

## Maritime Advisory

**Date:** 30 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

**Threat Level:** **Severe**

### 28 February – 30 March 2026

UKMTO has received 24 reports of incidents affecting vessels operating in and around the *Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz* and *Gulf of Oman*:

- 16 Attack Reports
- 8 Suspicious Activity Reports

## Situational Overview

Maritime conditions in the Strait of Hormuz and wider Gulf region remain highly volatile. Reports indicate that in the last several days, several vessels passed through the Strait of Hormuz, however, maritime traffic through the strait remains severely impacted and further attacks targeting vessels in the strait and the wider Gulf region are highly likely to occur.



A significant escalation occurred on 28 March,

when Houthi forces in Yemen conducted their first direct attack against Israel. This development marks a widening of the conflict and signals coordinated involvement amongst Iranian-aligned groups across the region. From a maritime perspective, this raises the likelihood of synchronized threats across multiple strategic chokepoints, particularly linking developments in the Strait of Hormuz with potential instability in the Red Sea.

The Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb are now assessed as increasingly vulnerable following Houthi entry into the conflict. While large-scale attacks on commercial shipping have not been reported since the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on 28 February, the capability and intent are well established based on prior Houthi operations in this region. The group's demonstrated use of anti-ship missiles, drones and waterborne improvised explosive devices presents a credible and immediate risk to vessels transiting the southern Red Sea. Shipping companies operating in this region are advised to closely monitor developments, as the emergence of a secondary disruption point at Bab el-Mandeb would significantly compound the global maritime impact.

## Key Developments (27 - 30 March 2026)

### Confirmed Incidents

- **30 March (Arabian Gulf)** – UKMTO received a report of an incident 22 nautical miles northeast of Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia. The CSO of a container vessel reported 2 unknown projectiles splashing in close proximity, each occurring within 1 hour of each other. Crewmembers have been reported safe and authorities are investigating the incident.
- **29 March (Iran)** – Reports indicate that the Bandar Bol pier, in Bandar Khamir County, Iran, has come under attack by unknown projectiles. Reports indicate that five people were killed and four were injured. Two vessels also sustained damage.
- **28 March (Oman)** – The port of Salalah in Oman was attacked by an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). Reports indicate that the port was hit by two drones, which damaged one main crane and caused all port operations to be stopped. Reports also indicated that one worker was injured in the incident.

### Other Reporting

- **30 March (Strait of Hormuz)** – Two Chinese container vessels sailed through the Strait of Hormuz on Monday on their second attempt to leave the Gulf after they turned back on 27 March, according to ship-tracking data. Reports indicate that the vessels sailed in close formation out of the strait and into open waters. While officials from China's COSCO, the shipping group that operates the two vessels, have not commented, on 25 March, COSCO said in a client advisory that it had resumed bookings for general cargo containers for shipments from Asia to the Gulf, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq. Separately, ship-tracking data also indicates that a Greek-operated tanker bound for India carrying Saudi crude also exited the Gulf via the strait recently. The Maltese-flagged *MARATHI* began broadcasting its position off the coast of India on 26 March, after last reporting its position inside the Gulf on 2 March, with the vessel last seen off the coast of India on Monday. Additionally, two Indian-flagged liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tankers crossed the strait on 28 March following two others which exited carrying critical supplies of the cooking gas bound for India in recent days.
- **30 March (Strait of Hormuz)** – US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has stated that the US plans to eventually take control of the Strait of Hormuz, using American or multinational escorts. He also disclosed that in the last two days, thirty vessels passed through the strait, easing some global supply constraints.
- **30 March (Oman – Salalah Port)** – Maersk has reported that Oman's Port of Salalah will gradually resume its operations on 31 March, noting that some operational constraints may remain as the port works to restore full capacity after a security incident at the weekend. Maersk also stated that additional precautionary security measures had been implemented at the port and that it remained in contact with relevant authorities and port stakeholders. On 28 March, two drones targeted the port, injuring one worker and causing limited damage to a crane.
- **28 March (Houthis)** – A missile attack on Israel by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen on Saturday has raised concern that the group may again try to block shipping through the Red Sea. The Houthis have confirmed that they fired a barrage of missiles at "sensitive Israeli military sites" in southern Israel, in what is the first since the start of the war a month ago. The Israeli military reported that it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen.

## Risk Assessment

### 1. Arabian/Persian Gulf & Strait of Hormuz

#### Current Status – Effective Commercial Disruption

- Merchant traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has significantly reduced
- 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)
- Naval mines in the Strait of Hormuz
- 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
<b>Hamriyah Port</b>	All terminal port operations are normal
<b>Sharjah Port</b>	All terminal port operations are normal
<b>Jebel Ali Port</b>	All terminal port operations are normal
<b>Fujairah and Khor Fakkan</b>	Fujairah Oil Tanker Terminal is partially operational; Khor Fakkan Terminal no disruption reported
<b>Ras al Khaimah Ports</b>	Open and operating normally
<b>Khalifa Port</b>	Operations resumed
<b>Ruwais &amp; Abu Dhabi Petroleum Ports</b>	Operational; Ruwais PPA (ISPS Level 2); Abu Dhabi Ports (ISPS Level 1)

#### Kuwait

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
<b>Shuwaikh Port</b>	Port operating normally; Security Level 2 protocols
<b>Shuaiba Port</b>	Port has temporarily suspended operations
<b>Minal Al Ahmadi Port</b>	Port operating normally; Security Level risen to Level 2
<b>Mina Al Zour Port</b>	Port operating normally; Security Level risen to Level 2

#### Oman

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
<b>Asyad Drydock - Duqm</b>	Port operating normally
<b>Port of Duqm</b>	Port operating normally ; vessels calling at port must submit an official letter stating that they are not carrying any dangerous goods on board.
<b>Port Sultan Qaboos</b>	Port operating normally
<b>Muscat</b>	Port operating normally; ISPS Level 3
<b>Mina Al Fahal</b>	Port operating normally; ISPS Level 3
<b>Port of Sohar</b>	Port operating normally
<b>Qalhat LNG Terminal – Sur</b>	Port operating normally ; ISPS Level 3
<b>OMIFCO Terminal – Sur</b>	Port operating normally
<b>Port of Salalah</b>	Operations suspended; partial resumption set to begin on 31 March

**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. BAPCO operations remain suspended. APM Terminals has resumed operations from 0600 hrs to 2200 hrs. 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
<b>Hamad Port</b>	Normal port operations and vessel movement; Activity levels are lower than pre-conflict
<b>Doha Port</b>	Normal port operations and vessel movement; Activity levels are lower than pre-conflict
<b>Al Ruwais Port</b>	Normal port operations; port is restricted to small craft only, including dhows and barges; Activity levels are lower than pre-conflict
<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; terminals, 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; Basra Oil Terminal and SPM Somo Terminal have ceased export operations.

### Mediterranean Sea Ports

**Cyprus** – All ports remain fully operational. ISPS level remains at Level 1

**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** – Eilat, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Hedera, and Haifa are fully open for business and functioning at full capacity.

## 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
- Minimize 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 30 March 2026)

**As of 30 March, the outlook for the Strait of Hormuz and connected waterways remains unstable, with the trend increasingly moving towards a prolonged, multi-theatre maritime crisis.** The strait remains effectively non-permissive, and the risk of attack on commercial shipping remains critical. The entry of Houthi forces into the conflict has increased the likelihood of simultaneous disruption in both the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, raising the prospect of a possible dual chokepoint crisis. With ongoing military operations, no clear de-escalation signals, and expanding geographic involvement, the near-term outlook is for continued instability, elevated threat levels, and potential for further escalation across the regional maritime domain.