

Challenges for Peace and Reconstruction in Yemen

This is a summary of presentations in German by two representatives of the Yemeni Association Insan for Human Rights and Peace (Germany). In Arabic, “insan” means “the human being.” These presentations were a part of Panel II of the Schiller Institute conference, June 30, 2018.

Abdullatif Elwashali: Yemen has a young population. Unemployment used to be 37%; it is now 50%. The percentage of Yemenis living under the poverty line used to be 54%; it’s now 85%. And these are not even up-to-date figures. There is a combination of epidemics, war and hunger. War: A coalition of 17 countries, led by the Saudis and the Emirates is attacking Yemen. The cause? To bring back the Saudi-backed President Hadi. After three years of war, our nation is destroyed, with 36,000 civilian casualties, including 14,000 deaths. Infrastructure is destroyed. We are under an air and sea blockade. Economic war is being waged against us.



Aiman Al-Mansor



Abdullatif Elwashali

Our financial situation is terrible. The health sector is destroyed, with 55% of medical facilities inoperable or destroyed; 1.25 million of our people are threatened by hunger and epidemics, and 896 of our schools have been completely destroyed. The hospital run by Doctors Without Borders was destroyed by air strikes in 2016, with dead and wounded, including the team of doctors. The worst case now is the port of Hodaidah. We are facing a humanitarian catastrophe, with 33 million people lacking even basic medical supplies. Food scarcity is the result of collapse of the financial situation. The ground water is collapsed. Humanitarian aid is not coming; the international community is reticent to help. The aggressors claim that they want to help, but no one here believes that.



A classroom in Yemen.

Aiman Al-Mansor: The Saudis claim that they are helping, but what they are doing has nothing to do with democracy. They have destroyed our education. This is the greatest humanitarian crisis of the 21st Century. They want to weaken the Yemeni military forces, to force us to cede political control to the Saudis, and indi-

rectly to the United States, as they have always done. They won't let the Yemenis decide. They want to use Yemen's geopolitical position to prevent win-win cooperation. Major economic interests are involved. The geographic importance of Yemen, is quite significant; it is now difficult to protect international commerce in the region. Before Yemen can be brought into the New Silk Road, we have to solve this grave humanitarian crisis. We need empathy from the international community. Saudi Arabia and the Emirates have to be convinced to leave Yemen alone. While the Chinese say,

“To get rich, build a road,” we say, “To participate in the international community, we have to end the catastrophe.” This is a challenge to all of mankind, who can't be onlookers. We waited too long in Syria. Yemen needs new governmental institutions, new elections, and a reconstruction plan. The BRICS, China and Russia have to play an important role, to build their own peace initiative. The media needs to publish independent information. We need schools, roads, medicine, and empathy. React quickly. Don't wait for the UN to react!