



Security Council

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Letter dated 12 January 2024 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I wish to report, on behalf of my Government, that the United States, in the exercise of its inherent right of self-defence, as reflected in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, has undertaken discrete strikes against Houthi facilities in Yemen in response to a series of armed attacks by Houthi militants over the last few months, including several attacks against United States Navy ships in the Red Sea. The Houthis' outrageous attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb strait and the Gulf of Aden using one-way unmanned aerial vehicles, anti-ship cruise and ballistic missiles, a helicopter-borne commando assault and small boats threaten the region's stability and have serious economic impacts for the global community. The Houthis have conducted more than two dozen attacks on commercial vessels since mid-November, including the 19 November Houthi seizure of the M/V *Galaxy Leader*. On several occasions, Houthi-launched systems have been directed towards United States Navy ships, necessitating the activation of defensive systems to safeguard the ships and their crews. Houthi militants also shot at United States Navy helicopters on 31 December while the Navy helicopters were aiding a commercial vessel that Houthis were attempting to board. On 9 January 2024, the Houthis perpetrated their largest attack in the Red Sea, with multiple unmanned aerial systems, anti-ship cruise missiles and ballistic missiles targeting United States Navy vessels. There is a continuing threat of additional attacks against other vessels in the region and to the safety of United States Navy ships and personnel patrolling the Red Sea.

On 1 December, the United Nations Security Council issued a statement condemning Houthi attacks against merchant and commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea. On 3 January, a joint statement was issued by Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States. That joint statement called for the immediate end of illegal attacks and warned that malign actors would be held accountable should they continue to threaten lives, the global economy and free flow of commerce in the region's critical waterways. On 10 January, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution [2722 \(2024\)](#), which also condemned these attacks and demanded that they cease. The resolution took note of the right of Member States, in accordance with international law, to defend their vessels from attack.

In response to these attacks and the continuing threat of future attacks, on 11 January, the United States, as part of a multinational operation, alongside the United Kingdom and with support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the



Netherlands, conducted discrete strikes against Houthi facilities in Yemen that facilitate Houthi attacks in the Red Sea region, including air and coastal surveillance radar sites, as well as unmanned aerial system and missile facilities and launch sites. These necessary and proportionate strikes were taken after non-military options proved inadequate to address the threat. The strikes were conducted to degrade and disrupt the ongoing pattern of attacks threatening the United States and deter the Houthi militants from conducting further attacks threatening merchant and commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea. These military responses will preserve navigational rights and freedoms, both for naval ships and for commercial vessels, in this important maritime passageway.

The United States took this necessary and proportionate action consistent with international law and in the exercise of the United States' inherent right of self-defence as reflected in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The United States will take further action against the Houthis as may be necessary in the exercise of its inherent right of self-defence to respond to future attacks or threats of attacks against the United States.

These narrowly tailored strikes are specific to the situation in the Red Sea, and do not constitute a shift in our approach to other conflicts. We continue to urge all State and non-State entities not to take action that would escalate into a broader regional conflict.

I request that you circulate the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Linda **Thomas-Greenfield**
Ambassador
Representative of the United States
to the United Nations
