

Joint Maritime Information Center

JMIC INFORMATION NOTE 15_AUG_2024 (05) INCIDENT NUMBER 92

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES INVOLVING TANZANIA-FLAGGED VESSEL SIAM AND HONDURAS-FLAGGED VESSEL SUNNY OCEAN

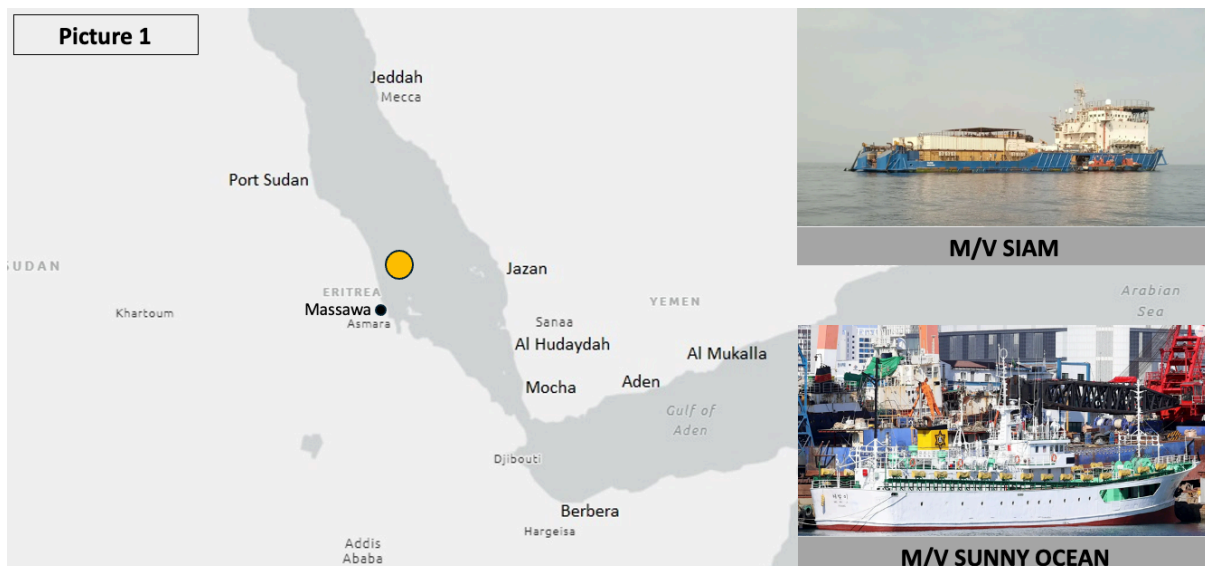
INCIDENT REPORT

Ref. UKMTO Incident Advisory 109

1. On 15th August 2024 there were two suspicious activities reported to the JMIC involving two different vessels:
 - 1) The first suspicious activity occurred at 10:10 UTC on the Tanzania-flagged vessel **SIAM** (IMO: 8637031)
 - 2) The second activity occurred on the Honduras-flagged vessel, **SUNNY OCEAN** (IMO: 9033995) at 12:45 UTC

Both incidents occurred while the vessels were stationary in the southern Red Sea, approximately 90 NM north-northeast of Massawa.

See **Picture 1** for incident location.





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2. The JMIC has confirmed that m/v SIAM and m/v SUNNY OCEAN were subject to suspicious activities.
 - 1) At 10:10 UTC, m/v SIAM was stationary with AIS OFF when approached by a small boat with 4-5 armed persons on board, operating near a small coastal freighter with more than 10 armed persons on board. The small boat and potential mother vessel left at 11:24 UTC without reported incident.
 - 2) At 12:45 UTC, m/v SUNNY OCEAN was stationary with AIS OFF when a speed boat (grey hull and outboard engine) with a machine gun together with a landing craft approached the vessel. When the boats closed in to less than 100 meters, m/v SUNNY OCEAN fired three warning shots. The small boats returned fire and claimed over the VHF radio that they were Eritrean Navy. m/v SIAM, which was in the vicinity of m/v SUNNY OCEAN, warned the small boats over the radio to stay back and that they were armed. Both small boats pulled away at 13:30 UTC without further incidents.

According to m/v SIAM, the small crafts were the same in both incidents.

The vessels and crew are reported safe.

3. The JMIC has investigated and found no linkages to US/UK/Israel.

It is worth noting that vessels loitering in the southern Red Sea may be subject to approaches or harassment and may consider staying well north of the northernmost identified incident area.

JMIC GUIDANCE

4. Freedom of navigation and the free flow of maritime commerce continue as a top priority while the Southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The current threat assessment identifies:

- a. Vessels with an Israeli, United States or United Kingdom association at highest risk
- b. Any vessel within a Group or Company fleet structure whereby the company has been identified making port calls to Israel



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5. **Vessels** intending to transit the threat area are recommended to exercise caution by applying the following:
 - a. Conduct a threat and risk assessment prior to entering the area
 - b. Review security measures/incorporate appropriate vessel hardening measures into their security plans
 - c. Turning off any form of non-essential emissions (e.g. intra-ship UHF/VHF transmissions) and AIS policy in the vicinity of, or before transiting or entering the threat area is to be very carefully considered as part of the voyage risk mitigation process, as broadcasting on AIS is assessed to aid Houthi targeting
 - i. While transmitting AIS may be consistent with SOLAS, it may compromise the safety & security of the vessel and crew
 - ii. If AIS is turned off, consider altering course and speed to minimize tracking by Dead Reckoning
 - d. Do not loiter when transiting the threat area and proceed with caution
 - e. If contacted by any unrecognized organization:
 - i. Report back to your company security officer and validate the source before responding
 - f. If contacted on VHF by “Yemeni Navy”:
 - i. Ignore the VHF call and continue passage if safe to do so
 - ii. Describe the incident in follow up reports to UKMTO
 - g. Share instances of suspicious activity with UKMTO (with recordings or imagery where possible)
 - i. UAV sightings
 - ii. Communications challenges
 - h. In case of unexploded ordnance and debris on deck:
 - i. Maintain a safe distance (as far away as practically possible) and cordon off the area
 - ii. Do not touch or try to dismantle any debris
 - iii. Be aware that any radio emissions may trigger the device
 - iv. Request assistance through UKMTO, ask for an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team (EOD)



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- i. Use of Best Management Practices (BMP) should be considered
 - i. Chain link fencing can be used to reduce the effects of an RPG
6. **Maritime Industry** is recommended to:
 - a. Conduct a threat & risk assessment of all associated vessels and especially those that may have previous USA, UK or Israel ownership or associations *[to include recent port calls by vessels within the company and/or group structure]*
 - b. Companies should plan and implement risk mitigation measures in advance of the furthest identified attack areas as depicted in the JMIC 'Overview of Incidents and Suspicious Activities' slide
 - c. If an association is made, shipping companies are recommended to provide the information to UKMTO prior to transiting the threat area
 - d. Ensure their managed vessels receive and follow the guidance for vessels
 - e. Review digital footprint
 - f. The JMIC is aware of increased email communication between unrecognized reporting entities and owners/operators
 - i. If contacted by any organization not officially recognized, report back to your company security officer and validate the source before responding
 - ii. Any response should be carefully considered
 - iii. Statements by Houthi forces to encourage merchant shipping to engage with the Houthi's Humanitarian Operations Coordination Centre (HOCC), or Yemeni Navy, should be disregarded and industry best practice and guidance should be followed in close communication with your company's CSO
 - g. Open-source claims that vessels are targeted may not be factual
 - i. JMIC recommends verifying source for legitimacy



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Additional Resources on Incident:

UKMTO Reporting Visit: <https://www.ukmto.org>

Email: watchkeepers@ukmto.org

Emergency Tel: +44 (0)2392 222060

Additional Resources on Industry Guidance:

BMP 5 – Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea:

<https://www.ics-shipping.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/bmp5-hi-res-min.pdf>

ATP – 02.1 NCAGS Guide to Owners, Operators, Masters and Officers:

https://shipping.nato.int/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=692&ver=2