

Maritime Security Review



Issue No. 52

1 January 2018

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: 25 December – 31 December 2017

Region	Current Incidents Reported	Late Reported incidents	Threat level
MAIN REGIONS			
Gulf of Aden/Arabian Sea	0	0	Low
Gulf of Guinea	2	1	Medium
Southeast Asia	2	1	Medium
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	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

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

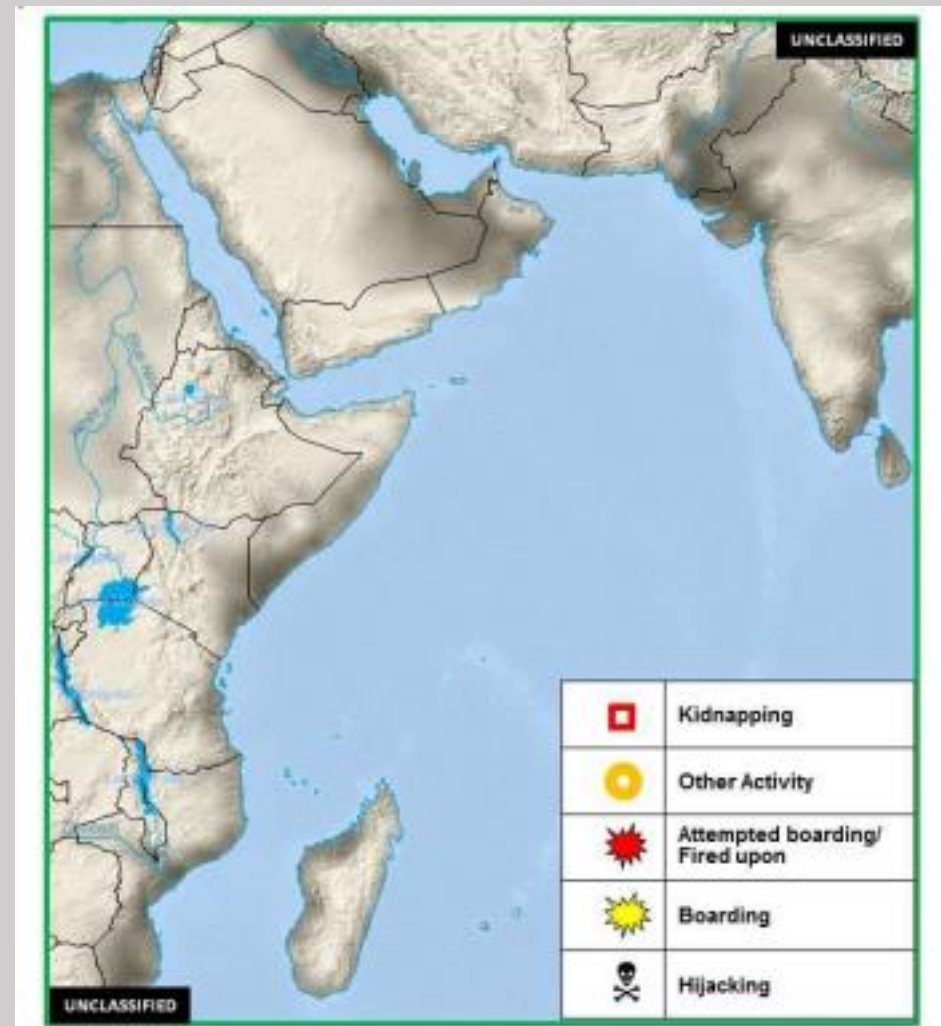
- No current incidents to report.

MARITIME REPORTING

Nothing to report

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI



WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF ADEN/ARABIAN SEA

WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 28 DECEMBER – 03 JANUARY 2018

NORTHERN ARABIAN SEA: Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, with seas of 3 - 5 feet.

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

GULF OF OMAN: Northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the western section of the Gulf; with northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the eastern section of the Gulf.

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

GULF OF ADEN: East-northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 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.

- **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, gusting to 25 knots, and seas of 5 - 7 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 4 - 6 feet in the southern section of the coastline.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, gusting to 25 knots, and seas of 5 - 7 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 4 - 6 feet in the southern section of the coastline.

CENTRAL AFRICAN COAST/INDIAN OCEAN: North-northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** North-northeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 4 - 6 feet.

MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL: Variable winds of 5 - 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, with seas of 7 - 9 feet in the southern Channel.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, gusting to 20 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas 4 - 6 feet in the southern Channel.

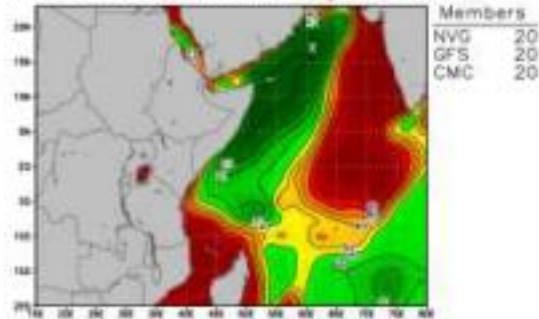
SURFACE CURRENTS: The northern Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden currents are variable with most areas having an average speed of 1 knot. The Mozambique Channel currents are variable having an average speed of 2 knots. Currents' speed along the Somali Basin are northeasterly averaging between 2 - 3 knots.

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

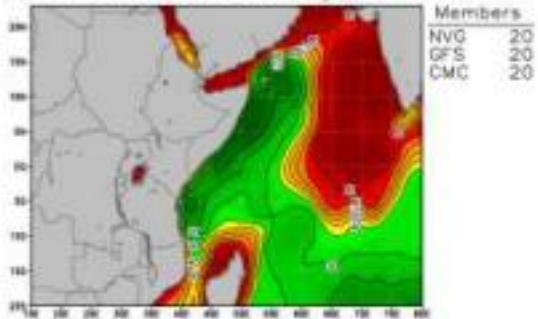
Source: ONI

Winds < 15.0 kts and Wave Heights < 5.0 ft



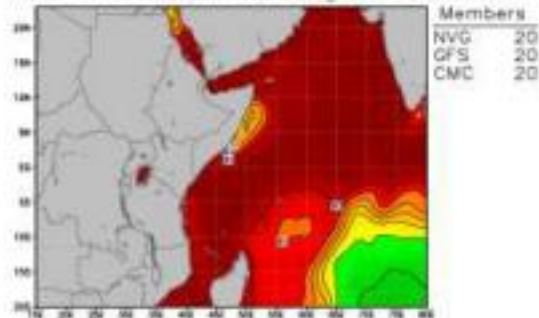
Valid Time: 1200Z 21 DEC 2017

Winds < 15.0 kts and Wave Heights < 5.0 ft



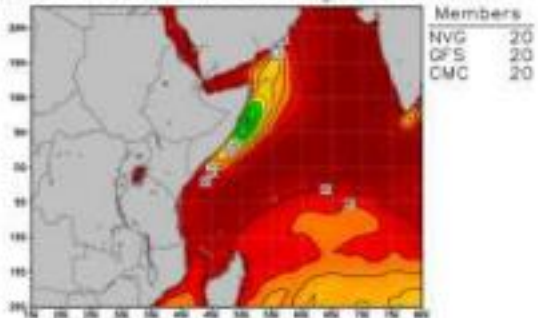
Valid Time: 0000Z 24 DEC 2017

Winds < 17.0 kts and Wave Heights < 7.0 ft



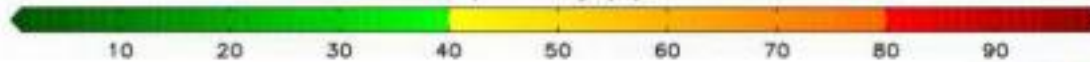
Valid Time: 1200Z 26 DEC 2017

Winds < 17.0 kts and Wave Heights < 7.0 ft



Valid Time: 0000Z 29 DEC 2017

probability (%)



SPOTLIGHT ON YEMEN

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.

- 28 December** – The Saudi-led coalition has killed 109 civilians in air strikes in the past 10 days, including 54 people at a crowded market and 14 members of one family on a farm, the top U.N. official in the country said on Thursday. The fighting is “futile and absurd”, U.N. resident coordinator Jamie McGoldrick said, in unusually direct criticism of the campaign being waged by the coalition against the Iran-aligned Houthi movement. The Saudi-led coalition denounced the charges, saying the information lacked credibility. McGoldrick appeared to be taking the Houthi side in the conflict, the Saudis said. Citing initial reports from the U.N. human rights office, a statement by McGoldrick said air strikes hit a crowded market in the Al Hayma sub-district of Attazziah in Taiz governorate on Tuesday, killing 54 and injuring 32. Eight of the dead and six of the injured were children, according to the reports. On the same day, an air strike on a farm in Attohayta district of Hodeidah governorate killed 14, and air strikes elsewhere killed a further 41 civilians and injured 43 over the past 10 days. “These incidents prove the complete disregard for human [...] this absurd war that has only resulted in the destruction of the country and the incommensurate suffering of its people, who are being punished as part of a futile military campaign by both sides,” McGoldrick said. Under international law, the warring sides must spare civilians and civilian infrastructure, he added. A spokesman for the Saudi-led coalition said he regretted the information that came in McGoldrick’s statement. “This statement creates a continuous state of doubt about the information and data used by the United Nations, and challenges its credibility,” the coalition spokesman said in a statement carried by Saudi state news agency SPA. “As the coalition spokesman condemns this biased stand, he asserts the need for the United Nations to review the mechanism of humanitarian work and the competence of its employees

PORT STATUS AS OF 31 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

working in Yemen and to monitor their performance,” SPA said, citing the statement. The United Nations has no up-to-date estimate of the death toll in Yemen. It said in August 2016 that according to medical centres at least 10,000 people had been killed.

- **27 December** – Emirati journal the National reports that the Yemeni army has killed two high-ranking Houthi militia commanders in Hodeidah as part of the Arab coalition’s push to recapture the second-most important city still held by the rebels. Hodeidah is the only major port under Houthi control and widely regarded as second only to the capital, Sanaa - also still in Houthi hands - in its strategic importance. Colonel Abu Zara'a Al Muharramy told The National: "Yasser Al Ahmer a well-known commander in the rebels' militia was killed with a group of his guards on Tuesday."
- **24 December** – Two militants linked to the Islamic State (IS) group were arrested during a security operation conducted in the southern port city of Aden early on Sunday morning. "The security forces launched a search operation and then raided a building in Aden's neighborhood of Tawahi and managed to capture two dangerous terrorists," the local government official said on condition of anonymity. Experts of the Criminal Investigation Department started interrogating the captured militants who were in close contact with prominent leaders of the IS group in Yemen, the source said. The captured militants were responsible for recruiting other terrorists to make roadside bombs and Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in order to target the government officials in Aden. The anti-terror unit of the security forces seized weapons, different kinds explosives and an amount of cash after the pre-dawn operation in Tawahi neighbourhood.
- **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

- **24 December (Nigeria)** – At 0118 in position 06:17.42N - 003:13.81E, Nigeria Duty watchmen onboard an anchored product tanker noticed three robbers attempting to board the vessel and immediately notified the officer on watch. Alarm raised and crew mustered. Seeing the alerted crew, the robbers escaped empty handed. Incident reported to the Nigerian Navy and a patrol boat was dispatched to investigate.
- **24 December (Nigeria)** – At 0730 UTC in position 03:47.1N - 006:49.8E, seven pirates armed with guns approached and came alongside a container ship underway. One pirate boarded the ship using a long ladder and opened fire towards the bridge. The Master contacted the Nigerian Navy and proceeded at full speed towards a security boat. Seeing the security boat, the pirates aborted the attack.

VESSELS BOARDED

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- **21 December (late report) (Nigeria)** – The Nigerian Navy in Lagos rescued four Chinese nationals from kidnappers around Igbokoda area of Ondo State. The Flag Officer Commanding, Western Naval Command, Rear Adm. Sylvanus Abbah, told journalists that the four victims were abducted on board a fishing trawler in Lagos waters on 14 December. Operatives of the Nigerian Navy. Ship (NNS) BEECROFT rescued the abducted Chinese nationals from a militant camp in the riverine area of Ondo State.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- No current incidents to report

INCIDENT MAP

Source: ONI

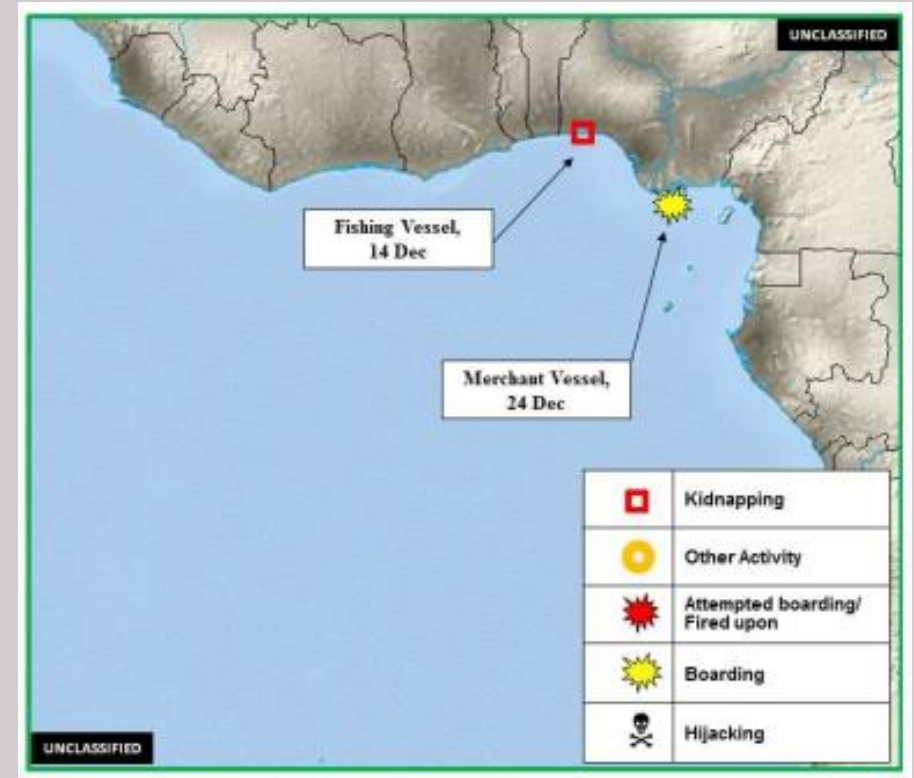
WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF GUINEA

WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 28 DECEMBER – 3 JANUARY 2018

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

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

SYNOPTIC DISCUSSION: High pressure continues to dominate the weather in the region producing relatively light winds across the Somali Basin. Isolated thunderstorms and rain showers can be routinely expected along the Somali and West 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

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- **22 November (Late report) (Indonesia)** – 0400 LT in position 02:12.46N - 107:06.33E: While steaming, several persons armed with knives boarded a tug towing a barge laden with palm oil cargo. They tied up the four, tug crew. They detached the barge, took six crew on the barge hostage and escaped. The crew on the tug managed to free themselves and sailed to a safe location. The next day, the barge and its six crew were located by the Authorities. All crew safe.

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS/ATTACK

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS BOARDED

- **28 December (Singapore)** – At 1430 UTC, in position 01:16.0N - 104:02.8E, four robbers boarded a bulk carrier awaiting Pilot boarding. They entered the engine room and threatened the duty engineer with a knife. The engineer managed to escape and raise the alarm. Seeing the alerted crew, the robbers escaped empty handed. Incident reported to VTIS East Singapore.
- **25 December (Indonesia)** – At 2030 UTC in position 07:46.9S - 109:04.0E, Duty watch on board an anchored tanker spotted four robbers near the poop deck. Alarm was raised and crew mustered. Seeing the crew alertness, the robbers escaped with stolen ship's engine spares.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

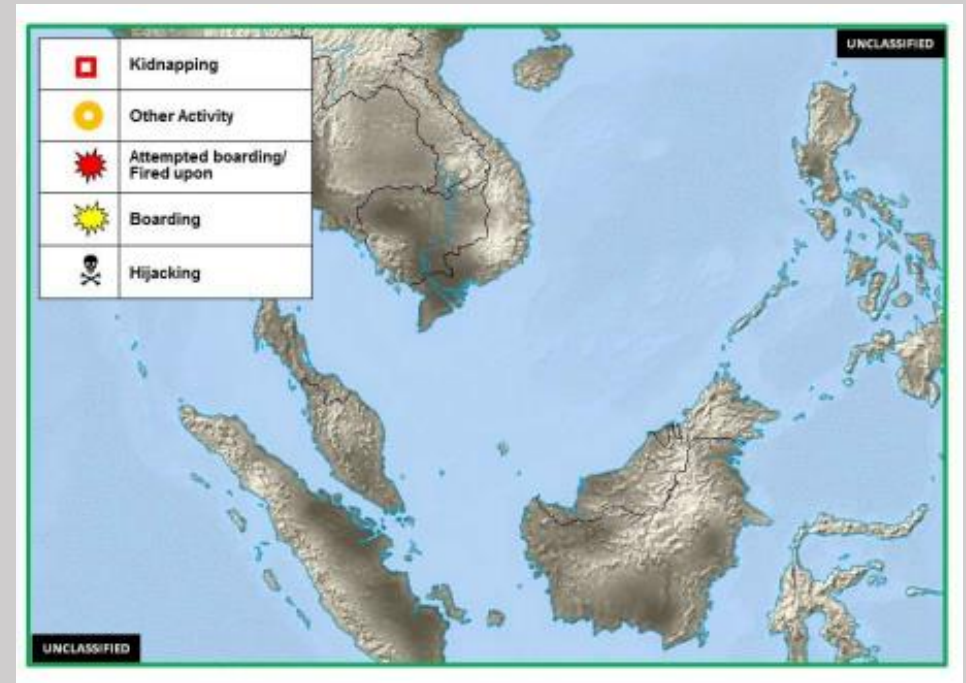
- No current incidents to report

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 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 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: Easterly winds of 15 - 20 knots, and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the northern section; with easterly winds of 15 - 30 knots, and seas of 2 - 4 feet in the southern section.

- **Extended Forecast:** Easterly winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 1 - 3 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 funneling effects and daytime heating.

WORLDWIDE

NORTH AMERICA

- No current incidents to report

CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN/SOUTH AMERICA

- **22 December (Late report) (Guatemala)**– At 0318 UTC at Puerto Quetzal Anchorage, Guatemala, duty crew on routine rounds noticed a speed boat with two persons approach the vessel from astern. The speedboat disappeared under the stern of the ship. Later the duty crew noticed two more persons wearing diving suites with a package boarding the speed boat. The incident was reported to the port control. The authorities from the harbour master's office boarded the vessel and investigated in and around the ship. Their divers found a black package near the ship's seachest.

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.

- **31 December** – Migrant arrivals to Italy by sea fell by a third in 2017 compared to a year earlier, the Interior Ministry said, as Libyan authorities helped to slow departures during the second half of the year. More than 119,000 came to Italy by boat this year after a record 181,000 made the crossing in 2016, the ministry said in a statement. Since July, arrivals have declined by more than two thirds versus a year earlier. In February, Italy signed an agreement with the United Nations-backed government in Tripoli, promising aid, equipment and training in exchange for its help in fighting people smuggling. The deal was endorsed by the European Union. Since then, armed groups supported by the Tripoli government have forced smugglers in the city of Sabratha - a key hub on the western coast - to stop sending out boats. Italy has also bolstered the Libyan coastguard's ability to turn back boats. But rights groups and humanitarian organizations operating rescue ships in the Mediterranean have criticized the policy, saying that it traps migrants in a country where they face appalling

treatment, including rape, torture and forced labour. While criticized by some, the figures are considered good news for the ruling Democratic Party (PD) ahead of a national election in March. More than 600,000 migrants have reached Italy by boat over the past four years, making immigration a hot-button political issue. More than 20,000 are estimated to have died attempting the crossing to Italy, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates, making it the deadliest border for migrants in the world.

- **29 December** – Migrant arrivals by sea to Spain tripled in 2017 on the previous year, fuelled by a surge in the numbers of Algerians and Moroccans, while over 200 died trying to make the crossing. "At the end of the year, the tally is devastating," the Spanish Commission for Refugees (CEAR), which defends the right to asylum, said in a statement. Almost 21,500 people arrived by sea on Spain's southern shores -- popular with northern European tourists -- between January 1 and December 20, up from 6,046 during the same period last year, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The number of deaths is also up. So far this year 223 people have died or disappeared while trying to reach Spain by boat, 95 more than in 2016. Most sea arrivals are reported along the Strait of Gibraltar which is the narrowest passage of the Mediterranean Sea separating Spain from Morocco.
- **26 December** – The number of migrant deaths in the Mediterranean this year reached 3,116, down about 40 per cent on last year's total. The UN Migration Agency says just over 170,000 migrants and refugees entered Europe by sea in the year to December 20, down almost 50 per cent compared to last year. The UN has been working with Tripoli to put pressure on people smugglers and the Libyan coast guard has also been given help to intercept boats. But Human Rights Watch is one of the groups voicing concern about the new strategies regarding Libya, saying more migrants are "being returned to nightmarish conditions in Libya". In the latest rescues, some 250 migrants were pulled from the sea off the coast of Libya in the early hours of Tuesday morning. The UN says among those migrants or refugees who drowned this year, 2,832 were headed for Italy, 223 were headed for Spain and 61 were trying to reach Greece. Globally, 5,362 migrant deaths were reported in 2017. In 2016, the recorded number of migrant deaths in the Mediterranean stood at 4,967, with 359,160 arrivals to Europe. Also, the UN began bringing African refugees to

Italy from Libya last week, releasing them from detention centres condemned by human rights groups as inhumane. It is the first time that the UNHCR in Libya has evacuated refugees directly to Europe. It is reported that as many as 10,000 people being held in detention centres for immigrants in Libya will be evacuated next year. Italy's Catholic Church will house many of the new arrivals in shelters across the country, as the migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen go through the country's asylum request process. Italy's move to open a safe corridor for some of the migrants deemed as vulnerable "follows criticism by rights groups who have condemned the country's efforts to block migrants in Libya in exchange for aid, training and equipment to fight smuggling".

SPOTLIGHT ON LIBYA

PORT STATUS AS OF 31 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)	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

- 28 December** – Libya's self-styled national army in the east welcomes holding presidential and parliamentary elections in the country as soon as possible, the spokesman said, urging the east-based parliament to make haste with issuing elections laws. Brigadier Gen. Ahmed al-Mosmari said in a press conference late Wednesday that elections, planned for 2018, should be monitored by international observers to ensure integrity. He also said the army will secure polling stations across the country. "We should give the Libyan people the freedom to express themselves through ballot boxes," al-Mosmari said. He stressed that the army is supportive of an "elected civilian leadership." Earlier in December, the United Nations said it was "intensively trying to establish the proper political, legislative and security conditions for elections to be held before the end of 2018."
- 26 December** - An explosion has hit an oil pipeline, leading to Libya's port Es Sider sea terminal, a source in the Libyan National Army told The Libya Times, adding that the blast occurred 30 km northwest of Marada. At the same time, the source accused militants from the Benghazi Defense Brigades of the blast. The Akhbar Libya news outlet reported, citing a group that operates in Marada, that the gas pipeline belonged to the al-Waha oil company. The group's press service claimed that the explosion could have been caused by a terrorist attack, adding that the communication with an engineering crew working on the scene had been lost. The media outlet added that the group had sent its forces to the explosion site, located between Es Sider port and an oil field. Col. Muftah Amgharief, from the security force guarding oil facilities in eastern Libya, says Tuesday's bombing appeared to have been carried out by the Islamic State group, which is active in the area. He says the attack could reduce Libya's oil production by up to 100,000 barrels a day.
- 25 December** – Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) on Monday opened three major oil ports in the east after four days of closure due to bad weather conditions. "Foreign tankers entered the ports to load shipments delayed due to bad weather during the past few days," an official with the corporation said, adding, "The closure was due to natural reasons, which delayed exports of crude oil and caused losses estimated at tens of millions of U.S. dollars." Poor weather conditions in the oil crescent region of eastern Libya on Thursday led

to temporary closure of Brega, Zueitina and Sidra. They transport more than half of Libya's crude oil exports, said the official. Libya has witnessed the strongest thunderstorms in many years, which affect government operations and traffic in most parts of the country.

- **22 December** – Tobruk port has reopened to international shipping. It was closed two months ago on the orders of Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, and foreign vessels ordered to use Benghazi instead. The decision to close was ostensibly made because of ineffective security controls at the port, corruption and smuggling. The decision to reopen has also come from Haftar, according to the port's security director, Colonel Abdussalam Younis. The closure, however, caused considerable anger in the town. Nor did it have any effect on reducing corruption. Benghazi port, formally reopened at the beginning of October, was at the centre of a \$8-million Letter of Credit scam last month when 40 containers were discovered containing not the goods they were supposed to have, but other cheaper ones. The fraud is now being investigated. Since the reopening of Benghazi port, container unloading, and storage security is now reported to be under the control of the Libyan National Army's Military Authority for Investment and Public Works.

- 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.

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

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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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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

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