

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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SHIP SECURITY ADVISORY No. 04-21

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Company Security Officers, Recognized Security Organizations

Subject: YEMEN / SOUTHERN RED SEA / BAB AL MANDEB STRAIT

Date: 3 March 2021

- References:**
- United States (US) Maritime Advisory [2020-009](#)
 - UKHO Maritime Security Charts [Q6099](#) and [Q6111](#)
 - [Maritime Global Security](#)
 - Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Safety in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea ([BMP5](#))
 - RMI Ship Security Advisory No. [07-18](#)

This Ship Security Advisory (SSA) supersedes SSA No. 08-20.

Issue

The civil war in Yemen continues to pose potential risk to Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)-flagged vessels transiting the southern Red Sea, Bab al Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden despite attempted cease-fire agreements between the Houthis and the Saudi Arabian-led Coalition. Threats may come from mines, missiles, rockets, projectiles, mines, small arms, unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned surface vessels, or waterborne improvised explosive devices. These threats continue to pose direct or collateral risk to RMI-flagged vessels operating in the region.

Additionally, piracy still poses a threat in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and Gulf of Oman. Specific case details are available at the Office of Naval Intelligence ([ONI](#)) and International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre ([IMB-PRC](#)).

Guidance

The international community continues maritime security operations within this region. Vessels are advised to review security assessments and plans, ensure AIS and LRIT is always transmitting (except in extraordinary circumstances, consistent with SOLAS), and monitor VHF Channel 16.

- Due to the ongoing conflict in Yemen, RMI-flagged vessels transiting the Southern Red Sea, Bal el Mandeb, or Gulf of Aden should operate under a heightened state of alert due to the potential for direct or collateral damage. These threats may come from a variety of

This SSA is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

different sources including, but not limited to, missiles, projectiles, mines, small arms, or waterborne improvised explosive devices.

- RMI-flagged vessels are advised to avoid entering or loitering near Yemen's Red Sea ports. Vessels at anchor, operating in restricted maneuvering environments, or proceeding at slow speeds should be especially vigilant.
- Conduct a pre-voyage risk assessment and incorporate appropriate protective measures into the Ship Security Plan.
- The Maritime Security Transit Corridor ([MSTC](#)) should be used by all merchant vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden and Bab al Mandeb (see RMI SSA [#07-18](#)).
- Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea ([BMP5](#)), and the [Maritime Global Security](#) website should be consulted prior to operating in the above listed geographic areas.
- The International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) has been established to maintain freedom of navigation, international law, and free flow of commerce to support stability and security of the maritime commons in the Persian/Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, and the Bab al Mandeb. The IMSC is currently supported by Albania, Australia, Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States. For further information and important guidance, please review the [IMSC brochure](#) and [IMSC Bridge Reference Cards](#).

Reporting

RMI-flagged vessels operating in these areas are advised to report any incidents or suspicious activities to US or Coalition Naval Vessels on VHF Channel 16. In addition:

- For the Red Sea, Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Oman, and the Persian Gulf: Simultaneously register with both the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Office (UKMTO) and the US Naval Forces Central Command Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NAVCENT NCAGS) Watch 24 hours prior to entering the Indian Ocean Voluntary Reporting Area by sending UKMTO and NAVCENT NCAGS, via a single e-mail, the Initial Report from Annex D of Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Safety in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea (BMP5).
- Include the estimated times of arrival at the Suez Canal, Bab al Mandeb Strait (BAM), and Strait of Hormuz (SoH) in Line 10 of the report and add a 'line 14' for comments as needed (e.g., speed restrictions or other constraints, anticipated time of entering/exiting the SoH Traffic Separation Scheme; an outline of the navigation plan for operating in the SoH and Persian Gulf, etc.).
- In the event of an incident or suspicious activity, call UKMTO or the US Fifth Fleet Battle Watch and activate the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) immediately.

- Answer all VHF calls professionally. DO NOT IGNORE.
- Utilize other reporting forms included in Annex D of BMP5 as necessary, including both UKMTO and NAVCENT NCAGS on each of these reports.
- All vessels should be aware that US and other coalition naval forces may conduct maritime awareness calls, queries, and approaches to ensure the safety of vessels transiting the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, and Arabian Sea. If an RMI-flagged vessel suspects it is being hailed from a source falsely claiming to be a US or coalition naval vessel, UKMTO and the US Fifth Fleet Battle Watch should be immediately informed.
- If hailed by non-coalition forces, provide vessel name, flag state, and affirm that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS). The master should immediately inform UKMTO and the US Fifth Fleet Battle Watch. Please also refer to the [IMSC brochure](#) and [IMSC Bridge Reference Cards](#) for additional guidance.
- If non-coalition forces seek to board an RMI-flagged vessel navigating these waters, the ship's Master should, if the safety of the ship and crew would not be compromised, decline permission to board, noting that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, and immediately inform UKMTO and the US Fifth Fleet Battle Watch.
- If non-coalition forces board an RMI-flagged vessel, the vessel should immediately contact UKMTO and the US Fifth Fleet Battle Watch. The crew should not forcibly resist the boarding party. Refraining from forcible resistance does not imply consent or agreement to boarding.
- Vessels operating in these areas are advised to establish contact with both UKMTO and the NAVCENT NCAGS Watch, and to include both on all update or incident report emails, as detailed above. By including both as addressees on each email, awareness will be enhanced without creating additional reporting burden.
- All security incidents and suspicious activities must be reported by RMI-flagged vessels to the RMI Maritime Administrator.

Contact Information

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- **US Fifth Fleet Battle Watch:** cusnc.bwc@me.navy.mil
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Supplemental information may also be found on the [RMI Maritime Security web page](#).