



RiskIntelligence

Security Threat Update: Red Sea / Gulf of Aden

2 October 2024

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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: 2 October 2024, 08:00 UTC.

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Recent incidents (Red Sea / 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 these and older incidents can be found on the Risk Intelligence System.

2 September	01:30 UTC	Crude oil tanker BLUE LAGOON I struck
The Panama-flagged crude oil tanker was targeted while transiting southbound. It reported being struck twice, including by at least one missile. A third explosion was reported. No casualties or fires onboard, with vessel continuing to next port of call.		

4 September	06:30 UTC	Crude oil tanker AMJAD reportedly attacked
The Saudi-flagged crude oil tanker AMJAD reportedly targeted by UAV, suffering light damage. On 3 September, the owner claimed that the attack was not directed at the AMJAD but towards another vessel nearby.		

1 October	01:40 UTC	Crude oil tanker CORDELIA MOON struck
The Panama-flagged crude oil tanker CORDELIA MOON reported three splashes/attacks by unknown projectiles close to the bow. A fourth splash was reported later. The vessel was then struck by a drone that punctured a ballast tank. Crew are safe and continued the voyage.		

1 October	04:15 UTC	Bulk carrier MINOAN COURAGE struck
The Liberia-flagged bulk carrier reported being struck by a missile on the starboard side with further damage reported near or in the engine room which was on fire. The vessel was then reported as drifting.		

Current situation

This week has seen momentous upheaval in the Middle East, caused primarily by the Israeli assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Israel's subsequent offensive in Lebanon. The goal of the offensive remains unknown as of writing, but has forced Iran and the Axis of Resistance to react.

The Houthis have interrupted the longest lull in attacks since the start of their campaign, striking two vessels at night in likely reaction to the Israeli offensive in Lebanon. One of the vessels was notably struck with a waterborne IED, which carries an increased risk of inflicting catastrophic damage to a vessel. This signals a continued reactivity by the Houthis to regional events and confirms that their strikes will continue to support Axis of Resistance efforts.

Military strikes against targets in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen have been ongoing since January. They have been carried out unilaterally by US forces and as joint strikes with the UK military, supported by several other countries. These strikes are conducted under Operation Poseidon Archer. For political reasons, offensive actions are separate from the US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian which is merely aimed at protecting commercial shipping.

Since the beginning of the Houthi campaign in November, the US and other governments have frequently stated that Houthi attacks against merchant ships have been 'indiscriminate'. This conclusion, however, has never been supported by available evidence. Houthi forces have largely stuck to publicly announced targeting parameters. Some attacks were very likely carried out based on outdated information about individual ships, although such incidents have been rare in recent months.

The broader conflict between Israel and the Axis of Resistance (AoR) took a turn this week when Israel assassinated the leader of the Hezbollah and launched a ground offensive into Lebanon. As of writing the objectives of the offensive are unknown and it is unknown what course of action the Israeli military has planned.

Immediately upon the start of the offensive, on the night of the 1st October, Iran launched a wave of missiles, with much of the attack mitigated by Israeli air defences. Likewise, the Houthis broke the 4-week lull in attacks and targeted two vessels repeatedly. One of the vessels was struck by a waterborne IED, and the other vessel is reported as being adrift.

The Houthi strikes were an expected reaction by the AoR to the Israeli offensive against Hezbollah. It is expected that Iran continues directing its proxies and allies to target Israeli and allied targets at the current desultory pace. This is due to the Iranian strategic imperative of protecting its credibility within the AoR, but the lack of means to mount an effective riposte.

To motivate disparate militias to join its ad-hoc alliance, Iran must motivate them politically and economically by inserting them into military supply lines and allowing them to benefit from Iranian trade routes. This model was initially developed with the Hezbollah and expanded into the Middle East. This is, in short, the members' payoff for accepting a higher threat to their assets, with members of the AoR likely to be attacked or sanctioned by Iran's adversaries.

The battering of Hezbollah, which has yet to negate its value as an Iranian proxy, poses a strategic challenge to Iran. If Iran no longer appears able to credibly defend or react to the destruction of its allies, many groups will start disengaging from the AoR, doubtful of Iranian protection.

That said, there is also a matter of opportunism among the militias which explains the lack of reaction by the AoR. Indeed, “talking the talk” is generally enough to reap political rewards within Arab countries while maintaining access to Iranian networks which allow both the militia and Iran to strengthen their influence. Iran will be hard pressed to “sanction” AoR members for their lack of commitment, as it would essentially be neutering its own influence.

The Houthis are the only AoR member which have so far “walked the walk” and exposed themselves to substantial western retaliation. This has opened speculation about the future role of the Houthis in the AoR, and whether the Houthis are poised to take a more active role in the conflict following Nasrallah’s demise. In Risk Intelligence’s assessment, this is unlikely, due to geography and history.

Iran has conceived the Hezbollah as a deterrent and a pressure lever on Israel, and given its proximity to Israel, is able to exert pressure by its mere existence. The Houthis meanwhile need to employ vastly more expensive means to exert such pressure. Furthermore, Hezbollah’s role as guarantor of access to the mediterranean sea cannot be played by the Houthis. Finally, the Hezbollah as an organisation owes most of its existence to Iranian backing, whereas the Houthis existed prior to modern Iran and do not rely on Iran for theological or political guidance, having clear Yemeni-focused goals. This makes them intrinsically less malleable than the Hezbollah.

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	Severe
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	Severe
Vessels linked to other countries participating in or supporting Operation Prosperity Guardian or Operation Aspides	Kinetic attack (missile, aerial/waterborne drone), possibly seizure and detention	Elevated
Other merchant ships in transit through the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden	Kinetic attack due to misidentification, potential proximity to the above threats ('collateral damage')	Elevated

In the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, 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 ships trading with Israel. As mentioned above, some attacks were likely carried out based on outdated information in publicly available databases, underlining the threat level for collateral damage.

Military operations led to an expansion of the Houthis' target pool to include merchant ships linked to the US and the UK through ownership. This has resulted in a severe threat level for such vessels, highlighted by several attacks.

Houthi have now expanded their targets to include all ships which are owned by companies that are trading with Israel, leading to a severe threat level for these vessels.

Despite the ongoing military operations, Houthi forces remain capable of conducting attacks. These are not limited to the southern Red Sea where Houthi forces control a large portion of coastline. Several ships have also been struck in the Gulf of Aden, although attacks by drone boats are very likely limited to the southern Red Sea.

While the Houthis' missile launch capabilities have been likely degraded by military strikes since January, the actual impact of these strikes cannot be assessed. Moreover, reports about military actions are solely based on military sources and not independently verified.

Any meaningful and sustainable reduction of the threat posed by the Houthis would require a longer-term mission. The current casualty-averse approach limits greater damage to Houthi weapons stockpiles. At the same time, a shift in tactics would likely have a greater civilian impact on the ground, potentially provoking another escalation in maritime attacks.

For merchant ships linked to countries solely supporting Operation Prosperity Guardian or Operation Aspides which both have a defensive focus, the threat level is assessed as lower compared to countries participating in offensive military actions against Houthi forces. For all other commercial vessels, the same threat level applies.

For vessels related to countries taking part in Operation Prosperity Guardian or Operation Aspides, 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 or Operation Aspides, this is largely due to the potential for merchant ships being targeted due to misidentification. 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 the situation remains dynamic and requires close monitoring. Updates regarding incidents as well as constantly updated assessments of current threat levels are available through the Risk Intelligence System.

Background

Starting with the seizure of the GALAXY LEADER on 19 November, Risk Intelligence has identified attacks by Houthi forces against more than 80 individual vessels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. This is slightly lower than the number of attacks stated by military sources which are not providing an overview to highlight which incidents were actually classified as 'attacks on commercial vessels'.

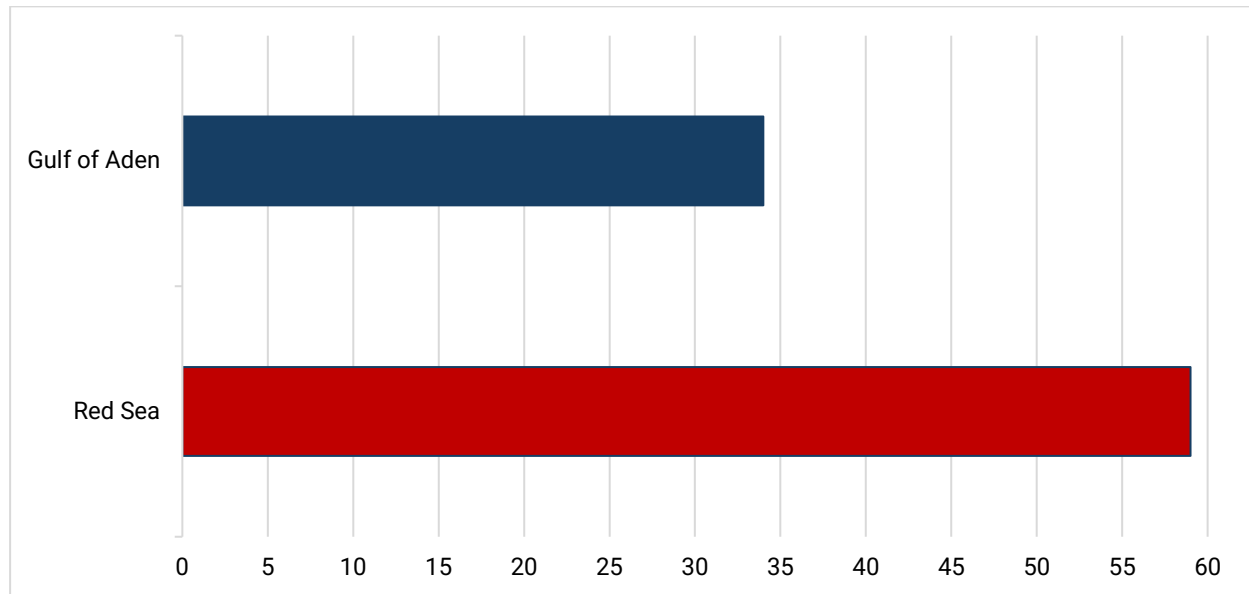


Figure 1: Number of attacks against merchant ships passing through the Red Sea/Bab el Mandeb/Gulf of Aden area since November 2023 (Source: Risk Intelligence)

Statistics show a notable decrease in frequency of attacks over the summer months. While the reasons are known only to the Houthis, anecdotal evidence and numbers show that the maritime sector has adapted to the situation, and that even a weeks-long stop to the attacks will not entice commercial shipping back through the area.

When the shipping industry decides to re-route its vessels through the Red Sea is likely to be determined by economic factors such as insurer pressure, just as much as by political declarations or resolutions that placate the belligerents. That date remains unknown to this day with no indication that either party involved, be it the Houthis, Israel, the Hezbollah, or the US intend to push for peace any time soon.

It is noted that there has been an increase in Chinese-flagged vessels transiting the Red Sea, whereas the other two main flags, namely the Greek and Russian flags, have decreased and stagnated, respectively. Simultaneously, statistics indicate that transits as measured in cumulative deadweight is at its lowest since the Houthis launched their campaign in November 2023. This is indicated in the graph below. While this low-point is not far from the current average, it still underlines the Houthis' success in durably changing shipping patterns.

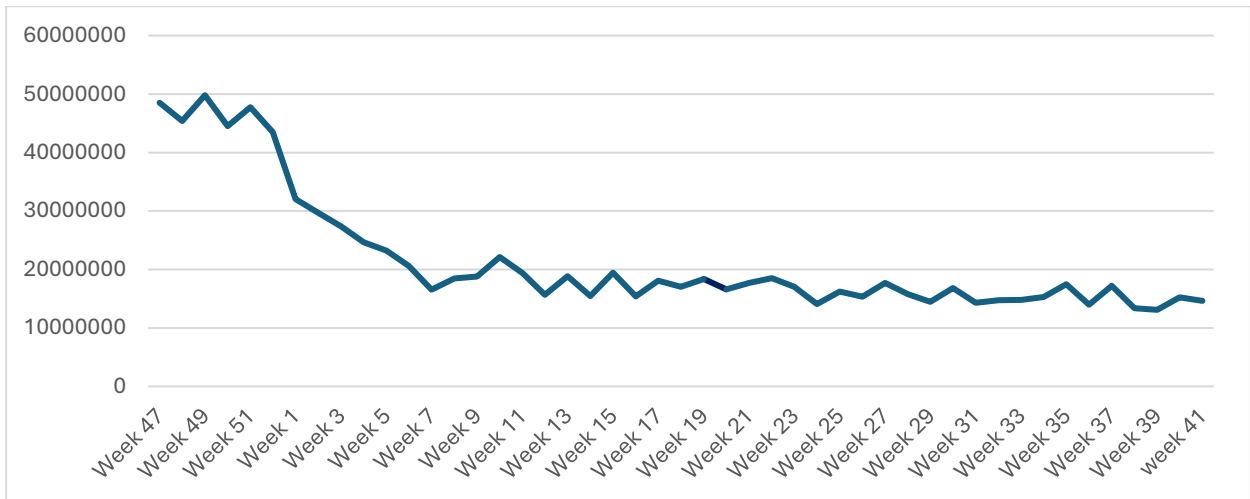


Figure 2: Bab el Mandeb transits by in deadweight tonnage (Source: Lloyd's List Intelligence/Seasearcher)

Houthi attacks against maritime traffic have caused a major decrease in ship transits through the Bab el Mandeb. It is unlikely, however, that traffic will see a significant further decrease after the current level has remained virtually unchanged since late January, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2 below indicates the type and number of vessels struck since the start of the campaign. The numbers are assessed to broadly reflect the type of commercial vessels most frequently seen transiting the area, and do not suggest any Houthi targeting preference.

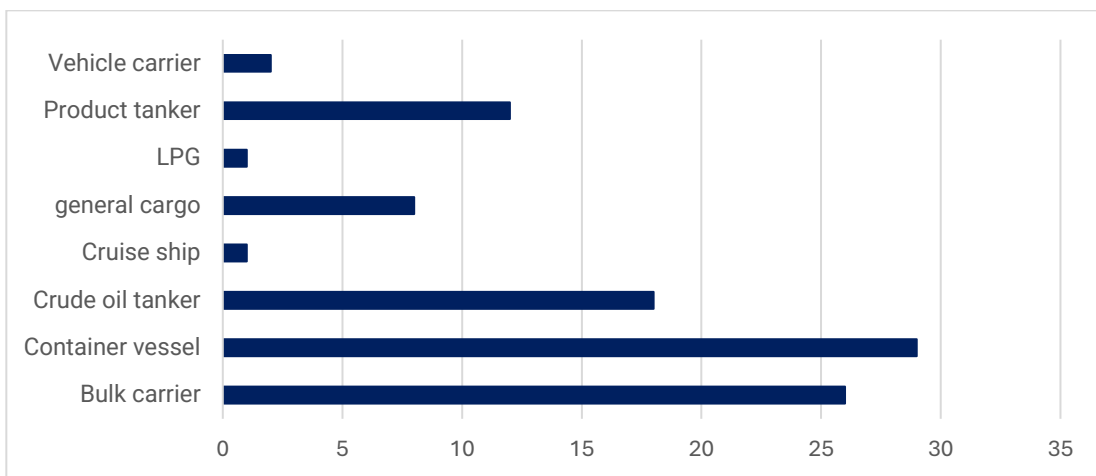


Figure 3: Confirmed & identified vessel attacks by type (Source: Risk Intelligence)

Since January, the number of Bab el Mandeb transits has consistently been between 50% and 60% lower than during the same timeframe in 2023. Less than 10% of ships passing the Bab el Mandeb are transiting the area without broadcasting AIS (see Figure 4).

It should be noted that naval forces recommend switching off AIS in the area, even though there is no evidence to suggest that this lowers the chances of vessels being targeted and struck.

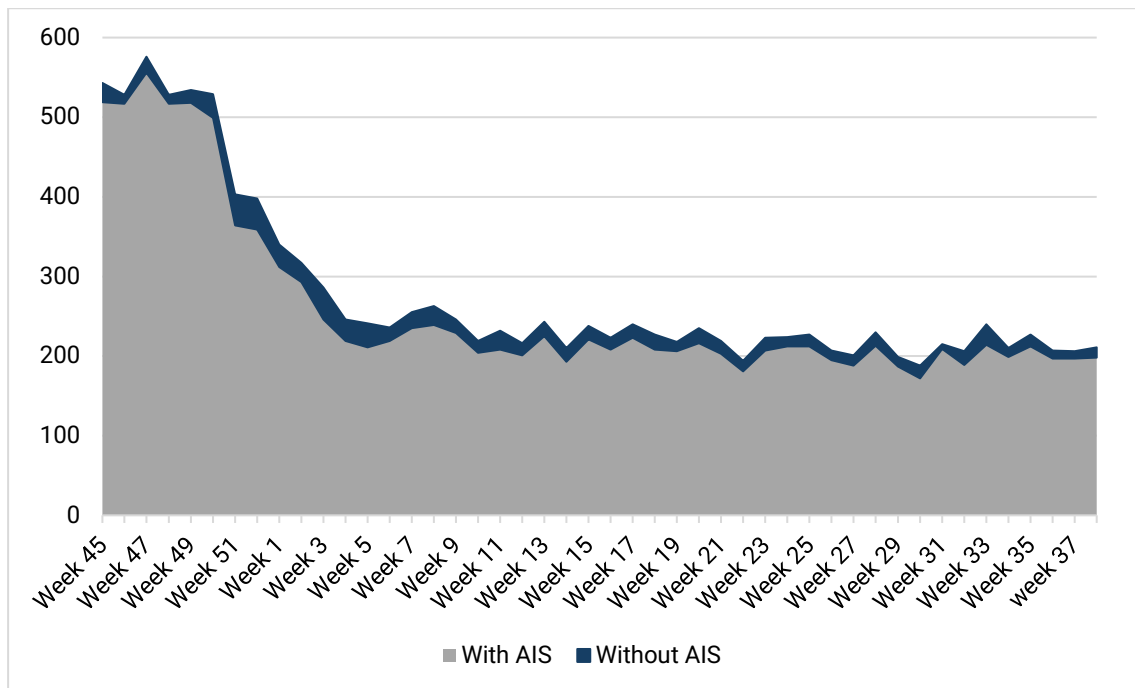


Figure 4: Number of Bab el Mandeb transits by merchant ships per week with and without AIS (Source: Lloyd's List Intelligence/Seasearcher)

Monthly figures show an increase in transits from July to August. This was technically the first Month on Month increase since May, but the first increase of substance since the start of the crisis.

The current threats in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden have also led to a noticeable increase in incidents that are perceived as suspicious by seafarers, including outside the immediate area. Reporting such incidents is strongly encouraged. At the same time, all reports must be thoroughly assessed 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.

The Saudis and the Houthis are involved in difficult negotiations about a peace agreement that would very likely involve financial and economic concessions to the Houthis. Neither side wants to jeopardise a potential deal. Saudi Arabia has refrained from criticising the Houthis which is a noticeable difference from Saudi rhetoric in the past. Moreover, attacks against commercial shipping have not interrupted the negotiations although it is impossible to assess when a final agreement will be signed. Houthi forces are very likely to continue to engage in attacks on maritime traffic as long as they deem their attacks unlikely to scupper the ongoing talks.

Guidance on commercial operations

Ship transits

Several shipping industry organisations have published the "Interim Industry Transit Advice, Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden – 5 February 2024". 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.

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

Phone: +44 2393 222060

Website: www.ukmto.org

Contact details MSCHOA

Email: postmaster@mschoa.org

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

Website: www.mschoa.org

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

Phone: +973 1785 3879

Email: m-ba-navcent-ncags@us.navy.mil

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 developing adapted procedures 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 by the crew to minimise the impact of any security incident.

Red Sea – threat assessment (summary)

Following the 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 by other ships owned by the same company. Threats against merchant 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 since January, which has progressively expanded the scope of vessels considered as "legitimate targets" by the Houthis. The threat level for other ships is assessed as elevated. It is likely that the US and UK strikes are impacting the Houthis' missile launch capabilities, though the extent of that impact is impossible to assess.

The increased threat level is a result of the Israel/Gaza conflict and subsequent Houthi actions. Naval vessels have intercepted a number of drones and missiles intended for Israeli targets, or against the naval ships themselves. The Houthis have also threatened to strike vessels in the Mediterranean and in the Indian Ocean, even if they are transiting around the Cape of Good Hope. It is very unlikely, however, that Houthi forces are able to conduct such strikes autonomously.

The situation is evolving as the list of possible targets has expanded over time. 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 which are 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. What the Houthis consider to constitute a link strong enough to warrant a strike is variable and an internal decision. The Houthis have conducted strikes against vessels with airborne and seaborne drones, missiles of different types and occasionally personnel aboard skiffs.

It is also important to highlight the increased threat of collateral damage, particularly in the southern Red Sea with still dense maritime traffic. It is very likely that Houthi forces have missed their intended targets on several occasions, 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 and so far in 2024, 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 2024 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 definition of threat levels. A concise assessment of all threats listed in the table can be found on the Risk Intelligence System.

Threat type	Threat level
Terrorism	Moderate
Piracy	Low
Insurgency and Military Operations	High
Cargo Theft	Moderate
Smuggling	Elevated
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, east towards India), including the Somali Basin, Gulf of Aden, and western Arabian Sea. Houthi operations targeting merchant ships in transit can take place in the western Gulf of Aden where threat levels are similar to the southern Red Sea. In the Indian Ocean, there is an elevated threat of piracy off Somalia and a moderate-elevated drone threat to merchant ships in the Somali Basin, Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

There is still a potential for pirate operations in the Somali Basin and the Gulf of Aden, the threat is elevated. Recent cases show that pirates retain boarding capabilities at significant distances offshore, as far as 800 nautical miles from Somalia. The hijacked ABDULLAH was released on 14 April after a claimed \$5 million ransom was paid. The successful ransom has demonstrated that the piracy model still functions – that vessels can be held by pirates off the Somali coast and ransom payments received. Pirate activity declined through the summer months of 2024, with monsoon weather a contributing factor for operations far offshore.

There have also been several reported boardings of fishing dhows off Somalia since November 2023; the level of activity has varied through 2024. One fishing vessel was hijacked in May and held temporarily while the attackers took food and supplies, an armed robbery against a Yemeni fishing dhow was reported in June. These were likely linked to illegal fishing activity in the area, which is an ongoing issue and has been a focus for Somalia in expanding its maritime enforcement capabilities.

In general, merchant ships in transit should be aware of the potential to encounter small armed craft in this area, particularly the Gulf of Aden. These might be fishermen, traders, smugglers, militia or irregular military forces, or military or coastguard patrols 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 was very likely related to Houthi-led actions against Israel-linked vessels, even though it has been described as a 'piracy incident' by military sources.

The Houthis have announced their intentions to target vessels also in the Indian Ocean. These intentions have been in some cases communicated directly to operators from the so-called Humanitarian Operations Coordination Centre (HOCC). However, Houthi capabilities to target ships at such distances are highly limited without outside assistance. Claims of successful strikes in the Indian Ocean (and the eastern Mediterranean) have not been corroborated and in cases to date are likely to be explained by the Houthi intention to appeal to broader Arab audiences.

Nonetheless, the MSC ORION was attacked by a drone on 27 April off Socotra in an attack claimed by the Houthis. The threat is generally assessed to be moderate in this area, as the main area of Houthi operations remains the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden but is elevated for vessels that have been specifically assessed by the Houthis as being targets. A similar attack to the MSC ORION took place on the MAERSK SENTOSA on 9 July in the eastern Gulf of Aden.

In Yemen, multiple political factions operate their own militias in addition to security forces from Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Terrorist groups have a limited presence. There have been no recent

incidents, aside from those linked to Houthi operations. The general situation in Yemen is primarily a consideration for operations close to the Yemeni coast or for port calls in the country.

Naval patrols operate in the area, such as EUNAVFOR's Operation Atalanta. Naval 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 still operational. National deployments are also ongoing, such as the Indian naval presence which has been effective in recent actions.

Shipping industry associations have published transit guidance for the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, emphasising the importance of thorough ship and voyage-specific threat and risk assessments before passing through the area. The shipping industry 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 Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Arabian Sea, administered by the Maritime Trade Information Centre (MTIC)/UKMTO (Dubai). UKMTO acts as primary point of contact for merchant vessels and liaison with military forces in the region. Vessels are encouraged to report positions while operating in the area. MSCHOA manages the EUNAVFOR (EU Naval Forces Somalia and Operation Atalanta) voluntary registration scheme for ships transiting the area and communicates EUNAVFOR counter-piracy guidance to the maritime industry.

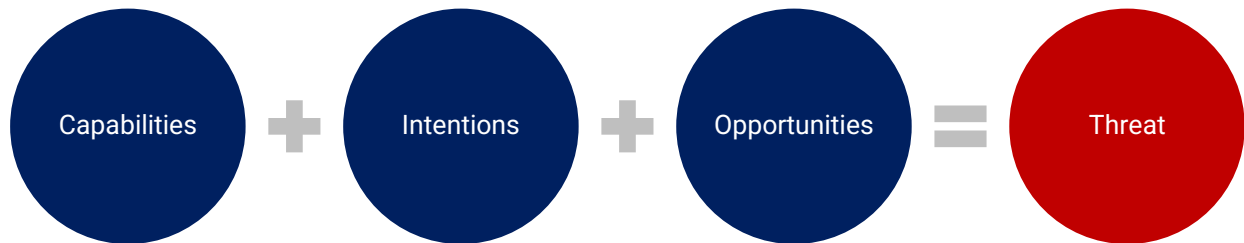
Threat levels

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Terrorism	Moderate
Piracy	Elevated
Insurgency and Military Operations	Moderate
Cargo Theft	Moderate
Smuggling	Moderate
Stowaways and human trafficking	Moderate
Fraud and corruption	Low
Activism	Moderate

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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