

MEMBER ALERT



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WARLIKE OPERATIONS AREA IN THE GULF OF ADEN

An emergency meeting of the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) Warlike Operations Area Committee was convened in Singapore on October 7, 2008 in view of the rising number of attacks on merchant ships in the Gulf of Aden. The circumstances of recent attacks and the deployment by naval services to provide protection were discussed at length.

There was common ground that the increase in the number of attacks and the number of seafarers currently held hostage were deeply disturbing. The IBF welcomed the establishment of a Maritime Security Patrol Area in the region to bring greater security to seafarers serving on ships transiting the Gulf of Aden.

In 2005, the IBF had agreed to a 'warlike operations area' situated off the northern coast of Somalia. This remains in effect. In recognition of the hazards facing seafarers during passage through the Gulf of Aden, it was agreed that an IBF High Risk Area should be established. It comprises the following coordinates:

12 degrees 13 minutes North	15 degrees 22 minutes North
43 degrees 39 minutes East	53 degrees 10 minutes East
11 degrees North	14 degrees 10 minutes North
44 degrees 05 minutes East	54 degrees East

Within the IBF High Risk Area, the channel established as a Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) was recognized as offering a higher degree of protection to ships and seafarers than that afforded in other parts of the Gulf of Aden. In view of this, Members are encouraged to use this channel for their vessels transiting the area, thereby strengthening the effectiveness of the security offered by naval patrols.