



Peace Action New York State

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End U.S. Complicity for Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen Support H. Con. Res. 81: Vote Expected November 2nd

H. Con. Res. 81 Summary:

Sponsored by Representatives Ro Khanna (D-CA17), Walter Jones (D-NC3), Thomas Massie (R-KY4), and Mark Pocan (D-WI2), H. Con. Res. 81 directs the President to remove U.S. Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen, except those engaged in operations directed at Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, within 30 days after adoption of this concurrent resolution, unless the President requests and Congress authorizes a later date, and unless and until a declaration of war or specific authorization for the use of U.S. Armed Forces has been enacted.

Why We Support H. Con. Res. 81:

U.S. weapons are being used against civilians by the Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels in Yemen. Last week, [Amnesty International reported](#) that a U.S. weapons was used against a residential building in Yemen's capital in August 2017, killing 16 civilian, including seven children. 17 more civilians were injured. In another attack last year, [U.S. weapons were used in airstrikes on a funeral hall](#) - while a funeral was in process. 140 people were killed. The Saudi-led coalition is [responsible for two-thirds of civilian deaths](#) in the conflict, but despite this widespread targeting of civilians, [U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia have continued](#). The United States must stop arming the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen, which is [actively committing human rights violations](#), and has proven to have little regard for the agreed upon tenets of the 2008 Ottawa Convention – using [cluster bombs](#) to devastate [civilians](#), military targets and critical infrastructure.

It would be in line with [recent popular opinion](#) to avoid inevitably contributing to a war on foreign soil that is responsible for [widespread famine](#), displacement and the [loss of innocent lives](#). It would also make sense to reject this sale due to the [potential cost of inaction](#), and the possibility that allowing an ally to indiscriminately violate terms in the [Geneva Convention](#) and destroy a population's source of food will serve to further destabilize the region, and will further damage America's [reputation](#); increasing the odds of eventual radicalization and animosity.

The US has the opportunity to hasten the peace process by denying Saudi Arabia the tools needed to continue devastating Yemen, as this war has cost Saudi Arabia \$5.3 billion alone in defense spending during the year of 2015, and led them to surpass India in terms of largest arms importer during same year. Saudi Arabia has felt the [economic impact](#) of such relentless bombing, and coupled with it's recent [oil production woes](#), the US has an opportunity to apply soft economic pressure and work with the UN to [re-open](#) the peace process; to aid a nation in critical condition.

U.S. military operations in Yemen are a violation of the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force, which [authorized sweeping powers](#) for the Executive to launch military strikes against persons, nations and organizations involved in the attacks on September 11th. Since originally authorized, the 2001 AUMF has been used more than [37 times in 14 countries](#), but debate on the AUMF has been [blocked by House leadership](#). To regain Congressional authority over war powers, and to prevent their continued expansion, Congress must proactively oppose military escalation in Yemen.



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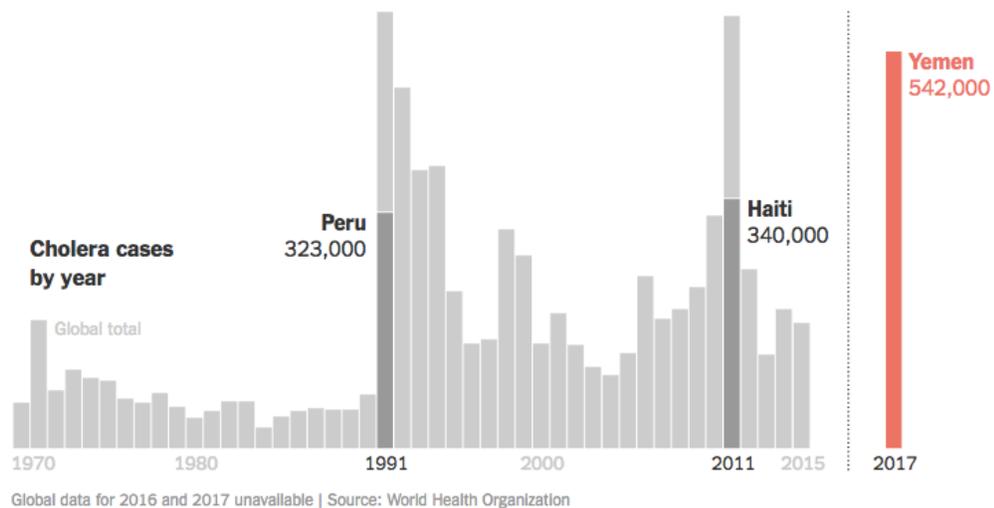
The New York Times

'It's a Slow Death': The World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis

By SHUAIB ALMOSAWA, BEN HUBBARD and TROY GRIGGS AUG. 23, 2017

SANA, Yemen – After two and a half years of war, little is functioning in Yemen.

Repeated bombings have crippled bridges, hospitals and factories. Many doctors and civil servants have gone unpaid for more than a year. Malnutrition and poor sanitation have made the Middle Eastern country vulnerable to diseases that most of the world has confined to the history books. In just three months, cholera has killed nearly 2,000 people and infected more than a half million, one of the world's largest outbreaks in the past 50 years.



"It's a slow death," said Yakoub al-Jayefi, a Yemeni soldier who has not collected a salary in eight months, and whose 6-year-old daughter, Shaima, was being treated for malnutrition at a clinic in the Yemeni capital, Sana. Since the family's savings ran out, they had lived mostly off milk and yogurt from neighbors. But that was not enough to keep his daughter healthy, and her skin went pale as she grew thin.

Like more than half of Yemenis, the family did not have immediate access to a working medical center, so Mr. Jayefi borrowed money from friends and relatives to take his daughter to the capital. "We're just waiting for doom or for a breakthrough from heaven," he said. How did a country in a region with such great wealth fall so far and so fast into crisis?

A Nation Split in Two



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Yemen has long been the Arab world's poorest country and suffered from frequent local armed conflicts. The most recent trouble started in 2014, when the Houthis, rebels from the north, allied with parts of the Yemeni military and stormed the capital, forcing the internationally recognized government into exile.

In March 2015, Saudi Arabia and a coalition of Arab nations launched a military campaign aimed at pushing back the Houthis and restoring the government. The campaign has so far failed to do so, and the country remains split between Houthi-controlled territory in the west and land controlled by the government and its Arab backers in the south and east.

A Collapsed State

Many coalition airstrikes have killed and wounded civilians, including strikes on Wednesday around the capital. The bombings have also heavily damaged Yemen's infrastructure, including a crucial seaport and important bridges as well as hospitals, sewage facilities and civilian factories. Services that Yemenis have depended on are gone, and the destruction has undermined the country's already weak economy. It has also made it harder for humanitarian organizations to bring in and distribute aid.

The Saudi-led coalition has also kept Sana's international airport closed to civilian air traffic for more than a year, meaning that merchants cannot fly goods in, and sick and wounded Yemenis cannot fly abroad for treatment. Many of them have died. Neither of Yemen's two competing administrations has paid regular salaries to many civil servants in over a year, impoverishing their families as there is little other work to be found. Among those affected are professionals whose work is essential to dealing with the crisis, like doctors, nurses and sewage system technicians, leading to the near collapse of their sectors.

The Devastation of Cholera

Damage from the war has turned Yemen into a fertile environment for cholera, a bacterial infection spread by water contaminated with feces. As garbage has piled up and sewage systems have failed, more Yemenis are relying on easily polluted wells for drinking water. Heavy rains since April accelerated the wells' contamination. In developed countries, cholera is not life-threatening and can be easily treated, with antibiotics if severe. But in Yemen, rampant malnutrition has made many people, particularly children, especially vulnerable to the disease.

"With the malnutrition we have among children, if they get diarrhea, they are not going to get better," said Meritxell Relano, the United Nations Children's Fund representative in Yemen.

Outside a cholera clinic in Sana, Muhammad Nasir was waiting for news about his 6-month-old son, Waleed, who had the disease. A poor agricultural laborer, Mr. Nasir had borrowed money to take his son to the hospital but did not have enough to return home even if the baby recovered. "My situation is bad," he said. Five tents had been erected in the backyard of the cholera ward to cope with the sudden increase in patients. All day, families brought sick relatives. Most were elderly, or children carried on their parents' backs.

If infection numbers continue to rise, researchers fear that the cases could ultimately rival the largest outbreak, in Haiti, which infected at least 750,000 people after a devastating earthquake in 2010.



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Aid organizations say they cannot replace the services that the government is supposed to provide. That means there is little chance for significant improvements unless the war ends.

“We are almost in the third year of the war and nothing is getting better,” said Ms. Relano of Unicef. “There are limits to what we can do in such a collapsed state.”

The United Nations has called the situation the world’s largest humanitarian crisis, with more than 10 million people who require immediate assistance. And the situation could become even worse. Peter Salama, the executive director of the World Health Organization’s health emergencies program, warned that as the state fails, “the manifestation of that now is cholera, but there could be in the future other epidemics that Yemen could be at the center of.”

International Involvement

There appears to be no end in sight for the conflict. Peace talks brokered by the United Nations have stalled, and none of the warring parties have indicated much willingness to back down. The Houthis and their allies firmly control the capital, and Saudi leaders have said they will keep fighting until the other side gives in.

The United Nations says that Yemen needs \$2.3 billion in humanitarian aid this year, but that only 41 percent of that amount has been received. The warring parties are among the greatest aid donors, with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates both giving significant sums. **But critics note that the countries spend much more on the war effort and that their closing of Sana’s airport has been devastating for civilians.**

The United States is also a major donor, as well as a primary supplier of arms to the members of the Saudi-led coalition. Although the United States is not directly involved in the conflict, it has provided military support to the Saudi-led coalition, and Yemenis have often found the remnants of American-made munitions in the ruins left by deadly airstrikes.

None of this bodes well for civilians.

“The war still haunts us from all directions,” said Saleh al-Khawlani, who fled his home in northern Yemen with his wife and six children after the Saudi-led coalition began its bombings. They then fled again, to Sana, after an airstrike hit the camp where they had sought shelter, and killed a number of his relatives.

They lived on the street for a while and had to beg for most of their food.

“Most of the time, we had only lunch and sometimes we don’t,” he said. “If we have lunch at noon, we don’t have dinner at night.”



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HUFFPOST

MoveOn Calls on House to Vote Down Saudi War in Yemen

10/06/2017 03:35 pm ET

After two and a half years, the question of unauthorized U.S. participation in the catastrophic Saudi war in Yemen is finally being called.

Four Members of the House - Representatives Ro Khanna [D-CA], Thomas Massie [R-KY], Mark Pocan [D-WI], and Walter Jones [R-NC] have introduced a bipartisan resolution to end U.S. military participation in Saudi Arabia's war, which was never authorized by Congress. The bill currently has 22 official co-sponsors. According to Section 7 of the War Powers Resolution, this Khanna-Massie resolution to end U.S. participation in a war that has never been authorized by Congress is "privileged" - it must go to the House floor for a vote, it cannot be buried in committee.

MoveOn.org is calling on Members of the House to back the Khanna-Massie resolution.

The American Conservative

Stop the War on Yemen: Pass H. Con. Res. 81

By DANIEL LARISON • October 10, 2017, 8:47 AM

Reps. Ro Khanna, Mark Pocan, and Walter Jones explain why they are co-sponsoring H. Con. Res. 81 to halt U.S. support for the war on Yemen:

We believe that the American people, if presented with the facts of this conflict, will oppose the use of their tax dollars to bomb and starve civilians in order to further the Saudi monarchy's regional goals. Our House resolution is a first step in expanding democracy into an arena long insulated from public accountability. Too many lives hang in the balance to allow this American war to continue without congressional consent. When our bill comes to the floor for a vote, our colleagues should consider first the solution proposed by the director of Unicef, Anthony Lake, for stopping the unimaginable suffering of millions of Yemenis: "Stop the war."

I applaud the Congressmen for their leadership on this issue. It would be easy for members of Congress to ignore what is being done to Yemen with our help, and challenging U.S. involvement in any war is always



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an uphill battle, but if any war involving the U.S. should be challenged and halted it is this one. The U.S. policy of enabling the Saudi-led war on Yemen serves no American interests, but more to the point it is a completely indefensible war that brings enduring shame on the U.S. for our role in helping to make it possible and keep it going. The chief reason to halt U.S. involvement in the war is that by doing so it will make it much more difficult for the coalition to continue its intervention. That will create an opening to negotiate a lasting cease-fire so that Yemen's appalling humanitarian crisis can be properly addressed and a more stable political settlement can be negotiated. It would also extricate the U.S. from a disgraceful campaign that has made our government complicit in coalition war crimes, and it would reassert Congress' role in matters of war after almost two decades of abdication.

We are all familiar with the pro-Saudi talking points that will be used to oppose the resolution, so let me answer them now. First, supporters of the war will say that the U.S. has to support our "allies" as they "defend themselves." This is wrong on all counts. The Saudi-led coalition isn't fighting in self-defense, but rather to install a deposed ruler in a country that hates him. The threats that the Saudis now face from Yemen are the product of their intervention, not the reason for it. Most important, these states aren't our allies, we have no treaties with them that oblige us to help them attack their neighbors, and the U.S. doesn't owe them anything. War supporters will also conjure up the specter of Iranian involvement as a reason to continue enabling the wrecking of Yemen, but that both grossly exaggerates the extent of Iran's involvement and fails to grasp that Iran benefits from having its regional rivals bogged down in an unwinnable war. Besides, even if Iran played the role that the coalition claimed the Saudis and their allies would have no right to devastate an entire country in response.

The House should pass H. Con. Res. 81. Ideally, it would pass by a wide margin, and I hope it does. Each time a measure to limit or halt U.S. support for the war on Yemen has come up for a vote, it has received more support than the one before it. I would like to think that is because decent people in this country are naturally horrified the more that they learn about this disaster and our role in it. Members of the House will have the chance to go on record whether they want our government to continue enabling an atrocious war. I urge them to vote to stop U.S. involvement so that the war on Yemen may finally be brought to an end.