

Joint Maritime Information Center

Update 086 to JMIC Advisory Note:

01 March – 18 August 2026

Regional Tension - Impact on Maritime Security

Area of Concern:

Middle East Maritime Region

JMIC# 001-26

ICOD: 181500 UTC

Regional Threat Level: SEVERE

1. Confirmed Maritime Security Incidents List since last report

Date	Vessel	Vessel Type	Event Type	Location	Narrative
17 August 2026, UKMTO 114-26	LUTUF	Dry bulk carrier	Hijack	Transiting southbound through the Somali basin 3NM from the coast of Somalia.	At 1136 UTC a general cargo vessel reported it was under attack by approximately eight unauthorised personnel armed with AK-47 type weapons off the Somali coast. At 1230 UTC the CSO confirmed the vessel was under control of the unauthorised personnel and that the crew mustered in the citadel but suspected pirates gained access and the crew was relocated to the bridge.
18 August 2026, UKMTO 115-26	Name withheld UFN	General cargo ship	Attack	Transiting southbound through the Strait of Hormuz, 0.5NM from the coast of Oman	At 1848 UTC the CSO reported multiple SSAS alerts and no telephone contact with the vessel. Contact attempts by UKMTO, nearby vessels, and NAVCENT NCAGS were unsuccessful. At 0130 UTC on 18 August, vessel began transmitting on AIS. Vessel was struck by an unknown projectile in its engine room; one crew fatality reported. Omani Coast Guard reported to render assistance.

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

There was one confirmed attack in the reporting period. IRGC attacks, attempted attacks, and/or harassment activity persisted (beyond the confirmed reports) including UAV overflight, and targeted surveillance of merchant shipping, but with reduced reports of 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 or nil tankers 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 17 August, 64 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 confirmed attacks 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. Following over 25 cumulative missile impacts and berth fires, Al-Mokha Port remains completely closed to commercial traffic, forcing remaining lower Red Sea commercial logistics to reroute.

2G. Somali Coast and Somali Basin

One confirmed attack or disruption was reported in this period. (UKMTO 114-26)

Four 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.



- LUTUF, Cameroon-flagged dry bulk/mini bulker 1. Highjacked 17 August 2026 off the coast Somalia. Under investigation.

2H. Northern Red Sea & Suez Canal

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.

Reports of elevated GNSS interference persisted 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	SUBSTANTIAL	Due to the residual strike-linked risk the threat level remains SUBSTANTIAL, and an attack is a strong possibility under current conditions. 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)

Total of 91 incidents since 01 March; two incidents since the last report.

4B. Infrastructure Incidents (Last 48 Hours)

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 16 - 17 August (past 48 hours): 42

** 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 16 - 17 August (past 48 hours): 59

** 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 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

The threat level remains SEVERE, with deliberate hostile action considered highly likely under current conditions. Attack frequency against commercial shipping in the Strait has increased over the reporting period, including unknown-projectile strikes on both inbound and outbound transiting vessels. Reported damage has generally been limited, with the notable exception reported in UKMTO 115-26; most vessels have continued under their own power. The increase is considered consistent with the existing threat level and may coincide with Iranian claims of a shift in posture now that the 60-day period following the 17 June U.S.-Iran MOU has lapsed. 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.maritimesecurity.org/media/vkaa3pjr/2026-05-20-guidance-strait-of-hormuz.pdf>

5C. Gulf of Oman (No change)

The threat level remains SUBSTANTIAL, driven by residual strike-linked risk, and an attack is considered a strong possibility under current conditions. 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 increased VHF 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 (No change)

The threat level remains SUBSTANTIAL, with intermittent skiff presence still considered possible 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.

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. Continuation of Houthi kinetic operations is likely. 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. Small regional craft in the southern Red Sea and Yemeni coastal waters face heightened misidentification and kinetic risk, as shown by the recent Houthi indiscriminate ballistic missile salvos into Al-Mokha berths.

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

The threat level remains MODERATE as PAG activity remains possible, as seen in UKMTO 114-26, 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

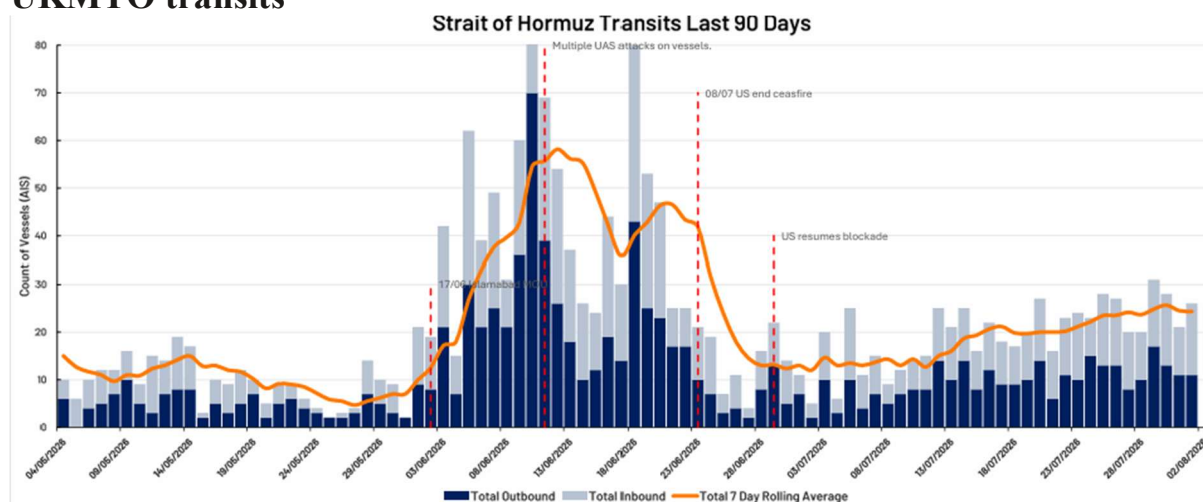
Date	11-August	12-August	13-August	14-August	15-August	16-August	17-August
SoH E	3	0	1	3	0	0	0
SoH W	0	2	2	2	0	0	0
SoH Total	3	2	3	5	0	0	0
BAM NW	9	9	12	15	9	12	10
BAM SE	8	6	5	7	11	9	10
BAM Total	17	15	17	22	20	21	20

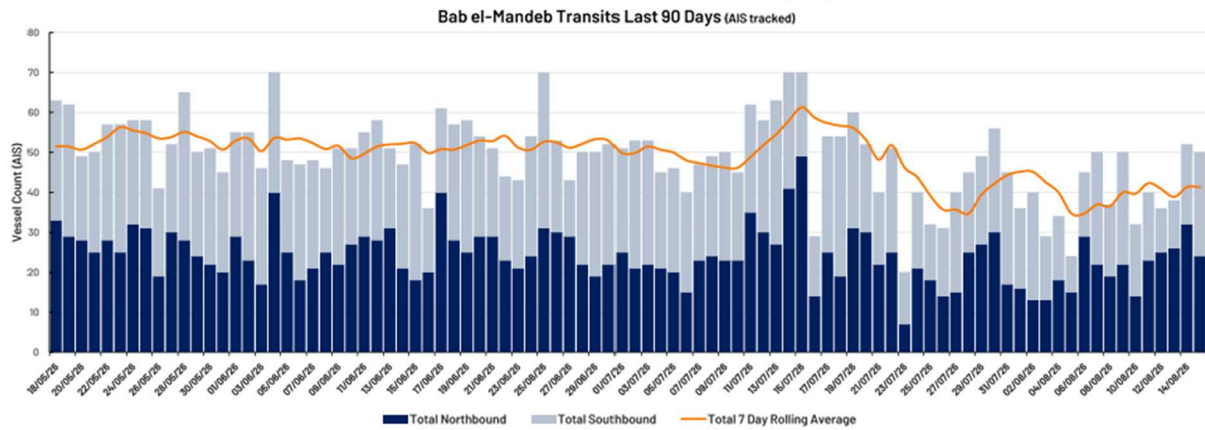
TANKERS (ALL TYPES) TRANSITS COMPARISON

Date	11-August	12-August	13-August	14-August	15-August	16-August	17-August
SoH E	0	1	2	0	0	0	1
SoH W	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
SoH Total	2	1	4	0	0	0	3
BAM NW	5	6	6	7	5	5	4
BAM SE	2	1	3	4	3	6	3
BAM Total	7	7	9	11	9	11	7

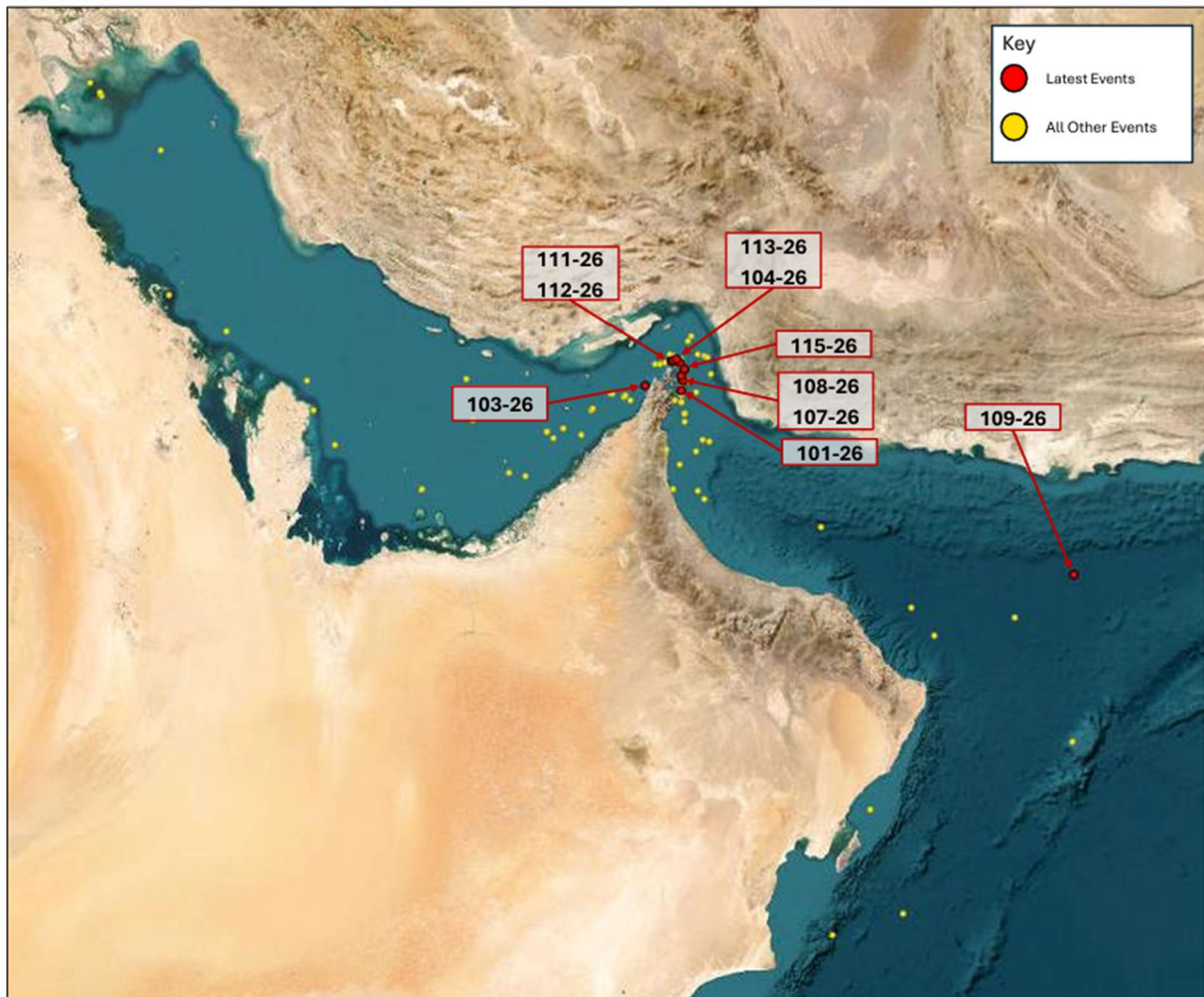
* Metrics are drawn from two separate sources: U.S. NCAGS data reflecting U.S.-facilitated Strait of Hormuz transits only, and S&P Maritime / SeaVision data reflecting non-facilitated vessel traffic above 1,000 deadweight tons, excluding vessels calling Iranian ports adjacent to the Strait of Hormuz.

UKMTO transits





UKMTO Strait of Hormuz – Latest incidents



UKMTO VRA AIS Anomalies

