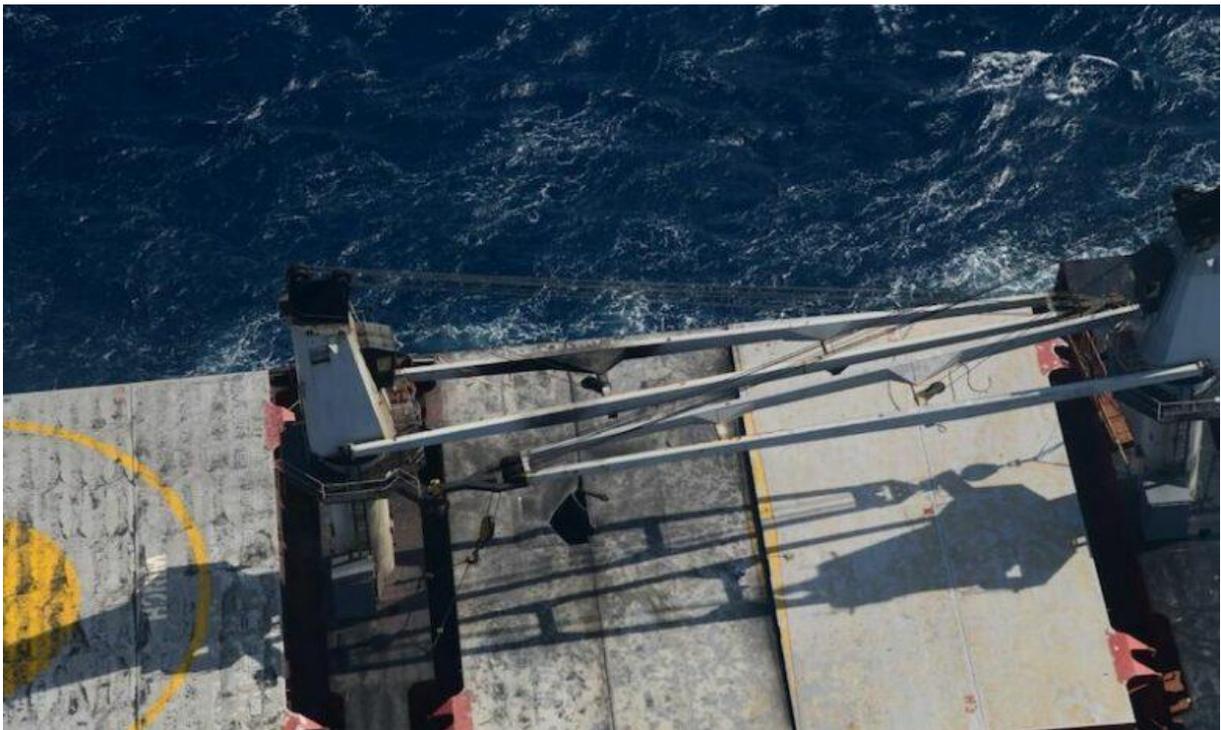


Houthi leader vows to escalate attacks

Sam Chambers

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The leader of the Houthis has said his militia will escalate attacks unless Israel ends its war in Gaza and the US stops attacking Yemen.

“We are preparing for a fourth round of escalation if the Israeli enemy and the Americans continue their intransigence,” Abdul Malik Al-Houthi said in a televised speech on Thursday.

Al-Houthi claimed his forces have so far launched 606 ballistic missiles and drones against 107 Israeli, US, and UK ships in the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandab Strait, Gulf of Aden, and recently in the Indian Ocean during the Red Sea ship campaign that began in November. Splash figures suggest around 90 ships have been targeted to date.

The Iranian-backed Houthis are threatening merchant ships hundreds of miles out in the Indian Ocean after striking a container vessel well beyond the Red Sea last week. The drone attack on the 15,000 teu MSC Orion on the night of April 26 followed a threat by the Houthis in March to extend their attacks to the Indian Ocean, including on commercial vessels sailing between Asia and Europe around the Cape of Good Hope.