

# Yemen: Red Sea Attacks Will Be Reassessed If Israeli 'Aggression' Stops

SANA'A (Dispatches) – Yemen's Ansarullah spokesperson said on Tuesday that the movement's operations in the Red Sea, where its missiles and drones have launched retaliatory attacks against Israeli-bound ships, will only stop when the Zionist regime's "aggression" on Gaza ends and the siege is lifted.

Asked if the attacks on ships would cease if a ceasefire deal was reached for Gaza, Mohammed Abdulsalam said the situation would be reassessed if the siege ended and humanitarian aid was free to enter.

A day earlier, Yemen's defense minister hailed operations by the country's military against Israeli-linked ships in the Red Sea, stressing that the era of "hegemonic influence" of the U.S. and its allies on international waters is over. "The United States, Britain and Israel must realize that the policies of demarcation and assertion of hegemonic influence on international waters are obsolete and



Members of Yemen's popular army hold up weapons during a parade in Sana'a on December 2, 2023.

no more favorable," Major General Muhammad al-Atifi said. He said the Yemeni armed forces can properly redefine maritime security in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea following their decision to block the passage of ships of any nationality heading towards ports in the 1948 Israeli-occupied territories.

Atifi said Yemeni naval units can also restore the identity of the two seas, which had been hijacked by the occupying Tel Aviv regime.

"We reaffirm that the Yemeni armed forces won't target any ships, which are neither affiliated to the Zionist enemy nor serving its interests. Marine navigation for vessels through the Red Sea

and the Arabian Sea is safe," he said.

Atifi emphasized that the Sana'a-based National Salvation Government stands fully committed to all international treaties and conventions, as well as pacts that neither undermine Yemen's dignity and national sovereignty nor impose particular will.

"As long as the Zionists' atrocities continue in Gaza, we will continue our operations against the usurping entity. Washington has aided and abetted the Zionist entity to forge ahead with its genocidal war on our Palestinian brethren and sisters," he said.

The Yemeni forces have vowed to keep up their strikes as long as the Israeli regime sustains the war and an all-out siege that it has been simultaneously employing against Gaza.

The war has so far killed at least 29,692 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured 69,879 others.

## British Media Giving 'Cover' for Israel to Kill Palestinian Journalists

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Palestinian journalists and activists have accused British media outlets of giving "cover" to the Zionist regime to kill unprecedented numbers of their colleagues in Gaza.

Media monitoring organizations say that the number of journalists killed in Gaza - estimated by the Committee to Protect Journalists to be 83 but possibly considerably higher - is unlike any previous conflict, with the death rate dwarfing the likes of wars in Vietnam, Yugoslavia and Ukraine.

Ahmed Alnaouq, a Gazan journalist and co-founder of the We Are Not Numbers campaign or-

ganization, told an audience in the British House of Commons that many British journalists were guilty of failing to properly report on the scale of the deaths.

"The BBC knows that they are biased, nonetheless they continue to do their biased coverage... why is the western media biased against the Palestinian people?" he asked.

"Our problem is not only with the Israeli army, our problem is with the western media that always gives the Israeli army cover to kill Palestinians."

He hit out at a number of common practices in British media, including the use of the passive voice when reporting on the

deaths of Palestinians.

Alnaouq pointed to one of his own appearances on British TV, being interviewed on ITV's Good Morning Britain, where he said he was subjected to questions aimed at "embarrassing" him.

His appearance sparked off an outcry after host Richard Madeley asked Alnaouq if he was "close" to his family members, shortly after he'd explained how dozens of them were killed in Israeli bombardment.

"I thought 'finally the British media cares about the Palestinians'," he told the meeting on Monday, about initially being originally invited.

"But I was mistaken."

In December, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) filed a second complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes against journalists in Gaza since 7 October.

The complaint specifically addressed the deaths of seven Palestinian journalists over the eight weeks leading up to 15 December.

According to the RSF, there is substantial evidence suggesting that the journalists mentioned in their complaint were subject to attacks that could be classified as war crimes and that there is a possibility that these journalists were specifically targeted due to their professional roles.

## Saudi Arabia Puts Seven Activists to Death in Largest Execution in Years

RIYADH (Middle East Eye) – Seven Saudi men were executed on Tuesday, the highest number put to death in one day since 81 were killed in March 2022.

The Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) convicted the men on terrorism charges, accusing them of betraying "their homeland, threatening its stability and endangering its security", the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported, citing the Interior Ministry.

The men's names were listed in

the SPA announcement, which is often the only information released about executions in the kingdom, but with little further detail.

Riyadh has now executed 31 people this year, after putting at least 172 people to death in 2023, rights groups monitoring executions in Saudi Arabia have said.

None of the men executed on Tuesday were known to be on death row, Duaa Dhainy, a researcher with the European-Saudi Organization for Human Rights (ESOHR),

told Middle East Eye.

In the past eight years, she said, ESOHR only had knowledge about three percent of death penalty cases before executions were carried out.

"NGO and public information about people on death row is very limited," Dhainy said.

Those executed in 2024 include 10 men convicted of terrorism charges by the SCC, which has been criticized for punishing activists and protesters.

Among those was Awn Hassan

Abu Abdullah, who was executed on 30 January.

While Abdullah was accused of joining a terrorist cell and financing terrorism, ESOHR has reported that it believes he was arrested, tried and executed for "legitimate activities", including expressing his opinions and participating in gatherings.

Tuesday's execution of seven people is the highest number put to death since March 2022, a year in which the kingdom carried out more executions than any other country.

## Hezbollah...

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Hezbollah has urged residents in southern Lebanon to take their CCTV camera systems offline to prevent Israel from hacking into those devices installed outside homes and shops in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah has already fought off two Israeli wars against Lebanon in 2000 and 2006. The resistance forced the regime to retreat in both conflicts.

## World's...

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"Aaron Bushnell is a martyr, whose final moment was spent in the heat of one naked, unflinching truth: the moral conscience of every human being, from the belly of the beast to the farthest reaches of the Earth, demands immediate attention and action to end the horrors before us," the statement said.

The People's Forum, a community centre working for the working class and marginalized communities in New York City, was helping to lead a vigil for Bushnell on February 27, along with the Palestinian Youth Movement.

In a post on Instagram, they wrote that Bushnell "made the ultimate sacrifice to end a genocide perpetrated, supported, and financed by the Biden Administration".

"The system is guilty of crimes against humanity in Gaza and Aaron Bushnell took a heroic stand. We honor him and his sacrifice."

In a statement, Hamas said, "The Biden administration bears full responsibility for the death of the airman in the U.S. army, Aaron Bushnell, due to its policy that has supported the Zionist regime in its genocidal war against our Palestinian people."

"Aaron Bushnell immortalized his name as a defender of humanitarian values and the oppressed Palestinian people ... just as did the American activist, Rachel Corrie, who was crushed by an Israeli bulldozer in Rafah in 2003," it noted.

In March 2003, Corrie was killed while she was protesting against the Israeli destruction of Palestinian homes in Gaza.

Iran said the self-immolation, in protest at the continued crimes of the Zionists in Gaza, showed how much the awakened consciences in the U.S. are ashamed of their government's support for the genocide of Palestinians.

"Bushnell's cries are the loud voice of the awakened consciences in the U.S. against the government's complicity in the Palestinian genocide," Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani wrote on X.

## Macron...

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky complained Ukraine only received 30 percent of a million shells the EU had promised.

"It is clear that we did not have this million," Macron responded, acknowledging an "imprudent commitment".

There are growing doubts about the viability of long-term U.S. backing for Ukraine as a new aid package struggles to find legislative approval and Donald Trump, who has indicated opposition to further support for Kyiv, eyes a return to the presidency in elections this year.

But Macron insisted Europe should not wait for the result of the elections, where Trump is expected to face off against incumbent President Joe Biden.

"It's our future, Europe's future that is at stake, we must have the possibility to do without (the United States), not out of defiance, pessimism or fear but because it depends on us," said Macron.

## Foreign ...

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Riyadh, as a "new starting point" in relations.

Amir-Abdollahian reiterated that Iran wants nothing but good for Egypt and the region. "We consider Egypt's security as Iran's security."

He said efforts by Iran and Egypt on regional developments, most notably the issue of Palestine, will have a "positive effect" on the entire region.

Amir-Abdollahian praised Egypt's key role in supporting the Palestinians and its efforts in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.

The Iranian minister said Israel was the "root cause of the crisis" in the region.

Shoukry, for his part, said relations between Egypt and Iran are crucial to ensuring regional stability and tackling the vexing problems that exist.

The Egyptian foreign minister hoped discussions with his Iranian counterpart would pave the way for the revitalization of relations.

He also praised the restoration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Shoukry said Egypt and Iran are united in supporting the Palestinian cause and stopping the crimes of Israel against the Palestinian nation. "We will do our best to support the Palestinian nation, and Cairo and Tehran have a common point of view in supporting Palestine."

Egypt severed its diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980 after it welcomed the deposed Pahlavi ruler of Iran and also recognized Israel.

## Oil Spills Pile on Pressure for Iraq's Farmers

AL-MEAIBDI (AFP) – Iraq enjoys tremendous oil wealth but many hard-scrabble farmers in the north say crude spills have contaminated their lands, piling on pressure as they already battle drought.

Amid the hills of Salaheddin province, puddles of the viscous black liquid pollute the otherwise fertile and green fields, rendering vast swathes of farmland barren.

"The oil has damaged all that the land can give," said one farmer, Abdel Majid Said, 62, who owns six hectares (15 acres) in the village of al-Meaibdi.

"Every planted seed is ruined. This land has become useless."

Oil spills in Iraq -- a country ravaged by decades of conflict, corruption and decaying infrastructure -- have contaminated farmland in the northern province, especially during the winter rains.

Authorities blame the Daesh terrorist group who overran large swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014 and

were only defeated in Iraq three years later.

The Daesh group blew up oil pipelines and wells and also dug primitive oil storage pits, causing crude to seep into the ground, from where annual rains wash it out again.

But the local farmers also complain that the state has been too slow to clean up the mess.

In al-Meaibdi and the nearby hills of Hamrin, authorities are struggling to find a sustainable solution to the problem, which adds to a litany of environmental challenges.

Iraq, also battered by blistering summer heat and severe drought, is ranked by the United Nations as one of the five countries most vulnerable to key impacts of climate change.

In Hamrin, layers of sludge pile up as excavators build up dirt barriers -- a temporary measure to stem the flow of contaminated water onto farmland below.

The oil not only damages the soil and crops but can also pollute groundwater in the water-scarce country.

Said, the farmer, said "the soil is no longer fertile -- we have not been able to cultivate it since 2016".

Some other farmers had already abandoned their lands, he added.

He pointed to a green plot of land so far untouched by the spills and said: "Look how the crops have grown there -- but not even a grain has sprouted here."

Oil spills have contaminated 500 hectares of wheat and barley fields in Salaheddin, said Mohamed Hamad from the environment department in the province.

Hamad pointed to the reign of Daesh, which collected revenues from oil production and smuggling by building makeshift refineries and digging primitive oil storage pits.