

Two bulkers report suspicious approaches in Gulf of Aden

Incidents occurred within a few miles of each other on consecutive days

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By [Gary Dixon](#)  

Two bulkers have reported suspicious approaches by smaller vessels in the Gulf of Aden.

The incidents occurred within 4 nautical miles (7 km) of each other on 13 and 14 January.

Security consultancies Dryad Global and Ambrey reported that both ships were heading eastbound about 34 nautical miles (63 km) north-west of Pointe A in the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC).



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The first instance involved a Liberian-flagged panamax approached by two skiffs that are understood to have altered course and approached the vessel.

Embarked security are understood to have shown weapons and the skiffs stopped their approach, Dryad said.

A second incident was reported south-east of this location. A container vessel was approached by one skiff with four people on board.

Ladder spotted on boat

A ladder and plastic barrels were spotted on the craft, which approached to within 0.2 nautical miles, Ambrey said.

"The embarked armed security team fired warning shots and the skiff broke off its approach," the company added.

The vessel and crew were reported to be safe.

The bulker was underway at 11.2 knots from Gdynia in Poland to Dammam, Saudi Arabia, with an estimated 7.1m freeboard.

Last year, there were eight incidents involving a suspicious approach within the western Gulf of Aden, Dryad added.

In three incidents, warning shots were fired and in one case weapons were shown but no shots fired.

Only once in 2020 were ladders recorded as sighted.

"Throughout 2020 no vessel was approached consistently, or any attempted boarding made," the company said.



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