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Weekly Security & Risk Report

25th May 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 333

Issue 333 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 Vanguard Media has awarded NIMASA Director General, Dr Bashir Jamoh, with its Public Sector Maritime Icon Award for his efforts to reduce piracy and insecurity in Nigerian waters, Blueprint reported on May 23rd.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Nigerian Navy rescues seven kidnapped victims in Rivers

The Daily Post reported on May 24th that Nigerian Navy personnel rescued seven hostages who were taken from a passenger boat whilst en route from Bonny to Port Harcourt on May 10th. The pirates fled before they could be arrested.

Navy bust illegal refining site, seizes over 6million litres of crude oil

The Nigerian Navy has announced continuing success in weeks five and six of its ongoing operation to combat illegal oil refineries in the region. The Guardian newspaper reported that the Navy had arrested a further 22 suspects and recovered over six million litres of illegally refined oil products as part of Operation DAKATAR DA BARAWO. A number of storage devices and refineries were destroyed, while boats used to smuggle the finished product were seized or destroyed during operations by the Navy. Between April 28th and May 19th, the Navy says it has destroyed 167 refinery sites as part of its operations, highlighting the massive scale of the problem.

Collaboration, pathway to taming piracy in Gulf of Guinea

An article in Nigeria's Daily Trust newspaper has

highlighted the need for nations in the region to collaborate in order to prevent pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea. Following a security conference on May 10th, the paper said that one of the outcomes was that regional naval cooperation in tackling piracy in the Gulf of Guinea through shared awareness had become imperative.

Global Fishing Watch welcomes partnership with Benin to combat illegal fishing

A new partnership agreement between Benin and Global Fishing Watch aims to strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities within the waters of the West African State. Under the memorandum of understanding, Global Fishing Watch will provide technical support, including fisheries analysis, capacity building and training on its vessel monitoring tools. To track its fishing fleet, Benin is establishing a vessel monitoring system, or VMS, and has formally agreed to share its data via the Global Fishing Watch map—the first African nation to commit to making its fishing fleet publicly visible, the reported on May 18th.

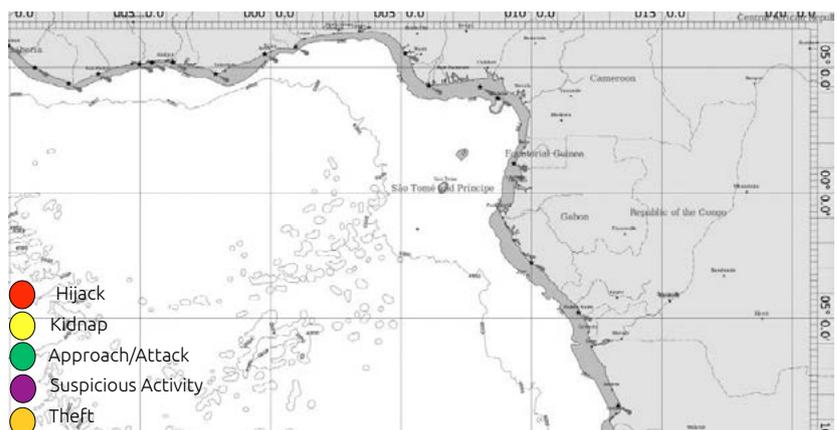
For further information, please [click here](#).

Gulf of Guinea Piracy & Maritime Crime Figures

2022
Incidents reported: 17 (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

Following the incident in the Red Sea on May 19th, EU NAVFOR has reiterated its calls for all vessels in the region to follow the recommendations enacted for the transit of vulnerable vessels in the Red Sea. This incident stands as a clear reminder of the relevance of the Best Management Practices, they said on May 20th.

Incidents:

- 1.** Underway MV reported attacked at 0800 UTC in position 14:19N - 042:42E, approx 34nm SW of Hodeidah, Yemen. Vessel reported evade attack and proceeding its transit. Reported (UKMTO/Source) 19th May.
- 2.** UKMTO received a report underway MV approached by two small craft at 1650 UTC in position 11:51N - 045:03E, approx 59nm South of Aden, Yemen (IRTC, Gulf of Aden). Vessel and crew safe. Reported (UKMTO) 17th May.

NBR to join maritime security scheme

Bangladesh reports that its National Board of Revenue (NBR) is to join the EU's CRIMARIO II project, to ensure maritime security and reduce drug trafficking in the Indian Ocean Region, the Financial Express reported on May 22nd. The move follows the successful adoption of the programme by Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Iranian Navy to develop heavy battlecruisers

Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Shahram Irani unveiled plans for the production of heavy battlecruisers and the formation of naval task groups consisting of 11 ships for overseas missions, Iran's state-run Tasnim News reported on Monday 23rd May.

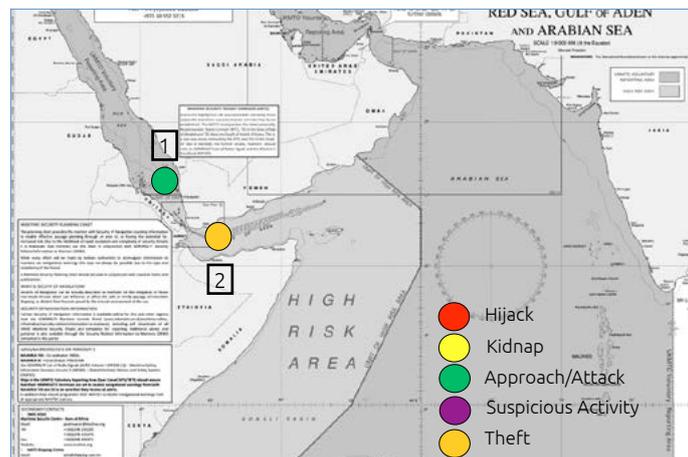
Attack against yacht highlights dangers in Red Sea

The attack on May 19th in the Red Sea off Hodeidah has once again highlighted the risk to vessels in the region. Reports state that a trimaran called Lakota was approached by three boats with civilians on board, who fired at least 20 warning shots at it before displaying RPGs and assault rifles for the crew to see. One assailant was able to board the yacht, but left and the yacht managed to evade the boats. The crew later provided video of the incident to personnel from EU NAVFOR.

Iranian Navy foils pirate attack on Iranian ship

Five days after a similar report, Iran's Tasnim News reported on May 18th that Iranian naval forces saved a trade vessel from a pirate attack in the Red Sea. Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said on Wednesday that one of the country's merchant ships in the Red Sea made a mayday call after coming under attack from pirates that morning. He noted that the Iranian Navy units tasked with escorting the trade vessels were immediately dispatched to the zone and took action against the assailants. The attack has not been confirmed by independent agencies.

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 Evening Standard reported on May 15th that more than 8,000 people have so far arrived in the UK after crossing the English Channel in small boats. The news comes as Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that the first batch of asylum seekers could be sent to Rwanda in the next few weeks.

Black Sea incidents

Despite reports by some media outlets and some Ukrainian politicians last week that Ukraine had successfully attacked the Russian logistical support ship, Vsevolod Bobrov near Snake Island, the ship has now apparently returned to Sevastopol port, and appears undamaged according to a report by Maritime Executive on May 15th. The incident is similar to that involving the Admiral Makarov cruiser, which was reportedly hit by Ukrainian missiles and later photographed apparently undamaged at Sevastopol.

The Kyiv Post reported on May 12th that calls are increasing for the UN to somehow create a maritime corridor which would allow Ukraine to continue exports of grain and other items from its southern ports, as the global food crisis begins to affect more nations. During his recent visit to Kyiv, Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, noted that: "It doesn't serve anyone if [Russian President] Vladimir Putin's war is not just killing Ukrainians but is starving people around the world," adding "we're just looking to solve a very direct problem."

The EU, meanwhile, has been speeding up efforts to shift Ukrainian grain exports by land routes. On May 12th, Maritime Executive reported that it is creating 'Solidarity Lanes' for Ukrainian grain to leave the country. "20 million tonnes of grains have to leave Ukraine in less than three months using the EU infrastructure. This is a [gigantic] challenge, so it is essential to coordinate and optimize the logistic chains, put in place new routes, and avoid, as much as possible, the bottlenecks," said EC transport commissioner Adina Valean in a statement.

Channel migrants: More than 600 people cross in small boats

More than 600 migrants reached the UK by boat over the weekend, the Ministry of Defence has said. On Sunday 15th 436 people crossed the English Channel, with another 167 on Saturday, BBC News reported on May 16th.

Nine migrants threatened with death if families don't pay ransom

Business Standard reported on May 14th that a group of Bangladeshi migrants is being held by the people smugglers who promised to take them from Libya to Italy. Unless ransoms are paid, their captors are threatening to kill them and dump their bodies at sea, Business Standard said. It is thought that the captors are Bangladeshi people smugglers.

Eritrean migrant found dead in Calais

InfoMigrants reported on May 12th that a man aged between 20-25 had been found dead inside a trailer at a parking area in the port city of Calais. He is thought to have been of Eritrean origin and is believed to have taken his own life. An investigation into his death has been opened by the prosecutor in Boulogne-sur-Mer.

UK asylum seekers hide to avoid being sent to Rwanda

The East African reported on May 11th that asylum seekers in the UK are going into hiding to avoid the threat of deportation to Rwanda. Aid agencies including the British Red Cross and Refugee Council have warned that the threat of deportation has meant that some asylum seekers have simply fled from hotels where they were staying, while others have resorted to self-harm. The agencies have reportedly accused the UK government of a breach in their duty of care towards asylum seekers.

Tunisia: Three bodies found, 248 migrants rescued

InfoMigrants reported on May 12th that the Tunisian Coast Guard had rescued 248 migrants at sea in a number of separate incidents on Wednesday 11th. Three bodies were recovered during the operations off the coast of El Awabed, Sfax region. Reuters reported that the rescue operation had involved 10 separate groups.

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

Somalia & Yemen

Human Rights Watch has called upon US forces due to be deployed in Somalia to do more to protect civilians from harm. "US officials should be very clear on how their forces will avoid harming Somali civilians during military operations," said Laetitia Bader, Horn of Africa director at Human Rights Watch on May 20th.

Official handover sees new Somali president take office

Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the newly elected president of Somalia, has assumed office a week after he was voted in by members of parliament. Outgoing President Mohamed Abdullahi "Farmajo" handed over power to Mr Mohamud at Villa Somalia, the presidential palace in the capital Mogadishu, in a ceremony that was broadcast live on state television. Also in attendance were the senate and lower house Speakers, as well as the armed forces. The official inauguration however is yet to come - and is expected in June, BBC News said on May 24th.

Somalia's new President faces familiar political, security challenges

Somalia's new president is starting his four-year term facing familiar top issues such as the country's political divide and rising attacks by al Qaeda-linked insurgent group Al Shabaab. The distribution of power in Somalia is on a clan-based system locally known as the 4.5 system, where majority clans are allocated majority seats in parliament while the smaller clans, grouped together, get the remainder. Besides tackling the political question, Mohamud must contend with the security threats posed by militant group Al Shabaab, VOA wrote on May 22nd.

Somalia releases nearly \$10M seized from UAE plane four years ago

The Somali government has released \$9.6 million it seized from a United Arab Emirates plane in Mogadishu four years ago, a step aimed at mending relations that have been stuck at a low point ever since. "The money has been released and it is on its way to the Emirates," Somali Deputy Information Minister Abdirahman Yusuf Al-Adala told VOA Somali. Other reliable government sources said Somali Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble, leading a delegation, flew to Dubai Wednesday to deliver the money in person, VOA reported on May 19th.

Al Shabaab attack army checkpoint

Continuing their attacks against Somali authorities, Al Shabaab launched an offensive against Somali National Army forces in Gololey on Friday 20th, killing at least four troops. Reports suggest that this is the same base which now also houses Burundian forces who vacated a base in the region, Garowe Online reported.

3 killed after Saudi Coalition's drone shot down in Yemen's capital

Xinhua reported on May 23rd that Houthi forces had claimed to have shot down a drone being used by Saudi Coalition forces in Sanaa. Unfortunately, the drone then crashed in a residential area, killing three people and wounding several others.

Houthi top official says group not against extending truce in Yemen

Reuters reported on May 22nd that Mahdi al-Mashat, head of Yemen's Houthi Supreme Political Council, had said that the rebel group had not ruled out an extension to the current truce between Houthi forces and those of the Saudi Coalition and officially recognised Yemen government. The UN is now working on an extension to the current peace agreement, set to run for two months, in the hope that new, formal negotiations to end the seven-year conflict can take place.

Yemen government demands US pressure Houthis to end Taiz siege

The Yemen government has called on the US to apply pressure on the Houthi leadership in order to relieve the siege in Taiz, Middle East Monitor reported on May 19th. Yemeni Foreign Minister, Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak, met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington and raised the matter, they said.

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

UK Security News

A viable device was found during a security alert in Whitecross, County Armagh. Police and ammunition technical officers attended the scene of the alert in the Ballymoyer Road area on Monday 23rd night after a suspicious object was found, BBC News said on May 24th.

Anti-terrorism programme must keep focus on far right, say experts

UK government advisers on extremism have reportedly questioned the Home Office counter-terror programme's direction, The Guardian reported on May 22nd. There are concerns that a review into the programme had suggested a greater focus on Islamist extremism, rather than the threat posed by far right terrorists, the paper said.

Darlington boy, 14, sentenced for terrorism offences

A boy who talked about carrying out a right-wing terrorism attack on an orphanage has been sentenced. The boy, from Darlington, was 13 when he said he wanted to carry out a school shooting and owned manuals detailing how to make explosives and weapons, Newton Aycliffe Youth Court heard. He is one of the youngest convicted terrorists in the UK. The boy was ordered to complete a "high-intensity" referral order for 12 months after admitting three charges, BBC News reported on May 21st.

Two teenagers arrested on suspicion of terror offences

Sky News reported on May 21st that two teenagers had been arrested on suspicion of terror offences. An 18-year-old man was arrested in Essex and a 17-year-old girl was detained by officers in East London. They are part of the same investigation into extreme Islamist ideology, Sky News said.

Police warn bank holiday street party organisers they could be terror attack targets

In the run up to the official celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Met police have released a booklet aimed at street party hosts, to advise them on how to secure their events. While there has been no change in the overall security threat to the UK, police warn that such gatherings could be in danger of attack, and over 60,000 people have registered to host Big Jubilee lunches over the Bank Holiday

weekend of June 2nd-5th, according to a Daily Mail report on May 19th.

Derbyshire 18-year-old charged with sharing pro-terrorism posts online

An 18-year-old from the Glossop area of Derby has been arrested by counter-terror police in connection with terrorism offences, Derbyshire Live reported on May 19th. He is accused of making posts online that could encourage others to pursue acts of terrorism, a spokesperson for Derbyshire police said. He is due to appear in court on May 27th.

London News

'Terminator' machete Tube attacker Ricky Morgan guilty of attempted murder

The Evening Standard reported on May 21st that a man who attacked a stranger with a machete on a London Underground train has been found guilty of attempted murder. Ricky Morgan launched an attack on James Porritt, shouting, "I'll kill him, I'll kill him," the court was told. The attack took place on the Jubilee Line on July 9th 2021.

London teenager arrested on suspicion of sharing Islamist terrorist material

A 13-year-old boy has been arrested by Met police officers on suspicion of sharing Islamist terror material, The Guardian reported on May 18th. He was questioned by officers from the Met's counter-terrorism command before being released on bail. Police figures show that around 13 per cent of suspects arrested in the year to March 2021 were aged under 18, The Guardian said.

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

Global Security News

Turkey's president has restated his opposition to Finland and Sweden joining NATO - just hours after they said they would seek membership. Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the two Nordic nations should not bother sending delegations to convince Turkey, a key NATO member, of their bids, the BBC reported on May 17th.

Ukraine: Latest updates

BBC News reported on May 24th that the current offensive by Russian forces in the Donbas region of Ukraine is "the largest one on European soil since World War Two," according to Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Minister, Dmytro Kuleba. The city of Severodonetsk remain under Ukrainian control, despite Russian bombardment of the city, the regional governor said on Telegram. Regional governor Serhiy Haidai wrote on Telegram that "the Russians concentrated almost all their forces, namely 25 battalion tactical groups to take the city". Global attention is now being placed on Ukraine's inability to export its massive grain stores, which could lead to dire consequences on a global scale, UK minister Grant Shapps has told the media. "There could be a lot of hunger and indeed even famine that could dwarf the numbers involved in the war itself," he told Sky News. Efforts to move grain from Ukraine's port of Odessa are ongoing but, with Russian naval forces effectively blockading the country, the maritime options are currently limited. In related news, Germany's economy minister told his country's media that the EU is close to agreeing an embargo on imports of Russian oil. While a ban would not immediately impact Russia financially, it would certainly be felt. Russia currently supplies around 40 per cent of the EU's gas and 27 per cent of its oil, the BBC reported.

Iran vows revenge after Revolutionary Guards colonel is assassinated

Iran's president has promised to take revenge after a colonel in the powerful Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) was shot dead in Tehran on Sunday 22nd, BBC News said on May 24th. Two gunmen on a motorbike opened fire at Sayad Khodai as he sat in a car outside his home, state media reported. Col Khodai was a member of the elite Quds Force, the IRGC's shadowy overseas operations arm, they said. President Ebrahim Raisi blamed "the hands of global arrogance" - a reference to the US and its allies.

Ethiopia arrests thousands including ex-army commander

Authorities in Ethiopia's northern Amhara region say they have arrested more than 4,500 individuals including a former army commander. The arrests are said to be part of "an operation to enforce law and order," announced last week. The region's security office head Desalegn Tassew has told state-run media outlets on Monday that those arrested were suspected of spreading lawlessness, Kalkidan Yibeltal wrote in a BBC News report on May 23rd.

Nigerian police probe beheading of state MP

Police in Nigeria are investigating the beheading of a local MP in the south-eastern state of Anambra barely a week after gunmen kidnapped him along with an aide. The discovery of Okechukwu Okoye's mutilated body over the weekend has sparked outrage. Anambra's state governor Charles Soludo described the killing as gruesome, barbaric and shocking. He announced a reward for information leading to the killers' capture. It's not clear who was behind the attack, the BBC said on May 23rd.

Industry and SIA News

Announcing the 2022 SIA GovSummit Keynote Speakers

SIA announce that Diane J. Sabatino, deputy executive assistant commissioner of the Office of Field Operations at U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Figen Murray, speaker and counter-terrorism advocate and Charlie Guddemi, state-wide interoperability coordinator at the D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, as the 2022 SIA GovSummit keynote speakers. View the conference agenda and grab your ticket now before it's too late - register today! Please [click here](#) for details.

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