



## EUNAVFOR ASPIDES Informational Message to the Shipping Industry

Larissa, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2026

### Incidents in Red sea, Bab-El-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden

**Days with no incident: 268**

**Last reported incident: 29 September 2025**

### General situation

Since 28 February 2026, the conflict between the United States, Israel and Iran has significantly reshaped the regional security environment. Military operations extended beyond Iranian territory, while Iranian retaliatory actions and those of its regional proxies affected multiple theatres, including the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in mid-June between the United States and Iran has initiated a 60-day negotiation period aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement. Follow-on discussions currently taking place in Switzerland, supported by regional mediators, have contributed to a partial easing of tensions, including commitments to preserve freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and establish deconfliction mechanisms. Nevertheless, the agreement remains provisional, and several key issues, including regional proxy activities and the future security architecture, remain unresolved.

Despite these diplomatic developments, the regional security environment remains fragile. Houthi forces continue to express hostile intent towards Israel and have reiterated their willingness to target merchant vessels perceived to be associated with Israeli interests in the Red Sea. While the immediate risk of large-scale interstate escalation has decreased, the possibility of missile, UAV, surface or other asymmetric maritime attacks by state or non-state actors cannot be excluded.

Merchant vessels operating in the Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden and adjacent waters are therefore advised to maintain a high level of vigilance, closely monitor the evolving security situation, and continue coordinating with relevant maritime security authorities, including EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, UKMTO, MICA Center and MSCIO.

### Current Situation

Recent incidents in southern Yemen indicate continued localized fighting between Houthi forces and pro-government forces, with no indication at this stage of a return to large-scale offensive operations. The fighting is likely to remain limited in scope, driven primarily by local tactical objectives and contested frontlines rather than broader strategic ambitions.



No hostile activity against merchant vessels has been recorded since 29 September 2025. However, the risk of a sudden resumption of attacks remains, given the volatile regional security environment and the Houthis' demonstrated capability to rapidly reconstitute and conduct missile, UAV and maritime attacks with little or no warning.

Overall, the maritime security situation remains unstable. Although the current diplomatic process has reduced the immediate risk of regional escalation, commercial shipping should continue to operate under a heightened level of vigilance until a sustained and verifiable de-escalation is achieved.

### **Threat Assessment**

Considering Houthis' pattern of behaviour, while announcements of transit bans have served as an indicator of implementing upcoming hostile actions, the threat level for transiting the Red Sea (RS), Bab el-Mandeb Strait (BaM), Gulf of Aden (GoA), and the Arabian Sea (AS) is assessed as follows:

Category	Threat Assessment	Description
a.	Low	North Red Sea is at a low threat level.
b.	Medium	South Red Sea and Bad al-Mandeb is at a medium threat Level.
c.	Medium	Gulf of Aden is at a medium threat level.

The Threat assessment for the area has been revised from High to Medium in: South Red Sea, Bad al-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden.

### **Ships' risk Level**

Considering Houthis' pattern of behaviour, while announcements of transit bans have served as an indicator of implementing upcoming hostile actions, the risk level for merchant vessels transiting the Red Sea (RS), Bab el-Mandeb Strait (BaM), Gulf of Aden (GoA), and the Arabian Sea (AS) is assessed as follows:



Category	Risk Assessment	Description
a.	Low	For merchant vessels not affiliated to Israel or the United States.
b.	High	For any vessels or shipping companies (incl. fleet) affiliated to Israeli and US interests (fully/partially owned, flagged).

This assessment reflects the threat level for Israeli and US-affiliated vessels and companies as High. The risk level for Israeli-affiliated vessels and companies remains assessed as High, following the latest Houthi statement announcing the implementation of a transit ban against Israeli navigation and reiterating that Israeli-affiliated vessels remain legitimate military targets.

### **Recommendations**

EUNAVFOR ASPIDES recommends that merchant vessels linked to Israeli or U.S. interests avoid transiting the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden until the threat level decreases. Other ships should continue to send their requests for support to the MSCIO.

While it remains too early to fully assess the scope and duration of the renewed threat, previous patterns indicate that attacks could involve anti-ship missiles, UAVs, USVs and small crafts.

Merchant vessels required to transit the eastern Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea should exercise heightened vigilance and maintain close coordination with MSCIO.

In response to the current threat environment, EUNAVFOR ASPIDES has reinforced protective measures to support vessels. As available military assets remain unchanged, ships requesting Close Protection may experience more waiting times.

EUNAVFOR ASPIDES' recommendations to the maritime community remain unchanged and should continue to be observed rigorously:

- Avoid entry into Yemeni territorial waters at all times.
- When feasible, navigate closer to the African coastline to reduce exposure to potential threats.
- Maintain constant communication with MSCIO and UKMTO and adhere strictly to official guidance, risk-assessment protocols, and best management practices.
- Conduct a voyage-specific risk assessment, taking into consideration any direct or indirect affiliations between the vessel, its ownership, or its cargo and countries of interest.



EUNAVFOR ASPIDES remains committed to safeguarding Freedom of Navigation by providing Monitoring and Close Protection services throughout the Red Sea, Bad-el-Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden.

The operation continuously monitors the evolving threat environment and remains fully committed to its defensive and de-escalatory mandate in support of the international maritime community.

### **Communication and Coordination**

All vessel masters are reminded that the MSCIO remains available as a point of contact for any incident, suspicious activity, or unusual observation.

Such reporting is vital to ensuring the safety of seafarers, the security of commercial shipping, and the preservation of freedom of navigation under the protection of Operation ASPIDES.

Further information, including operational updates and recommendations, is available on the MSCIO official webpage at <https://mscio.eu>.

For specific enquiries or to obtain pre-transit support, please contact: [postmaster@mscio.eu](mailto:postmaster@mscio.eu)

End of communication.