



Maritime security recommendations for operations in the Persian Gulf

Industry organizations remind ship operators and seafarers operating in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea to remain vigilant and listen for military warnings at all times.

Published 07 January 2021

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On 5 January 2021, the [Round Table of Industry Associations](#) and [OCIMF](#) jointly published a set of recommended risk mitigating measures for vessels operating in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. This was done in response to the 31 December 2020 incident, where a Liberian-flagged tanker identified the presence of a suspicious object, later reported to be a limpet mine, attached to its hull whilst conducting STS operations off Iraq. There is apparently no indication where or when the device was attached to the vessel's hull or who did this. It is also understood that officials from Iraq safely removed the device.

Their “ [Industry Guidance incident in PG.pdf](#) ” following this incident is outlined below.

Risk mitigating measures

Ship operators are recommended to review the “ [Best Management Practices \(BMP5\)](#))“ and consider sending the following guidance to vessels operating in the abovementioned region:

- Undertake a new ship and voyage specific threat risk assessment before entering any region where there has been an incident, or the threat has changed.
- After the risk assessment, review the Ship's Security Plan.
- Review section 2 of BMP5, which outlines non-piracy threats.
- Maintain a full and vigilant bridge watch. At night, slow small boats with no wake are difficult to spot on a radar.
- Maintain a strict communication watch and establish communication with all vessels coming close. Do not allow small boats to approach or to come alongside. Use a searchlight for identification at night.
- Ensure that strict boarding controls are in place.
- Only lower accommodation gangways or ladders when necessary.
- Rig outboard lighting where possible provided they do not interfere with keeping a safe lookout, particularly over the stern and rig/use searchlights if available.
- Report any suspicious activity or objects immediately to both the port and UKMTO, see detailed “ [Reporting Guidance](#) ” for the region.
- Monitor relevant VHF and other communication channels.
- Check that all fire-fighting equipment is available for immediate use. Make sure the emergency fire pump is available if any maintenance is being undertaken.
- Keep the Automatic Information System (AIS) on. There is no need to complete the field stating the last or next port of call.
- Conduct visual checks of the hull:
- Undertake a visual search from the deck, all around the vessel to check for anything attached to the hull of the vessel. Particular attention should be paid to the hull at the waterline.
- Conduct regular rounds and search the upper deck.

- If a vessel detects anything unusual attached to the hull, then the Master should contact the UKMTO and Flag State immediately. All crew should be evacuated from the immediate area and mustered in a safe place. No attempt should be made to remove it. The vessel should follow the advice of the military authorities.

If a vessel is alerted to suspicious activity whilst at anchor, the following additional measures should be considered:

- Rotate the propeller continuously or at short, irregular intervals.
- Operate bow and stern thrusters at zero (0) thrust at irregular intervals.
- Turn the rudder frequently.
- Switch the echo sounder to transmit counter/combat swimmer/diver threat.

Additional sources of information can be downloaded from the “Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin, Arabian Sea” section of the Maritime Global Security website (<https://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org/>).

See also our alert “ [US MARAD updates its security warning for the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and Western Indian Ocean region](#) ” of 20 September 2021.