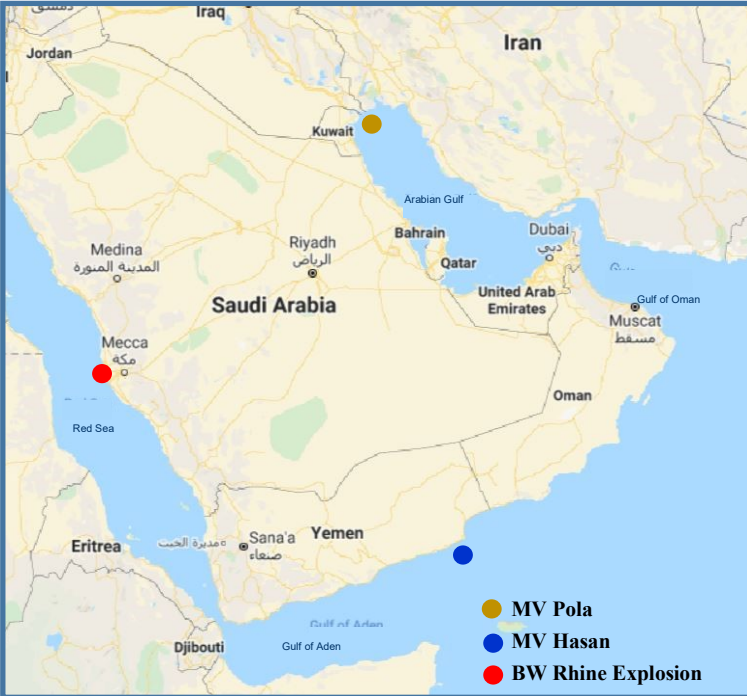




The SENTINEL Watch



IMSC Monthly Security Update - December 2020



IMSC Update

Welcome to the December edition of the International Maritime Security Construct update, 'The SENTINEL Watch'. 'The SENTINEL Watch' provides the merchant shipping industry with an update on IMSC initiatives and security within the Middle East Region.

As we start the new year CTF Sentinel renews its commitment of reassuring merchant shipping by seeking new opportunities to engage with industry both at sea and ashore. With the recent uptick of maritime security incidents, merchant vessels are encouraged to be ever vigilant.

Security Events

- On 5 December 20 the Sierra Leone flagged cargo vessel, HASAN was fired upon, off the coast of Yemen.
- On 14 December 20 Singaporean-flagged BW RHINE was hit by an external source while discharging at Jeddah Terminal.
- On 31 December 20 an limpet mine was discovered on the hull on the MT POLA.

Security Update

While discharging cargo via Ship-To-Ship operation in the KAZ anchorage area in Iraq, the Liberian flagged MT POLA identified a suspicious object attached to the hull, later confirmed to be a limpet mine. Despite ongoing regional tensions, the risk to maritime security in the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman remains low, reference is made to UKMTO Warning [003/DEC/2020 UPDATE 002](#) and [003/DEC/2020 - UPDATE 003](#) and Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB) 025, released 03 January 21.

Separately, the recent reported attacks have raised the threat for the merchant shipping within the Red Sea, Bab-el-Mandeb, and Gulf of Aden. On 14 December 2020, while discharging in Jeddah, the Singaporean-flagged tanker, BW RHINE, reported a blast from an external source resulting in a fire and damaged hull. Reference is made to the UKMTO Advisory Notice [002/DEC/2020 UPDATE 002](#), and IRTB 024. The Houthis and al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula continue to pose a threat to merchant shipping industry transits. While there is little evidence to support that malign actors are specifically targeting the broader commercial shipping industry, the risk to Saudi partners and facilities persists.

Warships continue to provide over-watch to merchant vessels throughout the IMSC area of operation. Vessels transiting the area can expect to hear IMSC warships conducting Maritime Awareness Calls (MAC) on a regular basis. IMSC warships broadcasted over 1000 MAC calls in December to reassure mariners in the region. In 2020 IMSC CTF Sentinel employed a total of 91 military surface vessels spanning from six IMSC partner nations providing assurance in the key waterways surrounding the Arabian Peninsula.

Masters are encouraged to report such incidents to IMSC via UKMTO. IMSC is currently reviewing and editing current guidance to increase awareness of evolving threats. Ship Owners, Operators, and Masters are advised to follow guidance in accordance with BMP 5 and national authorities and review the guidance and responses contained within the IMSC Bridge Cards with regards to:

- Approaches by suspicious craft in port or at anchor.
- Waterborne improvised explosive device (WBIED) attacks.
- Hails by unknown vessels or aircraft exhibiting unprofessional, threatening or harassing behavior.

Surveillance

Vigilance

Assurance



The SENTINEL Watch

Save the Date - 23 Feb 2020 - Industry Stakeholders Conference

IMSC CTF Sentinel invites you to our second industry focused Stakeholders Conference on 23 Feb via ZOOM videoconferencing. For more details and to submit questions please see our events pages on Facebook ([click here for link](#)) or LinkedIn ([click here for link](#)). Check out our social media over January and February where we'll publish further details, including guest speakers.

Media Update

Recent Highlights

- CTF Sentinel First Anniversary: ([click here for link](#))
- CTF Sentinel Commander on the importance of the reassurance provided IMSC: ([click here for link](#))
- See this month's Top Tweet: ([click here for link](#))
- Twitter @IMSC_Sentinel: ([click here for link](#))
- Facebook @IMSCSENTINEL: ([click here for link](#))

LinkedIn



IMSC is now on LinkedIn: ([click here for link](#)) or search for us for up-to-date advice and guidance on #MaritimeSecurity.

Your support will help us to achieve our mission of #FreedomOfNavigation and #GulfSecurity.

Reporting

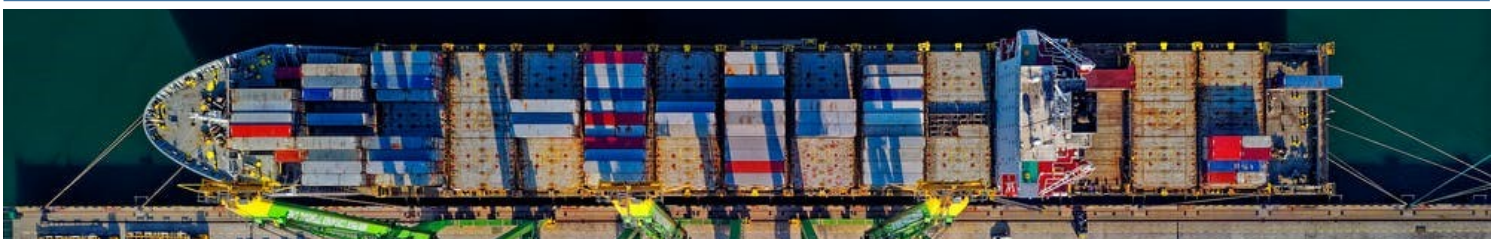
In the event of a security incident, follow reporting guidance in accordance with BMP 5, Section 7 ([click here for link](#)) and national authority.

When operating in the Middle East region, merchant shipping is encouraged to report through UKMTO, Telephone **+44 2392 222 060** or email watchkeepers@ukmto.org

In addition to the guidance provided in BMP5, merchant shipping is encouraged to report the following to UKMTO as detailed in the IMSC Bridge Cards ([click here for link](#)):

- Threatening or harassing conduct directed at a merchant vessel.
- Receiving or experiencing threatening or harassing language on the VHF.
- Boarding or search of a vessel without a valid legal pretext.
- Unnecessary manoeuvring in unsafe proximity of a merchant vessel.
- Intentional close manoeuvring so as to restrict a vessel's ability to manoeuvre without lawful justification.
- Aircraft operating at an unsafe altitude that results in the merchant vessel feeling threatened.
- Unprofessional or inappropriate queries - Queries that include asking questions beyond flagged state, port of departure and port of arrival. Including questions relating to:
 - Whether warships or aircraft are operating in the area.
 - Asking unnecessarily probing questions about the crew.
- Sighting of suspicious floating objects (possible mine or waterborne improvised explosive device) in the area.

* If you would like to be added to our distribution list, Email IMSC.MTO@me.navy.mil with the subject "SENTINEL Watch Distribution List"



Surveillance

Vigilance

Assurance