

Salvage begins on burning tanker attacked in Red Sea

Vessel became symbol of Mideast shipping targets

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Monday, September 16, 2024



The still-burning oil tanker Sounion under tow in the Red Sea. (Photo: Eunavfor Aspides)

Salvage of the still-burning crude oil tanker attacked by Houthis in the Red Sea is underway as tug boats began towing operations Saturday.

The Greek-flagged MV Sounion was the target of a series of attacks Aug. 21 by Houthi militia based in Yemen. Armed Houthis filmed themselves boarding the vessel and rigging it with explosives, crippling the ship and spurring fears of an environmental disaster since the cargo of more than 1 million barrels of crude oil had reportedly begun leaking.

The crew had earlier been permitted to leave the ship.

The targeting of shipping by the Houthis since the start of the Israel-Hamas war Oct. 7 has led container and tanker lines to detour around the Red Sea, though substantial civilian traffic still transits the shipping lane.

The towing was secured by the European Union's Naval Force (Eunavfor), under Operation Aspides protecting Red Sea shipping.

"The salvage of the MV Sounion is a complex operation and consists of various phases. The tug boats have successfully connected to the vessel and the towing of the MV Sounion to a safe location is in progress," Eunavfor said in a post on X on Sunday.

No further details were disclosed.