

Call for jihad against Al Houthi rebels

They are more malignant than Israel and are apostates, a leading Zaidi cleric says

- By Nasser Arrabyee, Correspondent
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Sana'a: A Zaidi cleric called for launching jihad (holy war) against Al Houthi rebels in Sa'ada, northern Yemen, saying they are "worse than Israel".

"We are determined to continue jihad against them. I swear by Allah that jihad against them is better than prayers, and better than jihad against Jews. They are more malignant than Israel," said the Zaidi cleric Mohammad Abdul Adheem Al Houthi, who is based in Sa'ada and from the same family of the top leader of Al Houthi rebels.

In an interview with Al Ahahli weekly, the Zaidi cleric said Al Houthi rebels are "apostates" and they do not belong to any Islamic sect at all including the Zaidi sect.

"They are neither Twelvers [Ethna Ashari], nor Zaidis, nor Shafis, nor Jafaris. They are apostates, they are out from the whole religion, they are enemies of Islam, enemies of believers," he said in the interview, which is expected to ignite a war between the two Houthi groups in Sa'ada.

More knowledgeable

Mohammad Abdul Adheem Al Houthi has always refused to accept leadership of Badr Al Deen Al Houthi as a top leader for the Zaidis in Sa'ada and Yemen as a whole. Badr Al Deen Al Houthi is the father of the top leader of Al Houthi rebels.

He would always say that another cleric, Majid Al Deen Al Muayadi, was the top leader of Zaidis.

"If Badr Al Deen Al Houthi claimed that he was the leader of the Zaidis because of his knowledge, I would say the cleric Majid Al Deen Al Muayadi had more knowledge than him, and many of our clerics are better than him," he said in the controversial interview.

Kids and illiterates

For the sons of Badr Al Deen, the leaders of Al Houthi rebels, the slain Hussain, and the current leader, Abdul Malek, are "kids and illiterates", said the cleric, Abdul Adheem, who and his followers are persecuted by the dominant Al Houthi rebels.

Both clerics, Badr Al Deen and Majid Al Deen, are dead.

Mohammad Abdul Adheem and Badr Al Deen are cousins.

"Our grandfather is one," said Mohammad Abdul Adheem in the interview.

The local tribal leader Ali Nasser Kersha is now leading mediation efforts to stop escalation of violence between the two Al Houthi groups.

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