

Counterterrorism and protection of civilians in Yemen

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Introduction

Yemen's recent history is marked by political, tribal, and religious conflict.¹ While most Yemenis consider themselves religiously conservative Muslims, extremism is interwoven in Yemeni politics.² Extremism and tribal warfare have led to hundreds of thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions. This humanitarian crisis is often considered the “forgotten war” due to its minimal Western media coverage.³

Houthi rebels began taking control of parts of Yemen in 2014.⁴ This civil war is still on-going. It has led to an extreme humanitarian crisis in the country. As of 2023, the ongoing conflict has reportedly resulted in over 370,000 deaths and the displacement of four million individuals. Yemen remains the Arab world's poorest

country and continues to have a rising unemployment rate.⁵ Furthermore, the country bore the highest global burden of cholera in 2024, and 17 million people are unable to meet their basic food needs.⁶

Due to the increasing internationalization of the conflict, the United Nations (UN) has made efforts to de-escalate.⁷ When the Houthi officially took control of the government, the UN condemned this action.⁸ Through the



Yemen's Houthi armed forces parade on the anniversary of the [21 September Revolution](#), marking the Houthi capture of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, in 2014. 'Yemen: Pro-Houthi army unveils new weapons at parade marking revolution's 8th anniversary', *Middle East Monitor*, 22 September 2022, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220922-yemen-pro-houthi-army-unveils-new-weapons-at-parade-marking-revolutions-8th-anniversary/>

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) the UN has been able to improve security conditions for civilians.⁹ Primarily, the UNSC has focused on arms embargos and ceasefire agreements.

Recently, these improved security conditions have been threatened due to an escalating cycle of strikes and counterstrikes between Yemen



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and Israel.¹⁰ Negotiating a ceasefire has encountered difficulties, due to competing interests in Israel's right to defend itself and threat of escalating conditions within Yemen. Delegates in the UN want to maintain civilian protection and safety, however the Houthi government is continuing to escalate. And Israel has begun striking critical civilian infrastructure.

Inaction could result in the heaviest burden falling on Yemen's most vulnerable populations.¹¹ Delegates within the UNSC must find a way to protect the Yemeni civilians from further violent Houthi extremism.

Background

Yemen has had a long history of civil war and extremism. The most prominent and successful extremist group being the Houthis. This group grew out of a revivalist movement among Zaydī Muslims, belonging to a small sect of Shi'i Islam.¹² They began gaining power in the 1990s after the reunification of Yemen.¹³ Following this reunification, a series of rebellions and takeovers certified Houthi control over the government.

2004-10 The Houthi Rebellion: After the reunification, Ali Abdullah Saleh became the president of the Republic of Yemen.¹⁴ In 2004, his government began arresting hundreds of Houthi members and issued a reward for the arrest of their leader, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi. Between 2004 and 2010, fighting between the Saleh government and the Houthis, now led by al-Houthi's brother, continues despite the occasional ceasefire agreement. In 2009-10, the Yemeni military conducted large scale operations to crush Houthi rebellions and crackdown on Houthi and al-Qaeda rebels in the Arabian Peninsula.



2011 Arab Spring Reaches Yemen: Saleh's rule over the Republic of Yemen was further criticized and demonstrations calling for the end to his rule spread. Saleh cracks down on these demonstrations, causing the deaths of hundreds. Saleh himself was injured in a bombing. He made Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi interim president and formed a unity government, in an effort to calm tensions.

2014-15 Houthi Takeover: The Hadi government continues to make controversial decisions, like overturning a controversial rise in fuel prices, and anti-government protests continue. By late 2014, the Houthis have taken control over most of Sanaa, as well as the Red Sea port city, Hodeida. In early 2015, the Houthis officially take control of the government after Hadi, who had been placed on house arrest by the Houthis, resigned as president. After escaping to southern Yemen, Hadi rescinds his resignation and designates the Houthi takeover as a "coup."



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2015-21 Civil War: At this point, the Houthis began officially advancing towards southern Yemen and began acts of terrorism in Sanaa including two suicide bombs at Shia mosques. To support Hadi's rule and prevent further Houthi takeover, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and United Arab Emirates began air strikes against Houthi targets. Several countries, led by Saudi Arabia and UAE also committed ground forces. Fighting continued as Houthi forces begin to capture more land.

In April of 2016, the UN sponsored peace talks between the Hadi government and Houthi coalition, to no avail. Fighting continued, making the Yemen crisis as one of the worst humanitarian emergencies in the world. After many controversial killings at the hands of Saudi agents in Yemen, the Houthis began striking critical Saudi infrastructure and continue to take land. By 2021, the United States had designated the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization, although they controlled over 70 percent of the Yemeni population.

2021-23 Houthi Control: The Houthi control the majority of Yemen and have control over the

capital. Air strikes, executions, and attacks continue. The U.S. and UNSC continue to work towards a successful ceasefire agreement, but the Houthi continue with violence. In 2022, the UN brokered a two-month truce between the warring parties, which successfully produced the lowered level of deaths from political violence since 2015. Efforts towards peace were becoming realized with successful prisoner swaps and humanitarian aid entering Yemen. However, after the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel and subsequent conflict in Gaza, the Houthi government declared war on Israel.

After the Houthi declared war on Israel, the humanitarian crisis has continued to worsen, political violence has increased, and progress from the UN brokered truce is threatened. The UN has had a difficult time combating violence and extremism in the region due to the Houthi government's commitment to violence.

Current Situation

International

Houthi continue to expand civil war and extremism to the international stage. After they declared war on Israel, the crisis escalated further. The Houthi began striking at other countries ships within international water, striking critical infrastructure within Israel, and threatening other countries that may support Israel. This has led to retaliatory strikes and ever worsening humanitarian conditions for Yemeni citizens.

Soon after the declaration of war against Israel, the Houthi government began striking Israeli-linked cargo ships in the Red Sea. In November of 2023, it hijacked an Israeli-owned cargo ship and held its 25 crew members (none of whom were Israeli) hostage.¹⁵ Abdul Malik al-Houthi declared that the group would continue attacks on Red Sea shipping if aggression against Gaza did not stop.



Houthi Revolutionary Committee President Mohammad Ali Al-Houthi speaks in Sanaa, Yemen. 'Houthis try to reassure skeptics they won't seek full control of Yemen, as Saudis eye exit', CNN, 17 April 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/04/14/middleeast/yemen-saudi-houthi-interview-mime-intl>

By October of 2024, Houthi had conducted over 190 attacks in the Red Sea and significantly disrupted shipping.¹⁶ Most recently, they expanded attacks to ships that have ties to any companies that work with Israeli.¹⁷ This resulted in sinking two Greek owned ships. These attacks in the Red Sea heightened tensions within the region, and with the China, Europe and the United States.¹⁸

Most of the Red Sea traffic is connected to European and Chinese interests. Houthi strikes have targeted many Greek and British ships in the Sea since 2024,¹⁹ and in March of 2024, a Chinese-linked oil tanker was attacked.²⁰ However, the attack on the Chinese tankard was considered a mistake, because the Houthi leaders stated they avoid targeting Chinese ships due to the country purchasing 90 percent of Iranian oil exports, and their supplience of weapons and missile supplies.²¹

While much of their international violence has been enacted within the Red Sea, the Houthis

have attempted land attacks. The Houthi government has sent missiles towards Israel, although they rarely cause damage.²² Most of the drones and missiles sent towards Israel have been intercepted.²³ Although, the Houthis claimed responsibility for a drone strike against Israel's Ramon Airport. This attack resulted in the injury of two citizens and the temporary halt of operations at the airport.²⁴ They have also threatened to strike neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, if they work with the U.S. or Israel.²⁵



Houthi missile ranges. 'DIA Report Confirms the Houthis' Use of Iranian Missiles and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to Conduct Attacks Across the Middle East', US Defense Intelligence Agency, 4 February 2024, <https://www.dia.mil/News-Features/Articles/Article-View/Article/3662325/dia-report-confirms-the-houthis-use-of-iranian-missiles-and-unmanned-aerial-veh/>

Most critically for the Yemeni citizens, these attacks come at the cost of retaliatory strikes on Yemeni critical infrastructure and have resulted in many civilian deaths. Most recently, Israel struck Sanaa International Airport and the port of Hodeida. These attacks have damaged infrastructure necessary for delivering humanitarian aid.²⁶ Furthermore, Israel has also struck power stations, the Ras Issa port, the al-



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Salif port, and other civilian areas, which has resulted in the deaths of dozens of citizens.²⁷ An attack in early September on al-Jawf, a northern province of Sanaa, resulted in the deaths of over 40 people including journalists and children.²⁸ In August of 2025, Israel struck the command headquarters and compounds of the Houthi General Staff.²⁹ These strikes killed high ranking Houthi officials including the military chief of staff and the Houthi Prime Minister, and almost half of the cabinet.³⁰ This was a devastating blow for the Houthi government, who promised “vengeance” and to continue fighting Israel.³¹

These retaliatory strikes are devastating for the worsening humanitarian crisis in Yemen. During a UN Council briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, stated that this infrastructure is a “lifeline for life-saving supplies”.³² While the strikes themselves kill dozens of civilians at a time, the lingering effects of the damaged infrastructure will cause the deaths of hundreds more. Also, with the recent designation of the Houthi government as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO), sanctions and cuts to foreign aid have placed millions of civilians at risk of further suffering and deprivation.³³

Domestic

The Houthi government is widely accused of causing harm to the Yemeni citizens. It has directly killed, injured, and arrested and detained Yemeni civilians. It has also further decreased civilian access to humanitarian aid by attacking and arresting UN and other NGO staff and blocking aid from entering villages.

The Houthi government has increased domestic attacks against the internationally recognized government (IRG) in Aden.³⁴ Towards the end of 2024, military activity in Marib had ceased almost completely; however, at the beginning of this year, the combat engagements and remote violence not only returned, but nearly doubled

from levels seen in October of 2023. This region is of strategic importance to the Houthi government due to its oil and gas resources, key pipelines, and its position as one of the northernmost cities controlled by the IRG. Marib provides almost all of the country's domestic fuel production, and it could net the Houthi government millions of dollars of revenue. This is especially necessary after the US's designation of the Houthi as a foreign terrorist organization. If the rebel forces are able to take over the city, it would give the Houthi and Iran significant power over the broader Yemeni civilians.

Furthermore, the Houthi have consistently attacked civilians and civilian infrastructure within their own territory.³⁵ In January of 2025, Houthi forces attacked civilian homes and infrastructure within a city under its own rule.³⁶ The attacks lasted four days and resulted in the death, injury, and displacement of dozens of people, as well as the arrest of hundreds of others.

The goal of the attack, according to the Houthi's Interior Ministry, was to find and arrest the ISIS members who had allegedly attacked a security checkpoint, injuring and killing soldiers.³⁷ NGOs have found no evidence of ISIS members or elements existing in the village. During the siege, food and medicine were not allowed to enter the village, and the Houthi have intermittently cut and restricted internet and telecommunication access since its conclusion, making it difficult for human rights organizations to gather information about the event.

Most recently, in October of 2025, the Houthi authorities raided a UN-run facility in Sanaa and detained about twenty United Nations employees, as well as all communications equipment from the facility.³⁸ The government accused the UN staff of espionage on behalf of the U.S. and Israel. While the UN has denied



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these claims, the Houthis continue to crack down on UN personnel in their territory.

This is not their first time detaining UN staff or employees of other NGOs, UN figures suggest that more than fifty staff members have been detained this year. The UN has been working with the Houthis to release the personnel and resolve the situation as quickly as possible.³⁹ In response, the UN has moved its top humanitarian coordinator from Sanaa to Aden, in an effort to maintain humanitarian relations with the country. This situation may limit humanitarian aid to the country even further.

Role of the UN

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is generally responsible for maintaining peace and security for all countries involved in the UN. According to the UN Charter, it can investigate situations that may lead to international friction; recommend settlements; recommend actions against potential threats; call members to apply economic sanctions; and take military action against an aggressor.⁴⁰

The UNSC is, overall, a platform for diplomatic dialogue and conflict resolution.⁴¹ It consists of five permanent members, China, France, The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, all of which have the power to veto any resolution proposed by other member states within the UN. Furthermore, the Council consists of ten other non-permanent members, elected by the General Assembly to serve two-year terms.⁴² Currently these members include: Algeria, Denmark, Greece, Guana, Pakistan, Panama, Republic of Korean, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Somalia.

The UNSC has created many committees including the Military Staff Committee, the Non-Proliferation Committee, Sanctions Committees, and most importantly in this situation, the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).⁴³ The CTC has is the forefront of

standard-setting on counter-terrorism frameworks.⁴⁴ The Committee has been responsible for imposing sanctions on terrorist organization; barring states from supporting nonstate actors that may use or acquire biological, nuclear, or chemical weapons for terrorism; calling states to suppress recruiting to terrorist groups; and urged states to implement recommendations in relation to financing terrorist organizations.

The Committee faces challenges acting on terrorism. The groups that are designated to be terrorist organizations are at the behest of the powerful states. China and the United States insist on countering specific types of terrorist activities, despite proposals from other members to form a international convention. Frequently, non-permanent members abstain from voting for resolutions that used force as a counter-terrorism measure, especially if it interfered with a state's sovereignty. Due to the vastly different international goals of the five permanent members, timely decision making is often hindered and proposals by non-permanent members are often blocked. These differences have affected the ability of the Committee to protect citizens on the UNSC agenda, including those in Yemen.⁴⁵

The UNSC works with a variety of other agencies to counter terrorism. The CTC works closely with INTERPOL, endorsing its role in combating threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters.⁴⁶ Furthermore, it frequently works with the Global Counterterrorism Forum, Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, Tech Against Terrorism, regional organizations, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Red Cross, and seeks financial recommendations guidance from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).⁴⁷

Countering terrorism in Yemen has been on the UNSC radar since October of 2011.⁴⁸ This coincided with the Arab Spring reaching Yemen, leading to an increase in terroristic and rebel



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activities.⁴⁹ The UNSC has been making efforts to protect the citizens of Yemen from the terroristic actions of the Houthi government and extend humanitarian aid to the region. The UNSC has placed an arms embargo, sanctions, travel bans, and asset freezes on Houthi members and supporters and have brokered ceasefire agreements and truces with the Houthi government.⁵⁰ Despite these efforts, the Houthi government continues to terrorize the citizens of Yemen, leaving upwards of twenty million people in need of humanitarian assistance.⁵¹ The conflict in Yemen is a high priority for the UNSC due to the humanitarian consequences of inaction.

Landmark UN Resolutions

The UNSC has been attempting to counter the terroristic actions of the Houthi rebels in Yemen for over a decade.⁵² Despite these prolonged efforts, effective resolutions are far and few between. There are only three major UN Resolutions that attempt to counter the group, as well as one UN brokered truce. This low number is primarily due to the diverse perspectives of the five permanent members of the UNSC and lack of cooperation from parties involved.



'Briefing by UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, to the Security Council', *United Nations*, 6 March 2025, <https://osesgy.unmissions.org/briefing-un-special-envoy-yemen-hans-grundberg-security-council-23>

Security Council Resolution 2014- 2011:⁵³ This is the first instance of a resolution being written that expresses concern for the situation in Yemen and makes calls for action regarding acts of terrorism within the country. Delegates expressed concern about the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation and threats of terror attacks in parts of Yemen. They condemn all attacks that target civilians, including terrorist attacks and consider it to be the most serious threat to international peace and security. This resolution also notes that the Yemeni government's primary role is to protect its population and calls upon Yemeni authorities to comply with international humanitarian and human rights laws. In 2012, a similar resolution was passed to recall and reaffirm these statements.⁵⁴

Security Council Resolution 2140- 2014:⁵⁵ This resolution, again, recalls the previous resolutions and condemns attacks against civilians and critical infrastructure. This resolution also outlines steps the country can make in implementing a political transition, like drafting a new Constitution, election reform, justice reform, and the transition must align with the Initiative and Implementation Mechanism Agreement. It also outlines punishments for the country if it does not align with this agreement, such as a travel ban and frozen assets.

Security Council Resolution 2201- 2015:⁵⁶ This is the first resolution to specifically call out the Houthis. It condemns the group for their efforts to take over Yemen's government, and their threat to Yemeni security, stability, sovereignty, and unity. It demands that the Houthis participate in negotiations with the UN, release political hostages, withdraw their forces from government institutions, and cease actions that could undermine the security of Yemen. Similar resolutions in 2015 reiterated these claims and extended sanctions on Houthi forces, called for the relinquishing of all seized arms and land, and established an arms embargo.⁵⁷



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2022 Truce: This was not a resolution, rather a UN brokered truce between the Saudi-led coalition and the rebel Houthi forces.⁵⁸ The parties agreed to halt all offensive military operations inside the country and allow commercial fuel ships and flights to enter predetermined ports in April of 2022. This truce was a noticeable step towards peace with both parties looking forward to a solution.⁵⁹ The truce was extended twice, for a total duration of six months.⁶⁰ While the truce did not entirely eliminate violence, it did produce the lowest number of deaths from political violence since 2015.⁶¹ While the truce officially ended in October of 2022, it continued in practice until tensions began to rise again after the war began in Gaza.⁶²

The UN brokered truce was the last big development by the UNSC in the Yemen crisis. In a UNSC meeting in January of 2025, delegates noted the importance of further action due to ever worsening humanitarian issues.⁶³ Acts of terror, civil conflict, and international engagements by the Houthi government have left the Yemeni civilians in a critical position.

There is evidence that both the Houthi government and Saudi-led coalition are interested in creating and maintaining a truce. The war in Yemen is no longer of interest to Saudi Arabia, it is too expensive, has tarnished its reputation, and has put Saudi Arabia in danger of attacks.⁶⁴ The Houthis are interested in cementing their political and military power in Yemen. While the IRG is the most apprehensive about a settlement, without Saudi Arabia's support in defending its political claims, it lacks power in negotiations.

Country and Bloc Positions

As hinted previously, diverse perspectives among the five permanent members of the UNSC have led to many potential resolutions being dismissed. Because each member has the

power to veto, it is critical that each resolution is approved by all five members. Generally, the members want to create security and stability within Yemen and help the civilians in need of humanitarian aid.⁶⁵

China: China's main goal seems to be to maintain allies and stability in the region.⁶⁶ It has modest engagement with the conflict and emphasizes freedom of international trade, and end to Houthi attacks on shipping, and respect for UN personal in the country. In UNSC discussions, Chinese delegates emphasize the need for a ceasefire and peaceful negotiations for security of Yemeni citizens, its governments actions show otherwise.⁶⁷ China also has a robust humanitarian aid program for Yemen, in which over eleven thousand tons of food aid were sent between 2017 and 2020.⁶⁸

China prefers stability in the region and prefers to counter terrorism and humanitarian crisis in the region in order to maintain its influence. It is attempting to appear neutral in theory while clearly favoring one side over the other. It opposes military attacks and other forms of military intervention.

France: France criticizes the actions of the Houthi within Yemen and internationally, and supports humanitarian efforts.⁷⁰ Its delegates have repeatedly called for Iran to end its destabilization efforts in the Middle East.⁷¹ It has condemned Houthi attacks on Israel and commercial ships in the Red Sea and urged other Council members to do the same.⁷²

French delegates criticized the Houthi government for supporting disinformation campaign about humanitarian efforts, preventing Yemeni civilians from receiving lifesaving vaccines, and taking Yemeni civilians hostage.⁷³ It notes the critical food insecurity the region is facing and calls for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access. France calls for a political solution, inclusive negotiations in which the Houthis are involved, and a cessation of



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hostilities that would allow for a dignified life for the Yemeni people.⁷⁴

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM): The 120 Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement include several Security Council Members:

Algeria, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, Sierra Leone and Somalia. In pure numbers, it is the dominant voice on the Security Council. Non-Aligned governments are skeptical of military intervention, and especially of any measure that would seem to support Israel. With a strong emphasis on humanitarian assistance, NAM countries stress measures to relieve suffering of the Yemeni people. They are willing to see the UN work with the Houthi government to increase availability of humanitarian assistance: food and water, shelter, medical care and basic education.

But the Non-Aligned in the Security Council demand neutral cooperation with UN agencies. In a recent statement, ‘Somalia’s representative, who also spoke on behalf of Algeria, Guyana and Sierra Leone, expressed deep concern over the Houthi’s continued detention of UN personnel — some for nearly three years — warning that such actions are unacceptable and directly affect the Organization’s ability to carry out its critical work. All UN personnel must be immediately and unconditionally released, he insisted.’

Russian Federation: Russia has a more direct involvement with the Houthi than China; it frequently communicates with the Houthi government, recognizing it as a legitimate Yemeni actor, however it has also frequently criticized Houthi actions within Yemen.⁷⁵ It has no direct interest in the country or its civil war, except Russian-supported arms smuggling to benefit its war efforts in Ukraine.⁷⁶

Russia is mostly working with the Houthi to benefit their shared anti-western goals and to gain power in the region. The occasional support from Russia, followed by criticism may be a

strategy to incentivize Houthi courtship of Moscow’s support. Similarly, despite cooperation with Yemen, especially in the fuel and energy sector, Russia is in no hurry to provide humanitarian aid to support the country’s civilians.⁷⁷

Russian Delegates have frequently called for a dialogue among internal Yemeni actors and sees no reason why Houthi actions internationally should impede on potential negotiations.⁷⁸ Representatives emphasize a desire to help Yemeni civilians, rather than allowing international preconditions to hinder the peace process.⁷⁹ Despite this, Russia is not overly concerned with countering terrorism or tackling the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, because it is shifting Western countries’ focus from the war in Ukraine.⁸⁰

United Kingdom: The UK stands with the IRG and Israel. It has conducted its own retaliatory strikes on Yemen. However, its main goals within the UNSC are to mitigate the humanitarian crisis, counter terrorism in the region, and create security for the Yemeni civilians.⁸¹

As well as conducting strikes on Yemen, the UK is also a large defense contractor for the Saudi war effort, providing munition and expertise.⁸² Also, it has called for Israel to respect international humanitarian law in regard to damaging critical infrastructure. The UK is working with Saudi Arabia to host a conference to announce the Yemen Maritime Security Partnership that will safeguard maritime trade and rebuild the Yemeni coastguard.⁸³

The UK has sent over a billion pounds of aid to Yemen in order to mitigate the humanitarian crisis by providing food, medicine, and nutritional supplements.⁸⁴ However, many criticize this humanitarian funding because it does not outdo the economic devastation caused by the British backed Saudi blockade on essential goods.⁸⁵



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United States: The U.S. is closely aligned with Israel and the IRG. It has conducted strikes against Houthi facilities and leaders.⁸⁶ It desires to hold Iran accountable for engaging in destabilization efforts in the Middle East and enabling the Houthi's war efforts.⁸⁷ In January of 2024, Washington redesignated the Houthi as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.⁸⁸ The U.S. has not directly criticized Israel for its strikes on Yemeni critical infrastructure.

Despite its allegiances, the U.S. was the second largest donor to the UN's Yemen Humanitarian Fund and has provided development assistance to Yemen.⁸⁹ This changed in 2025 when President Trump eliminated the US Agency for International Development and its funding. It has also called for the demilitarization of northern ports of Yemen, where most relief items enter the country.

The United States is steadfast in holding Iran accountable, ceasing Houthi attacks, and defending Israel. Although it used to provide a lot of humanitarian support to the region, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is secondary for the United States to holding Iran and other actors accountable for the instability within the Middle East.

Some Possible Proposals for Action

As sovereign countries, the Member States of the UN Security Council are free to develop the proposals they believe best serve the situation in Yemen and their individual priorities. As the Security Council has shown in recent years, inaction is possibility, when agreement cannot be found.

Issues to be addressed include establishing peace in Yemen, and under whose authority, over twenty million Yemenis are in need of humanitarian aid, missile strikes on neighboring countries, attacks on commercial ships in the

Red Sea, attacks on Yemeni civilians, and accusations of withholding aid from civilians.⁹⁰

Regional Truce: An important action by the UNSC was the UN-brokered truce between the IRG and the Houthi government. This allowed for the lowest number of deaths in a six-month period since 2014.⁹¹ A non-aggression truce between the two governments, would allow for UN members to make official efforts towards peace, and work to ensure successful distribution of aid. It is important to have the Houthi government directly involved, otherwise they may act as spoilers, unwilling to follow the terms of the agreement, as demonstrated by previous attempts. But winning their involvement may require Security Council to modify their own goals. A truce could be seen as a Houthi victory. Excessive demands could make their cooperation impossible.

There seems to be a shared interest in maintaining a truce.⁹² The Houthi want to have recognized control over the northern territory, and the war effort is becoming too costly for Saudi Arabia to continue funding. While the truce should focus mostly on ceasing intranational conflict, it may be possible to leverage the Gaza peace process to encourage Houthi acceptance of de-escalation.⁹³ This truce could be a step towards separating the country into two territories under separate rule, as it was prior to the reunification in 2014.⁹⁴

2025 Humanitarian Response Plan: During recent Security Council meetings, delegates urged members to fund the 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan.⁹⁵ This plan outlines locally driven response to the worsening humanitarian crisis.⁹⁶ It includes only life-sustaining and life-saving activities and puts forward concrete, quality, and cost-effective programming. In order to provide aid to over ten million Yemeni civilians, the plan requires USD 2.47 billion of funding. Finding the money is major problem.



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The 2024 plan was not fully funded, but still able to reach more than eight million people with life-saving aid, despite operational constraints. If the main goal for many of the countries in the UNSC in regard to the Yemen crisis is to mitigate the humanitarian crisis, this plan would be beneficial for establishing a common goal and garnering support for further resolutions.

Expand the Red Sea Resolution: The Red Sea Resolution was co-authored by Greece and the United States in January of 2025.⁹⁷ It passed, with Algeria, China and Russia abstaining.⁹⁸ It underlines the importance of maritime security for commercial vessels in the Red Sea, and advocates for peace and stability in Yemen.⁹⁹ It also emphasizes the arms embargo set by Resolution 2216 (2015) against the Houthi government.

The resolution demanded the release of mariners detained by the Houthi on the *Galaxy Leader*.¹⁰⁰ This resolution could be expanded to prevent further violence in the Red Sea. Although China abstained from voting, it would be beneficial for it to have improved maritime safety in the Red Sea. Expanding the resolution to include

advocacy for peace within the water and ports along the sea would benefit both security and peacekeeping objectives and ensure safer and more effective humanitarian deliveries.

Sanctions: Currently, UN sanctions against Yemen include an asset freeze, a travel ban, and a targeted arms embargo against entities threatening the security of Yemen.¹⁰¹ However, only the European Union, United Kingdom and United States have officially implemented these sanctions.

It is important to get China and Russia on board with sanctions and arms embargos, because they are the biggest supporters of the Houthi within the UNSC. Either they must support new sanctions—which is unlikely—or abstain. Winning their cooperation may require trade-offs, concessions on other, unrelated issues, they care more about.

It is important to consider the humanitarian consequences of sanctions when creating an updated plan. Whereas a large amount of Chinese funding comes from its purchase of Yemeni oil, sanctions of oil exports would also harm IRG citizens severely as well.

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