Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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SHIP SECURITY ADVISORY No. 03-25 (Rev. 2)

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

Subject: **THREATS TO SHIPPING IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ REGION**

Date: **25 June 2025**

This Ship Security Advisory (SSA) should be expeditiously circulated to Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)-flagged vessels that are operating or intend to operate in the:

- Arabian/Persian Gulf;

- Arabian Sea;

- Gulf of Oman (GoO); or

- Strait of Hormuz (SoH).

Heightened military activity and geopolitical tensions in this region continue to pose serious threats to commercial vessels. Vessels transiting these areas should maintain an increased level of vigilance.

1.0   Updates

1.1   As the ceasefire between Iran and Israel has held for the past 24-hours, and multiple United States (US)-affiliated ships have transited the SoH region without incident, the ship security level has now been lowered back to **Security Level 2** for all vessels transiting the SoH region.

1.2   This SSA should be read in conjunction with SSA No. 07-25.

2.0   Ship Security Levels

2.1   All RMI-flagged vessels) are required to operate at **Security Level 2** (or equivalent security measures while at port) while transiting the Arabian/Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, GoO, or SoH.

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is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

3.0   Threat and Risk Considerations

3.1   Seizures by Foreign Military Forces

.1   Commercial vessels transiting through the Arabian/Persian Gulf, GoO, and SoH have been boarded and detained/seized by foreign military forces over the past several years. Incidents have included:

2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
RMI-flagged tanker Madeira-flagged container ship	Panama-flagged tanker RMI-flagged tanker	Two Greek-flagged tankers	Panama-flagged tanker South Korea-flagged tanker Vietnam-flagged tanker	Dominica-flagged tanker Liberia-flagged tanker	United Kingdom (UK)-flagged tanker

.2   Foreign military forces have utilized small boats and/or helicopters during boarding/seizure operations and have attempted to force merchant vessels into their territorial waters. Harassment and aggressive maneuvers are applied in these types of scenarios.

3.2   Other Threat Types

.1   Threats involving mines (sea and limpet), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), water-borne improvised explosive devices, anti-ship missiles, and small arms fire should not be ruled out in this region, particularly in the Arabian Sea and GoO.

4.0   Coalition Forces

4.1   Refer to *Global Maritime Security Contacts* (MARSEC-210) for a list of naval coalition forces and contact information.

4.2   Vessels should be aware that the US and other coalition naval forces may conduct maritime awareness calls, queries, and approaches to ensure the safety of vessels transiting the Arabian/Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, GoO, and SoH. If a vessel suspects it is being hailed from a source falsely claiming to be a US or coalition naval vessel, immediately inform United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO).

4.3   Vessels operating in these areas are advised to establish contact with both UKMTO and US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) and to include both on all registration and position report emails (see §7.0 on Voluntary Reporting Schemes and *Global Maritime Security Contacts* (MARSEC-210) for contact details). By including both addresses on each email, awareness will be enhanced without creating an additional reporting burden.

5.0   Non-coalition Forces

5.1   If hailed by non-coalition forces, provide the vessel name and flag State, and affirm that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Master should immediately inform UKMTO. Refer to the bridge cards linked in §9.3 for additional guidance and standard responses.

5.2   If non-coalition forces seek to board a vessel or persuade it to change course/speed, the ship's Master should decline, noting that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS (refer to the bridge cards linked in §9.3), and immediately inform UKMTO.

5.3   If non-coalition forces board a vessel, the vessel should immediately contact US NAVCENT Battle Watch. The crew should not forcibly resist the boarding party. Refraining from forcible resistance does not imply consent or agreement to that boarding.

6.0   Risk Mitigation Measures

6.1   When operating in the SoH region vessels should:

.1   review and implement (as practicable) industry BMP guidelines;

.2   undertake a thorough pre-voyage threat and risk assessment;

.3   review the Ship Security Plan and amend, if necessary, after performing the pre-voyage security threat and risk assessment;

.4   navigate with maximum feasible distance from the coast of Iran;

.5   review the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) publications entitled *Loitering Munitions – the Threat to Merchant Ships* and *Ship Security: Hull Vulnerability Study*;

.6   review Chapter 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Shipping Centre's *ATP-02.1 Naval NCAGS Guide to Owners, Operators, Masters and Officers*;

.7   conduct security and fire drills/exercises prior to entering areas of increased risk;

.8   maintain a full and vigilant bridge watch for approaching craft;

.9   monitor relevant very high frequency and other communication channels; and

.10   follow the advice of coalition military authorities (UKMTO, European Union Naval Forces (EUNAVFOR), MSCIO, Combined Military Forces (CMF), the Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC), and US NAVCENT).

6.2   Vessels are not advised to use privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) north of Fujairah, United Arab Emirates.

6.3   In accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Regulation V/34-1, Masters shall not be prevented from using professional judgement to make decisions necessary for safety of life at sea and protection of the marine environment. Master's discretion includes the ability to switch off the vessel's Automatic Identification System (AIS) if it is thought that doing so will reduce threats to vessel safety or security (refer to §22 of International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.1106(29)).

7.0   Voluntary Reporting Schemes

7.1   Vessels transiting the UKMTO Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) are reminded to participate in the UKMTO voluntary reporting scheme:

.1   Register with and report daily to UKMTO (see Reporting Formats).

8.0   Reporting an Incident or Suspicious Activity

8.1   For suspicious activity, contact **UKMTO.**

8.2   For an **emergency incident,** immediately activate the Ship Security Alert System and contact **US NAVCENT Battle Watch** at: +973-1785-3879.

8.3   All security incidents must be reported to the RMI Maritime Administrator (the "Administrator") at: marsec@register-iri.com, dutyofficer@register-iri.com, and/or +1-571-441-1885.

9.0 Supplemental Information

9.1 The Maritime Global Security website offers industry issued best practices, including industry BMP guidelines, guidance to mariners by geographic region, and provides contact and subscription information for regional maritime security reporting centers. Industry BMP guidelines, and the Maritime Global Security website should be consulted prior to operating in the above-listed geographic areas.

9.2 International shipping industry associations have published transit advice to accompany the coordinates of the latest voluntary transit corridor advice for merchant ships navigating the SoH region (including the Arabian/Persian Gulf and GoO). Using this transit corridor may enable coalition forces to more effectively allocate resources to monitor and assist vessels in the SoH region.

9.3 The JMIC has published new Bridge Emergency Reference Cards for the Middle East region. The new bridge cards are available in printable and digital reading formats:

   .1   Printable Format – JMIC Bridge Emergency Reference Cards – Middle East

   .2   Digital Format – JMIC Bridge Emergency Reference Cards – Middle East

9.4 Refer also to the Administrator's Maritime Security webpage.