

Yemen health ministry says Saudi war kills 100,000 newborns every year

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A child suffering from malnutrition lies on a bed at a treatment center in al-Sabeen Maternal Hospital in the Yemeni capital Sana'a. (Photo: AFP)

Sanaa, December 23 (RHC)-- A Yemeni health ministry official says 100,000 newborns die every year in the impoverished country due to the ongoing war of aggression and total blockade imposed on Yemen by the Saudi-led military coalition.

In an interview with Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Najeeb al-Qubati announced the grim news, saying this means that every two hours six Yemeni children lose their lives due to the years-long Saudi-imposed war.

He added that the Saudi-led coalition has been preventing the entry of advanced medical equipment since March 2015, when Saudi Arabia along with several of its allies invaded Yemen to bring the former Riyadh-backed regime back to power and vanquish the country's Ansarullah movement. "We have been unable to bring medical personnel [into the country] due to the siege and aggression," Qubati said.

The undersecretary of Yemen's health ministry also pointed out that the crippling and inhumane siege imposed on the country by the invading coalition targets Yemeni children "while they are still fetuses in their mother's wombs." Qubati also warned that the rates of malnutrition among Yemeni mothers are very high.

The health official further warned that a pair of newborn conjoined twins at al-Sabeen Hospital in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, urgently needed to be transferred abroad for the separation surgery at a specialized medical center.

"Because of the aggression and blockade, we cannot perform the separation surgery for twins, or proceed with the medical procedures before and after the separation surgery," Qubati added.

Back in September, Yemen's Human Rights Center said in a report - titled Childhood with the Color of Blood and the Smell of Death – that some 7,200 Yemeni children were either killed or wounded in the imposed war. Of these ill-fated children, 3,468 were killed, it revealed.

The center further said at the time that some 5,500,000 Yemeni children were also at the risk of catching diseases due to malnutrition and shortage of health services.

Late last year, Yemen's health ministry warned that around three million children under the age of five were suffering from malnutrition, 400,000 of whom were suffering from severe malnutrition and at risk of death every ten minutes if they did not receive appropriate medical care.

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