
Maritime Security in Red Sea

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Technical Alert is issued by the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) to inform ships, Masters, Technical Managers and Owners who have ships wishing to transit the Red Sea that it is now considered an area of regional instability. This has introduced other maritime security threats, which include:
- i. Deliberate targeting of ships;
 - ii. Collateral damage from regional conflict.

2. Application

- 2.1. This Notice applies to all ships transiting, or intending to transit, the Red Sea area.
- 2.2. This Notice should be read in conjunction with [Marine Notice 71](#)¹.

3. Introduction

- 3.1. The high risk area (HRA) for piracy was removed at the beginning of 2023. The Lloyd's Market Association Joint War Committee (JWC) continues to maintain its Listed Area as before.
- 3.2. In November 2023, the Bahamas flag car carrier GALAXY LEADER was boarded in the Red Sea by helicopter and captured by armed forces, reportedly connected to the Houthi forces, and remains in their possession.
- 3.3. Since January 2024, commercial shipping has been coming under regular attacks from Houthi forces. In response, a grouping of concerned nations supported the establishment of **Operation Prosperity Guardian** to protect the freedom of navigation and the supply chain.
- 3.4. Following numerous attacks against shipping and a co-ordinated attack on naval assets, on 11 January 2024 there were air strikes against multiple targets in Yemen. The threat to shipping remains extant and real. <https://www.lmalloyds.com/lma/jointwar>

¹ <https://www.bahamasmaritime.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/MN071-Piracy-and-Armed-Robbery-Against-Ships.pdf>

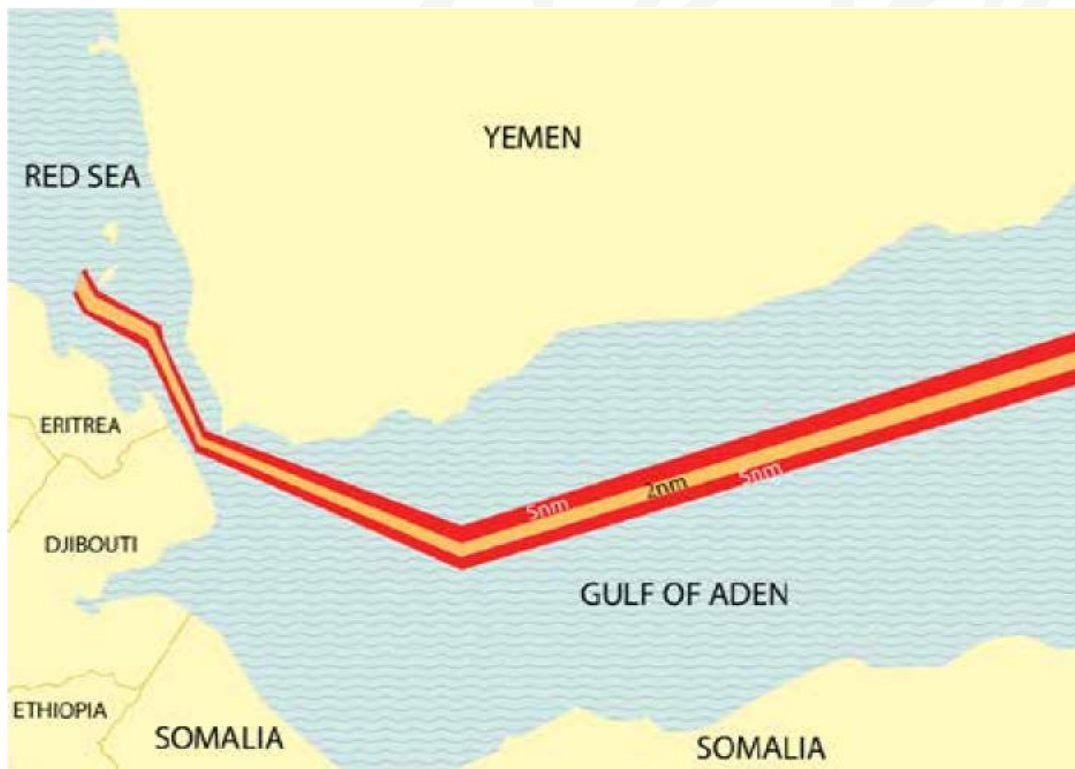
4. Situation in Yemen and Best Management Practice

- 4.1. There are currently no restrictions imposed by the BMA or Bahamas government on transiting the Red Sea, however such transits are currently considered extremely high risk.
- 4.2. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO - www.ukmto.org) and Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA - <http://www.mschoa.org/>) websites should be consulted for advice. Vessels can log in [here to register a vessel movement](#) with MSCHOA, to access the latest threat assessments, piracy alerts and Best Management Practices (BMP) advice.
- 4.3. Merchant vessels can receive a regional maritime security brief from UKMTO (Dubai) by telephone or online. To contact the UKMTO Dubai office please email: dubai-oic@ukmto.org. Please note that any emails received between 13:00UTC on Friday afternoon and 04:00UTC on Monday morning, may not be actioned before 04:00UTC on Monday. For urgent and short-notice briefing requirements that fall outside of these times Masters should contact the Duty UKMTO Officer on: +971 (0)50 559 3983 to arrange.
- 4.4. Contact details for UKMTO, MSCHOA and other contacts are provided in the Annex to this Alert.
- 4.5. The current version of BMP is [BMP 5](#)². This version includes details of self-protection measures and a feedback request to masters on the effectiveness of the anti-piracy actions taken by the vessel.
- 4.6. Maintaining vigilance, and reporting to UKMTO and MSCHOA, are fundamental but only part of what prudent owners should do. It is clearly necessary for adequate training and regular practice to be given to crews to enable them to respond effectively when under attack or threat. Low speed and low freeboard remain factors which significantly increase the vulnerability of ships.
- 4.7. Nothing in BMP detracts from the Master's overriding authority and responsibility to protect their crew, ship and cargo.

² <https://www.lmalloyds.com/CMDownload.aspx?ContentKey=2f3b475c-68ea-4a52-8bd9-2415ebf25206&ContentItemKey=2722b3be-1f02-4649-b33e-c870998f8949>

5. Maritime Security Transit Corridor

- 5.1. The Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC) is a military established corridor upon which naval forces focus their presence and surveillance efforts. The MSTC is shown on maritime security chart Q6099 and the figure below and consists of:
- i. The Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC). The IRTC is not a Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) but an established transit corridor in the Gulf of Aden where naval forces focus their counter piracy patrols. Within the IRTC, group transits and national convoys may be offered.
 - ii. The Bab Al Mandeb (BAM) TSS and the TSS West of the Hanish Islands.
 - iii. A two-way route directly connecting the IRTC and the BAM TSS.



- 5.2. It is recommended that ships use the MSTC to benefit from the military presence and surveillance.

6. Automatic Identification System (AIS) and Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) policy

6.1. AIS

6.1.1. The guidelines for the on-board operational use of AIS permits the Master to turn off this equipment in sea areas where there is a threat of piracy and armed robbery. The BMA accepts that the Master may choose to switch this equipment off whilst transiting the Red Sea.

6.1.2. However, in cases where an attack is expected, or suspicious activity is noticed, the AIS should be turned on as soon as possible. The BMA also requires Companies to take into account the current advice issued by the naval forces, as published on the MSCHOA website.

6.2. LRIT

6.2.1. **LRIT equipment MUST NOT be switched off** either before entry into a High Risk Area or during transit of such an area.

6.3. In cases where it becomes necessary to switch off or deactivate the LRIT equipment (e.g. for maintenance or repair), the BMA must be informed at the earliest opportunity (lrit@bahamasmaritime.com).

7. Reporting Attacks

7.1. In all cases the ship must develop an emergency communication plan to be implemented in the event of an attack. The BMA authorises the use of the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) programmed to alert the Company Security Officer, as set out in [Marine Notice 047](#)³, as part of this plan.

7.2. Owners may wish to use commercial services which automatically transmit the SSAS signal directly to the Authorities. The BMA has no objection to the use of these services, provided that the additional recipients of the signal are limited to UKMTO, MSCHOA or forces involved in Operation Prosperity Guardian as appropriate and that a suitable filter is applied to ensure that SSAS alerts which occur outside the piracy risk area are not sent to these recipients.

³ <https://www.bahamasmaritime.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/MN047-ISPS-Code-v1.0.pdf>

- 7.3. In the event that a Bahamian ship operating in the Red Sea region comes under attack, the BMA should be advised without delay.
- 7.4. The notification is to be made to the with as much of the following information as possible:
- i. Ships name;
 - ii. IMO number and/or Official number;
 - iii. Geographical location of ship;
 - iv. Cargo, if any;
 - v. Number of persons on board and their nationality/nationalities;
 - vi. Type of event – brief details;
 - vii. Time (UTC) and position of ship at the time of event;
 - viii. Details of damage to the vessel (if any);
 - ix. Current status of voyage (stopped/making way/continuing passage);
 - x. If the ship is continuing on its passage – next port of call;
 - xi. Any other important information; and
 - xii. What assistance required from the BMA/Bahamas government.
- 7.5. The information in 7.4 should be followed up by email as soon as practicable to the following email addresses:
- i. BMA - tech@bahamasmaritime.com and
 - ii. Bahamas ISPS Compliance Unit – ispscompliance@bahamas.gov.bs
- 7.6. At the times when BMA offices are closed and in the case of a genuine emergency, the Emergency Response Officer telephone number is:

+44 20 3869 8478

- 7.7. In the event of a ship being boarded by naval forces, the Master should follow the Company's reporting protocols and report this to the BMA.

8. Validity

- 8.1. This Technical Alert is valid until further notice.

Annex: Contact details**Emergency Contacts****UKMTO (United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations)**

Email : watchkeepers@ukmto.org
Tel : +44 2392 222060
+971 50 552 3215

MSCHOA

Email postmaster@mschoa.org
Tel +44 (0)1923 958 545
Fax +44 (0)1923 958 520
Website www.mschoa.org

USN Naval Control and Guidance to Shipping

Email CTF55.BWC@me.navy.mil
Tel (24hrs) + 973-1785-3434

Other useful contacts**NATO Shipping Centre**

Email info@shipping.nato.int
Tel +44 (0)1923 956 574
Fax +44 (0)1923 956 575
Website www.shipping.nato.int

IMB Piracy Reporting Centre

Email piracy@icc-ccs.org
imbkl@icc-ccs.org
Tel +603 2031 0014 (24hr Helpline)
Fax +603 2078 5769
Website www.icc-ccs.org