

# Saudi Ship of Death Halted in Europe

European civilians protect Yemeni children

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Region: [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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*In a collective demonstration of solidarity between European civilians and the suffering Yemeni civilians, the Saudi ship Bahri Yanbu was turned away from ports in [France](#) and [Italy](#) without loading its deadly cargo of weapons.*

Last summer, the Saudi-led coalition targeted a school bus in Yemen, killing 54 people, including 44 small children. [Human Rights Watch](#) conducted interviews with a large group of witnesses and survivors and came to the conclusion that the attack was an apparent war crime, as there had not been any military target in the area at that time. Lockheed Martin, an American weapons manufacturer had made the 500-pound laser-guided bomb that was sold and used by Saudi Arabia.

“No EU state should be making the deadly decision to authorize the transfer or transit of arms to a conflict where there is a clear risk they will be used in war crimes and other serious violations of international law,” said [Ara Marcen Naval](#), Amnesty International’s deputy director for Arms Control and Human Rights.

The UN has issued a [report](#) that Saudi Arabia may have committed war crimes in Yemen. The activists cite the UN Arms Trade Treaty, which prohibits the shipment of weapons if there is a risk of them being used on civilians.

Pres. Emmanuel Macron, of France, [defended](#) selling weapons to Saudi Arabia, on the basis that it was a good source of income. However, [French](#) civilian groups organized to prevent the deadly cargo from shipment. Recently, three French [journalists](#) have faced serious accusations from the French government, after a report was made public which contained sensitive information on the use of French weapons in Yemen.

[Italian](#) civilian groups as well banded together to prevent the docks of [Genoa](#) from being the transit point in the chain of events leading to yet further civilian deaths in Yemen. “What happened today in Genoa, what happened in Le Havre and Santander, showed the importance of international working-class solidarity, especially in stopping wars. And it showed the strength of the dock workers. We are winning because the arms will not be loaded here as was planned,” said activist Giacomo Marchetti, a member of Unione Sindacale di Base.

Pres. Trump has praised the Saudi Crown Prince, as an ally in the ‘[war on terror](#)’, and staunchly defends the continuing arms sales to Saudi Arabia. He feels strongly that the sales are a vital source of [income](#) for the U.S, and that the Saudi leaders can be trusted to prevent war crimes while waging a war on Yemen.

Predictably, the U.S., [UK](#), and France are in favor of arms sales to Saudi Arabia; however, [Germany](#) has taken a pause in order to reassess the situation, with a keen eye on humanitarian aspects.

According to the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#), Saudi Arabia was the world's largest arms importer from 2014 to 2018. This time frame corresponds directly with the beginning of the conflict in Yemen, which broadened in [2015](#) to become a coalition with the UAE. The conflict arose when a [Houthi](#) rebel group toppled Pres. Hadi from the capital, Sanaa in 2014. The Saudi led coalition attempts to reinstate the former government.

In a wide range of [reports](#), the Saudi coalition has attacked infrastructure, targeted civilians, and have demonstrated blatant [disregard](#) to accusations of war crimes and violations of international law. This attitude seems to stem from the Saudi Crown Prince's unshakable [relationship](#) with Pres. Trump. Even after the U.S. Congress [voted to end](#) American military assistance for Saudi Arabia's war, citing humanitarian concerns, Pres. Trump is now studying how to use a [loophole](#) to circumvent Congress.

Many civilians in Yemen may have lost hope, and are unaware that Europeans are peacefully protesting in an effort to save Yemeni civilians, and especially children. The UN has stated that about [360,000](#) children in Yemen face possible starvation. The protests have demonstrated the effectiveness of activists, and the power of civilians in the face of war crimes, even when the richest countries are involved.

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