



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

Page | 2 **WAF**

In the last 7 days there has been one incident within the WAF VRA, a suspicious approach at the Banana Anchorage in the Congo. Prior incident was the boarding and hijacking of the crew of the CURACAO TRADER, 230nm South of Lagos. As per the July monthly review incidents are more prevalent offshore Nigerian EEZ in a crescent from Lomé to Sao Tome. There is a possible need for additional mitigations particular off Bonny, Brass and Malabo, however this latest incident reinforces that when calling within the larger Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) precautions need to be taken.

IOR

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 not all details are known at this stage for the reason of the detention, this highlights political tensions in the region which owners and masters need to partake of appropriate planning in making safe passage in the region. The Gulf of Aden remains a higher risk profile than other areas with the IOR for potential piracy issues.

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 overboard 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.

LIBYA

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 21st 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

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 29 incidents 2020 YTD, 16 in the last 3 months.

WAF

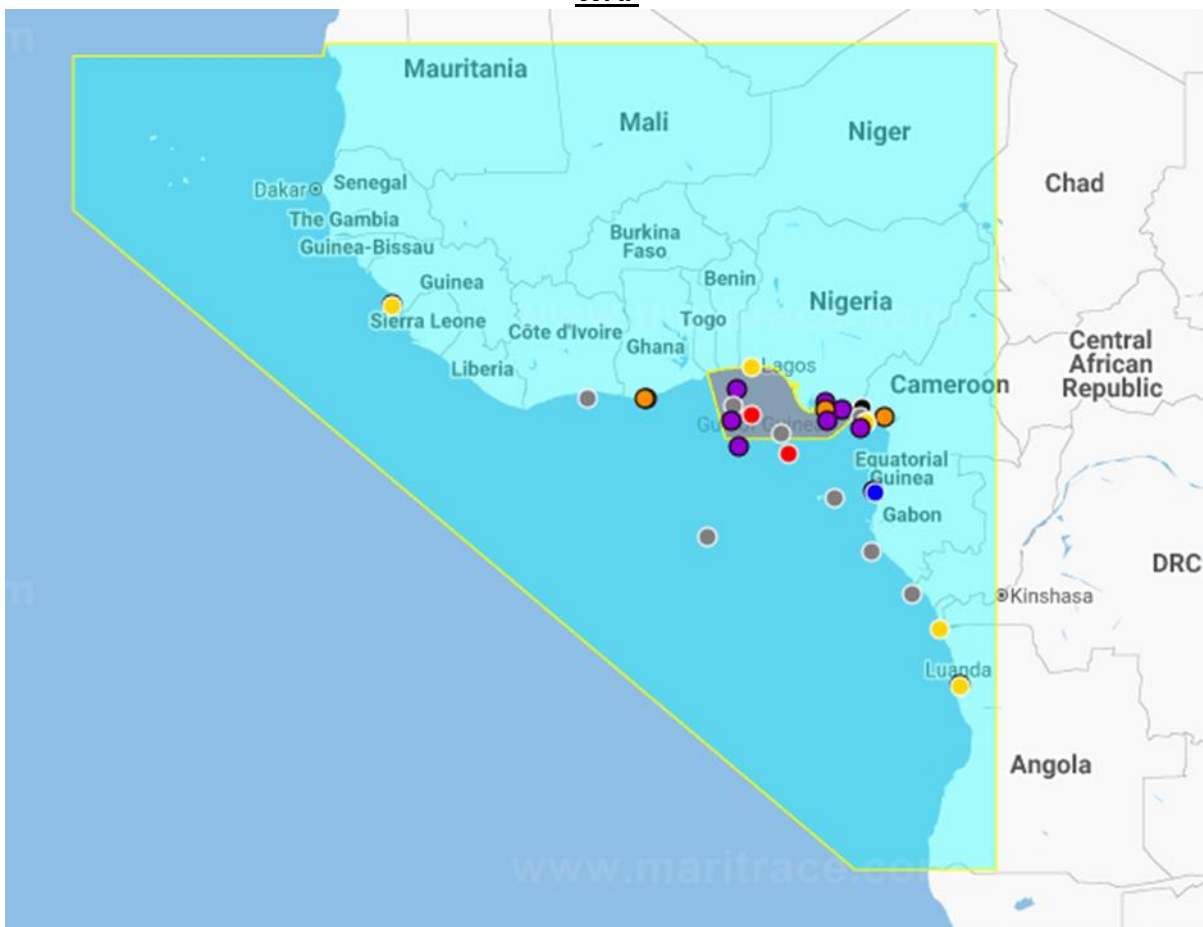


Fig 1. WAF GOG Piracy Incidents last three months, showing the JWC HRA and the wider VRA. (ICC-IMB / MDAT-GOG / MariTrace)

- Unknown
- Suspicious
- Approached
- Fired-upon
- Boarded
- Robbed
- Kidnapped
- Hijacked

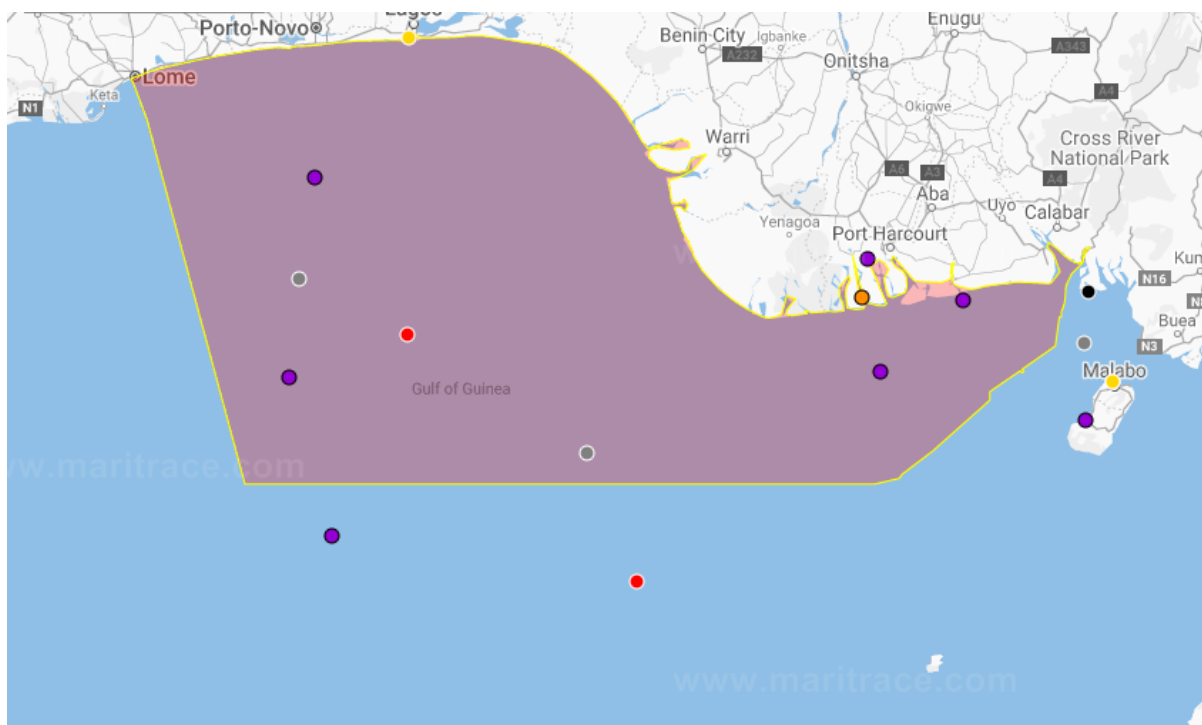


Fig 2. WAF JWC HRA Piracy Incidents last three months (ICC-IMB / MDAT-GOG / MariTrace)

- Unknown
- Suspicious
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WAF INCIDENTS IN THE LAST 7 DAYS

MDAT-GOG has received information about a suspicious approach which occurred on a MV in the Congo anchorage. At 0030UTC on August 19th in position 06° 01' 39S 012° 20' 24E, the vessel was approached to 0.5Nm by a supply vessel which did not identifying itself. A small vessel without an outboard motor also approached the MV with 2 POB. After a moment both the supply vessel and small vessel moved away from the MV in the direction of the DRC.

LIBYA

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 **7th 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

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.

IOR

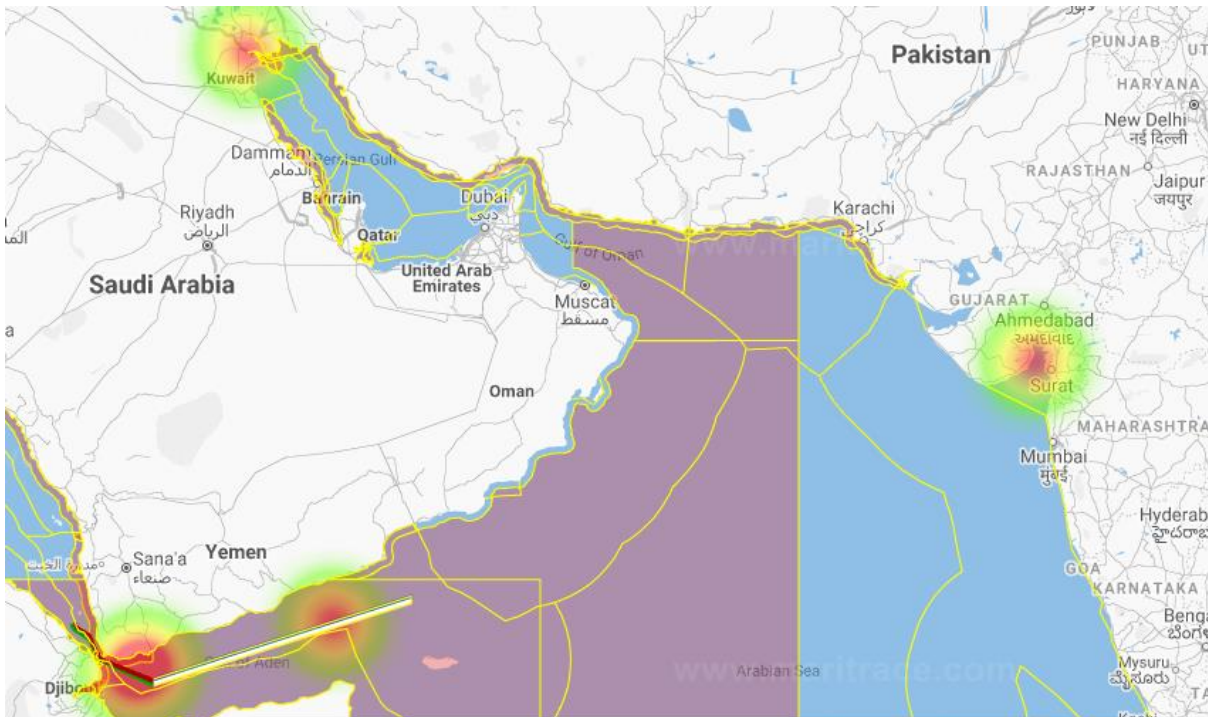


Fig 3. Heat Map of reported incidents in the last 3 months (UKMTO/MariTrace)

INCIDENTS IN THE LAST 7 DAYS

- 1. Red Sea Floating Armoury, “Golden Palm”, crew taken hostage by embarked armed guard in dispute over pay.**

The armed guard who held the crew of the Eagle Bulk controlled Jaeger Supramax last month has done it again. The Ukrainian, who worked for a private maritime security company (PMSC), this week broke into the armoury onboard the Golden Palm, operated by Spain’s Palm Charters, and took the crew hostage again in his fight over back pay.

The tense standoff between the guard and the crew onboard the Golden Palm, which serves as a floating armoury and is currently in the Red Sea, has now been resolved.

Splash reported how the same man had taken over an Eagle Bulk ship for three days last month. He was one of three men who had been employed as security for a Red Sea transit.

Comments

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No owner wants to be in the situation where an armed guard they have deployed to protect their crew and ship turns on the same and hijacks them. If a price seems too good to be true it is worth investigating to see why as no one wants the negative publicity rather than a safe transit for their ship and crew. Merlin Global working with trusted partners and blue chip PMSCs can help owners select the best service for their requirements.

2. Tanker Aegean II boarded off Somalia 19th August by a local armed group whilst within Somali territorial waters.

The Aegean II (IMO 9016911) was on passage from Khor Fakkan to Mogadishu with armed guards embarked when she developed technical issues. Reports that between 5 and 15 uniformed men approached the vessel and boarded, disarming the Armed Security Team on board, though understand that warning shots were fired. At this stage it is not clear if the uniformed men were from the Somali Maritime Police or another organisation. After being boarded the vessel then proceeded north towards Berede (North Somalia).

Both EUNAVFOR and UKMTO have advised that this was NOT a piracy related incident however no further information has been released at this stage. As this is written a EU Warship is escorting the Aegean II north towards the Gulf of Aden. (See Fig 5).

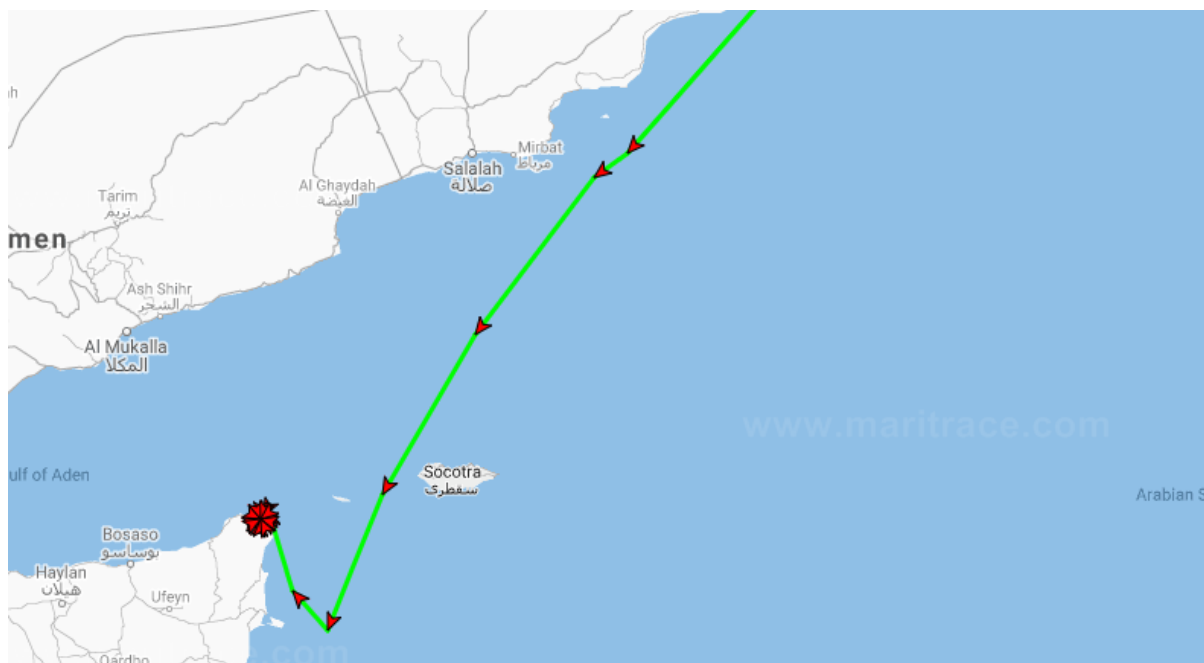


Fig 4 Routing of the Aegean II from UAE towards Mogadishu. (MariTrace)

UKMTO WARNING

ADVISORY NOTICE 002/AUGUST/2020

Category: Reported BOARDING

Description: UKMTO was advised on 20 Aug 2020 that a Tanker, anchored 2 to 5nm off the coast of Somalia in position 1154N 05103E, had suffered mechanical issues and had been boarded by persons unknown. This was widely reported in Open Source media. Subsequent investigation by Combined Maritime Forces and EUNAVFOR units on scene have established that this was a case of armed robbery, which has since been resolved. The crew is safe and the vessel will proceed to its next port of call. The incident is assessed as closed.

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Comments

This is a strange event. Looking at the AIS track, the vessel took a more inshore route from the Gulf of Oman towards her intended destination of Mogadishu. She also proceeded inshore of Socotra Island, which is not recommended. Whilst taking an Armed Security Team in the region is a routine tasking, when proceeding through territorial waters the guards are not allowed to act and so this nullifies their usefulness. Whilst there are many factors to be made public, this case does highlight the importance of routing a vessel effectively as much as deploying an armed team. By going inside a nation's waters the embarked team were unable to do their tasking.



Fig 5 – AEGEAN II Tanker being escorted by EU Warship. (Maritrace)

Open Source Media Articles (UKMTO)

YEMEN - PORT SITUATION

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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 4. 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.

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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.

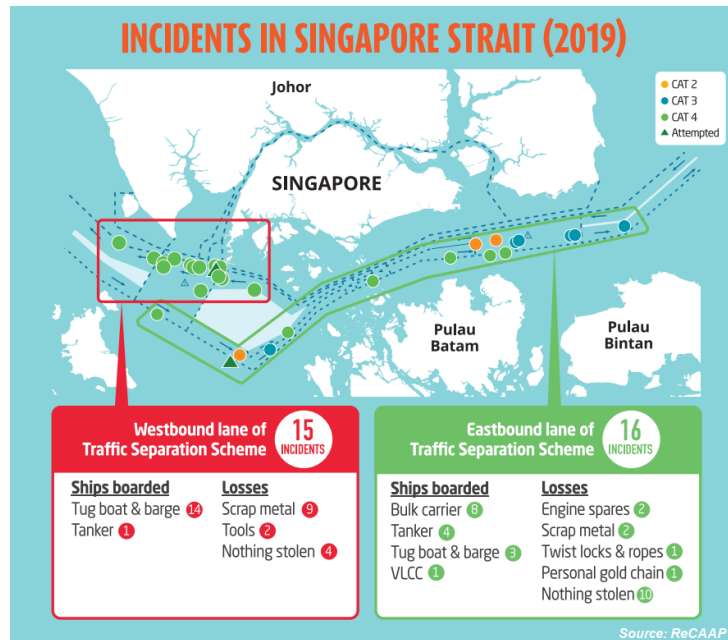


Fig 5. Incidents in the Singapore Strait 2019

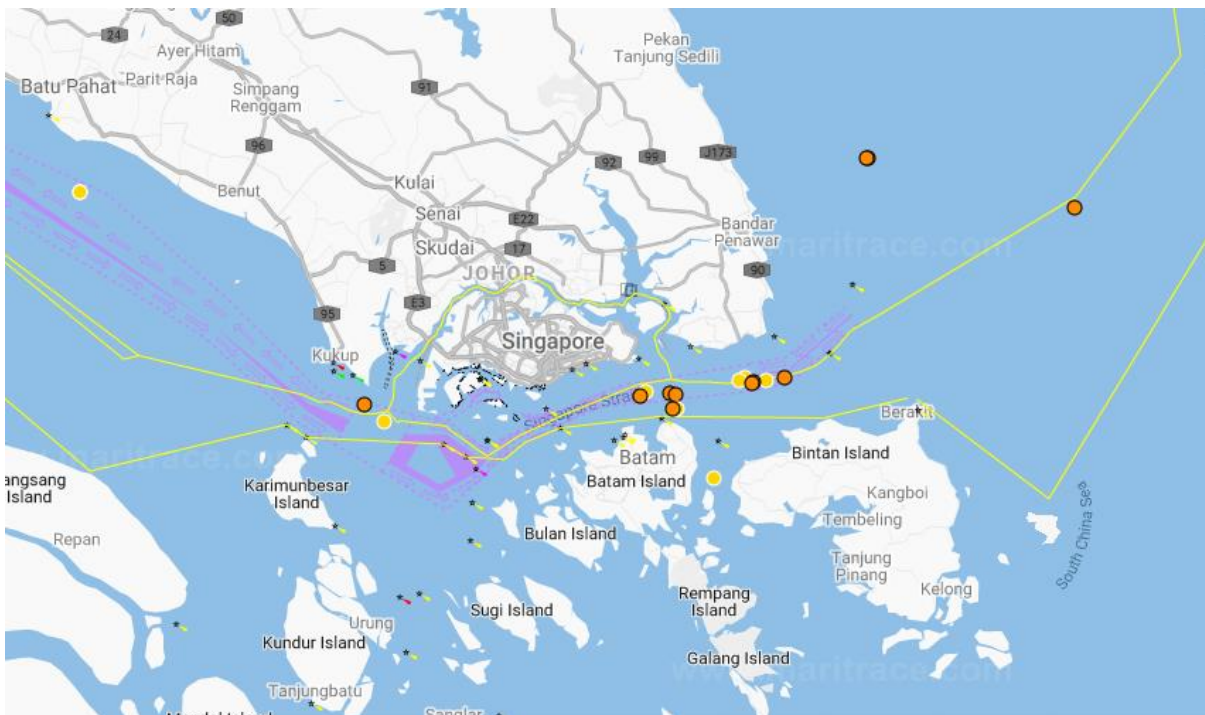


Fig 6. Incidents in Singapore Straits last three months (ICC-IMB / MariTrace)

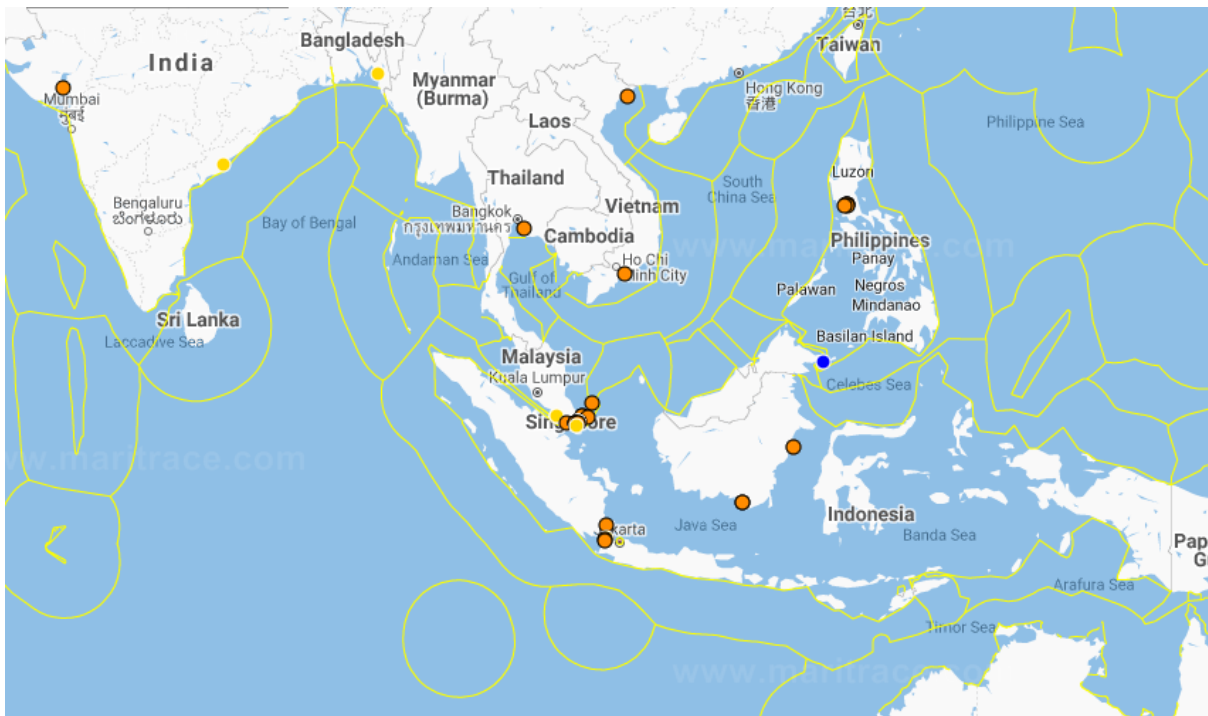
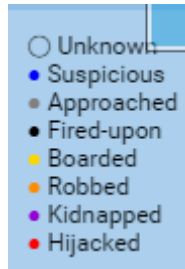


Fig 7. Incidents in wider Far Eastern waters last three months (ICC-IMB / MariTrace)

SOURCES

- UKMTO
- MSCHOA
- MDAT-GOG
- ICC-IMB
- GARD P&I
- NORTH P&I
- MARSHAL ISLANDS
- MARITRACE
- MERLIN GLOBAL MARITIME
- Various News reporting agencies as credited

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