

Russian Stance Unclear as UN Prepares to Vote on Yemen Arms Embargo

April 14, 2015



Followers of the Houthi movement raise their rifles as they shout slogans against the Saudi-led air strikes in Sanaa April 10, 2015.

The UN Security Council is due to vote on Tuesday on a resolution to blacklist the son of Yemen's former president and a Houthi leader and effectively impose an arms embargo on the rebels who rule most of the country, diplomats said.

It was unclear how Russia would vote on the draft by council member Jordan and Gulf Arab states. Russia had unsuccessfully suggested during negotiations that the text call for an immediate cease-fire and that an arms embargo include President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's government, diplomats said.

The Russian UN mission declined to comment on Monday on whether it would support the resolution, abstain or veto.

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.

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

The draft UN resolution would impose 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 draft resolution would impose 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.

The resolution also "calls upon Member States, in particular States neighboring Yemen, to inspect ... all cargo to Yemen" if they have reasonable grounds to believe it contains weapons destined for the poor Arabian peninsula country.

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

Russia put forward its own draft resolution earlier this month demanding "regular and obligatory humanitarian pauses in the air strikes by the coalition" to allow for the evacuation of foreigners. The Jordan and Gulf Arab text calls on all parties to facilitate the evacuation of foreigners.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/04/14/russian-stance-unclear-as-un-prepares-to-vote-on-yemen-arms-embargo-a45719>