Models of post-conflict settlement on the example of Arab countries

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Abstract. The article presents the materials of a scientific discussion related to the topic of post-conflict settlement in the Arab world, organized by the National Communications Development Research Institution together with the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The authors analyze theoretical models and specific cases of settlement in the regions of the Middle East, North Africa, the Arab world and related challenges. The humanitarian aspect of post-conflict political settlement and economic reconstruction, which has been associated with a number of challenges in recent years, is considered.

Keywords: post-conflict settlement, the Middle East, the Arab world, Yemen, Libya, Syria

Introduction

The unstable global and regional international situation in the conditions of the transition to a multipolar world, when the collective West is trying to confront new centers of power, determines new principles of studying modern conflicts – their genesis and evolution. One of the tasks becomes the search for optimal ways out of conflicts. Logically, the field of research is the vast geographical region of the Middle East and North Africa and the Arab world, characterized by numerous crises and internal armed conflicts that tend to internationalize.

This article analyzes post-conflict reconstruction models in the countries of the League of Arab States (LAS) and analyzes specific country cases (Yemen, Libya, Syria) from the perspective of political settlement and economic reconstruction.

Materials and methods

Country cases (Yemen, Libya, Syria) are analyzed from the point of the prospects for political settlement and their economic reconstruction. The article was prepared by a team of experts on the results of a scientific and practical discussion, which was organized on June 21, 2022 by the National Research Institute for the Communications Development with the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The authors used the visualization method: the bulk layer of the material is summarized in tables, which makes it possible to use the comparative historical method. To implement the objectives of the study, the author's concepts of "conflict" and "crisis" are proposed.

Results

Models of post-conflict recovery on the example of Arab countries
(I.A.Matveev)

Because of the ambiguity of the concepts of "conflict" (3) and "crisis" (1), in this study "conflict" is considered as a consequence and culmination of the most acute phase of the crisis. Here we should not forget that crises can be deep and systemic, regularly giving rise to conflict situations. An example is sectarian-torn Lebanon, where the crisis of 1958, the civil war of 1975-1990, the Cedar Revolution of 2005, and the Second Lebanon War of 2006 alternated with periods of economic recovery. Therefore, in this article, "post-conflict recovery" also includes measures to overcome crises.

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the current state and prospects of a political settlement on the example of six Arab League States (Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Somalia), as well as the PA:

In the cases under consideration, we see signs of a deeply divided society (DDS). This theoretical concept, put forward by the British researcher A.Gelke (5) in relation to the Middle East, is developed by V.V.Naumkin (2). DDS confrontation lines are fueled by negative social phenomena, such as tribalism (tribal strife), confessionalism or sectarianism (taifiyya), as well as regionalism or fraternity, when it refers to the dominance in power and economy of people from certain regions (iklimiya)[1]. All six Arab countries and the PNA have problems with

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[1] The phenomena of taifiyya and iklimiya are analyzed by the Dutch researcher of Syria Nicholas van Dam with reference to Syrian sources: van Dam N. The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society Under Asad and the Ba'th Party. London-NY: I.B. Tauris, 4th rev. ed., 2011:181.

Table. 1. The state of the processes of political settlement of con-flicts/crises in Arab countries (part 1)

Country	Chronology of the conflict	Characteristics of the conflict/crisis	Lines of confrontation	Degree of internationalization	Status of the peace process/ dialogue	Settlement prospects
Iraq	1990	Systemic internal crisis after the end of the civil war (2017) and external intervention (2011), the preservation of hotbeds of ISIS activity	Kurds / Sunni Arabs/ Shia Compradors / Islamic Radicals (ISIS)	High: orientation of local political forces towards external actors (Kurds – West, Shiites – Iran, Sunnis – Arabian monarchies)	The existence of a Kurdish autonomous region, the distribution of the highest state posts on an ethno-confessional basis (muhasasa taifiyya): The president is a Kurd, the head of the parliament is a Sunni, the prime minister is a Shiite coalition in the government, the power of the militia on the ground	Negative: the persistence of GRO and the interference of external authors in Iraqi affairs, the growth of local Kurdish separatism, the continued threat of terrorism
Yemen	2014	Internal armed conflict (hot phase) with external intervention	Sunnis / Shiites compradors / Islamic radicals elites of the North / South tribalism	Very high: military intervention by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, support for the Houthis by Iran	The national dialogue and the peace negotiation process are essentially absent (ad hoc contacts are underway)	Sharply negative in the short and medium term, continued confrontation, possible escalation
Lebanon	2019	Systemic internal crisis of the confessional political system	Confessionalism (taifiyya): Christians / Sunnis/ Shiites Arabs / Armenians/ "Levantines" local population / refugees (Syrians, Palestinians)	High: orientation of confessions to external authors (Christians – West; Sunnis – Arabian monarchies, West, Shiites – Iran); influence of Syria (now reduced due to the conflict in Syria itself)	Ethno-confessional political system based on the National Pact (1943): Maronite Christian President, Sunni Prime Minister, Shiite Head of Parliament	Negative in the short term, positive in the medium and long term, the formation of a national consensus on overcoming the crisis with foreign aid
Libya	2011	Internal armed conflict (hot phase completed in 2020)	Tribalism Regionalism (iklimiya) Compradors / Islamic Radicals	High: support by external actors of the parties to the conflict	A Government of National Unity has been formed (2021), but the national dialogue is unstable, the power of local militias remains	Negative in the short and medium term; positive in the long term: formation of a national consensus on overcoming the crisis based on domestic resources (oil) and foreign aid

Table. 1. The state of the processes of political settlement of con-flicts/crises in Arab countries (part 2)

Country	Chronology of the conflict/ crisis	Characteristics of the conflict/ crisis	Lines of confrontation	Degree of internationalization	Status of the peace process/dialogue	Settlement prospects
PNA	1948 (Arab-Israeli conflict) 2006 (inter-Palestinian conflict)	Armed conflict with external and internal confrontation	Arabs / Jews compradors / Islamists elites of the West Bank / Gaza Strip	Average: Qatar and Iran's support for Islamists in the Gaza Strip; part of the West's support for the PNA authorities	The split of the PNA persists, the confrontation between the Movement for the National Liberation of Palestine (Fatah) and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas))	Negative: the preservation of the GRO in the context of the declining interest of the world community in the Palestinian problem and the process of normalization of relations between a number of Arab countries with Israel (Abraham Agreements 2020). The threat of Islamic radicalism
Syria	2011	Internal armed conflict (hot phase localized in 2020) with external intervention	Arabs / Kurds Sunnis / religious minorities (Taifiyya) Regionalism (iklimiyya) supporters of the secular way of life / Islamists	Very high: the military presence of Iran, Turkey, Russia, the United States in Syria; Iran's economic assistance to the SAR authorities	The negotiation process has been taking place since 2012 in the Geneva and Astana formats, and the Syrian Constitutional Committee was established in 2019. There is no national dialogue	Negative in the short term while maintaining sanctions; positive in the medium and long term: the formation of a national consensus on overcoming the crisis on the basis of decentralizing governance (al-la markaziya) and taking into account the interests of local elites, including Kurds and Druze
Somalia	1988	Internal armed conflict, the "failed state" scenario	regionalism: the struggle of local elites tribalism Islamic radicalism	Average: permanent dependence on external humanitarian aid	The Federal Government of Somalia was created (2012), but its powers are limited. There is no national dialogue	Negative: the persistence of GRO, administrative-territorial fragmentation and acute humanitarian crisis in conditions of limited internal resources. Threats of terrorism and radicalism
Libya	2011	Internal armed conflict (hot phase completed in 2020)	Tribalism Regionalism (iklimiya) Compradors / Islamic Radicals	High: support by external actors of the parties to the conflict	A Government of National Unity has been formed (2021), but the national dialogue is unstable, the power of local militias remains	Negative in the short and medium term; positive in the long term: formation of a national consensus on overcoming the crisis based on domestic resources (oil) and foreign aid

national dialogue, consolidation of society in the face of external challenges (intervention of foreign forces, threats of terrorism and radicalism), and the degree of internationalization of crises and conflicts in the era of globalization is increasing. The combination of these factors slows down and even freezes the processes of political settlement.

The situation with economic recovery is hardly better, that is, the elimination of direct and indirect damage from conflicts. It is necessary to draw a line between the stages of this process, in connection with which the article provides the generally accepted differentiation of UNDP (table 3), according to which early recovery is distinguished[2] and post conflict reconstruction)[3]:

Table 3. Economic recovery (interpretation by UNDP)

early recovery	post crisis recovery
A process dependent on the assistance of external actors, primarily humanitarian aid	A self-sufficient process with a primary reliance on national resources; a shift from humanitarian to official assistance, to development goals

Although it is worth recognizing the universal nature of the UNDP scheme, its applicability for the analysis of any conflicts (by analogy with the well-known parable[4]), it has obvious disadvantages. This is the opposition of both stages: the recovery stages are separated by time, although they often overlap each other. The same disadvantages (conditionality of periodization, arbitrary deadlines, lack of understanding that the stages overlap each other), despite the greater concretization, are also in "country interpretations". An example is the Syrian gradation of the stages of reconstruction (Table 4), which is enshrined in the National Program for the Development of Syria in the post-war period, approved by the decree of the Government of the SAR of February 8, 2017 No. 1549/13[5].

Table 4. Concepts of early and post-conflict reconstruction in Syria

The first stage (Arabic: al-igasa wa al-istyjaba li al-ikhtyyajat)	The second stage (at-taafi)	The third stage (al-intyash)	The fourth stage (al-istydama at-tanmawiy)
Prompt assistance and response to the vital needs of the economy and the population	Early recovery: elimination of direct consequences of the conflict, stabilization of the economy	Revitalising social and economic life: stimulating business activity, eliminating direct and indirect consequences of the conflict	Sustainable development: solving problems of economic growth and social problems

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2   UNDP Policy on Early Recovery . UNDP, 22 Aug 2008:7. Available from: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A638DC99C778DD18C12575F3003F55B0-undp_aug2008.pdf.

3   Enabling Local Ingenuity .UNDP Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report, 2008:5. Available from: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A73161A001F3AB6CC12574EA004625C6-undp_oct2008.pdf.

4   "Give a hungry man a fish and you will feed him for one day. Give him a fishing rod, teach him how to fish – and you will feed him for life."

5   The National Program for the Development of Syria in the post-war period. Damascus: State Commission for Planning and International Cooperation under the Council of Ministers of the Syrian Arab Republic, May 2020. Available from: http://picc.gov.sy/EG8/report/Syria_202.pdf.

Therefore, an overview of the prospects for post-conflict recovery of the economies of the Arab countries (Table 5) is given without breakdown and at the same time taking into account the heterogeneity of the stages of this process (Table 6). All of the above factors determine the features of promising models of post-conflict reconstruction on the example of the seven states of the Arab League (Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan). We see both models with an emphasis on national consolidation, an elite agreement based on internal resources and/or external assistance – and decentralization on a consensual basis, taking into account the interests of local elites (as in Syria).

The following are country case studies.

Table 6. How to rebuild: models of post-conflict recovery in the short and medium term

Coutryt	Models of post-conflict recovery	The main characteristics of the model
Iraq	National consolidation with elements of external management	Countering Kurdish separatism and complete economic isolation of the KAR, developing interregional ties, attracting related and unrelated assistance (grants, loans) and investments from the GCC countries, the EU, the USA, Iran, international financial institutions (IMF, IBRD)
Yemen	It will not take place in the near future	Growing fragmentation of economic life, unclear prospects for post-conflict reconstruction (limited by the framework of early recovery)
Lebanon	National consolidation with elements of external management	Establishing a national (interfaith) dialogue, receiving in the short term an assistance (grants, loans) from the GCC countries, the EU, the USA, international financial institutions (IMF, IBRD), in the medium term – attracting foreign investment.
Libya	National consolidation	Establishing a national dialogue, restoration of the oil industry in order to revive the base of economic reconstruction
Syria	Decentralization (al-la markaziya) of governance	Engaging Syrian Kurds in dialogue, economic reintegration, constitutional reform (taking into account the interests of local elites), using the Russian "security matrix"
Somalia	Combination of national consolidation and decentralization	The slogan of federalization, attraction of external donor assistance and investments, economic reintegration while recognizing the de facto independence of Somaliland
Sudan	National consolidation	Concentration of all internal resources in the hands of the Government after the separation of the oil-rich South Sudan

Struggle for Influence in Yemen: Economics and Geopolitics (S.N. Serebrov)

1. Refinement to the typology of the Yemeni military conflict.

The military operation of the Arab coalition «Storm of determination» in Yemen, launched on March 26, 2015, turned into a protracted military conflict that created the largest source of humanitarian catastrophe on the planet and serious threats to

Table 5. The state of economic recovery processes in the Arab countries

Country	Chronological framework	Conflict status	Territorial fragmentation	Fragmentation of society	Income from oil, gas, banking	International consensus on participation in reconstruction	Timeline of the recovery process
Iraq	1980–1988	Iran-Iraq War	No	Yes	Yes	No	Was not completed
	1990–2017	Sanctions / foreign occupation / internal armed conflict with the participation of external actors – the fight against ISIS / the hot phase is over, the problem of terrorism and hotbeds of ISIS activity remains	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The process is ongoing/ completion dates are unclear
Yemen	2014–н/в (2004–2011 – спорадические столкновения)	Internal armed conflict with external intervention / ongoing	Yes	Yes	Yes (limited)	No	The process has not started
Kuwait	1990–1991	Occupation by Iraq / liberation by external actors (multinational forces) / the conflict is over	No	No	Yes	Yes	2 years, the process is completed
Lebanon	1975–1990	Internal armed conflict (civil war involving external actors) / completed	No (but there are zones of informal territorial control)	Yes	Yes	Yes	10 years, the process is completed
	2019	Domestic political and economic crisis / ongoing		Yes	No	No	The process has not started
Libya	2011–2020	Internal armed conflict with external intervention / the hot phase is over, instability persists	Yes	Yes	Yes (ограничены)	Нет	The process has not started
Syria	2011	Internal armed conflict with external intervention / the fight against ISIS / the hot phase is localized, the economic crisis continues	Yes	Да	Нет	Нет	The process is local /completion dates are unclear
Somalia	1988	Internal armed conflict involving external actors / continues with low intensity	Yes (the collapse of a unified state)	Yes	No	No	The process has begun, but is limited
Sudan	1983–2005	Internal armed conflict (second civil War between the Arab North and the non-Arab South) / completed	Yes: South Sudan gained independence (2011)	Yes	Yes	No	The process is ongoing/ completion dates are not clear

international security in one of the most significant regions for the global economy and logistics. The official assignment of the conflict to the international legal category of civil wars (an internationally recognized president plus an Arab coalition against the Houthi rebels) occurred after the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2216 (April 2015), which contained a demand for the Houthis to "withdraw all forces from all territories occupied by them, including Sana'a" and "the cessation of all activities falling exclusively within the competence of the legitimate government of Yemen"[6]. At the time of the adoption of the Resolution, the territory of Yemen was already under blockade and under massive air attacks from the Arab coalition aviation, and President Abdo Rabbo M. Hadi took refuge in Riyadh, where he spent all subsequent years of the war, up to the transfer of his powers to the Governing Presidential Council 7 April 2022.

Through the efforts of Russia's representative to the UN Security Council, who abstained from its adoption, the amendments to the text of the document were rejected by the rest of the voters. Later, the question of changing the text of the resolution arose more than once in the expert community, but remained unresolved.

The exceptional strategic geographic position of Yemen, direct participation in the military operation of two foreign regional states (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), large-scale logistical support from the United States and England, deep involvement in internal Yemeni problems of foreign states, hundreds of billions of dollars spent by them over the past seven years, the regular release of hostilities outside Yemen – these and other facts reflect the inadequacy of the adopted concept. To typify this Yemeni crisis, it is more appropriate to recognize it as an intermediate type of conflict – between an internationalized form of civil war and a military regional conflict.

This is reflected in alternative political concepts of the Yemeni crisis, where it is seen as a «proxy war» (between Saudi Arabia and Iran) and a «hybrid war» (in which foreign actors set the tone). Both approaches emphasize the special role of the geopolitical component of the conflict, although they do not fully explain its meaning.

Correcting the definition of the type of crisis is necessary, among other things, to unblock the peacekeeping projects of the UN, international organizations and sovereign actors. They came to a standstill because of the tendentious attitudes of the fundamental documents, which distorted the political realities of Yemen and the region beyond recognition. The former chief curator of the peace transit plan in Yemen, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Jamal Benomar (2011-2015), who resigned in April 2015, commenting on the situation in Yemen after the start of the intervention, wrote: "Less than a month later ... a UN Security Council resolution demanded from the Houthis to unconditional surrender to the government that left Yemen and went into exile, settled in the hotels of Riyadh. Impossible conditions like these... provided retrospective justification... for continuing the war." One of the latest examples of the futility of trying to achieve peace in this paradigm was the recent statement by US President George Biden

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6   S/RES/2216 (2015) c. 3/7. Available from: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2216.pdf.

(February 2021) about "our diplomacy is aimed at ending the war in Yemen, a war that has created a humanitarian and strategic catastrophe." Already in the summer of 2021, the conflict entered a phase of even more dangerous escalation.

В In 2021-2022, all this did not allow the UN mission (led by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Hans Grundberg) to return the task of a general political settlement of the conflict to the agenda of the Yemeni negotiations (it had to be abandoned after the collapse of the Kuwait round of negotiations in 2016, which seriously undermined the confidence of the Yemeni participants) . The next negotiations in Stockholm (2018) already touched only on particular issues of the humanitarian consequences of the ongoing war.

The political, economic and food situation in the world in 2022 makes a real threat of a humanitarian collapse in Yemen. The relative success of the UN-initiated truce in April 2022, accepted by all Yemeni parties to the crisis for the first time since 2016, will at best only slightly ease the situation, changing it to a "no war, no peace" situation. To guarantee the prevention of collapse, a revision of the international legal framework is required.

War as well as the situation of a fragile status quo (neither war nor peace) generate conditions for further internationalization of the conflict. As early as 2015, hostilities in Yemen encompassed several adjacent regions of Saudi Arabia (Asir, Jizan, and Najran), and by 2022 retaliatory attacks on strategic targets in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UAE using Yemeni ballistic missiles and drones had become a threatening regular occurrence. In 2017, U.S. Special Forces conducted a landing operation against militants of the terrorist group Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen's Beida province, in which more civilians were killed, and beginning in 2020 England began to address the security of commercial maritime traffic along the southern coast of Yemen in an anti-Iranian and anti-Hussite aspect. In August 2021, it was reported that it deployed a 40-member British special forces team to the eastern Yemeni province of Mahra[7], the territory of Oman that is hundreds of kilometers away from the Hussites.

Yemen controls the international channel Bab el-Mandeb, the waters of the Gulf of Aden and the adjacent shores of the Arabian and Red Seas for a total length of over 1,900 km (about 1,500 km from the south and over 400 km from the west). It also occupies a key position at the junction of the three centers of regional security (the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa), having a serious impact on their state. The geopolitical struggle in Yemen makes it only a matter of time before it escalates into a full-fledged regional conflict.

2. Geopolitical aspects of the military crisis.

The conclusion of the authors of the final expert report of the UN Security Council on the situation in Yemen for 2019 that "multiple conflicts in the country (over five years) have formed a node that does not allow drawing a clear line between internal and external

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7   British special forces on hunt for drone killers. World News Express.co.uk. By Marco Giannangeli. Aug 8, 2021. Available from: http:// www.express.co.uk/news/world/1473978/british-special-forces-yemen-drone-attack.

actors"[8], confirmed the irrelevance of the binary interpretation of the crisis. Over the years of the war, the strategies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE (which have enormous economic, military and political resources compared to Yemen) in Yemen, were aimed at forming loyal coalitions to oppose the Husis, but that coalitions were also divided with each other by deep internal contradictions. The relationship of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE with their Yemeni allies is reciprocal, with loyalty being subject to mutual bargaining, which makes it highly likely that the situation and the balance of power will constantly change in the future.

Domestic and foreign actors in the Yemeni crisis are grouped together on the basis of fundamental geopolitical contradictions. Each actor is trying to expand its own political and ideological influence in Yemen or in the international arena, using the achievements and shortcomings of its partners. The leadership of the foreign actors in the Arab coalition is very contingent.

After the unification of the Arab Republic of Yemen and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1990, long before the start of the war, two geopolitical problems arose: a) the so-called. the "southern question", which since 2009 has revolved around a demand by the influential (albeit divided) South Yemeni separatist movement Hirak for recognition of the right of the people of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (called "southerners" – janubiyun) to self-determination and secession from Yemen and b) conflicts that engulfed both the Shafi'i (Sunni) South and the Zaidi (Shi'ite) regions of the North during clashes with the Yemeni association "Islah" ("Reform"), the bearer of the proselytizing Salafi ideology.

In the second half of the 1990s, the baton of the al-Haqq party was taken over by the mass civil movement "shabab al-mumin" ("faithful youth"), whose leader, Seyyid Hussein B. al-Husi, considered it necessary to amend the state confessional policy, depriving monopoly privileges of the Islah party in the field of education. The Houthi leader considered the network of Salafi religious colleges "maahid ylmiya", in which authentic indigenous Yemeni beliefs and customs were mercilessly criticized from the standpoint of their inconsistency with true Islam, a threat to the unique centuries-old cultural identity of the Yemenis, the foundation of their ethno-cultural integrity. Years of bickering between Salafis, Shafi'is and Zaidis in Yemen has been accompanied by mutual accusations of following Saudi Arabia or Iran (4), making the Yemeni conflict part of a wider conflict within the Saudi-Iranian political divisions.

Two bloody civil wars in Yemen, in 1994 (between North and South) and in 2004-2010 (against the Houthis), became the catalyst for the fact that the problems of identity turned into political problems.

The beginning of the military intervention of the Arab coalition in Yemen in March 2015 was accompanied by accusations by the Houthis of the Iranian side, as well as an attempt to transform it into a Sunni-Shia confrontation. This caused rejection of the Yemeni society. The attempt to secure a reputation for Yemeni Zaidis as agents of Iranian

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8   UN SC 28/04/2020//S/2020/326 Final report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen: 2-207.

political and ideological influence in Yemen and Arabia did not receive support either from the Sunni majority of the population of Yemen, or at the level of partners of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as part of the Arab coalition. The accusations of the Houthis in the transition from Zaydism to Jaafarism (religious doctrine of Shiite Islam, which is dominant in Iran and Iraq) also did not find influential supporters, including among the Zaydi ulema.

The objective weakness of the Saudi-Iranian and associated Sunni-Shiite causes of the Yemeni military campaign led to the fact that rivalry within the GCC came to the fore. Yemen's role in the regional balance of power as a counterbalance to the dominant contender was indispensable. Although five of the six members of the GCC initially announced their entry into the Arab Coalition (all except Oman), only the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE became its real active participants. Oman and Kuwait immediately came out for a political resolution of the conflict, and Qatar, which initially joined the fight, dropped out of the ranks of the Arab coalition in 2017 as a result of the so-called diplomatic conflict with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The unfavorable consequences of the military campaign in Yemen were manifested, among other things, in the development of contradictions in the ranks of the Arab coalition between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the main participants in the Yemeni campaign. The division of the Arab coalition into the Saudi and Emirati flanks, begun in 2016, resulted in their institutional, political, military and functional demarcation. The flanks acquired their own separate headquarters, paramilitary structures, incompatible strategies and vision of campaign goals. Their rivalry for influence over strategic areas of part of Yemen loyal to the Arab coalition has taken the form of armed clashes. The "Islah" party was co-opted into the party of the Internationally Recognized President and took the leading position in the Yemeni coalition of the Saudi flank. The ideology of "Islah" was opposed not only by the supporting forces of the Emirati flank, but also by the UAE itself, which considered "Islah" to be a branch of the banned "Muslim Brotherhood".

The partial withdrawal of the UAE from the military operation in Yemen in the summer of 2019 was accompanied by the transfer of all the previously accumulated military and administrative resources in Yemen to their two strongholds of political influence: the Southern Transitional Council and the National Resistance Political Council. The number of transferred paramilitary units was more than 60 thousand people.

The confrontation between the flanks of the Arab coalition, which was manifested in the capture by the Southern Transitional Council of control over Aden from the Emirati flank in August 2019, was not overcome either by the signing of the Riyadh Agreement (November 2019) on the establishment of a joint government under the leadership of the International Recognized President, or as a result of pressure exerted on their regional partners from the USA and England. Undoubtedly, the radical reshuffling of the party of the internationally recognized president in April 2022, as well as the expected visit of US President John Biden to Saudi Arabia in July, will be focused primarily on reducing the level of confrontation skillfully used by Sanaa for a successful and large-scale offensive operation in 2020– 2021.

To integrate the power structures of the rival flanks of the Arab coalition, at least a joint political platform is needed; obviously, the new leader of the Governing Presidential

Council Rashad al-Alimi will be occupied by that task. He will have to bring positions closer on such issues as the integrity of the country and the status of the South, the place of the "Islah" party in the political system of post-conflict Yemen.

The "no war, no peace" situation that has arisen in the crisis zone since April 2022 does not guarantee the fading of the military conflict in the nearest future, but significantly enhances the importance of the economic component of the confrontation between the three Yemeni coalitions, one of which is based on the unrecognized regime of Sana'a, and the other two are on the newly created alliance of the two flanks of the Arab coalition. The new supreme body of executive power of the internationally recognized president must move its activities from Riyadh to Aden, but even this task in modern conditions does not have a simple solution.

3. Two camps and three coalitions: the struggle for resources and influence.

The three coalitions in the Yemen crisis zone are represented by two camps: The Sana'a Alliance (SA), mistakenly referred to as the "Houthis", and the two rival flanks of the arab coalition camp, which in April 2022 made another attempt to eliminate the dichotomy from the relationship through cooperation in a new authority – the RPS.

The unrecognized coalition regime in Sana'a has been functioning since 2016 as a part of the Ansarullah Houthi movement and the core of the former General People's Congress (GPC) party in power. The State-type regime declared loyalty to the current Constitution of Yemen, and this facilitated its legitimization by the majority of the Yemeni population. It controls about 90% of the territory of the North (the former YAR), where 3/4 of the country's inhabitants live. The UN Security Council expert report quoted earlier notes: the Sana'a regime, "in contrast to the permanent instability in the South, continues to consolidate its influence, and demonstrates military unity and economic efficiency"[9].

The authorities in Sana'a are pursuing a mobilization policy inside the country under the slogan of consolidating Yemenis to repulse the military intervention of Al Qaeda and "its mercenaries" for the freedom and independence of the country. In foreign policy, they show solidarity with the policies of the "Axis of Resistance" countries, considering the Palestinian problem central among the main political problems of the Middle East. The ideology of this power is a fusion of Yemeni nationalism, based on the notion that Yemenis occupy a priority position in the Arab and Islamic world (which is usually confirmed by references to the Hadith collections and the Koran) with Islamic nationalism, which demands consolidation of all Islamic faiths throughout the Islamic world to oppose the imperialism of the US and its enablers.

The authorities of Sana'a pay great attention to an economic strategy based on self-reliance and national resources, developing agriculture and the defense industry. The regime actively promotes its economic achievements to residents of the rest of the country, keeping, for example, the rial exchange rate in Sanaa at a level almost twice as high as its exchange rate in Aden (where it fell almost twice as fast after the transfer of the Central Bank from Sanaa in 2016, reaching 2022 more than 1,000 rials per 1 US

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9   Ibid. 2020;326:7-207.

dollar). The authorities of Sana'a are convincing the Yemenis that the ultimate goal of the military campaign of the Arab coalition is the maximum depletion of Yemen, depriving it of control over oil fields, and in the future – the elimination of its sovereignty and turning it into a colonially dependent territory in the interests of the United States and its partners.

Sustained economic exchanges between the fragmented territories controlled by all three coalitions have kept the Yemenis from slipping into the humanitarian collapse that could have set in in previous years due to acute shortages of food, fuel, water and medicine.

The flanks of the Arab coalition compete fiercely for the strategic territories and islands of the separatist South: Aden, Socotra, Hadhramaut, Shabwa, Mahra, etc. The support strategy of the emirate flank of the Arab coalition, Socotra, Hadhramaut, Shabwa, Mahra, etc. The strategy of the Arab coalition's emirate flank to support the Southern Transitional Council ensured its relative success in most of the territory of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, but the question of the future status of the South remains open. The process of political and economic disintegration of the South leads to the transformation of its regions into competing cantons, which does not suit either the Southern Transitional Council, or the Yemeni actors of the unionist flank as part of the forces of the internationally recognized president, as well as the Sana'i Alliance, which consider any projects for the territorial division of Yemen to be contrary to its national interests.

The armed structures of the Saudi flank, loyal to the internationally recognized president, control all the main oil and gas fields in Yemen – the main source of the country's budget revenues. It is obvious that the struggle for this resource will be at the center of any negotiations involving all three coalitions during the "no war, no peace" phase, since only it can provide them with a reliable basis for economic recovery in Yemen.

Humanitarian assistance in conflicts: the main challenges for humanitarian organizations (A.L.Khlebnikov)

Each of the modern conflicts is unique in its own way, having its own reasons, logic, difficulties and peculiarities. The problems concerning humanitarian access and the delivery of humanitarian aid are also unique. However, at the same time, the absolute majority of humanitarian organizations face common to them and large-scale problems[10] in the process of carrying out their work.

In this article we will look at some of the main problems and challenges in the sphere of humanitarian assistance in conflicts.

1. The changing character of modern conflicts.

Despite the noble goals that drive humanitarian organizations, their activities often lead to contradictory results. One of the most important reasons is the changed character of modern conflicts. For the first time after the end of World War II, half of all armed

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[10]   In this article, "humanitarian organizations" means "international non-governmental organization" (INGOs).

conflicts were colonial wars and interstate conflicts. This type of conflict has practically ceased to exist. According to the Oslo Peace Research Institute (PRIO), today the dominant form of conflict is interstate conflict, often involving external player states[11]. Today, only two conflicts can be called interstate – this is the conflict between India and Pakistan and between Russia and Ukraine.

One of the key problems today is the internationalization of conflicts – these are civil wars involving external players. According to PRIO research, such conflicts are difficult to resolve politically. The reason is the growth of the parties involved in the conflict: these are both state and non-state (national liberation movements, territorial self-defense units, terrorist organizations, armed groups based on ethnic and / or religious lines, etc.) actors, as a result the distinction between military and civilians becomes more complex. A greater number of participants also complicates the process of political settlement, finding compromises and increases the risk of blocking deals or agreements. All this complicates the ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to all parties to the conflict and the activities of humanitarian organizations in principle, as the distinction between civilian and military assistance is blurred. As a result, there is an increased risk that humanitarian organizations are perceived as biased (not neutral).

One of the key problems today is the internationalization of conflicts – these are civil wars involving external participants. According to PRIO research, such conflicts are difficult to resolve politically. The fact is that many parties are involved in the conflict: these are both state and non-state (national liberation movements, territorial self-defense units, terrorist organizations, armed groups built along ethnic and / or religious lines, etc.) participants, resulting in more complex distinctions between military and civilians. Also, a larger number of participants complicates the process of political settlement, finding compromises and increases the risk of blocking deals or agreements. As a result of all this, the ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to all sides of the conflict and the activities of humanitarian organizations in general becomes more difficult, as the distinction between civilian and military assistance is blurred, and the risk that humanitarian organizations are perceived as biased (not neutral) increases.

2. Working with all parties involved in the conflict.

One of the main ideas and goals of humanitarian organizations is to work with all parties to the conflict, observing the principles of neutrality and impartiality. However, in modern realities the implementation of this task is extremely difficult.

To effectively deliver humanitarian aid, security must be ensured. This requires negotiations with the parties to the conflict and the conclusion of agreements. Any intra-state conflict has at least two sides: the central government and the opposition or the authorities that control de facto the territories. Most often, the number of warring parties is more than two, which complicates the interaction of humanitarian organizations with the parties to the conflict and, as a result, the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Syria is a prime example.

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11   Dupuy, Kendra and Siri Aas Rustad. Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2017. Conflict Trends, 2018;5, PRIO. Available from: https://www.prio.org/utility/DownloadFile.ashx?id=1698&type=publicationfile.

The Syrian opposition has been, and now is, fragmented, and aid organizations have to work with multiple, often opposing sides in different territories to gain access to populations in need. It also encourages sides of conflict to use aid and humanitarian organizations for their own benefit, because of what humanitarian organizations perceive as biased.

Although humanitarian organizations are able to work with different sides of the conflict (for example, in Syria), their main work is concentrated in territories not controlled by the central government, which contributes to the viability of various armed opposition groups. That calls into question their neutrality in the eyes of Damascus. There are two main reasons for this: either the central government hinders and/or makes it difficult for them to work in their territories, or they themselves do not want to work with the central government for political reasons. In Ukraine we see the same processes, only mirrored: the vast majority of humanitarian organizations work in the territories controlled by Kyiv, and almost no one works in the territories of Eastern and South-Eastern Ukraine that are not under the control of Kyiv. This ambivalence also contributes to the negative perception of humanitarian organizations.

As a result, the problem of effective communication and interaction with the sides of the conflict is one of the most important and most difficult challenges facing humanitarian organizations.

The question arises: why is this happening?

3. Why is this happening?

A number of studies (Anderson 1996, 1999; Marsden 1997; Cooley, Ron 2002) have identified several situations in which humanitarian organizations can help sustain or even increase violence in conflicts. The provision of medical and/or humanitarian assistance to one of the sides of the conflict is perceived by the other side/s as an illegal act directed against them.

Firstly, rendering assistance to one side is perceived by others as "helping the enemy", as it helps to maintain its economic and military capabilities. Humanitarian aid targeted at conflict-affected civilian people in need is a valuable resource for warring parties and can be easily redirected to support military resistance, fighting, maintaining the survival of new territorial entities, and so on. As a result, humanitarian aid (including medicines and food) ends up in the hands of the armed opposition, terrorist groups, the army and pro-government militias. Therefore, providing assistance to one side makes it extremely difficult to work with other sedes of the conflict.

Second, humanitarian assistance contributes to the "legitimization" of the host. It is common for humanitarian organizations to sign memorandum of understanding with the forces that controls certain territories de facto in order to determine the possibility of providing assistance. This contributes to the recognition of non-state formations, which in turn leads to an erosion of state sovereignty and the destruction of territorial integrity of the country.

Third, the humanitarian aid has a "stabilizing effect" on the territories receiving the aid. The basic infrastructure (hospitals, electrical substations, wells and water pumping stations, schools, roads, etc.) restored or rebuilt by humanitarian organizations, or the aid provided for treatment, education, etc., helps to stabilize the situation by strengthening

the position of those forces that control these territories: they free up the resources needed to conduct combat operations and achieve military goals. For example, this is why many humanitarian organizations refused to work with the Syrian government: if we build roads, Assad will use them for military operations; if we build hospitals, he will treat soldiers there, not civilians affected by war. This creates a narrative that does not allow humanitarian organizations to work with all sides of the conflict.

4. The Paradox of Help.

There are also difficulties for humanitarian organizations because of the participants in the conflict themselves.

For example, there are many reasons (including those listed above) for a particular side of a conflict that humanitarian organizations work with to prevent interaction with other sides to the conflict, and even try to prohibit it. In essence, this is manipulation and/or instrumentalization of humanitarian aid.

Also, employees of the organization working with one of the sides of a conflict become vulnerable to the official authorities if their colleagues start working with the other side. Under these conditions, their activities can be outlawed; they can be expelled from the territories or even subject to criminal liability, which creates security risks for humanitarian workers.

This dilemma often pushes humanitarian organizations, willingly or unwittingly, to violate the proclaimed principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Some of the main problems listed above are only a part of the problems of humanitarian organizations in conflict zones. Undoubtedly, the problems of sovereignization, politicization and instrumentalization of humanitarian assistance should be seriously studied in order to enable the future develop of theoretical and practical principles that will help minimize the negative effects of the current principles of humanitarian assistance. We need a broad scientific and public discussion around the conceptual and practical foundations for the provision of humanitarian assistance, taking into account the extensive Western and Soviet experience.

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The authors contributed equally to this article.

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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