

JMIC ADVISORY NOTE 07 AUG '24 (01)

This advisory note is to ensure seafarers remain vigilant and exercise caution within the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and their approaches.

Despite a drop in attacks against merchant vessels over the last two weeks, the JMIC assesses that the Houthi capability and intent to target vessels **remains high** based on current Houthi messaging.

The JMIC urges vessels and maritime industry to continue utilizing best management practices and report anomalous or suspicious activities to the respective reporting centers (such as UKMTO). This information is critical to pattern-of-life assessment and creates greater situational awareness in the maritime for all stakeholders.

Examples may include:

- UAV sightings
- Loitering groups of dhows or skiffs with no indication of fishing activities
- Suspicious communications
- Any anomalous behaviour no matter how trivial it may seem

It is the collective effort from all military and commercial maritime organizations that will reassure industry in the support of free flow of commerce and freedom of navigation.

JMIC GUIDANCE

1. Freedom of navigation and the free flow of maritime commerce continue as a top priority while the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The current threat assessment identifies:

- a. Vessels with an Israeli, United States or United Kingdom association at highest risk
- b. Any vessel within a Group or Company fleet structure whereby the company has been identified making port calls to Israel

2. **Vessels** intending to transit the threat area are recommended to exercise caution by applying the following:
- a. Conduct a threat and risk assessment prior to entering the area
 - b. Review security measures/incorporate appropriate vessel hardening measures into their security plans
 - c. Turning off any form of non-essential emissions (e.g. intra-ship UHF/VHF transmissions) and AIS policy in the vicinity of, or before transiting or entering the threat area is to be very carefully considered as part of the voyage risk mitigation process, as broadcasting on AIS is assessed to aid Houthi targeting
 - i. While transmitting AIS may be consistent with SOLAS, it may compromise the safety & security of the vessel and crew
 - ii. If AIS is turned off, consider altering course and speed to minimize tracking by Dead Reckoning
 - d. Do not loiter when transiting the threat area and proceed with caution
 - e. If contacted by any unrecognized organization:
 - i. Report back to your company security officer and validate the source before responding
 - f. If contacted on VHF by “Yemeni Navy”:
 - i. Ignore the VHF call and continue passage if safe to do so
 - ii. Describe the incident in follow up reports to UKMTO
 - g. Share instances of suspicious activity with UKMTO (with recordings or imagery where possible)
 - i. UAV sightings
 - ii. Communications challenges
 - h. In case of unexploded ordnance and debris on deck:
 - i. Maintain a safe distance (as far away as practically possible) and cordon off the area
 - ii. Do not touch or try to dismantle any debris
 - iii. Be aware that any radio emissions may trigger the device
 - iv. Request assistance through UKMTO, ask for an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team (EOD)

3. **Maritime Industry** is recommended to:

- a. Conduct a threat & risk assessment of all associated vessels and especially those that may have previous USA, UK or Israel ownership or associations *[to include recent port calls by vessels within the company and/or group structure]*
- b. **Companies should plan and implement risk mitigation measures in advance of the furthest identified attack areas as depicted in the JMIC ‘Overview of Incidents and Suspicious Activities’ slide**
- c. If an association is made, shipping companies are recommended to provide the information to UKMTO prior to transiting the threat area
- d. Ensure their managed vessels receive and follow the guidance for vessels
- e. Review digital footprint
- f. The JMIC is aware of increased email communication between unrecognized reporting entities and owners/operators
 - i. If contacted by any organization not officially recognized, report back to your company security officer and validate the source before responding
 - ii. Any response should be carefully considered
 - iii. Statements by Houthi forces to encourage merchant shipping to engage with the Houthi’s Humanitarian Operations Coordination Centre (HOCC), or Yemeni Navy, should be disregarded and industry best practice and guidance should be followed in close communication with your company’s CSO
- g. Open-source claims that vessels are targeted may not be factual
 - i. JMIC recommends verifying source for legitimacy

Additional Resources on Incident:UKMTO Reporting Visit: <https://www.ukmto.org>Email: watchkeepers@ukmto.org

Emergency Tel: +44 (0)2392 222060

Additional Resources on Industry Guidance:

BMP 5 – Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea:
<https://www.ics-shipping.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/bmp5-hi-res-min.pdf>

ATP – 02.1 NCAGS Guide to Owners, Operators, Masters and Officers:
https://shipping.nato.int/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=692&ver=2