



ESCALATING SECURITY SITUATION IN THE NORTH BLACK SEA

Merchant Shipping Notice 204

Notice to Ship Owners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters, Owners' Representatives and Recognised Organisations

The Directorate would like to remind all concerned of [Merchant Shipping Notice 179](#) which is still relevant and in force. The situation has escalated and expanded to ports and sea areas within the conflict areas.

Masters and operators of Maltese ships that operate or that may operate in this area are strongly advised to evaluate the local security circumstances to determine whether their continued presence/or proceeding to ports in the region is safe.

Masters and crew shall at all times observe restrictions imposed by local authorities. It is to be noted that in view of the situation, port services may be disrupted and security levels in ports may change at short notice. As required in terms of the ISPS Code, ships shall respond to the MARSEC level set by the Contracting Government as outlined in Regulations 4.3 and 4.4 of such Code.

To this effect, in the case that masters and operators of Maltese ships, in their judgment, deem it necessary to proceed to this area, they are strongly advised to proceed with utmost caution and in a high state of vigilance. It is recommended that company security officers, masters, and ship security officers review security threat assessments for merchant ships operating in this region; and implement higher ship security level procedures as outlined in the approved ship security plans whilst trading in these areas.

Merchant Shipping Directorate

13 February 2026