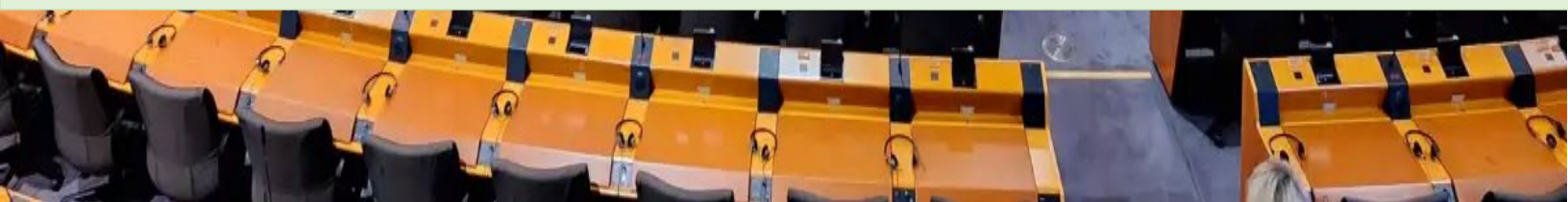# Security Council

Evaluating Maritime Security in the Red Sea Amid Escalating Proxy Conflicts

President: Yara Al Rousan

President's Letter

Honorable Delegates of the Security Council,

My name is Yara Al Rousan, a junior at the Modern Montessori School, and this year's President of the Security Council. I am very honored to sail on my 9th experience in my favorite committee with each and every one of you today. For me, the Security Council has never been just another committee; it is the heart of the United Nations, the very table where silence carries as much weight as screams, and where every choice we deliberate ripples across nations and lives.

What makes the Security Council special is its duality; as it is both the smallest and yet the most powerful body, both a space for fiery confrontation and delicate compromise. It is the council where the world looks to us for guidance. Every decision carries immense responsibility, shaping the actions of governments and influencing the course of global events, and that is exactly why I fell in love with it. The SC demands sharp thinking, but it also demands empathy. It requires strength, but equally patience. It is, to me, the purest test of what it means to be a delegate.

I hold this council close to my heart because it has taught me more than just procedure or politics, but in fact it has taught me the value of listening as much as speaking, of finding humanity in negotiation, and of standing firm when it matters the most. As your

President, I hope to guide you through intense debate and moments of doubt, but also to create a space full of excitement, growth, and leave you with loads of great memories! Delegates, come ready to defend your nations and discover your own potential. In SC there are no limitations for heated debates, so expect a council that is both disciplined and energetic, challenging yet encouraging, and truly unforgettable.

Thank you all, can't wait to see you in MontessoriMUN'25 Security Council!

Best wishes,

Yara Al Rousan

President of the Security Council

Terminology

- **Chokepoint:** A narrow maritime passage whose control or disruption can disproportionately affect global trade.

- **Maritime interdiction (escort operations):** Naval operations protecting merchant vessels and, where authorized, interdicting hostile actors at sea.

- **Asymmetric maritime warfare:** The use of low-cost unmanned systems, small boats, anti-ship missiles, and mines by irregular or proxy forces.

- **Proxy conflict:** When state actors (directly/indirectly) use non-state armed groups to advance strategic aims.

- **War-risk premium / hull & war insurance:** Surcharges or market reactions in marine insurance when a sea lane is judged unsafe.

- **UNCLOS / SOLAS:** the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (jurisdiction/ navigation rules) and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (safety standards).

- **Freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs):** Naval deployments asserting navigation rights and deterring interdiction.

- **Shadow fleet:** Older tankers and vessels operating under flags/arrangements that obscure ownership to evade sanctions; relevant to rerouting and energy trade.

Current situation

One of the most unstable maritime regions in the globe has been the Red Sea, especially the Bab El-Mandeb Strait as threats to shipping lines and energy security have recently increased dramatically due to ongoing instability in Yemen and because of the growth of proxy wars. The Houthi movement (affiliated with Iran) has attacked ships with drones, missiles, and even naval mines; causing trade to be redirected and shipping prices to rise globally. In retaliation, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have increased their naval patrols, and the USA began "Operation Prosperity Guardian" of international trade lines among allies for the purpose of their protection.

European states have added their own patrols, and China's long-term naval deployment at Djibouti highlights the worldwide value of these waters. At the same time, Horn of African (a region in Africa) nations (such as Djibouti, Eritrea, and Sudan) have been strategic actors as hosts for military bases or possible spoilers for other nations. All in all, the Red Sea has been increasing with instability, regional conflicts, and international rivalry.

Timeline of events

-   **1970s–1990s:** The Bab El-Mandeb Strait begins to gain international recognition as a strategic chokepoint after the Arab–Israeli conflicts and the Iran–Iraq War disrupted oil flows elsewhere.
    Piracy incidents and regional instability occasionally threatened traffic, but the route remained largely open.

-   **2000 (USS Cole bombing, Aden, Yemen):** Al-Qaeda suicide attack on the U.S. Navy destroyer underscored Yemen's vulnerability as a base for militant groups. Raised early warnings about non-state actors targeting vessels in the region.

-   **2008–2012 (Somali piracy peak):** The Gulf of Aden saw an explosion of piracy incidents, with Somali groups hijacking dozens of commercial ships.
    Promoted the launch of major international naval coalitions such as Combined Task Force 151 (under U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces) and the EU's Operation Atalanta, setting a precedent for multinational naval coordination in the Red Sea region.

-   **2015 (Yemen Civil War escalates):** Houthi rebels seized significant territory in Yemen, including coastal areas along the Red Sea.
    Beginning of Houthi use of missiles, mines, and drone boats against Saudi-led

coalition and civilian shipping, marking a shift from piracy to asymmetric warfare.

- **2018 (Saudi-led coalition vs. Houthis):** Houthi missile and drone attacks on Saudi tankers in the Red Sea forced a temporary suspension of Saudi oil shipments through Bab El-Mandeb.

  Exposed the chokepoint's fragility and sparked calls for reinforced naval escorts.

- **October 2023:** Houthis announced they would target vessels with ties to the US, and allies. From November 2023 onward, multiple commercial vessels were hijacked or attacked with drones and ballistic missiles.

- **December 2023 (Launch of Operation Prosperity Guardian):** U.S. and partner navies established a multinational coalition to protect merchant shipping in the Red Sea. It is marked as the largest coordinated naval presence in the region since the Somali piracy crisis.

- **2024 (Intensification of Houthi campaign):** Hundreds of missile and drone launches against merchant ships were reported. Many companies rerouted ships around the Cape of Good Hope, adding weeks to transit times and driving up global costs.

2025: Houthis strike the Dutch-flagged Minervagracht in the Gulf of Aden, injuring crew and prompting EU debate over designating the group as a terrorist organization; Houthis simultaneously end a truce with the U.S. and expand threats to international shipping.

Parties involved

- **Iran:** Supports the Houthi rebels in Yemen as part of its broader strategy to expand regional influence and counter Saudi Arabian dominance.

- **Houthi rebels (Yemen-based):** A key non-state actor responsible for launching direct attacks on commercial vessels and disrupting maritime trade routes in the Red Sea.

- **Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE):** Lead regional efforts to protect maritime trade and energy exports from Houthi threats. Both states have invested heavily in securing oil shipping routes and infrastructure, safeguarding their economic and security interests.

- **The United States of America (USA):** Oversees multinational maritime patrols through initiatives such as the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and Operation Prosperity Guardian, aiming to ensure freedom of navigation and deter hostile activity in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

- **The European Union (EU) and European Nations:** Heavily reliant on Red Sea trade routes for energy imports and exports. Disruptions pose significant economic risks.

- **China:** Dependent on uninterrupted maritime trade, China maintains a naval base in Djibouti, symbolizing its growing role in protecting Chinese commercial and strategic interests in the region.

- **Horn of Africa:** These nations experience both economic opportunity and political pressure due to their strategic location along key shipping lanes. Their territories often serve as hubs for military operations.
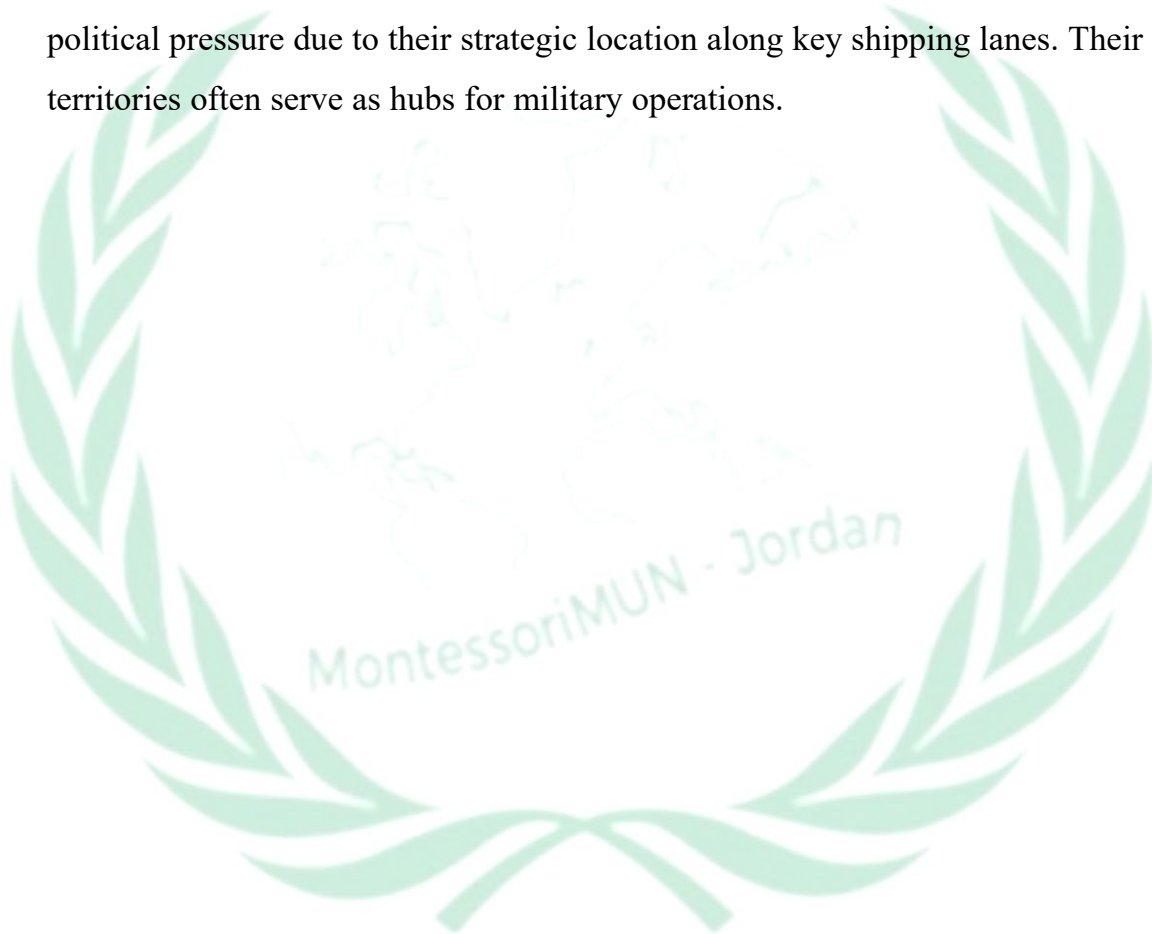
Suggested solutions

- Create and use Maritime Security Transit Corridors (MSTCs) to protect merchants and maintain trade relations in the region.

- Employ specialized personnel who are trained in defensive measures and protocol on ships passing through the region so that in the case something were to happen, it would be dealt with appropriately.

- Counter cybersecurity threats, such as GPS blocking.

- Negotiate deals with the involved parties and/or sign treaties so that maritime warfare is reduced to a minimum.

Guiding questions

- How can this issue be mitigated or minimized? Will this solution be long lasting?

- What factors are affecting this insecurity?

- To what extent should foreign countries be involved and what is the impact of such?

- What does each party gain or lose by this problem and instability, economically and politically?