

MEMBER ALERT



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MARITIME SECURITY SITUATION IN RED SEA AND INDIAN OCEAN AREA

Amidst numerous reported maritime security incidents and threats to merchant vessels in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, Members are reminded to take enhanced precautions if transiting through these areas. Members should reference Ambrey's Interactive Threat Insights hub that provide insightful overviews and in-depth analysis briefs on global maritime incidents, as well as indicators of geo-political issues that threaten to affect the maritime space.

Vessels with an Israeli affiliation or destination are additionally recommended to review the [Ambrey Threat Circular—27/11/2023](#) and [Ambrey Threat Circular—06/12/2023](#) which outline specific mitigation measures for Company Security Officers (CSOs).

Shipowners are also encouraged to inform military organisations in the region of their vessels' movements as this is essential to improve military situational awareness and their ability to respond. Vessels are recommended to exercise caution and increased vigilance in the risk area and implement security precautions as suggested by their flag State and [Best Management Practices 5 \(BMP5\)](#).

United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Voluntary Reporting

Any suspicious activity or objects should be reported immediately to both their flag State and the UKMTO at +44 239 222 2060. The UKMTO acts as the primary point of contact for merchant ships and their CSOs.

The UKMTO administers the Voluntary Reporting Scheme, under which merchant ships are encouraged to send a report prior to entering the high-risk area (HRA) as outlined in Maritime Security Chart Q6099 and subsequent regular reports or position and any irregular activity if applicable. UKMTO is able to communicate with ships and CSOs directly, in order to disseminate warnings and advisories of incidents within the region.

International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) and Coalition Task Force (CTF) Sentinel

The IMSC and CTF provide overwatch and reassurance through coalition naval forces maritime awareness calls to merchant vessels as they transit the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. It is recommended that vessels download and print [IMSC's April 2023 Bridge Reference Cards](#) available in English and Arabic.

European-led Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH)

EMASOH aims to provide enhanced surveillance capabilities in the area in order to establish maritime situational awareness. Supported by nine European countries, the mission is to "concretely provide Maritime Situation Awareness and Surveillance" in the Gulf and Arabian

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Sea. All ships entering the EMASOH Voluntary Reporting Area are invited to provide their vessel specific detailed information 48 hours prior to entering the area or as soon as possible and report suspicious behaviour or unusual events by clicking [here](#).

Recommendations for Company Security Officers (CSOs)

- Undertake a new ship- and voyage-specific threat risk assessment before entering any region where there has been an incident, or the threat has changed and, after the risk assessment, review the Ship's Security Plan.
- Advise and communicate with the ship's master about the recommended route, updated plans and requirements for group transits and national convoys.
- Participate in voluntary reporting schemes.
- Ensure Vessel Security Plans have up-to-date emergency contacts.

Recommendations for Vessel Security Officers (VSOs)

- Maintain a full and vigilant lookout and watch, monitor relevant VHF and other communication channels.
- Ensure that all alarms are tested satisfactorily, and fire-fighting equipment is ready for immediate use. Make sure the emergency fire pump is available if any maintenance is being undertaken.
- Be cognizant of the information broadcasting on the Automatic Identification System (AIS), for your vessel. Consider limiting to mandatory fields.
- Vessels should follow the advice of the military authorities. Keep emergency contact information readily available.
- For further guidance on protecting seafarers, the ship and cargo, and to facilitate threat and risk assessment and planning for voyages transiting areas where the threat of attack by pirates and armed robbers exists, VSOs can reference the [Global Counter Piracy Guidance for Companies Masters and Seafarers](#).

Recommendations to US Flagged Vessels

US flagged vessels are also advised to follow the guidance as set forth in the Maritime Security Communications with Industry (MSCI) advisory [2023-01 - Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Bab al Mandeb Strait, Red Sea, and Somali Basin-Threats to Commercial Vessels](#), and should contact US Fifth Fleet Battle Watch at +973-1785-3879, mcusnc.bwc@me.navy.mil and Fifth Fleet Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) at mcusnc.ncags_bw@me.navy.mil to report suspicious activities, threats, or where an incident has occurred.

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Red Sea Port Risk

While no specific threat is identified in Red Sea ports, Members are advised to consult their agents and Club correspondents in advance for local security requirements and services.

While in port is generally it is good practice to regularly check the ship's hull by undertaking a visual search from the top deck to the hull at the waterline for any objects that may be attached to the hull. If a vessel detects anything unusual the UKMTO and the flag State should be contacted immediately. All crew should be evacuated from the immediate area and mustered in a safe place. No attempt should be made to remove any attached objects.

Red Sea

CTF 151 in conjunction with the European Union Naval Force Somalia (EU NAVFOR), and together with independently deployed naval ships from nations such as China, CTF 151 helps to patrol the Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC). The MSTC is a two-way route connecting the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) and the Bab El Mandeb (BAM) Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) West of the Hanish Islands. This provides a recommended merchant traffic route around which naval forces can focus their presence and surveillance efforts.

Piracy

Members are reminded that the Club maintains a designated site with relevant guidance on piracy and armed robbery at:

<https://www.american-club.com/page/piracy>

The foregoing is a non-exhaustive list of resources and considerations for Members, which is subject to change given the dynamic situation in the affected region. Members should assess and reevaluate the above general guidance independently in light of the latest information available at the time and each Member's particular circumstances. Given the nature of the risks presented in this region, Members are strongly advised to consult with their hull and war risk underwriters for further guidance and coverage requirements. The above general guidance is for informational purposes only and is not intended as legal advice or as a waiver of any of the Association's rights or defences under its contracts of insurance, at law, or otherwise, all of which are expressly reserved.

Your Managers recommend that Members take note of this information and be guided accordingly. They also thank Ambrey for sharing their updates and recommendations to merchant ships.