

Bulkers

Houthis pledge to escalate attacks on shipping companies trading with Israel

Yemeni group vows to strike at any vessel, regardless of the owner's nationality



Yahya Saree is the Houthi group's military spokesman. (Photo: Ansarullah)



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Yemen's Houthi group has fleshed out a new policy of attacking any vessel owned by any company that calls at Israeli ports.

In an update of their doctrine released early on Monday, the rebels vowed to target “all ships belonging to any company that deals with the ports of the Israeli enemy, regardless of the nationality of the company, and in any location within the reach of our armed forces”.



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The Houthis' military spokesman, Yahya Saree, described this updated policy as the “fourth phase” of his group's “naval blockade against the enemy”.

“The Yemeni Armed Forces warn all companies to cease their dealings with Israeli enemy ports, starting from the moment this statement is announced,” Saree said in a televised statement also released on the group's social media channels.

“Otherwise, their ships, regardless of their destination, will be targeted anywhere that can be reached or within the reach of our missiles and drones.”

The Houthis have already started applying their policy in practice earlier this month, when they attacked and sank two bulkers owned by Greek firms fitting their newly formulated criteria.

The 36,800-dwt Eternity C (built 2012) and 63,300-dwt Magic Seas (built 2016) had not approached any Israeli ports recently but got targeted anyway because their operators, Cosmship Management and Stem Shipping, are understood to have had other vessels that did.

The Houthis, who control large swathes of Yemeni territory along the Red Sea coast, urged all countries wishing “to avoid this escalation, to pressure the enemy to halt its aggression and lift the blockade on the Gaza Strip”.

Four Filipino crew members of the Eternity C are understood to have died in the Houthis’ dogged attack against their ship on 8 and 9 July. As TradeWinds reported on Thursday, the Yemeni group is said to be holding 11 castaway seafarers from the vessel, whom they picked up from the water as it was sinking.

All crew in Houthi hands are believed to be Filipino, except for one Russian seafarer and one Indian armed guard.

Ten crew members of the Eternity C are safe after their rescue by private security contractors hired by the vessel’s owner.

The Eternity C remains the deadliest ship attack perpetrated by the Houthis since their campaign against Western shipping began in November 2023.

The assumed death toll from the Eternity C doubled to eight the number of seafarers killed in this campaign, which stretches over more than 100 attacks within a period of 20 months.



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Ship traffic, however, has not waned any further in the wake of the Houthis' latest deadly attacks earlier this month.

According to TradeWinds calculations based on Clarksons data through to 25 July, the rolling seven-day average of Suez Canal transits stands at about 35 crossings per day currently — about the same level as before the Eternity C and Magic Seas incidents.

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