

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 31, 2024

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to request that you redesignate the Houthis, also known as Ansarallah, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). Since the misguided revocation of the Houthis' FTO designation in 2021, the Houthis, backed by the Iranian regime, have only escalated their efforts to destabilize the Middle East. These actions include firing drones and missiles against Israel that have killed civilians, disrupting international shipping by targeting commercial vessels, directly attacking U.S. forces, and obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians in Yemen. While we recognize that your administration has listed the Houthis as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT), that designation is nowhere near as impactful as an FTO listing. Designating the Houthis as an FTO would impose meaningful costs on the Houthis and degrade their ability to commit acts of terrorism.

The Houthis, whose longstanding call to arms includes the phrase "death to America, death to Israel, curse on the Jews," are a key actor in Iran's terrorist proxy network. As the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, Tehran has fueled the conflict between Yemen's internationally-recognized government and the Houthis by providing the group with a wide array of advanced weapons, including ballistic, surface-to-air, and cruise missile components, unmanned aerial vehicles, and small arms. According to the Defense Intelligence Agency, the U.S. and its partners have interdicted at least 20 Iranian smuggling vessels destined for the Houthis since 2015. By providing the Houthis with advanced capabilities, the Iranian regime has allowed the group to expand its aggression well beyond Yemen's borders, including by repeatedly firing drones and missiles at Israel. These attacks include a drone strike on Tel Aviv in July 2024 using an Iranian-made drone that killed one person and wounded 10 others.

Following the October 7, 2023 Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, the Houthis began targeting commercial shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, posing a significant threat to the free flow of commerce in one of the world's most critical shipping lanes. These attacks have employed anti-ship ballistic missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and cruise missiles. These actions not only threaten the security of our partners in the region, but also disrupt the delivery of humanitarian aid to Yemen and other conflict areas, endanger global energy markets and supply chains, and increase shipping costs.

Additionally, following the U.S.-led coalition's launch of Operation Prosperity Guardian on December 18, 2023 to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, the Houthis have launched multiple attacks on U.S. military forces. Despite coalition strikes in Yemen intended to disrupt and degrade the capabilities of the Houthis, the group has been able to continue committing acts of terrorism. We should not wait for U.S. casualties to take further action to impose costs on the Houthis.

Relisting the Houthis as an FTO would make individuals or entities providing material support to the group liable for criminal prosecution and considered Tier III terrorists subject to sanctions and a travel ban, open up economic tools to target the Houthis' weapons procurement networks and manufacturing capabilities, provide a legal right of action to U.S. victims of Houthi terrorism, and ban Houthi members from obtaining a visa or entering the United States. Moreover, relisting the Houthis as an FTO would not inherently disrupt the delivery of international aid to Yemeni civilians.

We therefore urge you to immediately restore the designation of the Houthis as an FTO, which would enable the United States to better target the group's assets and financial support and hold the group accountable for committing terrorism against the United States, Israel, and our partners and allies throughout the region. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

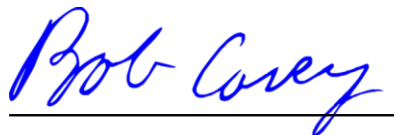
Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Rick Scott  
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator