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Houthi attack on small cargo ship in Red Sea kills three crew members, sources say

By Reuters

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Aug 11 (Reuters) - A small cargo ship was attacked by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis in the Bab el-Mandeb strait on Tuesday, killing three crew members, said two Yemeni coast guard sources and two military officials in the government.

If confirmed, the fatalities on the Tanzania-flagged Tihamah would be the first deaths in a Houthi strike on a ship since the Middle East conflict was triggered by U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran at the end of February.

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The Houthis, who have not yet claimed the attack, declared a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea last month in response to what they described as a Saudi siege. Riyadh denies that it had besieged Yemen.

VESSEL HIT BY UNKNOWN PROJECTILE, UKMTO SAYS

UK Maritime Trade Operations said it had been informed that a cargo vessel off the coast of al-Mokha, Yemen, had been hit by an unknown projectile, resulting in casualties.

British maritime security company Ambrey said the ship was reportedly targeted and damaged by the Houthis, killing three crew members, while at anchor 3.3 nautical miles northeast of Perim Island, Yemen.

Two Pakistanis and one Indonesian person were killed as the ship sailed from Salalah in Oman via Djibouti, the Yemeni sources said. After the attack, the crew lost control of the ship and were approached by Yemeni coast guard, they added.

Attacks on ships in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait have increased uncertainty for shipping companies already hobbled by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

An average of 32 ships per day passed through the Bab el-Mandeb strait last week, Kpler data showed. Prior to the blockade an average of 50 ships per day transited the strait.

Ambrey noted that the vessel was not Saudi-owned or operated at the time of the attack, adding that it had departed al-Mokha on Saturday.

The Egyptian company that LSEG data lists as the owner and manager of the Tihamah did not respond to emails and phone calls seeking comment.

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