

# Russia-bound ships immune from Houthi attacks

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Suez Canal

Ships involved in the niche Far East-Russia trade appear to be unperturbed by Houthi attacks, as the vessels have enjoyed uneventful transits through the Red Sea.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Houthi leader Mohammed Ali Al-Houthi said ships crossing the Red Sea should broadcast the message “We have no relations with Israel” on their automatic identification systems (AIS).

Al-Houthi said one ship, whose name starts with “Xin”, had complied. Based on the vessel’s International Maritime Organization (IMO) number, which Al-Houthi provided, the ship is the 3,429 TEU Xin He Lu 1, which is believed to be operated by Yangpu Newnew Shipping, part of China-based Torgmoll group. Yangpu Newnew is among several opportunistic Chinese operators

that launched services to Russia after the latter was sanctioned over its invasion of Ukraine.

Xin He Lu 1 crossed the Suez Canal on 24 December 2023 and is now heading for Taicang, China. The ship had previously called at Istanbul, Turkey and the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk.

Another ship, 3,429 TEU Xin He Lu 2, which had previously called at Novorossiysk, is expected to transit the canal on 13 January.

Two other ships, 2,202 TEU Newnew Moon and 4,363 TEU Newnew Panda 1, crossed the Suez in December 2023 and are due to arrive in Shanghai today (11 January).

In mid-2023, Yangpu Newnew had launched services transiting the Northern Sea Route but the latter is not feasible in the winter season, resulting in the company redirecting the vessels to the Suez.

Recent reports claiming that COSCO Shipping Lines has followed its subsidiary OOCL in [pausing shipments to Israel](#) suggest that Chinese ship owners are avoiding business with Israel in exchange for safe passage through the Red Sea.

It is not only the Chinese-owned ships in the Russian trade that appear unharassed in the Red Sea.

FESCO-operated ships have also crossed the area without incident. The Russian state-owned operator's Moskva moved through the Suez on 19 December 2023 and went on to St Petersburg, Russia.

Russian operator Crystal Alliance Shipping Lines' two ships, 1,740 TEU Crystal St.Petersburg and 505 TEU Crystal Vladivostok, crossed the Suez in December 2023. Crystal St.Petersburg went on to Pakistan, India and Saudi Arabia. The ship is expected to arrive in St Petersburg on 27 January. Crystal Vladivostok has been shuttling between St Petersburg and Kaliningrad since late December 2023.

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