



**RiskIntelligence**

# Security Threat Update: Red Sea / Gulf of Aden

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## Security Threat Update: Red Sea / Gulf of Aden

This report provides an overview of recent incidents in the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden as well as an assessments of threat levels for additional attacks against different types of merchant vessels.

Time of latest intelligence included in this report: 31 January 2024, 08:00 UTC.

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## Recent incidents (Red Sea / Bab el Mandeb / Gulf of Aden)

Below is a list of incidents directly affecting merchant ships in the Red Sea, the Bab el Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden which have been recorded on the Risk Intelligence System during the past 30 days. Information includes date, time and a short description of the respective incident. Comprehensive descriptions for all incidents (as well as for older incidents) can be found on the Risk Intelligence System.

|  |                  |   |
|--|------------------|---|
| <b>2 January</b>   | <b>18:50 UTC</b> | <b>Container ship CMA CGM TAGE targeted</b>                   |
| The crew on the ship reported up to three explosions at distances of 1 to 5 nautical miles respectively.   |                  |   |
| <b>4 January</b>   | <b>Unknown</b>   | <b>Drone boat reportedly explodes</b>                         |
| According to statements by a high-ranking US military officer, US forces observed a drone boat in the Red Sea which exploded without causing any damages to merchant ships.  |                  |   |
| <b>5 January</b>   | <b>19:34 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports drone activity</b>                 |
| The crew on a ship reported a sighting of drones circling the ship. No aggressive advances towards the vessel were reported.   |                  |   |
| <b>6 January</b>   | <b>13:24 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports suspicious approach</b>            |
| The crew on a ship reported a sighting of six boats which approached the ship to within a distance of 1 nautical mile.   |                  |   |
| <b>8 January</b>   | <b>13:24 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports suspicious approach</b>            |
| The crew on a ship reported a sighting of two boats which approached the ship to within a distance of 0.5 nautical miles.  |                  |   |
| <b>9 January</b>   | <b>20:00 UTC</b> | <b>Bulk carrier FEDERAL MASAMUNE reports possible attack</b>  |
| The crew on a ship reported a sighting of three boats which reportedly fired two 'rockets' at a distance of 1 nautical mile while a drone was reportedly passing over the ship.  |                  |   |
| <b>10 January</b>  | <b>23:00 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports missile impact in the water</b>    |
| The crew on a ship reported seeing a missile impact the water while transiting through the Gulf of Aden.   |                  |   |
| <b>12 January</b>  | <b>15:00 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports missile attack</b>                 |
| Crew on a ship reported a missile impact around 500 metres from the vessel while transiting eastbound in the Gulf of Aden. Media reports identified the ship as the KHALISSA, a tanker transporting Russian crude. These reports go back to a single source which likely misidentified the target. It is very likely that the US-owned bulk carrier OBE GRANDE was targeted. |                  |   |
| <b>14 January</b>  | <b>11:10 UTC</b> | <b>Bulk carrier ORCHID RISING reports suspicious approach</b> |
| The crew on the ship reported a sighting of one boat with four armed men which approached the ship. Given the location of this incident, it is very likely that the boat was part of the Eritrean coastguard.  |                  |   |

|   |                  |  |
|---|------------------|--|
| <b>15 January</b>   | <b>13:05 UTC</b> | <b>Bulk carrier GIBALTAR EAGLE struck</b>                |
| The ship was hit by a missile while steaming eastbound in the Gulf of Aden.   |                  |  |
| <b>15 January</b>   | <b>22:00 UTC</b> | <b>Bulk carrier ZOGRAFIA reports suspicious approach</b> |
| The crew on the ship observed a boat circling the vessel. Armed security personnel fired warning shots, the boat then left the area.                                |                  |  |
| <b>16 January</b>   | <b>11:00 UTC</b> | <b>Bulk carrier ZOGRAFIA struck</b>                      |
| The ship was hit by a projectile while steaming northbound in the southern Red Sea.   |                  |  |
| <b>16 January</b>   | <b>11:00 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports suspicious approach</b>       |
| The crew on the ship observed four boats approaching the ship to 400 metres. Armed security personnel fired warning shots, the boats then left the area.            |                  |  |
| <b>17 January</b>   | <b>03:30 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports suspicious approach</b>       |
| The crew on the ship observed eight boats following the vessel. No aggressive actions were reported.  |                  |  |
| <b>17 January</b>   | <b>17:35 UTC</b> | <b>Bulk carrier GENCO PICARDY struck</b>                 |
| The ship was hit by a drone while steaming eastbound in the Gulf of Aden.   |                  |  |
| <b>18 January</b>   | <b>18:00 UTC</b> | <b>Product tanker CHEM RANGER targeted</b>               |
| The ship was attacked while steaming eastbound in the Gulf of Aden.   |                  |  |
| <b>18 January</b>   | <b>18:33 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports drone activity</b>            |
| The crew on a ship reported a sighting of four drones in the Gulf of Aden. One of the drones hit the water at a distance of approximately 800 metres from the ship. |                  |  |
| <b>23 January</b>   | <b>09:38 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports drone activity</b>            |
| The crew on a ship reported a sighting of at least one drone while transiting the Bab el Mandeb.  |                  |  |
| <b>24 January</b>   | <b>11:00 UTC</b> | <b>Container ship MAERSK DETROIT targeted</b>            |
| The ship was attacked while steaming northbound through the Bab el Mandeb.  |                  |  |
| <b>24 January</b>   | <b>Unknown</b>   | <b>Merchant vessel targeted</b>                          |
| The ship was reportedly attacked while steaming through the southern Red Sea.   |                  |  |
| <b>26 January</b>   | <b>16:42 UTC</b> | <b>Product tanker MARLIN LUANDA struck</b>               |
| The ship was hit by a missile while steaming eastbound in the Gulf of Aden.   |                  |  |
| <b>29 January</b>   | <b>15:35 UTC</b> | <b>Merchant vessel reports suspicious approach</b>       |
| The crew on the ship observed three boats at a distance of 1 nautical mile. No aggressive actions were reported.  |                  |  |

## Current situation

Following the attacks against commercial and naval vessels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden since November, US and UK forces, supported by Australia, Bahrain, Canada and the Netherlands, have carried out several strikes against targets in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen since mid-January.

Military strikes are conducted under Operation Poseidon Archer. For political reasons, these offensive actions are separate from the US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian which is aimed at protecting commercial shipping in the area.

In various statements, the US and several other governments have stated that Houthi attacks against merchant ships have been 'indiscriminate'. This conclusion, however, is not supported by available evidence. Based on an analysis of all recorded incidents since November and considering the military strikes against Houthi forces, Risk Intelligence assesses that the threat to merchant ships is closely linked to individual characteristics.

Houthi forces are very likely to continue selecting specific targets rather than widen their campaign to indiscriminate attacks against civilian shipping.

| Vessel type   | Threat type   | Threat level    |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Vessels specifically linked to Israel through ownership, port calls, trade with and/or commercial relationship between Israeli companies and owners/operators | Kinetic attack (missile, aerial/waterborne drone), possibly seizure and detention                       | <b>Severe</b>   |
| Vessels linked to the United States, United Kingdom and other countries involved in Operation Poseidon Archer   | Kinetic attack (missile, aerial/waterborne drone), possibly seizure and detention                       | <b>Severe</b>   |
| Vessels linked to other countries participating in or supporting Operation Prosperity Guardian  | Kinetic attack (missile, aerial/waterborne drone), possibly seizure and detention                       | <b>Elevated</b> |
| Other merchant ships in transit through the Red Sea/Bab el Mandeb   | Kinetic attack due to misidentification, potential proximity to the above threats ('collateral damage') | <b>Elevated</b> |

Overall, the threat level to vessels directly owned by Israeli companies has been severe since the beginning of the Houthi campaign. Such vessels therefore largely stopped transiting the Red Sea, leading the Houthis to expand their potential targets to vessels trading with Israel. Moreover, some attacks were very likely carried out based on outdated information in publicly available databases, underlining the threat level for collateral damage.

Military action by the US and the UK has led to another expansion of the Houthis' target pool, highlighted by widely-publicised threats particularly against the US and the UK. This has resulted in a severe threat level for vessels directly linked to both countries as well as the four other countries which are directly supporting military strikes under Operation Poseidon Archer.

Several attempted and successful attacks against merchant ships closely linked with the US and the UK in recent weeks have underlined the current threat level. These incidents have also shown that Houthi forces retain the capability to strike merchant ships. In addition, they have underlined that attacks are not even limited to the southern Red Sea where Houthi forces control a large portion of the Yemeni coastline as ships have been targeted and struck in the Gulf of Aden.

For merchant ships linked to other countries taking part in or supporting Operation Prosperity Guardian – as well as for all other commercial vessels – the threat level is assessed as lower but still Elevated.

For vessels related to countries taking part in Operation Prosperity Guardian, this is largely due to the potential for kinetic attacks in lieu of other potential targets for Houthi forces. However, considering their careful selection of targets – which is in line with broader political ambitions – this is currently unlikely. For vessels not related to countries taking part in Operation Prosperity Guardian, this is largely due to the potential for merchant ships being targeted due to misidentification as mentioned above. Proximity to kinetic attacks or proximity to interceptions of drones and missiles by military forces could also lead to collateral damage.

Finally, it is vital to consider that this remains a highly dynamic situation. Risk Intelligence strongly recommends all stakeholders to closely monitor the situation. Updates regarding incidents as well as a constantly updated assessment of current threat levels is also available through the Risk Intelligence System.

## Background

Starting with the seizure of the GALAXY LEADER on 14 November, Risk Intelligence has identified 27 targeted attacks by Houthi forces against individual vessels in the Red Sea/Bab el Mandeb/Gulf of Aden area. This is lower than the number of attacks cited by the US military which does not provide an overview to show incidents classified as 'attacks on commercial vessels'. Interceptions of drones and missiles were possibly counted as additional attacks but this remains speculation without any evidence. Drones and missiles may have been used to target warships or merely used as a "show of force" in at least some of the interceptions.

Looking at all 27 attacks in detail, no preference for attacks against southbound or northbound vessels can be identified for attacks in the southern Red Sea. In addition, five ships have been targeted in the Gulf of Aden since the beginning of January (see Figure 1).

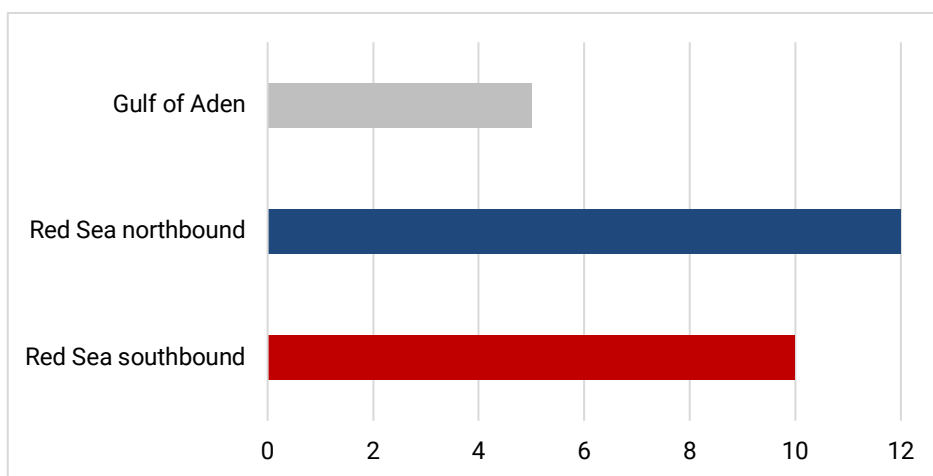


Figure 1: Number of attacks against merchant ships passing through the Red Sea/Bab el Mandeb/Gulf of Aden area since Nov. 2023 by direction of travel (Source: Risk Intelligence).

While it is possible to identify a slight preference for attacks during daylight hours (see Figure 2), it is far from impossible for Houthi forces to identify targets during hours of darkness and carry out missile or drone strikes against them.

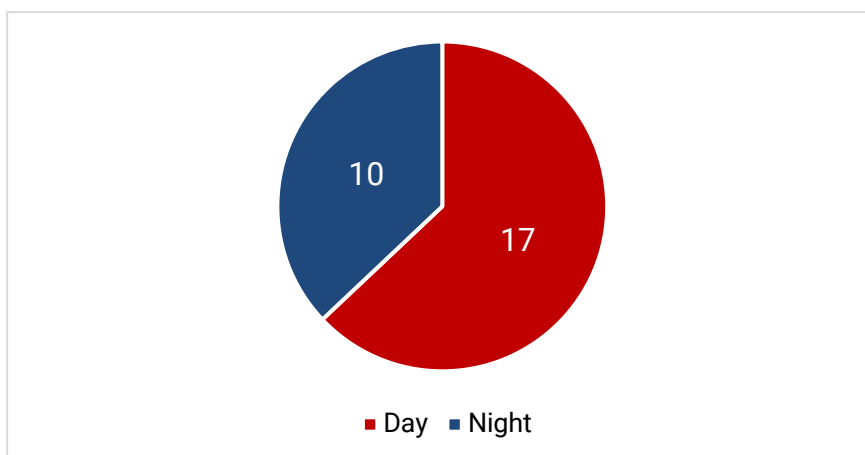
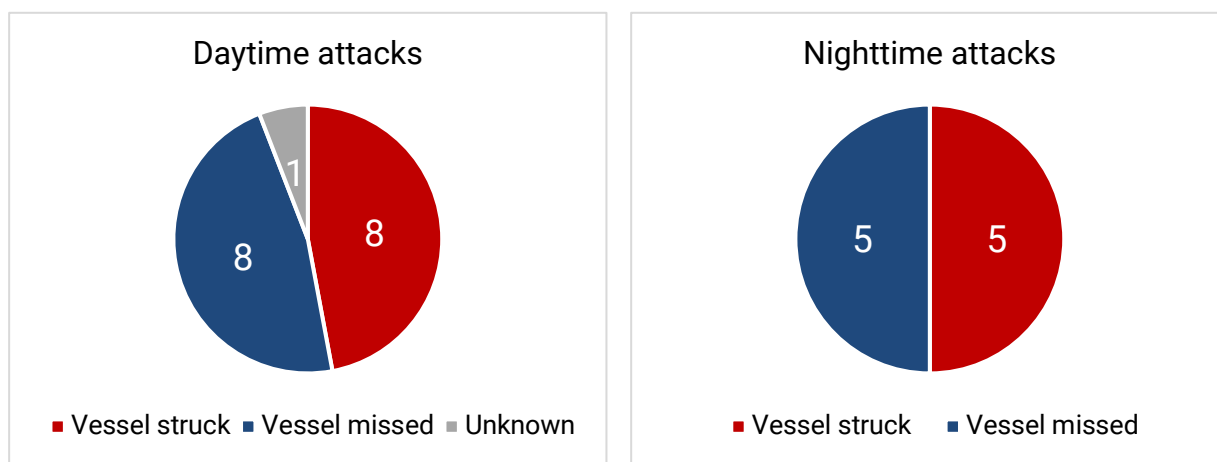


Figure 2: Number of attacks against merchant ships passing through the Red Sea/Bab el Mandeb/Gulf of Aden area since Nov. 2023 by time of day (Source: Risk Intelligence).



Moreover, this should not lead to the conclusion that transits at night are significantly safer). Of the ten ships targeted during hours of darkness, five were struck (see Figure 3b). For daytime attacks, eight of 17 ships were struck by a drone or a missile (see Figure 3a). In one case, it is unclear whether the ship was actually hit but the vessel was very likely not targeted directly. It is possible that the ship was struck by debris from an intercepted missile or drone; no significant damages were reported after this incident.



*Number of attacks against merchant ships passing through the Red Sea/Bab el Mandeb/Gulf of Aden area since Nov. 2023 during daytime (Figure 3a, left) and at night (Figure 3b) (Source: Risk Intelligence).*

Overall, maritime traffic in the southern Red Sea started to decrease in mid-December and is now at around 50% of Bab el Mandeb transits compared with the previous year. Less than 10% of ships passing the Bab el Mandeb are following naval recommendations to disable AIS.

Moreover, the threats in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden have led to a noticeable increase in incidents that are perceived as suspicious by seafarers, including in the larger region outside the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Reports about such incidents should be strongly encouraged. At the same time, it is vital to thoroughly assess all reports to identify particular areas of concern.

The background to the current situation is the civil war in Yemen. Since 2015, the Houthis in the northern part of the country have fought against the Saudi and UAE-backed government in southern Yemen. Iran has supported the Houthis during the conflict. Houthi forces have previously targeted Saudi and UAE vessels in the Red Sea with anti-ship missiles and drones (aerial and waterborne). They have also attacked Saudi ports and naval vessels in the Red Sea as well as oil industry targets in southern Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

In September, the Saudis and the Houthis were assessed to be close to a peace agreement that would involve financial and economic concessions to the Houthis in exchange for peace. Neither side wants to jeopardise a potential deal. Saudi Arabia has so far refrained from criticising the Houthis which is a noticeable difference from Saudi rhetoric in the past. Moreover, attacks against commercial shipping have not interrupted Houthi-Saudi negotiations although it is impossible to assess when a final agreement will be signed, given the maximalist approach by both sides.

# Guidance on commercial operations

## Ship transits

Several shipping industry organisations have published the "Interim Industry Transit Advice, Southern Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden – 15 December 2023". Among other information, the document includes considerations about routing and vessel hardening. Combined Maritime Forces have also issued a guidance document on 23 December 2023.

Both documents are available via [www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org](http://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org).

## Vessel registration and incident reporting

It is strongly recommended for all merchant ships transiting the Western Indian Ocean, the Somali Basin, the Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman and the Red Sea to register with UKMTO and the Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA). Any incidents or suspicious activities should also be reported to UKMTO and MSCHOA.

### Contact details UKMTO

Email: [watchkeepers@ukmto.org](mailto:watchkeepers@ukmto.org)

Phone: +44 2393 222060

Website: [www.ukmto.org](http://www.ukmto.org)

### Contact details MSCHOA

Email: [postmaster@mschoa.org](mailto:postmaster@mschoa.org)

Phone: +33 298 220 220 or +33 298 220 170

Website: [www.mschoa.org](http://www.mschoa.org)

If a vessel is under attack, **US naval forces in Bahrain** are able to coordinate assistance.

Phone: +973 1785 3879

Combined Maritime Forces also recommend ignoring VHF calls by "Yemeni navy" with instructions to alter course to Hudaydah or other locations in Yemen. When merchant ships are contacted, masters are advised to continue the voyage and call for a coalition warship on VHF Channel 16, stating current location, situation and intentions.

In addition, vessel operators are advised to contact the respective flag state for additional guidance or requirements regarding incident reporting procedures.

## Mitigation measures

Risk Intelligence strongly recommends merchant ship operators to assess whether the respective vessel has been owned or managed by Israel-affiliated companies in the past. Such information may not have been updated in publicly available databases and could lead to misidentification of current commercial links with Israel.

Prior to voyages through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, ship operators should conduct a thorough ship and voyage-specific threat and risk assessment in line with shipping industry best practices. In addition, the following measures should be considered:

- Constant monitoring of the security situation, enabling vessels to avoid locations with recent or ongoing incidents.
- Introduction/update of contingency plans on the company level to address the possibility of seafarers being injured, killed or kidnapped during a security incident. The plan should include contingency and emergency plans; appropriate drills should be completed.
- Crew briefings and scenario drills based on a valid and relevant anti-attack plan to ensure that incidents are reported and alarm is raised without delay when required. Drills should include scenarios with major damage and casualties.
- Enhancement of firefighting, evacuation and damage control procedures, taking into account the possibility of significant damage as a result of direct targeting or collateral damage.
- Enhancement of medical equipment to deal with multiple casualties.
- Emergency contacts placed readily available on the bridge.
- Bridge team briefing regarding hailing/harassment via VHF, prepared responses and immediate contact with naval forces in the respective area. (Local authorities' calls on VHF may be an act of spoofing or even targeting, underlined by several incidents in recent days which involved self-proclaimed 'Yemeni authorities' or the 'Yemeni navy' ordering merchant ships to alter course.)
- Preparation of citadel with emergency provisions and functioning satellite phone.
- Depending on individual circumstances, embarkation of armed guards may be useful to mitigate specific risks, specifically in relation to the threat of boardings from small boats (e.g. Houthi forces, Somali piracy). However, the threat of direct targeting by missiles, aerial or naval drones used by Houthi forces in Yemen (southern Red Sea / Gulf of Aden) cannot be mitigated by embarkation of armed guards.

In general, existing BMP5 recommendations have been developed to deter piracy. While the guidance included in BMP5 is relevant to deter illegal boardings, it offers virtually no mitigation against current threats such as attacks by missiles, drones or – potentially – waterborne IEDs ('drone boats').

Ship operators should also consider to issue specific voyage guidance for transits through the Red Sea and/or the Gulf of Aden. This guidance should consider specific scenarios (e.g. aerial or waterborne threats, hailing on VHF) and include actions for the crew to minimise the impact of any security incident.

## Red Sea – threat assessment (summary)

Following the recent incidents in the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden related primarily to Houthi forces, there is now a significant threat to merchant ships linked to Israel through a variety of commercial relationships. Although threats will vary on a case-by-case basis, the overall threat level for these vessels is now assessed as severe for vessels linked to Israel through ownership and severe for vessels linked through other commercial relationships including port calls. Threats against vessels linked to the US and UK and other countries involved in direct military strikes against Houthi forces are severe. This reflects the escalation in violence in early January, such as the launch of strikes on Houthi targets by the US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian on 12 January 2024, which is likely to expand the scope of vessels considered as "legitimate targets" by the Houthis. The threat level for all remainder vessels, those not linked to Israel or nations directly involved in strikes against Houthi forces, is assessed as elevated.

The increased threat is a result of the Israel/Gaza conflict and Houthi actions against Israel-linked vessels. Naval vessels have intercepted drones and missiles intended for Israeli targets, or against the naval ships themselves.

The situation is evolving as the list of possible targets is expanding. Links to Israel may now be port calls by the respective vessel, owners/operators conducting trade with Israel in general or owners/operators being in commercial relationships with Israeli companies. While the threat level to vessels directly owned by Israeli companies is assessed as even higher, it should be noted that virtually no such vessels are currently transiting the Red Sea. Houthi forces have therefore significantly expanded their potential targets, including the categories mentioned above.

At the same time, it is important to highlight the increased threat of collateral damage, particularly in the southern Red Sea with dense maritime traffic. It is very likely that Houthi forces have missed their intended targets on several occasions in recent days, increasing the potential for unintended strikes against other merchant ships. Moreover, this is a highly dynamic and evolving threat which must be monitored closely in light of ongoing incidents.

Maritime security in the southern Red Sea is also affected by the conflict in Yemen as some fighting between the Houthis and the rival government supported by the Saudi-led coalition continues. The maritime dimension to this conflict is limited. Ceasefire talks in 2022 saw a substantial fall in cross-border attacks in Saudi Arabia, as well as an improved threat environment during transits through the Bab el Mandeb. Attacks have not taken place in 2023, likely due to progress in negotiations between the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition. Both sides are unlikely to jeopardise a potential deal. The threat level for direct attacks against port and oil facilities in Saudi Arabia and the UAE is therefore lower while talks are ongoing. In addition, Saudi Arabia has so far refrained from criticising the Houthis for the recent wave of attacks against merchant ships which is a significant difference from Saudi announcements about alleged interceptions of waterborne drones off Saudi port facilities in the past.

There is a dispute between Yemen and Eritrea in the Hanish Islands area, primarily due to fishing. In an incident in June 2021, there was a clash between coastguard/naval forces. In August 2021, several fishing vessels and three Yemeni crew were detained by the Eritrean coastguard near the Hanish Islands. Due to the irregular nature of Yemeni coastguard forces, or the difficulty in

identifying Eritrean craft (which are small speedboats), there are problems with merchant vessels misidentifying small patrol craft from Yemen and Eritrea as pirate vessels. Aggressive enforcement by coastguard vessels, or local craft attempting to warn away merchant vessels, are possible threats in the area. The piracy threat is minimal, even in southern areas, as this area is now considered to be outside the operational range of Somali pirates. The fighting in Sudan is not expected to affect threat levels in the Red Sea.

## Threat levels

Refer to the section "Methodology / Definitions" for a detailed definition of the threat level. A concise assessment of all threats listed in the table can be found below.

| Threat type                        | Threat level |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Terrorism                          | Moderate     |
| Piracy                             | Low          |
| Insurgency and Military Operations | High         |
| Cargo Theft                        | Moderate     |
| Smuggling                          | Moderate     |
| Stowaways and human trafficking    | Low          |
| Fraud and corruption               | Low          |
| Activism                           | Low          |

## Indian Ocean – threat assessment (summary)

This area covers the western Indian Ocean north of Madagascar and east towards India, including the Somali Basin, Gulf of Aden, and western Arabian Sea. There are possible drone threats to Israel-linked merchant ships in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Houthi maritime operations targeting vessels in transit can take place in western areas of the Gulf of Aden close to the Bab el Mandeb where threat levels are similar to the southern Red Sea. In the Indian Ocean, primary threats are piracy off Somalia and the conflict in Yemen which has some implications close to the Yemeni coast. Broader regional conflicts might also affect certain vessels in the Arabian Sea or off Oman.

In general, vessels in transit should be aware of the potential to encounter small armed craft in this area, particularly in the Gulf of Aden. These might be fishermen, traders, smugglers, militia or irregular military forces, or military or coastguard patrol craft operating out of southern Yemen or northern Somalia. The boarding of the product tanker CENTRAL PARK in the Gulf of Aden on 26 November 2023 has been assessed as related to Houthi-led actions against Israel-linked vessels, although some critical details of this incident have not been confirmed.

There is still the potential for pirate operations in the Somali Basin and the Gulf of Aden. The Malta-flagged bulk carrier RUEN was hijacked about 400 nautical miles off the coast on 14 December 2023 and is being held off Somalia at present. On 4 January 2024, the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier LILA NORFOLK was boarded by armed men around 460 nautical miles off the Somali coast before being assisted by the Indian Navy. A merchant vessel was also approached by skiffs on 27 January in what might have been a boarding attempt.

Certain details of these incidents are currently not clear. The cases show that pirates still have boarding capabilities at significant distances off the coast – out to around 800 nautical miles. It is unclear whether these incidents were linked to overall unhappiness by coastal communities over illegal fishing and were to prove a point, or were opportunistic boardings for traditional hijackings and ransoms.

There have also been seven boardings of fishing dhows off Somalia since November 2023. These are likely linked to illegal fishing activity in the area, which is an ongoing issue and has been a major focus for Somalia in expanding its maritime enforcement capabilities. Iranian vessels have been seized in the past and their crews held, with captives released as recently as 2022 and 2020. The most recent incidents were an Iranian dhow that was hijacked just off Somalia but then freed by Indian naval forces, and a Sri Lankan fishing vessel hijacked farther out in the Indian Ocean that was freed by the Seychelles coastguard.

Naval patrols are operational in the area, such as EUNAVFOR's Operation Atalanta. Their mandates include maritime crimes (such as drugs and arms smuggling) as well as countering piracy. The group transit scheme for the Gulf of Aden is also still operational. National deployments are also ongoing, such as the Indian naval patrol presence that has been particularly effective in recent actions.

The situation in southern Yemen remains unstable and there are multiple political factions with their own militia forces, as well as security forces from Saudi Arabia and the UAE in operation.

The trend is for some improvement as peace talks are ongoing and there is some optimism that a permanent settlement might be reached in Yemen after eight years of conflict. Terrorist groups have a limited presence. In general, merchant ships might be caught up in either political disputes or terrorist attacks, which are less likely but still possible, and there is some blurring between the two. There have been no recent incidents, aside from those linked to Houthi operations.

Shipping industry associations have published transit guidance for the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, which emphasises the importance of conducting thorough ship and voyage-specific threat and risk assessments considering additional advice from the flag state before passing through the area in question. The shipping industry has removed its high-risk area (HRA) designation for the Indian Ocean, effective 1 January 2023, although notes that: "Threat and risk assessments should still be carried out, and best management practices followed to continue to mitigate the risks presented in a changeable and often complex and potentially threatening environment."

UKMTO operates the Voluntary Reporting Area for the Indian Ocean, specifically the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Arabian Sea, administered by the Maritime Trade Information Centre (MTIC)/UKMTO (Dubai). UKMTO acts as the primary point of contact for merchant vessels and liaison with military forces in the region. Vessels are encouraged to report their positions while operating in the area. MSCHOA manages the EUNAVFOR (EU Naval Forces Somalia and Operation Atalanta) voluntary registration scheme for vessels transiting the area and administers an interactive website that enables EUNAVFOR to communicate counter-piracy guidance to the maritime industry, and for shipping companies and operators to register vessel movements through the region.

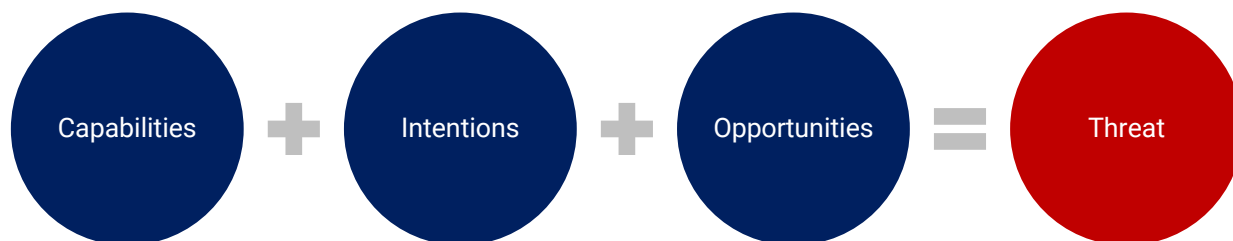
## Threat levels

Refer to the section "Methodology / Definitions" for a detailed definition of the threat level. Concise assessments of all types of threats listed in the table below can be found on the Risk Intelligence System.

| Threat type                        | Threat level |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Terrorism                          | Moderate     |
| Piracy                             | Moderate     |
| Insurgency and Military Operations | Moderate     |
| Cargo Theft                        | Low          |
| Smuggling                          | Moderate     |
| Stowaways and human trafficking    | Low          |
| Fraud and corruption               | Low          |
| Activism                           | Low          |

## Methodology / Definitions

All threat levels are based on the likelihood of a threat type occurring, with generic consequences described in the relevant sections. All threat levels are based on an assessment of capabilities, intentions and opportunities of potential perpetrators, separated into different categories.



Maritime operators are typically unable to lower the threat level by influencing the underlying variables. However, all variables are subject to change over time, e.g. changes in the intentions or capabilities of potential perpetrators. They should therefore be re-assessed as required.

In an additional step, the threat levels assessed here can be used to identify the risk level for a particular type of operations. Determining the risk level also requires an assessment of the vulnerability and the potential consequence of a particular incident. Appropriate mitigation measures can then be implemented to lower the risk level.

### Threat levels

All threat levels mentioned above are assessed based on the likelihood and consequence of a particular threat type occurring. The levels are:

- Low: Not expected in the operational area or in proximity.
- Moderate: Not expected in the operational area but possible in proximity.
- Elevated: Possible in the operational area or in proximity.
- High: Expected in the operational area or in proximity.
- Severe: Commonplace in the operational area or in proximity.

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