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No progress in Yemen talks: Minister

Talks on a possible truce in the war in Yemen have made "no progress" because the Iranian-backed Houthi delegation has not come to the United Nations in Geneva where the talks are being held, Yemen's Foreign Minister Reyad Yassin Abdulla said on Wednesday.

"Today we were supposed to have something positive. They are just sitting in their hotel making all kind of rumours," he said.



"They never showed up." Asked if his delegation planned to leave the talks, the minister said: "We have 48 hours."

Meanwhile, Houthis in central Yemen blew up the home of a senior politician on Wednesday while he was in Switzerland as a member of the exiled government's delegation to peace talks, residents said.

The destruction of member of parliament Abdel-Aziz Jubari's house in Dhamar city coincided with more air strikes by Saudi-led forces on military targets throughout Yemen in support of the government.

Dhamar residents said that the Houthis, who had taken over Jubari's house in April, dynamited the building early in the morning. Yemeni websites published picture of its collapsed ceiling on top of a pile of rubble.

Jubari, who is deputy head of the delegation sent to Geneva by ousted president Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, said he was shocked when he heard the news. "This is regrettable that people's manners and behaviours can reach this point," Jubari said in Geneva. "Of course my house is not the only house in Yemen. A lot of people's homes and properties have been targeted in an unbelievable way."

Abdulla, the head of the government delegation said: "It is in this spirit of revenge that they are dealing with all the Yemeni people and we cannot remain silent on this."

Houthi officials were not immediately available to comment.

In Geneva, the UN's special envoy to Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, has been conducting shuttle diplomacy trying to bridge differences. Abdulla played down the prospects of a quick agreement on a ceasefire, saying his delegation remained focused on implementing a United Nations Security Council resolution demanding the Houthis quit cities they seized in September and subsequent weeks.

He said that while everyone sought a ceasefire, he did not want one merely "for the sake of publicity."

"There is work on the ground that needs to be implemented so it can be a real truce, not just words that mess with people's emotions," he said.

Local medical teams and aid agencies in Yemen are overwhelmed by the scale of the crisis there and the strain of keeping health services going is taking a huge toll, an international medical charity said. The health care system is on the verge of collapse, in a country where 21.1 million people - 80 per cent of the population — urgently need aid, and there is a constant threat of disease outbreaks, according to the United Nations. Local medical teams are working round the clock, but they lack drugs and other medical supplies, as well as fuel to run their generators.

Several hospitals have been forced to close. "The situation is way beyond our ability to face (it), and it's way bigger than what the international aid system is able to cope with," Medecins Sans Frontieres' (MSF) outgoing head of mission in Yemen, Andre Heller-Perache, said in an interview.

"The scale of the crisis is growing, and as time goes on it will continue to grow," he added.

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