

Saudi Bombings Kill Scores of Civilians—including Children—in Yemen

by *Andrea Germanos*, published on *Common Dreams*, January 21, 2022

A series of Saudi-led airstrikes were blamed Friday for killing scores of people in Yemen as civilians, including children, continue to suffer deadly consequences of the U.S.-backed conflict that has lasted for years.

Overnight bombings included one that targeted a prison holding mostly migrants in the northern city of Sa'ada, an area described as being under the control of Houthi forces.

"It is impossible to know how many people have been killed. It seems to have been a horrific act of violence," said Ahmed Mahat, MSF's (Doctors Without Borders) head of mission in Yemen.

A hospital in the city *"has received 138 wounded and 70 dead"* and is *"so overwhelmed that they can't take any more patients,"* MSF said.

News update from #Yemen:

Last night Sa'ada City Remand Prison was hit by what was reported to be an air strike from the Saudi-led Coalition. Al-Gumhourriyeh Hospital in the city has received 138 wounded and 70 dead. They are so overwhelmed that they can't take any more patients.

– MSF International (@MSF) January 21, 2022

Facilities used for detention in Sa'ada, #Yemen, were hit

early this morning, killing and injuring over a hundred detainees.

Emergency workers were searching for victims amidst the rubble. pic.twitter.com/CdT8qe7wEF

– ICRC (@ICRC) January 21, 2022

Strikes also hit further south in the port city of Hodeida. According to *Agence France-Presse*:

“Video footage showed bodies in the rubble and dazed survivors after an air attack from the Saudi Arabia-led pro-government coalition took out a telecommunications hub. Yemen suffered a nationwide internet blackout, a web monitor said.”

The humanitarian group Save the Children said that at least three children, as well as more than 60 adults, were reported killed by the series of strikes, though the number of confirmed casualties would likely rise.

The children killed as a result of the Hodeidah strike had been playing on a nearby football field, the group said.

“Children are bearing the brunt of this crisis,” said Gillian Moyes, the group’s country director in Yemen.

“They are being killed and maimed, watching as their schools and hospitals are being destroyed, and denied access to basic lifesaving services,” she said. *“They are asking us: Does it matter if I die?”*

“The initial casualties report from Sa’ada is horrifying,” Moyes added. *“Migrants seeking better lives for themselves and their families, Yemeni civilians injured by the dozens, is a picture we never hoped to wake up to in Yemen.”*

In the U.S., the Biden administration—like previous administrations—has faced calls to stop supplying Saudi Arabia with weapons and other support being used to wage the bombing campaign on Yemen that's estimated to have killed over 300,000 Yemenis since 2015 and unleashed what the United Nations called the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

In *The New Republic* earlier this month, the Quincy Institute's Trita Parsi and Annelle Sheline wrote:

Despite Biden's promise to end the war in Yemen and his pledge to make the Saudis "*pay the price, and make them in fact the pariah that they are,*" he has fallen back into America's hegemonic role in the Middle East: taking sides, making America a party to conflicts, and selling more weapons—U.S. interest, peace, stability, and human rights be damned.

Responding to news of the overnight airstrikes, journalist Spencer Ackerman tweeted:

"America is complicit in this, as it has been complicit in every Saudi or UAE airstrike of this horrific war that Biden and his senior officials once promised to end. I hope they see these children when they sleep at night."

The International Committee of the Red Cross sounded alarm about the recent intensification of violence in Yemen.

"It is essential that we protect the lives of people in armed conflict. The human toll that we witness in Yemen is unacceptable,"

Fabrizio Carboni, ICRC's regional director for the Near and Middle East, said in a statement Thursday.

"Civilians living in densely populated areas have been exposed to increased attacks," he continued, "causing death and injury and deepening the psychological trauma among the

affected communities after seven years of war.”

The deadly strikes came after a Tuesday statement from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also expressing concern about the uptick in violence in Yemen.

“In recent days,” said spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani, *“there have been dozens of airstrikes and artillery strikes launched by the parties with seemingly little regard for civilians.”*

“The fighting has damaged civilian objects and critical infrastructure, including telecommunication towers and water reservoirs, as well as hospitals in Sana’a and Taizz. With frontlines shifting rapidly over large areas, civilians are also exposed to the constant threat of landmines,” she said.

“As has been shown time and time again,” added Shamdasani, *“there is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen.”*

***Featured Image:** *Yemenis inspect the scene of aerial attacks said to be carried out by aircraft of the coalition led by Saudi Arabia on January 18, 2022 in Sana’a, Yemen. (Photo: Mohammed Hamoud/Getty Images) Cropped*

Andrea Germanos is a senior editor and staff writer at Common Dreams. She can be reached on twitter at @andreagermanos and by email: andrea@commondreams.org