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▶ Warning to vessels operating in or near to Libyan waters

16 January 2015

To all Members,

Libya remains in a state of conflict, following the outbreak of Civil War in May 2014. Vessels transiting the Mediterranean are therefore advised to avoid Libyan waters, and vessels due to call at ports in Libya should exercise caution before doing so. Some parts of the country remain under the control of government forces, but many areas are now ruled by Islamic militia and other anti-government groups. As a result, it has become clear that commercial ships calling in Libya face a real risk of being subjected to military attack.

Commercial vessels have recently been attacked by military aircraft in the ports of Derna and Misrata, leading to significant damage and crew fatalities. On 9 January 2015, the Libyan Air Force is reported to have issued a notice stating that *any* vessels approaching the port of Misrata would be subjected to airstrikes. It has now been reported that, earlier today (16 January 2015), an oil tanker approaching the port of Benghazi was bombed. The Libyan National Army has claimed responsibility for the attack in Benghazi.

We have [attached the latest update](#) from the International Chamber of Shipping on this subject, for Members' reference. The Club would advise any Members navigating in or near to Libyan Waters to speak to their P&I and War Risk Underwriters if they have any queries on the above.

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15 January 2015

To: MARINE COMMITTEE

MC(15)02

Copy: All Full and Associate Members (for information)

AIRSTRIKES AGAINST SHIPPING IN LIBYAN PORTS AND SECURITY IN SUEZ CANAL

Action required: Members are invited to note information provided on the threat of airstrikes against shipping in Libyan Waters and to advise the Secretariat of any additional information or guidance on the situation of which they may be aware.

It has been reported that the Commander of the Libyan Air Force has declared that (effective 9th January) airstrikes will be carried out against ships calling at the port of Misrata. Along with the airstrike of 5 January which killed two seafarers on board the oil tanker Araevo and a reported attack in the last two days, the declaration represents a significant security concern to ships operating in and near to Libyan waters.

The continued conflict between rival factions in Libya limits the ability of Government forces to clearly differentiate between legitimate threats and innocent vessels. Coupled with the presence of armed militant groups in coastal regions, there is an increased risk of commercial ships being attacked.

ICS has learned that 'vessels transiting through the Mediterranean are advised to remain clear of Libyan waters. Vessels intending to call at Misrata are advised to contact port and flag State authorities and local shipping agents for further instructions'.

The Secretariat has been advised that some flag Administrations have issued notices to the effect that shipowners should carefully consider whether to continue with scheduled calls at Libyan ports given the change in the security situation. Notices pertaining to the situation are uploaded to the NATO Shipping Centre Website:

<http://www.shipping.nato.int>

to which reference should be made on a regular basis.

ICS strongly recommends that shipowners should contact the P&I Club and War Risk Underwriters for further advice on each specific voyage.

ICS has also been made aware of an increased risk of attack on merchant traffic in the approaches to, and in, the Suez Canal. The recent hijacking of an Egyptian warship indicates a capability on the part of militants in the Sinai Peninsula to operate in the maritime environment and to attack maritime targets, and along with the rocket attack against the Cosco Asia in 2013 indications are that a threat may exist to commercial shipping in the area. As such, the general advice must be to exercise increased caution and maintain vigilance particularly when ships are waiting in the approaches to the Canal.

Members are requested to note the above, and advise ICS of any information or guidance on the situation of which they may be aware.

John Stawpert
Manager (Environment and Trade)