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Four Years of the War on Yemen

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This week marks the fourth year since the beginning of the Saudi coalition's war on Yemen. In the last four years, the coalition has destroyed much of the country's infrastructure, devastated its economy, driven millions to the edge of starvation, and killed tens of thousands of Yemenis in its bombing campaign. That entire time, the U.S. has provided and continues to provide military assistance and diplomatic cover to the Saudis and Emiratis as they lay waste to their poorer neighbor. For more than two years, the Trump administration has [obnoxiously resisted](#) every effort to curtail or end U.S. support for the war. On its own terms, the war has been failure. The Saudi coalition has neither reinstated Hadi in power nor driven the Houthis from Sanaa, and in attacking Yemen it has strengthened Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and has cooperated with and armed groups aligned with AQAP.

Today 15 million Yemenis are at risk of starvation, more than 85,000 children have perished from hunger, and the coalition's economic war that has created famine in Yemen continues to starve the population. Reuters [reported](#) last week on the dire conditions in some of Yemen's remote villages:

As Yeman's war grinds into its fifth year with peace efforts stalling, ten-year-old Afaf's father sees little hope he will be able to give his starving daughter the food or healthcare she needs. Across Yemen's remote mountain villages, the country's war-induced economic crisis has left parents like Hussein Abdu destitute, hungry and watching their children waste away from malnutrition and unclean water.

The economic crisis has [not just been a byproduct of conflict](#), but was [created deliberately](#) by the policies of the Saudi coalition and the "legitimate" government under Hadi. Christoph Reuter [explained last year](#) how this happened:

When the Saudi offensive – initially conceived as an operation that would take mere weeks – still hadn't produced the desired results after a year, Riyadh pivoted to using starvation as a weapon. Starting in June 2016, President Hadi ceased sending revenues from the conquered oil fields to the central bank, transferring the money instead to an account in a Saudi Arabian bank. That July, he gave the order to cut the central bank's access to all hard-currency accounts abroad. Then, on September 18 of that year, he removed Bin Humam and moved the bank to battle-plagued Aden – allegedly to protect its independence.

Just days later, he said: “It may be that we will no longer be able to pay the salaries of state employees.” Hunger as a weapon. In the Houthi-controlled areas, civil servants have only received just short of four-months’ salary in the two years that have since elapsed.

The Saudi coalition has been using deprivation and grinding poverty to strangle and kill Yemeni civilians for years. Yemen was already a very poor country when they began their assault in 2015, and they have intentionally done what they can to make the people of Yemen even more miserable. The Saudi and Emirati governments stand guilty of committing the crime of mass starvation against the people of Yemen, and the U.S. has acted as their witting accomplice from the start. The U.S. and the Saudi coalition have destroyed an entire country, caused a famine, and inflicted incalculable harm on the health and development of an entire generation of Yemenis, and it has all been for nothing. As the war on Yemen turns four this week, opponents of the war must do all we can to make sure that it finally ends this year.

**- Daniel Larison is a senior editor at [The American Conservative](#), where he also keeps a solo [blog](#). He has been published in the New York Times Book Review, Dallas Morning News, Orthodox Life, Front Porch Republic, The American Scene, and Culture11, and is a columnist for The Week. He holds a PhD in history from the University of Chicago, and resides in Dallas. Follow him on [Twitter](#). This article is reprinted from [The American Conservative](#) with permission*

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