

# OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT IN YEMEN

## Causes

The 2011 popular revolts in Yemen forced then President Ali Abdullah Saleh out of power, against the backdrop of corruption and failed governance accusations. President Saleh was replaced by his deputy Abu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who attempted to address grievances. However, his plans received minimal support and was opposed by different factions. The Huthis then capitalized on popular discontent and began the consolidation of their control first in their stronghold of Sa'da and the capital Sana'a. The power expansion was facilitated by their newly forged alliance with former President Saleh. Following the Huthis' takeover of Sana'a in 2015, President Hadi and his government were forced to flee. By 25 March 2015, a Coalition of states led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) intervened at the request of President Hadi, with the aim of restoring the internationally recognized government to power.

In December 2017, the Huthis further consolidated their control after assassinating their ally and former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, and currently remain in control of most population centres, including Sana'a.

## Human Toll in numbers

[6,872+ civilians killed and 10,768+ wounded since 2015](#)

[22 million+](#) people in need of humanitarian assistance

[2.2 million](#) forced from their homes by the fighting

Nearly [394,000](#) children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition

[1 million+](#) people suffered from cholera

[2,200+](#) people were affected by diphtheria

[2 million+](#) children are out of school in Yemen

[14 million](#) people are facing famine

## International human rights and humanitarian law violations

Since 2015, the Saudi Arabia and UAE-led Coalition carried out scores of indiscriminate and disproportionate air strikes on civilians and civilians' objects, hitting homes, schools, hospitals, markets, mosques, weddings and funerals. The Coalition has also used cluster munitions, including US-manufactured types, lethal explosive weapons banned under international law.

Since the outbreak of the conflict, a consortium of states has supplied members of the Saudi Arabia and UAE-led Coalition with more than \$15 billion worth of military equipment. While the main recipient has been Saudi Arabia, [Western states have also supplied the UAE with more than \\$3.5 billion.](#)

Armed groups also stand accused of a variety of human rights abuses, including the use of imprecise weapons in residential areas. Huthi forces also deliberately [militarized hospitals](#) by positioning fighters on the roof of a fully functioning hospital in Hodeidah, placing numerous civilians inside the building in danger.

Notwithstanding the military operations, all parties to the conflict have also actively contributed to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The Coalition has [imposed restrictions](#) on the entry of essential goods and aid such as food, fuel and medical supplies into Yemen, while the Huthi de facto authorities have obstructed the movement of humanitarian aid within the country.

## Who's Who

**President Ali Abdullah Saleh**, former President of Yemen, forced to step down in 2011 after 33 years in power.

**Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi**, current President of the internationally recognized Yemeni state.

**Huthis**, armed group based in the north of the country, whose members follow Zaidism, an off-shoot of Shi'a Islam.

**Saudi Arabia and UAE-led Coalition**, a coalition of 9 Arab states initially, which intervened in the Yemen conflict on 25 March 2015 upon the request of the Hadi government.

**Security Belt, the Giants and the Elite**

All parties to the conflict have engaged in [illegal practices](#), including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment.

### Recommendations

- To all arms-supplying states: Immediately suspend arms transfers to any party to the conflict until there is no longer a substantial risk that the arms would be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of human rights or international humanitarian law in Yemen;
- All parties to the conflict, especially Coalition members, to fully comply with the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law in the planning and execution of any military operations;
- Call on all parties to the conflict to release anyone arbitrarily detained for involvement in peaceful political activities;
- Allow full and unfettered access to essential goods and humanitarian aid.

For more information about the armed conflict, civilians' struggle for survival, human toll statistics, and human rights violations and abuses by all sides, visit our Story Page – [Yemen War: No End in Sight](#)

### Resources

#### Reports

[God Only Knows If He's Alive': Enforced Disappearance and Detention Violations in Southern Yemen](#)

Perpetrators: All parties to the conflict

[Timeline](#): UAE's role in southern Yemen's secret prisons

[Stranglehold: Coalition and Huthi Obstacles Compound Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis](#)

Perpetrators: All parties to the conflict

#### Press Releases

[Ta'iz authorities must tackle child rape and abuse under militia rule](#)

Perpetrators: members of militias backed by the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition

[UAE recklessly supplying militias with windfall of Western arms](#)

Perpetrators: UAE, The Giants, the Security Belt, and Elite Forces

[When Arms Go astray: The deadly new threat of arms diversions to militias in Yemen](#)

Perpetrators: UAE, the Giants, the Security Belt, and Elite Forces

[UAE arms fair showcases Belgian weapon in use by Yemeni militias](#)

Perpetrators: UAE, the Giants, the Security Belt, and Elite Forces

[Huthi gunmen raid hospital as Hodeidah's civilians face imminent onslaught](#)

Perpetrators: Huthis, Saudi Arabia and UAE-led Coalition

[Fierce new offensive displaces tens of thousands of civilians from Hodeidah](#)

Perpetrators: All parties to the conflict

[Yemen: 24 Baha'i people, including a child, facing possible death penalty](#)

Perpetrators: Huthis

**Forces:** UAE-backed militias, unaccountable to the Yemeni government.

**Major arms supplying states:** the USA, UK and France.