

As Saudi Arabia and Allies Continue Airstrikes, Sorrow and Rage in Yemen

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People carry the body of a woman covered with a blanket from under the rubble of houses destroyed by Saudi airstrikes near Sanaa Airport, Yemen, Thursday, March 26, 2015. Saudi Arabia launched airstrikes Thursday targeting military installations in Yemen held by Shiite rebels who were taking over a key port city in the country's south and had driven the embattled president to flee by sea, security officials said. (Photo: AP/Hani Mohammed)

Saudi Arabia discusses deploying as many as 150,000 troops and 100 warplanes in operation receiving coordination from the Pentagon and supported by Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain.

Airstrikes led by Saudi Arabia, and supported by other members of Gulf Cooperating Council and the U.S. government, continued to hit Yemen on Thursday as the situation in one of the world's most impoverished, yet strategically important countries continues to unravel amid what can only be described now as all-out war.

Reports indicates that a first wave of bombings overnight which resulted in a number of civilian deaths—including [entire families trapped in flattened houses](#)—have spurred widespread anger in Sanaa and other targeted cities, even among members of the population opposed to the Houthi rebels who have now wrested control of much of the country from President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, whose whereabouts remain hard to establish.

The White House, [reports Reuters](#), has said it is actively supporting the operation and President Obama has authorized U.S. "logistical and intelligence support" for the bombing campaign. However, according National Security Council spokeswoman, U.S. forces are not involved in direct military action in Yemen.

The Houthi-controlled ministry of health said that at least 18 civilians were killed and 24 were injured after airstrikes pummeled the capital city of Sanaa. [According](#) to *Al-Jazeera English*, strikes were also reported on targets in the Malaheez and Hafr Sufyan regions of Saada province, a main Houthi stronghold on the border with Saudi Arabia.

RT.com was [hosting a livestream](#) of a rally by Houthi supporters taking place in the Sanaa on Thursday which showed thousands of Yemeni citizens angrily condemning Saudia Arabia, the U.S., and the other members of the GCC who are backing the military campaign dubbed 'Operation Decisive Storm':

Journalist Tom Finn, who is maintaining a [live-blog](#) for *Middle East Eye* on the ongoing situation in Yemen, provided this round-up of overnight developments:

- Global oil prices rise by 6 percent as Saudi Arabia and Gulf allies launch sweeping military operation
- Saudi officials considering deploying as many as 150,000 troops and 100 warplanes to operation that includes Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain
- US providing “logistical and intelligence support” to the Saudi-led forces

The Associated Press [reports](#):

[Houthi leaders] were calling on their supporters to protest in the streets of Sanaa on Thursday afternoon, Yemen’s Houthi-controlled state news agency SABA reported. TV stations affiliated with the rebels and their ally, former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, showed the aftermath of the strikes Thursday morning in what appeared to be a residential area.

Al-Masirah TV, affiliated with the Houthis, quoted the ministry of health as saying that 18 civilians were killed and 24 were injured.

Yemen Today, a TV station affiliated with Saleh, showed hundreds of residents congregating around a number of flattened houses, some chanting “Death to Al-Saud”, in reference to the kingdom’s royal family. The civilians were sifting through the rubble, pulling out mattresses, bricks and shrapnel.

An Associated Press reporter on the scene in the Sanaa neighborhood near the international airport saw people searching for loved ones in the debris of flattened homes. Residents said at least three bodies were pulled from the rubble. There were traces of blood between the bricks.

Ahmed al-Sumaini said an entire alley close to the airport was wiped out in the strikes overnight. He said people ran out from their homes in the middle of the night. “This was a surprise. I was asleep and I was jolted out of my bed,” he said, waving a piece of shrapnel.

[Speaking](#) to *Al Jazeera* from Sanaa, Houthi spokesman Mohammed Al Bukhaiti called the military action a declaration of war on Yemen, adding that reports alledging that Houthi leader Mohamed Ali Al Houthi had been injured were false.

Meanwhile, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif demanded an immediate halt to the airstrikes which he called a form of “US-backed aggression” which would only make matters worse in the region.

“Military action from outside of Yemen against its territorial integrity and its people will have no other result than more bloodshed and more deaths,” Zarif told the state-owned *Al-Alam* television station.

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