

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

April 8, 2019

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

According to multiple reports, two airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen over the last two weeks hit civilian targets in Kitaf and Sana'a and killed at least 20 people, including at least a dozen children. I previously served on active duty and taught the Law of Armed Conflict. These strikes look like additional war crimes being committed by the coalition.

The strikes once again call into question the coalition's killing of civilians and any role the U.S. may have played, including whether any U.S. intelligence, advice, information or weapons were used in conducting these airstrikes. We request that you provide responses to the questions below within 14 days of the date of transmission of this letter.

On May 26, 2019, according to reports, the coalition struck a hospital operated by aid organization Save the Children in a rural area of northern Yemen, a de-conflicted site that should never have been attacked. The strike killed at least seven people, including four children, and wounded eight others. Less than two weeks later, on April 7, an airstrike was conducted in the immediate vicinity of Al-Raei school for girls in Sana'a, killing at least 13 children and wounding more than 100.

Unfortunately, these horrific airstrikes on civilian targets are not isolated incidents but rather part of a long track record of bombing civilians at markets, weddings, schools, hospitals, funerals and other off-limits sites that have killed over 4,600 civilians since 2015. For years, these strikes were carried out in close coordination with the U.S., which sold precision-guided munitions to members of the coalition, provided regular mid-air refueling assistance and shared intelligence on targets. While the administration rightly halted refueling assistance in November 2018, it is unclear how much the U.S. continues to assist the coalition in conducting operations and what specific forms of assistance are being provided.

Any assistance of the United States in aiding and abetting what look like war crimes harms both our moral standing and our national security. We are giving terrorists ample recruiting material by our support of a coalition that keeps killing children. Our support of the coalition has also helped worsen the massive humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen.

In light of these latest strikes, we request responses to the following questions within 14 days of transmission of this letter:

1. In your March 28 appearance at the National Review Institute's 2019 Ideas Summit, you were asked about U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. You said, "Factually, frankly, the American role there has reduced civilian casualties there inordinately. I can – I think it's declassified. I can show you the statistics. Since America's begun to assist the Saudis in their campaign, the ratio of civilian casualties to effectiveness has decreased dramatically, and that's important. And so it's been a good thing that we've helped them." What specific activities are you referring to as our assistance to the Saudis that decreased the ratio of civilian casualties to effectiveness, and when did those activities begin?
2. Please provide the statistics referenced during your aforementioned remarks at the 2019 Ideas Summit regarding the ratio of civilian casualties to effectiveness in Yemen.
3. Has the U.S. Government asked members of the coalition for information regarding either strike described above? If so, at what levels has the communication taken place?
4. Does the administration believe independent investigations should be conducted for either strike?
5. Please list all forms of assistance the U.S. is currently providing to the Saudi-led coalition conducting missions in Yemen.
6. What resources is the Department dedicating to support UN efforts to broker a peace agreement in Yemen?

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Eliot Engel, Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee
The Honorable Michael McCaul, Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee
The Honorable Adam Smith, Chairman, House Armed Services Committee
The Honorable Mac Thornberry, Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee

TWL: cj