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Houthis to resume attacks on Israeli ships after Gaza aid deadline ended

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- by Shipping Telegraph

Yemen's Houthis will resume attacks on Israeli ships in both the Red and Arabian Sea after their deadline for Israel to allow the resumption of aid deliveries into Gaza passed.

The Houthis said they were “resuming the ban on the passage of all Israeli ships” in the “designated operations zone in both Red and Arabian Seas, as well as Bab al-Mandab strait and the Gulf of Aden.”

The Yemeni armed forces action is in line with supporting the Palestinian people and putting pressure on Israel to reopen the crossings and allow back the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip, Yemeni armed forces reported on March 11.

Earlier, the Yemeni group had given a deadline to push for the resumption of aid delivery into the Gaza Strip; otherwise, it will resume its naval operations against all Israel ships.

The Iran-aligned Yemeni group said the ban would take effect immediately from the time this statement is issued, adding that “any Israeli ship attempting to violate this ban shall be targeted in the declared zone of operations”.

This ban shall continue until the crossings to the Gaza Strip are reopened and aid, food, and medicine are allowed in, the group added.

The group halted its missile attacks, which had targeted vessels after the Gaza ceasefire deal. However, the Iran-backed Houthis threatened to renew attacks on Israel if the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas collapses.

Now the attacks will continue until Israel allows aid deliveries in Gaza, according to Houthis.

The Trump administration designated earlier this month the Houthi group in Yemen as a “foreign terrorist organization.”

The group was already the subject of earlier U.S. sanctions and other measures, with the designation of Houthis by the Biden administration as a “specially designated global terrorist” group.

The United States issued sanctions on seven senior members of Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthi movement.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said this in a statement, adding that these individuals have smuggled military-grade items and weapon systems into Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and also negotiated Houthi weapons procurements from Russia.

Since 2023, the Houthis have launched hundreds of attacks against commercial vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

During 2024, the product tanker market was strongly affected by the geopolitical conflict in the Middle East and the subsequent Houthi attacks against commercial vessels at the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

This led to a widespread rerouting of vessels away from the Red Sea to go around the Cape of Good Hope, increasing trade distances on top of the already longer trade routes as a result of sanctions against Russia, officially introduced in 2023.

Prior to disruption, around 12% of global clean petroleum product volumes transited the Suez Canal, according to the shipowner and operator of product tankers Torm.

“By the end of the first quarter 2024, the number of product tankers transiting the Red Sea had fallen by 60%,” Torm said in its annual report 2024.