

ENDLESS WAR: ON SAUDI ARABIA'S STRIKE IN YEMEN

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developing countries on India's interests

The [attack on a bus in a crowded market in southern Yemen](#) that killed at least 45 people, most of them children, is the latest atrocity in the military intervention led by Saudi Arabia that began over three years ago. During this period, Riyadh has paid little attention to growing international criticism of its use of excessive force in Yemen, which plunged the country, among the poorest in West Asia, into what the United Nations calls the world's most severe humanitarian crisis. The bus attack comes a week after Saudi war planes targeted the port city Hodeida, which is already under siege, killing at least 28 people and wounding dozens more. Since Saudi Arabia launched air strikes on Yemen's Shia Houthi rebels, who captured huge swathes of territory, including the capital Sanaa, the civilian toll has been particularly high. The Saudi-led coalition, backed by the U.S., targeted public infrastructure, killed thousands of civilians, displaced hundreds of thousands more and even laid siege to major cities, blocking food and aid supplies. With no functional government in place and the rebels fighting the Saudi invasion, Yemen's 28 million people have been practically abandoned by the world. In recent years, the country has had an unprecedented cholera outbreak that killed over 2,000 people. The health-care system has collapsed, millions of people have been cut off from regular access to clean water, and more than eight million people threatened by acute hunger.

Saudi Arabia has not been deterred by any of this. Nor has it come under any serious international pressure to halt its catastrophic campaign. Its response to the bus bombing has been callous: it said the attack was "a legitimate military action", and accused the rebels of using children as human shields. The Saudis say the Houthi rebels are backed by Iran, its regional rival; also that its campaign has been on behalf of the internationally recognised government of Yemen. Curiously, Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi is nowhere to be seen; he is reported to be under house arrest in Riyadh. The military campaign has been a failure from a strategic point of view as well. After more than three years of relentless bombing, the rebels are still entrenched in their areas of influence, including Sanaa. It is high time the international community paid serious attention to the voices of the battered Yemenis. The U.S. continues to support this disastrous aggression, with other leading global powers failing to do anything more than condemn rights violations. The plight of Yemenis will get progressively worse unless enough pressure is brought to bear upon Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the *de facto* ruler of Saudi Arabia and the main architect of the Kingdom's aggressive foreign policy. He should stop the war and push for a negotiated settlement between the Yemeni government and the rebels.

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