

**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LAHORE**  
**PRESENTS**



# **ISLMUN IV**

**UNSC**  
**STUDY GUIDE**

**1<sup>st</sup> | 2<sup>nd</sup> | 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**NOVEMBER**

## **TOPIC: Rising Regional Tensions in the Middle East**

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## Note from the Dias,

Hello, my name is Shayaan Dar, the Secretary-General for this year's ISLMUN. It is my utmost honor to welcome you all to the 4th edition of ISLMUN as the Chair for UNSC. A few things to know about me and the way this committee will function: Firstly, I adhere to a strict policy of non-interference, allowing delegates to proceed with the committee however they want. Secondly, content matters. Within the Security Council, I wish to see fruitful debate that not only transcends the boundaries of conventional common-sense rhetoric but also inculcates the true spirit of the Security Council mandate. Lastly, delegates must have a grasp of the topic and their foreign policies, as I penalize stance contradictions heavily! With that, I hope ISLMUN will be an enriching experience for you all and good luck!

Hello everyone,

My name is Ibrahim Lodhi and I will be serving as the Committee Director for UNSC at ISLMUN. Throughout my Model UN journey, I've primarily done The Security Council, so being part of the Dais for this committee is nothing less than an honor. Consistent with the chair, I too, prefer a policy of non-interference. For me, speeches matter. Content, rhetoric, and structure—consistent with the fast-paced nature that encompasses debate in the UNSC. I have high hopes for this committee and am extremely excited to welcome you all. So, please come prepared and have a firm grasp of the topic and your foreign policy. Best of luck!



Hello, my name is Maheen Aziz and this year I will be the Assistant Committee Director for UNSC at ISLMUN. As we proceed with the non-interference policy during committee sessions, all delegates must maintain proper decorum. I believe that the strength of your arguments lies in the clarity and substance of your speeches, rather than in complex rhetoric. A well-structured flow of ideas will enhance discussions throughout the conference. I hope to see engaging debates and a lot of effort from everyone. Good luck!



## The United Nations Security Council

### Introduction:

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a pivotal organ within the United Nations (UN), assumes the crucial responsibility of upholding global peace and security. Established in 1945, the UNSC has served as a cornerstone of international stability, diligently working to promote collective security, resolve conflicts, and address crises worldwide. Its mission aligns with the principles of peace and security enshrined in the UN Charter, empowering it to safeguard global stability from potential threats.

### Mandate:

The UNSC's mandate encompasses several key responsibilities. Article 24 of the Charter entrusts the council with the primary duty of maintaining peace, while Article 39 further empowers it to address and prevent threats to peace. Beyond its focus on peace, the council is also committed to upholding human rights and fostering sustainable development, aligning with Article 1's broader goals of promoting social progress and elevating living standards globally.

To effectively carry out its mandate, the UNSC possesses significant powers. Under Article 34, the council can investigate disputes and provide recommendations to prevent conflicts from escalating. Article 41 authorizes the imposition of economic sanctions, arms embargoes, and other non-military measures to enforce compliance with its resolutions. In situations demanding more direct intervention, Article 42 empowers the council to initiate peacekeeping operations and organize humanitarian missions. Notably, the UNSC's decisions, as outlined in Article 25, are binding on all UN member states, granting it unique authority to enforce its resolutions globally.

### Purpose:

In essence, the UNSC serves as the primary instrument within the UN's framework for responding to and managing international security challenges. Equipped with an extensive mandate and powerful tools, the council acts in the interest of global peace, employing both diplomatic and, when necessary, coercive measures to maintain stability and resolve conflicts around the world.



## **History and Background of the Topic**

### **Early 20th Century: The Ottoman Empire's Dissolution: (1922)**

The Ottoman Empire's collapse after World War I significantly altered the Middle East's geopolitical landscape. The empire's vast territories were divided among European powers, leading to the creation of artificial borders that disregarded ethnic and sectarian divisions. For instance, the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) secretly carved up the region into British and French spheres of influence, laying the groundwork for future conflicts. The subsequent establishment of modern nation-states, such as Iraq, Syria, and Jordan, often forced disparate groups to coexist within arbitrary borders.

### **Colonialism and Mandates: (1914-1945)**

European colonial powers, particularly Britain and France, imposed mandates on Middle Eastern territories, exploiting resources and suppressing local nationalism. The British Mandate for Palestine (1920-1948), for example, facilitated Jewish immigration, fueling tensions with Arab populations. Similarly, France's mandate over Syria and Lebanon led to the marginalization of minority groups. These mandates fostered widespread resentment, as local populations sought self-determination and independence.

### **Zionism and the Creation of Israel: (1948)**

The Zionist movement, emerging in the late 19th century, aimed to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The 1917 Balfour Declaration expressed British support for a Jewish national home, sparking Arab opposition. Post-World War II international pressure led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, known as the Nakba or "catastrophe" in Arabic, sparking the enduring Arab-Israeli conflict. The dispute revolves around issues of territory, identity, and rights.

### **Arab Nationalism:**

Arab nationalism gained momentum in the mid-20th century, driven by figures like Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt) and Saddam Hussein (Iraq). Pan-Arabism sought to unify Arab states and counter Western influence. However, this movement often clashed with regional rivalries and sectarian divisions. Nasser's United Arab Republic (1958-1961), for instance, briefly united Egypt and Syria before collapsing.



### **Iran's 1953 Coup:**

The CIA-backed coup overthrew Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh, who nationalized Iran's oil industry, threatening Western interests. The coup installed a pro-Western monarchy under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, fueling Iranian anti-American sentiment. This event contributed significantly to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which established the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### **Rise of Islamist Movements:**

Islamist movements gained prominence in the Middle East from the 1970s onward, driven by factors such as Disillusionment with secular Arab nationalism, Economic stagnation and social inequality, Islamic revivalism, and identity politics.

Groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928, and Hamas, emerging in the 1980s, sought to establish Islamic states governed by Sharia law. These movements often provided social services, filling gaps left by authoritarian regimes.

Ayatollah Khomeini's return to Iran and the establishment of the Islamic Republic inspired Islamist movements across the region. Hamas's electoral victory in Gaza (2006) demonstrated the appeal of Islamist movements. According to Ashraf El-Sherif's article "The Muslim Brotherhood's Rise and Fall in Egypt" for the Carnegie Middle East Center: "The Brotherhood's success in Egypt was largely due to its ability to provide social services and fill the gaps left by the state."

### **Arab Spring: (2010-2012)**

Protests swept across the Arab world, driven by Economic grievances, Corruption and authoritarianism, and demands for democratic reform and human rights.

Regime changes occurred in:

1. Tunisia (President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's ousting)
2. Egypt (President Hosni Mubarak's resignation)
3. Libya (Muammar Gaddafi's overthrow)
4. Yemen (President Ali Abdullah Saleh's resignation)

However, the Arab Spring's promise of democratization and stability remains unfulfilled. Many countries face ongoing conflicts, authoritarianism, and Islamist radicalization.

The Arab Spring created opportunities for Islamist movements, for example the Muslim Brotherhood's Electoral Success, where Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood won parliamentary and presidential elections (2011-2012). Likewise, the Syrian Civil War and Libyan instability enabled the emergence of extremist groups like ISIS.



## Current Situation

By 2024, 10 conflicts have erupted across the Middle-Eastern region. Israel faced two enemy lines; Hamas in the South and Hezbollah in the North, both of them were a part of the “Axis of Resistance”. Israeli-Arab tension also began to flare up. After the Islamic State collapsed in 2019, militias, backed by Iran, attacked US forces in Iraq and Syria. In the meantime, Yemen became involved in 3 wars, a civil war within its borders, contentions with Saudi Arabia, and assaults on global shipping in the Red Sea. Middle-Eastern tension rose after Israel attacked Lebanon and the killing of Hezbollah’s leader. Israel has increased airstrikes against the Houthis in Yemen and attacked Hezbollah and the Iranian logistics network located in Syria. Despite the “Axis of Resistance” pressuring Israel, Israel was definite in its preparation to escalate the situation further. As the hostilities increased over the years, Hezbollah targeted Israeli military camps and avoided using advanced artillery. Iran, however, was not open to going against Israel, even after the assassination of Hamas Leader in Tehran. Israel commenced ground operations in Southern Lebanon on October 1st. The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) released a statement announcing a “targeted ground operation” aimed towards “terrorist targets and infrastructure of the terrorist organization Hezbollah”. This operation targeted villages near the border since they were seen as an “immediate threat” to northern Israeli communities.

Israel shifted its focus to the northern side, resulting in a 20% decrease of violence in Gaza. With consideration to facilitating the United Nations (UN) polio vaccination campaign, Israel and Hamas agreed to an 8-hour humanitarian pause between fighting in different areas. The IDF continued its airstrikes, 400 of which were reported. These airstrikes hit locations where displaced Palestinians stayed, as the IDF claimed those areas to be Hamas command centers. On 10th September, an airstrike was sent towards the al-Mawasi humanitarian zone in Khan Yunis. The IDF claimed that this attack targeted the three key Hamas commanders. On September 21st, the IDF sent another airstrike towards 2 schools, killing around 30 civilians. On September 12th, the IDF announced that it had disbanded Hamas’ Rafah brigade. On September 17th, 4 IDF soldiers were killed as they entered a booby-trapped building in Rafah.

During September, Israel had sent out 1700 airstrikes towards Lebanon, a 125% increase from previously conducted attacks. Since the assassination of Hezbollah commander in July, there has been an increased level of violence and hostility on the borders of Israel and Lebanon. On 23rd September, Israel carried out 200 airstrikes across 5 provinces, this was the “deadliest day for Lebanon in decades” as 569 civilians were killed. On September 27th, 7 of Hezbollah’s senior figures and commanders were killed. Between October 2023 and 22nd September 2024, 21 Hezbollah commanders were killed in Lebanon.

In September, Iraqi military leaders promised military support in favor of Hezbollah, which intensified the Israeli attacks on Lebanon. During the last week of the month,



the Islamic Resistance in Iraq carried out attacks aimed at Israel. On September 25th, a drone struck the port of Eilat, injuring two civilians. After a series of US reciprocated airstrikes, the attacks had decreased. Militias in Iraq may respond in the future by targeting the US in a more coordinated and forceful way, but it remains uncertain. U.S. forces disrupted GPS signals used by Iraqi aircraft and carried out flights above Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) locations, leading the PMF to strengthen security measures in the western region of al-Anbar province. On September 28, the governments of the US and Iraq reached an agreement to end the US-led coalition's military mission against the Islamic State by 2025, which is expected to lead to a likely reduction in US troops stationed in Iraq.

On September 8th, Israeli forces targeted an underground missile factory that they, along with the US, claim was built by Iran and Hezbollah in 2018. Airstrikes and explosives placed inside the facility resulted in 18 deaths. Israel detonated walkie-talkies of Hezbollah members in Syria.

Hezbollah members sustained injuries in 11 different sites across the provinces of Idlib, Damascus and rural Damascus, Dara, Quneitra, and Dayr al-Zawr. IDF continued its airstrikes towards logistics networks in Syria to disrupt supply lines and prevent Hezbollah from transporting fighters from Syria to Lebanon. Over 220 aircraft strikes have been carried out by Israel on Syrian land, occasionally targeting specific members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Hezbollah.

The Houthis struck central Israel with a surface-to-surface missile on September 15; but no injuries were caused. Along with a drone, the Houthis launched a third ballistic missile on Tel Aviv the day after firing one into Haifa and Ashkelon in Israel on September 27. Israeli forces were able to intercept the missiles launched on the 27th and 28th. On September 29, the IDF conducted retaliatory airstrikes targeting infrastructure in the al-Hudayda governorate, located in Yemen's West Coast region. The strikes were specifically aimed at ports, oil facilities, and power plants. In light of the recent regional tensions that emerged in early October, the Houthis declared their intention to target Israel with three cruise missiles and affirmed their willingness to engage in collaborative military efforts in support of Palestine and Lebanon. These actions stand in stark contrast to the Houthis' earlier decision to cease all operations in the Red Sea following Iran's attack on Israel in April, a move aimed at facilitating regional de-escalation.





## Role of the United Nations

The UN's engagement in the Middle East began in 1947, during the organization's early years. It faced a challenging and uncertain start, quickly gaining the distrust of Arab nations, who perceived it as pro-Western. This sentiment was mirrored by Israel and its primary ally, the United States, which perceived the UN—particularly the General Assembly—as increasingly favoring Arab positions. The UN's involvement in the Middle East began during a conflict between the Arab population and the Jewish population, most of whom were recent settlers in what was then the British-ruled territory of Palestine. When the British government found too much burden within the region, it chose to give up its responsibilities in February 1947 and handed the state over to the newly established UN.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) plays a crucial role in delivering food, shelter, and healthcare to the majority of Gaza's population. It provides educational support for Gaza's 660,000 children, serving as the only organization capable of restarting their education, thus safeguarding the future of an entire generation. UNRWA sustains numerous health, education, and social services in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Secretary-General in a recent press conference, held on 8th October, emphasized that a ceasefire should be pursued in both Gaza and Lebanon simultaneously, suggesting that addressing the situation in both areas is crucial for a comprehensive solution. The human rights chief, a UN official, joined Secretary General Antonio Guterres in calling for a ceasefire and de-escalation.

UN Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland stated that he has been involved in important discussions with relevant parties and member states in the region, including Lebanon, Egypt, and Qatar, to promote regional de-escalation. Confronted with these "sobering realities," Mr. Pedersen, the special envoy for Syria, expressed his determination to seek constructive paths forward. He met in New York with the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the Syrian Negotiations Commission, along with other stakeholders and representatives from donor countries. His message was unequivocal: the UN-facilitated political process needs to progress on three essential fronts. These included revitalizing the stalled Constitutional Committee, implementing trust-building measures, and developing a comprehensive new approach that addresses the interests of all parties involved.

Meanwhile, in Geneva, the Human Rights Council—the UN's committee on rights-related issues—discussed the situation in Syria. The head of an independent commission of inquiry noted that the country is "descending further into a quagmire of misery and despair." UN members were alerted with the need to stop the ongoing conflict within the Middle Eastern region. By mid-2024, Gaza was attracting somewhat less diplomatic attention in New York, despite the ongoing absence of a ceasefire. While the UN's inability to end the conflict or



mitigate the risks of a broader regional escalation did not stop its efforts in other areas, it undeniably cast a significant shadow over the organization.

The Hamas-Israel conflict significantly shifted diplomacy in the Security Council, leaving the U.S. in a defensive position. After facing criticism over its actions in Ukraine, Russia accused Washington of double standards. Initially, other Council members, unsettled by Hamas's brutality on October 7, sought to align with the U.S. on a ceasefire, but U.S. officials quickly dismissed any UN role in conflict resolution. In March, it abstained on a brief ceasefire resolution but vetoed another in April that would have advanced Palestine's UN membership. By June, the U.S. facilitated its own resolution for a phased ceasefire.

After October 7, the General Assembly and International Court of Justice (ICJ) shifted its focus to Gaza, making two calls for a halt to hostilities after the U.S. blocked Council resolutions. In May, in response to the U.S. veto on Palestine's UN membership, the Assembly overwhelmingly passed a resolution granting Palestinians special privileges in Assembly proceedings. The war in Gaza has exposed the United Nations' impotence as a conflict resolution body. In particular, the Security Council has been largely absent from efforts to negotiate a ceasefire and secure the release of hostages, demonstrating its inability to prevent regional tensions from escalating.



## Relevant stakeholders

### The United States of America:

The U.S. provides substantial military aid to regional allies, including \$3.8 billion annually to Israel, \$1.3 billion to Egypt, \$400 million to Jordan, and \$3 billion to Saudi Arabia. The primary goal for US involvement in the region is to aid and secure Israel, with other goals such as those of energy. The US has historically been involved both diplomatically, and militarily, for example, it has always exemplified military aid to Israel, but simultaneously worked towards the Abraham Accords in 2020.

The U.S. claims to combat extremist groups, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda. U.S. operations include drone strikes and special forces raids. The U.S. has been either the initiator or at the forefront of every single Nato Intervention as well, be it Libya, Afghanistan, or Iraq. The U.S also directly intervened in Iraq against Saddam Hussein, under the claim that weapons of mass destruction were being developed.

A similar claim has been leveled against Iran in recent times, in the context of nuclear arms development. This led to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015) with the U.S. eventually withdrawing and reinstating sanctions on Iran during the Trump administration. The Middle East's oil reserves are crucial for global energy stability. The U.S. claims to ensure the free flow of oil through military presence and alliances. For example, the U.S. The Fifth Fleet is present in the Persian Gulf shipping lanes.

### The Russian Federation:

In Syria, Russia supports Bashar al-Assad's regime, providing military aid and airstrikes since 2015. Russia cooperates with Iran on nuclear issues, energy, and regional security. It also strengthens ties with Egypt through arms deals and nuclear cooperation. Russia's strategic interests include energy, security, and geopolitics. Russia seeks to maintain influence over regional energy markets and pipelines. Russia seeks to maintain influence over regional energy markets and pipelines. Russia's Gazprom supplies natural gas to Turkey and Europe. It aims to counter NATO's presence and protect its southern borders. By challenging US dominance, Russia asserts its global influence. Russia aims to counter NATO's presence and protect its southern borders. Russia's military bases in Syria and Tajikistan ensure regional security.

Diplomatically, Russia engages in various efforts. The Astana Process, alongside Iran and Turkey, facilitates Syrian peace talks. Russia supports Palestinian statehood and engages in mediation. Russia participates in regional organizations like the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)



### **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation: (NATO)**

NATO has a historical stake in the Middle East, stemming from its consistent involvement in military operations, either directly or through training exercises expressing its sentiments against certain state or non-state actors. Although not part of the Middle East, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was a major mission in response to the 9/11 attacks. NATO assumed command in 2003, aiming to combat Taliban forces, secure the government, and prevent Afghanistan from being a terrorist safe haven. NATO deployed a training mission from 2004 to 2011 to help build Iraq's security forces post-Saddam Hussein. This was followed by the 2018 NATO Mission Iraq, providing non-combat training to strengthen Iraqi defense against terrorism, particularly to combat ISIL. Although North African, Libya's proximity to the Middle East and strategic importance led NATO to intervene under Operation Unified Protector, a UN-mandated mission aimed at protecting civilians during the Libyan civil war and enforcing an arms embargo and no-fly zone.

### **The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant: (ISIL)**

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as ISIS, emerged from al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and gained prominence after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. ISIL's ideology blends radical Sunni Islam with a call for an Islamic caliphate, claiming territories in Syria and Iraq by 2014. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed himself caliph, marking the group's ambition for global influence. At one point ISIL controlled around 100,000 square kilometers across Iraq and Syria, including major cities like Mosul, Fallujah, and Raqqa, making it the largest territory held by a terrorist organization in modern times. ISIL's self-declared caliphate had a population of up to 12 million people under its rule, where it imposed a strict version of Sharia law. However, through coordinated efforts by local forces and international coalitions, ISIL's territorial control was gradually dismantled, with major losses by 2019.

### **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: (KSA)**

Saudi Arabia is involved in various regional conflicts. In Yemen, Saudi Arabia leads the coalition against Houthi forces, aiming to restore the internationally recognized government. In Syria, Saudi Arabia supports opposition groups, seeking to oust Bashar al-Assad's regime. The kingdom also counters Iranian influence through diplomatic and military means, including supporting Iraqi forces against Iranian-backed militias.

Saudi Arabia's strategic interests include energy security, regional influence, and security. Maintaining control over oil reserves and export routes is crucial for the kingdom's economy.



Countering Iranian and Turkish influence is vital for regional dominance. Protecting borders from extremist groups, such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS, ensures national security. KSA is in a constant proxy war with Iran, making a situation similar to that of the cold war, with KSA and Iran taking on the Role of the USA and the USSR.

#### **Iran:**

Iran is currently involved in various regional conflicts. In Syria, Iran supports Bashar al-Assad's regime, providing troops and military advisors. In Yemen, Iran backed Houthi forces with arms and funding. Iran also influences the Shia-dominated government in Iraq and supports Palestinian groups in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. Iran's strategic interests include regional influence, energy security, and security. Expanding influence through proxy forces, maintaining control over oil and gas reserves, and protecting borders from extremist groups are crucial.

Iran's military involvement includes Syrian operations, Yemen support, and proxy forces. Iran's nuclear program sparks international concern, particularly after the 2018 US withdrawal from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and Iran's subsequent nuclear expansion. As mentioned earlier Iran and KSA are engaged in a proxy war, replicating the Cold War.



## Case Studies

### Israel-Palestine Conflict:

The conflict's roots date back to the early 20th century. The 1917 Balfour Declaration promised a Jewish homeland in Palestine, then under Ottoman rule. Post-World War I, the British Mandate administered Palestine, leading to increased Jewish immigration. Arab Palestinians, who had inhabited the land for centuries, felt threatened.

In 1948, Israel declared independence, sparking the Arab-Israeli War. Neighboring Arab states invaded, but Israel emerged victorious, expanding its territory. The 1949 Armistice Agreement established the Green Line, separating Israel from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Following the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israeli settlements began to appear, sparking international condemnation. Palestinians viewed settlements as obstacles to a viable state.

The 1960s saw the emergence of the Palestinian national movement, led by Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO sought recognition and self-determination. The 1993 Oslo Accords aimed to establish a framework for peace. Israel recognized the PLO, and Palestinians gained limited autonomy. However, progress stalled due to settlement expansion, violence, and disagreements over Jerusalem's status.

Two Intifadas (1987-1993 and 2000-2005) and four Gaza Wars (2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2023) have resulted in significant Palestinian casualties and displacement.

The Israel-Hezbollah conflict is intricately linked to the Israel-Palestine issue, sharing roots in regional dynamics and ideological tensions. Hezbollah, a Shia Islamist group, emerged in Lebanon in the 1980s, initially focused on resisting Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. This resistance was fueled by Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, aimed at driving out Palestinian militants.

Hezbollah's anti-Israel stance aligns with Palestinian nationalist groups, such as Hamas and Fatah, in their struggle for self-determination. Iran's financial and military backing of Hezbollah strengthens this alliance, creating a regional axis of resistance against Israel. Hezbollah's support for Palestinian groups enhances their capabilities, while Israel views Hezbollah's military strength as a significant threat.

The 2006 Second Lebanon War exemplifies the conflict's complexity. Israel's invasion aimed to dismantle Hezbollah's military infrastructure but ultimately strengthened the group's popularity



and influence in Lebanon. This war also highlighted the regional dimensions of the conflict, with Iran and Syria supporting Hezbollah.

### **Red Sea Crisis:**

The Red Sea crisis refers to the escalating tensions and conflicts surrounding the strategic waterway, connecting the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal. The region's instability affects global trade, energy security, and regional geopolitics. The Red Sea's significance dates back to ancient times, with various empires vying for control.

In modern times, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the 1980s Iran-Iraq War highlighted the region's volatility. Recent developments have intensified tensions, including the Yemen Civil War, Houthi attacks on Saudi and Emirati ships, Iranian naval expansion, and the Ethiopian dam dispute with Egypt and Sudan.

Major stakeholders in the Red Sea crisis include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and China. Saudi Arabia controls key ports and seeks to secure oil exports. Egypt guards the Suez Canal and protects national interests. Iran expands its naval presence and supports Houthi forces. The UAE develops ports and military bases, while China invests in ports and infrastructure.

Piracy, terrorism, and naval rivalries threaten regional security. Al-Qaeda and ISIS presence in Yemen and Somalia, Houthi missile and drone attacks on Saudi and Emirati targets, and Iranian naval exercises and missile tests all contribute to instability. The international community has responded with UN Security Council resolutions condemning Houthi attacks and International Maritime Organization initiatives enhancing maritime security.

The Red Sea's strategic importance extends beyond regional dynamics, impacting global trade and energy security.

### **Iraqi Insurgency:**

Insurgency is viewed as the primary form of conflict in today's world, with large-scale conventional wars between states being minimal since World War II. In Iraq, a group of insurgents is challenging one of the world's strongest powers, potentially marking the beginning of a new type of insurgency conflict.

The Iraqi insurgency lacks a central focus, with no clear leader or cohesive leadership. Historical examples show that no unifying leadership has emerged in response to the conditions in Iraq. There is no coordinated effort to seize or hold territory, nor is there a defined ideology. While



groups like Al Qa'ida and Al Ansar are involved, there is little evidence of cohesion among them.

This insurgency consists of small groups that operate without a precise central command. Instead, command and control function in a loose environment where individuals come together for armed attacks, share intelligence, trade weapons, and then disperse, often never to regroup.

The immediate goal of the Iraqi insurgency is to disrupt the political process and drive U.S. forces out of the country. Each faction is motivated by its own distinct reasons, yet they unite for a common cause. Their strategy involves draining Coalition resources and gaining popular support through coercion and fear. With seemingly unlimited resources and global support, they may appear unstoppable.

### **Yemen Civil War:**

The Yemen Civil War began in 2014 when the Houthi insurgency—Shiite rebels connected to Iran with a history of opposing the Sunni government—seized control of Yemen's capital, Sanaa. They demanded lower fuel prices and a new government. After negotiations failed, the Houthis took the presidential palace in January 2015, leading President Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi and his government to resign. In March 2015, a coalition of Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia initiated a campaign of airstrikes and economic isolation against the Houthis, supported logistically and with intelligence from the U.S.

The involvement of regional powers in Yemen's conflict, including Iran and the Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia, turned the war into a proxy struggle along the broader Sunni-Shia divide. In June 2015, Saudi Arabia imposed a naval blockade to prevent Iranian supplies from reaching the Houthis, prompting Iran to send a naval convoy, escalating tensions. The U.S. Navy also became involved, intercepting Yemen-bound Iranian weapons. The blockade has been central to the ongoing humanitarian crisis, while the Saudi-led coalition has conducted over 25,000 airstrikes, resulting in more than 19,000 civilian casualties. In response, from 2021 to 2022, the Houthis launched a series of drone attacks on Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Initially, the Houthis made rapid advances, but Saudi intervention stabilized the frontlines. UN peace talks stalled in 2016, and the rise of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) further complicated matters. In July 2016, the Houthis and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh announced a political council, but Saleh was killed in December 2017 after breaking with the Houthis.

In 2018, coalition forces targeted Hodeidah, a key port, leading to a ceasefire, though fighting persisted in other regions, notably Taiz. The UAE officially withdrew in 2020 but retains influence in Yemen.





In 2021, Houthi offensives intensified, targeting Marib and conducting missile strikes in Saudi Arabia, prompting retaliatory airstrikes. This escalation marked the deadliest clashes since 2018.

The conflict has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with the UN estimating that 60% of around 377,000 deaths from 2015 to early 2022 were due to indirect causes. Two-thirds of Yemenis need urgent assistance, with millions at risk of famine.

The economic crisis has worsened conditions, leading to currency depreciation and widespread protests in government-controlled areas. Separately, the U.S. has conducted counterterrorism operations against AQAP and ISIS, with nearly 400 strikes since 2002. In 2021, President Biden ended support for Saudi-led offensive operations, designating the Houthis as a terrorist organization, a status later reinstated in January 2024.

In April 2022, Hadi resigned after a decade in power, allowing for the establishment of a new seven-member presidential council, led by Rashad al-Alimi, aimed at better representing Yemen's political factions.



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