



भारत सरकार/ GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING,
MUMBAI

F. No. File No: 28-11/3/2023-MSB

Date -19.07.2024

DGS Circular No. 20 of 2024

Sub.: Trend Analysis of Gulf of Aden, Bab al Mandeb Strait, Red Sea, Somali Basin, and Arabian Sea Region (November 2023 to June 2024) - reg.

For the attention of Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Shipping Agents, RPSL Agents, Ship Masters, Seafarers, Charterers, Recognised Organisation & Recognised Security Organisations, Coastal Indian States, including Administrations of Union territories and State Maritime Boards.

1. The maritime security landscape in the Gulf of Aden, Bab al Mandeb Strait, Red Sea, Somali Basin, and Arabian Sea Region has been significantly affected by the increasing frequency and geographical spread of attacks on merchant vessels from November 2023 to June 2024. Analysing the data and trends observed therein reveals that these attacks have evolved in nature and impact, disrupting global maritime trade and posing substantial security challenges.

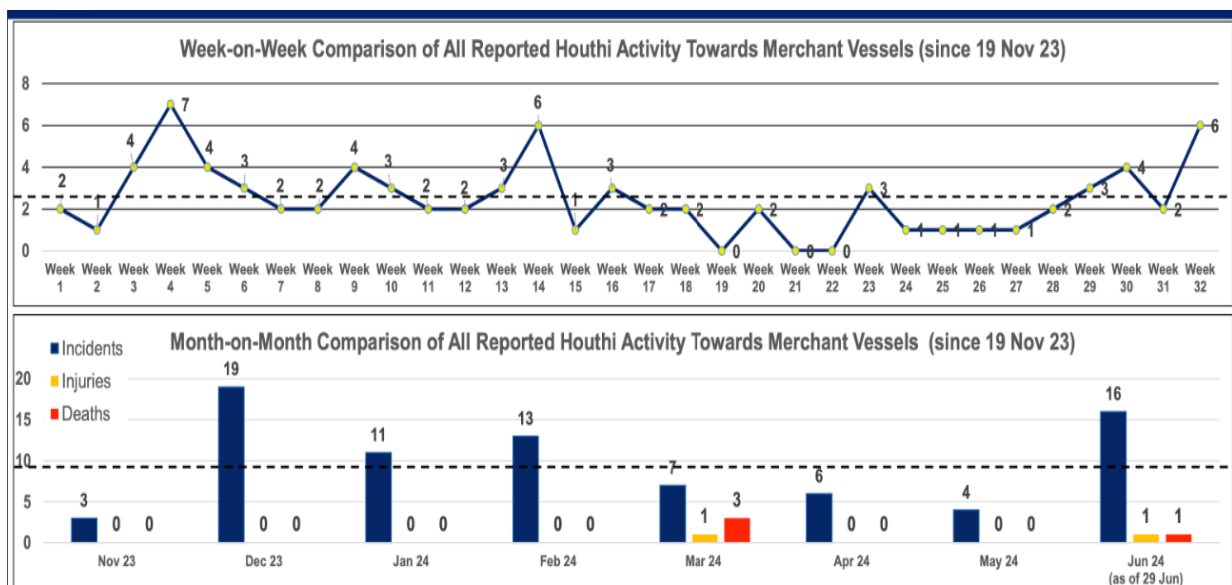


Figure 1: Week-on-Week Comparison of All Reported Houthi Activity Towards Merchant (Source: JMIC)

2. From November 2023 to June 2024, a marked increase in Houthi attacks was observed, particularly between December 2023 and February 2024, with a resurgence in June 2024. The Red Sea experienced the highest number of attacks, peaking at 18 in December 2023, while the Gulf of Aden saw a notable spike of 14 attacks in February 2024. These attacks have led to a significant reduction in vessel arrivals in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden regions, with the

Suez Canal experiencing a 60% decrease in traffic, the Red Sea a 54% decrease, and Bab-el-Mandeb facing the most significant decline at 62%.

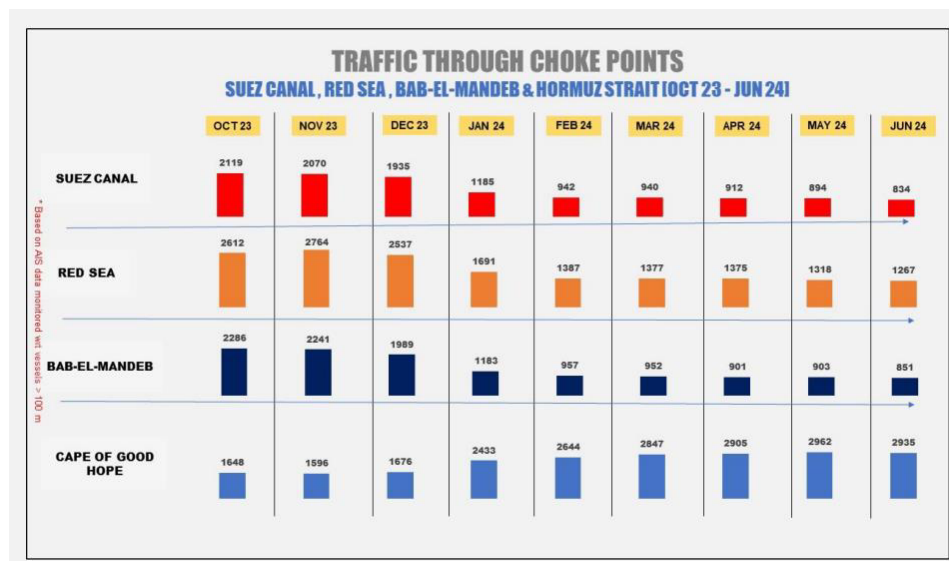


Figure 2: Trend of number of vessels transiting choke points of SLOC (Source: IFC-IOR)

3. The impact on tanker arrivals is observed to be substantial, with a 47% decrease by June 2024. LPG tankers were the most affected, experiencing an 81% decrease, followed by chemicals tankers (48% decrease), oil product tankers (47% decrease), and crude oil tankers (37% decrease).

4. From April 2024, the geographical scope of the Houthi attacks expanded beyond the Red Sea and Arabian Sea to the Mediterranean, indicating a strategic shift in operational tactics. Notable incidents during this period included the attacks on the Johannes MAERSK and Waler in the Mediterranean, marking the furthest extent of Houthi operations from Yemen.

5. In several incidents, the deployment of Uncrewed Submersible Vehicles (USVs) and Crewed Surface Vehicles (CSVs) has introduced a new dimension to the maritime security landscape. On 12 June 2024, an incident occurred in the southern Red Sea, where the MV Tutor, a Liberia-flagged bulk carrier, was subject to an attack. The vessel was targeted by both an unmanned surface vehicle (USV) and an anti-ship missile, tragically resulting in the loss of one crew member. The ship sustained severe damage, leading to its abandonment by the crew and subsequent sinking six days after the incident.

6. Despite the presence of privately contracted armed security personnel on board, video footage of the attack suggests a lack of response as the USV approached the vessel. This raises important questions about the efficacy and training standards of some private maritime security providers.

7. The incident underscores the need for a comprehensive review of security protocols and onboard armed security personnel qualifications to ensure they are commensurate with the evolving nature of maritime threats in high-risk areas.

8. Reports also highlight that the trend of attacks has shifted towards vessels with no direct association with Israel, the US, or the UK, targeting vessels that may have indirect or outdated linkages, broadening the scope of the threat.

**Incidents by Assessed Associations
(since 19 Nov 23)**

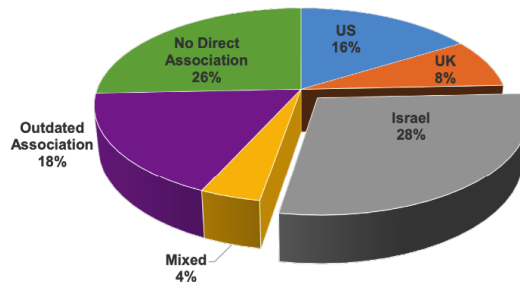


Figure 3: Houthi-Related Incidents by Assessed Associations (Source: JMIC)

9. Concurrently, Somali piracy activities have seen a resurgence, with eight incidents reported in the first half of 2024, marking the first successful hijacking by Somali pirates since 2017. The Indian Navy has played a crucial role in rescuing merchant vessels from pirate attacks, demonstrating the persistent threat in the region.

CHART M: East Africa – Waters off Somalia / Gulf of Aden – Total number of reported incidents

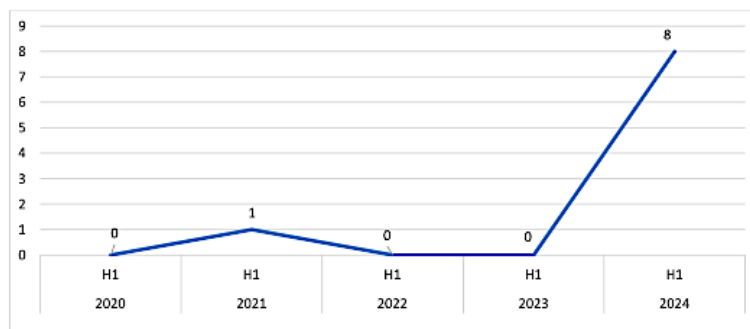


Figure 4: Somali Piracy Incident Trend (Source: IMB-PRC)

10. All stakeholders should note that maritime security concerns persist in the region due to the surge in attacks in June 2024, the use of USVs, geographical expansion, and continued escalation. The recent targeting of vessels with no direct association with Israel, the US, or the UK, coupled with the resurgence in Somali Piracy, further compounds the security challenges in this region.

11. Given the current scenario, all CSOs, Vessels, and Masters must consider the heightened security risks. In addition to the reporting through the [online form as per DGS Circular No. 08 of 2024](#), the SOPs/advisories specified in [DGS Circular No. 25 of 2023 dated 05.12.2023](#), [DGS Circular No. 27 of 2023 dated 29.12.2023](#), and [DGS Circular No. 08 of 2024 dated 10.04.2024](#), must be adhered to along with other existing Best Management Practices therein, by the vessels transiting through the region.

This is issued with the approval of the Director General of Shipping.

(Capt. Anish Joseph)

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Note - The underlined blue content in the circular indicates hyperlinks to the relevant online content on the respective website.