

Maritime Advisory

Date: 4 March 2026

Areas of Concern: Arabian/Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Northern Arabian Sea & adjacent waters; wider region including Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden; eastern Mediterranean Sea

Situational Overview

The conflict in the Middle East remains **highly volatile and continues to directly impact regional security, including maritime security**. Military operations launched on 28 February have escalated across multiple domains (air, missile, naval), significantly increasing risks to commercial shipping in the Arabian/Persian Gulf and adjacent waters. The most severe maritime disruption centres on the Strait of Hormuz, where commercial traffic has effectively halted



due to security threats and military activity. Iranian forces have warned vessels against transit, and most major shipping operators have suspended or rerouted sailings.

Hostilities have also expanded geographically, with reported military activity and air defence engagements extending beyond the Gulf region. While separate from the current Middle East conflict, the sinking of a Russian-flagged liquefied natural gas tanker in the Mediterranean Sea on 3 March, which Moscow has attributed to Ukrainian maritime drones, highlights the vulnerability of commercial energy shipping to indirect or proxy-related attacks and underscores the widening maritime risk environment into the central Mediterranean Sea region. In the Indian Ocean, a US Navy submarine sank the Iranian frigate *IRIS Dena* south of Sri Lanka, marking a significant escalation in direct state-on-state naval engagement well beyond the immediate Gulf theatre. This development signals an expansion of operational reach and raises the risk of retaliatory or asymmetric responses against commercial vessels transiting key transportation routes across the wider Indian Ocean basin. Additionally, Yemen's Houthis militia has also threatened to restart attacks on vessels transiting the Red Sea. **The maritime threat environment should therefore be assessed as regionally interconnected rather than isolated to the Gulf.**

Area-Specific Risk Assessment

1. Arabian/Persian Gulf & Strait of Hormuz

Current Status – Effective Commercial Disruption

- Merchant traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has been effectively reduced to near-zero levels
- Multiple commercial vessels have been struck by projectiles in Gulf waters
- Heightened naval deployments from regional and international forces are ongoing
- GPS/AIS interference and electronic warfare activity have increased significantly
- Large numbers of tankers and container vessels remain anchored off UAE, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi ports awaiting security clarity
- War-risk premiums have risen sharply, and some underwriters are restricting coverage in high risk-zones.
- On 3 March 2026, US President Trump stated that the US Navy could potentially provide protective escort or defensive coverage for vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz. However as of 4 March, no formal convoy system has been confirmed as operational, and commercial operators should not assume guaranteed naval protection unless explicitly coordinated through official channels. Additionally as of 4 March, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has stated that it maintains full control of the Strait.

Primary Threats

- Missile and drone strikes
- Naval engagements and collateral damage
- Electronic interference (jamming/spoofing)
- Mines or waterborne IEDs
- Boarding/seizure risks
- Cyber-attacks targeting ship companies and port operators

2. Gulf of Oman & Northern Arabian Sea

- Elevated surveillance and naval operations
- Risk of spillover kinetic activity
- Increased maritime interdictions and monitoring

3. Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb & Gulf of Aden

Risks remain elevated in - Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden

Yemen's Houthi movement has signalled a possible renewed campaign targeting commercial shipping in this region.

Threat Profile:

- Anti-ship missiles
- Armed drones
- Small boat swarm tactics
- Targeting linked to vessel nationality or ownership

International naval missions remain present, however vessels should not assume universal protection coverage.

4. Eastern Mediterranean Sea

Heightened awareness is advised in waters off - Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon, Syria

Risk Factors:

- Air defence engagements over maritime zones
- Missile interception debris hazards
- Naval deployments
- Port disruptions linked to military posture shifts

Commercial traffic continues in the Mediterranean Sea, however the Eastern basin should be treated as a heightened alert zone.

Port Operations

Port operations across the region are experiencing varying levels of disruption

Middle East Ports

United Arab Emirates

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
Hamriyah Port	All terminal port operations are normal
Sharjah Port	All terminal port operations are normal
Jebel Ali Port	All terminal port operations are normal
Fujairah and Khor Fakkan	No alerts issued at this time; navigational warning No. 01/2026 disseminated addressed reported incidents of intermittent GPS signal spoofing and jamming in offshore areas of Fujairah
Ras al Khaimah Ports	Open and operating normally
Ruwais & Abu Dhabi Petroleum Ports	Operational; Ruwais PPA (ISPS Level 2); Abu Dhabi Ports (ISPS Level 1)

Kuwait - All ports are operational; no alerts or warnings currently issued by local port authorities

Oman - Port operations are partially restricted

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
Asyad Drydock - Duqm, Port of Salalah	Suspended operations until further notice
Port of Duqum	Only arrived vessels operations ongoing; new call subject to approval
Port Sultan Qaboos	Port operating normally
Muscat	Port operating normally
Mina Al Fahal	Port operating normally
Port of Sohar	Port operating normally
Qalhat LNG Terminal – Sur	Port operating normally
OMIFCO Terminal – Sur	Port operating normally
Port of Salalah – CT Terminal	Port operating normally

Saudi Arabia – All ports are operational; no alerts or warnings currently issued by local port authorities

Bahrain – All port movements are temporarily suspended, including pilotage services; ISPS Level remains at Level 1

Qatar – All ports are operational ; Official security status remains at Security Level 1; As a proactive measure, all vessels are requested to exercise heightened caution and vigilance

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
Mesaieed Port	Significant GPS signal degradation
Al Shaheen Offshore Terminal	Operational
Halul Island Offshore Terminal	Operational

Egypt – The Suez Canal and all Egyptian ports remain fully operational; ISPS Level remains at Level 1

Jordan – All operations remain normal at Aqaba Port; terminal, marine services, cargo handling and gate operations are functioning without disruptions. Maritime navigation and cargo operations are proceeding smoothly and without delay.

Pakistan – All ports remain fully operational; ISPS Level remains at Level 1

Iraq – No damage at Umm Qasr; No port restrictions or emergency measures currently in place

Mediterranean Sea Ports

Cyprus – No official cancellations for vessel operations

Lebanon – Beirut and Tripoli Ports are open and operating; ISPS Level remains at Level 1

Israel – Besides restrictions for dangerous goods, all ports are operational

Recommendations

Voyage Planning

- Conduct risk assessments immediately prior to transit
- Closely monitor official advisories from flag states and maritime security centres
- Do not rely on anticipated naval escort operations unless formally confirmed
- Minimise loitering near territorial waters of high-risk states
- Consider alternative routing via the Cape of Good Hope where commercially viable
- Assess war-risk insurance implications before entering designated high-risk areas

Transit Procedures (if entering high-risk areas)

- Maintain maximum safe speed during transit of chokepoints
- Avoid unnecessary deviation towards military or energy infrastructure
- Increase bridge water levels and radar vigilance
- Minimise deck crew exposure
- Prepare for GPS/AIS disruptions with alternative navigation methods
- Conduct drills for: Missile/drone alerts, Emergency manoeuvring, Fire response. Casualty/injury managements
- Maintain continuous monitoring of VHF Channel 16 and naval broadcast frequencies
- Ensure Ship Security Plans are fully implemented at the highest appropriate security level

Port Planning

- Confirm port operational status directly with agents prior to arrival
- Anticipate berth congestion and extended anchorage delays

- Factor potential pilotage suspension into passage plans
- Reconfirm war-risk insurance coverage for port calls

Reporting & Coordinating

- Register movements with UKMTO and relevant maritime security centres
- Use Voluntary Reporting Schemes where applicable
- Immediately report any suspicious activity, projectile sightings or electronic interference

Outlook (As of 4 March 2026)

The Strait of Hormuz remains effectively non-transitable for most commercial shipping due to active hostilities. While the US has indicated potential naval protection measures, operational details remain unconfirmed. The Red Sea environment may deteriorate further if Houthi attacks resume at scale. The Eastern Mediterranean carries elevated but secondary risk, in relation to both the Middle East and Ukraine conflicts. **The situation remains fluid, with potential for further rapid escalation and short-notice operational shifts.**