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Weekly Security & Risk Report

04th May 2022



MAST Intelligence

UK Domestic

International Incidents

Industry and SIA Updates

LAND



SEA

West Africa

Indian Ocean
Yemen, Somalia

European Waters



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Issue 330

Issue 330 of the series reviews, analyses and threat assesses the conflict-affected coastal states of Somalia and Yemen and associated waters, as well as ongoing issues facing the maritime industry in West Africa. The Mediterranean migrant crisis, security issues facing the UK and incidents affecting maritime security are also reported and analysed.

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 conflicts 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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Content

Mast Services	2
Gulf of Guinea	4
Indian Ocean Region	5
European Waters	6
Somalia & Yemen	7
UK & London Security News	8
Global and Industry Security News	9

Gulf of Guinea

This Day Live reported on April 30th that despite recent success in suppressing piracy in the region, UNODC has said that the threat to shipping in the region remains. This follows a recent tabletop exercise which took place in Lagos and featured 32 officers from 16 different agencies, working on scenarios used in Obangame Express 2022.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Confusion over reported attack

Sources on May 3rd reported a suspected pirate boarding of a tanker in position 05°26.00'N, 002°15.50'E, around 55nm SSW of Cotonou, Benin. The incident was reported by the IMB, but MAST sources suggest that the incident may not be piracy-related, but part of a Nigerian Navy exercise. We will update with new information when we have it.

President Buhari approves new Naval Base in Oguta

Standard Observers reported on May 1st that President Buhari had agreed to approve a request to build a new Nigerian Navy base at Oguta in Imo State. The new base is intended to reduce maritime piracy and crime in the area. The request for the base came from the state's governor, Hope Uzodimma, the paper reported.

Paramount Launches New Gulf Of Guinea Patrol Vessel

South Africa's Paramount Maritime has launched a new, high-speed 35m patrol vessel designed to operate in the Gulf of Guinea. The new Sentinel is intended to be used to protect oil fields and associated assets and will be deployed in the greater Gulf of Guinea region, Marine Link said on April 29th.

Ghana Navy to construct Forward Operating Base

Ghana plans a new Forward Operating Base (FOB) for its Navy at Keta, NewsGhana reported on April 27th. Discussions with the local community and Assembly are underway, and the news has been broadly welcomed in the area, with many residents who make a living from the sea concerned about the threats posed by piracy and illegal fishing. Plans to create a new port at Keta may also influence the decision to build the new base. Two acres of land have been set aside for the new FOB.

After Imo bunkering tragedy, what next?

The recent explosion at an illegal oil refinery site in Ibo, which killed at least 110 people, has led to further discussion in the Nigerian media about the risks posed by illegal refining operations. On April 28th, the Director, Defence Media Operations, Maj.-Gen. Bernard Onyeuko, told reporters that Navy personnel acting as part of Operation Delta Safe had recovered 7.7 million litres of crude oil and 10.8 million litres of illegally refined Automotive Gas Oil (AGO). The media is putting pressure on the government to speed up its refinery plans, noting that the loss of up to 150,000 barrels of oil per day would be reduced if more were refined and made available within the country.

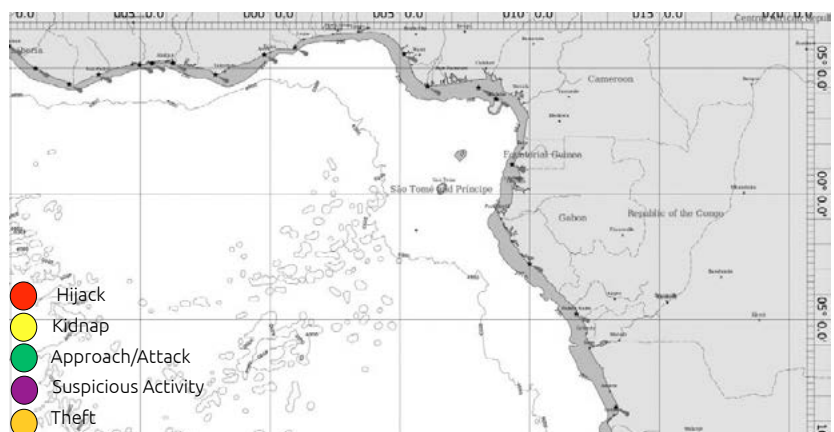
For further information, please [click here](#).

Gulf of Guinea Piracy & Maritime Crime Figures

2022
Incidents reported: 15 (MDAT-GoG/Others)

2021
Incidents reported: 56 (MDAT-GoG/Others)
Crew kidnapped: 46 (IMB, MDAT)
Vessels hijacked: 1 (MDAT-GoG)

2020
Incidents reported: 132 (MDAT-GoG)
43 Crew Kidnapped: 130 (IMB)
Vessels Hijacked: 3 (IMB)



Indian Ocean Region

The Iranian Navy is going to receive two new homegrown destroyers, a top commander said in an interview televised on Friday night. Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani unveiled plans to bring two advanced destroyers into operation, Tasnim News said on April 30th.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Major maritime task force role for regional partners in GCC

Zawya reported on May 2nd that the International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC), operating in the Persian Gulf, may soon receive local leadership. Up until now, the IMSC has been commanded by US or UK naval personnel, but the ultimate ambition is for IMSC to be run by regional commanders. Royal Navy Commander Commodore Don Mackinnon, who heads the operation, said: "In the future, my job could be done by an officer from Bahrain or Saudi Arabia – we're not quite there yet, but we're moving towards it. It's a realistic aspiration."

Pakistan Navy Interdicts Boat Smuggling Hashish in Gulf of Oman

A Pakistan Navy guided-missile frigate seized illicit narcotics from a fishing vessel while conducting patrols in international waters in the Gulf of Oman, April 23rd. PNS Shamsheer (FFG 252) was operating as part of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, which has increased regional patrols to locate and disrupt unlawful maritime activity. CTF 150 is one of four task forces under Combined Maritime Forces. The seizure consisted of 950 kilograms of hashish, with an estimated U.S. street value of \$2 million, the Combined Maritime Forces said on April 26th.

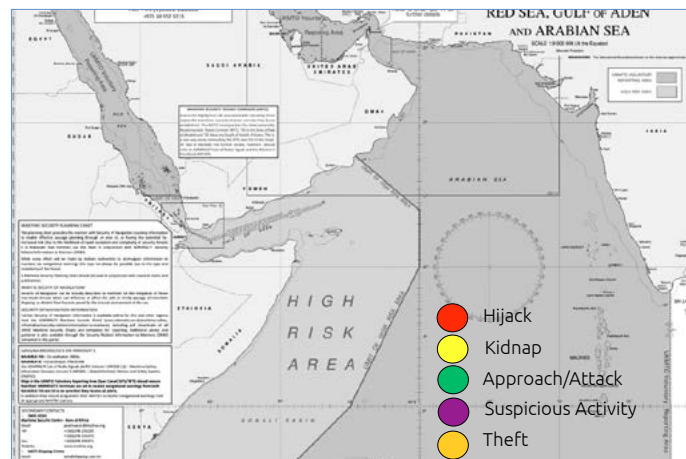
Mauritius Police Force receives new air assets

The Maritime Air Squadron (MAS) of the Mauritius Police Force (MPF) is now equipped with a new Passenger Variant Dornier (PVD) aircraft, as well as with a leased Advanced Light Helicopter from the Republic of India. The new PVD, constructed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and financed under the Indian line of credit, will play a critical role in securing the country's maritime zone and will also transform the National Coast Guard (NCG) capabilities to extend support to outer islands, Prime Minister Jugnauth told the media on April 27th.

USS Momsen Conducts Underway Operations with India Navy

The US and Indian navies concluded at sea bi-lateral operations off India's West Coast in the Arabian Sea, April 27th. The operations included the US Navy's guided-missile destroyer USS Momsen (DDG 92) and the Indian Navy's guided-missile frigate INS Trishul (F 43), which focused on building interoperability and strengthening relationships, the US Navy said in a press release.

For further information, please [click here](#).



MAST Note: This chart will be replaced as soon as Admiralty UK releases the updated version.

European Waters

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 105), which met 20th-29th April, has adopted Resolution MSC.495(105), which calls for the urgent evacuation of seafarers from the war zone area in and around the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

Black Sea incidents

On May 2nd, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine released video footage which shows one of its TB2 UAVs engaging two Russian assault boats off Snake Island. The dramatic footage shows two Raptor-class Russian boats being struck by what Naval News believes may have been MAM-L lightweight Smart Micro Munition. The video is dated May 2nd, and the damage to both vessels would appear to be significant. On May 1st, the Covert Shores Twitter account reported that Russian Navy activity was increasing in Lake Donuzlav, northwestern Crimea. Landing craft and special gunboats were reportedly captured by satellite running at high speed around the military staging area of Novoozerne.

On April 29th, Maritime Professional reported that the first sea cargo of Ukrainian corn was poised to leave Romania's Constanta port. It is the first such cargo to be shipped since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A further shipment of iron ore was loaded earlier in the week, demonstrating that Ukraine is still able to function at some economic level despite the massive disruption at its own ports.

On April 28th, the Local Spain reported that the country had barred a Maltese ship from its waters, on suspicion that it was carrying cargo from a Russian ship, against EU sanctions. Spain had already blocked a stopover request by the Andrey Pervozvanniy at Barcelona and the suspicion is that some cargo from this ship was transferred to the Maltese vessel. In other developments, UK Armed Forces Minister James Heapey has confirmed that the country is to supply Ukraine with Brimstone missiles. Although they have primarily been used by RAF aircraft, they can also be deployed on land against maritime targets, the National reported on April 27th.

Channel migrants: Border Force intercepts 254 on Sunday

BBC News reported on May 2nd that UK Border Force had intercepted several groups of migrants in the English Channel. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) said it had detected seven boats carrying

254 migrants on Sunday May 1st. However, it said it did not believe any migrants arrived "on their own terms" in a small boat. It is believed to be the first time there have been crossings in 11 days. Responding to the latest interceptions, the MoD described the rise in "dangerous" crossings as unacceptable.

More than 3,000 people lost in sea crossings to Europe in 2021: UN

UNHCR said on Friday 29th that over 3,000 refugees, migrants and asylum seekers died or were lost at sea in 2021 as they attempted to reach Europe. UNHCR say that at least 3,077 people lost their lives that year, almost double the figure for 2020, Reuters said. It added that so far in 2022, at least 533 people have been reported as dead or missing in the Mediterranean.

Ocean Viking: 295 migrants aboard after new rescue ops in Mediterranean

NGO rescue mission ship, Ocean Viking, currently has almost 300 people on board after rescuing them in two separate operations off the coast of Libya, InfoMigrants reported on April 27th. Poor sea states made the rescues difficult, but they are now safely on board and waiting to be disembarked at a port.

Italian coast guard rescued 80 migrants

On Wednesday 27th, the Italian Coast Guard reported that they had rescued around 80 migrants from a fishing vessel off Sicily on Tuesday. The rescued were taken by ship to Augusta port, although a pregnant woman and her partner were reportedly taken to hospital by helicopter due to a medical emergency, InfoMigrants reported.

For further information, please [click here](#).

Somalia & Yemen

A tense stand off between Somali police and African Union peacekeepers at the airport hangar where the vote to elect the Somali parliament's new speaker took place last Wednesday, Al Jazeera reported on April 28th. Despite some issues, the vote went ahead and Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nur was elected.

Al Shabaab attacks African Union mission camp in central Somalia

Al Shabaab terrorists reportedly attacked a camp used by African Union forces on Tuesday 3rd May, Alarabiya reported. A SVBIED was used before Al Shabaab terrorists opened fire on the base, locals in the Shabelle region told reporters. "The Mujahideen launched a pre-dawn raid on an ATMIS (African Union Mission) military base in el-Baraf, middle Shabelle region," al Shabaab said in a statement. "After a fierce firefight, the Mujahideen managed to overrun the base and are now in complete control of the entire military base."

Ethiopia Arrests Four Over Hotel Bomb Attack

Security forces in Ethiopia have arrested four suspected Al Shabaab members following a bomb attack at a hotel in Harar, Shabelle Media reported on April 27th. The explosion on Sunday 24th injured eight people and the involvement of Al Shabaab illustrates the danger the group now poses to countries in the region. In a statement, the Ethiopian National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) said, "The suspects were secretly conspiring and preparing to conduct terror attacks in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, Oromia and Somali regional states at the time of their arrest."

Somali Police Chief Suspended

To ensure the security of the elections in Somalia, the Minister of Security took the extraordinary step of suspending the country's Chief of Police, Major General Abdi Hassan Mohamed Hajar, Shabelle Media reported on April 27th. The media state that Hajar had been blamed for getting involved in politics and possibly obstructing the election.

UK Announces £25 Million Aid Package for Somalia

Shabelle Media report that the UK has announced a new £25 million aid package which will provide assistance to almost one million people inside

the drought-stricken country as it faces potential famine. "The UK is stepping up our support with an additional £25 million, taking our support to almost £40 million in 2022 alone," UK Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford, said at an event organised by the UN.

Yemen: Houthis holding fishing boat and crew

A report in the Egyptian media on May 1st states that Houthi rebels detained a fishing boat and its crew over a month ago in the Red Sea, and continue to hold it. Questions have been asked by Egyptian politicians and an investigation is underway. Reports state that the vessel, Nour El-Bahar, left Ezbet El-Borg on March 18th, but were detained by Houthis and accused of entering Yemeni waters illegally. Reports suggest that at least 20 crew were held during the operation.

Yemen assessment says Houthis poised to resume fighting

A report released by the Yemen Army on April 29th suggests that they believe Houthi forces will resume fighting almost immediately when the current two-month truce ends. They report that Houthis are using the time to reinforce and fortify positions around Marib governate, Critical Threats said.

Saudi Coalition forces release 163 Houthi prisoners

"The Joint Forces Command of the Coalition will release (163) Houthi detainees who had participated in hostilities against the Kingdom as a humanitarian initiative in extension to previous ones, and support of all the endeavors and efforts to bring about peace and end the Yemeni conflict, in addition to supporting UN efforts to stabilize the current ceasefire, and create conducive efforts for dialogue between Yemeni parties, they said in a statement on April 28th.

For further information, please [click here](#).

UK Security News

The government does not record the number of people prosecuted for terror offences after returning to the UK from Syria, an official report says. The data is held neither “officially or unofficially”, an annual review by the independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, Jonathan Hall QC, says, BBC News said on April 30th.

Army investigates intruder reports at Windsor base

The Army has launched an investigation after an intruder reportedly spent the night at a barracks close to Windsor Castle, alongside Royal guardsmen. The Sun newspaper reported that police were alerted to reports of the intruder at Victoria Barracks, home to the Coldstream Guards, in Windsor at 09:20 BST last Wednesday. The man approached soldiers pretending to be a priest, Talk TV reported, the BBC said on May 3rd.

Lakeside Shopping Centre: Man and woman held over death

Police investigating the death of a man at a shopping centre have arrested two people on suspicion of murder. The victim, aged in his 30s, was found with serious injuries at Lakeside Shopping Centre in Thurrock, Essex, at about 16:30 BST on Thursday, but died at the scene. Essex Police said a 19-year-old man and a woman aged 20 have been arrested. A 23-year-old man, who was earlier held on suspicion of conspiracy to murder, has been released without charge, BBC News reported on May 2nd.

UK-born ‘Beate’ ISIL member sentenced to life by US court

Al Jazeera reported on April 29th that a US court had sentenced Alexandra Kotey, a member of the ISIL (ISIS) cell known as ‘the Beatles’ to life in prison. Kotey had pleaded guilty to several counts of ‘lethal hostage-taking’ and other charges, Al Jazeera said. Another member of the group, Mohammed Emwazi, who had reportedly beheaded hostages, was killed in a drone attack in 2015.

UK report warns of impact of Islamist groups in prisons

Reuters reported on April 28th that a review into UK prisons revealed that the UK had underestimated the risk posed by Islamist ‘gang-type activity’ in jails. The ‘Terrorism in Prisons’ review said that prisoners had taken an ‘anti-state Islamist stance’ which

encouraged violence against non-Muslim inmates and staff. Following the review, UK Justice Minister, Dominic Raab, announced new measures including ‘Separation Centres’ in prisons to combat what the government called ‘influential and charismatic terrorists’ and keep them away from the main population in prisons.

‘Terror threat’ boy spared custody over synagogue bomb Twitter post

A boy who downloaded manuals for explosives and tweeted that he was a “domestic terror threat” who would “bomb a synagogue” has avoided custody, BBC News said on April 29th. The 16-year-old was arrested in Bootle, Merseyside, in 2021 after authorities in the US were alerted to his post. Liverpool Youth Court heard he had also been pictured doing a Nazi salute and a “white power” symbol. However, chief magistrate Paul Goldspring said he believed detaining the boy may undo his rehabilitation.

London News

Alleged terror funder ‘sent Covid bounce back loans to ISIS’

The Evening Standard reported on May 3rd that a former London pub landlord on trial at the Old Bailey, allegedly sent thousands of pounds collected in Covid ‘bounce back’ loans to ISIS. Tarek Namouz is currently on trial facing eight charges of funding terrorism between November 2020 and May 2021.

Man dies after stabbing near St Paul’s Cathedral

A man has died after he was found stabbed near to St Paul’s Cathedral in east London. City of London Police said officers were called to Gresham Street at 23:30 BST on Sunday following reports of a stabbing, BBC News said on May 2nd.

For further information, please [click here](#).

Global Security News

One of the UK's most wanted men has been arrested after trying to fly using a fraudulent passport. Alex Male, of Weston-super-Mare in Somerset was detained at Lisbon Airport on Saturday after arriving on a flight from Turkey. The National Crime Agency (NCA) said his arrest was a "fantastic result", BBC News said on May 3rd.

Ukraine: Latest updates

BBC News reported on May 3rd that France's President Macron is scheduled to speak with Russian leader, Vladimir Putin by phone, the first time the two have spoken since the end of March. The Pope has also offered to visit Moscow to meet with Putin, but so far, his message has not received a response from the Kremlin.

Evacuations have been continuing in Mariupol, as civilians are attempting to escape from the besieged Azovstal steel plant after some have spent as many as 60 days hiding in the complex of tunnels under the facility. Buses were expected to arrive on May 3rd to ferry people to safety. The United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross began an operation co-ordinated with Ukraine and Russia on 29 April to bring out women, children and the elderly from the steelworks. Negotiations are continuing to release a further 200 civilians still trapped there, the BBC said.

The UK Ministry of Defence has revealed in its latest daily intelligence update that Russia's military is now "significantly weaker" as a result of its invasion of Ukraine. Despite recent modernisation of Russia's physical equipment, it has not enabled it to dominate the war in Ukraine, due to failures in strategic planning, the MoD said on May 3rd.

Israeli politicians have reacted furiously to comments by Russia's Sergei Lavrov that Hitler had "Jewish blood". Sergei Lavrov made the comments to try to justify Russia's portrayal of Ukraine as "Nazi" despite the fact that its president is Jewish. Israel's foreign ministry summoned Russia's ambassador for "clarification" and demanded an apology. The comments have been condemned across the political spectrum in Israel and by newspapers in the country. Israel has attempted to remain neutral in the conflict, and had offered mediation services, but the Jerusalem Post said the comments meant the country could no longer remain neutral.

Haiti gang holding kidnapped diplomat for ransom

The Dominican Republic has urged Haiti to do everything in its power to ensure the safe release of one of its diplomats who was kidnapped on Friday 29th. The trade attaché at the Dominican embassy in Port-au-Prince, Carlos Guillén, was seized by gang members while he was travelling to neighbouring Dominican Republic. Dominican officials said that the 400 Mawozo gang was behind the kidnapping, the BBC said. It is not known whether Mr Guillén was protected by security personnel at the time of the kidnap.

British Virgin Islands: UK minister dispatched for governance talks

The BBC reported on May 1st that the UK government has sent a minister to the British Virgin Islands after an inquiry called for a return of UK rule. In a turbulent week for the overseas territory, its leader Andrew Fahie was arrested in the US for alleged drug trafficking and money laundering. After his arrest, a report led by a British judge was released recommending direct rule be imposed from London due to corruption concerns.

Industry and SIA News

SIA GovSummit

SIA GovSummit focuses on how government leverages security technologies to drive success across a wide spectrum of missions. Held annually in Washington, D.C., SIA's government summit examines emerging policy trends, technology needs of the government and changes in the risk environment that shape development of products and advanced systems integration to meet evolving security challenges. To find out more, [please click here](#).

For further information, [please click here](#).



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