



PIRACY REPORT AUGUST 2017

Piracy and Acts of Armed Robbery of Ships

For Monthly Reports
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Analysis

- ❑ Incidents of piracy and robbery of vessels were low in August 2017. Total incidents in both the Gulf of Guinea and Southeast Asia were lower in the first eight months of 2017 than the preceding two years.
- ❑ Nigeria, the Strait of Malacca and the Philippines are currently the areas with the highest geographical concentration of incidents of piracy and robbery of vessels. Venezuela also recorded relatively high incidents in 2017.
- ❑ Military operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Sulu, Philippines as well as trilateral maritime patrols between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have suppressed maritime kidnappings in the Sulu and Celebes Seas on the short term. Crew should however still exercise vigilance, control access to and on the vessel and maintain regular communication with their shipping company.
- ❑ On the coast of Nigeria 48 crew and passengers of vessels were kidnapped during seven reported incidents from January to end of July 2017. No kidnappings of crew were reported in August 2017.
- ❑ Houthi rebels once again launched an attack with a remote controlled boat packed with explosives in the Port of Mokha, Yemen in August 2017. The target was an United Arab Emirates naval vessel.
- ❑ The socio-economic and political crisis in Venezuela is effecting maritime security. Seven incidents of robbery and attempted robbery on tankers and cargo vessels were reported at Puerto La Cruz anchorages in Venezuela from January to end of August 2017. The incidents can be classified as petty theft and are non violent in most cases. A few predatory attacks from gangs of fishermen on other fishermen are reported off the State of Sucre and on Lake Maracaibo. It is likely that attacks are underreported. Attacks are extremely violent often leading to deaths of fishermen. The current security situation combined with attacks on yachts in previous years, resulted in a decline in visiting yachts to Venezuela. Risks to yachts remain very high in this area.

2016 Incidents



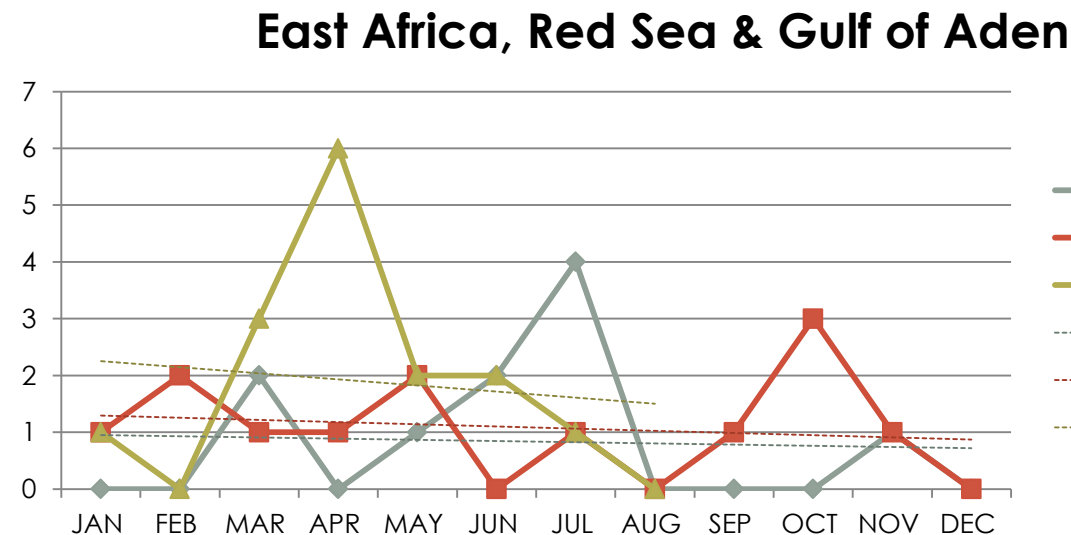
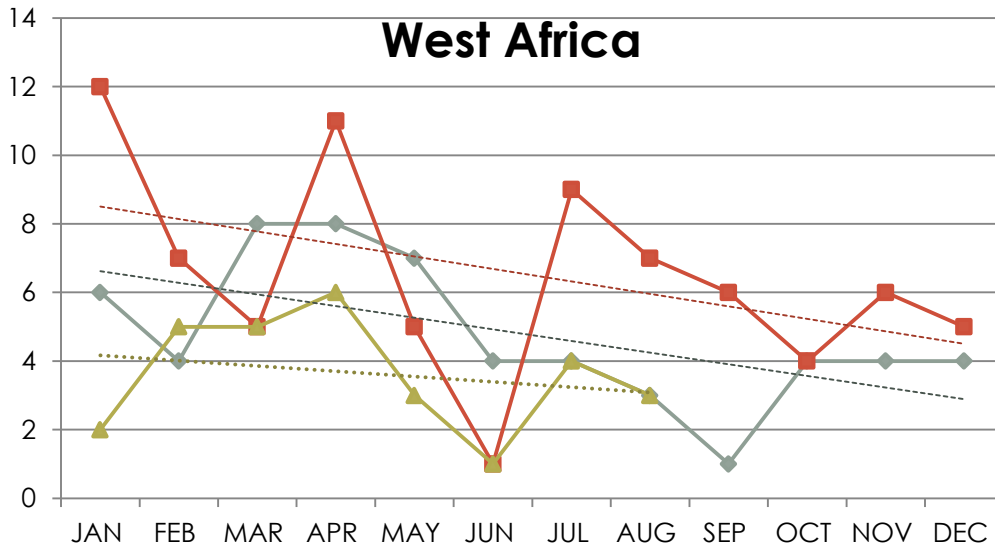
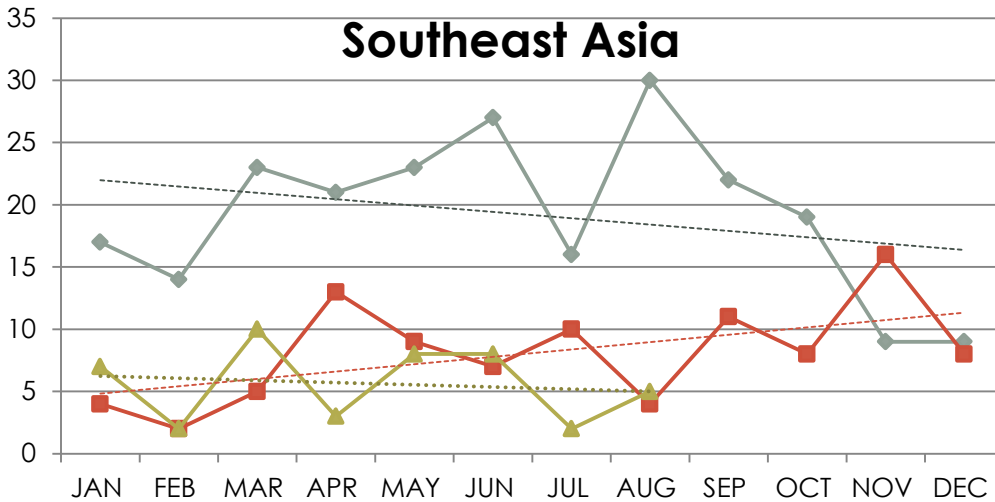
2017 Incidents



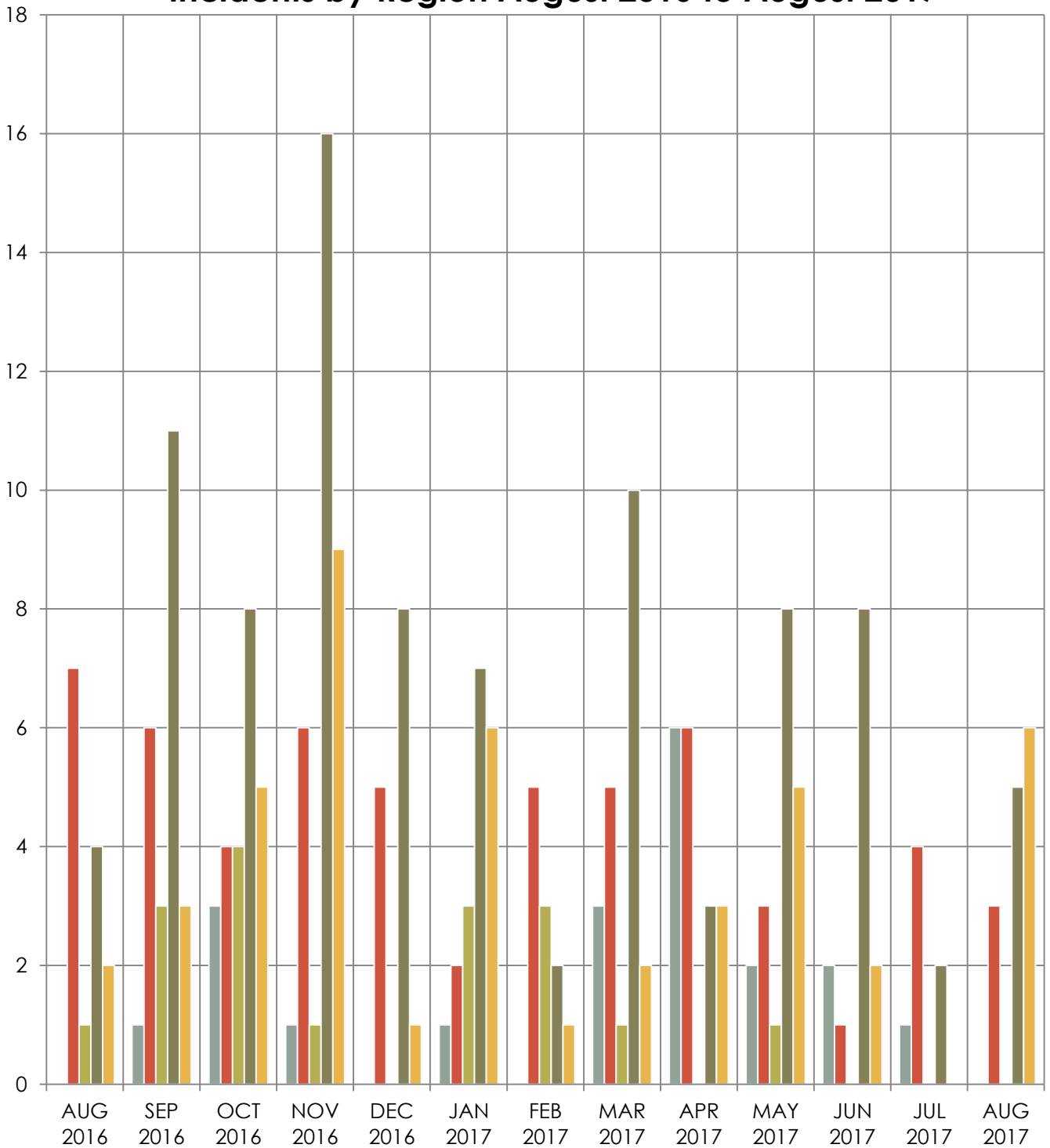
August 2017 Incidents



Incidents of Piracy and Robbery of Vessels: 2015 to 2017



Incidents by Region August 2016 to August 2017

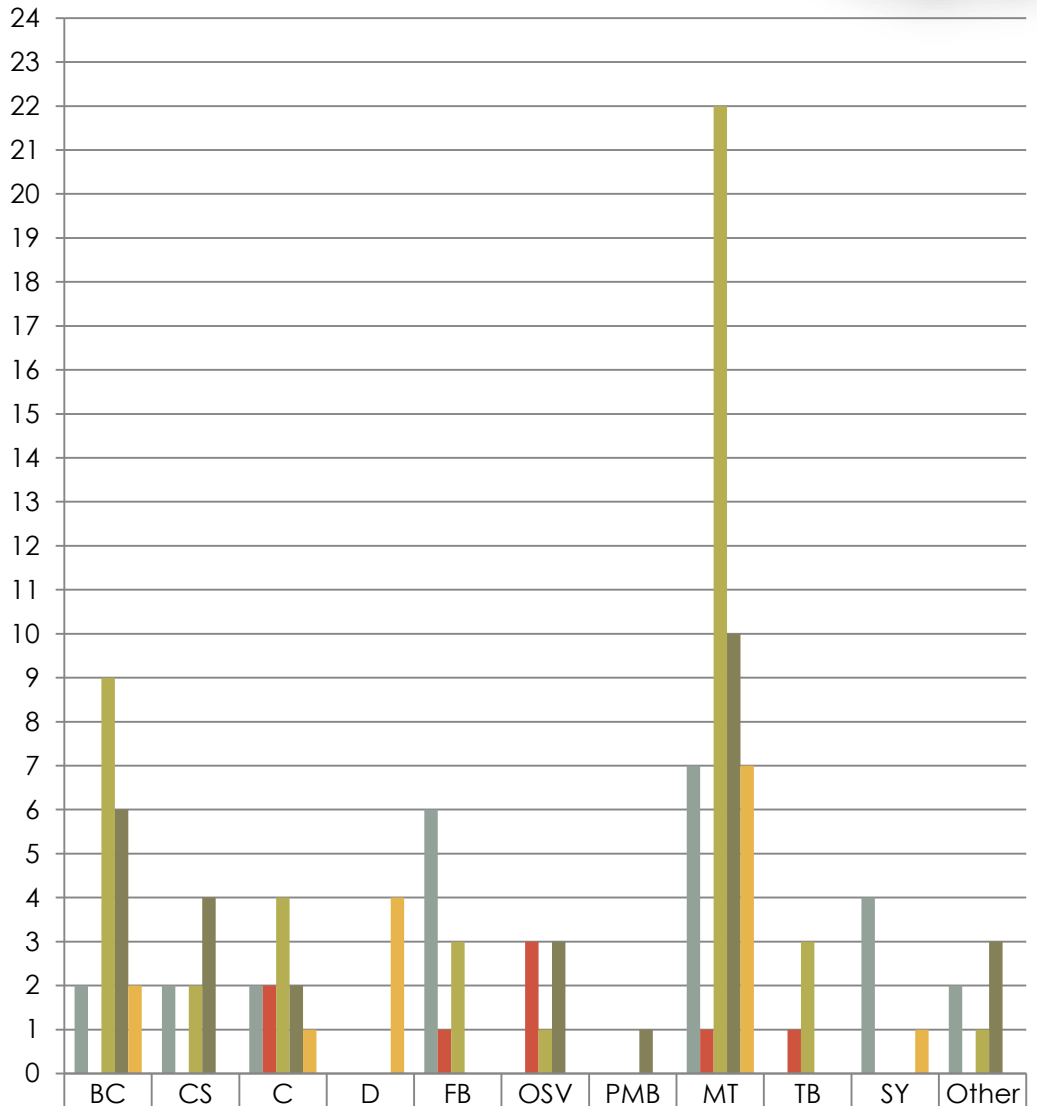


■ EAST AFRICA AND ARADIAN GULF ■ WEST AFRICA ■ INDIAN SUB CONT ■ SE ASIA ■ SOUTH AMERICA

Incidents 2017: Type of Ship Attacked

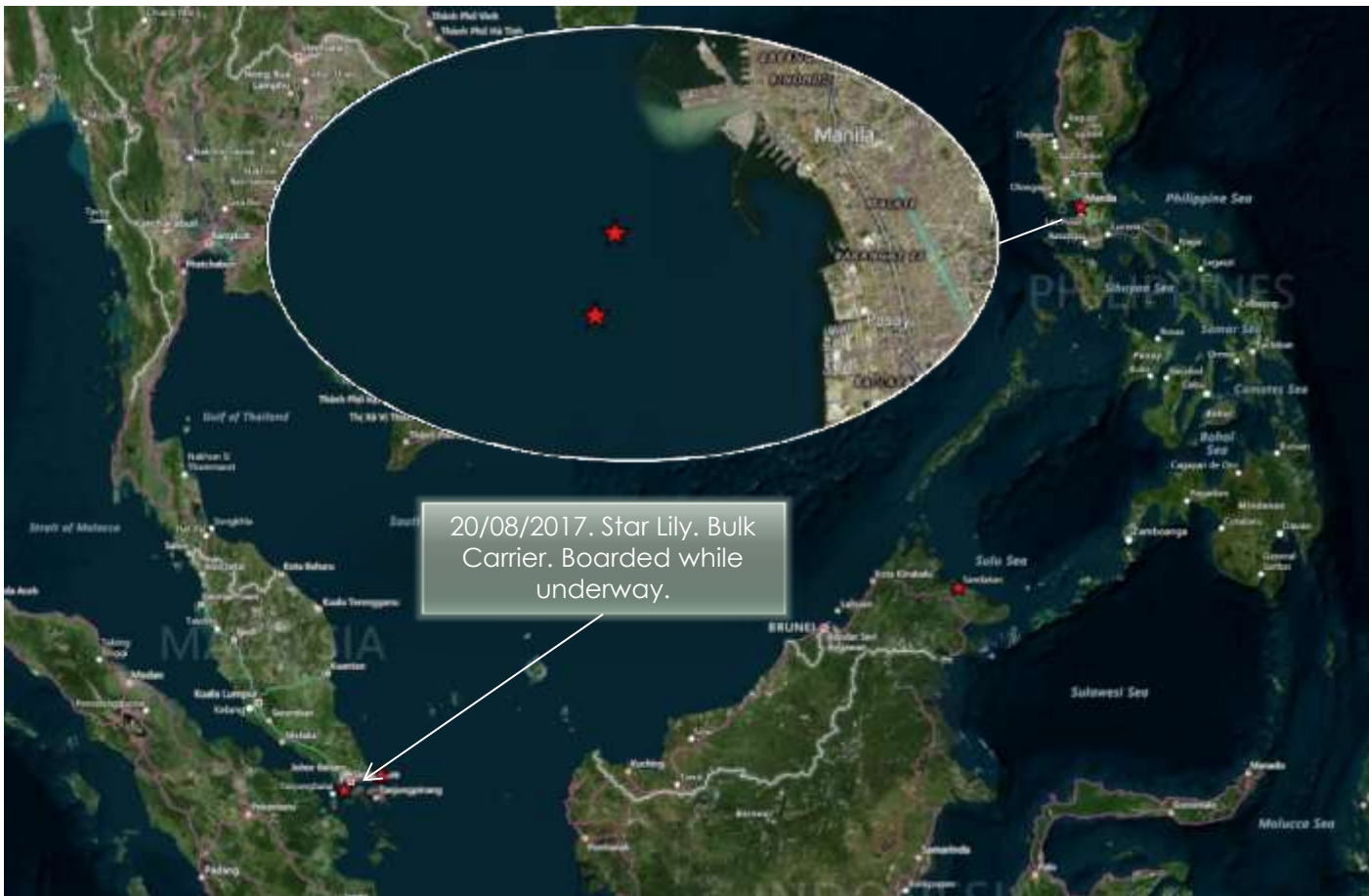


Type Vessel	Code
Barge	B
Bulk Carrier	BC
Cargo ship	CS
Coast Guard/ Patrol Boat	PB
Container	C
Dhow	D
Ferry	F
Fishing Boat	FB
Fishing Trawler	FV
Offshore Supply Vessel	OSV
Passenger Boat	PMB
Roll-on-Roll-off Cargo Ship	Ro-Ro
Tanker	MT
Tug	TB
Yacht	SY



	BC	CS	C	D	FB	OSV	PMB	MT	TB	SY	Other
Americas	2	2	2		6			7		4	2
Indian Sub Continent			2		1	3		1	1		
SE Asia	9	2	4		3	1		22	3		1
West Africa	6	4	2			3	1	10			3
East Africa/Arabian Gulf	2		1	4				7		1	

Southeast Asia



20/08/2017. Star Lily. Bulk Carrier. Boarded while underway.

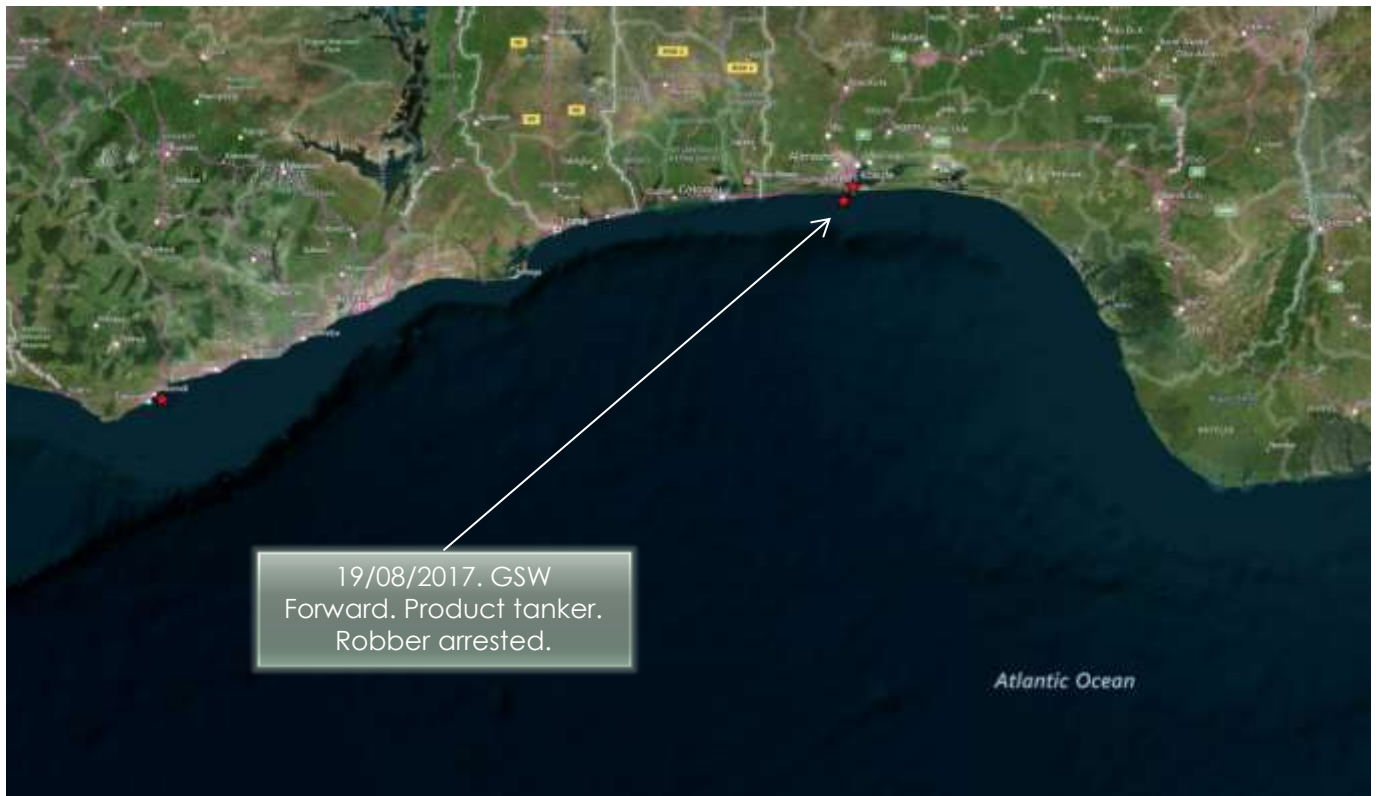
A robbery and an attempted robbery were reported at Manila Anchorages, Philippines. Fire fighting equipment was stolen as in previous robberies this year. A Tanker was robbed while at anchor at Pulau Bintan, Indonesia. An attempted robbery on a Chemical Tanker failed at Karamunting Bulk Oil Terminal, Sandakan Port, Sabah, Malaysia when the perpetrators were spotted by the duty crew.¹ A Bulk Carrier was boarded while underway in the Singapore Strait.

- ❑ **20 August 2017** – The Panama flagged Bulk Carrier, *Star Lily* was boarded by two men from a small boat while underway approximately 4.7nm SSE of Pulau Nipah, Indonesia. The duty oiler was threatened with a knife. Two small boats were noticed on radar heading towards Indonesia.²

Red Sea

On 16 August 2017 Yemeni Forces destroyed a remote controlled boat packed with explosives in the Port of Mokha, a Red Sea port in Yemen. The target in the Houthi initiated attack was an United Arab Emirates naval vessel.³

West Africa



Two robberies and an attempted robbery were reported in anchorages in the Gulf of Guinea. The LPG Tanker *Norgas Shasta* was robbed while anchored at Takoradi Anchorage, Ghana⁴ and the Product Tanker, *GSW Forward* at Lagos General Purpose Anchorage, Nigeria. An attempt to rob a chemical tanker failed at Folawiyo Terminal, Apapa, Lagos, Nigeria.

- ❑ **19 August 2017** – At 03:50LT the duty watch keepers on the Product Tanker, *GSW Forward* spotted a floating object on the bow. The armed security guard fired warning shots, after which one robber jumped overboard. The crew implemented anti-piracy measures and retreated to the citadel. After the security guards searched the deck areas, the crew made a thorough search of the ship. A robber hiding in the hawse pipe was apprehended. He was handed to local agents. Oil was stolen from the tanker.⁵

South America

Four incidents of piracy and robbery of vessels were reported in South America. All but one involved fishing vessels. A container vessel was robbed while anchored in Esmeraldas Port, Ecuador.



- ❑ **August 2017** – On 6 August 2017 three armed men attacked the fishing boats *Priya* and *Awawak* in the Waini River area, Guyana. They stole engines, food and fish. They approached in a small boat and fired on the fishermen. On 17 August 2017 the same owners were once again targeted. Six masked men approached on a faster small boat and fired on the *Priya 2*. After hijacking the vessel, they approached another fishing vessel *Arawak 2*. They harassed the crew for money and transferred the catch and engine to the *Priya 2*. The crew of the *Priya 2* was told to board the *Arawak 2*. They were left drifting. They were rescued on 20 August 2017. The *Priya* and the *Priya 2* belong to Totaram Bishu. The owner of the *Arawak* and *Arawak 2* is Carol Persaud. The owners are related. The captains of the vessels are also related.⁶
- ❑ **12 August 2017** – Six fishermen died in attacks by gangs on Lake Maracaibo, Venezuela. They stole engines of boats and the fish catch.⁷

Maritime Robberies in Venezuela

As the economic and political crisis in Venezuela intensifies, predatory crimes are also on the rise. These crimes extend to the maritime domain where there has been an increase in attacks against fishermen in waters off Puerto la Cruz, the State of Sucre⁸ and Lake Maracaibo in recent years. The attack and killing of six fishermen on Lake Maracaibo in August 2017 is only one of the few attacks that were reported in the press.

It is estimated that around 4000 fishermen fish on Lake Maracaibo. Armed gangs such as "Los Hedionditos", "Los Santarroseros", "Los Chompiras" and "El Nino Troconis" fill fishermen with fear as they attack fishing boats under darkness.

These gangs, comprising of former fishermen, approach in barges or motorboats. They are masked and are armed with firearms or knives. They approach without any lights.⁹ They steal boats, engines, nets, cell phones and generators. Men posing as fishermen gather intelligence for the gangs.

The attackers set the boats with fishermen adrift and throw them in the water at times – leaving them to drown. Attacks are often violent. Cases were reported where fishermen were shot in the head.

Fishermen try to find security by fishing in large groups. Fishermen are careful not to use lights unnecessary at night, even hiding the coals of cigarettes as this can be seen over distances at sea.

Other maritime crimes, such as oil smuggling, are also on the rise. Criminals use small boats to steal equipment from oil refineries, wells, oil barges and rigs. The drilling barge *LV-403* was boarded by eight robbers on 23 May 2014 near the municipality of La Ceiba on Lake Maracaibo. They shot an oil driller and injured another worker. This was the third attack on the *LV-403* in 2014. They stole televisions, refrigerators, radios, equipment and personal belongings during the robberies.¹⁰ According to media sources attacks on barges continue, but are not often reported.

Although there have been arrests in the past year, the police and coast guard lack resources and boats. Corruption is also a problem. As example the police in Zulia have only two boats to monitor 20 coastal municipalities.¹¹



With the exception of oil barges, attacks on Lake Maracaibo rarely affect commercial shipping. The last reported incident was in April 2010 when robbers attempted to rob a General Cargo Ship, *Industrial Dawn*, at the Maracaibo Port Inner Anchorage.¹²

Tankers and cargo vessels were targeted at Puerto La Cruz anchorages in recent years. Thirteen incidents against commercial vessels were recorded from January 2015 of which seven were recorded in 2017 alone. Almost all attacks took place at night. Ship stores were stolen in all cases. Robbers are usually armed with knives. Violence during these attacks is rare. The *AB* was assaulted by eight robbers during one of the attempted robberies in June 2016.

Two incidents in Trinidad and Tobago in late 2015 on a fishing boat and one on a yacht, *Maritima*¹³ were also attributed to pirates from Venezuela. A fisherman was killed and another wounded during the attack on the fishing boat.



No attacks on yachts in Venezuelan waters could be confirmed in the past three years, mainly because foreign yachts visiting Venezuela declined to a great extent due to security concerns.¹⁴ In previous years several armed robberies were reported, some of which were violent, resulting in injuries of crew. Risks to yachts are still very high.

It is likely that robberies on vessels in Venezuela will continue as long as the current socio-economic and political instability prevails.

End Notes

1. <https://gisis.imo.org/Public/PAR/Incident.aspx?Action=View&ID=7584> viewed 17/08/2017;
<http://www.recaap.org> viewed 23/08/2017.
2. <https://icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-report/details/169/1458> viewed 22/08/2017
3. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2017/08/16/Explosive-boat-attack-foiled-targeting-UAE-ship.html>
4. <https://icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-report/details/169/1459> viewed 22/08/2017
5. <https://icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-report/details/169/1457> viewed 22/08/2017
6. <http://guyana.hoop.la/topic/crime-tracker-guyana-since-may-11?reply=565387935323905748#565387935323905748> viewed 1/09/2017
7. <https://www.el-carabobeno.com/1372203-2>
8. <http://www.npr.org/2017/05/05/527092513/ghost-boats-terrorize-fishermen-in-venezuela-amid-humanitarian-crisis>
9. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/12/07/pirates-preying-on-venezuelan-fishermen-as-industry-unravels.html>
10. <http://www.producto.com.ve/pro/nacionales-negocios/instalaciones-petroleras-del-pa-s-bajo-ataque-piratas-y-atracadores>; <http://www.laverdad.com/sucesos/52968-piratas-del-lago-matan-a-obrero-de-pdvsa-en-una-gabarra.html>
11. <http://elestimulo.com/climax/piratas-en-el-lago-de-maracaibo-saquean-y-asesinan>
12. <https://gisis.imo.org>
13. <http://www.oceancruisingclub.org/index.php/forum/cruising-conversations/1528-piracy-in-the-eastern-caribbean#2672> viewed 4/01/2015
14. <http://www.noonsite.com/Countries/Venezuela>