

# Downplaying US Contribution to Potential Yemen Famine. Unreported War Crimes

By [Adam Johnson](#)

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*For almost two years, the United States has backed—with weapons, logistics and political support—a Saudi-led war in Yemen [that has left](#) over 10,000 dead, 40,000 wounded, 2.5 million internally displaced, 2.2 million children suffering from malnutrition and over 90 percent of civilians in need of humanitarian aid.*

A recent UN [report](#) on the humanitarian crisis and near-famine conditions in Yemen (that encompassed South Sudan, Nigeria and Somalia as well) has led to a rare instance of Western media taking notice of the war and its catastrophic effect. But missing from most of these reports is the role of the United States and its ally Saudi Arabia—whose two-year-long siege and bombing have left the country in ruins.

*A Daily News editorial (“USA for Africa (and Yemen),” [2/27/17](#)) called on readers to give to aid organizations helping to alleviate the crisis, but neglected to mention the US/Saudi role in the humanitarian disaster the Daily News itself insisted was “caused by acts of man rather than God.” Which men were those? The Daily News doesn’t say.*

MIDDLE EAST

## **Almost 1.4 million children face 'imminent death:' UN agency**

Published February 21, 2017

Associated Press



This AP report (2/21/17) (Left) notes that “in Yemen’s conflict, nearly half a million children have ‘severe acute malnutrition’”—but it doesn’t mention the US government’s contribution to that conflict.

Similarly, reports on the near-famine in Yemen in the Guardian ([2/12/17](#)), AP([2/21/17](#)), CBS News([2/22/17](#)) and Reuters([2/22/17](#)) neglected to mention the US-backed, Saudi-led bombing and siege that caused the hunger crisis in the first place.

To the extent these stories cover the war in Yemen, they typically do so in a “cycle of violence” framing that gives the reader the impression the crisis is entirely domestic in

origin. As FAIR has previously noted ([10/14/16](#)), while it's common for American media to describe the Houthi-led provisional government as "Iranian-backed," the role of Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies is less often highlighted, while the role of the United States (and Britain) in supporting the Saudi-led assault is frequently omitted entirely.

The Guardian view on famine: sitting by as disaster unfolds  
[Editorial](#)

Millions face starvation, but the world is turning away. We are too late to prevent this severe food crisis - but we can and must act now to save lives



A separate Guardian editorial ([2/23/17](#)), while briefly mentioning the war was "fueled in part by British and US bombs" in the text of the article, insisted in the headline the UK was "sitting by" as "disaster unfolded." The UK is, of course, not "sitting by." The British government has provided £3.3 billion in arms sales—as well as logistical support, surveillance assistance and [political cover](#)—to the Saudi regime primarily responsible for the disaster in question.

A UN report [from last year](#) found there had "been widespread and systematic violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and human rights norms" by the Saudi government and its allies. The US role in the humanitarian disaster was so significant, Reuters [revealed last year](#), the State Department was sending internal emails warning of possible US exposure to war crimes prosecution.

Like the US, the UK has not been "sitting by" but actively contributing to famine in Yemen.

One notable exception was the New York Times ([2/22/17](#)), which expressly mentioned the US and Saudi role in the war in its report on the UN's findings.

Over the past six months, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen—to say nothing of the US's role in it—has been virtually nonexistent on cable and broadcast news. NBC News, Fox News and MSNBC have all neglected to cover the story. When it was covered on TV news, as with CNN ([10/7/16](#)) and ABC News([10/28/16](#)) last October, the role of the United States in fueling the crisis was omitted altogether.

The US's role in the war in Yemen is even more urgent of late, with President Donald Trump [ramping up support](#) for Saudi Arabia's harsh tactics, including possibly cutting off access to the critical port of Hodeidah on Yemen's west coast—an act that the Huffington Post ([2/22/17](#)) insists could "spark a full-blown famine in Yemen."

A first step to putting political pressure on Trump to mitigate the suffering in Yemen is for the US public to speak out about their government's role—a condition unlikely to be met if

corporate media never bother to mention it.

*Adam Johnson is a contributing analyst for FAIR.org. You can find him on Twitter at [@AdamJohnsonNYC](#)*

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