

MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE
108th session
Agenda item 7

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MEASURES TO ENHANCE MARITIME SECURITY

Update on the Red Sea

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides information on the ongoing security situation in the Red Sea and the actions undertaken by IMO.

Strategic direction, if applicable: 5

Output: 5.2

Action to be taken: Paragraph 17

Related documents: MSC 108/7 and MSC 108/7/2

Background

1 The Red Sea serves as a crucial maritime route for international trade, facilitating the transportation of goods between Europe, Asia and Africa. Approximately 12-15% of the global seaborne trade passed through the Red Sea in 2023¹. The significant volume of international traffic underscores the strategic importance of the Red Sea as a key transit route for commercial shipping.

2 Since November 2023, the Houthis have been launching attacks against ships, causing shipping to be diverted away from the Red Sea, threatening the safety of seafarers, trade and freedom of navigation. On 19 November 2023, the Houthis hijacked a commercial ship in the Red Sea and have since targeted over 37 ships as of 12 March 2024.

3 These attacks have led to a significant drop in maritime traffic in the Red Sea² (Annex) and a diversion of maritime traffic via the Cape of Good Hope, resulting in longer voyages and an increase in fuel consumption.

¹ Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

² Source: Clarkson Research Services Limited ("Clarksons Research"). © Clarkson Research 2024. All rights in and to Clarkson Research services, information and data ("Information") are reserved to and owned by

Action taken by IMO

4 The Secretary-General has been actively engaged in facilitating several key meetings with relevant stakeholders, including Member States, industry representatives, signatory States of the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendments (DCoC/JA), and representatives of the navies present in the region. The meetings aimed at discussing possible measures to protect seafarers and to de-escalate the conflict. The Secretary-General has continuously reiterated his commitment to improving communication and the sharing of information to help prevent further attacks (please see IMO's website on the issue: <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Red-Sea.aspx>).

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2722 (2024)

5 On 10 January 2024, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2722 (2024) condemning the attacks on merchant and commercial ships and demanding an immediate cessation of all attacks. The Resolution also requested the UN Secretary General to provide monthly written reports, through July 1, 2024, to the Security Council on any further Houthi attacks to inform the Council's future consultations.

IMO Action: since the adoption of the Resolution, IMO has been providing monthly reports to the Secretary of the UN Security Council. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has been providing periodical information on his actions regarding the attacks to the Member States.

Galaxy Leader

6 On 19 November 2023, during its transit through the Red Sea, armed attackers boarded the **Galaxy Leader** (IMO 9237307), a Bahamian flag ro-ro cargo ship, registered under a British company, reportedly partially owned by an Israeli national. Twenty-five crew were taken hostage (17 Filipino, 2 Bulgarian, 3 Ukrainian, 2 Mexican and 1 Romanian nationals).

IMO Action: the Secretary-General has repeatedly condemned the hijack and requested immediate release of the crew and the ship, as well as meeting with relevant Member States and NGOs on the actions being taken towards the safe release of seafarers being held hostages and the ship.

International naval presence

7 The United States of America launched "Operation Prosperity Guardian" on 19 December 2023 to respond to Houthi-led attacks on shipping in the Red Sea. The coalition currently has more than 10 members and is working under the umbrella of the Combined Maritime Forces and the leadership of its Task Force 153, which focuses on security in the Red Sea.

8 On 19 February 2024 the European Union's Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) launched "Operation Aspides", with a defensive mandate to protect shipping targeted by attacks by sea and/or air. The operation is operating in line with UNSCR 2722 (2024).

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9 Other international navies are operating in the region and joining efforts to ensure freedom of navigation and safety of seafarers.

IMO Action: IMO continues to communicate with navies present in the region to enhance collaborative efforts to improve communication, particularly with the Member States in the region and industry representatives.

Impact on trade

10 Data analysis suggests that, as of 4 March 2024, the Gulf of Aden tonnage arrivals in the week of 26 February – 3 March 2024, was down to 70% compared to the first half of December 2023. Cape of Good Hope tonnage arrivals have continued to increase by approximately 90%. As of 4 March, at least 27 companies have announced suspension of transiting via the Red Sea.

IMO Action: as the situation is changeable, IMO is closely monitoring the market impacts of the ongoing disruption in the Red Sea on global trade and individual shipping segments, including IBIA's Bunker Activity Report for Africa (please see the link, referred to in the above-mentioned IMO website). Details on the impact on trade are being shared with Member States regularly.

*Impact on the environment – **MV RUBYMAR***

11 The **MV RUBYMAR** (IMO 9138898), a cargo ship registered in Belize and carrying 41,000 tons of fertilizer, was struck on 18 February 2024 by an uncrewed aerial device while transiting in the Bab-al-Mandeb Strait. It was reported to have leaked oil creating an 18-mile-long oil slick in the Red Sea, and that the crew abandoned ship. The ship subsequently sank on 2 March 2024 but has remained vertical and is only partially submerged and thus a navigational hazard in the area.

IMO Action: IMO is working through the UN Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), together with UNEP-OCHA's Joint Environment Unit and the Emergency Mutual Aid in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (EMERSGA), to provide technical support and backstopping to the team deployed to support the Government of Yemen in the event of a possible spill of fuel or cargo from the **MV Rubymar**.

MV True Confidence

12 **MV True Confidence** (IMO 9460784) is a Barbados-flagged bulk carrier attacked on March 2024, 54 nautical miles southwest of Aden, Yemen, killing three crew members and injuring four others, including three in critical condition. It was the first civilian casualties of Houthi attacks on merchant shipping in the Red Sea. The attack caused significant damage to the ship and the crew members abandoned the ship shortly after. The ship had a crew of 20 at the time of the attack and an additional three armed guards. The crew was made up of 15 Filipinos, four Vietnamese and one Indian and the armed guard was made of up two Sri Lankans and one Nepalese. The crew members killed were two Filipinos and one Vietnamese national.

IMO Action: the Secretary-General has released a video conveying condolences and renewing call for collective actions to protect seafarers.

<https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/pages/Attack-on-True-Confidence.aspx>

Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment

13 The Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden was adopted in 2009. The Jeddah Amendment, adopted in 2017, extends the scope of the Code, calling on the signatory States to cooperate to the fullest possible extent to repress transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing and other illegal activities at sea.

IMO Action: The Secretary-General convened a meeting with the DCoC Signatory States on 6 January 2024 to discuss pressing issues surrounding the ongoing security situation in the Red Sea with a particular focus on the safety of seafarers, ensuring freedom of navigation, and implementing measures to mitigate threats faced by shipping in the Red Sea. Following the meeting, the Chair of the DCoC Steering Committee shared an action plan to highlight the region's priorities to address regional and national maritime security challenges. Further discussions will take place to address resource mobilization and to coordinate activities already in place under relevant IMO initiatives such as the Red Sea Project.

Other IMO capacity-building initiatives in the region

EU-funded Red Sea Project

14 In 2021 IMO signed a UN-to-UN Agreement with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) under which IMO has become an implementing partner of a four-year EU-funded project on "Enhancing Port Security and Regional Dialogue in the Red Sea Region". The implementation phase of the Regional Programme for Maritime Security in the Red Sea Area project is now under way in five participating countries of the Red Sea, namely Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. Together with INTERPOL and UNODC, IMO is engaging in coordinated actions in support of participating countries to develop capacities and promote adequate security and safety standards for maritime, port and land-based maritime and law enforcement authorities to address maritime security challenges. A description of the activities can be found at:

<https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/RedSeaProject.aspx>

Industry guidelines

15 Industry associations have updated interim security guidance for navigating the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The guidance stresses the importance of conducting a comprehensive threat and risk assessment specific to each ship and voyage, incorporating advice from the ship's flag State. It highlights that the maritime threat from Houthi forces is greater in the vicinity of the Yemeni Red Sea coastline, under partial Houthi control. Additionally, it advises against complying with Houthi instructions to divert to their ports for detention and provides recommendations for suitable waiting areas if transit through the region needs to be postponed. More information is available at [maritimelocalsecurity.org](https://www.maritimelocalsecurity.org) (please also see the link in <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Red-Sea.aspx>).

Reporting to IMO

16 Information sharing related to incidents taking place in the Red Sea remains critical to ensure effective prevention and response, and is essential for safeguarding maritime security, protecting seafarers and preserving the global maritime trade. IMO thanks all stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement, shipping companies and other international organizations for sharing timely and accurate information related to incidents in the Red Sea and for their readiness to confirm relevant details regarding the ship, crew, location and damages.

Action requested of the Committee

- 17 The Committee is invited to:
- .1 note the information provided in this document in general;
 - .2 encourage Member States and non-governmental and governmental organizations to continue sharing information on incidents, best practice and impacts on safety of seafarers and freedom of navigation; and
 - .3 provide any comment or guidance on further action to be taken by the Organization, as appropriate.

ANNEX
RED SEA TRACKER

Red Sea Tracker: Vessel Activity – 11th March 2024

Vessel arrivals in Gulf of Aden down 70% in last 7 days vs 1H Dec avg, steady on previous week

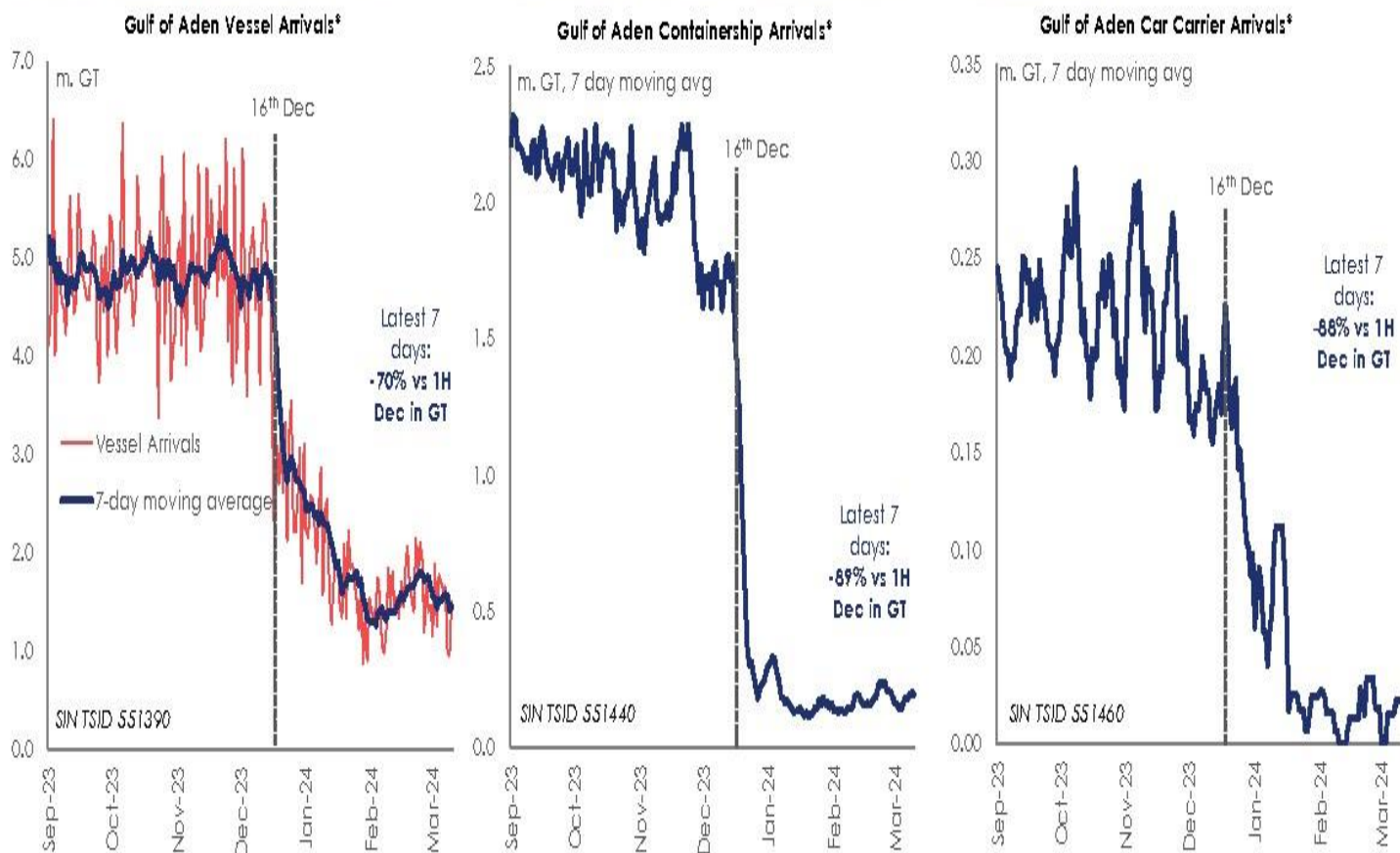
| | Sector | Unit | SIN ID ^A | Daily Average | | | | | | | Trend vs 1H Dec 2023 Avg | | | | | Comment |
|----------------------------|--|-------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | | | 2023* | 1H Dec | 2H Dec | Jan | 1H Feb | 2H Feb | Latest ^A | 2H Dec | Jan | 1H Feb | 2H Feb | Latest ^A | |
| Attacks | No. Reported Attacks (Cumulative, end period) | No. m GT | | | 15 | 22 | 37 | 41 | 48 | 53 | | | | | | Attacks continuing into March |
| | | | | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 2.6 | | | | | | | |
| Gulf of Aden Arrivals | Total | m GT | 551390 | 4.64 | 4.83 | 2.75 | 1.83 | 1.45 | 1.69 | 1.45 | -43% | -62% | -70% | -65% | -70% | Steady trend with limited arrivals |
| | Containerships | m GT | 551440 | 1.91 | 1.75 | 0.32 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.20 | 0.19 | -82% | -91% | -92% | -89% | -89% | Continued very limited arrivals |
| | Crude | m GT | 551400 | 0.71 | 0.73 | 0.61 | 0.52 | 0.42 | 0.66 | 0.49 | -16% | -28% | -43% | -10% | -33% | Further downtick this week after mid Feb rise |
| | Products | m GT | 551405 | 0.41 | 0.44 | 0.34 | 0.23 | 0.17 | 0.21 | 0.20 | -23% | -46% | -61% | -52% | -54% | More significant impact than crude |
| | Bulkcarriers | m GT | 551420 | 0.86 | 1.04 | 0.90 | 0.71 | 0.59 | 0.52 | 0.43 | -14% | -32% | -43% | -50% | -58% | Easing back further into March |
| | LNG | m GT | 551435 | 0.27 | 0.36 | 0.22 | 0.07 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | -40% | -82% | -100% | -100% | -100% | No arrivals since 16 th Jan |
| | LPG | m GT | 551430 | 0.08 | 0.15 | 0.09 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.01 | -42% | -84% | -87% | -96% | -91% | Very few arrivals recorded through Feb |
| Car Carriers | m GT | 551460 | 0.21 | 0.18 | 0.13 | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.02 | -27% | -75% | -92% | -91% | -88% | Continued very limited arrivals | |
| Suez Canal Transits | Total | m GT | 11278831 | 4.44 | 4.40 | 3.32 | 2.03 | 1.55 | 1.69 | 1.40 | -25% | -54% | -65% | -62% | -68% | Dropping back again in March |
| | Containerships | m GT | 11278942 | 1.87 | 1.72 | 0.78 | 0.38 | 0.29 | 0.21 | 0.23 | -55% | -78% | -83% | -88% | -87% | Ongoing significant diversions via Cape |
| | Crude | m GT | 11278863 | 0.63 | 0.53 | 0.58 | 0.45 | 0.37 | 0.53 | 0.34 | 10% | -15% | -31% | -1% | -37% | Return to more notable drop after Feb rise |
| | Products | m GT | 11278951 | 0.41 | 0.40 | 0.33 | 0.26 | 0.20 | 0.26 | 0.23 | -18% | -34% | -50% | -35% | -41% | Impacts fairly steady over recent weeks |
| | Bulkcarriers | m GT | 11278922 | 0.85 | 0.98 | 1.01 | 0.69 | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.51 | 3% | -30% | -42% | -41% | -48% | Transits gradually continuing to ease |
| | LNG | m GT | 11278962 | 0.27 | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.07 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1% | -76% | -100% | -100% | -100% | No transits since 16 th Jan |
| | LPG | m GT | 11279070 | 0.08 | 0.17 | 0.09 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | -48% | -84% | -89% | -88% | -88% | Continued very limited transits |
| Car Carriers | m GT | 11279063 | 0.17 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.00 | -5% | -64% | -75% | -76% | -100% | No transits in early March | |
| Cape of Good Hope Arrivals | Total | m GT | | 4.05 | 4.15 | 5.27 | 6.74 | 7.05 | 7.64 | 7.68 | 27% | 63% | 70% | 84% | 85% | Clear impacts from increased re-routing |

^ALatest = cumulative total for vessel attacks, average across most recent 7-day period for Gulf of Aden arrivals and Suez Canal transits. Source: Clarksons Research

Gulf Of Aden Vessel Activity (1)

Continued limited vessel arrivals, remaining at low levels in early March after dropping back again late Feb

Vessel arrivals into the Gulf of Aden limited, trending down again into early Mar, Containerships have seen the sharpest fall, with many operators avoiding the area, Car Carrier arrivals have also dropped back heavily



Source: Clarksons Research. *Data basis vessels arriving in the region from either the Red Sea or Indian Ocean, whether or not undertaking a complete 'transit'; basis date vessel first recorded in Gulf of Aden. Basis data derived from AIS vessel movements data; timeseries subject to variations in movements data coverage overtime.



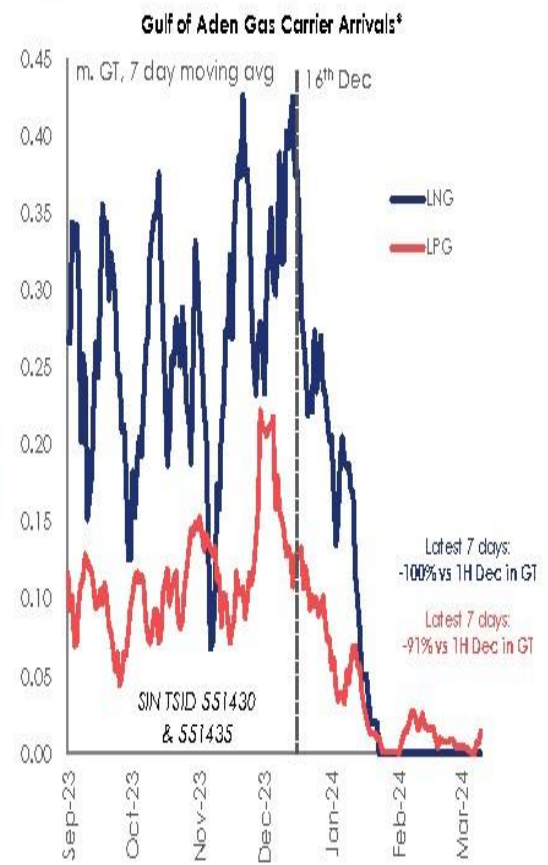
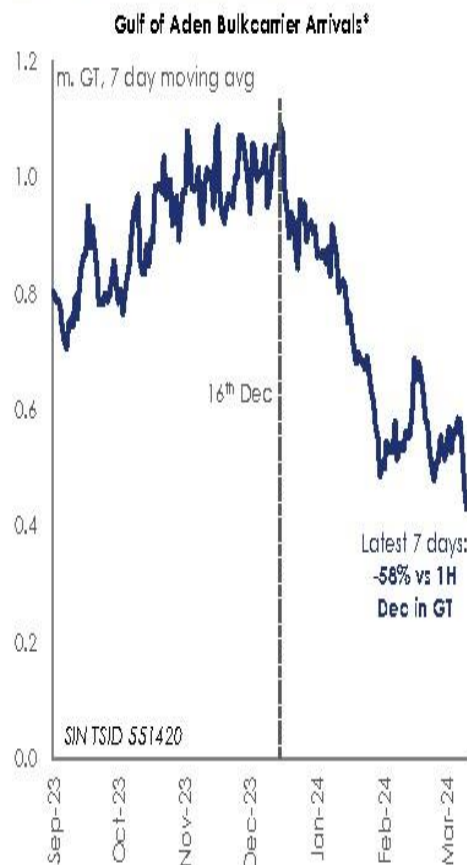
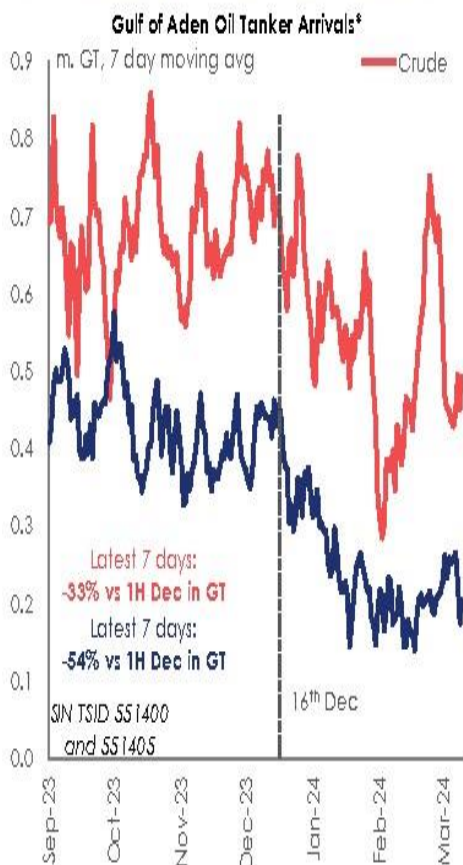
Gulf Of Aden Vessel Activity (2)

Crude tanker arrivals have dropped back after an uptick in Feb, bulkcarriers continue to see limited arrivals

Crude arrivals have dropped back after Feb rebound, products arrivals still low

Bulkcarriers saw a significant decline through January and remain limited

Very pronounced drop in arrivals seen in the LNG and LPG sectors



Source: Clarkson's Research. *Data basis vessels arriving in the region from either the Red Sea or Indian Ocean, whether or not undertaking a complete 'transit'; basis date vessel first recorded in Gulf Of Aden. Basis data derived from AIS vessel movements data; timeseries subject to variations in movements data coverage over time.