

Middle East war

Israeli warplanes hit Houthi targets in Yemen

Boss of World Health Organisation among those present during Israel's strike on Sana'a airport



Smoke rises from Sana'a international airport in Yemen following Israeli air strikes on Thursday © Yahya Arhab/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock

Neri Zilber in Tel Aviv 6 HOURS AGO

Israeli warplanes hit targets across Yemen on Thursday, including the international airport, energy facilities and ports, in retaliation for missile strikes by Iran-backed Houthi militants on the Jewish state.

Israel's military said on Thursday it had conducted "intelligence-based strikes" on targets used by the Yemen-based Houthi rebels for "military activities", as well as entry points into the country used by Iranian officials and weapons smugglers.

Among the sites struck were Sana'a international airport, two power stations and three ports on the country's western coast including Hodeidah.

At least four people were killed and 16 injured during the strikes, according to local media reports from Yemen, although the scale of the damage to the various facilities remained unclear.

A humanitarian delegation led by World Health Organization head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was present at Sana'a airport during the attacks.

According to a statement by Tedros, one of the delegation's air crew members was injured, although he said the UN and WHO officials were "safe".

"We will need to wait for the damage to the airport to be repaired before we can

we will need to wait for the damage to the airport to be repaired before we can leave,” he added.

Israel has launched strikes on key infrastructure in Yemen



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Source: FT research

According to Israeli media reports, some two dozen fighter jets took part in the daytime raid, the fourth such direct attack by Israel on Yemen since last summer and the [second in as many weeks](#), after the Houthis recently stepped up missile attacks on the Jewish state.

“We are determined to sever this terrorist arm of Iran’s axis of evil. We will persist in this until we complete the job,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday.

At least five ballistic missiles have been fired at central Israel over the past 10 days, including early on Christmas morning, sending millions of residents rushing to bomb shelters.

On two occasions Israeli air defences failed to fully intercept the incoming projectiles, with one landing on a school and another in a playground in the Tel Aviv area, injuring 16 people.

The Houthis, who control northern Yemen and the capital, began firing on merchant shipping in the Red Sea and launching hundreds of armed drones and missiles at Israel after Gaza-based militant group Hamas's October 7 2023 attack on the Jewish state, saying they were acting in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Their assaults severely disrupted shipping through one of the world's most important maritime trade routes.

Together with Hamas, Lebanese militant group Hizbollah and Shia militias in Iraq and Syria, the Houthis form part of an Iran-led "axis of resistance" whose capabilities have been severely degraded by Israel in recent months.

A naval task force, led by US and UK forces, has attempted to protect merchant vessels in the region.

Over the past week coalition jets launched air strikes on what the US military described as Houthi "command and control" centres in Sana'a.

The militants' leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, was giving his weekly televised address when the bombings began.

Israel Katz, Israel's defence minister, on Thursday again vowed to "hunt down" the Houthi leadership and "decapitate" the group like he said Israel had done to Hamas and Hizbollah.

The Houthis launched another ballistic missile at central Israel early on Friday, with air raid sirens waking residents and sending them to shelters once again.

Israeli air defenses intercepted the missile outside Israeli territory and no direct injuries were reported, according to Israeli authorities.

Houthi officials have promised to continue their attacks on Israel and international shipping for as long as the war in Gaza continues.

Cartography by Steven Bernard

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