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Model UN

On the Civil War in Yemen 2020

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Introduction

This text is a manual for a Model UN on the subject of the civil war in Yemen. The civil war broke out when Yemen's president resigned in the wake of the so-called Arab spring, and a conflict arose over control of power between Yemen's government and the Houthi rebels. In 2020, the UN described the long-standing conflict in Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The Houthi rebels control a large part of Yemen and the civil war threatens Yemen's civilian population's access to food. At the same time, the involvement of other states in recent years has intensified the conflict.¹

This Model UN is designed for high school students as the main target group. During the Model UN, participants will represent the fifteen member states of the UN Security Council and discuss three topics concerning the conflict in Yemen. The topics on the agenda are the duty to protect civilians in the conflict, reconciliation and justice, and humanitarian access. The goal of the Model UN is to reach an agreement on one or several resolutions for these different topics that can be adopted by the Security Council.

This Model UN can be performed either in its entirety or as a smaller version, a role-play; depending on how much time you have at your disposal. If you want to complete the role-play, all necessary information is summarised in the boxes marked in blue.

This Model UN focuses on what the UN Security Council can do when the individual state, as a result of civil war, cannot guarantee the security and human rights of its residents. The Model UN is based on the situation at the end of August 2020 and the roles of the participating states are described based on the states' positions in the Security Council at that time. The role-play participants should attempt to manage the conflict as it was in August 2020.

The manual is divided into seven parts. Part two contains instructions for the Model UN. Part three provides a brief background to the conflict and the current situation in Yemen. Part four describes the three topics to be debated during the Model UN. Part five contains the Country Positions that the participants must use. Finally, part six contains an example that shows the correct format for writing a draft resolution, and part seven contains a number of sources for further reading.

This material was developed in 2018 by the United Nations Association of Sweden in collaboration with the text's author Ragnar Fahlin Strömberg and with financial assistance from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The material was updated in 2020 by editor Molly Brander. The UN Association of Sweden is a NGO that works for a better and stronger UN. More information about the UN Association's activities can be found on our website www.fn.se.



The Security Council meets to discuss the serious risk of famine facing 20 million people in South Sudan, Yemen and northeastern Nigeria in October 2017.

Photo: UN Photos

2. Instructions

Instructions

Preparations

The participants will represent different states in the Security Council and their task is to agree a common solution to the situation in Yemen in the form of one or more written resolutions. In order for the participants to succeed, they will need a basic knowledge about the conflict and about the Security Council's rules of procedure. All necessary information is provided in this manual, but the students may of course be asked to supplement the material with their own research.

The manual contains a background description of the conflict and highlights three key issues, here described as topics. We recommend that each of the topics be addressed in separate resolutions. You can decide how many of these topics you want to address during the Model UN, depending on how much time you have at your disposal.

The participants are divided into groups of 2-3 people. The group is called a delegation and the participants are delegates representing a country. During the role-play, the delegations will operate based on their country position. The Country Positions provide brief information about the countries views and possible strategies during the Model UN.

During the Model UN, a president chairing the Model UN is required to ensure that the negotiations progress and to determine the order in which different issues are addressed, as well as moderating the time for debates and delegate's speeches. The role of President can be given to a teacher or former student who has experience in the United Nations role-play. You can also hire a professional President from the UN Association. Contact us at info@fn.se.

Opening speeches

In preparation for the Model UN, the delegates write an opening speech based on their respective country position. The maximum time for each opening speech is one minute. The opening speech addresses the state's most important points and positions on the topics that are to be debated during the Model UN.

Write resolutions

The goal of the Model UN is to agree on solutions to the issues in the conflict. This solution is formulated in one or more resolution texts to be adopted through a voting procedure in the Security Council. We recommend that each delegation prepare by writing a draft resolution for each of the topics to be debated during the Model UN.

In order to facilitate the negotiations, it is important that each delegation writes its draft resolutions according to the same template. A resolution is a formal document that consists initially of introductory sentences that briefly describe the situation, followed by a number of operational sentences that address joint positions and actions. To aid you, we have provided a resolution template in section six of this manual.

The Security Council meeting opens

The negotiations begin with the President checking that all delegations are present, and welcoming the delegates to today's meeting. The negotiations then begin by each delegation (in alphabetical order) giving their opening speech. The opening speech must be diplomatically polite, encourage cooperation and briefly present the country's position on the matter. It is recommended that the maximum time for each opening speech is limited to one minute, in order to allow more time for the on-going negotiations.

Lobbying to find allies

Following the opening speeches, the next stage of the Model UN begins, namely lobbying. During the lobbying, the delegations negotiate freely and directly with each other, without the President managing the negotiations. The delegations should strive to form alliances with other delegations and work together to merge their respective draft resolutions into a new draft resolution, which needs to be supported by as many countries as possible in order to increase the possibility of it being adopted in the vote. It is important to be creative and to be able to compromise. Each draft resolution is presented by one particular country (the proposing country) and must be co-sponsored by at least four other countries in order to proceed to debate and voting. In other words, support from five states is required for a resolution to proceed from the lobbying. Each country can present or co-sponsor no more than one resolution per topic.

Debate

After the lobbying, resolutions with sufficient support will be debated. When the debate is opened, it is important that the President begins with another attendance check to ensure that everyone is in place after the lobbying. The President then requests one delegate



Abdulmalik Abduljalil Ali Al-Mikhlafi (center), Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Yemen, spoke with Vassily Alekseevich Ne-benzia (right), Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN, at a Security Council meeting on the situation in Yemen in August 2018. Left in image: Khaled Hussein Mohamed Alyemany, Yemen's Permanent Representative to the UN.

Photo: UN Photos

from presenting country to read the operational clauses of the draft resolution and in this connection; the delegate is also given the opportunity to speak in favour of the draft resolution. Subsequently, other delegations are then given the opportunity to speak either in favour of or against the draft resolution. The President distributes speaking time and also has the important task of encouraging as many delegates as possible to participate in the debate, and to ensure that different opinions and arguments are heard. After each speech, delegates have the opportunity to ask questions to the speaker, provided that the speaker is open to answer questions.

Voting

Following the debate, the Security Council enters the voting procedure. Each member state has one vote and can vote either in favour of or against the resolution, or abstain. Nine votes in favour are required in order for a resolution to be adopted. It is also a requirement that none of the five permanent member states vote against. The permanent members of the Security Council are China, Russia, France, the UK and the United States, and they hold the right to veto any draft resolution, regardless of how many others vote in favour.

The procedure for debating and voting is repeated for each draft resolution that is co-sponsored by the required number of countries.

More information and other rules

The rules described above are sufficient to implement this Model UN. It should be mentioned that there are traditionally two different versions of the rules for Model UN. According to the rules we have explained above, the debate is largely led by the President. This model is easier to apply and is therefore preferred if you have limited time, and if many of the delegates are beginners when it comes to Model UN. According to the second version of the rules, it is the delegates instead who decide how the debate will proceed, by making proposals in the form of motions about what the next phase should be. The latter rules require greater involvement from the students, and usually more time, and it is therefore more common to apply these rules for Model UN at college level. The latter rules are also more similar to the rules of procedure used in the real Security Council. For more information about Model UN and different rules, visit our website at: <https://fn.se/fnskola/fn-rollspel/>.

Instructions for the Model UN

Instructions for the Model UN (MUN)

Use the information in the blue-framed boxes under each chapter and do the following:

- **Step 1.** Divide the students into fifteen groups, known as delegations, representing the different member states on the Security Council.
- **Step 2.** Distribute the Country Positions to each respective delegation. In order to prepare, the delegations should use their respective country positions (see part five below) and read the information contained in the blue-framed boxes.
- **Step 3.** Explain the purpose and content of the Model UN to the students. Students must know that they will represent different states on the Security Council and that their task is to debate the situation in Yemen.
- **Step 4.** The Model UN requires a President. This could be a teacher or former student who has experience in Model UN. If this is the first time you are organising a Model UN, we recommend that you contact the UN Association (info@fn.se) to engage a President with experience of managing the Model UN.
- **Step 5.** Prepare policy statements. In this version of the Model UN, each member state shall present what is known as a policy statement, which is a speech lasting about one minute, in which a delegate from each delegation outlines the country's most important positions. Use the blue-framed box for the respective country.
- **Step 6.** Make the speech. The President calls each state in alphabetical order. All speeches must begin with the phrase "Honourable President, distinguished delegates..." and end with "thank you".
- **Step 7.** Possibility to ask questions. The delegates listen to each other's policy statements. After each speech, the other delegates have the opportunity to ask questions to the speaker, provided that the speaker is open to accept questions.
- **Step 8.** Follow-up. After the Model UN is completed, gather all the delegates and discuss the following questions based on the policy statements that they presented:

What countries do they think they could have cooperated with? Why?

Which countries would they not have been able to cooperate with? Why?

Suggestions for more advanced questions.

- As part of the follow-up on the Model UN, the participants can be asked to study the country positions more closely and especially the wording of the different country statements. Does the specific wording alter the meaning behind the country positions? In relation to women, youth and civil society, most countries in the Security Council agree that these groups should be included in the peace process, however, does the way the countries present this view alter in any significant way? Can you identify the difference between strong wording and diplomatic tone?
- Students may be invited to do their own further research. Suggestions for pages to visit are www.fn.se and www.ud.se.
- Maintain a diplomatic tone during the role-play. It is important that all delegates maintain a courteous and diplomatic tone. For example, the delegates must use formal forms of address when questions are asked and answered.

Background

The information below is largely derived from reports and statements from the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a UN body that does not depend on the views of individual member states in the same way as the Security Council. Country information about Yemen is largely taken from the website of the Swedish Institute for International Affairs www.ui.se/languiden.

THE ROOT OF THE CONFLICT

Yemen was one of the world's poorest countries even before the civil war. The majority of the country's approximately 30 million inhabitants are Muslims. A large minority of the Muslims belong to the Shia Muslim zaidiyah group, but the majority are Sunni Muslims.²

For more than a millennium, imams who were Zaydis ruled northern Yemen. A revolution and a subsequent civil war from 1962-1970 brought an end to the imams' rule and the introduction of a republic in North Yemen. Yemen was then a divided country for several decades. South Yemen was a socialist republic that had a very tense relationship with North Yemen. The two countries united in 1990, and the Republic of Yemen was formed. Ali Abdullah Saleh, leader of North Yemen, was elected president, while the South Yemen leader Ali Salim al-Bid became vice president. Yemen has been a united country since then, but recurring conflicts have shown that the foundations of the state are fragile. In 1994, a civil war broke out when South Yemen declared itself independent, but North Yemen was victorious in the civil war, which only lasted a few months. President Saleh was then able to gather even more power in his own hands. At the same time, Islamist terrorist groups became increasingly active in Yemen and, among other things, carried out an attack in 2000 against an American warship in the city of Aden in Yemen.³

The Houthi rebels, who belong to zaidiyah, have been in conflict with the government since 2004. According to the rebels, the Muslims belonging to zaidiyah have been subjected to discrimination by the government of Yemen for a long time. The rebels have also accused Yemen's government of corruption and criticised its cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the United States.⁴

The Houthi rebels have long been supported by Iran, one of the Middle East's regional superpowers, which is in conflict with Saudi Arabia. From Saudi Arabia's perspective, increased influence for the rebels would result in Iran strengthening its influence in the region. This has contributed to Saudi Arabia's hostility to the Houthi rebels.



Jamal Abdullah Al-Sallal, Yemen's Permanent Representative, addresses the Security Council following the adoption of Resolution 2140 in February 2014.

Photo: UN Photos

CIVIL WAR BEGINS

The on-going conflict in Yemen began in connection with the extensive protests that swept across the Middle East and North Africa during the so-called Arab Spring of 2011. Mass protests broke out in Yemen and the opposition demanded that President Saleh, who had ruled Yemen for more than three decades, resigned. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) presented an initiative to resolve the crisis, which entailed President Saleh surrendering power to his vice president at the time, Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi, and that the UN would support a transition to democracy in Yemen and the adoption of a new constitution. The United States and later the United Nations Security Council supported the GCC initiative. In November 2011, Saleh resigned and Hadi took over the presidency.⁵

Houthi rebels already had a strong hold on the Sadah province and in March 2011 they took control of the provincial capital, Sa'dah. Discontent with the new president's government and the economic conditions in Yemen contributed to the Houthi rebels gradually increasing their influence in the country. In 2014, the dissatisfaction increased when the government presented a proposal to divide Yemen into six regions with limited self-government. In September, the Houthi rebels managed to capture the capital, Sana'a. The grip of the rebels increased further in January 2015, when they also took control of the Presidential Palace and other key building in the capital. The Houthi rebels also received support from the deposed president, Saleh. President Hadi then resigned and fled the country, while the Houthi rebels continued their attempt to take control of all of Yemen. The rebels adopted a constitutional declaration and established a presidential council.⁶

Saudi Arabia has been in conflict with the Houthi rebels for many years, and there were already hostilities in 2009 between the rebels and Saudi forces at the border between Saudi Arabia and the Sadah province. Saudi Arabia regards the Houthi rebels as a terrorist organisation and intervened in the conflict to support President Hadi.⁷ As a leading state in a coalition with the United Arab Emirates and other countries in the Middle East and North Africa, Saudi Arabia launched an air campaign against the Houthi rebels in 2015. Later, the coalition also imposed a blockade against Yemen and



Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the Secretary - General's Special Envoy to Yemen, gives reporters a review following a Security Council meeting on the situation in the country.

Photo: UN Photos

closed down the airport in Sana'a. In addition to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates several other countries, such as Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Senegal and Sudan have also been linked as members of the coalition. Qatar was a member of the coalition until 2017. The United States, UK and France support and advise the coalition.⁸ With the coalition's support, President Hadi was able to return to Yemen. He retracted his resignation and established a new government in the city of Aden. There has been an on-going civil war in Yemen since 2015.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN YEMEN

In 2020, after more than five years of conflict, Yemen is still deeply divided by the civil war. The Houthi rebels control large parts of the country, including the capital Sana'a and are believed to receive support from Iran, while the Hadi government in Aden receives military support from the coalition led by Saudi Arabia. Both the Houthi rebels and Hadi's government are in armed conflict with al-Qaeda. There is also a southern separatist force active in Yemen, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), which is supported by the UAE since 2017. The STC is part of the coalition, but has been pushing for self-rule. In 2019, the STC and Hadi's government ended up at odds and violent clashes between the two forces led to successful offensives by the Houthi Rebels, who in the spring of 2020 seized several new areas of Yemen.⁹

The coalition's involvement in the conflict has been criticised by the UN, among others. The coalition is accused of attacking civilian infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, and committed attacks on five hospitals in 2017. On 9 August 2018, a school bus was hit in a bomb attack and at least 40 children died. The bomb was reportedly supplied by the United States.¹⁰ A decline in airstrikes was recorded between 2017 and 2020. However, there recently was a 139% increase in the rate of air raids compared to the previous six months, reversing the three-year decline and marking a significant escalation in the sixth year of war.¹¹ The UN's former High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein, has stated that respect for the difference between military and civilian targets in the coalition's air strikes has been insufficient.¹²

In August 2018, a group of independent experts with a mandate from the UN Human Rights Council reported that international law violations were being committed by several players in the conflict, which could potentially constitute war crimes.¹³ Many human rights organisations, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), have been calling for accountability for those responsible.¹⁴ The hostilities between the rebels and the government are estimated to have led to at least 17,500 civilian casualties since the coalition intervened in the civil war in 2015,¹⁵ but the figure is likely to be significantly higher. Most civilian deaths have occurred in connection with the coalition's air campaign.¹⁶

The coalition has rejected the above report and denies that air attacks have been directed against civilians.¹⁷ The government of Yemen believes that the Houthi rebels bear the blame for the widespread civilian suffering and blames the rebels for recruiting child soldiers, attacking aid workers and exposing civilians to kidnapping and torture.¹⁸ Human rights organisations, such as HRW, agree that the rebels are responsible for e.g. disappearances and torture.¹⁹

The port city of Hodeidah (also known as al-Hudayda), is home to hundreds of thousands of civilians and plays a critical role in the delivery of food to Yemen. It is estimated that close to 70% of Yemen's imports, including humanitarian good, enter through the ports of Hodeidah. The UN predicted in the summer of 2018 that any attack on the key city would lead to the port becoming unusable and a full-scale famine would ensue.²⁰

The conflict is known around the world as the “worlds worst humanitarian crisis”, and one of the biggest problems in Yemen is the lack of food. In January 2019, Mark Lowcock, *Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator*, stated that more than 24 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance – correlating to 80% of the Yemeni population. He also stated 10 million people are on the brink of famine,²¹ including approximately 2,4 million children who could be malnourished by the end of the year.²² In July 2020, Mark Lowcock revealed that only 18% of the money required for 2020 have been received so far and the humanitarian crisis in Yemen has never been worse as hostilities escalate, the economy is in ruins, the famine is ravaging the population and the virus COVID-19 is spreading across the country.²³

Several news stories in 2020 have predicted that the impact of COVID-19 on the already vulnerable country could lead to Yemen being deleted from maps all over the world. With COVID-19 cases multiplying fast and international aid agencies being forced to abandon their programmes, the virus may be the end of the country.²⁴ WHO have confirmed 2,013 cases and 583 deaths as of 13th of September 2020.²⁵ However, the data from Houthi-controlled areas are unclear and officials fear that the real number of cases in Yemen is much higher than what's been confirmed.²⁶ With the country at war, the suffering of famine and malnutrition amongst the population, an already collapsed health system and the severe lack of essential equipment, Yemen does not have the capacity to handle the spread of the virus without international intervention and aid.²⁷

COVID-19 is not the only new problem facing Yemen in 2020. The country has also been battling Desert Locust swarms further threatening the food security. It

is predicted that swarms may increase in Yemen during the autumn due to favourable conditions.²⁸ Another threat is an oil tanker, which is stranded off the coast of Yemen. The FSO Safer oil tanker is officially owned by the government of Yemen, but controlled by the Houthi rebels since 2015. It was reported that the vessel sprang a leak in 2019 and was thereafter abandoned, while further deteriorating in 2020. If left where it is, it risks causing a major oil spill, explosion or fire, which would have catastrophic consequences for Yemen and the region – both humanitarian and environmental.²⁹

SECURITY COUNCIL'S ROLE AND PREVIOUS ACTIONS

The Security Council mandate and the Responsibility to Protect

The UN Charter gives the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council has a mandate to take military and non-military action to fulfil its mission.

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a principle based on current international law intended to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The principle was unanimously adopted by the heads of state and government at a UN summit in 2005.

According to R2P, all member states have a duty to prevent and stop genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The responsibility is primarily on the individual state, but the international community has a responsibility to take action if the state fails to protect its own population. The international community is also responsible for taking action if the state itself is responsible for the crimes. The principle is based on three pillars.

The first pillar: the individual state bears the primary responsibility for protecting its people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility includes preventing such crimes and violations and also encouraging people to do so.

The second pillar: the international community has a responsibility to encourage and assist the individual state in its efforts to protect its residents.

The third pillar: the international community is responsible for taking appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful measures to protect the population from these crimes. The international community must also be ready to take joint action, in due time and with sufficient strength in individual cases, as well as in accordance with the UN Charter and in cooperation with relevant regional organisations, if a state fails to protect its population or even commits these crimes itself. Such measures may include coercive means, including military means, if this is appropriate and sanctioned by the Security Council.



Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the Secretary - General's Special Envoy to Yemen, will provide the Security Council with a review of the situation in February 2016.

Photo: UN Photos

Alternatives to military means

The Security Council should primarily use diplomatic tools and only use military force if no other measures work. There are a large number of alternatives to military means, primarily mediation, statements and resolutions that do not contain coercive measures. If these measures are ineffective, the Security Council may use coercive measures such as financial sanctions against a particular state or against leading people within the state. Economic sanctions may, for example, restrict trade between a particular state and the rest of the world, or require all states to freeze a designated individual's bank accounts and financial assets. Types of economic sanctions include arms embargoes, which prohibit the export of weapons to a particular state or stateless group.

The Security Council can also monitor human rights and take measures to ensure humanitarian access. The Security Council also has a mandate to initiate a criminal investigation by the *International Criminal Court* (ICC). If the Security Council uses its mandate, the ICC has jurisdiction regardless of whether the state concerned has acceded to the statutes of the court.³⁰

Previous actions by the Security Council

The Security Council has taken a stand against the Houthi rebels since the start of the civil war. In the autumn of 2014, the Security Council expressed its support for Hadi's government.³¹ In February 2015, the Security Council also adopted a resolution that strongly rejected the Houthi rebels' takeover of power.³² In April 2015, the Security Council introduced, through resolution 2216, an arms embargo against the rebels and sanctions against their leading representatives. The sanctions have subsequently been renewed and still remain in place.³³ The Security Council's opposition to the rebels depends in part on the fact that France, the UK and the United States, all of which are permanent members, have clearly supported the government of Yemen.

In February 2018, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2402, extending the sanctions until February 2019. Russia, however, vetoed a proposal from the UK that the resolution should refer to information from the UN Expert Panel on Yemen that



The Security Council meets to discuss the serious risk of famine facing 20 million people in South Sudan, Yemen and northeastern Nigeria in October 2017.

Photo: UN Photos

Iran is breaking the arms embargo by supplying the rebels with weapons.³⁴ The sanctions were further extended by Resolution 2456³⁵ in 2019 and Resolution 2511³⁶ in 2020. Russia and China abstained from voting on Resolution 2511.³⁷

In September 2018, Yemeni government representatives and the Houthi rebels were to meet in Geneva for peace talks arranged by the UN. This would have been the first time in several years that the UN managed to organise such peace talks, but it failed when the rebel representatives did not attend.³⁸ New negotiations were quickly organised and in December 2018, delegations from both parties met up in Stockholm Sweden in the hopes of reaching a peaceful solution. Sweden was at the time finishing up their term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. On the 13th of December, the parties signed the ‘Stockholm Agreement’, agreeing to withdraw their troops from Hodeidah (the ‘Hodeidah Agreement’) and accept UN support to manage and monitor the port, allowing vital provisions to be imported to the country. The agreement also included a prisoner exchange and steps towards a ceasefire in the city of Taiz.³⁹ The ‘Stockholm Agreement’ was supported by the UN Security council through Resolution 2451, which authorised the Secretary-General to establish and deploy an advance team to monitor and facilitate implementation of the agreement in the beginning of 2019.⁴⁰ Another important agreement is that between the STC and the government, known as the ‘Riyadh Agreement’. This agreement was signed in 2019 and will hopefully lead to the two sides working together again for a peaceful Yemen.⁴¹

A year after the ‘Stockholm Agreement’, the UN stated that there had been modest success in taking steps towards achieving sustainable peace in Yemen. Although, the agreement has not been fully implemented.⁴²

In January 2019 the Security Council established a Special Political Mission through Resolution 2452, to support the ‘Hodeidah Agreement’ and the ceasefire between the government and Houth rebels for an initial six months,⁴³ which was extended for another six months in July 2019. The mandate was further renewed in 2020 through Resolution 2534, for an additional year.⁴⁴

Summary

- Yemen has a long history of political divisions, and the conflict between the Houthi rebels and the country's government dates back to 2004. The Houthi rebels belong to the Shia Muslim zaidiyah group, while most of the country's Muslims are Sunni. The Houthi rebels have long accused the government of Yemen of discrimination, corruption and cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the United States.
- The Houthi rebels are supported by Iran, which is competing with Saudi Arabia for power of the region. Saudi Arabia wants to prevent a takeover by the Houthi rebels, also because it would strengthen Iran's influence in the region.
- The Arab Spring led to a change of power in Yemen in 2011, when President Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced from power. The former vice president, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, took over the presidency, but dissatisfaction with his government led to the increasing number and influence of Houthi rebels. In 2014-2015, the rebels took over the capital of Yemen, Sana'a, and forced President Hadi into exile. A coalition led by Saudi Arabia, including Bahrain, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Senegal and Sudan, entered the conflict on the side of the government. Qatar was previously included in the coalition. Since 2015, a full-scale civil war has been raging in Yemen.
- The Security Council has condemned the actions of the Houthi rebels and has taken a position in support of the government. The Security Council has imposed an arms embargo on the rebels and targeted sanctions against leading rebel representatives. The Saudi coalition and the government of Yemen receive strong support from France, the UK and the United States, all of which are permanent members of the Security Council. The rebels receive support from Iran, and according to the UN's Expert Panel for Yemen, Iran is breaking the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council by providing the rebels with weapons.
- The conflict is known around the world as the "world's worst humanitarian crisis", and one of the biggest problems in Yemen is the lack of food. In January 2019 it was stated that more than 24 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance – correlating to 80% of the Yemeni population. In 2020 an additional threat reached Yemen – the virus COVID-19. WHO confirmed 2,013 cases and 583 deaths as of 13th of September 2020.
- In 2018, the situation in Yemen had deteriorated, especially since the war threatened the port city of Hodeidah. Yemen is dependent on imported food and approximately 70% of imports come via the port of Hodeidah. The UN estimates that the threat to food supplies means that the risk of mass famine in Yemen is imminent.
- In September 2018, peace talks between the government of Yemen and the rebels were due to take place in Geneva at the UN, but the representatives of the rebels did not turn up to the negotiations, which were therefore cancelled. New negotiations were scheduled for December 2018 in Sweden, where delegations from both parties attended and the 'Stockholm Agreement' was signed. As of 2020, the agreement has not been fully implemented, but the UN has stated it as a modest success.



Vote in the Security Council on the motion for a resolution on an expert panel in Yemen in February 2018. Russia uses its veto and votes down the proposal. (Later in the year, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2402 on the mandate of an expert panel in Yemen).

Photo: UN Photos

4. Topics

Topics

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT (R2P) AND RESPECT FOR CIVILIANS

During the civil war, violence has affected civilians to a major extent. As mentioned in part three, a group of independent experts with a mandate from the UN Human Rights Council, reported that several players in the conflict are committing systematic crimes against civilians. There have been issues of attacks directed directly against civilians, as well as attacks that do not distinguish between military and civilian targets. In addition to the Saudi coalition's air strikes, the report also highlights information on the arbitrary detention, rape, torture, kidnapping and recruitment of child soldiers, as well as a lack of respect for fundamental human rights.

Attacks directed against civilians may constitute crimes against humanity or war crimes under the Rome Statute (see the section on Reconciliation and justice below). The attacks may also lead the Security Council to act on the basis of the principle of R2P, but some members of the Security Council are sceptical of the principle. Further resources about the R2P principle can be found under part seven of this material.

For the Security Council, the question is how the violence against civilians can be stopped in the conflict. The resolution should require both sides of the conflict to refrain from violence directed against or which risks killing civilians. The Security Council must also consider concrete steps to ensure that this is achieved. Examples of actions that the Security Council can take are further resolutions, economic sanctions and, ultimately, military intervention.

RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE

A reconciliation process is necessary for society in Yemen to function in the future. It is also necessary that the perpetrators be brought to justice. The reconciliation process should be conducted through transitional justice with the intention of achieving accountability, justice and reconciliation. In the resolution, the Security Council should consider how reconciliation can be achieved in this conflict and how the perpetrators can be held accountable.

In order to achieve justice, it is possible to turn to the ICC, where suspected offenders can be prosecuted for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. The ICC has its own charter, the Rome Statute, and is independent of the UN. Genocide refers to certain acts of violence directed against a group of people in order to destroy all or part of the group. Crimes against humanity are defined as a number of grievous crimes, such as murder, torture and rape, when the acts are committed as part of widespread or systematic attacks directed against the civilian population. War Crimes include a number of acts that violate the rules of war, especially when committed as a plan or policy or when they form part of the practice of such crimes on a large scale. Examples of war crimes are intentional attacks on civilians.⁴⁵ The Crime of Aggression was included as an ICC crime through a resolution adopted and entered into force in 2018. The crime focuses on individuals and means that the international court will be able to hold leaders criminally responsible for waging aggressive war.⁴⁶

The ICC has jurisdiction for crimes committed on the territory of a member state or by a citizen of a member state. At present, 123 states are members of the ICC, but several important states have chosen to remain outside, such as China and the United States. The criticism of the ICC has concerned, among other things, unwillingness for the citizens of a sovereign state to be tried before an international court. Several states believe there is a risk that the ICC will not give their citizens a fair trial. Yemen has not ratified the ICC Charter and the court therefore has no territorial jurisdiction. Instead, it would have to be the Security Council bringing the case to the ICC. If the Security Council refers a case to the ICC, however, the court has jurisdiction and may investigate the suspected crime, even if the state concerned is not a member of the ICC. As an alternative to the ICC, the Security Council may establish a truth commission or tribunal. Another strategy is to require the government of Yemen to set up national courts in order to deal with human rights violations or war crimes in the conflict.

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Humanitarian access means that neutral players dealing with humanitarian issues, such as NGOs and the UN, have access to a conflict area and can provide humanitarian aid and monitor and promote human rights there. In Yemen, humanitarian access has deteriorated in 2018. The hostilities around the port city of Hodeidah means that several transport links that are vital to securing humanitarian access, are under threat. About 90% of all food imports and 70% of all humanitarian aid are now estimated to enter Yemen through Hodeidah. Since the civil war began, the coalition led by Saudi Arabia, supported by e.g. the UK and the United States, have imposed a naval and air blockade on Yemen. For security reasons, the Red Cross relief organisation had to withdraw some of its efforts in 2018, based on the fact that approximately ten of the organisation's aid workers had been killed since the civil war began in 2015. Aid work is also delayed by bureaucratic barriers, as it takes a long time to receive permits to access to the conflict-affected areas.

In 2019, the Security Council established a Special Political Mission to support the ceasefire between the government and Houthi rebels around the port of Hodeidah. In its resolution, the Security Council should decide how humanitarian access can be provided and reach those in need. In order to assess what humanitarian requirements actually exist, humanitarian organisations must first be given the opportunity to carry out fact-finding missions.

Summary – topics

- The Security Council's discussions on the situation in Yemen concern three areas in particular. All these areas can be listed in the same policy statement. The important thing is that the delegates rely on the blue box on their role cards.
- Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and respect for civilians in the conflict. A group of independent experts with a mandate from the UN Human Rights Council, reported that several players in the conflict are committing systematic crimes against civilians. Violence against civilians can constitute crimes against humanity or war crimes if carried out on a large scale, which means that the principle of R2P could be applied.
- Reconciliation and justice. A reconciliation process is necessary for society in Yemen to function in the future. It is also necessary that the perpetrators are brought to justice. There are different ways to achieve this. One possible mechanism for achieving justice is the ICC, which can prosecute individual criminals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. Other strategies are to set up a truth commission or tribunal, or to demand that Yemen's government establishes national courts in order to deal with human rights violations in the conflict.
- Humanitarian access. This means that neutral players dealing with humanitarian issues, such as the UN and other organisations, should have access to the conflict area and be able to provide humanitarian assistance, as well as to monitor and promote human rights. Humanitarian access to Yemen has been severely restricted. A large number of people in Yemen are now in urgent need of access to food and humanitarian aid. If the ceasefire is compromised and hostilities damage the port of Hodeidah, the consequence could be that food supplies to Yemen will be further restricted, resulting in full-scale famine.

Country Positions



BELGIUM

Belgium is a small country, but has a large international presence. Belgium was one of the founding members of NATO and is the home of the organisations headquarters and they still work closely with the UK and Unites States, who were also founding members. Belgium is also home to the EU headquarters and considers multilateral cooperation as essential.

Belgium has signed and ratified the ICC Charter and is a strong supporter of the court. Belgium is eager to combat impunity and strengthen accountability and the rule of law and is also a supporter of the R2P principle and believes it should be implemented on both a national and international level. Belgium is strongly against the death penalty.

Belgium has emphasised in the Security Council that a political process is the main way forward for Yemen and any such process must be fully inclusive and reflect the country's both ethnic and geographic diversity. Both women and youth must be included in any peace negotiations. Belgium stands behind the 'Stockholm Agreement' and the 'Riyadh Agreement' and has continuously urged that both agreements be implemented. Belgium also continuously urges the parties to remember their obligations and commitments under international humanitarian law. Especially when it comes to protecting children in armed conflict.

Belgium reportedly exported weapons to UAE and Saudi Arabia, but suspended arms exports in 2020.

Strategy

Belgium is likely to propose peaceful processes to resolve the conflict and will urge that the negotiations are inclusive. Any resolution would likely support the Stockholm and Riyadh agreements and call for humanitarian access. Belgium is also likely to attempt to ensure accountability for those guilty of breaching international law and may suggest that the ICC is engaged. Especially in cases involving children.

Key positions

- The conflict should preferably be resolved using a peaceful and inclusive process. Women and children need to be included and protected.
- Those guilty of atrocities should be held accountable and the rule of law needs to be remembered.
- The resolution should be designed to include political solutions and next steps towards peace.

Sources and continued reading

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CHINA

China, the world's most populous country, has long been pursuing a foreign policy characterised by a desire for stability and which helps to ensure China's access to energy and raw materials. China has often adopted a sceptical approach to R2P and it believed, for example, that the principle could not be used to justify interventions in the conflicts in Darfur and Myanmar. Instead, China has emphasised that the individual state has the primary responsibility for protecting its civilians and that the international community should prioritise preventive measures rather than intervening when a conflict has broken out.

China has expressed firm support for Yemen's territorial integrity and wants the country to remain united. A political solution is the only way to achieve peace and increased international efforts are required to provide help in the form of food, medicine and other basic goods to reach those in need in Yemen. China is against any military intervention and supports the 'Stockholm Agreement'. China abstained when Russia used its veto against the UK's proposed resolution condemning Iran's alleged deliveries of weapons to the Houthi rebels. China has also abstained, alongside Russia, when the Security Council have voted through extending the sanctions against those threatening security in Yemen.

China has not signed the ICC Charter and considers the court to be an unacceptable restriction on the sovereignty of the national state. China may therefore oppose prosecuting those responsible for war crimes in Yemen at the ICC.

Strategy

For China, it is crucial that the resolution respects Yemen's territorial integrity. The international community should take more comprehensive measures to ensure that help reaches those in need in Yemen. The resolution should not provoke individual member states such as Iran.

Key positions

- The conflict can only be solved by political means.
- The resolution should not be designed in such a way that it provokes individual member states. Yemen's national sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected.
- Reconciliation and justice should be achieved at national level, with minimal involvement of the international community.
- The international community, on the other hand, has an important role to play in contributing humanitarian assistance to the many needy people in Yemen.

Sources and continued reading

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic is dominated by its relations with the United States, on which it depends both economically and strategically. It is also dependant on its neighbouring country Haiti. However, these relations are rather embossed by the history of mistrust, crisis and poverty.

The Dominican Republic was one of the 51 founding members of the UN and often reiterates its belief that the UN is the main organ to serve in difficult times. The country believes in the respect for international cooperation, international humanitarian law and human rights law. The Dominican Republic has often urged that the parties to the conflict in Yemen cooperate with independent investigative mechanisms and believe that there can be no peace without justice. It has not formally commented on the R2P.

The Dominican Republic firmly believes in a broad and inclusive political agreement based on mutual respect and full compliance with the undertaken commitments to find a peaceful solution in Yemen. However, has also stated that the Security Council should evaluate more drastic measures to send a stronger message to resolve the conflict. This may not necessarily mean military intervention. The Dominican Republic was the only country that voted yes for a resolution proposed by the United States to extend a global arms embargo on Iran.

It often address specific problems in their statement and ask that these situations be prioritised by the Security Council and the parties of the conflict. The Dominican Republic also often points to issues that are needed to reach a stable peace in Yemen. Examples are the economic stability, humanitarian access and specific situations such as bombings, the FSO Safer oil tanker and locust swarms.

The Dominican Republic has signed and ratified the ICC Charter.

Strategy

The Dominican Republic is likely to take a position where they support the United States and vote alongside their allies. It believes in a political process, but may also support sending a stronger message to reach a peaceful solution. Any stronger message would however also need the support from the United States. May very likely encourage a concrete action plan.

Key positions

- The main road to peace will be through a broad and inclusive political agreement.
- There can be no peace without justice. All parties need to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law.
- Will most likely vote alongside the United States position.

Sources and continued reading

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ESTONIA

Estonia is a small country that used to be part of the Soviet Union until it became independent in 1991, when it ended up in an economic crisis. However, it joined both the EU and NATO in 2004 and is now considered an advanced IT-country with strong relations to the Nordic countries. This has led to strained relations with Russia. Estonia is also a loyal ally to the United States.

One of Estonia's main focuses is conflict prevention, especially related to cyber-security and emerging threats to international peace and security.

Estonia aligns itself with the US and is of the view that the main priority in Yemen should be the protection of civilians and has emphasised that bombs falling on civilian structures is a clear breach of international humanitarian law. Estonia has condemned the airstrikes on civilians in Yemen as well as on civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

Estonia supports the 'Stockholm Agreement' and believes that a political solution mediated by the UN is the only way that Yemen can reach a sustainable peace. According to Estonia, a sustainable peace is the emphasised goal and therefore it is important to always look ahead at what will be the next phase of the political process. It is currently necessary that the parties allow humanitarian access.

Estonia has emphasised its support for Resolution 2511 continuing the sanctions against those threatening security and stability in Yemen. It also stated its disappointment in those who abstained, which in this case were Russia and China.

Estonia has signed and ratified the ICC Charter.

Strategy

Estonia is likely to vote along their strongest ally, the United States. It will call for a political solution, but may be open to stronger actions as well, as long as there is a plan for continuous steps towards a sustainable peace. Estonia is likely to disagree with Russia due to the strained relationship with the nation and will not be afraid to express disappointment if it believes a country is not doing enough to reach a peaceful solution.

Key positions

- Will support the United States as one of its most loyal allies.
- It is crucial that all parties to the conflict respect international law and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.
- The resolution should include next steps in the political process and look ahead to achieve sustainable peace and not just a ceasefire. First steps should be to allow humanitarian access.

Sources and continued reading

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FRANCE

Among the Security Council members, France is one of the strongest supporters of R2P. France has emphasised that the Security Council must act in cases where gross human rights violations are committed and that it is not acceptable that the Security Council is restricted by the veto of individual states under such circumstances. According to France, the permanent members should refrain from using their veto right in such situations and has proposed a concrete measure to suspend such use.

France has good relations with a number of the non-permanent members on the Security Council, such as Germany and Niger. It has a strained relationship with Iran due to taking a stand against some of Iran's actions outside of the Yemen situation in 2020, alongside Germany and the UK.

With regard to the conflict in Yemen, France has supported the Saudi coalition and condemned the Houthi rebels' rocket attacks against Saudi Arabia. France supported the UK's proposed resolution condemning Iran's alleged delivery of weapons to the Houthi rebels. At the same time, France sells weapons to several countries that are part of the Saudi coalition.

France prefers a ceasefire, political solutions and unrestricted humanitarian access, especially in light of COVID-19. The civilian population must be protected from attacks and other endangerment and aid workers belonging to humanitarian organisations must be protected from violence. The territorial integrity of Yemen must be respected and the country should not be divided. It is also essential to fight impunity and ensure that independent investigations are conducted in Yemen.

France has signed and ratified the ICC Charter.

Strategy

France supports the Saudi coalition and strongly condemns the Houthi rebels. At the same time, it is crucial that the conflict can only be solved by diplomatic and political means. France is likely to support a resolution with sharp condemnation of the Houthi rebels and the support that France believes is being supplied to the rebels by Iran. France wants to achieve an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access to ensure that civilians are protected. France may call upon the responsibility to protect. It is also likely that France will propose that the perpetrators should be brought to justice in an international court, such as the ICC. France has veto power, but it is unlikely that it would choose to use it.

Key Positions

- The resolution should contain a strong condemnation of the Houthi rebels and of Iran, which France believes is supporting the rebels.
- The territorial integrity of Yemen must be respected and the country should not be divided.
- The parties must agree a ceasefire and provide unrestricted access for humanitarian organisations. The main priority is that civilians are protected.

Sources and continued reading

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GERMANY

Germany has slowly established itself as an economic power in Europe and the world, especially European countries and the US are expecting Germany to take more responsibility within peace and security as a consequence. It could be argued that this is just what its done in relation to Yemen where Germany is one of the largest economic contributors to help the starving population. Germany has also frozen its arms sales to Saudi Arabia. However, there are reports that German weapons still make their way to Yemen through the UAE. Germany also has a strained relationship with Iran due to taking a stand against some of Iran's actions outside of the Yemen situation in early 2020, alongside the UK and France.

Germany supports an inclusive political solution to the conflict, especially including women and civil society. Germany has showed this clearly by including women and civil society in Security Council briefings during their presidency in the Council. It wants to see confidence-building measures leading to a step-by-step de-escalation of the conflict. Germany believes that the Security Council has a responsibility to be the ones to call on all involved parties to engage and send clear and hard messages to the authorities in Yemen, especially to the Houthi rebels.

Germany is a strong supporter of R2P and believes strongly in conflict prevention. R2P is an important means to conflict prevention according to Germany. All parties need to adhere strictly to international humanitarian law and human rights law and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. Impunity is not an option. Humanitarian access is necessary and the Security Council needs to clearly show the parties that this is a priority.

Germany has signed and ratified the ICC Charter.

Strategy

Germany is likely to lean towards a resolution with strong wording stating the position of the Security Council to publicly endorse de-escalation of the conflict. It is likely that Germany aligns itself with the US and UK in calling on the Houthi's especially to take steps towards a peaceful solution. The question of funding is likely to be of importance to Germany.

Key positions

- The military violence in Yemen must cease and unrestricted humanitarian access must be maintained.
- All who have pledged funding must deliver. Germany has pledged a lot of fund and has delivered, but more money is needed to help the country and its people.
- The Security Council must take its responsibility seriously and call upon the parties, especially the Houthi's, to de-escalate the situation step by step.

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INDONESIA

Indonesia is one of the greatest powers in Southeast Asia and often prioritises regional conflicts. It is seen as a regional leader in the maintenance of peace and security. Indonesia is supported by the US, especially military support in the fight against terrorism, but is traditionally known to enjoy positive diplomatic ties with most countries.

Counter-terrorism is an important cause for Indonesia in the Security Council. It is therefore unlikely that the country will support the cause of the Houthi rebels and Indonesia often condemns the bombings by the Houthi's. However, Indonesia is looking for a political solution and has urged all parties to adhere to a ceasefire and especially ensure that the port of Hodeidah is kept safe, as this is the centre and the humanitarian lifeline in the country. Humanitarian access through the port of Hodeidah is one of the most important issues. Indonesia asks that the 'Stockholm Agreement', and especially the 'Hodeidah Agreement' there within, is implemented and respected by all parties.

Indonesia will call on donors to fulfil their pledges. It will also point out any environmental issues related to the conflict, such as the FSO oil tanker.

Many Islamic organisations have over the years, especially back in 2015, asked that Indonesia broker peace in Yemen as it is a largely Muslim country and its geographically separated from both the Western and Arab countries involved in the conflict. Indonesia also enjoys positive diplomatic ties with all countries involved.

Indonesia is likely to be willing to negotiate to ensure that a resolution is adopted as they think it is important that the people of Yemen know that the Security Council is on their side and to trust that they are trying their best to put an end to their suffering.

Indonesia has not signed the ICC Charter.

Strategy

Indonesia is likely to adopt an intermediate position and will be open to negotiate to ensure that a resolution is in fact adopted, as it believes that it is of importance to show the people of Yemen that the Security Council is on their side. May support a resolution condemning the Houthi rebels.

Key positions

- A resolution must be adopted and it is willing to negotiate to reach a consensus.
- The port of Hodeidah must be kept safe and the ‘Stockholm Agreement’ must be implemented and respected.
- Are open to support a resolution condemning the Houthi rebels.

Sources and continued reading

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NIGER

Niger pursues a moderate foreign policy and maintains friendly relationships with countries in both East and West. It has a special relationship with France, its former colonial power and is also home to one of the largest deployments of US military personnel in Africa and they therefore have decent relations.

In Yemen, Niger is looking for a political solution with a cessation of hostilities between the parties and it will not accept a military intervention. It has stated a wish for centralised authority in the country, especially to fight the current threat of COVID-19 as the de-centralised authorities, with different parties, is making it difficult to halt the spread of the virus in the country. Humanitarian access, especially to assist the population in their fight against the virus, is currently an important issue for Niger.

Niger has not publicly supported the R2P principle, but has called for support of international humanitarian law and human rights law by all parties.

Niger has signed and ratified the ICC Charter.

Strategy

Niger is likely to step back during the negotiations and adopt an intermediate position supporting a resolution that doesn't contain too strong language. Niger will call for cooperation and a peaceful process, without condemning specific parties, while condemning specific acts. Niger is likely to seek cooperation with France.

Key positions

- The resolution should call for a political and peaceful process and demand a cessation of hostilities.
- All parties to the conflict must seek to secure humanitarian access, food and medical supplies for those in need in Yemen. Especially in the fight against COVID-19.
- The wording of the resolution should not condemn specific parties.

Sources and continued reading

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RUSSIA

Russia's foreign policy is characterised by the country's efforts to regain its former role as a global superpower. It is therefore important for Russia to enter into alliances with other states in different parts of the world. In the Middle East, Russia's most important allies are Iran and Syria. Russia is a strong advocate of the sovereignty principle and thus it is often sceptical about interventions motivated by references to the principle R2P, such as the intervention in Libya in 2011. According to Russia, R2P is often abused by countries that want to promote self-interest, for example, to achieve regime change in some states.

In the Security Council, Russia has emphasised, inter alia, that humanitarian aid must be provided immediately to the entire population of the country, regardless of who is in control in the area and all ports in Yemen must be kept open and functioning. The Security Council must strive to ensure that both parties to the conflict return to the negotiating table. All warring parties should refrain from using violence and should seek a political solution. Russia has exercised its veto against the proposed resolution presented by the UK, which contained a condemnation of Iran's arms deliveries to the rebels. This should be viewed from the perspective that Russia wishes to maintain good relations with Iran and to counter US influence in the region.

Russia has stated the importance of implementing the Stockholm Agreement and has blamed the Yemeni side for it not yet being achieved. Russia often points to building on previously established documents rather than creating something new. Examples are the Stockholm Agreement or Resolution 598 from 1988 and the Russian blueprint of collective security in the Gulf Area to unblock the conflict situation. It is suggesting that useful concrete plans brought forward by countries, such as France and Iran should be pursued.

Russia signed the ICC Statute in 2000, but declared that the country no longer wants to be a contracting state, after the ICC criticised Russian intervention in Ukraine.

Strategy

The resolution must be balanced and not contain any explicit criticism of any party, especially Iran. The international community should seek to ensure a diplomatic solution, but the responsibility for the conflict does not lie solely with the rebels. Russia is unlikely to support any resolution where its views have not been adhered in the drafting.

Key positions

- The resolution must not contain any explicit criticism of Iran. Responsibility for the civil war rests with all parties.
- Humanitarian aid must be provided immediately and all ports in Yemen must be kept open and functioning. The ‘Stockholm Agreement’ should be implemented.
- The Security Council must strive to ensure that both parties to the conflict return to the negotiating table and any resolution must be well-balanced.
- Russia no longer intends to ratify the ICC Statute and may therefore oppose those responsible for war crimes in Yemen being brought before that court.

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SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a small country, which mainly focuses its foreign policy on the regional cooperation and the island territories. International environmental cooperation is of great importance and any environmental issues around the conflict should be prioritised. One such issue is the current threat from the FSO Safer oil tanker.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines strongly stresses the importance of non-interference and non-intervention in the conflict and demands that Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity stays intact. Therefore it is against any action from the Security Council that could jeopardise that. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes in a political solution owned by the Yemeni parties, where the UN may facilitate the dialogue. Any further military actions from any side should be avoided. This should happen as soon as possible and awaiting any further implementations of agreements such as the Stockholm or Riyadh agreements is not necessary, but will rather cause further damages to the country.

Unhindered passage for humanitarian aid is essential and should be a priority. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stresses that this is not a solution to the conflict, but only a treatment to one of the symptoms of the conflict. Only a political solution will lead to sustainable peace in Yemen.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has not signed the ICC Charter.

Strategy

It is likely that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wants the Security Council to adopt a resolution that ensures humanitarian access and that relief efforts reach the civilians in Yemen, but it cannot be viewed as a solution to the conflict. The resolution need to ensure that a political process that aims for sustainable peace in Yemen is the priority. It is likely that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will push any environmental issues to be addressed.

Key positions

- All ports, airports and roads must remain open so that humanitarian assistance can reach those in need in Yemen. Humanitarian aid access must be guaranteed.
- The sovereignty and respect for Yemen's territorial integrity cannot be jeopardised. It is unlikely that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would support any mention of the ICC.
- A political process owned by the Yemenis is to be preferred.

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SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa became a democracy in 1994 and developed good relations with the Western countries, specifically the United States. It also kept close relations to Iran and has more recently gotten closer to China. South Africa has also been accused both of supporting the arms sales in Saudi Arabia and UAE as one of the largest contributors, but also as blocking the export of weapons to said countries.

South Africa prioritises diplomacy and mediation through inclusive dialogue and believes that the only sustainable solution to the Yemeni conflict will be through a Yemeni-led political negotiation that is inclusive and fair and puts the interest and well being of all the citizens of Yemen first. Especially women should be included in the negotiations. All parties should fully commit to implementing the Stockholm and Riyadh agreements. Humanitarian access is imperative and especially in regards to COVID-19 where all parties need to cooperate to battle the pandemic.

Accountability is an essential part of achieving lasting peace and stability in Yemen. South Africa has called for investigations into alleged violations to uphold the standards of integrity and impunity.

South Africa has signed and ratified the ICC Charter.

Strategy

South Africa is likely to cooperate with most countries on the Security Council, but will also favour a resolution that does not condemn either party as it has relations with both Saudi Arabia and Iran. South Africa is likely to request investigations into alleged violations, while calling for Yemen to lead any negotiations in an inclusive manner.

Key positions

- Negotiations should be inclusive and Yemeni-led to reach a fair solution.
- South Africa will unlikely agree to a resolution condemning any party, but will be willing to hold any party accountable for its violations of international law.
- Humanitarian access is imperative.

Sources and continued reading

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TUNISIA

After becoming independent, Tunisia has pursued a pronounced non-aligned foreign policy. It has nourished relations with both Western and Arab countries. It has continued on this path throughout the last decade, but has accepted international cooperation to counter terrorism. Fighting and combating terrorism has been a main priority for Tunisia.

Tunisia supports the legitimate leadership of Yemen and wants the Security Council to pool their efforts to assist the legitimate Yemeni Government, especially in fighting the current issue with COVID-19. Tunisia believes in protecting the sovereignty of Yemen in any negotiation, which is a fundamental principle of international law. Any intervention, even on the basis of R2P, needs to be in harmony with the rule of law. The use of R2P may not call into question the principle of non-interference.

Tunisia promotes sustainable peace by focusing on conflict prevention. What is needed is peaceful, political negotiation and full cooperation with previous arrangements, such as the Stockholm, Riyadh and Hodeidah agreements as well as the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its Implementation Mechanisms. There are no military alternatives that can lead to a solution to the crisis. Tunisia also calls for relief efforts to be intensified and any obstructions to humanitarian aid to be removed in order to ensure they are delivered to those in most need.

Tunisia has signed the ICC Charter.

Strategy

All previously negotiated agreements and initiatives should be implemented. It is likely that Tunisia will stress for a new resolution to lean on previous arrangements. Tunisia will call for Yemen's sovereignty to be respected and is unlikely to agree to any resolution that supports any other party than the legitimate government of Yemen.

Key positions

- Want to restore security and stability in Yemen, while maintaining its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The sovereignty of Yemen cannot be jeopardised.
- Immediate and unrestricted humanitarian access must be guaranteed.
- Previous agreements and arrangements should be implemented.

Sources and continued reading

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UK

The UK has had a close relationship with the United States for a long time. At the same time, relations with Iran and Russia are strained. Some would also say that the UK relationship with the EU countries is strained due to Brexit. The UK has feared Iran's power ambitions in the Middle East and that Iran will develop nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. In 2020, the relationship between the UK and Iran intensified as the UK, together with Germany and France took a stand against some of Iran's actions outside of the Yemen situation.

The UK has played an active role in the Security Council's work on the conflict in Yemen, which is in part due to the fact that the country is a so-called "pen-holder" on the issue and leads the work on drafting new resolutions. The UK supports and sells weapons to the Saudi coalition. The UK has previously been criticised for unilaterally taking sides against the Houthi rebels, but has criticised both sides in the conflict for persisting in their belief in a military solution. According to the UK, R2P is a very important principle that can legitimise interventions in a sovereign state in order to protect civilians. The UK supports any independent investigations into atrocities in Yemen and wants those responsible to be held accountable. It especially condemns the violence against women in Houthi-controlled areas.

In the Security Council, the UK has emphasised that access for humanitarian aid through the ports of Yemen must be safeguarded. The UK also believes that Iran is violating Security Council resolutions by supplying weapons to the rebels, and it proposed a draft resolution condemning Iran's actions. However, the Security Council did not adopt the proposed resolution as Russia exercised its veto. Unrestricted humanitarian access is crucial to preventing a major famine disaster and to fight the current battle against COVID-19. The UK has accused the Houthi rebels of obstructing the work against COVID-19 by not reporting cases and not allowing humanitarian aid in form of PPE to be brought into the rebel-controlled areas. The military operations in Yemen must be conducted in accordance with international law, but the only way to resolve the conflict is through a political agreement.

The UK has signed and ratified the ICC Charter and would probably welcome those charged with international human rights violations in Yemen being brought to justice in the ICC.

Strategy

As the penholder for the Yemen conflict, the UK is likely to be one of the countries taking the lead. The UK will probably propose a resolution that strongly criticizes the Houthi rebels and Iran with a strong language demanding humanitarian access and a ceasefire. However, it may be open to some compromise to ensure the adoption of a resolution. It is likely that the UK will seek to cooperate with France, Germany and the United States.

Key positions

- The Houthi rebels and Iran bear the main responsibility for worsening the civil war. The resolution should preferably contain sharp criticism of Iran's involvement in the civil war.
- Full humanitarian access must be granted, especially in Houthi-controlled areas.
- The military operations in Yemen must be conducted in accordance with international law, but a political agreement is necessary in order to terminate the conflict.

Sources and continued reading

General information about the UK's foreign policy

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The UK's statements regarding Yemen at the Security Council

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UNITED STATES

With the slogan “America First” President Trump has recently altered the core philosophy in American politics making American interests the priority no matter the cause. The United States has had a strained relationship with Iran for many decades, which has deteriorated further after Trump’s administration re-imposed sanctions on Iran. In contrast, Saudi Arabia is a close ally of the United States. Against this background, the United States supports the Saudi coalition and strongly criticises Iran’s alleged involvement in the conflict. The United States has assisted the coalition with weapons and provides military advice to the government of Yemen in its struggle against the Houthi rebels. The United States also carries out air attacks against Al Qaeda and ISIS in Yemen. A small US military force is present in Yemen to fight terrorist organisations. However, the US military does not participate in the hostilities against the Houthi rebels. According to the United States, the R2P is a very important principle that can legitimise interventions in individual states that fail to protect their inhabitants and has been used by the US in multiple cases.

The United States has stated that the Houthi rebels are supported by Iran and that terrorist organisations are gaining ground in Yemen. The United States supports the government of Yemen and believes that Iran bears a major part of the responsibility for the civil war continuing. All parties to the conflict must protect civilians and guarantee unrestricted humanitarian access. Civilians must be protected in the conflict. In 2020 the US suffered a humiliating defeat as they proposed an extended arms embargo on Iran indefinitely, which only received support from one other Security Council member – the Dominican Republic. This was a clear attempt to further the anti-Iran rhetoric the US is pushing in the Yemen conflict.

The United States call for humanitarian access, especially in light of COVID-19 and believe that the Houthi’s are mainly responsible for the difficulties in getting a clear picture of the current state of the virus and to bring aid to those most in need.

The United States has signed but not ratified the ICC Charter. The United States revoked its signature in 2002 and stated that the country does not intend to become a Contracting State. The reason for its resistance to the ICC is that the United States does not want US citizens to be tried before the court.

Strategy

The United States is likely to collaborate with France and the United Kingdom. One objective is that the Security Council should adopt a resolution that sharply condemns the Houthi rebels and Iran. The United States is likely to protect the Saudi Arabian coalition.

Key positions

- Yemen must be held together under the legitimate government.
- The Houthi rebels and Iran bear the main responsibility for worsening the civil war.
- Humanitarian access must be guaranteed and civilians must be protected, especially against COVID-19.
- The individuals amongst the rebels who commit war crimes must be made to answer for their crimes. The United States has not ratified the ICC Charter and may advocate that other mechanisms should be used to achieve justice.

Sources and continued reading

General information about United States foreign policy

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www.ui.se/landguiden/lander-och-omraden/nordamerika/usa/utrikespolitik-och-forsvar/

The United States' statements regarding Yemen at the Security Council

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www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/security-council-meeting-records/?ctype=Yemen&cbtype=yemen



VIET NAM

Viet Nam has relatively relaxed relations to most countries, even the United States in spite of the Viet Nam War. However, relations with China are generally strained due to a dispute on the territory of the South China Sea.

One of the main issues for Viet Nam in their role as a non-permanent member of the Security Council is to promote the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure in armed conflict. However, it is important to note that R2P is a means of assisting and cooperating with the international community during conflict. The needs and wishes of the people of concerned countries should be adhered and any intervention needs to be in accordance with the UN Charter and principles of international law.

In Yemen, it is necessary that any settlement be reached through an inclusive political negotiation. There can be no military solution. Viet Nam strongly believes that the implementation of the Stockholm and Riyadh Agreements may be the first steps to reach a peaceful settlement.

It is important that all parties uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and respect the protection of civilians. Humanitarian access to the Yemeni population is therefore of great importance.

Viet Nam has not signed the ICC Charter.

Strategy

Viet Nam is likely to take an intermediate position in the discussions of a resolution. However Viet Nam wants the Security Council to adopt a resolution that ensures humanitarian access and protects the civilian population of Yemen. All parties should uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Key positions

- Humanitarian access is of great importance to protect the civilian population of Yemen.
- The Stockholm and Riyadh agreements should be implemented and a peaceful solution should be pursued.
- Any intervention should be balanced.

Sources and continued reading

General information about the Viet Nam's foreign policy

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Viet Nam's statements regarding Yemen at the Security Council

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6.
Template for
Draft Position

Template for draft resolution

Below is a template showing the structure of a draft resolution, with some examples of initiating and operational clauses that can be used. Initiating clauses are always first and should stand in italics and end with a comma. The operative clauses follows next and should be underlined, numbered and end with a semicolon. Each new line throughout the whole draft resolution should also be numbered in parenthesis.

Examples of more detailed instructions are also available (in Swedish) at www.fn.se.
 Examples of real resolutions that have been adopted can be found on the following website:
www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions-0.

THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL		
TOPIC: Topic on the agenda	SUBMITTED BY: Name of the country initiating the draft resolution	CO-SPONSORS: Name of at least four countries supporting the draft resolution
INITIATING CLAUSES	(01) <i>Recalling its resolution...</i> (02) <i>Confirming...</i> (03) <i>Recognising...</i> (04) <i>Emphasising the importance of...</i> (05) <i>Noting with concern...</i> (06) <i>Noting with satisfaction...</i>	
OPERATIVE CLAUSES	(07) <u>1. Condemns...</u> (08) <u>2. Confirms...</u> (09) <u>3. Claims...</u> (10) <u>4. Requests...</u> (11) <u>5. Encourages...</u> (12) <u>6. Underlines...</u> (13) <u>7. Urges...</u> (14) <u>8. Supports...</u> (15) <u>9. Requires....</u> (16) <u>10. Welcomes...</u> (17) <u>11. Decides to remain actively seized on the matter.</u>	

Further reading

ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR IN YEMEN

- Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014, 17 August 2018**
Expert investigation carried out on behalf of the UN Human Right Council.
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- Country information and information on vulnerable population groups, by the Global Centre for R2P**
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- Report of the Office of the High Commissioner on air attacks on civilian targets**
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- Data on the conflict in Yemen collated by the Yemen Data Project**
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www.yemendataproject.org/
- Overview on COVID-19 in Yemen by the World Health Organisation**
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<https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/ye>
- About the Security Council’s previous actions and other statements by the UN Security Council Press Statements regarding Yemen**
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Photo: UN Photos

Security Council Resolutions regarding Yemen

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- **The draft resolution presented to the Security Council by the UK, and which Russia vetoed**

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- **Reports by the UN Secretary-General on the conflict in Yemen**

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ABOUT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT (R2P)

- **The United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect**

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- **Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, What is R2P?**

Downloaded 19 September 2020.

www.globalr2p.org/what-is-r2p/

- **International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect**

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www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/about-rtop

- **About the International Criminal Court (ICC)**

Rome Statute governing the ICC's activities

Downloaded 19 September 2020.

www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/documents/rs-eng.pdf

- **International Coalition for the International Criminal Court**

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www.coalitionfortheicc.org/explore/international-criminal-court

- **International Criminal Court**

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www.icc-cpi.int/



Khaled Hussein Mohamed Alyemany, Yemen's Permanent Representative, addresses the Security Council meeting on the situation in his home country in October 2017

Photo: UN Photos

ABOUT THE POSITIONS OF THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

- See the sources listed in the respective role cards.

All statements by the Security Council members on the situation in Yemen can be found at the link below. Relevant statements for the current non-permanent Security Council members are from the years 2019-2020.

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