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Former Yemen President Rejects Talks With Government

By Jason Ditz
January 8, 2016



Yemen's former dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh today ruled out negotiating with current dictator Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, insisting that he sees no point negotiating with "mercenaries" who are only seeking power, and that negotiation would only be worthwhile with Saudi Arabia.

Saleh ruled Yemen from 1978-2012, when he was replaced by Hadi in a “single-candidate election.” This was only to be a two-year term, but Hadi unilaterally extended it. Hadi resigned in January of 2015, and in March Saudi Arabia invaded Yemen, with an eye on reinstalling him in power. Despite being out of power for four years, Saleh retains huge influence, particularly among the military.

Saleh had fought against the Shi’ite Houthis for years, but after the Saudi invasion got sucked into the war largely on their side. The Saudis demanded Saleh back their war, and when he refused they blew up his house in Sanaa.

Saleh has suggested a willingness to play a role in negotiations to end the war, but so far efforts to get any such negotiations going haven’t gone far, with peace talks mostly collapsing in short order after they begin.