



BAHRAIN & MARITIME SECURITY

SELECTED NAVAL MISSIONS IN THE REGION

- CHOKE POINTS**
1. Suez Canal
 2. Bab El Mandeb
 3. Strait of Hormuz

Due to its strategic importance as a link between the Mediterranean and the Indo-Pacific, the Red Sea area has become increasingly more militarised in recent years.

KEY MARITIME SECURITY ISSUES

- piracy
- terrorism
- attacks on trade vessels
- drug smuggling
- weapons smuggling
- human trafficking
- illegal fishing

Piracy has long posed a threat to shipping in the Gulf of Aden and off Somalia's coast, as has smuggling of people and illicit goods and weapons in the area, which led to the establishment of multinational naval operations.

Since 2015, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen have targeted international ships using RPGs, missiles, and armed drones in a bid to control the Bab El Mandeb.

Iran claims control of the Strait of Hormuz and has made the threat of its closure a key part of its asymmetric war strategy. Iran also claimed Bahrain as its 14th province.

After a series of Iran-linked attacks on commercial vessels in 2019, European countries and established separate maritime missions to safeguard the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. Similar scenario occurred amid the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea since late 2023. Bahrain joined the US-led IMSC in 2019 and Operation Prosperity Guardian in 2023.

NAVAL PRESENCE:

- Bahrain is a member
- United States (US)
- European Union (EU)
- United Kingdom (UK)
- Others

BAHRAIN HOSTS:

	The US Naval Support Activity (1971), with US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) and 5th Fleet (1995), and the Combined Maritime Forces (2001) with its 5 Task Forces (CTF):
	CTF 150 maritime security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman (2001)
	151 counter-piracy operation (2009)
	152 maritime security inside the Gulf (2004)
	153 maritime security in the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden (2022)
	154 maritime security training (2023)
	The United Kingdom (UK) Naval Support Facility (1934-1971, 2018-present) and the UK Component Command in charge of the naval Operation Kipion (2003)
	The GCC Unified Maritime Operations Centre (2016)
	The US-led International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) (2019)

BAHRAIN & MARITIME SECURITY COOPERATION

2005	Joined NATO Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)
2015	Deployed frigate Sabha as part of the Saudi-led Operation Restoring Hope in Yemen
2019	Bahrain, Poland and the US co-hosted the international Working Group on Maritime and Aviation Security in Manama
2021	Participated in a multilateral maritime security operations exercise in the Red Sea with Israel, the UAE and the US NAVCENT
2022	Participated in a US NAVCENT-led International Maritime Exercise 2022 (IMX 22), which involved Israel for the first time, alongside Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE and 50 other countries.
2022	Committed to partnering with regional countries and the US to build a multinational fleet of 100 unmanned surface vessels
11/2023	Became the first Arab state to join Operation Prosperity Guardian, a multinational coalition under CTF 153, to deter Houthi attacks in the Red Sea
3/2024	Became the 18th signatory to the Jeddah Amendment to the Djibouti Code of Conduct, a coalition to develop a regional maritime security strategy