

# Republic of the Marshall Islands

## MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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### SHIP SECURITY ADVISORY No. 03-26 (Rev. 1)

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

**Subject: THREATS TO SHIPPING IN THE MIDDLE EAST REGION**

**Date: 14 May 2026**

This revised Ship Security Advisory (SSA) should be circulated to all Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)-flagged vessels operating in or intending to transit the Red Sea, Bab-el-Mandeb (BeM), Gulf of Aden (GoA), Middle East Gulf (MEG), Gulf of Oman (GoO), Strait of Hormuz (SoH), or Northern Arabian Sea.

## 1.0 UPDATES

### 1.1 General

- .1 This revision incorporates updated threat assessments and operational reporting through 6 May 2026 and revises the required Ship Security Levels (SSLs) and area-specific guidance accordingly. Key changes are summarized below.

### 1.2 SSL Changes

- .1 SSL 3 (SEVERE/CRITICAL areas) - MEG, GoO, SoH, and Northern Arabian Sea.
- .2 SSL 2 (MODERATE/SUBSTANTIAL areas) - Red Sea, BeM, and GoA.

### 1.3 Threat Level Changes

The RMI Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) has adjusted its assessed threat levels using the Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC) Threat Scale:

JMIC Threat Scale: ● Low | ● Moderate | ● Substantial | ● Severe | ● Critical |

- .1 Northern Red Sea CRITICAL → MODERATE
- .2 Southern Red Sea CRITICAL → SUBSTANTIAL

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is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.

.3	BeM	CRITICAL → SUBSTANTIAL
.4	GoA	HIGH → SUBSTANTIAL
.5	Northern Arabian Sea	HIGH → SEVERE
.6	SoH, GoO, MEG	CRITICAL (no change)

#### 1.4 Other Changes

- .1 Added §5.1.2 (Houthi formal entry into the conflict, 28 March 2026).
- .2 Updated §4.5 (SoH) with current naval mine threat assessment and Iranian-declared traffic separation scheme (TSS) guidance.
- .3 Updated §2.0 with current operating picture (37 confirmed incidents since 1 March 2026; 25 April 2026 Shinas Port engagement; SoH transit data through 29 April 2026).
- .4 Referenced JMIC Advisory Note 003-26 (2 May 2026) in §4.5 for United States (US) Navy humanitarian-cargo blockade vetting procedures.
- .5 Updated §2.0 and §4.5 to address the US-led Project Freedom egress initiative (announced 3 May 2026; commenced 4 May 2026), JMIC Advisory Note 004-26, and Iran’s continued targeting of commercial shipping during the initial phase of the operation.
- .6 Updated §2.0 and §4.5 to reflect the 5 May 2026 missile attack on CMA CGM SAN ANTONIO during eastbound SoH transit and the subsequent US announcement of a temporary pause to Project Freedom escort operations. The US naval blockade of Iranian ports remains in full force and effect.

## 2.0 SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 28 February 2026, the US and Israel launched coordinated military strikes against Iran (“Operation EPIC FURY”), targeting Iranian military infrastructure, missile systems, naval assets, and nuclear-related sites across multiple locations.

In response, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN) forces have conducted a sustained anti-shipping campaign employing the full range of asymmetric maritime tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs): missile and one-way drone strikes, gunfire and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) engagements, naval mine emplacement in the SoH, Very High Frequency (VHF) intimidation, and forcible boardings. Targeting has been largely indiscriminate with respect to flag State and beneficial ownership.

US Navy Central Command (NAVCENT) has established a Maritime Warning Zone (MWZ) encompassing the MEG, GoO, Northern Arabian Sea, and SoH, advising that it cannot guarantee the safety of merchant vessels within the designated area.

The kinetic phase concluded on or about 7 April 2026 following 38 days of combat operations, with a two-week ceasefire entering into force 8 April and extended indefinitely on 21 April. On 13 April, US Central Command (CENTCOM) imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports. Tehran reciprocally closed the SoH to non-Iranian shipping on 18 April, producing a “dual blockade” condition. On 3 May, the US announced Project Freedom to facilitate the egress of stranded commercial vessels from the SoH (operations commenced 4 May).

On 5 May, the Maltese-flagged container vessel CMA CGM SAN ANTONIO was struck by a missile during eastbound SoH transit, sustaining damage and crew casualties; later the same day, the US announced a temporary pause of Project Freedom escort operations pending continued diplomatic engagement with Iran. The naval blockade of Iranian ports remains in full force and effect, and Iranian targeting of commercial shipping continued throughout the initial phase of the operation.

The Administrator’s assessed threat levels vary by sub-area and are detailed in §4.0 below. In light of these developments, the Administrator has raised the required SSL for all RMI-flagged vessels throughout the MWZ and adjacent High Threat Areas<sup>1</sup> (HTAs). Full details are provided in §3.0 below.

### **3.0 SSLs**

#### **3.1 Required SSLs**

3.1.1 RMI-flagged vessels are required to operate at SSL 3 (or equivalent security measures at port facilities, while still allowing safe cargo operations) in the following SEVERE/CRITICAL-threat areas (flag requirement):

- .1 MEG
- .2 GoO
- .3 SoH
- .4 Northern Arabian Sea.

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<sup>1</sup> Adjacent HTAs include the GoA and the Red Sea.

3.1.2 RMI-flagged vessels are required to operate at SSL 2 (or equivalent security measures at port facilities, while still allowing for cargo operations if assessed safe) in the following MODERATE/SUBSTANTIAL-threat areas (flag requirement):

- .1 Red Sea;
- .2 BeM; and
- .3 GoA.

### 3.2 War Risk Insurance

The Joint War Committee (JWC) has expanded its Listed Areas ([JWLA-033](#))<sup>2</sup> to include the MEG, GoO, and adjacent waters, triggering voyage declarations and Additional Premium (AP) negotiations under most Hull War policies. Insurance market conditions reflect a tightening underwriting posture consistent with a CRITICAL threat environment. Cover reportedly remains available but may act as a practical transit gating factor. Operators should engage their Protection & Indemnity (P&I) clubs and war risk underwriters well in advance of any planned transit of the MWZ or adjacent HTAs.

## 4.0 REGIONAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

The threat assessments below are organized by maritime area. Threat levels in the Middle East maritime region range from MODERATE to CRITICAL across the sub-areas covered herein. Area-specific assessments reflect the predominant threat actors, assessed activity levels, and current transit conditions for each maritime zone.

### 4.1 Red Sea

The Red Sea is addressed below in two sectors due to the differential threat profile between the Northern Red Sea (NRS) and the Southern Red Sea (SRS).

#### .1 NRS

**THREAT LEVEL: MODERATE**

The NRS, defined broadly as the area north of approximately 20°N, presents a measurably lower threat profile than the SRS. Houthi targeting activity has historically concentrated within range of the group's coastal intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and short-to-medium-range strike systems, which are positioned along the Yemeni western seaboard. Although Houthi anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) systems retain a maximum range envelope estimated at approximately 1,700 km, sufficient to engage targets across the entire Red Sea, sustained targeting at NRS distances is materially constrained by sensor reach, terminal-phase guidance fidelity, and the loss of organic ISR cueing as range increases.

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<sup>2</sup> JWLA-033 applicable as of 3 March 2026.

Vessel traffic in the NRS is more dispersed than in the SRS approach corridor, which complicates predictive targeting and reduces the volume of high-value targeting opportunities. Coalition naval presence under EUNAVFOR Operation ASPIDES and Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) continues to provide deterrent posture, with the densest force concentration positioned to cover the SRS and BeM approaches. Notwithstanding the lower observed activity, the NRS remains within demonstrated Houthi long-range strike envelopes, and a residual threat from Iranian-directed surrogate activity persists. Vessels are advised to maintain heightened watch, comply with all United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) and JMIC reporting requirements, and avoid predictable transit profiles.

## **.2 Southern Red Sea**

**THREAT LEVEL: SUBSTANTIAL**

The SRS, defined broadly as the area south of approximately 20°N, concentrates the highest density of recorded Houthi attacks in the Middle East maritime region and constitutes the most persistently active threat environment for commercial shipping in the Red Sea theater.

Houthi forces have employed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), ASBMs, anti-ship cruise missiles, naval mines, small boat swarms, and unmanned surface vessels (USVs) against commercial and naval vessels in this area. The group has demonstrated persistent intent and residual capability to threaten all transiting vessels, with enhanced focus on vessels meeting Israeli or US targeting criteria. The potential for misidentification or miscalculation resulting in attacks against non-targeted vessels remains assessed as HIGH.

Coalition forces advise that the threat of attack on merchant ships is greatest between latitudes 12°N and 16°N (the Houthi HTA). The most recent reported attacks have been concentrated within this corridor. Vessels should note that Houthi ASBM capability provides a strike range of approximately 1,700 km, which encompasses the entirety of the Red Sea.

## **4.2 BeM**

**THREAT LEVEL: SUBSTANTIAL**

The BeM constitutes the principal maritime chokepoint between the Red Sea and GoA and represents one of the highest-risk transit corridors globally. The narrow navigable width significantly restricts evasive maneuvering capability and concentrates vessels within range of Houthi shore-based and airborne weapons systems.

Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) interference has been documented in the vicinity of the BeM, creating navigational hazards that compound the security threat by degrading positional accuracy and increasing the risk of misidentification and grounding. Vessels transiting the BeM should maintain heightened electronic navigation vigilance and cross-reference Global Positioning System (GPS) with radar ranges and visual bearings.

Masquerade operations by Houthi forces, including false claims of authority over the strait and deceptive VHF communications mimicking legitimate naval or coast guard traffic, have been documented in this area. Mariners who receive instructions from unverified authorities to alter course or reduce speed should not comply and should report immediately to UKMTO.

#### 4.3 GoA

**THREAT LEVEL: SUBSTANTIAL**

In the event Houthi forces resume attacks against merchant shipping; the GoA is assessed to revert to a high-threat operating environment. Houthi forces have demonstrated a layered ISR and targeting capability extending up to 315 km from the Yemeni coast, integrating coastal surveillance radar, naval combatants, patrol craft, repurposed merchant vessels, and airborne ISR platforms. UAV and USV employment are assessed as the most probable threat vectors within the GoA, with residual risk posed by ASBM engagements. Vessels are advised to maintain the maximum practicable distance from the Yemeni littoral throughout GoA transits.

Coalition naval forces, including EU NAVFOR Operation ASPIDES and CMF under Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN, sustain a presence within the GoA and provide escort coordination. Vessels should report to UKMTO prior to GoA entry and comply with all JMIC and coalition guidance in force at the time of transit.

#### 4.4 Northern Arabian Sea

**THREAT LEVEL: SEVERE**

The Northern Arabian Sea represents an extension of the Houthi threat vector and has been the site of occasional ASBM and UAV attacks against vessels at greater standoff distances from the Yemeni coast. While attack frequency is lower than in the SRS and GoA, the risk is non-negligible given demonstrated Houthi long-range strike capability. Vessels should not assume reduced threat exposure simply by virtue of transiting further from the Yemeni littoral.

In the context of the ongoing US-Israel-Iran military conflict, the Northern Arabian Sea also presents an elevated collateral damage risk from military operations conducted by NAVCENT and Iranian naval assets. Vessels should maintain significant standoff distance from all naval vessels and avoid areas with known concentrated military activity.

NAVCENT advises a minimum distance of 30 nautical miles (NM) from US naval vessels operating in the region. Vessels should not approach or interact with US or coalition warships without prior coordination via established communications channels.

#### 4.5 SoH

**THREAT LEVEL: CRITICAL**

The SoH represents the highest-consequence transit environment in the Middle East maritime region. The SoH is the principal entry and egress point for the MEG and constitutes a strategic chokepoint through which approximately 20% of global oil supply transits under normal conditions. Commercial transits have effectively ceased as of early March 2026, with Automatic Identification System (AIS) data confirming a near-complete collapse of commercial traffic since the commencement of hostilities on 28 February 2026.

IRGCN and Iranian regular naval forces (IRIN) are the primary threat actors in this area. Iran has historically employed and has a demonstrated doctrine for asymmetric naval operations within the SoH, including fast attack craft (FAC) harassment, vessel seizure by armed boarding party (helicopter and small boat), limpet mine attachment, and VHF deception operations. Under current conflict conditions, these capabilities are assessed as actively postured and ready for employment.

The naval mine threat in the SoH is assessed as highly credible. CENTCOM has reported destruction of an estimated 97% of Iran's pre-war naval mine inventory. However, a small percentage remains unaccounted for and US officials have publicly stated that Iran laid "more than a dozen mines" in the strait. The US Navy is conducting ongoing mine-clearance operations, and Pentagon estimates indicate up to six months may be required to fully clear the SoH from cessation of hostilities. Reports of mines in and adjacent to the Iranian-declared TSS persist, including IRGC claims that the southern portion of the TSS is unsafe due to mine emplacement. Mariners are advised to treat the entire SoH and its approaches as a potential mine-threat environment, to maintain heightened watch for floating or moored objects, and to avoid drifting or anchoring in unsurveyed waters.

GNSS warfare originating from Iranian facilities near Bandar Abbas has been documented, with more than 600 GNSS disruption events per 24-hour period recorded in the SoH operational area since 28 February 2026. Effects include positional offsets, AIS anomalies, and intermittent signal degradation affecting several hundred maritime assets. Mariners must cross-check GPS against radar and visual bearings, validate the Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) with secondary navigation systems, and increase bridge manning in constrained waters.

Iran has unilaterally established a TSS within the SoH and is conducting verification of vessels seeking transit. The Iranian-declared TSS does not relieve Masters of obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) or the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS), and compliance with Iranian verification procedures is not endorsed by the Administrator. Vessels electing to comply with Iranian directives in extremis (e.g., to preserve crew safety) should report all interactions to UKMTO and NAVCENT Battle Watch contemporaneously. Iranian VHF deception and masquerade operations remain assessed as ongoing; deceptive hails purporting to issue routing instructions should be treated with extreme caution.

The US Navy continues to enforce a comprehensive blockade of Iranian ports and coastal areas, applicable to all vessel traffic regardless of flag. A limited exception exists for vessels carrying bulk food, medical supplies, or other goods essential for the survival of the civilian population destined for discharge in Iran. Operators of such vessels must submit an advance vetting request to Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) in accordance with the procedures published in [JMIC Advisory Note 003-26](#) (2 May 2026). Approval to transit the blockade does not authorize onload of any cargo other than stores and fuel for the return voyage; vessels remain subject to boarding, inspection, and continuous monitoring for compliance.

On 3 May 2026, the US announced Project Freedom, a US-led initiative to facilitate the egress of stranded, neutrally flagged commercial vessels from the SoH. Operations commenced on 4 May 2026. The procedural framework is set out in [JMIC Advisory Note 004-26](#) (issued 4 May 2026 in coordination with NAVCENT/NCAGS). Project Freedom is, by its publicly stated terms, narrowly scoped to the egress of stranded vessels and does not constitute a resumption of routine two-way commercial transit. US force contributions have been characterized in open-source reporting as guided-missile destroyers, more than 100 land and sea-based aircraft, multi-domain unmanned platforms, and approximately 15,000 service members; senior US officials have publicly confirmed that the mission does *not* include US Navy surface escort of commercial vessels. NCAGS engagement with industry indicates that any escort function is airborne overwatch oriented toward disruption, rather than surface point-defense protection of individual hulls. The naval blockade of Iranian ports remains in force and is not modified by Project Freedom.

Iran has publicly characterized Project Freedom as a ceasefire violation and has indicated that interference will be treated as such. Tehran continues to assert control over the SoH and to demand that transiting vessels comply with IRGC-approved routing and pay a regime-imposed transit fee. Iranian targeting of commercial shipping resumed concurrent with the announcement, with attacks against a humanitarian-cargo vessel and a commercial tanker on 3 May 2026 (small-arms and unmanned aerial system, respectively) and IRGCN VHF coercion of vessels at the Mina Saqr and Ras al Khaimah anchorages on the same evening. It is assessed with high confidence that the operational environment carries an elevated risk of escalation, miscalculation, and kinetic exchange during the initial phase of Project Freedom, which compounds the residual mine and asymmetric threats addressed elsewhere in this section. The regional threat level remains CRITICAL.

On 5 May 2026, the Maltese-flagged container vessel CMA CGM SAN ANTONIO (eastbound transit, AIS dark) was struck by a missile while transiting the SoH, sustaining hull damage and severe crew injuries. Injured personnel were evacuated and provided medical care. UKMTO initially characterized the projectile as unidentified. Subsequent open-source reporting cited US official assessments consistent with a cruise missile attack.

Later the same day, the US announced a pause of Project Freedom escort operations, citing reported diplomatic progress with Tehran and described requests from Pakistan and other regional partners. Pentagon leadership had separately characterized the operation as having met its initial objectives, with a limited number of vessels (including the bulk carrier ALLIANCE FAIRFAX) reportedly egressing the SoH under the framework prior to the pause.

The US naval blockade of Iranian ports remains in full force and effect. The pause is not characterized as termination, and operations may resume subject to the trajectory of US-Iran negotiations. It is assessed with high confidence that Iranian intent and residual capability to interdict commercial traffic in the SoH have not materially abated. The CMA CGM SAN ANTONIO incident occurred within hours of senior US official statements characterizing Project Freedom as a success. This demonstrates the limited deterrent value of standoff overwatch in the absence of direct surface escort. Any resumption of Project Freedom should be expected to occur under contested operational conditions.

The announcement of Project Freedom is not a basis for the resumption of routine commercial transit through the SoH. Decisions to transit, hold, divert, or seek egress under the Project Freedom framework remain commercial decisions for owners and operators, supported by a vessel-specific, voyage-specific risk assessment conducted per Best Management Practices for Maritime Security ([BMP-MS](#)).

Operators of RMI-flagged vessels considering transit or seeking egress must provide advance notification to the Administrator of intended transit windows together with vessel particulars (name and International Maritime Organization (IMO) number) so that flag State liaison with NCAGS, JMIC, and UKMTO may be supported.

Operators are also advised against transiting the SoH until the operational situation stabilizes and authoritative advisory feeds (UKMTO, JMIC, NAVCENT) indicate conditions are conducive to safe passage. The Administrator will issue an updated SSA when sufficient conditions of stability have been established to permit static written guidance for sound transit decisions.

#### 4.6 GoO

**THREAT LEVEL: CRITICAL**

The GoO is the primary maritime approach and departure area for the SoH and has been the site of multiple Iranian vessel seizures and harassment incidents since 2019. Documented incidents have involved vessels flagged with the RMI, Panama, South Korea, Vietnam, Dominica, Liberia, Madeira, Greece, and the UK.

Under current conditions, the IRGCN fast attack craft and IRIN surface forces are assessed as actively operating throughout the GoO in support of the broader Iranian military response. The threat of vessel seizure, particularly targeting US or Israel-affiliated vessels, is assessed at its highest level since 2020. Iranian forces have utilized small boats and helicopters during boarding operations and have attempted to force merchant vessels into Iranian territorial waters.

#### 4.7 MEG

**THREAT LEVEL: CRITICAL**

The MEG presents an elevated threat environment characterized by Iranian military activity, proximity to Iranian territorial waters and naval bases, and ongoing kinetic military operations. The confined geography significantly limits evasive routing options and creates multiple areas of vessel vulnerability, particularly at anchor off major ports and at the northern approaches to the SoH.

Recent incidents confirm that the Iranian threat extends beyond mobile vessel targeting to encompass fixed regional energy infrastructure, including offshore platforms and port facilities. Operators of vessels conducting port calls within the MEG should incorporate this threat dimension into their pre-voyage security risk assessment.

## 5.0 THREAT ACTORS AND ASSESSED CAPABILITIES

### 5.1 Houthi Forces (Ansar Allah)

5.1.1 Houthi forces maintain demonstrated capability and intent to target commercial merchant shipping. Their targeting criteria principally encompass vessels with links to Israel or the US, as defined below. However, the persistent risk of miscalculation and misidentification means that all vessels transiting Houthi threat areas face residual risk regardless of affiliation.

5.1.2 On 28 March 2026, Houthi forces formally entered the US-Israel-Iran conflict with missile strikes against Israeli territory. Notwithstanding this declared involvement, no Houthi attacks against commercial vessels have been reported since the commencement of hostilities on 28 February 2026, and Houthi messaging continues without associated operational indicators in the maritime domain. The group is assessed to retain both the willingness and capability to resume targeting at short notice, particularly against vessels with US or Israeli affiliation. Reporting also indicates that the Houthis may be considering imposition of a toll regime in the BeM as an act of solidarity with Iran. The parameters of any such regime are unknown, and its implementation would materially elevate the threat to commercial traffic in the strait.

- .1 **Targeting Criteria:** Houthi forces will most likely target vessels with links to Israel or the US, including vessel owners, operators, managers, charterers, cargo, and sister ships that have recently called at an Israeli port. The UK has become a decreased Houthi target, though the risk of targeting still persists.
- .2 **Fleet-wide Assessment:** The Houthi definition of “Israeli ship” may include any vessel within an owner’s wider fleet, including sister vessels, time-chartered assets, and vessels under common beneficial ownership or technical management that have called at an Israeli port. Operators are advised to conduct a thorough audit of all Israeli port calls fleet-wide, including those of affiliated vessels.
- .3 **Demonstrated Capabilities:** Small boat operations (small arms, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs)); helicopter assault and vessel seizure; UAV/loitering munition attacks; USV employment; cruise and ASBMs (ASBM, range up to ~1,700 km); and naval mines.

### 5.2 Iranian Military Forces

Notwithstanding the ceasefire, the IRIN and IRGCN retain residual capacity for asymmetric action against commercial and naval targets in the SoH, GoO, and MEG. Specific TTPs and threat vectors are detailed by sub-area in §4.0 above.

## **6.0 RISK MITIGATION MEASURES**

### **6.1 Pre-voyage Measures**

Prior to operating in or transiting any area addressed in this SSA, operators and Masters should:

- .1 conduct a thorough audit of all Israeli port calls within the owner's wider fleet, including those made by sister vessels, time-chartered assets, and vessels under common beneficial ownership, technical management, and Classification Society affiliation;
- .2 review the vessel's digital footprint, including AIS transmission logs, vessel-tracking platforms, and public maritime databases, to assess any linkage that could be interpreted as grounds for targeting;
- .3 reinforce cybersecurity and information control protocols, particularly concerning voyage routing, port call data, and ownership/management affiliations available through open-source intelligence methods;
- .4 review and amend the Ship Security Plan as necessary following a pre-voyage security threat and risk assessment calibrated to current conditions;
- .5 review industry BMP-MS and Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF) publications on loitering munitions and hull vulnerability;
- .6 review Chapter 4 of the NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) ATP-02.1 NAVCENT NCAGS prior to entry into the MWZ; and
- .7 engage war risk underwriters and P&I clubs to confirm coverage validity, applicable exclusions, and any voyage declaration requirements prior to transit.

### **6.2 Underway Measures**

- .1 Navigate with maximum feasible distance from the coasts of Yemen and Iran.
- .2 Maintain a full and vigilant bridge watch. Assign specific lookout responsibility for coordinated multi-platform attacks involving small boats, RPGs, UAVs, USVs, and missiles.
- .3 Conduct security and fire drills prior to entering areas of increased risk, including specific drills for coordinated multi-platform attack scenarios.
- .4 Monitor VHF Channel 16 and other designated communications channels. Do not comply with instructions from unverified authorities to alter course or reduce speed.
- .5 If operating with AIS switched off in the Houthi HTA, provide position reports to UKMTO, NAVCENT NCAGS, and coalition forces every two hours. AIS deactivation may be authorized at the Master's discretion in accordance with the

International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, Regulation V/34-1 and IMO Assembly [Resolution A.1106\(29\)](#) if it is assessed that doing so will reduce threats to vessel safety or security.

- .6 Maintain awareness of the degraded GNSS environment. Cross-check GPS position against radar ranges and visual bearings. Validate the Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) with secondary navigation systems. Increase bridge manning when operating in constrained or high-traffic waters.
- .7 Treat any suspected unexploded ordnance (UXO) aboard as extremely hazardous. Do not attempt to move, disarm, or jettison. Refer to BMP-MS (page 44) for post-incident procedures.
- .8 Maintain a minimum distance of 30 NM from US naval vessels. Do not approach or interact with coalition warships without prior coordination.

### **6.3 Private Armed Security Considerations**

- .1 For vessels employing privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP), rules for the use of force should be carefully reviewed. A clear operational distinction must be maintained between suspected non-state attackers employing small arms and military forces employing more advanced weapons systems.
- .2 Engagement with military forces is not advised and may result in significant escalation. Security teams should have contingency plans for USV deterrence, crew evacuation, and anti-boarding procedures.
- .3 PCASPs are not advised for operations north of Fujairah, UAE, in the MEG, GoO, and SoH region.

## **7.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

### **7.1 UKMTO**

- .1 UKMTO is the primary point of contact for merchant vessels operating in the UKMTO Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA). Vessels should register with UKMTO prior to entry into the VRA and submit position reports in accordance with the UKMTO Voluntary Reporting Scheme. UKMTO contact information and reporting formats are available [here](#).
- .2 For suspicious activity, including approaching small boats, drones, or unusual activity near the vessel, contact UKMTO immediately on VHF Channel 16 or by telephone/email as listed in Global Maritime Security Contacts ([MARSEC-210](#)).

## 7.2 JMIC

7.2.1 JMIC has been established to fuse unclassified information from multiple military stakeholders into timely maritime threat messaging. JMIC products (including [Advisory Notes](#) and [Bridge Emergency Reference Cards](#)) are posted on the [UKMTO website](#).

7.2.2 Bridge Emergency Reference Cards for the Middle East region are available in the following formats:

.1 [Printable Format](#)

.2 [Digital Format](#)

## 7.3 NAVCENT Battle Watch

.1 For emergency incidents, or in the event of boarding by non-coalition forces, immediately activate the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) and contact NAVCENT Battle Watch at +973-1785-3879.

.2 Vessels operating in the MEG, GoO, or SoH are advised to establish contact with both UKMTO and NAVCENT NCAGS and to include both on all registration and position report communications (see [MARSEC-210](#) for contact details).

## 7.4 Response to Non-coalition Force Communications

.1 If hailed by a vessel claiming to be the “Yemeni Navy” or other non-coalition force and instructed to change speed or alter course: ignore the call and continue passage if safe to do so; contact coalition warships on VHF Channel 16; report the incident to UKMTO.

.2 If hailed by Iranian naval forces or vessels claiming to exercise authority in the SoH, GoO, or MEG: provide vessel name and flag State; affirm that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with international law as reflected in UNCLOS; immediately contact UKMTO and NAVCENT Battle Watch.

.3 If non-coalition forces seek to board the vessel or compel it to change course or speed: decline; state that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with UNCLOS; immediately contact NAVCENT Battle Watch (+973-1785-3879). Crew should not forcibly resist boarding parties. Refraining from forcible resistance does not imply consent to the boarding.

.4 Coalition forces may conduct maritime awareness calls and approaches to vessels. If a vessel suspects it is being hailed by a source falsely claiming to be a US or coalition naval vessel, immediately contact UKMTO.

## 8.0 VOLUNTARY REPORTING SCHEME (VRS)

### 8.1 UKMTO VRS – Mandatory Participation

Vessels transiting the UKMTO VRA are required to participate in the UKMTO VRS. Operators and Masters should register with UKMTO and submit regular position reports in accordance with published reporting formats. UKMTO registration and reporting formats are available at <https://www.ukmto.org/reporting-formats>.

### 8.2 NAVCENT NCAGS Dual Registration

Vessels operating in the MEG, GoO, or SoH are additionally advised to register with NAVCENT NCAGS and to include NCAGS contact details on all position report communications alongside UKMTO (refer to [MARSEC-210](#)).

## 9.0 REPORTING AN INCIDENT OR SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

### 9.1 Mandatory Reporting to the Administrator

All security incidents and suspicious activity must be reported to the Administrator: [marsec@register-iri.com](mailto:marsec@register-iri.com) and [dutyofficer@register-iri.com](mailto:dutyofficer@register-iri.com); or 1-571-441-1885.

## 10.0 SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Resource	Description / Link
<a href="#">UKMTO</a>	Position reporting, VRS, JMIC products, incident reporting
<a href="#">JMIC Products</a>	Advisory Notes, threat assessments, <a href="#">Bridge Cards</a>
Maritime Security Centre Indian Ocean ( <a href="#">MSCIO</a> ) / EUNAVFOR ASPIDES	EUNAVFOR Op ASPIDES updates; <a href="#">escort request</a>
<a href="#">BMP-MS</a>	Industry Best Management Practice for maritime security
<a href="#">Maritime Global Security</a>	Industry BMP guidelines, MISTO, geographic guidance
<a href="#">MARSEC-210</a>	RMI Global Maritime Security Contacts
<a href="#">MARSEC Webpage</a>	Administrator advisories, SSA Index, bridge cards, supplemental resources
OCIMF: <a href="#">Loitering Munitions</a>	Threat guidance on loitering munitions for merchant ships
OCIMF: <a href="#">Hull Vulnerability Study</a>	Hull vulnerability and limpet mine countermeasures
ATP-02.1 <a href="#">NCAGS Guide</a>	NATO Shipping Centre guidance for owners, operators, and masters
Industry <a href="#">Transit Advice</a> (SRS/GoA)	Interim industry transit advice for SRS, BeM, GoA

Queries regarding this SSA should be sent to [marsec@register-iri.com](mailto:marsec@register-iri.com).