

Russia Abstains From UN Vote Targeting Yemen Houthis

April 14, 2015



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif

Russia abstained Tuesday from a United Nations Security Council vote which led to the blacklisting of the son of Yemen's former president and a Houthi leader, and effectively imposed an arms embargo on the Iran-allied Houthi rebels who rule most of the country.

The council voted 14 in favor. Russia abstained, saying some of its proposals for the resolution, drafted by council member Jordan and Gulf Arab states, were not included.

"The co-sponsors refused to include the requirements insisted upon by Russia addressed to all sides to the conflict to swiftly halt fire and to begin peace talks," Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin told the council after the vote.

Saudi Arabia launched air strikes against the Iran-allied Houthis in neighboring Yemen last month with a coalition made up mainly of four Gulf Arab allies. The United States said last week it is speeding up arms supplies to the coalition.

"We insisted that the arms embargo needs to be comprehensive; it's well known that Yemen is awash in weapons," Churkin said. "The adopted resolution should not be used for further escalation of the armed conflict."

Iran on Monday urged the formation of a new Yemeni government and offered to assist in a political transition.

The UN Security Council imposed a global asset freeze and travel ban on Ahmed Saleh, the former head of Yemen's elite Republican Guard, and on Abdulmalik al-Houthi, a top leader of the Shi'ite Houthi group.

Saleh's father, former Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh, and two other senior Houthi leaders, Abd al-Khaliq al-Huthi and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim, were blacklisted by the Security Council in November. Yemeni soldiers loyal to the former president are fighting alongside the Houthis.

The resolution imposed an arms embargo on the five men and "those acting on their behalf or at their direction in Yemen" — effectively the Houthi and soldiers loyal to Saleh.

It demands the Houthis stop fighting and withdraw from areas they have seized, including Sanaa, the capital. It also expressed concern at "destabilizing actions" taken by former President Saleh, "including supporting the Houthis' actions."

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/04/14/russia-abstains-from-un-vote-targeting-yemen-houthis-a45744>