

MS | RISK

Maritime Security Review



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INCIDENTS AT SEA

Reporting Period: 5 - 11 February 2018

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

Piracy Levels are determined on a weekly basis as follows:

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

PLEASE NOTE:

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

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

GULF OF ADEN, ARABIAN SEA, RED SEA



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

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

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

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

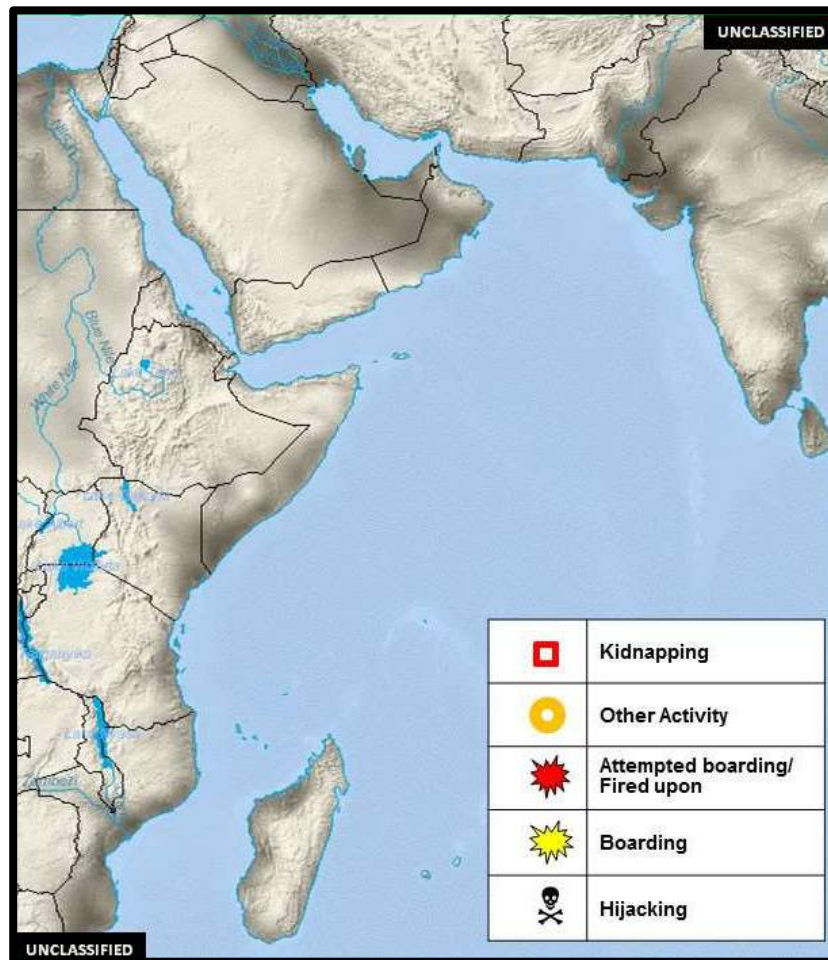
complacency may have set in and this year's successful hijacking is likely to result in potential copycat attacks, as pirate action groups head out in a bid to successfully hijack a commercial vessel.

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

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

Current
Incidents:

0

**VESSELS HIJACKED**

- No current incidents to report

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS/ATTACKS

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS BOARDED

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- No current incidents to report

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- No current incidents to report

WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF ADEN, ARABIAN SEA, RED SEA**WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 8 - 14 FEBRUARY 2018**

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOMALI COAST: Northeast winds of 20 – 25 knots and seas of 6 – 8 feet in the northern section of the coastline; with northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the southern section of the coastline.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 6 – 8 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: Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots, and seas of 3 – 5 feet.

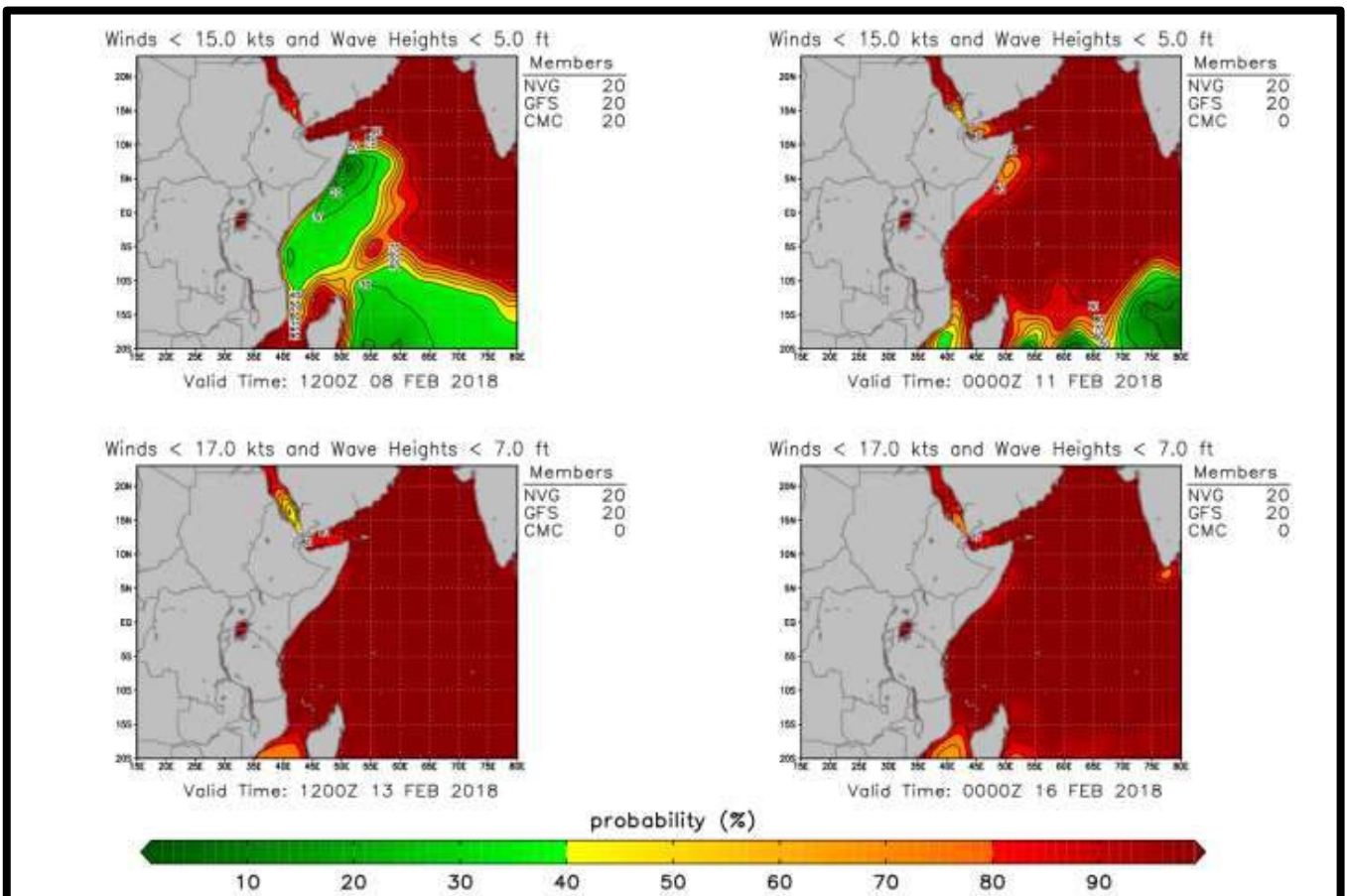
- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet.

MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL: North-northwest winds of 20 – 25 knots and seas of 7 – 9 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 20 – 25 knots, gusting to 30 knots, with seas of 7 – 9 feet in the southern Channel.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northwest winds of 5 – 10 knots, gusting to 15 knots, and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 20 – 25 knots and seas of 7 – 9 feet in the southern Channel.

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

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



SPOTLIGHT ON YEMEN

PORT STATUS AS OF 11 FEBRUARY 2018

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

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

SECURITY ADVISORY: ADEN CAPTURED BY SOUTHERN SEPRATISTS

- Fighters for the separatist group Southern Transitional Council have captured the area around the Presidential Palace in Aden. They have not entered the Palace.
- Some reporting suggests that separatist fighters have also taken control of a key Army base.
- The clash opens a rift between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, who are fighting together in Saudi-led coalition against the Houthi Rebels

- The clashes may cause disruption at Aden port.
- *MS Risk continues to advise extreme caution for vessels traveling through Bab-al-Mandab, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Please see security advisory below for further detail.*

SECURITY ADVISORY: ADEN, YEMEN

SUMMARY

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

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

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

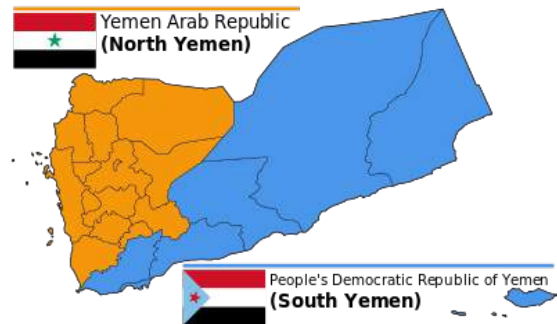
In turn, Hadi and his government refused the ultimatum and banned public gatherings ahead of last Sunday's deadline, deploying the Yemeni army to prevent STC fighters or affiliates from entering Aden. The presence of the army triggered violent clashes, leaving 12 killed and 130 wounded. The Yemeni government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

However, the truce only lasted a matter of hours, and fighting resumed in the early hours of 29 January. The violence in Aden so far has killed at least 36 people and wounded 185, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

A MATRYOSHKA DOLL OF WARS

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

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



Yemen prior to 1990 unification

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

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

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

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

PORT SECURITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

ACTIVITY REPORTING

YEMEN WARNS OF COUP AS SEPARATISTS SEIZE GOVT BLDG

- **10 February** – The United Nations (UN)'s outgoing envoy for Yemen says his potential successor is to moderate talks between Yemeni sides in Oman. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who will step down by the end of his term later this month, made the remarks on Friday. The talks would start out with a round of negotiations between the General People's Congress (GPC) party of former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh and the country's popular Houthi Ansarullah movement. The two sides have been attending talks in Switzerland and Kuwait over the past years and have formerly reached agreements on prisoner exchanges. The GPC had been allied to the Houthis before Saleh — who was killed in an attack late last year — switched allegiance to the invading Saudi Arabia.

ATAQ: FOURTEEN SOLDIERS KILLED IN TERRORIST ATTACK

- **9 February** – Twenty-five Ethiopian migrants are missing off Yemen after being forced into the sea, the United Nations migration agency said, highlighting the dangers of a well-traveled route from the Horn of Africa to rich Gulf nations. Director of operations and emergencies Mohammed Abdiker said in a Twitter post that people in the last of four boats carrying migrants were forced to swim to shore Thursday as they approached Yemen's Shabwa province from Somalia. No bodies have been found. About 600 Ethiopian migrants, men and women, were aboard the boats, spokesman Joel Millman said — an unusually large number of migrants to arrive off Shabwa at one time.

YEMENI FORCES MAKE KEY GAIN IN CAMPAIGN TO RETAKE REBEL-HELD PORT

- **8 February** – The Yemeni military, backed by the Arab Coalition, captured strategic high ground critical to the battle against the Houthi militia in Hodeidah. The capture of Mount Dharawiya, situated in the Baqim district of Saada province, less than 15 kilometres from the Saudi-Yemeni border, will allow government forces to control a key supply route from Hodeidah to the northern front. Saada is the stronghold of the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, whom the Arab coalition has been fighting on behalf of the internationally recognised government since March 2015. More than 30 Houthis were killed and two were detained in the battle, a military source told Al Arabiyanews channel. On Thursday, coalition artillery targeted Houthi military sites in Kitaf district in eastern Saada, the channel said. The coalition also launched air strikes in neighbouring Jawf province to prevent reinforcements from reaching a rebel force trying to recapture Al Mahashima hill, a journalist based in the province, Ramzi Mukhtar, told *The National*.

LOYALISTS RETAKE SOUTHWESTERN TOWN FROM REBELS

- **6 February** – Yemeni government forces have retaken the town of Hays from Houthi rebels in heavy fighting accompanied by intense Saudi-led air as they press an offensive up the Red Sea coast. At least 30 rebel fighters were killed in the battle for the town and scores wounded. A government source said eight soldiers were killed in the fighting on Monday. Loyalist commander Abdulrahman Hajari said a number of rebels had been captured as his forces entered the town. The retaking of Hays is a boost for government forces who have been hit by deadly infighting in their own ranks. Late last month, southern separatist militiamen who are a key component of the forces loyal to President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi overran the main southern city of Aden and surrounded

government ministers in the presidential palace. The two main players in the coalition supporting Hadi - Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - are still trying to broker a new political compromise. The Southern Transitional Council have called for the creation of an independent South Yemen, which existed prior to Yemeni unification in 1990.

NAVAL MINES PLANTED BY THE HOUTHIS DESTROYED IN MIDI COASTS

- **6 February** – Al Arabiya reports that Yemeni naval forces, in cooperation with the engineering teams of the Arab coalition, destroyed naval mines planted by the Houthi militias in the international waters near Midi. A military source stated that the naval mines were washed away by the waves near the coast of Midi, adding that Houthi mines pose a threat to the international community. Houthi leaders threatened more than once to cut off international shipping in the Red Sea and carried out several attempts using booby-trapped boats as well as naval mines.

COALITION SPOKESMAN: IRAN SUPPLIED HOUTHIS WITH WEAPONS TO TARGET BAB EL-MANDEB

- **5 February** – The spokesman for the Arab Coalition in Yemen stated that Iran has supplied Houthi militias with weapons to target the international shipping in Bab al-Mandeb strait. Colonel Turki al-Malki said that Houthi militias target the Hodeidah port with boat filled with bombs, which is a serious threat to shipping and world trade, stressing that there is an international understanding of these threats. He pointed out that the militias have fired a total of 95 ballistic missiles until now and that coalition forces have thwarted and destroyed all of them. He highlighted that Houthi militias threatened many Yemeni tribes in the past few weeks.
- **3 February** – A senior pro-government military commander was killed in a bomb blast in southern Yemen on Saturday, according to a local military officer. The explosion struck the convoy of Lt-Col. Moeen al-Shamsi, commander of the 83 Air Defense Brigade, in the Qa'tabah district in the al-Dhale province, officer Saddam al-Maresi said. One of al-Shamsi's aides was killed and five others were injured in the bombing. There was no claim of responsibility for the attack.

YEMEN PROCEDURE

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

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

United Nations Inspections

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

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

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

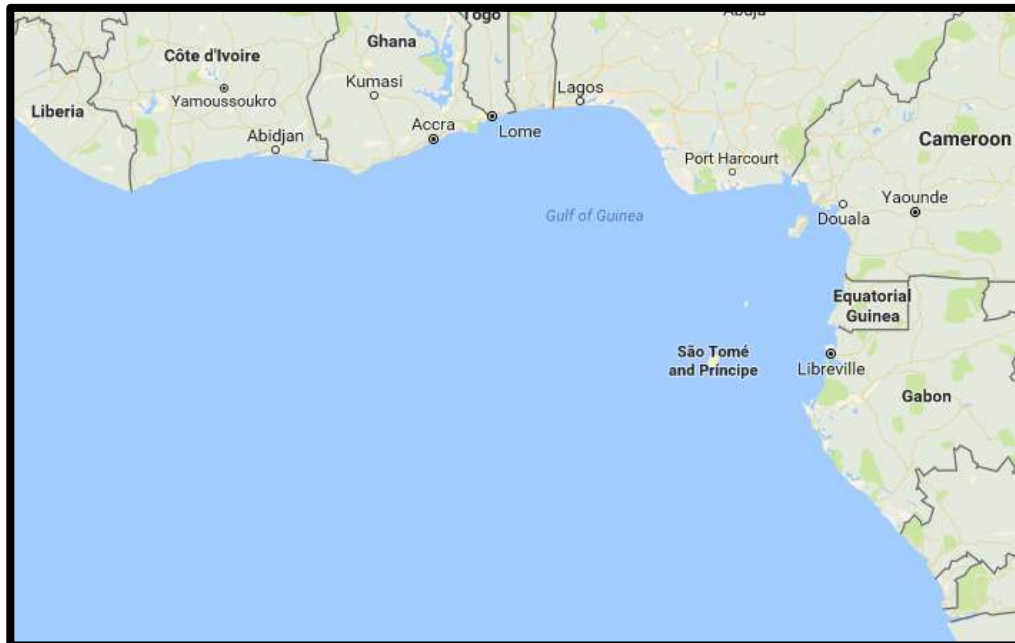
Saudi Coalition Inspections

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

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

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

WEST AFRICA, GULF OF GUINEA



Current
Incidents:

3

WARNING:

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

VESSELS HIJACKED

- **1 February (Benin – Late Report)** – The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Center (IMB PRC) received a missing vessel report from the owners of an anchored tanker *MARINE EXPRESS*, laden with 13,500 tonnes of gasoline awaiting berthing instruction in Cotonou. The IMB PRC broadcast a message to all ships in the region to look out for the missing tanker. **Update (6 February)** – The owners of the vessel confirmed that the tanker was released. The crew and cargo have been reported safe.

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS/ATTACK

- No incidents to report

VESSELS BOARDED

- **31 January (Nigeria – Late Report)** – Duty crewman on routine rounds on board an anchored product tanker in Lagos Anchorage saw two small boats tied up to the anchor chain and one robber on the forecastle deck. Duty officer on bridge was notified and the alarm was raised and foghorn was sounded. Upon seeing the alerted crew, the robber escaped. Nigerian Navy patrol boat was notified. The patrol boat arrived and searched the waters around the tanker, with the crewmembers searching the vessel. Nothing was reported stolen.

KIDNAPPING

- **2 February (Nigeria – Incident Update)** – It was announced that the five staff of an oil company who were kidnapped at Ajoki community near Koko, Warri North Local government Area of Delta State, were freed after spending nineteen days in captivity. The workers were kidnapped on 17 January by a gang of gunmen operating in the area.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

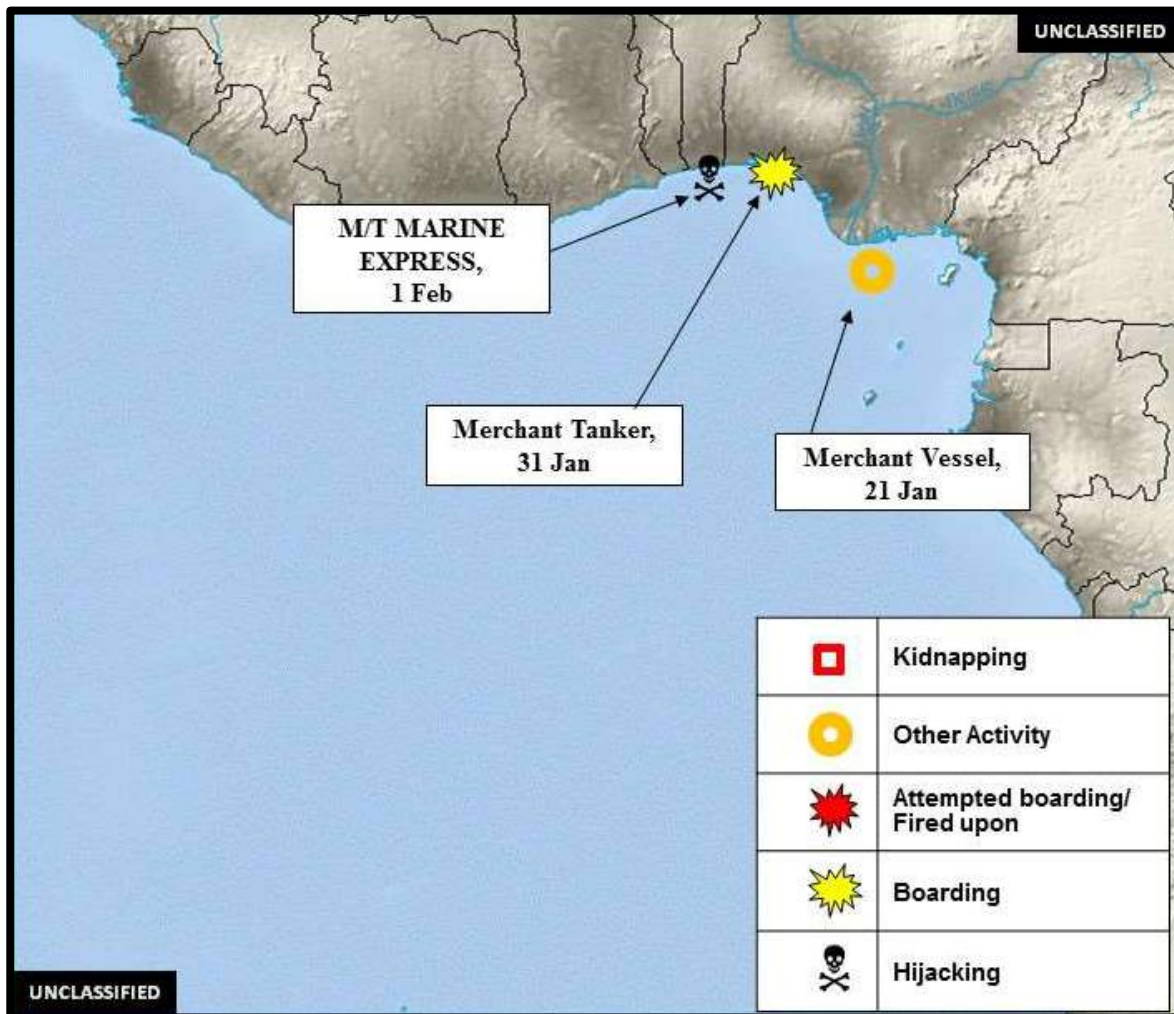
- No incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY

- **7 February (Nigeria)** – A vessel underway to Lagos was approached by one skiff near position 03:28 N – 006:56 E, 52 nautical miles south of Bonny. Skiff appeared on the starboard side with eight persons on board at 4.5 nautical miles with a CPA less than 1 nautical mile before it increased its speed to 22 knots. Armed security team onboard the vessel was alerted and ready to reply. The skiff then reduced speed and escaped. Vessel has been reported safe.

MARITIME REPORTING

- **5 February (Benin)** – India's minister of external affairs reported on Sunday that a vessel carrying 22 Indian crewmembers and 13,500 tonnes of gasoline is missing in the Gulf of Guinea after contact was lost in Benin on Friday 2 February. The Marine Express tanker, managed by Hong Kong-based Anglo-Eastern, was last seen in Benin's waters at 3:30 AM GMT on Friday after which contact was lost, an Anglo-Eastern spokesman has disclosed. Anglo-Eastern has reported that the cause of the loss of communication was unknown and that a search was underway, conducted with the help of Nigerian and Beninese authorities. According to the spokesman, contact was lost with the vessel, which was at the Cotonou Anchorage in Benin, West Africa. India's minister of external affairs Sushma Swaraj disclosed on Twitter that 22 Indian nationals were on board the vessel. This latest incident comes after a company lost communication with its tanker on 10 January. The tanker had been anchored in Cotonou. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), after a six-day search the tanker and crewmembers were found safely in Lagos after the tanker owner negotiated with the hijackers. **Update (6 February)** – A crew of 22 Indian nationals have been freed by pirates in the Gulf of Guinea off Benin. Anglo-Eastern Shipping confirmed on Tuesday that all crewmembers are safe. It currently remains unclear if a ransom was paid for the Marine Express and its crew.



WEATHER FORECAST: GULF OF GUINEA

WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 8 - 14 FEBRUARY 2018

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

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

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

SOUTHEAST ASIA



Current Incidents:

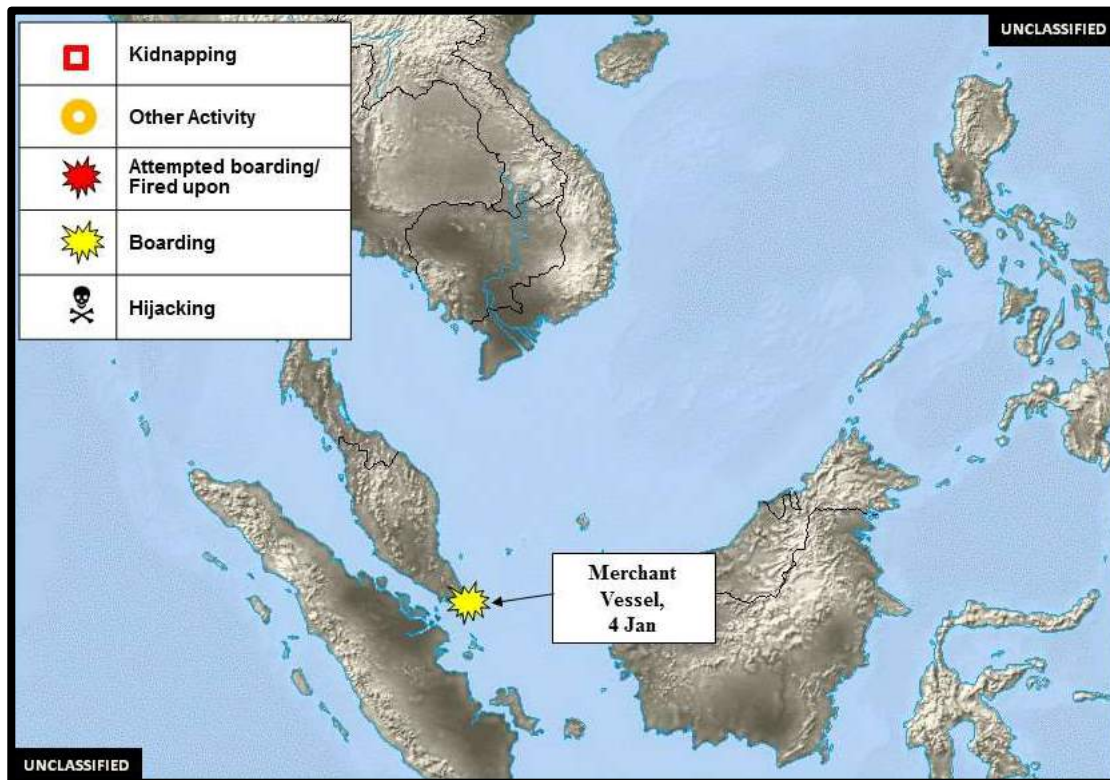
1

WARNING:

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

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

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



VESSELS HIJACKED

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- No current incidents to report

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS/ATTACK

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS BOARDED

- **4 January (Indonesia – Late Report)** – While at anchor near position 01:33 N – 104:47 E, 22 nautical miles north-northeast of Tanjung Berakit, Pulau Bintan, a duty watch keeper spotted five robbers boarding the vessel from the stern. The alarm was raised and the crew proceeded to the citadel. Later, a search of the vessel was carried out and no robbers were found onboard. Nothing was reported stolen.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY REPORT

- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- No current incidents to report

WEATHER FORECAST: SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEATHER FORECAST VALID FROM 8 - 14 FEBRUARY 2018

SOUTHERN SOUTH CHINA SEA: Northeast winds of 15 – 20 knots and seas of 4 – 6 feet.

- **Extended Forecast:** Northeast winds of 20 – 25 knots and seas of 7 – 9 feet.

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

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

ANDAMAN SEA: Northerly winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 3 – 5 feet in the northern section; with northerly winds of 10 – 15 knots and seas of 2 – 4 feet in the southern section.

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

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

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

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

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

PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST VESSELS IN ASIA: MONTHLY REVIEW (JANUARY 2018)

A total of seven incidents of piracy and armed robbery against vessels were reported in Asia in January 2018 – comprising of five actual incidents and two attempted incidents. Of the seven incidents, one was a piracy incident, with the remaining being armed robberies against vessels. During the first month of 2018, there were no actual or attempted incidents involving the abduction of crewmembers from vessels in the Sulu-Celebes Sea and waters off Eastern Sabah and there were no incidents involving the hijacking of ships for theft of oil cargo. During this period, there were two reports of arrest of perpetrators and recovery of stolen items by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Indian Coast Guard (ICG).

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

In January 2018, there were a total of seven incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships, comprising of five actual incidents and two attempted incidents, reported. Compared to December 2017, when a total of sixteen incidents were reported, the situation in the region has improved.

STATUS OF VESSELS

Of the seven incidents reported in January 2018, five incidents occurred on board vessels while at anchor/berth, with the remaining two occurring on board vessels while underway.

The incidents that occurred on board vessels at anchor/berth occurred at Muara Berau (East Kalimantan, Indonesia); Milan (Philippines); Cam Pha (Vietnam); and the South China Sea. The incidents that occurred on board vessels while underway occurred off Alanga, Gujarat (India); and off Pulau Karium (Straits of Malacca and Singapore).

SITUATION ON ABDUCTION OF CREWMEMBERS FROM VESSELS WHILE UNDERWAY IN THE SULU-CELEBES SEA AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

During this reporting period, there was no report of any incidents involving the abduction of crewmembers from vessels while underway in the Sulu-Celebes Sea, with the last actual incident occurring on board *SUPER SHUTTLE TUG 1* on 23 March 2017 and the last attempted incident occurring on board *DONA ANNABEL* on 18 April 2017.

As of January 2018, nine crewmembers are still being held in captivity. The Philippine authorities continued to conduct pursuit operations and intensify its military operations to rescue the abducted crew and neutralize the militant group.

MS Risk continues to advise all vessels to re-route from the area, where possible. Otherwise, vessel Masters and crewmembers are strongly urged to exercise extra vigilance while transiting the Sulu-Celebes Sea and eastern Sabah region, maintain communication and report all incidents to the following Centres:

ARREST OF PERPETRATORS

Philippines – Incident involving container ship POLAR ECUADOR at Manila Port

On 1 January 2018 at about 0330 hrs, Liberia-flagged container ship *POLAR ECUADOR* was anchored in the South Harbour Anchorage Area, Manila, Philippines when seven perpetrators boarded the vessel

from a motorized motor banca with markings “*ShyriL*.” The Master reported the incident to the Manila port authorities. Upon receipt of the report, the Philippines Coast Guard (PCG) activated its floating asset *DF 313* and conducted maritime patrol in the vicinity. The PCG team located the suspected motor banca, boarded and apprehended five perpetrators on board the bank. Two other perpetrators managed to jump into the water and swam towards an unknown direction. The PCG recovered the stolen items found on board the motor banca comprising of a welding machine, breathing apparatus, extension wire and paint. The PCG took custody of the motor banca used by the perpetrators and upon investigation, it was discovered that it was a stolen item. The authorities have filed charges of theft and robbery against the perpetrators in the court of Manila.

India – Incident involving tanker OCEAN 1 while underway off Alang, India

On 7 January 2018 at about 1245 hrs, Tuvalu-flagged tanker *OCEAN 1* towed by tug boat *ASL SCORPIO* was underway at approximately 11 nautical miles off Alang, Gujarat, India when three perpetrators boarded the tanker from a fishing boat. The crew immediately reported the incident to the local authorities. The Indian Coast Guard Station Pipavav requested the Indian marine Police to investigate the incident. On 11 January 2018, the Marine Police reported that they arrested the perpetrators and recovered the stolen items comprising of ship stores and engine spares. An investigation is ongoing.

CONCLUSION

The situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia improved in January 2018 compared to December 2017, with a total of seven incidents reported, compared to 16 incidents that were recorded in December 2017. During the January 2018 reporting period, there was no report of any incidents of abduction of crewmembers for ransom or hijacking of vessels for theft of oil cargo.

During this reporting period, timely and accurate reporting of all incidents to the authorities and quick response by the enforcement resulted in the arrest of the perpetrators and recovery of stolen items involving incidents that were reported on board the *POLAR ECUADOR* and *OCEAN 1*.

MS Risk continues to advise vessels transiting the areas of concern to exercise enhanced vigilance, maintain look-out for suspicious approach by boats, report all incidents to the nearest coastal State and flag State immediately, keep abreast of the latest situation and implement preventive measures.

WORLDWIDE

Current
Incidents:

2

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

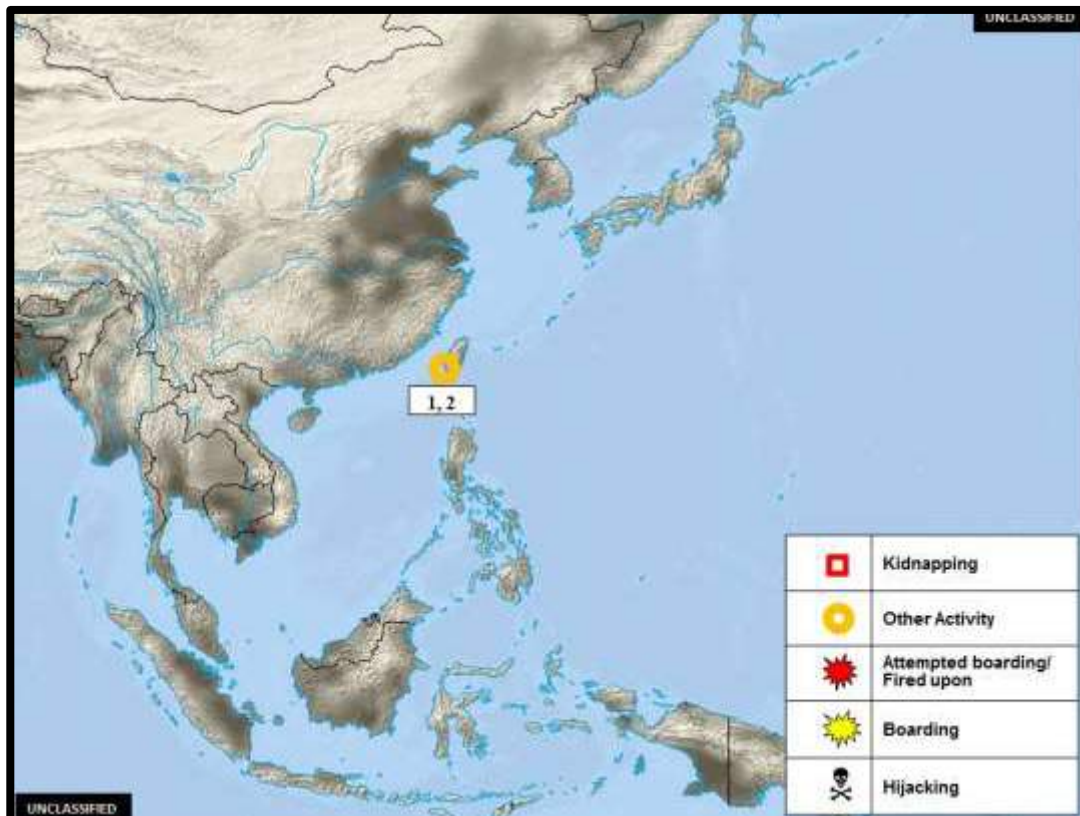
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

- No current incidents to report

NORTHEAST ASIA

- **4 February (Taiwan – Late Report)** – More than 13 tonnes of descaled and disembowelled pangolins were discovered in a cargo container at Kaosiung's Pier 66, the Kaohsiung Customs Administration office reported in a statement, adding that it has launched an investigation to track the group behind the illegal import. The original shipping company failed to return a shipping container to its original address, saying that the recipient refused to accept the shipment, the Kaohsiung disclosed, adding that it opened the container to inspect the contents, as it found the application suspicious. The front section of the container contained frozen sardines, a cover for the pangolins in the rear of the container, the office stated. The container was shipped from Malaysia to Kaohsiung on 27 December last year, but had remained in an unloading bay, as the recipient had not submitted its customs form, the office stated.

- **4 February (Taiwan – Late Report)** – Police raided a fishing boat at a pier in Kaohsiung and seized 1,289 kilogrammes of ketamine in the biggest drug bust in Taiwan’s history. The drug bust was carried out after weeks of investigation and surveillance, based on a tipoff that a drug syndicate was shipping drugs into Taiwan, a spokesman disclosed. The fishing vessel *SHENG LI MAN*, which is registered in Donggang in Pingtung County, was put under surveillance after it set sail in January because investigators discovered that it was not often engaged in fishing activities.



PACIFIC OCEAN/SOUTHERN OCEAN

- No current incidents to report

MIGRATION



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

SMUGGLERS HOLDING MIGRANTS FEARED DROWNED IN LIBYA SHIPWRECK

7 February - According to an embassy official, about twenty people feared to have drowned on a boat that sank off Libya late last week were brought back to shore by smugglers and are being held at an unknown location. The group includes eight Pakistanis, one of whom called officials to say that smugglers were holding him in a locked room with other survivors. Previously, just three people were known to have survived after a boat carrying more than ninety people sank off the western Libyan town of Zuwara. The bodies of twelve Pakistanis who died in the incident have been recovered and brought to a morgue in the capital, Tripoli, awaiting repatriation. According to the embassy official, the victims are mostly from Gujrat in northern Pakistan, adding that a total of 32 Pakistanis are believed to have been on the boat, with the number of deceased still unclear. Libya is the main gateway for migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe, through numbers have significantly dropped since July 2017, as Libyan factions and authorities, under increasing pressure from Italy and the European Union (EU), have begun to block departures. Zuwara was a top departure point until a local backlash against smuggling in 2015. The Italian Interior Ministry has reported that so far this year, just over 3,500 migrants are recorded to have crossed from Libya to Italy, about 60 percent fewer than during the same period last year. Pakistanis are the third largest national group to make the crossing, after Eritreans and Tunisians. Pakistanis who have resided in Libya for decades, many working in the gold business, have tried to leave because of the collapse in the value of the Libyan dinar and a severe liquidity crisis. Others have found their way to Libya through smuggling networks.

OVER A DOZEN BODIES PULLED OFF THE COAST OF MOROCCO

5 February – According to officials, the bodies of sixteen people have been pulled from the sea off the coast of Melilla, a small Spanish territory that borders Morocco. Moroccan rescue services recovered the corpses after crewmembers of a Spanish ship spotted them in the water. A medical official has disclosed that all the dead were from sub-Saharan Africa, apart from one Moroccan. It is thought that they may have been hoping to reach Europe by sailing from Melilla, despite storm warnings. Melilla, which is just 12 sq km (7 square miles) is a major crossing point for undocumented migrants who are seeking work or asylum in Europe. It is one of two European Union (EU) land borders with Africa, with the other being a second Spanish enclave, Ceuta.

SPOTLIGHT ON LIBYA

PORT STATUS AS OF 11 FEBRUARY 2018

Port Name	Port Status	Risk Level
Port of Abu Kammash	Open	Low
Port of al-Khums (Homs)	Open	Low
Port of As-Sidra (Sirte, Es Sider)	Open	Moderate-High
Port of Benghazi	Open	High
Port of Bouri (offshore port)	Open	Low
Port of Derna	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

TWIN BOMBING AT BENGHAZI MOSQUE KILLS TWO, WOUNDS 75

- **10 February** – Twin bomb explosions at a mosque in the city of Benghazi have killed at least two people and injured 75 others, Libyan officials say. Motaz Agouri, an official at Benghazi security directorate's media office, said the explosion took place during Friday prayers inside the Saad Ibn Ibada mosque in Benghazi's busy Berka district. Mr Agouri said the bombs were planted in separate rooms inside the mosque. The devices, placed inside bags, appear to have been activated remotely using a mobile phone, a military source said. Benghazi is controlled by the Libyan National Army (LNA), the dominant force in eastern Libya led by commander Khalifa Haftar. The LNA was battling Islamists, including some linked to Islamic State and Al Qaeda, as well as other opponents until late last year in the Mediterranean port city.

SMUGGLERS HOLDING MIGRANTS FEARED DROWNED IN SHIPWRECK

- **7 February** – About 20 people feared to have drowned on a boat that sank off Libya late last week were brought back to shore by smugglers and are being held at an unknown location, an embassy official said on Wednesday. The group includes eight Pakistanis, one of whom called officials to say that smugglers were holding him in a locked room with other survivors. Previously, just three people were known to have survived after a boat carrying more than 90 people sank off the western Libyan town of Zuwara. The bodies of 12 Pakistanis who died in the incident have been recovered and brought to a morgue in the capital, Tripoli, awaiting repatriation. The victims are mostly from Gujrat in northern Pakistan, according the embassy official. A total of 32 Pakistanis are believed to have been on the boat, and the number who died is still unclear, he said.

UN REPORT SUGGESTS LIBYA FORCES MAY BE COLLUDING WITH MIGRANT SMUGGLERS

- **6 February** – Human trafficking is on the rise in Libya, according to a report by a UN panel of experts which found that Libyan forces may be helping rebel groups tighten their control of smuggling routes. The confidential report sent to the UN Security Council also said the Islamic State group is seeking to join migrant smugglers in southern Libya after it was pushed out of Sirte in 2016. "Human trafficking is on the rise in Libya, resulting in major human rights violations," said the 157-page report. The panel raised concern "over the possible use of state facilities and state funds by armed groups and traffickers to enhance their control of migration routes." Libya has long been a transit hub for migrants, but smugglers have stepped up their lucrative business in the years that followed the 2011 ouster of Moammar Gadhafi. The report cited accounts from Eritrean migrants who were arrested in 2016 in Tripoli by agents of a special force affiliated to Libya's interior ministry who handed them over to migrant smugglers "against payment". Four Bangladeshi migrants arrested by the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) in Tripoli were held in a government detention center in 2015 even though they held valid work visas. The migrants paid \$300 US each to the SDF and were sent to another Libyan city where they were loaded on boats for Europe "against their will", the report said. "The panel is assessing whether the SDF's leadership was aware of collusion and trafficking being conducted within its ranks," said the report.

FRONTEX: NEW EU SEA MISSION -SHIPS ARE NOT OBLIGED TO BRING MIGRANTS TO ITALY

- **5 February** – Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency has launched a new operation in the Central Mediterranean to assist Italy in border control activities. The new Mediterranean operation, called Themis, is aimed at removing the obligation of the previous mission to bring rescued migrants only to Italy. Triton, which was the previous Frontex operation launched in 2014, required all those rescued at sea to be brought to Italy even if another EU country, such as Malta, was closer. Italy has over the years urged the EU to do more to help cope with the migrant problem, as it continues to have a drain on the country's public purse. Italy at the moment coordinates the vast majority of sea rescues between North Africa and its southern coast and hence the new rule may not have a large impact on arrivals. But it may be a cause for Mediterranean neighbours like Malta to worry about. The Operation Themis will focus more on law enforcement. In a statement, Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri said: "Operation Themis will better reflect the changing patterns of migration, as well as cross-border crime." "Frontex will also assist Italy in tracking down criminal activities, such as drug smuggling across the Adriatic," the statement added. The one-year mission will be re-evaluated every three months and will include Italy's southern Adriatic coast. Themis vessels are also not expected to patrol further than 24 miles from the coast, unlike Triton which extended about 30 miles from the Italian coast. Triton was not a search-and-rescue operation but it has helped in the rescue of 38,000 people since 2014. About 10 Themis vessels will be operating in the summer and will also carry out rescues if asked. But no rescued migrants will be taken to non-EU countries, like Libya or Tunisia.

LIBYA CONDEMNS MILITIA ATTACKS AGAINST TAWERGHIA MINORITY

- **5 February** – Libya's U.N.-backed government in Tripoli has condemned attacks against hundreds of displaced black Libyans known as Tawergha who were still stranded in a camp on Monday after militiamen prevented them from returning home. Witnesses reported that the Tawergha, who were due to return on Feb. 1 under an agreement with the neighboring city of Misrata, were barred from entry by militias who fired in the air and even shot up some cars. Misrata militiamen blame the Tawergha for siding with Libya's longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi during the 2011 uprising that overthrew and killed him. The Tawergha have been living in camps and makeshift housing across Libya since then, facing threats and extortion. In December, the Tripoli government said Tawergha families would be able to return to their hometown in February following a reconciliation deal. The U.N. has called for the deal to be implemented. Tawergha was used as a staging ground for attacks on Misrata during the uprising. Anti-Gadhafi militias, mainly from Misrata, later drove out its residents, believing they had aided Gadhafi's forces. The town has been largely deserted since then. Human Rights Watch estimates that about 40,000 have been displaced from the town.

TWO SOLDIERS, THREE IS FIGHTERS KILLED IN CLASHES NEAR LIBYAN OILFIELD

- **3 February** – Libyan forces killed three suspected Islamic State fighters near an oilfield in the southeast of the country. Two soldiers were also killed and five wounded during clashes over two days, one of which took place near the Dhahra oilfield on Saturday, said Umar al-Faqeh, head of the Maradah administration to which the area belongs. There had been fighting in another area on Friday, he added. The Dhahra field is operated by Waha, a joint-venture between Libya's state National Oil Company and US firms Hess, Marathon and ConocoPhillips. The oil protection force guarding the Waha operations is allied to Libya's eastern government. The U.N.-backed administration is in the capital, Tripoli, in western Libya.

LIBYA PROCEDURE

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

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

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

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

ABOUT JLT

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.

We work with yourselves, our network and the market to deliver a solution which is always tailored to your specific needs and always competitive and comprehensive.

Because of this our clients trust us. They have total confidence that the vital elements of their operations are covered, enabling their businesses to be even more ambitious and surpass expectations. This is why we now place insurance for more than 6,000 vessels, including one third of the world gas fleet and we handle more than USD350m marine insurance premium.

We know how we work makes us different. It's quite a claim but we're driven to deliver on it every single day.

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

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

SECURITY CONSULTING

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

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Interim security
- Training
- Special assignments

CRISIS RESPONSE

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

VIRTUAL SECURITY DIRECTOR SERVICE

- For clients lacking a full-time security executive

References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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