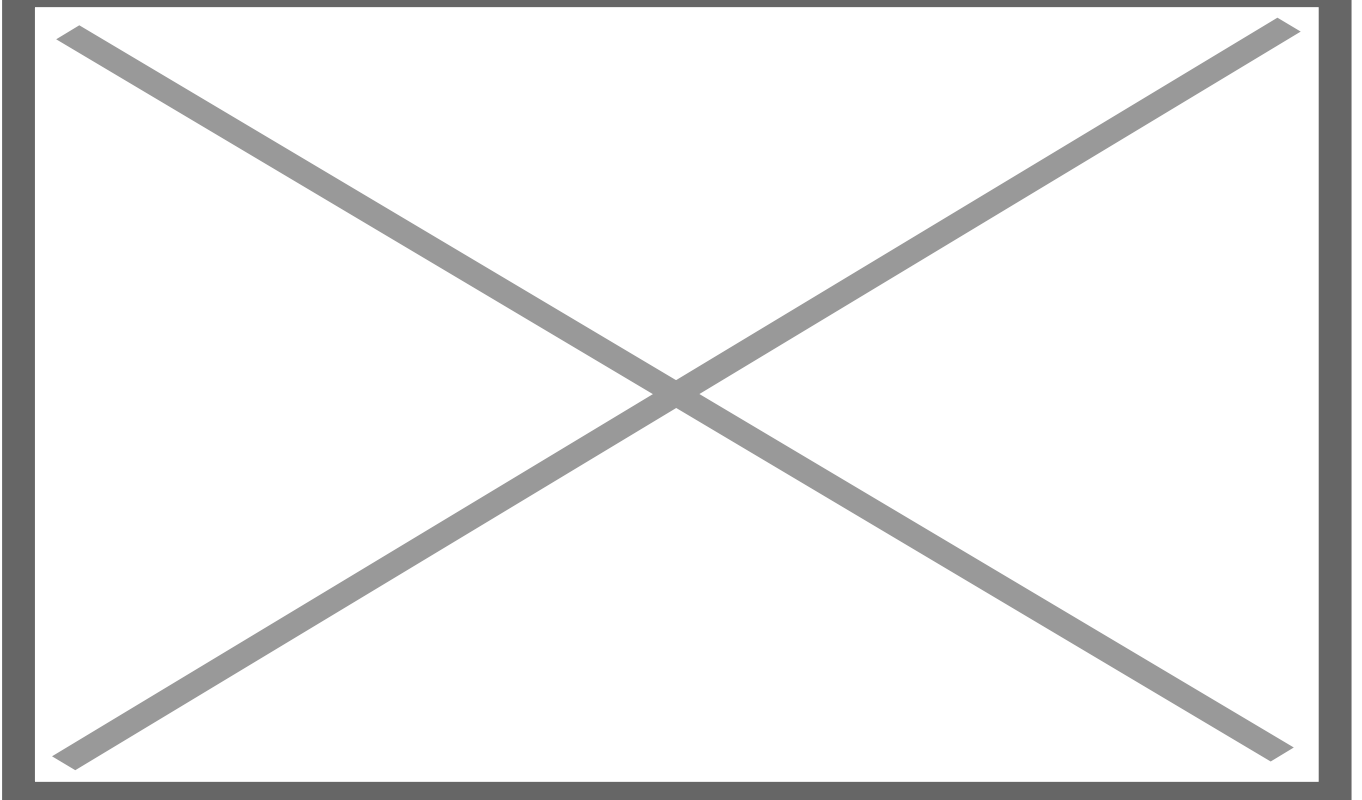


British oil giant Shell halts Red Sea shipments after U.S.-UK strikes on Yemen

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London, January 16 (RHC)-- UK-based energy giant Shell has suspended all shipments through the Red Sea indefinitely, amid heightened tensions in the Red Sea over Washington's unrelenting support for the Israeli genocidal war against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

The Wall Street Journal, citing people familiar with the decision, reported on Tuesday that Shell decided to suspend transit over fears of renewed escalating tensions involving Yemen's armed forces and US-led Western countries, Israel's main backers. An Israeli-bound tanker chartered by Shell was reportedly targeted by a drone in the Red Sea.

Britain's BP recently said that it would suspend the transit of oil through the Red Sea. Shipping giant Maersk earlier this month also noted it would divert vessels around Africa instead of using the Red Sea and Suez Canal for the foreseeable future.

Israeli shipping companies have already decided to reroute their vessels in fear of attacks by Yemeni forces.

The Yemeni forces have been targeting Israeli-linked vessels for several weeks. But the oil major's decision comes after Yemen warned that the American and British naval fleet will be a "legitimate" target for the country's armed forces following a wave of attack on Yemen in response to anti-Israeli strikes.

The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement on Monday that the U.S.-owned and -operated dry bulk ship Gibraltar Eagle had been struck with an anti-ship ballistic missile. U.S. forces also claimed to shoot down a Yemeni cruise missile targeting an American destroyer a day earlier.

Meanwhile, Qatar's prime minister said that liquefied natural gas shipments would be affected by tensions in the area, warning that strikes on Yemen risk worsening the crisis.

About 12 percent of global trade normally passes through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, the Red Sea's entrance between southwest Yemen and Djibouti. But anti-Israeli attacks by Yemeni forces have caused much shipping to be diverted thousands of kilometers around Africa.

Since the start of the Israeli military aggression on Gaza in early October 2023, the United States and its Western allies have been providing financial and logistical support to the occupying regime in its ceaseless bombardment campaign against Palestinians in the besieged territory.

As part of their support for Palestinians, Yemen's armed forces and popular Ansarullah resistance movement have over the past month targeted several ships owned by Israel or bound for ports in the occupied territories in the strategic Red Sea after multiple warnings.

Iran, Russia, Turkey and several other countries have sharply criticized the United States, the United Kingdom, and their allies for their recent acts of aggression against Yemen, saying these countries bear full responsibility for the violation of international law.

They have urged the international community to unequivocally condemn the US and UK military aggression against Yemen, stating that the attacks amount to a clear violation of international law and the UN Charter.

Yemenis have declared their open support for Palestine's struggle against the Israeli occupation since the regime launched a devastating war of aggression on Gaza on October 7th.

The relentless Israeli military campaign against Gaza has killed at least 24,280 people, most of them women and children. Another 60,800 individuals have been wounded.

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