

Sarah Ultes

International Mediation Quo Vadis? The UN in Yemen's Civil War

Achievements, Challenges and Lessons Learned from 2015-2018

Master's Thesis

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INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION QUO VADIS?

The UN as Mediator in Yemen's Complex Civil War

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Lessons Learned from 2015-2018

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a nuanced assessment of the effectiveness of the United Nations (UN)-led mediation process in Yemen's civil war between April 2015 and February 2018 in order to detect lessons learned for one of the main challenges of our time: effective conflict management. Based on latest developments in armed conflicts, civil wars are the most destabilizing threats in the current international system as well as the most difficult types of conflicts to manage and terminate (Zartman 1995; Licklider 1995; Walter 2002). Especially since 2011, revolutionary dynamics and state fragility in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region led to highly complex internationalized civil wars that involve major-power tensions and features of proxy-warfare. Against this backdrop, the very limits of the "standard regime" employed by the international community to manage civil wars in the post-Cold War era, namely: mediation and peacekeeping, are being tested sharply (Gowan & Stedman 2018: 171, Crocker 2007). This thesis contributes to one possible way the regime could survive: namely through lessons learned (ibid: 178). While much is known about UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding, less so about UN civil war mediation (Beardsley 2010: 1). Hence, the thesis focuses on third-party mediation as the most common form of conflict management with a special emphasis on the effectiveness of the UN as a leading actor in applying this standard treatment (Gowan & Stedman 2018: 171).

Through utilizing six key conditions for mediator effectiveness from Bergmann (2017) in expert interviews, the thesis finds that the low degree of UN mediator effectiveness in Yemen was mainly related to the (coherent) partisanship of the UN Security Council (UNSC), whose Chapter VII resolution 2216 functioned as mediation mandate and rendered an impartial and balanced process impossible. This added to the missing leverage of the mediator on all sides and to the missing willingness of the parties to compromise as well as to the restraint of major P-5 and western governments to reign the regional actors in. Most apparent lessons learned include the need to reflect the complexities involved in the mandate and throughout the process. The mandate should allow for the inclusion of all actors directly or indirectly involved through negotiation formats on several levels. Incentives and disincentives need to be revised, highest priority and sufficient funds should be allocated to UN mediation and above all, an impartial and balanced process should be safeguarded against all odds as this tackles the trust in and the very credibility of the UN and the integrity of the rules-based system of international relations as a whole (Hill & Shiban 2016: 20).

Keywords: Civil War, United Nations (UN), International Mediation, Conflict Management, Peacemaking, International Organization (IO), Third-Party Diplomatic Intervention, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Yemen, Houthi-Conflict, Anṣār Allāh, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (SESG), Effectiveness

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Last but not least, I would also like to express my greatest thanks to all the interviewees, who were willing to take part in this research project, who took their time and shared their valuable insights and expert-knowledge. Without their contributions it would not have been possible to conduct research in this particular field and on a country that still is deeply entrenched in a civil war that continues to cause starvation, death and destruction on an unprecedented scale.

May the wish of those young Yemeni students come true soon that we may be able to visit them in their beautiful country and experience the kindness of its people, who finally have been freed from the scourge of war.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AA	Anṣār Allāh
AAS	Anṣār aš-Šarī'a
ACLEH	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AI	Amnesty International
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
BF	Berghof Foundation
BRD	Battle Related Deaths
CARPO	Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (Bonn)
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Software
CBM	Confidence Building Measure
CCPR	Coordinating Council for Popular Resistance
CoE	Code of Ethics
COW	Correlates of War Project
CRF	Council on Foreign Relations
CWM	Civil War Mediation Dataset
DGPuK	German Communication Association
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DPO	Department of Peace Operations
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DW	Deutsche Welle
EIA	US Energy Information Administration
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
EU	European Union
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
FAD	First Armoured Division
FLOSY	Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen
FSU	Former Soviet Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GEE	Group of Eminent Experts
GPC	General People's Congress
GWoT	Global War on Terror
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HI	Humanitarian Intervention
HIK	Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research
HR	Human Rights
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HS	Human Security
IAC	International Armed Conflict
ICB	International Crisis Behaviour Dataset
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICM	International Conflict Management Dataset
ICOW	Issue Correlates of War Dataset
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization

IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IO	International Organization
IOCM	International Organizations Conflict Management
IR	International Relations
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIL-YP	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant - Yemen Province
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JIAT	Joint Incidents Assessment Team
JMP	Joint Meeting Parties
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LAS	League of Arab States
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MbS	Mohammed bin Salman
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEMO	Middle East Monitor
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MSU	Mediation Support Unit
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NDSP	National Dialogue Support Programme
NIAC	Non-international Armed Conflict
NDF	National Democratic Front
NG	Non-Governmental Organization
NLF	National Liberation Front
OAS	Organization of American States
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSASGY	Office of the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Yemen
OSESGY	Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Yemen
P-5	Permanent Members of the UN Security Council
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PKO	Peacekeeping Operation
PMD	Policy and Mediation Division
PNPA	Peace and National Partnership Agreement
PRIO	International Peace Research Institute
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCC	Redeployment Coordination Committee
RF	Russian Federation
RoY	Republic of Yemen
SASG	Special Advisor of the Secretary General
SAM	Shabab al Moumineen
SCR	Security Council Report
SCSS	Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies
SESG	Special Envoy of the Secretary General
SG	Secretary General
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SM	Southern Movement
SRC	Supreme Revolutionary Committee
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSG	Strategy Support Group
TFPM	Task Force on Population Movement

TPI	Third Party Interventions and Militarized Interstate Disputes Dataset
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNMHA	United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNSMIS	United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria
UNVIM	United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism in Yemen
UNYOM	United Nations Yemen Observation Mission
USA	United States of America
WFP	World Food Programme
YAR	Yemen Arab Republic
YDP	Yemen Data Project
YPP	Yemen Peace Project
YR	Yemeni Riyal
YSP	Yemen Socialist Party
ZOA	Zone of Agreement