

66 killed in Yemen as rebels and pro-govt forces battle for land

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Aden (Yemen): Violent clashes continue to cause destruction in Yemen with at least 66 people losing their lives in the last 24 hours, medics and security sources said today.

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The conflict between the Saudi-led coalition and Shiite Huthi rebels turned into a massacre when the pro-government forces conducted air-strikes near the strategic Bab al-Mandab strait, killing at least 52 fighters of the opposition.

In retaliation, the rebellions, that included allied troops loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh, killed 14 members of the pro-government forces.

The battles are part of the so-called Golden Spear operation launched by the coalition and President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi's government and aimed at uprooting Houthis and allied forces from the western coast, starting from the strait of Bab al-Mandab and extending to the vital Red Sea ports of Mokha and Hodeida.

The coalition accuses Houthis of using these ports to receive supplies of arms and ammunition from Iran.

The war in Yemen is entering its second year after Houthis seized the capital Sanaa and forced Hadi to flee the country.

The Saudi-led coalition has waged an extensive air campaign since March 2015 aimed at restoring Hadi's government. The northern region remains under Houthi control.

The coalition has come under heavy criticism by international rights groups for carrying out attacks against civilians including schools, markets, hospitals and residential areas.

As per the World Health Organization, more than 7,400 people have been killed since the coalition intervention began.

The civilian death could alone top 10,000, a UN spokesman said.

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