

Evolving operational and security risks



Due to the rapidly evolving security situation and increased threat to merchant vessels in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean area, the Club would like to provide Members with current advice and support.

The Houthis, carrying out these attacks, have regularly been expanding the geographical range of their attacks. The associated threats to vessels include, but are not limited to –

- Anti-ship missiles
- Anti-ship ballistic missiles
- Waterborne improvised explosive devices (WBIED)
- Drones
- Sea mines

The [Club's valued correspondent partners](#) in the region are available 24/7 to provide advice on current concerns related to security. Members may feel free to contact correspondents best suited to their vessels' area of operation/transit.

As has been the Club's stance, since the commencement of this conflict, we continue to be guided by the various industry guidance as well as any prevailing requirements / recommendations of the relevant Flag States.

In the event that Members vessels are or intend to operate / transit these areas, the Club would recommend the following points are considered:

- Complete a thorough ship and voyage specific 'security' risk assessment.
- Members may look to engage the services of commercial security consultants. Such consultants provide guidance and assisting with ship/voyage specific security risk assessments and advisories.
- If considering employing Armed Guards, then reference needs to be made to the [IMO Guidance on Private Armed Security](#) and the [Guidance on the use of armed guards](#) as issued by the Club.
- Liaise with the respective Flag States of the applicable vessels to check if the Flag State has issued any specific advisory / recommendation.
- Pay particular attention to details such as cargo interests, charterers, ownership of the vessel (current as well as past), trading history etc. to ascertain if any of these may make their vessel a potential target.
- Develop Contingency and Emergency Response Plans for the threat of, or an actual attack. Ensure that the ships crew and shore management are familiar with these plans. Review the security situation frequently and amend the plans, as required.
- As part of the ship and voyage risk assessment –
 - Consider which parts of the vessel may be safer for the crew to take refuge. Areas protected by more than one bulkhead may offer more protection from explosive projectiles.
 - If any hazardous cargo can be shielded. For example, on container vessels by placing empty containers in outer rows.

We would recommend Members to keep themselves fully updated of all relevant industry guidance on the matter, including but not limited to –

- IMO Updates - [Conflict-related attacks in the Red Sea area - general information.](#)
- [Interim Industry Transit Advice, Southern Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden](#)
- [23 December 2023 Combined Maritime Forces \(CMF\) Guidance for Shipping Navigating the Southern Red Sea \(SRS\)](#)
- [IMSC Bridge Reference Cards](#)
- [Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa \(MSCHOA\)](#)
- [European Union Naval Force Operation \(EUNAVFOR\)](#)
- [Combined Maritime Forces // CTF 153](#)
- [Maritime Global Security](#)
- [BMP 5](#)
- [IMB Piracy & Armed Robbery Map 2023](#)
- [Loitering Munitions – The Threat to Merchant Ships \(ocimf.org\)](#)
- [JMIC - Bridge Emergency Reference Cards – Middle East](#)

Members and their shipboard crew should be fully aware of all reporting requirements (whether related to transit or reporting suspicious activities, an actual incident etc) –

- [UKMTO reporting scheme](#)
- [Reporting Guidance for vessels transiting the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden \(GOO\), Arabian Sea \(AG\), Gulf of Oman \(GOO\), Straits of Hormuz \(SoH\) and the Arabian Gulf \(AG\)](#)
- Report any suspicious activity or concerns to the UKMTO at watchkeepers@ukmto.org or +44 2392 222060.
- If under attack, please contact US Naval Forces maritime operations centre in Bahrain directly on +973 1785 3879.
- When transiting the high threat area, please consider including NAVCENT NCAGS in your positional reporting. NCAGS may be reached at m-ba-navcent-ncags@us.navy.mil or +973-1785-0033.
- Any instructions/recommendations received from Naval forces operating in the area as part of efforts to maintain freedom of navigation should be closely followed.