US-armed Saudi coalition cancels ceasefire, renews military onslaught in Yemen

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Saudi Arabia officially canceled a weeks-old cease-fire in its war against Yemen Saturday, ending a formal period of truce between the regime and the Houthi insurgency that began on December 15.

The regime has already launched a fresh wave of airstrikes since declaring the truce over. According to the UN Saudi jets have pounded areas throughout the country over the last three days in attacks that have already destroyed a handful of civilian targets.

Saudi forces have already attacked several targets in "densely populated civilian areas" within Yemen's capital of Sanaa, according to UN human rights representative Rupert Coalville. The latest Saudi strikes destroyed a medical center for blind patients on Tuesday. Earlier this week airstrikes also destroyed Yemen's chamber of commerce headquarters.

Yemen's main population centers are currently under various degrees of military siege and blockade, including the capital Sanaa and the southern port city of Aden, as well as Taiz, a city of some 200,000.

An 8 p.m. curfew was imposed in Aden on Monday, after pro-government forces wrested control of areas of the city that had been taken over by Al Qaeda-linked militia and other militia factions.

The war against Yemen is only one of countless US-orchestrated slaughters perpetrated against the Middle East. Nonetheless, it is being waged with an especially frenzied level of criminality and recklessness. The Saudi regime and its American backers are proving in Yemen that they will use any level of military force and mass terror in defense of their power and control over the highly strategic region.

Wave after wave of Saudi-led bombing has routinely struck known civilian targets and residential areas. At least 8,100 Yemeni civilians have been killed or wounded since the beginning of the Saudi-led bombing campaign in March, according to the latest UN figures. Within days of the beginning of the Saudi air war in March Saudi attacks struck a refugee camp, a civilian market and a medical center.

The number of civilian casualties produced by Saudi air attacks continued to increase sharply throughout December in spite of the supposed truce. Amid the ceasefire and simultaneous "peace talks" in Geneva, the total number of Yemeni civilians killed more than doubled in December by comparison with November.

Saudi airstrikes are responsible for two thirds of the civilian deaths caused by the war, a UN report found in September. More than 2.5 million Yemenis have been displaced and nearly 200,000 have sought refuge in other countries since the Saudi onslaught began.

Saudi strikes have been launched in flagrant violation of international law against areas with known schools and hospitals, according to Johannes van der Klaauw, UN humanitarian official in charge of Yemen. Saudi forces have launched countless "accidental" strikes against civilian areas, wedding parties and medical facilities.

The widespread destruction of Yemen's social and productive infrastructure has led to conditions in which the vast majority of the population struggles without secure sources of food, electricity or running water.

Within two weeks of the launch of the Saudi air war, more than 10 million Yemenis had lost all access to food, water and electricity, according to initial reports in April 2015. Some 100,000 Yemenis were displaced from their homes within the first two weeks of the Saudi war alone.

The UN food agency warned recently that Yemen as a whole is "at risk of slipping into famine." Nearly half of Yemen's provinces are characterized by near famine conditions, according to the World Food Program. One

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million Yemenis are already malnourished and Yemen's health care infrastructure is "close to collapse," according statements by top UN emergency relief official Kyung-wha Kang.

Some 300,000 young children (ages 1-4) are malnourished and some 7.6 million Yemenis are living in borderline starvation conditions. Human rights groups also report that many Yemeni children are showing signs of mass psychological trauma.

In the months since initial accusations of cluster bomb usage by Riyadh were advanced by Human Rights Watch in April, Saudi forces have continued to use illegal cluster munitions against civilian areas. UN investigators found dozens of shell casings from Saudi cluster weapons near villages in Yemen's Haradh District.

The US media has maintained the maximum level of silence possible in relation to the Yemen war. A Saudi air strike which destroyed a Doctors Without Borders (MSF) hospital in Yemen in late October, just weeks after US forces incinerated a large MSF hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, passed with barely a ripple in the American press.

With the help of the corporate media, the Obama administration has worked to distance the US and NATO from the war and downplay the scale of the crimes being perpetrated by the US-backed Saudi forces.

In reality, the Saudi monarchy has received a blank check from Washington to wage war in Yemen. The US government and military have played a central role in the war, providing close support for the Saudi air campaign, including logistics, weapons, intelligence and target selection. The US has carried out thousands of mid-air refuels of Saudi coalition planes, and has been running joint military operation centers in Saudi territory to streamline the assault.

In November, President Obama signed an authorization green lighting an additional purchase of $1.3 billion worth of US weapons by the Saudi regime.

The Saudi royals have enthusiastically seized on the open-ended US backing for their campaign to place their military apparatus on a total war footing and assemble an "Islamic war coalition" in preparation for confrontation against Iran and Iranian forces and interests throughout the Middle East.

Official Saudi budget estimates for 2016 allocate nearly $215 billion to "military sectors." The regime plans to double the size of its military by 2020, building up its combat-ready force to over 500,000 soldiers and spending some $150 billion on an array of new advanced weapons systems, according to figures cited by the Daily Telegraph's Con Coughlin.

Just days prior to the December 15 ceasefire, Saudi Arabia announced the formation of the Islamic Military Alliance, which includes Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The Saudi war against Yemen is being waged by a coalition of states that closely overlaps with the roster of the IMA coalition, which is widely understood among regional analysts to be essentially an anti-Iranian alliance.

The renewed Saudi offensive against Iran will include forces from the Kuwaiti military, reports last week revealed. On Tuesday, the Kuwaiti regime announced that it will suspend diplomatic ties with Iran, joining Bahrain, UAE and Qatar in issuing punitive measures against Tehran and signaling their alignment with the Saudi monarchy.

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