

Yemenis unrattled by empty threats Ansarallah launches largest attack in Red Sea



Yemen's Ansarallah fighters take positions on the deck of the Galaxy Leader cargo ship in the Red Sea in November 2023.
● REUTERS

Yemen's Ansarallah resistance movement fired its largest-ever barrage of drones and missiles, targeting ships in the Red Sea heading to the ports of Israel.

The resistance movement's spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree in a televised statement said the attack "targeted an American ship that was providing support to the Zionist entity". Saree also described it as an "initial response" to American troops sinking Yemen's vessels and killing 10 Ansarallah fighters last week.

Yemen will "continue to prevent Israeli ships or those heading to the ports of occupied Palestine from navigating in the Red Sea until the aggression stops and the siege on our steadfast brothers in the Gaza Strip ends," Saree said.

"The naval forces, the missile force, and the unmanned air force of the Yemeni armed forces carried out a joint military operation with a large number of ballistic and naval missiles and drones," he said in a statement on X.

The resistance movement says they are targeting Israeli-linked vessels in support of Palestinians in Gaza. It says its attacks aim to end the pounding Israeli air-and-ground offensive targeting the Gaza Strip.

The Red Sea links the Mideast and Asia to Europe via the Suez Canal and its narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The strait is only 29 kilometers (18 miles) wide at its narrowest point, limiting traffic to two channels for inbound and outbound shipments, according to the US Energy Information Administration. Nearly 10% of all oil traded at sea passes through it and an estimated \$1 trillion in goods pass through the strait annually.

US and UK forces claimed that they have shot down more than 20 drones and missiles over the Red Sea launched by the Yemeni forces, in what London branded Wednesday the "largest attack" yet by the Yemeni forces.

The Western allies' warships and planes took out 18 drones and three missiles on Tuesday, the US military said.

HMS Diamond, a British destroyer, intervened with "her guns and Sea Viper missiles" after the drones were "heading for her and commercial shipping in the area", UK Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said.

It comes a week after 12 nations led by the United States warned the resistance movement in Yemen of consequences unless they immediately halted firing on commercial vessels in the busy international shipping corridor.

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) said the Ansarallah movement had launched a complex attack of one-way attack UAVs, as well as firing anti-ship cruise missiles and an anti-ship ballistic missile from Yemen.

It claimed that they were downed by a combination of F/A-18 warplanes, operating from the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier, three American destroyers and the British naval vessel, CENTCOM said.

The incident is the latest since the US set up a multinational naval task force last month against the Ansarallah movement.

Abbas: Gaza is integral part of Palestine

Hamis: Blinken tries to justify Israel's genocide



● AFP

International Desk

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas described the Gaza Strip as "an integral part of the Palestinian state" during a meeting with visiting US top diplomat Antony Blinken.

"It is not possible to accept or deal with the plans of the occupation authorities to separate it, or cut off any part of it," the Palestinian leader told Blinken.

The Palestinian president also raised "efforts made to stop the Israeli aggression against Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank," Wafa news agency reported. Blinken told Abbas that Washington supports "tangible steps" towards the creation of a Palestinian state.

Blinken reiterated Washington's longstanding position that a Palestinian state must stand alongside Israel, "with both living in peace and security," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement.

The United States has dispatched its top diplomat to the region for the fourth time since the eruption of war on October 7. Blinken has so far visited several countries, including Turkey, the UAE and Jordan. The Wednesday meeting came a day after talks on Tuesday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his war cabinet.

As Blinken arrived under tight security at Abbas's headquarters, a group of protesters held up signs that read "Stop the genocide," "Free Palestine" and "Blinken out".

Justifying genocide

The Hamas resistance movement in Gaza also denounced Blinken's visit to the region, saying the US official's "attempts to justify the genocide committed by the Israeli occupation army against Palestinian civilians ... are miserable attempts to wash the hands of the criminal occupation of the blood of children, women and the elderly of Gaza".

Israel intensified its onslaught on central and southern Gaza Strip with dozens killed in overnight attacks, including 15 from one family in Rafah city - an Israeli-declared "safe zone".

The Health Ministry in Gaza said Wednesday at least 23,357 people have been killed in more than three months of Israel's strikes on the Palestinian territory.

The toll includes 147 deaths in 24 hours, a ministry statement said,

while 59,410 people have been wounded across the Palestinian territory since conflict erupted on October 7.

Attacks on Israeli soldiers

Meanwhile, the Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of the Islamic Jihad movement in Gaza, said its fighters targeted Israeli military troops with a barrage of mortar shells around Al-Mahatta area in the southern city of Khan Younis.

Mortar shells were also used to hit Israeli soldiers and vehicles in the southern Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City, it said.

Israel's military said on Tuesday that Palestinian fighters ambushed Israeli troops in a dense Gaza City neighborhood, killing at least nine of them. At least 187 Israeli soldiers have been killed so far.

The conflict in Gaza has now spread to other parts of the region where resistance movements have been targeting Israel's position in support of Palestinians. In the north of occupied Palestine clashes have intensified between Israeli army and Lebanese resistance movement, Hezbollah. The Israeli army has so far killed dozens of resistance's fighters in its attacks on Lebanon, including senior commanders of the resistance groups.

Extrajudicial killings

On Tuesday, UN experts in international law condemned the killing of Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri and other fighters in drone strikes on Lebanon, saying this amounted to the crimes of extrajudicial killings and murder.

"Killings in foreign territory are arbitrary when they are not authorized under international law," the two UN Special Rapporteurs, Ben Saul and Morris Tidball-Binz, said in a statement issued in Geneva.

"Israel was not exercising self-defense because it presented no evidence that the victims were committing an armed attack on Israel from Lebanese territory."

Arouri was killed last week by a drone in Beirut's southern suburbs, the stronghold of Hezbollah, in an attack widely attributed to Israel. Israeli forces also killed Wissam Tawil, a top Hezbollah commander, in a strike in south Lebanon on Monday, sources familiar with the resistance group's operations said. Hezbollah retaliated on Tuesday, hitting Israeli army headquarters in Safed, northern Israel, with drones.

Parliaments urged measures to stop Israel's killings

International Desk

Representatives of 26 Islamic and Asian countries emphasized that the parliaments of countries should force the international bodies to take the necessary measures for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza to stop further killing of civilians.

The representatives of Islamic and Asian countries participated in the 5th emergency meeting of members of the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (PUIC) on Palestine in the Iranian capital of Tehran on Wednesday.

Addressing the conference, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said the Israeli regime was founded on genocide and aggression, and its survival depends on perpetrating such heinous crimes.

"What is coming to pass in the Gaza Strip today is a cause of deep concern and



● IRNA

shame for humanity. It is a double injustice to a nation that has been deprived of any human rights and has been under aggression and occupation for more than seven decades," Qalibaf said.

"No awakened conscience can be dismissive of the heinous and widespread bloody crimes being committed by the Zionist regime's war machine in Gaza

and its horrendous effects on the peace and security of the region and the world." Qalibaf also touched on Washington's and its Western allies' unflinching support for the Israeli regime over the past decades, saying, "Israel has not only committed the most heinous crimes against the oppressed people of Palestine, but as a corrupt and pampered child under the support of the Western political system and as the center of crisis in the region has remained immune from any accountability, responsibility and punishment."

The top Iranian legislator also censured the West's double-standard approach towards Israeli crimes in Gaza, saying, "What we are witnessing in Palestine these days is a clear example of the hypocritical and deviant policy of the United States and its Western allies in supporting bloodshed, absolute defense of an aggressor, and categorical denial of the historical and civilizational realities of Palestine.

Syrian Parliament Speaker Hamuda Sabbag said the Israeli regime has not only killed Palestinian women and children, but has targeted the infrastructure in the Palestinian territory.

He said that the West has provided the regime with technical and logistical support. Sabbag added that Israel's crimes in Gaza is a clear violation of the resolutions of the United Nations.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

