



ECOSOC: Humanitarian crisis in Yemen

On August 9 of this year, Saudi Arabia launched a US-made MK-82 free fall bomb, which hit a school bus carrying 50 children in Sa'dah, north of Yemen; reports from medical sources and the International Committee of the Red Cross, an act that led the Secretary General of the United Nations Organization, Antonio Guterres, to request an independent investigation. These facts only confirm the statement made by the organization cited in April of this year, which pointed out the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, affirming that three quarters of the population in Yemen need protection and humanitarian assistance; more than eight million Yemenis do not know how they will get their own food and there is a latent risk of epidemics in the region.

The territory of Yemen is located in the zone of conflict between the Houthi forces and Saudi Arabia, where numerous violations of human rights have taken place. There are around 22 million people suffering from such blockages and in extreme need of support, after 3 years of armed conflict.

The conflict arises since the Houthi forces, supported by Iran, seized the Yemeni capital, dismissing the Sunni President. The latter is backed by a coalition among the Saudis, who have dedicated themselves to bombarding the Yemeni territory with British arms, leaving aside the prescriptions of international humanitarian law, which prohibit attacks against medical institutions and civilian buildings.

One of the origins of the humanitarian crisis is the blockade established in the country that worryingly restricts the entry of essential products such as food, fuel and medicine. This measure taken by the combatant groups has caused the death of an important part of the population. Coupled with this, we can find a dense socio-economic instability for Yemenis who suffer from a lack of services, and receive precarious and irregular salaries. Approximately 60 percent of the population does not have guaranteed access to drinking water, since the sources of extraction are contaminated, nor basic foods, generating a high percentage of malnutrition in adults and minors, drastically reducing life expectancy, since 90 percent of the babies that enter hospitals are due to malnutrition, and their survival rate is shockingly low.

The worst thing, however, is that insecurity causes health professionals to leave the country, decreasing the chances of survival of the wounded who, because of the situation, are being treated in cars and hospital's hallways. In June 2018, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), present in Yemen since 1962, has suffered threats, attacks and the impossibility of attending the population at risk of health, to the point that an armed man killed one of the employees of the organization; due to this situation, the ICRC made the decision to remove 71 employees from the multi-mentioned country.

The attack on medical institutions is not the only attack prohibited by international humanitarian law in times of conflict in which it has been incurred. Other rules that have been broken include the attack on homes or private buildings and those launched from areas with a civilian population. The armed conflict has led to a serious humanitarian crisis and has forced around 3 million Yemenis to leave their homes, forcing them to flee the country.

Unlike the civil war in Syria, the conflict in Yemen involves several countries, which makes it an international crisis that has been ignored by most countries, leaving the civilian population completely unprotected and at the mercy of various epidemics.



The discussion of this issue among nations is important as it creates a precedent in terms of international reaction in conflict prohibited by international conventions such as those of Geneva and its additional protocols, on one hand, and on the other, because epidemics that had already been eradicated, such as cholera, are re-emerging, causing a serious public health problem that has crossed borders.

Questions:

- 1- What measure should the nations take to provide support and humanitarian aid to the Yemeni nation?
- 2- How can nations achieve the crossing of the field of war represented by Yemen in order to bring this support to needy citizens?
- 3- What actions can the United Nations take on humanitarian law, in this case?
- 4- Is it possible to create a subsidiary body for matter of a similar nature?
- 5- What health services are necessary and what will be the process of action in this case?
- 6- What activities can be developed in Yemen, while facing the impediment of delivery of supplies, to make humanitarian aid more efficient?
- 7- What actions can be proposed to the United Nations regarding public health?
- 8- What would be the budget of aid of the countries towards Yemen?
- 9- How much involvement should countries have in Yemeni territory? Is the sovereignty of Yemen violated?



Sources

- International Amnesty:
<https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2015/09/yemen-theforgotten-war/>
- International Committee of the Red Cross:
<https://www.icrc.org/es/donde-trabajamos/medio-orientes/yemen>
- Resolution of the Economic and Social Council June 2018:
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2018/11
- World Health Organization:
<http://www.who.int/countries/yem/es>
<http://www.who.int/es/news-room/feature-stories/detail/insecuritydrives-health-workers-out-of-yemen>
- Portal news BBC:
<https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-40762777>
- Power and Faculties of ECOSOC:
<http://www.un.org/es/sections/un-charter/chapter-x/index.html>