

Joint Maritime Information Center

Update 048 to JMIC Advisory Note: 01 March – 21 May 2026

Regional Tension - Impact on Maritime Security ^C

Area of Concern:

Middle East Maritime Region

JMIC# 001-26

Regional Threat Level: **CRITICAL**

1. Confirmed Maritime Security Incidents List since last report

Date	Vessel	Vessel Type	Event Type	Location	Summary
NTR					

2. Operational Summary – Last 48 Hours

Arabian Gulf & Strait of Hormuz (No change)

Strait of Hormuz traffic remains significantly reduced, with no security-related incidents reported in the last 48 hours.

Mining in and near the TSS remains a threat, and GNSS interference is consistent.

Gulf of Oman & Arabian Sea (No change)

Merchant vessels continue to report a strong naval presence across the Gulf of Oman and the northern Arabian Sea. Blockade enforcement activity is ongoing.

Southern Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb & Gulf of Aden (No change)

Commercial traffic remains steady in the Bab el Mandeb and Gulf of Aden. Houthi messaging continues without associated operational indicators.

Somali Coast and Somali Basin (No change)

Piracy threat level remains SEVERE. Three merchant vessels currently held:

- Oil/products tanker – held since 21 April 2026
- General cargo / cement carrier – held since 26 April 2026
- Oil tanker – held since 02 May 2026; taken 10 NM off the Yemen coast and diverted toward Somali waters; status unconfirmed

Northern Red Sea & Suez Canal (No change)

No confirmed attacks or disruptions. Suez Canal transits continue normally. Electronic interference remains sporadic.



Eastern Mediterranean

No maritime attacks have been reported. Periodic electronic and navigational interference continues near Cyprus and the Levant. Naval presence remains elevated, and vessels are advised to maintain prudent separation from military units.

Industry Guidance For Safe Management of Vessel Transit through the Strait of Hormuz

Produced by ICS, IMCA, INTERCARGO, BIMCO, INTERTANKO and OCIMF (May 2026)

Summary

Ship conducting Hormuz transits are encouraged to consider the following:

1. Conduct updated threat assessment in close coordination with UKMTO/JMIC.
2. Anticipate GNSS loss → navigation must rely on radar, visual observation and dead reckoning.
3. Extreme traffic risk → manual steering, additional bridge manning, best safe speed, and limited course deviations.
4. Appropriate security posture → ISPS level, physical hardening, SSAS readiness, and strict OPSEC control.
5. Master's overriding authority → transit must be postponed if navigation or safety cannot be assured.

This Industry Guidance stands as a baseline for safe and informed Hormuz transit planning.

Industry Guidance can be found here:

<https://www.maritimelobalsecurity.org/media/vkaa3pjr/2026-05-20-guidance-strait-of-hormuz.pdf>



3. Regional Threat overview

Overall Maritime Risk Level: ● **CRITICAL**

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

Region	Threat Level	Notes
Arabian Gulf / Strait of Hormuz	CRITICAL	Navigation interference, blockade enforcement, mine reports, residual kinetic risk. Risk of attack or miscalculation in the Strait of Hormuz.
Gulf of Oman / Arabian Sea	CRITICAL	Historical projectile/UAV strikes; naval presence and blockade enforcement activities remain high.
Bab el-Mandeb / Gulf of Aden / Southern Red Sea	MODERATE	No confirmed maritime attacks; stable posture; Houthi rhetoric persists.
Somali Coast / Somali Basin	SEVERE	Three vessels are held by Somali pirates. PAG activity remains highly likely across the Somali Coast and Somali Basin. The onset of monsoon conditions is beginning to constrain extended-range operations.
Northern Red Sea / Suez Canal	MODERATE	No attacks or disruptions; Suez Canal operating normally.
Eastern Mediterranean	MODERATE	EMI/GNSS disruptions; elevated naval presence; no maritime attacks. Aid flotilla may produce localized media interest.

4. Maritime Incidents & Traffic Assessment

4A. Confirmed Vessel Incidents (Since 1 March) (No change)

Total of 43 incidents since 1 March; unchanged.

4B. Infrastructure Incidents (Last 48 Hours)

No attacks on ports or maritime infrastructure reported. Overall risk remains SUBSTANTIAL, driven by the potential for renewed kinetic activity and ongoing uncertainty around Iranian coastal waters and blockade-related enforcement. Recent drone activity focused on power generation.

4C. Traffic Trends

- Strait of Hormuz:
 - Historical average: ~138 vessels/day
 - 19 May: 5 transits
 - 20 May: 8 transits
- Bab el-Mandeb:
 - 85 vessel transits in past 48 hours
 - Still below pre-2023 baseline

* Metrics are a compilation of data from S&P Maritime and SeaVision sources and are exclusive of ships calling Iranian ports adjacent to the Strait of Hormuz.



4D. Port & Anchorage Congestion (No change)

High vessel density persists across major Arabian Gulf anchorages, with no significant change in congestion levels over the last 48 hours. Traffic patterns remain largely unchanged as operators continue to delay Strait of Hormuz transits in response to observed activity.

Vessels operating in crowded anchorages should maintain heightened situational awareness and monitor for any navigational degradation to reduce collision risk. Periodic repositioning within anchorages remains advisable to avoid predictability and reduce exposure to potential targeting.

4E. GNSS / AIS Interference (No change)

GNSS interference remains consistent across the Strait of Hormuz approaches, the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Gulf, the central Red Sea, and the Suez Canal approaches.

5. Outlook (24–48 Hours)

Arabian Gulf / Strait of Hormuz (No change)

The operating environment remains high risk based upon recent attacks on ships in the area. Multiple instances of aggressive hailing and assertive action by Iranian units have been noted in the last 48 hours. Blockade-related enforcement activity continues. Rapid, short-notice actions near Iranian coastal waters and anchorages remain possible. The TSS and adjacent waters may have associated mine risk based upon reporting. Ships anchored in close proximity to the Strait of Hormuz may be challenged to move away or risk consequences. Furthermore, ships stationary for long periods or with AIS on may be at increased risk of targeting by adversaries.

Gulf of Oman / Arabian Sea (No change)

Naval activity remains elevated in the area and blockade enforcement is expected to persist. Verification hails and queries for vessels approaching the Strait of Hormuz or moving to/from Iranian ports is highly likely. Operators may encounter suspicious approaches and electronic interference near coastal transit lanes. Use of force against vessels failing to comply with blockading forces has been reported.

Southern Red Sea / Bab el Mandeb / Gulf of Aden (No change)

Houthi messaging continues without associated operational indicators. The potential for renewed disruption persists should regional tensions escalate. GNSS interference remains a residual hazard, with effects from the central Red Sea periodically extending into the southern sector.

Somali Coast and Somali Basin

Pirate Action Group activity remains highly likely across the Somali Coast and Somali Basin. Weather conditions remain conducive for small boat operations close to shore, while strengthening southwest monsoon effects are now further degrading offshore conditions and will significantly limit extended-range skiff activity over the next 48 hours.

Mariners should maintain a vigilant watch and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO and MSCIO.

Northern Red Sea / Suez (No change)

The environment remains stable with no indicators of maritime escalation. Periodic EMI and GNSS disruptions are likely to continue.



Eastern Mediterranean (No change)

While there is no major change in the Eastern Mediterranean, periodic electronic and navigational interference may be encountered near Cyprus and the Levant. Naval presence remains elevated, and vessels should maintain prudent separation from military units.

JMIC Advisory special topics schedule:

Sunday: AIS and Electronic Interference

Thursday: UKMTO Transit Metrics

Full incident history will be included in the JMIC Weekly Report.

ANNEXES

Transit comparisons

CARGO VESSELS TRANSITS COMPARISON

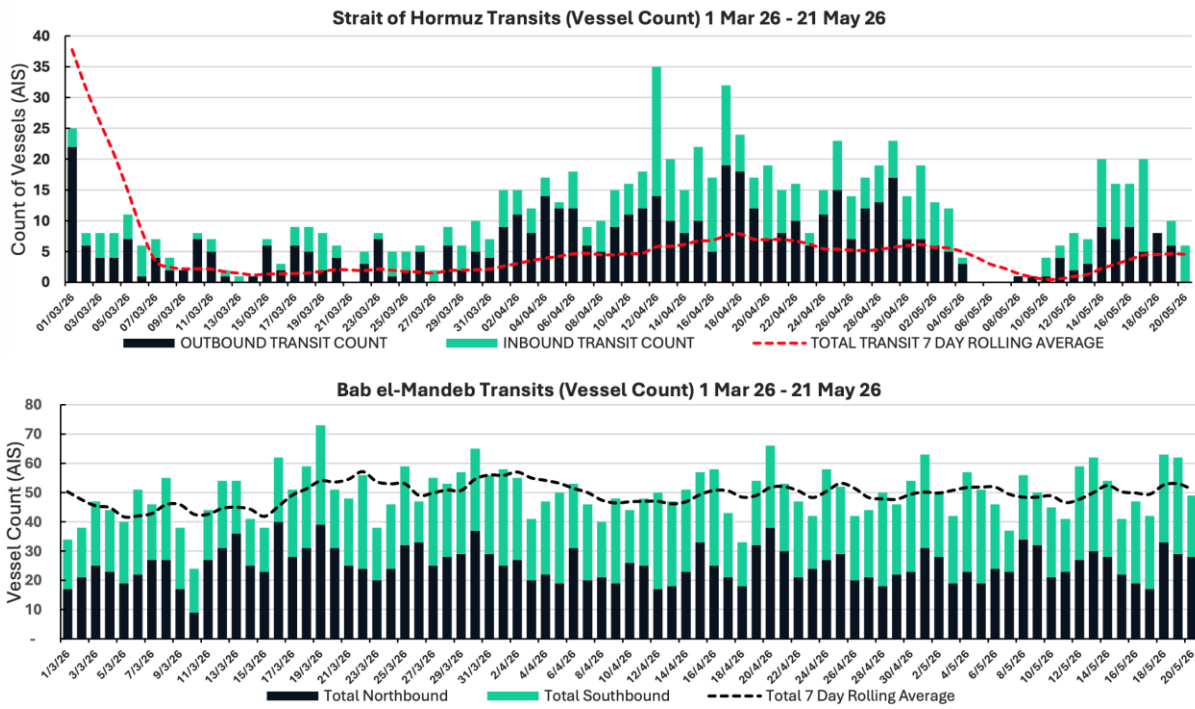
Date	14-May	15-May	16-May	17-May	18-May	19-May	20-May
SoH E	3	2	6	1	2	0	1
SoH W	5	2	1	1	1	1	4
SoH Total	8	4	7	2	3	1	5
BAM NW	14	13	8	10	18	16	14
BAM SE	15	9	19	11	13	12	11
BAM Total	29	22	27	21	31	28	25

TANKERS (ALL TYPES) VESSELS TRANSITS COMPARISON

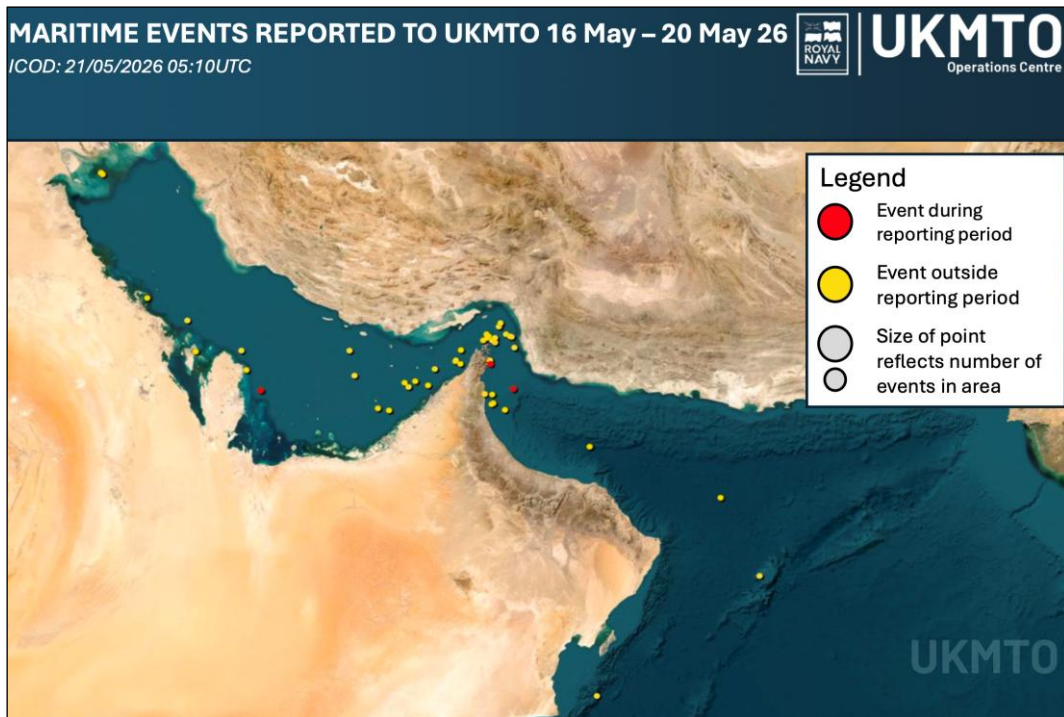
Date	12-May	13-May	14-May	15-May	16-May	17-May	18-May
SoH E	0	2	3	1	1	3	1
SoH W	1	0	1	0	3	1	2
SoH Total	1	2	4	1	4	4	3
BAM NW	12	8	8	6	8	5	11
BAM SE	10	8	7	3	6	9	7
BAM Total	22	16	15	9	14	14	18



UKMTO transits



UKMTO Incident Maps



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

