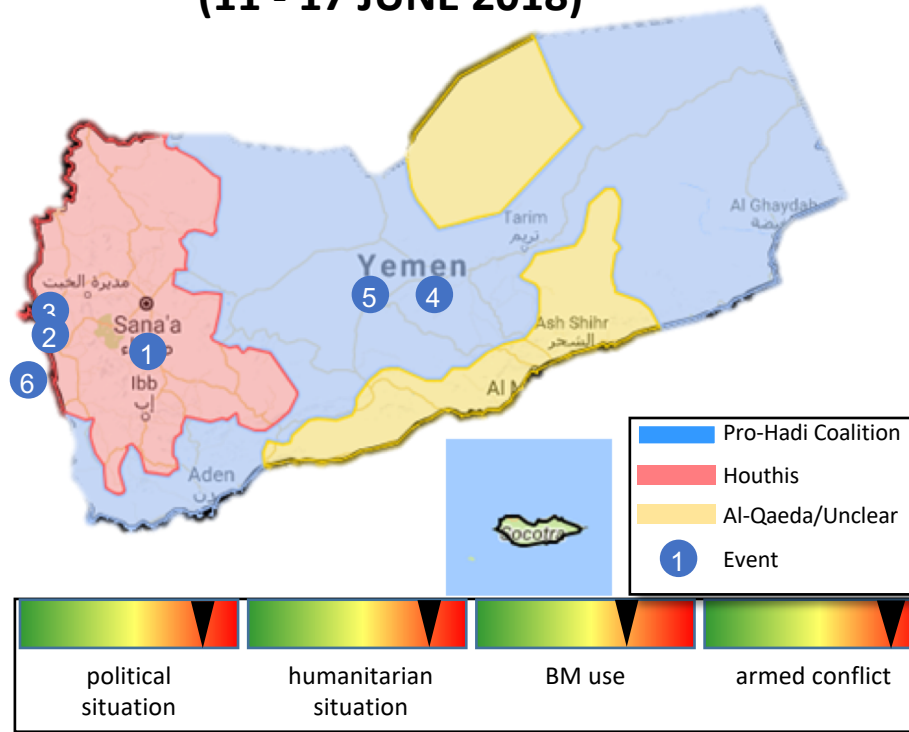


YEMEN CRISIS WATCH

(11 - 17 JUNE 2018)



1. UN envoy in Yemen for emergency talks on Hodeida

17 June 2018. The UN envoy for Yemen arrived in the rebel-held capital Sanaa on Saturday for talks on the key aid port of Hodeida where rebel fighters are battling a regional coalition. Martin Griffiths is expected to propose to rebel leaders that they cede control of the Red Sea port to a UN-supervised committee to avoid further fighting with advancing government troops which are backed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. (Middle East Monitor) <https://goo.gl/tF17Pc>

2. Government troops 'capture Hudaydah airport'

16 June 2018. Yemeni forces backed by a Saudi-led coalition say they have captured the airport of the main port city of Hudaydah from Houthi rebels. The military said engineers were now checking the surrounding area for mines. However, the Houthi-controlled Saba news agency denied the airport had been lost and some reports suggest clashes there are continuing. (BBC) <https://goo.gl/kyQnxs>

3. French special forces on the ground in Yemen

16 June 2018. French special forces are present on the ground in Yemen with forces from the United Arab Emirates, French newspaper Le Figaro reported on Saturday, citing two military sources. The newspaper gave no further information about their activities. The Defence Ministry was not immediately available for comment, but its usual policy is not to comment on special forces' operations. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/3wNf32>

Assessment:

- UN envoy Griffiths' timely interference and his credibility as opposed to his predecessor offers a good opportunity to broker a deal between sides towards de-escalation. Despite Emirati allegations it is clear that an urban operation revolving around a city of 600,000 inhabitants cannot be accomplished quickly. This is even more clear where the Coalition is built upon untrained Yemeni contingents lacking operational discipline and brotherly relations with each other.
- US and France stance shows no direct endorsement of the operation. If the famine, widespread cholera, already weak infrastructure and the fact that 70 percent of the international aid enters the country from this hub are altogether taken into consideration, the initiative has the potential to turn into a protracted urban conflict consuming more thousands Yemeni lives en masse. This would also render those leaders responsible in front of international criminal court.

4. UNSC urges Yemen warring parties to keep Hudaida port open

15 June 2018. The UN Security Council has called on all sides involved in fighting over the Yemeni city of Hudaida to keep its port open to allow the delivery of aid and other essentials. During a closed-door meeting, members of the Security Council expressed their "deep concern about the risks to the humanitarian situation" (Al Jazeera) <https://goo.gl/TqMZsw>

5. US rejects UAE request for support to capture Yemeni port city

15 June 2018. The US government rejected the coalition's request for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support as well as the use of an American minesweeper vessel to help clear the area of Houthi mines, a senior UAE official told CNN. In recent days several members of Congress have publicly criticized the Saudi-led effort to capture Hodeidah, which is seen as a vital lifeline for supplies for war-torn Yemen. Some estimates have said the operation could put hundreds of thousands of lives at risk. (CNN) <https://goo.gl/3GrhnX>

6. Battles Rage Around International Airport in Strategic Yemeni City

16 June 2018. Emirati officials say they have been planning the assault on Al Hudaydah for two years, and are confident they can take the port quickly and without disrupting the flow of humanitarian supplies. France stepped in, offering to send teams of specialists to clear the waters around the port of mines, Emirati officials said on Thursday. But on Friday the French Defense Ministry said that it was considering mine-sweeping operations only after the military operation is over, and emphasized that France was not part of the coalition. (The New York Times) <https://nyti.ms/2ym8EDm>