

Maritime Security Review



Issue No. 9

6 March 2017

MS | RISK



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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 comes becomes available.

We encourage our readers to confidentially report any incidents or suspicious activity to info@msrisk.com.

INCIDENTS AT SEA

Reporting Period: 27 February – 5 March 2017

Region	Current Incidents Reported	Late Reported incidents	Threat level
MAIN REGIONS			
Gulf of Aden/Arabian Sea	0	0	Low
Gulf of Guinea	0	2	Medium
Southeast Asia	0	1	Low
WORLDWIDE			
North America	0	0	Low
Central America/Caribbean/South America	0	3	Medium
Atlantic Ocean Area	0	0	Low
Northern Europe/Baltic	0	0	Low
Mediterranean/ Black Sea	0	0	Low
Arabian Gulf	0	0	Low
East Asia/Indian Subcontinent	0	3	Medium
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

NOTE: PRESIDENT TRUMP IMMIGRATION BAN

On 3 February, a federal judge issued a temporary, nation-wide halt to President Trump's Executive Order (EO) on immigration and travel to the United States. Customs and Border Patrol have told airlines to resume pre-ban procedures.

Following the finding, the White House stated that the Department of Justice would file an emergency request to push the EO through. If the EO is upheld following the emergency request, please be warned that it may have implications for vessels calling at US ports.

The Executive Order calls for a blanket ban on travel and immigration from seven countries (Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, and Libya) for a 90-day period. If upheld, crewmembers from these countries will be denied entry to the US while the ban is in effect. Shore leave will be denied for crewmembers from those nations, regardless of their visa status. However, it is not believed that ships with crews from this country will be denied entry into US ports. If a crewmember from a nation under the ban requires emergency medical treatment, an exception ***may*** be made to allow the member ashore for treatment.

Ship owners are advised to stay abreast of updates as they emerge.

GULF OF ADEN/ARABIAN SEA/BAB EL-MANDAB/RED SEA



Masters are advised to remain vigilant at all times inside the HRA and are advised to adhere to strict 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 continue 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.

WARNING FOR RED SEA, BAB EL-MANDAB STRAIT AND GULF OF ADEN:

Vessels transiting these regions should operate under a heightened state of alert. This is due to increasing tensions in the region, which in turn can escalate the potential for direct or collateral damage to vessels transiting the region. 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 attack on a UAE vessel. MS Risk advises all vessels transiting this region to report any hostile activities immediately.

HIJACKS

- No current incidents to report

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS

- 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

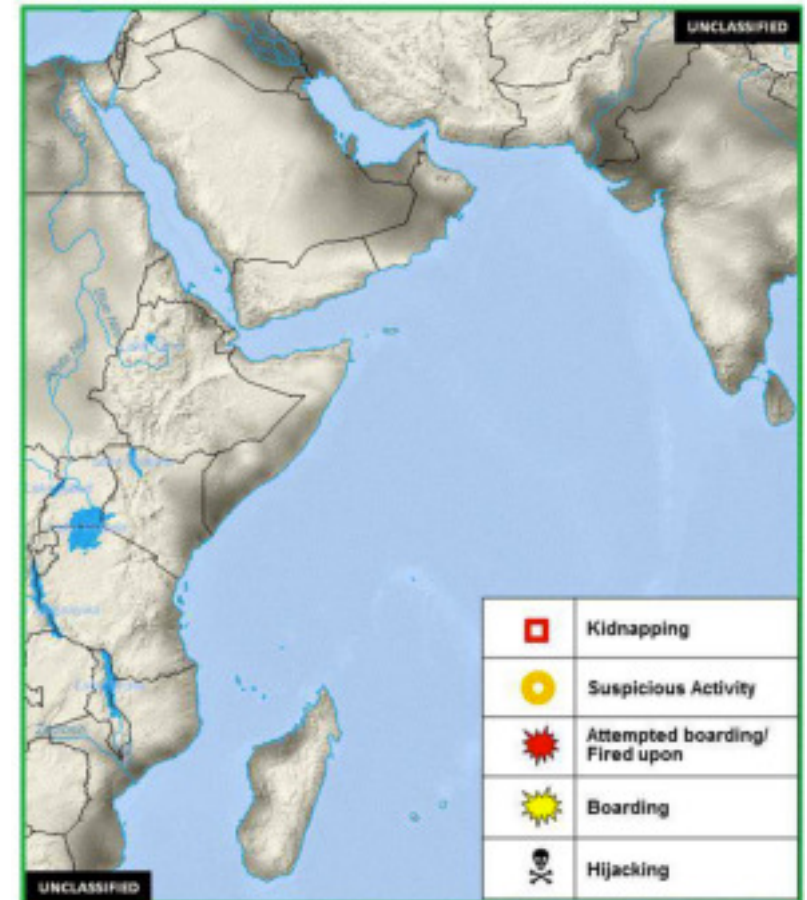
- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- Nothing to report

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI



WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF ADEN

NORTHERN ARABIAN SEA: West-northwest winds of 8 – 13 knots and seas of 2 - 4 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** West-northwest winds of 8 – 13 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet.

GULF OF OMAN: Variable winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with variable winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

- **Extended Forecast:** West-northwest winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with winds west-northwest at 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

GULF OF ADEN: East-northeast winds of 12 – 18 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 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 15 – 20 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, gusting to 20 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 3 – 5 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with east-northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the southern section of the coastline.

CENTRAL AFRICAN COAST/INDIAN OCEAN: East-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** East-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet.

MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL: Southerly winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the northern Channel; with southerly winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 3- 5 feet in the southern Channel.

- **Extended Forecast:** Southerly winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, gusting to 20 knots, with seas of 5 – 8 feet in the southern Channel.

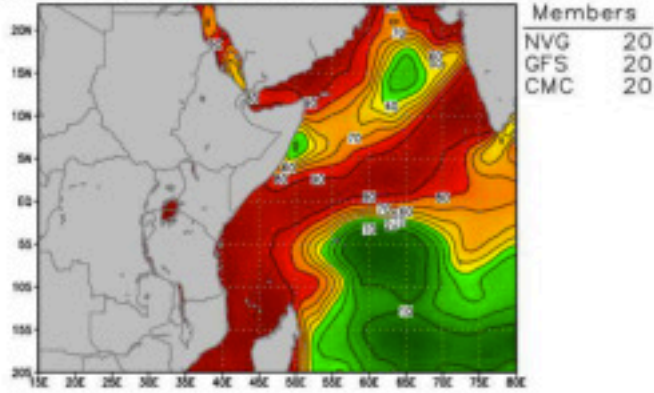
SURFACE CURRENTS: The northern Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden currents are variable with most areas having an average speed of 1 knot. The Mozambique Channel currents are variable having an average speed of 2 knots. Currents' along the Somali Basin are northeasterly averaging between 2 – 3 knots.

SYNOPTIC DISCUSSION: High pressure continues to dominate the weather over the region producing light winds across the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Expect increased wind flow through the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el Mandeb Strait due to funneling effects.

WEATHER MAP

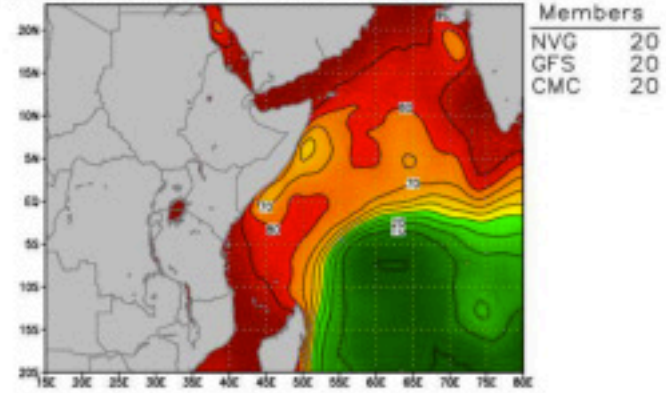
Source: ONI

Winds < 15.0 kts and Wave Heights < 5.0 ft



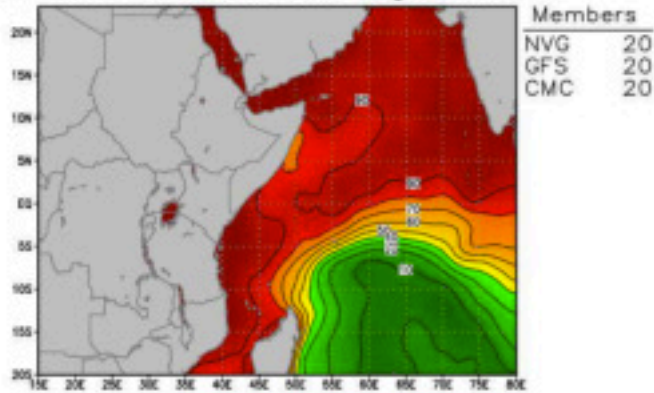
Valid Time: 1200Z 02 MAR 2017

Winds < 15.0 kts and Wave Heights < 5.0 ft



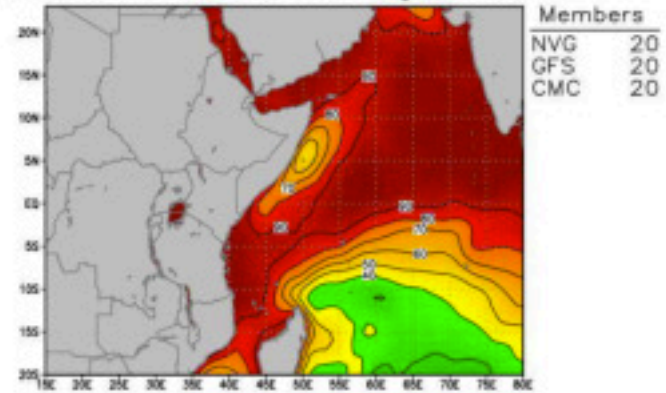
Valid Time: 0000Z 05 MAR 2017

Winds < 17.0 kts and Wave Heights < 7.0 ft



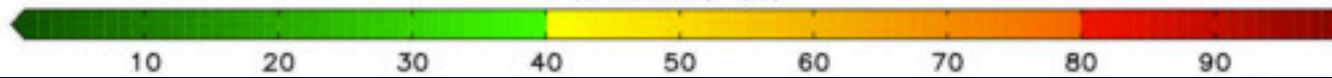
Valid Time: 1200Z 07 MAR 2017

Winds < 17.0 kts and Wave Heights < 7.0 ft



Valid Time: 0000Z 10 MAR 2017

probability (%)



SPOTLIGHT ON YEMEN

PORT STATUS AS OF 3 MARCH 2017

Port Name	Port Status	Risk Level	Notes
Aden Port	Open	High	Only port to facilitate container vessels. Curfew: 2000-0600
Ash Shihr Oil Terminal	Open	High	
Balhaf LNG Terminal	Closed	Closed	
Hodeidah Port	Open	High	Capacity: 8 berths
Mokha Port	Closed	High	Conflicting reports suggest it is open, however it is universally 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

As coalition forces continue north under Operation Golden Spear, it is likely that security conditions surrounding **Hodeida port** are subject to change. Shipmasters

and crew are urged to remain abreast of current conditions in the area, and ensure that security measures aboard vessels are in place.

MS Risk continues to advise extreme caution for vessels traveling through Bab Al Mandab, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Seek up-to-the-moment, reliable information from local sources and remain vigilant. Crewmembers are urged to report unusual or potentially hostile activity to coalition naval forces via the following methods:

VHF: Channel 16

E-mail: cusnc.bwc@me.navy.mil

Phone: 011-973-1785-3879

All vessels must adhere to UN and Coalition-led inspections.

ACTIVITY REPORT

- 1 March** – Fighting around the port of Mokha has forced more than 48,000 people from their homes as fighting intensifies in the region. Pro-government forces are seeking to retake swaths of the country under the control of Houthi rebels. The Houthis control most of Yemen's 280-mile Red Sea coast, the capital Sanaa and much of the northern highlands. Government loyalists took Mokha on 10 February, and are pushing north to take the country's main Red Sea port of Hodeida next. Many of those fleeing are making their way to Ibb and the Hodeida province. The UN estimates three million people have been displaced across Yemen.
- 1 March** – Coalition air strikes on the island of Kamaran, off the Hodeida coast, killed 15 rebels and wounded 11 others. A further five Houthis were killed in an air strike that targeted a vehicle near Hodeida.
- 28 February** – Militants prevented UN Emergency Aid Coordinator Stephen O'Brien from entering Taiz city to survey the humanitarian situation. O'Brien,

who is visiting both sides of the conflict, met with the Houthi movement in the capital Sanaa. On Tuesday, he planned to visit Taiz, but his convoy was turned away at the final checkpoint because of security concerns. Unconfirmed reports indicate that anti-Houthi gunmen may have targeted O'Brien's convoy.

- **28 February** – A prominent Houthi judge was assassinated by anti-rebel forces in Dhamar governorate. Yahya Moussa al Mutawakil was a former Houthi Justice Minister and senior advisor to the movement in Dhamar governorate.
- **24 February** – A suicide car bomber struck a security camp in Jaar, capital of Abyan province, killing at least eight soldiers. Officials say the bomber, wearing a military uniform, was disguised as a driver carrying a load of firewood for cooking. He failed to get inside the camp after soldiers stopped him and instead blew himself up at the gates. The bomber is suspected to be an Al-Qaeda member, however, no group immediately claimed responsibility.

YEMEN: PROCEDURE

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

MS Risk has previously assessed that the waters around Yemen may become the next affected area in a battle for regional influence. As Operation Golden Spear ensues along the western coast of Yemen, the potential for retaliatory measures is heightened. On the water, the battle has taken a turn as the US navy has discovered that the recent attack on the Saudi frigate, *RSN Al Madina*, was conducted via an unmanned, remotely controlled vessel. It is unknown how many similar vessels are currently in the hands of Houthi rebels. Attacks from ship-to-shore or vice versa could cause accidental damage to vessels or disruption to shipping routes.

The 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>.

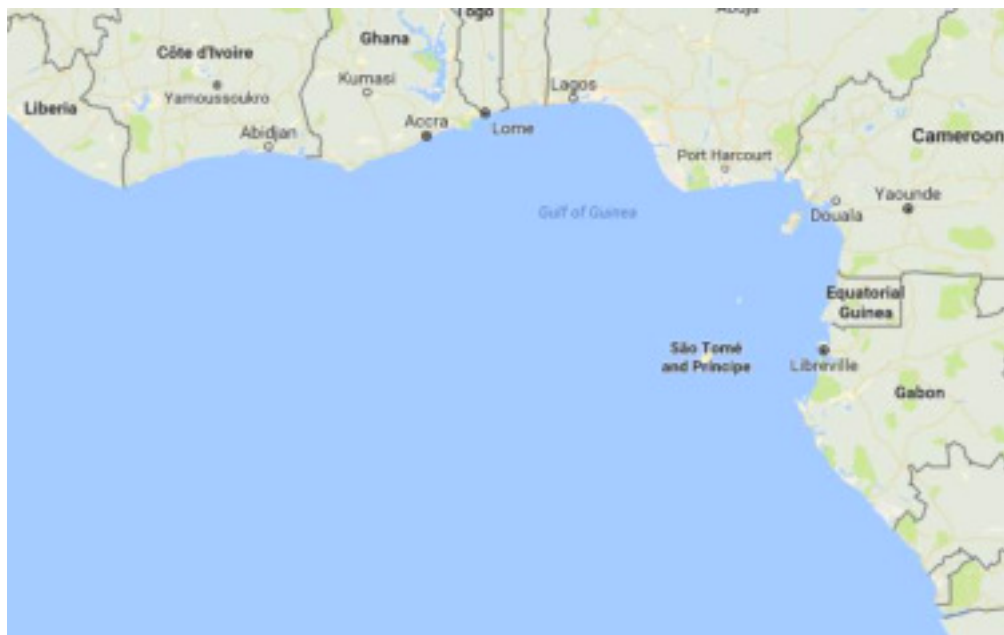
Vessels applying to go to ports under the control of the Government of Yemen need obtain permission for entry from the Yemeni Ministry of Transport. This should be done through the ship's agent and/or receivers prior to the vessel's arrival. The form should be completed by the ship's master and sent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

WEST AFRICA/GULF OF GUINEA



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.

HIJACKS

- No current incidents to report

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS BOARDED

2. **9 February (Congo – Late Report)** – Duty crewman onboard a supply vessel anchored near position 04:45 A – 011:49 E, Pointe Noire Anchorage noticed a small boat alongside near the bow and informed the duty officer. The alarm was raised and the crew was mustered. Upon seeing the crew's alertness, the robbers escaped with stolen ship's properties.

KIDNAPPING

1. **20 February (Nigeria - Update)** – Suspected militants kidnapped a Nigerian Army lieutenant while he was patrolling the Oteyi area of Abule-Ado, Lagos. A witness reported that he saw several militants dragging the officer into a waiting speedboat while they were shooting into the air and made their escape into the creeks. **Update** – The Nigerian Army released a statement about a soldier widely reported to have been kidnapped in Lagos however he only became separated from his unit during an ambush. Lt. Col Olaolu Daudu, spokesman for the 81st Division, made the clarification in a statement in Lagos, stating "the officer went missing in action when troops came under heavy ambush during routine patrol of Lagos creeks."

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY

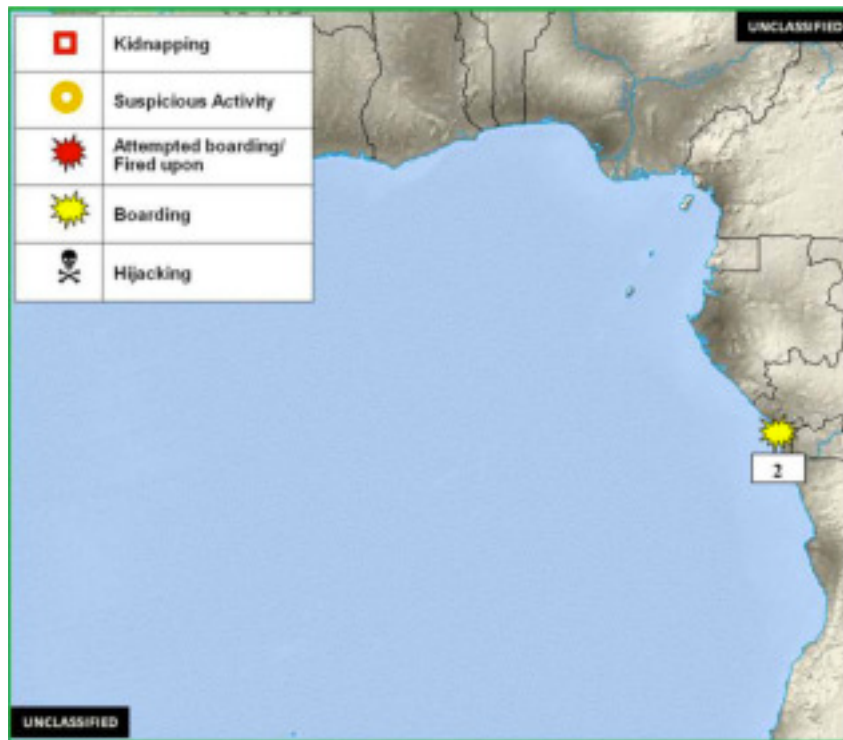
- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- **5 February (Nigeria)** – Russian news agencies reported on Sunday that Nigerian pirates have released seven Russian and on Ukrainian sailors after they were captured last month on the cargo vessel the *BBC CARIBBEAN*. The sailors were released after talks between the owners of the vessel and the pirates. Interfax news agency quoted human rights activist Pavel Butsay as stating that the sailors were at a Frankfurt airport and planned to return home next week. Butsay told TASS news agency that a ransom had been paid however he did not reveal the sum.

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI



WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF GUINEA

GULF OF GUINEA: South-southwest winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** South-southwest winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 2 – 4 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 due to funnelling effects.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

WARNING: There are continuing concerns in regards to the situation of kidnapping of crewmembers from vessels while underway in the Sulu-Celebs Sea region. In January 2017 there were two such incidents reported in the region (comprising of one actual and one attempted incident), while this month there was one incident recorded. MS Risk advises all slow moving vessels to re-route from the area, where possible. Otherwise, ship Masters and crewmembers are strongly advised to exercise extra vigilance while transiting the area. We advise that you immediately report any sightings of any suspicious activity or boats.

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.



HIJACKS

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- **6 November 2016 (Philippines – Update)** – Abu Sayyaf militants boarded German-flagged sailing yacht *ROCKALL* near a remote island in the southern Sulu Archipelago. The militants kidnapped a 70-year-old German man and killed his female companion. The boat and the dead woman were found by the authorities and an investigation is continuing. Of note, this couple and the same sailing yacht were kidnapped by Somali pirates in 2008 and held for more than 40 days. **Update (26 February 2017)** – It has been confirmed that

Abu Sayyaf executed German captive Jurgen Gustav Kantner after the deadline that the group had imposed for the ransom payment lapsed.

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

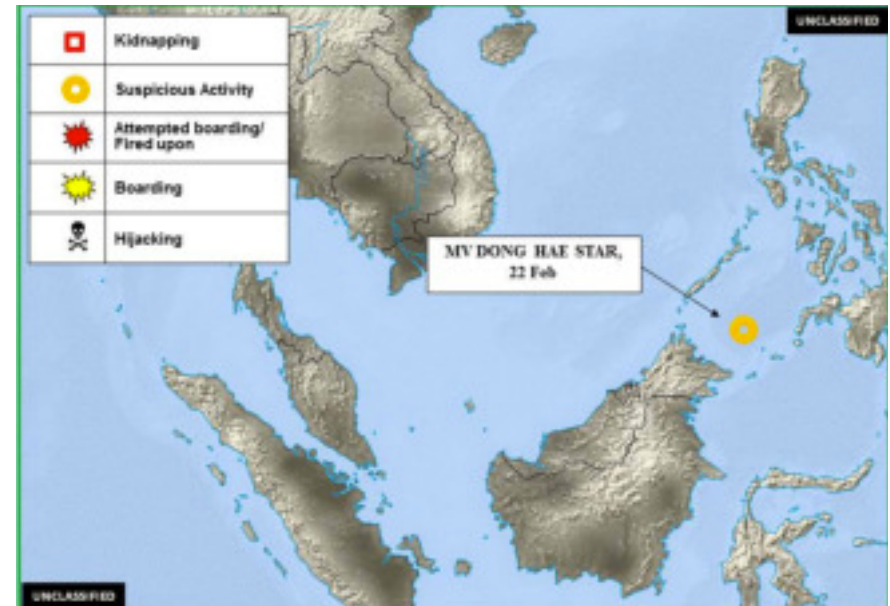
- **22 February (Philippines – Late Report)** – Bulk carrier *DONG HAE STAR* was enroute to Indonesia when two black speedboats with five individuals aboard each bot pursued them near Pearl Bank off Taganak Island, Tawi-Tawi. A spokesperson for the Western Mindanao Command (WESTMINCOM) disclosed that the crewmembers of the merchant vessel immediately sent a distress call to the Littoral Monitoring Station of the Philippine Navy in Bongao. The spokesperson went on to say that patrol boats of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao patrolling the area immediately responded and launched a pursuit. *DONG HAE STAR* reported that the suspicious speedboats quickly disengaged from chasing the vessel after sighting the responding naval ships.

MARITIME REPORTING

- Nothing to report

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI



WEATHER FORECAST FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA

SOUTHERN SOUTH CHINA SEA: Northwest winds of 13 – 18 knots and seas of 5 – 8 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northwest winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet with a northerly swell.

MALACCA STRAIT: Northwest winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 2 feet in the northern Strait; with northwest winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 2 feet in the southern Strait.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northwest winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 2 feet in the northern Strait; with northerly winds of 5 – 10 knots and seas of 1 – 2 feet in the southern Strait.

ANDAMAN SEA: North-northeast winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 1 – 3 feet in the northern section; with north-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the southern section.

- **Extended Forecast:** North-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots with seas of 1 – 3 feet in the northern section; with north-northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the southern section.

SOUTHERN SULU SEA – NORTHERN CELEBES SEA: North-northwest winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 1 – 3 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** North-northwest winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 1 – 3 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: The return of monsoonal flow late in the forecast period will produce increased winds and seas throughout the South China Sea. Expect strong gusts in and around scattered thunderstorms, throughout the Malacca Strait and the Andaman Sea due to funneling effects and day-time heating.

WORLDWIDE

NORTH AMERICA

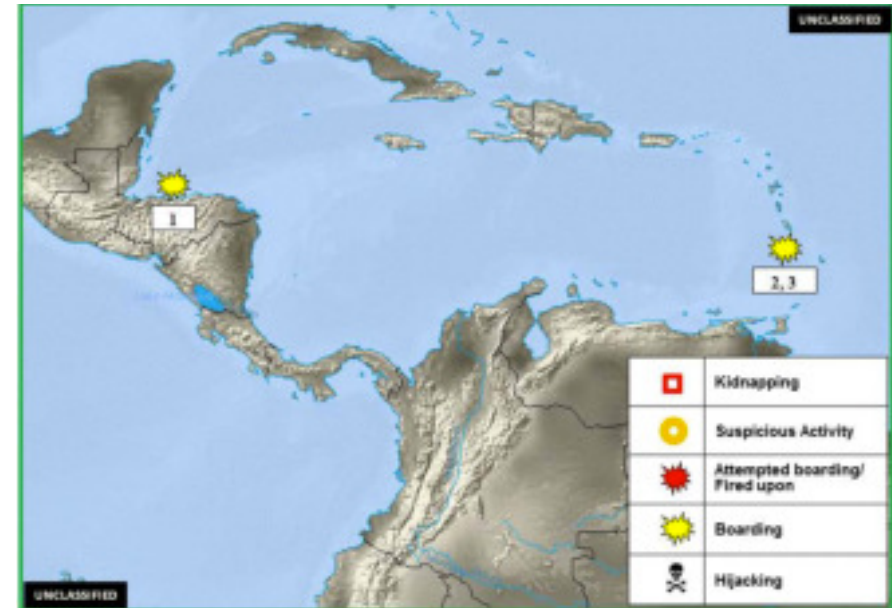
- No current incidents to report

CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN/SOUTH AMERICA

1. **21 February (Honduras – Late Report)** – A sailing yacht anchored near Utila was boarded. A small dinghy and outboard motor were stolen. The dinghy was recovered later that day by a local dive shop minus the outboard motor.
2. **17 February (St Lucia – Late Report)** – A sailing yacht was boarded and thoroughly ransacked while anchored in Marigot. The incident was reported to the local authorities.
3. **16 February (St Lucia – Late Report)** – Two fishing rods were stolen from a sailing yacht anchored in Marigot. The incident was reported to the local authorities.

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI



NORTHERN EUROPE/ENGLISH CHANNEL/BALTIC

- No current incidents to report

MEDITERRANEAN/BLACK SEA

- No current incidents to report

ARABIAN GULF

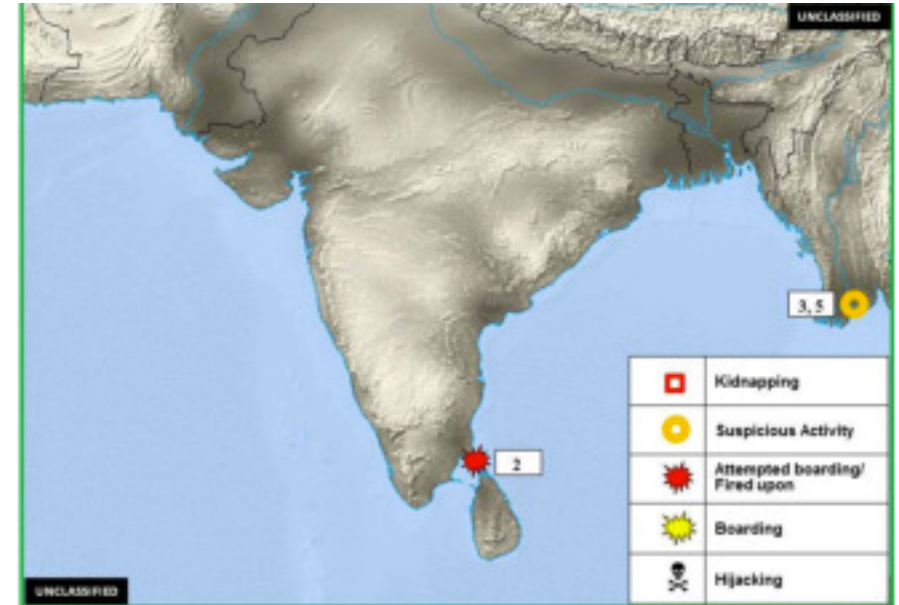
- No current incidents to report

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI

EAST ASIA/INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

2. **24 February (Sri Lanka – Late Report)** – Four Tamil Nadu fishermen suffered serious injuries after they were attacked, allegedly by Sri Lankan fishermen, near Kodyakarai. According to a spokesman for the Pamban Country Boat Association, the Sri Lankan fishermen first threatened them with hand guns and attacked them with knives.
3. **23 February (Myanmar – Late Report)** – Employees unloading a cargo of sugar from a shipping container in the Shwe Pyitha Industrial Zone of Yangon found 200 kilograms of cocaine amongst a consignment of bags of sugar. Police were notified and an investigation is ongoing.
5. **16 February (Myanmar – Late Report)** – Employees unloading a cargo of sugar from a shipping container in the Shwe Pyitha Industrial Zone of Yangon found 250 kilograms of cocaine amongst a consignment of bags of sugar. Police were notified and an investigation is ongoing.



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



- **3 March** – The Libyan navy has disclosed that it rescued 115 migrants on Friday who were headed for Europe when the overloaded rubber boat that they were on started to sink off the coast near Tripoli, adding that another 25 people are missing. According to Navy spokesman General Ayoub Qassem, “we rescued 115 illegal immigrants, six of them women, all African nationals except for a Bangladeshi.” Qassem went on to say that the survivors told of 140 passengers on board the boat that had run into problems on Thursday night after setting off from a beach east of the capital city, adding “our search for the missing was unsuccessful.”
- **2 March** – Italy’s coastguard has disclosed that on Thursday, some 970 migrants were rescued off the coast of Libya, as the numbers attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe continue to rise. Officials have disclosed that the migrants rescued on Thursday were crammed into four rubber dinghies, a small wooden boat and another larger one. Italy’s coastguard disclosed that it coordinated the rescue operations with a Norwegian vessel under the command of European Union (EU) border agency

Frontex and two humanitarian ships manned by the SOS Mediterranee aid group, Doctors Without Borders and the Spanish Proactiva Open Arms group. The coastguard also received a distress signal from a sailboat that left Greece without 85 migrants on board heading to southern Italy, however the boat never made it out of Greek waters and it was rescued by a Maltese vessel, which happened to be in the area. The migrants were taken to the southern Greek port of Kalamata. Prior to Thursday’s arrivals, more than 13,400 people had arrived on Italy’s shores this year so far – representing an increase of 50 – 70 percent compared with 2016 and 2015. According to the United Nations, more than 440 people have died or gone missing in January and February while crossing from Libya in the middle of winter, when the sea is at its most treacherous.

- **27 February** – On Monday, the head of the European Union (EU) border agency Frontex criticized charities that rescue migrants off Libya, arguing that they encourage traffickers who profit from the dangerous Mediterranean crossings. Fabrice Leggeri told Germany’s Die Welt daily that such rescue operations “should be re-evaluated.” He went on to accuse the groups of not effectively cooperating with security agencies against human traffickers. Leggeri disclosed that 40 percent of recent rescue operations at sea off the North African country “were carried out by non-government organizations,” adding that while under maritime law, everyone at sea has a duty to rescue vessels and people in distress “but we must avoid supporting the business of criminal networks and traffickers in Libya through European vessels picking up migrants ever closer to the Libyan coast...This leads traffickers to force even more migrants onto unseaworthy boats with insufficient water and fuel than in previous years.” The head of Frontex also charged that some NGOs cooperate poorly with EU security agencies, which “makes it more difficult...to gain information on trafficking networks through interviews with migrants and to open police investigations.” In a report released in December 2016, Frontex had criticized NGOs, charging that they were picking up migrants at sea “like taxis.” At the time, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) labelled the charges “extremely serious and damaging,” stating that its humanitarian action was not “the cause but a response” to the crisis.” In January, Frontex disclosed that migrant arrivals by sea last year had plunged by almost two-thirds to

364,000 compared with 2015, mainly due to an EU border agreement that was reached with Turkey, which in effect sharply reduced landings in Greece. The agency however noted that Italy was the exception with a record 181,000 arrivals, mostly from Africa via the Mediterranean, a 20 percent rise from 2015. Frontex operates on the EU's external borders, off Italy and the Greek Islands in the Aegean Sea, however it does not operation off the coast of Libya.

- **27 February** – The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has reported that migrant deaths in the Mediterranean Sea have this year reached 366, fewer than the 425 that were recorded during the same period last year. IOM's Missing Migrants Project reported that most of the fatalities, an estimated 326 deaths or disappearances, occurred on the Mediterranean's central route, which links Libya to Italy. Meanwhile the eastern Mediterranean route between Turkey and Greece, which claimed 321 lives during the first 52 days of 2016, has virtually ceased, with only two deaths recorded this year so far. Overall, according to the latest figure, migrant and refugee arrivals to Europe by sea have decreased significantly in 2017, with 13,924 registered as of 22 February, a sharp decline compared with the 105,427 that were recorded during the first 53 days of last year. IOM has disclosed that among them, over 75 percent of the arrivals were seen in Italy, while the rest were in Greece and Spain. IOM Rome also reported a significant increase in migrant arrivals in Italy, with over 10,700 registered before the end of February, while the figure remained slightly over 8,100 over the same period of each of the past two years. The IOM noted that with five days to go in the month, Italian arrivals could be 50 percent higher than those recorded during the first two months of either 2015 or 2016.

SPOTLIGHT ON LIBYA

PORT STATUS AS OF 3 MARCH 2017

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)	Closed	High
Port of Benghazi	Closed	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	High
Port of Tobruk	Open	Moderate
Port of Tripoli	Open	Moderate
Port of Zawiya (Zawia)	Open	Moderate
Port of Zueitina	Open	Low

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.

Risk level assessments take into consideration recent events, the likelihood of future outbreaks of violence, regional instability and other mitigating factors that may impact operations at the port.



ACTIVITY REPORTING

- 5 March** – On Sunday, a military spokesman disclosed that East Libyan forces resumed air strikes against rival factions as they tried to push them back from positions around the major oil terminals of Es Sider and Ras Lanuf. Libyan National Army (LNA) spokesman Ahmed al-Mismari disclosed that on Sunday afternoon, LNA warplanes targeted near Es Sider and south of the coastal town of Ben Jawad, which is located about 30 km (20 miles) to the east. Security

and oil officials also reported that there were clashes that erupted between the rival forces on the ground, however it was not immediately clear whether either side had advanced.

- **4 March** – On Saturday, the forces of eastern Libya’s strongman Khalifa Haftar conceded the loss of a key oil export terminal, which they seized last year, as fighting for the country’s resource wealth intensifies. The spokesman for Haftar’s forces, Colonel Ahmad al-Mismari, disclosed that they had lost control of Ras Lanuf’s main airfield to forces led by Islamists of the Benghazi Defense Brigades. Mismari disclosed “the attackers were armed with modern tanks,” adding “we lost two men. But the battle is ongoing. The situation in the Oil Crescent remains under control.” An official with pro-Haftar oil guards disclosed late on Saturday that his forces were preparing a counterattack. Haftar’s forces launched airstrikes on Saturday against the attackers for the second consecutive day, with Colonel Mohammed al-Manfur, a commander under the military strongman, disclosing that they were inflicting “heavy losses.” However Salem Souiden, a commander with the Benghazi Defense Brigades, stated that the raids had not hit “any person or any vehicle.”
- **3 March** – Workers were evacuated Es Sider port as fighting escalated nearby. The evacuation to Ras Lanuf, to the east, was a precautionary measure, according to Saad Dinar, head of the oil workers’ union in eastern Libya. The decision was taken as forces loyal to eastern-based military commander Khalifa Haftar, which control the area, sought to repel an attack on the port by Benghazi Defense Brigades forces from the west, he said. Clashes erupted in the area early on Friday. By midday, defense brigades were about 19 miles west of Es Sider, while Haftar’s troops were about 12 miles to the east. A leader in Haftar’s LNA forces said it still has control of the export facility. Earlier, LNA forces said they carried out air strikes and clashed with rival factions near major oil terminals as they sought to fend off the latest challenge to their control of the ports. The strikes were carried out south of the coastal town of Nawfiliya, 30 miles from Es Sider and 50 miles from Ras Lanuf. The strikes were in response to an attack by the Benghazi Defense Brigades (BDB), according to spokesmen for the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG). A military spokesman said the attack had been repelled. An oil official at Ras Lanuf said

the port was under PFG authority but that there was fighting close to Es Sider. A second port source said operations at the ports had not been affected. Es Sider and Ras Lanuf are among four ports that the eastern-based Libyan National Army (LNA) took control of in September. The LNA allowed the National Oil Corporation (NOC) to reopen three of the ports which had long been blockaded, allowing a sharp boost to Libya's oil production. The LNA's opponents have made several attempts since then to recapture the ports, but have been pushed back by air strikes.

- **2 March** – A Turkish-flagged oil tanker has been seized in the Libyan city of Zuwara by oil smugglers, a Turkish news outlet reported. *Haci Telli* set off from Tuzla in Turkey to Malta on February 11 and arrived in Zuwara Port on February 24 to load fuel. “As soon as Haci Telli approached the port, six gunmen boarded the tanker and held its 11-member crew captive.” The news agency said, adding that the owner of the tanker owes the Libyan smugglers about \$433,000 for earlier bought “smuggled” fuel. The gunmen said they will hold the crew and later sell the tanker if the required sum is not paid to them. The tanker is owned by Istanbul-based Transpasifik Denizcilik (Transpacific Shipping). Oil smuggling has become a booming trade in Zuwara. The Turkish tanker is among several others, which exploited the security vacuum in Libya and started buying its cheap fuel from local smugglers.
- **27 February** – The head of the EU border agency Frontex has said that NGOs who rescue people in the sea off Libya are encouraging traffickers who profit from dangerous Mediterranean crossings. Fabrice Leggeri called for rescue operations to be re-evaluated, and accused NGOs of ineffectively cooperating with security agencies against human traffickers. Leggeri said 40% of recent rescue operations were carried out by non-government organisations, making it impossible to check the origins of the migrants or their smuggling routes if the NGOs did not cooperate. He added that under maritime law everyone at sea had a duty to rescue vessels and people in distress. “But we must avoid supporting the business of criminal networks and traffickers in Libya through European vessels picking up migrants ever closer to the Libyan coast. This leads traffickers to force even more migrants on to unseaworthy boats with insufficient water and fuel than in previous years.”

- **24 February** – Eastern Libya has banned men and women between the ages of 18 and 45 from travelling abroad without permission. The aim of the ban, according to the region's military chief of staff, is to prevent people from joining terrorist groups abroad. The order comes days after a controversial ban preventing women under 60 from travelling without a male companion was introduced, and quickly suspended. Libyans in other parts of the country are unlikely to be affected as the two rival centres of power do not recognise each other's authority. According to the military chief of staff, the order is likely to be temporary; most travellers would be able to obtain a security clearance within a day, but he did not specify the criteria for a travel permit.

LIBYA: PROCEDURE

WARNING:

THE SITUATION IN LIBYA CONTINUES TO BE EXTREMELY FLUID. 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. The reintroduction of the National Salvation government further complicates any endeavours at stability within the unstable nation. 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. **Vessels should avoid navigating in the coastal waters of Benghazi, Derna and Sirte.**
- 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 cautioned to avoid navigating in the coastal waters of Benghazi, Derna and Sirte. MS Risk advises that shipmasters and owners stay up-to-date on the volatile situation in this region.

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When it comes to advising ship owners and operators, shipyards and ports and terminal operators we take the time to really understand your world, your people and your very particular challenges. We work closely with you to consider your business both today and tomorrow, and to explore all the variables which may impact on it.

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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

24 HR CONTACT INFORMATION:

Email: operations@msrisk.com

Telephone: +44 207 754 3555



South Suite, Ragnall House, 18 Peel Road
Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 4LZ

24 hr Global Contact: +44 207 754 3555
www.msrisk.com

Directors

S.J. Bingham, P.A. Crompton, P.O.J. Tracy
Registered in the Isle of Man No. 007435V