

Reports say Israeli-owned ship targeted in suspected drone attack

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The Israeli-owned CMA CGM Symi is seen at port in Valencia, Spain, on October 22, 2023 [File: Manuel Hernandez Lafuente via AP]

Madrid, November 25 (RHC)-- A suspected drone attack has hit a container ship owned by an Israeli businessman in the Indian Ocean, according to a United States defence official.

The attack was likely carried out using an Iranian-made Shahed-136 drone on Friday, an unnamed US defence official told The Associated Press news agency on Saturday. Pan-Arab satellite channel Al

Mayadeen also reported that an Israeli ship had been targeted in the Indian Ocean.

The drone targeted the Malta-flagged, French-operated CMA CGM Symi vessel while in international waters. The ship reportedly suffered damage after the drone exploded, but no crew members were injured.

The U.S. official did not provide any evidence of an Iranian link to the attack, and said “we continue to monitor the situation closely.”

Maritime security company Ambrey said in the days before the attack, the ship’s tracking transmissions had stopped shortly after departing port in the United Arab Emirates. “The vessel was managed by an Israeli-affiliated company, which was assessed to be the reason why it was targeted,” Ambrey said.

According to the AP, the vessel’s crew had been behaving as though they believed the ship may face a threat as they had switched off its tracking system since Tuesday, after leaving Dubai’s Jebel Ali port. The ship had done the same earlier when travelling through the Red Sea past Yemen.

From Yemen, the Iran-aligned Houthis have launched several rounds of missile and drone attacks on southern Israel since Israel declared war on Gaza last month in the wake of a Hamas attack that killed more than 1,200 people, according to Israeli officials. So far, the Israeli bombardment has killed about 15,000 Palestinians, including more than 6,150 children, Palestinian officials say.

Earlier this week, the Houthis also took control of a ship on Yemen’s Red Sea coast which they said was Israeli. But Israel described it as a British-owned and Japanese-operated cargo vessel with no Israeli nationals on board.

If the attack on the Symi vessel came late on Thursday, it would mean it happened just hours before a truce between Israel and Hamas came into effect. Israel had also ramped up its attacks on Gaza in the hours preceding the truce, according to the United Nations.

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