



Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB) 025 (to IRTA 01 MAR 21)

Issued: 03 Jan 21

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- 1. Foreword.** This IRTB has been written by Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR). It is intended to help shipping operators who are responsible for merchant and large commercial fishing vessels that pass through or operate in the Gulf (in this specific incident), Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (GOA).
- 2. Purpose.** The purpose of an **Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB)** is to bring a specific incident or threat to the attention of the shipping industry in advance of the publication of our next quarterly Industry Releasable Threat Assessment (IRTA).
- 3. Incident.** Likely Limpet Mine discovered attached to vessel at anchor.
- 4. Date/time.** 310700Z Dec 2020
- 5. Location.** Iraqi Territorial Waters, IVO Al Bakr Oil Terminal (293300N / 0484700E)
- 6. Incident Description.** On 31 Dec 20 at 0700Z, the Liberian-flagged oil tanker MT POLA was conducting a ship-to-ship transfer with the MT NORDIC FREEDOM when a likely deliberately-placed Limpet Mine was discovered attached to the MT POLA's hull. The MT POLA had been at anchor at the KAZ anchorage, and arrived in the area in the beginning of November, therefore it is unclear at this point when the device was attached. As of 0940Z on 2 Jan the device had been successfully removed by an Iraqi Technical Team, images of the device can be seen below on the left with a likely example device on the right.



- 7. Comment.** This IRTB is based on information from multiple sources. CMF and EU NAVFOR will continue to investigate this incident and will issue a further report if necessary. This incident whilst outside of routine IRTB reporting areas (Red Sea and Gulf of Aden) may impact merchant traffic in other areas under CMF and EU NAVFOR responsibility.

8. **Assessment.** Although only a single device has been reported, we cannot discount that further devices have been attached to vessel that were in or are in this anchorage. Due to the STS we are currently unable to assess the depth at or below the water line at which the device was originally attached.

9. **Recommendations.** Vessels at anchor in the Gulf and Gulf of Oman are advised to maintain an enhanced lookout and security posture. If a vessel detects anything unusual attached to the hull, Masters are advised to consider to reduce the crew below waterline to the minimum, evacuate them from the immediate area and mustered in a safe and open place. Any vessel that has used the KAZ anchorage in the recent past, is recommended to check their hull as far as is possible. While these waters are routinely patrolled by CMF and other warships, the timely and comprehensive reporting of incidents and suspicious activity remains crucial to allow for a rapid incident response. We request that, where possible, and without endangering the vessel or crew, vessels obtain and report as much factual detail as possible of incidents and suspicious activity, to include event logs, photographs, video, and radar footage. Vessels are, in any event, requested to remain vigilant and to adhere to BMP5¹ when transiting the Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Southern Red Sea.

10. **Publication.**

- a. Produced by CMF and EU NAVFOR.
- b. Published by MSCHOA.

11. **Feedback.**

Enquiries about the content of this bulletin should be directed to CMF and EU NAVFOR;

CMF:

- I. **Tel:** 00973 1785 9629
- II. **Website:** www.combinedmaritimeforces.com
- III. **Email:** cmf_info@me.navy.mil

EU NAVFOR:

- I. **Tel:** 0033 (0) 298 220 220 // 0034 956 470534.
- II. **Fax:** 0033 (0) 298 220 171.
- III. **Website:** www.mschoa.org
- IV. **Email:** postmaster@mschoa.org

¹ <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/PiracyArmedRobbery/Documents/MSC.1-CIRC.1601.pdf>