

Will the leaders of Yemen's coup negotiate with the UN?

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*(The Christian Science Monitor)* Following their armed seizure of the Yemeni government in early January, the Houthi militia groups have tried to extend their control and are still holding the leadership from the previous government under house-arrest.

The Houthis dissolved Yemen's parliament on February 6 and installed Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the cousin of the group's leader, Abdel-Malik al-Houthi, as the new president. Now members of the dissolved parliament have put forth a 16-point plan addressing Houthi control of the capital city, Sanaa, and part of the plan addresses the administration of regions not under Houthi control, according to al-Jazeera.

The Houthi rebels, a Shi'a group, were reported to have been fighting in the central Yemeni city of Ibb and to have fired on a group of protesters, wounding several, according to Arab News. Houthi fighters also battled with Sunni tribes near the city of Baida, according to the report.

On Sunday, the United Nations Security Council was expected to draft a proposal that calls for the Houthis to withdraw forces from government buildings and to end foreign interference, as well as to free the members of the ousted government, according to the Huffington Post.

The proposal was put forth by the governments of Great Britain and Jordan after the UN has warned that Yemen is at risk of total collapse, according to the same report.

The Gulf Cooperation Council, a six-member organization composed of oil-rich Middle Eastern countries, had called on the Security Council to draft a proposal under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter that allows the UN to enforce orders through sanctions or force, according to the Huffington Post.

The draft of the resolution, obtained by Reuters, "calls on all member states to refrain from external interference which seeks to foment conflict and instability and

instead to support the political transition."

But the Houthis connections to Iran have given some people pause for concern as to exactly how open Yemen's new power brokers in are to cooperating with the outside world. According a separate report from Reuters, Iran's government has been fairly involved in providing support for the Houthi's cause, and has publicly voiced its support for the Houthi takeover.

The Houthis have been fighting the Yemeni central government since 2004, but the extent to which Iran has involved itself in the conflict is unclear. A senior Houthi official has denied material report from Iran in the Reuters report. There was, however, the seizure of a cargo ship by Yemeni officials back in 2013 where multiple arms that the former government alleged were destined to Shi'a groups operating inside the country, according to the report.

The Houthis appear to be aligned against al-Qaeda, and, according to the New York Times's Rod Norland on Real Politics, the new Houthi government has approached the United States about opening relations. But this does not necessarily mean the Houthis will give in to international pressure on governance.

Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam insisted to al-Jazeera the group would not "cede power in the face of threats."