

Sixty killed in new US-Saudi war crime in Yemen

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The murderous and criminal character of the US-Saudi war against Yemen, the poorest country of the Middle East, was laid bare once again Sunday with the report of an air strike that claimed the lives of scores of civilians in the Red Sea port city of Al Hudaydah.

The bombs struck a prison facility inside a government compound controlled by the Houthi rebel movement, which controls the north and west of the country.

According to reports from Yemen, more than 60 people were killed in the air strike, which demolished two detention centers, and at least 40 more were wounded. The Saudi warplanes used their familiar tactic of dropping bombs on the facility and then waiting for people to rush to the scene to search for survivors before bombing again to achieve the maximum death toll.

Prisoners and guards alike were buried in the rubble. Photographs released from the scene showed lines of bodies covered in sheets.

The prison bombing, which took place at about midnight Saturday, followed close on the heels of another air strike in the western city of Taiz in the western Yemeni highlands, the country's third largest population center and a major cultural center.

Taiz has been the scene of bitter fighting between the Houthi rebels and Saudi-backed ground forces for the past year and a half.

Saturday's raid there targeted the al-Salw residential district near the front lines, demolishing several homes. Among those struck was the house of Abdullah Abdo, in which the US-supplied bombs dropped by Saudi jets took the lives of 11 members of the same family. Many of the victims were children. Reportedly seven of the dead were women.

The air strikes Saturday were the bloodiest since

October 8, when Saudi warplanes attacked a funeral home in the capital of Sana'a, killing and wounding at least 700 people. As many as 155 people died in that attack, which left many of the wounded without limbs and otherwise maimed. Like the latest strike on the prisons, it was a "double tap" bombing raid, timed to ensure that those rushing to the aid of the wounded would also be killed.

There is every reason to believe that this earlier attack was not a matter of collateral damage or mistaken targeting, but rather a deliberate attempt to decapitate the Houthi regime in Sana'a. The funeral that was hit was for the father of the government's interior minister and was attended by a number of senior officials, who lost their lives.

In the aftermath of that horrific bombing, US officials issued mealy-mouthed statements to the effect that Washington's support for the Saudi war was "not a blank check" and that it would be realigned in accordance with "American values."

Since then, US aid has continued to flow. US planes are continuing to refuel Saudi fighters in midair so that they can carry out these murderous attacks. And the US Navy has itself joined the onslaught, launching Tomahawk cruise missiles at alleged Houthi radar stations, supposedly in retaliation for missiles fired at a US warship in the Red Sea. US military officials have subsequently acknowledged doubts about the supposed missile attacks, raising the possibility that a US Navy radar malfunction had generated ghost signals.

Just one day before the latest atrocities carried out against the Yemeni people, both the United States and Saudi Arabia were voted onto the United Nations Human Rights Council. The elevation to this panel of the two countries most responsible for killing an estimated 10,200 Yemenis in the past year and a half,

the great majority of them civilians, and pushing at least half the population to the brink of starvation serves to unmask the hypocrisy of the entire “human rights” framework for justifying imperialist wars and interventions all over the globe.

This has particularly been evident in Syria, where the fate of eastern Aleppo, occupied by Al Qaeda-linked Islamist militias, has been turned into the object of a crusade to demonize Russia for its support for the Syrian government’s attempt to retake the area and to prepare public opinion for a far wider war.

The propaganda denunciations of Russia over Aleppo have continued, despite a suspension of Russian and Syrian air strikes against the positions of the US-armed Islamist “rebels,” which is now entering its third week.

The Al Qaeda-affiliated militias have used the suspension of air strikes to mount their own offensive, which has been directed in large measure against the civilian population of government-controlled western Aleppo, where the vast majority of the city’s population lives.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group hostile to the Syrian government, reported Sunday that “rebel” shelling of western Aleppo had killed at least 41 civilians over a three-day period, at least 16 of them children. The Islamist militias have also used suicide car bombs in an attempt to breach government positions, also claiming civilian victims.

Among the “rebel” attacks Sunday was a barrage of shells containing toxic gases that struck the al-Hamadaniyeh area and the al-Assad residential suburb of Aleppo. According to reports, one person died from gas poisoning, while at least 35 people were sent to the hospital from the effects of chlorine gas.

In 2013, the Obama administration came to the brink of launching a direct military attack on Syria over allegations that the government of President Bashar al-Assad was responsible for a gas attack on the Damascus suburb of Ghouta, which supposedly violated a “red line” set by Obama over the use of poison gas.

The Syrian government denied its responsibility for the attack, which coincided with the arrival of United Nations weapons inspectors in Damascus to investigate previous gas attacks and provided a convenient pretext for US military intervention against the Assad regime.

In the end, Washington accepted a face-saving deal brokered by Russian President Vladimir Putin providing for the UN-supervised destruction of all of Syria’s chemical weapons stockpiles.

Subsequent reports, including by the US investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, pointed to the Ghouta attack having been organized by the Turkish government working in league with the Al Qaeda-affiliated Al Nusra Front in order to blame it on Assad and provide a means for the Obama administration to override popular opposition to another US war in the Middle East and launch military action in Syria.

There is, needless to say, no sign within the US and other western media of the kind of moral outrage and “humanitarian concern” evinced over the Russian bombing of Aleppo or the fabricated charges of Syrian government gas attacks over the recent crimes carried out against the people of western Aleppo. Rather, the *New York Times* Saturday wrote approvingly that “A coalition of Syrian insurgent groups said it had begun a major offensive on Friday to break the months-long siege of eastern parts of Aleppo.”

The *Times* went on to advance an alibi for the fact that the forces backed by the US against the Assad government are led by Al Qaeda. “The rebels argue that they cannot afford to shun any potential allies while they are under fire, including well-armed and motivated jihadists, without more robust aid from their international backers,” the report stated, providing an argument for the CIA and the Pentagon pouring more heavy weaponry and anti-aircraft missiles into the hands of Al Qaeda.



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