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US Maritime Administration Issues Red Sea, BAM and GoA advisory amid continuing and increasing threat to vessels



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The US Maritime Administration has published an advisory valid until 24th September 2017, highlighting the potential threat to mariners resulting from the continuation of the Yemeni civil war. For the full US Maritime Administration advisory [click here](#).

Setting the Advisory in Context

The US supports the UAE-led coalition which is assisting President Hadi's government retake the capital Sana'a and surrounding Houthi held rebel areas. The civil war has been at a stalemate with neither side making territorial progress. Since last October the conflict has increasingly been fought in the coastal areas off Hodeidah and Mokha. Negotiations in 2016 failed and there is to date no sign of a peace agreement being achieved in the near future.

The tactical picture in the Southern Red Sea has developed at pace since October 2016, with an array of attacks against maritime targets. Attacks have included a successful missile strike against the UAE supply vessel HSV-2 Swift, and the targeting of US warships. A radio-controlled speed boat with an on-board explosive payload was detonated against a Saudi Frigate, and the latest development is the deployment of sea mines in the entrance to harbours. These resulted in major damage to a Yemeni Coast Guard vessel on March 10th 2017. In October 2016, there was a boat delivered IED attack on the LNG carrier Galicia Spirit on passage in the southern BAM.

These attacks underpin the importance of the US advisory which states that there is a heightened threat to merchant vessels in the vicinity. This week Saudi-Arabian naval forces have confirmed they have dismantled several naval mines deployed by Houthi militias in the Red Sea. Several of the mines were found near the southwestern port city of Mokha. The mines were moored mines of unknown manufacture. Military forces are monitoring the area closely for signs that the mines might have been set to free float or might over time break free of their moorings.

Vessels transiting or operating in the vicinity should exercise extreme caution and conduct a full risk assessment, taking appropriate mitigating measures. Vessels should ensure BMP 4 measures are enforced and consider the use of armed guards to counter the array of threats.



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