



Issue 77 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.

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**MAST RISK MAP**



## Indian Ocean Region

The Indian Navy vessel, INS Sharda, foiled what was believed to be an attempted pirate attack on the MV Lord Mountbatten around 230nm SW of Salalah in the Gulf of Aden on May 16th. The incident also featured the interdiction of two dhows and seven skiffs. While some media reports stated that a cache of weapons had been found on the dhows, other reports contradict this.



### Incidents:

**1.** Following MV sighting of three suspicious dhows during PM in position 14:03N - 051:35E, around 135nm NW of Socotra Island in IRTC, Gulf of Aden, Indian Navy assets boarded the dhows and confiscated a cache of weapons. Reported (UKMTO) 16 May.

**2.** MV approached by 7 skiffs each with 4/5 POB at 0530 UTC in position 14:41.25N - 051:03.43E, around 45nm ESE of Qusayir, Yemen, Gulf of Aden. Skiffs came within 1nm from both port and starboard quarters. Skiffs followed MV for 30 mins and then aborted. MV Safe. Reported (UKMTO) 17 May.

### Puntland Prosecutor Orders Capture of 18 for Piracy

A prosecutor in Somalia's northeastern region of Puntland has filed a criminal case against 18 men allegedly involved in recent piracy activities in the region, Somali Update reported on May 17th. Puntland Attorney General Mohamed Hared said he filed the case to the First Degree Court in Garowe as he expects the high court will announce a sentence against the alleged pirates on absentia.

### Keeping Children Out of Piracy

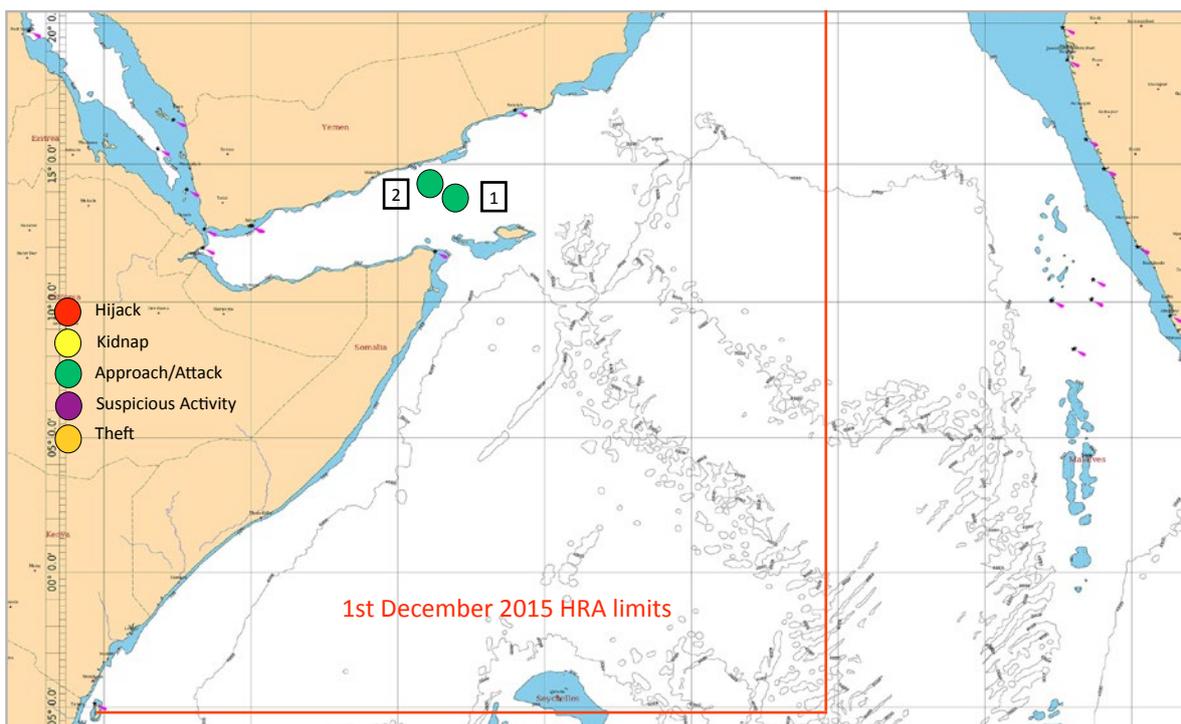
A first step has been taken to raise awareness of the horrific abuse of children in piracy with the release of a handbook for the maritime security sector. The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative began academic research, in collaboration with Human Rights at Sea, the Dalhousie University Marine Piracy Project and the 100 Series Rules, in 2011.

### Danish maritime surveillance aircraft begins deployment

The Royal Danish Air Force (RDAF) has deployed a Challenger 604 maritime surveillance aircraft to support the French-led Combined Maritime Force (CMF), which was set up to fight piracy in the Indian Ocean waters off the coast of Somalia and the broader Horn of Africa region.

### Threat Assessment

To read MAST's Threat Assessment on the Indian Ocean Region (updated on May 3rd), [please click here](#).





INTELLIGENCE REPORT SERIES

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## Somalia

Rains in Somalia have brought relief from drought but malnutrition remains a threat, the International Red Cross said on Friday 19th, with the number of children admitted to its feeding centers nationwide nearly doubling over the last year. Somalia is coming out of a severe drought that meant more than half its 12 million citizens were expected to need aid by July. In addition to food shortages, Somalia is experiencing a rapid spread of cholera, with more than 20,000 cases reported nationwide. The outbreak is expected to worsen due to the rains.



### Five Killed in Al Shabaab Attack Near Mahas

A Somali official says at least five people were killed, and several wounded in a botched attack near Mahas town in Hiiraan province by Al Shabaab militants on the night of Sunday 21st. Somali National Army forces repelled the attack.

### Attack On Bus Leaves Coach Dead, Two Players Injured

The coach of a local football club was reported killed, and two players wounded after gunmen opened fire on the vehicle on the main highway between Mogadishu and Afgoye, Somali media reported on May 22nd.

### Three soldiers killed in car bombing in Mogadishu

At least three bomb disposal unit soldiers were killed on Wednesday 17th when a car bomb they were attempting to defuse exploded in Mogadishu.

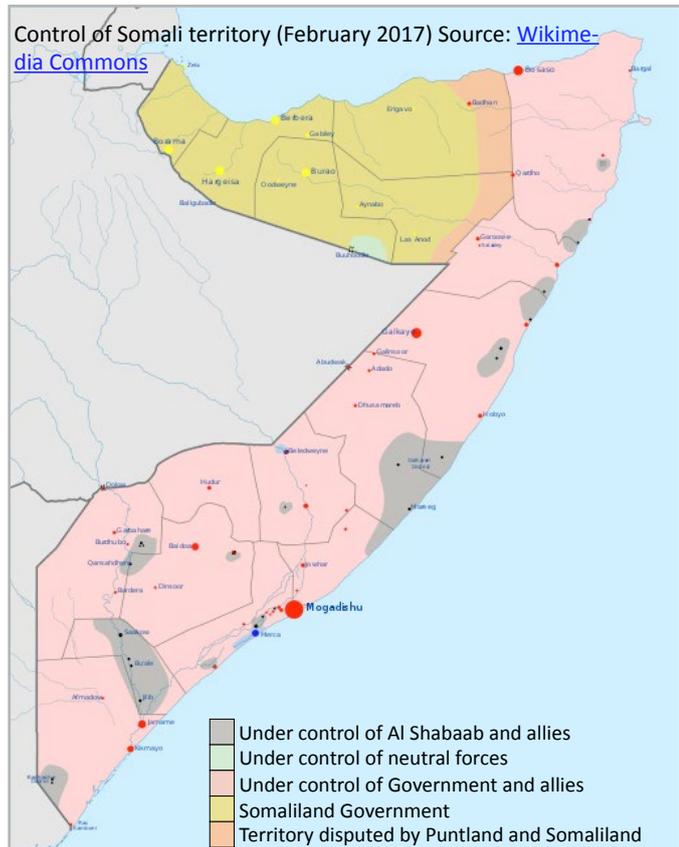
### Zambia's police joins AU mission to stabilize Somali

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) confirmed Fri-

day 19th that Zambia has joined police contributing countries to AU mission to offer specialized skills to the Somali police force. A statement from the AU mission said a contingent of four senior Zambian police officers are part of a team of 22 newly deployed Individual Police Officers (IPOs) to AMISOM, who will train Somali police officers on security matters.

### Al Shabaab

- Somali security forces arrested dozens of Al Shabaab militants during a sweep operation in Mogadishu on May 22nd.
- AS militants attacked an Ethiopian AMISOM base in Halgan town in Hiraan region, south-central Somalia, on May 17th. The militants seized parts of Halgan town while attacking the nearby base.
- AS detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) killing a local Kenyan government official in Elwaq town in Mandera County, northeastern Kenya, on May 17th.



### Analysis

The new security pact agreed in London to combat Al Shabaab will only work if the international community makes good on its promise to support the country's efforts against Al Shabaab. Despite the Somali President requesting the UNSCR arms embargo to be lifted, this is unlikely to happen in the short term. The security pact may see higher grade weapons incorporated into the SNA and Somali police to improve their capability.

Suspicious approaches against merchant traffic continue, with two unusual reports from the Gulf of Aden in the past week, as reported on the Indian Ocean Region page.

### Threat Assessment

Pirate attacks off Somalia and suspicious approaches in the Gulf of Aden continue to be a cause for concern. The ongoing threat to shipping in the region has been made clear by the military bodies which monitor the region. 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

A cholera outbreak in war-ravaged Yemen has killed 242 people, and left nearly 23,500 others sick in the past three weeks alone, the World Health Organisation said on Friday 19th. The UN health agency said that in the past day alone, 20 cholera deaths and 3,460 suspected cases had been registered in the country, where two-thirds of the population are on the brink of famine.



### US forces kill seven al Qaeda militants in Yemen

US forces raided an al Qaeda compound, killing seven militants, the Pentagon reported. They were killed "through a combination of small arms fire and precision air strikes" in the Marib governorate, east of Sanaa, on the morning of Tuesday 23rd.

### Sudanese troops deployed to al Mukalla

Twelve hundred Sudanese troops deployed to al Mukalla, Hadramawt governorate, on May 19th. These troops will participate in counterterrorism operations in Hadramawt and Shabwah governorates, according to local news sources. An additional 3,800 Sudanese troops are expected to deploy to Hadramawt.

### Cease fire ahead?

Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi expressed an openness toward a ceasefire during talks with UN Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed on May 19th. The proposed ceasefire will span the month of Ramadan to allow much-needed humanitarian aid to enter the country.

### AQAP/ISIS

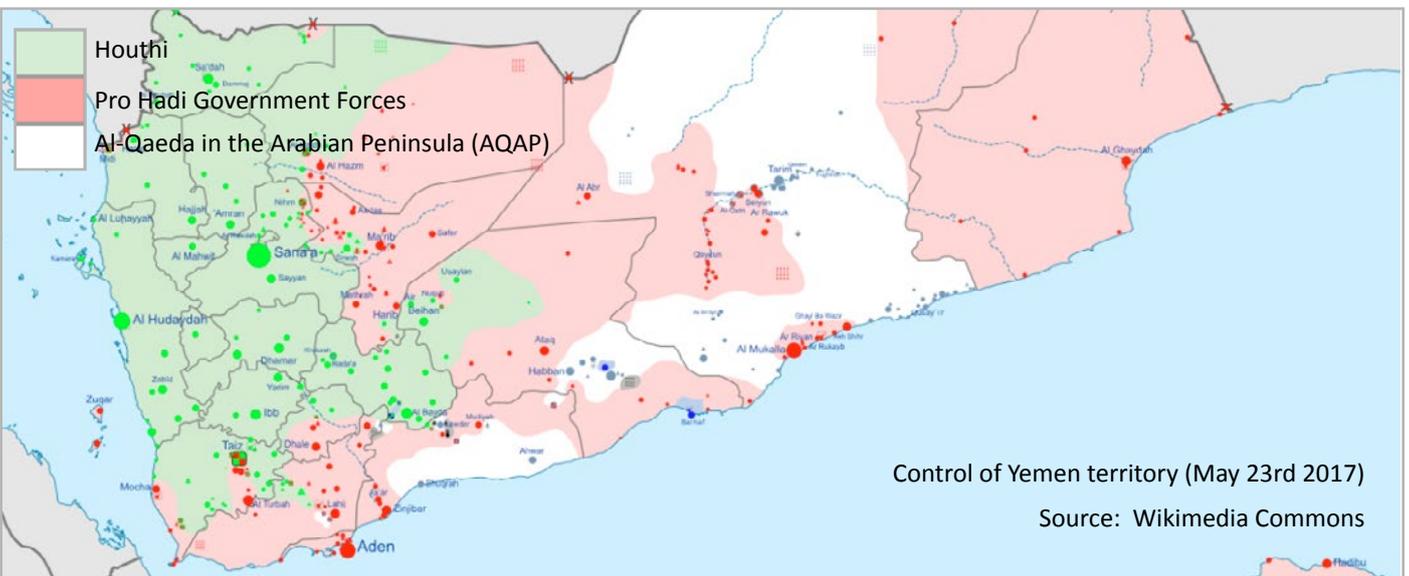
- AQAP militants killed two al Houthi-Saleh troops and seized their weapons near Awayan village southern al Bayda governorate May 14th.

### 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. The discovery of additional sea mines off Midi port is a clear cause for concern for the mer-

chant marine. 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 in 2016 should be taken as a significant warning of the possible outcome of allowing a small craft to approach a MV unchallenged. The series of recent incidents confirm that the Gulf of Aden remains moderate. The threatened attack on Hodeidah port by coalition forces is now being debated by the US administration, which could apply pressure on the Saudi coalition to seek a diplomatic solution. 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 moderate.



Control of Yemen territory (May 23rd 2017)

Source: Wikimedia Commons



## Yemen Ports

Nothing significant to report.



### 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](mailto: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

A reported 5,000 migrants were rescued on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th, during multiple operations in the Mediterranean Sea. The Italian and Libyan Coast Guards coordinated the missions, which took place off the coast of Libya. One lifeless body was also found. It comes days after the Italian Senate Defence Committee recommended stricter monitoring of NGOs and other humanitarian organisations operating in the Mediterranean Sea.



### Italy signs deal with Libya to cut off routes of illegal migrants

Italy has signed a deal with Libya, Chad and Niger to try to stem the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean by beefing up border controls and creating new reception centres in the African nations, according to a report by Agence-France Presse.

### Migrant Arrivals Reach 54,715 in 2017; Deaths: 1,332

IOM reports that 54,715 migrants and refugees entered Europe by sea in 2017 through 17th May, with nearly 85 per cent arriving in Italy and the remainder divided between Greece, Cyprus and Spain. This compares with 189,950 arrivals across the region for the same period in May 2016.

### Italy, France call for more integrated EU action on migrants

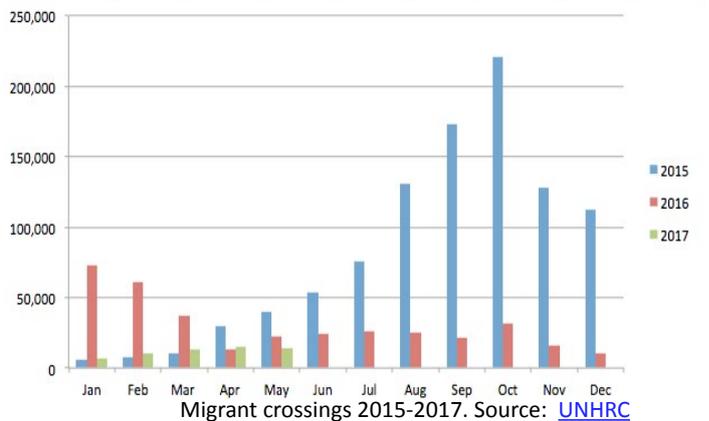
On Sunday 21st, France's new President Emmanuel Macron called for deeper European Union integration to tackle the migration crisis, saying bloc members had not paid enough heed to Italy's warnings about the growing burden.

### UNHCR ramping up its humanitarian response

UNHCR announced on Sunday May 21st that it is stepping up its presence and programmes in Libya in response to the worsening humanitarian crisis resulting from conflict.

### Migrants: need to clarify the "state of need", prosecutor

Ambrogio Cartosio, who is investigating some NGOs working in the Mediterranean on possible charges of aiding and abetting clandestine migration, spoke to Italian MPs on Wednesday. He told them that there was a need to clarify especially the "state of need", a mechanism according to which the crime is justified and not punishable if the action saves a life.



### 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 past week has seen an increase in migrant rescues, with several thousand picked up by rescue operations. Moves to limit border crossings into Libya, proposed by the EU, will take some time to implement and the ongoing hostilities within Libya make securing a consensus difficult for the EU, particularly as LNA and GNA forces look set to clash in the south of the country. The latest agreement to open reception centres in Niger and Chad may go some way to alleviating the issue, but as more economic migrants attempt to enter Libya from countries such as Bangladesh, further action by Libya itself may be required.



Map depicting major migrant routes in the Mediterranean (May 23rd 2017). Source: UNHCR



## Libya

The Secretary-General of the Arab League, Ahmed Abo El-Gheit, arrived in Brussels on Tuesday 23rd in order to participate in the Libya Quartet meeting, media sources reported. The meeting aims to continue coordination and consultancy between the Arab League, United Nations, European Union, and the African Union, around developments in Libya. Discussions will consider joint action regarding Libya's political process under the agreement that was signed in Morocco in December 2015.



### Attack on Brak El-Shati airbase leaves 141 dead

An attack on Thursday 18th apparently launched by 'Third Force' militia forces loyal to the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) on Brak El-Shati airbase has left at least 141 dead. The casualties were primarily LNA forces loyal to the rival House of Representative (HoR) government. The attack breached an informal truce between the parties.

### Analysis

News that Haftar's House of Representatives (HoR) and the UN-backed GNA governments finally met and agreed a tentative framework for negotiations had been seen as a promising step towards peace in the country. The attack on LNA forces at Brak El-Shati airbase is a significant set back to that process and, while the GNA has launched an investigation, suspending the defence minister and head of the militia involved, it is unlikely to appease Haftar's LNA forces. In retaliation for the airbase attack, LNA MIG-23 jets launched seven airstrikes against "terrorists" in Hun and Jufra in southern Libya.

The latest incidents effectively mean the peace process is back to square one, with Libyan media reporting that Haftar is planning a massive attack to regain control of Brak El-Shati as well as launching other attacks against GNA forces in the south of the country.

Haftar's ongoing control of the Oil Crescent is key to his success and powerbase and while production continues to increase, much to OPEC's dismay as it affects their ability to control prices and output cut (now expected to continue into 2018), it remains a huge revenue stream for the country, with experts predicting output of between 500,000 to 700,000 barrels per day (bpd) for the remainder of 2017. The National Oil Company's own target is said to be around 1.32 million bpd. Those figures are, of

course, based on the assumption that the conflict does not escalate further. OPEC may still call upon Libya to cut production, but it is unlikely this will be complied with given the fractured nature of the country and need for oil revenue.

The GNA's recent efforts against fuel smuggling, which saw two tankers seized, may now escalate should the LNA attempt to export oil via other, non-NOC channels.

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.

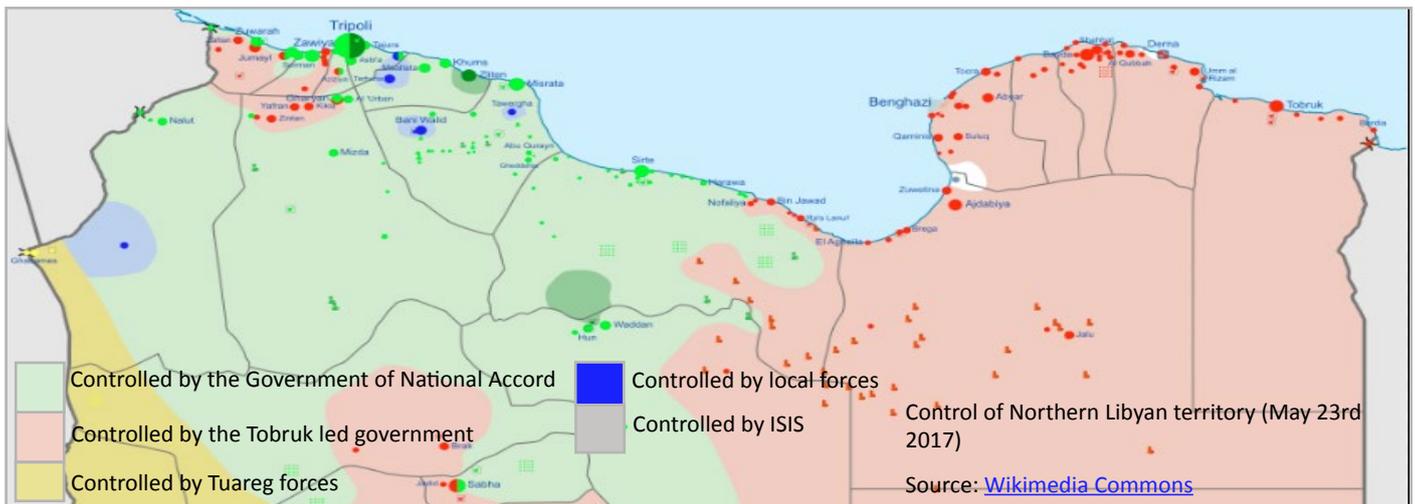
### Threat Assessment

The attack against Brak El-Shati airbase has sparked a new round of fighting between the LNA and GNA which effectively resets all previous efforts towards peace in the country. It is likely that Haftar's LNA forces will retake the airbase and continue their efforts against GNA forces in the country's south while keeping tight control of the country's oil output in an effort to force the GNA into new talks and concessions over not only the role of the HoR but Haftar's place in the country's government.

The increase in hostilities has the potential to affect shipping in the region, as militias loyal to either side may see vessels in the country's TTW as legitimate targets for seizure.

As a result, Masters are advised to ensure the correct paperwork and permissions to enter Libya's TTW or face the consequences.

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

Tempers rose among residents of Sagana and Akassa communities of Brass Local Government Area of Bayelsa State after gunmen suspected to be pirates in a fishing trawler shot a fisherman in the head, Nigerian media reported on May 21st. The incident, which occurred on Friday about 7.30am, caused anger among indigenes of the fishing towns who are regularly attacked by armed robbers and pirates.



**Incidents:**

**1.** Underway Antigua and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship reported attacked and boarded at 1120 UTC in position 03:59.19N - 006:46.05E, around 33nm SW of Bonny Island, Nigeria. Armed pirates kidnapped six crew and escaped. Remaining crew sailed the vessel to Bonny anchorage. Nigerian Navy investigating. Reported May 17th (IMB/MDAT).

**2.** MV reported approached by two skiffs with total 8 or 9 POB at a distance of 2 meters at 0224 UTC in position 03:58.13N - 007:33.49E, Yoho, Nigeria customary anchorage, around 31nm SSE of Bonny Island, Nigeria. Suspicious craft approached vessel's stern and proceeded to starboard side. Crew alerted and carried out all actions required. Terminal security patrol boat was informed. Terminal security patrol boat arrived after about 15 min, patrolled surrounding area with no further findings. Reported May 12th (MDAT).

**Nigerian Government Committed to Tackling Piracy**

The Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) Dr. Dakuku Peterside has said that the federal government is leaving no stone unturned in tackling the menace of piracy and other illicit crimes on the nation's territorial waterways. He made the announcement two days after

six Filipino crew were kidnapped from a vessel off Nigeria.

**Insurgency: Navy trains defence special forces**

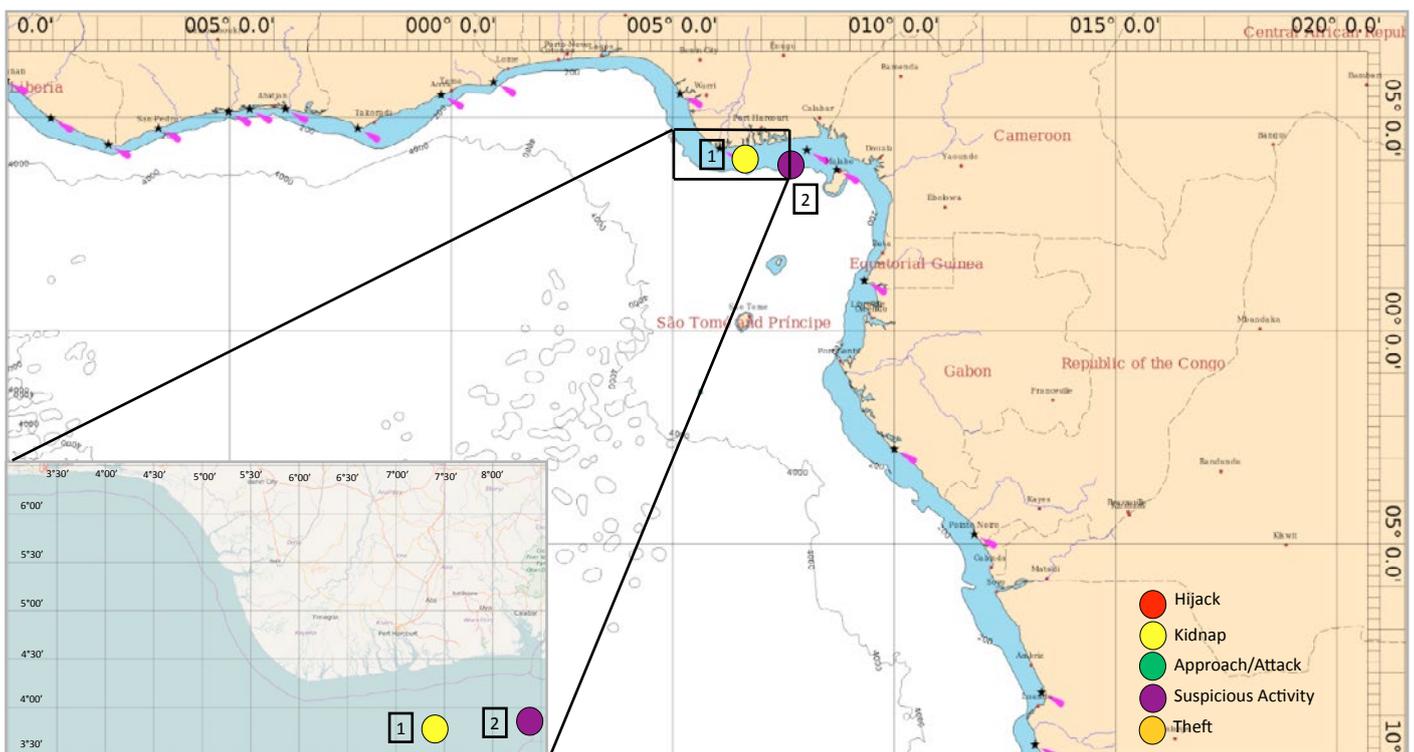
Forty-five candidates graduated from the Nigerian Navy Special Boat Service (SBS) on May 20th, having undergone training on Tactical Riverine Operation and Fast Rope Insertion and Extraction System (FRIES) with a view to building a formidable team that would assist regular forces in the military against the threat posed by militants and piracy.

**Military Options No Longer Effective in Maintaining Peace in Niger Delta**

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has said that none of the actions, including military options, deployed by the federal government to suppress militancy in the Niger Delta and halt disruptions in crude oil production, has been as effective as the dialogue initiated by the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, and Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Dr. Ibe Kachikwu.

**Threat Assessment**

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





## South East Asia

Fighting erupted in Marawi City, Philippines, on Tuesday May 23rd, as the military moved to hunt down "high value targets" belonging to the Maute Group and the Abu Sayyaf Group. The situation worsened towards evening as the Maute Group occupied a public hospital – the Amai Pakpak Medical Centre. City residents took to social media to post photos of soldiers, armed men, choppers, and report loud explosions. Clashes were ongoing at the time of this report.



### Incidents:

**1.** Six robbers wearing face masks and armed with long knives boarded a berthed chemical tanker at 1800 UTC in position 01:43.72N – 101:23.21E, MSSP Jetty, Lubuk Gaung Port, Dumai, Indonesia. Alert crew noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. The robbers stole ship's property and escaped in their boat. Crew mustered and a search was carried out. Local police informed. Reported May 20th (IMB).

**2.** An underway offshore tug was chased by two speed boats at 1130 UTC in position 10:58N - 118:15E, around 56nm NW of Cagnipa Island, Philippines. Master increased speed, conducted evasive manoeuvres and activated fire hoses. Incident reported to Philippines Authorities. Vessel managed to escape and crew are safe. Reported May 19th (IMB).

**3.** Underway offshore supply ship was approached by a small speed boat, closing to approx 30 meters at 1803 UTC in position 03:32N - 126:23E, around 26nm SW of Kepulauan Talaud North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Alarm raised, crew mustered and fire pump started to charge fire hoses. Seeing the alerted crew the boat aborted and moved away. Reported May 16th (IMB).

**4.** Robber, armed with a knife boarded an anchored bulk carrier via the anchor chain at 1212 UTC in position Muara Berau Anchorage, Samarinda, Indonesia. Duty AB on routine rounds no-

ticed the robber and informed the OOW who raised the alarm and crew mustered. Hearing the alarm and seeing the crew alertness, the robber escaped via the anchor chain. A search was carried out. Nothing reported stolen. Reported May 11th (IMB).

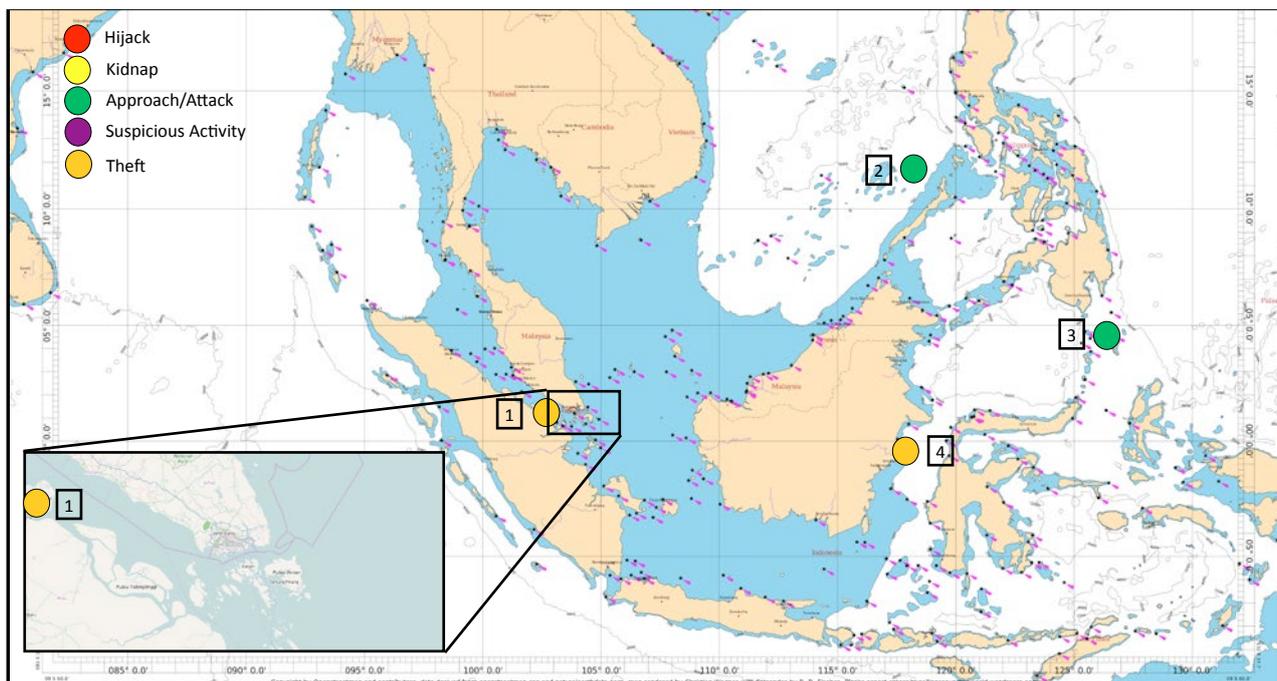
### Philippine forces kill another Abu Sayyaf militant

The Philippine military is continuing its operations against fleeing Abu Sayyaf gunmen, killing a militant known only as Imbo, a key ally of the notorious Alhabsi Misaya who was killed in late April.

### 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

Neopanamax vessels were expected to visit ports on the Eastern US Seaboard this year, bringing shipping containers from Asia through an expanded Panama Canal. But due to insufficient operational resources within the Panama Canal, far fewer ships than expected have made the passage. The \$9.4 billion investment by the Panama Canal Authority in a third set of locks was supposed to double the tonnage capacity of the Canal. However, according to the Authority's own transit records, the new locks are operating at about half their anticipated capacity.



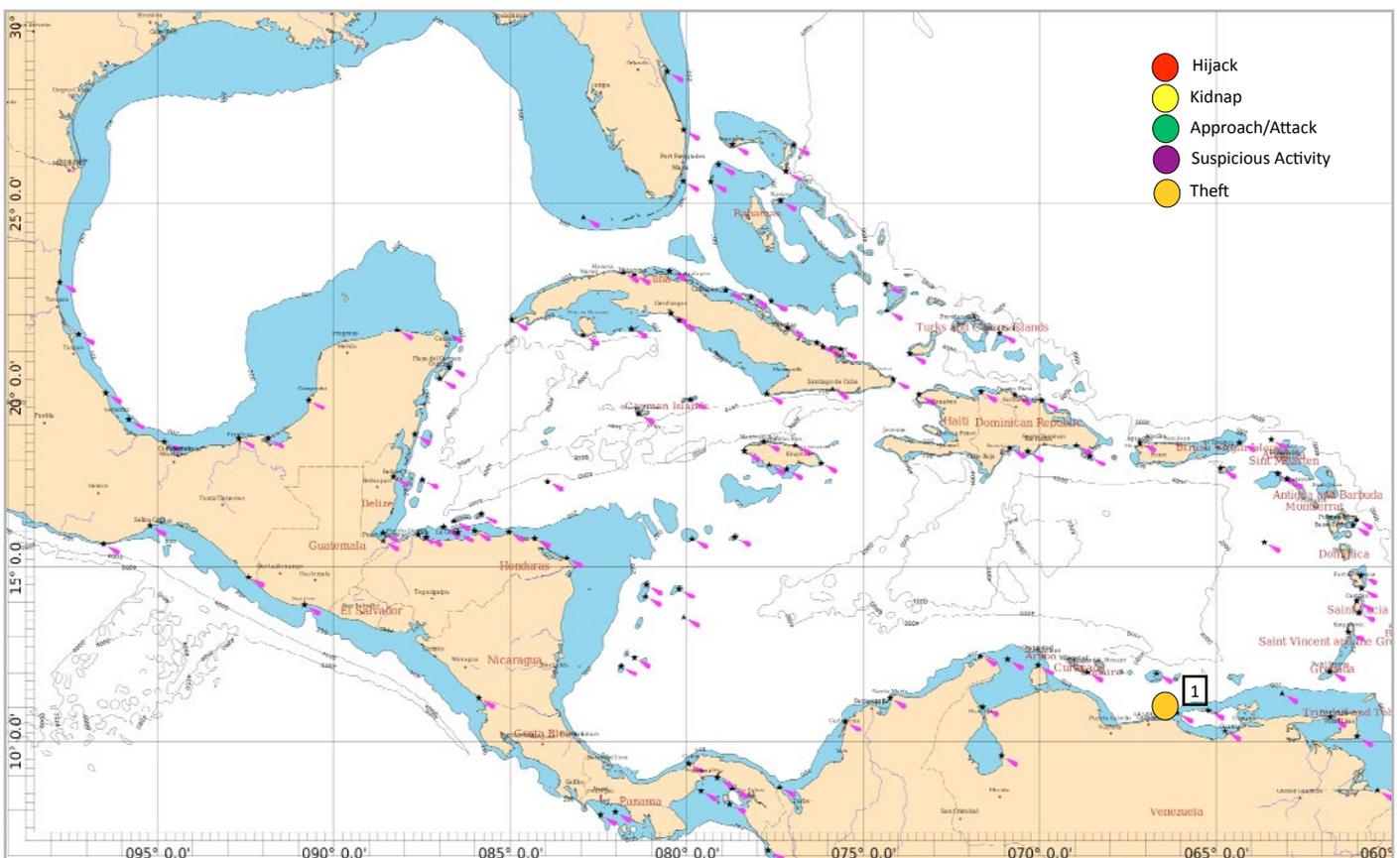
### Incidents:

**1.** On May 18th between 0001-0530 LT in position 10:11.31N – 064:46.16W, around 4nm West of Lecheria, Venezuela, robbers boarded an anchored chemical tanker, stole ship's equipment, stores and escaped unnoticed. Theft noticed by crew on routine rounds. Reported by IMB.

### 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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- Events

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