



## [Yemen's Houthis and Saudi Arabia Launch Tit-For-Tat Airstrikes Against Each Other](#)

The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen exchanged airstrikes with the country's Houthi rebels in an escalation of the ongoing Yemeni civil war. The Houthis fired several missiles at strategic targets in Saudi Arabia, most notably a Saudi Aramco facility that is vital to the kingdom's petroleum exports. In retaliation, the Saudi-led coalition struck targets in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa. Saudi Arabia said that the Houthis targeting civilian infrastructure was a "red line" which justified their response. The Houthis denied that they had targeted civilians, and said military targets had been struck in the Saudi cities of Dammam, Asir, and Jazan. The escalation between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis comes as the United States, United Nations, and others have pressed both sides to find a diplomatic solution to end the conflict. The war in Yemen is widely regarded as the greatest ongoing humanitarian disaster, and both sides have been urged to stop the violence.

In the aftermath of the tit-for-tat airstrikes, Saudi Arabia alleged that the United States delisting the Houthis as a terror organization had emboldened the group. Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had formally designated the Houthis as a terror group in one of his final acts in office, and current Secretary Antony Blinken reversed the measure in one of his first actions. President Biden also halted the sale of offensive weaponry to Saudi Arabia, due to the human rights violations the country was committing in Yemen. Both of these actions were taken in order to push the Saudis into accepting a diplomatic solution in Yemen that would end the fighting.

The Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia did not result in any casualties or significant, lasting damage. Cross-border attacks on Saudi oil facilities have long been a tactic of the Houthis as they seek to damage the Saudi Arabian economy. To this end, the Saudis claimed that this week's airstrikes sought to destabilize the global petroleum market. Indeed, crude oil prices soared to their highest prices since January 2020 immediately after the airstrikes. A spokesman for the Saudi military also hinted at future retaliation, saying that the kingdom would take whatever measures necessary to defend itself and its economy. However, the war in Yemen has become a quagmire for Saudi Arabia, with many observers believing that the Saudis are seeking a way out of the conflict after six years of interference.

Since the Biden administration came into office in the United States, it has pressed both Saudi Arabia and the Houthis to end the fighting. Yemen's civil war is regarded as the gravest humanitarian situation in the world, and the Houthis and Saudis both share responsibility for the situation. Saudi Arabia has been credibly accused of committing war crimes against Yemen's civilian population, and the Houthis have drawn allegations of corruption over the handling of humanitarian aid. President Biden has repeatedly said he desires a "recalibration" of US-Saudi relations, and the conflict in Yemen is a key aspect of that. The halting of offensive weapon sales to Saudi Arabia is an example of Biden's stance on ending the conflict in Yemen. However, the recent escalation by both parties indicates a peaceful solution is unlikely to be in the immediate offing.