

Three dead in Houthi missile strike on bulker True Confidence



Three seafarers are confirmed to have died and at least four are injured, three critically, after a Houthi missile struck the bulk carrier True Confidence.

Marcus Hand | Mar 07, 2024

US Central Command (Centcom) said that around 11:30am local time on 6 March in Yemen the Houthis fired an anti-ship ballistic missile at the 50,448 dwt, Liberian-owned, bulker True Confidence.

“The missile struck the vessel, and the multinational crew reports three fatalities, at least four injuries, of which three are in critical condition, and significant damage to the ship,” US Centcom stated. The crew were forced to abandon ship into lifeboats.

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A statement from the True Confidence's owners and managers said: "It is with great sadness that owners and managers report that as a result of the missile attack, one Vietnamese and two Filipino crew members have lost their lives. A further two Filipinos crew members have suffered serious injuries." All crew were taken to Djibouti by the Indian warship with the injured crew transferred to a local hospital.

The vessel's crew comprised 20 - 15 Filipino, four Vietnamese, and one Indian, and also had three armed guards onboard.

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The True Confidence was attacked approximately 50 nautical miles SW of Aden and was sailing from China to Jeddah and Aqaba. The Barbados-flagged vessel is owned by True Confidence Shipping SA and operated by Third January Maritime Ltd of Piraeus, Greece.

Houthi Armed Forces spokesperson, Yahya Sare'e said in a statement released through its Telegram channel that the True Confidence was targeted after the ship's crew rejected warning messages from Yemeni Naval Forces.

The True Confidence's owners and managers said damaged vessel was "drifting well away from land and salvage arrangements are being made".

Attacks by the Houthi on merchant ships have become increasingly frequent and extended into the Gulf of Aden as well as the Southern Red Sea. US Centcom reported that the Houthis have fired five anti-ship ballistic missiles over a period of two days.

The MSC containership MSC Sky was struck by a missile on 4 March while transiting the Gulf of Aden damaging the vessel.

The missile strike on the True Confidence marks the first seafarer fatalities as a result of Houthi attacks on shipping in the region that started in mid-November 2023 with the hijacking of the car carrier Galaxy Leader.

Responding to news of the fatal attack International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez said: "It is deeply saddening to follow the horrific reports of the casualties on the merchant vessel True Confidence, following an attack on the ship southwest of Aden, in Yemen.

"I extend my deepest condolences and those of the entire IMO family to the families of those who have lost their lives, and our thoughts are with those who have been injured. Innocent seafarers should never become collateral victims."

The IMO Secretary-General said more was needed to be done to protect our seafarers. "I once again call for collective action to fortify the safety of those who serve at sea. International trade depends on international shipping and international shipping cannot go on without seafarers."

US Department of State spokesman Matthew Miller said in a press briefing, "So this incident, I think that was sadly inevitable. The Houthis have continued to launch these reckless attacks with no regard for the well being of innocent civilians who are transiting through the Red Sea, and now they have, unfortunately and tragically killed innocent civilians."

He said the US would continue to hold the Houthis accountable for their attacks on shipping and called on governments around the world to do the same.