

# Suicide bombing kills 23 during Yemen procession

Al Qaida suspected due to its dislike of Shiite festival in Yemen

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Sana'a: At least 23 tribesmen loyal to Al Houthi rebels were killed and about 30 wounded when a suspected Al Qaida operative triggered an explosion in the middle of a cavalcade to mark a religious occasion in Al Metoon area in the eastern province of Al Jawf.

The tribesmen were on their way to an event to mark Al Ghadeer, a Shiite celebration, in Zaher district, north of Al Jawf, close to the city of Saada.

Two sources from Al Jawf and Mareb said Al Qaida affiliates were believed to be behind the attack since the group views Al Ghadeer celebrations as not in keeping with Islam. One of the sources said Al Qaida had repeatedly issued edicts warning against Al Ghadeer celebrations.

Al Ghadeer is a day celebrated annually by Shiites to commemorate the day when the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) announced that Ali Bin Abi Taleb would be his successor after his death.

## Target of attack

The sources said 18 bodies were identified and others are still unknown.

Tribal leaders loyal to Al Houthi rebels who were killed in the attack include Hussain Hadhban and two sons of Shaikh Abdullah Abdan.

The car bomb targeted the car of Shaikh Abdullah Abdan but he was not in the car at the time, the sources said.

The attack however had the effect of throwing the Al Ghadeer celebrations in the area into disarray.

Al Houthi spokesman Mohammad Abdul Salam said in press statements that 15 people had been killed and 30 injured in the attack.

Earlier this year, tribesmen owing allegiance to tribal leader Qasim Al Mashan from Mareb province — where Al Qaida militants are believed to be hiding — pledged loyalty to rebel leader Abdul Malek Al Houthi.

Before the attack, Abdul Salam had said that security forces had been very helpful as the tribesmen began their celebrations on the eve of Al Ghadeer day.

Al Houthi rebels celebrated the occasion on Tuesday by lighting bonfires of tyres and firing in the air through the night.

The celebratory displays led to a statement from the rebels' leadership urging the rank and file to save their bullets for hard times.

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