

Houthis shell villages in Yemen's Dhale, Lahj, Marib, Taiz provinces



- **Government troops on high alert as militia's attacks and bombardment continue**

AL-MUKALLA, Yemen: The Houthis have escalated their bombardment of villages in Yemen's Marib, Lahj, Dhale and Taiz provinces over the past 48 hours while the Yemeni government has ordered the army to remain on high alert to repel Houthi attacks.

Local media reports and residents said that the Houthis discharged artillery shells at homes in the Malaa region of the province's central region on Saturday evening.

Images shared on social media show flames pouring from the targeted homes, with no confirmed reports of casualties.

Other Houthis shelled houses and farms in Al-Dhafer districts of the southern province of Lahj on Saturday, prompting residents to flee their homes.

In the northern portion of the province of Dhale, a Houthi sniper shot and wounded an eight-year-old child, while residential areas and villages were shelled.

Residents said that Najema Mubarak Ali was grazing livestock next to her home in the Al-Markhaza region of Dhale when she was shot in both legs by a Houthi sniper.

She was transported to hospital in the southern city of Aden after bullets pierced both legs and severed nerves and arteries.

The most recent Houthi attacks in the three provinces occurred days after dozens of artillery shells struck villages in the Mawiyah District in Taiz, destroying homes and farms and killing a number of animals.

The escalation of Houthi military operations and bombardment of residential areas, primarily in the province of Lahj, has prompted Yemen's Prime Minister Maeen Abdul Malik Saeed to meet in Aden with the Ministry of Defense leadership, the commander of the 4th Military Region, and the governor of Lahj on Saturday to discuss how to counter the Houthi attacks while also keeping the army on alert.

At the same time, the international Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor reported that three million residents of Taiz are suffering from a lack of basic amenities such as food and medication as a result of the Houthi siege of the city, and that they are in danger of being killed or injured by Houthi shelling of residential areas.

The organization said the UN-brokered cease-fire that reduced hostilities across the country did not halt the Houthi siege of Taiz and the suffering of the people there.

"The slowing of the conflict in Yemen should not detract from the plight of millions of civilians who are dying slowly as a result of the siege imposed on the city of Taiz for years," the organization said.

It added that the siege of Taiz “is a form of collective punishment against civilians, and may amount to a war crime under the relevant international laws.”

Taiz, Yemen’s third largest city, has been under siege by the Houthis since 2015 when they failed to conquer the city’s downtown due to strong resistance from army forces and allied resistance fighters.

The Houthis have rejected all international mediators’ proposals and peace initiatives to open roads in Taiz.

Meanwhile, a group of Omani delegates who arrived in Sanaa last week to persuade the Houthis to embrace international peace efforts to end the war left on Sunday after meeting Houthi leaders.

The Houthi media reported that the Omani delegation discussed with their leaders the possibility of opening Sanaa airport to new destinations, paying public employees in militia-controlled areas, and extending the cease-fire for an extended period.

Since October, the Houthis have asked that the Yemeni government pay public employees in their territories and split oil earnings in order for the truce to be renewed.

The Yemeni government stated that it would only pay government salaries if the Houthis remitted state income from Hodeidah to the central bank.

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