

Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB) 009 (to IRTA 1 Jun 18 1)

Issued: 19 Jun 18

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1. Foreword. This IRTB has been written by EU NAVFOR and Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). It is intended to inform risk management decision making for shipping operators responsible for Merchant Vessels (M/V) that are transiting through the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden (GoA), Gulf of Oman (GoO) and the Western Indian Ocean.

2. Purpose. The purpose of an Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB) is to provide a specific update to industry on events that may require an interim update to the most recent Industry Releasable Threat Assessment. The information contained in the IRTBs will be incorporated into the IRTA at the next issue.

3. Incident/identifier. Saudi-led Coalition (SLC) assault on Al Hudaydah and attacks associated with the conflict.

- a. Point 1 – Location of Al Hudaydah.
- b. Point 2 – Location of attack on the World Food Program chartered vessel VOS THEIA.
- c. Point 3 – Estimated location of missile attack on SLC warship.

4. Date/time. 03 to 14 June 18

5. Location. Southern Red Sea (SRS).

Approximate location of incidents



1 The next Industry Releasable Threat Assessment (IRTA) will be issued 1 Sep 18 (with an information cut-off date 15 Aug 18).

2 Extract from ADMIRALTY Maritime Security Chart Q6099 (issued 28 Dec 17): reproduced with permission of the United Kingdom. Hydrographic Office (Maritime Security Charts can be viewed at the UKHO site Security Related Information to Mariners:

<https://www.admiralty.co.uk/maritime-safety-information/security-related-information-to-mariners>).

6. Event Description.

a. Attack against VOS THEIA: On 03 June 2018 at 1500Z, whilst heading NNW at a speed of 3 knots and awaiting further instruction from a SLC warship, a fast skiff with 6 POB approached the VOS THEIA from the direction of the Jazair Az Zubayr islands. Around 1512Z, whilst continuing to close to a distance of 500m, the skiff opened fire with a bow-mounted machine gun (MG). After ceasing fire the skiff proceeded to move towards the VOS THEIA from the starboard side, travelling astern and taking a position approximately 100 metres from ship's port quarter. The 6 POB subsequently displayed their weapons and when the embarked Protective Armed Security Team (PAST) displayed their weapons in response, the operator of the MG turned it and aimed it directly at the bridge. The PAST on-board the VOS THEIA fired two warning shots, and the attackers opened fire with the MG and other small arms towards the VOS THEIA. As a result there was a brief exchange of fire after which the skiff reduced its speed and moved away from the vessel. Based on the location of this attack, it is UNLIKELY piracy related and LIKELY conflict related.

b. Assault on Al Hudaydah: On 13 June 2018 at 0500Z the SLC, which has been involved in an armed conflict against Houthi forces in Yemen, began an assault on the Yemeni port city of Al Hudaydah through a combined offensive of land, air and maritime assets.

c. Missile strike on SLC warship: On 13 June 18 open source reporting indicated that an SLC warship has been struck with a missile deployed by Houthi forces in the Southern Red Sea.

7. Outcome.

a. No casualties, VOS THEIA undamaged.

b. The assault on Al Hudaydah by SLC forces is ongoing.

c. Open source reporting suggests that the SLC warship suffered extensive damage. The number of casualties, if any, have not been confirmed.

8. Comment.

a. Since the attack on the MV INCE INEBOLU (IRTB008) there have been no reported incidents involving merchant shipping transiting through the SRS; the attacks on the VOS THEIA and the SLC warship have involved vessels either directly involved with the conflict or vessels transiting in and out of Al Hudaydah port.

b. These incidents serve to highlight the ongoing threat in the Southern Red Sea as described in para 29 of the latest IRTA (released 01 Jun 18).

9. Assessment. Whilst the overall threat to merchant traffic not directly involved in the conflict in

Yemen remains unchanged, these incidents highlight the continued threat of conflict spill-over in the maritime domain, particularly in the Southern Red Sea. EU NAVFOR and CMF assess that vessels not directly linked to the conflict in Yemen are UNLIKELY to be deliberately targeted, however the risk of misidentification / collateral damage remains a REALISTIC POSSIBILITY.

10. EU NAVFOR and CMF assess that the attack on the VOS THEIA is HIGHLY LIKELY linked to the ongoing conflict in Yemen. The attackers may have been seeking to defend territory. The attack on the SLC warship, if open source reporting is correct, is ALMOST CERTAINLY linked to the conflict.

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11. The threat to shipping is greater when in proximity to the Yemeni coastline and the islands in the SRS. Therefore, where feasible, vessels are advised to utilise the Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC), which maximises the distance from the islands in the SRS, and maintain best speed through the SRS.

12. Follow up. The situation in Al Hudaydah is complex and rapidly changing. CMF and EU NAVFOR are committed to ensuring that mariners are provided with the most up to date threat assessment. Should there be a change to the threat this will be communicated in subsequent bulletins.

13. The requirement for vigilance when transiting this area, together with the timely reporting of all suspicious incidents, remains crucial. We request that during an incident, when feasible and without endangering the vessel or her crew, imagery and/or video is taken of the incident and provided in any subsequent reporting. A detailed description of vessels, objects, personnel and behaviours observed are vital contributors to any subsequent analysis and assessment of the threat environment. Reports should endeavour to provide as much factual detail as possible and avoid speculating when only limited information is available.

14. Publication and feedback.

a. Prepared by CMF and EU NAVFOR.

b. Distributed by the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA).

c. All enquiries should be referred to MSCHOA in the first instance:

(1) Tel: +44 (0) 1923 958545 / +44 (0) 1923 958700.

(2) Fax: +44 (0) 1923 958520.

(3) Website: www.mschoa.org.