

## Houthis vow to go after American ships

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US Navy

Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi said on Sunday that his militants would target US ships in the Red Sea in the wake of massive American strikes on Yemen over the weekend.

“If they continue their aggression, we will continue the escalation,” he said in a televised speech.

Despite there being no attacks on merchant shipping this year, the Donald Trump administration decided to unleash an enormous barrage of strikes on Houthi strongholds over the weekend, linked to Trump’s so-called ‘maximum pressure’ campaign on Iran. The missiles killed 53 people, with Yemeni media also claiming the *Galaxy Leader*, a car carrier seized by the Houthis in November 2023, was also hit. The US military has continued its campaign today.

Earlier this month, the Houthis said they would restart targeting Israeli-linked ships over Israel’s failure to allow humanitarian aid into war-torn Gaza.

Posting on Truth Social, Trump wrote: “The Houthis have choked off shipping in one of the most important Waterways of the World, grinding vast swaths of Global Commerce to a halt, and attacking the core principle of Freedom of Navigation upon which International Trade and Commerce depends.”

US defence secretary Pete Hegseth told *Fox News* yesterday: “The minute the Houthis say we’ll stop shooting at your ships, we’ll stop shooting at your drones, this campaign will end, but until then it will be unrelenting.”

“This is about stopping the shooting at assets ... in that critical waterway, to reopen freedom of navigation, which is a core national interest of the United States, and Iran has been enabling the Houthis for far too long,” he said. “They better back off.”

After more than 100 ships were attacked from late 2023 and throughout last year, the Houthis had ceased their campaign against merchant shipping this year, in line with the tentative peace deal struck between Israel and Hamas.