

Explained: Who Are Yemen's Houthis, and Why Are They Attacking Israel?

Despite being situated 2,000 kilometers south of Israel, the Houthi movement has now launched three separate attacks toward the resort city of Eilat. Experts explain why this is in line with its wider anti-Israel, antisemitic agenda, and why it is more a partner than proxy for its Iranian patron

Linda Dayan / Nov 6, 2023

[...]

“Many, many drones,” says **Ilan Zelayat, a researcher in the Gulf States Program at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies**. “The Houthis specialize in sending large groups of drones that are difficult to intercept. They crash into the target and explode, and this is what’s happening in Ukraine” – sometimes down to the very model, as Russia has been buying Iranian drones.

“It’s very effective against infrastructure; they’re often used against oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, as well as civilian targets. They can reach massive distances,” he says. Eilat, which the Houthis launched drones at, is almost 2,000 kilometers (about 1,250 miles) from Yemen.

[...]

Such a strike, **Zelayat** says, would have repercussions on the entire global economy. “They can target cargo ships and merchant ships with drones in the Red Sea – whether they’re Israeli ships or American ones. If we have an escalation in which Hezbollah attacks, in which the United States attacks them by itself, then it’s likely that the Houthis will strike there. It’s very convenient and very close,” he says. “This is something that can deter the United States from getting involved, and we need to pay attention to this threat.”

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