

NAVCENT: Saudi Arabia Expands Maritime Partnership with International Coalition



Royal Saudi Navy ship HMS Al Jubail. *U.S. NAVY*

MANAMA, Bahrain – Saudi Arabia’s western naval fleet began operating for the first time with the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) in the Red Sea, Sept. 27, signaling an expanded partnership between the multination coalition and Royal Saudi Naval Forces, NAVCENT Public Affairs said in a Sept. 28 release.

The Royal Saudi Navy Western Fleet, concentrated in the Red Sea, is now contributing to IMSC missions near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait as HMS Al Jubail (828) conducts patrols in support. Its Eastern Fleet has been operating with IMSC since 2019, when Saudi Arabia joined the nine-member coalition.

“As the Western Fleet joins with IMSC, we are able to bring reassurance to our maritime industry partners as they transit the Bab al-Mandeb Strait into the Red Sea,” said United Kingdom Royal Navy Commodore Ben Aldous, commander of IMSC and Coalition Task Force (CTF) Sentinel, the operational arm of the maritime partnership.

IMSC was formed in July 2019 in response to increased threats to freedom of navigation for merchant mariners transiting international waters in the Middle East. CTF Sentinel was established four months later to deter state-sponsored malign activity and reassure the merchant shipping industry in the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb.

Approximately 17,000 merchant ships transit through Bab al-Mandeb into the Red Sea annually.

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Western Fleet goes a long way to enhancing maritime security in this well transited region.”

The multinational coalition is headquartered in Bahrain with U.S. 5th Fleet and includes Albania, Bahrain, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the United States.