



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 10, 2015

## Iran Says Saudis Must Stop “Criminal Acts” in Yemen

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei made a public statement on April 9 denouncing the Saudi airstrikes in Yemen as “a crime” and “a genocide.”

“What the Saudi government is doing in Yemen resembles exactly what the Zionist regime did in Gaza,” Khamenei was quoted as saying by i24news in Tel Aviv, Israel. “This is a massacre, a genocide, and internationally prosecutable,” said the Iranian, denouncing the “massacre of children and the destruction of homes, infrastructure and wealth” of Yemen. “Certainly, the Saudis will suffer damage,” Khamenei warned, without specifying what that damage might be.



The bombing campaign condemned by Khamenei started on March 25 and is being waged by a regional coalition led by Saudi Arabia against the Houthi rebels that are backed by Iran. War planes from Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain have also taken part in the operation. President Obama has formed a Joint Planning Cell to interact with Saudi Arabia and coordinate “logistical and intelligence support” for what the Saudis have named “Operation Decisive Storm.”

The Houthi are in control of Yemen’s capital city of Sana’a and have been trying to seize the southern city of Aden from local militias. They also threaten to take control of the Bab-el-Mandeb — a strait located between Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula, and Djibouti and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa — that is one of the key strategic global energy chokepoints.

The Houthi are fighting against forces loyal to the country’s nominal president, Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who fled the country in March and is currently in Saudi Arabia. The Saudis and others have accused Iran of training and equipping the Houthi rebels in Yemen, but Iran has repeatedly denied the charge.

The Houthi rebels are allied with forces loyal to President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was president of Yemen from 1990 to 2012. Saleh left Yemen in January 2012 for medical treatment in New York City, and returned to Sana’a the following month. He is considered to be a behind-the-scenes leader of the Houthi forces.

Another force that has been designated as a terrorist organization — al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) — also maintains a presence in Yemen, particularly in Shabwa province. Saleh’s loyalists are al-Qaeda’s most powerful opponents, but the Saudi-led bombing threatens to weaken them. Therefore, the Saudi bombing, which is supported by the United States, will have the effect of helping al-Qaeda!

The civil war in Yemen is usually presented in the media as a classic religious-based conflict between the U.S.-backed coalition of Sunni Arab rulers led by Saudi Arabia in support of Hadi (a Sunni) and the



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Shia Houthi rebels. However, an April 8 report in RT disputed this categorization of the conflict:

Royally paid Saudi lobby hagiographers are once again frantically spinning the Sunni versus Shi'ite sectarian narrative — which totally ignores the mind-boggling tribal/class complexity of Yemeni society.... The Houthi rebellion includes both Sunnis and Shi'ites — thus totally debunking the Saudi narrative.

VOA News reported on April 9 that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also criticized the Saudi-led coalition engaged in strikes against Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen. Rouhani, in a televised speech on April 9, called for an end to airstrikes, saying they could not succeed, and said countries in the region should work toward a political solution. He declared:

A great nation like Yemen will not submit to bombing. Come, let us all think about ending war. Let us think about a cease-fire. Let us prepare to bring Yemenis to the negotiating table to make decisions about their future.... Let us accept that the future of Yemen will be in the hands of the people of Yemen, not anyone else.

Commenting on the crisis in an interview with PBS *NewsHour* on April 8, Secretary of State John Kerry said that the United States will not stand by while Iran provides support to the Houthi rebels.

"There have been — there are, obviously — flights coming from Iran [to Houthi-controlled territory]. Every single week there are flights from Iran and we've traced it and know this," Kerry said. "Iran needs to recognize that the United States is not going to stand by while the region is destabilized or while people engage in overt warfare across lines, international boundaries in other countries."

The *New York Times* reported on April 9 that the United States has recently increased its provision of logistical support, intelligence, and weapons to the Saudi campaign. In order to relieve concerns among those who feared that this support, which came just days after the announcement of a framework for a nuclear deal with Iran, would be too ambitious an agenda, Kerry said he was seeking to reassure allies, including Saudi Arabia, that the United States could "do two things at the same time."

An item posted on the [Ron Paul Institute website](#) on March 27 stated:

According to Washington, al-Qaeda and ISIS are the biggest danger facing the US. But in Yemen, the US has backed Saudi Arabia's bombing of the Houthis, who are bitterly opposed to al-Qaeda and ISIS? The neocons are all behind the bombing because they are dedicated to giving Iran a black eye in the hopes that any Iranian response will finally scuttle any nuclear deal with the country. The stakes are high so tune in to the Ron Paul Liberty Report for analysis and commentary.

As we noted above, the U.S.-backed Saudi bombing of the Houthis and their allies loyal to former president Saleh is beneficial to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, a designated terrorist organization. Our interventionist foreign policy is not only unconstitutional, it is also illogical.

*Photo of smoke rising after a Saudi airstrike in Yemen: AP Images*

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