

MEMBER ALERT



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GUIDANCE ON TRANSITS THROUGH THE BAB EL MANDEB (BeM) AND ASSOCIATED WATERS ISSUED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM MARITIME TRADE OPERATIONS (UKMTO)

On August 9, 2017, UKMTO issued the attached notice providing guidance on ship transits through the Bab el Mandeb and associated waters. The importance of this notice is the distinction it makes between piracy threats and those arising from regional conflicts and terrorism.

Regional conflict threats

The risk of the conflict in Yemen spilling into the maritime domain continues to exist in the area to the North of the BeM and around the Hanish Islands. Although merchant vessels are not expected to be targeted by the forces fighting in Yemen, the risk of collateral damage to commercial shipping is present. This is greater in the hours of darkness (when attackers may be more likely to misidentify their targets) to the North of the Traffic Separation Scheme to the West of the Hanish Islands.

Terrorist threats

Recent attacks against merchant shipping in the Gulf of Aden and the BeM have highlighted the risks associated with transiting these waters. Daylight attacks by small boats were recently conducted against two tankers in the southern approaches to the BeM. The method of these attacks involved two or more skiffs approaching at high speed. In each case, one or more fired small arms and rocket propelled grenades, and carried explosives. In both attacks, the skiffs carrying explosives detonated at a distance from the target vessel, the presumed intent being to detonate the explosives against its hull. The assessment of the attacks against merchant vessels in the southern approaches to the BeM suggests that the exposure to the threat is greater in daylight hours. However, an attack during the hours of darkness cannot be ruled out.

For further information and updates, the UKMTO website can be found at:

<https://www.ukmto.org/indian-ocean>

Members are recommended to review the attached information and be guided accordingly. Your Managers also thank INTERCARGO for this update.

UKMTO NOTICE

RELEASED ON BEHALF OF UK GOVERNMENT'S DfT

UKMTO NOTICE 001/AUG/2017

1. Category: Notice

2. Description: GUIDANCE ON TRANSITS THROUGH THE BAB EL MANDEB AND ASSOCIATED WATERS

The following information from the UK government relates to transits through the Bab El Mandeb (BeM) and associated waters. It replaces previous guidance UKMTO Notice 001 July 2017 (which refers to CMF advice dated 16 July 2017) and UKMTO Notice 002 July 2017.

Recent attacks against merchant shipping in the Gulf of Aden and Bab El Mandeb have highlighted the risks associated with transiting these waters. Daylight attacks by small boats were conducted against two tankers in the southern approaches to the BeM. The method of these attacks has seen two or more skiffs approaching at high speed. In each case, one or more have fired small arms and Rocket Propelled Grenades and carried explosives. In both attacks, the skiffs carrying explosives detonated at a distance from the target vessel, but the presumed intent was to detonate the explosives against the hull. The assessment of the attacks against merchant vessels in the southern approaches to the BeM indicates that due to the low levels of sophistication, the exposure to the threat is greater in daylight hours. However, an attack during the hours of darkness cannot be excluded.

The risk of the conflict in Yemen spilling into the maritime domain also continues to exist in the area to the North of the BeM and around the Hanish Islands. Even though we do not expect merchant vessels to be targeted by the forces fighting in Yemen, the threat of collateral damage to commercial shipping is present and should not be ignored. This threat is assessed as greater in the hours of darkness (when attackers may be more likely to misidentify their targets) to the North of the Traffic Separation Scheme to the West of the Hanish Islands.

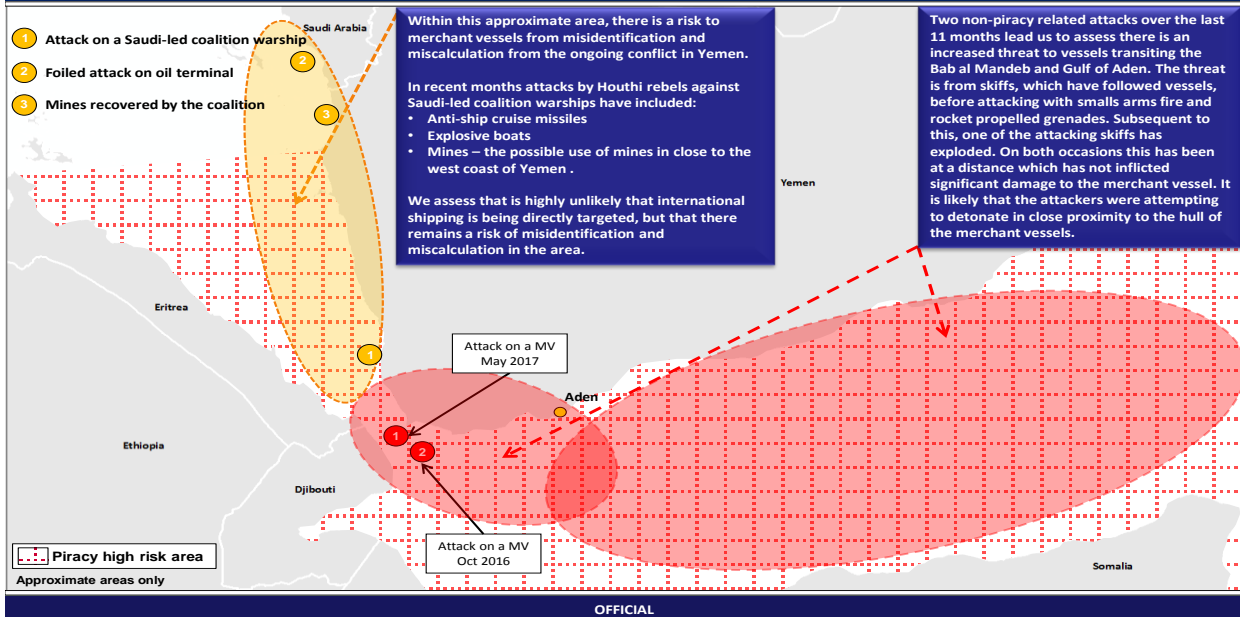
Therefore, operating in these waters requires thorough planning and the use of all available information. The maritime threat environment is dynamic; the risks will not remain constant for subsequent visits. It is essential therefore, that Masters, Ship Security Officers and Company Security Officers carry out detailed Risk Assessments for each voyage to the region and for each activity within the region.

All vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden and Bab El Mandeb should follow the guidance of BMP4 to the maximum extent possible and consider the use of embarked armed security. Recent attacks in 2017 serve to emphasise the importance of robustly following this guidance.

This information is aimed to help inform effective mitigating actions and has been developed through cooperation between Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and UKMTO. The use of BMP4, armed security, shifting transit times, or any other defensive measures remain the sole decision of the vessel operator based on its own dedicated risk assessment and the requirements of the flag state.

THE THREAT IN THE BAB EL MANDEB

ATTACKS IN THE BAB EL MANDEB



3. Cancel UKMTO Notice 001/JUL/2017 & UKMTO Notice 002/JUL/2017
4. Any queries regarding this UKMTO Notice ring 0044 2392 222060 only for further information.

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