



YEMEN

IN 2019: CAUSES, CRISIS AND CONSEQUENCES

Yemen in 2019: Causes, Crisis and Consequences

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FOREWORD

A New EU, and a New Opportunity for Yemen

Ben Lowings

PREFACE

This research by the Brussels International Center for Research and Human Rights represents the culmination of some months of research and development by our team. Topics selected demonstrate a range of crucial themes that have been analyzed in different ways. The Conflict in Yemen and Coup-Proofing in Yemen represent different analyses in conflict research. The former attempts an actor-map that aims towards building greater technical insight regarding the ground situation. The latter focuses on the underlying political factors that undermined Yemen's stability during the former regime of Saleh. Dissensus at the Security Council, shows, through a study on UN Security Council Resolution language, how the international community has become reluctant to name and blame specific actors in the Yemen conflict. A Weapon of War in Yemen focuses specifically on the humanitarian food assistance and how aid has become highly politicized. Yemeni Women in Peace Processes, provides an imperative gender lens on the conflict, and a reminder for the necessity of including the perspective of women in any political settlement.

We believe that this research is crucial in order to build greater and more comprehensive analyses on Yemen, and that this can be better used by policy-makers in order to help de-escalate and reach a conclusion to the crisis. Each chapter has recommendations towards specific policy makers; however, the entire work is itself a document addressed to relevant parties. And here, there is one party that we would like to address specifically in this foreword, the European Union (EU).

THE EU IN YEMEN

The European Union (EU) is at the start of a new political chapter, given the recent May 2019 Parliamentary elections, and the upcoming appointments of the new Commission, and other senior jobs such as the High Representative. While these discussions are ongoing, it is critical for the Union to remain involved with its many international responsibilities, one of which continues to be catastrophic.

The war in Yemen continues into 2019, causing immeasurable suffering to its people. There was renewed optimism in a United Nations (UN)

led process in December 2018 following the signing of an agreement in Stockholm, under the supervision of UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, between representatives of President Hadi's government and the Houthi insurgency. The Stockholm Agreement sought to ease fighting in key centers of conflict in the country, including Hodeida for instance, by requesting an immediate ceasefire and allowing humanitarian assistance into the country. However, since then fighting has continued despite these promises of a ceasefire.

The EU, meanwhile, has offered a response very textbook in nature, encapsulated by its own EU-Yemen Relations Factsheet 1 on the site of the European External Action Service (EEAS). According to the Factsheet, the EU is engaged with the Yemen conflict in three main areas:

1. Political support, security and human rights
2. Humanitarian assistance
3. Development assistance

Rather than a retread of this information however, what is interesting is that what this practically amounts to is an enormous financial contribution of more than €544 million since 2015, across all capacity building, humanitarian, development projects and the like. Otherwise, little else is offered beyond a simple "strong support to the United Nations-led process". What this support is, is rather dependent upon the UN and its Special Envoy. For instance, there have been two European Council conclusions adopted regarding Yemen since 2018. The first of which, adopted on 25 June 2018 ², expressed concern in Yemen's deterioration and called upon "all sides" to come together for political negotiations. The second, adopted on 18 February 2019 ³,

1 The Delegation of the European Union to Yemen. *EU-Yemen Relations, Factsheet*. (2018). [Online] Available at : https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/yemen/53984/eu-yemen-relations-factsheet_en

2 Council of the European Union. *Council Conclusions on Yemen (25 June 2018)*. 10369/18. (2018). [Online] Available at : <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10369-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

3 Council of the European Union. *Council Conclusions on Yemen (18 February 2019)*. 6179/19. (2019).

endorsed the Stockholm Agreement and welcomed the UN's most recent efforts including its most recent UN Security Council Resolutions. This was despite the fact that reports of violations of the Stockholm Agreement had already been circulating since January.

Regardless, the lack of a particular and definitive EU position on Yemen, beyond that of the UN, is curious given the investment of some of its Member States. Sweden is a key player for example, with one of its nationals, Griffiths, being the Special Envoy, and the aforementioned Stockholm being the center of the most recent peace talks. More controversially, France and the United Kingdom are engaged insofar as they have provided technical assistance to the Arab Coalition supporting Hadi's government, though both States have appeared to be discrete about this.

2019 AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A BETTER POSITION

Returning to the EU, Yemen demonstrates the problematic, yet typical ⁴, problems with effective EU-level foreign policy. There is a lack of a distinctive position, a failure to efficiently respond to changing realities on the ground, and Member States undermining the unity of any European position by going their own way. In order to address these challenges, should the EU wish to alleviate some of the suffering of Yemen's people, there are a few steps that the EU should implement, and the new cycle of MEPs and the new Commission provides a perfect opportunity to renew and orientate its policy:

The EU Should Urgently Convene a New European Council Meeting to Address Yemen

It is unacceptable that given the serious and ongoing nature of the Yemen conflict that

[Online] Available at : <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6179-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

⁴ These same problems regarding EU foreign policy are almost identical in the Libyan context for example, see: Ben Lowings. *Libya: The Need for a New International Approach*. Brussels International Center for Research and Human Rights. (2019).

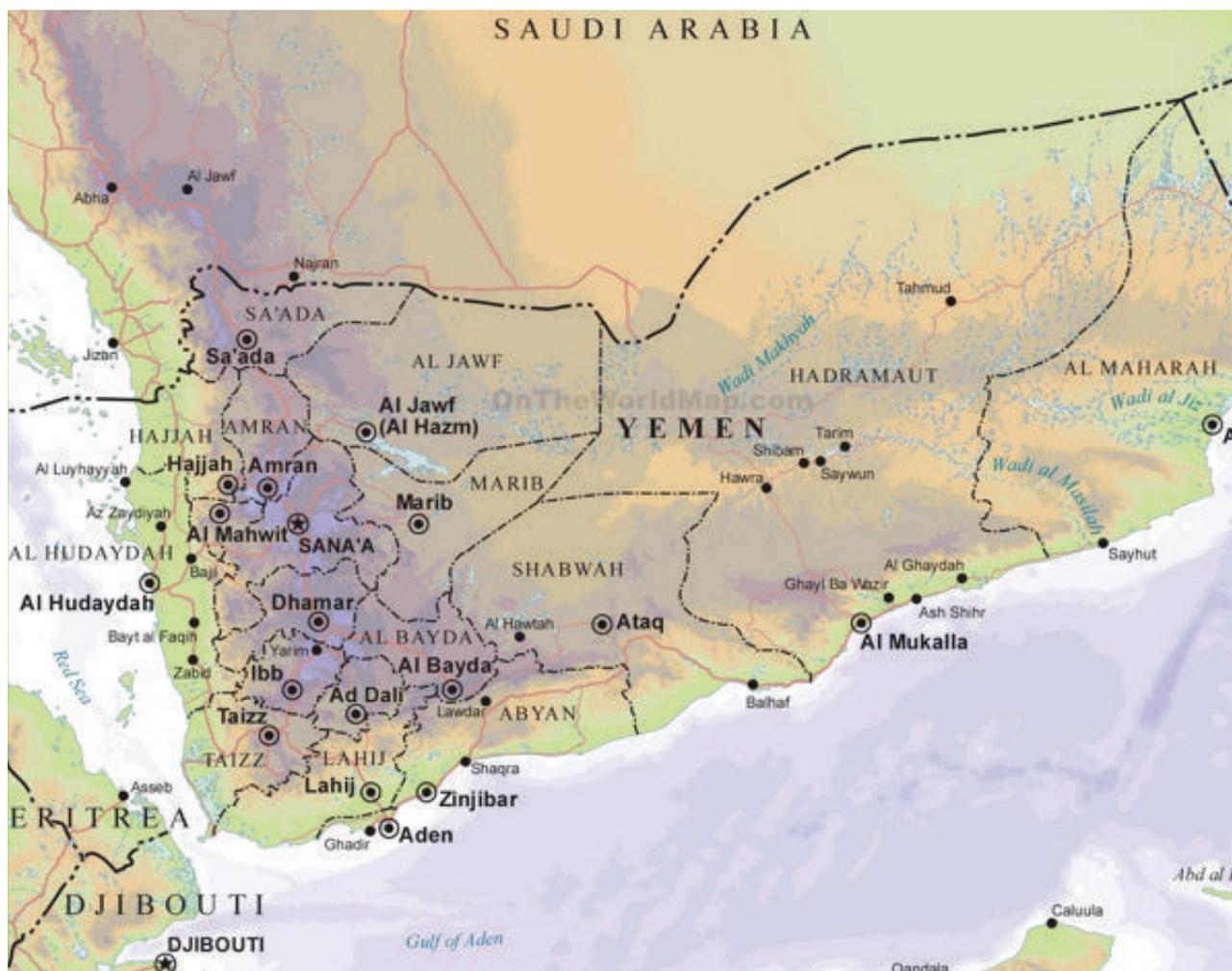
the most recent conclusions were adopted in February. Given that the Stockholm Agreement has already been violated by both sides, there is a clear incentive to update the European Council's position on Yemen to better reflect the reality on the ground.

The EU Should Convene a Mission to Investigate the On-ground Reality for Itself

Any new meeting provides ample opportunity to adopt a clear and distinct position on Yemen. Rather than being completely dependent on the UN, the EU should utilize its own resources, both financial and technical expertise, to investigate the on-ground situation for itself and develop a clear position. Those States more involved, such as France, could support this through their own on-ground experience.

The EU Should Increase its Political and Technical Support to the UN Process Through Direct Mediation

Though the EU has provided limited, and unspecified, political and technical support to the UN in its efforts to implement a political negotiation in Yemen, it can do more. For instance, the EU could act as a mediator between relevant international actors involved in the conflict, not only including its own Member States and the Arab Coalition, but those supporting the Houthis such as Iran. The latter insofar as it currently has its own complex negotiations ongoing with the EU, and this could provide opportunity to push for de-escalation.



Map 1. Yemen

CHAPTER 1

Dissensus at the Security Council: Generalizations and Blame-Aversion in UNSC Resolutions on Yemen

Ben Lowings

INTRODUCTION

Yemen has been devastated by war. Following a United Nations (UN)-backed political transition process in 2011, the new government under President Abdrahbbuh Mansour Hadi (Hadi, henceforth) was removed from the Yemeni capital by an insurgency instigated by the Houthis in 2015. Regional actors have intervened in the conflict including an International Coalition of forces led by Saudi Arabia (Coalition, henceforth) in support of President Hadi, and Iran who are accused of financial and military supporting the Houthis. There are also southern separatists, and different terror groups including Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Islamic State (IS).

As the conflict deepened in the following years, questions have been asked of the role of the UN, and why it has, as of yet, not managed to alleviate the situation to ensure the protection of Yemeni civilians. However, somewhat regular criticism has emerged about the nature of the UN, and especially its most important body, the UN Security Council (UNSC), and its inability to act when there is a failure to reach a political consensus among its Members.

This paper analyses the role of the UNSC in Yemen, through examination of every UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) regarding Yemen from 2011 to 2019, and asking the following question: 'How has the language of United Nations Security Resolutions on Yemen changed over the time period of 2011 to 2019?' It presents a background of the Yemen conflict, its actors, as well as pre-existing UN actions in Yemen. It introduces some preexisting theoretical perspectives on the UNSC, its UNSCRs, and the importance of key language such as 'responsibility to protect' (R2P).

It then presents a discourse analysis methodological approach that identifies instances of predicated nominations, specified actors attributed to a specific description or conceptual idea, that can be found in the text of UNSCRs. These predicated nominations are categorized as either *Blame*, *Support*, *Request* or *Obligation*¹. Following a presentation of the results, the paper identifies key trends in the

1 Italicized and capitalized for emphasis, and to distinguish further references of these categories and derivatives within this paper from their general usage counterparts.

number of specified actors in each category across the time of the Yemen conflict, from 2011 to 2019, the number of generalizations, a disconnect between actors blamed and those requested, and increasing abdication of UN responsibility by the gradual withdrawal of the language of R2P. The paper concludes with some recommendations towards the UNSC, in order to develop more effective UNSCRs regarding Yemen.

1. THE YEMENI CONFLICT

1.1 Mapping the Yemeni Conflict

The conflict in Yemen has a complex timeline, with clear tensions continuing to be perpetuated when North and South Yemen united in 1990 following the collapse of the Soviet bloc. At this time, Ali Abdallah Saleh (Saleh, henceforth) became President of a now united Yemen, a position he would go on to hold for another 22 years.

From the 90s onwards, various dissident actors were competing in Yemen. For instance, the 2000s saw a spike in attacks by Al-Qaeda. Following further activities, Al-Qaeda's Yemen branch merged with its neighboring branch in Saudi Arabia in January 2009, forming AQAP. AQAP has had a persistent presence in southern Yemen from then on. In 2004, another dissident group led by Hussein al-Houthi from the Saada governorate in Yemen's north carried out an insurgency against the government. This was primarily framed as a Shia/Sunni conflict, between the minority Houthis and the majority Sunnis in government, but has a more complex history than this simple narrative. For example, Hani Anouti ² identifies many other causes for Houthi unrest, beyond religious reasons, including historical, social, political, 'tribal' and developmental factors that generated feelings of discrimination and marginalization. Some of

these include post-unification regional economic underdevelopment in governorates such as Saada, and institutionalized sectarianism against the ethnic Zaydi Hashemite community of the north. Such feelings were then incorporated into the Houthi movement. Additionally, geopolitical interests have also coalesced, with one key material supporter of the Houthis being nearby Iran reflecting a proxy interest in the power politics of the Gulf region.

Regardless, tensions between the Government and the Houthis persisted beyond a 2007 ceasefire. In addition, southern separatists were active, such as the Hiraak Southern Movement, who were seeking a return to Yemen's pre-unified status quo. These separatists have also intermittently clashed with Yemeni authorities. In this context of discontent across much of Yemen, and a long-term unopposed President, there were calls for electoral reform and new elections in 2008 by government opposition. Demonstrations and protests would continue until November 2011, when in the context of the regional Arab Spring uprisings across the MENA region, President Saleh agreed to hand over power to his deputy Hadi, who formed a new unity government from opposition figures. Hadi was officially elected President the following year in largely uncontested elections. At this stage the political transition process was initiated by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with support from the UN. The second step of this transition was a National Dialogue Conference that was implemented in order to reach a consensus on the next steps in the political transition. This Dialogue was also supposed to accommodate some of the regional grievances, such as those professed by the Houthi movement.

By 2014, and as a result of the National Dialogue Conference, the Presidential panel of the government proposed a draft federal constitution that would attempt to accommodate these various grievances. But in a fierce rejection of the plans, the Houthis acted by force to seize the Presidential Palace

² Hani Anouti, *The Houthi Insurrection in Yemen: Shedding Light on the Problem of Minorities in the Middle East*, [Published Master's Thesis]. (Lebanese American University, Beirut, 2011).



in Sanaa, placing President Hadi under house arrest. Hadi would later leave the capital before making his way to Aden in the south of Yemen. In the following year, the Houthis appointed a new Presidential Council to replace Hadi. Former President Saleh, meanwhile, had allied with the Houthis which would ensure his stake on power for another two years, until he would ultimately be killed by his allies in 2017. Hadi, still-internationally recognized as the Yemeni President, sought support from allies in the GCC, and later that year a Coalition of these international forces, the most prominent of which Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), began air strikes and a naval blockade of the Houthis. To complicate matters further, the terror group IS began activity in Yemen in 2015.

However, the international community has been paralyzed by competing interests. Within the Coalition, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have had competing interests, such as the latter's more overt support for southern Yemen separatists. For the Houthis, there have been multiple reports and evidence that they have received support from Iran, which has enabled them to endure the ramifications of the Coalition naval blockade. In the proceeding years attempts to instigate peace talks such as in Kuwait, between April and August 2016, and Geneva, in September 2018, failed. However, there was hope for progress regarding the

conflict in December 2018, following peace talks between President Hadi and the Houthis in Stockholm, negotiated by the current UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, the third such Envoy appointed since 2011. This called for an immediate ceasefire in, and around, the port-city of Hodeidah and a withdrawal of forces by both sides in order to allow for humanitarian relief and UN monitors. This ceasefire was broken within a few weeks when hostilities resumed.

1.2 The UN in Yemen

This summary of events is based upon the Chronology of Events in Yemen page from the UNSC Report ³, and identifies both key moments of action and occasions where Member States intervened to obstruct the UN process for a particular reason.

The UN's involvement in Yemen dates back to April 2011 ⁴, when the UNSC was briefed on the protests occurring against President Saleh in Yemen by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe. At that time, the Secretary-General's Special Advisor

³ Security Council Report, "Chronology of Events – Yemen", *Security Council Report*. [Online] (2019) Available at: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/chronology/yemen.php>

⁴ Prior to this, there are only two historical UNSCRs, 29 (1947) and 243 (1967), both of which related to the accession of North and South Yemen, respectively, to the UN.

on Yemen was Jamal Benomar, and the initial UN Strategy was to endorse mediation efforts led by the GCC to negotiate a political transition from the regime of Saleh. This was particularly evident in the unanimous adoption of UNSCR 2014 (2011) in October 2011 by the UNSC, which primarily focused on this GCC initiative as well as expressing concerns over the ongoing activities of AQAP. Saleh, for his part, signed the GCC initiative in November 2011 that paved the way for the transition to his deputy, Hadi, and the formation of a government of national unity. During this period until President Hadi's inauguration in February 2012, a majority of UN activities were press statements and endorsements of the positives of the transition process.

Summary of UNSC Resolutions Regarding Yemen

A number of high-profile attacks against the new government in 2012, sparked a new Res 2051 (2012) to be adopted in June 2012. This showed the UNSC's willingness to consider further measures against those who would undermine the new government. It also showed strong support for the second phase of the transition, the National Dialogue Conference, a process that would consult the relevant actors to attempt to accommodate grievances in the process. Despite intermittent attacks, the ensuing years was considered to be largely successful in Yemen for the UN. Highlights include the January 2013 visit by all 15 UNSC members to Yemen to meet

Table 1. Summary of UNSC Resolutions Regarding Yemen

UNSC	Year	Resolution Summary
2014	2011	This endorsed the GCC initiative for a peaceful transition of power.
2051	2012	This focused on the second phase of the transition, including the National Dialogue Conference, and expressed the Council's readiness to consider further measures, including under Article 41 of the Charter.
2140	2014	This expressed the Council's strong support for the next steps of the political transition and established a sanctions regime against those threatening the peace, security or stability of Yemen through an asset freeze and travel ban. It also established a Panel of Experts.
2201	2015	This strongly deplored the Houthis' actions to dissolve parliament on 6 February and take over government institutions and urged the acceleration of negotiations to reach a consensus solution regarding the political impasse.
2204	2015	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.
2216	2015	This demanded the Houthis to withdraw from all seized areas and to relinquish all seized arms, and established an arms embargo on the Houthis and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.
2266	2016	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.
2342	2017	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.
2402	2018	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.
2451	2018	This endorsed the agreements reached by the parties during the consultations held in Stockholm, Sweden, and authorized the Secretary-General to establish and deploy, for an initial period of 30 days an advance team to begin monitoring and facilitate implementation of the Hodeidah Agreement.
2452	2019	This established the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) for an initial period of six months.
2456	2019	This renewed the Yemen sanctions regime, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts.

(Security Council Report, 2019)

Hadi and other senior figures in the Yemeni government, and the adoption of UNSCR 2140 (2014) endorsing the next steps in Yemen's political transition. UNSCR 2140 (2014) included a sanctions regime, including assets freezes and travel bans against individuals accused of supporting AQAP and other terrorist groups, and the creation of a UN Panel of Experts.

However, by July 2014 the UN was beginning to acknowledge the presence of the Houthis in Yemen, under consultations with Special Advisor Benomar, but these rarely strayed from general calls for parties to rally behind Hadi's government. January 2015 changed things dramatically with the escalation in violence between the Yemeni government and the Houthis, and here is the first example of serious disagreement among the UNSC on this issue, when members were unable to agree on press elements proposed by Jordan that included the Houthis role in those events, but this was objected to by Russia. Despite this, the UNSC adopted UNSCR 2201 (2015) in February, that strongly condemned the actions of the Houthis in their capture of the Presidential Palace and their placing of President Hadi under house arrest. Later that month, the UNSC adopted UNSCR 2204 (2015) that renewed the assets freeze, travel bans and the mandate of the Panel of Experts. In the following month, Saudi Arabia informed the UN that it was commencing airstrikes against targets in response to a request by the Hadi government.

By April 2015, UNSC members debated the situation in Yemen, where Russia, with significant links both to the former communist South Yemen and members of the previous Saleh regime, proposed a draft UNSCR calling for humanitarian pauses in the fighting. Whilst this was not adopted, another UNSCR 2216 (2015) was implemented that imposed targeted travel bans and arms embargoes against the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Saleh. During this same month, Special Advisor Benomar announced his resignation, and the UN named Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed as his

replacement. Russia again proposed a draft press statement in May on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, though again ultimately unadopted a UK-draft statement was issued that utilized some of the Russian elements.

For the next year, there were multiple consultations at the UN with now-Special Envoy Ahmed regarding Yemen, but little meaningful changes occurred. Following the adoption of UNSCR 2266 (2016) in February 2016, renewing the sanctions and Panel of Experts, the next incident of note was the controversy in June 2016 of the inclusion of the, specifically, Saudi-led Coalition in the annual UN report on Children in Armed Conflict in Annex 1, who was ultimately removed from the report under intense pressure from some UN member states. In July 2016, Russia and Egypt broke silence procedures regarding the adoption of a UK-drafted presidential statement on Yemen, and the then Kuwait-hosted peace talks, which caused the statement to fail to be adopted. Both States did the same again in September. Russia again broke silence procedures on a UK-drafted press statement, condemning an attack by the Houthis on a UAE naval vessel in October, believing the statement was not strong enough.

UNSCR 2342 (2017) was adopted in February 2017, renewing the sanctions and Panel of Experts mandate. And in June 2017, the UNSC adopted its first product on Yemen since April 2016, a Presidential statement regarding the humanitarian situation and confidence-building measures in Hodeidah port, a key contested city between the Houthis and Hadi's forces. In November 2017, Egypt circulated a draft presidential statement condemning an attempted missile attack on Riyadh, but Bolivia, France, Italy, Sweden and Uruguay broke silence procedures believing that it failed to address the humanitarian situation. That same month, the Panel of Experts submitted a case study to the sanctions committee indicating that the arms embargo was being utilized as justification to obstruct humanitarian assistance, and that they had seen no evidence of Saudi Arabia's claim

that short range ballistic missiles were being transferred to the Houthis. A few days later, this report was updated to include that missile debris from attacks against Saudi Arabia were consistent with the design, characteristics and dimensions of Iranian manufactured missiles.

In February 2018, along with the adoption of the annual sanctions regime/Panel of Experts renewal in UNSCR 2402 (2018), Russia vetoed a draft UNSCR prepared by the UK, objecting to references that Iran was found in non-compliance with the arms embargo in Yemen. Bolivia also voted against, and China and Kazakhstan abstained. That same month, Special Envoy Ahmed stood down and was replaced by Martin Griffiths in March. The majority of Griffiths' consultations revolved around the situation in Hodeidah, and resolving the situation there. In August 2018, the UNSC discussed Yemen at the request of Peru, on behalf of Bolivia, Netherlands, Poland and Sweden, issuing press elements expressing grave concern at reports of an air strike on a school bus in Sanaa that had killed over 40 children. That same month, the sanctions committee made their mid-term update, concluding clear evidence of Iranian weapons, evidence of Iranian financing of the Houthis via fuel donations, but that Iran may be willing to play a constructive role in finding a peaceful solution in Yemen.

In the Autumn of 2018, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock suggested to the UNSC that the humanitarian situation in Hodeidah was "approaching a tipping point, beyond which it would be impossible to prevent massive loss of life as a result of widespread famine". Relating to this, the UK announced in November that it was preparing a draft UNSCR in support of Lowcock's concerns. This draft was later adopted in December in UNSCR 2451 (2018), whereby the majority of the UNSCR endorsed the outcomes of the Stockholm meeting organized by Griffiths between the Houthis and Hadi that called for a ceasefire in Hodeidah and a withdrawal of forces. However, UNSCR 2451 (2018) had most

of the references relating to humanitarian suffering removed, due to the threat of veto by the US.

As of writing, in 2019, the UNSC has adopted a further two UNSCRs, 2452 (2019) and 2456 (2019). The former referred to an update on the Stockholm Agreement, as the ceasefire was violated by the parties within a few weeks, whereas the latter was another annual renewal of the sanction's regime and Panel of Experts.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This section of the paper introduces some ideas proposed by other authors and researchers regarding the UNSC, UNSCR language and a specific type of UNSCR language known as R2P. These ideas are presented in order to situate the paper in terms of preexisting academic and political research, and show further lines of enquiry utilizing these theoretical approaches.

2.1 The Security Council

The UNSC has been a subject of much discussion. Some commentators have analyzed its functioning and relevance to the permanent five members, the US, UK, France, Russia and China. Mats Berdal⁵ argues that the UNSC, and the status of permanent membership, is indispensable for the UK and France to continue to project power despite their relative declines in the 20th century. Russia has a similar conception to the UK and France regarding the use of the UNSC for power projection, but represents something more symbolic insofar as it is indispensable to its claim as a Great Power in the present day. China, it is argued, utilizes the UNSC to express what it objects to in the world, and the US, it is argued, seeks legitimacy for its international actions via the mechanism of the UNSC.

5 Mats Berdal, "The UN Security Council: Ineffective, but Indispensable," IPS Info, 4/03 (2003).

Legitimacy as a key component of the UNSC is expanded further by Ian Hurd ⁶, who writes:

*"Absent its capacity to mobilize states to voluntarily follow its decisions or contribute to its defense, the Council has no practical power. This is not to denigrate the Council (since its capacity to mobilize states by its symbols is great), but ... the foundation of this power is the legitimacy that actors confer on the organization."*⁷

in order to maintain this type of power, the UNSC must preserve the international support of its constituent Member States. Legitimacy in this sense is created not only by a willingness of the parties to utilize power to enforce its decision-making, but by its capacity to express the views of its membership.

However, there have been occasions that have undermined the actions of the UNSC. In 2003 with the intervention of the US and UK in Iraq, despite the objections of the other members of the UNSC, there were calls that the entire purpose of the UNSC was undermined due to unilateral actions taken by some Member States. Michael Glennon ⁸ writes that there was an inevitability to this occurring, as the world is not multipolar, but rather unipolar insofar as the power of the US is substantially greater than any other in the world. It has capacity to act unilaterally should it choose to, and in doing so exposes that the actions of the UNSC are merely rules created rather than enforceable. The call then follows for the UNSC to modernize and update in reflection of the realities of the present ⁹.

⁶ Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy, Power, and the Symbolic Life of the UN Security Council," *Global Governance*, 8. (2002): 35-51.

⁷ Hurd, "Legitimacy," 47.

⁸ Michael J. Glennon, "The UN Security Council in a Unipolar World," *Virginia Journal of International Law*, 44. (2003): 91-112.

⁹ However, there are few incentives for the permanent five to cede more power so the prospects for this modernization may be slow.

Other cases of UNSC division have been on Libya, Syria, and Yemen. In Libya, some UNSC members ignored objections and acted unilaterally as was the case in Iraq. In the latter two cases, the divisions among the UNSC rendered actions blocked or slow to occur. One possible explanation for the differences between the two cases is the interest of the US, who because of its power with respect to all other States, maintains the capacity to act unilaterally should it so wish. In the cases of both Libya and Iraq, intervention was either directed by the US, or was conferred legitimacy by US endorsement or management through NATO. For policy makers and humanitarian advocates ¹⁰, these delays and divisions are a cause of great concern.

2.2 The Language of UNSC Resolutions

However, even in these contested cases there has been some instances of consensus in the form of legally-binding UNSCRs. These are one of the strongest expressions of the UNSC's will and are significant insofar as they are instances of shared consensus to the extent that the members agreed on a particular binding text. Unsurprisingly then, the language of these binding UNSCRs is extremely important. Jess Gifkins ¹¹ provides three different ways in which the language of UNSCRs matters:

"First, language is not static and is indicative of current shared understandings. Second, the language used in resolutions informs future decisions. Third, repetition of language is a form of reaffirmation." ¹²

The research also takes this view. Critically in the case of Yemen, there are expected changes in trends of language. This implies that these changes in language trends are indicative of new understandings by the UNSC of the situation on the ground. There are at least two clear

¹⁰ International Crisis Group, *Council of Despair? The Fragmentation of UN Diplomacy*, Special Briefing 1/Global, 30 April 2019. (2019).

¹¹ Jess Gifkins, "UN Security Council Resolutions and the Responsibility to Protect," *AP R2P Brief*, 6:3. (2016).

¹² Gifkins, "UN Security Council Resolutions," 4.



distinctions for the motivations behind these language shifts. Firstly, they may represent a distinct empirical change in the events on ground. For example, it is expected that there will be significant changes in language during 2015 due to the contextual escalation of actions. Secondly, the changes in language may reflect changes in the UNSC itself, and the promotion of a new understanding for political reasons. For example, it is also expected that the election of US President Donald Trump in 2016 would affect the language of the UNSCRs with apparently a distinctive shift in administration of one of the UNSC permanent members. This was anticipated by Peter Salisbury¹³ due to the Trump administration's Hawkish stance on foreign policy.

These questions of 'why' regarding the language of the UNSCRs are aspects that can be explored in further research^{14 15}. What is important for this paper is the inclusion, or exclusion of

¹³ Peter Salisbury, "Bickering While Yemen Burns: Poverty, War and Political Indifference," *The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*, Policy Paper 2. (2017)

¹⁴ Jess Gifkins, "The UN Security Council Divided: Syria in Crisis," *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 4. (2012): 377-393.

¹⁵ International Crisis Group, *Council of Despair?*

certain actors. For instance, if we take the view that the language of a UNSCR promotes shared understandings of a situation, if it includes a particular actor, or excludes another, it reflects the shared understanding of what actors are involved. This is particularly relevant given the politicized nature of some of the actors in Yemen, and the already-discussed controversies of including the Coalition, Saudi Arabia or Iran in any of the UNSC products from 2015 onwards. Also, the way these actors are framed, whatever the motivation behind their framing, reflects the shared understanding of the UNSC at that particular time about what that particular actor represents to the situation.

2.3 Responsibility to Protect

As earlier, the language of UNSCRs implies some sort of shared understanding, and repetition implies reaffirmation. R2P is a particularly specific set of phrases in UNSCRs that imply a certain level of political weight and international responsibility to act based upon international law.

R2P as a discourse on international responsibility first emerged in UNSCR 1706 (2006) regarding the genocide in Darfur in the

early 2000s¹⁶. But this language did not reoccur for specific countries until 2011, where it was famously invoked for certain international cases such as the 2011 intervention in Libya. As Gifkins¹⁷ notes, there are three ways in which R2P language is formulated by the UNSC:

- Using the language of paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document¹⁸
- Either ‘the responsibility to protect’ or ‘the responsibility for the protection’
- ‘The responsibility of [government name] to protect’

For the purposes of this research, these phrases are of particular note due to their status as an indicator of a serious level of international responsibility and are worth specific note in the paper’s analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Background

In order to analyze the UNSCRs on Yemen, given the importance of the language of the UNSCRs, the paper will utilize a method of discourse analysis. The method is derived from the ‘political rhetoric analysis’ suggested by Ruth Wodak and Michal Krzyzanowski¹⁹, which in turn was expanded by Wanda Alarcon Ferraguto²⁰. Both examples utilize an approach that delineates nominations and predications into tables.

16 Gifkins, “UN Security Council Resolutions.”

17 Gifkins, “UN Security Council Resolutions.”

18 United Nations, *World Summit Outcome - United Nations General Assembly, A/RES/60/1*. (2005).

19 Ruth Wodak & Michal Krzyzanowski, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

20 Wanda P. Alarcon Ferraguto, *Oil Dependency and Self-Preservation: The Venezuelan Presidential Discourse*, [Unpublished Master’s Thesis]. (Université Libre de Bruxelles. Belgium, 2018)

A nomination is a specifically named entity, such as ‘Yemeni Government’, ‘the Houthis’ or something more general such as ‘the opposition’. A predication is what ‘thing’ is said about that nomination. For example, in Wodak and Krzyzanowski²¹ they provide tables that match nominations, for example ‘I’, with what is predicated about that nomination, for example ‘one of those down there’ and ‘understanding of people tired with policy and politics’. In this way the authors can make conclusions regarding the intentions of the political speaker based upon the types of nominations, and what is predicated about them.

This paper uses a similar strategy, but instead of applying a qualitative analysis to the data and exploring the meaning and intention of the predication strategies, it applies a quantitative analysis by counting the number of times each particular predicated ‘thing’ occurs, and which nominations occur in this context.

3.2 Method

As above, this research analyses every UNSCR regarding Yemen from 2011 to 2019 by dividing data into four different categories of predicated nomination: *Blame*, *Support*, *Request* and *Obligation*. As a continuation of the above logic, a predicated nomination is the complete instance of when a nomination is then predicated a particular idea or description. In this case, the descriptions that are countable for the research are instances of language that fall into one of the four categories as explained below.

When there is an individual instance of a predicated nomination, it is then counted as 1 on the data table. For the purposes of the data set, the grouping goes further by specifying the categories into particular predications within each category, and noting the instances of each predication for the specific UNSCR in which it appears. For ease of analysis, this data has been surmised by both predication category type, and into time period groupings, and this is explained further below.

21 Wodak, & Krzyzanowski, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis*.

- *Blame* predications are instances where the language of the UNSCR appears to blame or criticize a particular nominated actor and include the following: 'concern', 'serious or grave concern', 'condemn', 'strongly condemn', 'deplore', 'alarm', 'threaten', and 'unjustifiable'.
- *Support* predications are instances where the language of the UNSCR appears to support or justify a particular nominated actor and include the following: 'support', 'welcome', 'commend', 'endorse', 'looks forward', 'innocent', 'legitimate', and 'fundamental rights'.
- *Request* predications are instances where the language of the UNSCR asks something specific of a particular nominated actor and include the following: 'demand', 'calls upon', 'strongly calls upon', 'insist', 'urge', 'need', 'should', 'request', 'encourage', and 'invite'.

Within each of the four categories, there are differing degrees of language. For instance, 'demand' as opposed to 'encourage'. This would have been more complicated to qualify and justify for this research. Consequently, for this research, all types of predicated nomination in the same category are weighed the same. In the above example, these are both an instance of Request language. However, this could be a route of further enquiry, and for this reason, these instances have been split into their specific language variants in the raw data for future analysis.

Regarding the categorization of UNSCRs into time periods, there are twelve UNSCRs, which have been split into three categories of time: 2011 to 2014, 2015 and 2016 to 2019. The former two categories have three UNSCRs each, while the latter has six (see table 2).

The UNSCRs were categorized this way because it enables a clearer view of trends and patterns

Table 2. Categorization of UNSCRs

	2011-2014	2015	2016-2019
Resolution Number (Year)	2014 (2011) 2051 (2012) 2140 (2014)	2201 (2015) 2204 (2015) 2216 (2015)	2266 (2016) 2342 (2017) 2402 (2018) 2451 (2018) 2452 (2019) 2456 (2019)

- *Obligation* predications are instances that use very specific language implying stronger responsibilities and obligations and include the following: 'obligation', 'accountability', 'primary responsibility', and 'underscored importance'. It was also crucial to look for any specific instances of the language of R2P in this category.

in UNSCR language and, more generally, the time periods for the UNSCRs align with particular steps in the UN process in Yemen:

- 2014 (2011), 2051 (2012) and 2140 (2014) were UNSCRs endorsing and implementing a GCC-led initiative for a transition of power in Yemen from the previous Salah regime.

- 2201 (2015) and 2216 (2015) were UNSCRs condemning events of 2015 whereby tensions escalated between Hadi's government and the Houthi rebels.
- 2451 (2018) and 2452 (2019) were UNSCRs that welcomed the outcomes of negotiations between Hadi's government and the Houthi rebels in Stockholm.
- The other UNSCRs for 2016-2019, 2266 (2016), 2342 (2017), 2402 (2018) and 2456 (2019), were UNSCRs that renewed assets freezes and travel bans as part of a sanction regime. (Note: all four of these UNSCRs emulated the language of UNSCR 2204 (2015), which is an exception to this categorization as it falls in 2015. This detail is expanded more below.

The reason that this latter category has more UNSCRs than the others is because four of the UNSCRs in the latter category, 2266 (2016), 2342 (2017), 2402 (2018) and 2456 (2019), are almost identically-worded UNSCRs regarding a sanction's regime, and its renewal each subsequent year from 2016 to 2019. And also, as the results will show, there was far less data for this research for UNSCRs post-2015. UNSCR 2204 (2015) is an exception to this rule as even though it has the same general impetus of these other four UNSCRs, it featured in 2015 which for the purposes of analysis is its own category.

3.3 Methodological Precautions

In the case that there are multiple examples of language predications within a specific clause, only the main predication has been selected. However, if there are more than one clause within a statement, that make more than one specific predication, these have been individually counted. For example:

- *"Demands for all sides to..., and further insists that the international community..."* would be classified as two instances of

predicated nomination.

- *"Calls upon the opposition to recognize it should take action..."* would only be classified as 'calls upon' rather than 'should' as the former is the main predication.

In the case there are multiple nominations predicated to the same thing, either the main nomination or a general nomination have been counted rather than each separately. For example:

- *"Calls upon the Yemeni Government and others to..."* would be categorized as 'Yemeni Government', as the former is the main nomination.
- *"Commends the Yemeni Government and the Houthis for..."* would be categorized as 'all sides' as both nominations appear to be equally weighted and in the context of the UNSCR, means the same as 'all sides'.

There are a few exceptions to this. *"The Hiraak Southern Movement, the Houthis and others..."* was classified as its own separate nomination, rather than as 'opposition groups (general)', because these were two specifically mentioned groups, rather than political opposition per se, which otherwise is explicitly stated in the UNSCR text.

There are some statements within the UNSCR that use the language of predications, but are not ascribed to any discernible nomination and so are not included. Likewise, any nomination that does not have one of these categories of predication has not been included.

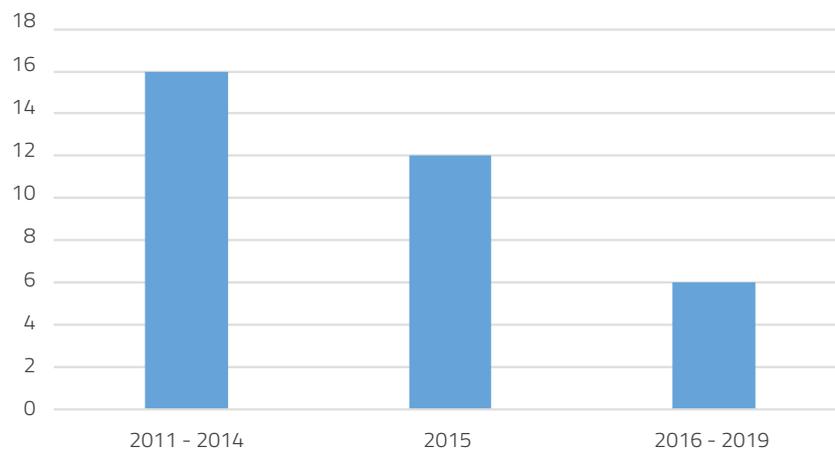
There are also some predicated nominations that have not been included for analysis as they were considered irrelevant to the objective of the research. These were: 'the Secretary-General', 'the Panel of Experts', 'the Government of Sweden', and 'the Security Council'. However, there is a note regarding this latter predicated nomination in the context of R2P that will be explored in the analysis.

4. DATA

The most significant data has been depicted graphically below, followed by a brief description of the main data trends.

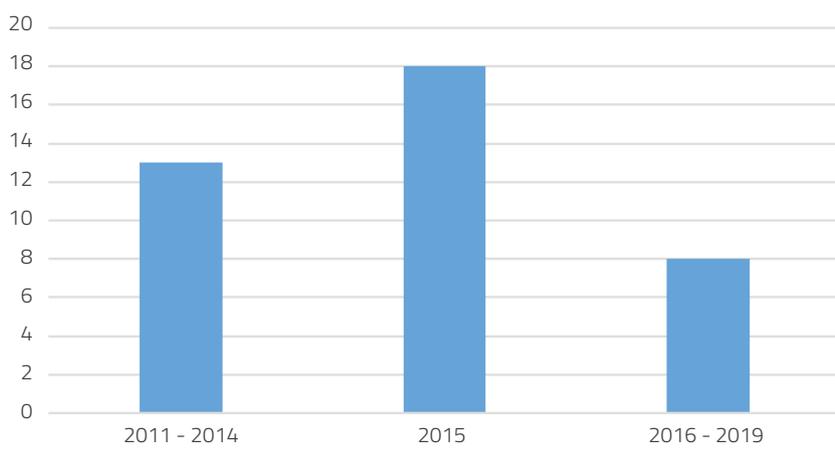
General Categories

Graph 1. Total numbers of different nominations across all categories



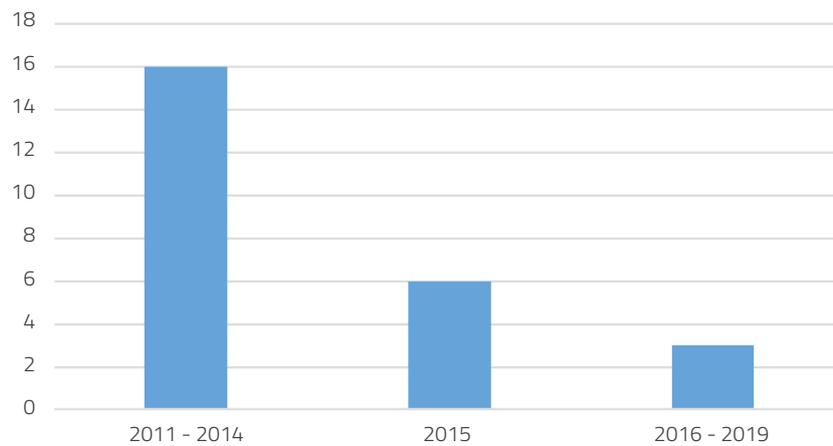
- By time grouping, as the conflict in Yemen progressed, overall there was a decreasing number of different actors directly nominated in any of the four capacities;

Graph 2. Total numbers of Blame Predications



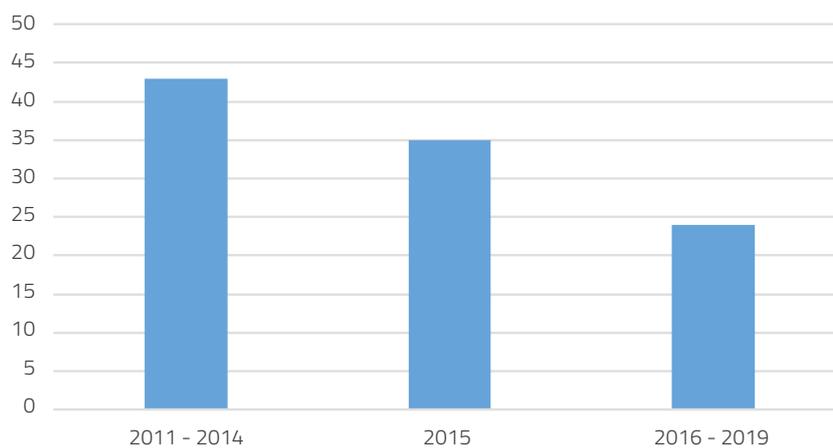
- The number of *Blame* Predications spiked from 2011-2014 to 2015, before decreasing from 2016 onwards;

Graph 3. Total number of Support Predications



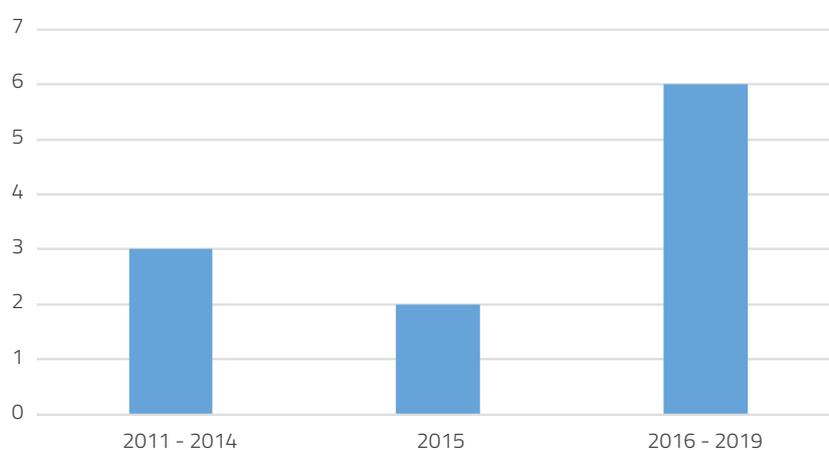
- The number of *Support* Predications dramatically fell in 2015, before lowering even further from 2016 onwards;

Graph 4. Total number of Request Predications



- There was also a continuous fall in *Request* Predications across the time periods;

Graph 5. Total number of Obligation Predications

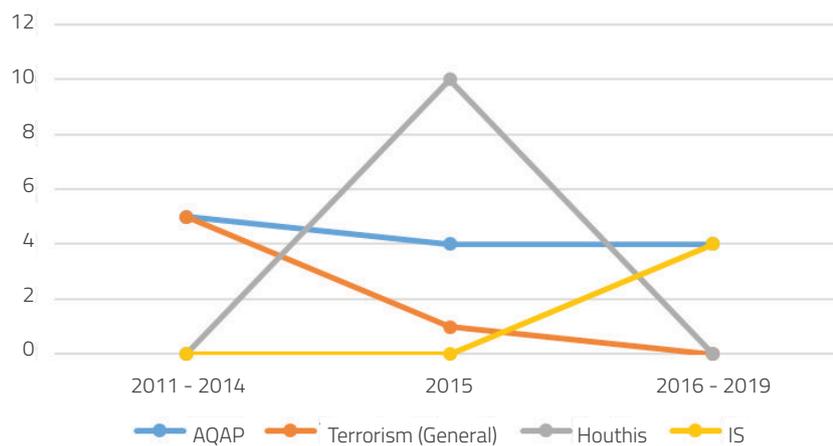


- However, despite being consistently low, *Obligation* Predications actually increased in 2016 onwards;

Nominated Actors

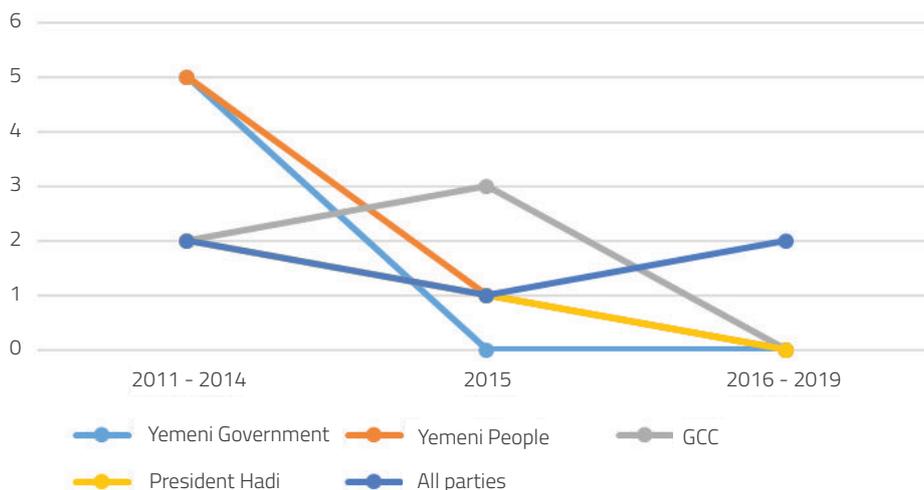
For *Blame*, *Support* and *Request* predications, the only graphically depicted actors are those who were nominated in that particular category on three or more separate instances. Due to overall lower numbers, all nominated actors for *Obligation* have been included graphically.

Graph 6. Number of instances of Blame Predications



- 'AQAP' was the only nominated actor that was consistently *Blamed* across all time periods;
- While 'terrorism (general)' was *Blamed* in 2011-2014, this appears to have changed to 'IS' in 2016-2019;
- The most dramatic result for *Blame* was the 'Houthis' who were *Blamed* the most in any time period, but only for 2015, as they were not *Blamed* at all in the other two time periods;

Graph 7. Number of instances of Support Predications

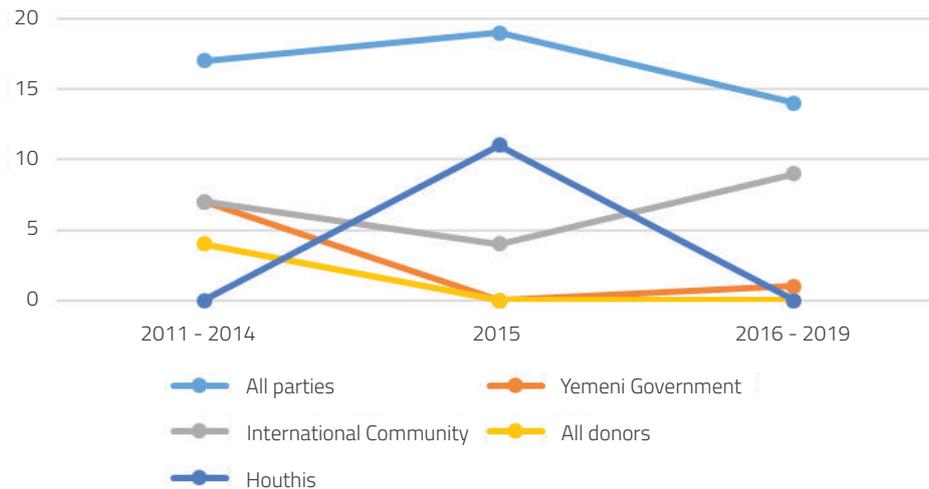


- The 'Yemeni Government' was the only actor that was both *Blamed*²² and *Supported*, yet both of these occurrences happened within the same time period of 2011-2014;

²² Not depicted graphically due to negligibility as there was only one instance of Blame predication for the Yemeni Government, which occurred between 2011-2014.

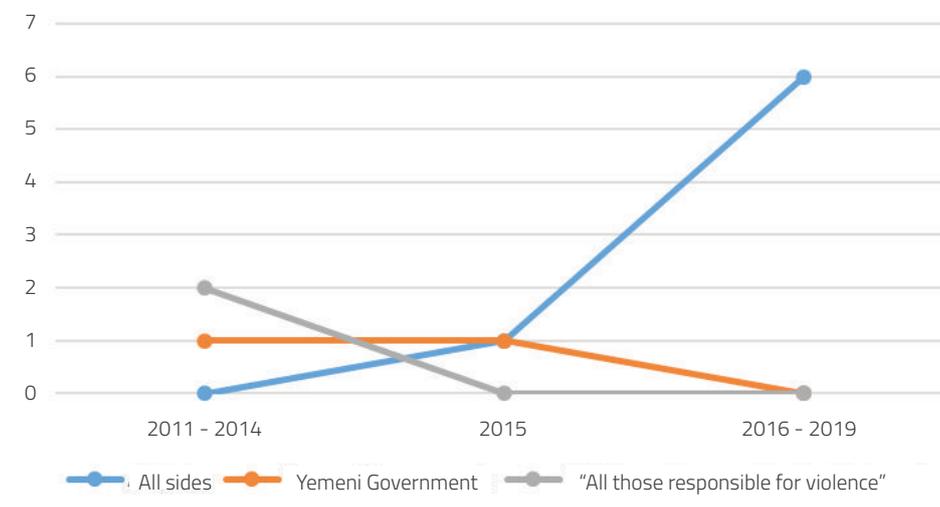
- The 'Yemeni people' were *Supported* significantly in 2011-2014, but these instances of *Support* all but diminished in 2015 onwards;
- The 'GCC' was the only actor that the number of *Support* Predications increased in 2015, though this too disappeared from 2016 onwards;
- 'All parties' were the only nomination that was *Supported* across all time periods consistently, but the number of occurrences was also consistently low;

Graph 8. Number of instances of Request Predications



- Regarding *Request* Predications, 'all parties' was the nominated the most in terms of *Request* Predications, and was consistently high across all time periods;
- Despite a small reduction in 2015, the 'International Community' was otherwise the most consistent in this category of *Request* Predications across both 2011-2014 and 2016-2019;
- The 'Yemeni Government' and 'all donors' were involved in *Request* Predications significantly in 2011-2014 only;
- Whereas the 'Houthis' were involved in *Request* Predications for 2015;

Graph 9. Number of instances of Request Predications



- Regarding *Obligation* Predications, the 'Yemeni Government' and 'all those responsible for violence' were present in either 2011-2014 or 2015;
- 'All sides' were involved more significantly in *Obligation* Predications in 2016-2019.

5. ANALYSIS

The data appears to validate the assumption that there was a demonstratively different approach in the UNSC towards the Yemen crisis as the years progressed. As we can see, as the time progressed, there was an increasing reluctance for the UNSC to specify both a range and specificity of actors by name, and an increasing resort to generalized nomination such as 'all parties' or the 'international community'.

Interestingly, the actors that were *Blamed* the most, with the exception of the 'Houthis', including 'AQAP', 'IS' and 'terrorism in general', were not featured in any *Request* Predication. This is understandable in a sense as the UNSC does not consider designated terrorist groups as legitimate actors to negotiate with. However, in line with the overall trend of generalization and lack of specificity, this appears to be more of a scapegoating strategy to avoid *Blaming* anyone who could be negotiated with. Regarding actors who were *Requested* of things, only generic categories of 'all sides' or the 'international community' were consistently requested.

Curiously, there was a shift away from holding the 'Yemeni Government' personally accountable. The instance of *Blame* Predication for the 'Yemeni Government' actually occurred in 2011, when the Salah administration was still in place. All of the *Support* Predications came later when Hadi took power. Interestingly, the *Support* of the 'Yemeni people' occurred in inverse to this, with the most significant *Support* Nominations occurring in 2011 while Salah was still in power, till disappearing in their entirety after 2015. This reads that the people were instrumentalized as a delegitimizing tool towards the Salah regime, and were cited as a means to justify his removal from power. This

is even clearer as despite great public knowledge of humanitarian suffering since 2015, they fail to feature in the UNSCRs from 2016 in this specified capacity.

The 'Houthis' are an interesting case in the data, and appear to justify the categorization of 2015 as its own individual category. There was a large spike in *Blame* and *Request* predications towards the 'Houthis' in 2015 alone, which then completely disappeared from 2016 onwards. This appears to show that the actions of the Houthis in 2015 to seize the Yemeni capital completely shifted the dynamics of the Yemen crisis in the understanding of the UN, to the extent that they became the main antagonistic actor in 2015. But the fact that they disappeared from this capacity in UNSCRs from 2016 onwards suggests that something shifted this understanding. The contextual speculation here is that the UNSC consensus on the Houthis was lost from 2016 onwards due to the intervention of UNSC politics and priorities. For example, as discussed in 'The UN in Yemen', Russia increasingly stepped in to block various drafted statements condemning the Houthis and their allies, including its veto of the inclusion of Iran in a draft UNSCR in 2018. We also find various instances of Member States blocking attempts to include the Saudi-Coalition in UN documents, such as the Annex in the annual UN Report on Children in Armed Conflict, and other statements condemning humanitarian suffering, such as the US veto threat of the draft UNSCR 2451 (2018) in late 2018 unless references to humanitarian suffering were reduced.

This latter point may also explain why the 'GCC' were the only actor to actually have an increase in *Support* Predications in 2015. The UNSCRs till this point presented the GCC as a negotiator and



mediator in the Yemen crisis, in line with the dialogue mechanism in place from 2011-2014. However, with the intervention of the Coalition forces in support of the Hadi government, their status as an actor in the conflict became somewhat compromised. There is notably no mention of the Coalition, any of its composite Member States, or conversely any specific backers of the Houthis, such as Iranian fuel financing and military armament. These are conspicuously absent, and imply that there was no consensus at the UNSC on their inclusion. In addition, other actors such as the Hiraak Southern Movement were only referenced in passing, and appear to be absent for a different reason in virtue of perceived irrelevance to the current conflict.

A significant anomaly was the increase in *Obligation* Predications for 'all sides' from 2016 onwards. This was an unexpected finding, as this skewed the results for *Obligation* to depict a significant increase in 2016 onward. However, after analyzing the specific UNSCRs, there may be an explanation. Each of these instances was the same clause:

"Reaffirming the need for all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law as applicable" ²³

23 UNSC Res 2266 (2016).

This was a recurring phrase present in every renewed UNSCR for the assets freezes etc. and so was directly repeated in many UNSCRs word-for-word.

There was very little talk of *Obligations* of actors at all. The language of R2P featured for one actor only, the 'Yemeni Government', with the phrase:

"Recalling the Yemeni Government's primary responsibility to protect its population" ²⁴

This occurred once in 2011, as part of the overall delegitimization strategy against Salah. This was never restated in any other UNSCR. R2P featured in two other instances, but only for an actor that was not included in the above data, the 'Security Council' itself. The following phrase occurred in 2011 and 2012, and then completely disappeared:

"Mindful of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations" ²⁵

Clearly, the consensus on this language and the responsibilities of the UNSC towards Yemen shifted after 2012.

24 UNSC Res 2014 (2011).

25 UNSC Res 2014 (2011).



6. CONCLUSION

As the data shows, there appears to have been three periods of UNSC consensus on the Yemen crisis. From 2011–2014, there was a clear consensus against the Salah regime, and the implementation of the GCC dialogue mechanism. During this period, the UNSC used more traditional language of national and international responsibility, including R2P, and accountability. They also had a strategy of nominating more varied and specific actors. Whether these UNSCRs were successful is debatable due to the event that followed, but for a while at least it appeared that this strategy was working to implement the GCC mechanism.

From 2015, the strategy shifted to blaming the Houthis for being disruptive towards the dialogue process. The sheer spike in blame and request towards the Houthis was very noticeable and represented a sharp change in strategy as they were effectively isolated as the primary reason for the deterioration in the Yemen crisis. Following this, from 2016 onwards the strategy became much more general with a lack of specified actors, and a repetition of language and approach for many years. This appears to represent the time in which the Yemen crisis became politicized with members of the UNSC involved in a political capacity.

Neither of these latter strategies appeared

to significantly alter the Yemen crisis. As we saw, the UNSC spent large periods of time debating the language of press statements and presidential texts, in addition to the more powerful UNSCRs—proper, and Members from all sides consistently vetoed, abstained or broke silence agreements to block certain passages of text.

Although as discussed, the difficulty with the UNSC is the inability of the members to reach consensus on issues upon which they diverge. However, this does not stop us from asking the following question: how could the strategy of UNSCRs be better used in the Yemeni case towards concrete actions? From simply looking at the failings in latter-year UNSCRs, there are four points that can be made here, which proceed as recommendations below.

- Firstly, part of the failings of the latter UNSCRs were due to their inability to name all of the relevant actors involved in the case in any of the four capacities. By failing to nominate actors such as the Coalition or Iran, the UNSCRs fail to capture the realities of the conflict on ground;
- Secondly, the language needs to move beyond generalizations. The frequency of the language of ‘all sides’ is increasingly redundant, as actors are unspecified and

unfairly grouped together with others. If there is a clear imbalance of power between both sides, then this should be expressed clearly;

- Thirdly, the complexities of the Yemen crisis cannot be explained solely by blaming specific terrorist groups, upon which the UNSC refuses to engage with by requesting anything of. There should be a clearer link between fairly blaming and requesting of specific relevant actors who could implement such requests on-ground;
- Fourthly, the disappearance of the language of R2P and international obligations of specific actors is concerning for it limits the level of international pressure that the UNSC

could exhibit on relevant parties. By undermining the power of the UNSC in this way it ultimately undermines the strength of the international response. In doing so undermines its own role as the penholder of the 2005 World Summit to prevent war crimes, ethnic cleansing, genocide and crimes against humanity;

These recommendations do not address the specific complexities of the ground, or the overarching political climate, nor do they seek to. However, they indicate that the UNSC strategy towards Yemen, regarding the language of its UNSCRs, is lacking key principles that would otherwise allow for a clearer portrayal of the roles and responsibilities of all relevant parties. For a more even assessment of the Yemeni crisis, this is otherwise critical to even begin to assess these challenges in their particularities. ■

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the United Nations Security Council:

- To accurately reflect the events on ground, nominate all relevant and involved actors in the Yemen conflict, including the Saudi-led Coalition, Iran, and the Hiraak Southern Movement, in future UN Security Council Resolutions;
- To allocate blame and responsibility fairly and accurately, avoid generalizations, such as “all sides”, in UN Security Council Resolution nominations on Yemen where possible, and instead advocate to specific actors;
- To ensure the relevance of requests within UN Security Council Resolutions, move beyond solely blaming unaccountable terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, to political actors that can actively be engaged with such as the Yemeni Government;
- To increase the political weight and legal precedent of the UN Security Council Resolutions to ensure full accountability under international law, utilize the language of ‘responsibility to protect’ in Resolutions, regarding political actors both domestic and international, where necessary.

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