

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