

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

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IMO



File WWA
ALSO EB/MA AT
COLREG.2/Circ.19
8 August 1983
ROS
AND
EGYPTIAN
DOK

Ref. T2/2.07

TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME IN THE GULF OF SUEZ

1 The Secretary-General has the honour to refer to COLREG 2/Circ.15 of 6 April 1982 advising Member Governments and Government Parties to the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREG), 1972 of the adoption of an amended traffic separation scheme in the Gulf of Suez by the Maritime Safety Committee at its forty-sixth session pursuant to resolution A.376(X) and that the amended traffic separation scheme "In the Gulf of Suez" would not become effective before 31 December 1982 and until notification had been received from the Government concerned.

2 Based on information issued by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, mariners were subsequently advised that the amended traffic separation scheme became effective on 15 March 1983.

3 In this connection the Secretary-General has received from the Commissioner of Maritime Affairs of Liberia a communication which reads as follows:

"The Gulf of Suez Traffic Separation Scheme - Part B - Strait of Jubal, was adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee at its 47th session without prior consideration by the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation.

On 18 May 1983 the Liberian ship Al-Duriyah (O.N. 5254) laden with 277,951 long tons of crude oil and having a draft of 22.9 metres struck an uncharted obstruction in the center of the northbound lane of the separation scheme in position 27 degrees 45.2 minutes north, 33 degrees 50.8 minutes east. There was substantial damage to the ship and considerable pollution. The incident occurred in a position where mariners might expect to find 35 metres of water but it would appear from information given on British Admiralty Chart 2375 that this area was last surveyed in the year 1870.

The undersigned is seriously concerned at the circumstances of this incident. Acting upon the advice given to me, I urgently request your

assistance and cooperation in an effort to avoid any repetition of this type of casualty in the area concerned.

The undersigned suggests that you might use your personal influence and the resources of IMO to advise all maritime authorities of the circumstances of this casualty and the possible existence of further uncharted obstructions within the northbound lane of this traffic separation scheme. Specifically we respectfully request that IMO bring this situation to the attention of all Governments Members of the Organization and to signatories to the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972.

Further, the undersigned respectfully suggest that you initiate consultation with the Government of Egypt and all interested Governments regarding the possibility of suspending the traffic separation scheme in the Strait of Jubal, pending prompt comprehensive survey for underwater obstacles and consideration by the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation. If this could be done as a matter of urgency ships could then navigate the more recently surveyed area in the western part of the Strait which is presently prohibited by Rule 10 of COLREG 72.

The undersigned will be most grateful for any assistance you may be able to provide in the interests of all administrations and mariners.

Liberia will make an appropriate submission to the 28th session of the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation scheduled for October of this year.

A copy of this letter will be forwarded through diplomatic channels to the Government of Egypt.

Respectfully yours,

(signed) Philip T. Bowen
Commission of Maritime Affairs
Republic of Liberia"

4 The Secretary-General has the honour to state that, pursuant to the above-mentioned request, he has invited the Government of Egypt to consider the possibility of suspending the traffic separation scheme in the Gulf of Suez - Part B: Southern Scheme (Strait of Jubal) pending prompt comprehensive survey for under-water obstacles in the Strait and consideration thereof by the relevant bodies of IMO. If the Government of Egypt were to decide in favour of a suspension of the scheme, such suspension would be effected by virtue of the

procedure set forth in paragraph 3.8 of the General Provisions on Ships' Routing which reads:

"3.8 In an emergency such as might result from the unexpected blocking or obstruction of a traffic lane by a wreck or other hazard, immediate temporary changes in the use of the affected traffic separation scheme may be made by the responsible and sponsoring Government(s), with the object of directing traffic flow clear of the new hazard. In such cases, every possible measure shall be taken by the Government(s) concerned immediately to inform shipping of the hazard and of the temporary changes which have been made."

Any measures taken by the Government of Egypt in response to this request and communicated to the Secretary-General will be duly circulated to Governments for information and action as necessary.
