



Faculty of Legal Sciences

School of International Studies

**The Yemen Conflict and Its Influence on the
Middle East Region (2014-2024)**

**Project prior to obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in
International Studies**

Author:

Mary Elisa Zúñiga Cambi

Advisor:

Damiano Scotton

Cuenca – Ecuador

2026

For the people who live in different realities. For those who never had the chance to choose which dreams they wanted to achieve. For those who live with the uncertainty of whether they will live another day or whether some war will snatch away their life or the lives of their loved ones.

For vulnerable people who cry out but receive no aid.

For people whose countries' circumstances silence them. For people whose names became just another figure of "collateral damage."

For all those people whom no one mentions, whose life circumstances make just another headline and then fade into oblivion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Angélica and Hernán, the pillars who held up my dreams no matter how heavy they became.

Fran and Nena. They held me in their arms when my legs failed me, and they reminded me of what I am capable of. They dragged me forward even when I myself would not move from nerves.

Sofía, Juliana, and Carolina. They filled me with confidence, they gave me the security to show who I am. I wish the days had passed more slowly.

Andrea, Andreita, Amalia, and Maca. I never missed rehearsals, so I would not lose the chance to see them; they became my escape from routine and from reality.

Damiano. From the moment I saw the thesis topic proposal, I knew it was the right path. While I felt excited, everyone asked me, "¿What is Yemen?"

Mary, who at first did not know if this was the right career. Who, in the end, managed to recognize the breadth of the world and its different realities.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	iv
RESUMEN.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1 EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT, BACKGROUND, AND ANALYSIS OF THE EVENTS. THE PERIOD 2014-2024	2
1.1 Historical background: The beginning.....	2
1.2 Precedents: The Escalation of the Conflict	4
1.3 Changes in the Dynamics of the Conflict: from Internal to Regional	10
1.4 Changes in the Dynamics of the Conflict: from Internal to Regional	12
CHAPTER 2 THE YEMEN CONFLICT AS A DE-ESTABILIZING FACTOR IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION.....	16
2.1 Domino Effect: Spread of Instability in the Yemen Conflict.....	16
2.1 Maritime routes instability	20
2.2 Reconfiguration of Regional Alliances	22
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....	28
CHAPTER 4 ACTORS AND THEIR STRATEGIES: THE PROLONGATION OF THE CONFLICT	30
4.1 Regional Actors and their interests	30
4.2 Extra-regional Actors and their Interests.....	32
4.3 Influence of Non-State Actors.....	34
4.4 Prolongation of the Conflict.....	37
4.5 Unsuccessful Peace-seeking Strategies	40
CONCLUSIONS	43
REFERENCES.....	47

List of Figures

Figure 1 Map of Rimland Theory	18
Figure 2 Map of Shatterbelt by Cohen	19
Figure 3 Map of Maritime Routes	20
Figure 4 Map of the Distribution Axis of Resistance	25

The Yemen Conflict and Its Influence on the Middle East Region. Period 2014-2024

ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the impact of the Yemeni conflict on the Middle East region during the period 2014-2024, covering the period from the outbreak of the civil war to its different stages of evolution. The main objective is to understand how a local conflict becomes a regional concern that threatens human security, trade routes, and encourages the intervention of extra-regional actors. To this end, the thesis is structured around three analytical axes. First, the reconstruction of the conflict's evolution, from its historical background and initial escalation to the shift in dynamics that transforms it from an internal matter into a regional crisis. Second, how the conflict becomes a destabilizing factor in the Middle East, spreading instability to countries in the region, increasing insecurity in maritime routes vital for global trade and oil transit, and the consequent reconfiguration of regional alliances. And finally, the analysis of the actors involved and their strategies, including non-state, regional, and extra-regional actors, evidences that, according to their agendas, they are far from seeking a solution, thus perpetuating the war. In conjunction, the failed peace strategies and initiatives are analyzed, along with the reasons for their failure.

Keywords: Civil war, Geopolitics, International Relations, Middle East, Yemen.

Conflicto de Yemen y su Influencia sobre la Región de Medio Oriente. Periodo 2014-2024

RESUMEN

Esta investigación analiza el impacto del conflicto de Yemen sobre la región de Medio Oriente durante el periodo 2014-2024, abarcando desde el surgimiento de la guerra civil hasta sus distintas etapas de evolución. El objetivo principal es comprender cómo un conflicto local se convierte en un interés regional que amenaza la seguridad humana, las rutas comerciales e incentiva la intervención de actores extrarregionales. Para ello, la tesis se estructura en tres ejes analíticos, primero, la reconstrucción de la evolución del conflicto, desde sus antecedentes históricos y la escalada inicial hasta el cambio de dinámicas que lo transforman de un asunto interno en una crisis regional. Segundo, cómo el conflicto se convierte en un factor desestabilizador en Medio Oriente, propagando la inestabilidad a países de la región, la creciente inseguridad en las rutas marítimas vitales para el comercio global y el tránsito de petróleo, y, la consecuente reconfiguración de alianzas regionales. Y, por último, el análisis de los actores involucrados y sus estrategias, que implican actores no estatales, regionales y extrarregionales; evidenciando que, de acuerdo a sus agendas, están lejos de buscar una solución, perpetuando la guerra mediante; y en conjunto, se analizan las estrategias e iniciativas de paz fallidas y las razones de su fracaso.

Palabras clave: Geopolítica, Guerra civil, Medio Oriente, Relaciones Internacionales, Yemen.

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to analyze the influence of the Yemen conflict on regional stability in the Middle East during the period between 2014 and 2024, identifying the different regional power dynamics that have emerged and consolidated within the framework of this crisis.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that, despite the abundant literature on the origins and evolution of the Yemeni conflict, scholars have only addressed it sporadically and generally. Furthermore, because the conflict's development between 2014 and 2024 continues to affect Middle Eastern stability, it has caused the participation of multiple actors with often contradictory agendas.

In particular, the intensification of the historical rivalry tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, together with the intervention of external powers and the progressive humanitarian deterioration, raises the need to analyze to what extent a local conflict, such as the Yemeni one, can reconfigure regional security balances. For this reason, this research's motivation arises precisely from the desire to insert itself into the literature that currently analyzes the role Yemen plays as a space where geopolitical interests overlap, as well as the humanitarian and strategic repercussions this conflict generates.

To address this problem, the thesis structures itself into chapters that develop as follows: first, an analysis of the background and development of the Yemen conflict during the study period (2014-2024) to analyze the conflict's structural causes, the failed political transition, the Houthi takeover of Sana'a in 2014, the intervention of the Saudi-led coalition in 2015, and the subsequent fragmentation of the country into multiple factions.

Then, it analyzes the impact of the Yemeni conflict on the geopolitical dimensions of the Middle East, focusing on the reconfiguration of alliances, the role of the Red Sea, and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The final chapter, for its part, determines the strategies of extra-regional and regional actors in relation to the conflict's development, identifying each actor's interests, allies, and strategies, as well as their impact on prolonging the conflict and obstructing the United Nations-led peace efforts.

With this structure, the research intends to explain how the dynamics of the Yemeni conflict actively affect regional stability, and to offer a descriptive-explanatory analysis that contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the tensions currently running through the Middle East.

CHAPTER 1 EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT, BACKGROUND, AND ANALYSIS OF THE EVENTS. THE PERIOD 2014-2024

1.1 Historical background: The beginning

The Yemen conflict after the Arab Spring of 2011, where Yemen experienced political changes because of the replacement of the president, Abdullah Saleh, by the then Vice-President Abdo Rabbo Mansour Hadi. As a result of the notorious lack of political stability, the Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, seek to strengthen their insurgency. This is a group with religious roots based on Zaydí Shiaism. In the next years, they were marginalized and discriminated against, which led to an armed uprising by Houthis against the government of Abdullah Saleh (Medina Gutiérrez, 2019).

In its beginnings, Yemen was divided into the Arab Republic of Yemen, located in the north of the country, which had the backing of countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United States. While in the south, they called themselves the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and used to have the support of the Soviet Union. It was then that Ali Abdullah Saleh assumed the presidency of North Yemen in 1978, due to the ideological differences that the country presented at the time (Albasoos & Al Hinai, 2020).

It's not until 1990 that Yemen unifies, Saleh comes to govern the country due to the instability of the South when they lose their main sponsor at the time of the fall of the Soviet Union. However, they never truly integrated with the North, and this is when the South attempted to secede again in 1994, manifested through a civil war due to the North's breach of the agreements practiced prior to unification. This was the principal cause of southern secessionism, where they ended up forming their own movements, such as the case of al-Hirak (Albasoos & Al Hinai, 2020).

In this context, religion plays an essential role in the development of the conflict. Religion in Yemen is mainly composed of Islam, which is divided into Sunnis or Shafi'is; this branch of Islam is represented by the majority of Yemen's population, with an approximate percentage of 65%. Otherwise, we have the branch of the Shias, who represented a minority, and in turn have a branch called Zaydism (Sarhan et al., 2022).

The Zaydism differs from other forms of Shiism through its association with the Zaydi imamate. In this tradition, the imam (the leader) must be a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad's family and must claim leadership. The Houthis are not trying to revive the

imamate itself; instead, this movement has formulated its own doctrines, objectives, and tribal systems based on Zaydism (Winter, 2011).

The religion, related to the Houthis, has historical roots. The Houthis are a movement with Zaydi origins, founded by Hussein Badr al-Din al-Houthi. However, not all Zaydis are related to this movement. Even though they began to lean towards Shiism after the 2000s, they are currently a mix of the two branches (Sarhan et al., 2022).

Since the Yemen revolution in 1962, which resulted in the abolition of the Zaydi Imamate, the believers of this branch began to be marginalized religiously and politically. This discrimination was accentuated over time and with the emergence of Wahhabism, which is a current of Sunni Islam. To do this, it is necessary to clarify its emergence (Williams, 2017).

Salafism is a current branch within Sunni Islam. A branch called Wahhabism was born. Here, Salafism seeks to restore pure Islam, rejecting diverse ideologies of legal interpretation as it is based solely on the Quran and verified hadiths (narrations). It differs from Wahhabism because the latter was specifically founded by Saudi Arabia and is governed by the country's ideology, excluding those who reject its doctrine. Therefore, it is summarized as a branch of Salafism that is much stricter (Williams, 2017).

With this, the Houthis' movement proclaims that this influence of Saudi Arabia over Yemen meant a forced Sunnization. As a consequence, in 1990, the "Party of Truth" was created. However, due to factors such as a lack of internal cohesion and a failure to respond to demands regarding religious marginalization, Hussein al-Houthi resigned from it and formed a new movement called "Believing Youth", seeking to give a voice to the Zaydi struggle. This group was characterized by its leadership, mobilizing narrative, and its unlimited but present military capability (Koch, 2018).

With this, the internal conflict between the government and the movement increasingly escalated. The latter demanded: the development that was concentrated specifically in the capital, Sana'a, while the rest of provinces lived in conditions of poverty and suffered discrimination in finding employment; the marginalization that the Zaydis were receiving and opposition to all the anti-Zaydi policies that had been implemented; the influences that Saudi Arabia had over the government, such as the spread of Wahhabism, and any foreign intervention; and, the constant corruption on the part of the government that monopolized the country's resources for the dominant elite groups in the country (Koch, 2018).

Facing this scenario, over the years, this movement grew and was enhanced. Nevertheless, after the leader Hussein al-Houthi was killed in 2004 by the hands of the government, the group increased its military capacity. At this point, the Houthis began to receive support from Iran, where the then head of National Security of Yemen expressed formal accusations of Iranian backing for facilitating material, political, and media assistance to the Houthis (Yaser & Filiz, 2021).

The breaking point for the government came during the Arab Spring in 2011. Various uprisings arose here seeking to end the regime of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had been in power for over 30 years. Although the Houthis were not the main reason or leaders of these uprisings, they took advantage of the chaotic situation to prepare militarily. Following this, Saudi Arabia carried out an intervention within the country called the “Gulf Initiative” to facilitate this government transition to then Vice President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi in an attempt to prevent the conflict from escalating into a civil war (Yaser & Filiz, 2021).

At the same time, after the marginalization that the South suffer as a result of the unification and during the power vacuum of 2011 and the lack of attention in forgotten provinces, different movements such as “al-Hirak” and “Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula” (also known as “AQAP”) seized the opportunity to take advantage of this instability and gain ground in the south of the country. For example, AQAP dedicated itself to creating strategic points or strongholds during 2011-2012, while al-Hirak organized mobilizations as a form of rejection of the presence of the former. This allowed these movements to gain influence in the future (Medina Gutiérrez, 2020).

Subsequently, the Houthis were not satisfied with the transition to practically the same line of government, took part in the National Dialogue that was held between 2013-2014, arguing that the power transferred to Hadi was illegitimate. It was then that they allied with Saleh's ex-army, where, together with Iranian support, they managed to carry out a coup d'état in September 2014 in which they took the capital Sana'a and forced the collapse of Hadi's government (Yaser & Filiz, 2021).

1.2 Precedents: The Escalation of the Conflict

After the takeover of the capital, the then-interim president Hadi began to be pursued by the Houthis. By January 2015, they besieged the presidential palace to place Hadi under house arrest. The president managed to escape towards Aden, a place from which he would

continue making efforts to govern. However, the Houthis eventually reached him in the south of the country, and he was forced to flee to the neighboring country of Oman (O'Driscoll, 2017).

This was the main event that was crucial for Saudi Arabia to begin intervening militarily in 2015 to restore Hadi's government. Meanwhile, Iran's role is an essential factor in the strengthening of the Houthis, as it has provided elements such as military training, weapons, and logistical support to the Houthis. This underscores the Saudi-Iranian rivalry for regional hegemony (Ahmed, 2019).

The reason for Iran's support of the Houthis is justified by the fact that both adhere to Shia Islam as their religious ideology and share opposition to Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemeni territory. This Iranian aid manifests itself indirectly through weapons, funding, logistical assistance, and training, seeking to maintain a constant influence within the country with the objective that the Houthis can confront the attacks from Saudi Arabia (Lauer, 2022).

As Abbasi & Khan describe (2025), these tense relations are understood as interstate interactions marked by distrust, strategic rivalry, and competition for resources, security, and primarily regional influence. This generally generates an environment of permanent confrontation that shapes international alliances. In the case of Yemen, the ideological and strategic disputes within the territory are presented by Saudi Arabia and Iran.

While the battle was concentrated against the Houthis, the aforementioned group, AQAP, took charge of seizing the city of Mukalla, forming an unrecognized "state". They managed to establish themselves because they took charge of providing basic services, security, and local courts within the area. Over time, a faction called Ansar al-Sharia (AAS) was established, thus distancing on its own from Al-Qaeda and setting itself up as a local actor (O'Driscoll, 2017).

Consequently, the "Islamic State" began to wield control and influence in Aden, Taiz, Lahij, and al-Bayda. This is a foreign movement founded by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2014 in the region of Syria and Iraq, and it exercises control in territories in Yemen with minimal impact. Initially, they were considered a branch of the Al-Qaeda group in Iraq, and they split due to ideological differences in how to achieve their objectives through violence and the conquest of areas. In Yemen, the group's strategy consisted of attacks on mosques, assassinations, and suicide bombings. Furthermore, they confronted AQAP over resources

and recruits. This tactic was not compatible with the people, unlike the operations of AQAP, which managed to gain the acceptance of the populace and thereby recruit more members (O'Driscoll, 2017).

During 2016, the country introduced various internal institutional changes. This was marked by the monetary administrative division following the creation of two central banks. On one side, the Central Bank of Sana'a, under Houthi control, which had its own liquidity, and the Central Bank of Yemen, located in Aden, led by the international system, and part of the population and merchants stopped accepting banknotes and any type of transaction issued by the Sana'a branch (Al-Aghbari et al., 2024).

The consequences of this change remain in the creation of two different regulatory frameworks, which began to be implemented, resulting in the existence of two currencies and, with that, two exchange rates. This generated high fluctuation, which led to an increase in the prices of basic goods and limited access to them. Furthermore, the Central Bank of Yemen began to demand that diverse banks in Sana'a relocate to Aden and adjust their standards according to its regulation; otherwise, the bank's services would be interrupted (Al-Aghbari et al., 2024).

Nowadays, this situation still remains ongoing. Therefore, this economic crisis projects itself as a destabilizing factor in relation to the conflict. It provokes a lack of state funds, paralyzes the financial system, economically isolates areas of the country, and generates distrust in the different exchange rates (International Crisis Group, 2025).

It is worth mentioning that the growing prominence of the Houthis has evolved to develop a considerably autonomous political and military force, becoming a transnational actor with the capacity to affect regional security. This is mainly because their capability extends beyond borders through drone and missile attacks targeting infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and even attacks on naval interests in the Red Sea (Tsalikis & Pedi, 2024).

Beyond the external support for the Houthis from Iran, this growth is due to the building of a solid political identity, together with the control of economic resources and regional dynamics that facilitate their transformation. These Houthi offensives do not reflect a major threat to the Saudi territory; however, these attacks generate aggressive responses from the Saudi-led coalition, intensifying the conflict and exposing civilians to danger (Tsalikis & Pedi, 2024).

An interesting point to highlight, as Mutschler & Bales (2024) explain, is that both Saudi Arabia and the Houthis have adopted a mode of combat that, in a certain way, avoids the permanent occupation of territory and, consequently, the administrative and social responsibility that comes with it. Their strategies focus more on precision but long-distance attacks against various critical targets such as economic infrastructure, leaders, and civilian or valuable installations.

This is done with the aim of strategically weakening the opponent and avoiding direct risks. The actors evade the responsibility that comes with occupying another state's territory due to the operational cost involved in maintaining the occupation of the invaded area. Additionally, the spatial dimension of the conflict expands because of the lack of delimitation over areas classified as war zones; this causes attacks to be reflected indiscriminately on civilian targets and generates a collapse of basic services in the subject territories (Mutschler & Bales, 2024).

In this same year, Saudi Arabia, together with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), would take control of the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb. This generated a strategic naval closure, which would prevent the entry of resources by blocking all types of humanitarian aid for Yemen. For this, the Yemeni authorities are singled out for not ensuring the well-being of their population due to their affinity with these countries. By 2023, more than 23 million people lived in precarious conditions without food security, potable water, or medical assistance as a result of this maritime closure (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

While the Houthis found themselves increasingly cornered as this joint force began to occupy the port of Mocha and Al-Hodeidah, thus controlling the main areas from which the Houthis sourced their supplies (Ferreruela, 2018)

From a geopolitical point of view, Aguilera (2020) analyzed the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb as the main factor that can explain the intense international interventions in this conflict. Clarifying that, through this strategic point, millions of barrels of oil pass daily, in addition to being vital for commerce and energy transit.

The following year, 2017, is marked by the reinforcement of the Houthis military power. Consequently, they begin launching long-range missiles towards Saudi territory. At the end of the year, in December, the Houthis assassinated the ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh after failed negotiations with Saudi Arabia. At that time, options had already been offered in search of peace, both in Kuwait in 2016 and in Oman in 2016-2017, which had no

effect whatsoever since the parties involved were not willing to give in to the other (Ferreruela, 2018).

A remarkable event was the shift in allegiance of the UAE, which progressively inclined towards the southern movements, while Saudi Arabia sought to continue supporting President Hadi. During this period, the Yemeni population experienced health crises, famine, and a disastrous cholera epidemic outbreak (Ferreruela, 2018)

Faced with this scenario, in 2018, various initiatives began to be formulated to provide humanitarian assistance for the more than 24 million people in precarious circumstances and those who have been displaced by the conditions of the country. However, the situation of civil war made it difficult for this aid to arrive, as it faced factors such as a lack of funds for the feasibility of aid projects, limited access to areas as a consequence of the conflict, and the conditions set by international aid to assist were aligned according to their own interests. Due to this, the requested support did not achieve the expected reach, and above all, priority was not given to the real needs of the inhabitants over the interests of the involved actors (Alqatabry & Butcher, 2020).

With this instability, the Islamic State movement in Yemen began to violently take territory and recruit members in 2019, becoming a competition for AQAP. On the other hand, the UAE fully supported the Southern Transitional Council, which, in turn, openly challenged Hadi's government. With different movements and alliances scattered throughout the country, the government began to neglect certain areas to protect others (Abbasi & Khan, 2025).

With the arrival of the pandemic, the humanitarian situation tends to worsen. Even because of the global circumstances being experienced and added to the pressure from the international media, Saudi Arabia declares a ceasefire. This situation is taken advantage of by the Houthis and allows them to move towards the Marib region, which is characterized as the sector with the largest oil reserves in Yemen (Abbasi & Khan, 2025).

After several years of attempts to restore the governmental authority, in 2022, President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi officially resigned. Following his resignation, the government of the Presidential Leadership Council was inaugurated. This body aims to act on behalf of the legitimate government of Yemen. Even so, it has not successfully carried out its reunification activities. This body is recognized by the United Nations and has the support of the international coalition (Arellanes, 2025).

During this period, the Houthis and Saudi Arabia were in the process of negotiation; this lasted until the Hamas attacks on Israel in October 2023. The Houthis' support in relation to the Palestinians occurs because the latter is also an ally of Iran, and they share an anti-Israel and anti-Western ideology (Arellanes, 2025).

Taking advantage of this circumstance, the Houthis began maritime attacks against commercial vessels in the Red Sea, arguing that their attacks were aimed at ships linked to the United States, the United Kingdom, or Israel. This point of attack is strategic because it would be easier to disrupt the traffic passing through the Bab el-Mandeb (Al Jazeera, 2024).

At the beginning of the following year, the President of the United States, Joe Biden, proclaimed the Houthis as a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist Group” in response to the Houthi attacks within the Red Sea, which involved more than one hundred attacks on various merchant vessels of high commercial value (Al Jazeera, 2024).

The purpose of these military offensives is to project the potential of the Houthi movement and the vulnerability of “common goods”, as this commercial route is considered. Likewise, it highlights the inefficiency in terms of maritime security that the hegemony promises when it comes to defending important trade routes (Arellanes, 2025).

Despite this, the Houthis continue with the attacks, going so far as to sink commercially significant vessels. Furthermore, this year sees the addition of military operations in an offensive against Israel involving drones and missiles in aid of the Palestinian cause. This demonstrates that the Houthis are essential actors when it comes to seeking negotiation paths and forcing the international community to respond to this crisis (Arellanes, 2025).

As can be analyzed in this historical perspective, the Yemen conflict has its roots in regional geopolitics, primarily due to internal fragility and external intervention. This means that, apart from Yemen being “strategic” on the geopolitical stage, it lacks state cohesion, which generates a power vacuum that external interests exploit for the projection of their power. This facilitates the interference of regional and extra-regional actors (Sajedi, 2015).

In addition, in light of the various events of the conflict, among the international mediation attempts is included the Stockholm Agreement of 2018, in which the involved actors commit to ceasing hostilities in Hodeidah and carrying out a prisoner exchange to release more than fifteen thousand detainees. However, limited results are obtained, confined

to improvements in the Hodeidah area and a decrease in conflicts within that area (Ali et al., 2023).

Another attempt at mediation is the Riyadh Agreement in 2019, which focuses on negotiations over the distribution of power between Yemen's central government and the Southern Transitional Council. This effort proved ineffective because it did not include the other actors involved in the conflict. Lastly, the Joint Declaration aimed to establish a ceasefire among all parties, allow access to strategic points such as ports, and set a definitive end to the conflict. However, the Houthis did not agree to join the government. Persistent mistrust, differing positions among participants, and the neglect of the conflict's roots hinder the realization of an agreement (Ali et al., 2023).

It is an essential factor, within this context, to consider that any initiative to resolve the conflict that has a unilateral perspective will not be effective. It is necessary to involve all internal actors, allowing for a sustainable solution that actually can last over time (International Crisis Group, 2019).

These mediation efforts, despite having the backing of the United Nations, have not been successful. This is mainly because of the division among local actors and the interests of external countries, where it is fundamental to mention failures such as: leaving aside local movements out of dialogue table; the Houthis and their resistance to abandoning strategic points; and the fact that the parties in conflict decided not to renounce sovereignty over vital resources like the oil revenues of Marib and Hadramawt (Ali et al., 2023).

The course of this conflict has transitioned from being a local dispute to escalating to a level where regional and extra-regional powers become involved in it, demonstrating that their differences are capable of worsening the conflict further and further (Bano, 2023).

It is also important to notice that the development of Yemen's internal dynamics cannot be fully understood without the context of the regional dynamics, which are marked by the hegemonic struggle between Gulf powers and their allies (Foyth, 2023).

1.3 Changes in the Dynamics of the Conflict: from Internal to Regional

It is recognized that, within this civil war, local actors receive support from external actors. As has already been outlined, this backing has been implicitly present throughout the country's history. However, it manifests itself notably when, according to Annisa et al. (2024), in the operation "Decisive Storm" in March 15, 2015, a military intervention took place that includes large-scale aerial bombings, naval and air blockades, and the introduction

of combat forces into Yemeni territory led by Saudi Arabia; in which countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Sudan, and Jordan participated, added to the logistical support of the United States and the United Kingdom.

This intervention aimed to restore Hadi's government; yet, during this, aerial offensives and port blockades were carried out to restrict the flow of weapons or any type of assistance for the Houthis. This worsened the humanitarian crisis and reinforced the differences between northern and southern Yemen. Despite these attacks, Iran had a more indirect intervention, providing logistical and financial aid to the Houthis in an attempt to weaken the Saudi presence (Aya, 2023).

In contrast, we have the involvement of the United States, which looks to maintain the balance of power in the region by supporting Saudi Arabia to ensure that Iran does not gain a hegemonic position in this strategic point. Meanwhile, Russia and China take advantage of the situation to expand their diplomatic and strategic presence in the Middle East (Ahmad & Khawaja, 2025).

As Fukutomi (2024) explains, due to the country's geographical location, it has port access to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and also to the Red Sea. This is an essential route for trade between Asia and Europe-Africa. In addition to this proximity to the Horn of Africa, where countries such as Djibouti, Somalia, and Eritrea are located, this is an important area because different global actors like China and the United States maintain military bases and constantly compete for influence. This, added to the instability in Yemen, put the security of maritime traffic along this route at risk.

Being more specific, this external intervention has generated dynamics that have an impact beyond the original conflict. They have even divided their own allies, as is the case with the UAE and the creation of the "Security Belt". This term refers to the military operations that are created and sponsored by the UAE as an independent actor, mainly in southern Yemen. Since the foreign intervention in Yemen in 2015, the UAE has established military bases under the justification of confronting movements such as AQAP and the Islamic State, as well as securing coastal areas that had strategic ports (Al-Hinaiti, 2023).

In light of that, the UAE allied with Saudi Arabia, it was expected to align itself with Hadi's government and contribute to its restoration; however, it ended up creating the Southern Transitional Council in 2017 to demand the independence of southern Yemen. Nevertheless, in 2019, the UAE announced its withdrawal from Yemeni territory, while at

the same time, it continues to provide logistical and financial assistance to the Southern Transitional Council (Al-hinaiti, 2023).

This results in a war within another war, as confrontations arise against Hadi's recognized government and the UAE, which triggered internal struggles between factions. Also, it exposes a dual morality on the part of the hegemonic powers by facilitating weapons, intelligence, and operational support while simultaneously promoting humanitarian aid and political solutions at the international scale (Al-hinaiti, 2023).

As Elayah & Al-Awami (2024) highlight, bilateral aid is not a neutral tool to pursue cooperation, but rather a foreign policy tool to shape the conflict due to national interests. This is how Saudi Arabia and the UAE provide backing by forming geopolitical alliances, supporting partisan groups, to divide the political unity of Yemen. When in reality, this assistance tends to worsen and prolong the conflict.

As long as these external actors continue to sponsor different groups according to their interests, the division within the country and the violence will continue to intensify. To propose a peace initiative, it is no longer enough to focus on Yemen, since the real problem lies with the powers that back them, in this case, Saudi Arabia and Iran. The moment Yemen stabilizes means a loss of influence in the region, which is the main reason why the conflict remains alive (Chukwuemeka, 2024).

Thus, the conflict continues to operate as a proxy war. This occurs when two or more external powers support opposing actors within an internal conflict. Therefore, they are indirectly confronting each other by supporting these actors in pursuit of their own objectives (Ali et al., 2023).

1.4 Changes in the Dynamics of the Conflict: from Internal to Regional

This conflict has been forced to displace more than 4.5 million people, who have had to leave their homes and seek refuge in camps lacking the minimum habitable conditions. These camps also imply limited access to sanitation, drinking water, food, and medical care. The educational system remains fragmented and on the brink of collapse; at least 2,916 schools have been destroyed, damaged, or occupied by armed actors, thus preventing millions of children from accessing education, protection, and school meals (Salako & Adenuga, 2026).

The prolonged conflict also drastically affected the economy; between 2015 and 2023, real GDP per capita decreased by 54%. The country's conditions have condemned 80% of

the population to live in poverty. The halt of oil exports caused a 42% drop in fiscal revenues during the first period of 2024, making the provision of basic services and the payment of public employee salaries unsustainable. Added to this, the suspension of international aid, including the interruption of World Food Programme and UNICEF programs due to US funding cuts, has deprived millions of Yemenis of food, medicine, and protection, thus worsening their already extreme vulnerability (Salako & Adenuga, 2026).

Furthermore, cases of child soldiers have been recorded in Yemen, where the Houthi movement recruits children from the age of 10. Since 2014, more than 10,000 children have served as informants or in support roles. The recruitment tactics involve economic incentives, primarily exploiting the deficiencies of the educational system, the extreme poverty situation, and the weak social structures (Ahmed & Nyeb, 2025).

Food insecurity arises from disruptions in food supply chains imposed by different actors in the conflict, fuel shortages, and the destruction of roads and transportation networks. The various attacks have destroyed farmland and irrigation systems, essential for local food production, so Yemen depends on imports to cover at least 90% of its food needs. In addition to this, the economic collapse and depreciation of the Yemeni rial significantly reduced the purchasing power of families; therefore, basic foodstuffs became more expensive, especially in areas that are under the control of the internationally recognized government (Salako & Adenuga, 2026).

The Yemeni health sector has collapsed almost entirely as a result of direct attacks against civilian infrastructure, the lack of funding for these facilities, and the blockade preventing medical supplies from entering. Because of this, more than half of hospitals are non-operational, as they lack staff, essential medicines, vaccines, electricity, or drinking water. Faced with this scenario, since 2017, more than 2.5 million cases have developed related to a cholera outbreak, in addition to the spread of malaria, diphtheria, and other similar diseases that would be preventable in a treatment and prevention environment (Salako & Adenuga, 2026).

The magnitude of this crisis exposes the population to violence and exploitation; at least 18.2 million Yemenis require humanitarian assistance, which reflects the collapse of living conditions, civil protection, and the state's capacity to respond to its population's most basic needs (Salako and Adenuga, 2026).

These events, in relation to the Fourth Geneva Convention, constitute direct violations of multiple articles. First, the forced displacement of people in Yemen violates the prohibition established in Article 49 against "individual or mass forcible transfers" of protected persons, regardless of the motive that justifies them (Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949).

Furthermore, the destruction, damage, or occupation of educational institutions by armed groups violates Article 53, which prohibits any destruction of property belonging to private individuals or the State unless "absolutely necessary for military operations"—a condition that does not apply in most documented attacks. Additionally, these same acts violate Article 50, which obligates the occupying power to facilitate the proper functioning of establishments dedicated to children's care and education. They also violate the prohibition against "enlisting them in formations or organizations subordinate to the occupying power" (Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949).

The recruitment of more than 10,000 child soldiers violates the provision of Article 51, which states that "any pressure or propaganda aiming to obtain voluntary enlistments is prohibited." Likewise, this practice transgresses Article 3, which prohibits at all times and in all places attacks against life, physical integrity, and personal dignity. Furthermore, the severe food insecurity breaches Article 55, where the occupying power has the duty to "ensure the supply of food and medical products to the population." Yemen's dependence on imports to cover 90% of its food needs makes the violation of this obligation even more serious (Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949).

The collapse of the Yemeni health system infringes the precept of Article 56, which obligates the Occupying Power to ensure and maintain medical establishments and services, as well as public hygiene in the occupied territory, with special emphasis on the preventive measures necessary to combat the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics. Additionally, according to the provision of Article 59, which states that when the population of an occupied territory does not have sufficient supplies, the Occupying Power shall supply the occupied territory in case of scarcity; then it shall accept relief plans in favor of that population and shall facilitate them with all the means at its disposal (Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949).

Yemen is experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis. The armed conflict has destroyed the country, leaving millions displaced, child soldiers, collapsed hospitals, and widespread

famine. The Yemeni crisis demonstrates that without effective sanction mechanisms and without international political will, the humanitarian situation tends to worsen.

CHAPTER 2

THE YEMEN CONFLICT AS A DE-ESTABILIZING FACTOR IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION

2.1 Domino Effect: Spread of Instability in the Yemen Conflict

Once we establish the basis of the conflict, it is essential to mention the geopolitical background, the main reason being its strategic value to Yemen. As Khoshnaw (2022) points out, geopolitics refers to the way in which geographical and strategic factors can condition the power struggle between states and actors. Applied to Yemen, this translates into its location on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which connects with the Horn of Africa, granting it relevance in global trade and even in energy security. This makes it a territory of interest for regional powers.

In addition, Moghadam et al. (2024) emphasize that geopolitics also includes military factors, since the control of territory through military means is essential, moreover, to the capacity to project force from Yemen. Complementing this, Alsudani (2025) indicates that geopolitics is not limited to the territorial aspect but rather encompasses identities, discourses, and regional alliances.

Despite this, the Yemen conflict is the inevitable consequence of regional geopolitics, primarily due to internal fragility and external intervention. That means that apart from Yemen being “strategic” on the geopolitical stage, it lacks state cohesion, which generates a power vacuum that external interests exploit for the projection of their power. This facilitates the interference of regional and extra-regional actors (Sajedi, 2015).

As mentioned by Mahan (1890), maintaining this strategic position is a necessary condition for possessing maritime power, especially because it leads to global dominance. Regarding Yemen, its proximity to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait represents an opportunity to regulate access to a vital commercial route. However, the extent of this maritime power will depend on the actor’s capacity to block the circulation of fleets.

Also, the sense of identity of the actors is a fundamental factor for this willingness to project themselves across borders to exist. Thus, the Houthis, being backed by Iran, have a much greater attack capability, and the predominance of this route is key within this international system (Mahan, 1890).

The Houthis strategically apply “sea denial” with the objective of preventing rival actors from using it for their benefit. This challenges Grotius’s principle of *Mare Liberum*,

which posits the oceans as a common space, and the transgression of this forces naval powers to deploy resources to once again secure transit.

This involves using means such as missiles, drones, and mines to block access to maritime routes, preventing rival actors like the United States, the United Kingdom, or Israel from navigating freely. In practice, this transgression forces naval powers to deploy costly operations, which, in turn, raises the risk of direct confrontation, disrupts global trade, and de facto redefines maritime control as a disputed field where the Houthi movement imposes its regional veto.

The Houthis' denial-of-sea strategy openly contradicts the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). First, Houthi attacks constitute a constant and violent obstruction of transit passage through straits used for international navigation. Furthermore, this strategy violates the freedom of navigation on the high seas through threats and the use of force (UNCLOS, 2012).

Furthermore, attacking ships within Yemen's territorial sea violates the right of innocent passage for all vessels. The law only permits impeding non-innocent passage through peaceful intercepts or detentions; however, launching missiles or drones violates that right. In addition to the above, the Houthis ignore the requirement to use the high seas "exclusively for peaceful purposes" (UNCLOS, 2012).

In contrast, when naval powers suffer obstruction of their rights, they have the capacity to implement measures that restore transit. They can apply resources to exercise the right of visit and inspection, deploy warships or aircraft to exercise enforcement powers without endangering navigation safety, provided that security threat situations warrant such actions (UNCLOS, 2012).

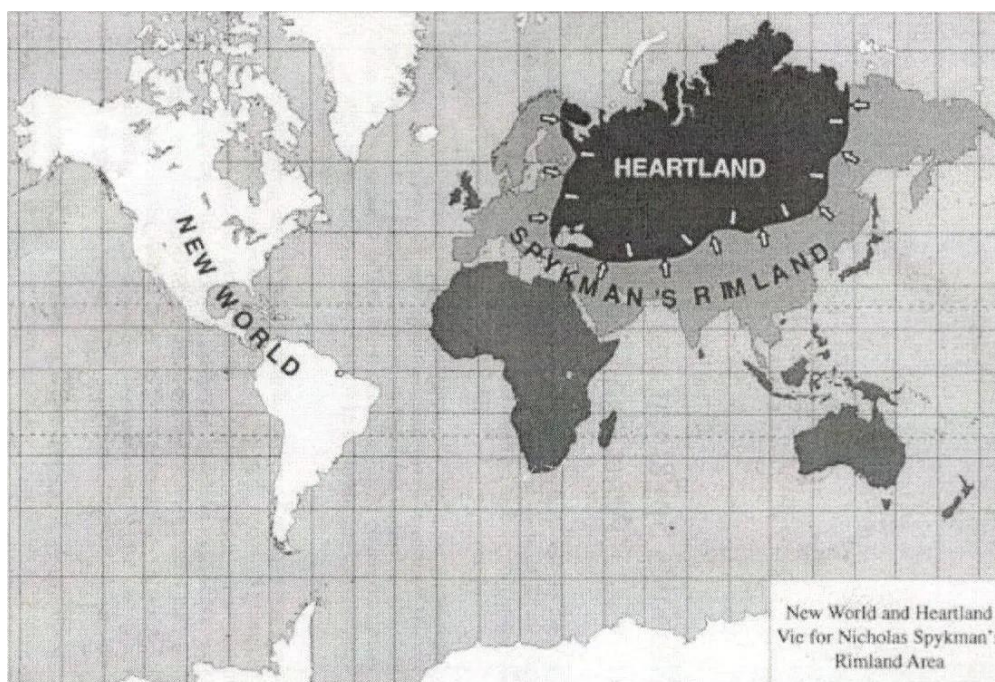
According to Spykman (1943), the key to global dominance lies in the coastal perimeter, also known as the Rimland. This term defines the coastal/maritime zone surrounding Eurasia, where naval and land power concentrate. In response to Iran's support for groups like the Houthis to dominate that coastal strip, Saudi Arabia, as a rival power, does not necessarily seek to control the Yemeni Rimland directly and unilaterally, but rather backs allied powers (local and international) to maintain influence on its behalf.

These allies include, on one hand, the recognized Yemeni government and loyal tribal or military factions, which it finances and arms; and, on the other hand, naval powers such

as the United States and the United Kingdom, whose presence in the Red Sea guarantees the security of maritime routes and contains Iranian advances.

Thus, Saudi Arabia exercises its influence indirectly, delegating effective control of the Rimland to allied actors, which allows it to sustain its hegemonic position in the region without assuming all the military and diplomatic costs of direct intervention. This theoretical framework translates into Yemen as a fundamental zone with land and maritime projection within the Rimland, as Figure 1 shows.

Figure 1
Map of Rimland Theory



Note: Rimland theory [Illustration]. Retrieved from Fiveable (2024). <https://fiveable.me/political-geography/unit-1/rimland-theory/study-guide/04x5dB1w0gOagASf>

This control over the Rimland zone implies securing critical points where naval power is most susceptible to hindering or facilitating the flow of resources and trade. In this case, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Hormuz Strait, and the Suez Canal represent those vital points that determine power (Spykman, 1943).

The events of 2026¹ triggered a crisis that confirms the relevance of Spykman's theory. Control over the Rimland no longer operates through mere territorial occupation, but

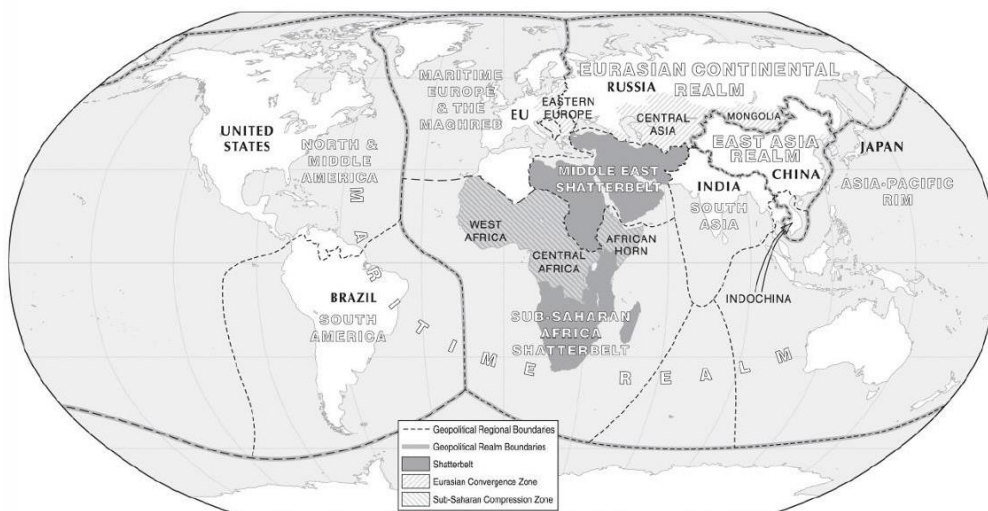
¹ The United States proclaims the threat that Iran's nuclear program poses to national security, and on February 28, 2026, it carries out bombings to destroy key sites of the Iranian nuclear program. During these events, the Houthi movement declares that it has the military preparation to join the war against the United States, and furthermore, it stands ready to conduct operations in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. This represents a serious

rather through the capacity to deny access to its chokepoints. In response to the US naval blockade of Iranian ports, Tehran mobilized the Houthis to close the Bab el-Mandeb Strait while also threatening to keep the Strait of Hormuz blocked. Thus, an Iran-backed non-state actor has the capacity to paralyze critical points of global trade, demonstrating that in the geopolitics of the Rimland, this strategy has consolidated itself as a resource as powerful as conventional naval supremacy.

The continuous instability in the Middle East region, as Cohen (2015) explained, occurs because the world is a system that is constantly in a dynamic equilibrium where various geopolitical regions and geostrategic spheres interact. These strategically located regions are termed Shatterbelts, which are generally internally fragmented and positioned as a center of competition for the great powers.

Thus, Cohen (2015) points to the Middle East as the main and most prolonged Shatterbelt within the world system, primarily for being the intersection of three continents and possessing the domain of the largest energy reserves. Yemen forms a strategic subzone within this Shatterbelt. The country meets the three conditions of a Shatterbelt, especially due to the external influence that is constantly present because of its internal fragmentation.

Figure 2
Map of Shatterbelt by Cohen



Note: The geography of international relations [Illustration]. Retrieved from Cohen (2015).

consequence for maritime transport because Iran initially closes the Strait of Hormuz, preventing oil from leaving the Persian Gulf. However, the United States subsequently imposes its own blockade on that strait.

2.2 Maritime routes instability

As Aguilera (2020) describes, maritime trade routes are considered strategic locations for different nations because they would be able to represent power, especially when they are controlled by a specific actor. These routes have a transcendental geographical location, and it is beneficial to have direct access to them. In relation to the case of Yemen, the sequence of commerce transiting through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait has the following trajectory, as in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Map of Maritime Routes



Note: Estrecho de Bab el Mandeb, ruta estratégica para el petróleo y gas natural [Illustration] Retrieved from Henar de Pedro, 20 Minutos (2023). <https://url-shortener.me/EYZ5>

Oil and natural gas are among the main commercial goods produced by the Gulf countries that transit in large quantities through the Bab el-Mandeb. Furthermore, most of the containers loaded with Asian merchandise, generally of Chinese, Indian, and Southeast Asian origin, whose final destination is Europe, also make use of this route to transport their products (Soto & Quezada, 2025).

The Bab el-Mandeb is located between two internally fragmented countries. On one side, we have Yemen, which is going through a civil war and has various actors within its territory seeking to dominate strategic zones. And across the coast, on the African continent, is Somalia, a country that lacks a central authority. This condition paves the way for criminal organizations to operate freely (Soto & Quezada, 2025).

These cases of piracy arise due to two situations: first, foreign illegal fishing exploitation within Somalia's Exclusive Economic Zone, which limits local fishers' access;

and second, the use of Somali waters by criminal organizations unrelated to piracy as a dumping ground for toxic waste, which causes the extinction of the marine ecosystem on which local residents depend. This precarious situation turns piracy into a profitable activity for some local fishers, who organize themselves into armed groups for purely economic purposes (Soto & Quezada, 2025).

Through this instability, different nations have established their military bases in the country of Djibouti. Countries such as France, the United States, Japan, Italy, and China have concentrated bases there with the aim of providing security to this trade route. Nevertheless, the fact that ideologically different countries implemented these centers increases tensions and direct rivalries; even Russia maintains an interest in establishing a base within this country. Another essential factor caused by the creation of these military installations is to demonstrate the influence of different powers in the region, and that they can support their own interests in the long term (Gonçalves, 2021).

The foreign presence in Djibouti has specific reasons per country for its permanence there. For France, preserving its influence in the region is transcendental; it is the power that has remained in the territory the longest, since 1977, and it is a former colony. Its interests consist of improving maritime security; combating the terrorist group Al-Shabaab that operates in Somalia and is considered a threat to the Horn of Africa region; cooperating in controlling the migratory flow on the island of Mayotte; and contributing to various peace operations in Somalia (Ali et al., 2025).

In contrast, the United States military base was established after the attacks of September 11, 2001. This strategic location allows them to combat terrorism while also protecting trade routes, and gives them the possibility of being prepared and acting quickly in the face of any crisis in the Middle East (Ali et al., 2025).

Within the framework of the 2026 war between the United States and Iran, the US military base Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti became a fundamental strategic asset, but also a potential target for the Houthis given its proximity, less than 160 km from the Yemeni coast. Djibouti maintains a "non-confrontational approach toward the Houthis," which, together with Djibouti's support for Palestine and the risk of collateral damage due to the presence of multiple foreign bases, has so far reduced Houthi incentives to attack Camp Lemonnier (Karr, 2026).

Another powerful country with a presence in Djibouti is China, which inaugurated its base in 2017 as an initiative to protect its investments in the region and the main trade routes through which it distributes products to Europe and Africa. Furthermore, it actively participates in international anti-piracy operations to highlight its presence as a global power with military capability (Ali et al., 2025).

In addition, the Japanese base was implemented in 2011, due to the country's interest in prioritizing the security of the routes through which energy imports destined for Asia transit. In addition, it also cooperates in anti-piracy missions with the objective of protecting its merchant vessels in the Gulf of Aden. For its part, Djibouti hosts the presence of an Italian military base and has a military presence from Germany and Spain. These are established in the country to provide logistical support for interventions carried out jointly with the EU against piracy, considering their own interests in the region's trade. Regarding Saudi Arabia, as one of the main actors in the conflict, together with the UAE, they established their military presence in the same country and manage agreements to set up military structures in order to counter the influence that Iran is having in the region (Ali et al., 2025).

However, the events of 2026 demonstrate that the concentration of military bases does not suffice to guarantee maritime security when the threat comes from non-state actors with sea denial capability, and that rivalry among powers within the same territory can paralyze any coordinated response.

As an alternative route, the Strait of Hormuz is viable; however, for the transport of hydrocarbons via this route, cargoes originating from Saudi Arabia and its allies would have to traverse Iranian coasts and would only be able to proceed to Asia. An alternate trajectory for commercialization destined for Europe and the United States is to go around the southern part of the African continent to avoid the strait. Besides, this would increase merchandise prices and transport times (Aguilera, 2020).

2.3 Reconfiguration of Regional Alliances

Saudi Arabia is the main power within the region, and, being a strong actor in the Middle East, it is of great interest for the United States to maintain influence within it. These countries are direct opponents of Iran; historically, Saudi Arabia has struggled against Iran for hegemony and control within the region. Furthermore, they seek to be predominant in the religion that each one professes, using religion as a political instrument to expand and gain influence (Sanamé, 2023).

The relation between Saudi Arabia and the United States has strengthened over time since both are aligned according to their interests in containing Iranian influence within the region. This bond allows for securing the global energy supply, making investments in the economic sectors of these powers, confronting Iran, and cooperating when faced with any conflict that arises inside the region to counter it (Sanamé, 2023).

Even so, this strategic relationship generates a permissive and tolerant attitude towards the Saudi government's non-compliance with international humanitarian law. As evidenced by the bombings of civilian targets in Yemen or the blockades that prevent the arrival of humanitarian aid. These ties of interest give rise to the execution of various operations that ended up violating human rights, prioritizing the convergence of interests against Iran over any ethical consideration (Sanamé, 2023).

Because of this, the UN interventions in Yemen have proven ineffective, largely due to the impunity with which Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have acted; their non-compliance and vetoes have weakened the enforcement of resolutions. The main failed milestones include: the 2014 National Peace and Partnership Agreement, which failed due to the Houthis' non-compliance with its clauses; the 2016 Kuwait Negotiations, which never concluded; the six-month truce of 2022, which the Houthis did not extend; and the UN Roadmap, which declared a national ceasefire, public salary payments, and the opening of ports and airports, but which also did not materialize (Mhiqani & Yenigun, 2024).

This UN ineffectiveness, in relation to the pressure exerted by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, is evident in these countries' success in securing the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen's dissolution in 2021. This group, established by the Human Rights Council, had the crucial function of impartially investigating violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the Yemeni conflict, identifying those responsible, analyzing the facts and circumstances, and offering recommendations to promote accountability and protect victims. Its disappearance, as a direct consequence of the management of interests by Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, has left the international community without an independent oversight mechanism and contributes to the widespread impunity that characterizes the crisis (Shea, 2022).

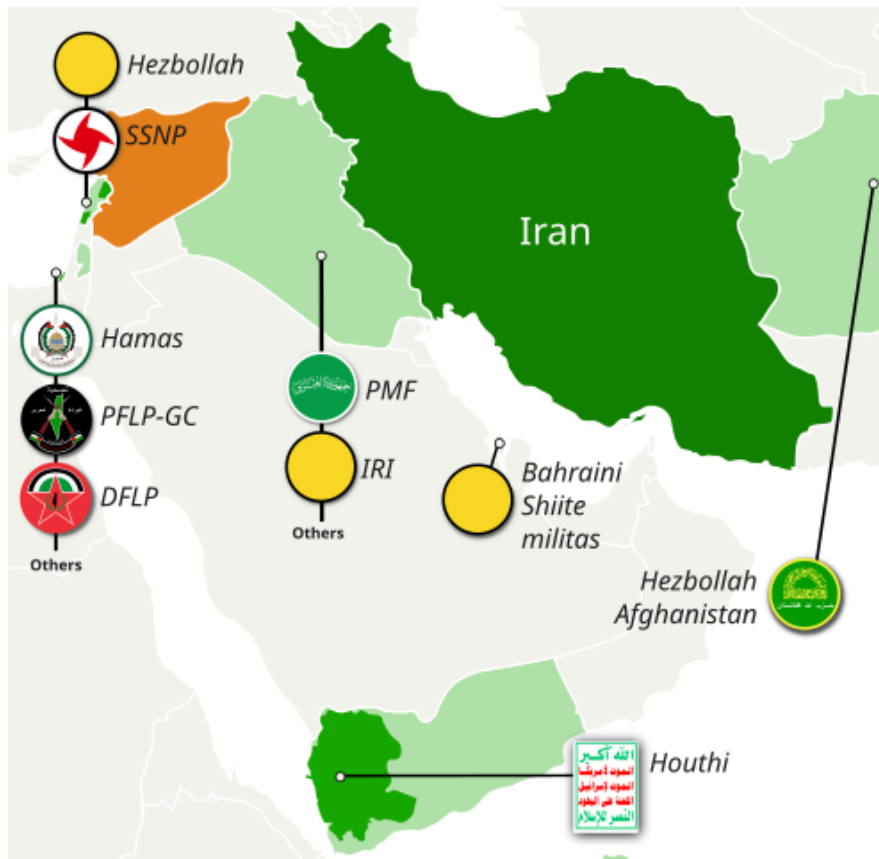
After the 1979 revolution, Iran went from being an ally to being an enemy of the United States due to its anti-imperialist stance and its aims to spread their ideology. This Axis of

Resistance², created and financed by Iran, recruits organizations/movements that are aligned with its ideologies, such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah; furthermore, militias with Shia systems in Iran, Syria, and the case study, the Houthis in Yemen (González, 2023).

According to Figure 4, the distribution of the Axis of Resistance illustrates the network. Its main members include Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, the Houthis in Yemen, the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in Iraq, as well as other smaller groups such as the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). Iran sits at the center of this network, acting as the main financier and political backer, while also including Afghanistan, referring to the Fatemiyoun brigade, which consists of Afghan fighters whom Iran has trained. However, Syria under Bashar al-Assad's regime no longer forms an active part of this axis, as its regime collapsed in December 2024. The fall of the Syrian regime responded to its loss of internal authority and its lack of utility for Iran, which has chosen to reconfigure the network by relying more on Iraq and Yemen. Consequently, Syria currently no longer has significant influence within the Axis of Resistance (Mansour et al., 2025).

² Name for the informal network of state and non-state actors that Iran leads and finances, which includes Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, as well as Shia militias of Iraqi and Syrian origin. This network aims to oppose US and Israeli influence in the Middle East.

Figure 4
Map of the Distribution Axis of Resistance



Note: Map Axis of Resistance [Illustration]. Retrieved from Wikimedia, 2024, Wikimedia (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Axis_of_Resistance.svg).

Iran assists these groups to secure its influence within other territories as part of its geopolitical strategy and to counter the influence of the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Its presence in Hezbollah, Lebanon, is based on the latter’s border with Israel. Hezbollah has a military and political force that, based on its interests, adheres to Iran’s motivations, and it is feasible for it to sustain this relationship (González, 2023).

In Iraq, Iranian support is provided to militias of Shia origin. This serves various purposes, such as preventing hostile operations against Iran, using it as a route to reach Syria and Lebanon, and intervening in political representation and the possibility of influencing the Iraqi government (Reardon, 2015).

In Syrian territory, multiple military installations have been established to maintain a latent threat against Israel and facilitate the transport of weapons to Hezbollah; however, these interventions were limited by the fall of the Shia regime of Bashar al-Assad in 2024. Nevertheless, Iran has carried out economic and social development within the region to ensure its permanence in the country (González, 2023).

Iranian support for Sunni groups such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad arises from the need to support the Palestinian cause and maintain an opposition stance toward Israel. Iran seeks to surround the Israeli state, keeping it in a constant state of tension. This approach causes Israel to distribute its forces across different points rather than concentrating them in one place; because of this, Israel must remain aware of potential attacks from multiple territories, increasing its operational attrition. However, this does not mean Iranian territorial expansion in Palestine. Tehran does not claim sovereignty, does not occupy Palestinian territory, nor does it administer lands there. Its support is political, financial, and military to local groups, without annexation or direct control of Palestinian territory (González, 2023).

On the other hand, Iran has also influenced Horn of Africa countries such as Ethiopia, especially during the Tigray³ conflict. Iran seeks to gain influence within African territory, given that Saudi Arabia and the UAE already have a presence in the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, Iran uses this "backing" strategy to project its power capability and gradually win allies within the region (Ezugwu & Duruji, 2025).

Simultaneously, Iran maintains influence in Sudan by providing weapons supplies such as drones, tanks, and logistical assistance. Moreover, Iran maintains a naval base in the country due to its interest in proximity to the Red Sea. Additionally, it secures the uranium supply chain for its own nuclear program (Echenique, 2023).

Dealing with the conflict in the region, the countries of the Horn of Africa have different positions. Djibouti allows the presence of foreign military bases to guarantee peace and security within its territory. As well, they rent from these, which is essential for their economy and, at the same time, makes them dependent. Therefore, the country maintains a "neutral position" and seeks to avoid getting involved in the various conflicts in the region (Mbiavanga, 2024).

In Eritrea, the government leased the port of Assab to the Saudi coalition, together with the United Arab Emirates. However, Iran also maintains a military presence within this country. This shows that Eritrea makes way for external actors whenever it serves its own

³ The Tigray conflict involves the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front group, who confront each other due to the policies implemented by the new minister that reduced autonomy for ethnic regions. During this conflict, various external actors intervened. Concerning Iran, it provided military support to the Ethiopian government (Ezugwu & Duruji, 2025).

benefit. Furthermore, this foreign presence allows Eritrea to create a shield against Ethiopia. The core of the rivalry with the Ethiopians dates back to after Eritrea's separation and the consequent loss of maritime access for Ethiopia (Mbiavanga, 2024).

For Somalia, encouraging foreign intervention within its territory is a tool that allows it to profit and establish close relations with other countries. Specifically, Turkey maintains military bases within Somalia and provides military technical support to the country's army. At the same time, it hosts a presence in its territory for the United States, the European Union, the UAE, and the United Kingdom. In addition, Somalia signs alliances with Egypt and Eritrea with the objective of curbing Ethiopia's maritime ambitions. However, the internal division and the lack of influence of the Mogadishu government limit the effectiveness of these actions (Abbas et al., 2023).

Regarding Ethiopia, this country adopts policies of not hosting foreign military bases within its territory; however, it constantly works on military collaboration. Its strategy consists of not adhering to a specific side, but rather maintaining cooperative relations with powers like China, the United States, the UAE, Turkey, and Russia. This allows it to limit dependence on other countries. Its stance is determined by factors such as its internal instability, which makes it prone to triggering conflicts at the domestic level; its dependence on the ports of neighboring countries due to its lack of a coastal zone; and the fact that Ethiopia's vision for development requires stable ties with powers in case it needs investment from them (Demeke, 2025).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out through a qualitative methodology focused on the case study of the Yemen conflict. This allowed for exploring the case study through different sources of evidence. This analysis process consisted of: case delimitation, data collection, documentary analysis, and triangulation of sources (Lecanda & Garrido, 2002).

For the execution of the triangulation, the approach involved analyzing specialized academic documentary sources related to the case study; reports from non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group; and international regulations such as the Geneva Convention and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The sources were selected because they possess truthfulness and neutrality when producing documents or reports related to the Yemen conflict.

The research uses data triangulation as a strategy to verify and contrast the information obtained through various sources. For the present case, it takes as reference international regulations, reports from qualified press, and analysis of academic documentary sources. This allows the researcher to identify similarities and contradictions in the data, which helps validate the data's truthfulness and improves understanding of the case study (Benavides & Gómez-Restrepo, 2005).

The triangulation process involved collecting material through research and reading documents related to the case study. Subsequently, the documents were classified by nature, seeking a neutral point of view, so that in the triangulation phase, it is possible to compare them from a joint approach.

Aligned with the specific objectives, the activities to analyze the background and development of the Yemen conflict during the study period included a review of the conflict's background and, subsequently, an analysis of the events presented during the 2014-2014 study period. The analysis of this period was carried out with a chronological reconstruction of the most notable events of the time interval, analyzing year by year the evolution of the conflict and detailing events outside the time frame that are complementary for understanding the conflict.

For the following objective, which consists of analyzing the impact on the Yemen conflict regarding the geopolitical dimensions of the Middle East, the analysis is carried out through the compilation and analysis of sources; identifying the variables that generate

regional instability in relation to the conflict. Through this analysis, it's determined that factors such as rivalry between regional powers, hegemonic interests in maintaining influence within the Middle East region, the need to protect strategic trade routes, and the projection capacity of non-state actors in the face of an internally fractured state trigger tensions within the region.

And according to the last objective, which focuses on analyzing the strategies of extra-regional and regional actors in relation to the development of the conflict, the identification of key actors involved in the Yemen conflict was carried out, determining their different positions and interventions. This was developed through the evaluation of documents that provide a general overview of the actors involved, and subsequently, the research and analysis of participants interconnected with the main actors of the conflict, thereby uncovering the history, interests, and positions that justify the actions of each one.

CHAPTER 4

ACTORS AND THEIR STRATEGIES: THE PROLONGATION OF THE CONFLICT

4.1 Regional Actors and their interests

Among the most relevant actors in the conflict, Saudi Arabia is one of the closest to Yemen and one of those that reflects the greatest interest in it. This is due to the strategic position in which the country finds itself, and this situation aligns with the interests of actors, as is the case with Saudi Arabia. The Yemen conflict directly impacts the commercialization of Saudi oil, especially the critical point that the Bab el-Mandeb route could be blocked and international trade paralyzed. Furthermore, it interferes with the initiatives of Saudi projects such as the Neom Project, which involves the construction of a megacity in the northwest of the country, and the Bin Salman Bridge project, which consists of infrastructure connecting Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt (Hamza, 2022).

Regarding their economic relationship, Saudi Arabia seeks to keep Yemen under its direction, making it dependent on Saudi support. A clear example is the retaliation that Arabia applied in response to Yemen's neutral stance during the Gulf War, where the effects were reflected in the Yemeni economy following the expulsion of more than 800 thousand workers who resided in Saudi territory, demonstrating the capacity for dominance and influence that the country has over Yemen. Moreover, Saudi Arabia deprives Yemen of exploring oil resources near the border with its territory, intervening at the government level to prevent Yemeni efforts to exploit said resources (Hamza, 2022).

On the ideological dimension, Saudi Arabia perceives the expansion of Shiism within the region as a threat. This, at the same time, translates into an increase in the reach of Iranian influence. Likewise, by sharing a border with Yemen, Iranian influence within this territory causes constant uncertainty regarding attacks. This consequently means that Iran would end up surrounding Saudi Arabia, in the north and south, given its close relationship with Iraq (Hamza, 2022).

To defend these interests, Saudi Arabia employs various mechanisms to manage the restoration of the Yemeni government. Initially, it provides funding and military support to the Hadi government to execute multiple offensives against the Houthis. Among these, we highlight aerial and naval blockades on Houthi-controlled ports, where it imposes import restrictions within areas under Houthi control (Gil, 2026).

When the country's situation did not turn in their favor, they implemented the aforementioned Presidential Leadership Council. However, internal divisions persist, and together with the international context, they make its effectiveness difficult. Saudi Arabia has kept mediation channels with the Houthis open and has promoted carrying out the truces proposed by the UN. This responds to the country's new priorities, such as its economic development (Gil, 2026).

On the other hand, the second main actor involved is Iran. It spreads its anti-hegemonic discourse throughout the region; its motivation for financing Zaydi Shiite groups is that they fight against repressive regimes and achieve influence in their respective countries. Examples include the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria until 2024. Ideologically, Iran seeks to counteract the expansion of Wahhabism promoted by Saudi Arabia (Mansour et al., 2025).

In this sense, the Houthis' presence in Yemen proves strategic for gaining projection in areas such as the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and for maintaining control over vital trade routes. This allows Iran to exert indirect international pressure (through the Houthis) and also against countries dependent on this route, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel. At the same time, this reflects the strategy that Iran executes to wear down US efforts to maintain influence in the region, and the measures implemented by its allies, subjecting them to a conflict that entails high costs and a long duration (Turk et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the Houthis' presence in the port of Hodeida allows Iran to maintain an entry point to the Red Sea for exporting supplies and funding to the Houthis without needing to transport these through Saudi territory. Ensuring a constant supply of provisions proves essential to secure this group's strengthening, just as Iran has projected this capability throughout all these years of backing (Turk, 2024).

This conflict, which Iran can define as a proxy war, allows it to diversify geographically by maintaining different groups under operation in various zones of the region, where its main benefit lies in attacking enemy interests without directly committing or involving itself. Furthermore, providing military support allows the Iranian militia to carry out tests to evaluate the performance of the military technology it supplies to the Houthis, and facilitates the analysis of devices in order to perfect their conditions for its own use (Akbarzadeh & Azizi, 2024).

All military training aims to create a strong ally, one capable of confronting the adversary coalition and influencing the regional balance. Its main purpose is to ensure the "survival" of the Houthis in order to maintain its strategic relationship with this actor (Akbarzadeh & Azizi, 2024).

In the future, potential economic advantages exist if a beneficial solution in favor of the Houthis is achieved, where Iran will be able to maintain a presence. Despite providing funding, it is important to highlight that Iran does not seek to maintain total control over the Houthis; what Iran seeks is to have a strategic partner. Therefore, this alliance of convenience allows the Houthis to have their own agenda and act autonomously (Akbarzadeh & Azizi, 2024).

In response to the intervention of these actors, the Regional Security Complex theory, formulated by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, seeks to describe how the interactions among them affect security in the Middle East. This theory consists of a set of states that relate internally and possess a relative level of autonomy, and it contrasts them with neighboring regions. This implies that mutual dependence proves stronger among actors within the same region (Gil, 2026).

This theory holds that a country's regional environment influences its security dynamics, and to understand those dynamics, it is necessary first to analyze that environment. In Yemen's case, this means more than a civil war; it implies a subcomplex in the Middle East, where the evolution of interventions by countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and various mediations in global maritime routes conditions this subcomplex (Gil, 2026).

However, the components of the Yemen conflict challenge this theory due to the following factors: first, intervention in maritime routes through technological resources that threaten global maritime traffic and affect the world economy; second, the uncertainty of alliance stability given the constant side-switching by actors; and finally, the absence of state authority and the presence of hybrid actors, which produce securitization dynamics that do not adapt to the Regional Security Complex Theory (Gil, 2026).

4.2 Extra-regional Actors and their Interests

In the conflict scenario, extra-regional powers also intervene, reflecting their interests in the dispute over influence in Yemen. This is the case with the United States, which seeks to restore the country's political situation in order to stop any Iranian attempt to expand

within the region. It also seeks to contain terrorist groups such as AQAP and the Islamic State. To this end, the US provides military and operational support to Saudi Arabia, thus keeping under control any attempt by these actors to consolidate within Yemeni territory (Du, 2024).

Furthermore, guaranteeing the security of global energy routes, such as the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, proves essential due to the volatility resulting from potential disruptions along the route, which could trigger prolonged crises in the Red Sea. This could lead to rising maritime transport costs, would greatly impact global energy supply systems, and would affect the various economies that depend on these routes, including the US economy itself (Ahmad & Khawaja, 2025).

According to the Theory of Hegemonic Stability, proposed by Charles Kindleberger, and in relation to US activity in the region, the theory mentions that this Western country acts as a defender of the international order by assuming the main tasks associated with those considered dominant powers. In the Yemen conflict, this role reflects itself in the protection of maritime routes in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Furthermore, the US fulfills the purpose of ensuring the current "stability" in the Middle East region through its support for Saudi Arabia (Ahmad & Khawaja, 2025).

To achieve this, the United States prioritizes protecting its regional allies such as Saudi Arabia and Israel. Maintaining these ties allows it to secure influence in the region. To this end, the US deploys military operations in the region through Saudi Arabia, or in the case of Israel, it assists with direct attacks against the Houthis (Blanchard, 2026).

However, the US global role as a promoter of peace and peaceful resolutions implies that it fosters humanitarian assistance within Yemen, mainly to maintain its mediator role in the conflict. Here, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) manages the aid. Through this agency, it supplies basic food and medicines and provides social protection programs focused on children and women. Nevertheless, these diplomatic efforts fail to have a significant impact as long as the United States continues to supply Saudi Arabia with weaponry (Du, 2024).

On the other hand, China maintains a close relationship with Iran. Tehran depends economically and energetically on Beijing due to the reimposition of sanctions. The United Nations Security Council imposed these sanctions in response to Iran's nuclear program and its refusal to meet the transparency requirements requested by the International Atomic

Energy Agency. The sanctions came back into force in September 2025, after France, Germany, and the United Kingdom activated the so-called "Snapback" mechanism, arguing that Iran had failed to meet its nuclear commitments. China's economic assistance to Iran, as the main buyer of Iranian oil, allows Iran, in turn, to indirectly help sustain financial support for groups such as the Houthis (Scita, 2022).

Through private Chinese companies, they have facilitated drone technology, missile guidance systems, and satellite imagery for the Houthis, which, during the attacks on ships in the Red Sea, allowed the Houthis to increase their military capability. This indirect support provoked accusations from the United States against Chinese companies, where the US imposed sanctions as a result of these companies having provided technology used against international vessels. In response to this, China maintains its firm neutral stance, avoiding direct confrontations with the West (Saraih, 2025).

The United States Department of the Treasury revealed that the Houthis have been acquiring, smuggling, and financing the supply of weapons and military technology through unofficial channels. At the same time, US intelligence detected the use of Chinese-made missiles and drones in the attacks that this group has carried out against vessels in the Red Sea. However, all evidence indicates that these weapons reach Houthi hands without the Chinese government's knowledge or authorization, taking advantage of China's stance of not officially recognizing any link to the conflict (Gering & Brodsky, 2025).

4.3 Influence of Non-State Actors

Yemen's internal fragility makes it prone to the emergence of rebel groups that aim to consolidate themselves and seek to promote separatist dynamics to form autonomous political power.

Since taking the capital Sana'a, the rebel group Ansar Allah (Houthis) has achieved significant evolution in its military development, which consists of highly trained ground forces, a military system comprising ballistic and cruise missiles, drones, and they also possess the capability to manufacture and modify weaponry. This strengthening, sponsored by the Islamic Republic of Iran, has allowed the group to gain projection capable of transcending Yemeni borders and to achieve regional reach (Knights, 2024).

Since October 2023, they have escalated their range of strategic operations, launching offensives against commercial and military navigation in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in the context of the war in Gaza, appealing to solidarity with the Palestinian people. This

strategy, beyond consolidating their internal legitimacy by positioning themselves as the main reference in the defense of the Palestinian cause, seeks to prove to the international community that they are a group with effective influence, demonstrating their operational capability and the repercussions they can generate for the stability of the Middle East region (Knights, 2024).

Despite the military reprisals carried out by the international community, such as the United States establishing Operation Prosperity Guardian⁴ and the European Union launching Operation ASPIDES⁵, the Houthis have maintained and intensified their operations within the Red Sea and within Israeli territory. This demonstrates that conventional bombings have limited effectiveness against decentralized actors with the ability to regenerate immediately, which is why the group has been able to sustain its activity over time (Al-Dawsari, 2025).

This projection of power and capability has allowed the Houthis to diversify their supporting actors beyond Iran, allying themselves with powers that share their same adversarial stance toward the West. As Al-Dawsari (2025) indicates, Russia has mobilized military advisers and on-the-ground intelligence to provide targeting data on maritime objectives, and both parties have conducted negotiations regarding anti-ship missile armaments.

Furthermore, the Houthis have managed to expand their influence over other non-state groups within the country. They have established cooperation channels with AQAP and the Islamic State in Yemen, through which they set up strategic information exchange channels, conduct prisoner swaps, and mutually provide each other with safe havens. They have also supplied technological equipment such as drones and rockets to AQAP. Additionally, they have established operational ties with Al-Shaab in the Horn of Africa and Somali piracy networks to ensure reinforced control over maritime routes in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (Al-Dawsari, 2025).

⁴ A US-led multinational naval mission, arising from the Red Sea crisis unleashed by the Houthi movement. This mission aims to protect maritime security, guarantee freedom of navigation, and deter Houthi aggressions through escorts, patrols, crew rescues, and blockades of Houthi supply chains. The mission emphasizes military action with limited diplomacy, executing operations without considering the context of Yemen and the Middle East, and in line with US international imposition (Gaudialmo & Ramadhan, 2025).

⁵ The European Union established this defensive naval mission on February 19, 2024. The mission originated as a response to Houthi attacks. Its three main objectives are: to protect commercial vessels, to guarantee safe passage through the strait, and to strengthen maritime awareness. It operates in self-defense, seeking to mitigate risks rather than neutralize the threat (Jalal, 2024).

In contrast, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) holds a different degree of influence. Due to its strategy of assuming public service maintenance functions that the Yemeni state fails to provide in certain areas, AQAP has gained legitimacy and acceptance among local communities; however, it has not achieved these communities' adoption of its ideology. Its financial backing comes from various sources, such as looting banks in Mukalla, imposing tariffs on imports at ports under its control, and integrating itself into smuggling routes (International Crisis Group, 2017).

However, the group's activity decreased at the beginning of 2021, and its territorial extension at that time limited itself to districts in southeastern al-Bayda (al-Sawmaa, Dhi Naim, and Mukayras). One year later, they managed to reintegrate themselves, even reducing violent confrontations against Houthi forces, but increasing tensions with the Southern Transitional Council (STC), where the STC deployed Operation Eastern Arrows to regain control of Abyan and Shabwa, and AQAP responded with an attack that left around 27 dead. Additionally, the United States has carried out deadly drone strikes against two high-ranking AQAP leaders, Husayn Habdul and Shura Hamad al-Tamimi. Despite its weakening, AQAP has survived various attacks and has found itself forced to redirect its efforts again toward southern Yemen, where it constantly confronts the STC (Hauthuille, 2023).

For its part, the Southern Transitional Council (STC) has sought to expand and has carried out operations to take control of the country's east. By late 2025, it had managed to control extensive territorial zones, including oil fields, and had consolidated its authority in Aden, issuing declarations about the imminent independence of the South. In response to this pronouncement, Saudi Arabia perceives it as a threat to its national security and deploys counteroffensives together with the Presidential Leadership Council, which result in the recovery of territories such as Hadramawt and al-Mahra and subsequently regain control of Aden (Khoury, 2025).

In response to the Saudi response, STC leader Aidarous al-Zubaid leaves the country and accuses the United Arab Emirates of covering up the operations carried out by the STC. Then the UAE withdraws from Yemeni territory, ending its military operations within the country. Despite these events and considering the movement's history, part of the STC will likely survive; meanwhile, its influence weakens without UAE support (Loft, 2026).

Finally, we have the Islamic State in Yemen. This movement never managed to control territory within the country; it established itself in an area of al-Bayda as a military training camp; however, US attacks destroyed that area. As previously mentioned, its recruitment strategy involved extreme violence and indiscriminate attacks, which is why it never truly aligned with the Yemeni population or covered local needs such as development, justice, or even services (Kendall, 2019).

In addition, it could not confront the influence that AQAP had maintained in the territory throughout history, and its presence steadily declined over the years. By 2018, the Islamic State had completely withdrawn from al-Bayda. Looking to the future, the movement has few to almost no possibilities of reestablishing itself within Yemen (Kendall, 2019).

4.4 Prolongation of the Conflict

This section analyzes the latest updates on the situation in the Middle East, describing events that occurred up to April 13, 2026, the date that delimits the validity of this analysis.

In the context of the Middle Eastern conflicts, and following the aforementioned designation of the Houthis as a "Foreign Terrorist Organization", the situation regarding non-state actors in Yemen unfolds as a result of Israel's blockade preventing humanitarian aid from entering Gaza amid the Israel-Palestine conflict. In response, the Houthis declare, as a threat, the deployment of operations targeting vessels linked to Israel in the Red Sea (Salhani, 2025).

And thus, on March 11, 2025, the Houthis ended the naval truce they had promised while the ceasefire in Gaza held. In response, the United States bombed Sana'a and its surroundings for two consecutive nights, claiming that the ultimate target was Houthi leaders; however, the bombings left 53 dead and more than 100 civilians wounded as a consequence (Salhani, 2025).

The United States also carried out an airstrike against the Ras Isa oil port in Yemen on April 18, 2025, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the fuel source on which the Houthis rely. The US has categorized this as one of the most fatal bombings the Western country has conducted due to the high number of civilian casualties and the devastation of the port, through which humanitarian aid and imports had entered Yemen. In reaction to this event, the Houthis attacked Israel and two US aircraft carriers with missiles; Houthi military

spokesman Yahya Saree even affirmed that the continued aggression by the Western country will only lead to more retaliation and responses from the movement (Al Jazeera, 2025).

Later, after a brief truce period between the United States and the Houthis, Israeli forces attacked Sana'a's main airport on May 28, 2025, destroying the last civilian aircraft of Yemenia Airways. Israel justified the attack by stating that the previous day, the Houthis had launched two ballistic missiles toward Israel, but the Israeli military intercepted them in time. This airport had been destined to transport Muslim pilgrims for the Hajj to Saudi Arabia. In response, Israel claims to attack terrorist targets at the airport, while the Houthis assert that the attack constitutes a pressure strategy to make them abandon their support for Gaza. This turns the conflict into a dynamic of continuous retaliation by both sides (News Agencies, 2025).

Following the intensification of Houthi-Israeli clashes, the Houthis announced in June 2025 their readiness to attack US vessels and aircraft carriers in response to the reprisals against Iranian nuclear sites. Consequently, they launched military operations in the Red Sea, attacking the vessel Magic Seas with two unmanned boats loaded with explosives, as well as with ballistic missiles, drones, and small arms fire; the next day, they attacked the cargo ship Eternity C, killing three crew members. In response to these aggressions, the Houthis claim that these vessels have ties to companies that violate the prohibition on operating in ports of "occupied Palestine" (Toomey, 2025).

Among the exchange of retaliations, the next notable event is the Israeli bombings on August 24, 2025. These bombings affected an oil facility, a power plant, and the presidential palace in Sana'a. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz warned that each Houthi missile launched against Israel would have cumulative consequences, and stated that as a result, Yemen could face a "plague of darkness and gloom" (Al Jazeera, 2025).

On August 31, Houthi forces stormed United Nations offices and detained 19 staff members, arguing espionage accusations because Israeli bombings days earlier had ended the life of Houthi Prime Minister Ahmed al-Rahawi and other ministers. This resulted in the UN suspending humanitarian aid in certain areas, thus worsening the crisis (Jafarnia, 2025).

In the following months, these arbitrary detentions continued. According to the Human Rights Watch report, by early 2026, Houthi forces had detained around 69 employees, all of Yemeni origin. At the same time, they seized equipment, confiscated vehicles and electronic devices, and, most importantly, paralyzed humanitarian activities in territories under their

control. Specifically in the north of the country, the health sector began to collapse more steadily. The treatment of the detained individuals depends on the circumstances they endure, which range from forced disappearances lasting months, forced confessions, deaths in custody, denial of medical care in cases of serious illness, unfair trials, and torture (Niku Jafarnia, 2026).

In February 2026, Oman mediated negotiations aiming to reach a new agreement that limits the Iranian nuclear program. This consensus implies: the US demand that Iran cease all activity involving its nuclear enrichment, to address Iran's future ballistic missile program, and the schedule for lifting sanctions. Despite Iranian declarations committing not to create nuclear material that could produce a bomb, US President Donald Trump announced his dissatisfaction with those declarations. The failure of the negotiations came about due to Iran's refusal to totally cancel its nuclear planning and the lack of trust between the parties (Loft, 2026).

That is when the United States proclaims the threat that Iran poses to national security, and on February 28, 2026, it carries out bombings to destroy key sites of the Iranian nuclear program, such as the Natanz enrichment plant and the Khondab heavy water plant, as well as Revolutionary Guard facilities, airfields, anti-aircraft systems, and to shoot down missiles and weaken the network of armed groups backed by Iran. Consequently, during the attacks, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dies along with high-ranking military and security commanders (Loft, 2026).

In response to these events, on March 26 the Houthi movement declares that it has the military preparation to join the war against the United States, and furthermore, it stands ready to carry out operations in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. This represents a serious consequence for maritime transport because Iran, in the midst of the conflict with the United States, closes the Strait of Hormuz, preventing oil from leaving the Persian Gulf (Ghobari & Farge, 2026).

Once they join the conflict, they carry out a single attack against Israel on March 28; however, they do not resume attacks in the Red Sea against maritime transport. They even seek to maintain significant autonomy, making their decisions based on their internal analyses in Yemen, and they prefer to avoid a confrontation that would wear down their human and material resources. So far, they maintain the latent threat of blocking the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and they will carry out interventions when the context allows them to gain regional influence without jeopardizing their main project (Thabet, 2026).

By April 13, 2026, the United States imposed a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz, covering the entire Iranian coast and extending to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It issues a warning of interception, diversion, or capture for any vessel that enters or exits without authorization; it allows humanitarian shipments that have undergone prior inspection. This measure arises due to the failure of negotiations to end the war with Iran, where even the price per barrel of oil had reportedly risen above 100 dollars (Saul & Somasekhar, 2026).

This blockade will prolong the paralysis of maritime traffic, and the impact will be immediate regarding global energy trade and the uncertainty it represents for navigation at such a strategic point.

4.5 Unsuccessful Peace-seeking Strategies

Throughout the conflict, the international community has promoted numerous diplomatic efforts to achieve a lasting cessation of the conflict, given that it represents a major humanitarian crisis within the country. To this end, it has fostered rounds of negotiations, ceasefire agreements, and political transition mechanisms to address this objective.

One of the significant efforts to resolve the differences is the 2018 Stockholm Agreement. This agreement represented the first diplomatic rapprochement between the Yemeni government and the Houthis. It consisted of three parts: first, the Hodeidah Agreement, aimed at keeping open the strategic port through which 70% of food and medicines enter Yemen; second, the exchange of 15,000 prisoners; and third, a consensus declaration on Taiz. During the agreement, the government demanded the complete withdrawal of Houthi troops from Hodeidah. Given the Houthis' refusal of this demand, humanitarian aid continued to face blockage at this entry point. This revealed the lack of enforcement mechanisms and political will to materialize the agreement (Dijkstal, 2019).

Then came the 2019 Riyadh Agreement. This agreement maintained a diplomatic approach between the Yemeni government and the Southern Transitional Council. The agreement's implementation required redeploying President Hadi's forces in Aden, which inevitably risked triggering confrontations with STC forces, thus destroying the very negotiations that the agreement sought to enable. The agreement was temporarily held, and attacks in the capital Aden ceased; however, tensions persisted and even led to new clashes. This agreement clearly demonstrated the deep structural flaw of the conflict: the anti-Houthi

side also remains fragmented. Furthermore, it made evident that any peace process must include all parties involved in the conflict and must take into account the conflict's root causes (Abdulghani Al-Iryani, 2020).

In 2022, Hans Grundberg, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy, successfully negotiated a ceasefire among all parties to the conflict. The ceasefire lasted several months, and the conditions included the cessation of ground, air, and naval military operations; the entry of fuel ships through Hodeidah; and the authorization of two commercial flights per week (United Nations, 2022).

The convergence of factors prevented the truce from lasting longer. At the local level, during negotiations, the Houthis, in addition to political demands, began making economic and legal requests seeking to obtain a share of oil revenues. Furthermore, they held military parades during the truce to demonstrate their willingness to escalate the conflict. This revealed their true purpose: during the truce period, they do not seek peace, but rather use it to buy time to reorganize, and at the same time, demand greater benefits in agreements (Munassar, 2022).

Communication channels for dialogue are never completely closed. However, the path toward permanent peace faces unresolved obstacles. The main sticking points include: the suspension of public employee salaries in Houthi-controlled areas, a suspension that has continued since 2016; control of the Central Bank; and the management of oil revenues. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia insists on presenting itself as a mediator rather than as a party to the conflict, a position that the Houthis reject (Munassar, 2022).

The dialogue strategy that Oman applied in 2023 proceeded, first, through discreet and covert mediations, and after the failure of the previous year's truce, Oman became the mediation bridge for the conflict. It helped establish direct conversations between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia, seeking not to impose solutions or pressure either side. The outcome of the mediation remains limited, especially due to Oman's lack of influence within the negotiations to persuade the parties to reach a point where all participants achieve some favorable outcome, thus rendering the mediation an insufficient resource for reaching any kind of agreement (Nasser, 2023).

In 2024, a truce attempt arises again, but one oriented toward the economic sphere. And thus, the internationally recognized Government and the Houthi group announced an economic de-escalation agreement, which implies ending measures against banks based in

Sana'a and increasing the number of flights from the capital's airport; for this purpose, the Houthis maintained as a threat to attack strategic Saudi airports (Arab Center Washington DC, 2024).

In an August 2025 report, Hans Grundberg proposes supporting de-escalation efforts aimed at a national ceasefire and advancing political and economic stabilization talks. He also emphasizes the need to include regional and international actors and partners, with whom it is essential to work, to prevent Yemen from extending the conflict in the Middle East (United Nations, 2025).

In response to this, he presented the main priorities for achieving this goal, which consist of: supporting de-escalation on combat fronts, establishing a roadmap to materialize talks in line with the "December 2023 Roadmap", and advancing economic measures that involve opening main roads and monetary stabilization. Faced with this situation, the progressive internationalization of the conflict, with the escalation of Houthi attacks on Israeli territory, aggravates the picture. This scenario demonstrates how each opening of a diplomatic space quickly encounters a counteraction from the emergence of a new regional conflict focus (United Nations, 2025).

According to Hellmüller & Salaymeh (2025), the peace strategies applied to the Yemen conflict have little impact due to "transactional peacemaking." This concept describes how changes in the world order and increased geopolitical competition have generated a phenomenon where states that militarily fund actors within a conflict commonly present themselves as "peace mediators."

This convergence turns peace processes into political markets where transactional peacemaking becomes the *modus operandi*. This approach exhibits the following characteristics: it prioritizes bilateral approaches over multilateral ones; it follows a logic based on self-interest and a short-term focus for agreements, seeking to contain violence rather than address the structural causes of the conflict. Applied to the Yemen conflict, this theory has manifested itself in the mediated agreements that appear on paper but never fully translate into real lasting peace; all actors pursue a different agenda that they will not abandon (Hellmüller & Salaymeh, 2025).

CONCLUSIONS

The Yemen conflict has transcended its borders to become the center of a proxy war that redefines regional stability in the Middle East. Throughout the analyzed decade (2014-2024), Yemen has gone from being a fragile state due to the failed political transition to a chessboard where it projects the historical tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

This outcome results from decades of political exclusion, structural poverty, and institutional weaknesses. Factors such as the failure of the national dialogue and the international community's inability to enforce resolutions allowed the Houthis, with Iran's growing backing, to take control of the capital and expand their dominion over western Yemen.

The conflict's development features three phases: first, Houthi territorial expansion until 2016; second, a war of attrition with Saudi-Emirati coalition intervention; and third, fragmentation of the anti-Houthi camp with the emergence of the Southern Transitional Council and the internationalization of the conflict through Houthi attacks on Saudi infrastructure and subsequently on Red Sea navigation. This evolution demonstrates that the conflict is a dynamic sequence where regional powers have instrumentalized local actors, while these actors have also developed strategic autonomy.

The Yemen conflict's influence on regional stability has been profound and multidimensional. First, it has reconfigured the security of the Arabian Peninsula through Houthi drone and missile attacks against Saudi oil facilities and against the United Arab Emirates. This demonstrates that the Gulf States, despite their technological, economic, and military superiority, remain vulnerable to the war dynamics that operate from their southern border.

Second, Houthi control of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and subsequent threats to Red Sea navigation have globalized the conflict, affecting global maritime trade and raising transport costs. This degree of capability to affect maritime shipping turns Yemen into a strategic chokepoint of the Rimland, where extra-regional powers such as the United States, China, or the European Union find themselves forced to deploy naval resources to guarantee transit. This Red Sea crisis has created a new front of tension that directly connects the Yemen conflict with the war in Gaza and the Iran-Israel confrontation, thus regionalizing instability even further.

Third, Yemen has become a testing ground for new warfare tactics: the massive use of drones, short-range ballistic missiles, naval mines, and cyberattacks. This scenario has raised tension levels and forced regional actors to invest in air defense systems and intelligence cooperation, while also eroding trust in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

Faced with this situation, the actors involved have employed different methods according to their interests. For example, Iran has deployed a proxy strategy based on indirect deterrence. Its support for the Houthis through advanced weaponry, training, and financing seeks to wear down Saudi Arabia, threaten maritime transit in Bab el-Mandeb as a pressure lever, and consolidate the Axis of Resistance.

In contrast, Saudi Arabia has maintained a dual strategy. On one hand, it led an expensive military coalition that has condemned for human rights violations; on the other hand, it has tried to position itself as a mediator. The main error consisted of not recognizing that the Houthis had become an actor with veto power over Saudi security. At the same time as Saudi Arabia seeks to secure its influence in Yemen, its fragmentation of the anti-Houthi camp with the United Arab Emirates has become one of the main obstacles to any inclusive peace agreement.

At the extra-regional level, the United States has provided logistical and intelligence support to the Saudi coalition, but with growing internal criticism for its complicity in war crimes. The US power has prioritized maritime security in the Red Sea over a political solution in Yemen, which reflects a strategy of containing Iran rather than building peace.

As non-state groups with influence within Yemeni territory, the Houthis represent the movement with the greatest impact, having evolved into a force capable of manufacturing and modifying weaponry, launching missiles and drones against enemy territory, and paralyzing maritime transit. In contrast, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has opted for a strategy of local legitimacy through providing public services, although US attacks have reduced its territorial power. The Southern Transitional Council initially enjoyed UAE backing, managed to control extensive southern zones, including oil fields and the city of Aden, but its declaration of independence provoked a Saudi counteroffensive that weakened its influence after the Emirati withdrawal. For its part, the Islamic State in Yemen never achieved significant territorial control, with Houthi forces expelling it from its strongholds in al-Bayda, and it has little chance of reemerging.

Taken together, this fragmentation demonstrates that Yemen is not merely a civil war scenario, but rather a geopolitical node where global powers' interests converge and where armed groups have acquired strategic autonomy, perpetuating regional instability and challenging traditional deterrence and conflict resolution mechanisms.

In relation to the most recent events analyzed in 2026, Yemen has become an active front within the open war between the United States, Israel, and Iran. The escalation reached its most critical point after the assassination of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in the US bombings of February 28, 2026. This led the Houthis to declare their readiness to join the conflict fully and to threaten closing the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, while the United States imposes a formal blockade on Hormuz that threatens to paralyze global energy trade. The Hormuz blockade and the latent threat over Bab el-Mandeb have created an economic pincer movement that could send oil prices soaring, but the real question remains whether the Houthis can maintain this balancing position or whether they will be dragged irremediably into a total war that would destroy the "achievements" of their decade of territorial consolidation.

The Houthi strategy of buying time during truces allows them to reorganize strategically; a ceasefire will not become viable unless international verification mechanisms with real sanctioning capacity come into effect. Furthermore, the fragmentation of the anti-Houthi camp will continue to hinder any inclusive political solution unless an internal reconciliation between the recognized government and the Southern Transitional Council takes place.

The internationalization of the conflict makes foreign intervention in this conflict inevitable, turning Yemeni territory into a proxy war front between Iran and the West. Meanwhile, the United Nations and the international community have demonstrated structural ineffectiveness. Security Council resolutions have not implemented due to cross-vetoes and the lack of verification and sanction mechanisms. As an example of this, the dissolution of the Group of Experts, which occurred under pressure from the Emirates and Saudi Arabia, has perpetuated impunity and delegitimized the UN as a guarantor of peace.

Given the foregoing, regional stability will not recover as long as Yemen remains a failed state fragmented into multiple territories controlled by armed factions with external agendas. The conclusion is that peace in Yemen must entail an inclusive political process that addresses the conflict's structural causes (such as the equitable distribution of oil

revenues, state reform, civil society participation, and accountability for human rights violations). Furthermore, this process requires the backing of an international community willing to impose effective sanctions on obstructionists, without geopolitical distinctions.

As long as this does not happen, Yemen will continue to reveal the Middle East's inherent tensions and contradictions: the struggle for the Rimland, the rise of indirect warfare, the crisis of international law, and the failure of multilateralism.

The analysis presented here, defined up to April 13, 2026, allows one to argue that Yemen has become an active and conditioning front of the regional war. The imposition of the US blockade on the Strait of Hormuz, together with the Iranian closure of the same strait and the rise in oil prices above 100 dollars, has completely reshaped global maritime routes. Yemen, with its geostrategic position over Bab el-Mandeb, remains a key piece in this war for control of energy chokepoints.

The Houthi threat to block that strait remains in effect, although its activation will depend on the group's tactical decisions, which aim to expand its power without jeopardizing its political-military structure, as that could lead to a larger-scale war. Thus, in the current scenario, the question is no longer whether Yemen affects regional stability, but rather at what moment and under what conditions its decisions could trigger a global energy and commercial crisis.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, Ouma y Sabala, (2023). *Role-of-internal-and-external-actors-in-shaping-security-dynamics-in-somalia*. [El papel de los actores internos y externos en la configuración de las dinámicas de seguridad en Somalia] https://cedred.or.ke/jais/images/sept2023/PDF_Ramla_Abbas_Role_of_Internal_and_External_Actors_in_Shaping_Security_Dynamics_in_Somalia.pdf
- Aguilera Raga, A. A. (2020). *The Bab el-Mandeb strait: Geopolitical considerations of the strategic chokepoint*. [El estrecho de Bab el-Mandeb: consideraciones geopolíticas de este punto estratégico clave] <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7561393>
- Abdulghani Al-Iryani. (2020). *The Riyadh Agreement Dilemma*. [El dilema del Acuerdo de Riad] <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/analysis/10311>
- Afrah Nasser. (2023). *Oman's Interests and Role in the Conflict in Yemen*. Arab Center Washington DC. [Los intereses y el papel de Omán en el conflicto en Yemen. Arab Center Washington DC] <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/omans-interests-and-role-in-the-conflict-in-yemen/>
- Ahmad, D. M., & Khawaja, H. A. (2025). *US Role in Yemen Conflict: Implications for Regional Stability and Global Leadership*. 9(2). [El papel de Estados Unidos en el conflicto de Yemen: implicaciones para la estabilidad regional y el liderazgo global.] [https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2025\(9-II\)29](https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2025(9-II)29)
- Ahmed, A. A. M., y Nyeb, E. A. M. A. A. (2025). Yemen's Child Soldiers Crisis 2024: Key Findings from a Six-Month Investigation. [La crisis de los niños soldados en Yemen 2024: hallazgos clave de una investigación de seis meses] *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 10(2), 254-262. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.102.41>
- Ahmed, N. (2019). Yemeni civil war: causes, consequences and prospects. [La guerra civil yemení: causas, consecuencias y perspectivas] *jdp (Jurnal dinamika pemerintahan)*, 2(2), 82-91. <https://doi.org/10.36341/jdp.v2i2.943>
- Akbarzadeh, E. S., & Azizi, H. (2024). Building bridges or expanding influence. [Construyendo puentes o ampliando la influencia] https://mecouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Iran-in-the-Middle-East-Building-Bridges-or-Expanding-Influence_MECouncil_Dossier.pdf
- Al Jazeera. (2024a, enero 12). *Who are the Houthis? A simple guide to the Yemeni group*. [¿Quiénes son los hutíes? Una guía sencilla sobre el grupo yemení.] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/12/who-are-yemens-houthis-a-basic-guide>
- Al Jazeera. (2024b, enero 17). *US designates Yemen's Houthis as 'global terrorists'*. [Estados Unidos designa a los hutíes de Yemen como "terroristas globales".] <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/17/us-redesignates-yemens-houthis-a-global-terrorist-group>
- Al Jazeera. (2025a). *Israeli bombardment kills 10 in Yemen's Sanaa after Houthi attacks* *Houthi official says Israeli attacks will not stop group from continuing support for Gaza, 'no matter the sacrifices*. [Un bombardeo israelí mata a 10 personas en Saná,

- Yemen, tras ataques hutíes. Un funcionario hutí afirma que los ataques israelíes no detendrán al grupo de continuar su apoyo a Gaza, “sin importar los sacrificios”.*] Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/24/israeli-military-targets-yemens-sanaa-after-houthi-attacks>
- Al Jazeera. (2025b). *US air strikes kill 80, injure 150 in Yemen Death toll reported by the Houthi rebels marks one of the deadliest attacks by the United States military on Yemen. [Los ataques aéreos de Estados Unidos matan a 80 personas y dejan 150 heridos en Yemen. El número de víctimas reportado por los rebeldes hutíes marca uno de los ataques más mortales del ejército estadounidense en Yemen.]* Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/18/more-than-30-killed-80-injured-in-us-air-strikes-on-yemen-report>
- Al-Aghbari, A. G., Nugroho, R. A., & Kartono, D. T. (2024). The Problems of Development and Economic Security in Yemen. [Los problemas del desarrollo y la seguridad económica en Yemen.] *Proceedings of Sunan Ampel International Conference of Political and Social Sciences*, 2, 268-282. <https://doi.org/10.15642/saicopss.2024.2..268-282>
- Albasoos, H., & Al Hinai, B. (2020). Understanding the root causes of the conflict in Yemen. [Comprender las causas fundamentales del conflicto en Yemen] *Bussecon Review of Social Sciences* (2687-2285), 2(2), 14-20. <https://doi.org/10.36096/brss.v2i2.199>
- Al-Dawsari. Nadwa (2025). *Armed Groups in Context: The Houthis – From Local Insurgency to Regional (Non-State) Powerhouse Shaping Middle East Dynamics.* [Grupos armados en contexto: los hutíes – de insurgencia local a potencia regional (no estatal) que configura las dinámicas de Oriente Medio.] <https://www.armedgroups-internationallaw.org/2025/01/14/the-houthis-from-local-insurgency-to-regional-non-state-powerhouse-shaping-middle-east-dynamics/>
- Alexandre, A. G. (2021). The Strait of Bab El-Mandeb: Stage of geopolitical disputes. [El estrecho de Bab el-Mandeb: escenario de disputas geopolíticas.] *JANUS NET E-Journal of International Relation*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.26619/1647-7251.12.2.5>
- Al-hinaiti, R. A. R. (2023). *The Impact of Foreign Intervention in the Yemeni Crisis (2015-2020).* [Al-hinaiti, R. A. R. (2023). El impacto de la intervención extranjera en la crisis de Yemen (2015-2020).] 50(6). <https://doi.org/10.35516/hum.v50i6.2597>
- Ali, N., Ali, D. A., Khan, D. I., Adnan, M., & Muhammad, D. (2023). *External Factors in Yemen Crisis: A Critical Overview.* [Factores externos en la crisis de Yemen: una revisión crítica.] <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/16342>
- Alqatabry, H., & Butcher, C. (2020). Humanitarian Aid in Yemen: Collaboration or Co-Optation? [La ayuda humanitaria en Yemen: ¿colaboración o cooptación?] *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 15(2), 250-255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1542316620907573>
- Alsudani, A. F. (2025). *Yemen at the Crossroads—The Houthis, Iran, and Saudi Arabia Under the Spotlight.* [Yemen en la encrucijada: los hutíes, Irán y Arabia Saudita bajo el foco de atención.] <https://upr.lse.ac.uk/articles/156>
- Annisa, N., & Burhanuddin, A. (2024). *The Impact of The Coalition of Arab States Intervention on The Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen Internal Conflict.* [El impacto de

- la intervención de la coalición de Estados árabes en la crisis humanitaria del conflicto interno en Yemen.] *1*(2). <https://journal.unhas.ac.id/index.php/gs/article/view/43068>
- Arab center Washington DC. (2024). *A Fragile but Enduring Truce in Yemen*. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. [Una tregua frágil pero duradera en Yemen. Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.] <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/a-fragile-but-enduring-truce-in-yemen/>
- Arellanes Arellanes, J. (2025). Los hutíes en el entramado geopolítico de Medio Oriente: La Crisis del Mar Rojo como disrupción de la seguridad marítima internacional. *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, *70*(255). <https://doi.org/10.22201/fcpys.2448492xe.2025.255.93957>.
- Aya, (2023). External Interventions in Internal Conflicts: A Case Study of Yemen. [Intervenciones externas en conflictos internos: un estudio de caso de Yemen.] *Humanitarian and Natural Sciences Journal*, *4*(6). <https://doi.org/10.53796/hnsj463>
- Bano, M. (2023). Yemen- a fragile state and overriding international stakes. [El impacto de la intervención de la coalición de Estados árabes en la crisis humanitaria del conflicto interno en Yemen.] *middle east technical university*. <https://open.metu.edu.tr/handle/11511/103274>
- Benavides, M. O., & Gómez-Restrepo, C. (2005). De investigación y lectura crítica de estudios. *Revista Colombiana de Psiquiatría*, (1).
- Bridget Toomey. (2025). *July 8, 2025 | FDD's Long War Journal Houthis resume deadly Red Sea shipping attacks*. [FDD's Long War Journal: los hutíes reanudan ataques mortales contra el transporte marítimo en el mar Rojo.] Foundation for Defense of Democracies. <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2025/07/08/houthis-resume-deadly-red-sea-shipping-attacks/>
- Blanchard, Christopher M. (2026). Yemen Conflict, Red Sea Security, and U.S. Policy. InFocus. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12581> [Conflicto en Yemen, seguridad en el mar Rojo y política de Estados Unidos.]
- Chukwuemeka, C. (2024). The impact of regional powers in international conflict: the Yemen experience. [El impacto de las potencias regionales en los conflictos internacionales: la experiencia de Yemen.] *7*(5). <https://acj.org/index.php/jasdd/article/view/5986>
- Cohen, S. B. (2015). *Geopolitics: The geography of international relations* (Third edition). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cohen, S. B. (2015). *Geopolitics: The geography of international relations* [Geopolítica: la geografía de las relaciones internacionales] (Third edition). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Convención de Ginebra IV. (1949). *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*. <https://www.refworld.org/es/leg/trat/cicr/1949/32227?lang=en>
- Convemar (2012) *Convención-de-las-naciones-unidas-sobre-el-derecho-del-mar-convemar*. https://www.defensa.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2015/04/feb15_CONVENCI%C3%93N-DE-LAS-NACIONES-UNIDAS-SOBRE-EL-DERECHO-DEL-MAR-CONVEMAR.pdf
- Demeke, M. A. (2025). Strategic Crossroads: External Powers Competition in the Horn of Africa and the Implications for Ethiopia's National Interests. [Encrucijada

- estratégica: la competencia de potencias externas en el Cuerno de África y sus implicaciones para los intereses nacionales de Etiopía.] *International Journal of Geopolitics and Governance*, 4(1), 273-295. <https://doi.org/10.37284/ijgg.4.1.3785>
- Du, J. (2024). US Humanitarian Intervention in Yemen from A Risk Society Perspective [Intervención humanitaria de Estados Unidos en Yemen desde una perspectiva de sociedad del riesgo.] *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 26, 283-289. <https://doi.org/10.54097/jt6p3284>
- Echenique, Y. (2023). *La presencia de los países del Golfo en el Cuerno de África The presence of the Gulf countries in the Horn of Africa*. <http://www.cna.cipi.cu/cna/article/view/179>
- Elayah, M., & Al-Awami, H. (2024). Exploring the preference for bilateral aid: Gulf oil states' aid to Yemen. [Explorando la preferencia por la ayuda bilateral: la asistencia de los Estados petroleros del Golfo a Yemen.] *Third World Quarterly*, 45(15-16), 2266-2286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2024.2327451>
- Ezugwu, O. A., & Duruji, M. (2025). External Intervention in the Ethiopia-Tigray Conflict and Its Implications on Conflict Resolution and Political Stability. [Intervención externa en el conflicto entre Etiopía y Tigray y sus implicaciones en la resolución del conflicto y la estabilidad política.] *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, 4(3-4), 130-147. <https://doi.org/10.12700/jceas.2024.4.3-4.295>
- Ferreruela, A. S. (2018). Yemen: Un conflicto sin final. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6532056>
- Fiveable, (2024) Rimland theory [Gráfico]. (<https://fiveable.me/political-geography/unit-1/rimland-theory/study-guide/04x5dBlw0gOagASf>)
- Foyth, J. (2023). Yemen, the Wound that Still Bleeds in the Gulf and Beyond. [Yemen, la herida que aún sangra en el Golfo y más allá] En M. M. Rahman & A. Al-Azm (Eds.), *Social Change in the Gulf Region* (Vol. 8, pp. 645-661). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-7796-1_38
- Fukutomi, M. (2024). Oil or geopolitical issues?: Quantitative rethinking of political instability in the Middle East and North Africa. [¿O problemas geopolíticos?: replanteamiento cuantitativo de la inestabilidad política en Oriente Medio y el Norte de África.] *GeoJournal*, 89(2), 55. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-024-11045-2>
- Gaudialmo, S., & Ramadhan, J. (2025). The United States' Strategic Culture in Handling the Red Sea Crisis Through Operation Prosperity Guardian. [La cultura estratégica de Estados Unidos en el manejo de la crisis del mar Rojo a través de la Operación Prosperity Guardian.] *Journal Research of Social Science, Economics, and Management*, 4(10), 1211-1226. <https://doi.org/10.59141/jrssem.v4i10.841>
- Gering & Brodsky. (2025). China is supporting the Houthis. Here's how the Trump administration can respond. [China está apoyando a los hutíes. Así es como la administración Trump puede responder.] Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/china-is-supporting-the-houthis-heres-how-the-trump-administration-can-respond/>

- Gil, G. (2026). The Yemen security complex in the Middle East: Continuity and change since 2004. [El complejo de seguridad de Yemen en Oriente Medio: continuidad y cambio desde 2004] <https://doi.org/10.12688/stomiedintrelat.17961.2>
- González, M. (2023). La política exterior de Irán: La campaña regional por el control de Oriente Medio. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=9206199>
- Hamza, (2022). The-role-of-regional-external-interventions-in-complicating-the-crisis-in-yemen. [El papel de las intervenciones externas regionales en la complicación de la crisis en Yemen.] <https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/194210>
- Hauthuille.Valentin (2023). *Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Sustained Resurgence in Yemen or Signs of Further Decline?* [Al-Qaeda en la Península Arábiga: ¿Resurgimiento sostenido en Yemen o señales de un mayor declive?] <https://acleddata.com/report/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-sustained-resurgence-yemen-or-signs-further-decline>
- Haydee Dijkstal. (2019). *Yemen and the Stockholm Agreement: Background, Context, and the Significance of the Agreement.* [Yemen y el Acuerdo de Estocolmo: antecedentes, contexto y la importancia del acuerdo.] American Society of International Law. <https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/23/issue/5/yemen-and-stockholm-agreement-background-context-and-significance?>
- Hellmüller, S., & Salaymeh, B. (2025). Transactional peacemaking: Warmakers as peacemakers in the political marketplace of peace processes. [Pacificación transaccional: los actores de guerra como constructores de paz en el mercado político de los procesos de paz.] *Contemporary Security Policy*, 46(2), 312-342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2024.2448908>
- Henar, de Pedro (2023). Estrecho de Bab el Mandeb, ruta estratégica para el petróleo y gas natural [Gráfico], 20 Minutos <https://url-shortener.me/EYZ5>
- Human Rights Watch. (2023, enero 14). *Yemen: Authorities Failing to Protect People's Basic Rights.* [Yemen: las autoridades están fallando en proteger los derechos básicos de las personas.] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/01/19/yemen-authorities-failing-protect-peoples-basic-rights>
- International Crisis Group, (2019). Yemen multiplying conflicts. [Yemen: conflictos en multiplicación.] <https://www.crisisgroup.org/cmt/middle-east-north-africa/yemen/yemens-multiplying-conflicts>
- International crisis group. (2017). *Yemen's al-Qaeda—Expanding the Base.* [Yemen y Al-Qaeda: expandiendo la base.] <https://www.crisisgroup.org/rpt/middle-east-north-africa/yemen/174-yemens-al-qaeda-expanding-base>
- International Crisis Group, (2025). Delivering Yemen from Dual Peril. [Liberando a Yemen de un doble peligro.] <https://www.crisisgroup.org/cmt/middle-east-north-africa/yemen/delivering-yemen-dual-peril>
- Jalal, I. (2024). *Operation Aspides, or the Peril of Low Expectations in Yemen.* [Operación Aspides, o el peligro de las bajas expectativas en Yemen.]

- <https://assets.production.carnegie.fusionary.io/static/files/Jalal%20-%20Yemmen%20and%20Gaza.pdf>
- Kendall, E. (2019). *The Failing Islamic State Within the Failed State of Yemen* [El fallido Estado Islámico dentro del fallido Estado de Yemen.]13(1). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26590510>
- Khoshnaw, Y. (2022). How Yemen Became and Has Remained a Territory of Strategic Importance. [Cómo Yemen se convirtió y ha permanecido como un territorio de importancia estratégica.] <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-2022060615523Knights>,
- M. (2024). *Assessing the Houthi War Effort Since October 2023*. <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/assessing-the-houthi-war-effort-since-october-2023/>
- Khoury, Nabeel A. (2025). *The Reality and Threats of the STC's Takeover of Eastern Yemen*. [La realidad y las amenazas de la toma de control del este de Yemen por parte del STC.] Arab Center Washington DC. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-reality-and-threats-of-the-stcs-takeover-of-eastern-yemen/>
- Koch, Thorsten (2018). Drivers_Huthi_Conflict_Koch_public [Factores que impulsan el conflicto hutí (Koch, versión pública).] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325343579_Drivers_of_the_Houthi_Conflict_in_Yemen_UWTSD_2018
- Lauer, B. (2022). *Yemen and the Dynamics of Foreign Intervention in Failed States*. [Yemen y la dinámica de la intervención extranjera en Estados fallidos.] https://scholars.unh.edu/inquiry_spring_2022/10/
- Lecanda, R. Q., & Garrido, C. C. (2002). *Introducción a la metodología de investigación cualitativa*.
- Liam Karr. (2026). *Iran War's Impact on the Red Sea and Horn of Africa: Africa File Special Edition*. [El impacto de la guerra con Irán en el Mar Rojo y el Cuerno de África: edición especial del Africa File.] Critical Threats. <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-houthi-israel-us-saudi-uae-red-sea-horn-africa-file>
- Loft, P. (2026). *Yemen in 2025-26 Changing balance of power in the south*. [Yemen en 2025-26: cambio en el equilibrio de poder en el sur.] <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-10427/CBP-10427.pdf>
- Loft, P. (2026). *US/Israel-Iran conflict 2026*. [Conflicto entre Estados Unidos/Israel e Irán (2026)]<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10521/>
- Mahan, (1890). The influence of power Sea Mahan. [La influencia del poder marítimo según Mahan.] <https://dn790003.ca.archive.org/0/items/seanpowerinf00maha/seanpowerinf00maha.pdf>
- Mansour, R., Al-Shakeri, H., & Haid, H. (2025). *The shape-shifting 'axis of resistance': How Iran and its networks adapt to external pressures*. [El 'eje de la resistencia' en constante transformación: cómo Irán y sus redes se adaptan a las presiones externas.] Royal Institute of International Affairs. <https://doi.org/10.55317/9781784136369>
- Mbiavanga Ajú, M. (2024). A medida que se hace patente el potencial del Cuerno de África, crece la lucha por la influencia geopolítica entre los Estados del Golfo, Turquía,

- Egipto e Irán, así como el riesgo de conflicto militar. <https://www.iemed.org/publication/relaciones-politicas-del-cuerno-de-africa-con-los-paises-mena/>
- Medina Gutiérrez, F. (2019). El movimiento ḥūṭī (Anṣār Allāh) y la guerra en Yemen. *Estudios de Asia y África*, 55(1), 79-112. <https://doi.org/10.24201/ea.v55i1.2581>
- Medina Gutiérrez, F. (2020). Al-Qā'ida en la Península Arábiga (AQPA): Génesis e influencia en la guerra en Yemen. *Foro Internacional*, 1371-1414. <https://doi.org/10.24201/fi.v60i4.2678>
- Middle East Institute (2026) The axis of resistance background. [Antecedentes del eje de la resistencia.] <https://mei.edu/backgrounder/axis-of-resistance/>
- Mhiqani, M. A. A., & Yenigun, M. C. (2024). *Failing of the United Nations in Yemeni Conflict*. [El fracaso de las Naciones Unidas en el conflicto yemení.] 45(3). <https://doi.org/10.52783/tjjpt.v45.i03.7142>
- Moghadam, I. A., & Ahmadvand, A. M. (2024). Strategies to Promote the Regional Power of Iran based on the Role of Military Geopolitical Factors in Yemen. [Estrategias para promover el poder regional de Irán basadas en el papel de los factores geopolíticos militares en Yemen.] 1. https://sdq.sndu.ac.ir/article_3100_6560e73d53197798336cb79c1ab23375.pdf
- Mohammed Ghobari and Emma Farge. (2026). *Yemen's Houthis ready to join Iran war if needed, raising new shipping risk*. [Yemen: los hutíes están listos para unirse a la guerra de Irán si es necesario, aumentando el riesgo para el transporte marítimo] Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/yemens-houthis-ready-join-iran-war-if-needed-raising-new-shipping-risk-2026-03-26/>
- Munassar, Omar (2022). *Failed Truce Reflects Houthi Willingness to Leverage Gov't Divisions, Global Needs*. [La tregua fallida refleja la disposición de los hutíes a aprovechar las divisiones del gobierno y las necesidades globales.] Sanaacenter. <https://sanaacenter.org/the-yemen-review/october-2022/18996>
- Mutschler, M., & Bales, M. (2024). Liquid or Solid Warfare? Autocratic States, Non-State Armed Groups and the Socio-Spatial Dimension of Warfare in Yemen. *Geopolitics*, [Guerra líquida o sólida? Estados autocráticos, grupos armados no estatales y la dimensión socioespacial de la guerra en Yemen. Geopolítica.] 29(1), 319-347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2023.2165915>
- Nawaz Abbasi, S., & Fahim Khan, M. (2025). The Political and Regional Dynamics of the Houthi Uprising in Yemen: An Analytical Perspective: The Political and Regional Dynamics of the Houthi Uprising in Yemen: An Analytical Perspective. [Las dinámicas políticas y regionales del levantamiento hutí en Yemen: una perspectiva analítica.] *The Journal for Interdisciplinary Middle Eastern Studies*, 11(1), 49-73. <https://doi.org/10.26351/JIMES/11-1/3>
- News Agencies. (2025). *Israel attacks Yemen's Sanaa airport; Houthis say won't deter Gaza support Four strikes hit the runway and a Yemenia Airways plane, according to Houthi-affiliated media report*. [Israel ataca el aeropuerto de Saná en Yemen; los hutíes dicen que no se dejarán disuadir de apoyar a Gaza. Cuatro ataques impactaron la pista y un avión de Yemenia Airways, según informes de medios

- afiliados a los hutíes.*] Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/28/israel-launches-attack-on-yemens-sanaa-airport>
- Niku Jafarnia. (2025). *New Houthi Arrests of UN Staff Arrests Endanger Provision of Aid Despite Dire Need in Yemen*. [Nuevos arrestos de personal de la ONU por parte de los hutíes ponen en peligro la provisión de ayuda a pesar de la grave necesidad en Yemen.] Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/09/08/new-houthi-arrests-of-un-staff>
- Niku Jafarnia. (2026). *Houthi Detentions Halting Aid in Crisis-Hit Yemen Severe Impact on Civil Society, UN Humanitarian Groups*. [Las detenciones de los hutíes están deteniendo la ayuda en el Yemen afectado por la crisis, con un impacto severo en la sociedad civil y los grupos humanitarios de la ONU.] Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/01/08/houthi-detentions-halting-aid-in-crisis-hit-yemen>
- O'Driscoll, D. (2018). *Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Yemen*. [Extremismo violento y terrorismo en Yemen.] https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles/report/Violent_Extremism_and_Terrorism_in_Yemen/26454391
- Reardon, M. (2015, marzo 26). *Saudi Arabia, Iran and the 'Great Game' in Yemen*. [Arabia Saudita, Irán y el 'Gran Juego' en Yemen.] <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/3/26/saudi-arabia-iran-and-the-great-game-in-yemen>
- Saeed Thabet. (2026). *Yemen's Houthis coordinate with Iran, but retain independence, despite war*. [Yemen: los hutíes coordinan con Irán, pero mantienen independencia, a pesar de la guerra.] Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/2/yemen-houthis-analysis-iran>
- Sajedi, A. (2015). *Yemen Crisis in the Regional Context*. [Crisis de Yemen en el contexto regional.] <https://scispace.com/papers/yemen-crisis-in-the-regional-context-1zakfcc89j>
- Salako y Adenuga, (2026). *The+Political+And+Humanitarian+Crisis+In+Yemen*. [La crisis política y humanitaria en Yemen.] <https://journals.iuiu.ac.ug/index.php/iujss/article/view/1102>
- Salhani, J. (2025). *What's happening in Yemen? A breakdown of the Houthi-US violence*. [¿Qué está pasando en Yemen? Un desglose de la violencia entre los hutíes y Estados Unidos.] Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/17/houthi-us-in-new-spiral-of-violence-everything-to-know>
- Sanamé, G. (2023). *Las no relaciones Irán-Arabia Saudita y las influencias de las políticas de los Estados Unidos (2016-2021)*. <http://www.cna.cipi.cu/cna/article/view/154>
- Sarhan, S Mugahed., Saidin, M. I. S., & Othman, Z. (2022). *The Religious-Political Ideology of Houthis' Rebellion in Yemen: Theoretical Perspective of the Divine Right to Rule*. [La ideología político-religiosa de la rebelión hutí en Yemen: perspectiva teórica del derecho divino a gobernar.] *Islamiyyat*, 44(1), 231-240. <https://doi.org/10.17576/islamiyyat-2022-4401-20>

- Saraih, A. (2025). *China's Growing Role in the Yemen Conflict*. [El creciente papel de China en el conflicto de Yemen.] Sanaacenter. <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/analysis/25975>
- Saul J. and Somasekhar A. (2026). *US details bounds of Hormuz blockade as at least two ships turn around*. [Estados Unidos detalla los límites del bloqueo del estrecho de Ormuz mientras al menos dos barcos se dan la vuelta.] Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/us-military-enforce-blockade-gulf-oman-arabian-sea-note-seafarers-2026-04-13/>
- Scita, J. (2022). China-Iran Relations Through the Prism of Sanctions. [Relaciones entre China e Irán a través del prisma de las sanciones.] *Asian Affairs*, 53(1), 87-105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2022.2029060>
- Shea, J. (2022, octubre 18). *UN Rights Body Fails Yemeni People, again*. [El organismo de derechos de la ONU vuelve a fallar al pueblo yemení.] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/18/un-rights-body-fails-yemeni-people-again>
- Soto, L. y Quezada (2025). “Choke points”, seguridad marítima, geopolítica internacional: El caso de Bab al-Mandeb. https://dsp.interior.gencat.cat/bitstream/handle/20.500.14007/4446/chock_points_seguretad_2025.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y
- Spykman, (1943). *The geography of the peace - nichoals spykman - 1943 - questia*. [La geografía de la paz – Nicholas Spykman – 1943 – Questia.] https://www.praetoriumstrategy.com/uploads/3/7/7/4/37740703/the_geography_of_the_peace_-_nichoals_spykman_-_1943_-_questia.pdf
- Tsalikis, A., & Pedi, R. (2024). Debating the Yemen conflict: Toward a synthesis of debates and diverse perspectives on causes and actors. [Debatiendo el conflicto de Yemen: hacia una síntesis de debates y diversas perspectivas sobre causas y actores.] *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 33(4), 451-475. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.12337>
- Turk, K. (2024). Analyzing the causes of the Yemen crisis in the Middle East in the 21st century with a focus on the typology of the national interests of Iran, Arabia, and America in it (2015-2022). [Analizando las causas de la crisis de Yemen en el Medio Oriente en el siglo XXI, con un enfoque en la tipología de los intereses nacionales de Irán, Arabia Saudita y Estados Unidos en ella] *Ortadoğu Etütleri*, 15(4), 265-292. <https://doi.org/10.47932/ortetut.1342114>
- United Nations. (2025). *Situation in Yemen 'Deeply Fragile' amid Ongoing Regional Turmoil, Special Envoy Warns, Urging Security Council to Support De-Escalation Efforts towards National Ceasefire*. [La situación en Yemen es “profundamente frágil” en medio de la continua agitación regional, advierte el enviado especial, instando al Consejo de Seguridad a apoyar los esfuerzos de desescalada hacia un alto el fuego nacional.] United Nations. <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16143.doc.htm?>
- United Nations Press. (2022). *Extending Yemen's Truce Has Resulted in Improved Humanitarian Conditions, Reduced Civilian Casualties, Special Envoy Tells Security Council*. [La extensión de la tregua en Yemen ha resultado en una mejora de las condiciones humanitarias y una reducción de las víctimas civiles, informa el enviado

- especial al Consejo de Seguridad.]United Nations.
<https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14931.doc.htm?>
- Usman Ali, Dr. Mohammad Nawaz Bhatti, & Dr. Adnan Nawaz. (2025). A Geo-Strategic Importance of Djibouti: Presence of Foreign Military Bases. [La importancia geoestratégica de Yibuti: la presencia de bases militares extranjeras.] *Social Sciences Spectrum*, 4(2), 681-688. <https://doi.org/10.71085/sss.04.02.302>
- Williams, R. J. (2017). Salafism, Wahhabism, and the Definition of Sunni Islam. [El salafismo, el wahabismo y la definición del islam suní.] <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=honrstudent>
- Winter, L. (2011). Conflict in Yemen: Simple People, Complicated Circumstances. *Middle East Policy*, 18(1), 102-120. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.2011.00476.x>
- Wikimedia (2024). Mapa del Eje de la Resistencia [Gráfico], por Wikimedia, 2024, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Axis_of_Resistance.svg
- Winter, L. (2011). Conflict in Yemen: Simple People, Complicated Circumstances. [Conflicto en Yemen: gente sencilla, circunstancias complicadas.] *Middle East Policy*, 18(1), 102-120. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.2011.00476.x>
- Yaser y Filiz, (2021). The Impact of the Religious Phenomenon on the Political Crisis in Yemen from 2011 to 2020: The Houthi Movement as a Case. [El impacto del fenómeno religioso en la crisis política en Yemen de 2011 a 2020: el movimiento hutí como caso.] (2021). *European Researcher*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.13187/er.2021.1.19>