

NEW GUIDANCE FOR TANKERS TRANSITING GULF OF ADEN TO RED SEA

Published:

21 July 2017 12:53

Updated:

21 July 2017 12:54

Following attacks on two tankers in the approaches to the Bab el Mandeb that were not piracy related, the Combined Maritime Forces have issued new guidance.

This guidance states that vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea are advised to:

- Pass through the area between 44 00 East in the Gulf of Aden and 13 00 N in the Southern Red Sea during the hours of darkness and exit the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) to the west of the Hanish Islands in daylight hours.
- Pass through the area between 13 00 N in the Southern Red Sea and 44 00 E in the Gulf of Aden during the hours of darkness.

The distance between 44 00 E and 13 00 N is approximately 91nm, so a transit time of 6.5 hours can be achieved at 14 knots.

For vessels transiting northbound, the top of the TSS to the west of the Hanish Islands is at approximately 13 40 N. This section should be undertaken so that it is daylight when reaching this latitude.

INTERTANKO and other partners are in discussion with EUNAVFOR regarding the timings of the convoys in the area. If there are changes to those times, an update will be provided.

Mode of attack

The mode of the previous attacks has been that two or more skiffs will approach at high speed. One or more will be firing both small arms and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) in a very aggressive manner. One or more of the boats will be laden with explosives and the other may be filming the attack. In both previous attacks, the explosives have detonated before the skiff has come alongside, but the likely intent is to detonate the explosives against the hull.

Citadel use

Due to the specific arrangements of each vessel, the CSO in conjunction with the Master should ascertain the best approach with regards to the safest location for the crew in the event of an external explosion. Such a space should be identified and this may be the citadel.

However, the central stairway of the vessel may be better due to the greater protection being afforded by the accommodation block and being well above the waterline. The identified space should be evacuated immediately following any explosion in case of loss of vessel.

Further to this advice, INTERTANKO would add the following guidance:

- Turn off all lights apart from navigation lights.
- Navigation lights must be switched on because of the risk of collision.
- The automatic identification system (AIS) should remain switched on throughout the passage to ensure that the military is able to track the vessel and to assist with anti-collision strategies.
- Remove any port information from the AIS data because this may be used to target the vessel.
- Comply fully with the [BMP4](#) and in particular the registration processes.
- Maintain as good a watch as possible.
- In the event of any attack or suspicious approach, the voyage data recorder (VDR) should be kept safe as it will contain vital information that can be used to combat these attacks.

The full press release from the [CMF BMP4 Press Release](#) can be also be viewed from the IFSMA front page.