



[U.S. National Security Advisor Meets with Officials in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates Regarding the Devastating Conflict in Yemen](#)

This week, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and other administration officials traveled to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to discuss the conflict in Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition, spearheaded by the regimes in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, has played a major role in exacerbating the Yemeni conflict and has had a detrimental effect on the humanitarian crisis there. It has drawn international criticism for both its destructive bombing campaign which has killed civilians, as well as the blockade that has worsened the dire humanitarian situation on the ground. Sullivan is the highest-ranking Biden administration official to visit the two countries, and observers are hopeful that the trip underscores the need to engage with them due to their central involvement in the crisis. The White House expressed that the meetings in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates highlight the Biden administration's continued commitment to prioritizing human rights concerns as a main focal point of its foreign policy and diplomacy efforts.

The Biden administration has tried to take a sharper and more critical approach toward the Saudi regime's behavior in recent months. U.S. officials have largely stayed clear of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) since publicizing a report earlier this year which showed his direct involvement in the murder of journalist and Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi, a shift in tone from the previous Trump administration. However, members of the White House have acknowledged the need to engage with senior Saudi officials like MBS in order to address the complex and multi-layered dynamics of the conflict in Yemen. Now, National Security Advisor Sullivan and others are attempting to interact with the regimes in Saudi Arabia and the UAE – two of the major culprits of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen – to try to help bring an end to the devastating impacts of the conflict.

Analysts are worried because the efforts to alleviate the Yemeni conflict have seemingly been at a stalemate. The new U.N. Special Envoy to Yemen, Hans Grundberg, recently stated that the country is “stuck in an indefinite state of war” and that resuming negotiations to end the conflict will be difficult. The Saudi regime and its coalition allies have been directly responsible for the humanitarian atrocities in Yemen, as their indiscriminate airstrikes have targeted civilian infrastructure and the blockade has created the worst ongoing famine in the world. Earlier this year, to try and gain favor with the Biden administration, the Saudi regime offered a ceasefire deal to the Houthis rebels but the proposed arrangement was more performative than genuine as a political PR tactic.

While the United States has formally provided weapon and tactical assistance to the Saudi military operation in Yemen, early during the Biden presidency, it was announced that the U.S. would cease these efforts. However, ultimately, little progress in actually halting the conflict has been made. Above all, the United States hopes that the dialogue channels over the conflict in Yemen will at least help to alleviate the humanitarian disaster. The situation is clearly one of the major foreign policy priorities of the Biden administration, but rights advocates remain skeptical about whether or not the talks will prove fruitful in pressuring the Saudi regime to cease its destructive actions in Yemen.