

RYAN-MUN Clubs

Presents

6th RIS-MUN Conference

Ryan Model United Nations Conference

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GENERAL
ASSEMBLY I
DISEC**

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Contents of the Background Guide

AGENDA: “Deliberating on deescalating the red sea war with special emphasis on marine routes”

Since October there has been an unprecedented rise in military action in the red sea. This not only threatens marine routes, exponentially increasing trade costs but also the internal politics of Yemen. This also has major impacts on the Israel Hamas war.

Thus, it’s important for us to deliberate how to de-escalate the conflict in the Red sea and how to ensure minimal damage to the global supply chain.

Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings delegates!

A warm welcome to all of you to this simulation of the United Nations General Assembly I at the 2024 edition of the Ryan International School Model United Nations. We look forward to two days of excellent exchange of ideas and problem-solving during the conference.

For many, it may be the first MUN conference and we strongly encourage you to go through this study guide that has been prepared for you as a part of the conference in order to get an in-depth understanding of the issue that will be discussed in the committee.

However, there is a lot of content available beyond the study guides too and henceforth encouraging you to go beyond the horizons and it shall be noted that nothing stated in the Background Guide can be used as evidence in the committee or as citation.

During the course of debate we shall expect all of you to not just be powerful delegates but inspiring delegates by portraying strong diplomatic skills and creating an impact through your speeches and content.

Negative protocols like loud and unpleasant shouting shall be discouraged. This might be a difficult task but we request you to believe in your strong potential and your duty as an organization to bring out best possible solutions that shall act as a panacea through peaceful means.

We would not like bland internet read statements. Rather, we would want you to apply your own logic to the research that you find on the internet so that you personalize it to yourself. Every argument should consist of research, analysis and logic.

Wishing you the very best for your research journey and feel free to contact us for any doubts and queries.

Regards,
Executive Board

About the United Nations General Assembly

The United Nations General Assembly is a prominent and paramount forum of the international community comprising of all 193 Member States of the United Nations. Established under the UN Charter, this deliberative body convenes annually in New York City to deliberate on and decide upon a broad spectrum of global issues.

As one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, the General Assembly is granted immense authority to review and coordinate the world's political, economic and social concerns. With its unique role as the world's most representative and democratic forum, the General Assembly serves as the platform for Member States to voice their respective stands, debate on issues and form a consensus on significant international issues.

The UN General Assembly is the only universally representative body of the United Nations. As delineated in the Charter of the United Nations, the function of the General Assembly is to discuss, debate and make recommendations on subjects about international peace and security, including development, disarmament, human rights, international law and the peaceful arbitration of disputes between states.

The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

It considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

The Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament.

INTRODUCTION TO HOUTHI MILITANTS

Houthi rebels are backed by Iran. They seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa, in 2014, launching a grinding war. They are formally known as Ansar Allah, or the "partisans of God". The anti-Houthi Presidential Leadership Council remains recognized by the international community as Yemen's legitimate government. After this conflict grew into an ongoing civil war, millions of residents were internally displaced, and a Saudi-led coalition responded by imposing a blockade of Yemen. These combined to shrink the economy by half and greatly increase food insecurity. Since 2017, Yemen has had one of the worst famines in the world. As of now, the Yemeni rebel group controls the west of the country, including its Red Sea coast.

In 2015, a Saudi-led coalition tried to restore Yemen's exiled, internationally recognized government to power. After years of "bloody, inconclusive" fighting against the Saudi-led coalition, a stalemated proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran caused widespread hunger and misery in Yemen, the Associated Press reported. The war killed more than 1,50,000 people, including fighters and civilians.

Since then, Saudi Arabia and the Houthi rebels have done some prisoner swaps. A Houthi delegation was also invited to high-level peace talks in Riyadh in September as part of a wider détente the kingdom has reached with Iran. While they reported "positive results," there is still no permanent peace.

Iran-backed Houthi militants in Yemen attacked commercial vessels in the Red Sea to show support for the Palestinian militant group Hamas. Israel's military attack in Hamas-ruled Gaza continues since October 7 post the October 6 attack done by Hamas on Israel.

The Houthis have claimed to continue the attacks until the attacks on Gaza are not stopped by Israel. They intend to stop all Israeli ships navigating the Arab and Red seas.

The Red Sea is the world's main East-West trade route. It lies south of the Suez Canal. Now, the Houthi attacks have made reaching the Suez Canal more perilous. They have disrupted a key trade route that links Europe and North America with Asia via the Suez Canal.

At the southern end of the Red Sea is a narrow strait of water between Djibouti and Yemen: the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. This is the area that the Houthi rebels in Yemen have been targeting.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

October 2023

October 19: Houthis fired three land-attack cruise missiles and several drones from Yemen, reportedly targeting Israel. The USS Carney intercepted the missiles and drones.

October 31: Houthis fired an unspecified number of ballistic missiles and drones at Israel. The Houthis vowed to “continue to carry out qualitative strikes with missiles and drones until the Israeli aggression stops.” Israel intercepted all of the aerial threats, which included one surface-to-surface missile.

November 2023

November 14: Houthis launched a surface-to-surface missile towards Eilat, Israel. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) intercepted the missile before it entered Israeli airspace.

November 15: The USS Thomas Hudner intercepted a drone in the Red Sea that had been launched from Yemen.

November 19: Houthis seized the Galaxy Leader, a British-owned, Japanese-operated cargo ship, in the Red Sea and took 25 crew members hostage. They claimed that the vessel was linked to Israel and a “legitimate target.” The British company that owns the ship had links to Abraham Ungar, an Israeli businessman, although the ship was leased to Nippon Yusen (NYK), a Japanese company. The Houthis vowed to continue targeting Israel-linked vessels until the Israeli campaign in Gaza ended.

November 22: The USS Thomas Hudner intercepted several drones launched from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen. No injuries or damage were reported. The same day, the IDF claimed to have shot down a Houthi cruise missile over the Red Sea.

November 26: Houthis fired two ballistic missiles at the USS Mason while it was responding to a distress call from the Central Park, a commercial tanker operated by Zodiac Maritime, an international shipping company owned by Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer.

November 29: The USS Carney intercepted an Iranian-produced drone launched from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

December 2023

December 1: Israel struck an arms depot in Sanaa, the Yemeni capital. The Houthis denied the report by Saudi media.

December 3: Houthis fired ballistic missiles at three commercial ships in the Red Sea—the Unity Explorer, a British-owned and -operated bulk carrier; Number 9, a British-owned and -operated container ship; and Sophie II, a Japanese-owned and -operated bulk carrier. The USS Carney responded to their distress calls. It also shot down three drones; the target of the drones was unclear.

December 7: The U.S. Department of Treasury sanctioned 13 individuals for providing funds to the Houthis.

December 11: Houthis fired an anti-ship cruise missile that hit the M/T Strinda, a Norwegian-flagged commercial tanker, in the Bab al-Mandab Strait of the Red Sea. The USS Mason responded to its mayday call.

December 13: Two missiles fired from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen narrowly missed the Ardmore Encounter, a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker. The USS Mason shot down a drone during the incident.

December 14: Houthis launched a missile at the M/V Maersk Gibraltar, a Hong Kong-flagged cargo vessel, after firing a ballistic missile north of the Bab al-Mandab.

December 18: The United States established Operation Prosperity Guardian, a multinational initiative focused on security in the Red Sea. It included the United States, Britain, Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the Seychelles, and Spain. Houthis also claimed to have fired drones at the MSC Clara and Swan Atlantic, two commercial vessels.

December 19: The United States, European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Australia, the Bahamas, Japan, Liberia, New Zealand, South Korea, Singapore, and others jointly condemned Houthi maritime aggression. The 44 signatories represented the countries that flagged the most commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea.

December 23: The USS Laboon intercepted four drones from Houthi-controlled Yemen. It also responded to distress calls from the M/V Blaamanen, a Norwegian-flagged tanker, and M/V Saibaba, an Indian-flagged tanker that had been targeted by Houthi drones.

December 26: Houthis claimed responsibility for an attack on the United VIII, a commercial tanker. They also launched a drone on southern Israel, which was intercepted over the Red Sea.

December 28: The USS Mason intercepted one drone and one anti-ship ballistic missile fired by Houthis over the Red Sea. The U.S. Treasury sanctioned one individual and three entities for facilitating Iranian “financial assistance” to the Houthis.

January 2024

January 1: The Alborz, an Iranian warship, entered the Red Sea. Its mission was not specified.

January 2: Houthis fired two anti-ship ballistic missiles into the southern Red Sea. No commercial ships reported damage.

January 3: The United States and 13 partners issued a joint statement warning the Houthis to cease maritime aggression or face a military response. Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and the United Kingdom joined the statement.

January 4: Houthis launched a drone that came within a few miles of U.S. Navy and commercial vessels before detonating in the Red Sea. The incident marked the first use by the Houthis of an unmanned surface vessel.

January 6: The USS Laboon intercepted a drone that had been launched from Houthi-controlled Yemen.

January 9: Houthis launched a large-scale attack, consisting of 18 drones, two anti-ship cruise missiles, and one anti-ship ballistic missile. They were all shot down by U.S. and British forces.

January 11: U.S. Navy SEALs boarded and seized a sailboat transporting weapons from Iran to the Houthis. The operation, off the coast of Somalia, marked the first seizure of Iranian weapons since the Houthis began their Red Sea attacks in November 2023.

January 11-12: The United States and United Kingdom – with support from the Netherlands, Canada, Bahrain, and Australia – launched more than 150 precision-guided munitions strikes on 60 targets, including radars, missile and drone launch sites, and weapons storage facilities in Yemen. The joint operation was dubbed “Operation Poseidon Archer.”

January 25: The U.S. Treasury, jointly with the United Kingdom, sanctioned four Houthi military officials. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan flew to Thailand to discuss the Houthi attacks with Chinese officials.

January 30: Houthis fired one anti-ship cruise missile toward the Red Sea. The USS Gravely intercepted the missile, and there was no damage.

January 31: The United States struck a Houthi surface-to-air missile that was being prepared for launch and was considered “an imminent threat” to U.S. aircraft operating in the region.

February 2024

February 3: U.S. forces destroyed six cruise missiles in Houthi-controlled Yemen.

The United States and United Kingdom—with support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, and New Zealand—struck 36 Houthi targets in 13 locations in Yemen. The strikes targeted storage facilities, missile launchers, air defense systems, and radars. “This collective action sends a clear message to the Houthis that they will continue to bear further consequences if they do not end their illegal attacks on international shipping and naval vessels,” said Lloyd Austin, U.S. Secretary of Defense.

February 4: U.S. forces conducted three air strikes in Houthi-controlled Yemen, destroying five anti-ship cruise missiles and one land attack cruise missile.

Commercial ships in the Red Sea, according to U.S. Central Command.

February 17: U.S. forces launched five strikes and destroyed three anti-ship cruise missiles, one unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV), and one unmanned surface vehicle (USV) in Houthi-controlled Yemen. This was the first observation of Houthi UUVs.

February 18: Houthis launched two anti-ship ballistic missiles toward M/V Rubymar, a bulk carrier owned by a British company and flagged in Belize. One of the missiles struck and damaged the M/V Rubymar, causing an 18 mile oil slick. U.S. forces responded to the M/V Rubymar's distress call and transported its crew to a nearby port.

February 19: Houthis launched two anti-ship ballistic missiles against the M/V Sea Champion, a grain carrier owned by a U.S. company and flagged in Greece. The M/V Sea Champion received minor damages but continued its voyage to Aden, Yemen. The M/V Sea Champion delivered grain, its eleventh delivery of humanitarian aid to Yemen since 2018.

The same day, U.S. forces destroyed a surface-to-air missile launcher in Houthi-controlled Yemen. Houthis launched one anti-ship ballistic missile into the Red Sea, but it did not hit any ships.

Later, a Houthi attack drone struck the M/V Navis Fortuna, a bulk carrier owned by a U.S. company and flagged in the Marshall Islands. The M/V Navis Fortuna received minor damage but continued its voyage.

U.S. forces destroyed one attack drone in Western Yemen that was prepared to launch against ships in the Red Sea. U.S. and coalition forces destroyed ten attack drones in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

February 23: U.S. forces shot down three Houthi attack drones in the Red Sea. The drones were near multiple commercial shipping vessels.

Later, U.S. forces destroyed seven Houthi anti-ship cruise missiles in Yemen. The missiles were prepared to launch into the Red Sea.

February 24: The U.S.S. Mason shot down one Houthi anti-ship ballistic missile in the Gulf of Aden. The missile targeted the M/V Tom Thor, a chemical/oil tanker owned by a U.S. company and flagged in the United States.

On the same day, the United States and United Kingdom – with support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, and New Zealand–struck 18 Houthi targets in 8 locations in Yemen. The strikes targeted weapons storage facilities, drones, air defense systems, radars, and a helicopter. “We will continue to make clear to the Houthis

that they will bear the consequences if they do not stop their illegal attacks, which harm Middle Eastern economies, cause environmental damage, and disrupt the delivery of humanitarian aid to Yemen and other countries,” said Defense Secretary Austin.

IMPACTS ON GLOBAL ECONOMY

The Suez Canal/Red Sea, vital for around 30% of the world’s container traffic, has seen disruptions leading companies to reroute around the Cape of Good Hope. This situation has led to an immediate contraction in market capacity and a surge in shipping rates, with significant impacts on global trade networks and economic stability.

In light of these challenges, businesses are seeking greater flexibility and resilience in their supply chains. Businesses responding to this need by adjusting its network and providing alternative solutions to support its clients during these turbulent times. These measures emphasize the need for agile and innovative supply chain strategies. In an era marked by escalating geopolitical uncertainties, the capacity for resilience is paramount in maintaining the continuity and stability of global supply chains.

Several Western container shipping lines won’t journey through to the Suez Canal. Instead, ships are being diverted round the Cape of Good Hope, adding two weeks to journeys and unnecessary expense.

Commercial shipping has historically been a hazardous and dangerous activity. After a few decades of relative peace and stability on international waters, we are back to a situation where key routes for international maritime traffic are held hostage by violent attacks. Black Sea transit has been heavily affected by Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine for a while, and it is now the turn of Red Sea shipping to suffer from geopolitical tensions. On top of this, climate change is affecting another important maritime route with low freshwater levels in the Panama Canal responsible for a 36% reduction in transit when compared to last year.

Thus, the Red Sea creating transport issues has the potential of alleviating already existent issues.

The Red Sea security crisis has seriously and negatively affected traffic through Africa’s Red Sea ports but has benefited some ports elsewhere through increased demand for bunkering and restocking services.

However, inefficiencies and congestion have prevented major African ports from fully exploiting the increase in trade around the Cape of Good Hope caused by diversion away from the Red Sea.

The crisis may focus the minds of African policymakers to push ahead with port development strategies that will help to build intra-African and international connectivity, capacity and efficiency in the coming years.

LINKS TO READ FURTHER

<https://unctad.org/publication/navigating-troubled-waters-impact-global-trade-disruption-shipping-routes-red-sea-black>

<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/03/07/Red-Sea-Attacks-Disrupt-Global-Trade>

<https://amp.theguardian.com/business/2023/dec/19/red-sea-shipping-crisis-bp-oil-explained-what-is-happening-and-what-does-it-mean-for-global-trade>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-timeline-idUSKBN1JD0BX>

<https://www.eiu.com/n/red-sea-crisis-affects-african-ports/>

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