

FORUM: Security Council (SC)

QUESTION OF: Addressing The Red Sea Crisis

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INTRODUCTION

The Red Sea, located south of the Suez Canal, is one of the world's most congested shipping lanes and a crucial maritime route¹ connecting Europe to Asia and East Africa. As we can understand, it bears a valuable position, related to economic and geopolitical reasons. Its position allows trades and transfers that benefit global trade. Only by taking into consideration Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a narrow passage situated between Djibouti and Yemen where annually a significant percentage of global trade passes through, we can assume that this volume represents billions of dollars worth of goods and supplies², meaning disruptions in this corridor can significantly impact global trade. This area has become a focal point for Houthi rebel attacks.

In 2014, when a movement called the Houthi took over Sanaa, Yemen's capital, a worldwide collaboration started in order to respond to the crisis that was created. The Houthis are a rebel group in Yemen that are capable of controlling the western part of the country, as well as the Red Sea coast. They receive support from Iran but stand as a politically independent entity.³ Unlike other Muslim countries and groups that have refrained from intervening in Gaza, the Houthis declared war on Israel at the end of October.

In reaction to the conflict in Gaza, the Houthis began launching drones, missiles and sending threats towards Israel. The reason behind their actions lies in their support to Palestine and seek to find other allies that share similar beliefs, in terms of benefits,

¹ Yerushalmy, Jonathan. "Red Sea crisis explained: what is happening and what does it mean for global trade?" *The Guardian*, 18 December 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/dec/19/red-sea-shipping-crisis-bp-oil-explained-what-is-happening-and-what-does-it-mean-for-global-trade>.

² Yerushalmy, Jonathan. "Red Sea crisis explained: what is happening and what does it mean for global trade?" *The Guardian*, 18 December 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/dec/19/red-sea-shipping-crisis-bp-oil-explained-what-is-happening-and-what-does-it-mean-for-global-trade>.

³ "Who are the Houthis and why are they attacking Red Sea ships?" *BBC*, 15 March 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67614911>.

ideology and religious matters⁴, most of which have been intercepted⁵. On November 19, the Houthis hijacked a commercial vessel in the Red Sea, starting the Red Sea Crisis. Since then, they have carried out numerous missile and drone assaults on commercial ships, with that being the causation for worldwide involvement in this crisis.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Geopolitics

The examination of how a nation's size, location and other factors, such as its economy, military and cultural beliefs affect its power and international relations.⁶

Piracy

Traditionally, piracy is known as the action of attacking ships with the intention to steal from them.⁷ However, nowadays piracy still exists and presents a threat to global security and economy. Apart from mere theft, modern piracy consists of illegal activities like trafficking in illegal goods, kidnapping crew members for ransom payments and taking possession of ships.⁸

Multilateral collaboration

A collaboration of multiple countries through an alliance wishing to achieve a goal.⁹ This collaboration is needed when conflicts that affect many countries are presented. For example, climate change, humanitarian crises and international security matters are reasons a collaboration between formal alliances like the United Nations (UN) and NATO will be needed, in order to find a solution that will benefit many countries facing such problems internationally.

⁴ Horton, Michael. "Houthi missile launches at Israel risk reigniting war in Yemen." *Responsible Statecraft*, <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/houthis-missiles-israel/>.

⁵ Yerushalmy, Jonathan. "Red Sea crisis explained: what is happening and what does it mean for global trade?" *The Guardian*, 18 December 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/dec/19/red-sea-shipping-crisis-bp-oil-explained-what-is-happening-and-what-does-it-mean-for-global-trade>.

⁶ ("GEOPOLITICS | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary")

⁷ ("PIRACY | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary")

⁸ Lamorena, Josh. "No room for complacency: maritime piracy incidents fall but crew safety remains at risk." *International Maritime Bureau*, 15 July 2024, <https://icc-ccs.org/index.php/1350-no-room-for-complacency-maritime-piracy-incidents-fall-but-crew-safety-remains-at-risk>.

⁹ ("MULTILATERAL | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary")

Houthis

The Houthis are a Yemen-based rebel group, supported by Iran, that has been attacking ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.¹⁰ Their goal is to disrupt international shipping lanes located in the Red Sea. Additionally, they took over Sanaa and were in charge of the government, after the Yemeni civil war that had started earlier in 2014.

Drone strikes

A drone strike is an attack that takes place with a drone which is equipped with cameras and weapons like bombs or missiles and is programmed to hit a specific target. It can either be controlled by someone through a remote or it can be previously programmed and autonomous.¹¹

Missile strikes

A missile strike is an attack that takes place with a flying weapon that is specially constructed so it can travel a long distance before exploding at the place that it has been programmed to do so.¹²

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Origin of the conflict

The Red Sea crisis roots its existence in the Yemen conflict. The Yemen conflict is a complex conflict between the Houthi rebels and President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi's government, which is recognized internationally. The situation started in 2014 with its motive being political exclusion, economic inequalities, and religious division. In 2014, Sanaa was controlled by the Houthi group after they claimed it, due to exploiting weaknesses within the then Interim government amid a civil conflict. This led to military interference by a coalition led by Saudi Arabia in 2015, with the goal of reestablishing Hadi's government. The conflict has led to a serious humanitarian emergency and unsuccessful attempts at international

¹⁰ "Who are the Houthis? A simple guide to the Yemeni group." *Al Jazeera*, 12 January 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/12/who-are-yemens-houthis-a-basic-guide>.

¹¹ "DRONE STRIKE | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary." *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/drone-strike>.

¹² "MISSILE | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary." *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/missile>.

peace. More specifically, the result was a humanitarian catastrophe that led to civilian casualties due to additional attacks through airstrikes. Additionally, the situation can be characterized as a vicious circle as regional instability and violence keep restricting the countries involved to reach a final agreement.

A major contributor in this conflict is the state of Iran. Iran has provided support to the Houthis, in a variety of ways, such as economic enhancement and military equipment¹³. The Houthis hold power over the western part of Yemen and the shoreline of the Red Sea. Despite the assistance provided, Iran does not appear to be exercising unrestricted influence over the Houthis. The security and stability of the Red Sea region has been greatly impacted and affected by this conflict, in terms of the safety of each ship passing through and of course the impact that the economy has dealt with after a significant number of sailors have been reluctant to travel through that passage due to a concern over a potential attack and modern piracy.

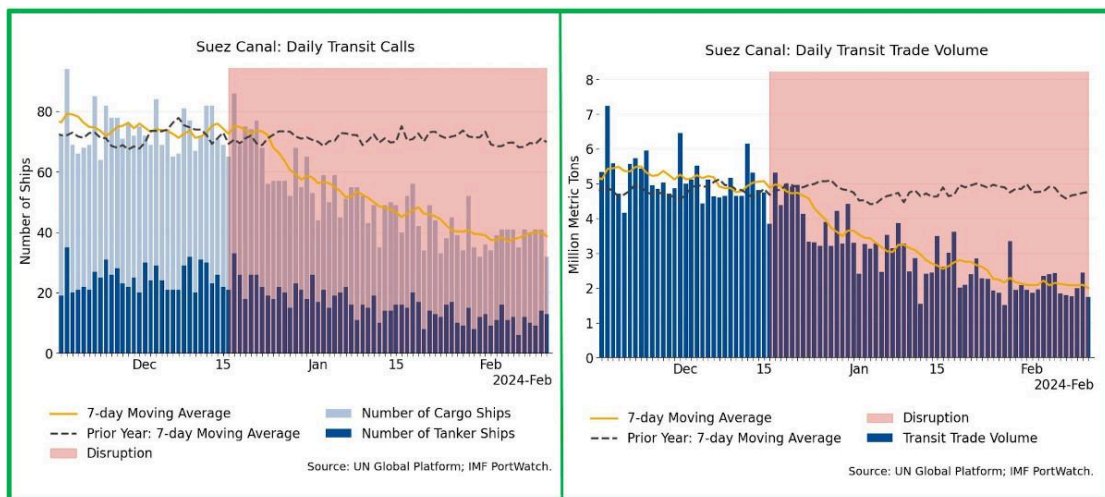


Figure1: How maritime traffic through the Suez Canal has been affected by Houthis’ attacks¹⁴

Initial stages of the issue

In July 2017, the Houthis started attacking commercial and military ships in the Red Sea, an act that forced them to involve more contemporary equipment like missiles and

¹³ “Who are the Houthis and why are they attacking Red Sea ships?” *BBC*, 15 March 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67614911>.

¹⁴ “Red Sea on edge: Houthi attacks disrupt vital shipping routes.” *Universidad de Navarra*, <https://www.unav.edu/web/global-affairs/red-sea-on-edge-houthi-attacks-disrupt-vital-shipping-routes>.

drones, which they later on received from Iran¹⁵. One of the most remarkable events was the missile attack on a Saudi warship. That is because this attack highlighted the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran and in that case, the Houthis acted as representatives of Iran.¹⁶ Once again, the countries that hold power of the passage such as Egypt were mainly affected because the security of the canal was threatened. Since the position of the Sea can be referred to as one of the busiest shipping lanes globally¹⁷, the increased danger can cause significant concerns, as each country's supplies not only will be in danger, but the costs would also rise¹⁸. In recent times, there has been a notable increase in these attacks, with numerous incidents being documented¹⁹.

The initial attack

On November 19, 2023, the Houthis seized control of a vehicle transport ship in the Red Sea in Yemeni territory and claimed that the ship was Israeli²⁰. However, it was found to only be partially owned by Israeli tycoon Abraham Ungar, and at the time of the attack, the ship was sailing with an international civilian crew, with no Israelis on board²¹. This attack was followed by another attack on November 24th, 2023 against a container ship, CMA CGM Symi, owned by an Israeli billionaire. The attempt was carried out by a suspected Iranian drone in the Indian Ocean; a third attack on the Liberian-flagged Motor Tanker "Central Park"

¹⁵ Nadimi, Farzin. "The UN Exposes Houthi Reliance on Iranian Weapons." *The Washington Institute*, 13 February 2020, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/un-exposes-houthi-reliance-iranian-weapons>.

¹⁶ Maher, Mohamed, and Mohamed Farid. "Cairo: Stuck between Securing the Red Sea and Avoiding a Perception of Support for Israel." *The Washington Institute*, 26 January 2024, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/cairo-stuck-between-securing-red-sea-and-avoiding-perception-support-israel>.

¹⁷ Yerushalmy, Jonathan. "Red Sea crisis explained: what is happening and what does it mean for global trade?" *The Guardian*, 18 December 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/dec/19/red-sea-shipping-crisis-bp-oil-explained-what-is-happening-and-what-does-it-mean-for-global-trade>.

¹⁸ Bacrot, Céline, and Marc Faure. "Red Sea Crisis and implications for trade facilitation in Africa." *unctad*, 17 April 2024, <https://unctad.org/news/red-sea-crisis-and-implications-trade-facilitation-africa>.

¹⁹ "Who are the Houthis and why are they attacking Red Sea ships?" *BBC*, 15 March 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67614911>
Bacrot, Céline, and Marc Faure. "Red Sea Crisis and implications for trade facilitation in Africa." *unctad*, 17 April 2024, <https://unctad.org/news/red->.

²⁰ "Israel-linked ship attacked off Yemeni coast, after 2 similar cases claimed by Houthis." *The Times of Israel*, 26 November 2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-linked-ship-attacked-off-yemeni-coast-after-2-similar-cases-claimed-by-houthis/>.

²¹ Bacrot, Céline, and Marc Faure. "Red Sea Crisis and implications for trade facilitation in Africa." *unctad*, 17 April 2024, <https://unctad.org/news/red-sea-crisis-and-implications-trade-facilitation-africa>.

occurred in the Gulf of Aden that belonged to Eyal Ofer, an Israeli billionaire²². This rapid escalation together with the fact that the Houthis specifically targeted ships belonging to Israeli interests rendered the crisis into a global concern and provided a disturbing preview of the various global implications that could arise in the event that the Houthis further increased their activities against commercial ships at sea. Indeed, after these events, the Houthis have proceeded to launch several missile and drone attacks and have caused damage and/or injuries to the crew-members of about 34²³ commercial ships. At this stage, the Houthis appeared to show an increased tendency to target ships owned or controlled by Israeli interests. This strategic selection may be interpreted as an attempt to raise tension with Israel for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Yemeni people to this conflict.

The rapidly increasing number and the frequency of the attacks against commercial ships provided a clear indication of increasing danger that the Houthis were capable of presenting to global maritime operations.

Economic Impact

Global economy on an international scale has been affected as each disruption and attack that takes place has a great impact on trade balances. Each transportation of cargo that gets delayed or lost results in additional costs of products, affectively destabilizing international trade. Furthermore, countries can choose not to cross the specific passage due to the attacks that take place, leading to increased fuel costs globally. That can subsequently have an effect on each country's economy.

International implications

The crisis has affected the international community multidimensionally, mainly the stakeholders in the conflict. Firstly, there are major economic implications due to the importance of the passage on global trade. Secondly, there are crucial security and humanitarian concerns. With the Red Sea being a passage that affects international trade, it is expected that many countries have reacted by expressing their dissatisfaction with the

²² "Israel-linked ship attacked off Yemeni coast, after 2 similar cases claimed by Houthis." *The Times of Israel*, 26 November 2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-linked-ship-attacked-off-yemeni-coast-after-2-similar-cases-claimed-by-houthis/>.

²³ "Red Sea Attacks and the International Response: An International Law Insight." *ELIAMEP*, 30 January 2024, <https://www.eliamep.gr/en/publication/%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B9%CE%B8%CE%AD%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B5%CF%81%CF%85%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%AC-%CE%B8%CE%AC%CE%BB%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%83%CE%B1-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%B7/>.

recent events as costs have increased due to the security concerns in the Canal. Military missions, security patrols and equipment have been emplaced by different countries as not only do they need to protect their nationals from a possible attack, but some have decided to help the Houthis with such equipment²⁴. Lastly, humanitarian implications such as lack of access to education, healthcare and basic needs like nourishment have made the crisis a global concern²⁵. Each attack that takes place may disrupt the supply chains and with that, the delivery of humanitarian aid such as food, medication and educational means is being negatively affected. Therefore, the attacks threaten the lives of the population through their actions to prevent the delivery of necessary needs that they need in order to survive.

Global concerns

The safety of the Red Sea is now a global concern, resulting in more naval forces from nations such as the United States of America (USA) and its allies. The purpose of these naval forces is to protect maritime paths and combat dangers from the Houthis, as their action in the Red Sea was observed to be extremely threatening. Those dangers range between unexpected attacks on vessels by both missile and drone strikes. Moreover, different diplomatic initiatives are being carried out to ease tensions by different countries that are interested in keeping peace or are benefiting through the transportation canals. Major actors, such as Saudi Arabia, have been trying to negotiate for peaceful means instead of implicating into an armed conflict²⁶. The United Nations have also emphasized their willingness to find a solution that does not include warfare, through talks²⁷, with the support of the European Union.²⁸ Additionally, the USA not only supports the initiative of Saudi Arabia to find a solution peacefully but has also attempted to contact the Houthis directly²⁹. Egypt has taken over the responsibility of securing the Suez Canal and possibly repelling a

²⁴ “War in Yemen | Global Conflict Tracker.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>.

²⁵ Maizland, Lindsay, and Kali Robinson. “How Severe Is Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis?” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 February 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/how-severe-yemens-humanitarian-crisis>.

²⁶ “War in Yemen | Global Conflict Tracker.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>.

²⁷ Elías, Manuel. “Security Council demands Houthis cease attacks in the Red Sea.” *UN News*, 27 June 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/06/1151586>.

²⁸ Trager, Eric. “Egypt's Yemen Campaign.” *The Washington Institute*, 27 March 2015, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/egypts-yemen-campaign>.

²⁹ “Who are the Houthis? A simple guide to the Yemeni group.” *Al Jazeera*, 12 January 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/12/who-are-yemens-houthis-a-basic-guide>.

possible attack³⁰. On the other hand, Iran has continually supported every movement of the Houthis by providing them military equipment and financial support³¹.

Potential warfare

Even though some countries are willing to find peace throughout the conflict, the circumstances seem to not allow a simple agreement, subsequently leading to potential armed conflict. Since the increase in the attacks, many countries like the USA and Saudi Arabia have proliferated their military equipment to face and limit the activity of the Houthis.³² Of course, potential warfare would be catastrophic as it would completely block the canal, actively constricting trade. This event would result in global economic disturbance where transportations could not happen through the Canal.³³

Potential humanitarian implications

Despite the economic impact on each country's economy, there are other implications that have been created from the conflict and might result in the beginning of warfare. One very important implication is the disruption that has been created to food supply chains. The disruption has been created as the Houthis attack vessels that may transfer humanitarian necessities, one of them being part of food supply chains. The prices of products that are needed for everyday usage and can be characterized as basic needs have increased, because of the attacks. People in regional countries that are not able to afford any of those, expose themselves to possible harm to their health. In a wider range, that can lead to hunger that can slowly affect a population's well being³⁴.

Potential environmental implications

The possibility of a devastating environmental catastrophe in case a vessel with dangerous cargo sinks, due to an attack, is significant and now presents another danger that should be taken into consideration. The case of Motor Tanker "Sounion", under the flag of

³⁰ Trager, Eric. "Egypt's Yemen Campaign." *The Washington Institute*, 27 March 2015, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/egypts-yemen-campaign>.

³¹ "Who are the Houthis and why are they attacking Red Sea ships?" *BBC*, 15 March 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67614911>.

³² Kuehn, John T. "US Navy Is at War." *Marine Corps University*, 14 May 2024, <https://www.usmcu.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/Expeditions-with-MCUP-digital-journal/US-Navy-Is-at-War/>.

³³ Kuehn, John T. "US Navy Is at War." *Marine Corps University*, 14 May 2024, <https://www.usmcu.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/Expeditions-with-MCUP-digital-journal/US-Navy-Is-at-War/>.

³⁴ Maizland, Lindsay, and Kali Robinson. "How Severe Is Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 February 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/how-severe-yemens-humanitarian-crisis>.

Greece, carrying 1 million barrels of crude oil that was recently attacked by the Houthis and the threat of a humongous oil spill in case of failure of the ongoing salvage operation aiming to tow the vessel in a safe harbor, consists a terrifying example of the possible environmental implications³⁵.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Yemen

Yemen is at the center of the Red Sea crisis as the presence of the Houthis in the area has fuelled imbalances in the region. The Houthis aim to claim control over this vital sea passage³⁶. This dispute has greatly disturbed sea transportation, affecting worldwide trade and safety. This has resulted in a global movement in order to take measures, with the participation of the Yemeni government, with the greater goal to stop the Houthi movement which seems to want to extend its power and custody out of Yemen.

To that end, the government of Yemen has sought international support and taken diplomatic steps by participating in the negotiations initiated and supported by the United Nations. It has coordinated with allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, participated in joint military operations with them, and has supported international maritime security initiatives via the International Maritime Organization.³⁷

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has been crucial in the Red Sea Crisis by leading a coalition that supports the Yemeni government to find a solution and counter the Houthi movement. The passage is very important for Saudi Arabia as any transportation or exchanges of oil travel

³⁵ Newsroom (2024) *Greek-flagged tanker sounion hit by Houthis appears to be leaking oil, Pentagon says*, eKathimerini.com. Available at: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/environment/1247175/greek-flagged-tanker-sounion-hit-by-houthis-appears-to-be-leaking-oil-pentagon-says/>

³⁶ "Who are the Houthis and why are they attacking Red Sea ships?" *BBC*, 15 March 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67614911>.

³⁷ "Red Sea Attacks and the International Response: An International Law Insight." *ΕΛΙΑΜΕΠ*, 30 January 2024, <https://www.eliamep.gr/en/publication/%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B9%CE%B8%CE%AD%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B5%CF%81%CF%85%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%AC-%CE%B8%CE%AC%CE%BB%CE%B1%CF%83%CF%83%CE%B1-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%B7/>.

through there. Subsequently, they need to ensure that the passage remains open and that global trade and the economy are not at risk.³⁸

To that end, Saudi Arabia has also engaged in diplomatic initiatives under the auspice of the United Nations or on bilateral basis³⁹, has participated in joint military operations against the Houthis and has provided support to multinational naval patrols in the Red Sea as a means of protection to the commercial vessels sailing in the area⁴⁰. However, it is to be noted that Saudi Arabia is currently being accused that it is not as actively involved against the Houthis as previously.⁴¹

Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran's role in the Red Sea conflict is defined by its backing of the Houthi insurgents. The reasons behind that are multiple such as ideological, economic, and military benefits. For instance, Iran benefits by supporting the Houthis due to their ability to control maritime traffic through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a crucial passage for global trade. This disruption can be found very useful as it limits Western powers and causes significant delays and cost increases in the international chain supply. In addition, it can also be found similar to Iran's strategy in the Strait of Hormuz⁴², therefore they are offered privileges that they can take advantage of⁴³. Iran has supplied the Houthis with military aid such as weapons and training, as well as logistical support. This can be proven useful to them as they can test and see the progress of their equipment as well as what possible changes might be considered in order for them to maximize their abilities in case of a scenario that they might find themselves in.

³⁸ "War in Yemen | Global Conflict Tracker." *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>.

³⁹ "Israel-linked ship attacked off Yemeni coast, after 2 similar cases claimed by Houthis." *The Times of Israel*, 26 November 2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-linked-ship-attacked-off-yemeni-coast-after-2-similar-cases-claimed-by-houthis/>.

⁴⁰ "Saudi Arabia Expands Maritime Partnership with International Coalition." *Navy.mil*, 28 September 2022, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3172513/saudi-arabia-expands-maritime-partnership-with-international-coalition/>.

⁴¹ Ali, Veena. "Why Saudi Arabia Isn't Acting Against the Houthis." *Foreign Policy*, 16 January 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/01/16/saudi-arabia-red-sea-conflict-houthis-us-strike/>.

⁴² Feierstein, Gerald M. "Houthis see domestic and regional benefit to continued Red Sea attacks." *Middle East Institute*, 11 January 2024, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/houthis-see-domestic-and-regional-benefit-continued-red-sea-attacks>.

⁴³ Feierstein, Gerald M. "Houthis see domestic and regional benefit to continued Red Sea attacks." *Middle East Institute*, 11 January 2024, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/houthis-see-domestic-and-regional-benefit-continued-red-sea-attacks>.

This assistance has given the Houthis the ability to conduct more complex and harmful assaults on sea traffic, making the crisis worse.

United States of America (USA)

The United States is involved in the conflict by mainly providing support to countries that wish to find a solution without warfare. Specifically, the US has been providing Saudi Arabia with military equipment that is being used against the Houthis in order to limit their actions. Furthermore, the US has been active on their own as they have increased their military presence in the area and have organized naval patrols, in order to make sure that there are not any additional implications that can affect global transportation.⁴⁴ The thought behind that act is for the US to keep the current strong alliances that it has with regional countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel. By strengthening those alliances, the US is also benefited as it also has access to products and techniques that each country in the alliance has to offer.

Egypt

Egypt by having control over the Suez Canal can be surely considered as one of the most involved countries in this situation as it can decide whether someone would pass, transfer or trade through the canal in a strategic way. Egypt's actions indicate its strategic concern for upholding stability and security in the Red Sea and Suez Canal, as well as its own national security. Egypt has also supported Saudi Arabia with equipment and wishes to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.⁴⁵

To that end, the Government of Egypt has participated in regional and international discussions, striving for stability in the Red Sea and seeking solutions to the conflict⁴⁶. Additionally, it has increased naval patrols in the Red Sea to help secure maritime routes and protect shipping from potential threats, including Houthi attacks⁴⁷. In conclusion, Egypt has

⁴⁴ Kuehn, John T. "US Navy Is at War." *Marine Corps University*, 14 May 2024, <https://www.usmcu.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/Expeditions-with-MCUP-digital-journal/US-Navy-Is-at-War/>.

⁴⁵ Maher, Mohamed, and Mohamed Farid. "Cairo: Stuck between Securing the Red Sea and Avoiding a Perception of Support for Israel." *The Washington Institute*, 26 January 2024, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/cairo-stuck-between-securing-red-sea-and-avoiding-perception-support-israel>.

⁴⁶ "Egypt Calls for Peace in Yemen, Renews Support for Govt." *Chinadailyhk*, www.chinadailyhk.com/hk/article/275537.

⁴⁷ "Egypt Takes Command of International Red Sea Task Force." *Navy.mil*, 12 December 2022, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3242579/egypt-takes-command-of-international-red-sea-task-force/>.

supported international initiatives aimed at safeguarding commercial shipping in the Red Sea.⁴⁸

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

The IMO has been contributory in guaranteeing maritime safety and security in the Red Sea. This involves ensuring the security of international maritime transportation. The IMO is working to reduce the dangers of the conflict that not only affect global trade and economy but also threaten human lives. These actions are essential for upholding the safety and effectiveness of one of the most busy shipping corridors globally.⁴⁹

In particular, a wide range of initiatives and projects have occurred; the IMO primarily issued warnings and advisories to global maritime operators about the risks in the Red Sea, including threats from Houthi attacks.⁵⁰ Furthermore, it has hosted, supported and promoted international initiatives to enhance maritime security and safeguard shipping routes in the Red Sea⁵¹. Lastly, the IMO is currently working with regional authorities and organizations to improve security measures and coordinate responses to maritime threats under the so-called “Red Sea Project 2021-2026”⁵² and acts as an intermediary or facilitator for the exchange of critical information among Member States and maritime stakeholders to improve awareness in timely manner and efficient responses to potential navigational threats.⁵³

The above actions reflect the IMO’s role in addressing maritime security challenges in the Red Sea, including the threat posed by Houthi attacks. These actions have been and

⁴⁸ Maher, Mohamed, and Mohamed Farid. “Cairo: Stuck between Securing the Red Sea and Avoiding a Perception of Support for Israel.” *The Washington Institute*, 26 January 2024, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/cairo-stuck-between-securing-red-sea-and-avoiding-perception-support-israel>.

⁴⁹ “Hot Topics - Red Sea area.” *International Maritime Organization (IMO)*, <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Red-Sea.aspx>.

⁵⁰ “Hot Topics - Red Sea area.” *International Maritime Organization (IMO)*, <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Red-Sea.aspx>.

⁵¹ “Maritime Security - Maritime Security.” *International Maritime Organization*, <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/GuideMaritimeSecurityDefault.aspx>.

⁵² “Maritime Security - Red Sea Project.” *International Maritime Organization*, <https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/RedSeaProject.aspx>.

⁵³ “Hot Topics - Red Sea area.” *International Maritime Organization (IMO)*, <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Red-Sea.aspx>.

continue to be critical for upholding the safety and effectiveness of one of the most busy shipping corridors globally.⁵⁴

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
2014	The Houthi movement captures Yemen’s capital, Sanaa.
2015	Saudi Arabia launches a military operation in Yemen in order to restore the internationally recognized government.
2017	Houthi attacks begin, mainly targeting both military and commercial vessels in the Red Sea and other canals
December 2023	A significant increase in attacks, marks a new wave of disruption, forcing ships to reroute their arranged journey around Africa, increasing costs and the time the supplies will be delivered in.
January 2024	Ships prefer not to pass through the Red Sea and avoid such action due to fear that was created by the current events, which increases the operational costs once more.
March 2024	Increased costs and delays exacerbate inflationary pressures globally and as a result, worldwide measurements need to be considered.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN Security Council Resolution 2216, 14th April 2015 ⁵⁵

After numerous attacks and the persistent deterioration of rights in Yemen from the Houthis, a global concern has been created as the threat of global security and economy has risen. The importance of the resolution is the fact that it limited the Houthis’ military capabilities. With that, their ability to attack targets in the canals was kept within bounds.

⁵⁴ “Hot Topics - Red Sea area.” *International Maritime Organization (IMO)*, <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Red-Sea.aspx>.

⁵⁵chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfefindmkaj/<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n15/103/72/pdf/n1510372.pdf>.

UN Security Council Resolution 2739, 27th June 2024⁵⁶

Including Resolution 2216 and new attacks on vessels, the UNSC voted for monthly updates on the situation until January 15 2025 and they confirmed their involvement in the crisis. Additionally, it was one of major importance as it addressed all the possible threats that can be presented by the Houthis to maritime navigation and reinforced measures to safeguard commercial vessels from their actions.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Saudi Arabia's failed attempt, March 26 2015

Saudi Arabia initiated military actions to counter the Houthi rebels in response to their uprising. These efforts have sought to bring back stability in Yemen, but they have also increased tensions in the region, resulting in continued instability in the Red Sea region. Saudi Arabia has carried out military actions such as airstrikes, naval blockades, and ground operations. Due to challenges that occurred this act failed. One major disadvantage is that the attacks led to the disruption of essential services and damaged the infrastructure.⁵⁷

U.S. Naval forces, 2015

The US has used its naval forces in order to safeguard shipping lanes and potentially attack if any piracy is detected. The goal of the deployment of Naval forces in 2015 was to dissuade any attacks from the Houthis and, of course, ensure the safety of the maritime corridor. Even though the attempt was partially successful, the naval forces only secured the shipping lanes temporarily and the Houthi threat carried on.⁵⁸

Diplomatic efforts

Furthermore, the US has attempted to get in contact with the Houthis and has also tried to urge regional and international actors to contribute to finding a solution that does not include warfare. Consequently, after numerous negotiations and efforts for peace in

⁵⁶[chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/187/24/pdf/n2418724.pdf](https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/187/24/pdf/n2418724.pdf).

⁵⁷ Maher, Mohamed, and Mohamed Farid. "Cairo: Stuck between Securing the Red Sea and Avoiding a Perception of Support for Israel." *The Washington Institute*, 26 January 2024, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/cairo-stuck-between-securing-red-sea-and-avoiding-perception-support-israel>.

⁵⁸"Red Sea on edge: Houthi attacks disrupt vital shipping routes." *Universidad de Navarra*, <https://www.unav.edu/web/global-affairs/red-sea-on-edge-houthi-attacks-disrupt-vital-shipping-routes>.

Yemen and even though the outcome of diplomatic talks has temporally led to a ceasefire, the attempt has not led to a lasting resolution thus it has failed.⁵⁹

USA military support to Saudi Arabia, 2015-2018

As the US and Saudi Arabia share a common understanding on this issue, the US supports their movements by providing them with military equipment, and logistics that they need for their attempts.⁶⁰ Even though this support increased Saudi Arabia's military, it did not have the expected response. Operations on the ground and air strikes occurred, in order to limit the actions of the Houthis. However, they did not ultimately prove effective as the attacks on vessels continued and the humanitarian crisis escalated.

Egypt's naval forces, March 2015

Egypt's participation is vital because it has control over the Suez Canal. Egypt cooperates with the USA and Saudi Arabia, supporting Saudi Arabia's movement by using its naval forces to limit the input of supplies that reach the Houthis from allies, such as Iran. Therefore, the attempt of Egypt was successful as it limited the actions of the Houthis locally, and protected Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the safety of the Suez Canal. Even though it could not put an end to the conflict, the attempt was a significant milestone.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Enhance maritime security in the area

Enhancing maritime security is considered crucial for the outcome of the crisis and the protection of the international economy. This can only be achieved under the cooperation of regional naval forces, in order to combine military equipment, intelligence and personnel and their overall resources to protect the biggest area of the Suez Canal. Countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel will cooperate and use their naval forces to protect areas like the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and safeguard shipping routes so international trade is not affected.

Sanctions on providers of weaponry to the Houthis

⁵⁹"Red Sea on edge: Houthi attacks disrupt vital shipping routes." *Universidad de Navarra*, <https://www.unav.edu/web/global-affairs/red-sea-on-edge-houthi-attacks-disrupt-vital-shipping-route>.
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⁶⁰Kuehn, John T. "US Navy Is at War." *Marine Corps University*, 14 May 2024, <https://www.usmcu.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/Expeditions-with-MCUP-digital-journal/US-Navy-Is-at-War/>.

The UNSC previously published resolution 2216 in 2015, which set an embargo on armory and weapons on the Houthis. Following that, there was a reduction in their use and obtaining of weapons. Therefore, enhancing sanction and embargo-driven resolutions where the oversight of the areas that are most dangerous and concerning as well as ports and borders will be strengthened. That could be achieved if organized patrols, deployed by the UN, were in charge of inspecting those areas and protecting any kind of armory reaching the Houthis. Additionally, countries that violate the embargo, will face secondary sanctions that are going to be authorized by the UNSC.

Ceasefire and peace talks

The SC could demand a ceasefire through negotiations and peace talks with the Houthis and regional governments like Yemen as a possible solution to the issue. Moreover, the UNSC can offer a platform in which relevant stakeholders will be able to communicate if a need occurs. Furthermore, if any country violates the ceasefire, the UNSC will have any right to set sanctions that may involve economic penalties.

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