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# US and UK strikes target Houthi rebels in Yemen

1 day ago



US CENTRAL COMMAND/REUTERS

| The US military released this photo from an aircraft carrier engaged in the operation

**US and UK naval forces in the Red Sea have launched air strikes against Houthi rebel targets across Yemen.**

US officials say warship-launched Tomahawk cruise missiles and fighter jets hit 16 sites, including in the capital, Sanaa, and Hudaydah, the Houthi Red Sea

port stronghold.

The strikes are in response to repeated attacks by the Iran-backed group on commercial vessels in the Red Sea.

The Houthis, who back Hamas, said at least five of their number were killed.

The group claims to be targeting ships linked to Israel - saying the attacks are in response to Israel's campaign in the Gaza Strip - and have also launched a series of drones and missiles towards Israel.

The Houthi targets in Yemen early on Friday included logistical hubs, air defence systems and arms depots, US officials told the Associated Press news agency.

US President Joe Biden, quoted by Reuters news agency, said the US and UK military had successfully launched strikes against Houthi targets with support from countries including Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands.

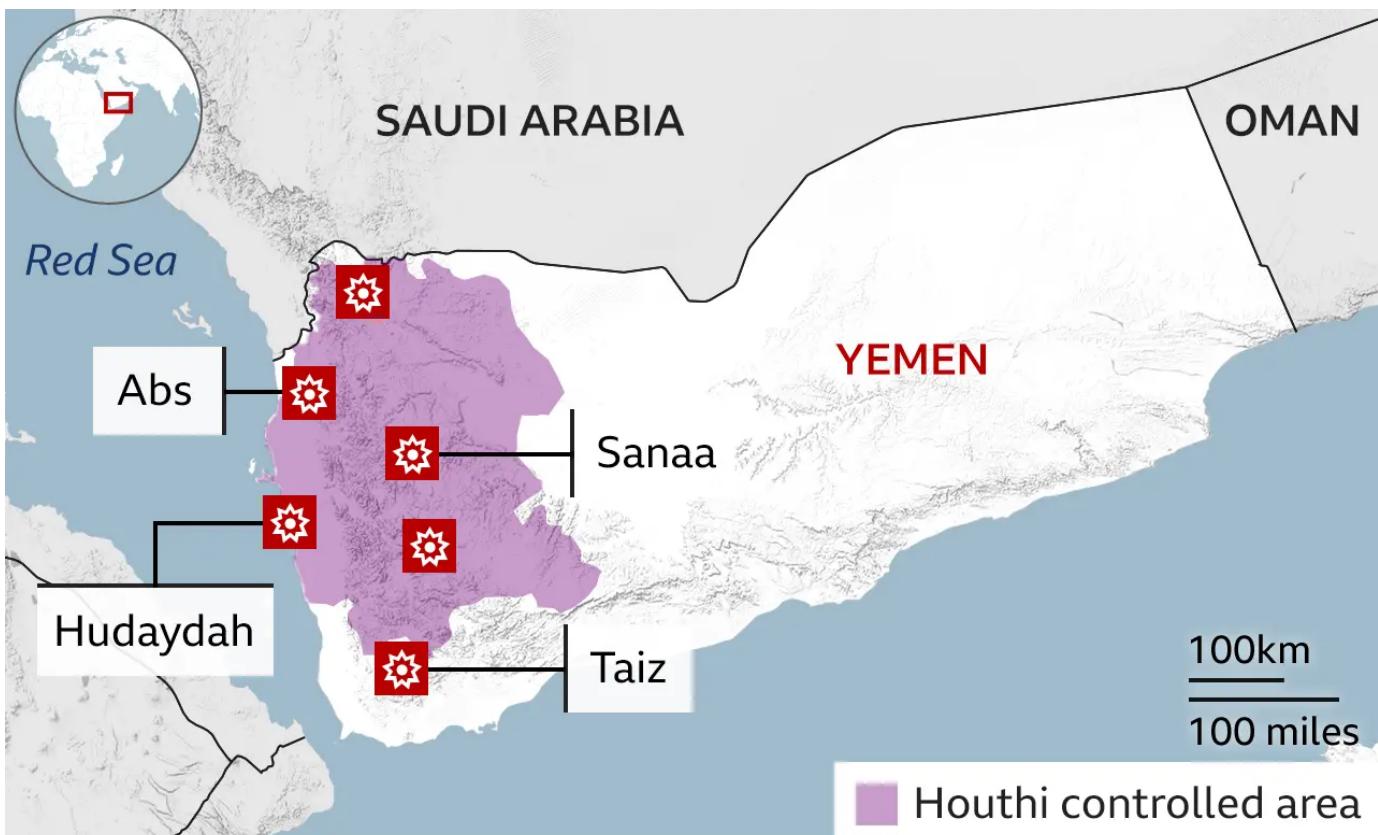
"These targeted strikes are a clear message that the United States and our partners will not tolerate attacks on our personnel or allow hostile actors to imperil freedom of navigation," Mr Biden said.

He added that he "will not hesitate" to order further military action if necessary.

Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam said in response that there was "absolutely no justification" for the attacks and that the group would continue to target Israeli ships.

Iran and the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah - both Houthi allies - have also condemned the strikes.

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Source: UK MoD, Houthi officials, Sanaa Center for Strategic Studies

**BBC**

These are the first such actions by the US military in the Red Sea since the Houthi drone and missile attacks on shipping began in November.

The Houthis, who control a large part of Yemen, have been targeting merchant vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden with missiles and drones - putting lives at risk, threatening the global economy and destabilising the region.

Four RAF Typhoon jets flying from Akrotiri in Cyprus also conducted air strikes on two Houthi targets in Yemen using Paveway bombs, BBC defence correspondent Jonathan Beale reports.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak confirmed the strikes in a statement on Friday morning, calling them "limited, necessary and proportionate action in self-defence".

Mr Sunak denounced the "reckless actions" of the Houthi militia, who he said had carried out a series of "dangerous and destabilising attacks" against commercial shipping in the Red Sea despite repeated warnings from the international community.

He added that the UK would "always stand up for freedom of navigation and the free flow of trade".

On 9 January, HMS Diamond, along with US warships, successfully repelled the largest attack from the Houthis in the Red Sea to date. On the same day, the Houthis said they targeted a US ship providing support to Israel - the 26th attack on commercial shipping in the Red Sea since 19 November.

Houthi attacks in the Red Sea have increased 500% between November and December. The threat has become so great that major shipping companies have ceased sailing in the region and insurance costs have risen 10-fold since early December.

The International Chamber of Shipping says 20% of the world's container ships are now avoiding the Red Sea and using the much longer route around the southern tip of Africa instead.



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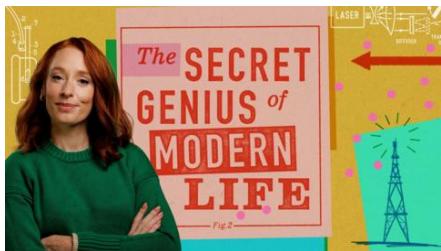


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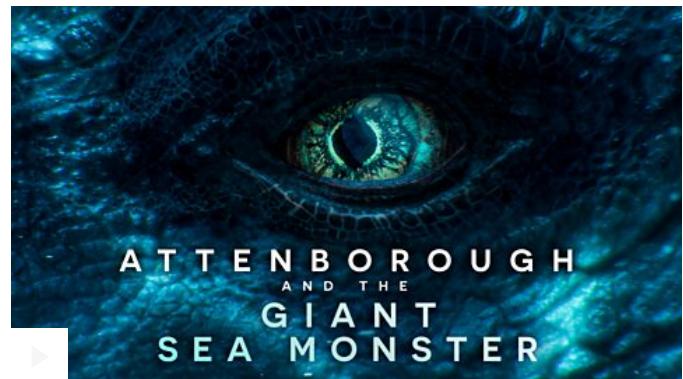
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