

Background Guide



United Nations Children's Fund

Agenda: Ensuring basic necessities and welfare of children in
Yemen

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Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings Delegates, It is an honour to be serving as a part of the Executive Board at the online edition of the SFHS MUN, 2020. Please consider the following guide, as the name suggests merely to provide you with the background of the agenda. Your real research lies beyond this guide and we hope to see some strong content and debate come our way. The agenda at hand is vast and multifaceted and a successful discussion on it would entail the collective participation of all of you. It shall be your prerogative to decide the direction in which you want to take this committee. The background guide is designed to help everyone to get a basic understanding of the agenda and we strongly recommend that you research about the various aspects of the agenda on your own. We also suggest understanding how various rights get affected (legally). We expect all of you to go through the UN-USA Rules of Procedure. If you're a first timer- do not feel taken aback on the research, foreign policy and other details of the allotted country just take the initiative to research properly.

Regards,

Kartik Arya
Chairperson

Dwija Khanna
Vice-Chairperson

Prerna Chakraborty
Director

Background

Yemen's civil war began in 2014 when Houthi insurgents—Shiite rebels with links to Iran and a history of rising up against the Sunni government—took control of Yemen's capital and largest city, Sana'a, demanding lower fuel prices and a new government. Following failed negotiations, the rebels seized the presidential palace in January 2015, leading President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government to resign. Beginning in March 2015, a coalition of Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia launched a campaign of economic isolation and air strikes against the Houthi insurgents, with U.S. logistical and intelligence support.

Hadi rescinded his resignation and returned to Aden in September 2015, and fighting has continued since. A UN effort to broker peace talks between allied Houthi rebels and the internationally recognized Yemeni government stalled in the summer of 2016. As of December 2017, Hadi has reportedly been residing in exile in Saudi Arabia.

In July 2016, the Houthis and the government of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, ousted in 2011 after nearly thirty years in power, announced the formation of a “political council” to govern Sana'a and much of northern Yemen. However, in December 2017, Saleh broke with the Houthis and called for his followers to take up arms against them. Saleh was killed and his forces defeated within two days.

The intervention of regional powers in Yemen's conflict, including Iran and Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia, threatens to draw the country into the broader Sunni-Shia divide. Numerous Iranian weapon shipments to Houthi rebels have been intercepted in the Gulf of Aden by a Saudi naval blockade in place since April 2015. In response, Iran has dispatched its own naval convoy, which further risks military escalation between the two countries. Meanwhile, the conflict continues to take a heavy toll on Yemeni civilians, making Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The UN estimates that the civilian casualty toll has exceeded

15,000 killed or injured. Twenty-two million

Yemenis remain in need of assistance, eight million are at risk of famine, and a cholera outbreak has affected over one million people. All sides of the conflict are reported to have violated human rights and international humanitarian law. Separate from the ongoing civil war, the United States continues counterterrorism operations in Yemen, relying mainly on airstrikes to target al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and militants associated with the self-proclaimed Islamic State. In 2016, the United States conducted an estimated 35 strikes in Yemen; in 2017, it conducted about 130. In April 2016, the United States deployed a small team of forces to advise and assist Saudi-led troops to retake territory from AQAP. In January 2017, a U.S. Special Operations Forces raid in central Yemen killed one U.S. service member, several suspected AQAP-affiliated fighters, and an unknown number of Yemeni civilians.



Poverty

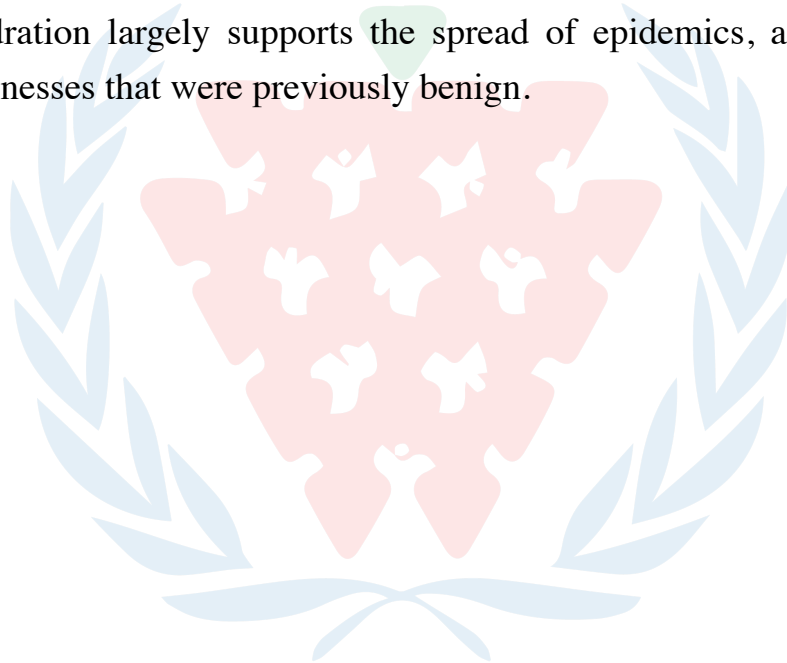
In Yemen, the poorest country of the Middle East, nearly one in two residents are living below the poverty line. The living conditions of residents can differ according to the region in which they live, for example the rural zones are always more discriminated against than the urban zones. In every case, children are the most vulnerable face of poverty. Their health, their well-being, and even their survival are seriously affected.



Health

The infant mortality rate in Yemen is very high, and it is also not surprising that many newborns show inadequate weight at birth (30%). Births are a real problem in Yemen because they often happen outside of medical centers; it is very risky for the child as well as the mother. Malnutrition is also one of the major problems in Yemen where it is seen in record numbers. The harmful consequences of malnutrition on the health of young Yemenis are numerous. For example, nearly one third of children between 2 and 5 years old suffer from serious retardation.

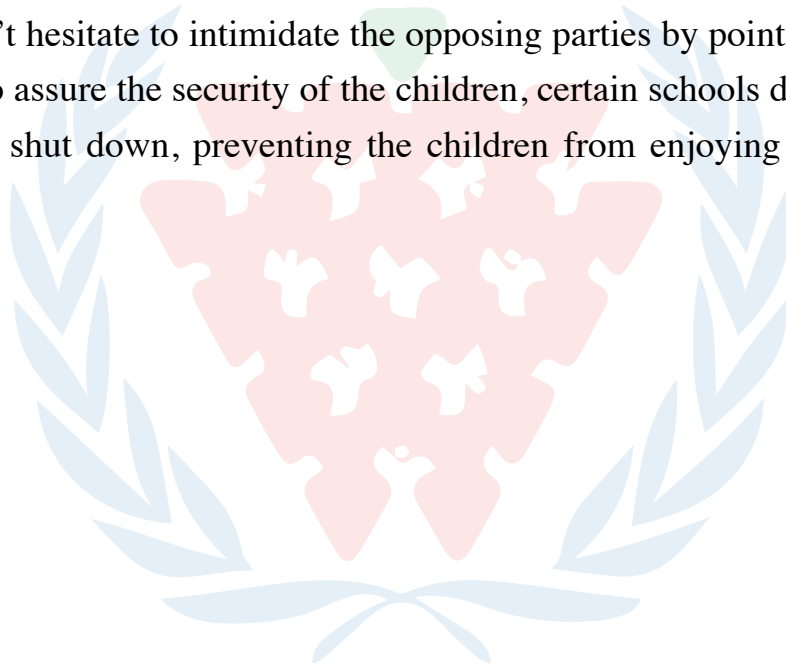
Children's health is equally affected by inadequate access to water. The lack of hygiene and hydration largely supports the spread of epidemics, as well as the aggravation of illnesses that were previously benign.



Right to Education

More than a quarter of children are not educated in Yemen, this lack of education affects girls more often than boys. Furthermore, the establishments are seriously unhealthy, the structures are insufficient and in poor condition. Consequently, the health and hygiene of students in these schools is compromised.

The presence of armed forces in the country makes travelling to school difficult and dangerous. The children are terrified of the idea of crossing the roads in Yemen to go to school. The parents, who are often just as frightened as their children, often let them stay at home. Schools are also the target of threats for the armed groups, who don't hesitate to intimidate the opposing parties by pointing their guns at the schools. To assure the security of the children, certain schools don't have any choice except to shut down, preventing the children from enjoying their right to education.



Child Labour

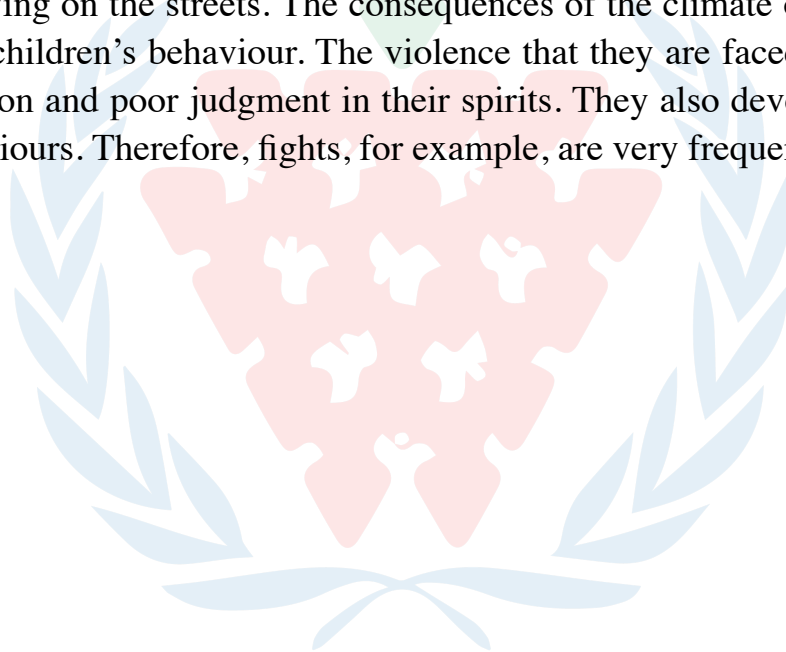
Labor is an everyday reality for around 23% of children between 5 and 14 years old in Yemen. The prevalence of forced labour in this country is all the more serious, as the abuse of these children is abundant. From sexual exploitation to slave treatment, these children are the objects of cruelty and malice. Their health, physical as well as mental, their security, and their development are drastically affected.



Child Abuse

The demonstrations of Arab Spring have touched many children in Yemen. Some have even been slaughtered, close to their own home, or even on their way home from school. The armed conflicts that regularly go off in this country systematically put their health and security in danger.

Furthermore, abuse of children within their family is frequent in Yemen. Some children are battered for one absurd reason or another, and the methods of violence are as various as they are cruel. Little girls are violated by members of their family. To escape these familiar acts of violence, children often run away from their homes and find themselves alone and without shelter. They therefore reside in poverty and face atrocities living on the streets. The consequences of the climate of insecurity are also seen in the children's behaviour. The violence that they are faced with everyday develops confusion and poor judgment in their spirits. They also develop violent and aggressive behaviours. Therefore, fights, for example, are very frequent in schools.



Child Trafficking

The trade of children is still present today in Yemen. Sometimes it is even the families that put their children in the trafficking networks. These young children are then the objects of the most exploitative trafficking. In particular there has recently been an increase in child sexual exploitation through certain practices such as child pornography and tourist marriage. Furthermore, other children see an abominable fate in the trafficking of organ transplants.

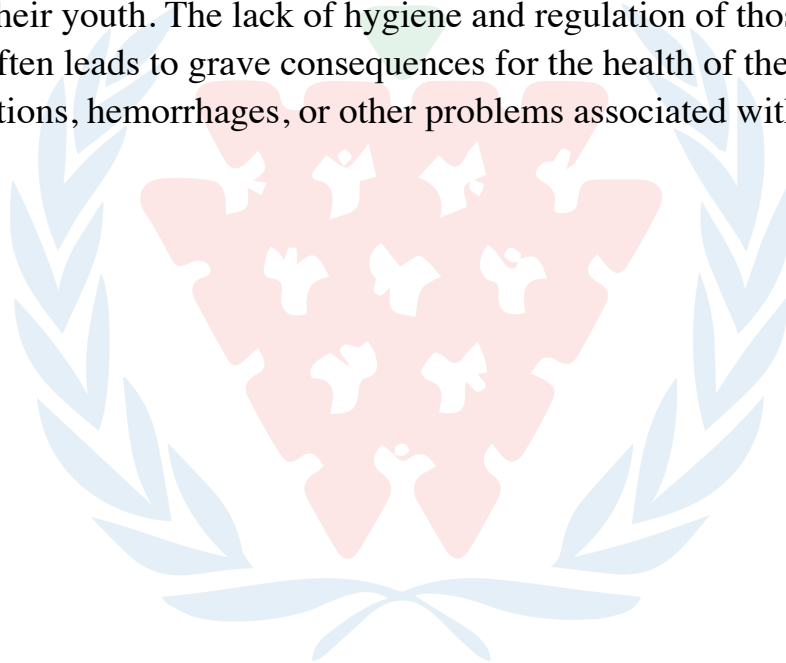
These serious violations of the numerous rights guaranteed by the International Convention of Children's Rights are very rarely reported and practically never sanctioned. The principal motive of this impunity resides in the Yemeni legislation, which doesn't cater for these types of crime. Finally, no specific protection of minors who are victims is implemented in this country.



Child Marriage

The practice of child marriage is very current in Yemen, it's estimated that more than 30% of young girls are married before the age of 18. The consequences are serious, all the more because these girls are very young (12-13 in some villages).

Pregnant at 15, the girls are living extremely hard lives and the delivery is sometimes fatal to them because of their young age. Moreover, they don't choose their husband and therefore often find themselves confronted with marital violence. Far too young, they don't have any input and can be forced to live with these despicable, violent, and loathsome men. Female Genital Mutilation These customary practices are extremely widespread in Yemen. It's estimated that one young girl in every 4 is subject to the excision during their youth. The lack of hygiene and regulation of those that practice these excisions often leads to grave consequences for the health of these young girls. Frequently, infections, hemorrhages, or other problems associated with the operation follow this act.



Refugee Children

Thousands of families look for refuge and security in the displaced person camps. Fleeing the violence in the north of the country, the people flood into these camps, which are trying their best to manage this large number of people. In these zones, associations provide a lot of help to children in many ways. But nevertheless, their situation sometimes remains critical taking into particular account the serious trauma that they have been subjected to. Besides, there are too many to be completely sustained and taken care of.

Their health proves to be worrisome, malnutrition rages, and there is not access for all to education because the classes are overwhelmed. Even more, the lack of infrastructure leads to recurrent problems of hygiene and illness. Right to Identity The situation is alarming in Yemen because nearly 80% of births are not officially declared to public authorities. This disturbing percentage results partly from the costs of registering, which remain high , in spite of the efforts of the country.

So, these children don't have an official identity, or nationality. This will lead to very large difficulties for these people, because they can't enjoy their rights as they are considered to be invisible in the eyes of society. Justice of minors in Yemen, children don't have any particular legislative protection. For example, a child forced to prostitute herself within the framework of the network of traffic that exploits it, can be commonly punished for the act of prostitution.

The country continues to execute minors in complete violation of their fundamental rights. So, children stopped by police forces live in miserable circumstances, entirely mixed with the adult prisoners.