

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-230

To: Masters, Ship-owners, Operators, Company Security Officers, Ship Security Officers, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates, Legal Representative of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Recognized Organizations (RO's) and Recognized Security Organizations (RSO's) of Panama Flag Vessels.

Subject: High Risk Areas (HRA) and precautionary zones.

Reference: Law No. 38 June 4th, 1995 UNCLOS 1982.
MMC-208 - Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) and Compliance with the Best Management Practices (BMP).
MMC-228 - Use of Armed Security Personnel on board Panama Flagged Vessels (**online application**).
MMC-231 - Piracy Reports
MMC-327 - Security Measures sailing in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG).
MMC-358 - Security Measures in Nigerian waters.

1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to inform about the recently amendment of the High Risk Area (HRA) description in Section 2 of BMP4 that will be effective from December 1, 2015.
2. For the purpose of BMP the High Risk Area is an area bounded by:

In the Red Sea northern limit	Latitude 15° N
In the Gulf of Oman northern limit	Latitude 22° N
Eastern limit:	Longitude 065° E
Southern Limit:	Latitude 5° S

3. The current HRA should be reduced in area to reflect the recent experience of ships in the Indian Ocean as well as available data provided by military headquarters.

Merchant Marine Circular

4. **Starting on May 1st, 2019**, the new coordinates of the HRA are:

In the Indian Ocean a line linking from the territorial waters off the coast of East Africa at Latitude 05° 00'S to 050°00'E:

Then to positions:

Lat: 00° 00'N	Long: 055° 00'E
Lat: 10° 00'N	Long: 060° 00'E
Lat: 14° 00'N	Long: 060° 00'E

Then a bearing 310° to the territorial waters of the Arabian Peninsula.

5. The High Risk Area (HRA) is an area within the UKMTO designated as the Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) where it is considered there is a higher risk of piracy and within which self-protective measures are most likely to be required.

6. According to the Merchant Marine Circular MMC-228, the Panama Maritime Authority defined HRA in point 4.1 ***“An area as defined in the BMP unless otherwise defined by the Flag State”***.

7. For this reason and taking in consideration the last incidents reports of the Panamanian flagged vessels, the following areas are considered to continue to suffer attacks and robberies. Given the aforementioned, this Administration will also consider the following, as High Risk Areas:

S.E. ASIA AND THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Indonesia: Belawan, Dumai, Karimun Kecil/Besar, Pulau Nipah, Pulau Takong Kecil, Jakarta /Tanjung Priok, Muara Berau, Pulau Bintan, **Batam, Taboneo and Tanjung Butan.**

Malacca Strait

Malaysia: Tanjung Piai, **Bandar Penawar and Johor.**

Philippines: **Celebes Sea**, off Sibutu passage, off Sibutu Island, Tawi Tawi, Sulu Sea and off Eastern Sabah.

Merchant Marine Circular

S.E. ASIA AND THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT (cont.)

Singapore Straits

Thailand

South China

Sea Vietnam:

Vung Tau

Bangladesh: Chittagong, kutubdia and **Chittagong**

Anchorage.

India: Kandla, Kochi, Visakhapatnam and **East of Alang**

AFRICA AND RED SEA

Somalia waters – Eastern and
Northeastern Coast.

Ghana: Takoradi

Angola: Luanda

Guinea: Gulf of Guinea, Conakry

Egypt

Benin: Cotonou

Gulf of Aden

Gabon: Libreville

Cameroon

Dem. Rep. of Congo

Ivory Coast: Abidjan

Conakr

and

Sierra

Leone

Kenya

Liberia

Mozambique: Mocimboa Da Praia Nigeria:

Lagos / Bayelsa / Brass / Bonny

Island / Port Harcourt

Red Sea

The Congo: Pointe Noire and Northern Somali Coast in the Gulf of Aden and
Southern Red Sea in the Bab El Mandeb

Togo: Lome

Sao Tome and Principe: Sao Tome Island

Merchant Marine Circular

SOUTH, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WATERS

Colombia:

Cartagena

Haiti: Port Au

Prince Jamaica

Venezuela: Puerto Jose, Puerto La

Cruz **Brazil: Macapa and Sao**

Francisco Do Sul Guyana

Peru, Callao

Anchorage

Dominican Republic

Ports

Ecuadorian Ports

Mexico: Gulf of Mexico, Gulf of Campeche, Tabasco, Puerto Dos Bocas

8. All the Panamanian Flagged Vessels transiting through any of the above mentioned areas have to raise their Security Level according to their Ship Security Plan.

9. From January to December 2021, eight locations contributed to 71% of the total of 132 incidents reported in the period from January to December 2021: Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, The Philippines, Santo Tome and Principe, Peru, Singapore Straits and Nigeria. The Singapore Straits and Peru have maintained risky activities, reason why the Panama Maritime Authority encourages to all Ship- owners/Operators and Masters to take the proper maritime security measurements in order to reduce and minimize the risks associated.

No.	Country	Port/Anchorage
1	Indonesia	Batam / Muara Berau / Taboneo / Tanjung Butan
2	Malasya	Bandar Penawar, Johor.
3.	Philippines	Celebes Sea, Sibutu Island, Tawi Tawi, Sulu Sea and Eastern Sabah, Manila
4.	Singapore	Singapore Straits
5.	Thailand	Kosichang Anchorage
6.	Vietnam	Southern Vietnam
7.	Bangladesh	Chittagong Anchorage
8.	India	East of Alang
9.	Brasil	Sao Francisco Do Sul, Macapa
10.	Colombia	Cartagena
11.	Ecuador	Guayaquil
12.	Haiti	Port au Prince

Merchant Marine Circular

13.	Mexico	Puerto Dos Bocas, Campeche, Tabasco and Ciudad del Carmen
14.	Peru	Callao Anchorage
15.	Angola	Luanda
16.	Benin	Cotonou
17.	Equatorial Guinea	Conakry
18.	Gabon	Libreville
19.	Ghana	Takoradi
20.	Ivory Coast	Abidjan
21.	Mozambique	Mocimboa Da Praia
22.	Nigeria	Lagos / Bayelsa / Brass / Off Brass Bonny Island, / Port Harcourt
23.	Sao Tome and Principe	Sao Tome Island
24.	The Congo	Pointe Noire.
25.	Togo	Lome / Off Lome

10. In this sense, we remind all our users that MMC-195 and MMC-197, states that all Panamanian flagged vessels, under SOLAS V/19-1 regulations are required to comply with LRIT requirement. The LRIT System must work properly as the ships are transiting High Risk Areas. This ensures the possibility to track vessels and will allow detecting any unexpected change of course or any other suspicious situation.

11. The Panama Maritime Authority encourages all our Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels to have as a First Option, the use of the Best Management Practices (BMP), and the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC); MMC-208.

12. All Panamanian flagged vessels are requested prior to transit, or leaving a port within the region, to follow the latest Best Management Practices (BMP) and to contact the local information centers for up to date instructions or transit and reporting.

13. The use of PCASP should not be considered as an alternative to Best Management Practices (BMP) and other protective measures. It is recommended that BMP be applied

14. Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) and be considered as the first, minimum, preventative option. Placing armed guards on board as a means to secure and protect the ship and its crew should only be considered after a risk assessment has been carried out.

15. Panama flagged vessels operating within the World Food Program in the Gulf of Aden (GoA) and Somali Basin shall implement as far practicable the BMP.

Merchant Marine Circular

16. The incidents of vessels transiting the Celebes – Sulu Seas continue to be reported to the IMB Piracy reporting Centre. Most incidents are targeted towards vessels approaching / entering the Sibutu Channel, which is probably the only safe and navigable channel joining the Celebes Sea to the Sulu Sea. This Channel is also the shortest, north/south route from and to Australia and the Southern Indonesian Islands. The vessels targeted are; bulk carriers, general cargo ships, fishing vessels, tankers and tugs and barges – all of which do not have excessive speed capabilities or freeboards when loaded.

To reduce the risk, the IMB is advising owners and charterers to consider the recommendations in IMO circular MSC.1/Circ.1334 of June 23, 2009 as well as the Risk Assessment and vessel hardening procedures given in the Best Management Practices. Depending on the risk assessment, consideration could be given to routeing west of Kalimantan and straight into the South China Sea thus avoiding the Celebes / Sulu Sea all together. The IMB appreciates that this will increase sailing time and thus costs, but we recommend this as a possible safer route.

17. All Panamanian flagged vessels transiting in the Gulf of Guinea must to remain at least 250 NM from the coast at all times, or until the vessel can transit to commence cargo operations at a berth or safe anchorage.

18. The Panama Maritime Authority encourage all Operators, CSO and Owners of Panamanian flag vessels, to contact the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Center 24/7, in case of any incident of piracy or armed robbery that occurs in any part of the country world.

The information received is important in order to be able to alert the response agencies in the region to take action as well as raise awareness for other ships in the vicinity by broadcasting via Inmarsat Safety Net Service.

IMB

Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC)

Tel: +(60 3) 2078 5763 / 2031 0287 / 2031 3106

24 Hrs ANTI PIRACY HELPLINE: + 60 3 2031 0014

(Manned 24 Hrs everyday)

Fax: + 60 3 2078 5769

General E-mail: imbkl@icc-ccs.org

Piracy E-mail: piracy@icc-ccs.org

Also, we exhorted the Captains of the vessels that the above information from the Piracy Report Center be placed in areas where there is communication such as the bridge, the engine room, citadel, among others.

Merchant Marine Circular

19. The goal of the Panama Maritime Authority is to give the Panamanian Flagged vessels and the Maritime Industry the certainty of our interest in achieving a safer and secure transit through these High Risk Areas.

The contact details are as follows:

PIRACY REPORTING CENTRE

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Merchant Marine Circular

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Marine Domain Awareness for Trade – Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG)

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Website:

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Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)

Naval Transmitting Station

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Website: <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/ifc-ior/index.html>

February, 2022 - Modification in paragraph 9.

October, 2021 - Modification in paragraph 9.

July, 2021 – Modification in paragraph 7 (Indonesia and Philippines) and paragraph 9

April, 2021- Modification in paragraph 7 (Africa and Red Sea) and paragraph 9.

Merchant Marine Circular

March, 2021 - Update MDAT-GoG information
January, 2021 – Modification in paragraph 7 (Africa and Red Sea), 9 point 3, 9, 11, 22 and 25.
November, 2020 – Change in paragraph 9.
July, 2020 - Update HRA
June, 2020 – Change of PMA phone numbers.
April, 2020 – Update HRA and modification in paragraph #9
June, 2019 – Exclusion of paragraph #13 and update of paragraph #16
May, 2019 – Updated HRA and Inclusion of new paragraph.
November 2018- Updated HRA, modification in paragraph 12, inclusion of paragraph 16
August 2018 – New Contacts
May 2017 – Update of paragraph #8
January 2017 – Inclusion of new paragraph #8 and inclusion of information of contact of MDAT-GoG.
December 2016 – Update of the subject, addition of paragraph #13 and correction of phone number in Panama contact point.
May, 2016 – Correction in Africa and Red Sea places.
December, 2015- Inclusion of new paragraphs
August, 2014 – changes all throughout the circular
April, 2012 – Update of emails
February, 2012 – inclusion of new paragraph (point 2)
September, 2011

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

Maritime Ships Security Department
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