

**Adam Smith, US Representative and  
Chairman of the US House Armed Services  
Committee,  
2264 Rayburn Office Building,  
Washington, DC 20515**



Dear Congressman Smith,

I am writing on behalf of the Organization for World Peace to express my concerns regarding the United States' commitment to consistently provide humanitarian aid to Yemen. Within the last several months, the Trump administration has routinely demonstrated an unwillingness to fulfil promised relief contributions to the Yemeni people. As Chair of the House Armed Services Committee you are uniquely positioned to resolve this situation and protect the people of Yemen.

Since the civil war began, Yemen has been plagued by non-stop violence and humanitarian suffering. According to UNHCR, the war has led to over 100,000 casualties and has displaced more than 3.5 million people. With fewer than 30% of the country having access to clean drinking water, cholera and diphtheria outbreaks have been frequent as well. These horrific living conditions make Yemen an ideal nesting ground for COVID-19, and more than a hundred positive cases have already been confirmed across the country. Health officials fear that the coronavirus may have already spread undetected throughout Yemen, and that the state's overwhelmed medical system is incapable of combating the pandemic. The Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation warns that \$1.3 billion in aid is needed for Yemen to stand a chance of fighting COVID-19.

The United States has traditionally been a key source of aid to Yemen, having contributed more than \$1.1 billion since July 2018. However, President Trump announced in March 2020 that the United States would immediately cut more than \$73 million in aid, citing concerns that the Houthi rebels were stealing relief packages from the local population. While there is ample evidence to suggest that these allegations are true, it has been the Yemenis civilians who have borne the consequences of this American policy rather than the Houthis.

Despite reversing course and announcing a substantial \$225 million contribution in May 2020, irreversible damage had already been done. Several international relief efforts, including the U.N. Children's Fund, who are heavily reliant upon American funding, were forced to reduce and even suspend some of their aid campaigns to Yemen during the two month absence of United States support.

President Trump is also continuing to defund the World Health Organization (WHO), which has for years been a primary on-the-ground force in Yemen. The WHO is expecting a \$150 million fallout in Yemen, and will likely need to eliminate programs that provide the war torn country with fundamental medical resources.

We at the Organization for World Peace are gravely concerned about the Trump administrations humanitarian relief policy towards Yemen. His pledged \$225 million aid package will not be enough to make up for the consequences of choosing to cut funds to Yemen in March. The U.S. President's unwillingness to cooperate with the WHO makes the already vulnerable Yemeni population even more susceptible to a coronavirus outbreak.

Congressman Smith, we urge your office to immediately take action in order to minimize the health repercussions of COVID-19 in Yemen. Specifically, we call on you to:

- Use your stature as a chair member of the House of Representatives to ensure that President Trump never again cut humanitarian aid to Yemen;
- Demand that the United States resumes funding the WHO; and,
- Advocate for an increase in American funding to Yemen in order to make up for the two months when the United States withdrew its support.

As someone who has previously led bipartisan initiatives to reduce American military intervention in Yemen, I trust that you recognize how serious a deadly coronavirus outbreak in this country would be. Without your help, the United States may never become fully committed in providing Yemen with a consistent supply of aid, furthering the risk of this country becoming the next COVID-19 hotspot.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Koenigsbauer  
Advocate, the Organization for World Peace



Jonathon Arrell  
Vice President, The Organization for World Peace