

Tehran warns Pentagon to steer clear of two IRISL 'spy' ships

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US Navy

The US military struck multiple Houthi positions in Yemen over the weekend, while Iran warned the US yesterday to avoid targeting two ships ostensibly belonging to Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL).

The two vessels – *Behshad* and *Saviz* – have long been suspected of being spy ships for Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, having loitered in the Red Sea off Yemen for years. Iran’s army has described the ships as floating armouries, aiming to stamp out piracy in the region.

The *Saviz* required significant repairs in 2021 when it took a hit after being planted with a limpet mine, with [TankerTrackers.com](https://www.tankertrackers.com) reporting at the time: “The consensus narrative within the maritime intelligence community (along with Iranian officials who got in touch with us privately) is that the vessel is rotating members of the IRGC (Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) that arrive from Iran’s Gulf of Oman port of Jask.”

The *Behshad*, meanwhile, has surprised security analysts by recently turning up inside Djibouti waters.

“Those engaging in terrorist activities against *Behshad*, or similar vessels jeopardise international maritime routes, security and assume global responsibility for potential future international risks,” a video posted by the Iranian military stated yesterday. Meanwhile, the liner exodus from the Red Sea has gathered pace in recent days with CMA CGM, the world’s third largest container shipping line, seemingly heeding the concerns raised recently by its crews.

Reuters is reporting the French liner has suspended all Red Sea transits, although the Rodolphe Saade-led liner has yet to comment publicly on the change of tactics.

In an email seen by *Splash* sent to top management eight days ago, a number of staff working onboard CMA CGM ships sought to “constructively address significant concerns” regarding [the company’s safety policies and compensation practices](#) in relation to sending ships through high-risk areas. CMA CGM had stuck steadfastly to Red Sea routes for its ships on the Asia-Europe/Mediterranean route while other global liners had shunned the route for the past month amid the deteriorating security situation in the region.

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