

# Weekly Security & Risk Report

Date: 10th March 2021  
Series 16/Issue 271



T +44 (0) 1279 216726 E [operations@mast-security.com](mailto:operations@mast-security.com) W [mast-security.com](http://mast-security.com)

Maritime Asset Security and Training (MAST) Ltd Thremhall Park, Start Hill, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM22 7WE

# MAST Services

MAST has the experience, capability and global presence to provide comprehensive support to our clients.

*"Making the world a safer place to live and work"*

## Maritime

- Counter piracy
- ISPS services
- Training
- K&R and Ship Arrest

## Risk Consulting

- Due Diligence
- Risk management
- Crisis management
- Training

## Technical Yacht Security

- System Design, Installation and Maintenance
- Technical Consultancy
- Cyber Risk Consultancy
- TSCM Sweeping Services

## Physical and Asset Protection

- Close Protection
- Residential Security
- Security Chauffeurs
- Events and Clubs
- Training

This report is copyright of Maritime Asset Security and Training (MAST) © 2021. All rights reserved.

This report is intended to provide general information about maritime intelligence topics but does not provide individual advice and the creators assume no liability for the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of any information contained herein, or though links you will find in it. Furthermore, using this report or sending MAST emails does not create a service provider- client relationship. It is intended only as an introduction to ideas and concepts only. It should not be treated as a definitive guide, nor should it be considered to cover every area of concern or regarded as an advice.

If you copy from this report, you have to refer to Maritime Asset Security and Training (MAST) Ltd as the source of the copied material. You may not, except with our express written permission, commercially exploit the content.



Issue 271 of the series reviews, analyses and threat assesses the fragile and conflict affected coastal states Libya, Somalia and Yemen. The Mediterranean migrant crisis, incidents affecting maritime security and influencing maritime news are also reported and analysed, focusing on the keys theatres of maritime instability.

### Coronavirus Port and Terminal Restrictions

The situation remains extremely fluid. For the most recent updates on closures and re-openings, MAST Security recommends using the Wilhemsen Covid-19 Global Port Restrictions Map. [Please Click Here](#) to visit their site.

The Security and Risk Report Series focuses on:

- Operational risks in areas of instability which could affect the safety of commercial and private vessels and personnel ashore and at sea.
- In country reporting on key countries where civil conflict are directly impacting on maritime operations; and
- Reporting and analysis of incidents of terrorism, piracy and other related criminal activity.

MAST has a global reach and presence, delivering first hand, accurate and exclusive intelligence. MAST is entrenched and committed in continuing to support and promote the awareness of the very real risks that seafarers and other stakeholders face.

This Intelligence Report Series is a brief snapshot of MAST's Intelligence capabilities. MAST Intelligence specialises in providing clients with a suite of products and services, including; political and economic risk analysis, detailed port and vessel security briefs, vessel passage plans, threat and risk mitigation and travel risk management.

Working closely in conjunction with a host of experts, MAST Intelligence offers a market leading service pertaining to all maritime affairs.

Follow MAST on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) to keep abreast with these insightful weekly reports and more – including real time security updates.

Editor: David Rider  
[www.mast-security.com](http://www.mast-security.com)

Contents:

	Page
Mast Services	2
Gulf of Guinea	4
Indian Ocean	6
Somalia	7
Yemen	8
South East Asia	9
UK & Europe	10
Libya	11
Central & South America	12
Severe Weather Warnings	13





# Gulf of Guinea

Maersk has called for a concerted maritime security response in the Gulf of Guinea. "In 2021 we should not have seafarers who are afraid of sailing anywhere because of piracy, this is not the age of piracy," Aslak Ross, head of maritime standards at the Danish giant, told AFP. Maersk wants an international mission similar to the naval operation that the European Union has deployed in the Gulf of Aden, off East Africa, since 2008 and which has been credited with a sharp drop in piracy there. "A solution is to have the international community support a mission in the short term," Ross said.

### Incidents:

1. Unnoticed, robbers boarded an anchored offshore supply ship at 0700 UTC in position Douala Anchorage, Cameroon. The theft was noticed by the bosun during routine rounds. Search conducted and several ship's properties reported stolen. Incident reported to local port authorities. Reported (IMB) 6th Mar.

### Crew of Chinese boat freed after ransom payment

The Nigerian army freed 10 crew from a Chinese fishing boat from their pirate kidnappers on Saturday 6th, after a month in captivity. Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Yahaya told AFP news agency a ransom of \$300,000 was paid before the crew were freed. The Chinese fishing boat, registered in Gabon, was seized using high-speed boats off the Gabonese port of Port-Gentil on February 7th 10 crew kidnapped, Al Jazeera reported.

### NIMASA, Navy tackling insecurity, says Jamoh

The Nigerian Navy and Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) have strengthened maritime security with the deployment of hitech assets for vessel protection. Both organisations are intensifying efforts to protect, interdict, and deter threats around vessels anchored in the Secure Anchorage Area (SAA), off the coast of Lagos. Director-General, NIMASA, Dr. Bashir Jamoh, made this known in Lagos during a visit by officials of the Shipping Association of Nigeria (SAN).

### Navy cautions on misinformation on piracy in GoG

The Nigerian Navy has cautioned on what it described as inaccurate reports on activities of pirates in the Gulf of Guinea, GoG noting that such report could discourage maritime traffic as well as heighten freight and insurance cost in the region, if not checked. "The Nigerian Navy wishes to alert the general public and the Nigerian media in particular, on inaccurate and unverified news reports on the rate of piracy in the Gulf of

Guinea (GoG). These reports are a deliberate ongoing effort to discourage maritime traffic as well as heighten freight and insurance cost in the region. A case in point is the reported hijack of a vessel, MV ODIANOLEN by a notable maritime information media source, which turned out to be false and alarmist."

### Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea Affirm Energy Cooperation

Equatorial Guinea's Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons, H.E. Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima, and Nigerian Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, H.E. Timipre Sylva, recently met to discuss and strengthen bilateral energy relations between the two countries. The two ministers agreed to fast-track the cross-border supply of gas from Nigeria to Equatorial Guinea, representing a critical step in Equatorial Guinea's Gas Mega Hub masterplan, which seeks to aggregate offshore gas from domestic and neighboring reserves and deliver it to onshore industry.

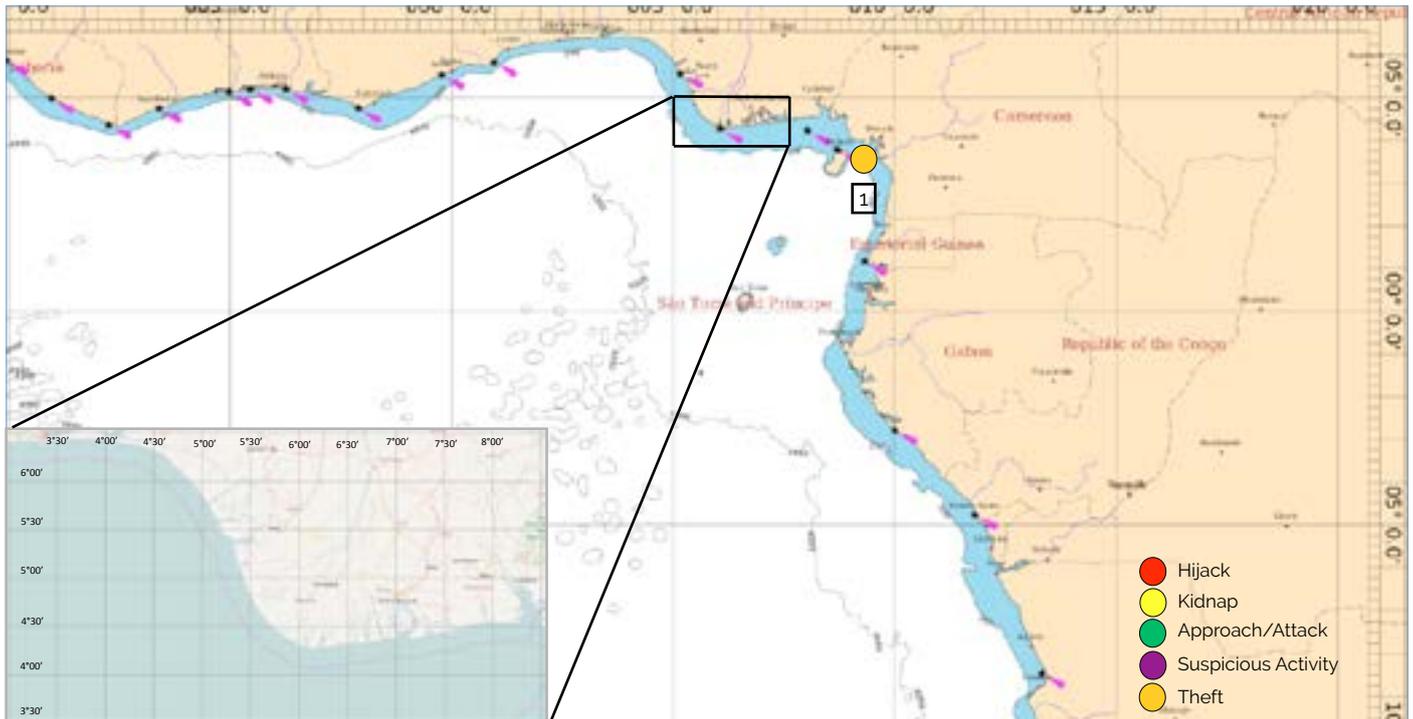
To see MAST Services in the region, [please click here](#). And and to read Nigeria's country report, [please click here](#).

**Gulf of Guinea Piracy & Maritime Crime Figures:**

**2021:**  
 Incidents reported: 15 (MDAT-GoG)  
 Crew kidnapped: 24 (OCEANUSLive)  
 Vessels hijacked: 1 (MDAT-GoG)

**2020:**  
 Incidents reported: 132 (MDAT-GoG)  
 Crew Kidnapped: 130 (IMB)  
 Vessels Hijacked: 3 (IMB)

**2019:**  
 Incidents reported: 111 (MDAT-GoG)  
 Crew kidnapped: 121 (IMB)  
 Vessels hijacked: 4 (IMB)





## Indian Ocean Region

The Combined Maritime Forces reported on Mar. 8th that French Marine Nationale ship (FS) Jean Bart has intercepted over 6500 lbs (2900 kg) of illicit drugs on February 12, 2021, in the latest successful Combined Maritime Forces interdiction in the Arabian Sea. After spotting a suspicious dhow and later investigating it using the ship's Panther helicopter, the crew of the Jean Bart observed multiple packages being thrown overboard. The subsequent search and recovery operation seized 148 parcels containing 6526 lbs (2960 kg) of cannabis resin, known locally as hashish. The total market value of this bust amounts to over \$1.5 million.

### Incidents:

**1.** Underway MV reported being approached by four small craft, each with two POB at 0555 UTC in position 14:43.09N - 053:31.3E, approx 95nm Southeast of Nishtun, Yemen, Gulf of Aden. Master reported incident to authorities. Reported (UK-MTO) 8th Mar.

### Pak Navy ship joins drill with Japan, Oman, Russia, US navies

Pakistan Navy Ship Alamgir with embarked helicopter participated in bilateral exercises with navies of Japan, Oman, Russia and United States as part of efforts of country's naval force to ensuring maritime security in the region. The Alamgir participated in bilateral exercises with Japanese maritime self-defense force ship Ariake, the royal Oman navy ship Khasab, Russian Federation navy ships Stoiky and Kola and United States navy ship John Paul Jones in Gulf of Aden and North Arabian Sea.

### Boat with tonnes of oil runs aground in Mauritius

A Chinese-flagged fishing boat ran aground on a coral reef in Mauritius, about 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) from the capital, Port Louis. The vessel, LURONGYUANYU 588, got stuck in Pointe aux Sables a few nautical miles from a public beach. It has 130 tonnes of diesel and five tonnes of dressing oil on board but no fish, according to the Fisheries Minister Sudheer Maudhoo, BBC News reported.

### IRGC, Army naval force sign intelligence MoU

Naval forces of Iran's Army and the IRGC have signed a memorandum of understanding to boost bilateral cooperation. The MoU seeks to expand intelligence, educational, and research cooperation between the two forces and was signed by Commander of Army's Navy Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi and

commander of IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Ali Reza Tangsiri on Sunday 7th.

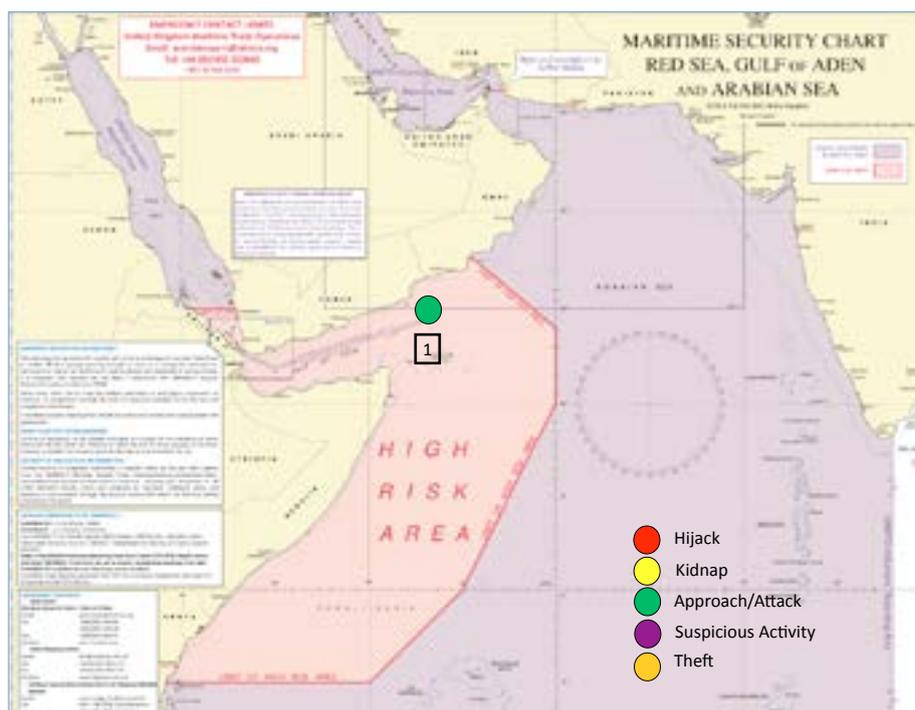
### SL & Indian Navy and SL Air Force combine to conduct air observer training

Sri Lanka Navy partnered with the Indian Navy and Sri Lanka Air Force to take part in an air observer training exercise on a Dornier aircraft of the Indian Navy, conducted in the southern coast from 02nd to 05th March 2021. Taking the wings from the Air Force base, Katunayake, a total of 04 training sorties were carried out covering the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the southern coast of the island, during the training deployment.

### Dozens of migrants heading to Yemen thrown overboard, feared dead

The International Organization for Migration has said that at least 20 migrants and refugees are dead after smugglers threw 80 people overboard during a voyage from Djibouti in East Africa to Yemen. A statement said that, "smugglers started shouting there were too many on board" after the boat with 200 migrants, including children under 18 years old, set off on Wednesday 3rd. The IOM said five bodies have been recovered, and survivors are being treated in Djibouti. It is not immediately clear what countries the migrants in this latest journey were from.

To see MAST's services in the Indian Ocean Region, [please click here.](#)





## Somalia

At least 20 people were killed and 30 wounded by a suicide car bomb just outside a restaurant near the port in Somalia's capital Mogadishu late on Friday 5th, an emergency services official said. The blast sent plumes of smoke into the sky and triggered gunfire, witnesses and state-owned media reported. "So far we have carried 20 dead people and 30 injured from the blast scene," Dr. Abdulkadir Aden, founder of AAMIN Ambulance services told Reuters.

### Fears New US Airstrike Guidance Is Benefiting Al Shabaab

A key U.S. partner in the fight against terrorism is growing increasingly uneasy about the Biden administration's new guidance on the use of drones and airstrikes, concerned that the changes are giving an already emboldened al-Qaida affiliate more room to operate. Senior Somali military officials worry the new guidance, which has imposed tighter controls on ordering airstrikes and requires the White House to sign off on operations, means Al Shabaab will begin to gather momentum.

### Somalia's Envoy heads to the Hague over Maritime dispute with Kenya

Somalia's envoy led by Federal Government of Somalia Deputy Prime Minister Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid on Monday 8th proceeded to The Hague-based International Court of Justice (ICJ) to attend the public hearing of the Maritime dispute case between Somalia and Kenya, set to be heard next week March 15th.

### Turkey hands over military barracks to Somalia

Turkey on Saturday 6th handed over military barracks to Somalia, according to an official statement. "As part of restructuring the Somali Armed Forces, the Northern Barracks - 1st Stage Facilities built by Turkey in Mogadishu were handed over to the [Somali] authorities," Turkey's National Defense Ministry said on Twitter.

### Soldier, civilian dead, 4 hurt in Somalia suicide blast

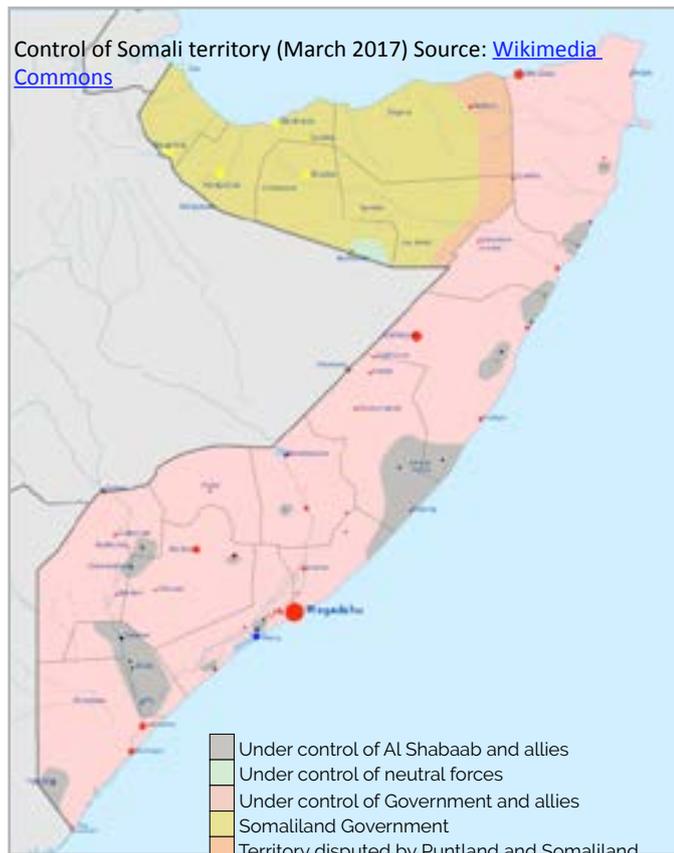
A soldier and a civilian were killed and four more people injured in a suicide attack in southwestern Somalia on Saturday 6th. A bomber blew himself up outside a small but busy restaurant in the town of Waajid in the Bakol region, according to Mohamud Kheyrow, a police official. The town is located some 350 kilometers (218 miles) southwest of the capital Mogadishu.

### Al Shabaab frees prisoners in attack on prison

Following an attack on the Central Prison in Bosaso, Puntland on Friday 5th, Al Shabaab has claimed it freed some 400 men being held there. Colonel Hussein Ali Mahmoud disclosed in a statement: "The Puntland forces managed to counter the attack launched by Al-Shabaab militants on the prison." Colonel Mahmoud added: "The attack caused human fatalities, we will announce more details at a later time. A number of prisoners escaped, but some of them were arrested by the security forces."

### Government, opposition talks collapse

Somalia's prime minister on Friday 5th said talks with the opposition presidential candidates to end the election stalemate in the country have collapsed. Mohamed Hussein Roble said the government has made a number of concessions during the nine-hour talks at Dècalè Hotel inside Adan Adde international airport in the capital Mogadishu.



### Analysis

The expulsion of Kenyan diplomats has been precipitated by the Kenyan government hosting a visit by the leader of Somaliland. The Somalis are further angered by the possibility that Kenya might also recognise the relatively successful (by comparison to Somalia) Somaliland as an independent state at some point. Of course, picking fights with neighbours is an age old trick by failing leaders down the ages to divert attention from internal failings and the poor performance of the government in the lead up to elections.

### Threat Assessment

The political situation has seen increased tension between regional states and the Federal Government. Should this continue, there is an opportunity for criminal organisations to return to their previous maritime activities. Al Shabaab continues to challenge the government and efforts to disrupt its operations continue. The trade in illegal charcoal by terror and crime groups continues, although the Combined Maritime Forces and UN are working on measures to prevent it. Youth unemployment in Somalia has not improved with 67% of Somali male youths aged between 14 to 29 unemployed. Pirate financiers offer lucrative and attractive opportunities, and were seen to be increasingly active in the last inter-monsoon period. Recent incidents off Somalia have highlighted the robust protections offered by both BMP5 and well trained, vigilant armed protection teams. Illegal fishing has returned to the region and there are wider political concerns that it could spark a resurgence in maritime crime unless checked. There is a risk that complacency in some quarters has seen a reduction in PMSC presence in these waters that could result in a piracy success. A lack of adherence to BMP5 protocol, particularly not maintaining a safe distance off the coast, has increased risks to shipping. Merchant vessels would be wise to maintain the same distance from the coast, particularly ensuring that the Socotra Gap isn't taken. All vessels are advised to update risk assessments and register with UKMTO/MSCHOA prior to entering the Indian Ocean High Risk Area (HRA).



## Yemen

Fierce fighting between Yemeni pro-government forces and Iran-backed Houthi rebels has killed at least 90 combatants on both sides in the past 24 hours, government military sources said on Saturday 6th. The Shiite rebels launched an offensive last month to seize Marib, the last stronghold in northern Yemen of pro-government forces who are backed by a Saudi-led military coalition. The clashes in the oil-rich province left 32 dead among government forces and loyalist tribes, while 58 Houthi rebels were killed in coalition airstrikes, the sources told AFP.

### Saudi-led coalition destroys 8 rebel drones

The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said on Sunday 7th it had intercepted and destroyed eight explosive-laden drones fired by Houthi rebels towards Saudi Arabia. In a statement, coalition spokesman Col. Turki al-Maliki accused the Houthi rebels of "deliberately and systematically targeting civilians and civilian areas in the kingdom", according to the Saudi SPA News Agency.

### Iran providing Yemen's Houthis with drones, missiles

Saudi Arabia's defense ministry spokesman on Monday 8th accused Iran of smuggling missiles and drones to Yemen's Houthi movement, which has stepped up cross-border attacks on the kingdom. Colonel Turki al-Malki, who is also spokesman of the Saudi-led military coalition battling the Houthis spoke on Saudi television, according to a report from Reuters.

### Houthis attack key Saudi Aramco oil port

While civilian areas were reportedly attacked on Sunday 7th in Saudi Arabia, a drone and ballistic missile attack targeted Saudi oil port Ras Tanura on the same day. The drone attack targeted "petroleum tank farms" at the port, the Saudi Press Agency said, quoting an official spokesperson at the Ministry of Energy. Shrapnel from a ballistic missile also fell near a Saudi Aramco residential area in the city of Dhahran.

### Saudi project clears 1,846 more mines in Yemen

The Saudi Project for Landmine Clearance (Masam) dismantled 1,846 mines in Yemen during the first week of March. They comprised 19 anti-personnel mines, 954 anti-tank mines, 868 unexploded ordnances and five explosive devices.

### Airstrikes begin against Houthis in Yemen as Coalition asserts civilians are a red line

The Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen announced on Sunday 7th the start of a qualitative military operation with heavy airstrikes against the Houthi militia in Yemen. The military operation targets Houthi capabilities in the occupied capital Sanaa and a number of other Yemeni governorates.

### Several killed in migrant detention center fire

At least eight people were killed and 170 more injured in a fire at a migrant detention center in the Yemeni capital city Sanaa on Sunday, the UN Migration Agency said. It remained unclear what caused the fire in the center run by the Houthi rebels, DW reported.

### Military convoy attacked by explosion in Aden

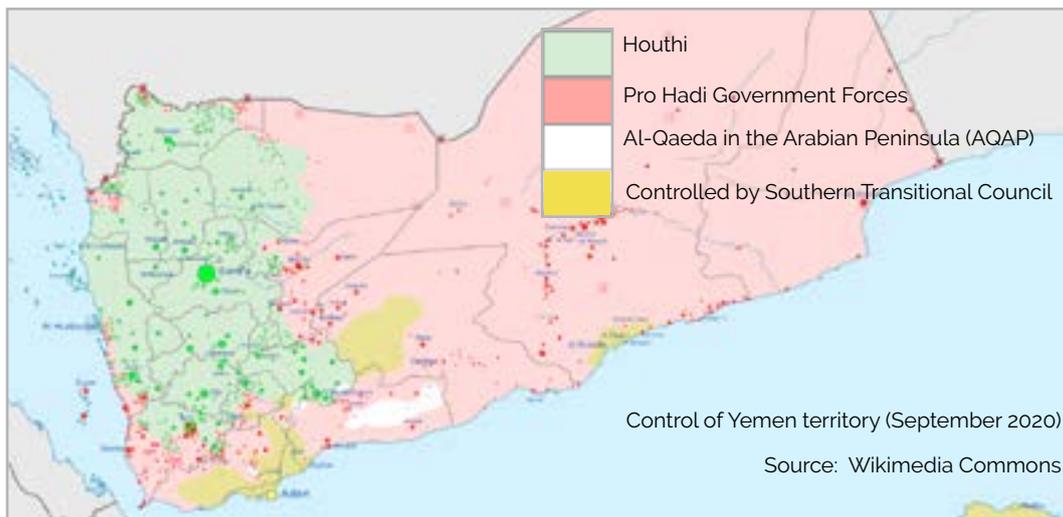
Explosive devices ripped through a military convoy of the newly-recruited forces in Yemen's southern port city of Aden on Thursday 4th, a security official told Xinhua. The explosive devices went off when the convoy carrying key military commanders was passing through a main road in Buraigah district of Aden, the local security source said on condition of anonymity. Two high-ranking military commanders of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) survived the explosion, while four soldiers were killed and around eight others were injured, according to the official.

### Houthis say they've seized majority control of Marib

Houthi rebels have taken control of 10 out of 14 districts of the strategic northern city of Marib, the Houthi deputy foreign minister, Hussein al-Ezzi, told CNN on Wednesday 3rd. Despite this, Marib's key city center district still remains under the control of the Saudi-backed government.

To see the latest threat analysis and Yemen port information in [MASTOPDEIA](#), please click here.

MAST recommends BMP measures be enforced and watches strengthened during transits in the region.





## South East Asia

A Bangladeshi bulk carrier, the Akij Pearl, escaped pirates who tried to board the cargo vessel while sailing off Sibutu Island in the province of Tawi-Tawi near the Malaysian border, reports said. The incident, which occurred on March 3rd, was only reported on Sunday 7th by the ReCAAP Information Sharing Center, which immediately issued a warning and urged ship master and crew to exercise extra vigilance when transiting the waters off Eastern Sabah and in the Sulu-Celebes Seas, in particular waters off Sibutu Island.

**Incidents: Nothing significant to report.**

### ReCAAP Warns of Kidnapping Danger Near Philippines

An incident this week in the region of the Sulu-Celebes seas near the Philippines has prompted ReCAAP, the regional co-operation on security in the region, to renew its warnings of the potential for boarding and kidnappings. Although the last kidnapping in the region was over a year ago, ReCAAP has reiterated its warning about the Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf Group/Kidnap-for-Ransom Group, which has targetted crews on slow-moving ships as well as wealthy businessmen ashore.

### 14 Abu Sayyaf men surrender in Sulu

The Philippine military said 14 Abu Sayyaf terrorists surrendered in the southern province of Sulu with security officials promising them aid despite the group's violent campaign in the restive region. Brig. Gen. Antonio Bautista, commander of the 1101st Infantry Brigade, said the terrorists also yielded assorted weapons, mostly old firearms, on March 8 during a ceremony witnessed by senior commanders at the army headquarters in Talipao town.

### Japan Mulls Military Response Against China's Increased Activity Near Senkaku: Report

Japan is reportedly considering a response to increased Chinese activity near the Tokyo-administered Senkaku islands, also known as the Diaoyu Islands in mainland China. According to reports, China has stepped up its presence near the disputed islands from twice a month last year to twice a week in 2021.

### US Hails German Warship Plan to Sail South China Sea

The United States has welcomed plans by NATO ally Germany to sail a warship across the contested South China Sea, calling it welcome support for a "rules-based international order"

in the region, something Washington says is threatened by China. German government officials said last week that a German frigate would set sail for Asia in August and, on its return journey, become the first German warship to cross the South China Sea since 2002.

### US to build anti-China missile network along first island chain

The U.S. will bolster its conventional deterrence against China, establishing a network of precision-strike missiles along the so-called first island chain as part of \$27.4 billion in spending to be considered for the Indo-Pacific theater over the next six years, Nikkei Asia reported, in a further sign of increasing tension in the region.

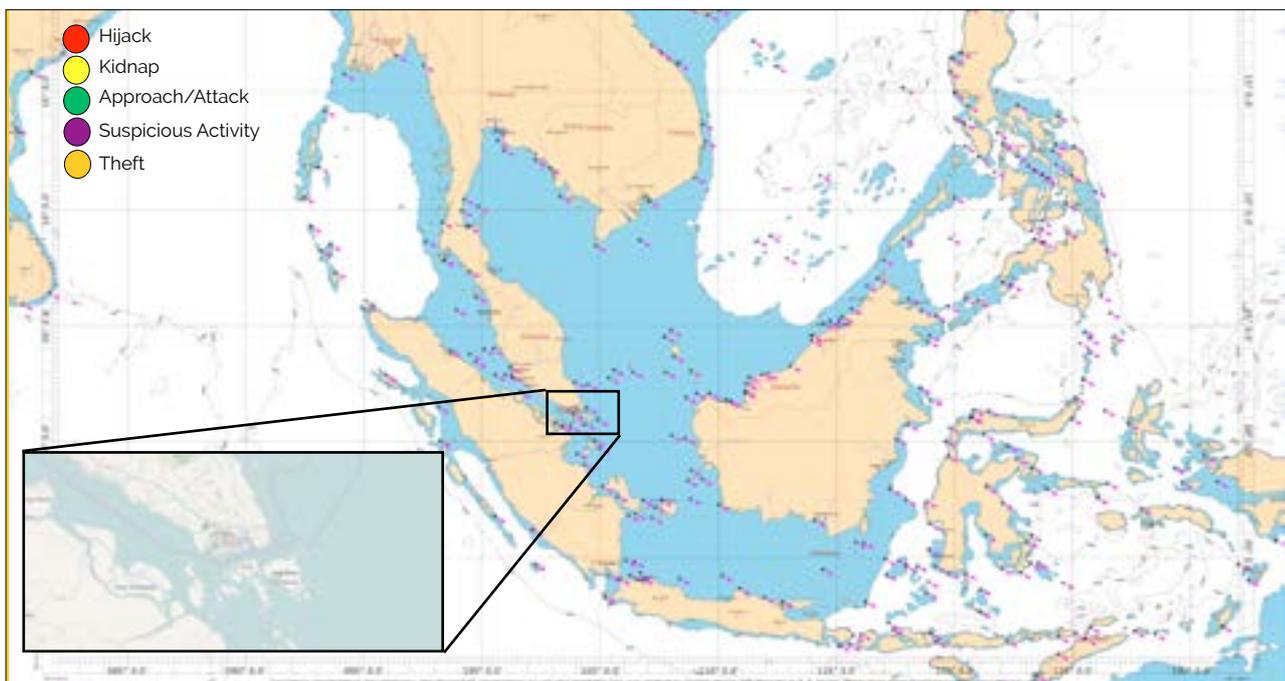
### MMEA tracking Vietnamese fishing crew who escaped after their boats sank

The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) is tracking Vietnamese fishermen from two foreign boats which sank in Kudat waters. The fishermen were believed to have escaped with the help of other foreign vessels.

### Royal Malaysian Navy launches Unmanned Aerial System to boost surveillance

The Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) created history after it launched the 601 Squadron Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) at the Sepanggar Naval Base in Sepanggar, on Mar. 4th. Chief of Navy, Admiral Tan Sri Mohd Reza Mohd Sany said RMN had received 12 units of ScanEagle Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) aircraft from the United States government under the Maritime Security Initiative (MSI).

To see MAST's services in the region, [please click here](#).



## European Waters

Fifty people in three small boats were intercepted while attempting to cross the English Channel on Sunday 7th. The Home Office confirmed a fourth boat was returned to France, and French authorities prevented a fifth crossing by a further 17 people in a dinghy. Border Force has detained more than 650 people trying to cross the Channel in small boats so far during 2021.

### 100 illegal migrants rescued off Libyan coast over past week: IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) on Monday 8th said that 100 illegal migrants have been rescued off the Libyan coast over the past week. These migrants were intercepted at sea and returned to Libya on March 2-8, said IOM. A total of 4,129 illegal migrants, including 293 women and 224 children, have been rescued and returned to Libya so far this year, it said.

### 115 people make perilous Channel crossing to Kent

More than 100 people made the risky journey across the English Channel to Kent's shores on Mar. 8th. The Home Office confirmed 115 people have made the dangerous crossing to Dover in seven separate incidents - while French authorities intercepted a further 38 people attempting to cross.

### Greenpeace drops boulders off the UK coast

Activists on a Greenpeace ship have constructed an underwater "boulder barrier" to stop harmful fishing practices in one of UK's Marine Protected areas. The environmental group completed the barrier in secret last week. It aims to close off 55 square miles of offshore Brighton, one fifth of its total area, because of threats from destructive bottom trawling. It is hoped that it will obstruct nets from reaching the sea bed and impacting other ocean life.

### Former skipper who piloted small boat packed with migrants across the English Channel jailed

A former Iranian sea captain who risked his life and 12 other asylum seekers by steering them across the Channel has been jailed for four and a half years. Skipper Fariboz Rakei took a rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RHIB) across the Channel, one of the busiest waterways in the world, before they were intercepted by a Border Force coastal patrol vessel on September 7th last year, the UK's Daily Mail reported.

### Migrant feared dead and three others are rescued

A migrant is feared dead after a boat he was in trying to reach the UK capsized in the English Channel, charity officials say. The search for the man has been called off while three others were rescued and taken to hospital, according to Care4Calais, the Daily Mail reported on Mar. 5th.

### Refugee rescuers charged in Italy with complicity in people smuggling

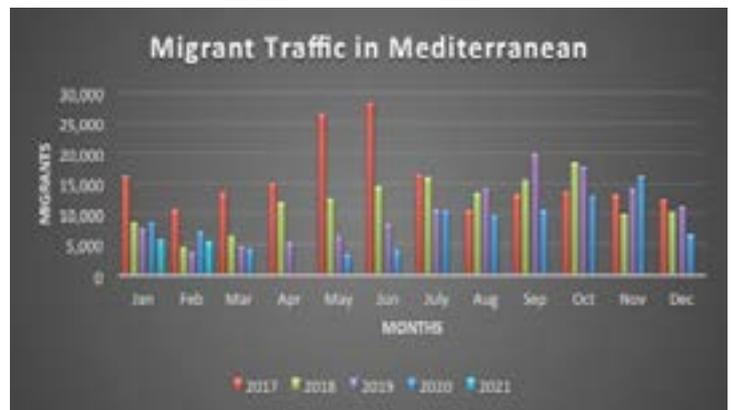
After an investigation lasting almost four years, Italian prosecutors have charged dozens of rescuers, from charities including Save the Children and Médecins Sans Frontières, who were accused of collaborating with people smugglers after saving thousands of people from drowning in the Mediterranean. Investigators in Trapani, Sicily, formally closed the inquiry on Monday and charged more than 20 people, including boat captains, heads of mission and legal representatives, with crimes carrying sentences of up to 20 years. The Guardian reported on Mar. 4th.

### More than 100 migrants rescued off Canary Isles

Spain's coast guard rescued 107 migrants from boats off the Canary Islands over the weekend as the migrant surge showed no letup on the Atlantic archipelago, a spokesman said Sunday 7th. A total of 56 migrants were plucked from two vessels on Saturday. One boat was found off the island of Tenerife carrying 15 men, while a second was intercepted off Gran Canaria carrying another 41 men, all of them from sub-Saharan Africa.

### Sea Watch 4 leaves Palermo after six months

After six months of administrative seizure at the port of Palermo, the Sea Watch 4 migrant-rescue ship operated by the German NGO in the Mediterranean left Sicily for the port of Burriana in Spain. In two weeks, one of the two vessels used for humanitarian operations will return to the Mediterranean. The release was possible thanks to an appeal filed by the lawyers of the NGO to an administrative court TAR in Palermo. "The administrative judges - explained the spokeswoman of Sea Watch Giorgia Linardi - have suspended the measure that blocked the vessel, ruling in favor of our request. While waiting for the European Court of Justice to rule on the case, both our ships can operate in the central Mediterranean".



Migrant crossings 2017-2020. Source: [UNHRC](https://www.unhcr.org/)

### The current migrant smuggling situation

A slight adjustment this week to the UNHCR crossing figures, which now record that just over 5,600 people crossed the Med in January and February. As the graph illustrates, February shows a slight increase which, given the weather, is concerning. Despite the ongoing political process towards peace and reconciliation within Libya, thousands of migrants remain in the country and little is being done to stop their attempts to cross. How Libya tackles that and how the EU can help in the months ahead are key questions which have remained unanswered for some time.



## Libya

A leaked document has revealed that the UK plans to slash aid to conflict-ridden countries including Libya by up to two-thirds. According to a report obtained by the openDemocracy website, the Foreign Office will reduce aid to Syria by 67 per cent, aid to Libya by 63 per cent, Somalia by 60 per cent and South Sudan by 59 per cent. Documents obtained by openDemocracy now suggest the total bilateral humanitarian aid programme will be cut from £1.5 billion to £900 million.

### Divided parliament to vote on Dbeibah's govt in Sirte

Scores of Libyan parliament members from both sides of the split country arrived in the coastal city of Sirte as Libya's divided parliament is scheduled to meet for a vote of confidence on the new interim government under Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah. It is meeting this week to debate giving confidence to a government announced by Dbeibah, who was designated prime minister last month through a political dialogue held in Geneva by the United Nations.

### New mass grave discovered in Qasr Bin Ghashir

The General Authority for Search and Identification of Missing Persons announced on Sunday 7th the discovery of yet another mass grave, which was unearthed in Qasr Bin Ghashir area, south of Tripoli. The authority said in a brief statement that its search teams were able to discover the mass grave in the Kazerma area of the Qasr Bin Ghashir region and that thus far, one body had been recovered from it.

### Egypt FM, UN envoy discuss political settlement in Libya

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry met on Sunday 7th with newly appointed UN special envoy for Libya Jan Kubis in Cairo, where they discussed the Libyan crisis and ways of achieving a political settlement in the war-torn country, said the Egyptian Foreign Ministry. During the meeting, Shoukry highlighted the necessity of continuing the current political path through holding the meeting of the House of Representatives to discuss the government formation, said Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Hafez in a statement.

### 5 + 5 Military Committee clears tons of mines from coastal road

The land mine clearance team of the 5 + 5 military committee has dismantled tons of mines from the region of Buwerat al-Hassoun-Abu Grain, in preparation for reopening the main coastal road in Libya linking the east and west parts of the country. The Officer in Charge of the demining file in the 5 + 5 Military Committee, Brigadier Muhammad Al-Turjuman said Saturday 6th that a total of five tons of mines and remnants of war have been extracted in a two-stage process.

### Prime Minister-designate names 35-member cabinet

Libya's designated prime minister Abdelhamid Dbeibah has proposed a large unity cabinet with 35 members, his office said on Friday 5th, ahead of a planned parliament meeting on Monday to debate ratifying his government. The Cabinet list has been subject to intense negotiation among Libya's warring factions and powerful regional and political leaders, but an official said talks continued over whether to reduce the number of ministers.

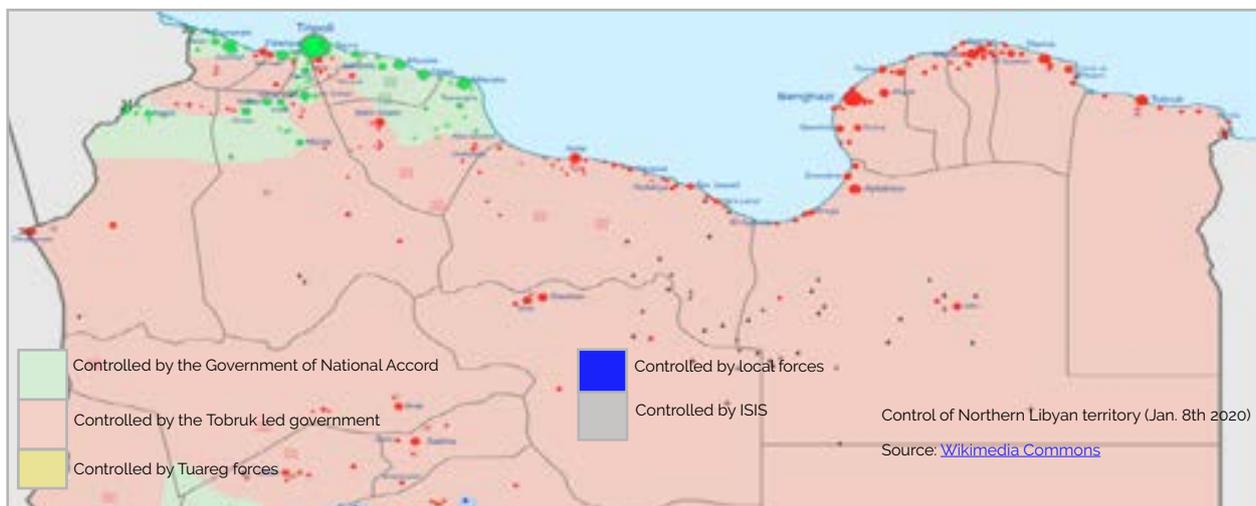
### Haftar commander destroys company headquarters in Benghazi, threatens to kill owner

Libyan activists have circulated a video on social media platforms showing Mahmoud AL-Werfalli, a commander of General Khalifa Haftar's militia, smashing into the headquarters of a car company in the eastern city of Benghazi, after storming it with his military force. AL-Werfalli, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for committing war crimes, sent a video message to the company owner who lives abroad, threatening to kill him if he ever returns home.

### Libya's oil production climb continues, hits 1.3 million barrels

The head of the National Oil Corporation, Mustafa Sanallah expected Libya's oil production to continue rising, but this requires more funding, security, and stability, Sanallah said. In an interview with TRT Arabi TV, Sanalla revealed that Libya's oil production has hit one million three hundred thousand barrels, indicating that if world prices continue to climb, with the increase in production, Libya would establish new records in its revenues.

To read MAST's Libyan Country report on MASTOPEDIA, [please click here](#).





## Central and South America

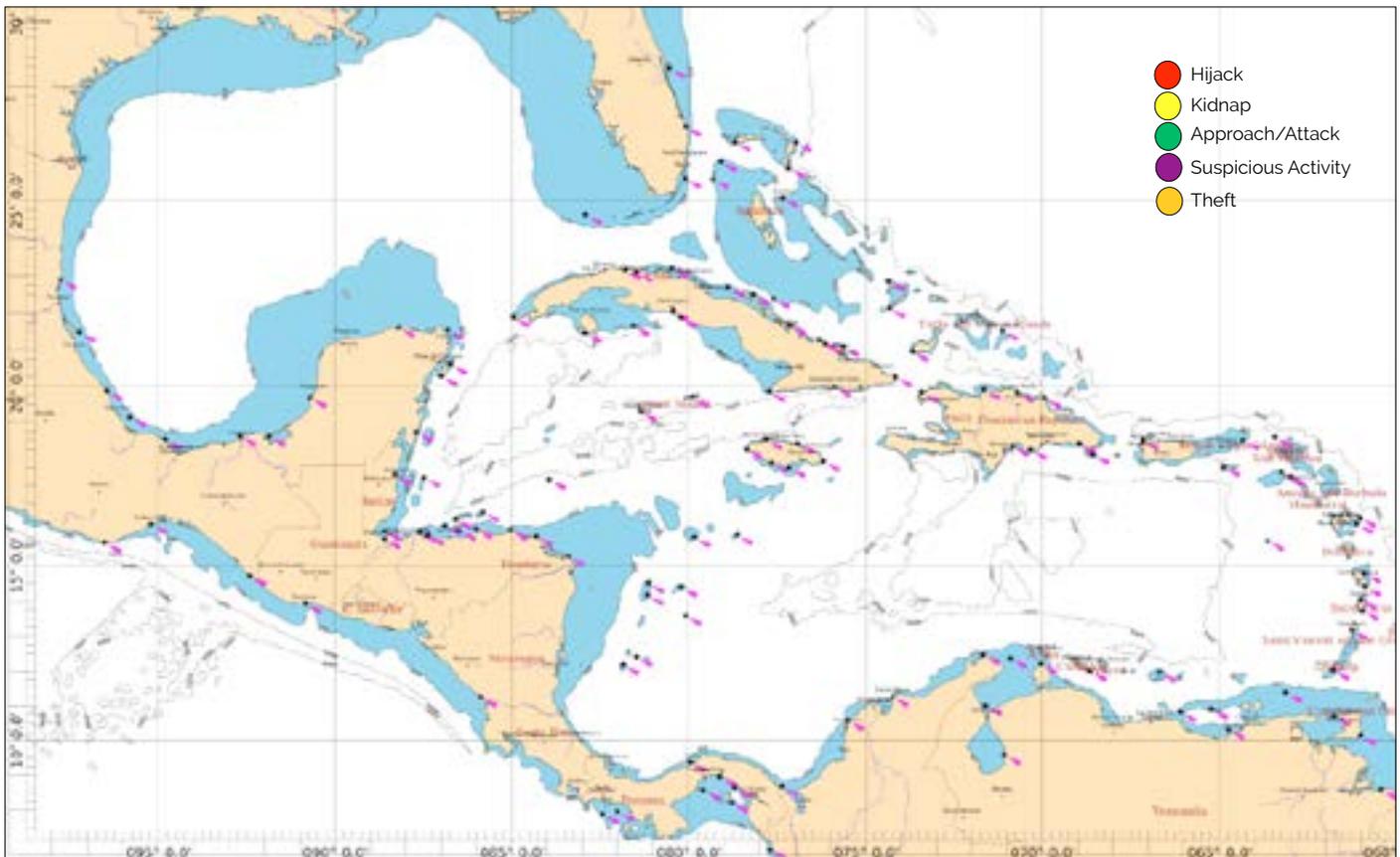
It's been over two weeks since retired Austrian national Christian "Gigi" Gusenbauer was attacked on his private island off the coast of Placencia. The private investor's home was infiltrated by sea pirates who made off with his boat, which was later found by police without its engine. On Mar. 4th, media in Belize reported that the key suspect in that crime has been detained. Acting Commandant of the Belize Coast Guard Gregory Soberanis spoke to the media about how they were able to apprehend the culprit with help from inter-agency partnerships.

**Incidents:** Nothing significant to report.

### Standing advice:

The repercussions of a vessel being caught acting as a mule with drugs stowed will depend on the type, amount and national laws, but may be disruptive and costly. When and if operating in these areas, especially Columbia and Peru, it is advised that:

- Potential stowage areas such as rudder shafts are denied as far as possible, and/or routinely searched.
- Access points are closely monitored by a vigilant watch for the duration of the vessel's call at port.





## Severe Weather Warnings

Warnings detailed on this page are from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and are issued by respective Regional Specialised Metrological Centres, Tropical Cyclone Centres or National Meteorological Services. For further information on severe weather warnings please click [here](#).

### South-West Indian Ocean



Note: The forecasts are correct as of the day before publication. For latest updates please follow the provided links.