



Marine Notice Nr. 01/ 2026, 05/03/2026

Subject: “Heightened Maritime Security Risk – Strait of Hormuz, Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and Adjacent Sea Areas”

Ref. : (a) SOLAS 1974, as amended, Chapter XI-2.
(b) IMO International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code (Parts A and B).
(c) Best Management Practices – Maritime Security (Industry Publication), March 2025.

To: G-B ISR Deputy Registrars, Shipowners, Managers, Operators, Masters, Recognized Organizations, Insurers, and Other Stakeholders

1. Introduction & Background of Maritime Security Risk

1.1 The Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry (GB ISR), acting in its capacity as the delegated Flag Administration of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and operating under multiple mandatory IMO instruments, issues the present Marine Notice in view of the evolving maritime security situation affecting the Strait of Hormuz, the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and adjacent sea areas.

1.2 The G-B I.S.R., in the discharge of its Flag State responsibilities under SOLAS Chapter XI-2 and in alignment with the objectives of the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code), continuously monitors developments through reliable international maritime security information channels, industry publications, open-source intelligence assessments, and communications with competent maritime authorities.

1.3 Recent developments indicate a significantly heightened threat environment in the above-mentioned sea areas, characterized by increased military presence, risk of kinetic activity, electronic interference affecting navigational systems, and elevated security alerts across regional ports and offshore installations.

1.4 In this context, the GB ISR provides structured guidance to Companies, Masters, Company Security Officers (CSOs), Ship Security Officers (SSOs), and other relevant stakeholders in order to ensure enhanced preparedness, risk mitigation, and protection of human life at sea.

2. Purpose and Policy Orientation

- 2.1 The primary objective of this Marine Notice is to:
- Reaffirm the obligations of Companies and ships under SOLAS Chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code;
 - Promote enhanced voyage-specific threat and risk assessments prior to and during transit in the affected region;
 - Encourage the implementation of proportionate and effective mitigation measures consistent with Security Level 2 or higher;
 - Strengthen reporting discipline and situational awareness;
 - Safeguard the lives of seafarers, the integrity of vessels, and the protection of the marine environment.

2.2 This Marine Notice constitutes strategic and managerial guidance. It does not impose mandatory routing instructions and does not prejudice the Master's overriding authority in matters of safety and security in accordance with SOLAS regulation XI-2/8.

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2.3 The GB ISR further takes due note of the public statement issued by the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization concerning the situation in the Strait of Hormuz and adjacent waters. In that statement, emphasis was placed on the fundamental principle of freedom of navigation under international maritime law, the imperative protection of innocent seafarers and civilian shipping, the need for maximum caution by shipping companies, and the importance of avoiding affected areas where operationally feasible. The GB ISR aligns with these priorities and policies and reiterates that navigational decision-making should be based on verified and authoritative sources, prudent seamanship, and structured threat and risk assessment processes consistent with the ISPS Code and industry best practices.

3. Description of the Maritime Security Environment at the concrete sea area

3.1 The Strait of Hormuz and its approaches constitute one of the most strategically sensitive maritime chokepoints worldwide, characterized by dense traffic separation schemes, restricted navigational margins, proximity of territorial waters, and concentration of naval and military assets.

3.2 The current security environment is assessed, based on reports by various international credible sources, as presenting a credible risk of:

- a. Missile-based or unmanned aerial system (UAS) attacks directed against merchant shipping;
- b. Water-borne explosive devices or asymmetric surface threats;
- c. Potential presence of naval mines, whether moored, drifting, or seabed-laid;
- d. Aggressive interception or boarding attempts;
- e. Misidentification of commercial vessels during military operations;
- f. Electronic interference, including GNSS degradation, AIS manipulation, radar anomalies, and abnormal VHF communications.

3.3 The possibility of deliberate or incidental disruption of navigational systems necessitates heightened bridge resource management, redundancy verification, and strict cross-checking of positional data using alternative means, including radar ranges, visual bearings, gyro repeaters, echo sounder data where applicable, and paper chart verification where available.

3.4 The maritime security situation remains dynamic and may deteriorate or stabilize without prior notice. Accordingly, continuous reassessment is required.

4. Voyage Planning and Risk Assessment

4.1 Companies shall ensure that, prior to transit in or near the affected region, a documented and voyage-specific threat and risk assessment is conducted as an integral part of the Safety Management System (SMS) and Ship Security Plan (SSP).

4.2 Such assessment shall take into account, inter alia:

- a. The vessel's freeboard, speed capability, maneuvering characteristics and structural configuration;
- b. Exposure during anchoring, drifting, slow steaming, or ship-to-ship operations;
- c. Proximity to military units and restricted zones;
- d. Crew composition, fatigue levels, and security preparedness;
- e. Availability and operational readiness of defensive and communication equipment.

4.3 Where operationally feasible and commercially practicable, Companies and Masters are strongly encouraged to consider alternative routing arrangements in order to minimize exposure to elevated threat areas, as per IMO respective recommendations.

4.4 Where avoidance is not practicable, risks shall be mitigated to "As Low As Reasonably Practicable" (ALARP) levels through the implementation of layered defensive measures.



5. Security Level Implementation

- 5.1 In light of the prevailing circumstances, the GB ISR advises that ships intending to transit the Strait of Hormuz and adjacent waters should implement security measures equivalent to at least Security Level 2, as defined under the ISPS Code.
- 5.2 Security Level 2 implementation shall include enhanced access control, reinforcement of restricted areas, increased deck and bridge watchkeeping, verification of lighting arrangements, readiness of citadel or safe muster areas, and confirmation of Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) operational status.
- 5.3 Where a coastal State formally establishes a higher security level, ships shall comply without undue delay, in accordance with SOLAS XI-2/4.

6. Reporting and Information Discipline

- 6.1 Masters are encouraged to maintain proactive communication with recognized maritime information centres operating in the region and to ensure timely registration and position reporting where such voluntary reporting schemes exist.
- 6.2 Any incident involving suspicious approach, attempted boarding, explosion, missile sighting, electronic interference, or abnormal communication shall be reported without delay to the relevant regional reporting mechanisms and simultaneously to the GB ISR Marine Operations Division.
- 6.3 Accurate and timely reporting enhances the Administration's ability to exercise its oversight obligations under international maritime security frameworks and supports compliance with the III Code and IMSAS expectations.
- 6.4 Without prejudice to any mandatory reporting requirements imposed by coastal States, Masters of G-B ISR registered vessels operating within or in proximity to the Strait of Hormuz, Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and adjacent sea areas are strongly encouraged to register and report to the established maritime information and coordination centres operating in the region¹. Proactive reporting and timely transmission of security-related observations enhance collective maritime domain awareness and contribute to the safety of navigation.

7. Implementation of Best Management Practices

- 7.1 Companies and Masters shall take into account relevant industry best management practices concerning vessel hardening, layered defense, enhanced lookout procedures, radar optimization, AIS management policies, and emergency communications planning.
- 7.2 Physical protection measures shall not compromise escape routes, firefighting capabilities, lifesaving appliance accessibility, or compliance with SOLAS safety requirements.
- 7.3 The Industry publication *Best Management Practices – Maritime Security (BMP MS), Edition March 2025*, is attached to the present Marine Notice for ease of reference. Companies, Company Security Officers (CSOs), Ship Security Officers (SSOs), and Masters are strongly encouraged to review and implement the relevant sections thereof, as appropriate to the vessel type, trade pattern, and assessed threat environment. The application of BMP measures should form part of the Company's documented threat and risk assessment process and be implemented under the specific instructions and oversight of the ship management company, in accordance with the Ship Security Plan (SSP) and the Safety Management System (SMS). The BMP guidance complements, but does not replace, the mandatory requirements of SOLAS Chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code.



8. Seafarer Protection and Welfare

- 8.1 The GB ISR reiterates that the safety and welfare of seafarers remain paramount.
- 8.2 Companies shall ensure that crews are adequately briefed on threat scenarios, emergency response procedures, and communication protocols, and that appropriate welfare mechanisms are available where required.

9. Flag State Oversight and Follow-Up

- 9.1 The GB ISR continues to monitor developments in the region through reliable maritime security sources and institutional channels.
- 9.2 This Marine Notice reflects the Administration’s commitment to proactive maritime security governance and effective implementation of its Flag State responsibilities.
- 9.3 Should further developments materially affect the security environment, the GB ISR will issue additional guidance, amendments, or supplementary Marine Notices as deemed necessary.
- 9.4 The Marine Operations Division of the Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry remains available as the designated Flag State contact point for clarification, consultation and ad-hoc operational guidance, where deemed necessary by the Master or Company. Communications may be addressed to: Marine Operations Division, Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry (G-B ISR) [Email: ops@gbi-lb.org, Tel.: +30 210 4537950, +30 210 4537194].
- 9.5 The Administration encourages early communication in cases of uncertainty or emerging security concerns, in order to facilitate coordinated support and informed decision-making.

10. Effective Date

- 10.1 This Marine Notice is effective upon publication.

For the Guinea-Bissau International Ships Registry

Authorized Signatory:



Office of the General Ships Registrar

Enclosed:

Best Management Practices – Maritime Security (BMP MS), Edition March 2025 (p.60)

Date of Issue	Revision No.	Amendments
05/03/2026	00	-

ⁱ Contact MSCIO prior to transiting the Gulf of Oman, Straits of Hormuz and Arabian Gulf.
The contact details of MSCIO are:
Maritime Security Centre – Indian Ocean (MSCIO)



G-B INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL SHIPS REGISTRY OF GUINEA-BISSAU

Email postmaster@mscio.eu
Telephone +33 (0) 298 220 220 +33 (0) 298 220 170
Fax +44 1923 958520 Website www.ukmto.org 3

When transiting the Gulf of Oman, Straits of Hormuz and Arabian Gulf should register their vessels with UKMTO
Email: watchkeepers@ukmto.org and ukmto@eim.ae Phone: +44 - 2392-222060, +971-50-552-3215 Fax +44 1923 958520

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G-B International Ship Registry
Email: gbi@gbissr.com
Tel: +30 2104529425
Address: Notara Str. 110-112,
Piraeus, 18535, Greece
Web: www.gbissr.com

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G-B International – LB Offshore sal
Email: rmedawar@gbi-lb.org
Tel: +30 2104537950 / +961 -4- 710246
Address: 1st Floor, White Bldg, Zalka,
Metn, Lebanon
Web: www.gbi-lb.org