

## Saudis committing war crimes in Yemen: Analyst

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Yemenis gather around a crater caused by a Saudi-led airstrike that targeted a building in the center of the capital, Sana'a, January 29, 2016. (Photo by AFP)

**Press TV has conducted an interview with Edward Corrigan, an international human rights lawyer, about Saudi Arabia's relentless airstrikes against Yemen and the reaction of international organizations to the humanitarian catastrophe in the impoverished Arab country.**

The following is a rough transcription of the interview.

**Press TV:** Let's not forget that human rights organizations are slowly waking up to the humanitarian catastrophe that's in the making in Yemen, specifically, let's not forget, Doctors Without Borders, whose own installations have been targeted by the Saudis. Where do you see this headed though?

**Corrigan:** Well, obviously there's rising international interest. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Red Cross actually for a long time has been talking about the sort of siege of Yemen and the fact that they've cut off food and there's a risk of many thousands of Yemeni children starving to death.

So, this is like a form of collective punishment against the civilians of Yemen, and clearly constitutes a war crime. There was a major report prepared recently for the Security Council that documents all sorts of human rights complaints, and the fact that Saudi Arabia has been bombing mosques and bombing schools, has been bombing infrastructure and markets. In fact, they even bombed the Iranian embassy to Yemen.

So, you have a massive attack on Yemenis' infrastructure. About 80 percent of the people who have

been killed are of course civilians. And this is of course an illegal attack and an act of aggression against Yemen targeting the people of Yemen and trying to bring them back under the control of the previous ousted president.

But it's more complicated. Saudi Arabia seems to be trying to set itself up as the defender of Sunni Islam and to attack the Shias within the Arab community. And I think they're concocting sort of... There is a rivalry obvious between Saudi Arabia and Iran, but Saudi Arabia is taking it to the next level and saying that 'Iran is a threat to all the Arabs, all the Sunnis have to rally around the Saudis to defend the Sunnis.' But this is really, I think, a pretext and a game that they're playing to mask themselves as the protectors of Sunni Islam as a way of legitimating the regime and of course they're spending hundreds of millions of dollars promoting their own rather extreme view of Sunni Islam – Wahhabism.

**Press TV:** No matter what excuse Saudi Arabia gives for its aggression against Yemen, it doesn't justify the targeting of hospitals and civilian infrastructure etc etc, and also we've seen evidence of cluster ammunitions being used.

**Corrigan:** That's right. Cluster ammunitions are basically a prohibited weapon. And the American government has sold them to Saudi Arabia and they're being used against civilian populations in Yemen. They're very dangerous weapon, they quite often don't explode; so, they're left lying around for kids to pick up later and the kids of course get killed or have their limbs blown off. So, this is... multiple war crimes and crimes against humanity piled on top of each other.

Now, the Secretary General Moon has strongly condemned the Saudis for this, but it remains to be seen if the Security Council is actually going to take the steps forward to strengthen the resolve and actually technically maybe even militarily intervene into the conflict. But with the ties that Britain has to the Saudis, the amount of money that... Britain is now the largest arms supplier to the Saudis. And of course, the Americans see themselves... the Saudis basically as their allies and usually do what the Americans want, even though it's a dangerous game, because the Saudis of course are just supporting al-Qaeda, even ISIS and all these radical Islamic groups, which are being used as a weapon to try to destroy Syria. And also there's a pressure cooker for the whole area, so it is bound to explode.

A few years ago, this wasn't a Sunni-Shia thing, but obviously it's about the Saudis wanting to control and destabilize the area and maintain their own dominance.