UN Criticizes Saudi Arabia for Attacks on Yemen Civilians

United Nations, December 23 (RHC)-- The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has criticized Saudi Arabia for carrying out a "disproportionate amount" of attacks on civilian areas in Yemen.

Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein made the comments during the first public session of the UN Security Council on Yemen on Tuesday. Hussein said he has observed heavy shelling from the ground and air in areas of Yemen with a high concentration of civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools. And he added that a "disproportionate amount appeared to be the result of airstrikes carried out" by Saudi warplanes.

Saudi Arabia started military attacks against Yemen in late March purportedly to undermine the Houthi Ansarullah movement and bring fugitive former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power.

The rising death toll and dire humanitarian situation in the impoverished Arabian Peninsula country has raised concerns among human rights groups as Yemeni sources say more than 7,500 people have been killed and over 14,000 others injured.

Hussein, meanwhile, urged the Security Council to do everything in its power "to help restrain the use of force by all parties and to urge all sides to abide by the basic principles of international humanitarian law."

According to diplomats, Tuesday's meeting was aimed at shedding more light on the conflict and pressuring all sides to seek an end to the crisis via negotiations. A renewable seven-day ceasefire under UN auspices was agreed between warring parties in Yemen and began on December 15th, but it has been repeatedly violated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Hussein warned the 15-member council of potential consequences of "a failed state in Yemen," saying they would "inevitably create safe havens for radical and confessional groups" such as Daesh.

Rights groups have censured the U.S., the UK and other Western countries for providing the Saudis with arms, which have been used in the war in Yemen.

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