Yemen Crisis

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1 Introduction

- The Yemeni Civil War is an ongoing conflict that began in 2015 between two factions claiming to constitute the Yemeni government, along with their supporters and allies. Southern separatists and forces loyal to the government of Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, based in Aden, have clashed with Houthi forces and forces loyal to the former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.
- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant have also carried out attacks, with AQAP controlling swaths of territory in the hinterlands, and along stretches of the coast.
- In March, a Houthi offensive began with fighting in the Taiz Governorate. By the end of March, Taiz, Mocha, and Lahij fell to the Houthis and they reached the outskirts of Aden, the seat of power for Hadi’s government.
- On 25 March, Hadi fled the country. On the same day, a coalition led by Saudi Arabia launched military operations by using airstrikes to restore the former Yemeni government and the United States provided intelligence and logistical support for the campaign. As of 2 May, at least 400 civilians have died in Aden.

2 Houthis and their uprising

- The Houthis are followers of the Shia Zaidi sect, the faith of around a third of Yemen’s population. Officially known as Ansarallah (the partisans of God), the group began as a movement preaching tolerance and peace in the Zaidi stronghold of North Yemen in the early 1990s.
- After some protests pitted it against the government, the group launched an insurgency in 2004 against the then ruler Ali Abdullah Saleh that lasted till 2010. Their opponents view them as a proxy of Shia Iran. The group is hostile to the United States but has also vowed to eradicate al-Qaeda. They participated in the 2011 Arab Spring inspired revolution in Yemen that replaced Saleh with Abdrahbu Mansour Hadi.
- It is the failure of the transitional government—which was set up with help from the Gulf Cooperation Council in 2012—to accommodate the Houthis’ interests that fuelled the insurgency.
- The Houthis have a large degree of control over many areas of northwestern Yemen, including over the capital, Sana’a.
- The Houthis have been fighting against the government of the former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.
- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant have also carried out attacks, with AQAP controlling swaths of territory in the hinterlands, and along stretches of the coast.
- The al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) leads another insurgency in the southeast along with the Ansar al-Sharia; this one is a Sunni Islamist rebellion.
- The regional intervention against the Houthis is bound to strengthen the AQAP. The inability of the ineffectual transitional government to effectively govern a nation that has steadily been divided on sectarian lines, and the weakening of the economy, has helped the various insurgent forces strengthen themselves.
- The Houthi forces’ consolidation in the south could have presented an opportunity for a new, more inclusive and legitimate government following a ceasefire, but that option is now ruled out as the conflict has been effectively regionalised with the Saudi intervention.

3 Possible reasons behind this crisis

There are various reasons suggested like:

1. During the 1970's and 1980's the Saudi government intervened in Yemen by building madrassas that spread Wahabism which is blatantly anti-Shiite. The Zaydi community (a sect of Shi'a Islam) obviously was threatened by this and a man named Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi decided to organize his people and created a movement that is now named after him(Houthi movement). Soon the movement evolved into an insurgency against the government which is presently the Yemen crisis.
2. Yemen has a Zaidi community, which practises a version of Shiite Islam. They are the majority in the far north but the minority in the country. Then there is a majority Shafi'i population, who follow a version of Sunni Islam. These communities have intermarried and they pray in each other’s mosques. While some regional divides and divisions in the political economy sometimes overlap with the Zaidi-Shafi’i divides, there’s no history of sectarian conflict in Yemen. To frame it in terms of sectarian conflict is therefore misleading.
3. Yemen is currently in a state of crisis as fighting between Houthi rebels and forces loyal to President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi devastates the country. In addition to the gun battles and shelling in major cities, there have been weeks of airstrikes by a Saudi-led coalition against the Houthis, which have leveled buildings and infrastructure.

Facts:
- Houthis:
  The rebel group controls nine of 21 provinces now
- Saudi-led coalition:
  Here are some of those who are participating and what they are deploying:
  - Saudi Arabia: 100 fighter jets, 150,000 soldiers and some naval units
  - UAE: 30 fighter jets
  - Bahrain: 15 fighter jets
  - Kuwait: 15 fighter jets
  - Qatar: 10 fighter jets
  - Jordan: 6 fighter jets
  - Sudan: 3 fighter jets
  - Egypt: naval and air forces involved.
- Yemeni security forces:
  The military is now split as units that support Mr. Hadi, units that support the Houthis, and units that support a still-influential Saleh, who is in the Houthi camp for now
- Popular Resistance Committees:
  Militia loyal to Hadi in his stronghold of south Yemen.
- AQAP: Mr. Hadi and Houthis are fighting al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which has staged several attacks in the country and is strong in the south. Active since 2009. AQAP has taken advantage of the power struggle.
4 Involvement of outsiders in Yemen and its reasons

- IS: A new group of militants inspired by the Islamic State group has claimed major attacks, including suicide bombings which killed at least 142 people at Shia mosques in Sana’a.
- U.S.: CIA drones have continued to target top AQAP leaders, but the campaign has suffered from Mr. Hadi’s absence. Last week, U.S. military advisers were withdrawn from a southern base as al-Qaeda militants seized a nearby city.

4 Involvement of outsiders in Yemen and its reasons

- The operation called “Operation Decisive Storm” is being conducted by a coalition including such countries as the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait. The military intervention taken by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Yemen may be justified on the account of “intervention by invitation”.
- For several years, the United States has been fighting a quiet war there with the cooperation of the Yemeni government, mostly using drones and Special Forces, against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Many counterterrorism officials see AQAP as a uniquely dangerous terrorist group from a U.S. perspective because it has demonstrated both the will and the capacity to attack U.S. targets.
- On 25 March 2015, the international community witnessed another massive campaign of destruction in the form of a military intervention against the Houthis in Yemen launched by Saudi Arabia because Yemen is located very near, indeed right next to, Saudi Arabia and that matters a great deal. For reasons of history and geography, the Saudis are deeply interested, indeed arguably obsessed, with developments in Yemen. It is simply impossible for them to stand aside while an Iranian-backed militia takes over in Yemen.
- The more important point is that in particular Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states are increasingly viewing Yemen and the Houthis through the lens of a war between Saudis and Iran. When they look at the Houthis they see an Iranian threat, and that is shaping the conflict dynamics inside of Yemen.
- Iran’s involvement in Yemen crisis via supporting Houthi rebels.

GCC

The Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] was established in an agreement concluded on 25 May 1981 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia between: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE. These countries declared that the GCC is established in view of the special relations between them, their similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny and common objective.

5 Impact on Oil Commodity

- Months of fighting between Houthi rebels and a military coalition led by neighbouring Saudi Arabia has starved Yemen of fuel, leaving residents and aid workers stranded—people can’t get to work, the injured can’t be taken to hospitals, authorities can’t run basic services such as water supplies.
- $14 a gallon is the price of fuel in the black-market, five times the pre-conflict rates. Only 20% of the fuel Yemenis need to transport food, run their water systems, and treat their sick is getting through.
- The crisis is so acute, said Oxfam’s country director in Yemen, Phillippe Clerc, that “shortages could kill more people than bullets or bombs”.
- Yemen produced more than 440,000 barrels a day before the 2011 anti-government protests. With Yemen’s oil infrastructure crippled after the repeated air attacks that began late March and with oil companies pulling out, the country has been increasingly dependent on imports.
- With Houthi rebels in control of the key Hodeidah port, the second biggest in the country after Aden, and with many of the Saudi airstrikes concentrated on these parts, a key oil supply route has been choked.
- About 300,000 tonnes of the fuel come into Yemen every month. But at the end of June, the UN estimated that Yemen was getting only 11 per cent of that fuel.
6 Indian Diaspora and India’s role in Yemen crisis

- India and Yemen have deep rooted historical, cultural and trade relations. Both countries have a long history of people-to-people contacts dating back to several centuries.
- A large number of Indian nationals, including Hindus, Muslims and Parsis, had lived in Aden since mid-1880s.
- The number of Indian nationals, which was estimated around 14000 in 2010, declined to an estimated 5000 by June 2011 following political instability and violence in the country. However, only around 3000 Indians are registered with the Embassy.
- Most of the Indians living in Yemen comprise of nurses, hospital staff, university professors, professionals, white collar workers, IT professionals, managerial and clerical staff in private sector, including oil companies, and skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- The paramedical personnel and hospital staff forms the dominant group and their number exceeds 2000. A vast majority of the Indians hail from Kerala but a few others belong to other states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.
- As the Houthi militants are coming near to the shore of Aden, Yemen Crisis is touching sky. India has carried out rescue operation “Operation Rahat” in Yemen to evacuate Indians from the Yemen’s war zones. The evacuation was controlled from a third country, Djibouti.
- Indian navy warships- INS Mumbai, INS Sumitra along with Indian Airforce’s three M7 Hercules and some attack helicopters are carrying out the operation Rahat in Yemen.
- India has rescued 3500 people so far from the burning Yemen. Operation Rahat was started when Saudi Arab pulled the wire of war against Houthi. Saudi Arab has given a three hour window to India to land on the Sana’a Airstrips as they are holding the power there.
- The need to launch a perilous operation at high cost has come about because Indians based in Yemen refused to heed government advisories issued since January 2015 to leave the country. The reasons for staying back are largely economic: many Indians would brave personal harm and keep their jobs there rather than risk returning to a tenuous future in India. In some situations, the problem is that their employers hold their passports and wages. The Indian government must negotiate better working conditions for expatriates.