



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 26, 2021

The Honorable
Peter DeFazio
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. DeFazio:

Thank you for your February 24 letter to President Biden regarding the war and humanitarian situation in Yemen. The White House has requested the Department of State respond on the President's behalf.

The Administration shares these concerns over the conduct of the Saudi-led coalition's offensive operations in Yemen. As President Biden has said, we are recalibrating our relationship with Saudi Arabia to elevate attention to human rights and ensure the relationship reflects American values. The President announced on February 4 that the U.S. was ending support for offensive operations by the Saudi-led coalition, including relevant arms sales. This includes the suspension of two previously notified air-to-ground munitions sales and an ongoing review of other systems. The Administration is committed to abiding by statutory requirements and following established practice for congressional consultation on any future arms sales, including those that are necessary to support Saudi Arabia's defense of its territory and people.

Complementing these actions are the Administration's reenergized diplomatic efforts to resolve the war in Yemen, led by Special Envoy Tim Lenderking. SE Lenderking is working diligently on the dual tracks the President outlined on February 4 – supporting the UN Special Envoy's political efforts and doing all we can to alleviate the continued humanitarian suffering. To that end, SE Lenderking continues to engage with our partners in the region and continues to stress that the United States opposes restrictions on the flow of commodities into and throughout Yemen. The United States also helped lead the push for additional humanitarian funding, which led to commitments from 37 different countries on March 1 of more than \$1.7 billion, including \$191 million from the United States and \$430 million from Saudi Arabia. On March 11, 2021, USAID announced a shift in its partial suspension of INGO humanitarian assistance in northern Yemen, implemented in March 2020 in response to Houthi interference in humanitarian

operations. USAID has resumed such support for INGO partners with new operational parameters, including new monitoring requirements to track attempted interference. This change is consistent with SE Lenderking's efforts to mitigate humanitarian suffering.

SE Lenderking is engaging with Yemeni civil society and working closely with UN Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths to ensure inclusive peace negotiations. The United States consistently raises allegations of human rights abuses and violations of international law with our partners, and supports access to Yemen for media, NGOs, and the UN to investigate reports of abuses. Accountability for abuses will be a key component of a durable solution to the conflict in Yemen. SE Lenderking is also engaging regularly with senior Saudi and Emirati officials to ensure they are taking all necessary efforts to promote a peaceful resolution to the Yemen conflict and to prevent destabilizing activity.

To protect against the very real threat to Saudi Arabia from aerial and maritime attacks, the United States will continue to support Saudi Arabia with its defense against inbound threats to the Kingdom, its people, and the more than 70,000 U.S. citizens resident in Saudi Arabia.

We will continue working with Congress as these policies develop. We hope this information is helpful to you. Please let us know if we may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Naz Durakoglu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Naz Durakoglu
Acting Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Legislative Affairs