CIVIL WAR IN YEMEN

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CATEGORY
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Civil War in Yemen

Yemen's civil war can be said to have started in September 2014 when Houthi rebels seized Yemeni capital Sanaa and then proceeded to march on the country's largest port, Aden. The Houthi rebels – mostly followers of the Zaidi sect of Islam (a branch of Shia Islam); the cause for the seizing of Sanaa was the decline of fuel subsidies, and the subsequent seizure of the presidential palace was due to failed negotiations to form a united government and resolve the fuel price issue. What would typically be considered an internal civil conflict has ballooned into an international issue and a proxy battle between two regional powers – Iran and Saudi Arabia. The latter party and its allies such as the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, United States, and the United Kingdom are backing the forces of the former president – who revoked his resignation - Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi; whereas, Iran is backing the Houthi rebels. Complicating an already contentious civil war, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State (ISIS) are also building forces in Yemen and, indeed, AQAP has seized control of some territory and implemented Shariah law. AQAP especially has taken advantage of the fragmentation and disorder in the country to use Yemen as an operations headquarters to prepare for attacks in other countries.

The human cost of the war has been dear. Since March 2015, there have been an estimated 16,000 civilian casualties, and the country's economy – already underdeveloped – and infrastructure are in tatters. An additional two million individuals are also displaced because of the conflict. In addition to the loss of lives and economic devastation, the health of the population has deteriorated significantly due to a severe cholera outbreak and access to health resources themselves has decreased as international personnel have both had trouble entering and operating in the country, and there have been attacks on hospitals maintained by the charity Doctors Without Borders.

The international oil trade has, likewise, been put at risk by Yemen's conflict. A significant quantity of the world's oil travels through the Bab-el-Mandeb, a strait that connects the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and is situated between Yemen, Eritrea, and Djibouti. There have, in fact, been rocket attacks against the Saudi-led coalition by Houthi forces (along with retaliations by the coalition forces). A Saudi tanker has reportedly been attacked as well, and the Houthis have threatened to block trade through the Bab-el-Mandeb. Continued threats against international trade in the region may lead to increased volatility in global energy markets.

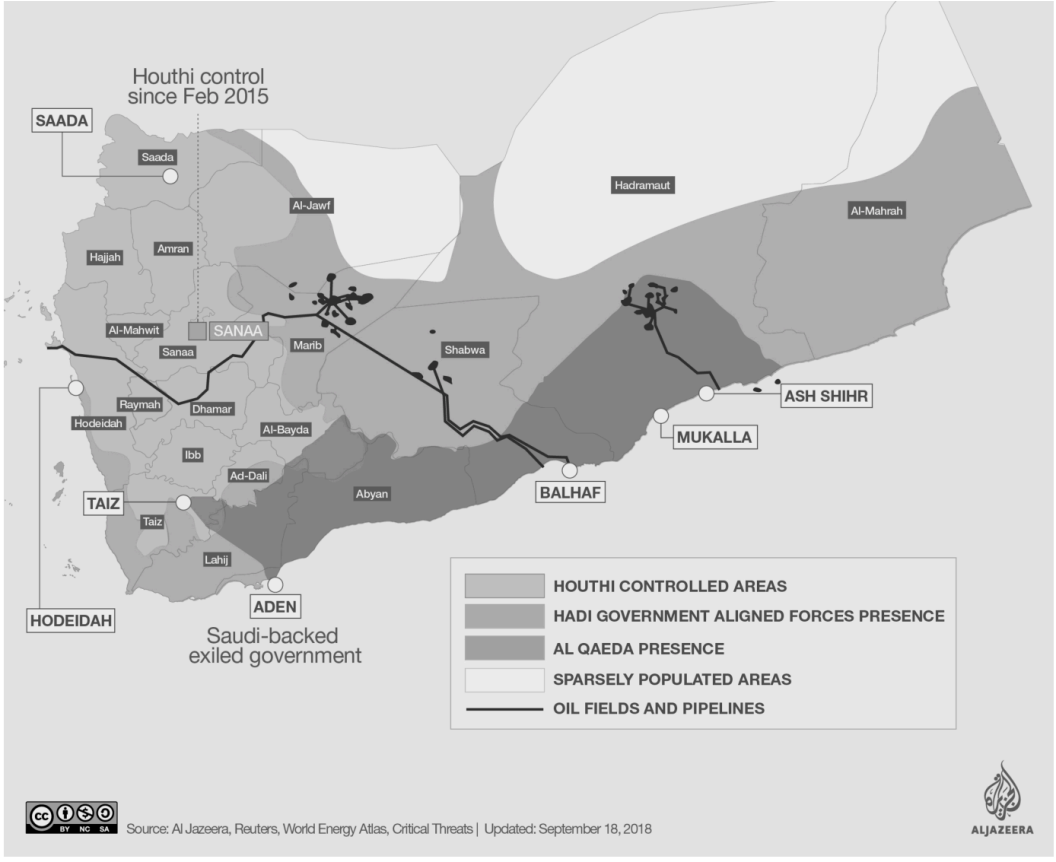
Internationally, outside of economic risks, there are geopolitical risks as Saudi Arabia and its allies appears to be willing to weather any publicity storm over civilian casualties or the continuing cholera epidemic if it results in preventing an Iranian allied political force from establishing a foothold in the Arabian Peninsula.

As Iran's most significant regional competitor, Saudi Arabia and its current leadership appear willing to allow the conflict to continue to meet that objective. Nevertheless, there may, however, be increasing pushes for peace if, in the aftermath of Jamal Khashoggi's, there are either restrictions placed on the Saudi Crown Prince (Mohammed bin Salman) or if he is dislodged from his post entirely. It is well-known in diplomatic circles that the Crown Prince has been the strongest advocate for the war, and if he were to have his power restricted or

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be pushed aside altogether for a different family member, there is a chance that other countries – notably the United States – would use it as an impetus to push for peace; moreover, such events would likely also be used as a catalyst to find a solution to Saudi Arabia's blockade of Qatar.

YEMEN WAR: WHO CONTROLS WHAT



https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2016/08/yemen-conflict-controls-160814132104300.html

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Soundbite analytics

- 10,000 cases of suspected cholera are reported weekly in Yemen.
- 1.8 million children in Yemen are malnourished.
- 14 million people could soon be on the brink of famine.
- In 2017, the US conducted about 120 airstrikes in Yemen.
- Saudi-led airstrikes are responsible for over 60% of civilian deaths.

SOURCES

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