

Houthis

September 7, 2021

In news— Recently, Saudi Arabia intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels.

What is the issue?

- Saudi Arabia is mired in a years-long, deadlocked war backing Yemen's toppled government against the Iranian-backed Houthis.
- The **Saudi-led war, which began in March 2015, has seen an uptick in recent months amid a Houthi effort to capture the city of Marib.**
- That has also seen a renewal of long-range attacks by the Houthis in Saudi Arabia.

About Houthis-

- **The Houthis are Zaydi Shiites, or Zaydiyyah.**
- **Shiite Muslims are the minority community** in the Islamic world and Zaydis are a minority of Shiites, significantly different in doctrine and beliefs from the Shiites who dominate in Iran, Iraq, and elsewhere (**often called Twelvers** for their belief in twelve Imams).
- **The Zadiyyah take their name from Zayd bin Ali, the great grandson of Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, whom all Shiites revere.**

Houthi Movement:

- The Houthi movement, officially **called Ansar Allah (meaning "Supporters of God"), is an Islamic political and armed movement** that emerged from Sa'dah in northern Yemen in the 1990s.
- The movement **was called Houthis because its founder is from the Houthi tribe.**
- The Houthis began as a moderate theological movement

that preached tolerance and held a broad-minded view of all the Yemeni peoples.

- Under the leadership of Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, the group emerged as an opposition to former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh.
- They charged Saleh with massive financial corruption and criticized for being backed by Saudi Arabia and the United States at the expense of the Yemeni people and Yemen's sovereignty.
- Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi was killed in Sa'dah in 2004 along with a number of his guards by the Yemeni army, sparking the Houthi insurgency in Yemen.
- Since then, except for a short intervening period, the movement has been led by his brother Abdul-Malik al-Houthi.
- The movement's expressed goals include combating economic underdevelopment and political marginalization in Yemen while seeking greater autonomy for Houthi-majority regions of the country.