

MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY NO. 02-2023

**To: DEPUTY REGISTRARS, SHIP OWNERS/ ISM OPERATORS /
RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS/ SHIPPING AGENTS /GENERAL
SAFETY INSPECTORS**

Subject: WARNING ON THE ISRAEL-GAZA CONFLICT

Date: 18 October 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Advisory is to inform ship owners/operators of the safety aspect when transiting the Mediterranean Sea (Levantine Sea) due to the existing war that has been occurring between the Israelis and the Hamas (Palestinian militant group) of Gaza.

BACKGROUND

The Israelis and the Hamas of Gaza have been at war since 2006. There have been sporadic clashes since the beginning of 2023, but recently in October 2023, Hamas launched a devastating and coordinated land, sea and air assault on Israel causing major chaos in the region.

CURRENT SITUATION



The map above shows the Gaza Strip (area in red) which is ruled by the Palestinian militant group, Hamas. The coast and waters situated directly in front of Gaza should be kept at a clear distance for Belize flagged vessels due to the Israel-Hamas War.



On October 7th, 2023, Hamas organized a surprise attack on Israel, killing hundreds of people and thousands were badly injured. This attack marked the deadliest assault Israel has every suffered in generations and their Prime Minister declared their country at war.

Israel has imposed a complete blockade on the Gaza Strip and stopped the supply of electricity, food, water, and fuel of their people. This ensuing conflict has now escalated, raising concerns about human life as well as multiple sectors, including the maritime industry. The conflict could also impose a severe maritime security risk in the Gaza Strip Area, and vessels have already been advised to change their routes and voyage plans.

NEW DIRECTIVE

The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) hereby advises the vessel's Management Companies, Charterers, Owners, and Crew of the Maritime Industry of the war happening between Israel and Gaza. Our administration recommends that all ship owners bring awareness to vessels entering the Mediterranean Sea and for the crew onboard these vessels to exercise caution when traversing near Egypt, Suez, Israel, and Lebanon. We strongly advise our vessels to keep a safe, clear distance and stay as far as practicable from the Gaza Strip and to be extremely vigilant when entering the Levantine Sea (the easternmost part of the Mediterranean Sea).

For our Belize flagged ships that are required to operate closer to the coast of the Gaza Strip, Cairo and that channel their way through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea, we recommend the following information:

- Stay in close contact with local port authorities and ship's agent correspondents to obtain the most up-to-date and reliable information available at any given time.
- To heighten the security level for our ships in the Mediterranean Sea, meaning that ships must implement additional protective measures in accordance with the Ship Security Plan (SSP) if necessary, in this region, and maintain contact with our administration.
- To report and record security incidents in the ship's security logbook and ensure protective measures are incorporated into the ship security plans.
- To use the Maritime Security Guidelines as a tool to educate your crew and protect the vessel against both internal and external threats that may occur in the area.
- To inform our administration when near the Levantine Sea and having to transit the Suez Canal by means of email. Also, to notify our administration when the ship has left the conflict area for us to be aware that the ship is clear of any risk.

For vessels previously trading in this region:

- Note that the port of Ashdod, Israel is currently operating in “emergency mode” status.
- The port of Ashkelon, Israel (used mostly by tankers) is not operating.
- The Israeli Navy control all the sea traffic and conduct routine patrols; and have made it clear that they will prevent any vessels attempting to breach the restrictions in this area.
- No Belize flagged vessel is allowed to call to any of the ports listed above until further notice.

For the safety of the vessel, ensure that the LRIT and AIS are always operational as per [MMN-19-005r1](#). If there is any blockage in the region, a prompt notification shall be submitted for close monitoring of the safe passage of the ship.

We anticipate your cooperation and assistance in this regard and look forward to receiving confirmation of this email.



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