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On Sunday, thousands of Yemenis gathered at the United Nations building in Sana'a calling for an international investigation into the U.S-backed Saudi assault on a funeral. The attack was carried out with warplanes and munitions sold to the Saudi-led coalition by the United States. The U.S. Air Force continues to provide midair refueling to Saudi warplanes. According to the U.N., more than 4,000 civilians have been killed and over 7,000 injured since the Saudi-led coalition bombing began last year. Airstrikes have reportedly caused about 60 percent of the deaths. We go to Sana'a to speak with Yemeni journalist Nasser Arrabyee and Sarah Leah Whitson of Human Rights Watch.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I wanted to see if we can reach Nasser Arrabyee, the Yemeni journalist based in Sana'a, founder and president of the media service company Yemen Now. Nasser, are you with us?

**NASSER ARRABYEE:** Yes, yes. Thank you very much.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Can you tell us—you're speaking to us from the capital. Can you talk about what you understand happened, who you've spoken to? And what evidence is there of the U.S. support for the Saudi attack?

**NASSER ARRABYEE:** Well, no single Yemeni doubt that Saudi Arabia was not the one who did this crime at all, because it is not the first, it is not the last. Saudi Arabia has been committing war crimes since March 26, 2015. So, without doubt, it's Saudi Arabia.

But let me tell you what is the—what is also the thing. The big criminal is Obama himself. This is how Yemenis see to the situation, because every Yemeni believe that Saudi Arabia would not have done that at all, would not have done a war in Yemen, without the approval of Obama. And it is very clear to everyone that Obama wanted to appease the Saudis after the Iranian nuclear deal. But, unfortunately, he appeased them by the Yemeni blood. And this is a big problem to the Americans. Obama is destroying the values and the principle of America now. Obama is leading the world to the law of jungle. Obama, unfortunately, is doing—is killing

Yemen now, killing Yemen. No killer except Obama in the eyes of Yemenis now, because everybody knows Saudi Arabia and what it would do if there is not the approval of Obama.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Nasser, you [tweeted](#) this morning, "Obama Has been killing Yemen humans With Saudi hands for about 20 months now." Also, from

*The Intercept*

, they

[write](#)

, "Multiple bomb fragments at the scene appear to confirm the use of American-produced MK-82 guided bombs. One fragment, posted in a picture on the Facebook page of a prominent Yemeni lawyer, says '

FOR

USE

ON MK-82

FIN

,  
GUIDED

BOMB

.'" Nasser Arrabyee?

**NASSER ARRABYEE:** Yes, yes. Well, let me tell you something very important. You know, the problem why—or the reason why we say Obama is killing Yemen, is killing Yemen humans, is simply because Obama or United States, the administration of the United States, is cooperating. And this is announced. This is known to everyone. But it is not only a matter of cooperating with the refuel or with the intelligence or with the logistic things. No. But it is a will. It is Obama will to support the Saudi Wahhabi regime, which means to us is Obama now is supporting the Qaeda, ISIS, because Obama is saying he's supporting the internationally recognized government, the exiled government based in Riyadh now. Obama should know—and I think he knows—that three members, at least—three members, at least, of this government are designated by Obama, by Treasury Department, as global terrorists. I can give you the names now. Three, at least, of this government in Riyadh are Qaeda, ISIS leaders. They are leading their operators here in Yemen, using the American weapons, using the Saudi money. This is what Obama is doing in Yemen. Obama is leading the Americans to the law of jungle and the world to the law of jungle. He is crazy now.

**AMY GOODMAN:** In June, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon removed the U.S.-backed, Saudi-led coalition from a blacklist of forces responsible for killing children. Ban later acknowledged he was coerced into doing so after the kingdom threatened to cut off funding to the U.N.

**SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON:** The report describes horrors no child should have to face. At the same time, I also had to concede the very real prospect that millions of other children would suffer grievously, if, as was suggested to me, countries would defund many U.N. programs. Children already at risk in Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen and so many other places would fall further into despair. It is unacceptable for members states to exert undue pressure.

**AMY GOODMAN:** That's U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Sarah Leah Whitson?

**SARAH LEAH WHITSON:** The fallout to U.S. and U.N. credibility from this support for Saudi Arabia and its disastrous war in Yemen has been quite severe. Not only is the U.S. implicated in the crimes that are being carried out by the Saudi coalition in Yemen, not only has the U.N.'s credibility been tarnished by basically accepting a bribe to take Saudi Arabia off of this list of shame of worst attackers on children, but now we have the U.S. government standing behind a government, the Saudi coalition, that is carrying out the exact same kind of strikes in Yemen—an attack on a funeral—that extremist groups in Iraq, ISIS, has been carrying out in Baghdad for over a year, and, again, making it very hard for people to tell the difference about who the extremists really are. Finally, the recent vote on—at the U.N. Security Council about a resolution on Aleppo was significantly stymied because the U.S. just could not maintain condemning an attack by Russians and Syrian government forces on civilians, while it's supporting, aiding and abetting very similar attacks that its partner, its number one arms client, is carrying out in Yemen.

**AMY GOODMAN:** I wanted to turn to Senator Chris Murphy, who's spoken out against the U.S. support for the Saudi-led bombing campaign in August. He was on CNN

**SEN. CHRIS MURPHY:** There is an American imprint on every civilian life lost in Yemen. Why? Well, it's because though the Saudis are actually dropping the bombs from their planes, they couldn't do it without the United States. It's our munitions, sold to the Saudis. It's our planes that are refueling the Saudi jets. And it's our intelligence that are helping the Saudis provide their targeting. We have made a decision to go to war in Yemen against a Houthi rebel army that poses no existential threat to the United States. It's really wild to me that we're not talking more about this in the United States. The United States Congress has not debated a war

authorization giving the president the power to conduct this operation in Yemen.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Connecticut Senator Murphy went on to say that Congress can put an end to arms sales in Saudi Arabia, again, speaking on CNN.

**SEN. CHRIS MURPHY:** Congress may have a chance to weigh in, in September, because the Saudis need more bombs, and so they need the Congress to reauthorize a new sale of weapons. So Congress can step in and say enough is enough.

**AMY GOODMAN:** And Senator Murphy said that the perception in Yemen is that the United States is responsible for the war, not Saudi Arabia.

**SEN. CHRIS MURPHY:** If you talk to Yemenis, they will tell you that inside Yemen, this is not perceived to be a Saudi bombing campaign, this is perceived to be a U.S. bombing campaign. What's happening is that we are helping to radicalize the Yemeni population against the United States.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Which is exactly what Nasser Arrabyee, our guest, just said from Sana'a. So, he was talking about cutting off the weapons supply back in September. It's now October, Sarah Leah Whitson.

**SARAH LEAH WHITSON:** Mm-hmm. And there was a remarkable vote in the Senate, which was defeated, to suspend arms sales to Saudi Arabia, but there were more votes in support for it than ever could have been imagined. So, clearly, there is a shift and a reconsideration. And, of course, most importantly, on Saturday, the State Department announced that it was going to review what it called its drastically reduced support for Saudi Arabia in the war in Yemen. So, clearly, the administration is feeling the heat.

We need an international investigation, a true, impartial investigation, to understand what is happening with these airstrikes and to hold those responsibility to account. And I think the U.S.

Congress has a major role to play, not only in suspending arms sales to Saudi Arabia, but in forcing this administration to tell us exactly what sort of assistance it has been providing and what its involvement has been in every single one of the unlawful strikes that we've documented. There are answers that the U.S. government, that the National Security Council, the State Department, owes the American people as to what exactly it's doing in terms of its support for this war in Yemen. And it's only given very vague and cryptic answers.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Why is President Obama doing this?

**SARAH LEAH WHITSON:** Well, as your guest said and as the administration has itself repeatedly conceded, this war in Yemen is the price of the Iran deal. The Yemeni people are paying the bill for Saudi being very upset about the Iran deal. And I think the administration calculated that this would be a very short war, that the Houthis would be quickly dislodged, and they could befriend and win over the Saudis. What they didn't count on, and what we've seen time and again in the region, is that the war unfolds into a massive disaster and the U.S. in way over its head.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Nasser Arrabyee, we have 30 seconds. Your final message to the American people from Sana'a, from Yemen?

**NASSER ARRABYEE:** The final message is that the—we want to salute the American heroes, despite all the war crimes of Obama, because there are a lot of people who—I mean, the Americans, all the Americans, we respect them. We know that they are with us. Human Rights Watch and the senators like Chris Murphy and Rand Paul and a lot of senators, they are heroes. We respect them. We salute them. We know they are going to rescue the values and the principles of America against Obama. Obama is misled. Obama is bylined by Saudi dirty money. Saudi dirty money is destroying the principles of American values of America. They should stop Obama and every official who does not know what's happening in Yemen now.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Let me just ask—let me ask Sarah Leah Whitson, very quickly: Last month, the U.S. Senate approved a billion-dollar arms deal to Saudi Arabia; is there any chance this might be revoked, if there are concerns that the U.S. itself is involved with war crimes?

**SARAH LEAH WHITSON:** Absolutely. Even if the deal itself is not revoked, delivery can be

suspended, delivery can be delayed. And we've already seen the U.S. government, for example, suspend the transfer of various weapons during the courses of various wars. So they can absolutely suspend this. And I think the U.S. government knows that, really, the time is up for this war and its support.