

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL REGION

GCC Weekly Intelligence

07 September 2026

Actionable Intelligence – Regional Protection



Executive Summary

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

The regional conflict has entered a more dangerous maritime phase following the 5 September exchange in the Strait of Hormuz. U.S. Central Command forces struck three Iranian crude-oil carriers after the IRGC launched ballistic missiles toward two U.S. Navy warships operating in regional waters. CENTCOM stated it "permanently disabled" two Iranian oil tankers and "completely destroyed" another, while neither U.S. vessel was hit and no servicemembers were injured — though the apparent targeting of an aircraft carrier marks a notable provocation.

MARITIME SECURITY UPDATE – ARABIAN GULF / STRAIT OF HORMUZ / GULF OF OMAN

CENTCOM has revised its cumulative interdiction figures upward: 87 vessels redirected, three disabled, and two boarded, as of [date/time]. This marks a significant increase from the three redirections reported as of 1 September. USS JOHN PAUL JONES (DDG-53) continues to provide supporting presence around the area of operations.

JMIC Update 093 maintains the Strait of Hormuz threat level at **SEVERE**.

Implications for maritime and resilience planning: Iran retains a layered threat mix of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, UAVs and coastal weapons capable of forcing U.S. commanders to sustain layered defences, even unsuccessful attacks impose costs by consuming defensive munitions, raising surveillance burdens, and constraining manoeuvre. The unresolved nature of the exchange indicates the confrontation is shifting toward a broader contest over maritime access, targeting persistence, and economic endurance in the strait, where a confirmed hit on a warship or major commercial vessel could trigger substantial further escalation.

The move from asymmetric/economic pressure to direct strikes on naval assets and merchant tonnage raises the risk profile for all commercial traffic transiting the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman. Expect continued Iranian rhetoric on retaliation, elevated risk of further tanker strikes (Iranian or Iran-linked), and a lower threshold for miscalculation between U.S. and IRGC naval forces.

The current situation does not represent a strategic resolution for either side. Both the US and Iran have demonstrated escalatory capability, but neither has achieved dominance over the other.

Assessment:

- U.S. capability demonstrated: The US has shown it can inflict direct, physical damage on Iranian oil-transport infrastructure a clear signal of reach and intent regarding Iran's energy export capacity.
- Iranian capability demonstrated: Iran has shown willingness to target high-value U.S. naval assets and continues to assert operational control over transit through the Strait of Hormuz a critical global energy chokepoint.

These are parallel, not decisive, developments. Each side has proven a capability and a resolve to use it, but neither action has forced a change in the other's posture or behaviours. This points to a continued period of contested signalling rather than closure.

PLANNING ASSUMPTION

Plan for active containment with near-standstill Hormuz traffic, sustained Red Sea disruption and no immediate diplomatic breakthrough. Movement remains possible across most of the GCC, but posture should stay elevated until Hormuz traffic recovers materially, attacks against GCC-linked vessels stop, Bab el-Mandeb becomes usable for Saudi exports, Iran and the US establish an implementable maritime arrangement, Iraq prevents further cross-border attacks and Bahrain/Kuwait experience a sustained period without renewed missile or drone activity.

[Assessed — moderate confidence]

Regional Risk Snapshot

COUNTRY	STRIKE	INFRA	OPS	TREND	ONE-LINE STATUS
Bahrain				► WATCH	US-linked posture and unresolved US-Iran confrontation keep Bahrain severe despite no major new direct incident.
Kuwait				► WATCH	Northern Gulf exposure, infrastructure vulnerability and Iraq-linked threats continue to keep Kuwait severe.
Qatar				► WATCH	Near-standstill Hormuz traffic materially increases Qatar’s LNG and tanker-access exposure.
UAE / Dubai				► WATCH	Repeated attacks against ADNOC-operated tankers increase direct UAE-linked maritime exposure. Recent strikes on 18 August 2026.
Saudi Arabia				▲ WORSENING	Hormuz disruption and Houthi pressure on Bab el-Mandeb increasingly constrain both Saudi maritime outlets.
Oman				► WATCH	Musandam and Gulf of Oman exposure remain high as Hormuz traffic falls towards commercial standstill.

RISK SCALE LOW MODERATE HIGH SEVERE CRITICAL



Saudi Arabia

SECURITY SITUATION

Yemen–Saudi border (Najran and Jizan provinces, status as of 2026-08-29):
U.S. Department of State maintains explicit "Do Not Travel" advisory for areas within 50 miles of the Saudi–Yemeni border, citing active hostilities, unexploded ordnance, and damaged critical infrastructure. These regions remain closed to international movement.

No Saudi oil shipments were recorded transiting Bab el-Mandeb on Tuesday, reinforcing that Houthi pressure is materially changing Saudi export behaviour rather than merely increasing insurance costs. This follows previous Houthi attacks against Saudi-linked tankers and the recent attack against the Aramco facility in Jizan.

The combined threat now includes commercial shipping, strategic energy infrastructure and southern Red Sea access. Saudi Arabia also remains exposed to possible Iraq-origin drone activity. The overall threat should therefore be viewed as multi-directional rather than centred exclusively on Yemen. Riyadh retains considerable resilience through domestic infrastructure, alternative crude-routing arrangements and strong regional road connectivity, but maritime redundancy is becoming increasingly constrained.

AVIATION

Cathay Pacific continues to suspend flights to Saudi Arabia through 30 November – Updated.

Saudi airspace remains operational, but aviation exposure continues to require active management. The principal risk zones remain Yemen-linked activity in the south, Iraq-linked launch corridors in the north and east, Eastern Province infrastructure exposure and any renewed US-Iran military escalation. Missile or drone interception activity could quickly produce warning alerts.

MARITIME

Red Sea – Maritime Threat Interdiction

Forces aligned with the Yemeni government reported intercepting four Houthi-operated explosive-laden boats in the vicinity of the Hanish and Zuqar islands, preventing them from reaching active shipping lanes. No vessel was struck or otherwise contacted because of this incident. The Houthi movement has not issued a statement on the matter, and the report remains unconfirmed by independent sources currently.

Given the absence of third-party verification and lack of Houthi acknowledgment, this should be treated as a single-source claim pending corroboration. Recommend monitoring for follow-on statements from Houthi media channels, UKMTO, JMIC, or commercial shipping advisories before adjusting threat posture for vessels transiting the southern Red Sea/Bab el-Mandeb corridor.

MOVEMENT - SUPPLY CHAIN

- Saudi land-border connectivity remains broadly functional. The UAE–Saudi Ghuwair/Al Batha route, Bahrain–Saudi King Fahd Causeway, Qatar–Saudi Abu Samra/Salwa crossing, Kuwait–Saudi routes and Jordan–Saudi crossings remain available for authorised passenger and commercial traffic under prevailing controls.
- The primary supply-chain concern is maritime rather than domestic road movement. Simultaneous disruption in Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb increases pressure on alternative tanker routing, Suez/SUMED capacity, inventories and air or road freight for time-sensitive goods.
- Cargo planners should maintain buffers for fuel pricing, insurance review, vessel delays, customs processing, driver availability and possible route changes. Critical industries should avoid just-in-time assumptions where inputs depend on maritime movements through either chokepoint.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH
Conflict	HIGH
Civil Unrest	MODERATE
Environmental	LOW
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW

MITIGATIONS & RECOMENDATIONS

Confirm war-risk cover, monitor Hormuz, Red Sea, Suez, Bab el-Mandeb and Iraq-linked routes, and review staff-accountability procedures. Maintain resilience plans for water, fuel, power and essential supplies. Monitor Jizan and Jubail developments closely. pressure.



United Arab Emirates

SECURITY SITUATION

Al Minhad & Al Dhafra Air Bases (south of Dubai), September 2, 2026 – Iranian military announced launch of "dozens of reconnaissance-strike drones" targeting U.S. radar systems and personnel positions at both bases as retaliation for prior U.S. strikes. UAE Ministry of Defence confirmed interception of at least one Iranian drone over UAE territorial waters on August 31.

U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi & Consulate Dubai, September 1–2, 2026 – Formal security alert issued to U.S. nationals warning of heightened risk of flight cancellations, airspace closures, and travel disruptions due to regional tensions; citizens advised to avoid areas with heavy police presence and monitor local media.

Dubai Police Cyber Enforcement, September 2, 2026 – Announcement of blocking 103 scam-related social media accounts during Q2 2026; reflects active policing of online fraud targeting residents and visitors, with relevance to phishing, investment scams, and fake employment/accommodation schemes.

AVIATION

Cathay Pacific continues to suspend flights to UAE through 30 November – Updated. Updated reports indicated that Cathay Pacific continues to suspend flights at Dubai International Airport (DXB/OMDB) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through 30 November due to security concerns amid regional escalation.

Aegean Airlines extended the suspension of flights to and from Dubai International Airport (DXB/OMDB) until 19 October, amid regional tensions.

Passenger travel, executive movement and time-sensitive cargo can continue, but operators should verify current NOTAMs and airline status immediately before movement. Attention should remain on routes interacting with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and the wider northern Gulf.

MARITIME

Maritime exposure remains the UAE's principal external vulnerability. Repeated attacks against ADNOC-operated vessels demonstrate that UAE-linked shipping is directly within the current threat environment.

In the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman, JMIC Update 092 keeps the Strait at SEVERE and surrounding waters (Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea) at MODERATE, with continued GNSS disruption and AIS irregularities complicating vessel tracking and navigation

UAE Territorial Waters / Fujairah & Das Island, August 31–September 2, 2026 – UAE government condemned Iranian "hostile attack" involving barrage of missiles and drones targeting commercial shipping linked to state-owned oil company; incident resulted in deaths and injuries; described as direct threat to regional stability and maritime commerce.

MOVEMENT - SUPPLY CHAIN

- UAE land connectivity remains one of the country's strongest resilience advantages.
- The Saudi border at Ghuwaifat/Al Batha and Oman crossings including Hatta/Al Wajajah and Khatmat Malaha remain important alternatives for passenger movement, road freight and contingency relocation.
- The principal supply-chain vulnerability remains external maritime and aviation connectivity rather than domestic road movement. Simultaneous pressure on Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb can affect UAE cargo moving both east towards Asia and west towards Suez and Europe.
- Maintain buffers for vessel delays, insurance review, air-freight disruption and maritime rerouting. Keep Saudi and Oman road alternatives live for critical cargo and personnel where practical.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	MODERATE
Conflict	HIGH
Civil Unrest	LOW
Environmental	LOW
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW

MITIGATIONS & RECOMENDATIONS

Confirm NOTAMs before air movement, verify war-risk cover, keep UAE–Saudi and UAE–Oman land-route options live, and maintain executive movement controls. Review energy, fuel, port and data-centre continuity planning if regional infrastructure threats return.



SECURITY SITUATION

US Embassy security alert for Oman – 1 September 2026

US diplomatic mission in Oman issued a security advisory citing regional tensions linked to Middle East conflict and Hormuz maritime situation, advising heightened vigilance

Oman remains at moderate global risk but faces an acute and escalating maritime security threat in the Strait of Hormuz and adjacent territorial waters. Since mid-August, at least five commercial vessels have sustained projectile or unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strikes in Omani waters and the immediate maritime zone, with the most recent incident on 24–25 August resulting in engine-room damage and vessel immobilization. No credible claim of responsibility has been publicly attributed.

AVIATION

Oman airspace remains important to regional aviation resilience, but routes around Musandam and the western Gulf of Oman remain exposed to wider military developments.

Operators should continue monitoring NOTAMs, GNSS interference, military movements and routing links with UAE and Saudi airspace. Any renewed US-Iran strike cycle could rapidly alter the availability or desirability of northern Muscat FIR routing.

MARITIME

Oman occupies a uniquely dual position in this landscape, functioning as the central mediator and primary negotiator for corridor-related diplomacy while remaining physically exposed to any incident in the Strait of Hormuz.

In the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman, JMIC Update 092 keeps the Strait at SEVERE and surrounding waters (Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea) at MODERATE, with continued GNSS disruption and AIS irregularities complicating vessel tracking and navigation. CENTCOM has stated its strikes targeted Iranian mine-laying capability, maritime assets, radar, and communications infrastructure associated with the Strait suggesting an effort to degrade Iran's ability to threaten the chokepoint directly, though this also raises the risk of miscalculation or asymmetric response in congested shipping lanes.

Tanker strikes, Strait of Hormuz off Khasab, Oman – 31 August–1 September 2026 (reported 1–2 September)

Two Saudi-flagged and Liberia-flagged crude super tankers were struck by unknown projectiles approximately 16–17 nautical miles northeast of Khasab while transiting the Omani corridor. Both incidents occurred within minutes of each other; damage included engine-room and ballast-tank strikes. No crew casualties or environmental damage reported. UK Maritime Trade Operations and multiple maritime-risk firms corroborated the incidents and issued formal advisories.

MOVEMENT - SUPPLY CHAIN

- Oman–UAE land crossings remain operational and should continue to serve as important resilience routes for passenger movement, freight and contingency access between Muscat, Sohar, Buraimi, Hatta and the wider UAE logistics network.
- The principal supply-chain vulnerability remains maritime. Hormuz-linked cargo, Gulf of Oman movements, tanker scheduling and marine insurance remain highly uncertain.
- Keep UAE land routes available for urgent movements and maintain additional inventory buffers for goods dependent on Gulf shipping. Sohar and Omani logistics facilities provide important resilience capacity, but their wider maritime connections remain exposed to the same conflict environment affecting Hormuz.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	MODERATE
Conflict	MODERATE
Civil Unrest	MODERATE
Environmental	LOW
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW

MITIGATIONS & RECOMENDATIONS

Confirm Omani, IMO and UKMTO routing guidance, verify war-risk insurance, monitor VHF instructions, keep AIS/LRIT active where required, and maintain UAE land-route alternatives. Track whether the Hormuz route becomes an operationally recognised mechanism, not only a political announcement.



SECURITY SITUATION

Protests reported in Northern governorate

Local sources reported that protests occurred in Diraz and Al Budaiya, Northern governorate, overnight on 4-5 September, in support of jailed Shiite religious leaders.

Bahrain Reports Successful Interception of Iranian UAV Attack on Sheikh Isa Air Base; Iran Claims Precision Strike Under Operation Sa'eqah, Phase 29

Bahrain's air defence network reported it detected, engaged, and destroyed a wave of Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) directed at Sheikh Isa Air Base, a facility hosting U.S. military assets in the southern part of the country. Bahraini authorities characterized the response as a successful defensive engagement, with no reported breach of the base's perimeter defences.

Iran's military has offered a conflicting account, claiming the strike designated as the 29th phase of "Operation Sa'eqah" ("Thunderbolt") successfully struck radar installations, aircraft shelters, fuel storage, and troop concentration areas at the base, framing it as retaliation for prior U.S./coalition action against Iranian territory.

AVIATION

Bahrain aviation remains open but highly sensitive.

Regional missile, drone and air-defence activity can quickly affect Bahrain FIR, even when Bahrain is not the primary target. Previous incidents demonstrate how rapidly normal commercial operations can shift into a heightened public-safety posture.

Executive travel, staff rotations and time-sensitive cargo should therefore proceed only after checking current flight status, NOTAMs and applicable safety guidance.

MARITIME

Bahrain's maritime exposure remains linked to the wider Gulf rather than a specific port shutdown.

Hormuz Tanker Incident: Two Crew Fatalities Confirmed Aboard Bahri's Sidr

Saudi state shipping operator Bahri has confirmed two fatalities among the crew of its VLCC tanker Sidr following a security incident during an outbound transit of the Strait of Hormuz. The incident occurred on August 31 as the vessel transited the strait, with Bahri specifying a timestamp of 23:40 local time (2040 GMT) on Monday. The two deceased were both Filipino nationals.

Maritime security agency UKMTO separately reported a tanker struck by three unidentified projectiles while outbound through the strait, consistent with the Sidr incident, though Bahri itself has not disclosed the nature or cause of the incident. Sidr was one of two Saudi-linked super tankers reported hit late Monday while transiting the strait.

MOVEMENT - SUPPLY CHAIN

- The King Fahd Causeway remains Bahrain's most important physical resilience corridor.
- It should remain central to passenger movement, freight support, staff relocation, medical evacuation planning and contingency access to Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC road network.
- Routine movement continues, but staff-accountability procedures and relocation plans should remain current. During periods of heightened US-Iran military activity, avoid unnecessary movement near sensitive facilities and confirm transport availability before initiating emergency relocation.
- The Causeway remains particularly important if aviation or Gulf maritime operations deteriorate with limited warning.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH
Conflict	HIGH
Civil Unrest	LOW
Environmental	LOW
Crime	LOW
Legal	MODERATE

MITIGATIONS & RECOMENDATIONS

Verify airspace status, keep Causeway relocation plans live, avoid sensitive sites during alerts, maintain staff-accountability checks, and confirm cross-border transport availability. Reinforce debris-awareness guidance and avoid suspicious objects following interceptions.



SECURITY SITUATION

Regional de-escalation diplomacy involving Oman – 1 September 2026

Qatar's Foreign Ministry announced talks with Oman and Pakistan aimed at de-escalating tensions and securing/reopening the Strait of Hormuz following latest tanker attacks. Development signals Oman's active diplomatic engagement in conflict management but also confirms regional perception of critical risk.

Qatar remains operationally stable, but the near-standstill in Hormuz materially increases its strategic exposure. Qatar's LNG export system depends heavily on reliable passage through the Strait. Only five commodity vessels were recorded through Hormuz on Saturday and none on Sunday, illustrating how far present conditions remain from normal commercial operation.

This does not mean Qatari LNG infrastructure itself is disrupted, but it increases tanker scheduling, insurance and market-confidence risk. Doha's mediation role remains potentially important, although current US-Iran diplomacy appears stalled and Iran has not committed to renewed negotiations.

The local security environment remains comparatively resilient, but Qatar's economic exposure to a prolonged Hormuz disruption is greater than that of most GCC states because of the importance of LNG exports.

AVIATION

No security-driven disruptions were identified in the 72-hour window. One isolated delay (a JetBlue departure from Hamad International) was flagged in monitoring feeds but assessed as consistent with the wider pattern of aviation congestion rather than security-related causes.

Doha / regional, 30–31 August: Social media and travel reporting indicated potential for short-notice airspace or flight disruption in the Gulf region, including Qatar, linked to broader military activity near the Strait of Hormuz; no corroborated closure or accident confirmed in Qatar.

Passenger travel, executive movements and air cargo can continue while maintaining diversion plans and schedule flexibility. Monitor Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran and northern Gulf airspace conditions closely. Air cargo may also become more important if maritime delays deepen, increasing potential demand and capacity pressure. Time-sensitive supply-chain planning should therefore consider both security-related routing changes and potential commercial capacity constraints.

MARITIME

Qatar's strategic maritime exposure has worsened because sustained LNG exports ultimately depend on Hormuz. The near absence of weekend commodity traffic demonstrates that tanker confidence remains extremely weak.

Regional maritime incident (28 August 2026, Hormuz region). At least one commercial tanker sustained a hit from an unidentified projectile in the broader Hormuz area. This incident is geographically external to Qatar but affects shipping lanes critical to Qatar's LNG and hydrocarbon exports.

MOVEMENT - SUPPLY CHAIN

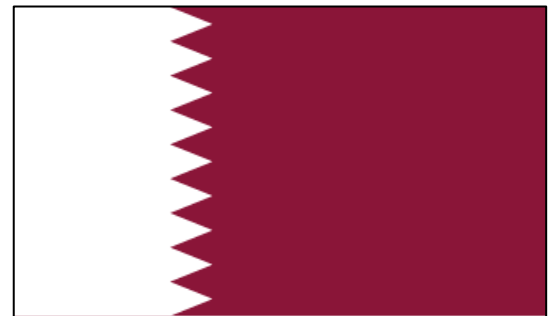
- The Abu Samra/Salwa crossing with Saudi Arabia remains Qatar's principal road-based resilience connection with the wider GCC.
- Domestic supply chains remain broadly functional, but prolonged Hormuz disruption increases exposure around LNG exports, port operations, maritime imports and air cargo.
- Maintain cargo-delay buffers, verify insurer and shipping conditions and keep Qatar–Saudi land-route options active for appropriate goods and personnel.
- Simultaneous disruption in Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb also complicates wider Asia-Europe cargo routing. Businesses should review inventory levels, supplier lead times and air-freight alternatives where critical inputs depend on maritime transport.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH
Conflict	MODERATE
Civil Unrest	MODERATE
Environmental	MODERATE
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW

MITIGATIONS & RECOMENDATIONS

Monitor LNG, maritime and aviation conditions, confirm insurer and port guidance, maintain Qatar–Saudi land-route options, and keep executive travel plans flexible. Treat maritime resumption as positive but not full normalisation.



SECURITY SITUATION

Kuwait City residential complex – Iranian drone strike, dawn 2 September 2026: An Iranian drone struck a residential area in the capital, sparking a fire that was contained by fire services with no reported casualties or mass-casualty impact, though property damage was sustained.

OSAC advisory renewal and Mina Al Ahmadi closure notice (28–29 August). US State Department maintained Level 3 "Reconsider Travel" advisory for Kuwait, citing unexploded ordnance at Mina Al Ahmadi, risk of sudden airspace closures, and potential targeting of military, government, and energy infrastructure. Port remains closed to international traffic.

The recently disrupted ISIS-linked plot against a vital facility also remains relevant to security planning. Although the intervention demonstrates effective counterterrorism capability, it reinforces the need to protect critical infrastructure against both external and domestic threats.

Ali Al-Salem Air Base – IRGC strike on U.S. commander quarters, early 2 September 2026: Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps announced a strike targeting living quarters and a command post at the U.S.-operated air base in northwest Kuwait; reports indicate infrastructure damage and unconfirmed casualty figures

AVIATION

Kuwait aviation remains highly sensitive because of proximity to Iraq, Iran and northern Gulf military activity.

Renewed missile or drone operations could quickly affect Kuwait FIR through air-defence activity, routing restrictions, temporary closure or falling debris. GNSS interference also remains relevant.

Passenger travel, executive movement and air cargo should proceed only after confirming current flight status, NOTAMs and applicable security guidance.

MARITIME

Kuwait's maritime exposure remains high because northern Gulf access is ultimately dependent on the Strait of Hormuz.

Kuwaiti-flagged tanker damaged in Strait of Hormuz (28–29 August). The AL SALAM II, transiting international waters, sustained projectile damage above the waterline; crew safe, fire controlled, no environmental release reported. Incident underscores maritime security exposure for Kuwaiti shipping.

Any further attack on Gulf-linked shipping would increase these pressures quickly. Conversely, sustained vessel traffic through Hormuz without attack would materially improve the outlook.

MOVEMENT - SUPPLY CHAIN

- Kuwait-Saudi crossings, including Nuwaisib and Salmi, remain the preferred overland resilience routes for passenger traffic, freight, urgent logistics and southbound contingency movement.
- The Iraq border should remain operationally sensitive. Do not route staff or time-sensitive cargo through Iraq without current security review and appropriate movement authority.
- The combination of maritime uncertainty, infrastructure exposure and the recently disrupted terrorism plot supports maintaining three-day resilience planning for water, power, fuel, communications and essential supplies.
- Critical facilities should continue reviewing access control, contractor procedures, emergency power and staff-accountability arrangements.

RISK RATINGS

Political	HIGH
Business	HIGH
Economic	HIGH
Conflict	SEVERE
Civil Unrest	LOW
Environmental	HIGH
Crime	LOW
Legal	LOW

MITIGATIONS & RECOMENDATIONS

Confirm air permissions, prioritise Kuwait–Saudi overland routing, treat Kuwait–Iraq movement as sensitive even where crossings are open, maintain staff-accountability checks, and keep three-day resilience plans for water, power, fuel and essential supplies. Review power and water continuity plans until a clean period is established.



Escalation Triggers

RED ACT NOW

- Another ADNOC-operated or other GCC-linked tanker is struck, disabled or suffers casualties in Hormuz.
- A Houthi attack strikes or sinks another Saudi-linked tanker or commercial vessel in Bab el-Mandeb.
- US maritime enforcement and Iranian forces enter a direct major exchange around Hormuz or the Gulf of Oman.
- Renewed US strikes on Iran trigger missile or drone retaliation against GCC territory.

AMBER WATCH

- Hormuz traffic remains below ten commodity vessels per day without a political breakthrough.
- Additional GCC-linked ships avoid Hormuz, turn back or switch off AIS because of security concerns.
- Yemen missile, drone or ground activity continues around Marib, Mocha or southern front lines.
- Bahrain or Kuwait reactivates public-safety or air-defence alerts without a confirmed strike.

GREEN IMPROVING

- ADNOC and other GCC-linked tankers transit without further attacks.
- Iran and the US agree an implementable mechanism for commercial passage.
- Houthi threats against Saudi-linked maritime traffic decline.

Additional watch items

- Daily Hormuz vessel counts and direction of travel.
- Further attacks involving ADNOC-operated vessels.
- Iranian requirements for vessels using Hormuz.
- US naval blockade and enforcement activity.
- Any renewed US-Iran negotiating channel.
- War-risk insurer response to the latest tanker incidents.
- Fujairah and Gulf of Oman vessel activity.
- Qatar LNG tanker movements and waiting patterns.
- Houthi enforcement of the Saudi maritime blockade.
- Saudi crude movements through Bab el-Mandeb.
- Yanbu and Suez/SUMED export patterns.
- Saudi Red Sea tanker AIS behaviour.
- Further attacks against Saudi energy infrastructure.
- Iraq-linked launch activity towards Saudi Arabia or Kuwait.
- Bahrain Fifth Fleet posture and public-safety alerts.
- Kuwait power, water and critical-infrastructure security.
- GCC aviation NOTAMs and GNSS-interference reporting.

Positive confirmation signals

- Hormuz records sustained growth in commercial traffic.
- No further attacks occur against ADNOC or other GCC-linked vessels.
- Repeated tankers transit Hormuz without attack, interception or forced diversion.
- Marine insurers restore wider cover without significant additional restrictions.
- Saudi oil movements resume through Bab el-Mandeb.
- No further Houthi attacks occur against Saudi shipping or energy facilities.
- Suez/SUMED and Saudi alternative export routes operate without major congestion.
- Iran and the US resume substantive negotiations.
- No further Iraq-linked drone attacks reach GCC territory.
- Bahrain and Kuwait record no new interception or siren activity.
- GCC airspace remains open without major new restrictions.
- GCC land borders continue functioning under standard controls.

Escalation Risk : Strait of Hormuz / Gulf of Oman

The shift from asymmetric and economic pressure tactics toward direct strikes on naval assets and merchant tonnage marks a material escalation in the regional threat picture. All commercial traffic transiting the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman should be considered elevated risk until further notice.

Key Indicators:

- Continued Iranian rhetoric signalling retaliatory intent
- Increased likelihood of further tanker strikes, whether directly attributable to Iran or Iran-aligned proxies
- Reduced margin for miscalculation in U.S.–IRGC naval interactions, raising the potential for unintended escalation

Recommended Actions:

- Review AIS transmission protocols for vessels transiting high-risk zones
- Reassess transit timing and routing to minimize exposure windows
- Confirm war-risk insurance coverage is current and adequate given the revised threat posture
- Maintain heightened situational awareness and reporting cadence for vessels in the JRA (Joint War Risk Area)

Next 72 – 96 Hours

The exchange has intensified sharply in the past week. On September 2, U.S. forces struck IRGC air defence sites, radar systems, mine-laying capabilities, communications sites, anti-ship cruise missile launchers, and drone launchers in response to attempted IRGC attacks on commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and on American bases. By September 5, the U.S. had struck three Iranian tankers one near Kharg Island, one in the Gulf of Oman hit in multiple critical locations forcing crew abandonment, and one near Jask.

- Continued reciprocal strikes likely. CENTCOM's Admiral Brad Cooper stated the message to the IRGC is that any attack on U.S. ships will be met with a higher-cost response against Iran's tanker fleet, indicating a tit-for-tat escalation cycle is now the operating pattern rather than an aberration.
- Elevated threat to tankers regardless of flag/ownership. The IRGC Navy has explicitly warned vessels against transiting the Strait via routes it has not authorized, threatening to target them. Expect continued targeting of vessels perceived to be moving through "unauthorized" lanes, with limited discrimination by ownership. The Jerusalem Post
- Traffic remains suppressed. The U.S. military has been helping guide ships through the Strait as Iran asserts control and targets some vessels, though overall traffic remains low. Expect continued convoy/escort dynamics rather than free transit over the next 72–96 hours.
- Risk of direct U.S.–IRGC naval clash remains high. The near-miss targeting of a U.S. carrier group signals a narrowing margin for miscalculation; further incidents involving U.S. Navy assets are plausible in this window.
- Mine risk persists. Sea mines remain an active threat vector in the Strait, in addition to missile and drone strikes; vessels with AIS gaps or "dark" transit periods should be considered heightened targets

Next 7–14 days: The central question is whether near-zero Hormuz traffic becomes the new operating baseline.

If commercial passage remains negligible despite the Strait being physically open, Gulf supply chains will increasingly adapt around a prolonged disruption rather than wait for rapid normalisation. That would increase tanker demand, insurance costs, inventory requirements and reliance on alternative ports and overland routes. Saudi Arabia faces the same question in Bab el-Mandeb. Continued Houthi restrictions would reduce the value of the Red Sea as an alternative export corridor and increase dependence on Suez/SUMED-linked movements and more complex routing.

Next month: The most likely scenario is prolonged active containment with simultaneous impairment of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb. Hormuz is unlikely to normalise until commercial operators see sustained safe passage backed by an enforceable political mechanism. The current near-zero traffic level demonstrates that military declarations alone are insufficient. Saudi Arabia will remain the GCC state facing the most complex maritime challenge because the Kingdom is exposed simultaneously through Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb, Houthi attacks and potential Iraq-linked activity. The UAE will remain operationally resilient but increasingly exposed through the nationality and ownership of its commercial fleet.

Planning baseline: Treat the GCC as open but unstable, with maritime risk worsening across both Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb and no immediate diplomatic resolution. Operational movement can continue, but posture should remain elevated until Hormuz traffic recovers materially, attacks against GCC-linked shipping stop, Saudi oil shipments resume safely through Bab el-Mandeb, insurers restore confidence, Iran and the US agree an implementable maritime mechanism, Iraq prevents cross-border attacks and Bahrain/Kuwait remain free from renewed missile or drone incidents.

- Saudi Arabia** — Energy-infrastructure attacks, Red Sea pressure and multi-directional drone exposure — **HIGH**
- Kuwait** — Power/water infrastructure, Iraq-border sensitivity and northern Gulf exposure — **SEVERE**
- UAE** — Operationally resilient but exposed through Hormuz, Fujairah and regional aviation — **HIGH**
- Oman** — Hormuz diplomacy progressing, but reopening and maritime transit risk remain unresolved — **HIGH**
- Bahrain** — US-linked profile and regional military sensitivity keep Bahrain severe — **SEVERE**
- Qatar** — Diplomacy helps, but LNG and Hormuz exposure remain high — **HIGH**

Global Security Awareness

Global Security Awareness delivers decision-ready security intelligence to corporate security teams, travel risk managers and executive leadership operating across the Gulf Cooperation Council and the wider MENA region.

METHODOLOGY

Risk ratings (LOW to CRITICAL) are professional judgements based on the information available at the time of writing and are not guarantees of outcome. Strike, infrastructure and operational risk are scored independently for each country and tracked week-on-week.

Level	Definition	Typical Indicators	Recommend Response
Low	Stable environment with minimal threat of disruption. Normal political, security, and economic conditions prevail.	No active conflict: stable diplomatic relations: functioning institutions: open trade/travel routes:	Routine monitoring only, Business/travel proceeds normally.
Moderate	Underlying tensions or risk factors exist but are being actively managed. Isolated incidents possible but not systemic.	Diplomatic friction: sanctions rhetoric: occasional posturing: consented but unresolved disputes:	Increased situational awareness. Contingency planning advisable but no operational changes needed.
High	Active tensions or recent hostile activity with a real possibility of escalation. Disruption to trade, travel, or infrastructure is plausible.	Recent attacks or military posturing: breakdown of talks: troop/asset build-up: targeted sanctions: localized unrest.	Active monitoring, scenario planning, risk mitigation measure (insurance, alternative routes, security protocols).
Severe	Significant, ongoing disruption or hostilities affecting a state directly. Escalation is likely without intervention.	Direct attacks on infrastructure or territory: closure/restriction of key routes (e.g., Hormuz): casualties reported: emergency diplomatic sessions.	Reduce exposure where possible: activate contingency/evacuation plans: heightened security posture: close coordination with authorities.
Critical	Active conflict, existential threat, or conditions where major regional or systemic disruption is imminent or underway.	Ongoing warfare: regime instability or collapse: major infrastructure destroyed: blockade or strategic chokepoints: large-scale casualties.	Avoid all non-essential presence /exposure: full contingency activation: treat as an acute crisis requiring real-time reassessment.

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