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WEEKLY THREAT ADVISORY NO. 718

(1 – 7 August 2025)

Summary of Threat Activities and Conclusion

1. Pirate and maritime crime activity in East Africa and the Indian Ocean. HRA saw an increase in the number of piracy activities in the HRA. US Naval Intelligence has issued warnings, which were featured in WETA No. 696. There were no reports of attacks or incidents arising from piracy or a politically motivated background. Nevertheless, the threat level remains high given the political volatility and tension in the region, which criminal and pirate syndicates may exploit. Piracy, as with all criminal activities, thrives on surprise for success. It is when nobody expects it that the perpetrators will strike and achieve their intent!

2. Based on the geographical development, the general forecast is that the piracy situation will persist even though the conflict between Israel, the Hamas, the Hezbollah, the Houthis, Iran and other Arab factions seems to stabilise. The new political problem brewing in Syria may be another flash point to spark a new conflict among the warring fraction. In the meantime, pirate and criminal syndicates operating in Somalia will exploit the turmoil and chaos to conduct opportunistic attacks against defenceless commercial shipping. UMS HQ warns all stakeholders, that the maritime industry should brace for increased pirate activity as the post-monsoon season brings calmer seas. In WETA No. 689, UMS HQ issued an Annex for instructions on enhanced measures during this period.

3. U.S. Maritime Advisory 025-008: Gulf of Guinea / Armed Robbery / Kidnapping for Ransom Issued on 18 June 2025. This advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory2024-014 and will automatically expire on 15 December 2025. Piracy, Armed Robbery, and Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR) continue to pose significant threats to vessels and crews operating in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) as well as to mariners onboard a vessel, or transiting to or from a vessel in the GoG. Details of incidents in the GoG can be found in the Office of Naval Intelligence Worldwide Threat to Shipping reports, posted at https://www.oni.navy.mil/ONI-Reports/Shipping-Threat-Reports/Worldwide-Threat- to-Shipping/. For any maritime industry questions about this advisory, contact GMCC@uscg.mil. Supplemental information may also be found on the

MARAD Office of Maritime Security website at https://www.maritime.dot.gov/ports/office-security/office-maritime-security.

4. Joint Maritime Information Centre Update No. 003

4.1. As of this report dated 14 June 2025 1300 UTC, there are no changes to JMIC Advisory Update 002. The regional threat level remains significant as strikes continue from both Iran and Israel. Regarding the maritime, the Strait of Hormuz remains open and commercial traffic continues to flow uninterrupted. JMIC and UKMTO have received no recent reports of electronic interference in the SoH.

4.2. JMIC advises companies to conduct due diligence before accepting unconfirmed media reports in the maritime.

4.3. The JMIC continues to monitor the situation closely and will provide timely updates should there be any changes. Monitor the UKMTO and MSCIO website for updated information.

4.4. Daily updates will be provided unless there is a reason to provide more timely information.

4.5. Background: Based on open-source media, Israeli authorities forwarded an ultimatum to both Iran and the United States, stating that a nuclear agreement must be reached by Sunday 15 June between the two countries. If not, Israeli leadership has an intent to initiate military action against Iran. The statement introduces a short operational pause until Sunday to allow diplomatic efforts.

4.6. Summary 14 June:

4.6.1. Following IDF unilateral military operations against the Islamic Republic of Iran on 13 June, Iran retaliated by firing waves of ballistic missiles at Israel.

4.6.2. Iranian government media warned that American military bases in the region could also become targets as the conflict expands. Given the proximity of regional flashpoints to major maritime

routes and chokepoints, the potential for rapid escalation involving the maritime environment should not be discounted. The threat from the Houthi, who have publicly stated their intent to respond if the U.S. is perceived to be involved, increases the threat of a broader regional impact.

4.7. Situation 14 June: •

4.7.1. Iran and Israel traded missiles and airstrikes on Saturday 14 June 2025.

4.7.2. Military operations commenced early morning on 13 June, 2025 to include missile strikes and drone activity. Marine operators have reported significant electronic interference in the region.

4.7.3. Diplomatic efforts between the United States and Iran concerning nuclear negotiations have reportedly stalled.

4.7.4. Rhetoric from regional actors has intensified; increasing the probability of a military operations involving direct engagement. International diplomats are calling for calm and diplomacy.

4.7.5. There is a possibility that military operations could spill over beyond bilateral hostilities into the wider region. 3.

4.8. Maritime Implications:

4.8.1. While there are no confirmed indications of an immediate threat to maritime traffic, the following scenarios would prompt a reassessment

4.8.2. Use of ballistic or cruise missiles near major maritime chokepoints.

4.8.3. Targeting of western-aligned or affiliated commercial vessels.

4.8.4. Collateral risks from regional conflict expanding to coastal, offshore, or port infrastructure.

4.9. Recommended Actions:

4.9.1. Owners and charterers continue to conduct thorough threat and risk assessments well in advance of entering the Arabian Gulf and implement necessary security and risk mitigation measures while operating in the region. As the situation remains fluid, pay close attention to the changing environment.

4.9.2. Closely monitor all electronic aids and communication networks for electronic interference. Be ready with alternative options should navigation aids fail.

4.9.3. Threat Level: Threat in the maritime remains elevated until further notice for vessels operating in or transiting the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Northern Arabian Sea.

4.9.4. Situational Monitoring: Shipmasters and CSOs are advised to maintain close contact with regional maritime security centers (UKMTO and MSCIO) and monitor official government and military advisories.

4.9.5. Communications: Vessels should report any unusual activity or security incidents to UKMTO via established Voluntary Reporting Schemes and keep communication equipment manned and functional at all times.

4.9.6. Planning: Companies are urged to apply BMP MS and review contingency plans for routing, crew welfare, and emergency response in the event of a significant regional escalation and ensure JMIC Bridge Emergency Reference Cards are available to bridge watchkeepers. The use of full speed maybe be a consideration

4.9.7. JMIC recommends following Best Management Practices and industry recommended MSTC-ME routing when transiting the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Northern Arabian Sea. Given the current operational pause, this window may be used to move, load or discharge vessels and if necessary, reposition into international

waters. Should strikes occur, consider staying within territorial waters.

4.10. Additional Notes: This update is based on the most recent development over the past 24-hours.

5. The Joint Maritime Information Centre Advisory Note 007/25

5.1. The Joint Maritime Information Centre (JMIC) issues this advisory to alert commercial shipping and associated maritime stakeholders regarding a recent declaration by the Houthi-controlled 'Harakat al-Houthis Operations Command Council' (HOCC). The statement, released via affiliated media channels, indicates an expansion of their threat posture in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. According to the declaration beginning 20 May 2025, vessels that have called at the Israeli port of Haifa or are alleged to have collaborated with Israeli entities may now be subject to targeted action by HOCC elements.

5.2. This expanded criteria explicitly includes sister ships—vessels under the same ownership, management, or operator network—as part of the new targeting posture. This implies that a vessel may be deemed hostile by HOCC not due to its own operational history, but solely because another vessel in its corporate structure has engaged in Israeli port activity. The risk applies regardless of flag, cargo, or current voyage route. ***JMIC notes that this is very similar to the May 2024 Houthi Phase 4 announcement of attacks expanded to include ships whose owners/operators have vessels visiting Israeli ports.***

5.3. In response, JMIC strongly urges all shipping companies and operators with vessels transiting the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden to:

5.3.1. Conduct a comprehensive audit of any Haifa, Israel port calls within their fleet, including those of sister vessels, time-chartered vessels, and vessels under common beneficial ownership or technical management.

5.3.2. Evaluate their digital footprint, including AIS transmission logs, vessel-tracking platforms, and public maritime databases, for any historical linkage that could be interpreted by HOCC-affiliated actors as grounds for targeting.

5.3.3. Reinforce cybersecurity and information control protocols, particularly concerning voyage routing, port call data, and affiliations that may be available through open-source intelligence (OSINT) methods.

5.4. JMIC will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as required.

6. U.S. Maritime Advisory 2025-006: Worldwide - Foreign Adversarial Technological, Physical and Cyber Influence. Issued on 9 April 2025. This advisory seeks to alert maritime stakeholders of potential vulnerabilities to maritime port equipment, networks, operating systems, software, and infrastructure. Foreign companies manufacture, install, and maintain port equipment that create vulnerabilities to global maritime infrastructure information technology (IT) and operational technology (OT) systems. The U.S. Government in the past few years has published several documents illuminating the risks associated with integrating and utilizing China's state-supported National Public Information Platform for Transportation and Logistics (LOGINK), Nuctech scanners, and automated ship-to- shore cranes worldwide. For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, please visit https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci/. This advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2024-011 and will automatically expire on 6 October 2025.

7. U.S. Maritime Advisory 2025-005: Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, and Somali Basin - Houthi Attacks on Commercial Vessels. Issued on 28 March 2025. This advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2025-001. On 15 March, U. S. forces commenced strikes against targets used by Houthi terrorists in Yemen to launch attacks against commercial and military vessels operating within international shipping lanes. Houthi forces have subsequently threatened to strike U.S. assets, including commercial vessels, and are at high risk until further notice. For maritime industry questions about this advisory, contact the Global Maritime Operational Threat Response Coordination Center at GMCC@uscg.mil. Supplemental information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, may be found at:

https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci. This message will automatically expire on 24 September 2025.

8. US Naval Intelligence has issued a new advisory. U.S. Maritime Advisory (2025-004: Black Sea and Sea of Azov - Military Combat Operations) Issued on 5 March 2025. This advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2024-012. Since February 2022, projectiles have reportedly struck commercial vessels and experienced explosions in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. There have also been reports of moored and drifting naval mines. While some past actions may have targeted specific commercial vessels due to their association with certain countries or their activity, the potential remains for miscalculation or misidentification, resulting in a high risk of damage to commercial vessels in the region. For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, please visit https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci. This advisory will automatically expire on 1 September 2025.

9. US Naval Intelligence has issued three advisories, and all stakeholders, including Masters, crew members, Team Leaders, and maritime marshals, are to heed these warnings.

10. **Three U.S. Maritime Advisories (2025-001, 2025-002, and 2025-003) were issued on 14 February 2025.** These advisories clarify specific threats faced in the Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Strait of Hormuz, and Indian Ocean. For maritime industry questions on these advisories, contact the Global Maritime Operational Threat Response Coordination Center at GMCC@uscg.mil. Supplemental information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, may be found at https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci. These advisories will automatically expire on 11 August 2025.

11. **U.S. Maritime Advisory 2025-001: Southern Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden - Houthi Attacks on Commercial Vessels.** This advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2024-008. On 19 January 2025, Houthi officials in Yemen claimed that they were ceasing their attacks on U.S.- and U.K- flagged, owned, and affiliated commercial vessels; commercial vessels partially owned or managed by Israeli individuals or entities; and commercial vessels bound for Israeli ports. Due to current uncertainty regarding these Houthi announcements,

commercial vessels remain at risk from terrorism and other hostile actions from the Houthis when transiting this region until further notice.

12. **U.S. Maritime Advisory 2025-002: Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman - Iranian Illegal Boarding / Detention / Seizure**. This advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2024-009. Although there is no specific threat to U.S.-flagged vessels, commercial vessels transiting this region may be at risk of being illegally boarded and detained or seized by Iranian forces. Iranian forces have utilized small boats and helicopters during boarding operations and have attempted to force commercial vessels into Iranian territorial waters.

13. **U.S. Maritime Advisory 2025-003: Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean - Piracy/Armed Robbery / Kidnapping for Ransom**. This advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2024-010. Recent cases of piracy pose a general threat to all commercial vessels operating in this region. Since November 2023, there have been seven reported boarding/hijacking incidents. Pirates have utilized captured fishing vessels as motherships. Successful or attempted boardings and suspicious approaches have been reported up to 960 NM off the coast of Somalia. Specific case details are available at https://www.oni.navy.mil/ONI-Reports/Shipping-Threat-Reports/Worldwide-Threat-to-Shipping/.

14. There have been some calls by some ignorant commercial bodies that do not understand the threat deeply and well enough to call for the removal of AST onboard commercial vessels due to concerns that the onboard AST might cause an incident with approaching naval craft. While the concerns are reasonable, the proposed solution to remove the onboard AST is highly unprofessional and dangerous. Implementing it would make the commercial vessels concerned ‘sitting ducks’ in the face of attacks by Somali pirates who take advantage of the chaos and distractions caused by the conflict. Some intelligence sources have established that some pirate action groups are working in cahoot with the Houthis. Therefore, we should see the increased attacks by Somali pirates linked with the Houthis activities in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. For this reason, UMS HQ instructed how UMS Maritime Marshals will respond and behave when confronted with this situation.

15. All vessels in the vicinity are, therefore, to exercise caution and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO.

16. In the latest quarterly report by UKMTO, it was reported that there has been an increased incidence of suspicious sightings compared to a year ago before the lifting off of the HRA by commercial shipping bodies. Intelligence agencies have unanimously agreed that there would be attempts by pirates' syndicates to exploit hopefully a relaxed attitude by the shipping community, and today we are seeing the manifestation of the situation happening. In other words, the possibility of a successful hijack can only be prevented if vessels have on-board armed security teams (AST) to deter and if necessary, prevent any attack and boarding by pirates.

17. The main message of the Quarterly Reporting by UKMTO is that piracy has been suppressed but not eradicated. So long as the socio-politico-economic problems of Somalia and Yemen are unresolved, the threat of piracy against commercial shipping will remain.

18. All Masters and UMS Maritime are advised to remain vigilant. The increased piracy-related activities in the waters of the Indian Ocean and East Africa/Red Sea have, in fact, been anticipated by intelligence agencies by the removal of the HRA by world commercial bodies but not by the War Committee, which assessed that the present situation has inadvertently increased the threat level.

19. UKMTO and other intelligence agencies have noticed increased activities by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). This recent development brings a new equation and range of challenges to the safety of commercial vessels transiting in waters that are prone to pirates' attacks in the Northern Indian Ocean and Southern Red Sae and maritime security operations. UMS HQ repeats the article on the subject in paragraph 31 given its importance in understanding the capabilities of UAV in maritime security operations (in particular paragraph 31.6) for a detailed exposition.

20. 2024-001-Southern Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden, Northwestern Indian Ocean, Somali Basin, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Strait of Hormuz, and Persian Gulf-Threats to Commercial Vessels

20.1. This advisory replaces and cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2023-011 and U.S. Maritime Alert 2024-001B

20.2. Issue: Regional conflict, military activity, and piracy pose significant threats to commercial vessels operating in the above listed geographic areas as evidenced by recent Houthi attacks and Somali piracy activity. The U.S. government is continually assessing the maritime security situation in the region to safeguard freedom of navigation, ensure the free flow of commerce, and protect U.S. vessels, personnel, and interests. The recent standup of Operation Prosperity Guardian is one of many examples of U.S. and international cooperative maritime security operations within this region. The following are currently deemed to be the most pressing threats to U.S.-flagged and U.S.-affiliated commercial vessels throughout this region.

20.3. **Houthi Hostile Actions**: Commercial vessels transiting the Southern Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden are at an elevated risk of hostile actions from the Houthis. Hostile actions include one-way Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) attacks; ballistic and cruise missile attacks; small arms fire from small boats; explosive boat attacks; and illegal boardings, detentions, and/or seizures. There have been at least 30 separate Houthi attacks on commercial vessels and one Houthi seizure of a commercial vessel in these areas, affecting over 55 nations since November 19, 2023. In November 2023, the Houthis conducted a helicopter-borne landing and seizure of a Bahamas-flagged commercial vessel in the Southern Red Sea. Entities claiming to be Yemeni authorities have also attempted to direct commercial vessels in the Southern Red Sea to divert to Yemen. These threats pose both direct and collateral risks to U.S.-flagged and U.S.-affiliated commercial vessels transiting in international shipping lanes, or otherwise operating in these areas.

20.3.1. U.S.-flagged commercial vessels operating in these areas are advised to remain as far as possible from Yemen's territorial sea without compromising navigational safety. Crewmembers should be especially vigilant when at anchor, operating in restricted maneuvering conditions, or proceeding at slow speeds.

20.3.2. Coordinate voyage planning with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) and consider their recommendations and guidance whenever possible. NAVCENT NCAGS stands a 24-hour

watch and has the latest information on the current maritime security threats and the operational environment in this region.

20.3.3. The route taken through these areas, and timing of the transit, remains at the discretion of individual companies and vessel Masters. Transiting these areas during hours of darkness may frustrate efforts to target vessels.

20.3.4. Adherence to all U.S. and international requirements and guidance regarding operation of AIS remains the responsibility of individual companies and vessel Masters. Ships operating with AIS switched on and off have both been the object of Houthi attacks. Switching AIS off makes it marginally more difficult to track or target a ship but may also hinder the ability of coalition forces to provide support.

20.3.5. U.S.-flagged commercial vessels are advised to provide hourly positional email updates to the NAVCENT NCAGS detachment when transiting these areas.

20.3.6. Maritime operators are advised to alert their crews to the fact that all electronics signals from their vessels pose a risk to maritime operations.

20.3.7. A missile strike on a Marshall Islands-flagged commercial tanker in the Gulf of Aden on January 26, 2024 resulted in a significant onboard fire. U.S.-flagged commercial vessels carrying flammable, explosive, or otherwise hazardous cargoes are strongly advised to reconsider transit through these areas. However, if planning voyages through these areas, vessels should take all prudent safety precautions, including thoroughly preparing for emergency responses, and considering carriage of additional safety and damage control preparedness supplies and equipment, such as those needed to extinguish fires.

20.3.8. If hailed on VHF by the Houthis, or entities claiming to be Yemeni authorities, and instructed to alter course to Al Hudaydah or another location on the northwest coast of Yemen, U.S.-flagged

commercial vessels should ignore the VHF call and continue their passage if safe to do so.

20.3.9. If the Houthis seek to board U.S.-flagged commercial vessels in these areas, the ship's Master should, if the safety of the ship and crew would not be compromised, decline permission to board, noting that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with international law, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention.

20.3.10. When combined with evasive maneuvering, vessels transiting these areas with armed security details onboard have successfully deterred boarding by individuals in approaching small craft. The decision whether to embark a contracted armed security detail and assessment of associated risks is the responsibility of individual companies and vessel Masters, who are responsible for establishing use of force guidance and pre-planned responses for vessels carrying contracted armed security details.

20.3.11. If Houthis board a U.S.-flagged commercial vessel without a contracted armed security detail onboard, the crew should not forcibly resist the boarding party. Refraining from forcible resistance does not imply consent or agreement to that boarding.

20.3.12. When operating in these waters, U.S.-flagged commercial vessels should maintain a vigilant lookout at all times. If U.S.-flagged commercial vessels observe or hear a suspected UAV or missile or observe a small boat approaching with apparent hostile intent, crewmembers not needed for the safe navigation and operation of the vessel should be relocated to a safe space until the threat has passed. Additional precautions should be taken to ensure small boats are kept at a safe distance whenever possible.

20.3.13. In addition to U.S. Maritime Alerts and this Advisory, interim industry transit advice for the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has been established by Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). CMF guidance messages are available on the Maritime Global Security website at maritimeglobalsecurity.org/geography/goa-etc/.

20.4. **Iranian Illegal Boarding/Detention/Seizure**: Commercial vessels transiting the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, and Arabian Sea are at risk of being illegally boarded and detained or seized by Iranian forces. Recent incidents include the April 2023 Iranian seizure of a Marshall Islands-flagged vessel in the Gulf of Oman, the May 2023 Iranian seizure of a Panama-flagged vessel in the Strait of Hormuz, and the January 2024 Iranian seizure of a Marshall Islands-flagged vessel in the Arabian Sea. Iranian forces attempted to seize one Marshall Islands-flagged vessel and one Bahamas-flagged vessel in the Gulf of Oman during July 2023, but were prevented from doing so by U.S. Naval Forces. Iranian forces have utilized small boats and helicopters during boarding operations and have attempted to force commercial vessels into Iranian territorial water

20.4.1. If hailed by Iranian forces, U.S.-flagged commercial vessels should provide vessel name and flag state and affirm that they are proceeding in accordance with international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention.

20.4.2. If Iranian forces seek to board a U.S.-flagged commercial vessel navigating these waters, the ship's Master should, if the safety of the ship and crew would not be compromised, decline permission to board, noting that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with international law, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention.

20.4.3. If Iranian forces board a U.S.-flagged commercial vessel, the crew should not forcibly resist the boarding party. Refraining from forcible resistance does not imply consent or agreement to that boarding.

20.4.4. It is recommended that vessels in the Persian Gulf remain as far as possible from Iran's territorial sea without compromising navigational safety. When transiting eastbound in the Strait of Hormuz, it is recommended that vessels transit close to Oman's territorial sea.

20.4.5. Industry transit advice for the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman was established on 9 November 2023, and can be

found on the Maritime Global Security website at maritimeglobalsecurity.org/geography/goa-etc/.

20.5. **Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships**: Recent cases of piracy pose a threat to commercial vessels operating in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, and Somali Basin, and Northwestern Indian Ocean. Since November 2023, there have been three boarding/hijacking incidents, representing the first such attacks against commercial shipping in the region since March 2017. Pirates may utilize captured fishing vessels as motherships to target vessels operating hundreds of miles from the coast of Somalia. In November 2023, one Liberian-flagged vessel was boarded in the Gulf of Aden; in December 2023, one Malta-flagged vessel was hijacked in the Arabian Sea; and in January 2024, one Liberia-flagged bulk carrier was boarded in the Indian Ocean. Specific case details are available via the Office of Naval Intelligence's weekly "Worldwide Threat to Shipping" product at https://www.oni.navy.mil/ONI-Reports/Shipping-Threat-Reports/Worldwide-Threat-to-Shipping/.

20.5.1. The Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea (BMP5), and Maritime Global Security website at: https://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org should be consulted prior to operating in the above listed geographic waters.

20.5.2. Transit by yachts and privately owned sailing vessels through the region is hazardous and may result in capture. The U.S. Government advises against all operation of yachts and pleasure craft in these areas. American citizens abroad should inform the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate of their plans to transit the area and/or update their information via the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at: https://step.state.gov/step/. Yachting guidance can be found at: https://on-shore.mschoa.org/reference-documents/advice-for-sailing-vessels.

20.5.3. **UAVs**: Outside of the Southern Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden, UAV attacks also pose a threat to commercial vessels in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, and Arabian Sea. The most recent attacks were on a Malta-flagged

vessel in the Arabian Sea in November 2023, and on a Liberian-flagged vessel in the Arabian Sea in December 2023.

- If U.S.-flagged commercial vessels observe or hear a suspected UAV, crewmembers not needed for the safe navigation and operation of the vessel should be relocated to a safe space on the vessel until the threat has passed.

20.6. **Limpet Mines**: Limpet mines have been used to damage commercial vessels on multiple occasions in recent years and are primarily a threat to commercial vessels in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and the Gulf of Oman. Limpet mines, or similar improvised explosive devices, can be attached to vessel hulls, above or below the waterline, via swimmers or small boats, while a vessel is berthed, at anchor, or underway.

20.6.1. When operating in these waters, U.S.-flagged commercial vessels should maintain a close lookout and remain vigilant for suspicious activity to include the approach of swimmers or small boats. Close attention should be given to the vessel's waterline, especially at slow speeds, at anchor, and when moored.

20.6.2. If a mine has been, or was attempted to have been, attached to a vessel, crewmembers not needed for the safe navigation and operation of the vessel should be relocated to a safe space on the vessel until the threat has passed.

20.6.3. Guidance: U.S.-flagged commercial vessels operating in these waters are advised to exercise caution, review security measures, and monitor VHF Channel 16. To afford best protection in the region, U.S.-flagged commercial vessels are also advised to in the event of any attack, incident, or suspicious activity, immediately:

20.6.3.1. Activate the Ship Security Alert System

20.6.3.2. Contact the U.S. Fifth Fleet Battle Watch

20.6.3.3. Contact UKMTO

20.6.3.4. Simultaneously register with both the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Office (UKMTO) and the IMSC watch 24 hours prior to entering the Indian Ocean Voluntary Reporting Area by sending UKMTO and IMSC, via a single e-mail, the Initial Report from Annex D of (BMP5). Include the estimated times of arrival at the Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb Strait (BAM), and Strait of Hormuz (SoH) in line 10 of the report and add line 14 for comments as needed (e.g., speed restrictions or other constraints, anticipated time of entering/exiting the SoH Traffic Separation Scheme; an outline of the navigation plan for operating in the SoH and Persian Gulf, etc.). Utilize other reports included in Annex D of BMP5 as necessary.

20.6.3.5. Vessels operating in this area are advised to include both NAVCENT NCAGS and the IMSC watch on all updates or incident report emails. By including both as addressees on each email, awareness will be enhanced without creating an additional reporting burden.

20.6.3.6. Conduct a pre-voyage risk assessment and incorporate appropriate protective measures into vessel security plans.

20.6.3.7. The Maritime Global Security website at https://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org/ offers industry issued best practices and guidance to mariners by geographic region and provides contact and subscription information for regional maritime security reporting centers, particularly in high risk-areas.

20.6.3.8. Answer all VHF calls from coalition navies. Vessels should be aware that U.S. and other coalition naval forces may conduct maritime awareness calls, queries, and approaches to ensure the safety of vessels transiting these listed waters.

20.6.3.9. Due to the risks of piracy, kidnapping, hijacking, and robbery while operating within U.S. Coast Guard designated

High Risk Waters, U.S.-flagged commercial vessels are required to comply with the Guidelines for U.S. Vessels Operating in High-Risk Waters contained in U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Security Directive 104-6 (Rev 8) and comply with their Coast Guard approved Vessel Security Plan annex on counter piracy. The U.S. Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance announced in the Federal Register in August 2021 the availability of Revision 8 to Maritime Security (MARSEC) Directive 104–6. U.S. vessel owners and operators who needed to act under previous versions of MARSEC Directive 104–6 should immediately contact their local Coast Guard Captain of the Port or District Commander for a copy of Revision 8.

20.6.3.10. Per 33 CFR 101.305, report all suspicious activities, breaches of security, and transportation security incident events involving U.S. vessels or persons to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center. Additional U.S. Coast Guard port specific requirements may be found in Port Security Advisory 1-22 at https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/InternationalPortSecurity/Port%20Security%20Advisory/PSA%20%201-22%20Remove%20Cote%20d'Ivoire.pdf?ver=6DzYOEsWAJQVh7ld4c0ycQ%3d%3d.

20.7. Contact Information:

a) Fifth Fleet Battle Watch: cusnc.bwc@me.navy.mil or + 973-1785-3879.

b) NAVCENT NCAGS:
+973-1785-0033 (Primary/Watch Desk), +973-3940-4523 (Alternate), or m-ba-navcent-ncags@us.navy.mil.

c) IMSC: m-ba-imsc-bwc@us.navy.mil or +973-1785-8412/8192/8193.
IMSC organizational information is available
at https://www.imscsentinel.com/.

d) UKMTO: watchkeepers@ukmto.org or +44 (0) 2392 222060. UKMTO advisories and warnings are available at https://www.ukmto.org/.

e) U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center: +1-800-424-8802.

f) USCG NAVCEN: www.navcen.uscg.gov/contact/gps-problem-report or +1-703-313-5900.

21. Maritime Advisory 2022-007-Gulf of Guinea-Piracy/Armed Robbery/Kidnapping for Ransom.

21.1. Issued on 6 July 2022. This revised advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2022-001. Issue: Piracy/Armed Robbery/Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR) serves as a significant threat to U.S.-flagged vessels transiting or operating in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) as well as U.S. mariners onboard a vessel or transiting to or from a vessel in the GoG. Guidance: Mariners transiting this area should visit the Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade-Gulf of Guinea MDAT-GoG) website at https://gog-mdat.org/home and the NATO Shipping Centre website at https://shipping.nato.int/nsc/operations/global-maritime-risk/west-africa-gulf-of-guinea for additional information on threats and specific recommendations for their vessels.

21.2. Additionally, the "Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security Off the Coast of West Africa including the Gulf of Guinea" (available under the Geography – Gulf of Guinea pull-down menu at https://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org/) provides additional guidance and resources for operating in this area. For any maritime industry questions about this advisory, contact GMCC@uscg.mil.

22. Pirate and maritime crime activities in West African waters are assessed as high-risk due to a recent successful hijacking incident. This past week, there were no reports of criminal or piracy activity.

23. In other parts of the world, there was only one report of piracy or crime at sea during the reported period. UMS HQ has lately highlighted the proliferation of crime at sea in Singapore/Indonesian waters. While the criminal activities are primarily confined to petty thefts currently, it would be unthinkable if the perpetrators were to mimic the Nigerian criminals' proven 'business' model by kidnapping a few key crew members and then negotiating for ransoms. The

situation could explode to be worse than the present piracy threats in West Africa or the Indian Ocean should this happen!

24. INDONESIA: On 10 August, 10 robbers boarded a Singapore-flagged barge under tow while in the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS).

25. Warning for Red Sea, Bab el-Mandab Straits and Gulf of Aden

25.1. There have been numerous attacks and suspicious approaches reported near the southern entrance to the Bab el Mandeb Strait during the reporting period. Levels of pirate activity in the Indian Ocean remain elevated, with five hijacks reported since March 2017 (MT ARIS 13, CASAYR II NO.30, AL KAUSAR, SALAMA 1 and OS 35). The threat of further attacks and hijacking remains high. All Masters are advised to exercise heightened vigilance within the High Risk Area (HRA), stringently implement BMP4 and liaise closely with embarked armed security teams (AST) and regional authorities. If not making calls in Yemen, it's recommended by UKMTO that vessels should use the IRTC and western lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Bab el Mandeb / southern Red Sea region, to provide a greater lee from Yemen. Further such incidents and hijackings are likely to take place, and all vessels transiting this region are advised to remain vigilant. While international naval patrols and anti-piracy measures on-board commercial vessels have practically eradicated Somali piracy since its peak in early 2011, poverty coupled with other factors that motivate pirates remain and some vessels transiting this region may have increasingly become complacent in the belief that the piracy threat had diminished.

25.2. While the international community has over the past several years taken significant steps in order to improve security in the region, including boosting naval forces in the area and requiring ships to take protection measures, including reporting in and out of high risk areas, sailing at top speed as far away as possible from the Somali coast and travelling with armed escorts on-board, the threat of an attack and hijacking remained as the real root of the cause on the ground in Somalia has never been properly addressed. After five years without a successful attack, analysts say that complacency may have set n and this week's successful hijacking is likely to result in potential copycat attacks, as pirate action groups head-out in a bid to successfully hijack a commercial vessel. Masters are advised to remain vigilant at all times inside the HRA and are advised to adhere to strict

guidance and protective measures as set down in BMP5. Sailing yachts should avoid transiting the HRA. Past activity has demonstrated that pirates will attack both large and small yachts transiting this region. While successful attacks and hijackings of merchant vessels have significantly decreased over the past two years, the possibility of attacks and the successful hijacking of sailing vessels continue to remain high. This is due to the reduction of revenue sources from pirated merchant vessels and the fact that sailing yachts are vulnerable and easier targets. PAG's continue to conduct "soft approaches" on merchant ships transiting the area. Skiffs have approached vessels in order to probe the reaction of the crewmembers and any possible Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel (PCASP) on-board. If the pirate approach does not elicit a resnse, the pirates will likely proceed with an attack, in which additional skiffs may participate. Vessels transiting the greater Gulf of Aden region should operate under a heightened state of alert. This is due to increasing tensions in the region, which in turn can escalate the potential for direct or collateral damage to vessels transiting the region. These threats may come from a number of different sources such as missiles, projectiles, or waterborne improvised explosive devices. Houthi rebels have claimed responsibility for the 1 October 2016 attack on a UAE vessel.

25.3. UMS HQ advises all vessels transiting this region to report any hostile activities immediately. Somali pirates have recently shown an ability to mount hijacking expeditions far out into the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, and inshore traffic might be an easier target. EUNAVFOR spokesperson Commander Jacqui Sherriff said that the recent series of attacks against commercial shipping again highlights the need for vigilance and adherence to self-protection measures (by the deployment of on-board AST) and compliance to Best Management Practices (BMP) 5. It is crucial that Somali pirates are denied opportunities to attack vessels so that there will no chance of a successful hijack. One successful hijack is one hijack too many because it will encourage and motivate more Somalis to taking up piracy!

25.4. CMF and EUNAVFOR and intelligence agencies have warned of increased complacency amongst stakeholders which may give rise to opportunities for piracy action groups and organizations funding piracy activities to revive the threat.

26. Actions to be Taken when a Vessel with On-Board UMS Maritime Marshals is Approached by a Naval Craft.

26.1. On 16 Dec 23, in the face of increased attacks from pirate action groups and approaches from naval craft, UMS HQ issued the orders on actions to be taken when a naval craft approaches a vessel. These orders were issued to all Team Leaders, and they were further personally briefed by the UMS Operation Officer because of the importance of the subject and the requirement that these orders be fully understood and complied with.

26.2. UMS Maritime Marshals onboard a vessel are to protect the vessel and crew members from pirate action groups. They are equipped with weapons and equipment to handle the threat posed by pirate action groups and **ARE NOT MEANT TO DETER NOR OPPOSE ANY NAVAL CRAFT THAT MAY APPROACH THE VESSEL FOR WHATEVER PURPOSES. The Orders is repeated in the paragraphs below.**

26.3. If a naval craft approaches our vessel, the following actions will be taken.

26.3.1. The Team Leader is to alert and discuss the approach of the naval craft with the Master.

26.3.2. The Master must notify the vessel's owner/HQ of the situation.

26.3.3. The team Leader will notify the UMS Operations Officer/UMS HQ.

26.4. If the naval craft asks the vessel to stop, the Master will take the appropriate action, as per his discussion with his HQ.

26.4.1. Based on the decision to stop, the Team Leader will immediately give orders to his Maritime Marshal(s) to unload and clear their weapons.

26.4.2. **NO WEAPON WILL BE LOADED.**

26.4.3. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL ANY MEMBER OF THE MARITIME MARSHAL TEAM SHOW HIS WEAPON TO DETER THE NAVAL CRAFT, FIRE WARNING SHOTS, OR FIRE ANY SHOT AT THE APPROACHING NAVAL VESSEL. THE TEAM LEADER IS TO ENSURE THIS IS CLEARLY BRIEFED AND UNDERSTOOD TO HIS TEAM MEMBERS. THERE MUST BE NO DEVIATION FROM THIS ORDER.**

26.5. When the vessel stops as ordered and naval personnel come on board, UMS Maritime Marshals will take the following actions:

26.5.1. All Maritime Marshals should keep low on the deck and cover their head with both hands, with their hands visible. They will all be together, lined up side by side.

26.5.2. On no account should any Maritime Marshal make any movement that could be misinterpreted as hostile actions. Their individual weapon should be placed on deck next to the Maritime Marshal, and at no time should any Maritime Marshal handle his weapon.

26.5.3. Do not take any videos or photographs.

26.5.4. All Maritime Marshals should be ready to be questioned on their identity and roles. They will answer the questions truthfully and cooperate fully with the naval personnel on board.

26.5.5. The Team Leader will be the spokesperson of the Maritime Marshal Team, working closely with the Master.

26.6. Remember to be cooperative and calm. There is no need to be unduly concerned as the vessel and crew members, including the Maritime Marshal Team, have not committed any wrongdoing.

26.7. After the naval personnel depart and the vessel resumes its mission, the Team Leader reconstitutes the Team to continue the mission.

26.8. The Team Leader will report the matter to UMS HQ accordingly.

27. Piracy in the Indian Ocean HRA has NOT Been Eradicated

27.1. UMS HQ has always maintained this position not to give stakeholders a sense of false security. The current development of piracy raging its ugly head again in the waters off Somalia and in the Indian Ocean is testimony to the accuracy of our analysis.

27.2. The decision by world shipping bodies such as BIMCO and the like has given the wrong perception that piracy in the Indian Ocean HRA has been eradicated. **Nothing can be further from the truth!**

27.3. Piracy threats have been reduced due to the strong presence and sustained effort by naval forces, namely EUNAVFOR and the US-led Combined Military Force (CMF) and the deployment of armed security

teams (AST) onboard commercial vessels. The deployment of ASTs onboard commercial vessels since the peak of the piracy threat in 2008 has proven effective, as no vessel with an AST has ever been hijacked.

27.4. Naval and intelligence agencies think pirate syndicates lie low due to the strong deterrence and are involved in other criminal activities, such as drug smuggling. These pirate and criminal syndicates have not been wiped out, and given the correct circumstances and environment, they can get their acts together quickly.

27.5. The pirate syndicates are privy to the announcement of the lifting of the HRA. They could view the situation in 2023 as a golden opportunity to resume their proven lucrative 'business'. The current political situation in the Middle East is a significant distraction to the naval forces that will not focus their attention and presence on the more critical military problems with the Iranian-backed Houthis.

27.6. Given Somalia's poor socio-economic situation, thousands of Somalians will be more than happy to take up arms to hunt and hijack commercial vessels again. The lack of local law enforcement to prevent piracy activities will make this revival a strong possibility. Therefore, the comeback scenario cannot be discounted and is a likely possibility.

27.7. Therefore, from a risk assessment point of view, the risk level in 2024, if deterrence measures are removed, the risk of piracy in 2024 will be objectively higher than in the last 5-6 years.

27.8. **Low piracy threat does not mean NO PIRACY THREAT!**

28. Present Tactics Employed by the Houthis and What We Should Do

28.1. UMS HQ recently studied the profile of attacks against commercial vessels and made the following observations.

28.2. They comprised attacks on commercial vessels by 2-3 skiffs with about 5-9 armed personnel on board (POB). Some vessels have ladders to suggest their intention to board the vessels.

28.3. They approached the commercial vessels, exchanged fires, and then kept a stand-off distance of about 1-2nm.

28.4. In some cases, one or more unmanned surface vessels (USVs) would strike the vessels.

28.5. This is what is happening.

28.5.1. The POB on board the skiffs could be either pirates working with the Houthis or Houthis personnel themselves.

28.5.2. The approach to a vessel is, in military terms, " recce by fire." The objective is to ascertain if the vessel is protected by armed personnel on board because a vessel that is not protected by armed personnel could be easily boarded and hijacked. If they confirmed that the vessel was not protected, they would simply try to board the vessel.

28.5.3. Once they confirmed that the vessel is protected, after exchanging fires they will withdraw if they are just pirates not working with the Houthis.

28.5.4. If the POB are pirates working with the Houthis or Houthis personnel themselves, they would withdraw to a stand-off distance of about 1-2nm and continue trailing the vessel. Why?

28.5.5. The POB would use their laser designator(s) to guide the USV(s) to engage the commercial vessel. These laser designators have an effective range of about 1-2nm and the further the target is, the less accurate the designation of the USV will be against the target vessel. For this reason, have you noticed that these attacks always happen in daylight hours because the POB does not have night capabilities to designate their lasers at night or in poor visibility?

28.6. What must we do?

28.6.1. Apply the current SOP when responding to Alert Grey and Alert Red. **The vessel should be transiting at maximum speed.**

28.6.2. After the withdrawal of the skiffs and if the skiffs are still trailing the vessel, it suggests that the threat has not disappeared. Be ready to respond to an attack against USV. UMS HQ has issued an SOP on how to destroy an approaching USV. To perfect this drill, UMS maritime marshals should conduct training and rehearsals regularly as part of their anti-piracy drill.

28.6.3. **The vessel must continue to transit at maximum speed to make it more difficult for the laser designators to designate our vessel.**

28.6.4. After the skiffs' withdrawal, the personnel in the citadel should not remain there as the threat (if any) is different, and they should remain at a location above the vessel's watermark. This presupposes that all Masters have designated this location and approved it by their respective Company Chief Security and Safety Office.

29. EU Extends Naval Operation ATALANTA Until 2027 as Somali Piracy Surges in Indian Ocean

29.1. In last week's WETA, UMS HQ warned that with the Indian Ocean monsoon season-ending, Somali-based piracy activities could be expected to rise. As this is not bad enough news, the European Council, based on the socio-political and economic situation of Somalia and neighbouring countries, has extended its counter-piracy mission, Operation ATALANTA, for two more years, coming amid a dramatic resurgence of Somali piracy that has seen 43 incidents in the past year.

29.2. The renewed mandate to February 2027 strengthens ATALANTA's role in maritime security across the Somalia coast, Gulf of Aden, West Indian Ocean, and parts of the Red Sea. The operation will maintain its focus on combating piracy while expanding efforts to reduce illicit trafficking at sea.

29.3. Recent intelligence reports highlight the necessity of the extension. In October 2024, Somali authorities confirmed a group of 13 heavily armed pirates, equipped with AK-47s and RPGs, departed from Ceel Huur Area

toward the Somali Basin. Earlier this month, a Chinese fishing vessel allegedly hijacked off Somalia's northeastern Puntland coast.

29.4. The pirates' typical strategy involves hijacking dhows to use as mother ships, enabling attacks up to 600 nautical miles off Somalia's eastern coast. The Gulf of Aden's eastern region remains particularly vulnerable.

29.5. This year has already seen significant piracy incidents, including the hijacking of two merchant vessels. The *MV Abdullah* was released after a reported $4 million ransom payment, while the *MV Ruen* required Indian Navy intervention after a three-month captivity.

29.6. Experts suggest the situation in the region has been exacerbated by the maritime industry's reduced security measures following the removal of the Indian Ocean High Risk Area designation in January 2023.

29.7. Operation ATALANTA, established in 2008, has played a crucial role in maritime security, protecting World Food Programme vessels and other vulnerable shipping in the region. The mission's extension comes alongside renewed mandates for EUCAP Somalia and EUTM Somalia, forming part of a comprehensive EU strategy to enhance regional security capabilities.

29.8. With the Indian Ocean monsoon season concluding, maritime security experts anticipate increased piracy activity in the coming months. This development, coupled with ongoing Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, presents a complex security challenge for international shipping in the region.

30. Somali Pirates Head Back to Sea

30.1. Shipping has been warned that Somali pirates are back hunting for targets.

30.2. British maritime security consultants Ambrey has issued a notice to clients detailing a suspected pirate action group sighted departing Marreya, Eyl, to the northeast of Somalia.

30.3. Merchant vessels are advised to increase vigilance, and to engage armed security where possible if the vessel has a permissible freeboard.

30.4. Yesterday the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Operation ATALANTA reported that a Yemeni-flagged dhow was taken by pirates on Sunday. Then dhow is now likely being used by pirates as a mother ship to stage attacks on merchant vessels.

30.5. Piracy was rampant off Somalia for a four-year period from 2008, but then it went dormant for about five years. From March last year, Somali pirates have been back in the headlines, abducting a number of vessels and their crews.

31. UMS CIRCULAR 1-2025 - Actions to be Taken when a Vessel with On-Board UMS Maritime Marshals is Approached by Houthis/Yemini Navy

31.1. On 10 Jul 25, UMS HQ issued the abovementioned Circular 1-2025. This circular is to address the prevailing threat faced by commercial shipping from the Houthis/Yemeni Navy.

31.2. In this Circular, UMS HQ makes it clear that our clients' vessels are not the target of the Houthis/Yemeni Navy and that our Masters, crew members, Team Leaders and Maritime Marshals should not have any fear regarding this threat but they must know how to respond if and when confronted with the situation. ***All Masters and Team Leaders are to note that the presence of the on-board AST is to deter and prevent any boarding by pirates. The ASTs are not to be involved in any fight with the Houthis/Yemeni Navy or Iranian Navy that may threaten the safety of their vessels and all crew members onboard.***

31.3. There is a need for Masters and Team Leaders to know how to differentiate between an approach by the Houthis/Yemeni Navy and pirates so that they will know how to respond appropriately and correctly.

31.4. Due to the importance of this subject, UMS HQ will be conducting a personal briefing to all Team Leaders on this subject. The contents of the said Circular is repeated in this WETA No. 715 to reinforce the importance of the subject. See the attached Annex A to this WETA which is to be read in conjunction with an earlier UMS Circular in paragraph 29.

32. Houthis Reveal Tracking of Shipping Between Israel, Egypt and Turkey

32.1. The Houthis continue their demand that all shipping be stopped into and out of Israel as part of their so-called blockade of Israeli ports. In their latest move, the militants revealed they are tracking individual ship movements, and they called out major companies, including Maersk and MSC, revealing they are using AIS data to track the movement of ships between Egypt, Turkey, and Israel.

32.2. The group resumed its threats this summer against all shipping that had any involvement with Israel, regardless of the nationality of the shipping company. They warned that ships must stop their calls in Israel and that any company that does not would face attacks anywhere within the reach of the Houthis.

32.3. The attacks on the *Magic Seas* and the *Eternity C*, both bulkers sunk by the Houthis at the beginning of July, with the latter claiming multiple lives, were reported as retribution for the shipping companies sending vessels to Israel. Crewmembers from the Eternity C were paraded out in a video and said their vessel was going to the Port of Eilat to pick up fertilizer. At the end of July, the group expanded the threat against Cosmoshipping, which managed the Eternity C, posting a listing of the company's other ships that sailed to Israel.

32.4. In their latest posting online and in their media outlets, the Houthis identify nine ships that they say have called in Israeli ports on August 2 and 3. All of them were coming from or going to ports in Egypt or Turkey.

32.5. The group writes, "The data highlights continued commercial activity between Turkey and the Israeli regime." Later, it also says, "The data also revealed that Egypt is continuing to import goods from Israel."

32.6. "This activity underscores ongoing trade relations with Israel, despite regional and international calls for economic disengagement," the Houthis write.

32.7. They cite the containership *MSC Oscar*, which they said arrived at Ashdod, Israel, from Turkey's Asia Port carrying 18,400 containers. They report the *MSC Tuxpan* was carrying 5,060 containers and sailed from Ashdod to Port Said, Egypt. The *Maersk Narmada* (referred to as a car carrier) is also listed as coming from Iskenderun, Turkey, to Haifa, and which

continued to Mersin, Turkey, carrying 2,478 containers, the group says. It says two other containerships, *Marla Tiger* and *YM Winner*, have also been called in Israel.

32.8. Other vessels they are citing include the bulk carriers *Aquis Perla*, *Neco K*, and *Pardus*, as well as a cement carrier, *Nova Coralia*. They list a cargo ship, Halo, and the car carrier *Lider Bulut*, which they said travelled from Ashdod to Port Said.

32.9. Due to these increased threats, carriers, for the most part, have continued to avoid the Red Sea. Egypt's hopes to begin restoring container vessel traffic at the Suez Canal appear to have been mostly dashed by the new threats, while in the Red Sea, EUNAVFOR Aspides continues to highlight that it is maintaining its defensive operation and providing protection for vessels transiting the Red Sea.

33. Houthis Level a Threat at 64 Shipowners for Violating Israeli "Blockade"

33.1. The Houthi militants in Yemen are continuing their pressure campaign, reporting they have warned 64 shipowners of the consequences of continuing to call in Israeli ports. The group's media officer sent a message to major news outlets reporting that they have served sanction notices on the shipping companies.

33.2. According to the notice, the sanction notices were sent to the shipowners in late July after the Houthis resumed their campaign against shipping. At the beginning of the month, the campaign began with two Greek-owned bulkers, targeted and sunk, with several seafarers killed. It largely dashed hopes in the shipping community that some resumption of sailing through the Red Sea would be possible.

33.3. The group says the companies that were notified of the sanctions were because their vessels "violated the naval blockade" imposed on Israel. "These vessels are hereby prohibited from transiting the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb Strait, the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea, and will be subject to targeting when they fall within the reach," the Houthis said.

33.4. The sanction notices, the group says, were warnings, and the "companies of the violating vessels shall bear the consequences." They

write that the notices were to help companies "avoid the risks" of violating the Houthis' ban on Israel.

33.5. The Houthis, however, warn that the sanctions "may be expanded to include entities engaged in dealings with" the companies violating their sanctions.

33.6. They have issued these types of propaganda warnings before to the shipping companies, but 20 months after the first attack, the threat remains against shipping in the region. The EUNAVFOR operation Aspides remains active in the region and over the weekend highlighted that a French frigate had completed another protection mission with a photo of a large CMA CGM containership as well as a command visit photo aboard the Greek frigate supporting the efforts.

33.7. The Houthis' military arm posted an online warning this week, highlighting that it was tracking ship movements between Egypt, Turkey, and Israel and citing by name nine ships it said were violators of the embargo. It included ships of Maersk, MSC, and Yang Ming among the list of vessels that it said had called at Israeli ports.

33.8. There have been no further reports of attacks after the sinking of the *Magic Seas* and the *Eternity C* in early July.

34. Africa

34.1. Unlike the presence and substantial involvement of international navies, numbering more than 43 countries and the legit deployment of armed security team (AST) onboard commercial vessels transiting the East Africa and Indian Ocean HRA, the situation in the West Africa HRA is about just the opposite. Nigerian government laws and regulations prohibit the deployment of ASTs other than those brokered by local security companies that used personnel from the Navy, which the government has declared as not supported by it. Besides the Nigerian Navy, no other naval forces provide security and deterrence to the pirates managed by criminal syndicates operating from Nigeria.

34.2. In other words, the waters and ports around Nigeria are almost a perfect hunting ground for the local criminal syndicates. Given this situation, the threat of piracy at this point of time is higher and more dangerous than that posed by Somali pirates in the East Africa and Indian Ocean HRA, although depending on the continued presence of the navies of EUNAVFOR and CMF and the other independent naval forces and the continued used of on-board ASTs, the situation may quickly reverse. Somali pirates still have the intent, skills, and resources to attack merchant ships. Fundamentally naval forces and intelligence agencies have repeatedly called for continued vigilance and preparedness in the fight against the threat of piracy at both the East Africa and Indian Ocean HRA and the West Africa HRA. Ignoring these warnings places one's business, vessels, and crew members at risk!

34.3. Intelligence agencies noted that Nigeria's pirate action groups (PAGs) have been relatively quiet in the last 2-3 months. However, this does not suggest that the piracy threat in West Africa has been eradicated. PAGs may strike anytime and the only protection and solution is to be well prepared for such an eventuality.

35. UMS HQ advises all stakeholders never to take the security and safety of their vessels and crew members for granted. **CURRENT LOW PIRACY THREAT doesn't mean NO PIRACY THREAT!**

36. ***Remember Always "Be Vigilant, Be Safe and Never Be Sorry!"***

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