

U.S. MARITIME ADVISORY 2020-009
Threat Type(s): Violence Due to Regional Conflict and Piracy
Geographic Area: Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, and Indian Ocean

This revised advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2019-014.

1. References: (a) U.S. Maritime Alert 2020-003A.

2. Issues: Regional conflict and piracy threats continue to pose risks to commercial vessels operating in the above listed geographic areas.

a) Conflict in Yemen continues to pose potential risk to U.S. flagged commercial vessels transiting the southern Red Sea, Bab al Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden. Threats may come from a variety of different sources including, but not limited to, missiles, rockets, projectiles, mines, small arms, unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned surface vessels, or waterborne improvised explosive devices. These threat vectors continue to pose a direct or collateral risk to U.S. flagged commercial vessels operating in the region.

b) Additionally, piracy poses a threat in the Gulf of Aden, Western Arabian Sea, and Western Indian Ocean. Specific case details are available at the Office of Naval Intelligence's "Worldwide Threat to Shipping" and "Weekly Piracy Update" website at <https://www.oni.navy.mil/News/Shipping-Threat-Reports/>.

3. Guidance: The international community, including the United States, continues maritime security operations within this region. Vessels operating in this area are advised to review security measures, ensure AIS is transmitting at all times (except in extraordinary circumstances, consistent with provisions of SOLAS), and monitor VHF Channel 16.

a) With regard to the conflict in Yemen, U.S. flagged commercial vessels are advised to avoid entering or loitering near Yemen's ports. Vessels at anchor, operating in restricted maneuvering environments, or proceeding at slow speeds should be especially vigilant. U.S. flagged commercial vessels transiting the conflict area should conduct a pre-voyage risk assessment and incorporate appropriate protective measures into their vessel security plans.

b) With regard to piracy, the Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea (BMP5), and Maritime Global Security website at: www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org should be consulted prior to operating in the above listed geographic areas.

c) To afford best protection in the region, U.S. flagged commercial vessels are encouraged to:

- Simultaneously register with both the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Office (UKMTO) and U.S. Fifth Fleet Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) Watch when entering the Indian Ocean Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) by e-mailing them the Initial Report from Annex D of Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Safety in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea (BMP5).

- In the event of any incident or suspicious activity, call UKMTO or the U.S. Fifth Fleet Battle Watch and activate the Ship Security Alert System immediately. Suspicious activities and incidents are also required to be reported by U.S. flagged commercial vessels to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center.

- Answer all VHF calls from coalition navies.

- Utilize other reports included in Annex D of BMP5 as necessary, including both UKMTO and Fifth Fleet NCAGS on each of these reports.

d) Due to the risk of piracy, kidnapping, hijacking, and armed robbery while operating within High Risk Waters (HRW), U.S. flagged commercial vessels are required to comply with U.S. Coast Guard MARSEC Directive 104-6. Additionally, vessels are advised to navigate at least 200 nautical miles from the Somali coast to the extent practicable and comply with their Coast Guard approved Vessel Security Plan annex on counter piracy.

e) Mariners operating near this area are also advised to consult Department of State Travel Advisories at: <https://go.usa.gov/xUa5F>. Transit by yachts and privately owned sailing vessels through the region is also extremely hazardous and may result in capture. The U.S. Government advises against all operation of yachts and pleasure craft in these areas. American citizens abroad should inform the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate of their plans to transit the area and/or update their information via the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at: <https://go.usa.gov/xEYEE>. Yachting guidance can be found at: <https://on-shore.mschoa.org/reference-documents/advice-for-sailing-vessels> .

4. Contact Information:

a) Fifth Fleet Battle Watch: + 973-1785-3879, and email details to: CUSNC.BWC@ME.NAVY.MIL.

b) Fifth Fleet NCAGS: CUSNC.NCAGS_BW@ME.NAVY.MIL or +973-3904-9583 or +973-1785-0084.

c) UKMTO: watchkeepers@ukmto.org or +44 (0) 2392 222060. UKMTO advisories and warnings are available at <http://www.ukmto.org/>.

d) U.S. Coast Guard: Per 33 CFR 101.305, all suspicious activities, breaches of security, and transportation security incident events must be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center at +1-800-424-8802. Additional U.S. Coast Guard port specific requirements may be found in Port Security Advisory 1-20 at: <https://go.usa.gov/xwmTy>.

e) For maritime industry questions about this advisory, contact GMCC@uscg.mil. Supplemental information may also be found on the MARAD Office of Maritime Security website at: <https://go.usa.gov/xUKsb>.

5. Cancellation of Prior Advisories: This message cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2019-014.

6. This Advisory will automatically expire on December 14, 2020.

For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, please visit <http://www.marad.dot.gov/MSCI>.