

Somalian Refugees Massacred in the Red Sea Off Yemen Coast

United States engineered war of genocide encompasses contiguous nations and waterways

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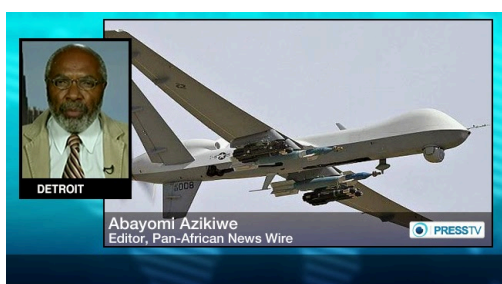
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Somalian community representatives in Yemen have issued a statement denouncing the brutal killings of 42 people and the injuring of 120 others when their vessel was struck in the Red Sea area near the port city of Hodeida on March 17.

Reports indicate that the deaths were a direct result of an airstrike carried out by the Saudi Arabian-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in a war being waged against the people of Yemen.

These refugees were traveling to the Republic of Sudan utilizing the Bab-el-Mandeb, a strait near Yemen, Djibouti, and Eritrea which joins the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. This area is one of the most lucrative shipping lanes in the world transporting oil, military hardware and other commodities.

The Somalians living in Yemen are demanding that the international community investigates the circumstances surrounding the bombing. In addition, they are urging that those found responsible should be prosecuted for the crimes committed. (Saba News Agency, March 21)



A United States manufactured Apache helicopter attacked the vessel carrying Somalians who were fleeing from the war torn state of Yemen. Since March 2015, the White House and Pentagon has backed a war inside the country to defeat the Popular Committees led by the Ansurrallah Movement (Houthis) and allied military forces still loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Over 12,000 people have died over the last two years while tens of thousands of others have been injured. A blockade that often prevents essential supplies reaching the people of Yemen has 3.3 million people facing famine.

Saudi-GCC airstrikes and ground operations have targeted civilians, educational institutions,

power stations, communications facilities, water sources and municipal services. The Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has supplied the Saudi-GCC forces with sophisticated air power, refueling technology and geographic coordinates needed to inflict maximum damage on the ground.

The persons on board the vessel were said to have documents in their possession certifying them as displaced persons. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said of the massacre that the agency was “appalled by this tragic incident, the latest in which civilians continue to disproportionately bear the brunt of conflict in Yemen.”

U.S.-backed Forces Deny Involvement

In response to the charges that the Saudi-GCC Coalition was responsible for the massacre, the alliance in a statement said:

“We are also aware of allegations that the attack was carried out by a helicopter and naval vessel belonging to the Saudi-led coalition. We can confirm the coalition was not responsible for any attack on a refugee boat on Friday (March 17) and ... there was no firing by any coalition forces on Friday in the area of Hodeida.” (Middle East Eye, March 19)

Not only did the U.S.-allied forces deny responsibility, they then proposed the port city “be placed immediately under United Nations supervision”. Such an action by the UN would be in contravention of international law since Hodeida is part of Yemeni national territory.

For the UN to enact this suggestion would be tantamount to the colonization of a section of the country. Saudi Arabia has occupied sections of Yemeni territory in the recent past aimed at curtailing the advances of the Ansurallah movement which they claim are supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Attempting to conceal its political motivations the Saudi-GCC Coalition declared: “This would facilitate the flow of humanitarian supplies to the Yemeni people, while at the same time ending the use of the port for weapons smuggling and people trafficking.” Nonetheless, it is well documented that it is the forces loyal to Riyadh which have continued to target civilians in the war and prevent the transport of essential goods and services from reaching millions of people in Yemen.

The Somali government fresh from electing a new president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, is a member of the Coalition which is conducting war against neighboring Yemen. Mogadishu has become an outpost of U.S. and European imperialism which finances, trains and coordinates military operations both inland and offshore in Somalia.

Some 22,000 African Union (AU) troops from Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia are patrolling the capital of Mogadishu and other areas in the central and southern regions of the Horn of Africa nation. Pentagon and CIA advisors are embedded in the Somali National Armed Forces and AMISOM units to guarantee the security of the Federal Government which is still waging a war against the Al-Shabaab Islamic movement.

Former Somali Foreign Minister Abdisalam Omer did not immediately condemn the massacre of his own citizens on March 17. In a statement issued on March 18, Mogadishu said “We call on our partners in the Saudi-led coalition to investigate the raid.”

However, it is unlikely that any substantive investigation into these deaths will occur from Mogadishu, Riyadh or its allies in the Yemen war. During the course of developments since March 2015, the U.S. under both the previous administration of President Barack Obama and his successor Donald Trump, there has been no condemnation of the way in which the war has been carried out by the Saudi-GCC Coalition.

War Continues at Feverish Pace

Meanwhile, the situation in Yemen remains tense and volatile. On March 21 authorities seized a vehicle packed with explosives found traveling on the al Azrakain road north of the capital of Sana'a. (Saba, March 21)

On the same day according to Saba news agency:

"A man was killed by a hand grenade in a popular market in Azzan city of Shabwa province. A local official told Saba that an armed man dropped the grenade at the middle of the Qat Market in Azzan, killing the man and injuring 30 others, some of them are critically injured. Shabwa province experiences insecurity in the light of al-Qaeda controls on a number of areas."

It is the al-Qaeda presence in Yemen which provides another rationale for the escalation of Pentagon military strikes inside the country. In January, a disastrous commando operation authorized by President Trump resulted in the deaths of more than two dozen civilians as well as a Navy Seal in Bayda Province.

Stratfor, the intelligence consultancy firm based in Austin, Texas, said of the escalation in direct airstrikes authorized by Washington claiming to target al-Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) that:

"The United States has carried out around 30 airstrikes against the group in Yemen over the past several days, marking a significant increase in the pace of strikes from the previous year. In fact, the United States only publicly acknowledged carrying out 31 strikes during all of 2016." (March 6)

New York Times reporters Helene Cooper and Eric Schmitt wrote on March 2:

"The coordinated series of attacks occurred in three Yemeni provinces — Abyan, Shabwa and Baydha — that have been linked to terrorist activity, according to the Pentagon. The strikes were conducted against targets that had been developed before the January raid, a senior official said."

Consequently, the war against the people of Yemen has been intensified under the Trump administration. These developments coincide with the increasing role of the Pentagon in Syria which has announced the deployment of additional troops to this embattled state.

Official pronouncements from the Pentagon say approximately 500 U.S. Special Operations forces are already engaged in Syria ostensibly supporting the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) near Raqqa, the de facto capital of the Islamic State. An additional 250 Rangers and 200 Marines are reportedly in the same area.

Trump has ordered Secretary of Defense James Mattis to draft a plan to place even more troops in Syria by the end of March. These troops could come from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit transported by warships harboring 2,200 Marines currently moving in the direction of Syria along with the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, which has 2,500 troops en route to Kuwait.

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