

The US-Backed Coalition in Yemen: Triggering Another Massive Cholera Epidemic

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By [Randi Nord](#)

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The U.S.-supported Saudi-led coalition in Yemen carried out multiple airstrike attacks across Yemen on Friday, Islam's holy day. Although the raids were not absent of casualties, today's airstrikes appeared to target vital civilian infrastructure rather than human life. The continual attacks on water wells and treatment facilities make it seem as though the U.S.-backed coalition is attempting to trigger another massive cholera epidemic.

Last year, over [one million](#) people contracted cholera in Yemen and over two thousand died.

U.S.-backed warplanes belonging to the Saudi coalition launched at least five airstrikes on the Sana'a International Airport. The attacks took place immediately following the departure of UN envoy, Martin Griffith. Griffith had just met with the leader of the Yemeni Ansarullah revolution, Abdulmalik Al-Houthi to discuss the conflict and humanitarian disaster.

The coalition against Yemen has hit Sana'a's airport over 160 times since the war began despite the fact that the Saudi-imposed blockade forced the airport to shut down. Additional airstrikes on Friday targeted a farm, communication tower, and plastic factory.

Coalition planes also destroyed an important water project in Yemen's Hodeidah province: one of Yemen's poorest yet most populated epicenters as a major port city. The people of Hodeidah temporarily lost access to water. The United Nations estimates that 8.6 million children lack access to clean water putting them at risk for deadly illnesses like cholera.

You Can Deprive People of Water, but Don't You Dare Cost the UN Money

This is just the most recent U.S.-backed attack on a water supply in Yemen. Last week, coalition warplanes destroyed a major water project in Saada province which left over 10,000 people without access to clean water. The constant attacks on water systems have prompted condemnation from the United Nations — mostly because they're the ones footing the bill.

UNICEF deplores in the strongest terms yet another attack on vital and lifesaving water systems in Yemen. A large water facility in Sa'ada, northwest of the country, came under attack this week. This is the third such attack on the same facility. More than half of the project is now damaged, cutting off 10,500 people from safe drinking water. Continuous attacks on water systems in Yemen are cutting off children and their families from water; increasing the likelihood of water-borne diseases spreading in the war-torn country. For

families in Yemen, these crumbling basic services, are a matter of life and death.”

The [UNICEF statement](#) also mentions that two separate Saudi attacks on a water project in March cost the UN \$20,000. Last week’s incident will cost the UN \$300,000.

While these attacks on water supplies are certainly worthy of nothing but the strongest condemnation, the UN has failed to hold the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates accountable in any practical manner thus far. (Likely due to blackmail and financial manipulation.)

Creating Another Cholera Epidemic

These attacks on water infrastructure come at a crucial time.

Yemen’s summer weather creates the perfect environment to contract cholera. The [World Health Organization](#) reported an estimated 3,000 suspected cholera cases in just the first week of July — the highest yet this year.

The UK-based group, [Save the Children](#), warns that a U.S.-backed Saudi and Emirati advance on Hodeidah port could quickly exasperate the spread of cholera:

Yemen could be on the brink of a deadly new cholera epidemic that could affect thousands of people in the coming weeks unless urgent action is taken, Save the Children is warning. Save the Children is becoming increasingly concerned that Hodeidah city could be besieged as the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition makes advances in northern Yemen and continues to consolidate gains around the south of the city. This could potentially cut off Hodeidah city, its port and its people from the rest of the country.”

In 2017, over one million Yemenis contracted cholera — an epidemic completely unprecedented in modern times. Cholera is a very preventable — yet very treatable — disease contracted by drinking unclean water.

It’s clear that these U.S.-backed attacks on water infrastructure are very deliberate. The cholera epidemic last year was not an accidental byproduct of the blockade and arbitrary airstrikes — it was an intended consequence.

This is part and parcel of the Saudi coalition’s strategy to beat Yemenis into submission as coalition troops fail on the ground. Disease and famine are two of Washington and Riyadh’s favorite weapons to use in Yemen for this purpose.

Feature Image: A girl is treated for a suspected cholera infection at a hospital in Sanaa, Yemen. The World Health Organization says a rapidly spreading cholera outbreak in Yemen has already claimed thousands of lives. (AP/Hani Mohammed)

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