



Military-Terrorist Activities of the Houthis in Yemen during Operation Iron Swords

December 17, 2023

Overview¹

► Since the beginning of Operation Iron Swords, the Houthi movement in Yemen has intensified its on against the State of Israel and on vessels sailing in the Red Sea near the coast of Yemen, **launching 13 missiles and 34 UAVs, and attacking at least nine ships in the Red Sea area.**

► The Houthis claim that the attacks are in response to Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip and they will only stop when Israel stops attacking. Since the beginning of the war, the United States Navy, as part of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), has increased its presence in the Red Sea area and is working to foil attacks on Israel and vessels sailing in the area. More than once, Houthi attacks have also endangered United States Navy vessels. So far no formal action has been taken against the Houthi forces, despite the increase in their attacks.

► The Houthis have a diverse arsenal of weapons, most of which came from Iran, including ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and UAVs which enable them to attack targets in Israeli territory and on land and at sea near Yemen.

► For Iran, using the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, Syria and Yemen as proxies for another level of escalation, on the one hand, expresses its commitment to the concept of "uniting the arenas," especially in view of the Israeli ground attack in the Gaza Strip, and on the other, relieves it of the necessity of involving Hezbollah in an all-out confrontation with Israel, which could exact a heavy price from the organization and possibly from Iran itself.

► So far Iran has hidden its involvement in the Houthi attacks. Both Houthi and Iranian officials deny that Iran participates in orchestrating or carrying out the attacks, and claim that Iran provides is verbal support for the Houthis, who belong to the "axis of resistance,"²

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

² The "axis of resistance" is the anti-American, anti-Israeli political-military alliance of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthi movement in Yemen and pro-Iranian militias in Iraq, Hamas, the

and general opposition to Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip. However, in all probability Iran is actively involved in the Houthis' actions and is a partner in its decision-making. Such claims have also been heard in recent days by officials in the United States, the UK and among the G7 countries.

► In ITIC assessment, as Operation Iron Swords continues, the Houthis will increase their attacks on Israeli or Israeli-related targets. The Houthi attacks, especially at sea, back the goal of the "axis of resistance" to exert pressure on Israel and the United States to stop the fighting in the Gaza Strip in a way that will allow Hamas to survive. Significant damage to an Israeli or American vessel could ignite a regional confrontation which could spread to other parts of the Middle East, given the involvement of many actors in the arena, especially Iran. Either way, in the immediate future the movement of ships and maritime trade will most likely be disrupted, damaging companies with ties to Israel and other countries.

Background Information³

► The Houthi movement was established in Yemen in the early 1990s among the Zaidi-Shi'ite Muslims, who make up about 30% of the country's population. From the beginning the Houthis were hostile to Israel and their enmity increased when they strengthened their relations with Iran and joined the "axis of resistance." In 2004, the movement rebelled against Yemen's central government, on the grounds that it had become too closely identified with the United States and Israel. By 2009, six rounds of fighting had taken place, at the end of which the Houthis established an autonomous region in northern Yemen. Over time, they increased their power and expanded their areas of control, and in 2015 they deposed the incumbent president, a move that led to the establishment of a coalition of Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, whose objective was to defeat the Houthis and restore the previous regime. In response, the Houthis attacked Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, using advanced weapons supplied by Iran.

► Iran has supported the Houthis over the years and provided them with military, economic, and political assistance and included them in its "axis of resistance." Iran supplied them with the ballistic missiles and UAVs which they used to attack Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Because

Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Headquarters. It advocates the violent destruction of Israel.

³ For further information, see the February 2023 ITIC report, "[The Houthi Movement and the War in Yemen: Development and Significance.](#)"

of Yemen's geo-strategic importance, the destabilization of the country turned it into an arena of regional struggle with the involvement of external parties including Iran and its affiliates, which regard the Houthis as allies, and Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries, which take an active part in the civil war in Yemen and support the anti-Houthi bloc.

► In April 2022 a ceasefire was announced, but it is fragile and frequently violated, and its continuation is precarious. However, both sides apparently want at least temporary calm. The Houthis have their own local and regional strategic agenda, and most of their attention is apparently focused on becoming a central actor in Yemen's new regime should they reach an agreement to end the war, which will also regularize their relations with their historical enemy, Saudi Arabia.

Weapons and Military Capabilities⁴

► Besides standard weapons such as small arms, anti-tank missiles and IEDs, the Houthi army possesses ballistic missiles, UAVs, anti-aircraft missiles, and locally-manufactured and foreign-made anti-ship missiles. Israel currently has to deal with ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, attack UAVs and suicide UAVs, and in the future, possibly with anti-aircraft capabilities and anti-ship weapons that have not yet been used, such as suicide vessels. Most of the Houthis' weapons originate in Iran. Advanced weapons such as missiles and UAVs are smuggled into Yemen disassembled and upon arrival are reassembled by the Houthis, who then learn to use them, apparently with the help of operatives from Iran and Hezbollah. Over time, the Houthis established their own weapons-production capabilities, but apparently do not yet have the capabilities to manufacture advanced weapons such as UAVs that can reach Israel.

Rockets and ballistic missiles

► With the occupation of the capital city of Sana'a in 2015, the Houthis took control of the Yemeni army's stockpile of weapons, an arsenal which included rockets and missiles of mostly Soviet manufacture. They have been adapted by the Houthis and have ranges of hundreds of kilometers. In addition, the Houthis possess missiles and rockets that were manufactured in Iran and smuggled into Yemen and even some that were manufactured by the Houthis themselves. The Houthis therefore have a large arsenal of missiles with ranges

⁴ For further information, see "The Houthi Movement" and the November 2023 report, "[The Houthis and Operation Iron Swords](#)."

of hundreds of kilometers, and according to some publications possibly a range of 2,000 kilometers, which covers a considerable area of the State of Israel. The Houthis used such ballistic and cruise missiles to attack southern Israel [unsuccessfully] and ships sailing near the coast of Yemen.

UAVs

►In 2016 the Houthis began using UAVs on the battlefield which were based on Iranian-made vehicles adapted to their needs. Today, they have UAVs for intelligence-gathering and direct attack. The UAVs with the greatest range can fly more than 2,000 kilometers, more than enough to cover most of the territory of the State of Israel. They may be used to attack not only targets in Israeli territory but also ships sailing near the coast of Yemen. Suicide UAVs have been used several times to attack vessels in the Red Sea since October 7, 2023 and since the Houthis have announced their readiness to attack such vessels.

Anti-aircraft missiles, anti-ship missiles and suicide vessels

►The Houthis also have anti-aircraft and anti-ship missiles, most of them produced by Iran, Russia and China. In the past the anti-aircraft missiles successfully shot down four American Army UAVs, and aerial action by Israel or other countries should take their capabilities into consideration. In the past the Houthis demonstrated significant attack capabilities at sea when they attacked a Saudi Arabian Navy ship in January 2017 with three remote-controlled suicide vessels. That type of weapon and Iranian-made coastal missiles were also used in the current conflict on December 3, 2023, when a British ship was hit by an anti-ship missile launched by the Houthis while other ships were attacked by suicide UAVs.



Right: Samad-3 type Houthi UAV with a range of between 1,200 and 1,500 kilometers (al-Masira Telegram channel, March 16, 2020). Left: Burkan-3 Houthi missile with a range of 1,200 km (al-Masira Telegram channel, August 2, 2019)

Houthi Attacks during Operation Iron Swords⁵

- ▶ During the first days of Operation Iron Swords the Houthis published support for Hamas and warned Israel that if it did not stop attacking the Gaza Strip, they would not hesitate to respond with military measures against it. On October 10, 2023, **Abdalmalik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi movement**, announced on Hezbollah-affiliated al-Manar TV in Lebanon that Yemen was prepared to respond should the United States intervene directly in the war between Israel and Hamas. He stated that the Houthis were fully coordinated with their allies and prepared to send soldiers to the battlefield or attack with missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and other weapons (al-Manar TV, October 10, 2023).
- ▶ The threat materialized on October 19, 2023, when Houthi military forces launched five cruise missiles and approximately 30 UAVs at the Red Sea region and Israel, and continued attacking with missiles and UAVs. However, most of them were intercepted and Israel was not hit. Various Houthi spokesmen continued claiming responsibility for launching missiles and UAVs at Israel even no launches were identified or intercepted and Houthi claims of hitting targets in Israeli territory turned out to be inaccurate.
- ▶ Unlike the relative failure to cause damage to Israeli territory, on the naval front the Houthis' actions caused significant damage. On November 14, the Houthi media information bureau published a poster in Hebrew, English and Arabic threatening to attack Israeli vessels sailing in the Red Sea (@ib_reb X account, November 14, 2023). On the same day, Abdelmalik al-Houthi gave a speech in which he referred to movement's attacks on Israeli targets and said that they were constantly on the lookout, searching for Israeli ships in the Red Sea and the Straits of Bab al-Mandeb, particularly those near Yemen's territorial waters. He threatened to harass the enemy's ships and claimed they would not hesitate to attack them, and the whole world should know it. He claimed Israel was afraid of them, which was why it did not dare to fly the Israeli flag on its ships when they passed through the Red Sea (Ansar Allah Telegram channel, November 14, 2023). In the following days the Houthis continued threatening to take action against Israeli vessels sailing in Yemen's coastal area.

⁵ As of December 13, 2023.



Houthi posters threatening to attack Israeli ships. Right: (Ansar Allah media information center Telegram account, November 15, 2023). Left: (@ib_reb X account, November 14, 2023)

►The threats were realized on November 19, 2023, when Houthi helicopter forces landed on the deck of the *Galaxy Leader*, hijacked the ship and took its 22 crew members hostage. There were no Israelis on the ship, which is owned by the company of an Israeli businessman, and it was sailing from Egypt to India (Ynet, November 19, 2023).



The Houthi hijacking of the *Galaxy Leader* (Hazam al-Assad's X Account, November 20, 2023)

►Following the hijacking of the ship, **Hazam al-Assad**, a member of the Houthi political bureau, wrote a post in Hebrew on his X account claiming that "as long as they insist on aggression against our people in Gaza, they must take the route of the Cape of Good Hope" [i.e., sailing around Africa to avoid sailing close to the coast of Yemen] (Hazam al-Assad's X account, November 19, 2023). Houthi **spokesman Yahya Sarieh** said that in accordance with the instructions of Commander Abdelmalik al-Houthi, the forces seized an Israeli ship in the Red Sea and took it to the shores of Yemen. He claimed the Houthi operatives treated the ship's crew "in accordance with the precepts and values of Islam." He stated they would

continue to carry out "military operations" against Israel until the "aggression" against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank ceased, and called on all countries whose citizens worked in the Red Sea to refrain from any work or activity with Israeli ships or Israeli-owned ships (Yahya Sarieh's X account, November 19 2023).

► On November 28, 2023, the foreign ministers of the G7 countries issued a joint statement calling on the Houthis to stop attacking civilians, stop endangering the shipping lanes and the vessels that sail them, and release the ship they hijacked and its crew members (United States State Department website, November 28, 2023). In response, **Houthi spokesman Muhammad Abdel Salam** claimed the way those countries legitimized the self-defense of the "Zionist entity" was contrary to international law and the forces of the Yemeni Navy were obliged to protect the maritime area of Yemen "in accordance with their sovereign powers." Referring to the naval operations which had recently taken place, he said they were limited to Israeli ships, as stated in their repeated warnings that ships belonging or connected to Israel would be targeted. As for the crew of the *Galaxy Leader*, he claimed that because it was hijacked as a sign of solidarity with the Palestinians, the fate of the ship was related to the decisions of the Palestinian "resistance" and how it could be used in a conflict with Israel (Muhammad Abdel Salam's Telegram channel, November 29, 2023).

► In the following days, the Houthis escalated their attacks. On December 3, 2023, they attacked two ships with a suicide UAV and an anti-ship missile. They claimed the ships were Israeli, but in reality one of them was British and the other was only partially owned by an Israeli businessman. The Pentagon and the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that a United States Navy ship and merchant vessels were attacked in the Red Sea by three UAVs and three missiles, apparently in reference to the same event (al-Jazeera, December 3, 2023; CENTCOM X account, December 3, 2023). **Houthi spokesman Yahya Sarieh** announced that their naval forces attacked two Israeli ships in the Bab al-Mandeb Straits, one with a torpedo and the other with a UAV. He claimed the attacks were carried out after the two ships did not heed the Houthi Navy's warnings (Yahya Sarieh's Telegram channel, December 3, 2023).

► On December 9, 2023, Yahya Sarieh announced that from now on any ship sailing to ports in Israel would be a "legitimate [sic] target" for the Houthi forces for as long as food and medicine did not enter the Gaza Strip. In addition, he claimed the Houthi forces would ensure the continuation of world trade through the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea for all

ships, except those connected to Israel or passing through them to its ports (Yahya Sarieh's X account, December 9, 2023).



**Houthi poster warning ships making their way to Israel
(Houthi Ansar Allah Telegram channel, December 9, 2023)**

►Less than a day later, on the night of December 9, 2023, the French army said that a navy destroyer had intercepted two UAVs attacking it in the Red Sea (French General Staff X account, December 10, 2023). The next day the tanker Strinda, flying the Norwegian flag and sailing the Port of Ashdod, was hit by a cruise missile which caused a fire (Reuters, December 12, 2023; Ynet, December 12, 2023). Yahya Sarieh stated that the Houthi forces had attacked the ship because it was en route to Israel and did not heed to the warnings of the Yemeni Navy forces (Yahia Sarieh's X account, December 12, 2023). It was later reported that in the same incident a French Navy ship intercepted a UAV launched from Yemen to attack the Norwegian ship (Agence France-Presse, December 12, 2023).

►The Houthis continued to escalate their attacks and on December 13, 2023, they launched two missiles at the Ardmores Encounter, a tanker carrying oil and chemicals, and sailing north towards the Suez Canal. The missiles missed their target and a UAV was intercepted by an American destroyer (AP, December 13, 2023; Ynet, December 13, 2023).



**Yahya Sarieh, spokesman for the armed forces of the Houthi movement
(al-Mayadeen X account, November 14, 2023)**

►Attacking the ships by the Houthis partially achieved its goal when the ZIM line, owned by an Israeli company, decided to change its ships' route and send them around Africa to avoid sailing near the coast of Yemen. That has resulted in significant delays in shipments and financial damage caused by high transport prices, which may translate into price increases in Israel (Ynet, November 29, 2023). **Houthi spokesman Muhammad Abdel Salam** told an RT TV interviewer that "the seizure of the Galaxy Leader exerts great pressure on the Zionist entity, proof of which is that its major companies announced they would divert their vessels from the Red Sea to another direction." He said "Israeli ships disable their identification signals from the time they enter the Suez Canal to Bab al-Mandeb" (RT website in Arabic, November 29, 2023).

►In ITIC assessment, the Houthis will continue to launch missiles and UAVs at Israel as long as the war in Gaza continues. In addition, due to their failure to hit targets in Israeli territory, they will increase their attacks on vessels in the Red Sea region and along the coast of Yemen. The hijacking of the Galaxy Leader and ZIM's decision to reroute its ships will encourage them to focus on the maritime front to harm Israeli interests. The reaction of the United States and its allies to the attacks will affect the continuation of the Houthi front. Moreover, if the war in Gaza spreads to other arenas, such as Lebanon and Syria, the Houthis may carry out their threats to send military forces to attack Israel from those fronts.

The Response of Israel and Other Countries

►The direct conflict between the Houthis and Israel began with the first attack by the Houthis on October 19, 2023, in which at least five missiles and approximately 30 UAVs were launched at Israel. All the aircraft and missiles were intercepted or failed to hit their targets, with most of them intercepted by the institute Navy destroyer USS Carney, stationed in the

Red Sea. The event also actively brought America into the conflict. Due to its presence in the Red Sea region and the coast of Yemen, and its active defense, it is now also under threat of attack.

►As the Houthi attacks continued, their rhetoric against the United States increased. On November 2, 2023, **Muhammad al-Bakhiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, threatened that their escalation would continue and could turn into an all-out war, despite American efforts to prevent it (Muhammad al-Bahiti's X account, November 2, 2023). The following day, he said the United States' threats did not worry them and they were continuing their "military operations" against Israel. He also claimed they were happy the American fleet was approaching Yemen's shores because they would be able to attack it (al-Mayadeen, November 3, 2023). On November 8, 2023, **Houthi spokesman Yahya Sarieh** said that the Houthi aerial defense system had intercepted an American MQ9 UAV which was flying over Yemen's territorial waters carrying out "hostile activity, monitoring and espionage as part of American military support for the Israeli entity" (Yahya Sarieh's Telegram channel, November 8, 2023). According to Reuters, the report was later confirmed by "official American sources" (Reuters, November 9, 2023).

►In the following days, due to the continued attacks on Israeli territory and ships marked by the Houthis as "Israeli," and the foiling of some of these attacks by American forces, **John Sullivan, the American National Security Advisor**, stated that the United States was conducting talks for establishing a maritime inspection force to ensure the safe passage of ships in the Red Sea (White House website, December 4, 2023).

►For now, Israel's overt activity in the confrontation with the Houthis amounts to intercepting the missile attacks. However, as of November 30, 2023, five explosions occurred in the Houthi-controlled capital city of Sana'a. The first explosion occurred on November 30 in the Jebel Attan area, southeast of Sana'a, where the Houthis have a military base. Various sources claimed it occurred in a warehouse where the Houthis stored weapons and UAVs, and that the attack had been carried out from the air. On December 5, four powerful explosions were reported north and west of Sana'a. In both instances, the Houthi movement denied both attacks or damage to its assets (Ynet, December 5, 2023; YNN, December 5, 2023).



Smoke rises from a Houthi military facility in Sana'a (Nasr al-Din Amer, November 30, 2023)

►According to a report, on December 12, 2023, in response to the Houthi warning of December 9 that they would attack any ship sailing towards Israel and the attacks in the following days, the United States warned the Houthis that if the attacks continued, the peace plan with Saudi Arabia would fail. According to the report, there is pressure to designate the Houthis as a terrorist organization, and if that occurs, the first phase of the peace plan will be stopped. Meanwhile, the United States is trying to create an international defense force based in Bahrain to protect the trade route, mobilizing countries which may be harmed by the Houthis' activities, including those which are not its allies, such as China (The Guardian, December 12, 2023). In response to the report and the IDF spokesman's statement that its navy ships were operating in the Red Sea, **Muhammad al-Bakhiti, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, that the Israeli warship was being sent for the media, nothing else. He pointed out that the what of Israeli ships was not an extension of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. He also claimed they had "trump cards" to use against the countries which would take part in the international defense force in the Red Sea (al-Jazeera Mubasher Telegram channel, December 12, 2023).

Iranian Involvement in the Houthi Attacks

►Since the early years of the Houthi movement, Iran has been its main supporter and primary supplier of arms. Most of the Houthis' arsenal is Iranian or based on Iranian technology. According to reports, over the years Iran has transferred large quantities of weapons to the Houthis, and operatives of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and Hezbollah have trained the Houthi forces in their use. Reports of this type continue to be

published from time to time, including recently.⁶ However, the Houthis' relations with Iran are complex. Although the Houthis are part of the Iranian-led "axis of resistance," they have demonstrated both the desire and the ability to act independently in accordance with their own interests. They do so despite the fact that Iran played a significant role in establishing the movement and not only reinforces and arms it, it may have representatives in the Houthi leadership's institutions.⁷

► Over the years, both the Houthis and Iran have denied the existence of Iranian command and control in the activities of the Houthi movement, and even during Operation Iron Swords both have reiterated their denials. The following shed some light on Iranian involvement:

- ◆ Announcing the start of Operation al-Aqsa Storm, as Hamas calls Operation Iron Swords, Hamas' military-terrorist wing called for a general mobilization of the "resistance," including the "brothers" in Yemen, for the war against Israel (Hamas Telegram channel, October 7, 2023; Safa, October 7, 2023).

- ◆ In response, **Houthi leader Abdelmalik al-Houthi** said in a speech that the Houthis were ready to join the Palestinian people in their war against Israel and that they were aligned with the "axis of resistance" (Ansar Allah Telegram channel, October 10, 2023).

- ◆ **Ibrahim al-Amin, a political commentator affiliated with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah**, referred to the "axis of resistance's" regional involvement on behalf of the Palestinians. He said that all the "axis" forces had recently created working mechanisms for the most effective support for "Palestine." Joint operations rooms were established to monitor the situation on the ground, and plans were formulated and carried out by the "axis" members in more than one arena, including operations against American military bases in Iraq and Yemen (al-Akhbar, October 20, 2023).

- ◆ However, on November 17, 2023, **Hossein-Amir Abdollahian, the Iranian foreign minister**, interviewed by the Financial Times, claimed Hezbollah, the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq, Syria and Yemen "were not Iranian proxies" and operated "independently." However, he claimed such groups

⁶ For example, on December 5, 2023, there were reports of recent Iranian and Hezbollah involvement in providing weapons and training to the Houthis (X account of Roe Keis, Israeli Channel 11 TV, December 5, 2023).

⁷ For further information, see the February 2023 ITIC report, "[The Houthi Movement and the War in Yemen: Development and Significance](#)."

were not indifferent to the killing of Muslims and Arabs in "Palestine" (Financial Times, November 17, 2023).

◆ On November 20, 2023, following the Houthi hijacking of the Galaxy Leader off the coast of Yemen, **Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, rejected Israel's claims of Iranian involvement in the event. He pointed out that the "resistance organizations" [terrorist organizations] in the region made their own decisions based on the interests of their peoples and were not commanded by Iran. He claimed the "Zionist regime" was "unable to recognize its strategic defeat at the hands of a resistance organization in Gaza and was trying to blame Iran in order to justify its defeat [sic]" (Tasnim, November 20, 2023).

◆ On the same day, **Hazam al-Assad, a member of the Houthi political bureau**, responding to accusations of Iranian involvement in the hijacking of the ship, said the "axis of resistance" had coordinated with and been guided by Iran, but that the decision to attack had been made by the Houthi forces. He also stated it was just the beginning of their naval operations (al-Araby al-Jadeed, November 20, 2023).

◆ After an extensive Houthi attack on vessels in the Red Sea carried out on November 3, 2023, the United States CENTCOM stated it had every reason to believe that although the attacks were carried out by the Houthis in Yemen, they had been made possible by Iran. According to the statement, the United States would consider appropriate responses in full coordination with its allies (CENTCOM X account, December 4, 2023).

◆ Meanwhile, **American National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan** said that Washington had every reason to believe the attacks carried out by the Houthis, even if they were carried out from Yemeni territory, received a green light from Iran, which had provided the weapons which made them possible (White House website, December 4, 2023).

◆ A similar message was conveyed by the spokesman of the British government on the same day, when he condemned the Houthi attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea. He stated that Iran supported the Houthis both militarily and politically and bore responsibility for the actions of its partners and proxies (British government website, December 4, 2023).

- ◆ In response, **Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry**, denied Iran supported the Houthis, claiming the accusations were "baseless." He stated Iran had "nothing to do with the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea and the regional 'resistance groups' [terrorist organizations] had not been ordered by Iran to respond to the [alleged] war crimes of the Zionist regime [sic]," but made decisions and acted according to their "principles," priorities and interests (ISNA, December 5, 2023).
- ◆ However, Western officials have continued to attribute involvement to Iran in the Houthi attacks, even during the G7 summit meeting, where the representatives stated they had reason to believe that Iran had enabled the attacks (White House website, December 6, 2023).
- ◆ On December 7, 2023, the United States Treasury Department announced it had sanctioned 13 individuals and entities responsible for providing tens of millions of dollars' worth of foreign currency generated from the sale and shipment of Iranian commodities, backed by the IRGC's Qods Force, to the Houthis in Yemen. It was also reported the Houthis "continue to receive funding and support from Iran, and the result is unsurprising: unprovoked attacks on civilian infrastructure and commercial shipping, disrupting maritime security and threatening international commercial trade" (US Treasury Department website, December 7, 2023).



**A Houthi delegation meets with the supreme leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei
(al-Masira Telegram channel, August 14, 2019)**

Appendix⁸- Attacks Attributed to the Houthi Movement

► Since the beginning of Operation Iron Swords, 13 missile and approximately 34 UAVs have been launched to attack Israel, and there have been at least nine naval attacks in the Red Sea area and near the coast of Yemen:

- ◆ October 19, 2023 – Five cruise missiles and approximately 30 UAVs were launched at the Red Sea area. The United States USS Navy Carney intercepted almost all of them. A fifth missile was intercepted by Saudi Arabian forces after entering the country's airspace.⁹
- ◆ October 27, 2023 - Two UAVs entered Egypt's airspace. One crashed into a building near a hospital in the town of Taba on the Egypt-Israel border, and the other was intercepted and parts of it fell in the area of the town of Nuweibaa.¹⁰
- ◆ October 31 – A ballistic missile and two cruise missiles were launched from the Red Sea at Israel. The ballistic missile was intercepted by Israel's Hetz-2 aerial defense system, and the cruise missiles by Israeli Air Force planes. All the missiles were intercepted outside Israel's airspace.¹¹
- ◆ Night of October 31– The Hetz aerial defense system intercepted a surface-to-surface missile launched at Israel from the Red Sea area.¹²
- ◆ November 9, 2023 – The Hetz-3 aerial defense system intercepted a surface-to-surface missile launched at Israel from the Red Sea area. The Houthis claimed responsibility for the launch. Later in the day, it was reported that a UAV had been intercepted in the Red Sea by a Patriot missile battery before it entered Israeli territory (Ynet, November 9, 2023).
- ◆ November 14, 2023 – A Hetz aerial defense system intercepted a surface-to-surface missile launched at Israel from the Red Sea area before it entered Israeli territory (IDF spokesman November 14, 2023).

⁸ As of December 13, 2023.

⁹ For further information, see the November ITIC report, "The Houthis and Operation Iron Swords."

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

- ◆ November 15, 2023 – The US Navy destroyer USS Thomas Hudner intercepted a UAV that took off from Yemen and flew towards the ship (United States CENTCOM X account, November 16, 2023).
- ◆ November 19, 2023 – The Houthis hijacked the Galaxy Leader (See above).
- ◆ November 22, 2023 – An Israeli Air Force fighter jet intercepted a cruise missile before it entered Israeli territory (IDF spokesman, November 22, 2023).
- ◆ November 23, 2023 – In the Red Sea, the US Navy destroyer USS Thomas Hudner intercepted a number of UAVs launched from areas in Yemen under Houthi control. The ship was not damaged and there were no casualties (CENTCOM X account, November 23, 2023).
- ◆ November 25, 2023 – In the Red Sea area an Israeli Air Force fighter jet intercepted a UAV flying towards Israeli territory. Earlier, interceptors were launched at two suspicious aerial targets in the area. No penetration of Israeli territory was detected (IDF spokesman, November 25, 2023).
- ◆ November 26, 2023 – An attempt was made to hijack the Central Park, which has ties to Israel. The United States Navy prevented the hijacking and secured the ship. Later in the day, two ballistic missiles were launched from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen at a United States Navy ship. The missiles did not hit the ship and there was no damage.¹³
- ◆ November 29, 2023 – The destroyer USS Carney intercepted an Iranian-made KAS-04 UAV in the southern Red Sea. According to CENTCOM, it was launched by the Houthis in Yemen and its purpose was unknown (CENTCOM X account, November 30, 2023).
- ◆ December 3, 2023 – Two ships were attacked by a suicide UAV and a coastal missile. The Houthis claimed the ships were Israeli, but in fact one of them was British, while the other is only partially owned by an Israeli businessman. The Pentagon and CENTCOM reported that a United States Navy and merchant ships were attacked in the Red Sea by three UAVs and three missiles, apparently in reference to the same event.
- ◆ December 6, 2023 – A surface-to-surface missile launched at Israeli territory from the Red Sea area was intercepted by the Hetz aerial defense system. The missile did not

¹³ For further information, see the November 2023 ITIC report, "[Operation Iron Swords \(Updated to 1 p.m., November 27, 2023\)](#)."

enter Israeli territory (IDF spokesman, December 6, 2023). It was also reported that the United States Navy USS Mason intercepted a UAV that took off from Houthi-controlled territories in Yemen and flew towards the ship (CNN, December 6, 2023).

◆ December 10, 2023 – Two UAVs that took off from Yemeni territory were intercepted by a French Navy ship in the Red Sea (Reuters, December 10, 2023).

◆ December 11, 2023 – The Norwegian ship Strinda was attacked and damaged by a cruise missile. In addition, the French Navy intercepted a UAV flying towards the ship (Reuters, December 12, 2023; Agence France-Presse, December 12, 2023).

◆ December 13, 2023 – Two missiles were launched by the Houthis at the Ardmare Encounter, a tanker sailing towards the Suez Canal. The missiles missed their target and an American destroyer intercepted a UAV (AP, December 13, 2023; Ynet, December 13, 2023).