

# OPINION



## Why Are We Allowing Yemen to Starve?

### Humanitarian atrocities must come to an end

BY J.P. LINSTROTH

Some have dubbed the Yemeni civil war “the forgotten war.” It seems more intentionally ignored.

It is a humanitarian crisis on a mass scale. According to recent reports by United Nations officials as many as 14 million Yemenis are on the verge of dying from starvation. Save the Children, an international humanitarian organization, issued a report documenting some 84,700 children under five years old have starved to death since the US started “helping” Saudi Arabia wage the war in 2015.

How can the world simply stand by and let this humanitarian crisis happen? Moreover, what is to be done about it?

Yemen’s latest civil war began in 2015 and has directly killed as many as 56,000 people by bomb and gun, and far more by starvation. The country itself is considered to



be the poorest in the Middle East. The war has caused the economy to collapse with the currency almost worthless and no job opportunities. Food is inaccessible.

According to the UN World Food Programme, more than three million civilians have been displaced since the war commenced. Two-thirds of the 29 million population are food-insecure. This number includes three million children, as well as pregnant women and nursing mothers—all severely malnourished. Since 2016 more than 2,500 civilians have died from a cholera epidemic with at least a million people infected.

Conflicts in and around Yemen originated long before 2015, some claim as far back as the Sunni-Shia conflict which began in the 7th century, but more recent events, from the consequences from British and French colonialism, the outcome of World War I, and the Cold War have all exacerbated inner strife in that poor nation.

The Executive Director of the World Peace Foundation, anthropologist Alex de Waal, has claimed that recent strategic tactics of war-

fare have included “mass starvation” from economic blockades and militarily targeting civilian populations and their food production. A major concern is whether or not those responsible for such tactics will be ultimately penalized as no such sanctions currently exist in international law.

A report by anthropologist Martha Mundy cites how coalition forces have been militarily targeting civilian food production in Yemen, especially farmlands and fishing boats. Additionally, economic blockades have been systematically used by the coalition to contain the Yemen’s Houthis population, all resulting in mass starvation in Yemen.

As of Nov. 14, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia coalition forces have put a temporary ceasefire in place to allow critical humanitarian supplies to reach the Yemeni port city of Hodeidah. How long this ceasefire will last is anyone’s guess.

The International Red Cross has demanded the following humanitarian measures be taken immediately: combatants must: spare civilians and save civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools; avoid civilian zones in combat; allow for free civilian passage away from

warfare; allow for the free movement of medicine and food to reach civilian populations; and allow for humanitarian aid to operate within the country.

In sum, all of us—all people across the United States and across the globe—should be very concerned about systematic starvation of civilian populations as a war tactic. This needs to stop. There needs to be accountability for such humanitarian atrocities and there needs to be passage of international law to put an end to these military practices. Otherwise, unnecessary and unfortunate suffering as is happening in Yemen will continue.

U.S. support for Saudi Arabia—just reinforced by Trump despite his own CIA concluding that the Crown Prince bin Salman ordered the ghoulish assassination and dismemberment of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi—is key to the ongoing killing and starvation of Yemeni civilians.

Politicians with a conscience are now calling for an end to such aid, including cessation of arms sales to Saudi Arabia. For the children of Yemen, that would be a relief.

*J. P. Linstroth is an Adjunct Professor at Barry University.*



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### Letter to the Editor

#### Support Green New Deal

I am a freshman at the University of Portland. Learning more and more about climate change

has made me scared for my future and for the future of the generations to come.

I fully support Rep. Ocasio-Cortez’s resolution to create a House Select Committee for a Green New Deal in Congress. It is proven fact that we have just 12 years to move our country off fossil fuels to avoid catastrophic climate disaster and to

protect my generation and the future generations to come.

We need a Green New Deal to create millions of green jobs, move our country off fossil fuels, and protect working people of all backgrounds. Every Congress member should support this resolution.

*Sophia Truempi*