

Red Sea shipping crisis deteriorates rapidly as attacks intensify

Sam Chambers July 8, 2025

0 2,261 2 minutes read



The security situation in the Red Sea has taken a sharp turn for the worse over the past 48 hours, with back-to-back attacks on merchant vessels and Israeli airstrikes targeting multiple Yemeni ports.

Yesterday, the Liberian-flagged bulk carrier *Eternity C*, operated by Greek firm Cosmoship Management, came under a coordinated assault involving drones, speedboats, and small arms fire approximately 50 nautical miles southwest of Yemen's Hodeidah. The vessel, with 22 crewmembers, was left adrift with its engines disabled and communications systems knocked offline after its bridge was struck. The *Eternity C* came under attack for the fourth time on Tuesday and is said to be surrounded by skiffs with small arms and RPGs. Maritime security firms report three people killed and one injured.

The attack follows a similar assault the day before on the *Magic Seas*, also in the Red Sea, marking a disturbing escalation in the group's maritime campaign.

Coinciding with the vessel attacks, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched a series of strikes under Operation Black Flag on the ports of Hodeidah, Ras Isa, and Saleef. Israel claims the strikes are retaliatory measures in response to repeated Houthi aggression against its territory and shipping interests.

Satellite imagery and on-ground reports confirm heavy damage to port infrastructure. The Saleef power station—vital for the port's flour mills and grain silos—was reportedly destroyed, hampering unloading operations for bulk carriers. Two Barbados-flagged bulkers likely suffered collateral blast damage, although no crew injuries have been confirmed.

The IDF also struck the *Galaxy Leader*, a car carrier seized by the Houthis in November 2023 and believed to have been retrofitted with radar equipment used to track maritime traffic. The vessel was berthed at Ras Isa at the time. The Houthis have claimed responsibility for the attack on the *Magic Seas*, alleging the vessel was sunk—though this has yet to be independently verified. If true, it would be the third ship confirmed lost since the militant group began its campaign against merchant shipping in November 2023 in solidarity with Palestinians.

Ambrey and UKMTO advisories now recommend that merchant shipping in the region maintain minimum deck movement, designate safe muster points above the waterline, and avoid proximity to vessels transiting without AIS signals. With multiple attacks, confirmed casualties, and major ports damaged, Red Sea shipping faces its most volatile period yet this year.

Commenting on the latest developments in the Red Sea region, IMO secretary-general Arsenio Dominguez said: "After several months of calm, the resumption of deplorable attacks in the Red Sea constitutes a renewed violation of international law and freedom of navigation. Innocent seafarers and local populations are the main victims of these attacks and the pollution they cause. Constructive dialogue is the solution to resolving ongoing geopolitical crises affecting seafarers and international shipping."

In a rare piece of good news, India's directorate general of shipping confirmed the release of over 150 Indian seafarers stranded at Ras Isa port since December. All 11 vessels have now departed after prolonged detainment by

Houthi forces who enforced a cargo discharge blockade following April's Israeli airstrike on the port.