Houthi Attacks Placing Pressure on International Trade
Yemen: Houthi Attacks Placing Pressure on International Trade

Since November 2023, the Houthis have conducted dozens of attacks on commercial ships transiting the Red Sea, endangering civilian crews and threatening freedom of navigation through a critical global transportation route. The Houthis are non-state actors in Yemen who have used Iran’s support to gradually expand their military capabilities since at least 2015. Early in December 2023, the Houthis threatened to attack any ships that they believed were heading to Israeli ports, though many of their attacks both before and since have been against civilian ships with either tenuous or no known Israeli affiliations or port calls. Since mid-December 2023, the Houthis have also threatened to attack ships affiliated with the United States and its allies, including members of Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN, a multinational initiative to protect international freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. Despite seeking international legitimacy, Houthi actions have damaged regional security, impeded international humanitarian relief efforts, and put stress on global maritime trade.

Economic Implications of Houthi Attacks
As of mid-February, container shipping through Red Sea had declined by 30-35% since December 2023: shipping via the Red Sea typically accounts for approximately 10-15% of international maritime trade. Effects have been less severe in other shipping sectors carrying commodities on bulkers and tankers. Alternate shipping routes around Africa add about 11,000 nautical miles, 1-2 weeks of transit time, and approximately $1 million in fuel costs for each voyage. For many shipping companies, the combined costs of crew bonuses, war risk insurance (roughly 1000% more than pre-war costs), and Suez transit fees make the additional time and financial costs traveling around Africa less expensive by comparison. Threats to Red Sea transits are compounding ongoing stress to global maritime shipping caused by interruptions at the Panama Canal due to drought. As of mid-February, insurance premiums for Red Sea transits have risen to 7-10% of a ship’s total value, compared to less than 0.1% prior to December 2023. As of February, humanitarian relief for Sudan and Yemen is being delayed by weeks and costing aid organizations more because of longer routes around Africa.

At least 65 countries’ interests have been affected:
- Argentina
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Burma
- Canada
- China
- Cyprus
- Denmark
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- France
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- India
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Japan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Liberia
- Malaysia
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Mexico
- Montenegro
- Morocco
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Panama
- Philippines
- Qatar
- Romania
- Russia
- Saudi Arabia
- Seychelles
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- South Korea
- Sudan
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Thailand
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- United Kingdom (UK)
- United States
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Yemen

At least 29 major energy and shipping companies have altered their routes to avoid Houthi attacks:
- British Petroleum (BP)
- C.H. Robinson
- CMA CGM
- COSCO
- Equinor
- Euronav
- Evergreen
- Frontline
- Gram Car Carriers
- Hapag-Lloyd
- HMM
- Hoegh Autoliners
- Klaaveness Combination Carriers
- Kuehne + Nagel
- Maersk
- MSC
- Nippon Yusen
- Ocean Network Express
- OOCL
- Qatar Energy
- Star Bulk
- Shell
- Stena Bulk
- Tailwind Shipping Lanes
- Torm
- Total Energies
- Wallenius Wilhelmsen
- Yang Ming Marine Transport
Houthi Commercial Shipping Attacks and Affected Nations, November 2023 - March 2024

The following is a timeline of attacks by the Houthis on commercial ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November 2023. This timeline is not exhaustive. Additionally, although this list reflects our best estimate of the countries associated with each ship, international shipping is an opaque industry where owners, flags, operators, crews, and port calls can frequently change, multiple companies can be involved in operating and managing a single ship, and where shell companies are sometimes used to obfuscate the ultimate economic beneficiary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Flag</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Crew</th>
<th>Departing Port</th>
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<td>GBM</td>
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<td>Republic of China</td>
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<td>📜</td>
<td>9 Dec</td>
<td>The Houthis announce they are expanding their potential maritime targets to any ships of any nationality heading to Israeli ports</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
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<td>Liberia</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>📜</td>
<td>18 Dec</td>
<td>The United States announces Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN, a multinational initiative focused on security in the Red Sea that includes Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Seychelles, and the UK</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Reunion Island</td>
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<td>Swan Atlantic</td>
<td>Cayman Islands (UK)</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>📜</td>
<td>19 Dec</td>
<td>The United States, along with the European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Australia, the Bahamas, Japan, Liberia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Singapore, release a joint statement condemning Houthi maritime aggression</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>Sai Baba</td>
<td>Gabon</td>
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<td>26 Dec</td>
<td>MSC United VIII</td>
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<td>31 Dec</td>
<td>Maersk Hangzhou</td>
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<td>CMS OGM</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>📜</td>
<td>3 Jan</td>
<td>The United States, along with Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore, and the UK, jointly warn the Houthis to cease maritime aggression or face a military response</td>
<td>US</td>
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<tr>
<td>📜</td>
<td>10 Jan</td>
<td>The UNSC passes Resolution 2722 calling on the Houthis to cease attacking commercial vessels and release the Galaxy Leader and its crew</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
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<tr>
<td>📜</td>
<td>12 Jan</td>
<td>The United States and UK, with support from a broader multinational coalition, launch the first set of offensive strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen as part of Operation POSEIDON ARCHER</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
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<td>15 Jan</td>
<td>Gibraltar Eagle</td>
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<td>United States</td>
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<td>Chem Ranger</td>
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<td>United States</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>24 Jan</td>
<td>Maersk Detroit</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Oman</td>
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<td>26 Jan</td>
<td>Marlin Luanda</td>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>Bermuda (UK)</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Koi</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Ukraine</td>
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<td>Unknown</td>
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Dec 2023 (cont.)
Houthi Commercial Shipping Attacks and Affected Nations, November 2023 – March 2024 (cont.)

**Feb 2024 (cont.)**

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<th>Crew</th>
<th>Departing Port</th>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>16 Feb</td>
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<td>Panama</td>
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<td>Rubymar</td>
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<td>Sea Champion</td>
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<td>Yemen</td>
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<td>19 Feb</td>
<td>Navigo Fortuna</td>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>Belarus, Burma, Russia, Ukraine</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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| 20 Feb   | The European Union launches its mission, called ASPIDES, to protect maritime traffic in the Red Sea, which includes forces from Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, and Italy.

**Mar 2024**

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Flag</th>
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<th>Operator</th>
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<td>India, Romania, Ukraine, Vietnam</td>
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<td>Türkiye</td>
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<td>14 Mar</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>India</td>
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</table>
Yemen: Houthi Attacks Placing Pressure on International Trade


- **52** REUTER; 15 FEB 2024; YEMENIS HOUTHS STRIKE CARGO SHIP Bound FOR IRAN, Causing MAJOR DAMAGE; HTTPS://WWW.REUTERS.COM/WORLD/ARAB-REPUBLIC-YEMEN-HOUTHS-ATTACK-CARGO-SHIP-BOUND-FOR-IRAN

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- **54** AP NEWS; 22 FEB 2024; HOUTHI REBEL ATTACK SETS CARGO SHIP ABLAZE, FORCES ISRAEL TO INTERCEPT ANOTHER ATTACK NEAR EILAT; HTTPS://APNEWS.COM/ISRAEL-YEMEN-HOUTHS-HAMAS-WAR-GAZA-STRIP-26FEB0578E7B9F15F77F71746F

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- **56** CONTAINER NEWS; 27 DEC 2023; MSC BOXSHIP ATTACKED IN RED SEA; HTTPS://CONTAINER-NEWS.COM/MSC-BOXSHIP-ATTACKED-IN-RED-SEA/


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- **63** AL-DEVELOPMENT/2024/FEB/16/HOUTHI-ATTACKS-IN-RED-SEA-HAVING-A-CATASTROPHIC-EFFECT-ON-AID-TO-SUDAN

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- **66** INSURANCE MARINE NEWS; 15 DEC 2023; MAERSK SAYS CONTAINER SHIP ON WAY TO SAUDI ARABIA IS TARGETED BY MISSILE; HTTPS://INSURANCEMARINE.COM/INSURANCE-MARINE-NEWS/MAERSK-SAYS-CONTAINER-SHIP-ON-WAY-TO-SAUDI-ARABIA-IS-TARGETED-BY-MISSILE

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The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has published reports tracking Houthi attacks in the Middle East since 2019. For instance, on 24 March 2024, the institute reported a Russian oil tanker hit by Houthi missiles in the Red Sea. Similarly, on 19 March 2024, a fuel tanker in the Red Sea was targeted with missiles, according to the reports. These incidents highlight the growing tension in the region and the impact on international trade. The attacks continue to be a concern for shipping companies and governments alike, as they work to ensure the safety of vessels and the security of maritime operations.
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