Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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SHIP SECURITY ADVISORY No. 03-22

To:	**Owners/Operators, Masters, Company Security Officers, Recognized Security Organizations**
Subject:	**YEMEN / SOUTHERN RED SEA / GULF OF ADEN / WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN**
Date:	**25 March 2022**

References:
- United States (US) Maritime Advisory 2022-003
- RMI Marine Notice 2-011-39
- 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)

This Ship Security Advisory (SSA) supersedes SSA No. 04-21.

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 Yemen's Houthi rebels and the Saudi Arabian-led Coalition. Threats may come from mines, missiles, rockets, projectiles, mines, small arms, unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), unmanned surface vessels, or waterborne improvised explosive devices (WBIEDs). These threats continue to pose direct or collateral risks to RMI-flagged vessels operating in the region.

Since seizing Yemen's capital in September 2014, the Houthis have used various unconventional methods to attack commercial vessels, including missiles, explosive laden WBIEDs, and floating mines in the Red Sea. Most attacks have targeted vessels with ties to Saudi Arabia, but this is not always the case. Recent incidents of serious concern in the Southern Red Sea include:

> **20 March 2022:** A missile and drone attack was launched on Jizan, Al-Shaqeeq, Dhahran al Janub, Khamis Mushait and Yanbu, Saudi Arabia. A Saudi-led coalition (SLC) spokesperson stated that ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as drones, were launched against Saudi Aramco facilities. The SLC announcement stated that the strikes targeted a water desalination plant in Al-Shaqeeq, an Aramco distribution station in Jizan, a power station in Dhahran al Janub, a gas facility in Khamis Mushait and an Aramco liquefied

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natural gas plant in Yanbu. The SLC claimed to have intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile and nine drones. A Houthi military spokesman claimed responsibility for the attacks. (*Source: Risk Intelligence*)

05 March 2022: The US Navy's Fifth Fleet reported that a missile had been fired into the Red Sea by Houthi rebels. A spokesperson for the US Navy said, "Although maritime traffic was not impacted in this instance, these actions are destabilizing and present a danger to all vessels transiting a critical international waterway." (*Source: Risk Intelligence*)

26 February 2022: Pro-Hadi government (Yemeni) naval forces claimed they destroyed two WBIEDs or so-called 'drone boats' north of Hodeida, Yemen in the southern Red Sea. (*Source: Risk Intelligence*)

17 February 2022: The Saudi-led coalition reportedly destroyed a WBIED off Hodeida, Yemen in the southern Red Sea. (*Source: Risk Intelligence*)

21 January 2022: According to media reports citing both Houthi and SLC sources, a large airstrike targeted various infrastructure installations in and around the port city of Hodeida, Yemen. A widespread disruption of electrical power and internet access has been reported as a result. (*Source: Risk Intelligence*)

02 January 2022: Houthi rebels attacked and seized the RWABEE, an Emerati-flagged cargo ship 23 nautical off Yemen's Ras Isa terminal. A spokesperson for the Saudi-led coalition fighting the rebels, said the RWABEE was carrying a Saudi field hospital back from the Yemeni island of Socotra to the Saudi port of Jizan when it was hijacked along with 11 seafarers. (*Source: Risk Intelligence*)

06 October 2021: Multiple airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition was reported in Northern Yemen near As Salif and Balif. According to Saudi media the strikes disrupted three WBIEDs that were "ready for imminent attack." (*Source: Risk Intelligence*)

20 September 2021: Two WBIEDs were reportedly destroyed by SLC forces off Saleef, Yemen. (*Source: Risk Intelligence*)

Although piracy incidents have significantly decreased in this region over the past few years, piracy, armed robbery, and terrorism still pose a serious threat in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa region. Updated incident details are available through the US Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB-PRC), and the International Maritime Organization's Global Integrated Shipping Information System (IMO GISIS).

<u>Guidance</u>

The international military community, including the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Bahrain, European Union Naval Forces (EU NAVFOR), and the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) continue maritime security operations within this region.

RMI-registered 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 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.

- 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) was 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 (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 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, as per All security incidents and suspicious activities must be reported by RMI-flagged vessels to the RMI Maritime Administrator, as per §12.5 of RMI Marine Notice 2-011-39.

Contact Information

- **IMSC:** M-BA-IMSC_-_MTO@me.navy.mil
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- **NAVCENT NCAGS:** cusnc.ncags_bw@me.navy.mil
  +973 1785 2983 or +973 1785 0084

- **UKMTO:** watchkeepers@ukmto.org
  +44 (0) 2392 222060
  UKMTO advisories and warnings www.ukmto.org

- **US Fifth Fleet Battle Watch:** cusnc.bwc@me.navy.mil
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- **RMI Maritime Administrator:** dutyofficer@register-iri.com
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Supplemental information, including security level settings, can be found on the RMI Maritime Security web page.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this advisory, please contact Maritime Security.