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Shipping industry renews call for the Houthis to free crew of the *Galaxy Leader* car carrier

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Tomorrow marks the one-year anniversary of the seizure of the crew of the *Galaxy Leader* car carrier by Yemeni insurgents.

Ahead of this Guy Platten, secretary-general of the International Chamber of Shipping, speaking in Hong Kong, has stated: “It seems incredible that a year has passed, and the crew of the *Galaxy Leader* are still being held hostage. Innocent seafarers and families who have had their lives irrevocably changed by geopolitical forces wholly out of their control.”

The ICS has repeatedly stated that holding seafarers against their will is in direct contravention of international law and an assault on the fundamental principles of freedom of navigation.

The ship owned and managed by Ray Car Carriers, controlled by Israeli tycoon Abraham Rami Ungar, and operated by Japan’s Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK), was boarded by military personnel via a helicopter in the Red Sea.

The Bahamas-flagged 4,500 ceu ship was heading to India and had no cargo at the time of the hijacking. It has a crew of 25 made up of nationals from Bulgaria, Ukraine, the Philippines, Mexico, and Romania.

The car carrier has been moored at the port of Hodeidah in Yemen where it has become something of a tourist attraction over the past year.

“The seafarers, some of whom have been at sea for nearly two years, have been held against their will only limited contact with their families, friends, and loved ones. This is unconscionable and must not be allowed to endure. We are thinking of the seafarers and all of those affected at this time, and we continue to call for humanity to prevail and their immediate release,” Platten said.

Since the *Galaxy Leader* was abducted the Houthis have targeted more than 120 ships over the past year with drones and missiles.

A ship passing through the Red Sea 25 nautical miles west of Al-Mukha, Yemen, reported on Sunday that a missile had splashed into the sea nearby, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said.

It did not name the vessel or the owner but cited the relevant company security officer as saying the vessel and crew were safe and proceeding to the next port of call.