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# 31 killed in U.S strikes on Yemen; Houthis hit back

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## Context

The first U.S. strikes against Yemen's Houthis since Donald Trump took office killed 31 people on Saturday evening, the rebels said, with the United States President warning "hell will rain down upon" the Iran-backed group if it did not stop attacking shipping.

The Houthis said they launched an attack on a U.S. carrier in the Red Sea on Sunday, hours after the deadly strikes



## Houthis

The Houthis, officially known as Ansar Allah (Partisans of God), are an **Iranian-backed Shiite Muslim military and political movement in Yemen.**

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Its members, who subscribe to the **minority Zaidi sect of Shiite Islam**, advocate **regional autonomy** for Zaidis in **northern Yemen**.

They are a **minority in Yemen**, which is predominantly Sunni Muslim, but they are a significant one, numbering in the hundreds of thousands and making up as much as **a third of the overall population**.

The group emerged in the 1990s and takes its name from the movement's late **founder, Hussein al-Houthi**.

The Houthi movement began as an effort **to maintain tribal autonomy in northern Yemen** and protest Western influence in the Middle East.

They have been fighting Yemen's Sunni-majority government since 2004.

The **Houthis took over the Yemeni capital Sanaa in September 2014** and seized control over much of north Yemen by 2016. Currently, Houthis controls approximately one third of Yemen's territory.

Today, the **Houthis seek a greater role in the Yemeni government and continue to advocate for Zaidi minority interests**.