

**Committee:** The Security Council

**Issue:** Fostering inclusive peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction within Yemen's conflict zones

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## Introduction

Yemen has been experiencing an armed conflict since 2014, with various factions involved, including the Yemeni government, Houthi rebels, and other armed groups.

In war zones, people, especially women and girls, face various risks of gender-based violence. Displacement and the breakdown of social structure have made people more vulnerable to abuse, having them lose their homes, forcing them into various poor situations, and increasing their dependence on others. Conflict-related disruptions in healthcare services have led to a negative impact on people. Yemenis suffer from the affection of violence, bombings, and armed clashes, getting them killed or injured in the fighting, leading to physical suffering and disabilities. Women, especially, face difficulties accessing reproductive health services and safe childbirth facilities. The problems, such as the lack of medical supplies and rights overall, affect the living conditions, further exacerbating the challenges people will face in war zones.

Humanitarian organisations and activists have been working to address this challenge. Efforts have been made to provide safe spaces for people, and as for women, organisations established support centres and women's participation in peacebuilding processes was promoted. The international community has the responsibility to play a role in supporting the rights of men and women in war zones in Yemen. Nevertheless, actions to provide humanitarian aid, like advocating for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and addressing the systemic barriers perpetuating gender inequality, are vital. The community's responsibilities to focus on empowering women, promoting participation in decision-making processes, and ensuring the safety and well-being of conflict-affected areas are discussed.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Border dispute

A border dispute is a disagreement between two or more countries about where their borders should be drawn. This can happen for various reasons, such as an unclearly defined treaty during

establishment, a change in boundaries due to natural or manufactured factors, or different interests in the area as in resource or strategical location.

## **Combat Roles**

Combat roles pertain to military or armed forces positions involving direct engagement in armed conflict or combat situations. Those in combat roles participate in offensive and defensive operations, reconnaissance missions, and direct encounters with enemy forces. These roles demand specialised training, combat expertise, and the ability to perform effectively under high-pressure and physically demanding circumstances.

## **Non-combat roles**

Non-combat roles: Non-combat roles in the military encompass positions that support military operations, logistics, administration, intelligence, communication, and medical services. These roles are vital for the functioning and effectiveness of armed forces during war or armed conflict.

## **Post-conflict reconstruction**

Post-conflict reconstruction refers to rebuilding and restoring societies and infrastructure after a conflict or war. The process includes rebuilding physical infrastructure, restoring essential services, promoting reconciliation, strengthening governance structures, fostering social cohesion, and addressing the root causes of the conflict.

## **History**

The Yemeni civil war began in 2014 when Houthi rebels protested with weapons from Iran against the Yemen government as the government suppressed Houthis' religious and political activities, mismanaged national properties and broke the Gulf Cooperation Council agreement to consolidate power. Houthi rebels are a Shia Muslim group that originated in northern Yemen in the 1990s, and Iran supports them, as they are considered rivals with Saudi Arabia. The Houthi rebel's original goal was to advocate and promote Zaydi revivalism, a Shia Islam practised in northern Yemen. From the revolt, they took control of the city of Sana'a, as the negotiation for a new government and lowering fuel prices turned to failure. The intervention of regional powers in Yemen's conflict, including Iran and Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia, draws the country into the broader Sunni-Shia divide. A Saudi-led coalition launched airstrikes against the rebels, exacerbating the conflict. Until 2021, Houthi rebels continued and accelerated to strike, but the United States ended its support for offensive operations, and the UN Security Council voiced support to

end the war. However, the US continues to sell weapons. In 2023, the recent conversations between Iran and Saudi Arabia raised hopes for a political settlement of the civil war.

According to estimates by the United Nations, approximately 60 per cent of the recorded 377,000 fatalities in the Yemen civil war since 2015 are from indirect factors. A staggering 74 per cent of the Yemeni population, approximately twenty-five million individuals, continue to face critical needs and require external assistance. Moreover, five million Yemenis suffered from famine, while a cholera outbreak has afflicted over one million people. Furthermore, all parties involved in the conflict have been exposed to human rights violations and international humanitarian law.

## Key Issues

### 2011

The "Arab Spring"<sup>1</sup> and related pro-democracy protests in Yemen challenged the current government and called on Yemeni President Saleh to step down. Saleh initially refused to resign and tried to convince the audience by proposing a new constitution that would result in a stronger parliament and judicial system. However, the opposition rejected this initiative and continued to call for Saleh's immediate removal. Recognising the social unrest and violence during the protests, he signed a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) agreement to resign to receive congressional immunity. In 2011, however, he did not abide by the GCC agreement and aroused widespread hostility.

### 2012

The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen was established in order to address the ongoing conflict and provide support for the political transition process in Yemen.

### 2014

The renege resulted in Houthi rebels, who are Zaydi Shia Muslims, protesting and seizing control of the capital of Yemen, Sanaa. It was followed by a takeover of the Yemeni government by the Houthis, leading to Saleh's resignation as president, and Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, the vice-president of the time, took office.

### 2015

<sup>1</sup> Arab Spring refers to the series of anti-governmental and pro-democratic protests that took place in the middle east in the early 2010s. It began with the Jasmine revolution in Tunisia, which resulted in a peaceful transition to a democratic government.

On March 26, 2015, Saudi Arabia led a coalition of nine countries: United Arab Emirates(UAE), Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Djibouti, and Saudi Arabia. Responding to the request of the Yemeni government, the Saudi-led coalition decided to intervene in the situation, and they began their airstrikes on Yemen, targeting Houthi rebels and their allies. The airstrikes caused widespread civilian casualties, including women and children. The World Health Organisation reports that over 1,000 women have died in childbirth since the start of the war. The war has also made it difficult for women to access healthcare. The United Nations reports that over 200,000 children are at risk of malnutrition, 100,000 women and girls have been forced into early marriage due to war, and 10,000 women have been subjected to sexual violence since the start of the war. The United Nations also reports that over 2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and over 100,000 people have died in the war in Yemen.

## 2017

The Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security was established to advocate for the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and resolve the conflict. The 56 member states analysed and generated strategies for the potential scenarios in the next period of conflict in Yemen.

## 2018

The United Nations implemented the Stockholm Agreement to ceasefire the ongoing conflict in Hudaydah, Salid, and Raslssa. The agreement asks for immediate action posed upon the conflict zone, the establishment of a redeployment committee, support of peacebuilding, and the participation of women in the negotiations, aiming to ensure their voices are heard in the peace process.

## 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the challenges faced in the conflict zones of Yemen, including limited access to healthcare and an increase in gender-based violence due to the decrease in humanitarian aid. The closure of schools and other services increased women and girls' vulnerability to violence.

### Significant Parties Involved and Their Views

#### ***European Union (EU)***

After the conflict within Yemen was internationalised in 2015, the member-states of the EU signed the Stockholm Agreement in December 2018, promising measures regarding the port cities of Yemen and prisoner exchanges. Although the EU faced challenges attempting to implement the measures, it has actively provided support under three categories: political support, humanitarian assistance, and

development assistance. The EU's humanitarian aid provides education, water, shelter, healthcare, and more to support the households that have been impacted by the crisis. The EU is also concerned about the displaced population who have been injured or disabled and are providing rehabilitation services.

### ***United Kingdom***

The UK serves as a penholder for Yemen in the UNSC. The concerns about human rights abuses committed by both Saudi Arabia and Yemen in the conflict have been raised by the UK government. While Saudi Arabia was accused of breaching the International Humanitarian Law(IHL) on Yemen, it was discovered that the UK has been selling arms to the Saudis. Recognising the issue, the UK government argued that its military exports do not seem to have an apparent contribution to the violations of IHL. Nevertheless, the UK has also been spending billions of money to provide aid for Yemen from 2015 to 2022. Most were humanitarian projects, with others on food insecurity and social protection. The UK also provided assistance for the peacebuilding and security of Yemen through the Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund. Its objective was to help achieve Yemen's economic stability and security.

### ***Canada***

Canada has been actively contributing humanitarian aid to Yemen. By supporting NGOs in Canada and actively aiding Yemen through multilateral organisations, Canada has committed \$62.5 million to Yemen in 2022. The help Canada provided was food assistance, shelter, clean water, and health care, including reproductive and sexual services. Canada has also invested more than \$15 million in peace and security assistance, supporting the UN-led peace projects in Yemen. It also promotes cross-border cooperation with Yemen in organisations such as the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the World Trade Organisation(WTO).

### ***United Arab Emirates (UAE)***

The long-lasting war in Yemen has also influenced the UAE. After the announcement of Saudi Arabia's invasion of Yemen in 2015, the UAE has also deployed troops in the cities of Yemen. Since then, the UAE has also been participating in the conflict. The UAE has also provided significant financial and humanitarian aid to Yemen.

### ***International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)***

The ICRC has provided aid and support to Yemen society since 1962. The ICRC has been actively promoting peacebuilding and equality in the conflict zones of Yemen. Aware of the fact that about 70% of the Yemeni population has to rely on humanitarian aid for survival, ICRC has made an effort to aid the post-conflict recovery of the Yemeni population by supporting Primary Health Centers(PHCs),

conducting food rations and financial aid, and provided services from Physical Rehabilitation Centers(PRCs).

### ***The Women's Peace Network-Yemen (WPNY)***

WPNY is a non-governmental organisation that promotes peace and security in Yemen. The WPNY has been active in the Yemen peace process since 2011 and has played a vital role in raising women's voices.

### ***Youth without Borders Organisation for Development(YWBOD)***

YWBOD is a non-governmental, non-profit Yemeni organisation that originates from Taiz. It targets youth's participation in peacebuilding, civil societies, and community resilience through conducting various campaigns and programs. It operates with the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding(CSPPS), following the 2030 Agenda seeking an inclusive and legitimate decision-making process.

### ***The Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies***

The Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies is an independent Yemeni research centre that conducts research and analysis on Yemeni political, economic, and security issues. The Sana'a Center has published several reports on the role of women in the Yemeni war and has called for greater recognition of women's contributions to peacebuilding. Its networks extend from Yemen's civil society to key political and military information.

### **Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events**

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| Date             | Description of the event  |
|------------------|---|
| October 31, 2000 | (S/RES/1325) - Landmark resolution on Women, Peace, and Security<br>Reemphasising the significance of the female role in preventing and resolving the conflict and post-conflict reconstruction, it encourages women's participation in peace and security efforts. |
| On July 1, 2002, | the UN Development Assistance Framework(UNDAF) in Yemen began<br>UNDAF is a framework created upon the multilateral affairs between the United Nations Country Team(UNCT), the Government of Yemen(GOY), and other  |

NGOs. It identifies critical areas that should be prioritised and suggests UN interventions on various levels in the conflict zones of Yemen.

#### (S/RES/2451) The situation in the Middle East

December 21, 2018

The resolution addresses the ongoing conflict in Yemen and reaffirms the member states to engage and implement the Stockholm Agreement actively and fully manage their obligation under the IHL.

### Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has been issued in the last decade; multilateral organisations and nations have attempted to provide support. The United Nations has been the leading factor in such efforts, but numerous local organisations have also been conducting programs to promote participation in peacebuilding in conflict zones actively. The ‘Search For Common Ground’(SFCG) established a peacebuilding centre in Aden in 2016, seeking to train women participating in peacebuilding in their communities. In 2017, SFCG offered a program for training young people in peacebuilding values. Over 1,000 youths have been trained through the program and have effectively contributed to the reduction of violence in local communities and schools. The Yemeni Women’s Union(YWU) has also been conducting workshops and training for women to develop conflict resolution skills. YWU believes that women take critical roles in building a just and peaceful society, and the programs ought to develop important values such as consensus-building skills. It allowed the people to be better educated on the ongoing conflict and allowed women to actively take part in promoting peace in Yemeni communities.

There have not been any international treaties explicitly addressing the situation in Yemen. Still, several treaties can be used to manage the ongoing humanitarian crisis and women’s rights in Yemen conflict zones. The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women(CEDAW) prohibits discrimination against women in all areas, including education, employment, and more. As it requires its member states to take action to eliminate discrimination against women, CEDAW could enhance women's participation in the peacebuilding of Yemen. The Geneva Conventions have also addressed the problems of humanitarian crises in conflict zones. Although not explicitly referring to the conflict in Yemen, it prohibits using indiscriminate weapons and requires member states to provide medical care to the people.

### Possible Solutions

#### **Ending the war**

The war in Yemen has been violating the rights of thousands of Yemenis, especially women. As long as the war continues, women will be exposed to the risks of sexual violence, forced displacement, lack of access to essential services, and other disproportional effects of the conflict.

### **Encouraging participation in peacebuilding**

Active participation, especially that of women, is crucial in deliberating the future of Yemen and peacebuilding efforts, negotiations, mediation, and reconciliation.

### **Promoting inclusive peacebuilding and post-war recovery**

A comprehensive approach towards peacebuilding is crucial; including various perspectives and experiences would foster a resilient society, providing a foundation for resolving conflict zones. Establishing a legal framework that ensures inclusive decision-making would also be necessary: a framework that protects women from discrimination and provides that the peacebuilding and post-war recovery would address the distinct needs and priorities of the people.

### **Enhancing economic and educational opportunities**

Economic and educational empowerment plays a pivotal role in post-war reconstruction. Efforts should be made to provide vocational training, create job opportunities, support new entrepreneurs, and promote participation in the labour market. Significantly investing in women's education, vocational training, access to credit, and business support services can help women become economically self-reliant, fostering their independence and decision-making power. Such educational and economic empowerment movements would enhance peace and stability in Yemen.

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