



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

THE UN DECLARED IMMINENT FAMINE IN YEMEN: SAUDI COALITION TO BALME



Mark Lowcock at UN SC briefing, Oct 2018



Malnourished Yemeni child at a feeding center in a hospital in Hodeida, 2018

Yemen's Saudi-led coalition forced humanitarian crisis has peaked as Saudi and allies seek to dismember Yemen. Yesterday while addressing the UN Security Council UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock said, "there is a clear and present danger of an imminent and great big famine engulfing Yemen." He further emphasized "the famine would be much bigger than anything any professional in this field has seen during their working lives".

During his address Lowcock reiterated with about half of the Yemeni population completely relying on humanitarian aid for survival, Yemen is facing an imminent **ICSFT in special consultative status with the ECOSOC** / Conseil Oecumenique des Eglise 150, Route de Ferney 1211, Offices: 191 & 192, Geneva - Switzerland, Tel: +41227884808 / 5&6
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widespread Famine. According to his briefing, 14 million - about half of Yemen's population, are expected to experience pre-famine conditions.

In his address Lowcock attributes the current worsening of humanitarian crisis in particular, food crisis, to the ongoing attack on the key port city of Hodeidah. The aid chief said that after nearly four years of war and struggling to survive, millions of Yemenis are physically more vulnerable, as they are less able to withstand hunger, cholera and other diseases.

Saudi-led coalition's ongoing military siege of the Yemeni port city of Hodeida and indiscriminate air bombardment is the cause of this humanitarian catastrophe. The four year war on Yemen waged by a Western-backed Saudi coalition has been genocidal from the start, with up to 14 million people facing imminent starvation due to the years-long blockade on the Yemen, as well as from indiscriminate air strikes.

Notably the latest offensive on the Red Sea city of Hodeida has turned the world's already worst humanitarian disaster into a mass extermination. Hodeida is the entry point for 90 per cent of all food and medical aid into Yemen. Therefore following the military offensive on this port if the city's port stops functioning from the Saudi coalition's military offensive an entire country population of more than 20 million is on the brink of death.

Cutting off of food and other vital aid to civilian populations as a weapon is a blatant war crime and is absolutely inexcusable. It is also worth noting that the offensive on Hodeida would not be possible without the crucial military support of Western governments namely, USA, UK and France- the Saudi coalition is supplied with billions-of-dollars-worth of weapons by these western countries.

For the past four years the Saudi coalition supported with Western warplanes, bombs, missiles, attack helicopters, naval power, and air refueling, as well as targeting logistics, have waged a non-stop bombing campaign on Yemeni civilians.

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Nothing has been off-limits. Hospitals, schools, markets, mosques, funerals, wedding halls, family homes, farms, water-treatment plants and power utilities, all have been mercilessly obliterated. Even graveyards have been bombed. This air bombardment did not stop even during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. This past August the Saudi coalition air strike killed 40 students who were on their way to school.

The UN experts assigned to investigate the ongoing war in Yemen have reported that the Saudi coalition is committing violations of international law that amounts to war crimes. The report notes that coalition air strikes have caused most direct civilian casualties. The airstrikes have hit residential areas, markets, funerals, weddings, detention facilities, civilian boats and even medical facilities. “Based on the incidents they examined, the Group of Experts have reasonable grounds to believe that individuals in the Government of Yemen and the coalition may have conducted attacks in violation of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution that may amount to war crimes.”

At least 10,000 Yemenis had been killed by the fighting, with more than 40,000 casualties overall. The war has left 17.8 million food insecure. An estimated 130 children in Yemen die every day from extreme hunger and disease. Almost 400,000 children will need treatment for severe acute malnutrition in Yemen, but aid organizations are struggling to reach them all amid the largest cholera outbreak in modern history, and Saudi coalition offensive on the life line port and blockade of supplies of food and aid. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), estimates that more than 3 million Yemenis have fled their homes to elsewhere in the country, and 280,000 have sought asylum in other countries.

Despite several international calls and pleas to stop this war, the coalition is not withdrawing its genocidal war. Refusal by the coalition to suspend naval and air restrictions has caused “extreme suffering of millions of people. There is no sign of

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improvement in conditions for the Yemeni people, and in many if not most cases, things are simply getting worse.

The international community specifically, the UN has a duty and a responsibility to respond meaningfully to the dire situation in Yemen.

ICSFT calls on all Saudi coalition to stop the blockade and open the entry and distribution of food, medicines, and other humanitarian assistance to the millions of Yemeni civilians in desperate need. However, the humanitarian crisis will not end solely by providing aid to civilians. The UN and international community must work to end the conflict by pressuring Saudi Arabia and allies through political and legal means to stop the war on Yemen because ending the conflict is the only lasting solution for Yemeni civilians.

How many more Yemenis need to die before the international community recognizes the dire situation of human rights abuses and humanitarian catastrophe caused by the Saudi coalition?

The path to a sustainable peace can only be achieved through a political process, and we encourage all parties to engage in this peaceful and political transformation. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr Martin Griffiths and his Office.

Against this backdrop, we support the work of the independent Group of Experts, including its mandate to investigate and identify all those responsible for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in Yemen, to establish the facts and circumstances, and to identify those who should be criminally investigated for responsibility for grave crimes, including through command responsibility.

We also urge all States to refrain from providing arms that will be used in the conflict in Yemen.

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