

Humanitarian crisis to go on in Yemen without world attention: Analyst



Press TV has conducted an interview with Edward Corrigan, an international human rights lawyer, to discuss a warning by the Norwegian Refugee Council about a humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Yemen.

You can read a rough transcription of the interview below.

Press TV: These calls by the Norwegian Refugee Council are coming at a time when there have been concerns about Saudi Arabia violating human rights laws when it comes to its aggression on Yemen.

Corrigan: Well, there was... certainly the United Nations made some declarations that Saudi Arabia was violating the rights of children by having a massive attack on Yemen, putting children at risk and then the Saudis pressured the UN.

So, this has been an ongoing struggle. And then the United Nations organizations plus Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, other groups push back. The Saudis shouldn't of course be allowed to blackmail the United Nations technically when it comes to the rights of children.

Now, with the breakdown of peace talks, we're seeing an escalation of humanitarian crisis as the Norwegian Refugee Council indicates, as UNICEF issued a statement earlier this week saying that I guess they said 370,000 children are on the verge of starvation plus you're looking at half of the people in Yemen, which is the poorest country in the Arab world of course being attacked by the richest countries in the Arab world... and this is a humanitarian catastrophe at the highest order.

But, unfortunately, for the most part the world is ignoring this. The United States, Britain, the other major powers are not really directing attention to this. I think their attention is focused on other areas, certainly Turkey, what's going on with the refugee crisis in Europe.

So, we need to get the peace talks back on track. I think they should be sent to Oman, which so far has been the only country that's really been sort of neutral in this whole process, and we need to get the Saudis to stop attacking marketplaces, schools, hospitals as they've been it's been well-documented.

But the Houthi rebels are also been accused of hiding weapons in residential areas and of course using primitive weapons in attacking, which are not very accurate and they're firing them into Saudi Arabia and firing them in the fighting and now in Yemen itself.

So, we're seeing... again... at least many other groups have called this some sort of humanitarian intervention to end this conflict and of course we're seeing a humanitarian catastrophe.

But of course Saudi Arabia has this massive embargo, which is preventing food, medicine, and other stuff from going in.

Press TV: I like to pick up on that point, Mr. Corrigan. As you've just mentioned, despite the fact that the aggression is continuing and civilian areas are being targeted, all of this is compounded by the fact that there is a blockade on Yemen that has been imposed by Saudi Arabia.

Now, there have been calls, in different quarters, of setting up corridors for humanitarian aid to get in; however, that doesn't seem to be given the kind of urgency that it requires.

Corrigan: Well, Saudi Arabia certainly is punishing the entire population of Yemen as a result of their intervention. And they are, I guess, trying to force the Houthis

and of course the allies of the former President Saleh, who are fighting, I guess, primarily the Saudis and their allies, who are trying to reinstall former President Hadi, who of course has been deposed and is very weak and couldn't sustain any sort of opposition to the other groups in Yemen without the massive support they're getting from Saudi Arabia and the other allies and even hiring mercenaries.

So, we have... I guess it is a huge problem. Unless the United State, Britain and the Security Council start to take strong measures, we're going to have this massive humanitarian crisis.

This blockade should be ended completely. Corridors would be an excellent idea. I think through Oman, the Houthis still control most of the country but the south is under the control of, I guess, the Saudis and their allies with Mr. Hadi as a sort of figurehead. In fact, he just appointed as a governor somebody who's got strong ties to al-Qaeda.

So, it's a very very messy situation and of course children and civilians are bearing the brunt of this punishment.