

Saudi Announced that Truce Was Non-existent in Yemen. The Fighting is Escalating

War of Aggression Leaves Many Dead, Injured, Displaced

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Although Riyadh backed by the United States State Department announced a pause last week in the bombing of Yemen, the fighting is escalating.

On May 16 dozens were killed in clashes across the southern port city of Aden. Tank shells were fired back and forth in the northern area of the city, while Ansurallah (Houthis) and Saudi-backed Hadi-allied forces continue to fight over territory, particularly a key road providing access to central Aden.

The Obama administration has blamed the Ansurallah Movement (Houthis) for the failure of the purported five day truce. Washington is providing refueling and intelligence coordination for the Saudi Arabia and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) alliance that is waging war against the country of 25 million, one of the most underdeveloped in the region.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry proclaimed on May 18 that the administration supported extending the truce, but that maneuvers by the Houthis were responsible for the Saudi-GCC aerial bombardments.

"We know that the Houthis were engaged in moving some missile-launching capacity to the border (with Saudi Arabia) and, under the rules of engagement, it was always understood that if there were proactive moves by one side or another, then that would be in violation of the ceasefire arrangement," Washington's top envoy said.

Saudi Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif echoed the line of the State Department saying Riyadh "regrets that the truce did not achieve its humanitarian goals" claiming that the Houthis prompted the failure of a purported pause in bombing.

In describing the aerial bombardments carried out on May 18, the Business Standard said "Saudi Arabia resumed its offensive on the impoverished Arab country hours after the end of the ceasefire, which expired at 11 p.m. on Sunday, with Saudi warplanes pounding a number of civilian and military centers in the Aden, Hajjah, and Sa'ada provinces, Iran's Press TV reported on Monday. In Aden, warplanes fired five rockets at the districts of Attawahi, Khormaksar, the Political Security Bureau in Fath, as well as the Ras Marmot barracks belonging to the Yemeni naval forces. The Aden airport and the al-Sawlaban military barracks in the city were also hit with three rockets."

This same article goes on to note that "Rockets also landed in the Sahar, Zahir and Ghamr districts of Sa'ada province, while the Saudi artillery targeted Dalih and Ghawr mountains in the northern Yemeni border areas.... About 16 million of Yemen's population of 25 million

need assistance and water supplies, and health services are on the verge of collapse, aid organizations have warned.”

The recently-appointed United Nations envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed of the North African state of Mauritania issued yet another plea for a ceasefire and the beginning of talks aimed at ending the war. “I call on all parties to renew their commitment to this truce for five more days at least,” Mr Ould Cheikh Ahmed told the international media while staying in Riyadh. “This humanitarian truce should turn into a permanent ceasefire,” he said.

Various Yemeni political parties did resume negotiations on May 17 ostensibly to reach a political settlement to the war. These meetings which are sponsored by the Saudi monarchy prompted the Houthis not to attend. Press reports indicate that 400 delegates including President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi attended the meetings.

Hadi, who is very unpopular in Yemen, has taken refuge in Saudi Arabia while the monarchy and its allies are attempting to reinstall him in power.

Hadi repeated accusations that the Ansruallah movement has staged a coup. “We are trying to regain our nation from militias backed by external forces,” apparently claiming that Iran was arming the Ansurallah fighters who have taken large swaths of territory in the country, an assertion that Tehran has continuously denied.

The Islamic Republic of Iran adviser to the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Ali Akbar Velayati, said during a trip to Beirut, Lebanon for a meeting with parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri, that the Saudi regime should not be hosting the talks since Riyadh was the aggressor in the war. Tehran’s position is that the talks should be hosted by the UN or in a neutral country.

A representative of the Ansurallah movement Alkarur al-Kuhlani, said of the talks taking place in Saudi Arabia that “This is another dialog conference just like the previous conferences which failed because they do not represent the Yemeni people, they only represent the previous oppressive powers who used to rule over Yemen.” (Press TV, May 18)

Another member of Ansurallah, Muhamed Subri, stressed that “Hadi means nothing to Yemenis. He was once trusted by them, but he decided to forsake the trust and plotted with foreign nations against them. In addition, he has committed many betrayals. Therefore, he is no longer the legitimate president.” (Press TV, May 18)

Humanitarian Crisis Deepens While Aid Shipments Attempt to Deliver Relief

In a statement issued by the Yemeni Freedom House Foundation, the Saudi-GCC air war has resulted in nearly 4,000 deaths while more than 6,887 others have been wounded. Attempts by Iran to deliver humanitarian assistance have been thwarted by Riyadh and its allies.

An Iranian vessel carrying a delegation of people including religious figures and peace activists in an effort to provide assistance to the Yemeni people, crossed into the Gulf of Aden on May 17. The ship is scheduled to arrive on May 21 at Hodaïda Port in Yemen but is facing potential threats from the Saudi-GCC coalition.

The Saudi-GCC alliance has announced that it will seek to board the vessel for an inspection

to supposedly guarantee that there are no weapons being transported to Yemen. Passengers on the ship have stated that they will not allow the forces which are bombing Yemen and starving its people to enter for an inspection.

Caleb Maupin of the International Action Center based in New York, a passenger on the Iranian ship sponsored by the Red Crescent Society, issued a statement on May 18 opposing any attempt to stop the ship by the Saudi-GCC forces. Maupin, a longtime organizer against war and capitalist exploitation, is also a journalist whose dispatches have been published by numerous press agencies around the world including the Pan-African News Wire.

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is mercilessly slaughtering people in Yemen, has absolutely no right to inspect this vessel. Neither does the United States of America or Israel,” Maupin said.

He went on to say that “The Iranian government has made that absolutely clear, and all of us in the delegation of peace activists from Germany, France, and the United States absolutely agree with this decision. An inspection from the United Nations or the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Society would absolutely be permitted and welcomed. These are international bodies delegated for such tasks.”

Maupin also stressed by “allowing an inspection of this ship from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would recognize that somehow the people of Yemen are the property of the Saudis, which they are not. Yemenis are fighting and dying to assert this fact each day. The Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in agreement with Yemen, is shipping 2,500 tons of medical supplies on this cargo vessel. Both Iran and Yemen are sovereign countries. They have the right to interact peacefully with each other, without interference. Saudi Arabia has no say in the matter.”

The U.S. has announced that the aid shipment should be docked in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa on the Gulf of Aden. Djibouti houses the largest Pentagon base on the African continent at Camp Lemonnier where the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) stages military operations across the region. Passengers on the ship have rejected this proposal by Washington.

The aid shipment is a direct challenge to the U.S.-backed aggression against Yemen. The effort also sheds light on the war which has been largely hidden from the American people by the corporate and government-controlled media which generally provides unconditional support to Saudi Arabia and its allies.

West Aden was also the scene of fighting . Also in southern Dhaleh province, five Ansurallah fighters were reportedly killed last night after a convoy was attacked.

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