

Circular From GARD**Date: 13 January 2021****US MARAD Updates Its Red Sea/Gulf of Aden Security Warning**

The conflict in Yemen continues to pose a risk to commercial vessels transiting the southern Red Sea, Bab al Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden.

On 14 December 2020 the US Maritime Administration (MARAD) issued a [revised advisory \(2020-017\)](#) to US flagged commercial vessels operating in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. The advisory warns that the conflict in Yemen continues to pose a risk to commercial vessels and states that threats may come from a number 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. Additionally, piracy poses a threat in the Gulf of Aden, Western Arabian Sea, and Western Indian Ocean, cautions MARAD.

MARAD recommends vessels operating in this area to review security measures, ensure their AIS is transmitting at all times (except in extraordinary circumstances, consistent with provisions of SOLAS), and monitor VHF Channel 16. Furthermore, the following guidance is provided:

- Conduct a pre-voyage risk assessment and incorporate appropriate protective measures into their vessel security plans. Take advice from available industry guidances such as the [BMP5](#).
- Avoid entering or loitering near Yemen's ports, and exercise increased caution if entering Yemen's territorial waters or Saudi territorial waters north of Yemen on the Red Sea.
- Be especially vigilant when at anchor, operating in restricted maneuvering environments, or proceeding at slow speeds.
- Establish and remain in contact with the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Office (UKMTO) as per the BMP5. Immediately report any incident or suspicious incident.
- Answer all VHF calls from coalition navies.

Like MARAD, the [IMB Piracy Reporting Centre \(PRC\)](#) encourages Masters and shipowners to register and report their vessels as per the BMP5 procedures and ensure that their vessel is hardened prior to entering the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden/Somalia/Arabian Sea/Indian Ocean high-risk area. While transiting through these waters it is essential to maintain a 24-hour visual and radar watch. Keeping in mind the warnings and alerts for the area, an early sighting/detection of an approaching skiff will enable an accurate assessment, allowing the Master and any privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) to make informed decisions to keep clear of small boats, dhows, fishing vessels and if necessary, take evasive actions and request assistance as needed. The IMB PRC also reminds Masters that fishermen in this region may try to protect

their nets by attempting to aggressively approach merchant vessels. Some of the fishermen may be armed to protect their catch and they should not be confused with pirates.

Source of Information: The Gard P&I Club

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