

Israel-affiliated merchant vessel hit by drone 200 kilometers off coast of India

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Chemical and oil products tanker MV Chem Pluto is seen in this undated file picture.

New Delhi, December 26 (RHC)-- British maritime security firm Ambrey says a merchant vessel affiliated to the Israeli regime has been targeted by a drone in the Arabian Sea off the western coast of India. The firm said on Saturday the fire on the Liberian-flagged chemical products tanker, identified as MV Chem Pluto, was extinguished without crew casualties in the incident 200 kilometers (120 miles) southwest of Veraval.

“Some structural damage was also reported and some water was taken onboard. The vessel was Israel-affiliated. She had last called Saudi Arabia and was destined for India at the time,” it said on its website.

An Indian Navy official told Reuters the force responded to a request for assistance on Saturday morning. “The safety of crew and ship has been ascertained. The Navy has also dispatched a warship to arrive in the area and provide assistance as required,” the official, who requested anonymity, said. There are media reports that the vessel was carrying oil from Saudi Arabia, and was heading towards the Indian port of Mangalore.

The targeted vessel is said to be operated by a company owned by an Israeli businessman with links to several Indian oil companies. It was carrying at least 20 Indian crew members.

The incident follows a flurry of drone and missile attacks in the Red Sea by Yemeni Armed Forces in retaliation for the ongoing Israeli onslaught against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The relentless Israeli strikes against Gaza have killed at least 20,057 people, most of them women and children, in the besieged territory. Another 53,320 individuals have been wounded as well. Experts say that the Israeli military operation in Gaza is now considered one of the most lethal and devastating in recent times.

On Friday, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution on the brutal Israeli war on Gaza, demanding increased aid deliveries to the region but stopping short of calling for an immediate halt to the genocide.

The watered-down resolution demanded all sides in the conflict allow the “safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale.” It also called for the creation of “conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities” but it did not call for an immediate end to fighting.

The vote in the 15-member Council was 13-0 with the United States and Russia abstaining.

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