

MS | RISK

# Maritime Security Review



Issue No 11  
19 March 2018

## Table of Contents

INCIDENTS AT SEA .....	3
GULF OF ADEN, ARABIAN SEA, RED SEA.....	4
<b>SPOTLIGHT ON YEMEN</b> .....	10
ACTIVITY REPORTING.....	11
<i>US: GOP leaders want to put off Yemen war powers vote</i> .....	11
<i>Saudis in Clandestine talks with Houthis to end Yemen's war</i> .....	11
<i>Yemen security forces seize shipment of weapons on its way to the Houthis</i> .....	11
<i>Is Car Bomb Kills 3 in Yemen's Aden</i> .....	12
<i>Politicians, experts, activists raise alarm after Saudi Royal visit to London</i> .....	12
<i>US: Iran improved Houthi ability to hit Arab coalition seapower</i> .....	12
<i>Hawlaf Port inaugurated</i> .....	13
<i>UK, Saudi Arabia to monitor shipping lanes near Yemen</i> .....	13
YEMEN PROCEDURE.....	13
WEST AFRICA, GULF OF GUINEA.....	15
SOUTHEAST ASIA .....	18
WORLDWIDE .....	21
.....	23
<i>Hundreds of Migrants Picked up Between Libya and Italy</i> .....	23
<i>Two Migrant Groups Transferred to Rescue Vessel</i> .....	24
<i>Libyan Coastguard Thwarts Migrant Departures</i> .....	24
<b>SPOTLIGHT ON LIBYA</b> .....	25
ACTIVITY REPORTING.....	26
<i>Tanker Seized over smuggling near Abu Kamash</i> .....	26
<i>Libya: GNA military prosecutor abducted in Tripoli</i> .....	26
<i>Libyan Attorney General's office: fuel smuggling is part of an international network</i> .....	26
<i>Embassy staff accused of trafficking migrants in Libya</i> .....	27
<i>Methanol plant at Libya's Brega port shut after accidental blast</i> .....	27
LIBYA PROCEDURE.....	28
<b>ABOUT MS RISK</b> .....	29

## INCIDENTS AT SEA

Reporting Period: 12 - 18 March 2018

Region	Current Incidents	Late Reported Incidents	Threat Level
<b>MAIN REGIONS</b>			
Gulf of Aden/Arabian Sea	0	1	Low
Gulf of Guinea	0	2	Medium
Southeast Asia	0	1	Low
<b>WORLDWIDE</b>			
North America	0	0	Low
Central America/Caribbean/ South America	0	2	Medium
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	0	0	Low
Southern Africa	0	0	Low
Northeast Asia	0	0	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

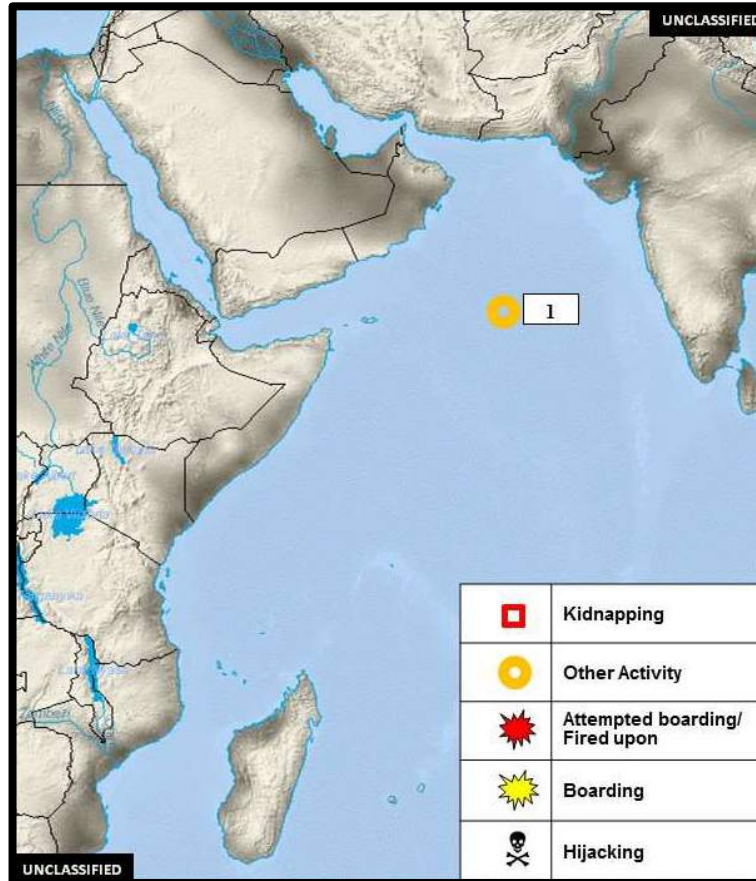
complacency may have set in and this year's successful hijacking is likely to result in potential copycat attacks, as pirate action groups head out in a bid to successfully hijack a commercial vessel.

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:

1

**VESSEL 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

- **10 March (Arabian Sea – Late Report)** – It was announced that Her Majesty’s Australian Ship *HMAS WARRAMUNGA* boarded her third vessel in just four days, interdicting millions of dollars’ worth of heroin. Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, CMF’s counter-terrorism and maritime security task force, seized 12,216 kg of hashish and 132 kg of heroin from 3 – 6 March in the Arabian Sea. According to CTF 150 Commander Commodore Mal Wise, “removing heroin from circulation reduces the funding resources available for terrorists, which then reduces their ability to inflict suffering on the communities in East Africa.” CTF 150, as part of CMF, supported by international agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, seeks to disrupt smuggling networks transferring illicit narcotics from Central Asia through East Asia.

#### MARITIME REPORTING

- No current incidents to report



**WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF ADEN, ARABIAN SEA, RED SEA****WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 15 - 21 MARCH 2018**

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

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

**GULF OF OMAN:** Variable winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with variable winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

- **Extended Forecast:** Variable winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with variable winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

**GULF OF ADEN:** East-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with east-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

- **Extended Forecast:** East-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with east-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

**SOMALI COAST:** Northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 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 2 – 4 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the southern section of the coastline.

**CENTRAL AFRICAN COAST/INDIAN OCEAN:** Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet.

**MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL:** Northwest winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 4 – 6 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 8 – 10 feet in the southern Channel.

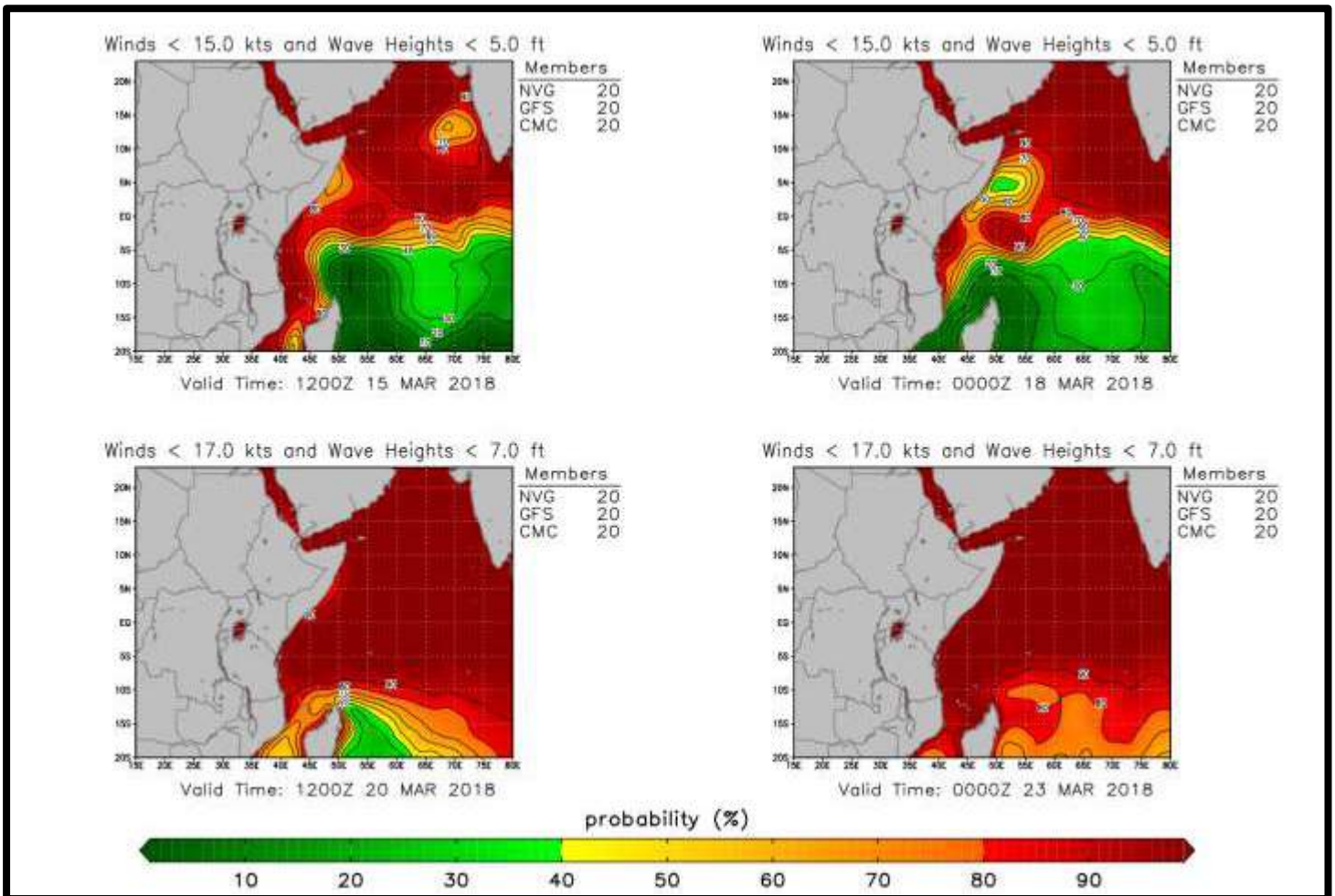
- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots, and seas of 7 – 9 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 20 – 25 knots, and seas of 14 – 16 feet in the southern Channel.

**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' speeds 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. **Forecaster Note:** Invest Area 99s (a weather disturbance) is located approximately 650 nautical miles northeast of Antananarivo, Madagascar. Maximum sustained surface winds are estimated at 28 to 33 knots. The potential for the development of a significant tropical cyclone within the next 24 hours is upgraded to high.



## SPOTLIGHT ON YEMEN

## PORT STATUS AS OF 18 MARCH 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 to humanitarian aid	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.*

## ACTIVITY REPORTING

**US: GOP LEADERS WANT TO PUT OFF YEMEN WAR POWERS VOTE**

**15 March** – The Senate is expected to debate a war powers resolution next week that calls for the United States to end its involvement in the Yemen conflict, but a top Senate Republican leader signaled that GOP leaders would prefer to put off a final vote on the divisive issue until after it can be more closely studied in committee. "I think it would be better for the committee to consider it and make a recommendation after having a hearing so everybody understands exactly what the consequences are," said Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 GOP leader in the chamber, referring to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The US has provided military support -- including intelligence sharing, logistical support, and mid-flight refueling -- to a coalition led by Saudi Arabia against Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen. Three senators -- Mike Lee, a Republican from Utah, Bernie Sanders, an independent from Vermont, and Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut -- authored the privileged resolution and are working to force a vote on it. They believe the refueling and other actions by the US armed forces are akin to "boots on the ground" and that Congress needs to authorize it. They described their bill as the "first-ever vote in the Senate to withdraw US armed forces from an unauthorized war."

**SAUDIS IN CLANDESTINE TALKS WITH HOUTHIS TO END YEMEN'S WAR**

**15 March** – Saudi officials and Houthi rebels have held months of secret talks on ending Yemen's devastating three-year war, according to a news report. Sources speaking on condition of anonymity said Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam had met Saudi officials in neighbouring Oman. The resolution of the conflict would begin with a truce that would halt fighting and allow the negotiation of a definitive peace deal that accounts for the interests of both sides, sources said. The talks have been going on for two months. The negotiations follow previous mediation efforts between the Yemeni government and the Houthis that were held in Kuwait in 2016. Both sides have yet to comment on the news report. Coalition air attacks have failed to bring about any real change on the battleground where Houthis continue to control the capital, Sanaa, and most of northern Yemen. Thousands of Saudi-led air attacks have killed hundreds of Yemeni civilians. Coalition forces have made modest territorial gains, but appear far from seizing back the capital from seasoned fighters. With no victory in sight, and as the war pushes the country towards famine, Saudi officials - including the powerful Crown Prince and Defence Minister Mohammed bin Salman - have expressed a desire to wrap up the conflict. **UPDATE: 17 March** – The Yemeni government has denied conducting any negotiations with the Iranian-backed Houthi in Riyadh, Saudi state-news channel reported. Yemen's government denounced what Reuters news agency published as "misleading news" on the matter. The government renewed its firm stance and called on the Houthi militias to end the coup and hand over arms to the state.

**YEMEN SECURITY FORCES SEIZE SHIPMENT OF WEAPONS ON ITS WAY TO THE HOUTHIS**

**14 March** – Al Arabiya English reports that Yemeni security forces seized a shipment of weapons on their way to the Houthi militia in Sanaa on Wednesday. The report cites a security sources as revealing that one of the security forces at a check point in Marib province, east of Sanaa, seized the shipment. The weapons ranged from missile launchers, Kalashnikovs, explosives, which were hidden carefully in a large truck. Yemeni security services in Marib, have seized more than one shipment of such weapons and military equipment on the way to the Iran-backed Houthi militia.

### IS CAR BOMB KILLS 3 IN YEMEN'S ADEN

**13 March** – Islamic State has claimed the detonation of a car bomb on Tuesday in Aden. Seven people were killed in Aden on Tuesday when a car bomb ripped through a military kitchen used by Yemeni forces trained and backed by the UAE, medics said. One of the dead was a young boy walking in the street at the time of the blast, they said. Fifteen people were wounded. Witnesses said the blast was caused by a car laden with explosives, apparently driven by a suicide bomber towards the kitchen in al-Derain area in northern Aden. The force of the blast damaged stores and cars nearby. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, the second of its kind targeting security forces in the city, where UAE forces from the Saudi-led coalition that has been operating in Yemen since 2015 hold sway. Islamic State last month claimed responsibility for an attack targeting the headquarters of a counter-terrorism unit in Aden that killed at least 14 people, including the attackers.

### POLITICIANS, EXPERTS, ACTIVISTS RAISE ALARM AFTER SAUDI ROYAL VISIT TO LONDON

**10 March** – The international community, including Britain, must load pressure on the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen to avoid further bloodshed, a Yemeni politician told a conference in London on Saturday. Abdulrahman al-Hamdi addressed delegates the day after Mohammad bin Salman, the kingdom's 32-year-old crown prince accused by activists of being the "architect" of the Yemen conflict, left the UK having signed further deals with Britain, with Downing Street announcing plans to sell 48 Eurofighter Typhoon jets to Riyadh. "History is repeating itself. There is a history of Saudi intervention in Yemen, from the revolution in 1962 to the 1994 Yemeni civil war," said al-Hamdi at the event, which was hosted by the Cordoba Foundation and titled Yemen: War, Politics and Human Tragedy event. "Yemen is being destroyed. A nation is dying," said al-Hamdi. The controversial three-day visit by the Saudi crown prince drew criticism from some sections of the British public, with protesters calling for his arrest over his role in the calamitous war in Yemen. Before he arrived, thousands had signed an online petition calling on Prime Minister Theresa May to cancel the trip over Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Yemen conflict, which has killed thousands and caused what the United Nations and several countries say is the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Al-Hamdi rejected Saudi Arabia's claim that it was intervening to support the legitimate government of Yemen. British arms companies have profited from the war in Yemen, reportedly earning more than £6bn (\$8.3bn) in trade with Saudi Arabia since Saudi became involved in the conflict in 2015. On Thursday, Downing Street confirmed that new deals were signed with the kingdom, to the tune of more than \$90bn.

### US: IRAN IMPROVED HOUTHİ ABILITY TO HIT ARAB COALITION SEAPOWERS

**10 March** – US General Robert Ashley, Director of the Defence Intelligence Agency, says Iran's support for Houthi rebels extends to helping them target ships belonging to the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen. General Ashley told the Senate Armed Services Committee that "low-cost, high-payoff support" from Tehran has helped the Houthis "improve their military and missile capabilities, demonstrated through missile launches against targets in Saudi Arabia and Saudi-led coalition ships in the Red Sea". This now includes "anti-ship missiles, explosive-laden boats, and mines," making the Yemen war a "threat to vital international shipping lanes through the Red Sea". Ashley said Iran's regional goals were undiminished. "Iran is poised to wield the most power in a post-conflict environment" in Syria, he said. "We expect Iran to transition to efforts that secure and increase its long-term influence and to look for new opportunities to challenge its regional adversaries." In Iraq, this will take form in Iran leveraging "its aligned PMF (Hasd Shaabi) and Shia militia groups, as well as its longstanding political and societal ties as its main avenues of influence to pressure Baghdad to expel US and coalition forces and prevent Kurdish

separatism". As the ISIL territorial threat recedes, Shia militia groups, including those loyal to Iran, "are likely to pose an increasing threat to US forces", the general said. And in Syria, Iran's presence "not only benefits the Assad regime, it represents a key step toward Iran's goal of a land bridge from Tehran through Iraq and Syria into Lebanon".

#### HAWLAF PORT INAUGURATED

**11 March** – The Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation has inaugurated the Hawlaf Port in Socotra Governorate, Yemen, after completing a number of development projects. The port, is expected to help promote maritime commerce in the governorate, as its only port. The port's enlargement will reduce the pressure on visiting ships caused by delays in unloading their cargo, and will allow for accommodating boats of various sizes. The port project included the enlargement of its berth by 110 metres, as well as the installing perimeter fences, lighting, pavements, and a mobile crane with a 100-tonne capacity. The deployment of the port's customs department was also announced, as well as a new working plan that will help it boost its activities, through providing a space outside its berth for sorting and delivering goods.

#### UK, SAUDI ARABIA TO MONITOR SHIPPING LANES NEAR YEMEN

**9 March** – The UK and Saudi Arabia will monitor shipping lanes in preparation for opening Yemeni ports, UK foreign minister Boris Johnson said on Wednesday March 7th after meeting his Saudi counterpart in Yemen, according to Saudi-run Al Arabiya television. Johnson also said that London would seek a UN meeting in an attempt to find a political solution in Yemen. Saudi Arabia leads a coalition fighting a three-year-old war against the armed Houthi movement, which is backed by Iran.

## 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>.

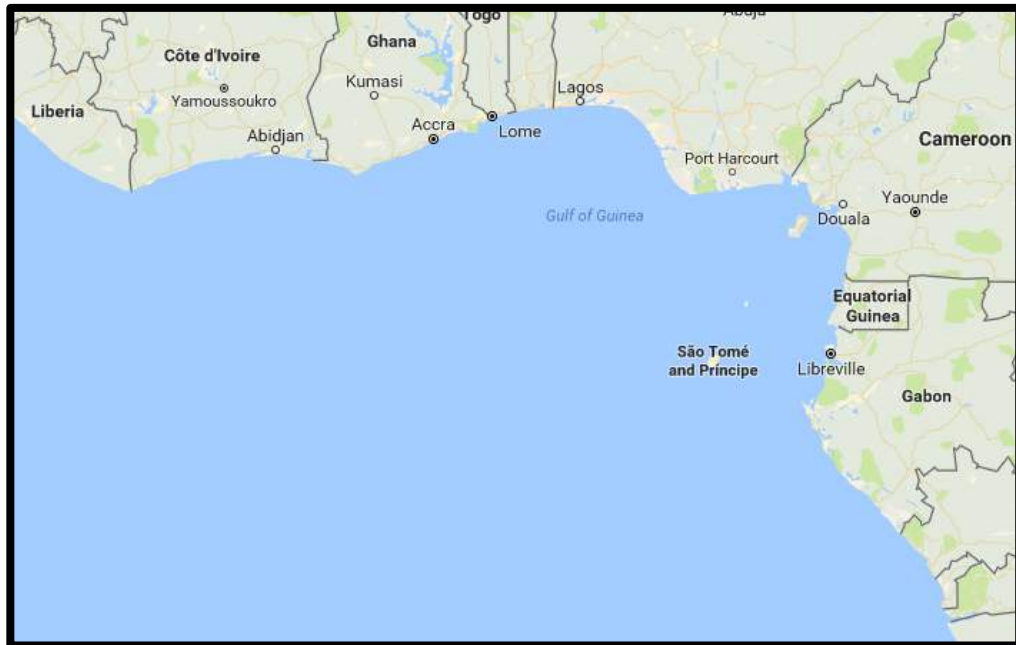
*Vessels applying to go to ports under the control of the Government of Yemen* need obtain permission for entry from the Yemeni Ministry of Transport. This should be done through the ship's agent and/or receivers prior to the vessel's arrival. The form should be completed by the ship's master and sent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

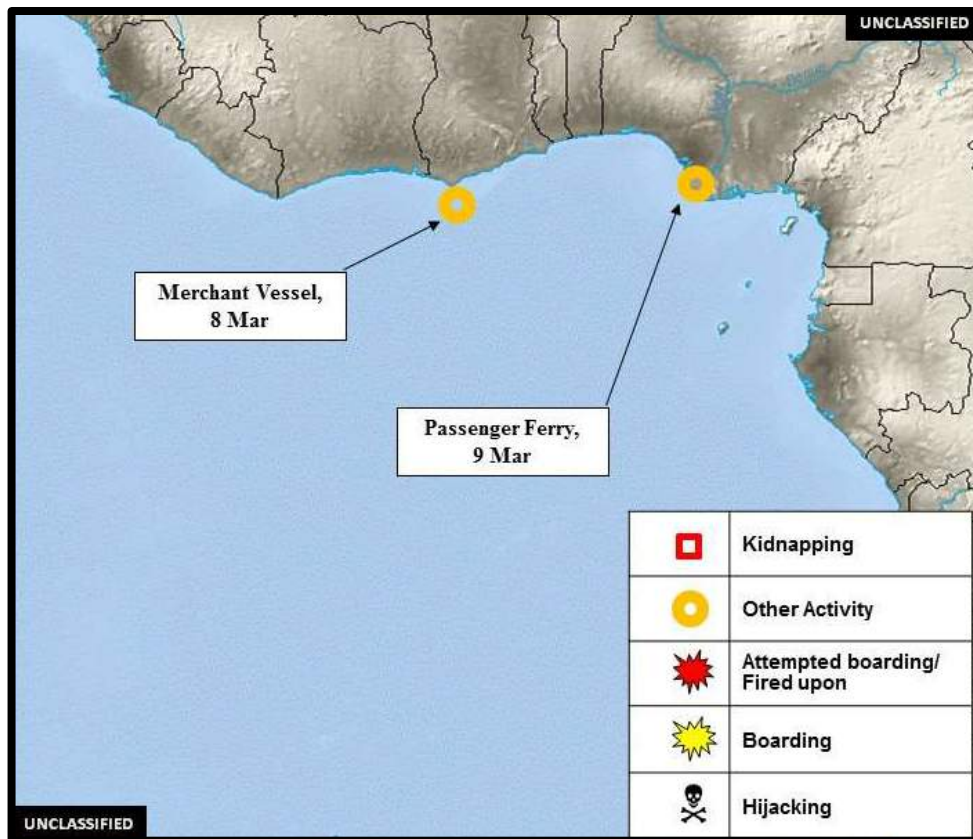
Coalition inspectors do not conduct investigation with the crew; contact will be with the ship's master or Chief Officer about the cargo and documents. Once the vessel is permitted into Yemeni ports, the Master will be required to call port control by VHF on channel 14 or 16 for the arrival registration. 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:**2****WARNING:**

In recent weeks, the Gulf of Guinea region has seen a significant rise in incidents. 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

- 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

- **9 March (Nigeria – Late Report)** – A pregnant woman was injured by gunfire armed robbers that attacked a Yenagoa bound passenger boat in the coastal area of Koluama in Southern Ijaw local government area of Bayelsa State. The passenger boat was travelling from Koluama to Yenagoa when the pirates struck in the early hours of the day. The Chairman of the Bayelsa State chapter of the Nigerian Maritime Workers’ Union disclosed that the pirates also stole the 200 horsepower engine belonging to the boat owner as well as the belongings of the passengers.
- **8 March (Ghana – Late Report)** – A merchant vessel was approached by three speedboats near position 03:55 N – 001:14 E, 65 nautical miles southeast of Takoradi. Occupants were wearing camouflage clothing and carrying weapons.

#### MARITIME REPORTING

- No current incidents to report

### WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF GUINEA

#### WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 15 - 21 MARCH 2018

**GULF OF GUINEA:** South-southwest winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** South-southwest winds of 10 – 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 Africa coasts with increased southerly wind flow through the Bab el Mandeb Strait due to funnelling effects.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA



Current Incidents:

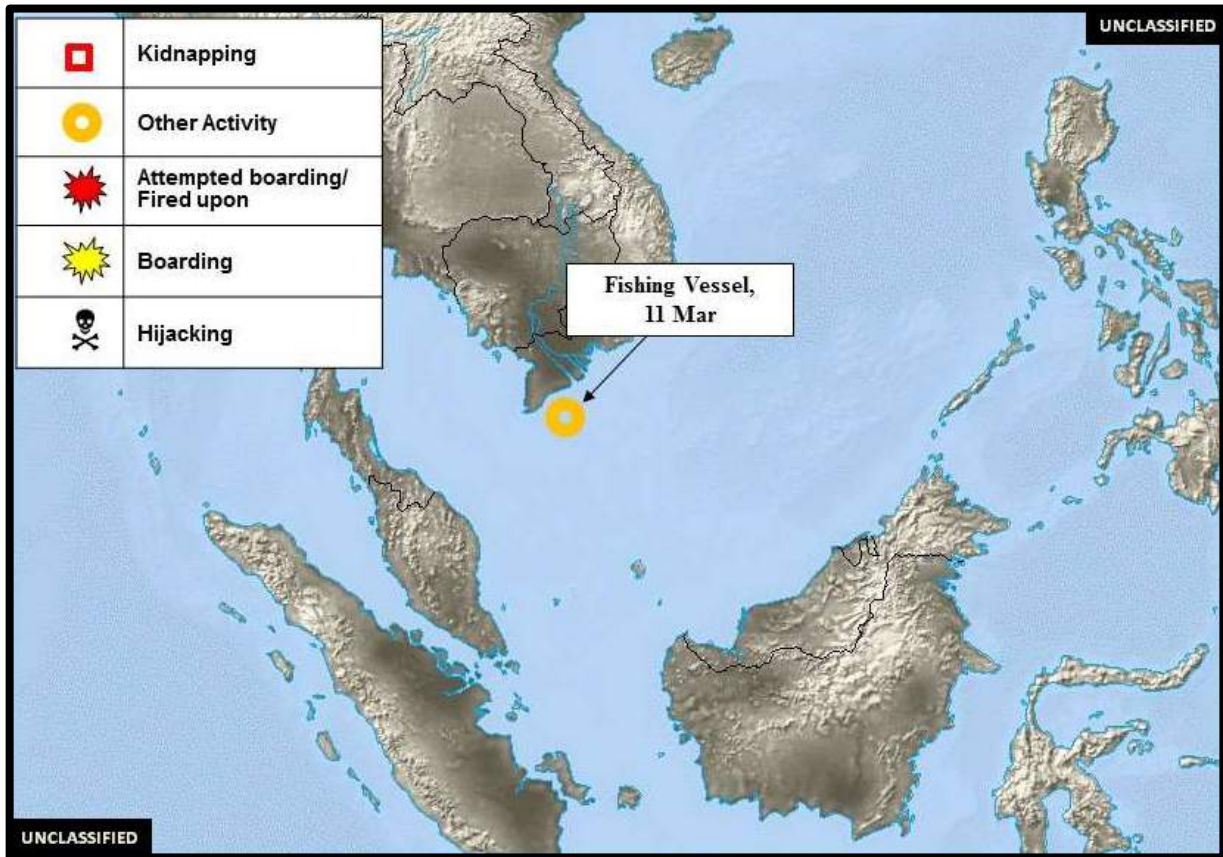
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### WARNING:

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

- No current incidents to report

#### SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

#### OTHER ACTIVITY REPORT

- **11 March (Vietnam – Late Report)** – Vietnamese fishermen spotted a drifting, unmanned, fishing vessel in waters off Bac Lieu, south of Ho Chi Minh City. It was a Chinese fishing vessel with nobody onboard, and no traces as to the crew's fate. Fishermen towed the ghost ship to Vietnamese waters. The ship is 30 metres long, 6 metres wide, with the hull in poor condition.

#### MARITIME REPORTING

- No incidents to report

### WEATHER FORECAST: SOUTHEAST ASIA

#### WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 15 - 21 MARCH 2018

**SOUTHERN SOUTH CHINA SEA:** Northeast winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 1 – 3 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 – 2 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 2 – 4 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.

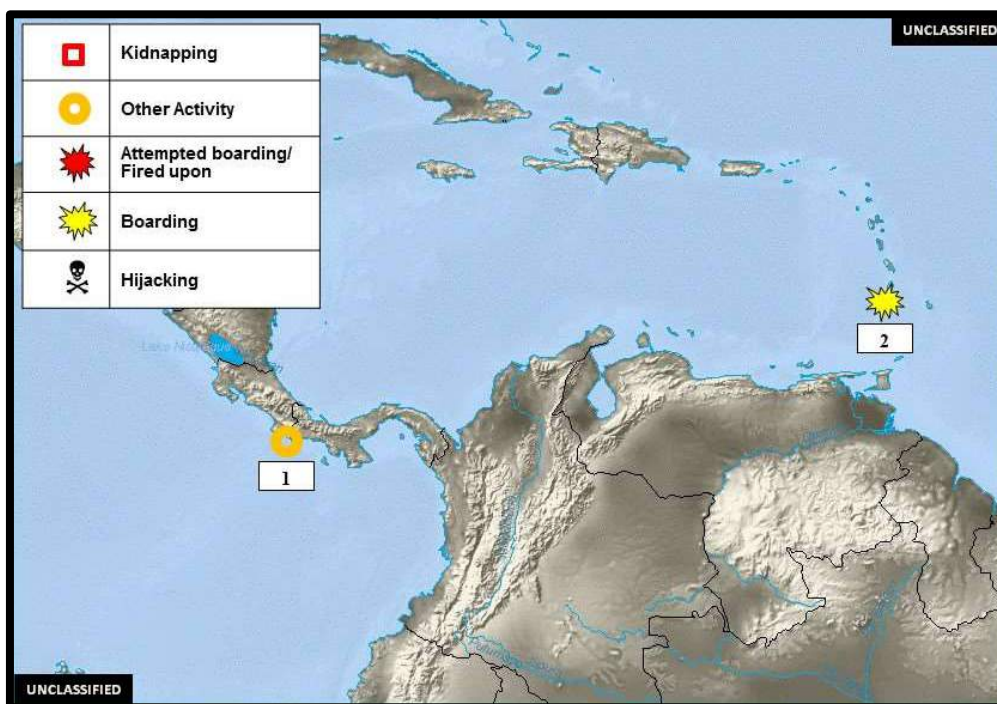


## WORLDWIDE

### NORTH AMERICA

- No current incidents to report

### CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN/SOUTH AMERICA



1. **7 March (Costa Rica – Late Report)** – A low-profile narco-submarine, 18 metres long and powered by three Yamaha 75 HP two-stroke engines, was abandoned by cocaine traffickers near Punta Burica in the South Pacific, very close to Panamanian coasts. The submersible was spotted by a private boater who notified the authorities. A patrol boat of the National Service of Guarcacostas of Costa Rica went towards the place and found the boat. The semi-submersible was flooded, a situation that made towing difficult because it was very heavy. Even so, the Coast Guard officers towed her to the main dock of Golfito. Officials of the Drug Control Police (PCD) of Costa Rica and personnel of the Public Ministry proceeded to carry out an inspection however no traces of narcotics were found.
2. **1 February (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines – Late Report)** – A charter yacht anchored in Canouan Charlestown Bay was boarded overnight while everyone was sleeping. The catamaran was not locked. The victims found that cash, personal electronics and clothing had been stolen from inside the yacht.

**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**

- No current incidents to report

**EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

- No current incidents to report

**NORTHEAST ASIA**

- No current incidents to report

**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.

### HUNDREDS OF MIGRANTS PICKED UP BETWEEN LIBYA AND ITALY

**12 March** – According to international charity ships and the Libyan coastguard, several hundred migrants were picked up on Saturday as smugglers trying to take advantage of calmer seas launched a flurry of boats towards Italy. According to Ayoub Qassem, a Libyan coastguard spokesman, vessels from the Libyan coastguard intercepted three migrant boats, the first an inflatable dinghy that had broken down with 125 people on board off Zawiya, just west of the capital, Tripoli. The second boat was turned back off Garabulli, east of Tripoli, and had 112 people on board, while a third boat was intercepted off Abu Kamash, near Libya's border with Tunisia. That boat was carrying 98 migrants. One boat with more than 100 migrants on board made it as far as the Aquarius rescue ship, about 21 miles from the coast of the west of Tripoli. The vessel was preparing to transfer the migrants to Italy. Rescuers on board the Aquarius disclosed that the migrant boat was on the verge of completely sinking when it reached them, adding that more than half of the migrants were Nigerians, with the rest from other sub-Saharan African countries as well as two Palestinians. Rescuers went on to say that one of the Palestinians was thrown into the water by other migrants after trying to convince them that they would be better off being saved by a nearby Libyan coastguard boat than drowning.

**TWO MIGRANT GROUPS TRANSFERRED TO RESCUE VESSEL**

**12 March** – Late on Saturday, two groups of migrants were transferred to the Aquarius rescue vessel, including 62 who had been picked up by a merchant vessel in offshore oil fields and 106 others from another charity vessel

**LIBYAN COASTGUARD THWARTS MIGRANT DEPARTURES**

**12 March** – A coastguard official in Zuwara, a former Libyan smuggling hub located west of Zawiya, has reported that coastguard officials had foiled a departure during the night and arrested some migrants whilst others had escaped with smugglers.

## SPOTLIGHT ON LIBYA



## PORT STATUS AS OF 18 MARCH 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	CLOSED	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

**TANKER SEIZED OVER SMUGGLING NEAR ABU KAMASH**

**16 March** – Libya's navy seized a Togo-flagged fuel tanker and arrested its Greek crew on suspicion of fuel smuggling. A navy spokesman told Reuters that the 1,700-dwt bunker vessel LAMAR (built 1966), flagged in Togo, had been intercepted after being found in territorial waters without permission. “The naval forces seized a Togo-flagged oil tanker in the territorial waters without permissions from the state of Libya. It has the name Lamar,” naval forces spokesman Ayoub Qassem said. “It was captured (late on Wednesday) about 8 miles off Abu Kamash town, near the border with Tunisia,” he said. The tanker is owned by a Greek company. Equasis shows it as controlled by Muraco Management Corp, care of manager Pak Marine & Shipping Services of Lagos, Nigeria, which could not be contacted. Qassem said eight Greek crew members had been arrested and their case referred to the general prosecutor. They were reportedly transferred to a naval base in Tripoli on Friday. The tanker, which was confiscated, was also docked at the base. Officials have vowed to clamp down on fuel smuggling but seizures of tankers and arrests of crew members are rare, given the small Libyan naval forces’ limited capacities. Tracking data showed the LAMAR had been in Tunisian waters before switching off its transponder on March 7, a usual tactic of smugglers.

**LIBYA: GNA MILITARY PROSECUTOR ABDUCTED IN TRIPOLI**

**16 March** – The military prosecutor of the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli has been kidnapped from in front of his house on Thursday by unknown gunmen. His family issued a statement saying Masoud Erhouma, the military prosecutor, was kidnapped in the vicinity of his house in Salah Eddeen district in Tripoli while he was coming back from work. Erhouma was appointed by the Presidential Council last year as the military prosecutor. Before that, he was the deputy defence minister of the eastern Interim Government in Al-Bayda. In the meantime, the Head of the Libyan Public Prosecution, Nouri Al-Weheshi, told reporters on Thursday that the military prosecutor was not abducted, but rather was arrested as per an arrest warrant issued by Al-Zawiya city general prosecutor. He added that the arrest warrant is related to charges pressed against Erhouma for his crackdown on protesters against Gaddaif in 2011.

**LIBYAN ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE: FUEL SMUGGLING IS PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK**

**15 March** – At a press conference, Libya’s head of the Investigations Department of the Attorney General’s Office, Saddik Al-Sour said that the smuggling of Libyan fuel is carried out as part of an organized international network linking Libya and Europe. He stated that most of Libya’s fuel smuggling originated from the Zawia oil refinery where Libya’s imported fuel is stored. It is smuggled from Zuwara, Sabratha and Zawia port as part of a collaborative effort with the port authorities and those in control of Zawia oil refinery, he stated. Al-Sour said the fuel is smuggled from Zawia to Zuwara in two ways: First, through small fishing vessels to larger carriers further out at sea; and secondly through flexible pipes from fuel trucks onshore to small vessels and thereon to larger vessels further out at sea. There was one specific smuggling gang using the pipe method. Al-Sour revealed that local militias guard the smuggler’s fuel trucks in return for anything from LD 5,000 to LD 10,000 per truck. These militias are linked to groups in Malta, Italy, Greece, Lebanon and Turkey. He described the smuggling as systematic, organized criminal activity by local and international criminal smuggling networks of both individuals and companies. Al Sour cited the most important of the local smugglers as Fehmi Sleem, and his brother

Hafed Sleem. They have controlled the fishing port of Zuwara since 2012. They are behind fuel smuggling operations, explained Al-Sour, using fishing vessels to Malta, then on to Italy, Turkey, Spain and Greece. This is conducted about 24 times a year through Maltese smuggling gangs, costing Libya about 300,000 euros each ton of fuel. Al-Sour revealed ongoing cooperation since October 2017 between the Attorney General's Office and Italian authorities countering terrorism and Mafia activity based on existing bilateral and international agreements.

#### **EMBASSY STAFF ACCUSED OF TRAFFICKING MIGRANTS IN LIBYA**

**15 March** – The Times reports that Libya has issued arrest warrants for more than 200 people suspected of playing pivotal roles in the country's brutal smuggling networks. Those accused include African embassy officials in Tripoli, members of the Libyan security forces and the heads of the government-run migrant detention camps. Libya has conducted the investigation with help from Italy, Seddiq al-Sour, head of investigations at the attorney-general's office, said. Tens of thousands of migrants pass through Libya each year to board unsafe boats heading to Italy. Many are kidnapped for ransom or tortured and sold as slaves along the way. Mr Sour said that his office had established a direct link between the smugglers and Islamic State, whose militants have been trying to tap into people-smuggling networks to finance their operations in North Africa.

#### **METHANOL PLANT AT LIBYA'S BREGA PORT SHUT AFTER ACCIDENTAL BLAST**

**13 March** – A methanol plant in the Libyan oil port of Brega has stopped operations after an accidental explosion caused by a gas leak, an official said on Tuesday. The plant will remain shut until safe operations can be guaranteed, but it was not clear how long this would take, said Issa Mukhtar, an official at Sirte Oil Company which runs the plant. One worker was injured by the explosion which occurred early on Saturday and was caused by a leak in a natural gas heating unit, Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) said. Firefighters dealt with the blast, which could be heard across the surrounding area, a Sirte Oil engineer said.

## 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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