



Issue 72 of the series reviews, analyses and threat assesses the fragile and conflict affected coastal states Libya, Somalia and Yemen. The Mediterranean migrant crisis, incidents affecting maritime security and influencing maritime news are also reported and analysed, focusing on the keys theatres of maritime instability.

“Making the maritime environment a safer place to live and work”



The Maritime Intelligence Report Series focuses on:

- Operational risks in areas of instability which could affect the safety of commercial and private vessels and personnel ashore and at sea.
- In country reporting on key countries where civil conflict are directly impacting on maritime operations; and
- Reporting and analysis of incidents of terrorism, piracy and other related criminal activity.

MAST has a global reach and presence, delivering first hand, accurate and exclusive intelligence. MAST is entrenched and committed in continuing to support and promote the awareness of the very real risks that seafarers and other stakeholders face.

This Intelligence Report Series is a brief snapshot of MAST’s Intelligence capabilities. MAST Intelligence specialises in providing clients with a suite of products and services, including; political and economic risk analysis, detailed port and vessel security briefs, vessel passage plans, threat and risk mitigation and travel risk management.

Working closely in conjunction with a host of experts, MAST Intelligence offers a market leading service pertaining to all maritime affairs.

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MAST RISK MAP



Indian Ocean Region

Voice of America reports that foreign naval forces have shot dead two Somali pirates in international waters. The pirates were attempting to hijack an unidentified ship near the Gulf of Aden on Saturday 15th. Another pirate was injured during the incident. Ahmed Abdullahi, an official with the anti-piracy force in the Puntland region, said the men were from a group of nine pirates. The others escaped. The naval force involved was not named.



Incidents:

1. MV approached by small boat with 6-7 armed POB. Vessel came under attack with shots fired at 0652 UTC in position 15:55.8N - 052:20.7E, around 10nm off Yemen coast in GoA. Several attempts to board without success. Vessel departed area, no casualties or damage observed. Subsequent investigations indicate that the incident was a local dispute with Yemen authorities from the port of Nishtun. Vessel and crew are safe. Reported April 14th (UKMTO).

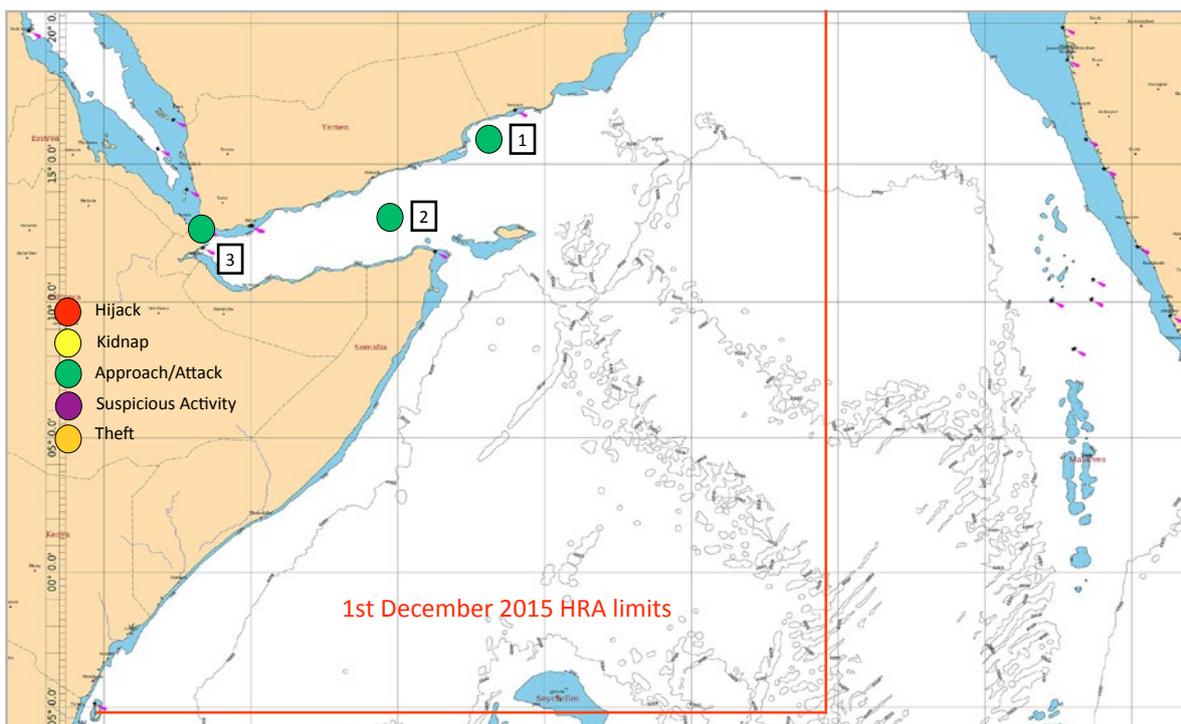
2. Pirates armed with automatic weapons in a white coloured skiff approached and fired upon a product tanker underway. Skiff with 7 armed POB at 1316 UTC in position 12:43.5N - 048:02E, around 110nm NxW of Bosasso in IRTC, Gulf of Aden. Master raised the alarm, contacted UKMTO and the non-essential crew members took shelter in the citadel. Warship in the vicinity informed. Embarked armed security team returned fire resulting in the pirates aborting the attack and moving away. Skiff still in the area, last seen 12:41.2N - 048:07E. Tanker and crew safe. Reported April 15th (IMB/UKMTO).

3. Three suspicious, blue-hulled skiffs with five POB in each approached a container ship underway at 1022 UTC in position

12:49.1N – 043:16E, Bab el Mandeb, Red Sea. Master raised the alarm, the non-essential crew retreated into the citadel and embarked armed security team showed their weapons. Master informed the coalition warship about the approaching skiffs. When the skiffs were around 1nm from the ship, AST fired a rocket flair resulting in the skiffs aborting the approach. At 1035 UTC, another white-hulled skiff with six POB approached the ship. AST fired another rocket flair towards the skiff resulting in the skiff crossing the ships bow and moving away. At 1050 UTC, another two skiffs were seen approaching the ship. At a distance of 0.7nm from the ship AST showed their weapons resulting in the skiffs aborting and seen heading towards Mayyun. All crew safe. The ship continued her passage. Reported April 16th (IMB).

Threat Assessment

To read MAST's current Threat Assessment on the Indian Ocean Region, [please click here](#).





Somalia

Dozens of American soldiers have deployed to Mogadishu to train and equip Somali and AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) forces fighting extremism in Somalia, U.S. military officials told the US media. The troops' arrival marks the first presence of American military forces in Somalia, other than a small unit of counterterrorism advisers, since March 1994.



India Thanks Somalia for Rescuing Crew

India on Wednesday 12th thanked Somalia for rescuing 10 Indians working as crew on a commercial vessel hijacked by pirates.

on Saturday 15th in El Adde village in Gedo region, southwest of Somalia, said senior official and residents, Garowe Online reported.

Police Issue Alert On Al Shabaab Attack in Kenya

Kenyan Security agents have been put on alert following reports that at least nine Kenyan terrorists who joined Al Shabaab in Somalia could be headed back to the country to launch attacks.

Terrorists Deny Somalis Access to Food Aid

Thousands of Somalis displaced by drought are at risk of starvation as AS terrorists block routes to make some places inaccessible to humanitarian workers, regional media reported on April 13th.

WFP Probes IED Attack on its Convoy Near Mogadishu

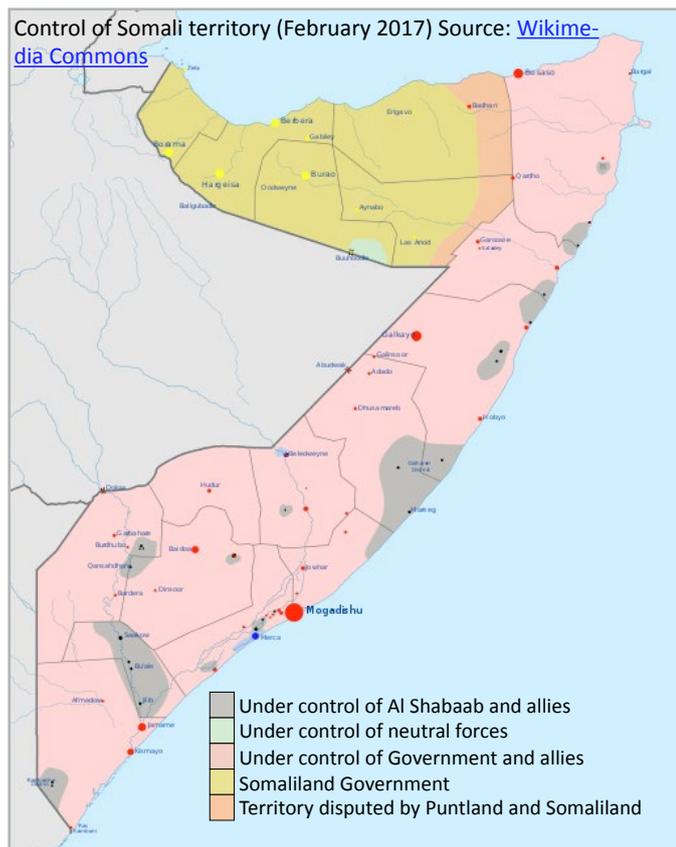
Two private security guards were wounded by a reported roadside bomb that hit a UN convoy in Mogadishu on Sunday 16th. The explosion struck 100 meters behind vehicles belonging to the UN's World Food Programme (WFP), as workers returned from a drought-affected area on the outskirts of the Somali capital.

Al Shabaab

- Al Shabaab militants fired mortar shells at Aden Adde International Airport in Mogadishu on April 16th, killing at least two civilians.
- Al Shabaab militants ambushed a Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF) convoy with a roadside IED near Hosingow village in Lower Jubba region, southern Somalia, on April 17th. The attack killed at least seven KDF soldiers.

Kenyan warplanes bomb Al Shabaab camp

Suspected Kenyan warplanes targeted an AS training camp



Analysis

The arrival of a US training mission in Somalia will concern Al Shabaab and may see efforts to disrupt it or larger attacks as AS attempts to demonstrate its capabilities. The possibility that Kenyan AS recruits may return to engage in acts of terrorism in Kenya cannot be ignored. The execution of several terrorists by the Puntland authorities will likely not be allowed to pass by AS and Daesh, who have fighters in the region.

Threat Assessment

The spate of recent hijackings, attacks and attempted boardings continues. Reports that 'foreign naval forces' shot and killed two pirates on Saturday 15th are unconfirmed but send a message that pirates will be met with deadly force when challenged. Whether this will be seen as a deterrent or challenge remains to be seen. The threat posed to shipping in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia and particularly Puntland remains a major cause for concern.

A lack of adherence to BMP4 protocol, particularly not maintaining a safe distance off the coast, has increased risks to shipping. BMP4 advises: "non-Somali fishing vessels should avoid operating or transiting within 200nm of the coast of Somalia, irrespective of whether or not they have been issued with license to do so". Merchant vessels would be wise to maintain the same distance from the coast, particularly ensuring that the Socotra Gap isn't taken.

All vessels are advised to update risk assessments and register with UKMTO/MSCHOA prior to entering the Indian Ocean High Risk Area.



Yemen

Yemeni forces launched an operation codenamed Naval Arrow on Sunday 16th in an effort to remove naval mines which they say were planted by Houthi militias. The mines, which are believed to have been sourced from Iran, threaten fishermen and residents of islands near the coasts of Midi. They also threaten international navigation in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.



Calls for militias to be listed as terror group

Yemen's Deputy Human Rights Minister Mohammed Askar has called on the international community to include Houthi militias and forces loyal to ousted President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the list of terrorist groups.

Rebels blamed for Yemen's humanitarian disaster

The Yemeni government has criticised a United Nations report faulting the Saudi-led coalition for the country's "humanitarian crisis". On Wednesday 12th, the UN special rapporteur on human rights and international sanctions, Edriss Jazairy, urged the Saudi-led coalition to lift its "unwarranted" aerial and naval blockade on Yemen.

AQAP/ISIS

- AQAP militants assassinated the commander of Emirati-backed al Hizam forces in Shaqra area, southwestern Abyan governorate, southern Yemen on April 13th.
- Tribal forces reportedly killed an AQAP commander in Shabwah governorate, eastern Yemen on April 13

Threat Assessment

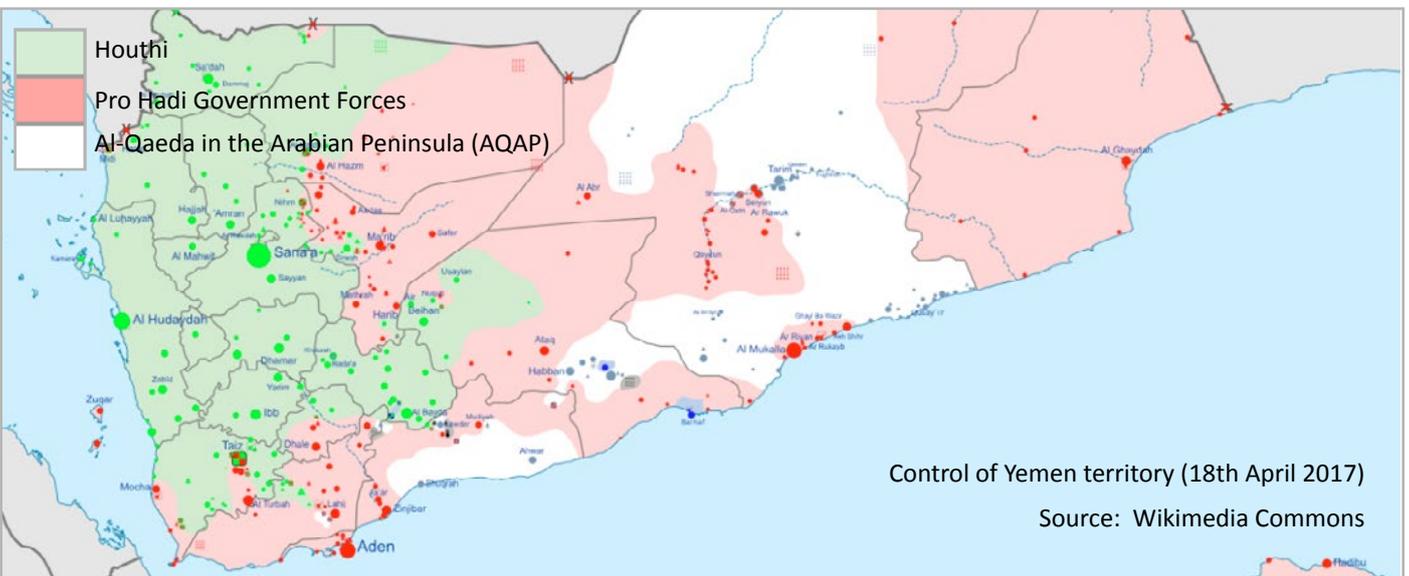
To date, Houthi maritime attacks have used directed weapons systems such as radar guided missiles and a Command Line of Sight remote control vessel. Sea mines present an indiscriminate threat, as a Yemen Coast Guard vessel discovered on March 10th when it struck one, killing two crew. It is unknown whether the mines are moored or grounded as is the method of detonation. Sea mines can be subject to free movement if cut or poorly secured. As issued in the UKMTO Advisory Notice

001/FEB/2017, Masters should consider increasing vigilance, maintain the furthest possible distance from the Yemen coast, transit the Bab el-Mandeb Strait during daylight hours and use the western TSS wherever possible.

The sophistication of the remote controlled speed boat which successfully targeted a Saudi Frigate on January 30th demonstrates a high likelihood that the Iranians are sponsoring innovative Asymmetric methods to challenge the Saudi-led blockade operating in the Southern Red Sea.

Approaches against merchant vessels by small, fast boats containing armed men indicate that the threat to shipping remains high; the motivation of these actors is not known - they may be AQAP or Houthi affiliates – although the incident involving the Galicia Spirit should be taken as a significant warning of the possible outcome of allowing a small craft to approach a MV unchallenged. The incident on March 13th (please see our Indian Ocean Region section) confirms that the Gulf of Aden remains high risk.

MAST recommends BMP measures be enforced and watches strengthened during transits in the region. In the Gulf of Aden, MAST's advice is to steer clear of al Mukallah and remain in the IRTC, where warship protection is more likely. Attacks off Al Mukallah in 2016 and recent activity indicate that the risk to merchant shipping from threat elements within Yemen remains high.



Control of Yemen territory (18th April 2017)

Source: Wikimedia Commons



Yemen Ports

The Economist has reported that an assault on Al Hudaydah (Hodeida), Yemen's main trading port, is expected in the very near future. A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia and backed by Western nations siding with President Hadi is finalising plans to invade and take Hodeida from rebel forces. UN observers have said that an attack is imminent. A successful raid could push rebel forces into the mountains and Sana'a, Yemen's capital.



UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM)

The UN's Secretary-General has decided to institute a UNVIM for the facilitation of commercial imports to Yemen, at the request of the Government of the Republic of Yemen and in line with Security Council resolution 2216 (2015).

UNVIM is operational with immediate effect. Shipping companies or vessel owners shipping commercial goods or services to any port not under the direct control of the Government of Yemen (Salif, Mokha, Hudaydah and associated oil terminals) need to apply for permits upon departure of the port of origin of their cargo. For further details [click here](#).

UN arms embargo imposed by UN Security Council Resolution 2216 of 2015 is in place.

Port Aden:

- The port of Aden is under the protection of the Republic of Yemen security forces.
- Curfew in effect for Aden, 2000-0600 daily.
- Merchant vessels wishing to enter Yemeni ports must first apply for a permit through the Yemeni Ministry of Transportation; contact: yemen.transport@gmail.com for more information.
- Final clearance to enter Yemeni ports (with permits in place) is authenticated by the coalition guard ship.
- Aden is the only port in Yemen currently able to facilitate container vessels. The container terminal has recently increased its capacity. WFP note that eight vessels were discharging at berth with 5 waiting at anchorage.

Port Salif: Capacity 2 berths. Operating at capacity.

Port Hudaydah:

- Capacity 8 berths.
- Only 1 of 5 shore based cranes in partial operation, container vessels highly recommended to have their own internal cranes.
- RSNF is utilizing a holding area 60 NM west of the port of Hudaydah for all vessels attempting entry into Salif or Hudaydah. Inbound vessels should plan on holding within this area prior to receiving clearance from port control warships.

Port Mokha: Status - Closed: Currently classified as 'Not Safe' (North of England P&I, Jan. 12th 2017).

Port Al Mukalla: Capacity 2 berths. Al Mukalla port was liberated on the 23/24 April by the Saudi-led coalition and southern resistance. Port officials have advised that port operations resumed on the 26th April.

Port of Balhaf: Status - Closed: LNG terminal remains closed. Now under control of Saudi and Yemeni forces.

Port of Ras Isa: Status - Closed. Safer oil terminal remains closed, Safer Company (SEPOC) does not allow vessels to berth at Safer Marine Terminal if they do not have an agreement signed by them according to the protocol between buyer and Yemeni government.



Mediterranean

Thousands of migrants have been saved from the sea near Libya during one of the busiest weekends of the year for rescue workers. More than 2,000 people were rescued on Friday 14th and 3,000 on Saturday 15th in dozens of separate rescues, the Italian Coast Guard said. But at least seven people drowned as aid workers struggled to rescue more than 1,500 migrants in one operation. An eight-year-old boy was among the dead, rescue workers said.



Almost 8,300 asylum seekers rescued in Mediterranean

Nearly 8,300 asylum seekers were rescued from unseaworthy smugglers' boats in the Mediterranean over the Easter weekend, according to NGOs and rescue workers. More than 1,400 of the rescued were saved by European border and coastguard agency Frontex, which said it was involved in 13 search-and-rescue operations over a three day period.

EU 'leaving migrants to drown'

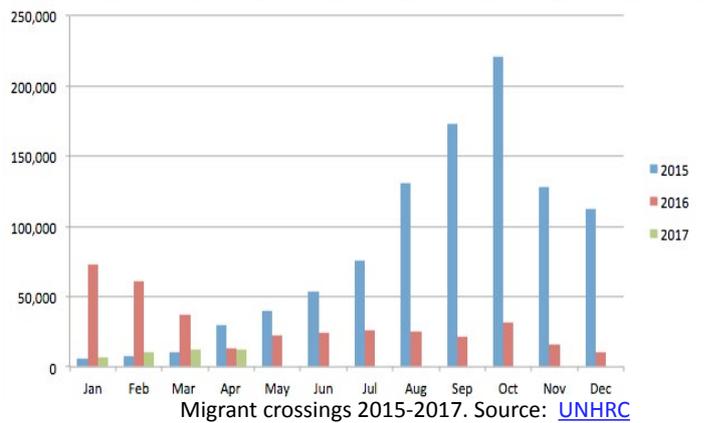
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), a medical charity which has carried out hundreds of rescue operations in the Mediterranean since the beginning of the migrant crisis, has criticised Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard agency, who operate official EU patrols on migration routes. MSF said in a series of tweets that NGOs were being forced to fill gaps in service provision left by the EU coastguard.

Almost 100 migrants feared drowned after boat sinks

At least 97 African migrants are believed drowned after their boat sank in the Mediterranean Sea on April 13th. Libyan coast guard spokesman Ayoub Gassim said 23 migrants were rescued around 6 miles off the Libyan coast after authorities received a distress call.

Spanish Coast Guard rescues 58 migrants

The Spanish coast guard said on Monday 17th said they saved 58 migrants who tried to enter the country illegally through its southern Mediterranean part, a press release said on Monday. The people on two boats, including nine children, were rescued several hours apart and nautical miles off Alboran island of the Spanish Almeria province. Each boat was carrying 29 people, the coast guard said.



The current migrant smuggling situation

MAST sources continue to suggest that Sabratha remains a popular migrant departure point, although clashes with fuel smuggling gangs remain an issue for human traffickers operating in the region. The Easter weekend saw large numbers of migrants attempt the Mediterranean crossing. As a result, rescuers were stretched thin and there were a number of reported fatalities amongst migrant groups. While the numbers crossing in April remain well below 2015 figures, they are already close to last year's numbers. Interestingly, the latest UNHCR data has reduced the number of dead and missing from the previous week's report. Media reports that up to a million migrants are en route to Libya to make the crossing will further stretch rescue efforts at a time when NGOs are critical of a lack of search and rescue support from the EU Frontex rescue mission.



Map depicting major migrant routes in the Mediterranean (April 18th 2017). Source: [UNHRC](#)



Libya

Libya's unity government called for "urgent intervention" by the international community on April 17th to end military escalation in its south, warning of a possible "civil war". For more than a week, militias allied to the UN-backed Government of National Accord have fought off rival forces trying to capture an airbase in the south of the North African country, although a three-day ceasefire was negotiated on April 16th.



Tobruk govt forces accused of breaching S. Libya truce

Tobruk-based forces of Libyan military commander Khalifa Haftar have violated a three-day ceasefire in southern Libya, according to a source within the country's UN-backed unity government (GNA). "Haftar's forces on Sunday night attacked the Tamanhant Airbase some 30 kilometers northeast of the city of Sabha," Mohamed Iqliwan, a spokesman for the unity government's Third Force, told Anadolu Agency on Monday 17th.

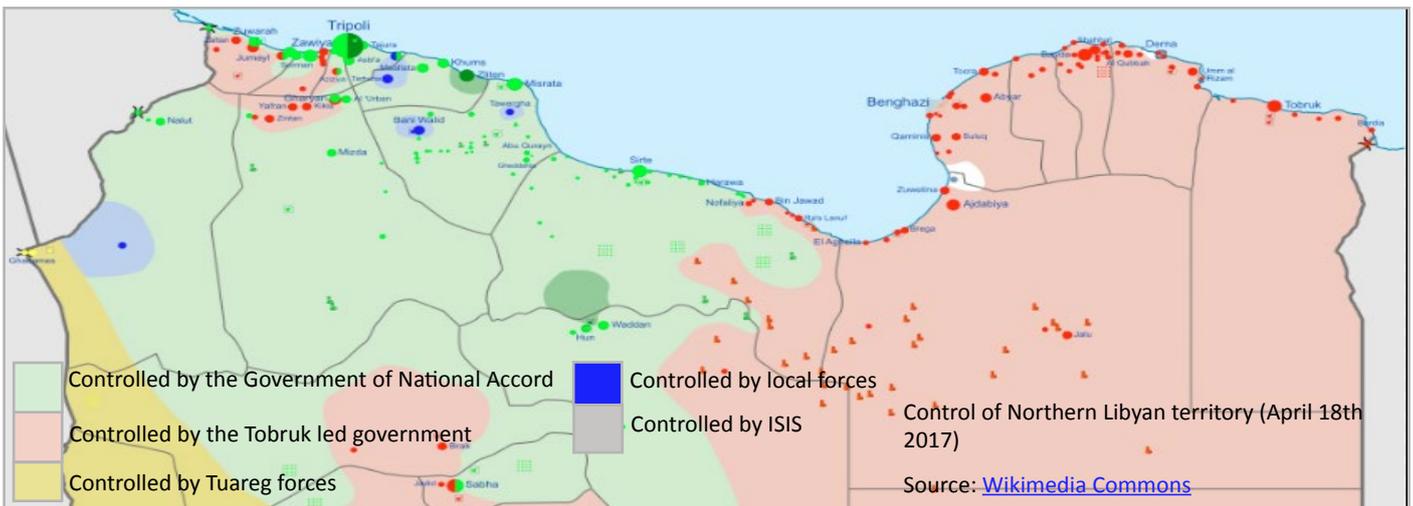
Analysis

With the Oil Crescent back under his control, it remains to be seen whether Field Marshal Haftar will return day to day control to the National Oil Company (NOC) or oversee operations with LNA-backed staff. The arrival of the 'Supreme Council for Oil, Gas and Water Resources in the Oases and the Basin' could complicate matters for the EU-backed GNA, with supplies from the Sharara oil field shut down again after just one week of operation, due to ongoing fighting in the region between GNA and LNA factions. Global oil prices have already risen as a result of Libya's drop in output in recent weeks, and Libya desperately needs to increase production. The NOC has declared force majeure on crude loadings from Sharara at Zawiyah terminal. The relationship between the HoR and Russia will be of great concern to both the EU and US, who have backed the Government of National Accord, which Haftar and the HoR do not recognise. The political olive branch recently presented by Russia to the GNA will cause further concern in the West as Russian influence in the country. The US is now taking Field Marshal Haftar's Russian ties seriously, and will retain a force in Libya, primarily to coordinate the fight against Daesh/ISIS, but with a secondary mission to observe any Russian encroachment in the region.

Ports currently operational in Libya are: Mellitah, Zawiyah, Tripoli, Misrata, Marsa El Brega, Tobruk, Al Khoms, Marsa El Hariga, Farwah, Bouri, Zuwarah, Zuetina and Es Sider.

Threat Assessment

News that GNA-backed naval and air assets are to be used to stop fuel smuggling is welcome on the face of it. However, the risks to vessels in Libya's TTW is clear with two competing governments and confusing paperwork and permissions to enter Libyan waters. Vessels transiting to Libya must ensure they have the correct authority prior to entering the country's TTW or risk vessel seizure. Equally, LNA militias remain a threat to vessels entering Libyan waters without the correct paperwork. The GNA has kept its counsel over both Haftar's retaking of Ras Lanuf and Es Sider, as well as the LNA's vessel seizures. While the EU and other nations have concentrated on Haftar and his Russian connections, the GNA has not publicly been drawn into commenting on potential Russian involvement in the country, despite calls from Russia for "inclusive national dialogue", possibly because they hope to strike a deal with Russia themselves. Both the UK and French ambassadors to Libya have now held meetings with Haftar, suggesting that the West is beginning to rethink its approach to the country, which could see support for the GNA wane in the EU. MAST is able to provide risk assessments and crew training to improve situational awareness and risk appreciation. The additional threat to shipping should not be taken lightly.





Gulf of Guinea

Two soldiers were killed in Rivers State on Wednesday 12th after they responded to a distress call by "heavily armed sea robbers," the Army has said. A spokesperson for the Army confirmed the incident in a statement to media. The statement said that troops deployed at Creek 6 Houseboat Cawthorne Channel responded to a distress call stating that sea robbers were attacking. They then engaged the heavily-armed men in the area of Ijawkiri.



Incidents:

1. On Wednesday 12th at around 1800 LT, pirates engaged Nigerian military forces in the vicinity of 04:29.3N-06:14E. During the gun battle, two soldiers were killed.
2. On Wednesday 19th at 0900Z, a MV was attacked in position 03:25N-005:36E, around 40nm off Brass, Nigeria. A small craft with 8 POB fired on the MV. The MV's armed security team returned fire, forcing the attackers to abort.

Nigeria's military destroys 13 illegal oil refineries

Nigeria's military said on Thursday that it had destroyed 13 illegal refineries in the restive Niger Delta oil hub. The Nigerian government said last week that it plans to legalize illicit refineries as part of an attempt to bring peace to the production heartland of crude oil, but it is unclear when it will put the plan into action.

Niger Delta amnesty to pay ex-militants 2016 stipends

The Presidential Amnesty Programme on the Niger Delta announced on Monday 17th that it would pay the 2016 stipends and allowances of ex-militants "soon". The Coordinator of the programme, Brig-General Paul Boroh (rtd), said in a statement that the documents needed for the payment had been pre-

pared. He said the amnesty office had concluded an arrangement with the finance ministry, budget office, accountant general's office and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on the issue.

Nigeria's Mosimi oil depot resumes loading

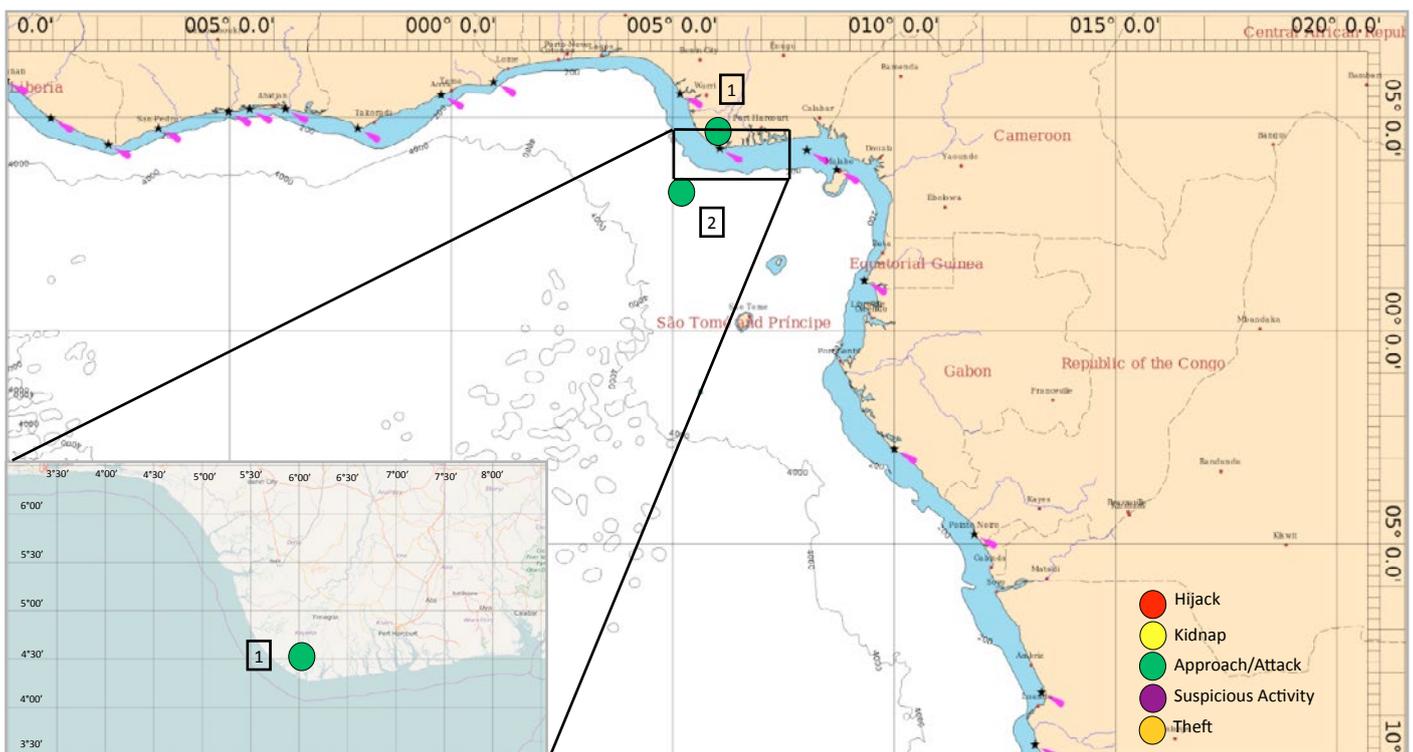
Nigeria's Mosimi oil depot has resumed operations after almost a year, when a major pipeline was vandalised last May, the state oil company said on Monday 10th.

MEND disowns Jonathan, backs Reps' decision to summon ex-president

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) on Monday 17th lauded the decision of the House of Representatives to summon former President Goodluck Jonathan over the controversial Malabu oil deal.

Threat Assessment

To read MAST's current Threat Assessment on the Gulf of Guinea region, [please click here](#).





INTELLIGENCE REPORT SERIES

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South East Asia

The Philippine Coast Guard foiled an attack on a cargo ship by suspected pirates on April 18th, off Zamboanga del Norte. Zamboanga CG Station Commander Alvin Dagalea said the attack occurred at around 6:30am off Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte. Dagalea said the MV Doña Anabelle was sailing to Zamboanga City when gunmen aboard on two motorboats intercepted her. The attackers aborted the attempt after seeing the Coast Guard and Navy vessels as they responded to the ship's distress call.



Incidents: Awaiting official report for incident on April 18th.

Kidnapped fisherman beheaded by ASG

The Philippine army says Abu Sayyaf fighters have beheaded one of four Filipino fishermen they took captive in December. Brigadier-General Cirilito Sobejana, military commander on the southern island of Jolo island, said on Sunday 16th that the boat's captain had been executed in the jungle near the town of Patikul on Thursday but that his remains had yet to be recovered.

Joint patrols still happening

A trilateral maritime patrol arrangement between Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia will be launched in the near future, said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein on April 15th. However, the pact signing was put off indefinitely last week.

Malaysia foils large-scale kidnapping plans

A plan to carry out large-scale kidnapping of foreigners from tourist island resorts in Sabah and the central Philippines has been foiled following the death of Abu Sayyaf leader, Muamar Askali, in Bohol and the surrender of 11 sub-leaders in Tawi Tawi. The threat is still present, however, and security forces of both countries remain on alert Malaysian media reported on April 18th.

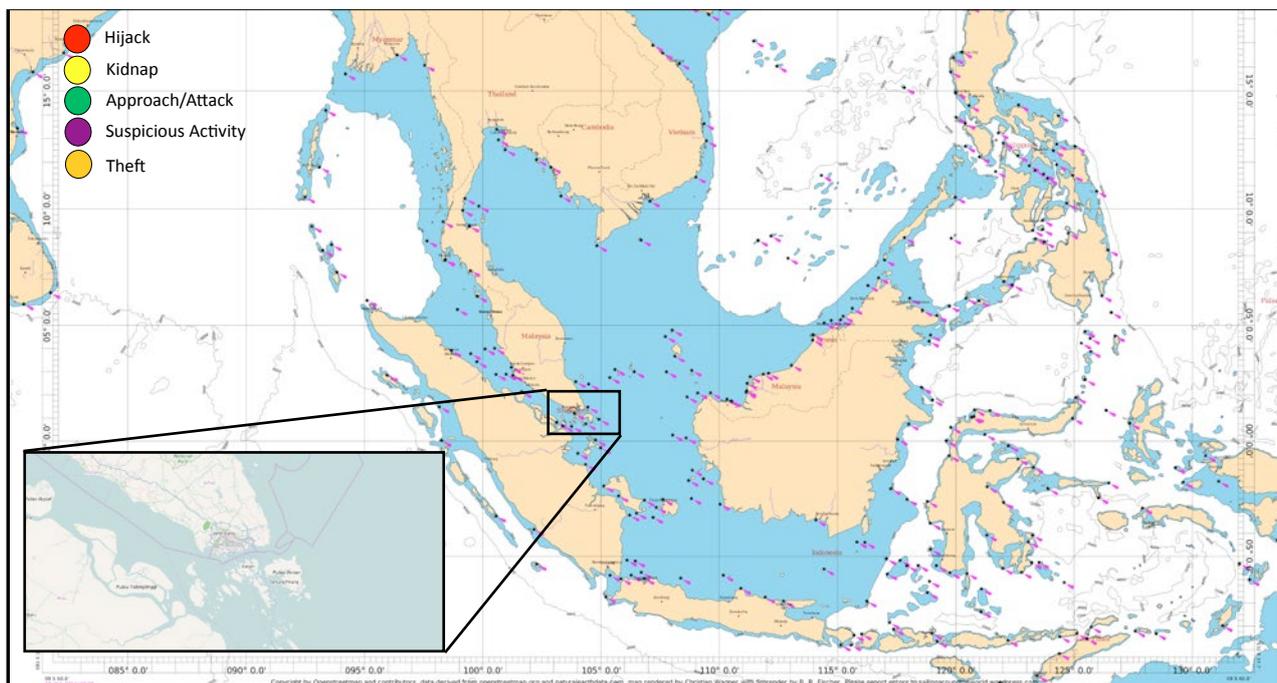
Authorities hunt four ASG chiefs

Four Abu Sayyaf Group commanders capable of mounting large-scale kidnappings are being hunted down on both sides of the Sabah and southern Philippines sea borders. Top on the hunted list are the hot-tempered Al Habsi Misaya and his comrade Sarip Mura, followed by the ageing Radulan Sahiron and Hatib Sawadjaan – all described as "targets for elimination".

Threat Assessment

To read MAST's current Threat Assessment on the South East Asia region, [please click here](#).

MAST is able to provide an armed protection solution to clients transiting the region. Please contact us for further details.





Central and South America

Media reports from the region state that on Monday 18th, a US nuclear "Ohio" class submarine transited the Panama Canal as it crossed from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Although naval traffic is hardly unusual in the canal, the heightened tensions between North Korea and the US have made events such as this more newsworthy.

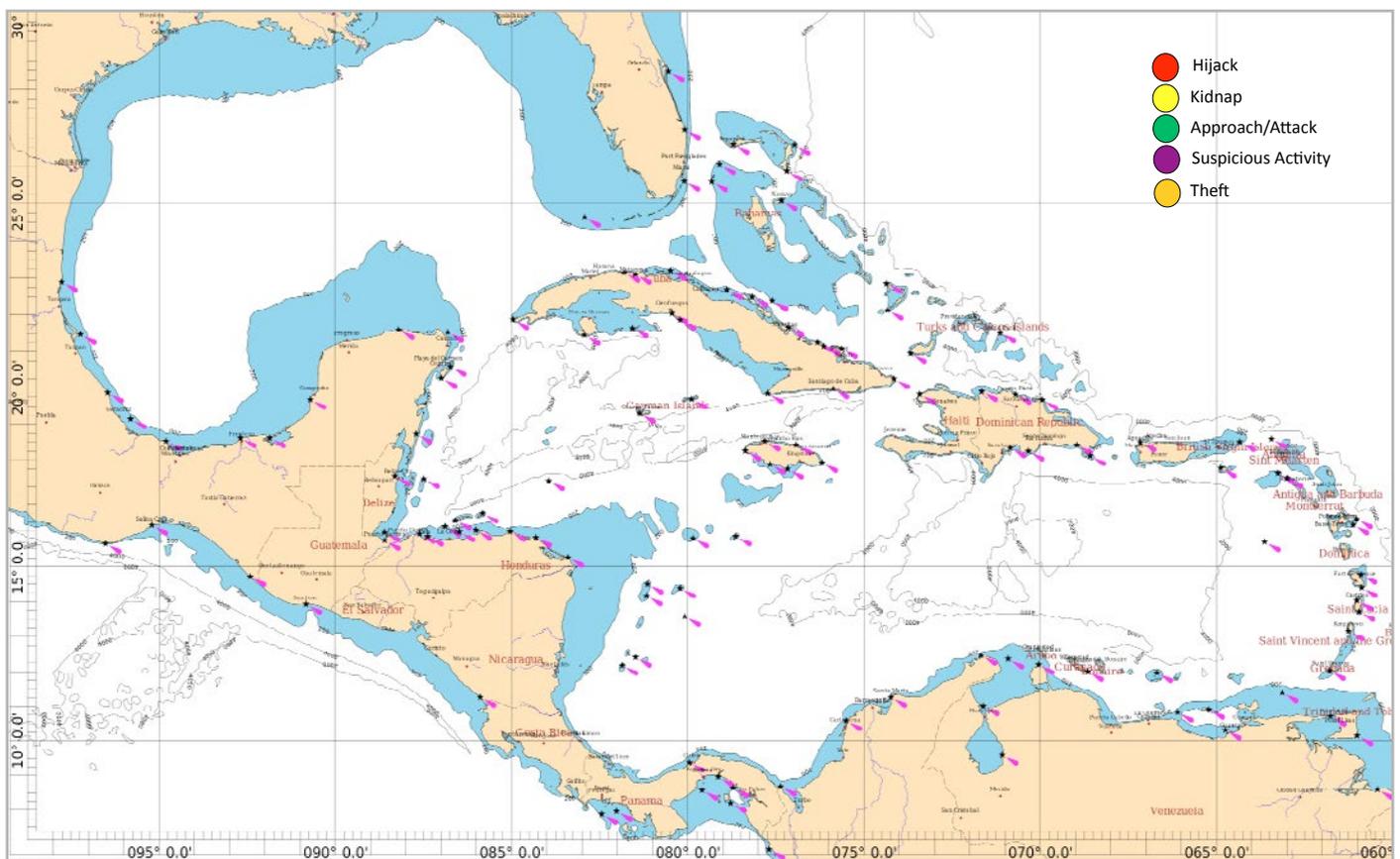


Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Standing advice:

The repercussions of a vessel being caught acting as a mule with drugs stowed will depend on the type, amount and national laws, but may be disruptive and costly. When and if operating in these areas, especially Columbia and Peru, it is advised that:

- Potential stowage areas such as rudder shafts are denied as far as possible, and/or routinely searched.
- Access points are closely monitored by a vigilant watch for the duration of the vessel's call at port.





Severe Weather Warnings

Warnings detailed on this page are from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and are issued by respective Regional Specialised Metrological Centres, Tropical Cyclone Centres or National Meteorological Services. For further information on severe weather warnings please [click here](#).



Nothing serious to report.

Note: The forecasts are correct as of the day before publication. For latest updates please follow the provided links.



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