

Weekly Security & Risk Report

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MARITIME SECURITY PHYSICAL AND ASSET SECURITY RISK CONSULTING SECURITY SYSTEMS



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Issue 294 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

The Commanding Officer of the USS Hershel Williams, which has been in the Gulf of Guinea on a training mission with Nigeria and Ghana, has praised the efforts of the Nigerian Navy to stem piracy in the region. Captain Chad Graham said: "Maritime engagements with many navies working together improve inter-operability and collective capability, absolutely necessary for a busy area such as the Gulf of Guinea."

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Oil Company Donates 50 Security Boats to the Nigerian Navy

The Nigerian oil and pipeline company Aiteo donated 50 brand new gunboats, patrol craft and other vessels to the Nigerian Navy, hoping to clamp down piracy and oil theft in its own backyard, Maritime Executive reported on August 16th.

MWUN Knocks NIMASA, Marine Police Over Piracy

Tide News reported on August 16th that the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN) in Rivers State had laid the blame for ongoing instability in the maritime sector on NIMASA. MWUN blamed them and the marine police formation for the incessant abduction of maritime workers and passengers in the state's waterways. Trustee, Dockworkers, MWUN, Rivers State Chapter, Comrade Harry Waite, stated this while condemning the recent abduction of five passengers along Bonny/ Port Harcourt by suspected sea robbers.

Navy Debunks Claim Of Militant Attack On Personnel In Bayelsa

The Nigerian Navy has debunked the reported attack by militant group, known as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), on its personnel, in Bayelsa State, Leadership newspaper reported on August 14th. A video clip posted online showed a gunfight between unidentified gunmen and Nigerian Navy personnel at sea, causing panic in Bayelsa State but the Nigerian Navy, in a statement on August 13th, described the video clip as that of activity from simulated assault on a militant location by Nigerian Navy Special Boat Service.

Nigerian, Spanish Navy Strengthen Partnership

As part of its ongoing relationship with the Nigerian Navy, Spanish Navy vessel Vigia has visited the Western Naval Command of the Nigerian Navy, This Day reported on August 16th.

During the visit, the ship carried out exercises/drills with selected Nigerian Navy Ships in addition to other engagements including visit to the Naval Training Command (NAVTRAC). The visit comes just after the Nigerian Navy conducted exercises with the US Navy, and highlights the international community's efforts to improve maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea brings in nearly \$4 million a year

A recent report by the UNODC has highlighted the amounts pirates in the Gulf of Guinea have earned from their crimes. According to the report, pirates in the region have earned around \$4 million per year. According to a recent UNODC study, "Piracy operations in the Gulf of Guinea are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Six pirate groups, 30 to 50 members each, have developed the ability to carry out attacks in deep waters, primarily targeting foreign ships to kidnap crew members for ransom.

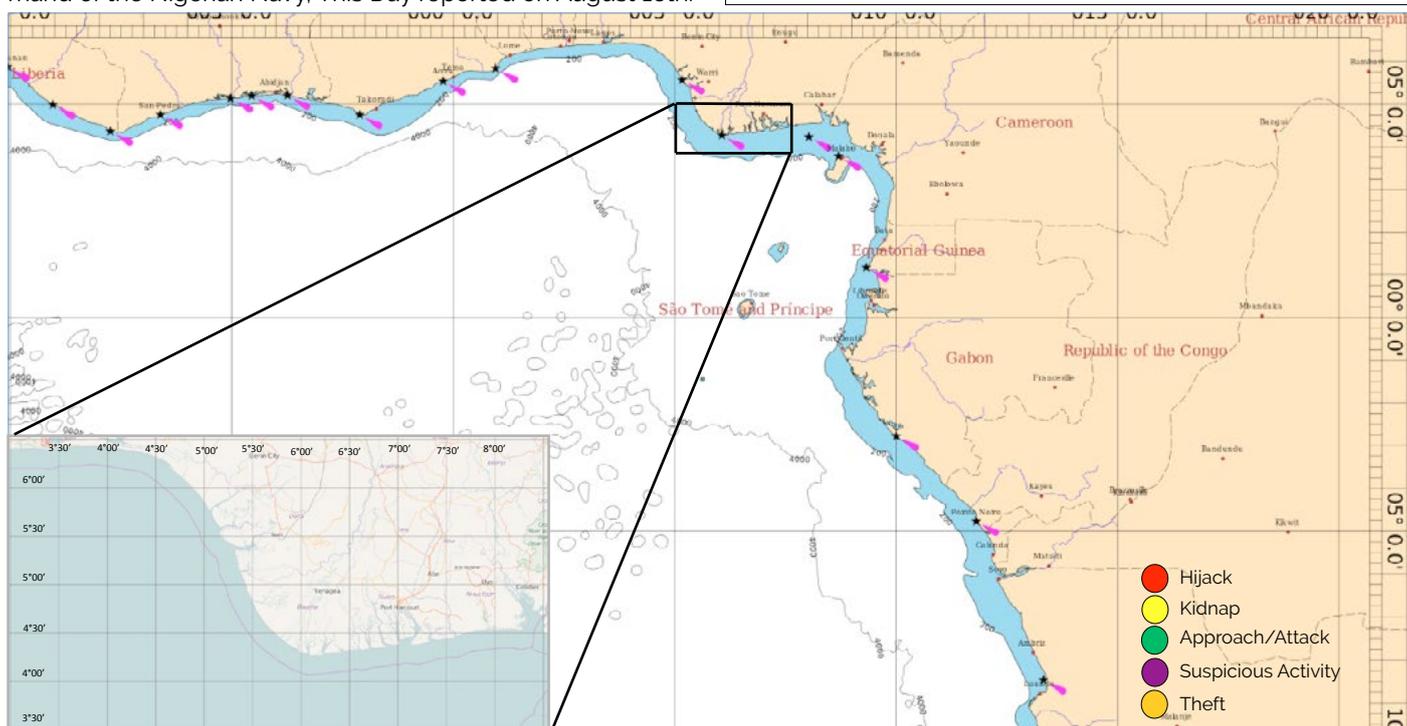
For further information and to see MAST Services in the region, [please click here.](#)

Gulf of Guinea Piracy & Maritime Crime Figures:

2021:
 Incidents reported: 37 (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 Times reports that the the group of men believed to be Iranian Special Forces, who boarded the MV Asphalt Princess in the Arabian Sea were unable to divert it to Iran after the crew disabled the ship's engines. Once rendered inoperable, the boarders had little choice but to disembark, as US and Omani forces approached her position, a source told The Times, according to a report from Arab News on August 5th.

Incidents:

1. Underway MV reported attacked at 0445 UTC in position 02:58.48N - 046:44.05E, approx 100nm NE of Mogadishu, Somalia. Attack ended, vessel and crew reported Safe. Reported (UKMTO) 13th Aug.

Civilian authorities return to Mozambique city retaken from rebels

Africa News reported on August 13th that the governor of Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado province said Thursday that the city of Mocimboa da Praia was safe for people to return. The news came as the town was retaken by troops from Rwanda and Mozambique over the weekend. After being overrun in August 2020, the town became the de-facto headquarters of the Islamic State-linked extremists, who are locally referred to as Al-Shabab.

UAE calls for protecting maritime routes from any threats in Security Council meeting

The United Arab Emirates affirmed its commitment to regional and international efforts to confront threats to navigation during a meeting by the UN Security Council this week, according to state-run news agency WAM. Hellenic Shipping News reported on August 13th. The UAE statement stressed on the pivotal role that maritime transport plays in the global economy, stressing that maritime security and environmental sustainability are interrelated, in light of the recent threats to maritime security in the Arabian Peninsula.

Indian Navy projects power across IOR, carries out drills with Gulf countries

India continues to increase military ties with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, Financial Express reported on August 13th. India hopes

to maintain robust diplomatic relations while ensuring coordination in the event of security concerns in crucial sea lanes. The efforts are in part to send a strong message to China, as well as ensuring Indian interests in the region are secured, at a time when Iran is accused of being behind a series of incidents in the Indian Ocean Region.

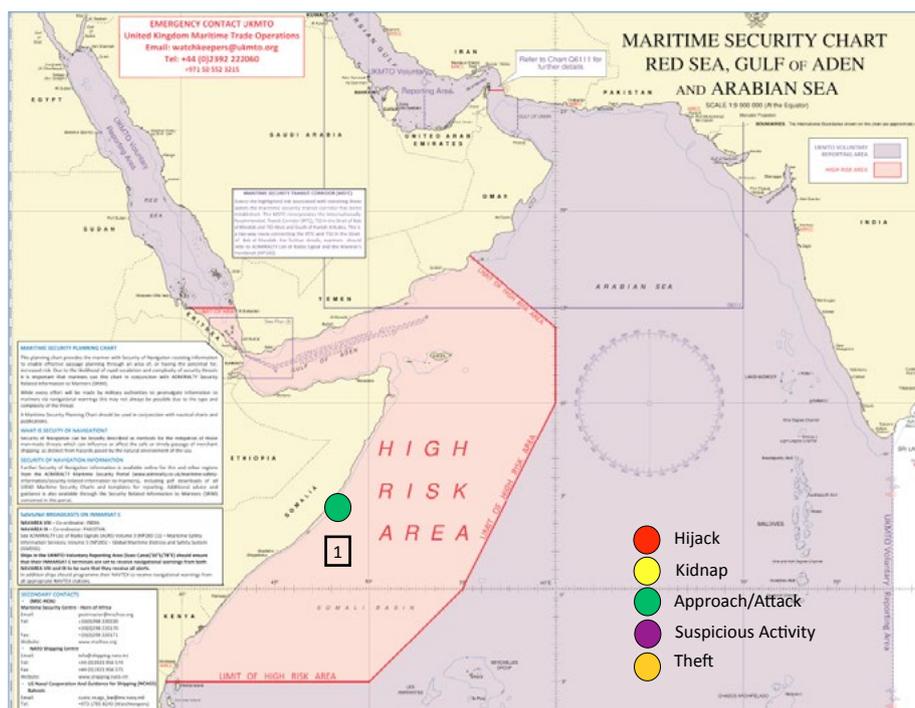
Analyst: Iran running program of 'kamikaze drones'

Iran is developing a "kamikaze drone" program in the wake of heightened maritime warfare, Arab News reported on August 12th. The news follows an apparent drone strike on the MV Asphalt Princess, which left two dead. Experts from the Counter Extremism Project (CEP) have warned that the new exploding drone tactics are a "core element" of Tehran's efforts to influence the region. CEP analyst Daniel Roth said: "The Iranian threat to shipping in the Gulf is substantial and borne out by numerous examples of Iranian attacks, hijackings, detentions and increasingly, drone strikes," Arab News added.

Tanker missing for over a month off Oman with \$30m China-bound cargo

Tradewinds reported on August 10th that the MT Winsome, a aframax tanker, has been missing for over a month en route to China with an oil cargo from Oman. Contact was lost with the vessel shortly after it set out on its voyage on July 5th. There is speculation that it may have been seized by Iran, but this remains unconfirmed.

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





Somalia

Political strides are breathing new hope into the country's fragile State-building process, driven by an electoral agreement signed by Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble, and the heads of Somalia's federal member states, a senior UN official told the Security Council on Thursday. James Swan, UN Special Representative and Head of the UN's Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), outlined progress made since the signing of the Electoral Implementation Agreement, in May.

Security Experts Warn Al-Shabab May Try to Emulate Taliban

The Taliban's swift takeover of Afghanistan has raised concerns that it could encourage other Islamist militant groups around the world, such as Al Shabaab in Somalia. Experts warn that when and if international forces there try to hand over security to the Somali government, the world could see a repeat of what happened in Afghanistan, Voice of America reported on August 16th.

Militants killed, Al Shabaab bases destroyed in south

Horn Observer reported on August 16th that at least 17 Al Shabaab terrorists were killed during clashes between Somali forces and the militants in the south of the country. Somali special forces also reportedly killed seven Al Shabaab fighters in a gunfight in Toratorow town, around 100km from Mogadishu.

Somalia seeks Saudi investment in fishery project

Arab News reported on August 15th that Saudi Arabia was looking at potential investments into Somalia, including the fisheries sector. Officials from the Saudi Public Authority for Foreign Trade (GAFT) and their Somali counterparts held a meeting in Muscat, Asharq Al-Awsat reported, according to Arab News. Somalia has the largest seacoast in Africa, and it leads the continent in livestock and fish exports.

Somalia Receives Johnson and Johnson Vaccines to Help Curb COVID 19

Somalia has received more than than 300,000 doses of the

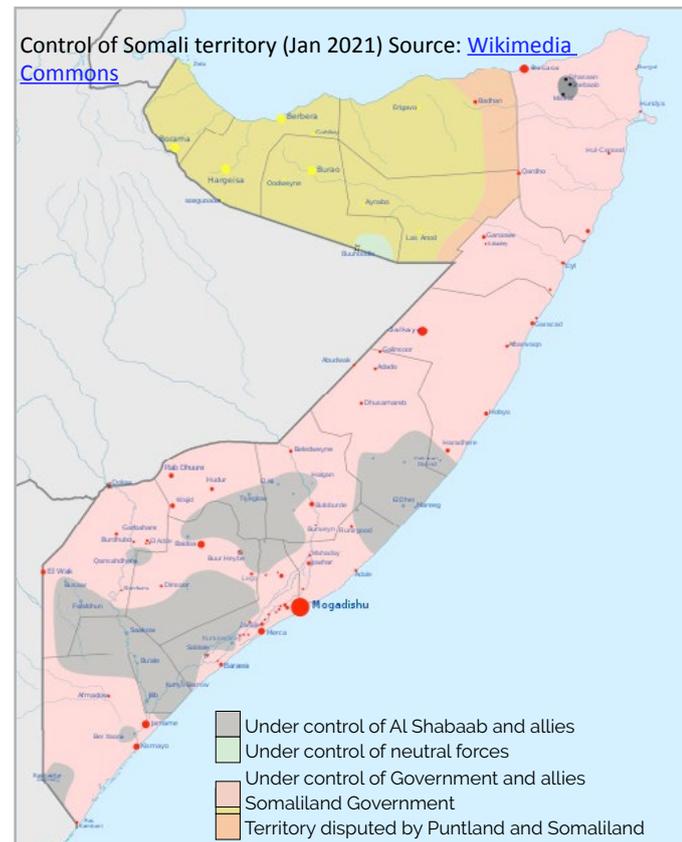
Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. The doses, donated by the U.S. through the international COVAX facility, will be the first single-dose vaccines to be distributed in Somalia, Voice of America reported on August 13th. Somali health authorities received 302,400 doses on Thursday 12th of the Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine through the COVAX facility.

African union peace force in Somalia probes reports of civilian deaths

Reuters reported on August 12th that the African Union (AU) was investigating reports which said that a number of civilians were killed during a recent incident between AU troops and Al Shabaab militants. It is believed that during an ambush in the Beldamin-Golweyn Forward Operating Base in the Lower Shabelle region, seven civilians lost their lives. The incident has stirred significant unrest in the region, with calls for action against the AMISOM forces present.

Somalia PM Holds Talks With Kenya Somali Businessmen

Kenya's Daily Nation reported on August 12th that there were hopes for improved trading conditions between Somalia and Kenya, after Somali PM Roble held talks with Somali and Kenyan business representatives in Kenya. Opening the border to secure better trade was one of the main topics discussed.



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

China's Xinhua agency reported on August 14th that a huge blast struck a security patrol in Aden on Saturday, killing at least two soldiers, according to government sources. "Unknown gunmen detonated their booby-trapped motorcycle and struck a security patrol in Aden's district of Dar Sad, leaving two soldiers killed and six others injured," the local government source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. As a result of the incident, security has been stepped up in the city.

Iranian Diplomat Says Talks With Saudi Arabia Await Raisi Administration

Al Alam TV has reported that talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been placed on hold until the new Iranian administration takes over in the country. Iran's former president Hassan Rouhani's government had evaluated the talks that began between the two arch-rivals in Iraq earlier this year as positive, Iran International reported on August 16th.

Saudi project clears 1,882 more mines in Yemen

Arab News reported on August 16th that the Saudi Project for Landmine Clearance had made safe another 1,882 mines in Yemen during the second week of August. The figure comprised eight antipersonnel mines, 1,469 anti-tank mines, 403 unexploded ordnances, and two explosive devices.

Houthis suffer losses in Marib attacks

Reports from Marib province on August 15th say that as many as 21 Houthi rebels were killed during a series of attacks against Yemen army positions in the region. The casualties follow several days of intense fighting, which have seen government forces reclaim the highway linking Al-Kasarah with Raghwan, according to a report carried by regional media and China's Xinhua agency.

Houthis clash with government forces in Hodeidah

At least 10 people were killed during an engagement between Yemeni forces and Houthi rebels in Hodeidah, Xinhua reported on August 15th. "Fresh armed confrontations erupted between units of the pro-government forces and the Houthi militia in Hodeidah's district of Tuhyata," a local military source said. At least seven Houthis died during the firefight, with the government forces reporting three fatalities.

Coalition forces down missile heading for Saudi Arabia

Reports on August 15th state that Saudi coalition forces shot down a Houthi ballistic missile near the Saudi city of Najran on Sunday. The coalition accused the Houthis of "attempting to target civilians and civilian facilities" in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency.

Houthi rebels say shoot down "spy" drone

Yemen's Houthi rebels said they shot down a "U.S.-made spy drone" belonging to the Saudi-led coalition while it was hovering over their positions in the central province of Marib on Saturday. "Our forces shot down the spy drone over Medghal district," Houthi-run al-Masirah TV quoted the Houthi militia spokesman Yehya Sarea as saying, Xinhua reported on August 14th.

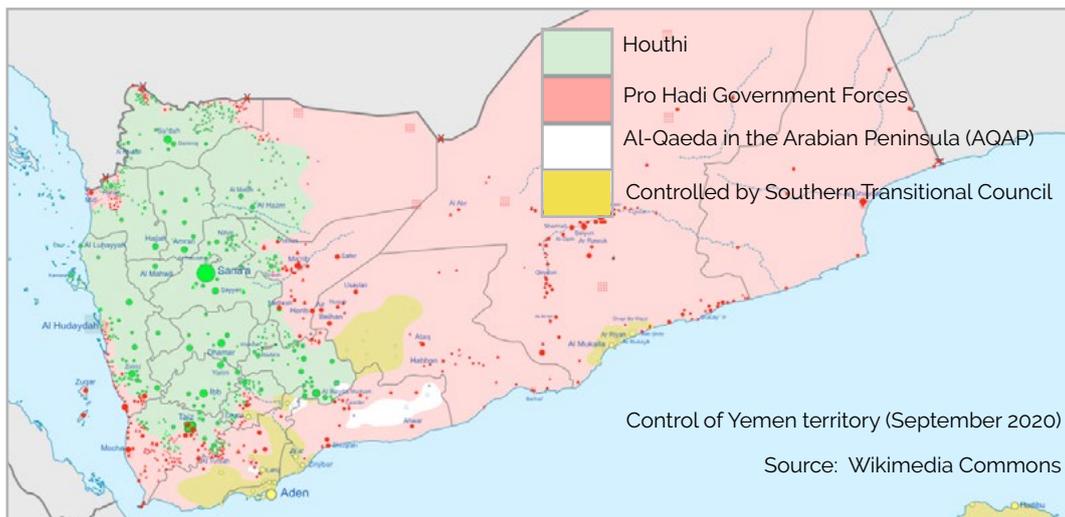
Reports of UK Special Forces in Yemen

A recent piece in the UK's Daily Express has stated that as many as 40 SAS operatives are currently deployed in Yemen, searching for the groups behind UAV attacks and threats to shipping in the region. According to the report, a team of 40 soldiers landed at Al Ghaydah airport and are apparently being helped by locals.

Yemen aid agencies: thousands of lives at risk as vital lifeline remains blocked

For the past five years, Sana'a International airport has remained closed to commercial flights due to restrictions imposed by the Saudi-led Coalition on Yemen's airspace and disagreement over the terms of its reopening between Ansar Allah and the Internationally Recognised Government and Saudi Arabia has led to its continued closure, impeding thousands of civilians' access to lifesaving assistance, nine aid agencies warned on August 12th. Since 2016, aid agencies have been raising the alarm over the deadly impact of the closure. At least 32,000 people may have died prematurely as a result according to the Ministry of Health and Population in Sana'a (2019).

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





South East Asia

The partial closure of one of China's biggest cargo ports due to coronavirus has raised fresh concerns about the impact on global trade. Services were shut on Wednesday 11th at a terminal at Ningbo-Zhoushan port after a worker was infected with the Delta variant of Covid-19. The closure threatens more disruption to supply chains ahead of the key Christmas shopping season. Closing the terminal on Meishan island until further notice will cut the port's capacity for container cargo by about a quarter, BBC News reported on August 14th.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Philippine Navy conducts Exercise Pagsasama 2021

As the fishing season begins in the South China Sea, the Philippine Navy will conduct exercises with reservists from August 16th to 20th, regional media reported. The activity is dubbed as Exercise Pagsasama 2021, and it carried the theme, "Strengthening Integration, Cooperation and Interoperability of the Philippine Navy Reserve Force to the Regular Force," the SunStar reported on August 16th.

MMEA arrests five vessels in six-hour period over alleged entry permission offenses

The Manifold Times reported on August 17th that the MMEA had arrested five ships during a six-hour period for a variety of entry permission failures. The Johor State Maritime Director, First Admiral Nurul Hizam bin Zakaria, said that a cargo ship and two tankers were intercepted by MMEA assets, while two 'barter boats' were also stopped. None of the vessels had permission to enter Malaysian waters, the report said. A total of 80 ships have been seized since the beginning of the year for anchoring illegally in Johor waters.

Cutter Munro Arrives in Western Pacific for Months-Long Deployment

Seapower reported on August 16th that USCG cutter Munro had arrived in the West Pacific on August 15th as part of a deployment to the region, The crew is operating in support of United States Indo-Pacific Command, which oversees military operations in the region.

Malaysia flexes missile capabilities of submarine, Kasturi-class corvettes in South China Sea

Janes reported on August 16th that the Royal Malaysian Navy

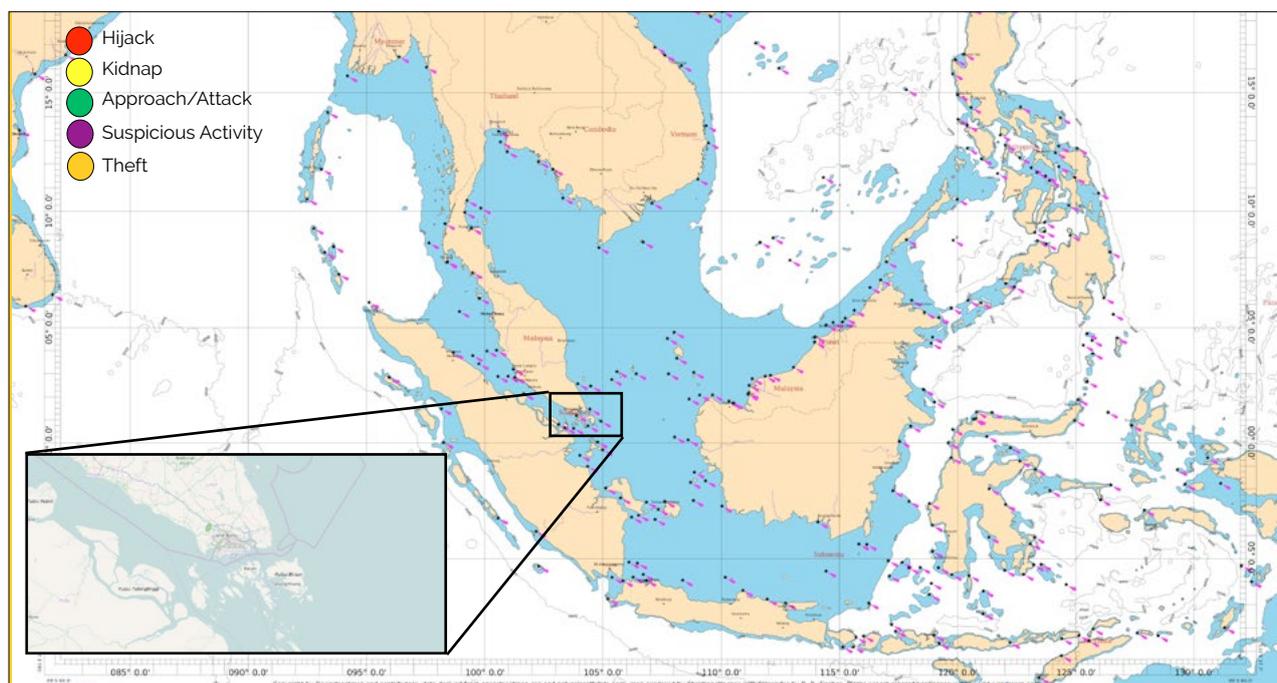
had given a very rare demonstration of its naval capacity in the South China Sea, with a live fire exercise from the corvette, KD Lekir. The exercise saw the vessel fire three Exocet missiles as well as the first use of an anti-ship missile, the report said. The six-day exercise also saw involvement from over 1,000 personnel from the Navy, Royal Malaysian Air Force and MMEA.

Abu Sayyaf fighters surrender to authorities

Last week saw a number of Abu Sayyaf terrorists surrender to the Philippine authorities. On Friday 13th, four Abu Sayyaf Group members surrendered in Sulu, while at least another nine turned themselves in at the beginning of the week, including one man believed to have been in hiding since the kidnapping of over 40 tourists in Sipadan, Malaysia in 2000. Major General William Gonzales, commander of the Army's 11th Infantry Division and head of Joint Task Force Sulu, said "These people have once gone astray. We are glad that they (now) chose a life of peace instead of hiding."

Two armed robbery attempts on ships in Singapore Strait reported last month

ReCAAP has issued its report for July, showing five incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia that month. Two incidents were reported on the Singapore Strait, with both cases taking place on July 17th and involving a group of five men armed with knives, who boarded vessels but then fled when spotted by crew. ReCAAP reported that there had been 22 incidents of armed robbery in the Singapore Strait between January and July 2021, a slight increase, year on year. It also noted that 18 of those incidents took place off Tanjung Pergam in Bintan, Indonesia.



European Waters

Nearly 600 migrants crossed the Channel on the same day a man died making the journey, the government has confirmed. The Home Office said UK authorities dealt with 592 people on Thursday - the highest figure for a single day. French authorities reported more than 160 rescues on Thursday after several boats got into difficulty, BBC News reported on August 16th.

Channel migrants: French prosecutors investigate death

French prosecutors have begun a manslaughter investigation after a migrant died trying to cross the English Channel. The man, who is thought to be from Africa and was aged between 25 and 30, died in hospital in Calais after being winched from the sea on Thursday 12th. He was one of 36 people in a boat which began to sink off Gravelines. A French charity said the man, who was onboard with his girlfriend, had dived into the water to lighten the load, BBC News reported. Several men were winched from the sea by a Belgian helicopter, with others rescued by nearby fishing boats. On August 16th, BBC News reported that French authorities said an Algerian national appeared before a judge on Saturday and is being held in custody. He was also charged with endangering the lives of others and assisting illegal entry into France.

120 illegal migrants rescued off Libyan coast

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Sunday said 120 illegal migrants were rescued and returned to Libya, Xinhua reported on August 16th. "Earlier today, some 120 persons were rescued/intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guards in two disembarkation operations," UNHCR tweeted. "The individuals were returned to the Tripoli Naval Base where UNHCR and its medical partner IRC provided urgent humanitarian assistance," it said.

Toddlers among latest to cross English Channel just days after tragedy

The Press Association (PA) reported on August 15th that several further migrant boats had crossed the Channel and arrived in the UK, with several children too young to walk spotted amongst the passengers. Several vessels were thought to have successfully made the crossing, with around 50 people seen arriving in Dover, the PA reported.

Create safe routes for refugees across the Channel to stop people drowning, MPs tell government

A cross party group of UK politicians has called upon the UK government to introduce safe routes for refugees trying to cross the English Channel, in a move that will further inflame tensions over illegal immigration. The report in The Independent newspaper calls for "sufficient alternative safe routes need to be provided by the Government..."

One in ten asylum seekers crossing the Channel is an unaccompanied child, charity says

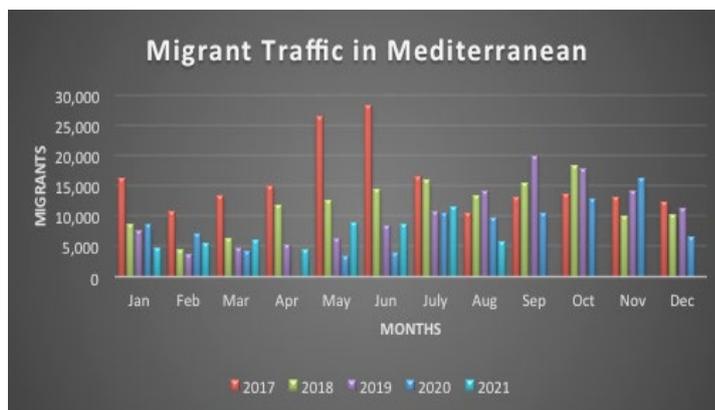
The Kent Refugee Action Network charity estimates that as many as one in ten migrants crossings the Channel is an unaccompanied minor, Euronews reported on August 12th. Bridget Chapman, project coordinator at the Kent Refugee Action Network, says that most of the time, children were going to be forced to fight in their home countries of Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan.

Over 42,000 refugees, asylum-seekers in Libya: UNHCR

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has announced that there are currently 42,210 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Libya. So far in 2021, a total of 20,799 refugees and immigrants have been rescued at sea and returned to Libya by the Libyan Coast Guard, Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday citing the UNHCR as saying on August 14th. "The number of people returned to Libya in July 2021 has more than tripled compared to the same period last year, which may be attributed to the periodic easing of movement restrictions for Covid-19, as well as calmer sea conditions," the agency added.

Libyan navy rescues 113 illegal immigrants off western coast

The Libyan navy on Friday 13th said that its coast guard rescued 113 illegal migrants off the country's western coast. The migrants, rescued in two separate operations, are from different African countries, the navy said. The migrants were disembarked at Libyan capital Tripoli's Naval Base and then handed over to the anti-illegal immigration department. The department will look after the migrants and complete the procedures for their deportation safely back to their countries of origin, the navy added, according to a report by China's Xinhua agency.



Migrant crossings 2017-2021. Source: [UNHCR](#)

The current migrant smuggling situation

While crossings continue in significant numbers both in the English Channel and Mediterranean Sea, with some 5662 people arriving so far in August, this will not be the focus for many this week. Events in Afghanistan have once again focussed political minds on the issue of mass migration, as the news footage from Kabul airport has brutally highlighted. It is almost certain that many more people will now try to reach Libya and other countries bordering the Mediterranean in an attempt to reach Europe, but the true impact will not be felt in the region for some time.

Libya

The relative political calm in Libya has had a knock-on effect: far greater numbers of migrants are now attempting to cross from the country to places like Italy, some 186 miles away, AFP reported on August 17th. Anwar al-Werfalli, a specialist in migration law, believes that many local people smugglers are now ramping activity up to make up for a financial shortfall during the pandemic lockdown.

Libya ends partial lockdown due to stabilizing coronavirus situation

Despite ongoing concern over case numbers, the Libyan government on Saturday 14th ended the partial lockdown, following advice from the country's Minister of Health regarding indications of the stability of the country's coronavirus situation.

Libya's 5+5 JMC urges freezing of military agreements, departure of mercenaries

The Libya Observer reported on August 15th that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) had asked the government to place a hold on all military agreements with other countries, saying it had agreed on emergency measures to remove all foreign fighters and mercenaries operating in the country, without exception, as soon as possible. The JMC delegations called for speedy approval of the constitutional basis so Libyans can have their say in December elections, urging as well in their seventh meeting in Sirte on Saturday for appointing a defense minister in the Government of National Unity, the paper reported.

UN Mission in Libya denies allowing proposals contradicting Dialogue Forum roadmap

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on Saturday denied reports saying it allowed discussion of proposals contradicting the roadmap adopted by the UN-sponsored Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF). Xinhau reported on August 15th. "The mission reiterated that its role is to bring Libyans together and facilitate their discussion or mediation, provided that parties are ready for mediation and working for a compromise," the UNSMIL tweeted.

Gaddafi's son faces arrest over Russian mercenaries

Prosecutors in Libya have issued an arrest warrant for Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of the late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, over suspected ties to Russian mercenaries. A BBC World Service investigation has revealed links between the shadowy Wagner group's activities in Libya and war crimes committed against Libyan citizens. Russian fighters first appeared in Libya in 2019 when they joined the forces of a rebel

general, Khalifa Haftar, in attacking the UN-backed government in the capital Tripoli. The conflict ended in a ceasefire in October 2020, BBC news reported on August 13th.

North Africa Fires Spread to Libya

As unusually hot weather persists over parts of Northern Africa, new forest fires reportedly have broken out in Tunisia and Libya during the past 24 hours, in addition to many that are still burning in Algeria. Amateur video showed a forest fire raging out of control near the Libyan city of Bayada in the Jebel Akhdar region, east of the country, overnight. Libya's 218 TV network reported that fire crews in the region were trying to put out the blaze, Voice of America reported on August 13th.

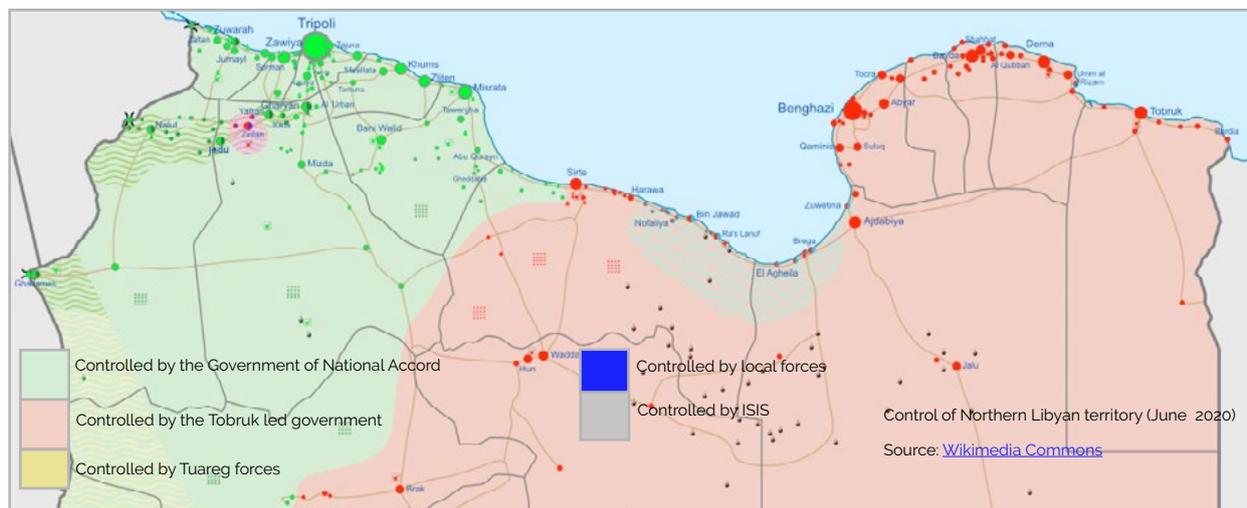
Libya launches largest COVID-19 vaccination center in capital Tripoli

In a bid to accelerate inoculations and catch up with the surging COVID-19 cases, Libya has reportedly pioneered its largest vaccination center in the city of Tripoli, Running Africa reported on August 13th. Since the commencement of the pandemic, the country has officially registered 274,453 cases of infection, comprising 3,811 deaths.

Libya's promising transition stalls

The Institute for Security Studies issued a stark article on the future of the Libyan elections on August 13th, highlighting the belief that many analysts have been too optimistic about the country's future as a political stalemate now seems likely to throw a spanner into the works. Negotiations have deadlocked mostly over the nature and sequencing – and possibly the delay – of the 24th December elections, and the crucial question of who should be the military's commander in chief. The 1st July deadline has passed without the necessary constitutional amendments and electoral law to be adopted by Parliament that would allow for polls to be organised, the ISS wrote.

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



Central and South America

Nothing significant to report.

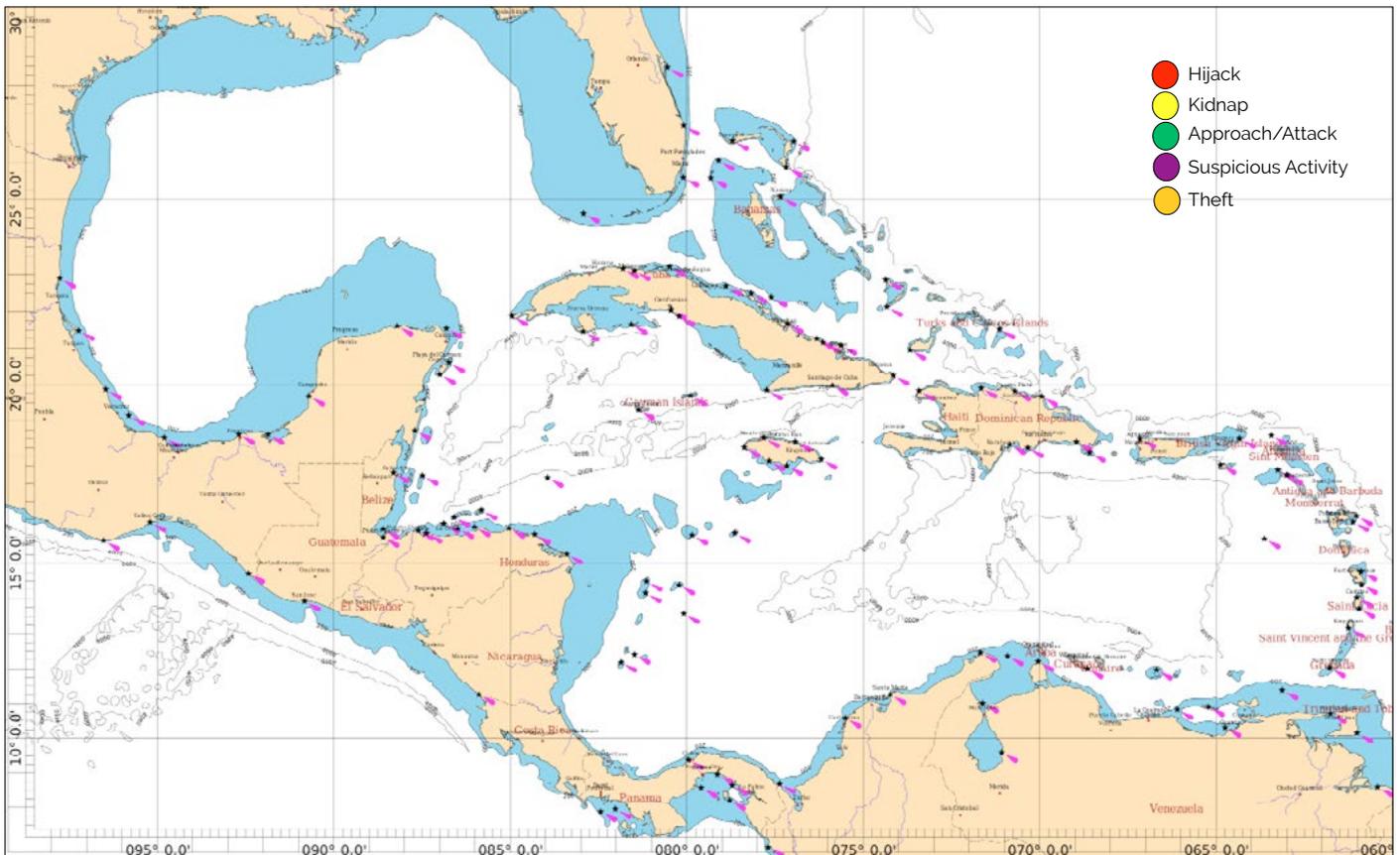
Incidents:

1. Late report: Duty crew onboard Malta-flagged container ship underway noticed a speed boat with five persons onboard alongside the ship at 0612 UTC in position 02:29.9S – 080:04.8W, around 1.45nm South of Puerto La Seca, Ecuador. Alarm raised and local authorities notified. Seeing the alerted crew the moved away. Coast guard officers boarded and escorted the ship to a safe port. Reported (IMB) 5 Aug. (*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.