

05 January 2021

INDUSTRY UPDATE FOLLOWING INCIDENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF

A Tanker conducting STS Operations in International waters in the Persian Gulf reported a limpet mine attached to the hull of the vessel. Industry organisations are relieved no seafarers have been injured or damage sustained.

What was reported

A limpet mine was discovered attached to the hull of a tanker whilst conducting STS operations in Iraqi Territorial Waters, in vicinity of Al Bakr Oil Terminal (29 33 N / 048 47 E).

There is no indication where or when the device was attached to the hull or who did this.

It is understood Officials from Iraq safely removed the device.

What we are doing

Industry is in contact with Flag States, Regional Stakeholders, UKMTO, Combined Maritime Forces, International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC), European Maritime Awareness in The Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH), and industry associations.

Risk mitigation measures

Industry organisations recommend companies review *BMP5* and consider sending the following guidance to vessels operating in the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea:

- Undertake a new ship- and voyage-specific threat risk assessment before entering any region where there has been an incident, or the threat has changed.
- After the risk assessment, review the Ship's Security Plan.
- Review section 2 of *BMP5*, which outlines non-piracy threats.
- Maintain a full and vigilant bridge watch; Note: at night, slow small boats with no wake are difficult to spot on radar.
- Maintain a strict communications watch and establish communication with all vessels coming close. Do not allow small boats to approach or to come alongside. Use a searchlight for identification at night.
- Ensure strict boarding controls are in place.
- Only lower accommodation gangways or ladders when necessary.
- Rig outboard lighting where possible provided they do not interfere with keeping a safe lookout, particularly over the stern and rig/use searchlights if available.
- Report any suspicious activity or objects immediately to both the port and UKMTO **+44239222060**.
- Monitor relevant VHF and other communication channels.
- Check all fire-fighting equipment is available for immediate use. Make sure the emergency fire pump is available if any maintenance is being undertaken.
- Keep the Automatic Information System (AIS) on. There is no need to complete the field stating the last or next port of call.

Visual check of the hull:

- Undertake a visual search from the deck, all around the vessel to check for anything attached to the hull of the vessel. Particular attention should be paid to the hull at the waterline.
- Conduct regular rounds and search the upper deck.
- If a vessel detects anything unusual attached to the hull, then the Master should contact the UKMTO and Flag State immediately. All crew should be evacuated from the immediate area and mustered in a safe place. No attempt should be made to remove it.
- Vessel should follow the advice of the military authorities.

Additional measures Operators may wish to take if alerted to suspicious activity whilst at anchor include:

- Rotate the propeller continuously or at short, irregular intervals.
- Operate bow and stern thrusters at zero (0) thrust at irregular intervals.
- Turn the rudder frequently.
- Switch the echo sounder to transmit counter/combat swimmer/diver threat.

Reference should be made to the following publications:

Download [*BMP5: Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.*](#)

[*OCIMF's Ship Security: Hull Vulnerability Study*](#) is also a useful reference.

NATO ATP2: [*NCAGS Guide to Owners, Operators, Masters and Officers Edition A Version 1 Annex D to Chp 4*](#)

[*IMSC Bridge Reference Cards Jun 20*](#)