

Republic of the Marshall Islands

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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SHIP SECURITY ADVISORY No. 04-25

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

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

Date: 9 January 2025

This Ship Security Advisory (SSA) should be circulated 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 Updates

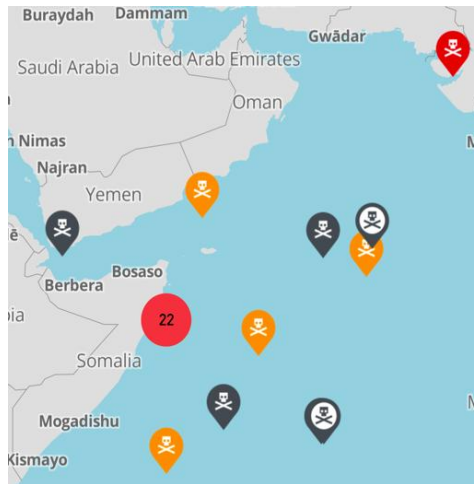
- 1.1 The Maritime Security Center Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) has been renamed Maritime Security Center Indian Ocean ([MSCIO](#)). This change, along with corresponding website and contact information, has been updated throughout this SSA and in related links.
- 1.2 Appendix A (Contact Information) has been removed. A consolidated list of relevant maritime security contacts is now available in *Global Maritime Security Contacts* ([MARSEC-210](#)).
- 1.3 During the [52nd SHADE \(Shared Awareness and Deconfliction\) Conference](#) in Bahrain, held from 16-17 December 2024, it was agreed that United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations ([UKMTO](#)) will now serve as the primary point of contact for merchant ship registration and reporting in the Red Sea Region (including the bodies of water listed above). The MSCIO will serve as a secondary point of contact in the region. This change is now reflected in §3.0.

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is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

2.0 Threat and Risk

2.1 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, attempts, boardings, and attacks) since November 2023:



Source: Risk Intelligence

- .3 Recent Somali-based piracy and armed robbery against ships incidents have included the successful hijacking of well over a dozen fishing dhows and small boats, the attempted boarding of three merchant vessels (one tanker and two bulk carriers), and the successful hijacking of two bulk carriers.¹ This is in addition to multiple reported sightings of suspected piratical activity or pirate action groups in the Indian Ocean Region.
- .4 The RMI Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) suspects that the hijacked fishing dhows are meant to be utilized 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.

¹ According to open sources, including the UKMTO, MSCIO, and the International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC).

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 at least 600nm off the coast of Somalia (if practicable). This advice is subject to revision as trends develop.
 - .2 Review and implement industry [BMP guidelines²](#) (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 thought that doing so will reduce threats to vessel safety or security (refer to §22 of International Maritime Organization Assembly Resolution [A.1106\(29\)](#)).

3.0 Reporting

- 3.1 Vessels transiting the UKMTO Voluntary Reporting Area must participate in the voluntary reporting scheme in accordance with §5.0 of RMI Marine Notice [2-011-39](#):
- .1 Register with and report to UKMTO (see [Reporting Formats](#)).
 - .2 To request information or assistance from European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR), follow the instructions published [here](#).

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

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 [UKMTO](#)) and the [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 *Global Maritime Security Contacts* ([MARSEC-210](#)).for a full list of relevant contacts.

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](#).