



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(23 - 29 December 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

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KEY EVENTS

1. UN relief chief condemns attacks against humanitarian premises in Yemen

23 December 2019. Mark Lowcock issued a statement on Monday condemning the attacks on 21-22 December against the premises of three international aid organizations in Al Dhale'e, located in the south-west of the country. They were carried out by unknown individuals using rocket-propelled grenades. "These events represent an alarming escalation in the risks faced by humanitarian workers in Yemen. Twelve organizations have now been forced to suspend aid programmes in Al Dhale'e, which will affect 217,000 local residents. Several organizations are working with local staff to ensure the most essential activities can continue," he said. [UN News](#)

2. Houthi military spokesman: Our 2019' qualitative military operations hurt coalition"

28 December 2019. The military spokesman of Houthi groupe (Ansar Allah), Yahya Saree, listed on Sunday a detailed report on what he called "developments of the combat situation on the fronts and the outcome of the year 2019." Saree revealed that the coalition warplanes launched 6,534 raids on 9 governorates during the year 2019, 50% of which targeted Saada governorate, in northeastern Yemen, with 3,615 strikes, followed by Hajjah Governorate, west of Yemen, which was exposed to more than 1427 air raids, then the capital, Sana'a, with more than 424 air raids, and Al-Jawf with 211 air raids, while the rest was distributed over the air raids in the other provinces.

Saree said that his group's forces succeeded in repelling more than 1,226 military operations for the coalition forces, including 163 offensive operations, 656 marches, and 407 infiltration attempts.

He pointed out that the number of military operations carried out by their forces during the year 2019 amounted to "1686 operations along the scene of combat operations and the extension of the map of confrontations, including 607 offensive operations, 1044 raid operations and 35 infiltration operations." According to military spokesman of Houthi group (Ansar Allah), his group's air defense units were able to shoot down 96 coalition planes distributed between 7 combat planes, 9 low reconnaissance planes and 53 spy planes, while the group's snipers unit carried out 16,643 operations in which 228 Saudi and officer killed, 142 Sudanese, and 16050 Yemeni government forces. [Debrief](#)

3. Blast hits military parade in Yemen

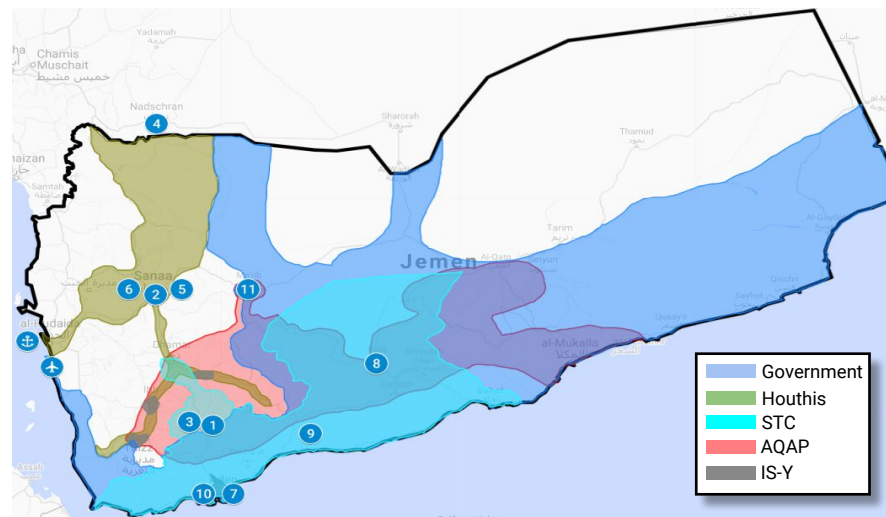
29 December 2019. A blast hit a military graduation parade in Yemen's southern town of Al-Dhalea, Yemen's Security Belt forces said in a tweet on Sunday. No claim of responsibility had yet been made. Witnesses told Reuters that a blast near a guest platform went off during the parade. Six people died and between 15 and 25 were injured, according to local health authority figures quoted by the local forces' spokesman. [Reuters](#)

4. Houthis launch ballistic missile at Saudi city of Najran

28 December 2019. On Friday, spokesman of the Houthis, Mohamed Abdul-Salam, posted on Twitter: "A ballistic missile was launched at the leadership camp of Brigade 19 of the border guards in the city of Najran." He added: "The attack resulted in tens of death and injuries among the Saudi troops, including senior officers." This was the first attack since the Houthis had announced a one-sided truce in September. [Middle East Monitor](#)

5. Yemen Houthis, Iran sign first military cooperation deal

23 December 2019. An Ambassador appointed by Yemen's Houthis to Tehran Ibrahim Dailami has signed a military cooperation deal with Iran, in the first such formal deal between the two parties. The announcement is the first official recognition by the Yemeni group of cooperating militarily with Iran. [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ This week Houthis restarted targeting Saudi soil after a long pause due to ongoing negotiations between the sides. In order to distance regional actors from the local conflict in Yemen, Houthis further made show of force by threatening to hit Saudi and Emirati high value targets. They also signed a military cooperation deal with Iran, a first of its kind.
- ❑ The dynamics effective in break-out of the war in Yemen were local and after regional intervention, local dynamics kick in again towards the end of the conflict. As KSA and UAE has less incentive and appetite in continuing a devastating war in Yemen, local actors will have to find solution to end the war.
- ❑ The yardstick to measure prospects of success for local actors will likely be how much they are committed to the peace in Yemen. There are positive steps in the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement like nomination of names to govern Aden. However, news about internal strifes between government and STC forces and political efforts to use national wealth for corruption shows it will not be easy to move in the direction of peace.

6. Houthis: Prepared to cause greater pain, hit 9 Saudi-Emirati targets

29 December 2019. Houthi military units have prepared targets including critical centers across the main Gulf states leading the Arab coalition in support of the Yemeni internationally-recognized government, spokesman for the rebels said Sunday. "Our forces' target bank is divided into three levels, by significance," Yahya Saree added at a press conference. "The first level includes 9 very critical targets; 6 in Saudi Arabia and 3 in the United Arab Emirates." [Debrief](#)

7. Weapons looted from Yemeni army bases find a diversity of buyers in Aden

29 December 2019. Arms dealers in Yemen's interim capital Aden completed a number of sales of looted government weapons in recent days, brokers involved in the deals told Almasdar Online. Some of the weapons sold in recent days went to military commanders in the internationally recognized government, while others went to leaders of STC-aligned forces, the arms dealer said. But a large portion of the weapons were sold to armed men whose political identities were unknown, he added. The arms sales were carried out with the knowledge of STC leaders, the arms dealer said. [Almasdaronline](#)

8. Government forces surround Shabwa military camp housing Emirati troops

29 December 2019. Army and security forces loyal to government have deployed around Al-Alam military camp in Shabwa Governorate, where UAE forces are stationed, a local military official told Almasdar Online. The deployed forces are searching all vehicles passing by the camp, according to the official, who said that Majid Lamrouk, commander of the UAE-backed Shabwani Elite's 7th Brigade, is inside the camp under the protection of the Emiratis. Located in Jordan District to the east of Shabwa's capital city of Ataq, Al-Alam Camp has the second largest footprint of UAE forces in the governorate. The largest UAE presence is in Balhaf camp at the liquified natural gas facility on Yemen's southern coast. [Almasdaronline](#)

9. Military source: UAE appoints Security Belt commander

26 December 2019. The recent departure of Abyan's Security Belt commander, Abdul Latif Al-Sayed, is likely final, according to a military official in the governorate, who said that a successor has already been appointed behind the scenes. The official did not obtain the family name of Al-Sayed's successor, but said that his nickname is "Al-Yafai" and that he is "known amongst the leadership" of the UAE-backed forces in Abyan. [Almasdaronline](#)

10. The Government and STC Agree on Names of Candidates for the Posts of Governor of Aden and Director of Security

29 December 2019. The newly formed Joint Political Committee from the government and STC to implement the Riyadh Agreement reached a preliminary agreement on the names of candidates for the position of governor of Aden and the director of security. Both sides proposed 5 names for each of the posts. [Alomanaa.net](#)

11. How a Handful of Elites are Plundering the Oil Wealth of the Nation

24 December 2019. According to a report published by Reuters in July, Yemen's internationally recognized government has called on oil companies to restart production and exploration in the country.

Foreign companies have headed the call, and multiple meetings have taken place in Cairo Egypt, between foreign oil companies and the Yemeni oil and gas ministry. However, crippling corruption is turning investment opportunities for the nation into 'looting opportunity' for the oil minister and a handful of predatory elites, selling oil blocks and contracts to who pays the top commission to them, rather than to which company will generate more income for the nation. [Medium.com](#)



KEY EVENTS

1. U.N. hosts renewed talks on contested Yemeni port city

18 December 2019. Yemen's warring parties have renewed talks on how to implement a year-old truce in the contested port city of Hodeida.

The two days of meetings are taking place on a boat off the coast of the city, according to a statement by the United Nations mission tasked with supporting the agreement. Previous negotiations between the Houthi rebels and Saudi-led coalition have repeatedly collapsed. [AP](#)

2. UN Special Envoy optimistic about ongoing Yemen talks in Riyadh

18 December 2019. Talks between Yemen's UN-recognized government and rival political actors continued Tuesday, said UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths, a year after the government and the Iran-backed Houthi militia met in Sweden in talks which led to the UN-sponsored Stockholm Agreement. In a statement on Twitter, he added that he met with Abdulmalik al-Houthi, one of the Houthi's leaders, on Monday. The two reportedly discussed the advancement of the peace process, including implementation of an agreement on prisoners. [Alarabiya](#)

3. Warring sides reach humanitarian agreement on key Yemen town

19 December 2019. Yemen's warring parties agreed Thursday to create humanitarian corridors in the key port city of Hodeida, which remains the main entry point for food and aid in a country witnessing the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The agreement follows two days of U.N.-mediated talks between the Houthi rebels and the Saudi-led coalition. A coordinating committee sanctioned by the world body said in a statement that both parties were working on redeploying forces to improve humanitarian access and enable movement of civilians. [AP](#)

4. Warring Yemen parties carry out prisoner swap in front-line Taiz

19 December 2019. Warring parties in Yemen's Taiz governorate have exchanged dozens of prisoners in a locally-mediated swap, the Iran-aligned Houthi movement and government sources said on Thursday. The local deal coincided with renewed diplomatic efforts by the UN this week and as Saudi Arabia carries out informal talks with the Houthis about a possible ceasefire. Seventy-five detainees affiliated with the internationally-recognized government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi were released, local government sources said. In exchange, 60 people affiliated with the Houthi group were also released, according to Houthi-run al-Masirah TV and the local sources. [Reuters](#)

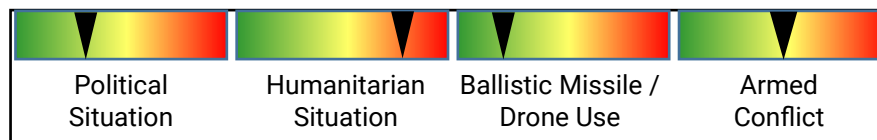
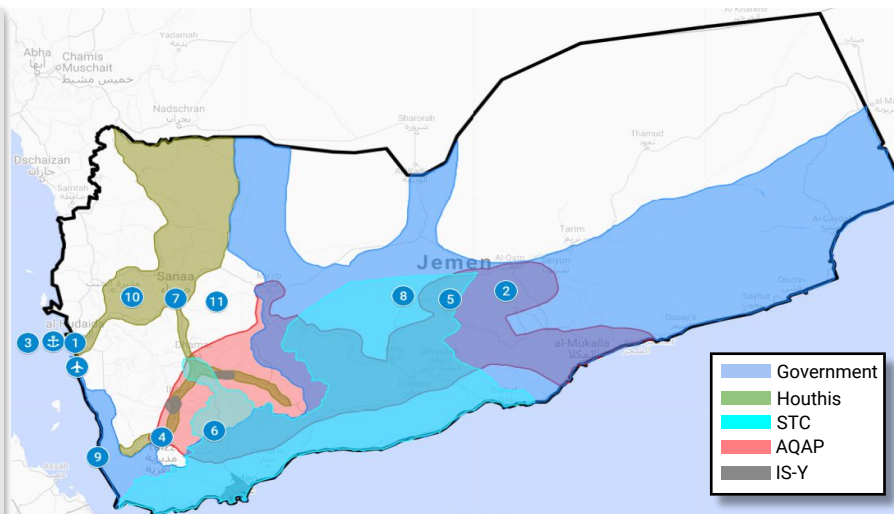
5. Yemen government slams Swiss diplomat's meeting with Houthis

18 December 2019. On Tuesday the internationally-recognised Yemeni government slammed the meeting between Swiss ambassador to Iran and the Houthis' representative in Tehran, Arabi21 reported. Yemeni information minister, Muammar Al-Eryani, disclosed that the meeting was "a flagrant violation of diplomatic norms and unacceptable violation of international laws and resolutions on Yemen."

Last month, the Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Iran's recognition of the Houthi official as an ambassador of Yemen violates the UN charter and the UN Security Council's resolutions on Yemen, and other related international treaties. [Middle East Monitor](#)

6. Houthis: UAE plot to wipe out Islah Party in south Yemen

16 December 2019. Sources affiliated with Yemen's Houthis have reported plans by the UAE to wipe out the Islamist Islah Party's leadership across southern Yemen. A member of the Houthi-led National Salvation Government (NSG), which is based in the capital Sanaa, revealed the plot to assassinate leaders of the Yemeni branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, especially in the provinces of Taiz, Ma'rib and Shabwah. According to a tweet on Saturday by Deputy Foreign Minister in the NSG Hussein Al-Izzi, a nephew of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Tariq Afash requested funding from the UAE to carry out plans to eradicate the leaders of the Islah Party across the aforementioned provinces. Al-Izzi added that the UAE had agreed to adopt Afash's plan and to execute it with the assistance of the separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC). [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ One year after Stockholm Agreement, a result of US pressure and threatening, still it is not possible to mention a direct success in its implementation. The provisions of the agreement foreseeing a ceasefire in Hodeidab, an exchange of prisoners and opening of a humanitarian corridor is yet to be implemented.
- ❑ But it is equally true that the agreement has changed the direction of the war indirectly. It has served as a pretext to shuffle cards across the board. Thanks to Stockholm Agreement, the war in Yemen has lost, to an extent, its global attraction, relegating it to a regional matter. After initial announcement of troop drawdown from the war-torn country, the UAE has opted for influencing power brokering behind scenes through its proxy, STC whereas KSA has directly descended on the field, becoming more involved in micromanagement of steps towards internal power sharing. In parallel with UAE decision, this week witnessed withdrawal of last contingent of Sudanese troops.
- ❑ International politics revolving around Libya has eclipsed what happens in Yemen. The UAE is implementing economy of forces to take position in Libya while KSA is trying to attain a sustainable equilibrium in Yemen to follow the suit. In the same direction, the sides are ready to forget animosity towards Qatar under conditions the latter aligns its affairs with other Gulf countries vis-a-vis other regional powers.
- ❑ We are yet to see an agreement between the KSA and Houthis as openly proposed by the US. This means, Ansarallah or Houthis are set and to stay within the political arena of Yemen irrespective of what happens in the South.
- ❑ The greatest challenge or problem in Yemen is still legitimacy to rule. As STC does not represent the whole South, the government of Hadi is away from catering needs of constituents. The initial optimism and caution witnessed in the immediate aftermath of the Riyadh Agreement has left its place to outbidding efforts of forces under control of both sides. As said, for peace in Yemen, there is still a long and bumpy trail to be crossed.

7. US investigation claims 'high likelihood' Saudi Aramco oil facility attacked from Iran

20 December 2019. A US probe into a missile strike on Saudi Arabia's key oil facility in September has unearthed new evidence that the raid originated north of the kingdom, contradicting claims of responsibility by Yemen's Houthi rebels. The US report assesses that one of the drones used in the attack was recorded approximately 200 kilometres northwest of the attack site before hitting its target, which "indicates with high likelihood that the attack originated north of Abqaiq." The findings also identified similarities between the drones used in the Aramco strike and an Iranian-designed and produced unmanned aircraft known as the IRN-05 UAV.

However the report's authors stopped short of certainty around the drone's origins. "At this time, the US Intelligence Community has not identified any information from the recovered weapon systems used in the 14 September attacks on Saudi Arabia that definitively reveals an attack origin," it said. [The New Arab](#)

8. Iran and US both undermining nuclear deal says UN political affairs chief

19 December 2019. The US had supplied additional information that pointed away from Houthi involvement Rosemary DiCarlo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs said during briefing to the Security Council on nuclear non-proliferation. She said: "at this time, we are unable to independently corroborate that the cruise missiles, or the recovered components we inspected, are of Iranian origin. I would like to stress, however, that this is our preliminary finding." Likewise, she said the Secretariat could not independently corroborate that any of the drone debris it examined, were of Iranian origin. "The Secretary-General intends to report back on our further findings." [UN News](#)

9. Sudan troops exit deadly war after five-year stalemate

17 December 2019. The last of Sudanese soldiers fighting alongside the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen left the country on Sunday morning, just weeks after Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok announced a reduction in the number of troops in the war-torn country. The Sudanese Elite Brigades relinquished control to Yemen's Joint Forces and left via the port of Mokha, Almasdar Online reported, quoting an anonymous military official from Yemen's ministry of defence. [The New Arab](#)

10. Teachers' Union: Houthis organized more than 4,000 recruitment events in Sana'a schools

19 December 2019. Houthi authorities have held thousands of mandatory propaganda events for teachers and students in Sana'a governorate aimed at mobilizing large groups of fighters, according to Yahya Al-Yana'e, media officer at the Yemeni Teachers' Union. In a statement to Almasdar Online, Al-Yana'e said the teachers' union has monitored 4,168 such events in the last 10 months, and teachers who refused to participate in the events were threatened with dismissal from their positions. The Houthis have held 362 of these recruitment events Sana'a schools in the last week alone, he said. [Almasdaronline](#)

11. Currency wars: Houthis ban banknotes issued by government-controlled central bank in Aden

19 December 2019. The Houthi-controlled branch of Yemen's central bank in Sana'a has given merchants, money changers, banks and citizens 30 days to hand over newly-minted currency from the central bank's government-controlled branch in Aden. The Houthis have pledged to compensate those who, according to the group, have been "deceived" by the Adeni central bank. The deadline for the handover of the "illegal currency" is one month from Dec. 19.

The Houthi-run branch issued a statement on Wednesday claiming that the trading or possession of what it called "illegal currency" is "seriously damaging the national economy, the legal currency and the supreme national interest."

The Central Bank of Yemen split into rival branches in 2016, after President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi fled a Houthi military coup in Sana'a and established Aden as the interim capital. An official in the central bank's Aden branch told Almasdar Online that the Houthis are using this policy decision to legitimize the theft of large sums of cash from private entities, such as exchange shops, banks and trading firms. In 2018 alone, the Houthis confiscated upwards of 150 million riyals (about \$300,000) from traders and exchange shops, and have yet to return them, the official said. [Almasdaronline](#)



KEY EVENTS

1. Ongoing clashes in Abyan, Shabwa stall implementation of Riyadh agreement

14 December 2019. Government troops launched an offensive against forces loyal to the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) on Thursday along the main road connecting northeast Abyan governorate with Shabwa governorate. By evening, the army claimed to have regained control of Al-Mahfad district in northeast Abyan, capturing STC field commander Ali Miftah Al-Shakli in the process.

The tit-for-tat clashes are related to disagreements over implementation of the Riyadh agreement, which ended months of fighting between the pro-secession STC forces and the national army for control of southern governorates, including Abyan, Shabwa and the interim capital Aden.

As part of the power-sharing agreement, the army's 1st Presidential Protection brigade is supposed to secure the presidential palace in Aden, as well as protect members of the STC. But the STC has said it doesn't trust the soldiers that the 1st Presidential Protection brigade recruited for that job and has prevented them from reaching Aden, via Abyan and Shabwa.

[Almasdaronline](#)

2. Aid groups: City of Hodeida top dangerous place in Yemen war

12 December 2019. Several international aid groups warned on Thursday that the flashpoint Yemeni city at the heart of last year's peace agreement signed in Sweden remains the most dangerous place in the war-torn, impoverished Arab country.

Fifteen aid agencies -- including the Norwegian Refugee Council, CARE International, Medecins du Monde and Oxfam -- say that since the U.N.-brokered deal last December, the port city of Hodeida and the surrounding province has seen 799 civilians killed and wounded.

This is "the highest toll countrywide," the statement said, without providing a breakdown for the toll. "As aid agencies working in Yemen, we are outraged that after almost five years, Yemenis continue to suffer from an incalculable humanitarian crisis fueled by conflict." [AP](#)

3. Projectiles fired from Yemeni territory hit hospital in Jazan last night

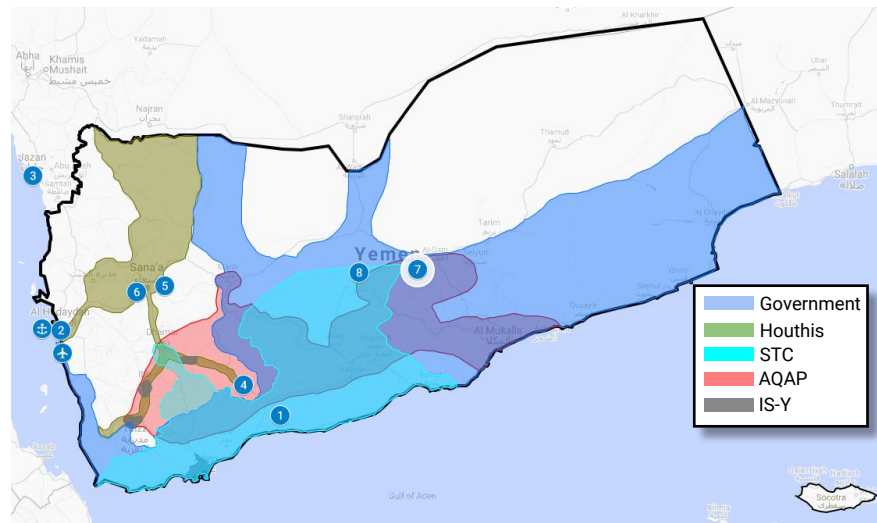
11 December 2019. Projectiles fired from Yemeni territory hit a hospital in Jazan, Saudi Arabia, last night, reported Saudi Arabia's Civil Defense.

No people were killed or injured, added the authorities, who said that the projectile had been fired by the Houthi militia. [Alarabiya](#)

4. Series of US airstrikes on Al-Qaida sites in Yemeni Bayda

14 December 2019. The officials told The Associated Press that US jets and drones targeted at least six districts and they were all located in a mountainous area where the three provinces of Bayda, Shabwa and Abyan meet. The vast region is known for its rocky mountains, which have been used by al-Qaida as a hideout.

One media official in Bayda said a total of 23 airstrikes were carried out by US jets. Another official said four al-Qaida militants were killed in the airstrikes that targeted Shabwa's Saeed district. [Debrief](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ "Shaky" has been the often used adjective to define the agreement reached last month in Riyadh. The reasons for that are clear for those following Yemen file. Especially STC has difficulty to sell the agreement to its followers and to those under its control on the ground, hardened with military gains and perception that a free South is not a distant illusion.
- ❑ So far, none of the three conditions set out in the agreement (assignment of governor to Aden, withdrawal to pre-August positions and relinquishing heavy weapons) has been implemented. The assassination of military commanders, tit-for-tat clashes between government forces and STC units, unwillingness in making steps toward implementing the agreement and constant need for meddling of Saudi officials shows the agreement should not be taken for granted and that the way ahead will be bumpy.
- ❑ The announcement from Saudi Civil Defense authority that projectiles fired from Yemen hit Jazan and Houthi declaration that contacts with Saudi Arabia never reached the point to be called negotiations can be understood as recommencement of conflict between Saudis and Houthis. It is deplorable that an agreement that was reached after more than a month of negotiations could not be implemented seamlessly to form incentive for peace in Yemen and as long as this divide exists it will further continue to be a source of more conflicts.

5. Yemeni Houthis deny talks with Saudis, criticize Washington

14 December 2019. Member of Houthi Supreme Political Council said on Saturday no talks are held with Saudi Arabia to end the war in Yemen, although there are contact and arrangements with slack moves. "There is some contact that cannot amount to negotiation, and slack-stepped, backstage arrangements that we hope to see the light," Mohamed Ali al-Houthi added at interview with the Sana'a-based Thawra paper.

"So far, we've felt no publishable response. If any, the other party could have hastily declared... Any negotiation would be public, and leaks carried by some US papers don't often reflect reality, including their reports about a deal with Saudi Arabia to stop bombing on four areas. These remain leaks until declared by an official party," he said. [Debrief](#)

6. Houthis: 1,000 children die every day due to Saudi-led aggression

12 December 2019. Houthi's public health minister in Yemen Taha Al-Mutawakkil, yesterday announced that 1,000 children were dying "on a daily basis" due to the "Saudi-led aggression and blockade" against the country.

"Yemen's health sector is one of the most affected civil sectors by the Saudi-American aggression and the blockade," Al-Mutawakkil pointed out, stressing that international organisations were not providing the "necessary supplies." [Middle East Monitor](#)

7. It's time for the international community to stop 'recognising' Hadi's 'government'

14 December 2019. In spite of having no substantial physical political presence in Yemen, and no formal armed forces on the ground, the media is insistent on running with the same, tired expression of "the internationally recognised legitimate government" of the fugitive president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who has apparently been running the country from the Saudi capital, Riyadh, since he fled Yemen in 2015.

It has now been over a month since the signing of the Riyadh Agreement, which was hailed as ushering in peace in the south, not only among the warring factions of Hadi's forces, which largely consists of Islamist, Islah militia and Sudanese mercenaries against the Security Belt forces, who are aligned with southern separatists, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), but it was also hoped to simmer down the tension between the patrons of these two parties, Saudi Arabia and the UAE respectively, both partners in the anti-Houthi coalition in the north, but backing opposing sides in the south. [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. European arms companies accused of being complicit in Yemen war crimes

12 December 2019. A group of human rights organisations have filed a 300-page document to the International Criminal Court (ICC) accusing European arms companies - including British giant BAE Systems - of being linked to war crimes in Yemen's brutal war.

The human-rights groups, including Amnesty International and Campaign Against the Arms Trade, met prosecutors in The Hague on Wednesday to hand over the file.

The dossier compiled by the rights' groups alleges that missiles, aircraft and other arms made by 10 companies "contributed to the capacity" of the Saudi-led coalition in the conflict.

The groups accused Saudi Arabia of bombing schools, hospitals and civilians in 26 strikes, which killed more than 135 civilians. Remnants of bombs made by companies in Europe were found at each of the sites. [The New Arab](#)

KEY EVENTS

1. Clashes erupt in southern Yemen after deal with separatists

5 December 2019. Yemeni security officials say clashes in the country's south between Saudi-backed Yemeni government troops and separatists backed by the United Arab Emirates killed a separatist commander. It's the first fighting since the two sides signed a power-sharing deal last month.

The officials say the clashes erupted on Thursday as government forces advanced toward Zinjibar, the Abyan provincial capital. Separatists seeking to push them back erected barricades around the city and set fire to military vehicles. The clashes killed separatist commander Salem Awad al-Sahami and wounded seven secessionist fighters. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity under regulations. [AP](#)

2. Separatist commander killed in Aden

7 December 2019. "Mohamed Saleh, the deputy director of the SB man force and support, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen," private sources told Debriefier, as the man "was in front of his house in the Mansoura district" of Aden.

Aden is currently witnessing deep tensions following the fierce clashes that erupted Thursday in adjacent governorate of Abyan between Presidential Guard First Brigade and Southern Transitional Council (STC) forces, leaving some 40 people killed or injured.

Friday overnight, STC forces besieged the Ma'sheeq Palace in Aden, as Arab coalition warplanes were intensely hovering over the port city. Last week alone saw 10 assassinations of security officers. [Debriefier](#)

3. President forms committee to investigate killing of Brigadier Adnan al-Hammadi

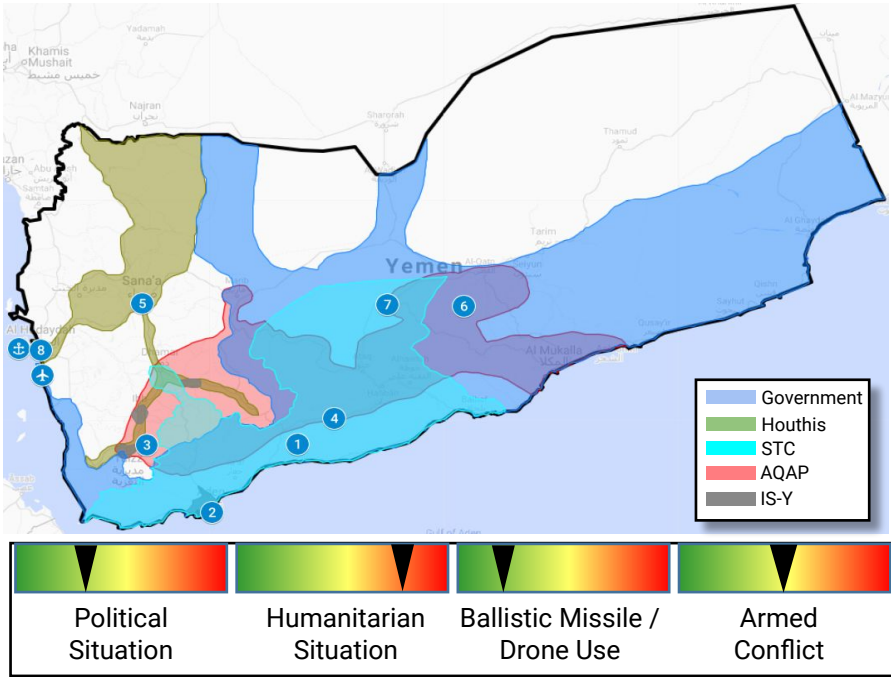
5 December 2019. Brigadier General Hammadi was shot in the head, on Monday evening, in the courtyard of his home in the countryside south of Taiz, and announced his death during his transfer to hospital for treatment in Aden. The military, political and human rights community in Yemen has demanded the formation of a neutral and fully empowered professional committee to conduct a "fair and transparent" investigation into the crime of "assassinating" the military leader who fought fierce battles against the Houthis.

Within the internationally recognized government of Yemen, he then fought a fierce struggle with the Islah Party in Taiz and its brigades in the National Army. Observers say members of the committee charged with investigating the killing of Brigadier Adnan al-Hammadi are affiliated with Islah (the Muslim Brotherhood's arm in Yemen), calling it a "second chapter of the assassination plot." [Debriefier](#)

4. Saudi military delegation visits Abyan in shaky start to Riyadh Agreement

5 December 2019. A source in the ministry of defence told the delegation arrived in Abyan's capital Zanjibar, where forces loyal to the STC are stationed, before visiting the coastal town of Shaqra, east of Zinjibar, where government forces loyal to President Hadi are based.

The Saudi military delegation is in Abyan to supervise the withdrawal of both government and STC forces to their pre-August positions. STC had wrested control of Aden in August, before overtaking Abyan and much of Shabwa governorate. Army reinforcements from Marib pushed back STC advances, eventually retaking much of Shabwa and parts of Abyan.



ASSESSMENT

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- ❑ So far, none of the three conditions set out in the agreement (assignment of governor to Aden, withdrawal to pre-August positions and relinquishing heavy weapons) has been implemented. The assassination of military commanders and unwillingness in making steps toward implementing the agreement and constant need for meddling of Saudi officials shows the agreement should not be taken for granted and that the way ahead will be bumpy.
- ❑ The Saudi constructive intervention to convince STC, the government, the UAE, its further commitment to talks with Houthis and warm messages to Qatar shows intent to close chapter in the Yemen War and open a new chapter to confront / pressure Iran. Saudi Arabia sounds rhetorics feeding into greater US narrative that contradicts earlier labeling of Houthis as an extension of Iran, an effort presumably to securitize the issue and legitimize military action in Yemen. UAE approaches more practically to a probable action against Iran and is sceptic about how far US would remain committed as former initiatives by President Trump does not promise success.

The Saudi delegation held separate meetings with STC and government officials to discuss implementation of the troop withdrawal, the source said. But no troop movements have been reported in the hours after the departure of the Saudi officials. [Almasdaronline](#)

5. In shift, State's Hook says Yemen's Houthis independent from Iran

5 December 2019. In a shift that analysts said reflects progress in Saudi talks with Yemen's Houthi rebels to end the Yemen war, State Department Iran envoy Brian Hook said today that Iran does not speak for the Houthis, whom he described as playing a more constructive role in issuing a cease-fire proposal.

"The Houthis' de-escalation proposal, which the Saudis are responding to, shows that Iran clearly does not speak for the Houthis, nor has the best interests of the Yemeni people at heart," Hook said. "Iran is trying to prolong Yemen's civil war to project power. Iran should follow the calls of its own people and end its involvement in Yemen." [Al-Monitor](#)

6. US Navy seizes suspected Iranian missile parts set for Yemen

4 December 2019. A Navy warship has seized a "significant cache" of suspected Iranian guided missile parts headed to rebels in Yemen, U.S. officials said Wednesday, marking the first time that such sophisticated components have been taken en route to the war there.

The seizure from a small boat by the U.S. Navy and a U.S. Coast Guard boarding team happened last Wednesday in the northern Arabian Sea, and the weapons have been linked to Iran.

Officials said the incident illustrates the continuing illegal smuggling of weapons to Houthi rebels and comes as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were meeting, with Iran as the main topic. [AP](#)

7. Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir: Iran's threat to the region can no longer be tolerated

6 December 2019. Speaking on the situation in Yemen at the Mediterranean Dialogues conference on the future of the Mediterranean, al-Jubeir said that there is a possibility of reaching a truce in the country, which could be followed by a settlement.

"Yemen is of particular importance to us, and Iran's intervention there is devastating. The only solution in Yemen is political, and the Houthis are the ones who started the war, not us." "All Yemenis, including the Houthis, have a role in the future of Yemen," he added. [Alarabiya](#)

8. Heavy clashes rock southern Hodeidah border town

6 December 2019. More than 40 mortar shells were fired into residential neighborhoods in the city of Hays in southern Hodeidah governorate Tuesday night, local residents told Almasdar Online.

Using a variety of medium and heavy weapons, including mortar shells, rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and missiles, the clashes between Saudi-led coalition-backed Giants Brigade and Iran-backed Houthis damaged property, partially destroyed houses and injured one civilian. [Almasdaronline](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(25 November - 01 December 2019)

KEY EVENTS

1. Saudi Arabia Admits, Two Saudi Pilots' Killed in the Apache's Downing in Aseer

1 December 2019. Saudi Arabia admitted Saturday night that two Saudi pilots were killed after what it described as the fall of their Apache helicopter in Yemen. Earlier in the day, the [Houthi] Military Media published scenes showing the moment of targeting an Apache plane with a suitable surface-to-air missile with a new undisclosed technology, resulting in burning the plane, downing it in a mountain in Aseer and killing its crew. [Almasirah](#)

2. Airstrikes kill 8 Houthi fighters, sparking new battles

25 November 2019. Arab Coalition airstrikes killed eight members of the Yemeni Houthi militia near the port of Hodeidah on Monday, triggering fierce battles around the flashpoint city, local officials said. Clashes erupted several hours later between forces of the UN-recognized government and the Houthis in Hodeidah's eastern and southern outskirts. The new escalation threatens a fragile truce in the Red Sea city that was reached after United Nations-brokered peace talks in Sweden late last year. [Al Arabiya](#)

3. Arab Coalition says it has released 200 Houthi prisoners

26 November 2019. The Arab Coalition said on Tuesday it released 200 prisoners captured from the Iran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen, according to a press release reported by Al Arabiya. In cooperation with the World Health Organization, there will be flights to transport patients from the capital Sana'a to countries where they can receive appropriate treatment for their cases, said Colonel Turki al-Maliki, the spokesman for the coalition forces. [Al Arabiya](#)

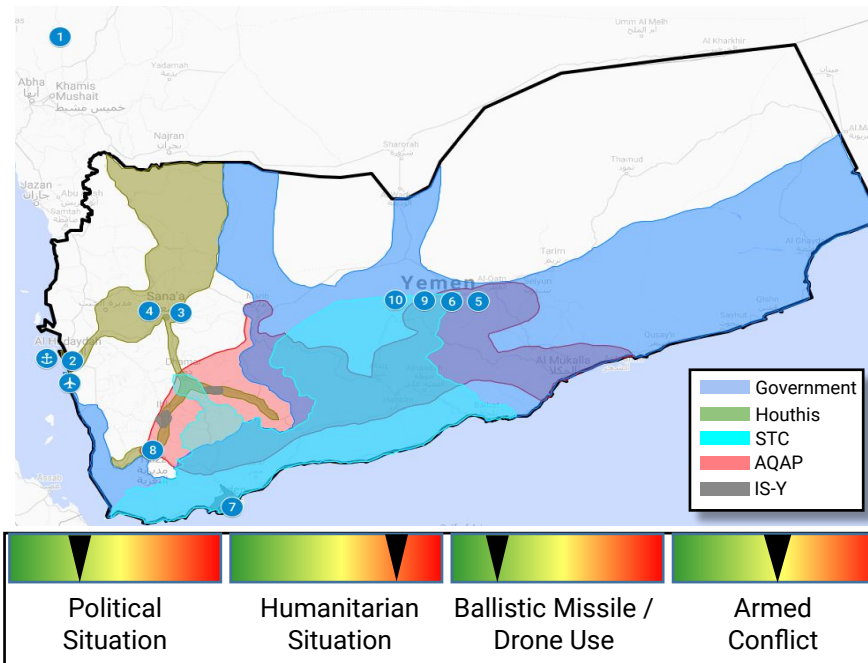
4. A declaration of emergency and comprehensive alert and an unprecedented panic in Sana'a

1 December 2019. Confusion and anxiety dominated the leadership of the Houthi militia, the Iranian arm in Yemen, coinciding with the second anniversary of the December 2, 2017 uprising launched by the late President Ali Abdullah Saleh from Sana'a. Last week, Houthi militias prevented the leaders of the Popular Congress in Sana'a from holding any events or meetings, and imposed security controls on their natural movements. In parallel, the Houthi militia imposed an almost undeclared emergency, especially in Sanaa, where the group has been witnessing an unprecedented proliferation of gunmen and combat equipment throughout the city. The militia raised the level of security alert on Sunday, December 1, 2019, on the eve of the second anniversary of the uprising, amid threats by the Houthis through social media platforms and media, if any action takes place. [Muntahaa](#)

5. US probes Saudi Arabia and UAE about weapons passed to Al-Qaeda

28 November 2019. The US has sent investigators to Saudi Arabia and the UAE to probe claims that American-made weapons have been passed to militias related to Al-Qaeda in Yemen, CNN reported on Tuesday.

In a letter obtained by CNN, the US State Department said that the "continued insufficient responses" of Saudi Arabia and the UAE had hindered the probe which, the reporter said, was launched early this year. [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ *The events that happened in the last weeks shows how shaky the peace attained in the last two months is. In this regard, special attention should be given to Hodeidah in terms of escalation of crisis, and the dengue fever and cholera epidemic gaining force especially in Taiz.*
- ❑ *Can we assume the window of opportunity to reach a common ground between Houthis and Saudi Arabia is closed based on the latest downing of Saudi helicopter and air assault in Sana'a. It is still early to conclude on that. But release of 200 Houthi prisoners can be deemed a gesture of goodwill and further will to continue negotiations.*

6. African migrants among 20 civilians killed in attacks on Yemen within a week

28 November 2019. African migrants were among at least 20 civilians killed this week in two attacks on a market in northern Yemen where migrants are known to congregate as they make their way to wealthy Gulf states in search of a better life, the United Nations said.

The U.N. statement, issued on Thursday, did not specify the type of attacks on Al-Raqw market in Saada province, near the Saudi border, or say who was responsible, but said many of those killed or wounded were Ethiopians. Thousands of migrants arrive in Yemen every year, mostly from the Horn of Africa, driven by drought and unemployment at home and lured by the wages available in Saudi Arabia and other wealthy Gulf Arab states. [Reuters](#)

7. Somali refugees are returning to Somalia from Yemen

28 November 2019. The UN said 131 Somali refugees arrived today at the port of Berbera in Somalia, returning from Yemen. Since 2017, UNHCR in Yemen has helped 4,942 Somalis return home safely, it has said. According to UN reports, Yemen currently hosts more than 270,000 refugees, including some 256,000 Somalis. [Almasdaronline](#)

8. Red Cross reports new outbreak of dengue fever in Yemen

26 November 2019. Robert Mardini, the ICRC's U.N. observer, told journalists that the Arab world's poorest nation faces "a very dire humanitarian situation." It is not only facing an escalation in dengue cases but must also continue to deal with tens of thousands of cholera cases as well as malaria, he said.

More than 3,500 cases of dengue have been reported in Taiz, Mardini said. And in Hodeida, where the country's main port is located, the ICRC heard that 50 people died in late October and early November of dengue fever and malaria, and the local head office reported the number of people infected with dengue fever is 2,000, and close to 3,000 have malaria. In addition, he said, last year's "spectacular" cholera epidemic in Yemen isn't over yet, pointing to more than 56,000 cases reported between January and September.

Dengue fever is a painful, debilitating disease caused by viruses transmitted by mosquitoes that breed in stagnant water. Malaria is caused by a parasite also transmitted by mosquitoes, and cholera is caused by eating food or drinking water contaminated by bacteria. [AP](#)

9. Failure to end civil war in Yemen now could cost \$29bn

1 December 2019. A failure to capture the present rare chance for peace in Yemen may potentially cost the international community \$29bn (£22bn) in further humanitarian aid if the current civil war continues for another five years, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) warns on Monday in a new report. It is also likely to prolong Yemen's inability to return to pre-crisis levels of hunger by 20 years just as famine conditions are improving.

The warnings are partly directed at Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, who are leading the fight against Houthi rebels as well as funding the bulk of humanitarian aid mainly going to UN agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP). [The Guardian](#)

10. UK Labour leader Corbyn would stop arms sales to KSA for use in Yemen

1 December 2019. Britain's Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn said on Sunday: "Labour will stop arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen and work to end the war there, not actively support it as the Conservative government has done," [Reuters](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(18 - 24 November 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Briefing of Griffiths in the Open Session of the UNSC

22 November 2019. The UN special envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths:

- In the last two weeks, the rate of that war has dramatically reduced: there were reportedly almost 80% fewer airstrikes nation-wide than in the two weeks prior. And I realise these are short periods, but nonetheless, it is striking. And in recent weeks, there have been entire 48-hour periods without airstrikes at all for the first time since the conflict began. The cessation of missile and drone attacks on Saudi territory announced by Ansar Allah on the 20th September has been sustained for a second month in a row. Efforts to de-escalate violence are holding.

- This month, the Government's Economic and Technical Team has agreed with my Office to establish a mechanism to have traders deposit the taxes and customs for commercial oil and gas shipments into a special account in the Central bank in Hudaydah under UN supervision. The proceeds will go to pay the salaries of the civil servants in Hudaydah and elsewhere.

- In Hudaydah, the establishment of the CeaseFire Enhancement and De-escalation Mechanism has allowed a reduction of the number of security incidents in the governorate: 40 per cent lower than before the mechanism came into effect.

- Since the creation of five Joint Observation Posts on the frontlines in Hudaydah, we have also observed a decrease of approximately 80 per cent in the number of security incidents in the city. Indeed, remarkably, relatedly, but very much welcome, for several days in a row, there were no incidents in the city at all.

- Yemen's leaders must now ask themselves what peace should look like. They will need to reach an agreement on the political and security arrangements to end the fighting, and we will be there to help them do so. They will need to lead in rebuilding the country, its economy and its social fabric, and we will all be there to make this happen. They will need to deal pragmatically with complex political challenges in a landscape that has changed dramatically during the years of conflict. The groundwork in addressing these issues must start now, but we believe, Madam President, as one Yemeni leader said so vividly to me, that we may soon see the return of civility into Yemen's social lif. [QSESGY](#)

2. Yemeni government back in Aden under deal with separatists

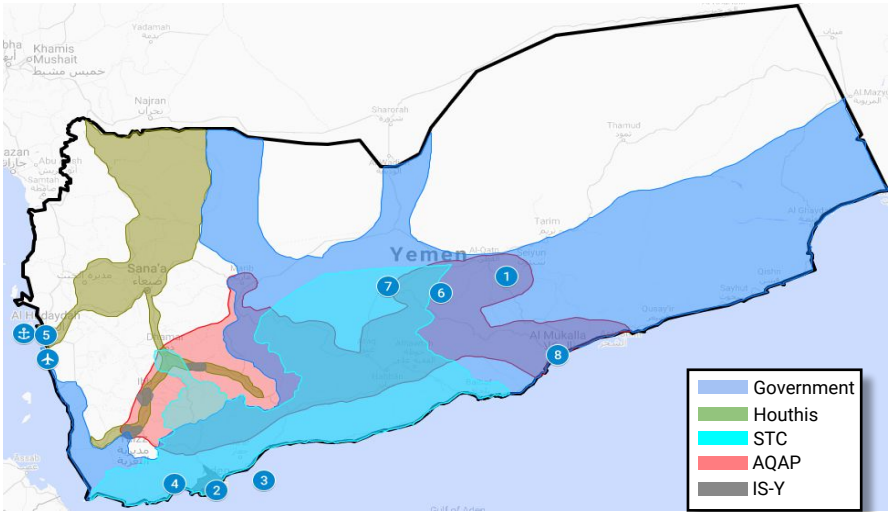
18 November 2019. Yemen's internationally recognized government returned to Yemen on Monday for the first time since it was forced out by southern separatists during clashes last summer. "The government's priorities in the next stage are to normalize the situation in Aden first and then consolidate state institutions on the ground ... as a guarantor of stability," Prime Minister Ma'een Abdulmalik Saeed told The Associated Press when he disembarked onto the tarmac. [AP](#)

3. Yemen's STC Begins Handing over Military Bases

21 November 2019. Yemen's Southern Transitional Council has announced the formation of committees with Coalition forces to start handing over security and military positions in line with the Riyadh Agreement. The announcement came after Yemeni Prime Minister Ma'een Abdulmalik and his government resumed their work in the temporary Yemeni capital of Aden on Wednesday. The PM said the Agreement is a good chance for all concerned parties to conduct serious and drastic reforms to tackle the inappropriate situation in state institutions. [Asharq Al-Awsat](#)

4. UAE-backed Yemen separatists refuse to withdraw from Aden

22 November 2019. The Southern Resistance militia, aligned with the Southern Transitional Council (STC), has refused to vacate and hand over the Presidential Palace of Maashiq in Yemen's port city of Aden to Saudi forces who are in support of exiled President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi. Adel Al-Hassani of the Southern Resistance is quoted by local sources as saying "the Southern Transitional Council's militias still control all of Hadi's forces camps and state institutions, which indicates their rejection of the Riyadh Agreement". Signed at the start of the month, the peace deal allowed for Hadi's government to return to Aden as part of a power sharing agreement with the UAE-backed STC. [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ *The success coming with compromise from both the internationally recognized government and STC has still long way to go to come into fruition.*
- ❑ *There is an entrenched Houthis rule in the north that day by day becomes more integrated within state institutions and become a normalcy. As Yemen Polling Center survey indicates, there is strong penchant in north for a united Yemen, not willing to let go resource rich south. In the south on the contrary, 46 pc of the population supports the idea of secession and this sentiment gains vigor each day irrespective of STC.*
- ❑ *Within this strategic setting, both STC and the government has to sell the latest agreement to their respective target audience. As they implement the agreement and make progress towards peace, they should build upon this success to gain legitimacy and present themselves as dependable actors to lead the state.*
- ❑ *However, still there exists many risks on the way. Radical elements within STC and the government have potential to upend the progress and gains so far.*

5. Yemen war deprived 4.5m children of education

21 November 2019. Some 4.5 million Yemeni children have been deprived of education since Houthis took control of the capital Sanaa in 2014, the country's Yemen's Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Ibtihaj Al-Kamal revealed yesterday. The minister accused the Houthis of turning schools into military barracks and injecting hate and racism into textbooks. In the statement, issued on World Children's Day yesterday, she said that the Houthis recruited more than 23,000 children and kidnapped 700 others.

As a result of the landmines planted arbitrarily in the areas controlled by the Houthis, 800 children were killed or injured. The minister also said that two million children of a total of three million born since the start of the unrest suffer health problems. [Middle East Monitor](#)

6. S.Korean nationals, vessels released by Yemen's Houthis: Foreign ministry

20 November 2019. Three vessels and 16 crew members, including two South Korean nationals, who had been seized by the Iran-backed Houthi militia have been released on Tuesday, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday. The Arab Coalition's spokesman Colonel Turki al-Maliki said on Monday a vessel "Rabigh-3" was hijacked by armed Houthis traveling on two boats. [AlArabiya](#)

7. Peace and State Fragmentation in Yemen

22 November 2019. - According to a survey conducted between May and July 2019 by the Yemen Polling Center (YPC) of 3980 Yemenis in 19 out of the 22 governorates, 46 percent of southern Yemenis support the southern movement's call for separation. The south has less than a third of the north's population—as such, southern opinions have been marginalized for decades. Meanwhile, in the north, 81 percent oppose letting go of the resource rich south.

- 22 percent of those living in the south stated that the STC is positively active, while 25 percent believe the STC is not active at all (15 percent have never heard of the STC). Not all southerners who long for an independent south do so under STC authority. The STC's strongest support base is in Lahj. The YPC survey shows that in other areas where secessionist tendencies run high, fewer people support the STC.

- In the five years since the Houthis took control of Sanaa, they have inserted their governing system into the pre-existing state. Once they gained access to institutions through their alliance with Saleh, they dispatched supervisors from core Houthi areas into the institutions as a mechanism of direct control, and to learn the craft of state administration. After Saleh's death in December 2017, the Houthis removed Saleh supporters from their positions and assumed direct control.

- The very integrity of the Yemeni state is at stake. According to the YPC survey, half of Yemenis do not consider a single actor in Yemen to be a legitimate authority. Approximately 19 percent of Yemenis support Hadi and the policies he represents, such as the division of Yemen into six federal regions. Recognizing the position the various groups hold on the ground, the international community should insert the notion of federalism, an outcome of Yemen's 2013 National Dialogue, directly into the framework for peace talks.

[Carnegie Endowment](#)

8. Mukalla's Al-Rayyan Airport open to commercial flights after 5-year closure

22 November 2019. Yemen's General Authority for Civil Aviation announced on Thursday the resumption of commercial flights to and from Al-Rayyan International Airport in Mukalla, after being closed for nearly 5 years. Al-Rayyan airport has been closed since 2015 after Al-Qaeda took control of Hadhramaut coast. However, following the liberation of the area from Al-Qaeda control in 2016, the site was used by UAE forces as both a military base and prison. This continued closure contributed to a humanitarian crisis in the area. The airport will operate as a first phase of operation with flights from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., although the possible number of flights has not been confirmed. [Almasdaronline](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(11 - 17 November 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen government delays return, officials blame separatists

17 November 2019. Under the agreement brokered by Saudi Arabia between Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the separatists, the government was to have returned to Aden last Tuesday. Yemen's internationally recognized government was forced to delay its return to the port city of Aden which was supposed to take place last Tuesday, officials said Sunday. Government officials told The Associated Press that the separatists are refusing to hand over Aden headquarters and the presidential palace. The separatist Southern Transitional Council insists instead on joint committees. The government officials, in turn, blame the separatists for inciting "limited clashes" and looting. [AP](#)

2. KSA discussing Yemen truce in informal talks with Houthis: sources

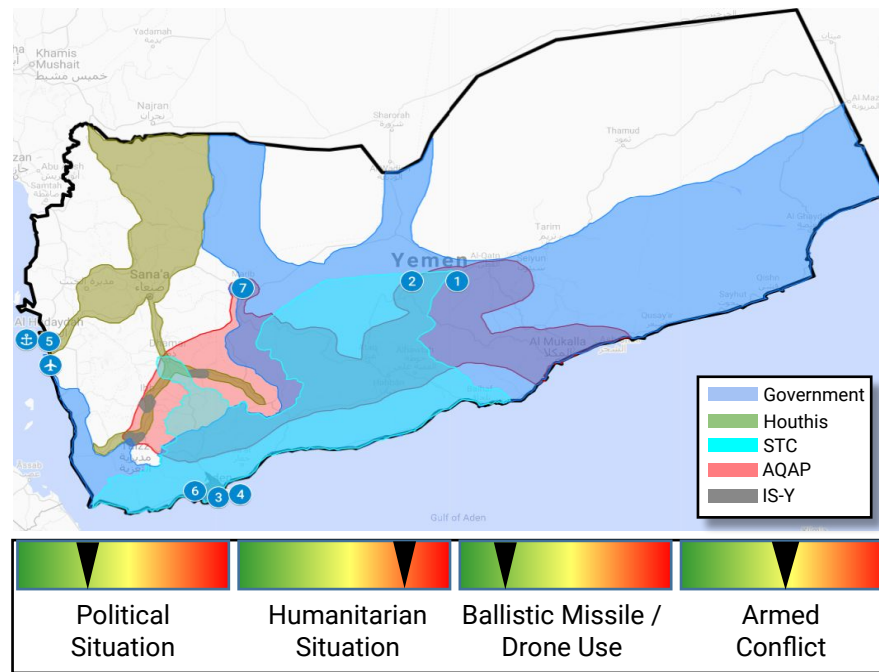
14 November 2019. Saudi Arabia is intensifying informal talks with the Iran-aligned Houthi movement on a ceasefire in Yemen, sources familiar with the discussions said. The talks were launched in Jordan in late September, three of the sources said, with Riyadh taking sole responsibility for military efforts by the Arab alliance fighting in Yemen after the exit of its main partner, the United Arab Emirates. A fourth source said "discussions on finalizing the security pact are moving very quickly now through a number of channels" but that Riyadh still had concerns about its border security. A Houthi official, who declined to be named, confirmed the group was discussing a broad ceasefire with Riyadh but cautioned that the group's patience was "wearing thin". [Reuters](#)

3. Saudi Cabinet: Riyadh Agreement a pivotal step

12 November 2019. The Riyadh Agreement is a pivotal step in ending the crisis in Yemen, S.Arabia's Council of Ministers said on Tuesday during a meeting chaired by King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. During the meeting, King Salman reaffirmed that the Kingdom's will continue to support Yemen in order to ensure the country's security and stability, as well as stop foreign countries from interfering in an attempt to destabilize the region. [Al Arabiya](#)

4. US envoy to Yemen: We are ready to support Riyadh Agreement

13 November 2019. The US is ready to support the Riyadh Agreement signed between the internationally backed Yemen government and UAE-backed separatist STC, US Ambassador to Yemen Christopher Henzel said. Henzel added. He expressed the United States' readiness to "provide the necessary technical support for the success of the agreement and the implementation of its provisions." [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ *The success of any initiative taken at strategic level depend on its implementation in unknowing hands at lowest tactical levels. The management of tasks based on this separation of level is the art of leadership. Both the internationally recognized government and STC should establish dialogue links at all levels (strategic, operational and tactical) to solve problems in the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement in order not to lose momentum and thus support behind this unification. Disagreements at any level should be solved by active intervention of superior levels. Mediatization and internationalization of the problems will only worsen the problems.*
- ❑ *Yemen's economic commission revelation that fuel shipment revenues collected in Yemeni ports have exceeded 29 billion Yemeni Riyals (YR) in just 3 months (August 13 to November 14) will relieve Yemeni officials who have not been able to get their salaries on continuous basis in the last five years. This will also provide another positive kick in economy by increasing purchasing power of the household, strengthen government in its task of governing and encourage it to devise newer ways to relieve the already bad situation.*

5. Economic Commission: Fuel shipment revenues in Yemeni ports exceed 29 billion riyals in 3 months

15 November 2019. Yemen's economic commission revealed today that fuel shipment revenues collected in Yemeni ports have exceeded 29 billion Yemeni Riyals (YR) in 3 months (August 13 to November 14). In late June, the Yemeni government had issued a decree requiring oil derivatives suppliers to pay taxes and customs duties on fuel shipments at the Central Bank in Aden, before they were allowed to enter Yemeni ports. Resolution 49 had been passed in an effort to use petroleum and petroleum derivatives tariffs to pay governmental salaries. According to the committee, the majority of this revenue comes from the port of Hodeidah, which contributes 44%, followed by the port of Aden with 35%, Mukalla with 16%, and finally the port of Nasatoon in Al-Mahra governorate, which accounted for 5% of total revenues. According to the commission, this will allow for a serious commitment to the payment of salaries to civilian state employees who've been deprived of official income for five years. [Almasdaronline](#)

6. Saudi security delegation discusses security with the Yemen Petroleum Corporation

12 November 2019. A source at the Yemeni Petroleum Corporation (YPC) told Almasdar Onlinethat a delegation from the Saudi armed forces visited the YPC building in the Al-Mu'alla district in the center of Aden to discuss the company's security in the coming period. The source said that the delegation visited the oil company and held a meeting with the company's leadership in order to complete security arrangements meant to secure the company's facilities in cooperation with the Facility Protection Authority, as stipulated in the Riyadh agreement between the government and Southern Transitional Council. [Almasdaronline](#)

7. At least five Yemeni soldiers killed by Houthi missile in Marib military base

13 November 2019. Houthi militants fired a missile at the Saudi-led military coalition's headquarters in the city of Marib on Wednesday during a visit by the Yemeni defence minister, killing at least five soldiers, local officials said. The base is the main military facility overseeing a ground offensive aimed at recapturing the capital Sanaa, which lies 120 km (75 miles) to the west of Marib. Mohammed al-Maqdishi, the defence minister of Yemen's internationally recognised government, and Saudi military officers were in the compound at the time, the officials said. [Reuters](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(04 - 10 November 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. The President of Yemen meets the ambassadors of the G20 countries accredited to Yemen

10 November 2019. President Hadi met ambassadors from G20 countries on Monday. The President briefed them on the latest developments and challenges witnessed by Yemen at various levels, including those related to the Riyadh Agreement and also on efforts to reflect decisions taken within the context of the latter to the governance on the basis of legitimacy and national quotas and three references constituting the frame in state institutions. [Sabanet](#)

2. The President of the Republic directs the organs and institutions of the State to act immediately to implement the Riyadh Agreement

9 November 2019. President of the Republic, "Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi," on Saturday said, all state bodies and institutions should work immediately on the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement and its provisions. Each body should in its own capacity translate the agreement provisions to action on the ground.

[Almasdaronline](#)

3. Yemen government and separatists sign deal to end power struggle

5 October 2019. Yemen's Saudi-backed government and southern separatists signed an agreement on Tuesday to end a power struggle in the south of Yemen that Saudi Arabia's crown prince hailed as a step toward a wider political solution to end the multifaceted conflict. Saudi Arabia's envoy to Yemen told reporters that the pact, reached after more than a month of indirect talks in the kingdom, would see the separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC) join a new cabinet along with other southerners and all armed forces would be placed under government control. [Reuters](#)

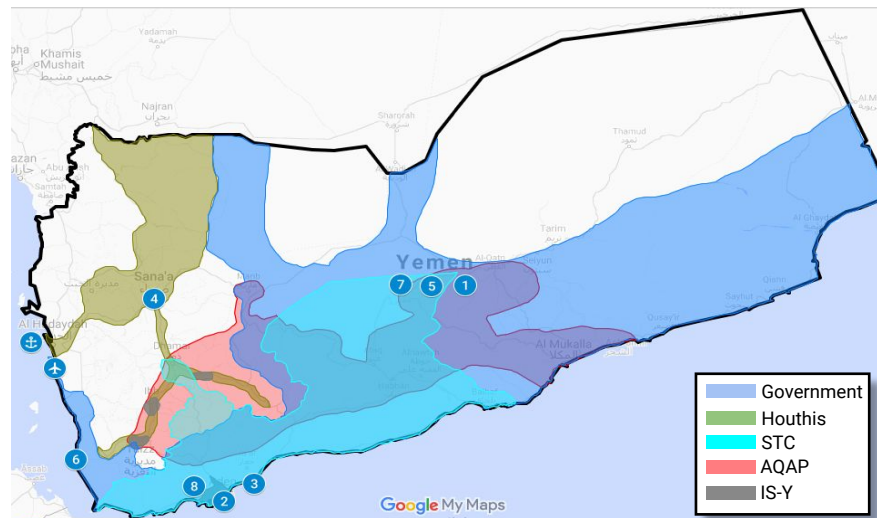
4. Official: Saudi Arabia confirms talks with Yemen's Houthis

7 November 2019. A Saudi official yesterday confirmed that the kingdom has held talks with the Houthi in Yemen in an effort to end the war.

"We have had an open channel with the Houthis since 2016. We are continuing these contacts to support peace in Yemen," the senior Saudi official told reporters.

The official, who refused to be named, gave no further details about the nature of the communication channel, but his remarks came after Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia stopped for weeks.

"If the Houthis are serious about reducing the escalation and accepting to come to the 'dialogue' table, Saudi Arabia will support their request and all political parties to reach a political solution," the official said. [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ *The Riyadh Agreement, as has been noted by many commentators and experts following Yemen file, is the half full glass in the middle of many parties that assume the content is what it wants to get from it. The meaning attributed to the provisions in the agreement form rudimentary steps of different finalities in the minds of GoY and STC. Still this does not take away from the value and importance of the agreement.*
- ❑ *The truth is that the agreement is the result of different climax points. To be more precise, a result of multiple inabilities to win over the adversary in the conflicts between:*
 - Houthis and Coalition, and
 - Southern Transitional Council and Government of Yemen
- ❑ *Impulsive reactions suggest upon conclusion of agreement uniting STC and GoY the new force will lead to a breakthrough in the front against Houthis. The owners of this premise has to answer two critical questions. First, how will a Coalition that failed defeating Houthis at times when it had all support of all parties to include UAE will defeat Houthis when the latter developed many technological and operational skills along the way. Second, if that is the case why both Saudis and Houthis refrain from targeting each other in the last four weeks?*

5. ICRC: 75% of Yemenis do not have access to health care

10 November 2019. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said in a tweet with a video on its official Twitter account on Sunday that less than 50 percent of health facilities functioned in Yemen. The ICRC noted scarcity of medicine and medical supplies, which respond to less than 30% of the needs. Humanitarian organizations say many Yemenis who have survived five years of conflict are dying from the consequences of famine and epidemics, lack of timely access to quality health care and medical care. [Almasdaronline](#)

6. Houthis fire missiles at Yemen's Mokha port, military coalition says

6 November 2019. Houthi movement fired missiles and drones at the Red Sea port city of al-Mokha on Wednesday, causing deaths and injuries and damaging a hospital, forces in the anti-Houthi military coalition said. There was no immediate confirmation of the rare attack on a coalition naval base from Houthi-run media or the spokesman for the Saudi-led Sunni Muslim alliance. [Reuters](#)

7. Yemen Aid US Management Expenses Mere 3%

9 November 2019. US AID Yemen announced on its official Twitter account: "After completing our financial documents, we are happy to share to our followers, supporters and donors that in 2018, we have spent 97% in Direct Aid & Programs and 3% in Management Expenses. To the best of our ability, we believe that the people of Yemen deserve all possible. [Yemen Aid US](#)

8. Despite the hurdles, an opportunity for de-escalation in Yemen

8 November 2019. By concluding the Riyadh Agreement nearly a year after the Stockholm Agreement, the ROYG has normalized what it once considered a coup to strengthen its position in the southern governorates and remedy broken partnerships ahead of nationwide peace talks vis-à-vis the Houthis. With the prime minister set to return to Aden by Nov. 13, the idea that Sana'a is next seems unlikely on the military front, barring the outbreak of a popular revolution across the northern governorates like that of the late 1960s. For the Houthis, this deal sets a baseline for expectations. If the STC could achieve this much by taking over Aden, the Houthis' demands will force the ROYG to make huge concessions far above and beyond UNSCR 2216. Despite all the hurdles, the Riyadh Agreement opens a window of opportunity for a nationwide peace agreement, especially as the Saudis reactivate backchannel talks with the Houthis, the international community increases its support for the UN special envoy to end the war, and neither the ROYG nor the Houthis has achieved an outright military victory. [Middle East Institute](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(28 October - 03 November 2019)

KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen govt, separatists to sign power-sharing deal on Tuesday

02 November 2019. Yemen's internationally recognised government will sign an agreement with southern separatists on Tuesday aimed at ending a conflict simmering within the country's long-running war, Yemeni and Saudi officials said. Saudi Arabia's Al-Ekhbariya state television said the Saudi-led coalition would oversee a "joint committee" to implement the agreement. [The New Arab](#)

2. Foreign Minister: Riyadh agreement is an important step to unite the ranks

31 October 2019. Yemen's Foreign Minister said on Wednesday the deal Saudi Arabia brokered between his government and STC rebels in Aden is crucial for unifying ranks in Yemen against the Houthis who are advancing Iran's expansionist agenda in the country. [Almasdaronline](#)

3. UAE troops return after 'successful liberation, stabilization of Aden'

30 October 2019. The United Arab Emirates said its troops have returned from the Yemeni port city of Aden after the completion of its role in "liberating and stabilizing" the city. The General Command of the UAE Armed Forces said that it is now transferring its charge to Saudi and Yemeni forces, who will now maintain the security and stability of the governorate. [Al-Arabiya](#)

4. Sudan withdraws 10,000 troops from Yemen and will not send new troops

31 October 2019. The Sudanese opposition newspaper "Al-Tayyar" reported the vice president of the Sovereign Council of Sudan, Mohammed Hamdan Daqlu "Hamidti" confirmed during a tripartite meeting held Tuesday "withdrawal of 10 thousand soldiers from his forces in Yemen and their return to their country." The newspaper, quoting unnamed informed sources, said "Hamidti" indicated that he did not want to send new troops to Yemen alternative to the forces that arrived in the capital Khartoum, without further details. [Almasdaronline](#)

5. Migrants endure rape and torture on route through Yemen

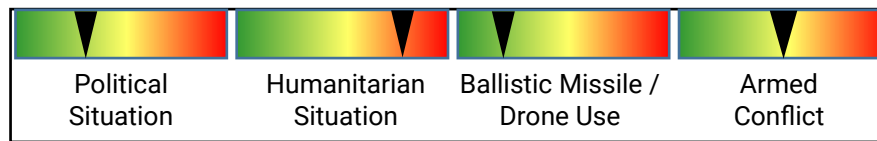
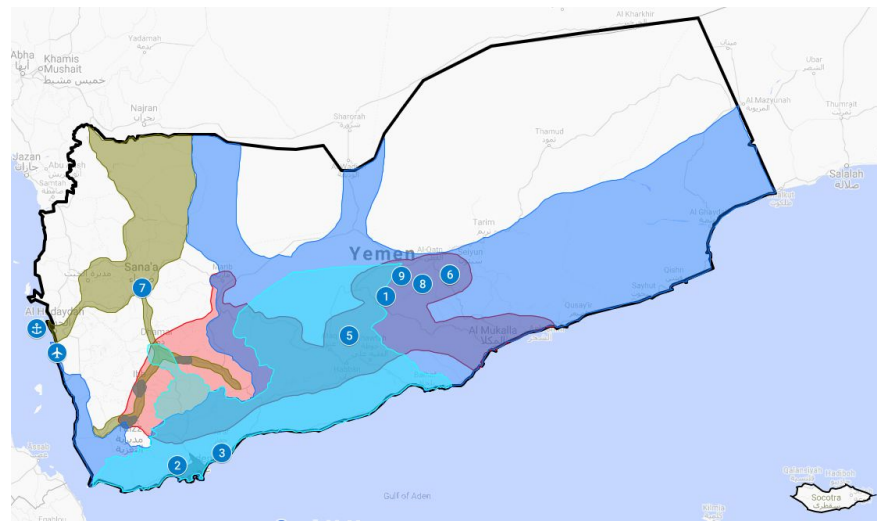
02 November 2019. More than 150,000 migrants landed in Yemen in 2018, a 50% increase from the year before, according to the International Organization for Migration. This year, more than 107,000 had arrived by the end of September, along with perhaps tens of thousands more the organization was unable to track — or who were buried in graves along the trail.

And European policies may be making the Yemen route more dangerous. Funded by the EU, Ethiopia has cracked down on migrant smugglers and intensified border controls. Arrests of known brokers have prompted migrants to turn to unreliable traffickers, taking more dangerous paths and increasing the risk of abuses.

Many of those migrants end up in Ras al-Ara. Nearly every migrant who lands here is imprisoned in hidden compounds while their families are shaken down for money.

They are subjected to daily torments ranging from beatings and rapes to starvation, their screams drowned out by the noise of generators or cars or simply lost in the desert.

[AP](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ Despite existing challenges along the way and retarded signature date hinting at remaining concerns between sides, the Jeddah Agreement has potential to profoundly effect the current conflict and unity of the state.
- ❑ If correct military and political principles are implemented and secessionist or impulsive reflects are not given leverage, and the agreement is followed with patience and perseverance, the deal has potential to primary solve the problem of effective governance and other internal problems thereafter.
- ❑ Among many others, the bad treatment of migrants and their use for ransom continues to haunt the country. EU also has indirect role in this. Immediately after signature of the agreement, the new government should take precaution for this issue, which harm its standing and legitimacy towards outside world.

6. Over 100,000 Reported Killed in Yemen War

31 October 2019. ACLED records over 100,000 total reported fatalities from 2015 to the present. Approximately 20,000 have been reported so far in 2019, making it the second most lethal year after 2018.

Hodeidah and Al Jawf follow Taiz, with more than 10,000 total fatalities reported in each region since 2015. Though deadly violence has decreased in Hodeidah and Taiz this year, other fronts in Ad Dali, Al Jawf, and Hajjah have registered heavy clashes: for these governorates, 2019 is the deadliest year since ACLED began tracking the conflict. Lethal fighting has particularly escalated in Ad Dali in 2019 due to clashes over the strategic town of Qaatabah and its outskirts: more than 60% of the 5,500 total fatalities reported in the governorate since 2015 have occurred this year.

Targeted anti-civilian violence in 2019 is concentrated in Ad Dali, Hodeidah, Hajjah, and Taiz: the governorates account for more than half of all reported fatalities from direct civilian targeting recorded so far this year. [ACLED](#)

7. GPC Officials Rejoin Houthi Institutions After Receiving Threats

28 October 2019. Houthis, in less than a week, managed to threaten the General People's Congress (GPC) into rejoining the coup's shadow public institutions after the latter had frozen its membership. GPC leadership had taken a decision last week to suspend its participation in the Houthi-run institutions in protest of militias deciding to release five suspects involved in the bombing of the Presidential House Mosque in 2011. Fourteen were killed and another 200 injured in that attack. Activists say that Houthis pressured GPC officials back into governing because local institutions run by the group would have collapsed upon their leave. [Asharq Al-Awsat](#)

OPINION

8. Saudi-Brokered Deal Defuses Tensions in South, but Challenges Linger

31 October 2019. The Saudi-brokered bargain is a significant breakthrough that, if successful, will prevent the fragmentation of the country and avert a new civil war. The Saudis have engineered this agreement to guarantee a concerted effort against the Houthis. However, it remains to be seen if the signatories themselves understand that the pact's success will not be measured by short-term gains for their respective political establishments but in the provision of security and stability that will unlock further potential for the South and the whole country. [The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington](#)

9. Analysis: Riyadh Agreement: Factors of success or failure

03 November 2019. Riyadh will try to unite the home front in Aden in alignment against the Houthis, after local fighters have been long preoccupied with the conflict between the government and UAE-aligned groups. Saudi Arabia will likely seek not only to get military forces out of Aden, but moreover to engage these forces against the Houthis along the north-south border areas. Some military brigades will be maintained in Lahj, Abyan, and Al-Dhale'a for insurance purposes. [Almasdaronline](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(21 - 27 October 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemeni officials: Government, separatists reach initial deal

25 October 2019. Yemen's internationally-recognized government and southern separatists have reached an initial agreement to end their infighting in the country's south, Yemeni officials said Friday. According to two Yemeni officials, the tentative deal between the separatists and the government envisages the formation of a new Cabinet with equal representation of northern and southern politicians, excluding the Houthis. The two officials told The Associated Press that the agreement also allows for Hadi's return to Aden. The separatists have agreed to disband their militias, which would be integrated in Hadi's police force, the officials added, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters. The agreement further dictates that both sides pull out their forces from Aden, leaving only a unit of Hadi's presidential guard there, they said. [AP](#)

2. Saudi takes command of coalition forces in Yemen's Aden

27 October 2019. The Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels in Yemen said Sunday its forces have been repositioned in the southern city of Aden to be under the command of Saudi Arabia. It said the redeployment came as part of effort "to coordinate military and security operations plans, enhance humanitarian and relief actions and strengthen efforts to secure waterways adjacent to Yemeni coastlines", the official Saudi news agency SPA reported. [Middle East Monitor](#)

3. Yemeni warring parties set up joint ceasefire observation posts in Hodeidah port

23 October 2019. Yemen's warring parties have set up joint frontline observation posts in the flashpoint port city of Hodeidah, the United Nations said on Wednesday, the latest step in U.N. efforts to maintain a ceasefire in the Red Sea port city. [Reuters](#)

4. UAE troops include vehicles and soldiers leaving Ziet port west of Aden

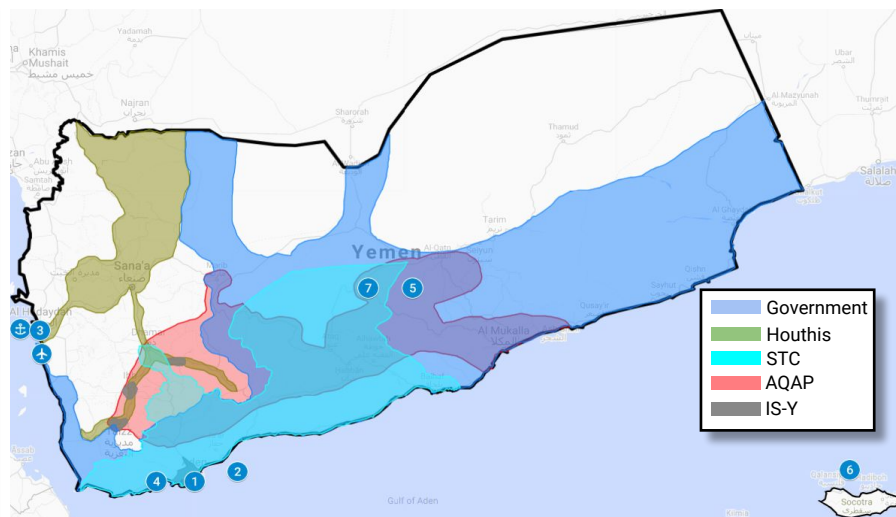
27 October 2019. UAE forces on Sunday morning left the port of Al- Ziet in al-Buraïqa district, west of the southern city of Aden, hours after the coalition forces announced in a statement that their forces had been repositioned in the coastal city. A military source told Al-Masdar Online that a batch of UAE forces, including soldiers, machinery, cannons and technical equipment they were using, left the port of Al-Zeit this morning on board an Emirati ship in conjunction with the start of the position of Saudi forces at Aden International Airport, the coalition headquarters and al-Anad military base in Lahj province.

[Almasdaronline](#)

5. UN: one child dies every 12 minutes in Yemen

26 October 2019/ Achim Steiner, administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has announced that one child under the age of five dies every 12 minutes in Yemen.

Steiner posted on his Twitter account "1 child under the age of 5 dies every 12 minutes in #Yemen, mostly from lack of water, basic nutrition, healthcare & medicine due to the conflict." [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ The Jeddah Agreement reflects efforts to internalize opposition within state structure. This comes alongside positive and negative repercussions for both sides.
- ❑ From the government side, the move vents off pressure in the south and gives southerners sense of ownership in the government. By incorporating south to the governance, it removes reasons for secession and makes STC also responsible for the failures that has profoundly reduced legitimacy base of the current government. If not sacrificed to petty personal clashes of interest, the move can also be path to unification in real sense. If both sides make sincere efforts to reconfigure the state in weberian sense, this will increase legitimacy and effectiveness range of their joint government.
- ❑ For STC also this is a big win. With the agreement, the entity will share responsibility of governance, have its voice in resolution of internal problems and reflect its point of view in relations with external actors.
- ❑ The KSA has been pronounced as having great influence in reaching the agreement. The UAE also has blessed it. This creates a momentum built around unity. It has become clear that Houthis cannot be removed from the areas under their control militarily. This is not possible even with the help of Coalition. But, as the war has become costlier, this unity might create deterrence and effectively bring an end to the current conflict.

6. UAE steals endangered trees from Yemen's Socotra

23 October 2019. Known locally as "Dam Al-Akhawain" or "blood of the two brothers", the trees are considered one of the most important features of the island of Socotra archipelago. This confirms previous reports that the UAE, who locals perceive as an occupying force, may have been stealing the UNESCO protected tree. There have also been reports from last year of coral reef stones and rare birds being looted from the island. Emirati forces began to arrive on the island in April 2018 without prior coordination with the Yemeni government. [Middle East Monitor](#)

7. Opinion: On the Signed Agreement

26 October 2019. Over the past few days, I spoke to members of Gov't & Southern Transitional Council. Both realize that the compromise reached averts conflict (for now.) The issue of secession is OFF the table as per the agreement, even if the intention is still there. I saw a draft of the agreement leaked by Govt sources. This was not rushed (like Stockholm for example). Items were carefully detailed.

An excellent concession from the Govt was the withdrawal of non-southern forces from the South within 15 days. This removes the sense of "occupation" that beleaguered southerners and could build trust with Government institutions.

Media campaigns harming the reputation of all sides were ordered to stop. Even if this is hard to enforce due to freedom of speech practice, the recognition of the Council as a political entity, & its force as legitimate, will stop it from being vilified as a non-state actor; STC will be part of the official government delegation that is focused to stop the war against #Houthis. This is unbelievable given that the government refused to shake hands with the Council at the beginning of talks. Ironically, the #Houthi threat unites them.

A new committee under the supervision of #KSA will be formed to oversee the implementation of this agreement. This appears to re-assure all because both the Government and STC want good relations with the #Saudis.

President will appoint a governor for #Aden within two weeks of signing the agreement, and one for #Abyan and al-Daha'a within 30 days in what seems to be a "consultation" process.

It has been already leaked that a new Government will be formed, with 24 Ministers from the South (not just the Council). This is a direct implementation of the 1990 unity agreement that suffered from implementation challenges.

The redeployment of 90,000 southern soldiers into #Yemen's national army is also a huge point the Government scored. It is also a point of concern for the #Houthi militias who rejoiced to see the divisions among the coalition members, using it to their advantage;

Overall, this is a litmus test for the Southern Transitional Council: What reason will they have to secede if they are a strong partner w/ #Yemen's government? They will undoubtedly face the same challenges and limitations in implementation. 15. What are the implications for peace? for now, this agreement averted the dissolution of #Yemen, which many saw as inevitable. However, more focus is needed in building trust & society healing & reconciliation if this is going to have a lasting impact. [Fatima Alasrar on Twitter](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(14 - 20 October 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. American weapons ended up in the wrong hands in Yemen

20 October 2019. Fresh evidence shows that military hardware that was supplied to US allies has been distributed in contravention of arms deals to militia groups, including UAE-backed separatists. They are now using it to fight the Saudi-supported forces of the internationally recognized government, who are also armed with US weapons. These new findings follow an exclusive investigation by CNN in February which traced US-made equipment that was sold to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The weapons were being passed to non-state fighters on the ground in Yemen, including al Qaeda-linked fighters, hardline Salafi militias and the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, the report found, in violation of arms sales law. [CNN](#)

2. Saudi Arabia holds talks with Houthis to de-escalate Yemen war

14 October 2019. Saudi Arabia has reportedly been holding talks with the Houthi movement of Yemen in an attempt to break the deadlock in the conflict. The "back-channel" negotiations, according to the FT, represent the first time in over two years Riyadh and the Iranian-aligned Houthis have held talks.

Although the Saudis agreed to a halt in air raids over four Houthi-held cities including the capital Sanaa, they have continued with further air strikes, carrying out over 250 since the initiative was offered, according to Houthi military spokesperson. Despite this, it has been reported that the scale of the bombardments has since been significantly reduced. [Middle East Monitor](#)

3. Our Patience About Peace Initiative Has Been Implemented Says Al-Houthi

20 October 2019. Member of the Supreme Political Council, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, recorded the first official expression of impatience with the reluctance of the US-Saudi-UAE coalition to respond to the initiative of the Houthi President, Mehdi al-Mashat, which has been put forward for nearly a month ago.

For the first time, al-Houthi talked about a deadline for a duration of initiative' launch, recalling his assertion that the initiative is indivisible, referring to a Saudi offer to stop coalition airstrikes on only four cities, including the capital Sana'a. [Yemen Press](#)

4. Under the auspices of UN, First checkpoints deployed east of Hodeidah

20 October 2019. The redeployment committee on Saturday began deploying the first checkpoints made up of liaison officers from joint forces brigades and Houthi militias, with the aim of establishing a ceasefire between the two sides, east of the city of Hodeidah in western Yemen. A field source told "Al-Masdar Online" that the UN mission will deploy the rest of the points in the coming days in implementation of an agreement between the two parties under the auspices of the two parties and UN. [Almasdaronline](#)

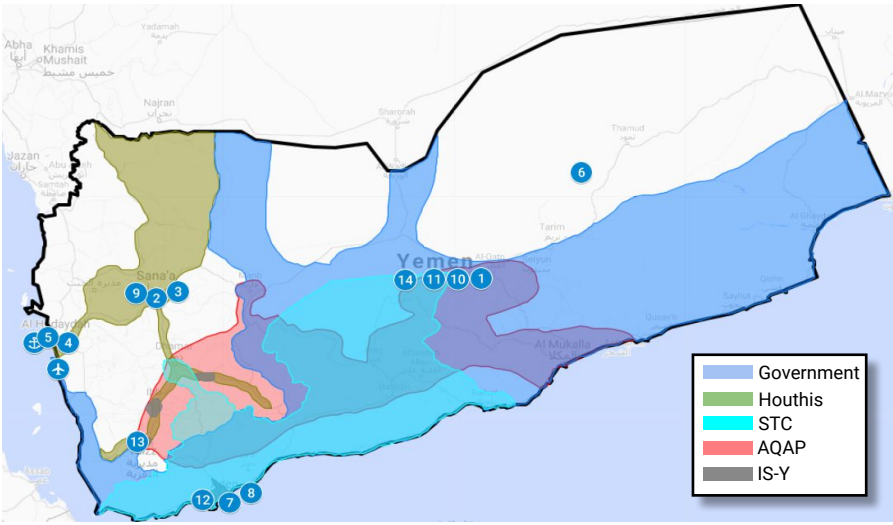
5. The Houthis prevent the UN team to deploy the observation post in Al-Saleh

20 October 2019. A field source told "Al-Masdar Online" that the Houthi militias deployed, Sunday morning, in front of the UN ship anchored in the Red Sea, and restricted the movement of the UN team, and prevented them from moving to the meeting point to deploy liaison officers at the second observation point in the city of Al-Saleh in implementation for the agreement between the two parties.

The ban on the United Nations team from continuing its field work came a day after the first ceasefire monitoring points were deployed at Al-Khamiri, kilo 8, east of Hodeidah. [Almasdaronline](#)

6. First region of Hadhramaut receive the camps and points from the UAE forces

20 October 2019. Troops from the first military zone in Hadhramaut on Saturday received the positions and camps of the Arab alliance in the directorates of "Ramah" and "Thamud" from UAE. A local source said UAE forces handed over all their military positions at the Thamud and Ramah directorates in Hadhramaut province in eastern Yemen. According to the sources, the UAE forces left for Mukalla where they still have a large presence, while the first military zone forces have begun to take over the tasks of securing the area. [Almasdaronline](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ The so-called Jeddah Agreement has not been made public yet. The developments in the south will be dependent on results of this agreement which was supposed to be signed and declared on Wednesday. The events like hand-over of UAE bases in Hadramaut and further movement of Saudi units testify for an agreement. But the details have not been made public to allow making comment. As reiterated last week, if the [leaked version](#) reflects verity, the agreement will be a game-changer in that:
 - a. It precludes formation of military structures outside state infrastructure and as such it will strengthen government and allow it to rule over state not under Houthi control to better confront its domestic and external problems.
 - b. It will reflect common ground between KSA and UAE, two partners with different post-conflict Yemen visions, and as such might preclude counter actions of each other.
 - c. It should increase legitimacy and support base for the Hadi government as it incorporates Southern separatists to the government and should also force Houthis to make peace under more favorable terms.
 - d. It can -if implemented seamlessly- also serve as a deterrent / motivator to cease hostilities between Houthis and Saudi Arabia.
- ❑ The Houthi efforts to block UN Redeployment Committee to deploy checkpoints, or Houthi court decisions to summon prominent leaders to include Obama and President Hadi are clear signs on where we are in terms of attaining peace with or in spite of Houthis and how enduring -if reached - it will be.

7. Yemeni officials: Saudi troops take control Aden in deal

15 October 2019. Yemeni officials say Saudi troops have taken control of the airport and ports in Aden from separatists backed by the United Arab Emirates. They say the move is part of a settlement between President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Southern Transitional Council, which controls Aden. They say the separatists in southern Shabwa Province also handed over arms to the Saudi-led coalition, paving the way for Hadi's government to fully control Shabwa and other southern provinces. [AP](#)

8. Yemeni government, Southern Transition Council expected to sign deal

16 October 2019. Yemen's government and STC are expected to sign an agreement ending a standoff in Aden on Thursday in Saudi Arabia, according to Al-Hadath. Accordingly, the they will sign the final draft of the deal, named the "Jeddah Agreement," on Thursday brokered by Saudi efforts. [English.Alarabiya](#)

9. Yemen's rebel court issues 'subpoena' for Donald Trump, Barack Obama and MbS

17 October 2019. A Houthi court has summoned prominent world leaders, including US President Donald Trump and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman within a next month before slapping a lawsuit against them over alleged war crimes in Yemen. A total of 124 figures were ordered to appear in court to defend themselves of charges of war crimes, with the names published in al-Thawra newspaper. [The New Arab](#)

10. UNICEF: 92% of babies in Yemen are underweight at birth

15 October 2019. Almost all babies in Yemen are born underweight, according to data by UNICEF. The figures of 92 per cent for children born in Yemen are a stark contrast to the worldwide figures of 29 per cent over the same period between 2010-2018. [Middle East Monitor](#)

11. UN: September Deadline for Civilians

Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths briefed UNSC. 'Indeed, there are signs of hope. But these are fragile and in need of our diligent care and attention. I welcome, as I did publicly at the time the initiative by Ansar Allah, under the leadership of Abdel Malek al Houthi, to suspend all drones and ballistic missile attacks on Saudi Arabia, I think it was an initiative announced on the 20th of September and I also welcome the reduction of violence that followed that announcement. In Taiz, we have heard reports of potential offers from both parties to open humanitarian corridors, and I mentioned that, Mr. President, because of course Taiz was one of the issues agreed upon in Sweden to precisely seek such openings. I hope that these reports, Mr. President, translate into reality. God knows, Taiz deserves some good news so I hope an agreement comes on the heels of the promises being made.' [OSESGY](#)

12. Opinion: Why will Yemen be the poorest country in the world by 2022?

17 October 2019. Conflict in Yemen, not the scarcity of resources, is the primary driver of the country's high poverty rate. The current conflict in Yemen plays a prominent role in increasing poverty rates, but even if the conflict stops now, poverty rates will continue to rise, albeit at a lower rate. The fight against poverty requires providing safe sources of drinking water, building schools, promoting education, providing better healthcare, and building infrastructure. [Beyond the Horizon](#)

13. Yemen: Parents in Taiz demand answers over alleged rape of their children

19 October 2019. Some, like Raed's mother, say they are too intimidated to approach authorities because the attackers who hurt their children hold positions of power. Others want to hide what happened because they consider rape to be shameful. But after another mother, who did not give her name, came forward last week, in a TV interview accusing a leader in the Yemeni army in Taiz of raping her son, the unresolved cases are back in the public eye, drawing parents to speak out once again. [Middle East Eye](#)

14. Assessing Oil and Non-Oil GDP Growth from Space: An Application to Yemen 2012-17

11 October 2019. This paper uses an untapped source of satellite-recorded nightlights and gas flaring data to characterize the contraction of economic activity in Yemen throughout the ongoing conflict that erupted in 2015. Using estimated nightlights elasticities, The author show that real GDP contracted by a cumulative 24 percent over 2015-17 against 50 percent according to official figures. I also find that the impact of the conflict has been geographically uneven with economic activity contracting more in some governorates than in others. [IMF](#)



KEY EVENTS

1. Yemeni official described the 'Draft agreement' of Aljazeera' as incorrect

13 October 2019. The draft calls for the formation of a 50-50 unity government between northern and southern Yemen, with President Abdu Rabbo Mansour Hadi appointing the prime minister and ministers of sovereign portfolios. It also includes the integration of military and security formations into the structures of the ministries of defense and interior. Accordingly, Saudi Arabia oversees the structure of the security forces and establishes a neutral security force to oversee the transition, as well as the absorption of the Transitional Council and southern components in the government and local authority. It also provides for the involvement of the STC and southern components in the negotiations for a comprehensive political solution.

According to the terms of the draft, the agreement obliges the signatories not to form any forces outside state institutions, and the kingdom will form a political team in Aden to oversee the implementation of its provisions. The "Al-Masdar Online" attempted to confirm the authenticity of the terms of the proposed draft, but an informed source declined to comment and merely said that "most of them are incorrect." [Almasdaronline](https://bit.ly/32cYQGp)

2. Yemeni government, separatist STC close to deal on Aden

8 October 2019. Saudi Arabia, leader of an Arab coalition battling Yemen's Houthi movement, has been hosting indirect talks for a month between the government of Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and the Southern Transitional Council (STC) to end the standoff that had opened a new front in the multi-faceted war. "There is progress in the Jeddah talks. The conversation is still ongoing and it is about bringing STC into the government, de-escalating tensions and redeployment of forces," a third source familiar with the talks said on Monday. [Al Jazeera](https://www.aljazeera.com)

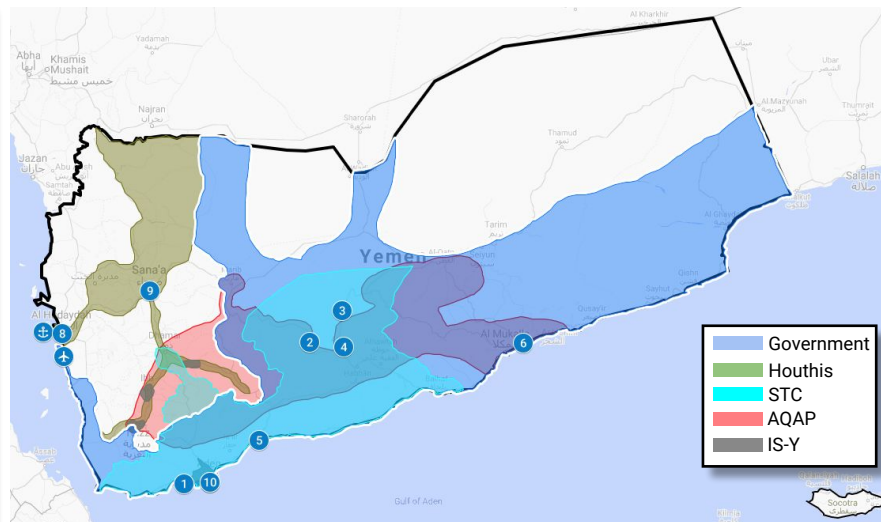
3. Yemeni Govt. Condemns Erdogan's Statements

12 October 2019. The Yemeni government denounced on Saturday Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's statement in which he falsely compared between Turkey's violation of the sovereignty and independence of Syria and the operations of the Saudi-led coalition supporting legitimacy in Yemen against Iranian-backed terrorist Houthi militia. The Yemeni government described the statement of the Turkish president as "provocative", according to the official Yemeni News Agency. [Al-Sharq al-Awsat](https://www.al-sharq-al-awsat.com)

4. Yemeni government denies prisoner swap proposal by Houthis

12 October 2019. Commenting on the reports regarding Houthi's proposal for a prisoner swap through local mediation, Hadi Haij, chief of the government detainees committee in the Yemeni government wrote on Twitter: "we have not received anything." Haij also posted "we must respect what we have signed and be truthful and ready to carry out the agreement," referring to the prisoners swap deal, which was involved in the Stockholm Agreement reached in December of last year.

On Thursday, the head of the Houthis' Prisoner Affairs Committee, Abdul Qader al-Murtada, was quoted as stating by Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV "we told the local mediators that we are ready to implement a prisoner exchange within one week." He added "we are waiting for the other side to respond," explaining that the proposed deal would cover 2,000 prisoners in "a first phase." [Middle East Monitor](https://www.middleeastmonitor.com)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ The agreement said-to-be concluded between Yemeni government and STC as declared by Al Jazeera has not been verified yet. But if it is true it will be a groundbreaking development for five main reasons:
 - a. As it precludes formation of military structures outside state infrastructure it will strengthen government and allow it to rule over state not under Houthi control to better confront its domestic and external problems.
 - b. The agreement will reflect common ground between KSA and UAE, two partners with different post-conflict Yemen visions, and as such might preclude counter actions of each other.
 - c. The move might increase legitimacy and support base for the Hadi government as it incorporates Southern separatists to the government
 - d. This unity might also force Houthis to make peace under more favorable terms.
 - e. If can be implemented seamlessly, it can also serve as a deterrent / motivator to cease hostilities between Houthis and Saudi Arabia.
- ❑ Though not making much noise, Saudi Arabian negotiation with Houthis is heard to be progressing. If can be synchronized with efforts to bring internal actors into unity, the negotiations could have lasting effects towards peace.

5. Movement of Presidential Protection Forces Expected to Aden

13 October 2019. According to a military source, in line with the Saudi-Emirati-Yemeni consensus, preparations are made to bring presidential protection forces to the Palace of Ma'ashiq. The forces will include the most prominent forces of the Southern Movement, the Hadramout Conference and the Southern National Coalition. [Almasdaronline](https://bit.ly/32cYQGp)

6. President Hadi orders completing arrangements to operate Arryan airport

13 October 2019. President Hadi gave instructions to the Governor of Hadramout Maj. General Faraj al-Bohssoni to get final arrangements accomplished to re-open Arryan international airport to serve the population of the governorate and entire Yemen. [Almasdaronline](https://www.almasdaronline.com)

7. UAE pulls some forces from Yemen's Aden

8 October 2019. The United Arab Emirates pulled some of its forces from Yemen's southern port of Aden on Tuesday, officials and witnesses said. Two officials told Reuters that an Emirati convoy boarded a military vessel at Buraika oil terminal near Aden refinery that had shipped out. Four employees at the refinery said they saw a large convoy of military vehicles and three buses carrying around 200 troops headed toward the terminal. [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com)

8. Yemen's government: ready to supply fuel to Houthi-controlled areas

13 October 2019. Yemeni government is willing to provide fuel to Houthi-controlled areas for lower prices than the ones set by the militants, Saudi state agency SPA reported on Saturday. Yemen's UN representative Al-Saadi told: "The private sector in Houthi-controlled areas is ready to follow through the decision of importing oil and fuel from the Aden refinery solely, but they are being pressured by the Houthi militants." [Arab News](https://www.arabnews.com)

9. Yemen denounces Qatar Charity financing Houthi-produced school books

12 October 2019. Yemen's government denounced Qatar Charity's financing of the printing of a new schoolbook in Houthi-controlled areas, Saudi state news agency SPA reported on Friday.

"Iran backed Houthi militants, since their uprising, have started changing public school curriculums in Yemen to fit their malevolent sectarian ideology," Yemen's ministry of education said in a statement. [Arab News](https://www.arabnews.com)

10. Save the Children warns of cholera spike in Yemen's north

9 October 2019. Save the Children said Wednesday that fuel prices have hiked 100% over the past 40 days as the internationally recognized government imposed customs duties in the interim capital Aden. That caused a 60% decrease in the amount of fuel coming through the key port of Hodeida. The children's advocacy group warns of a spike in cholera cases in northern Yemen affecting hundreds of thousands of children and their families as a result of the increase in fuel shortages. [AP](https://www.ap.com)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(30 September - 06 October 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen's Houthis unilaterally release hundreds of detainees

30 September 2019. The Houthi group in control of Yemen's capital released hundreds of prisoners on Monday in a unilateral move, which UN hoped would help revive a stalled peace process after months of failed efforts to push through a prisoner swap. The ICRC, which facilitated the release, said 290 Yemeni nationals were transferred from the Houthi-controlled capital Sanaa to their homes. Each side was meant to release around 7,000 prisoners. The U.N. Yemen envoy, Martin Griffiths, called on all parties to meet soon to discuss prisoner exchanges. [Reuters](#)

2. The Special Envoy for Yemen arrives in Sana'a

1 October 2019. The Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths arrived in Sana'a for a two-day visit. He commended once again unilateral release of detainees by Ansar Allah. [OESG](#)

3. The truth about the Houthis' initiative on prisoners

4 October 2019. Houthis released 250 civilian abductees after years of detention. The Association of Mothers of Abductees. The association's website published a statement by its president, Amat Al-Salam Al-Hajj, in which it confirmed that dozens of those released by the Houthis in what was considered an initiative under the Swedish Agreement, are civilians who were illegally abducted from their homes and workplaces, and during the abduction they were subjected to the most horrible forms of psychological and physical torture and were injured and many of them are affected by chronic diseases, difficulty moving and mental disorders. [Almasdaronline](#)

4. Saudi positive toward Yemeni rebels' truce

4 October 2019. S.Arabia says it views positively a truce called by Yemen's Houthi rebels, two weeks after the rebels said they were halting drone and missile attacks against the kingdom. [AP](#)

5. Arab Alliance: Two ballistic missiles landed in Sa'da after being fired by the Houthis

5 October 2019. The Saudi Press Agency quoted coalition spokesman Col. Turki al-Maliki as saying that the Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist militia fired two ballistic missiles from Sanaa province on Friday morning using civilian objects to launch. Al-Maliki added that the missiles "landed after being fired into Yemeni territory in Sa'da province."

Al-Maliki noted that "the Houthi militia continues to violate international humanitarian law by firing ballistic missiles and indiscriminately falling on civilians as well as communities that threaten the lives of hundreds of civilians." [Almasdaronline](#)

6. UAE coup attempt in Yemen's Socotra

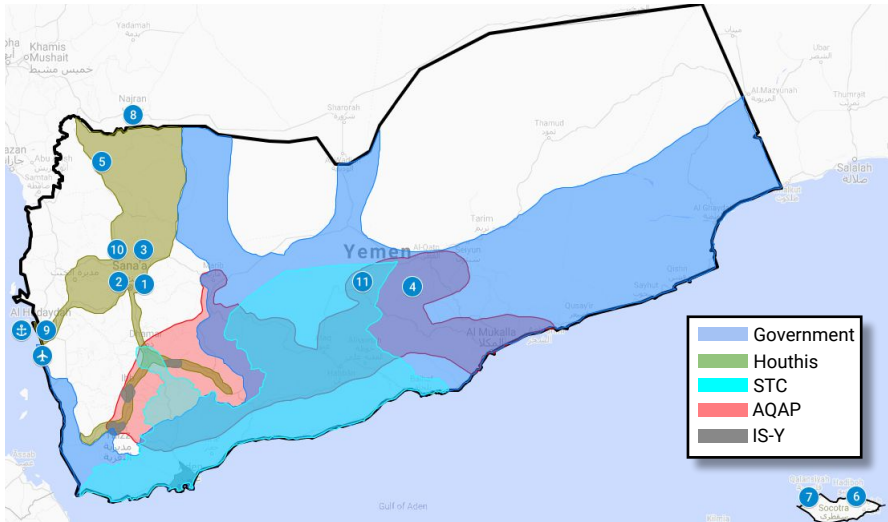
5 October 2019. Yemeni sources revealed on Friday that pro-UAE militias attempted a coup in the archipelago of Socotra, the largest island in the east of the country, following the dismissal of a security official. Concurrently, the Arab Coalition accused the Houthi group of firing two ballistic missiles, despite the declared truce with Saudi Arabia.

Sources close to the government told Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that on Friday, militias belonging to the so-called Southern Transitional Council carried out an attempt to take control over security headquarters in the governorate, including breaking into the headquarters of the rescue police and looting its contents. According to recent information, the local authority, led by Governor Ramzi Mahrous, had managed to control the situation and thwart what was termed a "coup attempt."

[Middle East Monitor](#)

7. Saudi mediation to persuade UAE-backed rebels to hand over headquarters in Socotra

5 October 2019. A source close to Socotra Governor Ramzi Mahrous told Al-Masdar Online that southern Transitional Council (STC) rebels have been given time to hand over a security post in the provincial capital. The source said that mediation by Saudi forces in the island led to a consensus to hand over the "Al-Shamel" security center where the rebels were stationed to the new security director on Sunday. [Almasdaronline](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ Internally, after Houthi declaration that they would release 350 of detainees ICRC declared 290 were transferred their homes. Then came the declaration from The Association of Mothers of Abductees reading: "many of them are affected by chronic diseases, difficulty moving and mental disorders".
- ❑ Externally, Saudi Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs declared on Friday that the Kingdom viewed unilateral halting of drone and missile attacks and cease-fire proposal by Houthis positively. The next day, spokesperson for the Coalition declared they landed two Houthi missiles.
- ❑ This gap between speech and actions continue to haunt Yemeni political landscape. All sides seem convinced for importance and need for peace. However, not every party share the same idea about what that peace would be like.
- ❑ A probable rapprochement between Houthis and KSA, if happens, will leave Houthis more free handed to continue their domination project from where they were left, increase their legitimacy as one able actor on the ground that have forced two regional forces to withdrawal and ceasefire.
- ❑ In this internationalized chaotic situation, where internal actors become increasingly belligerent and external actors contribute to the deterioration rather than solution of the problem, it is hard to be optimistic about an imminent peace.

8. Yemen's Houthis announce success of 2nd phase of Saudi operation

2 October 2019. The Houthis yesterday announced that a second phase of operation "Victory from God" took place on 3 September against Saudi forces in the kingdom's Najran province.

According to the Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree, who held a press conference in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, the movement and its allied troops successfully captured three Saudi military bases and seized considerable amounts of munitions. Saree also claimed that the movement took control over more than 150 square kilometres from the Saudi armed forces – which includes Saudi-sponsored Yemeni mercenaries. Additionally, up to 120 military vehicles were reportedly destroyed. The Houthi's media wing published scenes of a number of prisoners of war purportedly from the Saudi army, captured during the operation's second phase. [Middle East Monitor](#)

9. "Hoja" as the third chairman of the UN Monitoring Committee in "Hodeidah"

5 October 2019. Retired Indian general Abahijit Hoja has taken up his duties as chairman of the UN Monitoring Committee in the western Province of Hodeidah. Last month, the United Nations named General Hoja as the successor to Danish General Michael Lawlissgaard, the third official in charge of the UN's oversight of the Hodeidah ceasefire agreement.

Nearly 10 months after the Conclusion of the Swedish Agreement, the United Nations has made no progress in implementing any of the terms of the agreement, which has resulted in a halt to confrontations and prevented government forces from advancing towards the strategic province and port of Hodeidah in the west of the country. [Almasdaronline](#)

10. Houthis seek absolute power, not peace

5 October 2019. For Yemen's Houthis, peace is to recognize that they have absolute power. Through their vacuous announcements, they are essentially trying to make peace on their own terms. In other words, they want to have their cake and eat it too. However tempting it is to find a quick solution with the Houthi militias, there is more to peace with Saudi Arabia than a thin, conditional promise of "halting attacks," such as actually seeking peace and good neighborly relations. Any agreement with the Saudis will have to go beyond an assurance to stop threatening the Kingdom into a plan to demilitarize, hand over or destroy weapons under international agreements, and show a willingness to stop doing Iran's bidding. Short of this, there is nothing really in the Houthis' deal that represents anything but propaganda. The world must not fall for their tactics. [RepublicanYemen](#)

11. After Aramco: Will halting Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia end Yemen's war?

1 October 2019. A cessation of hostilities between Riyadh and the Houthis would bring about a reduction of violence, but not an end to the war. It does not in any way suggest that the Houthis will stop their attacks on other Yemenis. Unless it is conditional on a broader Yemeni peace process, Saudi reciprocity would only put the Houthis in a more favorable position. First, it would remove the pressure from the Saudi aerial campaign that has partly constrained their ability to capture more territory, furthering the Houthis' perceived sense of victory following the UAE's drawdown. Second, it would give the Houthis room to regroup, rearm, and redeploy their forces ahead of the next military escalation to tighten their control over Hodeida and extend their influence along the coast, as well as on other frontlines, including Marib. Third, detached from a broader national conflict resolution effort, the move might end up actually reducing the Houthis' incentives to engage in peace talks.

A coalition withdrawal or a mutual cessation of hostilities should be an integral part of a broader political settlement whose implementation is internationally monitored and includes clear national reconciliation and transitional justice measures. Without addressing the roots of the conflict in an inclusive manner and without an awareness of the growing imbalance of power in favor of militias and terrorist groups, there cannot be a credible resolution to the war; instead, there will likely be a further localization of conflict dynamics, exacerbating security issues for both Yemen and the Gulf. To look forward we must also look backward. [Middle East Institute](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(23 - 29 September 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

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KEY EVENTS

1. Houthi Spokesman: Saudi Brigades Destroyed, Scores of Mercs Captured in Najran Offensive

28 September 2019. "The operation resulted in the complete destruction of three military brigades of the enemy (Saudi) forces, seizure of large quantities of military equipment, including hundreds of vehicles and armored vehicles, capture of thousands of enemy forces, mostly traitors and the beguiled (Saudi-sponsored Yemeni militiamen loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi). Hundreds more were killed and wounded in the process as well," The spokesman for Houthi Armed Forces, Saree pointed out. [Al-Masirah](#)

2. Reports: Saudi Arabia agreed to a truce with Houthi in four Yemeni regions

28 September 2019. Saudi Arabia has agreed to a ceasefire with Yemen's Ansar Allah group (Houthi) in four regions of Yemen, according to Western media reports published on Friday. According to the Wall Street Journal, the agreement includes a ceasefire in the capital Sanaa, held by the Houthis. However, relevant sources have confirmed that the truce could possibly extend to cover other parts of the country, if sustainable. [Middle East Monitor](#)

3. Pentagon to send radar, Patriot missiles to bolster Saudi defenses

26 September 2019. The Pentagon said on Thursday it plans to send four radar systems, a battery of Patriot missiles and about 200 support personnel to bolster Saudi Arabia's defenses after the largest-ever attack on the kingdom's oil facilities this month.

The Pentagon's statement added details to the Pentagon's announcement on Friday about U.S. plans to deploy more forces to Saudi Arabia after the Sept. 14 attack on the world's biggest crude oil-processing facility, which Washington has blamed on Iran. [Reuters](#)

4. 10 civilians killed in coalition fighter attacks on a house in southern Yemen

24 September 2019. 10 civilians -most of them were children and women" were killed by Saudi - led coalition fighters on Tuesday, on a residential complex in Qa'taba district, west of al-Dhalea province in southern Yemen. Local sources said that paramedics rushed to the house after the first raid to help the injured, but the fighters launched a second raid, killing the three paramedics and destroying an ambulance. [Almasdaronline](#)

5. Five civilians killed in coalition air strikes in Amran province

23 September 2019. Al-Masirah TV quoted the Houthi group as saying that at early Monday morning five civilians were killed in airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition in Amran province. [Almasdaronline](#)

6. At UN, Yemen Foreign Minister demands end to 'Iranian-Houthi coup d'état'

29 September 2019. Condemning Iran as "the main sponsor of terrorism throughout the world," Mr. Al-Hadhrami said Tehran's "expansionist agenda" led it to wage proxy wars through militias like the Houthis "who have destroyed everything that was beautiful in my country: homes, places of worship, hospitals, and [they have] asphyxiated all forms of descent."

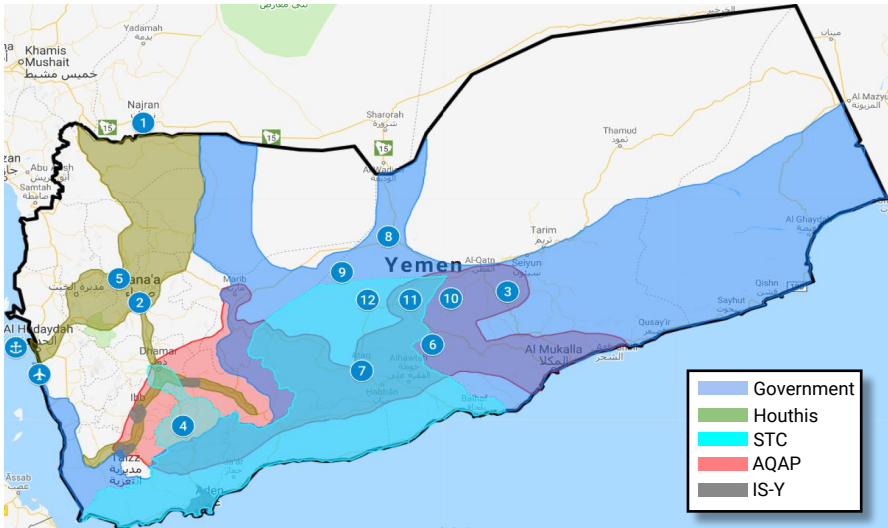
In that regard, he again thanked Saudi Arabia for providing some \$500 million to bolster the Yemen humanitarian response plan. But he warned that Saudi Arabia and the wider international community's efforts were being undermined not only by Iran-backed militias but by attacks he said were carried out by air assets belonging to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). [UN News](#)

7. Yemen government names new interim capital

27 September 2019. Since the Houthi expansion in the north of the country in 2014, the government of President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi has been expelled from two capital cities. Ataq is the capital of the oil producing governorate of Shabwa, which has on occasions been partially controlled by Al-Qaeda. "The government will temporarily run its work from Ataq until the liberation of Aden and Sanaa," Yemen's Minister of Transport, Saleh Al-Gabwani, said on Twitter. However, it remains to be seen how secure the government will be, in light of clashes with separatist forces in the city and other areas of the governorate in August. [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. UK, France Germany blame Iran for Saudi oil attacks

24 September 2019. The leaders of the United Kingdom, France and Germany released a statement reaffirming their support for the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which the U.S. exited, but telling Iran to stop breaching it and saying "there is no other plausible explanation" than that "Iran bears responsibility for this attack [on key oil facilities in Saudi Arabia]." The Iranian foreign minister pointed to claims of responsibility by Yemeni rebels and said: "If Iran were behind this attack, nothing would have been left of this refinery." [AP](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ The reality behind Houthi announcement that they destroyed three Saudi brigades while killing and capturing thousands is still to be clarified. Apparently, videos broadcasted by Houthi mouthpiece Almasirah belong to an operation against a training camp in August where they captured hostages from [Al Fatah Brigade in Kataf, Saadab](#). If there was an operation as claimed and if yes it ended with what results are still to be answered by Saudi government.
- ❑ [Nadwa Dawari](#), drawing attention to the fact that the appearance of the captured in Houthi broadcasts resemble more to Yemenis than Saudis, attributes reasons for Saudi silence to a [SAM report](#) highlighting their attracting Yemeni civilians, including children, and some former Yemeni military to fight in the southern border of Saudi Arabia without legal cover.
- ❑ It should be noted that Houthis are neither reliable in their reporting, nor they remain loyal to the agreements they have made. But it is of particular importance to understand why Houthis made such announcement after news that Saudis accepted ceasefire offer of the Houthis started circulating.
- ❑ Another event to affect Yemen issue was 74th Session of the UN General Assembly that started on 17 September. Three issues were of relevance.
 - a. The Yemeni FM's speech that mentioned the UAE alongside Houthis as spoilers of int'l efforts to end war in Yemen.
 - b. UK, Germany and France declaration pointing fingers to Iran as perpetrator of attack to oil facilities.
 - c. The joint communique by UNSC permanent members plus Germany, Kuwait and Sweden, reiterating UN led process as hope to end war in Yemen which amounted to nothing.
- ❑ The war in Yemen increasingly becomes more difficult to solve due to regional dynamics. Houthis' determination to stick to initial rhetoric to own attacks to the Saudi oil facilities despite risks of reprisal show the group's readiness to jeopardize already dire humanitarian situation for the good of Iran.

9. Prolonged conflict would make Yemen the poorest country in the world, UNDP study says

26 September 2019. Yemen will become the poorest country in the world if its conflict goes on through 2022, a new report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects. Since 2014, war has driven poverty in Yemen from 47 percent of the population to a projected 75 percent by the end of 2019. If fighting continues through 2022, Yemen will rank as the poorest country in the world, with 79 percent of the population living under the poverty line and 65 percent classified as extremely poor, the report, Assessing the Impact of War in Yemen on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), says. [UNDP](#)

10. Action on Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in Yemen

28 September 2019. In a resolution (A/HRC/39/L.21) on the Human rights situation in Yemen, adopted by a vote of 21 in favour, eight against and 18 abstentions, the Council decides to extend the mandate of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts for a further period of one year, renewable as authorized by the Human Rights Council; and requests the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts to submit a comprehensive written report to the High Commissioner for presentation at the forty-second session of the Human Rights Council, to be followed by an interactive dialogue. The Council requests the High Commissioner to... continue to provide substantive capacity-building, technical assistance and advice and legal support to enable the National Commission of Inquiry to complete its investigatory work, including to ensure that the National Commission investigates allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties in Yemen and in line with international standards; and to present to the Human Rights Council, at its fortieth session, an oral update on the situation of human rights in Yemen and the development and implementation of the present resolution, and to present to the Council at its forty-second session a written report on the situation of human rights, including violations and abuses committed since September 2014, as well as on the implementation of technical assistance as stipulated in the present resolution. [OHCHR](#)

11. Yemen: Joint communique signed at UN General Assembly

27 September 2019. A communique has been signed by the permanent five members of the UNSC plus Germany, Kuwait and Sweden underlining support for the UN-led Yemen peace process. Accordingly:

- The Group reiterates the need to increase the pace and scale of the humanitarian response. It expresses its concern at reports that the UN is increasingly running out of funding, forced to scale back or stop life-saving activities. The Group is clear that a political settlement is the only way to address the humanitarian crisis, but given the risk of starvation faced by millions, the Group calls on all donors to disburse promptly their pledges to the UN humanitarian response. The Group expresses appreciation for the disbursement of \$500 million by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the UN on 25 September. It also calls on the conflict parties to facilitate safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access in compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 2451. The Group calls on all parties to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, including ensuring the protection of civilians. [UK Government Press Release](#)

12. Defeating al-Qaeda's Shadow Government in Yemen: The Need for Local Governance Reform

25 September 2019. Recent U.S. attention in Yemen has focused largely on the war against the Iranian-backed Houthis, but another threat endures: al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. U.S. efforts to confront AQAP have historically relied on counterterrorism approaches such as air and drone strikes, direct-action raids, and partnerships with indigenous and coalition security forces. But the Yemeni branch of al-Qaeda has shown impressive resiliency by adopting a "hearts and minds" and local governing strategy to secure support, making it difficult to defeat. Its continuing strength requires a rethinking of the U.S. approach, one that confronts the terrorist group's political strategy as much as its military strategy.

In this Policy Focus, Daniel Green, a former defense fellow at The Washington Institute, draws on extensive research and interviews with Yemeni officials and civil society leaders to propose a new framework for defeating AQAP. His recommendations call for a U.S. strategy that extends beyond using strictly counterterrorism approaches and encompasses governance reform, capacity building, and enlisting locals in their own defense. Only through the active participation of communities in their security and governing can AQAP truly be defeated. [The Washington Institute](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(16 - 22 September 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

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KEY EVENTS

1. Who Was Behind the Saudi Oil Attack? What the Evidence Shows

16 September 2019. We analyzed the satellite photos that the Trump administration released, comparing them with independent sources when possible, to determine what they show and what they leave unclear:

- The sophistication of the attack far exceeds that shown in previous attacks by the Houthis, raising the likelihood of direct Iranian involvement.
- The satellite photos alone are not enough to support American claims that the strikes appeared to have come from the direction of Iran or Iraq.
- There's not enough evidence to show what kinds of weapons were used, but the precision of the strikes are consistent with a guided missile. Adam Simmons, a geospatial analyst at Midgard Raven, said the precision and consistency of the damage to the storage tanks was consistent with some type of guided munition, such as a missile. [The New York Times](#)

2. Attacks Expose Flaws in Saudi Arabia's Expensive Military

19 September 2019. For the past half-century, the United States has trained and supplied the Saudi military, selling the wealthy kingdom more than \$150 billion in dazzling high-technology weapons, including fighter jets and air defense systems. And yet, the kingdom could not protect a prized national asset — its oil installations — from a recent attack by low-flying cruise missiles and drones that caused the largest rise in crude oil prices in a single day. The advanced weapons the United States sold to the Saudis include the Patriot air-defense system, but it is deployed near important military installations, and not oil infrastructure.

2. Attacks Expose Flaws in Saudi Arabia's Expensive Military

For example, American officials said, the Saudi Air Force does not require the kind of sustained training, with mandatory monthly flying hours, that is required of United States Air Force and Navy pilots. During the early months of the Yemeni bombing campaign, that meant that many Saudi pilots were unable to fly low, and ended up dropping bombs from higher altitudes, causing more civilian casualties, according to one American Air Force pilot who has worked with the Saudi force. [The New York Times](#)

3. Al-Jubeir: If Iran is directly involved in the attacks, it should pay the price

21 September 2019. Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir said in an interview with Al Arabiya : "The investigating team is identifying where (the attacks) were launched from and consultations and coordination is ongoing between the Kingdom and its allies, like the United States and the UK, and its allies in the region, with regards to the options available and the measures that can be taken." The Kingdom is coordinating at the highest levels with Washington, he added. If it is proven that Iran is behind the attacks "then the international community should bear its responsibility and make Iran pay the price for that," said al-Jubeir. [Al-Arabiya](#)

3. Al-Jubeir: If Iran is directly involved in the attacks, it should pay the price

4. United States sending troops to bolster Saudi defenses after attack

21 September 2019. "In response to the kingdom's request, the president has approved the deployment of U.S. forces, which will be defensive in nature and primarily focused on air and missile defense," U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said at a news briefing. "We will also work to accelerate the delivery of military equipment to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to enhance their ability to defend themselves. [Almasdaronline](#)

4. United States sending troops to bolster Saudi defenses after attack

5. Yemen [Houthis] Launches Peace Initiative with Saudi-led Aggression

21 September 2019. In a speech marking the fifth anniversary of the September 21st revolution [coup d'état], President Mahdi Al-Mashat [Houthi] launched a peace initiative in which he called on all parties from all sides of the war to engage seriously in real and serious negotiations leading to comprehensive national reconciliation that does not exclude any party to inject Yemeni blood. He declared to stop targeting KSA by drones, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles, "and we await a response." [Al-Masirah](#)

5. Yemen [Houthis] Launches Peace Initiative with Saudi-led Aggression

6. Statement by Special Envoy for Yemen on The Ansar Allah Announcement

21 September 2019. The Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, welcomes the initiative announced by Ansar Allah on 20 September, on the cessation of hostile military acts against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He also welcomes the expression of further openness towards the implementation of the Prisoner Exchange Agreement and the desire for a political solution to end the conflict. [OSESgy](#)

6. Statement by Special Envoy for Yemen on The Ansar Allah Announcement

7. Saudi Aggression During Past Hours Confirms Determination to Waste President's Initiative

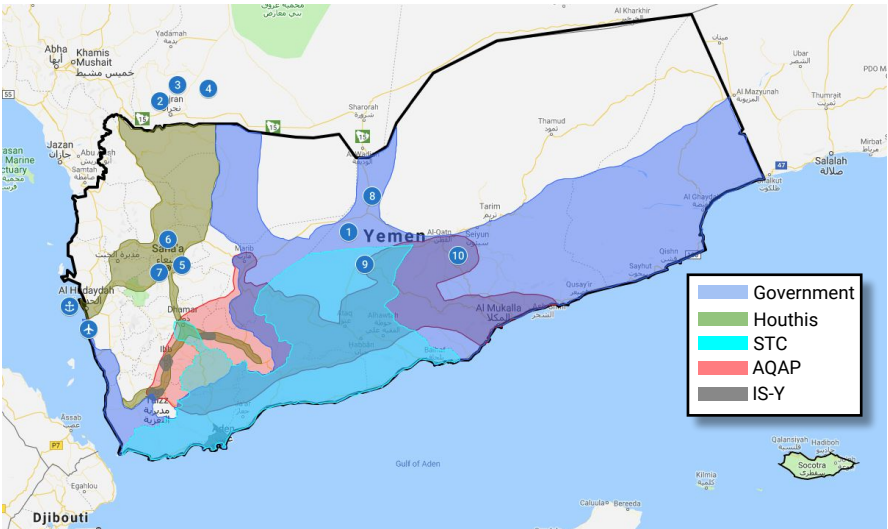
22 September 2019. The number of raids launched by the US-Saudi aerial aggression against Yemen in a number of provinces over the past 12 hours has exceeded 39, Yemeni [Houthi] Armed Forces spokesman Brigadier Yahya Sare'e tweeted on Saturday. These raids came after [Houthi] President Mahdi al-Mashat's initiative to halt strikes on Saudi Arabia in return for an end to the US-Saudi attacks on Yemen, which confirms the unwillingness of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to respond to this initiative. [Al-Masirah](#)

7. Saudi Aggression During Past Hours Confirms Determination to Waste President's Initiative

8. Trump says no plans to meet Iranian officials at UN General Assembly

22 September 2019. US President Donald Trump told reporters on Sunday that he has no plans to meet with Iranian officials at the UNGA. His statement came after Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday that Tehran would present to the UN a regional cooperation plan for peace. [Al-Arabiya](#)

8. Trump says no plans to meet Iranian officials at UN General Assembly



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ *Repercussions of the attacks on Saudi oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais on September 14 still keep global agenda busy. The attacks that caused highest rise in crude oil prices in one day and took down 5 percent of global production still continues to be a matter of dispute. The fact that Houthis do not possess required sophisticated systems with mentioned ranges and that the satellite images presented by the US has rendered the debate into a blame game. Still the smoking gun evidence has not been found.*
- ❑ *Most notable reaction came from the Editorial Board of the New York Times. Emphasizing President Trump's revocation of Iran Nuclear Deal without suggesting alternatives and his policies that estranged US allies and his unforeseeable moves reversing decades-old tenets of US foreign policy, the Board suggests President Trump not to haste for military action. But it recommends to "consult with Congress, with major industrial nations that depend on Middle Eastern oil and with military and intelligence analysts outside his immediate circle."*
- ❑ *A major development of the week is Houthi proposal to cease aerial assaults between their and Saudi forces. Although denied by Houthi leadership, a [WSJ](#) article suggested the Houthis told in private to Saudi officials that they did not carry out the operation and while claiming responsibility as demanded by Iran they were not aware of the gravity of the situation. Whether the latter is true or not, these are indications that Houthis want to evade consequences of the attack and do not want to be lost within regional rift between Iran and its competitors.*

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OPINION

9. The Secret of Yemen's War? We Can End It

13 September 2019. This is a conflict the international community can resolve. And because we can, we must. The details of this settlement are in plain sight. Seven elements will necessarily underpin any agreement to end the war.

- First, the monopoly on force must be returned to the government of Yemen.
- Second, the government must be more than a coalition. It must be an inclusive partnership among the political parties that now take different sides.
- Third, the government must ensure that its country will not be used for attacks on neighbors or even those beyond.
- Fourth, the government will adopt and uphold its historic responsibility of ensuring the safety of the trade that has for millenniums depended on the security of its seas.
- Fifth, the people of Yemen will eliminate and outlaw from its territory the terrorist threat that even now we see.
- Sixth, Yemen's neighbors will guarantee the prosperity and stability of its population through trade and the generosity that will remove the scars of this war.
- And finally, it will be the people of Yemen and their leaders who decide on the future of the state. [The New York Times](#)

10. 'Locked and Loaded,' but for What?

16 September 2019. But then the president has left himself few other sources of credible advice. He has regularly dismissed the reporting of intelligence agencies; he fired his third national security adviser, John Bolton, and has not yet named another; his defense secretary, Mark Esper, has been in office just over a month; he has effectively alienated major allies — though some, including Britain and Germany, condemned Saturday's attacks; he has all but exhausted options for more financial pressure on Iran; and his support for the Saudi bombing war in Yemen has been assailed even by Republicans lawmakers.

Left to his own devices, Mr. Trump has generally preferred to avoid conflict. After Iran shot down an American drone in June, he rejected Mr. Bolton's arguments for a retaliatory military strike. On Monday, he sounded the same reluctance, noting that diplomacy is "never exhausted until the final 12 seconds."

That is sensible, and Mr. Trump should indeed explore every possibility of a diplomatic resolution before ordering military action, or having Saudi Arabia retaliate. The United States is now facing a serious crisis for which there was no real reason other than Mr. Trump's compulsion to undo President Barack Obama's legacy by abandoning a nuclear deal that had broad international support.

The upshot is that Iran has now apparently raised the ante, challenging the White House with a brazen attack on an ally and one of the world's most important oil producers. The time has come for Mr. Trump to consult with Congress, with major industrial nations that depend on Middle Eastern oil and with military and intelligence analysts outside his immediate circle. [The New York Times](#)

KEY EVENTS

1. Houthis drone attack targets the Abqaiq and Khurais refineries affiliated to Aramco

14 September 2019. Air Force of the Yemeni Army (Houthis) and Popular Committees, Saturday morning carried out a large-scale operation with 10 drones, targeting Abqaiq and Khurais refineries east of Saudi Arabia. The operation is called the "Second Deterrent Balance Operation". The scale of the operation is obviously very large. Images of massive fires and heavy smoke at Aramco's Abqaiq and Khurais oil fields have spread on social media, prompting Saudi authorities to acknowledge the operations. [Almasirah](#)

2. Saudi oil production cut by 50 percent after attacks: Energy minister

15 September 2019. The latest attacks on Saudi Aramco oil facilities resulted in the halt of an estimated 5.7 million barrels of crude oil supplies, or about 50 percent of Saudi Aramco's production, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said on Saturday. "Previous attacks were not viewed as serious by the market but it is hard to ignore today's attack on such key infrastructure at Abqaiq," Joe McMonigle, a senior energy analyst at US-based Hedgeye Risk Management, told Al Arabiya English. [Alarabiya](#)

3. Two Major Saudi Oil Installations Hit by Drone Strike, and U.S. Blames Iran

14 September 2019. The attacks immediately escalated tensions in the Persian Gulf amid a standoff between the United States and Iran, even as key questions remained unanswered — where the drones were launched from, and how the Houthis managed to hit facilities deep in Saudi territory, some 500 miles from Yemeni soil. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused Iran of being behind what he called "an unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply" and asserted that there was "no evidence the attacks came from Yemen." He did not, however, specify an alternative launch site, and the Saudis themselves refrained from pointing the finger directly at Iran.

President Trump condemned the attack in a phone call with Prince Mohammed bin Salman and offered support for "Saudi Arabia's self defense," the White House said in a statement, adding that the country "remains committed to ensuring global oil markets are stable and well supplied." [The New York Times](#)

4. Drone strike on Saudi Arabia oil facilities: UK statement

14 September 2019. The UK condemns the reckless drone attack on Aramco oil facilities in Saudi Arabia this morning, for which the Houthis have claimed responsibility. Threatening civilian areas and commercial infrastructure is dangerous, provocative and completely unacceptable. This escalation also undermines UN-led efforts to end the conflict in Yemen. We call upon the Houthis to immediately cease such attacks. The UK remains committed to supporting the security of Saudi Arabia and to achieving a political solution to the devastating conflict in Yemen.' [GOV.UK](#)

5. Iraq denies its territory was used to launch attack on Saudi oil facilities

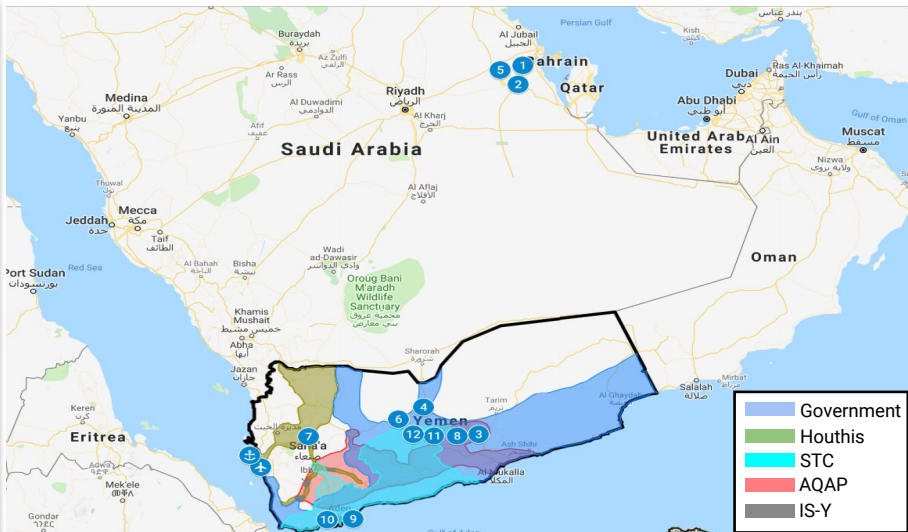
15 September 2019. Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi on Sunday denied reports Iraqi territory "was used for drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities." [Al-Arabiyya](#)

6. Trump tells Saudi Crown Prince US ready to help protect Kingdom's security

14 September 2019. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman received a phone call from US President Donald Trump following the drone attacks on oil production facilities in the Kingdom. During the phone call on Saturday, Trump also affirmed Washington's readiness to cooperate with the Kingdom to support its security and stability, according to a statement on the Saudi Press Agency. The US President stressed the negative impact of the terrorist attacks that targeted two Aramco facilities on the American and global economy. [Alarabiya](#)

7. WHO: Funding shortages threaten lives of millions of Yemen children

13 September 2019. The World Health Organisation (WHO) warned yesterday that a lack of funding is threatening the lives of millions of children in Yemen. "Funding shortfalls prevent patients from getting free or subsidised treatment and put their lives at risk," the organisation's office in Yemen said on Twitter. WHO stressed the need to meet pledges given in this regard so as to save the lives of Yemeni people. UN agencies working in Yemen have already complained of a lack of funding limiting their ability to carry out many humanitarian and health programmes in the country. [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ If we need to disregard who actually did it, latest attacks on Saudi oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais resulting in damage in 17 key infrastructure testifies to the fact that the perpetrator has sound intel on where it will hurt the most, good knowledge of the oil facility and exact coordinates of each piece of infrastructure (NGL desalination spheroids and stabilization towers) within the facilities. Satellite pictures released by US government shows exactitude of the hits with penetration from same angle to each element. [Expert views](#) attract attention to the fact that the type of attack to different pieces of infrastructure shows divergence in terms of explosive charge as use of explosives in the spheroids would have caused much greater damage. Accordingly, the perpetrators have seemingly wanted to minimize collateral damage.
- ❑ President Trump delivered assurances in terms of supplying additional petroleum from strategic reserves and that the US was locked and loaded, depending on verification and KSA pronunciation of the culprit.
- ❑ There is need to wait for confirmation and final report on the details of the attack. However, clearly the war in Yemen again became a proxy in the stand-off between the US and Iran. Following US mediation efforts with Houthis last week, the attacks will likely work as game changer. On the one hand, the attacks will force KSA to take a clear stance against Iran. On the other hand they will work as an Iranian challenge to Trump's maximum pressure efforts. Benefitting from the event, Trump will not likely authorize military action against Iran as it is contrary to his "America First" policy and promise of prosperity. However, he seems willing to increase pressure, mobilize the KSA in line with his maximum pressure policy and benefit from the crisis in the run-up to presidential elections.

8. Could a new Sudan withdraw from the Saudi-led coalition?

13 September 2019. Sudanese opposition figures have called on their country's transitional government to bring back Sudanese soldiers fighting for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, including child soldiers and mercenaries, according to a report on Tuesday. At any time in the past four and a half years, as many as 14,000 Sudanese militiamen were fighting in Yemen with local militia aligned with the Saudis, according to an Al Jazeera report. Many of these, the report adds, were children and mercenaries.

There are "between 8,000 and 14,000 Sudanese paramilitary forces are fighting in Yemen", Noha Aboueldahab, from Brookings Doha Centre, told Al Jazeera. "Sudanese mercenaries, many of them children from Darfur, have been lured into fighting on the ground in Yemen in exchange for financial compensation." In December, The New York Times reported that Riyadh offered impoverished Sudanese families up to \$10,000 to send their children to fight in Yemen. [The New Arab](#)

9. UN experts: UAE forces sexually abuse inmates in Yemen

12 September 2019. The chairman of a UN body of experts on Yemen has confirmed the involvement of UAE forces in the sexual abuse of detainees held in secret prisons in the country's south. In a television interview with Al Jazeera, Kamel Jandoubi exposed the detention and use of girls and women held as hostages in the Yemen war.

Jandoubi said the UN's Group of Regional and International Eminent Experts on Yemen documented 37 cases of sexual violence committed by the UAE-backed security belt and Emirati personnel.

"We have 600 testimonies and huge documents and reports of international institutions to indicate violations in Yemen," he explained. [Middle East Monitor](#)

10. A Fractious Unity: Conflict Dynamics in Yemen's South

13 September 2019. Assuming that the STC is simply a UAE client that will relinquish its cause if its funding is severed is a fundamental misconception that could lead to further failed policies in dealing with the South. Even if the UAE withdraws support, Southerners' desire for autonomy is unlikely to disappear. Southerners have long-held grievances. Resolving the current Southern conflict requires the Hadi government and STC leadership to find another way forward, with regional and international powers backing a road map for de-escalation that would look at federalism as highlighted in Yemen's National Dialogue process. The U.N. special envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, needs to incorporate Southern voices into his current peacemaking efforts. Such mediation among the conflict's actors are unlikely to build trust immediately, but finding a middle ground and initiating a more inclusive process would be a good place to start. [The Arab Gulf States Initiative in Washington](#)

11. Yemeni medics: 135 bodies found after Saudi-led airstrike

11 September 2019. Yemeni medics say the final death toll from Saudi-led coalition airstrikes last week on a detention center operated by the Houthi rebels has reached 135 people. The attack, which wounded 40 others, was one of the deadliest in more than four years of war in Yemen. The targeted buildings were part of a local community college before the Iran-backed Houthi rebels converted it to a detention center, one of dozens in areas they control. [AP](#)

12. Opinion: The Arab Coalition Must Put Aside Differences, Rethink Strategy on Yemen

1 September 2019. The United States has an important role to play in bringing the Coalition partners to a unified position. First, it should reconsider the decision to engage directly with the Houthis, which had repeatedly attacked Saudi civilians. Rather, the Houthis should be designated as a terrorist organization and treated accordingly, as part of the maximum pressure campaign against Iran, which could be the pinnacle of the Trump administration foreign policy success in the region. Second, US should call on UAE to return and remain in Yemen, and to play a bigger role in liberating the occupied areas from Houthis and Al Qaeda, following the above-described model. Third, the Saudis should reconsider their close relationship with Hadi in light of the evidence of his relationship with Qatar, which runs counter to the nature of the agreement between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. At the very least, Hadi should be held accountable for his relationship with MB, and the Coalition should be supplemented with other forces. [Small Wars Journal](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(16 - 22 September 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

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KEY EVENTS

1. Who Was Behind the Saudi Oil Attack? What the Evidence Shows

16 September 2019. We analyzed the satellite photos that the Trump administration released, comparing them with independent sources when possible, to determine what they show and what they leave unclear:

- The sophistication of the attack far exceeds that shown in previous attacks by the Houthis, raising the likelihood of direct Iranian involvement.
- The satellite photos alone are not enough to support American claims that the strikes appeared to have come from the direction of Iran or Iraq.
- There's not enough evidence to show what kinds of weapons were used, but the precision of the strikes are consistent with a guided missile. Adam Simmons, a geospatial analyst at Midgard Raven, said the precision and consistency of the damage to the storage tanks was consistent with some type of guided munition, such as a missile. [The New York Times](#)

2. Attacks Expose Flaws in Saudi Arabia's Expensive Military

19 September 2019. For the past half-century, the United States has trained and supplied the Saudi military, selling the wealthy kingdom more than \$150 billion in dazzling high-technology weapons, including fighter jets and air defense systems. And yet, the kingdom could not protect a prized national asset — its oil installations — from a recent attack by low-flying cruise missiles and drones that caused the largest rise in crude oil prices in a single day. The advanced weapons the United States sold to the Saudis include the Patriot air-defense system, but it is deployed near important military installations, and not oil infrastructure.

2. Attacks Expose Flaws in Saudi Arabia's Expensive Military

For example, American officials said, the Saudi Air Force does not require the kind of sustained training, with mandatory monthly flying hours, that is required of United States Air Force and Navy pilots. During the early months of the Yemeni bombing campaign, that meant that many Saudi pilots were unable to fly low, and ended up dropping bombs from higher altitudes, causing more civilian casualties, according to one American Air Force pilot who has worked with the Saudi force. [The New York Times](#)

3. Al-Jubeir: If Iran is directly involved in the attacks, it should pay the price

21 September 2019. Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir said in an interview with Al Arabiya : "The investigating team is identifying where (the attacks) were launched from and consultations and coordination is ongoing between the Kingdom and its allies, like the United States and the UK, and its allies in the region, with regards to the options available and the measures that can be taken." The Kingdom is coordinating at the highest levels with Washington, he added. If it is proven that Iran is behind the attacks "then the international community should bear its responsibility and make Iran pay the price for that," said al-Jubeir. [Al-Arabiya](#)

3. Al-Jubeir: If Iran is directly involved in the attacks, it should pay the price

4. United States sending troops to bolster Saudi defenses after attack

21 September 2019. "In response to the kingdom's request, the president has approved the deployment of U.S. forces, which will be defensive in nature and primarily focused on air and missile defense," U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said at a news briefing. "We will also work to accelerate the delivery of military equipment to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to enhance their ability to defend themselves. [Almasdaronline](#)

4. United States sending troops to bolster Saudi defenses after attack

5. Yemen [Houthis] Launches Peace Initiative with Saudi-led Aggression

21 September 2019. In a speech marking the fifth anniversary of the September 21st revolution [coup d'état], President Mahdi Al-Mashat [Houthi] launched a peace initiative in which he called on all parties from all sides of the war to engage seriously in real and serious negotiations leading to comprehensive national reconciliation that does not exclude any party to inject Yemeni blood. He declared to stop targeting KSA by drones, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles, "and we await a response." [Al-Masirah](#)

5. Yemen [Houthis] Launches Peace Initiative with Saudi-led Aggression

6. Statement by Special Envoy for Yemen on The Ansar Allah Announcement

21 September 2019. The Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, welcomes the initiative announced by Ansar Allah on 20 September, on the cessation of hostile military acts against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He also welcomes the expression of further openness towards the implementation of the Prisoner Exchange Agreement and the desire for a political solution to end the conflict. [OSESgy](#)

6. Statement by Special Envoy for Yemen on The Ansar Allah Announcement

7. Saudi Aggression During Past Hours Confirms Determination to Waste President's Initiative

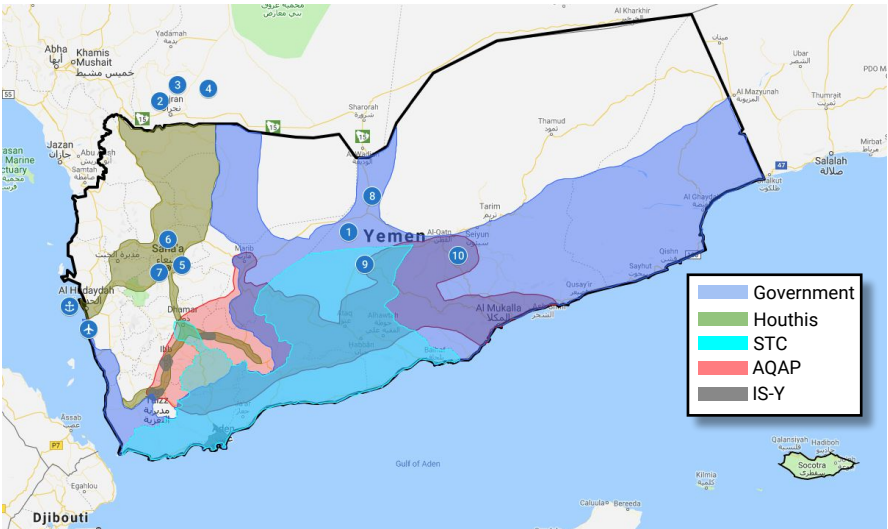
22 September 2019. The number of raids launched by the US-Saudi aerial aggression against Yemen in a number of provinces over the past 12 hours has exceeded 39, Yemeni [Houthi] Armed Forces spokesman Brigadier Yahya Sare'e tweeted on Saturday. These raids came after [Houthi] President Mahdi al-Mashat's initiative to halt strikes on Saudi Arabia in return for an end to the US-Saudi attacks on Yemen, which confirms the unwillingness of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to respond to this initiative. [Al-Masirah](#)

7. Saudi Aggression During Past Hours Confirms Determination to Waste President's Initiative

8. Trump says no plans to meet Iranian officials at UN General Assembly

22 September 2019. US President Donald Trump told reporters on Sunday that he has no plans to meet with Iranian officials at the UNGA. His statement came after Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday that Tehran would present to the UN a regional cooperation plan for peace. [Al-Arabiya](#)

8. Trump says no plans to meet Iranian officials at UN General Assembly



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ *Repercussions of the attacks on Saudi oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais on September 14 still keep global agenda busy. The attacks that caused highest rise in crude oil prices in one day and took down 5 percent of global production still continues to be a matter of dispute. The fact that Houthis do not possess required sophisticated systems with mentioned ranges and that the satellite images presented by the US has rendered the debate into a blame game. Still the smoking gun evidence has not been found.*
- ❑ *Most notable reaction came from the Editorial Board of the New York Times. Emphasizing President Trump's revocation of Iran Nuclear Deal without suggesting alternatives and his policies that estranged US allies and his unforeseeable moves reversing decades-old tenets of US foreign policy, the Board suggests President Trump not to haste for military action. But it recommends to "consult with Congress, with major industrial nations that depend on Middle Eastern oil and with military and intelligence analysts outside his immediate circle."*
- ❑ *A major development of the week is Houthi proposal to cease aerial assaults between their and Saudi forces. Although denied by Houthi leadership, a [WSJ](#) article suggested the Houthis told in private to Saudi officials that they did not carry out the operation and while claiming responsibility as demanded by Iran they were not aware of the gravity of the situation. Whether the latter is true or not, these are indications that Houthis want to evade consequences of the attack and do not want to be lost within regional rift between Iran and its competitors.*

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OPINION

9. The Secret of Yemen's War? We Can End It

13 September 2019. This is a conflict the international community can resolve. And because we can, we must. The details of this settlement are in plain sight. Seven elements will necessarily underpin any agreement to end the war.

- First, the monopoly on force must be returned to the government of Yemen.
- Second, the government must be more than a coalition. It must be an inclusive partnership among the political parties that now take different sides.
- Third, the government must ensure that its country will not be used for attacks on neighbors or even those beyond.
- Fourth, the government will adopt and uphold its historic responsibility of ensuring the safety of the trade that has for millenniums depended on the security of its seas.
- Fifth, the people of Yemen will eliminate and outlaw from its territory the terrorist threat that even now we see.
- Sixth, Yemen's neighbors will guarantee the prosperity and stability of its population through trade and the generosity that will remove the scars of this war.
- And finally, it will be the people of Yemen and their leaders who decide on the future of the state. [The New York Times](#)

10. 'Locked and Loaded,' but for What?

16 September 2019. But then the president has left himself few other sources of credible advice. He has regularly dismissed the reporting of intelligence agencies; he fired his third national security adviser, John Bolton, and has not yet named another; his defense secretary, Mark Esper, has been in office just over a month; he has effectively alienated major allies — though some, including Britain and Germany, condemned Saturday's attacks; he has all but exhausted options for more financial pressure on Iran; and his support for the Saudi bombing war in Yemen has been assailed even by Republicans lawmakers.

Left to his own devices, Mr. Trump has generally preferred to avoid conflict. After Iran shot down an American drone in June, he rejected Mr. Bolton's arguments for a retaliatory military strike. On Monday, he sounded the same reluctance, noting that diplomacy is "never exhausted until the final 12 seconds."

That is sensible, and Mr. Trump should indeed explore every possibility of a diplomatic resolution before ordering military action, or having Saudi Arabia retaliate. The United States is now facing a serious crisis for which there was no real reason other than Mr. Trump's compulsion to undo President Barack Obama's legacy by abandoning a nuclear deal that had broad international support.

The upshot is that Iran has now apparently raised the ante, challenging the White House with a brazen attack on an ally and one of the world's most important oil producers. The time has come for Mr. Trump to consult with Congress, with major industrial nations that depend on Middle Eastern oil and with military and intelligence analysts outside his immediate circle. [The New York Times](#)

KEY EVENTS

1. Saudi Arabia, UAE urge Yemen government and separatists to halt fighting

8 September 2019. A joint statement by the two Gulf states, leaders of an Arab coalition that is battling Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis, called on the UAE-backed separatists and the Saudi-backed government to prepare for "constructive dialogue" to end the crisis between the two nominal allies. Talks to end the power struggle, in the Red Sea city of Jeddah, reached a dead-end and both sides were gathering troops to prepare for further battle, officials said on Friday, an indication that a rift between Saudi Arabia and ally UAE had deepened. [Reuters](#)

2. Arrival of more UAE mercenaries on Yemen's Socotra island

7 September 2019. Dozens of Indian and Bangladeshi nationals arrived on an Emirati plane, the sources said, and are being accommodated at the headquarters of the UAE forces on the island. Local sources claim this is not the first time the UAE has deployed foreign nationalities in the region. According to the Socotra Post, the locals fear the UAE intends to carry out operations against Yemeni government forces or the islanders themselves. It has been said that the foreign soldiers and officials have been treating the island as if it belongs to the UAE rather than to Yemen, even raising Emirati flags over government buildings.

[Middle East Monitor](#)

3. Officials :Talks to end violent south Yemen power struggle stall

6 September 2019. Talks to end a violent power struggle in south Yemen have stalled and both sides appear to be preparing to resume fighting, officials said on Friday, suggesting more turmoil lies ahead on a new battlefield that risks further fragmenting Yemen. Saudi Arabia called on the separatists, who seek to revive the former South Yemen republic, to cede control of Aden and voiced its support for President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's government on Thursday, threatening "to react decisively".

Two Yemeni officials said the Saudi statement came after the talks, in the Red Sea city of Jeddah, reached a dead-end and both sides were gathering troops to prepare for further battle.

Leaders of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), backed by Abu Dhabi, rejected the inclusion of their forces under the authority of the Saudi-backed government, they said. "The situation is headed towards war, so be ready people of the south... Talks have failed, war is declared," the STC's Security Belt forces said in a twitter post early on Friday.

The talks also stalled over the separatists' role in the government, after the separatists asked for the vice-president position along with two major ministries. Yemen's current vice-president is Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar, a politically powerful army general allied with Hadi. [Almasdaronline](#)

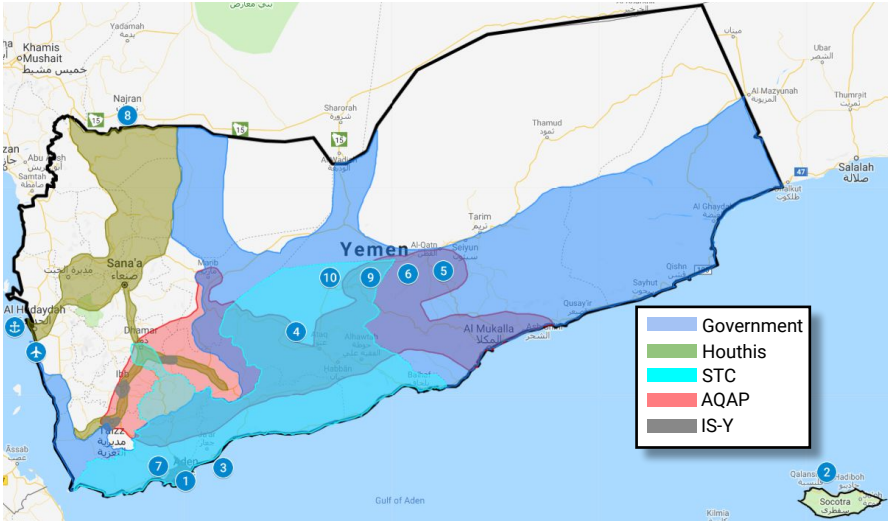
4. Islah militias move towards Yemen's south as UAE sends more troops

5 September 2019. Dozens of armoured vehicles belonging to Islah Party militants were reported to have moved from Marib province to Shabwa yesterday according to sources.

It has also been reported that large Saudi weapons systems also belonging to Islah fighters have been heading towards the province which is contested between the forces of the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) and the Saudi-backed Yemeni government.

This comes as Saudi Arabia boosted its troops and armoured vehicles in the same province over the weekend, raising the risk of clashes between the Gulf neighbours.

Reports also claim that the UAE has sent more troops to the port city of Aden today. At least 70 UAE combat vehicles were seen arriving on a vessel and deployed to a camp of STC loyalists, the Security Belt Forces. [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- ❑ *Houthis is the most benefited party from the latest developments. The group that historically been able to prove its efficiency in face of Saudi forces has consolidated its gains by political and military technological advances. Since last year, Houthis have been able to explode image of Saudi military, a main recipient of most advanced US developed systems like Patriots, apache helicopters and Abrahams tanks, to successfully hit critical Saudi assets by missiles and drones, to efficiently push away the UAE from being a threat to itself, to establish links and open embassy in Russia, to down US drones on Yemeni skies and finally to sit with US on negotiation table.*
- ❑ *This final confrontation between STC and GovY comes at this critical juncture. The STC may have achieved a big leap towards attaining its dreamed independent South. But they have equally made sure that Houthis will not retreat even one inch from areas under its control after this point.*
- ❑ *The situation in Yemen is becoming increasingly fragile. Behind many joint statements by the Coalition, the competition in interests and different calculations for a post-conflict Yemen exhibit themselves in preparation of both government and STC for a final confrontation to settle scores. Behind venter of a united Coalition, both UAE and KSA work towards their planned Yemen, divided or united.*

5. Cracks in Saudi-UAE coalition risk new war in Yemen

6 September 2019. Two senior Yemeni officials told AP that KSA forced Hadi's government to accept a U.N.-brokered truce that halted the UAE-backed militias' offensive to retake Hodeida, from the Houthis. KSA feared the Red Sea port would be absorbed into the Emirates' expanding zone of control along with other key southern ports it holds, the officials said.

Fighting between their allies in southern Yemen has opened a gaping wound in KSA-UAE coalition against the country's rebels. If they can't fix it, it threatens to tear the country apart into even smaller warring pieces. Both sides are building for renewed clashes.

Hadi's security agencies warned in an internal report obtained by the AP that as early as April they tracked STC preparations to launch a coup. The report said militia leaders met with Emirati officials over the plans. Both sides are building for renewed clashes.

The Emiratis have sent tanks, rockets and ammunition to militias in Aden, and Saudi Arabia is resupplying Hadi's forces, several of the Yemeni officials said. A new spiral of violence could carve the south into enclaves, with pro-UAE forces controlling Aden and neighboring provinces, and Hadis' camp holding the rest. The Saudi leadership seems divided — stunned at the Emiratis' moves but reluctant to break with its ally for an overt battle for the south. [AP](#)

6. Griffiths: We support Jeddah talks between Yemeni govt. and STC

5 September 2019. I am very supportive of the talks being held in Jeddah under the auspices of KSA. I encourage the GoY and STC to seize this opportunity and settle their differences through peaceful means. [@OSE_Yemen](#)

7. Yemen's government starts indirect talks with southern separatists in Saudi Arabia

4 September 2019. "Indirect talks have started between the government and the STC via the Saudi side; the situation is very difficult and complicated but we hope to achieve some progress," a senior Yemeni official, who declined to be named, told Reuters. [Reuters](#)

8. Ballistic Friday, Bader Halts Najran Airport and Qasem Targets Mercenaries Gatherings

7 September 2019. The Rocketry Force of the Army [Houthis] and Popular Committees launched a number of successful offensives on Saudi targets and military sites in Najran and Al-Baidha'a. Armed Forces Spokesman, Yahya Sare'e, said that Rocketry Force accurately targeted drones' hangers in Najran Airport with a ballistic missile, Bader 1, halting all air traffic. [Almasirah](#)

9. US in talks with Houthis to end Yemen war

6 September 2019. During his visit to the Prince Sultan Air Base near the Saudi city of Al-Kharj, the Assistant Secretary of Near Eastern Affairs, David Schenker told reporters the US is holding talks "to the extent possible with the Houthis to try and find a mutually acceptable negotiated solution to the conflict". He gave no further details. Senior Houthi official Hamid Assem told AFP that the US "talking to us is a great victory for us and proves that we are right." He did, however, refuse to confirm or deny the US official's statement. [Middle East Monitor](#)

10. US strategy in talks with Houthis

30 August 2019. U.S. decision to engage the Houthis is likely about negotiating a longterm truce between KSA and Houthis. Once a truce between Houthis and KSA has been negotiated - which would likely require Houthis to refrain from launching cross-border attacks into KSA (missiles & drones), & KSA ending its bombing campaigns, intra-Yemen talks and between Hadi and Houthis will likely take place. In parallel with the US-Houthi talks, US will likely request the UAE to cut off all financial support for militias fighting under the STC umbrella. KSA will likely continue to support Hadi & UAE cannot support STC while at odds with US & KSA. [Twitter](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(26 August - 01 September 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Saudi-led coalition says strikes Houthi arms site in Yemen, group says prison hit

1 September 2019. A Saudi-led military coalition said in a statement carried on Saudi state television that it destroyed a site storing drones and missiles in Dhamar. The Houthi's Al Masirah TV said the attack targeted a prison and 40 bodies had been pulled from the rubble. Residents told Reuters there had been six air strikes and that a complex in the city being used as a detention center had been hit. [Reuters](#)

2. Sweden's FM to tour Mideast to relaunch Yemen talks

30 August 2019. Sweden's foreign minister said Friday she was heading to the Middle East in an attempt to relaunch talks between Yemen's internationally recognized government and the country's Iran-backed Houthi rebels. Margot Wallstrom told Swedish Radio that she wants to "speak with as many people as possible," adding she will visit Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Jordan, and planned to meet officials from the United Nations. Wallstrom admitted a deal signed in December was "fragile."

"I believe we have a great deal of trust with the parties and we believe that it is our responsibility to try to ensure that this agreement is implemented," she said. [AP](#)

3. Minister of Defence: Joint campaign in Aden, Abyan and Shabwa in coordination with the Leadership of the Arab Coalition Forces

1 September 2019. Al-Meqdishi explained that the joint campaign carried out by the National Army in the provinces of Shabwa, Abyan and Aden is being conducted in full coordination with the Joint Forces Command of the Saudi-led Coalition for the Support of Legitimacy, in accordance with the directives of President Hadi, commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

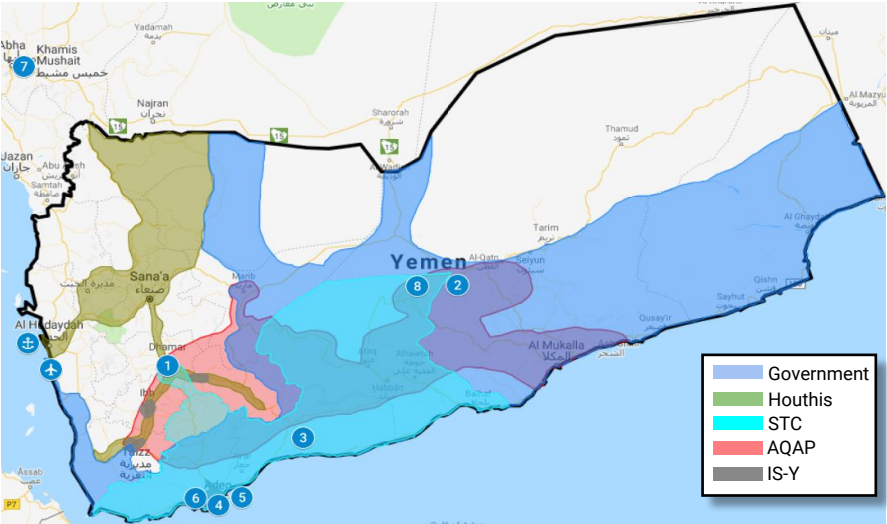
UAE warplanes targeted national army forces on the outskirts of Aden and Abyan province, which the Yemeni government considered a blatant aggression and a violation of sovereignty, reiterating its accusation that the United Arab Emirates supported and financed the coup d'état of southern transitional militias and the attempt to break and divide Yemen.

[Almasdaronline](#)

4. Yemen President urges end of UAE strikes, fears secession

29 August 2019. Yemen's president urged Saudi Arabia on Thursday to rein in the United Arab Emirates after warplanes from his former ally staged airstrikes on Yemeni government troops, killing and wounding dozens as they headed to retake the key southern port city of Aden from separatists backed by the UAE.

In a rare statement, President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi condemned the UAE, a former ally, for "blatant intervention" in Yemen by providing "support, money and plans" for separatists who aim at "dividing up" the country. [AP](#)



ASSESSMENT

The divergence between Saudi Arabia and UAE started with the UAE's invasion of Socotra Island in April 2018 and continued through the partly withdrawal of UAE troops from Yemen. Today, this fissure has deepened with the struggle for dominance in southern Yemen. While SA supports Hadi Government to deter the Iran's influence in the region, UAE is supporting Southern Transitional Council (STC) who wants to separate Yemen's south from the north. The main purpose of SA is to prevent Iran from supporting Houthis in Yemen, on the other hand UAE's goal is to obtain the Bab El Mandeb and to control the strategic shipping lanes there. In the light of all these developments, the emergence of a unique Yemen in the near future seems quite difficult.

5. Yemeni separatists arrest dozens of government loyalists in Aden

1 September 2019. Southern Yemeni separatists said they arrested dozens of government loyalists in Aden on Saturday after President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's forces withdrew from the port city following air strikes by the United Arab Emirates. Hadi's government said the arrests were "politically motivated". An STC security source denied this, saying dozens of "terrorists and outlaws" had been rounded up. [Reuters](#)

6. Separatists control majority of Yemen's Aden

29 August 2019. Separatist forces backed by the UAE wrested control of a large portion of Aden province from government forces on Thursday, an official said, Anadolu Agency reports.

The forces loyal to the Southern Transitional Council (STC) made their gains with support of Emirati air forces which struck positions of legitimate government forces in eastern Aden, a government source told Anadolu Agency on condition of anonymity. [Middle East Monitor](#)

7. Rocketry Force Targets Abha International Airport with Quds 1, Cruise Missile

29 August 2019. On Wednesday evening, the Rocketry Force [Houthis] fired a winged, Quds 1, cruise missile at Abha International Airport in Asir. The Armed Forces spokesman, Brigadier Yahya Serai, said the missile targeted the military operations center and warplanes' hangers at the airport and hit its target with high accuracy.

He said that "the missile targeting of Abha International Airport led to the disruption of air traffic at the airport. Also, this targeting comes in response to the crimes of aggression and the ongoing siege and continuous raids, which amounted during the past few hours 42 air strikes."

[Almasirah](#)

8. UAE loosens Saudi alliance to push peacemaker image

28 August 2019. A loosening of UAE-Saudi ties has implications far beyond bilateral ties. A rift could undermine Trump's "maximum pressure" push against Tehran, damage Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, and reverberate in other theaters of conflict, so extensive has the two partners' influence been in a region critical to world oil supplies. One source said it is hedging its bets as a small power: The UAE's commercial hub Dubai has strong Iran trade ties. "The honeymoon (with Saudi Arabia) is over," said another source, pointing to Abu Dhabi's recent overtures to Iran, including maritime security talks revived last month.

A Gulf source said the alliance was "very much alive and well" in terms of combating regional threats like Iran and Islamists, but acknowledged a rebalancing as situations evolved. Riyadh accuses Iran of giving the Houthis missiles and drones to attack Saudi oil assets, a charge Tehran denies. It also fears spillover effects if Yemen fragments further.

By contrast, Abu Dhabi's main concern is protecting the strategic Bab al-Mandeb waterway and keeping Islamists at bay.

"They are broadly strategically aligned. There are more similarities than differences, but we will start to see divergences," said one diplomat. [Reuters](#)

KEY EVENTS

1. Millions face starvation in Yemen after KSA, UAE fail to meet pledge

22 August 2019. Some \$2.6 billion was pledged during event for Yemen in February to meet the urgent needs of more than 20 million Yemenis. Over half, \$1.5 billion, was promised by KSA and the UAE, but to date less than half the amount has been received. According to According to the UN humanitarian office in New York, KSA and the UAE each pledged \$750 million. But so far KSA have contributed \$127 million and the UAE \$160 million. “We are desperate for the funds that were promised,” said Lisa Grande, UN Humanitarian Coord. for Yemen. “When money doesn’t come, people die.” She said that the UN was forced to suspend most vaccination campaigns in May, and without new money a “staggering” 22 life-saving programs in Yemen will close in the next two months. [Middle East Monitor](#)

2. Govt forces take control of strategic “Murra” camp

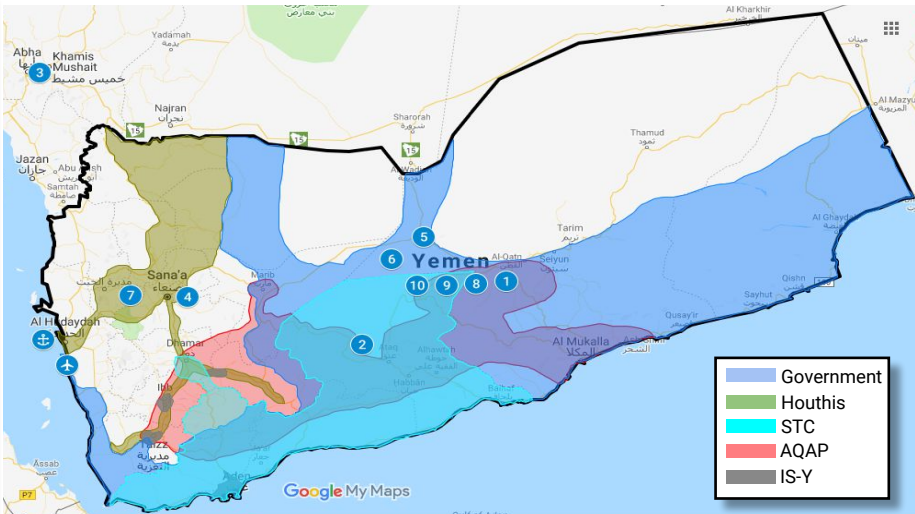
24 August 2019. On Saturday, government forces took control of the strategic “Murra” camp, one of the largest camps where the UAE-backed Shabwani elite forces are stationed west of Ataq city in Shabwa province in southeastern Yemen. The camp is the second most important military base in the southern provinces of Yemen in terms of area and fortifications after the base of “Al-Anad”. The strategic camp is located west of Ataq City and is in the middle of the oil fields of Osaylan, Al-Oqlah and Ayad, and has been controlled by the elite Shabwani forces for more than a year. Earlier in the day, government forces took control of the STC headquarters in the provincial capital Ataq. According to the sources, government forces have taken control of the points between al-Abr area and Ataq City. Controlling the points between Al-Abr and Ataq aims securing the international line and opening a line of supplies for government forces. [Almasdaronline](#)

3. Houthis Targets Saudi Airport and Airbase

25 August 2019. Houthis carried out retaliatory attacks on an airport and an airbase in southwestern Saudi Arabia, using a squadron of domestically-manufactured combat drones. The strike against the airport accurately hit its control tower, said the spokesman, which led to halting all flights in/out of the airport. The attack on King Khalid Airbase also targeted its control tower. [Almasirah](#)

4. Yemeni Armed Forces Reveal Air Defense Systems, Change Course of Battle

25 August 2019. On 24 August, Houthi Forces unveiled two types of air defense systems, Fater1 and Thaqib1, the latter entering battlefield in 2017. According to the spokesperson Brigadier Saree', Fater 1 system was able to confront the adversary F16, F15, Mirage and Typhoon. During his speech, Saree' showed two videos on how Fater 1 downed US MQ-9 drones, first in Hodaidah in June and second in Dhamar few days ago. He further explained that 72 air operations were so far conducted. 42 of them targeted adversary war planes, downing and damaging a number of them. He added another success was their neutralizing and limiting operations of adversary Apache helicopters by 70 pc. Accordingly, in 49 operations, Houthis downed and damaged 17 Apaches and other helicopters. He pointed out that the development of a third and fourth defense system within the readiness of the air defense forces will be revealed during the next phase. [Almasirah Arabic](#)



ASSESSMENT

- We do not know what is discussed behind closed doors. However, if we bring together the pieces of the puzzle coming from the events we witness since 1 August and strategic circumstances the UAE is within, following scenario may be helpful to explain what happens in Yemen.
 1. An agreement on a divided Yemen along geographic and historic lines was reached between UAE, STC, Houthis and Iran, envisioning two new Yemeni states in North and South. Based on a strategic decoy and communication plan:
 2. First, UAE gave the impression of a draw down for:
 - a. Showing UAE involvement in Yemeni political landscape minimal to the outside world,
 - b. Giving the impression that the coup attempt evolving since 1 August comes genuinely from Southerners, c. Giving the impression that UAE is nowhere in the latest events since it has lost interest in Yemen and that STC is an able and competent entity with necessary armed extensions that can eclipse the current government.
 3. STC would start a coup in Aden as of 1 August and gradually take over whole South.
 4. After this seizure of control of whole South would be complete, the partition between North and South will be formalized with a new agreement and the hostilities will be ended. Thus, the Houthis will govern the new Imamate in the North whereas STC will govern South Arabia.

5. Shatara reveals the STC goal in Jeddah talks

21 August 2019. Member of the Presidency of the Southern Transitional Council, Lutfi Shatara said that the STC goal is to achieve the people’s will that perceived by the whole region and the world, so let the Jeddah talks on Aden be the beginning, not the end. Shatara added in his tweet today that “STC will not negotiate the return of the legitimate government that wreaked havoc and used all means to stir up inter-southern conflict since 2015.” Shatara said it clearly that the STC will not accept in its negotiations quota positions within the government. [Adenpress News](#)

6. Yemen Govt. Refuses to Engage in Jeddah Talks before STC Pullout from Aden

22 August 2019. The legitimate Yemeni government reiterated on Wednesday its refusal to engage in dialogue with the Southern Transitional Council (STC) before it withdraws its forces from the city of Aden. An STC delegation had arrived in the Saudi city of Jeddah on Tuesday for urgent talks called for by the Kingdom to discuss the recent clashes in the interim Yemen capital. Unheeded, the STC captured on Tuesday camps in Zinjibar city in the Abyan province east of Aden. Zinjibar is the hometown of President Abdurabbuh Mansur Hadi. KSA Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed al-Hadrami stressed that the government will not hesitate in confronting any development that undermines the security and stability of Yemen, official sources quoted him as saying after meeting with US Charge d’affaires, Junaid Mounir. The government will work on ending the armed coup staged by the UAE-backed STC through all possible constitutional and legal means, he vowed. He held the STC and UAE responsible for the repercussions of the Aden rebellion, demanding that Abu Dhabi cease its military support to the council. [Sharq al-Awsat](#)

7. U.S. drone shot down over Yemen: officials

21 August 2019. A U.S. military MQ-9 drone was shot down in Yemen’s Dhamar governate, southeast of the Houthi-controlled capital Sanaa, two U.S. officials told Reuters on Wednesday, the second such incident in recent months. [Reuters](#)

8. CENTCOM investigates reports of Houthi-claimed attack on UAS

21 August 2019. “We are investigating reports of an attack by Iranian-backed Houthi forces on a US unmanned aerial system (UAS) operating in authorized airspace over Yemen,” CENTCOM Spokesman Lt. Col. Earl Brown said said. “We have been clear that Iran’s provocative actions and support to militants and proxies, like the Iranian-backed Houthis, pose a serious threat to stability in the region and our partners,” he added. [CENTCOM](#)

9. WFP resumes food distribution in Yemen’s Sanaa after deal with Houthis

21 August 2019. The World Food Programme (WFP) on Wednesday resumed distributing food to 850,000 people in Sanaa after a two-month stoppage since June 20, having reached an agreement with the Iran-aligned Houthi authorities who control the city. [Reuters](#)

10. Why Saudi-UAE alliance is cracking: Yemen, Iran, and Trump

23 August 2019. While Saudi Arabia sees a zero-sum game where its security can be guaranteed only by regime change in Tehran, the UAE, which is just miles from Iran and would be the hardest hit by any military conflict, seeks merely to contain and push back Iranian influence in the Arab world. [The Christian Science Monitor](#)

KEY EVENTS

1. More than 20 gunmen killed and wounded in clashes between 'Joint Forces' and Houthi militia in Hodeidah

17 August 2019. The joint forces (Brigadier General Tariq Saleh's forces, giants' forces, and Al-Tuhami brigades), units formed from different-oriented resistance fighters taking part in hostilities against Houthi militias on the west coast, agreed to form a unified collective command linked to the coalition forces (UAE) And Saudi Arabia) on the west coast.

Houthi militias intensified shelling with mortars and machine guns on Saturday afternoon on the positions of joint forces loyal to the Arab coalition in the east of al-Drihimi district, adjacent to the city of Hodeidah. [Almasdaronline](#)

2. Yemen's Southern Transitional Council (STC) withdraws from key positions in Aden

17 August 2019. STC withdrew early Saturday from key positions it had seized in the city of Aden last week, the Arab Coalition said on Saturday. The STC pulled out of the headquarters of President Hadi's government, the supreme court and the central bank as well as Aden's main hospital, Muammar al-Iryani said on Twitter. Sources told Al Arabiya that the seized positions were handed over to the Yemeni presidential brigades. [Alarabiya](#)

3. Yemen official: No talks before separatists leave Aden

14 August 2019. Deputy Foreign Minister al-Hadrami said the separatists must "commit to total withdrawal from areas forcibly seized." He also called on them to hand over arms seized from forces loyal to President. The fighters for STC wrested control of Aden, which serves as Hadi's interim capital, in four days of combat. More than 70 people, including civilians and combatants, were killed. [AP](#)

4. Gulf Newspaper: Yemeni Parties Will Meet in KSA This Week

18 August 2019. Sources predicted the upcoming meeting, which was called by KSA between the Yemeni parties after seizure of control of Aden by STC will be held this week in the Kingdom. [Yemen Window](#)

5. Yemen government holds UAE responsible for 'coup' in Aden

16 August 2019. The Yemeni government held STC and the UAE responsible for the "coup" against the legitimate regime in the interim capital Aden. In a statement issued on Thursday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yemen called on the UAE to withdraw and cease the military support offered to these "rebel groups immediately and completely.". [Middle East Monitor](#)

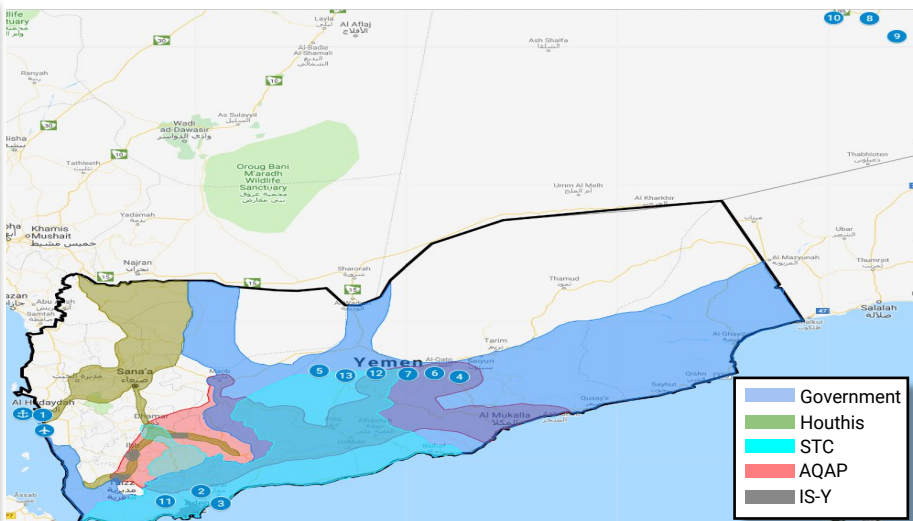
6. Yemen Government Standoff with STC

16 August 2019. Yemen's Interior Minister sacks Head of Aden's Security Department, Shalal Shaye for his affiliation to STC; appointing Nasser al-Shohati. Al-Shotahi was seen with the Vice President of the STC immediately after his appointment. At this point, it is unclear if he actually defected or is just enjoying amicable relations with the STC.

STC issued a statement after its widely held demonstration, expressing a desire to "return to a federal South" & its vision for what's to come next. The statement addressed governance, economy, education, security, disarmament, peace & reconciliation concerns. It also re-assures the Coalition of its commitment to "resist Houthis & Iran's expansionism." The STC also expressed a "commitment to dialogue for conflict resolution" including UN mediation. It also guaranteed freedom of movement to Northern brothers. The Gov't has shown incredible restraint and has so far been very calculated, careful not to escalate on the ground. Minister of Information reported the actions as a coup, warned of effects on the social fabric and vowed to pursue all possible ways to protect the Government. [Fatima Al Asrar's Twitter Account](#)

7. Iran's Khamenei backs Yemen's Houthi movement, calls for dialogue

13 August 2019. Khamenei, who held talks for the first time in Tehran with a senior Houthi representative, called for "strong resistance against the Saudi-led plots to divide Yemen", the semi-official Fars news agency reported. "A unified and coherent Yemen with sovereign integrity should be endorsed. Given Yemen's religious and ethnic diversity, protecting Yemen's integrity requires domestic dialogue," he said, TV reported. [Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- As written here before and verified by the latest events, UAE has no possibility to completely withdraw from Yemeni theater. It will one way or another remain engaged either through proxies or by itself to safeguard its strategic interests within the country.
- The events in the past week will likely have different repercussions for different actors.
 - For the government, already weak public support and basis for legitimacy has been sizably degraded. Although not certain until seeing results of the meeting in the Kingdom this week, it will most likely become marginalized with less area under direct control.
 - For STC, this was a tactically big step. It challenged and won over the government forces in the capital, and showed the support and strength behind secession. In the coming days, STC will likely try to legitimize its rule in the zone it de facto controls through negotiations with the government and try to find a place or its say in international negotiations. Based on this attained autonomy, STC will likely try to control the resources coming from oil and natural gas as the second step.
 - For the Coalition, the event has been a flashpoint showing differences and even clashes within. The post-war plans were different from day one between KSA and UAE. But from this point on, this difference has potential to cause greater conflicts in the coming days.
 - The biggest winner in the events is Ansar Allah or the Houthis. The events in the last week can be the final nail in the coffin for Coalition. For Houthis, there will be no Coalition but two neighbor states each trying to increase gains by interference into Yemeni War and a more divided adversary. This is a morale booster for the Houthis.
 - Another loser is the international community that has not been able to come up with a scheme to first stop war and then de-escalate the tension. The point the events arrived is a certification of the failure of international efforts.

8. Yemeni Air Force [Houthis] Conducts Largest Attack in Saudi Depth

17 August 2019. Yemeni Armed Forces spokesman Brigadier Yahya Sare'e said in a statement that ten Yemeni drones have targeted Aramco's Shaybah Oil Field and Refinery in eastern Saudi Arabia. He also noted that Shaybah Oil Field and Refinery have the largest strategic Oil reserve in the Saudi Kingdom and can accommodate more than one billion barrels. [Almasirah](#)

9. Saudi Aramco says fire at Shaybah oil field did not disrupt oil production

17 August 2019. Saudi Aramco says a fire at Shaybah oil field, caused by drone attacks, did not cause injuries or disrupt oil production. "One of the units of a natural gas plant in the Shaybah petroleum field was attacked by drones, resulting in a fire that was later controlled - causing limited damage, and no human injuries, thankfully," said Khalid al-Falih, the Saudi Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources and the chairman of Saudi Aramco. [Alarabiya](#)

10. Yemen rebel drone attack targets remote Saudi oil field

17 August 2019. The attack on the Shaybah oil field, which produces some 1 million barrels of crude oil a day near the kingdom's border with UAE, again shows the reach of the Houthis' drone program. Shaybah sits some 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) from Houthi-controlled territory, underscoring the rebels' ability to now strike at both nations, which are mired in Yemen's yearslong war. [AP](#)

11. Minister of Information Thanks STC and Coalition for De-escalation

17 August 2019. The minister of Information of Yemen, Moammar al-Aryani tweeted: "1_ We welcome the withdrawal of the STC from a number of government headquarters in the city of Aden, including the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Supreme Council of the Judiciary, the Central Bank and the Aden Hospital.

2_ We highly value the role of brothers in KSA and UAE to contain the events, and call for the unification of all national efforts in the main battle of the Yemenis and not to engage in side battles and to ensure the restoration of the state and overthrow the coup of the Iranian-backed Houthi militia

3_ What happened in Aden is an important opportunity for a comprehensive review and stimulation of joint action to preserve the Yemeni state led by the President, creating a model for security, stability, development and return to normal life, alleviating the suffering of the people in Aden and all the liberated governorates and the movement of citizens between the governorates to work normally without barriers.

4_ Events of Aden reaffirmed that our choice, as Yemenis, to support our brothers in KSA was and still is the winning one, and the relationship between the two countries and the neighboring and brotherly peoples is a strategic choice amidst so many national and regional challenges and the dangers of the terrorist groups ISIS, Al-Qaeda and the Houthi militia. [Yemeni Interior Minister's Twitter Account](#)

12. Opinion: The Future Structure of the Yemeni State

14 August 2019. Currently, there are multiple, rival authorities in different regions, and the individuals in power disagree whether there should be one state, two states, or multiple states. They also disagree whether the future state or states should be independent or linked through a federal or confederal system. Profound questions remain unanswered, and before negotiations can move forward, the parties will likely need to address the elephant in the room: the future structure of Yemen as a state. [Middle East Institute](#)

13. Opinion: Oil's Impact on Tensions in Southern Yemen

9 August 2019. In the aftermath of Arab coalition efforts to liberate southern Yemen from Houthi control, many of the liberated provinces mirror microstates, including the Al-Mahra and Marib provinces, which refuse to supply revenue to the government. Hadramout has formed its own military forces, as did Shabwa and Aden with the support of the Arab alliance, especially the UAE. The presence of local forces in Southern Yemen and the expanding powers of local governors increase the chances of southerners getting their demands, even independence. As the past few years demonstrate, within the conflict developing between the STC and Hadi's government oil is likely to play a major role in the calculations of both parties. And in the upcoming months, these considerations are likely to continue shaping the political fate of Hadramout and the surrounding regions of South Yemen. [Washington Institute](#)

KEY EVENTS

1. U.N. Secretary-General expresses concern over clashes in Yemen's Aden

10 August 2019. Guterres on Saturday expressed concern over the violent clashes in Yemen's Aden and urged the parties to cease hostilities. [Reuters](#)

2. Violence in Aden

8 August 2019. We call on all parties to refrain from escalation and further bloodshed, and to resolve their differences through dialogue. Inciting further divisions and violence within Yemen will only increase the suffering of the Yemeni people and prolong the conflict. Dialogue represents the only way to achieve a stable, unified, and prosperous Yemen. [U.S. Department of State](#)

3. Calls for the opening of 'safe corridors' for residents trapped in Aden

10 August 2019. Yemeni residents and activists have called for the opening of safe corridors for civilians trapped inside Aden as armed clashes between legitimate government forces and UAE-backed separatist rebels escalate. [Almasdaronline](#)

4. Yemeni officials: Separatists take military camp, 45 killed

10 August 2019. Yemeni officials say southern separatists have taken control of a military camp from forces loyal to the government in Aden. The officials said at least 45 people, both combatants and civilians, died in clashes overnight at the Fourth Brigade camp raising death toll to 70 in Aden this week. The officials added the separatists also captured a military camp in the central Khormaksar neighborhood. [AP](#)

5. Eight civilians killed amid renewed clashes in Yemen's Aden

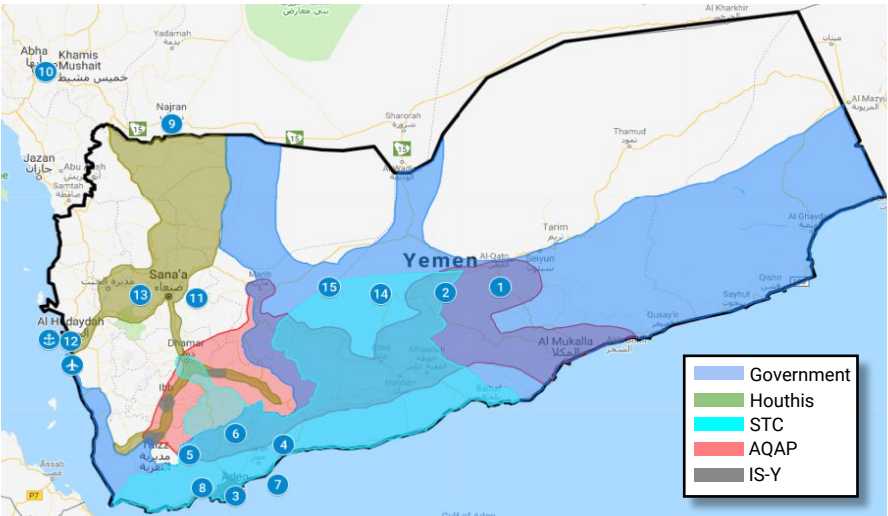
9 August 2019. The Aden clashes began this week after the separatists accused an Islamist party allied to President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi of complicity in an earlier missile attack on a military parade in the southern port city. The head of Aden's health directorate told Reuters that 24 fighters had been killed in the past three days, without specifying which side they belonged to. [Reuters](#)

6. Tensions rise among Yemen allies after separatist attack

8 August 2019. In a statement carried by the official news agency, Interior Minister Ahmed al-Maisari called on the followers of separatist leader Hani Ben Braik to ignore his calls to overthrow the government, saying "they only aim at engendering war" and undermine the fight against Houthi rebels. After laying a UAE-backed militia commander to rest in a cemetery nearby on Wednesday, his supporters marched on the presidential palace and clashed with troops stationed there. [AP](#)

7. The STC issues statement on the government attacks on unarmed citizens

7 August 2019. The Presidency of STC approved: First: Calling for our southern people and their resistance to march to Maashiq palace to overthrow the government of terrorism and corruption that is allied with the Islah terrorist party and put an end to its futility towards our people, with the confirmation on the preservation of the legitimacy of President Hadi, and get it rid of the dominance of the terrorist Islah party. Second: STC affirms the continuation of partnership in the war with the Arab Coalition under the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, to fight and stop the Persian Houthi expansion in the region, and continuing the partnership with the international community in the fight against terrorism. Third: STC calls upon the leaders, officers and members of the southern military and security units to stand with the right of the people of the south and their just cause, and not to be dragged into facing this right under any circumstances. Fourth: STC calls on the governors and directors of security and government and service departments in all the southern governorates to continue to perform their tasks, and to confront corruption in all its forms, and STC, confirms that anyone who fails to do so will carry the responsibility against the people. Fifth: STC affirms the protection of the lives, property and all the rights of our brothers from the north who are in the South, without breaching the security and stability of the South. Sixth: The Transitional Council affirms that the South is for all its people, calling on all our people in these delicate circumstances for more cohesion and solidarity, and not to leave any chance for those who lurk in the South cause, security and stability. [STC Official Website](#)



ASSESSMENT

• The latest escalation of tension and flare of conflicts between government and Security Belt Forces has potential to :

- to extremely weaken Hadi government's power and ability to rule over Yemen and thus create a vacuum of power,
- to create tensions and divisions among Yemeni society,
- to disrupt unity and weaken the morale of forces fighting Houthis,
- to create suitable conditions for Daesh and AQAP to flourish,
- to bring efforts to curb Houthi expansion to null as result of attenuation of forces,
- and finally to make any sort of national reconciliation impossible.

• In general terms, the despair of Southerners together with the fatigue coming with war, disillusionment in the government and the umpteenth failure of UN led efforts to reach peace has encouraged Southern Transitional Council to mobilize and confront government forces. The move was already expected. But the surprise element is in its timing.

• Even if we consider STC ambitions legitimate, any move that will cause a division and confrontation between forces that are supposed to struggle Houthis together will certainly cause operational setbacks in the overall execution that can hardly be labelled as successful.

• In simplest terms, what we observe is an internal power sharing dispute resulting in control of capital by one group at the expense of the government, putting the future of the whole country at risk. As statement by US State Department: "Inciting further divisions and violence within Yemen will only increase the suffering of the Yemeni people and prolong the conflict".

8. Saudi sends military reinforcements to Aden

6 August 2019. Saudi military vehicles and crews were seen heading from Shabwa towards Aden, local sources and witnesses said. The move is being seen as proof that Saudi Arabia is looking to expand its military presence in Aden as the UAE announced it plans to reduce its presence in the southern city. [Middle East Monitor](#)

9. Badr-1P Ballistic Missile Strikes Camp of Saudi Army in Najran

9 August 2019. "Badr-1P ballistic missile struck, on Friday, a command center for the Saudi army and its mercenaries across from Najran," the spokesman for the Houthi Forces said. He claimed the ballistic missile hit target accurately, destroying the operation center and killing / injuring US-Saudi mercenaries. [Almasirah](#)

10. Yemeni Air Force Targets Abha Airport Twice

9 August 2019. Houthi Forces executed, Saturday, two aerial operations on Abha Airport with Qasef-2K unmanned aircrafts. Spokesperson said the first attack targeted the airport's fueling stations and the second targeted the control tower at the airport, hitting targets with high accuracy. He added during the past three months, Houthis has carried out 60 operations, with two operations every 72 hours, targeting adversary headquarters, bases and facilities. 16 operations targeted Abha airport, 14 operations at Jizan airport, 11 operations at Najran airport and 9 operations on Khamis Mushait base. [Almasirah](#)

11. Demanding Opening of Sana'a Int. Airport, Protesters Gather at the Airport

9 August 2019. Thousands of protesters converged outside Sana'a Int'l Airport on Friday in a rally entitled "Continuation of the Air Embargo and Blockade are US Crimes," expressing resentment over the ongoing air blockade and closure of the airport which has made it impossible for medical supplies to reach to more than 13 million people in Yemen's north. [Almasirah](#)

12. Houthis bomb government forces positions in Hess and Al-Drihimi, south of Hodeidah

9 August 2019. Al-Houthi militias on Friday intensified their artillery shelling on government forces' positions on the outskirts of the southern city of Hees in the western Province of Hodeidah. On Thursday evening, Houthi militias shelled the heaviest artillery shelling in weeks on government forces positions east of al-Drihimi district in southern Hodeidah province. [Almasdaronline](#)

13. Houthi group announces the assassination of the brother of the group leader

9 August 2019. The Houthi group announced friday morning the death of Ibrahim Badr al-Din al-Huoth, the brother of the group's leader, in an assassination, without giving details of the location and time of the operation. The incident comes against the backdrop of increasing tense situation among Houthi leaders in the struggle for money and influence on family and regional grounds. [Almasdaronline](#)

14. WHO says it has 'zero tolerance' for corruption in Yemen

8 August 2019. WHO issued a statement Wednesday saying it has an ongoing investigation into its Yemen office after an internal audit last year found that controls over administration and finances there were "unsatisfactory." WHO said it "moved quickly to address audit recommendations," appointing a new country director, hiring more experienced staff and reforming the office structure to increase accountability. [AP](#)

15. What Are the Implications of the Recent Contacts the UAE Has Had With Iran?

8 August 2019. For the time being, the UAE is avoiding conflict with Iran and its militias in Yemen. The Iran-backed Houthis' attacks on Saudi Arabia, which have been growing bolder and more deadly, as well as what appears to be Tehran's attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf, have revealed Iran's inclination to escalate with impunity. Furthermore, the US has not been clear or consistent in its strategy with regard to Iran, choosing diplomatic overtures at times and threatening military action at others. Within this context, and given the high economic cost the UAE could pay if Iran and its allies decide to target it as they have the Saudis, Abu Dhabi, which tends to play a leading role in the UAE's foreign policy, had no choice but to open this diplomatic door with its rivals in Tehran. And the UAE's military drawdown in Yemen and deescalation around the port of Hodeida were gestures of goodwill, directing at Iran. [Carnegie Middle East Center](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(29 July - 04 August 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Badr-F Ballistic Missile Strikes Camp of Saudi Army and Mercenaries off Najran

3 August 2019. Houthi Badr-F ballistic missile struck, on Saturday, a recently constructed camp for the Saudi army and its mercenaries across from Najran, killing and injuring dozens. The spokesman of the Armed Forces [Houthis] pointed out that the strike caused dozens of deaths and injuries among the soldiers and mercenaries, causing a state of confusion in their side, noting that the wounded and dead were transferred to hospitals in Najran. [Almasirah](#)

2. Houthi attack kills more than 30 in Yemen's Aden, Saudi blames Iran

1 August 2019. Houthis launched missile and drone attacks on Thursday on a parade in military camp belonging to the Security Belt forces, killing 36 people according to the interior ministry. The explosion killed Brigadier General Muneer al-Yafee [also known as Abu Yamama] the interior ministry said. "I call on parties to honor their commitment to peace and put more efforts toward a political solution to the conflict," U.N. special envoy Martin Griffiths tweeted on Thursday. [Reuters](#)

3. Soldiers in the security belt forces burn goods of peddlers from North

2 August 2019. A local source and residents told soldiers belonging to Aden's security belt forces burned vegetable stalls belonging to citizens from the northern provinces. Cities in southern Yemen are experiencing tension a day after attacks in Aden. These practices are reminiscent of similar restrictions, deportations and arrests led by UAE-backed local forces against workers and vendors from the northern provinces two years ago. [Almasdaronline](#)

4. "ISIS" claims attack on Sheikh Osman police station in Aden

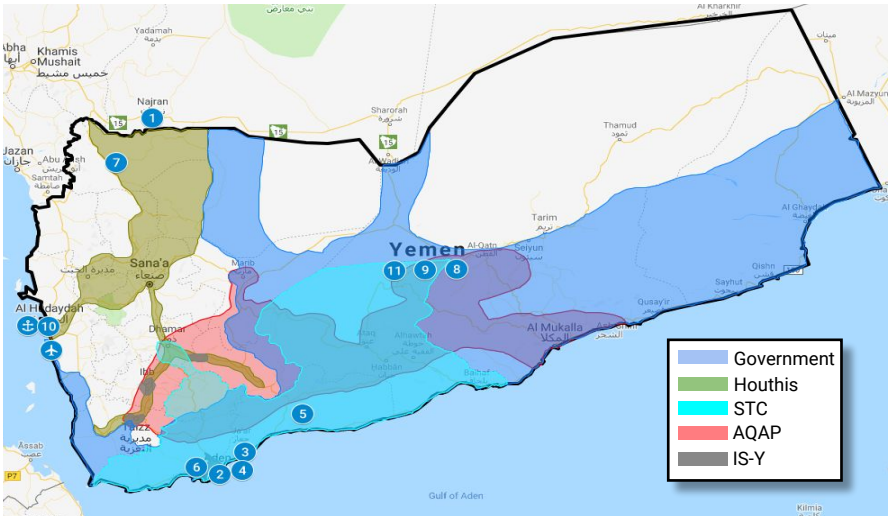
2 August 2019. An ISIS Twitter account said that the group attacked Sheikh Osman's police station with a car bomb on Thursday morning in an istishhadi operation. The bomb killed 13 police officers and injured others. The brief communication attributed to ISIS on Twitter suggested that it was part of the "operation of attrition" and did not disclose any further details about the identity of the executor which it posted his picture with a bomb in his hand and the name appeared on the picture was "Aqeel Al-Muhajer". [Almasdaronline](#)

5. Al-Qaeda attack kills 19 soldiers in south Yemen: security officials

2 August 2019. Al-Qaeda gunmen killed 19 soldiers in an attack on an army base in southern Yemen Friday, security officials said, a day after deadly assaults by opposition forces and an extremist bomber. The gunmen stormed Al-Mahfad base in Abyan province and remained inside for several hours before military reinforcements came, three security officials told AFP, adding that the soldiers were killed in clashes with the extremists. [Alarabiya](#)

6. Saudi envoy to Yemen blames Iran for attacks in Aden

1 August 2019. Saudi Arabia's envoy to Yemen accused Iran of being behind an attack on a military parade in Aden on Thursday that the Houthi militia has claimed responsibility for. Envoy Mohammed bin Saeed Al Jabir, in a Twitter post, also blamed Iran for a separate attack on a police station in the southern port city, which no one has claimed yet. Yemen's Prime Minister Maen Abdulmalik Saeed, in separate tweets, said the attacks were coordinated under "Iran's administration." Iran denies any involvement in Yemen. [Alarabiya](#)



ASSESSMENT

- The attack to Jala'a military base in Aden shows Houthi capability to first gather timely intelligence on high value targets and hitting them with precision. At this point, it is still unclear whether Emirati decision for drawdown is a result of this lately acquired capability as the mini-state has too much to lose if its security is at stake or if it is a fake move. It may even be a simple result of implementing economy of forces by shifting some of its military and mercenaries to the Libyan theatre. Irrespective of its true nature, the issue has become an important element of Houthi discourse posing itself as the "victorious", demanding Saudi Arabia also to follow the suit.
- The discourse of the Houthis becoming as nefarious as its kinetic war efforts. The Houthis can be said to have become adept at using language to abuse social divisions among Yemenis in a way to extend its support base in the North through both above mentioned victorious tone and its way of relaying the flow of events from its perspective in Orwellian fashion. This latest attack shows they have started skilfully mix kinetic action with speech act, meaning use [drone] attacks in a way to provoke a northerner-southerner division and start newer conflicts at society level in the south.
- A divide has been created between international officials and Yemenis that have to pay the price at the end of the day. The increased importance coming with effectiveness on the ground and being an important element of the conflict has granted legitimacy to Houthis. This evidences itself in Houthis' sitting on negotiation table with de facto more than equal basis and its ability to violate, cheat or get the best part of any agreement so far while disregarding important provisions with impunity. The Houthis use this visual and the inability of international peace initiatives to enforce this victorious posture. This coincides with international officials' need to produce a success story to report back to their bosses in international organisations.
- International society has no choice other than taking the bull by its horns any more. Because Yemen has turned into china shop.

7. Attack on Yemen market kills more than 10, warring parties trade blame

29 July 2019. An attack on a market killed at least 10 civilians including children in Yemen's northern Saada province on Monday, a medical source and the warring parties who blamed each other said. [Reuters](#)

8. Sudan's army denies troops withdrawal from Yemen

1 August 2019. The Sudanese troops will remain in Yemen, the head of the country's Transitional Military Council (TMC), Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, said yesterday. About alleged repatriation by the UAE troops from Yemen, Burhan pointed out that the Emirati forces were carrying out "redeployment and repositioning activities." [Middle East Monitor](#)

9. Proxy of Convenience, Alliance of Necessity: How Iran Weaponized Houthis

22 July 2019. Abdel-Malik al-Houthi has concocted a story in which the Houthis made a "moral choice" to voluntarily join with those fighting the enemies of Islam. In this upside-down fairy-tale Houthi dependence on Iran and Hezbollah is the surest path to an independent Yemen and weaponization in Iran's transnational arsenal is the quickest way to securing national objectives. Al-Houthi has sold his cause, his people, and his country to Hezbollah operatives like Abu Saleh who would gladly sacrifice every Houthi fighter just to bleed Iran's enemies and show its Arab Gulf adversaries that the US cannot effectively protect them. While this decision may militarily strengthen the Houthis in the short-term, in the long-term it risks utterly discrediting the movement in the eyes of the UN, the international community, and the few Yemenis that still support them. [Arabia Foundation](#)

10. Emirati talk on the end of the war in Yemen

4 August 2019. "The war in Yemen is over and it remains to be officially stopped," said Abdul Khaliq Abdullah, a well-known academic close to Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. Abdullah added that his country "will henceforth put all its political and diplomatic weight to push for a settlement and peace for the Yemeni people, who have suffered a lot from the coup of the Iranian-backed Houthi group." [Almasdaronline](#)

11. The Role of Khat in Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis

22 July 2019. Unfortunately, as one farmer noted in a 2000 Australian documentary: "[Khat] is five times more valuable [than fruit]. With [khat], we can pick it twice or three times a year. If this field is grown with fruit it will only yield five thousand riyals, but [khat] will give fifty to sixty thousand riyals." Just as Afghans elect to grow opium and cannabis in lieu of food crops, Yemeni farmers dedicate scarce arable land and irrigation resources to khat. Farmers surrender their opportunity to grow subsistence crops like mangoes or pears, for the sake of khat. However, unlike Afghanistan's lucrative illicit cultivation, Yemen has little to no khat export market upon which to prevail. Yemeni farmers produce khat almost entirely for domestic consumption. Of course, cultivation cannot pivot in real time. Prior to 2011, when Yemen's fragile equilibrium was upended by the Arab Spring, Yemeni farmers had spent years replacing subsistence and cash crops with khat trees. Even assuming a national consensus to scale back khat consumption in favor of domestic food production, a conversion back to food crops would take years to affect. [Small Wars Journal](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(22 - 28 July 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. U.N. says: War in Yemen is eminently resolvable

23 July 2019. UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths: 'Both parties continue to insist that they want a political solution. The Head of the UN Mission for the Hodeida agreement, convened the two parties on the UN vessel, the Arctic Dream, which took place on the high seas of the Red Sea. They came to specific agreements on the operational plans for all the redeployments that they had agreed to do in Sweden so many months ago. They did not come to an agreement on two or three issues, which remain for me to resolve with the parties; first being the approach to local security forces which has been a vexed issue for some time, the second being the issue revenue in the port, and the third being related to the first, which is governance. The decision by the Coalition to redeploy forces out of Yemen, the reason those redeployments happened, and this was not unexpected to us, was in order to make a push towards a commitment towards peace, and a very deliberate one from one of the two coalition partners.' [OSESQY](#)

2. "We're proud of the UAE's military role in Yemen. But it's time to seek a political solution."

22 July 2019. UAE and the rest of coalition are not leaving Yemen. While we will operate differently, our military presence will remain. In accordance with international law, we will continue to advise and assist local Yemeni forces. [The Washington Post](#)

3. The head of the National Delegation Abdulsalam Comments on His Visit to Moscow

25 July 2019. Abdulsalam said that his visit to Moscow was based on an invitation from the Russian MFA, stressing that the vision of the Russian resolution may have come after the new tensions in the region following the attacks on Iran. Regarding the UAE withdrawal from Yemen he said "not a single Emirati soldier has been withdrawn out of Yemen, just a redeployment from Marib to other areas." He added: "the UAE presence in Socotra is not for rebuilding; it is a gateway to continue occupation of this charming and historic island."

Regarding US presence in Saudi Arabia, he said: "The recent US presence in Saudi Arabia, he said, is among other reasons to deal with damaged reputation of the Patriot in the world of arms trade. Sending 500 US troops to Saudi Arabia provides psychological and security support in the face of Yemeni ballistic missiles and drones." "Saudi Arabia's normalization with Israel is dangerous, it will hurt its role at the level of the Arab and Islamic nation," he added. [Almasirah](#)

4. Arab Coalition downs Houthi drones targeting civilian areas in Asir

23 July 2019. The Arab Coalition said on Tuesday it downed several drones launched by Yemen's Houthi militia toward civilian areas in Saudi Arabia's region of Asir. [Alarabiya](#)

5. Yemen in Focus: Hizballah official reveals secret UAE-Houthi communication

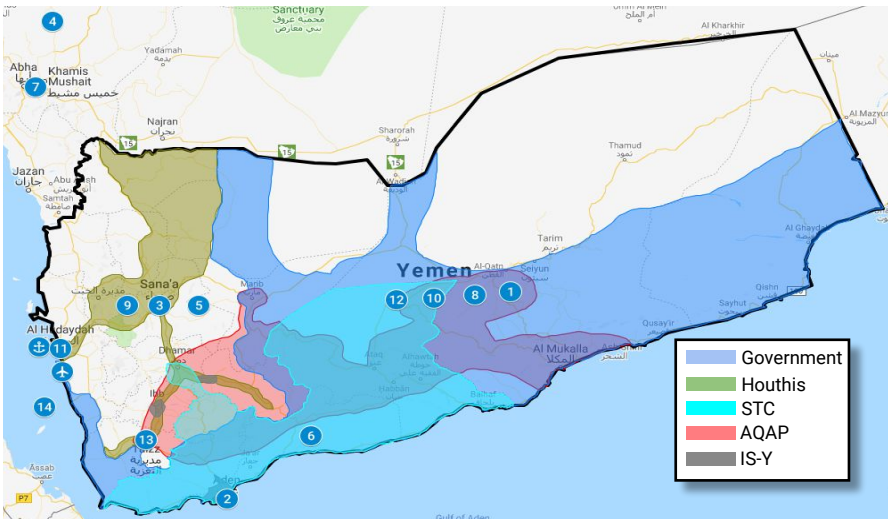
26 July 2019. The rebels are conducting several meetings with Emirati officials, Naem Qassem, the Deputy Secretary General of Hizballah said in an interview with Al-Mayadeen. "There are meetings between officials from the UAE and officials of the Houthis to organise subsequent steps in the Emirati withdrawal from Yemen," Qassem said. "The UAE was an integral part of the war on Yemen, but we learned that there are strong differences between the ruler of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed and Mohammed bin Rashid, the latter of which has suffered economically," Qassem said. "The deterioration of the economy, a large drainage of money in the war and Emirati human losses without bearing much fruit has led to the gradual withdrawal," the Hizballah official added. [The New Arab](#)

6. Much of southern Yemen flooded by heavy rainfall; 6 dead

27 July 2019. The officials said Saturday that at least three people are still missing in the Abyan and Shabwa provinces hit by heavy rains over the past 24 hours. The officials say rushing muddy water flooded dozens of farms, cutting off roads and sweeping away cars and cattle in parts of both provinces. They added that power outages have also engulfed entire areas in Abyan and Shabwa. [AP](#)

7. Yemen's Houthis attack Saudi Abha airport with drones, Houthi TV says

25 July 2019. Yemen's Iranian-aligned Houthi militia attacked Abha airport in Saudi Arabia on Thursday with drones, the group's Al Masirah TV said, citing a military spokesman. [Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- This week the issue of Emirati drawdown in Yemen was widely covered in the international media and politics circles. An extended version of our assessment on what to make out of this drawdown will be on our website. But in short:
- In the current strategic circumstances, an Emirati drawdown will not enforce conditions conducive to peace but will remove one more stick from Houthi perspective. Both the general rules of international relations and the initiatives so far has shown that what matters most for any conflict to be resolved is not the goodwill but ability to own clear sticks and carrots and strong will to use them as required. So, the Emirati move, "a confidence-building measure to create new momentum to end the conflict" as labeled by Gargash, will only have opposite effects.
- It is likely that we will in the coming days see Houthis more active in multiple fronts, increasingly emboldened by being recognized as equal party to the legitimate government of Yemen on the negotiation table and with new ability to inflict casualties in both Saudi Arabia and the UAE from extended range. The group will likely play for time rather than solution with no aim to solve anything as non-solution feeds more bullets to their narratives and strengthen their rule in the North where they are only a minority political movement.

8. Coalition Forces Intercept, Down Drone

25 July 2019. The official spokesman of the Coalition's Forces "Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen" Col. Turki Al-Malki stated that the joint coalition forces managed this evening to intercept and drop a drone in the Yemeni airspace launched by Al-Houthi terrorist militia from Sana'a governorate in an attempt to target the Kingdom. [Saudi Press Agency](#)

9. Yemen accuses UNICEF of funding Houthi summer camps

24 July 2019. Yemeni government sources have accused the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) of funding summer sectarian camps for the Houthi movement. September Net, the Yemeni National Army's official website, quoted on Monday sources described as "private" saying that the UN organisation is behind the funding of the summer camps held by the Houthi militias in Sanaa, and the rest of the areas under the movement's control. The website pointed out that these camps are aimed at creating a sense of sectarianism in society and recruiting children to fight in the fronts. [Middle East Monitor](#)

10. Trump and GOP leaders will bear responsibility if Saudi Arabia isn't held accountable

25 July 2019. A vote by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday showed that there remains strong and bipartisan congressional support for holding Saudi Arabia accountable for its disastrous intervention in Yemen, as well as for the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. By a vote of 13 to 9, the committee approved a bill sponsored by Sens. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) and Todd C. Young (R-Ind.) that would suspend most U.S. military sales to the kingdom and impose sanctions on all those implicated in the killing of Khashoggi. On Wednesday, President Trump vetoed three previous congressional resolutions blocking arms sales to Saudi Arabia. [Washington Post](#)

11. Emirati Newspaper says Divisions Ail Houthi Militias in Hodeidah

28 July 2019. According to news on Sunday by Bayan, an Emirati newspaper, there is continuous and great divisions among Houthi leadership in Hodeidah. Accordingly, the divisions were so great that the group had to change military leadership in the whole western coast. Basing its assertions to a military resource, the newspaper said the leadership in Hodeidah was assigned to Abu Abdurrahman and the general inspector position of the Western Coast was assigned to Abu Malik Al-Khulani. The sources said these new assignments came after failures to attain advance in Hodeidah against Coalition and death of several field commanders during attempts. [Alomanaa.net](#)

12. Southern leaders concluded her meetings in Jordan

28 July 2019. Southern leaders concluded meetings in Amman under the auspices of the European Institute of Peace. The meeting was positive, served to bring Southern leaders around table, discuss and unify their visions. The conclusive statement will be issued later by the Institute. [Aden al-Ghad](#)

13. Local official: Revenues received by the legitimate government in Taiz do not exceed 11%

28 July 2019. A local official in Taiz said most of the revenue is still in the hands of the Houthi coupists, despite the liberation of a large area of the province, stressing the importance of liberating the rest of the regions in order to recover revenues. Accordingly, Taiz lacks natural resources and has relied mainly on indirect sources and revenues from industrial facilities, which have been covering more than 70 percent of the province's revenues. He said, "These facilities and factories are currently located in the areas under the control of the putschists and are not under the authority of the legitimate government." [Almasdaronline](#)

14. UAE hands over Zaqar island in red sea to Tareq Saleh forces

28 July 2019. A few days ago, UAE forces handed over the Red Sea island of Zaqar to the Coast Guard forces of the nephew of former President, Tareq Saleh. The island is the largest in the Hunaish archipelago, and its importance lies in its position overlooking international navigation routes passing between Bab al-Mandab and the Suez Canals. The handover comes about a month after UAE forces handed over the strategic island of Myon at the entrance to the Bab al-Mandab Strait to Tareq Saleh's Coast Guard. UAE forces are still stationed in Yemen's Socotra archipelago in the Indian Ocean, and have not left despite their work on establishing and financing local militias loyal to them in the archipelago. [Almasdaronline](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(15 - 21 July 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

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KEY EVENTS

1. UAE drawdown scrambles the board in Yemen

15 July 2019. The implications of the drawdown are far-reaching for the trajectory of the conflict: it transforms the Arab coalition from an ad-hoc multilateral security structure into a unilateral, Saudi offensive; substantially weakens the coalition and GoY by withdrawing military capabilities, reducing political and logistical support, and cutting the number of well-trained troops; curtails the coalition's operational effectiveness; increases the vulnerability of coalition-backed Yemeni forces; and reduces pressure on the Houthis. These consequences are problematic mainly because the military force that brought the Houthi rebels to the table in December has removed itself from the equation, reducing the Houthis' incentives, if any, to engage constructively in the UN-led peace process. So far, the Houthis are the biggest beneficiary. Considering the gradual disintegration of the coalition and potential security vacuums the UAE drawdown may cause, the Houthis will likely try to expand their territorial gains militarily and show greater inflexibility toward implementation of the Hodeida agreement and the broader peace process, given their growing confidence that time is on their side. For the GoY this development must rank as the single biggest strategic shift during the war, but only time will tell how other actors respond. [Middle East Institute](#)

2. Yemen Has Been a Saudi Prince's War. Now It's His Quagmire.

18 July 2019. Since the Saudi intervention began, the Houthis have fired more than 500 missiles and sent more than 150 explosive-laden drones into the kingdom, Saudi researchers say. Although only a few have hit targets and the damage has been minimal, the escalating pace of the attacks makes it difficult for the Saudis to walk away. Even if the Houthis suspended the attacks, the Saudis argue, they could pose an even greater threat if they were allowed to consolidate their hold on the country. "The Saudis don't have the luxury of walking out of Yemen," said Farea al-Muslimi, chairman of the Sanaa Center for Strategic Studies, a research institute in the Yemeni capital. "There is no way to flee."

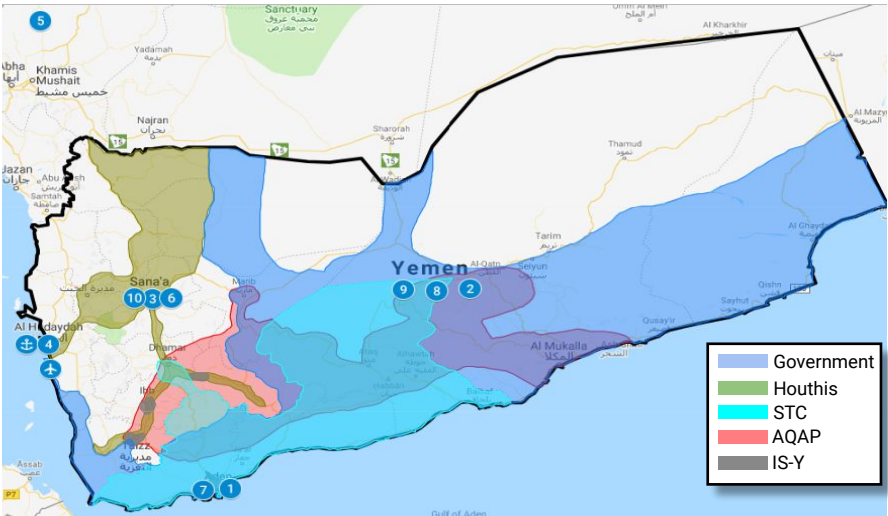
Boxed in, he has asked for more aid from the United States. The Americans already provide logistical support and sell weapons to the Saudis. The Saudis are hoping for at least greater sharing of American intelligence and possibly the deployment of special forces teams or military advisers, diplomats said.

Last week, allies of Tareq Saleh, a maverick nephew of the former Yemeni strongman Ali Abdullah Saleh, floated the idea that the Saudi-led coalition had tapped him to be the new leader of the Yemeni forces previously under the Emiratis. That did not last long. A powerful ultraconservative Islamist militia known as the Giants Brigade, quickly issued a statement saying that it would never accept Saleh because he was from northern Yemen, not the south.

[The New York Times](#)

3. Arab Coalition begins operation targeting military positions in Yemen's Sanaa

20 July 2019. The Arab Coalition in Yemen said it started an operation to target military positions in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa, according to state TV early on Saturday. The targets included air defense sites and ballistic missile depots, it added. [Al Arabiya](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *The repercussions of the Emirati withdrawal from Yemeni theater is yet to be seen. Some analysts consider this as full disengagement of the country from the conflict whereas some others consider it as mere reducing footprint. The most likely outcome will be somewhere in-between.*
- *That is to say, as we have seen in the last week, the battle groups formed, trained and led by Emirati officers will likely have spats among each other about who will lead and how operations will be conducted. But, UAE will still have influence in financing and directing such groups.*
- *Politically also the UAE will continue to be a driving force as South Transitional Council acts under its tutelage. As the organization continues to expand its area of influence its acts and rhetoric work as a divisive force to preclude a united Yemen even after this war is ended.*
- *It becomes strikingly clear as the time passes that Stockholm Agreement will not bring peace to the country. Its vague provisions make it a source of contention rather than solution. The escalation of the conflict in areas not covered by the Agreement, inability to implement its provisions even after so much time has passed and last Houthi court decision to give death sentences to 30 activists, professors shows the limits of the diplomacy based on goodwill. The next such initiative should be tied to clear, measurable sticks and carrots and a strong will to implement them.*

4. Griffiths continues to market the illusion

19 July 2019. The UN special envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, spoke at length about the successes and technical progress in Hodeidah and Taiz, and referred to the death sentences issued by the Houthis, without addressing the issue of prisoners, and pointed out the importance of the withdrawal of the UAE in achieving peace, but warned of a regional war that will drag Yemen and be disastrous. [Almasdar](#)

5. Yemeni Air Force Conducts Fresh Attack on King Khalid Air Base, Asir

19 July 2019. Yemeni [Houthi] Air Force, on Saturday, carried out several drone attacks on the King Khalid air base in Khamis Mushait, Asir. The spokesman of the Houthis said they targeted radar and important military sites at the air base using Qasif-2K drones. [Almasirah](#)

6. UN food chief says full food aid could be restored in Yemen

18 July 2019. The U.N. food agency has reached an "agreement in principle" to restore full food aid to rebel-controlled parts of war-torn Yemen after suspending the aid last month, the agency's director said Thursday. The partial suspension of aid to Sanaa began late last month amid accusations the rebels were diverting the food from the hungriest people in the Arab world's poorest country, which has been pushed to the brink of starvation. [AP](#)

7. U.N. calls out Saudi Arabia, UAE for not paying Yemen aid pledges

18 July 2019. United Nations aid chief Mark Lowcock called out Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates on Thursday for only paying a "modest proportion" of the hundreds of millions of dollars they pledged five months ago to a humanitarian appeal for Yemen. Both countries each promised \$750 million at a U.N. fundraising event in February that was seeking \$4 billion, but Saudi Arabia so far has paid only \$121.7 million and the United Arab Emirates about \$195 million, according to U.N. figures. [Reuters](#)

8. Saudi Ambassador to UN: It is time to end war in Yemen

20 July 2019. KSA Ambassador to the UN stated: "We do not want war with Iran in Yemen or elsewhere, it is high time that the war in Yemen end and the Houthis accept UN resolution 2216 by ending their illegitimate occupation of power in Yemen." [Middle East Monitor](#)

9. IMF urges Yemen to pay nationwide public sector wages

20 July 2019. The IMF on Friday urged Yemen's internationally-recognised government to pay public workers across the country their salaries, to help revive the shattered economy.

"We urge the government to pay all civil service salaries throughout the country," the IMF said in a statement following a meeting between the agency, Yemeni officials and private sector participants in Amman, Jordan earlier this month.

Most of Yemen's public workers have gone unpaid for months as the country's finances and economy collapsed in the war, which has dragged on for at least four years. [The New Arab](#)

10. Houthis showing off their "donations" to Hizbullah

20 July 2019. A tweet by Hamood Mohammad Sharaf showed a video showing four men in front of a pile of dollars destined for Lebanese Hezbollah. The Houthis are seen in front of logo of Sam FM announcing the donations as Lebanese resistance and in the end they shout: "Good is Great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse the Jews, Victory to Islam" [Twitter](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(08 - 14 July 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

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KEY EVENTS

1. Houthis intensify attacks and shelling on Tahita south of Hodeidah

13 July 2019. According to the sources, Houthi militias launched a large-scale offensive on government forces positions north of the city of Al-Tahita from their positions in farms between Zabeed and Al-Tahita. [Al-Masdar](#)

2. Yemen Houthi court condemns 30 to death for spying

10 July 2019. A court run by Yemen's Houthi militias on Tuesday sentenced 30 academics, trade unionists, and preachers to death for allegedly spying for the Arab Coalition, a judicial source said. Riyadh has also sent an unspecified number of troops to the southern port city of Aden and Perim Island, a small volcanic rock in the strategic Bab al-Mandeb shipping lane where the Red Sea meets the Gulf of Aden. [Alarabiya](#)

3. Griffiths to Riyadh: Yemeni Government Reflect Withdrawal

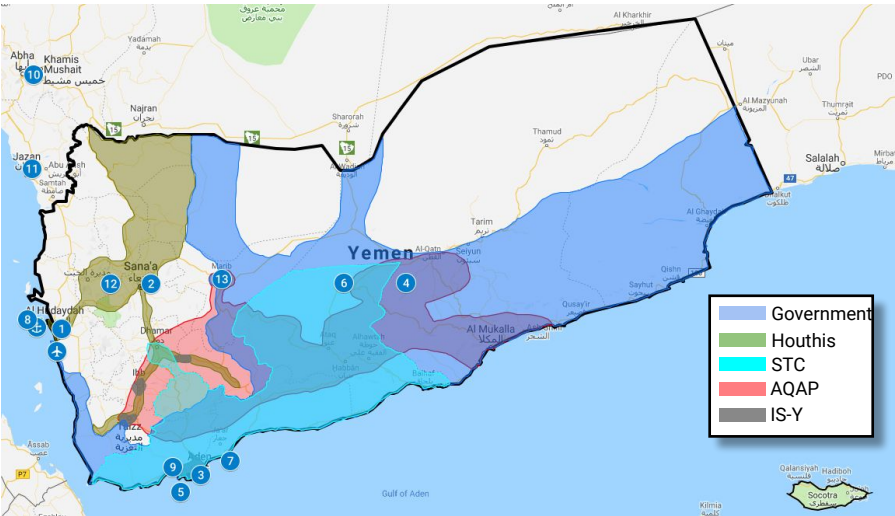
12 July 2019. According to sources, "Arab," Sunday, the UN envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths will visit Riyadh on Monday to hold talks with officials in the Yemeni government. The visit comes after Griffiths tour of Moscow, Abu Dhabi, Muscat and Washington as part of his efforts to revive the political process and the efforts of the United Nations peace in Yemen after more than a two-month halt. The sources close to the Yemeni presidency confirmed "that the government is considering suspending its obligations coming from Stockholm Agreement due to continuous breaches by the Houthi militias to include death sentences in Sana'a against thirty civilians from academics, activists and students. The thirty civilians' names were within the lists of exchange of prisoners under the terms of the Stockholm Agreement. The sources pointed out that Yemeni officials will relate Griffiths their position during a meeting scheduled to be held on Monday with Vice President al-Ahmar, and PM Dr. Abdul Malik. [Alarabiya](#)

4. The UAE's withdrawal from Yemen

12 July 2019. There have been several media reports about the withdrawal of the Emirati forces operating within the so-called Arab Alliance for the restoration of legitimacy in Yemen. [...] The UAE is an essential channel to the world for Iran's economy, along with the trade volume between the two countries, which is over \$20 billion a year. There is also a large Iranian community in the UAE, over half a million Iranians, and they play a significant economic and political role in the country. [...] Anyone observing the affairs in the region would have noticed the magnitude of the Iranian-Emirati relations and the accompanying arrangements in advance for the nature of the roles played by Abu Dhabi, especially since the nature of these relations remained effective and natural and did not experience any escalation, despite the war in Yemen. This includes the Southern Transitional Council, which was an Iranian wing in the south. Its members were trained in the militia camps in Saada before the coup. There is also a political alliance between the Houthis and the Southern Movement, which welcomed and blessed the coup, standing by and watching the Houthi militias invade the south. This means that Abu Dhabi's press releases on the withdrawal are nothing but a new phase of Emirati policies in Yemen, introduced by controlling and dominating the state institutions in the temporary capital city of Aden and other cities. The launch of this phase is also manifested in talking about transitioning from the strategy of military resolution first, according to an Emirati spokesman, to a peace plan. [Middle East Monitor](#)

5. Yemen in Focus: UAE hands over Yemen mission to its local proxies

12 July 2019. The UAE, who supported the establishment of the Southern Transitional Council in 2017, has led a drive to form dozens of military brigades and several military hubs across southern Yemen in recent months. The newly established brigades have been concentrated in areas that formerly surrounded the North-South Yemen border prior to its unification in 1990, including the provinces of Lahj, Aden, Dhali, Abyan and Yafa. Sources close to the Southern Transitional Council leadership say the UAE directed them to form a parallel army to that of the Hadi government, consisting of between 25 and 35 brigades based in southern Yemen, which Abu Dhabi fully supports and arms. Each brigade consists of around 1,500 fighters, meaning the militia army may be 52,000 strong. In context, government forces are said to number around 200,000 though many suspect these figures are inflated. The militia brigades have been reportedly ordered to take control of the southern provinces and their resources, in order to secure former border areas while pushing out government forces from the same areas. [The New Arab](#)



ASSESSMENT

- Emboldened by its operational, technological and political achievements, Houthis increasingly violate or dishonor obligations coming with Stockholm Agreement. The political and military stalemate Houthis were within at the time the agreement was inked seems to have remained in the past. They will likely behave more aggressively in the coming days.***
- The Hadi government's meeting with Griffiths on Monday is likely a gesture to show internally that an action is being taken. No side has any doubt on Houthis to change the course of events.***
- STC is becoming more and more organized in creating alternative security forces to kick government forces out along the former South-North geographical divide. Hadi government's authority and forces gradually erode as STC becomes stronger.***
- In the four and a half years war, UAE has formed and trained "brigades" or "militia forces" that have been warring against Houthis, operating outside government oversight and control. Given the country's influence on the political component, STC and its control over those brigades, the news about its withdrawal from Yemeni theater means little.***
- This week, a major general was sacked by Hadi for his televised statements complaining from Coalition for not supplying arms to Yemeni armed forces. He claimed the support from Coalition came in form of air support whereas Houthis were increasing their capabilities based on Iranian technology and weapons transfer. In fact, his words are not totally wrong.***

6. UAE official says redistribution of troops in Yemen is for 'tactical reasons'

9 July 2019. An official from UAE has stated they have begun a plan regarding redistribution of troops in Yemen for "strategic and tactical" reasons and that the move was coordinated with KSA. [Alarabiya](#)

7. Saudi Arabia moves to secure Yemen Red Sea ports after UAE drawdown

11 July 2019. Saudi Arabia's military in Yemen has moved in to secure two strategic Red Sea ports and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait after UAE substantially reduced its presence there, four sources familiar with the matter said. Two Yemeni military commanders and two Yemeni government officials told Reuters that Saudi officers had taken command of military bases at the ports of al-Mokha and al-Khokha, which Emirati forces had used to back their campaign in nearby Hodeidah and to monitor the coastline. Riyadh has also sent an unspecified number of troops to the southern port city of Aden and Perim Island. [Reuters](#)

8. UAE to transfer command of its proxies under Gen.Saleh

10 July 2019. UAE withdrew & handed operations in West Coast to KSA. Yemeni forces there including national resistance (RG & co), Tehama Brigade, & Giant Brigades now brought under a unified leadership with brigade Tariq Saleh as the commander. [@NDawsari](#)

9. "Miss Me Yet?" What the UAE Drawdown Means For the United States and UN in Yemen

10 July 2019. The UAE's current intention to limit its military involvement means that the UAE's small mission in the city of Marib is almost completely gone, the frontline "advise, assist, and accompany" battlegroup at the Red Sea port of Hodeidah is leaving, and the large stabilization battlegroup in the Hadi government's temporary capital of Aden is also going home. And while a drawdown was inevitable—no country the size of the UAE can permanently maintain the country's current three large battlegroups and many smaller detachments in Yemen—withdrawing so much support at such an early point in the stabilization of the country risks losing what stabilization the UAE and local forces have so far been able to achieve. [Washington Institute](#)

10. Saudi Arabia says it intercepts bomb-laden Yemen rebel drone

9 July 2019. KSA says it has intercepted a Houthi drone targeting "civilian infrastructure" in the kingdom. The Houthi's Al-Masirah satellite television station said the Houthis sought to again target Abha regional airport, which they've hit several times in recent weeks, as well as a power station in Abha. [AP](#)

11. US troubled by rise in Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia

11 July 2019. The US voiced concern Wednesday to the UN's Yemen envoy over a recent uptick in Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo thanked Martin Griffiths for his efforts to end the Yemen conflict but "expressed concern over the recent increase in Iranian-supported Houthi attacks into Saudi territory that exacerbate the conflict and deepen mistrust," the State Department said. "The Secretary and the Special Envoy agreed that parties must continue working toward a political settlement and an end to the conflict in Yemen," spokeswoman Morgan Ortogus said in a statement. [Middle East Monitor](#)

12. US-Iran Tensions Overshadow Houthi Agenda in War in Yemen

3 July 2019. The Houthis have benefitted from Iranian weapons, but even if Tehran ceased shipments today they could sustain the conflict for the foreseeable future with what remains in their stockpile. It is unlikely that the U.S. or Saudi coalition can force an end to Iran's material support through military or security operations. The Houthis' ties with Iran have always seemingly been more about sustaining its military operations to achieve the group's own political goals rather than fulfilling Iran's agenda. The most viable way to prevent a deeper Iranian connection is through a political solution that ends in the Houthis' military needs. As such, it is critical that U.S.-Iran tensions do not overshadow the unique local dynamics of the conflict and push the conflict into deeper territory and the Houthi closer to Iran. Instead, it is necessary to de-escalate in the region and continue efforts to reach a political solution. [Jamestown Foundation](#)

13. Yemen: Over 460K cases of cholera registered to date this year

8 July 2019. Recent flash flooding has accelerated the spread of cholera across Yemen, exacerbated by poor maintenance of waste management systems and lack of access to clean water for drinking or irrigation. As of today, the cholera outbreak has reached over 460,000 suspected cases this year, including approximately 200,000 children. This exceeds the 380,000 total suspected cases in the whole of 2018. So far this year, 705 deaths have been recorded from suspected cholera – versus 75 deaths in the same period last year or nine times more. [OCHA](#)

KEY EVENTS

1. National Commission of Inquiry monitors 939 incidents of violation within three months

7 July 2019. The National commission of Inquiry into allegations of human rights violations said it had monitored and investigated 939 incidents of violation in a number of Yemeni governorates over the past three months. In a statement on Saturday, the committee added that among the cases of violations that it monitored from April 1 to June 30, "423" cases of targeting civilians and (297) cases of enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest and torture, and (51) cases of the cultivation of individual mines and vehicles, in which 82 victims were killed, in addition to 28 cases of murder out of the law, (19) cases of recruiting children, one incident to target medical crews, and 13 incidents of bombing houses. It noted that during the monitoring and investigation process, "2817" Witnesses and testimonies were heard, as well as the receipt of files that were monitored and documented by civil society organizations. [Al-Masdar](#)

2. UNICEF: Yemen's basic services on the verge of total collapse

1 July 2019. UNICEF: only 51 per cent of the country's health facilities are still working in full, although they suffer from a severe shortage of medicines, equipment and staff. Accordingly, the maternal mortality rate rose sharply during the war, from five deaths per day in 2013 to 12 deaths in 2018. [Middle East Monitor](#)

3. Government team: Houthis Use United Nations Buildings to Target Government Forces

7 July 2019. The Yemeni government accused Houthi group for using UN buildings in the city of Hodeidah, to launch rockets and projectiles towards the liberated areas south of the city. This came in a written message sent by the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel of the Committee for redeployment, Brigadier General bin Aziz addressing Chairman of the Grand Commission of International Inspectors, Michael Ollesgard, calling on him to visit areas affected by the bombing of Houthi militias and take the necessary measures to stop repeated attacks by the putschists in Hodeidah. [Sawt Saba'](#)

4. Houthis raise over \$100k for Lebanese Hezbollah

5 July 2019. After finishing its fundraising campaign this week for Lebanese Hezbollah, Yemen's Houthi insurgent group has reported that it raised over \$100,000 for the terrorist organization. Sam FM, the Houthi-ran radio station that organized the fundraising campaign, said today that "thanks to God and the awareness and generosity of the public, the mujahid radio station Sam FM, gave in the campaign of the free men of the great Yemeni people 73,500,000 Yemeni Rial." This amount equals to about 132,000 USD, according to Sam FM. [Long War Journal](#)

5. Representatives of Southern Transition Council in Geneva hold seminar entitled "The Right of People of the South to Restore their Independent State"

4 July 2019. The Seminar was held on the sidelines of the forty-first session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. In the seminar, Dr. Aidaroos Nasr Al-Naqib, head of the General Department of Foreign Affairs of the Southern Transitional Council, delivered a speech on the international and national legitimacy for the restoration of the independent southern state, indicating the legal foundations and sacrifices of the people of the South to achieve their legitimate aspirations. Dr. Al-Naqib stressed that resolving the southern issue requires respecting the will of the southern people and granting them the legal and natural right to restore their state and choose their free path towards the future that is determined by its citizens. [STC Official Web Site](#)

6. Opinion: Arms Dealers and Lobbyists Get Rich as Yemen Burns

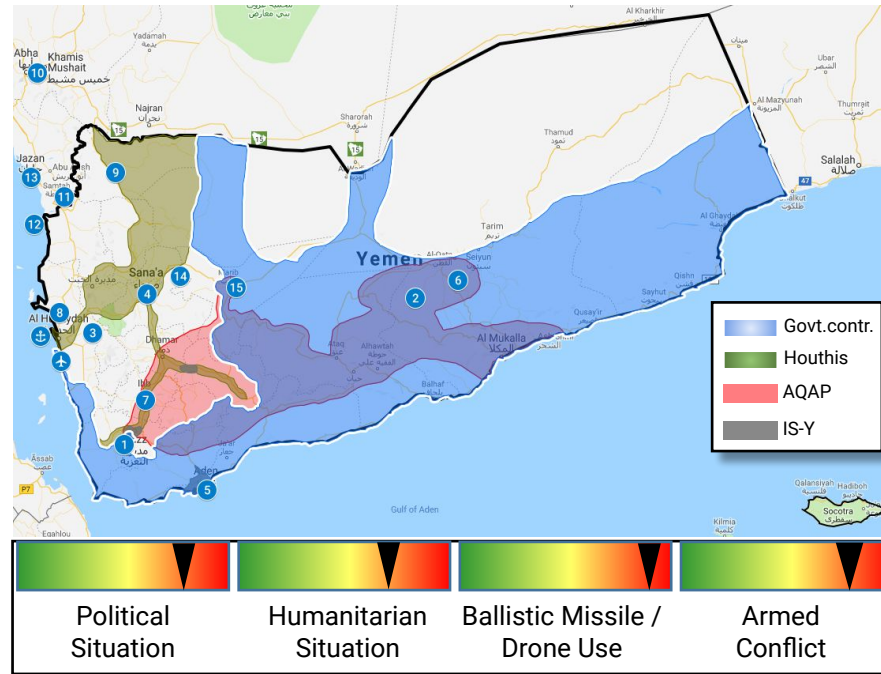
25 June 2019. Chronic human rights violator Saudi Arabia is using American-made weapons against civilians in the fifth-poorest nation in the world, Yemen. And make no mistake: U.S. defense contractors and their lobbyists and supporters in government are getting rich in the process. [TAC](#)

7. Coalition fighters bomb al-Hamza camp in Ibb for the fourth time in a week

7 July 2019. Arab coalition fighter jets on Sunday afternoon launched airstrikes targeting sites and gatherings of militants of the Houthi group in Ibb central province of the country. Local sources said that the fighters carried out four air raids on the Houthis in the camp located in Al-Sabrah Directorate South east of Ibb province, without knowing the losses caused by the raids. The raids came two days after airstrikes targeted the Houthi positions at al-Haszah camp, bringing the number of raids to 20 in one week. [Al-Masdar](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(01 - 08 Jul 2019)



ASSESSMENT

- *The arms exhibition yesterday showed the challenge by Houthis to the Coalition and gave the message that the more the Coalition tries to hurt Houthis the more it will reciprocate. The Stockholm Agreement seems to have only succeeded in securing Houthi gains in Hodeidah by precluding military option in the city. This means economy of forces or more ready Houthi forces in other fronts to counter Coalition and government forces.*
- *Houthis are often conflated with the whole population in North and the Zaydis, which is not the case. They are effectively controlling the state in the north and will not let it go easily. So, opinion suggesting restart of political negotiations will not yield result if they do not secure Houthi ambitions. Even if a compromise seems to have reached at the table, Houthis will not abide by its provisions if those do not fit their agenda.*
- *UAE withdrawal from Yemen shows fractures within Coalition, war fatigue and a rational decision making seeing no more benefits in the current stalemate. What is more, the UAE has already supported an effective entity, STC that has its own security forces and is increasing its support base for leading a divided Yemen. So, UAE decision to have lesser footprint in Yemen should not come as a surprise.*

8. Yemeni officials say rebels kill 10 in attacks in Hodeida

7 July 2019. Yemeni officials and witnesses say rebel attacks have killed at least 10 pro-government forces in the key port city of Hodeida. They say the clashes, which flared up Wednesday, wounded at least seven civilians when shells hit their residential areas in the contested Red Sea city. Yemen's internationally recognized government accused the Houthi rebels of using U.N. facilities in Hodeida to attack its forces. [AP](#)

9. More than 15 Houthi elements were killed in raids by coalition fighters in Saa'da

6 July 2019. The Azal Axis spokesperson said: "Several Coalition airstrikes were conducted on Houthi militia positions in "Ibarat", in the south of Baqim Directorate, Saa'da. Two air strikes carried out earlier by the coalition fighters on the groups of the militia coup on one of the buildings on the " White Hill " overlooking the center of the Directorate of Baqim, Saa'da resulted in the deaths of more than 15 Houthi elements and wounding many. [Sabancet](#)

10. Houthi drone attack on Saudi Arabia's Abha Airport leaves nine injured

2 July 2019. A drone attack by Houthi movement on Abha Airport in Saudi Arabia early on Tuesday left nine people injured included one Indian and eight Saudis, a Saudi-led coalition statement said. [Reuters](#)

11. Arab Coalition intercepts Houthi drones targeting Saudi Arabia's Jazan airport

5 July 2019. Houthi government mouthpiece Al Masirah had declared to have targeted military sites in Jizan Airport on 4 July 2019. The Arab Coalition denied such claims saying its forces were able to intercept and destroy drones launched by the Houthi militia toward the airport in Jazan. In a statement, the Arab Coalition spokesman, said the drones were launched by the Houthi militia from Sanaa in Yemen. [Alarabiya](#)

12. Arab Coalition says Houthi drones intercepted before they reached targets

6 July 2019. The Arab Coalition has denied claims made by the Houthis that the militia targeted aircraft belonging to the coalition within Saudi territories. The spokesperson of the Arab Coalition, said on Saturday that forces were able to intercept the drones launched by the Houthis before they reached their targets inside Saudi Arabia. [Alarabiya](#)

13. Houthis launch offensives on Jizan and Abha Airports

6 July 2019. Houthis launched several offensives with Qasif 2K drones on Jet fighters' revetment and important military sites in Abha and Jizan Airports. The spokesman of the Armed Forces claimed that the drones accurately hit targets, resulting in halting all air traffic in both airports. Houthi Armed Forces spokesman said that more painful operations will continue, if the Saudi-led aggression and siege against Yemen continue. [Almasirah](#)

14. Missiles and Drones: A Close Look at Houthis' New Weapons

7 July 2019. The Houthis unveiled new locally-manufactured missiles and drones in a small military exhibition attended by senior Yemeni officials. During the exhibition, the Houthis showcased for the first time their Quds-1 cruise missile, Badir-F precision-guided tactical ballistic missile, as well as Samad-1 (identical to Hezbollah's Mirsad UAV), Samad-3 (same as first generation with an additional conformal fuel tank to extends range in a significant way,) and Qasef-2K (identical to that of the Qasef-1, which is a copy of the Iranian Ababil-2) unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Some older weapons systems were also displayed like the Scud-based Burkan-1 and Burkan-2H tactical ballistic missiles, Badir-1 and Badir-1P artillery rockets, Qahir-2M missile, which is based on the S-75 air defense missile. [South Front](#)

15. UAE Drawdown May Isolate Saudi Arabia in Yemen

2 July 2019. UAE sources claim that Emirati units are almost 100 pc out of Marib, 80 pc out of Hodeida, and beginning to withdraw from Aden, leaving local oversight to the Yemeni forces they have trained (i.e., the Security Belt and the Elite Forces). Yemeni sources confirm at least part of the Aden drawdown. Similarly, Emirati staff in the key forward operating base of Assab, Eritrea, have declined by about 75 percent in the past two months, including personnel who trained Yemeni forces. The drawdown is not obvious in some areas; for example, Yemeni sources claim that no withdrawal is apparent in Shabwa province, where fighting persists over the oil districts of Bayhan. Moreover, UAE-funded mercenaries, including at least 10,000 Sudanese fighters supported out of the Assab base, will remain on hand to back Yemen's military. Perhaps most important, UAE forces will continue running counterterrorism operations out of their base in al-Mukalla, the city they liberated from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in 2016. [The Washington Institute](#)

KEY EVENTS

1. Press Release: Saudi Special Forces Capture Leader of Daesh Branch in Yemen

28 June 2019. The Coalition claimed through a press release that Saudi special forces captured the leader of Yemen branch of Daesh a.k.a. Abu Osama al-Muhajir together with other elements of the group to include financial officer on Sunday, 3 June 2019. ([MOFA KSA](#)) Yemeni tribal leaders said the raid took place in Mahfad district, a stronghold for the group in Yemen's southern province of Abyan. ([AP](#)) Colin P. Clarke from RAND estimates numbers of its militants to 100-250.

2. U.S.: Saudi Pipeline Attacks Originated From Iraq

29 June 2019. U.S. officials have concluded that drone attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil industry in May were launched from Iraq, not Yemen, raising concerns that Iran's allies in the region are trying to open a new front in the conflict between Tehran and Washington. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged Iraq's prime minister to take steps to ensure that Iraq isn't used as a new staging ground for attacks. Iraqi leaders are questioning the U.S. assessment and have asked the Trump administration for more evidence to support its claims. [The Wall Street Journal](#)

3. UAE scales down military presence in Yemen as Gulf tensions flare

28 June 2019. The United Arab Emirates, a key member of the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen, is scaling back its military presence there as worsening U.S.-Iran tensions threaten security closer to home, four western diplomatic sources said. The UAE has pulled some troops from the southern port of Aden and Yemen's western coast, two of the diplomats said, areas where the Gulf state has built up and armed local forces who are leading the battle against the Iran-aligned Houthi group along the Red Sea coast.

Three of the diplomats said Abu Dhabi preferred to have its forces and equipment on hand should tension between the United States and Iran escalate further after attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf and Tehran's downing of a U.S. unmanned drone. [Reuters](#)

4. Yemeni officials say Saudi-led coalition airstrikes kill 7

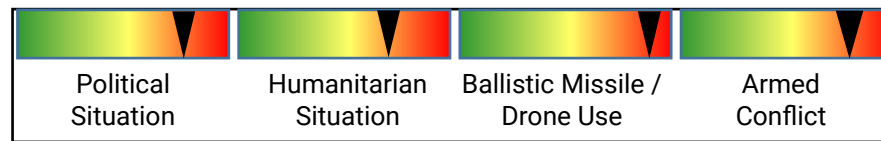
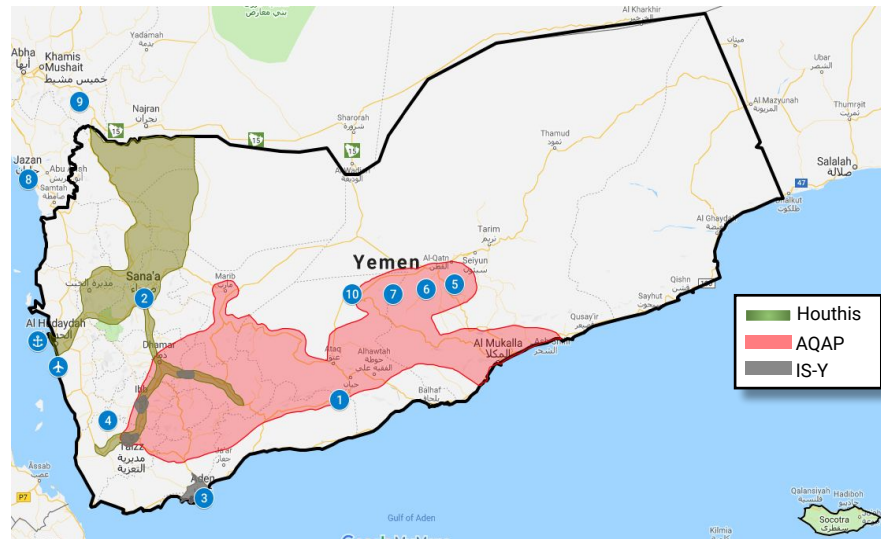
20 June 2019. Yemeni officials say airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition fighting rebels have hit a house in the southwestern province of Taiz, killing at least seven people from one family. They say the two airstrikes took place Friday in the Khadir district, and that the dead included a woman and four children. [AP](#)

5. UN report: 7,500 kids killed or wounded in Yemen since 2013

29 June 2019. 7,508 children/youngsters have been killed or wounded in Yemen in the last 5 1/2 years as a result of airstrikes, shelling, fighting, suicide attacks, mines and other unexploded ordnance, according to a U.N. report released Friday. The report said the killings and injuries were among 11,779 grave violations against children during the period between April 1, 2013 and Dec. 31, 2018. Accordingly, the recruitment and use of 3,034 children by the warring parties — including 1,940 by the Houthis and 274 by the government — was the second largest violation. It also said 340 boys were verified to have been detained for their actual or alleged association with the warring parties.

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(24 - 30 Jun 2019)



ASSESSMENT

- US claim that the rockets hitting Saudi pipeline facilities were not fired from Yemen but Iraq brings to mind disproportionate reaction of Bolton after a rocket fell in the Green Zone. A clear intention is visible to propagate the crisis across the region for a reason. As Iraqi officials stated, the US administration should provide concrete evidence. If true, the tension will rise and US will pressure Iran together with its proxies.
- Last week, UAE's pull of forces and their replacement with mercenaries was written here. This week the news found more outlets in the Western media. According to them, the motive behind this move was to have more soldiers in the homeland for the eventuality of a US-Iran confrontation. The real reason behind the move might be UAE's willingness to be in the driving seat in shaping internal Yemeni political landscape while having lower footprint as reactions to its interference grow both within the government and the Yemeni society. What is more, its open support to STC or Hirak deprives the latter from the legitimacy it seeks.
- UN report on children in Yemen best depicts what awaits Yemen in future where it reads: "attacks on schools remained high, with 345 of the 381 that were verified causing the partial or total destruction of the building. The United Nations verified the use of 258 schools for military purposes." So we know about the catastrophe in Yemen today and should know today precludes a shiny future for the country, as the war processes its coming generations.

The report said the number of children denied access to humanitarian assistance sharply increased over the 5 1/2 years, "with catastrophic consequences." It said the U.N. verified 828 incidents where aid was denied.

The second report on children also noted that attacks on schools and hospitals remained high, with 345 of the 381 that were verified causing the partial or total destruction of the building. Of "great concern," the report said, is the verified military use of 258 schools, which is higher than the 244 schools that were attacked. The result is that thousands of boys and girls were prevented "safe access to education," it said. [AP](#)

6. Former FM Khaled Yamani breaks his silence on reason for his resignation

30 June 2019. Yamani broke his silence, declaring that the reason behind his resignation on 10 June was his remarks made on the performance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In an interview with «Arabiyya», he commented «without Saudi support, the Yemeni government would not be able to carry out its work». In the interview, he further made a call to UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, to be clear on the implementation of Security Council resolutions and the terms of reference, explaining that the United Nations has committed significant errors in the Yemeni file, in reference to the treatment of the Yemeni government and the Houthi militias on an equal footing. [Barakish.net](#)

7. Un Special Envoy Meets with The Government of Yemen in Riyadh

26 June 2019. The meeting discussed steps needed to move forward with the peace process in Yemen and reiterated the importance of achieving substantial and speedy progress in implementing the Stockholm Agreement. The Special Envoy reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to continue working with the parties for a comprehensive Yemeni-led peace agreement in Yemen, and urged all parties to create a conducive environment to make this a reality. [OESGY](#)

8. Yemen's Houthis attack Jizan Airport

30 June 2019. Houthi Forces Spokesperson Brigadier Sare'e claimed to have conducted drone attacks on both Abha and Jizan airports putting both out of service. He further claimed: "The operation in Jizan Airport targeted air traffic control for jet fighters and that targets in both airports have been destroyed. He concluded the airports, military sites and vital facilities of Coalition countries have become insecure. [Almasirah](#)

9. Alliance destroys "Drone" launched towards the residential area in Assir

30 June 2019. The spokesperson for the Coalition announced on Saturday evening that the coalition forces were able to intercept a second drone destined for residential area in the region of Assir at 11: 45. Earlier Houthis had launched another one destined to Jizan at 22:45. [Al-Arabiya](#)

10. Drone Launched by Houthis Intercepted in Southwestern Saudi Arabia

26 June 2019. The Coalition for the Support of Legitimacy in Yemen has said that the Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces intercepted and downed a drone launched by the Houthi terrorist militias towards a residential area in Khamis Mushayt in southwestern Saudi Arabia. [Asharq Al Awsat](#)



KEY EVENTS

1. World Food Programme begins partial suspension of aid in Yemen

21 June 2019. The UN WFP has started a partial suspension of food assistance operations in areas of Yemen under the control of the Sana'a-based authorities. The decision was taken as a last resort after lengthy negotiations stalled on an agreement to introduce controls to prevent the diversion of food away from some of the most vulnerable people in Yemen by introduction of a biometric registration system. At this stage, with the support of the entire United Nations system, WFP is suspending in Sana'a city only, affecting 850,000 people. WFP will maintain nutrition programmes for malnourished children, pregnant and nursing mothers throughout the period of suspension. (WFP)

2. Coalition: One killed, seven injured in Houthi attack on Saudi Abha airport

23 June 2019. The Arab Coalition said on Sunday that the Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist militia launched an attack targeting Saudi Arabia's Abha International Airport. Officials said one resident who is a Syrian national was killed and seven other were injured. (Al-Arabiya)

3. Coalition jets destroy two Houthi drones in Yemeni air space

22 June 2019. The fighter jets of the Arab Coalition backing the legitimate government in Yemen on Saturday intercepted and destroyed two drones in the Yemeni air space. The Coalition said the drones were launched by the Iranian-backed Houthi militia from the Sanaa Governorate. (Al-Arabiya)

4. Yemen's Houthi rebels hit Saudi facility with 'cruise missile'

20 June 2019. Yemen's Houthi rebels hit a power station in Saudi Arabia's southern province of Jizan with a "cruise missile", the group's Al Masirah TV channel reported. On Thursday, the Saudi-Emirati-led military coalition in Yemen confirmed Houthi forces fired a "projectile" at a desalination plant in Al Shuqaiq city, but said no one was wounded and there was no damage caused to the facility. It was not possible to independently confirm if it was a power station or desalination facility that was hit. (Al Jazeera)

5. Houthis Down Drones

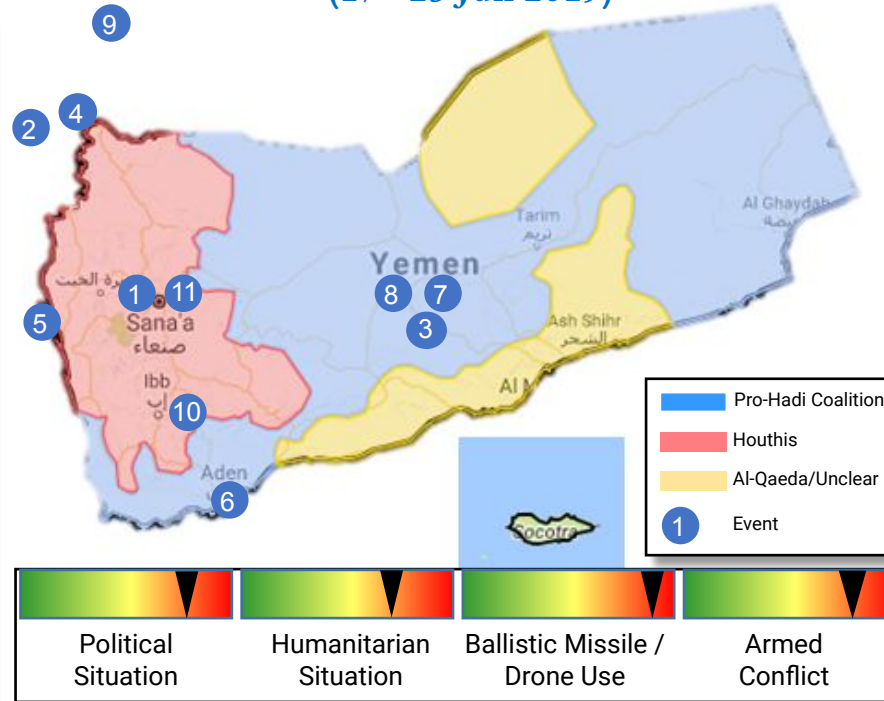
23 June 2019. Pro-Houthi Almasira.net claimed Houthis shot down a spy drone off Sudais in Najran, south of Arabia. It further added Houthis on Saturday shot down a spy drone in Haradh district of Hajja and another spy drone in Faza area of Hodeidah on Friday. (Almasira)

6. As Sudanese troops arrive, Emirati troops leave Aden

22 June 2019. A secret source told "Al Masdar Online" that source said: "The tanks and military vehicles belonging to the UAE left the oil port in the west of Aden for the first time since arrival about four years ago. Associated with this, Sudanese troops had reached the city, preparing to move further towards Abbas military camp in the west of Aden. (Al-Masdar Online)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(17 - 23 Jun 2019)



ASSESSMENT

- This week military confrontation between Houthis and Coalition continued in increased tempo. We have been observing a radical change in the way the war is waged in Yemen especially since last month. Houthis target "high value targets" whereas Saudis conduct air raids mostly in Sa'adah and Sana'a and target Houthi military assets in northern and central Yemen. Upon seeing inability of their air defense systems to intercept Houthi drones last week, the Coalition declared to have downed two Houthi drones by patrol fighters in air.*
- Yemen has its place in the regional balance and latest tension between the US and Iran continue to evidence itself in Yemen also. As the tension increases, the Houthis will likely increase rate and dispersion of drone attacks to Saudi Arabia and the UAE as those serve also as show of force for the part of Iran. This week announcement of Houthi media organ Almasirah that they have downed three Saudi spy drones is also a challenge to the latter in terms of superiority of weaponry.*
- The ACLED press release mapping destruction in Yemen in the last four and a half years hints there may be backward investigation of those that have complicity in civilian casualties.*
- After accusation that UAE was trying to annex Socotra, the country seems to have decided to lower footprint in Yemen. It is likely that the country will replace its units with those of Sudan or with paid mercenaries from Africa.*

7. UK Court Finds Weapons Sales to Saudis Unlawful**

20 June 2019. In an "historic" Thursday ruling, the U.K. Court of Appeal declared unlawful the government's decision to allow weapons sales to Saudi Arabia while it wages war on Yemen without assessing breaches of international humanitarian law. The judgment (pdf) came in response to a judicial review brought by Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)—joined by Amnesty International, Rights Watch U.K., and Human Rights Watch. Amnesty's Lucy Claridge called the ruling "a rare piece of good news for the people of Yemen." (Common Dreams)

8. Yemen War Death Toll Exceeds 90,000 According To New ACLED Data

18 June 2019. With addition of new data for 2015, the total number of reported fatalities in Yemen reaches to some than 91,600 over the past four and a half years. Approximately 17,100 were reported in 2015; 15,100 in 2016; 16,800 in 2017; 30,800 in 2018; and 11,900 in 2019 thus far.

ACLED records **nearly 4,500 direct civilian targeting events resulting in approximately 11,700 reported civilian fatalities**² since 2015. Approximately 4,500 reported fatalities in 2015; 2,200 in 2016; 1,900 in 2017; 2,400 in 2018; and 600 in 2019 thus far. The **Saudi-led coalition and its allies remain responsible for the highest number of reported civilian fatalities** from direct targeting, with over 8,000 since 2015. Around 67% of all reported civilian fatalities in Yemen over the last four and a half years have been caused by Saudi-led coalition airstrikes. The Houthis and their allies are responsible for over 1,900 reported civilian fatalities from direct targeting. (ACLED)

9. New map of important battle along Saudi-Yemeni border

20 June 2019. The battle for the Saudi-Yemeni border has recently intensified over the last two weeks, as the Houthi forces continue to advance in the Najran and Asir provinces. Earlier this week, the Houthi forces scored a massive advance along the border when their troops captured several areas inside the Barakin and Sayyaf Mountains. (AMN)

10. Houthi Militias Cut Off Operational Links between Qa'tabah and Ibb

24 June 2019. Houthi militias proceeded days ago to cut and close the general line that connects the Qa'atabah District and the province of Ibb, and prevent the passage of vehicles and pedestrians in it. The line is the main artery that feeds all the northern provinces and all goods and passengers from Aden to Sanaa and vice versa pass through it. (Tahdeeth.Net)

11. Abdulmalik al-Houthi wages a new war on his cousin Mohammed Azim .

23 June 2019. Militia "Malik" squeeze neck on followers of his cousin, Mohammed Azim al-Huthi and throws tens of them in prisons local resources in Sana'a reported. "Yemeni Observer" sources explained Azim raced frantically to control the mosques, councils and zakat resources. The sources indicated that the militia campaign justified the arrests by the failure of pro-Mohammad Azim for what it called "jihad" and move to fronts to support its elements. (Barq Press)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(10 - 16 Jun 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemeni Drones Attack Jizan and Abha Airports

15 June 2019. Yemeni Air Force [Houthis] carried out attacks with drones, Qasef-2K, on Saudi Abha and Jizan Airports. Brigadier Sare'e said that the operation in Saudi Abha Airport targeted fuel stations. He mentioned that both operations in Saudi Jizan and Abha airports accurately destroyed targets, both airports are out of service. Yemeni Armed Forces Spokesman warned the Saudi regime of more painful days if its aggression and siege against Yemen continue. Air traffic watch centers confirm disturbance of air traffic in Saudi Jizan and Abha airports after Yemeni drones attack. [Almasirah](#)

2. President of the Arab Parliament: targeting of Abha airport is a war crime

12 June 2019. The head of the Arab parliament, Dr. Meshaal al-Salami, condemned the terrorist act that targeted the international airport of Abha by the Iranian-backed Houthi militia and declared it a war crime, denouncing the terrorist act in the strongest possible terms. He demanded UN Security Council to adopt a firm and immediate stance to classify the coupist Houthi militia as a terrorist group for its flagrant violation of international law and to target the civilian and vital installations in Saudi Arabia with ballistic missiles and drones. [Sabanet](#)

3. Saudi-led Arab coalition targets Houthi sites in Sanaa

15 June 2019. The operation came just days after Saudi Arabia's air defense forces shot down five drones launched by Houthi militia towards the southern border region of Asir.

The spokesperson of the coalition, Col. Al-Maliki said the drones were targeted at Abha International Airport and the city of Khamis Mushayt on Thursday night. [Arab News](#)

4. Yemen's Houthis, in tit-for-tat, launch fresh attacks against Abha airport

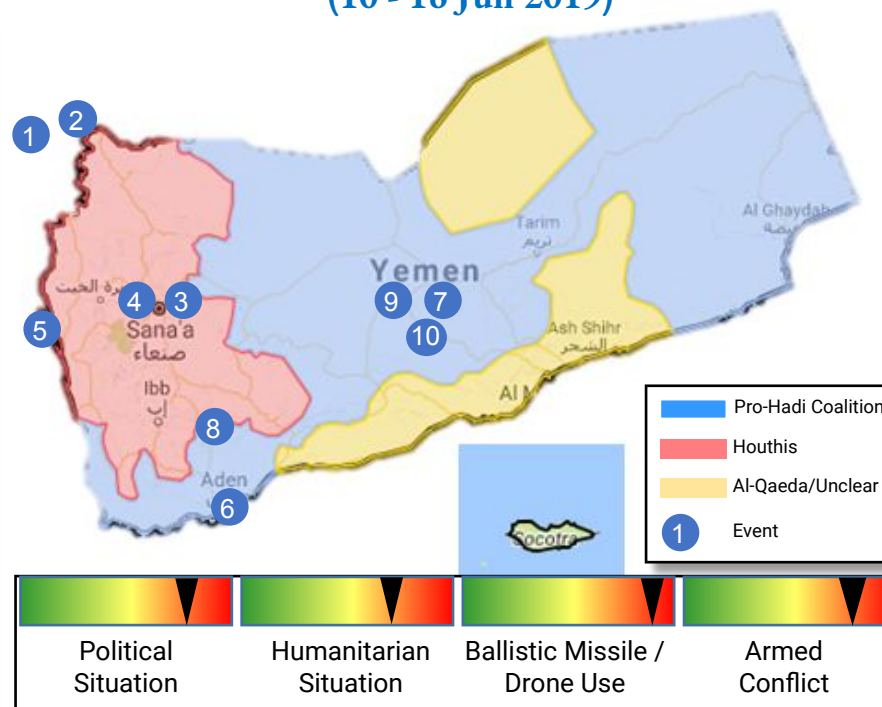
14 June 2019. They have launched several drone strikes against Abha regional airport in southern Saudi Arabia, the Houthi television channel reported, two days after it claimed responsibility for a missile attack against the same airport. [Reuters](#)

5. UN mission urges Houthis to remove trenches at Hodeida port

12 June 2019. Lt. Gen. Michael Lollesgaard said Wednesday that the U.N. mission has not detected a rebel military presence in Hodeida and the two small ports of Salif and Ras Isa since May 14. But he said there are still usable rebel military positions in Hodeida. The redeployment from the ports is considered an important first step toward ending the civil war in Yemen. [AP](#)

6. Yemen foreign minister resigns amid differences over UN efforts

10 May 2019. Yemen's foreign minister submitted his resignation as differences emerge within the Saudi-backed government over the handling of a UN-led peace initiative in the main port city of Hudaydah, two ministry sources said on Monday. Khaled al-Yamani, who took over the post in May 2018, said he would step down after some officials in the government of Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi faulted him for not criticising United Nations special envoy Martin Griffiths' performance. [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- The latest drone attacks to Saudi Abha Airport and further statement by US CENTCOM that its armed surveillance drone MQ-9 was downed by Houthi SA-6 surface to air missile have repercussions in the landscape of rhetorics. Houthis have used the former to claim helplessness of the Saudis and inefficiency of US supplied Patriot missiles in face of Qasef 2K drones. They have further used the latter as proof of direct US implication in the war as Saudis failed.
- Saudis have PAC-2 and PAC-3 Patriot systems developed in 1980s and 2000. The former became famous during Gulf War for intercepting SCUDs of Saddam in 1991. But little known is that even then kill-rate was a meager 9 per cent. Inability of the Saudi Air Defense Units to intercept Houthi drones will likely continue to feed questioning on technical superiority of the Patriots and Saudi ability to man such extremely vital and expensive systems.
- Houthi attacks to the Abha Airport and Khamis Musbait, as any other civilian targeting, constitutes a war crime. However, Saudi Arabia's record does not look any brighter. Within 19,748 Coalition air raids, so far, only 6,784 are confirmed military targets. The rest are 6235 non-military and 6729 unknown targets. Both Coalition members should draw lessons from this event.

7. Iran FM: UAE trying to become the 'second Israel' of the Middle East

12 June 2019. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif has stated that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is attempting to become the region's "second Israel" by increasing its arms imports. In the interview with Al Araby TV yesterday, Zarif said that "three countries in the region believe they can maintain their security through their relations with the United States," in reference to Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Israel. He added, however, that they would be wrong to believe the weapons can guarantee security from the US, as they would be used to achieve the goals of Israel.

Studies have shown that the UAE's arms imports increased by 63 per cent between 2012 and 2016, and that its military spending is predicted to grow from \$23.6 billion in 2016 to \$31.8 billion by 2021, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. Dali' .. Yemeni army frees new sites and kills 12 Houthi militia

16 June 2019. Yemeni Army announced on Sunday that their forces backed by popular resistance units launched a surprise attack on the sites where the Houthi coup militias are stationed in northwest Qa'atabah District of Dali' province south of the country.

Media Center of the Armed Forces of Yemen reported that the Army and the resistance units were able to seize control of a number of positions and hills overlooking Zuberiaat near Shakhib area, in the north of Dali'. In the attack, at least 12 Houthi elements were killed while 20 others were wounded. The battles continue amid steady progress of the army. [Al-Arabiyya](#)

9. Opinion: Yemen's peace process is almost dead. Here's how to revive it.

15 June 2019. Many Yemenis have been disappointed by the lack of leadership displayed by Hadi over the past five years, not least because he remains a "hotel president" living in Saudi Arabia. It will be nearly impossible for Yemen to move forward without reshaping Hadi's position or his responsibilities, as only a strong government with broad support can lead Yemen to peace.

The failure of the Stockholm agreement to hold the parties to any sort of accountability should be a lesson. If the international community fails to strengthen the state's institutions and help the Yemeni government to regain its sovereignty, the underlying reasons for the conflict will remain — and the world's worst humanitarian crisis will likely continue without respite. [Beyond the Horizon](#)

10. Statement from US Central Command on attacks against U.S. observation aircraft

16 June 2019. A U.S. MQ-9 was shot down over Yemen by what we assess to be a Houthi SA-6 surface to air missile on Jun 6, 2019. The altitude of the engagement indicated an improvement over previous Houthi capability, which we assess was enabled by Iranian assistance. [US Central Command](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(03 - 09 Jun 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1.16 children killed, injured in Taiz during Eid

8 June 2019. The Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights yesterday stated that 16 children were killed or wounded after being targeted by a Houthi bombardment of the city of Taiz, northwest of Aden, during Eid El-Fitr.

The ministry said in a statement that “the children were targeted with shells and snipers stationed on the outskirts of Taiz, the main exits of which have been besieged by the Houthi movement since August 2015, despite the fact that the city is mostly controlled by government forces”. [Middle East Monitor](#)

2. The National Army controls several positions north of Saada

8 June 2019. Baqam, north of Saada province, have taken control of several sites including Tuba al-Bayda and al-Tabbab al-Aswad, which were controlled by the Iranian-backed Houthi-backed militia. [Sabaneer](#)

3. Saudi-led coalition says it evacuated crew member of Iranian ship

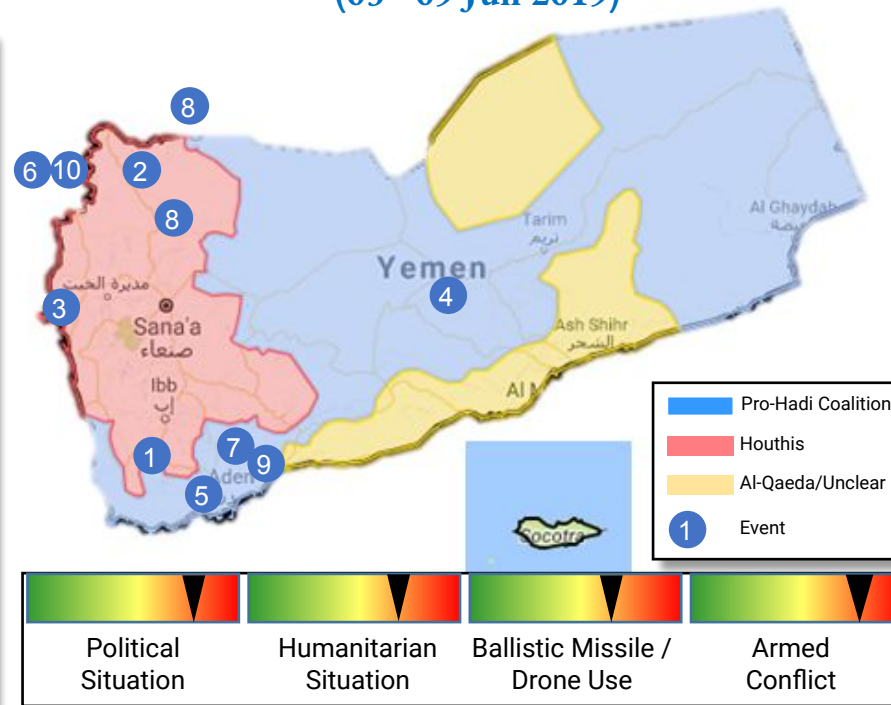
4 June 2019. The Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen said on Tuesday it evacuated a crew member for medical reasons from a “suspect” Iranian ship northwest of Yemen’s Hodeidah port after Saudi Arabia received a request for help from Iran. A coalition statement said the Iranian crew member was transported by MEDEVAC helicopter from the Iranian vessel Savis to a military hospital in the Saudi city of Jizan. Coalition spokesman Colonel Turki al-Malki said the kingdom had received the request from the Iranian charge d’affaires in the Iranian delegation to the UN. [Reuters](#)

4. French weapons sales to Saudi jumped 50 percent last year

4 June 2019. France’s weapons sales to KSA rose 50 pct in 2018 despite the government calling for an end to the “dirty war” in Yemen, figures released on Tuesday showed. An annual government report showed that total arms sales rose 30 percent to 9.1 billion euros in 2018, driven by a sharp increase in sales to European allies. France sold about 1 billion euros worth of arms to Saudi Arabia, with the main item being patrol boats. A partial naval blockade of ports controlled by the Houthi movement is one of the tactics used by the coalition in Yemen that has been criticized by campaigners for worsening a humanitarian crisis. [Reuters](#)

5. Houthis launch drone attack on Saudi-led coalition military parade in Aden

3 June 2019. Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthi movement launched a drone attack on a military parade for Saudi-led coalition forces in the port city of Aden, the group’s Al Masirah TV said early on Monday. The Saudi-owned Al-Hadath channel later quoted sources that the air defenses shot down a drone west of Aden. [Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- The war in Yemen continues in multi-fronts this week. The instability in the north becomes more and more ingrained as Houthis answer Saudi incursion towards Midi by drone attacks to Najran and Jizan and territorial advances crossing border in Najran axis. The balance between forces hint at more losses to both sides without seizable territorial gains.
- US pressure on the UAE to allow monitors inspect humanitarian abuses in Yemen detention centers verifies our previous assessment that at some point those perpetrating abuses will have to pay for what they did. The irresponsible actions committed in the heat of war cannot be kept hidden forever as means of communication and technology of the day allows for easy recording of such.
- The latest disaster coming with heavy rains have prompted government to react quickly. The behavior of especially the prime minister and his presence in Aden will likely increase the support to Hadi government.

6. Update of Confrontations with US-Saudi Forces in Jizan, Najran

30 May 2019. In Jizan, the Army and Committees (Houthis) carried out an offensive against the positions of the Saudi-mercenaries east of Al-Khouba. The offensive ended with the clearing of one of the sites. A number of Saudi-mercenaries were killed and wounded and the Yemeni army seized various weapons during the operation. In Najran, the Army and Committees (Houthis) have foiled two attempts of infiltration by the Saudi-mercenaries in two tracks towards their positions in Al-Beqa desert and Al-Ajashar. A number of Saudi-mercenaries were killed and wounded, as well as five military vehicles were destroyed during the two attempts. [Almasirah](#)

7. Trump presses UAE on alleged human rights abuses in Yemen

5 June 2019. The Trump administration is calling on the UAE to allow monitors to probe alleged incidents of torture in detention facilities in Yemen, just months after the Pentagon insisted that it had no evidence of detainee abuse. In a joint March report to Congress on US strategy in Yemen seen by Al-Monitor, the State and Defense departments and the US Agency for International Development said the US had “raised serious concern with the UAE” over the alleged abuse and “urged them to conduct a thorough investigation and allow access for independent monitors.” [Al-Monitor](#)

8. Houthi spokesman announces 20 new control areas in Najran

5 June 2019. The Houthi group’s spokesman, Brigadier General Yehia Sari, said the group’s fighters had taken control of more than 20 military positions in the Najran axis in a massive offensive operation in the last 72 hours. Accordingly, the Houthis stormed positions from three directions: Sawah, west of al-Sudais and al-Sudais. The Houthis inflicted 200 casualties and claimed the destruction and looting of more than 20 armored vehicles and seized weapons and heavy military equipment. [Mawki’ Post](#)

9. More than 3,000 families affected by heavy rains in four provinces

9 June 2019. The Executive Unit for the management of displaced persons camps announced that more than 3,000 families were affected by torrential rains that hit the four provinces of Lahj, Aden, Taiz and Hadhramout on Saturday evening. A preliminary report issued by the Executive Unit on the magnitude of the damage caused by torrential rains showed that the province of Lahj has the highest number of affected families, with a total of 315 affected households. [Saba Net](#)

10. [Houthi] Air Force Launches Fresh Attacks on Jizan Airport

9 June 2019. Houthis on Sunday carried out several offensive operations by Qasef-2K combat drones on Jizan International Airport, southern Saudi Arabia. Air Force source confirmed that the air attacks on Jizan airport targeted UAVs’ hangars and stations used in the aggression on Yemen, adding that the targeting was carried out after careful intelligence monitoring. The source pointed out that these attacks come after the aggression countries converted the airport to a military base to attack Yemen. [Al Masirah](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(27 May - 02 Jun 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Saudi-led coalition targets Houthis in Yemen's Ad Dali - Al Arabiya TV

29 May 2019. The Saudi-led coalition has started an operation against Houthi targets in the Yemeni province of Dalea, Al Arabiya TV reported on Wednesday. [Reuters](#)

2. Houthi leader killed in battles with army west of Taiz

1 June 2019. A senior leader of the Huthi militia was killed Friday by the fire of the National Army forces west of the city of Taiz, according to the site of the National Army, "September.Net." The targeting resulted in the death of the leader of Huthi al-Omari, a recruitment officer of the militia in the Directorate of the province of Dhamar with a number of his companions. [Al Tagheer](#)

3. France FM calls on Saudi Arabia, UAE to end 'dirty war' in Yemen

29 May 2019. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian yesterday called on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to end the conflict in Yemen which he described as a "dirty war". Le Drian's calls come days after French Armed Forces Minister, Florence Barley, said that all her country's efforts and those of the international community are focused on stopping the conflict in Yemen, using the term "dirty war" for the first time, AFP reported.

[Middle East Monitor](#)

4. We are in the final stages of developing and manufacturing various air defenses

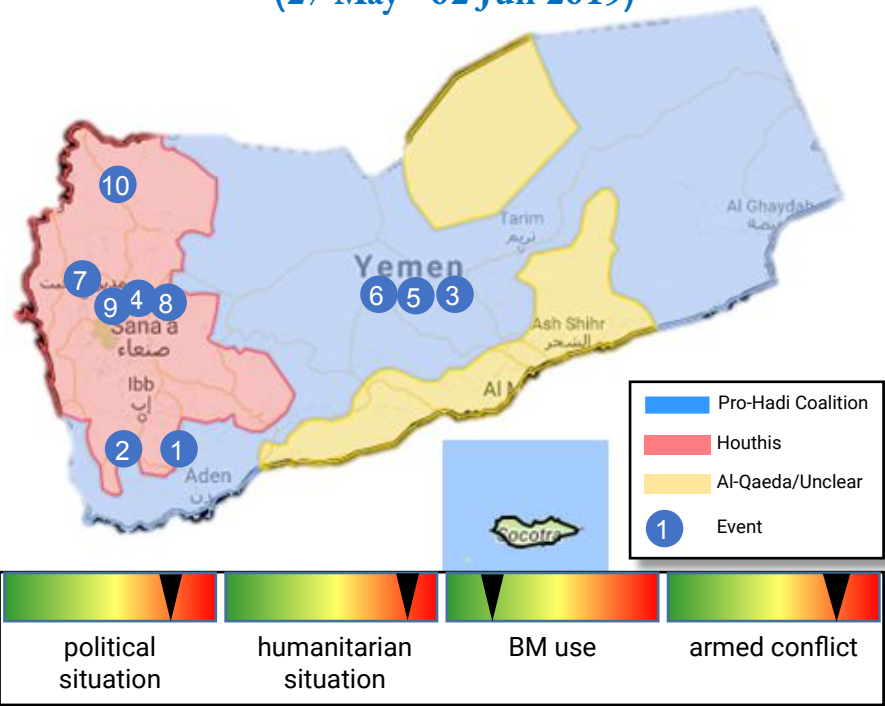
1 June 2019. Houthis' Minister of Defense, Major General Mohammad Nasser Al-Emati, said on Saturday that the Yemeni military industries have made great strides in the defense sector and will "surprise" Saudi Arabia and those of allies that are waging a war on the country. "We have developed and manufactured missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, rockets, and other kinds of weapons," he said. "We are now in the final stages of developing different air defenses." [Al Masirah](#)

5. Second Saudi ship leaves French port without arms cargo -rights group

30 May 2019. A Saudi cargo ship has left the southern French port of Fos-sur-Mer without loading its arms cargo destined for Saudi Arabia, blocked from doing so after pressure from rights campaigners, a French rights group said on Thursday. The incident reported by ACAT, a Christian organization against torture, is the second time this month that a Saudi vessel has been blocked from loading arms in France as pressure mounts on Paris to stop arms sales to the kingdom. [Reuters](#)

6. UN: 27 children killed, wounded in 10 days in Yemen

28 May 2019. "Seven children were killed on Friday in an attack on a fuel station in the Mawiyah district, in the southern Yemeni city of Taiz," UNICEF's executive director, Henrietta Fore, told reporters. She added that there were other children reported dead in Yemen's Houthi-held capital of Sanaa as a result of "continuous attacks." "This attack brings to 27 the number of children killed and injured in a recent escalation of violence near Sanaa and in Taiz over the past 10 days," Fore pointed out, explaining that the actual death toll was "likely to be even higher than the numbers provided by the UN." [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- Saudi announcement of two new operations, one in Dali' and the other in Sana'a has strategic and tactical implications. Strategically, Saudis want to enfeeble, if not totally annihilate, Houthi assets that has been hurting the Kingdom in form of drone attacks on its soil. Among those, petroleum facilities, airports and strategic military assets to include multi-billion-dollar Patriot air defense systems are both strategically important to be protected and also inability to do so shows the country defenseless. As Samuel Ramani says, this further add vigor to Houthi rhetoric targeting Saudi Arabia and help them increase popular support in the North.
- In Dali' on the other hand, the operation can be said to be dictated by tactical military requirements. Houthis' seizure of the provincial capital Qa'tabah and more than ten other towns in the beginning of May has enabled them to build logistical bridge between Al Bayda' and Taiz and opened the way to capital Aden, a mere 150 km. distance away from Qa'tabah.
- After the declaration of al-Zoubaidi, leader of Southern Transitional Council (STC) that they will establish combat hubs to oust units loyal to the internationally recognized government, his further advances in Hadramawt and Shabwa to extend influence / control over oil-producing zones and efforts to take over state powers in liberated areas will do more harm than help the struggle against Houthis.
- STC operates under UAE backing. This phenomenon where UAE feeds internal conflict and secession under mandate from government to win over another secessionist rebel group creates an interesting ecosystem in Yemen. STC demand for secession is not shared by all Yemenis especially in Hadramawt. Such moves of STC will likely deepen cracks in Yemen and complicate solution to the problem.

7. Yemen: Hajour, Brutality of Abuses

1 June 2019. According to the Rights Radar field monitoring team, there were 20,561 documented violations against human rights committed by the Houthi armed group during the period from January 1, 2019 to April 20, 2019 in Hajour tribe, Hajjah Governorate. These violations included murder, physical assaults, arrests, abductions, enforced disappearances, enforced displacement, in addition to destruction of homes and private property, violations of women's and children's rights and their right to education, blowing up, shelling and looting of health facilities and attacking their staff, the explosion and occupation of historical sites and places of worship, restricting freedom of expression and thought, as well as torture and maltreatment. [Rights Radar](#)

8. Yemen's Houthis fundraise for Hezbollah

29 May 2019. Yemen's Houthi movement recently announced that it began a fundraising drive to procure funds for Lebanese Hezbollah. The fundraising campaign comes after the US levied new sanctions against the Lebanese group last month.

The Houthis are not thought to be directly subordinate to Tehran like Hezbollah or other proxies. However, its role within the Iranian-led "axis" has become more evident in recent years. [Long War Journal](#)

9. CPJ calls on Houthis in Yemen to release all detained journalists

31 May 2019. The Ansar Allah group, known as the Houthis, should immediately release all journalists in its custody and stop its campaign of detentions and intimidation against journalists working in areas under its control, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today. The Houthis are expected to begin what they have described as trial proceedings in June or July for at least 10 journalists who have been detained for nearly four years, according to Abdullah al-Mansouri, the brother of one of the journalists, and a statement from the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate sent to CPJ by syndicate co-chair Nabil Alosaidi. [Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

10. Why the Houthi drone strikes targeted Saudi oil facilities

30 May 2019. Although Houthi drone strikes can be plausibly explained by Iran's desire to retaliate against Washington's exclusion of Tehran from global energy markets, this argument tells us only part of the story. My research on the Yemeni civil war suggests that these drone strikes can be partially explained by internal insecurities within the Houthi movement, as numerous Houthi officials have defected to Saudi Arabia in recent months. By targeting Saudi oil facilities, the Houthis can increase their popular support in northern Yemen. Houthi drone strikes play into the popular desire for revenge against Saudi Arabia's alleged theft of Yemen's oil wealth, showcase the Houthis' ability to counter Saudi bombardments, and counter Saudi depictions of the Houthis as a terrorist group that targets civilians.

[The Washington Post](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(20 - 27 May 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Houthi plane shot down south of Hodeidah

26 May 2019. The Joint Resistance Forces (JR) on Saturday evening shot down a military aircraft of the al-Houthi militia, south of the city of Al Hudaydah. [Al Tagheer](#)

2. Houthis Lose in Saa'da

26 May 2019. The Yemeni National Army with support of Saudi-led Coalition made advances in its operations against Houthis in their home town of Saada governorate yesterday. In Taiz, the army announced to have made new progress, and succeeded in controlling the mountains of Cairo. In the past week, the army had made progress by seizing control of the Samar mountain range, a strategic progress, as well as securing other sites that the army had previously liberated. [Al Tagheer](#)

3. Arab Coalition targets Houthi reinforcements in Yemen's Hajjah

25 May 2019. The Arab Coalition has targeted Houthi reinforcements in the Yemeni province of Hajjah on Saturday, an Al Arabiya correspondent reported. According to military sources, the coalition targeted Houthi military vehicles carrying weapons and ammunition, heading towards Houthi-controlled fronts.

The Arab Coalition had announced earlier in May that it has launched an operation on Houthi military targets in Yemen to "neutralize the ability of the Houthi militia to carry out acts of aggression." The Coalition's airstrikes target weapons' warehouses and Houthi posts in the Mountain of Attan in Sanaa. [al Arabiya](#)

4. Yemeni Drones Target Warplane Hangars at Jizan Airport

26 May 2019. Houthis on Sunday struck hangars that contain Saudi warplanes at Jizan Airport. A military source told Almasirah Net that the attack was carried out by a Qasef-K2 combat drone. The source confirmed that the operation successfully achieved its goals, after accurate intelligence monitoring.

The Houthis, in recent days, has targeted in three attack operations Najran Regional Airport, targeting arms depot, military aircraft hangars and Patriot missile system. The attacks hit the targets accurately.

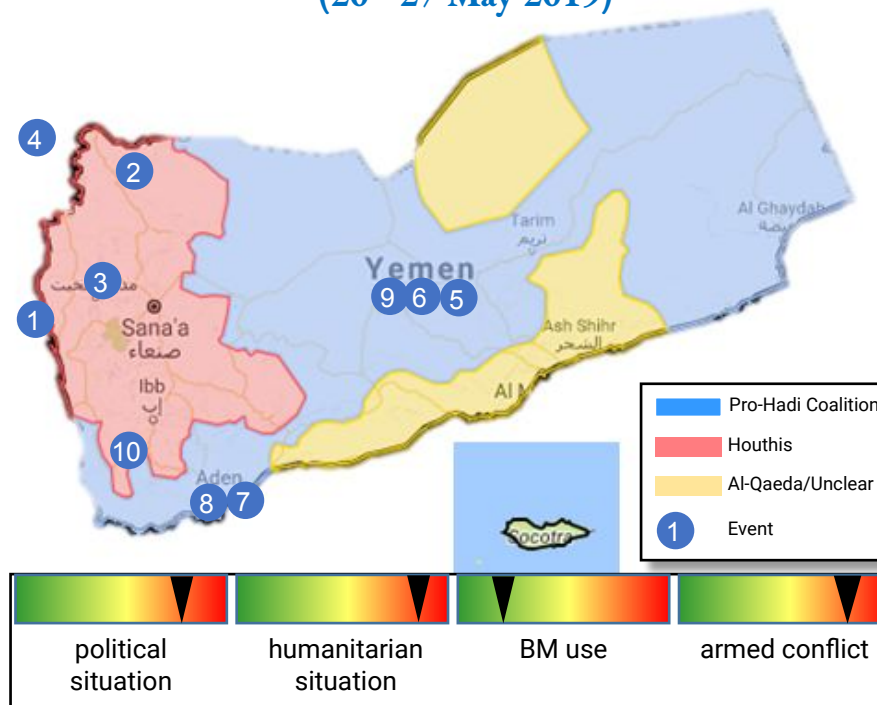
Ansarullah warned on Sunday that those strikes were the start of operations against 300 vital targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as well as positions inside Yemen, where the foreign aggressors and their mercenaries hold bases. [Al Masirah](#)

5. Saudi Arabia says it intercepted Houthi missiles in Mecca province

20 May 2019. Saudi Arabia said on Monday that it had intercepted two missiles in Mecca province fired by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis, who earlier denied having targeted Islam's holiest site. [Reuters](#)

6. Houthis deny targeting Mecca, accuse Saudis of lying

23 May 2019. Leader of the Shia rebels in Yemen, Abdul Malik Badruddin Al-Houthi denied, Wednesday, Saudi claims that his forces had targeted Mecca with rockets. Houthis described these claims as "lies." [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- The tense situation in Yemen is taking an even more volatile form as global dynamics evidence themselves in the war-torn country. In line with escalation of tension between the US and Iran, the tempo of conflict in Yemen has increased. As forces loyal to the government gained more ground in Taiz and Saada in the last week, Houthis bit Saudi air assets in Najran and Jizan. Two developments indicate that the tension will increase more in the coming weeks. Those are:
 - a. Saudi claims to have intercepted two Houthi rockets destined to Mecca, home to holiest temple for Muslims, and
 - b. Houthi warning that they were at the start of operations against 300 vital targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as well as positions inside Yemen.
- The political procedure to bring peace to Yemen does not promise hope either. President Hadi's first time ever letter to UN General Secretary to complain about his Special Envoy Griffiths shows both the non-progress in the situation and the helplessness of the government. The whole corpus of the letter clearly shows how Griffiths has favored Houthis on the expense of the internationally recognized government. However, the letter ends with: "I can not accept your Special Envoy to Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffith, unless you give sufficient guarantees to review the abuses and avoid repeating them." As Fatima Al Asrar says, the letter seems rather destined to vent internal pressure based on Hadi government's inability to make Houthis implement provisions of the Stockholm Agreement which became especially visible in the hand over of control in the ports of Hodeidah.

7. Yemen's president in letter to UN chief criticizes his envoy

24 May 2019. Yemen's internationally recognized president sent a letter to the U.N. secretary-general criticizing his envoy to the war-torn Arab country over allegedly siding with Iran-aligned Houthi rebels, the president's office said Friday.

In the letter addressed to Antonio Guterres, Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi accuses Martin Griffiths, the U.N. special envoy to Yemen, of undermining chances for peace. Hadi also warned his government would stop dealing with the U.N. envoy.

"I can no longer tolerate the violations committed by the special envoy, which threaten prospects for a solution," read the five-page letter, a copy of which was released to reporters Thursday.

It also accuses Griffiths of treating the "rebels as a de-facto government and as an equal to the legitimate and elected government" of Yemen. [AP](#)

8. UN chief rejects Yemen president's accusation of bias

26 May 2019. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has assured Yemen's leader that the world body will remain impartial in efforts to resolve the country's conflict, rejecting accusations that its envoy was siding with rebels in the country.

The pledge came in a letter from Guterres to President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, who had accused the UN special envoy to Yemen of impartiality.

"I would like to assure you that every effort will be made to maintain the impartial stance that is expected of the United Nations," while implementing a ceasefire agreement, Guterres said in the letter seen by AFP on Sunday. [The New Arab](#)

9. Despite Congress, Trump pushes through weapon sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE and Jordan

25 May 2019. The Trump administration has formally invoked an exemption that allows the White House to clear \$8.1 billion in weapon sales for Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates over congressional objections, in a move that could create trouble for the defense industry. Now, the administration is pushing through those weapons, as well as a mix of unmanned aerial vehicles and aircraft maintenance systems, using an obscure exemption to circumvent Congress' ability to say no to foreign weapon deals.

The Arms Export Control Act contains an exemption to sell weapons to partners in case of an emergency, something designed to speed up the process amid a crisis. In this case, Trump appears to be using the tense situation with Iran — based on intelligence reports that have been widely questioned by Democrats, but supported by the Pentagon — as a reason to push through the weapons. [DefenseNews](#)

10. Children among civilians killed in Saudi-led coalition strike on Yemen's Taiz

25 May 2019. Nine civilians were killed in overnight airstrikes east of Yemen's third city of Taiz, a medic and rebel forces said on Saturday.

Two children were among the nine killed in airstrikes by a Saudi-led military coalition fighting on the side of the government, a doctor at al-Thawra hospital told AFP. [The New Arab](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(13 - 20 May 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Insurer says Iran's Guards likely to have organized tanker attacks

17 May 2019. Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) are "highly likely" to have facilitated attacks last Sunday on four tankers including two Saudi, one UAE and one Norwegian ship off Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, according to a Norwegian insurers' report seen by Reuters. A confidential assessment issued this week by the Norwegian Shipowners' Mutual War Risks Insurance Association (DNK) concluded that the attack was likely to have been carried out by a surface vessel operating close by that despatched underwater drones carrying 30-50 kg (65-110 lb) of high-grade explosives to detonate on impact. (Reuters)

2. Saudi oil stations hit by armed drones

14 May 2019. Two oil pumping stations have today been hit by armed drones close to Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Energy Minister said on state TV. Khalid Al-Falih said the attacks had caused a fire at one of the oil stations – which was now contained. He added there was additional damage at another pump but that oil production had not been disrupted.

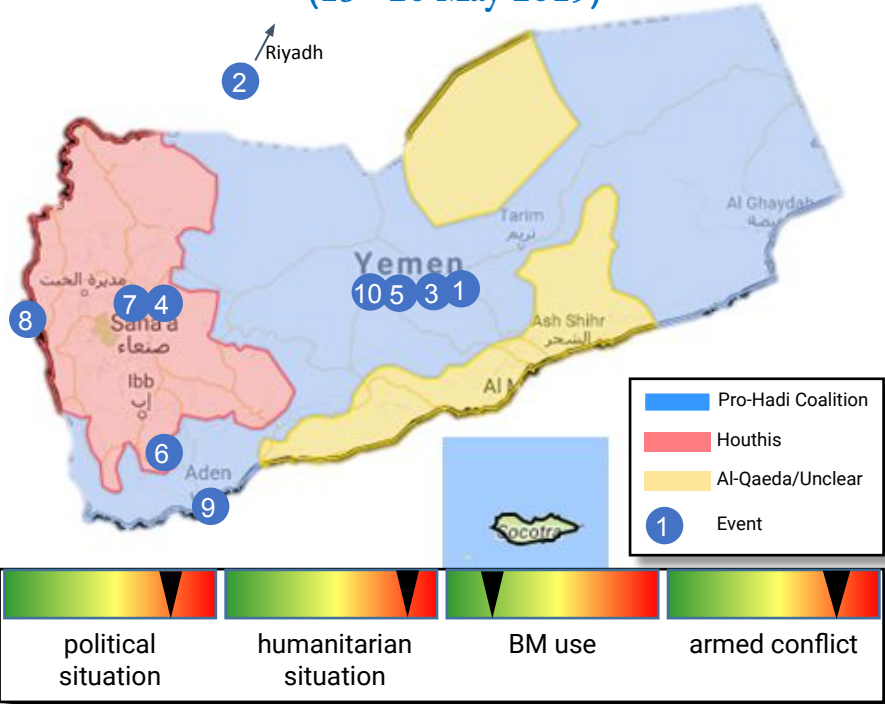
The attacks come one day after two Saudi oil tankers were struck near the coast of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Last week, the US military deployed response units, including a carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Arabian Gulf, in what it called a response to the "threat of upcoming attacks on US forces and interests in the region." (Middle East Monitor)

3. Bomb-Laden drones of Yemen rebels threaten Arabian Peninsula

16 May 2019. U.N. investigators said the Houthis' new UAV-X drone, found in recent months during the Saudi-led coalition's war in Yemen, likely has a range of up to 1,500 kilometers (930 miles). That puts the far reaches of both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the two main opponents of the Iranian-allied Houthi rebels in Yemen, within reach of drones difficult to detect and track. Their relatively simple design, coupled with readily available information online, makes targeting even easier, analysts say. For Saudi Arabia, that range puts the oil fields of its Eastern Province in range. In the neighboring UAE, an immediate target is the under-construction Barakah nuclear power plant, which is deep in its western desert. The \$20 billion, four-reactor plant being built with help from South Korea, has been considered a target by the Houthis since December 2017, when they claimed without offering evidence to have fired a cruise missile at it, something immediately denied by the UAE. Also within reach is the skyscraper-studded city of Dubai, a crucial link in worldwide global travel. Dubai International Airport bills itself as the world's busiest for international travel. (The New York Times)

4. AP Explains: How Yemen's rebels increasingly deploy drones

14 May 2019. A 2018 report by a United Nations panel of experts on Yemen looked particularly at the Houthis' Qatef-1 drone. The Qatef, or "Striker," it added, "is virtually identical in design, dimensions and capability to that of the Ababil-T, manufactured by the Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industries." Saudi-led coalition forces last year also showed journalists a Houthi "drone boat," filled with explosives that had failed to detonate. The officials also shared black-and-white images they said came from the "drone boat." They said the pictures and associated data from the boat's computer showed Iranians building components for its guidance system in eastern Tehran, with a hat in the background of one picture bearing the symbol of Iran's hard-line paramilitary Revolutionary Guard forces. For its part, Iran repeatedly has denied supplying the Houthis with drone or ballistic missile technology. (AP)



ASSESSMENT

▪ This week's hallmark events, the coordinated attacks on four vessels in UAE and on two oil pumping stations in Saudi Arabia cannot be taken out of global context showing increased tension between the U.S. and Iran. The illustrations canvassing international media bore circles representing the range of UAV-X drones used by Houthis to contain a whole series of US Allies and Partners hosting US forces and assets, including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Egypt. The rhetoric conflating Houthis as Iranian proxies not only makes solution in Yemen more elusive but it also provides more bullets to the National Security Advisor of Trump, a Mr. Bolton that contributed to the efforts to take US to war in Iraq in 2003 on shaky grounds and now seems on the forefront again this time against Iran. As Mr. Bolton and his main counterpart in the effort, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have not been able to convince Allies and Partners in Europe and the Middle East to exclude Israel, Saudi Arabia and UAE, Mr. Trump does not seem convinced either. His promises to take back US soldiers in territories that Americans care little about does not match the threats to Iran.

▪ However, this latest event will likely work as catalyst to add more fuels to the debate of arms transfers to the Coalition members and result in more arms sales that will help intercept those drones.

5. Iran denies ties to Houthi drone attack on Saudi oil installations

17 May 2019. Iran's foreign ministry on Friday rejected accusations by Saudi Arabia that Tehran had ordered an attack on Saudi oil installations claimed by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi militia. (Reuters)

6. Yemeni officials say troops retake key district from rebels

18 May 2019. Yemeni security officials say forces loyal to the internationally recognized government have recaptured a key district in the southern Dhale province. Officials say the fighting has killed at least 120 people from both sides since government fighters launched an offensive Friday to push out the Houthi rebels from Qataba, a key district controlling the area's main roads. (AP)

7. Saudi-led coalition in Yemen strikes Sanaa, casualties reported

16 May 2019. The Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen carried out several air strikes on the Houthi-held capital Sanaa on Thursday after the Iranian-aligned movement claimed responsibility for drone attacks on Saudi oil installations. The Sanaa strikes targeted nine military sites in and around the city, residents said, with humanitarian agencies reporting a number of casualties. (Reuters)

8. The UN is ready to improve and develop the port of Hodeidah: Griffiths

15 May 2019. Speaking during a Security Council meeting in New York on Wednesday, Martin Griffiths said the redeployment step in Hodeidah is important and must be built on both sides. He also called on the parties to work on the implementation of the third phase of the Hodeidah Agreement, which was implemented in December last year in Sweden. (Arab News)

9. World Bank announces \$400m in aid to combat threat of famine in Yemen

16 May 2019. The World Bank on Tuesday announced a \$400 million grant to Yemen, bringing total of grants by its International Development Association (IDA) since 2016 to \$1.7 billion.

The statement explained that \$200 million will be used to support the ongoing crisis response project in Yemen, to foster an enabling environment for economic opportunities in the medium term and to address the risks of potential famine and increasing malnutrition rates.

Another \$200 million would support Yemen's ongoing emergency health and nutrition project to help expand activities to meet short-term health needs, prevent chronic malnutrition and diseases, including cholera, maintain health systems and staff capacity at the local level, the statement added. (Middle East Monitor)

10. France takes unprecedented action against reporters who published secret government document

17 May 2019. Earlier this week, a reporter from Radio France and the co-founders of Paris-based investigative news organization Disclose were called in for questioning at the offices of the General Directorate for Internal Security, known as the DGSI. The agency is tasked with fighting terrorism, espionage, and other domestic threats, similar in function to the FBI in the United States. The two news organizations published stories in April — together with The Intercept, Mediapart, ARTE Info, and Konbini News — that revealed the vast amount of French, British, and American military equipment sold to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and subsequently used by those nations to wage war in Yemen. (The Intercept)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(06 - 13 May 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen's Houthis begin withdrawal from Hodeidah ports in boost to peace deal

11 May 2019. Yemen's Houthi movement on Saturday started withdrawing forces from Saleef port in Hodeidah under a U.N.-sponsored deal stalled for months, a Reuters witness said. But a minister in the Yemeni government backed by Saudi Arabia dismissed the Iran-aligned Houthis' pull-out as a "show" meant to "misinform the international community". The move, yet to be verified by the United Nations, is the first major step in implementing the pact reached last year by the government and the Houthis for a truce and troop withdrawal in Hodeidah, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis.

U.N. teams were overseeing the Houthi redeployment in Saleef, used for grain, as other teams headed to the second port of Ras Isa, used for oil, to start implementing the withdrawal from there, according to the witness. A U.N. source told Reuters on Saturday that the RCC would announce its assessment of the Houthi redeployment next week. Under the first phase, the Houthis would pull back five km (three miles) from the ports over the next four days. Coalition forces, currently massed four km from Hodeidah port on the edges of the city, would retreat one km from "Kilo 8" and Saleh districts. [Reuters](#)

2. Houthis tell U.N. to press Saudi-led forces to implement Yemen peace deal

11 May 2019. Yemen's Houthi movement called on the UN on Saturday to press the Saudi-led coalition to implement the Hodeidah agreement, al-Masirah TV said, citing the movement's political office. The movement said its "unilateral step shows our commitment to implement the Hodeidah agreement and to achieving peace," after four years of fighting in the Arab nation. [Reuters](#)

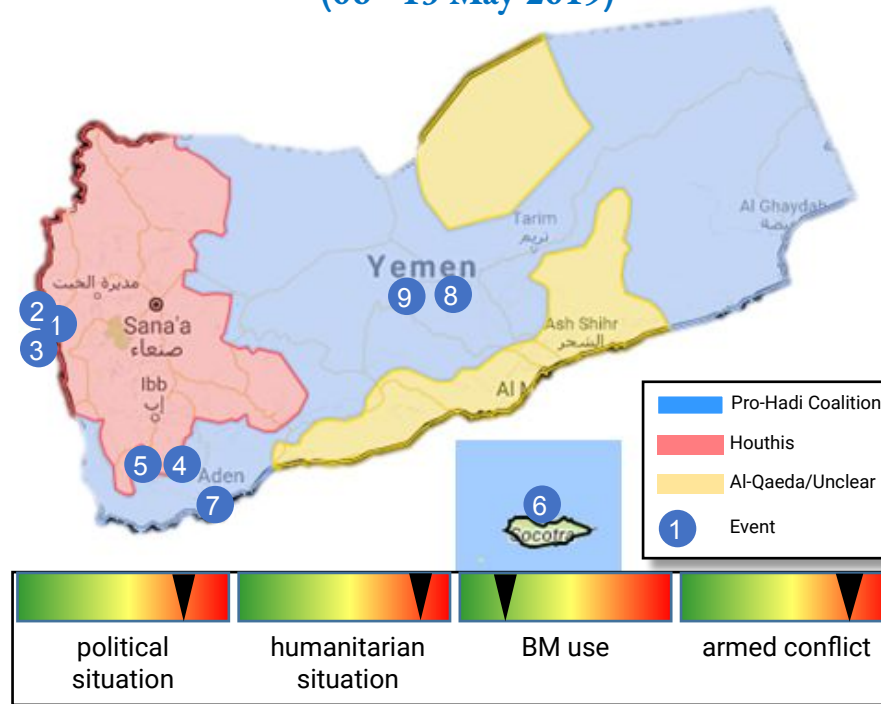
3. U.N. Assessing Damage at Yemeni Port City Grain Mills

11 May 2019. The UN are assessing possible damage to grain stores it manages near Hodeidah that were hit by gunfire on Thursday, a spokesman said. "Any damage to humanitarian food stocks, whether deliberately targeted or as collateral damage, is unacceptable when millions in Yemen continue to suffer from crippling shortages of food," the World Food Programme's senior spokesman Herve Verhoosel told during a press briefing in Geneva. [The New York Times](#)

4. Yemeni officials: Houthi rebels push into southern province

10 May 2019. Fighting continued Friday in Yemen's southern Ad Dhali province between Iran-backed Houthi rebels and pro-government forces, Yemeni officials said. Rebel incursions into Ad Dhali, which had been under the control of forces loyal to Yemen's internationally recognized government, started in April, killing hundreds of fighters on both sides, officials said. The officials said the Houthi rebel push into Ad Dhali was in part aided by ongoing feuding between Hadi's fighters and those backed by the UAE. [AP](#)

Escalating hostilities in the southwestern Ad Dali area have disrupted the main south-to-north goods route, displaced thousands and complicated efforts to battle a cholera epidemic and feed millions on the brink of starvation. [Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *The withdrawal of Houthi forces from the port city of Hodeidah, leaving the control to Coast Guard is a positive move in implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. It will certainly vent off some pressure from over the Houthis in the run-up to a UNSC Meeting on Yemen. However, the international society is yet to see the RCC assessment on the withdrawal next week to understand whether it was actually just a show. "A group of (Houthi) militiamen left and they were replaced by others wearing coast guard police uniforms" had been the claim of Information Minister al-Iryani and others from the government side.*
- *The UAE move to transfer forces from Aden to Socotra and efforts to strengthen its hold over the city is perceived as long-term investment or efforts to annex the strategic island in the straits. The move is just another show of divergent ambitions of the Coalition members and internationally recognized government in Yemen.*
- *The issue of arms transfers to Saudi Arabia from France will likely continue to haunt French politics in the coming weeks. Two weeks ago a report by French Directorate of Military Intelligence had been leaked that showed location of French arms in the conflict.*

5. Yemen in Focus: A deadly new battle emerges in Dhale'

10 May 2019. Houthi rebels have so far managed to advance towards the strategic Qataba area after seizing control of several government-held areas within the Dhale province but have yet to fight off resistance in the main city. "Most of the Houthi fighters captured or found killed along the battlefield are unfortunately child soldiers," a government source told The New Arab. "Dhale' is the border between the north and south of Yemen, whoever controls this strategic part of the country holds the gateway to the south," the source added. [The New Arab](#)

6. Official: Hundreds of UAE-backed troops arrive in Yemen's Socotra

8 May 2019. Troops backed by the UAE have arrived in the Yemeni port island of Socotra from the capital Aden, a Yemeni official said. According to Information Minister advisor , Mukhtar Al-Rahbi: "These militias have been mobilised against the legitimacy and its components, to be the arms that carry out the directives of the UAE and the so-called Transitional Council." The troops are trying to locate a base in the area before more militias are sent to Socotra, he explained. There have been numerous reports that Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been competing to impose sovereignty over the Yemeni island of Socotra by carrying out humanitarian relief activities. [Middle East Monitor](#)

7. UN seeks release of thousands of migrants held in Yemen

7 May 2019. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) called on Tuesday for the release of more than 3,000 migrants, mainly Ethiopians, who it said remain held in inhumane conditions in two detention centres in southern Yemen. The UN migration agency had received reports that in recent days more than 1,400 people detained at a military camp in Lahj were released, he said. At least 14 migrants have died of an outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea in Lahj, where IOM is treating some 70 former inmates, he said. [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. Macron "Supports" Arms Delivery to Saudi Arabia Despite War in Yemen

9 May 2019. Despite criticism, France continues its arms delivery to Saudi Arabia, engaged in a war in Yemen, and Emmanuel Macron "takes responsibility for it": "Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are allies of France . And that they are allies in the fight against terrorism. We support this action totally," he said on the sidelines of a European summit, Thursday, May 9, in Sibiu, Romania. The head of state, however, assured he had the "guarantee" that French weapons "would not be used against civilians" in Yemen. He said: "There is a committee that manages these exports, under the authority of the Prime Minister, in which things have been hardened in recent years, and where we ask for the guarantee that these weapons can not be used against civilians. It has been obtained." [Le Monde](#)

9. Yemeni Minister: \$28 Billion Needed for Short-Term Reconstruction Plans

10 May 2019. Yemen's Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Najib al-Auj, said that the war-torn country needs a baseline \$28-billion-dollar fund for reconstruction efforts over the next four years. In the long term, Yemen's reconstruction could run a bill as large as \$60 billion for post-war restoration of institutions, stability and security. Revamping the country's ailing health, education and power sectors and rehabilitating city infrastructure figure high on the government's agenda, Auj told Asharq Al-Awsat, saying the state will work to fix the general budget deficit. [Al Sharq al-Awsat](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(29 April - 06 May 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. U.N. races to process rotting Yemeni grain in Hodeidah store

5 May 2019. The United Nations regained access to donated grain stored in the Yemeni port city of Hodeidah on Sunday, and began the task of salvaging food that could stave off starvation for millions of citizens before it rots. [Reuters](#)

2. Trump's Yemen War Policy Survives Senate's Veto Override Bid

2 May 2019. The Senate on Thursday failed to overturn President Donald Trump's veto of legislation that would have ended U.S. military assistance for the Saudi-led war in Yemen against Iran-backed rebels, but lawmakers pledged to re-examine other aspects of America's ties with the kingdom. [The New York Times](#)

3. Biden calls for end to U.S. support for Saudi war in Yemen

1 May 2019. Former vice president Joe Biden is taking his first major foreign policy stance since officially announcing his candidacy for president by calling for the United States to end its assistance to Saudi Arabia for its war in Yemen. This aligns him with Senate Democrats and against President Trump. [The Washington Post](#)

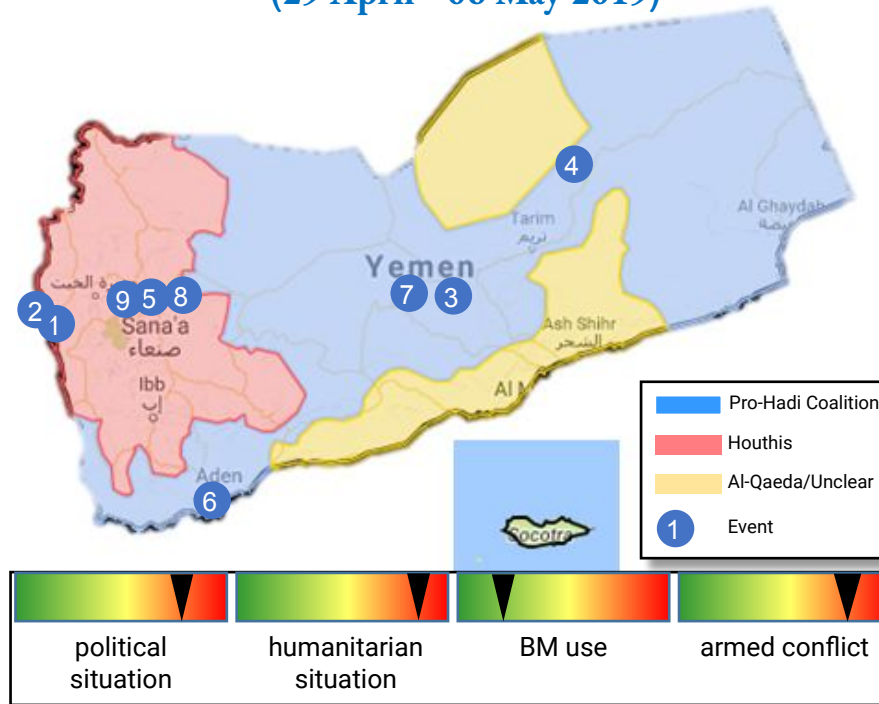
4. Six civilians killed in Yemen in suspected al Qaeda bombing

3 May 2019. At least six civilians, including children, were killed in Yemen on Friday when a roadside bomb believed to be planted by al Qaeda went off in the country's southeast, a Yemeni security official said.

At least six others were wounded in the blast, the second attack in less than a week in al-Qatn village in the vast Hadramaut region. [Reuters](#)

5. Saudi-led coalition attacks air base near Sanaa airport

2 May 2019. The coalition has ramped up attacks on a drone facility used by Houthi rebels after the rebels warned last month they could launch attacks against the capitals of Saudi Arabia and the UAE which lead the military coalition against them. The latest raid on Wednesday targeted "drone maintenance sites, a communications system and locations of drone experts and operators" at the Al-Dulaimi base adjoining the airport in rebel-held Sanaa, the official Saudi Press Agency quoted coalition spokesman Colonel al-Maliki as saying. The Houthi-controlled Saba news agency said 13 air strikes targeted the base and airport. [The New Arab](#)



ASSESSMENT

▪ This week, the article in Foreign Policy (see right) got quite positive feedbacks from those following the crisis. The main argument of the article is that to bring peace to Yemen the price of war should be unacceptable for Houthis when compared to accepting an agreement. In this regard, additional support should be made available to Coalition to enable it take Hudaydah to force Houthis commit to an agreement. However, the article has overseen several facts that make the situation more complicated than articulated:

- The Coalition already got the maximum support it could and tried to wrest control of Hudaydah but could NOT. With limited resources and capabilities, It reached culminating point.
- Second, the Coalition is awkward, if not malevolent, in target selection. For example, in January, from a total of 155 air raids, 31 military, 45 non-military and 79 unknown targets exist. The school bus catastrophe is still in minds. No actor will be willing to be complicit where civilian casualty risk is so high.
- Third, though operating under the umbrella of a Coalition, KSA and UAE have divergent strategic interests in Yemen. This will eventually lead to another wave of internal strife in the form of a crisis between Hadi government and al Hirak if the issue of Houthis is solved.
- Last, it is true that if Hudaydah was taken by the Coalition Houthis would be more cooperative in conforming to the agreements. Yet, stipulation of such an end to the increased US support is misleading. The much discussed US support is there and has never ceased. Trump just vetoed another action to end US involvement. A more ambitious step would be direct involvement of US forces on the ground. But it is dubious if this is what authors hinted while saying: "What Yemen needs now is tougher U.S., European, and UN diplomacy, backed by reinvigorated military pressure." Because there is no good invasion.

6. UN 'alarmed' over migrant conditions in Yemen

2 May 2019. The U.N. migration agency has voiced concern over the condition of African migrants in Yemen amid reports of eight deaths from cholera in a detention center. The International Organization for Migration said in a statement Thursday that the victims -- predominantly Ethiopian -- were among more than 1,400 people held at a detention center near the port city of Aden, where at least 200 cholera cases were detected. [AP](#)

7. Minister: 60% of Yemen workers lost their jobs

2 May 2019. Five million Yemeni workers, 60 per cent of the overall workforce, have lost their jobs as a result of the ongoing war in the country, the minister of social affairs revealed yesterday. [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. Rights group urges Yemen's rebels to release 10 journalists

1 May 2019. A rights group is calling on Yemen's Houthi rebels to release 10 journalists detained nearly four years ago on "trumped-up" spying charges. Amnesty International says "these men are being punished for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression." It says nine journalists were arrested in a raid on a hotel in the rebel-held capital in June 2015, and the 10th was detained at his home in Sanaa that August. [The Washington Post](#)

9. A Real Plan to End the War in Yemen

2 May 2019. True peace in Yemen will remain elusive unless both sides accept that they have nothing to gain from more fighting. We are not there yet. To get there will require not cutting off U.S. support for Saudi Arabia but threatening to double down on it unless the Houthis honor their commitments to the UN and are ready to disgorge most of their initial conquests.

A negotiated settlement would be the best—or least bad—outcome to the brutal war in Yemen. And a renewed offensive on Hodeidah would pave the way for its enactment. The Houthis would be most receptive to a generous offer after losing the city.

If the coalition retakes Hodeidah, it can afford to end the war while the Houthis' control of Sanaa will leave them with some bargaining power. What Yemen needs now is tougher U.S., European, and UN diplomacy, backed by reinvigorated military pressure. [Foreign Affairs](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(22 - 29 April 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

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KEY EVENTS

1. UN: Yemen detains over 2,000 migrants, including 400 kids

26 April 2019. The U.N. says authorities in Yemen have detained over 2,000 migrants in the southern city of Aden since Sunday, including at least 400 children. The U.N. migration agency is engaging with Yemeni authorities to ensure that the migrants' critical needs such as basic health care, food, water and sanitation are met, he said. It is also urging authorities "to find safer alternatives to detention." [AP](#)

2. Yemen's Houthis ignoring calls for political solution: Saudi minister

24 April 2019. Saudi Arabia's deputy defense minister blamed Yemen's Houthi movement for a stalled peace deal in the main port of Hodeidah, saying the Iran-aligned group was ignoring the kingdom's call for a political solution to the four-year war. The Houthis say they are ready to implement the Hodeidah deal, but that the other side is obstructing it. [Reuters](#)

3. Yemeni Officials Say Bombing Kills 7 Family Members

27 April 2019. The officials say the seven, including two women, are from one family and were killed Saturday in the district of Qataba. The Houthi rebels say a suspected airstrike by a Saudi-led coalition hit the family vehicle, while officials from the internationally recognized government say Houthi shells killed the family. [The New York Times](#)

4. Trump's Yemen veto damages America's image around the world

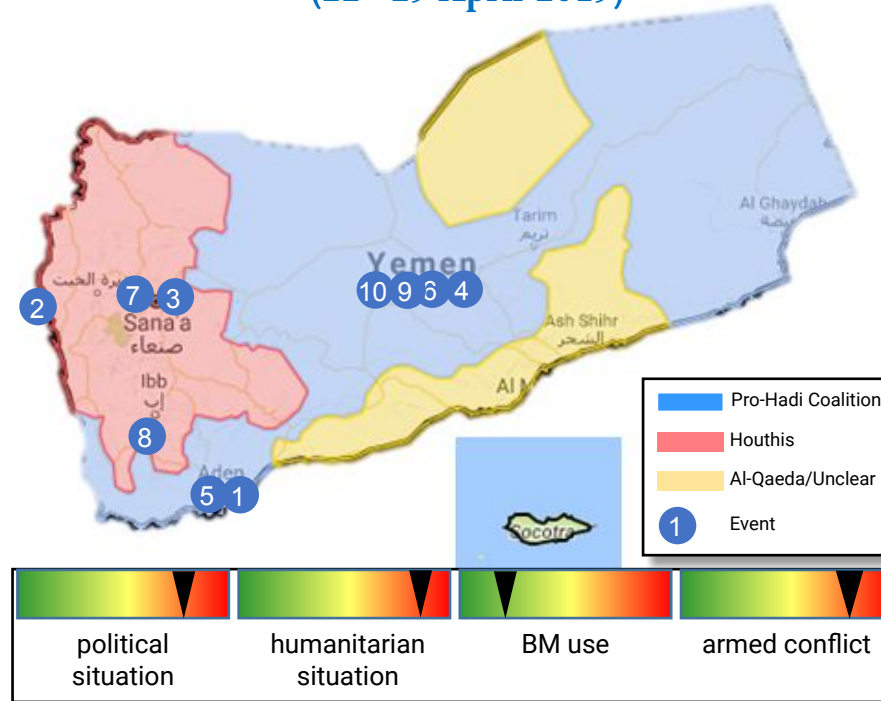
26 April 2019. Trump's veto signals that the US administration does not oppose the coalition's bombings and blockade of civilians. Moreover, the veto also demonstrates that having 14 million Yemenis at risk of famine and a rising death toll is not enough to make Washington think again end its support for the coalition. Last month, the US-based University Network for Human Rights and Mwatana Yemeni rights group presented a 128-page report showing that American and British bombs may have killed or injured 1,000 civilians, including women and children, in Yemen. "Our findings reinforce prior evidence demonstrating that the Saudi/UAE-led Coalition is failing to fulfil its obligations under the laws of war and repeatedly using US weapons in apparently disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks that have resulted in widespread civilian casualties and other civilian harm in Yemen," the groups explain in their report. This suggests very strongly that Trump actually had an obligation not to veto the resolution. [Middle East Monitor](#)

5. Yemen Central Bank says it's ready to supply banks with foreign currency

23 April 2019. Aden seat of Yemen's central bank said it is ready to supply banks with foreign currency to finance imports of goods into the country. Accordingly the bank will cover letters of credit and financing guarantees for imports of goods not covered by a \$2 billion grant from Saudi Arabia to help finance imports of basic goods and petroleum products. The rival central bank headquartered in Sanaa, did not receive any funds from the Saudi loan. An official in the Sanaa branch told Reuters last year that traders must get letters of credit in Aden. [Reuters](#)

6. Yemen signs MoU with China

27 April 2019. The Chinese government signed MOUs on Belt and Road cooperation with the governments of Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Luxembourg, Jamaica, Peru, Italy, Barbados, Cyprus and Yemen. [Belt and Road Forum](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *The repercussions of the U.S. President Trump's veto have been blanketing western media outlets since last week. The discussions on what effects might a halt of transfer of arms to two major Coalition partners, Saudi Arabia and UAE are hotly debated. But more than that, the move that makes the U.S. complicit in the probable war crimes being committed in Yemen has and will hurt US image and will become a main element in recruitment efforts of especially jihadi terrorist networks.*
- *The inhumane conditions resulting from rounding up about 2000 migrants (mostly Ethiopian) in a stadium and their further potential transfer to inhabitable military bases has created a reaction from international organizations. The government should respect migrant lives as it expects concern from international society to help solve or ease its problems.*
- *The UNDP report lays before eyes this time how the war has reversed human development in the country. This reversal stands at 21 years for the moment. As long as the sides to the conflict are busy trying to hold gains rather than making compromise to attain peace the trend will likely continue. As the organization's Yemen representative, Auke Lootsma, said: "Even if there were to be peace tomorrow, it could take decades for Yemen to return to pre-conflict levels of development".*

7. Yemen's al-Qaida branch vows revenge over Saudi executions

26 April 2019. Al-Qaida in Yemen is vowing to avenge beheadings carried out by Saudi Arabia this week — an indication that some of the 37 Saudis executed on terrorism-related charges were members of the Sunni militant group. The statement says al-Qaida will "never forget about their blood and we will avenge them." U.S. ally Saudi Arabia on Tuesday executed 37 suspects convicted on terrorism-related charges. Most were believed to be Shiites but at least one was believed to be a Sunni militant. [AP](#)

8. Rights Group: Rebel Land Mines in Yemen Hinder Aid Efforts

22 April 2019. Human Rights Watch says in a new report Monday that at least 140 people, including children, have been killed in the two governorates of Taiz and Hodeida since 2018, as the Houthis have blanketed farmlands, wells, and roads with anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines.

HRW researcher Priyanka Motaparthi says the Houthi mines have "not only killed and maimed numerous civilians, but they have prevented vulnerable Yemenis from harvesting crops and drawing clean water desperately needed for survival." She says the mines have also "prevented aid groups from bringing food and health care to increasingly hungry and ill Yemeni civilians." [The New York Times](#)

9. US & Western Arms in Yemen Conflict Signal Potential War Crime Charges

26 April 2019. The results of a study commissioned by the UN Development Program (UNDP), released last week, confirm the worst: the ongoing conflict has reversed Yemen's human development by 21 years.

The study warns of exponentially growing impacts of conflict on human development. It projects that if the war ends in 2022, development gains will have been set back by 26 years — almost a generation. If it continues through 2030, that setback will increase to four decades. [IPS](#)

10. Opinion: Yemen proves it: in western eyes, not all 'Notre Dames' are created equal

26 April 2019. As an archaeologist, I've seen Yemen's rich heritage. But for too many world leaders, only arms sales really matter.

Even as we grieve for Notre Dame, hundreds of millions of dollars in arms are being sold by the US, the UK, France, Italy, Australia and other countries to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as they begin their fifth year of aerial and terrestrial assault on Yemen. While Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world in terms of GDP, it is immensely rich in cultural heritage. And today, this ancient and proud country of 25 million is being torn apart, along with its invaluable heritage.

Every day I watch Yemen burn, and every day I hear only silence. Donald Trump has been very clear as to why he recently vetoed a bill passed by both houses of the US Congress to stop US arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Congress has seen overwhelming evidence that these arms are being used against a devastated civilian population under siege and suffering from famine and cholera. But the president of the United States expressed what all world leaders are hiding from their citizens: arms sales are more important than human lives and world heritage. [The Guardian](#)



KEY EVENTS

1. U.N. envoy sees troop withdrawal in Yemen's Hodeidah within weeks

18 April 2019. Martin Griffiths said he had received on Sunday the formal acceptance of the Saudi-backed government and the Iran-aligned Houthi group to implement a first phase of troop redeployments, while discussions were still underway for the second phase. Sources have told Reuters the first phase would see the Houthis leave the city's ports and pro-government forces leave some areas on the city's outskirts. In the second phase, both sides would pull troops to 18 km from the city and heavy weapons 30 km away.

Three sources told Reuters last month that the first phase would see the Houthis pull back 5 km (3 miles) from the ports of Saleef, used for grain, and Ras Isa, for oil. Then the Houthis would quit Hodeidah port while coalition forces would retreat 1 km from the city's "Kilo 8" and Saleh districts.

This would restore access cut off since September to the Red Sea Mills, which holds some 50,000 tonnes of World Food Programme grain, enough to feed 3.7 million people, and allow humanitarian corridors to be reopened. [Reuters](#)

2. UN calls for Yemen agreement to be implemented without delay

18 April 2019. The U.N. Security Council expressed "grave concern" Wednesday that agreements reached four months ago by the warring parties in Yemen have not been carried out and called for their implementation "without delay."

Welcoming Monday's announcement by Griffiths on the military plan for the initial redeployment of forces from Hodeida, Council members also called on the parties "to redouble efforts" to finalize arrangements for a prisoner exchange and to establish a coordinating committee in Taiz, where there has been fighting, as called for in the Stockholm agreements. [AP](#)

3. UK urges 'stronger measures' at UN if no progress on Yemen's Hudaydah deal

15 April 2019. Britain's UN Ambassador Karen Pierce said the lack of implementation of the deal reached in Sweden is "very worrying." "The stakes are too high for us to let that fail and the council [UNSC] in our view should be ready to take stronger measures if there's no progress by our next meeting," Pierce told the council, which traditionally meets once a month on Yemen. [Middle East Monitor](#)

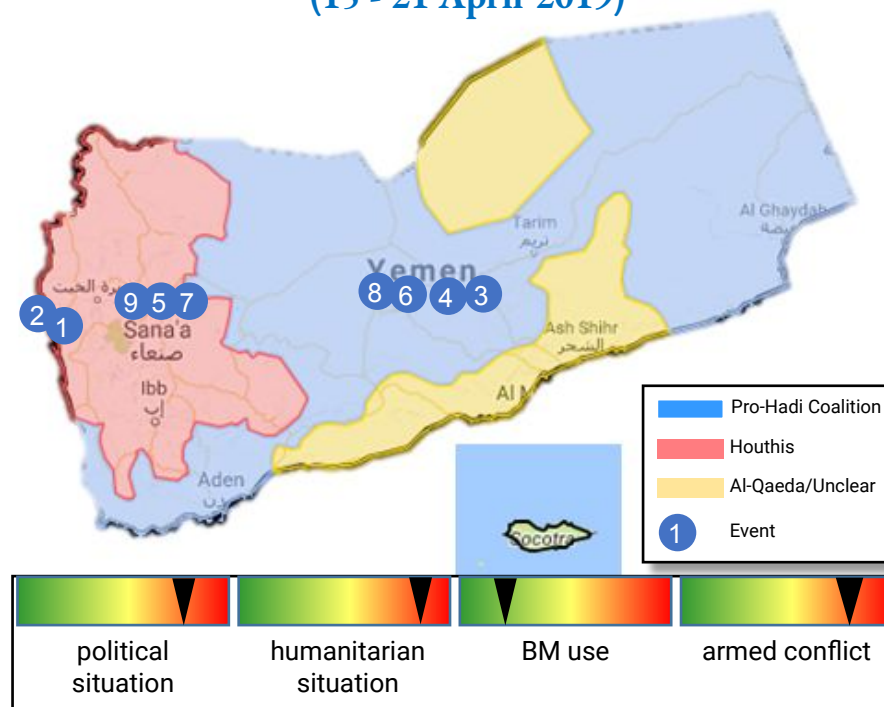
4. Trump's Veto on Yemen War Is a Sign That the Strongmen in the U.S. and Saudi Arabia Are Winning

18 April 2019. On Tuesday, Donald Trump invoked his veto power for only the second time in his presidency. Trump's move struck down a congressional resolution to end U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. In doing so, he stifled a moment of rare bipartisanship, flexing his own authoritarian tendencies to protect a fellow autocrat, the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is known by the initials MBS.

By doing so, Trump not only signaled his loyalty to a prince who has been widely implicated in the murder of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi, as well as the imprisonment and torture of numerous human rights activists, but he has also ensured that the U.S. would remain complicit in the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Far from an effort to protect the Constitution, as Trump claimed, the veto was rather the latest example of the autocratic, tit-for-tat deal-making that has in recent years increasingly dominated the geopolitics of the Middle East. [The Intercept](#)

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(15 - 21 April 2019)



ASSESSMENT

- *The Stockholm Agreement still holds objectively with different subjective interpretations on how, why and what next. The UN Envoy Griffiths can be said to be doing utmost to sell the hope that it will come to fruition if patience is practiced. Last week internationally recognized president Hadi joined first parliamentary session after four years in Hadramawt signalling a betterment whereas Houthis use agreement to lessen international pressure on themselves and implement economy of forces to divert their attention and forces to other parts in Yemen based on ease in Hodeidah.*
- *Among this tumult, two things stick out among others. First is UK's urge for stronger measures if no progress is seen on implementation of the agreement. Considering arms sales of the country it is hard to think this as a sincere move. Last month, UK Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt had authored an article whitewashing arms sales of his country which was published on Politico with beading: "Yemen crisis won't be solved by UK arms exports halt"*
- *Second is the leaked French Directorate of Military Intelligence report which shows the discrepancies between the rhetorics of those countries feeding the conflict in Yemen through arms sales and the realities on the ground. Still to be seen if the content of the report will politically shake Macron and the government. But the report tells us that:*
 - *The assertion that if members of Saudi-led Coalition do not acquire arms and weapons from Nato-member West, they will turn to Russia and China is at best "misleading". Because military assets of both KSA and UAE to include systems, weapons, munitions and spare parts have been so far been fed by the West and based on compatibility issues cannot be changed overnight.*
 - *This arms trade is so lucrative that President Trump vetoed a congressional resolution to end U.S. support for Coalition in Yemen, putting the name and fame of the country at risk.*
 - *Despite general rhetoric that the arms provided are for defensive reasons and the provider's have no idea where and with what purposes Coalition members employ them is not true. At least in the case of France, it is clear that let alone having information about systems provided by herself, the country has well awareness of other providers' actions too.*
- *Coming to the UK proposal irrespective of its sincerity, its fate and the fate of overall peace in Yemen will depend on preference of UNSC members' for commitment to the peace in Yemen more than that for profits coming from arms sales to the parties of the conflict.*

5. French-made tanks and howitzer canons used in Yemeni war: Disclose

15 April 2019. French arms including tanks and laser-guided missile systems sold to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are being used in the Yemeni war against civilians, leaked intelligence published by investigative website Disclose showed. Entitled "Yemen: security situation", a 15-page classified report written by France's DRM military intelligence agency includes maps that detail the positioning of French-made weapons inside Yemen and on the Saudi side of the border.

It demonstrates that swathes of Yemen's population lives under the threat of the French-made arms, according to Disclose.

The leaked report will be awkward for President Emmanuel Macron and his government, which has said that as far as it knows French-made arms sold to Saudi Arabia are used solely for defensive purposes on the border.

[Reuters](#)

6. Secret Report Reveals Saudi Incompetence and Widespread Use of U.S. Weapons in Yemen

15 April 2019. A highly classified document produced by the French Directorate of Military Intelligence shows that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are overwhelmingly dependent on Western-produced weapon systems to wage their devastating war in Yemen. Many of the systems listed are only compatible with munitions, spare parts, and communications systems produced in NATO countries, meaning that the Saudis and UAE would have to replace large portions of their arsenals to continue with Russian or Chinese weapons. "You can't just swap out the missiles that are used in U.S. planes for suddenly using Chinese and Russian missiles," said Rachel Stohl, managing director of the Conventional Defense Program at the Stimson Center in Washington, D.C. "It takes decades to build your air force. It's not something you do in one fell swoop."

Overall, the appendix reinforces a point that observers of the war have made since the intervention began: that the military capability of the coalition has been created and sustained almost entirely by the global arms trade. In addition to the U.S., the U.K., and France, the report mentions radar and detection systems from Sweden; Austrian Camcopter drones; defensive naval rockets from South Korea, Italian warships, and even rocket launcher batteries from Brazil. [The Intercept](#)

7. French weapons not used against civilians in Yemen: minister

18 April 2019. French weapons are not being used against civilians in Yemen, France's armed forces minister Florence Parly told Radio Classique on Thursday. "To my knowledge, French weapons are not being used in any offensive in the war in Yemen. I do not have any evidence that would lead me to believe that French arms are behind the origins of civilian victims in Yemen," Parly said. [Reuters](#)

8. The dangers of war and climate change in Yemen

17 April 2019. In 2014, a year before the outset of the Yemeni civil war, the World Bank concluded that the water table was already sinking by six metres per year in the countryside around Amran, Dhamar, Sadaa, Sanaa, and Taiz. Other experts predicted that Sanaa would deplete its water supply by 2023. The war in Yemen has only accelerated the spread of water scarcity across the country, and climate change will ensure that droughts and other environmental issues grow more relentless in the years to come. In addition to water scarcity, global warming has aggravated gradual but serious environmental issues such as biodiversity loss, desertification, and sea level rise in Yemen. In a handful of cases, climate change has already had deadly consequences for Yemenis. [The New Arab](#)

9. Saudi-led coalition in Yemen targets drone store near presidential palace

20 April 2019. Aircraft from the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen on Saturday attacked a camp containing drones near Yemen's presidential palace in the Houthi-controlled capital, Saudi state TV reported. [Middle East Monitor](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(08 - 14 April 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemeni leader-in-exile Hadi returns for meeting of divided parliament

13 April 2019. President Hadi made a rare visit to his country for a meeting of the divided parliament. Hadi-aligned parliamentarians gathered in Say'un, Hadramawt province on Saturday where they elected Sultan al-Burkani of the General People's Congress (GPC) as their new speaker. "This extraordinary session is held in a historic moment as we stand in a crossroad between choices of war and peace. We support the U.N. special envoy to achieve a comprehensive peace," Hadi told the 145 parliamentarians. [Reuters](#)

2. With the ISIS caliphate defeated in Syria, an Islamist militant rivalry takes root in Yemen

14 April 2019. The Islamic State and al-Qaeda are waging a deadly contest for territory, recruits and influence in Yemen that is dividing tribes and deepening instability in the Middle East's poorest nation, according to tribal leaders, security officials and analysts. According to Elisabeth Kendall nearly two-thirds of AQAP's operations have been directed at the Islamic State, less than a quarter at UAE-backed militias who are fighting AQAP, and a mere 15 percent at the Houthis. The Islamic State is even more focused on attacking AQAP, according to her data. Until a year ago, the two groups had never targeted each other, preferring to focus their efforts on battling the Shiite Houthis, viewing the rebels as apostates. AQAP and ISIS-Y even had bases close to each other, and their foot soldiers often switching allegiances between the groups. That changed in June. [The Washington Post](#)

3. Does Russia seek the return of an independent South Yemen?

11 April 2019. Although Syria and Libya rank higher on the scale of Russian foreign policy priorities than the conflict in Yemen, Moscow has recently demonstrated its willingness to intensify work on the Yemeni track to help the parties in conflict find solutions to end the war. At the same time, given Russia's long history of relations with Yemen, Moscow is also pursuing its own interests in the country. For this reason, Moscow both maintains existing contacts with the opposing parties and has worked toward establishing new ones. In this respect, recently, Aidarus al-Zoubaidi, the president of the so-called Southern Transitional Council (STC), and Said bin Breik, the head of the structure's National Assembly, took a trip to Moscow upon the invitation of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

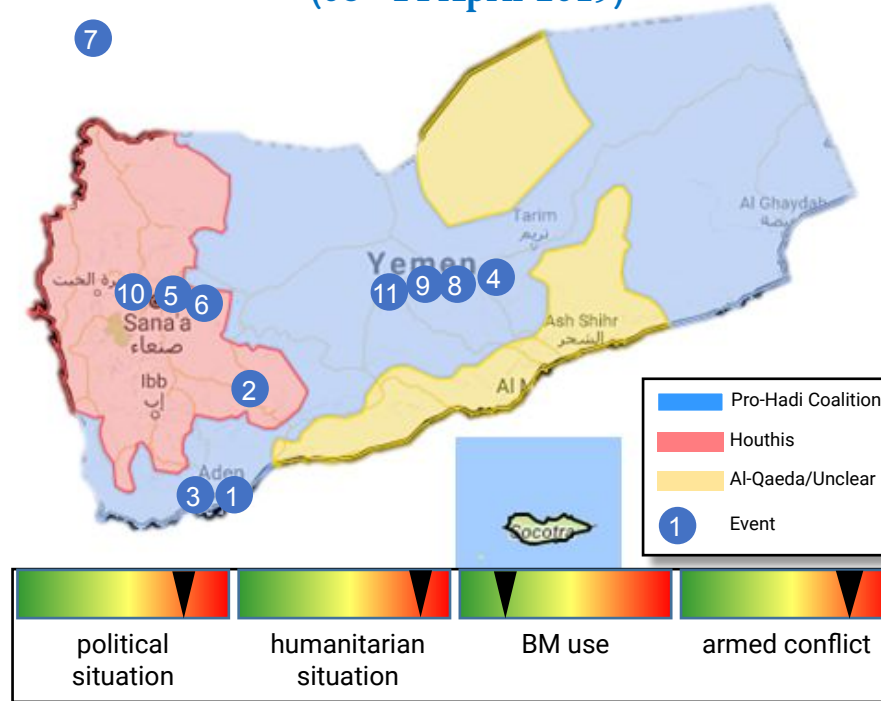
Russia's support for factions under Abu Dhabi's patronage is also connected to the general context of Russian-Emirati relations. The UAE is gradually becoming Russia's major Middle Eastern partner. Russia's interests in Yemen are not limited to economic aspects. Russia may benefit from resurrecting the plan to construct a military base on Socotra Island. Initially proposed decades ago by the Soviet military authorities, the plan was never implemented. Currently, the UAE is the most influential actor on the island — a fact that has already caused a diplomatic controversy between President Hadi and Abu Dhabi. The STC and the UAE also control other places where military bases could be established, such as the strategically important shores of the Bab el Mandeb and Aden straits. Bab el Mandeb is a passage for global navigation as well as a popular site for naval bases. The United States, France, China, the UAE and even Japan all have naval bases in neighboring Djibouti. [AlMonitor](#)

4. Pelosi calls on President Trump to sign Yemen resolution

10 April 2019. "The situation in Yemen ... has left an indelible scar and stain on the conscience of the world," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told reporters. She said the resolution passed by Congress last week sets "a standard for what kinds of military engagements we take part in." Trump has already pledged to veto the measure. [AP](#)

5. Yemen explosion: At least 14 children killed in blast near school

9 April 2019. At least 14 children were killed in a blast near a school in Yemen, the UN's children agency reported on Tuesday. Another 16 children, most of whom are under nine years old, were critically injured and are now in hospitals "fighting for their lives", Unicef said. The attack occurred near two schools in Sanaa at lunch time, when students were in class. "The blast shattered the windows and unleashed a burst of shrapnel and broken glass into the classrooms," the UN agency said. [The Independent](#)



ASSESSMENT

- Under normal conditions, the AP & Pulitzer Center Report would serve as a trigger for great political change. However, in current Yemen, the report just adds up to previous reports all hinting at the fact that Houthis have no intention to be a side to the solution. The crisis, as it is, presents perfect conditions to further their political agenda. In the case of delivery of vaccines, the Houthi government has put aid to its military effort before the health of the general public causing the cholera take root and claim the lives of 3000 Yemenis. It is unfortunate that the chances of this report to be communicated to the Yemenis are very low, as rights violations against journalists continue, following an increasing trend.
- The entry of Russia into the political scene and its increased partnership with UAE is harbinger of more active Russian involvement in Yemen affairs. Having strong relations with South in the past, Russia will likely develop relationship with all actors as part of its efforts to gain more foothold in the Middle East. This Russian will matches the will of STC to gain legitimacy and have more say in the future of Yemen. When the ambition of all those three actors are combined it is probable that Russia, UAE and STC will cooperate more in solving the problem in Yemen in the coming days while accommodating the demands of and make compromises in favor of the other.
- The competition between AQAP and ISIS-Y will complicate the efforts against Houthis and create further internal conflict between tribes aligned with either of the organisations. The internal power centers within the country become increasingly fractured and their positions become more divergent rendering the chances of attaining peace even more elusive.

6. UN Decries Killing of 7 Children in Yemen Explosion

11 April 2019. The U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Yemen has decried the killing of 13 civilians, including seven children, in a large explosion over the weekend in the rebel-held capital, Sanaa. The cause of Sunday's blast at a warehouse remains unclear. [The New York Times](#)

7. Saudis intercept Houthi drone, as rebels increase frequency of attacks

8 April 2019. Saudi air defences intercepted and destroyed a drone operated by the Houthi militias in Yemen, which was flying towards the Asir region. [The Arab Weekly](#)

8. Rights violations against journalists continue in Yemen

9 April 2019. The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) has announced that there were at least 28 documented rights violations against its members during the first three months of 2019, Anadolu reported on Monday. The YYS report recorded one murder, four physical assaults, 11 arrests and trials, three websites banned, two journalists prevented from travelling, and one case of torture. [Middle East Monitor](#)

9. Vaccines blocked as deadly cholera raged across Yemen

9 April 2019. In the summer of 2017, a plane waited for final clearance to deliver half a million doses of cholera vaccine to Yemen. The disease was spiraling out of control, with thousands of new cases reported each day. The green light for the plane to head to northern Yemen never came. The U.N. wasn't able to distribute cholera vaccines to Yemen until May 2018 and the outbreak ultimately produced more than 1 million suspected cholera cases — the worst cholera epidemic recorded in modern times and a calamity that medical researchers say may have been avoided if vaccines had been deployed sooner. Ali al-Walidi, the deputy health minister in southern Yemen, and Youssef al-Hadri, the spokesman of the Houthi-run Health Ministry in the north, both deny there were delays in getting cholera vaccines into Yemen at the start of the outbreak.

Relief workers and government officials said they have seen repeated indications that insiders in both the Houthi government in the north and the U.S.-backed government in the south have skimmed off money and supplies for cholera vaccination and treatment and sold them on the black market. In some cases, treatment centers for people who had contracted cholera existed only on paper even though the U.N. had disbursed money to bankroll their operations, according to two aid officials familiar with the centers.

"Both the Houthis and the government of Yemen were trying to politicize cholera," an aid official told the AP. "The Houthis are taking advantage of U.N. weakness," the official said. "Corruption or aid diversion and all of this are because of the U.N.'s weak position." Relief workers know that if the U.N. speaks out, the official said, "their visas will be denied and they would not be allowed back in the country."

More than 2.5 million doses of the cholera vaccine have been transported into Yemen by the U.N. since mid-2018. It's unclear how many of them have been administered to people. Two Houthi officials confirmed to the AP that nearly 1.2 million doses remain stored in warehouses in Sanaa. The Health Ministry there plans to distribute those doses soon in two northern districts, one of the officials said. [AP](#)

10. Saudi-Led Coalition's Air Strikes Hit Yemeni Capital

10 April 2019. The Saudi-led coalition carried out air strikes against two Houthi targets in Sanaa, early on Wednesday, its spokesman said. The coalition said the strikes targeted a Houthi drone-manufacturing plant and a warehouse containing launch pads. [The New York Times](#)

11. Sunnites contre chiïtes ? Une grille d'analyse trompeuse

9 April 2019. Badly defining the struggles ravaging the Middle East leads to the use of inappropriate remedies. This is what the US administration does by analyzing conflicts in this region through the prism of the Sunni-Shia antagonism.

The specter of confessionalism haunts the Middle East. It is responsible for chaos, conflict and extremism. It is attributed what is considered the main fault line of the region: Sunni against Shiites. It has the power and elegance of a great theory that seems to explain everything. Sunnis, enraged by Shiite ambitions, radicalize in large numbers, join al-Qaida or enlist in the organization of the Islamic State (OEI). Shiites, driven by minority anxiety, seek too much power for their small numbers. [Orient XXI](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(01 - 07 April 2019)

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Beyond the Horizon

International Strategic Studies Group

www.bchorizon.orgKEY EVENTS**1. U.S. House rebukes Trump on Saudi Arabia, backs measure to end Yemen involvement**

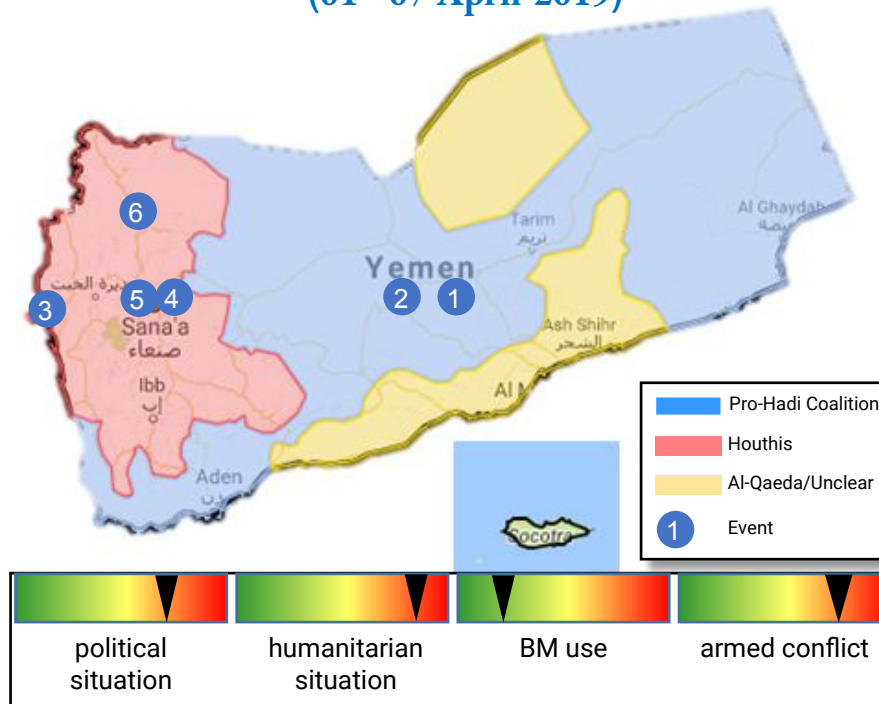
4 April 2019. The U.S. House of Representatives approved a resolution on Thursday that would end all U.S. involvement with the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in the war in Yemen, rebuffing President Donald Trump's policy of continued support for the kingdom. As the resolution had already passed the Senate, the vote in the Democratic-led House sends the measure to the White House, which said last month Trump would issue a veto. It would be the second of his presidency. [Reuters](#)

2. Iran says it seeks peace and stability in Yemen

6 April 2019. Rouhani said: "The war in Yemen should finish soon and the solution to the Yemeni crisis should be a political one." [AP](#)

3. Yemen's Houthis deny U.N. access to Hodeidah mills for 'safety reasons': sources

2 April 2019. A World Food Programme (WFP) technical team was scheduled to cross the front line between the Iran-aligned Houthi movement forces and the Saudi-backed government on the eastern outskirts of Hodeidah to fumigate the wheat stored in the Red Sea Mills. "The Houthis argued that government forces will target the U.N. and then they will be blamed for it," one source aware of the discussion said. "(But) if the wheat is not fumigated, it will be lost." The grain stores there have more than 51,000 tonnes of wheat, enough to feed 3.7 million people. [Reuters](#)

ASSESSMENT

- *As expected, the resolution against the U.S. involvement in the war in Yemen passed the House of Representatives. Next step is likely going to be the Trump's veto of the measure. Whereupon it is hard to forecast if the Congress can override his veto.*
- *The cholera outbreak in Yemen is spreading more rapidly than ever. Due to insufficient health care system, many people are unable to access basic medical care. Above all, the attitude contrary to Stockholm Agreement from both sides makes it almost impossible to overcome the epidemic in near future.*

4. Lawyer says defendants were tortured by Houthi captors

2 April 2019. A Yemeni lawyer says 36 defendants charged with espionage by the Houthi rebels are alleging they have been tortured.

[The New York Times](#)

5. Yemeni army advances in Sana'a province

7 April 2019. The Yemeni army took control of Jabal Al-Ghunaimi east of Sanaa province in an operation on Saturday, Saudi state-agency SPA reported.

Saudi-led Arab coalition jets targeted Houthi troops in the area, a military source said. [Arab News](#)

6. Cholera is surging once again in war-ravaged Yemen

5 April 2019. There were 76,152 new suspected cases and 195 deaths in March, compared to about 32,000 cases in February and 39,000 in January. The March toll brought the number of those believed to have died from cholera this year to nearly 300.

[The Washington Post](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(25 March 2019 - 31 March 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Save The Children: 7 killed in airstrike on Yemen hospital

27 March 2019. A hospital in a rural area of northwest Yemen was hit by an airstrike Tuesday killing seven people and wounding eight others, Save the Children said. Save the Children, which reported earlier this week that 37 Yemeni children a month had been killed or injured by foreign bombs in the last year, demanded an urgent investigation into the attack. [AP](#)
U.S. State Department spokesman, Robert Palladino : “We understand that the Saudi-led coalition has referred the results of this targeting operation to the joint incidents assessment team for their review and their investigation. The United States urges a transparent investigation.” There was no immediate comment from the Saudi-led coalition, which controls the airspace over Yemen. [The New York Times](#)

2. Clashes break out in Yemen’s key port city, killing 8

25 March 2019. Yemeni security officials say fighting has erupted in the key port city of Hodeida, killing at least eight people, including civilians. Officials say the clashes began overnight and continued into Monday, leaving fires burning on the main front lines in the city’s east and south, while exchanges of artillery fire shook the city. [Washington Post](#)

3. UN Yemen envoy says redeployment in Hodeida slow but sure

28 March 2019. “As I’ve been reminded recently there are 50 percent fewer civilian casualties in Hodeida since the cease-fire came into account than in the previous three months.” Griffiths said. Accordingly, the two sides are meeting daily to finalize details of the first redeployment from the Hodeida port and two smaller ports. That will be followed by a second phase in which heavy weapons and ground forces will be removed from the city. [AP](#)

4. Calls for Saudi, UAE to close prisons in Yemen

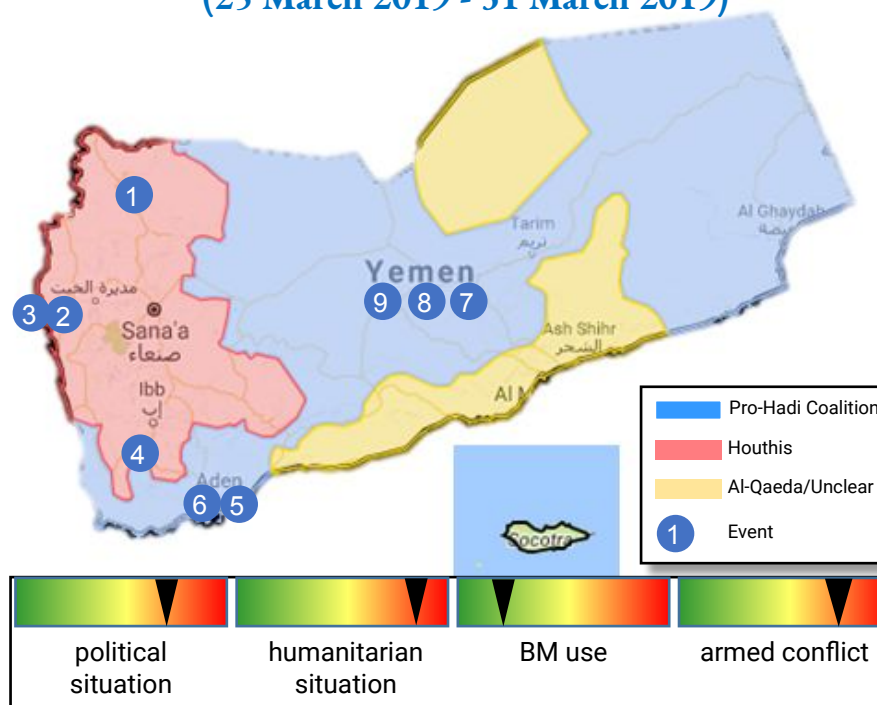
30 March 2019. The national committee for investigating complaints of human rights violations in Yemen has called on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to close their secret prisons in the country. Amnesty International has documented 51 detentions in secret UAE prisons in Yemen, stressing that these prisoners were tortured and mistreated. The rights group also said in a report issued last week that the UAE has actively trained, funded and armed different armed groups operating in Yemen since 2015. [Middle East Monitor](#)

5. Saudi Deputy Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman discusses the cease-fire with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

28 March 2019. Prince Khalid and Pompeo “agreed on the need for parties to adhere to the agreement made in Sweden,” the US State Department said. Pompeo expressed his appreciation for Saudi Arabia’s continued support for Griffiths’ efforts “to advance the political process in Yemen.” [Arab News](#)

6. German Government Extends Ban on Arms Exports to Saudi

29 March 2019. The government extended a ban on purely German exports by six months and said no new permits would be issued either. That affects an order for patrol boats, and the government said it would try to find a solution that involves either the boats being built and not delivered or the vessels being used in Germany. [The New York Times](#)



ASSESSMENT

- This week marks the fourth year in the operation started by the Saudi-led Coalition. Exacerbating humanitarian condition and political stalemate rendering solution impossible have been the constants of the war in Yemen.
- Stockholm Agreement coming after US political pressure has changed the climate. However, Griffiths’ statements are misleading. It is true that the losses in Hodeidab have halved but this has enabled Houthis to concentrate forces in Hajour Province / Hajjah, resulting in displacement of 3000 families and killing of political leaders together with their families coming after breaking local peace agreement with tribes. So, net total is the same. There is need for creating real sticks / carrots for Houthis to force them agree to a comprehensive peace that will cover all Yemen.
- The balance of four year air operations by the Coalition does not stand good. Every time int’l observers tend to forget about the issue, newer Coalition attacks function as wake-up call, starting a new round of discussions on who sells what weapons to which Coalition member. The YDP report is clear enough to show that there is intentional targeting of civilian targets. Alongside the need for respect to innocent civilian lives, the Coalition should abandon this way of punishing enemy based on two reasons. First it harms the legitimacy of Its own operation. Second, this opens doors to trial of those responsible in int’l criminal courts.
- The third nationwide cholera epidemic seems at the doorsteps of Yemen. As we are at the beginning of the rainy season, the epidemic will become more destructive in the coming weeks. It is very unfortunate that Yemen has not been an important enough issue for UNSC and int’l community to do what is required in absence of understanding of what is really at stake by local and regional competitors for power.

7. MSF treats exponential increase in cholera cases since start of 2019

27 March 2019. Between 1 January - 26 March 2019, MSF has admitted 7,938 suspected cholera cases to our health facilities in Amran, Hajjah, Ibb and Taiz governorates, 50% of them coming from Ibb governorate, in the country’s southwest. Over this period, the number of cholera patients treated by MSF increased from 140 to 2,000 per week. Results of rapid diagnostic tests done in MSF projects show that, in the same period, the percentage of cholera-positive cases increased from 58% to 70%. Strengthening water and sanitation activities is a priority, as they are essential in the fight against cholera. The increase in cases is concerning, as the rainy season – which could aggravate the overall situation – has not even started yet. [MSF](#)

8. Four years on, fears of further violations with no end in sight to brutal conflict

25 March 2019. Since the Saudi and UAE-led coalition’s bombardment of Yemen began in March 2015, Amnesty International (AI) has documented a horrific catalogue of crimes under international law perpetrated by all, including Yemeni government forces, the Coalition and allied forces, as well as by the Houthis and allied forces. The int’l community must step up efforts to ensure that civilians are protected, obstacles to humanitarian assistance and arbitrary restrictions on import of essential goods are lifted, and impunity for war crimes and other violations is ended,” said Samah Hadid, AI Middle East Camp. Director. [Amnesty International](#)

9. First Civilian Casualty Data From Air War in Yemen

26 March 2019. Yemen Data Project released the holistic figures on civilian casualties from 26 March 2015 to 20 March 2019 in the bombing campaign. The figures show more than 17,500 civilians were killed and injured in the coalition’s four-year bombing campaign. A quarter (25%) of all civilians killed in air raids were women and children.

Out of the 19,511 air raids recorded in four years of the air war, 100 or more civilian casualties were recorded in 14 bombings. Ten of those 100+ civilian casualty events happened in the first year of the air campaign. Over 45% of the civilians who have died in air raids were killed in 2015. Despite the overall decline in the rate of air raids since 2016, in the last year of the air war from 26 March 2018 to 20 March 2019 there were 44 bombings where 10 or more civilian casualties were recorded. More than 400 children were killed and injured in air raids in the last year of the bombing campaign with 166 child deaths and 253 injured in air raids between 26 March 2018 and 20 March 2019. More than 45% of civilians who’ve died in 4 years of coalition bombings in Yemen were killed in the first 9 months of the Saudi/UAE-led air campaign. [Yemen Data Project](#)
[What Happened Four Years Ago, series of Tweets by Baraa Shiban](#)

25 March 2019. Like this day four years ago, I remember having mixed feelings of a military operation led by KSA and promised to stop the Houthis. Fear of civilian casualties & fear of Houthis retaliating even harder. People in Yemen had different views on the coalition... ppl in Sanaa were rightly criticising the coalition & ppl in Aden + Taiz were relieved that finally a military operation will put an end to Houthis offensive on their cities. AbdulMalik Al-Houthi called for the public to mobilise, get recruited and head towards Aden to end what he called the role of the hypocrites once and for all. Four years ago, the coalition started its operations and did obstruct many things in the country & caused allot of damage. One thing for sure, the country would have fallen to the Houthis and the conflict would have happened anyway. [@BShtwtr](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(18 March 2019 - 24 March 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Clashes among government-aligned forces in Yemen's kill 6

23 March 2019. Yemeni officials say heavy street battles among armed Islamist factions aligned with the exiled government have left at least six people dead and families displaced. They said on Saturday that the clashes, which erupted in Taiz a day earlier, saw a faction financed and armed by the United Arab Emirates and led by Salafi commander Aboul Abbas, confront other factions affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood group in Yemen — the Islah party — which is loyal to Yemeni president Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. [AP](#)

2. The coalition attacks drone storage caves in Yemen's capital: SPA

23 March 2019. The Saudi-led military coalition mounted raids on sites of the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement in Yemen's capital Sanaa, Saudi news agency SPA said on Saturday. The raids are part of an operation launched in January to destroy the Houthis' drone capabilities. [Reuters](#)

3. Yemen army controls areas in Houthi stronghold of Saada

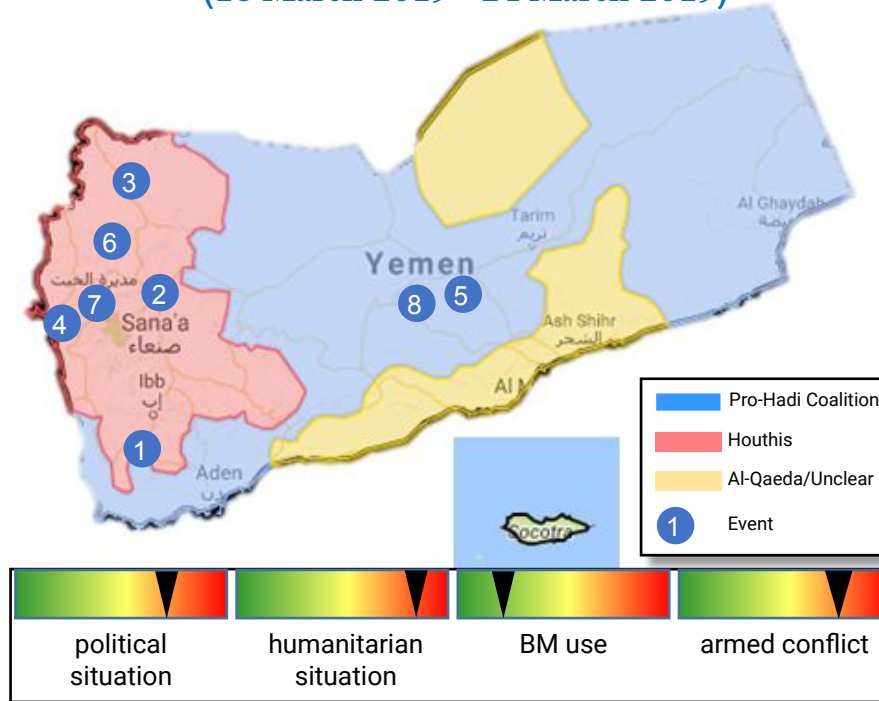
18 March 2019. The Yemeni army site reported the forces have taken control of the villages of Jalah, Al-Dahl, Al-Sulfa, Wadi Al-Aslan Jahla and Wadi Al-Mabtah, the Houthis' last strongholds in the Directorate of Baqem near Saada province with support from the Saudi-led Arab coalition. [Middle East Monitor](#)

4. AP Interview: Yemen's rebels say they won't give up port

18 March 2019. Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the head of the rebels' Supreme Revolutionary Committees, said Tuesday that his group will not give up the key port city of Hodeida. He accused his rivals from the internationally-recognized government of misinterpreting the deal. He says the Houthis have agreed to withdraw their forces but will remain in control. He said the Saudi-backed government "couldn't get (the port) by force and they won't seize it by tricks." [AP](#)

5. Timeline: Yemen's slide into political crisis and war

21 March 2019. Yemen's warring parties have failed to leave the main port city of Hodeidah three months after agreeing to a breakthrough U.N.-led truce deal as part of efforts to end a four-year-old war that has pushed the country to the brink of famine. [Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *The crisis in Yemen continues in different shades and colors. As latest report by Norwegian Refugee Council made it clear, the carnage in Yemen continues. The momentum gained in the aftermath of the Stockholm Agreement has allowed sides to concentrate more forces in other parts to catapult violence to higher levels despite respective decrease in Hodeidah.*
- *Although the agreement holds in very loose terms, distrust, a commonly cited reason, prevents real progress towards peace. There is problem about the focus of the efforts. The efforts should be focused on finding common ground between Houthis and Yemenis instead of accommodating interests of all those involved.*
- *Also the individual members of the Coalition follow their individual agendas in many cases working at cross purposes. As STC continue to sound its distaste towards exclusion from talks, UAE's policies to weaken actors aligned or within Islah party continue.*

6. Civilian casualties double in parts of Yemen since ceasefire

18 March 2019. Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) analysis of attacks on civilians over the last three months reveals that civilian casualties in Hajjah and Taiz alone have more than doubled since the Hodeidah ceasefire and Stockholm Agreement came into effect, with 164 and 184 people killed respectively. "The reduction in violence seen in Hodeidah through recent months, has been counteracted by escalations in other parts of the country," said Mohamed Abdi, country director for NRC in Yemen. "While air strikes on Hodeidah city have reduced significantly and a semblance of life has resumed, the fighting is intensifying in other parts of the country with a devastating impact on civilians." Four years in to the war, Yemeni civilians continue to be killed and injured every day. They are being ruthlessly killed in their homes, cars, in markets and at work. An estimated 788 civilian casualties were reported nationwide since 18 December last year. The majority of them, 318 people, were killed by shelling. The data collected by the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project shows that whilst in 2018 and previous year's air strikes caused the most civilian harm and damage, victims of airstrikes have halved in the last three months. However, victims of landmines, snipers and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) are on the rise.

[Norwegian Refugee Council](#)

7. U.S. Envoy Blames Houthis for Yemen Peace Deal Delays

21 March 2019. The U.S. ambassador to Yemen blamed the Iran-aligned Houthi movement on Thursday for the hold-up to a U.N.-led peace deal in the main port of Hodeidah and said Houthi weapons pose a threat to other countries in the region. The United States does not support groups that "seek to divide Yemen", Tueller said, in an apparent reference to southern separatists whose forces have been taking part in coalition operations under the leadership of the UAE. [The New York Times](#)

8. Yemeni government protests UN officials' 'functions transgression'

22 March 2019. Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs, Khaled Al-Yamani said that UN officials held a meeting with the Houthi authorities in Sana'a last Saturday to "discuss the procedures for starting the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM) at Al-Hudaydah ports under the control of the Houthis." He added that his government rejects these "irresponsible" practices, which cannot be carried out without direct instructions of the UN Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffith, and without the understanding, coordination and approval of the Yemeni government.

[Middle East Monitor](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(11 March 2019 - 17 March 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Twenty-two civilians killed, including children, in north Yemen

11 March 2019. Air strikes by a Saudi-led coalition killed at least 22 civilians, including women and children, this week in a village in northern Yemen, the United Nations said.

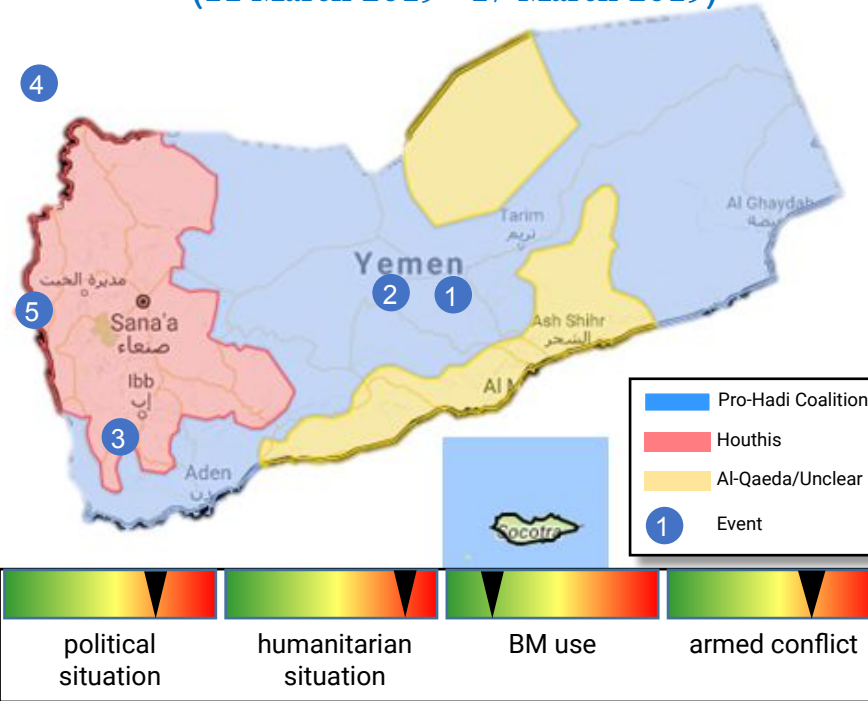
Medical sources quoted by the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen said late on Monday that the attacks in Kushar district, in Hajja Province, killed 10 women and 12 children and wounded 30 people, including 14 under the age of 18. [Reuters](#)

2. UN warns thousands trapped in Yemen's northern flashpoint

12 March 2019. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA warned in a report Tuesday, March 12, 2019, that thousands of Yemeni civilians caught in fierce clashes between warring factions are trapped in the embattled northern district of Hajjah. The number of displaced in the district has doubled over the past six months, the humanitarian agency said. Over 5,300 families have fled from the district of Kushar and surroundings in the past weeks, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The overall number of displaced people in the governorate of Hajjah, where Kushar is located, has doubled the past six months, the U.N. said. [AP News](#)

3. Security Council members urge Yemen parties to implement peace deal

12 March 2019. The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council urged Yemen's warring parties on Tuesday to implement a peace deal in the port city of Hodeidah, a move they hope will lead to an end of the four-year-old conflict. "We ... urge both parties to begin implementation of the proposal in good faith without further delay and without seeking to exploit the redeployments by the other side," they said. The Chinese, French, Russian, British and U.S. ambassadors to Yemen said in a statement they were "extremely concerned" that the agreement reached in Stockholm in December had not been implemented. [Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *The crisis in Yemen continues to hit the headlines in different places in different contexts. This week the subject again dominated domestic agenda in US. The pass of resolution to limit war powers of the President by 54 to 46 in the Congress has triggered another salvo of constitutional and political debates. The resolution will most probably pass in the Democrat-dominated House. The deep debate continues under cover of discussing US involvement in Yemen.*
- *Another intermittently surfacing issue is UAE role in the war. The Saudi-led Coalition airstrikes continue to claim innocent lives. This week the airstrikes first claimed the lives of 22 civilians. Even though not making it to the newspapers, on 14 March, coalition airstrikes also killed / injured 30 Yemeni soldiers. These airstrikes continue to erode legitimacy of the Coalition efforts.*
- *The international society's calls to the sides to implement conditions of the Stockholm Agreement falls to deaf ears.*

4. Yemen official calls for ending alliance with UAE

13 March 2019. Speaking to Yemen's Suhail Channel, the Yemeni Governor of Al-Mahwit province, Saleh Samei, yesterday criticised the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s role in the war saying: "President Abd Rabbuh must dispense with the UAE's services as part of the Saudi-led coalition if they continued their stupid acts." Activists say that the UAE has been "deliberately" forming armed militias in Aden, Hadramout and Shabwa provinces, with the aim to carry out military aggressions against Yemeni civilians. Samei stressed that those militias were not affiliated to the Yemeni military or government. [Middle East Monitor](#)

5. Senate votes to end support for Saudi war in Yemen

March 14, 2019. The Senate voted Wednesday to end U.S. support for the Saudi Arabian-led coalition's war in Yemen, bringing Congress one step closer to an unprecedented rebuke of President Donald Trump's foreign policy. Lawmakers have never before invoked the decades-old War Powers Resolution to stop a foreign conflict, but they are poised to do just that in the bid to cut off U.S. support for a war that has triggered a humanitarian catastrophe. The vote puts Congress on a collision course with Trump, who has already threatened to veto the resolution, which the White House says raises "serious constitutional concerns." The resolution passed by a vote of 54 to 46, with seven Republicans breaking with Trump to back the resolution. Next, it will move to the Democratic-controlled House, where it is expected to pass. [AP News](#)

U.S. should not curb aid to Saudi-led coalition in Yemen: Pompeo

15 March 2019. The Trump administration opposes curbs on U.S. assistance for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, United States U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Friday. "The way to alleviate the Yemeni people's suffering isn't to prolong the conflict by handicapping our partners in the fight, but by giving the Saudi-led coalition the support needed to defeat Iranian-backed rebels and ensure just peace," Pompeo said at a news conference. [Reuters](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(04 March 2019 - 10 March 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. UN: 100 Yemen Civilian Casualties on Average Weekly in 2018

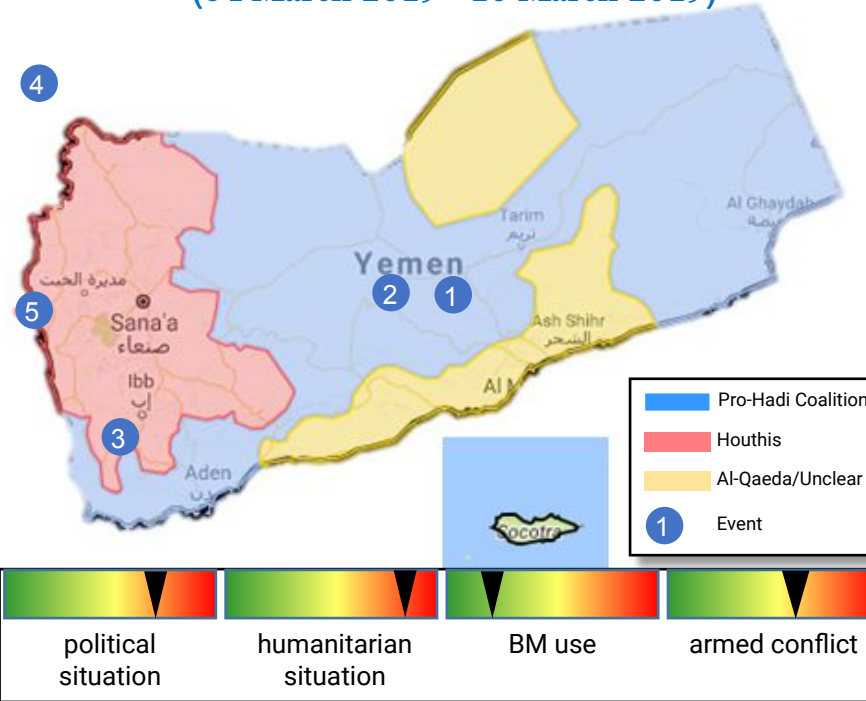
8 March 2019. UNHCR says in a report that around 5,000 civilians were either killed or wounded last year, which averages out to 93 victims each week.

Nearly half of this number were wounded or killed in the country's west, including the in the war-torn governorate of Hodeida. A third of the casualties were children, according to the Thursday report.

[The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/08/world/middleeast/yemen-civilians.html)

2. Germany extending Saudi arms freeze to end-March: foreign minister

6 March 2019. Germany said on Wednesday it would extend until the end of March a unilateral halt on arms shipments to Saudi Arabia imposed due to concerns about its role in Yemen's war and the killing of a journalist, stretching the embargo beyond a March 9 deadline. [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/article/us/yemen-germany/germany-extends-saudi-arms-freeze-to-end-march-idUSKBN1Z0001)



ASSESSMENT

- Despite the UN reports regarding humanitarian crisis and even civilian casualties in Yemen and the Khashoggi affair do not prevent US, UK and France to make arms deal with Saudi Arabia.
- However, Germany's decision to freeze arms exports to Saudi Arabia can be seen as a significant step in the right direction.
- Both the drone aimed at Kingdom and the clashes in Al Hudaydah shows again that the fragile conditions in Yemen continue to exist as diplomatic efforts continue to enforce sides to implement Stockholm Agreement.

3. Yemen stops issuing passports

6 March 2019. Yemeni authorities have stopped issuing passports as a result of the high demand, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed reported.

[Middle East Monitor](https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190306-yemen-stops-issuing-passports/)

4. Saudis shoot down drone aimed at kingdom, Saudi TV reports

8 March 2019. Saudi Arabia's air defense systems shot down a drone over the kingdom on Friday, the Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen said, and it accused the country's Houthi fighters of launching the aircraft and targeting civilians. [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/article/us/yemen-saudi/saudi-shoots-down-drone-aimed-at-kingdom-idUSKBN1Z0001)

5. Clashes break out in Yemen's key port city after cease-fire

10 March 2019. Yemeni security officials and eyewitnesses say that fighting has erupted in the key port city of Hodeida, the first significant clashes since warring sides agreed to a U.N.-brokered cease-fire deal in December. [AP](https://www.ap.com/yemen-clashes-break-out-in-yemens-key-port-city-after-cease-fire)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(26 February 2019 - 04 March 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Southern Yemen warn exclusion from U.N. peace talks could trigger new conflict

1 March 2019. Ahmed Omar bin Fareed, a senior member of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), the southern separatist movement's political body, told Reuters the south needed to be included in the peace process to avoid further conflict if a deal does not satisfy their demand for self-determination. Bin Fareed, the STC's chairman in the European Union, said the elite forces in the south number at least 30,000-35,000, while other military forces are still engaged in the battle against the Houthis in Hodeidah and in al-Anad. The southern forces are maybe 60,000 when you factor in tribal forces and other militias." [Reuters](#)

2. UK FM Meets Yemen Rebels in Oman to Discuss Port City Truce

1 March 2019. Yemeni rebels say their representatives have met with British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt in Oman's capital, Muscat, to discuss the situation in and around Yemen's key port city of Hodeida. [The New York Times](#)

3. UN envoy arrives in Yemen to discuss truce around port city

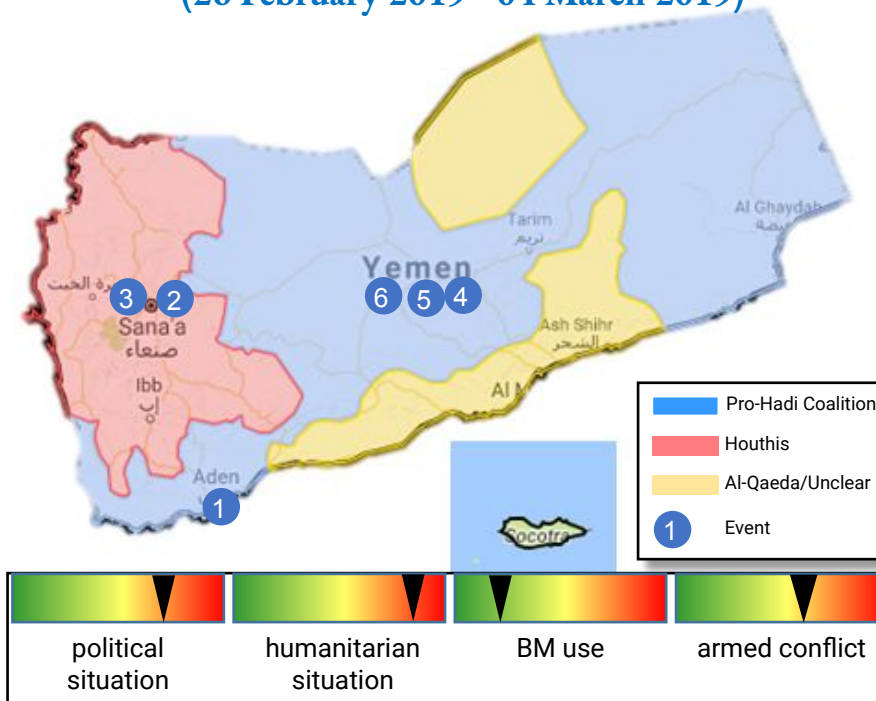
26 February 2019. The officials say Griffiths is meeting Tuesday with Houthi rebel leader Abdul-Malek al-Houthi to discuss the implementation of peace deals from December talks with Yemen's internationally recognized government. [AP](#)

4. With 10 mn Yemenis 'one step away from famine', donors pledge \$2.6 bn

26 February 2019. Donors have pledged \$2.6 billion, 3 per cent more than during last year's conference, to provide urgently needed support to millions of Yemeni civilians facing an "overwhelming humanitarian calamity" after nearly four years of brutal war, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said on Tuesday.

The UN chief also announced that the World Food Programme (WFP) has been able to reach the so-called Red Sea Mills food stores in the key port city of Hudaydah, where more than 50,000 tonnes of wheat - enough to feed 3.7 million people for a month - has been trapped for months, due to fighting between coalition forces backing the Government, and Houthi rebels who control the city and port. The UN emergency food assistance agency confirmed the information but has yet to announce if its stocks are fit to eat, after months without access.

The highest contributors at the conference - at \$500 million each - were Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. The 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen requires \$4 billion to reach 21.4 million people who are barely surviving. More than half of the funding is destined for emergency food aid for 12 million people - a 50 per cent increase compared to last year. [UN News](#)



ASSESSMENT

- This week witnessed several good news. The first one was certainly the pledge event whereby the 16 donors committed to transfer \$2.6 bn to Yemen of which more than half will be used for food aid. Not interestingly those seen as reason for devastation in Yemen, namely S.Arabia and UAE were the ones to pledge the most (\$500 mn). But interestingly, US, which is currently at the epicenter of the global discussions about Yemen due to its unconditional support to Saudi-led Coalition pledged only \$21 mn.
- Another good news is the transfer of control of Red Sea Mills food stores to WFP. Still there is need for the opening of the humanitarian corridor to Taiz, an element of the Stockholm agreement awaiting to be honored.
- The Houthis play the game in "clever" way. While the war ravages the country in full fledge, they agree on this and that from time to time to manage impression.
- Southern Transitional Council wants to make its mark in the process to reach peace. The latest statements of the Chairman in the EU shows the country has made great distance away from being a unitary state again. The future Yemen will most likely be a federation or a divided state.

5. Congressional Action on Yemen Isn't Only About Yemen

27 February 2019. As currently framed, House Joint Resolution 37 would have only modest impact on Saudi Arabia's calculus in prolonging Yemen's brutal, four-year old war. The resolution also will not alleviate, in and of itself, the ongoing dire humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Nonetheless, H.J. Res. 37 is a rebuke of the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition's prosecution of the war - which has caused the world's worst current humanitarian crisis - and the U.S. role in supporting the coalition's military activities. Despite Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates having received U.S. sales of precision weapons, U.S. training, U.S. refueling, and U.S. intelligence support, the U.N. has calculated that the "vast majority" of civilian casualties in Yemen have been caused by the 19,000-plus coalition airstrikes. Beyond the serious undertaking of addressing the U.S. role in the Yemen conflict, the resolution has other strategic potential if Congress pursues it constructively. Review of this legislation and continued oversight work may succeed in sparking a sustainable debate on the future role of the United States in Yemen's conflict, the U.S.-Saudi and U.S.-U.A.E. relationships, and more broadly, on the proper role of the United States in the Middle East and its conflicts. [Center for a New American Security](#)

6. Federalism in Yemen: A Catalyst for War, the Present Reality, and the Inevitable Future

28 February 2019. It is widely agreed that there is little possibility of a military victory for any side in the ongoing conflict. Following any potential negotiated end to the war and subsequent reconciliation process, broad discussions on the subject of federalism - and indeed other possible alternatives - are needed to avoid a repeat of the flawed process that led to the current war. Rather than postponing discussions until after the conclusion of the conflict, preliminary discussions should be held with a variety of stakeholders to better understand their key demands and visions for governance in post-conflict Yemen. This diplomatic engagement should take place in parallel to the current UN-backed peace talks to end the conflict. [Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(18 February 2019 - 25 February 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. UN envoy says Yemen ports deal is chance for peace talks

19 February 2019. Martin Griffiths told the U.N. Security Council that the forces will initially be withdrawn from the smaller ports of Salif and Ras Issa, beginning “possibly” Tuesday or Wednesday. This will be followed by a pullout from the major port of Hodeida and critical parts of the city that will allow access to the Red Sea Mills, a major U.N. storage facility holding enough grain to feed 3.7 million people for a month. , he said. Griffiths called on the parties to fully implement the first phase and to agree on details of the second phase of the redeployment of forces, “which we hope will lead to the demilitarization” of Hodeida, whose port handles about 70 percent of Yemen’s commercial and humanitarian imports.

A U.N. official said the first phase involves pulling back several kilometers, and the second phase a withdrawal of 18 to 30 kilometers (11-18 1/2 miles), depending on the location and fighters. In some places in Hodeida city, the opposing forces are facing each other about 100 meters apart, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because negotiations were private. [The Washington Post](#)

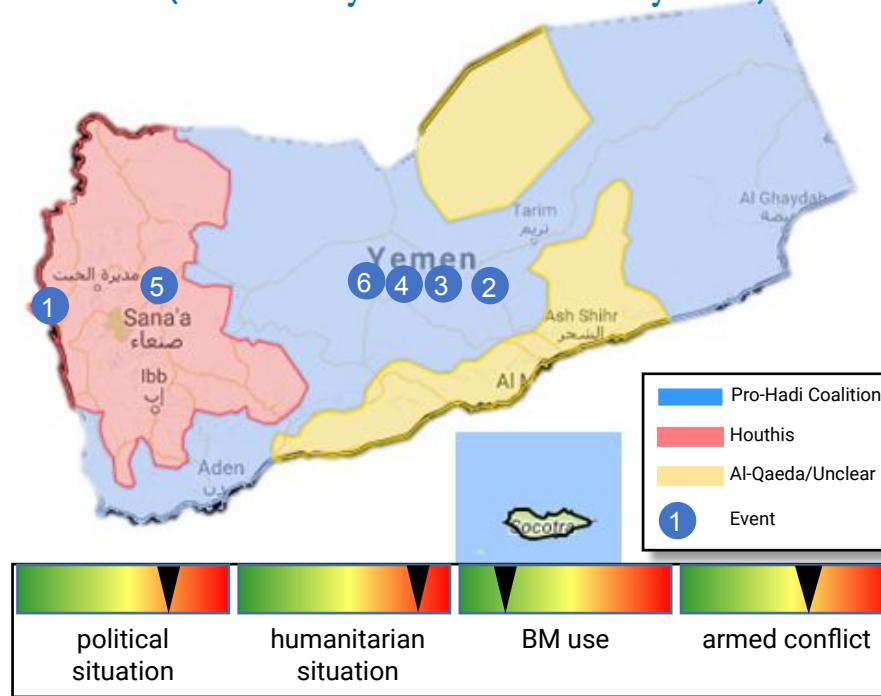
2. Germany: Decisions on arms exports to Saudi will depend on Yemen conflict

20 February 2019. “The German government’s position is that we are not delivering any weapons to Saudi Arabia at the moment and we will make future decisions depend on how the Yemen conflict develops and whether what has been agreed in the peace talks in Stockholm is being implemented,” German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told a news conference. [Reuters](#)

3. Ties with Saudi Arabia give UK leeway to push for peace in Yemen: Hunt

20 February 2019. Speaking during a visit to Berlin, UK Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said the “strategic relationship that the UK has with Saudi Arabia is what allows us to have a huge influence in bringing about peace in Yemen.” He added: “Britain and Germany have the same objectives, but we need to be able to continue that strategic relationship in order to make sure that there is a European voice at the table doing everything we can to press for peace.”

[Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- The process initiated with Stockholm Talks has again focused effort and action on Salif and Ras Issa ports, and the major port and city of Hodeida. The efforts by international actors reflect the mindset that if it would be possible to convince Houthis to conform to the conditions set in Stockholm, this will trigger a domino effect to finally bring peace to whole of Yemen. As the Yemeni government and Saudi-led Coalition constantly document and disseminate Houthi violations to the agreement, International Community to include UN Special Representative, Griffiths try their best to push Houthis to abide by very basic articles of the agreement, in most cases refraining from criticizing them, overseeing their violations and even accommodating those conditions according to Houthis understanding.
- The war in Yemen continue in full force in all Yemen. Houthis have shown so far no willingness for compromise in other parts of Yemen. In addition to their fight with the Coalition, Houthis try to subdue tribes to consolidate power, intimidate or jail international workers, testing and enlarging the limits of patience of all stakeholders.
- Latest military acquisition contracts by Saudi Arabia and UAE and appointment of a first ever female Saudi Ambassador for US shows the intention and need of both states to manage impressions in US and the West.

4. UAE signs \$5.5 bn military contracts as Yemen war heightens scrutiny

21 February 2019. The United Arab Emirates awarded 20 billion dirhams worth (\$5.5 billion) of military procurement contracts during the five-day IDEX military exhibition in Abu Dhabi (17-21 February) this week, at a time when arms sales to the country are under scrutiny due to its role in Yemen’s devastating war. The majority were awarded to international companies such as US firms Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, which sealed one of the biggest deals with 7 billion dirhams worth of contracts related to its Patriot missile air defence system. The UAE also awarded deals to firms from Russia, Turkey, Pakistan and South Africa.

The other member of the Coalition in Yemen, Saudi Arabia signed agreements to develop its domestic defence industry in an effort to diversify its economy away from oil. Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI), the kingdom’s state defence company, signed partnerships with France’s Naval Group, Spain’s Navantia, and Abu Dhabi state fund Mubadala. Established in May 2017, SAMI seeks to localise 50 per cent of military spending by 2030 as part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s economic diversification plan. [Middle East Monitor](#)

5. Houthis take over Yasser Arafat’s house in Sanaa

20 February 2019. “For the [Houthi] militias, the Palestinian cause is a material for propaganda used to exploit the simple people, using slogans such as Jerusalem and refusing normalisation [with Israel],” Yemeni Information Minister Muammar Al-Iryani wrote on his Twitter account. The Houthis use these slogans, El-Iryani said, to mobilise the Yemenis to get involved in the battles that serve their “reactionist” project. [Middle East Monitor](#)

6. MP creates incident in Assembly with banner on Yemen war

19 February 2019. French MP, Sébastien Nadot, the deputy of Haute-Garonne who was recently excluded from the group LREM opened a banner which read “France kills in Yemen” this Tuesday afternoon in the hemicycle, in full session of questions to the government. The MP taking advantage of the unrest caused by his banner announced that he has lodged a complaint against the French government at the European Commission. The complaint targets more specifically the authorizations for arms exports granted by a specialized interministerial commission “to several French companies to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates”. [20 Minutes](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(11 February 2019 - 17 February 2019)

KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen's Houthi forces kill Saudi soldiers in combat

17 February 2019. Saudi state media say Yemen's Houthi rebels have killed at least nine Saudi soldiers in a renewed military offensive. The attacks happened in the southern Saudi provinces of Aseer, Jazan, and Najran. It is the worst spate of violence since a UN-brokered peace deal was signed in December. [Al Jazeera](#)

2. U.S. House backs measure to end U.S. support for Saudis in Yemen war

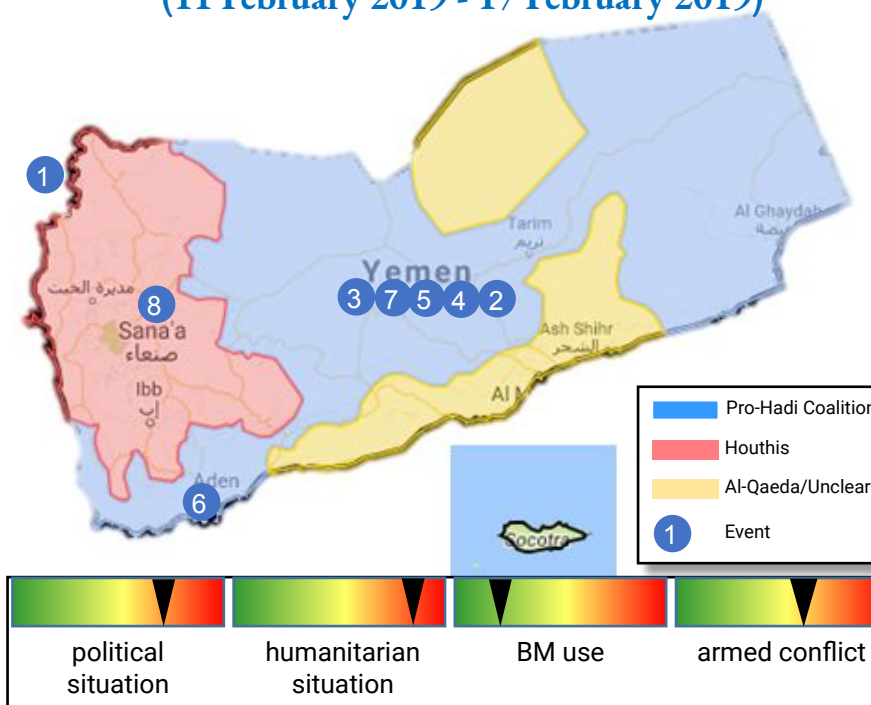
14 February 2019. The Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday approved a resolution that would end U.S. support for the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in the war in Yemen, by 248-177 vote - almost entirely along party lines - which would not be enough, however, to overcome Trump's promise to issue what would likely be his first veto. A previous version of the resolution passed the Senate by 56-41 in December. But it was not brought up for a vote in the House. But this time, the Senate is expected to vote on the resolution within 30 days. [Reuters](#)

3. Trump Objects to Measure Ending U.S. Support for Saudis in Yemen War

11 February 2019. The Trump administration threatened on Monday to veto an effort in the U.S. Congress to end U.S. military support for the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in the war in Yemen, continuing a stand-off with lawmakers over policy toward the kingdom. Democrats view the war powers resolution as a way to assert Congress' constitutional right to authorize the use of military force in foreign conflicts. Republican opponents of the measure, echoing Trump, argue that support for the Saudis constitutes a security agreement, not the use of force. However, the resolution would struggle to garner the two-thirds majorities needed in both the House and Senate to overcome a Trump veto. Republicans still hold a slim majority in the Senate. [The New York Times](#)

4. UK says time to turn Yemen ceasefire into peace is shortening

8 February 2019. "We now have a shortening window of opportunity to turn the ceasefire into a durable path to peace - and stop the world's worst humanitarian crisis," British foreign minister Jeremy Hunt said in a statement ahead of a meeting with the U.S., UAE and Saudi foreign ministers. [Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- The repercussions of the crisis in Yemen continues to haunt US internal politics. After announcement of the President that he would veto any resolution aiming to limit his powers, the issue will be brought to Senate next week. As the voting in the House resulted along party lines and that the Republicans hold a slim majority in the Senate, it is unlikely that the resolution will overcome a probable Trump veto.*
- The fragile conditions in Yemen continue to exist as diplomatic efforts continue to enforce sides to implement Stockholm Agreement. The Quad Meeting in Warsaw seems to have been organised in that regard. However, any meeting not having the Houthis on the table has less chance to better military conditions on the ground. In any case, the \$2.2 billion pledge by KSA to be deposited to the Central Bank of Yemen, the \$570 million contribution paid by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to tackle food security and pay teachers' salaries will hopefully create better living conditions.*
- Houthis continue to block humanitarian aid to reach inner Yemen to include Taiz and use the humanitarian disaster as weapon to block any adverse action.*

5. Yemen Quad meeting in Warsaw - joint declaration

13 February 2019. The Foreign Ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America met today in Warsaw to discuss the situation in Yemen. [...] The Ministers called on the Yemeni parties to rapidly and fully implement the agreements reached in December 2018 for the sake of the Yemeni people. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the preliminary agreement reached on the deployment of forces in Hodeidah by the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) and call on the Houthis and the Government of Yemen to confirm their agreement to this plan and to work urgently with the RCC and the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) to implement the mutual redeployment of forces from the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa in compliance with their obligations. The Ministers stressed that there should be no further delaying tactics with regards to implementation of the Hodeidah Agreement. The Ministers agreed to monitor the situation, coordinate closely and meet again if there are any further delays. The Ministers welcomed the deposit of \$2.2 billion by the KSA to the Central Bank of Yemen, their financial contribution to oil derivatives and the \$570 million contribution paid by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to tackle food security and pay teachers' salaries. [UK Common & Commonwealth Office](#)

6. 3000 cases filed for crimes against humanity

15 February 2019. The National Committee to Investigate Alleged Violations of Human Rights in Yemen said yesterday that it has filed 3,000 cases against perpetrators of crimes against humanity in order to bring them to trial. [Middle East Monitor](#)

7. Analysis Yemen's War Is a Mercenary Heaven. Are Israelis Reaping the Profits?

17 February 2019. Israeli cyber companies, gun traders, terror-warfare instructors and even paid hitmen operated by an Israeli-owned company are partners to the war in Yemen. In September, London-based Al-Khaleej Online published a long article about Israel's involvement in training Colombian and Nepalese combatants, who were recruited by the UAE for the war in Yemen. The site's sources said Israel also sold bombs and missiles to Saudi Arabia, some of which are banned. Recently it was reported and later denied that Israel also sold Saudi Arabia combat drones and intends to sell it Iron Dome systems as well. [Haaretz](#)

8. Land Mines Block Saudi-Led Assault in Yemen, Killing Civilians

17 February 2019. Desperate to break through enemy lines, the Saudi-backed forces fighting in Yemen are sending untrained soldiers to clear minefields, sometimes using only their bayonets. Saudi and Yemeni commanders say that hundreds of thousands of unmarked land mines planted by their opponents, the Houthis, have emerged as perhaps their most formidable defense. The mines have also killed as many as 920 civilians and wounded thousands, according to mine removal experts. Rights groups and other monitors say the minefields will leave Yemen riddled with buried explosives that could kill or maim unsuspecting civilians for decades before the devices can all be removed, as they have in Afghanistan, Colombia and Cambodia. [The New York Times](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(04 February 2019 - 10 February 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. The Supervisory Committee on the implementation of the Prisoner Exchange Agreement Continues Its Work

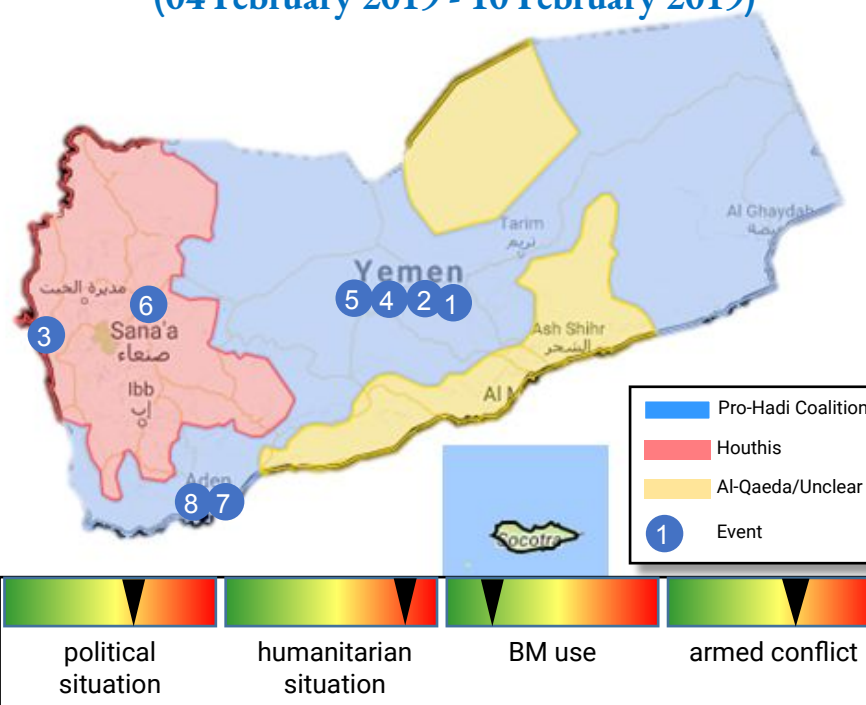
8 February 2019. The Supervisory Committee on the implementation of the Prisoner Exchange Agreement, comprised of representatives of the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah, and co-chaired by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen (OESGY) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), held its second meeting in Amman, Jordan, on 5 to 8 February 2019. The two parties remain committed to the release of all prisoners and detainees, missing persons, arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared persons, and those under house arrest, based on a phased implementation. They furthermore have reaffirmed their readiness to do their utmost to achieve this shared objective, recognizing the urgent need to reunite detainees with their families. [OESGY](#)

2. Yemen's Houthis: prisoner swap talks could drag on for months

8 February 2019. Talks on a UN-sponsored prisoner swap in Yemen's war could drag on for months if the Saudi-backed government denies the existence of thousands of Houthi fighters in captivity, the Iranian-aligned Houthis said on Thursday. [Middle East Monitor](#)

3. U.N.: Yemen Warring Parties Agree Preliminary Compromise on Al Hudaydah

7 February 2019. Yemen's warring parties have reached a preliminary compromise on how to implement a truce and troop withdrawal accord in the port of Hodeidah, although the deal has not yet been finally agreed, the United Nations said on Thursday. [The New York Times](#)



ASSESSMENT

- Even though the two parties remain committed to the release of all prisoners and detainees in Amman, it still seems hard to reach compromise on the numbers of prisoners and detainees.
- Despite Pope's good will, UAE will unlikely cease to support the proliferation of the fighting forces in south of Yemen. Beyond that, it will likely proceed its operational partnership especially with STC (Southern Transitional Council). This act can be seen as hindrance before unified Yemen.

4. UAE recklessly supplying militias with windfall of Western arms

6 February 2019. "While the USA, the UK, France and other European states have rightly been criticized for supplying arms to Coalition forces, and Iran has been implicated in sending arms to the Houthis, a deadly new threat is emerging. Yemen is quickly becoming a safe haven for UAE-backed militias that are largely unaccountable," said Patrick Wilcken, Arms Control and Human Rights Researcher at Amnesty International. [Amnesty International](#)

5. Pope Says He Found 'Good Will' From UAE Leaders to Seek Peace in Yemen

5 February 2019. Pope Francis said on Tuesday he had found "good will" to start peace processes to end the conflict in Yemen, during private meetings with leaders of the United Arab Emirates, which is playing a leading role in a Saudi-led coalition against Houthis in Yemen. [The New York Times](#)

6. Saudi-led coalition in Yemen launches a targeting operation in Sanaa

8 February 2019. The operation targeted a location for storing and preparing drones and launch vehicles in Sanaa. The coalition added that the operation conformed to international law and that measures were taken to protect civilians. [Reuters](#)

7. Morocco suspends participation in Saudi-led war in Yemen

8 February 2019. Morocco has recalled its ambassador to Saudi Arabia and withdrawn its military from the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, government officials confirmed last night. [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. Yemen aims to export about 75,000 bpd oil in 2019: minister

8 February 2019. The Saudi-backed government in Yemen hopes to scale up its crude production to 110,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2019, with exports touching about 75,000 bpd, its oil minister told Reuters on Sunday. [Reuters](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(28 January 2019 - 03 February 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. The Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, concluded his visit to Riyadh, Sanaa and Hdayda.

31 January 2019. In Sanaa, Griffiths met with Ansar Allah leader, Abdulmalik Al Houthi, in addition to senior political officials of Ansar Allah and representatives of the General People's Congress party. The purpose of his visit was to discuss the rapid and effective implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. He also discussed the deployment of UN staff in support of the implementation of the Hodeidah agreement.

In Hdayda, the Special Envoy met with General Patrick Cammaert and local officials, and stressed the importance of the rapid implementation of the Hdayda Agreement, in particular speedy redeployments according to an RCC plan. Griffiths expressed concern about recent hostilities in Yemen and called on all parties to exercise utmost restraint and de-escalate tensions, in Hdayda and in other parts of Yemen.

During his visit to Riyadh, Griffiths received assurances from President Hadi and the Saudi-led Coalition of their continued commitment to respect and fully implement the Stockholm Agreement. Griffiths appreciated that the parties have demonstrated the necessary flexibility and good faith regarding the timelines for implementation and the technical challenges that need to be resolved on the ground. [OSESGY](#)

2. Yemen truce monitor mission to meet on U.N.-hired ship

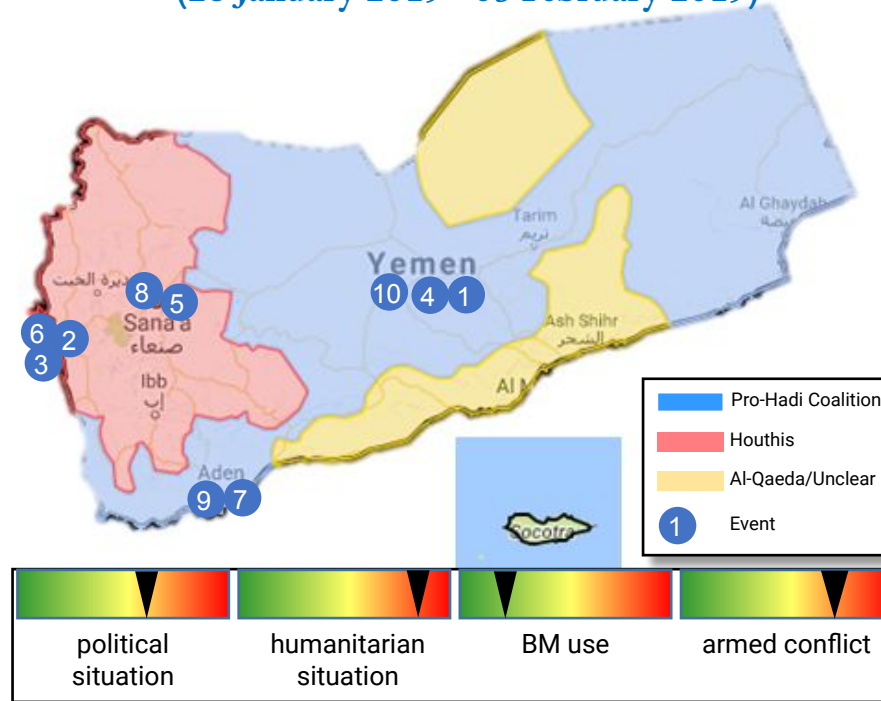
2 February 2019. A committee overseeing a ceasefire in Hodeidah will hold its next meeting on a ship off the port city as Yemen's warring parties cannot agree on a venue, Yemeni and U.N. sources said on Saturday. One of the sources said that the United Nations has hired a ship to be used as the headquarters for the RCC and its meetings. Another source said representatives of the warring parties would be taken to the ship on U.N. helicopters. The RCC had previously met in Houthi-run territory, but attempts to convene a meeting in areas held by coalition forces failed because the Houthis were unwilling to cross the frontline, sources told Reuters in late January.

Troops have not yet pulled out, missing a Jan. 7 target, and residents and aid workers have told Reuters that barricades, trenches and roadblocks have been reinforced. As part of the accord, both sides agreed to the deployment of international monitors in Hodeidah. The next meeting of the RCC is expected next week after the arrival of Danish Major General Michael Anker Lollsgaard who was appointed on Thursday to replace retired General Patrick Cammaert. Lollsgaard is expected to arrive in Amman on Sunday and will travel to Hodeidah afterwards. [Reuters](#)

3. Saudi-led coalition ready to use 'calibrated force' to push Yemen port deal: UAE

30 January 2019. The Saudi-led coalition is prepared to use "calibrated force" to push the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement to withdraw from Yemen's Hodeidah port city under a U.N.-sponsored deal, a senior United Arab Emirates official said on Wednesday.

Yemen's warring parties have failed to pull troops from the country's main port under a month-old truce, reviving the threat of an all-out assault on Hodeidah that could unleash famine. [Reuters](#)



ASSESSMENT

- The process to bring peace or at least to ameliorate the situation in Yemen to make humanitarian aid reach 24 million Yemenis on the brink of starvation still holds although with imperfection. UN Special Envoy Griffiths continues his shuttle diplomacy to find common ground between sides.*
- Despite Griffiths dismissal, general understanding about resignation of Gen. Cammaert is that he leaves due to the attack to his convoy.*
- The progress about the items agreed in Stockholm regarding Sanaa airport, prisoner exchange, withdrawal of forces from Al Hudayda is too slow that UN had to revise predetermined timelines.*
- International Society has to once again make pressure on Houthis to stop re-interpreting conditions or blocking process.*

4. Saudi-coalition protagonists ask UN to pressure Houthis

1 February 2019. Yemen's government and its allies Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates asked the United Nations Security Council on Thursday to turn up the pressure on Houthi rebels to uphold a ceasefire deal. In a letter sent to the council, the three governments accused the Houthis of violating the ceasefire in the port city of Hodeidah 970 times since it came into force on December 18. They asked the council to "impress upon the Houthis, and their Iranian backers, that they will be held responsible if their continued failure to comply... leads to the collapse of the Stockholm agreement," said the letter seen by AFP. [The New Arab](#)

5. Saudi-Led Coalition Attacks Drone Storage Site East of Sanaa

31 January 2019. The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen has attacked a site east of the capital Sanaa which the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement used to store drones, Saudi news agency SPA said on Thursday. [The New York Times](#)

6. U.N. envoy urges Yemen combatants to withdraw from lifeline port

28 January 2019. The United Nations envoy for Yemen on Monday urged the warring parties to withdraw their troops from the port of Hodeidah quickly, and international aid agencies said conditions for thousands of starving people were deteriorating fast. [Reuters](#)

7. UN extends implementation timeline of Yemen agreements

29 January 2019. UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, yesterday confirmed that the timeline for the implementation of the UN-brokered deal between Yemen's warring parties has been extended due to "difficulties on the ground". [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. Saudi pledges to release seven Houthi prisoners after freed Saudi arrives in Riyadh

29 January 2019. The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said that seven Houthi prisoners will be released, after a Saudi prisoner freed by the group arrived in Riyadh on Tuesday, Saudi state television reported. Saudi prisoner Mousa Awaji was returned on a Red Cross plane from Sanaa on Tuesday due to illness, the Houthi TV channel al-Masirah said, citing Abdulqadir Murtada, a Houthi official. [Middle East Monitor](#)

9. Griffiths to Asharq Al-Awsat: No Element of Truth to Reports of Disagreements with Cammaert

30 January 2019. United Nations special envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths ruled out claims that the departure of head of the UN mission tasked with overseeing the Hodeidah ceasefire deal, retired Dutch General Patrick Cammaert, from his position is linked to the attack against his convoy in Hodeidah earlier this month.

He also denied that disputes existed between him and Cammaert, explaining that an agreement had been reached since his appointment that his mission would be short and limited to forming his team in Hodeidah. [Al Sharq al Awsat](#)

10. Documentary: Targeting Yemen

22 January 2019. Correspondent Safa Al Ahmad reports from inside Yemen, investigating the escalation of the U.S. fight against Al Qaeda and its impact on civilians. She travels to the front lines, visiting the sites of Special Forces raids and a deadly drone strike to shed light on how the U.S. counterterrorism strategy is playing out on the ground. [PBS Frontline](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(21 January 2019 - 27 January 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Eight civilians killed in Yemen displaced centre bombing

27 January 2019. Eight civilians were killed and 30 others wounded in a "shocking" bomb attack against a centre for displaced people in Yemen, the UN said Sunday. The bombing hit the centre in the Haradh district in the northwestern province of Hajja on Saturday, according to the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, Lisa Grande. She did not name the party behind the attack and said: "Any attack on a civilian site is unconscionable and a clear violation of international humanitarian law." [Daily Mail](#)

2. U.N. to replace head of Yemen truce monitoring mission: diplomats

25 January 2019. The head of a United Nations mission tasked with overseeing a peace deal in Yemen's Hodeidah port city plans to step down next month and will be replaced with a Danish official, U.N. diplomats said on Thursday. Diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the United Nations plans to replace Cammaert next month with Danish Major General Michael Anker Lollsgaard, who led a U.N. peacekeeping mission in Mali in 2015 and 2016. [Reuters](#)

3. UK host a meeting in February with Saudi Arabia & the UAE

24 January 2019. UK Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt: We would host a meeting in February with Saudi Arabia & the UAE to bolster our support for the Stockholm process and agree next steps for further progress on a political settlement for Yemen.

[Jeremy Hunt on twitter](#)

4. Yemen prisoner swap terms expected in coming days, govt. delegate says

23 January 2019. Yemen's warring parties are expected to agree the terms of a prisoner swap in about 10 days, a representative of the internationally recognized government said on Wednesday, as part of efforts to build confidence in slow-moving peace talks.

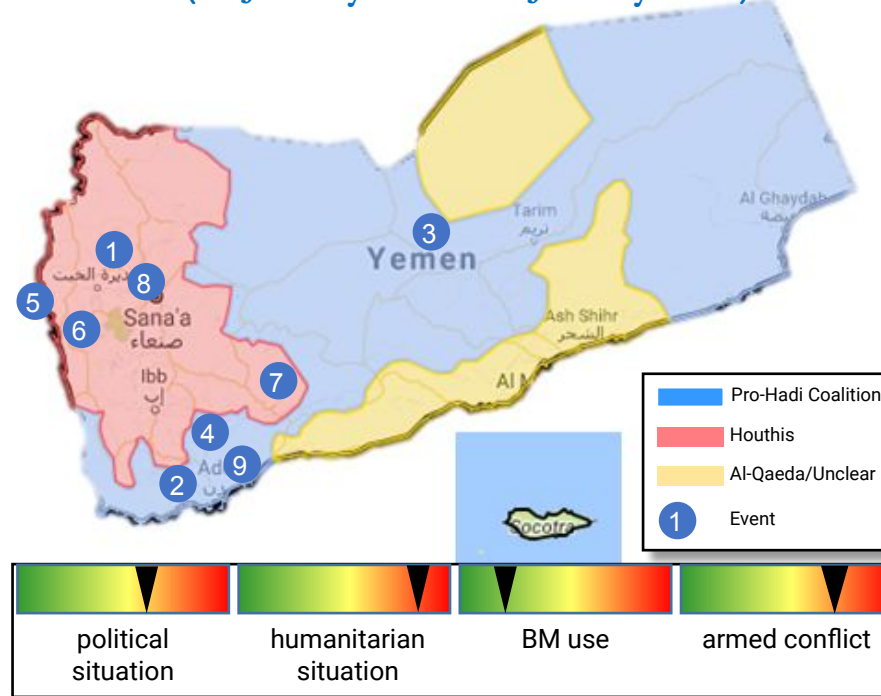
[Reuters](#)

5. Fear of renewed fighting, hunger as Yemen port troop pull-out stalls

25 January 2019. Yemen's warring parties have failed to pull troops from the main port under a month-old truce, putting the first major diplomatic breakthrough of the four-year war in jeopardy and reviving the threat of an all-out assault that could unleash famine. [Reuters](#)

6. Troops, Shiite Rebels Clash Near Contested Yemeni Port City

24 January 2019. Security officials say heavy fighting has broken out between government-allied troops and Shiite rebels in and around Yemen's contested port city of Hodeida. Thursday's fighting, which went on for about three hours, is thought to be the biggest breach yet of a fragile cease-fire in the city reached in U.N.-sponsored talks in Sweden last month. [The New York Times](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *The cease-fire attained after Stockholm Agreement holds only tenuously. This week again clashes near Hodeidah risk foiling the agreement. The intransigent behaviour of Houthis, their interpretations of the agreement that foresees no compromise are working against attaining a lasting peace.*
- *Gen. Cammaert's resignation came after one of the cars in his convoy was targeted. Although there is no official reason given for his resignation this event probably had great importance in this decision.*
- *The Coalition plans to redeploy some of the forces from Hodeidah to Sana'a then to Sa'adah to isolate the capital and prevent supply and communications. This will require fixing Houthis in Hodeidah with some troops while attacking the capital with the bulk of its forces. The plan, as may seem good on the paper, needs to be well assessed based on the length of logistics lines, availability and morale of forces to conduct such operations and international political support. Because such an action will excruciate already critical humanitarian situation and cause interruption of all peace efforts.*

7. US attack killed 30 civilians in Yemen village

24 January 2019. Some 30 Yemeni civilians were killed in error during a US Special Operations raid on the village of Yakla in the Yemeni province of Al-Bayda in January 2017, the BBC reported. The BBC said its correspondent, Safa Al-Ahmad, traveled to Yemen to investigate the escalation of US attacks on Al-Qaeda targets in the country, explaining that "most of the strikes were carried out in secret". [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. 2 explosions hit Yemeni capital Sana'a

23 January 2019. Two explosions hit south of Yemen's Houthi-held capital, Sanaa, early on Wednesday, with one of them being an operation that targeted missiles and weapons cache, Saudi-owned Al Arabiya TV reported. There were no immediate reports or casualties. [Middle East Monitor](#)

9. Op-Ed: Yemen's Stockholm test

23 January 2019. Baleegh Al-Mekhlafi, chairman of the media committee of the government delegation to Stockholm, told Al-Ahram Weekly that Houthis want to undermine Stockholm deal by violating their obligations and obstructing the committees formed at the Stockholm talks in December 2018. Al-Mekhlafi doubts that the Houthis have a real peace plan, based on the expectations of the world community and responsiveness of the legitimate government and Arab coalition.

Rana Ghanem, member of the government's negotiating team said: Houthis are also manoeuvring on the Hodeida issue by interpreting the Stockholm text as "redeployment" instead of "withdrawal" and accordingly restructured their military and security forces in the port city to comply with this interpretation. In Taiz, Houthi militias refused to open the Houban corridor to end the siege ahead of relief work.

Pro-government media reported that the coalition will likely send excess troops in the ongoing battle for Hodeida to other locations around Sanaa and continue moving onto Saada, the militia's stronghold. The government supports this outlook, especially after the appointment of new military leaders on the outskirts of Sanaa to improve military action on the fronts of Naham, Sirwah and others around Sanaa in preparation for isolating the capital and blocking supplies and communication between these fronts to put the militia under siege and submission and restore pre-21 September 2014 conditions when the Houthis revolted.

It is likely settlement talks will continue despite stumbling blocks since the UN is persistent in moving forward no matter the level of procrastination or obstacles to implementation. This was evident when the prisoner exchange committee met in Jordan despite the Houthi attack on Al-Anad. At the same time, Yemeni Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Yamani announced the first meeting of the committee on ending the siege of Taiz. When Houthis attacked the motorcade of UN committee chairman Patrick Cammaert in Hodeida, he moved the meeting overseas. [Al Ahram](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(14 January 2019 - 20 January 2019)

KEY EVENTS

1. U.N. Security Council approves up to 75 Yemen truce monitors

16 January 2019. The United Nations Security Council unanimously approved on Wednesday the deployment of up to 75 observers to Yemen's port city of Hodeidah for six months to monitor a ceasefire and redeployment of forces by the warring parties. In a letter to the Security Council on Tuesday - seen by Reuters - Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen accused the Houthis of 573 violations of the ceasefire, leading to the death of 41 coalition forces and wounding of another 396. "The coalition hopes that the deployment of an increased number of U.N. monitors will help to ensure greater compliance by the Houthis," they wrote. [Reuters](#)

2. Head of U.N. team in Yemen's Hodeidah safe after car in convoy shot: U.N.

17 January 2019. The head of a U.N. mission tasked with overseeing a peace deal in Yemen's Hodeidah port city is safe after an armored car in his convoy was hit by a bullet, the United Nations said on Thursday. "Cammaert appealed for calm and a strengthening of the ceasefire in Hodeidah by the warring parties. [Reuters](#)

3. Yemen's warring sides fail to reach agreement on prisoner swap

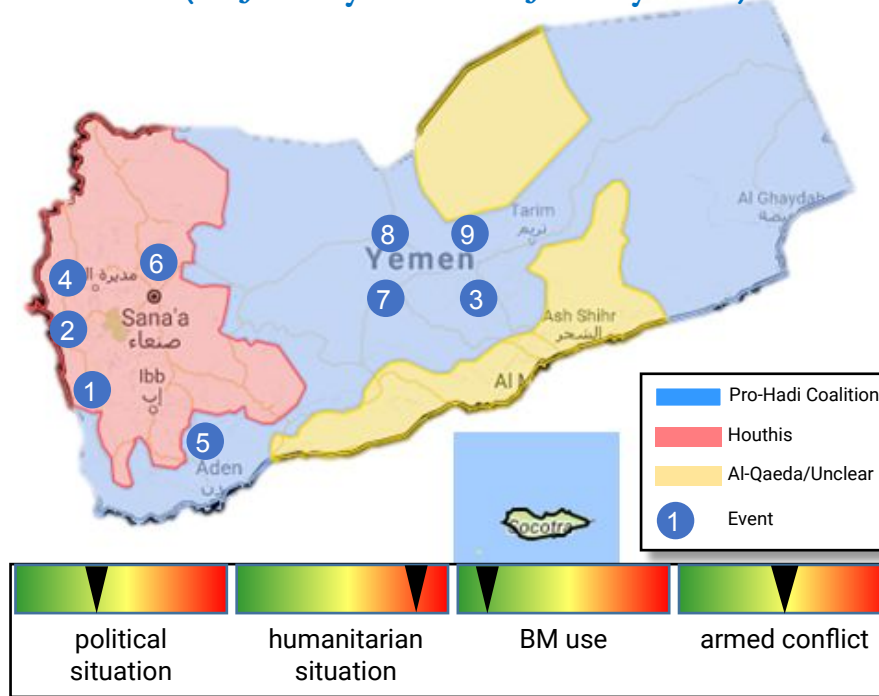
19 January 2019. Three days of talks in the Jordanian capital end in failure, with both sides accusing the other of lying. "They provided lists of names that were fake," Majid Fada'el, the Yemeni government's deputy minister for human rights told reporters. "We don't even know where they got them from. On the other hand, we have reports and documents on those they have imprisoned. They said some of the names we provided were jailed on criminal charges or even belong to al-Qaeda but it's all lies. Sadly, the Houthis lie with every breath". The Houthis, in turn, accused the Yemeni government of withholding information about prisoners being held by the government's allies, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Abdul Qader al-Murtada, a member of the Houthi delegation, said the rebels needed "more time". "Those imprisoned in Saudi and UAE jails are still unknown. We only know of 300 names," he said. "This means we need more time in order to identify them, to better deal with this humanitarian crisis". [Al-Jazeera](#)

4. UN experts: Fuel from Iran is financing Yemen rebels' war

18 January 2019. Fuel is being shipped illegally from Iran to Houthi Shiite rebels in Yemen to finance their war against the government, and both sides are violating international law with their military campaigns and arbitrary detention of rivals, U.N. experts said in a new report. In the 85-page report to the Security Council seen Friday by The Associated Press, the experts said the government and its coalition partners led by Saudi Arabia made "significant progress" on the ground against the Houthis in 2018 - but their aim of restoring the government's authority throughout the country "is far from being realized." [The Washington Times](#)

Video: The hidden victims of the Yemen war

18 January 2018. 3:20 mins. Video produced by Mohamed al-Mikhlaifi, Nawal al-Maghafi, Mohamed Madi depicts the hardships lived by regular Yemenis, real victims of the war in Yemen. The video is important in that it contributes to understanding the impact of the war as opposed to general reporting on political crisis between Houthis and government. [BBC](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *The fragile conditions in Yemen continue to exist. Latest failure in Amman regarding prisoner swap, the first agreed item in the Sweden talks, shows the hard way the sides still have to walk. Houthis block or spoil every step to bring peace to Yemen for obvious reasons. Houthis implement reelpolitik, trying to solidify their gains on the ground by preempting or preventing solution by deeds while pretending to be working towards peace.*
- *Targeting the convoy of Gen. Cammaert is an open threat to the 75 observers that will deploy to Yemen. Happening one day after UN Security Council approval, the intent is to instill fear in observers in order to prevent them from reporting abuses and violations. In any case, deployment of additional observers to Yemen will have positive effect on implementation of the agreement.*
- *An initiative to reach agreement regarding Taiz, another element of the Sweden agreement is soon to be taken. Other initiatives will be a meeting between sides in Kuwait (time still to be determined) and a donor conference to be held in Geneva in February.*

5. Interview with Al-Yamani

20 January 2019. The Yemeni Foreign Minister, Khalid al-Yamani, does not rule out that Dutch General Patrick Cammaert, head of the committee for the coordination of the redeployment of the Hodeidah agreement, decided to transfer the committee's meetings out of Yemen "because of Houthi intransigence and the dangerous escalation by the Houthi militias in Hodeidah." "When asked about status on Taiz, the minister said: The Special Envoy Griffith "intends to hold a meeting with representatives of the government and the coup separately in the coming days in order to coordinate a first joint committee meeting. "As you know, the problem in Taiz is different from the problem of Hodeidah. In Taiz, the challenge is to open humanitarian corridors to deliver food and medicine to the entire population. The closure of roads leading to the city and the denial of access to humanitarian assistance » . [Al Sharq al Awsat](#)

6. Saudi-Led Coalition's Planes Pound Yemen's Capital

20 January 2019. Saudi-led forces launched overnight air strikes on Yemen's capital, described by one resident on Sunday as the worst in a year, as the United Nations struggles to implement a peace deal. A spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition said its warplanes attacked seven military facilities used for drone operations in Sanaa, which is held by rival Houthi forces. [The New York Times](#)

7. UN officials, international parties talk Yemen in Berlin

16 January 2019. Griffiths reiterated his faith in the Redeployment Coordination Committee, chaired by the retired Dutch general Patrick Cammaert, which is overseeing the implementation of the Hodeida ceasefire. "We're going to make this work," Griffiths said. "There's no plan B. What we agreed in Sweden was that this committee would have responsibility for the technical issues about redeployment — monitoring, demining." German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said Germany would contribute €4.5 million (\$5.1 million) to a fund set up to support the peace process. A donor conference is planned for Geneva in February. [Deutsche Welle](#)

8. WHO: 24.4 million in Yemen need humanitarian assistance

18 January 2019. Writing on Twitter, the WHO said that "while Yemen is facing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, the situation is getting worse year by year. By the end of 2018, 24.4 million Yemenis – 80% of the total population – were in need of humanitarian assistance". On Sunday, the WHO announced that 45 per cent of health facilities in the country are out of service. Further, 16.6 million people lack water and sanitation services. [Middle East Monitor](#)

9. UN food aid to Yemen reaches 9.5 million people, shy of target

15 January 2019. The UN's World Food Programme said on Tuesday that it delivered food and food vouchers to more than 9.5 million hungry people in Yemen in December, just shy of its 10 million monthly target due to insecurity in the country threatened by famine. [Arab News](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(07 - 13 January 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Clashes erupt in Yemen's Hodeida despite truce

12 January 2019. Clashes erupted between Houthi rebels and government forces in Yemen's flashpoint port city of Hodeida on Saturday, dealing a new blow to a fragile truce, an AFP correspondent reported. Artillery and machine-gun exchanges rocked the southern part of Hodeida in early morning before tapering off later in day, the correspondent said.

A meeting will be held in Amman next week to follow up on an agreed prisoner swap that could pave the way to an airlift of "many, many thousands" of detainees from both sides. The United Nations is working to schedule a new round of talks, possibly in Kuwait, to build on the Stockholm agreement and advance toward a final deal to end the conflict. [The New Arab](#)

2. Houthis Attack UN Efforts, Call for Expelling Head of Ceasefire Team

13 January 2019. In a Saturday official statement, the Houthis' self-proclaimed Sanaa-based Higher Economic Committee blamed the international body for not doing enough to save the economy. This was followed by threats by Houthi leaders to expel the UN monitor team, headed by retired Dutch general Patrick Cammaert, out of Hodeidah province. Prominent Houthi leader Hassan Zeid called for expelling Cammaert and resuming armed clashes, baselessly claiming in a Facebook post that the UN committee is trying to hand over Hodeidah city and its strategic ports to Houthi enemies: the Americans, British, Saudis and Emiratis. [Al Sharq-al Awsat](#)

3. Top Yemen brass injured in rebel drone strike dies

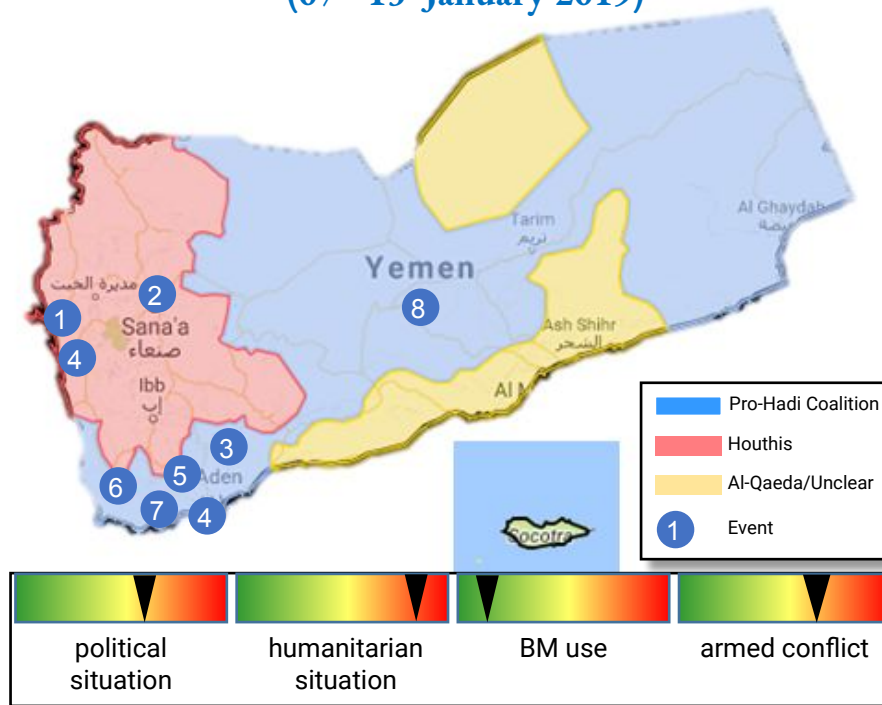
12 January 2019. Al-Anad air base, in government-held Lahij province some 60 kilometres north of Aden, had been witness to Houthi attack where the rebel drone exploded showering a military parade with deadly shrapnel. At least seven loyalists - including Intelligence Brigadier General Saleh Tamah - were killed and 11 injured in Thursday's incident. Although not violating the accord, the attack threatens to hamper United Nations-led peace efforts. Among those injured were Yemen's deputy chief of staff Saleh al-Zandani, senior army commander Fadel Hasan and Lahij governor Ahmad Abdullah al-Turki. Turki and Zandani were transported to Saudi Arabia for treatment, a Yemeni official told AFP. [I24 News](#)

4. Yemen oil refinery fire spreads to second storage tank

12 January 2019. On Friday, a storage tank holding 7000 tonnes of diesel caught fire at Aden's main oil refinery in Al Buraika city. Heat from that fire caused the second reservoir to catch fire on Saturday, a source at the refinery told the National website. "A huge fire erupted just minutes after an explosion that targeted one of the company's oil tanks," a worker at the refinery told China's Xinhua news agency on condition of anonymity. [Middle East Eye](#)

5. CERF allocates \$32 million to enable life-saving assistance in Yemen

11 January 2019. UN today announced a US\$32 million contribution from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support critical services to enable the scale-up of the life-saving humanitarian response in Yemen. The CERF allocation will allow WFP to ramp up humanitarian logistical operations, including increases in humanitarian air cargo, transport more humanitarian workers, provide more accommodation spaces, including in Hodeida, and expand emergency telecommunications. [ReliefWeb](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *Unrest on the part of Houthis continue this week. Another series of exchange of artillery fire in the south of Hudaydah and drone attack to Yemen's biggest airbase resulting in death and wounding of important military figures of Yemeni Armed Forces still shake the foundations of the accord reached in Sweden. The talks that will be held in Amman next week will have crucial importance for continuation of the initiative.*
- *Both continuation of negotiations between Houthis and Yemeni government, and flow of humanitarian aid to the country has crucial importance. However, as was reiterated last week, there is need for strategic moves rather than piecemeal solutions to entangle the country from its long-lasting problems.*
- *This would entail rehabilitating economy, creating incentives for good governance, rule of law, and implementing projects towards creation of jobs and provide good education for Yemeni children. If not, we will continue to witness how this or that group seized which opportunity to grip which benefit in a bid for more power.*

6. Trapped by Mines

10 January 2019. In an effort to prevent the advance of the coalition's ground troops, thousands of mines and improvised explosive devices were planted across the region's roads and fields by Houthis. The principal victims of these lethal hazards have been civilians, many of whom have been killed or maimed for life after unwittingly stepping on an explosive device. MSF set up a hospital in the city of Mocha, in Taiz governorate, in August 2018. Between August and December 2018, MSF's teams in Mocha admitted and treated more than 150 people wounded by mines, improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance. One third of the patients were children who had been playing in fields. Disabled for life, they face an uncertain future. By creating generations of maimed people, mines have far-reaching repercussions – not only for individual families, but for society as a whole, as their victims are likely to be more dependent on others at the same time as being more socially isolated. According to the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre, the Yemeni army cleared 300,000 mines between 2016 and 2018. [MSF](#)

7. Pentagon on Detainee Abuse In Yemen

7 January 2019. In a previously unpublished report to Congress, the Department of Defense said that it has found no evidence of detainee abuse by U.S. allies in Yemen, contradicting reports from journalists, human rights groups, and a U.N. panel of experts that documented torture by U.S.-backed forces. The carefully worded report sent to the House and Senate Armed Services committees last month denied that U.S. forces had ever observed or reported detainee abuse by allies and partner forces fighting in Yemen. The report, which was required by an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for this fiscal year. [The Intercept](#)

8. Opinion: Prospects for Yemen in 2019 and Beyond

7 January 2019. Yemen, and particularly its children face a multiplicity of immediate and long-term challenges. Yemen, prior to the war the country with the highest illiteracy rate in the region, is now creating a new generation of illiterate adults, as more than 2 million children (a quarter of the school age population) who should be in education are not.[1] More than 2500 schools are unusable (16% of the total), either because they have been damaged or destroyed by military action (2/3 of cases) or because they have been closed due to lack of staff, are used as shelters for displaced people or have been taken over by the military. As of December 2018, about 1.1 million pregnant or breast-feeding women and 1.8 million children are malnourished. One child dies every 10 minutes from malnutrition. More than 7 million Yemeni children go to bed hungry every night, they are half of the 15 million people suffering severe malnutrition. All the malnourished children who survive will suffer varying levels of physical and intellectual incapacitation throughout their lives, simply because of early age malnutrition due to the war. More than 6, 700 children have been killed or severely wounded, 85, 000 children are estimated to have died of hunger, directly or indirectly. Close to 1.5 million children have been displaced, millions more are suffering from the trauma resulting from proximity to war zones, including the many active fronts, but also fearing attacks by drones, air strikes and other terrifying events which can happen anywhere in the country suddenly out of clear skies, day or night. The fear and terror induced by this situation, combined with increasingly difficult, not to say, unbearable, living (or more accurately, survival) conditions are creating a generation of psychologically scarred people, many of whom will never be able to live normal lives. [Open Democracy](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(31 December 2018 - 06 January 2019)

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KEY EVENTS

1. AP Investigation: Food aid stolen as Yemen starves

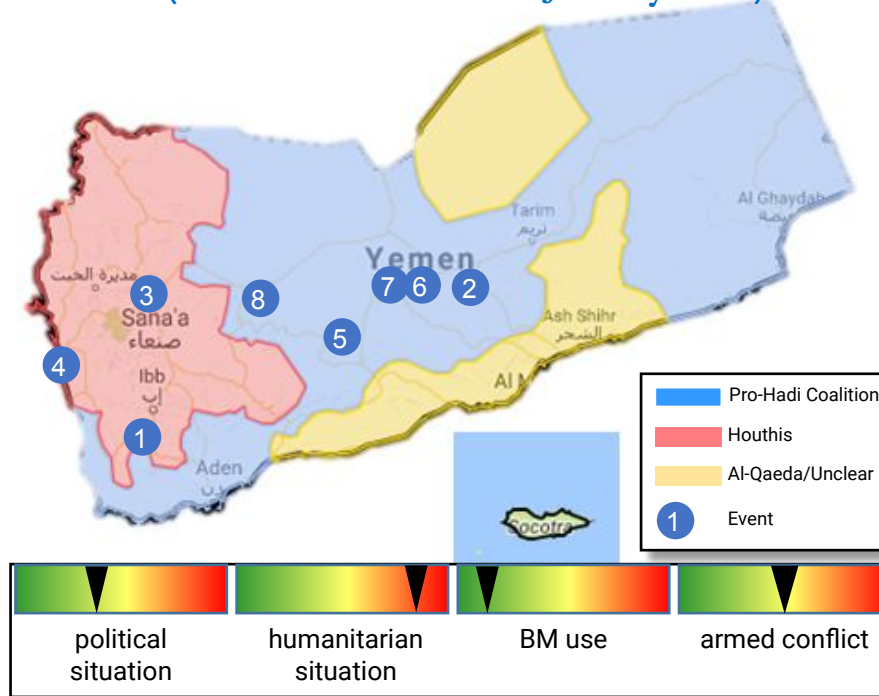
31 December 2018. Thousands of families in Taiz are not getting international food aid intended for them — often because it has been seized by armed units that are allied with the Saudi-led, American-backed military coalition fighting in Yemen. “The army that should protect the aid is looting the aid,” al-Hakimi told the AP. Across Yemen, factions and militias on all sides of the conflict have blocked food aid from going to groups suspected of disloyalty, diverted it to front-line combat units or sold it for profit on the black market, according to public records and confidential documents obtained by the AP and interviews with more than 70 aid workers, government officials and average citizens from six different provinces. It is even more widespread in territories controlled by the Houthi rebels.

Some observers have attributed the near-famine conditions in much of the country to the coalition’s blockade of ports that supply Houthi-controlled areas. AP’s investigation found that large amounts of food are making it into the country, but once there, the food often isn’t getting to people who need it most — raising questions about the ability of United Nations agencies and other big aid organizations to operate effectively in Yemen. [The Associated Press](#)

2. Yemen: Houthi rebels’ food aid theft only tip of iceberg, officials say

2 January 2019. The theft of food aid in Yemen by Houthi rebels might be only the tip of the iceberg, officials believe, as questions multiply over international relief efforts in the famine-ravaged country. It has emerged that aid officials have been aware for months that armed groups — most prominently Houthi rebels in the capital, Sana’a — have been diverting food aid into the key areas they control, including by manipulating data in malnutrition surveys used by the UN.

Officials concede that difficulties with access to many areas in Yemen under Houthi control, and aid agencies’ reliance on Houthi officials to collect much of the hunger data, have left them vulnerable to falsification. The latest claims go a long way towards explaining the stark disparities in the UN’s official famine data for Yemen in comparison to assessments provided by other international aid groups, which have been warning of a much more serious crisis facing the country. [The Guardian](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *Latest exchange of artillery fire in the south of Hudaydah shows on how shaky grounds the cease-fire stands, which is seen as an important step towards peace, the main rhetoric of international community. Another equally dominant rhetoric that drives policies is how humanitarian aid is being stolen or diverted by local actors, be it Houthis or the forces supported by Saudi-led coalition. However, none of those force look beyond to the core of the problem. Even if the weapons are silenced in Yemen, the anguish Yemenis live will not go away. The country will bounce back and forth between war and peace.*
- *As Nadwa Dawsari points, even though humanitarian aid has crucial role at operational level, the international community should make more strategic moves, building capacity in the country rather than providing piecemeal remedies. This would entail rehabilitating economy, creating incentives for good governance, rule of law, and implementing projects towards creation of jobs and provide good education for Yemeni children. If not, we will continue to witness how this or that group seized which opportunity to grip which benefit in a bid for more power.*

3. UN envoy bound for Yemen, Saudi Arabia for Yemen war talks

4 January 2019. The United Nations’ envoy for Yemen is heading to the region this weekend to talk with government and rebel leaders as international efforts aimed at ending Yemen’s civil war continue. Griffiths intends to meet with leaders of the Iran-aligned Houthi rebels, then go to Saudi Arabia to consult with Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi in Riyadh. [AP](#)

4. Yemen’s War Rivals Exchange Artillery Fire Around Port City

5 December 2018. Security officials say Yemen’s Shiite rebels and government forces are shelling each other in areas south of Hodeida, straining an already shaky cease-fire in the Red Sea port city. [The New York Times](#)

5. UAE-backed force kills 9 in Yemen’s Shabwa

4 January 2019. The UAE-backed force attacked members of the Al-Saada tribe in Shabwa’s Merkha directorate, the source said on condition of anonymity. The force — Dubbed the “Shabwani Elite” — received air support from Saudi-led coalition aircrafts, the same source said. [Middle East Monitor](#)

6. In Yemen, world’s worst cholera outbreak traced to eastern Africa

2 January 2019. Scientists have found that a strain of cholera causing an epidemic in Yemen — the worst in recorded history — came from eastern Africa and was probably borne into Yemen by migrants. [Reuters](#)

7. Opinion: Yemen conflict: Can one make peace with the Houthis?

5 January 2019. Despite all their faults, the Houthi movement, also known as Ansar Allah, a largely Zaydi/Shii coalition of tribes, is neither a proxy for Iran nor a terrorist group. They have in the past formed and broken alliances within Yemen, negotiated and broken truces with Saudi Arabia and their Yemeni rivals, but are, even in that inconsistency, an integral part of the Yemeni tribal and societal fabric. They can and must be included in any discussion of peace — and must be involved in the much needed effort to rebuild the tattered state of Yemen. [The Hill](#)

8. Airstrike Kills Plotter of Deadly Bombing of U.S.S. Cole

5 January 2019. An American airstrike in Yemen last week killed one of the suspected plotters of the deadly Qaeda bombing of the United States Navy destroyer Cole in 2000, President Trump and military officials confirmed on Sunday. On Friday, the military’s Central Command said it had conducted a strike on Tuesday in the Marib Province of Yemen that targeted the militant, Jamal al-Badawi, but added that it was still assessing whether he had been killed. By Sunday, the military was confident that Mr. Badawi was dead, Capt. Bill Urban, a spokesman for the command, said in an email. Badawi had escaped from prison twice in Yemen. [The New York Times](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(24 December - 30 December 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen's rebels say they left Hodeida port, claim disputed

29 December 2018. Yemen's Shiite rebels on Saturday said they handed over control of the main port in the Red Sea city of Hodeida to the coast guard and local administrators, but the government denied that, calling it a ploy by the Iran-aligned rebels to maintain control of the strategic facility. Military and local Hodeida officials loyal to the government said the Houthis had taken advantage of their control of the city to place loyalist administrators and fighters in both the port management and the coast guard.

"It's a stage play in which the Houthis handed over the port to their fighters after they put on coast guard uniforms," said the Hodeida governor, al-Hassan Taher.

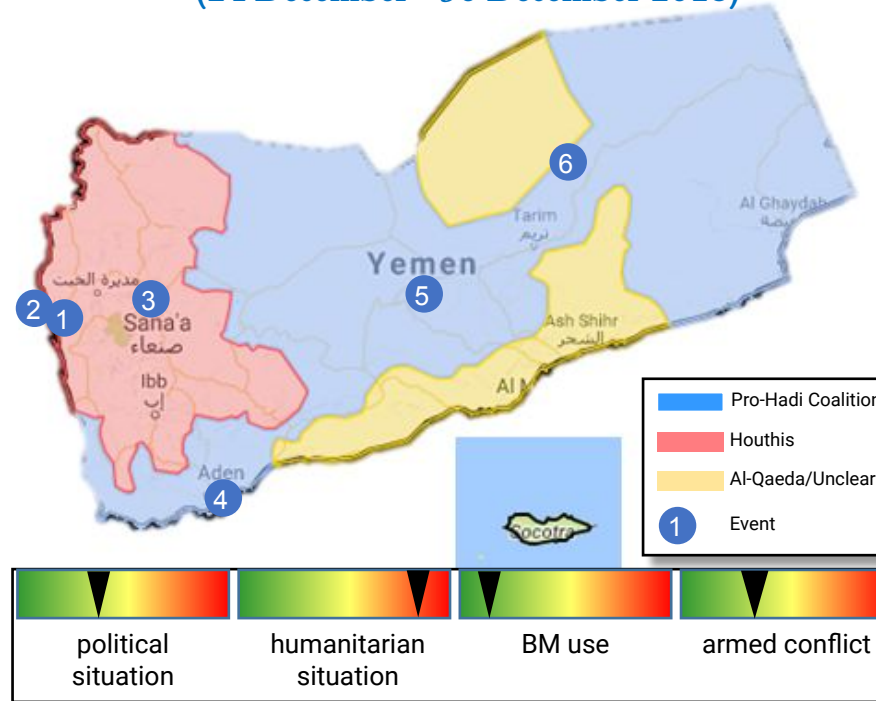
Government officials maintain that the Houthis are denying the presence in their detention facilities of nearly 3,000 people among a total of some 8,500 prisoners whose names were submitted to the rebels. [Associated Press](#)

2. UN Calls Out Yemen's Houthi Rebels Over Peace Gestures

30 December 2018. Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said the rebels, known as Houthis failed to honor an agreement to open a "humanitarian" corridor between Hodeida and the capital, Sanaa, to deliver assistance. Both cities are under rebel control.

The Houthis said Saturday they handed over control of the Hodeida port to the coast guard under the Sweden agreement, but the government denied this, saying it was a ploy by the rebels to maintain control. Government officials said the Houthi-appointed commander of the coast guard in Hodeida is a longtime rebel commander who had never served in the coast guard before.

The estimated 300 members of Hodeida's coast guard had not reported for work in months and have been replaced by personnel loyal to the Houthis, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media. [The New York Times](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *Houthis failed to honour the terms they agreed upon in Sweden on 3 issues by:*
 - Claiming 3000 of 8500 names submitted by Yemeni government not present in their prisons,
 - Abusing agreement regarding handing over the control of the ports,
 - Failing to open a humanitarian corridor between Hudaydah and Sana'a.
- *This shows the group is using the process to ease the tensions from the international community by giving the impression they are ready for peace while trying to hold onto their former position. This will hurt the process to reach political settlement.*
- *Russian negotiations with the representatives of Southern Transitional Council (STC) is a way to have more say in the developments in the country. STC has been actively involved in the fight against Houthis and has complained many times for not being added to the political process. When seen together with its latest attempts to get closer to the Kurds in Syria and its support to Saif-ul Islam Qaddafi, son of the former leader of the country in his bid for power, it is visible that Russia is trying to be active in the affairs of the region by supporting actors disregarded / quitted by the West.*

3. Agreement reached on opening road connecting Yemen's Sanaa with Hodeidah, Taiz

28 December 2018. As consultations continued on Friday between representatives of the Yemeni parties involved in Sweden peace talks, al-Hadath news channel's correspondent reported that an agreement was reached to open the eastern road (known as Kilo 16) which links Sanaa with the port city of Hodeidah and Taiz on Saturday. [english.alarabiya](#)

4. Southern secessionists meet with Russian ambassador to Yemen

27 December 2018. The Russian ambassador to Yemen, Vladimir Dedushkin, met with representatives from the Transitional Political Council for the South (STC) to discuss the importance of the southern issue throughout the Yemeni peace process. Dedushkin stated that the STC should participate in the process and the STC representatives stated that any agreement made without their involvement would fail. [Critical Threats](#)

5. Yemen political discuss convening parliament in Aden

28 December 2018. A Yemeni parliamentarian, who asked not to be identified, said that President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi will meet today with members of the House of Representatives at his residence in the Saudi capital Riyadh. The source pointed out that following the meeting with the president, the Yemeni parliamentary blocs will meet to prepare for holding a council session in Yemen if the arrangements are completed. [Middle East Monitor](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(17 December - 23 December 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen prisoner exchange could involve up to 16,000: Red Cross

19 December 2018. Yemen's warring parties have exchanged lists with a total of 16,000 names of people believed to be detained as part of a prisoner swap deal agreed last week, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Wednesday. Under the agreement, 40 days from the Dec. 11 signing, or Jan. 21, the ICRC will have 10 days to interview privately each detainee released, make medical checks, and arrange transfers to their places of origin by bus or plane, he said. [Reuters](#)

2. Senior Yemen military commander killed by Houthi missile

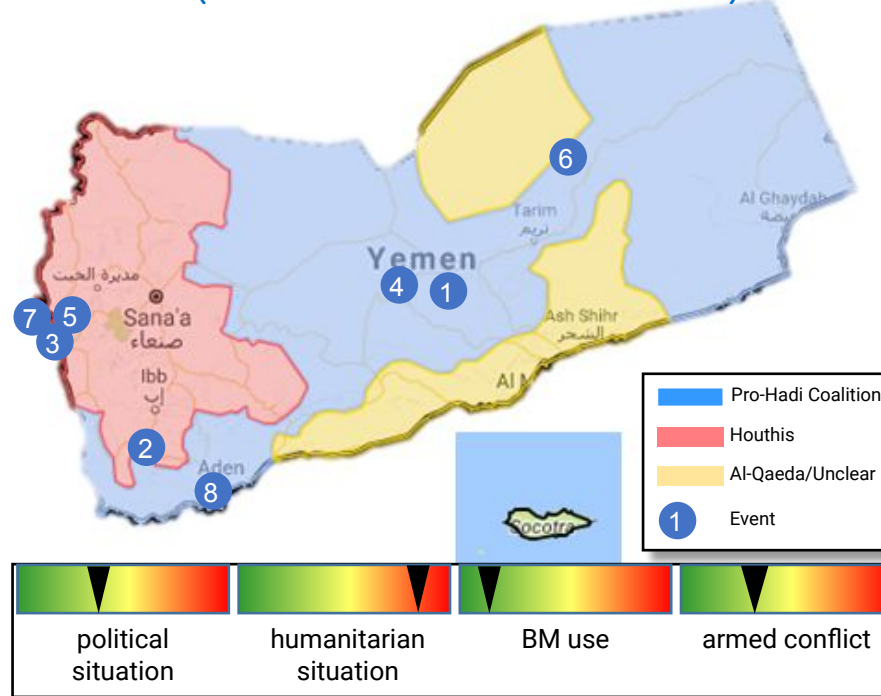
18 December 2018. Colonel Abdul Basset Al-Bahr told the Anadolu Agency that Brigadier-General Taher Hamid Al-Sharabi was killed last night by a shell fired by the Houthis. Al-Bahr added that Al-Sharabi was the head of Military Engineering in Taiz; the highest military authority in the province. [Middle East Monitor](#)

3. Yemen government, Houthis trade blame for ceasefire breaches

18 December 2018. Government spokesman Mamoun al-Mehmaji told Anadolu Agency on Tuesday that the Houthis had attacked government troop concentrations — with machine-guns and artillery — in Al-Hudaydah's regional capital. "If the Houthis continue to violate the ceasefire, we will have no choice but to respond to the source of fire," al-Mehmaji said. Houthi-linked media outlets, for their part, blamed government forces for breaching the truce. [Middle East Monitor](#)

4. Saudi Arabia is hit by a double whammy in one day over Yemen and Khashoggi

19 December 2018. The steps taken by the US Senate in passing the Yemen War Powers Resolution last Thursday confirmed the ongoing disgust at the premeditated killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Arabian Consulate in Istanbul two months ago. It attests to the simple fact that American legislators will not always ignore criminal acts in the pursuit of state interests, following the dictum of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. that, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- The UNSCR 2451 (2018) set a series of mechanisms to stop the conflict in Hudaydah, allow flow of humanitarian and medical aid to the ports around the city and from there to inner Yemen and formation of a committee to agree on how to bring peace to Taiz.
- However, since the Stockholm agreement entered into force on 18 December, the sides continue to take actions within the fringes of the agreement, forming minor violations. The international pressure in face of famine in the country and dire humanitarian situation has forced the sides to look ready for compromise to attain peace. However, how much they actually are ready in terms of compromise is yet to be seen. The arrival of MG Cammaert will certainly provide more clarity in the implementation (if this is the intention) and provide deterrence against violations.

5. UN-led Yemen ceasefire monitoring team gets ready to begin operations

19 December 2018. The Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) is led by retired Major General Patrick Cammaert, who previously served in a variety of peacekeeping roles at the United Nations, including as Force Commander of the former Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), and Military Adviser to UN peacekeeping (DPKO).

The RCC members are drawn from military and security representatives of the Yemeni Government and the Houthi militia, with General Cammaert in the role of Chair. In addition, several international observers may be deployed in the city and port of Hudaydah, as well as Saleef and Ras Isa. [UN News](#)

6. US forces discover injured Emirati soldiers in Yemen

20 December 2018. The United States Defence Department confirmed that American forces found six wounded members of the UAE military after they were hit in an anti-terrorism operation targeting Al-Qaeda in Yemen. [Middle East Monitor](#)

7. After U.S., British tussle, U.N. approves Yemen truce monitors

21 December 2018. The United Nations Security Council on Friday unanimously approved the deployment of a U.N. advance team to monitor a ceasefire in Yemen's Hodeidah region after days of wrangling that pitted the United States against ally Britain. The Security Council authorized U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to deploy - for an initial 30 days - an advance monitoring team. [Reuters](#)

8. Head of UN mission monitoring Hodeidah ceasefire arrives

22 December 2018. The head of a United Nations mission tasked with monitoring a fragile ceasefire in Yemen's strategic port city of Hodeidah has arrived Aden. Patrick Cammaert, a retired Dutch general, with experience in Sri Lanka, Cambodia and the DRC, arrived in the southern city of Aden on Saturday and is due to meet government representatives before travelling to the rebel-held capital Sanaa and onwards to Hodeidah. [Aljazeera](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(10 December - 16 December 2018)

KEY EVENTS

1. Warring parties agree to reopen Sanaa airport, resume oil, gas exports

12 December 2018. Yemen's warring parties reached agreement on Wednesday. Houthi delegate Abdelmajid Hanash said international flights from and to Sanaa would stop in Aden and the airport in Sayun in the south, but the U.N. would oversee the safety procedures. The U.N. declined to comment. As part of confidence-building measures, both sides agreed to resume oil and gas exports to help shore up central bank coffers. Revenues would be used to pay salaries in both government and Houthi-held areas, delegates from both sides told Reuters. [Reuters](#)

2. Reached 'good understanding' with Houthis on economic file

13 December 2018. Yemeni official, Marwan Damaj told reporters on the sidelines of consultations held in the Swedish capital Stockholm: "I think we have reached a good understanding on the economy, and the details will be announced." "Hudaydah revenues will be transferred to the central bank branch in the city and will be managed from the bank head office in Aden, according to the law." [Middle East Monitor](#)

3. UN Envoy: UN Monitors Needed to Observe Yemen Cease-Fire

14 December 2018. The U.N. envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths told the Security Council that a speedy presence in the field is "an essential part of the confidence" needed to accompany implementation of Thursday's agreement on implementation of a cease-fire in the strategic port city of Hodeida and the withdrawal of rival forces, between Yemen's government and Houthi Shiite rebels reached after eight days of negotiations in Sweden. Griffiths said in a video briefing from Amman, Jordan that Dutch Maj. Gen. Patrick Cammaert will lead the monitoring mission and could be in the region "as soon as the middle of next week." The agreement which entered into force upon its publication Thursday, also gives the U.N. a leading role in managing and carrying out inspections at the ports of Hodeida, Saleef and Ras Issa which must "happen within days," Griffiths said. The government and the Houthis also reached "a mutual understanding to ease the situation in Taiz" and open humanitarian corridors for people and goods to cross the front lines and reduce fighting in the province, Griffiths said. U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley said pictures of suffering Yemenis and babies starving to death demand "that we take action to hold all the warring parties accountable," address "the Iranian aggression at the root of the crisis," and deliver life-saving assistance. [The New York Times](#)

4. Yemenis in Hodeidah hope truce holds as warring parties talk peace

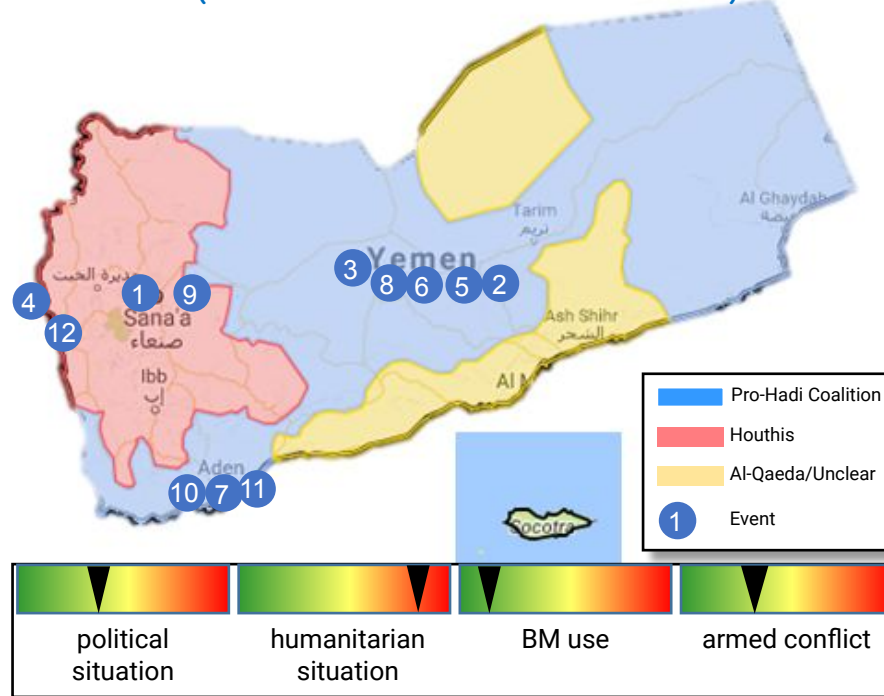
14 December 2018. The ceasefire has wider implications for millions facing possible starvation, as the port supplies two-thirds of the population of the impoverished country of 29 million people. Herve Verhoosel, senior spokesman for the World Food Programme, told a U.N. briefing in Geneva that the truce should enable a sustained flow of food, fuel and aid and prevent further price spikes. He said it would renew access to Red Sea Mills, which stores 51,000 tonnes of WFP wheat stock but has been cut off since September due to fighting. [Reuters](#)

5. Iran Says U.N.-Led Ceasefire in Yemen's Hodeidah Is Step Toward Peace: TV

14 December 2018. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi was quoted saying by TV: "Iran welcomes the agreement ... and hopes it will pave the way for the next round of dialogue for concluding a final accord among Yemeni groups." [The New York Times](#)

6. UN: Two missile launchers found in Yemen appear to be from Iran

12 December 2018. Two launch units for anti-tank guided missiles recovered by a Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen appear to have been manufactured in Iran during 2016 and 2017, according to a confidential United Nations report seen by Reuters on Tuesday. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres does not specifically state whether the discovery of the units in Yemen was a violation of a UN resolution that took effect in January 2016. It prevents Iran from importing and exporting arms or related material unless the Security Council has approved. [Middle East Monitor](#)



ASSESSMENT

- *The agreement reached on Thursday include measures concerning transfer of control in Hudaydah to UN, the cease-fire in Taiz and Hudaydah, restart of oil and gas exports and finally opening of Sana'a airport to flights, all of which constitute urgent matters for Yemen. However, [all three texts](#) of the agreements are extremely vague in nature. Action speaks louder than words. Coming days will show how the sides or other actors will conform to the conditions of the agreement. The latest fight around Hudaydah two days before the cease-fire goes into effect does not bode well. It should not come as surprise if both sides try to take most advantageous position before the agreement enters into effect on Tuesday and try to interpret the vague texts of the agreements to their best benefit which might break the fragile truce. The agreement is not an overall peace agreement. It just includes confidence building measures to prepare the atmosphere for ultimate talks.*
- *There is strong distaste pronounced by Yemeni foreign minister Al Yamani towards British initiative to draft a UNSCR for Yemen. The fear is that the effort will cover disaster caused by Houthi coup based on humanitarian considerations, in a way legitimizing the group.*
- *S.Arabia seems energized by what happens in Yemen. After being singled as the one responsible for the catastrophe, the country tries to find a more multilateral way to advance its agenda for the region. For now the intended solution seems a regional bloc.*
- *The news about Yemenis in S.Korea is disturbing. The tide of events which resulted in framing of the Yemenis as "potential Arab terrorists, rapists or illegal immigrants stealing jobs" during anti-immigrant protests and government surrender to such sentiments will not stand good in the country's record.*

7. Saudi Arabia seeks new political bloc in strategic Red Sea region

12 December 2018. Saudi Arabia is seeking an alliance with six countries bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, a strategic area vital to global shipping and increasingly an arena of contention with regional rivals like Iran, Turkey and Qatar, reports Reuters. Representatives from Egypt, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Jordan gathered in Riyadh on Wednesday to discuss the initiative without reaching a final agreement. A team of experts is expected to meet "soon" in Cairo for technical talks. [Middle East Monitor](#)

8. Senators vote to end US backing for Saudi war on Yemen

14 December 2018. The US Senate has voted to withdraw US military aid for Saudi Arabia's war on Yemen and to blame the kingdom's crown prince for the murder of a journalist. The historic vote is the first time any chamber of US Congress has agreed to pull US forces from a military conflict under the 1973 War Powers Act. Some of President Donald Trump's fellow Republicans defied him to pass the measure with Democrats by 56-41. But the resolution is seen as largely symbolic and unlikely to become law. [BBC](#)

9. Just 2 of More Than 480 Yemenis Receive Refugee Status in South Korea

14 December 2018. Among the many South Koreans who take pride in their relatively homogeneous society, the sudden arrival of the asylum seekers set off a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment, leading to what has been considered South Korea's first organized anti-asylum movement. During recent rallies, anti-immigrant activists vilified the Yemenis as potential Arab terrorists, rapists or illegal immigrants stealing jobs. On Friday, the Justice Ministry said that the government had completed screening applicants seeking for refugees status, granting the privilege to only two of them. Both were Yemeni journalists who faced the risk of persecution if they returned home, the ministry said. South Korea's National Human Rights Commission sharply criticized the Justice Ministry for failing to declare more Yemenis refugees. On Friday, its chairwoman, Choi Young-ae, accused the ministry of screening the refugee applicants "in an indiscriminate manner to mitigate the public sentiments against them." The government has allowed 412 Yemenis to remain in South Korea on temporary humanitarian visas on the condition that they leave once the situation in Yemen has stabilized. [The New York Times](#)

10. In Yemen, a ray of light amid a war's darkness

14 December 2018. In the past, Yemen's warring parties have agreed to various cease-fires, power-sharing agreements, and other truces. "Often, these agreements were only prelude to a new round of fighting," warned Gerald Feierstein, a former U.S. ambassador to Yemen, at a panel event in Washington on Wednesday. He added that the "fundamental challenges facing Yemen," including "political disenfranchisement, economic marginalization and sectional rivalries" have "never been overcome." [The Washington Post](#)

11. A man-made war paid for by women and children

13 December 2018. Often overlooked in Yemen's wartime narrative are women and children. Yet they are the ones most likely to be displaced, deprived and abused. More women are being widowed by the war each day, left without the education or skills to support their families. Rape and domestic violence are increasing. Girls are being pulled out of school to be married off for dowry money. Children are falling sick from diseases that were long-ago eradicated elsewhere in the world, and pregnant women and newborn babies are succumbing to starvation. [The Washington Post](#)

12. Fighting around Yemen's Hodeida leaves 12 dead, 25 wounded

16 December 2018. Fighting has erupted between Shiite rebels and forces loyal to Yemen's internationally recognized government near the strategic Red Sea port of Hodeida, leaving at least 12 people dead and 25 others wounded from both sides, officials said on Sunday, just two days ahead of the implementation of a cease-fire agreed in talks in Sweden earlier this week. They said the fighting south and east of Hodeida began Saturday night and continued until Sunday afternoon, a development that does not bode well for a cease-fire in Hodeida, whose port sees about 70 percent of Yemen's food aid and other imports coming into the country. The cease-fire is expected to go into effect Tuesday, according to the Yemeni officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media. [Fox News](#)



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(03 December - 09 December 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemeni government, Houthis sign prisoner swap deal

5 December 2018. The Saudi-backed Yemeni government and the Iran-aligned Houthis yesterday agreed on a mass prisoner swap deal, days ahead of the United Nations (UN) peace talks which are due to begin on Wednesday. "The office of the UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, informed us on Sunday that the Saudi-led Arab coalition and the Yemeni government signed the prisoner swap deal, which we signed last November," the chairman of Houthis' Committee for Prisoner Affairs, Abdul Qader Al-Murtaza, said on Facebook. (Middle East Monitor)

<https://goo.gl/S8eMM6>

2. Yemen FM: Some Houthis excluded from Sweden peace talks

7 December 2018. The Yemeni Foreign Minister and head of the government delegation Khalid Al-Yamani said it has been agreed that extra participants in the Houthi delegation would be removed from peace talks. Al-Yamani stressed in remarks to Sky News Arabia the need for Houthi militias to withdraw from Yemen's west coast and hand over the strategic port town of Hudaydah to the legitimate government. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/GZodh9>

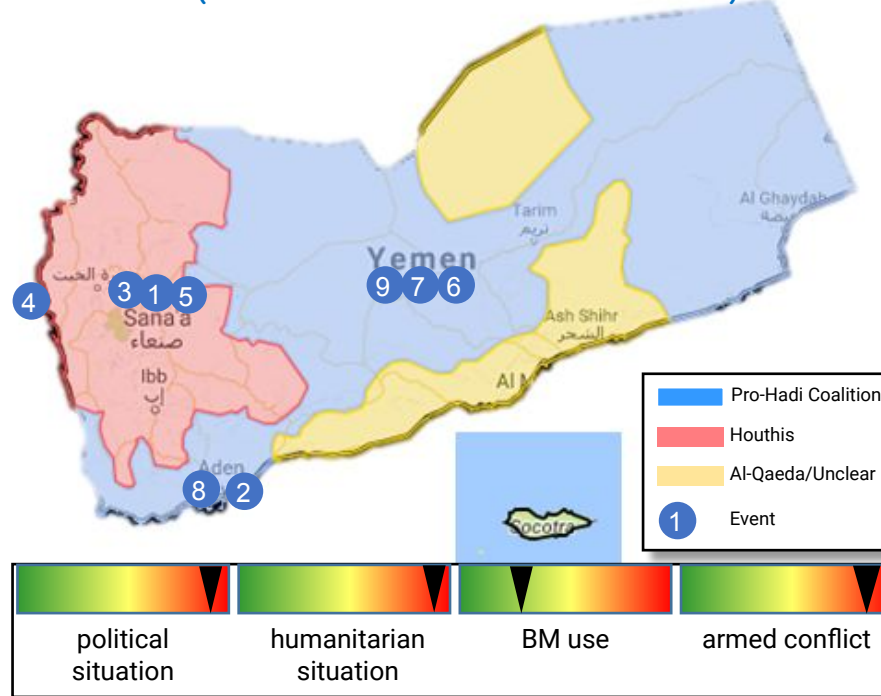
3. Houthis reject government proposals over Sanaa airport in Yemen peace talks

7 December 2018. Griffiths wants a deal on reopening the airport, shoring up the central bank and securing a truce in Hodeidah. Yemen's Saudi-backed government has proposed reopening the Houthi-held airport in Sana'a to internal flights, meaning on condition planes are inspected in the airports of Aden or Sayun which are under its control, two government officials said on Friday. The Houthis rejected the proposal. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/Mzty9v>

4. Top Houthi negotiator calls for main Yemen port to be neutral zone

8 December 2018. Yemen's main port city should be declared a "neutral zone" and the United Nations could play a role in Sanaa airport, the Iran-aligned Houthis' main negotiator said on Saturday on the sidelines of talks aimed at ending the Yemeni war. "We have proposed to the U.N. to oversee the port and supervise its logistics... inspections, revenues and all the technical issues," he said, while declining to say who will control the city if both forces leave. Yemen's government is sticking to its position that Hodeidah should be under its control. Griffiths secured a prisoner swap deal on the first day of the talks on Thursday. But a U.N. source said the two sides remained far apart on Sanaa airport and Hodeidah. (Reuters)

<https://goo.gl/bi9Hra>



ASSESSMENT

- This week two developments will have further implications in the coming months and years.
- The first is obviously the peace talks in Sweden. Despite prisoner exchange agreement, the sides have different positions. Hadi government tries its best to force Houthis to accept conditions like a defeated side whereas Houthis try not to lose their gains to the former. Whatever the results of this conference might be, the country is in the process of Afghanistanization. In the absence of common enemy, the Houthis, terrorist groups like AQAP and IS-Y and militias supported by Saudi Arabia and UAE have started to fight each other to maximize their post-conflict gains. If separatist STC is included, the chaos is more than the government can handle. The country undergoes a great turbulence that requires support from regional and major powers to institutionalize the state apparatus, to attain control over use of force and bring services to the citizens.
- The second is the bi-partisan support to a bill to limit Trump's ability to conduct operations without sanction by the Senate and a following White House threat to use presidential veto. This latter move shows Trump does not want an authority above himself to control his war efforts. As the threat went futile, the Senate showed lack of trust to the President. We will likely observe more political rift between Trump administration and the Senate over the use of power in the coming days.

5. Houthis Call for Transitional Government Including Yemen's All Political Parties

8 December 2018. The main negotiator of Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi group called on Saturday for the formation of a transitional government with the participation of "all political parties". (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/t8NQmR>

6. Martin Griffiths commends the positive spirit in the Sweden consultations

8 December 2018. "The two parties are engaged in a serious and constructive way in discussing the details of confidence building measures, the reduction of violence, and the framework for negotiations. We hope we will achieve progress during this round of consultations". Griffiths reiterates the importance of continued restraint on the ground and calls on the two parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. "We are working to the background of a very fragile situation in Yemen. We hope that de-escalation will be maintained on different frontlines, to give a chance for progress to be achieved on the political consultations" (OSESGY)

<https://goo.gl/FSMfqm>

7. The US Congress is finally doing its job regarding Yemen

5 December 2018. The US Senate sent a strong message to the Trump administration on Wednesday by supporting a bill that would force Washington to cut its support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. Even though Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary James Mattis put forward a vigorous defence of Saudi Arabia and the White House, unsurprisingly, threatened to use a presidential veto, the Senate defied them and had the last word. The vote on the bill (63 for, with 37 against) demonstrates that Riyadh's closest Western ally is not willing to ignore the situation in Yemen any longer. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/wK1ppt>

8. U.S. wants to continue support for Saudi-led coalition in Yemen

9 December 2018. The United States wants to continue support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen's war and will remain engaged in efforts to combat Iranian influence and Islamist militancy in the Arab state, a State Department official said on Sunday. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/VFVyWc>

9. Yemen will need billions to run government, avoid rial collapse

4 December 2018. Yemen's government will need billions of dollars in external support to finance its 2019 budget and avoid another currency collapse in addition to \$4 billion in aid, U.N. aid chief Mark Lowcock said on Tuesday. Lowcock said he had discussed the balance of payments deficit and the need to pay Yemeni salaries and pensions with officials from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the United States at weekend talks in Riyadh. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/2jfKrD>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(26 November - 02 December 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Houthis say they could attend U.N.-led talks if safe passage guaranteed

29 November 2018. A delegation from Yemen's Houthis could attend talks sponsored by the United Nations in Sweden if safe exit and return is guaranteed, the Head of the Houthi's supreme revolutionary committee, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, said on Thursday. The talks are expected to start next week in Sweden. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/Z36R2v>

2. U.N.'s Guterres hopes Yemen peace talks will resume by year-end

29 November 2018. The United Nations is "working hard to ensure the start of meaningful peace talks in Yemen" before the end of the year, U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres said on Thursday. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/2G8i44>

3. ERC calls for peace in Yemen

1 December 2018. At the end of his mission to Yemen, Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock warned that conditions had deteriorated alarmingly since his last visit. He further said: "Yemen is on the brink of a major catastrophe. But it is not too late. Displacement is one of the most visible consequences of the conflict in Yemen. About 2.3 million people are currently displaced across the country. Since June alone, more than 500,000 people have fled conflict in Hudaydah. Yemen is the world's largest humanitarian operation, but in 2019 it will need to be substantially bigger." Deteriorating conditions in Yemen mean substantially more resources will be required for the aid effort next year. Donors have provided \$2.3 billion for the 2018 response plan, or about 80 percent of requirements. (OCHA)

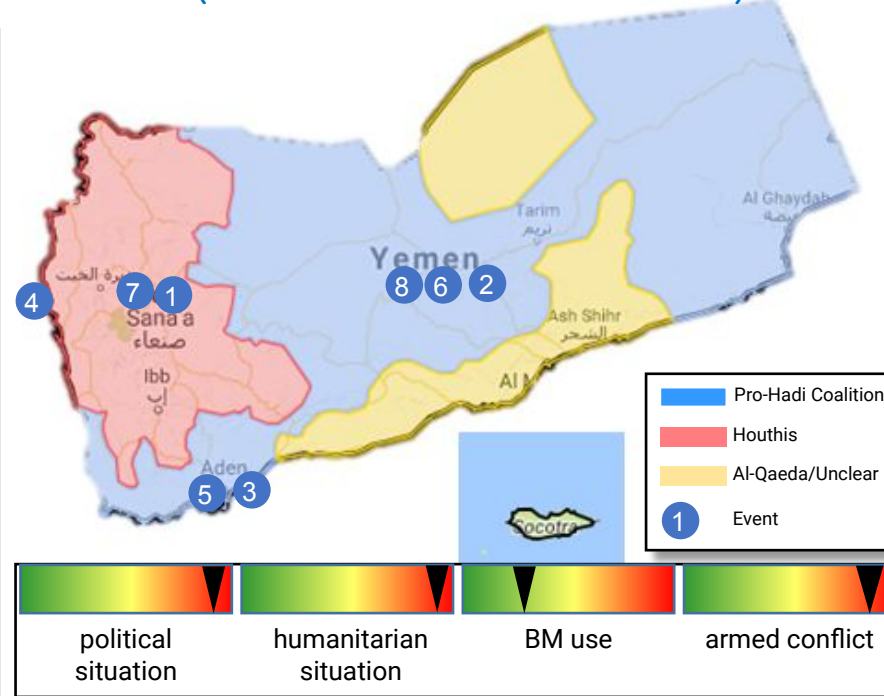
<https://goo.gl/Rbxqmd>

4. Shippers shun Hodeidah due to Yemen insecurity: U.N.

27 November 2018. Operations at Yemen's lifeline port of Hodeidah have nearly halved in two weeks, with shipping companies deterred by insecurity in the flashpoint Houthi-held city, the U.N.'s World Food Programme (WFP) said on Tuesday. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/oXSY3g>

5. Yemen central bank expecting \$3 billion to prop up stricken economy

2 December 2018. Yemen's central bank is waiting for deposits worth \$3 billion from foreign sources, the state news agency SABA quoted its governor, Mohammed Zammam, as saying on Saturday. The deposits are expected to further prop up the battered Yemeni economy and its currency, the riyal, whose value has recently improved to 400 against the dollar, from a previous 800. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/8uctcm>



ASSESSMENT

- *Yemen is becoming a policy changer in US. The Senate which has restrained from making any change in the authorization for use of military force since 9/11 has taken stance for the first time in the case of Yemen.*
- *Houthis' declaration that they will attend the talks in Sweden if safe exit and return is guaranteed should not be taken for granted.*
- *Peace in Yemen is not easy to attain. Even though the talks succeed in reaching compromise, the fractured societal and political structure will feed internal strifes. Secessionist Southerners have been and will push for solutions that will result in a divided Yemen. Terrorist networks like AQAP and IS-Y are major actors waiting for discord and chaos to expand their zone of influence.*

6. Rights groups: US prolonging Yemen war by supporting Saudi Arabia and UAE

26 November 2018. The US' continued military support for Saudi Arabia and the UAE is prolonging the war in Yemen, leading human rights groups have said. In a joint statement, OXFAM, Care, the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children and the Norwegian refugee Council called for America to halt its military support for the Gulf states as this is leading to the famine in the war torn country. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/EPTtF>

7. Military option on table against Iran: US envoy

2 December 2018. In a presentation at a military base in Washington, the administration displayed weapons and fragments of weapons seized in Afghanistan, Bahrain and Yemen that it said are evidence Iran is a "grave and escalating threat" that must be stopped. The material was added to a collection presented by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley last December when she laid out a case for pulling out of the nuclear agreement. The weapons presented "irrefutable evidence" that Iran's destabilizing activity in the region "is a problem that's not getting better, it's getting worse," Brian Hook, the U.S. special representative for Iran, told journalists in a briefing after the presentation. Hook added that he hoped the display would rally international support for re-imposed U.S. sanctions on Iran. (NYT) <https://goo.gl/jMhien>

Hook further said: "We have been very clear with the Iranian regime that we will not hesitate to use military force when our interests are threatened. I think they understand that very clearly. I think right now, while we have the military option on the table, our preference is to use all of the tools that are at our disposal diplomatically." (MEMO) <https://goo.gl/BXD3Ph>

8. US Senate advances measure to end military support for Saudis in Yemen

28 November 2018. The U.S. Senate voted on Wednesday to advance a resolution to end U.S. military support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen's civil war, setting the stage for a possible final vote on the measure within days. Underscoring bipartisan unhappiness with President Donald Trump's response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and the murder of a journalist at a Saudi consulate, many of Trump's fellow Republicans joined Democrats to advance the measure by a vote of 63-37. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/yB1axU>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(19 November - 25 November 2018)

KEY EVENTS

1. Clashes resume in Yemen's Hodeidah after Houthis say open to truce

19 November 2018. Intense fighting broke out in Yemen's port city of Hodeidah late on Monday, shattering a lull in violence that had raised hopes of a ceasefire between a Saudi-led coalition and Houthi insurgents as the United Nations tried to resume peace talks. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/SM9GiC>

2. Moving Forward in Yemen

21 November 2018. The United States reiterates its call for all parties to support UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths by immediately ceasing hostilities and engaging in direct talks aimed at ending the conflict. We welcome the UN Special Envoy's statement that the Houthis and the Republic of Yemen Government are committed to attending the consultations in Sweden, and we call on the parties to follow through on that commitment. All parties must not delay talks any longer, or insist on travel or transport conditions that call into question good faith intentions to look for a solution or to make necessary concessions. The time for direct talks and building mutual confidence is now. We encourage all combatants to abide by their statements declaring a commitment to cease hostilities and call on those parties to not use any period of truce to reinforce military positions, implant mines, or in any way escalate the conflict. The United States welcomes the Saudi-led Coalition's November 20 announcement of a \$500 million contribution to address the food security crisis. In addition to this, Hudaydah port must be turned over to a neutral party to accelerate the distribution of aid to address the acute humanitarian crisis, and to prevent the port from being used to smuggle weapons and contraband into the country or to finance the Houthi militia. It is time to end this conflict, replace conflict with compromise, and allow the Yemeni people to heal through peace and reconstruction. (US State Dept.) <https://goo.gl/WwoYcI>

3. U.N. Envoy: Houthis Ready to Negotiate Control of Key Yemen Port

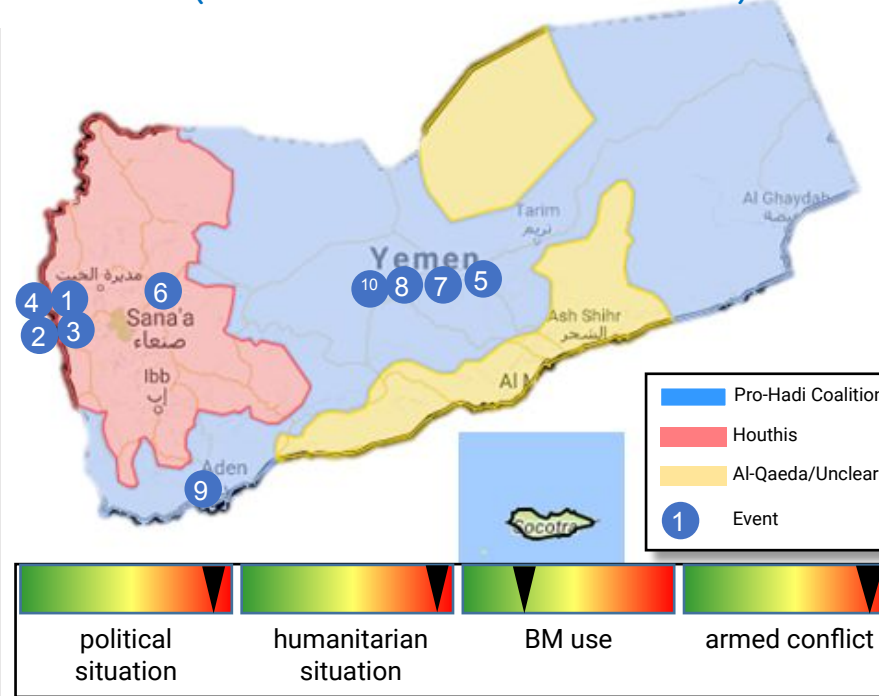
23 November 2018. The Houthi rebels who control the key Yemeni port of Hudaydah have agreed to enter talks about handing some control to the United Nations, its envoy to Yemen said during a visit to the city on Friday. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/qZ1dnD>

4. U.N. ready to help run vital Yemen port in danger of destruction

23 November 2018. The United Nations said on Friday it was ready to help supervise Yemen's vital Hodeidah port to protect it from "potential destruction", as its envoy met managers of the Houthi-held harbour. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/DJWnVz>

5. Warring parties in Yemen seek gains before sitting down to negotiations

23 November 2018. Talks between the warring parties in Yemen may not seem to be close to happening. The Saudi-led coalition, for example, is relying on military achievements as well as divisions within the enemy camp to boost its own position in the talks. It is even offering financial incentives to split the ranks of its opponents. The coalition formed a propaganda and persuasion unit to encourage dissidents amongst the Houthis to split from the main group. The unit includes veteran diplomats and intelligence agents; it provides large sums of money to leaders willing to join the internationally-recognised government of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/mNZaNN>



ASSESSMENT

- Another cycle of show of force, intense fight, mass killing and waste of resources is about to end leaving great destruction behind. After a war of three and a half years, the potent rulers understood that they have been playing in the field they were allowed to with assumed freedom. After statement by the Department of State, all actors are lining up to "replace conflict with compromise" as ordered. This scene became classic in Middle East.
- As reports suggest, Houthis have agreed negotiations to leave the control of the Hudaydah port to a non-partisan entity. In the previous attempt, Houthis had pretended to agree while there was no direct "yes" from UN to take over the control.
- The Coalition is still trying hard to increase defections among Houthis to obtain political supremacy in negotiations.
- It is yet to be seen what the negotiations will bring for the sides. But, most visible outcomes are a totally destroyed Yemen, ultimately polarised Yemeni population and great political rifts in Saudi Arabia over the succession of MbS.

6. UN Yemen envoy meets Houthi leader on new peace talks

23 November 2018. The special UN envoy for Yemen met with Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi on Thursday to revive peace talks for the war-torn country, a Houthi spokesman said on Thursday, Anadolu reports. Mohammad Abdussalam, a spokesman for the Houthi rebels, said in a statement that participants at today's meeting, including the UN's Martin Griffiths, discussed the conditions for a cease-fire and offering overseas medical treatment for Houthis. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/bY4FSS>

7. Yemen peace talks set for December, Mattis says

21 November 2018. Peace talks to end the conflict in Yemen will take place in Sweden in the next few weeks, Secretary of Defense James Mattis said Wednesday, as experts cautioned that there's no guarantee Saudi Arabia will take the steps needed for that to happen. (CNN) <https://goo.gl/3WV9FY>

8. King Salman calls for political solution during Shoura Council speech

19 November 2018. Expressing the Kingdom's support to reach a political solution in accordance with the UN resolutions, the king said that standing by the Yemeni people in confronting the aggression of the Iranian-backed Houthi militias was "not an option, but a duty." "We reaffirm our rejection of the continuous attempts of Houthi militias to impose their will on the Yemeni people, and obstruct the efforts to reach a political solution," he said. (Arabnews) <https://goo.gl/ufYwiQ>

9. Denmark Suspends Saudi Weapon Export Approvals Over Khashoggi, Yemen Concerns

22 November 2018. Denmark has suspended future approvals of weapons and military equipment exports to Saudi Arabia in response to the killing of a dissident Saudi journalist and the kingdom's role in the conflict in Yemen, the Danish Foreign Ministry said on Thursday. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/62pxVx>

10. Yemen crisis: 85,000 children 'dead from malnutrition'

21 November 2018. An estimated 85,000 children under the age of five may have died from acute malnutrition in three years of war in Yemen, a leading charity says. The number is equivalent to the entire under-five population in the UK's second largest city of Birmingham, Save the Children adds. The UN warned last month that up to 14m Yemenis are on the brink of famine. (BBC) <https://goo.gl/WZE851>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(12 November - 18 November 2018)

KEY EVENTS

1. UN Envoy: Warring Parties in Yemen Agree to Meet in Sweden

16 November 2018. The U.N. envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths announced Friday the country's internationally recognized government and rival Houthi Shiite rebels have agreed to attend talks aimed at ending their three-year war. He told the U.N. Security Council that he planned to bring the warring parties together "soon" in Sweden. He also said the Houthis and the government, which is backed by a Saudi-led coalition, were about to conclude an agreement on exchanging prisoners and detainees. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/ZA2Gc6>

2. Saudi Arabia invites head of UAE-backed Yemen group for talks

14 November 2018. Saudi Arabia has invited the president of the Southern Transitional Council Aidros Al-Zubaidi to visit the kingdom, Russia's Sputnik news agency reported. High-level sources said Al-Zubaidi has welcomed the invitation, saying the transitional council is a key partner in the Saudi war on terrorism in Yemen. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/16iZ1j>

3. UK ambassador to UN announced a draft text of a resolution on Yemen

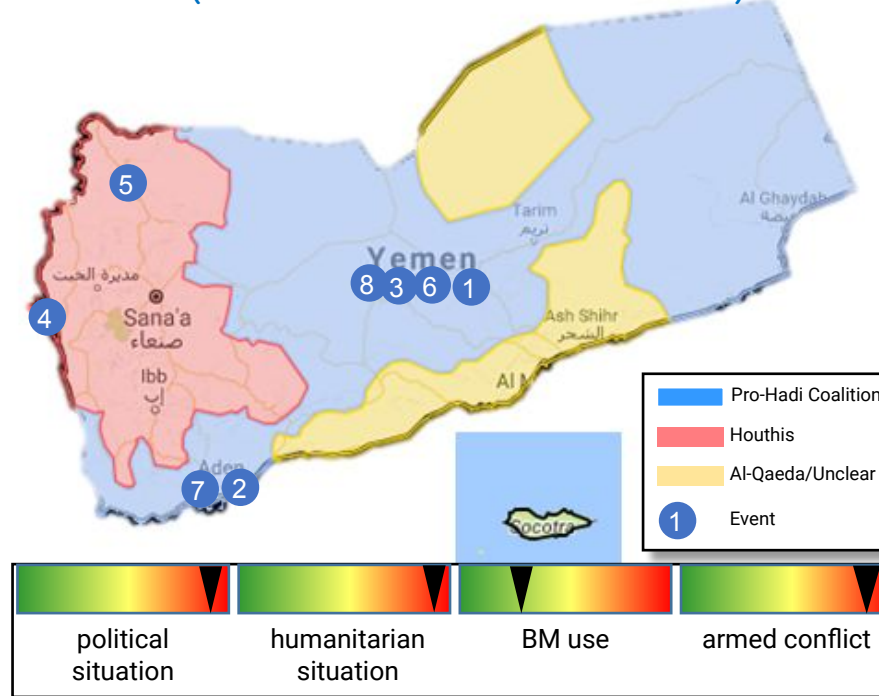
16 November 2018. UK ambassador to UN Karen Elizabeth Pierce announces to UNSC that the UK will bring the draft text of a resolution on Yemen to partners on the Security Council on Monday, 19 November. (UK at the UN twitter) <https://goo.gl/Pa5a6A>

4. Saudi-led coalition halts assault on Yemen's Hudaydah

16 November 2018. The Saudi-led coalition of Arab states has ordered a temporary halt to its military offensive on the Yemeni port city of Hudaydah under international pressure, Reuters reported. A military source said the coalition has instructed its ground troops to stop fighting in the vital port city. The decision comes amid calls by Western countries for a ceasefire before the UN-led peace effort resume. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/xvXX5b>

5. Houthi Minister of Informations Resigns

15 November 2018. The Minister of Technical Training and Vocational Education in the government of the Houthis, Mohsen al-Naqqah, broke away from government, days after resignation of Minister of Information Abdul Salam Jaber. Al-Naqib said the Houthis practiced financial corruption in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and were able to withdraw their public revenues, control trade permits and monopolize oil and gas. He said that his escape from the hell of the Houthis came at the right time, explaining that during his tenure he announced his rejection of their interventions and hindered the implementation of many of their schemes. Al-Naqib was the former minister of industry and trade and the fourth minister breaking away from Houthi government recently. (Makkah) <https://goo.gl/58UFIr>



ASSESSMENT

- This week, CIA concluded that the order of killing of Khashoggi came from the crown prince Mohammed bin Salman himself. Despite Saudi official admission that it was several rogue agents causing this and commencement of legal proceedings to try those responsible, American public and policymaker fury against Saudi Arabia has not lessened. Trump administration have declared that It will define its official stance this Tuesday. Trump's repetitive claims that MBS has nothing to do with the event has not succeeded in convincing the audience. Against this backdrop, Saudi Arabia announced to have halted operations in Hudaydah on Friday and that It is ready for negotiations with Houthis. Politically cornered, Saudi Arabia does not want to further lose prestige due to operations in Yemen. However, the Kingdom have also summoned STC leader for consultations. The intention may be to discuss about how to handle Houthis during negotiations and what kind of cooperation can be made with STC to further Saudi interests in the aftermath of a prospective agreement.
- Houthis have announced their preparedness too. Houthis are in no better conditions politically and militarily. This week, another minister which make the total four defected from the government. Reports have been also accumulating that show weakened military situation of the Houthis.
- The political situation around Saudi Arabia and Yemen provide a perfect storm to be benefited by UN Special Envoy Griffiths to impose an agreement to the sides.

6. Britain's Hunt sees prospect for Yemen talks, news on Khashoggi inquiry

12 November 2018. Following meetings in Riyadh with the Saudi king and crown prince, British Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt said prospects for talks to end Yemen's 3-1/2-year-old war were "more real" after Saudi Arabia confirmed to him its willingness to evacuate 50 wounded Houthi fighters as a confidence-building measure. The evacuation of Houthi fighters, which Hunt said would have conditions about who travels with them, was a Houthi condition for peace talks that collapsed in September after the armed group's delegation failed to show up. Hunt also added he anticipated "rapid progress" in bringing to justice those responsible for last month's murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/USIdVK>

7. EU lawmakers seek checks on arms exports fuelling Yemen conflict

14 November 2018. Tougher checks on European Union arms exports are needed and sanctions should be imposed on those countries that flout the bloc's rules, the European Parliament said on Wednesday. The European Union's so-called Common Position on arms exports lists eight criteria governments must apply when taking a decision on an arms export license. Sales to Saudi Arabia violated six out of the eight, lawmakers said. German EU lawmaker, Sabine Losing, who is leading efforts to hold EU governments to account, said: "In Yemen, European weapons are fundamentally responsible for the war taking place. [...] The Common Position on arms exports must be implemented effectively. That includes, among others, a sanctions mechanism." (France24) <https://goo.gl/LuYKkU>

8. U.S. Senators Seek Clampdown on Saudis Over Yemen, Journalist's Murder

15 November 2018. Republican and Democratic U.S. senators introduced legislation on Thursday seeking to strike back at Saudi Arabia over the death of a Saudi journalist at a consulate in Turkey and for its role in Yemen's devastating civil war. If it were to become law, the bill would suspend weapon sales to Saudi Arabia and prohibit U.S. refueling of Saudi coalition aircraft for Riyadh's campaign in Yemen against the Houthis, Shi'ite Muslim fighters that Yemen's neighbors view as agents of Iran, the lawmakers said. It also would impose sanctions on anyone blocking humanitarian access in Yemen and anyone supporting the Houthis in Yemen. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/Ek22Lc>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(05 November - 11 November 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Whither Yemen?

6 November 2018. The window opportunity given to the Coalition by US is, as declared by Mattis, 30 days. In this regard, reports already started to come indicating the Coalition has massed forces in front of Hudaydah to finish off the initiative before the deadline. Houthis will take their precautions too. The insurgent group will try its best to guard operational gains as long as their forces are up to that. We will probably see both sides doing their best to maximize their territorial gains before sitting around negotiation table. (Beyond the Horizon)

<https://goo.gl/p6J2Fq>

2. As Famine Looms in Yemen, Saudi-Led Coalition Redoubles Attacks

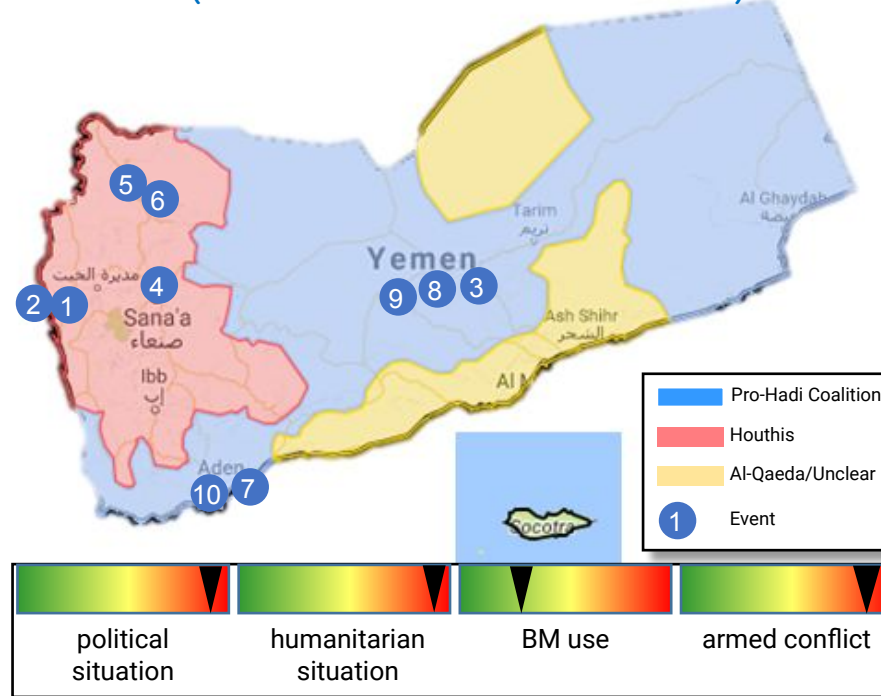
6 November 2018. A senior aid worker and two Western officials said in interviews that the coalition, commanded locally by the United Arab Emirates, had redoubled its five-month offensive to snatch the city from Houthi control. Houthi fighters often fight near humanitarian buildings that are protected by a “no-strike” list drawn up by the coalition, the United States and the United Nations. Houthi fighters cache weapons or station troops beside such buildings in the hope of protecting them from airstrikes — but in so doing, can turn the buildings into legitimate military targets. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/nv8PeD>

3. U.S. ends refueling support in Yemen war as pressure builds on S.Arabia

10 November 2018. An announcement came from the Coalition which was also confirmed by Washington which read: “Recently, the Kingdom and the Coalition increased its capability to independently conduct inflight refueling in Yemen. As a result, in consultation with the United States, the Coalition has requested the cessation of inflight refueling support for its operations in Yemen,” Saudi Arabia has a fleet of 23 planes for refueling operations, including six Airbus 330 MRTT used for Yemen, while the United Arab Emirates has six of the Airbus planes. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/ThaFev>

4. Trump administration considers naming Yemen's Houthi rebels a terrorist group

8 November 2018. The Trump administration is considering designating Yemen's Houthi rebels a terrorist organization, people familiar with the discussions said, as part of a campaign to end that country's civil war and put pressure on the Houthis' ally Iran. A terrorist designation would be seen as a major escalation of U.S. pressure against the group. (The Washington Post) <https://goo.gl/BorRwC>



ASSESSMENT

- Trump Administration has to reconcile several dilemmas in its actions in Yemen. On the one hand it has to distance itself from the Coalition actions in order not to be accessory to war crimes. This also serves to lessen the domestic and int'l pressure especially building up after Khashoggi's death. On the other hand, it has to continue lucrative arms trade and limit Iranian influence in the region. The solution found by Trump seems a combination of covertly continuing support Coalition while overtly pulling the plug on US inflight refueling support.
- In the midst of all such dilemmas, Trump Administration also contemplates naming Houthis a terrorist group which would serve cross purposes with announced intention of reaching peace in Yemen. Putting aside that such measure would make nearly no difference on the ground, the move has potential to further complicate UN-led negotiations which will require free movement of Houthi delegations.
- In a clearly defined deadline of 30 days, the sides will certainly try to maximize their territorial gains before sitting around the negotiation table. This latest increase in the tempo of the operations verifies this premise.
- The protracted war in Yemen has increased burden on KSA and UAE both politically and economically. Both states should have seen depending on third states and intra-state groups may be problematic in delivering the expected gains on the ground. Both need to build capacity in terms of comprehensive operations planning and execution.

5. Pentagon launched new classified op. to support Saudi coalition in Yemen

10 November 2018. The Pentagon earlier this year launched a new classified operation according to a Defense Department document that appears to have been posted online inadvertently. Another document posted earlier this year on a Pentagon-affiliated website identifies Yukon Journey as a Central Command operation supporting the “Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Partner Nations in Yemen.” The existence of a classified operation in Yemen raises the possibility that even as the Pentagon scales back unclassified operations, such as refueling Saudi-led coalition aircraft, covert support, to include possible U.S. special forces on the ground, could continue. (Yahoo) <https://goo.gl/H2UXdE>

6. Trump: US weapons being misused by Saudi in Yemen

5 November 2018. After saying that his administration was studying the war “very, very carefully,” Trump criticised Saudi conduct of the aerial campaign, saying the government shouldn't have people “who don't know how to use the weapons shooting at buses with children. We teach them how to use the equipment.” (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/bxXfZW>

7. End Yemen's Agony (Opinion)

4 November 2018. The United States, according to Amnesty International, stands “at risk of making itself an accessory to war crimes.” The secretaries have taken a first step. The next must be to demand an immediate halt to the bombing, combined with the start of negotiations and a large-scale, global relief effort led by the United States. And if the prince hesitates, pull the plug on the arms. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/52mv9A>

8. Civilian Death Toll in Yemen Mounting Despite US Assurances

10 November 2018. At least 57,538 people — civilians and combatants — have been killed since the beginning of 2016, according to the data assembled by ACLED. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/Nzpxy2>

9. Martin Griffiths: We are working to hold a new round of consultations before the end of the year

8 November 2018. Griffiths said that the content of the next round of negotiations will include two key issues: discussing confidence-building measures and setting a framework for a possible solution to the conflict in Yemen. (OSESGY) <https://goo.gl/FZkxqq>

10. Yemen president appoints new minister of defence, chief of staff

4 November 2018. President Hadi appointed Mohammed al-Maqdishi as Defense Min. and Abdullah Al-Nakhi as Chief of Staff. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/z1RdsN>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(29 October - 04 November 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Mattis and Pompeo call for Yemen ceasefire 'within 30 days'

31 October 2018. "Thirty days from now we want to see everybody around a peace table based on a ceasefire, based on a pullback from the border and then based on ceasing dropping of bombs that will permit the (UN) special envoy, Martin Griffiths -- he's very good, he knows what he's doing -- to get them together in Sweden and end this war," Mattis said at an event at the US Institute of Peace in Washington. (CNN) <https://goo.gl/CYxsNo>

2. FM: Sweden could host Yemen peace talks

1 November 2018. Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom said yesterday that her country is ready to host the UN sponsored talks between the internationally recognised Yemeni government and the Houthis. (Middle East Monitor)

<https://goo.gl/SgzSG4>

3. Light at the end of the tunnel?

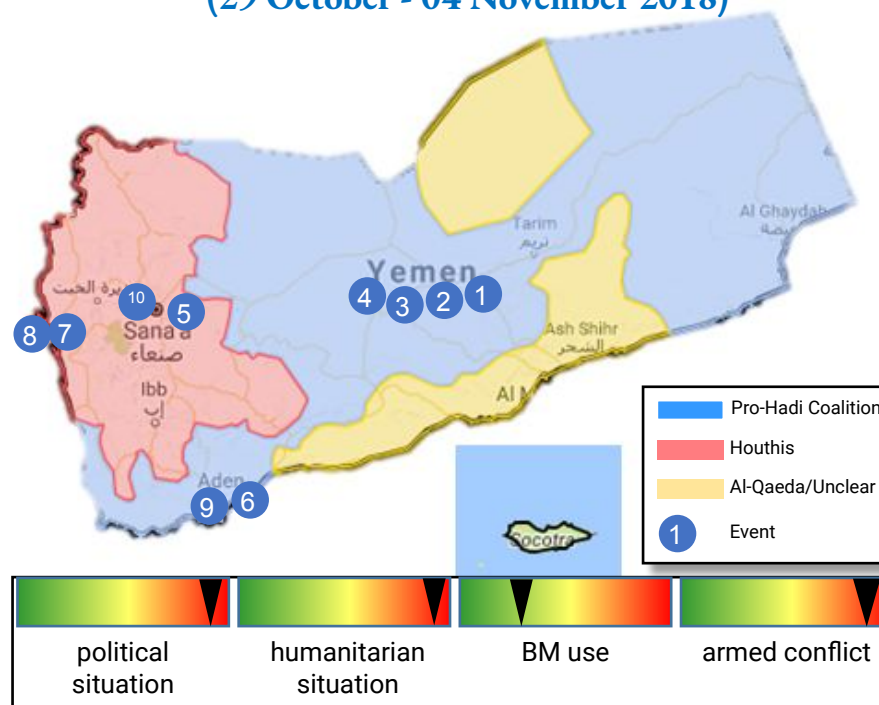
2 November 2018. I [Afrah Nasser] was told yesterday by the Swedish amb. to the UNSC, that Sweden is working closely with the Netherlands and the UK on a humanitarian UNSC resolution on Yemen that they hope can be adopted in the coming weeks. (Afrah Nasser's Blog) <https://goo.gl/acjN9M>

4. Secretary-General's remarks at press encounter on Yemen

2 November 2018. Yemen stands on a precipice. The international community has a real opportunity to halt the senseless cycle of violence and to prevent an imminent catastrophe. The time to act is now. Yemenis cannot wait. We must seize the opportunity to end the war and prevent the worst famine we have seen in decades. (United Nations Secretary-General) <https://goo.gl/QRjaGa>

5. Yemenis welcome US call for truce, but obstacles loom

1 November 2018. The Yemeni government welcomed the cease-fire calls and said it was ready to discuss "confidence-building measures," while accusing the Houthis of "intransigence" in past negotiations. The rebels also welcomed the calls for a truce as "positive" on Thursday, while urging international action to halt the Saudi-led air campaign, which has caused the bulk of civilian casualties. Mohamed Ali Al-Houthi, a senior rebel leader, said those urging a cease-fire should "translate their desire to bring peace in Yemen into action, stop the bombing of Yemenis immediately and lift the siege on Yemen." (ABC NEWS) <https://goo.gl/VTpmEG>



ASSESSMENT

- The latest statements by two US secretaries, Mattis and Pompeo have marked a different phase in the war in Yemen. Their statements have been welcomed by internationally recognized government and Houthis. The Coalition has also started to mass forces in front of Hudaydah to finish off the operations to capture the city before the 30 days deadline. The wheels of the machinery regulating the war in Yemen has been wound up to produce cease-fire. So the sides will increase tempo to maximize gains before 30 days.
- The potential reasons for conflict in Yemen, all having pre-war reasons stay still intact despite such declaration. So, even if a cease-fire enters into effect, the peace will still remain elusive. Current internationally recognized government is not strong and popular enough to mobilize Yemenis towards peace. More actors or factors will be necessary to politically engage the sides in direction of reconciliation and reconstruction.

6. The government welcomes all efforts exerted to achieve peace and supports the efforts of the UN envoy

1 November 2018. The government said in a press statement: "The statements made by a number of countries during the last few days, which urge the importance of pushing efforts to reach a political solution in accordance with the three agreed terms, consistent with the desire of the political leadership headed by President Abdurabbuh Mansour Hadi and his government in peace and end the suffering Yemeni people as a result of the coup of the Iranian Houthi militias. " (www.sabanew.net) <https://goo.gl/sW11cm>

7. Saudi-backed forces advance towards Yemen's Hodeidah as UN warns of famine

4 November 2018. Yemeni forces backed by a Saudi-led coalition inched closer to the Red Sea port city of Hodeidah on Sunday as they battled Iranian-aligned Houthi fighters entrenched there, local military sources and residents said on Sunday. The coalition has deployed thousands of troops to retake Hodeidah, a vital entry point for imports and a lifeline for millions of Yemenis after more than three years of war. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/PeBmi8>

8. Yemeni children die as warring sides block aid deliveries: UNICEF

2 November 2018. Yemeni children are dying from starvation and disease as trucks with life-saving supplies are blocked in port, leaving medical staff and desperate mothers imploring aid workers to do more, a senior U.N. official said. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/VMWoQh>

9. Martin Griffiths Convenes a Consultative Meeting with Independent Yemeni Figures

4 November 2018. The Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, held a consultative meeting with a group of independent Yemeni figures, who represent a wide spectrum of the Yemeni society, to discuss the current situation in Yemen, and his endeavors to resume the political process. More than 30% of the Yemeni figures taking part in this meeting in Amman were women. (OSESGY) <https://goo.gl/6E1fXS>

10. Yemen Girl Who Turned World's Eyes to Famine Is Dead

1 November 2018. A searing portrait of the starving girl published in The New York Times last week drew an impassioned response from readers. They expressed heartbreak. They offered money for her family. They wrote in to ask if she was getting better. On Thursday, Amal's family said she had died at a ragged refugee camp four miles from the hospital. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/wkRzYo>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(15 - 21 October 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. UAE Hired American Ex-Soldiers To Kill Its Political Enemies.

16 October 2018. Spear Operations Group, founded in US by Abraham Golan, a Hungarian Israeli security contractor, admits to have led the strike against Anssaf Ali Mayo, the local leader of the Islamist political party Al-Islah. The UAE considers Al-Islah the Yemeni branch of Muslim Brotherhood, which the UAE calls a terrorist organization. Golan told BuzzFeed: "There was a targeted assassination program in Yemen. I was running it. We did it. It was sanctioned by the UAE within the coalition." Golan said during his company's months-long engagement in Yemen, his team was responsible for a number of high-profile assassinations, though he declined to specify which ones. Isaac Gilmore, a former US Navy SEAL who flew with Golan to make the initial deal UAE said some were members of Al-Islah, some were clerics, and some were out-and-out terrorists — but he conceded he couldn't be sure. (BuzzFeed) <https://goo.gl/ujGe8u>

2. Yemen's Hadi sacks PM over economic 'negligence'

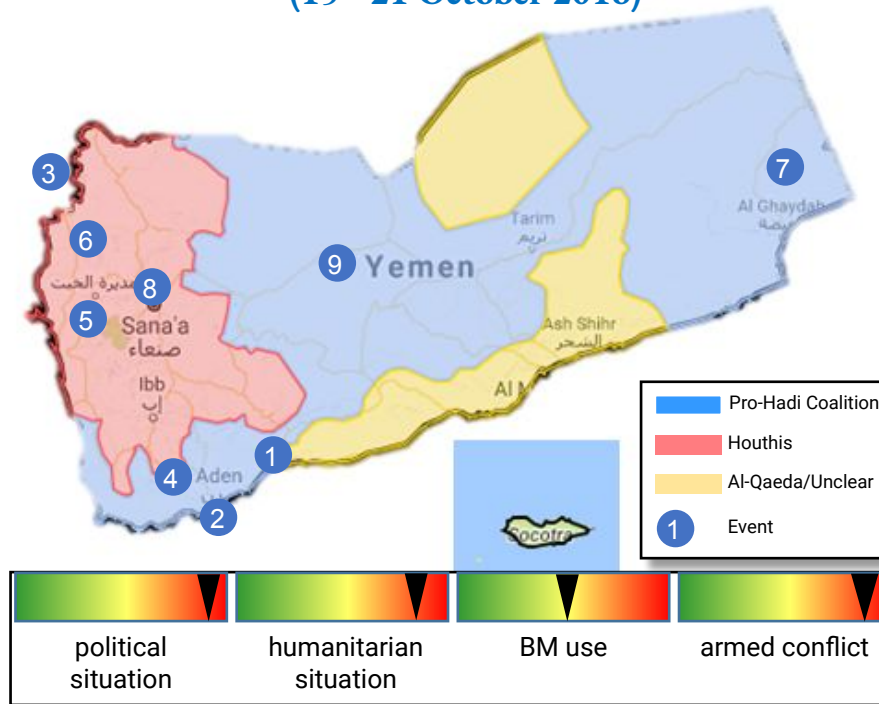
16 October 2018. President Hadi has sacked PM Ahmed Bin Dagher and ordered for his investigation in connection with the economic woes, citing his "inability to take real measures to stop the economic deterioration in the country, especially the collapse of the currency." Hadi has confirmed that Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed, the former minister of public works and roads, will replace Bin Dagher. Yemeni political sources told reporters that Saeed is known to have "excellent" relations with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. (The Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/7rPcgg>

3. Hezbollah leader calls on Saudi Arabia to end war in Yemen

19 October 2018. The leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, has called on Saudi Arabia to make a "courageous" decision and end the fighting in Yemen, saying the alleged killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey has tarnished the kingdom's image to an unprecedented degree. He said in Beirut Friday that "the international cover" for the war in Yemen has begun to collapse. (The Washington Post) <https://goo.gl/4wV414>

4. Why Is Trump Still Backing Saudi Arabia in Yemen?

15 October 2018. In the wake of journalist Jamal Khashoggi's disappearance, a group of bipartisan senators demanded answers about why the United States is still backing the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont said the U.S. should "get out" of the war entirely if the kingdom is involved with the journalist's disappearance. President Trump said the U.S. gets "massive amounts" of money selling arms to Riyadh. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/qqXvYf>



ASSESSMENT

- The stakes in Yemen are getting higher for the Coalition partners. The political repercussions of Saudi confession about Khashoggi has created a new wave of questioning why US is involved in the operations in Yemen in support of Saudi Arabia. As more reports come about indiscriminate targeting, the legitimacy of the operation conducted by coalition loses more ground.
- The other main partner of the coalition, the UAE is in no good shape either. The latest revelations by the founder of Spear Operations Group testifies for UAE involvement in the assassinations of Al Islah leaders and clergymen. UAE is not a great power as US. After the dust settles, all those revelations may add to files that could be subject to international prosecution for war crimes. UAE should be wiser on selection of options available to itself to win the war.
- Those confessions have explosive nature for US and third parties too. According to the Washington Post, US State Department denies granting licence. If otherwise proved, exporting assassination services would be a big departure from established US practices which would further have dire consequences on the conduct of warfare in the coming future.
- The new Yemeni prime minister will ascertain more alignment with UAE objectives as opposed to former ben Dagher who was vocal about his opposition to STC and UAE policies. The latest storm served just as the excuse.

5. UN relief official in Yemen condemns 'horrific' attack on passenger buses

14 October 2018. At least 15 civilians have been reported killed and 20 others injured when minibuses carrying civilians were struck in Jabal Ras district in war-ravaged Yemen's western Hudaydah governorate, on Saturday. Condemning the attack on passenger buses, the top United Nations humanitarian official in the country has called on warring parties "to do everything possible" to protect civilians. According to humanitarian organizations, some 170 people have been killed and over 1,700 injured in Hudaydah since fighting escalated in June 2018. Furthermore, more than 425,000 people have been forced to flee their homes. (UN News) <https://goo.gl/ou6noM>

6. Some pregnant women and sick children arrive so late, we can't save them

18 October 2018. The Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) hospital in Abs is currently receiving wounded every day. Between August and September the hospital treated 362 injured people, more than 40 percent of all the wounded that have been treated at this facility in 2018. Increased fighting about 50 kilometres north of Abs, in the area of Beni Hassan, close to the border with Saudi Arabia, in recent weeks is causing new waves of displacement. Many are civilians caught in the crossfire of airstrikes and missiles. (MSF) <https://goo.gl/EUWkmT>

7. Tropical storm lashes eastern Yemen province, injures 33

16 October 2018. A tropical storm has ravaged large areas of Yemen's eastern al-Mahra province, with three days of heavy rainfall and flooding injuring dozens, destroying property and killing livestock, Yemeni officials and the United Nations said Tuesday. They said that around 70 percent of the province has been affected by the storm, cyclone Luban that was downgraded to a tropical storm. Two aircraft, one Yemeni and the other from the United Arab Emirates, are ferrying to safety residents stranded in the provincial capital, Gheita. (AP) <https://goo.gl/2WVDdX>

8. Frenchman held in Yemen released with Saudi help

16 October 2018. A Frenchman, Alain Goma (54) held captive by Houthis in Sana'a for over four months after his boat ran into trouble near the port of Hudaydah has been released, the French presidency announced Tuesday. In a statement President Emmanuel Macron thanked authorities in Oman and Saudi Arabia for helping obtain his release. (AFP) <https://goo.gl/uypJMG>

9. South Korea Denies Refugee Status to Hundreds of Fleeing Yemenis

15 October 2018. More than 500 Yemenis landed in Jeju in the first five months of 2018 benefitting island's no-visa entry policy. South Korean central government withdrew the no-visa benefit for Yemenis in June. It also banned the Yemenis from leaving for mainland. After months of screening, the Justice Ministry on Wednesday decided against granting refugee status to any of the Yemenis. It instead allowed 339 of them to stay on one-year humanitarian visa. The authorities are still reviewing 85 other cases. Thirty-four Yemenis who were denied even such visas on Wednesday can challenge the decision in court. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/9ewGtG>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(08 - 14 October 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Exporting (In)Stability: The UAE's Role in Yemen And The Horn of Africa

10 October 2018. As the UAE expands economically, it has increasingly found itself engaged in a complex security environment, and has responded by engaging militarily, providing training, equipment, and direct battle assistance in Yemen and the East African Horn. This is likely due to “the importance of the Red Sea as a vital artery for the transportation of the country’s hydrocarbon exports” (Reuters, 27 August 2018). (ACLED)

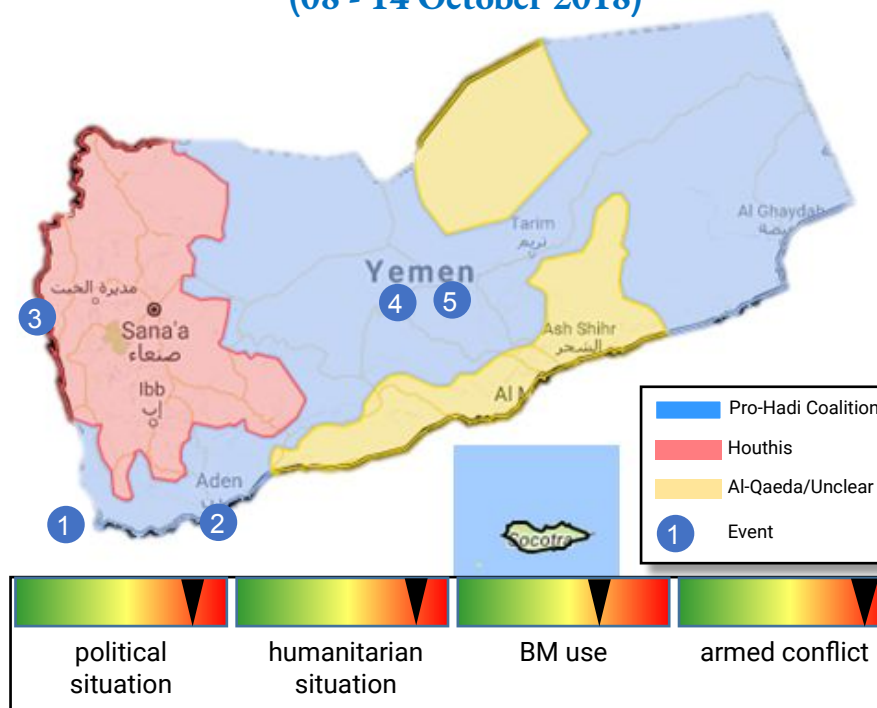
<https://goo.gl/7DEMnE>

2. Austria offers to host Yemen talks as Griffiths seeks to renew negotiations

12 October 2018. The UN’s envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths has resumed efforts to secure another round of consultations between warring parties in the Yemeni crisis in November, while the Austrian government has offered to be the host country. (English Al-Arabiya) <https://goo.gl/zcc9fL>

3. Air strikes kill 10 civilians in Yemen's Hodeidah province

13 October 2018. Air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthi group in Yemen killed at least 10 civilians in Hodeidah province on Saturday, medics and Houthi media said. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/Tbb5PY>



ASSESSMENT

- Both commercial and military presence in the region of Bab al Mandab Strait and its execution of intensive military operation in Yemen show that UAE is eager to sustain its influence in Red Sea region in near future.
- U.S. whitewashing Saudi war crimes in Yemen has diminished importance attached to UN’s warnings on the humanitarian crisis in the region.

4. Saudi Arabia must halt Yemen strikes: U.N. child rights panel

11 October 2018. A U.N. human rights watchdog called on Saudi Arabia on Thursday to immediately halt its deadly air strikes against civilian targets in Yemen and to prosecute officials responsible for child casualties due to unlawful attacks.

(Reuters) <https://goo.gl/SvWMnU>

5. U.S. Whitewashes Saudi War Crimes

9 October 2018. Khashoggi’s disappearance and apparent murder—as appalling as it may be—should be overshadowed, though, by Saudi Arabia’s far more extensive human-rights abuses and outright war crimes. That is especially true regarding the way it has conducted the war in Yemen. There is abundant evidence of multiple atrocities that Riyadh and its United Arab Emirates (UAE) junior partner have committed and continue to commit. The coalition’s war strategy has created a famine as well as a cholera epidemic. Among the many deliberate attacks on innocent Yemeni civilians was an August incident in which coalition aircraft attacked a school bus, killing 40 children.

(CATO Institute) <https://goo.gl/oM2U5y>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(01 - 07 October 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

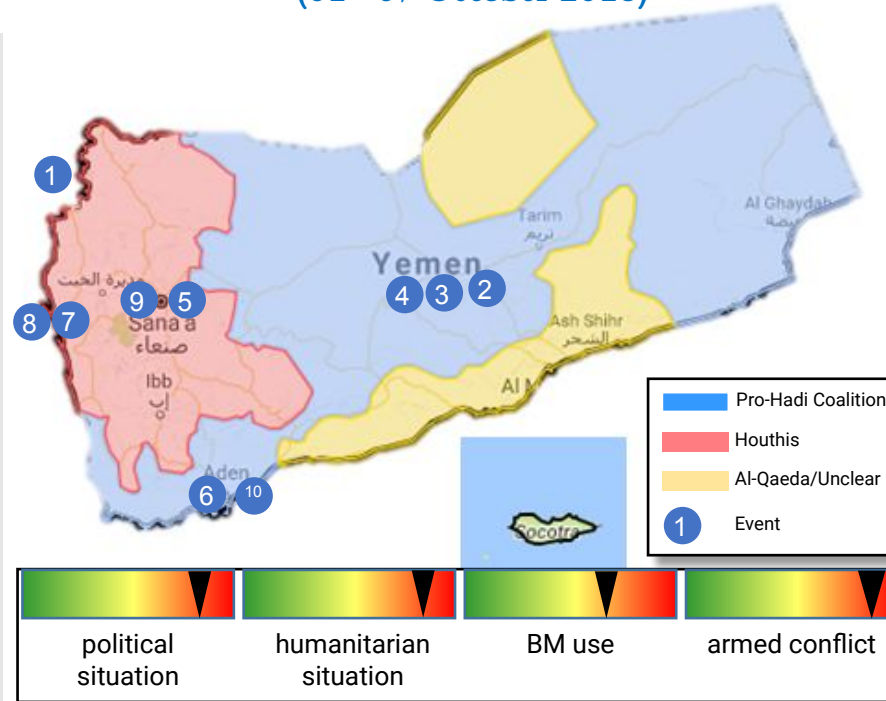
1. Arab Coalition: 200 ballistic missiles fired by 'Houthis' towards Saudi Arabia
2 October 2018. The spokesman of the Arab Coalition forces, Colonel Turki Al-Maliki said on Monday that "the Houthi militias in Yemen [have] fired 200 missiles towards the Kingdom [since the beginning of the war in 2015]." He added that "the Houthi militias continue to threaten maritime navigation ... and that there must be tougher measures against their violations." (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/gYKoI6>

2. Abu Dhabi recruits mercenaries from Arab tribes of Chad and Niger
3 October 2018. Abu Dhabi's envoys are located throughout Africa, not to spread peace, love, or happiness – as promoted by the UAE to be a part of its external policies – but in search of mercenaries from Arab tribes to be recruited to fight in the Yemen war as Emirati soldiers. A delegation of Emirati people in business visited Niger in January 2018, where they met Arab tribal leaders and recruited ten thousand tribesmen living between Libya, Chad, and Niger. Middle East Monitor <https://goo.gl/EZuf3m>

3. U.N. envoy says top priority in Yemen is fixing the economy
4 October 2018. The best way to resolve Yemen's humanitarian crisis is to fix the economy so stemming a slide in the rial currency is the top international priority, the U.N. special envoy said on Thursday. Authorities sought to boost liquidity last year by printing money, but it plunged from 250 to the dollar after the first batch of notes was rolled out. It was trading at around 700 on Thursday. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/1waHbw>

4. Amid Currency's Freefall, Yemen Receives Cash Injection
2 October 2018. Yemen's weak Central Bank is getting a \$200 million cash infusion from Saudi Arabia to shore up its reserves after the currency went into freefall, sparking further concerns for the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The Yemeni rial traded between 700 to 800 rials to the dollar on Monday and Tuesday, sending food and fuel prices soaring. Before the civil war erupted in 2015, the rial was around 215 to \$1. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/kvFt6o>

5. UN Suspends Crucial Cash Aid to 9 Million Yemenis
3 October 2018. UNICEF on Wednesday suspended cash transfers to 9 million of Yemen's most impoverished citizens under pressure from the country's Houthi rebels. It said the decision came after it was unable to set up a call center to get feedback from beneficiaries, without providing further details. UNICEF has been under pressure from Houthis to use the rebels' beneficiary lists in aid distribution and to use Houthi-linked staffers in ADRA-run health facilities. The suspended UNICEF payment is the third since the project was launched in August 2017. The cash transfers are a "lifeline" to a third of Yemen's people and "contribute to avert the risk of famine and allowed targeted families to buy food and medicine." (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/4t1xxz>



ASSESSMENT

- The Yemeni rial that has been on constant slide since last year has plunged from 250 to the dollar to 700. In the country where 90 % of the food is imported, 70 % of the pre-war revenues stemming from oil and gas exports have evaporated and the price of imported goods is higher than normal due to embargo, the economy no longer supports the conditions. The government, the Coalition and the Houthis all get their share of critique from population blaming them causing the disaster.
- In this havoc, STC leader al-Zubaidi made a call from Abu Dhabi for uprising in Aden. UAE aims at carving an area of influence at the expense of President Hadi of whom the Coalition tries to restore order. In its bid for such influence, UAE has been implementing every tool available in the country.
- In the same political havoc, assassinations continue against those opposing UAE role. The branch head of Islah party which UAE sees as an extension of Muslim Brotherhood was tortured and killed this week. This came after assassination of another cleric few days earlier. Aden is under de-facto control of STC.
- The Coalition operations have progressed well this week. UAE continues efforts to strengthen the force it massed to seize Hudaidah by mercenaries.

6. Yemen separatists call for uprising as U.N. pursues peace

3 October 2018. STC called on Wednesday for an uprising in Aden and the southern provinces against the country's internationally-recognized government. Violent protests rocked Aden and other southern provinces last month after separatist officials issued similar calls. The southern Yemenis, the government of President Hadi and the Houthis have all been blaming each other for the collapse of the Yemeni rial and using the central bank to score political points to gain more allies. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/QSUpAh>

7. Key battle in Yemen's war risks tipping country into famine

4 October 2018. Notably absent from the fight to take Hodeida are the forces of Hadi's government — the government that the coalition says it aims to restore. "The government knows nothing about what is going on in Hodeida," one senior official said. "It's all in the hands of the Emiratis." Houthi-free southern Yemen has turned into a patchwork of splintered regions under rival militias. Aden, the southern capital, has seen assassinations and street battles between pro-UAE and pro-Hadi militias, as well as increasing crime, robbery and rape. The fragmentation has sent a message to Yemenis living under the Houthis' repressive rule that the alternative may not be much better. "Many Yemenis resent what they see as a neo-colonial land and resource grab," said Horton. (AP) <https://goo.gl/v3X9y7>

8. Yemen's Houthis Detain 10 Oil and Commercial Vessels at Hodeidah Port-Saudi State TV

7 October 2018. Yemen's government said Houthi rebels detained 10 oil and commercial vessels at Hodeidah port, Saudi Arabian state television said on Sunday. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/QPogyz>

9. Yemen's Houthis Arrest Protesters in Sanaa

6 October 2018. Yemen's Houthi group arrested a number of people demonstrating in Sanaa on Saturday over plunging living standards, as soaring prices put basic commodities out of reach for many people amid a humanitarian crisis and war with neighbouring countries. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/1gr0LZ>

10. Islah leader found dead after being kidnapped

3 October 2018. The head of the branch of the Islah Charitable Society for Social Welfare, Mohammed Al-Shujainah was found dead yesterday afternoon hours after he was kidnapped by gunmen outside his home in the district of Attawahi. Days earlier social media users had circulated a video clip showing the assassination of prominent Imam in Aden, Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Omrani, in broad daylight. Some parties accuse the United Arab Emirates of plotting the assassinations in Aden, saying they have been systematically carried out against scholars, advocates and political figures known for supporting President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and rejecting the UAE's involvement in the Yemen conflict. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/7rppcf>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(24 - 30 September 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemeni government refuses to extend UN Panel of Experts' mission

28 September 2018. The Yemeni Government rejected on Thursday a mission extension for the UN Panel of Experts and accused the UN-appointed team of "politicising and complicating the situation in the country, in addition to being biased in favour of the Houthis." (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/MKbFeG>

2. Saudi Arabia, UAE fail to halt U.N. Yemen human rights inquiry

28 September 2018. The U.N. Human Rights Council voted on Friday to prolong an inquiry into human rights in Yemen against objections from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, leaders of a coalition widely criticized by right groups for killings of civilians. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/i95XAF>

3. UN envoy to announce reopening of Sanaa airport next week

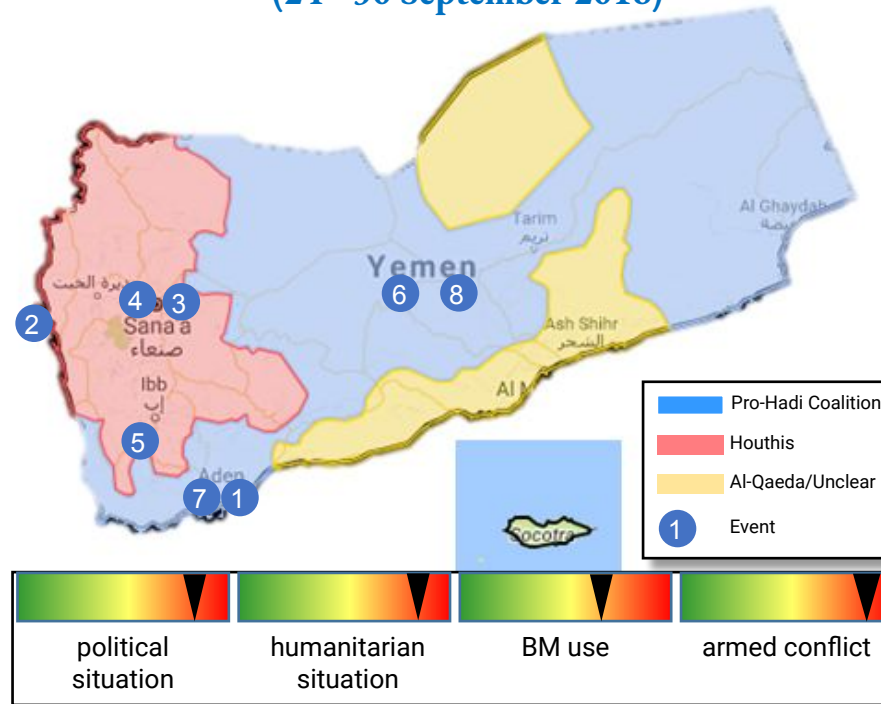
28 September 2018. The U.N. special envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, told Al Jazeera late on Thursday that he looked forward to "announcing the reopening of Sanaa airport next week". (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/gYZFX6>

4. Watchdog accuses Yemen rebels of taking hostages, torture

26 September 2018. An international watchdog on Tuesday accused Yemen's Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, of committing abuses including hostage taking, torture and enforced disappearances of people they hold in detention. New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a statement it documented 16 cases in which Houthi authorities held people unlawfully, largely to extort money from relatives or to exchange them for prisoners held by opposing forces. (AP) <https://goo.gl/y2o688>

5. Iranian-made parts found in explosives that Houthis use to fight the war in Yemen

26 September 2018. Yemen's president called on the world to stop Iran from fueling his country's devastating civil war, the same day British experts said they had evidence that Tehran has helped rebels there to deploy mass-produced landmines and improvised explosive devices. (The Washington Times) <https://goo.gl/BeKZrX>



ASSESSMENT

- The fact that ten million more Yemenis will face pre-famine conditions by the end of this year if the status quo does not change causes concern across the globe. As such the pressure is building up against the Saudi-led Coalition. After initial reactions after airstrikes on the fish market, humanitarian situation in Yemen and the way Coalition wages war had become a flash point. Within the same context, despite coalition funding, lobbying and Yemeni government support, the mandate for UN Panel of Experts was extended this week.
- There is also concrete move from US side to curtail the field of manoeuvre for the President concerning his support to the Coalition. The move aims to stop US support to the war through legislation.
- All those abovementioned developments come at a time when the Coalition masses forces on its advance route to Hudaydah.
- UN Special Envoy's efforts continue to strike a deal between sides.

6. UN: one child dies every 10 minutes in Yemen

26 September 2018. The United Nations humanitarian coordinator in Yemen, Lise Grande, warned at the end of a high-level meeting held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly that ten million more Yemenis will face pre-famine conditions by the end of this year if the status quo does not change. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/THf8RD>

7. UAE will support U.N. proposals for new talks on Yemen: official

26 September 2018. The United Arab Emirates will support United Nations proposals for new peace talks on Yemen, a senior Emirati official said early on Wednesday after meeting with U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/BEsvbc>

8. FCNL Applauds Bipartisan Initiative to End Illegal American War in Yemen

26 September 2018. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) applauds legislation introduced by a bipartisan quartet of U.S. Representatives to end U.S. military backing for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. By invoking the War Powers Resolution, the Khanna-Smith-Pocan-Massie legislation sets the stage for a House floor vote in November on ending the unauthorized war. Last March, 44 senators voted in support of similar legislation ending American involvement in the Yemeni civil war. "As Quakers, we support legislation to end American involvement in the Saudi-led war that is slaughtering men, women, and children in Yemen. By refueling Saudi and Emirati jets as they bomb civilians, the U.S. is enabling the world's largest humanitarian crisis," said Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. "We applaud Representatives Ro Khanna, Adam Smith, Mark Pocan, and Thomas Massie for their bipartisan initiative to reassert Congress' constitutional authority to end this illegal war." (AP) <https://goo.gl/uyKxGi>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(17 - 23 September 2018)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen: Mercenaries trained in Israel lead battles of Al-Hudaydah

20 September 2018. Sources close to the US Congress Intelligence Committee revealed that hundreds of Western mercenaries financed by UAE participated in the attack on the Yemeni province of Al-Hudaydah after they received intensive combat exercises in Israel. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/9M2Klh>

2. Yemen separatist leader says Hodeidah offensive will not stop

20 September 2018. Aidaroos al-Zubaidi is the leader of the separatists who aim to restore the independent state of Southern Yemen, which united with northern Yemen in 1990. His Southern Resistance Movement has 20,000 men positioned in Hodeidah, providing the bulk of a ground force led by the United Arab Emirates that is trying to capture Yemen's main port city from the Houthis who control the capital Sanaa. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/5uspTk>

3. Germany approves arms sale to Saudi after Yemen war ban promise

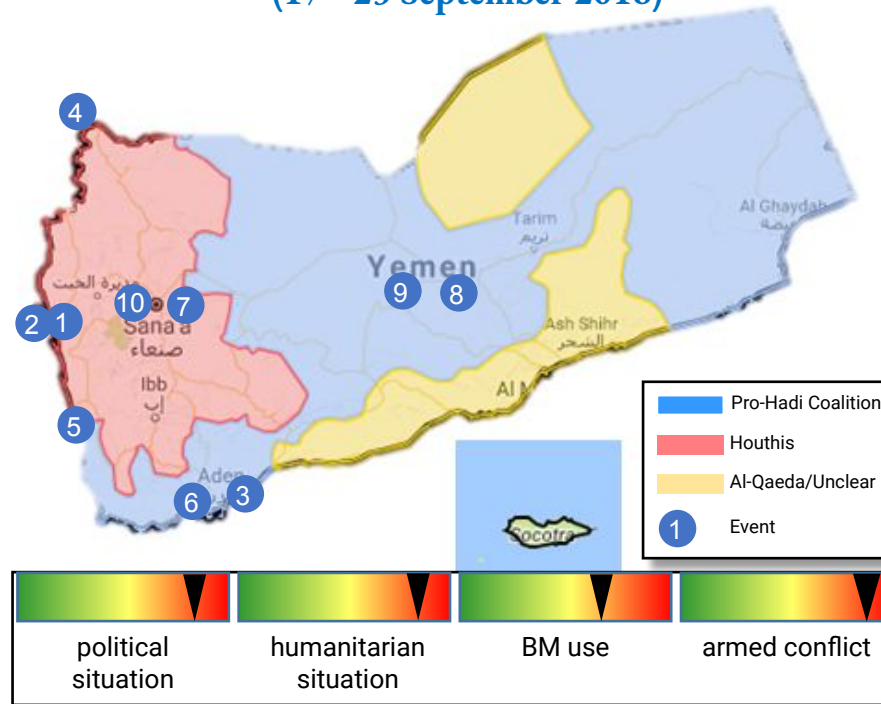
19 September 2018. Germany approved a delivery of weapons to Saudi Arabia, a government document showed on Wednesday, after saying it would halt arms sales to countries involved in the war in Yemen. The weapons delivery is the first documented one to Riyadh since March, when Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition agreed to the Yemen-related ban. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/n4FoSK>

4. Saudi says it destroyed missile Houthis fired at Jizan province

16 September 2018. Houthi forces fired a missile over the border targeting the Jizan Industrial City in southern Saudi Arabia on Saturday. Saudi air defence forces said they had intercepted and destroyed the projectile. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/z8Uanu>

5. Eighteen Fishermen Killed Off Yemen's Red Sea Coast

18 September 2018. A frigate attacked a fishing boat off Yemen's Red Sea port of al-Khoukha, killing 18 fishermen on Tuesday, relatives said. Members of the fishermen's families told Reuters only one person survived when a warship attacked the boat. The Saudi-led coalition denied attacking the boat and said an unknown vessel opened fire on the fishermen. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/ghUN22>



ASSESSMENT

- The Coalition has massed forces in front of Hudaydah. The reports about mercenaries shows the determination of the Coalition to finish off the operation in Hudaydah in a swift manner.
- Saudi Arabia, one way or another, convinces arms sellers to continue to provide arms. After reversal of decision by Spain last week, this week Germany followed the suit in restarting delivering arms to Saudi Arabia. It should be noted that German government had agreed to Yemen related ban in March.
- The coalition continues to obstruct human rights experts to document abuses during war. If the Coalition does not implement accountability of those implicated such abuses will be subject to international trials.
- The worst humanitarian crisis has reached unimaginable levels. The political, military and humanitarian situation renders it more necessary every other day to reach a political agreement to terminate the war.

6. Showdown Looms as UN Rights Experts in Yemen Hindered

21 September 2018. Saudi Arabia and allied states balked at efforts to renew work by U.N.-backed "eminent experts" investigating human rights violations in Yemen, setting up a possible diplomatic showdown with some Western countries over scrutiny of a 3-1/2-year war that has killed thousands of civilians and created the world's worst humanitarian crisis. In their first and only report issued on Aug. 28, the experts had cited rights violations in Yemen including "deprivation of the right to life," arbitrary detention, rape, torture, enforced disappearances and child recruitment by Yemeni government forces and their Saudi and Emirati allies. It had said the Houthi rebels were also responsible for the same abuses. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/gAe6ev>

7. Amnesty Decries Houthi Prosecution of Bahais in Yemen

18 September 2018. An international rights group on Tuesday decried the prosecution of 24 Yemeni Bahais, including women and a teenager, by a Houthi rebel court on espionage charges. The Houthi group's leader has targeted Bahais in public speeches describing them as "satanic" and several Bahais have been detained, tortured and held incommunicado, according to the community's U.N. representative. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/F8LjeM>

8. Yemen central bank nearly doubles interest rate to halt rial plunge

19 September 2018. Yemen's central bank, based in territory controlled by its exiled government, nearly doubled its interest rate on Wednesday in an effort to stabilize the rial after violent demonstrations against a plunging currency. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/pu36Dp>

9. UN aid chief: Fight against famine is being lost in Yemen

22 September 2018. The U.N. humanitarian chief warned Friday that the fight against famine is being lost in Yemen, which is already facing the world's worst humanitarian crisis with 75 percent of its 29 million people in need of assistance. (AP) <https://goo.gl/4W1zwy>

10. UN inks deal for 'medical air bridge' with Yemen's capital

17 September 2018. The U.N. humanitarian aid agency says it's agreed with the rebel-run government in the capital of war-torn Yemen on a "medical air bridge" to evacuate civilians for medical treatment. (AP) <https://goo.gl/EqUdfc>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(10 - 16 September 2018)

KEY EVENTS

1. Fighting rages in Yemen around Red Sea port city of Hodeida

13 September 2018. The officials said the fighting was concentrated in the eastern and southern approaches of the city, which is considered the lifeline of Yemen. The officials aid areas overrun by the government forces were littered with bodies of Houthi fighters. One main objective of the ongoing offensive is to cut off the road between Hodeida and Sanaa, thus depriving the capital city from supplies arriving by sea. Government forces are also trying to cut off the road to Taiz, a fiercely contested and strategic city south of Hodeida. (AP) <https://goo.gl/CSXqNZ>

2. Saudi-Led Coalition Seizes Main Road Linking Hodeidah to Sanaa

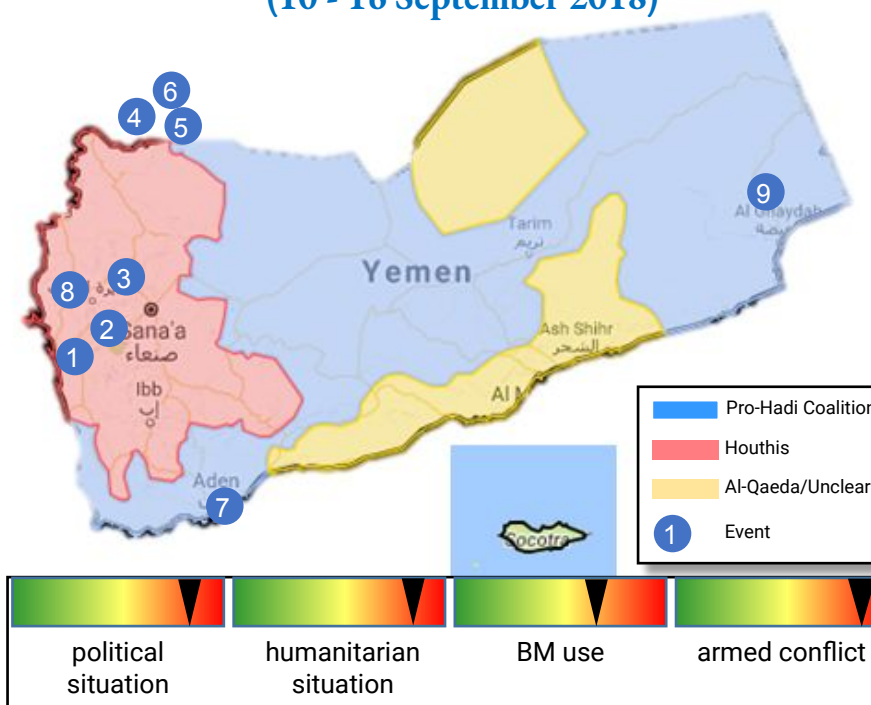
13 September 2018. Yemeni forces backed by a Saudi-led coalition seized the main road linking the port city of Hodeidah to the capital Sanaa, blocking a supply route for the Houthi group that controls both cities, military sources and residents said on Thursday. The Western-backed alliance in Yemen resumed its offensive on 12 September. This came after the collapse of peace talks on Saturday which the United Nations had hoped would avert an assault on the Red Sea city, the country's main port and a lifeline for millions of Yemenis, and start a process to end the three-year war. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/eDs5pD>

3. Iran ready to support Syria, Houthis militarily if asked

11 September 2018. A senior advisor to the Iranian Supreme leader on military industries affairs, Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan said his country is ready to support the Syrian government and Yemen's Houthi rebels if they asked for Tehran's support. "The Yemenis are defending themselves, and they will get any help for that, from anywhere. Naturally, anyone who wants to support them will support them, but to say that the Houthis have no right to receive support from anyone, would be unfair" Dehqan said in an interview. (MEMO) <https://goo.gl/wFKQpM>

4. Mike Pompeo: U.S. sticking with Saudis in brutal Yemen war despite mounting civilian casualties

12 September 2018. The Trump administration on Wednesday said it was sticking with Saudi Arabia and its allies, telling Congress that they are doing all they can to avoid civilian casualties in Yemen's bloody civil war — a controversial conclusion that will permit continued U.S. support in the campaign and allow American military aid to keep flowing to the Saudi-led coalition. (The Washington Times) <https://goo.gl/EN6FdA> In response to similar assaults, Congress included in a defense bill signed by Mr. Trump last month a clause that required Mr. Pompeo to certify that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were doing enough to avoid harming civilians. Without that certification, they would lose the aerial refueling services provided by the United States. In his statement on Wednesday, Mr. Pompeo said they were doing enough. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/QO94Kq>



ASSESSMENT

- Following no-show of Houthis in Geneva Talks another wave of operations towards Hudaidah and Taiz started.
- As was written here last week, the Gulf is an indispensable market for arms sellers. After Spain made announcement that it would abolish the sales of 400 guided munition to SA, this week the country reversed the rhetoric and changed decision.
- This came after a meeting with Saudi officials. On top of the visible costs of the operations in Yemen, both UAE and Saudi Arabia pay great sums of money to lobby firms or make contracts with arms providers to maintain political support. This increases the already high costs of operations for coalition partners.
- The worst humanitarian crisis in Yemen has reached unimaginable levels. The political, military and humanitarian situation renders it more necessary every other day to reach a political agreement to terminate the war.

5. Spain to hold talks with Saudi Arabia over bomb sale, after halting it

11 September 2018. Spain said on Monday it would hold talks with Saudi Arabia over the sale of 400 laser-guided bombs to the Gulf kingdom, after confirming last week it was halting the shipment because of the Saudi role in the war in Yemen. (MEMO) <https://goo.gl/wdEda7>

6. Spain to supply Saudi 400 laser-guided bombs

14 September 2018. The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, said yesterday that his country will go ahead with the implementation of the deal to deliver 400 laser-guided bombs to Saudi Arabia. Borrell told local radio station Onda Cero that "the ultimate decision is to hand over these bombs to fulfil a contract which dates back to 2015," and added: "We have not found any violation that justifies the non-implementation of this contract, so it must be implemented." (MEMO) <https://goo.gl/vc9na4>

7. UN says situation worsening fast amid risk to hundreds of thousands

13 September 2018. "The mills in Hodeidah feed millions of people. We're particularly worried about the Red Sea mill, which currently has 45,000 metric tonnes of food inside, enough to feed 3.5 million people for a month. If the mills are damaged or disrupted, the human cost will be incalculable," U.N. humanitarian coordinator Lise Grande said. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/o7N3dz>

8. Two Saudi Pilots Killed in Helicopter Crash: State Media

14 September 2018. Two Saudi pilots were killed when their helicopter came down in the eastern Yemeni province of al-Mahra on Friday, the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthi group in Yemen said. In a statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency, the coalition said the helicopter, which belongs to the Saudi ground forces, had crashed following technical issues. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/jwD7Vs>

9. Saudi says it destroyed missile fired at Aramco facility by Houthis

14 September 2018. Yemen's armed Houthi movement said it had launched a ballistic missile toward a Saudi Aramco oil refinery on Friday, but Saudi air defense forces said they had intercepted and destroyed the projectile. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/GfyY9s>

IMPORTANT ARTICLE / REPORT

Isolated and Unseen, Yemenis Eat Leaves to Stave Off Famine

AP. The New York Times. 14 September 2018. <https://goo.gl/JILNda>

This AP article/report is of particular importance for those following the situation in Yemen in that the article depicts the famine in Yemen, the way the aids are distributed and details reasons for injustices in such distribution.

OPED

How Congress Can End the War in Yemen

Mark Weisbrot. The Washington Times. 14 September 2018. <https://goo.gl/6EpK6A>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(02 Sep - 09 Sep 18)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen peace talks collapse in Geneva after Houthi no-show

08 September 2018. Griffiths, who held three days of talks with a Yemeni government delegation, said he would meet in coming days with the Houthi leadership in the Yemeni capital Sanaa and in Muscat, Oman. "They would have liked to get here, we didn't make conditions sufficiently correct to get them here," Griffiths told a news conference, declining to elaborate. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/RwTZ4>

2. Houthi leader says Saudi-led coalition obstructed his peace delegation

08 September 2018. Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi on Saturday accused the Saudi-led coalition opposing it in Yemen's war of blocking the Houthi delegation from traveling to U.N.-hosted peace talks in Geneva. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/iT8bFT>

3. More than 80 dead in fighting in Hodeidah after peace talks collapse

09 September 2018. The sources in Hodeidah province, which is controlled by Houthi rebels, said on Sunday that 11 soldiers and 73 rebels had been killed since the talks were abandoned on Saturday. Dozens of rebels and at least 17 soldiers had also been wounded. (Middle East Eye) <https://goo.gl/W7wSQm>

4. Saudi Arabia: Yemeni rebel missile shot down, 26 wounded

06 September 2018. The rebels, known as Houthis, fired the missile into southern Najran province late Wednesday, where it was intercepted, the agency reported. Meanwhile, the rebel-run Al-Masirah TV says the missile targeted a Saudi military camp and hit it "accurately." (AP) <https://goo.gl/VSF97C>

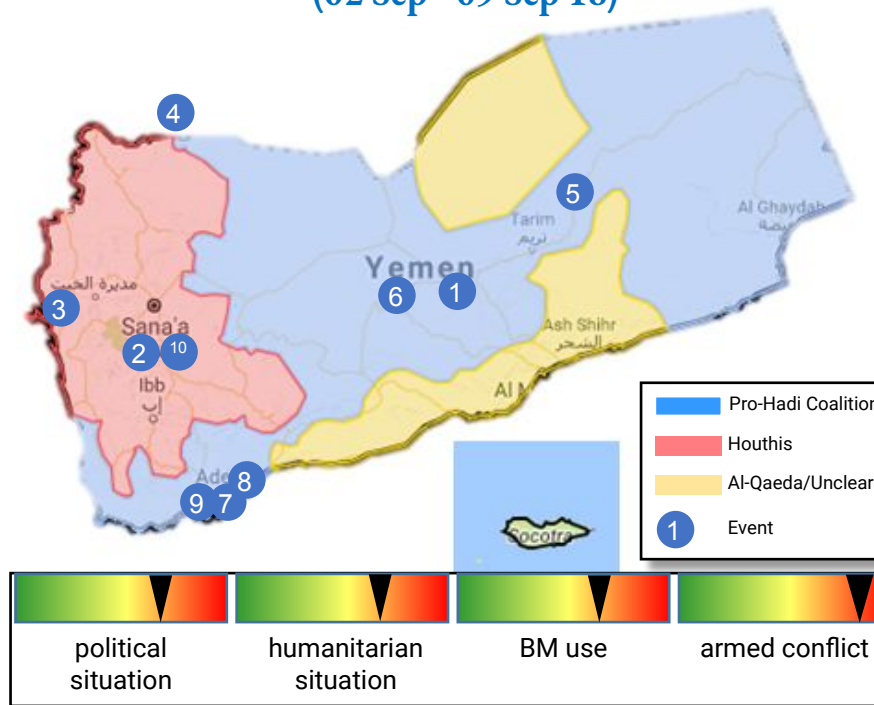
5. Yemeni Forces Wound 7 at Protest Over Price Hikes

5 September 2018. Yemeni officials say security forces have dispersed hundreds of protesters rallying against the government and a Saudi-led coalition, wounding at least seven of them. Demonstration in the western Hadramawt province were held to protest price hikes linked to the weakening local currency. The officials say protesters blocked roads and burned tires. The Yemeni rial has lost more than half its value since the country was plunged into civil war in March 2015. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/A6bb67>

6. Spain cancels bombs sale to Saudi Arabia amid Yemen concerns

4 September 2018. Spain said Tuesday it has canceled the delivery of 400 laser-guided bombs purchased by Saudi Arabia, amid fears that the weapons could be used against Iran-aligned Houthi rebels in Yemen.

The arms deal was originally signed in 2015 under Spain's former conservative government, but the new center-left administration of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez plans to return the 9.2 million euros (\$10.6 million) already paid by the Saudis, Cadena SER radio reported on Tuesday. (AP) <https://goo.gl/3VLy22>



ASSESSMENT

- No-show of Houthis in Geneva Talks verified two things
 - a. There is no consensus between the sides on reaching a political solution to the conflict.
 - b. Even there was one between Houthis and Coalition, the multiplicity of the actors and their divergent interests (secession/unity), which manifested itself best in protests by STC, makes it more elusive to attain peace.
- Spain's cancellation of sales of bombs to SA is just symbolic. Spain is the fourth largest provider of military equipment and weapons to SA. Apart from the cancelled contract worth of 9.2 million euros, Spanish state-owned shipbuilding company has pledged to deliver 5 navy corvettes worth 2 billion euros to the country.
- The Gulf Market is not dispensable for arms sellers. SA is second and UAE is fourth largest arms importer in the globe. Repetition of Spanish behavior by other main arms providers, the US, the UK and France is not expected.

7. Top US general visits Yemen

06 September 2018. According to Yemen's official SABA news agency, Gen. Joseph Votel, head of the US Central Command (CENTCOM) and Major General Taher al-Aqili discussed developing Yemen's coast guard, naval forces and special forces to "tackle the threat of terrorist militias and fight smuggling". The two also discussed the situation in Yemen and the government's attempt to restore the state. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/mDxFXv>

8. Saudi Coalition Admits Error in Yemen Airstrike That Killed Dozens

02 September 2018. "The Joint Incident Assessment Team, an investigative body set up by the coalition, said on Saturday that the strikes had been based on intelligence indicating that the bus was carrying Houthi leaders, a legitimate military target, but that delays in executing the strike and receiving a no-strike order should be investigated further. The coalition later announced that it accepted those findings and pledged to hold accountable anyone who was proved to have made a mistake. The coalition said it would coordinate with the Yemeni government to compensate victims and would review the rules of engagement to prevent such episodes in the future. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/7TqtdF>

9. Yemen's President Travels to US for Medical Tests

03 September 2018. Yemen's official news agency, SABA reported Sunday that President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi has travelled to the United States for regular medical tests. Accordingly, Hadi will remain in the U.S. through the United Nations General Assembly meeting at the end of September. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/idqcVe>

10. Report: Who Provides Arms to the Coalition

01 March 2018. The US was the top arms exporter in 2013-17. Its share of total arms exports was 34 per cent. In the same period, states in the Middle East accounted for 49 per cent of US arms exports. By far the largest recipient of US arms was Saudi Arabia, accounting for 18 percent of US arms exports. Then comes UAE by 7.4 %. France ranks third (6.7 %) and UK ranks sixth (4.8) in global arms exports. A total of 42 percent of French arms exports went to states in the Middle East. In the case of UK, deliveries of combat aircraft to Saudi Arabia and Oman accounted for a large share of these exports.

For Saudi Arabia, major arms providers are in order US (61%), UK (23%), and France (3.6%). For UAE on the other hand major providers are US (58%), France (13%), and Italy (6.6%). (SIPRI) <https://goo.gl/7qrHic>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(27 Aug - 02 Sep 18)

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KEY EVENTS

1. Yemen's Houthis say they fire two missiles at Saudi Arabia

26 August 2018. Yemen's Houthi group fired two Zelzal-1 missiles in the direction of Saudi Arabian provinces alongside the joint border, the Houthis' Masirah TV said in a tweet on Sunday. The two missiles targeted "gatherings of Saudi soldiers," one in Jizan and the other in Najran, it said. The Saudi armed forces did not confirm the attacks. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/zFu8CT>

2. UAE denies Houthis claim Dubai airport struck by drone

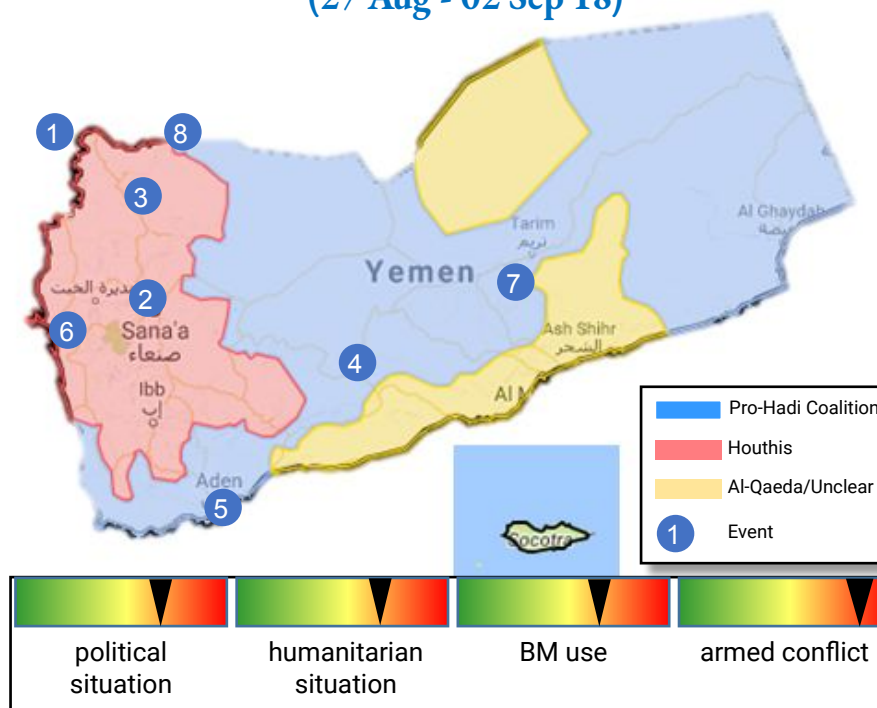
28 August 2018. Warning foreign investors to "stay away" from the UAE is part of a broader strategy to drain the Saudi-led coalition's economy. But the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority "has denied Houthi media claims on the Dubai International Airport, affirming that the UAE air traffic operates business as usual," the authority said in a statement carried by state news agency WAM. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/dyopMP>

3. Yemen rebel threats to Dubai show danger looms

31 August 2018. Houthis threaten the Coalition. The rebels can target commercial shipping and oil tankers passing by Yemen in the Red Sea. Its forces could launch missiles and other attacks. Either likely would push global oil prices higher, especially as Iranian supply gets cut out of the market. (AP) <https://goo.gl/1wsmRB>

4. Centcom Officials Provide Update on CT Strikes in Yemen

30 August 2018. U.S. Central Command has conducted six counterterrorism airstrikes targeting the al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula terrorist network in Yemen in three separate governorates since May 16, bringing the total number of airstrikes to 34, Centcom officials announced today. (US Department of Defense) <https://goo.gl/pK1nd1>



ASSESSMENT

- The Coalition retreated from its initial rhetoric of justified target regarding airstrikes killing more than 66 children in the last three weeks. The reports regarding targeting of non-military targets to punish Houthis have and will continue to cause problems to both Coalition members and their providers of training and ammunition. This retreat is a small step in the right direction. If they want to maintain legitimacy they should also show that effective measures are being put in place lest such incidence occur again.*
- The talks that will be held in Geneva this week will be a technical one revolving around agreement on release of prisoners of both sides. If Griffiths manages to attain an agreement this could increase probability to restart negotiations in coming rounds.*
- UN report made a huge impact in the international arena when compared to previous ones by NGOs. The Coalition may have felt that a report by UN experts may have consequences per public international law alongside deteriorating public opinion.*

5. No face-to-face meetings at Yemen peace talks

2 September 2018. Yemen's warring parties will not meet face-to-face at UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva this week. Speaking on condition of anonymity, a government source said the delegation would demand the release of 5,000 prisoners. The rebels aim to secure the release of 3,000 of their fighters, the source said. (France 24) <https://goo.gl/QosWXR>

6. Saudi-led coalition admits deadly Yemen strike on bus was unjustified

1 September 2018. A Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said on Saturday it accepted that an air attack last month that killed dozens of people, including children traveling on a bus, was unjustified and pledged to hold accountable anyone who contributed to the error. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/4q8cWa>

7. United Nations Experts point to possible war crimes by parties to the conflict

28 August 2018. Among their conclusions, the experts say individuals in the Government of Yemen and the coalition, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and in the de facto authorities have committed acts that may, subject to determination by an independent and competent court, amount to international crimes. The airstrikes have hit residential areas, markets, funerals, weddings, detention facilities, civilian boats and even medical facilities. The Group of Experts have reasonable grounds to believe that individuals in the GoY and the coalition may have conducted attacks in violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution that may amount to war crimes. (OHCHR) <https://goo.gl/9umLta>

8. Arab Coalition Slams UN Report on Yemen

28 August 2018. "The report did not mention the Iranian role in the continuation of the war in Yemen... and its continued support for the Houthis despite the clear evidence which the coalition provided to international mechanisms," said a statement published by the Saudi state news agency. The coalition said it would provide a "comprehensive and detailed legal response" at a later time. (Asharq al Awsat) <https://goo.gl/oGzezq>



YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(20 - 26 Aug 18)

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KEY EVENTS

1. UN: Coalition Airstrike Killed at Least 26 Children

24 August 2018. The UN humanitarian chief, Mark Lowcock, and the head of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Henrietta Fore, have condemned the deadly air strike in Hudaydah governorate, in western Yemen, that killed at least 26 children and four women on Thursday. Echoing a recent statement by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Mr. Lowcock, who is the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, called for an impartial, independent and prompt investigation into these most recent incidents. (UN News) <https://goo.gl/4BkqTT>

2. Saudi-led Coalition must be punished for war crimes in Yemen, insists Human Rights Watch

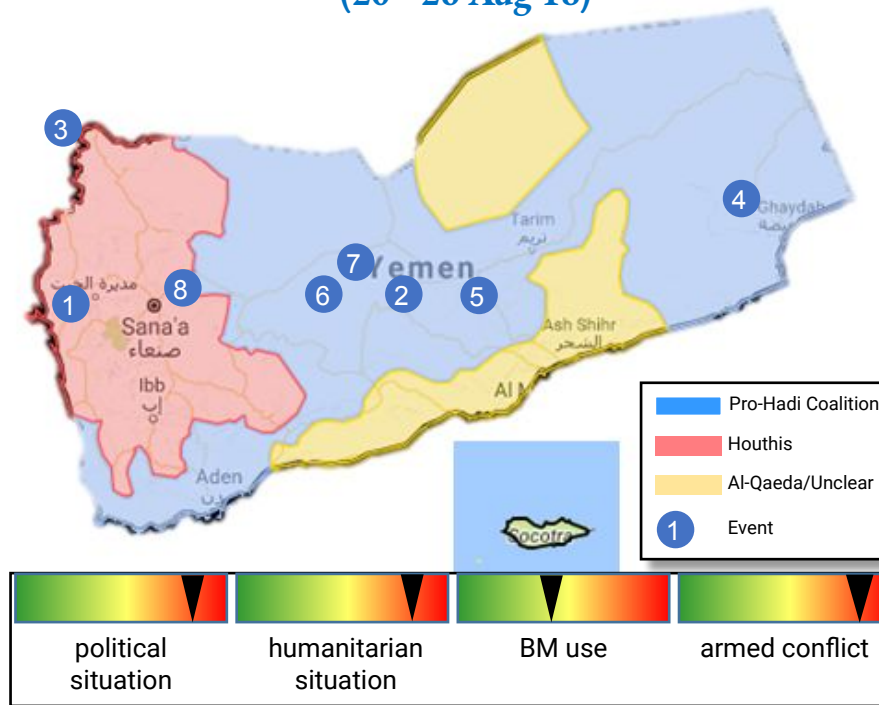
25 August 2018. A new report published on Friday by Human Rights Watch insists the Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen has committed war crimes and must be punished. Accordingly: "The work of the Coalition's Commission of Inquiry over the past two years has not met the int'l standards of transparency, integrity and independence. The team did not even meet the requirements of its limited mandate to assess allegations and incidents during the Coalition's military operations." (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/Eqqcga>

3. Yemen's Houthis say they fire two missiles at Saudi Arabia

26 August 2018. Yemen's Houthi group fired two Zelzal-1 missiles in the direction of Saudi Arabian provinces alongside the joint border, the Houthis' Masirah TV said in a tweet on Sunday. The two missiles targeted "gatherings of Saudi soldiers," one in Jizan and the other in Najran, it said. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/zFu8CT>

4. Yemenis shut down construction of Saudi military base

23 August 2018. A community in southeast Yemen has shut down construction of a Saudi military base in the area. Locals are protesting against the base amid growing suspicions that new Saudi-funded infrastructure projects aim to boost Riyadh's tarnished image. (Aljazeera) <https://goo.gl/wmZSif>



ASSESSMENT

- *The Coalition reckless targeting amounting to war crimes causes loss of legitimacy for operations in Yemeni theater. After the airstrike hitting school bus killing 40 children last week, this week another 26 Yemeni were killed the same way. What is more there is no concrete effort to try those implicated. This week US tried to dissipate the burn on itself regarding its support to Coalition by announcing the death of one famous AQAP bombmaker a year ago.*
- *The talks that will be held in Geneva next month will not likely change the tide in the series of negotiations or bring any tangible results. This is mainly because of multiplicity of active actors in the issue.*

5. UN warns of a possible new cholera epidemic in Yemen

22 August 2018. The UN is warning of a possible "third wave" of the cholera epidemic in Yemen, which is already "the largest outbreak on record." U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Wednesday there have been more than 1.1 million suspected cases of cholera since April 2017, and the number is increasing. He said over 2,300 deaths have been reported. (AP) <https://goo.gl/vbB2mx>

6. Chief al-Qaeda bomb maker 'killed in Yemen strike'

21 August 2018. US officials are reportedly confident that AQAP's suspected chief bomb maker, Ibrahim al-Asiri, has been killed in a drone strike in Marib province last year. Asiri is alleged to have been behind the 2009 underwear bomb plot and made devices found on cargo planes in 2010. (BBC) <https://goo.gl/zRr1ZU>

7. Yemen Tribal Leaders Say Senior Al-Qaida Leader Killed

25 August 2018. A senior al-Qaida leader, Ghalib al-Zaidi was killed in the Sirwah district of Marib while fighting alongside the government forces battling Shiite rebels, officials and tribal leaders said Saturday. In 2017, al-Zaidi was placed on the UNSC sanctions list as a Yemen-based individual "who acts for or on behalf of AQAP." The U.N. found him to be providing the Yemeni affiliate of the global terror network with weapons, funding, and recruits. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/fthGDN>

8. Hezbollah Leader Meets With Yemeni Rebels

19 August 2018. Hezbollah says its leader has met with a delegation from Yemen's Houthi rebels. Hassan Nasrallah met with a delegation headed by Houthi spokesman Mohamad Abdelsalam to discuss the latest developments. Hezbollah is believed to train and support the Iran-backed Shiite Houthi rebels. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/BczHua>

1. US ambassador to Yemen ‘optimistic’ about Geneva talks

16 August 2018. US ambassador to Yemen Mathew Tueller, said on Wednesday in a press conference held in Cairo that coming round of Geneva talks will be held on September 6 to look into procedures for building trust, and that is a step towards a comprehensive solution to the conflict in the Yemen.” The ambassador said that positive results [of the conference] could include alleviation of the human suffering, releasing prisoners and detainees, commencing commercial and civil flights especially in Sanaa airport, building trust between the two sides, and taking the necessary procedures with the Yemeni Central Bank to maintain the Yemeni currency rate. (Al Arabiyya) <https://goo.gl/jedN44>

2. STC National Assembly reiterates threat to attack al Hudaydah if excluded from UN consultations

16 August 2018. The acting secretary general of the National Assembly for the Transitional Political Council for the South (STC), Fadhl al Jaadi, reiterated the STC’s threat to seize al Hudaydah if the UN Envoy to Yemen and the Hadi government continue to ignore its demands. Jaadi stated at a special session on August 16 that the UN-led peace process in Yemen will fail and the STC has “the full capacity” to spoil the UN consultations. (Critical Threats) <https://goo.gl/2rfFmg>

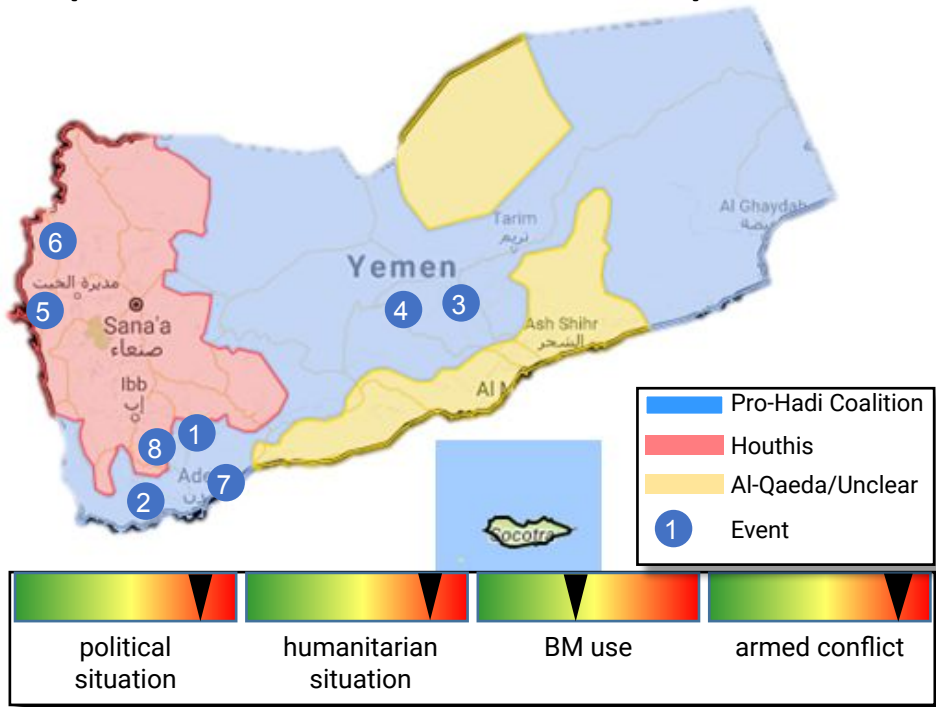
3. Al-Qaida in Yemen Denies AP Report on Secret Deals With UAE

17 August 2018. A new statement by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) unsurprisingly denies Associated Press report of last week outlining secret agreements and mutual cooperation between AQAP and the Saudi-led coalition, especially how Emirati forces have integrated al-Qaida members into the ranks of newly formed militias. The statement posted on AQAP telegram channel on Friday said the report "lacks evidence, reality, or credibility." Kendall says the fact that it took 10 days to post the statement (dates 7 August and was posted on 17 August) suggests communication difficulties. (Elisabeth Kendall on Twitter and The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/HvXAQL> , <https://goo.gl/SW93cN>

4. US Official Says UAE Paid Yemen Tribes to Push Al-Qaida Out

15 August 2018. A senior U.S. official acknowledged Wednesday that the United Arab Emirates had paid money to tribal leaders in Yemen to rout al-Qaida militants from their strongholds in the war-torn county. The official said that al-Qaida had pulled back under pressure from the Yemeni tribes. The American official said that money "has exchanged hands" and that it often went to "sheikhs in areas that have collaborated or allowed al-Qaida to exist." He didn't elaborate on how much was paid, but said the Emiratis' payments to tribal sheikhs allowed them to "ally themselves to the Emiratis." He stressed that al-Qaida and some of the tribal leaders paid by the UAE "had good relations and in fact in many areas, there are al-Qaida recruits among the same young men of the tribes." Asking rhetorically whether the sheikhs would "turn back to al-Qaida at some point in the future," he shrugged his shoulders. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/nzzpLU>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH
(13 AUGUST - 19 AUGUST 2018)



Assessment:

- The more the Coalition gets implicated in the war, the more violations of Int’l Humanitarian Law are being committed. The air raid striking school bus killing 40 children resonated quite loudly in international media. US is subject to fierce critique due to its role in helping Coalition on target selection. Yemen Data Project updates also show a poor score of one third (31%) military targets hit. The remaining 36% were military and 33% were classified as unknown. The Coalition loses legitimacy and international support for its war because of such violations.
- The talks that will be held in Geneva next month will not likely change the tide in the series of negotiations or bring any tangible results. STC becomes more vocal about its concerns for being recognized and tries to carve its place in shaping Yemen’s future.

5. Yemen Data Project June Update Verifies Ugliness of Coalition Air Raids

1 August 2018. Coalition air raids fell for the second consecutive month to 258 in June from 298 in May. Of the monthly total, 37% (96) of air raids targeted the western coastal governorate of Al Hudaydah where coalition anti-Houthi ground forces launched Operation Golden Arrow on 12 June in an attempt to push pro-Houthi fighters out of the governorate capital. In June, 70% of coalition air raids targeted the two governorates of Al Hudaydah and Sa'ada. Of the 140 air raids in June where the target could be identified as either military or non-military, 59% (83) hit non-military sites, of which 29% hit residential areas. The overall pattern of air raids since the start of the air campaign in March 2015 to the end of June 2018 show almost one third of all targets (31%) were non-military, 36% military with 33% classified as unknown. (Yemen Data Project) <https://goo.gl/qN6hon>

6. UAE: Yemen war is ‘ugly’, no conflict is ‘clean’

14 August 2018. At least 50 people, including 40 children, were killed in air strikes which hit a bus of school children as it drove through a market of Dahyan, a town in Saada. Amid outrage from international human rights groups and UN officials, the Saudi-led coalition continued to defend the air strike as a “legitimate military action” intended to hit Houthi leaders, a day after it authorised a coalition investigation of the strike. Speaking in response to questions regarding a Saudi-led coalition air strike which killed children on a bus, the UAE minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash said: “This war has been and remains an ugly war. In this war, we have seen civilians shot at, bombed, killed and unfortunately, as I say, this is really part of any confrontation we have to do.” (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/1NRZ8b>

7. HRW calls for halting arms sales to Saudi Arabia

17 August 2018. The massacre resulted from a Saudi-led coalition airstrike in the Yemeni city of Saada, which left dozens of civilians and children killed, must be “a watershed in the history of this law-violating war”, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said. If the key arms suppliers are “genuinely” determined to minimise civilian harm in Yemen, Hancock pointed out, “this horrific incident should mark the point of no return.” “Weapons sales to Saudi Arabia should be immediately suspended,” she stressed. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/26wYEB>

8. The Govt and Houthi leadership invited to Sept 6 peace talks

17 August 2018. The United Nations has invited the Yemeni government and the Houthi movement that controls most of the north to peace talks in Geneva on Sept. 6, a U.N. spokeswoman said on Friday. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/vTZoiA>

1. U.N. envoy Yemen: Talks to focus on transition, disarmament

11 August 2018. Talks between Yemen’s warring parties next month will focus on a transitional governance deal and disarmament, the U.N. special envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, said in remarks published on Saturday. Griffiths said discussions on a new government should also include representatives from the General People’s Congress, once headed by slain former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, and the southern separatist movement, a powerful force that has provided many of the coalition-backed fighters against the Houthis. “The future of the South will not be discussed in these consultations, but will be part of the Yemeni dialogue in the transitional period,” Griffiths said, adding that the United Nations supported a united Yemen. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/Vgy5bf>

2. Saudi-led strike kills dozens of children on school field trip in Yemen

10 August 2018. According to Houthi-controlled Health Ministry, 50 were killed and 77 injured in a Saudi-led coalition airstrike that hit a school bus in northern Yemen on Thursday. Accordingly, the children were on a field trip when their bus was struck at a market, the first stop of the day. (CNN) <https://goo.gl/6MsYik>

3. Statement by the Coalition Regarding Latest Attack

9 August 2018. Colonel Turki AlMalki, the Official Spokesman of the “Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen” stated that the targeting today in Sa’dah Governorate is a legitimate military action, conducted in conformity with the International Humanitarian Law and its Customary Rules, to target the militants responsible for planning and targeting civilians, which resulted in killing and injuring them, last night in Jazan. “The Coalition will take all necessary measures against the terrorist, criminal acts of the terrorist Iranian-Houthi militia, such as recruiting child soldiers, throwing them in battlefields and using them as tools and covers to their terrorist acts.” (Saudi Press Agency) <https://goo.gl/dDp68n>

4. U.N. Security Council Urges Credible Inquiry Into Yemen Air Strike

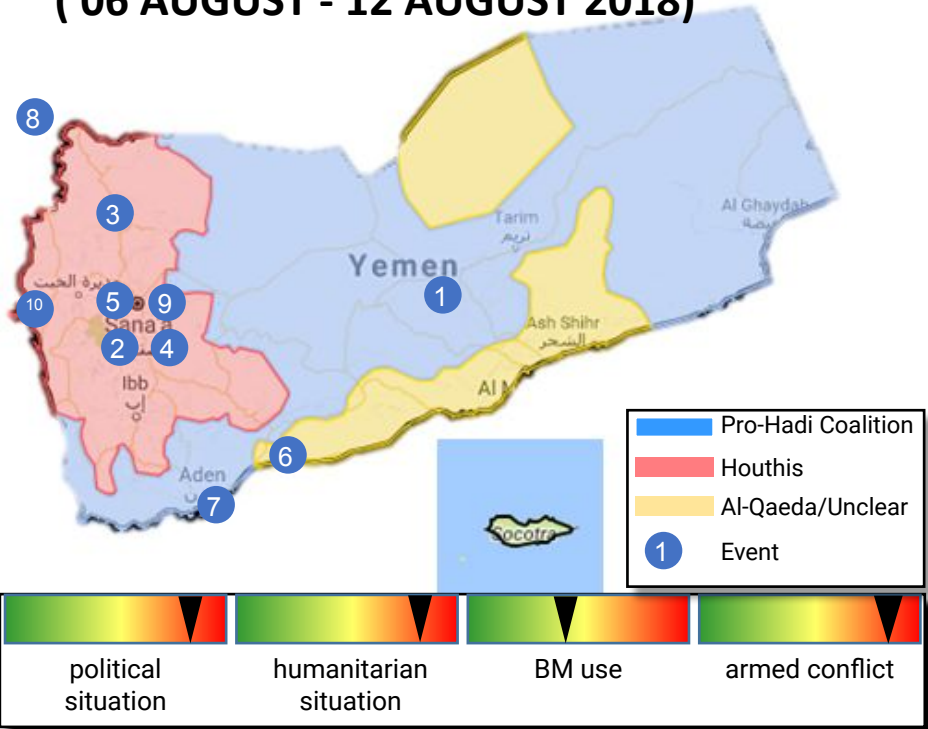
10 August 2018. The United Nations Security Council called for a credible and transparent investigation into a Saudi-led coalition air strike in Yemen that killed dozens of children, British U.N. Ambassador Karen Pierce said on Friday. (The New York times) <https://goo.gl/Vnz3iE>

5. Saudi-Led Coalition to Probe Yemen Air Raid

10 August 2018. A Saudi-led Arab military coalition said on Friday it would investigate the airstrike that killed dozens of children in Yemen, an apparent shift of stance on an attack Riyadh has portrayed as a legitimate action against its Houthi foes. Announcing the investigation into the strike on the bus, the Saudi Press Agency quoted an alliance official as saying: "The coalition is firmly committed to investigating all claims regarding mistakes or violations of international law, to sanction those who caused these incidents and to provide assistance to the victims." (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/9PZPXm>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(06 AUGUST - 12 AUGUST 2018)



Assessment:

- The more the Coalition gets implicated into the war, the more violations of Int'l Humanitarian Law are being committed. Although perpetrators of last week's explosions in the Fish Market are not clear, the latest shift of stance and tone by Coalition regarding airstrike on the schoolbus hints at role of the Coalition. The Coalition loses legitimacy and international support for its war because of such violations.
- Another factor contributing to the dirt of the war is Saudi and UAE reckless conduct. The final reports about agreement with AQAP shows the extent the two states can go in point of winning the war. Both the agreement with AQAP and use of African children will certainly have repercussions regarding violations of international humanitarian law and law of armed conflict.
- The talks that will be held in Geneva next month will not likely change the tide in the series of negotiations or bring any tangible results.

6. US allies in Yemen cut 'secret deals' with Al-Qaeda

06 August 2018. The United States-backed Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has cut secret deals with AQAP fighters to assist local military dynamics against Houthis. Some AQAP fighters were paid to leave key towns and provinces they previously took over, while others were allowed to retreat with military equipment, weapons and cash, the Associated Press reveals today. Accordingly, on a number of occasions, the Saudi-led coalition made headlines of ousting AQAP from decisive landscapes, neutralising the terror group's ability to strike the West. But in reality, it was a sealed and negotiated conquest without any military confrontation. AP found that the coalition actively sought out to recruit AQAP fighters, as they were considered exceptional and hardened fighters. A senior US diplomat confirmed that Al-Qaeda exists among the anti-Houthi ranks. "It's very, very easy for Al-Qaeda to insinuate itself into the mix," the official said on condition of anonymity. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/cChbw1>

7. Int'l Campaign: Abu Dhabi uses African children to fight in Yemen

07 August 2018. The International Campaign to Boycott the UAE (ICBU) explained that many African children have been brought to fight in Yemen alongside the UAE army or its mercenary militias. Such children are frequently brought through African ports, many of which are partly owned by the UAE and then exploited and forced to carry arms and fight in Yemen. Hundreds of them were killed and buried in the battlefield. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/pf3UCT>

8. Houthi missile launched into Saudi Arabia kills one

08 August 2018. Fragments from a missile launched into Saudi Arabia from Yemen by Houthi forces killed one civilian and wounded 11, Saudi state media said on Thursday. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/gDVKx9>

9. UN says Houthis refused visa to head of human rights office in Yemen

10 August 2018. Elobaid Elobaid, a Canadian citizen, had been based in Yemen since October 2016, leading a team of 17 staff in Sanaa and 13 monitors in 11 of Yemen's governorates. His visa expired in June but was not renewed. UN human rights spokeswoman Liz Throssell told reporters in Geneva: "They provided no reason for their decision and our requests for them to reconsider have, to date, gone unanswered." The UN human rights office has frequently criticized the Houthis for indiscriminate shelling and sniping and the use of child soldiers. (Al Arabia) <https://goo.gl/n9EviD>

10. Yemen Humanitarian Update Covering 30 July – 9 August 2018

9 August 2018. Violence in several governorates has killed tens of civilian, including children and women, and continues to displace thousands of other people. As of 05 August, 50,552 households have been displaced from Al Hudaydah and 47,400 households (93 per cent of caseload) have received assistance through the rapid response mechanism (RRM). More than 1.4 million people in need of assistance live in districts with high access constraints. Food and fuel imports declined by 18 and 20 per cent, respectively, in July. (OCHA) <https://goo.gl/f2qQvy>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(29 JULY - 05 AUGUST 2018)

1. U.N. Yemen envoy to invite warring parties to Geneva on Sept. 6

02 August 2018. The United Nations Yemen mediator said on Thursday he plans to invite the warring parties to Geneva on Sept. 6 to discuss a framework for peace talks and confidence-building measures as he tries to negotiate an end to the more than three-year conflict. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/Q2xN9t>

2. Saudi-Led Coalition Says Houthi Behind Killing of Civilians in Hodeidah

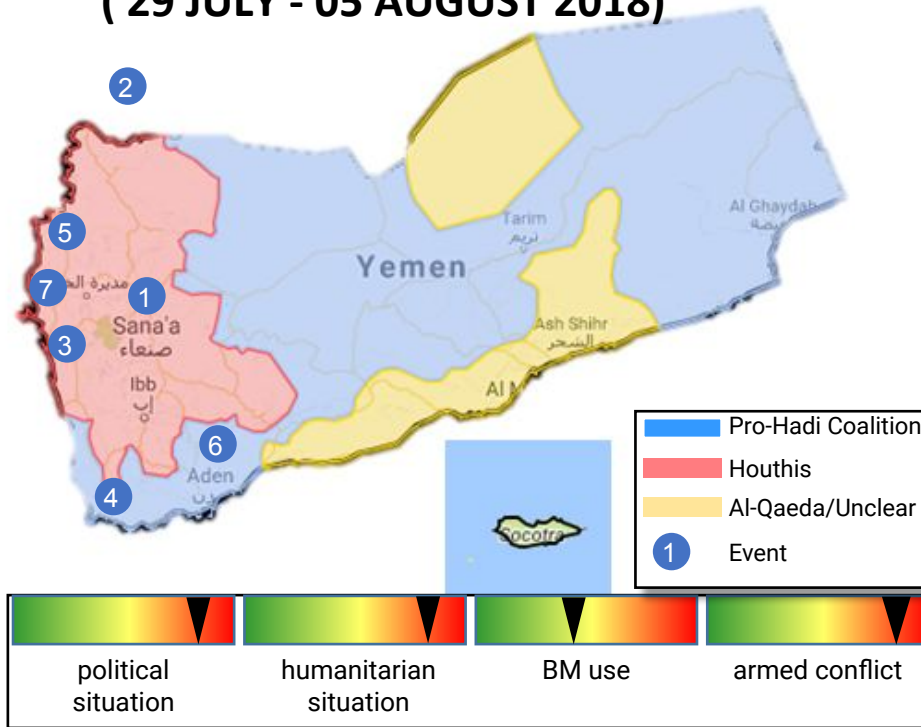
02 August 2018. The Saudi-led coalition spokesman accused Houthi militia of being behind an attack that killed and wounded dozens of civilians in Hodeidah in Yemen on Thursday, adding the coalition did not carry out any operations in the port city. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/tVHm7J>

3. Deadly 'air strike' near hospital in rebel-held port

03 August 2018. At least 20 people in the rebel-held Yemeni port city of Hudaydah have been killed in airstrikes blamed on the Saudi-led coalition. The strikes hit a fish market and the entrance to a nearby hospital, eyewitnesses and medics said. (BBC) <https://goo.gl/6Fvu3c>

4. Saudi Arabia resumes oil shipments through Bab El-Mandab

02 August 2018. Saudi Arabia has resumed oil shipments through the Bab El-Mandab Strait reversing a decision issued last week to temporarily suspend movement through the waterway following a Houthi attack. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/5hKnjV>



Assessment:

After the targeting of Saudi vessel by Houthis, Saudi Arabia tried to internationalize the issue, asserting Houthis are threat to international trade made through Bab-al Mandab Strait. This week, after the air strikes to the fish market in Hudaydah, Houthis try to reciprocate by asserting Saudi-led Coalition has no respect to innocent lives.

In the last ten days, water infrastructure delivering water to Sa'ada and Hudaydah were hit by airstrikes. As the country remains at the threshold of a new wave of cholera epidemic, selection of such non-military targets does not do other than killing more innocent and antagonizing the population. What is more, it causes loss of legitimacy for the operation and opens ways for those responsible to be tried at international criminal courts.

5. Yemen's Houthis halt Red Sea attacks for two weeks

31 July 2018. Yemen's Houthi group said on Tuesday it is unilaterally halting attacks in the Red Sea for two weeks to support peace efforts, days after Saudi Arabia suspended oil exports through a strategic Red Sea channel following attacks on crude tankers last week. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/oq794w>

6. Yemen on the brink of a new cholera outbreak

03 August 2018. Yemen may be on the brink of the third major wave of a cholera epidemic, warns the World Health Organisation (WHO) (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/cxpg2p>

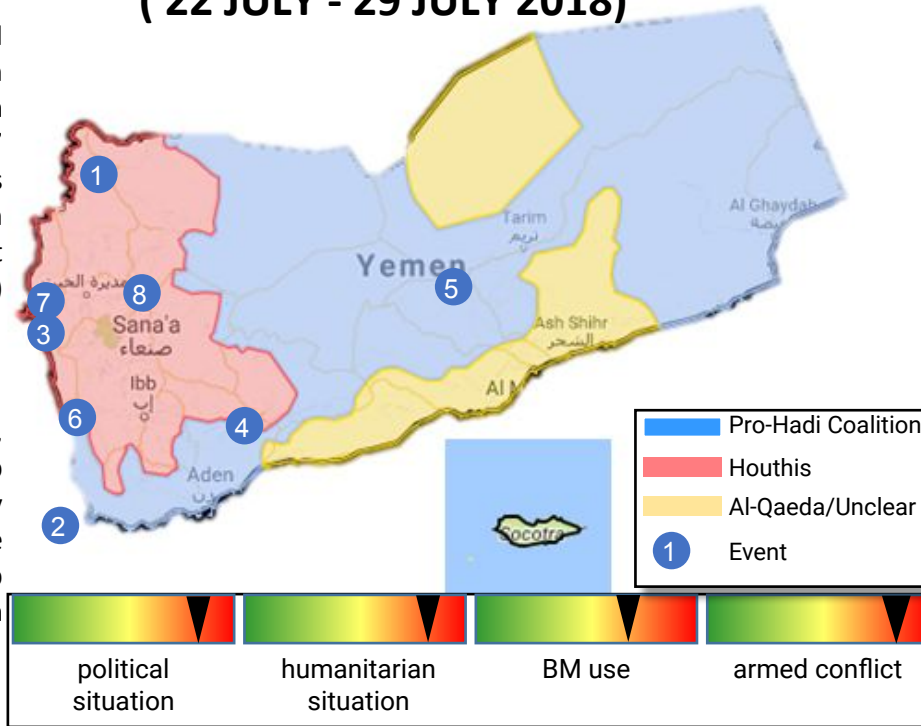
7. Yemen Humanitarian Update Covering 17 July – 29 July 2018

29 July 2018. Important items from the report include:

- The Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen warns that civilians are at extreme risk in Al Hudaydah Governorate.
- UNICEF condemns attacks on a water facility in Sa'ada which cut off 10,500 people from safe drinking water. On 24 July, UNICEF issued a statement condemning the attack on water facility.
- As of 29 July, total number of displaced households from Al Hudaydah Governorate was 48,574.
- On 26, 27 and 28 July, airstrikes occurred near a reproductive health centre and public laboratory in Al Hudaydah and hit and damaged a sanitation facility in Zabid and a water station, which supplies the majority of the water to Hudaydah City. (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) <https://goo.gl/MUcRXi>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(22 JULY - 29 JULY 2018)



1. Yemen rebels claim strikes on Abu Dhabi airport in UAE

26 July 2018. Yemen's Shiite rebels say they have launched "several strikes" targeting Abu Dhabi's international airport in the United Arab Emirates. Thursday's announcement on Yemen's rebel-run Al-Masirah TV says the rebel "air force" targeted the airport using drones. On Twitter, Abu Dhabi's airport said there was an "incident involving a supply vehicle in Terminal 1 airside area of the airport." It said the incident didn't affect airport operations. (The Washington Post) <https://goo.gl/BFdXxS>

2. Saudi Arabia suspends oil exports through Bab al-Mandeb

26 July 2018. Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, temporarily suspended all oil shipments through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait after attacks on two crude-carrying vessels by Houthi rebels in Yemen. The suspension will last "until the situation becomes clearer and maritime transit through Bab al-Mandeb is safe", Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said in a statement. (Al Jazeera) <https://goo.gl/zSbGL4>

3. Saudi-Led Coalition Strikes Yemen's Main Port City

27 July 2018. A Saudi-led coalition launched heavy air strikes on Yemen's main port city of Hodeidah on Friday, in an apparent resumption of military operations on the city after the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement attacked two Saudi oil tankers, residents said. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/ofdnRg>

4. UAE-backed forces kick-off big offensive in central Yemen

27 July 2018. The UAE-backed Southern Resistance Army and their allies kicked off a new offensive in central Yemen, today, targeting the small province of Al-Bayda. Backed by heavy airstrikes from the Arab Coalition, the Southern Resistance Army stormed the Houthi-held Al-Malajeem area, resulting in a fierce battle that is still ongoing at the moment. The operation reportedly began at dawn on Friday and is geared to cutoff one of the Houthi forces' main supply lines to southern Yemen. (Al Masdar News) <https://goo.gl/CVAKQg>

Assessment:

- Houthis started to aim economic targets with symbolic importance to deter the Coalition and boost the morale among their supporters. Saudi Arabia has the ability to direct its exports to Yanbu terminal, bypassing Bab-al Mandeb. However especially Abu Dhabi airport is an important hub for many airlines and air cargo companies. A question about the safety in the airport will cause sizable economical losses.
- The Coalition started their operations as a response to Houthi attacks last Friday from two directions. The question if the Coalition has generated necessary force and establish required logistic lines to support current operations is yet to be seen.
- Humanitarian situation will be negatively affected from restarted operations.

5. UAE ready to take on 'burden' of Middle East security

27 July 2018. UAE is ready to deploy more troops across the Middle East as it cannot rely on Western allies, including UK and US, to police the region, Arab News reported yesterday. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/7h39VH>

6. Saudi-led Coalition Boost Its Troops in Western Yemen in Preparation for New Attack on Al Hudaydah

28 July 2018. On July 28, a source familiar with the situation told the UAE-based al-Arabiya TV that the Saudi-led coalition and its Yemeni proxies deployed more units along the western coast in order to launch a new attack on the strategic port of al-Hudaydah. According to the source, the coalition took the decision to resume its military operations along the western Yemeni coast because the Houthis refused to withdraw from al-Hudaydah and stepped up their attacks on the international shipping lines in the Red Sea. (South Front) <https://goo.gl/KaHHkw>

7. Yemen close to famine after port offensive, aid groups warn

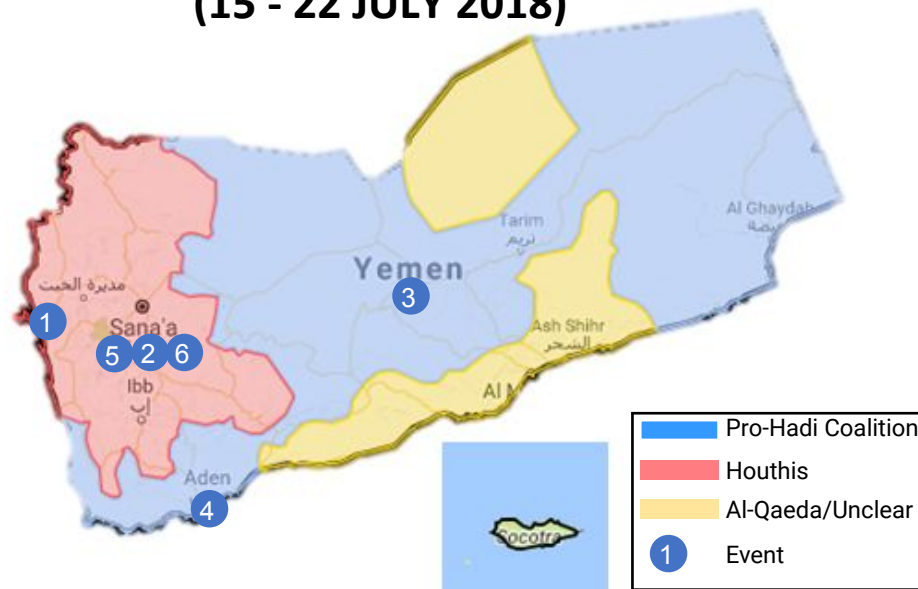
24 July 2018. Yemen is close to famine after a 25% increase in levels of severe hunger this year and an offensive on the main port city of Hodeida, a lifeline for millions, humanitarian organizations warned on Monday. Thousands more people have been displaced by the conflict and many are having to skip meals and beg on the streets, they said, with an estimated 8.4 million people already on the verge of starvation. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/ivjwsU>

8. President [Sana'a] and UN envoy discuss humanitarian situation in Hodeidah

26 July 2018. President Mahdi al-Mashat discussed on Thursday with the UN special envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, the worsening humanitarian situation in Hodeidah province. In the meeting, the president reviewed the latest developments at the Yemeni arena, as well as the UN peace efforts to resume the peaceful negotiations and to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The meeting touched upon the vision of the Revolution Leader, al-Sayyed Abdul Malik Al-Houthi, regarding the status of Hodeidah Port. The meeting dealt with the aspects related to the coming Geneva consultations. (Saba Net) <https://goo.gl/2E2H4r>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(15 - 22 JULY 2018)



Assessment:

- It becomes clearer that neither the Coalition nor Houthis are able to enforce their conditions to the other side forcefully. As the duration of the conflict extends, the economic and societal pressure grows especially in the Coalition member states. In this regard, Griffiths' diplomatic efforts present a chance for both sides to settle the problem through diplomacy.
- Another important factor is the image of US. After reports showing engagement of US in the conflict, the Coalition's inability to solve the problem since 2015 hurts US image also.
- The final initiative by STC is a manifestation of its will to secede from North. The de facto area where internationally recognized President Mansur's rule shrinks systematically.
- Dire humanitarian situation persists.

4. UAE-backed south 'reject' northern military presence

18 July 2018. The Southern Separatist Forces launched a campaign to "reject the presence of any northern military forces in the south," a demand which traces back to 1990 according to the STC. The STC claim that the position was clarified to the United Nations envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, who is attempting to bring peace to Yemen by negotiating with all parties to the conflict. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/BX8m2o>

5. Houthis Plead with Putin to Stop Liberation of Hodeidah

21 July 2018. In a letter sent to Putin, head of Yemen's Supreme Political Council Mahdi al-Mashat warned that the coalition has been aiming to take control of all strategic maritime areas to put them under US influence and lay hands on international trade, official sources said on Thursday. According to the group, this letter aims at strengthening bilateral relations with friendly countries. Observers, however, viewed it as an attempt to legitimize the militia. (Asharq Al-Awsat) <https://goo.gl/KdZpsX>

6. Yemen Humanitarian Update Covering 10 July – 16 July 2018

11 July 2018. Displaced households from Al Hudaydah Governorate continue to be assisted through the rapid response mechanism.

IOM organizes the voluntary return of 53 Ethiopian migrants from Yemen.

UNHAS operated 177 flights and transported 4,837 passengers since January 2018. (OCHA) <https://goo.gl/vJefhf>

1. Secretary Pompeo's Meeting with UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Martin Griffiths

19 July 2018. U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo met yesterday with UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Martin Griffiths in Washington. The Special Envoy provided an update on his engagement with all parties on the conflict in Yemen. The Secretary thanked the Special Envoy for his efforts to advance a diplomatic solution to the situation in Hudaydah that avoids a further deterioration of humanitarian conditions on the ground. The Secretary underscored his support for the Special Envoy's initiative and expressed the hope that all sides can work toward a comprehensive political agreement that brings peace, prosperity, and security to Yemen. (www.state.gov) <https://goo.gl/aC1c8z>

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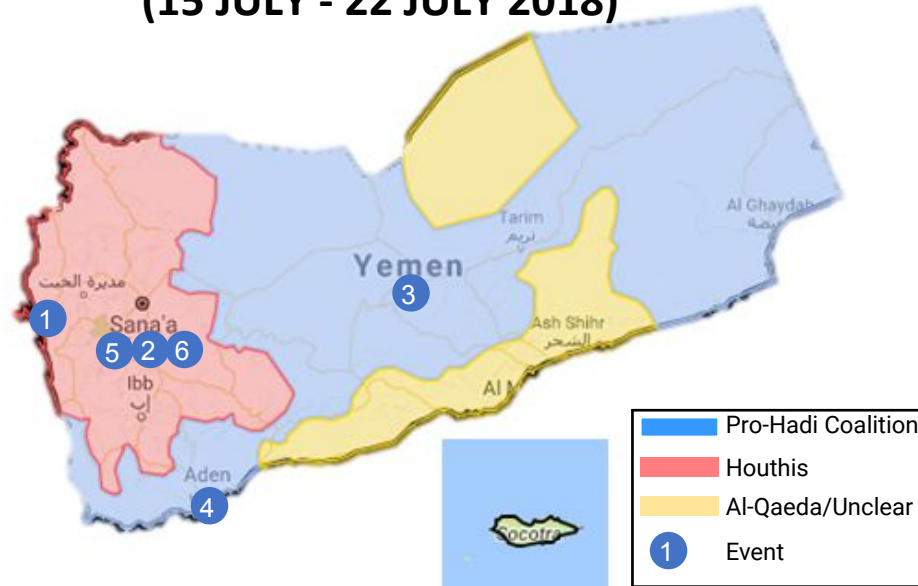
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3. UAE's Reem Al Hashimy: Solution in Hodeidah could lead to final settlement in Yemen

18 July 2018. UAE Minister of State for International Co-operation Reem Al Hashimy held talks in Washington with UN Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths on Wednesday, as efforts intensified to find a political solution for the Yemeni port city of Hodeidah, which she said could provide "an opening" for a larger settlement to the Yemen war. (The National) <https://goo.gl/yjTJmg>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(15 JULY - 22 JULY 2018)



Assessment:

- It becomes clearer that neither side, neither the Coalition nor Saudis are able to overcome the other side in a military conflict. As the duration of the conflict extends so does the economic and societal pressure grow especially in the Coalition member states. In this regard, Griffiths' diplomatic efforts present a chance for both sides to settle the problem through diplomacy.
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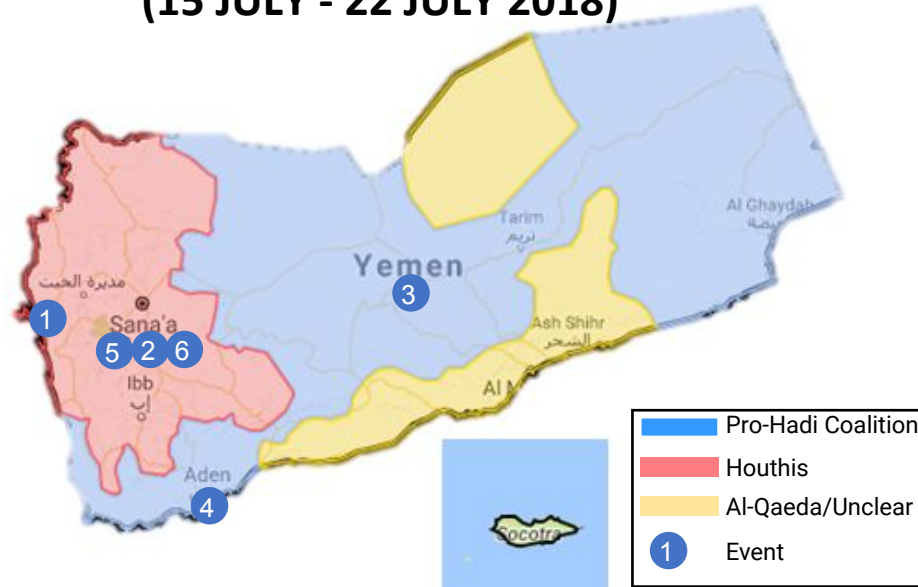
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YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(15 JULY - 22 JULY 2018)



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YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(08 JULY - 15 JULY 2018)

1. Earthquake of 6.2 Magnitude Strikes Off Yemen-USGS

15 July 2018. An earthquake of 6.2 magnitude struck off Yemen on Sunday, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) reported, but there were no immediate reports of any damage or casualties. The quake struck 213 km northwest of Socotra island in the Gulf of Aden. There was no immediate tsunami warning. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/cWDeMR>

2. Emirati Prince Flees to Qatar, Exposing Tensions in U.A.E.

14 July 2018. Emirati Prince spoke publicly about tensions among the Emirates that were previously discussed only in whispers — notably resentments over Abu Dhabi's leadership of the U.A.E.'s military intervention in Yemen. The rulers of Abu Dhabi, he charged, did not consult the emirs of the other six Emirates before committing their troops to the war, now three years old, against an Iranian-allied faction in Yemen. But soldiers from smaller emirates, such as Fujairah, have filled the front lines and accounted for most of the war deaths, which Emirati news reports have put at a little more than 100. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/os9QYF>

3. UAE-backed forces in Yemen protest non-payment of wages

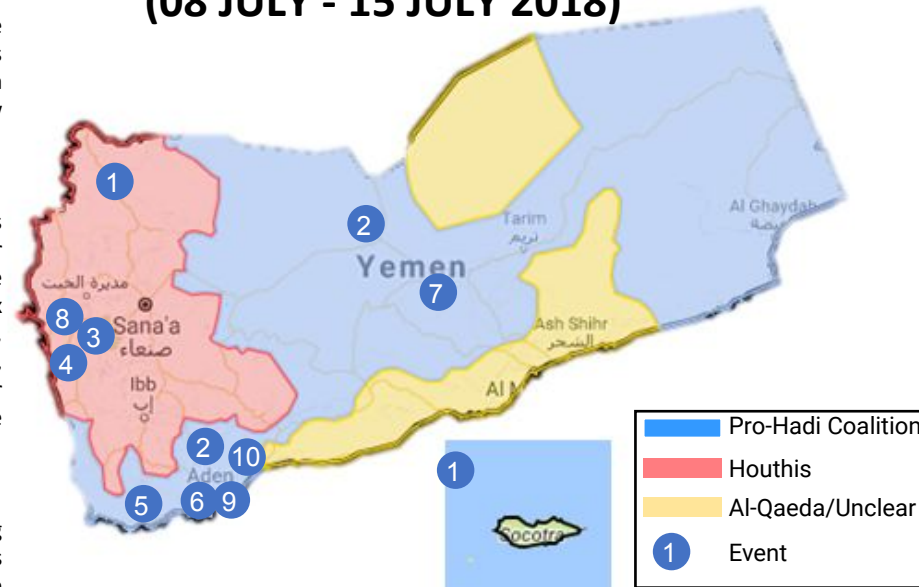
11 July 2018. UAE-backed Tihama Resistance forces in Yemen began protesting this week over non-payment of salaries in May and June. The demonstrations could deeply impact gains already made by the Saudi-led Arab coalition in the strategic Red Sea port of Hudaydah. The UAE has not commented on the issue. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/JumRpB>

4. Saudi-Led Coalition Faces Stalemate in Yemen's Main Port City

9 July 2018. A Saudi-led coalition has made no major gains in its offensive to wrest control of Yemen's Hodeidah port from the Iran-aligned Houthis, leaving it without the decisive increase in leverage it had sought against the group in U.N.-sponsored peace efforts. The coalition announced on June 20 that it had seized Hodeidah airport, but local military and aid sources told Reuters that neither side has complete control of the airport and its surrounding area, which spreads over 20 km (12 miles). A senior aid official said coalition forces had initially penetrated the perimeter of the airport. "But that was short lived for less than 24 hours and they were pushed out," the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Reuters. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/LGjX87>

5. Saudi royal pardon for soldiers in Yemen

12 July 2018. The royal pardon covers all "military men" who have taken part in "Operation Restoring Hope". The official clean slate is signed off by Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman and King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. The statement did not mention what crimes the soldiers were pardoned for, but all "military and disciplinary penalties" have been wiped off. Whether the pardon comes as a result of human rights groups' deep criticism of Saudi Arabia's military activity in Yemen is unclear. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/BYwdh4>



Assessment:

- UAE's inability to pay the salaries of the proxy fighters, to make progress in the operation and lastly the flight of the prince from one of seven emirates shows the divisions and dilemmas UAE faces. Moreover, UAE is in discord with Saudi Arabia on the structure of post-war Yemen.
- UAE will likely become more targeted by international community because of its violations on the sovereignty rights of Yemen and breach of human rights.
- STC announcement further complicates peace in the country. It also shows the country has a long way to go to attain unity even if the Houthi problem did not exist.
- There is no significant improvement on the humanitarian situation which gets on the contrary even worse.
- UN envoy's offer to bring peace to Yemen is a good reason for both the Houthi's and the Saudi-led Coalition to withdraw from the «adventure with no winners» without losing face. The sides should be more proactive in efforts to achieve peace.

6. STC announces plans to form independent southern state

10 July 2018. The Political Transitional Council of the South (STC) announced plans to form an independent southern state following its first National Assembly between July 8 and 10. The STC blamed corruption in the Hadi government for the humanitarian crisis in southern Yemen. The National Assembly announced that the STC will establish a federal system of governance in the south and demanded that all northern forces leave southern Yemen. The first being that the STC's objective is to fully restore the "sovereignty of the South State in accordance with the borders of May 21, 1990". The STC stated its support for the UN negotiations but demanded international recognition and inclusion in the negotiations. (Critical Threats) <https://goo.gl/Dnee1n>

7. Yemen Humanitarian Update Covering 12 June - 9 July 2018

10 July 2018. Eleven people were killed by an airstrike in Sa'ada, including nine children, as violence continues in several governorates. The UN verified 842 cases of the recruitment and use of boys as young as 11 years old in 2017. Also verified was the killing and maiming of 1,316 children. Commodity imports improved in May, leading to better supply and availability in most local markets but prices remained high. The Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) has completed a reserve allocation for US\$90m. (OCHA) <https://goo.gl/3LMoFg>

8. Health conditions for citizens of Yemen's key port city 'remain critical' says UN agency

11 July 2018. The World Health Organization (WHO) said that Hudaydah had registered the highest incidences of suspected cholera cases of any city; around 14 per cent of those reported nationwide since the start of the crippling epidemic, in April 2017. In addition to that highly infectious disease, there have been 209 suspected cases of diphtheria and 252 of measles. "The intensification of fighting in Hudaydah endangered not only those directly affected but also the 70 per cent of the population who depended on vital supplies, including health-care supplies, that flowed through Hudaydah port, WHO's Tarik Jašarević told journalists in Geneva on Tuesday. (Foreign Affairs) <https://goo.gl/iC8qS>

9. Yemen Demands Emirates Shut Down Prisons Where Abuses Rife

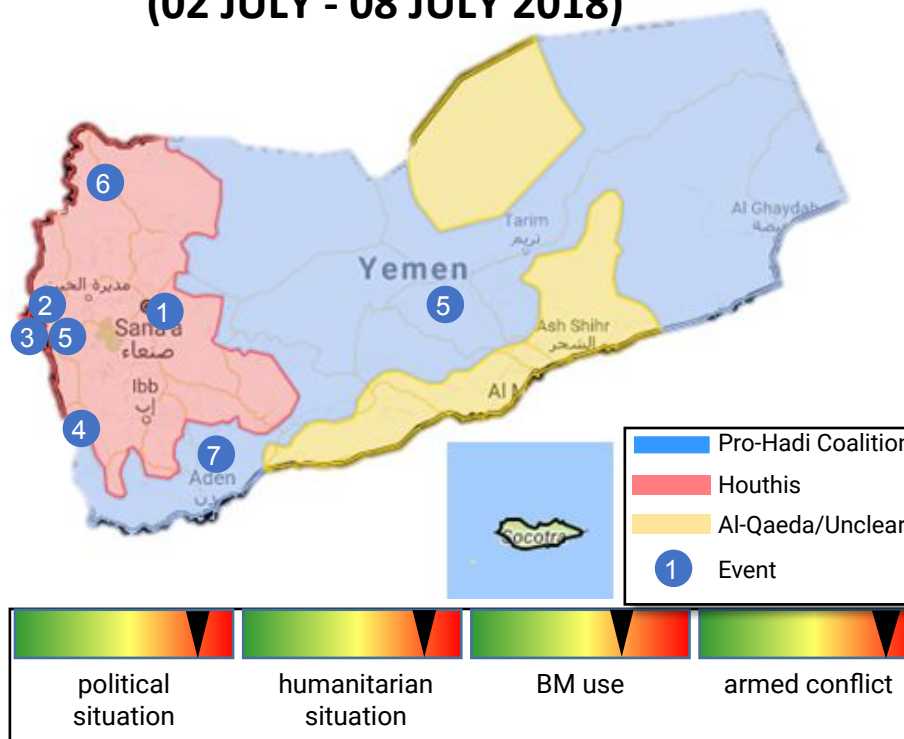
9 July 2018. Yemen's interior minister on Monday demanded the United Arab Emirates shut down or hand over secret prisons that The Associated Press reported are under the control of the UAE and its allied militias. At least 80 detainees have been freed from the facilities in recent weeks since an AP investigation detailed sexual abuse and torture at the sites. It was the first time Interior Minister Ahmed al-Maysari has gone public with the demand in talks with an Emirati official, seeming to contradict the UAE's repeated denials that it has authority over any prisons in Yemen. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/FWUDQk>

10. AI calls for probe of torture claims at Yemen detention centers.

12 July 2018. Amnesty International accused the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and allied Yemeni forces of torturing detainees at a network of secret prisons in southern Yemen and said such violations should be investigated as war crimes. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/tTxvHe>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(02 JULY - 08 JULY 2018)



Assessment:

- Last week Griffiths had told during an interview that he would present the case of managing the port of Hodeidah by UN to the Security Council. However, in the council statement there is no mention to that. Al Arabiya assertion that Houthis rejected a proposal to hand Hodeidah and its port over to UN jurisdiction may be true.
- It is likely that it will take Griffiths more shuttle diplomacy and some more time to reach an agreement (if possible) between the sides.

4. Officials Say Fighting Along Yemen's West Coast Kills 165

07 July 2018. The security officials said the battles have been concentrated over the past two days in al-Tuhytat district, south of the key port city of Hodeida. It comes as Yemenis continue to flee the west coast seeking shelter in safer areas. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media. (The New York Times) <https://goo.gl/N4qQ2h>

5. 121,000 Yemenis have fled Yemen's Hudaydah

06 July 2018. Since 1 June, more than 17,350 households – over 121,000 people – have been displaced according to the United Nations. Of them, some 10,000 displaced households – nearly 80,000 people – have been supported with “food, emergency kits, and other life-saving support, according to the United Nation’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs’ (OCHA) latest report. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/NaCQ37>

6. Saudi armour moves into northern Yemen

05 July 2018. A Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) armoured formation appears to have advanced into the northern Yemeni province of Sadah, entering the mountainous stronghold of the Iranian-backed rebel group Ansar Allah (the Houthis) for the first time in more than three years of fighting. (Jane's 360) <https://goo.gl/hvYWwf>

7. UN agency says UAE soldiers tortured detainees in Yemen: report

03 July 2018. A number of Yemeni detainees have been subjected to ill-treatment, torture and sexual abuse by United Arab Emirates (UAE) soldiers, the UN human rights office in Geneva said. "We have engaged with the UAE government on this issue and requested access to UAE-run prisons in the country but to date we have not been granted access," Liz Throssell, UN right office spokeswoman told Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency on Tuesday. (Al Jazeera) <https://goo.gl/KM5xQr>

1. U.N. envoy says Yemen's parties offer 'concrete ideas' for peace.

04 July 2018. Griffiths has been conducting shuttle diplomacy in search of a political solution that would avert an all-out military assault on the Houthi-held port city of Hodeidah by a Saudi-led coalition that entered Yemen’s conflict in 2015 to try to reinstate the exiled, internationally recognized government. Griffiths gave no details on the “concrete ideas”, and there was no immediate comment from the two sides. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/7EcLvo>

2. Battle for Hodeidah: Glimmer of hope in UN talks to save vital Yemeni port

6 July 2018. While no details have been made public, the Saudi-based *al Arabiya* reported on Friday that the Houthis rejected a proposal to hand Hodeidah and its port over to UN jurisdiction, instead suggesting joint management, but in principal verbally agreed to a lasting ceasefire.

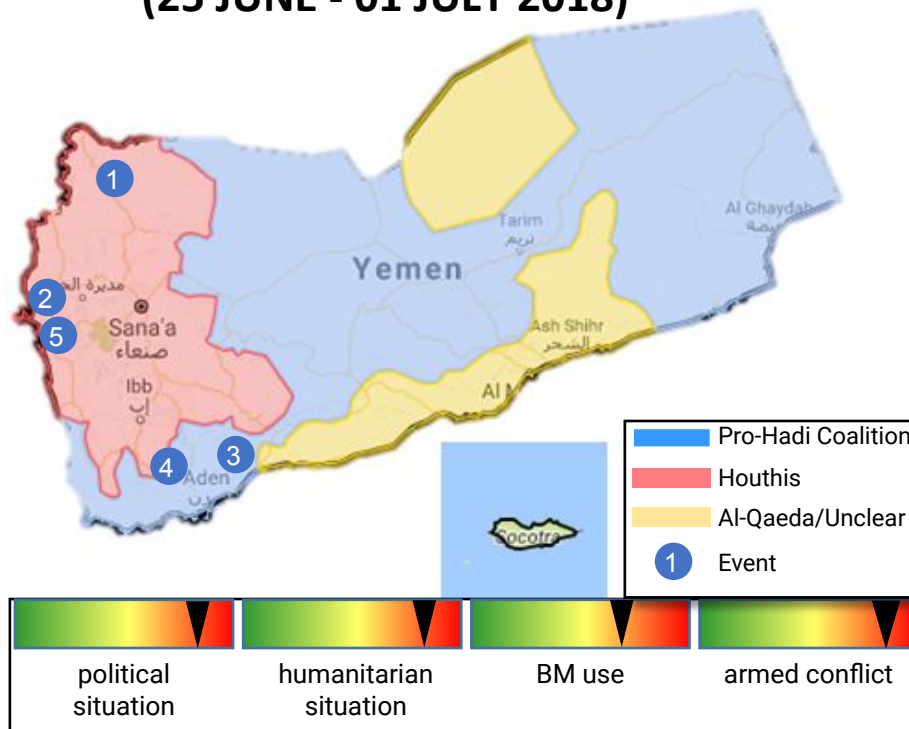
While at least one Houthi negotiator later said no significant progress had been made, the visit to Sanaa nonetheless marks the first high level UN meeting with Houthi leadership since Yemen’s civil war broke out in 2015. (The Independent) <https://goo.gl/eRHpiu>

3. UN backs envoy's efforts to start new Yemen peace talks

5 July 2018. The Security Council on Thursday gave strong backing to efforts by U.N. Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to start new talks between Yemen’s warring parties. The council issued a statement, following a closed-door briefing by Griffiths, reaffirming that “a political solution remains the only way to end the conflict.” Council members said they “encouraged all parties to engage constructively with his efforts to take forward a political solution.” (The Washington Post) <https://goo.gl/LrL1eR>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(25 JUNE - 01 JULY 2018)



Assessment:

- The operational pause last week, as claimed by Emirati minister, was used by the Saudi-led coalition to consolidate gains, by Houthis to dig in and prepare positions and by Griffiths to conduct shuttle diplomacy. The parties have been giving statements that show keenness for negotiations. Yet, the meanings attributed to ceasefire and peace are completely different and fuzzy. Griffiths is following a gradual approach to first stop fight and then bring sides to the table. The UNSC offer and the positions of the parties will be more clear in the coming weeks.
- If Coalition insistence on withdrawal of Houthis from Al Hodeidah cannot be conditioned, this may lead to an intense urban conflict in Al Hodeidah, where fighting parties (now totaling to 1 million in numbers) will probably suffer more casualties than ever.

4. Assault on Yemen's Hodeida halted as UN pursues talks

1 July 2018. Griffiths met with Hadi in the southern city of Aden on Wednesday and is reported to be pushing for the Houthis to cede control of Hodeida to the United Nations. The rebels have said they may be willing to share control of Hodeida's port with the UN but say their forces must remain in the docks and the rest of the Red Sea city. Analysts have ruled out major concessions by the rebels in Hodeida without talks on the rest of Yemen's territory. "The Houthis will not make concessions unless they are guaranteed the upper hand in central and northern Yemen," said Yemeni analyst Najib Ghallab. Both the UAE and the Hadi government have held firm to their refusal of anything short of a full withdrawal of the Houthi rebels from Hodeida. (AFP) <https://bit.ly/2NcqbRP>

5. De-escalation of fighting in Hodeida is key to 'long-overdue' restart of Yemen peace talks: UN envoy

28 June 2018. In an exclusive interview with UN News, Special Envoy Griffiths pointed out that his "principal and over-riding responsibility" was to bring about negotiations to end the war. "Hodeida is an extraordinary and important issue," he said, "but it is not more important than the issue of an overall political solution." Confirming that avoiding an attack on Hodeida is one of his top priorities, Mr. Griffiths said that it was clear from discussions with all parties that the solution to the Hodeida crisis was "tied up intrinsically with a restart of political negotiations". He cited as an achievement towards the political solution, an offer to give the United Nations a lead role in managing the Hodeida port. Both the Government of Yemen and the Ansar Allah leadership of the Houthi rebels have accepted this provision, dependent on an overall ceasefire in the governorate, he said. (UN) <https://bit.ly/2IG8ihN>

1. Yemen: 70 Houthi prisoners freed by Saudi, UAE

26 June 2018. The Saudi-led coalition released 70 Houthi prisoners in exchange for some 40 prisoners held by the Houthis. The deal insinuates that both warring parties are on negotiating terms, ideal for a United Nations backed political process. (Middle East Monitor) <https://bit.ly/2KlbAWB>

2. Saudi coalition unlikely to drop demand for Houthi withdrawal

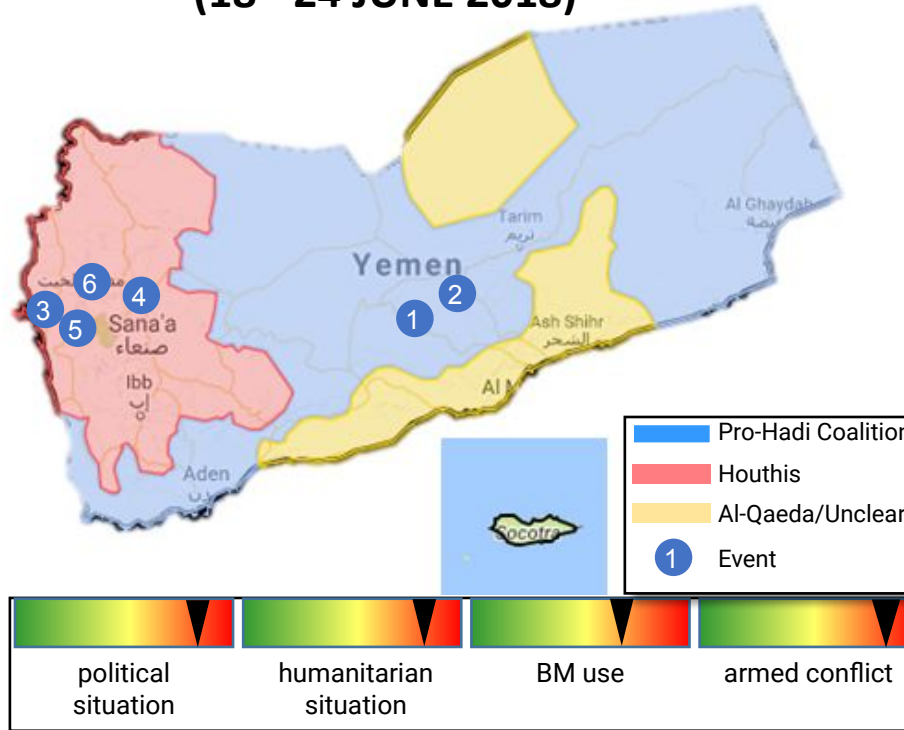
29 June 2018. The Saudi-led military coalition fighting the Houthis in Yemen said on Friday it would welcome a political deal to end the conflict but indicated it would keep insisting on a complete withdrawal by the Houthis from territory seized since 2014. The Houthis have so far not yielded any territory they seized willingly. U.N. talks on a political deal collapsed in 2016 when Hadi's government walked out after the Houthis refused to quit Yemen's three main cities, including Sanaa and Hodeidah. (Reuters) <https://reut.rs/2tK9ncW>

3. Emirati Minister Declared Operational Pause over Hodeida Campaign to Give Chance to UN Efforts

1 July 2018. Anwar Gargash, the Emirati Minister of State for Foreign Affairs tweeted: "To clarify the Coalition has paused the advance on the city & port on June 23 for a week to allow the UN envoy to secure an unconditional withdrawal from Hodeida. We continue our pressure on the parameter & await results of the Envoy's visit to Sana. Failing these patient efforts we believe that continued military pressure will ultimately bring the liberation of Hodeida & force the Houthis to engage seriously in negotiations."(Twitter) <https://twitter.com/AnwarGargash>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(18 - 24 JUNE 2018)



Assessment:

- Griffith's efforts should yield result at this most crucial time of the crisis. Despite vocal objections and protest by international organizations to include UN and Amnesty International, great powers like US, UK and France have not sounded any real objection. Developments in Yemen have a potential to trigger a long lasting sectarian war in broader Middle East which will endure for decades.
- There is no swift result in contemporary operational environments to include urban areas. Coalition's promise of a swift victory is void. If Houthis do not accept unconditional retreat from the port and the city (so far this has been the case), the operation will evolve into a quagmire claiming the lives of many civilians and combatants from both sides and bringing both Coalition and its supporters more under criticism.
- Human rights violations do not cease to come from Yemen. Despite denial, those officials committing such crimes against humanity and war crimes will be held responsible when the dust settles despite current impunity due to the heat of conflict.

4. Yemen's Houthis indicate willingness to hand over port to U.N.

22 June 2018. Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis have indicated they would be willing to hand over management of Hodeidah port to the United Nations, a potential breakthrough in a conflict that has caused the world's worst humanitarian crisis, sources familiar with the efforts said. A U.S. official said the United States was urging the Saudis and Emiratis to accept the deal. A diplomatic source at the United Nations said the coalition had informed Griffiths it would study the proposal. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/TTc8R6>

5. Fighting moves closer to center of Yemen's main port city

24 June 2018. Yemen's Houthis deployed additional forces in the main port city of Hodeidah on Sunday as a Saudi-led military coalition moved closer to the city center in the largest offensive of the war, raising U.N. fears of a humanitarian catastrophe. Coalition forces seized the airport on Wednesday and have been consolidating their hold in the area as U.N. efforts continued to reach a political deal that would avert an assault on the port, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/ab7nE8>

6. UK 'hides extent of arms sales to Saudi Arabia'

23 June 2018. Hundreds of millions of pounds worth of British-made missiles and bombs have been sold to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen under an opaque licensing system that makes tracking arms sales more difficult. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which uses open sources to measure the quantities of arms exported each year, estimates that, since 2013, around 100 British-made Storm Shadow missiles worth £80m, 2,400 Paveway IV bombs worth £150m, and 1,000 Brimstone missiles worth £100m have been sold to Saudi Arabia. (The Guardian) <https://bit.ly/2toUMDz>

1. UAE: We will continue assault on Yemen until 'unconditional withdrawal' of Houthis

19 June 2018. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash announced that "the forces are now pressuring to help the UN envoy in his last chance to convince the Houthis to unconditionally withdraw from the city and avoid any confrontations there." UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, left the Yemeni capital Sana'a yesterday without progressing talks with the Houthis during his three-day visit. The sources also said that the Houthis refused to withdraw from the port of Hudaydah and hand it over to the UN, and asked for more time to reconsider the UN envoy's proposal. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/xbaegn>

2. Human rights workers at risk in Yemen

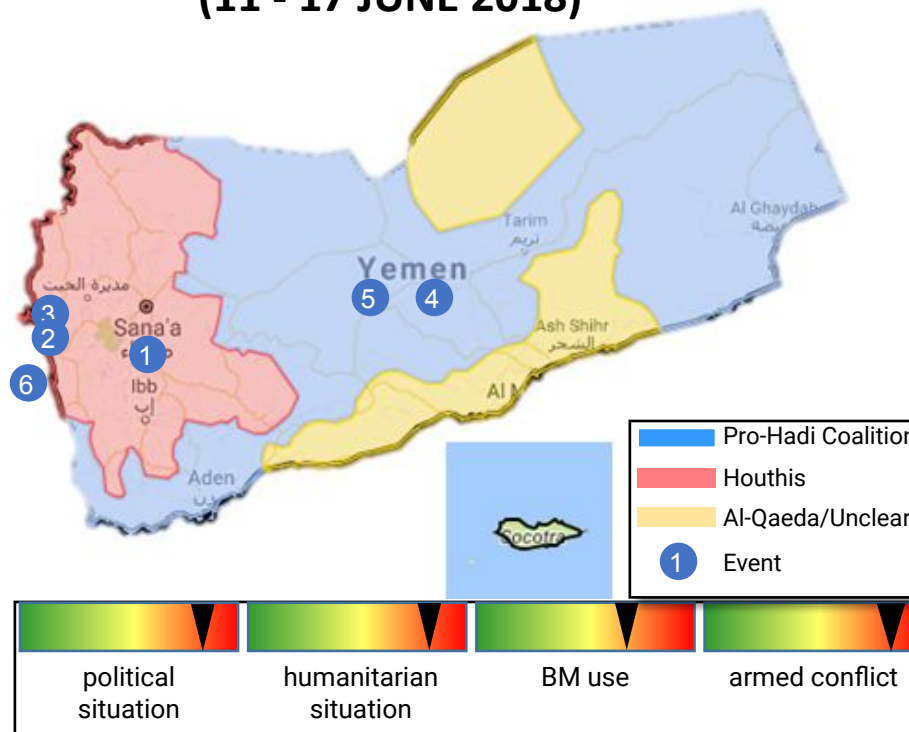
20 June 2018. Eighteen human rights groups and civil liberty organisations, including Amnesty International, have warned the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen about the arbitrary detention of their Yemeni colleagues. Radhya Almutawakel and Abdulrasheed Alfaqih, two human rights defenders with the Mwatana Organisation for Human Rights, were detained unlawfully on 18 June by authorities operating in the government-controlled Seiyun City Airport in the war-torn country. The two human rights defenders were released yesterday following mounting pressure by human rights groups worldwide. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/vkFLMx>

3. Amnesty International Publishes Report Entitled "Stranglehold"

22 June 2018. The Saudis, under a deal brokered with the UN, are permitted additional inspections to those carried out by the UN, and if necessary can divert boats to a different port for full inspection. Amnesty said in a new 22-page report, entitled Stranglehold, that since 2015 the coalition had repeatedly tightened its blockade of the two Houthi-controlled ports of Saleef and Hodeidah, seriously impeding Yemenis' access to food. (The Guardian) <https://bit.ly/2uAGn2>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(11 - 17 JUNE 2018)



1. UN envoy in Yemen for emergency talks on Hodeida

The UN envoy for Yemen arrived in the rebel-held capital Sanaa on Saturday for talks on the key aid port of Hodeida where rebel fighters are battling a regional coalition. Martin Griffiths is expected to propose to rebel leaders that they cede control of the Red Sea port to a UN-supervised committee to avoid further fighting with advancing government troops which are backed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/tF17Pc>

2. Government troops 'capture Hudaydah airport'

Yemeni forces backed by a Saudi-led coalition say they have captured the airport of the main port city of Hudaydah from Houthi rebels. The military said engineers were now checking the surrounding area for mines. However, the Houthi-controlled Saba news agency denied the airport had been lost and some reports suggest clashes there are continuing. (BBC) <https://goo.gl/kyQnxs>

3. French special forces on the ground in Yemen

French special forces are present on the ground in Yemen with forces from the United Arab Emirates, French newspaper Le Figaro reported on Saturday, citing two military sources. The newspaper gave no further information about their activities. The Defence Ministry was not immediately available for comment, but its usual policy is not to comment on special forces' operations. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/3wNf32>

4. UNSC urges Yemen warring parties to keep Hudaida port open

The UN Security Council has called on all sides involved in fighting over the Yemeni city of Hudaida to keep its port open to allow the delivery of aid and other essentials. During a closed-door meeting, members of the Security Council expressed their "deep concern about the risks to the humanitarian situation" (Al Jazeera) <https://goo.gl/TqMZsw>

5. US rejects UAE request for support to capture Yemeni port city

The US government rejected the coalition's request for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support as well as the use of an American minesweeper vessel to help clear the area of Houthi mines, a senior UAE official told CNN. In recent days several members of Congress have publicly criticized the Saudi-led effort to capture Hodeidah, which is seen as a vital lifeline for supplies for war-torn Yemen. Some estimates have said the operation could put hundreds of thousands of lives at risk. (CNN) <https://goo.gl/3GrhnX>

6. Battles Rage Around International Airport in Strategic Yemeni City

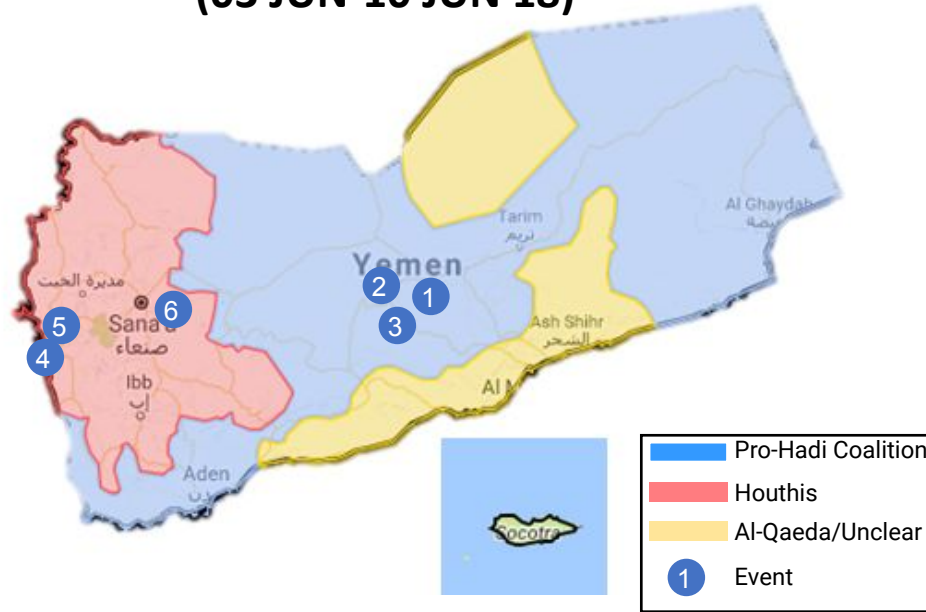
Emirati officials say they have been planning the assault on Al Hudaydah for two years, and are confident they can take the port quickly and without disrupting the flow of humanitarian supplies. France stepped in, offering to send teams of specialists to clear the waters around the port of mines, Emirati officials said on Thursday. But on Friday the French Defense Ministry said that it was considering mine-sweeping operations only after the military operation is over, and emphasized that France was not part of the coalition. (The New York Times) <https://nyti.ms/2ym8EDm>

Assessment:

- UN envoy Griffiths' timely interference and his credibility as opposed to his predecessor offers a good opportunity to broker a deal between sides towards de-escalation. Despite Emirati allegations it is clear that an urban operation revolving around a city of 600.000 inhabitants cannot be accomplished quickly. This is even more clear where the Coalition is built upon untrained Yemeni contingents lacking operational discipline and brotherly relations with each other.
- US and France stance shows no direct endorsement of the operation. If the famine, widespread cholera, already weak infrastructure and the fact that 70 percent of the international aid enters the country from this hub are altogether taken into consideration, the initiative has the potential to turn into a protracted urban conflict consuming more thousands Yemeni lives en masse. This would also render those leaders responsible in front of international criminal court.

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(03 JUN-10 JUN 18)



Assessment:

- Both epidemics and famine will likely accelerate the process of going to peace talks. However, it is still needed pressure and even sanctions from the international community to conflicting parties and their supporters to reconcile.
- Even the realization of disarmament, first step of the draft peace document, may ease a bit who suffers from the humanitarian crisis and conflict itself.

4. U.N. says assault on Yemen's Hodeidah port could cost 250,000 lives. “A military attack or siege on Hodeidah will impact hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians,” she said. the United Nations humanitarian coordinator in the country, Lise Grande, said in a statement. (MIDDLE EAST MONITOR) <https://goo.gl/amHApq>

5. Oxfam warns of famine disaster Oxfam warned on Wednesday that Yemen is “one step away from famine” as fighting around the Port of Hudaydah threatened to cut off essential supplies.

“If this vital route for supplying food, fuel and medicine is blocked, the result will be more hunger, more people without healthcare and more families burying their loved ones,”

Mohsin Siddiqui, country director of the UK-based group, said in a press statement.

“There has been far too much destruction, disease and death. The international community needs to put pressure on warring parties to end the fighting and return to peace negotiations.” (MIDDLE EAST MONITOR) <https://goo.gl/Do1qUj>

6. Three dead in south of Saudi Arabia from missile attack: state media. Three civilians were killed in the south of Saudi Arabia from a missile launched from Yemen by the Houthi movement, said Saudi state-owned Al Ekhbariya TV on Saturday night. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/yZhG2aj>

1. WHO: Cholera ‘continues to threaten millions’ in Yemen. The rainy season runs from mid-April to the end of August, which further increase the risk of transmission of cholera already threatening millions in Yemen. WHO said in a statement on its official website on 4 June: “As the third wave of cholera looms upon armed conflict-ridden Yemen, the uptake of this crucial public health tool is a vital and substantial prevention measure in the fight against this epidemic. In addition to conducting vaccination campaigns, an integrated comprehensive cholera outbreak response operational plan has been developed in cooperation with the health authorities and collaboration with health partners to implement activities regarding early detection, referral, case investigation and management, water and sanitation, health education, promotion and food hygiene,”

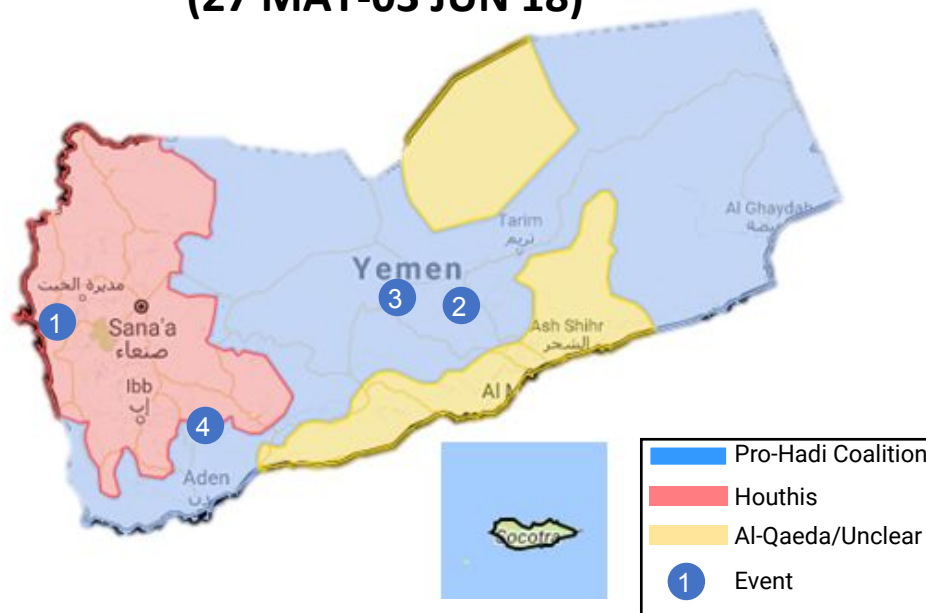
“The cumulative total from 27 April 2017 to 20 May 2018 is 1,100,720 suspected cholera cases and 2,291 associated deaths, (CFR 0.21%), 1119 have been confirmed by culture. (MIDDLE EAST MONITOR) <https://goo.gl/P8XBT1>

2. Egypt's army chief of staff discusses military cooperation with Yemeni counterpart in Cairo. Farid and Al-Aqeeli also spoke about the latest developments in the Middle East as well as regional and international efforts exerted to resolve the Yemeni crisis. During the meeting, Farid stressed Egypt's support for the Yemeni people and for the country to maintain its unity, stability and integrity. (AHARAMONLINE) <https://goo.gl/oTAWq8>

3. Yemen peace plan sees ceasefire, Houthis abandoning missiles. “The intention is to link

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(27 MAY-03 JUN 18)



Assessment:

- The friction among southern parties (Pro Hadi, STC and others) have the potential to deteriorate the situation in the country even after a negotiation between Houthis and Saudi led coalition.
- Southern friction seems another challenge for U.N. special envoy to Yemen.

5. Iran Willing to Push for Ceasefire in Yemen Talks With European Powers.

Iran and European powers have made good progress in talks to end the conflict in Yemen as Tehran has shown itself willing to push for a ceasefire and ease the humanitarian crisis there, according to officials on both sides. To shield Iran from new U.S. sanctions, the European powers have been pressing Tehran to be less aggressive in the region, including in the civil war in Yemen.

Washington, Paris and London all back Riyadh in its intervention in Yemen and all supply weapons and intelligence to Saudi Arabia.

Araqchi, Iran's senior nuclear negotiator, said Iran and European powers will meet in mid-June in Brussels to further discuss the Yemen conflict.

France, which has stressed the importance of supplementing the nuclear deal with substantive talks on other issues, is due to co-host an international conference on Yemen with Saudi Arabia in Paris in June to assess aid needs for the country and possibly contribute to reviving U.N.-backed peace talks.

However, it is unclear how talks between Iran and the European parties of the deal would fit into the U.N. Yemen mediator Martin Griffiths' efforts.

Griffiths said in April he wanted to present a plan for negotiations within two months to end the conflict, but warned that any new military offensives could "take peace off the table."

1. Death toll tops 100 in fight for key Yemen port.
Medics in the southern Aden governorate, where the Yemeni government is based, said they had received the bodies of 52 people, including 20 soldiers, between Friday and Saturday, bringing the toll to at least 110 killed in clashes since Wednesday. (Dailymail) <https://goo.gl/fQRBRf>

2. Pressing for Peace in Yemen: An Envoy's Challenge.
U.N. special envoy to Yemen is racing to stay ahead of a military escalation (a Saudi-led coalition ground assault on the strategic port of Hodeidah, Assured of a fresh supply of PGMs could increase the operational tempo of Coalition's air campaign, the prospect that Houthis ballistic missiles launched deep into a heavily populated area in Saudi territory, maritime drones used by Houthis to attack commercial traffic and coalition warships plying the waters off Yemen's coast) by any one of the belligerents, which would almost certainly derail his efforts to rejuvenate the moribund peace process. (AGSIW) <https://goo.gl/PiFH6s>

3. Saudi-led coalition assault on Yemen port would be disaster - aid agencies.

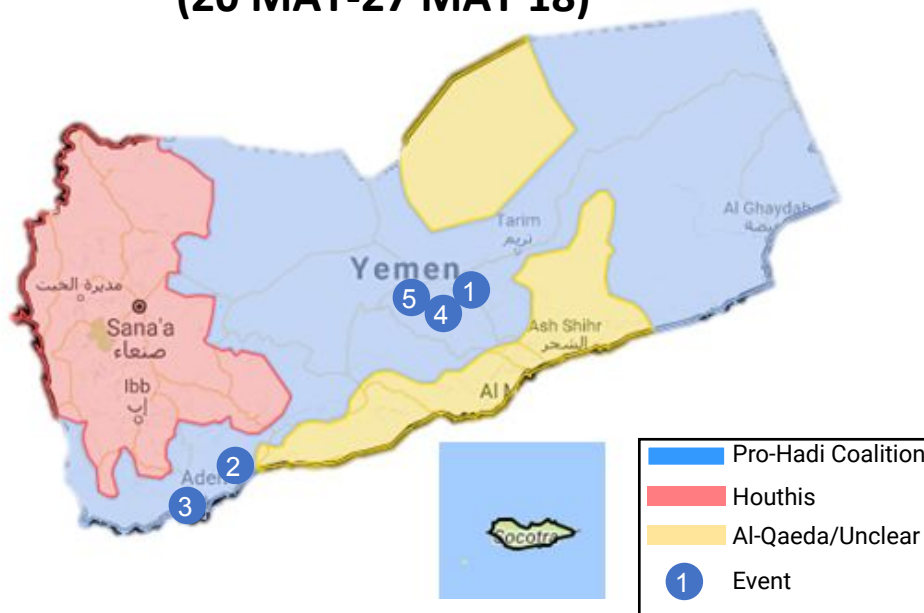
Yemen traditionally imports 90 percent of its food, mainly through Hodeidah where U.N. inspectors check ships to ensure they do not carry weapons. "The coalition ground forces are now at the doorstep of this heavily-fortified, heavily-mined port city," Jan Egeland, secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council, told Reuters. "Thousands of civilians are fleeing from the outskirts of Hodeidah which is now a battle zone." <https://goo.gl/YRsTLP>

4. 'War of billboards' rages in southern Yemen.

A less publicized conflict is raging on in Yemen's port city of Aden between the internationally recognized government and southern separatists (STC). "This is a conflict between two rival projects: one calling for

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(20 MAY-27 MAY 18)



Assessment:

- To continue its influence in the region, UAE will likely try every opportunity to keep its military presence in Yemen.
- The increasing efforts on Humanitarian Crisis (Geneva meeting held last April and scheduled Paris Conference) and the meetings held by UN envoy with the conflicting parties could be seen as the signs of peace talks on the horizon.
- Despite the increasing efforts on Humanitarian Crisis, the humanitarian situation remains unchanged.

4. Pompeo Says Precision-Guided Missiles, as in Yemen, Cut Risks to Civilians. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday that foreign sales of precision-guided missiles to nations such as Saudi Arabia, which has been criticized for killing civilians during its campaign in Yemen, can help to reduce civilian deaths. The Trump administration has asked Congress to review the sale of more than 120,000 precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia and the UAE. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/R6Zmz6>

5. Human suffering at risk of further deterioration, warns UN aid chief. More than 22 million people are dependent on humanitarian assistance or protection, of whom around 8.4 million are severely food insecure and at risk of starvation.

"If conditions do not improve, a further 10 million people will fall into this category by the end of the year," cautioned Mark Lowcock, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, in a statement. The threat of a resurgence in deadly cholera, together with watery diarrhoea also looms, which infected over 600,000 people, he added. (UN News) <https://goo.gl/iKJwTV>

6. Paris Conference Over Yemen Discusses Clear Mechanisms to Deliver Aids. Yemeni Minister of Local Administration and chairman of Higher Committee for Relief in Yemen Abdul Raqeeb Fateh told that the scheduled Paris conference for the reconstruction of Yemen would discuss clear mechanisms for the delivery of humanitarian aids to the entire Yemeni territories, based on the announcement made by foreign ministers of the Saudi-led Arab coalition. (AL AWSAT) <https://goo.gl/j2UHMC>

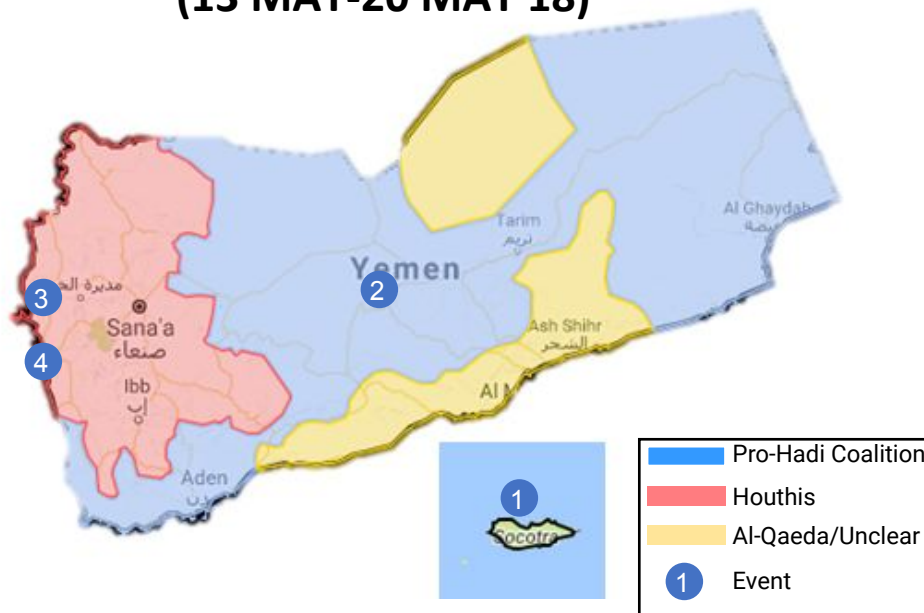
1. Houthis 'Softening,' But UAE Minister Says Yemen Security Could Still Require Foreign Troops. Ultimately, he argued, the defeat of the Houthis will not necessarily end the need for Saudi-led forces in Yemen, and whether a new Yemeni government is capable of counterterror operations. (Defenseone) <https://goo.gl/8ogQYT>

2. Yemen's Interior Minister: Our country is occupied by UAE. Yemen's Interior Minister, Ahmed Al-Misri, said that members of the government cannot enter or leave Aden without permission from the United Arab Emirates. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/y2MnJx>

3. Yemen Appoints New Minister of Foreign Affairs. Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi has appointed Khaled al-Yamani as foreign minister, replacing Abdel-Malek al-Mekhlafi. Mekhlafi will become an adviser to the president, the statement said. Yemeni ambassador to the United States Ahmed Awadh bin Mubarak will take up Yamani's position as Yemen's representative to the United Nations while also remaining in his current role. (NY Times) <https://goo.gl/tQ8Yoa>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(13 MAY-20 MAY 18)



Assessment:

The Flee of tens of thousands from Hudaydah and the amphibious assault of UAE to Al Fazah - 80 km south of Hudaydah Port- are likely the signs of coming intensive assault to strategically important Houthi-held Hudaydah, the largest port city of the country. A joint operation launched to city supported by Saudi-led coalition will likely reach a local success in the conflict. This success will most likely weaken Houthis flexibility in peace talks when both sides come to the peace table.

3. Houthi threat to target UAE and Sudan with ballistic missiles credible, despite limited capabilities. Houthi military spokesperson Brigadier-General Sharaf Ghalib Luqman stated in an interview released to Houthi-controlled Yemeni media that Sudan and UAE were now on the militia's target list in its ballistic missile campaign.

He directly linked the threat to military developments recorded on the Yemeni Red Sea coastline front, where coalition-backed forces have made significant advances in the offensive aimed at capturing the Houthi-controlled port city of Hodeidah since early May. (JANES)

<https://goo.gl/5Q4xiN>

4. UAE carries out amphibious assault in Yemen

The United Arab Emirates' (UAE's) military had carried out an amphibious assault in Yemen called Operation 'Red Thunder', the official WAM news agency reported.

It identified the area where the assault took place as Al-Fazah, around 80 km south of Al-Hudaydah: a port city controlled by the Iranian-backed rebel group Ansar Allah (Houthis).

UAE-backed forces are currently advancing towards Al-Hudaydah, with WAM reporting a day earlier that the port of Hima had been captured. (JANES)

<https://goo.gl/na1TeG>

1. Yemen PM: Crisis over UAE deployment to Socotra over. 14 May 2018 Ahmed Obeid bin Daghr, Yemen's prime minister, said "the crisis on the island is over" and that the Yemeni flag was "flying above our sea and airports again". The resolution of the weeks-long dispute came a day after Saudi Arabia deployed troops to the strategic island and signed a deal with the UAE to return the island's sea and airports to Yemeni forces. (AL JAZEERA)

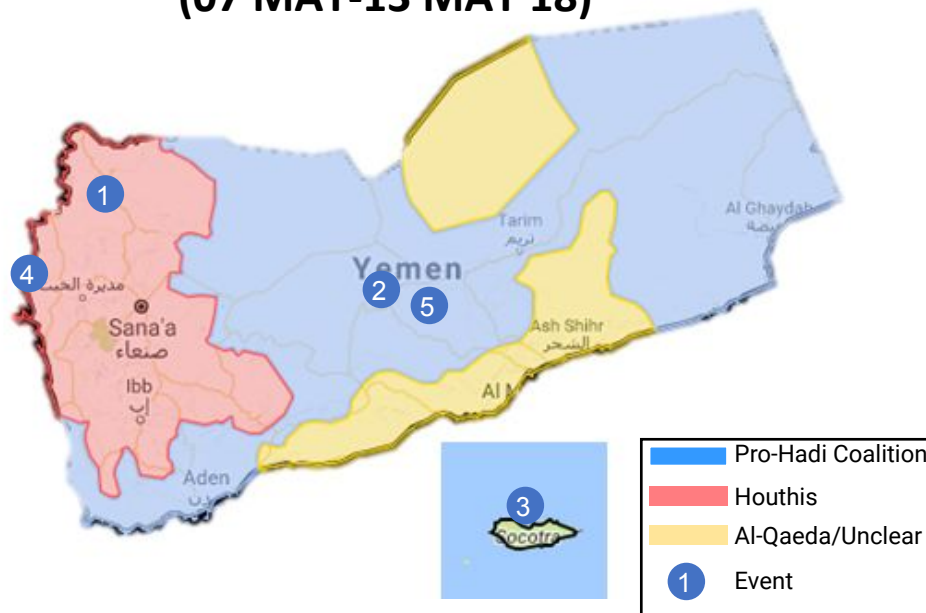
<https://goo.gl/bDLirp>

2. Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Martin Griffiths. The Secretary committed to supporting the Special Envoy's efforts and urging international partners to do the same. The Secretary and the Special Envoy agreed on the urgency of de-escalation and dialogue. The Secretary and the Special Envoy expressed hope that all sides can work toward a comprehensive political agreement that brings peace, prosperity, and security to Yemen. (U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE)

<https://goo.gl/5Yk7y9>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(07 MAY-13 MAY 18)



Assessment:

- Trump's withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal will negatively affect the Iran's support to Houthis in Yemen. This will likely lead to easier advance of Pro-Hadi forces in Hudaydah and Taiz region where the clashes between Houthis and Pro-Hadi forces taking place.
- Although the Humanitarian Situation continues to worsen, it is still manageable by the Humanitarian Cluster in the Region.

3. Situation on the Yemeni Island of Socotra. The United States is closely following the situation on the Yemeni island of Socotra and engaging with all parties to reinforce Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the need for de-escalation and dialogue. Political dialogue is necessary for the Republic of Yemen Government to rightfully ensure the safety and security of its residents on Socotra and throughout the rest of the country. The Socotra archipelago has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. The Yemeni people, along with their unique cultural and natural heritage, have already suffered immeasurably as a result of the ongoing conflict in Yemen. Yemen cannot afford further divisions. The United States calls on all parties to the conflict to focus on and embrace the UN-led political process, with the unified aim of a safe, secure, and prosperous Yemen. (US Department of State)

<https://goo.gl/D4KtcY>

4. Explosion damages vessel carrying wheat to Yemen. An explosion has damaged a Turkish vessel carrying wheat to Yemen's Houthi-controlled port of Saleef, with varying accounts attributing the incident on Thursday to an unexplained blast aboard the ship or a possible missile strike. A separate source connected with the shipment said the vessel was carrying 50,000 tons of Russian milling wheat, adding that it was unclear if it was hit by a missile or due to an internal blast, while anchored about 70 miles off Saleef, which is just north of the port of Hodeidah on the Red Sea. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/g2P7Wh>

5. Humanitarian situation continues to worsen. Over the last six months, the intensification of the conflict in Yemen's western coast has prompted the displacement of 100,000 new IDPs in areas reached by humanitarian partners based in the Aden hub. The new IDPs have mostly originated from conflict areas of Al Hudaydah, Taizz and Shabwah governorates. (UNOCHA Yemen Weekly Update) (reliefweb) <https://goo.gl/LR37jK>

1. Missile launched at Saudi capital, Houthis claim responsibility. The official Saudi press agency said in a statement that the Saudi Royal Air Force intercepted a ballistic missile launched from the Saada province of Yemen by Houthi-backed militia. Spokesperson Colonel Turki al-Maliki said the missile was directly targeting civilian areas. Maliki said that the hostile action proves the continued involvement of Iran in supporting the Houthi militias.

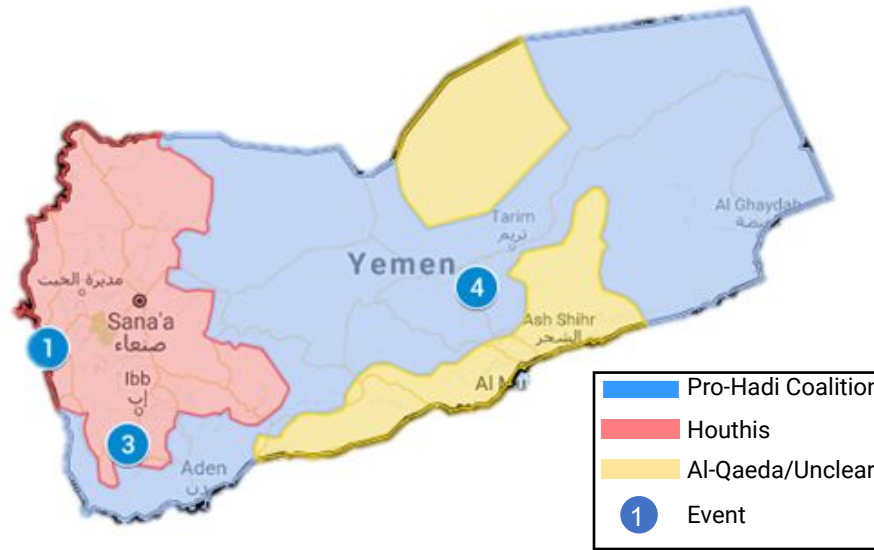
Maliki added that the attempted missile strike was an explicit violation of two UN resolutions and was a threat to the security of Saudi Arabia and international security. (RT) <https://goo.gl/YLaK7n>

2. UN: 60% of Yemen casualties caused by Saudi coalition.

This month, the Saudi-led coalition executed air strikes in the Presidential Palace based in Sana'a during work hours. The briefing note declared that it "doubts" the extent in which the principles of precaution, distinction and proportionality prescribed in international war law are being applied to avoid civilian deaths. Between 26 March 2015 and 10 May 2018, the UN documented a total of "16,432 civilian casualties – 6,385 dead and 10,047 injured". Of these, 10,185 resulted from Saudi-led coalition air strikes, it added. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/t6NyVc>

YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(30 APR-06 MAY 18)



Assessment:

- The military act of UAE in the strategic and UNESCO World Heritage site of Socotra Island will likely weaken the coalition ties and escalate diplomatic tension, even if not military, between UAE and Saudi Arabia.
- Contrary the statements of US officials that military aid to the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen is limited to logistics and intelligence, and is not related to combat, US will likely support Saudi-led coalition with military operations as Saudi Arabia demands.

He added that “the handover was carried out under the supervision of Governor Amin Mahmoud and the security committee in the province. The areas under the Yemeni government authority in Taiz have become one secure region under one command”. (MEMO) (<https://goo.gl/n8abR8>)

4. US Army Special Forces Secretly Help Saudis Combat Threat From Yemen Rebels. 03 May 2018 The Army commandos are helping locate and destroy caches of ballistic missiles and launch sites that Houthi rebels in Yemen are using to attack Riyadh and other Saudi cities. Details of the Green Beret operation, which has not been previously disclosed, were provided to The New York Times by United States officials and European diplomats. (The New York Times) (<https://goo.gl/Pi1kM9>)

5. UAE forces 'occupy' sea and airports on Yemen's Socotra. 04 May 2018 Condemning the move as an "act of aggression", the official said UAE soldiers also blocked Ahmed Obeid bin Daghr, Yemen's prime minister, and 10 ministers from leaving Socotra on Friday.

Saudi Arabia has pledged to send investigators to Socotra, according to the official. (ALJAZEERA) <https://goo.gl/GUBkeH>

1. Houthi political leader Saleh al-Sammad 'killed in air raid.' 26 April 2018 Yemen's rebel Houthi movement says a senior political figure has been killed in a Saudi-led coalition air strike. Saleh al-Sammad, head of the Supreme Political Council, was "martyred" in the city of Hudaydah last Thursday, the group's overall leader announced. (BBC) (<https://goo.gl/P3uzLV>)

2. Egypt calls for political solution in Yemen. 29 April 2018 The Egyptian foreign ministry called for a political solution that saves Yemen from slipping into long term war. The ministry made the remarks in a statement issued after the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shukri, received his Yemeni counterpart, Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi, in Cairo. Shukri stressed that “there is no military solution to the Yemeni crisis” adding that Egypt will always be ready to provide political support for peace efforts as well as United Nations mediation efforts. (MEMO) (<https://goo.gl/ihftFr>)

3. Yemen forces take over official sites in Taiz. 01 May 2018 A spokesman for the Yemeni army in Taiz, Colonel Abdul Basset Al-Bahr told the Anadolu Agency that “the Yemeni police, public security forces, special security forces and presidential protection forces took over the Taiz military headquarters, the tax office, the finance office, and the post office”.