

Yemen conflict forces new security recommendations

In response to the threats arising from the conflict in Yemen, BIMCO, ICS and INTERTANKO have published interim guidance on maritime security in the southern Red Sea and Bab al-Mandeb. Shipowners and operators should be aware of new threat patterns in the area. The publication is supported by the International Group of Protection & Indemnity Clubs (IGP&I).

The European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) have advised that a range of threats other than piracy, such as sea mines and water-borne improvised explosive devices (WBIEDs), are potential risks in the area.

In the words of Angus Frew, BIMCO Secretary General and CEO: *‘We’ve been advised that these threats are real, and therefore decided to provide guidance for ships operating in the area. We have seen two incidents in January, and we want to make sure owners and operators are aware and advise their crews accordingly.’*

It is important that company security officers and ship Masters are informed of these new threats, as the threat patterns and mitigating measures differ from the more familiar regional threat of piracy.

The guidance stresses the importance of using the Maritime Security Transit Corridor, registration with MSCHOA and reporting to UKMTO, as well as reviewing and updating risk assessments and plans to include these new threats. The guidance also includes advice specific to identified threat types, including WBIEDs and complements the guidance provided in BMP 4.

ICS Secretary General, Peter Hinchliffe added: *‘This guidance supports the activity of military forces in the region, and adds a further layer to the awareness and preparedness of ships in the region. That trade continues through these waters demonstrates shipping’s resilience in the face of such threats. The ability of the industry to successfully risk assess dynamic situations in cooperation with State resources and naval operations ensures the continued safety and security of maritime trade.’*

Dr Phillip Belcher, INTERTANKO’s Marine Director, reflected: *‘In response to the urgent need, we have produced this practical guide for Masters and seafarers. This will become a valuable planning tool and should provide some reassurance to our industry.’*

The Interim Guidance on Maritime Security in the Southern Red Sea and Bab al-Mandeb is available on the BIMCO, ICS and INTERTANKO websites.

See : <http://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/Piracy-Docs/1---interim-guidance-on-maritime-security-in-the-southern-red-sea-and-bab-al-mandeb.pdf>