

Weekly Security & Risk Report

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Issue 262 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.

Coronavirus Port and Terminal Restrictions

The situation remains extremely fluid. For the most recent updates on closures and re-openings, MAST Security recommends using the Wilhemsen Covid-19 Global Port Restrictions Map. [Please Click Here](#) to visit their site.

The Security and Risk 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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www.mast-security.com

Contents:

	Page
Mast Services	2
Indian Ocean region	4
Somalia	6
Yemen	7
Mediterranean	8
Libya	9
Gulf of Guinea	10
South East Asia	11
Central & South America	12
Severe Weather Warnings	13



Indian Ocean Region

An Iraqi oil tanker was evacuated after a mine was discovered attached to its hull, and explosives experts were working to make it safe, Iraq's military said on Friday Jan. 1st. The tanker was in international waters about 28 nautical miles (52 km) off Iraq's coast in the Persian Gulf and supplying another ship with fuel when the device was discovered on Thursday afternoon, the military said in its statement, Reuters reported.

Incidents:

1. Anchored Liberia-flagged tanker identified presence of a suspicious object attached to the vessel hull whilst conducting Ship to-Ship transfer at 0600 UTC in position 29:33N - 048:47, approx 6nm South Al Bakr Terminal offshore Iraq. Object suspected limpet mine. Vessel and crew are safe as incident concluded 2 Dec. Reported (UKMTO/CSO/Source) 31st Dec. *(Not shown on chart)*

Military Exercise of the coast off Pakistan

It has been reported to UKMTO that Naval ships will carry out Surface, Anti-Aircraft and Depth Charge LIVE FIRING PRACTICE between 04th-08th, 11th-15th, 18th-22nd, 21st-24th and 25th-29th Jan 2021 in the following areas:

- A. 24-19.00N 066-58.00E 24-00.00N 066-39.00E
24-11.00N 066-27.00E 24-24.30N 066-42.00E
- B. 24-36.02N 063-15.03E 24-36.02N 062-30.03E
24-21.02N 063-15.03E 24-21.02N 062-30.03E
- C. 24-36.02N 062-30.03E 24-36.02N 061-45.03E
24-21.02N 062-30.03E 24-21.02N 061-45.03E
- D. DEPTH CHARGE FIRING AREA
24-16.18N 066-20.50E 24-22.00N 066-27.00E
24-16.30N 066-33.00E 24-10.30N 066-27.00E

Ships and Crafts are to keep well clear of assigned danger area on above specified schedule.

South Korea calls for release of tanker

South Korea is trying to secure the release of a tanker seized by Iran on Monday 4th. The MT Hankuk Chemi was seized by Iranian forces near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, and its crew of 20 detained. Iran said the ship had violated environmental rules. However, media outlets such as Associated Press and,

to an extent, Iran's own Tasnim News alluded to the fact that the country was seeking leverage over negotiations to return billions in frozen assets from South Korea.

USS Nimitz delays plan to return to US base

Associated Press reported that the US Navy plans to move the USS Nimitz carrier from its current deployment in the Middle East, despite rising tensions with Iran. However, that plan has now been reversed, following 'threats' against President Trump, The Guardian reported on Monday 4th. Ongoing incidents off Yemen, as well as last week's mine discovery, suggest that Iran is continuing with its activities in the region.

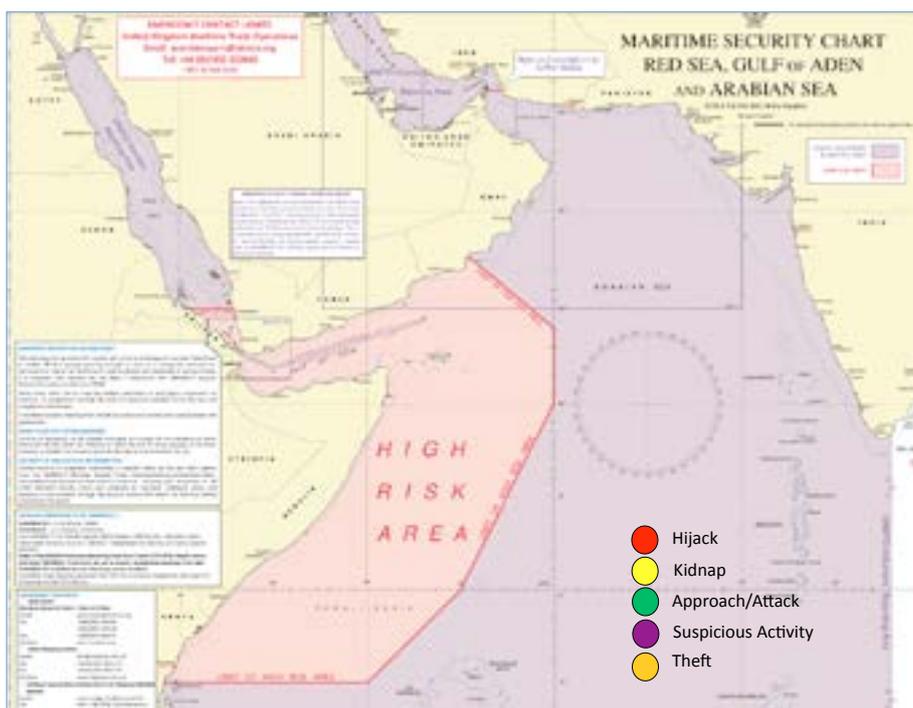
Indian Navy's Surveillance Capabilities To Receive Boost With 10 Shipborne Drones

The Indian Navy's surveillance capabilities will be receiving a boost in the Indian Ocean Region as the government has cleared a proposal to acquire 10 shipborne drones for Rs 1300 crore. "A proposal moved in fast track mode by the Indian Navy before the Defense Ministry, under which it will buy 10 Naval Shipborne Unmanned Aerial Systems for around Rs 1,300 crores has been cleared by the government," sources told news agency ANI.

Iranian navy ups alert level in the Persian Gulf, U.S. sources

The Iranian navy has upped its alert level in the Persian Gulf in the past 48 hours, U.S. sources told CNN on Friday 1st. It was unclear whether this was a defensive move and Iran was expecting a U.S. attack, or it was a sign that Iran is planning to act against the U.S. in the Persian Gulf.

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





Somalia

A suicide bombing near the Somali capital of Mogadishu killed at least five people including two Turks, the Turkish health minister said. Abdiasis Abu Musab, military operation spokesman for the al Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab, said the armed group was behind the attack on Saturday 2nd, Al Jazeera reported. Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca tweeted that 14 people, including three Turks, were wounded and are being treated in a Mogadishu hospital named after Turkey's president.

Parliament extends term amid pre-election stalemate

The current pre-election impasse could escalate further in Somalia following the latest reports that parliament may have extended its term without laid down legal provisions, a move which could trigger endless political squabbles. Somalia was set to hold elections from December last year but the plans have been derailed by the ongoing pre-election standoff which involves the federal government of Somalia and the opposition, which accuses President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo of sabotage.

Somali opposition leaders warn against 'secret' oil deals

The Council of the Presidential Candidates Union has warned the federal government against entering oil exploration and drilling agreements with the foreign firms just before the end of its term. In a letter addressed to President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo the presidential candidates said they had information that the government was planning to sign a secret oil exploration and drilling deal with two foreign companies.

US Conducts 2 New Year's Day Airstrikes

The U.S. conducted the first airstrikes of the New Year in Somalia on Al Shabaab compounds, destroying two according to the initial assessment. No civilians were killed or injured, officials said.

Airstrike Destroys Al-Shabaab Radio Station

A suspected U.S airstrike has destroyed Al Shabaab owned

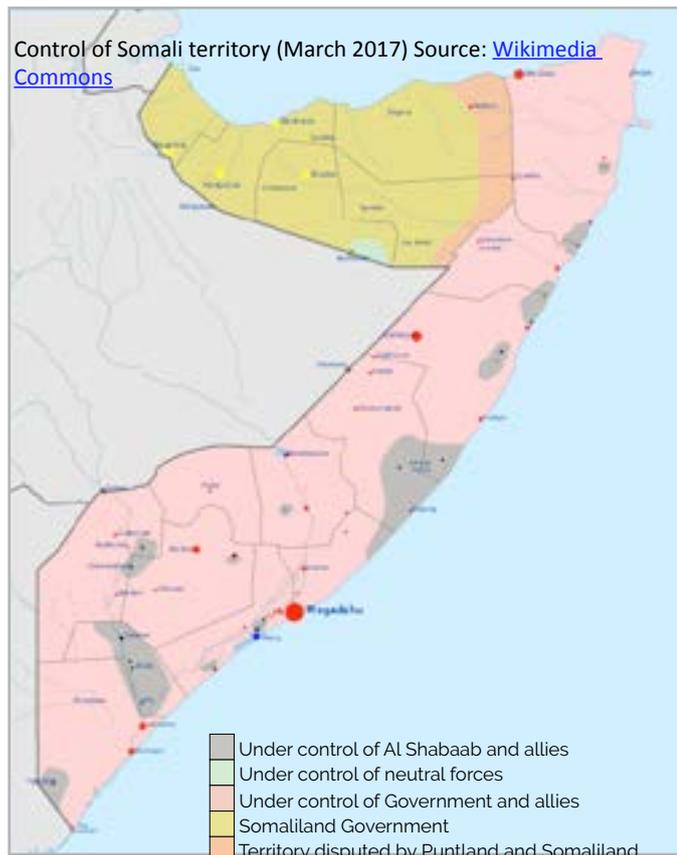
Alfurqaan radio station in Kunya-Barrow area of Lower Shabelle region. According to sources, the radio station was one of the target sites, adding that the station's headquarters was completely destroyed those were inside killed.

Clanism is threat to federalism in Somalia, says former president

The formation of the Jubaland and the deep clan divisions are threat to the realization of federalism in the Horn of Africa nation, former Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has said, in what could yet again give insight on the persistent political squabbles in the country. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who is one of the leading presidential candidates, was one of those tasked to fully implement federalism after taking over in 2012-2016. However, there were no clear legal provisions and framework to make it a reality, thus frequent power struggles in Somalia.

AMISOM trains Somali police officers on securing the upcoming electoral process

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is conducting training for the police in Somalia-both at the federal and federal member states level, to enhance their capacity to secure the upcoming electoral process. The 14- day training by AMISOM police is intended to equip the Somali police with the knowledge and skills in securing the elections, and will be conducted in Mogadishu, Southwest, Jubaland and HirShabelle States.



Analysis

The expulsion of Kenyan diplomats has been precipitated by the Kenyan government hosting a visit by the leader of Somaliland. The Somalis are further angered by the possibility that Kenya might also recognise the relatively successful (by comparison to Somalia) Somaliland as an independent state at some point. Of course, picking fights with neighbours is an age old trick by failing leaders down the ages to divert attention from internal failings and the poor performance of the government in the lead up to elections.

Threat Assessment

The political situation has seen increased tension between regional states and the Federal Government. Should this continue, there is an opportunity for criminal organisations to return to their previous maritime activities. Al Shabaab continues to challenge the government and efforts to disrupt its operations continue. The trade in illegal charcoal by terror and crime groups continues, although the Combined Maritime Forces and UN are working on measures to prevent it. 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. Recent incidents off Somalia have highlighted the robust protections offered by both BMP5 and well trained, vigilant armed protection teams. Illegal fishing has returned to the region and there are wider political concerns that it could spark a resurgence in maritime crime unless checked. There is a risk that complacency in some quarters has seen a reduction in PMSC presence in these waters that could result in a piracy success. A lack of adherence to BMP5 protocol, particularly not maintaining a safe distance off the coast, has increased risks to shipping. 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 (HRA).



Yemen

At least 25 people were killed and more than 50 wounded in an attack at the airport in the southern Yemeni city of Aden on Dec. 30th, officials say. There was at least one explosion shortly after a plane carrying the war-torn country's newly formed government arrived from neighbouring Saudi Arabia. Aid workers and officials were among the casualties. But the prime minister said he and his cabinet were "fine".

UAE refuses to reopen airport in Yemen: official

The United Arab Emirates has rejected demands by the Yemeni government to reopen Al Rayan airport in Yemen's south-eastern city of Al-Mukalla, an official said on Monday 4th. "The Emirati forces have refused the instructions of the Yemeni government to reopen Al-Rayan airport," said Mukhtar al-Rahbi, adviser to the Yemeni Minister of Information.

UAE and Iran reportedly engaged in secret talks

The UAE has reportedly conducted secret communications with Tehran over the past week, in an attempt by Abu Dhabi to calm the Iranians and deny involvement in any military operations inside Iran, according to the London-based Al-Araby al-Jadeed newspaper. Sources told the newspaper that talks took place in Cairo between Abu Dhabi and Tehran to coincide with Iran's commemoration of the assassination of military commander Qassem Soleimani, who was killed in a US raid on 3 January 2020.

Fatal airport attack 'potentially amounts to a war crime' – UN envoy

On the last day of a year that has continued to brutalize the war-torn people of Yemen, UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths condemned a "despicable attack" on the country's newly formed government as they arrived at Aden airport on Wednesday 30th. "Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law", Mr. Griffiths said on Thursday. "A transgression of such magnitude potentially amounts to a war crime".

Houthi blamed as blast hits Yemen wedding hall, killing 5 women and 7 injuring others

Five women were killed in war-torn Yemen when a projectile exploded at a wedding held on New Year's Day in the Red Sea port city of Hodeida, officials said on Saturday 2nd. The government and Houthi militia blamed each other for the Friday night bombing of the hall near Hodeida's airport, a frontline between the warring sides on the edge of the Houthi-held town.

Saudi-led coalition strikes capital after Aden attacks

Saudi-led coalition warplanes on Thursday Dec. 31st conducted retaliatory air strikes on Sanaa, the country's capital held by Shiite Houthi rebels. Thursday's coalition air strikes targeted Sanaa airport and several other sites in and around the city, according to eyewitnesses, DW reported.

KSRelief hands out food baskets, dates to the needy

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) distributed on Thursday 53 tons and 500 kilograms of food baskets to the needy families in the Yemeni governorate of Hadramout, benefiting 3,000 individuals. The center handed out on Thursday Dec. 31st 100 tons and 450 kilograms of food baskets to the displaced in the Aden governorate, benefiting 5,610 individuals.

Houthi say Saudi pilots will only be exchanged for Palestinian prisoners

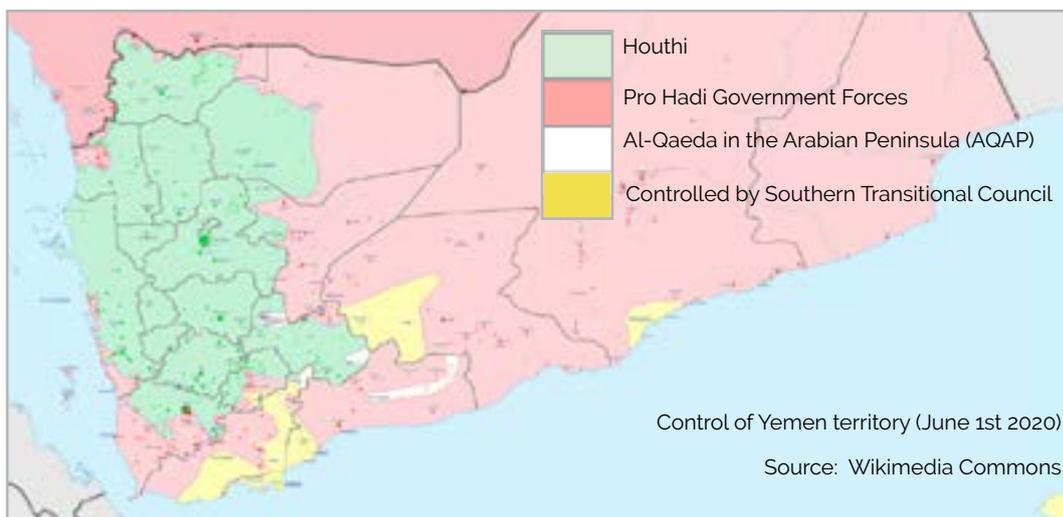
An official in Yemen's Houthi-led National Salvation Government (NSG) has reiterated that Saudi pilots currently being held captive will only be released in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in the kingdom. In an interview with AL-Masirah TV, the head of the National Committee for Prisoners Affairs, Abdulqadir Al-Murtadha, stated: "We have assured the other party that the Saudi pilots will not be released from prison except in exchange for the Palestinian prisoners in Saudi Arabia."

Saudi project clears 1,300 more mines in Yemen

The Saudi Project for Landmine Clearance (Masam) in Yemen dismantled 11 antipersonnel mines, 423 antitank mines, and 859 unexploded ordnance and 7 explosive devices — totaling 1,300 mines — during the fourth week of December. A total of 208,505 mines have been extracted since the beginning of the project

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 (June 1st 2020)

Source: Wikimedia Commons



Mediterranean

The Open Arms charity tweeted that its vessel on Saturday 2nd had safely brought on board 96 migrants who had been adrift in a wooden boat with without life vests in international waters. It said the passengers, most of them from Eritrea, included two women and 17 minors and were suffering from hypothermia. On Sunday 3rd, the group stated that it was seeking a port of safety for 265 migrants its crew rescued from the Mediterranean Sea in the last few days.

82 illegal immigrants rescued off Libyan coast: navy

The Libyan navy said on Monday 4th that it rescued 82 immigrants off the coast of Khoms city, 120 km east of the capital Tripoli. "A rubber boat was successfully rescued with 82 migrants on board off the coast of Khoms city after a distress call was received by the Libyan Search and Rescue team," the Libyan navy said in a statement.

'Invisible shipwrecks' belie falling migrant deaths: UN

The number of deaths recorded on migratory routes fell this year, although COVID-19 difficulties and so-called "invisible shipwrecks" mean the real number is probably much higher, officials at the UN migration agency said on Friday 1st. The IOM's Missing Migrants report showed 3 174 deaths compared to 5 327 in 2019.

Egypt signs nine oil and gas exploration agreements

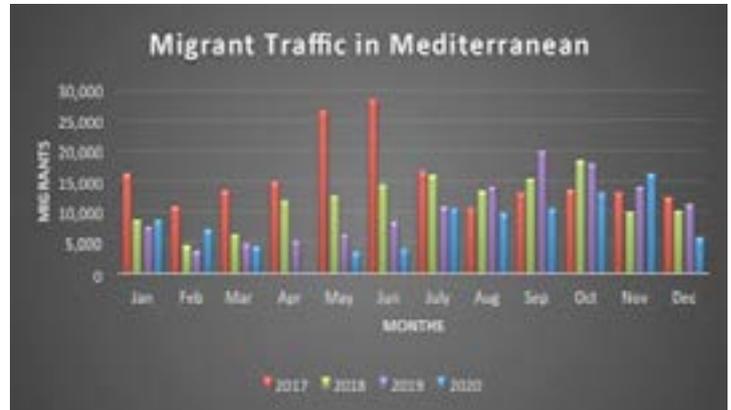
Egypt's Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Tarek el-Molla, signed on Friday 1st nine new agreements to search for oil and natural gas in the eastern and western regions of the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.

Seven bodies wash up on Algeria beach

The bodies of seven people, believed to be migrants who drowned trying to reach Europe, washed up on an Algerian beach on Saturday, the emergency services said. Winds of up to 70 kilometres (45 miles) per hour had swept the seas off the northwestern port city of Mostaganem in recent days.

97 migrants rescued in Maltese search and rescue area

97 migrants were rescued in the Maltese search and rescue area and are now seeking a port of safety in Europe, the NGO Alarm Phone said on Saturday 2nd.



Migrant crossings 2017-2020. Source: [UNHRC](#)

The current migrant smuggling situation

Despite the winter weather, migrants continue to be rescued in the Mediterranean, with NGO mission, Open Arms, making significant rescues over the New Year period.

While their actions are very welcome, it highlights the ongoing lack of coastal security in Libya and, presumably, the level of co-operation between what security presence there is in the country and the smuggling gangs and militias involved in the process.

January should see some political movement, with the topic of Brexit now off the plates of EU nations. However, the ongoing political spat between Turkey and other Med nations may well be the more pressing issue for the EU. Much will depend on Ankara's moves in the coming days, as well as the approach taken by the incoming US administration.



Migrant statistics in the Mediterranean (Figures last updated on Jan. 5th 2021). Source: [UNHCR](#)



Libya

UN chief Antonio Guterres has proposed the dispatching of international monitors to support Libya's fragile ceasefire amid hopes that foreign fighters will soon leave and the country can turn the page on a decade of war. In a letter to UN Security Council members, the secretary-general asked to set up a monitoring group that would include civilians and retired soldiers from regional groups such as the African Union, European Union and Arab League.

Libya's UN-backed gov't accused of destabilising security

The east-based Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Haftar has accused its UN-backed rival, the Government of National Accord (GNA) of trying to destabilise security in the southern part of the war-torn country. Local media reported that clashes erupted between forces of the UN-backed government based in capital Tripoli and a military unit of the LNA in the southern city of Sabha on Sunday 3rd, Xinhua news agency.

GNA rejects reopening Sirte-Misrata road before mercenaries' departure

The commander of the Sirte-Jufra Operations Room of the Libyan Army under the command of the Government of National Accord (GNA) Ibrahim Baytelmal rejected again the reopening of Sirte-Misrata road before the withdrawal of mercenaries from Sirte and Jufra.

Libya starts using new exchange rate as economy struggles

The Central Bank of Libya on Sunday 3rd introduced a new unified exchange rate agreed last month after years of division between rival branches based on opposing sides of the front line. As part of the change, the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli suspended a fee on foreign currency transactions that it introduced two years ago to bring the official rate closer to the black market rate, Al Jazeera reported.

Four Russians, One Ukrainian Freed In Libya

A Moscow-based foundation with links to the Wagner Group, a Russian military contractor force, says three Russians and one Ukrainian national have been freed from captivity in Libya. Aleksandr Malkevich, head of the Foundation for the Protection of Traditional Values, said on Telegram on Jan. 2nd that the four individuals had been "kidnapped" several weeks ago, but did not say why they were in Libya or who had allegedly detained them.

Members of Libyan political dialogue call for reconciliation

Members of the Libyan political dialogue called on Saturday

2nd for the formation of a committee for reconciliation, Al Arabiya TV reported. Members also called for "the Libyan elites" to work on the unity and sovereignty of the country.

Russia warns against call to war by Libya's Haftar

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned on Wednesday Dec. 30th against a resumption of hostilities in Libya. Speaking at a news conference in Moscow following a meeting with his Libyan counterpart Mohamed Siala, Lavrov promised to provide "maximum support" to ongoing peace efforts in Libya.

Egypt increases peace efforts with Libya's fighting parties

According to Egyptian experts, the new visit of a high-level Egyptian security commission to Libya's capital Tripoli indicates Cairo's openness to all Libya's parties with the purpose of finding a resolution to the Libyan crisis.

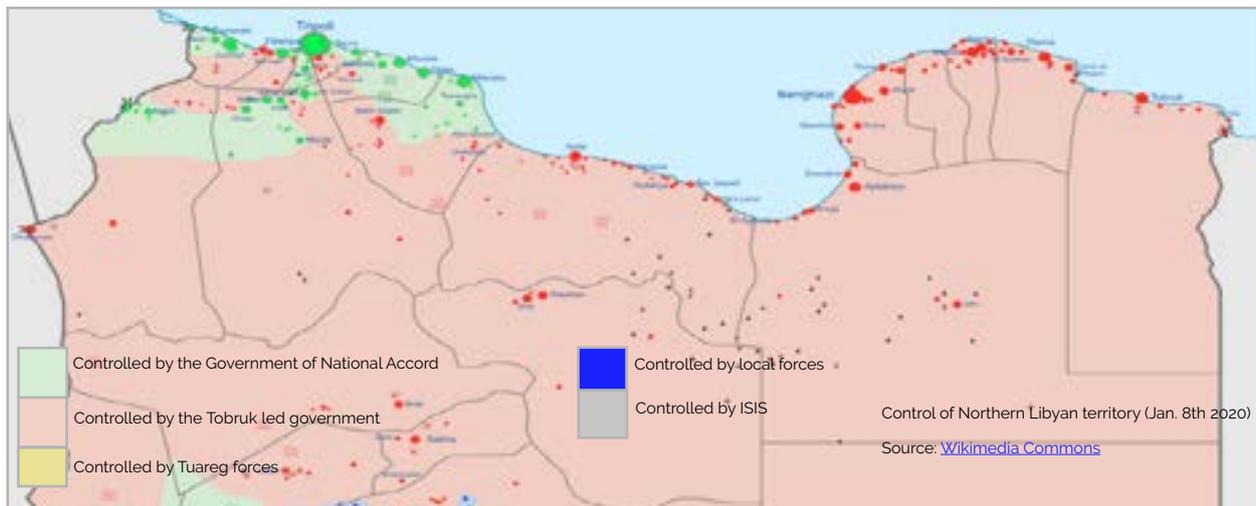
12 thousand migrants returned to Libya in 2020

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) that almost 12 thousand illegal migrants were stopped in the Mediterranean and returned to Libya. The Organisation also detailed that 811 women, and 711 children have been intercepted this year. An estimated 316 migrants have died, with a further 417 others still lost at sea.

Misrata Free Zone temporarily postpones charging ships in hard currency

Misrata Free Zone announced last on Dec. 31st that it had temporarily postponed its decision to start from the 1st January 2021 charging foreign ships in hard currency for services provided. The postponement will be for one month as of 1st January.

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





Gulf of Guinea

The Nigerian Navy says it is re-equipping its operational headquarters in Baga town of Borno State, looted by Boko Haram. The Baga Naval Base was dislodged in December 2018 after a fierce battle with the Boko Haram insurgents. This is according to the Chief of Training and Operations of the Naval Headquarters, Rear Admiral Ibikunle Taiwo Olaiya.

Incidents:

1. Robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored container ship at 0048 UTC in position 04:42.93S – 011:44.21E, Pointe Noire Anchorage, The Congo. General alarm sounded and all crew mustered in the citadel. Robbers stole ships stores and escaped. Incident reported to Port Control. All crew reported safe. Reported (IMB) 4th Jan.

Militants bomb ex-leader's home in Bayelsa

A coalition of militants in Niger Delta has bombed the country home of a former militant leader in Bayelsa State, "General" Ogunbos, who they claimed abandoned his boys to suffer in the creeks and is "living big" in the city, Vanguard newspaper reported on Jan. 5th.

Insecurity: Ijaw Youths Seek Regional Security Outfit For Niger Delta

The Ijaw Youths Council (IYC) Worldwide has vowed to push for the establishment of a regional security outfit in 2021 to police the Niger Delta region, especially the South-South geopolitical zone. IYC President, Peter Timothy Igbifa, disclosed this in his New Year address in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on Friday 1st.

Fishermen Threaten Showdown over Shell's Failure to Pay \$3.6bn Bonga Spill Fine

Fishermen from the Niger Delta region operating under the auspices of Artisanal Fishermen Association of Nigeria (ARFAN) have urged the federal government to prevail on Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCO) Limited to pay the \$3.6 billion fine imposed by the oil industry regulators over the 2011 Bonga oilfield spill or face a showdown.

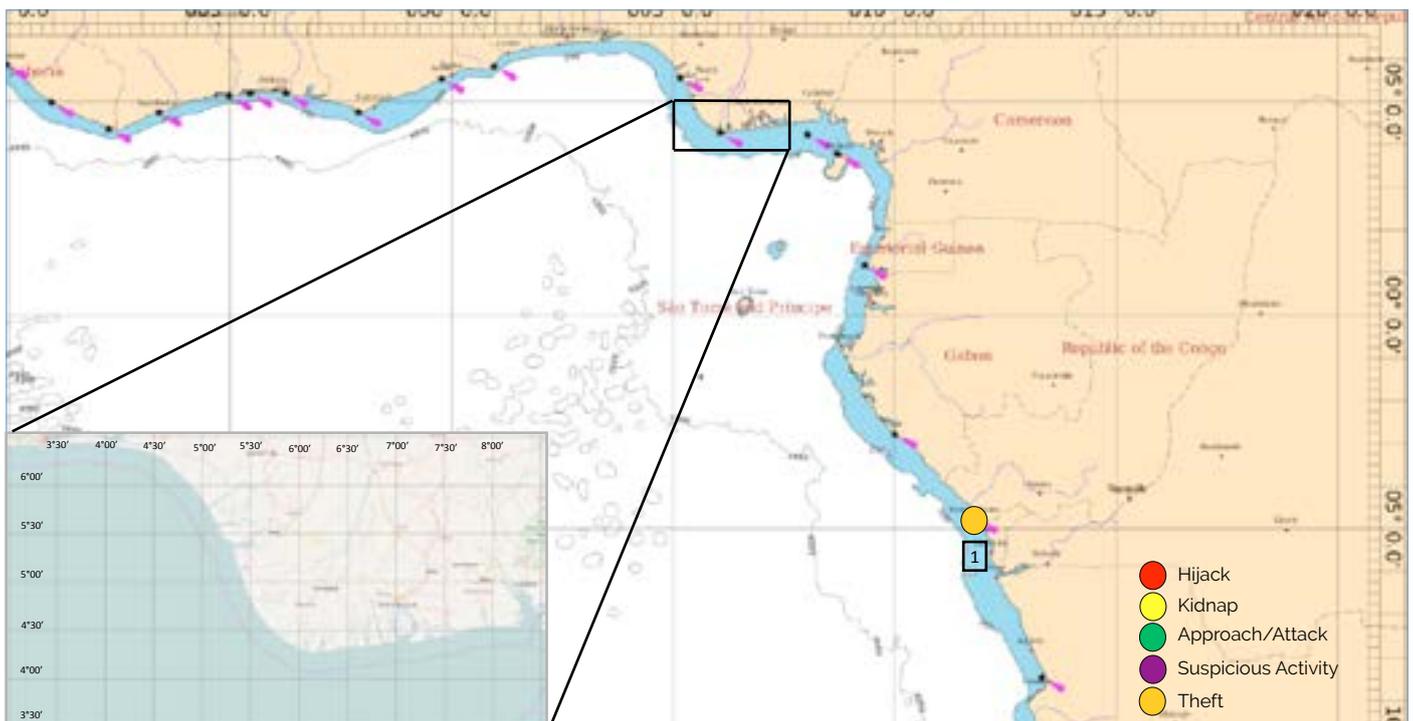
Many crime suspects escape from police custody in Benin

There are indications that several crime suspects including kidnapers, armed robbers and cultists have escaped from the custody of the Edo State Police Command. The actual number of suspects that escaped could not be ascertained, but sources at the command's headquarters disclosed that the majority of the escapees are kidnap and armed robbery suspects who were arrested in the past two months, Premium Times reported on Jan. 3rd.

New strategies needed to eradicate piracy

Preoccupied with the unprecedented level of insecurity — terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and armed robbery — across the country, the government appears to be paying less than required attention to coastal piracy. It should pay attention. Despite inefficiencies and poor infrastructure, the Nigerian Ports Authority said the maritime sector had 10,000 direct new jobs in 2017. It is through the coasts also that crude oil and gas that provide 90 per cent of export earnings are evacuated and the gateway for most imported goods, Punch newspaper reported on Dec. 31st.

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





South East Asia

The commander of the Philippine Navy is said to have confirmed that negotiations have been completed with Israel Shipyards for the supply of nine Shaldag MK V patrol vessels as well as remotely controlled weapon stations and missiles for the Philippine Navy. The tweet last week by @MonteroMax, the account of the MaxDefense Philippines website, also said the notice of award as well as the signing of the contract are expected in early 2021.

Incidents:

1. Three robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored bulk carrier at 1940 UTC in position 00:15.8S – 117:34.3E, Muara Be-
rau Anchorage, Indonesia. Duty crew spotted the robbers at Forecastle store before escaping with ships stores. Incident was reported to local authorities. Reported (IMB) 3rd Jan.

ESSCOM: Semporna tourist island to have forward operating base in 2024

The Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) will set up a forward operating base off Mabul island to enhance security in the district. Its chief executive officer Dr Jamaluddin Mohd Ali said the project, which involves RM41 million, will be completed within 36 months; and Esscom is expected to begin operations there in early Jan 2024.

Suspected kidnapper of Norwegian national in 2015 arrested in Manila on Christmas Eve

The key suspect in the 2015 kidnapping of Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, Canadian John Ridsdel and Robert Hall and Hall's Filipina girlfriend Marines Flor was arrested in Manila, Philippines on Christmas Eve according to The Philippine National Police (PNP). Kjartan Sekkingstad is manager of Holiday Ocean View resort in Samal Island where the four hostages were kidnapped in a raid five years ago. Local militant and terror faction Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) later owned up to the abductions.

Two Japan-Based Destroyers Conduct Taiwan Strait Transit

Two Japan-based destroyers conducted a Taiwan Strait transit at the end of December 2020, in the second such transit in three weeks and the fourth overall mission during that time to push back against excessive maritime claims in the Pacific. Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS John S. McCain (DDG-56) and USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG-54) conducted a

routine Taiwan Strait transit Dec. 31 local time, or Dec. 30 in the continental United States.

Indonesian fisherman finds Chinese drone submarine on possible mission

An Indonesian fisherman recently found what is believed to be a Chinese submarine drone in waters on a strategic maritime route from the South China Sea to Australia. According to Indonesian media, the unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) was found on December 20th near Selayar Island in South Sulawesi. It was later handed over to police and then transferred to the Indonesian military, although the news only emerged later in December.

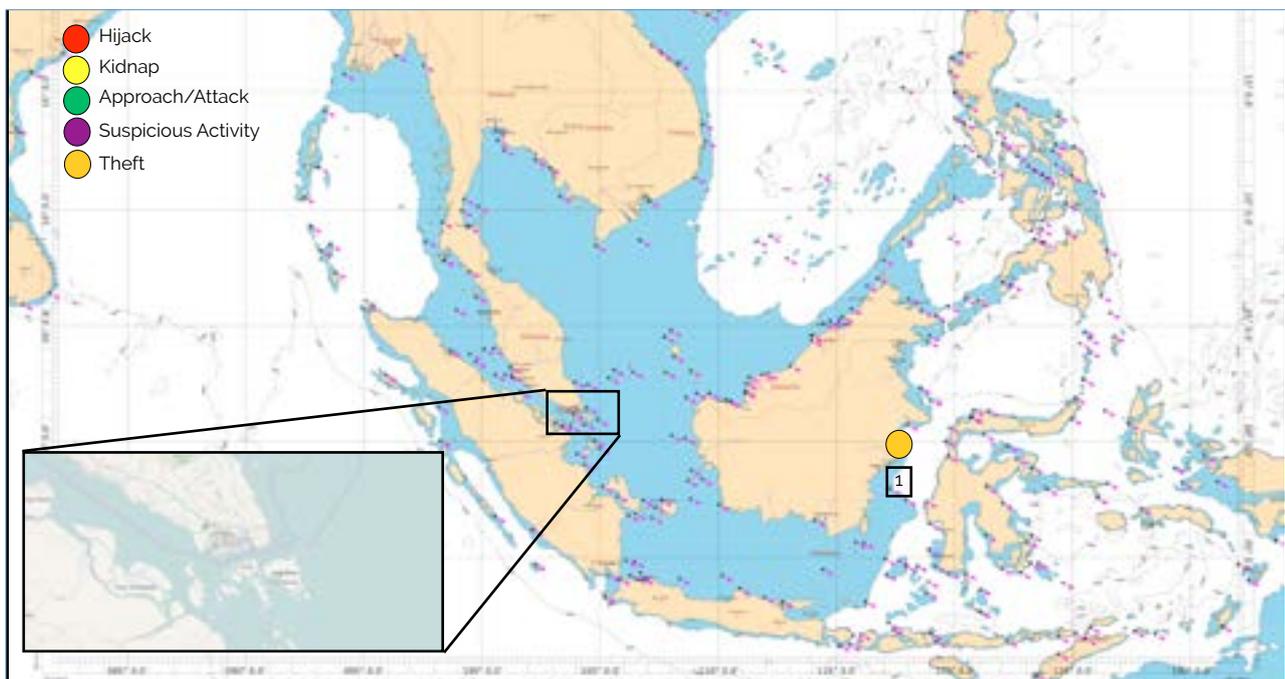
Curfew in waters off ESSZone extended, says Sabah police chief

The curfew in the waters off seven districts in the Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone), scheduled to end in December 2020, has been extended to January 15th. Sabah police commissioner Datuk Hazani Ghazali said the curfew covers the waters off Tawau, Semporna, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan, Sandakan and Beluran.

Soldiers tighten watch on Sabah border

The Philippine military deployed additional security forces to patrol the porous southern border with Malaysia following the emergence of a new strain of the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in Sabah. Army Lt. Gen. Corleto Vinluan Jr, chief of the Western Mindanao Command (WesMin-Com), said Sulu Gov. Sakur Tan is also set to temporarily close the province to civilians coming from Sabah to preempt the possible spread of the new Covid-19 strain, identified as B117.

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





Central and South America

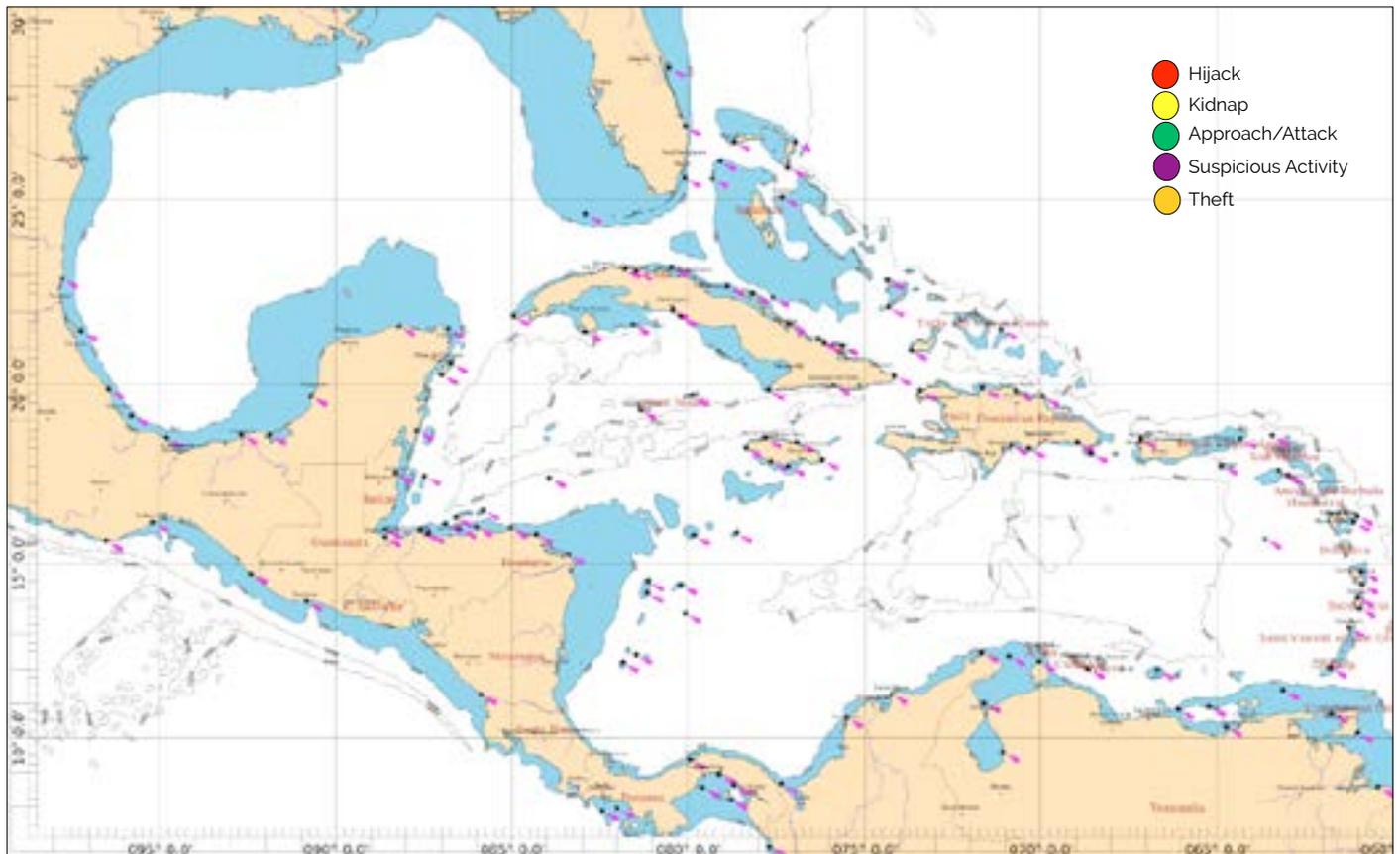
Nothing significant to report.

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.