



Humanitarian CEOs to U.S. Government: We have no means left to avert a catastrophe, please act now to save Yemeni lives

The stakes in Yemen are shocking and must be stated clearly: 14 million people are at risk of starving to death in Yemen if the parties to the conflict and their supporters do not change course immediately.

After years of conflict, people have exhausted their coping strategies and countless Yemenis are unlikely to live through the winter unless the parties to the conflict immediately cease hostilities, reopen all of Yemen's ports and allow commercial shipments to enter the country without delay, facilitate access to people in need for humanitarian staff and supplies, and take basic measures to stabilize the Yemeni economy, including payment of civil servant salaries.

If the Government of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Ansar Allah, and other parties to the conflict fail to take these steps, and if the United States does not use all levers of pressure to compel them to do so, responsibility for the deaths of many more Yemeni civilians will lie not only with the parties to the conflict, but with the United States as well.

This crisis is entirely man-made; the deaths already occurring in Yemen cannot and will not be attributed to natural disasters or environmental shocks, nor simply deemed inevitable consequences of war. The causes of death will be import restrictions, blockades, non-payment of government salaries, inflation, job losses, displacement, declining incomes, and violent attacks that kill civilians and destroy the infrastructure that delivers food and safe water: the results of more than three and a half years of warfare, economic siege, and widespread violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict. It is now clear that in addition to bombs and missiles, the parties to the conflict are undermining the Yemeni economy with policies and practices that have caused rampant inflation while the value of currency plummets. Starvation must not be used as a weapon of war against Yemeni civilians.

The United States is one of the most generous donors of humanitarian assistance in Yemen, but these contributions pale in comparison to the harm caused by U.S. military support and diplomatic cover to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. While the Administration has said that reaching a political settlement and relieving the humanitarian crisis in Yemen are top national security objectives, U.S. policies tell a different story. By providing such extensive military and diplomatic support for one side of the conflict, the United States is deepening and prolonging a crisis that has immediate and severe consequences for Yemen, and civilians are paying the price.

We, as humanitarian organizations, will stay and deliver assistance for the people of Yemen as we have for more than three years of brutal conflict, often at great risk. But now, as violence escalates, and the insidious tactics of war take hold of millions of people, we have no means left to avert a catastrophe in Yemen; every humanitarian effort can no longer prevent mass starvation if the war is not brought to an end immediately and urgent efforts undertaken to ensure food, fuel, and other vital supplies reach those in greatest need.

We are pleading with the United States to back up its recent call for a cessation of hostilities with genuine diplomatic pressure, and to halt all military support for the Saudi/UAE coalition in Yemen in order to save millions of lives. It pains us to write these words, but we cannot escape the truth: if it does not cease its military support for the Saudi/UAE coalition, the United States, too, will bear responsibility for what may be the largest famine in decades.

Signed,

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Abby Maxman, President & CEO, Oxfam America

Michelle Nunn, President & CEO, CARE US

Carolyn Miles, President & CEO, Save the Children USA

Joel Charny, Executive Director, Norwegian Refugee Council, USA