

MSCIO MARITIME SECURITY NOTICE

MILITARY ACTIVITY

Military operations are ongoing in parts of the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, the North Arabian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz.

Where transit is necessary, vessels should maximize their distance from naval forces and conduct a dynamic risk assessment in accordance with BMP-MS guidance.

Vessels are strongly advised to exercise heightened caution while transiting these areas, maintain an active listening watch on VHF Channel 16, and report any suspicious activity to MSCIO and UKMTO.



UPDATE 04

This note provides an update of the current maritime security environment affecting commercial shipping, based on information promulgated by maritime security reporting centers, military authorities and reports received directly from Masters.

It is divided into two key transit regions that are directly and indirectly affected:

- The Strait of Hormuz.
- The Strait of Bab el-Mandeb.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ (SoH)

Arabian Gulf – Gulf of Oman – Northern Arabian Sea

Military operations keep ongoing in the region.

Transit through the Strait of Hormuz remains legally permissible; nevertheless, IRGC officials have announced the closure of the Strait and warned that vessels attempting to transit may face hostile action. In parallel, the Joint War Committee (JWC) has included the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb in its Listed Areas, triggering additional war-risk insurance requirements and potential premium surcharges for vessels transiting these waters.

It has been noted that traffic keeps significantly reduced, with negligible inbound/outbound traffic.

It has been observed big clustering of merchant vessels anchored or loitering in the following locations:

- Jebel Ali.
- Dubai.
- Khor Fakkan.
- Fujairah.
- Eastern part SOH TSS.
- Eastern part of GOO/Northern part of Arabian Sea.

Enhanced caution and vigilance are advised when transiting or loitering in these areas, and maintain safe separation distances.

Since 28th February, there have been five confirmed incidents related to merchant vessels as shown in “Annex A”. For all these events, no evidence exists for identifying the responsible party or a specific actor claiming responsibility for these incidents at this time although it is **HIGHLY LIKELY** to be attributed to Iranian hostile actions. In general, however, it does not seem that Iranian armed forces are currently focusing on attacks against MV trying to impose a closure to the SoH.

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The following has been reported by vessels in or transiting the area:

- GPS spoofing inside the Arabian Gulf, SoH and Gulf of Oman.
- VHF Ch16 broadcasts announcing the closure of the SoH.

It is advised for merchant vessels to:

- Consult any guidance issued by their Flag State or competent national authorities when considering transit.
- Perform enhanced risk assessment.
- Transit through the Strait of Hormuz is currently discouraged.
- Strictly adhere to BMP-MS.
- Monitor Ch16 VHF and be prepared to be hailed.
- Use AIS as per company policy.
- Whenever possible, increase distance from any naval forces to mitigate risk.
- Enhance radar and landmark procedures to support safe navigation, since GNSS are highly likely to be unreliable.

BAB EL-MANDEB (BeM)

Red Sea - Gulf of Aden

Current regional developments and open-source reporting indicate a potential resumption of hostile activity by Iranian-aligned Houthi forces against commercial shipping in the Red Sea and adjacent approaches although Houthi's supreme leader avoided referring to a resumption of attacks against commercial shipping. Houthi attacks against commercial shipping may remain suspended provided the Gaza ceasefire agreement continues to hold.

Currently, no attacks from Houthi forces have been reported in the maritime domain, however attacks against merchant vessels transiting the area cannot be ruled out for merchant vessels with affiliations to parties actively involved in the ongoing crisis.

Merchant vessels should expect:

- Higher exposure for vessels with certain affiliations.

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- Potential delays for vessels requesting close protection.

It is advised for merchant vessels to:

- Maintain navigation through international waters for as long as possible.
- Navigate closer to the African coastline where feasible.
- Maintain coordination with maritime security reporting centers, both MSCIO and UKMTO.
- Conduct a voyage-specific risk assessment and adhere to BMP-MS.
- Before transiting the area, take into consideration any direct or indirect affiliations between the vessel, its ownership, or its cargo and countries of interest.

Be aware the environment in the region is dynamic in the region and may change with limited notice. It is encouraged to maintain a high level of situational awareness and monitor official channels.

Vessels are advised to transit with caution, be prepared to implement BMP-MS, and report any suspicious activity or electronic interference to MSCIO and UKMTO:

- **MSCIO:** postmaster@mscio.eu / +33 (0) 298 220 220 / +33 (0) 298 220 170
- **UKMTO:** watchkeepers@ukmto.org / +44 (0) 2392 222060

MSCIO continues to closely monitor developments in the region.

More detailed information can be found in:

[MSCIO EU | Advisories](#)

ANNEX A

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OVERVIEW OF INCIDENTS

SOH REGION



<u>EVENT NR</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
5	02MAR	26-11 N 050-40E	An oil tanker alongside in Port Salman, Bahrain, was hit by unidentified projectiles, resulting in a fire. All crew members were safe. One shipyard worker was killed and two others were injured.
4	01MAR	25-34N 054-45E	An unidentified projectile detonated in close proximity to a bulk carrier, approximately 35 NM west of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. No damages to hull or crew reported.
3	01MAR	26-13N 055-55E	An oil tanker was struck by an unidentified projectile, approximately 17 NM northwest of Mina Saqr, United

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			Arab Emirates, causing a fire onboard. The fire was extinguished and the vessel continued its voyage.
2	01MAR	24-19N 058-20E	An oil tanker was hit by an unknown projectile, 45 NM north of Muscat, in the Gulf of Oman. One fatality was reported. The vessel is currently drifting approximately 60 NM off the coast of Muscat. Further information confirms the vessel was struck by an unmanned surface vessel (USV). The crew has been safely evacuated ashore.
1	01MAR	26-17N 056-15E	An oil tanker was struck while at anchor in the waiting area off Khasab, Oman. The impact resulted in a fire onboard and the crew was evacuated. Four crew members sustained injuries. The fire has since been extinguished



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