

Maritime Security Review



Issue No. 51

25 December 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 November - 3 December 2017

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

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



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

While international naval patrols and anti-piracy measures on board commercial vessels have practically eradicated Somali piracy since its peak in early 2011, poverty coupled with other factors that motivate pirates remain and some vessels transiting this region may have increasingly become complacent in the belief that the piracy threat had diminished. While the international community has over the past several years taken significant steps in order to improve security in the region, including boosting naval forces in the area and requiring ships to take protection measures, including reporting in and out of high risk areas, sailing at top speed as far away as

possible from the Somali coast and travelling with armed escorts on board, the threat of an attack and hijacking remained as the real root of the cause on the ground in Somalia has never been properly 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 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.

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, 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 2016 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/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

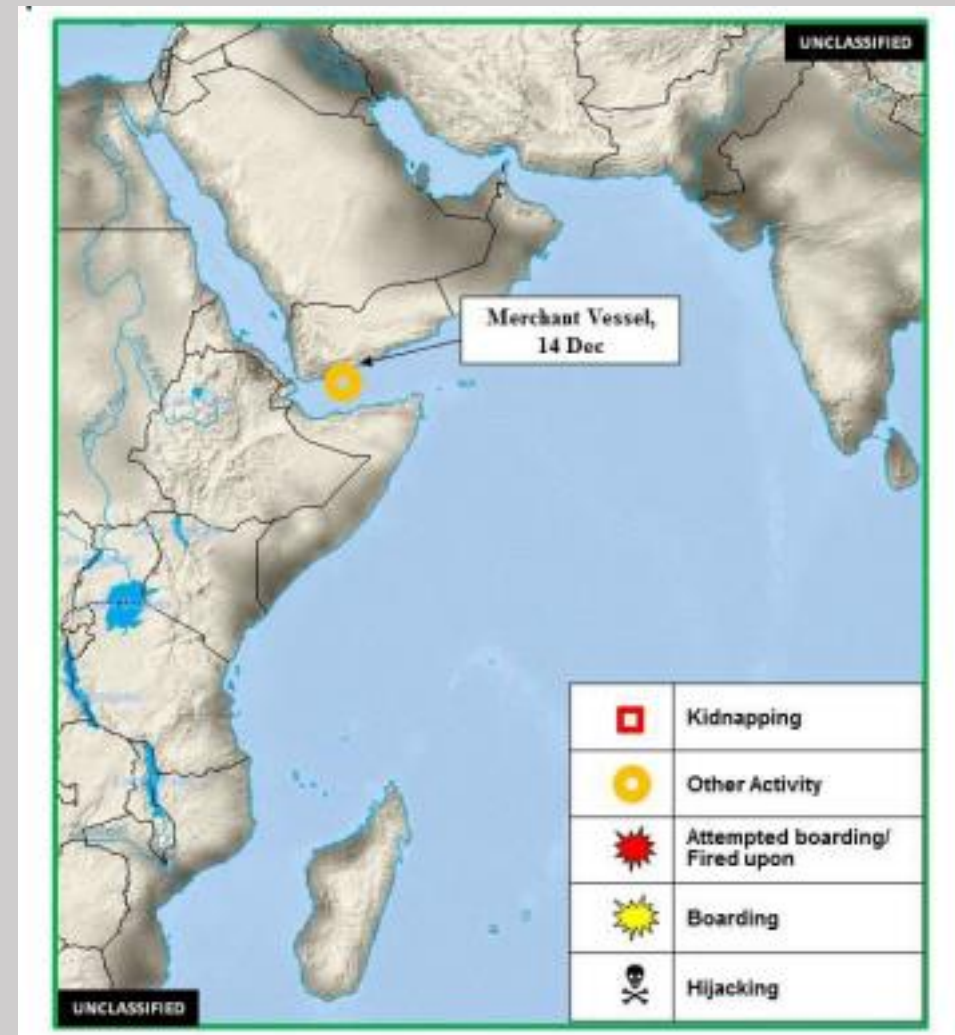
- **14 December (Yemen - late report)** – A merchant vessel reported a suspicious approach near position 13:56N - 049:51E, 60 nm southeast of Mukalla. Three skiffs with 3 to 4 persons in each skiff made a close approach then turned away.

MARITIME REPORTING

Nothing to report

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI



WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF ADEN/ARABIAN SEA

WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 21 – 27 DECEMBER 2017

NORTHERN ARABIAN SEA: Northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots with seas of 2 – 4 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots, with seas of 3 – 5 feet.

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

- **Extended Forecast:** East-northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 1 - 2 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.

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 3 - 5 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

- **Extended Forecast:** 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 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

SOMALI COAST: Northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 4 - 6 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northerly winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 2 - 4 feet in the southern section of the coastline.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 20 - 25 knots, and seas of 6 - 9 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northerly winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 4 - 7 feet in the southern section of the coastline.

CENTRAL AFRICAN COAST/INDIAN OCEAN: North-northeast winds of 10 - 12 knots, and seas of 2 - 4 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** North-northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet.

MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL: Variable winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the northern Channel; with south-southeast winds of 20 - 25 knots, gusting to 30 knots, with seas of 7 - 10 feet in the southern Channel.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northerly winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 4 - 7 feet in the northern Channel; with east-northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas 4 - 7 feet in the southern Channel.

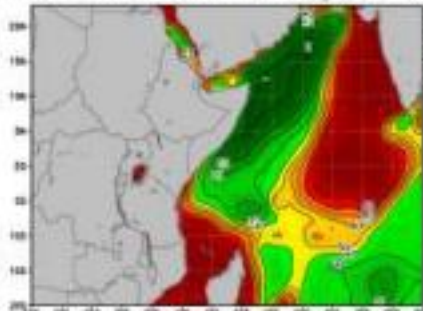
SURFACE CURRENTS: The northern Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden currents are variable with most areas having an average speed of 1 knot. The Mozambique Channel currents are variable having an average speed of 2 knots. Currents' speed along the Somali Basin are northeasterly averaging between 2 - 3 knots.

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 funneling effects and occasional shamal winds across the Arabian Gulf.

WEATHER MAP

Source: ONI

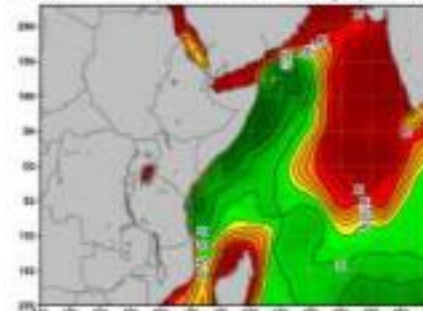
Winds < 15.0 kts and Wave Heights < 5.0 ft



Members	
NVG	20
GFS	20
CMC	20

Valid Time: 1200Z 21 DEC 2017

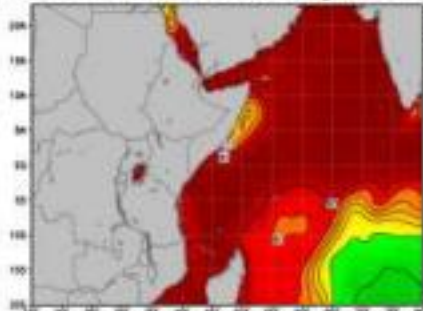
Winds < 15.0 kts and Wave Heights < 5.0 ft



Members	
NVG	20
GFS	20
CMC	20

Valid Time: 0000Z 24 DEC 2017

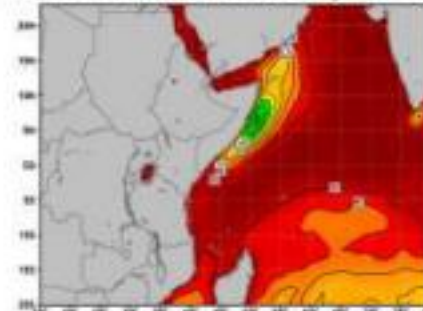
Winds < 17.0 kts and Wave Heights < 7.0 ft



Members	
NVG	20
GFS	20
CMC	20

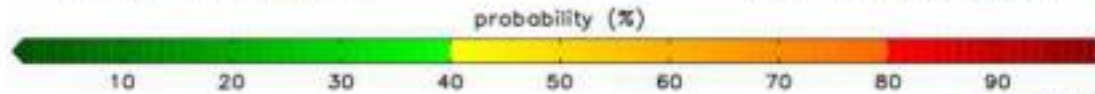
Valid Time: 1200Z 26 DEC 2017

Winds < 17.0 kts and Wave Heights < 7.0 ft



Members	
NVG	20
GFS	20
CMC	20

Valid Time: 0000Z 29 DEC 2017



Approved for Public Release

SPOTLIGHT ON YEMEN

PORT STATUS AS OF 23 DECEMBER 2017

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 (see activity reporting for details)	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.

ACTIVITY REPORTING

The Arab Coalition Command in Yemen has announced that the port of Hodeida will continue to be open to humanitarian and relief supplies and to commercial ships, including fuel and food vessels, for a period of 30 days, beginning on 20 December.

- 21 December** – A World Health Organization-chartered aircraft carrying more than 70 tons of essential medicines and surgical supplies landed in Sana'a Airport today, the largest planeload delivered by WHO to Yemen this year. The shipment contains trauma kits sufficient to meet the needs of 2000 patients requiring surgical care, as well as various types of rapid diagnostic tests and laboratory reagents to cover the urgent needs of central laboratories and blood banks. Despite restrictions, including the recent blockade, WHO continues to fill critical gaps in hospitals and health facilities across the country. Earlier this week, two other planes delivered 26 tons of emergency inter-agency health kits. This year, WHO has provided nearly 1500 metric tons of essential medicines and medical supplies to 96 health facilities that are struggling to keep their doors open.
- 21 December** – Suspected cholera cases in Yemen have reached one million, highlighting the suffering of the country caught up in a civil war for nearly three years, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Thursday. More than 80 percent of the population lack food, fuel, clean water and access to healthcare, ICRC said on its official Twitter page. The World Health Organization has reported 2,219 deaths from the cholera outbreak since it spread across the country in April, third of whom were children. The war-torn Arab country has also been suffering from a severe diphtheria outbreak since October. On Dec. 11, the United Nations aid agencies reported 32 deaths from diphtheria, warning the disease is spreading. The suspected cases of diphtheria have reached up to 244, mostly children, according to the aid agencies. Vaccines needed to treat diphtheria will run out, local authorities have warned.

Ships and planes carrying humanitarian supplies have been unable to reach Yemen since the Saudi-led coalition imposed a blockade in early November.

- **21 December** – The Yemeni army has said that its forces captured a field commander working closely with the leader of the Iranian-backed Houthi militia Abdul Malik Al Houthi, according to the Saudi Press Agency, SPA. “Army forces on the Hamak front, located between the provinces of Ibb and Dhaleh, captured the militia chief, Hussain Al Houthi, and three of his assistants,” SPA said. Internationally-recognised Yemeni President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi came to power in early 2012 after Arab Spring protests ousted Ali Abdullah Saleh. In 2014, an Al Houthi coup placed Hadi under house arrest. He was able to escape and has since shifted his government’s headquarters to Aden from where he has led an offensive against Al Houthis. With help from the Saudi-led Arab coalition who entered the war in 2015, the Yemeni army has liberated 85 per cent of Yemeni territory, but the Iran-backed militants still control the capital, Sana’a, and most northern provinces including Hodeida, Ibb, Mahweet, Yareem, Amran, Baydha and Hajja. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia agreed to open the Red Sea port city of Hodeida for 30 days to let in humanitarian supplies despite repeated warning that it was being used by Al Houthi militants to smuggle in weapons from Iran.
- **20 December – The Arab Coalition Command in Yemen has announced that the port of Hodeida will continue to be open to humanitarian and relief supplies and to commercial ships, including fuel and food vessels, for a period of 30 days**, in line with the proposals of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Yemen. According to the Saudi Press Agency, SPA, the decision reflects the desire of the coalition countries to provide humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people and follows an intensification of the inspection procedures for vessels approaching the port.
- **20 December** – Coalition forces launched fresh air strikes overnight. Residents said at least nine members of the same family, including at least five children, were killed in one air strike which hit their home in Wadi Khair in southern Yemen’s Shabwa province. Coalition aircraft have been providing air support for southern fighters and pro-government troops as part of a push to clear the Houthis from Shabwa and the family were killed in an apparently mistaken attack. Residents also reported that coalition aircraft bombed a new

parliament chamber, part of a government compound being built in Sanaa, causing damage but no casualties. The coalition had no immediate comment on the report but says it does not target civilians. Similar air strikes in which civilian homes, markets and hospitals were hit are recurrent in Yemen. On Monday, eight women and two children from the same family died when war planes struck a vehicle returning from a wedding party in Marib, east of Sanaa.

- **20 December** – Hundreds of world figures have urged the leaders of the United States, France and UK to stop “stoking the flames of war” in Yemen. The statement, signed by 355 high-profile figures, marked the 1000th day of the war, which has turned the poorest Arab country into the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. The signatories included eight Nobel peace laureates, religious leaders, Western lawmakers and rights defenders, as well as US Congresswomen Barbara Lee and Pramila Jayapal, and Congressman Ro Khanna, who are all Democrats. The letter makes an appeal to Donald Trump, Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron. It says: “To prevent further catastrophe and famine, Yemen needs an immediate ceasefire; an end to all blockages on access for food, fuel and medical supplies; and investment in a new, inclusive peace process. If you don’t want the burden of the lives of thousands more Yemeni children on your hands, then the time to act is now. Yemen can’t wait any longer.” The appeal also called on the UN Security Council to press Saudi Arabia and its ally the United Arab Emirates, the main pillars of the coalition fighting Houthi rebels in Yemen, to end the war.
- **18 December** – The United States is pressing for the delivery of World Food Program shipments to Yemen and the installation of new cranes at a key port amid a conflict in the nation that has killed or wounded more than 60,000 people, the State Department said on Monday. John Sullivan, the U.S. deputy secretary of state, discussed Yemen with the leaders of international organizations on Friday and underscored that Washington was pressing for restoration of full humanitarian and commercial access to Yemen, the department said. Sullivan told the leaders the United States was calling for “the delivery of World Food Program shipments that have not reached Hodeidah since late November, and the installation of new cranes at Hodeidah port,” it said in a statement.

- **19 December** – The UN human rights office says it has verified the killings of 136 Yemeni civilians and other non-combatants. Rupert Colville, of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, said UN officials are “deeply concerned” about a surge in civilian casualties. Colville said the killings occurred between December 6 and 16 in four northern provinces. The air strikes, which also injured 87 people, hit targets including the rebel-run TV channel, a hospital in the port city of Hodeida, and a wedding party. One woman and nine children died in the latter, the rights office said.
- **19 December**– The Saudi-led coalition has said it intercepted a missile fired over southern Riyadh, which the Yemeni rebels said was aimed at the royal palace. Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam said the group targeted the Yamama Palace, tweeting that a ballistic Volcano H-2 missile was used.
- **18 December** – The UK has promised to deliver desperately needed food and fuel supplies for the millions of people in rebel-held Yemen who are living on the brink of famine. An extra £50m will help stave off the “human tragedy” of the world’s worst humanitarian crisis for one more month, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said on Monday. Ms Mordaunt made the announcement during a visit to Djibouti, the tiny African country across the Gulf of Aden where thousands of Yemeni refugees have fled - and from where UK aid makes its way to rebel-held parts of the country.
- **17 December** – At least eight women and two girls heading home from a wedding have been killed in an air attack in central-west Yemen, a health official has told Al Jazeera. Saba news agency, aligned with Yemen's Houthi group, cited a security source as saying that the women's vehicle was struck by three Saudi-led coalition air raids late on Saturday. The attack reportedly took place at around 11pm local time (20:00 GMT) in the Harib al-Qaramish district of the Marib governorate, east of the capital, Sanaa, where the wedding had taken place. So far, the Saudi-led coalition has not commented on the alleged air attack. Mohammad al-Sheab, head of the health bureau in Marib, told Al Jazeera that the victims were all from the Haysan family. He said the women were between 30 to 50 years old, without providing an age for the two girls. In a post on Twitter, Mohammad Abdel Salam, spokesperson for Ansar Allah, the political arm of the Houthis, called the attack a "massacre".
- **17 December** – Makkah Border Guards have urged sea travellers to abide by safety rules after they rescued on Friday two people whose boat broke down in the Red Sea due to high winds and waves. They were taken to the police department in Jeddah, and their health was checked in coordination with the Red Crescent. Spokesman Maj. Fares Al-Malki stressed the need to report any emergency to Border Guards on 994.

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.

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



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/ATTACK

- **14 December (Nigeria - late report)** – At 0128 UTC robbers made an unsuccessful attempt to board a merchant vessel near position 03:58N - 006:12E. Vessel and crew are safe.

VESSELS BOARDED

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- **14 December (Nigeria - late report)** – At 0830 UTC pirates boarded the Greece-flagged bulk carrier SKYLIGHT near position 03:46N - 006:17E, 32nm south of Brass. Ten crewmen were kidnapped.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- Nothing to report

INCIDENT MAP

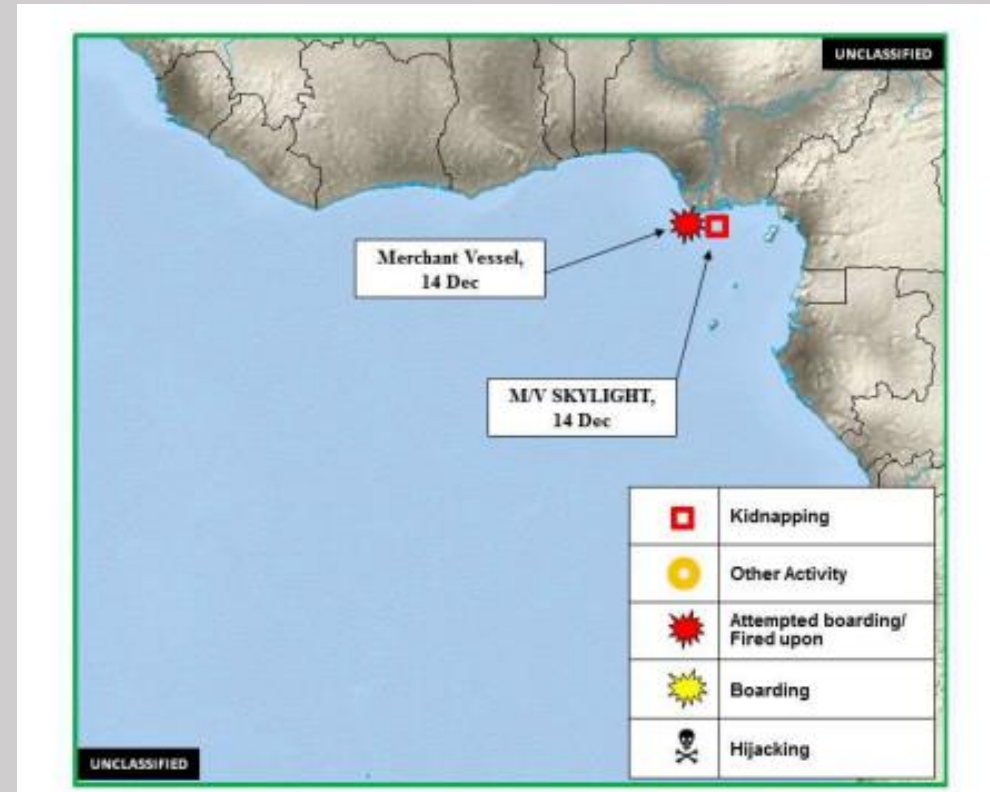
Source: ONI

WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 21 – 27 DECEMBER 2017

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 Africa coasts with increased southerly wind flow through the Bab el Mandeb Strait due to funnelling effects.



SOUTHEAST ASIA

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.



HIJACKS

- **16 December (Vietnam – Late Report)** – During cargo operations near position 20:53N - 107:16E, Hon Net Anchorage, 12 robbers boarded an anchored bulk carrier via the mooring ropes of the cargo barge alongside. Duty crewman noticed the robbers stealing paint drums and raised the alarm. Seeing the alerted crew, the robbers escaped with stolen ship's properties.
- **13 December (Singapore – Late report)** – Four robbers armed with knives boarded a tanker underway near position 01:14N - 104:02E, Singapore Strait. As they entered the engine room they came across the duty oiler and assaulted him. Alarm raised and crew mustered. Seeing the crew's alertness, the robbers escaped with stolen ship's engine spare parts.

- **9 December (Philippines – Late report)** – On 9 December, robbers boarded an anchored container ship via the anchor chain, near position 14:35N - 120:55E, Manila South Harbor Anchorage. The thieves cut through the forecandle store room padlock, stole ship's properties and escaped. The incident was noticed and reported by the bosun. Local authorities were informed and the coast guard boarded the vessel to investigate.

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI

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

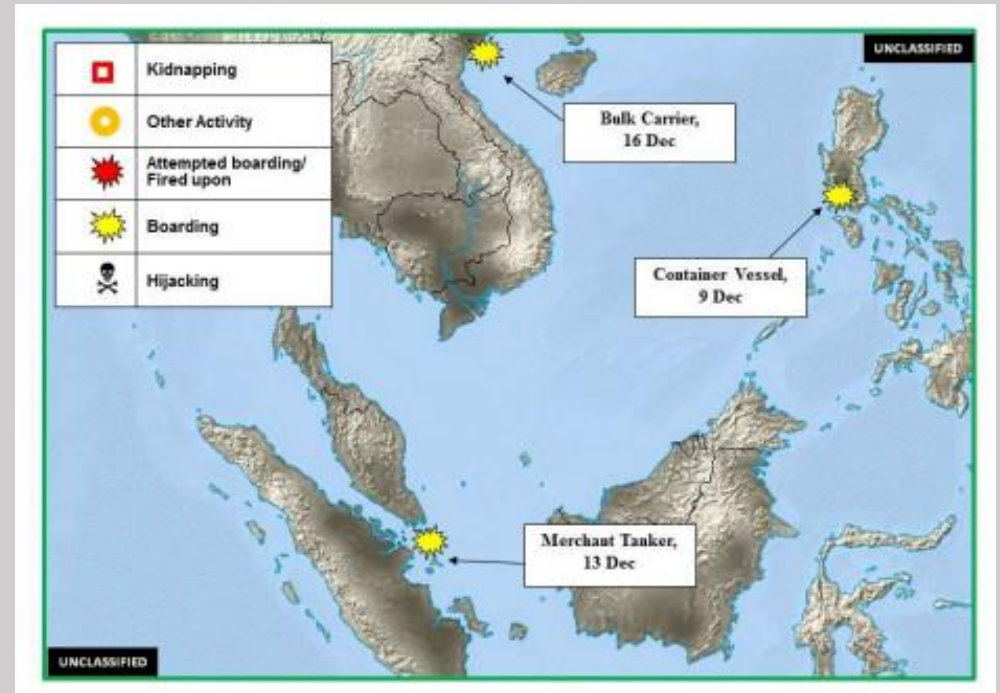
- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY REPORT

- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- Nothing to report



WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 21 – 27 DECEMBER 2017

SOUTHERN SOUTH CHINA SEA: Northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** North-northeast winds of 20 - 25 knots, gusting to 30 knots, and seas of 9 - 13 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: Variable winds of 5 - 10 knots, and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the northern section; with east-northeast winds of 12 - 18 knots, and seas of 2 - 4 feet in the southern section.

- **Extended Forecast:** Variable winds of 5 - 10 knots, and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the northern section; with easterly winds of 15 - 20 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 funneling effects and daytime heating.

WORLDWIDE

NORTH AMERICA

- No current incidents to report

CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN/SOUTH AMERICA

- No current incidents to report

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



Migrant crossings in the Mediterranean have continued throughout the Autumn period – with an increase in reports of vessels in the Western Mediterranean corridor.

- **22 December** – The number of illegal immigrants in Libya currently reaches 700,000, according to an immigration official. "Libya this year deported about 13,000 immigrants of different nationalities, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration(IOM)," Milad Saadi, media adviser of Tripoli's anti-illegal immigration department. "Most Arab and African countries are cooperating with the department on the deportation of their citizens." Libya has become a preferred departure point for illegal immigrants hoping to cross the Mediterranean into Europe, because of insecurity and chaos following the 2011 uprising that toppled former leader Muammar Gaddafi.
- **18 December** – Some 300 migrants were rescued over the weekend and arrived in the Italian port of Pozzallo after being pulled from tiny dinghies just off the Libyan coast. Doctors working onboard the SOS Mediterranean ship Aquarius said many migrants had told stories of torture they had experienced

whilst waiting in Libya before their crossing to Italy. Nigerian migrant Nwankwo Johnson said he had been sold several times to armed gangs in Libya and treated like an animal before making it onto a boat that was rescued by a humanitarian organisation.

- **16 December** – The Libyan navy has rescued 437 illegal immigrants in three separate operations off Libya coast during the past 24 hours, a Libyan official said. Al-Hadi Mohamed, an official of the Coast Guard and Port Security Agency, said, the rescue was done off the coast of the western towns of Garrabuli and Zliten, adding the migrants were aboard two rubber boats and they were transferred to an immigrant reception shelter in Tripoli. Media and Information office of the Libyan navy said that 157 illegal African migrants, including women and children, were rescued in two operations off western Libyan coast. The office said that the rescued migrants were provided with medical and humanitarian assistance by the International Medical Corps and the Libyan Red Crescent. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Libya said that about 17,000 illegal immigrants were voluntarily deported from Libya to their countries of origin this year so far.
- **15 December** – Germany is pouring money into the creation of electronic surveillance systems along Tunisia's eastern border, designed to prevent extremists and migrants from slipping across into the country from neighbouring Libya, a government spokesman said Friday. Tunisia stepped up security measures along the 300-mile frontier in 2015 following attacks by Islamic extremists believed to have received training in Libya. But European governments have also been seeking ways to halt the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean from Africa in recent years, including by funding border security measures in key countries. A spokesman for Germany's defence ministry, Michael Henjes, said that Berlin has earmarked \$21.3 million in financial support to install permanent radar systems along the Tunisian border.

SPOTLIGHT ON LIBYA

PORT STATUS AS OF 23 DECEMBER 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	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 for local shipping only	Moderate
Port of Tripoli	Open	High
Port of Zawiya (Zawia)	Open	Moderate
Port of Zueitina	Open	Low

ACTIVITY REPORTING

- 21 December** – Bad weather has forced the closure of the eastern Libyan oil ports of Es Sider, Zueitina and Brega, an oil source said on Thursday. A view shows the oil port of Es Sider, Libya, March 16, 2017. No tanker was currently waiting to dock at these ports, the source said, asking not to be identified.
- 21 December** – Libya's rival factions should stick to a United Nations peace process and prepare for elections in spring 2018, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said, trying to give stalled U.N. talks a new push. The United Nations launched a new round of talks in September in Tunis between the rival factions to prepare for presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018, but they broke off after one month. Drian will later fly to the eastern city of Benghazi to meet the powerful eastern military commander Khalifa Haftar, who on Sunday called the U.N.-backed government and peace process obsolete. The U.N. talks had stumbled over the question of what role Haftar should play. He indicated on Sunday he wants to run as presidential candidate. Haftar remains popular among Libyans in the east who are weary of the chaos, but faces opposition in western Libya. The eastern-based House of Representatives on Tuesday widened divisions between east and west by approving a new central bank governor. The bank's Tripoli headquarters and U.N. rejected the move. Le Drian said a political deal would help solve crisis of thousands of illegal migrants stuck in detention centres in Libya where human rights groups said they often face abuse. Libya is to main departure point for illegal migrants heading for Europe by boat.
- 20 December**– Libya is the second worst country in the world for doing business, according to a survey by Forbes Magazine. It came 149th out of 150; only Afghanistan was rated worse. Forbes rated 153 counties on 15 different factors. These were property rights, innovation, taxes, technology, corruption, infrastructure, market size, political risk, quality of life, workforce, freedom (personal, trade and monetary), red tape and investor protection. In the corruption section, Libya, along with Yemen, was classed as the “most corrupt” country in world.

- **18 December** – Cameroon has flown home more than 500 of its nationals who were trapped in Libya as they attempted to reach Europe. The latest arrivals include two children aged between six months and two years old, whose mothers died in the perilous journey. Some 162 other returnees arrived on December 12 as part of a repatriation the government launched in June. Cameroon has stepped up in collaboration with agencies, including the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The returnees received psychosocial and medical care from the social affairs and public health officials. About 1,700 Cameroonians were trapped in the crisis-hit Libya, according to IOM estimates. The African Union has said it aims to repatriate 20,000 Africans from the country. The continental body had earlier said it wanted to bring back 15,000 migrants by the end of the year, but increased its goal after a task force – made up of AU, European Union and United Nations officials — met earlier this month.
- **17 December** – Gunmen fatally shot the mayor of Libya’s third-largest city, Misrata, late on Sunday, ambushing his car inside the city, security officials said. The North African oil producer has been in chaos since the 2011 uprising that unseated Muammar Gaddafi, but Misrata, Libya’s biggest port, had been relative peaceful until now. Gunmen chased the car of Mayor Mohamed Eshtewi after he left Misrata airport following his arrival on a plane from Turkey, a security official said, adding it was unclear who was behind it. In October, a bomb exploded at the city’s court, killing about four people and wounding 40 others in an attack claimed by Islamic state. Misrata, almost 200 km (125 miles) east of Tripoli, is the gateway for food and other imports into Libya and the country’s only tax-free zone. It is one of the few places still frequented by foreign business people fearing poor security elsewhere.
- **17 December** – Makkah Border Guards have urged sea travellers to abide by safety rules after they rescued on Friday two people whose boat broke down in the Red Sea due to high winds and waves. They were taken to the police department in Jeddah, and their health was checked in coordination with the Red Crescent. Spokesman Maj. Fares Al-Malki stressed the need to report any emergency to Border Guards on 994.

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.

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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
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References are always available.

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