

Indian Ocean Region

On Jan. 26th, at 0810 in position 14:59.4N-042:49.7E, an anchored MV was approached by a skiff containing 4 POB armed with AK-47s and a RPG. Master activated security measures and embarked AST displayed weapons as skiff circled MV at 100-150m distance. Master sent Mayday call and informed Hodeidah Port Control who reported no knowledge of the armed personnel and speculated that they could be Coast Guard, despite lacking uniforms or vessel insignia. After making several approaches, the skiff left the area. The incident lasted for around 30 minutes. Vessel safe.

MAST Analysis:

Pictures confirm that there were definitely Yemeni/Arab type crew in the boat. Not Somalis. No sign of uniforms, but they did have proper shirts and long trousers. The lack of uniform might of course be normal for the Yemenis given the civil war, though it would be surprising if the Saudis had not been supplying military fatigues to their Yemeni allies.

The skiff is a Somali style fishing skiff though these are common to Yemen as well. we cannot quite make out the engine in the copy of the photos, but is possibly a Mariner – similar to the one the Somalis use and rather ubiquitous in the region.

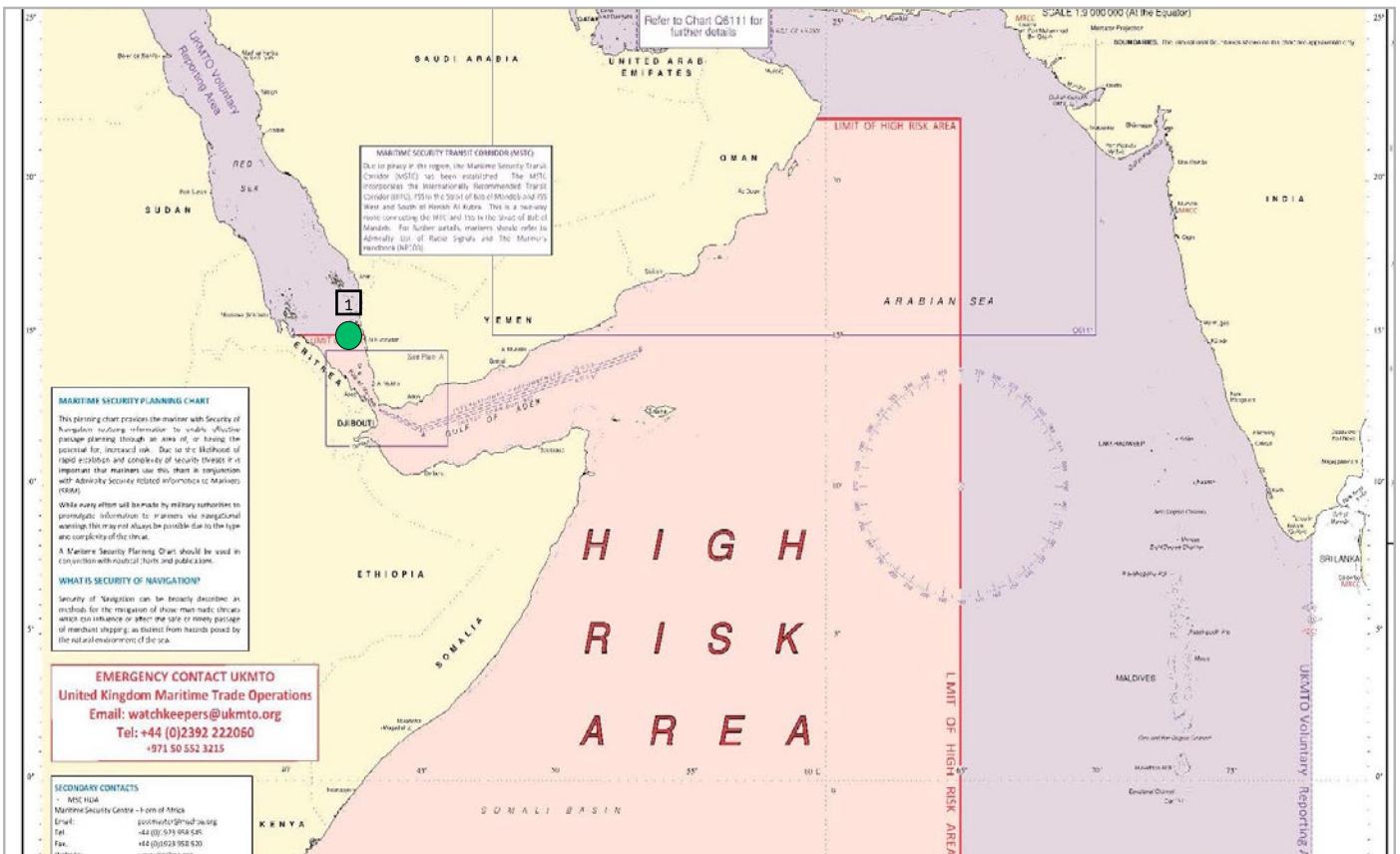


Image taken by MAST Armed Security Team