

Maritime Advisory

Date: 9 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 (6 March 2026) – No major operational changes

Situational Overview

The conflict in the Middle East remains **highly volatile and continues to directly impact regional security, including maritime security.**

The operational situation in the Strait of Hormuz remains broadly unchanged, with traffic continuing to be severely disrupted and many shipping companies avoiding transit due to the elevated security risks. UKTMO has reported that during the reporting period of 28 February – 8 March 2026, it received 13 reports of

incidents affecting vessels operating in and around the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman. This figure consists of 10 attack reports and 3 suspicious activity reports.



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.

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

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

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
Shuwaikh Port	Port operating normally; Security Level 2 protocols
Shuaiba Port	Port operating normally; Security Level 2 protocols
Minal Al Ahmadi Port	Port operating normally; Security Level risen to Level 2
Mina Al Zour Port	Port operating normally; Security Level risen to Level 2

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 – No alerts or warnings issued by the local port authorities; all operational activities are functioning at full capacity.

Bahrain – Vessel movements in Bahrain have gradually resumed, however operations remain limited due to the restricted availability of pilots. Operations at Bahrain’s national energy company Bapco Energies have been disrupted following an attack that struck its refinery complex, prompting the group to issue a formal force majeure notice. ISPS security level remains at Level 1.

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
Hamad Port	Normal port operations and vessel movement
Doha Port	Normal port operations and vessel movement
Al Ruwais Port	Normal port operations; port is restricted to small craft only, including dhows and barges
Mesaieed Port	Port operations ongoing
Ras Laffan Port	Port operations ongoing
Al Shaheen Offshore Terminal	Operations suspended until further notice
Halul Island Offshore Terminal	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 – Ports of Umm Qasr and Khor Al Zubair are fully operational; no further port restrictions or emergency measures in place; Basra Oil Terminal and SPM Somo Terminal have ceased export operations.

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 9 March 2026)

The maritime security environment across the Gulf region is expected to remain highly unstable in the near term. Continued military exchanges between Iran, the US and Israel are likely to sustain elevated risks to commercial shipping, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman. Further attacks against merchant vessels, including direct or opportunistic, remain highly probable as Iran and affiliated groups seek to exert pressure on regional maritime traffic and global energy markets.

Proxy involvement also presents a significant escalation risk as Iranian-aligned groups operating across the region may conduct strikes against military facilities, ports or commercial vessels, potentially expanding the geographic scope of maritime threats. Renewed Houthi attacks against shipping in the Red Sea or Bab el-Mandeb would further compound regional disruption and may affect key international shipping routes.