Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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SHIP SECURITY ADVISORY No. 03-24

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

Subject: **POSSIBLE RESURGENCE OF SOMALI-BASED PIRACY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION**

Date: **9 February 2024**

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

- Gulf of Aden (GoA);

- Arabian Sea; or

- Indian Ocean.

1.0. Threat and Risk

　1.1 Recent Incidents

　　.1 Activity indicative of Somali-based piracy has re-emerged in the Indian Ocean Region. Since November 2023, multiple merchant vessels and fishing dhows have been approached, fired-upon, and hijacked off the coast of Somalia. While these events were first attributed to local fishery disputes, it now appears that these hijacked dhows are being used as pirate motherships in the Indian Ocean (including the GoA and Arabian Sea).

　　.2 The following image depicts reported piracy incidents (hijackings, attempted boardings, and attacks) since November 2023:

Source: Risk Intelligence

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is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

.3 Recent piracy incidents have included the successful hijacking of at least twelve fishing dhows and small boats, the attempted boarding of three merchant vessels (one tanker and two bulk carriers), and the successful hijacking of one bulk carrier.[1] This is in addition to multiple reported sightings of suspected piratical activity or pirate action groups in the Indian Ocean Region.

.4 The Administrator suspects that the hijacked fishing dhows are being used as pirate motherships, enabling the pirates to travel long distances to carry out attacks. The one successful hijacking of a merchant vessel occurred approximately 600 nautical miles (nm) off the Somali coast in the Arabian Sea. Attempted boardings and other suspected piratical activity have been reported up to approximately 900nm off the Somali coast.

2.0 Risk Mitigation Considerations

2.1 Vessels should take the following precautions when operating in the Indian Ocean Region:

.1 Based on recent incidents and the reports of suspected pirate action groups in the region, it is recommended that ships remain <u>at least</u> **600nm** off the coast of Somalia (if practicable). This advice is subject to revision as trends develop.

.2 Review and implement industry BMP guidelines[2] (as practicable).

.3 Undertake a thorough pre-voyage threat and risk assessment.

.4 Review the Ship Security Plan and amend, if necessary, after performing the pre-voyage security threat and risk assessment.

.5 Conduct security drills/exercises prior to entering areas of increased risk.

.6 Maintain a full and vigilant bridge watch for small craft approaching.

2.2 In accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 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. The Master's discretion includes the ability to switch off the vessel's automatic identification system if it is believed that doing so will reduce threats to vessel safety or security (refer to §22 of International Maritime Organization Assembly Resolution A.1106(29)).

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[1] According to open sources, including the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Office (UKMTO), the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), and the International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC)

[2] *Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea* (BMP5).

3.0   Reporting

3.1   Vessels transiting the UKMTO VRA must participate in the BMP5 voluntary reporting scheme in accordance with §5.0 of RMI Marine Notice 2-011-39:

.1   Register with MSCHOA upon entry into the UKMTO VRA.

.2   Report vessel position daily to UKMTO using their position reporting form.

4.0   Reporting an Incident or Suspicious Activity

4.1   **Emergency incident:** immediately activate the Ship Security Alert System and contact US Navy Central Command (**US NAVCENT) Battle Watch** at +973-1785-3879.

4.2   **Suspicious activity:** contact United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (**UKMTO**) and the International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Centre (**IMB PRC)**

4.3   **All security incidents**: report them to the Administrator at: marsec@register-iri.com, dutyofficer@register-iri.com, and/or +1-571-441-1885.

4.4   Refer to Appendix A for relevant reporting center contacts and additional information.

5.0   Supplemental Information

5.1   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.

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

APPENDIX A: CONTACTS

Coalition Force	Contact Information	Comments
IMB PRC	imbkl@icc-ccs.org piracy@icc-ccs.org +60 3 2031 0014 (24/7 Help Line) +60 3 2078 5763 +60 3 2078 5769 (fax) MA 34199 (telex)	Established in 1992, IMB PRC offers a 24-hour, free service for shipmasters to report any piracy, armed robbery, or stowaway incidents.
MSCHOA	postmaster@mschoa.org jocwatchkeeper@mschoa.org +34 956 470 534 +34 661 442 365	MSCHOA is an initiative established by the European Union Naval Forces (EU NAVFOR) in close cooperation with the shipping industry. MSCHOA manages EU NAVFOR's voluntary registration scheme (VRS) for vessels transiting the UKMTO VRA.
UKMTO	watchkeepers@ukmto.org +44 (0) 2392 222060	A list of recent security incidents in the region can be found on the UKMTO website.
US NAVCENT NCAGS	**Primary**: +973-1785-0033 **Alternate**: m-ba-cusnc-ncags@us.navy.mil **Contingency**: +973-3940-4523 (mobile) **Emergency**: **(US NAVCENT Battle Watch)** +973-1785-3879 cusnc.bwc@me.navy.mil	US NAVCENT NCAGS provides a critical interface between the military and merchant shipping, providing information and guidance to assist masters and Company Security Officers with voyage threat and risk assessment.