

Joint Maritime Information Center

Update 088 to JMIC Advisory Note:

01 March – 23 August 2026

Regional Tension - Impact on Maritime Security

Area of Concern:

Middle East Maritime Region

JMIC# 001-26

ICOD: 231500 UTC

Regional Threat Level: SEVERE

1. Confirmed Maritime Security Incidents List since last report

Date	Vessel	Vessel Type	Event Type	Location	Narrative
NSTR					

2. Operational Summary – Last 48 Hours

2A. Arabian Gulf (No change)

No confirmed attacks or disruptions were reported in this period. Traffic flows remained stable, with anchorage congestion unchanged across the region.

Navigational system interference and wider regional military activity continued to warrant caution, and recurring GNSS interference remained consistent with prior reporting.

2B. Strait of Hormuz

No confirmed attacks or disruptions were reported in this period. IRGC attempted attacks, and/or harassment activity persisted including UAV overflight, targeted surveillance of merchant shipping, and occasional VHF hailing. These actions continue to demonstrate Iran's intent to assert presence along key transit lanes and maintain pressure on transiting vessels.

Commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz remained at reduced levels. Independent tracking data indicated suppression with single-digit numbers transiting in both directions.

There remained a continued risk of drifting or uncharted mines in and near the TSS, with mine danger areas still active.

2C. Gulf of Oman

No confirmed attacks or disruptions were reported in this period. Traffic flows in the Gulf of Oman remained stable, with vessels maintaining heightened awareness amid ongoing naval activity.

Naval presence remained elevated due to blockade enforcement activity. US CENTCOM stated that, as of 21 August, 68 commercial vessels had been redirected, three disabled, and two boarded for compliance verification.



Vessels were expected to respond promptly to military queries and maintain AIS-on unless constrained by security threats. Operators continued to exercise caution due to regional strike activity, and ongoing IRGC monitoring of shipping in adjacent waters.

2D. Arabian Sea (No change)

No confirmed attacks or disruptions were reported in this period. Naval forces continued routine patrols, and commercial traffic was transiting without disruption. The broader operating environment remained influenced by regional tensions.

2E. Gulf of Aden (No change)

No confirmed attacks or disruptions were reported in this period. Commercial traffic remained relatively steady in the Gulf of Aden.

2F. Southern Red Sea & Bab el Mandeb (No change)

No confirmed attack or disruption was reported in this period. Commercial traffic through the Southern Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb continues at reduced levels, consistent with the pattern established after the 20 July Houthi declaration of a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia and earlier confirmed attacks on vessels in the region.

2G. Somali Coast and Somali Basin

No confirmed attack or disruption was reported in this period. However, MV SWARD (IMO 9174244), a Saint Kitts and Nevis-flagged general cargo vessel, was hijacked on 26 April 2026 approximately 6 nm northeast of Garacad off the northern Somali coast while transiting to Mombasa. The vessel remains under Pirate Action Group control and has been confirmed as operating as a mothership. Confirmed employment includes support to the July 2026 seizure of two Iranian fishing dhows and the 17 August 2026 boarding of MV LUTUF.

Six merchant vessels remain held at the reporting date:

- MT HONOUR 25, Palau-flagged product tanker: Hijacked 21 April 2026 off the northern Somali coast while en route to Mogadishu with oil products.
- MV SWARD, Saint Kitts and Nevis-flagged general cargo ship: Hijacked 26 April 2026 off the northern Somali coast while bound for Mombasa with fertilizer.
- MT EUREKA, Togo-flagged product tanker: Hijacked 2 May 2026 while anchored off Qana Port, Shabwa, Yemen with oil products.
- MT ASANA, Tanzania-flagged product/chemical tanker: Hijacked 17 July 2026 approximately 65 NM southwest of Mukalla, Yemen with oil products.
- MV LUTUF, Cameroon-flagged dry bulk/mini bulker 1: Hijacked 17 August 2026 off the coast Somalia.
- MT SEAMULL (SIBU 1), Eritrea-flagged tanker. Hijacked 20 August 2026 off the coast of Somalia in the IRTC. Diverted towards Somalian east coast.

2H. Northern Red Sea & Suez Canal (No change)

No confirmed attacks or disruptions were reported in this period.

The overall pattern in the Northern Red Sea traffic remains security-sensitive and reactive to threats, producing day-to-day fluctuations, while the Suez Canal continue operations with steady tanker flows and selective container vessel returns. Northern Red Sea approaches to the canal remain functional for northbound and southbound traffic at stable levels without systemic interruption or mass diversion.

Persistent GNSS interference in the vicinity of Yanbu, though without operational impact on traffic flow. AIS-off operations at Yanbu remain the established norm, The AIS-off berth and waiting-area posture has been sustained without interruption for six weeks.



2I. Eastern Mediterranean (No change)

No confirmed attacks or disruptions were reported in this period. Periodic electronic and navigational interference continued near Cyprus and the Levant.



3. Regional Threat overview

JMIC Threat Scale: ● Low | ● Moderate | ● Substantial | ● Severe | ● Critical

Region	Threat Level	Notes
Arabian Gulf	MODERATE	Navigation interference and residual kinetic risk persist; an attack is possible but not likely under current conditions.
Strait of Hormuz	SEVERE	Due to recent Iranian attacks, the threat level remains SEVERE, with deliberate hostile action considered as highly likely under current conditions. Navigation interference persists, and mine-risk reporting remains relevant within and adjacent to the TSS. IRGC attacks, hailing, and routing pressure continue, particularly for AIS-on vessels.
Gulf of Oman	MODERATE	The geographic concentration of recent Iranian attacks occurring IVO of the Musandam Peninsula, and a lack of disruptions in the broader Gulf of Oman to the east/south, support a lower threat level for the Gulf of Oman. The U.S. naval blockade remains enforced, with ongoing monitoring, hailing, and verification queries, particularly near approaches to Iranian ports. Enforcement activity poses no direct impact to neutral shipping transits in the Gulf of Oman. Electronic interference continues to present a credible concern for operators.
Arabian Sea	MODERATE	Residual conflict-linked risk persists, but no attacks have been reported, and current indicators suggest no imminent change to the threat environment.
Gulf of Aden	SUBSTANTIAL	Due to piracy-related events and Houthi rhetoric and attacks, the threat level remains SUBSTANTIAL, with a strong possibility of a maritime security incident in coastal approaches, transit corridors, and established small-craft areas.
Bab el-Mandeb / Southern Red Sea	SUBSTANTIAL	Due to recent Houthi attack on vessels and maritime infrastructure in the Southern Red Sea, the threat level remains SUBSTANTIAL. Based on the recent attacks, sustained intent, and maintained capability, additional attacks are a strong possibility
Somali Coast / Somali Basin	MODERATE	PAG activity remains possible; monsoon conditions restrict offshore skiffs, but coastal opportunism persists.
Northern Red Sea / Suez Canal	MODERATE	Suez Canal operations remain normal. Periodic EMI/GNSS interference remains possible.
Eastern Mediterranean	LOW	Due to a lack of persistent targeting, the threat level remains LOW. Localized EMI/GNSS disruptions persist, and regional naval presence remains steady.

JMIC Regional Threat Levels

Threat Level	Definition
Low	An attack is highly unlikely
Moderate	An attack is possible but not likely
Substantial	An attack is a strong possibility
Severe	An attack is highly likely
Critical	An attack is almost certain



4. Maritime Incidents & Traffic Assessment

4A. Confirmed Vessel Incidents (Since 01 March) (No change)

Total of 94 incidents since 01 March; NIL incidents since the last report.

4B. Infrastructure Incidents (Last 48 Hours) (No change)

The overall risk remains MODERATE, driven by the potential for renewed kinetic activity and ongoing uncertainty along Iranian coastal areas. However, a recent ballistic missile assault has led to the closure of Al-Mokha Port in the Southern Red Sea.

4C. Traffic Trends

- Strait of Hormuz:
 - Historical average: ~138 vessels/day (2025 baseline)
 - U.S. – facilitated SoH transits 20 - 22 August (past 72 hours): 74

** Metrics are drawn from two separate sources: U.S. NCAGS data reflecting U.S.-facilitated Strait of Hormuz transits only, and S&P Maritime/SeaVision data reflecting non-facilitated vessel traffic for cargo carrying vessels above 1,000 deadweight tons, excluding vessels calling Iranian ports adjacent to the Strait of Hormuz.*

- Bab el-Mandeb:
 - Historical average: ~61 vessels/day (2023 baseline)
 - Vessel transits 20 - 22 August (past 72 hours): 97

** Metrics are drawn from S&P Maritime for cargo carrying vessels above 1,000 deadweight tons.*

4D. Port & Anchorage Congestion (No change)

High vessel density persists across major Arabian Gulf anchorages, with overall congestion remaining stable following an earlier outbound surge.

Periodic repositioning within anchorages remains advisable to avoid long-term predictability and to maintain safe separation in congested areas.

4E. GNSS / AIS Interference (No change)

GNSS interference remains consistent across the Strait of Hormuz approaches, the Gulf of Oman, and the Arabian Gulf. The residual GNSS/EMI hazard across the Red Sea corridor continues and broad-spectrum GNSS/GPS spoofing and false AIS transponder manipulation remain heavily saturated across the Hodeidah littoral and southern Red Sea approach lanes. Elevated electronic interference and AIS-off operations persists in the vicinity of Yanbu. Intensity remains as lower and more intermittent than concurrent activity in the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Gulf. No new confirmed high-intensity spike- or new multi-vessel simultaneous events or specific UKMTO/MARAD/NAVCEN/NAVAREA IX notices in the reporting period. Baseline advisories remain in force.

5. Outlook (24–48 Hours)

5A. Arabian Gulf (No change)

The threat level remains MODERATE, with continued navigational system interference and residual kinetic risk. An attack is possible but not likely under current conditions. Rapid, short-notice actions near Iranian coastal waters and anchorages remains possible.



Vessels stationary for extended periods, or maintaining AIS-on while static, may still face elevated targeting risk.

5B. Strait of Hormuz (No change)

The threat level remains SEVERE, with deliberate hostile action considered highly likely under current conditions. Attack frequency against commercial shipping in the Strait has remained consistent over the reporting period, including unknown-projectile strikes on both inbound and outbound transiting vessels, and the environment reflects an established post-MOU status quo. Vessels transiting with AIS-on can expect to receive directed hails instructing them to divert toward the northern Iranian-controlled route.

Maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is expected to remain at reduced levels across both the northern Iranian-controlled route and the southern Omani corridor. Operator caution should continue, driven by a series of vessel attacks, ongoing U.S. blockade enforcement, and elevated regional tension.

The U.S. blockade of Iranian ports continues to be enforced. Unauthorized entry or departure may result in interception or force. Neutral transit is permitted, but vessels should expect visit-and-search checks, strong U.S. naval presence, persistent IRGC monitoring, and increased VHF hails. A 30 NM standoff from U.S. units is advised to reduce misidentification risk.

A vetted humanitarian-cargo exemption remains in place but requires submission to NAVCENT NCAGS. Approved vessels may transit to Iranian ports but remain subject to inspection and may not load cargo in Iran beyond fuel and stores.

Navigation interference persists, and mine-risk reporting remains relevant within and adjacent to the TSS. Clearance and mine-surveying operations continue throughout the Strait of Hormuz, with updated coordinates and graphics available from NAVCENT NCAGS (m-ba-navcent-ncags@us.navy.mil). Vessels should remain vigilant and maintain heightened situational awareness during all approaches.

Industry Guidance for Safe Management of Vessel Transit through the Strait of Hormuz:

<https://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org/media/vkaa3pir/2026-05-20-guidance-strait-of-hormuz.pdf>

5C. Gulf of Oman

The threat level has been reduced to MODERATE in the Gulf of Oman. This assessment is driven by the clear geographic concentration of recent confirmed projectile strikes along the Omani corridor near the Musandam peninsula that are better categorized as part of the Strait of Hormuz. Vessels can expect persistent IRGC monitoring and routing pressure in that sector; however, further east/south within Gulf of Oman, deliberate hostile action is considered possible but not likely. Open-source reporting shows no confirmed kinetic incidents in this sector during the recent period; residual risk diminishes with distance from the primary concentration of IRGC activity and recent strike locations IVO of the Strait of Hormuz.

A U.S. naval blockade remains enforced, with ongoing monitoring, hailing, and verification queries, particularly near approaches to Iranian ports. Unauthorized entry or departure may result in interception or force. Neutral transit is permitted, but vessels should expect visit-and-search checks, strong U.S. naval presence, persistent IRGC monitoring, and occasional hails. A 30 NM standoff from U.S. units is advised, as well as ensuring continuous monitoring of VHF Channel 16, to reduce misidentification risk.

Electronic interference continues to present a credible concern. The operating environment requires heightened situational awareness throughout all approaches.



5D. Arabian Sea (No change)

The threat level remains MODERATE. No significant change in the operating environment. The regional posture remains stable, with no confirmed maritime attacks reported. Residual risk persists due to broader regional tensions; an attack is possible but not likely, and current indicators do not suggest any shift toward increased threat levels in the near term.

5E. Gulf of Aden

The threat level remains SUBSTANTIAL, with intermittent skiff presence still considered a strong possibility in the wider area despite the monsoon and recent Houthi rhetoric and attacks. Small-craft groups retain the capability to conduct aggressive close-approach behavior, underscoring the need for sustained vigilance throughout the IRTC and adjacent coastal zones. Pirate Action Groups continue to demonstrate the ability to board and divert merchant vessels in both coastal Somali waters and the Gulf of Aden under current monsoon conditions. Further opportunistic seizures remain a credible near-term risk across the IRTC approaches and adjacent coastal zones.

The operating environment continues to support opportunistic movement in coastal and sheltered areas, particularly within established small-craft operating zones. Southwest monsoon conditions remain firmly established, with coastal waters offering favorable conditions for small-boat activity but restrict offshore skiff activity.

5F. Southern Red Sea / Bab el Mandeb (No change)

The threat level remains SUBSTANTIAL. Houthi messaging and operational tempo remain elevated following the 20 July maritime blockade declaration against Saudi-associated interests. Enforcement remains selective, primarily targeting assets considered as Saudi or Yemeni internationally-recognized government linked, though within the broader region additional attacks are considered a strong possibility. Expansion beyond current selective Saudi and Yemeni internationally-recognized government targets into broader indiscriminate shipping attacks is possible but not probable in the near-term.

Collateral risk remains elevated. Bab el-Mandeb traffic has stabilized below pre-20 July blockade averages, driven mainly by tanker-sector rerouting. Non-targeted commercial traffic continues through established corridors. Bab el-Mandeb continues to show greater resilience, supporting a cumulative increase over the reporting period. Small regional craft in the southern Red Sea and Yemeni coastal waters face heightened misidentification and kinetic risk.

Commercial operators transiting the area should maintain heightened security postures, implement speed and timing mitigation measures, and prepare for short-notice navigational directives. Residual hazards, including persistent Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) interference and electromagnetic degradation, remain active from the central Red Sea through the southern approaches to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

5G. Somali Coast and Somali Basin (No change)

The threat level remains MODERATE as PAG activity persists across the Somali Coast and Somali Basin. Southwest monsoon conditions continue to degrade offshore environments restricting extended-range skiff operations.

Despite monsoon onset, coastal waters remain comparatively sheltered, sustaining residual opportunistic piracy risk in nearshore areas where small-boat activity remains feasible.



5H. Northern Red Sea / Suez (No change)

The threat level remains MODERATE. The Houthi statement on 05 August indicated an expanded risk area in the northern Red Sea. The messaging framed the escalation as a response to alleged Saudi northward rerouting and suggested an intent to close or contest additional access points. The stated emphasis extends beyond the southern approaches and Bab el-Mandeb, broadening the area of concern into the northern Red Sea. The statement also signals a wider operational posture and reinforces the potential for disruption along access routes associated with Saudi-linked traffic.

Periodic EMI and GNSS disruptions are likely to continue in the area. AIS-off operations at Yanbu berths, waiting areas and approaches are highly likely to remain elevated. The pattern since late July shows no open-source indication of reversal.

5J. Eastern Mediterranean (No change)

The threat level remains LOW. Periodic electronic and navigational interference may still be encountered near Cyprus and the Levant. Naval presence remains, and vessels should maintain prudent separation from military units.



ANNEXES

Transit comparisons

CARGO VESSELS TRANSITS COMPARISON

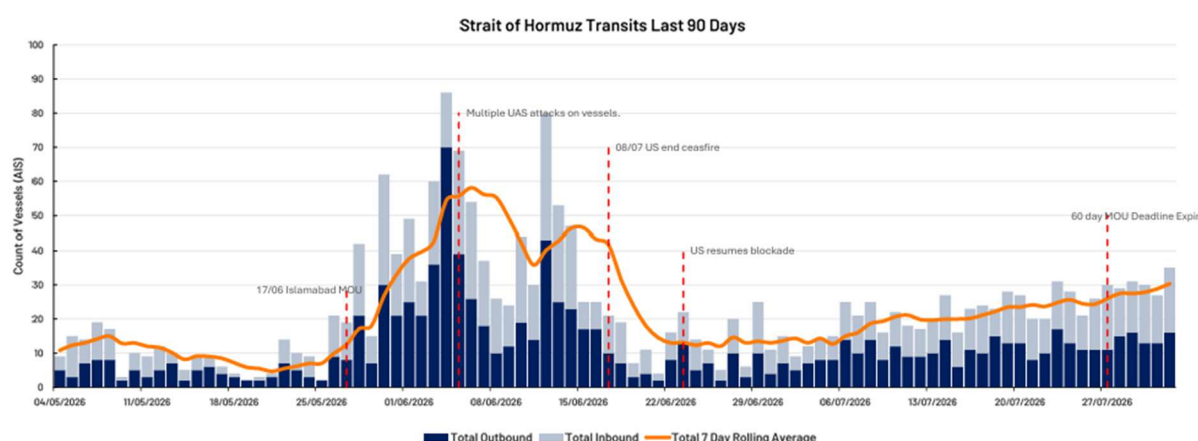
Date	16-August	17-August	18-August	19-August	20-August	21-August	22-August
SoH E	0	0	1	0	2	2	4
SoH W	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
SoH Total	0	0	1	0	3	3	8
BAM NW	12	10	14	11	7	10	15
BAM SE	9	10	8	8	8	7	10
BAM Total	21	20	22	19	15	17	25

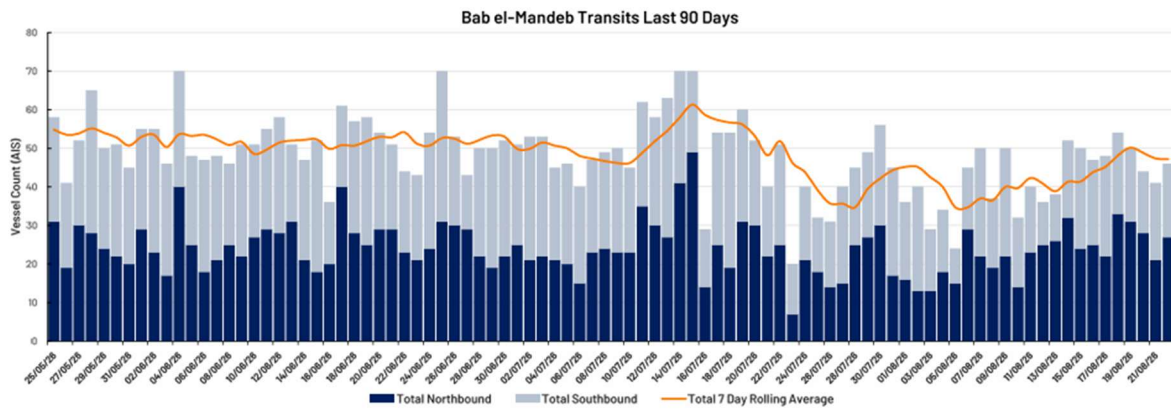
TANKERS (ALL TYPES) TRANSITS COMPARISON

Date	16-August	17-August	18-August	19-August	20-August	21-August	22-August
SoH E	0	1	1	2	1	1	3
SoH W	0	2	2	1	1	1	1
SoH Total	0	3	3	3	2	2	4
BAM NW	5	4	6	9	12	6	7
BAM SE	6	3	6	9	5	7	3
BAM Total	11	7	12	18	17	13	10

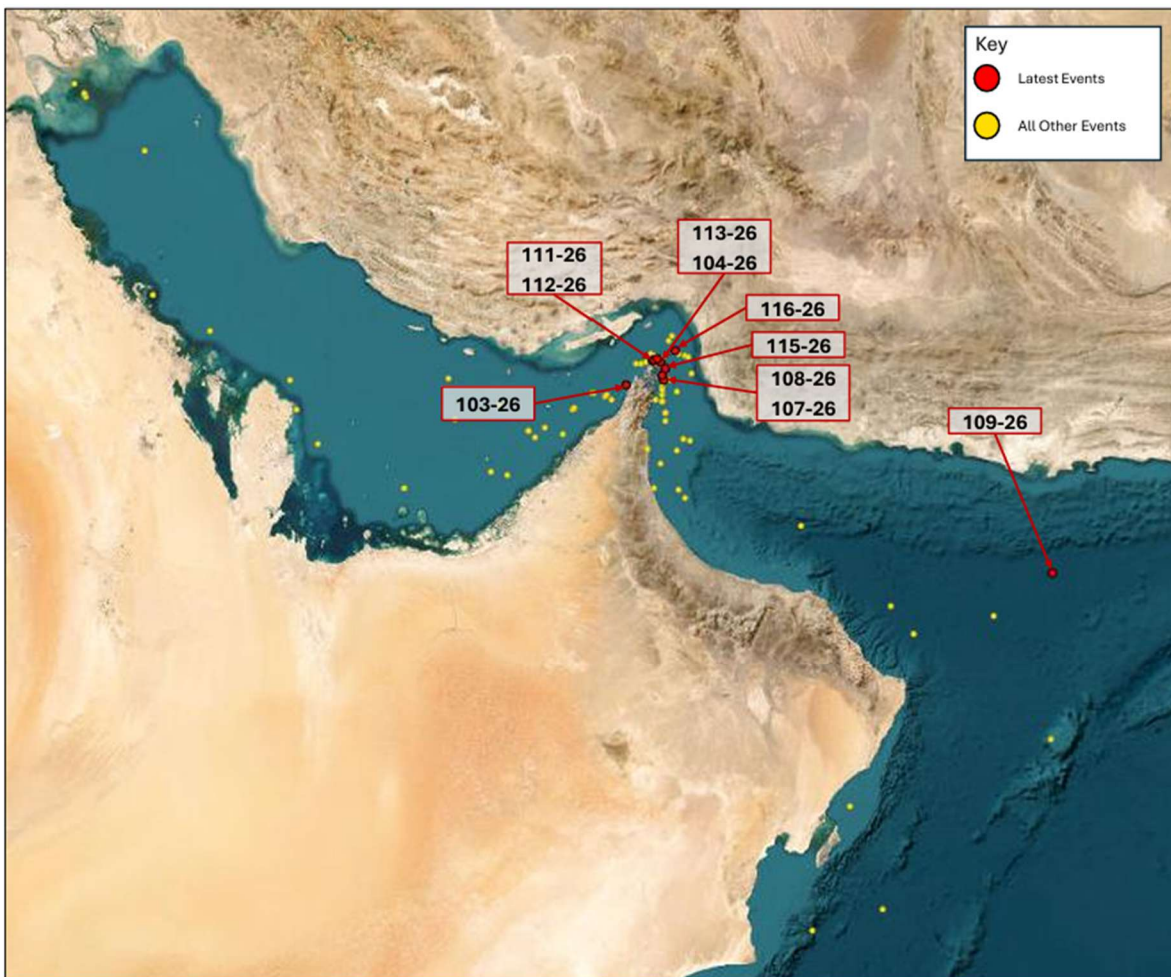
* Metrics are drawn from two separate sources: U.S. NCAGS data reflecting U.S.-facilitated Strait of Hormuz transits only, and S&P Maritime / SeaVision data reflecting non-facilitated vessel traffic above 1,000 deadweight tons, excluding vessels calling Iranian ports adjacent to the Strait of Hormuz.

UKMTO transits

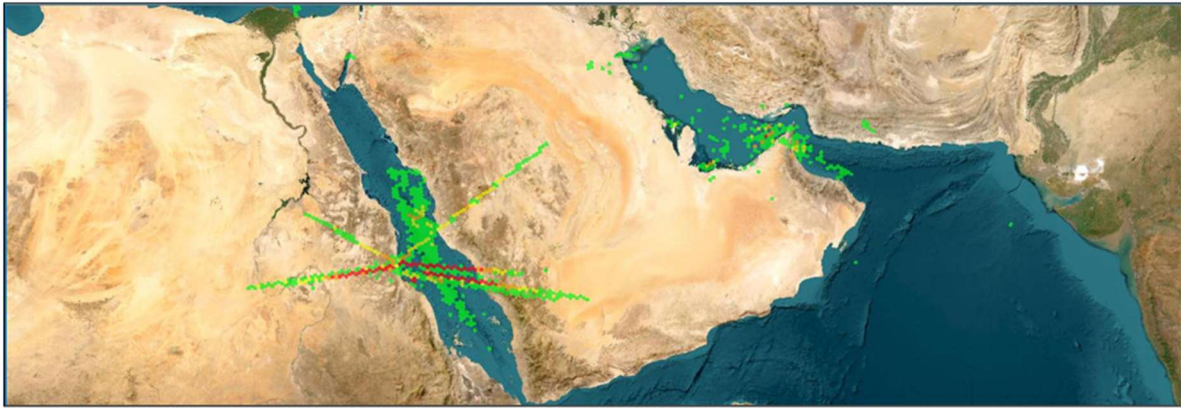




UKMTO Strait of Hormuz – Latest incidents



UKMTO VRA AIS Anomalies



Non-Geofeasible AIS Positions 30-Day Hexbin Aggregation ICOD: 23/08/26 00:01UTC



Non-Geofeasible AIS Positions 7-Day Hexbin Aggregation ICOD: 23/08/26 00:01UTC