

MS | RISK

# Maritime Security Review



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## INCIDENTS AT SEA

Reporting Period: 29 January – 4 February 2018

Region	Current Incidents	Late Reported Incidents	Threat Level
<b>MAIN REGIONS</b>			
Gulf of Aden/Arabian Sea	0	2	Medium
Gulf of Guinea	0	6	High
Southeast Asia	1	2	Medium
<b>WORLDWIDE</b>			
North America	0	0	Low
Central America/Caribbean/ South America	2	6	High
Atlantic Ocean Area	0	0	Low
Northern Europe/English Channel/Baltic	0	0	Low
Mediterranean/ Black Sea	0	0	Low
Arabian Gulf	0	0	Low
East Asia/Indian Subcontinent	1	1	Medium
Southern Africa	0	0	Low
Northeast Asia	0	1	Low
Pacific Ocean/Southern Ocean	0	0	Low

**Piracy Levels are determined on a weekly basis as follows:**

- HIGH** 5 or more incidents in the current reporting period
- MEDIUM** 2 – 4 piracy incidents in the current reporting period
- LOW** 0 – 1 piracy incidents in the current reporting period

### PLEASE NOTE:

The information contained in this report is as accurate as possible at the time of publishing. In some cases, however, incidents are updated at a later date as more information becomes available.

We encourage our readers to confidentially report any incidents or suspicious activity to [info@msrisk.com](mailto:info@msrisk.com).

## GULF OF ADEN, ARABIAN SEA, RED SEA



### **WARNING FOR RED SEA, BAB EL-MANDAB STRAIT, AND GULF OF ADEN: HIGH THREAT OF VESSEL HIJACKING**

There remains a high threat of piracy and a risk of vessel damage as the result of maritime conflict in this region. International naval patrols and anti-piracy measures on board commercial vessels have greatly diminished Somali piracy since its peak in early 2011. The international community has significant steps to improve security in the region, including:

- Boosting naval forces in the area
- Requiring ships to take protection measures, such as
  - Reporting in and out of high risk areas
  - Sailing at top speed as far as possible from the Somali coast, and
  - Travelling with armed escorts on board.

Some vessels transiting this region may have increasingly become complacent in the belief that the piracy threat had diminished. However, poverty and other motivating factors for piracy remain. The threat of attack and/or hijacking remains significant as the root causes on the ground in Somalia have not been sufficiently addressed. After five years without a successful attack, analysts say that

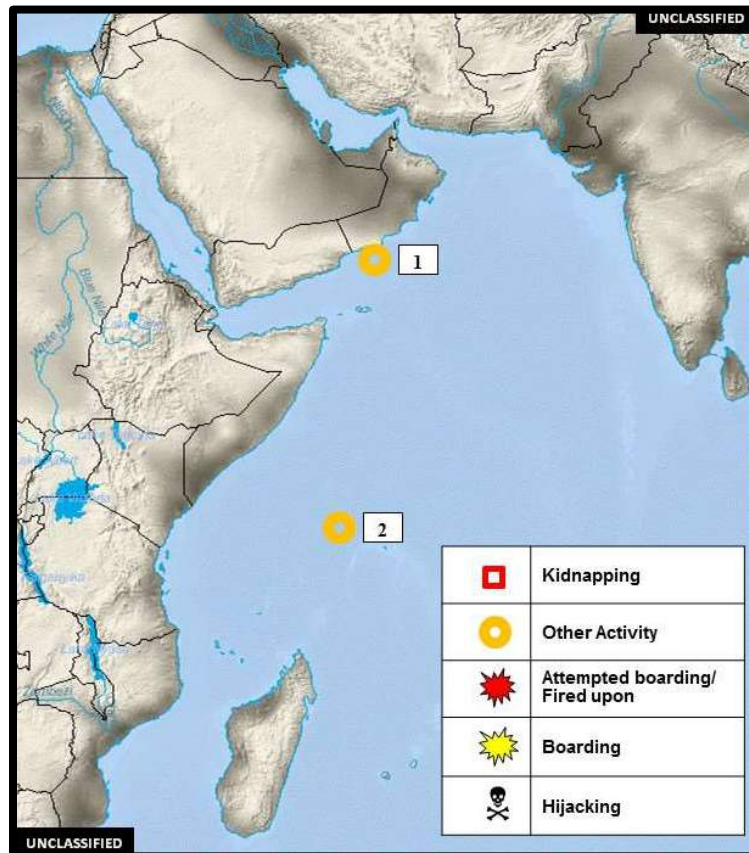
complacency may have set in and this year's successful hijacking is likely to result in potential copycat attacks, as pirate action groups head out in a bid to successfully hijack a commercial vessel.

Masters are advised to remain vigilant at all times inside the HRA and are urged to adhere to guidance and protective measures as set down in BMP4. Sailing yachts should avoid transiting the HRA. Past activity has demonstrated that pirates will attack both large and small yachts transiting this region. While successful attacks and hijackings of merchant vessels have significantly decreased over the past two years, the possibility of attacks and the successful hijacking of sailing vessels continues to remain high. This is due to the reduction of revenue sources from pirated merchant vessels, and the fact that sailing yachts are vulnerable and easier targets. PAG's continue to conduct "soft approaches" on merchant ships transiting the area. Skiffs have approached vessels in order to probe the reaction of the crewmembers and any possible Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel (PCASP) onboard. If the pirate approach does not elicit a response, the pirates will likely proceed with an attack, in which additional skiffs may participate.

Vessels transiting the greater Gulf of Aden region should operate under a heightened state of alert. This is due to increasing tensions in the region, particularly around Bab al Mandab Strait and near Yemen, where fighting has taken a maritime trajectory. The risk for potential for direct or collateral damage to vessels transiting the region is high. These threats may come from a number of different sources such as missiles, projectiles, or waterborne improvised explosive devices. Houthi rebels have claimed responsibility for the 1 October 2016 attack on a UAE vessel. MS Risk advises all vessels transiting this region to report any hostile activities immediately.

Current  
Incidents:

2

**VESSELS HIJACKED**

- No current incidents to report

**UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES**

- No current incidents to report

**VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS/ATTACKS**

- No current incidents to report

**VESSELS BOARDED**

- No current incidents to report

**KIDNAPPING**

- No current incidents to report

**SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**

- No current incidents to report

#### OTHER ACTIVITY

- **28 January (Oman – Late Report)** – Authorities announced that they had successfully boarded a fishing boat and seized over a thousand packets of Khat. A Royal Oman police spokesperson released a statement that read “the Anti-Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Department, led by Dhofar Governorate Police, in cooperation with patrol teams of the Special Tasks Unit of Salalah, managed to seize a fishing boat with 1,050 packs of khat off the coast of Taqah.”
- **January (Indian Ocean – Late Report)** – Australian and New Zealand joint forces seized 915 kilograms of heroin, valued in excess of US \$274 million, in a counter-narcotics operation in the Western Indian Ocean. A Royal New Zealand Air Force P-3K2 aircraft detected a suspicious vessel on 23 January and a crew from Royal Australian navy Frigate HMAS WARRAMUNGA board the boat on 24 January. The illegal drugs were transferred to the frigate for disposal at sea.

#### MARITIME REPORTING

- No current incidents to report

### WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF ADEN, ARABIAN SEA, RED SEA

#### WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 1 – 7 FEBRUARY 2018

**NORTHERN ARABIAN SEA:** Westerly winds of 10 – 15 knots, with seas of 3 – 5 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Westerly winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet.

**GULF OF OMAN:** West-northwest winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with variable winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

- **Extended Forecast:** West-northwest winds of 15 – 20 knots, gusting to 25 knots, and seas of 3 -5 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with west-northwest winds of 15 – 20 knots, gusting to 25 knots, and seas of 4 – 6 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

**GULF OF ADEN:** East-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with east-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

- **Extended Forecast:** East-northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 5 – 7 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with east-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

**SOMALI COAST:** Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the southern section of the coastline.



- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 5 – 7 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 7 – 9 feet in the southern section of the coastline.

**CENTRAL AFRICAN COAST/INDIAN OCEAN:** Northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, gusting to 20 knots, and seas of 4 – 6 feet.

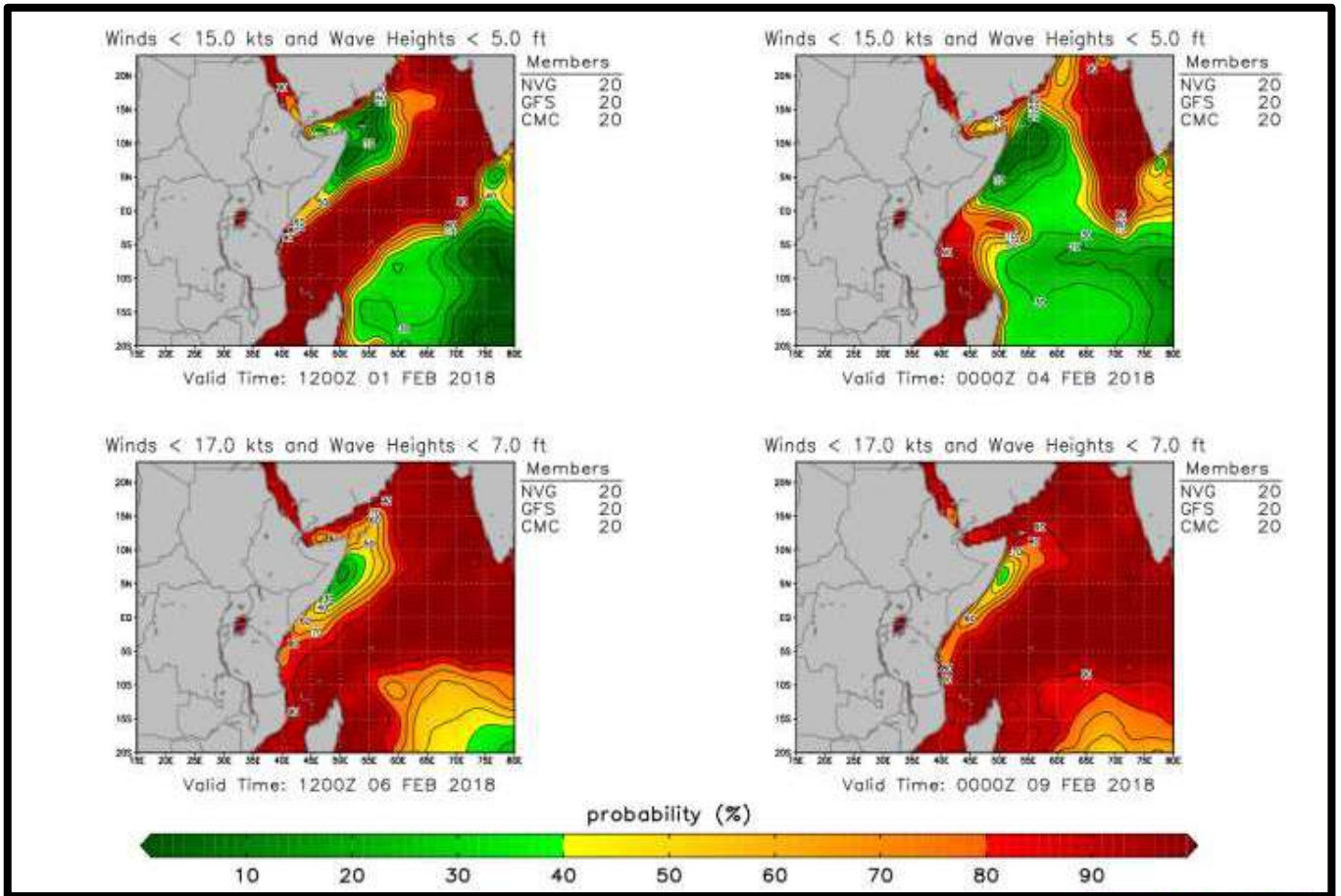
**MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL:** Variable winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the northern Channel; with northwest winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 6 – 8 feet in the southern Channel.

- **Extended Forecast:** Variable winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 6 – 8 feet, in the southern Channel.

**SURFACE CURRENTS:** The northern Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden currents are variable with most areas having an average speed of 1 knot. The Mozambique Channel currents are variable having an average speed of 2 knots. Currents' speed along the Somali Basin are north-easterly averaging between 2 – 3 knots.

**SYNOPTIC DISCUSSION:** High pressure will dominate the weather pattern over much of the region producing mostly clear skies. Isolated rain showers and thunderstorms can be expected during the forecast as an area of low pressure moves through the region. Expect increased localized wind flow through the Strait of Hormuz due to funnelling effects and occasional shamal winds across the Arabian Gulf.





## SPOTLIGHT ON YEMEN

PORT STATUS AS OF 4 FEBRUARY 2018			
Port Name	Port Status	Risk Level	Notes
Aden Port	Open	High	Curfew: 2000 - 0600
Ash Shihr Oil Terminal	Closed	High	
Balhaf LNG Terminal	Closed	Closed	
Hodeidah Port	Open	High	The Saudi Royal Navy is using a holding area 60 NM west of Hodeidah port for vessels attempting entry into Salif or Hodeidah. Inbound vessels should plan on holding here prior to receiving clearance.
Mokha Port	Open	High	Considered unsafe; no activity reported since August 2015
Mukalla Port	Open	High	Capacity: 2 berths
Ras Isa Marine Terminal	Closed	Closed	
Saleef Port	Open	High	Capacity: 2 berths

*Shipmasters and crew are urged to remain abreast of current conditions surrounding all Yemeni ports, and to ensure that security measured aboard vessels are in place.*

#### SECURITY ADVISORY: ADEN CAPTURED BY SOUTHERN SEPRATISTS

- Fighters for the separatist group Southern Transitional Council have captured the area around the Presidential Palace in Aden. They have not entered the Palace.
- Some reporting suggests that separatist fighters have also taken control of a key Army base.
- The clash opens a rift between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, who are fighting together in Saudi-led coalition against the Houthi Rebels
- The clashes may cause disruption at Aden port.
- *MS Risk continues to advise extreme caution for vessels traveling through Bab-al-Mandab, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Please see security advisory below for further detail.*

## SECURITY ADVISORY: ADEN, YEMEN

### SUMMARY:

Early on 30 January, Yemen's southern separatists seized the area around the presidential palace in Aden, after a three-day long battle with supporters of Yemeni President Hadi. Some reports indicate that the Yemeni Prime Minister and several cabinet members are preparing to flee to Saudi Arabia.

Fighters for the separatist group Southern Transitional Council (STC) have clashed with Yemeni forces and made it to the gates of Palace of Maashiq, in Crater district, Aden. The Yemeni forces reportedly abandoned their positions. Separatist forces were stopped from entering the palace by Saudi Arabian troops who have guarded the palace for months.

Some reporting indicates that on 29 January, the Southern Resistance Front (SRF), an armed wing of the STC wrested control of a key military base in Aden's Khormaksar district, capturing dozens of soldiers.

### BACKGROUND

On 28 January, forces loyal to the Yemeni government clashed with armed group aligned with the Southern Transitional Council (STC) in Yemen's interim capital of Aden. The attack comes a week after the separatists declared a state of emergency in Aden and vowed to overthrow the country's internationally recognised government within the next week if their conditions were not met.

On 22 January, Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the leader of the STC, said Yemen's parliament would be barred from convening in Aden or anywhere else in southern Yemen unless President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi replaced Prime Minister Ahmed bin Daghr and his entire cabinet. Al-Zubaidi accused Hadi's government of "rampant corruption" resulting in a "deteriorating economic, security and social situation never before witnessed in the history of the south", and of "waging a misinformation campaign against the southern leaders using state funds".

Al-Zubaidi added that the Southern Resistance Front (SRF) will "become the core of a new force that will rebuild South Yemen's security and military institutions." The statement did not give details on how it intended to topple Hadi's government, only that he had a week to comply.

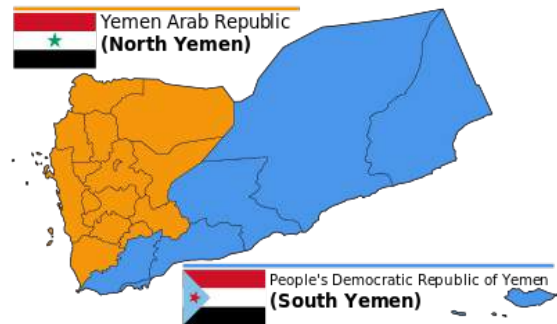
In turn, Hadi and his government refused the ultimatum and banned public gatherings ahead of last Sunday's deadline, deploying the Yemeni army to prevent STC fighters or affiliates from entering Aden. The presence of the army triggered violent clashes, leaving 12 killed and 130 wounded. The Yemeni government called for an immediate ceasefire, backed by calls from the Saudi coalition to concentrate on their main fight against the Houthi rebels.

However, the truce only lasted a matter of hours, and fighting resumed in the early hours of last Monday morning. The violence in Aden so far has killed at least 36 people and wounded 185, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

### A MATRYOSHKA DOLL OF WARS

The war in Yemen is not one single battle, but rather, like Russian nesting dolls, a series wars within a war.

**Houthi Rebels:** At the topmost level is the battle to remove the Northern, Shiite, Iranian-backed Houthi rebels who have taken seats of power in Sanaa and other key areas since 2015. This battle has been observed as a proxy war between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran. The Saudi-led coalition fighting with and on behalf of the Yemeni government has fighting training, or logistical support from at least sixteen countries, however most fighters are from the Gulf states.



*Yemen prior to 1990 unification*

**Separatist movement:** Within the battle for the whole of Yemen, southern separatists have long voiced a desire to secede from Yemen and return to the previous condition of a North and South Yemen that existed prior to their unification in 1990. Separatist desires created impediments to the post-Arab Spring national unity conferences, held to resolve the circumstances that led to wide-scale rioting and violence in 2011.

While allies in the Saudi-led coalition, the separatist battle pits the Saudi Arabian-backed government against the UAE, which is a major patron of the southern separatist movement. The UAE has invested millions of dollars into the STC, and considerable training in their armed wing, to secure Emirati interests in the region. With this backing, the group has amassed a significant following in the port cities of Aden and Mukalla, as well as nearby provinces of Dhale and Lahij.

**Terrorist Groups:** Amid these battles, the Saudi led coalition and separatist groups are battling extremist groups; key among them Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, considered the most active group in the Al Qaeda organisation, and Daesh in Yemen, as the group tries to identify new locations to replace their diminished territories in Iraq and Syria. Operation Golden Spear, a Saudi strategy to clear ports controlled by Houthi Rebels and extremists, has eradicated Al Qaeda presence from most ports in Yemen, however it is believed that the fighters have regrouped and are attempting, like their extremist counterparts in Daesh, to thrive and create a space for themselves amid the chaos.

Yemen has been in a constant state of war for three years, and still remains at a stalemate. The war has left over 10,000 civilians dead and 2 million displaced, with the United Nations saying Yemen is facing the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

### PORT SECURITY

The battle in Aden puts the port area at significant risk for clashes. The Yemeni Government and Saudi Coalition may lose the support from the UAE if it lacks the political will to protect the port for the Hadi government. Further, MS Risk has previously assessed that the waters around Yemen may become the next affected area in a battle for regional influence, including warnings recently issued regarding Houthi rebel threats to block international shipping through the Red Sea. The risk of passage through the region

has increased and is likely to rise, and the risk of violence at or near the port of Aden is highly likely. Shipping vessels should remain constantly aware of the situation, including changes to protocol when entering Yemeni maritime waters.

In response to rising threats stemming from the conflict in Yemen, BIMCO, ICS and INTERTANKO published interim guidance on maritime security in the southern Red Sea and Bab al-Mandeb.

The European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) have advised that a range of threats other than piracy, such as sea mines and water-borne improvised explosive devices (WBIEDs), are potential risks in the area.

The guidance stresses the importance of using the Maritime Security Transit Corridor, registration with MSCHOA and reporting to UKMTO, as well as reviewing and updating risk assessments and plans to include these new threats.

The guidance also includes advice specific to identified threat types, including WBIEDs and complements the guidance provided in BMP 4. The Interim Guidance on Maritime Security in the Southern Red Sea and Bab al-Mandeb is available here: <http://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/Piracy-Docs/1---interim-guidance-on-maritime-security-in-the-southern-red-sea-and-bab-al-mandeb.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

## ACTIVITY REPORTING

## YEMEN WARNS OF COUP AS SEPARATISTS SEIZE GOVT BLDG

- **2 February** – Yemen's government accused southern separatists of an attempted coup on Sunday after they took over its headquarters amid fierce clashes in Aden. The fighting threw Yemen into further chaos and threatened to undermine President Hadi, who ordered his forces to stand down. Clashes spread to most of the city. The government urged the Saudi-led military coalition to intervene. The southern separatists backed Hadi's government against the Houthis but tensions between them had been rising. Security sources said that pro-separatist units trained and backed by the United Arab Emirates had taken over the government headquarters in Aden after clashes. The fighting erupted after separatist protesters were prevented from entering the city for a rally to demand the government's ouster from Aden. By early evening, separatists took control of two roads leading to the presidential palace where several members of the government were staying, security sources said, adding that fighting had receded. The move exposed potential divides between Saudi Arabia, which finances and arms the Yemeni government, and the UAE, which is providing direct financial and military aid to the separatist Southern Transitional Council and its armed militia. Yemeni government officials accused the Emirati government of deploying fighter planes to help the separatist fighters. In a statement published by the Saudi Press Agency on Thursday, the Saudi-led coalition said Riyadh and Abu Dhabi shared "one goal and a shared vision for Yemen". "Saudi Arabia and the UAE have no ambitions but for Yemen to be a safe, stable, and able, Arab nation," the statement said. While stopping short of expressing support for the Yemeni government, which is based in Aden because the capital is under Houthi rebel control, the coalition called on both sides to focus on the goal of "defeating the Houthi militias of Iran." **Ataq: Fourteen soldiers killed in Suicide attack**

## ATAQ: FOURTEEN SOLDIERS KILLED IN TERRORIST ATTACK

- **30 January** – Fourteen soldiers were killed in a suicide attack by suspected Islamist extremists in southern Yemen, a senior military official said. The bomb struck a checkpoint manned by UAE-trained special operations forces in Ataq, capital of the oil-rich province of Shabwa.

## YEMEN PROCEDURE

**MS RISK CONTINUES TO ADVISE EXTREME CAUTION FOR VESSELS TRAVELING THROUGH BAB AL MANDAB, THE GULF OF ADEN, AND THE INDIAN OCEAN.**

In the past year, the battle between the Yemeni government and Saudi led coalition against the Houthi rebels has taken a maritime trajectory. In 2016, Houthi rebels deployed sea mines and unmanned armed vessels in the waters around Yemen. While unmanned drone boats may likely target coalition warships, aquatic mines do not distinguish, and can cause harm to any vessel in the vicinity. Therefore, risk of passage through the region has increased and is likely to rise. There remains a high level of violence and criminal activity ashore. Shipping vessels should remain constantly aware of the situation, including changes to protocol when entering Yemeni maritime waters.

### United Nations Inspections

The UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) is operational for commercial imports to Yemen.

*Shipping companies or owners delivering to ports not under the control of the Government of Yemen* must apply for permits upon departing from the port of origin of their cargo. Yemen-based importers/traders are required to submit this notification form. More information about the UNVIM program is available here: <https://www.vimye.org/home>.

*Vessels applying to go to ports under the control of the Government of Yemen* need obtain permission for entry from the Yemeni Ministry of Transport. This should be done through the ship's agent and/or receivers prior to the vessel's arrival. The form should be completed by the ship's master and sent directly to the Ministry of Transport.

### Saudi Coalition Inspections

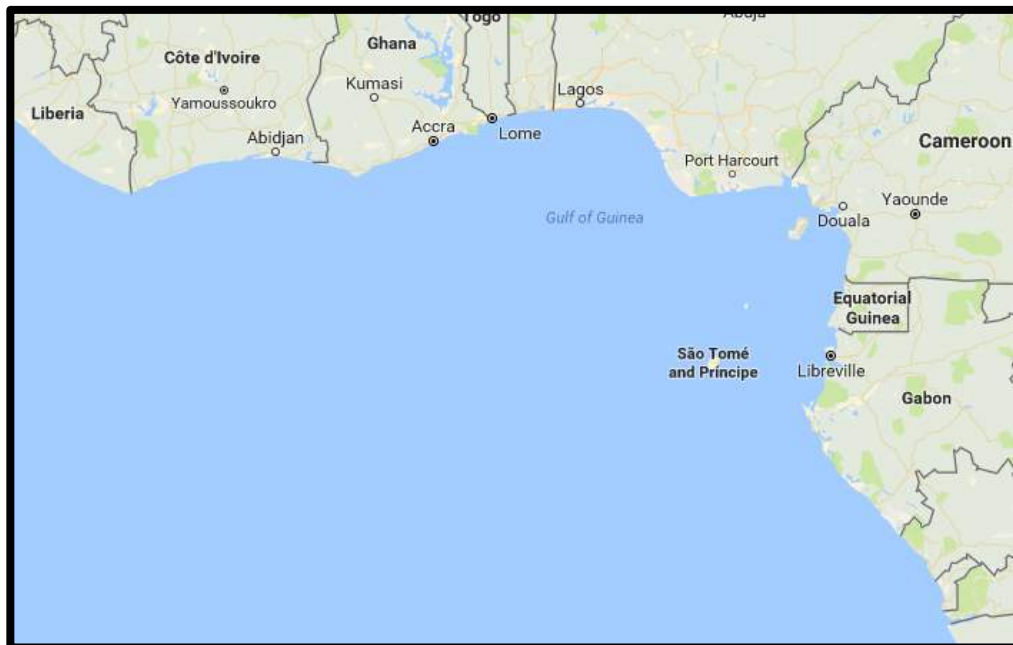
All vessels calling at Yemeni ports will only be allowed to enter Yemeni territorial waters following an inspection by the Saudi Arabian coalition forces. Upon arrival outside Bab Al-Mandab, the shipmaster should call the naval forces of the Saudi Arabian coalition by VHF on channel 16 for the arrival registration, and indicate his location (ideally three miles from Bab Al Mandab). Coalition authorities will advise on the anchor position until they provide final approval to enter the port. This procedure will not take more than 48 hours.

Coalition inspectors do not conduct investigation with the crew; contact will be with the ship's master or Chief Officer about the cargo and documents. Once the vessel is permitted into Yemeni ports, the Master will be required to call port control by VHF on channel 14 or 16 for the arrival registration. The shipmaster will be advised the anchor position until the Harbour master confirms berthing prospects.

Coalition forces require AIS to be kept on at all times. The situation is subject to change and vessels should check frequently with local sources for any changes.



## WEST AFRICA, GULF OF GUINEA



Current  
Incidents:

6

### WARNING:

The entire Gulf of Guinea region remains at a high risk to piracy; MS Risk advises all vessels transiting within 100 nautical miles of Tema, Ghana; Lome, Togo; and Cotonou, Benin to remain particularly vigilant.

#### VESSELS HIJACKED

- No current incidents to report

#### UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

#### VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS/ATTACK

3. **24 January (Guinea – Late Report)** – A crewman on routine rounds on board a container ship near position 09:30 N – 013:43 W, Conakry Port Terminal noticed one person attempting to gain access to the vessel by using the ship's line. Another person was seen in the water. The alarm was raised. Upon seeing the alerted crewmembers, the intruders aborted and swam away.
4. **23 January (Nigeria – Late Report)** – Unknown gunmen attacked a marine police base in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa, killing two policemen on guard duty. The Bayelsa Police

Commissioner disclosed that “at about 2200hrs on Tuesday, some unknown gunmen suspected to be sea pirates came in two boats from different directions attacked our men that were at the marine base at Ogbia. We tried to be as defensive as possible. In the course of exchange of fire, we lost two policemen who were shot in action...,” adding that the gunmen also stole two rifles and a 200 horsepower outboard boat engine.

#### VESSELS BOARDED

1. **27 January (Nigeria – Late Report)** – A duty crewman on board an anchored product tanker near position 06:18 N – 003:20 E, Lagos STS Anchorage, noticed suspicious movement on the forecastle and informed the duty officer who noticed a person hiding behind the mooring winches. The alarm was raised, a PA announcement was made, the ship’s horn was continuously blown, the crew was mustered and a Nigerian Navy patrol boat was notified. The patrol boat arrived and searched the waters around the tanker. The crew also carried out a search of the tanker. Nothing was reported stolen.
5. **21 January (Cameroon – Late Report)** – A suspected robber boarded a merchant vessel berthed at Douala port. The duty officer reportedly spotted the intruder, raised the alarm and sought assistance from local Navy personnel. The intruder then jumped overboard and escaped in a boat. Nothing was reported stolen.

#### KIDNAPPING

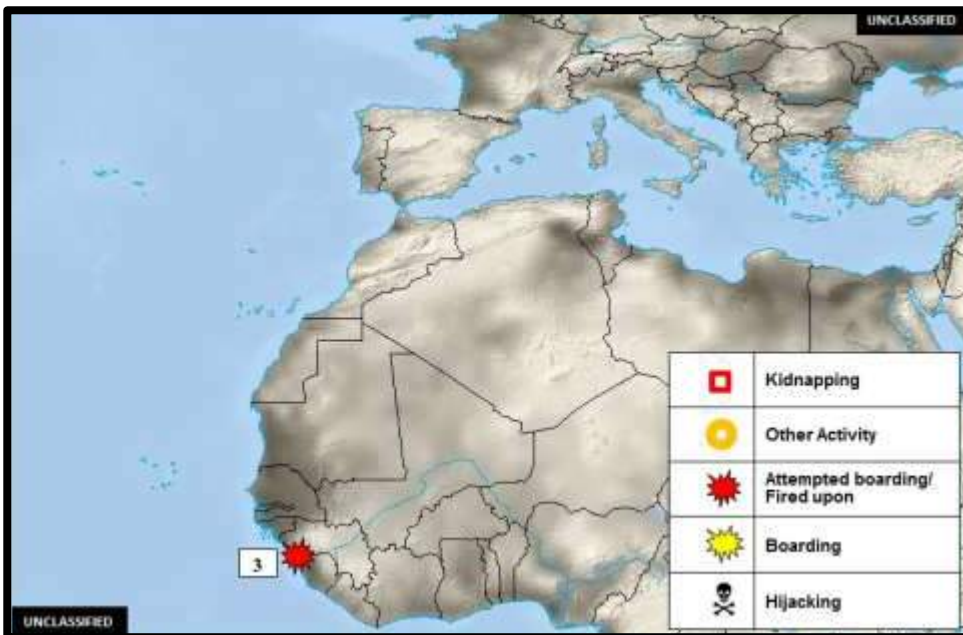
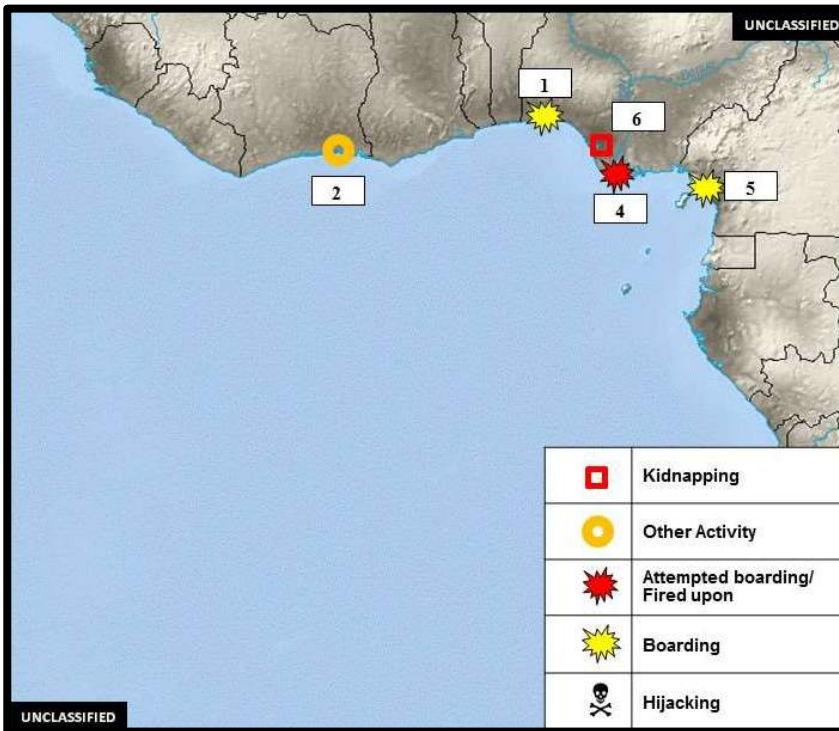
6. **17 January (Nigeria – Late Report)** – Five oil workers were kidnapped in Nigeria’s restive southern Niger Delta region, an area that has regularly been hit by militant attacks and kidnappings. According to a Delta State police spokesperson, suspected militants seized the workers on Wednesday near the Ajoki community, which borders the states of Edo and Delta, adding “the police in partnership with the military are working to ensure that the victims are rescued unhurt with the perpetrators arrested and brought to book.” The workers are employees of Sahara Energy Oil Company, a Nigerian energy firm. A local resident who witnessed the abductions has disclosed that the oil workers were in a bot en route to an offshore location when the gunmen arrived, adding “they stormed the waterside and ordered the workers into their boat amidst sporadic gunshots and sped off to an unknown location.”

#### SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

#### OTHER ACTIVITY

2. **25 January (Ivory Coast – Late Report)** – Authorities seized 600 kilograms of elephant tusks and 600 kilograms of pangolin scales, that were ready to be sent to Vietnam and other Asian countries. In an operation that lasted several days, and which aimed to dismantle a major trafficking network, six suspects were arrested.



**MARITIME REPORTING**

- No major incidents to report

**WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF GUINEA****WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 1 – 7 FEBRUARY 2018**

**GULF OF GUINEA:** Southwest winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 3 – 5 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Southwest winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet.

**SYNOPTIC DISCUSSION:** High pressure continues to dominate the weather in the region producing relatively light winds across the Somali Basin. Isolated thunderstorms and rain showers can be routinely expected along the Somali and West African coasts with increased southerly wind flow through the Bab el Mandeb Strait due to funnelling effects.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA



Current Incidents:

3

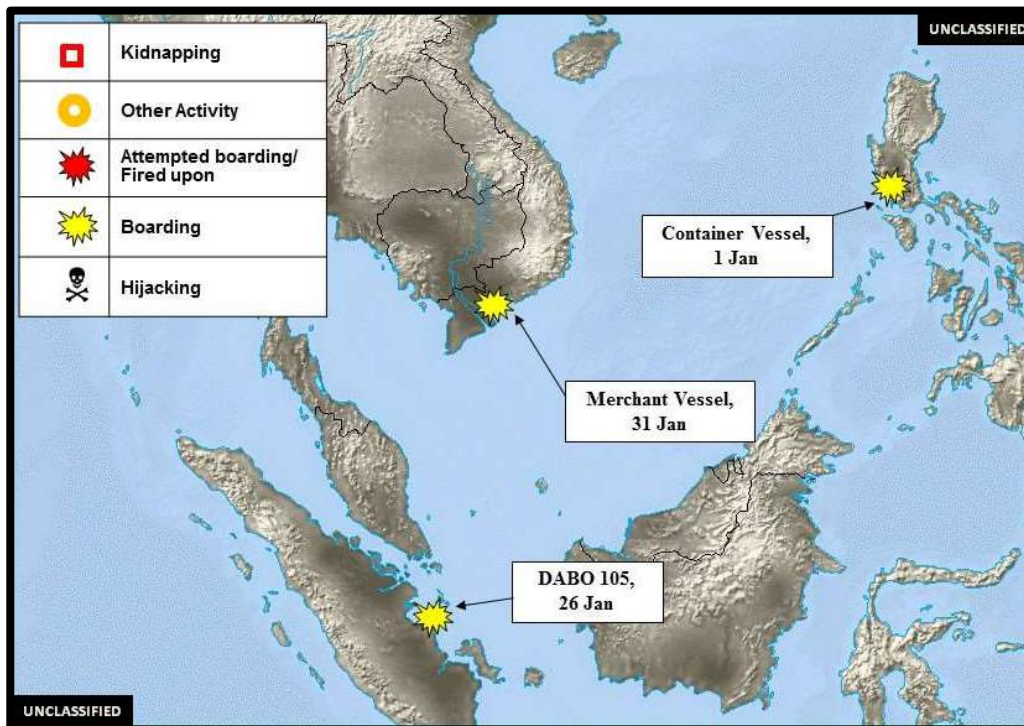
### WARNING:

While in recent months, there have been no reports of kidnapping of crewmembers from vessels while underway in the Sulu-Celebs Sea region, the threat of further such incidents remains high. MS Risk advises all vessels, particularly slow-moving vessels, to re-route where possible. If unable to re-route, we strongly advise vessel Masters and crewmembers to adopt the following measures:

- Maintain a heightened level of vigilance and increase security watch rotations
- Sound the alarm when unknown people are sighted on board the vessel or when suspicious boats are in the vicinity
- Report all incidents and suspicious activity
- Maintain continuous communication with shipping company and with local enforcement agencies
- Avoid confrontation with the perpetrators

Pirate Action Groups (PAG's) operating in this region are likely to target vessels to siphon fuel or oil onto another ship. Masters are therefore reminded to remain vigilant at all times in all regions, including at ports and anchorages. Attacks and robberies can occur at any time. Incidents involving the siphoning of oil/fuel have been on the rise in recent months. Masters are reminded to remain vigilant at all times and to report any incidents, suspicious activity, attacks or hijackings to the local authorities.





#### VESSELS HIJACKED

- No current incidents to report

#### KIDNAPPING

- No current incidents to report

#### UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

#### VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS/ATTACK

- No current incidents to report

#### VESSELS BOARDED

- **31 January (Vietnam)** – Two robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored bulk carrier near position 10:39 N – 107:00.9 E, Godau Port. They took the bosun hostage and injured him with a knife and then tied him up. The bosun managed to free himself and informed the Master who then raised the alarm and mustered the crew. A search of the vessel was carried out and ship stores were reported missing. The incident was reported to port authorities who boarded the vessel for investigation. The bosun was sent ashore for medical treatment.
- **25 January (Indonesia – Late Report)** - Two robbers boarded the tug *DABO 105* near position 00:44 S – 104:24 E, Strait of Berhala. Bridge crew called for help over VHF and an Indonesian Navy patrol boat responded. It launched a small boat, boarded the tug and arrested the two robbers.

- **1 January (Philippines – Late Report)** - Seven robbers boarded an anchored container ship near position 14:33 N – 120:54 E, South Harbour Anchorage. The robbers stole ship's properties and escaped unseen. The Master reported the incident to the port authorities who notified the coast guard. A patrol boat was dispatched resulting in the perpetrators being apprehended and the stolen properties recovered.

#### SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

#### OTHER ACTIVITY REPORT

- No current incidents to report

#### MARITIME REPORTING

- **29 January (Malaysia)** – Malaysia's maritime agency and Japan's coast guard have launched a weeklong joint exercise focusing on combatting piracy at sea as well as search and rescue operations. The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency has reported that the Japanese Coast Guard sent its patrol vessel Tsugaru and more than fifty crewmembers for the exercise, which is taking place at Malaysia's northeastern port of Kuantan, adding that KM Pekan, one of two patrol vessels given to Malaysia by Japan, will also be involved in the exercise. The agency disclosed in a statement released on Monday that it is the third such exercise to take place in five years, adding that it aims to help build capacity because "robbery at sea and cross-border maritime crime remain a significant threat" in Malaysia's maritime zone.

## WEATHER FORECAST: SOUTHEAST ASIA

### WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 1 – 7 FEBRUARY 2018

**SOUTHERN SOUTH CHINA SEA:** Northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 20 – 25 knots, and seas of 8 – 10 feet.

**MALACCA STRAIT:** Variable winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 2 feet in the northern Strait; with variable winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots and seas of 1 - 2 feet in the southern Strait.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northwest winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the northern Strait; with northwest winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 1 – 2 feet in the southern Strait.

**ANDAMAN SEA:** Northerly winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the northern section; with northerly winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the southern section.



- **Extended Forecast:** Easterly winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the northern section; with easterly winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the southern section.

**SOUTHERN SULU SEA – NORTHERN CELEBES SEA:** Variable winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 2 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Variable winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 2 feet.

**SURFACE CURRENTS:** Currents in the southern South China Sea, Malacca Strait and Andaman Sea are generally less than 1 knot, with a few areas in the southern South China Sea averaging 1 knot.

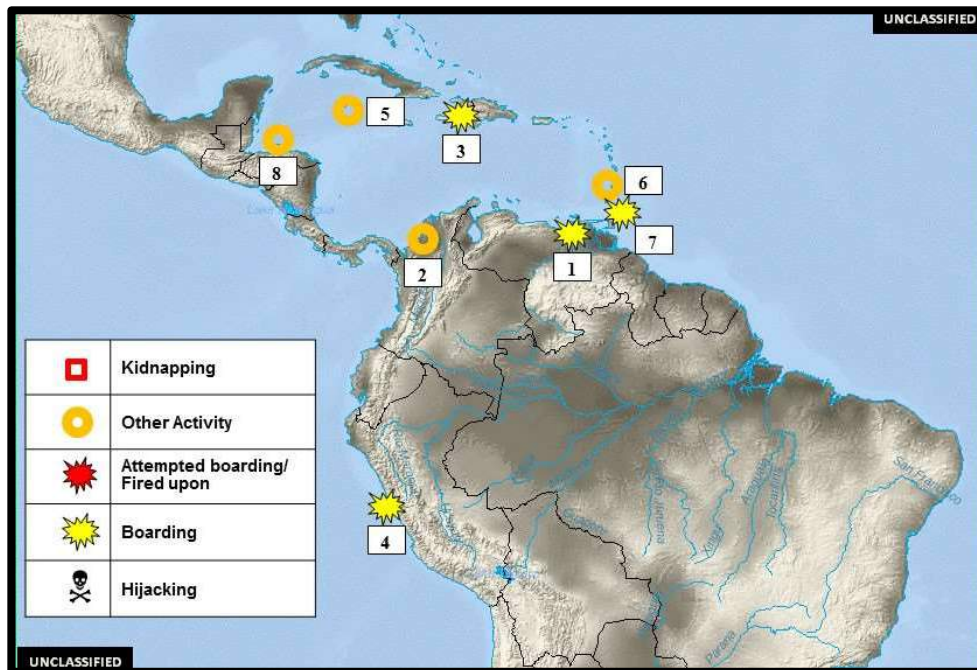
**SYNOPTIC DISCUSSION:** An area of low pressure moving off of China will produce slightly increased wind flow in the South China Sea. Expect strong gusts in and around scattered thunderstorms, throughout the Malacca Strait and the Andaman Sea due to funnelling effects and daytime heating.

## WORLDWIDE

## NORTH AMERICA

- No current incidents to report

## CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN/SOUTH AMERICA



1. **30 January (Venezuela)** – Seven robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored tanker near position 10:16 N – 064:42 W, Puerto La Cruz Anchorage and took hostage a duty crewman on routine rounds. They threatened him with a knife, tied him up to the windlass rail and stole his safety shoes and portable UHF radio. Another crew near the accommodation noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. The crew was mustered and a search of the vessel was carried out and the duty crewman was released. The paint store was found broken into and ship's stores were reported stolen. Attempts to contact the port control were unsuccessful.
2. **29 January (Colombia)** – The Colombian Navy announced that it had prevented the transport of drugs, which were found on board a merchant ship. The cargo ship *ROTTERDAM EXPRESS*, a German-flagged merchant ship, had left the port of Cartagena, heading to the Dominican Republic, when its crewmembers conducted a search of the vessel in accordance with security protocols. During the search, they found unknown persons on board the vessel, and called the San Jose Maritime Traffic and Surveillance Station of the General Maritime Directorate, reporting the incident. The Colombian Navy and Coast Guard went to the scene, boarded the vessel and found 10 persons, who had managed to get on the vessel. The

- authorities carried out a search of the vessel, during which they discovered 185 kilos of cocaine.
3. **27 January (Haiti – Late Report)** – Robbers boarded an anchored product tanker near position 18:34 N – 072:24 W, Port au Prince Inner Anchorage, stole two mooring ropes and a messenger rope and escaped. The theft was noticed during routine rounds. Local authorities were notified.
  4. **27 January (Peru – Late Report)** – Three robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored bulk carrier near position 12:01 S – 077:12 W, Callao Anchorage. They tied up the forward duty crew, stole ship’s stores and crew’s personal belongings and escaped. A search was carried out. The incident was reported to the local port authorities and agents.
  5. **25 January (Cayman Islands – Late Report)** – Five men were intercepted by police in two separate boats and have been charged with various offences relating to both drug trafficking and human smuggling. Police seized more than 700 pounds of marijuana after tracking one of the boats to the West Bay shoreline, where it was abandoned near Uncle Bob’s Road. Two men were arrested. Three other men on the second boat who escaped police were arrested by customs officers in Cayman Brac the following day.
  6. **25 January (St Lucia – Late Report)** – A dinghy was stolen from a dock in Rodney Bay. It was not locked to the dock, but the engine was locked to the dingy. It was taken to the Redduit Beach area and the outboard and fuel tank lock was cut and the dinghy was set adrift. Another boat owner anchored in the bay noticed it drifting the net evening and managed to grab it. The next morning, he turned the engineless dinghy in to the Customs Office who located the owner. It is now known if a police report was made by the owner.
  7. **25 January (St Vincent and the Grenadines – Late Report)** – Thieves boarded an anchored sailing yacht in Buccament Bay. In an attempt to steal the dinghy, the thieves had lowered it from the davits until the locking cable went tight and prevented the theft. The dinghy was left partially suspended. Two sets of snorkel gear, a pair of binoculars and a handheld VHF were taken from the cockpit. The yacht departed immediately and no police report was made.
  8. **18 January (Honduras – Late Report)** – A sailing yacht bound for Panama was approached suspiciously by a fishing boat. Near the Gordo Bank at position 16:36 N – 082:17 W, they observed a small fishing boat on an intersecting course. They altered course 90 degrees and noticed the small boat continued to attempt to follow. Listening to VHF they heard a discussion in Spanish about stealing a dinghy. No other vessels were in the vicinity at this time. The crew hailed a merchant vessel located about 15 nautical miles away, and one of the small fishing boats made a false response, attempting to impersonate the merchant vessel. A private VHF DSC call was made to the merchant ship. Radar indicated that the small boats were unable to close the gap in difficult sea and wind conditions, and had fallen further out of range as it became dark. The yacht continued without lights or AIS. The following day, VHF traffic in Spanish was overheard discussing “keeping a lookout for a white sailboat that got away last night.” The yacht continued to Providencia without further incident.

**ATLANTIC OCEAN AREA**

- No current incidents to report

**NORTHERN EUROPE/ENGLISH CHANNEL/BALTIC**

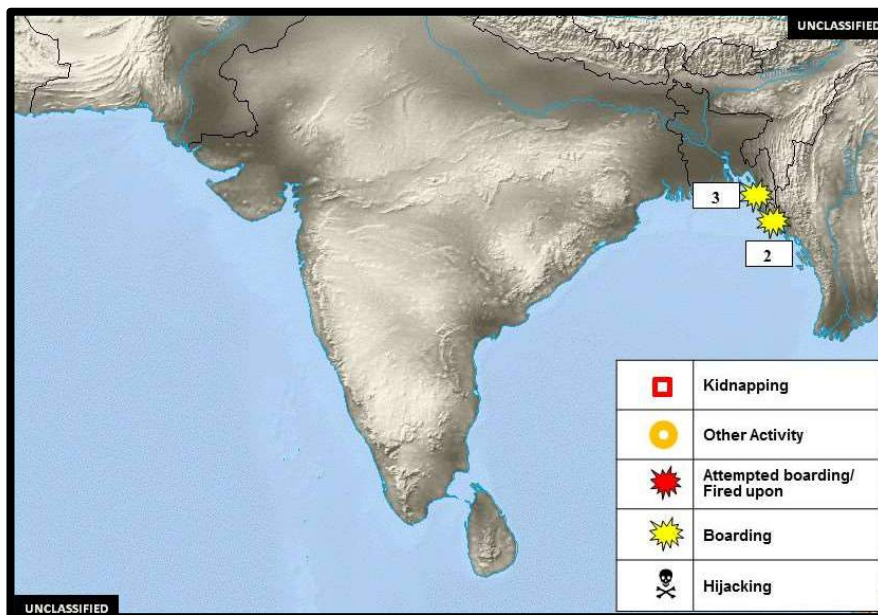
- No current incidents to report

**MEDITERRANEAN/BLACK SEA**

- No current incidents to report

**ARABIAN GULF**

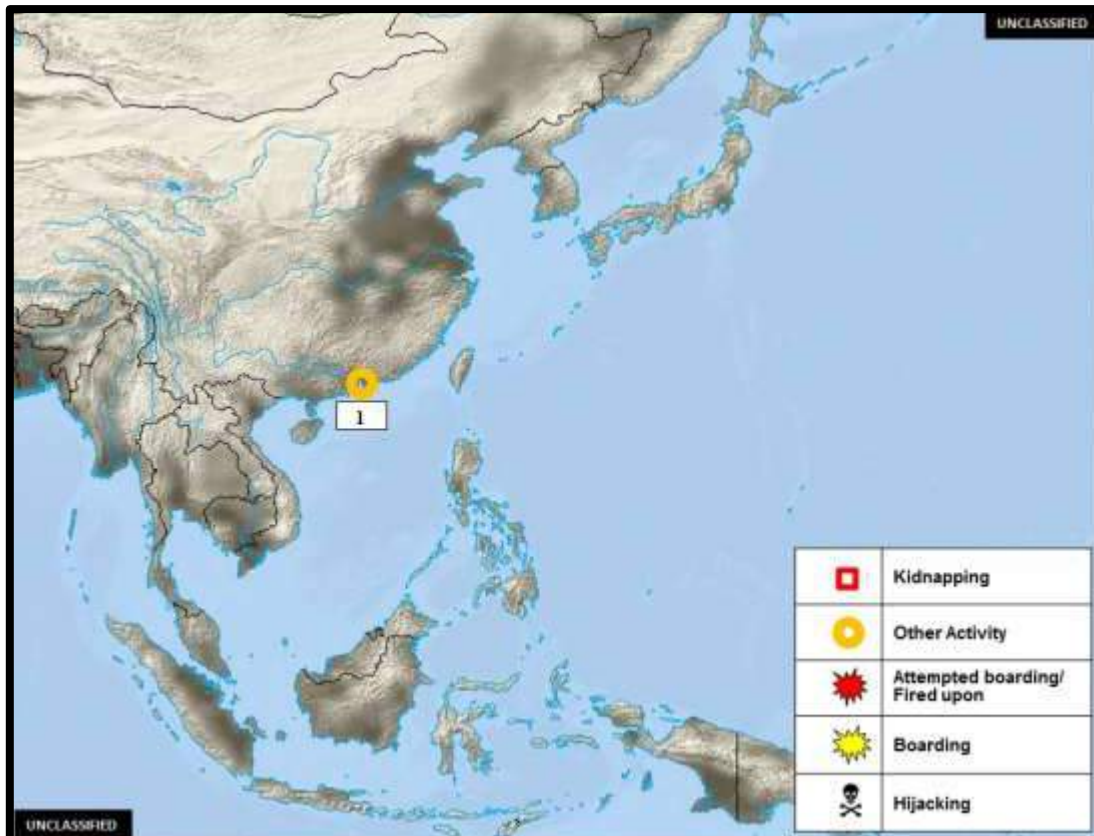
- No current incidents to report

**EAST ASIA/INDIAN SUBCONTINENT**

2. **30 January (Bangladesh)** – Five robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored bulk carrier near position 21:48 N – 091:48 E, Kutubdia Anchorage. They threatened a duty crewman, who managed to escape and raise the alarm. Upon seeing the alerted crewmembers, the robbers escaped with stolen ship's stores. The incident was reported to the Bangladesh Coast Guard who boarded the ship for investigation. Later, the Coast Guard managed to recover the stolen stores and delivered them to the ship.
3. **26 January (Bangladesh – Late Report)** – During routine rounds, a duty crewman on board a merchant ship anchored near position 22:10 N – 091:42 E, Chittagong B Anchorage found three lube oil drums on the deck. Suspecting that something was amiss, he informed the duty officer who in turn alerted the Master and chief engineer. An investigation was carried out. The shore watchmen admitted to having drained the lube oil from the anchor windlass feed tank into the drums. Local agents were informed.

**EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

- No current incidents to report

**NORTHEAST ASIA**

- **23 January (Hong Kong – Late Report)** – Hong Kong police arrested two men and seized over USD 1 million worth of smuggled goods destined for the black market in mainland China after a speedboat chase off Shek O. The chase began when police vessels were alerted to two China-bound speedboats that were spotted near Ng Fan Chau island. Sixty-eight boxes of smuggled goods, including mobile phones, cameras, watches and other electronics, were seized.

**PACIFIC OCEAN/SOUTHERN OCEAN**

- No current incidents to report



## MIGRATION



Despite the cold winter weather, migrant crossings in the Mediterranean have continued throughout the winter period, with the Western Mediterranean corridor continuing to see migrants trying to reach Spain. The EU's border agency has warned that migrant numbers arriving in Spain are likely to rise this year.

### AT LEAST NINETY MIGRANTS FEARED DROWNED OFF COAST OF LIBYA

**2 February** – The UN Migration Agency reported on Friday that at least 90 migrants are feared to have drowned after a smuggler's boat capsized off Libya, adding that most of those on board were Pakistanis. According to Olivia Headon, from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the bodies of two Libyans and eight Pakistanis are reported to have washed up on Libyan shores. She noted that Pakistani nationals had been taking an increasingly large share of migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean via Libya to Europe. Security officials in the western Libyan town of Zuwara have reported that two Libyans and one Pakistani had been rescued from the vessel. Early indications suggest that the vessel became unbalanced.

### ITALY REPORTS DECLINE IN MIGRANT ARRIVALS

**1 February** – On Thursday, Italian officials released migrant arrival figures for the month of January 2018, indicating that 4,256 migrants reached Italy by sea during this period – a 6 percent decline on the same month last year. Furthermore, arrivals from Libya, where most people smugglers operate, were down almost 26 percent. Last year, Italy sealed an agreement with the United Nations-backed government in Tripoli to provide aid, equipment and training to help Libya fight smuggling. During the second half of 2017, arrivals plummeted by two thirds as armed groups cracked down on trafficking from Sabratha, a smuggling hub, and as the Libyan coast guard intercepted an increasing number of boats.

### MIGRANTS RESCUED IN ADRIATIC SEA

**1 February** – Police in Montenegro have disclosed that an Italian fishing boat has picked up 17 migrants, including eleven Syrians, from a small inflatable boat floating in the Adriatic Sea. Crewmembers on board the Italian boat disclosed that they picked up the migrants before docking into the Montenegro port of Zelenika early on Tuesday. Police have indicated that Moroccans, two people from Yemen, one from Afghanistan and one from Pakistan were also on the boat. The group, which included four children, was in police custody in Zelenika. It was not immediately clear where the migrants began their journey. Montenegro has been largely spared from the migrant flow across that Balkans that peaked in 2016, with people fleeing wars and poverty in the Middle East and Africa in a bid to reach Europe.

### NEW EU MISSION TO DETECT THREATS IN MEDITERRANEAN

**31 January** – European border agency Frontex has launched a new Mediterranean Sea operation that will focus on detecting terror threats. Frontex has reported that Joint Operation Themis will begin on 1 February in the central Mediterranean, noting that while its vessels will still rescue migrants from human traffickers' boats, the operation will also involve "intelligence-gathering and other steps aimed at detecting foreign fighters and other terrorist threats at the external borders" of Europe. Themis' operational area will span the waters off Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Turkey and Albania. The security component will also help Italy fight drug smuggling across the Adriatic Sea. According to Frontex executive director Fabrice Leggeri, Themis will "better reflect the changing patterns of migration, as well as cross-border crime." **Update (1 February)** – Frontex launched its new Mediterranean operation on Thursday, removing the obligation of the previous mission to bring rescued migrants only to Italy. Italy has repeatedly lamented a lack of EU solidarity in managing immigration. The previous Frontex operation, known as Triton, required that all those rescued at sea be brought to Italy, even if another EU country, such as Malta, was closer. According to Izabella Cooper, a spokeswoman for Frontex, "Triton said that whomever rescued would be taken to Italy...Themis leave the decision on disembarkation to the (country) coordinating a particular rescue." However since Italy coordinates the vast majority of sea rescues between North Africa and its southern coast, the new rule is unlikely to have a large impact on arrivals, though it does send a political message to Mediterranean neighbours like Malta. Maltese authorities have so far not commented on the new Frontex operation. The new one-year mission will be re-evaluated every three months and will, unlike Triton, include Italy's southern Adriatic coast. While the operation area of Triton extended about 30 miles from the Italian coast, Themis vessels typically will not patrol further than 24 miles from the coast. While Triton was not a search-and-rescue operation, it has assisted in the rescue of 38,000 people since 2014. Themis vessels, of which there will be more than ten operating in the summer, will also carry out rescues if requested, however according to Cooper, no rescued migrants will be taken to non-EU countries, like Libya or Tunisia. Furthermore, while Italian newspapers suggested on Thursday that migrants would be taken to the "closest port," Cooper has indicated that international maritime law, which foresees they be taken to the nearest "place of safety," would continue to be followed. With more than 600,000 migrants landing on Italian shores in the past four years, backlash has been building ahead of the 4 March national election, with the centre-left government under growing pressure to show that it is handling the situation.

### 800 MIGRANTS RESCUED OVER THE WEEKEND

**29 January** – According to the Italian coast guard, some 800 migrants were rescued on the Mediterranean Sea over the weekend. The coast guard reported that they were spotted in five boats, including two rubber dinghies, on Saturday, adding that seven children who had water in their lungs were taken by helicopter to the nearest hospital that could treat them, located in Sfax, Tunisia. The coast guard also reported that two bodies were recovered.



## SPOTLIGHT ON LIBYA

## PORT STATUS AS OF 4 FEBRUARY 2018

Port Name	Port Status	Risk Level
Port of Abu Kammash	Open	Low
Port of al-Khums (Homs)	Open	Low
Port of As-Sidra (Sirte, Es Sider)	Open	Moderate-High
Port of Benghazi	Open	High
Port of Bouri (offshore port)	Open	Low
Port of Derna	<b>CLOSED</b>	High
Port of El Brega (Marsa El Brega)	Open	Moderate
Port of Hariga	Open	Moderate
Port of Mellitah	Open	Low
Port of Misrata (Qasr Ahmed)	Open	High
Port of Ras Lanuf	Open	Moderate-High
Port of Tobruk	Open	Moderate
Port of Tripoli	Open	High
Port of Zawiya (Zawia)	Open	Moderate
Port of Zueitina	Open	Low

## ACTIVITY REPORTING

## NINETY MIGRANTS FEARED DEAD IN BOAT CAPSIZE

- **2 February** – Ninety people are feared to have drowned Friday after a boat capsized off the coast of Libya. The agency said two Libyan and eight Pakistani bodies have washed up on shore. Two survivors from the vessel were able to swim ashore and another person was rescued by a fishing boat. The U.N. migration agency said in January, more than 6,600 migrants traveled to Europe by boat and nearly 250 are believed to be dead or missing. More than half of the migrants -- 64 percent -- arrive in Italy and most of the others show up in Spain (19 percent) or Greece (16 percent). January was the second deadliest month in the Mediterranean since last June.

## LIBYA TO CLOSE FOUR IMMIGRANT SHELTERS

- **1 February** – Libya's Illegal Immigration Agency issued a decision Wednesday to close four shelters in western Libya, without giving a specific reason. The chief of the Illegal Immigration Agency Brigadier General Mohamed Beshr described the decision as being in the interest of the public and the department's work organization. Libyan immigrant reception centers house thousands of migrants, mostly Africans, rescued in the Mediterranean on boats while attempting to cross to European shores. Sheltering illegal immigrants in Libya has been suffering major problems, particularly in equipment and infrastructure.

## MISRATA: LIBYA CUSTOMS SEIZE 11 MILLION NARCOTIC PILLS

- **29 January** – Customs authorities of Misrata port seized 11 million narcotic pills. "The anti-smuggling and drugs department and the customs inspection unit have seized two containers coming from Asia and Europe, containing 11 million tablets of Tramadol," a Misurata customs official said. The smugglers tried to camouflage the shipment inside two containers; the first one contained electric appliances and the second contained imported juice boxes. According to Italian police investigations, the shipment was intended to fund IS activities in Libya.

## LIBYA PROCEDURE

The security situation throughout Libya remains fluid. In the absence of a diplomatic solution, MS Risk continues to advise extreme caution to all vessels entering Libyan waters. The ports are an extremely valuable target, and control of these key facilities in Libya have, and could again, change hands with little or no notice. As a result, ports, infrastructure, and other valuable assets remain at a high risk for violent attack by various armed militia groups.

While all working ports are believed to be currently safe for ships and crew, the security situation remains volatile and subject to rapid change. Shipmasters and crews are urged to exercise extreme caution when entering Libyan ports and waters. Vessels are urged to:

- Observe international laws of trading

- Follow official sea navigation routes to any of the working Libyan ports and avoid navigating in the coastal waters of the closed ports.
- In advance of arrival, declare the intended voyage and type of cargo to be discharged/loaded to the local agent, to allow sufficient time to notify the appropriate authorities.
- Stay in contact with local port authorities to receive the most up to date information.
- Vessels should report their schedules to local port agents prior to arrival at any Libyan port, including:
  - A declaration of the vessel's sailing route
  - Whether they are loading or discharging cargo
  - The type of cargo on board

Vessels are urged to apply extreme caution while navigating coastal waters near Benghazi, Derna and Sirte, the last two ports still being closed. MS Risk advises that shipmasters and owners stay up-to-date on the volatile situation in this region.

## ABOUT MS RISK

MS Risk is a privately-owned company domiciled in the Isle of Man. It is underwritten by a syndicate of Lloyd's of London for special risks case management in all jurisdictions. It also acts as retained advisors to syndicates in the Lloyd's of London specialty risk insurance markets: kidnap for ransom, extortion, hijack, illegal detention, illegal war tax, malicious product tamper, terrorism, political and war risk.

MS Risk is always mindful and compliant to legislation and guidelines on the use of private security services including, but not limited to the US FCPA (1977), UK Bribery Act (2010), Canadian Bill C-48 (2007), ASX 8 Corporate Governance Principles, and the World Bank/IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Government and Private Security Forces. MS Risk is a signatory of the Swiss government's International Code of Conduct. It is transparent and compliant to market expectations on legal and ethical conduct in the performance of services.

MS Risk has a dedicated team of researchers, a 24/7 hotline service and a pool of trained and experienced consultants to support client needs.

MS Risk supports clients in a variety of business sectors with the following services:

### SECURITY CONSULTING

- Risk assessments and intelligence reporting
- Planning and management
- Due diligence and investigations

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Interim security
- Training
- Special assignments

### CRISIS RESPONSE

- Crisis management
- Business continuity management
- Hostile operations support to commercial interests

### VIRTUAL SECURITY DIRECTOR SERVICE

- For clients lacking a full-time security executive

References are always available.

More information is found at [www.msrisk.com](http://www.msrisk.com)

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