

# Weekly Security & Risk Report

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Issue 272 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.

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Editor: David Rider  
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## Gulf of Guinea

Pirates have kidnapped 15 crew members from a chemical tanker in the Gulf of Guinea after boarding the vessel off the coast of Benin, the ship's Dutch owners said on Friday 12th. The latest incident of high-seas piracy happened on Thursday afternoon around 210 nautical miles (389 kilometres) south of Cotonou when pirates attacked the chemical tanker Davide B, the De Poli tanker company said.

### Incidents:

1. Underway Luxembourg-flagged offshore supply vessel attacked and boarded by pirates at 0731 UTC in position 02:58N - 002:53E, around 208nm South of Lagos, Nigeria. Crew mustered in citadel to await nearby patrol vessel. Pirates depart; supply vessel now under escort and crew safe at 12:43 UTC. Reported (MDAT) 14th Mar.
2. Underway Malta-flagged chemical tanker reported boarded by nine armed pirates at 1512 UTC in position 02:48N - 002:36E, approx 214nm south of Cotonou, Benin. Unconfirmed report states 15 crew kidnapped. Pirates reported escaping at 0832 UTC (12 Mar). Tanker now under escort. Reported (MDAT/Source) 11th Mar.
3. An anchored Singapore-flagged offshore drill ship was boarded by four unauthorised persons at 0120 UTC in position 04:44.1N - 001:35.6W, Takoradi Anchorage, Ghana. Alert crew noticed the persons and informed the bridge. Incident reported to local port authorities and a security patrol team was dispatched. Nothing reported stolen. Reported (IMB) 11th Mar.
4. Unnoticed, robbers boarded an anchored Cyprus-flagged container ship at 0700 UTC in position 08:44.5S - 013:15.1E, Luanda Anchorage, Angola. The theft was noticed by the duty Bosun during routine rounds. Crew conducted search and reported ship's properties stolen. Incident reported to local agent. Reported (IMB) 10th Mar.

### Nigerian Navy court martials 13 officers for alleged oil theft

The Nigerian Navy (NN) on Friday 12th began the court martial of 13 officers for alleged economic sabotage against the country. The officers were alleged to have colluded with vandals and other oil thieves working against the interest of Nigeria. Among those brought before the court martial presided over by Rear Admiral Zakariyya Muhammad were a Navy Captain, a Commander, Lieutenant Commander, Sub-Lieutenants and three ratings.

### Nigerian Navy begins Exercise Cold Waters

The Nigerian Navy as part of efforts to assess the combat readiness of the its' men towards tackling maritime insecurity, especially crude oil theft and piracy within the Central Naval Command (CNC) Area of Operations (AOR), has flagged off exercise COLD WATERS (EX AMI JIJI). Rear Admiral Saidu Garba, who flagged off the exercise, disclosed that the overall objective is to work towards fulfilling the CNC mandate of securing the nation's maritime space.

### Ghana: Developing Maritime Security Culture Course held

The eight-day programme is being attended by 21 participants drawn from 10 countries drawn from West and Central Africa; namely Ghana, Togo, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, Cameroun, and Congo Brazzaville.

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:

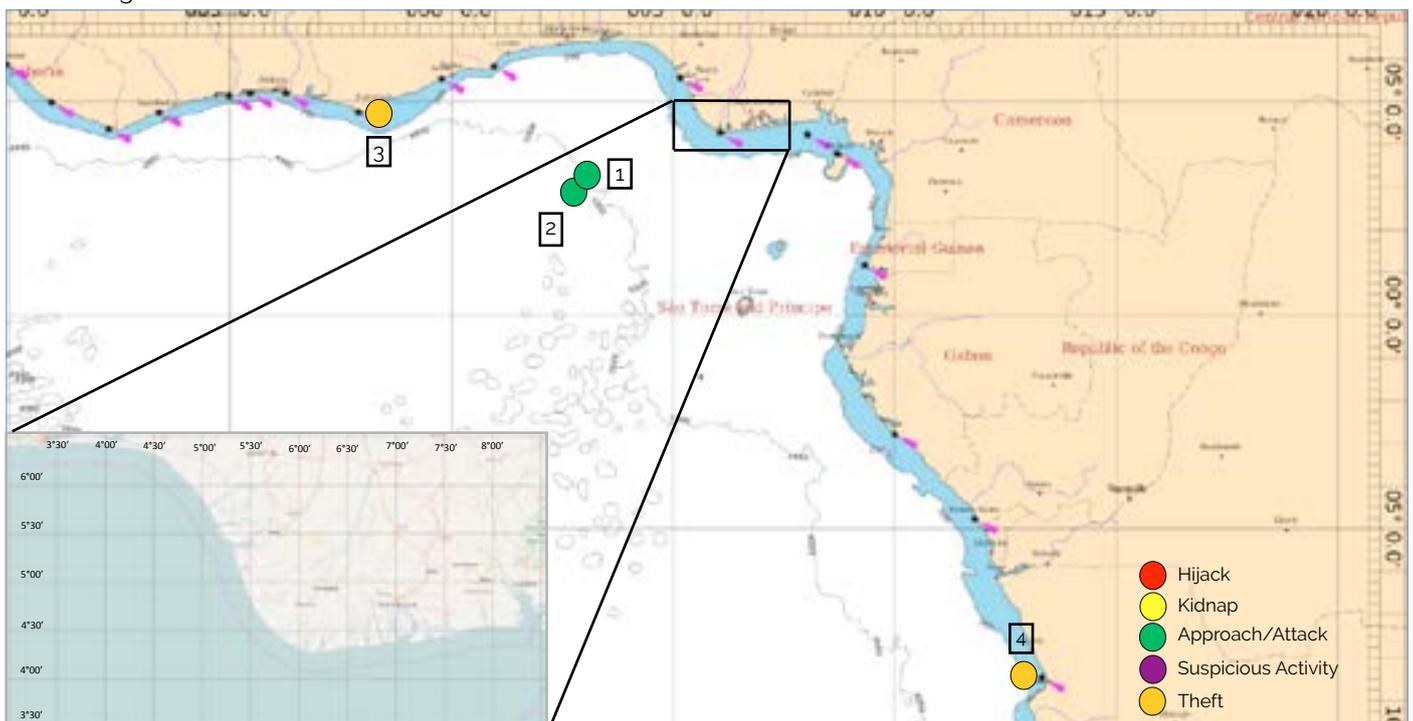
Incidents reported: 19 (MDAT-GoG)  
Crew kidnapped: 39 (OCEANUSLive)  
Vessels hijacked: 1 (MDAT-GoG)

#### 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

Israel has targeted at least a dozen vessels bound for Syria and mostly carrying Iranian oil out of concern that petroleum profits are funding extremism in the Middle East, U.S. and regional officials say, in a new front in the conflict between Israel and Iran. Since late 2019, Israel has used weaponry including water mines to strike Iranian vessels or those carrying Iranian cargo as they navigate toward Syria in the Red Sea and in other areas of the region, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday 12th.

**Incidents: Nothing significant to report.**

### Saldanha 'cocaine ship' suspects stay behind bars until next court date

The case against 10 men accused of smuggling nearly a ton of cocaine into South Africa aboard a ship in Saldanha Bay Harbour has been postponed until Mar. 23rd. The 11 Bulgarians and Myanmarers on board were arrested when special forces troops pounced on the Windward in Saldanha Bay two weeks ago and found 973kg of cocaine in three hiding places. The vessel had once been used as a floating armoury, South African media reported.

### Kenya 'won't hand over' port to China to pay debt

Kenya's Finance Minister, Ukur Yatani, has denied reports that the country risks losing its main port to China should it fail to pay huge loans advanced for the construction of a new railway line. A local newspaper reported on Monday 15th that Chinese lenders could take control of the port of Mombasa if Kenya defaults on the \$3.2bn (£2.3bn) loan.

### Germany quits surveillance in Horn of Africa

Germany's only maritime surveillance plane is to leave Djibouti, where it has been conducting counter-piracy missions around the Horn of Africa alongside its European allies as part of Operation Atalanta. The aircraft may be redeployed to the Mediterranean to watch over Libyan waters, Africa Intelligence reported on Mar. 12th.

### Crowd Attacks Iran Coast Guard after Smuggler Shot

Protesters attacked a coast guard station in in the Kouhestak district of southern Iran after a patrol from the force shot and killed a fuel smuggler, the semiofficial Fars news agency re-

ported on Saturday 13th. The report said the attack happened Friday when coast guard patrols shot at vessels smuggling fuel to neighboring countries, killing at least one smuggler.

### U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Participates in Oman-led Exercise

The Royal Navy of Oman, Royal Air Force of Oman, United Kingdom Royal Navy, France Marine Nationale and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) recently participated in an Oman-led training exercise. The annual Oman-led surface, air and mine countermeasures multilateral exercise is designed to strengthen capabilities in underwater diving, searching, mine identification, demolition and maritime explosive ordnance disposal operations.

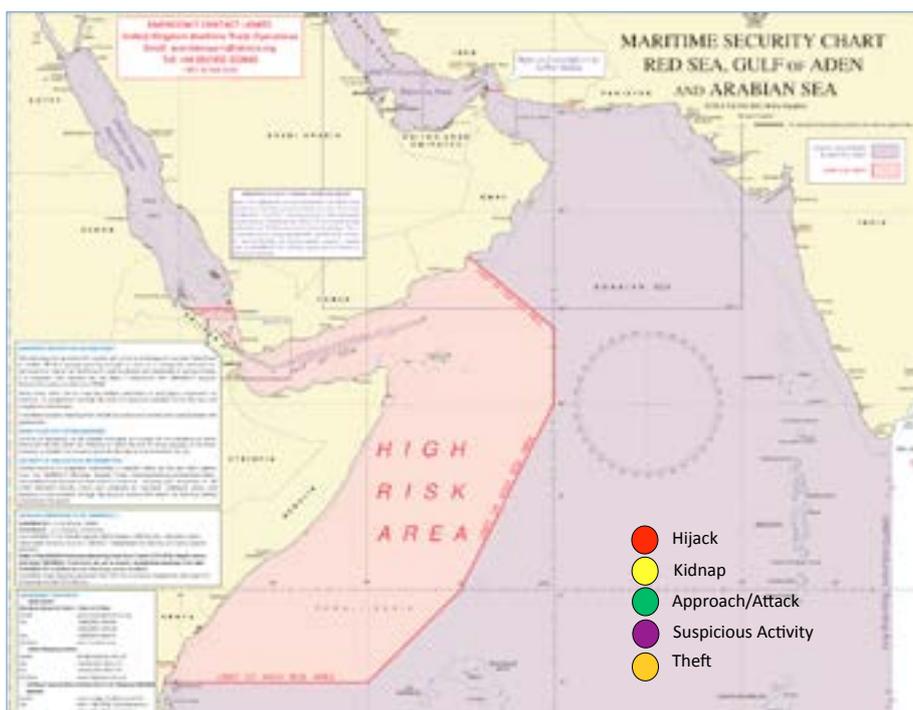
### Iran's Navy Equipped with Various Smart Missiles

Commander of the Iranian Navy said his forces have obtained a whole host of military equipment, including various types of smart missiles. During a visit to a naval academy in the northern port city of Noshahr on Friday, Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said the Iranian Navy has acquired "a collection of equipment" thanks to the tireless efforts of its servicemen.

### Indian naval ship Shardul in Mauritius to enhance military ties

As part of enhancing military cooperation with the friendly nations, Indian Naval Ship Shardul, a ship of the First Training Squadron of the Indian Navy, is visiting Port Louis in Mauritius, the force said on Mar. 11th. The ship will undertake exclusive economic zone surveillance of Mauritius, in coordination with the Mauritian National Coast Guard as part of the deployment.

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





## Somalia

Kenya will not take part in this week's hearings over its maritime border dispute with Somalia at the International Court of Justice, government sources have told the BBC. Kenya accuses the ICJ of bias in the case, which concerns a 62,000 sq miles (160,000 sq km) triangle in the Indian Ocean. The area is thought to be rich in oil and gas. Kenya had asked for the case to be delayed while it briefed a new legal team, and also cited the coronavirus pandemic, but the ICJ ruled the case should be heard virtually on Monday 15th.

### Somalia receives 300,000 doses of Covid vaccine

Somalia on Monday 15th received its first shipment of 300,000 doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, destined for front-line workers and those most at risk from Covid-19, the government said in a statement. The conflict-torn nation has seen coronavirus cases soar 77 percent over the past month, to 9,190, while deaths have more than doubled to a total of 367.

### Al Shabaab claims deadly bomb attack

Al Shabaab militants on Saturday (13th) night targeted a senior military official in Mogadishu, in the latest wave of violence targeting government officials and members of the military, who are essential in security operations. Reports indicate that it took place around Afisyooni, where Somali leaders are due to convene a meeting on the pre-election crisis this week. This is the second attack within the area, an indication that the militants are keen to paralyze talks.

### Dead Fish Wash Up On Beach In Southern Somalia, Toxic Dump Feared

On Friday 12th morning, Kismayo residents who went to Lido beach for a morning swim encountered the unusual sight of many dead fish strewn along the beach. Fish sellers in Kismayo believe that the illegal dumping of toxic waste along the Somali coastline has "resulted in the death of (the) fish that washed up on Kismayo beach." Jubaland authorities in the Kismayo area have yet to visit Kismayo beach or order an investigation into the causes behind the dead fish scattered around

the beach. Images posted on social media show dozens of fish of various species dead on the beach.

### Millions Face Acute Hunger in Somalia as Drought Widens

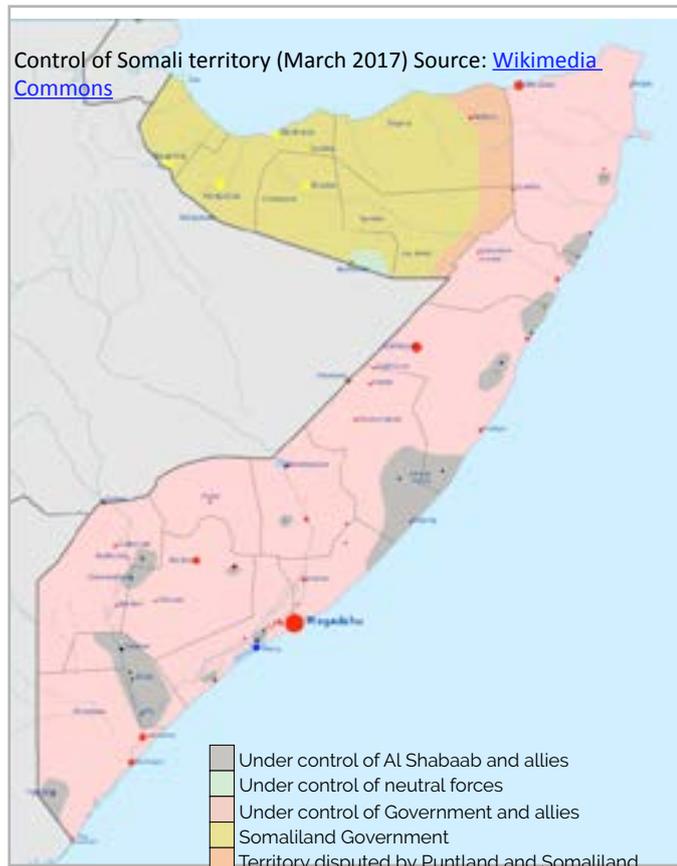
The U.N. office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs, OCHA, reports an estimated 2.7 million Somalis will face severe food shortages over the coming months as drought conditions affect more areas in the country. The U.N. reports pre-drought conditions already can be seen in parts of Somaliland, Puntland, Hirshabelle, Galmudug and Jubaland states.

### UN urges Somalia elections, extends peacekeeping mission

The UN Security Council on Friday 12th adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia until December, and called on Somali authorities to hold elections "without further delay." The 13-page text drafted by Britain was unanimously approved by the 15 members of the Council, diplomatic sources said.

### 18 Al Shabab militants killed in southern Somalia

The Somali National Army (SNA) on Thursday 11th killed 18 Al Shabab militants and injured several others during operations in several locations in Lower Shabelle region, southern Somalia, local media reported. SNA Operation Commander in the region, Abdalla Mustaf told the state news agency, SONNA that the operations were aimed at neutralizing terrorists who often plant landmines on the main roads in the region.



### Analysis

On 8th February 2021, the Council of Presidential Candidates announced that they no longer recognise Mohamed as the President of Somalia since his constitutional term in office expired on 8th February without any agreement on the path toward elections to replace him. James Swan, the Special Representative and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia, confirmed that the electoral implementation tensions had been compounded by questions over the legitimacy of Mohamed's mandate following the expiry of his constitutional term in office, and that the growing political tensions threatened Somalia's State-building progress and even security. He encouraged Somalia's political leaders to "pull back from confrontation and avoid risky winner-take-all tactics". Over the past 6 weeks there have been numerous attacks against politicians, including former high ranking ministers and leaders, and attacks on journalists in Somalia. Specifically, Amnesty International has called on the Somali authorities to bring an end to the arbitrary arrest and persecution of journalists in Puntland.

Given the blatant disregard for the constitution by the current President, Somalia's political future as a nation state remains uncertain. Indeed, regional fragmentation may once again be on the cards, and this can only be to the benefit of Al Shabaab terrorists as well as criminal organisations who may be interested at some point in a return to piracy in the Indian Ocean.

### Threat Assessment

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

Houthi rebels in Yemen announced that they had ruled out a US cease-fire plan, describing it as a plot to put the war-weary country in a more dangerous situation. Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam commented on the plan by Timothy Lenderking, US special envoy for Yemen, and said there was nothing new about the proposal and it reflected the point of view of Saudi Arabia and the UN, according to a report by AL-Masirah TV, media reported on Mar. 13th.

### Yemen national army cuts off Houthi supply route, gains more ground

The Yemeni army on Monday 15th were able to cut off Houthi supply routes northwest of the capital Sanaa, Al Arabiya reported. Saudi-led coalition warplanes supported the army by targeting a warehouse of weapons in Hajjah. Meanwhile, the Yemeni army gained more ground in Hajjah, pushing the Houthi militia back, Arab News reported.

### Houthis claim drone attack on airports in southern Saudi Arabia

Yemen's Houthi movement on Monday 15th said its armed drones had struck an airport and airbase in Saudi Arabia, with the Saudi-led coalition confirming it had intercepted an explosive drone. Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said three drones had hit military targets at Abha airport and the King Khalid airbase in Khamis Mushait.

### Yemen forces backed by Saudi coalition launch offensive against Houthis

Yemen's army backed by the Saudi-led coalition forces has begun a large-scale offensive in Abs district, Hajjah province, against the Houthi rebels. The offensive comes after years of a political and military stalemate during the six years of deadly civil war, Xinhua news agency reported on Monday 15th.

### Fierce Battles in Yemen's Hajjah as Hodeidah Clashes Threaten UN Truce

Battles continued on Sunday 14th between the national Yemeni army and the Iran-backed Houthi militias in the northwestern Hajjah province. The fierce fighting coincided with the Houthis firing ballistic missiles and armed drones towards liberated villages in the Taiz province, as well as heavy fighting in Hodeidah, which could threaten the current United Nations truce.

### Houthi missile attack kills three children in Yemen's Taiz

Three children and 15 soldiers died in a Houthi missile attack on Sunday 14th on a school in Yemen. Military sources said the school in Kadha district in the west of Taiz governorate had previously been used as a base by the Iran-backed militia, and

was recaptured when pro-government fighters seized Kadha last week.

### US to resume aid to northern Yemen

The United States announced on Friday 12th that it is resuming aid to the rebel-held northern Yemen in an effort to fend off a potential famine in the war-torn country. Washington said it will "cautiously resume" support to humanitarian groups working in the north of Yemen and monitor to make sure the Houthis aren't interfering with the aid deliveries, DW reported.

### Mass displacement fears as fighting intensifies in Marib

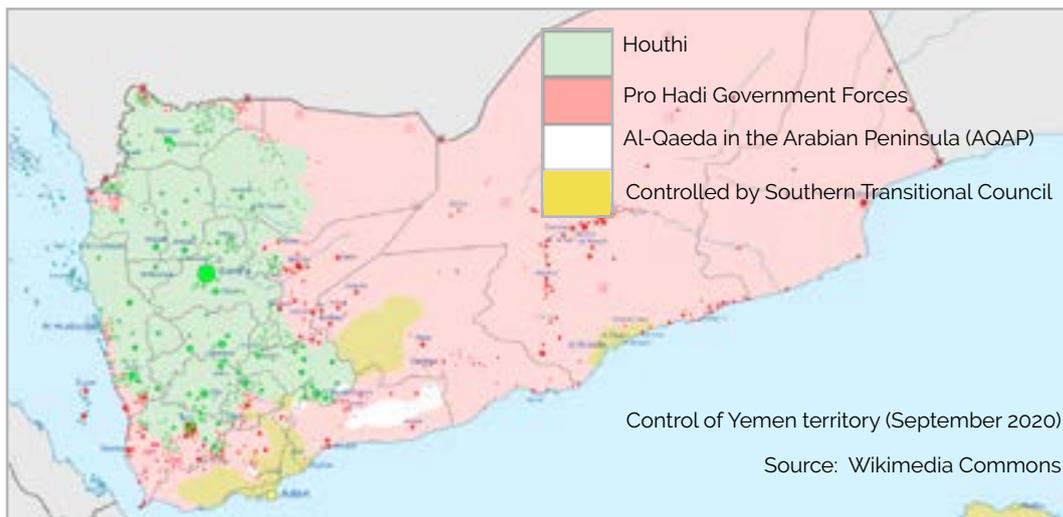
Residents in the Yemeni province of Marib are bracing for what could be the worst mass displacement of the war as a Houthi rebel offensive intensifies, leaving more than 2 million people trapped. Marib, which is controlled by parties loyal to the Yemeni government, has faced intermittent attacks from rebel forces over the last year as the Houthis have steadily gained ground in the area, The Guardian reported on Friday 12th.

### Army takes control of two strategic points in south

Yemeni security forces made significant progress by gaining control of two strategic points in the south after clashes with Iran-backed Houthis, the army said on Thursday 11th. Violent clashes erupted between government forces and Houthis in the Makbana and Al-Kedha regions in southwestern Taiz province, Taiz Axis Command of the Yemeni Armed Forces said in a statement.

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

Japan and the United States have shared serious concerns over rising tensions in the East and South China Seas, Japanese defence minister Nobuo Kishi said on Tuesday 16th. Kishi made the comments after talks with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who is visiting Tokyo, Reuters reported. Meanwhile, at this week's Two Sessions national assembly of the Chinese Communist Party, Chairman Xi Jinping reasserted his desire to build a world-beating fleet.

**Incidents: Nothing significant to report.**

### Sabah curfew extended until end of March

The order of confinement in the waters of seven districts in the Sabah East Safe Zone (ESSZONE) which ends tomorrow, is extended for another 14 days until Mar. 31st. "This order continues to ensure that the waters are not encroached on terrorists threatening the safety of international researchers conducting research and foreign tourists visiting resort islands. Information reveals groups carrying out Kidnapping For Ransom (KFR) activities and Abu Sayyaf groups are still trying to encroach into the area to commit kidnappings and other cross-border crimes," Sabah Police Commissioner Datuk Hazani Ghazali said in a media statement.

### 5 Abu Sayyaf bandits surrender in Sulu

Five Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits, including a minor, surrendered to government authorities in Sulu with the help of their relatives, military officials said Saturday 13th. Maj. Gen. William Gonzales, 11th Infantry Division commander, said the five surrendered to the 41st Infantry Battalion (IB) in Sitio Bato Habah, Barangay Matatal, Maimbung, Sulu on Friday.

### Taiwan nabs smuggled cigarettes near disputed South China Sea island

The Coast Guard Administration (CGA) found 1.63 million packs of smuggled cigarettes with a street value of more than NT\$100 million (US\$3.54 million) on a ship near the disputed Dongsha Islands in the South China Sea, reports said Friday 12th. The catch, just west of the islands, was made on a Togolese-registered freighter on March 6, CNA reported.

### PCG to build stations in Calayan Island

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) is set to construct stations

on Calayan Island, Cagayan to enhance maritime law enforcement, security, search and rescue, and environmental protection not only in the northern part of Luzon but also in the West Philippine Sea. In a Facebook post on Friday 12th, the PCG said Calayan Island, part of the Babuyan Islands, will soon be home to PCG stations and/or sub-stations to be constructed at a land area measuring approximately 1,000-square meters.

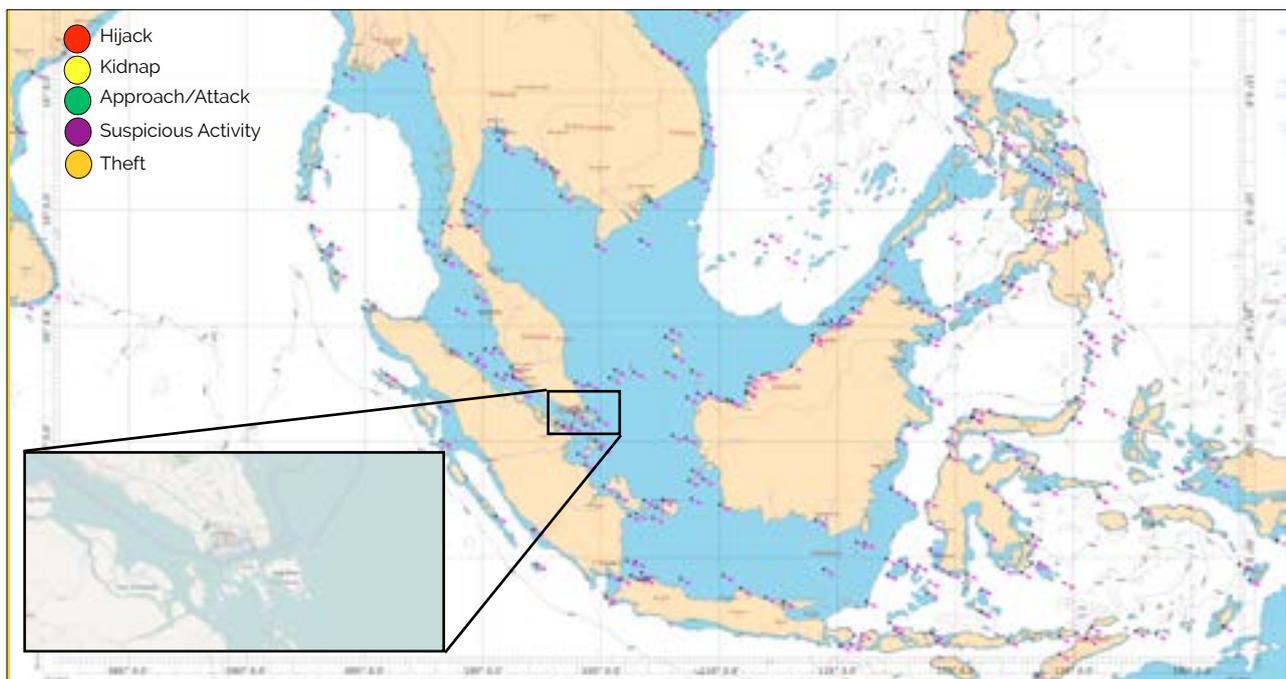
### MMEA detains Liberian registered tanker for allegedly anchoring illegally in Perak

The Perak state division of Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) on Saturday (13 March) said it detained a Liberian flagged tanker for allegedly anchoring without a permit on Friday 12th. "The vessel was discovered 30.2 nautical miles southeast of Pulau Jarak at 16.15 by the APMM Subang Air Station's patrol team who then notified us of the vessel behaving suspiciously," said Maritime Captain Shahrizan bin Raman, Director, MMEA Perak.

### Indonesia adds two more patrol vessels to combat illegal fishing

The Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry of Indonesia has launched two new patrol ships to fight against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in its waters, Antara News reported. The ships, named Hiu 16 and Hiu 17, will conduct routine patrols in the Malacca Strait and North Natuna Sea, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry Director of Fleet Monitoring and Operations Pung Nugroho Saksono was quoted as saying.

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





## European Waters

An Iranian cargo vessel was targeted this week in a "terrorist attack" in the Mediterranean Sea, the country's state TV reported on Friday 12th. There were no casualties in the explosion, the report said. The report quoted Ali Ghiasian, spokesman for the state shipping line, as saying that Wednesday's attack damaged Shahr-e Kord, a commercial vessel traveling to Europe. Ghiasian said an "explosives device" damaged the hull of the ship and set off a small fire that was quickly extinguished.

### Border Force patrol boat taken off migrant route

A Border Force cutter that patrols the Channel is being taken out of service for two months for repairs at a time when ministers are expecting a surge in migrant crossings. HMC Vigilant, one of five cutters that detect and deter illegal immigration and smuggling, will be out of service from the end of this month until the end of May. The Border Force has a further six vessels patrolling UK and international waters.

### Over 4,000 illegal migrants rescued off Libyan coast so far in 2021: IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) on Monday 15th said that a total of 4,129 illegal migrants have been rescued and returned to Libya so far in 2021. The rescued migrants include 293 women and 215 children, IOM said, adding that 73 migrants died and 159 others went missing on the Central Mediterranean route so far this year. A total of 11,891 illegal migrants were rescued and returned to Libya in 2020, IOM estimates, adding that 381 migrants died and 597 went missing on the Central Mediterranean route during the year.

### Turkey tells Israel, Greece, EU to seek permission for work in east Med waters

Turkey has told Israel, Greece and the European Union to seek its permission before assuming work on a proposed undersea power cable in disputed eastern Mediterranean waters, Turkish state media reported on Monday 15th. Cyprus, Israel and Greece last week signed an initial agreement on laying the world's longest undersea power cable, linking their electricity grids.

### Germany, Turkey Seen Revising EU Refugee Deal, Greece Left Out

Nearly five years after a deal struck by the European Union for Turkey to contain refugees and migrants - which didn't work and saw scores of thousands land on Greek islands - Germany is reportedly trying to rework it. The German business newspaper Handelsblatt said Germany and Turkey are in private talks to revise the agreement - bypassing Greece although it's holding more than 100,000 refugees and migrants, most on the mainland. Those negotiations are going on as Greek and Turkish officials were set to meet for a 62nd round of exploratory talks, those aimed at trying to settle differences over competing claims to the Aegean and East Mediterranean, the National Herald reported.

### Central Mediterranean: Three migrant deaths per day, UN agencies say

At least 39 migrants died in shipwrecks off Tunisia last week. Now, the UN migration and refugee agencies are calling for a new rescue system in the Mediterranean. On average, there have been three deaths on the route from Northern Africa to Italy every day thus far in 2021. The UN migration agency IOM and the UN refugee agency UNHCR issued a statement on Wednesday, saying that the capsizing of two boats off Tunisia's shores on Tuesday underscored the need for search and rescue systems to prevent further deaths in the Mediterranean Sea.

### 187 migrants rescued off Italy's Lampedusa island

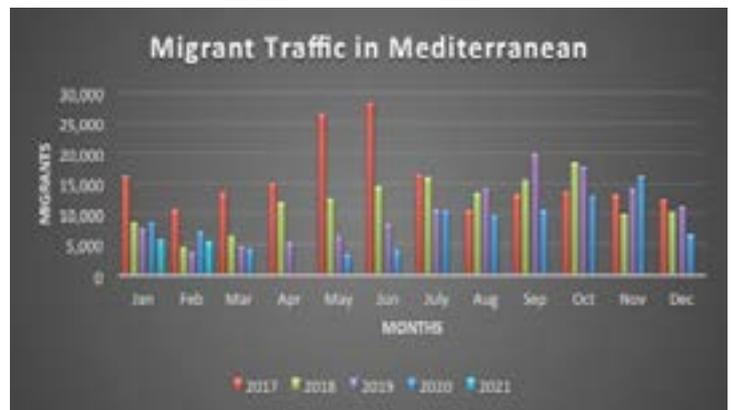
Italian authorities say they have intercepted 187 migrants on three boats near the coast of Lampedusa and brought them to safety. The rescues come as the number of migrants risking the Mediterranean crossing to Europe is rising. Within the space of several hours on Tuesday (March 9th), Italian coast guards reportedly discovered three boats with a total of 187 people and subsequently brought them to Italy. According to Italian news agency Adnkronos, many of the rescuees are from Africa.

### US welcomes efforts to ease tensions in Eastern Mediterranean

The United States has welcomed recent efforts to tamp down tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, voicing optimism that the status quo can lead to a resolution of ongoing disputes. Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. has watched with concern the actions taken in the Eastern Mediterranean, stressing that energy and territorial disputes be resolved "peacefully, diplomatically, not military and certainly not through provocative actions."

### 15 Libyan Migrants die during crossing attempt

According to UNHCR, the small vessel started taking in water 15 hours after the journey began. Eight people drowned before rescuers spotted the distressed site. Rescuers transported the remaining survivors to the Sicilian port town of Porto Empedocle in Italy. The vessel was a rubber boat carrying at least 110 people who had departed from the Libyan coastal town of Zawiyah on Friday 12th, Safa Msehli, a spokeswoman for the IOM, stated.



Migrant crossings 2017-2020. Source: [UNHCR](#)

### The current migrant smuggling situation

The report of an Iranian vessel suffering a suspected 'terrorist attack' in the Mediterranean last week bears further investigation, and MAST hopes that a full report will be available in due course. In light of the report in the Wall Street Journal that Israeli forces had targeted Iranian assets, it takes in new weight and could significantly impact geopolitics in a region where cool heads are always welcome.

While there have been no reports of migrants crossing the English Channel in recent days, deaths in the Med sadly continue, with little movement from littoral states to prevent the incidents at sea.



# Libya

The United Nations Security Council has called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya "without further delay" in a unanimously approved declaration. It also welcomed the Libyan parliament's approval of a new unified government on Wednesday 10th, which is set to lead the North African country to December elections after a decade of conflict following the removal of dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

## Libya's new unity gov't sworn in by parliament

Libya's new unity government headed by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh was sworn in on Monday 15th before the Libyan parliament in Tobruk city in eastern Libya. Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Libyan lawmaker Mohammad al-Ra'eedh said more than 100 MPs attended the swearing-in session. Last week, the Libyan parliament granted a vote of confidence to Dbeibeh's government with 132 votes of the 133 lawmakers who attended the session.

## Eastern Libya forces say arrested top Daesh figure

Forces loyal to Libyan eastern commander Khalifa Haftar announced on Sunday 14th the arrest of a top Daesh figure in the south of the North African country. The eastern-based marshal's forces led an operation in the southern desert town of Ubari targeting the "most prominent leader" of Daesh in Libya, Mohamed Miloud Mohamed — who goes by Abu Omar — leading to his arrest, said a statement by Haftar's spokesman Ahmad Al-Mesmari.

## Three tons of war remnants detonated in Libya

The spokesman for the Sirte-Jufra Operations Room, Abdelhadi Drah, said military engineering teams had combed through the area from eastern Abu Grein onward to scour for explosive remnants of war (ERW) left by Khalifa Haftar's forces. Drah said the teams had detonated three tons of ERW found in the area so the amount of detonated ERW reached five tons as two tons were detonated last month near Buerat Al-Hassoun area, local media reported on Mar. 14th.

## Airstrikes target Libya's southern city of Ubari

Four airstrikes have targeted the southern Libyan city of Ubari early Sunday 14th, according to a local official. The attacks targeted various points close to the city center, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. According to the source, the first strike occurred at 4 am local time (02:00 GMT) and the latest at 7 am (05:00 GMT).

## Libya frees 47 illegal migrants from 'secret prison'

The Security Directorate in Libya's southern city of Kufra said on Sunday 14th that it had "liberated 47 illegal immigrants who were detained by human traffickers in a secret prison on the outskirts of the city." In an official statement, the office explained that the liberation of the hostages was carried out "through joint security work with our criminal investigation department, the city's shelter and deportation centre".

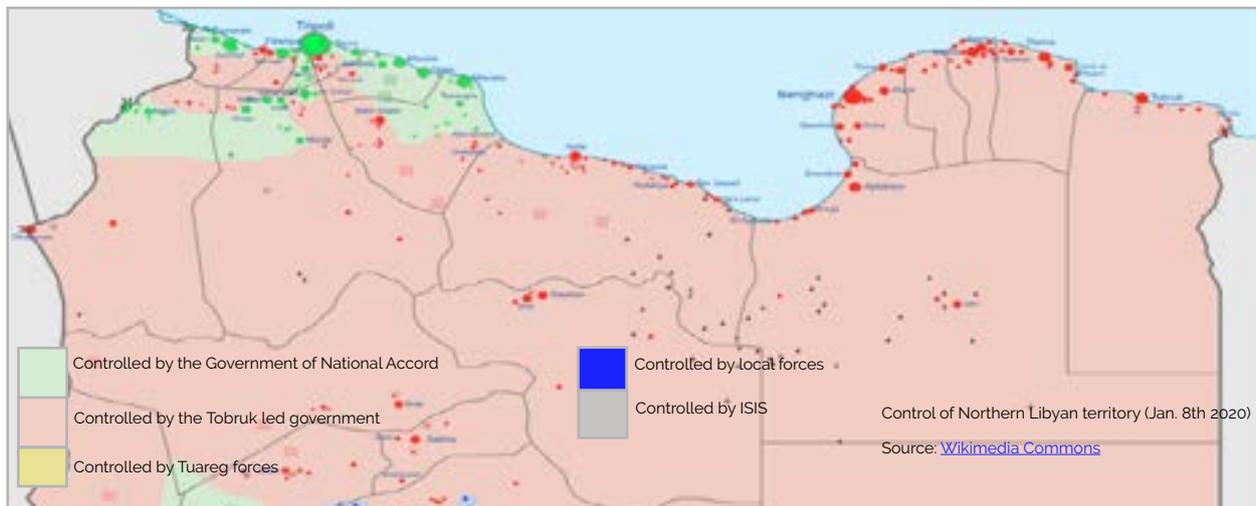
## Mercenaries back in Sirte: Libyan army

Mercenaries who withdrew outside of Sirte for a vote of confidence of Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh's government are back in the city, a Libyan official said on Saturday 13th. Abdulhadi Dirah, spokesman for the Sirte and Jufra Operation Department, told Anadolu Agency that the Wagner security company and Sudanese Jarjaweed militia were taken 4 miles (6 kilometers) outside the city. However, 12 buses carrying militia forces returned to the al-Ghardabiya base in Sirte and were deployed to the headquarters of Al Calid.

## EU welcomes Libya unity government, warns 'spoilers'

The European Union on Thursday 11th welcomed a vote by Libya's parliament to approve a unity government and warned it could sanction foreign or domestic "spoilers" who undermine peace efforts. "This is a significant breakthrough that creates the conditions to reunify institutions in Libya and lead the country toward national elections on 24 December," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement on behalf of the 27 member states.

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





## Central and South America

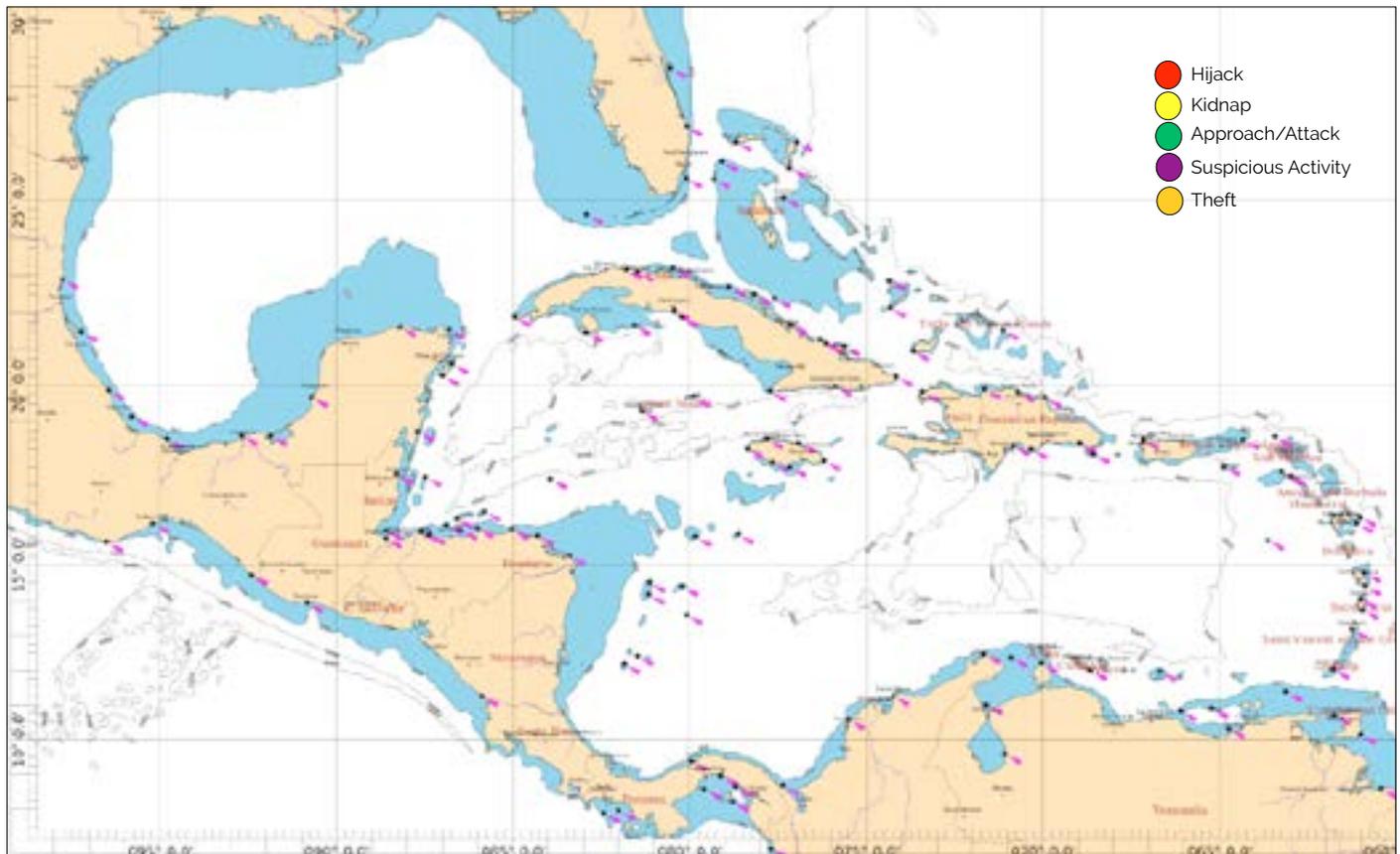
Friends of a woman who is missing from a yacht in the Caribbean have called for an "urgent" search of the boat. Sarm Heslop, 41, from Southampton, was last seen on 7th March onboard Siren Song, a catamaran moored off the coast of St John in the US Virgin Islands. "We understand that even now the boat has not been searched by the police," her friends in the UK have said. She had been staying with her American boyfriend and was reported missing on 8th March, sparking a police search.

**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.