



Ceasefire in Yemen

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The warring parties in Yemen Houthi rebels and Saudi Arabia-backed forces loyal to President of Yemen agreed to a United Nations-mediated ceasefire agreement.

- The agreement was reached in UN-mediated talks held in Stockholm in December 2018 and signed in the city of Hodeidah in Yemen.
- The coalition had blockaded the port, the main conduit for humanitarian aid to enter Yemen, for months, and the fighters, mostly UAE soldiers, were battling the rebels.

Hodeidah Ceasefire Agreement

- According to the UN, a ceasefire by the parties came into effect in the city and the three ports of Hodeidah, Ras Isa and Saleef from midnight 17 December 2018.
- Under the agreement, the Houthis will withdraw from the ports and from Hodeidah city and a UN-chaired committee including both sides will oversee the withdrawal of forces.
- The Yemeni ports will fall under the control of "local forces", who would then send the ports' revenues to the country's Central Bank.

What led to talks?

- **UN Efforts:** The UN has been pushing for an agreement for long.
- **Jamal Khashoggi Murder:** Saudi Arabia which is a major party in the crisis came under increased global pressure to stop fighting in Yemen after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside its consulate in Istanbul.
- **Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen:** The spotlight on Yemen and its deteriorating humanitarian situation lead to a severe global outcry. The impact was so high that, the U.S., which supports Saudi Arabia in the war, cut down its involvement by ending refueling of coalition aircraft.

War in Yemen

- Since 2014, Yemen is facing a multi-sided conflict involving local, regional, and international actors.
- The Houthis, a group of Zaidi Shia Muslims who ruled a kingdom there for nearly 1,000 years. They used widespread anger against President Hadi's decision to postpone long-awaited elections and his stalled negotiations over a new constitution to protest against the government.
- They marched from their stronghold of Saada province to the capital Sanaa and surrounded the presidential palace, placing Hadi under house arrest.
- A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia intervened in Yemen on March 26, 2015, at Hadi's request, after the Houthis continued to sweep the south and threatened to conquer the last government stronghold of Aden. Prompting one of the world's worst humanitarian crises ever.

Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen

- According to WHO, since the Saudi intervention in 2015, at least 10,000 people have been killed in Yemen.
- The widespread damage caused to infrastructure by the coalition airstrikes and lack of supplies of food and medicines due to the blockade has pushed Yemen into a humanitarian catastrophe.
- About 12 million people are at the risk of starvation in Yemen. The country is also facing a massive cholera outbreak. According to UNICEF, a child dies every 10 minutes in Yemen from preventable causes.

Operation Raahat

India launched a rescue operation in Yemen to ensure safe passage to Indian citizens and other foreign nationals who were stuck in Yemen after Saudi Led coalition intervened.

Way Forward

- The war has reached a stalemate long ago. The Houthis are facing the loss of territory in recent months, while the Saudi coalition is facing growing international pressure.
- A solution to the conflict can be found only if the rebels and the government make some political concessions.
- The current deal, if implemented on the ground, will represent a breakthrough because the port is the gateway for the bulk of humanitarian aid coming into the country.
- While the second round of talks is already expected to be held in January, a smooth ceasefire could lead to a fast framework for negotiations and a transitional governing body.