



Date: 23rd October 2023

Circular no.: 0064C/TG/10/23

To: Ship owners/ Ship-operators & Ship-managers/ Masters/ Officers/ CSOs / SSOs/ Recognized Organizations/ Recognized Security Organizations/ Deputy Registrars.

Subject: Israel - Gaza Strip Crisis – Maritime Security Impact

PURPOSE:

The current Circular outlines maritime security measures recommended for all Togolese flagged vessels transiting the Mediterranean area near the Gaza Strip and/or calling Israel ports. The situation in Israel remains volatile and we recommend assessing all port calls in the country on a case-by-case basis. Appropriate measures should be incorporated into ship contingency plans.

BACKGROUND

Following the Israel-Gaza Strip Crisis that broke out on October 7th, 2023, all vessels must implement comprehensive security protocols and steer clear of the Mediterranean vicinity around the Gaza Strip. The port operations in the ports of Israel are limited, for which the Togo registered vessels that may call in these ports and their crews must remain in port until the Israeli authorities grant permission for departure. The Israeli port of Ashkelon and its oil terminal have been closed in the wake of the escalating conflict.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Due to the ongoing security situation in Israel, it is assessed that there is an increased risk for vessels operating in and around ports in Israel and its territorial waters. According to UN official information, the situation in Israel remains volatile and it is recommended that ship operators and their masters trading with Israeli ports carefully assess the risks involved in all port calls on a case-by-case basis. In particular, emphasis is attributed to:

- a. make frequent checks with local sources of information, e.g. vessel agents, local authorities, and/or P&I correspondent, to obtain the most up-to-date and reliable security information available at any given time,
- b. follow advice received from coastal & port authorities regarding applicable ISPS security levels, and
- c. review their relevant security and contingency plans and apply them accordingly.



SHORELEAVE FOR SEAFARERS

Owners and managers should also ensure that seafarers on vessels heading towards Israel are aware of any imminent security threats in the region. Decisions on crew shore leave should always be taken with the prevailing local security situation in mind.

SECURITY RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the above, commercial traffic has been threatened, therefore the recommendations listed below are strongly advised and, in addition to that any official document to be issued by the Israeli Authorities:

- a. Conduct a new ship- and voyage-specific threat risk assessment before entering any region where there has been an incident, or the threat has changed.
- b. After the risk assessment, review the Vessel Protection Plan, as prescribed by the ISM Code.
- c. Maintain a complete and vigilant watch on the bridge.
- d. Maintain strict surveillance of communications and establish communication with all approaching vessels. Do not allow small boats to approach or dock.
- e. Guarantee strict boarding controls.
- f. Install exterior lights where possible, provided they do not interfere with maintaining a safe lookout and install/use searchlights if available.
- g. Monitor relevant VHF and other communication channels.
- h. Check all fire-fighting equipment available for immediate use. Make sure the emergency fire pump is available if any maintenance is being undertaken.
- i. Keep the Automatic Information System (AIS) on.

LRIT & AIS USAGE

1. For safety & security-related considerations, the automatic identification system (AIS) and the LRIT must be always turned on except in those cases where the master considers that the security of the vessel could be compromised or when a security incident is imminent. Following the provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), in the same way, VHF Channel 16 must be monitored, and communication must be maintained at all times with local authorities.

2. In those cases that the Master / S.S.O. and the managing company decide and consider the switch off of the aforementioned equipment, they must notify and report the status of the ship and its crew in time intervals not exceeding 4 hours via email to the I.S.R. (Registrar for Togo flagged vessels- Mrs. Vera N. Medawar, E-Mails: administration@togoregistrar.com / verazervos@gmail.com).



P&I COVERAGE

Following official P&I open sources (<https://www.gard.no/web/articles?documentId=36097505>), as Israel is already included in the Joint War Committee's (JWC) Listed Areas for Hull War, Piracy, Terrorism, and Related Perils, it is also recommended conferring with the vessel's war insurer well in advance of arrival at any Israeli port.

Contact Information:

a) Registrar for Togo flagged vessels: Mrs. Vera Medawar: administration@togoregistrar.com / verazervos@gmail.com or +961-1-883794.


For the International Ship Registry
of Togo




Vera N. Medawar
Ship Registrar

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