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Yemen's government warns of massive Houthi strikes in Shabwa, Marib



A Yemeni government fighter fires a vehicle-mounted weapon at Houthi positions in Marib, Yemen, Mar. 9, 2021. (Reuters)

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- Yemeni authorities fear the situation may be about to deteriorate as the Houthis gather militants and military equipment in Marib, Shabwa, and Taiz
- Iran-backed militant group vows to target American naval ships in Red Sea

AL-MUKALLA: Yemen's internationally recognized government has warned that the Houthis are planning major offensives in two Yemeni regions, action that may derail peace talks and plunge the country back into turmoil.


Muammar Al-Eryani, Yemen's information minister, accused the Iran-backed Houthis of mobilizing major military forces in the southern province of Shabwa and the central province of Marib in recent weeks.


And he noted that the militia group planned to attack Marib from the south, east, and north, as well as launch another simultaneous attack on government-controlled Bayan, Ain, Ouslen, and other areas in Shabwa.


Al-Eryani pointed out that such an attack would "undermine the efforts to emerge from the conflict and exacerbate the deteriorating humanitarian crisis."


Fighting has mostly stopped on all fronts throughout the nation after a UN-brokered truce came into force in April 2022.


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But Yemeni authorities fear the situation may be about to deteriorate as the Houthis gathered militants and military equipment in Marib, Shabwa, and Taiz.

The Houthis have used popular outrage over continued Israeli attacks on Gaza to begin military training and collect soldiers outside government-controlled cities under the guise of preparing to battle the Israelis.

Al-Eryani urged the international community to label the Houthis as terrorists, impose penalties on their leaders, freeze their assets, bar them from traveling, and limit the militia's income sources.

In a post on X, the minister said: "The international community, the United Nations, and its special envoy are called upon to issue a clear condemnation of these escalatory steps that confirm the Houthi militia's disregard for de-escalation efforts."

The warning came after the Yemeni army revealed on Sunday that its forces had killed and wounded several Houthis after foiling raids on government-controlled territory south of Marib.

The Houthis also organized a funeral procession in Sanaa on Sunday for 15 officers of various military grades killed in combat with government troops near the country's western coastline on the Red Sea and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the Houthi threatened to target American naval ships in the Red Sea only a day after launching drone and missile assaults on commercial vessels in the waters.

On a US vow to respond to strikes, Supreme Political Council member, Mohammed Ali Al-Houthi, said that America had "no right" to deploy ships in the Red Sea.

In a post on X, Al-Houthi said: "The Americans do not have a right in the Red Sea that allows them to say that they retain the right to respond."

Washington said on Monday it would consult with its partners and allies on how to react to Houthi attacks on ships after the group fired four missiles and drones at commercial vessels operating in international waters in the Red Sea.

In a post on X, the US Central Command said: "These attacks represent a direct threat to international commerce and maritime security.

"They have jeopardized the lives of international crews representing multiple countries around the world," it added.

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