

Congress Must Vote to End U.S. Military Support in Yemen War

President Biden's [announcement last February](#)¹ that "we are ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen including relevant arms sales" was a welcome breath of fresh air. Sadly, since then, U.S. support has continued in the form of the maintenance, logistical support, and spare parts that enable Saudi airplanes and attack helicopters to continue raining deadly ordnance on Yemeni civilians. In the last few months, the conflict has grown more violent, the economy is on the verge of collapse, and as the [UN's World Food Programme chief said](#)² "We're literally looking at 16 million people marching towards starvation." This is a man-made humanitarian catastrophe engineered by indiscriminate military attacks on civilian targets.

Congress Can Mandate a Definitive End to U.S. Support for the War in Yemen

- Despite promises to end U.S. support for the Saudi human rights violations, support for the Air Force infrastructure that enables the continued attacks and blockade has continued. April 2021, the Department of Defense confirmed that the US continues [to support the Saudi-led coalition](#).³ Fundamentally, if we continue to maintain and equip the Saudi armed forces, the administration's commitment to only supporting "defensive operations" can not be fulfilled. Even the air-to-air missiles approved last year portrayed as defensive can be [used as a tool to enforce the blockade](#)⁴ on Yemen by increasing Saudi ability to threaten aircraft trying to land in Sana'a airport.
- The most effective way for Congress to ensure that the United States is not engaging in Saudi-led hostilities that are part of this tragic war is to invoke its war powers through a war powers resolution.

Ending Support Means Blocking Arms Transfers to the Saudi Military

- Last fall, the Senate failed to block a massive \$650 million weapons transfer to Saudi Arabia. Predictably, the fighting has escalated since then.
- There have been consistent and widespread human rights violations committed with helicopters during this war. A 2015 attack killed dozens of Yemeni fishers. A 2015 airstrike killed 30 civilians, including first responders. A 2017 Apache helicopter strike on a boat filled with UN credentialed Somali refugees killed at least 40 people. Yet an arms transfer of military helicopters was approved in 2021 as well.

The Blockade of Yemen is a Leading Driver of the Humanitarian Crisis

The administration has, unfortunately, sought to downplay the Saudi role in the disastrous blockade of Yemen — going as far as to say "[there is no blockade](#)"⁵ while people are dying because of food and fuel shortages. At a minimum, the administration appears to be tacitly accepting the blockade. The healthcare system in Yemen, during the COVID crisis, is [now under immense pressure as fuel shortages](#)⁶ prevent hospitals from providing services. Members of Congress should press the administration to do more to end the blockade.

Steps Members of Congress Can Take

- **In the House, support and cosponsor the [War Powers Resolution being introduced by Reps. Jayapal and DeFazio](#) that end all US support for the calamitous war in Yemen. In the Senate, introduce and support a similar War Powers Resolution.**
- **Oppose arms sales/contracts** to Saudi Arabia that support the continuing war and humanitarian crisis.
- **Oppose designation of the [Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization](#) which [harms aid efforts](#).**
- **Publicly speak out and pressure the administration** to push the Saudis to end the blockade of Yemen.

¹ Biden, Joseph, *Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World*, White House Briefing Room, February 4, 2021

² *Millions in Yemen 'a step away from starvation'*, UN News, September 22, 2021

³ The US may still be helping Saudi Arabia in the Yemen war after all, Alex Ward, Vox, April 27, 2021

⁴ Hartung, William, *The Biden Administration's Missile Sale to Saudi Arabia Is Offensive, and Must Be Stopped*, Forbes, November 28, 2021

⁵ Ward, Alex, "*It is not a blockade*": US says Saudi Arabia isn't to blame for Yemen's fuel shortage, Vox, April 14, 2021

⁶ *Deadly Consequences: Obstruction of Aid in Yemen During Covid-19*, Human Rights Watch, September 14, 2020