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Crimes against Humanity: US Provides Skin-Melting Chemical to Saudi Arabia for Yemen War

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Saudi Arabia is using white phosphorus, a skin-melting chemical, in its conflict with Yemen, according to social media reports, and the U.S. acknowledges that it has supplied the kingdom with the chemical.

It is unknown exactly how Saudi Arabia is using the napalm-like chemical, but recent photos and videos published on social media appear to show white phosphorus canisters being used in a mortar shell.

Military officials in the U.S. confirmed that they have previously supplied the Saudi kingdom with white phosphorous, but refused to say how much and when the chemical was sold to the Saudis.

People gather at the site of a Saudi-led air strike in Yemen's capital Sanaa September 21, 2015 | Photo: Reuters

When white phosphorus is used in munitions it can cause horrific damage. The highly flammable chemical can burn skin down to the bone. While internationally there is no outright ban on white phosphorus, it has been sold by the U.S. to other countries under the condition that it only be used for the purpose of creating smoke screens and signalling to

troops.

The U.S. became involved in the Yemen conflict as an ally of Saudi Arabia in March 2015, along with the U.K., Turkey, China, France and other Middle East allies. Saudi Arabia backs loyalist supporters of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who are fighting the Houthi forces.

The U.N. estimates that over 10,000 people, including almost 4,000 civilians, have been killed in the conflict – the majority from Saudi bombings. Ongoing fighting has also displaced around 3 million Yemenis.

Human rights organizations are now concerned that white phosphorus is being used against Yemeni civilians, with many groups saying that the Saudi monarchy should be suspended from the U.N. Human Rights Council for its human rights abuses in Yemen.

The Obama administration earlier this monthoffered a record US$115 billion in arms, military equipment and training to the Saudis, according to a report from the Center for International Policy. Saudi-led bombings in Yemen reportedly use U.S. cluster munitions, a widely-banned weapon which both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have not signed.

Two British parliamentary reports said that that an international investigation should be lanced into whether British weapons were being used by Saudi forces to target Yemeni civilians.

Israel, another state receiving huge amounts of military funding from the U.S., has admitted to using white phosphorous in attacks against Palestinians in Gaza.

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