

Yemen's Houthi rebels announce government takeover

Dramatic move finalises months-long power grab and plunges country deeper into political turmoil



Houthi soldiers stand outside the house of representatives in Sana'a. Photograph: Mohamed Al-Sayaghi/Reuters

Associated Press in Sana'a

Friday 6 February 2015 10.27 EST

Yemen's dominant Houthi faction has dissolved the country's parliament and said it plans to form a new interim assembly.

The new assembly will elect a five-member interim presidential council to manage the country's affairs in a transitional period of up to two years, according to a televised statement on Friday.

Some political leaders attended the announcement which took place at the presidential palace in the capital, Sana'a. Former interior and defence ministers were also there, indicating that the announcement has the blessing of other political factions.

Yemen has been in political limbo since President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour

Hadi and the government of prime minister Khaled Bahah resigned after the Houthis seized the presidential palace and confined the head of state to his residence in a struggle to tighten control.

The Houthis, who became power brokers when they overran Sana'a in September, have been holding talks with main political factions trying to agree on a way out of the standoff.

The Shia Muslim movement, which is backed by Iran, had set a Wednesday deadline for political factions to agree a way out of the crisis, otherwise, the group said, it would impose its own solution.

Yemen's stability is particularly important to neighbouring Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter. Yemen is also fighting one of the most formidable branches of al-Qaida with the help of US drone strikes.