

TURKISH RESPONSE TO HOUTHJI MISSILE ATTACK ON ANADOLU

On November 20, 2024, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a formal condemnation of the Houthi missile attack on the Panama-flagged dry cargo vessel Anadolu S, operated by Turkish company Oras Shipping. The ministry affirmed that measures are underway to mitigate the risk of similar incidents and ensure the protection of Turkish maritime interests.

Turkey has currently deployed the following naval vessels to escort the Oruc Reis research vessel during its mission in Somalia:

- **TCG Gökova (F-496) and TCG Gediz (F-495):** G-class frigates (Oliver Hazard Perry-class), equipped with advanced combat management systems, SMART-S Mk2 3D radar, Mk.41 Vertical Launch Systems (VLS) for RIM-162 ESSMs, OTO Melara 76mm naval guns, Phalanx CIWS, and torpedo launch systems. Each frigate displaces 4,100 tons, measures 135.6 meters in length, and has a beam of 13.7 meters.
- **TCG First Lieutenant Arif Ekmekçi:** A logistics support vessel with capabilities including helicopter refueling, a stern flotation system, and replenishment operations. Specifications include a length of 106.51 meters, width of 16.80 meters, a speed of 12+ knots, and a range of 9,500 nautical miles. The ship is armed with two ASELSAN STAMP 12.7 mm weapon systems and features an 18-ton crane. It can carry 8 containers, 631 tons of drinking water, 336 tons of JP-5 helicopter fuel, and 4,036 tons of F-76 fuel.



Illustrative image of Oruc Reis and Turkish Frigates / Source: Anadolu Ajansi

U.S. STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO HOUTHI THREATS IN THE RED SEA:

- During an on-record press briefing in Laos, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III emphasized the urgent need to counter Houthi aggression in the Red Sea, declaring that the group must "pay a price" for their escalatory actions. Secretary Austin outlined the U.S. commitment to intensify operations under Operation Prosperity Guardian, a multinational initiative designed to ensure freedom of navigation and protect maritime commerce. The Secretary reaffirmed the U.S. stance to strengthen defensive measures and step up targeted actions to mitigate the Houthi threat and maintain regional stability.



Illustrative image of USS Cole / Source : CENTCOM

ANALYSIS

- Turkey's response to regional threats, including Houthi actions, reflects a delicate balance between domestic imperatives and broader geopolitical ambitions. While Ankara seeks to safeguard its strategic and economic interests and maintain its image as a decisive regional power, it faces operational challenges in managing Tehran's influence and countering threats from Iranian-backed proxies, such as the Houthis.
- Failure to address these threats diplomatically is likely to push Turkey toward operational alignment with U.S. and European naval missions in the Red Sea. Turkish capabilities in the region remain constrained, particularly in intelligence and precision strike capabilities, limiting its capacity to effectively deter Houthi aggression without external support. These factors underscore Turkey's reliance on multinational cooperation to reinforce its maritime security and regional strategic posture.

SOURCES

SeaHawk Maritime Intelligence provides actionable, land-based intelligence on Somali piracy and other emerging threats in the region.

Turkish Ministry Of Foreign Affairs

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