



Press Release: Djibouti Code of Conduct - Response to recent attacks against commercial shipping in the Red Sea

The DCoC acknowledges the [statement](#) issued by Mr. Kitack Lim, Secretary General to the International Maritime Organization, on maritime security challenges along the Red Sea and his directive for Member States to “work together to ensure unhindered and safe global navigation, everywhere, as a prerequisite for maintaining the world's supply chains, in line with the framework of the Djibouti Code of Conduct.”

Following the SG’s remarks, Mr. Metse Ralephenya, South Africa’s national focal point and Chair of the DCoC Steering Committee, voices serious concerns over the recent attacks on merchant shipping operating in the Red Sea.

The Chair reiterates the SG’s remarks made on 12 December 2023 that such attacks are unacceptable; and that ships, cargoes and seafarers must be protected at all times.

The Steering Committee represents the 20 signatory States to the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, 2009 (Djibouti Code of Conduct) and the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, 2017 (the Jeddah Amendment).

The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are vital shipping lanes upon which the global economy depends. Any threat to shipping transiting this area is not only a threat to economies in the region but also to the wider global economy and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Denial of the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea route to merchant shipping will require ships to transit the Cape route with significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions, cost, and disruption to global supply chains.

It was in response to such a threat that in 2009, 20 countries from the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden area concluded the Djibouti Code of Conduct. Actions taken pursuant to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, coupled with actions by naval forces, implementation of self-protection measures by merchant shipping and effective civil/military cooperation, led to the containment of Somalia-based piracy.

Building on the success of the Djibouti Code of Conduct, in 2017 the Jeddah Amendment expanded the scope of the Code. Signatory States to the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct declared their intention to cooperate to the fullest possible extent in the repression of transnational organized crime in the maritime domain, maritime terrorism, and other illegal activities at sea.

The Steering Committee calls upon:

- The Security Council of the United Nations to act with resolution on this matter in the same way that it addressed piracy off the coast of Somalia, including calling for additional naval units to provide security in the area;



- International naval forces operating in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden area to coordinate their activities provide enhanced security including counter missile and drone protection for merchant ships;
- Ship operators to ensure that all appropriate self-protection measures are implemented on board their ships, taking into account the guidance given by IMO and the industry, including the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code and Best Management Practices;
- Merchant ships transiting the area to maintain close liaison with security forces and to follow their directions and guidance;
- Djibouti Code of Conduct signatory States to proactively contribute to maritime situational awareness and maritime law enforcement in support of international efforts; and
- Border control and security authorities in Djibouti Code of Conduct signatory States to enhance action to stem the flow of weapons to combatant parties.

An extraordinary meeting has been scheduled on 18 December 2023 for signatory States, international security forces and other supporting partners, with a view to further discuss maritime security related interventions to make, over the incidents that have occurred within the Red Sea in the preceding days.

Additional information or follow-up will be provided where necessary, after this meeting.
