

Study Guide

Security Council

GALMUN XIX



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II. Letter from the Chairpersons

Esteemed delegates,

It is our utmost pleasure to welcome you to the Security Council of this year's edition of GalMUN. After countless hours of revision, preparation, and debating, we have managed to bring the 19th edition of Galați Model United Nations to life and offer you, the delegates, a chance to grow intellectually and to critically judge global issues that require the utmost attention as we speak.

We are more than delighted that you have chosen the Security Council as your next checkpoint along your MUN journey, or perhaps, even the beginning of your diplomacy adventure. We hope to offer you a broader perspective of what international security means, how it is tackled by countries across the globe, and what impact it has on global politics, the economy, and the overall society.

We aim to not only enrich your knowledge and your critical thinking skills but also the fashion in which you construct and deliver a speech, solve issues, and work within a team. These constitute crucial abilities that everyone is required to attain throughout life. It will help you better interact with co-workers, superiors, clients, and even friends and family.

The Security Council will be focusing on addressing *Security Concerns in the Bab Al-Mandab Strait*, a topic of great importance, in addition to extensive international implications. It is, indeed, a challenging topic that is sure to put you, delegates, to the test, but it is for this reason we have chosen it. It might seem frightening at first sight, but the gains and knowledge you are about to acquire through this conference will far outweigh your current doubts and concerns.

We hope this study guide will aid you in your research process and provide you with a base for the topic at hand. You will find descriptions, and definitions, as well as summaries and brief explanations of terms, concepts, and events. Nevertheless, it is crucial that you do not solely rely on the Study Guide and look forward into the depths of the media for further information. You must have a good grasp of the topic that is to be debated, therefore, researching specific data, statistics, and especially solutions is recommended.

Finally, we wish you good luck in your research process and advise you not to be afraid of the conference. Try to immerse yourself in the topic and enjoy every moment of the debate. We, the chairpersons, are here to guide and assist you at every step!

*Kind regards,
Gătin Maria and Cosmina Niță,
Chairpersons of the Security Council at GalMUN 2024*

III. Introduction to the Committee

The Security Council is one of the six main organs of the United Nations Charter (an instrument of international law that incorporates the major principles of international affairs) and it is responsible for maintaining *international peace and security*.



It promotes the concept of friendly affairs between world nations, cooperation in the process of solving global matters and ensuring international human rights, as well as mediation in world conflicts.

The committee has the power to investigate conflicts that may lead to separation between world nations, to take military action against international actors, to impose solutions, or methods of adjusting conflicts, to emit economic sanctions, embargoes, financial restrictions, as well as travel bans and penalties, to issue ceasefire directives with a view to ending, or at least, diminishing conflict in disputed areas, to call upon Members to apply measures deemed necessary to prevent disputes and many other of the sort.

The Security Council has been headquartered in New York since 1946 when it held its first meeting. Throughout the years, it has traveled to places such as Geneva, Switzerland, and Addis Ababa, Kenya to hold meetings.

It consists of 15 Members in total, with 5 permanent, also known as the **P5** (*The United States of America, The French Republic, The Russian Federation, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, People's Republic of China*) and 10 non-permanent.

A representative of each of its members, an ambassador, must remain at the UN Headquarters at all times, should an urgent matter arise and, consequently, an immediate meeting needs to be held.

IV. Key Terms

The Houthi Movement (also known as the “*Ansar Allah*”, translated as “*Supporters of God*”) = Iran-backed, Shia Islamist political and military organization, founded by Hussain Badreddin al-Houthi, that emerged from Yemen in 1990 with a view to opposing western activity within the country and promoting equality;

The Arab Spring= Wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa between 2010 and 2011;

Saudi-led Coalition = An Arab alliance formed by Saudi Arabia, which includes countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Sudan, Morocco and Pakistan. The members have conducted military operations in Yemen, against the Houthi Movement.

political pluralism= the idea that liberal democracies' power should be dispersed among a variety of economic and ideological pressure groups and is not held by a single elite.

governorate= an administrative division in a country that is headed by a governor. Typically used in non-English speaking countries.

totalitarianism= a political system in which those in power have complete control and do not allow people freedom to oppose them.

naval mining= the act of placing self-contained explosive devices underwater, to destroy submarines and surface vessels.

The Gulf Cooperation Council= political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain , and Oman- with the mission of achieving unity among its members based on their common objectives and their similar political and cultural identities.

V. Overview of the topic

Section 1: The Importance of the Bab Al-Mandab Strait

The Bab Al-Mandab Strait, also known as the Gate of Grief or the Gate of Tears, is a narrow, 50 km long waterway that separates the Arabian Peninsula from the Horn of Africa and which, consequently, stands between the coast of Yemen and the States of Djibouti and Eritrea, two countries with foreign military involvement due to their crucial geographic positioning.

The strait forms a barrier between the Red Sea, which further leads north to the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean and ultimately, the Atlantic Ocean. To the south, it leads to the Gulf of Aiden, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and further into the waters of East Asia and the Pacific Ocean.

It is one of the most significant international passages in terms of global maritime trade, as well as geopolitics and economy. It is its strategic positioning that facilitates the linkage between eastern and western regions. Consequently, in the event of a blockage within the Red Sea territory, the flow of global commerce between the East and the West would swiftly decelerate, thus impeding on regional security, commercial stability, and the overall economic activity.

The International Maritime Organisation estimates that up to a quarter of the world's shipping passes along this route, equating to several billion tons of cargo per year. Approximately 10% of maritime oil, along with 8% of liquified gas is being traded through the Red Sea annually. The Bab Al-Mandab Strait allows the passing of over 50% of container capacity and 9% of oil shipping worldwide. It is the most efficient route for Eurasian trading operations especially and it profits the overall maritime economy and, ultimately, global economic affairs.

Section 2: The Conflict within the Bab Al-Mandab region

Notwithstanding the strait's strategic advantages, the region has been vulnerable for over twenty years and has affected, not only regional security but also the flow of commerce and maritime expenses.

Global Shipping Giants, along with numerous other trading companies, are opting for longer, more costly routes surrounding Southern Africa in order to reach Western waters, to the detriment of the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. According to the International Monetary Fund, in January 2024, the seven-day rolling average of passages through this region saw a staggering 46% drop compared to January 2023. These developments have caused the International

Chamber of Shipping (ICS), the largest organization representing shipowners, to call for international help in stabilizing the region. The civil war in Yemen is the foremost motive for the channel's uncertainty.

Section 3: The Civil War in Yemen

During the 1990s, The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen experienced a period of political, as well as social insecurity which further took its toll on regional politics, alliances, and the economy.

Subsequent to Yemen's unification of the US-backed North (Yemeni Arab Republic) and the Soviet-backed South (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen), differences in culture and religion began to emerge. The Northern leader, Ali Abdullah Saleh, claimed authority over the entire country.

The Southern minority, the Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, started to advocate for equal treatment and lower prices. The Houthis criticized Yemeni government decisions, commenting on inequality, corruption, and favoritism, therefore rising against government forces with a view to dissolving the Yemeni government and further taking control of Yemen.

During the Arab Spring protests in 2011, the liberation extremist group gained terrain, thus weakening military forces and gaining some national support. In 2014, the Houthis managed to capture much of the capital, Sana'a, and in the following years, other Western parts of the country. The Yemeni government relocated to the southern port of Aiden.

Neighboring Saudi Arabia formed the Saudi-led Coalition, for fear of Houthi's extensive control over Yemen. This intervention consisted of armed attacks on opposing forces, surveillance operations, air strikes and more, but much of the issue remains unresolved.

VI. Historical Background

In order to fully comprehend the intensity of the Bab Al-Mandab tensions, it is fundamental to grasp the unfolding of the conflict within Yemen. Events that are rooted in Yemeni politics and governance provide a foundation for the understanding of the current situation in the Red Sea region.

The historical background of the conflict within the Bab Al-Mandab Strait is grounded in times of political anarchy and corruption, social inequality, as well as religious discrepancy. It is the result of numerous social uprisings and violent interventions, along with foreign involvement in security operations, the establishment of regional alliances, and the spread of national influence within the disputed area. The foremost purpose, however, is maintaining peace and security in the Red Sea, respectively, the Bab Al-Mandab Strait.

Section 1: The roots of the conflict

1. The Yemeni Civil War (1994)

In the early 1990s, the Houthi minority began to gradually gain social influence by means of representing the voice of the ordinary people, hence advocating for concerning social issues, such as lower gas prices, equal rights, and, amongst others, fair treatment. However, the most prominent motive of all was that of a religious nature. The Houthis felt that their religious identity- the Zaydi Sect- was being overlooked and, most of all, threatened by emerging religious minorities- the Saudi-Arabian Salafi Islam specifically.



During the same period of time, Yemen was undergoing numerous political transformations which would eventually spark discontent amongst Yemeni citizens:

- The reunification of Yemen

In 1990, the northern Yemen Arab Republic and the southern People's Democratic Republic of Yemen ultimately consolidated under one flag, following a mutual agreement between the respective national leaders of the two halves on a draft unity constitution which was mainly based on the principle of equality. The unification was seen as a symbol of *Arab Unity*, although much uncertainty still remained amongst national officials. Yemeni people, however, welcomed the unification, believing that the former separation was, indeed, an imposed matter and rather artificial.

- *The leadership of one ruler*

Subsequent to the reunification, the president of northern Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, eventually became president of the entire country, although the event sparked heated debate amongst politicians and most of all, Yemeni religious minorities. Notwithstanding the former presidents' agreement on equality and security, much of the country's political power remained in the north.

- *A degrading quality of life*

As unprecedented political pluralism emerged, former ruling parties began to uncover acts of bureaucratic corruption on behalf of their opponents, thus generating a sense of general uncertainty concerning upcoming elections. Neighboring nations began imposing embargoes, in addition to financial sanctions and political isolation. Provisions of Gulf-generated aid halted, tourism gradually collapsed and regional commerce declined. The Yemeni government was having difficulties in paying salaries and was unable to properly deal with price increases.

Many of these issues took their toll on Yemeni people. Presidential elections were held once again in 1993, although the liberal manner in which these were conducted, that is, a relative freedom of the press, assembly, and women's participation, sparked controversy within the Arab Peninsula.

Political competition came as a novel concept, which was bound to favor the northern half of Yemen- the formerly British-led part, to the detriment of the formerly Soviet-led south. Southern people and, respectively, the Houthis, regarded the matter as an injustice.

In 1994, Yemeni citizens eventually rose up against the government, thus commencing a two-month civil war, which resulted in the defeat of the southern army and the steady rise of the Houthi movement. Later on, president Ali Abdullah Saleh turned to Saudi Arabia for political and military aid, in view of the recent Houthi emergence.

2. Houthi Rebellions (2004-2010)

The issues of corruption and government mismanagement prompted more Houthi insurgencies in the early 2000s. This time, however, national forces retaliated accordingly, managing to arrest and lastly, execute the Houthi leader, Badreddin Al-Houthi. Consequently, his brother, Abdoul Malik Al-Houthi, claimed leadership over the movement.

Fighting intensified in 2005, although vague signs of mutual understanding and peace initiatives between the two sides started to appear. After the Houthi military commander

surrendered, an agreement was reached. Notwithstanding this decision, sporadic armed conflicts did not cease and more temporary agreements followed throughout the years. All of these were eventually broken.

3. *Operation Scorched Earth (2009-2010)*

In military terms, the “*scorched earth*” strategy refers to the invasion of an army into enemy territory. It may be adopted by one of the fighting sides to reduce the enemy’s capacity and will to resist armed attacks, or even to retreat from one's own territory, so as to not leave anything of value to the enemy.

In the context of the Yemeni conflict, operation “*scorched earth*” meant military intervention in Houthi clashes within the Saada region and prevention against Houthi political influence over the governorate.

4. *The Yemeni Arab Spring (2011-2014)*

The *Arab Spring* prompted violent protests in the whole country. Yemeni citizens were gradually becoming more discontent with president Saleh's long-lasting mandate, speaking up on totalitarianism, corruption and poverty.



A notable difference between the Arab Spring in North Africa and that in Yemen is the centralisation and regrouping of the opposition. Freedom trends along with directed liberalist movements and chants were a lot more organized in Yemen and ultimately, stronger.

In response to the protests, president Ali Abdullah Saleh made several promises, such as not to stand for reelection at the end of his mandate, to lower income taxes and raise salaries for state employees. Even before he could fulfill these commitments, Saleh was forced to hand over power to his deputy and flee to Saudi Arabia.

5. *Houthi Takeover (2014)*

On 18th of August, 2014, the Houthi rebels seized control of the capital, San’a and proceeded to clash southern parts of the country, as well as city ports near the Red Sea coast. The Yemeni government made several proposals, such as draft constitutions and peace negotiations, none of which were met with the approval of the Houthis. Later on, the newly appointed president made his way to Saudi Arabia, in search of political and military support.

6. *The Saudi-led Coalition (ongoing)*

In 2015, Saudi Arabia, in conjunction with countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Sudan and Egypt, launched the “*Saudi-led Coalition*” under several military operations, mainly aiming at complete destruction of Houthi forces, restoring the Yemeni government and aiding Yemeni citizens. Some of the most notable military operations were:

- *Operation Decisive Storm (2015)*

It entailed airstrikes, naval blockades and violent attacks on Houthi rebels in Yemen, subsequent to president’s Hadi plea for assistance in Saudi Arabia. The respective operation was meant to dissolve Houthi militia from the Aiden region and weaken its forces.

- *Operation Restoring Hope (2015)*

Operation “Restoring Hope” was but a succession of the previous military strategy, only this time, the focus turned more to humanitarian aid delivery and proposing ceasefire initiatives.

- *Operation Golden Arrow (2017)*

This military insurgency was conducted by the Yemeni government, with support from Arabian nations, in order to deter Houthi attacks along the Red Sea Coastline. The main disputed area within the region was the *Bab Al-Mandab Strait*.

Operation “*Golden Arrow*” proved itself to work efficiently in favor of the national forces, as the Yemeni government succeeded in securing more than 75 km of the coastline, as well as initiating negotiation talks regarding the maritime region. Nevertheless, tensions have still not eased.

During this time, the Saudi-led Coalition has gained international support from several western powers, including the United States, The French Republic and to some extent, the Federal Republic of Germany. Diplomatic backing and arms sales have been the most frequent forms of support provided by these nations.

Timeline

1990

- Yemen unifies under one flag and one president;
- Political protests begin emerging;
- The Houthi Movement starts to gain support;

1993

- The first presidential elections to allow women to participate take place in Yemen;
- Yemen undergoes national, economic, and political insecurities;

1994

- The first Yemeni Civil War breaks out;
- President Saleh turned to Saudi Arabia for support in dissolving the Houthis;

2004

- Houthi leader Badreddin Al-Houthi is captured and executed;

2005

- The Houthis reach some peace agreements with the Yemeni government but all of them are eventually broken;

2011

- The Arab Spring reaches Yemen and gives way to protests all across the country;
- The Houthis seize control of certain regions of Yemen and continuously gain more backing;
- Yemeni President Saleh is forced to flee to Saudi Arabia;

2014

- The Houthis overtake the capital of Yemen, San'a, and seize several parts of the Red Sea Coastline, including the *Bab Al-Mandab Strait*;

2015

- The Saudi-led Coalition begins;
- The movement gains more and more military and political support from foreign nations.

VII. Past Actions

Throughout the years, the international community has made strides so as to alleviate the conflict within the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and reach sustainable peace agreements with the Houthi community. Such initiatives, however, have not been well received by the liberation rebels, who continue to resist government forces and counterattack national military insurgencies.

The new key pillar of this conflict is the *Bab Al-Mandab Strait*, which has been under Houthi control for over a decade. Ever since the rebels seized *the Island of Perim*, the entrance to the Red Sea has been maneuvered entirely by Houthi law and it is this strategic positioning that offers the rebel movement the advantage over other coastal nations, such as Djibouti, or Eritrea.



Section 1: Houthi Involvement

The Houthi rebels have carried out countless attacks on passing ships, thus posing a serious threat on international maritime security, trade and economy. At present, its vulnerable state favors the deceleration of maritime commerce and its efficiency overall. More and more companies opt for longer maritime routes to the detriment of the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, so as to avoid being embroiled in a potential attack. This strategy, although secure, involves the consumption of more energy, resources, capital and interrupts the natural flow of trade.

Current threats within the region recount missile attacks, drone strikes, and naval mining, the latter being amongst the most dangerous.

The Houthis have planted sea mines all over, but not limited to the Red Sea coast. Naval mining has also been conducted within the Gulf of Aden and neighboring Arabian seas, thus ensuring that passing vessels, especially US-owned, get destroyed. Most explosives are of the floating type and can be easily spotted and further reported. Nevertheless, countless other naval mines have succeeded in carrying out their original purpose. In 2021, the Saudi-led Coalition reported having captured 171 sea mines.

In response to these threats, the international community has opted for security measures and better vessel infrastructure, although the military force is still in the lead.

Section 2: Foreign Involvement

- The United Nations

The United Nations has been actively involved in finding viable peace solutions and sustainable political frameworks to mediate the conflict. One significant such advancement is *the Stockholm Agreement*¹, which involved diplomatic peace negotiations and the emission of resolutions in accordance with the interests of both parties involved.

The agreement consists of three subsections, each focusing on the maintenance of security within smaller areas, as well as agreements on prisoner exchanges. Security measures, such as an immediate ceasefire within the regions near the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ras Issa, an instant militia retreat, constant UN involvement and supervision, the centralization of revenue earned through Red Sea commerce, as well as an end to military intervention and protests were discussed and further introduced in Security Council resolutions. This initiative was ultimately materialized through the *UNMHA project*.

UNMHA- United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement

The UNMHA project was proposed during UN meetings in 2018 and, ultimately, introduced in Security Council resolutions nr 2451 and 2452, with a view to ensuring efficiency and consistency in the implementation of the previously mentioned Stockholm Agreement.

Its foremost focus was facilitating discussions between opposite parties in Yemen, imposing ceasefire monitoring mechanisms, increasing economic activity in the coastal city of Hudaydah and the protection of Red Sea regions.

The appointed UN crew had the responsibility to ensure that civilian nature is maintained in the three ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ras Issa and that, ultimately, there is peace between the two sides.

Following the implementation of these initiatives, the formerly brokered ceasefire was swiftly broken by both parties, each of them claiming provocation and enemy invasion.

Another significant UN-led peace approach was determined by the *Kuwait Talks*, which mainly tackled the issue of prisoners, power sharing and a unified government.

¹ https://unmha.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/stockholm_agreement.pdf

- The Saudi-led Coalition

The Arabian Coalition has been the primary provider of arms, military forces, political backing, and war strategy to Yemen and its efforts have gone beyond involvement in the Yemeni Civil War.

Leading countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have highly invested in infrastructure, maritime ports, and defense all across the region and further into the Island of Socotra, Djibouti, and inland countries within Africa. The UAE has implemented the “*chain of ports*” strategy, thus seeking to expand maritime power across the Gulf of Aiden and surrounding African coastal nations.

The Gulf Cooperation Council has also held meetings and brokered deals regarding the matter, although the coalition’s involvement has been most prominent through its member states and their respective actions, rather than as an official body.

- US Involvement

The United States began offering its support ever since the Saudi-led Coalition started activating within the conflict. The US military strategy has mainly relied on ship deployment and military base construction.

The United States has taken direct initiative and sent in military vessels to counterattack Houthi projectiles, drones, naval mines, or anything of the sort. The intensity of its military and political support for the Saudi-led Coalition is indisputable. Nevertheless, the US’s more recent approach is based on a gradual retreat and, ultimately, a cease of its involvement within the region of the Arabian Waters.

VIII. Legal Framework

There have been issued several documents that assess the gravity of the conflict, as well as potential solutions that can be implemented to ease tensions within Yemen and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. Such official documents provide a strong legal basis for arguments related to the issue and further establish a defined legal ground for potential solutions and peacekeeping prospects.

Section I: The International Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS)

The United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea primarily provides a legal framework that seeks to ensure maritime security, in addition to freedom of navigation and further proceeds to tackle issues related to the delineation of different types of maritime zones, management of maritime life, and even maritime scientific research.

Tensions within the Bab Al-Mandab have raised several concerns regarding the global safety of navigation and the perpetuated vulnerability of the region. Through their actions, the Houthis have managed to breach numerous articles of this specific convention. Some of those that ought to be considered are:

- *Article 38- Right of Transit passage*

Article 38 of the *UNCLOS* mentions that all ships and aircrafts benefit from the right to transit through straits that are used for international navigation.

- *Article 39- Duties of ships and aircraft during transit passage*

Article 39 of the same convention outlines the standard regulations that must be followed by passing ships or aircraft when entering a certain maritime zone.

- *Article 42- Laws and regulations of States bordering straits relating to transit passage*

This article enumerates the duties that bordering states shall abide by when encountering passing vessels or aircraft, or even specific regulations that bordering states must follow to ensure safe passage.

[Section 2: Security Council Resolution 1816 \(2008\)](#)

Resolution nr. 1816 addresses the issue of piracy within the Horn of Africa and, thus, urges all coastal nations to report acts of piracy, armed robbery and maritime theft, to cooperate with the *International Maritime Organisation* in regards with maritime safety, to provide technical assistance to countries dealing with such safety matters and further provide reports regarding the evolution of the situation to the United Nations.

[Section 3: Security Council Resolution 2216 \(2015\)](#)

The respective document stresses the importance of a ceasefire within the disputed region and urges attacking sides to refrain from provocation and fighting initiatives, to restore diplomatic talks and implement a consensus-based political solution. The Houthis are urged to cease armed attacks on passing vessels, Yemeni government forces and civilians, as well as withdraw forces from seized areas, especially the capital, San'a.

Negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council are deemed indispensable.

[Section 4: Security Council Resolution 2452 \(2019\)](#)

Resolution nr. 2452 recalls the *Hudaydah Agreement* and further analyzes novel strategies that may be able to provide support in this relation. The United Nations agreed upon a mission aimed at backing the formerly brokered agreement as well as ensuring that both parties abide by it. It also plans to monitor all activity in the region and, ultimately, seek more and more involvement later on.

[Section 5: The Treaty of Jeddah \(2000\)](#)

The Treaty of Jeddah marks the beginning of a long-lasting political cooperation between the Republic of Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, thus establishing specific ground geographical maritime delimitations, as well as taking into account formerly held negotiation and cooperation talks between the two countries.

IX. Current Situation

Apart from the ongoing civil war and the escalating political tensions that are rapidly spreading throughout the entire Arabian Peninsula and into other regions, the Democratic Republic of Yemen is also undergoing a rough period of political separation and mismanagement.

Shipping giants have changed their commerce route and they now opt for longer, more costly maritime ways, to the detriment of the dangers of the Red Sea. As a result, various oil-dependent south-Asian countries face economic challenges. They are now under pressure to encounter novel trading partners, develop more effective strategies and, in some cases, potentially find radical alternatives to oil use and reliance.



At present, the Houthis conduct missions in solidarity with Palestinians and correlate their attacks with vengeance for the escalating conflict within the Gaza Strip. Houthi rebels claim that their sole ambition is to destroy ships of either US, or Israeli descent, intending to show support to their arab counterparts, although when faced with the situation, the Ansar Allah grouping takes no notice of the nationality, nor of the flag under which vessels travel and proceed with the attacks.

X. Main Actors

Section 1: The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

At present, the Yemeni government is taking steps towards halting Houthi advances and violent attacks, as well as restoring its national integrity and overall status within the Arab Peninsula. The country faces drastic national insecurity, political instability and food scarcity, factors which constitute, arguably, one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

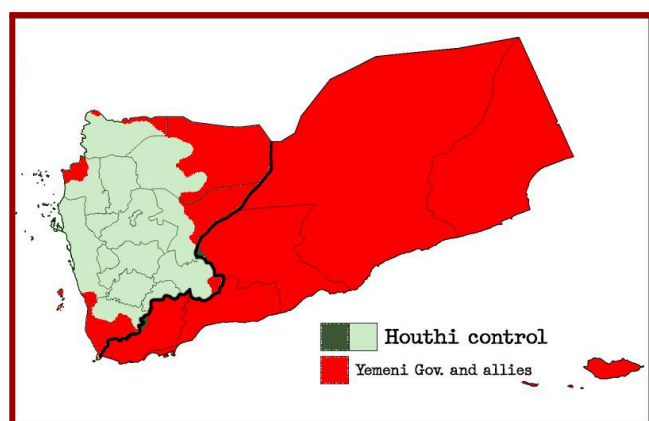


Neighboring nations and other global powers seek involvement in the conflict by providing weaponry, military forces, humanitarian aid, financial investments in maritime facility development, and, lastly, diplomacy. Meanwhile, Yemen is undergoing national separation.

After the UN-brokered ceasefire in 2022, tensions have remained rather low and both parties seemed to have refrained from creating major escalatory events. More talks between the Ansar Allah and the Yemeni government have been held by various European countries, although no agreement has managed to keep the peace for long after its legitimization.

The Bab Al-Mandab area, along with the majority of coastal regions, currently functions under Ansar Allah autonomy, meaning that no stable legal framework is imposed so as to back political decisions taken by the Houthis.

Yemen's main task is to restore Yemeni jurisdiction over areas that currently operate under Ansar Allah law and further reach agreements that will potentially lead to a harmonious political state, or at least, a long-lasting peace between the two. Debates related to whether or not the Ansar Allah grouping should be given political recognition by the Yemeni government are also being held.



Section 2: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's geographical positioning, as well as political ties with neighboring Yemen, prompted the kingdom to take immediate action, in response to Houthi's initial attacks back in 2014. The Saudi-led Coalition has been operating and still operates within the Gulf region and its mission has yet to change.



Saudi Arabia has been building maritime ports along the coastal regions of Africa, the Gulf of Aiden, as well as Socotra Island, therefore protecting maritime borders. The Saudi-led Coalition also sought to intervene and has recently initiated a maritime blockade operation, surrounding the Bab Al-Mandab Strait. On the surface, Saudi Arabia's intentions appear to limit themselves to the securing of the Arabian Peninsula and the halting of Iranian influence within the Arab sphere. However, various other economic factors should be taken into consideration when assessing Saudi Arabia's stance.

By means of extensive maritime influence, the country has succeeded in imposing taxes and restrictions and in further asserting territorial authority altogether, thus gathering the resources necessary to enhance commercial interests all over the Red Sea region.

In January 2020, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia formed *The Council of Arab States bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aiden*², with a view to promoting a sense of awareness, importance and coordination regarding the disputing areas.



2

https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2020/1/6/06-01-2020-uae-red-sea?fbclid=IwAR11zR0Kn_xba62BTskTNGF00D8VyX7-3z26Uc_p3VGyt3zD4add-zMoX2z4_aem_AUye-zKjVHOCxm97jd1AFap_tYzHhMHZZg9sEV41i3MKjcNvfmSPM5_BW73GEJKjR--k

Section 3: The United States of America

Dissolving terrorism within the Arabian world and maintaining close ties with Saudi Arabia have constituted the main pillars of the approach that the US has adopted. It has been actively involved in the conflict by deploying military troops, sending in maritime forces, undergoing surveillance operations and providing weapons to the Gulf countries.



The Trump Administration adopted a “*maximum pressure*” approach towards the ongoing conflict, which ultimately became highly controversial and extremely detrimental to the US economy and external politics.

The United States’ military expansion within Djibouti has also drawn attention to its political involvement in the Red Sea area. Nevertheless, its ambitions seem to also derive from Eurasian competition, that is Russia and China, which are also building maritime infrastructure along the coastline. More recently, the US seems to be economically battling with China, now on African land and so its intentions to proceed in building military bases and maritime ports along the coast are just a mere reflection of Washington-Beijing ongoing tensions.

Statistics show that the US has reached oil security and no longer relies on countries, such as Saudi Arabia, to export resources. Amongst others, America is now confident in internal production and so plans on minimizing, if not completely reducing, US involvement in the conflict.

On February 4, 2021, President Biden announced an end of U.S. support for offensive operations carried out by the Saudi-led Arab coalition in its war in Yemen, but promised an ongoing U.S. commitment to defensive ones, which mainly consists of the interception of Houthi-launched missiles and drones into Saudi territories.

Section 4: United Arab Emirates

The UAE mainly follows the same stance as Saudi Arabia, that is, a complete maritime monopoly over the Gulf. After countless strides to control the Gulf of Aiden, subsequent to initial Houthi rebellions in 1990, the United Arab Emirates developed the “chain of ports” strategy and further proceeded to expand its territorial influence.

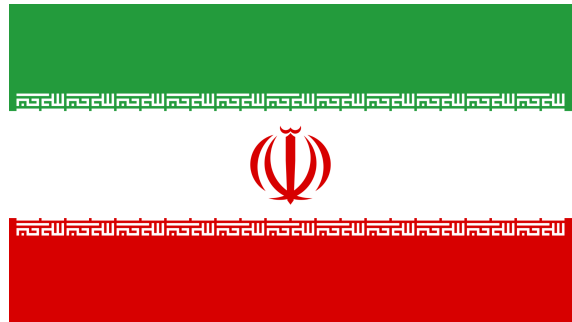


The Yemeni government's approval of the establishment of a free trade zone in Aden was a decision that raised Abu Dhabi's concerns regarding how it would greatly affect the activity in Jebel Ali port in Dubai.

The UAE has been activating through the Saudi-led Coalition but has also had multiple ships seized by Houthi rebels. Even though its intentions have become more than clear throughout the years, its primary goal, which is defeating Houthi forces, coincides with that of Yemen. As long as this objective doesn't change, the two nations are to remain politically allied.

Section 5: The Islamic Republic of Iran

The Republic of Iran's position within the Bab Al-Mandab conflict is one of absolute importance, as it is the sole nation that officially recognizes the Ansar Allah jurisdiction over the western part of Yemen.



Iran is the main weaponry seller and political supporter of the Houthis, as it is also the place where the rebels initially formed and emerged as we know them today. Most of all, Iran serves as an ideological inspiration, a philosophical ground for the Houthis, an aspect which is also apparent in their own political slogan: “*God is great, death to America, death to Israel, a curse upon the Jews, victory to Islam.*”

Notwithstanding Iran's strong sphere of influence, the Houthis don't necessarily identify themselves as subordinates of the country, nor do they conduct their missions in collaboration with the Iranian government. It seems that their devotion to Iranian ruling and the desire to perpetuate Iranian influence are the true pillars of their ambitions in the Arabian Peninsula.

It is fundamental to understand Iran's internal politics in order to fully grasp the importance of the Houthi rebels to its purpose.

Subsequent to a string of rebellions in the 70s, Iran experienced a great deal of political tensions and uncertainty, events which led to the *Iranian Revolution*. The outcome of the conflict was the dissolving of the liberal, west-inclined monarchy and the further establishment of an *Islamic republic*, a regime that follows religious principles that often impede on basic human rights and freedom of any kind.

Iran is on a mission to dissolve Western influence within the Arab world and relies on the Houthis to perform this act further into the territories that Iranian authorities do not reach. For this reason, the Houthis would no longer exist without Iranian financing and, respectively, Iran's ambitions in the gulf would ultimately become hopeless.

Section 6: Other Secondary Stances

1. The Republic of Djibouti

The Republic of Djibouti is at a distance of only 32 km from the Yemeni coastline and less than 20 km from the Island of Perim, thus making its geographical position the most vulnerable and insecure of all.

Currently, Djibouti appears to be the main military hub within Africa, as it hosts the largest American military basis within the whole continent, as well as other Italian, Japanese, Chinese and French military centers.

2. People's Republic of China

Over the past decades, China has been investing in the African economy, production levels and infrastructure, therefore securing external economic relations, as well as oil import from Arab countries and asserting Chinese influence over the region.

China's newest ambitions seem to revolve around making a profit, causing regional states to depend on its revenues and resources and, ultimately, prevail in the Washington-Beijing competition.

XI. Points To Be Addressed

- How does the historical background affect the ongoing conflict within the Bab Al-Mandab Strait?
- What kind of involvement has there been in the region and which member states seem to have contributed the most?
- How do member states handle the cause that is being presented and supported by the Houthi grouping?
- How does the vulnerability of the Bab Al-Mandab Strait affect each member state?
- What does the conflict mean for the countries that rely on Aab resources?
- What legal framework is there to question malicious activity within the disputed maritime region?
- What are the prospects in case of a definitive blockade of the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and what other measures would be taken in this regard?
- What approach is there to making justice to both parties involved in the conflict?
- How can member states cooperate with Ansar Allah so as to develop sustainable legal frameworks in occupied regions within Yemen?
- What other political strategies can member states propose so as to take into consideration the demands of both parties?
- How can member states find viable solutions so as to ensure effective cooperation between the Yemeni government and the Ansar Allah grouping?
- How will member states divide power, if necessary, within the region, once the matter is settled?
- How can global security be preserved in the area?

XII. Further Reading

- Historical Background

1. [History and background](#)
2. [History and background](#)
3. [Operation Decisive Storm](#)
4. [Operation Golden Arrow](#)
5. [Overview](#)
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7. [watch](#)- Yemen and the Economy

- Past Actions

1. [History, Strategic Importance, Foreign Involvement](#)
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3. [Maritime-Security-in-The-Southern-Red-Sea-and-Bab-al-Mandeb.pdf](#)
4. [Houthi Naval Mines](#)
5. [UN Security Council Meeting 2024](#)
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3. [iran's-support-houthis-what-know](#)