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A new United Nations report detailing atrocities in Yemen's -civil war calls on the U.N. Security Council to refer alleged actions by all parties in the conflict, including the Houthi rebels and U.S. ally Saudi Arabia, to the International Criminal Court for possible war crimes prosecutions.

The [report](#), prepared by a panel of experts designated by the U.N. Human Rights Council, also urges the Security Council to expand sanctions against individuals involved in the conflict and to establish a criminal investigations body.

"The international community can and should take further initiatives to help bridge the acute accountability gap that persists in relation to the conflict in Yemen," the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen said in its report, which focused on events between July 2019 and June 2020 and was based in part on more than 400 interviews.

The group said there were "reasonable grounds" to believe that the Yemeni government and the Iran-backed Houthis, along with the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, were responsible for a range of rights violations, including unlawful deaths, disappearances and imprisonments, along with sexual violence and the use of child soldiers.

The conflict, which erupted in 2015 and spawned a massive humanitarian crisis, has pitted the country's internationally recognized government, which receives support from a Saudi-led coalition that includes the UAE, against the Houthis, who are likewise vying for control of the country.

The panel also said other nations, including Iran, France, Canada, the United States and Britain, helped perpetuate the war by supporting the parties to the conflict through arms transfers and other assistance.

Radhya Almutawakel, chairperson of the Yemeni organization Mwatana for Human Rights, said the report “made crystal clear that no warring side has clean hands, and states must do a lot more to ensure accountability and redress.”

Muhsin Siddiquey, Yemen country director for the aid group Oxfam, said the findings “should shame all those who are fueling this conflict by selling arms to the belligerents.”

Representatives of the governments of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the United States, along with a representative for the Houthis, did not immediately provide comment on the report.

The Trump administration has scaled back military support to Saudi Arabia in its air war against the Houthis, [halting its earlier practice](#) of refueling Saudi jets in 2018 after repeated incidents of civilian death triggered congressional outcry. The kingdom has nevertheless remained an important U.S. military partner and customer for U.S. weaponry, particularly as the administration has sought to strengthen its standing against Saudi rival Iran.

In one example cited by the report, an Aug. 31, 2019, airstrike attributed to the Saudi-led coalition on a community college in Dhamar governorate — which was being used as an informal detention center by the Houthis — allegedly killed 134 detainees.

The report said a coalition investigation concluded that the site, which was publicly known to be in use as a makeshift prison, was a valid military target because it housed Houthi weapons and was not on a “no-strike list” of civilian targets.

“Even if this were the case, the presence of military targets does not negate the coalition’s legal obligation to take account of the likely civilian impact of attacks, undertake necessary proportionality analyses and ensure sufficient precautions in attack,” the experts stated.

The panel also blamed the Houthis for acts of indiscriminate violence prohibited under international humanitarian law, including an April 5 mortar attack on a prison in the city of Taiz,

which allegedly killed at least six female prisoners. It also said the Houthis had recruited children as young as 7 to serve as fighters.

The report said the Yemeni government was responsible for other actions, including attacks on a major wheat storage and processing site in the port city of Hodeida that is important to the food supply across the country. As the war has dragged on, Yemen has been gripped by a health crisis, including widespread malnutrition, a problem compounded by the novel [coronavirus](#).

The report's authors said that Yemen's judicial system is not capable of addressing the alleged violations and that the response of external bodies, such as a board set up by Saudi Arabia to look into alleged civilian casualties caused by coalition airstrikes, had been inadequate.