



# Merchant Marine **Notice**

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

F-34  
(DCCM)  
V.04

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

No: **MMN-09/2023**

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1. Due to recent threats from Yemen's Houthi rebels, the Panama Maritime Administration strongly recommends all Panama-flagged vessels to take all security measures and avoid transiting the Red Sea, with increased caution through the Strait of Bab al Mandeb.
2. Since the start 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.
3. 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. This movement controls significant parts of Yemen along the coast of the Red Sea.
4. The ability of this movement to disrupt merchant shipping has been evidenced by the attack on the Bahamas-flagged Galaxy Trader on November 19, 2023, while in route to India in the southern Red Sea, off Hodeidah, Yemen. The ship turned off her AIS transmissions 24 hours before the incident, approximately 250 nautical miles north of the incident site.
5. On November 26, 2023, the Liberian-flagged ship Central Park sent a distress signal that it was under attack while transiting the Gulf of Aden, receiving support from the United States and Japanese naval forces.
6. The Houthi movement's attacks are characterized by the use of sea mines, missiles and remotely controlled improvised explosive devices in the Red Sea.
7. We urge all Panamanian-registered vessels transiting the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Persian Gulf and their accesses to increase all security measures on board and maintain communication at all times with UKMTO and the Central Command of the Naval Forces of USA.

8. This Administration strongly recommends following the recommendations listed below:

- Assess the ship's route, particularly proximity to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iranian Navy assets, and controlled sites.
- It is recommended that ships transit the Red Sea at night to avoid detection and maintain communication with maritime security centers.
- That the ships remain alert, do not stop if threatened and present a challenging target through proactive maneuvers.
- Conduct a new threat risk assessment specific to each ship and voyage before entering any region where there has been an incident or the threat has changed.
- After the risk assessment, review the Vessel Protection Plan.
- Review section 2 of BMP5, which describes non-piracy threats and the Global Anti-Piracy Guide.
- Maintain a complete and vigilant watch on the bridge; *Note:* At night, small, slow vessels without a wake are difficult to detect on radar.
- 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.
- Guarantee strict boarding controls.
- Go down hallways or accommodation stairs only when necessary.
- Install exterior lights where possible, provided they do not interfere with maintaining a safe lookout, especially aft, and install/use searchlights if available.
- Monitor relevant VHF and other communication channels.
- Check all firefighting equipment available for immediate use. Make sure the emergency fire pump is available if any maintenance is performed.

9. All vessels flying the flag of Panama 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 Maritime Administration. of Panama, and report any incident or suspicious activity as soon as possible.



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10. In those cases that 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 [nardila@amp.gob.pa](mailto:nardila@amp.gob.pa) and [isps@amp.gob.pa](mailto:isps@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. All Panama-flagged 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 report formally through LRIT and AIS to our Administration at the appropriate time.

UKMTO

[watchkeepers@ukmto.org](mailto: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](mailto: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)

**November, 2023** – *New.*

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

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