



GERMAN NAVY SHIPPING CENTRE



Security Update Brief Persian Gulf

(Timeframe 131200ZMAY – 211200ZMAY)

General Situation

The situation in the Persian Gulf remains highly dynamic. Negotiations to end the war have stalled. On May 19, 2026, several media outlets reported that the U.S. President cancelled strikes planned for that day due to serious negotiations. On May 20, 2026, the IRGC threatened further reaching attacks should the U.S. strike Iran again. Nevertheless, the ceasefire—unilaterally announced by the U.S. and unconfirmed by Iran—remains active for now. During the last reporting period, there were again isolated drone attacks on the UAE. On May 17, 2026, the Barakah nuclear power plant was hit; a fire broke out, but no radiation leak occurred.

The U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports and coastal waters remains in effect. On May 19, 2026, American forces seized the tanker SKYWAVE between Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Previously, on May 14, 2026, Iran had also boarded the "research vessel" HUI CHUAN from its anchorage off Fujairah and brought it into Iranian waters.

On May 18, 2026, the U.S. Treasury Department extended the exemption for sanctioned Russian oil already on tankers for a third time for a period of 30 days.

Furthermore, the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon, which has been in place since April 17, 2026, is being repeatedly violated by both sides.

The danger posed by possible mines in the Strait of Hormuz cannot be ruled out. AIS and GPS interference persists, though it has been significantly reduced compared to March. The interference occurs irregularly and is localized.

Operational Overview

Since the beginning of the war, a total of 34 commercial vessels have been hit in the Persian Gulf, with some sustaining severe damage. Since the last security update brief on May 13, 2026, no confirmed attacks on merchant vessels occurred.

- 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.
- OCEAN ELECTRA (9402782): Product tanker (Liberia). Hit on March 1 by a drone or missile, no major damage.





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- 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).
- PELAGIA (9433626): Bulk carrier (Malta). Loud explosion and smoke observed near the vessel on March 3.
- LIBRA TRADER (9562673): Tanker (Marshall Islands). Hit by an unknown projectile on March 3, minor damage.
- 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.
- ONE MAJESTY (9424912): Container ship (Japan). Hit on March 11, damage to the vessel's stern above the waterline.
- 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, drone impact on the starboard side, resulting in fire.
- AQUA 1 (IMO 9573660): Tanker (Panama): Two hits on March 31, one explosion and one unexploded charge in the engine room; recovery of the explosive charge is underway.
- QINGDAO STAR (9318163): Container ship (Marshall Islands): Hit by an unknown projectile on April 7; damage sustained above the waterline.
- GOLD AUTUMN (9220483): Bulk carrier (Panama): Struck on April 7, by up to two missiles/drones 200 nm south of Pakistan. A fire broke out and the crew was rescued by Pakistan.





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- SANMAR HERALD (9330563): Tanker (India): Attacked on April 18, by IRGC boats; small arms fire, damage to bridge windows.
- CMA CGM EVERGLADE (9894985): Container ship (France): Hit by a drone on April 18; 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, with RPGs and small arms; bridge heavily damaged.
- MSC FRANCESCA (9401116): Container ship (Panama): Fired upon on April 22; damage to hull and accommodation; vessel was also ordered to anchor by the IRGC via VHF, seized by Iran.
- EUPHORIA (9235828): Container ship (Panama): Fired upon on April 22, by the IRGC; crew retreated to the citadel, was able to escape IRN seizure.
- BARAKAH (9902615): Tanker (Liberia): Hit on May 3, by an unknown projectile, likely drones, in the engine room and cargo hold; the crew has abandoned the ship.
- MINOAN FALCON (9605841): Bulk carrier (Liberia): Fired upon on May 3, by several small boats; damage to the bridge and superstructure.
- JV INNOVATION (9276688): Tanker (Marshall Islands): Hit on May 4, by an unknown projectile; reported by third parties; heavy damage to the hull.
- CMA CGM SAN ANTONIO (9294173): Container ship (Malta): Hit on May 5, by an unknown projectile; several injuries, some serious; the injured were evacuated to shore (German connection).
- SAFESEA NEHA (9563392): Bulk carrier (Marshall Islands). Hit on May 10, by a drone, fire was extinguished, light damage in the area of the quarterdeck.

The following potential attack has not yet been confirmed:

- MSV HAJI ALI (LLI NO 13630964): General cargo (livestock). On May 13, an onboard explosion (allegedly initiated by a drone) resulted in a fire and significant water ingress. The crew was successfully rescued by the Omani Coast Guard.

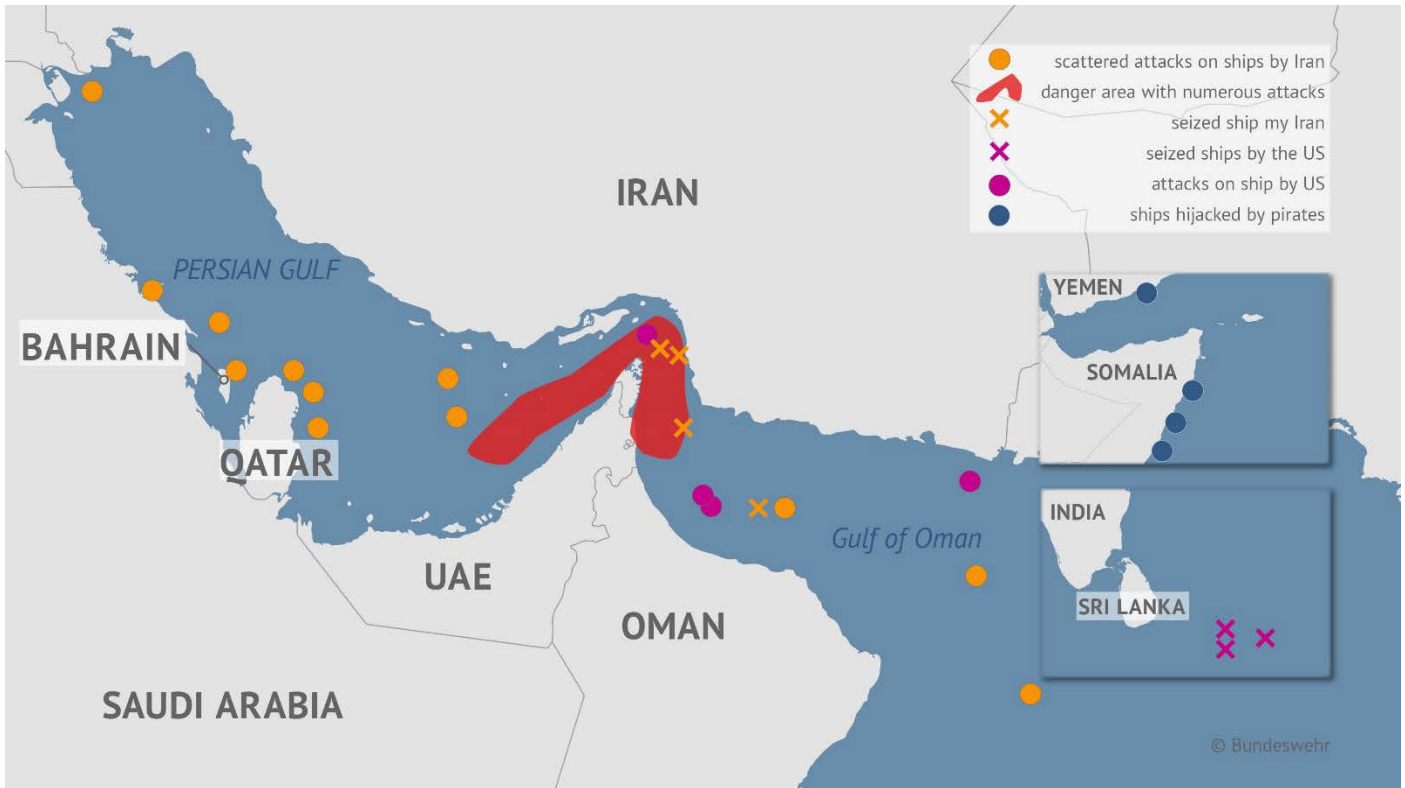
With the SKYWAVE, the USA has seized a total of three vessels in the Indian Ocean, alongside the MAJESTIC X and TIFANI, as part of the naval blockade of Iran. Additionally, four vessels (TOUSKA, HASNA, SEASTAR III, and SEVDA) have already been attacked by the USA to enforce the naval blockade.

In addition to the HUI CHUAN, Iran continues to hold the JIN LI, EPAMINONDAS, and the MSC FRANCESCA seized.





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As in the previous reporting period, the vessels EUREKA, HONOUR 25, and SWARD remain in the hands of Somali pirates. The map also indicates the location of the hijacking of the dhow FAHAD-4, which has since been released. The weather forecast for the Somali Basin, the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Gulf for the coming days remains favourable for small boats and thus for pirate attacks. The alert level for the Somali coast and the Somali Basin remains: SEVERE.

Infrastructure

There were no successful attacks on ports or maritime infrastructure during the last reporting period.

Port Status

United Arab Emirates

Operations at the ports of Fujairah and Khor Fakkan are largely normal, even following the attacks on May 4, 2026. Berth 6 remains closed for maintenance. Berths 4 and 5 are reserved for bulk carriers. Currently, bulk, breakbulk, general cargo, and Ro-Ro vessels must expect waiting times of up to three weeks. The VOPAK and ADNOC SPM terminals are operational. The Khor Fakkan Container Terminal is in expanded operation with 6 berths. Here, a waiting time of four weeks must be expected for bulk, breakbulk, general cargo, and Ro-Ro ships.





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Terminals in Jebel Ali, Hamriya, Sharjah, Khalifa, Abu Dhabi, and Ruwais are also functional, though an additional risk surcharge is levied in Ra's al-Khaimah. Ruwais PPA is at ISPS Level 2, all others at Level 1. An official navigation warning (01/2026) points to 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 ease logistical pressure, a simplified customs procedure has been introduced, allowing the direct onward transport of containers by truck from Fujairah and Khor Fakkan to Jebel Ali or Abu Dhabi. Dubai Airport has meanwhile resumed 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 was partially reopened on April 26, 2026.

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 1 is in effect at all ports in Oman. 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.

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.





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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 21/05/2026

Impact on German Interests (DEU)

According to AIS data and consultations with shipping companies, there are approximately 158 vessels with German links in the Area of Interest (see annex), 46 of which are currently in the Persian Gulf. In total 3 ships with German interest have been attacked.

Assessment

The current situation for shipping in the Persian Gulf and adjacent waters continues to be characterized by a massive threat. The ceasefire, unilaterally declared by the USA and unconfirmed by Iran, is currently holding. Nevertheless, both countries appear to have plans ready for renewed attacks. Furthermore, it remains unforeseeable when, how, or if the two countries can agree on an end to the war. The US Navy's naval blockade also remains active in preventing Iranian ships from breaking through.

In addition, the operational risk from technical disruptions remains high. Even though the massive GPS spoofing across the entire sector has decreased, a risk of a resumption of disruptions remains.

Furthermore, it is assumed that Iran still possesses sufficient missiles and drones, especially for attacks in the Persian Gulf. In addition, the IRGC clearly expressed its capabilities and willingness for attacks last week. The danger to ships remains.

Conclusion

The threat level for vessels and crews remains complex. Operationally, the situation remains critical due to the established blockades and the possibility of further 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





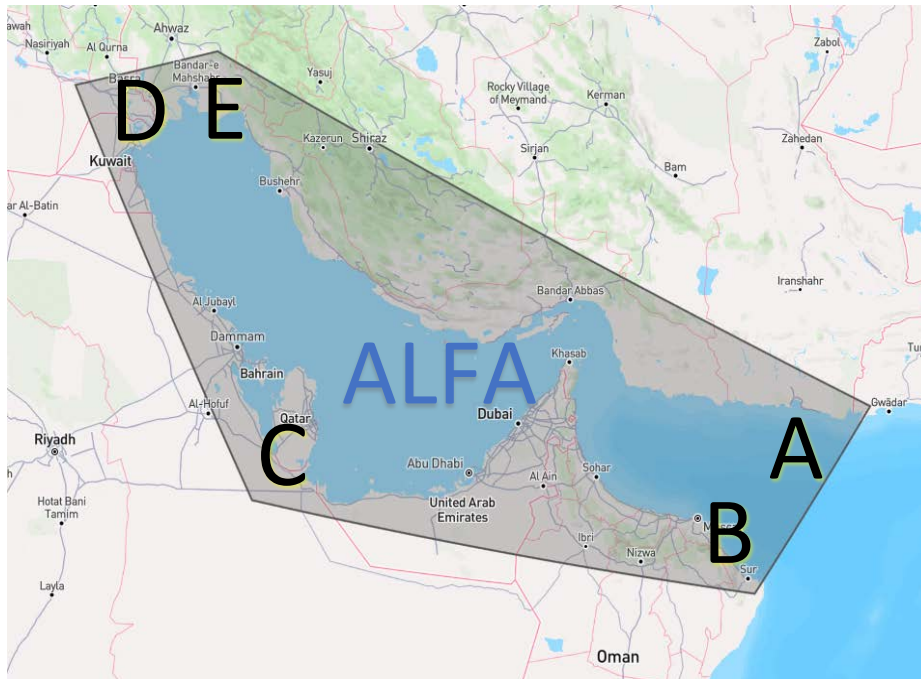
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Appendix

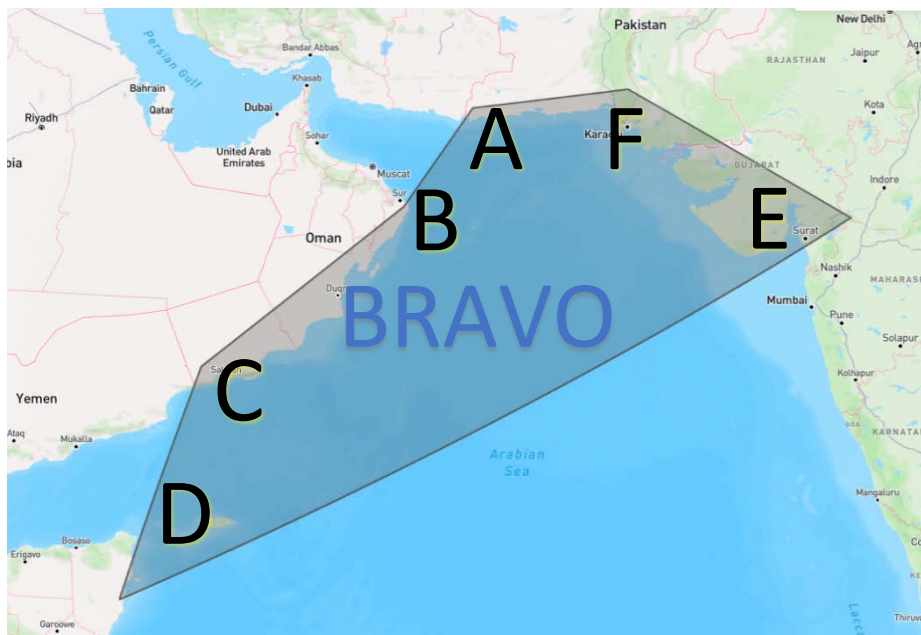
Area of Interest DEU NCAGS

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

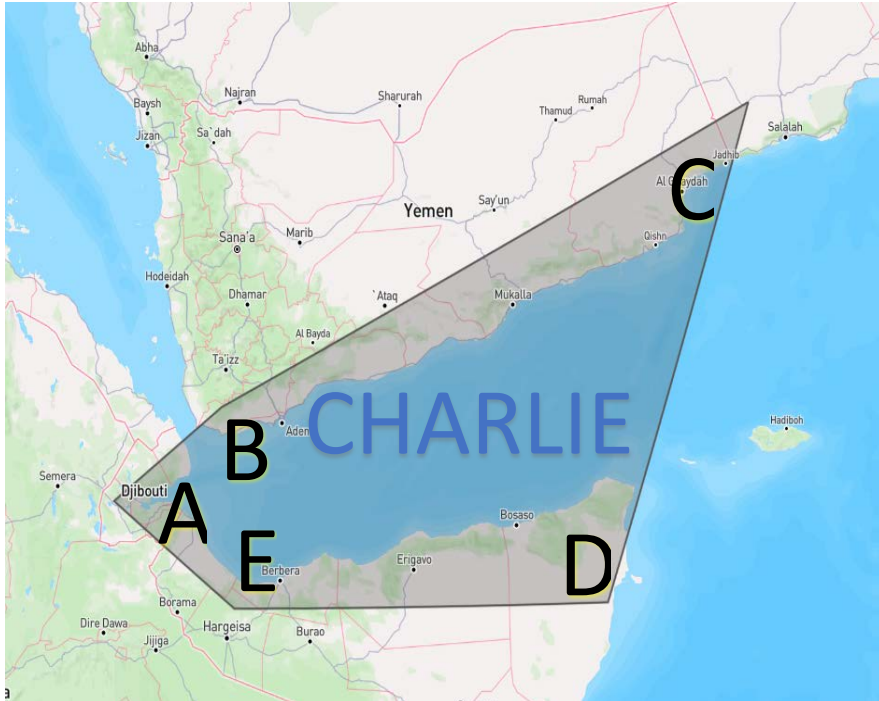




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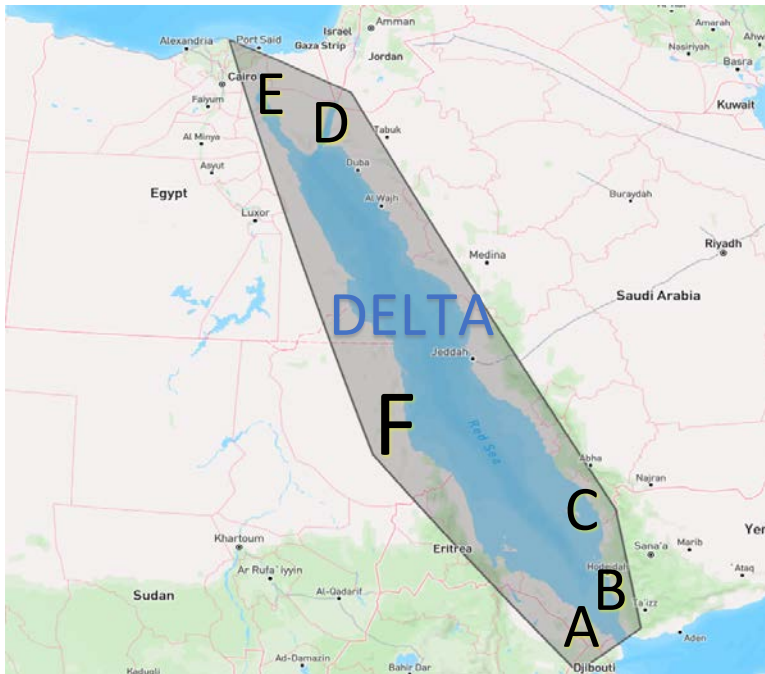


Gulf of Aden:



- 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

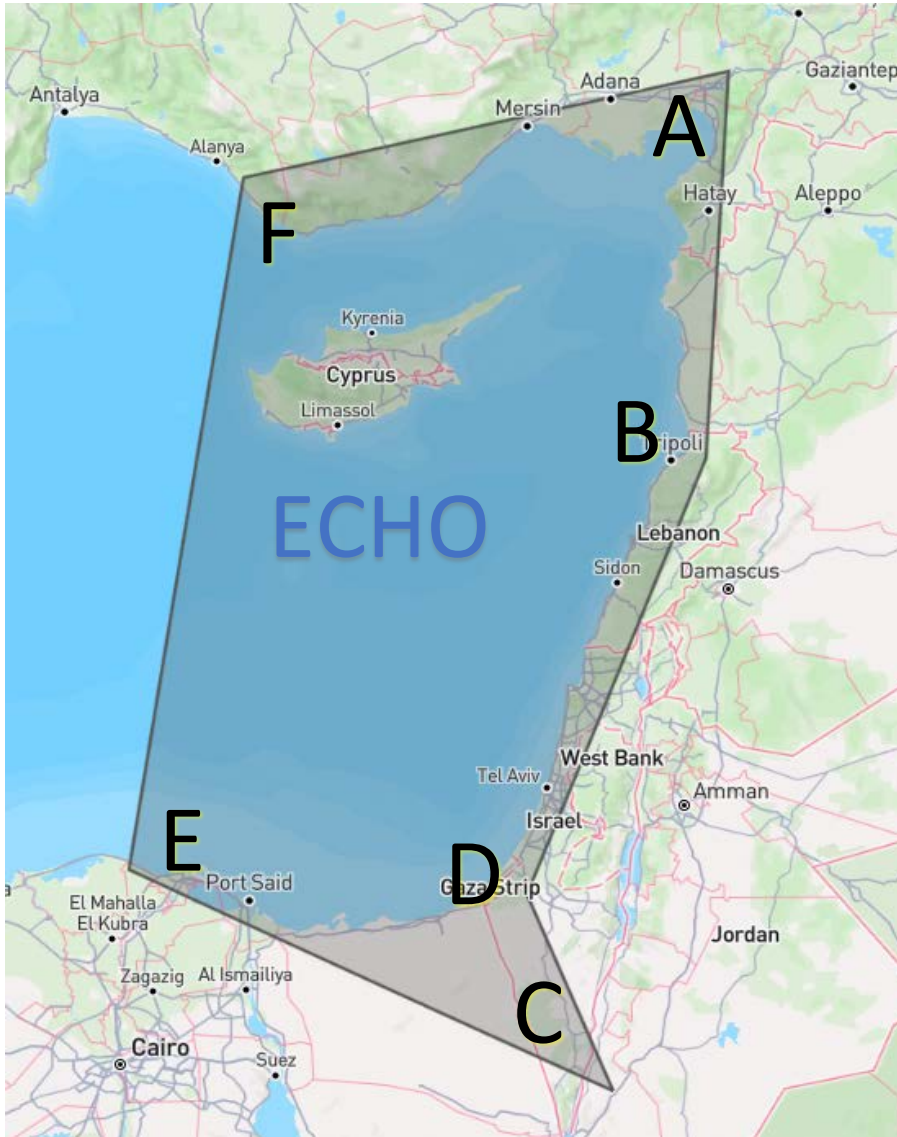
Mediterranean Sea EAST:

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 24/7 MSZ Cuxhaven Verbindungselement Marine





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

