

# A meaningful solution to a meaningless war

The Middle East can no longer afford divisions, harsh rhetoric or anger.

By **ADNAN OKTAR** **DECEMBER 7, 2017 22:35**

**Today, two-thirds of global trade is transported by sea. This maritime trade has given rise to countless wars since it first started, due to the belief that “whoever controls the seas, controls the world.” While the wars of the past were usually fought directly between countries, today they are mostly fought using proxy armies. The battles in Yemen that have been furiously raging since 2015, albeit with much of the world choosing to ignore them, are a painful and horrible reminder of this struggle for power.**

**Seven sea passage choke points represent the world’s most critical locations. The Bab al-Mandab Strait is one of them. Running between the Arabian Peninsula and Africa, Bab al-Mandab’s strategic location puts it in the crosshairs of conflict. Impoverished despite its rich natural resources, Yemen was considered a suitable ground for proxy conflict. The country lacked financial sources and stability, didn’t have a firm ideological foundation, and therefore was vulnerable. It is not surprising it quickly turned into a battleground between two feuding groups. Although many fighters in the region see the Shi’a-Sunni divide as the only reason behind their fight – as this**

is generally the case in the Middle East – the real problem is the struggle for power. In the civil war that has been going on for the past three years, 10,000 people have lost their lives. According to 21st-century war strategy, states remain behind the scenes while civilians are targeted. This is why hospitals, marketplaces and water facilities are frequently struck in Yemen. Moreover, due to the recent blockade, importation of basic foodstuffs, oil, medicine and, most important, potable water is to a large extent barred. Due to the difficulty of access to oil, finding potable water is almost impossible, which contributes to the increase in cholera and diphtheria cases. Many civilians are dying from these diseases, which under normal conditions can easily be treated.

According to estimates, 900,000 people have been affected by cholera since April. The World Health Organization called it “the biggest cholera outbreak in history.” The scenes in the country are extremely distressing: severely debilitated and emaciated people can be seen everywhere. Those who survive the relentless air bombardments cannot escape the choking hold of disease and poverty. Monday’s killing of the former Yemen president Ali Abdullah Saleh by the Houthis once more halted the aid, which had been trickling in until then. On the day of the murder, the United Nations had called for an urgent humanitarian pause of six hours so that aid could be delivered to civilians. Jamie McGoldnick, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, said that the streets of Sanaa were like a battleground and that the aid workers were unable to go outside to help the civilians. With

**the murder of former president Saleh, the call for humanitarian pause was answered by more and fiercer fighting.**

**A UNICEF officer in Yemen reports that since the killing of Saleh, they are not allowed to distribute aid and the situation of the civilians is getting worse. He also reports that the fights intensified after the former president was killed and that according to the Red Cross officers on the ground civilian casualties have increased significantly. It seems that the situation will get only worse with the renewed vows of vengeance. Yemen urgently needs a solution. Needless to say, there are many things that the United Nations can do for Yemen. The UN Security Council can take action through various sanctions, especially in the face of such crimes against human life. However, the UN so far has failed to take any effective action other than offering humanitarian aid. This is mostly due to the flawed procedures of the United Nations, which are in need of urgent revision. Resolution 2216 of the Security Council provides justification for coalitions to intervene in countries like Yemen. According to this resolution, the activities of groups that are designated as terrorist justify attacks and blockades on countries where they operate. In other words, the UN enables attacks and blockades with its own resolutions, and hinders its own goals of peace. We are once again reiterating our call for the regulations and authorities of the UN to be revisited, especially in today's world where terrorist groups abound. Calls to the UN for more effective action are**

**urgently needed. However, the UN is neither the only way nor the only body that can stop the bloodshed and help the innocent. We have been advocating for a long time that the problems of the Middle East can be solved only through alliance, reconciliation and joint decisions of the countries in the region. Alliances that helped produce solutions in the Syrian case – albeit slow – can also be possible for Yemen. To this end, it is crucial that the three important players in the region – Israel, Turkey and Russia – start negotiations as mediators to agree upon a solution. Russia also, with its contribution to the Syrian peace, proved that it is a leading player in the Middle East. All of these movements could translate into a new power balance in the Middle East. With their mediation, first a cease-fire that will allow the humanitarian aid to be delivered to civilians, followed by a stabilizing strategy that allows the agreement of all parties involved, can be possible. The cooperation of these three powerful countries will be reliable as it would come from a regional alliance, will be reconciliatory because it would cater for all sides, and will be effective because it would not be interest-oriented. For these reasons, the leaders of three countries should urgently come together and work on mutually acceptable solutions to make peace between the two sides and lift the blockade. There is no time left to lose for Yemen. The Middle East can no longer afford divisions, harsh rhetoric or anger. Civilians are slaughtered for no reason in this region that has turned into a bloodbath. It is crucial that at a critical time like this, reasonable countries**

**stand in solidarity and avoid any rhetoric that can cause strife between them. As we have always argued, Israel and Turkey are two important and necessary countries that are capable of building stability in the region when they ally. Therefore, it is paramount that the two countries always use reconciliatory language to build and strengthen their friendship and ties. Furthermore, it is very important that the two strong and stable countries of the region, talk and together build solutions not only for Yemen, but whenever a problem or a need for change arises in the area. Vladimir Putin, who takes very sensible and solution-focused steps, should also be a part of this alliance. When a country or a leader cannot solve a crisis on its own, alliances can easily take the stage and offer effective solutions. To this end, it is crucial we ignore voices seeking to cause discord, and form this alliance as soon as possible. The writer is a Turkish Muslim TV commentator who has authored more than 300 books in 73 languages on political, faith-related and scientific topics.**

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