

Former Yemeni President Killed: The Price of Betrayal

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Ali Abdullah Saleh ruled Yemen despotically from May 1990 until ousted in February 2012 - earlier ruling North Yemen from 1978 to 1990.

He sided with Houthi fighters against Saudi Arabia until betraying them - shifting his allegiance to the kingdom, saying:

"I call upon the brothers in neighboring states and the alliance to stop their aggression, lift the siege, open the airports and allow food aid and the saving of the wounded and we will turn a new page by virtue of our neighborliness."

The Houthi controlled interior ministry accused him of "creating chaos by working with militias of aggression, helping extremist militants," the group's political bureau adding:

"It is not strange or surprising that Saleh turns back on a partnership he never believed in. The priority has been and still is to confront the forces of aggression."

On December 4, Houthi fighters blew up his home in Sanaa, media reports saying he was killed en route to Marib, his death confirmed by a senior aide, a video of his alleged body posted online by the Houthis, showing a severe head wound.

On Monday, Houthi al-Masriah television said

"(t)he leader of treason has been killed."

Its media official Abdel-Rahman al-Ahnomi said he was killed, trying to flee to Saudi Arabia through Marib.

Heavy fighting has been ongoing in Sanaa for days, Saudi terror-bombing striking Houthi positions. Their fighters now control the city, according to reports, many Saleh loyalists

defecting to their forces.

The UN called for a humanitarian halt in fighting to let civilians get out of harm's way, enabling aid workers to reach them, the wounded able to get medical treatment.

UN humanitarian coordinator in Yemen Jamie McGoldrick said streets in Sanaa are "battlegrounds." Aid workers "remain in lockdown."

Sanaa-based Norwegian Refugee Council protection and advocacy advisor Suze van Meegen said fighting in the city "completely paralyz(ed) humanitarian operations," adding:

"No one is safe in Sanaa at the moment. I can hear heavy shelling outside now and know it is too imprecise and too pervasive to guarantee that any of us are safe."

Regional ICRC director Robert Mardini tweeted:

"The night was tough. Massive urban clashes with heavy artillery and airstrikes. Yemenis stuck in their homes, too scared to go out. Reduced access to water, health care, food and fuel."

An unnamed woman said

"(i)t's like horror movies. I have lived through many wars but nothing like this."

Explosions rock the city, defenseless civilians at risk of death or severe injuries. Bodies of dead and wounded lie in streets unattended, fighting too fierce for anyone to venture out, hundreds killed or wounded since last Wednesday.

Defection of loyalist Saleh forces to the Houthis marks a significant turn in the war, ongoing for nearly three years, causing the world's gravest humanitarian crisis.

On Monday, Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul Salam claimed significant gains in the battle for Sanaa, saying:

"With the aid and approval of God, the security forces backed up by wide popular support were able last night to cleanse the areas in which the militias of treason and betrayal were deployed."

Will Trump order aerial attacks on Houthi fighters in Sanaa, aiding Saudi terror-bombing?
Will US-orchestrated aggression escalate, intensifying the humanitarian crisis?

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My newest book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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