

Joint Maritime Information Center

Update 020 to JMIC Advisory Note: 01 - 20 March 2026

Regional Tension - Impact on Maritime Security

Area of Concern:

Middle East Maritime Region

JMIC# 001-26

Regional Threat Level: **CRITICAL**

1. Regional Risk Level Assessment

Overall Maritime Risk Level: ● **CRITICAL**

JMIC Threat Scale: ● Low | ● Moderate | ● Substantial | ● Severe | ● Critical

The regional maritime threat environment across the **Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman remains CRITICAL**. The overall maritime threat environment remains at a critical level due to recent attack patterns, continued navigation interference, and persistent operational disruption, to include port facilities, across the region.

Operational Indicators (20 March)

- Confirmed maritime attacks/incidents since 1 March: **21**
- Vessel attacks past 24 hours: **0**
- Historical SoH traffic: **~138/day**
- Current observed SoH vessel traffic: **1 vessel/day**
- GNSS interference: **localized and sporadic; improving last 24 hours**

Since the start of hostilities on 28 February, more than twenty maritime incidents involving commercial vessels and offshore infrastructure have been reported across the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman. The incidents involve a wide range of vessel types and flag states, with no consistent pattern of Western ownership linkage, suggesting that the current strike pattern reflects a campaign aimed at broad maritime disruption rather than selective vessel targeting. Attacks may occur across a broad operating area of the Arabian Gulf, including anchorages, Ship-to-Ship (STS) operations, and port approaches. Commercial vessels operating within the critical threat area are strongly encouraged to maintain reporting contact with UKMTO.

AIS transmission remains governed by **SOLAS regulations**. Operators should review AIS transmission policies within their internal risk management frameworks while maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements. Mariners should also remain alert to the possibility of **unexploded ordnance (UXO)** aboard affected vessels and treat any suspected projectile as extremely hazardous in accordance with **BMP-MS guidance**.

2. Industry Coordination & Maritime Security Planning (No Change)



Kinetic events persist in the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman.

When conditions permit, maritime industry stakeholders should anticipate a deliberate and methodical plan focused on ensuring safe and secure vessel movements. This planning effort will require time to coordinate across military, interagency, and industry. Simultaneously, military operations work to achieve conditions conducive to safe transits.

Mariners should continue to exercise extreme caution when operating in the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman. Risk of adversary attacks against commercial shipping remains high in these areas.

3. Confirmed Vessel Incidents – Past 24 Hours

Incident	Vessel	Status	Damage	Location
NTR				

0 confirmed vessel attack reported during this reporting period.

4. Confirmed/known Marine infrastructure attacks

SUBSTANTIAL threats persist to port infrastructure, with potential disruption to bunkering operations, port logistics, and regional energy supply chains.

Kuwait: Early Friday March 20 a new wave of drone attacks targeted Mina al-Ahmadi refinery. Fires broke out in multiple operational units; some units shut down for safety. This was the second attack in ~48 hours. No casualties reported.

Qatar: Primary strikes: Wednesday March 18 and Thursday March 19. No new strikes last 24 hours. Multiple missile/drone attacks caused extensive damage, sizeable fires, now controlled, and halted LNG production/export. No reported casualties

KSA: Thursday March 19, drone impact reported; assessment ongoing as of March 20. A drone struck SAMREF refinery with damage assessment ongoing; temporary/minimal impact on oil loadings at Yanbu port. No casualties reported

UAE: NTR last 24 hours

Bahrain: Friday morning March 20; Shrapnel/debris from intercepted projectiles caused fire in a company warehouse/facility in the vicinity of the port area, fire reported and contained. No casualties reported

These attacks also illustrate that long-range unmanned systems possess the capability to target critical maritime infrastructure far beyond traditional chokepoints. As a result, not only vessel



transits but also port facilities, offshore energy assets and major maritime logistics hubs throughout the Arabian Gulf and Arabian Sea approaches remain at SUBSTANTIAL risk.

Commercial operators should ensure they obtain the latest port status updates and operational advisories from local agents, terminal operators, and relevant authorities prior to planning or executing port calls in the region. This is essential to safeguarding crew, vessel operations, and continuity of supply chain activities.

5. Port & Anchorage Congestion Risk (No Change)

A high concentration of vessels remain at anchor, drifting, or alongside in Arabian Gulf ports. Congestion is further complicated by EMI, AIS anomalies, and GNSS interference, increasing the risk of navigational hazards such as limited maneuvering space, anchor dragging, and collision.

Bridge teams should apply disciplined bridge resource management, maintain effective VHF/AIS communications, and cross-check navigation systems where interference is suspected.

Vessels are advised to minimize time spent pier-side or at anchor within high-risk areas. Maintaining movement and avoiding predictable patterns remains an important mitigation measure.

6. Strait of Hormuz Traffic Assessment

Historically average daily transit through the Strait of Hormuz is approximately **138 vessels per day**.

AIS-derived monitoring indicates that commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz remains extremely limited, with **one confirmed commercial vessel transits recorded during the past 24 hours**.

VESSEL TRANSITS COMPARISON

CARGO VESSEL TRANSITS COMPARISON 13 to 19 MARCH 2026

Date	13 Mar	14 Mar	15 Mar	16 Mar	17 Mar	18 Mar	19 Mar
SoH E	0	1	2	1	3	2	1
SoH W	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
SoH Total	1	2	3	2	4	2	1
BAM NW	18	10	6	11	7	7	15
BAM SE	8	5	3	12	9	11	15
BAM Total	26	15	9	23	16	18	30

Source: S&P. Data based on cargo carrying vessels 1000 GT and above **transmitting AIS**



TANKERS (ALL TYPES) VESSELS TRANSITS COMPARISON 13 to 19 MARCH 2026

Date	13 Mar	14 Mar	15 Mar	16 Mar	17 Mar	18 Mar	19 Mar
SoH E	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
SoH W	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
SoH Total	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
BAM NW	7	4	9	10	15	14	13
BAM SE	3	3	2	7	10	5	14
BAM Total	10	7	11	17	25	19	27

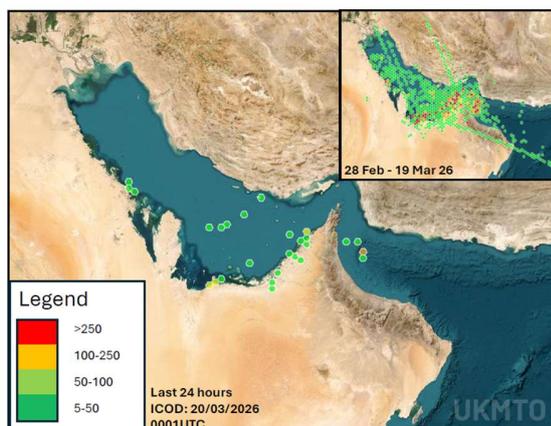
Source: S&P. Data based on cargo carrying vessels 1000 GT and above **transmitting AIS**

Note: AIS-derived transit figures represent only vessels actively transmitting AIS and may not capture vessels operating with AIS disabled or affected by GNSS disruption. Actual transit volumes may therefore vary from observed figures.

7. GNSS / GPS Interference Environment

Sporadic GNSS/GPS/AIS interference, spoofing, and jamming continues across the Strait of Hormuz approaches, Gulf of Oman, and Arabian Gulf, may degrade positional reliability and contributing to AIS anomalies, false tracks, and intermittent signal loss. Degraded positional reliability remains clustered near the Strait of Hormuz approaches and adjacent Omani/UAE waters. AIS anomaly mapping also indicates minor secondary interference patterns extending into the Central Red Sea.

These effects may produce artificial vessel tracks, unrealistic speed readings, and sudden positional displacement, potentially creating the appearance of vessels transiting across land or moving at physically impossible speeds. Mariners should anticipate associated degradation in communications reliability, including congested or anomalous VHF reporting, and should treat **all electronic navigation inputs with increased caution**.



Heatmap of Anomalous AIS positions,
20KM Hexbin aggregation of points



Recommended Measures:

- Cross-check GNSS position with radar ranges, visual bearings, echo sounder trends, and parallel indexing where appropriate.
- Validate ECDIS and AIS inputs against secondary navigation sources and manual plotting where required.
- Increase bridge manning and enhanced vigilance in constrained waters, near anchorages, and during port approaches.
- Treat anomalous VHF calls, reported closures, or unexpected routing instructions cautiously and verify through recognized authorities.
- Include offshore infrastructure, anchorages, and port approaches in voyage threat and risk assessments, not only open-water transit lanes.

8. War Risk Insurance Status – Elevated Market Posture (No Change)

The Joint War Committee (JWLA-033) expansion of Listed Areas across the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and adjacent waters continues to trigger voyage declarations and Additional Premium negotiations under most Hull War policies. While commercial war risk insurance remains available, premiums have increased significantly and underwriting posture has tightened.

The U.S. government has indicated that additional war-risk insurance support mechanisms may be activated if required to sustain commercial shipping flows in the region. These mechanisms are intended to supplement the private insurance market and ensure continuity of maritime trade during periods of elevated conflict risk.

9. Outlook (24–48 Hours)

The maritime threat environment **across the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman remains at CRITICAL** threat level. The conflict shows a rhythm, with recurring pulses designed to sustain psychological and economic pressure. Threats encompass a broader operational area within the Arabian Gulf, to include northern Gulf offshore transfer zones, anchorages, and approaches to ports. Offshore energy infrastructure and designated port facilities continue to face heightened exposure to standoff and asymmetric attacks.

Over the next 24–48 hours, the most credible threats encompass sustained UAV, USV, and missile engagements; potential follow-on or opportunistic strikes in proximity to recent incident sites, particularly coastal and offshore waters; and targeted attacks against static or predictably operating vessels, including ship-to-ship transfers and offshore installations.

Sustained electronic interference may still affect GNSS, AIS, and communications, degrading navigational safety and maritime traffic management in constrained waterways

A. Strait of Hormuz and Arabian Gulf (Graphics updated)

The Strait of Hormuz and Arabian Gulf remain at a critical risk level. Events demonstrate hostile activity occurring across an expanded geographic footprint within the Arabian Gulf, extending well beyond the primary transit corridor of the Strait of Hormuz. Projectile strikes remain primary risk to merchant



shipping. No change in pattern: low-cost kinetic attacks in chokepoints and coastal anchorages. Historical patterns indicate elevated vulnerability for vessels at anchor, adrift, or predictable routing and manoeuvring.

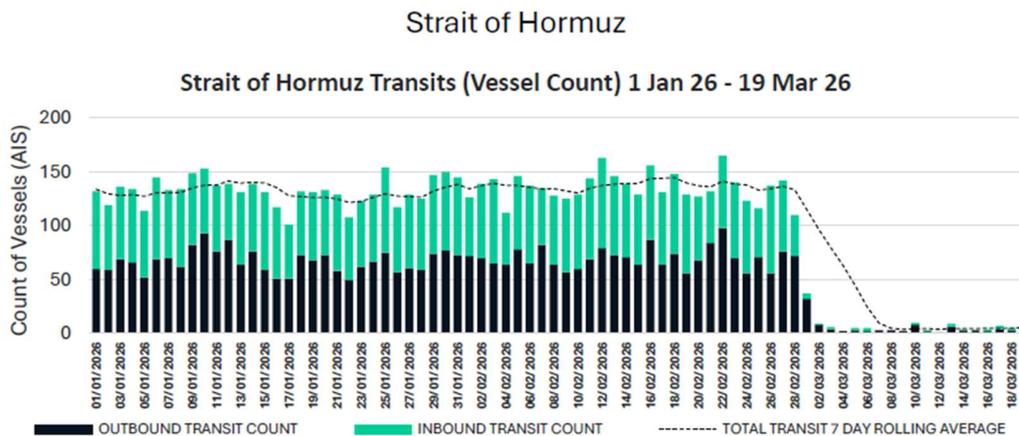
There remains no confirmation of mining in the SoH.

Northern Arabian Gulf states are conducting additional patrols to monitor ships in the area. Ongoing field inspections and reinforced deployments are reported aimed at safeguarding territorial waters, maritime routes, oil infrastructure, and key commercial ports. Shipping companies should carefully consider their own security measures.

Mariners may experience GNSS/GPS spoofing, AIS anomalies, and electronic interference affecting navigation and communications reliability across the region. GNSS jamming/spoofing is sporadic but reduced from peak levels.

OPERATION EPIC FURY SITREP

Transit Statistics *ICOD: 20/03/2026 09:45UTC*



Traffic observations are derived from AIS-based monitoring and should be interpreted as indicative rather than exhaustive.

B. Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea (No change)

The security environment in **the Gulf of Oman, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Arabian Sea remains at CRITICAL** level of operational risk. Incidents include unidentified projectiles striking ships while transiting the region, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz and adjacent waters, affecting navigational and communication systems. The risk of "limpet mine" or USV attacks in regional terminals remains a significant concern for the energy sector. Limpet-style underwater attacks remain a historical risk pattern. International naval forces maintain a presence in the area. Vessels are advised to transit with caution, maintain a 24-hour visual and radar watch, and report any suspicious activity to relevant authorities such as UKMTO.



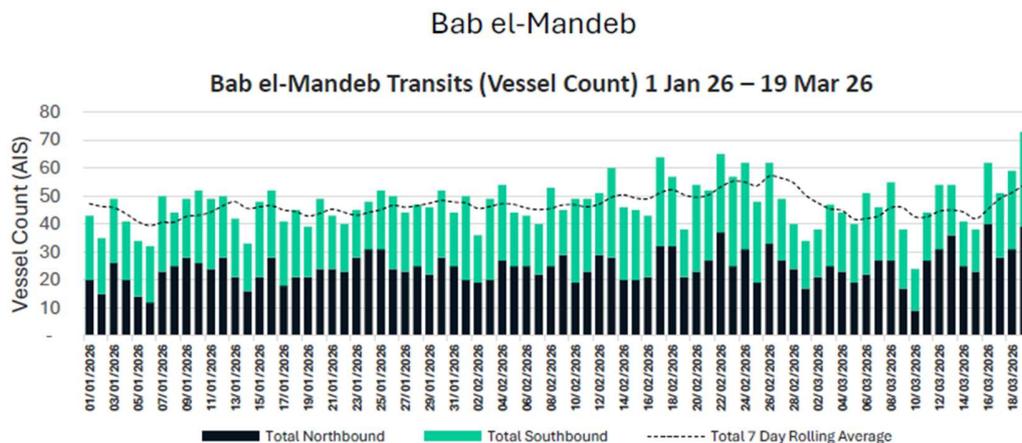
C. Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden (Graphics updated)

The situation across the **Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden are at MODERATE threat level** due to the ongoing regional conflict and the continued hostile posture of Houthi forces toward commercial shipping. No verified Houthi attacks against commercial vessels have been confirmed since the escalation of hostilities on 28 February, though the group retains both the capability and demonstrated intent to conduct maritime attacks in the region. Known threat vectors include anti-ship missiles, one-way attack UAVs, and uncrewed surface vessels (USVs).

Commercial traffic through the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb Strait has returned to historical trends, with approximately 57 vessel transits recorded during the past 24 hours. No new public statements or operational indicators suggesting imminent Houthi maritime activity have been identified; however, maritime industry concern remains elevated given the group's previous targeting patterns and demonstrated capabilities.

There are no known active Pirate Action Groups (PAGs) operating in the Gulf of Aden or adjacent waters at present. General piracy risk in the broader region is assessed as low. Mariners should maintain vigilance to guard against opportunistic armed robbery and piracy.

Strict adherence to BMP-MS guidance and use of the Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC) is strongly advised for any vessel attempting transit, particularly when operating in coordination with naval forces or under escort.



Traffic observations are derived from AIS-based monitoring and should be interpreted as indicative rather than exhaustive.

D. Southern Red Sea (No change)

No confirmed attacks, suspicious approaches, or reported incidents involving commercial vessels in the southern Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb Strait, or adjacent Yemen/Saudi waters. Houthi posture remains



threatening but with no indications of kinetic action. Houthi leadership continues to communicate potential resumption of strikes on US/Israel-linked shipping amid the broader Iran conflict. No attacks against merchant-vessel actions have recently reported. Moderate asymmetric threat from Houthi capabilities and reduced traffic volumes due to avoidance.

The most recent Red Sea maritime-related event (19 March) was a drone strike on the SAMREF refinery in the port of Yanbu. Damage was minimal. Yanbu serves as a key alternative oil-export terminal bypassing the closed Strait of Hormuz, so this incident escalates risks to Red Sea port infrastructure and rerouted shipping.

GNSS/GPS jamming and spoofing remain a consistent hazard across the region, with secondary interference patterns extending into the central Red Sea but lower intensity than the primary hotspots in the Persian Gulf / Strait of Hormuz. No major new spikes, widespread communications blackouts, or specific incidents isolated to the southern Red Sea were reported in the last 24 hours. Electronic warfare effects are treated as an ongoing operational risk tied to the wider Iran conflict.

E. Northern Red Sea and Suez Canal (No change)

No confirmed attacks, suspicious approaches, vessel strikes or reported incidents involving commercial shipping in the Northern Red Sea (including Gulf of Suez approaches), Suez Canal, or adjacent Egyptian waters has been reported. The Suez Canal Authority confirms operations continuing normally in both directions with no security incidents or disruptions to transit. Houthi forces retain a general “substantial” threat posture across the wider Red Sea, but no verified actions or escalations have affected northern sectors. Moderate to low direct threat.

No significant new spikes, widespread outages, or isolated incidents of GNSS/GPS jamming, spoofing, or communications blackouts were reported in the Northern Red Sea or Suez Canal in the last 24 hours. Secondary/lower-intensity GNSS interference patterns can occasionally extend into the broader Red Sea corridor (including historical AIS speed anomalies near Port Sudan and Suez approaches), but nothing acute or new has been flagged for the northern sector. No vessel-reported comms blackouts specific to these waters.

F. Eastern Mediterranean Sea

In the Eastern Mediterranean, electromagnetic interference (EMI) continuous to be reported around Cyprus and the Levant, coinciding with naval operations. Mariners report frequent GPS "blackouts" and false coordinates near naval task groups. Vessels operating near the Lebanese and Israeli coastlines continue to face an elevated risk of collateral damage due to ongoing cross-border kinetic exchanges and intensified UAV activity. Reporting indicates continuous engagements in southern Lebanon alongside potential expansion of ongoing operations. While the overall risk to commercial shipping in the Eastern Mediterranean remains stable, vessels operating close to shore should consider their proximity to ongoing kinetic activity on land. Recent missile attacks in the region have caused damage to infrastructure in and around Haifa, including localized fires and temporary power disruptions.



There is increased naval presence in the region expected to continue as regional tensions persist. Mariners should exercise extreme caution and avoid loitering near military exclusion zones. Mariners are advised that military exclusion zones are being strictly enforced and a 30 nm standoff from all naval units is recommended to mitigate the high risk of misidentification.

There are no verified reports of:

- Missile or UAV attacks on commercial vessels in Eastern Mediterranean waters
- Mining or chokepoint denial activity

Analytical Note: //DISCLAIMER//

This advisory is based on currently available reporting, including maritime industry observations, open-source intelligence, and aggregated operational reporting from regional maritime stakeholders. Information remains subject to verification as additional data becomes available. Observed patterns and threat assessments represent the best current analytical judgment and should be interpreted as indicative of prevailing risk conditions rather than definitive prediction of future events.

JMIC will continue monitoring and issue updates as the situation warrants. The next JMIC update will be on **21** March.

Issued by: Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC) in consultation with UKMTO & MSCIO

Annex – Reference Material

- JMIC Regional Threat Levels
- UKMTO Incident Map
- Transit Statistics (AIS Derived)
- Confirmed Maritime Security Incidents List

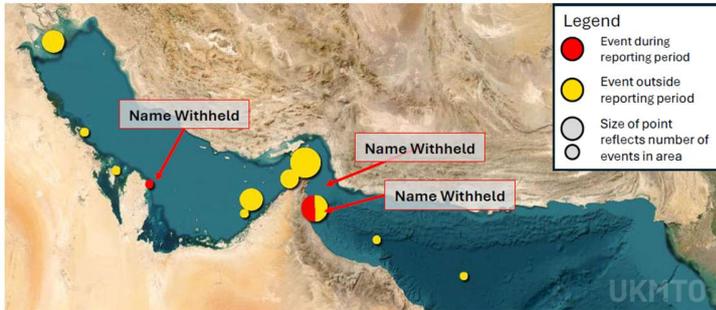
JMIC Regional Threat Levels

Threat Level	Definition
Low	An attack is highly unlikely
Moderate	An attack is possible but not likely
Substantial	An attack is a strong possibility
Severe	An attack is highly likely
Critical	An attack is almost certain



OPERATION EPIC FURY SITREP 15-19 Mar 26

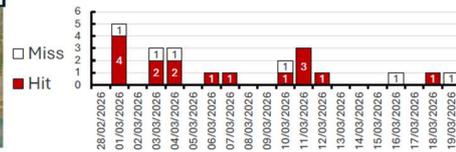
Maritime events reported to UKMTO ICOD: 20/03/2026 08:30UTC



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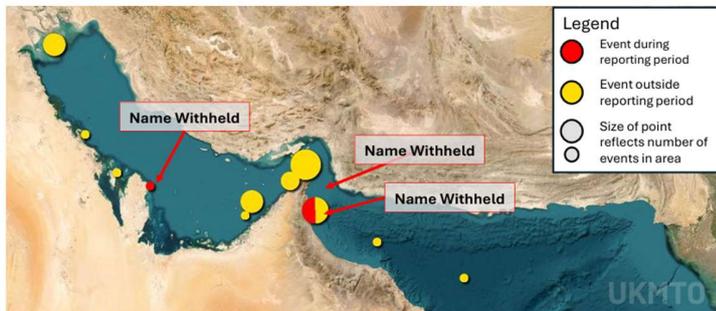
- Map reflects reported events to UKMTO since Saturday 28th Feb 2026
- No reported events on 2,5,8,9,15,17 Mar 2026
- No reported events before 1 Mar 2026

Reported Events



OPERATION EPIC FURY SITREP 15-19 Mar 26

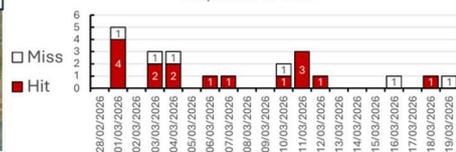
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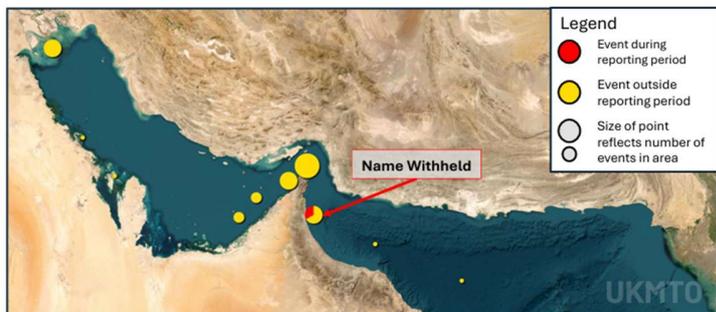
- Map reflects reported events to UKMTO since Saturday 28th Feb 2026
- No reported events on 2,5,8,9,15,17 Mar 2026
- No reported events before 1 Mar 2026

Reported Events



OPERATION EPIC FURY SITREP 15-16 Mar 26

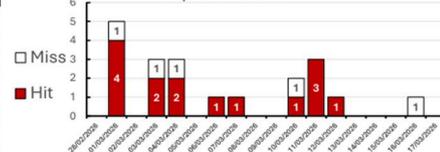
Maritime events reported to UKMTO ICOD: 18/03/2026 11:55UTC



Notes

- Map reflects reported events to UKMTO since Saturday 28th Feb 2026
- No reported events on 2,5,8,9,13,14,15,17 Mar 2026
- No reported events before 1 Mar 2026

Reported Events



Confirmed Maritime Security Incidents (01–15 March 2026)

Since 01 March 2026, at least 20 maritime security incidents involving commercial vessels and offshore infrastructure have been reported across the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman.

Date	Vessel	Vessel Type	Event Type	Location	Summary
01 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 004-36	SKYLIGHT	Tanker	Attack (serious)	Strait of Hormuz	Vessel struck by projectile while at anchor causing fire; crew evacuated with injuries reported.
01 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 006-36 UKMTO 005-26	HERCULES STAR	Tanker	Attack (serious)	Strait of Hormuz	Vessel struck by projectile while transiting outbound; fire reported onboard.
01 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 006-26	OCEAN ELECTRA	Bulk	Attack	Arabian Gulf	Projectile detonated in close proximity while vessel was transiting westbound; no damage reported.
01 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 007-36	MKD VYOM	Tanker	Attack (serious)	Gulf of Oman	Vessel struck by projectile (USV) while transiting northbound causing fire; one fatality reported.
01 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 008-26	STENA IMPERATIVE	Tanker	Attack (serious)	Bahrain	Vessel struck by two projectiles while in drydock causing fire and damage.
03 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 009-26	PELAGIA	Bulk	Near Miss	Gulf of Oman	UAV observed near vessel before impacting water nearby; no damage reported.



03 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 010-26	GOLD OAK	Bulk	Attack (serious)	Gulf of Oman	Vessel struck by projectile while at anchor causing structural damage; crew safe.
03 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 011-26	LIBRA TRADER	Tanker	Attack (serious)	Gulf of Oman	Vessel struck by projectile while anchored; damage reported.
04 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 012-26	SAFEEN PRESTIGE	Container	Attack (serious)	Strait of Hormuz	Explosion was reported near stern following approach by small craft; crew abandoned vessel.
04 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 013-26	MSC GRACE	Container	Near Miss	Arabian Gulf	Projectile detonated approximately 1 NM from vessel while drifting.
04 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 014-26	SONANGOL NAMIBE	Tanker	Attack (serious)	Northern Arabian Gulf	Explosion onboard causing cargo hold damage and oil leakage.
06 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 015-26	MUSSAFAH 2	Tug	Attack (serious)	Strait of Hormuz	Vessel struck by projectiles while supporting operations with SAFEEN PRESTIGE.
07 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 016-26	ARABIA III	Offshore Rig	Attack (serious)	Arabian Gulf	Drilling rig struck by UAV causing injuries and evacuation of personnel.
10 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 017-26	GH KAHLO	Bulk	Near Miss	Arabian Gulf	The Master reports witnessing a splash and hearing a loud bang in close proximity of a bulk carrier.



10 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 018-26	ONE MAJESTY	Container	Attack (serious)	Arabian Gulf	Vessel struck by projectile at stern causing possible structural damage.
11 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 019-26	MAYUREE NAREE	Bulk Carrier	Attack (serious)	Strait of Hormuz	Projectile strike resulted in engine room fire; crew evacuated by Omani Coast Guard.
11 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 020-26	STAR GWYNETH	Bulk Carrier	Attack (serious)	Arabian Gulf	Projectile strike caused breach in cargo hold and adjacent ballast tanks resulting in listing.
11 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 021-26	SAFESEA VISHNU	Tanker	Attack (serious)	Northern Arabian Gulf (STS area)	Struck by projectile while conducting STS operations; fire onboard and casualty reported.
11 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 021-26	ZEFYROS	Tanker	Attack (serious)	Northern Arabian Gulf (STS area)	Struck by projectile during STS operations causing significant fire.
12 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 022-26	SOURCE BLESSING	Container	Attack	Arabian Gulf (North of Jebel Ali)	Projectile struck accommodation block causing fire; crew safe.
17 Mar 2026 - UKMTO 023-26	Name withheld UFN	LPG Carrier	Suspicious activity	Approx 23 NM of the coast of UAE	Vessel was subjected to falling debris from drone or Missile Interception minor structural damage, no fire; crew safe.
18 Mar 2026 UKMTO 024-26	Name withheld UFN	Chemical products tanker	Attack	Vessel in TTW of UAE, 11NM off the coast	Hit by unknown projectile and caught fire. Crew of 16, 15 rescued and one crew member unaccounted for.



19 Mar 2026 UKMTO 025-26	Name withheld UFN	Tug, Multipurpose Offshore vessel	Suspicious activity	Inner anchorage at Ras Laffan Port, approx 4 NM out.	Debris from a drone impacted on board, resulting in damage to the bridge window. No injuries to personnel and no structural damage to the vessel have been reported.
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