Responding to Yemen Civil War

What is the issue?

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- A recent attack on a bus in a crowded market in southern Yemen has killed at least 45 people, most of them children.
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- The rising toll on civilian lives calls for serious measures to address the Yemen civil war.
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What is going on in Yemen?

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- The Yemeni Civil War is an ongoing conflict that began in 2015.
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- It is the tussle between two factions claiming to constitute the Yemeni government.
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- One is Yemen’s Shia Houthi rebels, loyal to the former President.
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- They are in clashes with forces loyal to the current government.
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- The Houthi forces captured huge swathes of territory, significantly the Yemen capital Sana'a.
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- Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are also involved in the conflict.
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- Saudi Arabia led military intervention in Yemen began over 3 years ago.
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- A coalition led by Saudi Arabia launched military operations by using airstrikes.
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- This is to restore the Yemeni government which is overthrown by Houthi.
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- The Saudi-led coalition is backed by the U.S.
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What are the implications?

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- There is absence of a functional government in the country and the rebels are fighting the Saudi invasion.
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- The attacks have targeted public infrastructure, killed thousands of civilians, and displaced many more.
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- The recent attack comes in the line of atrocities as part of the Saudi's military intervention.
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- Ever since the air strikes, the civilian toll had been particularly rising.
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- UN reports that from March 2015 to March 2017, around 16,000 people have been killed in Yemen, including 10,000 civilians.
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- Saudi Arabia's use of excessive force has plunged Yemen among the poorest in West Asia.
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- The military intervention had even led to a blockade, affecting food and aid supplies.
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- More than eight million people are threatened by acute hunger.
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- The health-care system has collapsed and people have been cut off from regular access to clean water.
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- In recent years, the country has had an unprecedented cholera outbreak that killed over 2,000 people.
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What is Saudi's response?

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- The United Nations has called it the world’s most severe humanitarian crisis.
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- But Saudi Arabia has paid little attention to growing international criticism.
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- Worryingly, it has not come under any serious international pressure to halt its catastrophic campaign.
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- It even said the recent bus attack was “a legitimate military action”.
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- It only accused the rebels of using children as human shields.
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- The Saudis say the Houthi rebels are backed by Iran, its regional rival.
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- It also claims that its campaign has been on behalf of the internationally recognised government of Yemen.
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- But ironically, Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi is nowhere to be seen.
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- He is reported to be under house arrest in Riyadh, the Saudi capital.
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What is the way forward?

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- The military campaign has been a failure from a strategic point of view as well.
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- Even after more than 3 years of attacks, the rebels still have their areas of influence, including Sana'a.
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- It is high time the international community paid serious attention to Yemen's humanitarian crisis.
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- The Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia should stop the war.
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- He should push for a negotiated settlement between the Yemeni government and the rebels.
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Source: The Hindu

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