



Houthi rebels allege U.S. airstrike that hit Yemen prison holding African migrants kills at least 68

World Apr 28, 2025 11:47 AM EDT

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Yemen's Houthi rebels on Monday alleged a U.S. airstrike hit a prison holding African migrants, killing at least 68 people and wounding 47 others. The U.S. military did not acknowledge carrying out the strike.

The strike in Yemen's Saada governorate, a stronghold for the Houthis, is the latest incident in the country's decadelong war to see African migrants from Ethiopia and other nations killed while crossing the nation for a chance to work in neighboring Saudi Arabia.

READ MORE: Houthi rebels have shot down 7 Reaper drones as U.S. continues attack on Yemeni group

It also likely will renew questions from activists about the American campaign, known as "Operation Rough Rider," which has been targeting the rebels as the Trump administration negotiates with their main benefactor, Iran, over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program.

The U.S. military's Central Command, in a statement early Monday before news of the alleged strike broke, sought to defend its policy of offering no specific details of its extensive airstrike campaign. The strikes have drawn controversy in America over Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's use of the unclassified Signal messaging app to post sensitive details about the attacks.

"To preserve operational security, we have intentionally limited disclosing details of our ongoing or future operations," Central Command said. "We are very deliberate in our operational approach, but will not reveal specifics about what we've done or what we will do."

It did not immediately respond to questions from The Associated Press about the alleged strike in Saada.

Graphic footage shows aftermath of explosion

Graphic footage aired by the Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel showed what appeared to be dead bodies and others wounded at the site. The Houthi-run Interior Ministry said some 115 migrants had been detained at the site.

The rebels' Civil Defense organization said at least 68 people had been killed and 47 others wounded in the attack.

Footage from the s
debris fragments a

A voice, soft in the
medics sought to h

The International C

"It is imperative tha
it said.

We use cookies to enhance your web experience, measure our audience, and collect useful information that allows PBS and our partners to tailor our marketing efforts. Click [Cookie Settings](#) to set your preferences or view more in our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept Cookies

Reject Optional Cookies

Cookie Settings

ngly peppered by

shot rang out as

prison.

ng circumstances,"

African migrants caught in middle of Yemen's war

Ethiopians and other African migrants for years have landed in Yemen, braving the war-torn nation to try and reach Saudi Arabia for work. The Houthi rebels allegedly make tens of thousands of dollars a week smuggling migrants over the border.

Migrants from Ethiopia have found themselves detained, abused and even killed in Saudi Arabia and Yemen during the war. An Oct. 3, 2022, letter to the kingdom from the U.N. said its investigators "received concerning allegations of cross-border artillery shelling and small arms fire allegedly by Saudi security forces, causing the deaths of up to 430 and injuring 650 migrants."

Saudi Arabia has denied killing migrants.

Monday's alleged strike recalled a similar strike by a Saudi-led coalition battling the Houthis back in 2022 on the same compound, which caused a collapse killing 66 detainees and wounding 113 others, a United Nations report later said. The Houthis shot dead 16 detainees who fled after the strike and wounded another 50, the U.N. said. The Saudi-led coalition sought to justify the strike by saying the Houthis built and launched drones there, but the U.N. said it was known to be a detention facility.

"The coalition should have avoided any attack on that facility," the U.N. report added.

That 2022 attack was one of the deadliest single attacks in the yearslong war between the coalition and the Houthi rebels and came after the Houthis killed three people in a strike near Abu Dhabi's international airport.

US military says over 800 strikes conducted in campaign so far

Meanwhile, U.S. airstrikes overnight targeting Yemen's capital killed at least eight people, the Houthis said. The American military acknowledged carrying out over 800 individual strikes in their monthlong campaign.

The overnight statement from Central Command also said "Operation Rough Rider" had "killed hundreds of Houthi fighters and numerous Houthi leaders," including those associated with its missile and drone program. It did not identify any of those officials.

"We will continue to ratchet up the pressure until the objective is met, which remains the restoration of freedom of navigation and American deterrence in the region," it added.

The U.S. is targeting the Houthis because of the group's attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, a crucial global trade route, and on Israel. The Houthis are also the last militant group in Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" that is capable of regularly attacking Israel.

US discuss

The U.S. is conduct
Carl Vinson in the A

On April 18, an Ame
American campaig

"U.S. strikes destro
also to generate m

We use cookies to enhance your web experience, measure our audience, and collect useful information that allows PBS and our partners to tailor our marketing efforts. Click [Cookie Settings](#) to set your preferences or view more in our [Privacy Policy](#).

ea and the USS

own attack of the

t operations, but

Meanwhile, the Houthis have increasingly sought to control the flow of information from the territory they hold to the outside world. It issued a notice Sunday that all those holding Starlink satellite internet receivers should "quickly hand over" the devices to authorities.

"A field campaign will be implemented in coordination with the security authorities to arrest anyone who sells, trades, uses, operates, installs or possesses these prohibited terminals," the Houthis warned.

Starlink terminals have been crucial for Ukraine in fighting Russia's full-scale invasion and receivers also have been smuggled into Iran amid unrest there.

A free press is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy.

Support trusted journalism and civil dialogue.

Donate now →

By — **Jon Gambrell, Associated Press**

Jon Gambrell, the news director for the Gulf and Iran for The Associated Press, has reported from each of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iran and other locations across the world since joining the AP in 2006.

We use cookies to enhance your web experience, measure our audience, and collect useful information that allows PBS and our partners to tailor our marketing efforts. Click [Cookie Settings](#) to set your preferences or view more in our [Privacy Policy](#).