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Weekly Security & Risk Report

16th March 2022



MAST Intelligence

UK Domestic

International Incidents

Industry and SIA Updates

LAND



SEA

West Africa

Indian Ocean
Yemen, Somalia

European Waters



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Issue 323

Issue 323 of the series reviews, analyses and threat assesses the conflict-affected coastal states of Somalia and Yemen and associated waters, as well as ongoing issues facing the maritime industry in West Africa. The Mediterranean migrant crisis, security issues facing the UK and incidents affecting maritime security are also reported and analysed.

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 conflicts 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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Gulf of Guinea

Nigeria's Central Bank, Port Authority and the office of the Accountant General of the Federation have all denied any involvement in the conception of the country's Deep Blue maritime security project, during a hearing by the Nigerian government's Navy Committee, Premium Times reported on 9th March. There are concerns within the government that the company behind the project is not even registered in Nigeria.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Rivers State donates 14 ballistic gunboats to Navy, Army, Police others in Port Harcourt

The governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, has presented 14 rigid hulled patrol boats to the security services operating in the area, The News Nigeria reported on 12th March. During a handover ceremony, where Wike spoke about the State's maritime security problems, he told the media: "Most of the problem we have with illegal oil bunkering is that security agencies are fully involved in this illegal oil bunkering. That's the truth. Civil defence is involved. Army is involved. Police is involved. Navy is involved. Let us tell ourselves the simple truth."

Obangame Express 2022 opens

The international naval exercise, Obangame Express 2022, has commenced in Nigeria's TTW and wider Gulf of Guinea, media reported on Friday 11th. The aim of the exercise is to, "improve regional collaboration through joint operations, intelligence sharing and harmonized legal framework to enhance collective capabilities of Gulf of Guinea nations against maritime crime," Nigeria's Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Awwal Zubairu-Gambo told the media. Some 31 countries will participate, with Nigeria deploying 10 ships and two helicopters during the exercise.

Italian Navy frigate patrolling Gulf of Guinea

Defence Web reported on 11th March that the EU had deployed Italian frigate, Luigi Rizzo, to the Gulf of Guinea. The Italian Navy said the deployment was part of Operation Gabinia, which has run since 2020. The ship will engage in anti-piracy patrols as well as training exercises with regional navies. The deployment is part of the EU's commitment to maritime security in the region.

Chief of Naval Staff announces Nigeria's exit from 'piracy list'

In an unusual statement, Vice Admiral AZ Gambo, Nigeria's Chief of Naval Staff, told the media that the country had now "exited the IMB Piracy List". While the country has experienced a reduction in piracy reports in its waters in recent months, the IMB does not maintain a 'list' of countries as such, rather it simply reports on the incidence of piracy and maritime crime in a nation's waters.

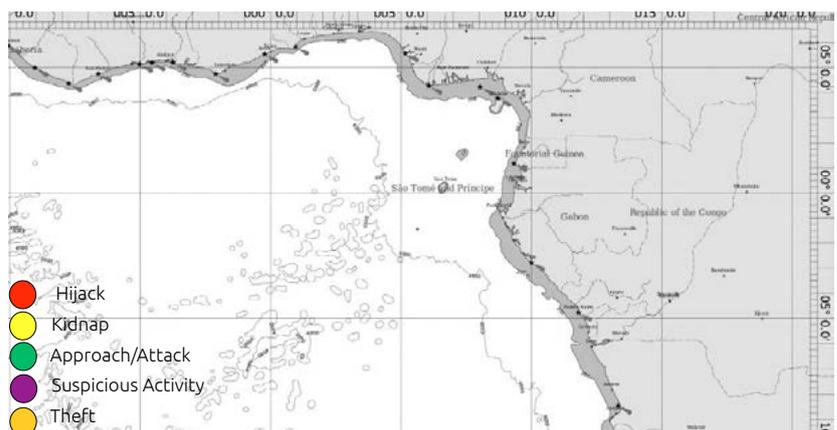
For further information, please [click here](#).

Gulf of Guinea Piracy & Maritime Crime Figures

2022
Incidents reported: 12 (MDAT-GoG/Others)

2021
Incidents reported: 56 (MDAT-GoG/Others)
Crew kidnapped: 46 (IMB, MDAT)
Vessels hijacked: 1 (MDAT-GoG)

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



Indian Ocean Region

Iran's oil minister, Jawad Owji, has said that US attempts to prevent Iranian oil exports had largely failed. Speaking on Saturday 12th, he said: "Attempts by the enemy to reduce Iran's oil exports and capture the country's ships have taken place many times."

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Tanzania: Appeal Court Orders Fresh Trial On Seven Somali Pirates

Tanzania's Court of Appeal has reportedly ordered a fresh trial for seven Somalis, sentenced to life in prison for attacking a ship in 2011 within Tanzania's waters. The report, by the Tanzania Daily News on 11th March, said that Justices Augustine Mwarija, Winfrida Korosso and Patricia Fikirini had reached their decision and ordered a retrial, setting aside the original verdict against the men. They noted that the original trial judge did not authenticate the recorded testimonies of not only the prosecution witnesses but also the defence witnesses during the original case.

UN authorization to fight piracy in Somali waters ends

The UN has let the deadline for it to renew a new authorisation to operate in Somali waters pass, France 24 reported on 11th March. The remit was extended in December 2021, but has now ended. The UN has made no comment on the issue, but it is something that Somalia has wanted to see in recent years. This means that EU and other international navies are not legally able to operate in Somali waters and any pursuit of suspected pirates can only take place in international waters. Whether Somalia now has the capacity to secure its own waters

remains to be seen.

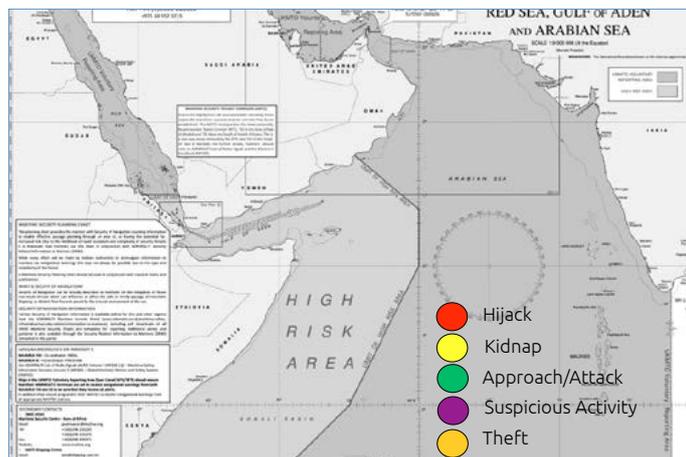
Mauritius: Prime Minister reiterates determination to fight drug trafficking

The Prime Minister, Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, reaffirmed his relentless determination to fight drug trafficking while highlighting that the record seizure of drugs since 2015 amounts to some Rs 4.3 billion at land and Rs 1.6 billion at sea. He was speaking at the inauguration of the New Poudre d'Or National Coast Guard (NCG) Post in presence of Commissioner of Police, Mr Anil Kumar Dip; and the Commandant of NCG, Captain Vipin Gupta, the government said in a press statement on 10th March.

NSA Doval calls for strengthening maritime cooperation in Indian Ocean

India's National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, has called for increased cooperation among India and its regional neighbours in an attempt to improve maritime security in the Indian Ocean, Business Standard reported on 9th March. Speaking at the 5th NSA-level Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) in Malé, Maldives, he was joined by National Security Advisors and Representatives from Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Bangladesh and Seychelles. The meeting saw Mauritius become a full member of the Conclave.

For further information, please [click here](#).



MAST Note: This chart will be replaced as soon as Admiralty UK releases the updated version.

European Waters

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) held an extraordinary session of its Council (C/ES.35) on 10th and 11th March to address the impacts on shipping and seafarers of the situation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. There are hopes that a 'blue maritime corridor' may be established in the Black Sea.

Black Sea incidents

The UK Ministry of Defence said in an update on 13th March that: "Russian naval forces have established a distant blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea coast, effectively isolating Ukraine from international maritime trade," the Times of Israel reported on Monday 14th. While the Sea of Azov has reportedly been opened once again to local Russian coastal traffic, there are concerns that a threatened amphibious landing is planned at Odessa. There have been no reports of any incidents involving merchant vessels in the past week.

UK minister's plan to deploy navy to Channel is dead in the water, say MPs

A plan by the UK Home Office to deploy Royal Navy vessels in the English Channel to deter migrants have "failed before it has started," Arab News reported on 11th March. MPs on the UK Defence Committee have said that arguments in public between the Ministry of Defence and Home Office about the proposal were "deeply unedifying". The Royal Navy has objected to certain aspects proposed by the government, including the suggestion that it could 'push back' migrant boats towards French waters.

New deadly shipwreck in Morocco

Moroccan media reported on March 13th that at least 44 migrants had drowned, after their boat sank as they attempted to reach the Canary Islands. The vessel was lost off Darbaya, Morocco, according to reports from a Spanish NGO. It is believed that the inflatable boat held 61 people prior to its sinking.

Greek Coast Guard rescues migrants

Euractiv reported on March 13th that the Greek Coast Guard had rescued around 100 migrants at sea, after their boat got into difficulty off the island of Paros on Sunday. Many of those rescued were Afghan nationals fleeing the Taliban, the report said. The migrants were taken to port on Paros for Covid tests and will then be taken elsewhere for processing.

At least 19 migrants missing after boat capsizes off coast of Libya

Castanet reported on March 12th that 19 people were feared to have drowned, after their vessel got into difficulties off the coast of Libya on Saturday. Libya's Coast Guard reportedly said that 23 migrants had left Tobruk the same day. Three persons were rescued at sea but only one body was recovered, they said.

Bodies washed up on Libyan shore

InfoMigrants reported on March 9th that at least 50 people had died in a shipwreck on Feb. 27th, and that bodies had now begun to wash up on the beach at Sabratha, Libya. NGO group, Alarm Phone, said that at least 50 people were onboard the boat when it sank off Sabratha. More than a dozen bodies have so far washed up on the beach.

Merchant vessel takes migrants to France

A merchant ship operated by CMA CGM is on its way to Dunkirk, after picking up 26 migrants in difficulty in the Mediterranean. The migrants left Benghazi on March 3rd and became adrift in international waters. They contacted Alarm Phone, who then tried to get assistance from the Italian and Maltese authorities. However, they were reportedly told to contact Libya, InfoMigrants said on March 9th. Fortunately, the migrants were then picked up by the MV Rivoli, which is now en route to port.

For further information, please [click here](#).

Somalia & Yemen

Somalia is likely to miss a deadline to conclude long-delayed parliamentary elections as political disagreements continue in the country. The federal government had set a deadline of March 15 to complete the polls, but more than 50 seats in the legislature are yet to be filled, BBC News reported on March 14th.

Chinese national among 5 killed in attack near Somalia border

Arab News reported on March 12th that five people were killed by an unknown group in an attack in Lamu County, Kenya, close to the Somali border. The attack took place on a construction site where a bridge was being built on the Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET). While Al Shabaab is suspected of conducting the attack, the group has not claimed responsibility at the time of this report.

Drought Sparks Humanitarian, Displacement Crisis

The U.N. refugee agency said on Friday 11th that drought in Somalia was causing a humanitarian and displacement crisis, with thousands of people fleeing their parched lands in search of fertile territory and humanitarian assistance to help them survive, VOA reported. In Somalia, experts say, climate change is kicking in with a vengeance. For the past three years, the rains have largely failed to come, decimating crops and livestock. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has estimated that about half a million people this year alone are likely to have been displaced by the end of March.

UN chief wants AMISOM to remain in Somalia

The East African reported on March 10th that UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, recommended that AMISOM remain in Somalia until the end of 2022. While AMISOM's mandate expires at the end of March, with ATMIS expected to replace it with Somali personnel, the UN may now push for a continued AMISOM presence in the country amid concerns over increasing Al Shabaab activity.

US Military urge Biden to send troops to Somalia

The Wall Street Journal has said that senior US military chiefs are urging President Biden to send "several hundred" special operations troops to

Somalia in order to bolster anti-terror efforts within the country. In a March 10th report, it was said that troops who had been moved to neighbouring countries under former President Trump should be redeployed back to Somalia.

American women rescued from Houthi-rebel captivity in Yemen

A joint operation between US and Saudi Arabian forces in Yemen has freed two American women being held hostage by Houthi rebels, Al Jazeera said on March 11th. The pair, both Yemeni-Americans, had been taken hostage in Sanaa while visiting relatives. Reports suggest that the operation took place in January and is only now being reported, as the women have returned to the USA. No details of the operation itself have so far been made public.

In Yemen, the number of children killed or injured continues to increase

Statement by Philippe Duamelle, UNICEF Representative in Yemen:

"Over the first two months of 2022, 47 children were reportedly killed or maimed in several locations across the country. Since the conflict escalated in Yemen nearly seven years ago, the UN has verified that more than 10,200 children have been killed or injured. The actual number is likely much higher UNICEF calls on all parties to the conflict in Yemen and those with influence over them to protect civilians wherever they are. Children's safety, their well-being and protection must be safeguarded at all times."

For further information, please [click here](#).

UK Security News

Sky News reported on March 14th that a 15-year-old had been charged with terrorism offences following an arrest by the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command. He was charged on March 13th and will appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court next week.

Armed UK police expected to patrol British Dover to France ferries

Armed Police may be deployed on ferries travelling between the UK and France beginning in July, The Connexion reported on March 15th. While there has been no specific threat, it may be because several nuclear power stations are being decommissioned, leading to the redeployment of Civil Nuclear Constabulary personnel. The new arrangement can only take place once the UK and French governments have signed off on the Maritime Security Treaty which was proposed last year.

Londonderry: Residents return home after security alert

Residents in Londonderry who were evacuated during a security alert have been allowed to return home. A number of homes in the Fahan Street area were evacuated on Monday following the discovery of a number of suspicious items at about 11:00 GMT. Army bomb experts carried out searches and a cordon was extended to the city walls on Monday afternoon. The Police Service of Northern Ireland said 13 households had to be evacuated during the security alert, BBC News reported on March 15th.

Lyra McKee: Five men arrested over journalist's murder

Detectives investigating the murder of journalist Lyra McKee in Londonderry have arrested five men, the BBC said on March 15th. The men, aged 41, 20 and 54 and two 21-year-olds, were all detained in the Derry area on Tuesday under the Terrorism Act, police have said. Ms McKee, who was 29, was observing rioting in Derry's Creggan estate when she was shot on 18 April 2019.

Public reports lead to terrorism conviction for teenager

A 16 year old from Leeds has pleaded guilty to terrorism offences after a member of the public reported their concerns over postings on social media. The Counter Terrorism Internet Referral

Unit were alerted to an account that was suspected of sharing extreme right wing content. Following investigations into the account, Counter Terrorism Policing North East arrested a teenager from Leeds in May 2021. He was further arrested in July, Counter Terror Police UK reported on March 14th.

London News

'London significantly better prepared for terrorism but still at risk of attacks'

A security review conducted by London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, has warned that while the city continues to face a rising threat of terrorism from extreme right wing sources, it is "significantly better prepared" for an incident than in previous years. Improvements in information sharing and communications among the city's emergency responders and other agencies have improved, along with overall coordination, Xinhua reported on March 12th.

Teenager in court accused of Islamic State-inspired terror attack plan

A north London teenager has appeared in court accused of planning an Islamic State-inspired terror attack. Al-Arfat Hassan, 19, is charged with preparing terrorist acts and collecting information useful to a terrorist. Mr Hassan, of Enfield, is alleged to have downloaded an Islamic State video that gave instructions on how to make a bomb and kill people with knives. He is also accused of purchasing weapons and obtaining chemicals for making explosives, the court heard. He is due to appear at the Old Bailey on March 25th, the BBC reported.

For further information, please [click here](#).

Global Security News

Saudi Arabia says it executed 81 men on Saturday - more than during the whole of last year. The group - including seven Yemenis and one Syrian national - were convicted of "multiple heinous crimes", including terrorism, state news agency SPA said, the BBC reported on March 13th.

Ukraine: Latest updates

Media reports on Wednesday 16th state that an estimated 20,000 civilians have so far managed to escape the besieged port town of Mariupol by various means. The Guardian reported that Ukraine's Ministry of Defence had said that the: "worst situation remains in the area of Mariupol, where the opponent tries to block the city in the western and eastern outskirts of the city". Overnight on Tuesday 14th, Russian forces seized a hospital and took 500 people hostage. In related news, India faces pressure over a deal with Russia for 3 million barrels of oil, signed before the conflict began.

In the UK, PM Boris Johnson has said that Ukraine would not join NATO "any time soon", after Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday that Ukraine realized it could not join NATO. Talks between Russia and Ukraine are reportedly making progress, media outlets said on Wednesday.

Italy Arrests Four Albanian Terrorism Suspects in Bari

Italian police have arrested four Albanian citizens in Bari, on suspicion of raising money for terrorist purposes, Balkan Insight wrote on March 14th. "The money raised within the Islamic community of Bari was destined to offer assistance to an Albanian imam, already arrested in 2014 for having sent dozens of fighters to Syria and who promoted division between the Christian and Muslim population, and who is currently in prison in Albania," a police press release read.

Man is killed by police in Marseilles after three police officers are injured in 'violent' knife attack

French Police shot and killed a man in Marseilles after he attacked three officers with a knife, the Daily Mail reported on March 12th. The attack took place at a town hall which was being used to collect donations for Ukraine. Police say that the man was not known to them and did not have a criminal record. No motive for the attack, which has left one officer in

hospital, was apparent, and the assailant ignored warning shots, the police said.

Honduran authorities burn eight tonnes of cocaine

Authorities in Honduras have burnt more than eight tonnes of cocaine that has been seized in various operations in the country since 2020. Xiomara Castro, from the left-wing Libre Party, was sworn in as the president of Honduras in early 2022. She has promised to tackle the powerful drug trafficking gangs in the country, BBC News said on March 12th.

IS confirms leader Qurayshi's death and names successor

The Islamic State (IS) group has named a new leader after confirming the death of Abu Ibrahim al-Qurayshi. An audio message posted online said Abu al-Hassan al-Hashemi al-Qurayshi was now "caliph", without providing any further details about his identity, BBC News said on March 11th. The message did not mention how, where or when Abu Ibrahim al-Qurayshi died. The US has said the Iraqi jihadist blew himself up, killing his family, during a special forces raid on his hideout in north-western Syria on 3rd February.

Industry and SIA News

SIA OSDP All Access: Get ready for the "all access" VIP treatment

Whether you are an OSDP expert or a newcomer, connect with the larger access control community during ISC West! Meet and network with industry leaders, integrators, consultants, practitioners, and end users at ISC West over complimentary food and drinks on Wednesday, March 23rd, at 4:30 p.m. (PDT) in Marco Polo 701/702/801/802. For further details or to register, please click here.

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