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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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J. Ditz

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Mattis: US Will Improve Saudi Targeting to Kill Fewer Yemeni Civilians

Speaking to reporters on Friday, Secretary of Defense James Mattis promised the US was going to take a series of new measures with respect to the Saudi Arabian military and its war in Yemen, trying to reduce the number of Yemeni civilians killed in Saudi airstrikes.



James Mattis and Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman

Mattis suggested this would largely be a matter of training, saying that the US is going to “[explain how you do bombing runs](#)” to the Saudi pilots, and increase Saudi military capability to do what they think they need to in Yemen without killing innocent bystanders.

The Trump Administration has expressed growing concern about the number of civilians the Saudis are killing, both in attacks and naval blockade. Officials say this is the [result of briefings given to President Trump about the mounting humanitarian crisis](#).

This newfound US interest in reducing the number of civilian deaths comes as Saudi airstrikes have spiked, and the number of civilian deaths is growing precipitously ever since the first US comments, suggesting they're having little impact.

Interestingly, other US officials have tried to downplay their direct role in the Saudi war in recent weeks, and despite Mattis' talk of improving the Saudis' targeting, other Pentagon officials have claimed that the US has nothing to do with Saudi targeting whatsoever, and can't be held responsible for what they hit.