

YEMEN HOUTHIS

Party Portrait

The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, are a Zaydi-Shi'ite organization currently engaged in a loose coalition with Yemen's former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh. Having mobilized a broad coalition of religious parties, leftists and rebels, uniting in a radical anti-establishment movement, the Houthis are a potent political and military force. While the Houthis' capacities have been damaged by Saudi-led airstrikes, they retain control of Yemen's capital city of Sana'a. Their capacities are buttressed by extensive financial and material support from Iran, the Houthis' main external sponsor.

Key Interests

- Establish new, independent state in northeast of Yemen
- Restore the Zaydi Imamate and rule over Yemen
- Return of former President Saleh
- Continue flow of weapons and resources from Tehran
- Defeat AQAP
- Ensure dominance of Shia groups

Sources of Leverage

Military - The Houthis have the potential to threaten the Yemeni government and its allies with violence. This could also include stoking Sunni - Shia tensions.

Regional Strategy

The Houthis' regional strategy has consisted of recruiting allies to provide political, military and financial support to the rebellion. Most importantly, this includes Iran, a natural ally to this Shia political-religious movement. The Houthis have also built alliances with Hezbollah, Russia and Syria. Furthermore, they have also engaged former President Saleh in a coalition, given his widespread popularity amongst many Yemenis and the armed forces. The precise ultimate objective of this strategy, however, remains unclear - and different factions of the Houthis may articulate different objectives.

Powerful Individuals

Abdul-Malik al-Houthi (leader), Yahia al-Houthi (brother of leader)

Potential Negotiation Moves

Secure more direct engagement from Iran, escalating tensions from a proxy war between Tehran and Riyadh to direct conflict between the parties drawing in much of the Sunni and Shia alliances in the region.

Internal Conflicts

The Houthis are engaged in a civil war with the Yemeni Government, while also fighting to weaken AQAP.

Memberships

N/A

Allies

SYRIA Government, RUSSIA, LEBANON Hezbollah, IRAN

Partners

N/A

Rivals

N/A

Adversaries

SAUDI ARABIA, UNITED STATES, UNITED NATIONS, EUROPEAN UNION, ISREAL, EGYPT Government, MOROCCO Government, JORDAN, SUDAN, KUWAIT, UAE, QATAR, BAHRAIN

Active Armed Opponents

AQAP, YEMEN Government, ISIS

Proxy

N/A

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

N/A

Aid Donor

N/A