

With Biden's Support, Saudi Arabia Escalates Its War of Aggression in Yemen

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The US-backed war on Yemen started seven years ago this week, and after all this time US policy is practically unchanged. The coalition bombing campaign has picked up again in recent months with [700 airstrikes in February](#) alone, and according to the Yemen Data Project the bombing has been more intense during this period than at any point since 2018. 1,500 civilians have been killed or wounded in these attacks. Despite being far more destructive and killing many more people, including [91 people](#) in a migrant detention center, these airstrikes have received no criticism from the US.

Instead of withholding military assistance from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as it should have done, the Biden administration has been [rushing](#) more jets, ships, and [air defense interceptors](#) to the governments that have been brutalizing the people of Yemen directly and through their armed proxies. The US also backed a one-sided UN Security Council [resolution](#) that named the Houthis as a terrorist group while ignoring the many atrocities committed by the coalition governments and their proxies. While the US condemns aggression in Ukraine, it continues to support it in Yemen.

Yemen's humanitarian crisis continues to worsen because far too little has been done to halt the slide towards catastrophe. The UN has warned again that famine is spreading in the country. According to their estimate, there will be [161,000 people](#) in famine conditions this year, and that figure is five times larger than it has been in the past. The World Food Program's David Beasley commented on the projection, "These harrowing figures confirm that we are on a countdown to catastrophe in Yemen and we are almost out of time to avoid it."

Two days after he said that, the UN aid drive for Yemen [came up](#) with a paltry \$1.3 billion in donations, far short of the \$4.27 billion that they were requesting. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have donated to these drives in the past to distract from their responsibility for the crisis, but this year they gave nothing. Yemen desperately needs more resources to stave off the

worst-case scenario of widespread starvation, but more than that it needs an urgent effort to halt the fighting and lift the blockade. Even when there were no other major crises in the world, Yemen's plight was badly neglected, and now it is being almost completely ignored.

To make matters worse, the war in Ukraine [threatens](#) to drive food prices much higher. In countries where tens of millions are already severely food insecure, including Yemen and Afghanistan, the effects of food shortages and rising global food prices will hit hardest. Yemen and Afghanistan were already facing some of the worst man-made famines before this because of economic warfare being waged against them, and this makes mass starvation even more likely.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE assume that they can [extract more support](#) from the US on account of higher energy prices, and the Biden administration has given them every reason to think that this will work. The US put no real pressure on either government over the last year, and Biden has signaled to these clients that he will give them practically anything they want. As usual, letting client states get away with murder just encourages them to make more demands and complain that they are being abandoned if they are not immediately satisfied. This is what comes of Biden's so-called "[back to basics](#)" approach to the region, where the US remains deeply complicit in the crimes of its clients without using any of its leverage to get cooperation from them.

The war on Yemen is undoubtedly a war of aggression, but because it is waged by US client states with US backing it is not widely condemned in the same way as Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. The only real difference between the two is that the Saudi coalition dresses up their aggression by claiming to be seeking to restore a deposed dictator as president, but that is a pitiful fig leaf for an unprovoked attack on a neighboring country. It certainly cannot justify the many thousands of airstrikes that have battered Yemen's cities and villages and [killed and injured tens of thousands of civilians](#). The people of Yemen have borne the brunt of the war for seven years, and they have done so mostly without the rest of the world paying them much attention.

The US has a special responsibility to bring this conflict to an end because our government has done so much to fuel and enable it, and time is of the essence in averting a major famine that this US-supported war is creating. The Biden administration has proven that it isn't going to make more than a token effort on its own. It falls to the public and members of Congress to insist that the US use all the leverage that it has with these states to put a stop to this indefensible war.

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Featured image: WFP Provides Food Assistance to a Record 7 Million People In Yemen In August 2017. UN World Food Program. [Source: wfp.org]

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