations.



United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE, a crucial player in the international coalition headed by Saudi Arabia, has assisted regional Yemeni forces in their fight against Houthi authority. Its military actions, nevertheless, are coming under attack for escalating Yemeni divides and promoting the disintegration of governmental structures in the southern region.

United States of America

The Saudi-led coalition has received benefits from US military intelligence and operational guidance, including the sale of weapons. It has nonetheless come under criticism nationally as well as globally for its contribution in fostering a conflict with catastrophic humanitarian repercussions. The US administration has been urged and advised in recent years to cut back on military support and rather concentrate on diplomatic negotiation attempts and resolutions.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

In order to supply health services and crisis assistance, institutions like the International Red Cross (IRC) and Doctors Without Borders (MSF) have been highly important. Despite several, harsh obstacles, such as inadequate access and security threats, these NGOs continue to play a key part in decreasing the hardships of Yemen's civilian community.

Chronology of Important Events

Date	Description of Event
June 1, 2004 - September 9, 2004	First Round of Sadaa War: The initial dispute between the Yemeni government and the infamous Houthi organization was ignited due to a police operation against Hussein al-Houthi, a Zaydi



	youth activist and previous Member of Parliament.
November 24, 2011	Agreement on the Implementation Mechanism for the Transition Process in Yemen in Accordance with the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC Implementation Mechanism) was signed
May 28 - June 7, 2011	Battle of Taiz
April 14, 2014	Adoption of Resolution 2216 by the United Nations Security Council seeks that all parties abstain from unilateral acts that would jeopardize the nation's UN-facilitated constitutional shift, in addition to a complete armament embargo against the Ansar Allah/Saleh coalition.
September 21, 2014	Formerly known as the Ansar Allah movement, Houthi forces took possession of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, and effectively took command of the vast majority of the population of the nation.



November 6, 2014	After it is revealed that the former leader of Yemen, Saleh supported the Houthis disrupt the election process, the UN imposes sanctions on him, including a prohibition on traveling.
March 26, 2015	Without a UN obligation, a coalition led by Saudi Arabia and incorporating the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Turkey (collectively, "the Coalition") initiated a war against Yemen. From the very start, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and France contributed in political, diplomatic, and military assistance for this coalition.
December 13, 2018	Stockholm Agreement
August 27, 2021- September 3, 2021	Iraq hosted a regional forum with the goal of strengthening communication between Saudi Arabia and Iran regarding hostilities in many Middle Eastern nations.



January 17, 2024	The United States declared the Houthis to have been designated a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) group.
-------------------------	--

Relevant International Documents

- Adopted by the Security Council at its 7426th meeting, on 14 April 2015 (**S/RES/2216**)
- Adopted by the Security Council at its 9782nd meeting, on 13 November 2024 (**S/RES/2758**)
- Adopted by the Security Council at its 8444th meeting, on 16 January 2019 (**S/RES/2452**)
- Agreement on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative, on 21 April 2011
<https://www.peaceagreements.org/masterdocument/1401>
- Stockholm Agreement, on December 13, 2018
<https://www.peaceagreements.org/masterdocument/2121>
- Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Francis M. Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission [on Human Rights] resolution 1997/39, on 11 February 1998 (**E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2**)

Past Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Numerous peace negotiations and humanitarian efforts have been utilized in the attempts to put an end to the dispute in Yemen. A significant turning point was the 2018 Stockholm Agreement, which resulted in certain short-term ceasefires. Despite technical difficulties, institutions such as UNICEF and the International Red Cross have sent key assistance, covering the pressing necessities of communities that were negatively impacted. The United Nations adopted particular measures and various resolutions throughout the years that aimed to diminish financing for armed organizations, but implementation has remained inadequate. J4YP, a coalition of ten Yemen human rights organizations was established to identify the complex struggles regarding the conflict and made substantial



contributions to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to highlight human rights breaches. Furthermore, the Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC) launched an international awareness attempt in collaboration with other international and local nonprofit organizations, resulting in the liberation of four Yemeni reporters who were sentenced to execution. A noteworthy victory by nonprofit organizations is the operational liberation of four Yemeni Baha'is unjustly held by the Houthis, indicating how collective approaches in resolution attempts can maintain human rights in difficult circumstances. These initiatives demonstrate the significance of ongoing global cooperation.

Solution Alternatives

A range of solution strategies can be put into practice for dealing with the Yemen conflict. In order to provide assurance that support accesses those in need without limitations, humanitarian routes must be developed. To conduct inquiries into human rights violations while holding perpetrators responsible, procedures for accountability consisting of commissions or tribunals could be created. All nations, especially those who are underrepresented, have to engage in comprehensive peace talks in order to guarantee extensive deliberations. Initiatives for monetary recovery in partnership with multinational financial organizations are necessary for stabilizing Yemen's infrastructure. Furthermore, educational and psychological aid for restoring its lifespan should be the primary goal of support programs for those most in need, particularly women, children, and IDPs.

Useful Links

[Yemen Crisis Explained?](#)

[Human rights in Yemen Amnesty International](#)

[Who are the Houthis? A simple guide to the Yemeni group | Israel-Palestine conflict News |](#)

[Al Jazeera](#)

[Yemen: A Brief Background | unfoundation.org](#)

[The Houthi Takeover of Yemen Is 10 Years Old. It Must Not Reach 20 | The Washington Institute](#)

[Human Rights Violations Against Migrants in Yemen Increase Amid Soaring Arrivals: IOM Warns | International Organization for Migration](#)



[World Report 2023: Yemen | Human Rights Watch](#)

Bibliography

United Nations. Examples of Definitions of Humanitarian Law Violations* Wilful Killing or Murder of Civilians.

Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis M. Deng, submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 1997/39, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, UN Commission on Human Rights, 11 February 1998, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/otherinstr/unchr/1998/en/18487>

International Committee of the Red Cross. "Civilians." International Committee of the Red Cross, 28 July 2014, www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/protected-persons-civilians.

Amnesty International. "Human Rights in Yemen." *Amnesty International*, www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/yemen/report-yemen/.

Al Jazeera. "Who Are the Houthis? A Simple Guide to the Yemeni Group." *Al Jazeera*, 12 Jan. 2024, www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/12/who-are-yemens-houthis-a-basic-guide.

Human Rights Watch. "Yemen: Events of 2023." *Human Rights Watch*, 11 Jan. 2024, www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/yemen.

Human Rights Watch. "Yemen: Events of 2022." *Human Rights Watch*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/yemen.

UNHCR. "Yemen Crisis Explained." *Www.unrefugees.org*, 24 Mar. 2023, www.unrefugees.org/news/yemen-crisis-explained/#WhendidthecrisisinYemenbegin?
<https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/arabvoices/economic-consequences-war-yemen-macro>



economic-shocks-microeconomic-pain

United Nations Foundation. "Yemen: A Brief Background ." *Unfoundation.org*, 2018, unfoundation.org/what-we-do/issues/peace-human-rights-and-humanitarian-response/yemen-a-brief-background/.

The University of Edinburgh. "PA-X: Peace Agreements Database - YemenTimeline Site." *Www.peaceagreements.org*, www.peaceagreements.org/yemen-timeline.

Knights, Michael. "The Houthi Takeover of Yemen Is 10 Years Old. It Must Not Reach 20." *The Washington Institute*, 2024, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/houthi-takeover-yemen-10-years-old-it-must-not-reach-20.

FILE, MERCENARIES. "ARWA RIGHTS." *ARWA RIGHTS*, 2014, arwarights.org/foreign-mercenaries-file. Accessed 25 Dec. 2024.

United Nations Security Council. "S/RES/2216 (2015) | Security Council." *Un.org*, 2015, main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/s/res/2216-%282015%29-0.

Security Council Report. "December 2024 Monthly Forecast: Yemen." *Security Council Report*, 2024, www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-12/yemen-73.php. Accessed 25 Dec. 2024.

Blinken, Antony. "Terrorist Designation of the Houthis." *United States Department of State*, 17 Jan. 2024, www.state.gov/terrorist-designation-of-the-houthis/.

European Union. "EUR-Lex - 4322328 - EN - EUR-Lex." *Europa.eu*, 2017, eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A4322328.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees." *UNHCR*, 1951, www.unhcr.org/media/convention-and-protocol-relating-status-refugees.



Montgomery, Marcus. "A Timeline of the Yemen Crisis, from the 1990s to the Present."

Arab Center Washington DC, 19 Feb. 2021,

arabcenterdc.org/resource/a-timeline-of-the-yemen-crisis-from-the-1990s-to-the-present/.

World Health Organization. "Yemen Crisis." *Www.who.int*, 2023,

www.who.int/emergencies/situations/yemen-crisis.

DT Institute. "Coalitions as a Transformative Force for Protecting Human Rights in

Yemen - DT Institute." *DT Institute*, 19 Sept. 2024,

www.dt-institute.org/coalitions-as-a-transformative-force-for-protecting-human-rights-in-yemen/.