

USS Gravely Shoots Down Houthi Ant-Ship Missiles and Helps Sink 3 Houthi Boats

Source: Military.com, published 12/31/2023

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/12/31/us-forces-shoot-down-ballistic-missiles-red-sea-kill-gunmen-attack-yemens-houthi-rebels.html>

BEIRUT (AP) The U.S. military said Sunday that its forces opened fire on Houthi rebels after they attacked a cargo ship in the Red Sea, killing several of them in an escalation of the maritime conflict linked to the war in Gaza. In a series of statements, the U.S. Central Command said the crew of the **USS Gravely** destroyer first shot down two anti-ship ballistic missiles fired at the Singapore-flagged Maersk Hangzhou late Saturday, after the vessel reported getting hit by a missile earlier that evening as it sailed through the Southern Red Sea.

Four small boats then attacked the same cargo ship with small arms fire early Sunday and rebels tried to board the vessel, the U.S. Navy said. Next, the **USS Gravely** and helicopters from the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower aircraft carrier responded to the Maersk Hangzhou's distress call and issued verbal warnings to the attackers, who responded by firing on the helicopters.

“The U.S. Navy helicopters returned fire in self-defense,” sinking three of the four boats and killing the people on board while the fourth boat fled the area, the U.S. Central Command said. No harm to U.S. personnel or equipment, or casualties from the cargo ship, were reported. The Houthis acknowledged that 10 of their fighters were killed in the confrontation and warned of consequences.

The events surrounding the Maersk Hangzhou represented the 23rd illegal attack by the Houthis on international shipping since Nov. 19, the Central Command said. It was the first time the U.S. Navy said its personnel had killed Houthi fighters since the Red Sea attacks started.

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