

Congress Must Support a Yemen War Powers Resolution

President Biden's February 2021 [announcement](#)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.

A surprisingly successful UN-brokered truce between the Saudi/UAE-led coalition and Houthi rebels controlling large parts of Yemen, originally agreed to in April and extended into August, offers the best chance yet to end a calamity that has killed nearly half a million civilians and driven millions more to the brink of starvation.

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 persisted. Fundamentally, if we continue to maintain and equip the Saudi armed forces, the administration's commitment to only supporting "defensive operations" cannot be fulfilled.
- 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 escalated late in 2021 and early 2022.
- 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.
- [Recent analysis](#)² by the *Washington Post* and the Security Force Monitor at Columbia Law School's Human Rights Institute shows the crucial support the U.S. military and weapons contractors have played in supporting the Saudi Air Force. Reviewing thousands of images, videos, and media reports, they were able to connect specific Saudi-led fighter jet squadrons to respective U.S. arms, maintenance, and training contracts. A number of these squadrons actively carried out airstrikes that killed large numbers of civilians – a potential war crime.

Timing is Everything

With President Biden set to visit Saudi Arabia on a regional diplomatic tour in July, Congress passing a War Powers Resolution now to end all forms of military and intelligence support for the Saudi-led coalition would be very timely. Moreover, the largely successful, if fragile, truce in Yemen is currently set to expire on August 2. Taking decisive action to end the war can't come soon enough for the people of Yemen.

Steps Members of Congress Can Take

- **Cosponsor the Yemen War Powers Resolutions, [S.J.Res.56](#), introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) or [H.J.Res.87](#), introduced by Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), which end all U.S. support for the calamitous war in Yemen.**

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

² Lee, Joyce Sohyun, Meg Kelly, and Atthar Mirza, *Saudi-led airstrikes in Yemen have been called war crimes. Many relied on U.S. support*, The Washington Post, June 4, 2022