

Three Israeli-linked vessels attacked in a week



Israeli-linked vessels have found themselves in the crosshairs of Houthi rebels and increased security threats while sailing in the Red and Arabian Seas.

[Marcus Hand](#) | Nov 27, 2023

The last week has seen three Israeli-linked vessels attacked. In the first the car carrier Galaxy Leader owned by Ray Car Carriers and chartered by NYK was hijacked in the Red Sea with Houthi rebels claiming responsibility for the attack and releasing video of a military style operation to take control of the Bahamas-flagged ship.

The vessel remains under control of the Houthi militia and 25 crew comprising Filipino, Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Mexican nationals are being held hostage.

Related: [Update: Houthi rebels seize car carrier with 25 crew on board](#)

Isle of Man based Ray Car Carriers was founded by Abraham “Rami” Ungar, who is known as one of the richest men in Israel.

Israeli-linked vessels are being targeted by the Houthi militia in relation to the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

Related: [Dramatic video footage of car carrier hijack in Red Sea](#)

In recent days two further attacks have been reported against ships controlled by Ofer family companies Eastern Pacific Shipping (EPS) and Zodiac Maritime, although the latter is being portrayed as a pirate attack.

Overnight of 23/24 November the containership CMA CGM Sympy was reportedly hit by a Shaheed-136 drone in the Arabian Sea. “The drone exploded causing damage to the ship but not injuring any of its crew,” EOS Risk said in an incident alert. Singapore-headquartered EPS is ultimately controlled Israeli billionaire Idan Ofer.

In response to press queries EPS said: “Eastern Pacific Shipping (EPS) is aware of claims that a container ship under the company’s management was targeted in a possible security incident on Friday, 24 November, following departure from the UAE. The vessel in question is currently sailing as planned. All crew are safe and well.”

Meanwhile a Zodiac Maritime-managed tanker Central Park was hijacked was briefly hijacked in the Gulf of Aden on Sunday and is reported to be safe. According to reports the tanker was seized by armed individuals, the crew were able to retreat to the vessel’s citadel and make a distress call. Voice of America reported that the warship USS Mason responded to the distress call and it is now safe.

The vessel had 22 crew onboard comprising Turkish, Russian, Vietnamese, Bulgarian, Vietnamese, Filipino, Indian and Georgian nationals onboard according to Zodiac Maritime which characterised the attack as piracy.

Zodiac Maritime is part of Zodiac Group controlled by Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer.

No group has claimed responsibility for the hijacking although reports have linked it to Houthi rebels.

The three incidents see a heightened threat against Israel-linked ships, but, it does not extend to the wider international fleet. Commenting on the incident involving the CMA CGM Symi EOS Risk said: "This incident remains within the realms of the Iran – Israel, now Houthi conflict. Ships not affiliated to Israel are unlikely to be targeted with drones in this region."

However, given the highly international nature in which shipping operates the threat does extend to charterers and seafarers of such vessels regardless of their country of origin.