



Merchant Marine **Notice**

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

F-34
(DCCM)
V.04

YEMEN, RED SEA, GULF OF ADEN AND PERSIAN AND THEIR APPROACHES

No: **MMN-03/2024**

1. This Merchant Marine Notice replaces **MMN-09/2023** - RED SEA, GULF OF ADEN AND PERSIAN AND THEIR APPROACHES.
2. Due to recent threats from Yemen's Houthi rebels, the Panama Maritime Administration strongly recommends all Panama Flag Registry vessels to take all security measures and **avoid transiting the Red Sea, with increased caution through the Strait of Bab al Mandeb.**
3. Since the beginning of the conflict between Israel and Gaza on October 7, 2023, geopolitical tensions in the Red Sea have increased, with particular attention to Israeli ships turning off AIS transmissions while transiting the region.
4. The Yemen-based Ansar Allah movement (the Houthis) launched its first missile and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attack towards Israeli territory on October 19, 2023, a situation that has been increasing in recent months causing serious threats to commercial vessels transiting that area. This rebel movement controls significant parts of Yemen along the coast of the Red Sea.
5. The ability of this rebel movement to disrupt merchant shipping has been evidenced by the attack on the Bahamas Flag vessel Galaxy Trader on November 19, 2023, while in southern Red Sea on route to India, off Hodeidah, Yemen. The ship turned off her AIS transmissions 24 hours before the incident, approximately 250 nautical miles north of the site of the incident.
6. The Houthi rebel movement's attacks are characterized by the use of sea mines, in strategic navigable waterways, missiles and remotely controlled improvised explosive devices in the Red Sea, with the aim of attacking commercial maritime transport using coastal radars, warships or patrol vessels, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to track and monitor merchant ships.

7. We urge all Panama Flag Registry vessels transiting: the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Strait of Hormuz (SoH), Bab-al-Mandeb (BaM), Gulf of Oman and their accesses to implement the security level 3 or equivalent port security measures in those areas and maintain communication at all times with UKMTO and the Central Command of the USA Naval Forces.
8. This Administration strongly recommends following the recommendations listed below:
 - Review BMP5 at all times.
 - Evaluate the ship's route, particularly proximity to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iranian Navy assets, controlled sites and the coasts of Yemen, attempting to navigate as far away as possible from these areas.
 - It is recommended to maintain complete surveillance on the bridge.
 - Transit through the Red Sea, Bab-al-Mandeb (BaM) and Strait of Hormuz (SoH), at night to avoid detection and maintain communication with maritime security centers at all times.
 - Remain alert at all times; At night, small and slow boats without a wake are difficult to detect on radar. Don't stop if threatened and present a challenging target through proactive maneuvers.
 - Maintain strict surveillance of communications and establish communication with all approaching vessels. Do not allow small boats to approach or dock. Use a reflector to identify yourself at night.
 - Consistently and thoroughly conduct a threat risk assessment before traveling and entering any region where there has been an incident or the threat has changed.
 - After a risk assessment, review the Vessel Protection Plan, and if necessary, modify it to secure the vessel, crew and cargo.
 - Follow the BIMCO and INTERTANKO recommendations regarding transiting the conflicted areas.
 - Vessels using privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) are advised to re-evaluate use of force standards with their private maritime security company and avoid any type of confrontation with military forces, as it may result in a significant escalation. The use of PCASP is not recommended as a risk mitigation measure in the northern Gulf of Oman (north of Fujairah, UAE), Strait of Hormuz (SoH), or the Arabian/Persian Gulf.
 - Guarantee strict boarding controls.
 - Go down hallways or accommodation stairs only when necessary.
 - Install exterior lights wherever possible, as long as they do not interfere with maintaining a safe lookout, especially aft, and install/use searchlights if available.
 - Monitor relevant VHF and other communication channels.



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- Check all firefighting equipment available for immediate use. Make sure the emergency fire pump is available if any maintenance is performed.
 - Conduct fire and safety drills/exercises before entering higher risk areas.
9. All vessels hoisting the Panama flag before, during and after transiting the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Persian and their approaches must keep the automatic identification system (AIS) and LRIT on except in those cases in which the captain consider that the safety of the vessel could be compromised or when a safety incident is imminent. In accordance with the provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), VHF Channel 16 must also be monitored and communication maintained at all times with the naval forces in the area and with the Panama Maritime Administration, and report any incident or suspicious activity as soon as possible.
 10. In case the Captains/S.S.O. and the companies decide and consider the shutdown of the aforementioned equipment, they must notify and report the status of the ship and its crew every 4 hours via email to compliance@amp.gob.pa.
 11. This Administration urges all shipowners, operators, Company Security Officers (CSO) and Ship Security Officers to verify that the LRIT System and AIS are functioning correctly at all times, in order to continuously send vessel positions.
 12. In light of the evolving geopolitical context in the region, especially concerning operations in Houthi-controlled ports in Yemen, shipowners and operators are urged to consult Marine Notice MMN-03/2025. That notice provides specific guidance on the legal implications and sanctions risks following the expiration of OFAC General License 25A, complementing the security considerations addressed in this document.
 13. In view of the recent military escalations involving Israel and Iran, which have further increased instability in the broader Middle East region, the Panama Maritime Authority recommends reviewing Marine Notice MMN-04/2025. That notice provides updated guidance regarding the operational and security risks specific to the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Strait of Hormuz, and surrounding areas, complementing the security measures described herein for vessels transiting the Red Sea and adjacent waters.
 14. All Panama Flag Registry vessels trading in these areas are expected to comply with international requirements related to position reporting, and the Panama Maritime Authority may sanction violations of such provisions in accordance with national legislation, if they do not formally report through LRIT and AIS to our Administration at the appropriate time.



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UKMTO

watchkeepers@ukmto.org

Emergency numbers: +44 (0) 239 222 2060 / +971 50 552 2315.

United States Naval Forces Central Command (USNAVCENT)

Naval Co-operation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS)

(cusnc.ncags_bw@me.navy.mil)

+973 3904 9583 / +973 1785 1023 / 1024 / 2983 / 0084.

USNAVCENT Maritime Operations Center (NAVCENT MOC)

+973 1785 3879 / +973 1785 4577 (fleet watch)

July, 2025 – Inclusion of paragraph 12 and 13. Modification of paragraph 10.

February, 2024 – New. This Merchant Marine Notice replaces MMN-09/2023 - RED SEA, GULF OF ADEN AND PERSIAN AND THEIR APPROACHES.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Notice or any other request should be forward to:

Maritime Ships Security Department
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Panama Maritime Authority

Phone: (507) 501-5016

E-mail: compliance@amp.gob.pa

Website: <https://panamashipregistry.com/marine-category/marine-notice>