

Committee:DISEC

Country: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Topic: Addressing Threats to Merchant Shipping: The Rise of Weaponized Drones and Terrorism at Sea



I. Background

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we recognize the growing threat of weaponized drones, unmanned aerial vehicles, and maritime terrorism to global merchant shipping. Recent attacks in important waterways such as the Red Sea, the Arabian Gulf, and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait show how non-state actors use low-cost and fast drones to harm international trade routes.

As a country closely connected to global energy markets and maritime trade, Saudi Arabia considers maritime security essential for international stability.

II. National Position

At the beginning of 2024, several vessel disruptions caused major problems. Trade through the Suez Canal fell by 50% compared to 2023, while trade through the Panama Canal dropped by 32%. These two key routes are important for world trade, and the disruption harmed global supply chains.

Attacks in the Red Sea reduced traffic through the Suez Canal, which normally carries about 15% of global maritime trade. Many shipping companies had to reroute their ships around the Cape of Good Hope to avoid risks. This increased delivery times by at least 10 days and affected companies of all sizes.

III. Proposed Solutions

Improving International Drone Regulation

Saudi Arabia calls for stronger global rules on exporting drone parts that can be used for military purposes. We recommend keeping clear records that track each step of the drone supply chain, as well as creating a single identification system for unmanned aerial vehicles operating near sea lanes.

We also encourage more information-sharing between states to detect and stop illegal drone shipments.

Saudi Arabia stands ready to work with the international community to support these measures and protect global maritime trade.