



Ro Khanna, M.C.

Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Hearing
on
Mass Atrocities Prevention I

February 6, 2018 – 10:30 a.m.
2255 Rayburn House Office Building

STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

The Honorable Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

I applaud this Commission invitation for calling today's hearing to assess preventable mass atrocities, and I appreciate its invitation to submit a statement on perhaps the world's most extensive case in point. Because of a three-year old Saudi-led war against the Houthi rebels, the people of Yemen are suffering deeply. The Saudi-led coalition is leading an air-strike campaign against the Houthis and blockading important sea and air ports. They are devastating what was already one of the poorest countries in the world. This humanitarian crisis has led to more than one million cholera outbreaks and seven million Yemeni civilians on the brink of starvation.

The United States, as a key ally of Saudi Arabia, has been aiding the coalition, participating in jet refueling, targeting and other military support. This is all happening without any declaration of war, which is a power exclusive to Congress under article 1, section 8, of the U.S. Constitution. Through our unauthorized participation in this conflict, the United States has become complicit in the suffering of millions. That is why I introduced H.Con.Res. 81 in September of 2017 which directs the President to remove U.S. Armed Forces from hostilities in Yemen absent a declaration of war or congressional authorization.

The indiscriminate bombing combined with a cruel Saudi blockade of key ports has resulted in a "famine of biblical proportions," according to Jan Egeland of the Norwegian Refugee Council. This catastrophe is compounded by limited access to safe water and medical resources. As such, the U.S. should not be providing aid to Saudi Arabia and the UAE as they lead this brutal assault on innocent people.

This humanitarian crisis is a mass atrocity. Famines and cholera outbreaks should not occur in our world today. We have enough food and medicine to feed and care for every living human. The fact that one child dies in Yemen every ten minutes due to a curable disease or a solvable famine crisis is a tragedy. The U.S. can help end the suffering by ending U.S. involvement in the conflict and calling for a ceasefire. We should continue to pressure the Saudi-led coalition to open up the sea and airports and work towards finding a political solution to end the conflict.

I wish to again commend the co-chairs and members of this commission for examining this critically important issue to peace and global stability. I encourage you to incorporate your findings into the decision-making process in Congress that determines U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East and the other conflicted areas where mass atrocities can be prevented.