

HOUTHI STRATEGIC SHIFTS :

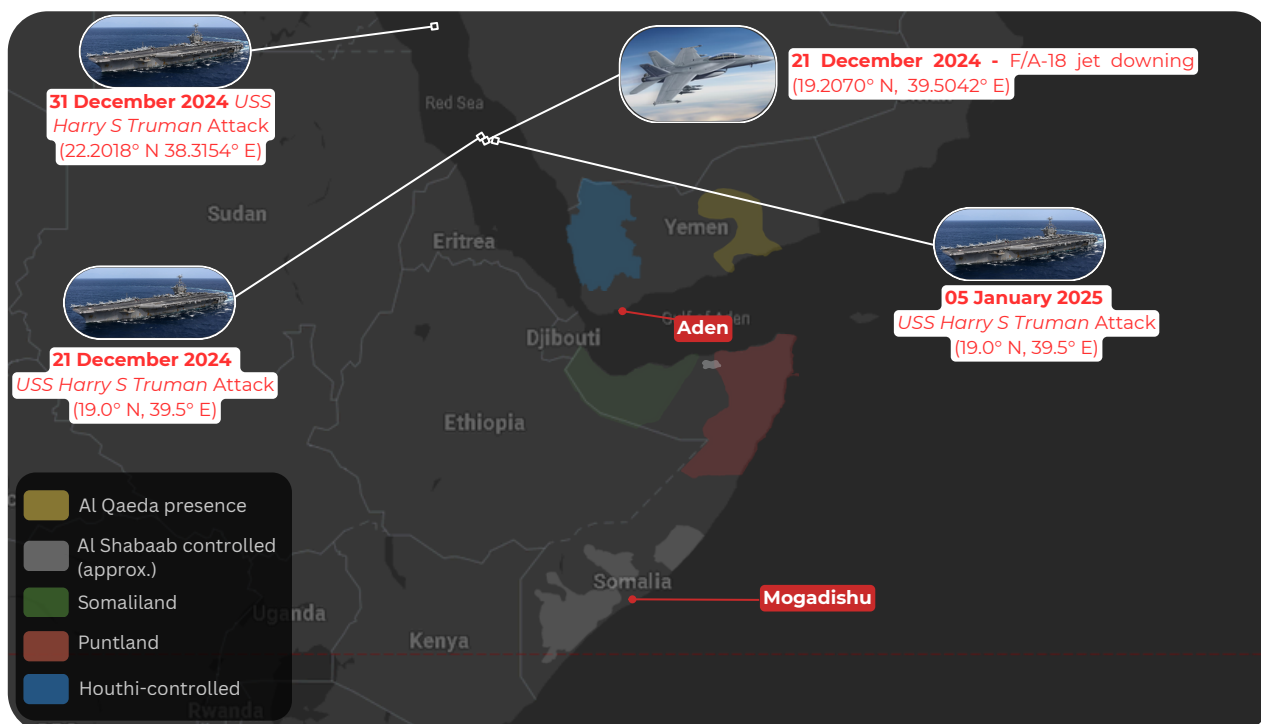
On 6 January 2025, the Houthis announced a another attack on the aircraft carrier *USS Harry S. Truman*, marking the third such operation since the carrier began its transit towards the Red Sea in December 2024. This highlights the *USS Harry S. Truman* as a "preferred" target alongside the intensified attacks on Israel, which were strategically heightened following the success of the previous strike.

Timeline and approximate coordinates of attacks in the Red Sea

21 December 2024:

On 21 December 2024, the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) reported carrying out a series of airstrikes targeting Houthi missile storage facilities and command-and-control infrastructure. In retaliation, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree claimed the launching of 17 drones and 8 cruise missiles aimed at a mentioned US aircraft carrier, along with the downing of an F-18 fighter jet. However, CENTCOM later clarified that the aircraft loss was due to a friendly fire incident as opposed to Houthi downing.

LOCATIONS OF THE USS HARRY S. TRUMAN IN THE RED SEA BETWEEN 21 AND 31 DECEMBER 2024

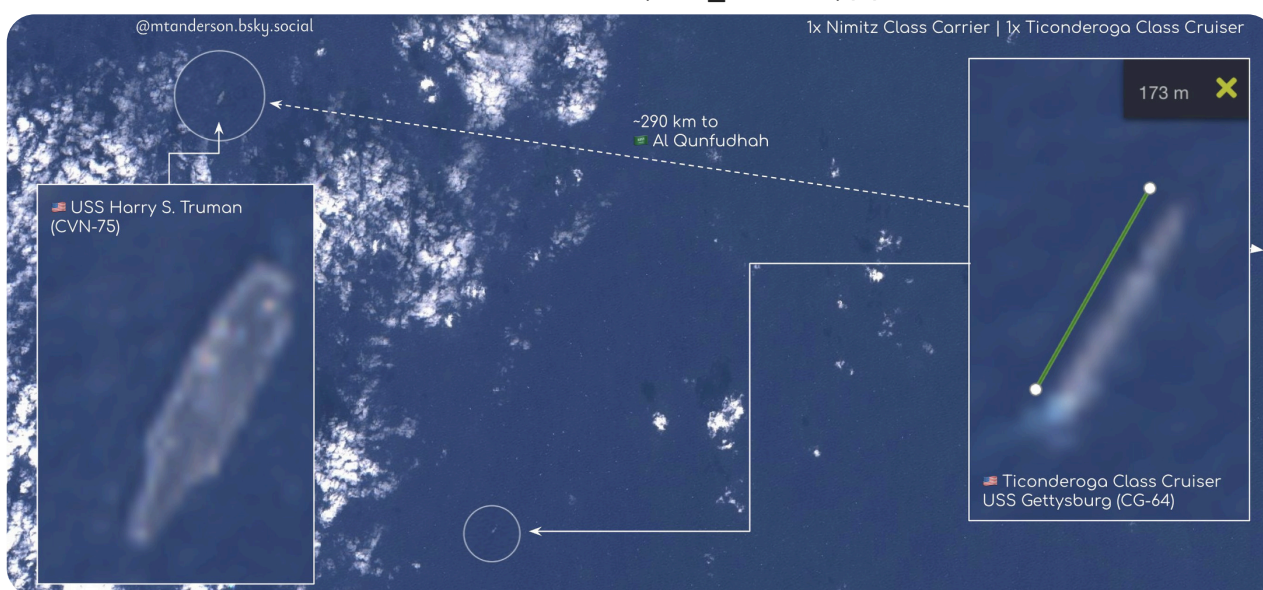


31 December 2024:

Between December 30 and 31, 2024, CENTCOM conducted precision strikes on Houthi command centers, weapon production sites, and coastal radars in Sanaa and Hodeidah. On December 31, Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree claimed they targeted the USS Harry S. Truman with cruise missiles and drones; however, no damages were reported on the U.S. side.

HARRY S TRUMAN AIRCRAFT CARRIER POSITION ON 21 DECEMBER 2024

SOURCE: MT ANDERSON, @MT_ANDERSON, (X)



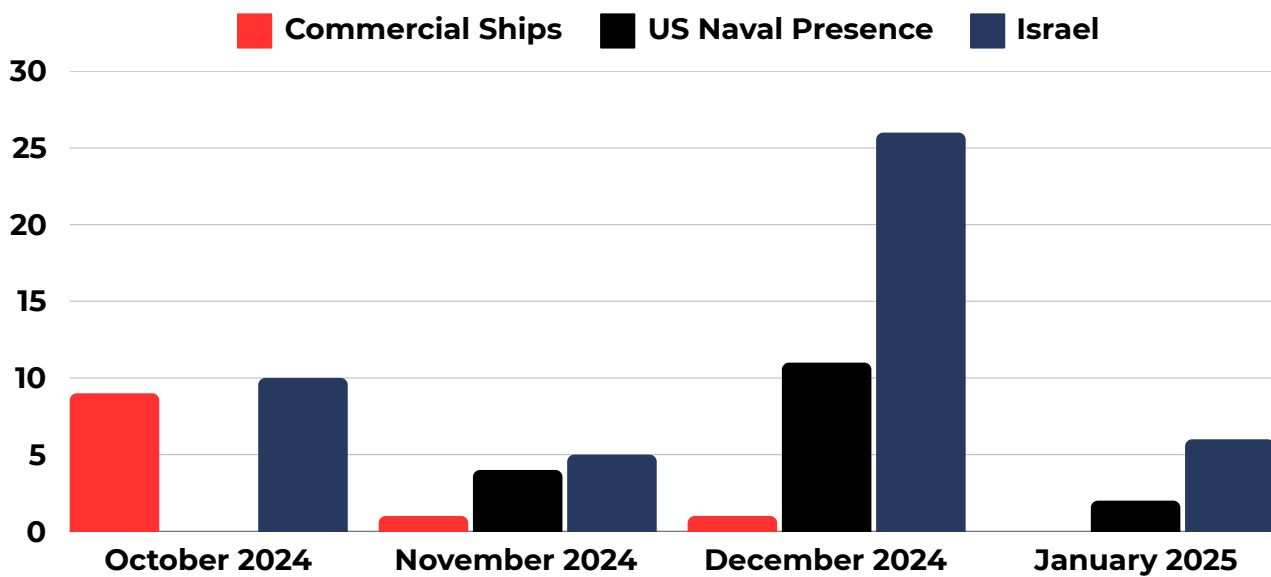
05-06 January 2025:

On January 6, Yahya Saree claimed that Houthi forces struck the USS Harry S. Truman with two cruise missiles and four drones. CENTCOM did not issue any statement regarding the alleged attack.

HOUTHİ ATTACK TRENDS

From November to January, Houthi attacks escalated from targeting commercial shipping and imposing naval blockades to launching aggressive strikes on high-value military targets, including airbases, aircraft carriers, and power plants. This shift came as a response to increased airstrikes by coalition forces, with the Houthis retaliating using drones and missiles. Initially focused on disrupting maritime trade in the Red Sea, their operations expanded to direct military targets in Israel and the Arabian Sea.

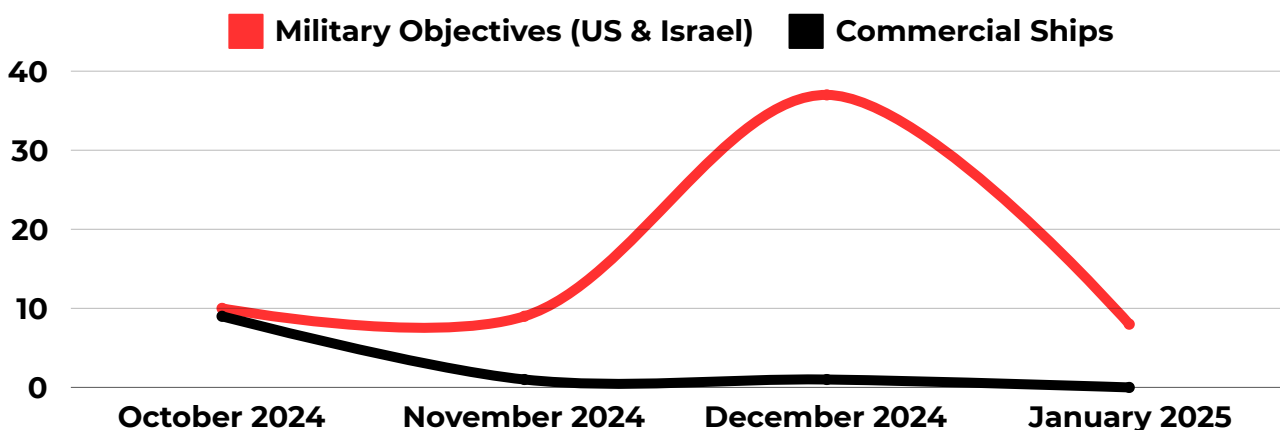
HOUTHİ TARGETS BETWEEN OCTOBER 2024 AND JANUARY 2025



Between October 2024 and January 2025, the Houthis shifted their focus from targeting economic assets, such as commercial shipping, to prioritizing military objectives. In October, the group conducted 9 attacks on commercial ships and 10 on Israel, with no recorded actions against US presence in the region. By November, this shifted to 4 attacks on US assets, 5 on Israel, and only 1 on commercial shipping, indicating a growing focus on direct military engagements.

The trend intensified in December, with 11 attacks on US forces and 26 on Israel, while commercial shipping was nearly abandoned with just 1 attack. In January, the Houthis maintained their focus on military targets with 6 attacks on Israel and 2 on US forces, signaling a clear shift toward high-profile military confrontations over economic disruption.

EVOLUTION OF MILITARY TARGETS BY HOUTHİS IN COMPARED TO MERCHANT SHIPS BETWEEN OCTOBER 2024 AND JANUARY 2025



- **US Coalition and Israeli Airstrikes:** The US Coalition has maintained a steady rate of approximately seven airstrikes per month on Houthi-controlled areas since October 2024. In December, Israel joined these campaigns, escalating the pressure on Houthi positions and operations.
- **Impact on Houthi Decisions:** The involvement of Israeli forces in the airstrike campaigns has markedly influenced Houthi strategic decisions, prompting a significant shift in their focus from commercial targets in October to primarily targeting US military assets and Israeli interests in December and January.

ANALYSIS

The Houthis appear to be adopting a tit-for-tat strategy against the United States, retaliating for airstrikes and naval operations with direct attacks on American assets in the region. This approach is reflected in Yahya Saree's statements, where he has claimed that the Houthis have successfully thwarted U.S. airstrikes on three separate occasions.

The F-18 incident, along with earlier warnings about the threat posed by Houthi missiles to aircraft carriers, appears to have emboldened Sanaa to escalate direct attacks on U.S. forces. Despite sustained military campaigns, these measures have not succeeded in curtailing Houthi operations in the area.

There are also credible reports suggesting that the Houthis are acquiring missile components from China. In exchange, China is reportedly ensuring safe passage through the Red Sea while further complicating challenges faced by U.S. forces in the region.

Although the immediate threat to commercial shipping is assessed as lower than in previous periods, maintaining heightened vigilance remains essential. Clear communication and prudent navigation are crucial to avoid entanglement in the ongoing conflict. The Houthis' use of suicide UAVs continues to pose a residual risk, as these systems could inadvertently target or affect commercial vessels.

SOURCES

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

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