

U.S. Forces Have Carried Out More Than 800 Strikes on Houthis



Courtesy DOD

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On Sunday, U.S. Central Command said that its multiweek campaign of airstrikes against Yemen's Houthi militant group is having an effect, and the number of Houthi missile and drone attacks on U.S. Navy warships is beginning to come down.

Since the operation began on March 15, U.S. forces have carried out more than 800 strikes on Houthi targets, CENTCOM said, killing hundreds of the group's fighters and multiple members of its leadership. The casualties include "senior Houthi and UAV officials," and the command said that it is using intelligence to reduce civilian harm.

CENTCOM declined to divulge the specifics of past or future targets for reasons of operational security. It has had serious issues with leaks in the recent past: at the outset of the campaign, a group of senior U.S. leaders accidentally gave a reporter the details of imminent strike force launch times, target sequencing and time on target - sensitive advance information about when U.S. pilots would be arriving over Yemen.

CENTCOM has declined to discuss any details of the time or location of its strikes, but it has released a list of the types of installations it is targeting. The target list includes command centers, air defense systems, weapons factories, and weapons storage locations. The command is prioritizing the advanced weapons that the Houthis have used against shipping - anti-ship ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, UAVs and drone boats.

The destruction of the Houthi-operated fuel port at Ras Isa will begin to have a broader effect on the group, too, the command said. The port handled fuel imports critical for the Houthis' military operations; its commercial traffic also made it a major source of tax revenue for its Houthi overseers.

Two carriers remain on station in the Red Sea to carry out ongoing strikes, supported by <u>B-2 strategic bombers</u> operating out of Diego Garcia. "We will continue to increase the pressure and further disintegrate Houthi capabilities as long as they continue to impede freedom of navigation," CENTCOM said.

The Houthis still retain the ability to launch attacks on shipping and continue to target U.S. warships. However, the militant group now operates at a much reduced tempo, the command said. The number of ballistic missile launches has dropped by nearly 70 percent, and suicide drone attacks are down by 55 percent. The fact that the Houthis retain an ability to launch attacks suggests continued Iranian support. "The Houthis can only continue to attack our forces with the backing of the Iranian regime," CENTCOM concluded.