



Quakers in Britain condemn UK and US airstrikes in Yemen and call for peaceful and just solutions to conflict in the Middle East

Quakers have called on the UK government to use peaceful means to resolve conflicts in the Middle East, following the attacks on Houthi targets in Yemen.

On 11 and 12 January, the United Kingdom and United States carried out dozens of air strikes in Yemen, in response to attacks from the Houthi political and military group on commercial ships in the Red Sea. Spokespeople for the Houthi group have said that their actions are aimed at putting pressure on Israel and its allies to end the attack on Gaza.

Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship for Quakers in Britain, said: “Quakers believe that ‘true peace cannot be dictated, it can only be built in co-operation between all peoples.’

“As well as having an inevitable cost for the people of Yemen, these bombings risk escalating the already heightened tensions in the Middle East and making the outbreak of wider conflict in the region more likely. It is also concerning that Parliament was not consulted about the strikes.”

Since 2015, the people of Yemen have suffered greatly from the war between the Yemeni government, the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition. According to the UN, 377,000 people have died in the war and the resulting famine. The UK is deeply implicated in the conflict, having supplied billions of pounds worth of arms to the Saudi-led coalition despite evidence they were being used in violations of international law such as attacks on civilians. The recent UK and US bombings threaten to perpetuate the violence in Yemen even further.

Quakers in Britain call on the UK government to stop the use of air strikes and to use diplomacy and other peaceful means to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East and avert the outbreak of costly military conflict. This must include addressing the drivers of tensions in the region; working for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and seeking a just peace in Palestine and Israel in the longer-term.

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