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Security Council: Topic #1 - The Crisis of Shipping in the Red Sea

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International shipping is the backbone of global trade. Roughly 12 percent of global trade passes through the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, making it one of the world's most vital maritime chokepoints.<sup>1</sup> Recently, the waters of the Red Sea have become the site of escalating tensions as Houthi rebels in Yemen have targeted commercial vessels with drones, missiles, and other attacks. This has not only threatened the free flow of commerce, but it has also raised serious concerns about regional stability and the safety of international shipping lanes.

The crisis is deeply tied to Yemen's civil war. The Houthis, controlling large parts of northern Yemen, claim responsibility for multiple attacks on international shipping.<sup>2</sup> These assaults have drawn international condemnation and prompted naval deployments by the United States, European Union, and other actors seeking to secure freedom of navigation. Furthermore, the conflict has limited the European Union's ability to support Yemen in addressing its diplomatic and humanitarian needs. The nature of the Red Sea crisis involves many nations; Iran backs the Houthis, Saudi Arabia seeks to restore the Yemeni government, and aside from the security and trade concerns, the Houthis' actions have affected global communication.<sup>3</sup>

The conflict between Israel and Gaza has also played a significant role in the Red Sea crisis, with the Houthis initially threatening to attack any ship affiliated with Israel. Many of the targeting ships were civilian ships, highlighting a serious security threat.<sup>4</sup>

The consequences of this crisis are widespread. Disruptions to Red Sea shipping increase costs for global supply chains, force vessels to reroute around the Cape of Good Hope,<sup>5</sup> and raise insurance rates for international carriers.<sup>6</sup> These effects contribute to inflationary pressures and global economic instability. The security challenges raise questions about sovereignty, the use of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/article/siege-red-sea>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/houthi-attacks-merchant-ships-red-sea-2025-01-16>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/yemen/248-calming-red-seas-turbulent-waters>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.dia.mil/Portals/110/Images/News/Military\\_Powers\\_Publications/YEM\\_Houthi-Attacks-Pressuring-International-Trade.pdf](https://www.dia.mil/Portals/110/Images/News/Military_Powers_Publications/YEM_Houthi-Attacks-Pressuring-International-Trade.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20240119-red-sea-crisis-how-global-shipping-is-being-rerouted-out-of-danger>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2025/07/houthis-resume-deadly-red-sea-shipping-attacks.php>

military force to protect commercial shipping, the ability to provide humanitarian aid to nations in this region, and the role of the UNSC in addressing threats posed by non-state actors such as the Houthis.

As members of the Security Council, you are tasked with confronting these challenges head-on. The Council must grapple with competing national interests, questions of international law, and the urgent need to prevent further escalation.

Some questions to consider:

1. How should the international community respond to non-state actors targeting commercial shipping?
2. To what extent should military force be authorized to protect freedom of navigation?
3. What role should the UN play in coordinating an international response?
4. How can the Council balance immediate security needs with long-term solutions for peace in Yemen and the broader region?

Remember that you represent your assigned country's position, not your personal views. Please use reliable sources in your research and properly cite them in your position papers. All papers will be submitted through Turnitin; plagiarism and the use of AI will not be tolerated.

We look forward to hearing your perspectives and seeing how you navigate this complex and high-stakes issue. Do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

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Best,

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