

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Joint Statement by the United States, Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom on the Attacks on Commercial Shipping in the Red Sea

January 3, 2024

Recognizing the broad consensus as expressed by 44 countries around the world on December 19, 2023, as well as the statement by the UN Security Council on December 1, 2023, condemning Houthi attacks against commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea, and in light of ongoing attacks, including a significant escalation over the past week targeting commercial vessels, with missiles, small boats, and attempted hijackings,

We hereby reiterate the following and warn the Houthis against further attacks:

Ongoing Houthi attacks in the Red Sea are illegal, unacceptable, and profoundly destabilizing. There is no lawful justification for intentionally targeting civilian shipping and naval vessels. Attacks on vessels, including commercial vessels, using unmanned aerial vehicles, small boats, and missiles, including the first use of anti-ship ballistic missiles against such vessels, are a direct threat to the freedom of navigation that serves as the bedrock of global trade in one of the world's most critical waterways.

These attacks threaten innocent lives from all over the world and constitute a significant international problem that demands collective action. Nearly 15 percent of global seaborne trade passes through the Red Sea, including 8 percent of global grain trade, 12 percent of seaborne-traded oil and 8 percent of the world's liquefied natural gas trade. International shipping companies continue to reroute their vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, adding significant cost and weeks of delay to the delivery of goods, and ultimately jeopardizing the movement of critical food, fuel, and humanitarian assistance throughout the world.

Let our message now be clear: we call for the immediate end of these illegal attacks and release of unlawfully detained vessels and crews. The Houthis will bear the responsibility of the consequences should they continue to threaten lives, the global economy, and free flow of commerce in the region's critical waterways. We remain committed to the international rules-based order and are determined to hold malign actors accountable for unlawful seizures and attacks.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

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