

Weekly Security & Risk Report

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MAKING THE
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MARITIME SECURITY PHYSICAL AND ASSET SECURITY RISK CONSULTING SECURITY SYSTEMS



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Issue 283 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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Contents:

	Page
Mast Services	2
Gulf of Guinea	4
Indian Ocean	5
Somalia	6
Yemen	7
South East Asia	8
European Waters	9
Libya	10
Central & South America	11
Severe Weather Warnings	12



Gulf of Guinea

As Nigeria's Deep Blue project gets underway, Nigerian newspaper, New Telegraph, says the economic cost of piracy in on Nigeria in 2017 was \$818.1 million, up from \$793.7 million the year before. In 2018, dropped to \$810 million, but jumped to \$900 million in 2019 and \$1.1 billion in 2020; an indication that rather than abating, the piracy menace is rising in the Gulf at a time the incidence of piracy has fallen around the world. According to nonprofit Oceans Beyond Piracy's 2020 reports, a quarter of that \$1.1 billion was spent contracting maritime security, adding that insurance also represents a huge cost.

Incidents:

1. MDAT-GOG has received a report that a vessel has been boarded in position 04°33'N – 002°23'E (approximately 104NM south of Cotonou, Benin). The boarders are reported to have left at 2045 UTC, the vessel is safe. MAST sources suggest that five crew may have been kidnapped, but this is unconfirmed at the time of writing. Reported (MDAT) 1st June.

2. Intruder spotted onboard berthed MV at 0320 UTC in position 04:42N - 007:09E, Onne port, Nigeria. Alarm raised resulting in the intruder fleeing in a canoe. A Nigerian patrol boat was dispatched to secure the area. Reported (MDAT) 26th May.

Maritime Authority partners UNODC on Ghana's piracy bill

The Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA) has held a one-day meeting to discuss the country's draft Piracy Bill, with the technical support of the UNODC. The meeting is part of the roadmap being implemented by the GMA, as the country accelerates progress in its fight against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

Niger Delta Ex-militant Leader, Tompolo Gives Ultimatum

Former MEND commander, Tompolo (Government Ekpe-mepolo), gave the Nigerian government a deadline of seven days on Sunday 30th to inaugurate the Board of the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The statement signed by Tompolo said: "I wish to call on Mr. President, members of the National Assembly and security agencies to work towards the constitution of the substantive board of the NDDC, within a few days, to avert a total breakdown of law and order that will equally affect crude oil exploration and exploitation activities in the region.

Denmark to Deploy Military to West Africa, Sahel to Fight Piracy, Terrorism

Denmark's government has secured parliamentary backing for

its plans to send military contributions to the Sahel and West Africa. Starting from November 2021, Denmark will contribute a frigate and a maritime task force to the Gulf of Guinea for approximately five months. The frigate Esben Snare will be equipped with a Seahawk helicopter. All in all, the mission is expected to feature some 195 servicemen, Russia's Sputnik News reported on May 28th.

Ibom Deep Sea Port to ease burden on Lagos ports

The Akwa Ibom State Government disclosed that the recently approved Ibom Deep Sea Port would reduce the burden on Lagos ports and also reduce gridlock challenges in Apapa. The Governor disclosed this on Friday 28th in a statement released by the FG, he also praised the Navy for protecting commercial maritime assets in the state, to ensure the safety of the seaport, Naira Metrics reported on May 29th.

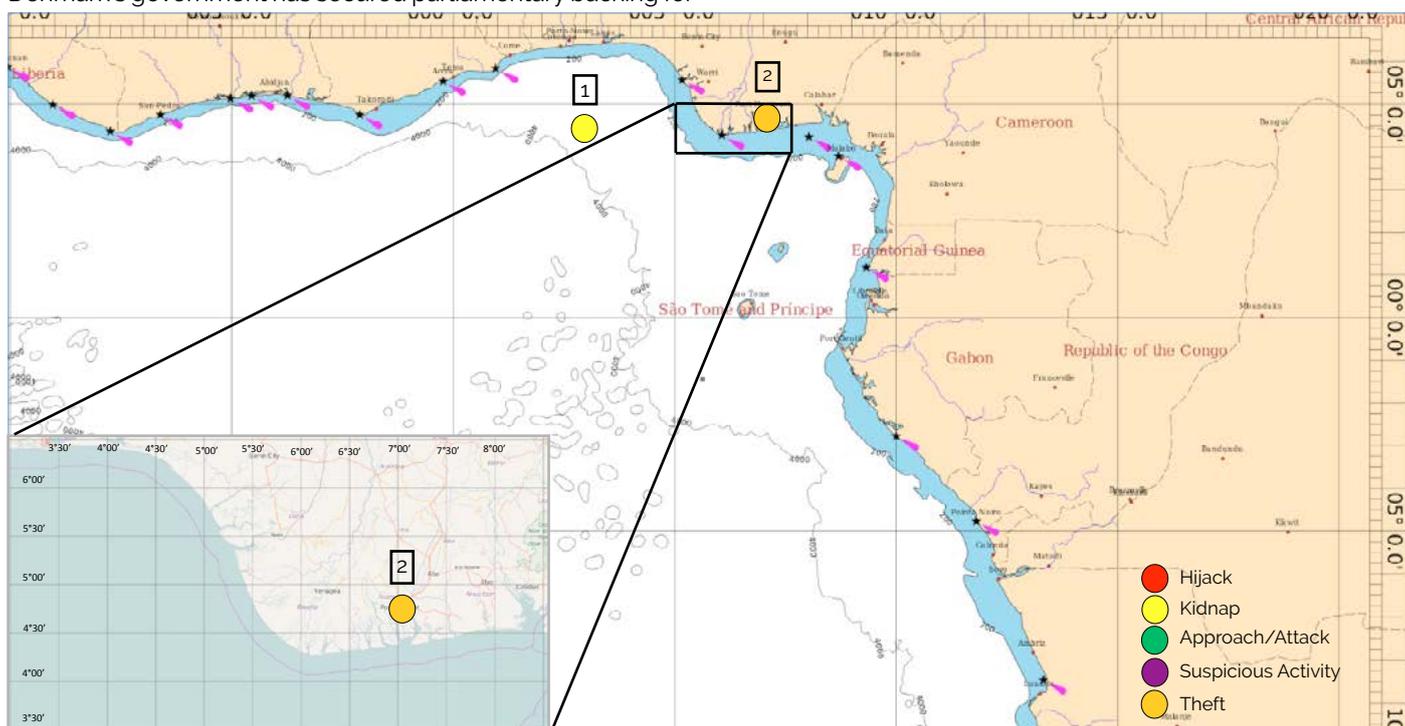
To see MAST Services in the region, [please click here](#). And and to read Nigeria's country report, [please click here](#).

Gulf of Guinea Piracy & Maritime Crime Figures:

2021:
 Incidents reported: 30 (MDAT-GoG)
 Crew kidnapped: 45 (IMB, MDAT)
 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 Seychelles National Assembly has approved the ratification of a bilateral agreement with the United States which supporters say will help increase surveillance capabilities in the Seychelles' waters. Under the agreement, Seychelles will provide whatever resources it has, while the U.S. will bring assets including vessels and surveillance aircraft, as well as the equipment and personnel towards strengthening policing within the region. This will be done through the United States Coastguard and the Department of Homeland Security, and the Seychelles Ministry for Internal Affairs, and the Seychelles People's Defence Forces on the local front.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

EU mission to Mozambique could be ready in months

Reuters reports that the EU's plans to create a military training mission in Mozambique could be ready in months, according to Joseph Borrell on May 29th. The mission could see as many as 300 troops deployed to assist in training local forces to combat ongoing insurgency in the country which threatens its gas production efforts.

Sri Lanka: Burning ship coats beaches in oil and debris

Oil and debris from a container ship on fire off the coast of Sri Lanka have coated beaches on its west coast. Images of the beach in Negombo, a popular tourist destination, have generated outrage in the country. The Singapore-registered X-Press Pearl was carrying chemicals and cosmetics, and has been on fire for eight days, BBC News reported.

SA Navy annual security conference goes virtual

South Africa's maritime service is taking up the cudgels of the virtual information era thrust on the world by COVID-19 and will on Friday June 4th host the SA Navy's first virtual conference centring on the "security of seaways and maritime infrastructure".

US officials monitoring two Iranian navy ships that may be headed to Venezuela

US security officials are reported to be monitoring two Iranian ships believed to be headed to Venezuela, an American political newspaper cited three people familiar with the matter as saying. The Politico said "an Iranian frigate and the Makran, a former oil tanker that was converted to a floating forward staging base, have been heading south along the east coast of

Africa," The Arab News reported on May 30th.

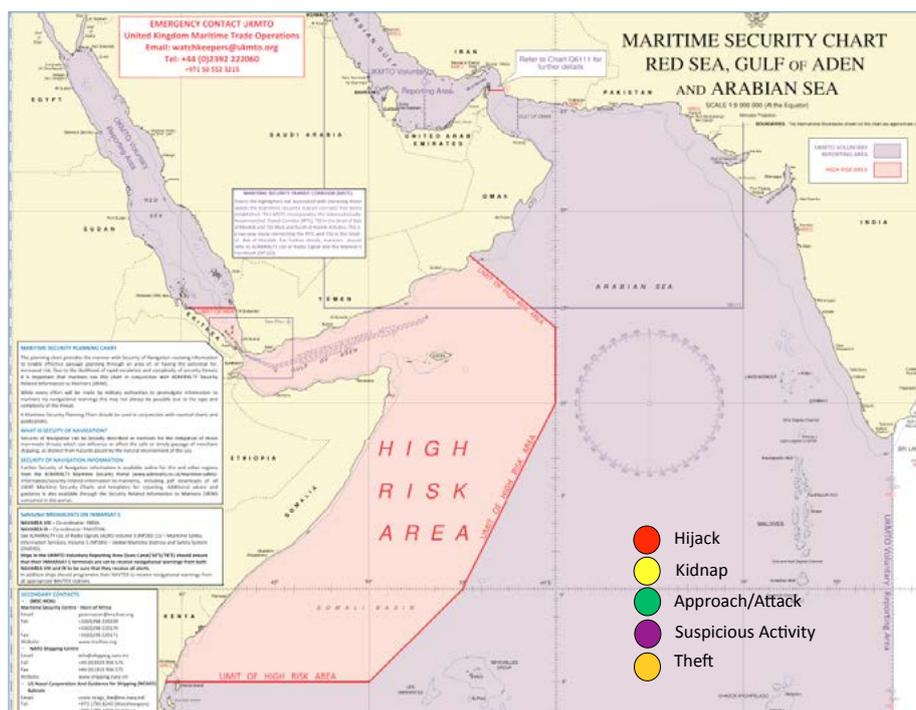
Senior Pakistan Navy Officers Visit United States Coast Guard Training Facility

Combined Maritime Forces' counter-piracy task force commander, Commodore Abdul Munib SI (M), and the commander of Pakistan's Navy flotilla in the region, Commodore Khan Muhamad Asif SI (M) visited the U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Force Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA) squadron training facility in Bahrain. The Commodores and their teams, including the Commanding Officers of Pakistan ships PNS Alamgir and PNS Azmat received a briefing from PATFORSWA Commanding Officer Captain Willie L. Carmichael before touring the engineering warehouse and the Maritime Engagement Team facility.

The impact of Covid-19 on drugs markets in the islands of the western Indian Ocean

As forces such as the CMF continue to seize large quantities of drugs in the Arabian Sea, the Daily Maverick reports that the latest data from the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC), which tracks illicit maritime activity across the Indian Ocean from Madagascar, reported a 50% drop in maritime security incidents in the Indian Ocean region between February and March 2020, primarily driven by decreases in illicit flows such as the smuggling of contraband and people.

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





Somalia

The Somalia's military announced that 37 members of Al Shabaab were killed in a large-scale operation in Shebilli province, Anadolu news agency reported on Saturday 30th. Stating that the operation was conducted in Galka Hara region, the Somalia National Army reported that at least 37 terrorists were killed and two others were detained during the operation. The army had reportedly shot and killed 15 Al Shabaab members in the area on Friday 29th.

Kenya warns it may ban Somalia humanitarian flights

Kenya has warned that it may impose a total ban on flights from Somalia including those on humanitarian missions. The foreign affairs ministry said in a letter to diplomatic missions that humanitarian flights were being misused for "bilateral and political matters" even after Kenya had suspended flights, BBC News reported on June 1st.

Puntland as forces kill Pakistani Jihadist

ISIS-affiliated militants suffered a significant blow following the death of a top foreign Jihadist, who has been serving the group for a couple of years, Garowe Online reported on May 30th. With diminishing ability, the ISIS affiliate has limited themselves to Puntland state in Somalia, mainly in the Goli mountains. They occasionally strike at security forces and civilians in the northeastern state. An operation by Puntland Security Forces (PFS) killed one terrorist and uncovered a mountain base and cache of weapons. It is believed other, injured ISIS fighters escaped during the gunfight.

Somaliland elections underway

Voters in Somaliland are casting their ballot in parliamentary and local elections on Monday 31st, Al Jazeera reported, highlighting progress in the semi-autonomous region of Somalia that over the years has avoided the destructive violence plaguing other parts of the Horn of Africa country. More than a quarter of the autonomous region's population of four million were expected to vote.

Explosion in Baidoa kills three, injures seven

At least three people, including civilians, were killed and seven others injured in southwestern Somalia today in a bomb blast that targeted a busy market, according to an official, Anadolu Agency reported on May 28th. Abdiqani Mohamud, a police officer in Baidoa city, told Anadolu Agency that the explosion was caused by an improvised explosive device set to explode during the crowded daytime hours.

Somalia Leaders Agree to Hold Election Within 60 Days

Political leaders in Somalia agreed Thursday 27th on a framework for long-delayed national elections, hoping to avert a crisis that could push the fragile Horn of Africa country into political violence. The agreement signed by Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble and the leaders of five regional states laid out a path to parliamentary elections to begin within 60 days, VOA reported.

Somalia's anti-graft agency vows to tackle corruption

The Independent Anti-Corruption Commission of Somalia (IACC) on Wednesday announced new strategy to expedite its duties following the Commission's 4th May election. In a meeting in Mogadishu, IACC discussed the Commission's Regulations, Code of Conduct, and the six-month Strategic Action Plan as well as the anti-corruption public awareness strategy, the Horn Observer reported on May 27th.

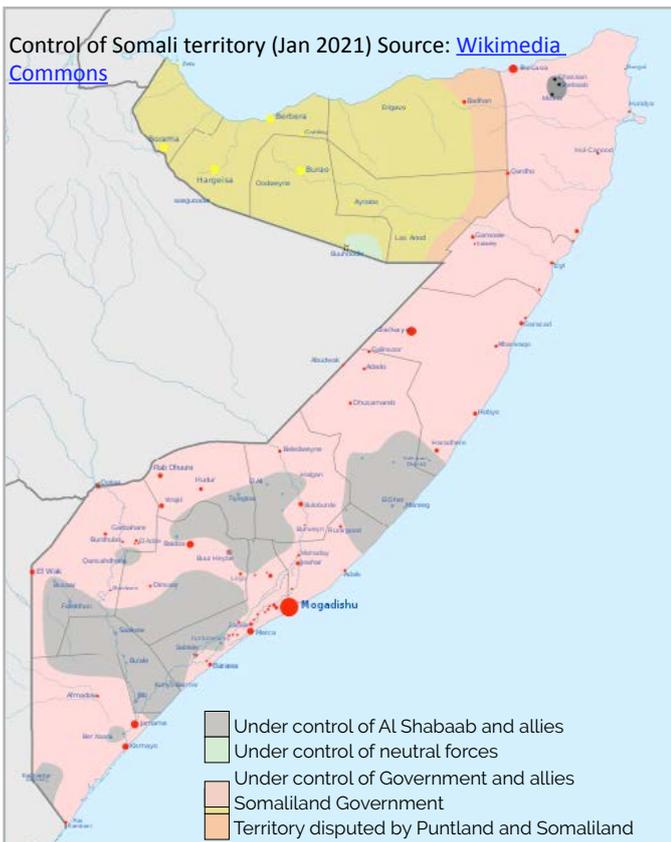
Analysis

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

Reuters reported on May 29th that Saudi coalition forces had destroyed two SVBIEDs in the Red Sea. The unmanned, explosive-laden boats were likely intended to disrupt traffic in the Red Sea or target Coalition naval forces. Both boats were destroyed off Saliff, Yemen with no casualties reported.

Houthis using child soldiers in assaults on Marib front line

The National News website reported on May 31st that Houthi rebels have been accused of using 'child soldiers' in their on-going war with the internationally recognised government. Sheikh Mohammed Al Qardaie, a tribal leader fighting the Houthis in southern Marib province, told The National that the rebels had pushed hundreds of young recruits to the front line since their assault on the region began in February. Yemen's Human Rights Ministry confirmed the use of child soldiers in Marib, telling the media that 387 child soldiers have been captured since February.

Warring sides mobilize troops in southern Yemen as UN seeks cease-fire: sources

Forces loyal to Yemen's government on Monday May 31st moved military reinforcements to southern border areas in an attempt to discourage the Houthi rebels from intruding into southern regions, a military official told Xinhua. "Units of the Southern Transitional Council (STC), which is part of Yemen's government, dispatched armored vehicles and infantrymen to the border areas of the country's southern province of Lahj," the local military source said on condition of anonymity.

Coalition forces intercepts, destroys drone

The Arab Coalition Forces on Sunday 30th morning intercepted and destroyed an explosive-laden drone fired by the Iranian-backed Al-Houthi militias towards Khamis Mushayt, the southern city of Saudi Arabia, reported Saudi Press Agency (SPA). In a statement, coalition spokesman, Brig. Gen. Turki Al Maliki, said, "The Joint Forces will continue to implement all necessary operational procedures to safeguard civilians and civilian objects in accordance with the customary International Humanitarian Law."

31 Houthi rebels killed in Saudi-led airstrikes

At least 31 Houthi rebels were killed on Friday 28th in airstrikes launched by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen's central province of Marib, a military source from the Yemeni government told Xinhua. "The airstrikes killed the militants in the desert while they were moving in three groups toward positions of

the Yemeni army in the western district of Sirwah," the source said on condition of anonymity.

Red Sea base is ours, Saudi Arabia says

Reuters reported on May 27th that Saudi Arabia is behind a mysterious new military base which has been constructed on Perim Island in the Red Sea. Initial reports suggested that the base belonged to the UAE, but news has now emerged which suggests that the base will form part of a maritime security effort in the Red Sea by Saudi Arabia, as it attempts to ensure the free movement of trade in the region.

Red Sea security requires international cooperation

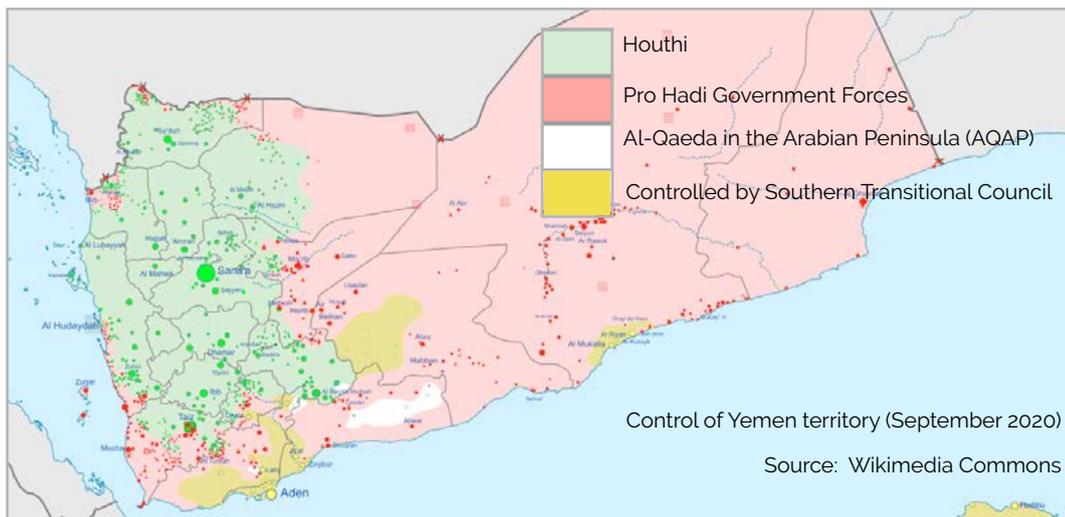
While many nations are seeking to gain a military foothold in the Red Sea region, cooperation between them has been limited due to a lack of effective platforms to manage their competition and direct it toward achieving the best results, Dr. AbdelAziz Aluwaisheg wrote in Arab News. Looked at from the Gulf Cooperation Council perspective, there is great urgency to deal with Red Sea security. The most immediate security threats include attacks by drone boats and anti-shipping missiles, sea mines, piracy, terrorism and arms smuggling. They also include human trafficking, drugs and cyberattacks.

Oxfam staff member killed in Yemen

Oxfam confirms the death of colleague Fathi Mahmoud Ali Salem Al-Zurigi in Yemen on the evening of Tuesday May 25th, after a shooting incident on Monday 24th. Fathi, a Yemeni citizen, 42, was traveling with another Oxfam colleague and a contracted driver when they were caught in what appears to be a crossfire at a checkpoint in southern Yemen, traveling to Aden. The three men were taken to the hospital where Fathi succumbed to his injuries.

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

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs lodged a diplomatic protest on May 28th against the incessant deployment, prolonged presence, and illegal activities of Chinese maritime assets and fishing vessels in the vicinity of the Pag-asa islands, demanding that China withdraw these vessels. The Pag-asa Islands are an integral part of the Philippines over which it has sovereignty and jurisdiction, the Philippine government said in a statement.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

MMEA foils attempt to smuggle out syabu, ecstasy worth RM3.33 million

Malaysian media report that the country's MMEA foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of illegal narcotics on Monday 31st May. Around 56kg of methamphetamine and ecstasy was seized in an operation some 3.4 nautical miles southwest of Sungai Kapar Kecil, the MMEA said. Three men were arrested when their boat was searched during the operation.

RBAF to use drones for maritime security surveillance

The Royal Brunei Armed Forces plan to use drone technology to assist in maritime security surveillance, regional media reported on May 31st. The unmanned aerial system (UAS) will, it was reported, be deployed in the near future. It was reported by the US embassy that His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah had attended the unveiling of Boeing subsidiary Insitu Inc's unmanned aerial system.

The Philippines has dramatically boosted South China Sea patrols, data shows

A report by the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI) has noted a significant increase in patrols by Philippine vessels in recent weeks, as China continues to deploy fishing boats and other vessels into the region. From March 1 to May 25th, AMTI observed 13 Philippine law enforcement or military vessels paying a total of 57 visits to waters around the Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal. This was a substantial increase over the previous 10 months (May 2020-February 2021), when 3 vessels were tracked making 7 total visits to contested features.

Iranian Tanker Seized by Indonesia Is Released After 4 Months

Reuters reports that an Iranian tanker, seized by Indonesian authorities in January this year for the suspected illegal transfer of oil products has now been released. The MT Horse was allowed to leave Indonesian waters on Friday 28th although its captain is subject to two years of probation.

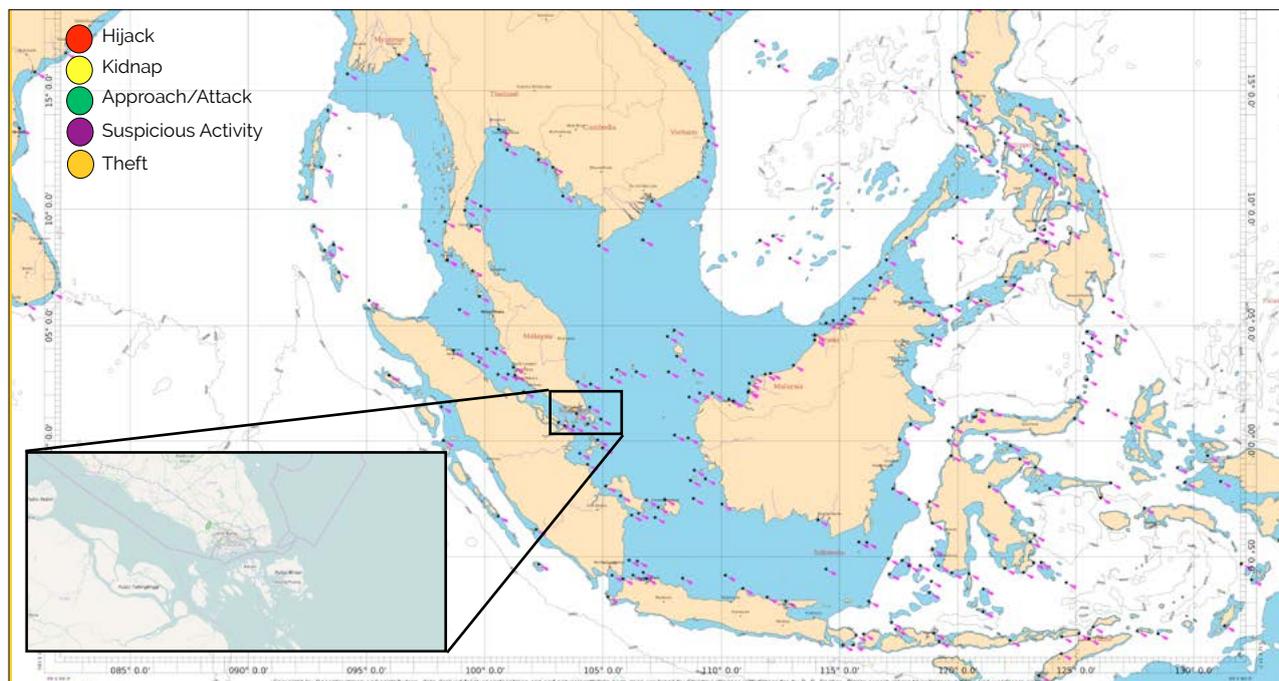
Sabah hands over 8 Abu Sayyaf suspects to Philippines

Malaysian police, through the Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom) operating Malaysia, have handed eight suspected Abu Sayyaf Group terrorists over to Philippine authorities. The eight arrested Abu Sayyaf bandits, including two mid-level leaders, were handed over onboard Philippine Navy vessel BRP-Ivatan (LC298) in the waters off Bakungan, Turtle Island, Tawi-Tawi on Friday May 28th.

Indonesia, Australia work together to safeguard maritime borders

The Jakarta Post reports that Australia and Indonesia held joint maritime border patrols last week, in order to improve coordination and maritime security. The three-day drill, called Operation Gannet, began on Monday May 24th, with Indonesia's Bakalma agency and Australia's Border Force both taking part along with fisheries agencies.

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



European Waters

Anti-immigration protesters blocked a road in Dover on May 29th, causing queues into the international ferry terminal. Police made four arrests and officers dispersed a handful of people who had sat in the middle of the A20, leading to the Port of Dover. About 60 people joined the protest, with some holding a banner that read "defend our borders". Dover MP Natalie Elphicke condemned the demonstration and criticised the "disruption to trade and to our town".

More migrants cross Channel

Friday 28th saw some 366 people cross the English Channel in small boats, the BBC reported, citing Home Office sources. On Saturday, a further 144 people crossed, with all migrants dealt with by UK Border Force personnel. The UK's National Crime Agency recently reported that "despite an increase in small boats facilitation, the overall organised immigration crime threat reduced" in 2020. Home Office figures show that in the 12 months to March 2021, the number of asylum applications in the UK fell by 24% - to 26,903. The Home Office also reported that French authorities had so far prevented a further 3,600 people from attempting to cross the English Channel.

P&O Ferries struggles to raise capital for future operation

Shipping Watch reports that ferry operator P&O Ferries, which recently formed a partnership with Danish competitor DFDS, is struggling to stay afloat, writes UK newspaper, The Times. According to the media, P&O Ferries admit to considerable uncertainty about its future operation unless the company can secure fresh capital.

Over 260 migrants rescued off Tunisia

At least 262 people were intercepted by the Tunisian navy and coast guard on Friday 28th. The migrants were trying to reach Europe from Tunisia and Libya. A statement from the Tunisian defence ministry said that a group of 158 people from Tunisia and sub-Saharan African countries was intercepted overnight from Thursday to Friday, May 28th, InfoMigrants reported on May 30th.

Around 500 migrants stopped in 24 hours in Mediterranean Sea

The International Migration Organization (IOM) announced on Friday 28th that around 500 migrants attempting to cross from Libya to Europe had been intercepted by Libyan Coast Guard assets, who returned them to the country. Ms Safa Masehli, communications officer at the IOM office in Libya, said in a tweet that 308 migrants left on the evening of Thursday 27th in three inflatables and one wooden boat from Zoura in western Libya in the hope of reaching Europe.

UN report blames EU and Libya for migrant deaths in central Mediterranean

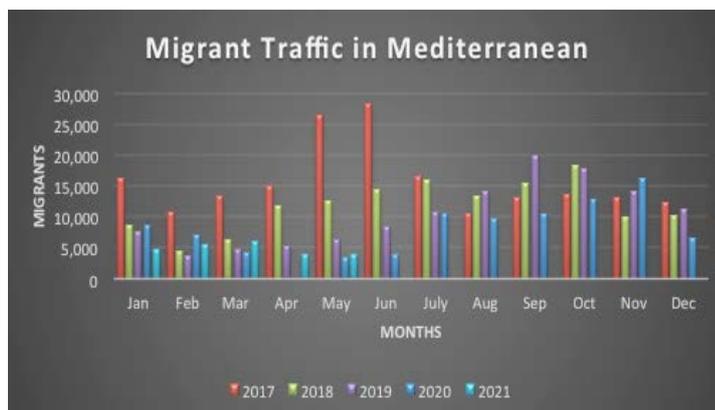
Policy decisions by EU member states and Libya led to deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, according to a report from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Wednesday 26th. The report is primarily based on interviews with migrants, government officials and relevant experts and covers the period between January 2019 to December 2020. At least 2,239 migrants died during this period while crossing the central Mediterranean Sea from Libya to the European States. In 2021 alone, at least 632 people have died along the route, The Jurist reported on May 27th.

UN rights chief urges Libya, EU, to protect migrants crossing the central Mediterranean

The UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet has urged Libya and the European Union to step up efforts to protect migrants crossing the central Mediterranean, the North African Post reported on May 27th. Bachelet also called for urgent reform of current policies and practices on search and rescue "that too often rob migrants of their lives, dignity and fundamental human rights."

Maersk Etienne crew wins Danish Shipping prize for saving Libyan migrants

Tradewinds reports that the captain and crew of a product tanker that had been stranded in Malta for 38 days during the Mediterranean migrant crisis was recognised by Danish Shipping for their rescue efforts. During a ceremony on Thursday 28th, Captain Volodymyr Yeroshkin and the crew of the Maersk Etienne received a Maritime Prize for their swift action in saving 27 migrants, including a pregnant woman, off Tunisia on August 5th 2020, after their vessel began drifting and taking on water. "We did our duty as seafarers and human beings, and it means a lot to me that our care for the rescuees and our seamanship are being recognised," said Captain Yeroshkin.



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

The current migrant smuggling situation

The UNHCR page for Mediterranean crossings is currently non-operational, so figures for this week have not been updated. However, as the media reports demonstrate, large numbers of migrants continue to put to sea from Libya to cross to EU states. Although there are no significant casualty reports this week, last week did see reports from Libya that bodies had been washing up on beaches once again, highlighting the extreme risk posed by attempting to cross the Med. There have been no significant political moves in the past week which might reduce those numbers, although Libyan politicians have been in discussion with EU states in recent days.

Libya

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Friday 28th called for the orderly release of asylum seekers detained in Libya. "There are an estimated 5,097 asylum seekers and migrants detained across Libya & UNHCR calls for their orderly release," UNHCR Libya tweeted. Nearly 10,000 illegal migrants have returned to Libya so far this year, according to the International Organization for Migration.

NOC Libya keen to work with global oil companies

Oil and Gas reported on May 31st that NOC Chairman, Mustafa Sanalla, met with Norway's Equinor and expressed the importance of collaborating with major international oil companies and securing investment for Libya's oil and gas industry. He cited the need to build capacity and coordinate technical training programmes to make the sector more efficient and promote development in the nation, the website said.

Autonomous drone attacked soldiers in Libya all on its own

According to the UN Security Council's Panel of Experts on Libya report, a drone attack on LNA forces in March, was conducted by the drone itself. Logistics convoys and retreating forces were "hunted down and remotely engaged by "lethal autonomous weapons systems such as the STM Kargu-2," the report reads. "The lethal autonomous weapons systems were programmed to attack targets without requiring data connectivity between the operator and the munition: in effect, a true 'fire, forget and find' capability." CNET reported.

Tunisia, Libya discuss ways to enhance bilateral cooperation

Tunisian President Kais Saied met on Saturday 29th with visiting President of the Libyan Presidency Council Mohamed Menfi to discuss ways to enhance bilateral cooperation. Saied and Menfi affirmed the congruence of views between the two countries on bilateral, regional and international issues of common interest during a joint press conference held at Carthage Presidential Palace in the capital Tunis, Xinhau reported.

Turkey Resumes Sending Mercenaries to Libya

News outlet, Asharq Al-Aswat reported on May 29th that Turkey has resumed sending Syrian mercenaries to Libya despite local and international demands to withdraw all foreign forces to stabilize the country ahead of the elections at the end of the year. They cite a report from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, although this remains unconfirmed by other sources.

Libya, Italy, Malta, EU discuss cooperation against illegal immigration

China's Xinhau news agency reports that Libyan Foreign Min-

ister Najla al-Mangoush met with his Italian and Maltese counterparts and the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement to discuss the cooperation against the illegal immigration on Friday 28th May. "Libya has been suffering from the illegal immigration," al-Mangoush said at a joint press conference following the meeting, adding that she and the other three all agreed to secure the southern Libyan border from illegal immigration with the assistance of the European Union. However, until the country can do more to control militia groups believed to be profiting from human trafficking, this seems unlikely.

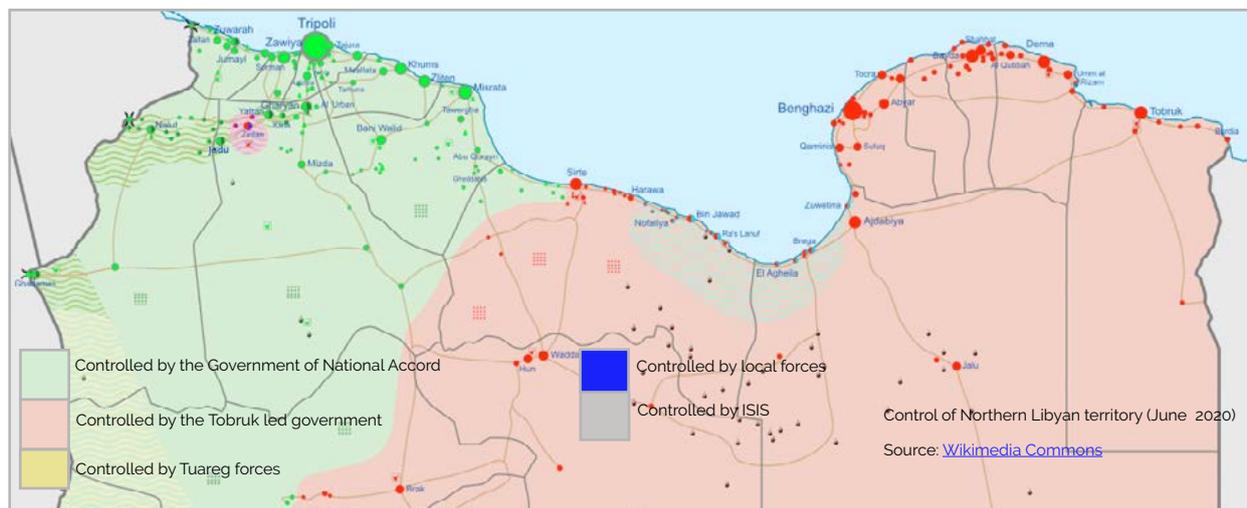
Will Haftar run in December's election?

Libya's renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar is polishing his political image ahead of elections after a crippling rout on the battlefield and with his support waning at home and abroad, analysts told Al Jazeera on May 29th. Despite failing to take the country's capital after almost a year of fighting, "He is hoping the elections will secure him a political victory after his military defeat," international relations professor Miloud el-Hajj to the media outlet. Haftar has been quiet since the UN-led peace process began, but has recently engaged in a PR push in the country, suggesting further political ambition.

The U.S. is quietly returning to Libya

NBC News report that the Biden administration is quietly dipping its toes back into Libya. Last week, the highest-ranking U.S. diplomat to visit the country since 2014 arrived in Tripoli, and the administration has deployed a team there to work out the daunting logistics of reopening the embassy, two sources familiar with the matter said, the news outlet reported. The strategic importance of the country is not lost on the current administration. "Our intent is to begin to resume operations in Libya as soon as the security situation permits and we have the necessary security measures in place," a State Department spokesperson said.

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



Central and South America

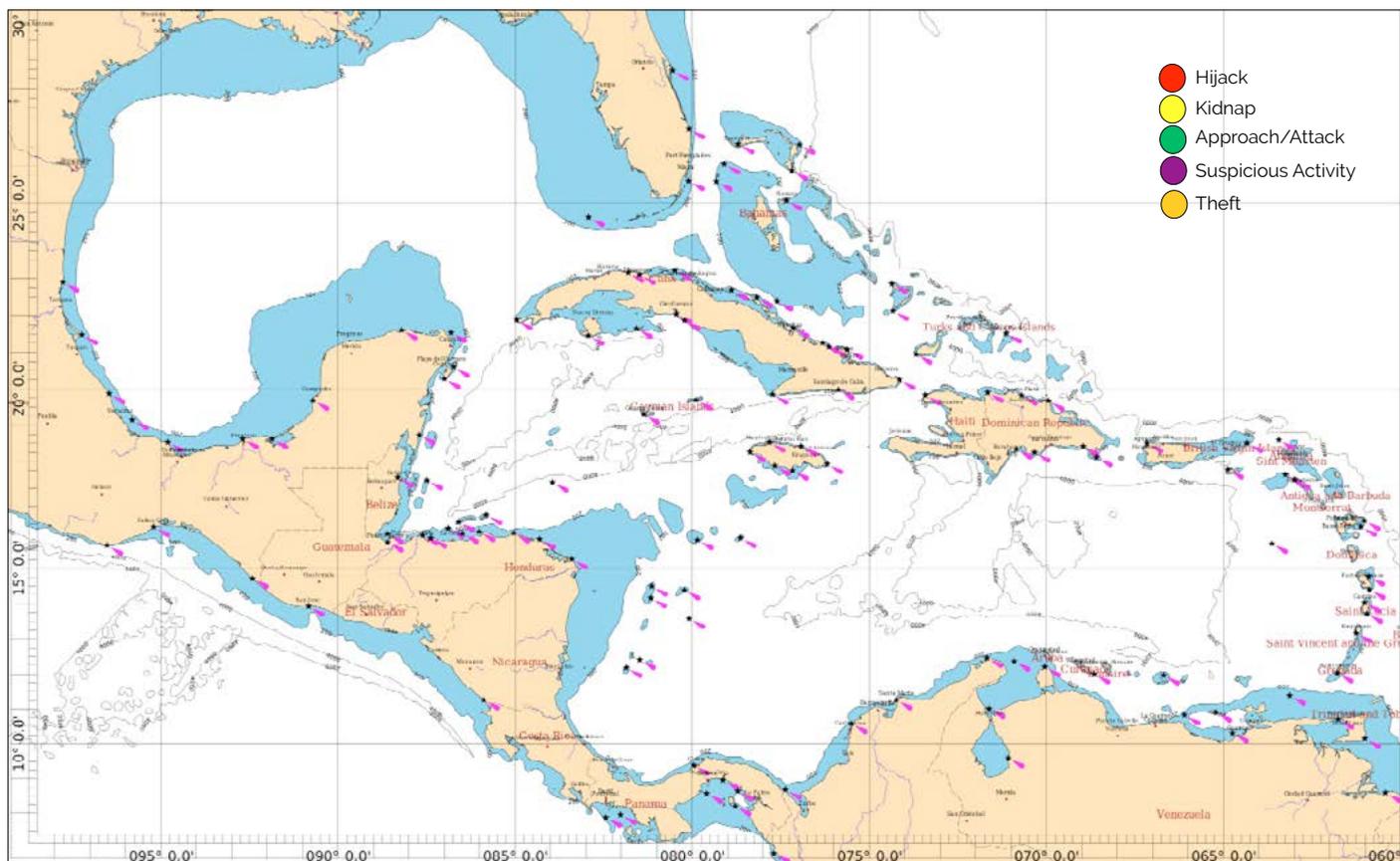
Nothing significant to report.

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](#).

Western North Pacific Ocean and South China Sea



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