

## Yemen crisis FAQs

### Where is Yemen?

- Yemen is a country in Western Asia, bordered by Saudi Arabia and Oman.
- The estimated population of Yemen as of 2021 is 30 million people. The majority of Yemenis practise Islam, and are divided into two principal Islamic religious groups: Sunni and Shia.
- Yemen has a rich cultural heritage, and is home to 3 UNESCO World Heritage sites. One of these is the historic town of Zabid, where algebra is said to have been invented in the early 9th century.
- For years, fighting in Yemen has persisted. The last seven years of war in Yemen has continued to make life very tough.



### What is happening in the Yemen civil war?

- There has been conflict in Yemen for a long time and a civil war since the end of 2014. The longer the war continues, new groups get involved. It is not just a war between two parties.
- The Houthi movement, officially known as Ansar Allah, wants to take over large parts of the country, but the Saudi-recognised government does not want that, so the fighting continues.
- The Houthis and the recognised government continue to fight, with children getting caught in the middle. Their schools and houses get bombed and attacked because of the fighting.
- Countries such as the UK and US are selling weapons to the Saudi Arabia and its allies, with limited monitoring.



### What about the people of Yemen?

- 20 million people are in need of assistance. This means they do not have access to money, food, water or shelter. Half of these people are children.
- Children and their families continue to be very hungry. There are over 5 million on the brink of famine. People cannot afford the food in the shops.
- There are 400,000 children at risk of severe malnutrition – this means that if they do not get the proper food and nutrition they need, they may not survive.
- Since the beginning of the most recent fighting, over 233,000 people have been killed, with over 85,000 children.
- Things left from the fighting, like old landmines and remnants of bombs, make children feel very unsafe. Many have friends or family members who have been killed or lost their arms and legs because these remnants haven't been cleared away.
- Millions of children cannot go to school. Many are afraid that their school will get attacked. Others cannot afford books, or their school no longer exists.
- This is one of the world's worst humanitarian crises of all time.

### What can the UK do about it?

- The UK is currently the 'penholder' on Yemen at the UN Security Council. Being the penholder means that a country is responsible for leading practical action, such as holding emergency meetings and drafting resolutions or statements. It means that the UK has the power to lead the way in global efforts to forge a political, not military, solution to the conflict
- The UK has been one of the biggest donors to the Yemen crisis. It has donated over £1 billion in humanitarian aid since 2015, helping Yemeni people buy food and household essentials, treating children for malnutrition and providing people with improved water supply and basic sanitation
- However, in March 2021, the UK cut humanitarian funding to Yemen by nearly 60%. This means there will be less money to support programmes that help make sure children have enough to eat and can go to school.
- The UK has also called for ceasefires in Yemen, for both sides to lay down their weapons.
- But the UK continues to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia, so this helps the fighting to continue.

### What can we do to change this?

- We can tell Liz Truss, the Foreign Secretary, that we care about the people of Yemen and we want the UK to reverse its cuts to the aid budget and provide Yemeni children and their families with the support they need.
- We can ask the UK Government to use its power at the UN, and other forums where countries gather, to influence and act on ways to better protect children. The fighting must stop, and all countries must come together and work with the Yemeni people to find solutions to the fighting, so people can go back to living their lives.
- We can also tell the UK to stop selling weapons or to have very strict regulations in place for monitoring if they do
- We can also create spaces in our communities where we can all connect with people who have come to the UK from Yemen and elsewhere.