

# Maritime Intelligence Report Series

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Issue 124

MAKING THE  
WORLD A SAFER  
PLACE TO  
LIVE & WORK

MARITIME SECURITY

PHYSICAL AND ASSET SECURITY

RISK CONSULTING

SECURITY SYSTEMS



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Issue 124 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 world 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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Editor: David Rider  
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## Indian Ocean Region

South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, has approved the extension of the anti-piracy Operation Copper in the Mozambique Channel for another year. In a letter sent to the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ramaphosa informed members of the Council of the extension of the employment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) "for service in fulfilment of the international obligations of the Republic of South Africa towards Southern African Development Community maritime security, in the Mozambique Channel."



**Incidents: Nothing significant to report.**

### Puntland president leaves for UAE amid diplomat spat

Puntland President Abdiweli Mohamed Ali jetted off to the United Arab Emirates on Saturday 21st, a week after the Gulf country disbanded its training mission in Somalia, Garowe On-line reported. President Ali's trip came after receiving an official invitation for a visit from the UAE government, a key ally in the fight against the terrorism and piracy in the region.

### Another huge drug seizure for Combined Maritime Forces

On 17th April, Marine Nationale frigate La Fayette seized 1940 kgs of hashish in her second seizure in under a week. La Fayette's seizure is the fourth for the French Navy in support of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) as part of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Together with Marine Nationale destroyer Jean de Vienne, the two French ships have confiscated over 6 tonnes of hashish and 943 kgs of heroin worth over \$450 million USD of narcotics over the last two months.

### CPEC project turns out to be a security headache for China, Pakistan

The ongoing US\$ 60 billion plus China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor (CPEC) project, which forms a part of Beijing's ambitious transnational Belt Road Initiative (BRI), is according to a report from an American NGO, turning out to be an economic as well as a security headache for both China and Pakistan, with increased spending "drawing Beijing deeper into Pakistan's internal security concerns".

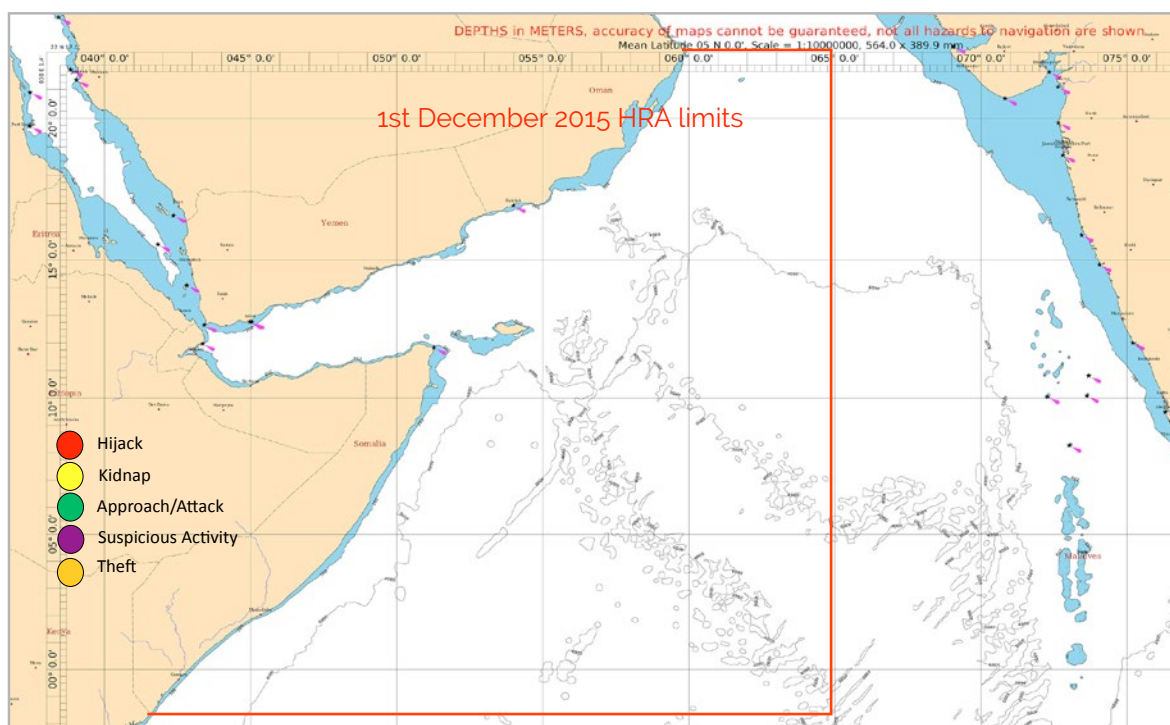
### Iran navy chief: US is not aware of our naval power

Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) navy chief has warned the US against underestimating his country's naval capabilities, according to the official FARS news agency (FNA).

### German skipper 'who scuppered Somali hostage deal' held for fraud

A man accused of spoiling a hostage deal with Somali pirates has been arrested in Ireland on an extradition warrant that includes fraud charges for allegedly selling fake gold bars. Andreas Holst, 57, from Kiel, Germany, was arrested on Wednesday 18th and is being detained in Cloverhill Prison, Dublin.

To see MAST's services in the Indian Ocean Region, [please click here.](#)





## Somalia

Some 145 officers from Sierra Leone's Formed Police Units (FPU) have been deployed in Somalia's port city of Kismayo, Garowe Online reported. The new batch of officers will join an elite team of 15 which are already in the country as part of the African Union Mission (AMISOM) in Somalia. Kismayo and the surrounding area has seen Al Shabaab activity in recent months, and the port is an important hub for Somalila.



### Rival Somali forces clash at ex-UAE base

Rival troops in Somalia's army have been involved in a shoot-out in Mogadishu, with one group trying to storm a base that had been run by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) before it was forced to end its military training programme in the country. "Some Somali military forces attacked us at the base, they wanted to loot it but we repulsed them," UAE-trained soldier Ahmed Nur told the Reuters news agency on April 23rd.

### Fears of more IEDs after Al Shabaab steals fertiliser

Suspected members of the Al Shabaab terror group on Saturday 21st stole fertiliser from local farmers in Gedo region, Somalia. The supplies had been delivered to the farmers by the agencies. Security agents suspect that the militants are using the fertiliser as a component in making Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDS).

### DP World should rethink port deals in Somalia

Somalia's foreign minister said on Friday 20th that Dubai state-

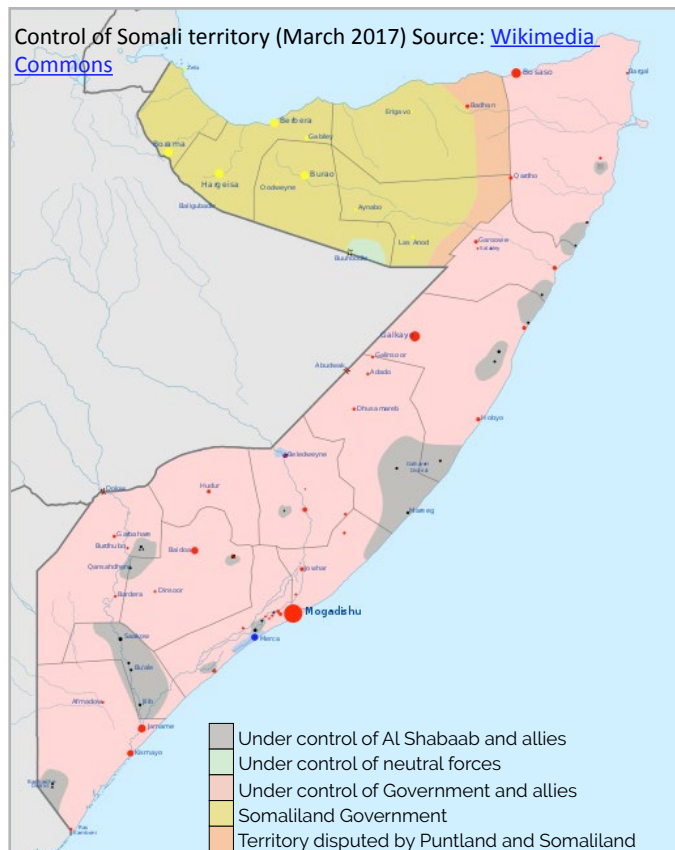
owned port operator DP World should reconsider its contract with the breakaway region of Somaliland and work with federal authorities so Somalia's sovereignty is not violated.

### We're stuck in Somalia, says Army chief

The Chief of Defence Forces, Gen David Muhoozi, has said Ugandan soldiers deployed in Somalia to fight Al Shabaab are stranded due to underfunding, logistical deficits and a challenged Somali national force.

### Al Shabaab leaders split amid acrimonious succession

Regional media reports that Al Shabaab has been plunged into chaos amid fears its leader Ahmed Umar, also known as Abu Ubeiydah, may die after a prolonged illness. Umar's deputies, Mahad Karate, Ali Dhere and Maalim Osman, reportedly failed to agree on who to replace him in the event that he dies.



### Analysis

Al Shabaab continues to mount operations against civilian and military targets in Somalia, seizing military bases and equipment before being driven off by AMISOM forces, despite combined action against them from Somali, African Union and US forces.

### Threat Assessment

Somalia held Presidential elections in February 2017. After a peaceful transition of power, Somalia continues to face familiar problems. Al Shabaab frequently ambushes AMISOM and local security forces denying any significant process to the shaping of a stable country which is vital before Somalia can tackle humanitarian and economic issues. Somalia is recovering from a severe drought which led to widespread famine with an identified 2.9 million people facing food insecurity. Youth unemployment in Somalia has not improved with 67% of Somali male youths aged between 14 to 29 unemployed. Pirate financiers offer lucrative and attractive opportunities, and were seen to be increasingly active in the last inter-monsoon period. Somalia continues to be a permissive location for kidnap and ransom piracy operations. Somalia has both an EU and UN arms embargo in place under UN-SCR Resolution 2317 in place until November 15th 2018. 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

The Yemeni National Resistance Forces, led by Staff Brigadier-General Tarek Mohamed Abdullah Saleh, launched a large-scale military operation on Yemen's Red Sea Coast on April 19th in the direction of Mocha and Al Barah Area, west of Taiz, to liberate new areas from the grip of the Iran-backed Al Houthi militias.



### UN staff warned in Aden

Reports from Aden on Tuesday 24th suggest that UN staff have been instructed to remain in their homes until further notice. At least one vessel approaching the port of Aden has been instructed to remain at anchor by coalition forces.

### Houthi political leader Saleh al-Sammad 'killed in air raid'

Yemen's rebel Houthi movement says a senior political figure has been killed in a Saudi-led coalition air strike. Saleh al-Sammad, head of the Supreme Political Council, was "martyred" in the city of Hudaydah on Thursday 19th, the group's overall leader announced.

### Saudi ambassador to Yemen confirms Houthis detaining 19 oil vessels

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Yemen, Mohammed al-Jaber, confirmed that Houthi militias were detaining 19 oil vessels and prevented them from entering Hodeidah port. "The Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Support Center (YCHO) is deeply concerned that the Iranian-backed Houthi militias are holding more than 19 oil vessels in the militia-controlled area of al-Mustaqaf, preventing them from entering the port," al-Jaber wrote in a tweet on Saturday 21st.

### Scores of Houthi commanders killed in Yemen

Scores of Houthi field commanders were killed during confrontations with National Resistance Forces in Yemen's Red Sea Coast front, WAM news agency reported on Saturday 21st.

### Twenty killed in air strike in southwest Yemen: residents

Twenty people were killed in an air strike by a Saudi-led military coalition in southwestern Yemen on Friday 20th, residents

said. The attack hit a car transporting 20 passengers south of Taiz province, locals told Reuters. Six bodies had been identified but the rest were charred beyond recognition, they added.

### Red Cross employee killed in an attack in Yemen

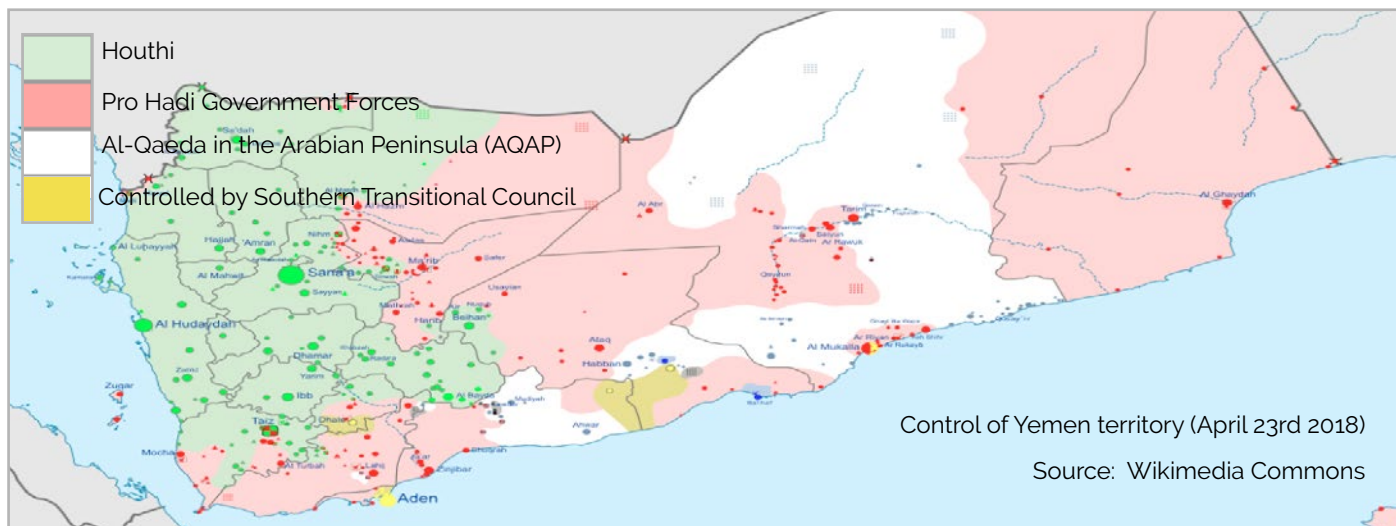
A humanitarian aid worker was shot and killed in Yemen on Saturday 21st after an attack on his vehicle, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said. Hanna Lahoud was a staffer in charge of the ICRC's detention program in Yemen. The Lebanese national was on his way to visit a prison when a group of unknown armed men attacked the car he was in, the aid group said.

### Yemen security raid results in death of two Qaeda leaders

Two al-Qaeda leaders died following a raid by Yemeni security forces in the Abyan governorate. Security sources said that the two men were Morad al-Dobly and Hassan Bou Saree who are wanted terrorists. The two died during the operation which took place on Wednesday 18th following an armed clash with security forces in the al-Wadea district.

To see the latest threat analysis and Yemen port information in MASTOPDEIA, [please click here](#).

MAST recommends BMP measures be enforced and watches strengthened during transits in the region.



Control of Yemen territory (April 23rd 2018)

Source: Wikimedia Commons



## Mediterranean

The U.N. migration agency has measured an impressive drop in the number of migrants and refugees entering Europe by sea this year, compared to the same period the two previous years. Through mid-April of this year, data shows 18,575 migrants and refugees arrived in Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Spain by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. The International Organization for Migration says that is less than half of last year's pace.



### 1,200 saved as new migrant wave sets sail from Libya

About 1,200 people were rescued in the Mediterranean over the weekend of 21st-22nd as fine weather and renewed chaos in Libya led to a rise in departures from the north African coast — and renewed anxiety in Europe over how to deal with migrants. The Italian coastguard said that it co-ordinated 13 rescue operations involving 900 migrants. More operations took place yesterday.

### Libyan navy rescues 120 migrants off western coast

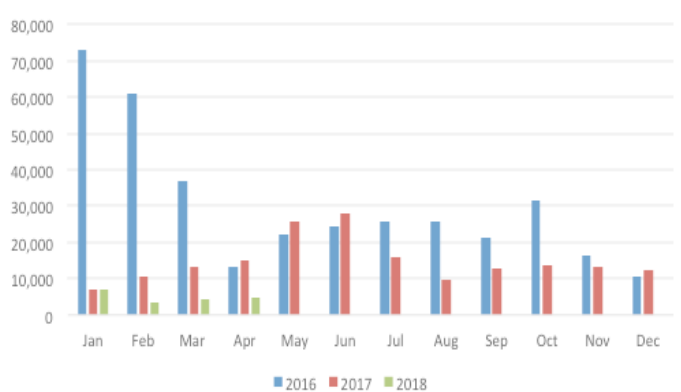
The Libyan navy on Monday rescued 120 illegal immigrants off the coast of Garrabulli city, some 55 km east of the capital Tripoli. "120 illegal immigrants of different African nationalities have been rescued 50 miles off the coast of Garrabulli," Milad Abdalkarim, commander of the navy patrol, told Xinhua.

### 11 Migrants Die, 263 Rescued off Libya Coast

The Libyan navy said it recovered the bodies of 11 migrants and rescued 263 others in two separate operations off Libya's western coast on April 21st. The migrants were from various sub-Saharan African countries, he said.

### Italy and its Mediterranean neighbours launch plan to identify migrants lost at sea

Four European Mediterranean countries are launching an initiative in June to identify thousands of missing migrants who died or went missing during the perilous sea crossing to the continent. Italy, Greece, Malta and Cyprus — hardest hit by waves of migrants from Syria and Libya or people elsewhere in Africa — will gather on June 11th in Rome to discuss the plan, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) said on Wednesday 18th.



Migrant crossings 2016-2018. Source: [UNHRC](https://www.unhcr.org/)

### The current migrant smuggling situation

The past week has seen a significant increase in attempted crossings from Libya, with a number of fatalities reported. An improvement in regional weather conditions is being cited for the increase, with migrants once again leaving Libya via Sabraha, a notorious smuggling port. Quite why there are so few Libyan forces in this area, stopping the efforts of people smugglers remains open to question and once again highlights the issue of collusion between smugglers, militias and official agencies within Libya.

While numbers remain significantly down compared with previous years, sudden surges in crossing numbers continue to stretch rescue missions.



Migrant statistics in the Mediterranean (Figures last updated on April 23rd 2018). Source: [IOM](https://www.iom.int/)





## Libya

An attack on an oil pipeline supplying Libya's biggest export terminal has reduced the North African country's production by at least 80,000 barrels a day and would take several days to repair, the National Oil Corp. said Sunday 22nd. The impact of the fire, which Waha Oil blamed on "terrorist actions," underscores the fragility of Libya's oil recovery. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries member has struggled to boost production amid the lingering effects of political divisions and conflict that flared in 2011.



### Libya's Haftar 'suffering irreversible brain damage'

Eastern Libya military commander Khalifa Haftar is in an almost vegetative state and "will never be normal again" because of his health issues, an informed source told Middle East Eye. "He is unable to talk or even fully comprehend. He can not even sit or stand up," said the source, who wished to remain anonymous. The unconfirmed report is one of many regarding the LNA leader's health in recent days.

### U.S. Congress calls for a greater role in Libya

Voice of America reported on April 23rd that members of the U.S. House of Representatives demanded a greater role for Washington in Libya, and expressed support for the military contribution of U.S. forces in Libya. It is thought that the re-appearance of ISIS in the country as well as reports of an increase in Russian interest have led some politicians to rethink America's position.

### \$750m worth of Libyan fuel is stolen: Sanalla

The Chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation, Mustafa Sanalla has reported that 30-40 percent of Libya's fuel is stolen or smuggled. He has called on Operation Sophia to include smuggling of refined fuel as part of its operations. Sanalla has also suggested adding a marker to Libyan fuel to identify it. He also called for a reform of Libya's subsidy system. Sanalla was speaking at the inaugural Oil and Fuel Theft conference in Geneva.

### Rockets hit airport in Libya's capital, damaging passenger jet

Rockets hit Libya's main airport and damaged a plane as it was waiting to take off early on Thursday 19th, a security force said, underscoring fragile security. One rocket hit an Airbus 320 of state-run Libyan Airlines, and others struck the arrivals hall at Tripoli's Mitiga airport at around 2 a.m.(0000 GMT), but no one

was injured, a spokesman for the Special Deterrence Force (Rada) said.

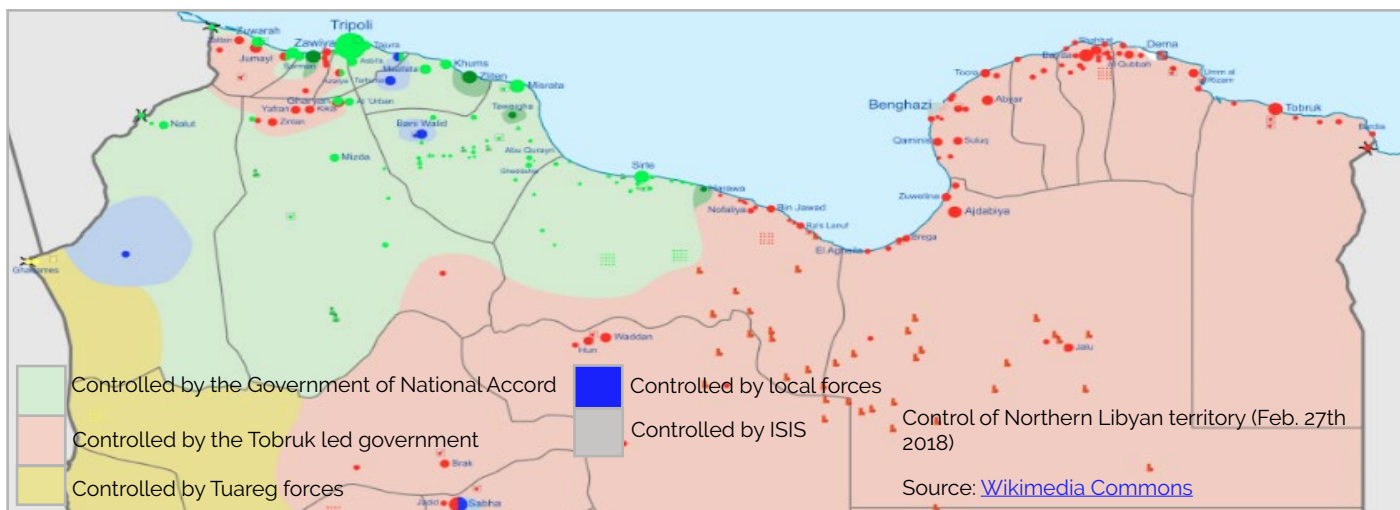
### Libya's NOC reconsiders Total-Marathon oil deal

The Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC) said it is reconsidering with the Presidential Council the deal of selling the assets of the US Marathon Oil in Libya's Waha Oil Company to French company, Total. Mustafa Sanallah, the NOC Chairman, said in a statement on Monday that the deal should be approved first by the NOC and then the Libyan authorities, adding that any attempts to get the deal done without the approvals are to be considered a violation of the concessions contract.

### Networks of profiteers run rampant in Libya. Can they be stopped?

Networks of armed actors, corrupt executives and politicians continue to find ways to make money through avenues such as the smuggling of fuel or people, the diversion of state resources and the growth of extremely profitable protection rackets. Ghassan Salamé, the U.N. special envoy to Libya, has his sights set on targeting Libya's "economy of predation", but the practice is so ingrained into the culture that he faces a significant struggle, the Washington Post reported.

To read MAST's Libyan Country report on MASTOPEDIA, [please click here](#).







## Gulf of Guinea

Dutch general cargo vessel operator ForestWave reported Monday 23rd that pirates had abducted 12 crewmembers from the freighter FWN Rapide in the Gulf of Guinea. On Saturday 21st, the Rapide was approaching Port Harcourt, Nigeria when pirates approached and boarded her. They kidnapped 12 of her 14 crewmembers and departed. The remaining two crewmembers managed to navigate their vessel to safety, ForestWave reported. As of Monday, the FWN Rapide was anchored near Port Harcourt.



### Incidents:

**1.** Underway Antigua and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship reported attacked and boarded by pirates in the early hours in the vicinity of 03:33N - 007:02E around 50nm South of Bonny Island, Nigeria. 12 of 14 crew kidnapped, remaining 2 crew reportedly safe and unharmed; vessel moved to safe position. Reported (MDAT/Ship Owner) 21st Apr.

### Niger Delta Militants Stop Planned Attack On Oil Facilities

The Reformed Niger Delta Avengers, (RND), and a coalition of nine militant groups in the Niger Delta have withdrawn the four-week ultimatum they gave President Muhammadu Buhari to reinstate the sacked Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, Brigadier General Paul Boroh (retd) or risk fresh attacks on oil installations.

### 'Lets collaborate to fight pirates'

The President of the Nigerian Chamber of Shipping (NCS), Mr Andy Isichei, has expressed worry about the weaknesses in the maritime security systems of countries within the West African sub-region. He attributed the problem to lack of collaboration by way of information sharing among the countries, adding that: "Most countries are not talking to one another, thereby heightening activities of piracy and robbery within the coastal zones across the region.

### Sea pirates kill 2 in Rivers, shoot Policeman

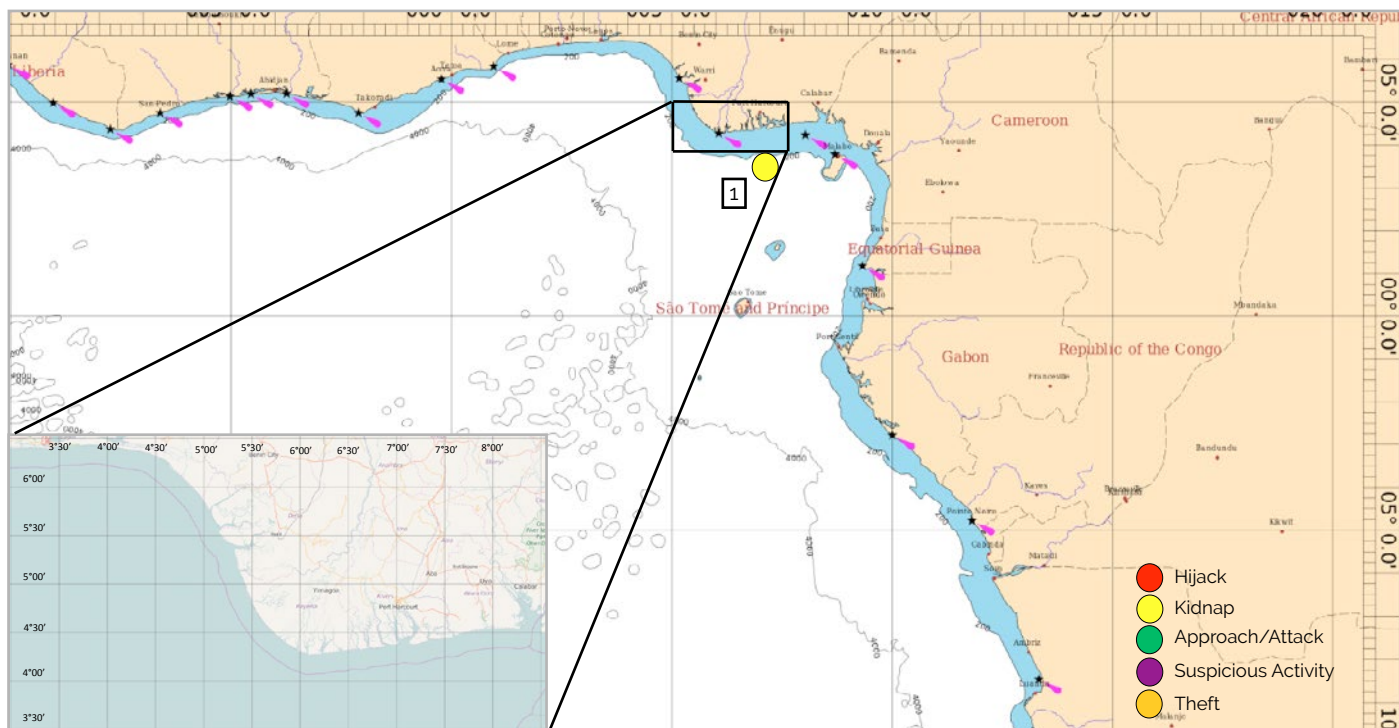
Gunmen suspected to be sea pirates have killed two persons on a boat along the Kula waterways. A policeman who was on-board when the attackers struck sustained gunshot wounds. The gunmen attacked a boat carrying the National Chairman of the National Youth Council of Nigeria, NYCN, Sukubo Saragbe Sukubo and the Chairman of the Rivers State Taskforce on Petroleum, Kenneth Opusuigi, from Abonnema to Kula.

### Ghana Navy calls for review of maritime laws to ensure adequate protection

The current maritime laws of the country make it difficult for the Navy to adequately protect vessels and assure them of their safety. Chief Staff Officer at the Navy Headquarters, Commodore Issah Yakubu told Radio Ghana why some suspicious vessels which were arrested in the territorial waters of the country ended up being released due to limitations in the legal framework.

### MAST provides escort vessels in partnership with trusted Nigerian partnered MoU holding companies.

To see MAST Services in the region, [please click here](#). And and to read Nigeria's country report, [please click here](#).





## South East Asia

Indonesia's Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjiastuti deals with some dangerous men in her role, but they don't rattle her. She has an equally intimidating weapon on her side: Google. Partnering with the search engine firm, Ms Pudjiastuti is catching illegal fishing activity in real time, after thousands of vessels' locations were revealed online. In her mission to clean up an industry once the domain of crooks, she's convinced powerful local operators with foreign interests to stop practices that were robbing the economy of billions of dollars of revenue each year.



### Incidents:

1. Robbers in a wooden boat tried to board an anchored bulk carrier in position 00:14.33S - 117:35.07E, Muara Berau Anchorage, Samarinda, Indonesia. The crew noticed the boat and raised the alarm. Seeing the alerted crew, the robbers aborted their attempt and escaped. Reported (IMB) 20th April.
2. Unnoticed, robbers boarded an anchored bulk carrier. They managed to steal ship store's properties at the forecastle. Upon checking, at 2200 UTC in position 00:15.29S - 117:36.7E, Muara Berau Anchorage, Samarinda, Indonesia, it was found that forecastle padlock was broken. The robbers were suspected to board the vessel via the anchor chain. Reported (IMB) 18th Apr.
3. Six robbers in a black boat tried to board an anchored general cargo vessel from astern at 1915 UTC in position 22:11.3N - 091:42.1E, Chittagong Anchorage, Bangladesh. The crew noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. One robber managed to board the vessel and threatened the crew by showing a knife. Hearing the alarm and seeing the alerted crew the robber escaped without stealing anything. All crew reported safe. Reported (IMB) 17th Apr. (Not shown on map)

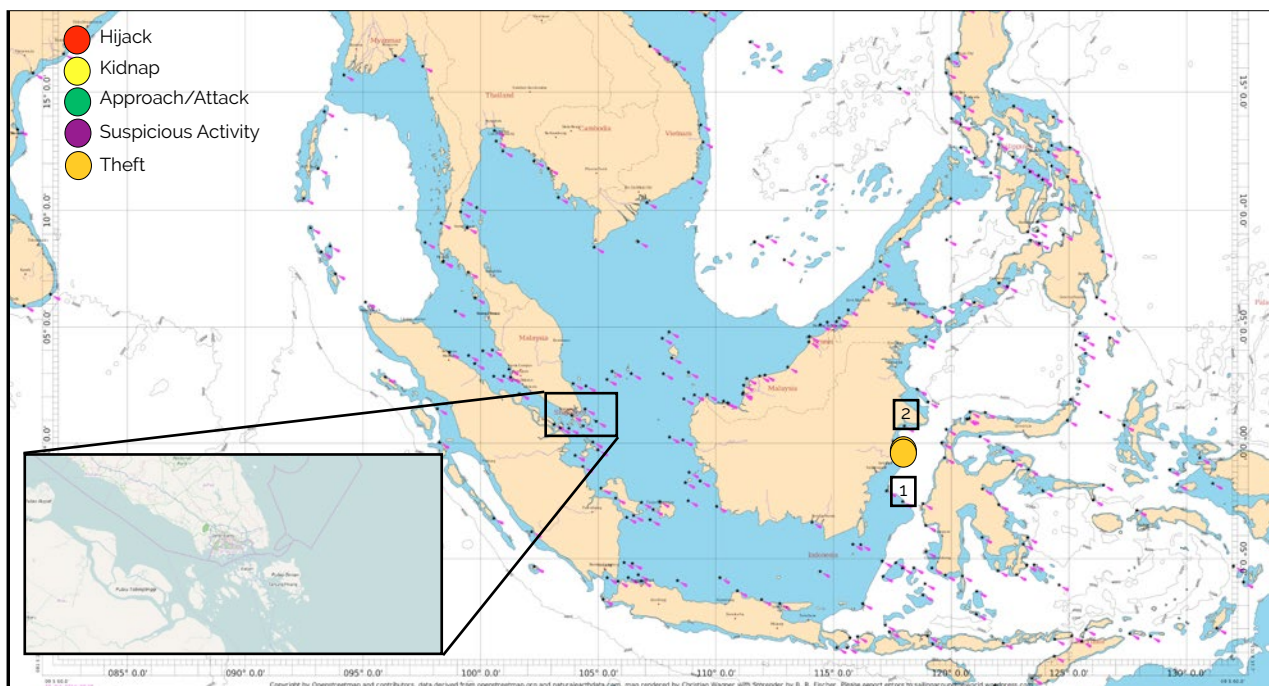
### Sea marshals help keep maritime terror at bay

When a ship sails into Singapore's waters, it is hard to tell - from the outside - whether it has actually been taken over by pirates or terrorists. One way to find out is to physically board the ship. But whoever does so risks his life if the ship has really been hijacked. This is the role of the Republic of Singapore Navy's 180 Squadron, whose crew board sensitive vessels to make sure they have not been taken over. The unit's abilities were showcased in several demonstrations last week.

### New Philippine military chief vows to drive Daesh out

The new armed forces chief in the Philippines took up his post with a pledge to drive Daesh from the Philippines while also extending an olive branch to Filipino militants and insurgents. Army Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez became the country's 50th military chief on Wednesday 18th, replacing the retiring Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero.

To see MAST's services in the region, [please click here](#).







## Central and South America

The Panama Canal may carry five times as much liquefied natural gas (LNG) in 2020 as it did last year as production of the fuel expands in the United States and Asian import demand rises, the head of the canal's governing agency told Reuters.

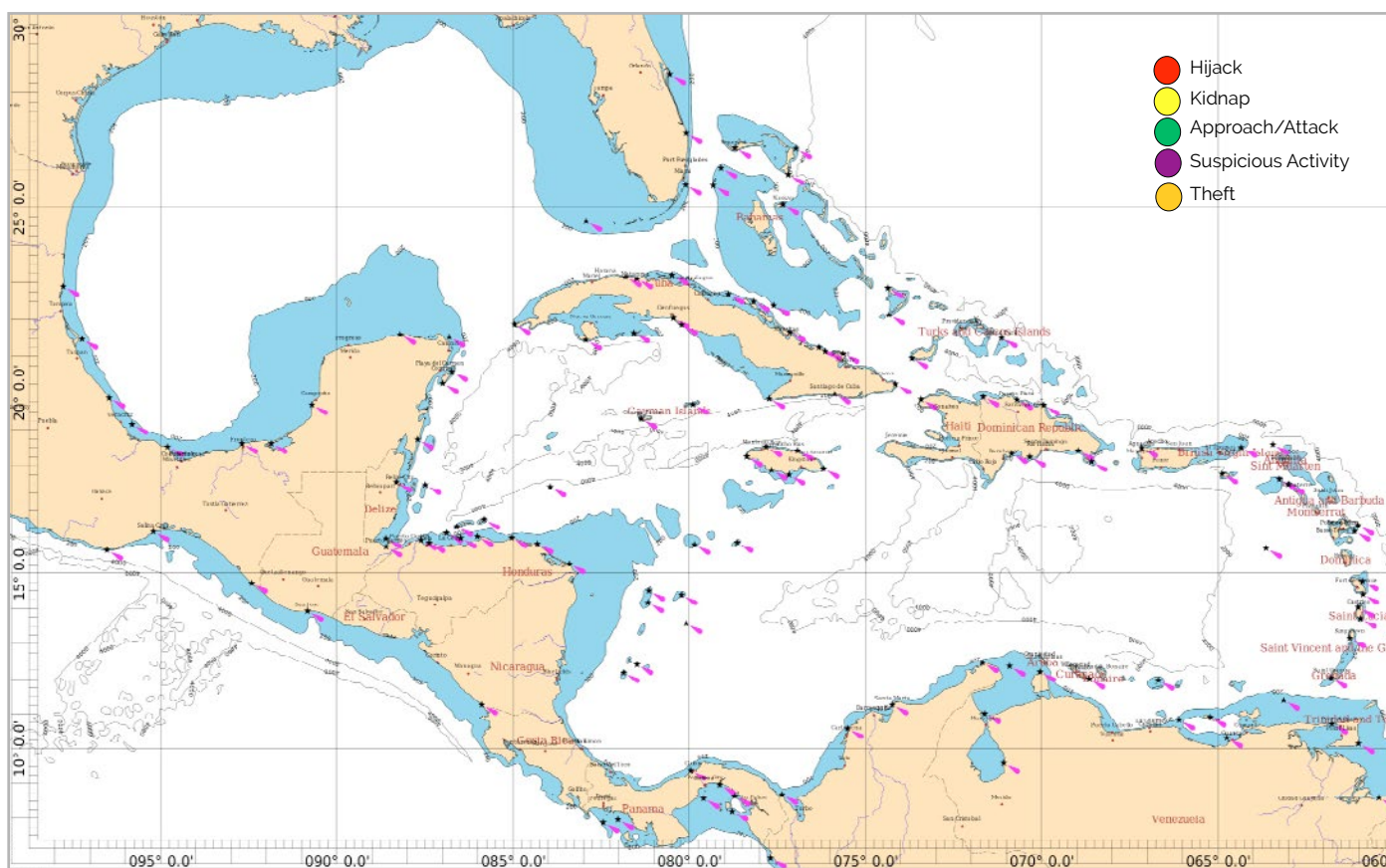


**Incidents:** Nothing significant to report.

### 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](#).



South-West Indian Ocean



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