# British military joins US airstrikes against Yemen’s Houthi rebels



The British military has joined forces with the United States in launching airstrikes against Yemen’s Houthi rebels, marking the UK’s first active participation in the US’s intensified campaign targeting the Iranian-backed group, officials confirmed on Wednesday.

The strikes form part of a campaign known as Operation Rough Rider, which the Trump administration initiated to counter the Houthis amid ongoing negotiations with Iran concerning Tehran's advancing nuclear programme. The British Ministry of Defence outlined the rationale behind the UK’s involvement, breaking from the US approach that has offered scant details about the more than 800 strikes conducted since 15 March.

“This action was taken in response to a persistent threat from the Houthis to freedom of navigation,” stated John Healey, the UK’s Defence Secretary. Healey further highlighted the broader impact, saying, “A 55% drop in shipping through the Red Sea has already cost billions, fuelling regional instability and risking economic security for families in the UK.”

The joint strikes reportedly targeted sites in and around Yemen’s capital, Sana’a, which the Houthis have controlled since 2014, with additional strikes near Saada. The British Ministry of Defence described the specific target as “a cluster of buildings used by the Houthis to manufacture drones of the type used to attack ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden,” located approximately 25 kilometres south of Sana’a.

Royal Air Force Typhoon FGR4 fighter jets participated in the operation, deploying Paveway IV precision-guided bombs. The Ministry added that the strike was executed after dark to minimise the risk of civilian casualties. However, the UK did not provide information on the extent of damage or casualties resulting from the strike, and the US Central Command did not officially acknowledge the operation.

Since January 2024, the British military has been involved in airstrikes alongside the US under the Biden administration’s campaign against the Houthis, but this marks their first direct involvement during the Trump administration’s intensified campaign.

This UK-US air assault occurred shortly after a separate US airstrike on Monday reportedly hit a prison holding African migrants, resulting in at least 68 deaths and 47 injuries. The US military has announced an investigation into that incident. Additionally, an American airstrike on 18 April targeted the Ras Isa fuel port, killing at least 74 individuals and wounding 171, constituting the deadliest known attack in the American campaign thus far.

The United States is conducting strikes from two aircraft carriers stationed in the region: the USS Harry S Truman in the Red Sea and the USS Carl Vinson in the Arabian Sea. The primary focus is on curbing Houthi attacks on vessels navigating the Red Sea, a vital artery for global trade, as well as on Israel. The Houthis remain the only militant group within Iran’s self-declared “Axis of Resistance” capable of frequently launching attacks against Israel.

Reports from The Guardian indicate that the US strikes have sparked controversy domestically, particularly over the use of the unclassified Signal messaging app by Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth to disseminate sensitive information about the attacks.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://apnews.com/article/9ab021aac8f01694fa98619e3ffe92ba> - This article reports on the UK's first airstrike in cooperation with the US as part of 'Operation Rough Rider' targeting Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, marking the UK's active participation in the US's intensified campaign.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-military-says-it-will-not-reveal-details-about-strikes-yemen-2025-04-27/> - This source discusses the US military's decision to withhold specific details about its strikes in Yemen to maintain operational security, despite stating that the operations have had 'lethal effects' on Houthi rebels.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-campaign-against-yemens-houthis-2025-04-28/> - This article provides an overview of the United States' escalated military campaign against Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi forces in early 2025, aiming to halt attacks on Red Sea shipping.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67954799> - This source reports on UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's statement that the UK acted in self-defense following the Houthis' targeting of ships, including a Royal Navy warship, and calls on the group to stop the attacks.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67954161> - This article details the US and UK launching airstrikes against Houthi rebel targets across Yemen in response to repeated attacks by the Iran-backed group on commercial vessels in the Red Sea.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/12/us-uk-air-strikes-yemen-houthi-rebels-red-sea-crisis> - This source discusses the US and UK launching air and missile strikes in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen, aimed at halting attacks on ships in the Red Sea, marking a significant escalation in the conflict.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/30/uk-yemen-airstrikes-houthi-rebels> - Please view link - unable to able to access data