# U.S. Strikes Houthis in Red Sea Amid Escalating Attacks on Vessels



**U.S. Launches Strikes Against Houthis Amid Escalating Red Sea Attacks**

The U.S. military conducted airstrikes on Thursday, June 13, 2024, targeting three anti-ship cruise missile launchers in Houthi-controlled Yemen, according to the U.S. Central Command. This action follows intensified attacks by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels on vessels in the Red Sea. The Houthis fired missiles at two ships on Thursday after crippling a different vessel a day earlier.

One merchant ship, the Ukrainian-owned **M/V Verbena**, was struck and caught fire approximately 98 nautical miles east of Aden, resulting in severe injuries to a crew member. The vessel, operating under a Polish flag, was en route to Italy carrying lumber and continues to fight the fire onboard.

Separately, the British maritime agency, United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, reported another explosion near a different ship about 82 nautical miles northwest of the port of Hodeida. No damage was reported from this incident.

A Houthi military spokesperson claimed additional strikes on vessels named **Seaguardian** and **Athina**, though these claims could not be verified independently. On Wednesday, a Greek merchant ship, **Tutor**, sent out a distress call after reportedly being targeted by Houthi drones and missiles, causing severe flooding and engine damage.

The U.S. Central Command condemned the Houthi attacks as reckless, warning that continued provocations threaten regional stability and mariner safety in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

The Houthis have been in a protracted conflict with Yemen’s internationally recognized government, supported by a Saudi-led coalition, since 2014. The rebels are leveraging maritime attacks purportedly to support Palestinians in the Israel-Hamas conflict, although the affected ships are often unrelated to the conflict.

In addition to maritime aggression, the Houthis recently detained 17 U.N. and humanitarian staff members, accusing them of espionage. The U.N. and several international humanitarian agencies have called for the immediate release of these staffers. These detentions coincide with the group's increased internal crackdowns and financial pressures.