

Documents Show U.S. Could be Implicated in War Crimes in Yemen



Washington, October 14 (RHC)-- The United States could be implicated in war crimes for supporting Saudi Arabia's deadly military campaign in Yemen, official documents show. According to the documents obtained by Reuters, U.S. government lawyers warned Washington last year that it might be considered a "co-belligerent" in the Saudi war under international law.

State Department officials were skeptical of the Saudi military's ability to prevent killing of civilians and destroying "critical infrastructure" in its strikes against Yemen, according to the e-mails and other records as well as interviews with nearly a dozen officials with knowledge of those discussions.

Nonetheless, the U.S. government has continued to authorize weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, showed the documents, which date from mid-May 2015 to February 2016. During that period, State Department officials reviewed and approved the sale of precision munitions to Saudi Arabia to replenish bombs used in Yemen.

In one of the e-mails obtained by Reuters, a specific reference was made to a 2013 ruling from the war crimes trial of former Liberian president Charles Taylor that dramatically broadened the international legal

definition of aiding and abetting such crimes.

According to the ruling, "practical assistance, encouragement or moral support" is sufficient to determine liability for war crimes. The U.S. and Britain are the main backers of Saudi Arabia in its war against the impoverished nation.

Washington and London have sold weapons worth of billions of dollars to the kingdom, with Riyadh acknowledging that British and American military officials were in command and control centers for Saudi airstrikes and had access to lists of targets in Yemen.

Just over the weekend, more than 140 people were killed after Saudi military aircraft attacked a hall in Sanaa, Yemen while rows of people were attending a funeral.

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