



Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2018 University of Central Punjab MUN.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at UCPMUN 2018 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the UCPMUN'18 experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

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INTRODUCTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Under the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations Security Council is one of the six main organs of the United Nations and is responsible for maintaining international peace and security. According to the Article 25 of the Charter, all members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions made by the Security Council, of which makes the decisions of the Security Council legally binding. The very first session of the Security Council was held on January 17, 1946, at Church House, Westminster, London. Ever since the first session, the Security Council held the United Nations Headquarters in New York City as their permanent residence.

The United Nations Security Council consists of fifteen members, of which five are permanent members and ten are rotating in a two years basis. Permanent members are namely France, People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States of America. Every member of the Security Council has one vote. However, five permanent members have the right to veto, which means without their consensus, a resolution would be destined to fail. This right to veto has risen controversy and critiques towards the Security Council due to its sensitive nature that may prevent swift action in case a conflicting political interest occurs with a permanent member and the current agenda of the Security Council. Therefore, this makes the discussions and collective action in the Security Council highly challenging. The United Nations Security Council holds the legitimacy to take action if international peace and security are at risk. In the moment of a crisis or a threatening situation, the Security Council may try to reach an agreement by peaceful means. If such action is not appropriate and/or non-resolving, the Security Council may take further action by issuing a ceasefire directive and/or military observation and peacekeeping force. Beyond this, the Security Council may enforce measures of economic sanctions, blockade and even a collective military action. Apart from the peace and security discourse, the Security Council recommends to the General Assembly regarding the appointment of the Secretary-General and admission of new members to the United Nations. Additionally, the Security Council together with the General Assembly elects the judges of the International Court of Justice.

In today's world of rapidly developing international crisis and peace-threatening developments by states and non-state actors; members of the Security Council are being

challenged more intensively than the years past. It is a demanding challenge to pursue international peace, security and collaboration while respecting the sovereignty and tackling political agendas. In a globe with highly complex security threats and advancing methods of terrorism, the Security Council will be asked to resolve this proliferating nature of chaos.

AGENDA 1

CIVIL WAR IN YEMEN

A. History of the Civil War in Yemen

Starting with the disputes and demonstration back in 2011, Yemen had entered into a period of destabilization and conflict that escalated into a civil war in 2015. Two main sides of the conflict are Houthi forces and Hadi Government. Due to the instability generated by war, Yemen also saw an increase in terrorist activities and terrorist groups are also on the rise and claiming territories that could lead the war into further deadlock. Before the 2011 turning point, Houthi forces were conducting insurgency activities against Yemeni government since 2004 and multiple clashes occurred until the conflict transformed into a larger scale and turned into a civil war. Yemeni army constantly engaged Houthi rebellion between the period of 2004 and 2009. 2011 was the year in which Houthis saw the demonstrations against the government as an opportunity and supported the protests against the President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. After years of fierce clashes and demonstrations between protestors and the government forces, Houthi forces entered the capital Sana'a and captured the city in September 2014. This led to the resignation of the government and formulation of the Revolutionary Committee to govern the country in February 2015. President Hadi was put under house arrest in Sana'a in the mean time, but he managed to escape to Aden and declared the illegitimate takeover by Houthi forces on national television. After such move by Hadi, the Yemeni Civil War started and is still ongoing.

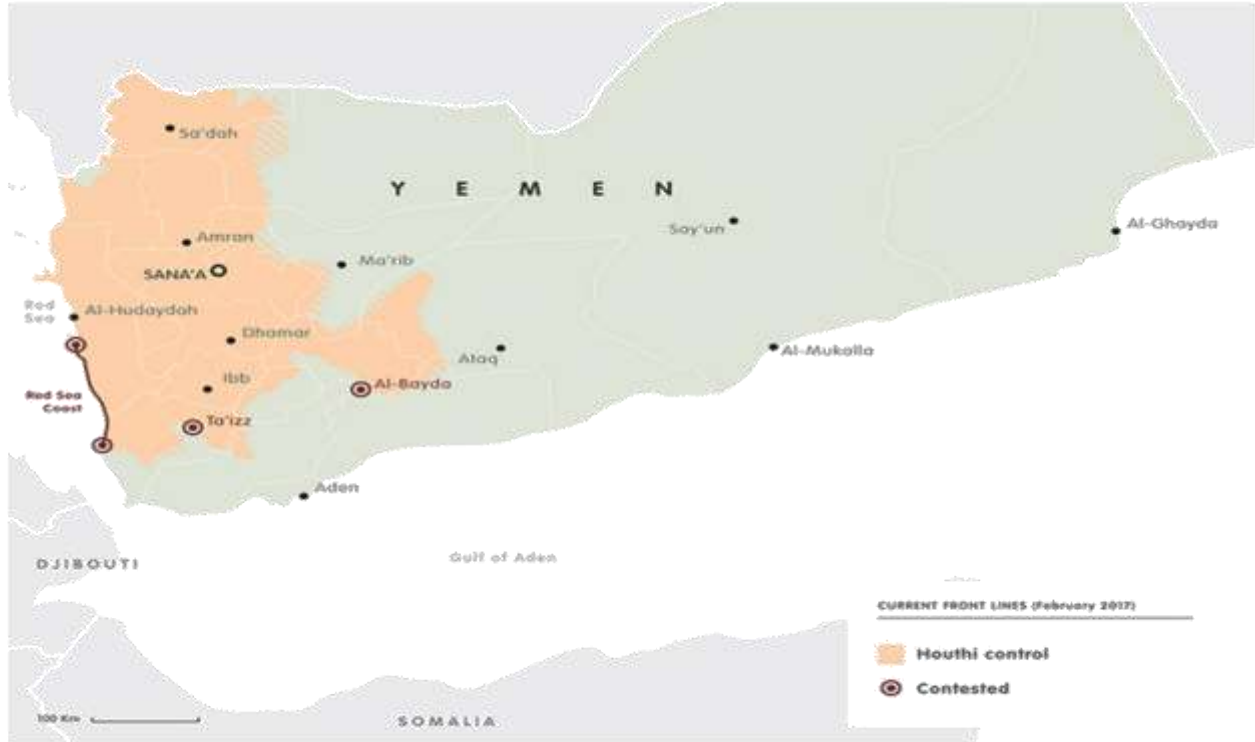


Figure 2.1: Current Frontlines in Yemeni Civil War as of February 2017 (Source: ecfr.eu)

B. Combatants

There are two sides in the Yemeni Civil War with additional terrorist side consists of Ansar al-Sharia and Islamic State of Iraq and Levant-Yemen Province. Government forces with their loyalty to President Hadi consists hundreds of thousands of security forces with the additional support of Saudi-led coalition and the military support of United States of America. Houthi forces are commanded by the Supreme Political Council that was formed after the Houthi takeover and is currently being supported by Iranian government due to large number of Shia tribes and fighters in the Houthi forces. There is an estimated +/-5000 terrorists in the region that are also conducting their own operations mostly against the Houthi forces. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia) and ISIL-YP are the main terrorist forces in the region and are causing more violence and instabilities in an already chaotic Civil War. Estimated force distribution is projected in Table 1.1 below:

Belligerents	Ground Force	Air Force	Naval Force
Hadi Government	180.000 Fighters	Several Light Attack Planes	Unspecified
Houthi Forces	80.000-130.000 Fighters	None	2 Iranian Warships (Monitoring) + Anti-Ship Missiles + Suicide Boats
AQAP + ISIL	4000-5000 Terrorists	None	Suicide Boats
Saudi-led Coalition	157.000 Soldiers	186 Fighter Jets	Several Warships (SA + UAE + Egypt)
United States of America	Unspecified (Special Ops)	Several UCAVs	USS Cole Guided Missile Destroyer

Table 2.1: Yemeni Civil War Combatants

1. Hadi Government

Hadi Forces are those who are loyal to the President Hadi and are mostly army members with addition of 30.000 tribal fighters supporting Hadi Government. After the Houthi takeover, Yemeni Army saw a separation in its forces and those who loyal to the Hadi stayed in Pro-Hadi forces while a considerable amount of the military switched sides and joined Houthi forces. Pro-Hadi forces currently occupy most of the country in addition to the port city of Aden. Hadi government is supported with military and logistics means by the Saudi-led Coalition and logistical-intelligence support by the USA including several UCAV strikes. Domestic support consists of Pro-Hadi security forces, Popular Committees, Al-Islah, Popular Resistance and Southern Movement groups. Saudi-led Coalition includes Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Senegal and Sudan.

Ultimate aim of the Hadi Government is to restore the previous order and eliminate Houthi threat while retaking capital Sana'a and eradicating terrorist activities in the country.

2. Supreme Political Council/ Revolutionary Committee

Commonly referred as Houthis. Consists of Houthi forces, Pro-Saleh Security Forces and the Republican Guard. Iran reportedly provides weapons support and logistical support for the Houthis while Hezbollah also provides military and logistics support too. Due to Shia majority, conflict also resembles sectarian violence since there is a clear separation between Sunni Pro-

Hadi forces and Shia Houthis. Houthis are considered a significant military force due to their sheer numbers and moderate/advanced weapons systems. Houthi forces are operating Iranian arms, several light armored troop carriers, suicide boats and anti-ship missiles that also struck Coalition naval vessels multiple times. With the cross-border incursions by Houthis against Saudi forces, conflict also occurs in the Saudi-Yemen border.

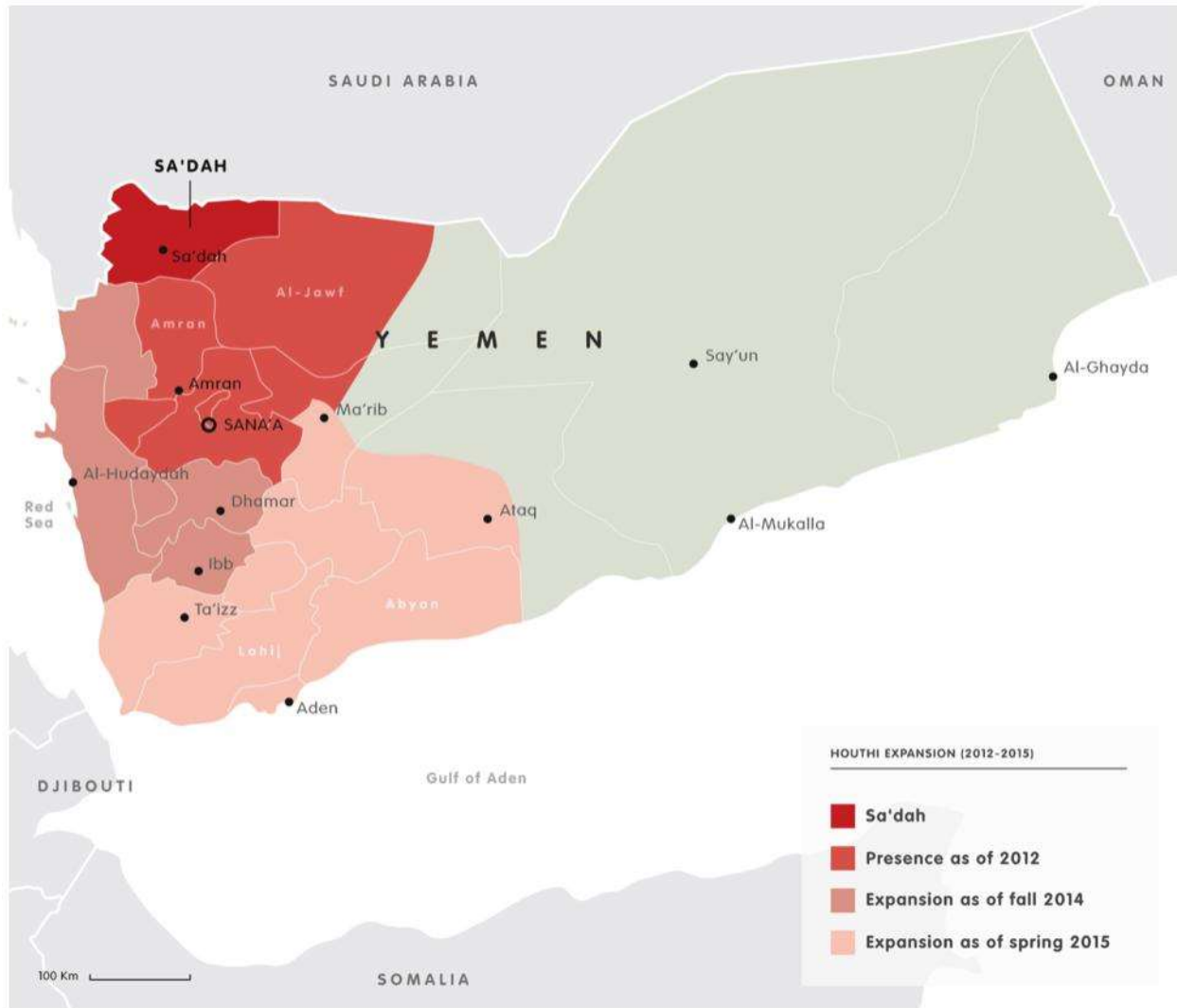


Figure 2.2: *Houthi Expansion between 2012-2015* (Source: ecfr.eu)

3. AQAP & ISIL-YP

AQAP already operated terrorist cells in the Yemen prior to the civil war but with the instability, terrorist activities rose. Especially after 2011 demonstrations, AQAP increased its

power in the country and several AQAP groups combined to create Ansar al-Sharia. Since 2011, Ansar al-Sharia occupied many cities in the southern parts of Yemen and conducted many suicide bombings in major cities, mostly focusing on the capital Sana'a in 2012 and 2013. In the country's central and western parts, terrorists are struggling to hold their lands against advancing Houthi forces and this led to many battles between two sides. In February 2015, a number of groups in AQAP defected from Ansar al-Sharia and pledged allegiance to ISIL. This led to the formulation of ISIL-YP but the size of these forces are considerably small (around 500 terrorists) and their control zones are small compared to the Ansar al-Sharia.

Below, the map shows the current stance at the Yemen regarding terrorist strongholds. It must be noted that the terrorist activity is also observed outside the designated strongholds.



Figure 2.3: AQAP Presence in Yemen as of February 2017 (Source: ecfr.eu)

C. Rising Terrorist Activities in Yemen

Instabilities allowed terrorist factions to gain control of the major chunk of country's territory after 2011 demonstrations. Multiple suicide attacks occurred against Houthis, Hadi forces and civilians in major cities. With the declaration of ISIL-YP, terrorist activities gained more significance and even resulted in US intervention against many terrorist cells and leaders.

Below, there is a list of major terrorist attacks in Yemen between 2011-2017:

- Battle of Zinjibar in 2011: Ansar al-Sharia launched an attack against Houthi forces in the city on Zinjibar and killed more than 300 soldiers in addition to 33 civilians. The battle took more than 3 months and the city fell under terrorist control.
- 2011 March: Ansar al-Sharia captured Jaar, al-Husn and Khanfar. They also siezed a weapons manufacturing plant.
- 2012 Second Battle of Lawdar: Ansar al-Sharia launched and attack against Lawdar and killed 100 soldiers in addition to 38 civilians. Terrorists failed to capture the city.
- 2012 Sana'a Bombing: Ansar al-Sharia conducted a suicide bombings against Yemeni soldiers in the capital, killing 120 and injuring more than 350 in the attack.
- 2013 Sana'a Attack: A suicide bomber of Ansar al-Sharia killed 56 people and injured more than 200 people in Defense Ministry complex.
- December 2014 Suicide Attack: Ansar al-Sharia launched a suicide attack on the birthday of Prophet Muhammed, killing 23 people.
- January 2015 Suicide Attack: A SVBIED attacked Police Academy in Sana'a, killing 38 and wounding over 90 people.
- 2015 Sana'a Mosque Bombings: Deadliest terrorist attack in Yemen's history. 142 killed and 51 wounded.
- 2015 Aden Car Bombing: ISIL claimed responsibility of the attack killing 7 people.
- January 2017: Suicide Bombing on Saudi Frigate was made by Houthi forces. It is still not clear whether this was an anti-ship missile strike or a suicide boat.

D. Foreign Intervention

Yemeni Civil War not only includes domestic belligerents, but also a lot of international involvement took place after 2015 turning point. Apart from civil war, rising terrorism also attracted many attention towards Yemen and resulted in strikes by foreign actors targeting terrorist groups. Main foreign intervention was made by Iran and Saudi-led Coalition followed by a relatively smaller intervention by the United States. United States' involvement mostly includes UCAV strikes against terrorist cells and leaders. There are a number of Special Operations conducted by Navy SEAL's targeting key AQAP leaders but there aren't much details regarding these raids. Sanger (2017) stated that the Yemeni government withdrew counterterrorism operations authorization given to US in February 2017 after high number of civilian casualties in the recent operations. It is still debated whether US will step down on its operations in Yemen or continue targeting AQAP and ISIL in the area.

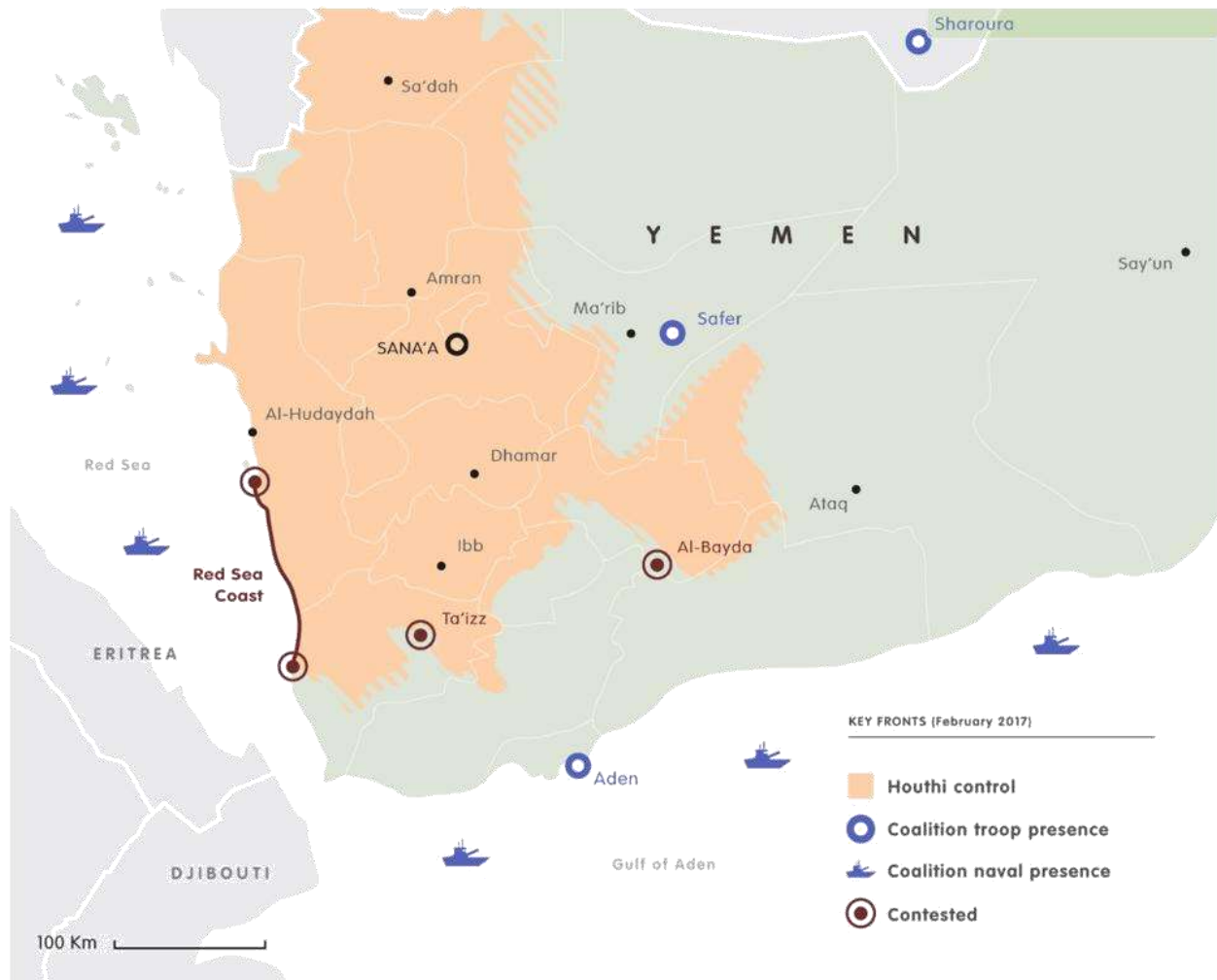


Figure 2.4: Saudi-led Coalition Engagement and Key Fronts as of February 2017 (Source: ecfr.eu)

1. Saudi-led Coalition

Saudi Arabia and nine supporting countries formed the coalition supporting Hadi Government and launched the Operation Decisive Storm back in 2015 after the Yemeni Civil War officially started. Many nations contributed ground troops, fighter jets and naval assistance to the coalition. The United States also supports Operation Decisive Storm with logistical and intelligence assistance. It is noted that even aerial refueling is provided by the US Air Force to Coalition warplanes. Operation Decisive Storm had launched many aerial bombing campaigns against Houthi forces and struck a major blow against their efforts to fight Hadi forces. With ground troop deployments into Hadi-controlled regions, Operation Decisive Storm increases its significance in the Yemeni Civil War and even Saudi-Yemen border has seen fierce clashes and

cross-border incursions by Houthis and Saudis. Many casualties were reported on the both sides. Operation Decisive Storm was expected to be terminated before the Summer 2015 and Operation Restoring Hope would start aiming to restore political stability back to Yemen. However, Coalition undermined Houthi capabilities and this resulted in Houthi ballistic missile launches to Saudi Arabian cities. This was a major blow to the Coalition since they believed that they have eradicated military and ballistic threats of Houthis after months of air bombardment campaign. Even though the coalition aimed to cease military operations, as of 2017, operations continue and battle keeps escalating both inside Yemen and on Saudi-Yemen border. Apart from ground and aerial combat missions, Coalition also utilized Naval support for Hadi government. Egyptian and Saudi Arabian naval vessels conducted coastal bombardments towards advancing Houthi forces on multiple occasions. After Houthis struck UAE and Saudi Arabia vessels with supposedly Iranian-made anti-ship missiles, naval operations faced further risk. Combining missile threat with suicide boat attacks by Houthis, Yemen is a dangerous place for naval operations and poses a threat also for commercial ships. There are many instances indicating Coalition's human rights violations regarding their campaign in Yemen. This is further explained in upcoming sections but it is worth saying that the United States officially warned the Coalition regarding the cessation of hostilities after Saudi jets struck a funeral in Sana'a, killing 140 and injuring 500 people.

2. Iranian Involvement

Iran always kept good relations with Houthi forces due to the same religious views as both being part of the Shia branch of Islam. Iranian support for Houthis does not include direct involvement by Iranian military into combat missions. However, it is widely debated that Iran is supplying Houthis with military advisors, small arms, explosives, rocket launchers, armored vehicles, anti-ship missiles and advanced weaponry. Especially after the missile attacks aiming Coalition naval vessels, these allegations arose and even the United States accused Iran with selling anti-ship weapon systems to Houthi forces. Anti-ship missiles not only threat Coalition vessels, but also US Navy operating in the area. Even though there is no evidence suggesting direct Iranian involvement to the Yemeni Civil War, allegations keep continuing. Referring back to the suicided boat attack on USS Cole in 2000 in the Gulf of Aden and recent anti-ship missile radar lock harassment and missile attack to the same US Navy vessel, Americans see Iranian

supplied missiles to the Houthis as a threat and even launched aerial bombardment against Houthi radar sites with Coalition forces in order to incapacitate anti-ship missile threat by Houthis. Considering the Americans sensitivity towards anti-ship missile threat, Iran is an important stakeholder in the Yemeni Civil War. Referring to the Al Jazeera's (2016) special report on the alleged Saudi-Iranian Cold War, Yemeni Civil War is definitely highly significant for Iranian interests in the region.

E. Major Incidents in the Yemeni Civil War

- 2014 July: Tribesman blow up the largest oil pipeline in Yemen, disrupting supplies to the Red Sea export terminal.
- 2014 August: President Hadi sacks the cabinet and increases fuel prices, leading to major demonstrations against government that included Houthi support to demonstrations.
- 2014 September: Houthis invaded capital Sana'a.
- 2015 February: President Hadi flees to Aden.
- 2015 March: First major terrorist attacks hitting capital Sana'a. Operation Decisive Storm begins as the Coalition starts striking Houthi targets. President Hadi flees from Aden following swift Houthi advance against the city.
- 2015 June: AQAP Leader Nasser al-Wuhayshi was killed by a US UCAV strike.
- 2015 September: President Hadi returns to Aden after coalition ground forces re-captured the port and the city.
- 2016 April: Negotiations began between Houthis and Hadi following UN sponsorship for peace talks.
- 2016 October: Coalition airstrike targeted a funeral in Sana'a, killing 140 and injuring 500 people. Houthis target US naval vessel with anti-ship missiles but missiles did not hit the ship. Houthis strike UAE Navy vessel HSV-2 with anti-ship missile and cause significant damage.
- 2017 January-February: Houthi forces launch ballistic missile targeting Coalition base in Zuqar island in Red Sea. Houthis launch a suicide boat attack targeting Saudi naval vessel. US Special Forces raid kills AQAP militants along with civilian casualties. Hadi revokes permission to US counterterrorism operations following civilian casualties. US warned Iran regarding recent anti-ship missile threat from Houthis.
- 2017 March: Houthis claimed to have struck Saudi air base with a ballistic missile.

- 2017 May: Houthis launch ballistic missile targeting Saudi capital Riyadh.
- 2017 July: WHO says 1500 people have died as a result of cholera outbreak and outbreak spreads at unprecedented levels.

F. International Law Violations, Civilians and UNESCO Heritage

Since the civil war started back in 2015, millions of Yemeni civilians faced difficulties due to increased conflict, decreased food security, access to water, outbreaks and constant human rights violations. Recent cholera outbreak resulted in the death of 1500 people and 300.000 people are hospitalized as the result of damaged infrastructure, lack of medical service and lack of humanitarian supplies to the region. Cholera outbreak is categorized as being at “an uncontrollable level” by the WHO and is expected to kill many more people if international community does not intervene with a humanitarian solution. Below, Table 6.1 explains the situation of the civilians in numbers:

Civilians Effected by the Yemeni Civil War (2015-2017)	
Killed	10.000+
People Facing Food Insecurity	14.1 Million
Internally Displaced People	3.11 Million
People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance	18.8 Million

Table 2.2: Civilians Effected by the Yemeni Civil War (Source: cfr.org, amnesty.org)

Saudi-led Coalition committed large number of international law violations targeting civilians during their engagement into Yemeni Civil War. These included targeting civilian areas, bombing hospitals and imposing blockades. Blockades prevented humanitarian supplies such as food, medicine and shelter reaching to civilians. UN Report of 2016 indicated that the Coalition is deliberately targeting refugee camps and civilian infrastructure resulting in humanitarian problems for civilians. The report also added that 60% of the civilian deaths since the beginning of the civil war was caused by airstrikes. Reports from the field indicated that Saudi warplanes used white phosphorus bombs in Yemen in 2016. Usage of white phosphorous is considered a war crime and is strictly banned in the international law. This allegation was not confirmed due to

the inability to access conflict zones. Yemen is declared a level three crisis zone by the UN which is considered the highest level of humanitarian crisis. These atrocities targeting civilians are considered war crime by the international law and the UNSC is expected to provide solutions for the ever growing humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which is considered as a result of the ongoing civil war. Another violation of international law is considered the arms sales to Saudi Arabia by the United Kingdom and the United States. Previous UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon stated that the UK is violating Arms Trade Treaty with its arms sales to the Saudi Arabia. Additionally, many airstrikes targeted civilians by the Coalition used American-made ammunition. Therefore, this also created an international pressure towards the United States to reconsider its arms sales to the Saudi Arabia. Overall, Yemeni Civil War shows its effect on civilians in the basic human rights of “right to an adequate standard of living, right to health, children’s rights, women’s rights, and overall human rights”.

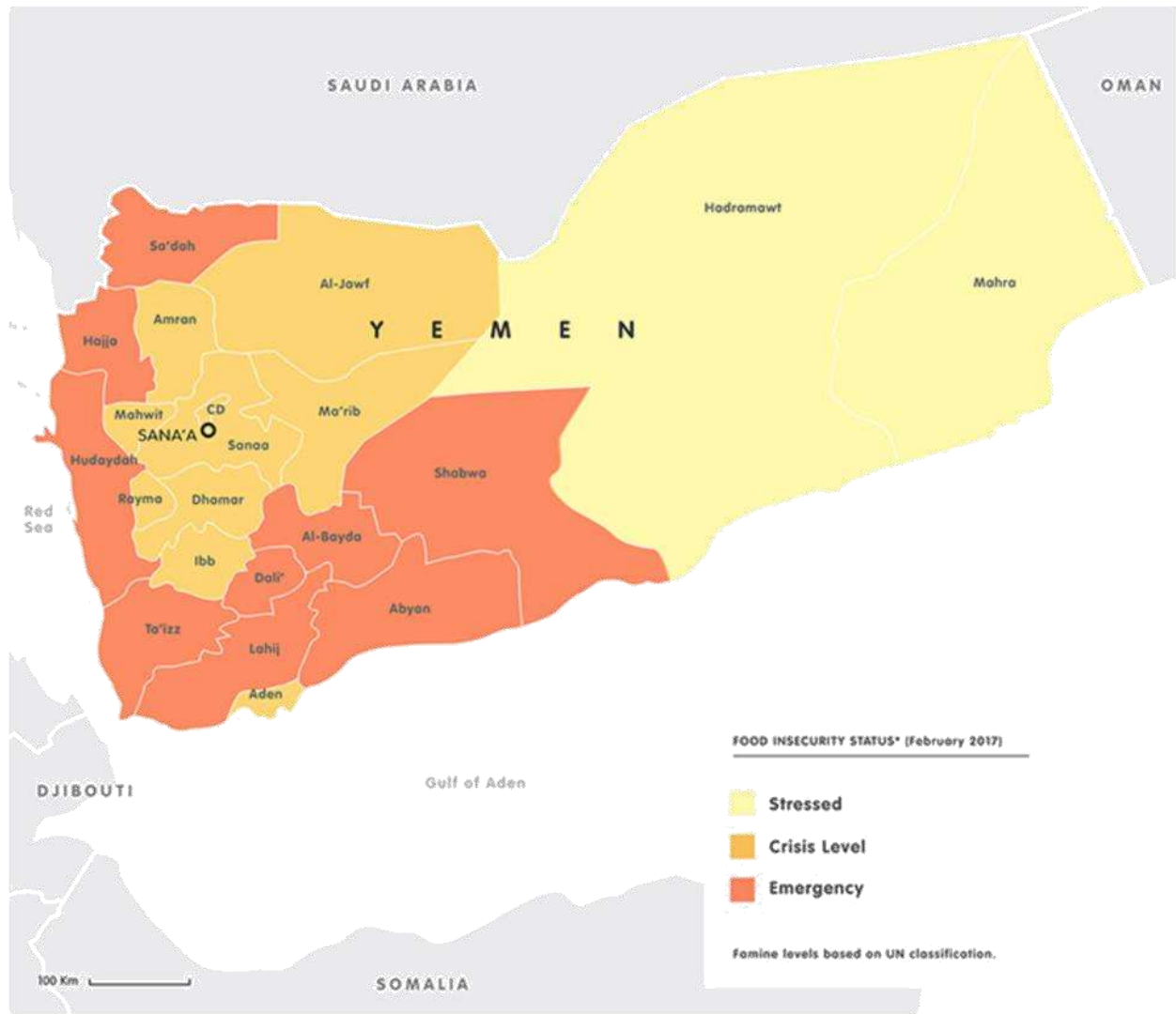


Figure 2.5: Food Insecurity Status in Yemen as of February 2017 (Source: ecfr.eu)

Regarding UNESCO Heritage issues, BBC (2015) reported that Saudi airstrikes damaged the UNESCO Heritage Site in Yemeni capital Sana'a. UNESCO Head Irina Bokova commented on the airstrikes as being "profoundly distressed" and the damage caused by the airstrikes destroyed several cultural heritage sites. This again is an important issue that considers UN and UNESCO. Making sure similar events won't reoccur in the future is one of the priorities of the UN regarding Yemeni Civil War.

G. UNSC Discussions Regarding the Yemeni Crisis

UNSC Resolution 2201 stated that the Yemeni crisis is deepening and there is an immediate need for action from involving parties to restore the stability back to the nation. UNSC Resolution 2201 deplored unilateral actions taken by Houthis to dissolve parliament and take over governmental institutions of which is leading to an expressing alarm due to the jeopardizing actions regarding security, stability, sovereignty and unity of the Yemeni nation. UNSC Resolution 2201 stated grave concern on usage of child soldiers by the Houthis, Ansar al-Sharia and Yemeni security forces. Resolution also mentioned the increasing need for humanitarian assistance with increasing economical, social and security challenges in the country. In addition to humanitarian assistance, observation and detailed investigation was expected to monitor human rights violations by the involving parties.

UNSC Resolution 2216 reaffirmed its decision of Resolution 2201 and added new comments regarding their support for Hadi government as the legitimate government of the Yemen and announced the Hadi government's request from GCC and League of Arab Nations for military assistance to cope with Houthi threat. UNSC Resolution 2216 also added the immediate need for negotiations between conflicting parties with UN-brokered negotiations and restated the GCC's political solution for the situation. UNSC Resolution 2216 also added the decision of arms embargo towards Houthis by all member nations and called upon neighboring countries and active countries in the region to observe and monitor the arms embargo while monitoring all air and naval cargo entering Yemen in order to prevent any restricted military items to reach to the Houthis.

Delegates of the UNSC are advised to look into both resolutions in detail to understand what the UNSC decided on Yemeni crisis while also checking UNSC Resolutions 2342, 2204, 2140 in order to increase their grasp on the topic further.

H. Points a Possible Resolution Should Cover

A possible resolution on the Yemeni Civil War should take all of the discussion in this study guide into account. As of July 2017, most important issues regarding Yemeni Civil War are the “immediate humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people, effective action against human

rights violations by all parties , investigating the origins of anti-ship missiles delivered to Houthis and immediate UN-brokered negotiations to ensure the political transition that would allow the country to step out of its current instability and crisis environment”. Briefly, a new resolution by the UNSC should cover:

- Immediate solutions to cease hostilities and ensure political transition in Yemen
- Providing swift humanitarian assistance to critical regions in Yemen to provide basic needs for civilians and to ensure no further outbreaks could occur while containing current Cholera outbreak
- Ensuring anti-ship missile threat does not escalate into further situation threatening military and civilian vessels passing through the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea
- Implementing accurate measures to observe and detect further human rights violations by all parties

However, it must be noted that the developments in Yemen are fluid and unexpected events could occur. This could potentially push the UNSC for further measures to be taken while considering the general structure of the crisis and not overlapping with the immediate need for humanitarian assistance to the country. Additionally, it is advised to the delegates to look into the acquisitions by various UN officials such as the previous UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon towards the Saudi-led Coalition and its partners regarding possible violations of the Arms Trade Treaty. Overall, the UNSC should ensure the security of the Yemeni people while taking necessary steps and measures against the most prominent threats in the region.

AGENDA 2

ISRAELI PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

1. Topic background

One of the biggest myths about the Israel- Palestine conflict is that it has been going on — for centuries that this is all about ancient religious hatreds. While religion is involved, the conflict is mostly between two groups of people who claim the same land. Moreover, it only goes back about a century, to the early 1900s. Around then, the region along the eastern Mediterranean we now call Israel- Palestine had been under the Ottoman rule for most of its history. A large number of Jews, who generally lived in peace. The situation started to change with the rise of nationalist movements. People in the region were developing a sense of being not just ethnic Arabs but Palestinians, distinct national identity. At the same time, not so far away in Europe, more Jews were joining a movement called Zionism, which said that Judaism was not just a religion but a nationality, one that deserved a nation of its own. So after centuries of persecution, many believed a Jewish state was their only way of safety. Moreover, they saw their historic homeland —the promised lands- in the Middle East as their best hope for them. In the first decades of the 20th century, tens of thousands of European Jews moved there. After World War One, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, and the British and French Empires shared the lands of the Middle East, with the British took control of the region and established the British Mandate for Palestine. At first, the British allowed Jewish immigration. However, as more Jews arrived, settling into farming communes, the tension between Jews and Arabs grew.

Both sides committed acts of violence. So by the 1930s, the British began limiting Jewish immigration. In response, Jewish militias formed to fight both the local Arabs and to resist British rule.

Then came the Holocaust, leading many more Jews to flee Europe for British Palestine, and gaining much of the world in support of a Jewish state. In 1947, as sectarian violence between Arabs and Jews there grew, the United Nations approved a plan to divide British Palestine into two separate states: one for Jews, Israel, and one for Arabs, Palestine. The city of Jerusalem, where Jews, Muslims, and Christians all have holy sites, it was to become a particular international zone. The plan was meant to give Jews a state, to establish Palestinian independence, and to end the sectarian violence that the British could no longer control.

The Jews accepted the plan and declared independence as Israel. However, Arabs throughout the region saw the UN plan as just more European colonialism trying to steal their land.

Many of the Arab states, who had just recently won independence themselves, declared war on Israel to establish a unified Arab Palestine where all of British Palestine had been before. The new state of Israel won the war. However, in the process, they pushed well past their borders under the UN plan, taking the western half of Jerusalem and much of the land that was to have been part of Palestine. They also expelled vast numbers of Palestinians from their homes, creating a massive Palestinian refugee population whose descendants today number about 7 million. At the end of the war, Israel controlled all of the territory except for Gaza which Egypt controlled and the West Bank which Jordan controlled. This was the beginning of another decades-long Arab- | Israeli conflict. During this period, many Jews in Arab-majority countries fled or were expelled, arriving in Israel.

Then something happened that transformed the conflict. In 1967, Israel and the neighboring Arab states fought another war. —Six Days War- When it ended, Israel had seized the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank from Jordan, and both Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. Consequently, Israel occupied the Palestinian territories, including all of Jerusalem and its holy sites. This left Israel responsible for governing the Palestinians, people it had fought for decades. In 1978 Israel and Egypt signed the US-brokered Camp David Accords and shortly after that, Israel gave Sinai back to Egypt as part of a peace treaty. At the time this treaty was Sinai hugely controversial in the Arab world. Egypt Peninsula President Anwar Sadat was assassinated in part because of outrage against it. Over the next few decades, the other Arab states gradually made peace with Israel, even if they never signed formal peace treaties. Israel's military was still occupying the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza, and this. was when the conflict became an Israeli-

Palestinian struggle. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which had formed in the 1960s to seek a Palestinian state, fought against Israel, including through acts of terrorism.

Initially, the PLO claimed all of what had been British Palestine, meaning it wanted to end the state of Israel entirely. Fighting between Israel and the PLO went on for years, even including a 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon to kick the group out of Beirut. The PLO later said it would accept dividing the land between Israel and Palestine, but the conflict continued. As all of this was happening, something dramatic was changing in the Israel-occupied Palestinian territories: Israelis were moving in. These people are called settlers, and they made their homes in the West Bank and Gaza whether Palestinians wanted them or not. Some moved for religious reasons, some because they want to claim the land for Israel, and some just because housing is cheap and often subsidized by the Israeli government. Some settlements are cities with thousands of people; others are small communities deep into the West Bank The settlers are followed by soldiers to guard them, and the growing settlements force Palestinians off of their land and divide communities. Short-term, they make the occupation much more painful for Palestinians. Long-term, by dividing up Palestinian land, they make it much more difficult for the Palestinians to ever have an independent state.

Today there are several hundred thousand settlers in the occupied territory even though the international community considers them illegal. By the late 1980s, Palestinian frustration exploded into the Intifada, which is the Arabic word for uprising. It began with mostly protests and boycotts but soon became violent, and Israel responded with massive force. A couple of hundred Israelis and over a thousand Palestinians died in the first Intifada. Around the same time, a group of Palestinians in Gaza, who consider the PLO too secular and too compromise-minded, created Hamas, a violent extremist group dedicated to Israel's destruction. By the early 1990s, it is clear that Israelis and Palestinians have to make peace, and leaders from both sides sign the Oslo Accords. This is meant to be the big, first step toward Israel maybe someday withdrawing from the Palestinian territories, and allowing an independent Palestine. The Oslo Accords establish the Palestinian Authority, allowing Palestinians a little bit of freedom to govern themselves in specific areas.⁴ *Members of Hamas launch suicide bombings to try to sabotage the process. The right Israeli protests peace talks, with rallies calling Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin a traitor and a Nazi. Not long after Rabin signs the second round of Oslo Accords”, a far-right Israeli shoots him to death in Tel Aviv. This violence showed how the extremists on both sides could use violence to derail peace and keep a permanent conflict going as they seek the other side's total destruction.*®

That is a dynamic has been around ever since. Palestinians come to believe that peace is not coming, and rise in a Second Intifada, this one much more violent than the first..By the time it wound down a few years later, about 1,000 Israelis and 3,200 Palestinians had died.?’

The Second Intifada changes the conflict. Israelis become much more skeptical that Palestinians will ever accept peace, or that it is even worth trying. Israeli politics shift right, and the country builds walls and checkpoints to control Palestinians' movements. They are not trying to. solve the conflict anymore, manage it.?8 The Palestinians are left feeling like negotiating didn't work, and violence did not work, that they are stuck under an ever-growing occupation with no future as a people. That year, Israel withdraws from Gaza. Hamas gains power but splits from the Palestinian Authority in a short civil war, dividing Gaza from the West Bank. Israel puts Gaza under a suffocating blockade, and unemployment rose to 40%.

This is the state of the conflict as we know it today. It is relatively new, and it is unbearable for Palestinians. In the West Bank, more and more settlements are smothering Palestinians, who often respond with protests and sometimes with violence, though most want normal lives. In Gaza, Hamas and other violent groups have periodic wars with Israel. The fighting overwhelmingly kills Palestinians, including lots of civilians. In Israel itself, most people have become apathetic, and

for the most part, the occupation keeps the conflict relatively removed from their daily lives, with moments of brief but horrible violence.

2. Evaluation of the Current Situation.

a) Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Territory

As stated above, what started as a few Israelis building homes, escalated to a point where nearly 10% of the Israeli population lives either in West Jerusalem or the West Bank*? When the settlements first began, they were small encampments in Palestinian territory, but today they are often the size of cities and are filled with middle-class Israeli homes. Moreover, the Israeli government fails to discourage, and at some points even encourages, the migration of their citizens to the West Bank. These settlements undermine the possibility of any peace accord or a two-state solution, given that Israeli citizens in those areas offer a pretext through which the Israeli military can exert their presence in Palestinian territory. While the international community, including their long-term ally, the United States, has actively condemned Israel for these settlements.

b) The Peace Process

The UN has been consistently issuing resolutions since the creation of Israel in an attempt to reach terms.of peace, and most of them have been directed at solving immediate humanitarian crises or conflicts that threaten the people of Palestine or Israel. However, few have made attempts at creating lasting peace in the region. This lack of finding lasting peace is due mostly to different nations' opinions on how to resolve this conflict. Especially in the Security Council, France, China, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States regularly disagree on how peace should be found. This disagreement prevents the UN from actually enforcing any permanent peace talks and thus hindering hopes of establishing peace in the region. Despite the UN not being able to arrive at a definitive form of peace, independent nations have worked to attempt at finding a permanent solution. There have been several essential peace conferences, and these include the Oslo Agreement (1993), Camp David (2000), Annapolis (2007), and Washington (2010). These conferences have

almost always been led/moderated by the United States, and they have aimed at creating a Two State Solution between Israel and Palestine.

In 1993, Israeli and Palestinian leaders met to negotiate a potential peace agreement called the Oslo Accords. Although it did not bring peace, it kicked off years of diplomatic efforts to end the conflict, which is referred to as the peace process.

Today, the peace process revolves around negotiations between Israeli leaders, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Palestinian leaders, led by President Mahmoud Abbas. Although there are two sides to the conflict, on each side there are different actors and internal pressures. Within Israel, however, Netanyahu faces conflicting pressures from his political party, opposing political parties, and Israeli citizens. Within Palestine, President Abbas is the recognized leader, but another group, Hamas, controls a part of Palestine called the Gaza Strip, where they are effectively in control.

The intense conflict and various internal pressures of both sides' means that the peace process requires help from the international community in order to move forward. The United Nations, the European Union, the United States, and Russia have been mainly involved in the peace process, and the four of them are referred to as the "Quartet."

c) Palestine's bid for UN membership

On 23 September 2011, Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas declared its application to become the 194th member state of the United Nations at the 66th session of General Assembly. Becoming a member state would give the state of Palestine recognition based on the borders before the Six-Day War, with East Jerusalem as its capital and more credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. However, membership to the UN requires voting by the Security Council and the US has vetoed Palestine's bid for membership by stating they believe that a

Palestinian state only can come about as the result of negotiations with Israel.

3. Conclusion and Possible Solutions.

As can be seen from the lengthy historical background, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is complicated and hard to digest. The two most common solutions proposed are the one- and two-state solutions. The one-state solution offers either creating a unified democratic state that would integrate Muslims, Christians, and Jews which would effectively end the idea of a Jewish state or bringing the entirety of Palestine under Jewish control which many consider being a violation of Palestinian rights. Therefore it seems inapplicable from perspectives of both sides. The second solution is the one which has been shown effort towards by the international community and also the most widely accepted. It proposes the creation of two separate states for Israel and Palestine, which would be independently governed. The problem with this solution is that despite dozens of attempts at negotiations between the two sides, there is no agreement on terms under which they could create two separate states.

Seeing all the attempts to solve the conflict came to nothing, many consider the matter is 'unsolvable.' However, it is clear that the circumstances are not stable in the region; therefore, something is bound to shake up the status quo eventually as it happened various times in the history. It is now in the hands of this committee to propose solutions that are realistic and effective in order to resolve disputes in the region.

4. Questions to Consider

- What is your government's position on the Israel-Palestine conflict?
- What is your government's position on Palestine's bid for UN membership? What policies can be implemented as a solution to the conflict?
- What should be done to protect peace once it is formed

