

## **U.S. MARITIME ADVISORY 2020-015**

Threat Type: Risks Due to Regional Tensions and Increased Naval Activities  
Geographic Area: Eastern Mediterranean Sea Southeast of Rhodes and West of Cyprus

1. Issues: Recent disputes among countries over maritime boundaries and offshore resources have increased regional tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Also, NATO's Operation Sea Guardian has resumed focused NATO patrols in the Eastern Mediterranean with naval forces of multiple nations operating near each other. These developments could pose an indirect risk to commercial vessels operating in the area.

2. Guidance: Vessels operating in this area are advised to review security measures, ensure AIS is transmitting at all times (except when transmitting creates a threat to the safety or security of the ship or where a security incident is imminent, consistent with provisions of SOLAS and U.S. regulations), and monitor VHF Channel 16.

a) U.S. flagged commercial vessels transiting this area should conduct a risk assessment and incorporate appropriate protective measures into their vessel security plans.

b) To afford the best protection in the region, U.S. flagged commercial vessels are encouraged to check in with the NATO Shipping Center upon entering the Mediterranean Sea. In the event of any incident or suspicious activity, call the NATO Shipping Center and activate the Ship Security Alert System immediately. Mariners are also encouraged to review the "Eastern Mediterranean" section of the NATO Shipping Center website at <https://mc.nato.int/nsc/operations/news/2020/threat-to-commercial-shipping-operating-in-the-mediterranean-2>.

c) Mariners operating near this area are advised to consult Department of State Travel Advisories at: <https://go.usa.gov/xUa5F>. 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>.

3. Contact Information:

a) NATO Shipping Center (NSC): [info@shipping.nato.int](mailto:info@shipping.nato.int) or +44 (0) 1923-956574. NSC Advisories and warnings can be found at <https://shipping.nato.int/nsc>.

b) U.S. Coast Guard: Per 33 CFR 101.305, suspicious activities that may result in a transportation security incident, 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>.

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

4. This Advisory will automatically expire on February 17, 2021.

For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, please visit <https://go.usa.gov/xfdUX>.