

Maritime Advisory

Date: 17 April 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 – 17 April 2026

UKMTO has received 30 reports of incidents affecting vessels operating in and around the *Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman*:

- 18 Attack Reports
- 12 Suspicious Activity Reports

Situational Overview

As of 17 April, the situation in the Strait of Hormuz has shifted rapidly from near-total disruption towards a fragile, conditional reopening. Iran has declared the strait open to commercial shipping following a temporary ceasefire linked to the wider US-Iran and Israel-Lebanon de-escalation efforts. However, this reopening remains conditional and controlled. A senior Iranian official has stated that all vessels can sail through the Strait of Hormuz



but this needs to be coordinated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), adding that transits would be restricted to lanes that Iran deemed safe, and that military vessels were still prohibited from crossing the strait. It currently remains unclear if this includes or excludes the established Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) lanes for entering and exiting the Gulf used by international shipping.

The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz follows a weeks-long conflict that effectively shut the strait through attacks on tankers, drones and mines, resulting in a near collapse of shipping traffic. A US naval blockade of Iran, imposed on 13 April, remains in force. It should be noted that the current ceasefires in place are temporary and are tied to ongoing negotiations. Therefore the situation in the region, including in the Strait of Hormuz, could reverse quickly.

Bottom Line: The strait of Hormuz is nominally reopened as of 17 April however it is not 'back to normal.' It remains a high-risk, tightly controlled chokepoint, with shipping resuming cautiously under a fragile ceasefire and overlapping military measures.

Key Developments (14 - 17 April 2026)

Confirmed Incidents

- No confirmed incidents reported during this period.

Other Reporting

- **15 April (Strait of Hormuz)** – Reports have emerged that Iran could consider allowing vessels to sail freely through the Oman side of the Strait of Hormuz without risk of attack as part of proposals that it has offered in negotiations with the US if a deal is clinched to prevent renewed conflict. A source briefed by Tehran did not disclose whether Iran would also agree to clear any mines it may have placed in that stretch of water or if all ships, even those linked to Israel, would be allowed to move freely, though the source added that the proposal hinged on whether Washington was prepared to meet Tehran's demands, a condition that was central to any potential breakthrough with the Strait of Hormuz.
- **15 April (Strait of Hormuz)** – A US-sanctioned tanker *RICH STARRY* made its way back to the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday after exiting the Gulf the day before, according to shipping data, failing to break through a US blockade on vessels calling at Iranian ports. The Chinese-owned tanker was amongst at least eight vessels crossing the waterway on 14 April, the first day of the US blockade. Separately, another US-sanctioned vessel, the supertanker *ALICIA*, is entering the Gulf via the strait on Wednesday, according to shipping data, indicating that the empty tanker is heading to Iraq to load a cargo on 16 April. Additionally, the Malta-flagged *VLCC AGIOS FANOURIOS I* entered the Gulf via the strait on Wednesday in a second attempt to transit, according to data. The tanker was amongst several vessels that tried to enter the Gulf on 12 April. It is heading to Iraq to load Basra crude.

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
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	Fujairah Oil Tanker Terminal is partially operational; Khor Fakkan Terminal no disruption reported
Ras al Khaimah Ports	Open and operating normally
Khalifa Port	Operations resumed
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 has temporarily suspended operations
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

PORT	OPERATIONAL STATUS
Asyad Drydock - Duqm	Port operating normally
Port of Duqum	Port operating normally ; vessels calling at port must submit an official letter stating that they are not carrying any dangerous goods on board.
Port Sultan Qaboos	Port operating normally
Muscat	Port operating normally; ISPS Level 3
Mina Al Fahal	Port operating normally; ISPS Level 3
Port of Sohar	Port operating normally
Qalhat LNG Terminal – Sur	Port operating normally ; ISPS Level 3
OMIFCO Terminal – Sur	Port operating normally
Port of Salalah	Partially resumed operations for CT and GCT

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
Hamad Port	Normal port operations and vessel movement; Activity levels are lower than pre-conflict
Doha Port	Normal port operations and vessel movement; Activity levels are lower than pre-conflict
Al Ruwais Port	Normal port operations; port is restricted to small craft only, including dhows and barges; Activity levels are lower than pre-conflict
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; 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
- 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 17 April 2026)

As of 17 April 2026, the outlook for the Strait of Hormuz is cautiously stabilizing in the very short term, though remaining highly fragile overall. The declared reopening is likely to hold briefly as both the US and

Iran have strong incentives to avoid an immediate relapse while negotiations for a more permanent ceasefire continue. Tanker traffic is expected to gradually resume, however it is likely to remain below normal levels as shipping companies will remain cautious due to the continued security risks. The biggest variable is whether the temporary ceasefire converts into a durable agreement and currently, this is uncertain. The key risks include a breakdown in talks, which would result in a rapid re-escalation including strikes on vessels; continued IRGC control over transit in the Strait, which could lead to selective disruptions; and ongoing US naval pressure and blockade dynamics which could result in friction. In short, the strait is relatively functioning again, however it is not completely secure, and the outlook greatly hinges on whether the current diplomatic window holds or collapses.