

## Maritime Advisory

**Date:** 6 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

**Changes from Previous Advisory (4 March 2026)** – Minor changes to port operations (pg. 3)

### 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, following coordinated strikes against Iran by the US and Israel, have expanded across multiple domains including air, missile and naval operations. These developments have significantly increased risks to commercial shipping across the Arabian/Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and adjacent waters.



The most severe maritime disruption continues to centre on the Strait of Hormuz, where commercial traffic has largely halted due to security threats, military activity, and insurance restrictions. Iranian authorities and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) units have warned vessels against transiting the strait and have threatened attacks on ships attempting passage. Multiple tankers have been struck in recent days by projectiles or drones and vessel traffic through the strait has significantly fallen since the start of hostilities. As a result, most major shipping operators and energy traders have suspended or rerouted sailings, with hundreds of tankers currently waiting outside the strait or diverting to alternative ports and routes.

Hostilities have also expanded geographically beyond the immediate Gulf theatre. Missile strikes, air defence engagements, and drone activity have been reported across several Middle Eastern states hosting US or allied military facilities. Regional armed groups aligned with Iran have signalled potential involvement, raising the risk of multi-front escalation and indirect attacks on maritime infrastructure, ports or commercial vessels operating in the wide region.

In parallel, tensions in adjacent maritime theatres remain elevated. Yemen's Houthi movement has renewed threats to target vessels transiting the Red Sea, raising concerns that attacks against commercial shipping in this region could resume.

Overall, the maritime threat environment should therefore be assessed as regionally interconnected rather than confined to the Arabian Gulf. Ongoing military operations, the potential expansion of proxy hostilities, and the vulnerability of critical maritime checkpoints continue to present high operational risk for commercial shipping across the wider region.

## 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

### Operations at Bahrain begin to resume; additional closures reported in Qatari ports

#### 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** – No alerts/notifications have been issued by the local authorities

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
Asyad Drydock - Duqm	Port operating normally
Port of Duqm	Port operating normally
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	Port operating normally

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

**Bahrain** – Vessel movements in Bahrain have gradually resumed, however operations remain limited due to the restricted availability of pilots. Movements are being carried out on a priority basis with BAPCO vessels. Additionally, most Bahraini-flagged vessels are being granted permission to operate at this time.

**Qatar** – The official security status remains at Security Level 1, however as a proactive measure, all vessels are requested to exercise heightened caution and vigilance

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
<b>Hamad Port</b>	Normal port operations and vessel movement
<b>Doha Port</b>	Normal port operations and vessel movement
<b>Al Ruwais Port</b>	Normal port operations; port is restricted to small craft only, including dhows and barges
<b>Mesaieed Port</b>	Port operations ongoing
<b>Ras Laffan Port</b>	Port operations ongoing
<b>Al Shaheen Offshore Terminal</b>	Operations suspended until further notice
<b>Halul Island Offshore Terminal</b>	Operations suspended until further notice

**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** – All ports remain operational, with no alerts or warnings issued by the local port authorities. South of Lebanon remains in an unstable operational situation. 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 6 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.**