

Yemen Conflict Misconceptions Refuted

by Kim Sharif

Kim Sharif is Director of Human Rights for Yemen. She refutes the standard misconceptions about the war on Yemen in the clearest terms.

Yemen—A Modern Day Concentration Camp

May 13—In the early hours of March 26, 2015, the children of Yemen say they heard the sounds of massive “fireworks,” which they attributed to some sort of national celebration—only to discover later that it was the start of a nightmare of bombardment, starvation, and immense suffering that seems to have no end in sight. Who is doing this and why?

Saudi Arabia, through its then-Ambassador to Washington Jubeir and its spokesperson General Al-Asiri, made an announcement in English and Arabic, claiming that they had formed a coalition of nations including Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Sudan, Senegal, Pakistan (“the Saudico”), and attacked Yemen in order to restore the so-called legitimate government of Yemen led by former caretaker president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, at his request.

The Saudi-led alliance later added to its claims that its additional aim is to prevent Iranian expansion in the region and to enforce UNSC Resolution 2216. I shall deal with each of these claims separately under its own heading, to see whether there is a grain of truth to what they have been claiming, and to show the consequences of their actions for the people of Yemen.

The Lie about Restoring Hadi

Hadi, the former deputy to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, was chosen as a caretaker president

following the Arab Spring of 2011 in Yemen, to lead the country for a period of two years, during which he was to hold a general election, among other things, under the Gulf Initiative (“the GI”).

It should be noted, that as a condition for the validity of the GI, all parties which were involved in the Arab Spring revolution had to agree to it and sign it. Ansarullah (the Huthi and others), Al-Harak (southern separatists) and others have neither agreed to it nor signed it.

The GI came into effect in February 2012 and expired in February 2014, but Hadi had not fulfilled any of its mandates!

We are told that the period of the application of the GI was extended by a further a year by a quango of people appointed to their positions by Mr. Hadi. But that extension itself expired in February 2015. Thus, there was no legitimacy to Mr. Hadi whatsoever, from the start of the GI all the way to its expiry in February 2015.

This therefore makes the attack on Yemen by the Saudico illegal, and all the actions taken by it from March 26, 2015 to date amount to Crimes against Humanity.

Iranian Expansion a Red Herring

The Saudico has claimed later, during its relentless campaign of aerial bombardment of Yemen—using all manner of weapons, including cluster bombs and chemical bombs—that it is doing so in order to prevent Iranian expansion in the region through Iran’s alleged proxies—the “Huthis.”

In reality, the Huthis are a small minority of Zaydi Yemenis from the northern part of Yemen—Sa’dah—bordering Southern Saudi regions, and members of the Ansarullah Party. U.S. and U.K. officials have coun-

tered the Saudico claim of Iranian involvement in the situation in Yemen. One British official, Andrew Mitchell, conservative MP and former Minister for International Development, stated clearly, [“We should be wary of demonizing the Houthis and branding them as owned by Iran. They are not.”](#)

The fact is, following Mr. Hadi’s failure to perform his mandates under the GI, the condition of the country deteriorated to an intolerable level, and by September 2014, a coalition of parties including Ansarullah, the Yemen Army, the Congress Party (the party of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh), Al-Harak, and most tribes and their elders rose and besieged the presidential palace in Sana’a, demanding that Hadi carry out his mandates. Hadi escaped in women’s clothing to the Southern city of Aden, where he put together a militia of fighters to support his bid to return to power. Several requests to him to work towards a smooth handover of power failed, when he rejected them outright.

Meanwhile, Ansarullah and its coalition partners, which became known as the Army and Popular Committees (“the APC”), captured the capital, and many other regions fell to its control without much ado. Thus a *de facto* government came into existence in this way, which has now formed the current government of Sana’a under Yemen’s constitution, with a fully functioning parliament. Under the UN Charter, this is the government of the sovereign state of Yemen, which must be recognized under international law.

Several fronts of armed confrontation then erupted, led by renegade generals of pro-Hadi militias in the areas of Ta’iz, Mokha, Aden, Ma’rib, Al-Jowf, and Nahm. The APC later withdrew from the South, which has ever since been under occupation by foreign UAE forces aided by terrorists and mercenaries. Many are reporting untold horrors in the South. In some parts of Ta’iz, pro-Hadi militias have committed genocide against the tribes of Al-Rummaymah and Al-Junaid in a manner identical to Da’esh practices of crucifixion, skinning people alive, and mutilating their bodies. The leaders of these pro-Hadi terror militias are Wahhabi takfiri leaders Hammoud Al-Mikhlaifi (currently in Turkey) and another one called Abul-Abbas.

At the head of the renegade generals is Ali Mohsin Al-Ahmer. This general belongs to the Party of Islah (the Muslim Brotherhood of Yemen), and was in charge of recruitment of mujahideen during the Afghan-Soviet war in the 1980s. He is also behind Al-

Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen, and thus also Da’esh. In fact, there is ample evidence to show that the Saudico fighters are fighting alongside these terror outfits. What connects the two is ideology, the Wahhabi takfiri ideology—and, of course, petrodollars.

The Islah Party’s spiritual leader is Sheikh Abdelhameed Zandani. Zandani was placed on the most-wanted list for terror offences by the U.S. authorities, and is currently hosted in Riyadh. Hadi is its political leader, and general Al-Ahmer its military leader. The Nobel Peace Prize-winner Tawakul Karman is one of its celebrated soldiers—she was one of the agitators of the Arab Spring in 2011. Hammoud Al-Mikhlaifi and Abul-Abbas are among its followers.

The Saudico also engaged the services of both the notorious Blackwater and Dyne Corporation, which brought mercenaries from other countries, such as Colombia, Mexico, Australia, and even the UK and Israel. Not a single Iranian national has ever been found to have a hand in the Yemen war. However, many other groups, including terror outfits, have been found fighting alongside the Saudico.

On the Saudico claim that they are enforcing UNSC Resolution 2216, it should first be noted that laws cannot be retroactive. That is, if we can call the Resolution “law.” First, it was passed some three weeks *after the start of the bombardment of Yemen*—on April 15, 2015—and it cannot retrospectively legitimize an act of war against a sovereign state. Second, there is nothing in the resolution allowing any military measures, as the Russians have pointed out. Third, the Security Council is not a lawmaker itself—rather, it is subject to the laws of the UN. Fourth, no instrument of the UN can ever be used to commit War Crimes, Genocide or Crimes against Humanity. Therefore, it is a total fallacy for the Saudico to rely on this instrument at any time.

Modern-Day Concentration Camp

According to UNICEF, a child under the age of five dies every ten minutes in Yemen due to malnutrition. This equates to approximately 60,000 deaths of children a year in Yemen due the actions of the Saudico, as they are enforcing a strict blockade, preventing the entry of vital food and medicine into the country through the only functioning port, the Port of Hodeidah.

The Saudico admitted nearly a month ago that it had carried out up to *90,000 airstrikes* on Yemen during

the last two years! This admission should have made the international community aghast, and resulted in a demand for the immediate cessation of hostilities against Yemen, particularly in light of the fact that the country is facing famine. According to UN reports, up to seven million people in Yemen are food insecure—at best, struggling to avoid hunger.

The situation was made much worse when the Central Bank of Yemen was moved from Sana'a to Aden by Hadi, and up to 4 trillion rial of notes printed in Russia were handed to Hadi's team. The Central Bank now cannot supply the necessary import credits for the food immediately needed.

General Asiri admitted in an interview with BBC, that they are taking these measures in order to prevent "Huthis" from gaining power in the country. In other words, the starvation of the people of Yemen and the use of all manner of lethal weapons, is being done with the sole intention of killing them if the people of Yemen refuse to obey the Saudis and insist on supporting Ansarullah—as they do, for millions of people have flocked to the capital city of Sana'a to demonstrate in support of the current government there.

The majority of the Saudico airstrikes have been carried out against civilian targets, and the country's entire infrastructure has been destroyed. Nothing has been spared: schools, universities, hospitals, homes, sports facilities, food stores, farms, factories, heritage sites, mosques, airports, seaports, and much more. Figures show that up to 15,000 civilians have killed and over 50,000 injured. These figures don't include the children who die as a result of malnutrition. Thus, it is right to say that Yemen is a modern-day concentration camp and a killing field for the Saudico.



Author Kim Sherif, addressing a demonstration in London.

Any strike on a civilian target, even if it is later discovered that the target was used for military purposes, amounts to a War Crime under the Geneva Convention. Thousands of War Crimes have been committed against Yemen by the Saudico. The UN can't even commission an independent investigation into the matter, but, much to our horror, the UN now rewards the Saudis by giving them a place at the UN Human Rights Council and Women's Rights committee!

While the killing continues, the international community is stricken with a shameful silence and inaction. Furthermore, they continue to insist on forcing everyone to accept Hadi's quango in Riyadh as the legitimate government, even when they know that Hadi's grouping—which has become known as the government of "Facebook" due to its lack of popular support in North and South Yemen—have nil legitimacy, and are fighting alongside

terror outfits. All of Yemen's embassies, which are the property of the state of Yemen, are under *de facto* illegal occupation by the Qataris who are paying the salaries of the staff, and support the Islah Party. All staff are Muslim Brotherhood followers. Qatar is the biggest supporter of the Brotherhood internationally.

This war is an act of aggression illegally executed, leading to thousands of deaths and total destruction of the country, while millions are facing imminent slow, horrible death by starvation and lack of medication. Failure to intervene to stop this war will be an ugly scar on the international community, and nothing will heal its ugliness.

Kim Sharif made the following presentations to the United Nations Human Rights Commission: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZloijDOPx3M>