

***Notifications 202303
Thursday, November 16, 2023***

Israel-Gaza conflict: Impact on shipping

Dear Members:

UPDATED 27 OCTOBER 2023

The situation in Israel and Gaza 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.

At the time of writing, and despite growing fears of a widening war, the majority of the fighting is reported to take place in the southern part of Israel. According to our local correspondents, Ashkelon port is in principle closed, but permission to berth or discharge cargo while moored at the port's anchorage may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Ashdod port is still in operation but is working in emergency mode and applies strict entry procedures for vessels carrying hazardous materials. While other Israeli ports, including Haifa, Hadera and Eliat, are currently reported to be operating normally, vessels diverted from the southern Israeli ports may cause congestions and delays, particularly in Haifa. However, as the situation continues to evolve, the status of Israeli ports can also change. The correspondents further advise that vessels operating in Israeli waters may encounter GPS interference and should account for this when navigating the area.

Advice is likely to evolve quickly

The situation in Israel remains volatile and we recommend ship operators and their masters trading to Israeli ports to carefully assess the risks involved in all port calls on a case-by-case basis and:

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

As an example, on 10 October 2023 the Norwegian Maritime Authority raised the security level to MARSEC 2 for all Norwegian flagged vessels operating in Israeli territorial waters and the area outside the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, vessels anchored outside this area were instructed to assess the risk of collateral damage and take necessary precautions. The Liberia Maritime Authority did the same on 13 October 2023 and requested that all Liberian flagged vessels calling at Israeli ports implement MARSEC security level 2.

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 leaves should always be taken with the prevailing local security situation in mind.



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As Israel is already included in the Joint War Committee's (JWC) Listed Areas for Hull War, Piracy, Terrorism and Related Perils, we also recommend conferring with the vessel's war insurer well in advance of arrival at any Israeli port.

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