



## ***Committee on International Justice and Peace***

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July 19, 2018

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator,

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge Congress to take action to alleviate what the United Nations has called the "world's largest humanitarian crisis" in Yemen. The fact that this is a man-made crisis, stemming from a civil war fueled by regional powers and internal factions, makes the situation in Yemen all the more tragic. It also raises questions as to whether U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia may be exacerbating and prolonging the conflict.

The United Nations now reports that 75 percent of Yemen's population, over 22 million, are in dire need of some kind of assistance. Of that number, 8.4 million are on the brink of famine, a 24 percent increase over 2017, according to the UN. Thousands have been killed and injured, and over 10 percent of the population has been displaced. The healthcare system is failing and disease is spreading. The need is greatest in areas of ongoing conflict.

The port of Hodeida is one such area as it serves as the major conduit for 70 percent of all goods, including food and medicines, entering Yemen. Even before the outbreak of hostilities, Yemen was the poorest country in the Arabian Peninsula, almost entirely dependent on food imports. As the civil war in Yemen enters its fourth year, fighting around Hodeida has intensified between the U.S.-supported Saudi coalition forces and the Houthis, who have some backing from Iran and who are currently in control of Hodeida. The UN Special Envoy for Yemen visited Sanaa earlier this month seeking to mediate between the government and the Houthis. However, some analysts fear the Saudi coalition will soon launch an all-out assault on Hodeida. I would strongly advise the United States to refrain from supporting any such attack as it would exacerbate the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen.

To stop further bloodshed, I would urge the United States to support UN mediation efforts. Pope Francis has prayed for Yemen and called on the international community to bring parties to the negotiating table to alleviate the terrible suffering in that country. The United States should carefully examine its continuing support of Saudi Arabia's actions in Yemen and whether the \$110 billion sale of U.S. munitions is enabling Saudi Arabia to perpetuate the conflict at the cost of many more lives. Despite some easing of restrictions, Saudi Arabia remains a country where human rights, particularly religious freedom, are sharply curtailed or non-existent. Given its ties to Saudi Arabia, now is the time for the United States to exercise its influence and leadership in the region to help bring warring factions together to resolve this crisis and to provide robust humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio  
Archbishop for the Military Services USA  
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace