

Yemen: A war crime made in America

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21 September 2015

On Sunday, a Saudi-led coalition air strike ripped through a market in Sanaa, Yemen, killing 69 civilians and injuring dozens of others. People had been out shopping for Eid al-Adha, the annual Muslim Feast of Sacrifice, when the bombs fell. Photos posted on social media show corpses strewn amidst the rubble in the aftermath of the assault.

Air raids on Friday destroyed portions of Sanaa's historic Old City, which is on the United Nation's list of World Heritage sites. The area is the site of thousands of unique multi-storied homes that were constructed before the 11th century. Historic cultural sites throughout Yemen have come under repeated attack in the course of the six-month Saudi-fronted assault.

In the 24 hour period between Friday and Saturday morning, at least 57 civilians were killed and a further 130 people wounded in coalition air strikes throughout the country. The Yemen Health Ministry reported that at least 31 people were killed and 120 wounded in air raids on Sanaa that included multiple strikes on the Interior Ministry. Hospitals in the city, which face a shortage of medical supplies and fuel for power generators, were overwhelmed by the casualties.

While these bloody attacks were carried out by jets belonging to Middle East monarchies fronted by Saudi Arabia, the responsibility ultimately lies with the Obama administration. The atrocities carried out by the Saudi monarchy and its allies would not be possible without the backing of the American government and military.

President Obama welcomed Saudi King Salman to the White House with open arms earlier this month, even as Saudi war planes were slaughtering and terrorizing men, women and children throughout Yemen. A billion dollar deal was announced to replenish the kingdom's stockpile of bombs. The US government has provided billions of dollars worth of

weapons and military equipment, assisting Saudi Arabia in developing one of the largest and most advanced militaries in the Middle East.

The entire assault is being overseen from a joint operations center in Saudi Arabia staffed by dozens of American military advisors. American drone operators are providing live video streams of potential air strike targets, while American advisors give their stamp of approval.

Deploying American-made jet fighters and American bombs, supported by American refueling flights and with the aid of American logistics and intelligence, the Saudi-led coalition has carried out more than 25,000 air strikes over the last six months. This compares to approximately 7,000 air strikes carried out in the air war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), now in its second year.

The barrage of air strikes combined with fighting on the ground has killed more than 4,500 people, including a significant number of women and children, who have borne the brunt of the onslaught.

At least 1.5 million people have been forced to flee their homes, with thousands risking the perilous trip by sea across the Gulf of Aden to take up residence in inhospitable refugee camps in Somalia and Djibouti. The UN estimates that more 21 million Yemenis, 80 percent of the country's population, are in need of some form of humanitarian aid.

There has not been a single week since the assault began in which there has not been an attack that resulted in mass civilian casualties. This is the outcome of the coalition's practice of deliberately targeting non-military civilian targets for destruction, including water bottling factories, ports, power plants, residential neighborhoods, workers' housing units, market places, schools and hospitals.

The attacks over the weekend were just the latest in the ongoing assault being waged by Saudi Arabia and

its allies to reinstate the government of President Abdrabuh Monsour Hadi, which was forced to flee Yemen earlier this year in the face of an assault by Houthi militias on the port city of Aden.

The Houthis, with the support of military forces loyal to former dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh, were able to seize control of most of Yemen's western provinces in the spring of this year.

In the last few months, a ground offensive spearheaded by troops from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain has successfully pushed the Houthis out of the area surrounding Aden in the south, while thousands of coalition troops have flooded into the central Marib province east of Sanaa.

Reports indicate that the US-backed coalition escalated its campaign of air strikes this weekend in advance of a massive ground offensive to seize control over Marib and move into position to retake Sanaa from the Houthis, who have maintained control over the capital since last year. A bloodbath is being prepared that will put the previous six months in the shade.

Given the brazen and murderous character of the crimes being committed in Yemen, the response—or, more precisely, the non-response—from official political and media circles in the West is striking. Mass civilian casualties and unspeakable suffering are treated at most as an embarrassing public relations problem in the US imperialist drive to dominate the Middle East and its vast energy resources.

There is no limit to the hypocrisy and cynicism of the media. The American press raises a hue and cry over Russia's reported dispatch of military equipment and some 200 troops to Syria because it disrupts Washington's drive to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who is allied with Russia and Iran, and install a more pliant US puppet regime. The Russian intervention pales in comparison to the billions spent by the CIA and US allies in the region on arms and other forms of support for right-wing Islamist militias, including those linked to Al Qaeda, that are battling the Assad regime.

But the US media has virtually nothing to say about mass murder being committed by US allies, directly aided by Washington, in Yemen.

Over the last decade and a half, under the pretext of fighting terrorism and defending human rights,

American imperialism has devastated one country after another in the Middle East and North Africa. Across the region, more than a million people have been killed, while tens of millions more have been made refugees, desperately seeking safety outside their home countries, most recently flooding into Europe.

The Obama administration has overseen a general expansion of neo-colonial interventions, including the wars for regime-change in Libya and Syria and the renewed war in Iraq. The new Iraq war and the escalation in Syria are ostensibly being carried out to contain and defeat ISIS, which has overrun much of Iraq and large parts of Syria. However, as is well known, ISIS is itself a product of US imperialist interventions in the region.

These crimes are carried out in the interests of the same corporate ruling elite that is imposing brutal austerity measures against the working class within the US, by means of a political system it totally controls. The source of these catastrophes is the capitalist system, whose mortal crisis threatens to plunge mankind into another world war. There is only one answer: the struggle of the working class for political power and the disarming of the war criminals by means of socialist revolution.



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