

US Congressman to John Kerry: Are We Committing War Crimes in Yemen?

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On Tuesday, US Representative Ted Lieu (D-CA) wrote a [remarkable letter](#) to Secretary of State John Kerry. Citing the “civilian carnage caused by the Saudi Arabia-led military coalition in Yemen,” Rep. Lieu expressed concern to Kerry that the US government might be “liable for war crimes in Yemen,” based on continued US material support for the ongoing Saudi attack on its southern neighbor.

According to Rep. Lieu, it seems clear that the Saudis are intentionally targeting civilians in Yemen and for the US to support Saudi Arabia in such an illegal and immoral war would mean Washington shares Riyadh’s guilt. Wrote Lieu:

The repeated and frequent strikes on civilians show that the issue is not the gross incompetence of the Saudi military coalition. Apologists for the Saudi coalition can perhaps defend a few errant bombs, but not over 70 unlawful airstrikes. It appears that either the Saudi coalition is intentionally targeting civilians or they are not distinguishing between civilians and military targets. Both would be war crimes. ...

Immediately stopping the aiding and abetting of the Saudi military coalition would not only help reduce the legal risk to US officials, it would send a strong message to the world that the US respects the Law of War and basic human rights.

Last weekend Saudi jets attacked a funeral in Yemen, killing and wounding as many as 1,000 civilians. Reports suggest after the initial strike on the funeral, Saudi planes returned to attack the first responders. Fragments of US-manufactured bombs were photographed at the site.

There is no word on a State Department response to Rep. Lieu’s letter.

Often such letters are sent by a group of Representatives to show solidarity on an issue. The appearance of only Rep. Lieu’s name on the letter could mean that his colleagues refused to join him in his query or perhaps that he did not seek out the support of others.

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