



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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December 4, 2018

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator,

In July 2018, I wrote to you expressing concerns about the horrific situation in Yemen. The tragedy has only gotten worse as the United Nations now estimates 14 million Yemenis, about half the population, are “teetering on the edge of famine.” An estimated 3 million people are displaced and the number of civilian casualties has reached the thousands. As the civil war in Yemen drags on toward its fifth year, the scale of what has been termed the “world’s largest humanitarian crisis” is staggering.

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I was pleased to hear of the Pentagon’s decision to end mid-air refueling of Saudi aircraft as the Saudi Arabian-led coalition has carried out an aggressive bombing campaign in Yemen that has hit hospitals, markets, weddings, and school buses and killed many civilians. While the Houthis have likewise launched attacks that have injured civilians, a group of experts on Yemen report that coalition air strikes have caused the most direct civilian casualties. I repeat the concern I raised in my July letter that U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia may be exacerbating and prolonging the conflict.

On October 30, Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called for a ceasefire in Yemen within 30 days. As that deadline approaches, I urge the Senate to exercise its influence to support international efforts, particularly those advanced by United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths, to end the conflict in Yemen that is fueled by regional powers.

The international community seems to be in agreement that this conflict, “made by men,” can also be resolved by a concerted effort on the part of people of good will everywhere. Allowing this purposeless struggle to continue would represent an abdication of the responsibility to be peace makers. In the shadow of the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, it is incumbent on the United States to advocate for a definitive peace process in Yemen.

Pope Francis has repeatedly called on the international community to encourage and provide support for mediation efforts in order that this crisis reach its end. He has petitioned the world to join him in prayer for the countless people suffering. Saudi Arabia remains a country where human rights, particularly religious freedom, are sharply curtailed or non-existent. Given U.S. 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