

MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN LAUNCHES ATTACK ON HOUTHIS



REUTERS

A boy walks Sunday at a factory damaged by an airstrike in Sanaa, Yemen.

Offensive expands new front in US-Israeli war with Iran

**MOHAMMED GHOBARI AND TIMOUR AZHARI
AND EMAN ABOUHASSIRA**
Reuters

ADEN, Yemen — Yemen's Saudi-backed, internationally recognized government said Sunday it was launching a major military campaign to recapture all areas of the country controlled by the Iran-backed Houthis.

The government's armed forces would press the offensive "until the country is liberated from the grip of the terrorist militia," Yemeni President Rashad al-Alimi said in a televised address. A military spokesman later called on the Houthis to lay down their weapons.

The Houthis, known formally as Ansar Allah, have held Yemen's capital Sanaa and vast parts of the northwest, where

most of the population live, since 2014. They have so far withstood a series of attacks over the years by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and their Western allies, and have updated their weaponry with the help of Iran.

The movement launched a surprise offensive last month that captured the strategic Bab el-Mandeb strait and some 90 miles of coast on the Red Sea in a matter of weeks, giving the Houthis new leverage over the international shipping route.

That advance also opened a new front in the wider U.S.-Israeli war launched in February against Iran, to which Tehran's responses included choking oil shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, to the other side of the Arabian Peninsula.

Houthis say they struck Saudis

As the Yemeni government, known as the Presidential Leadership Council, made its announcement, the Houthis said they had launched ballistic missiles and drones at Saudi Aramco sites in Riyadh and the Khurais area of Saudi Arabia.

They claimed the attacks caused major fires and were in response to what they said were 50 Saudi-led air and missile strikes in Yemen in the past 12 hours.

There was no immediate confirmation from Saudi Arabia.

Alimi said the decision to launch the counteroffensive came after all chances of de-escalating the conflict had been exhausted.

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Treasurer candidates differ on state investments

Incumbent Republican
Ellsworth will face
Democratic challenger Jones
in Nov. 3 general election

LAURA GUIDO
Idaho Capital Sun

Two candidates will vie for the position to manage Idaho's cash flow and investments, and they offer differing views on how to do so.

Incumbent Republican Treasurer Julie Ellsworth will face Democratic challenger Kevin Jones in the Nov. 3 general election. Jones, although running as a Democrat, believes the position should be nonpartisan and has announced he will be unaffiliated the day after the election.

The treasurer's office serves as the state's chief financial officer, which includes overseeing the receipt of state money, accounting for disbursement of funds, investing idle state money and administering the unclaimed property program, the 529 College Savings Fund and the Idaho ABLE savings accounts.

Each of the candidates are focused on the state's investment strategy, but with different approaches and metrics for success.

Who are the candidates seeking office for Idaho treasurer?

Jones, 63, said he is running to improve the state's investment yields and said his background better suits him to the job. He previously ran Boise-based Harmonic Investment Advisors. He is a longtime institutional portfolio manager and a chartered financial analyst, which is an internationally recognized professional certification for advanced investment management and financial analysis, he said.

"I'm a very logical individual, and I'm also a former college golfer, so I've spent my entire life competing, where numbers matter more than how someone dresses, what party they're in and so forth," Jones said. "... You either post the score on the golf course, or you don't. You either do well at managing investment portfolios, or you don't."

Ellsworth, 64, was first elected as state



Idaho State Treasurer Julie Ellsworth, left, and Democratic challenger Kevin Jones.

treasurer in 2018 after serving 12 years non-consecutively as an Idaho state representative. She has been a public school teacher and a mediator and business consultant. She said she wants to run again because her work has helped the state.

"I think I'm doing a good job, and I can see that it elevates Idahoans," Ellsworth said. "It's very uplifting. The main focus of my job is to assure that money is safe in the state of Idaho, that it is collected in a uniform manner. ... And then when money is going to be spent but is idle at the time, we invest it. And I love turning money back to Idaho taxpayers."

How would the candidates manage Idaho investments?

When the state has funds that aren't yet ready to be spent, the treasurer's office can invest the money to grow the fund until it's ready to be spent. The Treasurer Investment Advisory Board reviews policies and performance of funds, and private firms that contract with the state help oversee investments with the treasurer.

Jones said the state's portfolios have been underperforming. He highlighted recent reports from the investment advisory board showing state funds, such as the IDLE fund, producing total returns less than a comparable index fund. An index fund tracks performances of a certain index — or group of investments that often have something in common — and tries to mimic it through buying a representative sample of stocks and bonds in that index.

The state's IDLE fund is used to balance cash flow and is used to ensure there is adequate money for state appropriation. Money that isn't being spent right away can be invested "at the best rate possible

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