

# Weekly Security & Risk Report

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Issue 279 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.

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# Gulf of Guinea

Mercury Maritime Concession Company (MMCC) Limited, the promoter of the proposed \$2.9 billion Escravos Seaport Industrial Complex (ESIC-1) in Nigeria's Delta State, has said that the project would help to decongest Lagos ports while attracting about \$50 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) to Nigeria when completed. The chairman of MMCC, Rear Admiral Andrew Okoja, (rtd) said that the project would generate about 40,000 jobs upon completion and eliminate criminality such as piracy in the region, especially as the Nigerian Navy would be present to protect the businesses.

## Incidents:

**1.** Duty crew onboard an anchored container ship noticed two unauthorised persons on the forecastle deck and notified the bridge at 0100 UTC in position 08:41.3S – 013:17.7E, Luanda Anchorage, Angola. Ship's horn sounded, crew mustered and a search was carried out. Incident reported to port authorities and a patrol boat was dispatched to investigate. Nothing reported stolen. Reported (IMB) 29th Apr.

**2.** Late Report: Small boat activity reported at 0938 UTC in position 03:41N – 003:33E, around 165nm South of Lagos, Nigeria. Small boat w/ eight POB suspected of approach to vessel underway. Sighting reported by naval assets. Small boat seen entering Nigerian TTW at 1233 UTC. Extreme caution and/or maintaining safe distance recommended. Reported (MDAT) 21st Apr.

## Nigerian military issues warning to coup plotters

The Nigerian military has dismissed a suggestion that it should take over the running of the country given the current security problems. "The Military High Command wishes to use this opportunity to warn misguided politicians who nurse the inordinate ambition to rule this country outside the ballot box to banish such thoughts as the military under the current leadership remain resolute in the defence of Nigeria's democracy and its growth," spokesperson Brig-Gen Onyema Nwachukwu said in a statement on Tuesday May 4th.

## NIMASA Recruits 250 Cadets To Man Coastal Platforms

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) says it has recruited 250 new cadets to man its various platforms in Lagos and Bayelsa coastal platforms. NIMASA said the recruitment exercise was part of the current drive to develop local capacity for improved operations. The Director-General, Dr Bashir Jamoh said 250 cadets would be sent for

trainings before their deployment to coastal areas.

## NIMASA To Launch Deep Blue Project

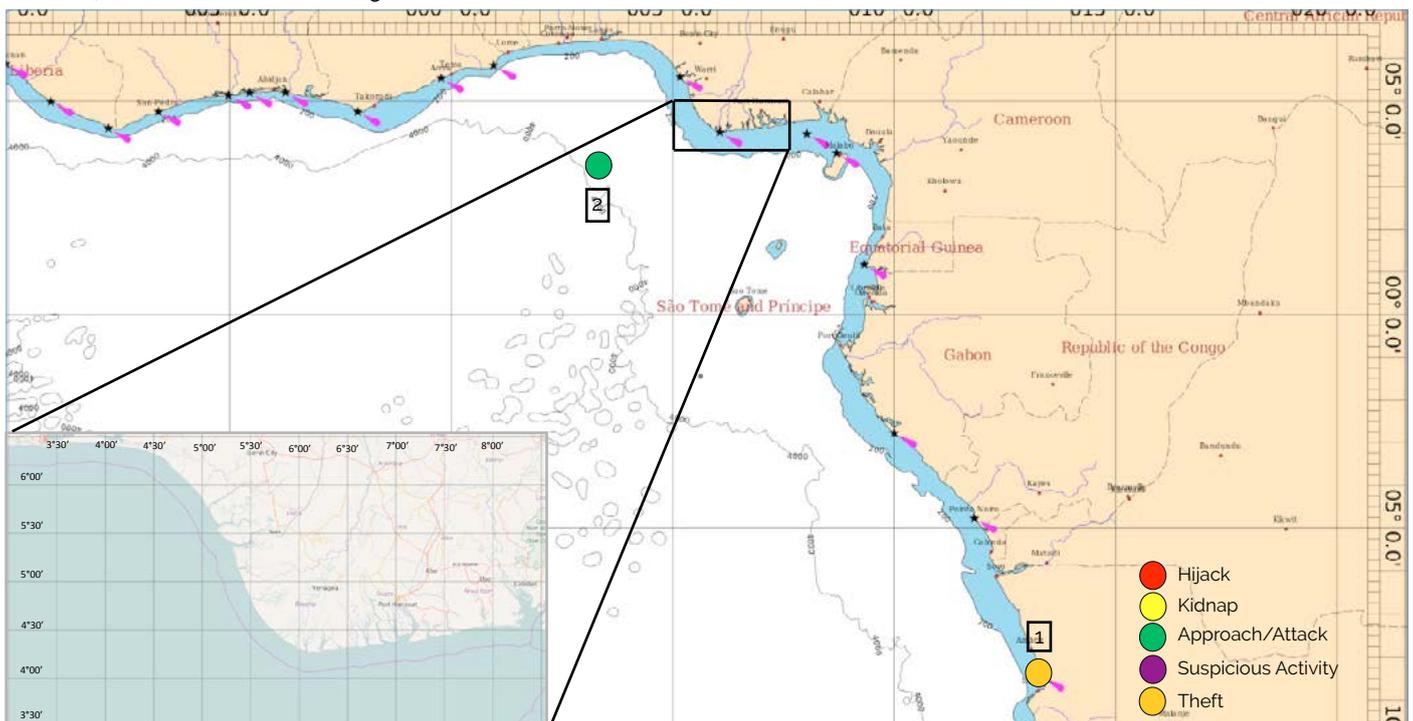
Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), has said it will soon launch its deep blue project aimed at tackling insecurity within the country's maritime corridors. Special assistant to the NIMASA director-general on communications and strategy, Ubong Essien, disclosed this while speaking with reporters in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

## Shell pipelines spill 4,309 barrels of crude in Q2 2020

Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) reported that a total of 4,309.18 barrels of crude was spilled into the Niger Delta environment from its operations in the second half of 2020. The report says the spills comprise 102.7 barrels through operational failure and 4,199.48 barrels through sabotage.

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:	
<b>2021:</b>	Incidents reported: 27 (MDAT-GoG) Crew kidnapped: 40 (IMB) Vessels hijacked: 1 (MDAT-GoG)
<b>2020:</b>	Incidents reported: 132 (MDAT-GoG) Crew Kidnapped: 130 (IMB) Vessels Hijacked: 3 (IMB)
<b>2019:</b>	Incidents reported: 111 (MDAT-GoG) Crew kidnapped: 121 (IMB) Vessels hijacked: 4 (IMB)





# Indian Ocean Region

Islamist militants in the north of Mozambique have beheaded five people and kidnapped an unknown number of others in an attack on the village of Pangane. The nearby area of Chai was also targeted and although no-one died there four people were kidnapped. The attacks happened on Friday April 30th, but information has only just come out as the authorities are reluctant to talk about these kinds of incidents, BBC News reported on May 5th.

## Incidents:

**1.** Underway tanker reported approached by two small craft at 1358 UTC in position 15:04N - 041:56E, approx 60nm West of Al Hudaydah, Yemen. Craft with six POB came within 15 metres. Master informed authorities. Vessel and crew safe. Reported (UKMTO) 3rd May.

## US Navy fires warning shots in new tense encounter with Iran

An American warship fired warning shots when vessels of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard came too close to a patrol in the Arabian Gulf, the US Navy said Wednesday. It was the first such shooting in nearly four years. The Navy released black-and-white footage of the encounter Monday night in international waters of the northern reaches of the Arabian Gulf near Kuwait, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. In it, lights can be seen in the distance and what appears to be a single gunshot can be heard, with a tracer round racing across the top of the water.

## Sri Lankan Navy increases patrolling to prevent entry of illegal immigrants via sea routes

The Navy's announcement comes as military personnel apprehended 21 Indian nationals on four Indian boats for allegedly trying to enter the island nation in the last fortnight. The Navy said more ships would be deployed, along with Fast Attack Craft, to maintain high level of surveillance in the International Maritime Boundary Line. The Navy has urged the local fishing community to remain vigilant and refrain from having any contact with foreign fishing vessels at sea and to provide information on any smuggling groups.

## UK Deploys Aircraft Carrier in the Indian Ocean

The British Carrier Strike Group (CSG) led by HMS Queen Elizabeth will undertake a "global deployment" that will include

visits to 40 countries including India, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. The British High Commission in India said the CSG, "will engage in several joint exercises with the Indian military in the Indian Ocean aiming to broaden the scale of our interoperability and enhancing our capabilities to defend against shared threats and protect our democratic values."

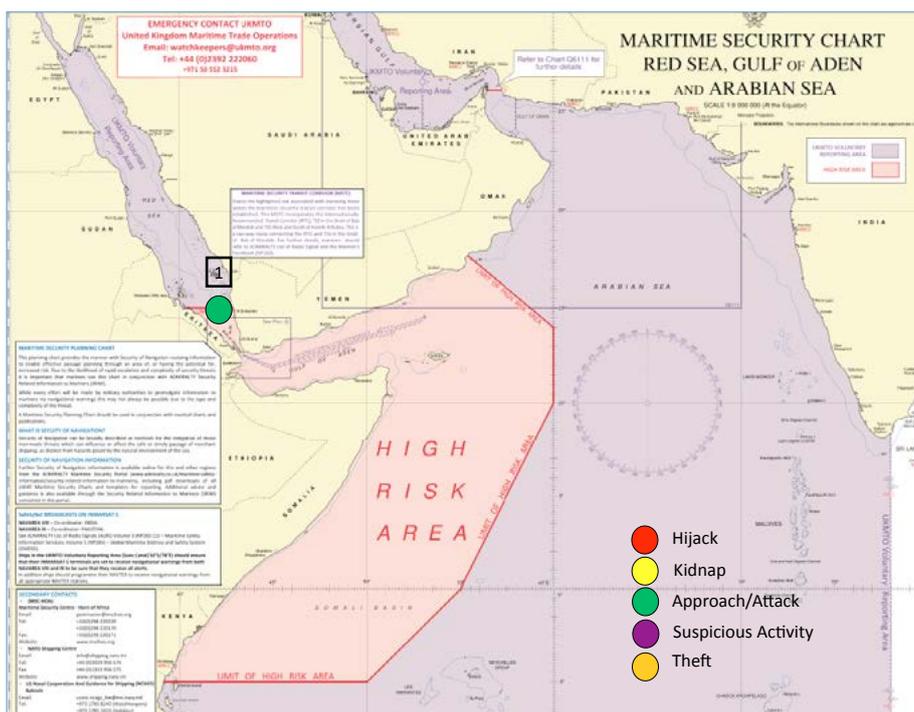
## France Australia UK and US Conduct MCM Exercise in the Arabian Gulf

The French Marine Nationale, Royal Australian Navy, Royal Navy, and U.S. Navy participated in multi-lateral mine countermeasures (MCM) exercise Artemis Trident (AT) 21 in the Arabian Gulf, April 18th-29th. This was the fifth iteration in the series of MCM exercises between the four partner nations held to enhance mine hunting and communications interoperability, Naval News reported.

## Bangladesh rescues 30 persons adrift for two days after pirate attack

The Bangladesh coastguard on Tuesday (Apr 27th) rescued 30 Rohingya refugees adrift in the Bay of Bengal for two days after they were attacked by pirates, an official said. Coast Guard spokesman Lieutenant Commander Amirul Haque said the boat left from near the camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district on Friday, carrying 20 women, five men and five children. "On Sunday, the boat was attacked by pirates who took all valuables from the refugees and crippled the boat's engine before leaving," he told reporters.

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





# Somalia

Somali lawmakers voted unanimously on Saturday May 1st to cancel a two-year presidential term extension they had approved last month, after clashes in the capital Mogadishu between factions of the security forces, which are divided over the issue. In a speech following the vote in the lower house of parliament, Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble ordered the army to return to barracks and urged politicians to avoid inciting violence.

## 2 killed by suspected Al Shabaab IED along Kenya-Somalia border

Two people were killed and one critically wounded after a vehicle they were travelling in ran over an explosive device suspected to have been planted by Al Shabaab militants along the Kenya-Somalia border on Monday May 3rd. Lamu County Commissioner Irungu Macharia confirmed the incident, saying three occupants, who work for a private contractor at the Kenya-Somalia security border wall construction site, dubbed Usalama camp, were in the vehicle at the time of the incident, the Xinhua news agency reported.

## Puntland sentences convicted Al Shabaab terrorists to death

Somalia's north-eastern semi-autonomous Puntland regional state has sentenced five Al Shabaab militants to death. The five convicts were identified as Mohamed Hashi Mumin (Abu-dayib), Abdulkadir Ahmed Ummal (Abu-Abdalla), Mohamed Ali Awke (Jeri), Mohamed Abdullahi Ayanle (Abbeyle) and Qasim Jaylani Al-Turabi, according to Radio Dalsan's website said. The chief of the Puntland military court, Colonel Ali Shire, said the five were found guilty of carrying out attacks targeting government officials, BBC News reported on May 3rd.

## EU urges demilitarization of Mogadishu

The European Union Ambassador to Somalia Nicolas Berganga has on Monday 3rd said that 'Demilitarization of Mogadishu is now the priority'. In a tweet, the Ambassador stated that, "Those that want to play a positive role towards elections

should support PM Roble in his key tasks. Division of Mogadishu with militias or out-of-line-of-command security forces is not helping Somali people."

## Al Shabaab attack in Middle Shabelle leaves at least one dead

Al Shabaab militants on Sunday attacked Rage Elle town in the Middle Shabelle region. The militants reportedly targeted a house in the city, which was said to be the residence of Ahmed Jilcane, the town's traditional chief elder. Residents said the militants abducted Traditional Chief Jilcane. However, Al Shabaab said in a statement that it had killed Jilcane.

## Regulating Khat Could Disrupt East Africa's Illegal Drug Economy

In March 2020, Somalia suspended flights to its capital due to the COVID-19 outbreak. However, at least two planes supposedly bringing humanitarian aid and medical supplies for the pandemic were intercepted, smuggling tons of khat. These flights avoided the main Mogadishu airport and used the smaller airstrips of Buhodle and Jowhar, where surveillance is minimal. During this period, old smuggling sea routes from Kenya to Somalia also opened up. Khat was traded alongside other illicit goods, such as explosives used by terrorists, and legal products, such as fish, using the Lamu (Kenya) and Ras Kamboni (Somalia) sea route.

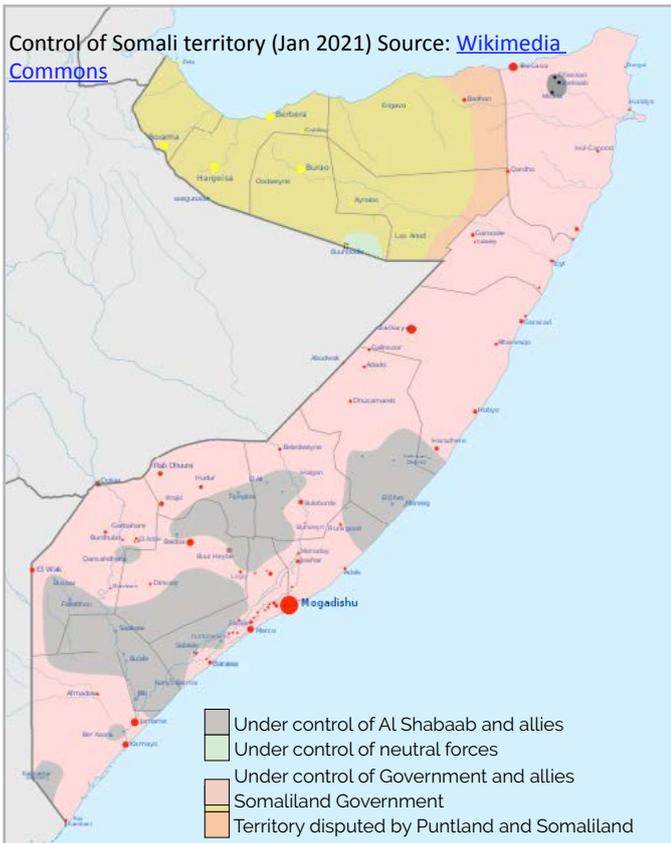
## Analysis

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

The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said on Sunday May 2nd that it had intercepted and destroyed an explosive-laden drone fired by Houthi rebels towards Saudi Arabia. A coalition statement cited by the official Saudi news agency SPA said the drone was fired towards the southwestern city of Khamis Mushait. "The Houthi terrorist militia continues to commit grave violations of the international humanitarian law by targeting civilians," the statement said.

### Iran ready for talks with Saudi Arabia at any level

Spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Saeed Khatibzadeh, said yesterday that the Islamic Republic is ready to hold talks with Saudi Arabia "at any level and in any form". Speaking to reporters during his weekly press briefing, Khatibzadeh added that changing the Saudi rhetoric and discourse towards Iran will help reduce tensions, but will only lead to practical results when coupled with a change in behaviour.

### Yemen government troops advance in Marib province

Yemeni government troops, backed by Arab coalition warplanes, seized control of several mountainous locations near the central city of Marib after fierce clashes with the Houthis, an army spokesperson said on Sunday May 2nd. Maj. Gen. Abdu Abdullah Majili told a press briefing that troops had expelled the militia from several locations in AL-Kasara and AL-Mashjah, west of Marib, captured three rebels and destroyed more than 20 military vehicles. Coalition warplanes destroyed vehicles carrying ammunition and fighters headed for battle.

### Yemen rivals exchange 18 war prisoners

Forces loyal to Yemen's government and the Houthi rebels conducted a prisoner exchange in the country's northern province of Marib, a local official said here. The official told Xinhua news agency on Sunday May 2nd that 18 detainees were released as part of a prisoner exchange between the two warring sides fighting over the control of the strategic oil-rich province of Marib.

### US, Saudi hold discussions on political solution to Yemen war

US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking met on Friday April 30th with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman to discuss a comprehensive political solution to Yemen's civil war, Anadolu Agency reported. The US diplomat and Bin Salman discussed the latest developments in Yemen and reviewed the joint efforts exerted by their countries to reach a political solution to the crisis.

### Coalition Navies 'Detain' Diesel Ship

Sana'a-based Yemeni Petroleum Company (YPC) said that

the Saudi-led coalition has seized a new ship carrying 23,960 tons of gasoline. Issam al-Mutawakil, spokesman for the company, told The Yemeni News Agency (Saba) that the MT Tango, which was prevented from reaching the port of Hodeidah despite being inspected and obtained UN entry permits, carried diesel for the electricity sector.

### Three killed and a dozen injured in clashes in Yemen's oil-rich Shabwa province

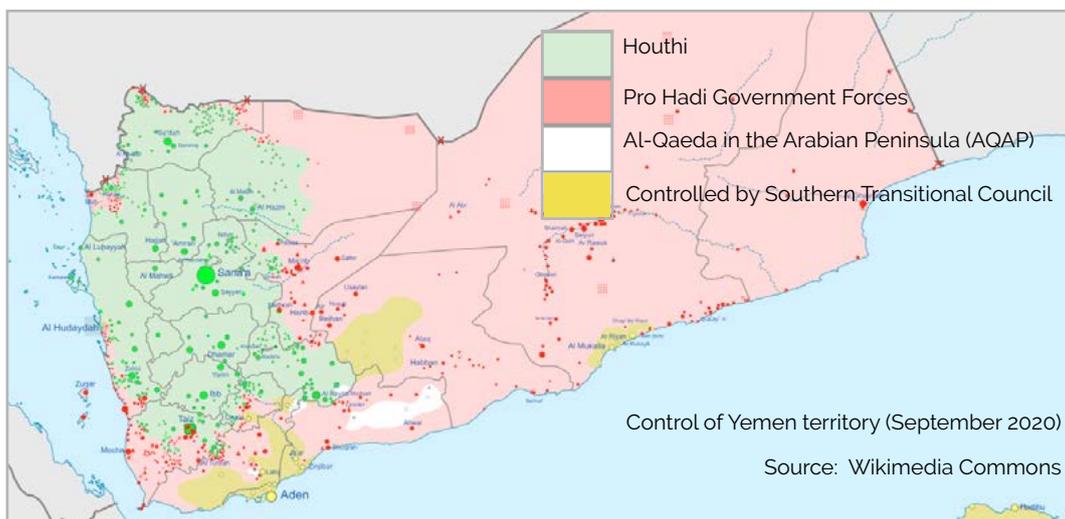
Two soldiers and a civilian were killed in clashes between armed tribesmen and pro-government forces in south-eastern Shabwa province, local dignitaries told The National on Thursday April 29th. Fighting broke out when a guard from an oil production company shot and killed one of dozens of local Balharith tribe members who were protesting to demand their unpaid wages, said Mohammed Al Bereiki, a retired army colonel.

### Iran's Zarif backs Yemen ceasefire in talks with Houthi leader

Iran's foreign minister met the Yemeni rebel spokesman in Oman on Wednesday April 28th, reiterating Tehran's support for a ceasefire and a return to talks to end the country's long conflict. Mohammad Javad Zarif's comments came a day after Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, whose country leads a military coalition supporting the Yemeni government, called on the Houthis to stop fighting and enter peace negotiations.

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

Taiwan says it is investigating whether a man from mainland China managed to cross the highly militarised Taiwan Strait in a small rubber dinghy. The Chinese man, 33, told police he crossed the 100-mile (160km) stretch in search of "freedom and democracy". Patrolled by hundreds of vessels, the Taiwan Strait is one of the most heavily policed waterways in the world. Taiwanese authorities are looking into whether security "shortcomings" had made the journey possible. BBC News reported on May 3rd.

**Incidents: Nothing significant to report.**

### Ships are advised to take extra precaution when anchoring in Malaysian waters

When anchoring in waters off Singapore, Malaysia or Indonesia, it is recommended that ships take extra precaution to check their exact location, contact the relevant authority of these countries and obtain permission before carrying out their intended act. Malaysia has communicated this information in Malaysian shipping notice 05/2014. It is learnt that Malaysian authorities rely on their "1979 Territorial Waters Chart" to find out if a ship has entered its territorial waters, therefore, if a ship wishes to find out the territorial limit of Malaysian waters, it may be a good idea to have a copy of this chart on board. Information on national boundaries may not always be available in navigational charts of this area, BIMCO reported on May 3rd.

### Chinese militia vessels at Sabina Shoal disperse after challenge by coast guard

Chinese maritime militia vessels seen at Sabina (Escoda) Shoal off the coast of Palawan have dispersed after a series of challenges by the Philippine Coast Guard, according to a report from the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS) on May 4th.

### Philippine foreign minister unleashes expletive-laden tirade against China

The Philippine foreign minister on Monday May 3rd demanded in an expletive-laced Twitter message that China's vessels get out of disputed waters, the latest exchange in a war of words with Beijing over the South China Sea. The comments by Teodoro Locsin, known for blunt remarks, follow Manila's protests for what it calls the "illegal" presence of hundreds of Chinese boats inside the Philippines' 200-mile Exclusive Economic

Zone (EEZ), CNN reported.

### 2 Abu Sayyaf bomb suppliers captured in Sulu

Military and police officers arrested two suspected suppliers of bomb components to Abu Sayyaf bandit group in Jolo, Sulu on Sunday May 2nd. Authorities tagged Akkang Omaron of Barangay Tulay in Jolo and Mardan Jamasali of Patikul town as suppliers of the components of the bombs used in the twin attacks in Jolo in August last year.

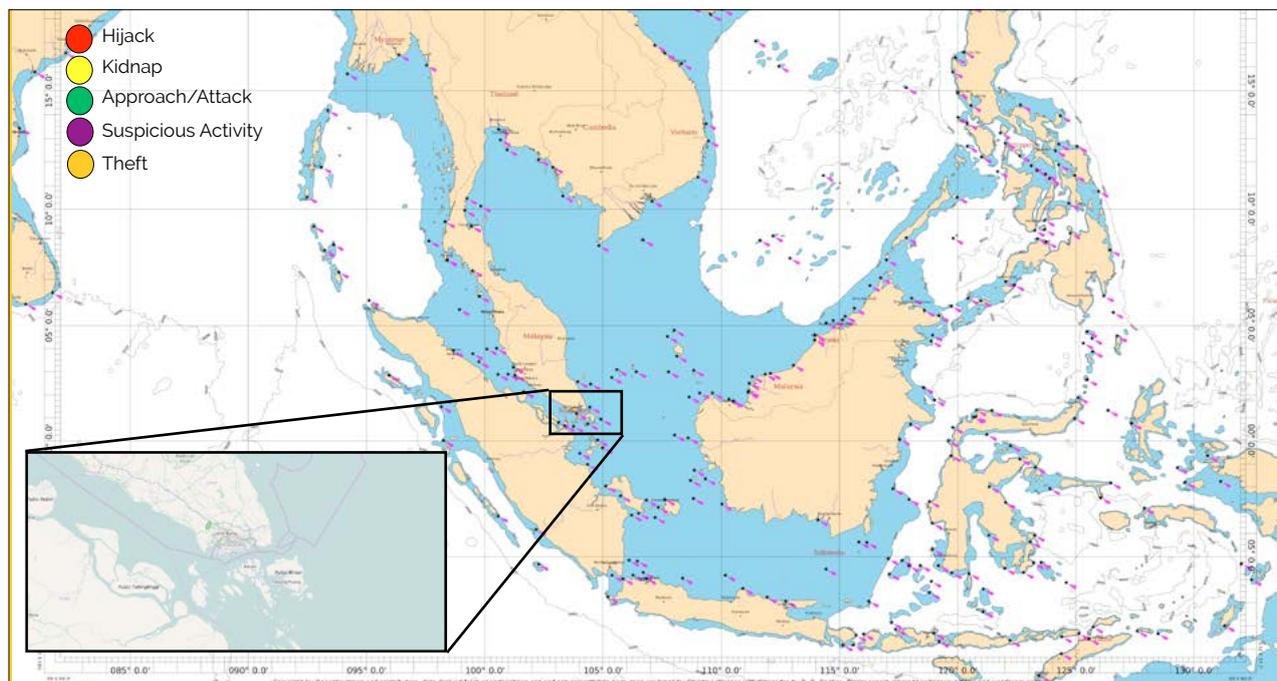
### Philippines vows to continue maritime exercises in South China Sea

The Philippines will continue maritime exercises inside its 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea, the country's defence minister said on Sunday May 2nd, despite a call by China to stop actions that it said could escalate disputes. The Philippine coastguard and fisheries bureau started maritime exercises last month, having boosted its presence in the area to counter the "threatening" presence of Chinese boats. Reuters reported.

### Indonesia police seize meth worth \$82 million, arrest 17

Indonesian police said on Wednesday April 28th that they had smashed a drug smuggling ring that moved 2.5 tons of methamphetamine into the country from Afghanistan, a haul worth about \$82 million. One Indonesian suspect was shot dead while 17 others including a Nigerian were arrested during a series of police raids in Sumatra's Aceh province and the capital Jakarta in recent weeks, they said. Some of the meth had been placed inside food containers and then hidden in boats or lockers on land.

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



## European Waters

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has issued an alert after the number of refugees attempting to enter the UK using small boats to Cross the English Channel "increased significantly". It is warning the UK maritime industry that "organised crime groups may target them to obtain small boats for people smugglers". "Since global Covid-19 lockdown measures were imposed in March 2020 the number of migrants attempting to enter the UK using small boats has increased significantly," said an NCA spokesperson.

### Four small boats with 92 migrants cross English Channel

Four small boats with 92 migrants on board crossed the English Channel on Sunday, the Home Office has confirmed. A further 20 people were prevented from making the journey by the French authorities, a spokeswoman said. More than 2,047 people have reached the UK in more than 40 boats so far this year, BBC News reported on May 4th.

### More migrants die trying to cross Mediterranean

Statement by the Norwegian Refugee Council's country director in Libya, Dax Roque, on the latest tragedy of migrants dying in the Mediterranean. "Another 11 migrants drowned yesterday off the coast of Libya, bringing the total number of lives lost while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea to more than 600 in 2021 alone. This tragedy and those before were completely avoidable, had Europe stepped up and allowed rescue missions to bring migrants and refugees to safety, rather than shifting responsibility to others. Hundreds of migrants were intercepted at sea by the Libyan Coast Guard in the last week, including another 95 migrants yesterday.

### Traffickers in Libya push hundreds of migrants into the sea

Two Italian ports faced an influx of hundreds of migrants on Saturday May 1st, as a charity ship sailed toward a Sicilian port with 236 people rescued in the Mediterranean from traffickers' boats, while Italian coast guard and border police brought 532 others to a tiny island. The maritime rescue group SOS Mediterranee said a ship it operates, Ocean Viking, pulled the migrants to safety four days ago from two rubber dinghies. Upon instructions from Italian authorities, the Ocean Viking was sailing to Augusta, Sicily, with its passengers, who it said included 119 unaccompanied minors.

### Border Force intercept another 185 migrants in nine Channel crossings

185 migrants were intercepted by Border Force officials as they crossed the English Channel on Saturday May 1st. It comes as French authorities prevented at least three events involving 40 migrants on Saturday.

### NCA issues alert to boat suppliers in England

The UK's National Crime Agency has warned boat suppliers they may be targeted by criminal gangs bent on acquiring small boats so they can smuggle people into the country. The agency said that organised crime groups were known to target legitimate sellers of vessels and equipment such as outboard motors and life jackets, both in person and online. There were even incidents recorded of boats and equipment being stolen.

### Baby born on dinghy and 44 migrants land in Spain

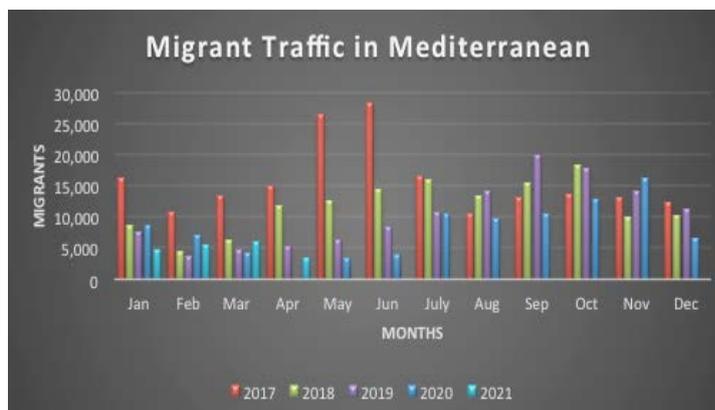
Emergency services reported that a woman gave birth to a baby girl on Thursday April 29th night while she was travelling with the rest of the migrants the boat. The baby and the mother were taken to a local hospital on Friday 30th to undergo a medical check. Twenty-eight men, 11 women and 4 children were also travelling in the dinghy.

### Frontex accused of collusion with Libyan coast guards

New accusations have been made against the EU border protection agency Frontex in its handling of migrants in the Mediterranean. A new report compiled by a group of media outlets states that Frontex plays a central role in ensuring that migrants are intercepted by Libya's coast guard and brought back to the North African country. The German news magazine "Der Spiegel" along with the national German broadcaster ARD, the Netherlands-based investigative media organization "Lighthouse Reports" and the French daily newspaper "Libération" reported that since January 2020, Frontex aircraft had reportedly flown over migrant boats in at least 20 cases before Libya's coast guard intercepted them and towed them back to Libya.

### Over 600 Europe-bound migrants returned to Libya: Navy

More than 600 migrants hoping to reach Europe from Libya have been stopped since Friday April 30th, the navy said, as the International Organization for Migration warned Libya was "not a safe port". Three groups of illegal migrants were intercepted at sea on Friday and Saturday by Libya's coastguard and units in charge of securing ports, the navy said in a statement, released overnight Saturday to Sunday.



Migrant crossings 2017-2021. Source: [UNHRC](https://www.unhcr.org/)

### The current migrant smuggling situation

The past week has again seen significant numbers of migrant boats put to sea and rescue missions in the Mediterranean, along with further fatalities. The accusations by media outlets against Frontex will no doubt continue to be investigated in the coming weeks. The English Channel has also seen a sharp spike in crossing attempts, with UK Border Force and the NCA both raising the alarm at the increasing numbers of people undertaking the dangerous crossing. As weather conditions and sea states continue to improve, there is growing concern that despite relatively low crossing numbers in previous years, the post-pandemic period could see a huge rise in attempts and, tragically, fatalities at sea.

# Libya

Libya's new interim government urged Turkey on Monday May 3rd to "cooperate" over the withdrawal of foreign troops and mercenaries from the country, to help bolster a seven-month-old ceasefire. "We call on Turkey to cooperate with us to put an end to the presence of all foreign forces and mercenaries, in order to preserve the sovereignty" of Libya, Foreign Minister Najla al-Mangoush said.

## UN envoy for Libya submits proposal on elections to forum

Jan Kubis, the UN Special Envoy to Libya, submitted a draft proposal on Tuesday May 4th for the constitutional basis for upcoming elections to the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) plenary. The draft proposal was finalized by the LPDF's Legal Committee following a meeting in Tunisia, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) said in a statement. "Special Envoy Kubis thanks the members of the Legal Committee, in particular the Drafting Team and the Rapporteurs, for their excellent work and accomplishment," the statement said, according to a report from the Anadolu Agency.

## Italy guards its fishing boats in the Mediterranean

The Italian Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defence, Stefania Bucharelli, announced that a frigate of the Italian Navy intervened on Monday May 3rd to rescue seven Italian fishing boats after they were threatened by a high-speed rubber boat coming from the eastern coast of Libya. Aki news agency quoted Boucharelli as saying that the Italian boats which were carrying out fishing activities in international waters are safe and are heading towards the central Mediterranean.

## Libya's Health Ministry discusses cooperation with the UK

The Libyan Health Minister, Ali Al-Zanati, discussed with the United Kingdom's chargé d'affaires, Keith English, the Coronavirus pandemic issues in the two countries and possible cooperation in the healthcare sector. The UK chargé d'affaires said her country was ready to support Libya in the healthcare sector and that the UK was keen to develop health sector in Libya, the Libyan Observer reported on May 3rd.

## With senior officials streaming into Libya, Turkey signals it is there to stay

No top-ranking Turkish official seems to have been left out of the high-level delegation that visited Tripoli to meet Libyan officials on Monday May 3rd. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan dispatched Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Defence Minister Hulusi Akar, Intelligence Chief Hakan Fidan and Chief of Staff Yasar Guler to Tripoli to inform Libyan officials and regional countries that the Turkish intervention in Libya

was not an accident and that Turkey is there to stay, The Arab Weekly reported.

## Libyan oil minister seeks budget approval to hit 1.5 mln bpd target

Reuters reports that gains in Libya's oil production to the target of 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) by the end of 2021 depends on parliament approving the national budget quickly, according to Mohamed Oun, the country's Oil Minister. Output was significantly disrupted following LNA efforts to block exports under leader Khalifa Haftar, but now Oun is pushing for renewed investment in the sector to ensure the country hits its target.

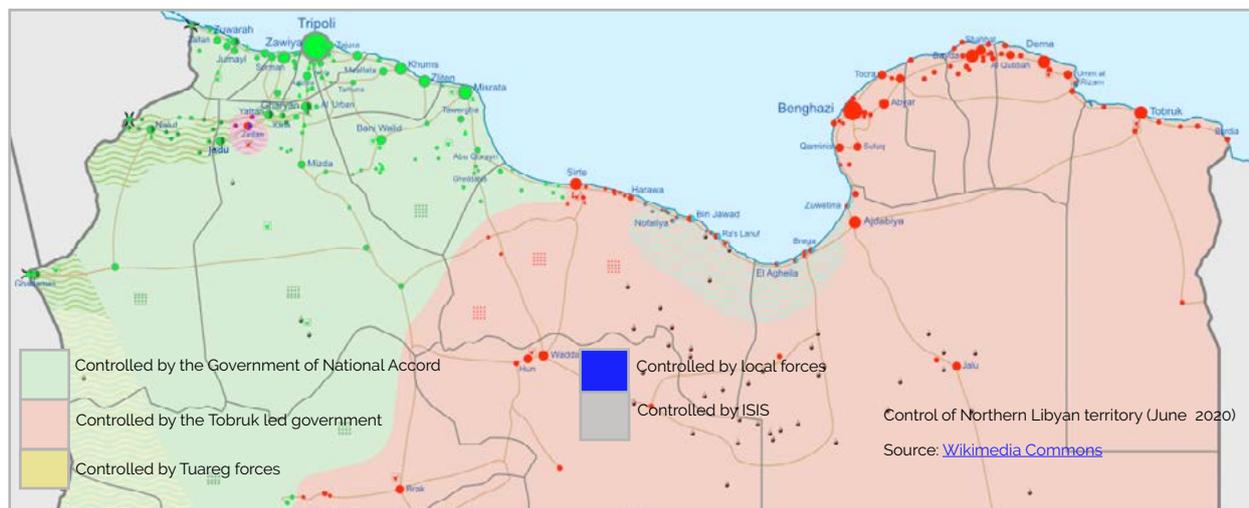
## The IRC is extremely concerned about the safety of migrants and refugees being returned to Libya

The IRC is extremely concerned about the safety of migrants and refugees being returned to Libya, following a huge spike in the number brought back by the Libyan Coast Guard this weekend. Since Thursday April 28th, the IRC's teams have responded to four disembarkations in the west of the country, providing medical attention and Core Relief Items, including water, blankets and hygiene items to 696 survivors, including 79 women and 36 children. Bringing the total of those returned to Libya so far this year to approximately 7,000 people.

## Haftar's forces say Libya PM 'has no authority' after preventing his visit to Benghazi

Forces loyal to Khalifa Haftar have stated that he recently formed Government of National Unity, headed by Prime Minister Abdul Rahman Dbeibah, had no authority over them, according to a report in Alaraby. A statement from Haftar's "Libyan Arab Armed Forces" - also known as the "Libyan National Army" - read that government officials would only be allowed to enter territories it controls under Haftar's protection. The move once again highlights the fragility of the current peace in Libya and underlines Haftar's ongoing influence in the region.

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





## Central and South America

Ecuador's anti-narcotics officers seized 2.14 tons of cocaine over the weekend of May 1st-2nd, the highest figure so far this year, which had been surreptitiously introduced into a banana container that was about to leave the port of Guayaquil destined for Russia, police said on Monday May 3rd. Police that the drugs, identified with six different logos of Colombian cartels, began the journey in that country, where it had a cost of \$4 million and was about to be shipped to Russia, where its final price would reach \$127 million.

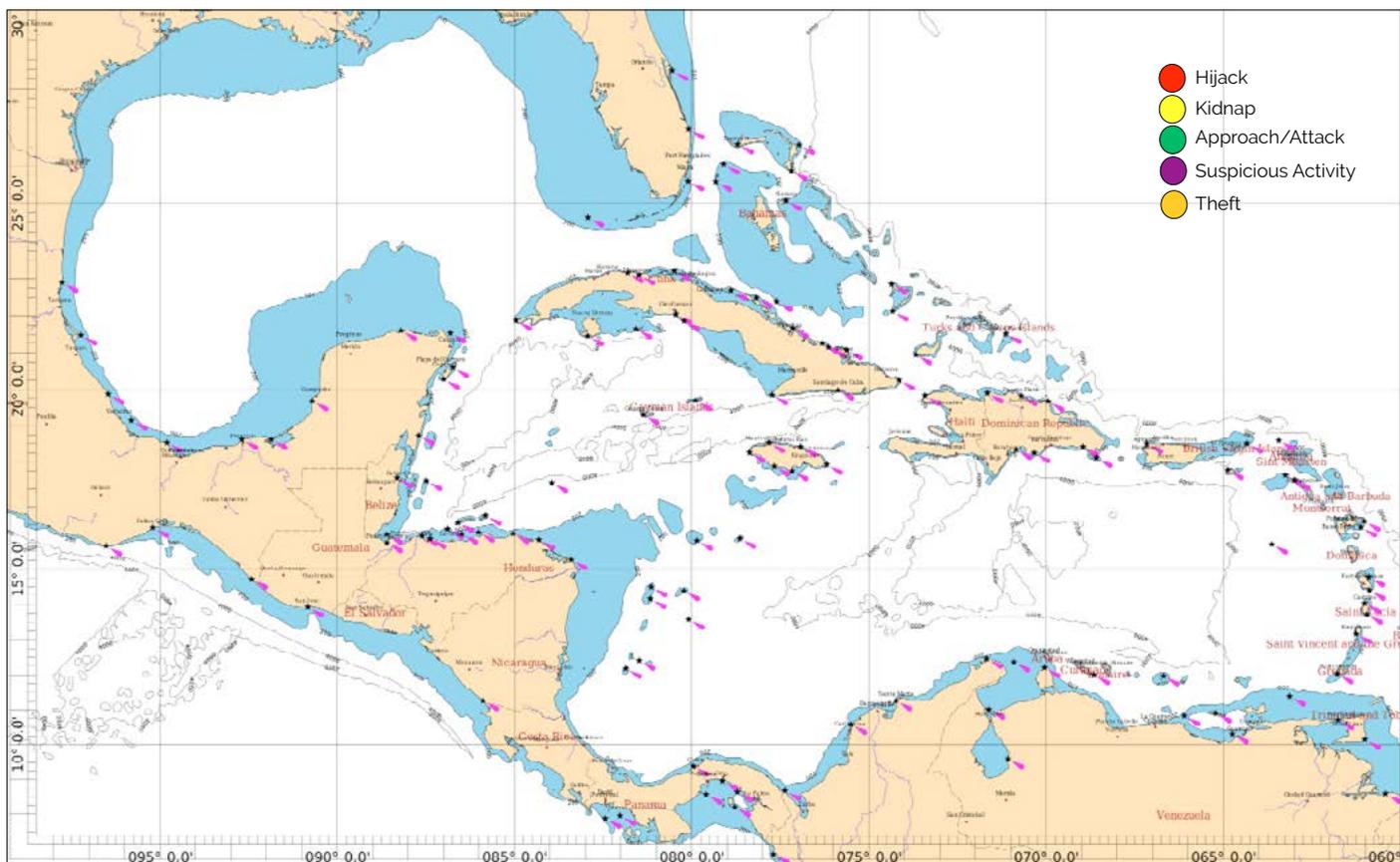
### Incidents:

1. Four robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored product tanker at 0030 UTC in position 11:59.5S – 077:12.4W, Callao Anchorage No 8, Peru. They took the duty AB as hostage and tied him up. Robbers stole the AB's personal belongings and ships properties and escaped. The tied-up AB was later found by another AB. Alarm raised and PA announcement made. Owners and port authorities notified. Reported (IMB) 3rd May. (Not shown on chart)

### 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](#).

Nothing significant to report.

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