

# U.S. Military Says Its Air Campaign Has Hit More Than 800 Targets in Yemen

*President Trump ordered a start to the strikes against the Houthis on March 15. Congressional officials say the campaign has cost well over \$1 billion.*

**By Edward Wong**  
**New York Times**

American forces have hit more than 800 targets in Yemen during an ongoing air campaign that began six weeks ago against the Houthi militia, the U.S. military said on Sunday.

The military said the targets of the strikes, called Operation Rough Rider, included “multiple command-and-control facilities, air defense systems, advanced weapons manufacturing facilities and advanced weapons storage locations.”

Among the arms and equipment in stockpiles struck by the Americans were antiship ballistic and cruise missiles and drones, the types of weapons that the Houthis have used against ships in the Red Sea, the military said. The details were outlined in an announcement issued by U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations and forces in the Middle East.

Congressional officials say the campaign has cost well over \$1 billion so far, based on closed-door briefings Pentagon officials gave to Congress early this month, just three weeks into the campaign. [The New York Times reported](#) in early April on the rapid rate of munitions used in the campaign, [a rate that has caused concern](#) among some strategic planners in the U.S. military.

The Houthis have been firing projectiles and launching drones at commercial and military ships in the Red Sea as a show of solidarity with the residents of Gaza and with Hamas, the militant group that controls it. They have been under assault by Israel since Hamas carried out a deadly strike in southern Israel in October 2023 and took hostages.

On March 15, President Trump ordered the U.S. military to begin a continual air campaign against the Houthis, after the Biden administration carried out some strikes. Until Sunday, the U.S. military had not publicly disclosed the number of targets struck in Operation Rough Rider.

The announcement made no mention of civilian casualties. Houthi officials say more than 100 civilians have been killed. The Central Command announcement said that the

American strikes had “killed hundreds of Houthi fighters and numerous Houthi leaders,” including senior officials who oversee missile and drone operations.

The military did not give the names of any Houthi leaders killed.

Years before the American assault, a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia tried to bomb the Houthis into submission in an air campaign that lasted nearly six years. The Saudis failed to achieve any goals while killing many civilians, sometimes with U.S.-made bombs.

Mr. Trump’s aides, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, have said the purpose of the current campaign is to deter the Houthis from trying to strike at commercial shipping in the Red Sea. The Central Command announcement repeated this rationale on Sunday, saying that Operation Rough Rider would “further disintegrate Houthi capabilities as long as they continue to impede freedom of navigation.”

Only a fraction of global commercial shipping goes through the Red Sea, however. And U.S. businesses rely much less on the shipping lanes there than European companies do.

The operational pace of the air campaign has been high. In the briefings to Congress early this month, Pentagon officials said they had used up \$200 million of munitions in just the first three weeks. Factoring in personnel and naval ship deployment costs, the campaign has cost U.S. taxpayers more than \$1 billion in the first month, congressional officials said.

U.S. military planners who map out potential war scenarios with China in the Asia-Pacific region, including over a hypothetical Chinese military invasion of Taiwan, have been concerned about the rate of munitions use.

Some of the same long-range precision weapons being used against the Houthis are considered critical by those officials for deterrence against China and, in the event of war, for use in the Pacific theater. The officials are worried that the U.S. military will need to draw on American stockpiles in the Asia-Pacific region if Central Command were to keep up a rapid operational tempo against the Houthis.

Some conservative foreign policy thinkers have counseled against the strikes in Yemen. The American Conservative is one publication that has [taken such a stand](#), arguing that the United States should avoid getting militarily entwined in the Middle East following decades of disastrous wars in the aftermath of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Discussions over the Yemen campaign have been a central topic of at least two group chats in which Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth took part on the encrypted messaging app Signal. He shared operational details of airstrikes on March 15 in both chats before the attacks took place. [The New York Times reported](#) on April 20 that one of the chat groups included Mr. Hegseth’s wife, his brother and his personal lawyer.

Mr. Hegseth created that group. The other known group in which Mr. Hegseth shared operational details was created by Mike Waltz, the White House national security adviser, who appears [to have accidentally added the top editor](#) of The Atlantic magazine to the chat.

Signal is a commercial private-messaging app, and security experts at the Pentagon warn against the use of it.

*Eric Schmitt contributed reporting.*