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- Security Council -

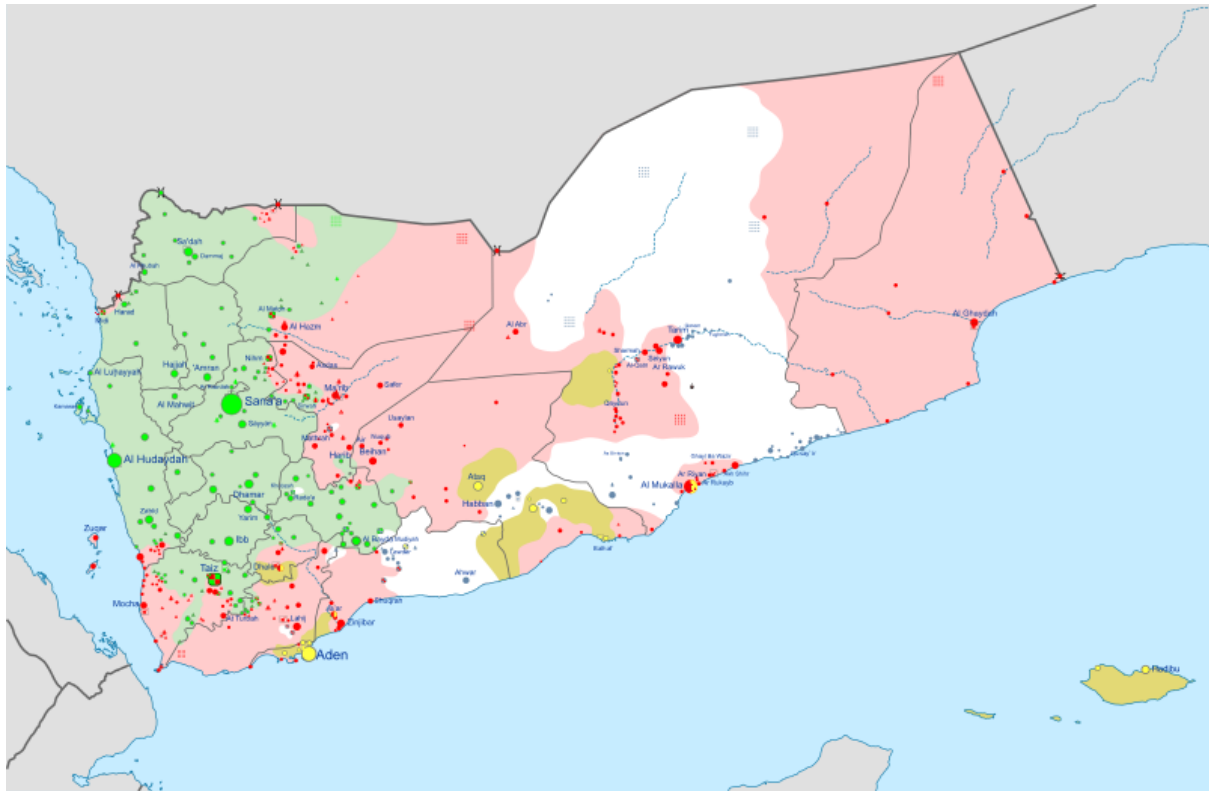
Committee	United Nations Security Council
Issue	101 The Situation in Yemen
Expert Chair	Howard Shen (TNFSH)

Introduction

The situation in Yemen is now amongst one of the worst humanitarian crises around the world. With two major parties engaging each other and involving the Saudi-led coalition, the Houthi fighters, the Islamic State (IS), and Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) in the civil war, Yemen has turned drastically into a bloody battleground for power houses and non-state actors with their own political interests.

One of the two major factions involved is the incumbent and exiled President, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, backed by the Saudi-led coalition, and the former President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had ruled Yemen after its unification for more than three decades and was supported by the Iranian-backed Houthi fighters. Yet, as the result of the former President Saleh turning his back on the Houthi fighters and seeking peace with the Saudi-led coalition, the Houthi fighters succeeded in an attempt to assassinate the former President.

As the conflict in Yemen continues, numerous human rights violations have been reported by human rights organizations, such as the Human Rights Watch; man-made famine caused by blockades of humanitarian aid has also raised a serious problem. Similar to Syrian civil war and the war in Iraq, the Yemeni civil war which started from 2015 is one of the many consequences caused by the proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. That is to say, Saudi Arabia and Iran have respectively backed different governments and insurgencies standing in opposite sides in many unstable countries. The problem is that the civil wars caused by the competition of influence between Saudi Arabia and Iran provide conditions that both the Saudis and the Iranians could not have predicted.



Red - Forces loyal to the Hadi Government

Green - Houthis

Yellow - Southern Transitional Council

White - Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula / the Islamic State / No Clear Occupying Party

Definition of Key Terms

Arab Spring

Started in 2010, the Arab Spring is a democratizing and revolutionary wave in the Middle East and Northern Africa; it toppled dictators, set up democratic governments. The whole wave began with the Tunisian Revolution, which was a peaceful demonstration against high unemployment, food inflation, and corruption within governmental sectors. The wave has led to democratic transitions in Morocco and Oman, deadly civil wars in Syria and Mauritania; it has also overthrown governments and sustained battlegrounds in Yemen and Libya. It is hard to define

whether the wave has brought better lives to the civilians, but the awakening force of democratization is still notable.

Houthis (Supreme Revolutionary Committee)

The Houthis, named as the “Supporters of Allah” in Arabic, is a group of Shia-led Islamic armed militants formed in the 90s, backed by the Iranian government. The same as many other Iranian-backed Shia Islamic groups, it has a significant anti-United States and anti-Semitism background. In 2004, they launched an uprising against the Yemeni government around the Sa’dah Governorate; the insurgency has remained since then until 2015, when Saudi Arabia intervened and the conflict escalated into a full-scale war.

Following the 2011 Yemeni Revolution, the Houthis joined the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) as the coordinator of many opposition groups. The NDC was held as a Gulf Cooperation Council’s (GCC) initiative of brokering a peace deal in Yemen; yet, its result was later rejected by the Houthis as they believed the NDC’s plan of the “creation of a 6-region Yemeni federal state” would only bring benefits to the wealthy regions and deteriorate the poor regions. They rebuilt their relationship with the former President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, in 2014 and started to cooperate with him.

In 2014, they succeeded in taking over the Hadi's government in Sana’a; they then declared the fall of the government. Yet, Hadi’s government has already temporarily moved his capital to the port city of Aden, its current de-facto capital. The organization has occupied Sana’a and its surrounding regions (Northern Yemen) ever since.

“Allah is great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse on the Jews, Victory to Islam.”

- Houthis’ Slogan

Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (Ansar al-Sharia in Yemen)

Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) is a United Nations Security Council-designated terrorist organization. AQAP is one of the most active and dangerous branches of the al-Qaeda Central (active in Afghanistan and Pakistan).

After the United States' war on terror and Saudi Arabia's continuous suppress of Al-Qaeda within its own territory, al-Qaeda has turned its focus to Yemen, which was already in chaos back then. Due to AQAP's terrorist relation and affiliation, AQAP has been excluded from nearly all third party-brokered peace deals and ceasefire agreements.

Ali Abdullah Saleh

Following the unification of Yemen in 1990, Ali Abdullah Saleh, the then President of the Northern Yemen, became the President of the Republic of Yemen and started his 21-year rule of the country. His authoritarian style of ruling and the lack of democratic reform had caused widespread corruption and violations of human rights.

So, then we had the Yemeni Revolution. In 2011, massive demonstrations occurred in the streets of Sana'a, the capital, and Aden, a sea port city. Though Saleh announced a referendum on the Constitution to separate Yemen's executive and legislative powers in March, it was in vain.

On May 22nd, Saleh refused to sign a transition agreement to hand over power. And then on June 3rd, Saleh was almost killed during a clash of its government force and armed supporters of the defected Hashid Tribal Federation. The next day, June 4th, while Saleh was fleeing to Saudi Arabia, his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, took his place as the acting President. Moving on into November, Saleh eventually agreed on a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered power transition deal which would transfer his power to his vice President of the Republic of Yemen, in exchange of immunity of prosecution. While the GCC and some opposition groups agreed to uphold the deal, groups such as the Houthis rejected it.

On February 21st, 2012, the first ever Yemeni presidential election was held and Hadi won the presidency unopposed. Ali Abdullah Saleh, finally, formally transferred his power to another person.

In 2014, after Saleh chose to side with the Houthis, he led the forces loyal to him and the Houthis to take over the constitutional capital, Sana'a. Yet, in December 2017, he declared to withdraw from the coalition with the Houthis and turned to the Saudi-led coalition for help. The Houthis saw it as a severe treason then assassinated him in the 2017 battle of Sana'a. His last appearance was him calling upon his supporters on the television to fight against his former ally, the Houthis, two days before the assassination.

Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi

Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi was Saleh's deputy from 1994 to 2012. He first took the presidency in June 2011, when Saleh fled to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. He took the presidency second time when Saleh agreed on the power transition deal, which put Saleh into a non-active role pending the presidential election on February 21st, 2012. The result of the presidential election was meant to be a part of the transitional process, which means that Hadi, who won the presidential election in February, was chosen as the President of a two-year transitional period. Yet, Hadi has continued to stay in power even after the transitional period.

In 2015, the Houthis forced him to resign during the Houthis' takeover of Sana'a and put him under house arrest. A month later, he fled to Aden; objected his own resignation; proclaimed that the Houthis' action was an unconstitutional coup d'état; declared to temporarily move Yemen's capital to Aden.

After he fled to Saudi Arabia again in February 2017, he was, yet again, put under house arrest by the Saudi government because of his loss of authority in Yemen. So, where is Hadi now? According to The New Arab news center, he is still under house arrest; yet his true status has still been clouded in recent months and years.

Southern Movement

The Southern Movement which began in 2007 is a paramilitary movement in Southern Yemen. The movement in large runs a secessionist campaign to re-establish the Southern part of Yemen into its predecessor, South Yemen. Currently, the political branch in charge of the movement is the Southern Transitional Council (STC), the de facto leadership of all southern provinces. The STC has been actively involved in secessionist movement since former President Saleh's tenure. In 2018, the council took control of Aden, following the battle of Aden. The STC is mainly backed by the United Arab Emirates, a member of the Saudi-led Coalition and the Gulf Cooperation Council. This phenomenon shows the internal disagreements between the so-called "Arab NATO", the GCC, have gone much severe and are gravely concerned by the western community.

Historically, Southern Yemen had called for independence from time to time. However, the fight for independence never came fruitful and was constantly put down to maintain Yemen's national identity and entity as one sovereign nation. The situation between the two sides further exacerbated when social conditions failed to reach standard. Accusations such as corruption, alleged electoral fraud, and strong nepotism within governmental bureaucracies left the Southern part with repulsive public discontent, especially with Sana'a's mishandling of the 1990 unity deal.

Background of the Topic

The ongoing civil war in Yemen is one of the Middle East's bloodiest conflicts and is also the most overlooked. Yemen has been plagued by sectarian strife and social upheavals throughout its entire history. The country was once ruled by a monarch in the northern region and the British to the southern region. Coups in both regions had tarnished and pushed the country towards a state of unending violence, until it was reunified in 1990. But violence did not stop here. The savagery of Al-Qaeda insurgents (1998-Present), Houthi led insurgency (2004~2015), South Yemen insurgency, and the Yemeni Revolution continued to crumble the nation's social-political order. Moreover, with the involvement of the Saudi-led coalition, Yemen has

become a violent playground for regional and international powers, leaving the country in a state of shambles.

Multiple factors lead to the current situation in Yemen today, these include: a regional split between the North-South relation combined with tribal affiliations; the presence of Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP); a Sunni/Shia split; the attempt of Saudi Arabia to secure its geopolitical interest; and an overwhelming per capita ratio of US drone bombing. All of these reasons combined with the already impoverished state only further exacerbate the instability in Yemen.

It all began in 2011 after the Arab Spring. President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had ruled Yemen for 33 years (including his term as the President of Northern Yemen), was unseated after a GCC deal had been brokered. The long-time authoritarian president was forced to hand over his power to his deputy president, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. Hadi's attempt at reforming the constitution and budget sparked resistance from the Houthi rebels in the North. The Houthis took advantage of the new president and coordinated with Saleh to seize the capital, claiming autonomy over the region. In fact, with the public being disenchanted by the transition of presidency, the movement even gained support from ordinary civilians. This eventually led to the takeover of Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, in 2014 by the rebels. The takeover of Sana'a crossed Saudi Arabia's red line.

Saudi Arabia considers the Houthi's actions as immediate threats. This is due to Saudi Arabia's competing geopolitical influence with Iran (research Houthi affiliation with Iran), and being afraid of the fact that this might be an opportunity for Iran to gain foothold on the Saudi border. Immediately, a coalition was formed to bomb Houthi strongholds, which has resulted in a massive displacement and humanitarian crises.

So who have contributed to the operations of the Saudi-led Coalition? And what are the results? Countries such as Bahrain, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, Kuwait are involved and they are supported by the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey, NATO, etc. With a population of 27.4 million, over 18.8 million people are in need and 10.3 million people are in acute need. Water is scarce, with only one-third of the population having access to clean water. As of March 26, 2018, it is reported that at least 10,000 Yemenis have been killed, with over 40,000

casualties being the civilians. What is more shocking is the fact that: according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), over 3 million Yemenis have been displaced.

Iran-Saudi Arabia Proxy Warfare

The 1979 Iranian Revolution marked the inception of a bitter rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Iranians toppled the monarch, Mohammad Reza Shah, and established a popular Islamic Republic led by a clergy, Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini advocated against the secular and westernized monarchy led by Shah since 1976 and the move scared Saudi Arabia fearing that the revolution might inspire Saudi population to go against the Saudi monarch.

Notably, their rivalry has not been mainly because of the Sunni/Shia split; it is their political agendas that matter. That is to say, both Saudi Arabia and Iran are utilizing the already existing contradictory within Islam as the tools to fulfill their political agendas—to achieve regional dominance. After Khomeini came to power, he started to export revolution by secretly supporting militants and armed groups, mostly Shia ones, to overthrow governments in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia reacted by establishing the GCC and bolstering its tie with the United States.

The United States overthrew the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003 for an alleged Weapons of Mass Destruction storage. But, the point was that Iraq had served as the buffer zone between the Saudi Arabia and Iran, the two major powers in the region. After the removal of Hussein regime, armed militants emerged to fight for national dominance and this was when the situation got worse. Saudi Arabia and Iran started to fund Sunni and Shia groups respectively; to deteriorate the situation more, some of them were even radical Islamic terrorists. The whole thing has crumbled Iraq and turned it into a failing state ever since.

So, what is a proxy war? A proxy war happens when two political entities indirectly fight each other by supporting other opposing entities respectively. The most famous proxy war of all time was fought between the United States and the Soviet Union started from the 40s to the 90s, called the Cold War. They supported

opposite sides in a country for them to fight with each other; and that helped them to gain global influence. For instance, their rivalries in Afghanistan, Chile, China, Korean Peninsula, and Viet Nam were all pretty renowned back then. Saudi Arabia and Iran are doing the exact same thing, but for regional influence. They have been tearing countries like Iraq, Syria, and Yemen apart and making them three of the worst failing states in the world. They are imposing devastating impacts on those countries for pursuing regional dominance, the driving force of the continuous chaos in the Middle East.

Major Parties Involved and Their Positions

Saudi-led Coalition

The Saudi-led Coalition intervened in the Yemeni Crisis upon the request of the incumbent President of Yemen, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. He asked the United Nations Security Council to authorize willing countries by all means and measures to protect Yemen and deter the Houthi aggression. Moreover, his Foreign Minister also requested the Arab League for military support. With all above, the Saudi-led Coalition has full legality to intervene in the conflict.

Its aim is clear—to restore all Hadi's rights as the President of Yemen; to stop the Houthi involvement; to reduce Iranian influence in the country. Saudi Arabia is heavily backed by the United States and sees the Houthi and Iranian involvement as a huge threat to its own national security. They also accused Iran, its long-time rival, of funding the Houthis. The Saudi-led Coalition violated human rights in some occasions, such as establishing blockade which have caused man-made famine, creating secret prisons, and the usage of cluster munitions.

Iran

Many parties sided with the Saudi-led Coalition and President Hadi have accused Iran of helping the Houthis. The allegations, however, were all publicly denied by both the Houthis and Iran. Notably, in 2015, the spokesperson of the

United States National Security Council stated, “It remains our assessment that Iran does exert command and control over the Houthis in Yemen.” Yet, it is hard to tell what the truth really is; Iranian influence over the Houthis in the Yemeni civil war remains partially a question.

Iran involves either directly or indirectly in the conflict not only by allegedly supporting the Houthis, but also by smuggling weapons and providing intelligence to the rebels and funding the Lebanese Hezbollah, a Shia militant group which engages in the war.

*** See Hadi’s, the Houthis’, and the Southern Transitional Council’s stances in the Definition of Key Terms above.**

Timeline of Events and Relevant Documents

Date	Description of Event
January 27, 2011	Start of the Yemeni Revolution
November 23, 2011	Saleh signs the power transitional deal
February 21, 2012	Presidential Election of the Republic of Yemen
February 27, 2012	Saleh formally hands over his power to his successor Hadi becomes the President of Yemen
March 18, 2013	Start of the National Dialogue Conference
September 21, 2014	Fall of Sana’a (occupied by the Houthis)
January 22, 2015	Hadi is ousted
March 19, 2015	Start of the Yemeni Civil War
March 26, 2015	Start of the Saudi Intervention in the Yemeni Civil War
February, 2017	Start of the detention of Hadi in the Saudi Arabia
December 4, 2017	Assassination of Saleh

January 28, 2018

Fall of Aden (occupied by the Southern Transitional Council)

Relevant Resolutions and Documents

United Nations Charter Chapter VII Article 51

“Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.”

This article is under Chapter 7 of the United Nations, and is often cited for welcomed foreign interventions. For instance, Hadi cited this article when he requested the United Nations Security Council for help. The United States also saw this article as the justification and legality of its involvements in Nicaragua and Vietnam.

United Nations Security Council Resolution S/RES/2140

This resolution can be served as the framework of the future Yemeni peace deal. There are five notable parts that deserve attention.

1. Clause 2 (Implementation of Political Transition)
 - a. Drafting a new constitution
 - b. Electoral reform including drafting and adopting of a new electoral law consistent with the new constitution
 - c. Referendum on the draft Constitution

- d. Structure reform to prepare Yemen for the transition from a unitary state to a 6-region federal state
 - e. Timely general election
2. Clause 11~15 (Sanction)
- a. Freezing all forms of funds and assets
 - b. Further determined by the Sanction Committee established by Clause 19 below (designate individuals and entities and determine cases)
 - c. Sanctions do not apply to basic expenses, such as foodstuffs, medical treatment and payment of reasonable professional fees, and extraordinary expenses, determined by the Sanction Committee
 - d. Travel ban (do not apply to travel is justified on the ground of humanitarian need or would further peace and national reconciliation in Yemen) (Sanction Committee determines on a case-by-case basis)
3. Clause 17~18 (Designation of Criteria)
4. Clause 19 (Sanction Committee)
- a. Monitor the implementation of sanctions
 - b. Review the information of designated individuals and entities
 - c. Establish guidelines for sanctions
 - d. Report the work of the Sanction Committee within every 60 days
 - e. Encourage dialogue between the Sanction Committee and interested Member State
 - f. Seek whatever information from all Member States that may be considered useful
 - g. Examine and take appropriate action on information regarding alleged violations or non-compliance with the sanctions
 - h. Cooperate with other Sanction Committees, such as the one sanctioning AQAP
5. Clause 21~23 (Panel of Experts)
- a. Update information
 - b. Cooperate with Sanctions Monitoring Team, established by S/RES/1526 (2004)
 - c. Gather, examine and analyze the measures provided by this resolution, as in S/RES/2140 (2014)

Other Documents

Delegates are also advised to research on relevant United Nations documents such as S/RES/2402, S/RES/2266, S/RES/2216, S/RES/2051, S/PRST/2017/14.

S - Security Council

RES - Resolution

PRST - Presidential Statement

PV - Meeting Records

Analysis of Previous Attempted Solutions

From Saleh's power transitional deal to the National Dialogue Conference, the international community has brokered several ceasefire agreements and peace deals, yet has failed to successfully implement them and has failed to draw international attention that the war deserves.

Let us start from Saleh's power transitional deal. While overseeing the 2012 Yemeni presidential election, the United Nations special envoy to Yemen, Jamal Bin Omar, said "The February 21st is a historic day, and it protected Yemen from a civil war." And then, we all know what happened next—the situation continued to deteriorate; President Hadi was ousted three years later; Bin Omar, the envoy, resigned from the position four years later. How ironic it is. So, what brings it here? The most popular analysis from the Washington Post concerning the transitional power deal pointed out the question of its accountability. Let us go back to 2011. The slogan of the Yemeni Revolution back then was "No tribes, no parties—our revolution is a youth revolution." Though it did sound a bit bizarre in English, its main concept was still clear—they did not want partisan politics. The government under the transitional period, however, was mostly consisted of members of the former ruling party and lacked the representation of major oppositions. Not only in the administrative governmental sectors, but also in the security ministry, which was supposed to be responsible for combating the rebels, had the same problem. The secessionists in the south and insurgents in the north were unrepresented. And that did not help solve the problem.

Moving on to the National Dialogue Conference, also a part of the Yemeni peace process. The NDC is an essential part of the UN and GCC–brokered agreement and was mentioned and stipulated in the Security Council Resolution 2051. The NDC was divided into several small working groups. Those working groups specialize in one issue regarding the Yemeni crisis respectively, such as the Southern Issue Working Group and the National Reconciliation and Transitional Justice Working Group. They eventually agreed on the formation of the Yemeni Federation and the extension of Hadi’s term for all necessary transitional work. It was a successful conference, yet again, the proposals were failed to be implemented. What seems to be the problem right here?

First, although the NDC was far much inclusive than any other sectors, different voices were still not very involved in the effective decision-making process. That is to say, the oppositions cannot really do anything about the substantive transitional reform because all reforms are conducted by pro-Hadi men and even Hadi appointees. Second, although the Houthis did agree on the 6-region federal state of Yemen, they still accused the districting of “dividing the Houthi influence into parts”.

So, in conclusion, the peace process from then until now has not been accountable and representative enough to satisfy all parties.

Possible Solutions

Formation of the Yemeni Federation

Forming a Yemeni Federation would seem to be the most feasible long-term solution for now. Because of the major ideological differences between the northern and the southern Yemen, the best way to ensure peace in the Republic of Yemen is to establish a decentralized federal Yemeni government. Clashes between different parties in Yemen would reduce if a federal government is successfully established. But, before implementing, the districting questions mentioned above should first be resolved.

Continuation of the Omani Initiative

Just like the 1992 Wang-Koo Summit held in Singapore, controversial meetings tend to be held in a third party country on which both parties involved agree. Oman has served as the bridge of communication between the western countries and Iran and also between Sunni-led political entities and Shia-led political entities. For instance, Oman's effort in the Iranian nuclear deal was internationally renowned. Another reason for Oman to participate in the negotiation is that Oman has already presented a 7-point plan to both Iran and Saudi Arabia, also known as the Omani Initiative.

Oman's 7-point plan includes:

1. The withdrawal of the Houthis and forces loyal to deposed president Ali Abdullah Saleh from all Yemeni cities and the return of military hardware and munitions seized from the army.
2. The restoration of the President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi and the government of Khaled Bahah, Hadi's Prime Minister.
3. Early parliamentary and presidential elections.
4. An agreement signed by all Yemeni parties.
5. The conversion of the Houthis into a political party.
6. An international aid conference attended by donor states.
7. Yemen entering the Gulf Cooperation Council.

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Appendix

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S/PV/7119 (Security Council Meeting Records):

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.7119