

A Thesis Presented to
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Yemen's Regional War
by
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MAPS

"Nevertheless, as we saw in Africa, arbitrarily creating 'nation states' out of people unused to living together in one region is not a recipe for justice, equality, and stability"

ومع ذلك ، وكما رأينا في أفريقيا ، فإن إنشاء "دول قومية" بشكل تعسفي من أشخاص غير معتادين على العيش معا في منطقة واحدة " ليس وصفة للعدالة والمساواة والاستقرار.

-Tim Marshall

Political Map of Arabian Peninsula



Photo Source: Nations Online Project. "Political map of the Arabian Peninsula showing the Arab States of the Persian Gulf, the Gulf states." Nations Online Project, <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/Arabia-Map.htm>, November 3, 2022.

Yemen's Political and Infrastructural Map



Photo Source: Nations Online Project. "Political map Yemen." Nations Online Project, <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/yemen-map.htm>, November 3, 2022.

INTRODUCTION

Tucked away in the corner of the Arabian Peninsula, surrounded by the Red and Arabian Seas, lies a tiny country in the Middle East called Yemen. Yemen is 50th in area in the world and 48th in the world's population standings, making the nation larger than 75 percent of sovereign nations. Home to around 31 million people, the country has been involved in a deadly, incredibly violent, and destructive civil war since September 16th, 2014. The civil war is still ongoing as of November 29th, 2022. Yemen's civil war may very well be the most complex war I have ever studied. There is an entire region of Middle Eastern countries involved in the war, all with their own motives for power and control. In this thesis, before I even get into the argumentative aspects, you will learn about Yemen's early history and Arab Spring. You will learn about the timeline of the civil war and who the Houthis are. I cannot stress this enough, that it is impossible to even begin to understand the complexity of Yemen's regional war without understanding what came before. After reading this thesis, I hope you will understand why Yemen should be categorized as a regional war and why the atrocities happening to Yemenis should be considered more than just a proxy war. Yemen has been experiencing, at rapid rates, crimes against humanity and war crimes since the beginning of the war. This impacts their lives tremendously. I will not discuss the legality of Yemen's crisis until the end of this thesis, but it is one of the most important aspects. It truly ties everything together for me. After you read that section, I hope that you can look back to understand every factor that I have written up until that point and understand how everything is connected.

Studying the civil war in Yemen was incredibly tolling mentally and emotionally. Like most people that author an in-depth thesis or dissertation, I lost countless nights of sleep trying to wrap my head around the complexity of my topic. I have strived, my whole life, to do something

that makes a difference for people. I do not think I realized what wanting to help people implied, especially when it came to learning about a country like Yemen, therefore making me ignorant. A nation with tremendous historical and cultural value, with little economic value except for a few ports that are crucial to the oil industry being, abandoned by powerful countries hungry for dominance of the oil trade. It made me angry, and with reason; by learning about the severity of the war and that almost all countries involved have intervened because of religious dominance, religious fear, and oil power. Another topic that confused me, for a while, was why Yemen was being called a proxy war, when it is not that. There are proxy factors, which is undeniable, but I felt that calling Yemen a proxy war truly took away the seriousness of the domesticity of Yemen's war. I am taking a risk, in the world of academics, by labeling this war as a regional war. I do not expect everyone to agree that Yemen is a regional war, but I refuse to accept it is a proxy war. The war is far too complex for a label so simple.

It is no easy task to educate yourself about an underreported war and to try to even begin understanding mass groups of underrepresented people. More than anything, I think, the most difficult part of the entire process of what I have written was realizing I know nothing. I thought I knew what humanitarian aid looked like; I thought I knew what humanitarian rights meant. I spent so much time researching and conversing with people, but the more I did just that, the more I realized that everything is more complex than it appears. Everything in this world, at least the one of academia, is systematic. You cannot fix one issue without attempting to fix them all, or at least find ways to break the system, especially when it comes to political, religious, and economic focused issues.

There are a thousand sides to a story, and in the case of Yemen, there is the case of the Houthi rebels, the Saudi-led coalition, humanitarian rights organizations, America, and the

people of Yemen. I cannot even begin to understand all of them, but even after authoring this thesis, which I am incredibly proud of, I have only touched the beginning.

There is extraordinarily little knowledge on Yemen. Western scholars in the field are usually focused on bigger countries, with greater economic value and stronger global relationships. The information I found on Yemen while researching, in comparison to countries like Iran or Saudi Arabia, is miniscule. After this research, I am very aware that Yemen needs more scholars focused on the country, the culture, the conflict, and the history to be able to make an educational and humanitarian difference in Yemen. One cannot comprehend the severity of a crisis without being educated on the past, present, and what the two formers can imply for the future. I became aware of how little people know of what happened in Yemen's early times, when the country was split into the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and Yemen Arab Republic. One historical document would say one thing while another would say the complete opposite. I found myself at a standstill trying to figure out where to go next. How could I have written an academic piece without any accurate, historical accounts of what happened in Yemen before the civil war— to tie missing pieces together?

I kept searching for the answers, and I found them, but only after days' and weeks' worth of comparison between documents. There were moments, where I found it incredibly difficult to force myself to write very briefly or completely skip over historical events that have happened— like the Egypt and Soviet Russian led coalitions in Yemen's 1986 civil war, otherwise "known" as the Bloody Spring of '86. Everything is important in history and what leads up to current-day politics of any country, but I would have to have series of books written to cover the complexity that is Yemen. I wanted to write about poor western media coverage of the war and the United Nation's true role in Yemen, yet I could not write about either in the way I hoped to. The United

Nations is mentioned several times in my thesis, especially in the timeline, but I realized that writing in depth about the United Nations would take away from the purpose of my thesis. Heart wrenchingly, I took it out. Something else that has disappointed me was my realization that I could not write about the humanitarian crisis in depth. The section is brief, but it is equally important as my other sections to remember that there are always more impacts on civilians living in high warzone areas. I implore, whoever you are, to read more on the crisis. I hope that by the time you read this, ten years from now, Yemen's crisis will have ended.

Because Yemen is so poorly studied, one of the most difficult factors of this thesis for me to research was an in-depth study of events that have happened in the civil war. I could not have written this without Marcus Montgomery's timeline, which was written and published on the *Arab Center Washington D.C.*'s website. My timeline is remarkably like his, with some exceptions to current information and taking some information out that did not serve its purpose in my work.

In my studies as an undergraduate, I have taken a multitude of courses on Middle Eastern related classes. I learned, in every single one, that terrorist groups and violent rebellions/coups are not to be related with Muslims as a whole. The sub-sect of Shia Islam, called Zaydism, is not the same thing as the Houthi rebels. Most Houthi rebels practice Zaydism, which is a subcategory of the Shiite Islam practice, but it does not account for most of those who practice Zaydism. In fact, many Zaydis do not support the Houthi movement. The Houthis have supporters from different areas, some non-Zaydi and others who are. In my experience, one of the greatest issues people have with hearing or learning about Islamist extremists, is that they always associate all Muslims with it. Do not further read this thesis if you cannot acknowledge there is always separation between Muslims and extremists.

I initially wanted to draft this thesis to later help me in my career; for this thesis to act as a backbone, when I continue to write and research about Yemen. I started this thesis for selfish reasons, but it turned into something so much more. Although this thesis is nowhere near any form of justice for the humanitarian crisis itself, this is dedicated to the Yemeni people. This is my tribute in hopes that one day, a Yemeni will see this and know that at least one person in a powerful country like the one I live in, cares. This is dedicated the motherless children, for the parents who lost their child to starvation, for the grandparents who lost their grandchildren, for the sisters whose brothers died in the war. This is not for me, or for you: we who live the most privileged of lives. This is for them. I hope, to whoever is reading this, that you truly and utterly understand the importance of crises like this by the end of this thesis. I hope that you see how big the world really is, and how important it is for a powerful nation, like the one we live in, to put *people* and not governments first. We owe them that. Some people may say that we owe a country we know nothing about, nothing, but I disagree. It is because we know nothing about Yemen that we owe them as much as we possibly can.

I have taken an academic approach to this conflict. This thesis is an educational one, intended to teach my readers of everything one needs to know about Yemen's conflict. Do not confuse understanding the conflict with understanding Yemen. I acknowledge that there are separate ways to approach a thesis covering a conflict, but I strongly believe that there always must be a person to start. I know that I have learnt a lot, but I will learn so much more as my years go on. I hope, for the sake of Yemen, that you will too.

FIRST THERE WERE TWO

“People must know the past to understand the present, and to face the future.”

”يجب أن يعرف الناس الماضي لفهم الحاضر ومواجهة المستقبل.”

-Nellie L. McClung

Before understanding the current tensions that have triggered the ongoing civil war in Yemen that we see today, one must understand what happened before and if tensions have always been the same; and what part of these tensions have changed for the better or worse.

Before modern-day Yemen was divided politically, with fighting across the country in a detrimental war, Yemen was once a nation divided physically. Before there was a unified Yemen, there was the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY, the south) and the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR, the north). When the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1918 after the first World War, the North became an independent state, while the South was colonized until 1967 by the British. The two nations stayed separate until unification of, what we now know today as Yemen, on May 22 of 1990.

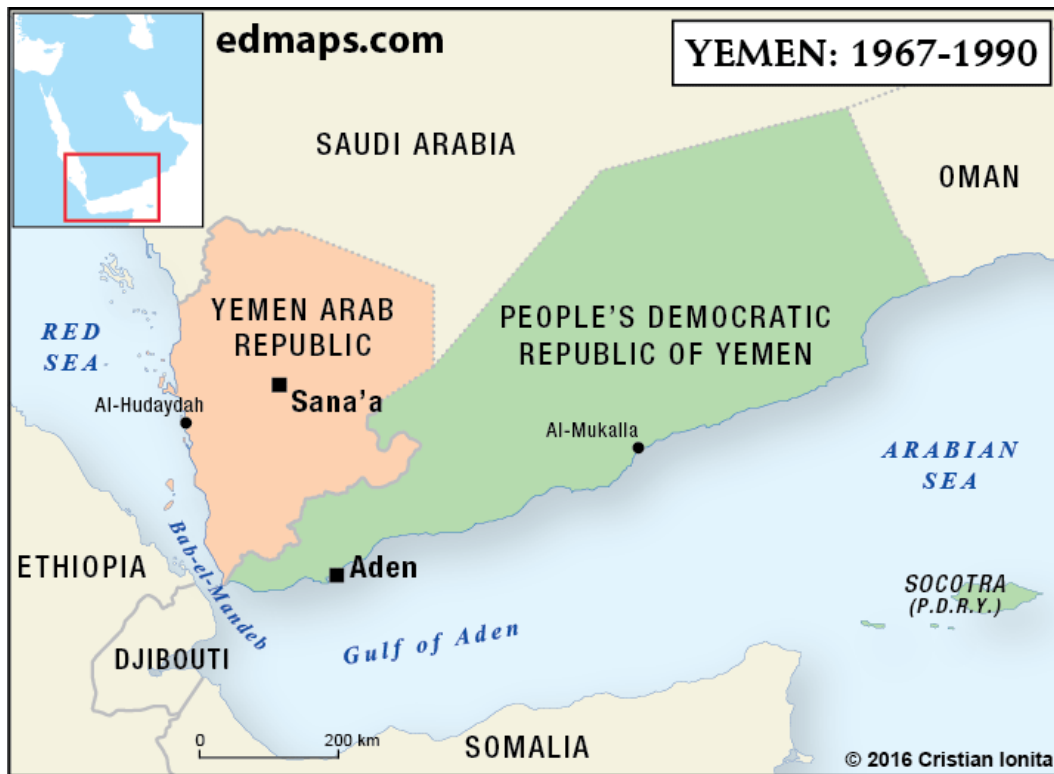


Photo Source: Cristian Ionita. "Yemen: 1967-1990." Alistair Reign News Blog, <https://alistairreignblog.com/2016/04/09/yemen-a-countrys-crisis-outlined-in-five-maps/>, November 3, 2022.

Despite both countries becoming independent states, free from colonization and conquer, they experienced events and crises that continued to keep their countries in turmoil. The PDRY was divided into two rival groups, both fighting over the right to govern the country. The first group was the Nasserite People's Socialist Party, led by Abdullah al-Asnag but morphed into an Egyptian-backed Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY). The second was the National Liberation Front (NLF), which originated with Arab nationalist movements— one that was highly disliked by, and had a complex relationship with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who backed FLOSY (Al-Hamdani). After the NLF won the conflict, leaders, and members of FLOSY alike went into exile in the North, where living standards were exceptionally beneficial: with free education, medical care, and livable housing leases. In the

South, the government was a socialist influenced one, where PDRY was heavily influenced by the USSR.

YAR experienced civil war between 1962 and 1967, where Egypt was intervening. Northerners were not fans of the Egyptians, who fueled acts of violence in the conflict that eventually led to the overthrowing and exile of Yemen Arab Republic's Imamate, Abdullah Sallal. Despite the efforts of their first civil war, the North faced multiple accounts of instability with President Abdul Rahman al-Iryani, who was the civil war's champion, being overthrown by a bloodless coup by Ibrahim al-Hamdi in 1974, who was also assassinated in October of 1977. A year later, their third president, Ahmed al-Ghashmi was assassinated like his successor.

Their fourth President, the man responsible for the establishment of the Republic of Yemen we know today, was Colonel Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was a Zaydi Shiite but had major support from Sunni leaders in Yemen. Saleh's regime offered stability for YAR, bringing wealth to the nation through oil exportations, all the way until unification. Saleh was not a dictator, but he favored authoritarian values, spending his presidency setting up complex networks of alliances between the country's military, tribal and civil communities, and fueling societal divisions by playing his enemies against one another to keep mass support and weaken his opposition (Edroos). Financially, the PDRY and YAR alike were the poorest in the Middle East. By the late 1980s, both regimes were in tremendous debt to Soviet Russia for weapons, were recipients of aid from the Gulf countries, and were reliant on remittance income from emigrant workers. "By the end of the decade [the 1980s], both countries owed around 45 percent of their entire national debt to the USSR" (Clark 122).

In 1986, PDRY entered a bloody civil war, that lasted January 13th to January 24th. Known as the "blood-soaked spring of 1986", Egypt's Nasser and the USSR were affiliates of

the war, supporting either side. Their involvement officially caused \$120 million in damage to property and loss of military hardware, but unofficially it is thought to be \$140 million. These figures matched the already toppling debt that the PDRY owed since their independence in 1967 from the British (Lackner 106).

Yemen was unified on May 22nd, 1990, after a mere few hours of consultation. Unification was pushed for by the Yemeni population of both Yemen sovereignties. Saleh claimed victory for unification, which placed him as President of Yemen. It is unknown and unclear what happened during the meetings of unification, but there is speculation that military dominance was threatened, causing South Yemen to agree to terms of unification. Lackner studied the establishment of the Republic of Yemen, and although the reason for unification is unknown, she argues that as communism failed, in connection with PDYR, surrounding global factors impacted unification:

The establishment of the Republic of Yemen in 1990 took place in the same era as the reunification of Germany, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the Iraqi Baathist attempted takeover of Kuwait. All three of these factors had an impact on Yemen... It merged two regimes which had both differences and surprising similarities and took place at a time when it was seen by leaders in both 'parts of the homeland' as a response to the crises each of them faced. (Lackner 96-97)

After YAR's Saleh had claimed victory, a two-year transition period was set in stone. Helen

Lackner, author of *Yemen in Crisis: The Road to War*, explains the transition period:

To pre-empt any obstruction, the process was accelerated without much warning and the Republic of Yemen was proclaimed. For a two-year transition period, the government was to be run with half of all senior posts earmarked for officials of each previous state. Parliament would be composed of the two combined parliaments. This was to be followed by national elections that would rationalize the system. (Lackner 118)

Among the reasons for the transition period was religion. In the Middle East, a recurring issue across the region is that of religious dominance of Islam, particularly between Shia and Sunni

Muslims. In Yemen, there are two branches of Islam practiced: Zaydism, closely related to Shi'ism (Shia) in the northern sects of Yemen and Sunni Muslims in the south. There are no accurate figures about the numbers of followers from each sect due to the political state of the last century. However, based on population distribution, Zaydis represent 30 to 35 percent of Yemen's population, with 60 to 65 percent practicing Sunni Islam. Naturally, a minority religious group ruling the country caused great discontent and resentment in a region surrounded by Sunni dominance. The hatred for Zaydis goes long past the unification of Yemen and was a prevalent factor in North Yemen's instability— even when half of YAR practiced Zaydism (Renaud).

For a brief time, there was joy and enthusiasm towards unification. Tensions were forgotten for merely a few months, but nothing lasts forever. In the now unified country of Yemen, tensions returned; in fact, they escalated worse than they had been before.

Two months after the unification, regional and global developments hit Yemen when Saddam Hussein marched the Iraqi government into Kuwait on August 2nd of 1990. Hussein's actions ignited a wrath from the west – the United States, Britain, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf States— and resulted in the United Nations' sanction on the invasion of Iraq five months later. This put Yemen's fragile relationship with Iraq, their oil supplier, at risk. Yemen's relationship with Iraq was an important one because Iraq's oil was helping Yemen climb out of the country's crippling debt. Hussein's invasion of Kuwait was a direct threat and hit to Saudi Arabia. While President Saleh did not directly applaud the invasion, he did not condemn it either and that outraged Saudi Arabia. In return to Yemen's refusal to condemn Iraq, Saudi Arabia pulled back on recently preferential terms with the oil trade. It cost Yemen another \$1.5 billion in remittances and unemployment rose to 25 percent (Clark 136).

The United Nations Security Council was voting on UN Resolution 678, which would sanction a US and British led coalition into Iraq, and Yemen was one of the non-permanent seats in the council. When the United States became involved in the invasion of Iraq through the United Nations, Secretary of State, James A. Baker III, tried to befriend Yemen. Saleh publicly said he would not be supporting Resolution 678, therefore publicly siding with Hussein. Six days later, when Yemen voted against the UN's ruling of the resolution, the United States stopped supplying their \$70 million aid development package to Yemen (Clark 137). Yemen could not afford this, and it impacted the country severely, which would last to the current day.

As a result of all that happened in Yemen months after unification, tensions rose. The poorest and only democratic country in the Middle East suffered from financial constrictions and political regimes that survived beyond unification. The tensions from YAR and PDRY continued within a unified Yemen through political religious superiority in each region and ways of interaction with the international community. However, these tensions that represent a former PDYR versus YAR, that are seen within the civil war today, are not civil tensions— they are political ones that have continued since before Yemen's unification. With these growing tensions influenced by government and political actors in Yemen within the 1960s, 70s, and 80s financial, economic, and governmental instability have continued to be the same into Yemen today, but it began boiling with Yemen's unification.

Both factors, along with the continuing tensions from the UN meeting, contributed to Yemen's current civil war. Beyond these events though, there were arguably more crucial factors that continued to push towards these tensions that would later erupt. These factors lay in the hands of extremists, intolerance for separation of religion, threats from successionists, and the rise of the Arab Spring. Tensions simmered under the surface until 2011: after only 21 years of

unification when the Arab Spring ransacked the country, which would lead to Yemen's deadly civil war and the worst humanitarian crisis in the world since the Holocaust.

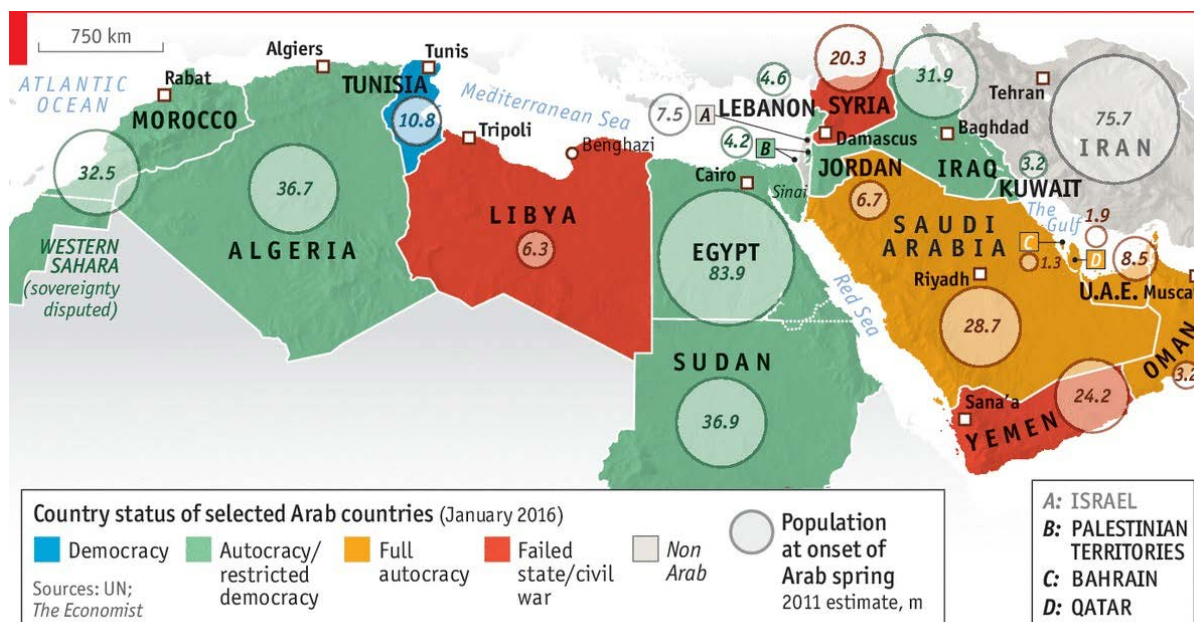
THE ARAB SPRING

*"Arab Spring Revolutions did not fail, but the collapsed regimes failed to **withdraw**."*

"لم تفشل ثورات الربيع العربي ، لكن الأنظمة المنهارة فشلت في الانسحاب."

-Mohammad Mustafa, Thamar University located in Dhamar, Yemen

The first Arab Spring happened in Tunisia on December 17th, 2010, in response to corruption and economic stagnation. An Arab Spring is a term used for when citizens in the Middle East attempt to overthrow their governments. What happened in Tunisia was not a unique experience and spread to five other countries across North Africa and the Middle East: Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. Although the Arab Spring was not a unique experience, the end results of these Arab Springs were. Below is a map that shows the current standing of each country in North Africa and the Middle East. Tunisia had the most successful Arab Spring, which resulted in a democratic country, with Egypt following a close second, and Bahrain being somewhat successful. Unlike Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain, three countries failed: Libya, Syria, and Yemen. For the three that failed to have a successful Arab Spring, the state failed, and civil war broke out across the countries.



Economist.com

Photo Source: The Economist. "The Political Participation of the Diaspora of the Middle East and North Africa Before and After the Arab Uprisings." Semantic Scholar, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-political-participation-of-the-diaspora-of-the-al-Khulidi-d'Hondt/a0c68f12e8f51b7d08f6fd5697c9171a65c2a9c7>, November 3, 2022.

On January 27th of 2011, anywhere from 10,000 to 16,000 Yemeni protestors took to the streets demanding that President Saleh step down from his presidency of over 30 years, including his time as president of YAR. Yemen was not the first country to begin a series of Arab Spring phenomena, but it was one of the first countries to do so.

The people of Yemen who took part in the Arab Spring condemned Saleh's corruption, government officials' corruption, and poverty that the country had not been able to escape since the late 1980s. Yemenis protesting were organized oppositionists and there was little violence between protestors and security forces. Saleh responded to the demonstrations by promising not to run in the reelection and to deny his son the right to govern. He also made several economic concessions, that were aimed at supporting Yemen's economy, but was ultimately denied by the protestors. The people of Yemen held no trust in Saleh: in 2006 he had made this same promise not to run for reelection. The Yemeni demonstrations continued, and on February 20th, 2010,

thousands of Yemeni university students staged a sit in at Sanaa University. In March, Saleh offered to draft a new constitution that would strengthen democratic values— such as the parliament and the judiciary branches of government. Again, he was denied.

While the opposition parties were relatively nonviolent, Saleh's supporters were not. On March 18th of the same year, Saleh loyalists opened fire in Sanaa and killed 50 peaceful protesters. Due to the escalated violence, dozens of Yemen officials, diplomats, cabinet members, and parliament members resigned from their positions. Two days later, the most powerful military figure in Yemen, General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, vowed that his troops would not be used for violence against the opposition and backed them. Senior officials within Yemen's military followed after al-Ahmar's defection. For those of military rank that still supported Saleh, they were deployed to key points within the country. When Saleh, again, refused to step down from power, tensions rose again in the city and the military troops once again were deployed back to Sanaa (Montgomery).

While the Arab Spring was occurring and with the government weakening, there were unprotected areas in Yemen missing military presence. Militant groups took advantage of the military's absence in those areas. Fighters that were part of al-Qaeda's Arabian Peninsula branch (AQAP) took control of cities in the southern areas of Yemen, particularly the southern province of Abyan. In the north, the Houthi rebellion was gaining support. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)— consisting of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – offered Saleh a plan in late April that would remove him from power, but grant his family, former officials, and himself immunity. The opposition accepted this offer, but in late May, Saleh refused to sign the agreement.

Fighting broke out across the country between loyalists and oppositionists. On June 7th, a bomb went off in the Presidential Palace, and although Saleh survived, he was severely injured. During his absence, Vice President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi acted as president. Hadi lacked tribal support, unlike his predecessor Saleh and appointed family members to strategic positions within the government, but like his predecessor, Hadi remains an authoritative, but symbolic, figure (McDowell).

Hadi's placement would become permanent, as in late November, Saleh signed an international agreement that placed Hadi as President. In the 2012 elections in February, Hadi would be the only candidate on the ballot. He would serve a two-term presidency, and his most crucial role was to re-write the constitution. Despite a transition of power, Yemen remained deeply divided and threats of secession from all sides of Yemen resurged. Militant groups continued to grow, as did violence. Further development of the country was not achievable, especially with high rates of unemployment, instability, and growing rates of violence (McDowell).

Abdul Malik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi rebellion, accused Hadi's new government of being corrupt and contributing to the ever-growing rates of poverty in Yemen. In September 2014, the Yemen military killed several protesters. In retaliation, the Houthis overran Sanaa in late September. In a United Nations agreement, Hadi would appoint Houthi representatives in the government, but the Houthis refused because they wanted Hadi to appoint a Houthi Prime Minister. This agreement was not successful. Throughout the Houthi's occupation of Sanaa, fighting increased between government officials and other Islamist groups. On February 6th, 2015, the Houthis formalized their seizure of power, dissolved parliament, and announced that a five-member presidential council would form Yemen's new government

(Montgomery). During this, Hadi escaped from Yemen and took refuge in both Oman and Saudi Arabia. In retaliation to the Houthis takeover of Yemen, the Saudis fired missiles and created a naval blockade.

This action taken by Saudi Arabia, had taken the Arab Spring farther than just people protesting for a better standard of living and, instead, escalated it. Yemen's Arab Spring, by far, was the most consequential Arab Spring that gradually transitioned from protests into a brutal civil war agitated by different acts of foreign intervention. Militant groups, particularly the Houthi rebels, saw the Arab Spring as an opportunity through mass division and government instability. Opportunists they were.

THE HOUTHI REBELLION and YEMEN'S CIVIL WAR

"In 1990, when the Republic of Yemen was established, the Houthi movement simply did not exist. It started as a religious revivalist movement in the early 1990s, objecting to Zaydi marginalization in the power structure."

في عام 1990 ، عندما تأسست الجمهورية اليمنية ، لم تكن حركة الحوثيين موجودة ببساطة. بدأت كحركة إحياء دينية في أوائل 1990 ، "واعترضت على التهميش الزيدي في هيكل السلطة."
-Helen Lackner in her book "Yemen in Crisis"

Zaydi Muslims ruled North Yemen from the early 9th century to 1962, when Nasser replaced the Zaydi monarchy with the Presidents of YAR that was discussed in the first section. Traditionally, since 1962, the people that associated themselves with the Houthis were not a part of the current-day rebellion. In fact, the Houthi movement began in the 1990s as a revivalist movement for Zaydism; to protect and revive Zaydi cultural and religious traditions that were lost during Nasser's intervention of YAR. It is important to remember that not all those who practice Zaydism are Houthi, and that many Zaydis do not support the Houthi movement (Lackner 118).

During this period of Zaydism renewal, Salafi religious institutes were state supported and placed in traditionally Zaydi areas by a Saudi Arabian educated Yemeni cleric of Salafism (Renaud). Zaydism is a branch of Shia Islam that grew in heavy opposition towards Salafism, a reform movement which believes that Islam should be returned to the traditions of the pious predecessors and return to its purest form. Salafism branches from Sunni Islam. Zaydis believe that Zaydism is closer in relation to Sunni Islam than Shia Islam is. Zaydis have always been politically excluded and marginalized in Yemen, viewed negatively for their belief that those blood related to Fatima and Ali, Imams of the Sada tribal clan, have a right to rule the Muslim population. Myriam Renaud, an academic on the Houthi rebellion, explains the importance of understanding the division between Shia and Sunni:

Shiites and Sunnis disagree about who should have been selected to succeed Muhammad as head of the Muslim community. Two groups emerged after his death. One group of the Prophet's followers – later called Sunnis – recognized four of his companions as “rightly guided” leaders. In contrast, another group – later called Shiites – recognized only Ali, the fourth of these leaders, as legitimate. Ali was the Prophet's first cousin and closest male blood relative. He was also married to Fatima, Muhammad's youngest daughter. For these and other reasons, Shiites believe that Ali was uniquely qualified to lead. In support of this claim, they cite sources describing Muhammad's wish that Ali succeed him. Shiites consider Ali second in importance only to the Prophet.

Over time, further divisions took place. Allegiances to different descendants of Ali and his two sons, Hassan and Hussein, split Shiites into sub-branches. A grandson of Hussein called Zayd gave the Zaydis their name. To them, he is the fifth imam after Muhammad, giving the Zaydis their other name: “Fivers”.
(Renaud)

The Houthi rebels form an incredibly diverse group, ranging from tribe members of Sanaa and other traditionally tribal areas of Yemen. There is a high percentage of Saleh supporters, who joined the movement when ex-President Saleh momentarily supported both his Zaydi roots and the Houthi rebellion during the Arab Spring after he was removed from power. Saleh discontinued his support for the Houthis publicly in 2017. The Houthi rebellion has support from

some Yemeni Sunnis, who are displeased with the governments constant rates of unemployment, corruption, and poverty. Additionally, the Houthis created a group called Believing Youth Organization to set up a cultural education program designed to teach and promote Zaydism during the summer months in the northern provinces of Yemen (Renaud).

From this discontent with the Yemeni government and marginalization, the Houthi movement transitioned to a rebel group in the early 2000s. They were politicized under their late leader, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, during Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Al-Houthi was a threat to Saleh's government and Saleh started a series of six wars against the Houthi rebels in 2004, where al-Houthi was killed. The series of wars (2004 – 2010) happened before the Arab Spring and Yemen's current civil war but plays a crucial factor in understanding the rise of one of the greatest players in the civil war today. By 2010, the Houthi rebels had grown in mass numbers and had become strong enough to defeat Saudi Arabia's intervention, capturing territory beyond their traditional strongholds (Renaud). Due to the support and strength that the rebellion collected during the six wars, the Houthis were able to play crucial roles in the Arab Spring, as discussed in section two.

Today, their numbers range from 75,000 to 200,000, according to a UN Security Council report released in 2015 (Renaud).

CIVIL WAR IN YEMEN

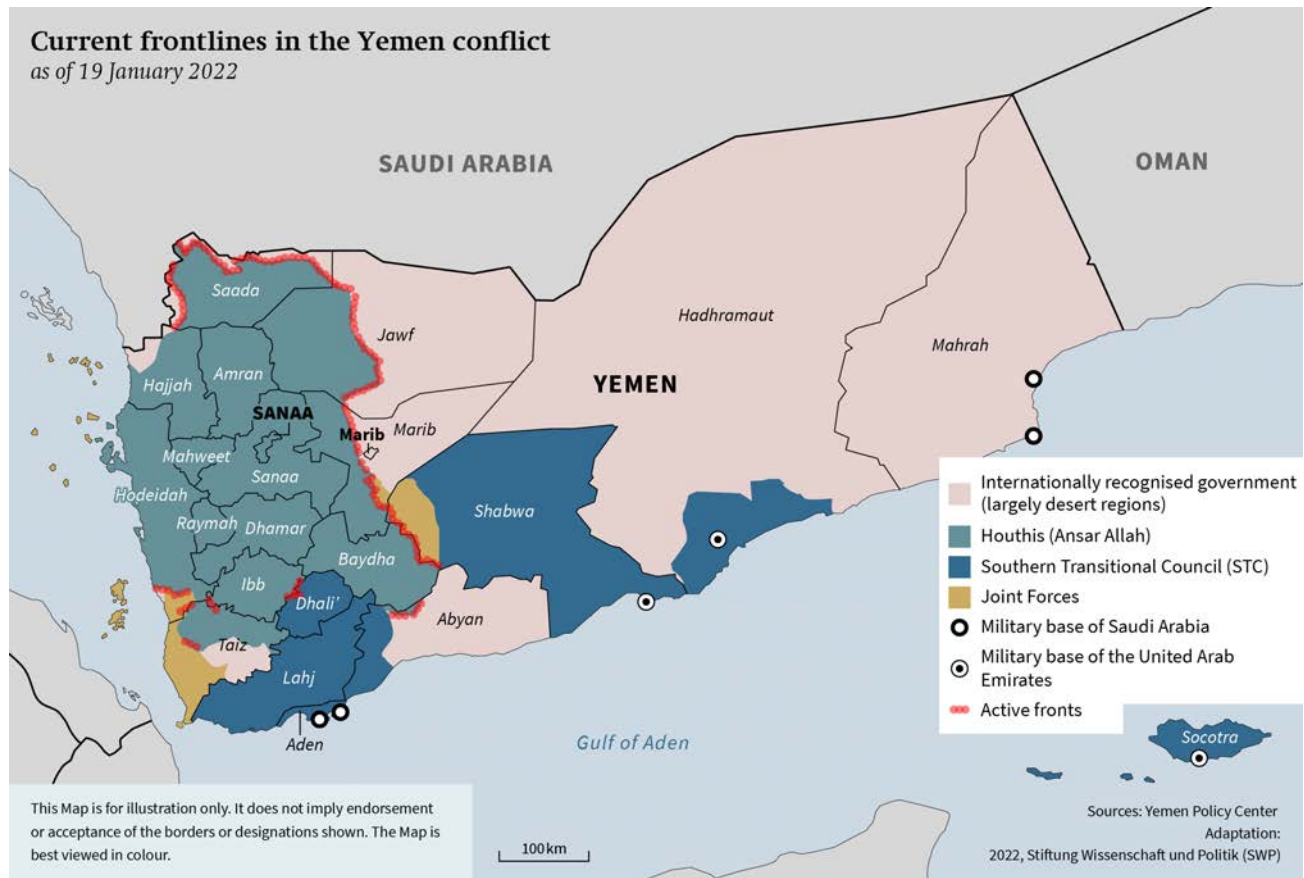


Photo Source: Yemen Policy Center. Adapted 2022: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). “Three Scenarios for the Yemen War.” SWP, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2022C06/>, November 3, 2022.

The civil war has been internationally recognized to have begun on September 16, 2014.

The Houthi rebels have been blamed on the international level to have started the civil war during their takeover of Sanaa and Houthi attempted takeover of the Yemen government.

Additionally, the western world accuses the Houthi rebels of being the sole cause of the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. There are more factors than solely the Houthi takeover of Sanaa in late 2014 and the failure of the government to withdraw from Yemen that influenced the civil war.

There was a high price for fuel, set in place by Hadi’s government in retaliation towards the Houthis. There was military division– with some of Saleh’s military siding with the Houthis,

militias siding with the government (known as loyalists), Southern Separatists who wanted South Yemen to succeed from Yemen, AQAP (al-Qaeda Arabian Peninsula), and the Islah, otherwise known as Yemen's Islamists Political party, that was exiled with the Yemeni government in 2014. There was foreign intervention before the war even began, as noted in the Arab Spring section. There are always multiple factors that influence the uproar of an entire nation and set it off into civil war; one factor of it cannot take the entirety of the blame.

Although civil wars often internationally recognize who caused it and what fighting is currently happening, it goes far deeper than that. Civil wars start because of different parties, each with their own ideologies, and militia groups which have their own agenda they plan to see become successful. Although civil war is detrimental to a nation, it always affects the bystanders the most: those who are unable to protect themselves in the way a militia party or government can.

The civil war in Yemen has affected the civilians more than the warring parties. For a better understanding, imagine that Yemen is a country of 100 people. 80 would need humanitarian assistance, 67 would be food insecure, 30 would suffer from extreme hunger, and 11 would be internally displaced (World Health Organization). In an interview with a young child in Yemen, journalist Iona Craig divulged into the impact of the crisis:

Ahmed Abdu was six when the civil war started in Yemen. Nine years old now, he is small for his age, but once a month he makes a four-mile trek from his mountain village of A'unqba, in the country's central highlands, to the nearest market where food is available. For half his life, hardship and scarcity have been the norm.

"Before the war you could eat whatever you wanted – chicken, chocolate bars, anything," says Ahmed, sitting cross-legged in a terraced maize field. "Now it's a bit of tea and just a handful of food, one bite only." (Craig)

Yemen is a nation of approximately 28.5 to 30 million people. In retrospect to these simplified numbers, the United Nations has estimated that 131,000 of the estimated 235,000 (8 in

10 people) civilian deaths have been an indirect result of food insecurities, lack of access to health services, and disease outbreaks. The exact number of those in need of aid varies depending on the source, but it is estimated that 23 to 25 million people need immediate humanitarian aid. An estimated five million are fighting cholera in Yemen, a disease which comes from a bacterial infection of the intestine with *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria found in contaminated water and causes prominent levels of fatality if not treated. Overall, around 80 percent of Yemenis have been severely impacted by the civil war (World Health Organization).

In terms of the war itself, most of the fighting has been between the Iranian-backed-Houthi rebels and the Saudi-led coalition. The civil war has not been documented in a way that makes it easy to understand the war, with bits and pieces of it missing throughout. However, the eight years of civil war is best explained through a chronological list, located in the civil war chronology appendix, page 48, as it is a complex conflict. Throughout the entirety of the war, there have been multiple attempts at peace, most of which have fallen through, except for the recent truce that has stayed true up until the date of December 12, 2022.

THE TRANSITION FROM CIVIL TO REGIONAL WAR and its INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS

“Peace, in the sense of the absence of war, is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold. It will not remove the pain of torture inflicted on a prisoner of conscience. It does not comfort those who have lost their loved ones in floods caused by senseless deforestation in a neighboring country. Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.”

السلام ، بمعنى غياب الحرب ، ليس له قيمة تذكر لشخص يموت من الجوع أو البرد. فهو لن يزيل آلام التعذيب التي يتعرض لها سجين الرأي. إنه لا يريح أولئك الذين فقدوا أحبائهم في الفيضانات الناجمة عن إزالة الغابات التي لا معنى لها في بلد مجاور. ولا يمكن للسلام أن يدوم إلا عندما تحترم حقوق الإنسان ، وحيث يتغذى الناس ، وحيث يكون الأفراد والأمم أحراراً.

- The XIVth Dalai Lama

The war in Yemen was not originally rooted in regional conflict; it began as a domestic issue with its own, unique, local roots. Yet somewhere, there was a transition between a domestic issue to a regional issue, where almost every surrounding country in the Middle East has intervened for their own reasons.

Yemen has been classified as both a civil and proxy war since the crisis began in September 2014. A civil war is defined as a war being fought between citizens of a nation. A proxy war is defined as a war that has been instigated by a major power which does not itself become involved. Yemen is undeniably amid a civil war and will continue to be so until peace prevails. However, although Yemen’s war has proxy war aspects with *some* of the countries involved, the conflict is far too complex to be deemed as such. By labeling Yemen’s conflict as a proxy war, it takes away the importance of the domestication and local roots of the war. The term proxy implies that academics, humanitarian activists, and other organizations should focus on the international dimensions rather than the locality of a conflict. Although international dimensions are a principal factor in Yemen’s war – the war remains focused within Yemen. Yemen’s war has evolved into something far greater than just a proxy war– it has become

regional. A regional war is not more dangerous physically or violently than a proxy war, but it is more dangerous in terms of international and political involvement.

Defining Yemen as a regional war implies that there is a multitude of regional countries involved in the crisis all for varied reasons: political, economic, and religious. Yemen is a regional conflict because it has been characterized as extremely complex, both domestically and regionally, and has had to experience new ways to implement peace by multiple organizations, with the UN being the main showrunner. The International Peace Academy (IPA) is a non-profit think tank dedicated to risk management and building resilience to promote peace, security, and sustainable development. To promote Yemen being a regional war, the IPA has defined regional conflict:

Regional conflict formations are interconnected wars among adjacent countries that are mutually reinforcing and therefore typically protracted. They are characterized by complex political, economic, social, and military transborder linkages. Regional conflict formations are distinct from interstate and intrastate wars, and thus also require new strategies for intervention by the international community. Transborder war economies include economically motivated violence by rebels and states, war profiteering by third parties, and coping mechanisms among civilian populations. Thus, while it is true that some insurgencies may be characterized by forms of economic predation, it remains unclear whether interdiction or cooperation is the best strategy for managing conflict goods during regional peacebuilding efforts. (International Peace Academy 1)

The implications of naming Yemen as a regional war, over a proxy war, adds a sense of urgency and severity to a conflict in ways a proxy war cannot. Since proxy wars focus on the international dimensions of a conflict, continuing to name Yemen as such would focus on what these countries are *doing* in Yemen, rather than what their presence *means* for Yemenis. The world will continue to focus on the international dimensions, such as Saudi Arabia, instead of ways to tackle the conflict from the inside—locally—and will not focus on how this impacts the country of Yemen. Regional war is a term that does not exist, but it should. By focusing on the

regionality of war, rather than a proxy, it is possible to focus on all aspects of a war but can remain as a local conflict through remembering the historical and deeply rooted tensions within Yemen to understand why Yemen is at war within itself. When implying that Yemen is a regional war, it is crucial to remember that outsider countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE are important *actors* in the war, manipulating fighting for their own benefit, rather than proxy *aspects*. The implication of a regional war means that all countries involved need to be forced to take accountability for their involvement in Yemen's war, and not viewed as proxy aspects that limits the liability of these powerful countries.

Historically, Yemen has always been interfered with politically. Saudi Arabia has been involved in Yemen's politics since before unification in 1990. Prior to the unification, Saudi Arabia was involved for control of the Zaydi majority living in the northern governorates of Yemen: who have always been deemed a threat to the Wahhabi-Sunni religious domination in Saudi Arabia. It has been highly speculated that Saudi Arabia's involvement within Yemen's borders is a direct cause of desire for oil control. Yemen has the highly valuable port city of Hodeida, with direct connection to the Beq al-Mandeb Strait.



Photo Source: Google Maps. 2022, <https://geography.name/bab-el-mandeb/>. December 8, 2022.

Saudi Arabia has only supplied 9.7 percent of Yemen's 70-80 percent of imports since 2015. At the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, researcher and journalist Jonathon Fenton-Harvey believes that Saudi Arabia is involved in Yemen's war for the kingdom to secure influence in Yemen:

Riyadh [the capital of Saudi Arabia] is hoping to capitalize on the collapse of Yemen's infrastructure to increase its share of these imports and keep Yemen dependent on its support. In October, Riyadh agreed to provide Yemen \$60 million worth of oil derivatives per month, with the first installment delivered in November 2018 to the eastern and central governorates of Hadhramaut, Shabwa, Al-Jawf, Marib, and Mahra. Skepticism surrounds Saudi efforts to present itself as offering a humanitarian hand to Yemen. In May 2018, it announced long-term plans to focus on developing infrastructure through the Saudi Reconstruction and Development Program in Yemen (SRPY). The program, supervised by Saudi Ambassador to Yemen Mohammad Al Jaber, "includes building and expanding

civil, industrial, educational and medical facilities complete with state-of-the art technology [in Yemen],” according to the Saudi Embassy in the United States. While Riyadh conveys this as a benevolent gesture that reflects a desire to help Yemen’s humanitarian crisis, critics note that it mainly enables Saudi Arabia to expand its networks of patronage. (Fenton-Harvey)

Based off the following research, Saudi Arabia fuels every aspect of a regionalized war. Their economic and social interventions, to expand a network of patronage, is more detrimental than it is helpful for Yemen: the country will adhere to Saudi Arabia’s wishes in return for developmental assistance. In the government definition, patronage is recognized to be a sense of “I do this for you, but you have to do this for me.” If Yemenis accept this developmental act of “kindness” from Saudi Arabia, Riyadh will expect Yemen officials to side with them internationally, economically, politically, and even religiously. If Yemenis do not see the patronage networking, it could severely worsen the crisis– especially with the minority groups and Zaydis in the country, where there are astoundingly high tensions between the two denominations of Islam (Fenton-Harvey).

Militarily, Saudi Arabia plays a significant role in attributing to a regional war, rather than a proxy war. If Saudi Arabia were an acting member of a proxy, there would be minimal to no troops in Yemen. In 2015, Saudi Arabia formed a coalition of Sunni-majority Arab nations: Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates. This coalition, with high Saudi Arabia influence, led air-strikes against the Houthi rebels in retaliation for Hadi’s government. Saudi Arabia’s military intervention consists of at least 100 warplanes and 150,000 troops (about half the unofficial number of casualties of Yemen’s conflict). Accepting a Houthi controlled Yemen would mean that a border would be shared with a hostile neighbor and would diminish Riyadh’s dominance in Tehran’s (the capital of Iran) eyes (Robinson). Saudi Arabia’s influence alone, with the successful attempts of creating coalitions

between other regional players in the Middle East, disproves the proxy war label of Yemen's war. Saudi Arabia is a major power, and it is heavily involved in the war on all aspects, and Gregory D. Johnsen, a former UN Panel of Experts member, explains Saudi's strategic interest:

In March 2015, when Saudi Arabia announced the beginning of military operations in Yemen from Washington, DC, Adel al-Jubeir, then the Saudi ambassador to the United States, made clear that the kingdom was not going it alone in Yemen. "We have a coalition of over 10 countries that will participate in these operations," he told assembled reporters. (Johnsen)

Another country that disproves the proxy war categorization, is the United Arab Emirates. The nation has around 10,000 ground troops that mostly occupy the southern provinces of Yemen, although some of these troops were pulled out in 2019. They have been accused, multiple times, of supporting the Southern Transitional Council, which captured Aden. The UAE has strategically prioritized coastlines and shipping lanes from Yemen's coastline, which is where the STC currently has a stronghold. Like Saudi Arabia, it is assumed by scholars that UAE's presence in Yemen is for control of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Yemen's coastline sits along key Red Sea shipping lanes for oil production and trade. Johnsen again explains strategic interest of the involved regional powers:

In late 2021 and early 2022, Houthi forces managed to take control of three governorates in northern Shabwa as well as large parts of southern Marib. For the UAE, Houthi incursions into Shabwa crossed a red line. Marib is often considered part of Northern Yemen and its oil and gas fields are key to Houthi desires for an independent state. However, should the Houthis take Shabwa, which also has oil and gas fields, they would effectively split the South in two, separating the capital Aden from the oil and gas fields in Hadramout and destroying any hopes of an independent Southern state under STC control.

To prevent this, the UAE moved units of the Giants Brigades from their bases on the Red Sea coast to Shabwa, where they quickly pushed the Houthis out of the governorate and back into Marib. The Houthis responded by directly attacking the UAE, forcefully demonstrating the group's ability to expand the war. (Johnsen)

When looking at the UAE's involvement in Yemen, it is critical to understand that although some troops have been withdrawn, the presence of the nation is just as powerful as Saudi Arabia's. The nation joined Saudi's coalition initially to continue keeping a good relationship with Riyadh. Regionally, an STC and UAE influence in a Houthi controlled Yemen remains the key strategy for the country (Johnsen).

Bahrain's role in Yemen's war has been minimal. Bahrain backs the Saudi-led coalition and has supported the Saudis with ground troops and air support. Besides support for the Saudi-led coalition, their involvement ends there. However, Bahrain has been known to imprison human rights activists, protestors, and journalists that have spoken out against the Bahrain monarchy's involvement in Yemen. In 2018, Bahrain's Court of Cassation imprisoned human rights defender, Nabeel Rajab, for two Twitter posts that were critical of their involvement in Yemen (ADHRB).

There are three countries that are minimally involved, but present and important, in Yemen: Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar. All three countries have acted as areas of mediation for meetings, peace talks, or support for the war in Yemen. At one point, these nations sided with Saudi Arabia's coalition, but their support was miniscule and has been concentrated on peace prospects. Kuwait's role is known to be consistent with that of Oman's. Kuwait, however, has publicly sided with the UN regarding political, economic, and humanitarian fields. Kuwait has also agreed to help Yemen reach comprehensive peace and stability with the UN. Oman has been called the "Switzerland of the Middle East" (Cafiero). Oman's pro-diplomacy course of action has chosen a route of neutrality, both supporting and mediating for the Houthi coalition and the Yemeni government. However, if Oman were to pick sides, they would side with Yemen's Houthi rebellion, where experts claim the first priority of Omani leadership is the prevention of

Yemeni conflict spilling over to Oman and to protect their country from the conflict (Cafiero).

Although Oman shares a border with Yemen, the Houthis are not perceived as a threat but rather it is the instability, refugees, and evacuation of Yemenis to Oman that has resulted in the route of neutrality (Akkas).

The same can be said for Qatar, who have sided neutrally with the nation. This is not Qatar's first country to mediate in, as they have been mediators for Eritrea, Lebanon, and Palestine. Qatar is not a true mediator, as they were involved in the Saudi-led coalition, but they have transitioned to it in recent years (Akkas). Like Oman, Qatar would side with Yemen's Houthi rebellion. Qatari dialogue with Houthis has been studied to be resulted from a lack of threat perception from the rebel group, as Qatar does not share a border with Yemen (Akkas).

Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar's involvement in Yemen is not fully direct, but still contributes to the regional war because they are actors siding with Saudi Arabia's military coalition in Yemen's war, advocating for peace within the nation and humanitarian fields. These countries still contribute to a regional war because they have contemplated new ways to approach peace in the nation with the United Nations and the international community, and were, at one point, a member of Saudi Arabia's coalition sending troops of their own into the nation. Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar have faced backlash from within their own nations about their involvement in Yemen. Overall, the three countries are complex factors within Yemen's war and attribute to a regional war.

Iran's involvement in Yemen is a private one. The relationship that the Iranians share with the Houthis is one that has been scrutinized internationally since the war began, but the country has not commented on their involvement. However, with common religious interests in mind, the Houthis are known to be backed by Iran internationally— especially with weapon sales.

Hadi's government has accused Iran of using Hezbollah, a Lebanese Islamist group allied with Iran, of supporting the Houthi rebellion. However, despite international speculation, regional specialists say that Tehran's influence is miniscule, as Houthis and Iranians follow different schools of Shiite Islam (Robinson). There are shared geopolitical interests of challenging and undermining the Saudi regime and the United States' regional dominance, so Iran's involvement, however unofficial it may be, cannot go unnoticed.

Iran is a prime example of what a proxy war *should* look like and has adhered to the definition of it. Iran has stayed physically distant, has not spoken, or commented on their speculated involvement in Yemen internationally, and have not tried altering the tide of the war by including themselves in the ways that Saudi Arabia has (Al-Muslimi). Peace for Yemen, now, does not appear to be on Iran's mind.

The United States and the United Kingdom has an interesting connection with Yemen, through Saudi Arabia and the United Nations. Both sovereignties are known to be close allies to the regime, especially the Trump Administration, where he sided with Saudi Arabia after the murder of journalist Jamaal Khashoggi and vetoed three bills that would have required the US to halt arms sales to the nation. United States' and the United Kingdoms' weaponry are usually used in air strikes, which in the case of Yemen, have killed multiple civilians. There have also been concerns within US lawmakers that the weapons they are selling to Saudi Arabia have fallen into the hands of Islamist groups, like AQAP and even underground sales to the Houthi rebels (Robinson).

It is speculated that both the US and the UK have supported the Saudi-led coalition because of the oil trade and the security of Saudi borders. An important global transport of oil called the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, which is located between Arabian and Red Seas under control

of Saudi Arabia, allows Saudi's allies free passage throughout the Bab al-Mandeb Strait from the alliance. Both the United States and United Kingdom have not directly infiltrated Yemen, which keeps the regional war from becoming a globalized war, like Syria's civil war has, but they have supported Saudi Arabia heavily with arm sales. The United States Congress and United Kingdom's Parliament have been torn with their involvement in Yemen since the beginning of the civil war, but only until recently has the US pulled back under the Biden Administration. There are currently sales being made to Saudi Arabia for defense reasons. Do not mistake the American and UK's involvement as innocent. Both are just as responsible for Saudi Arabia for supplying them with arms, logistics, and intelligence.

The line between proxy and regional is thin, but labeling Yemen as a proxy war limits the reality of where Yemen's war comes from: local and domestic motivations. Regionally, powerful countries have taken advantage of Yemen's poverty and the civil war to prove dominance. The war needs to be labeled properly and categorized beyond a traditional proxy war ideology. Yemen's war is a regional war, with influences and multiple years' worth of interventions from powerful countries throughout the region. Whether those interventions are religious focused, oil focused, or politically focused, all are regionally influenced and war-like strategies.

There are proxy factors in the war, which is an undeniable truth, but those limiting exceptions should not define the war for what it really is: a regional intervention and coalition meant to benefit each of those regional countries in separate ways.

THE WORLD'S WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS and its HUMANITARIAN AID

The purpose of this brief section is to show the severe consequences of those living through the war in Yemen and to remember that war goes beyond those fighting in it.

One of the most detrimental impacts of war is that of what happens to the people living in conflict. Since the start of Yemen's war, where 75 percent of the population lives in poverty in the Middle East's poorest country, civilians have been grievously impacted. Yemen has a population of approximately 31 million people, and of this, there are 13 million children in desperate need of humanitarian aid. In total, 80 percent of the population needs humanitarian aid. To add perspective, imagine Yemen is 100 people: 66 people are food insecure, 67 do not have access to clean water, 30 suffer from extreme hunger, 11 are internally displaced, 11 are malnourished, and 60 children do not make it past the age of five (WFP). As of April 18th, 2022, The United Nations Development Program says the war has killed 377,000 people, with half of these deaths stemming from disease and starvation (Montgomery).

Yemen has been called the worst humanitarian crisis in the world by the United Nations, Human Rights Watch (HRW), the World Food Program (WFP) and hundreds of other humanitarian organizations. Kali Robinson, a journalist and researcher covering the Middle East, in a detailed report for the *Council on Foreign Relations*, explains the severity of the humanitarian crisis:

Disease runs rampant; suspected cholera cases passed two hundred thousand in 2020. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is harder to assess since there is no comprehensive caseload data. Some twelve thousand cases have been reported to the World Health Organization, but health analysts say the actual count is likely much higher. Moreover, many countries cut back on critical aid to Yemen amid the crush of the pandemic, leading the United Nations to reduce food rations for some eight million Yemenis in January 2022. Three out of four Yemenis require humanitarian aid and protection, and four million are internally displaced, according to the UN refugee agency. (Robinson)

Humanitarian aid was designed for those who are at considerable risk of death, to minimize suffering, and ensuring that vulnerable and crisis-affected individuals are protected and receiving any kind of assistance they may need. Yemen's humanitarian crisis has worsened since the spread of Coronavirus in 2020: "Yemen is like Syria without cameras. And by that, I mean the suffering of Yemenis is not as well documented, it's not as well Youtube'd, Twitter'd, Facebook'd" (Afrah Nasser, Yemeni Journalist and Activist). The crisis would not be as devastating, and grueling as they are if it were not for the blockades by sea, land, and air imposed by the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi rebels, which obstructs humanitarian aid. These blockades have obstructed the flow of vital medical care, medical supplies, replacement for displaced people, food, and access to clean water sent by the Red Cross and UNICEF (Robinson).

HRP	People in need	People targeted	Requirements (US\$)	Funding coverage
2022	20.7 M	16.0 M	3.9 B	
2021	20.7 M	16.0 M	3.9 B	57%
2020	24.0 M	15.6 M	3.2 B	59%
2019	24.1 M	24.1 M	4.2 B	87%
2018	22.2 M	13.1 M	3.6 B	81%
2017	18.8 M	10.3 M	3.1 B	75%
2016	21.2 M	13.6 M	2.3 B	63%

Table: Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 • Source: Financial Tracking Service

Photo Source: Yemen | Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) 2022 OCHA. "Yemen." GHO <https://gho.unocha.org/yemen>, November 3, 2022.

The following images are triggering. They show children incredibly malnourished, injured, or dead, all impacted by Yemen's humanitarian crisis. Please view with caution.



Photo Source: AP File. "In this Aug. 25, 2018, image made from video, a severely malnourished girl is weighed at the Aslam Health Center in Hajjah, Yemen." VOA News, August 25, 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-chief-yemen-on-precipice/4640397.html>, November 27, 2022.



Photo Source: STRINGER/AFP/GETTYIMAGES. "One of the boys injured in Thursday's attack." CNN, February 27, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/13/middleeast/yemen-children-school-bus-strike-intl/index.html>, November 27, 2022.



Photo Source: STRINGER/AFP/GETTYIMAGES. “A Yemeni child injured on Thursday’s airstrike on a school bus.” CNN, February 27, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/13/middleeast/yemen-children-school-bus-strike-intl/index.html>, November 27, 2022.



Photo Source: Ziad, Khaled/AFP/GETTYIMAGES. “Children walk at a refugee camp for displaced Yemenis who fled fighting between Iran-backed Houthi rebels and the Saudi-backed government forces, in the village of Hays, near the conflict zone in Yemen's western province of Hodeida, Yemen, on Feb. 5, 2022.” The Intercept, February 8, 2022, <https://theintercept.com/2022/02/08/yemen-terrorist-group-houthis-uae/>, November 27, 2022.



Photo Source: STRINGER/AFP/GETTYIMAGES. “A Yemeni man mourns over the casket of one of the boys, during Monday’s funeral.” CNN, February 27, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/13/middleeast/yemen-children-school-bus-strike-intl/index.html>, November 27, 2022.



Photo Source: STRINGER/AFP/GETTYIMAGES. “Saida Ahmad Baghili, an 18-year-old Yemeni woman, from Hodeida, receiving care for severe malnutrition”. NBC, October 25, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/slideshow/malnutrition-strikes-yemenis-trapped-civil-war-n672931>, November 27, 2022.

LEGALITY AND CRIME

"It's never acceptable to target civilians. It violates the Geneva Accords; it violates the international law of war, and it violates all principles of morality"

"من غير المقبول أبدا استهداف المدنيين. إنه ينتهك اتفاقيات جنيف ، وينتهك القانون الدولي للحرب ، وينتهك جميع مبادئ الأخلاق"

-Alan Dershowitz

With great power comes great responsibility. In the case of Yemen's regional war, there are powerful countries and men at play. In the fight over who in Yemen will take control of the government, human beings and civilians that have been directly impacted by the conflict have faced grievous atrocities. Before understanding the legality of the atrocities committed and the crimes that influenced the horrible acts, one must understand what international law entails. International law has been defined as rules and principles governing the relationships and the dealings of nations with each other, as well as the relations of states and individuals, and relations between international organizations. There are many courts and councils that govern international law, but one of the most important courts is the International Criminal Court (ICC). Within this court are hearings and cases against states, organizations, or individuals who have committed one of the following crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression.

War crimes refers to serious breaches of international humanitarian law committed against civilians or enemy combatants during an international or domestic armed conflict, for which the perpetrators may be held criminally responsible on an individual basis. They may only happen during times of war. The Rome Statute of the ICC, Article 8 lists what consists of war crimes: willful killing, torture, unlawfully extensive destruction, compelling a prisoner of war to serve in the forces of a hostile power, intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population or intentionally directing attacks knowing civilian lives will be lost, intentionally

using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, and enlisting children under the age of 15 in the national armed forces or using them to actively participate in hostile activities (UN Office on Genocide Prevention).

In December of 2019, a 350 paged report consisted of at least 36 allegations of war crime against both the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi rebellion for usage of missile strikes that have been launched intentionally, knowing there would be loss of civilian life (OCHA- War Crimes).

From 2018-2021, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC)-mandated Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) on Yemen documented a pattern of violations and abuses of international law that may amount to war crimes, including indiscriminate airstrikes and shelling, torture, arbitrary detention and sexual and gender-based violence. The GEE alleged that Canada, France, Iran, United Kingdom, and United States may be complicit in these violations due to their provision of military intelligence, arms, and logistical support to some parties to the conflict. The UN Security Council (UNSC)-mandated Panel of Experts on Yemen has also reported that since 2015 arbitrary arrests and detention, enforced disappearances, ill-treatment and torture of detainees have been conducted by the governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as well as the Houthis, STC and forces affiliated with the UAE. The Panel reported in January 2022 that over 2,000 children recruited by the Houthis have died in combat since 2020. (Global Centre)

From this information alone, it becomes apparent that war crimes have been committed from every party involved in Yemen's war. Civilian lives have been intentionally lost from air strikes, children under the age of fifteen have been enlisted into combat, arbitrary detention, torture, and sexual and gender-based crimes have been committed against Yemenis. Houthi forces have previously used at least 18,000 child soldiers in their coalition, before they signed an agreement within their ranks that enlistment of them would stop in April of 2022.

Despite the detailed reports that have been written, there has been no action to pursue trials against the accused. For Yemenis, war crimes will continue until a long-term truce or peace is amended in the nation. For the international community, it is more relevant now than ever to

begin the prosecution process and provide reparations to the victims of war crimes committed in Yemen.

Crimes against humanity are defined as a purposeful act, typically as part of a systematic campaign, that causes human suffering or death on a large scale. Crimes against humanity and war crimes have similar criteria that can imprison a perpetrator of the crimes, but they differ. Crimes against humanity are usually enacted by the state or government and perpetrated against individuals based off gender, race, religion, culture, or political beliefs, that can happen at any time. War crimes are judged based on individual action. Unlike war crimes, crimes against humanity can happen at any given moment, but are more prone to occur during times of conflict (OCHA- Crimes Against Humanity).

The Rome Statute of ICC, Article 7 lists what consists of crimes against humanity: murder, enslavement, extermination, imprisonment or severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, rape, sexual slavery, forced sterilization, forced prostitution, enforced disappearances of individuals, and deportation or forcible transportation of population (UN Office on Genocide Prevention). The United Nations has said separately from the statute that famine can amount to a crime against humanity if food is weaponized: “it is an international crime to intentionally block access to food, food aid, and the destruction of food production” (Specia). In addition, the United Nations has found that both Houthi and coalition forces have knowingly attacked civilian targets in violation of international law. This includes the destruction of a hospital run by Doctors Without Borders in 2015, torture, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances. (Robinson)

Houthi forces, the Yemeni government, the UAE, Saudi forces have arbitrarily detained people, including children, abused detainees and held them in poor conditions, and forcibly disappeared people that were deemed as political threats (Human Rights Watch). Like war

crimes, crimes against humanity have been committed at a high rate throughout the course of eight years of war. Unlike war crimes though, women and girls have faced higher rates of violence, discrimination, and child marriage since the conflict began (Human Rights Watch). Women have also endured torture and sexual violence during detention, which categorizes as crimes against humanity because it is gender biased.

Once again, Yemenis will not see prosecutions of those groups who committed crimes against humanity until a long-term truce or peace agreement is met in the nation. The international community, just like war crimes, has yet to act on either reparations or trials of the convicted.

Defining the legality of crimes in Yemen is one that will take tremendous research and dedication, but it is possible. Based off numerous reports and humanitarian rights organizations that have begun the process of informing the ICC of either war crimes, crimes against humanity, or both simultaneously, it is probable that justice will come one day for the people of Yemen. However, the uncertainty of where Yemen's conflict is headed is probable to withhold on allegations until peace is acquirable within the international community. Allegations that the parties of Yemen's civil war face will take years to charge. To charge an individual or state of any crime broken under international law, the court must prove who was responsible, the motives, and the severity that the allegations had on civilians living in Yemen. It is most likely that all parties in Yemen will face charges of both war crimes and crimes against humanity. If the international community and the ICC fail to act on charging these perpetrators, they will have failed those directly impacted by the devastation caused by the war in Yemen.

All of these "ifs" are concerning. From the humanitarian perspective, the international community needs to break from their silent positions on Yemen and push to do more. It is known

that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed, based on reports done by humanitarian organizations, so why is the international community– particularly the UN and ICC– doing nothing? Humanitarian organizations have already labeled Yemen as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, yet there continues to be little positive impact from abroad. The work cannot wait to be started until the conflict is over– it needs to start now. By determining what is happening to Yemeni people and the atrocities being committed, why is the international community only slapping those accused on the wrist instead of holding them liable? There needs to be refocus on Yemen’s crisis within the international community, especially as numbers of those in need of aid continues to rise. Action must be taken now, to work on helping the people within this regional war, while focusing on the regional war. International communities need to strengthen their focus on Yemen by charging those accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity all while aiding those in need before the devastation overwhelms the country to the point it becomes unrecoverable.

CONCLUSION

When authoring this thesis, I was often asked how my research would contribute to my field. The answer is simple: using new terminology when describing war about a country that is often overlooked, such as Yemen, is necessary and crucial to raising proper awareness. My regional war terminology is crucial to understanding how there are a multitude of factors that impact a war and its people, but also shows that regional intervention is deadly.

This thesis shows the importance of history and how condensed countries have complex issues and tensions. The main point has been to highlight the nature of the war and the dire need for understanding, attention, and answers. My thesis has shown, statistically and factually, that Yemen's civil war is intricate and complex, through themes of historical tensions, the impact of the Arab Spring, understanding the Houthis, labeling a regional war, and simplifying the legality behind war crimes and crimes against humanity. Throughout this thesis, and writing it, the importance of early history and tensions can easily be seen. Had I authored this thesis without both backgrounds from pre-unified Yemen and the Arab Spring, there would not be as much comprehensibility as there is now. History, to me, is the biggest puzzle piece when it comes to understanding what a conflict is: understanding past relationships, past motivations, and past tensions are usually repetitive throughout conflicts.

Understanding the implications and injustices of labeling Yemen as a proxy war was another huge focus point in this thesis. Although regional war is a term, that technically, does not exist and has not been used to describe Yemen, that is exactly what is happening in the country. Proxy wars limit the severity of war, and I say this because when I think of the Cold War, I think it was not a grave issue because we never *really* went to war. In Yemen, it is obvious that other regional countries are involved, whether they are Kuwait or the UAE, and the issue is serious

because these countries are acting out war strategies, rather than implying they will happen if either coalition does not adhere to their wishes.

Not one party in this conflict, whether it is Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, is an innocent one, and that is one takeaway I want to be remembered about Yemen's war. Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar are all mediators and advocates for peace, yes, but they were also once members of Saudi Arabia— some which still back the coalition today. The United States is just as responsible for the deaths of civilians, through arm sales, as the ground forces in Yemen are. Although America's intervention is non-direct, the weapons created are responsible for the deaths of thousands— rebels and civilians alike. Something else I take pride in is showing, to the best of my *current* abilities, is that Saudi Arabia has always been a threat to Yemen— long before the war began. For those of us that have studied the Middle East, or at least know the history of it, Saudi Arabia has been intervening in its regional affairs since the country discovered oil.

Throughout my thesis, I have dedicated the idea that knowledge is key when reporting, investigating, and understanding the complexity of serious and detrimental wars that experience war crimes, crimes against humanity, and terminology that takes away from the locality of the war. My thesis is aimed at forcing scholars, journalists, and humanitarian organizations to begin looking at issues as complex as Yemen through a new and uncomfortable lens: new terminology is crucial to begin understanding an under-studied and misrepresented country.

Beyond the country though, the people of Yemen have been forgotten, which I aimed at showing through my research on the humanitarian crisis and Yemen's legality and crime. The most devastating fact of all, is the truth behind Yemenis being forgotten. Despite this pessimism, Yemen is going to be a turning point for scholars and journalists alike. Yemen has obviously merged into something far greater than predicted. There are countries, all around the region,

involved in its politics and fighting over which party will govern the country when peace comes. Yemen has been overlooked on all aspects, but it is changing what scholars are comfortable with. I went into this thesis fully believing that Yemen's war was proxy, but after further evaluation I will stick to my gut instinct and call Yemen a regional war.

As I stated in my introduction, there is one final reminder I must give, and I will say it once more. Although this thesis is nowhere near any form of justice for the humanitarian crisis itself, this is dedicated to the Yemeni people. This is dedicated the motherless children, for the parents who lost their child to starvation, for the grandparents who lost their grandchildren, for the sisters whose brothers died in the war. This is not for me, or for you: we who live the most privileged of lives. This is for them. I hope, to whomever is reading this, that you truly and utterly understand the importance of crises like this by the end of this thesis. I hope that you see how big the world really is, and how important it is for a powerful nation, like the one we live in, to put *people* and not governments first. We owe them that. Some people may say that we owe a country we know nothing about, nothing, but I disagree.

It is because we know nothing about Yemen that we owe them as much as we can.

CIVIL WAR CHRONOLOGY APPENDIX

The following table shows the chronological timeline of Yemen's war. The information inspired by Marcus Montgomery's timeline is crucial to understanding the complexity of the war. The table shows the many international dimensions present in the conflict, attempts at peace by both mediating countries and the UN, and the severity of the war.

As of April 18th, 2022, The United Nations Development Program says the war has killed 377,000 people, with half of these deaths stemming from disease and starvation. In-depth reporting of the war has not been reported since late April 2022.

Table 1: Chronology of Yemen's Civil War, 2014-2022.

September 2014:	The Houthis take control of the capital city of Sanaa.
October 2014:	The Houthis seized the port of Hodeida, located on the Red Sea.
January 2015:	Hadi resigns as president, after the Houthis claim to be the new governing power of Yemen.
February 2015:	The United Nations denounced the declaration made by the Houthi rebels as the new governing power. Hadi rescinds his resignation in Aden and internationally declares the Houthis a coup.
March 2015:	The Houthis begin an offensive against the government and make their way to Aden, the traditional capital of South Yemen. Hadi flees to Saudi Arabia and the Houthis seize parts of Taiz, which was once known as the cultural capital of Yemen. Taiz is now known as the "city of snipers" and is one of the most active and dangerous war zones in the country.
March 2015, Operation Decisive Storm:	A Saudi-led coalition of Arab States (Egypt, Kuwait, UAE, Morocco, Jordan, Bahrain, and Sudan) declare support for President Hadi. Air strikes against the Houthis begin, ground forces are deployed, and a naval blockade is imposed. The United States internationally announces their support for Operation Decisive Storm (ODS).

April 2015, Operation Restoring Hope:	The coalition announces the end to ODS but continues to bomb Houthi strongholds and the United States increases arms sale to Saudi Arabia.
April 2015:	Houthis capture the city of Ataq in the midst of the bombing and air strikes. Saudi Arabia strengthens its borders after three Saudi officers die at the border during a Houthi attack. The Houthi rebels call the UN Security Council's resolution, which was designed to impose an arms embargo, an act of aggression.
May 2015:	Saleh's troops formally announce an alliance with the Houthi rebels, where Saleh claims Hadi's presidency is illegitimate.
August 2015:	Houthi rebels take control of Shabwah governorate. The main city of the province is Ataq.
September 2015:	President Hadi returns to Aden after it is recaptured by the government loyalists with the help of a Saudi-led coalition.
April 2016:	The United Nations attempts to talk to both sides of the civil war; the Houthis and Hadi's government to push for a ceasefire. The talk was successful, and the ceasefire lasts a month.
May 2016 – October 2017:	Both sides break the ceasefire truce. Houthi rebels fire missiles into Saudi Arabia and attack the capital city of Riyadh. There are more attempts for political resolutions and peace talks, all of which are unsuccessful.
November 2017:	The civil war in Yemen is deemed, for the first time, as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Cholera has broken out and Yemen's famine is on the rise. These two issues occurred because of civil war, and have yet to be resolved, five years later.
December 2017:	Saleh breaks alliance with the Houthis, and instead sides with his former Vice President Hadi and the Saudis. Fighting escalates to the worst it has been since the war has ever been, resulting in Saleh's death. At this point, the Houthi's control most of North Yemen and the border with Saudi Arabia. Loyalists control most of South Yemen. Saleh's son, Ahmed Ali Saleh vows to avenge his father.
January 2018:	A United Arab Emirates-backed separatists' movement, known as the Southern Transitional Council (STC), seize control of Aden. This movement has the largest member percentage of those wishing for a succession of South Yemen, to no longer have Yemen be unified.

February 2018:	British diplomat Martin Griffiths is appointed as Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen by the United Nations.
March 2018:	It is declared, by multiple humanitarian organizations, like the United Nations, that 22 million Yemenis need humanitarian aid.
March – May 2018:	In the western coast of Yemen, fighting escalates. Dozens of civilians are killed in a Saudi air strike and security raid. One of the Houthis most important senior officials, Saleh Ali al-Sammad, is killed during an air strike. He is one of the first major losses on the Houthis behalf since the fighting began in 2015. For the first time since the civil war began in 2014, international opposition towards the Saudi-led coalition is expressed when 20 civilians were killed at a wedding. In May, the UAE forces took control of Socotra Island to occupy the airport and seaport. This causes tensions with the Saudi-led coalition and Yemeni government officials.
June – July 2018:	President Hadi meets with UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nayhan. Their meeting was for coalition plans to launch an offensive against the Houthi's controlled port of Hodeida.
August – September 2018:	A Saudi-led coalition air strike strikes a school bus, killing 40, most of whom were children. Further international opposition grows. US Public Opinion for the US's involvement in Yemen's war decreases by significant numbers. The bombs used for this air strike, that killed the 40, were US supplied weapons.
October 2018:	<i>The Washington's Post</i> journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, is assassinated by Saudi agents in Istanbul. This further decreases US support for the aid to Saudi Arabia and raises questions about the alliance. UN efforts to mediate the war in the country of Switzerland between the Houthis and Yemeni government officials fall through, once again.
November 2018:	President Donald Trump's statement on standing with Saudi Arabia is released: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">The world is a very dangerous place! The country of Iran, as an example, is responsible for a bloody proxy war against Saudi Arabia in Yemen, trying to destabilize Iraq's fragile attempt at democracy, supporting the terror group Hezbollah in Lebanon, propping up dictator Bashar Assad in Syria (who has killed millions of his own citizens), and much more. Likewise, the Iranians have killed many Americans and other innocent people throughout the Middle East. Iran states openly, and with great force, "Death to America!"</p>

and “Death to Israel!” Iran is considered “the world’s leading sponsor of terror.”

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia would gladly withdraw from Yemen if the Iranians would agree to leave. They would immediately provide desperately needed humanitarian assistance. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has agreed to spend billions of dollars in leading the fight against Radical Islamic Terrorism.

After my heavily negotiated trip to Saudi Arabia last year, the Kingdom agreed to spend and invest \$450 billion in the United States. This is a record amount of money. It will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, tremendous economic development, and much additional wealth for the United States. Of the \$450 billion, \$110 billion will be spent on the purchase of military equipment from Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and many other great U.S. defense contractors. If we foolishly cancel these contracts, Russia and China would be the enormous beneficiaries – and very happy to acquire all of this newfound business. It would be a wonderful gift to them directly from the United States! The crime against Jamal Khashoggi was a terrible one, and one that our country does not condone. Indeed, we have taken strong action against those already known to have participated in the murder. After great independent research, we now know many details of this horrible crime. We have already sanctioned 17 Saudis known to have been involved in the murder of Mr. Khashoggi, and the disposal of his body.

Representatives of Saudi Arabia say that Jamal Khashoggi was an “enemy of the state” and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, but my decision is in no way based on that – this is an unacceptable and horrible crime. King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman vigorously deny any knowledge of the planning or execution of the murder of Mr. Khashoggi. Our intelligence agencies continue to assess all information, but it could very well be that the Crown Prince had knowledge of this tragic event – maybe he did and maybe he didn’t!

That being said, we may *never* know all of the facts surrounding the murder of Mr. Jamal Khashoggi. In any case, our relationship is with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They have been a great ally in our very important fight against Iran. The United States intends to remain a steadfast partner of Saudi Arabia to ensure the

	<p>interests of our country, Israel, and all other partners in the region. It is our paramount goal to fully eliminate the threat of terrorism throughout the world!</p> <p>I understand there are members of Congress who, for political or other reasons, would like to go in a different direction – and they are free to do so. I will consider whatever ideas are presented to me, but only if they are consistent with the absolute security and safety of America. After the United States, Saudi Arabia is the largest oil producing nation in the world. They have worked closely with us and have been very responsive to my requests to keeping oil prices at reasonable levels – so important for the world. As President of the United States I intend to ensure that, in a very dangerous world, America is pursuing its national interests and vigorously contesting countries that wish to do us harm. Very simply it is called America First! (White House Archives)</p>
November – December 2018:	<p>The United States urges all sides to end the war in Yemen. For the first time, the US Senate votes to invoke the <i>War Powers Resolution</i>, to force the end of US military involvement in the Yemen war. A ceasefire was supposed to take place on December 18th between the Yemeni government and Houthis for the fight of Hodeida but falls through. Fighting continues.</p>
January 2019 – June 2019:	<p>Houthis launch a drone attack on Al-Anad base north of Aden and kills the head of intelligence for the Yemeni government. It injures dozens. The UAE withdraws most of its military presence in June, but continues to support STC, which has gained more control in Aden. Houthis continue to launch air strikes into Saudi, hitting oil installations and airports. In April, President Donald Trump vetoes a bipartisan congressional measure that would have forced the US military to completely withdraw from Yemen.</p>
July – September 2019:	<p>STC assumes control of the southern governorates of Aden, Abyan, and Shabwa. The UAE conducts air raids against the Yemeni government over control of South Yemen. Operation Victory from God is conducted by the Houthis in August. The operation destroys half of Saudi Arabia's oil output capacity. Iran is blamed for the first time in the war for the operation, as some of the weapon technology was too advanced for the Houthis.</p>
January 2020 – February 2020:	<p>Houthis carry out attacks on Saudi military training camps, and the Saudis regulate air strikes on Sanaa.</p>

March 2020:	Coronavirus has made its entrance into Yemen. The United Nations urges ceasefire to stop the spread of the pandemic in the already outbreak-driven Yemen. The Trump Administration discontinues aiding \$73 million in humanitarian aid to Yemen.
April – May 2020:	Saudi Arabia agrees to a ceasefire for two weeks to help control the spread of coronavirus. The first case of COVID-19 is recorded in Yemen sometime during these months. The ceasefire falls through, and fighting continues. STC demands self-rule in South Yemen, upsetting the Yemeni government once again.
June – November 2020:	STC denounces right to self-rule, once again siding with Yemeni government officials. In October, a major and important prisoner-swap takes place between the Houthis and Saudi-led coalitions. There is talk of potential ceasefire between the Houthis and Saudis, but the Houthis break the discussions when firing at the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah.
December 2020:	STC and Hadi come to a power-sharing agreement on governing Aden. An attack on the airport kills at least 24 people. The Hadi government, STC, and international community blame the Houthis for the attack and Saudi warplanes continue raiding Sanaa.
January 2021:	The Trump Administration internationally names the Houthi rebellion as a foreign terrorist organization. The Houthis control 70 to 80 percent of the Yemeni population. Marib, a stronghold of the Saudi coalition, is threatened by the Houthi rebellion.
February 2021:	President Joe Biden announces changes to US policy toward the country of Yemen, claims the Houthis are not a foreign terrorist organization, and declares an end to support the Saudi-led coalition (the offensive). However, the US will continue to support the territory that the Saudi has control over (the defensive). Houthi rebels launched an attack on Marib, which hosts a million displaced people. The clashes have displaced thousands more, as an exact number has not been released publicly.
March 2021:	Conflict escalates in Marib. Airstrikes continue to be the main show of power in the war. Capital city of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, proposes a ceasefire, which would have included re-opening the seaport and airport, but is not agreed to by the Houthi rebellion.
April – May 2021:	Fighting continues. The UN continues to voice support for ceasefire. The US calls for Saudi to de-escalate the fighting. UN Special Envoy

	Martin Griffiths calls on the Houthis to meet for de-escalation of the conflict but is denied an audience.
August 2021:	The Biden Administration removes the most technologically advanced missile defense systems from Saudi Arabia and its frontlines. The withdrawal was seen as an opportunity for the Houthis, who damaged a commercial airline and wounded eight civilians in Saudi Arabia. Two thirds of the population have become dependent on humanitarian aid for survival. Five million are on the verge of dying due to starvation and disease. Oman attempts to broker a peace agreement between the Houthis and the Saudis. It is ignored.
September 2021:	Houthi rebels captured Rahabeh, a crucial district within the Marib Governorate. In the south, government forces kill three protesters who were protesting the continued civil war, collapse of currency, and the lack of daily needs. On September 18 th , Houthis execute nine people who were involved in the attack that killed Saleh Ali al-Sammad.
October 2021:	<p>The UN Human Rights Council votes to not renew the mandate for the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts in Yemen (GEE), the only independent body that was monitoring all sides of the civil war:</p> <p>The following is the mandate to the GEE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and report on the situation on Human Rights in Yemen • Carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights and other appropriate and applicable fields of international law committed by all parties to the conflict since September 2014, including possible gender dimensions of such violations, • Establish the facts and circumstances surrounding the alleged violations and abuses • Identify those responsible for the violations, where possible. • Make general recommendations on improving the respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights • Provide guidance on access to justice, accountability, reconciliation, and healing, as appropriate • Engage with Yemeni authorities and all stakeholders, in particular relevant United Nations agencies, the field presence of the Office of the High Commissioner in Yemen, authorities of the Gulf States, and the League of Arab States

	<p>with a view to exchanging information and providing support for national, regional, and international efforts to promote accountability for human rights violations and abuses in Yemen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a written report to the High Commissioner by the time of the forty-second session, to be followed by an interactive dialogue (OHCHR) <p>Internationally, Saudi Arabia is blamed for the cancelation of the mandate. GEE had reported war crimes committed by all parties in 2018, including Saudi Arabia. Their Security Council chair voted new on the renewal vote.</p>
November 2021:	Houthis detain employees of the US embassy in Sanaa. The US demands immediate release. The Yemeni government's only stronghold is in Marib, where two million are displaced, and they announce they are withdrawing troops from Hodeida.
December 2021:	The World Food Program (WFP) cuts off funding to Yemen, due to falling international funding. They funded approximately 11.1 million dollars. This highly escalates the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.
January 2022 – February 2022:	Fighting continues, with attacks on Saudi Arabia and the UAE, by seizing a UAE Red Cross vessel in the Red Sea and air attacks across the border. The UN continues to enforce a travel ban to the country and renews an arms embargo on Yemen. A truce is proposed.
March 2022:	The World Food Program announces the food crisis in Yemen has increased, from the war in Ukraine. Saudi Arabia announces ending their military operations in Yemen as of March 30 th .
April 2022:	The United Nations brokered another two-month truce between the warring parties that began during the holy month of Ramadan. Peace efforts gain traction. Unfortunately, the ceasefire is broken. The Houthis signed a plan within their ranks to stop the recruitment of children in their forces, which at one time, had inducted 18,000 child soldiers. Hadi ceded power to a governing council and fired a deputy scorned by the Houthis in hopes that the rebels would return to the negotiating table.
May 2022:	A Houthis-led airstrike kills three civilians in the Marib governorate.
June 2022:	Fighting escalates, and violence worsens for the first time since earlier this year.

July 2022:	Armed clashes and shelling between all parties continue on the frontlines of Hama, Aleppo, Idleb, and Lattakia provinces.
August 2022:	The proposed two-month long truce is approved.
September – October 2022:	Truce continues. It has lasted for six months thus far since February.

Source: Marcus Montgomery. "A Timeline of the Yemen Crisis, from the 1990s to the Present." *Arab Center Washington DC*, Arab Center Washington DC, 24 May 2022, <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/a-timeline-of-the-yemen-crisis-from-the-1990s-to-the-present/>. November 3, 2022.

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