

U.S. Approves More Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia



Washington, August 10 (RHC)-- The U.S. State Department has approved the potential sale of nearly \$1.5 billion in munitions -- including 130 Abrams battle tanks and 20 armored recovery vehicles and other equipment -- to Saudi Arabia. The announcement coincides with Saudi Arabia's military campaign in support of Yemeni forces loyal to the exiled government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi in their effort to oust Houthi forces from the capital, Sanaa.

The high number of civilian casualties has led human rights groups to criticize airstrikes by the Saudi and Yemeni loyalists. The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, which oversees foreign arms sales, said that General Dynamics will be the principal contractor for the sale, adding it would contribute to U.S. national security by improving the security of a regional partner.

Saudi Arabia and its mostly Gulf Arab allies intervened in Yemen's civil war in March 2015 after the Houthi movement had pushed the Hadi administration into exile in Saudi Arabia. On Tuesday, the Saudi-led military coalition conducted air strikes on Sanaa for the first time in five months, residents said, after U.N.-backed peace talks to end the conflict broke down over the weekend.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch called on the United Nations General Assembly in June to suspend Saudi Arabia from the U.N. Human Rights Council until the military coalition stops killing civilians in Yemen.

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