



UNSC

AGENDA ITEM:

Addressing Maritime Security and Regional Stability Amidst the Red Sea Crisis

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NERİMAN EROL YILMAZ SOCIAL SCIENCES HIGHSCHOOL
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Welcoming Letters

- 1.1. Letter from the Secretary-General
- 1.2. Letter from the Under-Secretary-General
- 1.3. Letter from the Academic Assistant

2. Introduction to the Committee

3. Introduction to the Agenda Item

4. Historical Background of the Red Sea Crisis

- 4.1. Geopolitical Importance of the Red Sea
- 4.2. The Yemen Conflict
- 4.3. Previous Maritime Attacks

5. Current Situation of the Crisis

- 5.1. Rising Tensions in the Red Sea Region
- 5.2. 2023-2025 Period's Key Events
- 5.3. Crisis Impact to the International Maritime Trading
- 5.4. Humanitarian Challenges

6. Previous UN Actions and Resolutions

- 6.1. UNSC's Response
- 6.2. UN Peacekeeping and Naval Operations

7. Questions to be Addressed (QTBA)

8. Bibliography

Welcoming Letters

1.1. Letter from the Secretary-General

Most Esteemed Participants of Neriman Erol Yılmaz Social Sciences High School Model United Nations Conference, on behalf of myself and of other members of the Executive Team,

My name is Yasemin Raithel, I am a senior graduating from Private Açı Science College. It is my great honor and pleasure to be serving as the Secretary-General of this fabulous conference. Model United Nations conferences are not just a place where diplomatic views are discussed; they are events that provide you with the ability to fully express yourself in critical situations, giving speeches in a confident way in multi-person committees, bringing solutions to problems from the perspective of countries, and many other skills like these. That's why these conferences are like an open door for you to improve yourself. Step out of your comfort zone and don't miss this opportunity. I have no doubt that your experience will be the best you have had in a long time.

Both our academic and organisation teams have dedicated limitless hours and put so much work to deliver to the whole Antalya Model United Nations Society one of the most incredible MUN experience you have seen to this day. Last but not least, let this be a new beginning, as befits the motto of the conference: The Dawn of the Moon. Lastly, I would like to leave a quote with hopes of a marvellous conference;

“Men become builders by building and lyreplayers by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.”

-Aristotle

Sincerely,

Yasemin RAITHEL

Secretary-General of NEYMUN'25

1.2. Letter from the Under-Secretary-General

Distinguished participants of the UNSC committee,

As the Under-Secretary-General of this committee, I am honoured to welcome you all to this journey.

I thank and appreciate our Secretariat and Organizations with all of my heart. I believe that they are committed to making your experience at the conference one of the finest from the help of high-quality both organization and academic teams they built. They made us able to explore, understand the importance, share our knowledge and discuss this current issue.

I really believe that this committee will be the best place to express your opinions and debate. Your discussions will not go unnoticed so we expect you to express yourself and ideas with utmost confidence, integrity and cleverly.

As the delegates of this committee never forget the importance of being a part of this process and the seriousness of this current issue. I am here to encourage you all to share your primary goals.

This guide which is written by me and my dear Academic Assistant Ece Yiğit is available for you to understand this committee. We aimed this study guide to be informative to you and help your knowledge about this subject.

If you have further questions or concerns don't hesitate to contact me via 0 505 058 6312.

Sincerely,

Turgut Emir ÖNDER
Under-Secretary-General of the UNSC Committee

1.3. Letter from the Academic Assistant

Letter from the Academic Assistant,

Dear UNSC delegates. I am Ece Yigit, your academic assistant. We have carefully prepared this committee for you. I think the context of the topic will be of interest to you. I want you to remember that UNSC is a different committee and you will have a very good experience here. I recommend you to come to the committee prepared and to read and research this guide we have prepared for you. Remember that you can contact me at any time with any questions you may have. I will always be here for you. You are in for an unforgettable committee experience. Good work!

Best regards,
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2. Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN) and is charged with ensuring international peace and security, recommending the admission of new UN members to the General Assembly, and approving any changes to the UN Charter. Its powers as outlined in the United Nations Charter include establishing peacekeeping operations, enacting international sanctions, and authorizing military action. The UNSC is the only UN body with authority to issue resolutions that are binding on member states. The Security Council consists of fifteen members, of which five are permanent: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These were the great powers that were the victors of World War II (or their recognized successor states). Permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states to the United Nations or nominees for the Office of Secretary-General. This veto right does not carry over into General Assembly matters or votes, which are non-binding.

3. Introduction to the Agenda Item

One of the world's most vital trade route: The Red Sea is now the center of escalating tensions due to drone attacks, disrupted shipping lanes and rising foreign governments involvement.

In this committee, delegates will engage in intense negotiations on global maritime security and the growing threat of proxy conflict.

4. Historical Background of the Red Sea Crisis

The Red Sea and its environs, are receiving increased global attention due to their economic and military importance. There is an obvious competition between regional and international players in this strategic geopolitical pathway which puts the region at a crossroad. The potentials are open to rewards or disasters where the possibilities of intense economic growth are accompanied by an increasing regional and international rivalry. Now, let's take a look at the importance of the Red Sea and how the competition between powers in the region will affect the future of the region, especially security threats that range from maritime piracy to human, drugs and weapons trafficking.

- **The Suez Crisis**

The Suez Crisis, also known as the Tripartite Aggression, occurred when Egypt, under President Gamal Abdel Nasser, nationalized the Suez Canal, previously controlled by British and French interests. This move led to a military intervention by Israel, the United Kingdom, and France, aiming to regain control over the canal and remove Nasser from power. The crisis highlighted the canal's importance to European powers and the lengths to which they would go to maintain access to this vital trade route. The conflict resulted in a temporary closure of the canal and highlighted its vulnerability to geopolitical tensions.

- **The Six Day War (1967)**

The Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors had a significant impact on the Suez Canal. Following the war, the canal was closed by Egypt, as it had become a boundary between Egypt and the Israeli-occupied Sinai Peninsula. This closure lasted until 1975, severely disrupting global trade routes and demonstrating the canal's vulnerability to regional conflicts. The closure forced ships to take the longer route around the Cape of Good Hope, significantly impacting global shipping and trade dynamics.

- **Yom Kippur War**

Although the Yom Kippur War did not lead to an immediate closure of the canal, as it was already closed since the Six-Day War, it underscored the strategic importance of the canal in the context of Middle Eastern geopolitics. The war between a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria against Israel led to further damage and minefields in the canal area, delaying its reopening.

4.1. Geopolitical Importance of the Red Sea

Before taking a comprehensive look at the Red Sea and its significance, it's important for you delegates to understand the geographical position of the Red Sea, Suez Canal and Bab el-Mandeb.



The Red Sea region has rapidly changed during the last decades due to growing foreign countries' rivalry and military base expansion. The Red Sea crisis is unprecedented since the Suez Crisis of 1967 and Yom Kippur War of 1973. The crisis brings to fore attention on geopolitical tension and shipping network disruption. Navigating the complex currents of global maritime trade, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea stand as crucial arteries of international commerce and strategic geopolitical interest. These waterways, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean, serve as vital conduits for the flow of goods, energy, and information between Europe, Asia, and beyond. The Suez Canal, in particular, dramatically reduces travel time for shipping routes, underscoring its importance to global supply chains and energy markets.

The Suez Canal, since its inauguration in 1869, has stood as a testament to human ingenuity and a pivotal artery in the global trade network. Carving a path between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, it significantly shortens the maritime route between Europe and Asia, eliminating the need for ships to navigate around the African continent through the Cape of Good Hope (The Cape of Good is a territory in the end of South Africa).

Suez Canal vs. Cape of Good Hope shipping routes



Source: Global Maritime Hub, S&P Global Commodity Insights

This strategic waterway facilitates the seamless flow of goods, including oil, natural gas, consumer products, and raw materials, contributing substantially to the global economy. The canal's importance cannot be overstated, as it not only serves as a crucial link for maritime trade but also as a geopolitical focal point, influencing international relations and regional power dynamics. Parallel to this, the Red Sea's geopolitical significance has grown, serving as a vital conduit for maritime trade and a flashpoint for regional tensions. Its strategic location, bordered by Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, places it at the crossroads of crucial maritime routes that connect the East and West. The Red Sea is also a critical component of the global energy supply chain, with oil tankers and cargo ships traversing its waters, linking the oil-rich Gulf region with European and Asian markets.

Recent events have underscored the vulnerabilities of these maritime routes to geopolitical tensions and conflicts. The Red Sea has witnessed increased threats to shipping, notably from the Houthi movement (will be explained in the following parts) in Yemen, which has targeted maritime vessels in response to broader regional conflicts. Such actions not only pose a threat to international shipping but also highlight the complex interplay between regional disputes and global trade dynamics. The strategic importance of the Suez Canal and the Red Sea extends beyond their roles in facilitating trade. They are symbols of national pride, centers of international diplomacy, and battlegrounds for regional supremacy. As the global economy continues to evolve, the significance of these maritime routes in shaping economic and political landscapes cannot be underestimated.

The Suez Canal is one of the world's busiest maritime routes, facilitating the passage of approximately 12% of global trade. This includes a substantial portion of the world's seaborne oil, with millions of barrels of oil and petroleum products passing through the canal daily. The canal also plays a critical role in the transport of liquefied natural gas (LNG), making it essential for global energy markets. The canal is pivotal for the transport of a wide array of goods. This includes not only energy products like crude oil and natural gas but also consumer goods, automotive parts, grains, and other bulk and containerized cargo. The efficient transport of these goods is crucial for maintaining supply chains and meeting the demands of global markets.

For many countries, especially those in Europe and Asia, the Suez Canal is vital for ensuring the timely delivery of goods and energy resources. It supports international trade operations, enabling economies to import and export goods more efficiently. A disruption in the canal can lead to delays, increased shipping costs, and broader economic repercussions globally. The canal's importance was highlighted by the Ever Given incident in March 2021, where a container ship blocked the canal, causing a significant backlog of vessels and highlighting the fragile nature of global supply chains. The Suez Canal's efficiency and strategic location reduce shipping times and costs, contributing to lower transportation costs for goods worldwide. This efficiency is particularly important for perishable goods and industries operating on just-in-time delivery models. The alternative route around the Cape of Good Hope is not only longer but also more expensive, with increased fuel consumption and additional operational costs.

The canal's significance extends into the energy sector, acting as a critical artery for the transport of oil and LNG from the Middle East to Europe and other global markets. Any disruption can have immediate effects on global energy prices and supply chains, underscoring the canal's strategic economic importance beyond maritime trade.

The Red Sea's geopolitical significance has escalated in recent years, becoming a theater for regional conflicts and power struggles. This vital maritime corridor, linking the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal, is not only crucial for global trade but also for its strategic military importance and the rich oil reserves of the surrounding regions.

4.2. The Yemen Conflict

Before continuing with the Yemen Conflict you need to understand a few key terms: Proxy, Houthis and the Proxy Conflict.

Proxy in dictionary: *authority given to a person to act for someone else, such as by voting for them in an election.*

But we'll use this term as representing someone else in the battlefield. Some of the countries that do not want to use their own army for the conflict support a chain of proxy networks such as local militias. So it's a political method in order not to involve directly into the conflict.

Houthis: *The Houthis, officially known as Ansar Allah, is a Zaydi revivalist and Islamist political and military organization that emerged from Yemen in the 1990s.*

Yemen's Houthi rebels have been transformed from a local armed group with limited capabilities to a powerful military organization with support from Iran, Iraqi armed groups, Lebanon's Hezbollah militants and others, U.N. experts said in a new report.

The Iranian-backed Houthis have exploited the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and worked to enhance their status in Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" to gain popularity in the region and beyond, the experts monitoring sanctions against the Houthis said in the 537-page report to the U.N. Security Council. (Axis of Resistance: is an informal coalition of Iranian supported militant and political organizations across the Middle East. Some of the coalition members are declared as terror organisms by the UN)

To support Iranian-backed Hamas militants, whose surprise attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, sparked the war in Gaza, the Houthis have been attacking vessels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, disrupting global shipping in a key geopolitical area.

Despite Houthi claims that they would target ships linked to Israel, the panel said its investigations revealed the rebels have been targeting vessels indiscriminately.

Its analysis of data from the International Maritime Organization, the U.S. and the United Kingdom revealed that at least 134 attacks were carried out from Houthi-controlled areas against merchant and commercial vessels and U.S. and U.K. warships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden between Nov. 15, 2023, and July 31, 2024.

The Houthis have been engaged in a civil war with Yemen's internationally recognized government, backed by a Saudi-led coalition, since 2014, when they took control of the capital Sanaa and most of the north. Hopes for peace talks to end the war vanished after the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks.

The U.N. experts said the Yemen conflict, which started as an internal fight and expanded into a regional confrontation, “has now escalated into a major international crisis.”

According to the experts, the number of Houthi fighters is estimated at 350,000 now, compared with 220,000 in 2022 and 30,000 in 2015.

“The panel observes the transformation of the Houthis from a localized armed group with limited capabilities to a powerful military organization, extending their operational capabilities well beyond the territories under their control,” the report said.

The experts said the transformation has been possible due to the transfer of military materiel and training provided by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard’s elite Quds Force, Hezbollah and Iraqi specialists and technicians.

Military experts, Yemeni officials and even officials close to the Houthis indicated that the rebel group couldn’t produce complex weapons systems such as ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, surveillance and attack drones, portable air defense systems, and thermal sights, which they have used without foreign support, the U.N. experts said.

“The scale, nature and extent of transfers of diverse military materiel and technology provided to the Houthis from external sources, including financial support and training of its combatants, is unprecedented,” the experts said.

The panel said it observed similarities between multiple military items used by the Houthis and those produced and operated by Iran or its allies in the Axis of Resistance, which includes Hezbollah and Hamas and armed groups in Iraq and Syria.

It said joint operations centers have been set up in Iraq and Lebanon with Houthi representatives “aimed at coordinating joint military actions of the Axis of Resistance.”

Inside Yemen, the panel said the Houthis have been intensifying military operations against the government. “The internal military situation is fragile, and any internal or external trigger could lead to the resumption of military confrontations,” it said.

The Houthis also have been recruiting large numbers of Yemeni youths and children as well as exploiting Ethiopian migrants, forcing them to join the fight against the government and engage in trafficking narcotics, it said.

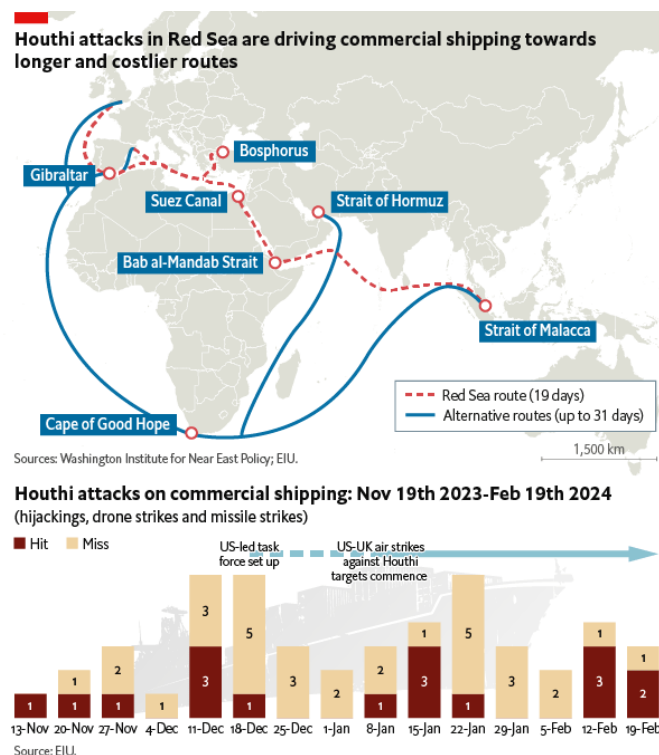
“Exploiting high illiteracy rates, particularly in tribal areas, they have reportedly mobilized boys as young as 10 or 11, often despite parental opposition,” they said. “Recruitment sermons and weekly classes on jihad are reportedly delivered in schools.” (jihad: is a religious term used for war on Allah’s sake.)

Child recruitment reportedly increased after the war in Gaza started and the U.S. and U.K. airstrikes in Yemen, the experts said. Yemen’s government said it received 3,298 reports of child recruitment in the first half of 2024, with youngsters reportedly used as human shields, spies and in combat and for planting landmines and explosives, reconnaissance and as cooks.

Now that we understand the Yemen crisis let’s move on with its effects on the Red Sea Crisis.

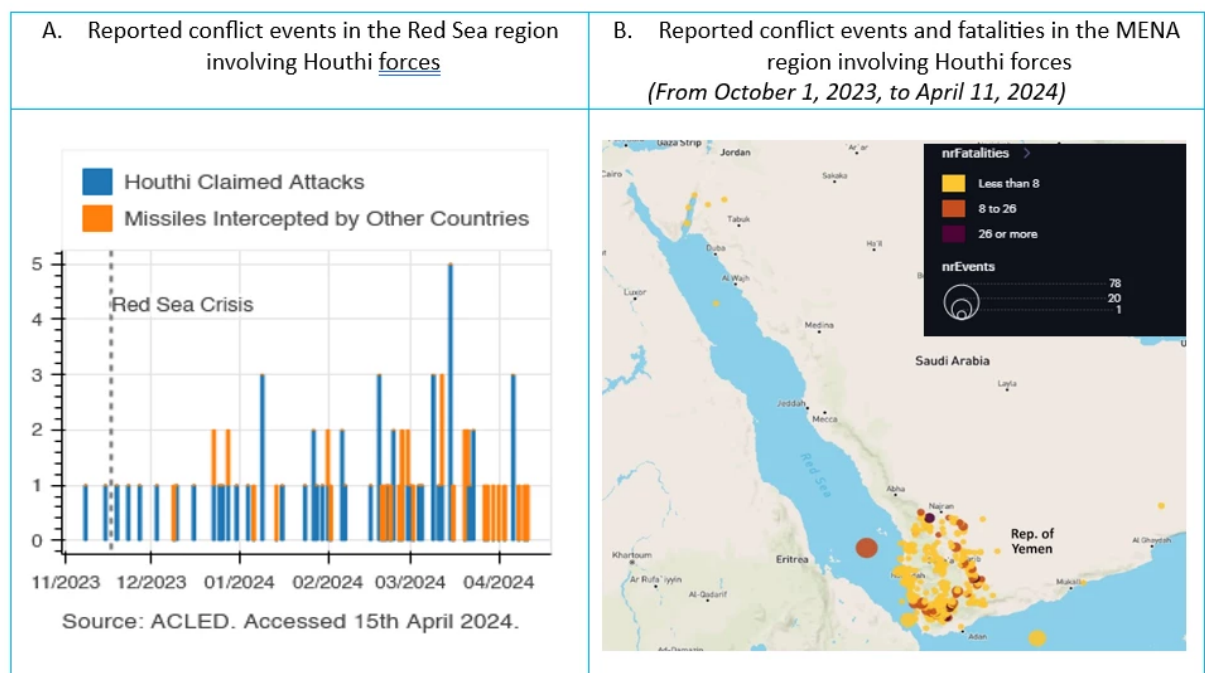
How does that cause geopolitical instability?

Attacks launched from Yemen on vessels transiting the Red Sea are the primary driver of the current Red Sea crisis. The Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a strategic chokepoint connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, has become increasingly volatile as Houthi rebels launch attacks on oil tankers and cargo ships. In early 2023, these attacks escalated, compelling many shipping companies to reroute vessels through the safer but longer and more expensive path around the Cape of Good Hope. These geopolitical tensions have transformed the Red Sea from a vital shipping corridor into a high-risk zone, significantly affecting the cost of global shipping and insurance premiums.



The resulting rerouting of vessels around the Cape of Good Hope has also had a substantial environmental impact. Ships that otherwise would transit the Suez Canal now travel 50-60% longer distances, leading to higher fuel consumption, a 40% increase in CO2 emissions, and higher fuel costs for carriers, which is one factor in higher freight rates for shippers.

The World Bank reports that these emissions significantly contribute to global warming, posing challenges for international climate goals and agreements like the Paris Climate Accord. Additionally, idling vessels awaiting docking at congested ports further contribute to the environmental footprint, as they burn fuel during these waiting periods.



- **UN's Response to the Houthi Attacks**

Security Council Resolution 2216 and a joint letter addressed to Saudi Arabia, the head of the Coalition Forces instituting a potential naval blockade in Yemen, from various UN Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts. Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015) authorized measures that could amount to air and naval blockades of Yemen by the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the League of Arab States. UN Special Mandate holders subsequently brought the negative impact of the potential blockades to the Coalition's attention. This case will discuss those effects from an IHL (International Humanitarian Law) perspective. The Resolution imposed "sanctions on individuals undermining the stability of Yemen, calling all Yemeni parties, in particular the Houthis, to end violence and refrain from further unilateral actions that threatened the political transition.

For further research: [Yemen, Potential Existence and Effects of Naval Blockade | How does law protect in war? - Online casebook](#)

[United Nations Security Council Resolution 2216 - Wikipedia](#)

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2342 was unanimously adopted on 23 February 2017. The resolution renewed sanctions against individuals and entities engaging in acts that threatened the peace and stability of Yemen until 26 February 2018. The resolution prohibited the sale, supply and transfer of weapons to these individuals and entities, as well as to former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Houthi commanders Abdullah Yahya al Hakim and Abd al-Khaliq al-Huthi. The Security Council expressed concern at the situation and ongoing violence in Yemen. The council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen until 28 March 2018.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2624, adopted on 28 February 2022, extended for one year arms embargo on Yemen and sanctions including travel ban and asset freeze against those destabilizing the stability of the country. The security council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen.

4.3. Previous Maritime Attacks

- **10 January 2023**

The United States reported earlier in the day that together with UK naval forces it had shot down 21 drones and missiles fired by Houthi rebels from Yemen on Tuesday in the southern Red Sea.

There have been over two dozen separate attacks on international shipping carried out by the rebel movement which controls much of Yemen, since the 7 October terror attacks by Hamas led to Israel's offensive in Gaza.

Houthis control the capital Sana'a and large swathes of the country, including the Red Sea coast. They began targeting what they believe to be Israel-bound vessels in mid-November after first launching missile and drone attacks against Israel itself, in support of the extremist group Hamas.

Now they have widened their aim to all international shipping companies, until, they say, Israel allows full humanitarian supplies to enter Gaza, causing many companies to divert ships far to the south around the Cape of Good Hope, driving up costs and threatening to disrupt the entire global supply chain.

Council members previously condemned the Houthi attacks and demanded the release of the Japanese-registered Galaxy Leader and its crew in a 1 December 2023 press statement.

- **MV Rubymar Incident (18 February 2024)**

MV Rubymar was a Belize-flagged Handymax-size bulk carrier cargo ship completed in 1997. She previously sailed under the names Ken Shin from 1997, Chatham Island from 2009, and Ikaria Island from 2020, before being renamed Rubymar. On 18 February 2024, the ship was struck by a Houthi anti-ship missile during the Red Sea crisis while carrying a cargo of fertilizer. After being adrift for weeks, the ship sank on 2 March as a result of the strike, becoming the first vessel lost due to a Houthi attack during the crisis. The wreck poses a risk to navigation of the Red Sea, and also has the potential to cause environmental damage due to the leakage of its oil and fertilizer.

- **MV True Confidence Incident (6 March 2024)**

MV True Confidence is a Barbados-flagged bulk carrier managed by Third January Maritime, a Greek company, and owned by True Confidence Shipping, a Liberian shipping company. The vessel was attacked on 6 March 2024, causing the first civilian casualties of Houthi attacks on merchant shipping during the Red Sea crisis.

- **MV Tutor Incident (12 June 2024)**

On 12 June 2024, the Yemeni Houthi movement attacked MV Tutor, a Liberia-flagged bulk carrier, in the southern Red Sea with an unmanned surface vehicle (USV) and an anti-ship missile, killing one crewmember. The vessel was seriously damaged, and later abandoned by her crew. She sank six days after the attacks. The attacks mark the first successful usage of a USV and the second sinking by the Houthis in the Red Sea crisis.

- **13 June 2024**

On June 13, 2024 Ukraine owned Verbena ship was struck by Houthi forces. There are some parts from the SC rapport from that incident:

Tomorrow morning (27 June), the Security Council is expected to vote on a draft resolution extending the monthly reporting requirement for the Secretary-General contained in resolution 2722 of 10 January on attacks by the Houthi rebel group in Yemen on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea.

The extension of the Secretary-General's reporting requirement comes as the Houthis continue to threaten maritime traffic in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden,

and the broader Indian Ocean, despite the sustained US-led retaliatory strikes since January against Houthi targets in Yemen. The crisis has significantly disrupted maritime traffic through the Red Sea and frozen Yemen's peace talks. On 19 June, a Liberian-flagged, Greek-owned and -operated bulk carrier called the M/V Tutor sank in the Red Sea. A bomb-laden Houthi boat had struck the vessel one week earlier. One missing Philippine crew member is believed to have died. This was the second ship that the Houthis have sunk. Additionally, on 13 June, two Houthi missiles struck the M/V Verbena—a Palauan-flagged, Ukrainian-owned, Polish-operated bulk cargo carrier—in the Gulf of Aden. The attack set off fires on the ship, which was transporting timber, and forced the crew to abandon the vessel. One sailor was reportedly seriously injured.

- **MT Sounion Incident (22 August 2024)**

The attacks on the MT Sounion refers to Houthi attacks on a Greek-registered oil tanker and the resulting spillage of crude oil into the Red Sea, that at the time of the spill was carrying approximately 150,000 tons of petroleum cargo. The oil spill was caused by Houthi explosions targeting the ship, which caused the ship to burn and start spilling flaming crude oil into the ocean which the European Union Aspides military task force stated posed a severe environmental risk to the complex biodiversity of the marine region.

- **MV Eternity C (7 July 2025)**

On 7 July 2025, the Houthis attacked MV Eternity C, a Liberia-flagged bulk carrier, in the southern Red Sea on route from Berbera, Somalia, where it has been delivering aid. The vessel was assaulted with sea drones and rocket-propelled grenades and was seriously damaged. The attacks killed, injured, or resulted in the kidnapping more than 25 Filipino, Greek, and Russian crew members. The vessel was abandoned and sank shortly after the attacks. Four people have been confirmed killed. Ten crew members were rescued, five others were reported missing, and six were kidnapped.

The Houthis stated they attacked Eternity C because the vessel's operator continues to make port visits to Israel with other ships, and that they took an unspecified number of crew to a "safe location", although the United States stated the Houthis had taken the crew hostage. The vessel is registered in Monrovia, and owned and managed by Cosmo Ship Management of Athens, Greece.

During the same period, the merchant ship Magic Seas was hijacked and sunk by the Houthis after an attack.

5. Current Situation of the Crisis

5.1. Rising Tensions in the Red Sea Region

The Red Sea is a vital sea route connecting the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, through which about 10% of world trade passes via the Suez Canal. It is therefore a geostrategic region, both economically and militarily

Cold War Period (1945-1990)

- There was a struggle for influence between the US and the Soviet Union.
- Yemen Civil Wars (1962-1970): Regional actors such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia waged proxy wars there.
- Eritrea-Ethiopia tensions destabilized the Horn of Africa.

5.2. 2023-2025 Period's Key Events

1990s - 2000s: Terrorism and Piracy

- The presence of organizations such as Al-Qaeda in Yemen began to increase.
- Somali pirates posed a threat especially in the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait after 2008.
- This led to the deployment of international military navies in the region.

Yemen Civil War and Houthi Uprising (2015-)

- The Iranian-backed Houthis are fighting against the Saudi-backed government.
- Over time, the Houthis have launched attacks on Saudi Arabia, the UAE and merchant ships passing through the Red Sea.

Israel-Gaza War (2023) and its Reflections on the Red Sea

- The Israel-Hamas war that began in 2023 affected all actors in the region.
- The Iranian-backed Houthis began attacking Israeli-bound ships in the Red Sea under the pretext of supporting Gaza.
- This led to military interventions by the US and Europe.

US "Operation Prosperity Guardian" (2023)

- A US-led international coalition launched a military operation to secure trade in the Red Sea.

- This operation has increased the risk of indirect conflict between Iran and the West.

5.3. Crisis Impact to the International Maritime Trading

The Bab el-Mendeb Strait, in particular, has become one of the world's most risky sea passages in the last 10 years.

- Since the early 2020s, Iranian-backed Houthi militias have organized attacks on Israeli-linked merchant ships, increasing regional tensions.

Regional and Global Impacts

- Sea traffic was rerouted, which increased costs (for example, ships had to round the Cape of Good Hope).
- The Egyptian economy has been hit by declining Suez revenues.
- Iran-Saudi Arabia relations have partially softened with Chinese mediation, but the competition over the Red Sea continues.
- Turkey is closely monitoring developments, both for its maritime trade and its presence in the Horn of Africa.

Maritime Security and Stability

- The crisis in the Red Sea has become not only a regional but also a global stability and security issue.
- Energy security, trade routes and geopolitical struggles have turned this narrow waterway into a global conflict zone.
- Long-term stability will only be possible through diplomatic reconciliation among the countries of the region and constructive, not military, intervention by the great powers.

5.4. Humanitarian Challenges

1. Failure to Protect Civilians and War Crimes

- In the context of Yemen's civil war, both the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis have violated international humanitarian law through airstrikes and missile strikes against civilian settlements.
- These violations have led to serious human rights problems, including mass killings, the targeting of civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, and the use of starvation policies.
- Houthi attacks have endangered civilians not only in the war zone but also on merchant ships in the Red Sea.

2. Violation of Economic Rights (Right to Life, Food, Water, Health)

- Due to maritime security crises and embargoes:
- Food and medicine supplies have been disrupted.
- Millions of people are struggling to survive on the brink of starvation.

- Access to clean water is limited and health systems have collapsed.

6. Previous UN Actions and Resolutions

6.1. UNSC's Response

UNSC's Response

Yemen Civil War Context

- The UNSC adopted Resolution 2216 in 2015. In this resolution:
- Imposing an arms embargo on the Houthis,
- Involvement of all parties in the peace process,
- It called for support for the legitimate Yemeni government.
- But this decision:
- Criticized as biased (especially by Iran and the Houthis),
- It has been repeatedly violated but sanction mechanisms have been ineffective.

Maritime Security and Attacks in the Red Sea

- After 2023, when Houthi attacks on merchant ships increased:
- The UNSC issued statements condemning attacks on Israeli-linked ships.
- However, these statements were generally non-binding.
- Permanent members such as China and Russia did not openly support naval operations by the US and its allies (e.g. Operation Prosperity Guardian), which prevented concerted action.

Veto Power Provided an Obstacle

- China and Russia have at times vetoed tough resolutions against Iranian-backed groups.
- And this is the Security Council:
- It undermines the principle of impartiality,
- It has shown to block effective diplomatic interventions.

The UNSC failed to support independent investigations into war crimes in Yemen.

- In 2021, the UN's independent panel of experts monitoring human rights violations in Yemen was not renewed due to lobbying by Saudi Arabia - demonstrating that the Security Council is politically influenced.

The Security Council also took some positive steps:

- It supported negotiations through the UN Special Representative for Yemen.

- The 2018 Stockholm Agreement is exemplary as a UN-backed ceasefire (de-escalation of the conflict around the port of Hodeidah).
- The UN Monitoring Mission (UNMHA) was established to ensure the security of humanitarian aid in the port

Relationship between the UN General Secretariat and the Security Council

- The UN Secretary-General (in particular António Guterres) has repeatedly warned of the humanitarian impact of the crisis in the Red Sea.
- However, the political fragmentation of the Security Council has made it difficult to back up the Secretary-General's calls with practical decisions. Although the UNSC has played a symbolic role in the search for a peaceful resolution of the Red Sea crisis, it has often remained an ineffective and delayed actor due to geopolitical conflicts of interest, the use of veto power and the inability to implement decisions.

6.2. UN Peacekeeping and Naval Operations

1.1. Introduction

The United Nations (UN) plays a vital role in maintaining international peace and security. While traditional UN peacekeeping activities are mostly land-based, the maritime dimension of peacekeeping and security has become increasingly important in some conflict zones, such as the Red Sea region.

1.2. The Nature of UN Peacekeeping

- UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) are deployed based on UN Security Council authorization.
- Principles
- Consent of the parties
- Neutrality
- No use of force except in self-defense and mission protection
- However, maritime operations are not a core activity of UN peacekeeping missions - they are usually conducted by coalitions of willing states or regional organizations (e.g. NATO, EU, Combined Maritime Forces).

1.3. Maritime Operations: The Role of the UN

Although the UN does not directly command naval fleets like peacekeeping forces on land

- Authorizes maritime coalitions to operate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peace enforcement).
- Coordinates with international partners for maritime security, particularly in piracy-prone or conflict-affected waters.

Examples of UN-Authorized Naval Operations:

- Somali Coast / Gulf of Aden:
- Resolutions like UNSCR 1816 (2008) and subsequent ones authorized states to use force against pirates.
- NATO's Operation Ocean Shield, the EU's Operation Atalanta, and the Combined Maritime Forces operated under this legal framework.
- Lebanon (UNIFIL Maritime Task Force):
- First and only naval component of a UN peacekeeping mission (since 2006), ensuring no illegal arms reach Lebanon by sea.

1.4. Red Sea Crisis and the UN's Maritime Security Role

Red Sea Context:

- Strategic chokepoint: Bab el-Mandeb Strait
- Rising threats from:
- Houthi missile and drone attacks on commercial vessels
- Iran-Saudi Arabia rivalry
- Regional instability from the Yemen conflict and Israel-Gaza war

UNSC Action:

- Issued statements condemning attacks on freedom of navigation
 - Did not authorize a UN naval operation, but:
 - Recognized the right to self-defense of commercial and state vessels
 - Welcomed coordinated efforts (e.g., US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian) - but this remains outside the UN command
- #### **1.5. Limitations of UN Naval Peacekeeping**
- No standing naval force: UN does not maintain its own warships.
 - Dependence on member states for naval enforcement.
 - Political divisions (e.g., vetoes by China/Russia) often block robust mandates.
 - Naval operations require rapid, flexible responses - difficult under UN bureaucracy.
-

1.6. The Future of Maritime Peace Operations

Given growing threats in maritime zones:

- Experts suggest the UN may need to evolve a more structured naval doctrine.
- Hybrid models (UN coordination + regional naval coalitions) may dominate future operations.
- Increased focus on:
 - Maritime domain awareness
 - Protection of global trade routes
 - Humanitarian access by sea

1.7. Conclusion

While the UN's peacekeeping framework is traditionally land-based, the rising importance of maritime security, particularly in strategic regions like the Red Sea, is pushing the boundaries of peacekeeping into the naval domain. However, legal, political, and operational challenges currently limit the UN's direct role in naval operations.

To respond effectively to modern crises, the UN may need to redefine its role in maritime security, either by strengthening partnerships or creating dedicated naval coordination mechanisms.

7. Questions to be Addressed (QTBA)

- 1. Who is responsible for protecting commercial vessels in the Red Sea from attacks by non-state actors like the Houthis?**
- 2. What mechanisms can be established to ensure maritime security without escalating geopolitical tensions among regional and global powers?**
- 3. When will a sustainable diplomatic resolution to the Yemen conflict—which fuels much of the Red Sea insecurity—be realistically achievable?**
- 4. Where should international naval forces be deployed to effectively deter threats without violating the sovereignty of coastal states?**
- 5. Why have current UN Security Council responses failed to prevent further destabilization in the Red Sea maritime domain?**

6. Which regional actors (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran) should take the lead in negotiating maritime security agreements, and under what conditions?
7. Whose economic interests are most at risk due to the ongoing disruption of Red Sea shipping routes and how should they be compensated?
8. What are the legal and ethical implications of foreign naval operations in the Red Sea conducted outside the UN framework?
9. Why are humanitarian aid deliveries via Red Sea ports being obstructed, and what international protections can be implemented to ensure access?
10. What role should international organizations (UN, IMO, AU, LAS) play in resolving the interconnected issues of maritime conflict and regional instability?

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