Saudi Arabia Intercepts Houthi Ballistic Missile East of Riyadh

Translation by Maya Hardimon
November 5, 2017

The Houthis announced that they had fired a ballistic missile at King Khalid International Airport in the Saudi capital of Riyadh, while Arab Coalition leadership said that the missile actually targeted Riyadh and was intercepted, falling in an uninhabited area to the east of the airport.

Saudi Arabia’s Civil Aviation Authority said that the missile fired from Yemen landed on the grounds of King Khalid International Airport and did not damage the airport, adding that movement in the airport is normal.

The leadership of the Saudi-led coalition said that the missile was fired indiscriminately towards Riyadh, targeting populated civilian areas, but it was intercepted and landed in an uninhabited area.

Colonel Turki al-Maliki, spokesman for the Coalition Forces Supporting Legitimacy in Yemen, said that the missile was intercepted successfully, its fragments scattering in an uninhabited area east of the airport without causing any damage.

A Renewed Threat

In contrast, Aziz Rashed, a spokesman for the Yemeni Army and the Popular Committees for the Houthis, said that the long-range “H-2” missile, launched from inside Yemeni territory, targeted King Khalid International Airport and achieved high accuracy.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Rashed said that the missile’s launch “sends many messages, including that Yemeni missiles will be able to hit vital targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, neither of which will be immune… Mohammad bin Salman can’t dream about any industrial development, whether on land or on sea, because it will be within range of Yemeni missiles. So as long as we have military capabilities, scientific capabilities, and a research center, the next missile attack will be greater, and there will be consecutive surprises from now on.”

A Houthi Spokesman, Mohammed Abdel Salaam, confirmed that the capital cities of the coalition countries are not safe from his group’s ballistic missiles.

In a tweet, Abdel Salam said that this was a response to “the continued bombing of innocent civilians, the most recent being at the massacre at the ‘alaf market’ in the Saada Governorate in northern Yemen, referring to a raid by the Arab Coalition last Wednesday that killed 29 people.

After the missile was fired, an Al Jazeera correspondent in Yemen reported that the Arab Coalition launched an attack on the Ministry of Defense compound in Sana’a.
The Houthi group has threatened to target the depth of Saudi Arabia and the cities from which the Arab Coalition launches its fighter aircraft. Its spokesman said that “Abu Dhabi is a major military target in the coming period.”

In July, Saudi Air Defense intercepted a ballistic missile launched by the Houthis in the direction of Mecca (in the western part of the Kingdom). The Houthis also announced the launch of ballistic missiles towards the King Fahad Air Base in Taif.

Last September, the Houthi group said that its aircraft flew over Saudi Arabia, and they vowed to bomb the Kingdom soon.