



MERLIN
GLOBAL MARITIME

[Contact us today](#) to discussing performing Due Diligence and Risk Assessments for any High-Risk Area to ensure peace of mind for your fleet and to discuss possible mitigations or further information on regions or port calls. These are produced by experienced Maritime Operations Officers who have experience of sailing in the region as well as commercial and technical operations of vessels in the regions and understand your and your charterers requirements.

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SUMMARY

Monthly overview – August 2020

In August 2020, compared to same period 2019, we can see a slight decline in reported piracy incidents, as per data from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), with just 12 incidents reported in August 2020 and the same number in July. Same period of 2019 saw numbers of 18 and 23 respectively. Whilst on first glance this appears to be a reduction in incidents we must take into account the effects of CV19 world pandemic on the shipping patterns. If we look at the average for the last three months there is an increase in nearly 19% from same period in 2019 and year to date an increase of 35%.

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WAF

In WAF region there has been 3 reported incidents in the last 7 days. Two attempted attacks, one 114 nm SE of Tema where the vessel managed to evade and a second attack off Freetown Port which the ships crew resisted the boarders and several were injured. Attacks in this region are volant and ships crews need to be prepared accordingly.

IOR

After the last week of activity in the region including a vessel being boarded in suspicious circumstances off Scrota Gap and an Armed Guard first taking the vessel he was supposed to protect hostage and then taking the floating armoury hostage, last 7 days have been quiet in the region. Civil War in Yemen still causing issues within the Gulf of Aden, especially for Saudi Flagged vessels whilst political issues within the Arabian Gulf meaning that transit of the Straits of Hormuz needs to be taken with precautions, especially for vessels with USA and allies connections.

LIBYA

This week The Libya's National Oil Corporation's (NOC) proposal to resume production and export of oil and to freeze sales revenues in NOC accounts in the Libyan Foreign Bank. Revenues should remain frozen until a comprehensive political agreement is reached in line with the recommendations of the Berlin Process.

NOC reiterates its call for all oil facilities to be freed from military occupation to ensure the security and safety of its workers. Once this has been done, NOC should be able to lift force majeure and re-commence oil export operations.

However meantime, according to information received from our local correspondents in Libya, the situation in the Libyan oil export terminals that were placed under force majeure by Libya's National Oil Corporation's (NOC) in January 2020 remains unchanged. The port situation in Libya as at 28th August 2020 is reported to be as follows:

Working: Farwah, Bouri, Melittah, Zawia, Tripoli, Al Khoms, Misurata, Marsa El Brega (only non-oil cargoes), Benghazi and Tobruk

Under force majeure by NOC: Es Sider, Ras Lanuf, Marsa El Brega, Zueitina and Marsa El Hariga

Closed: Sirte and Derna

BEIRUT - PORT SITUATION

Following the initial closure of the port of Beirut after the recent explosion, some container operations have now resumed where vessels have been allowed to discharge their cargo at the local container terminal.

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FAR EAST

Ships transiting the Singapore Strait should remain vigilant and maintain an adequate anti-piracy watch as the number of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Strait with 37 incidents 2020 YTD, 17 in the last 3 months.

AUGUST PIRACY STATISTICS 2020

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
<u>AUG</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>JULY</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>MAY – AUG (Last 3 Months)</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>88</u>
<u>JAN-AUG (YTD)</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>214</u>

In August 2020, compared to same period 2019, we can see a slight decline in reported piracy incidents, as per data from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), with just 12 incidents reported in August 2020 and the same number in July. Same period of 2019 saw numbers of 18 and 23 respectively. Whilst on first glance this appears to be a reduction in incidents we must take into account the effects of CV19 world pandemic on the shipping patterns. If we look at the average for the last three months there is an increase in nearly 19% from same period in 2019 and year to date an increase of 35%.

August 2020 has seen potential first incident within the Gulf of Aden since 2017. 19th August, a Tanker was reportedly boarded by Somalia Uniformed Force whilst in Somalia territorial waters. 21st August the vessel was released and is being escorted North by an EU Warship. Whilst the boarding was reportedly done by a uniformed force, this has been reported by EUNAVFOR as a robbery.

Additionally, in the Red Sea a guard who was embarked on a floating armoury “Golden Palm”, took the crew hostage in a dispute over pay with their PMSC employer. In a twist on a second platform, a different guard from the same PMSC took over the armoury and threatened to throw the weapons of that PMSC over board unless they got paid as well. This highlights the need to conduct full due diligence on the Armed Guards deployed on your vessels to ensure working with blue chip PMSCs who work to ensure that this would not be an issue. The same guard on the Golden Palm had earlier last week taken the ship he was working on in a hostage situation in same pay dispute.

Anti-shipping activity by incident status (12)

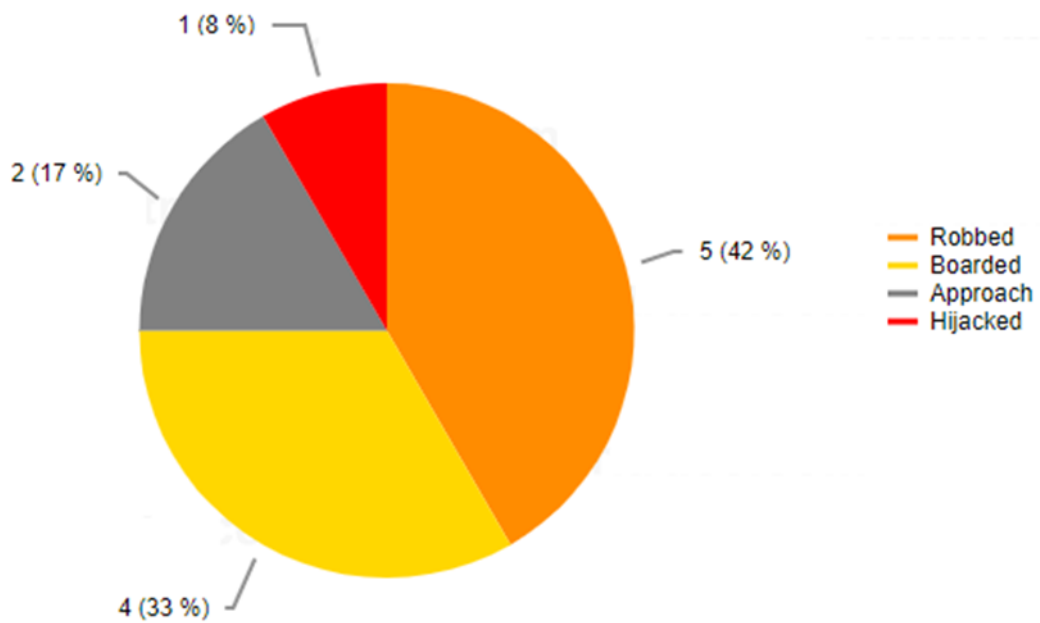


Fig 1. All reported piracy incidents worldwide Aug 2020. (ICC-IMB/MariTrace)

Anti-shipping activity by incident status (214)

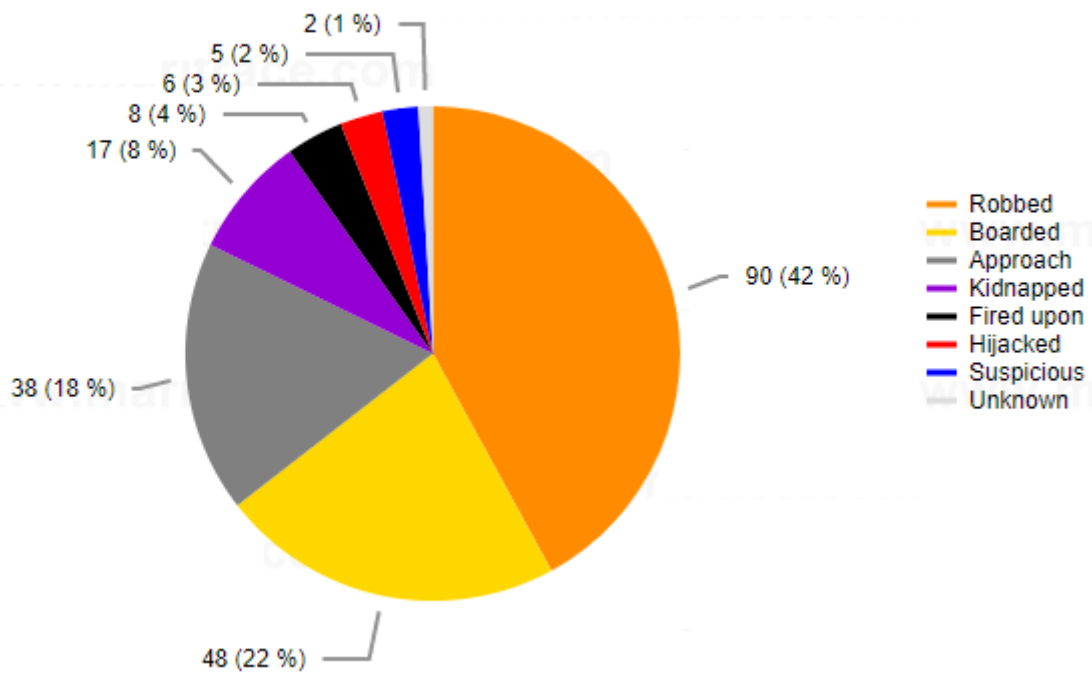


Fig 2. All reported piracy incidents worldwide 2020 YTD. (ICC-IMB/MariTrace)

Anti-shipping activity by incident status (18)

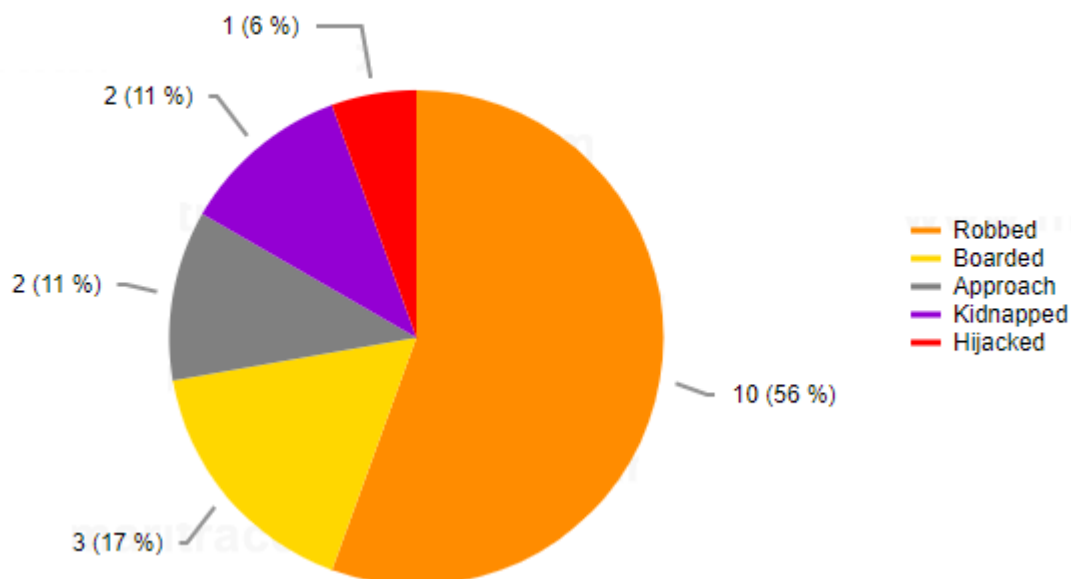


Fig 3. All reported piracy incidents worldwide Aug 2019. (ICC-IMB/MariTrace)

Anti-shipping activity by incident status (158)

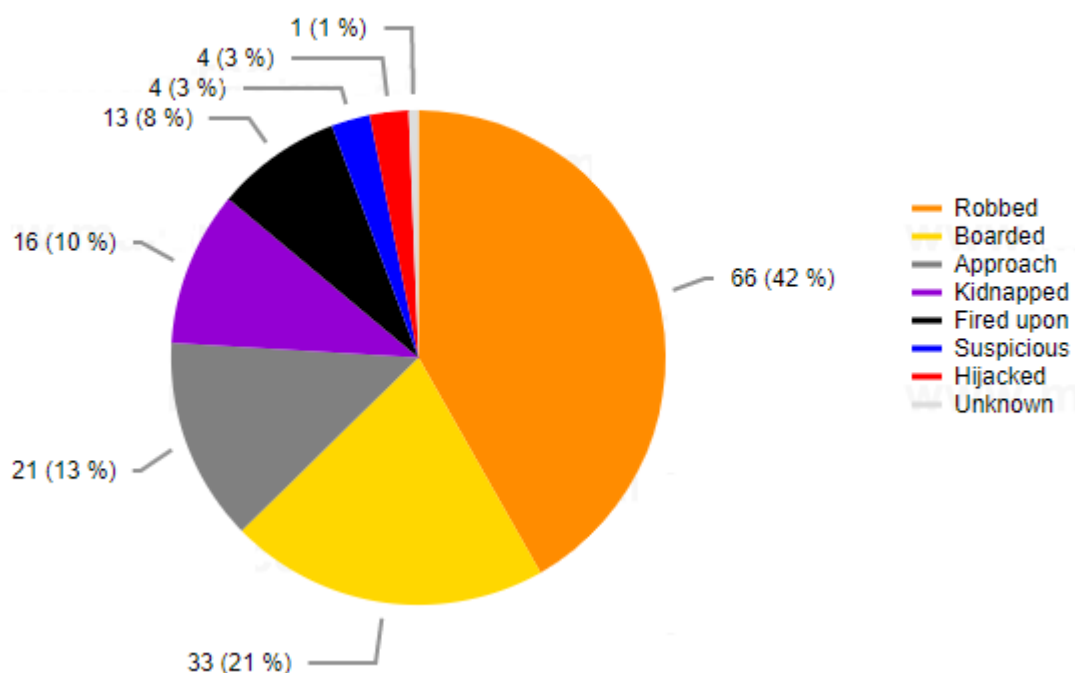


Fig 4. All reported piracy incidents worldwide Jan - Aug 2019. (ICC-IMB/MariTrace)

WAF

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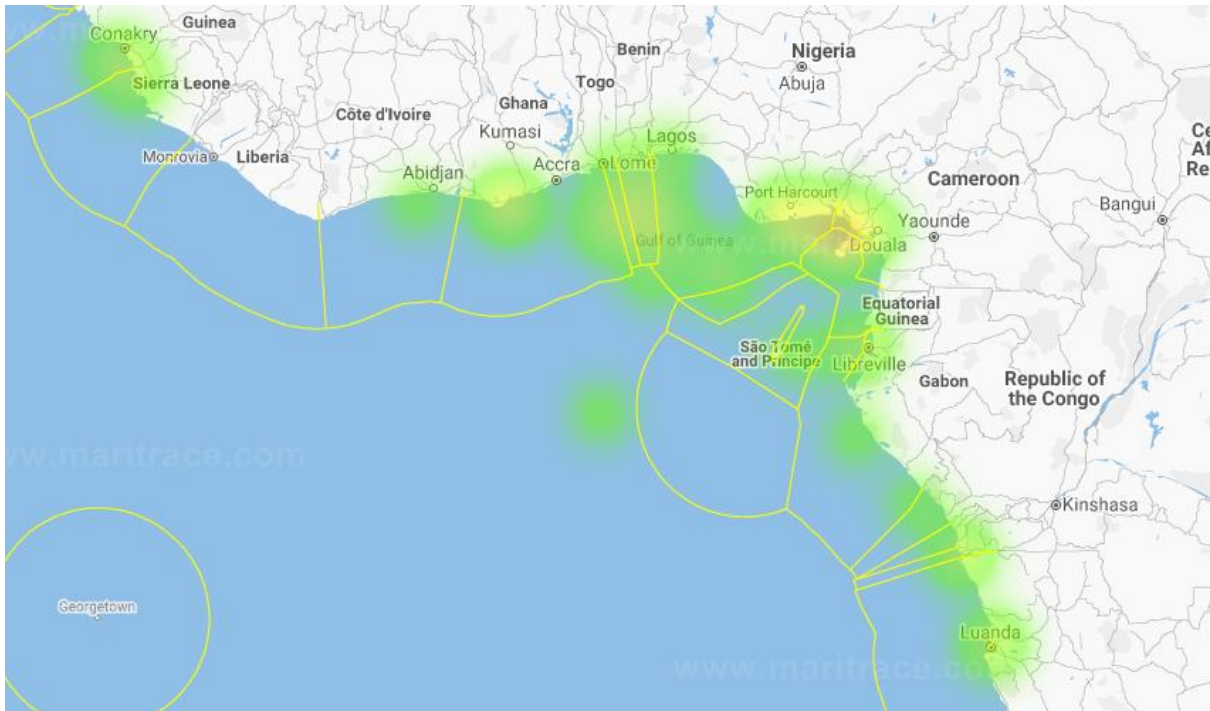


Fig 5. WAF GOG Piracy Incidents last three months (ICC-IMB / MDAT-GOG / MariTrace)

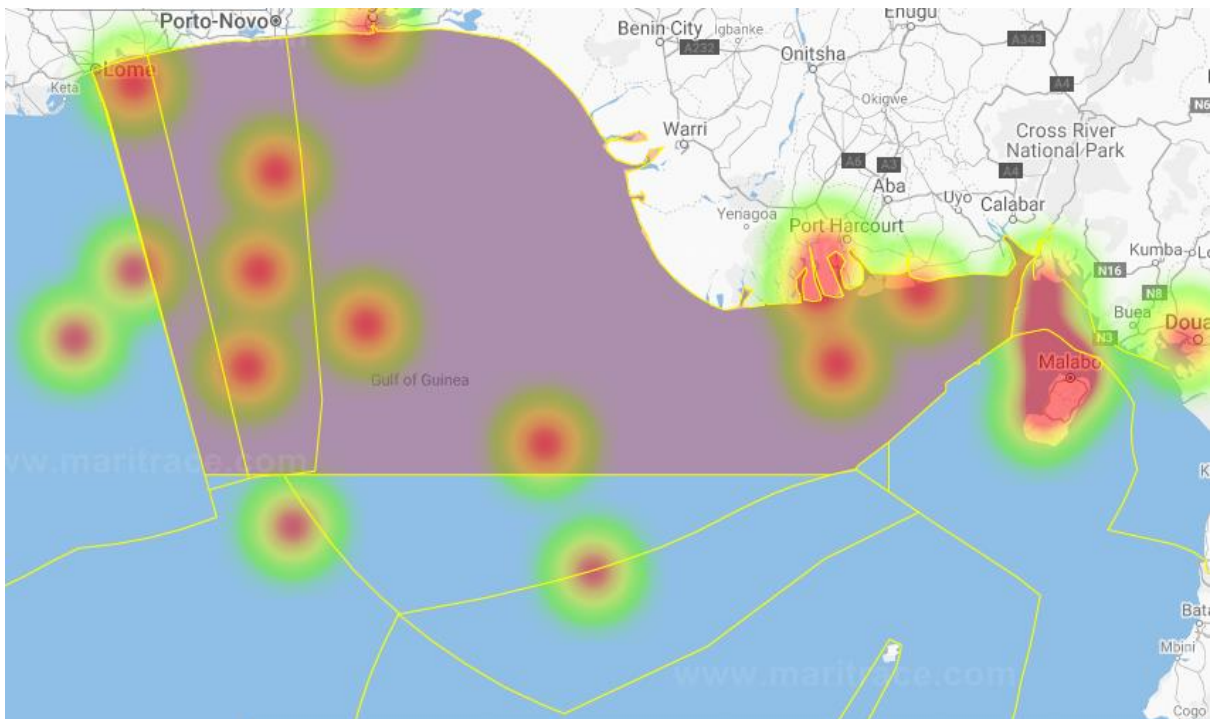


Fig 6. WAF HRA Piracy Incidents last three months (ICC-IMB / MDAT-GOG / MariTrace)

INCIDENTS IN THE LAST 7 DAYS

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1. At 0030 UTC, 21 August 2020, a fishing vessel was attacked and boarded by seven armed men with machetes whilst at anchorage at position 08° 25'N, 013° 07'W about 8 NM Off Freetown Port. First incoming information reports gunshots. The perpetrators boarded the fishing vessel as the crew onboard was trying to resist and therefore sustained severe injuries. It was not stated if the injuries result of the gunshots or other weapons. The Sierra Leone Navy dispatched a Search And Rescue Team but the boarders had left before they arrived at the scene. However, JOC informed authorities about the incident and an investigation is ongoing by the Sierra Leone Marine Police
2. At Pointe Noire Anchorage, the duty watch reported sighting 2 persons on the forecandle deck on a tanker. Alarms raised, crew mustered, fire pumps started. Search conducted and nobody found onboard. Robbers tried to steal mooring lines. One rope has been cut, however, no part appears missing from the vessel - Both ends still onboard, securing wires and padlocks in place. Another rope was tampered with, but not cut. Small wooden boat was seen rowing away from the vessel.
3. On 28th August 2020 at 0431 UTC in position 04°02N-001°04E (114 NM South East off Tema Ghana) a Tanker reported a small craft (12-14 meters) with 6-8 people on board. Metallic ladder sighted. There was an attempt made to board, vessel manoeuvred and the attempt was aborted. Vessel and crew are safe.

LIBYA

Please find below, NOC Statement with regards to the reopening of oil ports :

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The National Oil Corporation (NOC) welcomes the statement of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the chairman of the Presidency Council supporting NOC's proposal to resume production and export of oil and to freeze sales revenues in NOC accounts in the Libyan Foreign Bank. Revenues should remain frozen until a comprehensive political agreement is reached in line with the recommendations of the Berlin Process. Full transparency and effective governance are required as well as the return of security management of oil facilities to NOC's exclusive control.

Regarding continued supply of gas to the Zueitina and North Benghazi power plants, NOC is currently making all possible efforts to provide a ship to empty condensate tanks. This should allow gas production to continue. All gas production is currently due to cease tomorrow evening, Saturday 22 August 2020,

NOC sent a shipment of diesel to Benghazi on Wednesday August 19, 2020, to help meet the needs of the city's power stations as far as is possible under current circumstances, despite the severe shortage of fuel allocations and the huge debts that have accumulated as a result of the closure of the fields producing gas and oil and the suspension of refineries.

NOC reiterates its call for all oil facilities to be freed from military occupation to ensure the security and safety of its workers. Once this has been done, NOC should be able to lift force majeure and re-commence oil export operations.

NOC expresses its gratitude to all the local and international actors, including UNSMIL and the US Government, who have helped achieve progress to date. NOC continues to work tirelessly in the interests of all Libyans.

According to information received from our local correspondents in Libya, the situation in the Libyan oil export terminals that were placed under force majeure by Libya's National Oil Corporation's (NOC) in January 2020 remains unchanged. The port situation in Libya as at **31st July 2020** is reported to be as follows:

- **Working:** Farwah, Bouri, Melittah, Zawia, Tripoli, Al Khoms, Misurata, Marsa El Brega (only non-oil cargoes), Benghazi and Tobruk
- **Under force majeure by NOC:** Es Sider, Ras Lanuf, Marsa El Brega, Zueitina and Marsa El Hariga
- **Closed:** Sirte and Derna

According to our correspondents, all working ports are currently considered safe for ships and crew. However, our correspondents advise **Turkish ships and crews** against calling Libya's Eastern ports controlled by the Libyan National Army (LNA). In response to Turkey's support of and cooperation with Libya's UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), the LNA may stop any Turkish ships transiting the Eastern Libyan maritime boundaries.

The situation could, however, change at short notice and we recommend ship operators to warn their ships' crews of the volatility of the situation, check with local port authorities as to the port's status and carry out an assessment of the risks involved prior to entering or transiting Libyan waters.

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After the last week of activity in the region including a vessel being boarded in suspicious circumstances off Scrota Gap and an Armed Guard first taking the vessel he was supposed to protect hostage and then taking the floating armoury hostage, last 7 days have been quiet in the region. Civil War in Yemen still causing issues within the Gulf of Aden, especially for Saudi Flagged vessels whilst political issues within the Arabian Gulf meaning that transit of the Straits of Hormuz needs to be taken with precautions, especially for vessels with USA and allies connections.

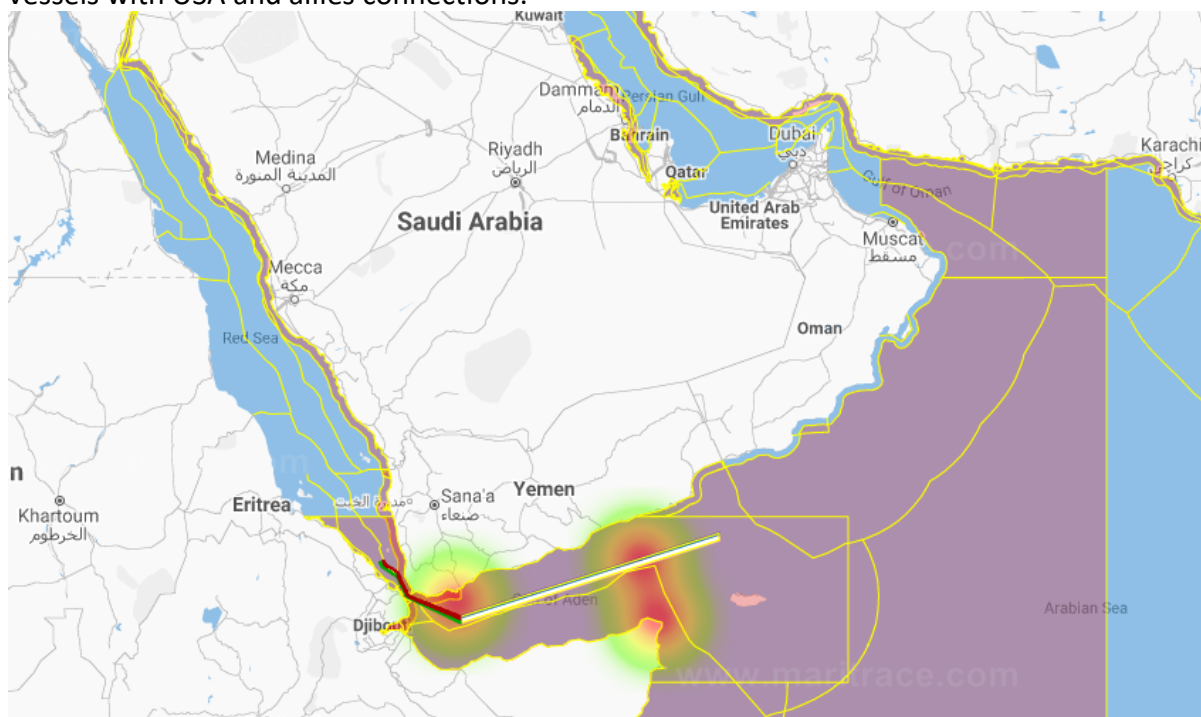


Fig 7. Heat Map of reported incidents in the last 3 months (UKMTO/MariTrace)

INCIDENTS IN THE LAST 7 DAYS

None reported

Open Source Media Articles:

- a. 25 Aug 20 - Massive growth in Maritime Security market research report. (Scientect): <https://bit.ly/3baYtRY>
- b. 25 Aug 20 - WHO -Promoting public health measures in response to COVID-19 on cargo ships and fishing vessels (WHO): <https://bit.ly/3b6nbTy>
- c. 26 Aug 20 - Yemen, Djibouti talk protection of Bab al-Mandab strait, Red Sea. (Arab News 45): <https://bit.ly/31FajXA>
- d. 26 Aug 20 - British team help free Iranian sailors held in longest-ever Somali hijacking. (The Telegraph): <https://bit.ly/3lz9JMD>

e. 27 Aug 20 - Danish Navy frigate Iver Huitfeldt joins Operation Agencor. (NavalNews):
<https://bit.ly/3hle4e6>

f. 27 Aug 20 - Shipping steady despite trade disruption: Study (Times of India):
<https://bit.ly/3b7YCW8>

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YEMEN - PORT SITUATION

While there have been no recent changes to the status of Yemeni ports, port authorities are now implementing strict quarantine and control measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Fig 7. Yemen Port Situation

Port situation

According to information received from our correspondent Gulf Agency Co. (Yemen) Ltd. (GAC), the port situation in Yemen as at 30 July 2020 is as follows:

Working: Aden, Rudhum Oil Exporting Terminal, Mukalla, Ash Shihr Oil Exporting Terminal, Nishtun, Saleef and Hodeidah

Closed: Mokha, Ras Isa Marine Terminal (Safer), Ras Isa Petroleum Products Reception Facility and Balhaf LNG Terminal

FAR EAST

According to data from the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCaap ISC), a total of 31 piracy incidents, actual and attempted, were recorded in the Singapore Strait by 30 December 2019 compared to seven in 2018. While there is an equal distribution of incidents in the westbound and eastbound lanes of the strait over the last 12 months, 12 of the 16 incidents recorded in the eastbound lane occurred in a relatively short period between 23 November and 30 December 2019.

Unlike the incidents occurring in the westbound lane of the Singapore Strait last year, which primarily involved barges towed by tug boats, theft of tools and scrap metal and no reports of crew injuries, the incidents in the eastbound lane primarily involved bulk carriers (8) and tankers (5), with reports of crew being confronted, threatened and injured as well.

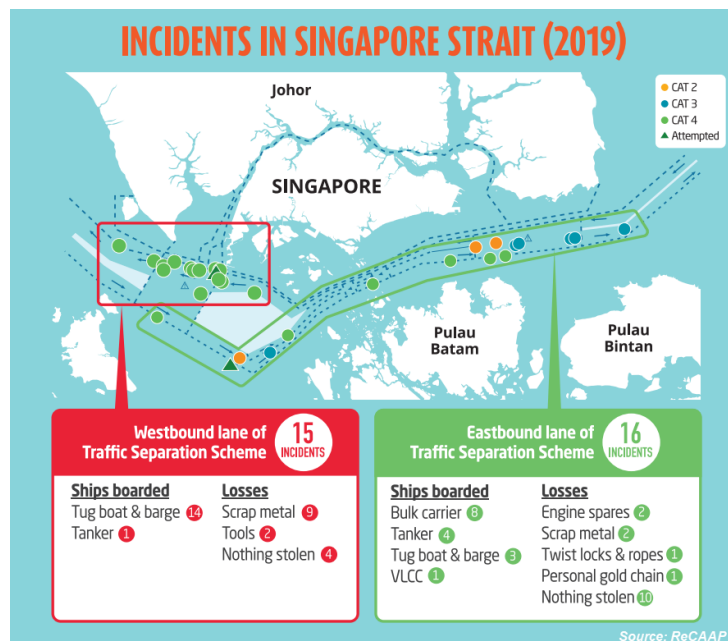


Fig 8. Incidents in the Singapore Strait 2019

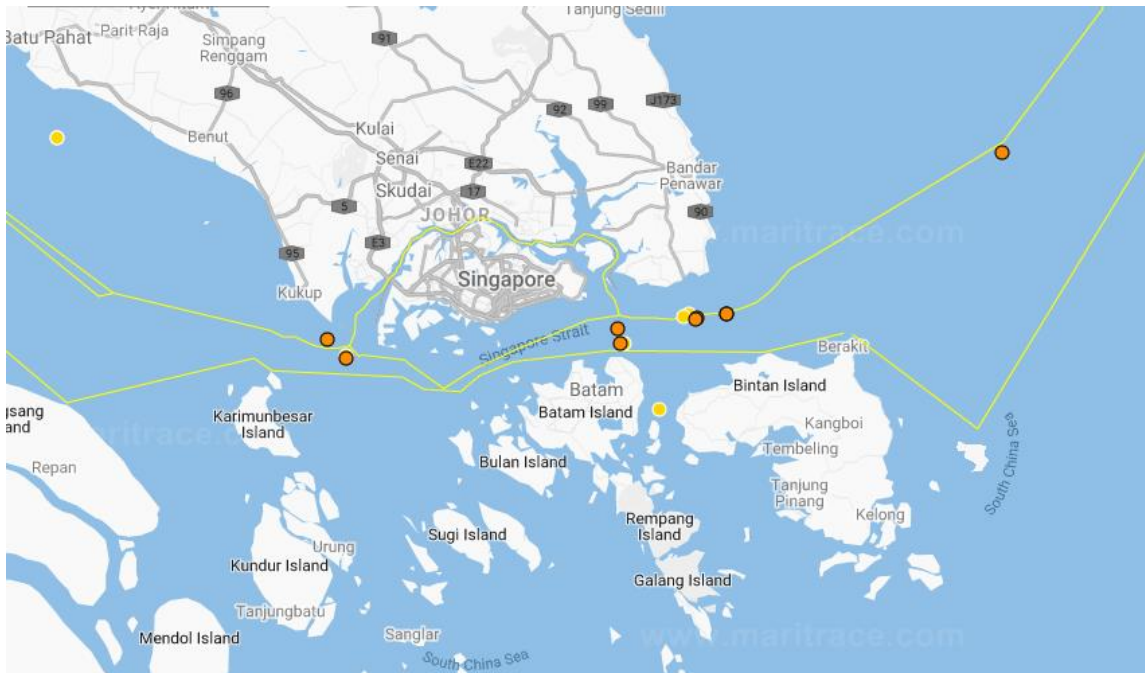


Fig 9. Incidents in Singapore Straits last three months (ICC-IMB / MariTrace)

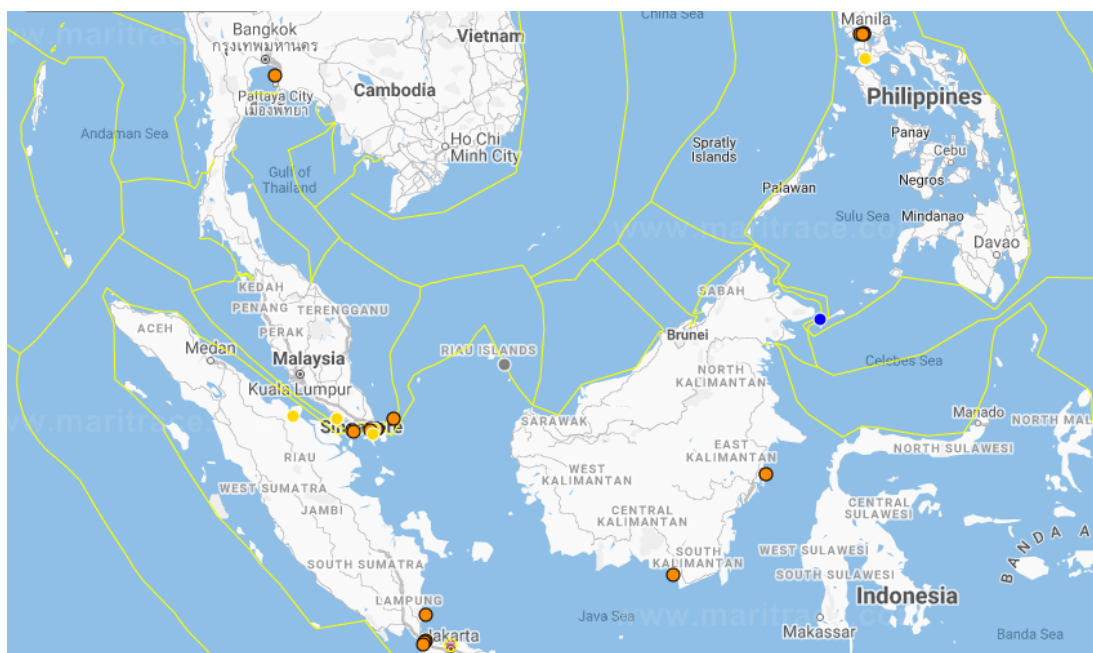
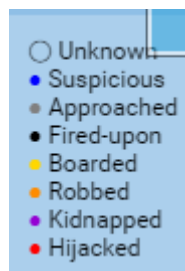


Fig 10. Incidents in wider Far Eastern waters last three months (ICC-IMB / MariTrace)

SOURCES

UKMTO
MSCHOA
MDAT-GOG
ICC-IMB
International Fusion Centre (IFC-Singapore)
GARD P&I
NORTH P&I
MARSHAL ISLANDS
MARITRACE
MERLIN GLOBAL MARITIME
Various News reporting agencies as credited

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