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## *There is No “Proxy War” in Yemen*



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Those in the Western media too busy to be bothered trying to understand the complexities, intricacies and nuances of the Middle East often resort to concluding nearly all conflicts there are some kind of “proxy war” between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

This is usually out of ignorance, reducing disputes to the lowest common dominator of Sunnis versus Shiites or to that between their two most prominent patron states. Often though there is deliberate obfuscation; there must be justification for a US ally to cause regional mayhem on the pretext of containing an enemy. The easiest and most convenient

scapegoat has been Iran and efforts to contain its alleged expansionism by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and of course, Israel, go unchecked.

One of the most devastating and tragic episodes occurring in the Middle East today is in Yemen. But this is not a de facto proxy war its bankrollers hope we have all grown too weary of hearing to investigate further.

Despite the constant disclaimers by a lazy [media](#), there is no proxy war in Yemen.

The war which has ravaged the Arab world's poorest country since March 2015 is a Saudi-led, unilateral onslaught which has so devastated the nation, its economy, infrastructure and social services that malnutrition has become widespread and cholera epidemic.

Ostensibly, the Saudi-UAE military campaign was to oust Houthi-led rebels who unseated the deeply unpopular Saudi-backed puppet-president Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi in January 2015 (elected on a ballot in which he was the only candidate and who remained in power even after the expiration of a one-year mandate that had extended his term). The Houthis, a politico-religious group officially known as *Ansarullah* and named after their founder, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, initially formed in opposition to late Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The Houthis generally belong to the Zaidi school in Islam, a branch of the larger Shiite sect. Branding the Houthis as "Iranian-backed Shiite rebels" as is now routine, makes for easy and convenient categorization of who the "bad guys" are in Western and Gulf media.

But this is disingenuous. The inconvenient fact is Zaidis are generally closer to Sunni Islam than Shiite (and the longtime military, Saudi-backed dictator Saleh was Zaidi).

More significantly, other than voicing solidarity with the Houthis, there has been no substantive evidence of Iranian military intervention or that of affiliated parties in Yemen.

On the contrary, and starkly so, it has been the Saudi and Emirati governments' inhumane bombing campaign which has been the most glaring example of foreign interference in the internal affairs of another country.

When a school-bus was struck during an air raid that killed 40 children, it was initially justified as a "[legitimate military target](#)" by the Saudi coalition before international outrage finally led to the conclusion it was otherwise. On the other hand, intermittent Houthi missiles launched at Saudi military installations and considered evidence of foreign military supply belie the Houthis as a legitimate, capable, battle-hardened fighting force. Apparently, the regime cannot fathom that despite daily attack, they have had the muster to retaliate and demonstrate offensive, rather than strictly defensive, capabilities.

Yemen is not a sectarian conflict or one of proxies, but a war stemming from the fallout of removing yet another Saudi-backed ruler from power.

Since 2015, at least 10,000 Yemenis have been killed, 22 million are now in need some form of relief (out of a total population of approximately 29 million) and eight million are malnourished. These numbers can only be expected to climb after evidence has shown Saudi Arabia is [targeting food supplies](#).

The war waged in Yemen by Saudi Arabia and its allies and their wanton use of US and UK-supplied arms is everything short of a formal invasion. It is a one-sided, vicious military adventure which has rendered millions destitute and to date, has proven completely unsuccessful in fulfilling its stated objectives. The only proxies in this struggle are the victims of its war crimes; innocent men, women and children starved or killed, stand-ins for an apparition of a foreign power waiting to be found.