



Date: 05th November 2024

Circular no.: 0066C/TG/11/24

To: Ship owners/ Ship-operators & Ship-managers/ Masters/ Officers/ CSOs / SSOs/ Recognized Organizations/ Recognized Security Organizations/ Deputy Registrars.

Subject: Threats to merchant vessels in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Arabian sea.

References:

- a) Interim Industry Transit Advise, Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, 15th Dec. 2023
-Updated circular by the industry on 24 September 2024.
- b) IMO Resolution A.1106(29), REVISED GUIDELINES FOR THE ONBOARD OPERATIONAL USE OF SHIPBORNE AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS (AIS).
- c) CMF Guidance for Shipping Navigating the Southern Red Sea, Issue 01/2023, 23rd Dec. 2023.
- d) Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea (**BMP 5**)

Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to inform Owners/Operators/Company Security Officers/master's and other interested parties of the imminent threat of attacks to vessels transiting the Arabian/Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Bab-al-Mandeb, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Strait of Hormuz, and Red Sea. Togo flagged vessels transiting the above sea areas are advised to increase their security level, to conduct a thorough ship and voyage-specific threat and risk assessment and to report to the competent operational centers of the region.

Background

1. During December 2023 and January 2024, there has been an increase in attacks, carried out mainly by members of Yemen's rebels against vessels sailing through the Red Sea. These attacks have largely consisted of missile and drone strikes targeting commercial vessels primarily, which the rebels believe to be destined for and/or have departed from Israeli ports or are vessels owned, managed, and/or operated by Israeli entities.

2. There are also many instances of commercial vessels being harassed and/or seized by foreign military vessels when transiting the Persian Gulf and its approaches. Local military forces in this area have used small boats and/or helicopters to board commercial vessels and attempted to force these vessels into their territorial waters. Although some past incidents may have targeted specific commercial vessels due to their association with certain countries, cargoes, individuals, or companies, not all did. The possibility for miscalculation or misidentification therefore remains, potentially leading to aggressive actions against any commercial vessel.

3. In addition to illegal boardings and seizures, threats in the wider Gulf of Aden and Red Sea regions may come from a number of different sources including, but not limited to, drones (unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)), limpet mines, explosive boats, and pirates and armed robbers.



With little or no warning, vessels operating in these areas may also encounter navigation or communication disruptions.

4. These events have caused wide-ranging damage, to both individual vessels and the global trade industry as a whole, with oil major shipping companies and carriers recently suspending all shipping operations via the Red Sea. According to industry sources, it is estimated that approximately 15% of global trade and 40% of Asia-Europe trade passes through the Red Sea. There are reports of an increasing number of vessels belonging to major shipping lines that have diverted to cross the Cape of Good Hope on Africa's southern tip. Such a diversion adds around 3,000 nautical miles and additional 10 days or even weeks to the sailing times of vessels booked to transit the Suez Canal with significant operational, logistical, and cost implications.

Escalating Security Situation at the Red Sea

1. Over the last few weeks, the militia has engaged in threats and attacks on multiple vessels engaged in innocent passage through the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Arabian Sea. On multiple occasions, the militia has launched missiles from drones and has demanded ships to turn around and proceed to Houthi-controlled area.

2. Togo flagged vessels transiting the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Arabian Sea are strongly advised to increase their security level and implement all protective measures in their Ship Security Plan. In addition, vessels should avoid calling ports in Yemen controlled by rebels.

3. In line with international shipping organizations' guidance and as per [International Maritime Organization \(IMO\) Resolution A.1106\(29\)](#) paragraph 22, if the master believes that the continual operation of AIS might compromise the safety and security of his/her ship or where security incidents are imminent, the AIS may be switched off. It is noted that limiting AIS data to the mandatory fields and omitting the next port of call is considered by international shipping organizations mostly efficient in operational terms.

Basis For Preparedness: Best Management Practices (BMP 5)

1. The purpose of the "[Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea](#)" is to help ships plan their voyage and to detect, avoid, deter, delay, and report attacks. Experience has shown application of the recommendations in this publication makes a significant difference to the safety of seafarers.

2. The current basis for preparedness in this respect is set by BMP5. Following BMP 5, ships that are planning a passage through the Southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden should conduct a thorough ship and voyage-specific threat and risk assessment considering any additional advice by the mentioned operational centers and industry organizations, as well as additional guidance by this Administration. The industry recommendation to use the Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC) remains unchanged in light of the recent attacks.

4



Reporting To Operational Centres

The key output from UKMTO (UK Maritime Trade Operations, <https://www.ukmto.org/indian-ocean/about-indian-ocean>) is the maintenance of a coherent Maritime Situational Awareness picture in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea, to inform and support industry, contributing to the safety of the mariner. All vessels are advised to report to the UKMTO and register with the Maritime Security Centre for the Horn of Africa (MSCHOA, <https://on-shore.mschoa.org/>) under industry BMP (Best Management Practices) and take advice from the coalition forces operating in the area. Best Management Practices 5 (BMP5) will continue to provide the necessary guidance for shipping to ensure threat and risk assessments are developed for every voyage to mitigate the risks presented by remaining security threats in the region.

Emergency Situations – Contacting Operational Centers

It is advised to contact MSCHOA before transiting the Western Indian Ocean, the Somali Basin, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, and the Red Sea.

1. The contact details of MSCHOA are:

Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)

Email: postmaster@mschoa.org

Telephone: +44 1923 958545, +44 1923 958700

Website: www.mschoa.org

2. When transiting the Western Indian Ocean, the Somali Basin, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, and the Red Sea it is advised to register with UKMTO (United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, <https://www.ukmto.org/>).

UKMTO (United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations)

Email: watchkeepers@ukmto.org; and ukmto@eim.ae

Telephone: +44 - 2392-222060, +971-50-552-3215

Contact Information:

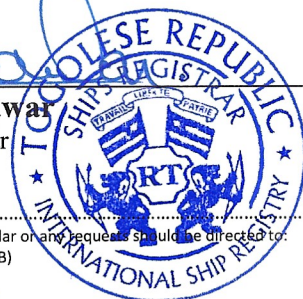
Registrar for Togo flagged vessels: Mrs. Vera Medawar administration@togoregistrar.com / verazervos@gmail.com or +961-1-883794.

Attached (in electronic form)

1. Interim Industry Transit Advise, Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, 15th Dec. 2023 (p.3)
2. CMF Guidance for Shipping Navigating the Southern Red Sea, Issue 01/2023, 23rd Dec. 2023(p.2).

For the International Ship Registry of Togo


Vera N. Medawar
Ship Registrar




Mr. Matononawe Bakai
Director of Maritime Affairs

