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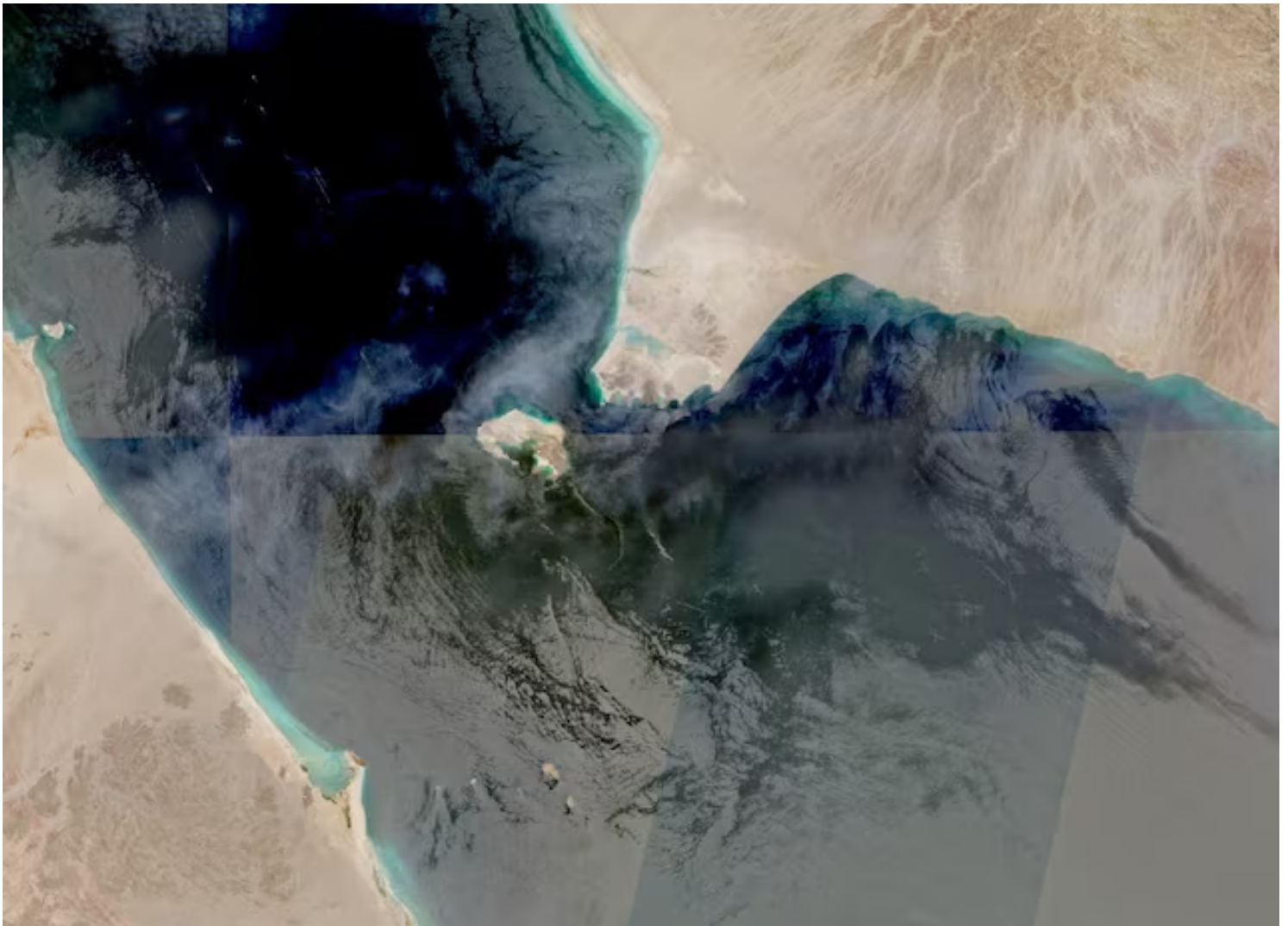
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Four crew, two rescuers killed in Red Sea attack; US strikes ship in Gulf of Oman

By Mohammed Ghobari, Jonathan Saul, Nayera Abdallah and Yasmine Ghania

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Satellite imagery shows Bab el Mandeb Strait. Handout via REUTERS/File Photo [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

Summary

Small cargo ship hit in Bab el-Mandeb strait

Four crew, two rescuers killed in attack, Yemeni authorities say

US military says it fired two missiles at container ship in Gulf of Oman

Aug 12 (Reuters) - Four crew members were killed in an attack by Iran-backed Houthis on a cargo ship in the Bab el-Mandeb strait on Tuesday, Yemen's transport ministry said, while the U.S. military said it struck a container ship attempting to sail toward an Iranian port.

Two Yemeni rescuers from an anti-Houthi military group were also killed in the Bab el-Mandeb attack, Yemen's Coast Guard said.

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The fatalities aboard the Egyptian-owned Tihamah, if confirmed, would mark the first deaths in a Houthi strike on shipping since the Iran war began on February 28.

Later in the day, the Houthis confirmed they attacked a ship in the Bab el-Mandeb, which they said was carrying Saudi military equipment but did not name the ship.

The Saudi Center for International Communication did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

The British navy-affiliated agency UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported one incident in the strait on Tuesday, saying a ship was hit by an unknown projectile.

Reuters was able to confirm the cargo ship as Tihamah by the shape of the deck and mast of the ship, which matched archive imagery of the vessel. Corroborating visuals from the dock matched satellite imagery and topography mapping of the area.

Ship-tracking data showed the vessel Tihamah near Murad, Yemen, on August 11. The date was verified by two Yemeni coast guard sources and two military officials in the government who said a small cargo ship was attacked by Houthis. British maritime security company Ambrey also said there was an attack on the vessel on August 11.

Three Pakistanis were killed in the attack, Pakistan's foreign minister confirmed. The Yemeni ministry said one Indonesian was also killed, adding the crew lost control of the vessel after being attacked.

Two rescuers from the National Resistance Forces (NRF), an anti-Houthi force, were also killed when the Houthis struck again after rescue crews arrived, the Yemeni Coast Guard said.

Ten people were injured, including seven crew members, two Coast Guard personnel and one NRF member, according to the Coast Guard. The Houthis declared a maritime embargo against Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea on July 20 in response to what they described as a Saudi siege. Riyadh denies that Yemen is under siege.

The incident occurred while the ship was at anchor northeast of Perim Island, Yemen, British maritime security group Ambrey said.

ATTACK OFF PAKISTAN

Separately, U.S. Central Command said it had fired two Hellfire missiles, disabling the steering gear of the Panama-flagged container ship Vela Nova while it was sailing in the Gulf of Oman toward an Iranian port.

The vessel ignored repeated warnings to stop violating a naval blockade on Iranian ports, Central Command added.

It is the 12th vessel attacked by U.S. forces since its blockade was announced in April and the third since the blockade was reimposed on July 14. The ship recently made port calls in Mumbai and Port Klang, Malaysia, where Iran-linked ships have also been spotted, said Charlie Brown, senior advisor at U.S. advocacy group United Against Nuclear Iran, which monitors Iran-related tanker traffic using ship and satellite tracking.

"The reported U.S. disabling and stopping of the Panama-flagged Vela Nova near the blockade line in the Gulf of Oman, after its recent Mumbai port call alongside these vessels, underscores the heightened scrutiny now being applied to Iran-related shipping," he said.

The ship was believed to have been hit some 71 nautical miles (131 km) off Pakistan's coast, UK maritime risk management group Vanguard said.

SHIPPING TRAFFIC

Shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb strait and Red Sea has fallen by more than 50% since an earlier wave of Houthi attacks on shipping from 2023 to 2025.

Traffic has fallen further since the Houthis announced their blockade last month, with an average of 32 ships per day passing through the strait last week, according to Kpler data, down from an average of 50 before the blockade.

Ambrey noted the cargo ship, which sources said was the Tihamah, was not Saudi-owned or operated and that it had departed the Yemeni government-held port of al-Mokha on Saturday.

LSEG data lists Egyptian companies as owners and managers of the ship. Neither responded to emails and phone calls seeking immediate comment.

Traffic is even more disrupted in the [Strait of Hormuz](#), with just six ships passing through on Monday, down from a 10-day average of about 11 and prewar levels of some 130 to 140.

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