



MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY NO. 043 (26)

Title:	ESCALATION OF CONFLICT (ISRAEL-USA-IRAN) – SECURITY RISKS IN THE PERSIAN GULF, STRAIT OF HORMUZ, GULF OF OMAN, AND RED SEA		
To:	SHIP OWNERS/ ISM OPERATORS / RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS/ DEPUTY REGISTRARS		
Issuance Date:	2 nd March 2026	Effective Date:	1 st March 2026
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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) issues this urgent Safety Advisory following the escalation of military hostilities between the United States and Israel, and the Islamic Republic of Iran (Operation "Epic Fury") which commenced on February 28, 2026. These advisory aims to inform all Belize-flagged vessels of the critical security risks currently present in the region.

2. SITUATION OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The security environment in the Middle East has degraded to a state of active conflict. Significant developments including:
- 2.1.1 High-level strikes within Iran have triggered immediate retaliatory missile and drone attacks across the region, including targets in Israel, UAE (Jebel Ali), Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.
 - 2.1.2 US Naval Forces Central Command (CENTCOM) has established a wide Maritime Warning Zone encompassing the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, and North Arabian Sea. The US Navy has officially stated it cannot guarantee the safety of neutral commercial shipping within this zone.
 - 2.1.3 While the Strait of Hormuz Status not officially closed by international decree, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has issued VHF broadcasts claiming the Strait is closed resulting in congestion is reported as vessels have dropped anchor to avoid transit.
 - 2.1.4 Recent reports confirm multiple tankers have been struck by projectiles or drones off the Gulf coast and Oman, resulting in vessel damage and seafarer fatalities.

3. IDENTIFIED RISKS TO SHIPS

- 3.1 Vessels with any perceived commercial or physical link to the USA or Israel are at the highest risk direct retaliation.
- 3.2 Due to the density of military assets, there is a severe risk of commercial ships being misidentified as military targets.
- 3.3 Widespread reports of GPS interference, "spoofing," and fake AIS echoes designed to lure ships into sensitive waters or disrupt navigation.
- 3.4 Missile exchanges between coastal batteries and naval task forces pose a direct "wrong place, wrong time" threat to merchant lanes.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Advisory or any other request should be directed to: **Technical and Seafarer Services, security@immarbe.com**

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4. MANDATORY AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

4.1 In light of these events, Belize-flagged vessels are advised to take the following actions.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION
TRANSIT ASSESSMENT	Strongly reconsider any planned transits through the Strait of Hormuz or the Red Sea. If already in the Persian Gulf, seek refuge in neutral territorial waters (e.g., eastern UAE or Saudi coast) or exit the region if safe.	Recommended
COMMUNICATION	Maintain a continuous listening watch on VHF Channel 16. Report any suspicious activity immediately to UKMTO (+44 2392 222060) and MSCHOA. Adhere to safety protocols advised by local authorities.	Mandatory
VESSEL HARDENING	Implement BMP5 (Best Management Practices) for protection against water-borne and aerial drone threats. Ensure all firefighting and damage control equipment is ready.	Mandatory
NAVIGATION	Exercise extreme caution regarding GPS reliability. Use traditional navigation methods (radar, visual) to cross-check positions. Do not follow instructions from unknown VHF callers to divert into Iranian waters.	Recommended
AIS POLICY	While IMO regulations require AIS to be on, Masters may exercise professional judgment to switch off AIS if they believe it poses a direct security threat (Ref: SOLAS V/19.2.4), provided the decision is logged.	Recommended

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

- 5.1 Owners and Masters must report any incidents or security concerns to the Belize Administration at security@immarbe.com.
- 5.2 Belize remains committed to the safety of our seafarers and the security of our fleet. This advisory will remain in effect until further notice.



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