

Maritime Security Review



Issue No. 11

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MS | RISK

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PLEASE NOTE:

The information contained in this report is as accurate as possible at the time of publishing. In some cases, however, incidents are updated at a later date as more information comes becomes available.

We encourage our readers to confidentially report any incidents or suspicious activity to info@msrisk.com.

INCIDENTS AT SEA

Reporting Period: 13 - 19 March 2017

Region	Current Incidents Reported	Late Reported incidents	Threat level
MAIN REGIONS			
Gulf of Aden/Arabian Sea	2	0	Medium
Gulf of Guinea	0	2	Medium
Southeast Asia	0	0	Low
WORLDWIDE			
North America	0	1	Low
Central America/Caribbean/South America	1	1	Medium
Atlantic Ocean Area	0	0	Low
Northern Europe/English Channel/Baltic	0	1	Low
Mediterranean/ Black Sea	0	0	Low
Arabian Gulf	0	0	Low
East Asia/Indian Subcontinent	0	0	Low
Southern Africa	0	0	Low
Northeast Asia	0	0	Low
Pacific Ocean/Southern Ocean	0	0	Low

Piracy Levels are determined on a weekly basis as follows:

- HIGH** 5 or more incidents in the current reporting period
- MEDIUM** 2 – 4 piracy incidents in the current reporting period
- LOW** 0 – 1 piracy incidents in the current reporting period

NOTE: PRESIDENT TRUMP IMMIGRATION BAN

On 3 February, a federal judge issued a temporary, nation-wide halt to President Trump's Executive Order (EO) on immigration and travel to the United States. Customs and Border Patrol have told airlines to resume pre-ban procedures.

Following the finding, the White House stated that the Department of Justice would file an emergency request to push the EO through. If the EO is upheld following the emergency request, please be warned that it may have implications for vessels calling at US ports.

The Executive Order calls for a blanket ban on travel and immigration from seven countries (Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, and Libya) for a 90-day period. If upheld, crewmembers from these countries will be denied entry to the US while the ban is in effect. Shore leave will be denied for crewmembers from those nations, regardless of their visa status. However, it is not believed that ships with crews from this country will be denied entry into US ports. If a crewmember from a nation under the ban requires emergency medical treatment, an exception ***may*** be made to allow the member ashore for treatment.

Ship owners are advised to stay abreast of updates as they emerge.

GULF OF ADEN/ARABIAN SEA/BAB EL-MANDAB/RED SEA



WARNING FOR RED SEA, BAB EL-MANDAB STRAIT AND GULF OF ADEN: VESSEL HIJACKING

On 13 March, Somali pirates hijacked the Comoros-flagged tanker ARIS 13 as the ship was in transit with a cargo of fuel from Djibouti to Mogadishu. The seizing of the vessel and its eight crewmembers is the first successful attack by Somali pirates since 2012. While international naval patrols and anti-piracy measures on board commercial vessels have practically eradicated Somali piracy since its peak in early 2011, poverty coupled with other factors that motivate pirates remain and some vessels transiting this region may have increasingly

become complacent in the belief that the piracy threat had diminished. While the international community has over the past several years taken significant steps in order to improve security in the region, including boosting naval forces in the area and requiring ships to take protection measures, including reporting in and out of high risk areas, sailing at top speed as far away as possible from the Somali coast and travelling with armed escorts on board, the threat of an attack and hijacking remained as the real root of the cause on the ground in Somalia has never been properly addressed. After five years without a successful attack, analysts say that complacency may have set in and this week's successful hijacking is likely to result in potential copycat attacks, as pirate action groups head out in a bid to successfully hijack a commercial vessel.

Masters are advised to remain vigilant at all times inside the HRA and are advised to adhere to strict guidance and protective measures as set down in BMP4. Sailing yachts should avoid transiting the HRA. Past activity has demonstrated that pirates will attack both large and small yachts transiting this region. While successful attacks and hijackings of merchant vessels have significantly decreased over the past two years, the possibility of attacks and the successful hijacking of sailing vessels continue to remain high. This is due to the reduction of revenue sources from pirated merchant vessels and the fact that sailing yachts are vulnerable and easier targets. PAG's continue to conduct "soft approaches" on merchant ships transiting the area. Skiffs have approached vessels in order to probe the reaction of the crewmembers and any possible Privately Contracted Armed Security Personnel (PCASP) onboard. If the pirate approach does not elicit a response, the pirates will likely proceed with an attack, in which additional skiffs may participate.

Vessels transiting the greater Gulf of Aden region should operate under a heightened state of alert. This is due to increasing tensions in the region, which in turn can escalate the potential for direct or collateral damage to vessels transiting the region. These threats may come from a number of different sources such as missiles, projectiles, or waterborne improvised explosive devices. Houthi rebels have claimed responsibility for the 1 October 2016 attack on a UAE vessel. MS Risk advises all vessels transiting this region to report any hostile activities immediately.

HIJACKS

- **13 March (Somalia)** – Somali pirates hijacked the Comoros-flagged tanker *ARIS 13* as the ship was in transit with a cargo of fuel from Djibouti to Mogadishu. According to a spokesman for the aid group Oceans Beyond Piracy, the *ARIS 13* sent a distress call, turned off its tracking system and altered course for the Somali port town of Alula, adding “the ship reported it was being followed by two skiffs, and then it disappeared.” Aircraft from regional naval force EU NAVFOR were flying overhead to track the vessel. The gunmen told a local Somali official that they were fishermen whose equipment was destroyed by foreign illegal fishing vessels. Ali Shire Mohamud Osman, the district commissioner in the town of Alula, near where the ship has been taken, disclosed that he was trying to find out if the gunmen really were fishermen or were organized pirates. The tanker has a crew of eight Sri Lankans. This is the first time that Somali pirates have successfully taken a commercial ship since 2012. Experts say that the ship was an easy target and that ship owners were becoming lax after a long period without many attacks. **Update (16 March)** – On Thursday, a gun battle erupted between pirates onboard the vessel and a detachment of troops from the Puntland Marine Police Force (PMPF), with one PMPF trooper reportedly injured in the firefight.

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS BOARDED

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- No current incidents to report

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY

- **13 March (Arabian Sea)** – A joint US Navy, Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy operation intercepted a small stateless dhow in the international waters of the Arabian Sea, seizing 270 kilograms of heroin. The force were conducting maritime security operations in the region as part of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 of the Combined Maritime Forces, and were conducting an inspection of the vessel as part of a flag verification boarding when the illicit cargo was found.

MARITIME REPORTING

- **13 March (Somalia)** – Somali pirates on Monday hijacked an oil tanker with eight Sri Lankan crewmembers on board in what is the first successful hijacking of a commercial vessel in waters off Somalia since 2012. According to aid group Ocean’s Beyond Piracy, the *ARIS 13* sent a distress call on Monday, turned off its tracking system and altered course for the Somali port town of Alula. The district commissioner of Alula has confirmed that “the pirates hijacked the oil tanker and they brought it near Alula.” Pirates in the town, which is located in the semi-autonomous northern region of Puntland, have also confirmed that they were expecting the ship. Data has indicated that the

vessel made a sharp turn just after it passed the Horn of Africa on its voyage from Djibouti to Mogadishu. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), in its heyday five years ago, Somali pirates launched 237 attacks off the coast of Somalia in 2011 and held hundreds of hostages. That year, Ocean's Beyond Piracy estimated that the global cost of piracy was about US \$7 billion, with the shipping industry bearing roughly 80 percent of those costs. Attacks however fell sharply after ship owners tightened security and avoided sailing near the Somali coast. Intervention by regional naval forces, which entered the region to fight the threat of Somali piracy, further helped disrupt several hijack bids and improved security for the strategic trade route, which leads through the Suez Canal and links the oilfields of the Middle East with European Ports. **Update (14 March)** – According to the European Union (EU) Naval Force, pirates off the coast of Somalia area demanding a ransom payment for the release of the vessel. In a statement released late on Tuesday, the force disclosed that “the EU Naval Force...has received positive confirmation from the Master of...Aris 13, that his ship and crew are currently being held captive by a number of suspected armed pirates in an anchorage off the north coast of Puntland, close to Alula.” EU NAVFOR further disclosed that as soon as it received an alert on the ship's seizure, it sent patrol aircraft from its Djibouti base to try to make radio contact, adding that late on Tuesday, its headquarters in London managed to contact the vessel's Master by phone. EU NAVFOR went on to disclose that “the Master confirmed that armed men were on board his ship and they were demanding a ransom for the ship's release. The EU Naval Force has now passed the information regarding the incident to the ship's owners.” It gave no details of the size of the ransom. According to the French transport ministry's Equasis shipping data website, the 1,800 deadweight tonne tanker is owned by Armi Shipping, a company that is registered in Panama, and managed by Aurora Ship Management in the United Arab Emirates. Aid group Oceans Beyond Piracy disclosed in a statement released late on Tuesday that the vessel was carrying gas and fuel and was not registered with the Maritime Security Centre for the Horn of Africa, which registers and tracks vessels in the region. Experts have also indicated that the vessel was an easy target for pirates because it was low, slow and was sailing close to the coast of Somalia. **Update (16 March)** – On Thursday, maritime police in Somalia's semi-autonomous region of Puntland stated that they would attack hijackers holding an oil tanker in order to free

the vessel if efforts by local elders to get them to surrender did not work. Abdirahman Mohamud Hassan, director general of Puntland's maritime police, disclosed that they had surrounded the ship, which is docked near the port town of Alula, but had been asked by local elders to give them a chance to convince the hijackers to free the vessel. He added that “if they do not get off, we shall fight to rescue the ship.” **Update (16 March)** – On Thursday afternoon, Somali maritime forces have exchanged gunfire with the hijackers of an oil tanker. Abdirahman Mohamud Hassan disclosed late on Thursday that “we tried to intercept a boat that was carrying supplies to the pirates, but pirates on the ship fired on us and so the pirate boat escaped.” Pirate Abdulahi claimed that the pirates killed a member of the marine force and injured another, however Hassan disclosed that that report was untrue. Residents near the vessel confirmed hearing gunfire. **Update (17 March)** – According to officials, Somali pirates have released the vessel without condition. Abdirahman Mohamud Hassan disclosed, “there has been discussion going on after the gunfight this afternoon...We took our forces back and thus the pirates went away.” The Sri Lankan foreign ministry also confirmed that the vessel was released, stating that the crewmembers were released “unharmful, without the payment of a ransom.” A pirate also confirmed the release of the vessel without a ransom payment.



SPOTLIGHT ON YEMEN

PORT STATUS AS OF 18 MARCH 2017

Port Name	Port Status	Risk Level	Notes
Aden Port	Open	High	Curfew: 2000-0600
Ash Shihr Oil Terminal	Open	High	
Balhaf LNG Terminal	Closed	Closed	
Hodeidah Port	Open	High	The Saudi Royal Navy is using a holding area 60 NM west of Hodeidah port for vessels attempting entry into Salif or Hodeidah. Inbound vessels should plan on holding here prior to receiving clearance.
Mokha Port	Closed	High	Considered unsafe; no activity reported since August 2015
Mukalla Port	Open	High	Capacity: 2 berths
Ras Isa Marine Terminal	Closed	Closed	
Saleef Port	Open	High	Capacity: 2 berths

Security conditions surrounding **Hodeida port** are subject to change. Shipmasters and crew are urged to remain abreast of current conditions in the area, and ensure that security measured aboard vessels are in place.

ACTIVITY REPORTING

- 17 March** – The UN has reported that 42 bodies were recovered from the scene of a military attack on a boat carrying refugees near the province of Hodeidah in Yemen. The boat was carrying refugees from Somalia, including women and children, and the attack reportedly involved a helicopter and a military vessel. A coast guard official said the boat was attacked by an Apache helicopter. Survivors have reported that a boat began the attack, and was joined by a helicopter. A Yemeni trafficker who survived the attack states a military vessel fired first and was joined by a helicopter. The refugees reportedly were travelling to Sudan from Yemen. It was not clear as of Friday who attacked the boat, but the port area is in Houthi territory, and generally, the Saudi-led coalition controls the airspace. Apache helicopters, meanwhile, are U.S.-made, and Saudi Arabia is a customer for the aircraft. Houthi rebels have accused the coalition of the attack; the coalition denied any involvement.
- 16 March** – Aid agencies have warned that Yemen is “at the point of no return” after new figures released by the UN indicated 17 million people are facing severe food insecurity. Approximately 6.8 million people are deemed to be in a state of emergency – one step from famine on the five-point integrated food security phase classification (IPC), with a further 10.2 million in crisis. The numbers reflect a 21% increase in hunger levels since June 2016. Taiz and

Hodeidah governorates, home to almost 25% of Yemen's 28 million population, are at particularly heightened risk of famine.

- **11 March** – At least twenty civilians and six Houthi rebels were killed, and dozens wounded when a Saudi-led coalition air strike hit a market in Red Sea port of Khoukha, in the western area of the country. A local official said aircraft tried to target rebels at a roadblock on the southern outskirts of Khoukha, but the fighters fled to a market where they were attacked.
- **9 March** – Yemeni forces backed by the Saudi-led Arab coalition battled Houthi snipers in al Zahari region on the Red Sea area as part of a military offensive aiming at liberating the port city of Hodeida. Pro-government forces are trying to evict the remnants of Houthi fighters in the area before advancing towards new areas in the province of Hodeida. Army commanders predict difficult battles ahead as their forces get closer to Hodeida, Al Houthi's last major port city.
- **6 March** – The Pentagon is increasing military operations in Yemen. On Thursday and Friday, the U.S. carried out over 30 airstrikes in Shabwah, Abyan and Al Bayda provinces. In 2016, the total number of US airstrikes in Yemen was 36. According to the Pentagon, the strikes were targeting al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. The U.S. military did not disclose how many al Qaeda fighters were killed, although on Thursday, Reuters reported that strikes, using manned and unmanned aircraft, left at least nine militants dead. The attacks come after a botched ground raid on a Yemeni village in January left 25 civilians and one U.S. Navy SEAL dead.

YEMEN: PROCEDURE

MS RISK CONTINUES TO ADVISE EXTREME CAUTION FOR VESSELS TRAVELING THROUGH BAB AL MANDAB, THE GULF OF ADEN, AND THE INDIAN OCEAN.

MS Risk has previously assessed that the waters around Yemen may become the next affected area in a battle for regional influence. As Operation Golden Spear ensues along the western coast of Yemen, the potential for retaliatory measures is heightened. On the water, the battle has taken a turn as the US navy has discovered that the recent attack on the Saudi frigate, *RSN Al Madina*, was conducted via an unmanned, remotely controlled vessel. It is unknown how many similar vessels are currently in the hands of Houthi rebels. Attacks from ship-to-shore or vice versa could cause accidental damage to vessels or disruption to shipping routes.

The risk of passage through the region has increased and is likely to rise. There remains a high level of violence and criminal activity ashore. Shipping vessels should remain constantly aware of the situation, including changes to protocol when entering Yemeni maritime waters.

UNITED NATIONS INSPECTIONS

The UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) is operational for commercial imports to Yemen.

Shipping companies or owners delivering to ports not under the control of the Government of Yemen must apply for permits upon departing from the port of origin of their cargo. Yemen-based importers/traders are required to submit this

notification form. More information about the UNVIM program is available here: <https://www.vimye.org/home>.

Vessels applying to go to ports under the control of the Government of Yemen need obtain permission for entry from the Yemeni Ministry of Transport. This should be done through the ship's agent and/or receivers prior to the vessel's arrival. The form should be completed by the ship's master and sent directly to the Ministry of Transport.

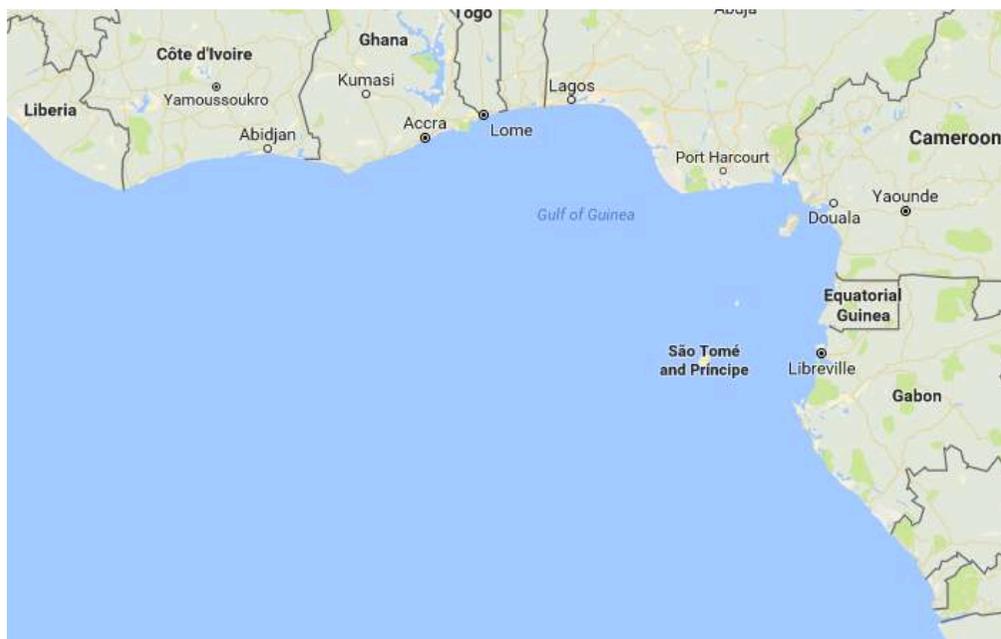
SAUDI COALITION INSPECTIONS

All vessels calling at Yemeni ports will only be allowed to enter Yemeni territorial waters following an inspection by the Saudi Arabian coalition forces. Upon arrival outside Bab Al-Mandab, the shipmaster should call the naval forces of the Saudi Arabian coalition by VHF on channel 16 for the arrival registration, and indicate his location (ideally three miles from Bab Al Mandab). Coalition authorities will advise on the anchor position until they provide final approval to enter the port. This procedure will not take more than 48 hours.

Coalition inspectors do not conduct investigation with the crew; contact will be with the ship's master or Chief Officer about the cargo and documents. Once the vessel is permitted into Yemeni ports, the Master will be required to call port control by VHF on channel 14 or 16 for the arrival registration. The shipmaster will be advised the anchor position until the Harbour master confirms berthing prospects.

Coalition forces require AIS to be kept on at all times. The situation is subject to change and vessels should check frequently with local sources for any changes.

WEST AFRICA/GULF OF GUINEA



WARNING: The entire Gulf of Guinea region remains at a high risk to piracy; MS Risk advises all vessels transiting within 100 nautical miles of Tema, Ghana; Lome, Togo and Cotonou, Benin to remain particularly vigilant.

HIJACKS

- No current incidents to report

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS

- **10 March (Nigeria – Late Report)** – A speed boat carrying armed men attacked and attempted to board LNG tanker *LA MANCHA KNUTSEN* near position 03:03 N – 006:57 E, approximately 90 nautical miles south of Port Harcourt. When the attack began, the vessel activated its security alert system, increased speed and began evasive manoeuvres. The pirates stopped their attack and moved away.
- **8 March (Nigeria – Late Report)** – The bulk carrier *SOFIA* was near position 03:20 N – 004:29 E, 120 nautical miles southwest of Brass, Bayelsa State while en route from Lagos to Owendo Anchorage, Libreville, Gabon when seven armed persons in a skiff approached and fired upon the vessel. The Master and crewmembers undertook the following actions: alarm raised, ship increased speed and commenced evasive manoeuvring. All non-essential crewmembers retreated to the citadel. After 40 minutes, the skiffs aborted the attack and moved away. The crewmembers have been reported safe. The vessel sustained some damage due to the gun firing.

VESSELS BOARDED

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- No current incidents to report

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- Nothing to report

SOUTHEAST ASIA

WARNING: There are continuing concerns in regards to the situation of kidnapping of crewmembers from vessels while underway in the Sulu-Celebs Sea region. MS Risk advises all slow moving vessels to re-route from the area, where possible. Otherwise, ship Masters and crewmembers are strongly advised to exercise extra vigilance while transiting the area. We advise that you immediately report any sightings of any suspicious activity or boats.

Pirate Action Groups (PAG's) operating in this region are likely to target vessels to siphon fuel or oil onto another ship. Masters are therefore reminded to remain vigilant at all times in all regions, including at ports and anchorages. Attacks and robberies can occur at any time. Incidents involving the siphoning of oil/fuel have been on the rise in recent months. Masters are reminded to remain vigilant at all times and to report any incidents, suspicious activity, attacks or hijackings to the local authorities.



HIJACKS

- No current incidents to report

KIDNAPPING

- No current incidents to report

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS/ROBBERIES

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS FIRED UPON/ATTEMPTED BOARDINGS/ATTACK

- No current incidents to report

VESSELS BOARDED

- No current incidents to report

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

- No current incidents to report

OTHER ACTIVITY REPORT

- No current incidents to report

MARITIME REPORTING

- No current incidents to report

WORLDWIDE

NORTH AMERICA

- **8 March (Mexico – Late Report)** – Customs officials in the port of Lazaro Cardenas found four suitcase, containing 130 kilograms of cocaine, inside a shipping container that was carrying a consignment of baby diapers, aboard the container ship *LUNA MAERSK*. The vessel had recently arrived from Panama. It departed as scheduled, bound for Yokohama.

CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN/SOUTH AMERICA

- **13 March (Puerto Rico)** – A dinghy and outboard motor were stolen from a sailing yacht anchored in Vieques. The outboard was removed and the dinghy was set adrift. The dinghy ended up beating against the rocks and was found unsalvageable the next morning, the fuel tank and life jackets were recovered. A police report was made.
- **12 March (St Lucia – Late Report)** – Thieves boarded an unlocked yacht anchored in Soufriere while crew was ashore for the evening. Cash, cell phones and computers were taken. A report was made to the police.

NORTHERN EUROPE/ENGLISH CHANNEL/BALTIC

- **12 March (Russia – Late Report)** – Russian officials found two dead Nigerian men, believed to have been stowaways, in a cargo hold of bulk carrier *LADY SERRA* in the port city of Svetly, Kaliningrad. The ship had recently arrived from Lagos, Nigeria with a cargo of bans. Reportedly, four other Nigerian stowaways were found by the crew soon after the vessel departed Lagos. They were returned to Nigeria.

MEDITERRANEAN/BLACK SEA

- No current incidents to report

ARABIAN GULF

- No current incidents to report

EAST ASIA/INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

- No current incidents to report

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

- No current incidents to report

NORTHEAST ASIA

- No current incidents to report

PACIFIC OCEAN/SOUTHERN OCEAN

- No current incidents to report

MIGRATION



- **15 March** – Migration officials disclosed on Wednesday that a campaign to inform would-be migrants in Africa about the dangers of heading to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea aims to reach people in fifteen African countries through social media, radio and television adverts. The “Aware Migrants” campaign was launched last year by the Italian government and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It features video testimonies of migrants who made it to Europe but who were abused, beaten and raped along the way. The campaign is now targeting potential migrants across Western and Central Africa – which accounts for the most arrivals in Italy – with posts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, as well as adverts with local media. According to IOM spokesman Flavio Di Giacomo, “the purpose of the campaign is not to tell migrants not to leave – that is a personal choice...But we need to provide them with as much information as possible,” adding, “many migrants who arrive in Italy are not fully aware of the risks...their journeys were more dangerous and traumatic than they expected.” While African migrants are prey to abuse,

beating, imprisonment and rape while heading through the Sahara desert and lawless Libya, many migrants who manage to arrive in Italy do not tell their friends and families about the hardships that they have endured, something that IOM officials are hoping that the campaign will address. The voyage from Libya across the Mediterranean Sea to Italy – with most migrants crossing the sea on flimsy boats run by people smugglers – has become the main route to Europe for migrants from Africa after a European Union (EU) clampdown in 2016 on sea crossings from Turkey. IOM data indicates that a record 181,000 migrants made the perilous journey last year, while this year, arrivals in Italy have risen by two thirds compared with the same period in 2016. IOM states further that more than 4,500 migrants drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2016 and that nearly 500 have died at sea this year – almost a five-fold increase from this time last year.

- **15 March** – Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stated in a televised interview late on Wednesday that Turkey may cancel a migrant readmission agreement with the European Union (EU), adding that the country is also re-evaluating a US \$6 billion refugee deal with the bloc. In 2013, Turkey agreed to take back migrants who travelled illegally to the EU in return for the promise of visa-free travel. Last year, it also agreed to stop illegal migrants from crossing into Greece in exchange for financial aid for those in its care and accelerated EU membership talks. In an interview with Kanal 24, Cavusoglu disclosed “we may cancel the readmission agreement. The EU has been wasting our time on the visa liberalization issue. We are not applying the readmission agreement at the moment, and we are evaluating the refugee deal.” The minister’s marks come at a time when Turkey-EU tensions are running high after several European countries prevented Turkish politicians, including the foreign minister, from holding rallies intended to drum up support for plans to give President Taysip Erdogan sweeping powers in a referendum. The row escalated after the Dutch government banned a rally in Rotterdam at the weekend over fears that tensions in Turkey over the referendum could spill over into its expatriate Turkish community. The Turkish leader, who survived a military coup last summer, has defended his plans to amass greater power, stating that Turkey needs greater stability. However his crackdown on dissenting voices amongst the judiciary and the media since the failed coup has drawn rebuke from the

West. The EU now finds itself caught between holding President Erdogan accountable and guaranteeing the continuation of a deal to control the flow of refugees and migrants who pass through Turkey to Europe. **Update (15 March)** – A spokeswoman for the EU’s executive arm disclosed on Wednesday that the EU is committed to the migration deal with Turkey, adding that it expects Ankara to comply as well. The spokeswoman disclosed “we remain committed to the application of the EU-Turkey (agreement),” adding that “this is a contract of mutual trust and delivery, we expect that both parts will comply with their commitments.”

SPOTLIGHT ON LIBYA

PORT STATUS AS OF 18 March 2017

Risk level assessments take into consideration recent events, the likelihood of future outbreaks of violence, regional instability and other mitigating factors that may impact operations at the port.

Port Name	Port Status	Risk Level
Port of Abu Kammash	Open	Low
Port of al-Khums (Homs)	Open	Low
Port of As-Sidra (Sirte, Es Sider)	Closed	High
Port of Benghazi	Closed	High
Port of Bouri (offshore port)	Open	Low
Port of Derna	Closed	High
Port of El Brega (Marsa El Brega)	Open	Moderate
Port of Hariga	Open	Moderate
Port of Mellitah	Open	Low
Port of Misrata (Qasr Ahmed)	Open	High
Port of Ras Lanuf	Closed	High
Port of Tobruk	Open	Moderate
Port of Tripoli	Open	Moderate
Port of Zawiya (Zawia)	Open	Moderate
Port of Zueitina	Open	Low



LIBYA ANALYSIS

ACRONYM	NAME	ROLE
GNA	Government of National Accord	UN-backed Government, based in Tripoli
HOR	House of Representatives	Nationally elected government based in Tobruk
GNC	General National Congress	Former government, officially disbanded in 2014 but still has a small following
LNA	Libyan National Army	Led by Khalifa Haftar, supports HoR in Tobruk. Based in Benghazi
BDB	Benghazi Defense Brigade	Militia comprised predominantly of Misratan members, supports GNA in Tripoli

On 3 March, fighting erupted in Libya's Oil Crescent between the Benghazi Defence Brigades (BDB) and the Libyan National Army (LNA) over control of Ras Lanuf and Es Sider oil terminals. Since clashes began, oil output has fallen to 620, 000 bpd, approximately 80,000 bpd less than previous weeks. On 14 March, the LNA recaptured the oil terminals; however, the situation remains fluid. BDB forces have retreated, and there is a heavy LNA presence at the terminals as they prepare to resume business. Yet there is a likelihood for renewed fighting in the next few months as rival governments continue to seek power and resource primacy.

The BDB is a predominately Misrata based militia that supports the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA). They have attempted to wrest control of the ports to hand them to the Petroleum Facilities Guard, allied to the GNA. The BDB has also indicated that it plans to advance westward toward Benghazi, where the LNA, led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, have been battling insurgent forces for over two years. Haftar and the LNA are backed by the Tobruk-based, nationally elected House of Representatives, and have been working their way east to gain control of the country's major resources.

Neither the UN-backed government nor the Tobruk government recognises the authority of the other, and the battle for Ras Lanuf and Es Sider ports compounds the rivalry. Earlier this week, the Tobruk government called for an end to the deal which has unified the country's National Oil Corporation. Prior to this agreement, each faction had operated its own NOC, in competition with the other. If the NOC is broken up again, there is a

likelihood that militias supporting each faction could fight again for control of key ports.

Although the LNA has taken control of the ports, fighting in the region may be renewed in the foreseeable future, and as evidenced in recent days, may spread to other regions, including Benghazi, and Tripoli. In Tripoli, pro-GNA forces ousted a militia which backs a third government, the General National Congress (GNC), led by former Prime Minister Khalifa al-Ghawil.

The LNA, which has touted itself as a strong opposing force, may find themselves weakened by attempting to main a presence and military primacy in disparate parts of Libya. The clashes between the LNA and opposing militias, including the BDB, could draw in more militias on either side of the conflict, and may create a security vacuum which presents renewed opportunity for increased criminal or terrorist activity. In 2016, several militia groups set aside political differences to oust ISIS from their strongholds in Sirte and Derna. Although the bulk of ISIS fighters have scattered, their regrouping, or the regrouping of other terrorist organizations or criminal networks.



Further, unconfirmed rumours have indicated that Russia has deployed special forces to a military base in Western Egypt in support of Haftar. These claims have been denied by both Russian and Egyptian sources, however it is known that Haftar has been in talks with Russian officials since November of last year. Russian intervention could complicate and protract the ongoing negotiations among the rival governments.

MS Risk reiterates that the conflict in Libya will be not resolved through military efforts, but diplomatic negotiation. In the absence of diplomatic agreement, the situation remains highly volatile. Oil terminals, air and sea ports continue to be targets for strikes. Infrastructure and assets could be purposefully destroyed in an attempt to gain power, and control of key ports could change hands with minimal notice. Fighting is expected to remain most intense in the Oil Crescent, particularly around Es Sider and Ras Lanuf ports; and near Benghazi and Tripoli.

ACTIVITY REPORTING

- **18 March** – Workers are gradually returning to the oil facilities at Es Sider and Ras Lanuf; officials say they show little sign of damage beyond what was wrought in previous rounds of fighting. "The port has not suffered damage that would hinder exports, just some stealing," said an engineer at Es Sider. "About 30 workers have returned to the port, though we have not started export operations yet." As the LNA regains control of the area, military checkpoints, shops, mosques, and petrol stations have reopened.

- **16 March** – The UN-backed government is brokering an agreement with loyal brigades and municipal councils to stop fighting in Tripoli. According to the ceasefire agreement, all armed brigades shall withdraw from Tripoli and release all prisoners who were arrested based on their identities. Tripoli Revolutionaries' Brigade and Ghaniewa armed brigade of UN-Presidency Council launched an offensive on rival groups from Misrata three days earlier and managed to drive from several areas of the capital. Now according to the ceasefire agreement, some of the controlled buildings would be handed over to other loyal brigades from Misrata. Misrata Brigades will guard the Ministry of Interior, the Rixos compound, and protect Airport Road, a region where several **rival groups** are located. Ghaniewa armed brigade, which currently controls Rixos compound, said it was not part of the agreement and it will only accept inclusive solutions.
- **16 March** – Seven crew members are missing after a Turkish cargo vessel sank off the Libyan coast on Thursday in bad weather, a coastguard official said. The ship, a dry bulk vessel carrying construction materials, sank two to three miles from the port of Misrata. Six of the crew were rescued by coast guards and port staff. All crew members were Turkish. The Libyan Coast Guard is continuing the search for seven crew members, but have been hampered by bad weather.
- **15 March** – Libya's Tobruk-based parliament said it supported ending a deal to unify the country's National Oil Corporation (NOC), a day after eastern forces recaptured major oil ports from a rival faction. The statement from the parliament's energy committee urged the LNA to hand over the ports of Es Sider and Ras Lanuf as soon as it had fully secured them, without saying who they

should be handed to. "This is a matter for the parliament and the leadership to decide," LNA spokesman Colonel Ahmed Al Mismari said in a news conference, referring to the Tobruk-based House of Representatives. He added he expected to be notified on Thursday or Friday. When Libya split into separately governed regions in 2014, two separate, competing National Oil Corp. administrations were formed. In 2016, a deal was signed to unite them, a step toward healing the political divide. In a statement dated March 13, Nagi Elmagrabi said his eastern-based NOC was pulling out of the unification deal because some terms of the agreement, including transferring headquarters to Benghazi, were yet to be met. The House of Representatives' energy committee said it also considers the deal over. Earlier this week, the eastern assembly voted to withdraw its support from the UN-backed peace deal that paved the way for a Government of National Accord based in the capital. Despite having approved the accord, it had never endorsed it in a vote and refused to coordinate with the GNA.

- **15 March** – Forces loyal to Libya's UN-backed Government of National Accord seized the headquarters of a rival militia on Wednesday in a third day of fighting for control of Tripoli. Rocket and artillery fire has been exchanged between GNA forces and a militia loyal to former prime minister Khalifa Ghweil. Since taking power from al-Ghawil's administration in March 2016, the GNA has secured the backing of powerful militias in the capital, but some districts remain outside its control. Ghweil does not recognise the GNA's authority. GNA forces launched an assault on his headquarters in the Guest Palace and overran it after heavy fighting. A security source confirmed that al-Ghawil's forces, drawn largely from his hometown of Misrata, withdrew as GNA forces took control of the area.

- **14 March** – Human rights violations have been reported during the recent fighting in Libya's oil crescent, and may worsen in coming days, according to U.N. human rights spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani. "Credible reports suggest that unlawful killings, including summary executions, hostage-taking, arbitrary detentions, torture, as well as widespread raids of civilian homes have been occurring, particularly in the towns of Ajdabiya, Benghazi, Brega and Beishir," she said at a UN briefing. The violence has flared since March 3 when the Benghazi Defence Brigade (BDB) attacked the "oil crescent" between the ports of Ras Lanuf and Brega, while the Libyan National Army responded with air strikes. The UN received allegations of the summary execution of two LNA fighters in the Ras Lanuf medical centre on March 3, followed by LNA raids on homes of BDB supporters. The allegations were credible and the victims were reportedly shot in the head, Shamdasani said. LNA fighters detained more than 100 men and boys as young as 13 during the subsequent raids, as well as stealing money and beating and insulting residents, according to the latest information provided to the UN. Many families have no information on the whereabouts of their male relatives, who are being held without access to communications.
- **14 March** – Forces loyal LNA leader Khalifa Haftar say they have retaken key oil-rich areas in the country's east. Ground, sea and air forces were engaged in the fight for sites at Ras Lanuf, Sidra and Ben Jawad from a rival Islamist militia. The oil terminals had been seized by the Benghazi Defence Brigades (BDB) - a mix of militias, which then handed them over to the Petroleum Facilities Guard, affiliated to the UN-backed unity government based in Tripoli. Ahmed al-

Mismari, spokesman for the LNA, said fighters from the BDB retreated toward the coastal town of Harawa, more than 60 miles west of Es Sider; and to Jufra, their desert base nearly 300 km to the south.

- **14 March** – Russia's defence ministry denied allegations that it had special forces at an Egyptian base, some 60 miles (100 km) from the Libyan border, to support Haftar. "There are no Russian special forces in Sidi-Barrani. It's not the first time such leaks from anonymous sources to certain Western media have got people excited," defence spokesman Igor Konashenkov said. The report by Reuters news agency, quoting unnamed Egyptian officials, had said that a 22-strong unit of Russian special forces were at the base. The Egyptian military has also denied the reports. Haftar has held talks with senior Russian officials in recent months. In January, he was given a tour of a Russian aircraft carrier the Admiral Kusnetsov in the Mediterranean and spoke by video link to Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu. In November, 2016 he met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow and asked for Russian assistance in fighting Islamist militias in Libya.
- **14 March** – Fierce clashes resumed at a tower block complex in southwest Benghazi where forces loyal to Khalifa Haftar have been battling for weeks to dislodge rival fighters, a security official said. A spokesman for the LNA) said jets had bombed the buildings and three special forces soldiers had been killed and three wounded in clashes. Over the past year, the LNA has made major gains in Benghazi; however, they still face pockets of resistance, including in the tower blocks between the districts of Ganfouda and Bosnaib. Dozens of civilians, are

trapped by the fighting there. Local and international attempts to negotiate safe passage for them have largely failed. Analysts say the LNA has been stretched thin and suffers internal divisions, contributing to its loss of two major oil ports southwest of Benghazi this month.

- **14 March** – Renewed clashes erupted west of the city centre in Tripoli, blocking several key thoroughfares and leaving many trapped in their homes. Clashes erupted in the neighbourhoods of Hay al-Andalus and Gargaresh on Monday evening, prompting the government to deploy tanks. Overnight, gunmen stormed the headquarters of Al-Nabaa television, a privately-owned channel known for its Islamist leanings. The channel remained off the air on Wednesday. UN envoy Martin Kobler on Tuesday tweeted an appeal for an "immediate ceasefire", saying the fighting put civilians at "grave risk". Tripoli's GNA-allied police said security forces in Tripoli were battling "outlaw groups that are destabilising security and inciting chaos". The Misrata militias have warned against attacks on their forces in Tripoli, saying they were ready to intervene to restore calm in the capital.
- **14 March** – Troops commanded by Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar launched ground, sea, and air attacks to retake Ras Lanuf and Es Sider oil terminals, which were seized by a rival force earlier this month. Haftar backs the House of Representatives (HoR), a rival administration in the Tobruk that has refused to cede power to the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), which was installed in 2016. The GNA, which has struggled to assert control, denies having any connection to the takeover of Ras Lanuf and Es Sider earlier

this month. However last week the GNA stated that they had ordered oil installation guards who are loyal to them to secure the two terminals. The eastern parliament suspended its participation in political dialogue after what it called "the terrorist attack on the oil crescent". The HoR, which was elected in 2014, has called for presidential and legislative elections to be held before next February.

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