

## Who's MAWO?

Mobilization Against War and Occupation is a coalition of over 50 endorsing organizations and also individual members, most of which are working class organizations, student groups, grassroots organizations, and ethnic communities. This is including Indigenous activists and groups from the third world as well as women, youth and elder fighters for social justice and against war and occupation. We are the people in struggle because we are people that suffer at the hands of imperialism. We have the energy, drive and will for change because it is in our interest to make this change in order to create a better world for all of humanity!

## Get involved



## with MAWO!

### Meetings & Forums

For time and location: [@MAWOvan](#) OR Website:

[mawovancouver.org](http://mawovancouver.org)

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### UPCOMING EVENT ENDORSED BY MAWO:



**INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF ACTION OCTOBER 2-8**  
[WWW.UNACPEACE.ORG](http://WWW.UNACPEACE.ORG)

**MARKING 16 YEARS OF U.S.-LED WAR & OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN**

**>> US OUT OF AFGHANISTAN!**  
**>> US/SAUDI STOP BOMBING YEMEN!**  
**>> US/Canada/NATO: HANDS OFF SYRIA, IRAQ, VENEZUELA, NORTH KOREA, THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA!**

**Rally & Petition Drive**  
**SATURDAY OCTOBER 7 2017**  
**2pm Vancouver Art Gallery**  
**(Robson at Howe Street)**  
**Downtown Vancouver, Canada**

**MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR & OCCUPATION**  
**INFO@MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG | @MAWO\_VAN**  
**WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG**

stop the war! stop the occupations!

[www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org)

**MAWO 66**

newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2017

mobilization against war & occupation

## Veterans For Peace: No More Troops in Afghanistan



The Trump Administration announced it has given Defense Secretary Jim Mattis the authority to determine troops levels in Afghanistan. It is widely believed that Mattis favors sending several thousand more U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Why? Perhaps to break the “stalemate” as described by the Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, Army General John Nicholson when describing the war to the Senate Armed Services Committee. In his June 13th testimony, Secretary Mattis told the same committee, “We are not winning in Afghanistan right now.”

Veterans For Peace calls for a different direction than more war. We call on Congress to stop funding war and demand a plan for a peaceful solution. We call on the President to immediately begin withdrawal of U.S. troops and take a new direction towards diplomacy and peace. And we call on the people of the U.S. to resist war and demand policies that foster peace and prosperity at home and in Afghanistan.

It should be clear after 16 years and the death of tens of thousands of people that no one is a winner in Afghanistan. There is no clear concept of what it means to win there. In fact, it is no longer clear why the U.S. continues to keep troops in Afghanistan and now is on the brink of increasing the number of men and women in harm's way.

The U.S. has claimed to be at war in Afghanistan to deny “terrorists” training and

staging areas to attack the United States and to protect the people of Afghanistan. After this long period of war, what does the U.S. have to show for its military efforts?

Since the horror of September 11, 2001, the U.S. has been on a path of war, wreaking havoc on millions of people around the globe. Because of displacement, death and maiming of loved ones by U.S. wars, animosity towards the U.S. has increased and the world has become less safe. The animosity caused by the wars has created a larger pool of people willing to fight the U.S. In 2001 al Qaeda had limited influence and ISIL did not exist. Now Al Qaeda and ISIL have affiliated groups and sympathetic supporters around the globe.

The protection of the Afghan people has been a total failure. It has been widely reported that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan found that there were 11,418 civilian casualties (3,498 deaths and 7,920 injured) between January and December 2016, an overall increase of 3 percent. An appalling number of those casualties were children – 923 deaths, and 2,589 injured – a 24 percent increase over record-high numbers from 2015. In addition, 3,535 coalition forces have died; three of which were recently killed as a result of an insider attack fire from an Afghan soldier. We must add to these losses all the people who are physically and psychologically broken and families torn apart. The human cost is immeasurable. But there is also a dollar cost to war. The U.S. has spent over \$1 trillion in this failed and depraved effort in Afghanistan. These dollars represent lost opportunities to repair U.S. infrastructure, pay for healthcare, create jobs and address a host of human needs.

It is not too late for a different direction. War was always the wrong option. Perhaps it was not clear 16 years ago. It should be clear now more than ever!

[www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)

## U.S. OUT OF SYRIA NOW

By Nita Palmer

Another 59 civilians have been killed by US coalition air strikes in Syria's northern city of Raqqa. Twenty-one of the dead are children. The air strikes are said to be targeting Daesh (ISIS) fighters, but to date have killed more than 300 civilians in the city.

The US government claims their air strikes and military intervention in the country have humanitarian aims – to rid the country of the terrorists of Daesh. Yet The Nation magazine reports that “[H]uman rights groups and local reporters say that, across Syria in recent months, the US-led coalition and US Marines have bombed or shelled at least 12 schools, including primary schools and a girls' high school; a health clinic and an obstetrics hospital; Raqqa's Science College; residential neighborhoods; bakeries; post offices; a car wash; at least 15 mosques; a cultural center; a gas station; cars carrying civilians to the hospital; a

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# YEMENS’S CHILDREN UNDER ATTACK!

By Azza Rojbi



As families in North America are preparing for the new school year, children in Yemen are struggling to stay alive amid the war that is ravaging their country. The people of Yemen have been suffering under a brutal bombing campaign carried out by Saudi Arabia’s government and its allies. Over two years of war and destruction have left the country in the midst of a humanitarian crisis that’s getting worse by the day. In a joint statement, three UN agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP) described the most recent situation in Yemen as “the world’s worst cholera outbreak in the midst of the world’s largest humanitarian crisis.” Humanitarian crisis intensifies!

The indiscriminate bombing campaign by the Saudi-led coalition has destroyed homes, schools, hospitals, roads, markets, mosques, and other economic and civilian infrastructure. Coupled with the inhuman naval, aerial and land blockade imposed on the country by Saudi Arabia, Yemen faces huge shortages of many essential items, including food, fuel and medical supplies. According to the UN’s latest report on the situation in Yemen, “21.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, of which 9.9 million are children and 1.4 million are internally displaced.” This lack of food, medicine and proper healthcare and sanitary infrastructure has plunged the country into a widespread cholera epidemic. According to the New York Times 5,000 Yemenis are infected with cholera each day. Children suffering from acute malnutrition account for a big number of fatalities by the disease.

In a report by UNICEF titled “Falling through the cracks - the children of Yemen” the situation for children in Yemen was described as “A Calamity.”The report states that “Nearly 2.2 million children are acutely malnourished and require urgent care. Close to half a million children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, a life-threatening condition that has seen a drastic increase of 200 per cent since 2014.”

Children of Yemen: deprived of their lives and future

The Saudi government backed by the US and their allies has no respect for human life. Their brutal bombardment and war on Yemen is stripping Yemeni children of their childhood and destroying the hopes and future of a whole generation. As the UNICEF representative in Yemen, Meritxell Relaño, described it “Relentless fighting and destruction has scarred children for life.”

One of the recent horrendous crimes by the Saudi-led coalition was an airstrike on an apartment building in the residential neighbourhood of Faj Attan in the south of Sana’a. The airstrike killed 14 civilians and injured another 16, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The world saw the atrocities that happened through the photos of the young Buthaina Muhammad Mansour, believed to be four or five years old, in her hospital bed as she tries to open one of her severely swollen eyes with her index finger and thumb. Buthaina is the sole survivor of the bombing that flattened her house and killed her parents, siblings and uncle. Imagine what went through the mind of this innocent child while she was stuck underneath the debris of her home for more than 14 hours before being rescued. Imagine how she must of felt

when she learned that all her family members were killed by the bombing. Buthaina lost her home, her family, her innocence, and her childhood in what the Saudi-led military coalition called a “technical mistake”!!! Buthaina’s story and suffering is shared by millions of children and families in Yemen, struggling to survive under the war and the economic blockade imposed on their country by Saudi Arabia’s government and its allies. The war is destroying the spirit and hope of children in Yemen. In this back to school season, the children of Yemen are being deprived from the opportunity to go to school and from the dream of building a better future. At least two million children, or about 30 per cent of school-age children, are out of school according to UNICEF. An estimated 2,108 schools across the country can no longer be used as they are either destroyed, damaged or being used for other purposes.

Amnesty international has recorded several instances where the Saudi fighter jets bombed schools with civilians and students in them or in the vicinity. One example is the Al-Asma School in Mansouriya village which was bombed on August 24, 2015.

A student at the school spoke to Amnesty International about how she and her classmates continue to fear future attacks on their school: “We are living in fear and in terror. Today I saw the plane and I was very afraid and terrified. The sound today was loud but the feeling I had was like that of all of the girls at school today, of course we are afraid... We just want the aggression [coalition forces] to stop [shelling] on schools. It is a shame for them to bomb kids, a shame for them to attack schools. Their kids study in Saudi Arabia in private universities and everywhere. Our kids are bombed.”

Hands off Yemen! #KefayaWar on Yemen!

The Saudi-led coalition has been bombing Yemen since March 2015 in an attempt to reinstate their puppet, former president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, to power. Since day one, the United States provided the coalition with political, military and logistical support. Saudi and UAE fighter jets are being refuelled mid-air by US Air Force tankers.

In addition the US and the UK are helping the Saudi government and their coalition allies to restock their weapon inventory. According to Amnesty international the US and the UK have sold over \$5 billion worth of weapons to the Saudi government since the beginning of the war; more than 10 times the \$450 million they claim have spent in humanitarian donations to help the millions of people suffering in Yemen.

Despite all of this, the Saudi government is failing in its attempt to restore to power its puppet regime and crush the spirit of the brave Yemeni people. The Yemeni people continue to fight and protest against the foreign Saudi-led aggression on their country. They continue to share with the world their voice, their photos, and their stories to try to break the media silence and resist against the lies and deceptions by the Saudi government and their allies.

Let’s join the Yemeni people to expose the atrocities committed by the US, Saudi Arabia and their allies in Yemen. Let’s join the people of Yemen in standing up for their self-determination, sovereignty, human rights and a bright future for the children of Yemen!

**US/Saudi Arabia Hands off Yemen!**  
**Stop Bombing Yemen!**  
**Lift the Blockade on Yemen!**

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funeral; water tanks; at least 15 bridges; a makeshift refugee camp; the ancient Rafiqah Wall that dates back to the 8th century; and an Internet cafe in Raqqa, where a Syrian media activist was killed as he was trying to smuggle news out of the besieged city.” The Syrian Network for Human Rights also reports that in May and June, the US was responsible for more civilian deaths than Syrian government forces, Russian forces, and Daesh combined. Amnesty International has also confirmed US forces have used white phosphorus munitions in Raqqa. White phosphorus is a deadly toxin which burns skin to the bone and will kill and maim indiscriminately. The Convention on Conventional Weapons prohibits its use in areas populated by civilians, although the US is not a signatory to that convention. Just how is this a ‘humanitarian’ intervention if the US military is killing and injuring the very people it claims to be protecting?

## Syria Then and Now

The families killed in these most recent air strikes are just the latest victims in a war which has killed over 400,000 people and devastated a once-thriving country. Just a few short years ago, Syria was known as a country which blended ancient and modern, featuring ancient UNESCO World Heritage sites alongside modern markets, malls, and universities. Today, large sections of the country remain under the control of Daesh or other terrorist groups). The Syrian government has been steadily gaining ground in the battle against these terrorists, but the war has taken a devastating toll on the country. A quarter of the country’s schools are closed and nearly half of Syrian children cannot attend classes, according to UNICEF. Syria’s once-prized public health system has been decimated, with 57% of hospitals damaged and 37% no longer functioning, according to Physicians for Human Rights. The NGO Save the Children estimates that 200,000 Syrians have died from chronic diseases due to a lack of drugs and treatment.

Every aspect of daily life has been disrupted. Fuel shortages are common, and electricity is available only a few hours a day, if at all. The war has resulted in a 90% inflation rate, making even basic necessities out of reach of many families. Certain foods, including meat and some vegetables, are only available for steep prices on the black market.

Nearly five million Syrians have been forced to flee the country. The majority have spent months or years in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, particularly Lebanon. While safe from the immediate danger of war, these families face overcrowded conditions and a lack of basic necessities such as food and medicine. Ordinary life has been put on hold for those living in the camps, often with no work available for the adults and no school for the children.

In the areas still under siege by Daesh or other terrorist groups, people live every day in fear for their lives. Tim Ramadan, a journalist living in Raqqa, described life under Daesh in a recent article for The Guardian: “We lead double lives as a condition of our survival. Everyone has at least two personalities. The first personality despises ISIS, but if this personality emerges outside the home it could lead to execution. Therefore a second personality is necessary... That second personality must express an affinity for the militants, and emerges as soon as you see an ISIS member or you are stopped at one of their checkpoints.”

## Fighting Terrorism or Fuelling Terrorism?

The United States and their allies claim to be fighting terrorism, but in reality they have directly contributed to the rise of Daesh and other radical terrorist groups. From the war in Iraq to the CIA’s support for al-Qaeda linked groups in Libya and elsewhere, the US has created the conditions in the region for these groups to flourish. In Syria specifically, the US and their allies trained, armed and funded so-called ‘moderate rebels’ to fight against the Syrian government. In reality, however, many of these ‘moderate’ groups hold ties to al-Qaeda linked terrorist groups, particularly Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (formerly Jabhat al-Nusra). Professor Joshua Landis, director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma, told the LA Times in 2015 that “[t]he problem is this kaleidoscopic number of opposition groups that are constantly making deals with each other... everybody has been associated with al-Qaeda at some point”.

But wait – didn’t this ‘war on terror’ begin with the US fighting al-Qaeda? Are these not the very extremists who the US claims were responsible for the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center? Why, then, is the US government supporting groups affiliated with al-Qaeda in Syria?

## US Strategy: to Remain in Syria Long-Term

The US government talks of bringing human rights to Syria; yet it is they who are bombing schools, hospitals, and mosques. They talk of ending terrorism; yet it is they who are funding, arming, and training the terrorists they claim to fight.

The only objective the US has managed to achieve in Syria is creating chaos and division in the country. They attack Daesh, yet they refuse to cooperate with the Syrian government or army – the organization best equipped to fight this deadly and dangerous group. In fact, the US government is funding ‘rebels’ to attack the Syrian people and the Syrian government, who could be their best ally in the fight against Daesh.

Even the ‘rebels’ they are funding are fighting each other. In January 2016, the LA times reported that “CIA-armed units and Pentagon-armed ones have repeatedly shot at each other while manoeuvring through contested territory on the northern outskirts of Aleppo”.

In short, US intervention and meddling has done everything but establish human rights and stop terrorism. It has, however, divided the country and provided an opportunity and justification for US military intervention.

It seems they have found exactly that opportunity in Syria’s Kurdish area in the north. Reuters reported in August that Talal Silo, a spokesperson for the American-backed and Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), said that the SDF believes that Washington has strategic interests in the country. “They have a strategy policy for decades to come. There will be military, economic, and political agreements in the long term between the leadership of the northern areas [of Syria] and the US administration.”

The US has already established military bases in the area and has forces deployed in several locations in northern Syria along the border with Turkey. Silo also stated that, “[The US recently] referred to the possibility of securing an area to prepare for a military airport. These are the beginnings – they are not giving support just to leave. America is not providing all this support for free.”

The White House has denied claims that they are pursuing a long-term occupation in Syria. However, we only need to look to the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan for a blueprint of a likely scenario in Syria. In both those countries, the US has established a decade-plus occupation and built massive military infrastructure as well as large embassies.

US strategy in Syria and the region as a whole is not focussed on bringing peace, democracy, or human rights to the region. The US and their allies are pursuing this strategy in order to establish military, political, and economic control in the region and gain an upper hand over rising global economic competitors such as China and Russia, and to ward off the threat that independent countries, particularly Iran, pose to their economic interests in the region.

## US Out of Syria Now!

The ‘civil war’ in Syria today is a product of dangerous policies which place the economic interests of the US capitalist class above the lives of Syrians and people around the world. The US and their allies cannot and will not put an end to the war or resolve Syria’s internal conflicts. In fact, most of the fighting and division which is tearing the country apart today was created by the US government itself.

The future of Syria must be left to Syrians to decide. Military intervention by the US and their allies has failed to bring any sort of peace, democracy, or human rights to Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, or anywhere else they have intervened. It is well beyond time for the US to end any and all intervention in the country and let the Syrian government and people put an end to terrorism and war in their country.