

## **FAQ on the Senate Joint Resolution Invoking the War Powers Resolution to End Unauthorized U.S. Military Involvement in Yemen**

*Senators Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Mike Lee (R-UT), and Chris Murphy (D-CT) have introduced S.J.Res.54 to withdraw U.S. armed forces from Yemen's civil war. The Yemen Peace Project, Win Without War, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation call on senators to support this resolution. We have prepared this document to address questions about the effort.*

### ***1. What does the resolution do?***

If enacted, the joint resolution would end U.S. military involvement in the Saudi-led coalition's war in Yemen, which includes intelligence-sharing and U.S. provision of mid-air refueling services to coalition warplanes conducting aerial bombings in Yemen – activities that are the leading cause of civilian casualties in the war according to the United Nations, and a [foremost driver](#) of the world's worst humanitarian emergency.

### ***2. How would passage of the resolution impact the fight against AQAP and ISIS in Yemen?***

The resolution does not impact the U.S. military campaign against Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) or other military activities authorized under the 2001 AUMF. Passing this resolution would only end unauthorized U.S. coordination and support for Saudi-led coalition forces fighting against the Houthis. Additionally, ending the civil war is key to undermining extremist groups' appeal in Yemen. In fact, the 2017 Worldwide Threat Assessment published by the U.S. intelligence community [concluded](#) that "AQAP and ISIS's branch in Yemen have exploited the conflict and the collapse of government authority to gain new recruits and allies and expand their influence."

### ***3. Why does the War Powers Resolution (WPR) apply to U.S. involvement in Yemen's war?***

The War Powers Resolution ([50 U.S.C. Chapter 33](#)) ensures congressional oversight over "the introduction of the United States Armed Forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances" (Sec. 2(a)). Section 8(c) of the WPR defines the "introduction of the United States Armed Forces in hostilities" to include "the assignment of member of such armed forces to command, coordinate, participate in the movement of, or accompany the regular or irregular military forces of any foreign country or government when such military forces are engaged, or there exists an imminent threat that such forces will become engaged, in hostilities."

**The WPR applies because U.S. armed forces meet the Section 8(c) threshold:** they are involved in the coordination and accompaniment of Saudi-led coalition forces that are involved in active hostilities, by providing mid-air refueling for Saudi-led coalition bombers and providing intelligence for targeting assistance.

### ***4. What specific forms of U.S. military support for the coalition are documented?***

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- Pursuant to a cross-servicing agreement, the U.S. Air Force [provides mid-air refueling services to coalition warplanes](#);
- The United States has shared intelligence for airstrike targeting since 2015, including [surveillance feeds](#) from U.S. drones to assist with target selection;
- U.S. advisors have [intermittently provided](#) training and targeting advice to Saudi military personnel in the coalition's Riyadh-based joint command center.

***5. Do the current AUMFs authorize U.S. military involvement in the Saudi-led war in Yemen?***

Neither the 2001 nor 2002 AUMF authorizes U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Further, neither the Trump nor the Obama administration have cited the 2001 or 2002 AUMF as the legal justification for U.S. military support for the Saudi-led coalition's intervention against the Houthi rebels in Yemen.

***6. Would invoking the WPR end or impose limitations on arms sales to Saudi Arabia?***

Invoking the WPR would not end or limit arms sales to Saudi Arabia or other coalition partners.

***7. How would passage of the bill impact the situation on the ground in Yemen?***

Ending U.S. military support for the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen would significantly curtail further Yemeni civilian casualties from airstrikes, as the coalition could not continue the current tempo of its air campaign without U.S. military support. The coalition bombing campaign is responsible for a [majority](#) of the war's direct civilian casualties, and warplanes have repeatedly targeted [markets](#), [schools](#), [hospitals](#), and [funerals](#). Additionally, the campaign has directly [contributed](#) to Yemen's disastrous humanitarian crisis by destroying civilian infrastructure, including water treatment facilities and sewage systems, creating the conditions necessary for the outbreak of the largest and fastest-growing cholera crisis ever recorded. The coalition has also targeted [farms and fishing vessels](#), making it impossible for Yemen to feed itself.

***8. Would ending U.S. military support for the Saudi-led coalition help bring about an end to the Saudi intervention and the Yemeni civil war?***

Yes. The United States cannot credibly call for a political solution to the conflict while continuing to arm one side. Ending U.S. refueling and other logistical support will likely curb future bombing runs and send the much-needed signal that it is time for Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and President Hadi to come to the table to negotiate a political settlement.

***9. What is Iran's involvement in Yemen and what would this resolution do to reduce it?***

Withdrawing U.S. military support will help reduce Iran's influence in Yemen. Since the war's start, Iranian involvement has been limited and opportunistic, and has increased as the Saudi-led coalition's campaign has escalated. As Katie Zimmerman from the American Enterprise Institute has [pointed out](#), "giving more bullets and bombs to the Saudis will make things worse, rather than better.... It is likely to drive Yemeni rebel factions even further under Iranian control, and enable the Saudis to continue to ignore a growing threat in Yemen from ISIS and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)."

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