

News**AP Analysis: No End to War in Sight as Life Worsens in Yemen****No side is winning, and peace talks are nonexistent**By **Brian Rohan**
Associated Press

CAIRO — As Saudi Arabia tightens the screws on its weak southern neighbor, the war it launched in Yemen over two years ago appears more intractable than ever, with nothing but further suffering in sight.

Despite crushing air power by the Saudi-led coalition seeking to reinstall the country's exiled president, which has reduced much of the north to rubble, Yemen's Shiite rebels, with the political backing of Iran, still hold large swaths of territory, including the capital, Sanaa.

And while the U.S.-supported coalition's recent tightening of a blockade to include aid shipments might be intended to starve the rebels into submission, they remain dug in to difficult, mountainous and urban terrain.

Unlike other regional conflicts in Syria or Libya, no side is winning, and peace talks are nonexistent. With both sides deeply committed to victory, face-saving exits are elusive, especially with the Saudi-Iranian rivalry heating up. The war, which has killed more than 10,000 civilians and pushed millions of Yemenis to the brink of famine, appears unlikely to end any time soon.

A look at the impasse:

HOUTHIS WEAKENED BUT DUG IN

On much of the ground and especially in the north, the battle-hardened Shiite rebels known as Houthis hold the upper hand. They control most state institutions and fortifications, are well-armed, and are backed by the remnants of a powerful army built up by former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Infrastructure, such as health care, water and electricity however, are failing.

Opposing them are a jumble of forces ostensibly loyal to exiled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, and a collection of tribes under nominal tutelage of Saudi Arabia and its main coalition partner, the United Arab Emirates.

These forces control most of the south, including the port city of Aden, Yemen's second largest and the official seat of Hadi's government, but a place where weak security, local factional power struggles and repeated attacks have kept him away for most of the year.

Neither the Saudis nor the UAE appear to have forces capable of taking over the whole country. An earlier drive northward ended up in tragedy for the coalition, with over 100 Emirati soldiers killed in combat so far.

NO LEADERS LEFT

After all the fighting, to

say Yemen lacks leaders with broad consensus is an understatement.

The Houthis, a long-neglected Shiite offshoot in the north, consider themselves revolutionaries fighting corruption. But their enigmatic leader, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, appears only rarely, and his appeal has little reach beyond the bounds of sectarianism.

Likewise, his erstwhile ally Saleh, who once mastered the country with a deft tribal balancing act until he was deposed in a 2011 Arab Spring uprising, now has little comprehensive appeal, although some yearn for the pre-war days when he ruled. The two have reportedly fallen out, with news occasionally surfacing that the Houthis have put Saleh under house arrest.

Hadi, meanwhile, has fared no better as a potential leader of a post-war Yemen. Now in exile in Riyadh, the Saudis have prevented him from travelling to Aden since February, saying it's not safe. As his influence waned, the UAE built up its own force in the area, training and financing militias loyal to it.

THE COALITION'S COMPETING AGENDAS

The UAE's rising clout in the south, where it has backed alternate local leaders, has led to friction with Hadi and



In this July 26, 2017 file photo, a girl scavenges at a garbage dump in a street in Sanaa, Yemen. The United Nations and more than 20 aid groups said Thursday, Nov. 9, 2017, that the Saudi-led coalition's tightening of a blockade on war-torn Yemen could bring millions of people closer to "starvation and death." About two-thirds of Yemen's population relies on imported supplies, said the groups, which include CARE, Save the Children and Islamic Relief.

further undermined his rule.

And while not at odds with the Saudis, the UAE prefers supporting ultraconservative Salafi groups as a bulwark against Islamist organizations it loathes, like the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the Saudis have given a pass in Yemen.

Riyadh has also historically been more tolerant of more hard-core Sunni-inspired fighters, blurring the lines regarding who the coalition should consider friend or foe in southern Yemen. Al-Qaida and Islamic State group affiliates operate there, sometimes striking targets in Aden and other southern cities.

The same goes for the lawless east, a vast desert with little state control

and occasional U.S. drone strikes on militants. While minor, the differences highlight potential pitfalls in efforts to unify the south, let alone the larger country with its diverse tribal mosaic.

IRAN DISENFRANCHISED

While the Saudi-led coalition's air power and naval blockade cannot bring victory on its own, it has made a large-scale Iranian intervention nearly impossible.

Tehran, while ideologically close to the Houthis and happy to give them political and diplomatic backing, denies supplying them with weapons. Small arms shipments on fishing boats are occasionally intercepted en route to Yemen, and both the U.S. Navy and coalition forces accuse the Iranians of gun-running.

No one can say for sure which is ultimately true, but the blockade has largely held and prevented quantities of game-changing weapons

from entering the country.

Saleh built up an impressive weapons stockpile over the years that included missiles, and those fired into Saudi Arabia recently may indeed have been locally manufactured, as the Houthis contend, despite U.S. and Saudi allegations to the contrary. On Friday, the top U.S. Air Force official in the Middle East said that Iran had manufactured a missile fired toward the Saudi capital on Nov. 4, adding that remnants of it bore "Iranian markings." There was no immediate response from Iran.

While the Houthis and Iran briefly operated direct flights between their capitals at the beginning of the war, no such route exists today, making any potential Iranian resupply efforts extremely difficult. Tiny sailboats may be able to smuggle small parts like guidance systems via coastal routes, however.

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become a writer and get their work out there.

Kiely's response was simple— "do you write?" he asked. To the ones that said yes, he said, "then you are already a writer." He encouraged students to listen and stay curious. All three authors suggested students share their work widely via social media and writing contests because getting feedback, even rejection, is important to becoming a better writer. One place new writers can submit their work right now is to the library with the Library Writers Project. The deadline is December 15, 2017, and the best works will be added to the library's collection.

Reynolds also talked about having never finished a book until he was almost 18 and about how he never saw himself in anything he read. Today, the books that Mr. Reynolds writes are "love letters" to teens like him.

Watson shared with students how she read the Ramona Quimby series growing up, but despite calling the same city home, she was angered that she never saw anyone that looked like her. Now when she writes she makes sure she is bearing witness — making sure the Black Pacific Northwest is not erased.

More writing and author events are being planned for the new year, so be sure to check our website www.multicolib.org.