



stand

STAND Summary:

YEMEN

TIMELINE

Local Grievances and Civil War

The Houthis, rebel fighters who predominantly belong to the Zaidi Shia sect of Islam, have fought the government in Yemen for decades, fueled by grievances involving the distribution of political and economic resources. After massive cuts to fuel subsidies, the Houthis swept into Sana'a and captured the capital on September 21, 2014, and ultimately forced the government to restore the subsidies and commit to a unity government.

Unhappy with a constitutional proposal to divide Yemen into six federal regions, the Houthis once again seized the presidential compound in Sana'a on January 20, 2015, compelling President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi to resign.

After Hadi fled from the capital, he declared that he remained the president, sparking clashes between government forces and the Houthis, who were also backed by forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Fighting between the two factions has since raged for several years despite some attempts at peace sponsored by the United Nations.

Foreign Intervention

Following a series of early victories by Houthi forces, Saudi Arabia and eight other Sunni Arab states launched a military intervention in support of President Hadi.

Although this coalition has repeatedly justified its intervention by claiming that the Houthis are an Iranian proxy, this claim does not hold up under scrutiny. Although Iran has provided minor economic and military support to the Houthis, there is no evidence that this has led to significant influence over their actions.

The United States and the United Kingdom have provided significant support to the coalition's campaign, selling Saudi Arabia many of the weapons they use in Yemen and providing intelligence and logistical support.

1992: The Houthis begin as a moderate theological movement.

2004: Facing political and economic marginalization, the Houthis launch an insurgency.

2005: The Houthis and government forces agree to a ceasefire, but sporadic fighting continues for the next five years.

2011: Arab Spring protests begin in the streets of Sana'a, the capital of Yemen.

2014: After fuel subsidy cuts, Houthi fighters seize control of Sana'a and gain political influence after negotiating an agreement.

2015: Feeling threatened by a proposal to split Yemen into six federal regions, the Houthis capture the presidential palace in Sana'a; just two months later, the civil war begins.

2016: Peace talks sponsored by the United Nations begin between the government, the Houthis, and the General People's Congress of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

2019: Government and separatists sign a power-sharing agreement to end conflict in southern Yemen.

2021: The U.S. announces that it will stop supporting any of Saudi Arabia's offensive missions in Yemen, but does not make substantive changes.

Sources: [Arab Center Washington DC](#), [BBC](#)

Humanitarian Crisis

The Yemeni people have faced a massive humanitarian crisis as a result of the civil war. Although all sides have been accused of human rights abuses, the United Nations attributes the majority of civilian casualties to the coalition led by Saudi Arabia. More than 12,000 civilians have been killed in direct attacks, 4 million have been internally displaced, and 16 million are currently facing hunger.

Approximately 20 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Multiple outbreaks of disease, first cholera and then COVID-19, have only exacerbated the crisis.

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