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Weekly Security & Risk Report

23rd 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 324

Issue 324 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

The political investigation into NIMASA's Deep Blue project has continued over the past week. The Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Navy, Yusuf Gagdi, has questioned why NIMASA purchased military equipment when it is a safety agency and not responsible for a Coast Guard, Ships and Ports reported on March 17th.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Sea Piracy: Boat owners urge Navy to deploy gunboats

Barely a week after Rivers State donated 14 gunboats to the Navy and Marine Police, local boat owners have called on both to deploy them. A Marine Safety Officer, Comrade Kins Dimkpa, told the Tide on March 21st that the boats are not intended to be used for commercial purposes and the agencies should use them to: "comb the creeks and channels of the waters to curb illegal oil refining and piracy".

NIMASA, IMB disagree over reason for drop in piracy in Gulf

A minor spat between NIMASA and the IMB has emerged, after NIMASA claimed that maritime crime had been reduced due to the Deep Blue project. The IMB, however, has pointed to the deployment of international and regional naval forces, saying these had led to a reduction in reports. Director of IMB, Michael Howlett, reminded stakeholders that the Gulf of Guinea still accounted for the majority of crew kidnappings.

Nigerian Navy in illegal oil arrests

On March 21st, Vanguard reported that following Obangame Express 2022, its vessels have foiled two attempts to smuggle oil in Nigerian waters. In

the first, NNS Ekulu was deployed to intercept a tanker which had been behaving suspiciously as it was monitored by the Falcon Sea Eye surveillance platform. A search of MT Queen of Peace revealed a quantity of crude onboard, and 14 crew were detained. In a second incident, the MT Harbour Spirit was intercepted by NNS Thunder on March 17th and found to be carrying crude oil under a forged document. The crew has been detained and investigations are underway.

Eni lifts force majeure on exports of Nigeria's Brass River crude

Reuters and Platts reported on March 20th that Eni had lifted force majeure measures on exports of Brass Rivers crude blend oil. The news comes after repairs to a badly damaged pipeline were completed. The pipe was damaged on March 7th by suspected oil thieves. Bonny Light oil remains under force majeure, reports said.

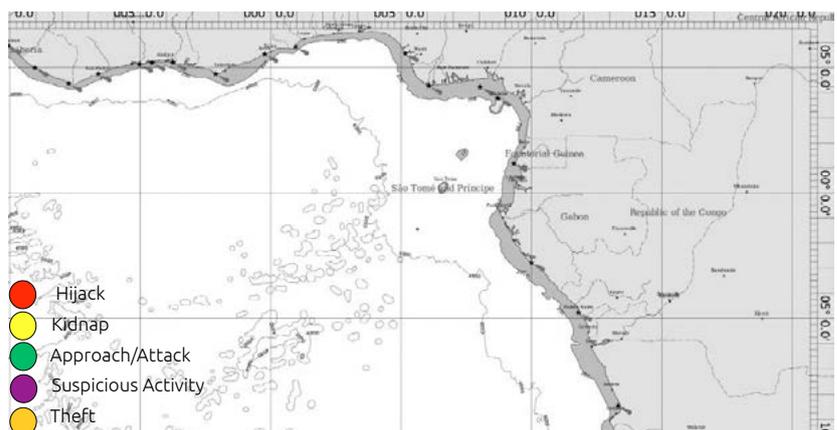
For further information, please click here.

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

The UN mandate which allowed international navies to pursue suspected pirates into Somali waters has officially ended, Defence Web reported on March 18th. Somalia had been pushing for the end of the agreement, and has suggested that it now has capacity to manage its own waters.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Iran's Navy dispatches 81st flotilla of warships to high seas

Iran's Press TV reported on March 18th that the country's 81st Flotilla had left port at Bandar Abbas on Friday, to head for "international waters". It is believed that part of this deployment will be anti-piracy related work in the Gulf of Aden. The flotilla consists of the Alborz destroyer and a support vessel. Previous deployments have claimed success against suspected pirates in the region, although these are rarely confirmed by third party intelligence agencies.

UAE Ship Sinks Off Coast of Iran with 30 Crew Aboard

Tasnim News reported on March 17th that a cargo ship named Al Salmy 6 belonging to the United Arab Emirates capsized with 30 crew aboard and sank off the coast of Iran, due to rough and stormy weather in the Persian Gulf. According to Captain Nizar Qaddoura, operations manager of the Salem Al Makrani Cargo company, the tough weather was the main cause of incident. Rescuers had saved 16 crew members, the captain said. Another 11 had made it onto a life raft, while one person was saved by a nearby tanker. Two crew members were still in the water, he said.

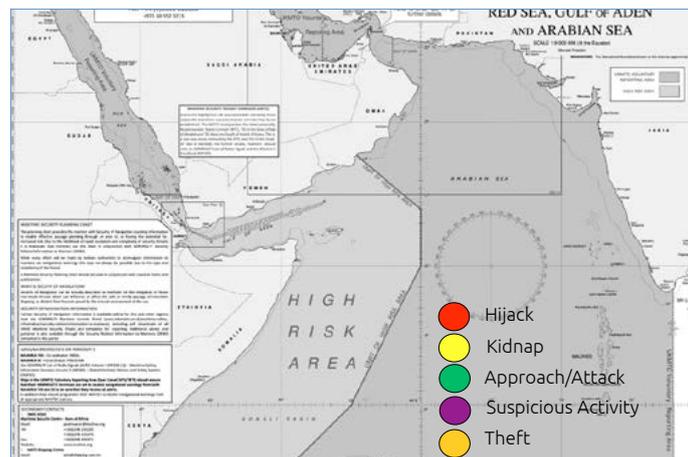
BIMSTEC Summit: Maritime Security, trade and connectivity in focus

The Bay of Bengal will be in sharp focus later this month, as The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit gets underway. Held in Sri Lanka in virtual and physical form, the summit is expected to deal with common security threats in the region. India, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand and Bangladesh will all take part in the event.

Pakistan Navy conducts missile and torpedo firings during Sea Spark 2022

Pakistan's Navy has completed its SEASPAK-2022 naval exercise in the North Arabian Sea, culminating in a live fire drill. Anti-ship missiles and torpedoes were deployed, the Pakistan Navy reported, and the event concluded successfully. During the live fire demonstration, PN Ship, Aircraft, and Submarine successfully hit their intended targets thereby reaffirming PN's war-fighting capability and combat potential, the Pakistan Navy said in a press release on March 18th.

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 National reported on March 18th that the rate at which migrants are attempting to cross the English Channel in 2022 continues to increase. They report that so far in 2022, some 2,354 people have been rescued at sea by UK agencies. The National notes that this figure was only reached on May 13th 2021.

Black Sea incidents

A report on March 20th stated that Andrei Nikolayevich Paly, Deputy Commander of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, had been killed in fighting near Mariupol. On March 19th, Russia reported that commercial vessels should be aware of the danger of naval mines placed on sea routes. Russia claimed that Ukraine deployed the mines. Ukraine, meanwhile, claims that the mines are Russian. Andrii Klymenko, editor-in-chief of the BlackSeaNews portal, told UKrinform that: "Russia has mined the recommended routes from the Bosphorus to Odessa and said that these are Ukrainian mines."

Panama's Marine Authority has stated that as of March 17th, three vessels registered with them had been hit by 'Russian missiles' since the beginning of the conflict, according to Swiss Info. They also estimated that some 300 ships remain trapped in the Black Sea.

Almost 400 migrants cross Channel in small boats

BBC News reported on March 23rd that 394 people arrived in Kent on 11 boats, including babies wrapped in blankets, while a further 467 people were intercepted by French authorities after attempting to make the journey on Tuesday. Several children were among those to be brought ashore on Tuesday. Improving weather and sea states are cited as reasons for the sudden surge.

At least 25 dead in shipwreck off Tunisia's coast

A shipwreck off the coast of Tunisia has cost the lives of at least 25 people, while another 35 remain unaccounted for, the IOM said on Sunday 20th. It is thought that as many as 60 migrants were onboard the boat, which was attempting to reach Italy when it ran into difficulty. The Tunisian Coast Guard responded, and began recovering bodies from the water and those which had washed ashore.

People smugglers sentenced

Three men convicted of 'conspiring to do an act to facilitate the commission of a breach of UK immigration law by a non EU person' have been sentenced at Isle of Wight Crown Court. Jean Pierre Labelle, Stephen Redhead and Christopher Barber, all resident on the Isle of Wight, received sentences of eight, five and three years, Portsmouth News reported on March 18th.

UN says at least 70 migrants dead or missing off Libyan coast

Over the past two weeks, at least 70 migrants have gone missing at sea and are presumed dead off the coast of Libya, the UN migration agency said on Thursday 17th. "I am appalled by the continuing loss of life in the Central Mediterranean and the lack of action to tackle this ongoing tragedy," said Federico Soda, Libya Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration. On 12 March, a boat reportedly carrying 25 migrants capsized near the Libyan coast of Tobruk and while authorities rescued six people and recovered seven bodies, 12 others remain missing. The latest incident brings the total number of migrants reported dead or missing in the Central Mediterranean up to 215 this year, according to IOM's Missing Migrants Project, the UN said in a press release.

Syrian refugee sues EU border agency Frontex

A Syrian refugee, who arrived in Greece and claims that he was then placed in a crowded boat by Greek authorities and abandoned at sea, is suing EU border agency, Frontex. The agency has received significant criticism in recent months. Frontex has been assisting the Greek Coast Guard to monitor its maritime border with Turkey.

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

Somalia & Yemen

The African Union, European Union and United Nations called upon Somalia to remove obstacles that currently stand in the way of the election process, Xinhua reported on March 21st. While more than 80 per cent of House of the People seats have now been confirmed, 33 seats remain, Xinhua reported.

U.S. Issues a \$5 Million Bounty for Key Al Shabaab Operative

Capital FM reported on March 20th that the US has issued a \$5 million bounty for information on the location of Jihad Serwan Mostafa, aka Ahmed Gurey, thought to be a leading figure in the Al Shabaab terror organisation. Mostafa is a US citizen whom the US State Dept. believe has held senior roles within Al Shabaab. He moved to Somalia in 2005 and is thought to have joined the terror group in 2008.

China Donates Military Equipment to Somalia to Aid War Against Terrorists

China has donated military vehicles, including Armed Personnel Carriers, to the Somali National Army in order to assist them in the fight against Al Shabaab, All Africa reported on March 19th. The new equipment arrived on Friday 18th and was handed over by Chinese Ambassador, Fei Shengchao, in a ceremony in Mogadishu.

Seven Al Shabaab terrorists killed in southern Somalia

Xinhua reported on March 18th that the Somali National Army had conducted security operations on Friday which resulted in the deaths of at least seven Al Shabaab terrorists. The operations took place in Jubaland State as troops visited 11 villages in the region to distribute food and water to locals.

U.S. Expands Visa Restrictions to More Somalians Over Held-Up Elections

Shabelle Media Network reported on March 17th that the US administration had applied visa restrictions against a number of Somalis in an attempt to pressure political figures to speed up the electoral process in the country. The US State Dept. announced the new measures in a statement, saying it came in response to Somalia's failure to meet its deadline for the conclusion of the country's elections.

Pentagon May Boost Troop Presence in Somalia

The USA may deploy more troops to Somalia in order to combat Al Shabaab, the head of AFRICOM told politicians last week. A report by All Africa on March 16th said that Gen. Stephen Townsend said the threat posed by Al Shabaab is significant and that a US military presence in countries near Somalia is insufficient to combat it.

Arab Coalition Destroys Booby-trapped Vessel in Yemen's Hodeidah, Thwarts Imminent Attack

Asharq Al-Awsat reported on March 21st that Saudi coalition forces had destroyed a suspected Houthi water-borne improvised explosive device (WBIED) on Sunday 20th. The booby-trapped boat was off Hodeidah, and the coalition claimed it was about to be deployed. So far, Saudi coalition forces have destroyed 106 boat bombs in the Red Sea.

Yemen's Houthi rebels strike Saudi energy facilities, slowing output at refinery

Houthi rebels reportedly fired missiles and used drones to attack energy and water facilities in Saudi Arabia over the weekend, France 24 reported on March 21st. Drones attacked a terminal in Jizan region, the Yasref refinery in Yanbu and a natural gas plant.

\$1.3 billion pledged at event for Yemen

36 donors pledged \$1.3 billion in donations at a high-level pledging event for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. While world leaders highlighted the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, the donations of \$1.3 billion fall short of the needs by around US\$2.9 billion, the UN said on March 17th.

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

UK Security News

The Independent reported on March 20th that UK Home Secretary, Priti Patel, had warned that Russia could attempt to smuggle female agents into the UK, disguised as Ukrainian refugees. Security checks on those arriving from Ukraine as part of the visa scheme could prevent that, she told the Conservative conference.

Sir David Amess MP murder trial hears accused targeted Michael Gove

An "Islamist terrorist" accused of murdering Sir David Amess MP carried out reconnaissance on other potential targets including cabinet minister Michael Gove, his trial heard. Sir David, MP for Southend West, was stabbed during a constituency surgery in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, on 15 October. Ali Harbi Ali stabbed Sir David repeatedly in an "assassination for terrorist purposes", the jury heard, BBC News reported on March 21st.

Schoolboy denies five terrorism charges after arrest in St Albans

A 15-year-old from Leeds has denied five terrorism charges at Westminster Magistrates' Court, the Herts Advertiser reported on March 21st. The teenager was arrested at an address in St. Albans and videos he is alleged to have posted were reportedly linked to the Islamic State terrorist group, the court was told. The case is due to be heard at Westminster Magistrates' Court in April.

Leeds boy, 15, accused of planning terrorist attack

A 15-year-old boy has been charged with planning a terrorist attack, Counter Terrorism Policing North East said. The teenager, who is from Leeds, was arrested on Saturday "in a pre-planned, intelligence-led operation", officers said. He has been charged with engaging in the preparation of an act of terrorism, BBC News reported on March 18th.

Manchester United midfielder's home robbed while children slept

Paul Pogba's home was targeted by burglars while he was playing at Old Trafford, the player has said. In a report on March 16th, he said: "Last night our family's worst nightmare was realized when our home was broken into and burglarized while our babies were sleeping in their bedroom. The burglars were in our home for less than five minutes but in that time they took from us something more

valuable than anything we had in our home... our sense of safety and security."

London News

Man charged with murder of student at university halls

A man has been charged with murdering 19-year-old Sabita Thanwani at her central London student accommodation. Maher Maaroufe, 22, of no fixed address, will appear at Highbury Corner Magistrates' Court later. Police and medics were called to Arbour House in Sebastian Street at about 05:10 GMT on Saturday where Ms Thanwani was found seriously injured, BBC News reported on March 22nd.

County Lines: Hundreds arrested as police carry out fresh crackdown

Nearly 250 suspects have been arrested by the Met Police and dozens of county lines networks out of London have been smashed as part of a fresh crackdown. The raids were part of the Met's ongoing Operation Orochi and ran from 7 March to 13 March. They joined forces across the UK carrying out synchronised dawn raids seizing cash, drugs and firearms from properties used to run drug operations, the BBC reported on March 18th.

Flying Squad investigation sees four men jailed

An investigation by the Metropolitan Police 'Flying Squad' into a robbery where £43,000 worth of jewellery was stolen has seen four men jailed for nearly 39 years in total. The robbery gang attacked a man in his 20s as he left a hotel in Mayfair. A Rolex watch and diamond rings were stolen in the attack. Security staff from the hotel attempted to intervene but the gang fled, the Met reported on March 18th.

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

Global Security News

The US may remove Iran's elite Republican Guard from its terror organisation blacklist, media outlets reported. Middle East Eye cited a source close to the discussions on March 17th. Any such move would require Iran's agreement to 'rein in' the organisation, the media said.

Ukraine: Latest updates

Russia has lost around 15,300 troops so far in its invasion of Ukraine, the BBC said on March 22nd. The figures, provided by Ukraine's Ministry of Defence, have not been confirmed by Russia. On March 21st, Komsomolskaya Pravda, a Russian newspaper, reportedly wrote that 9861 Russian troops had been killed during the invasion, with 16153 injured. This was later deleted by the paper, which said that it had been hacked, according to reports by BBC Monitoring on Twitter.

Russian warships reportedly began shelling the port of Odessa on Monday 21st. It is thought that Russia has plans to launch an amphibious assault on the city, although some analysts regard this as unlikely in the near term.

The BBC reports that Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelensky, has again reached out to Russian President, Vladimir Putin, offering direct talks with him.

However, he added that any negotiations would have to be put to a referendum of the Ukrainian people. Ukraine says a further 8,000 people were evacuated from conflict zones on Monday. Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said this included around 3,000 people from Mariupol.

Warning over potential for cyber-attacks

President Joe Biden said on Monday that intelligence indicated a growing Russian cyber threat to the US. He said Russia was "exploring" cyber-attack, but the US would use "every tool" to prevent and respond to such a move, BBC News reported on March 21st. There are concerns that a Russian cyber-attack could have a domino effect, such as the one seen during the 2017 NotPetya malware attack, where a number of unintended targets were hit, including Maersk.

UK's £400m debt repayment to Iran 'won't fund terrorism', says minister after Nazanin release

Foreign Office minister, James Cleverly, has said that the £400 million the UK returned to Iran, and which led to the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

and Anoosheh Ashoori from prison in Iran will not be used to fund terrorism. Cleverly told the media that the money would be spent on humanitarian work, thanks to the efforts of negotiators, The Independent reported on March 17th. "We owed this debt, we accepted that debt. Obviously, the sanctions position made it incredibly difficult – you cannot just write a cheque," the minister told Sky News.

IS plot to target Morocco's government thwarted

The New Arab reported on March 17th that Morocco had arrested five suspects allegedly affiliated to Islamic State and who were planning terror attacks in the country. It is believed that government officials, banks and 'public forces' were to be their targets.

Industry and SIA News

ISC West begins this week

Don't forget that this week sees ISC West, a SIA-sponsored event, take place at the Sands Expo & Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas. ISC West is an opportunity to meet and talk with hundreds of security professionals from around the world. The three-day event will see more than 65 expert sessions, as well as lots of activity on the show floor, with hundreds of exhibitors attending. Expect to see solutions like video surveillance, building access control, perimeter security, biometric-enabled security devices, cyber security solutions. For further details or to register, please click here.

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