

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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SHIP SECURITY ADVISORY No. 04-23

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

Subject: YEMEN UPDATE

Date: 26 May 2023

This Ship Security Advisory (SSA) supersedes SSA No. 10-22.

1.0 SECURITY LEVEL LOWERED

1.1 The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) hereby lowers the required Ship Security Level for RMI-registered vessels within Yemeni territorial waters and ports to **Security Level 2**.

2.0 THREAT OVERVIEW

2.1 A ceasefire negotiated in April 2022 between the United Nations (UN) backed Government of Yemen (also known as the ‘Pro-Hadi’ government) and the Pro-Houthi Government (also known as ‘Ansar Allah’) temporarily resulted in increased stability across the Southern Red Sea / Bab el Mandeb region. However, the warring parties allowed the ceasefire agreement to lapse on 2 October 2022.

2.2 The end of the ceasefire has caused concern over the potential for an increased threat to merchant shipping in the region. Houthi forces have demonstrated capabilities to strike long and short distance maritime targets in the past. Until now, these attacks have historically targeted vessels with ties to the Saudi-led Coalition (SLC).

2.3 The Administrator has been made aware that Houthi forces are contacting merchant vessels with intentions of trading oil at Yemeni ports. The Houthi communications has been sent via email claiming to be from the “Yemen Coast Guards (YGC)” (ycg@yemen.net.ye). The email states that under the provisions of UNCLOS, and according to a decision made by the “Minister of Transport of the Republic of Yemen,” shipping activities and the transportation of oil and natural gas from Yemeni fields, terminals, export stations, or ports is prohibited. In addition, the message suggests that ships engaged in the transport of oil or natural gas from Yemeni fields, terminals, or ports will be “considered as non-innocent passage.”

2.4 Vessels operating within Yemeni waters may encounter Houthi militias during operations.

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is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

- 2.5 The lapse of the ceasefire raises the risk to commercial vessels operating within the Red Sea waters east of the Hanish and al Zubair archipelago and Saudi Red Sea ports south of Jeddah.
- 2.6 On 21 October 2022, a drone attack was reported on an RMI-registered vessel while loading cargo at Ash Shihr Terminal, Yemen, prompting the Administrator to require RMI-registered vessels to operate at Security Level 3 within Yemeni territorial waters and ports. As incidents have reduced, the required Ship Security Level for RMI-registered vessels is lowered back to Security Level 2, however guidance for vessels entering Yemeni ports and territorial waters remains in effect.

3.0 YEMEN PORT CLEARANCE

3.1 Ports Under Houthi Control

- .1 In 2016, at the request of the Government of Yemen, the UN established the [UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism \(UNVIM\)](#) to ensure compliance with [UN Security Council Resolution 2216 \(2015\)](#).
- .2 The UNVIM applies only to commercial imports and bilateral assistance to Yemeni ports outside the authority of the UN-backed Government of Yemen, including but not limited to Hodeida and Saleef.
- .3 Per the UNVIM, completed [UNVIM clearance requests](#) should be submitted no later than five days prior to the vessel's arrival at the outer limits of these ports and preferably before the departure of the vessel from its port of loading, depending on the availability of the vessel's documents. Any UNVIM clearance request received after this period will incur delays in the clearance process. The UNVIM inspection process is detailed on www.vimye.org.

3.2 Ports Under UN-backed Government of Yemen Control

- .1 All other clearance requests for Yemeni ports (Aden, Mukallah, etc.) under control of the UN-backed Government of Yemen are managed directly through the Yemen Ministry of Transport (YMoT) using the form: [Entry permission for commercial and relief ships to Yemeni ports](#).
- .2 The YMoT clearance form should be completed and sent by email to the Operations Unit of the Supreme Relief Committee at: yemen.transport@gmail.com no less than one week before the vessel's entry/arrival.

4.0 GUIDANCE

- 4.1 Due to the recent and ongoing warnings/threats made by Houthi forces under the guise of the "YCG," RMI-flagged vessels are encouraged to seriously assess the risk associated with entering Yemeni ports and territorial waters until further notice.

- 4.2 Vessel owners and operators must ensure that they are not dealing in property or interest in property of any blocked entity or individual.
- 4.3 Vessels engaged in the export of Yemeni oil and gas are considered to be particularly at risk of attack or harassment by Houthi forces.
- 4.4 The Maritime Security Transit Corridor ([MSTC](#)) should be used by all merchant vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden and the Bab al Mandeb.
- 4.5 *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.
- 4.6 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. For further information and important guidance, please review the [IMSC brochure](#) and [IMSC Bridge Reference Cards](#).
- 4.7 Operators are advised to review [OCIMF's Ship Security: Hull Vulnerability Study](#) and NATO ATP2: [NCAGS' Guide to Owners, Operators, Masters and Officers Edition A Version 1, Annex D to Chapter 4](#).

5.0 INCIDENT REPORTING CONTACT DETAILS

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- 5.1 Supplemental maritime security information, including security level settings, can be found on the [RMI Maritime Security web page](#). Please contact [Maritime Security](#) with any questions or concerns.