

# YEMEN

## IN 2019: CAUSES, CRISIS AND CONSEQUENCES

## **Yemen in 2019: Causes, Crisis and Consequences**

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**Policy Report**  
Summer 2019

Reader:  
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Design, cover and center spread:  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the peak of the Arab Spring uprisings throughout the Middle East, protesters in Yemen called for the former President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to step down from office. After months of protest, Saleh agreed to hand over power to the second-in-command, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, and a new constitution was to be formed under his direction in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), which began in March of 2013. The months that followed were met with conflict and disagreement by groups around Yemen, and while the conference was finalized in 2014 through the signing of the NDC document, conflict again broke out in the following months.

This paper outlines many of the different aspects of the events that followed the National Dialogue Conference, at a local, state and international level. The first chapter in this publication covers the transformation of United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions, from 2011 into 2019. The transformation that took place at an international level indicates the challenges that the international community faces in approaching the Yemen conflict at the UN level, as language of blame and support have become more generalized over time.

The second chapter explores the transition of power between former President Saleh and current President Hadi. Specifically, Saleh's plans to solidify and protect his administration prior to the transition, is argued to have ultimately been one of the reasons that the transition failed. In addition, the developments at the national level during this transition period have had an impact on the inability to achieve peace in Yemen today.

While the transition ultimately led to a variety of different problems after 2014,

the different actors in Yemen are also a significant reason that the conflict is still ongoing. The third chapter in the publication outlines the different actors in the Yemen conflict, beyond the ones that are outlined in the media. Many of these actors must be included in the discussion regarding the civil war in Yemen, as an end to the conflict will not be reached without understanding how the conflict affects different groups.

The two final chapters focus on more local issues that are taking place in Yemen, specifically the food crisis and the role of the World Food Programme in Yemen, and women's role in peace processes. The humanitarian food crisis has put over 20 million lives at risk in Yemen, and this number only continues to rise. The difficulties beyond the sheer volume of food that it takes to feed this many people, are within the logistics of transporting the food and distributing it safely to those in need. This chapter focuses on some of the setbacks that international organizations face in delivering food aid.

The final chapter discusses women's roles in the peace processes, drawing a comparison between the role of women in the NDC conference in 2013/2014 and the role that women have taken as peacebuilders today. The role that women have in peace processes today is much different than it was five years ago, however, women are still struggling to be heard at the national and international level. The solution to the conflict in Yemen cannot be solved without fair inclusion of half of the population.

The themes of these chapters were selected not only for their significance in Yemen current events, but also to bring light to specific topics that are not well discussed

in the Yemen conflict. The research team at BIC has consulted a wide variety of sources to gather this information, to provide a well-balanced and highly topical take on the conflict in Yemen.

## CHAPTER 1

This research analyses UN Security Council Resolutions regarding the conflict in Yemen from 2011 to 2019. It introduces the Yemen conflict and its actors, and presents a summary of the UN strategy towards Yemen so far. In order to situate the research within current literary debates, it introduces a review of existing research on the political dynamics of the UN Security Council, its drafting of Resolutions, and the precedent for a particular type of Resolution-language in 'responsibility to protect'.

It utilizes a discourse analysis methodology in order to identify instances of predicated nominations, specified named actors with a particular description they are attributed with, which were categorized into four groups by the type of predication (Blame, Support, Request and Obligation) and themselves split into three categories of time relating to contextual shifts in the Yemeni conflict (2011-2014, 2015 and 2016-2019). The language of 'responsibility to protect' was identified as a key instance of Obligation in Resolutions, and was particularly scrutinized for. By identifying the numbers of these instances, data was found to show particular trends in naming and attribution strategy within the Resolutions. This data has been presented in graphical form.

The main findings were as follows:

- Resolutions failed to name all relevant actors in the Yemen crisis;
- Resolutions implemented in latter years increasingly resorted to generalizations such as 'all sides' rather than specified named actors;
- Resolutions mainly attributed blame

to unaccountable terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, rather than actors that are able to be made official requests;

- The only Resolutions to use the language of 'responsibility to protect' were those made in 2011 and 2012, before the conflict intensified in 2015

Recommendations for improvements to the UN Security Council Resolution strategy on Yemen proceed from these conclusions.

## CHAPTER 2

The ouster of Yemen's leader Ali Abdullah Saleh marked the end of more than three decades of his authoritarian rule over Yemen. The footage of Saleh peacefully handing the Yemeni flag to Mansour Hadi (Saleh's deputy president and the new sworn in head of state) reflected a promising step-forward for Yemen's future. Hadi was to lead Yemen for a 2-year transitional period during which the country will, among others, prepare for constitutional amendments as well as presidential and parliamentary elections.

Although Saleh had transferred power to Hadi in November 2011, he was still operating at the core of Yemeni politics. He adopted the role of a spoiler through which he undermined Hadi's legitimacy and obstructed the transitional government's roadmap. With more than 30 years in power, Saleh understood the societal and political texture of Yemen and knew how to play by the rule of the game.

This paper argues that the coup-proofing strategies adopted by Saleh during his years in power contributed to the failure of the Yemeni transition. Saleh tailored Yemen's military in a manner that facilitated his grasp over the authority. He sought creating a security apparatus that rotated around his desires. He strove to maintain complete autonomy over the country through appointing his loyalists in the core of Yemen's security apparatus.

### CHAPTER 3

Uncertainty remains looming around Yemen's future prospects. The country is in a swamp of political violence that overshadows nearly all economic, social, and political determinations of the society. The Yemeni Conflict is dominated by various contesting actors pursuing contrasting agendas. Each actor operates in accordance with different political doctrines and follows different strategies in their struggle to achieve their objectives. Although the Saudi-led Coalition and the Houthis are perceived as the most instrumental actors in the conflict, this shouldn't cause a distraction from other prominent actors operating in the same conflict with direct influence on the local population.

Attempting to rationalize contemporary Yemen while excluding other prominent actors would be insufficient. The main objective of this paper is to provide the reader with a thorough description on the main local actors in Yemen. The actors are: Abd Rabo Mansour Hadi's Government, Houthis, the Southern Movement (Hirak), and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). It is important to take into consideration that many of the conflict's main actors were fueled by their pre-war grievances of political marginalization. This paper expands on a previous paper that was published in BIC's monthly thematics project.

### CHAPTER 4

The ongoing humanitarian aid crisis in Yemen has put millions of lives at risk, as men, women and children alike are all at risk of starvation. Yemenis rely on food aid for survival, and while a large amount of aid is entering the borders, some of the food aid is not being delivered to the intended recipients of the aid. Coalition forces have promised large amounts of aid in an attempt to alleviate the world's largest humanitarian crisis, however they are not working to ensure safe distribution of the aid to civilians.

The Houthi Rebels have been accused of stealing food aid, for personal and economic gain.

This chapter will explore some of the difficulties that humanitarian organizations, such as the United Nations World Food Programme, face in delivering food aid throughout Yemen. Similarly, the struggles that all sides of the conflict face in gaining access to food aid and ensuring the fulfillment of their promises to one another will also be explored throughout this section.

### CHAPTER 5

Women in Yemen today face many challenges in fighting for peace. The ongoing conflict in Yemen has disproportionately affected women and their ability to participate in peace processes. Developments in the conflict have defined new roles that women must take on in the fight for peace, particularly compared to the challenges that women faced following the failure of the transition in 2015.

This paper will explore some of the unique risks, challenges and roles that women have taken on throughout the war in Yemen. Specifically, the evolution of women's roles and their ability to participate in peace processes will be analyzed on a time scale from the end of the National Dialogue Conference in 2015, into today. What one would hope, is that women have achieved greater freedom and an ability to openly promote peace in Yemen, yet this has not been the case. Women in Yemen in 2019 have taken on a unique role as peacebuilders and negotiators, but that does not necessarily mean that they face fewer challenges than they did four years ago, before the onset of the current war.

# FOREWORD

## A New EU, and a New Opportunity for Yemen

Ben Lowings

### PREFACE

This research by the Brussels International Center for Research and Human Rights represents the culmination of some months of research and development by our team. Topics selected demonstrate a range of crucial themes that have been analyzed in different ways. The Conflict in Yemen and Coup-Proofing in Yemen represent different analyses in conflict research. The former attempts on actor-map to that aims towards building greater technical insight regarding the ground situation. The latter focuses on the underlying political factors that undermined Yemen's stability during the former regime of Saleh. Dissensus at the Security Council, shows, through a study on UN Security Council Resolution language, how the international community has become reluctant to name and blame specific actors in the Yemen conflict. A Weapon of War in Yemen focuses specifically on the humanitarian food assistance and how aid has become highly politicized. Yemeni Women in Peace Processes, provides an imperative gender lens on the conflict, and a reminder for the necessity of including the perspective of women in any political settlement.

We believe that this research is crucial in order to build greater and more comprehensive analyses on Yemen, and that this can be better used by policy-makers in order to help de-escalate and reach a conclusion to the crisis. Each chapter has recommendations towards specific policy makers; however, the entire work is itself a document addressed to relevant parties. And here, there is one party that we would like to address specifically in this foreword, the European Union (EU).

### THE EU IN YEMEN

The European Union (EU) is at the start of a new political chapter, given the recent May 2019 Parliamentary elections, and the upcoming appointments of the new Commission, and other senior jobs such as the High Representative. While these discussions are ongoing, it is critical for the Union to remain involved with its many international responsibilities, one of which continues to be catastrophic.

The war in Yemen continues into 2019, causing immeasurable suffering to its people. There was renewed optimism in a United Nations (UN)

led process in December 2018 following the signing of an agreement in Stockholm, under the supervision of UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, between representatives of President Hadi's government and the Houthi insurgency. The Stockholm Agreement sought to ease fighting in key centers of conflict in the country, including Hodeida for instance, by requesting an immediate ceasefire and allowing humanitarian assistance into the country. However, since then fighting has continued despite these promises of a ceasefire.

The EU, meanwhile, has offered a response very textbook in nature, encapsulated by its own EU-Yemen Relations Factsheet 1 on the site of the European External Action Service (EEAS). According to the Factsheet, the EU is engaged with the Yemen conflict in three main areas:

1. Political support, security and human rights
2. Humanitarian assistance
3. Development assistance

Rather than a retread of this information however, what is interesting is that what this practically amounts to is an enormous financial contribution of more than €544 million since 2015, across all capacity building, humanitarian, development projects and the like. Otherwise, little else is offered beyond a simple "strong support to the United Nations-led process". What this support is, is rather dependent upon the UN and its Special Envoy. For instance, there have been two European Council conclusions adopted regarding Yemen since 2018. The first of which, adopted on 25 June 2018<sup>2</sup>, expressed concern in Yemen's deterioration and called upon "all sides" to come together for political negotiations. The second, adopted on 18 February 2019<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> The Delegation of the European Union to Yemen. *EU-Yemen Relations, Factsheet*. (2018). [Online] Available at : [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/yemen/53984/eu-yemen-relations-factsheet\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/yemen/53984/eu-yemen-relations-factsheet_en)

<sup>2</sup> Council of the European Union. *Council Conclusions on Yemen (25 June 2018)*. 10369/18. (2018). [Online] Available at : <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10369-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Council of the European Union. *Council Conclusions on Yemen (18 February 2019)*. 6179/19. (2019).

endorsed the Stockholm Agreement and welcomed the UN's most recent efforts including its most recent UN Security Council Resolutions. This was despite the fact that reports of violations of the Stockholm Agreement had already been circulating since January.

Regardless, the lack of a particular and definitive EU position on Yemen, beyond that of the UN, is curious given the investment of some of its Member States. Sweden is a key player for example, with one of its nationals, Griffiths, being the Special Envoy, and the aforementioned Stockholm being the center of the most recent peace talks. More controversially, France and the United Kingdom are engaged insofar as they have provided technical assistance to the Arab Coalition supporting Hadi's government, though both States have appeared to be discrete about this.

### 2019 AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A BETTER POSITION

Returning to the EU, Yemen demonstrates the problematic, yet typical<sup>4</sup>, problems with effective EU-level foreign policy. There is a lack of a distinctive position, a failure to efficiently respond to changing realities on the ground, and Member States undermining the unity of any European position by going their own way. In order to address these challenges, should the EU wish to alleviate some of the suffering of Yemen's people, there are a few steps that the EU should implement, and the new cycle of MEPs and the new Commission provides a perfect opportunity to renew and orientate its policy:

*The EU Should Urgently Convene a New European Council Meeting to Address Yemen*

It is unacceptable that given the serious and ongoing nature of the Yemen conflict that

[Online] Available at : <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6179-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>4</sup> These same problems regarding EU foreign policy are almost identical in the Libyan context for example, see: Ben Lowings. *Libya: The Need for a New International Approach*. Brussels International Center for Research and Human Rights. (2019).

the most recent conclusions were adopted in February. Given that the Stockholm Agreement has already been violated by both sides, there is a clear incentive to update the European Council's position on Yemen to better reflect the reality on the ground.

*The EU Should Convene a Mission to Investigate the On-ground Reality for Itself*

Any new meeting provides ample opportunity to adopt a clear and distinct position on Yemen. Rather than being completely dependent on the UN, the EU should utilize its own resources, both financial and technical expertise, to investigate the on-ground situation for itself and develop a clear position. Those States more involved, such as France, could support this through their own on-ground experience.

*The EU Should Increase its Political and Technical Support to the UN Process Through Direct Mediation*

Though the EU has provided limited, and unspecified, political and technical support to the UN in its efforts to implement a political negotiation in Yemen, it can do more. For instance, the EU could act as a mediator between relevant international actors involved in the conflict, not only including its own Member States and the Arab Coalition, but those supporting the Houthis such as Iran. The latter insofar as it currently has its own complex negotiations ongoing with the EU, and this could provide opportunity to push for de-escalation.



Map 1. Yemen

# CHAPTER 1

## Dissensus at the Security Council: Generalizations and Blame-Aversion in UNSC Resolutions on Yemen

Ben Lowings

### INTRODUCTION

Yemen has been devastated by war. Following a United Nations (UN)-backed political transition process in 2011, the new government under President Abdrahbbuh Mansour Hadi (Hadi, henceforth) was removed from the Yemeni capital by an insurgency instigated by the Houthis in 2015. Regional actors have intervened in the conflict including an International Coalition of forces led by Saudi Arabia (Coalition, henceforth) in support of President Hadi, and Iran who are accused of financial and military supporting the Houthis. There are also southern separatists, and different terror groups including Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Islamic State (IS).

As the conflict deepened in the following years, questions have been asked of the role of the UN, and why it has, as of yet, not managed to alleviate the situation to ensure the protection of Yemeni civilians. However, somewhat regular criticism has emerged about the nature of the UN, and especially its most important body, the UN Security Council (UNSC), and its inability to act when there is a failure to reach a political consensus among its Members.

This paper analyses the role of the UNSC in Yemen, though examination of every UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) regarding Yemen from 2011 to 2019, and asking the following question: 'How has the language of United Nations Security Resolutions on Yemen changed over the time period of 2011 to 2019?' It presents a background of the Yemen conflict, its actors, as well as pre-existing UN actions in Yemen. It introduces some preexisting theoretical perspectives on the UNSC, its UNSCRs, and the importance of key language such as 'responsibility to protect' (R2P).

It then presents a discourse analysis methodological approach that identifies instances of predicated nominations, specified actors attributed to a specific description or conceptual idea, that can be found in the text of UNSCRs. These predicated nominations are categorized as either *Blame*, *Support*, *Request* or *Obligation*<sup>1</sup>. Following a presentation of the results, the paper identifies key trends in the

<sup>1</sup> Italicized and capitalized for emphasis, and to distinguish further references of these categories and derivatives within this paper from their general usage counterparts.

number of specified actors in each category across the time of the Yemen conflict, from 2011 to 2019, the number of generalizations, a disconnect between actors blamed and those requested, and increasing abdication of UN responsibility by the gradual withdrawal of the language of R2P. The paper concludes with some recommendations towards the UNSC, in order to develop more effective UNSCRs regarding Yemen.

### 1. THE YEMENI CONFLICT

#### 1.1 Mapping the Yemeni Conflict

The conflict in Yemen has a complex timeline, with clear tensions continuing to be perpetuated when North and South Yemen united in 1990 following the collapse of the Soviet bloc. At this time, Ali Abdallah Saleh (Saleh, henceforth) became President of a now united Yemen, a position he would go on to hold for another 22 years.

From the 90s onwards, various dissident actors were competing in Yemen. For instance, the 2000s saw a spike in attacks by Al-Qaeda. Following further activities, Al-Qaeda's Yemen branch merged with its neighboring branch in Saudi Arabia in January 2009, forming AQAP. AQAP has had a persistent presence in southern Yemen from then on. In 2004, another dissident group led by Hussein al-Houthi from the Saada governorate in Yemen's north carried out an insurgency against the government. This was primarily framed as a Shia/Sunni conflict, between the minority Houthis and the majority Sunnis in government, but has a more complex history than this simple narrative. For example, Hani Anouti<sup>2</sup> identifies many other causes for Houthi unrest, beyond religious reasons, including historical, social, political, 'tribal' and developmental factors that generated feelings of discrimination and marginalization. Some of

<sup>2</sup> Hani Anouti, *The Houthi Insurrection in Yemen: Shedding Light on the Problem of Minorities in the Middle East*, [Published Master's Thesis]. (Lebanese American University, Beirut, 2011).

these include post-unification regional economic underdevelopment in governorates such as Saada, and institutionalized sectarianism against the ethnic Zaydi Hashemite community of the north. Such feelings were then incorporated into the Houthi movement. Additionally, geopolitical interests have also coalesced, with one key material supporter of the Houthis being nearby Iran reflecting a proxy interest in the power politics of the Gulf region.

Regardless, tensions between the Government and the Houthis persisted beyond a 2007 ceasefire. In addition, southern separatists were active, such as the Hiraak Southern Movement, who were seeking a return to Yemen's pre-unified status quo. These separatists have also intermittently clashed with Yemeni authorities. In this context of discontent across much of Yemen, and a long-term unopposed President, there were calls for electoral reform and new elections in 2008 by government opposition. Demonstrations and protests would continue until November 2011, when in the context of the regional Arab Spring uprisings across the MENA region, President Saleh agreed to hand over power to his deputy Hadi, who formed a new unity government from opposition figures. Hadi was officially elected President the following year in largely uncontested elections. At this stage the political transition process was initiated by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with support from the UN. The second step of this transition was a National Dialogue Conference that was implemented in order to reach a consensus on the next steps in the political transition. This Dialogue was also supposed to accommodate some of the regional grievances, such as those professed by the Houthi movement.

By 2014, and as a result of the National Dialogue Conference, the Presidential panel of the government proposed a draft federal constitution that would attempt to accommodate these various grievances. But in a fierce rejection of the plans, the Houthis acted by force to seize the Presidential Palace



in Sanaa, placing President Hadi under house arrest. Hadi would later leave the capital before making his way to Aden in the south of Yemen. In the following year, the Houthis appointed a new Presidential Council to replace Hadi. Former President Saleh, meanwhile, had allied with the Houthis which would ensure his stake on power for another two years, until he would ultimately be killed by his allies in 2017. Hadi, still-internationally recognized as the Yemeni President, sought support from allies in the GCC, and later that year a Coalition of these international forces, the most prominent of which Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), began air strikes and a naval blockade of the Houthis. To complicate matters further, the terror group IS began activity in Yemen in 2015.

However, the international community has been paralyzed by competing interests. Within the Coalition, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have had competing interests, such as the latter's more overt support for southern Yemen separatists. For the Houthis, there have been multiple reports and evidence that they have received support from Iran, which has enabled them to endure the ramifications of the Coalition naval blockade. In the proceeding years attempts to instigate peace talks such as in Kuwait, between April and August 2016, and Geneva, in September 2018, failed. However, there was hope for progress regarding the

conflict in December 2018, following peace talks between President Hadi and the Houthis in Stockholm, negotiated by the current UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, the third such Envoy appointed since 2011. This called for an immediate ceasefire in, and around, the port-city of Hodeidah and a withdrawal of forces by both sides in order to allow for humanitarian relief and UN monitors. This ceasefire was broken within a few weeks when hostilities resumed.

## 1.2 The UN in Yemen

This summary of events is based upon the Chronology of Events in Yemen page from the UNSC Report 3, and identifies both key moments of action and occasions where Member States intervened to obstruct the UN process for a particular reason.

The UN's involvement in Yemen dates back to April 2011 4, when the UNSC was briefed on the protests occurring against President Saleh in Yemen by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe. At that time, the Secretary-General's Special Advisor

3 Security Council Report, "Chronology of Events – Yemen", *Security Council Report*. [Online] (2019) Available at: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/chronology/yemen.php>

4 Prior to this, there are only two historical UNSCRs, 29 (1947) and 243 (1967), both of which related to the accession of North and South Yemen, respectively, to the UN.

on Yemen was Jamal Benomar, and the initial UN Strategy was to endorse mediation efforts led by the GCC to negotiate a political transition from the regime of Saleh. This was particularly evident in the unanimous adoption of UNSCR 2014 (2011) in October 2011 by the UNSC, which primarily focused on this GCC initiative as well as expressing concerns over the ongoing activities of AQAP. Saleh, for his part, signed the GCC initiative in November 2011 that paved the way for the transition to his deputy, Hadi, and the formation of a government of national unity. During this period until President Hadi's inauguration in February 2012, a majority of UN activities were press statements and endorsements of the positives of the transition process.

### Summary of UNSC Resolutions Regarding Yemen

A number of high-profile attacks against the new government in 2012, sparked a new Res 2051 (2012) to be adopted in June 2012. This showed the UNSC's willingness to consider further measures against those who would undermine the new government. It also showed strong support for the second phase of the transition, the National Dialogue Conference, a process that would consult the relevant actors to attempt to accommodate grievances in the process. Despite intermittent attacks, the ensuing years was considered to be largely successful in Yemen for the UN. Highlights include the January 2013 visit by all 15 UNSC members to Yemen to meet

Table 1. Summary of UNSC Resolutions Regarding Yemen

UNSC	Year	Resolution Summary
2014	2011	This endorsed the GCC initiative for a peaceful transition of power.
2051	2012	This focused on the second phase of the transition, including the National Dialogue Conference, and expressed the Council's readiness to consider further measures, including under Article 41 of the Charter.
2140	2014	This expressed the Council's strong support for the next steps of the political transition and established a sanctions regime against those threatening the peace, security or stability of Yemen through an asset freeze and travel ban. It also established a Panel of Experts.
2201	2015	This strongly deplored the Houthis' actions to dissolve parliament on 6 February and take over government institutions and urged the acceleration of negotiations to reach a consensus solution regarding the political impasse.
2204	2015	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.
2216	2015	This demanded the Houthis to withdraw from all seized areas and to relinquish all seized arms, and established an arms embargo on the Houthis and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.
2266	2016	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.
2342	2017	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.
2402	2018	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.
2451	2018	This endorsed the agreements reached by the parties during the consultations held in Stockholm, Sweden, and authorized the Secretary-General to establish and deploy, for an initial period of 30 days an advance team to begin monitoring and facilitate implementation of the Hodeidah Agreement.
2452	2019	This established the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) for an initial period of six months.
2456	2019	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.

(Security Council Report, 2019)

Hadi and other senior figures in the Yemeni government, and the adoption of UNSCR 2140 (2014) endorsing the next steps in Yemen's political transition. UNSCR 2140 (2014) included a sanctions regime, including assets freezes and travel bans against individuals accused of supporting AQAP and other terrorist groups, and the creation of a UN Panel of Experts.

However, by July 2014 the UN was beginning to acknowledge the presence of the Houthis in Yemen, under consultations with Special Advisor Benomar, but these rarely strayed from general calls for parties to rally behind Hadi's government. January 2015 changed things dramatically with the escalation in violence between the Yemeni government and the Houthis, and here is the first example of serious disagreement among the UNSC on this issue, when members were unable to agree on press elements proposed by Jordan that included the Houthis role in those events, but this was objected to by Russia. Despite this, the UNSC adopted UNSCR 2201 (2015) in February, that strongly condemned the actions of the Houthis in their capture of the Presidential Palace and their placing of President Hadi under house arrest. Later that month, the UNSC adopted UNSCR 2204 (2015) that renewed the assets freeze, travel bans and the mandate of the Panel of Experts. In the following month, Saudi Arabia informed the UN that it was commencing airstrikes against targets in response to a request by the Hadi government.

By April 2015, UNSC members debated the situation in Yemen, where Russia, with significant links both to the former communist South Yemen and members of the previous Saleh regime, proposed a draft UNSCR calling for humanitarian pauses in the fighting. Whilst this was not adopted, another UNSCR 2216 (2015) was implemented that imposed targeted travel bans and arms embargoes against the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Saleh. During this same month, Special Advisor Benomar announced his resignation, and the UN named Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed as his

replacement. Russia again proposed a draft press statement in May on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, though again ultimately unadopted a UK-draft statement was issued that utilized some of the Russian elements.

For the next year, there were multiple consultations at the UN with now-Special Envoy Ahmed regarding Yemen, but little meaningful changes occurred. Following the adoption of UNSCR 2266 (2016) in February 2016, renewing the sanctions and Panel of Experts, the next incident of note was the controversy in June 2016 of the inclusion of the, specifically, Saudi-led Coalition in the annual UN report on Children in Armed Conflict in Annex 1, who was ultimately removed from the report under intense pressure from some UN member states. In July 2016, Russia and Egypt broke silence procedures regarding the adoption of a UK-drafted presidential statement on Yemen, and the then Kuwait-hosted peace talks, which caused the statement to fail to be adopted. Both States did the same again in September. Russia again broke silence procedures on a UK-drafted press statement, condemning an attack by the Houthis on a UAE naval vessel in October, believing the statement was not strong enough.

UNSCR 2342 (2017) was adopted in February 2017, renewing the sanctions and Panel of Experts mandate. And in June 2017, the UNSC adopted its first product on Yemen since April 2016, a Presidential statement regarding the humanitarian situation and confidence-building measures in Hodeidah port, a key contested city between the Houthis and Hadi's forces. In November 2017, Egypt circulated a draft presidential statement condemning an attempted missile attack on Riyadh, but Bolivia, France, Italy, Sweden and Uruguay broke silence procedures believing that it failed to address the humanitarian situation. That same month, the Panel of Experts submitted a case study to the sanctions committee indicating that the arms embargo was being utilized as justification to obstruct humanitarian assistance, and that they had seen no evidence of Saudi Arabia's claim

that short range ballistic missiles were being transferred to the Houthis. A few days later, this report was updated to include that missile debris from attacks against Saudi Arabia were consistent with the design, characteristics and dimensions of Iranian manufactured missiles.

In February 2018, along with the adoption of the annual sanctions regime/Panel of Experts renewal in UNSCR 2402 (2018), Russia vetoed a draft UNSCR prepared by the UK, objecting to references that Iran was found in non-compliance with the arms embargo in Yemen. Bolivia also voted against, and China and Kazakhstan abstained. That same month, Special Envoy Ahmed stood down and was replaced by Martin Griffiths in March. The majority of Griffiths' consultations revolved around the situation in Hodeidah, and resolving the situation there. In August 2018, the UNSC discussed Yemen at the request of Peru, on behalf of Bolivia, Netherlands, Poland and Sweden, issuing press elements expressing grave concern at reports of an air strike on a school bus in Sanaa that had killed over 40 children. That same month, the sanctions committee made their mid-term update, concluding clear evidence of Iranian weapons, evidence of Iranian financing of the Houthis via fuel donations, but that Iran may be willing to play a constructive role in finding a peaceful solution in Yemen.

In the Autumn of 2018, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock suggested to the UNSC that the humanitarian situation in Hodeidah was "approaching a tipping point, beyond which it would be impossible to prevent massive loss of life as a result of widespread famine". Relating to this, the UK announced in November that it was preparing a draft UNSCR in support of Lowcock's concerns. This draft was later adopted in December in UNSCR 2451 (2018), whereby the majority of the UNSCR endorsed the outcomes of the Stockholm meeting organized by Griffiths between the Houthis and Hadi that called for a ceasefire in Hodeidah and a withdrawal of forces. However, UNSCR 2451 (2018) had most

of the references relating to humanitarian suffering removed, due to the threat of veto by the US.

As of writing, in 2019, the UNSC has adopted a further two UNSCRs, 2452 (2019) and 2456 (2019). The former referred to an update on the Stockholm Agreement, as the ceasefire was violated by the parties within a few weeks, whereas the latter was another annual renewal of the sanction's regime and Panel of Experts.

## 2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This section of the paper introduces some ideas proposed by other authors and researchers regarding the UNSC, UNSCR language and a specific type of UNSCR language known as R2P. These ideas are presented in order to situate the paper in terms of preexisting academic and political research, and show further lines of enquiry utilizing these theoretical approaches.

### 2.1 The Security Council

The UNSC has been a subject of much discussion. Some commentators have analyzed its functioning and relevance to the permanent five members, the US, UK, France, Russia and China. Mats Berdal<sup>5</sup> argues that the UNSC, and the status of permanent membership, is indispensable for the UK and France to continue to project power despite their relative declines in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Russia has a similar conception to the UK and France regarding the use of the UNSC for power projection, but represents something more symbolic insofar as it is indispensable to its claim as a Great Power in the present day. China, it is argued, utilizes the UNSC to express what it objects to in the world, and the US, it is argued, seeks legitimacy for its international actions via the mechanism of the UNSC.

<sup>5</sup> Mats Berdal, "The UN Security Council: Ineffective, but Indispensable," IPS Info, 4/03 (2003).

Legitimacy as a key component of the UNSC is expanded further by Ian Hurd 6, who writes:

*"Absent its capacity to mobilize states to voluntarily follow its decisions or contribute to its defense, the Council has no practical power. This is not to denigrate the Council (since its capacity to mobilize states by its symbols is great), but ... the foundation of this power is the legitimacy that actors confer on the organization."* 7

in order to maintain this type of power, the UNSC must preserve the international support of its constituent Member States. Legitimacy in this sense is created not only by a willingness of the parties to utilize power to enforce its decision-making, but by its capacity to express the views of its membership.

However, there have been occasions that have undermined the actions of the UNSC. In 2003 with the intervention of the US and UK in Iraq, despite the objections of the other members of the UNSC, there were calls that the entire purpose of the UNSC was undermined due to unilateral actions taken by some Member States. Michael Glennon 8 writes that there was an inevitability to this occurring, as the world is not multipolar, but rather unipolar insofar as the power of the US is substantially greater than any other in the world. It has capacity to act unilaterally should it choose to, and in doing so exposes that the actions of the UNSC are merely rules created rather than enforceable. The call then follows for the UNSC to modernize and update in reflection of the realities of the present 9.

6 Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy, Power, and the Symbolic Life of the UN Security Council," *Global Governance*, 8. (2002): 35-51.

7 Hurd, "Legitimacy," 47.

8 Michael J. Glennon, "The UN Security Council in a Unipolar World," *Virginia Journal of International Law*, 44. (2003): 91-112.

9 However, there are few incentives for the permanent five to cede more power so the prospects for this modernization may be slow.

Other cases of UNSC division have been on Libya, Syria, and Yemen. In Libya, some UNSC members ignored objections and acted unilaterally as was the case in Iraq. In the latter two cases, the divisions among the UNSC rendered actions blocked or slow to occur. One possible explanation for the differences between the two cases is the interest of the US, who because of its power with respect to all other States, maintains the capacity to act unilaterally should it so wish. In the cases of both Libya and Iraq, intervention was either directed by the US, or was conferred legitimacy by US endorsement or management through NATO. For policy makers and humanitarian advocates 10, these delays and divisions are a cause of great concern.

## 2.2 The Language of UNSC Resolutions

However, even in these contested cases there has been some instances of consensus in the form of legally-binding UNSCRs. These are one of the strongest expressions of the UNSC's will and are significant insofar as they are instances of shared consensus to the extent that the members agreed on a particular binding text. Unsurprisingly then, the language of these binding UNSCRs is extremely important. Jess Gifkins 11 provides three different ways in which the language of UNSCRs matters:

*"First, language is not static and is indicative of current shared understandings. Second, the language used in resolutions informs future decisions. Third, repetition of language is a form of reaffirmation."* 12

The research also takes this view. Critically in the case of Yemen, there are expected changes in trends of language. This implies that these changes in language trends are indicative of new understandings by the UNSC of the situation on the ground. There are at least two clear

10 International Crisis Group, *Council of Despair? The Fragmentation of UN Diplomacy*, Special Briefing 1/Global, 30 April 2019. (2019).

11 Jess Gifkins, "UN Security Council Resolutions and the Responsibility to Protect," *AP R2P Brief*, 6:3. (2016).

12 Gifkins, "UN Security Council Resolutions," 4.



Mike Segar/Reuters

distinctions for the motivations behind these language shifts. Firstly, they may represent a distinct empirical change in the events on ground. For example, it is expected that there will be significant changes in language during 2015 due to the contextual escalation of actions. Secondly, the changes in language may reflect changes in the UNSC itself, and the promotion of a new understanding for political reasons. For example, it is also expected that the election of US President Donald Trump in 2016 would affect the language of the UNSCRs with apparently a distinctive shift in administration of one of the UNSC permanent members. This was anticipated by Peter Salisbury 13 due to the Trump administration's Hawkish stance on foreign policy.

These questions of 'why' regarding the language of the UNSCRs are aspects that can be explored in further research 14 15. What is important for this paper is the inclusion, or exclusion of

13 Peter Salisbury, "Bickering While Yemen Burns: Poverty, War and Political Indifference," *The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, Policy Paper 2. (2017)

14 Jess Gifkins, "The UN Security Council Divided: Syria in Crisis," *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 4. (2012): 377-393.

15 International Crisis Group, *Council of Despair?*

certain actors. For instance, if we take the view that the language of a UNSCR promotes shared understandings of a situation, if it includes a particular actor, or excludes another, it reflects the shared understanding of what actors are involved. This is particularly relevant given the politicized nature of some of the actors in Yemen, and the already-discussed controversies of including the Coalition, Saudi Arabia or Iran in any of the UNSC products from 2015 onwards. Also, the way these actors are framed, whatever the motivation behind their framing, reflects the shared understanding of the UNSC at that particular time about what that particular actor represents to the situation.

## 2.3 Responsibility to Protect

As earlier, the language of UNSCRs implies some sort of shared understanding, and repetition implies reaffirmation. R2P is a particularly specific set of phrases in UNSCRs that imply a certain level of political weight and international responsibility to act based upon international law.

R2P as a discourse on international responsibility first emerged in UNSCR 1706 (2006) regarding the genocide in Darfur in the

early 2000s<sup>16</sup>. But this language did not reoccur for specific countries until 2011, where it was famously invoked for certain international cases such as the 2011 intervention in Libya. As Gifkins<sup>17</sup> notes, there are three ways in which R2P language is formulated by the UNSC:

- Using the language of paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document<sup>18</sup>
- Either ‘the responsibility to protect’ or ‘the responsibility for the protection’
- ‘The responsibility of [government name] to protect’

For the purposes of this research, these phrases are of particular note due to their status as an indicator of a serious level of international responsibility and are worth specific note in the paper’s analysis.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Background

In order to analyze the UNSCRs on Yemen, given the importance of the language of the UNSCRs, the paper will utilize a method of discourse analysis. The method is derived from the ‘political rhetoric analysis’ suggested by Ruth Wodak and Michal Krzyzanowski<sup>19</sup>, which in turn was expanded by Wanda Alarcon Ferraguto<sup>20</sup>. Both examples utilize an approach that delineates nominations and predications into tables.

<sup>16</sup> Gifkins, “UN Security Council Resolutions.”

<sup>17</sup> Gifkins, “UN Security Council Resolutions.”

<sup>18</sup> United Nations, *World Summit Outcome - United Nations General Assembly, A/RES/60/1*. (2005).

<sup>19</sup> Ruth Wodak & Michal Krzyzanowski, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Wanda P. Alarcon Ferraguto, *Oil Dependency and Self-Preservation: The Venezuelan Presidential Discourse*, [Unpublished Master’s Thesis]. (Université Libre de Bruxelles. Belgium, 2018)

A nomination is a specifically named entity, such as ‘Yemeni Government’, ‘the Houthis’ or something more general such as ‘the opposition’. A predication is what ‘thing’ is said about that nomination. For example, in Wodak and Krzyzanowski<sup>21</sup> they provide tables that match nominations, for example ‘I’, with what is predicated about that nomination, for example ‘one of those down there’ and ‘understanding of people tired with policy and politics’. In this way the authors can make conclusions regarding the intentions of the political speaker based upon the types of nominations, and what is predicated about them.

This paper uses a similar strategy, but instead of applying a qualitative analysis to the data and exploring the meaning and intention of the predication strategies, it applies a quantitative analysis by counting the number of times each particular predicated ‘thing’ occurs, and which nominations occur in this context.

#### 3.2 Method

As above, this research analyses every UNSCR regarding Yemen from 2011 to 2019 by dividing data into four different categories of predicated nomination: *Blame*, *Support*, *Request* and *Obligation*. As a continuation of the above logic, a predicated nomination is the complete instance of when a nomination is then predicated a particular idea or description. In this case, the descriptions that are countable for the research are instances of language that fall into one of the four categories as explained below.

When there is an individual instance of a predicated nomination, it is then counted as 1 on the data table. For the purposes of the data set, the grouping goes further by specifying the categories into particular predications within each category, and noting the instances of each predication for the specific UNSCR in which it appears. For ease of analysis, this data has been surmised by both predication category type, and into time period groupings, and this is explained further below.

<sup>21</sup> Wodak, & Krzyzanowski, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis*.

- *Blame* predications are instances where the language of the UNSCR appears to blame or criticize a particular nominated actor and include the following: ‘concern’, ‘serious or grave concern’, ‘condemn’, ‘strongly condemn’, ‘deplore’, ‘alarm’, ‘threaten’, and ‘unjustifiable’.
- *Support* predications are instances where the language of the UNSCR appears to support or justify a particular nominated actor and include the following: ‘support’, ‘welcome’, ‘commend’, ‘endorse’, ‘looks forward’, ‘innocent’, ‘legitimate’, and ‘fundamental rights’.
- *Request* predications are instances where the language of the UNSCR asks something specific of a particular nominated actor and include the following: ‘demand’, ‘calls upon’, ‘strongly calls upon’, ‘insist’, ‘urge’, ‘need’, ‘should’, ‘request’, ‘encourage’, and ‘invite’.

Within each of the four categories, there are differing degrees of language. For instance, ‘demand’ as opposed to ‘encourage’. This would have been more complicated to qualify and justify for this research. Consequently, for this research, all types of predicated nomination in the same category are weighed the same. In the above example, these are both an instance of Request language. However, this could be a route of further enquiry, and for this reason, these instances have been split into their specific language variants in the raw data for future analysis.

Regarding the categorization of UNSCRs into time periods, there are twelve UNSCRs, which have been split into three categories of time: 2011 to 2014, 2015 and 2016 to 2019. The former two categories have three UNSCRs each, while the latter has six (see table 2).

The UNSCRs were categorized this way because it enables a clearer view of trends and patterns

Table 2. Categorization of UNSCRs

	2011-2014	2015	2016-2019
<b>Resolution Number (Year)</b>	<b>2014 (2011)</b>	<b>2201 (2015)</b>	<b>2266 (2016)</b>
	<b>2051 (2012)</b>	<b>2204 (2015)</b>	<b>2342 (2017)</b>
	<b>2140 (2014)</b>	<b>2216 (2015)</b>	<b>2402 (2018)</b>
			<b>2451 (2018)</b>
			<b>2452 (2019)</b>
			<b>2456 (2019)</b>

- *Obligation* predications are instances that use very specific language implying stronger responsibilities and obligations and include the following: ‘obligation’, ‘accountability’, ‘primary responsibility’, and ‘underscored importance’. It was also crucial to look for any specific instances of the language of R2P in this category.

in UNSCR language and, more generally, the time periods for the UNSCRs align with particular steps in the UN process in Yemen:

- 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012) and 2140 (2014) were UNSCRs endorsing and implementing a GCC-led initiative for a transition of power in Yemen from the previous Salah regime.

- 2201 (2015) and 2216 (2015) were UNSCRs condemning events of 2015 whereby tensions escalated between Hadi's government and the Houthi rebels.
- 2451 (2018) and 2452 (2019) were UNSCRs that welcomed the outcomes of negotiations between Hadi's government and the Houthi rebels in Stockholm.
- The other UNSCRs for 2016-2019, 2266 (2016), 2342 (2017), 2402 (2018) and 2456 (2019), were UNSCRs that renewed assets freezes and travel bans as part of a sanction regime. (Note: all four of these UNSCRs emulated the language of UNSCR 2204 (2015), which is an exception to this categorization as it falls in 2015. This detail is expanded more below.

The reason that this latter category has more UNSCRs than the others is because four of the UNSCRs in the latter category, 2266 (2016), 2342 (2017), 2402 (2018) and 2456 (2019), are almost identically-worded UNSCRs regarding a sanction's regime, and its renewal each subsequent year from 2016 to 2019. And also, as the results will show, there was far less data for this research for UNSCRs post-2015. UNSCR 2204 (2015) is an exception to this rule as even though it has the same general impetus of these other four UNSCRs, it featured in 2015 which for the purposes of analysis is its own category.

### 3.3 Methodological Precautions

In the case that there are multiple examples of language predications within a specific clause, only the main predication has been selected. However, if there are more than one clause within a statement, that make more than one specific predication, these have been individually counted. For example:

- *"Demands for all sides to..., and further insists that the international community..."* would be classified as two instances of

predicated nomination.

- *"Calls upon the opposition to recognize it should take action..."* would only be classified as 'calls upon' rather than 'should' as the former is the main predication.

In the case there are multiple nominations predicated to the same thing, either the main nomination or a general nomination have been counted rather than each separately. For example:

- *"Calls upon the Yemeni Government and others to..."* would be categorized as 'Yemeni Government', as the former is the main nomination.
- *"Commends the Yemeni Government and the Houthis for..."* would be categorized as 'all sides' as both nominations appear to be equally weighted and in the context of the UNSCR, means the same as 'all sides'.

There are a few exceptions to this. *"The Hiraak Southern Movement, the Houthis and others..."* was classified as its own separate nomination, rather than as 'opposition groups (general)', because these were two specifically mentioned groups, rather than political opposition per se, which otherwise is explicitly stated in the UNSCR text.

There are some statements within the UNSCR that use the language of predications, but are not ascribed to any discernible nomination and so are not included. Likewise, any nomination that does not have one of these categories of predication has not been included.

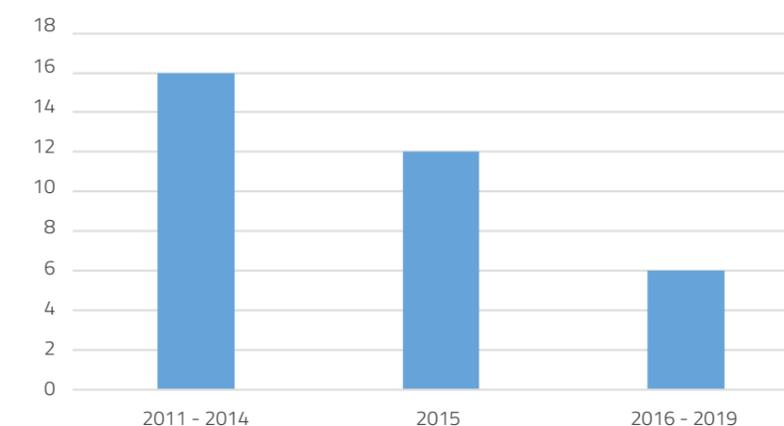
There are also some predicated nominations that have not been included for analysis as they were considered irrelevant to the objective of the research. These were: 'the Secretary-General', 'the Panel of Experts', 'the Government of Sweden', and 'the Security Council'. However, there is a note regarding this latter predicated nomination in the context of R2P that will be explored in the analysis.

## 4. DATA

The most significant data has been depicted graphically below, followed by a brief description of the main data trends.

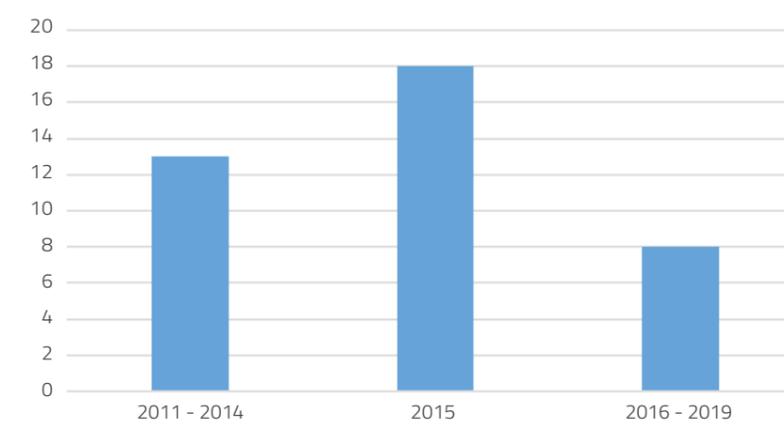
### General Categories

Graph 1. Total numbers of different nominations across all categories



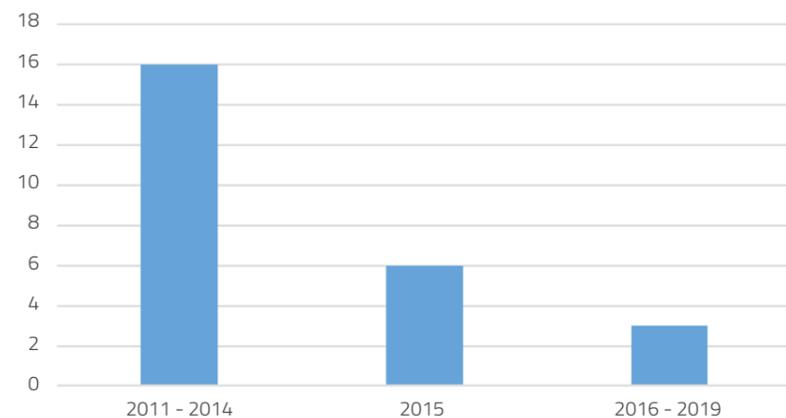
- By time grouping, as the conflict in Yemen progressed, overall there was a decreasing number of different actors directly nominated in any of the four capacities;

Graph 2. Total numbers of Blame Predications



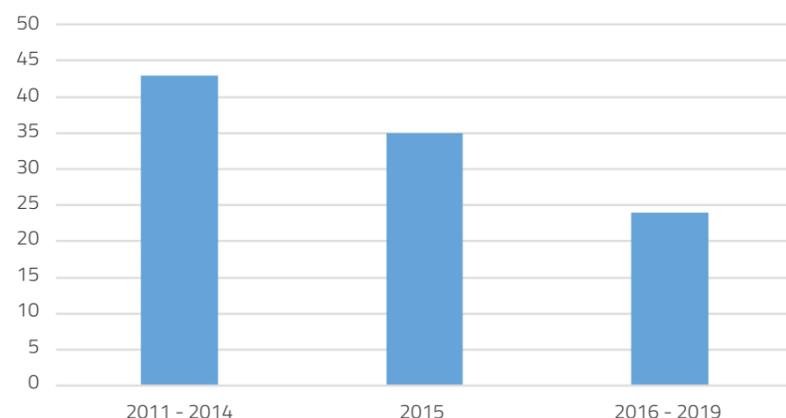
- The number of *Blame* Predications spiked from 2011-2014 to 2015, before decreasing from 2016 onwards;

Graph 3. Total number of Support Predications



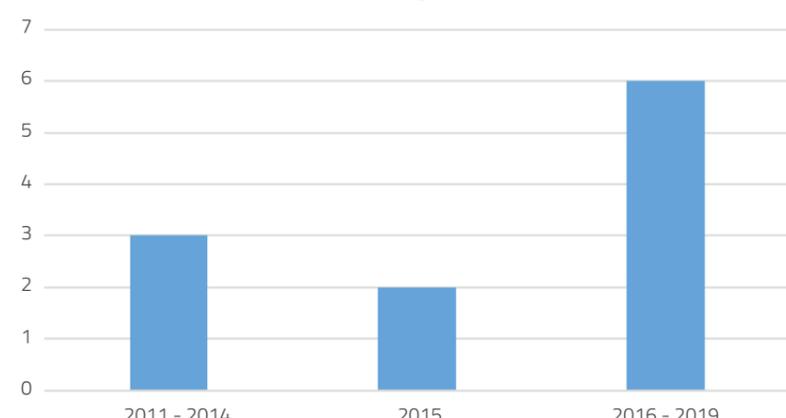
- The number of *Support* Predications dramatically fell in 2015, before lowering even further from 2016 onwards;

Graph 4. Total number of Request Predications



- There was also a continuous fall in *Request* Predications across the time periods;

Graph 5. Total number of Obligation Predications

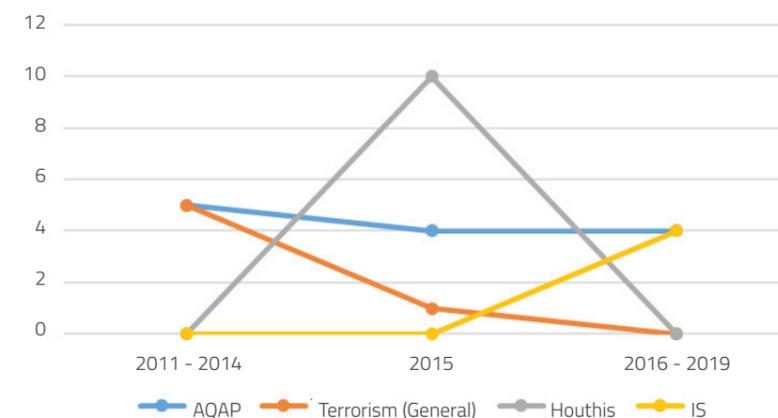


- However, despite being consistently low, *Obligation* Predications actually increased in 2016 onwards;

*Nominated Actors*

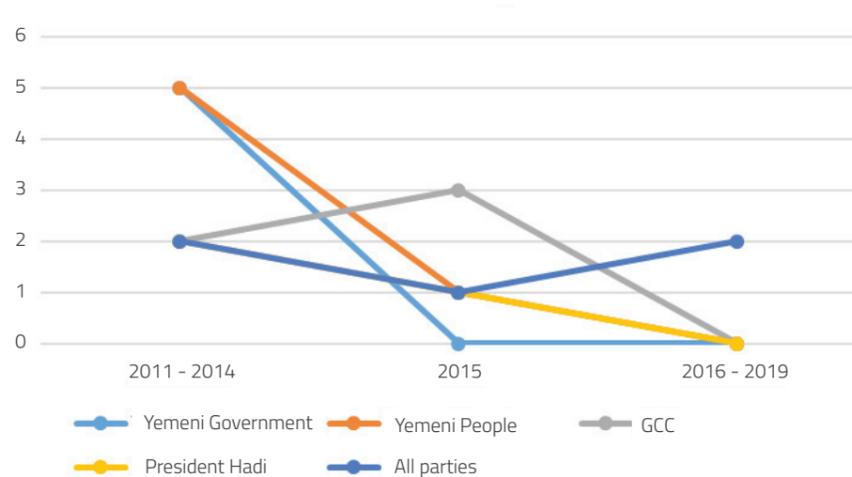
For *Blame*, *Support* and *Request* predications, the only graphically depicted actors are those who were nominated in that particular category on three or more separate instances. Due to overall lower numbers, all nominated actors for *Obligation* have been included graphically.

Graph 6. Number of instances of Blame Predications



- 'AQAP' was the only nominated actor that was consistently *Blamed* across all time periods;
- While 'terrorism (general)' was *Blamed* in 2011-2014, this appears to have changed to 'IS' in 2016-2019;
- The most dramatic result for *Blame* was the 'Houthis' who were *Blamed* the most in any time period, but only for 2015, as they were not *Blamed* at all in the other two time periods;

Graph 7. Number of instances of Support Predications

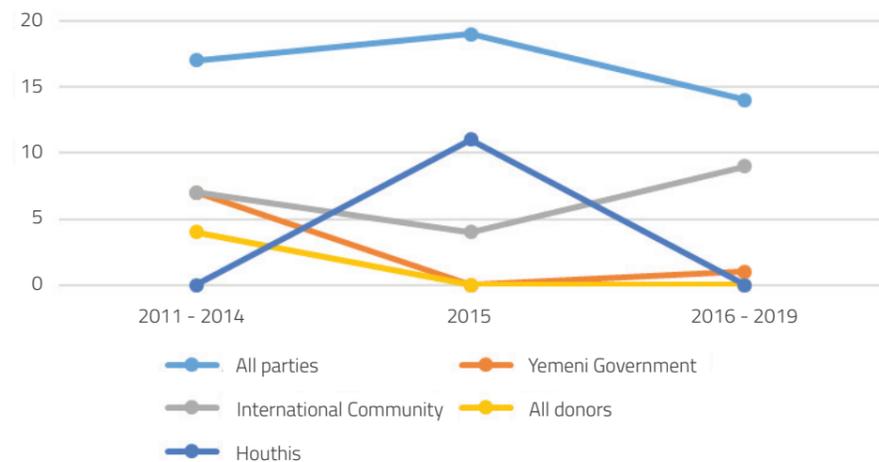


- The 'Yemeni Government' was the only actor that was both *Blamed*<sup>22</sup> and *Supported*, yet both of these occurrences happened within the same time period of 2011-2014;

<sup>22</sup> Not depicted graphically due to negligibility as there was only one instance of Blame predication for the Yemeni Government, which occurred between 2011-2014.

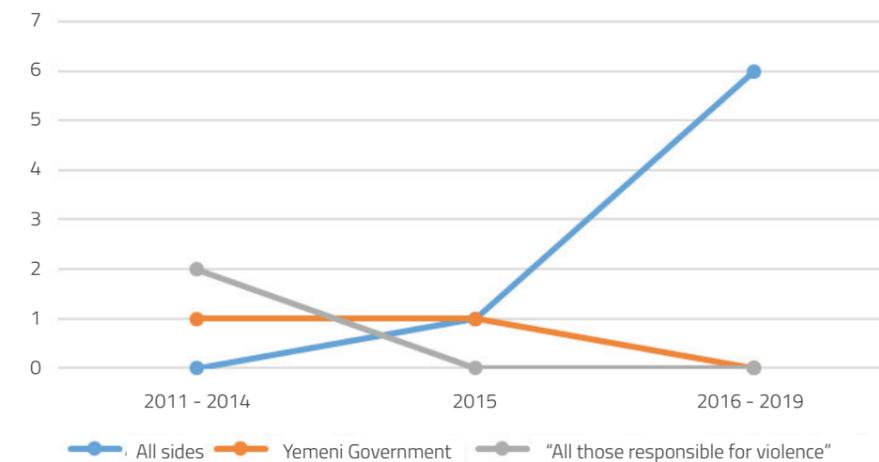
- The 'Yemeni people' were *Supported* significantly in 2011-2014, but these instances of *Support* all but diminished in 2015 onwards;
- The 'GCC' was the only actor that the number of *Support* Predications increased in 2015, though this too disappeared from 2016 onwards;
- 'All parties' were the only nomination that was *Supported* across all time periods consistently, but the number of occurrences was also consistently low;

Graph 8. Number of instances of Request Predications



- Regarding *Request* Predications, 'all parties' was the nominated the most in terms of *Request* Predications, and was consistently high across all time periods;
- Despite a small reduction in 2015, the 'International Community' was otherwise the most consistent in this category of *Request* Predications across both 2011-2014 and 2016-2019;
- The 'Yemeni Government' and 'all donors' were involved in *Request* Predications significantly in 2011-2014 only;
- Whereas the 'Houthis' were involved in *Request* Predications for 2015;

Graph 9. Number of instances of Request Predications



- Regarding *Obligation* Predications, the 'Yemeni Government' and 'all those responsible for violence' were present in either 2011-2014 or 2015;
- 'All sides' were involved more significantly in *Obligation* Predications in 2016-2019.

### 5. ANALYSIS

The data appears to validate the assumption that there was a demonstratively different approach in the UNSC towards the Yemen crisis as the years progressed. As we can see, as the time progressed, there was an increasing reluctance for the UNSC to specify both a range and specificity of actors by name, and an increasing resort to generalized nomination such as 'all parties' or the 'international community'.

Interestingly, the actors that were *Blamed* the most, with the exception of the 'Houthis', including 'AQAP', 'IS' and 'terrorism in general', were not featured in any *Request* Predication. This is understandable in a sense as the UNSC does not consider designated terrorist groups as legitimate actors to negotiate with. However, in line with the overall trend of generalization and lack of specificity, this appears to be more of a scapegoating strategy to avoid *Blaming* anyone who could be negotiated with. Regarding actors who were *Requested* of things, only generic categories of 'all sides' or the 'international community' were consistently requested.

Curiously, there was a shift away from holding the 'Yemeni Government' personally accountable. The instance of *Blame* Predication for the 'Yemeni Government' actually occurred in 2011, when the Salah administration was still in place. All of the *Support* Predications came later when Hadi took power. Interestingly, the *Support* of the 'Yemeni people' occurred in inverse to this, with the most significant *Support* Nominations occurring in 2011 while Salah was still in power, till disappearing in their entirety after 2015. This reads that the people were instrumentalized as a delegitimizing tool towards the Salah regime, and were cited as a means to justify his removal from power. This

is even clearer as despite great public knowledge of humanitarian suffering since 2015, they fail to feature in the UNSCRs from 2016 in this specified capacity.

The 'Houthis' are an interesting case in the data, and appear to justify the categorization of 2015 as its own individual category. There was a large spike in *Blame* and *Request* predications towards the 'Houthis' in 2015 alone, which then completely disappeared from 2016 onwards. This appears to show that the actions of the Houthis in 2015 to seize the Yemeni capital completely shifted the dynamics of the Yemen crisis in the understanding of the UN, to the extent that they became the main antagonistic actor in 2015. But the fact that they disappeared from this capacity in UNSCRs from 2016 onwards suggests that something shifted this understanding. The contextual speculation here is that the UNSC consensus on the Houthis was lost from 2016 onwards due to the intervention of UNSC politics and priorities. For example, as discussed in 'The UN in Yemen', Russia increasingly stepped in to block various drafted statements condemning the Houthis and their allies, including its veto of the inclusion of Iran in a draft UNSCR in 2018. We also find various instances of Member States blocking attempts to include the Saudi-Coalition in UN documents, such as the Annex in the annual UN Report on Children in Armed Conflict, and other statements condemning humanitarian suffering, such as the US veto threat of the draft UNSCR 2451 (2018) in late 2018 unless references to humanitarian suffering were reduced.

This latter point may also explain why the 'GCC' were the only actor to actually have an increase in *Support* Predications in 2015. The UNSCRs till this point presented the GCC as a negotiator and



mediator in the Yemen crisis, in line with the dialogue mechanism in place from 2011-2014. However, with the intervention of the Coalition forces in support of the Hadi government, their status as an actor in the conflict became somewhat compromised. There is notably no mention of the Coalition, any of its composite Member States, or conversely any specific backers of the Houthis, such as Iranian fuel financing and military armament. These are conspicuously absent, and imply that there was no consensus at the UNSC on their inclusion. In addition, other actors such as the Hiraak Southern Movement were only referenced in passing, and appear to be absent for a different reason in virtue of perceived irrelevance to the current conflict.

A significant anomaly was the increase in *Obligation* Predications for 'all sides' from 2016 onwards. This was an unexpected finding, as this skewed the results for *Obligation* to depict a significant increase in 2016 onward. However, after analyzing the specific UNSCRs, there may be an explanation. Each of these instances was the same clause:

*"Reaffirming the need for all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law as applicable"* <sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> UNSC Res 2266 (2016).

This was a recurring phrase present in every renewed UNSCR for the assets freezes etc. and so was directly repeated in many UNSCRs word-for-word.

There was very little talk of *Obligations* of actors at all. The language of R2P featured for one actor only, the 'Yemeni Government', with the phrase:

*"Recalling the Yemeni Government's primary responsibility to protect its population"* <sup>24</sup>

This occurred once in 2011, as part of the overall delegitimization strategy against Salah. This was never restated in any other UNSCR. R2P featured in two other instances, but only for an actor that was not included in the above data, the 'Security Council' itself. The following phrase occurred in 2011 and 2012, and then completely disappeared:

*"Mindful of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations"* <sup>25</sup>

Clearly, the consensus on this language and the responsibilities of the UNSC towards Yemen shifted after 2012.

<sup>24</sup> UNSC Res 2014 (2011).

<sup>25</sup> UNSC Res 2014 (2011).

## 6. CONCLUSION

As the data shows, there appears to have been three periods of UNSC consensus on the Yemen crisis. From 2011-2014, there was a clear consensus against the Salah regime, and the implementation of the GCC dialogue mechanism. During this period, the UNSC used more traditional language of national and international responsibility, including R2P, and accountability. They also had a strategy of nominating more varied and specific actors. Whether these UNSCRs were successful is debatable due to the event that followed, but for a while at least it appeared that this strategy was working to implement the GCC mechanism.

From 2015, the strategy shifted to blaming the Houthis for being disruptive towards the dialogue process. The sheer spike in blame and request towards the Houthis was very noticeable and represented a sharp change in strategy as they were effectively isolated as the primary reason for the deterioration in the Yemen crisis. Following this, from 2016 onwards the strategy became much more general with a lack of specified actors, and a repetition of language and approach for many years. This appears to represent the time in which the Yemen crisis became politicized with members of the UNSC involved in a political capacity.

Neither of these latter strategies appeared

to significantly alter the Yemen crisis. As we saw, the UNSC spent large periods of time debating the language of press statements and presidential texts, in addition to the more powerful UNSCRs-proper, and Members from all sides consistently vetoed, abstained or broke silence agreements to block certain passages of text.

Although as discussed, the difficulty with the UNSC is the inability of the members to reach consensus on issues upon which they diverge. However, this does not stop us from asking the following question: how could the strategy of UNSCRs be better used in the Yemeni case towards concrete actions? From simply looking at the failings in latter-year UNSCRs, there are four points that can be made here, which proceed as recommendations below.

- Firstly, part of the failings of the latter UNSCRs were due to their inability to name all of the relevant actors involved in the case in any of the four capacities. By failing to nominate actors such as the Coalition or Iran, the UNSCRs fail to capture the realities of the conflict on ground;
- Secondly, the language needs to move beyond generalizations. The frequency of the language of 'all sides' is increasingly redundant, as actors are unspecified and

unfairly grouped together with others. If there is a clear imbalance of power between both sides, then this should be expressed clearly;

- Thirdly, the complexities of the Yemen crisis cannot be explained solely by blaming specific terrorist groups, upon which the UNSC refuses to engage with by requesting anything of. There should be a clearer link between fairly blaming and requesting of specific relevant actors who could implement such requests on-ground;
- Fourthly, the disappearance of the language of R2P and international obligations of specific actors is concerning for it limits the level of international pressure that the UNSC

could exhibit on relevant parties. By undermining the power of the UNSC in this way it ultimately undermines the strength of the international response. In doing so undermines its own role as the penholder of the 2005 World Summit to prevent war crimes, ethnic cleansing, genocide and crimes against humanity;

These recommendations do not address the specific complexities of the ground, or the overarching political climate, nor do they seek to. However, they indicate that the UNSC strategy towards Yemen, regarding the language of its UNSCRs, is lacking key principles that would otherwise allow for a clearer portrayal of the roles and responsibilities of all relevant parties. For a more even assessment of the Yemeni crisis, this is otherwise critical to even begin to assess these challenges in their particularities. ■

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *To the United Nations Security Council:*

- To accurately reflect the events on ground, nominate all relevant and involved actors in the Yemen conflict, including the Saudi-led Coalition, Iran, and the Hiraak Southern Movement, in future UN Security Council Resolutions;
- To allocate blame and responsibility fairly and accurately, avoid generalizations, such as “all sides”, in UN Security Council Resolution nominations on Yemen where possible, and instead advocate to specific actors;
- To ensure the relevance of requests within UN Security Council Resolutions, move beyond solely blaming unaccountable terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, to political actors that can actively be engaged with such as the Yemeni Government;
- To increase the political weight and legal precedent of the UN Security Council Resolutions to ensure full accountability under international law, utilize the language of ‘responsibility to protect’ in Resolutions, regarding political actors both domestic and international, where necessary.

## CHAPTER 2

### Coup-proofing in Yemen: Saleh’s Military

Mohammed Sami

#### INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, Yemenis marched in the streets of Sana’a denouncing Ali Abdullah Saleh’s policies and economic mismanagement. In resemblance to the demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt, protestors demanded change and an end to Saleh’s rule over Yemen. It wasn’t apparent that Saleh was willing to comply with what he conceived as a plot against the country, thus describing the protests as organized by “a control room in Tel Aviv for destabilizing the Arab world [...that is] managed by the White House.”<sup>1</sup> Saleh’s attempts to maintain control over the situation proved to be futile and the situation began deteriorating with signs of political violence looming around the country, particularly that Yemen served as a host for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the allegedly Iran-supported Houthi Movement. This prompted the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), led by Saudi Arabia which shares 33% of its land borders with Yemen,<sup>2</sup> to intervene in an attempt

to avoid an endless bloodbath. The GCC’s initiative was concentrated around a transfer of power from Saleh to his deputy Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi which in return Saleh would be granted an amnesty along with his subordinates. Although initially refusing the terms of the agreement, Saleh eventually agreed to sign the GCC’s initiative following a failed assassination attempt during Friday prayers in the presidential palace.<sup>3</sup>

Although Saleh had transferred power to Hadi in November 2011, he was still operating at the core of Yemeni politics. Saleh’s reluctance to abandon the presidency soon turned into complete refusal to abandon Yemen’s political process. In the immediate period following the agreement’s signature, Saleh contended that “Our people will remain present in every institution. Two months have passed since this

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<http://countrystudies.us/saudi-arabia/14.htm>.

<sup>1</sup> Tobias Thiel, “Yemen’s Arab Spring: From Youth Revolution to Fragile Political Transition,” 2012, 5.

<sup>2</sup> “Saudi Arabia - Geography,” accessed May 21, 2019,

<sup>3</sup> The assassination attempt was in June of 2011. Although he survived the assassination, Saleh was heavily injured and was immediately transferred to Saudi Arabia to receive medical treatment. Peace talks were at large with the Saudis during this period.



creation of this weak government, which doesn't know the ABCs of politics. It won't be able to build a thing or put one brick on top of another." 4 Saleh adopted the role of a spoiler through which he undermined Hadi's legitimacy and obstructed the transitional government's roadmap. With 33 years serving on the head of the country's pyramid, Saleh overshadowed Yemen through situating the country's joints in the hands of his subordinates. In addition, Saleh utilized his entrenched tribal networks to maintain a future transition that poured into his favor. After all, the alliance built between Saleh and his long-time enemies the Houthis consolidated the latter's grasp over Sanaa, paving a way for the beginning of the civil war.

Hence, this paper aims to discuss the transition's failure in Yemen through analyzing the impact of Saleh's policies both during his years in presidency and after stepping down. The reader should note that limiting the transition's failure to one factor would not be plausible. As such, this piece focuses mainly on Saleh's pre-2011 policies with particular focus on Yemen's

4 Barany Zoltan, "The Challenges of Building a National Army in Yemen," 2016 accessed May 21, 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/challenges-building-national-army-yemen>.

military as a result of its pivotal role in Yemen's demonstrations. The paper is structured as follows. First, an explanation on the coup-proofing strategies practiced by Saleh and how that fragmented the country's security apparatus. Second, an analysis on the amnesty granted to Saleh and how it provided him with the space to maneuver as he pleased during Yemen's transition. Last, a conclusion that sums up the paper's objectives.

### COUP-PROOFING STRATEGIES

The role played by the state's armed forces is determinant in preserving the country's security from internal and external threats. 5 Under autocratic regimes, the establishment of a strong security apparatus facilitates the state's mission in its struggle to control local dissidence, prevent regime overthrow, and maintain its authoritarian grasp over power. 6

5 Michael Makara, "Coup-Proofing, Military Defection, and the Arab Spring," *Democracy and Security* 9, no. 4 (September 1, 2013): 334–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2013.802983>.

6 Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (2004): 139–57, [https://doi.org/10.2307/4150140.including weak civil](https://doi.org/10.2307/4150140.including%20weak%20civil)

Militaries, however, are a weapon with two sharp ends. While from one side they serve as the state's sword and shield in protecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity, militaries can pose an existential threat on the ruling regime by internally mobilizing for the purpose of toppling that regime. Particularly when we look at a region like the modern Middle East, military interventions and coup-d'états proved to be decisive in shaping the region's political structure. In this way, the Middle East demonstrated to have a fertile soil for coup-d'états in various occasions, where fifty-five coups were conducted between the end of World War II and the end of the 1980s – half of which were successful. 7

The decrease in coups trend can be attributed to a variety of reasons amongst which is that the political leadership "learned to take preventative measures to forestall their recurrence." 8 A leader that prioritizes staying in power invests in tailoring a strategy to prevent potential dissidence within the military ranks that attempt to conduct a coup. 9 As such, coup-proofing practices rotate around the objective of preserving the regime's grasp over power

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society, state-dominated economies, poor socioeconomic performance, and nondemocratic culture. By contrast, the region's enduring authoritarianism can be attributed to the robustness of the coercive apparatus in many Middle Eastern and North African states and to this apparatus's exceptional will and capacity to crush democratic initiatives. Cross-regional comparison suggests factors both external and internal to the region that account for this exceptional strength.]]";DOI:"10.2307/4150140";ISSN":0010-4159";title-short":"The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East";author":{"family":"Bellin";given":"Eva"},"issued":{"date-parts":[[2004]]}}";schema":"https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"}  
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7 James T. Quinlivan, "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (October 1, 1999): 131–65, <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228899560202.116228899560202> {\\i} International Security} 24, no. 2 (October 1, 1999

8 Ibid.

9 Jun Koga Sudduth, "Coup Risk, Coup-Proofing and Leader Survival," *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 1 (January 2017): 3–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343316676885>.

through deterring potential military defection aimed at toppling the regime. It is defined as "efforts or actions adopted by political leaders that will reduce the military's ability to organize a successful coup". 10

Notably, there are three main coup-proofing strategies that regimes adopt. 11 First, regimes establish 'parallel militaries' with autonomy that are inherently independent from the regular army's command. Unlike the state's armed forces which are mainly responsible for protecting the state, the parallel militaries operate mainly to protect the regime. 12 Parallel militaries, in principle, do not necessarily enjoy the capabilities of defeating the state's regular army. However, they enjoy the capacity of high resistance that would discourage potential coup attempts as a result of the high opportunity cost. 13 Second, regimes invest in the loyalty of the security apparatus through providing the latter with cohesive financial budgets. Such measures keep the military and its personnel satisfied and would therefore reduce coup possibilities. Therefore, the regime establishes an atmosphere where the survival of the military's financial security is highly dependent on the survival of the regime itself. Third, regime builds the military in accordance with 'communal identities' where the sensitive military positions are given to officers that enjoy strong relations with the regime. As such, the military ranks are given to officers depending on the regime's level of trust and not on the officers' personal capacity. 14

### COUP-PROOFING IN YEMEN

Coup-proofing strategies fit well in explaining the civil-military interactions in Yemen under Saleh. Saleh's firm grasp over the military facilitated his stay in power, particularly in a context where his predecessors where either assassinated or

10 Ibid.

11 (Makara 2013) See no.5 above

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

toppled by a coup.<sup>15</sup> To prevent a coup from recurrence, Saleh extended his family's (Sanhan) control in Yemen's army. Although his tribe roughly represented 1% of the entire Yemeni population, 70% of the commanding positions in Yemen's security apparatus fell under the Sanhan's command.<sup>16</sup> Saleh established a criteria of delegating military command to forces in accordance with the latter's loyalty rather than competence or experience.<sup>17</sup>

Saleh's main objective was regime survival in which he sought to tailor an army that was more invested in protecting the regime than protecting Yemen's national sovereignty.<sup>18</sup> His endeavors to keep the military's command under his watch were embedded in the allocation of military personnel in the country. Yemen's military was mainly concentrated around Yemen's capital Sanaa and its peripheries.<sup>19</sup> Illustrating the exact number of soldiers to the reader would require extensive research not only because transparency is absent in Yemen but also reports suggest that one-third of the Yemeni military consisted of 'ghost soldiers'.<sup>20</sup>

15 Eliezer Be'eri, "The Waning of the Military Coup in Arab Politics," 1982, 15.

16 Adel Al-Shargabi, "The Restructuring of the Yemeni Army," *AlMuntaqa* 1, no. 1 (2018): 38–50. 2011, 40 days after the outbreak of the youth revolution in Yemen, General Ali Muhsin Saleh al-Ahmar, commander of the Northeastern region and the First Armored Division, Brigadier Muhammad Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar, commander of the Eastern region, and a number of other senior officers declared their support for the Yemeni Revolution. As a result, the Yemeni Army found itself divided into two armies, "the pro-revolution army" and "the family army," as labeled by the revolutionary forces, indicating the latter's link to Ali Abdullah Saleh's family. These developments exposed the hidden split within the army, spiraling these divisions to the point of no return. The capital Sanaa and a number of other Yemeni cities subsequently witnessed clashes between these two armies, and between their respective militias, leading the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC

17 Ibid.

18 (Zoltan 2016) See. No.4 above

19 Ibid.

20 Khaled Fattah, "Yemen's Insecurity Dilemma," Carnegie Middle East Center, 2014, <https://carnegie-mec.org/2014/02/11/yemen-s-insecurity-dilem->

As such, the responsibility of protecting the state's borders were often delegated by Saleh to remote tribesmen and paramilitaries at best or completely left out of his interests at worst.<sup>21</sup> The absence of a centralized military command exacerbated a fragile border security. This would be evident in the 1995 events of the effortless Eritrean occupation of the strategic Yemeni islands of Hanish.<sup>22</sup> Notably, Saleh's coop-proofing practices rendered the capabilities of the military, thus creating armed forces that are incompetent in protecting the state.

Saleh sought to maintain complete autonomy over the country through appointing his loyalists in the core of Yemen's security apparatus. As Laura Kasinof defined it "He [Saleh] ruled in such a way that under every rock in Yemen, one could find his footprint."<sup>23</sup> As illustrated in table 1 in the appendix,<sup>24</sup> the reader can see how Saleh entrenched his men in the military's roots. Most sensitive posts were distributed amongst Saleh's inner circle. In even more extreme cases, children would inherit fathers' positions following their death, as seen in the case of the Central Security's command.

Saleh operated as he wished without encountering any legitimate dissidence to his decisions. The lack of regulatory law on the state's armed forces facilitated Saleh's efforts to prevent the institutionalization of the armed forces and increased his decision-making autonomy in the military. In addition, Saleh was in charge of determining the number of soldiers, the recruitment methods and standards, the

21 (Al-Shargabi) see no.16 above

22 Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, "Red Sea Security and the Geopolitical-Economy of the Hanish Islands Dispute," *Middle East Journal* 52, no. 3 (1998): 367–85.

23 Kasinof Laura, "Ali Abdullah Saleh: Yemen's Unrelenting Despot - POLITICO Magazine," Politico, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/12/28/ali-abdullah-saleh-yemen-obituary-216177>.

24 Khasruf Muhsin, "The Yemeni Army: Its Creation, Evolution and Pathways For Future," *Aljazeera Center for Studies* (2012) Arabic Source <http://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/reports/2012/07/20127308279666699.html>

regions where new recruits came from, and in which the military units were to be deployed. He routinely issued orders promoting armed forces officers without abiding by the legal conditions surrounding such promotions. This could be further identified through Saleh's decision to grant his son, Khaled Ali Abdullah Saleh, the rank of a colonel and the command of a mountain infantry division immediately after his graduation.<sup>25</sup>

Since his rise to power, Saleh invested in mending ties with local tribes in his struggle to protect the regime.<sup>26</sup> Tribes resembled a fertile soil for the military's recruitment and the sustainability of Saleh's power. In an interview given to the International Crisis Group, a retired military officer stated that Saleh concluded an agreement with the Sanhans<sup>27</sup> that General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar will succeed Saleh if the latter was assassinated.<sup>28</sup> However, Saleh started gradually favoring his son, Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, the commander of the strong Republican Guard at Ali Mohsen's expense. The Republican Guard was equipped with exceptional resources that varied from recruitment, arms, gear, ammunition and supplies.<sup>29</sup> Naturally, the disparities expanded between the Republican Guard and Ali Mohsin's 1st Armored Brigade as well as the rest of the Yemeni military. This triggered unrest across several ranks within the military, particularly after Ahmed Ali became a member in Yemeni Parliament in 1997. This was evident in the case of Mohammed Ismail al-Qadhi, the military commander of the Eastern Region, who was allegedly the most vocal against

25 Holger Albrecht, Aurel Croissant, and Fred H. Lawson, *Armies and Insurgencies in the Arab Spring* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). Pp 66

26 Ibid.

27 Saleh's Village

28 "Yemen's Military-Security Reform: Seeds of New Conflict? | Crisis Group," International Crisis Group, accessed May 21, 2019, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/yemen-s-military-security-reform-seeds-new-conflict>.

29 Ibid.

Saleh's policies in that regard.<sup>30</sup> Al-Qadhi, along with other senior military officials, lost their lives in a helicopter accident in 1999.<sup>31</sup> This assists in demonstrating how Saleh left no opportunity for dissent against his decision making autonomy. It could also be seen through Saleh's attempts to further weaken Ali Mohsen through exhausting his military division in six wars against the Houthis in the North. Saleh acknowledged how powerful Mohsen was, and perhaps conceived him as the only strong competitor to his son Ahmed. After all, Mohsen was regarded by many as the strongest man in Yemen only after Saleh.<sup>32</sup> However, the space left by Saleh for the opposition was significantly scant. He clipped the wings of any entity that would represent a threat to his decision-making authority. Saleh even attempted to eliminate Mohsen through giving Saudi Arabia the coordinates of Mohsen, presenting them as coordinates for the Houthis.<sup>33</sup>

## YEMEN'S MILITARY SPLIT

When demonstrators took on the streets of Sanaa in part of the Arab Spring events, Saleh's concerns rotated around maintaining power rather than addressing the demands of the demonstrators. As people started calling for Saleh to step down, he maneuvered through calling upon his supporters to mobilize and create a countermovement, promising to adopt political and economic reforms, and preparing the country for constitutional amendments.<sup>34</sup> However, the demonstrators were defiant and their trust in Saleh was not in its best forms. They refused Saleh's proposals and insisted that

30 Winter Lucas, "Restructuring Yemen's Military Leadership," Foreign Military Studies Office, 2012, <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/204274>.

31 Ibid.

32 Vincent Durac, "Yemen's Arab Spring – Democratic Opening or Regime Maintenance?," *Mediterranean Politics* 17, no. 2 (July 1, 2012): 161–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2012.694042>.

33 (Al-Shargabi 2018) see no.16 above

34 (Tobias 2012) See no.1 above

he should immediately step down. The situation grew difficult for Saleh to handle as the country was passing through a period of dramatic deterioration. In less than a year, the country has recorded more than 2,000 casualties and injuries exceeded 22,000. <sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the country reached its highest recorded inflation rate of 24.77% by October of 2011. <sup>36</sup>

Saleh's incompetence to maintain control over the developments in Yemen triggered unrest amongst some ranks in the military. He started resorting to violence in an attempt to maintain control over the popular movement. His excessive use of force prompted many of his historic allies to abandon him, namely tribal sheikhs as well as Sunni clerics. <sup>37</sup> Furthermore, strongman Ali Mohsin al-Ahmar also decided to defect and take the side of the protests, thus throwing his weight behind the demonstrators. <sup>38</sup> Ali Mohsin's decision was probably motivated by Saleh's deliberate policies to have his son, Ahmed, inherit the republic. Mohsin mobilized his forces into the capital of Sana'a to protect the demonstrators from any belligerent actions that Saleh would adopt. <sup>39</sup> Mohsin's defection fractured the military into two main parties: on the one side Saleh and his son along with their supporters and on the other side, Mohsin and his supporters.

Armed confrontations continued between both parties in what appeared to be tit-for-tat

35 al-Haj Ahmed, "Yemen Says More than 2,000 Killed in Uprising," *The Washington Post*, 2012, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/yemen-says-more-than-2000-killed-in-uprising/2012/03/18/gIQA0tLS\\_story.html?amp;utm\\_term=.492e453470a0&noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.ae198fd-f70ba](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/yemen-says-more-than-2000-killed-in-uprising/2012/03/18/gIQA0tLS_story.html?amp;utm_term=.492e453470a0&noredirect=on&utm_term=.ae198fd-f70ba).

36 "Yemen Inflation Rate | 2019 | Data | Chart | Calendar | Forecast | News," *Tradingeconomics*, accessed May 21, 2019, <https://tradingeconomics.com/yemen/inflation-cpi>.

37 Sajid Aziz, "View of Yemen Conundrum | CISS Insight Journal," 2015, <https://ojs.ciss.org.pk/index.php/ciss-insight-journal/article/view/74/77>.

38 Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds, "Tracking the 'Arab Spring': Why the Modest Harvest?," *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 4 (October 10, 2013): 29–44, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2013.0061>.

39 Ibid.

battles with no end in sight. On the 3rd of June 2011, however, Saleh survived an assassination attempt during Friday prayers inside a mosque within the presidential compound. <sup>40</sup> He was heavily injured and was transported into a hospital in Saudi Arabia to receive medical treatment. During Saleh's stay in Saudi Arabia, Hadi served as the country's acting president. In the meantime, Riyadh intensified its efforts to broker a peace deal between the contested parties. The GCC Initiative/Framework, rotated around a transition of power from Saleh to his vice president Hadi while in return Saleh as well as his supporters are to be granted amnesty. Saleh was reluctant to sign the agreement and didn't find it easy to relinquish power; <sup>41</sup> however, he eventually agreed to sign the GCC Framework and transfer power to Hadi on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2011. <sup>42</sup> Saleh's decision received ambivalent reactions from the protestors and the opposition, particularly that many saw that granting Saleh an amnesty was a betrayal to the popular demands and found it difficult that Saleh will simply abandon the political process. <sup>43</sup>

### SALEH AND THE GCC INITIATIVE

The GCC Framework was in principle a promising step forward in Yemen's future. However, the agreement had no guarantee that Saleh would abandon Yemen's political process. As Ibrahim defines it "the GCC initiative is based on a formula

40 Mohamed Sudam and Jason Benham, "Yemeni President Leaves Country for Medical Treatment," *Reuters*, 2011, [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen/yemeni-president-leaves-country-for-medical-treatment-idUSTRE73L1PP20110604?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FtopNews+%28News+%2F+US+%2F+Top+News%29](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen/yemeni-president-leaves-country-for-medical-treatment-idUSTRE73L1PP20110604?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+reuters%2FtopNews+%28News+%2F+US+%2F+Top+News%29).

41 Marwa Rashad, "Yemen's Saleh Signs Deal to Give up Power," *Reuters*, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen/yemens-saleh-signs-deal-to-give-up-power-idUSTRE7AM0D020111123>.

42 Ibid

43 Ibrahim Fraihat, "Still Hope for a Deal in Yemen, Despite Saleh's GCC Snub," *Brookings* (blog), November 30, 2001, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/still-hope-for-a-deal-in-yemen-despite-salehs-gcc-snub/>.

to trade "justice for peace", <sup>44</sup> arguing that Saleh's departure from presidency didn't imply his departure from politics. Although the resulting GCC Initiative included a mechanism to transfer power away from President Saleh, it did not remove him from authority so much as organized a form of power sharing with him. <sup>45</sup> The GCC Framework allowed space for all political parties to participate in the transitional period. This was distributed on a 50-50 basis in which the Joint Meeting Party JMP, the main opposition wing that consists of 6 parties and together had 22% of the parliament, would tailor a power transition with the General People's Congress GPC [Saleh's party] that represented 77% of the parliament. <sup>46</sup> Ironically, Saleh was not removed from his position as the president of the GPC. Therefore, Saleh and his aides had direct influence on the political roadmap as well as its implications.

Despite the GCC Initiative and Saleh's ouster from power, Yemen was pretty much still defined by political unrest. The division within the security apparatus along with the absence of a centralized military exacerbated a security vacuum across the country. Street-level security deteriorated in Yemen's urban and the country had fallen increasingly into the hands of a wide variety of militias and armed factions without the rise of a single dominant center of power. <sup>47</sup> Hadi's efforts to maintain control over the country were constantly challenged by Saleh's subordinates. His decisions and decrees were notably futile as a result of the decision made by Saleh's men not to comply with Hadi's measures. For example, Hadi issued a decree renouncing the command of Mohammed Saleh al-Ahmar and Tariq Muhammad Abdullah Saleh over the air

44 Ibid.

45 Maged Al-Madhaji, "How Yemen's Post-2011 Transitional Phase Ended in War," *Sana'a Center For Strategic Studies* (blog), 2016, <http://sanaacenter.org/publications/main-publications/39>.

46 Eyad Ahmed and Osamah al-Rawhani, "The Need to Build State Legitimacy in Yemen," *Sana'a Center For Strategic Studies* (blog), September 29, 2018, <http://sanaacenter.org/publications/main-publications/6496>.

47 (Zoltan 2016) see no.4 above

force and the special guard respectively, yet both officials refused to adhere to Hadi's decision. <sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Mohammed al-Ahmar threatened to bomb Sanaa's airport as a response to Hadi's decree. Another example would be Hadi's directions for Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh to relinquish control over missile units were Ahmed Ali refused Hadi's call and also threatened to bomb the capital with missiles. <sup>49</sup>

### CONCLUSION

To conclude, this paper discussed the transition in Yemen and explained how Saleh's policies stood as an obstruction in the path of Hadi's government. The transition's failure was influenced by various factors. However, I attempted to tackle its failure from the angle of Saleh's coup-proofing practices during his years in power. The paper briefly explored the notion of coup-proofing and explained how it assists in understanding the fragmentation in the country's security apparatus. Different examples were illustrated as evidence in support for the paper's argument. Saleh's doctrine in ruling the country was driven by his desires to acquire full autonomy over Yemen's decision politics. His coup-proofing practices rotated around granting his inner-circle full control over the sensitive positions in the country's security apparatus. Saleh's criteria in allocating positions was motivated by the loyalty of his aides. As such, positions were given in accordance with Saleh's trust in his subordinates and not with competence or experience. These policies created a fragmented military that was loyal to Saleh and his regime rather than Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The military was therefore divided and could not offer any effective support in maintaining peace in the country. ■

48 (Al-Shargabi 2018) see no. 16 above

49 Ibid.

## Appendix

Table 3: Saleh's Army

Name	Position	Rank	Relationship with Saleh
Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh	Commander of the Republican Guard	Birgadier General	Son
Muhammad Abdullah Saleh	Commander of Central Security	Major General	Brother
Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar	Commander of the northwestern military district and the 1st Armored Division	Major General	Half Brother
Muhammad Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar	Commander of the Air Defense	Major General	Distant Cousin
Muhammad Saleh al-Ahmar	Commander of the air force	Major General	Half-brother
Tareq Mohammed Abdullah Saleh	Commander of Presidential Guard	Commander	Nephew
Muhammad Ali Khalil	Commander of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade	Major general	Saleh's Sanhan Locality
Saleh al-Zannin	Commander of the Second Armored Brigade	Major General	Saleh's Sanhan Locality
Yehia Muhammad Abdullah Saleh	Commander of Central security *Following his Father	Brigadier General	Nephew
Ammar Muhammad Abdullah Saleh	Commander of Yemen's National Security	Brigadier General	Nephew
Tayseer Muhammad Saleh al-Ahmar	Yemen's Military Attaché in Washington	Major General	Married to Saleh's Step Sister
Ali Saleh Al-Ahmar	Commander of the Sixth Air Brigade	Major General	Half Brother
Mohammed Abdullah Haidar	Commander of the 35th Armored Brigade	Major General	Saleh's Sanhan Locality
Mahdi Makwla	Commander of the Southern Region	Major General	Saleh's Sanhan Locality



## CHAPTER 3

### The Civil War in Yemen: Understanding the Actors

Mohammed Sami

#### INTRODUCTION

Yemen is in an on-going full-scale conflict since March 2015. The country is in a swamp of political violence that overshadows nearly all economic, social, and political determinations of the society. In a context where 14 million people (representing more than half of the population) are on the brink of famine, <sup>1</sup> the United Nations was prompted to define Yemen as the 'world's worst humanitarian crisis'. <sup>2</sup> Illustrating the exact

<sup>1</sup> "Half the Population of Yemen at Risk of Famine: UN Emergency Relief Chief," UN News, October 23, 2018, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/10/1023962>.

<sup>2</sup> "About OCHA Yemen," OCHA, February 7, 2018, <https://www.unocha.org/yemen/about-ocha-yemen>. including 14.3 million who are in acute need. Severity of needs is deepening, with the number of people in acute need a staggering 27 per cent higher than last year. Two-thirds of all districts in the country are already pre-famine, and one-third face a convergence of multiple acute vulnerabilities. The OCHA Yemen Country Office was established in the capital, Sana'a, in 2010 in response to the humanitarian crisis brought about by widespread

number of fatalities is challenging as a result of the relatively scant information emanating from the country; however, some observers suggest a death toll that exceeds 70,000 people. <sup>3</sup> Despite the several initiatives that have been taken to come up with solutions to the conflict, uncertainty remains looming around the country's future prospects. The warring parties appear to be in a stalemate with each side claiming advancements with no end in sight. Mutual belligerence continues between the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition, thus limiting the opportunities of a peaceful way out.

flooding in Yemen. In July 2015, following the escalation of the conflict and the rapidly deteriorating situation on the ground, Yemen was declared a System Wide IASC Level 3 Emergency (L3)

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Cockburn, "The Yemen War Death Toll Is Five Times Higher than We Think – We Can't Shrug off Our Responsibilities Any Longer," The Independent, October 26, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/yemen-war-death-toll-saudi-arabia-allies-how-many-killed-responsibility-a8603326.html>.

Notably, the previously mentioned entities might resemble the main actors in the Yemeni Conflict. However, this shouldn't cause a distraction from other prominent actors operating in the same conflict with direct influence on the local population.

As such, attempting to rationalize contemporary Yemen while excluding other prominent actors would be insufficient. This piece attempts to provide a thorough demonstration of the main local actors operating in Yemen. The actors are: Abd Rabo Mansour Hadi's Government, Houthis, the Southern Movement (Hirak), and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).<sup>4</sup> For grasping a visualized general overview on the actors in Yemen, refer to this piece's appendices.<sup>5</sup>

## HADI'S GOVERNMENT

Hadi's Government is the internationally recognized government of Yemen since the previous president Ali Abdullah Saleh was ousted in February 2012. The government is led by Abd Rabo Mansour Hadi who previously served as Saleh's deputy president. Hadi's government came into power after the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), led by Saudi Arabia, brokered a peace deal in Yemen. The agreement, also known as the GCC Framework, stipulated a transfer of power from Saleh to Hadi and in return Saleh and his subordinates were granted amnesty from legal prosecutions.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Hadi's government was to govern the country for a two-year transitional period to prepare the country for constitutional amendments as well as presidential and parliamentary elections.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The reader should note that this piece is an extension for a previous article published at the Brussels International Center. See Sami Mohammed, "Yemen's Civil War: Defining the Actors | Bic-Rhr," Brussels International Center for Research and Human Rights, March 2019, <http://bic-rhr.com/projects/yemens-civil-war-defining-actors>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Marwa Rashad, "Yemen's Saleh Signs Deal to Give up Power," Reuters, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen/yemens-saleh-signs-deal-to-give-up-power-idUSTRE7AMOD02011123>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim Fraihat, "Still Hope for a Deal in Yemen, De-

Notably, the transitional government had a long to-do list despite the limited time and fluctuating context. Assuaging the aspirations of the Yemenis while simultaneously reassuring the concerned regional and international actors accumulated a heavy burden on Hadi's government. In an attempt to maintain a cohesive future transition, Hadi called for the National Dialogue Conference NDC.<sup>8</sup> The NDC aimed to include all political parties and movements in the country to delineate Yemen's political roadmap. The NDC comprised delegates with a 50-50 representation from north and south Yemen that included a 20 and 30 percent participation from youth and women respectively.<sup>9</sup>

The NDC was perceived as the heart of the country's transitional process.<sup>10</sup> Tasks were delegated to subcommittees that held the responsibility of managing the files with controversy such as the question of South Yemen and the conflict in Sa'da.<sup>11</sup> Although most subcommittees submitted their reports within the timeframe, the final document was not published on the agreed upon deadline.<sup>12</sup> The final document was accepted on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2014, and included a list of around 1,800 recommendations.<sup>13</sup> The United Nations praised the outcomes of the NDC and described

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 spite Saleh's GCC Snub," *Brookings* (blog), November 30, 2011, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/still-hope-for-a-deal-in-yemen-despite-salehs-gcc-snob/>.

<sup>8</sup> Ali Saif Hassan, "Yemen - National Dialogue Conference: Managing Peaceful Change?," Conciliation Resources, April 3, 2014, <https://www.c-r.org/accord/legitimacy-and-peace-processes/yemen-national-dialogue-conference-managing-peaceful-change>.

<sup>9</sup> "Yemen's National Dialogue," Middle East Institute, accessed June 1, 2019, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/yemens-national-dialogue>.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Schmitz, "Yemen's National Dialogue," Middle East Institute, 2014, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/yemens-national-dialogue/>.

<sup>11</sup> See no. 9 above

<sup>12</sup> (Schmitz 2014) see no. 10 above

<sup>13</sup> Erica Gaston, "Process Lessons Learned in Yemen's National Dialogue," *United States Institute of Peace*, 2014, 16.

it as "historic moment" for Yemen.<sup>14</sup> However, the local developments created uncertainty over its applicability.

The country's political atmosphere and the NDC's structure impeded the subcommittees' tasks and raised concerns over the NDC's prospects. First, hosting the NDC at a 5-star hotel in Sana'a along with its long-time schedule were not reassuring. Second, the dialogue was held in a context where the country's security conditions were fragile. The Houthis and Sunni tribes were engaged in armed confrontations in Yemen's northern periphery.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, AQAP saw the security vacuum in South of Yemen as an opening to entrench its position.<sup>16</sup> Third, prominent political entities such as Hirak had scant confidence in the NDC and regularly called for its boycott.<sup>17</sup> Fourth, the NDC was built over the GCC Framework, which granted Saleh and his subordinates amnesty from any legal prosecutions, and that inherently was seen as a method of trading justice for peace.<sup>18</sup>

Although Saleh agreed to relinquish the country's presidency, the GCC Framework allowed him space to remain in Yemen's political structure. Saleh was still the president of the General People's Congress GPC<sup>19</sup> that participated in the forming Yemen's transition. Saleh made

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<sup>14</sup> "Bin Omar Praises Yemen Dialogue Consensus," Gulf News, 2014, <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/yemen/bin-omar-praises-yemen-dialogue-consensus-1.1280519>.

<sup>15</sup> Nasser Arrabyee, "National Dimensions of the Saada Conflict," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2013, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/53721>.

<sup>16</sup> Aaron Ng, "In Focus: Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Yemen Uprisings," *International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research* 3, no. 6 (2011): 10.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen W. Day, "The 'Non-Conclusion' of Yemen's National Dialogue - Foreign Policy," 2014, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/27/the-non-conclusion-of-yemens-national-dialogue/>.

<sup>18</sup> (Fraihat 2011) see no.7 above

<sup>19</sup> Eyad Ahmed and Osamah al-Rawhani, "The Need to Build State Legitimacy in Yemen," *Sana'a Center For Strategic Studies* (blog), September 29, 2018, <http://sanaacenter.org/publications/main-publications/6496>.

it clear that he had no intention to abandon Yemen's political future by stating "Our people will remain present in every institution. Two months have passed since this creation of this weak government, which doesn't know the ABCs of politics. It won't be able to build a thing or put one brick on top of another".<sup>20</sup> Loyalists to Saleh continued to defy Hadi's decisions, undermining the prospects of the NDC and therefore limiting the trust of the local population in Hadi.<sup>21</sup>

Saleh, who described ruling Yemen as "dancing on the heads of snakes",<sup>22</sup> operated to entrench a future transition that poured into his favor. He concluded an alliance with his longtime enemies, the Houthis, in his attempt to expand his spheres of influence. The Saleh-Houthis alliance conducted an insurgency in Sana'a, causing Hadi's departure from the country at the end of 2014.<sup>23</sup> This prompted Hadi to request military assistance from Saudi Arabia through which the latter initiated an operation in March 2015 to counter the insurgency.<sup>24</sup> Until today, both parties appear to be in a stalemate with very limited solutions for solving the conflict.

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<sup>20</sup> Barany Zoltan, "The Challenges of Building a National Army in Yemen," 2016 accessed May 21, 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/challenges-building-national-army-yemen>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Martin Varisco, "Dancing on the Heads of Snakes in Yemen," *Society* 48, no. 4 (July 1, 2011): 301-3, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-011-9440-9>.

<sup>23</sup> Yara Bayoumy and Mohammed Ghobari, "Yemen President Quits, Throwing Country Deeper into Chaos," *Reuters*, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-houthis-idUSKBNOKVOHT20150123>.

<sup>24</sup> Khaled Abdullah and Sami Aboudi, "Yemeni Leader Hadi Leaves Country as Saudi Arabia Keeps up Air Strikes - Reuters," 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-yemen-security/yemeni-leader-hadi-leaves-country-as-saudi-arabia-keeps-up-air-strikes-idUKKBN-OMLOYM20150326>.

## THE HOUTHIS

The Houthis initially resembled a theological movement advocating for peace.<sup>25</sup> The title 'Houthis' is given to the followers of the movement's late leader Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi.<sup>26</sup> The movement follows the Zaidi sect of Shia Islam and are mainly based in Yemen's northern district, close to the Yemeni-Saudi border. The Houthi movement was not a supporter of Saleh's policies, particularly that the latter tolerated the establishment of Sunni shrines in northern Yemen. As a result, the Houthis started adopting some belligerent stances, galvanizing Saleh to launch six wars against their areas since 2004.<sup>27</sup>

Yemen's uprisings in early 2011 were perceived as an opportunity for the movement to eliminate Saleh and his allies.<sup>28</sup> The Houthis supported Saleh's ouster; however, they were intolerant towards Saleh's amnesty, contending that he should face legal prosecutions. Following Saleh's ouster, the Houthis were keen to participate in Hadi's NDC. The NDC was perceived by the Houthis as a gateway to enhance their participation in Yemen's political process and to consolidate their determinations in Yemen's future transition.<sup>29</sup>

25 Abdullah M. Al-Ansi, "Houthis: The Second Arm of Iran in the Region to Subjugate the Arabian Peninsula," 2018, [https://www.academia.edu/37970592/Houthis\\_The\\_Second\\_Arm\\_of\\_Iran\\_in\\_the\\_Region\\_to\\_subjugate\\_the\\_Arabian\\_Peninsula](https://www.academia.edu/37970592/Houthis_The_Second_Arm_of_Iran_in_the_Region_to_subjugate_the_Arabian_Peninsula).

26 Bethan McKernan, "Who Are the Houthis and Why Are They Fighting the Saudi Coalition in Yemen?" | World News | The Guardian, The Guardian, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/21/who-are-the-houthis-fighting-the-saudi-led-coalition-in-yemen>.

27 April Longley Alley, "Collapse of the Houthi-Saleh Alliance and the Future of Yemen's War," Crisis Group, 2018, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/collapse-houthi-saleh-alliance-and-future-yemens-war>.

28 Bruce Riedel, "Who Are the Houthis, and Why Are We at War with Them?," Brookings (blog), 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/12/18/who-are-the-houthis-and-why-are-we-at-war-with-them/>.

29 Mareike Transfeld, "Houthis on the Rise in Yemen," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2014,

The NDC, however, was not held during a favorable time for the Houthis. From the one hand, the Houthi movement was pre-occupied with local clashes with Sunni Groups in the country's north to what is referred to as Sa'da Conflict. The Houthis sought to expand their sphere of influence in the areas dominated by Zaidi Shias in their attempt to consolidate their autonomy. Their ambitions were challenged by the presence of armed Sunni tribes, whom the Houthis desired to clip their wings and limit their influence. On the other hand, two of the Houthis representatives in the NDC were assassinated on two different occasions.<sup>30</sup> This created skepticism amongst the Houthi ranks and limited the Houthis' confidence in the NDC.

Notably, not all of the NDC's final decisions were pleasant for the Houthis. The final document stipulated dividing Yemen into six different governates.<sup>31</sup> According to this new division, the Houthis' access to natural resources was significantly limited, therefore contending that this would divide Yemen into "poor and wealthy regions".<sup>32</sup> It wasn't apparent that the Houthis are willing to comply with such decisions, particularly that their presence in the country's north is entrenched and can in fact defy Yemen's security forces. As a result, the Houthis mobilized its followers and denounced the decisions dividing Yemen into that structure.

The Houthis demonstrations soon escalated into clashes with Yemen's security forces. The country's fragile security structure served as a fertile soil for the Houthis to consolidate their position. As mentioned in the previous section, the Houthis concluded an alliance with Yemen's previous president and longtime enemy Saleh.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/57087>.

30 "Yemen's National Dialogue Conference Concludes with Agreement - BBC News," BBC, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25835721>.

31 (Riedel 2017) see no. 28 above

32 "Yemen Al Houthi Rebels Slam Federation Plan as Unfair," Gulf News, 2014, <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/yemen/yemen-al-houthi-rebels-slam-federation-plan-as-unfair-1.1289512>.

Through their alliance, they were successful in leading an insurgency that granted them control over Sana'a and vast pockets of land in Yemen.<sup>33</sup> However, their territorial expansion was deterred following the start of Saudi Arabia's military campaign in Yemen.

The Houthi insurgency was met by heavy criticism by the international community. Despite the several initiatives that were made to come up with political solutions for the conflict, the Houthis remain defiant with entrenched control over most of the country's north. The areas that fall under the Houthis' control are governed by the Supreme Political Council SPC.<sup>34</sup> The SPC is a political executive body commissioned by the Houthi movement to manage the political affairs of the Houthis' areas. Furthermore, some observers contend that the Houthis allegedly receive Iranian support; however, Tehran repudiates these claims.<sup>35</sup>

## THE SOUTHERN MOVEMENT (HIRAK)

Catalyzed by Ali Abdullah Saleh's economic failures and the corruption that weighed down the state and the marginalized population of southern Yemen, HIRAK- a political movement that originated in the south- was established in 2007. With the political and economic situation in retrograde, HIRAK appealed for the forced resignation of the Saleh regime's southern security forces, the redistribution of resources and a readjustment to the balance of power between the north and the south as the former enjoyed greater political and economic entitlements.<sup>36</sup>

33 Ahmed Nagi, "Yemen's Houthis Used Multiple Identities to Advance - Carnegie Middle East Center - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace," Carnegie Middle East Center, 2019, <https://carnegie-mec.org/2019/03/19/yemen-s-houthis-used-multiple-identities-to-advance-pub-78623>.

34 Ibid.

35 "Iran Denies Providing Missiles to Yemen's Houthi Rebels," Middle East Eye, 2017, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-denies-providing-missiles-yemens-houthi-rebels>.

36 Jon Unruh, "Mass Claims in Land and Property Fol-



Mike Segar/Reuters

Notwithstanding the movement's initial objectives, the 2008 protests, which erupted in the South to demand the independence of Southern Yemen, galvanized HIRAK to reformulate its agenda in 2012 to center around achieving autonomy and secession of the southern region from the Republic of Yemen.<sup>37</sup> Hence, given the newly adopted vision for political development, eminent personages within HIRAK led on a vigorous struggle to reclaim the South. Under the Southern Transitional Council which HIRAK temporarily operates, the movement upholds the stable relationship it has established with

lowing the Arab Spring: Lessons from Yemen," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 5, no. 1 (July 8, 2016): 6, <https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.444>.

37 "Al-Hirak Al-Janoubi (the Southern Movement) / South Yemen Unrest (2007-)," accessed June 13, 2019, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/yemen2.htm>.

Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi's government while endeavoring to revamp its strained relations with the local establishment, the region's stakeholders as well as dominant international players such as Russia. 38

Situated in the port city of Aden- Yemen's post-revolutionary interim government and the ex-capital of the south- Hiraq altered its ideological character from a confederacy that served as a hub for discontented labor workers from the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to a fierce political opponent to the north. 39 Although the restructured political bloc of the south, which comprises various political parties that a considerable segment of the southern population affiliates with, Hiraq remains an influential actor in the political scene. The movement obtains its credibility as its most distinguished figures, such as Abd Al-Rahman Ali Al-Jifi and Ali Salem Al-Beidh who hold the authority to represent Southerners, stood as prominent actors prior to unification. 40

The Southern Transitional Council (STC), established in May 2017, arose as a sub-state to challenge the authority of Mansour Hadi's government through promoting the interests of the Southerners by promoting stability in the Gulf of Aden and Bab Al-Mandab. The goal of the STC is to advocate for the southern cause through peaceful means to retrieve the independence of the South with reference to the pre-1990 territorial borders. 41

### AL-QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula AQAP is the unified banner under which al-Qaeda's militants from Saudi Arabia and Yemen are operating. The

38 Samuel Ramani, "Russia's Mediating Role in Southern Yemen," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2018, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/77482>.

39 (AL-Hiraq) see no 43 above

40 Ibid.

41 Robert Forster, "The Southern Transitional Council: Implications for Yemen's Peace Process," Middle East Policy Council, 2017, <http://mepc.org/journal/southern-transitional-council-implications-yemens-peace-process>.

union between the militants of both countries came to existence in early 2009. 42 Prior to their unification, militants in each country were motivated for different purposes. While al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia was more concerned about the presence of Western troops in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Qaeda in Yemen focused more on domestic issues facing the Yemeni population. 43 These issues would vary from corruption, poverty and the government's fragile structure.

In generic terms, Yemen has fertile soil for the expansion of organizations such as AQAP. Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab world and is infamous for its poor education, weak governance, and low living standards. 44 Such factors resemble an instrument for AQAP to exploit in its narrative to touch upon the emotions of the Yemeni population. Furthermore, Yemen's landscape is mountainous and therefore provides a natural safe haven both for AQAP's personnel inside Yemen and foreign fighters. 45

AQAP saw the events that led to the fall of Saleh's regime in Yemen as an opening to catalyze its presence. On the first hand, counterterrorism operations in Yemen were put on hold as a result of the civil uprisings in the country. 46 On the other hand, Saleh's regime was mobilizing its troops from different areas in Yemen to the capital Sana'a to maintain control over the situation. Members of the powerful Republican Guards (comprise counter-terrorism forces) were forced to relinquish their posts in the south of Yemen to defend the capital Sana'a. 47 A security vacuum was thus established in the southern governorate of Abyan that AQAP exploited to establish its territorial control during the early stages of 2011. 48

42 Samuel Lindo, "Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," *Center For Strategic and International Studies CSIS*, 2011, 14.

43 Ibid.

44 Laub, Zachary. "Yemen in crisis." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2016, 19

45 Alistair Harris, "Exploiting Grievances: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," *Carnegie Endowment*, 2010, 26.

46 (Aaron 2011) see no. 16 above

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

Notably, AQAP introduced itself as the entity that attempts to improve the living standards of the Yemenis. Not only did AQAP marketed itself as the promoter of religious purity, it regularly shared footage of its members developing more cohesive services for the locals than that of Saleh's government. This included electricity to forgotten areas, security services for the civilians as well as distributing charitable goods for those that are in need. Moreover, AQAP declared war on the Houthis in an attempt to consolidate its popular support. 49 By waging war on the Houthis, AQAP depicted itself as the guardian of the Sunnis. This played well into AQAP's hands as a result of the vicious confrontations between the Houthis and the Sunni groups in the events of Sa'da Conflict. 50

However, AQAP's control over Abyan didn't last for long. Yemeni forces trained by the United States dislodged AQAP from the governorate. AQAP was still present, however, it failed to maintain its territorial control. Nonetheless, the rapid developments occurring in Yemen created another opening for AQAP to control territory. AQAP exploited the outbreak of the conflict and the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen to establish a new territorial control in the Southern city of al-Mukalla which hosts 500,000 people. 51 Similar to what it previously did in Abyan, AQAP provided the locals in al-Mukalla with descent municipal services. Its rule in al-Mukalla lasted for a year between April 2015 and April 2016 when it was expelled by United Arab Emirates forces. 52

AQAP established the Yemen based Ansar Al Sharia AAS, meaning partisans of Sharia, to monitor AQAP's affairs in Yemen. AAS was established in 2011 to separate AQAP's territorial rule in Yemen from al-Qaeda's international

49 David Knoll, "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP): An Al-Qaeda Affiliate Case Study," *Center for Strategic Studies CNA*, 2017, 54.

50 "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) | Council on Foreign Relations," 2015, <https://www.cfr.org/background/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-aqap/plainCitation>." "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP

51 (Knol 2017) see no. 55 above

52 Ibid.

banner. AAS was adopting different tactics than al-Qaeda's previous experiences. An AAS cadre held an interview in which he explained how his organization is striving to learn from the mistakes it did previously made in Iraq and that they are investing greatly in winning the hearts and minds of the local population. 53 AAS was mainly responsible for developing new strategies in an attempt to mend ties with the localists and strengthening connections with tribe elders. However, this didn't prevent the United States from labeling AAS as a terrorist organization because it resembles an extension to al-Qaeda. 54

### CONCLUSION

To conclude, this piece provided a thorough description on the main local actors operating in Yemen. As mentioned earlier, despite the weight that the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis hold, other prominent actors that resemble an instrumental fraction of the society exist in Yemen. As such, attempting to rationalize contemporary Yemen with excluding other prominent actors would be insufficient. Although these actors vary in power and in tendency, their roles in the conflict can have far reaching influence. These actors also vary in their history as well as their political backgrounds, for example, Hadi's government came to existence following Saleh's ousting while AQAP was established prior to that. For that purpose, I provided a brief background explanation for each of the different actors despite the political intersections that exist between them. The reader should note that this piece serves as an extension to a previous article published at the BIC. For grasping a general overview over the actors in the country, refer to the appendix below. ■

53 Robin Simcox, "Ansar Al-Sharia and Governance in Southern Yemen," *Hudson* 14 (2012): 58-72.

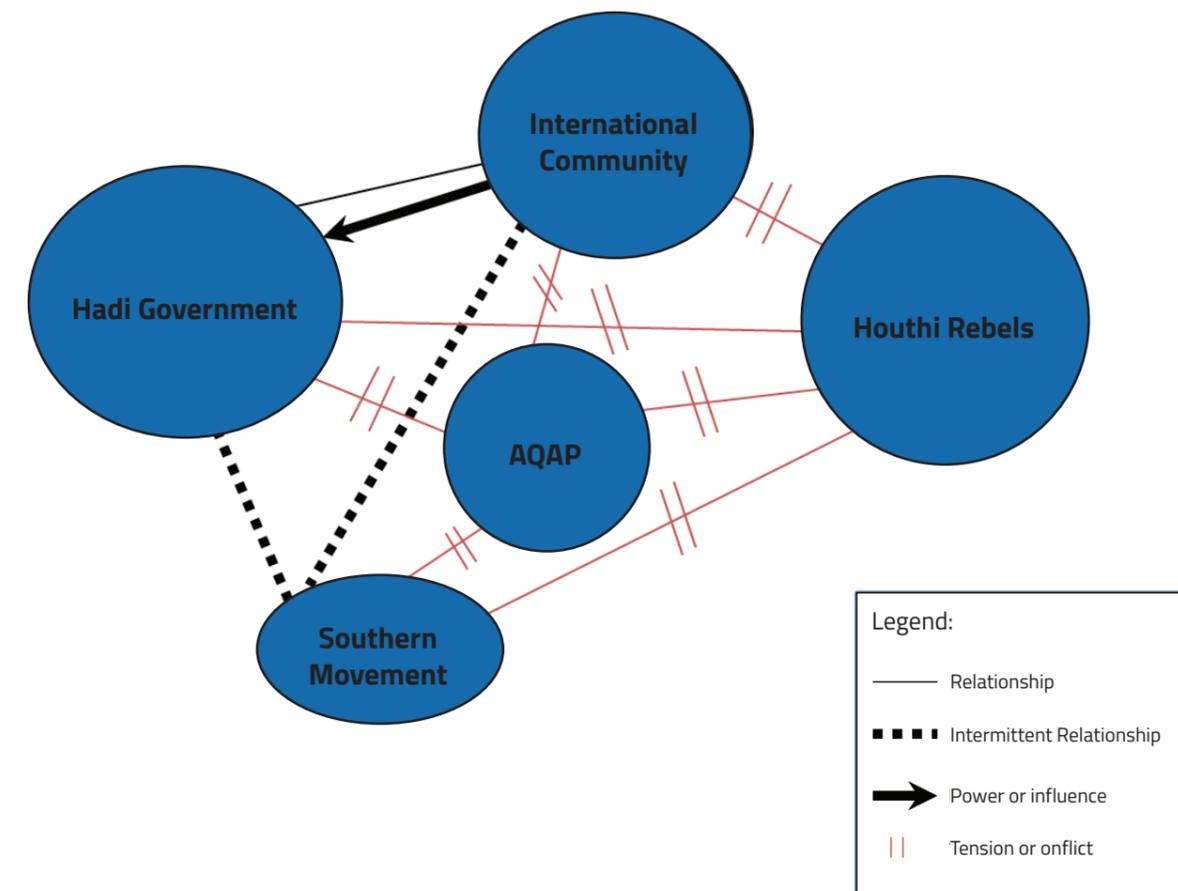
54 Ibid.

Appendix

Table 4. Overview of Actors

Parties	Issues	Interests/Needs	Fears	Means	Potential Strategies
Hadi Government	- Fractured authority - Failure of National Dialogue Conference - Houthi Insurgency - Ouster from power	- National dialogue - Implementing Security Council Resolutions 2201&2204 - Yemen's territorial integrity	- Perpetuating the Status quo	- Request military assistance - Support local tribes and militias	- Engage in peace talks - Military Solution
Houthi Rebels	- Political marginalization - 2011 Gulf Cooperation Council Framework	- Perpetuating the status quo - Stronger position in negotiations	- International position - Lack of legitimacy - Loss of territory	- Establish the Supreme Political Council - Establish tactical alliances - Expand recruitment networks - Conflate Sunni groups - Crackdown on all adversaries	- Engage in peace talks - Military solution
Southern Movement (Hirak)	- Southern marginalization - Land seizure - Corruption and economic mismanagement - Divided leadership	- Power sharing between North and South Yemen - Request equality under the law	- Continued marginalization - Refused demands	- Establish the Southern Transitional Council - Empower elites' troops in the South - Mend ties with regional power(s) - Maintain communication channels with regional and international actors	- Call for secession
AQAP	- US Counterterrorism campaign - Houthi's belligerence against Northern Sunni tribes	- Ideological - Jihad	- Expansion of counterterrorism campaign - Loss of territory	- Call for Sunni unity - Exploit Houthi's belligerence against Sunni tribes - Exploit power vacuum	- Control fragmented territory - Provide services for locals

Graph 10. Relationship Mapping of Actors in Yemen



# CHAPTER 4

## A Weapon of War in Yemen: An Analysis of the Ongoing Food Crisis in 2019

Elisa Cherry

### INTRODUCTION

The humanitarian aid crisis has been at the forefront of the discussion on Yemen in the past two years. Prior to 2017, the humanitarian crisis, that has been seen since the start of the war, was not discussed on an international level. Since the beginning of the coalition blockade in 2015, millions of people's lives have been at risk, as food, water and medical supplies are diminished or unable to enter into Yemen, or are stuck in the ports. The number of people in danger of starvation has become the top priority in the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. <sup>1</sup> While there are many reasons for the supplies not entering into the country, multiple actors involved on both sides of the conflict are to blame. The international coalition, the Houthis and the international community, including the United Nations (UN) all have a role in the humanitarian crisis, and the failure to resolve the hunger of over 80 percent of the population, upwards of 22 million Yemenis.

<sup>1</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian Response Plan: January-December 2019," April 14, 2019, 3.

The situation has evolved from a proxy war waged between the coalition and the Iranian-backed Houthis, into a multifaceted conflict where actors play both sides of the war, ultimately exacerbating the ongoing battle of the humanitarian crisis. One of the most significant aspects to the humanitarian aid crisis is the food shortages that threaten millions of Yemenis. The food shortages cannot be directed towards one actor in the conflict, but rather a series of events that have taken place over the last two years of the war, and the subsequent failure of the international community and international organizations to adequately address the situation.

The statistics are staggering, for those that face malnutrition, potential famine, or insecurity in where their next meal is going to come from. There are an estimated 22 million people in need of immediate humanitarian aid, and nearly 17.8 million of these people are insecure about where their next meal is coming from, as they rely on food aid from humanitarian organizations to survive. <sup>2</sup> Specifically, over eight million people

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, "With 22 Million People Requiring Aid



in Yemen are at risk of starvation.<sup>3</sup> About half of the nearly three million women and children that are malnourished in Yemen receive aid every month.<sup>4</sup> The magnitude of the humanitarian crisis is unlike any other in the world, yet the international community continues to struggle in resolving the disaster. One of the most difficult aspects in solving the humanitarian crisis is the distribution of aid in conflict zones. The ability of the international community to distribute aid in the face of conflict, has been put to the test in Yemen in recent years.

in Yemen, Special Envoy Calls for Political Consultations in Geneva, as Delegates Advocate Continued Security Council Unity | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, August 2, 2018,

<sup>3</sup> Embrace Relief, "Food Distribution in Yemen," *Embrace Relief* (blog), October 8, 2018, <https://www.embrace-relief.org/yemen/>.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Dumont, "Orpheus in Yemen," World Food Programme Insight, February 19, 2019, <https://insight.wfp.org/-/28922f91cd5>.

This paper will explore the complexities of the humanitarian aid crisis, specifically regarding the potential famine situation taking place throughout Yemen. Furthermore, the role of the different actors and organizations that are involved in food crisis in varying capacities, which has ultimately led to the starvation of millions of people will be examined. Specifically, this paper will look at one of the organizations that has been most involved in the food crisis, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). The WFP has faced many struggles in trying to distribute food and build reliable partnerships throughout Yemen. These struggles are not unique to the WFP, which resonates how some of the recurring themes of the food crisis are not being addressed by the international community, and are ultimately worsening the crisis situation in Yemen.

### THE BLOCKADE AGAINST AID: A FAILURE FROM BOTH SIDES

In 2015, the coalition forces created a partial blockade on the Hodeida port. This blockade ultimately transformed into all goods being denied access into the country. The significance

of the Hodeida port as the main entry for up to 80 percent of the aid entering into the country, is also strategic for the Houthis, the coalition, and the international community.<sup>5</sup> The international coalition uses the port as an entry point into the Red Sea, and by blocking access, they are preventing both humanitarian aid supplies and other goods from entering into the country.<sup>6</sup> The Houthis' interest in the port of Hodeida is to control the distribution of goods coming in to the country. Ultimately, this decision to put up a blockade on the port, brought the already food-insecure country to the brink of starvation, leaving millions of people without consistent access to food. Following the blockade, many of the imports were redirected from the north of Yemen, to the southern port of Aden, where the national capital was re-established. By diverting the aid to a different port, the struggles to distribute aid throughout Yemen were not solved. Today people still face grave food insecurity, and humanitarian organizations struggle to find safe ways to distribute food. However, while there were many difficulties in bringing aid into the country in 2017 and 2018, the difficulty has now transformed as the food aid is being taken by local armed groups. There are still large amounts of food that are making it into the country, but before the food arrives to the intended recipients, the aid is stolen.<sup>7</sup> The citizens of Yemen are the ones that suffer the most by the aid being diverted, and it calls into question the ability of international institutions to prevent armed groups, such as the Houthis, as well as government actors from preventing crises like this from occurring.

<sup>5</sup> Joanne Stocker, "Fearing Imminent UAE Assault, Some NGOs Pull Staff from Yemen's Hodeidah," *The Defense Post*, June 11, 2018, <https://thedefensepost.com/2018/06/11/ngos-evacuate-yemen-hodeidah/>.

<sup>6</sup> Middle East Correspondent Sophie McNeill, "Threat of Famine Looming' in Yemen amid Import Blockade," *Text*, ABC News, February 24, 2017, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-24/yemen-on-brink-of-famine-mass-starvation-un-warns/8299776>.

<sup>7</sup> Maggie Michael, "AP Investigation: Food Aid Stolen as Yemen Starves," *AP NEWS*, December 31, 2018, <https://apnews.com/bcf4e7595b554029bcd372cb129c49ab>.

Actors of the coalition have promised the largest amounts of funding for different groups and projects in the humanitarian aid crisis. Saudi Arabia pledged \$1.5 billion to fund humanitarian aid projects in Yemen in early 2018, and the United Arab Emirates promised another large sum of \$750 million to the crisis.<sup>8</sup> These two actors alone have pledged enough money in aid to significantly reduce the humanitarian crisis, yet the humanitarian crisis ensues. The amount of money that has actually been delivered to Yemen is not even close to what was promised, with some estimates saying that less than ten percent of the 1.5 billion dollar project has been funded by the coalition. In 2019, similar promises were made by the coalition, where large sums of money were promised to assist with the humanitarian aid crisis. So far the WFP has received only \$120 million from Saudi Arabia this year.<sup>9</sup>

Other significant donors, besides members of the coalition, include members of the European Union (EU). While many of the EU countries provide humanitarian assistance indirectly through monetary aid, the EU has remained largely absent from the food crisis in Yemen.<sup>10</sup> The EU mostly gives humanitarian assistance to international organizations like the UN, or EU partners like European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).<sup>11</sup> These programs give monetary aid, but fail to address some of the individual needs throughout Yemen. The programs give money to humanitarian

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Kalin, "Saudi-Led Coalition to Give \$1.5 Billion in Yemen Aid, Expand Port..." *Reuters*, January 22, 2018, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-yemen-aid-saudi-idUKKBN1FB000>.

<sup>9</sup> World Food Programme, "Contributions to WFP in 2019 | WFP | United Nations World Food Programme - Fighting Hunger Worldwide," May 12, 2019, <https://www.wfp.org/funding/year/2019>.

<sup>10</sup> "Yemen and the EU," *Text*, EEAS - European External Action Service - European Commission, accessed July 2, 2019, [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/yemen/1877/yemen-and-eu\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/yemen/1877/yemen-and-eu_en).

<sup>11</sup> ECHO, "Yemen," *Text*, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - European Commission, October 3, 2013, [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east/yemen\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east/yemen_en).

assistance as an umbrella, which covers a variety of different subjects, without addressing some of the more acute issues, such as famine in Yemen. <sup>12</sup> Simply sending money does not alleviate the crisis that the people of Yemen are experiencing. The money that the EU gives to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is funneled through partner organizations such as the UN and many of its subsidiaries, or through the Red Cross. <sup>13</sup> While the money is vital to the food crisis, there role that the EU plays in the humanitarian disaster is dismal. The EU should be able to take a more active role in these efforts to ensure that the money is being properly used and handled to best solve the food crisis. The use of local partnerships in the humanitarian crisis is one of the best ways to directly benefit the people, but only if the aid is being used and distributed properly.

Distribution of food is a constant struggle, as both the blockade on commercial and humanitarian aid is still seen in some capacity. Aid distribution is further exacerbated by the presence of local armed groups and militias that try and steal the aid once it has entered in land, from the ports. The coalition has taken responsibility for a percentage of the food distribution throughout Yemen, working to find local partners and channels to which the aid can be distributed through. However, the coalition has been reluctant to deliver aid to channels where the Houthis are present, as they cannot control the safety of these areas. The coalition has aligned with local armies in areas of southwest Yemen to assist in food distribution, but a report found that the army groups tasked with circulating the food aid, were looting food for themselves throughout 2018. <sup>14</sup> The accountability for where the aid in Yemen goes, and if it is properly distributed does not exist. In Taiz issues of government corruption and untrustworthy deals with local organizations have resulted in food aid going missing. <sup>15</sup> Aid is

<sup>12</sup> ECHO.

<sup>13</sup> "Yemen and the EU."

<sup>14</sup> Michael, "AP Investigation."

<sup>15</sup> Michael.

blocked from groups on all sides of the conflict from those who are suspected of being disloyal, and the aid is either diverted for personal use, or sold on the black market for profit by the groups who block the aid. <sup>16</sup> The situation in Yemen has resulted in many local partners stealing aid for personal gain. This is the result of very low levels of accountability in ensuring that food is provided to those who need it most.

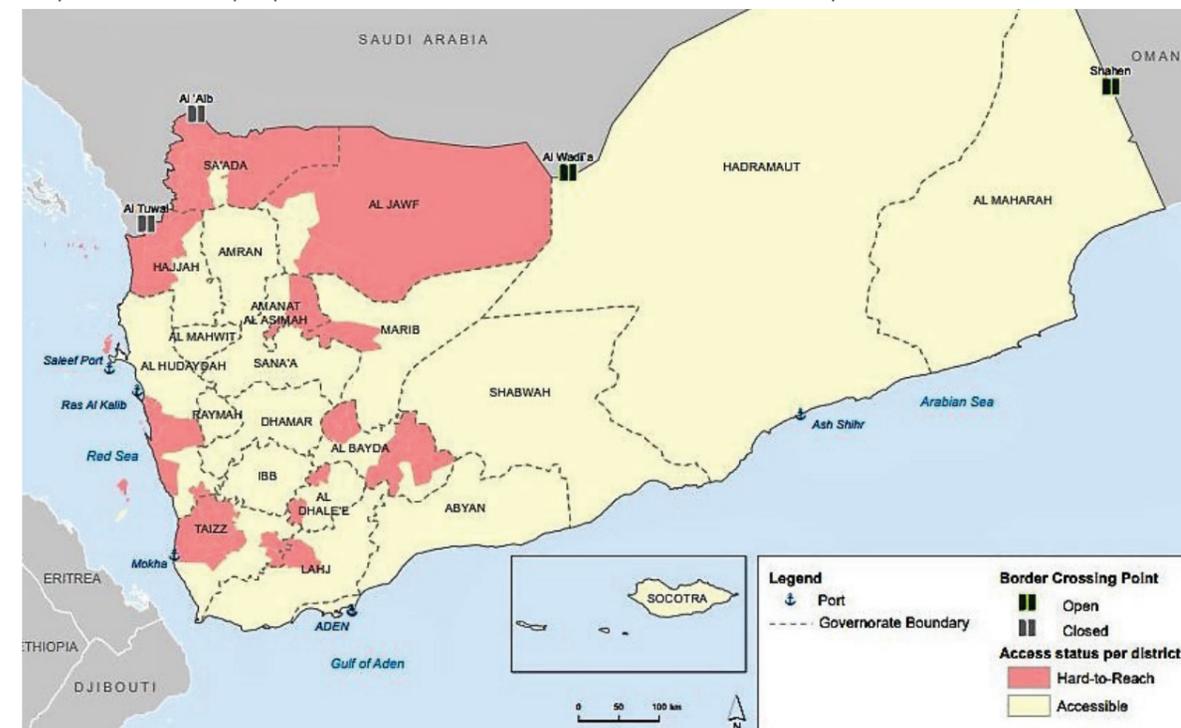
With the amount of insecurity aid workers and people who are partnered with humanitarian organizations face, it is difficult to imagine a viable solution to properly account for the aid and where it is delivered. There is no consistency in the struggle to distribute aid. Many channels of food distribution are corrupt, and uninterrupted transport of food aid seems to be rare. OCHA has outlined a map (below) of the districts in Yemen that inconsistently receive aid because the areas are considered difficult to reach, for a variety of reasons. <sup>17</sup> There are over 75 districts that are considered difficult to reach, many of which are directly impeded by the closures of ports, border crossings and roads to and from major cities. The Houthis place blockades on roads going between cities to control the amount of aid that is entering the country, while the coalition seems unwilling to partner with localities that are not aligned with their cause. Humanitarian organizations continually struggle to access areas to distribute aid, and they encounter security dilemmas along the way. While aid workers not only struggle to push aid through, they also risk their personal safety. Reports have come out noting encounters that aid workers have had with locals while trying to deliver aid. <sup>18</sup> Interactions with locals are sometimes dangerous, aid workers compromise their safety in the struggle to deliver aid to the millions of people that have

<sup>16</sup> Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, "Stockholm Agreement Meets Yemeni Reality – The Yemen Review, January 2019," *Sana'a Center For Strategic Studies* (blog), February 11, 2019, <http://sanaacenter.org/publications/the-yemen-review/7027>.

<sup>17</sup> OCHA, "Yemen Interim Country Strategic Plan (2019–2020)," April 29, 2019, 37.

<sup>18</sup> Michael, "AP Investigation."

Map 2. 5.1 million people in need in 75 hard-to-reach districts (as of 29 April 2019). Source: OCHA.



relied on aid for the past four years. "Workers of the UN and other international groups have been forced to sacrifice their independence in order to maintain access as they try to deliver aid to as many people as possible". <sup>19</sup> Situations like these call into question the ability of humanitarian organizations to continue to access these areas. If the safety of the workers is compromised by any party in the conflict, these organizations may have to reevaluate the capacity in which they operate in Yemen. As the dangers that aid workers face increase, the humanitarian aid organizations present in these areas may be forced to scale back their operations, or even leave the areas all together. Both the coalition and the Houthis must allow for aid workers to bring in food aid, unabatedly.

### THE HOUTHIS: ACCUSATIONS AND VIEWS TOWARDS HUMANITARIAN AID

The Houthis have controlled a large majority of the population for nearly four years now. The most populated regions of the country are under Houthi control and they are also the

<sup>19</sup> Michael.

regions that require the most humanitarian assistance. The Houthis have been repeatedly accused of stealing humanitarian aid from NGOs and international organizations. <sup>20</sup> While the Houthis deny claims that they are stealing food, the numbers that have been presented argue that around one percent of the aid delivered in 2018 was stolen, but in reality these numbers could be much higher. It is the responsibility of the aid organizations to monitor the channels in which they operate. If aid is being stolen from the civilians that are in desperate need of the supplies, the organizations must be prepared to take further actions to ensure the safety of their workers and the aid supplies. Continued allegations of food aid being stolen should be identified and addressed by the international community.

Those who have accused the Houthis of stealing aid said that they have been either using the food

<sup>20</sup> Sam Kiley, Sarah El Sergany, and Brice Lainé, "CNN Exposes Systematic Abuse of Aid in Yemen - CNN," accessed May 21, 2019, [https://edition.cnn.com/2019/05/20/middleeast/yemen-houthi-aid-investigation-kiley/index.html?fbclid=IwAR3leYw38-bsOsWx-rbSXBaY\\_dBqp7ga005jPvT-bKikftPlzu7fq0hV-kv0](https://edition.cnn.com/2019/05/20/middleeast/yemen-houthi-aid-investigation-kiley/index.html?fbclid=IwAR3leYw38-bsOsWx-rbSXBaY_dBqp7ga005jPvT-bKikftPlzu7fq0hV-kv0).

supplies for personal use, or selling it for profit. 21 In 2018, the WFP accused the Houthi rebels of diverting the food aid they brought in to Sanaa. Unfortunately, the Houthis did not respond to this claim, but similar reports published in the past have stated similar accusations. When food aid is brought in to areas that are under control of armed groups, the organizations that are attempting to bring the supplies into these areas must establish local partnerships in order to safely distribute the aid. Often times, this is done in order to maximize the safety of the individuals working for the humanitarian organizations and also to try and establish trust between the aid organizations and the armed groups. This concept is no different than what was seen with the Houthi rebels. In December 2018, rations of food were not delivered to starving people in Sanaa, following an investigation by the WFP, it was concluded that the partnering organization that was in charge of handling and distributing the food rations to civilians had not held up their end of the deal. This local organization was a known affiliate with a Houthi-run education ministry in Sanaa. 22 The struggles of distributing food in conflict zones are extreme, but it is up to the humanitarian organizations to provide safe and secure channels for the aid to be delivered. While the Houthis have taken a majority of the blame for diverting food aid from its intended recipients, the other main actor in the war, the coalition, also has a major role in the food crisis that is affecting millions of Yemenis.

### THE ROLE OF SAUDI ARABIA PLAYING BOTH SIDES OF THE CONFLICT

The coalition forces have been battling against the Houthis in Yemen for four years, yet they are also the biggest financial supporters of humanitarian aid to Yemen. The WFP estimated the cost to alleviate the famine in Yemen to be at over \$3 billion. This project has not been well funded, as the international community has not allocated the significant amount of funds to the

21 BBC News, "Yemen Rebels 'Stealing Food from Humanity,'" December 31, 2018, sec. Middle East, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-46722502>.

22 BBC News.

project. Of the 3.3 billion dollars that the WFP asked for, only 28 percent of the project has been funded. 23 Significantly, the second biggest donor of this project, behind the United States, is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who has donated over 150 million dollars to this project, which is 4.5 percent of the whole project. The United Arab Emirates was the third largest donor, followed by the European Commission. 24 The complexities of these donations will be explored below, as the conflict is being waged by the parties that are also the biggest donors to the humanitarian crisis.

In January of 2018, Saudi Arabia launched a humanitarian operation called the Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Operation, which outlined very specific donations that Saudi Arabia would give to Yemen, including a donation of \$1.5 billion to international organizations to ensure the success of the UN Humanitarian Response Plan. 25 This money was to be distributed across different UN agencies, including the WFP. However, it was later discovered that the Saudis had strict stipulations to the publicity of their donations. 26 While the coalition forces have offered large amounts of financial aid to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, many of these financial donations come with the stipulations of giving good publicity. The importance of this good publicity may be due to some of the coalitions' actions in 2017, including the blockade on the port of Hodeida that prevented over 80 percent of the aid from getting into Yemen for several months. In late 2018, Saudi Arabia pledged to give the remainder of their aid donation to the UN, but threatened to withhold the aid if the UN didn't agree to give them favorable publicity. 27

23 World Food Programme, "Yemen Resource Situation: Needs Based Plan," May 2019, 2.

24 World Food Programme.

25 Dan Glazebrook, "The Spin behind Saudi Arabia's 'humanitarian Aid Plan' for Yemen," Middle East Eye, March 2, 2018, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/spin-behind-saudi-arabias-humanitarian-aid-plan-yemen>.

26 Glazebrook.

27 Patrick Wintour, "Saudis Demanded Good Publicity over Yemen Aid, Leaked UN Document Shows," *The Guardian*, October 30, 2018, sec. Global development,

While the publicity stunts are not specifically linked to the blockade in 2017, framing the coalition forces as the ones at the forefront of humanitarian relief is an inflated reflection of the actions that have taken place over the course of the war. Stipulations such as these make it difficult for international organizations to accept aid, because the stipulations may be disagreeable to the values of the organization, but the money must be weighed against the human impact without the aid.

While the Saudis have promised large amounts of money and food supplies to Yemen, the strict requirements that they place on the access points for the aid, may restrict the aid from getting to the populations that need it most. These requirements were that no aid from the Saudis would enter through areas that were not under their control. 28 As Glazebrook wrote: "The 'Comprehensive Operations' plan envisages making permanent the juxtaposition of willful starvation of Houthi-controlled territory (in which the vast majority of Yemenis live) and 'generous' aid deliveries into coalition-controlled territories". 29 There are speculations that the aid donations to Yemen are all part of an attempt to cover up their blockade in Hodeida and improve their image. 30 It is the responsibility of the organizations that are delivering the humanitarian aid, such as the WFP and the UN, to ensure transparency on where the aid is coming from, and the potential ethical implications of the aid coming from certain actors. Furthermore, the international community, including members of the coalition should continue to work to implement the existing aid plans rather than trying to fuel personal agendas through unilateral aid response plans.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/oct/30/saudis-demanded-good-publicity-over-yemen-aid-leaked-un-document-shows>.

28 London Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, "Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Operations," January 22, 2018, <https://saudiembassyuk.co.uk/yemen-comprehensive-humanitarian-operations/>.

29 Glazebrook, "The Spin behind Saudi Arabia's 'humanitarian Aid Plan' for Yemen."

30 Ibid.

There are potential human rights impacts to these decisions, as the aid stipulations are used as a way to garner support for a war that is causing thousands of civilians to die. In April 2019, a report was leaked regarding the French involvement in the war in Yemen, as a supplier of military technology to the coalition forces. 31 This report analyzed how the coalition forces are using food as a weapon of war. The number of air strikes that have been carried out since February of 2015 is almost 20,000. 32 The impact of these airstrikes is vast, and it was estimated in the report that 30 percent of these were targeted against civilians by destroying civilian infrastructure, agricultural production, water supplies, and fisheries. 33 It should be noted that a UN Security Council Resolution was adopted in May 2018, stating that "using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare may constitute a war crime". 34 Targeting the food supplies in Yemen has affected millions of civilians. The reports that have been published cannot be ignored, as food insecurity is being used as a weapon of war. One organization that has been at the forefront of combatting the humanitarian aid crisis in Yemen is the World Food Programme, a UN agency that sees that implications of all the actors in the conflict and the failure to resolve the food crisis in Yemen.

### THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME'S PRESENCE IN SANAA

The WFP has taken charge of the food security crisis in Sanaa. Since before the blockade began in 2017, the WFP assisted the people through food aid, but dramatically increased their efforts following the blockade of the Hodeida port in 2017. The difficulty that the WFP faces regarding distribution are unavoidable, however

31 "Food War - Made in France" (Disclose, April 15, 2019), <https://made-in-france.disclose.ngo/en/chapter/food-war>.

32 "Food War - Made in France."

33 "Food War - Made in France."

34 United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 2417 (2018)," May 24, 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13354.doc.htm>.

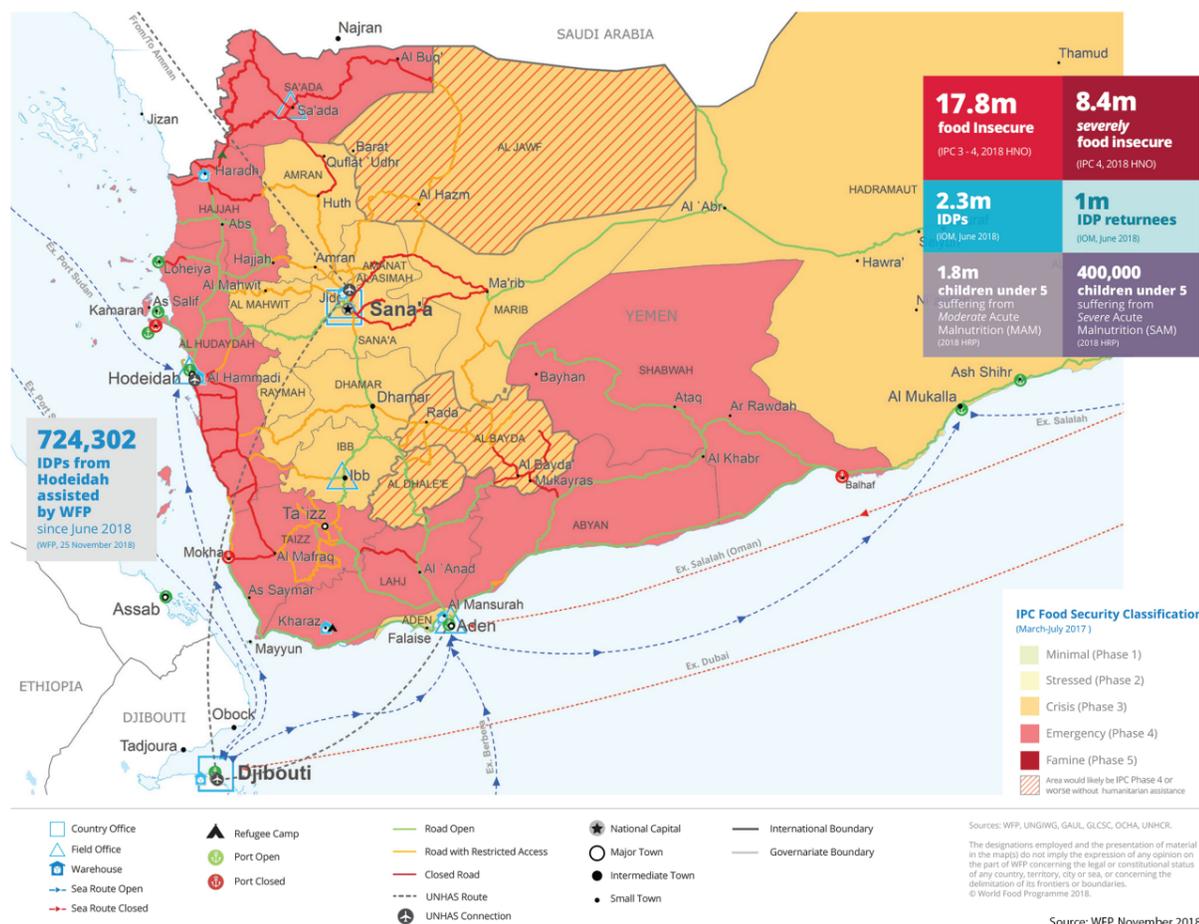
the issues must be addressed and every step possible to ensure the safe delivery of aid, must be enacted. There are over 5,000 distribution sites throughout Yemen, as the WFP attempts to reach nearly twelve million people every month with food assistance. 35 Because this task is so large, and there are thousands of distribution sites, it is impossible for the WFP to monitor the distribution for each site. Furthermore, there isn't a map that exists of the distribution sites in Yemen to clearly demonstrate the complexity of the issue. Without a map that shows all the distribution sites, the safety of aid workers and the delivery of food is at risk, because many of these sites are not monitored regularly. Only

35 UNOCHA, "Yemen: CERF Allocates US\$32M to Allow WFP to Ramp up Logistical Operations," OCHA, January 11, 2019, <https://www.unocha.org/story/yemen-cerf-allocates-us32m-allow-wfp-ramp-logistical-operations>.

20 percent of the deliveries to and from the distribution sites can be monitored, making it easy for armed groups and local actors to take advantage of the food that is being brought in. 36 The amount of food that is stolen from some areas is difficult to estimate, because the population that faces severe hunger and lack of food is impossible to measure accurately due to security and safety concerns. Some areas near Sanaa have received enough food aid to feed twice the population in the province, yet a majority of the population is still face food shortages. 37 This clearly demonstrates that food is not going to the intended recipients, and the food aid is being diverted or stolen. The WFP has taken on an immense task of providing food

36 Michael, "AP Investigation."

37 Kiley, El Sergany, and Lainé, "CNN Exposes Systematic Abuse of Aid in Yemen - CNN."



Map 3. Coverage of food assistance in different regions of Yemen throughout 2018. Source: WFP.

aid to millions of people on a monthly basis in Yemen, but they must ensure that they pursue the proper channels to safely deliver the food aid. On page 54 is a map that outlines the coverage of food assistance in different regions throughout 2018 (see Map 3). It demonstrates that while there are areas where 100 percent of the needs of food aid are being met, while in a large majority of the country, food assistance is not up to par with the level that it should be. The difficulty with aid distribution is not only the bringing aid into the country, but dispersing the aid to all the areas where it is needed. Clearly, this is still an area for improvement, and aid needs to reach all areas where it is needed.

The WFP built a partnership with the education ministry in Sanaa, one of the strongest areas held by the Houthis in 2018. This partnership was built on the premise that the education ministry would be responsible for distributing baskets of food from the WFP every month, yet nearly 15,000 of these food baskets never make it to the hungry people, and are sold on the black market by the Houthis or are used to feed members of the armed group. 38 The major concern following these claims then, is not whether or not there is enough food to feed the people of Yemen, but what can be done to ensure the food is being properly distributed to those who need it. "Enough aid is coming into the country to meet the demands of the hunger crisis, but much of it is stolen. If there is no corruption --- there is no famine." 39

The WFP has developed a series of other partnerships in both Houthi and government controlled territories throughout Yemen as they attempt to reach over twelve million people per month in 2019, a significant increase from the previous years of the conflict. 40 The WFP has established local partnerships throughout Yemen to aid in their distribution of food. However, these

38 Michael, "AP Investigation."

39 Michael.

40 Stephen Anderson, "YEMEN: This Is the World's Largest Food Crisis." (World Food Programme, March 29, 2019), <https://unwfp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=a8e9e0ef4b854f3f921b08d296830e28>.

partnerships are not completely transparent and many come with stipulations of publicity. In developing these partnerships, the WFP must remain transparent about the ways their food is moved, who they are working with, and where the aid is coming from. The amount of corruption throughout Yemen is the single most important factor which has allowed the hunger crisis to continue. If both sides are blamed for the improper distribution of food aid, there will likely not be a lasting solution to end the hunger crisis until both sides remain committed to ensuring the aid is delivered properly to its intended recipients. Only through developing proper, secure and transparent protocols can aid organizations hope to foster strong distribution networks.

The WFP must continue to work to build strong partnerships that ensure the safety of their workers, as well as the security of the food products to arrive safely to their intended recipients. Further, the repeated claims of the Houthis stealing food aid from humanitarian organizations is an issue that must be addressed by the WFP, the United Nations, and the countries involved in the conflict. The complexity of this issue is not specific to one area of Yemen, and while is more common in Houthi controlled regions, action needs to be taken to endure that the food supplies that are being brought into Yemen, are safely delivered to the intended recipients of the population. It is idealistic to think that the international organizations that have undertaken this task will be able to resolve these issues on their own, yet there must be a better protocol for building relationships with local partners who will ensure the food is properly distributed.

### CONCLUSION

The food crisis in Yemen must be addressed as an urgent need. Large amounts of funding has been allocated by countries and humanitarian organizations around the world to address the crisis, yet there are still many issues that need to be addressed. First and foremost, humanitarian organizations such as the WFP must be allowed

unrestricted access to roads, ports and all other channels for distributing humanitarian aid. The partnerships that aid organizations build, whether with local organizations, the Houthis, or coalition forces, must enable the aid organization to distribute the complete amount of supplies to the people of Yemen who they are intended for. Furthermore, the aid organizations must be transparent in their actions and must take responsibility for the monitoring of the actions of their partners. The organizations that the WFP works with must also be safe and ensure the full cooperation to distribute the aid, without worry that the aid will be stolen.

Further escalations in fighting will only worsen the humanitarian crisis, as roads and ports are

at risk of closing, preventing aid supplies from getting in. The solution to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is idealistic, as the starvation of millions of people will not be solved until the conflict ends. Small steps to alleviate the food aid shortages in Yemen must be taken, including guaranteeing safe access for aid workers to deliver goods to civilians. Actors on all sides of this conflict must remain committed to the secure delivery of aid. The coalition, the Houthis and humanitarian organizations all have a responsibility to the citizens of Yemen to ensure their safety and access to basic human rights, most significantly the much needed food aid. The international community must step up and take action against any actors in the conflict that do not comply with the protection of the civilian population. ■

# CHAPTER 5

## Yemeni Women in Peace Processes: From 2015 to Today

Elisa Cherry

### INTRODUCTION

The role of women in Yemen has transformed throughout the conflict period. For a country that consistently suffers to uphold and promote the rights of women, there are those individuals and groups who prevail. This chapter will explore the changing roles of women in Yemen, and how the perceptions of women in peacebuilding contexts have transformed between the time of the post-Arab Spring peace negotiations in the National Dialogue council, into the role that women take in today's conflict.

Women were originally granted access to negotiations and were in fact represented through a mandate as part of the governmental structure. Unfortunately, women now struggle to find their voice in Yemen, as this representation no longer exists. Continually marginalized and targeted for trying to promote peace in Yemen, the role that women have in society gives them a unique set of opportunities in promoting peace. For the sake of this paper, women will refer especially to those who are peacebuilders, human rights activists, humanitarian workers, and all of those who choose to participate in

the promotion of women and their inclusion in bringing peace to Yemen. The discussion begins with a broad overview of women's roles in peace processes and conflict, and then is taken to the state level, where a comparison will be drawn between two different times of women as peacebuilders.

### THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN YEMEN

In the year 2000, the United Nations (UN) formed the Women, Peace and Security agenda, a series of eight Security Council resolutions which have been the framework for the implementation of women's full and equal representation and participation in peace processes and security efforts.<sup>1</sup> The first resolution, 1325, passed

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 1 UN Women, "What We Do: Peace and Security," UN Women, accessed June 11, 2019, <http://www.unwomen.org/what-we-do/peace-and-security>.  
 UN Women, accessed June 11, 2019, <http://www.unwomen.org/what-we-do/peace-and-security>.  
 UN Women, "What We Do: Peace and Security," UN Women, accessed June 11, 2019, <http://www.unwomen.org/what-we-do/peace-and-security>.  
 noteIndex":1},citationItem":{ "id":343,"uris":["http://zotero.org/users/local/6d-



in 2000, was the first UN Security Council resolution which recognized how men and women experience conflict differently. One of the driving concepts of this agenda is to view conflict through the lens of power relations, and it calls on actors to address the root causes and drivers of conflict, gender inequality being one of these factors.<sup>2</sup> Another significant resolution worth noting, is Security Council Resolution 1889, which ensures that women's protection and empowerment is taken into account during post-conflict discussions.<sup>3</sup> This framework of resolutions has been the backbone of women's inclusion in peace processes, but it also faces criticism on international and local levels. The

852VaJ/items/3TJQAES3"];uri":["http://zotero.org/users/local/6d852VaJ/items/3TJQAES3"];itemData":{"id":343,"type":"webpage","title":"What we do: Peace and security","container-title":"UN Women","abstract":"UN Women supports women's full and equal representation and participation in all levels of peace processes and security efforts. UN Women leads on implementing the women, peace, and security (WPS

<sup>2</sup> Jessica Zimerman, "Lessons from the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda," *The Diplomat*, November 2, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/lessons-from-the-uns-women-peace-and-security-agenda/>.

<sup>3</sup> "WPS SRES 1889.Pdf," accessed July 2, 2019, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF-CF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20SRES%201889.pdf>.

four pillars of the agenda can be divided into prevention, participation, protection and finally relief and recovery. Within the context of Yemen, there are very few things that are being done to ensure that women are being included in these discussions, and that the three "pillars" of prevention, participation and protection are being upheld.

First and foremost, when discussing the Women, Peace and Security agenda within the context of Yemen, it is significant in noting that Yemen has not devised a National Action Plan for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, and the broader Women, Peace and Security agenda as a whole. If Yemeni women are to gain a position at the negotiating table, or to be involved in the peace processes in a post-conflict scenario within Yemen, it is unlikely to occur without a National Action Plan for women. Following the NDC in 2015 a group of women who were working on the negotiations formulated a National Agenda for Women, Peace and Security, yet the plan never came to fruition because of lack of support from women outside of the group.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sanam Naraghi Anderlini et al., "Bringing Peace to Yemen by Having Women at the Table What the U.S. Must Do and Why It Matters" (U.S Civil Society Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, August 21, 2017), <http://>

The participation of women in peace processes in Yemen was seen in 2011-2015 but has not been as widely observed in today's conflict. Only two of the four "pillars" of this agenda are seen in Yemen: participation and prevention. Women are allowed to participate in many levels of government discussions, including peace negotiations, however the quotas that were used in the NDC are not being upheld, and a 30 percent mandate for women's involvement has not been seen in any of the peace talks or delegations since the end of the NDC. The preventative measure to ensure women's peace and security exists in Yemen through the structure of the laws. However, in practice this pillar of the Women, Peace and Security agenda lacks popular support and widespread implementation in Yemen.

The protection of women in conflict, and the understanding that women experience conflict in Yemen differently than men do, is not being addressed in Yemen. Women in Yemen continually face threats in public spaces for taking part in the conflict as peace builders and negotiators. Since the inception of the agenda at the turn of the century, and the escalations of conflict in Yemen in 2011 and again in 2015, there have been very few conferences held on

[www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ICAN-US-CSWG-Policy-Brief-August-28-2017.pdf](http://www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ICAN-US-CSWG-Policy-Brief-August-28-2017.pdf).

the topic of Yemeni women in conflict. Women gathered in Cyprus in October 2015 to discuss women's roles in the war<sup>5</sup> and last year, women gathered in Amman, Jordan with the help of UN Women to discuss women's roles as peacebuilders in Yemen.<sup>6</sup> The fact that there have only been these two major conferences that have focused on women's inclusion in peace negotiations is problematic within itself, but it is also noteworthy that women's roles in peace processes were not discussed in any capacity in 2016 or 2017. It is significant to note as well, there were likely similar discussions that were taking place, discussing women's roles in the peace processes in Yemen that were not held on an international level. This silence demonstrates the struggles that women continue to face in voicing their own concerns on a bringing peace to Yemen. In late 2018, with the UN-backed discussions that ultimately led to the formation of the Stockholm agreement, only one female delegate was included in these discussions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Anderlini et al.

<sup>6</sup> OSESGY, "Griffiths to Yemeni Women Conference: 'We Have to Walk an Uphill,'" OSESGY, March 27, 2019, <https://osesgy.unmissions.org/griffiths-yemeni-women-conference-%E2%80%9Cwe-have-walk-uphill%E2%80%9D>.

<sup>7</sup> One Earth Future, "Yemeni Women Call for Inclusion in Peace Talks," *Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference*, January 14, 2019, <https://oursecurefuture.org/blog/>



The role of women in the conflict in Yemen has changed significantly since the start of the war in 2011, and this has been recognized both internally, and by the international community. The following sections will explore the role that women had in the National Dialogue Council (NDC) between 2013 and 2014 and the transformations of women's roles in peace processes in Yemen today.

### WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE CONFERENCE 2011-2015

At the NDC, following the Arab Spring in 2011, Yemen went through a series of transitions and negotiations to try and reconcile groups from across the country, as well as to establish a power-sharing deal after the 33-year rule of Ali Abdallah Saleh. <sup>8</sup> During these negotiations, each political group that was represented at the table was required to have at least 30 percent women on each panel. This mandate created a large amount of momentum for women and their role in the peace processes. These women participated in a significant capacity throughout the two years of the NDC, making up 28 percent of the total participants of the conference. <sup>9</sup>

Women led three of the nine NDC workshops and

yemeni-women-peace. \u0000\u00221} Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference, January 14, 2019, <https://oursecurefuture.org/blog/yemeni-women-peace/>; "plain-Citation": "One Earth Future, "Yemeni Women Call for Inclusion in Peace Talks," Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference, January 14, 2019, <https://oursecurefuture.org/blog/yemeni-women-peace/>; "noteIndex": 7; "citationItems": [{"id": 353, "uris": [{"http://zotero.org/users/local/6d852Va/items/7284JQRK"}, {"http://zotero.org/users/local/6d852Va/items/7284JQRK"}], "itemData": {"id": 353, "type": "webpage", "title": "Yemeni Women Call for Inclusion in Peace Talks", "container-title": "Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference", "abstract": "With the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review on Yemen (UPR

<sup>8</sup> Jessica Zimerman, "Lessons from the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda," *The Diplomat*, November 2, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/lessons-from-the-uns-women-peace-and-security-agenda/>.

<sup>9</sup> Anderlini et al., "Bringing Peace to Yemen by Having Women at the Table What the U.S. Must Do and Why It Matters."

created an all women panel in order to voice their concerns to the council more strongly. <sup>10</sup> These statistics demonstrate clearly the importance that women had in the attempted government transition following the revolution in 2011. They played an integral part in the protests and negotiations, yet they faced scrutiny and many structural challenges along the way. Many of these challenges that women face in trying to participate more in the peace processes are systemic in nature, because many of the delegations and groups in Yemen still do not openly advocate for women's participation in an official capacity.

The women of the revolution worked to implement a mandatory 30 percent representation in parliament, however to this day that goal has still not been achieved. In fact, this goal is perhaps further from being achieved today in 2019, than it was after the NDC in 2015. Women in Yemen during the NDC fought to gain representation, noting particularly the importance that they place in the peace processes. Including women in the peace negotiations in Yemen in 2015 was advocated for at the United Nations in 2015, by the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, however there were few changes that were adopted to allow women more opportunities in the peace processes during the 2011-2015 transition at the international level. <sup>11</sup>

Following the ending of the NDC in 2014, women were used as representatives on certain committees, including the Constitution Drafting Commission and the National Authority for Monitoring the Implementation of the National Dialogue Conference amongst others. However, their presence was seen largely in a superficial manner, as these committees were required to fill quotas with women as participants. <sup>12</sup> The list of

<sup>10</sup> Anderlini et al.

<sup>11</sup> UN Women, "Yemeni Women Call for Their Inclusion in Peace Efforts," UN Women, October 27, 2015, <http://www.unwomen.org/news/stories/2015/10/yemeni-women-call-for-their-inclusion-in-peace-efforts>.

<sup>12</sup> "Women in Peace and Transition Processes: Yemen (2011-2015) | Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative," Inclusive Peace, April 2018, <https://www.inclusivepeace.org/content/women-peace-and-transition-processes-yemen-2011-2015>.



actions that women took following the end of the NDC, through 2015 is extensive. However, after this time period ended, many of the women's groups were dismantled due to the onset of the conflict in 2015. The inability of the government of Yemen and local actors to support women's roles in peace processes following end of the NDC has ultimately affected the role that they play in peace processes today, as their continuous role in peace processes cannot be guaranteed.

While actions such as these are important to the transition of involving more women in peace processes, if women are not directly involved in the discussion, and are only included as a point of discussion, there will be no change. This is what is still being seen today, as women have been increasingly marginalized throughout the war, since 2015, and face even more challenges today than they did four years ago.

In the next section, some of these challenges will be addressed, as well as a brief comparison of the steps that have been taken to include women in peace processes in the current conflict. Ultimately, Yemeni men and women, international organizations and high-level representatives must be the one to take actions to advocate for women and their role in the peace processes. While women are fighting to play a part in the post-conflict peace negotiations, the changes must be seen as beneficial to all groups, otherwise women will only continue to be marginalized.

<https://www.inclusivepeace.org/content/women-peace-and-transition-processes-yemen-2011-2015>.

### TODAY IN YEMEN: THE TRANSFORMATION OF WOMEN'S ROLES

In the ongoing civil war today, women have been disproportionately affected by the conflict. The economic impact of the war effects a variety of sectors and groups in Yemen, arguable, the group that is most affected by the conflict is family households. Families in Yemen can no longer rely on men to provide for the household and the number of women that have become the head of the household during the war has increased to over 30 percent. <sup>13</sup>

This shift in women's roles is significant because of the existing societal stigmas that prevent women from being more active within the public sphere. There are many risk that women face being at the frontline of sustaining families and communities, while simultaneously trying to adapt to new ways to address the effects of the conflict. <sup>14</sup> These risks that women face, including verbal and physical threats, harassment and slander, must be acknowledged, particularly as women face challenges in public spaces in Yemen.

The role that women have taken on since the conflict began in 2015 varies drastically from

<sup>13</sup> Anderlini et al., "Bringing Peace to Yemen by Having Women at the Table What the U.S. Must Do and Why It Matters."

<sup>14</sup> Marie-Christine Heinze and Sophie Stevens, "Women as Peacebuilders in Yemen" (Social Development Direct, June 2018), [http://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1571/sdd\\_yemenreport\\_full\\_v5.pdf](http://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1571/sdd_yemenreport_full_v5.pdf).

their roles following the Arab Spring. In today's conflict, women have taken the responsibility upon themselves to fight for the end of the war, as well as fighting for their representation within negotiations and potential post-conflict resolutions. Similarly to the position in 2011, women have taken to the streets and demanded a role in the peace processes. However, as the conflict is still ongoing there is unlikely to be a comparable post-conflict dialogue, like the NDC, that would allow for women to play a direct role in the peace processes, at this current stage. The political situation in Yemen, and the parties' unwillingness to negotiate, or implement peace deals is problematic when looking for opportunities for women's participation in peace processes.

In March of 2019, over 100 Yemeni women gathered in Jordan to discuss the role that women can have in the formal consultations, in local groups and their inclusion in the peace negotiations in Yemen. <sup>15</sup> While the Special Envoy of the Secretary General of Yemen, Martin Griffiths acknowledged women's roles in the peace processes, the conference itself had no women speakers on the first day, and only when reporters were not allowed in the discussions, were women allowed to speak at the conference, hosted by UN Women. <sup>16</sup> While events like these are imperative to promoting the discussion on women's rights, their role in the conflict, and potential steps towards peace, inclusivity in these conferences is still lacking. Women from around Yemen should be at the forefront of the discussions, not just the topic itself. Within Yemen, women are engaged in conflict resolution on multiple levels by promoting peace and providing security when possible. <sup>17</sup>

In a post-conflict scenario, the women of Yemen must be a group that is represented in the

<sup>15</sup> OSESGY, "Griffiths to Yemeni Women Conference."

<sup>16</sup> AP Archive, *Yemeni Women Underrepresented in Peace Talks*, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRDn-rdRzTK8>.

<sup>17</sup> Heinze and Stevens, "Women as Peacebuilders in Yemen."

peace-processes. Significantly, the women of Yemen comprise a diverse display of interests and regions, and by having a small proportion of women involved in the peace processes, the diversity of opinions of women in Yemen will not be considered seriously. In order to implement a strategy where women are represented in the peace processes in Yemen, the government with support from local, national and international actors, must draft and apply a National Action Plan for the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Furthermore, while women from diverse areas and demographics within Yemen should be represented in such discussions in order to represent the diverse needs and opinions of Yemeni women, there must also be structural changes within Yemen that allow for greater, long-term participation of women.

### LOOKING FORWARD: THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN PEACE PROCESSES

The role that women have played in past peace processes has stagnated in the current conflict, although women have taken on different roles in Yemen today. The conflict has disproportionately affected women throughout Yemen. Mirroring the post-conflict period and the NDC in 2011-2015, women played an integral role in promoting peace on local, state and international levels. In 2019, women are fighting to play a more active role in the conflict, as peace keepers, peace builders, and negotiators, however they have largely failed in this notion, as women's inclusion in peace processes is seen less often today, than in 2015. Women in Yemen are struggling to find their voice in the negotiations, as they are not being allowed a seat at the negotiating table. Involving women in the peace processes in Yemen is vital to the stability of the country and promoting practices that could ensure a lasting peace. Measures must be taken to ensure that women are being included in the peace processes in Yemen, including the implementation of a National Action Plan for Yemen.

Women in Yemen have a unique opportunity to promote peace, but their security and safety

must be recognized as a priority. While women in Yemen are at the forefront of individual peacebuilding, they do not have a large enough platform to speak for themselves.

The international community must support women's roles in peace processes by assisting at both a local and international level to allow women from all over Yemen to play an active part in the discussions. Similar to the NDC, women should have larger representation in

peace negotiations than what is currently seen, as many opinions from women are not heard. Including women in peace processes, demanding safety and representation for women must be a priority if Yemen hopes to achieve a lasting peace following the conflict. Without women's involvement in every step of the peace processes, this goal will not be achieved. ■

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