Forum:	Security Council
Issue:	The situation in Yemen
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Description of the issue:

Yemen is facing the current worst humanitarian crisis (as stated by the Secretary General, at Yemen pledging conference), by not only having 24 million Yemeni (80% of the country´s population), including 12 million children, in need of humanitarian assistance, such as financial and medical aid, but also having an escalating conflict.

Due to COVID19 spreading worldwide, rapidly and uncontrollably when having a lack of basic medical, and essential supplies in general, Yemen´s crisis is at its worst.

UNICEF calls the situation: "facing an emergency within an emergency", since the reason which led to the current severity is the ongoing civil war which started in 2014/2015.

Since then more than 7,600 people have been killed and close to 42,000 others injured due to the conflict between forces loyal to exiled President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi and those allied to the Houthi rebel movement.

The Saudi-led coalition and pro-government forces have recaptured some territory while the Houthis hold control of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, when the chaos has enabled al-Qaeda´s Arabian Peninsula franchise to gain a foothold. Due to Iran inciting the Saudi intervention by advocating the Houthis and the United States being involved in the opposition, as well as other outside powers influencing the crisis, concerns have come to pass that it has become or will soon become a proxy war. Having multiple armed parties not coming to a mutual agreement, UN-led efforts conveying a halt to the fighting have stopped.

Mark Lowcock, the UN humanitarian affairs chief, demands an immediate ceasefire, calling to mind that funding for aid operations in Yemen is "frankly on the verge of collapse" with only 18 per cent of the money required for 2020 having been received so far.

"Without more funding, we should all expect large increases in hunger, malnutrition, cholera, COVID-19 and, above all, death," he said.

Background information:

Prior the conflict Yemen was the Arab world´s poorest country, with a poverty rate of more than fifty percent. A 2019 UN Report said the country's "degree of suffering is nearly unprecedented," with 40 percent of Yemenis being on the brink of famine.

Disease has run rampant; suspected cholera cases reached some seven hundred thousand in 2019. Experts suspect the actual caseload is far greater than 1,600 cases of the new coronavirus disease that have been officially reported. Moreover, as the pandemic rages, many countries have cut back on providing aid, needing those their own, more than ever, worsening Yemen´s fragile health system.

"A lack of food, clean water and exposure to cold weather has already left hundreds of thousands of people in poor health, making them even more vulnerable to a disease that can spread as quickly as COVID-19," says Misty Buswell, Middle East regional policy and advocacy director for the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

Due to the war three million people, more than one million of whom are internally displaced, were displaced in general; the UN refugee agency reported in February 2020.

More than one hundred thousand deaths due to lack of food, health services, and infrastructure have been recorded by the U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) since 2015.

In addition, by attacking civilian targets, including the coalition's destruction of a hospital run by the international relief organization Doctors Without Borders, both, the Houthis and coalition forces have violated international humanitarian law, as the UN recognizes.

Other violations perpetrated by both sides include torture, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances.

HUMAN COST

- UN verified the deaths of at least 7,700 civilians in March 2020, killed by air strikes
- More than 100,000 fatalities, including 12,000 civilians killed in direct attacks
- Thousands more civilians have died from preventable causes, including malnutrition, disease and poor health
- 85,000 children with severe acute malnutrition might have died between April 2015 and October 2018
- Estimated 2 million children are acutely malnourished, including almost 360,000 children under five years old who are struggling to survive; see above

Young child, approximately 2 years old, being famine-stricken, thereby malnourished, and underweight, on the brink of death, and trying to survive somehow.

NGOS involved in the conflict

- UNICEF

  "UNICEF is on the ground to save children's lives, to help them cope with the impact of conflict, and to help them to recover and resume their childhoods."

- UN Development Plan

  "The UNDP has a comprehensive range of peace and development programs in Yemen."

  http://www.undp.org/

- UN High Commissioner for Refugees

  "The UNHCR is mandated to lead and coordinate action to protect refugees and resolve their problems worldwide, in Yemen the agency is working to support all those affected by the current conflict."

  http://www.unhcr.org

WHY IS SOLVING THE ISSUE IMPORTANT?

Solving the issue should be of great interest for every member of the Security Council, reasons given:

1. As mentioned before, it is/ will soon be a proxy war in which the conflict can be seen as a regional power struggle between Shia-ruled Iran and Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia.

2. Yemen sits on a strait linking the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden, through which much of the world's oil shipments pass. Hostilities in the region can lead to natural disasters and shortages all over the world

3. Saudi Arabia's eastern oil fields of Abqaiq and Khurais were attacked by air, disrupting nearly half the kingdom's oil production - representing around 5% of global oil output.

4. The conflict can greatly exacerbate regional tensions.

5. The threat of attacks - such as from al-Qaeda or IS affiliates - emanating from the country as it becomes more unstable.

6. It contradicts the UN Charter to let this conflict carry on.

Historical background:

In 2011, the conflict began with a failed political transition originally made to stabilize Yemen which led to the Arab Spring uprising that forced President Ali Abdullah Saleh to cede power to Deputy Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

Being new in his position as president, Hadi struggled dealing with issues, such as attacks by jihadists, a separatist movement in the south, and the continuing loyalty of security personnel to Saleh, as well as corruption, unemployment and food insecurity.

The Houthi movement, supporting the Zaidi Shia Muslim minority that fought various rebellions against previous president Saleh the past approximately ten years, took the instability in the government and the president´s weakness as a chance of taking control of the Northern Province Saada and neighboring areas.

Disenchanted by the abrupt transition, the Houthis achieved support from Yemeni citizens, even including Sunnis. By that the rebels took over Yemen´s capital Sanaa, in late 2014/ early 2015.

In March 2015, the Houthis and security forces loyal to Saleh attempted to gain control of whole Yemen. Saudi Arabia and eight other (mostly) Sunni Arab states targeted defeating the Houthis who were suspected to be provided militarily by Shia power Iran, in order to end their influence in Yemen; and to restore Hadi and the government.

Logistical and intelligential support came from the US, UK, and France.

After the Houthis and their allies left the south of Yemen, the government established a temporary home in Aden that can´t provide security nor basic service, therefore President Hadi is still in exile in Saudi Arabia.

The Houthis held positon in north western Yemen, and even took over their third city, Taiz.

In addition, they could launch ballistic missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia.

In November 2017, Saudi-led coalition tightened its blockade of Yemen ("closed" borders), due to their aim of ending Iran´s smuggling of weapons to the Houthi rebels, which Tehran denied. This restriction unfortunately not only increased prices of food and fuel but also highly increased food insecurity in the country.

The alliance between the Houthis and Ali Abdullah Saleh also collapsed in November 2017, to which deadly clashes over control of Sanaa's biggest mosque followed. Houthi fighters launched an operation to take full control of the capital and Saleh was killed.

The Saudi coalition launched a major offensive to conquer the Red Sea city of Hudaydah belonging to the Houthis, including Yemen´s most important port which is the lifeline for 66% of Yemenis.

Thereby, destroying the port would constitute a "tipping point" that could make it impossible to prevent great loss of life due to famine.
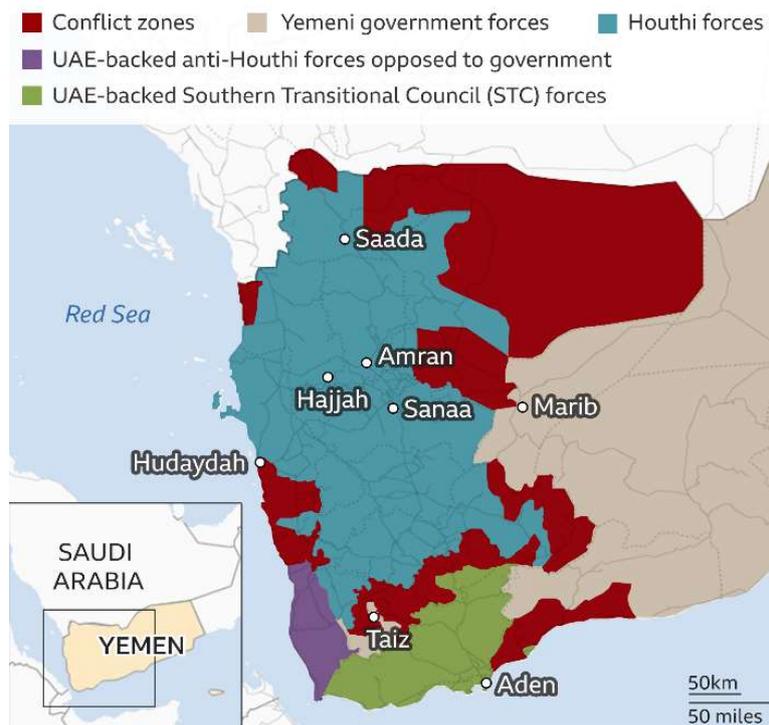
At negotiations in Sweden, the parties agreed a ceasefire. The Stockholm agreement further urged the parties to redeploy their forces from Hudaydah, establish a prisoner exchange mechanism, and to address the situation in Taiz.

Although hundreds of prisoners were released, the fights about taking power over Hudaydah haven´t stopped, raising fears the agreement will collapse.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), ally of Saudi Arabia, withdrew their forces from Yemen, in July 2019. In August, fighting erupted in the south between Saudi-backed government forces and an ostensibly allied southern separatist movement supported by the UAE, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), that actually were against President Hadi. Moreover they accused him of mismanagement and links to the IS, gained control of Aden, and pressured Saudi Arabia by not allowing the cabinet to come back until a former power-sharing treaty was arranged, in November.

As previously mentioned the conflict escalated in January 2020, when the Houthis and Saudi-led coalition forces fighted on multiple front lines using missile strikes and air raids.

In April the STC broke a peace deal signed with the internationally recognized government, saying it would govern the port city and southern provinces, and thereby declaring their self-rule in Aden.

Due to the current pandemic, the coronavirus, Saudi Arabia called upon a unilateral ceasefire which was rejected by the Houthis since they are demanding the lifting of air and sea blockades in Sanaa and Hudaydah.

Yemen: Areas of control and conflict

Source: Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, May 2020

Glossary:

- <u>Proxy war</u> - A war instigated by a major power which does not itself become involved (e.g.: here: Iran; USA)
- <u>Unilateral</u> - relating or affecting only one side, here only one of the warring parties
- <u>LEDC/MEDC</u> - Less/More Economically Developed Country
- <u>HIC</u> - High Income Country
- <u>NGO</u> - Non-government(al)-organization
- <u>IGO</u> - Intergovernmental organization
- <u>IS</u> - The Islamic State; a Sunni jihadist group (having a violent ideology calling itself caliphate and claiming religious authority over all Muslims) forming a terrorist organization
- <u>Famine</u> - Extreme scarcity of food

How to prepare as a delegate:

In order to discuss on this issue, all delegates should be aware of the urgency solving the biggest humanitarian crisis worldwide, and acknowledge it as such. The delegates need to be informed about their countries´ current situation in general, including social, economic, and political aspects, especially about the national policy.

More specific, all delegations are required to know their relation with Yemen and the influence they may or may not have in the issue, but also need to know about initiatives and laws established by the governments and various IGOS and NGOs.

Since the topic addresses specifically the situation in Yemen, the chair encourages delegates to research the situation in the Middle East in general, in order to have a better understanding for the severity it lead to.

In addition you may consider following questions during your research:

- Which major countries involved have to be pointed out in resolutions to make sure that especially they feel approached?

- What does the Islamic State (IS) want with Yemen?

- What about the UK's balancing act in Yemen, what is the UK´s role and how could they be confronting/ provocating Saudi Arabia?
- Why don´t financial, as well as medical aids get to the Yemenis, even when provided by assisting countries/ organizations?

- Which factors are the biggest and most important to deal with that lead to the current situation in Yemen?

All delegates are required to write at least one draft resolution and one/two position papers so that both topics of the forum are covered. Concerning the draft resolution: focus on writing OCs calling for <u>concrete action</u> to take, in order to solve the issue.

The deadline to send in the documents is the XX.XX.2020. All documents sent in after the deadline will not be corrected by me as a Student Officer. We might implement further restrictions if we feel it is necessary, like expelling unprepared delegates from lobbying.

UN resolutions:

Two newest UNSC resolutions on Yemen´s crisis:

- 25 February 2020:

    <u>RES/2511</u>: Renewed the Yemen sanctions regime for a year, based on …

    > 26 February 2014; <u>RES/2140</u>: Established a sanctions regime under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, having these sanctions against those threatening the peace, security or stability of Yemen.

- 13 January 2020:

    <u>RES/2505</u>: Extended the mandate of the UNMHA (until July 15, 2020), based on …

    > 16 January 2019; <u>RES/2452</u>: Established a special political mission, the so called UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) in Yemen (for 6 months)

Useful links:

Here you´ll find:

Almost daily updates about the current situation in Yemen, including attacks, etc.:

https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/yemen.html

Overall overview of the issue:

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423

Detailed documentary of the Yemeni Civil War from 2015 (-present):

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemeni_Civil_War_(2015%E2%80%93present)

Human Rights violations:

https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/yemen

Division of / Mapping the Yemen conflict:

https://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen

Further UN resolutions:

https://osesgy.unmissions.org/security-council-resolutions

Sources:

For your research, use <u>valid and reliable sources</u>.

Ideas for sources are:

- your forum's official website
- NGOs websites
- <u>UN.org</u> (articles written especially on your issue)
- If you use google for your research, try this one, it offers sources that have the specific purpose to educate and leaves out irrelevant information: https://scholar.google.de
- http://www.findthedata.com

https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/security-council-resolutions/page/1?ctype=Yemen&cbtype=yemen#038;cbtype=yemen

https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis

https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis#what-unicef-is-doing

https://www.peaceinsight.org/conflicts/yemen/internationals/

https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/624/cpsprodpb/6D0E/production/_112981972_yemen_control_19_06_3x_640-nc.png

https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sgsm19477.doc.htm