



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 30, 2019

## Houthi Rebels in Yemen Claim to Have Killed 500 Saudi Soldiers

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Yemen's Houthi rebels claim to have launched a major offensive against Saudi-backed Yemeni forces and captured "thousands" of prisoners.

The Houthis broadcast footage of the attack on September 29 on their Al Masirah TV channel, which is located in Beirut, Lebanon, next door to Hezbollah's Al Manar TV with backup studios at Hezbollah headquarters. The Iranian-backed, Lebanese-based Hezbollah is considered to be a terrorist group by the United States.

The Houthi broadcast described the offensive as the rebels' largest military operation since Saudi Arabia intervened in Yemen's civil war in 2015, reported *Financial Times*. The videos showed vehicles bearing Saudi military insignia that were purported to have been seized by the rebels, as well as interviews with two soldiers who identified themselves as Saudis to their captors.

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*Financial Times* reported that the information could not be independently verified.

Another report from the BBC cited a September 28 statement from a Houthi spokesman who claimed that three Saudi brigades had surrendered near the Saudi town of Najran. The report noted that the video broadcast on September 29 shows what appeared to be rebels firing at vehicles on a road. The BBC quoted a Houthi spokesman, Colonel Yahiya Sarea, who alleged on September 28 that Saudi forces had suffered "huge losses in life and machinery," including "thousands" of its troops. Colonel Sarea said that evidence of the attack could not be shown "for security reasons," and the BBC appeared to be skeptical about the Houthi claims, headlining its report: "Houthi rebels video fails to prove Saudi troop capture claim."

On September 30, in a statement quoted by Qatar-based al Jazeera, Yemeni Information Minister Muammar al-Iryani accused Houthi rebels of claiming a "fake victory" to cover up their political dilemma.

"The Iran-backed Houthi militia attempts to propagate false victory through its media tools at a time when it is sustaining heavy losses in troops and machinery on a daily basis," al-Iryani said in statements cited by the official Saba news agency.

The Houthi militia received worldwide attention when they claimed responsibility for the September 14 coordinated strikes on the world's largest oil processing facility and a nearby oil field in Saudi Arabia.

Following those attacks, Houthi spokesman Yahia Sarie (quoted above) said in a short address aired by Al-Masirah that his group had launched 10 drones in a coordinated attack on the sites. "The only option



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for the Saudi government is to stop attacking us,” he added.

Despite the Houthi claims, some Trump administration officials, mostly notably Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, blamed the attacks on Iran. Pompeo charged that Iran was behind what he called “an unprecedented attack on the world’s energy supply” and asserted that there was “no evidence the attacks came from [Houthi forces in] Yemen.”

When asked whether Iran was responsible for the attacks on September 16, Trump said the evidence pointed toward Tehran. “It’s looking that way,” he said. “That’s being checked out right now.”

The United States has not taken any retaliatory action against Iran, indicating that the source of the attacks is still being investigated.

*Photo of Houthi rebels in Yemen: AP Images*

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