



GERMAN NAVY SHIPPING CENTRE



Security Update Brief Persian Golf

(Timeframe 161200ZAPR – 231200ZAPR)

General Situation

The situation in the Persian Gulf remains highly dynamic. The ceasefire of April 8, 2026, was extended indefinitely by the U.S. President. Further talks regarding negotiations following the two-week ceasefire have not taken place so far. Shortly before the ceasefire was set to expire, the USA announced its indefinite extension. Iran has not officially agreed to this. Since April 8, 2026, there have been no direct airstrikes by U.S. forces or Iranian units. Nevertheless, the region remains highly volatile.

On April 13, 2026, US CENTCOM announced a blockade of all Iranian ports and coastal waters effective 1400 UTC the same day. This blockade was established east of the Strait of Hormuz (SoH) in the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea, and along the Iranian coastal waters. According to the U.S. Navy, this blockade affects all vessel transit through the SoH into Iranian coastal waters or to and from Iranian ports. Neutral vessels not calling at Iranian ports are reportedly not affected, but may be subject to searches by American forces. Already on Sunday (April 12, 2026), President Trump announced, according to various media reports (Deutsche Welle, CNN), that the blockade also affects all ships that have paid a passage fee to Iran.

On April 16, 2026, the naval blockade of Iran was expanded by U.S. forces to include sanctioned Iranian-flagged vessels and other ships with ties to Iran. In the course of this blockade, the U.S. Navy seized an Iranian vessel. The TOUSKA (9328900), an Iranian container ship, was rendered not under command on April 19, 2026, according to US CENTCOM (U.S. Central Command), following repeated warnings and shots into the engine room, and was subsequently boarded by U.S. MARINES.

Due to the expansion of the blockade, the tanker TIFANI (9273337) was also seized by U.S. forces on April 21, 2026. The tanker is alleged to be carrying Iranian oil.

A ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon has also been in effect since April 17, 2026. However, there have been repeated attacks by Israeli forces and Hezbollah. In response, Iran announced the opening of the SoH. The U.S. blockade of Iranian coastal waters and ports remained in place. Less than 24 hours after the announcement of an "opening" of the SoH by Iran, this was rescinded on April 19, 2026.

Iran views the U.S. blockade and the seizure of the two ships linked to Iran as a breach of the ceasefire. The USA, on the other hand, does not view the attacks on merchant vessels in recent days as a breach of the ceasefire, as these ships have no ties to the United States.

AIS and GPS remain a problem, but have been significantly reduced. Disruptions are occurring locally at specific key points. Nevertheless, further interference must be expected.





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Operational Overview

Since the beginning of the war, a total of 29 commercial vessels have been hit in the Persian Gulf, with some sustaining severe damage. Since the last security update brief on April 16, 2026, 6 ships have been attacked.

- SKYLIGHT (IMO 9330020): Chemical tanker (Palau). Hit on Feb 28 north of Khasab (OMN). 4 crew members injured; evacuation completed; vessel sank.
- MKD VYOM (IMO 9284386): Crude oil tanker (Marshall Islands). Hit on March 1 in the Gulf of Oman. Vessel is drifting and severely disabled; 1 confirmed fatality, unit evacuated. Heavy hull damage above the waterline and fire in the engine room.
- HERCULES STAR (IMO 9916135): Product tanker (Gibraltar). Hit on March 1, 20 nautical miles northwest of Dubai. Fire extinguished.
- STENA IMPERATIVE (IMO 9666077): Oil/chemical tanker (USA). Hit in the port of Muharraq (Bahrain). Fire extinguished; crew evacuated.
- GOLD OAK (IMO 9806342): Bulk carrier (Panama). Lateral hit on March 3 while at anchor in Fujairah (UAE).
- SAFEEN PRESTIGE (IMO 9593517): Container ship (Malta). Hit on March 4; projectile passed through the vessel; fire broke out. Crew abandoned ship. Further attack on March 18, fire broke out; no crew on board (since March 4).
- SONANGOL NAMIBE (IMO 9325049): Crude oil tanker (Bahamas). Hit on March 4 at anchor in Iraqi waters; water ingress and ballast water leakage.
- MUSSAFAH 2 (IMO 9522051): Tug (UAE). Hit on March 6 while en route to salvage the SAFEEN PRESTIGE; struck by two missiles. 4 dead, 3 injured.
- ARABIA III (IMO 8771332): Drilling rig (Liberia). Hit on March 7; fire under control, one injured, crew reduced to minimum.
- MAYUREE NAREE (IMO 9323649): Bulk carrier (Thailand). Hit on March 11; fire under control, 3 missing.
- STAR GWYNETH (IMO 9301031): Bulk carrier (Marshall Islands). Hit on March 11; punctures in cargo hold and ballast tank, vessel is listing.
- ZEFYROS (IMO 9515917): Oil/chemical tanker (Malta). Hit on March 11 during STS (ship-to-ship transfer) with SAFESA VISHNU; fire, one fatality.
- SAFESA VISHNU (IMO 9327009): Crude oil tanker (Marshall Islands). Hit on March 11 during STS with ZEFYROS; fire.
- SOURCE BLESSING (IMO 9243198): Container ship (Liberia). Hit on March 12; fire extinguished (German link).
- AL SALMI (IMO 9534793): Tanker (Kuwait): Hit on March 30, 2026; drone impact on the starboard side, resulting in fire.
- AQUA 1 (IMO 9573660): Tanker (Panama): Two hits on March 31, 2026; one explosion and one unexploded charge in the engine room; recovery of the explosive charge is underway.

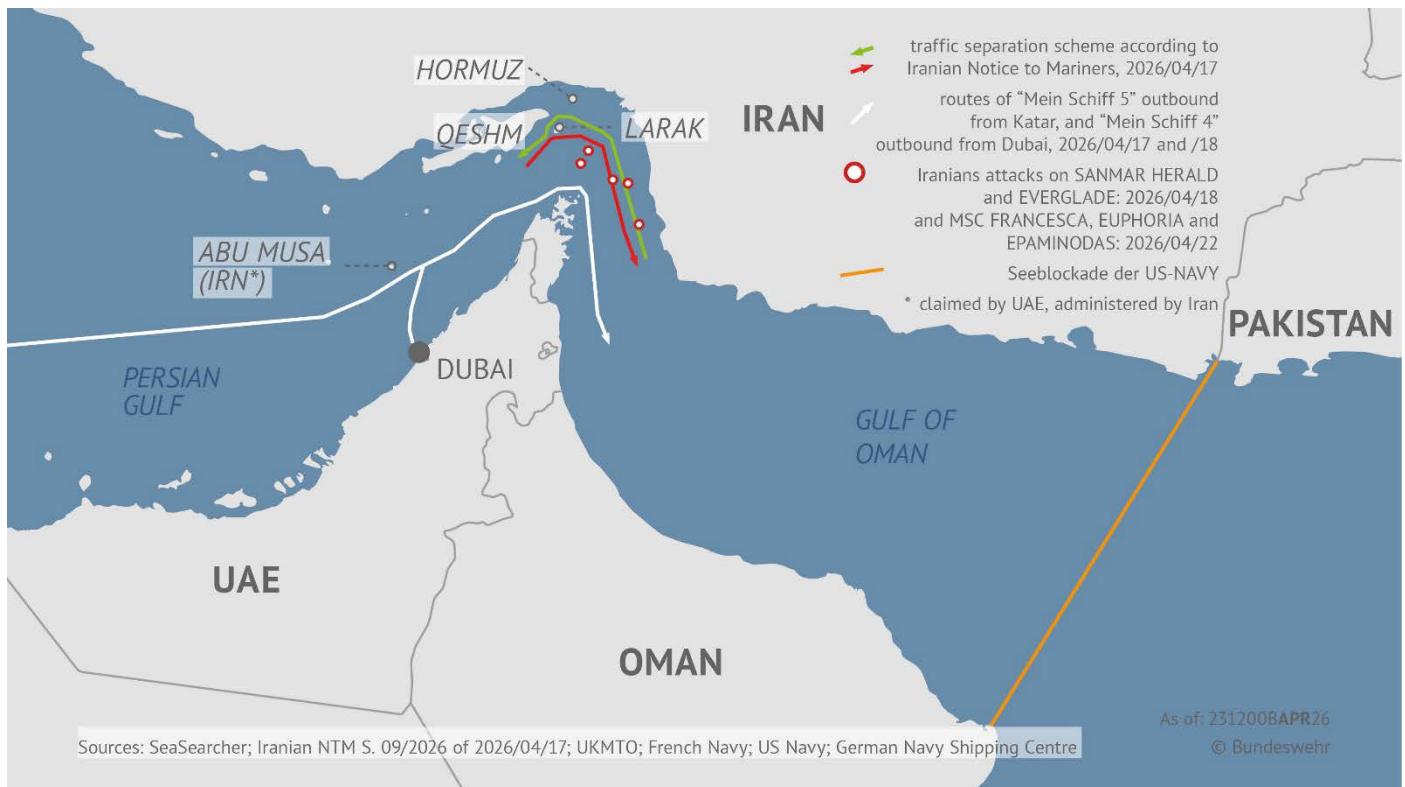




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- QINGDAO STAR (9318163): Container ship (Marshall Islands): Hit by an unknown projectile; damage sustained above the waterline.
- GOLD AUTUMN (9220483): Bulk carrier (Panama): Struck on April 7, 2026, by up to two missiles/drones 200 nm south of Pakistan. A fire broke out and the crew was rescued by Pakistan.
- SANMAR HERALD (9330563): Tanker (India): Attacked on April 18, 2026, by IRGC boats; small arms fire, damage to bridge windows.
- CMA CGM EVERGLADE (9894985): Container ship (France): Hit by a drone on April 18, 2026; damage to containers.
- MEIN SCHIFF 4 (9678408): Cruise ship (Malta), German connection: Observation of an impact in the water 150 m away; hailing via VHF.
- EPAMINONDAS (9153862): Container ship (Liberia): Fired upon on April 22, 2026, with RPGs and small arms; bridge heavily damaged.
- MSC FRANCESCA (9401116): Container ship (Panama): Fired upon on April 22, 2026; damage to hull and accommodation; vessel was also ordered to anchor by the IRGC via VHF.
- EUPHORIA (9235828): Container ship (Panama): Fired upon on April 22, 2026, by the IRGC; crew retreated to the citadel.



Following the transit of the cruise ship AROYA through the Strait of Hormuz on April 20, 2026, there are no longer any cruise ships remaining in the Persian Gulf.





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Infrastructure

Since April 16, 2026, there have been no attacks on port infrastructure or energy and water supply systems in the Persian Gulf littoral states.

Port Status

United Arab Emirates

Operations at the ports of Fujairah and Khor Fakkan are proceeding largely as normal, although Berth 6 remains closed due to maintenance work. Berths 4 and 5 are reserved for bulk carriers. The terminals in Jebel Ali, Hamriya, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, and Ruwais are also operational, though an additional risk surcharge is being levied in Ras Al Khaimah. Ruwais PPA is currently at ISPS Level 2, while all others remain at Level 1.

An official navigation warning (01/2026) indicates massive GPS interference off Fujairah, making the area a high-risk zone for navigation. Ship-to-Ship (STS) transfers in Dubai are currently only permitted at anchor with tug assistance. To provide logistical relief, a simplified customs procedure has been introduced, allowing for the direct onward transport of containers by truck from Fujairah and Khor Fakkan to Jebel Ali or Abu Dhabi. Dubai Airport has now resumed approximately 90% of its operations.

Kuwait

All ports are fully operational; there are no official reports of operational disruptions. However, the Coast Guard has suspended the issuance of entry permits for foreign vessels arriving from Iraqi ports until further notice. ISPS Level 2 is in effect for the ports of Shuaiba and Shuwaikh. The airspace has been temporarily closed.

Oman

All Omani ports are fully operational. Before entering, vessels must officially confirm that no dangerous goods are on board; otherwise, a detailed declaration and ministry approval must be awaited. For the port of Mina Al Fahal, a fully functional Doppler log is mandatory due to ongoing GPS interference; vessels without this system will not be granted mooring permission. ISPS Level 2 applies at the Qalhat LNG terminals and the Port of Salalah, while Level 1 is now in effect at Mina Al Fahal and all other ports. Airspace remains open, although some international flight connections have been discontinued.

Saudi Arabia

All ports in the country are operating at full capacity without restrictions or warnings. Emirates is currently not yet flying to Dammam, but other airlines (e.g., FlyDubai, Qatar Airways) continue to serve this airport.





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Bahrain

Shipping traffic in Bahrain has resumed; however, operations remain restricted due to the current situation. Specifically, BAPCO activities continue to be suspended. APM Terminals are back in operation from 06:00 to 18:00. Crew changes are possible again, and Bahrain International Airport is open. The security level remains unchanged at ISPS Level 1.

Qatar

In Qatar, the ports of Hamad, Doha, and Al Ruwais are operational but are experiencing significantly reduced activity levels. Furthermore, Al Ruwais is limited to small vessels. While port operations continue in Mesaieed and Ras Laffan, Qatar Energy has temporarily suspended the production of LNG and related products. The terminals at Al Shaheen and Halul Island remain closed.

To secure supply chains, goods destined for Qatar can be rerouted via alternative ports in Oman (Sohar, Salalah, Duqm) or the UAE (Fujairah, Khor Fakkan); for this purpose, Mwani Qatar has activated a special fee relief program ('Exceptional Package'). Since April 20, 2026, international airline flights to Hamad International Airport are being gradually reintroduced.

Source: INCHCAPE Middle East Port Advisory 23/04/2026

Impact on German Interests (DEU)

According to AIS data and consultations with shipping companies, there are approximately 130 vessels with German links in the Area of Interest (see annex), 47 of which are currently in the Persian Gulf.

The cruise ships MEIN SCHIFF 4 and MEIN SCHIFF 5 were able to transit the Strait of Hormuz on April 18, 2026, and have thereby left the Persian Gulf. During the passage, there was an impact of a projectile in the water approximately 150 m from MEIN SCHIFF 4; additionally, the vessel was hailed by Iran via VHF.





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Assessment

Despite the unilateral extension of the ceasefire by the U.S. on April 21, 2026, the current situation for shipping in the Persian Gulf and adjacent waters is characterized by a massive threat. The blockade of the SoH from the east, active since April 13, 2026, by the U.S. Navy—combined with the seizure of two Iranian vessels—is generating significant tensions between Iran and the USA. According to statements by the U.S. President, any payment made to Iran is considered grounds for blocking a vessel's further passage. Both Iran and the USA are threatening the use of force should their respective rules not be followed.

Furthermore, operational risks remain high due to technical interference. Although massive GPS manipulations have decreased across the area, the risk of a resumption of such disruptions remains. It is still assumed that Iran possesses a sufficient inventory of missiles and drones, particularly for attacks within the Persian Gulf. Additionally, the IRGC has clearly demonstrated its capabilities for attacks and vessel seizures over the past few days. The danger to shipping persists.

The Houthis in Yemen have announced a resumption of attacks against shipping but have not yet implemented them. They have confirmed, however, that attacks in the Red Sea may resume as soon as the Houthis deem them necessary. Furthermore, Iran has threatened to close the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait if deemed necessary and as long as the U.S. blockade of the SoH remains in place.

Conclusion

The threat level for vessels and crews has reached a complex stage. The official two-week ceasefire is no longer active. Ships are not only being attacked but are also being seized by both sides. Operationally, the situation remains critical due to the entrenched blockade and the attacks in the Strait of Hormuz.

The threat potential for the Persian Gulf and adjacent regions must continue to be assessed within the overall context as:

MARITIM RISK LEVEL - CRITICAL





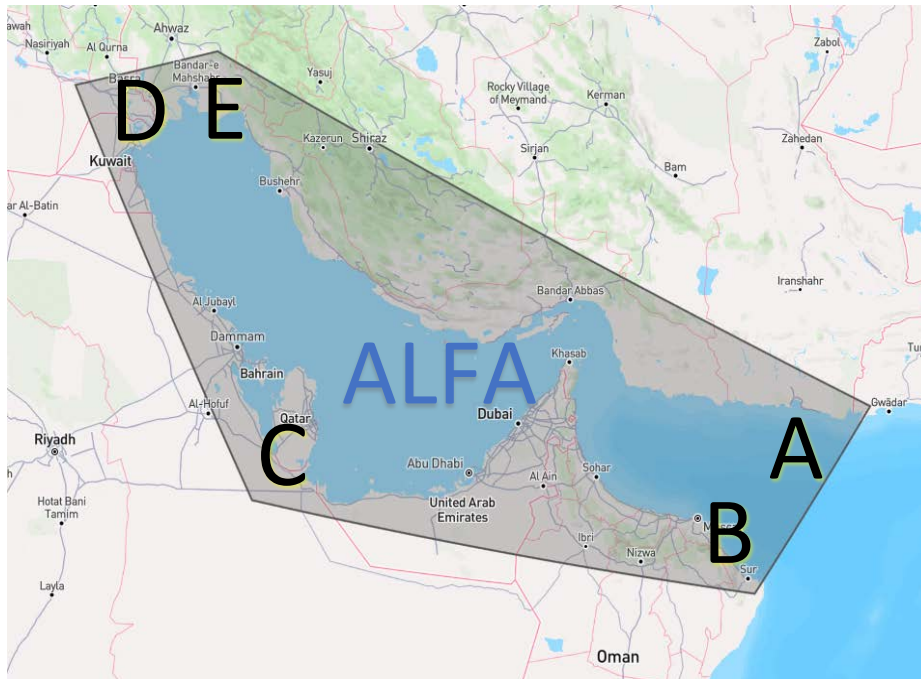
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Appendix

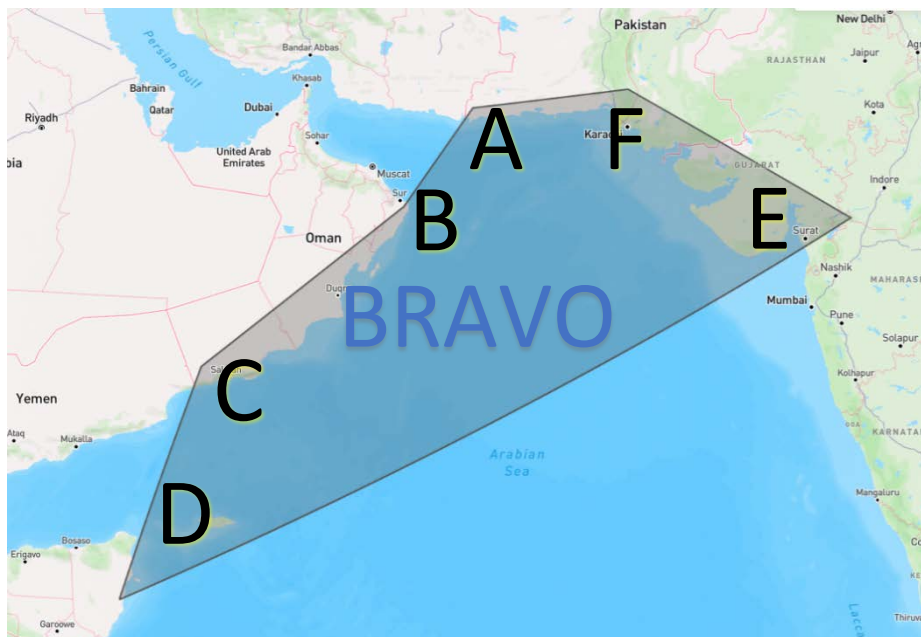
Area of Interest DEU NCAGS

Persian Gulf / Strait of Hormus / Golf of Oman:



- REF A: LAT: 25° 15' N LON: 61° 57' E
- REF B: LAT: 22° 18' N LON: 59° 37' E
- REF C: LAT: 23° 58' N LON: 50° 22' E
- REF D: LAT: 30° 31' N LON: 46° 50' E
- REF E: LAT: 31° 07' N LON: 49° 35' E

Arabian Sea NORTH:



- REF A: LAT: 25° 15' N LON: 61° 57' E
- REF B: LAT: 22° 18' N LON: 59° 37' E
- REF C: LAT: 17° 50' N LON: 53° 30' E
- REF D: LAT: 09° 59' N LON: 50° 48' E
- REF E: LAT: 21° 53' N LON: 74° 40' E
- REF F: LAT: 26° 03' N LON: 66° 39' E

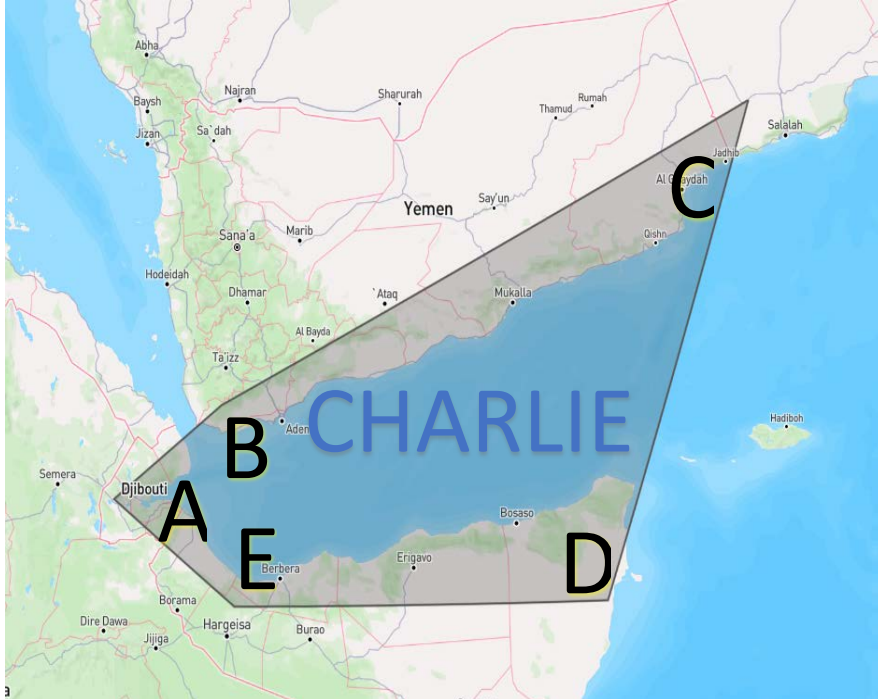




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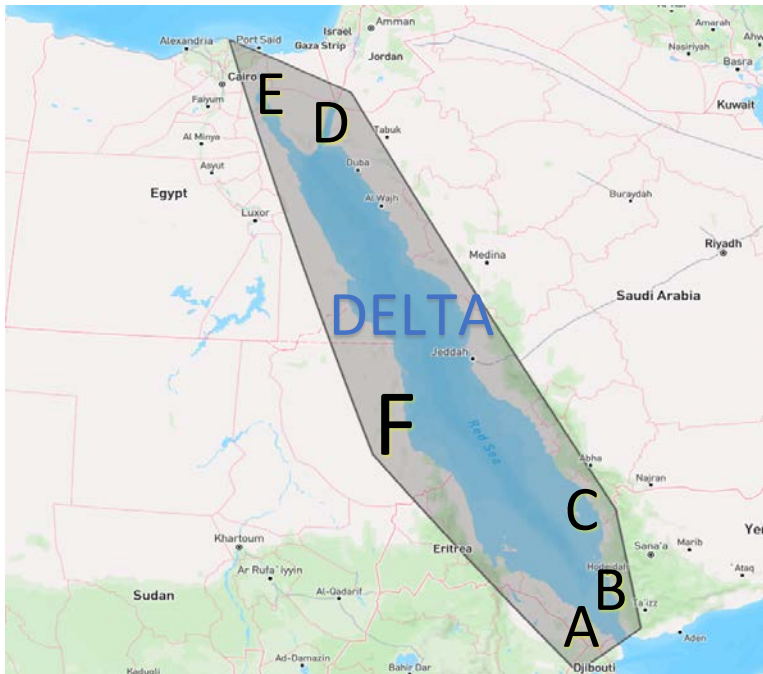


Gulf of Aden:



- REF A: LAT: 11° 37' N LON: 42° 05' E
- REF B: LAT: 12° 59' N LON: 43° 54' E
- REF C: LAT: 17° 50' N LON: 53° 30' E
- REF D: LAT: 09° 59' N LON: 50° 48' E
- REF E: LAT: 09° 55' N LON: 44° 07' E

Red Sea:



- REF A: LAT: 11° 37' N LON: 42° 05' E
- REF B: LAT: 12° 59' N LON: 43° 54' E
- REF C: LAT: 16° 50' N LON: 43° 12' E
- REF D: LAT: 29° 49' N LON: 35° 23' E
- REF E: LAT: 31° 31' N LON: 31° 17' E
- REF F: LAT: 18° 35' N LON: 36° 19' E

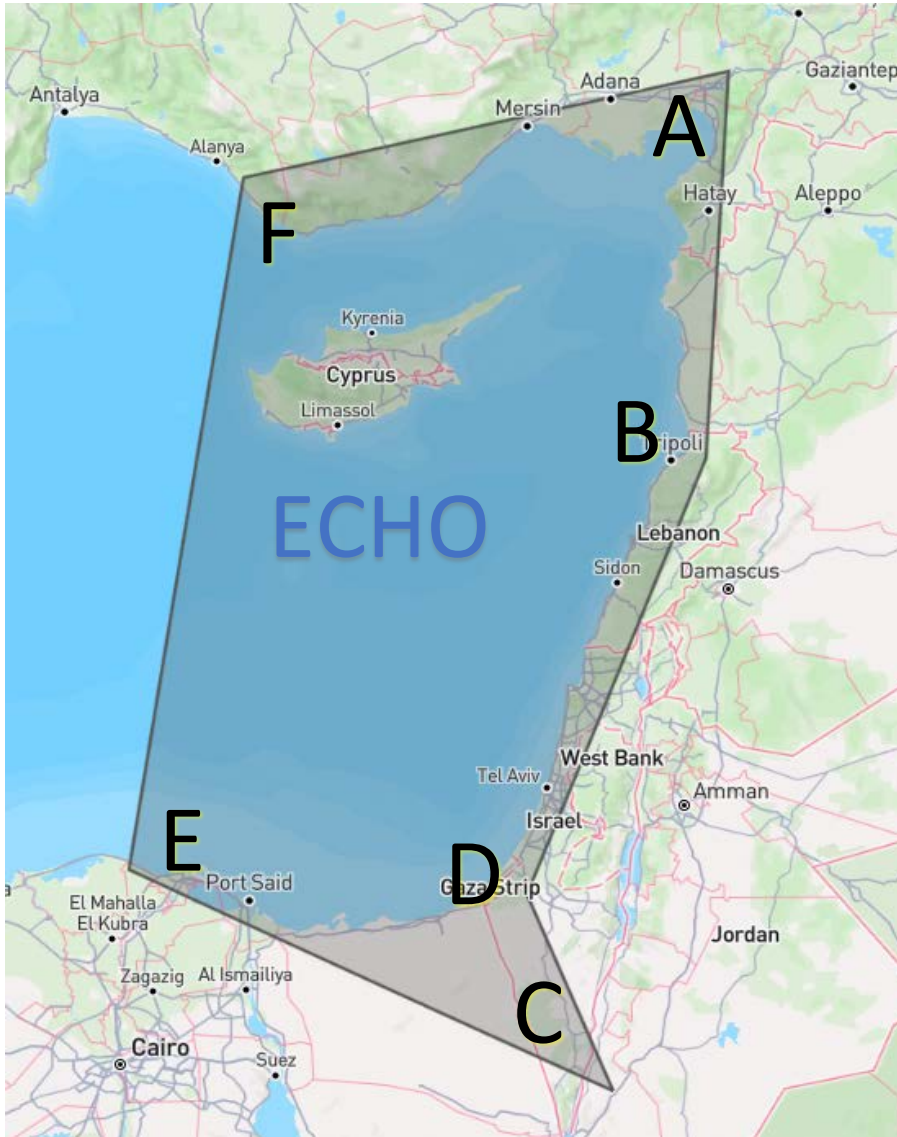
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GERMAN NAVY SHIPPING CENTRE



- REF A: LAT: 37° 10' N LON: 36° 19' E
- REF B: LAT: 34° 27' N LON: 36° 07' E
- REF C: LAT: 31° 18' N LON: 34° 37' E
- REF D: LAT: 29° 49' N LON: 35° 23' E
- REF E: LAT: 31° 31' N LON: 31° 17' E
- REF F: LAT: 36° 25' N LON: 32° 13' E

