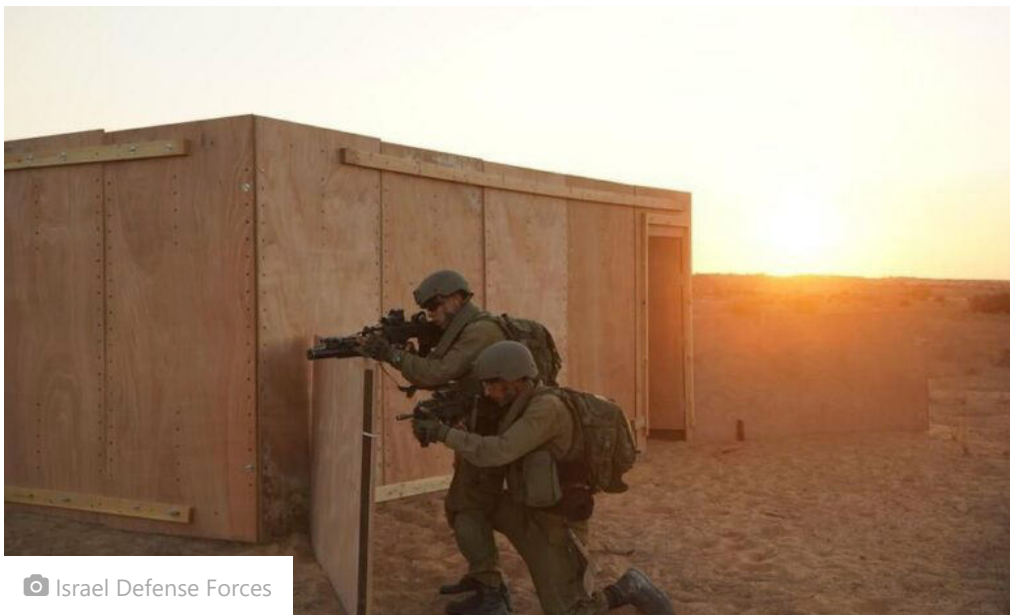


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Ships advised to wait further offshore as rockets rain down around Israel



Sam Chambers • October 26, 2023 0 34 1 minute read



Shipping lines are being advised to wait further offshore when calling Israel as the nation battles Hamas.

Yesterday Hamas launched a single unguided long-range rocket toward Haifa. The rocket ultimately exploded mid-flight. Similar rocket attacks have been reported at the nation's other major port, Ashdod as well as the Red Sea port city of Eilat.

Security consultants Ambrey suggest there has been a change in Hamas' operational activity, not only targeting closer ports and cities en masse but also specifically launching rockets at far away targets as the war nears the end of its third week.

Many liners have instituted war risk surcharges for cargoes headed to Israel while eight days ago Evergreen became the first carrier to divert an Israel-bound feeder ship after a force majeure declaration.

While most ports are working, much of the workforce has been drafted into the war effort and delays are occurring.

One port to close, Ashkelon, which lies just 10 km from the Gaza Strip, has forced Tel Aviv to look at the largely neglected Eilat port for oil import needs.

Ashkelon is Israel's largest tanker port. It has been closed since October 9, with tankers now making for Eilat instead. According to analysis from broker Braemar Eilat received just over 1m barrels of crude oil from the suezmax Seaviolet on October 18, the first crude oil cargo arrival there since May 2020.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) reported an attempted maritime infiltration by Hamas swimmers offshore Zikim, south of Ashkelon earlier this week.

"Given the increased IDF presence and vigilance, such attempts were assessed highly likely to be stopped before they posed a threat to merchant shipping," Ambrey noted in an update to clients.

In the past, Hamas has developed unmanned underwater vehicles. None have been reported so far.

"So far, no merchant vessels have been damaged by missile/rocket fire. The Israeli Iron Dome system is designed to protect civilian and critical national infrastructure, which makes this less likely. However, vessels have been disrupted, and there is a considerably greater risk of damage in the event of a regional conflict given the number of missiles and rockets available to Israel's opponents," Ambrey stated in a new update.