

## IUMI Policy Agenda

### 15. Maritime security / Piracy

#### *Brief description*

The world is facing a new era of instability in which the rules-based order which has underpinned global trade and the social order since 1945 is under threat from several directions. UNCLOS is being tested and clashing territorial ambitions are posing difficult legal and practical questions to which there is no clear answer.

#### **Strait of Hormuz**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026 hostilities began between US, Israel and Iran, resulting in over 1,000 sea-going vessels being trapped west of Hormuz with over 20,000 crew aboard. There have been almost 30 attacks on vessels. The US has deployed minesweepers to the area, implying there are mines there. There are suggestions that Iran may be attempting to charge for passage and that raises a number of legal questions for anyone insuring such vessels. Both Iran and the US are attempting to blockade the strait and masters are unwilling to take the risk of trying to leave under the Iranian gaze. The situation remains fluid. The second and third order effects of the trade interruption will be felt for months after a peace is confirmed.

#### **Gaza/Red Sea**

The conflict situation in Gaza continued for over a year and the region remains highly unstable. The insurgent Houthis chose to attack international shipping in a show of support for the Palestinians. This has resulted in around 55% of all transits being re-routed away from Suez. NATO supported shipping via Operation Prosperity Guardian and Poseidon Archer whilst the EU intervened through Operation Aspides which provided an escort service to some vessels when possible. IUMI assisted Aspides with their guidance to shipping. Since mid-2025 Houthi attacks on shipping have reduced but the threat endures. Trading and underwriting in the area remain subject to high levels of risk and uncertainty where political motives clash with commercial operations.

#### **Ukraine**

The conflict continues with no end in sight. Despite continuing resistance by Ukraine, and an unprecedented regime of sanctions, Russia's strategic goals remain unchanged; they seek total control over Ukraine and appear undeterred by very significant casualties and economic damage. The European strategic picture has been recast with the continent recognizing the downside of oil and gas reliance on a country with contrasting strategic ambitions.

### **Baltic**

Following the addition of Sweden and Finland to NATO there were a number of sub-sea cable incidents involving Russian and Chinese linked ships. NATO countries launched “Baltic Sentry” which will involve the deployment of defensive patrols by frigates, planes and drones. This receives support from NMCSUI, the “cell”, a specific knowledge centre at MARCOM which is co-ordinating action on undersea infrastructures and response.

### **Piracy**

The Shipping Round Table has worked to update Best Management Practices into BMP Maritime Security. BMP MS comprises a useful and comprehensive guidance which introduces effective measures for the protection of crew, vessels and cargo while transiting the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. It is intended for use with the companion Maritime Security Industry Threat Overview (MISTO).

Q6099, the maritime security planning chart for the Indian Ocean has now been supplemented with Q6112 which covers Karachi to Hong Kong. Both provide routing information and contact details for masters.

In the Gulf of Guinea, the IMB continues to seek continued, robust regional and international naval presence as a deterrent to address piracy and kidnapping. Nigeria’s Deep Blue Project and the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Collaboration Forum are complementary initiatives, created to support the fight against piracy in the region.

### *Relevant authority / organisations and documents*

- **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**
  - **Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS)**: Recent reported incidents of piracy & armed robbery.
  - ***MSC102/10/3***: Security in the Gulf of Guinea, submitted by ICS, BIMCO, OCIMF, INTERTANKO and INTERCARGO, 10 March 2020.
  - ***Circular Letter No. 4382***: Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, 10 February 2021.
  - ***Resolution A.1069(28)***: Prevention and suppression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity in the Gulf of Guinea, 15 December 2021.
  - ***MSC106/INF.10***: Removal of the Indian Ocean High Risk Area, submitted by ICS, BIMCO, OCIMF, INTERTANKO, INTERCARGO and IMCA, 22 August 2022.
  
- **BM MS 2025:**

- ◊ Consolidates previously published guidelines in one place. They focus on threat and risk management, give guidance how to detect, avoid, deter, delay and report maritime security incidents. They also address seafarer welfare.
- **BIMCO's GUARDCON contract**
  - **IGP&I GUARDCON West Africa** – IG clubs' version including the recommended amendments in Circular 1, 9 April 2014.
- **European Union:**
  - EU Maritime Security Factsheet: The Gulf of Guinea, 25 January 2021.
- **EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR)** – Operation Atalanta.
- **ICC International Maritime Bureau – Piracy Reporting Centre**
- **Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)**
- **Joint War Committee (JWC):** Listed areas.
- **IUMI: Position Paper – Piracy and its suppression, 29 January 2026**
- **Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade – Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG)**
- **U.S. Coast Guard:** Port Security Advisory (1-20), 10 June 2020.
- **Benin:** Interministerial decree concerning means of protection of ships in territorial waters, 13 July 2020.
- **OCIMF:** Guidance for the employment of private maritime security companies, October 2021.
- **NATO Shipping Centre.**

*IUMI will:*

- Monitor and inform IUMI membership of new developments.
- Strongly support implementation of BMP Maritime Security and consider amendments and/or more suitably adapted versions for new areas/threats as and when appropriate.
- Support implementation of ISO PSA 28007 as the sole standard when determining rules for the use of force.
- Endorse guidelines issued by BIMCO and ICS for vessels and crews.
- Encourage governments to support counter-piracy operations through naval task forces and other means of support off the Horn of Africa.
- Encourage owners and insurers to remain vigilant in the Indian Ocean.
- Support all efforts to find a lasting solution to ensure the safe passage of vessels and crew in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf.
- Participate in the EU's Stakeholder Advisory Group on Maritime Security (SAGMAS)