



PIRACY REPORT MAY 2017

Piracy and Acts of Armed Robbery of Ships

For Monthly Reports
Please contact
Lydelle Joubert
info@PiracyReport.co.za

Analysis

- ❑ Nigeria is currently the country with the highest geographical concentration in incidents of piracy and robbery of vessels. Bangladesh, the Malacca Strait, the Sulu and Sulawesi Seas off Malaysia; and Venezuela all recorded several incidents in 2017.
- ❑ In the first five months of 2017 the high risk areas with regard to hijackings and kidnappings of crew were the coast of Nigeria (43 crew and passengers kidnapped during six reported incidents), the Sulu and Celebes Seas off Malaysia and the Philippines (11 kidnapped during three incidents), off the coast of Somalia (at least 45 hostages taken during four vessel hijackings plus an unconfirmed hijacking).
- ❑ Puerto La Cruz anchorages in Venezuela recorded five robberies and attempted robberies in 2017.
- ❑ Another dhow was successfully hijacked off Somalia in May 2017. The success rate of recent attacks in terms of ransom payments was low due to the interception of pirate groups on land by the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF) and Galmudog authorities; the implementation of Best Management Practises (BMP4) by crews of vessels which allowed European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) to board vessels; as well as the successful capture of pirates by these naval forces.
- ❑ Although capacity building in developing a coastguard and the PMPF is ongoing, more is needed in terms of logistical support.
- ❑ The decision by the Puntland Attorney General to file a criminal case against the 18 individuals accused of involvement in the recent piracy incidents, is a positive step in changing the balance where individuals involved in piracy can do so with impunity. Ultimately piracy is a land based problem. Safe havens should be denied to pirates and capacity building on land is vital to bring an end to piracy.
- ❑ Six crew were kidnapped from a cargo vessel and eight from a passenger boat in Nigeria in May 2017. One of the alleged ransom demands of the kidnapers in the last incident, is inclusion in the payroll of Elcrest and the NPDC which is an indication that the kidnapers are not concerned that revealing their identities will result in prosecution.

2016 Incidents



2017 Incidents

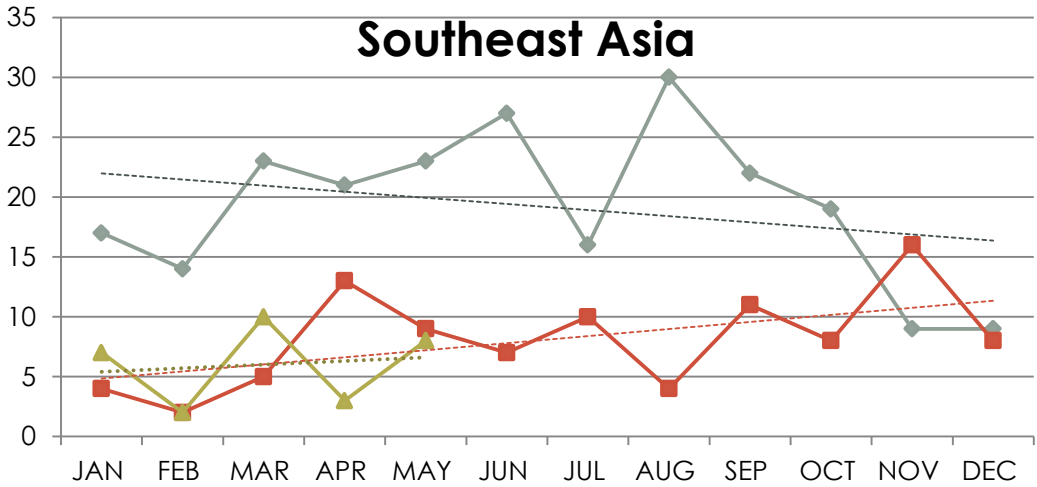


Mei 2017 Incidents

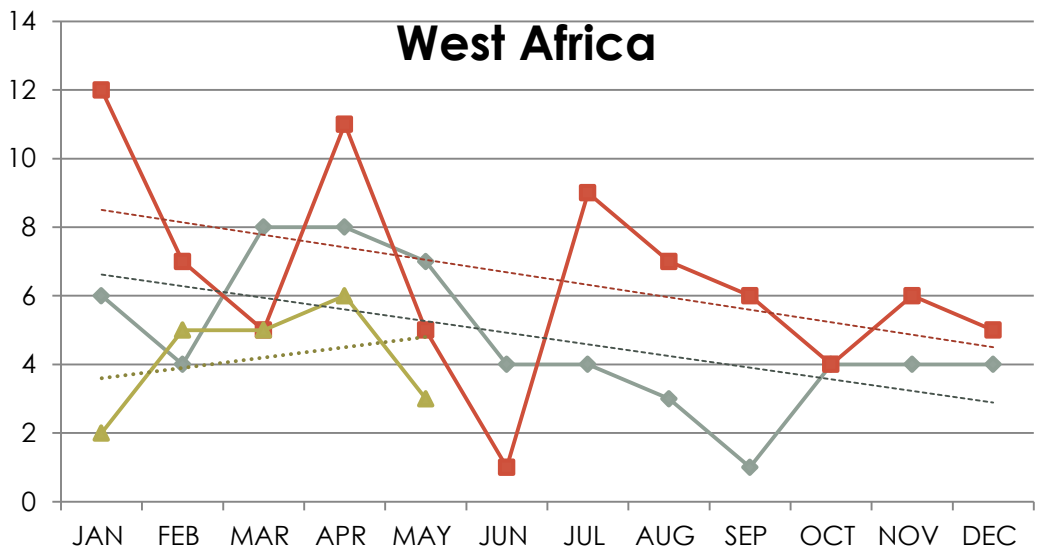


Incidents of Piracy and Robbery of Vessels: 2015 to 2017

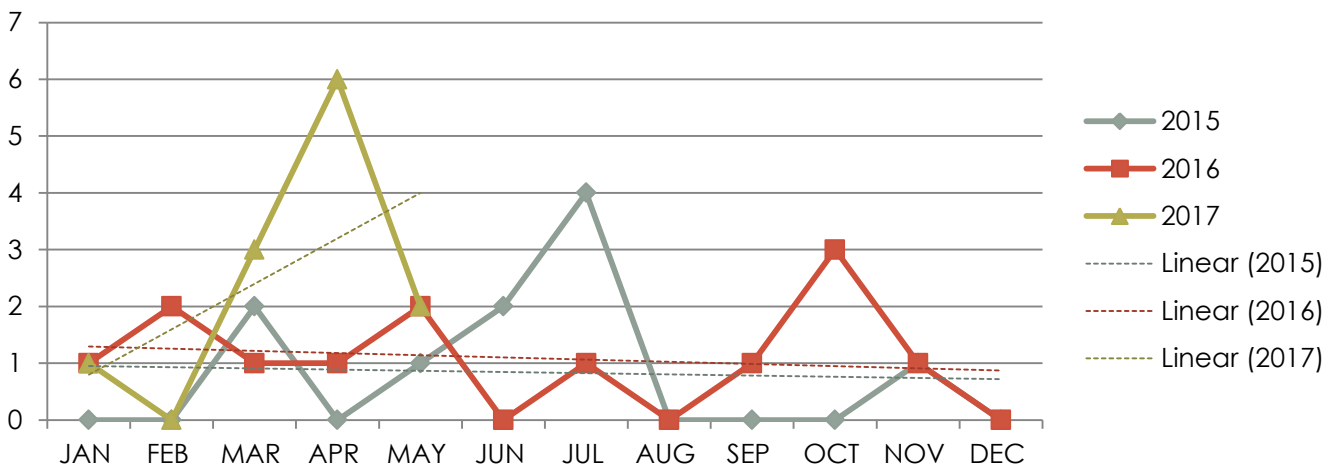
Southeast Asia



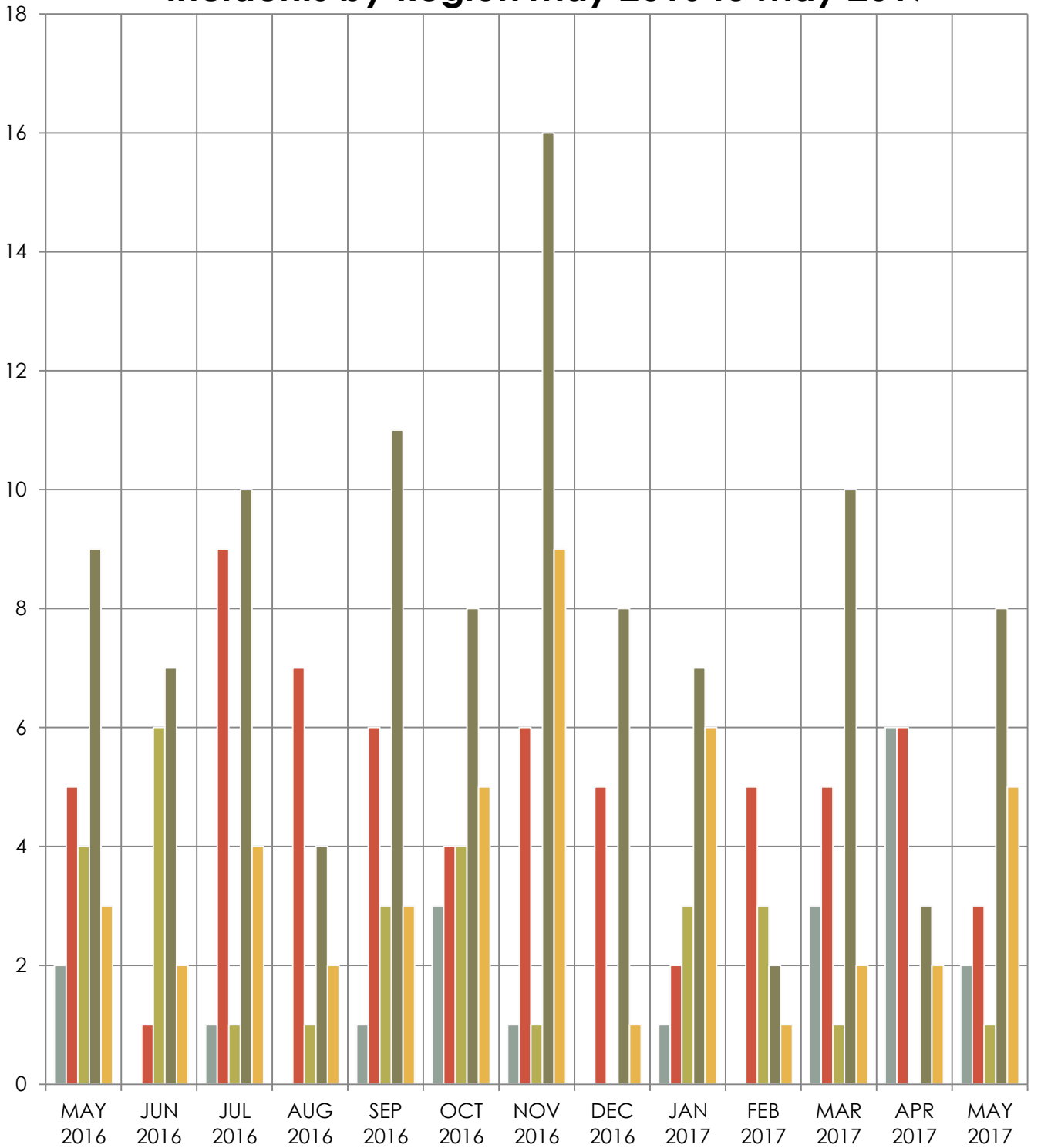
West Africa



East Africa, Red Sea & Gulf of Aden

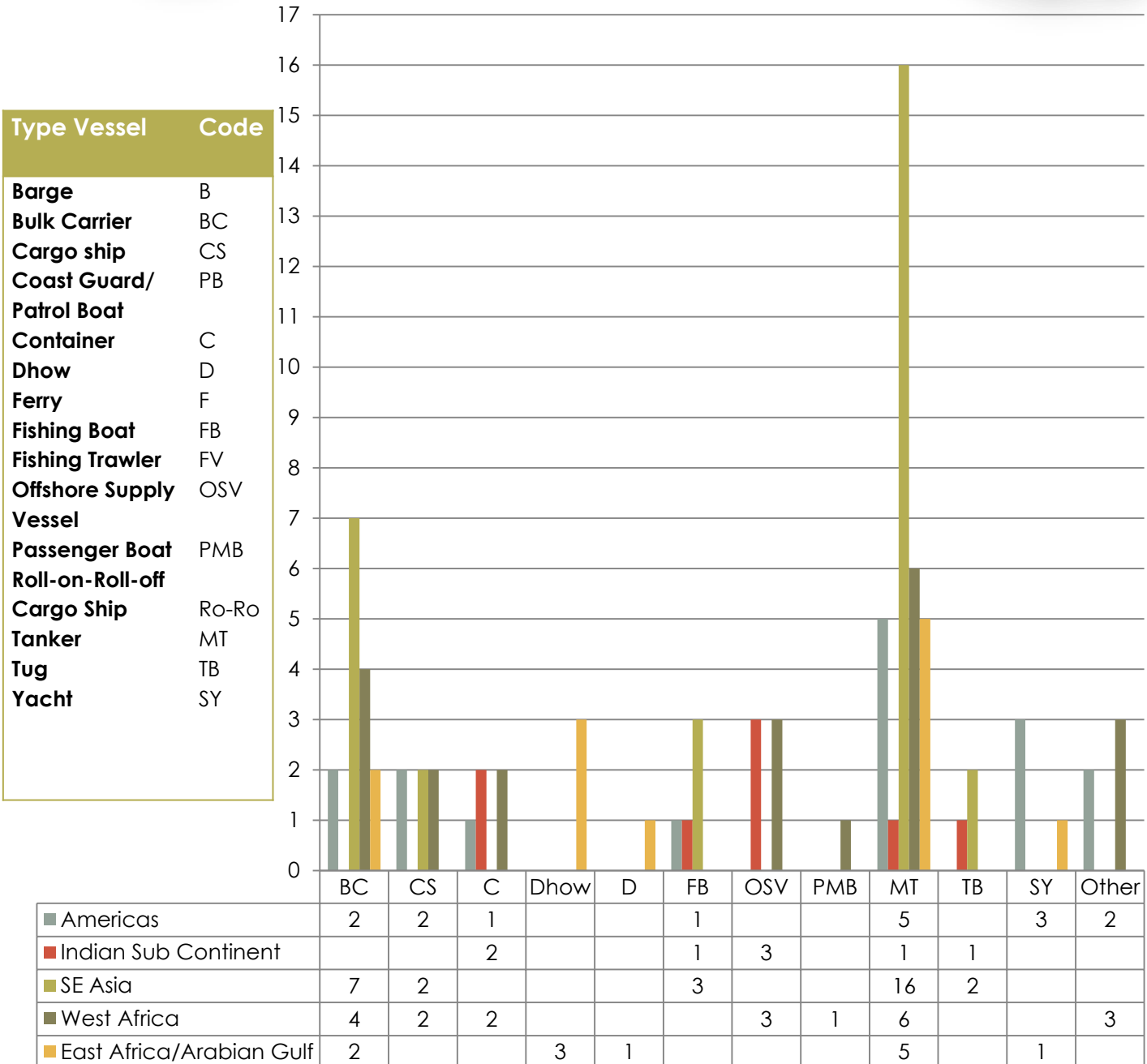


Incidents by Region May 2016 to May 2017



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

Incidents 2017: Type of Ship Attacked

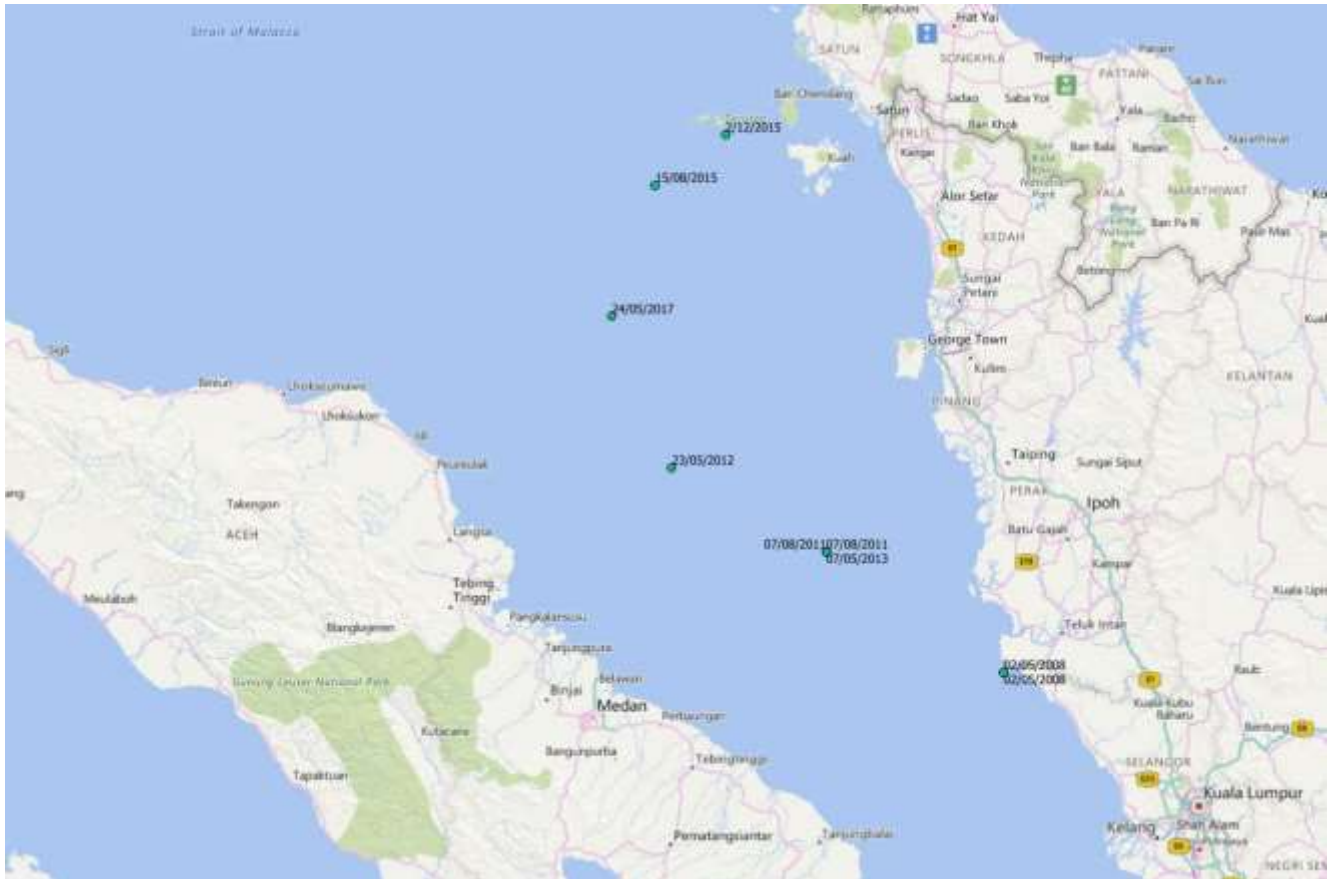


Southeast Asia



Eight incidents of piracy and robbery of vessels were reported in Southeast Asia in May 2017. Two suspicious approaches were also reported. A fishing vessel was hijacked in the Malacca Strait and two vessels were boarded while underway. Five incidents were reported at Indonesian anchorages. Robberies took place at Tanjung Priok Anchorage, Jakarta; Dumai Anchorage and Port; Muara Berau Anchorage, Samarinda and Cilacap Anchorage.

- ❑ **16 May 2017** – A small speed boat approached the OSV, *Posh Conquest* approximately 26nm SW of Kepulauan Talaud, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. The boat closed in to 30m and only moved away when the crew started to charge the fire hoses.¹
- ❑ **19 May 2017** – A OSV was chased by two speed boats approximately 56nm NW of Cagnipa Islands, Philippines. The crew commenced evasive manoeuvres and the boats moved away.²
- ❑ **28 May 2017** – The Chemical Tanker, *Alice* was boarded by six pirates armed with guns and knives 23.5nm SW of Pulau Mangkai while underway. The crew were tied up while the pirates stole crew and ship's possessions. They left in a small boat.³
- ❑ **24 May 2017** – A fishing vessel was hijacked 11.8nm SW of Pulau Perak, Malaysia by three masked men.⁴



Eight similar hijackings of fishing vessels were reported in the Malacca Strait between the northern border of Malaysia and Kelang, Malaysia in the last decade. It is very likely that these attacks are underreported. Fishing vessels are often sailed to Thailand or Indonesian waters. The geographical proximity of Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand work in favour of the hijackers in this area. Crew of fishing vessels were forced to jump overboard in several of these cases.

East Africa

A dhow was hijacked off the Somalian coast in May 2017. An oil tanker was also attacked in the Bab Al Mandeb Strait between Djibouti and Somalia. A Bulk Carrier reported a suspicious approach off Iran.

- ❑ **7 May 2017:** – The Bulk Carrier, *Navios Hios* reported a suspicious approach by three skiffs 12nm SW of Bandar-e-Jask, Iran. Ladders were spotted on the skiffs. The skiffs followed as the Bulk Carrier changed course and increased speed. The skiffs moved away after 20 minutes as the Iranian Navy called the Bulk Carrier on radio to change course.⁵
- ❑ **23 May 2017:** – An Iranian flagged fishing dhow was hijacked off Qandala, Puntland. The vessel was taken to Caluula anchorage, but it was no longer at this location on 25 May 2017. It is suspected that the vessel would be used as a mother vessel.⁶



7/05/2017. Navios Hios. Bulk Carrier. Suspicious approach.

23/05/2017. Fishing Dhow. Hijacked.

31/05/2017. Muskie. Oil Products Tanker. Attack with RPG7.

31 May 2017: – A Greek flagged Oil Product Tanker, *Muskie* was attacked in the Bab al Mandeb Strait between Djibouti and Somalia by three armed men in a skiff. The vessel sustained damage when it was hit by a RPG and small arms fire. It was reported that the skiff exploded when the onboard security team of four returned fire.⁷ The probability is high that this attack is not piracy related, but related to the conflict in Yemen.

Update OS 35 Attack – Somalia

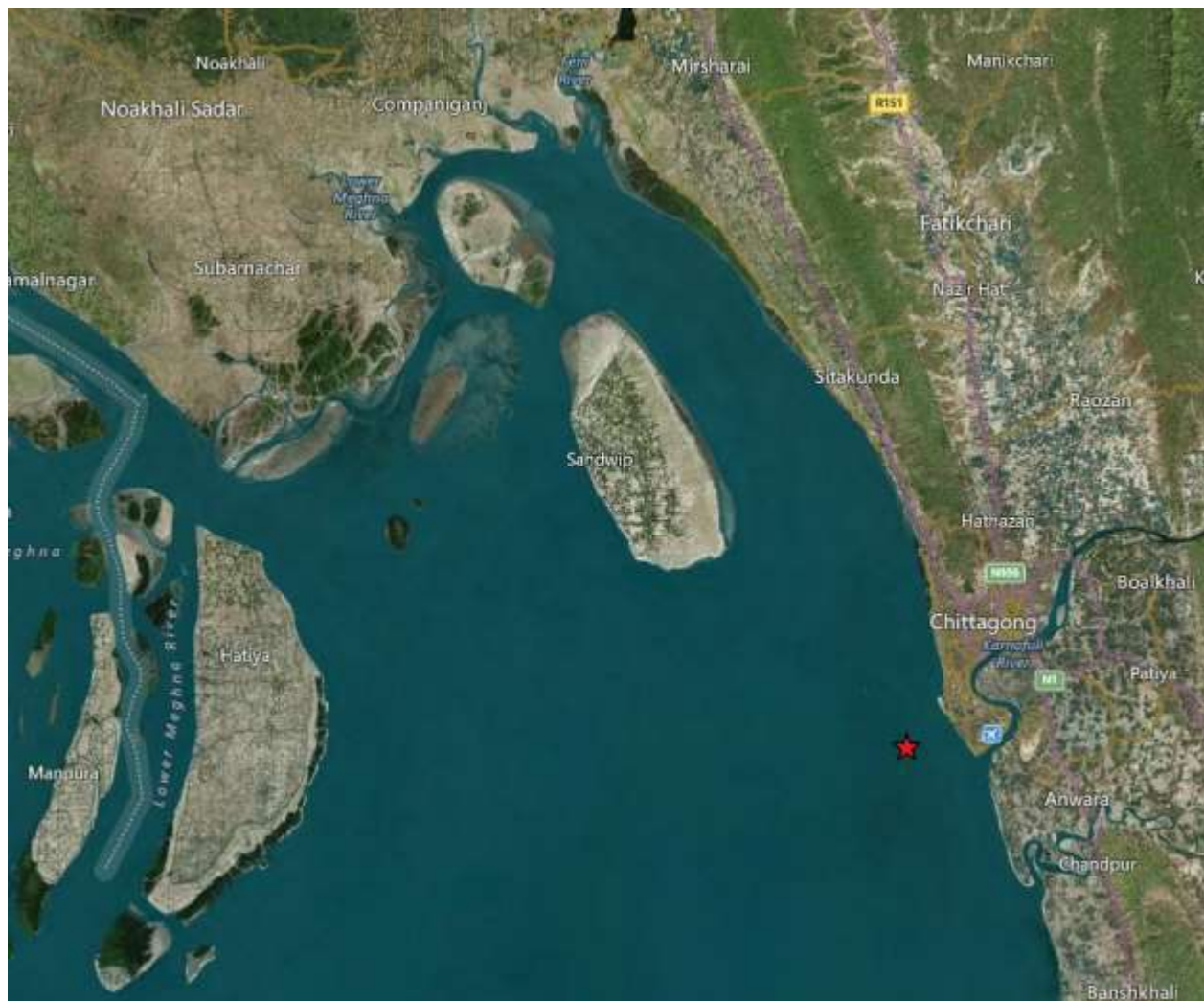
5 May 2017 – Three pirates arrested for the hijacking of the Tuvalu flagged Bulk Carrier, OS 35 in April 2017 have been handed over to Puntland authorities by the Chinese Navy. One of the arrested is the pirate leader Abdikarim Salah alias Aw Koombe. The OS 35 was boarded by pirates on 8 April 2017, 147nm SE off Al Mukalla. On 9 April 2017 the Indian and Chinese navies boarded the vessel. The pirates hid for 12 hours on the OS 35 after the attack, before they were discovered by the Chinese naval crew.⁸

In May 2017 Puntland Attorney General Mohamed Hared filed a criminal case in Garowe Court against 18 men allegedly involved in the recent piracy activities in the region. They also requested police to arrest the accused.⁹

According to the UN World Food Programme (WFP) 6.2 million Somalis still need aid after crops failed and livestock died during the recent drought. Rains in April will allow farmers to plant crops, but will not help to alleviate the immediate food shortages.¹⁰ The drought and economic hardship will be a contributing factor for people considering piracy as an attractive financial option to make ends meet.

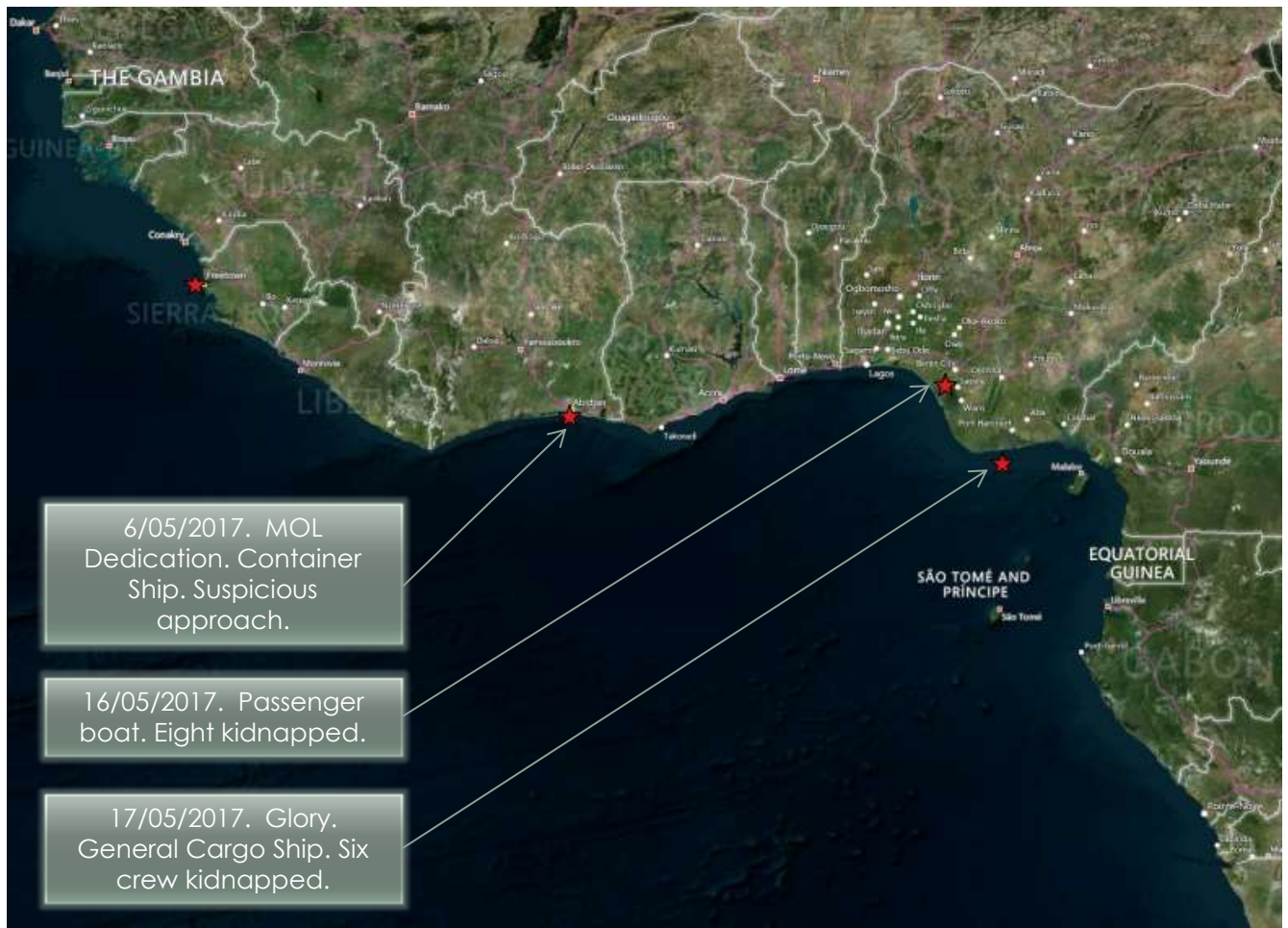
During a maritime information exchange vessel operators meeting (MIEVOM) held in Dubai on 18 May 2017 the Minister of Puntland, Saeed F Mohamed stated that authorities have the manpower based in six to seven locations around Puntland and Somalia to fight piracy, but they lack logistical support. He estimated that they require US\$1 million for ongoing operations.¹¹

Indian Subcontinent



Two men attempted to rob the Product Tanker, *Unique Developer* at Chittagong Anchorage, Bangladesh on 2 May 2017.¹²

West Africa



Three incidents of piracy and robbery of vessels were reported in the Gulf of Guinea in May 2017. A suspicious approach on a container ship was also reported at Abidjan Anchorage, Ivory Coast. Two kidnapping incidents occurred on a Cargo Vessel and a passenger boat in Nigeria. A robbery of a container ship was reported at Freetown Offroad Anchorage, Sierra Leone.

- ❑ **16 May 2017** – Four Itsekiri community leaders and four officials of Elcrest, a Nigerian Petroleum Development Company contracting firm were kidnapped from the passenger boat they were traveling in on the Benin River, Delta State, Nigeria. They claimed N36 million in ransom, the withdrawal of gunboats on the Benin River and their inclusion in the payroll of Elcrest and the NPDC as conditions of the release of the hostages.¹³
- ❑ **17 May 2017** – Six crew were kidnapped from the general cargo vessel, *Glory* approximately 21nm off the Nigerian coast.¹⁴
- ❑ According to Nigerian authorities troops intercepted a gang of kidnapers along the KM45-Awoba Waterway in Rivers State on 30 May 2017. They also raided a hideout of kidnapers on the Forupa-Lobia waterway, killing four. Several others managed to escaped. They left three boats behind.¹⁵

Americas



Five robberies of vessels were reported in South America in May 2017. Two robberies and one attempted robbery were reported in Venezuela. The robberies took place at Puerto La Cruz and Puerto Jose anchorages and the attempted robbery at Berth no 5, Pertigalete. A robbery on a container ship was reported at Callao, Anchorage, Peru and a fishing boat was attacked and robbed close to Tain, Guyana.

- ❑ **4 May 2017** – The container ship, *Kota Lukis* was boarded by five to six mask men armed with knives at Callao Anchorage, Peru. They attacked the able bodied (AB) seaman on duty and a one shore security watchman and tied them up. Mooring ropes, ship’s handheld radio and personal belongings were stolen.¹⁶
- ❑ **16 May 2017** – The fishing boat, *Varuni 4* was rammed by a smaller fishing boat in the vicinity of Tain, Guyana. Two masked men on the attacking boat ordered the crew to loosen the boat engine and place it onboard their boat. They cut the seine from the *MV Varuni 4* and set it adrift. Then they ordered the three fishermen to jump overboard. They hit the captain and son of the boat owner, Permaul over the head with a cutlass. He did not survive the incident. The two other fishermen were rescued by another fishing boat in the vicinity of Port Mourant. According to the boat owner his boat has been attacked on three previous occasions and the engines were taken during all these robberies. He also questioned the other two crew members version of events. The fishing boat was recovered at Rose Hall, Corentyne. Police arrested two suspects (aliases Rambo and Antenna) both from Rose Hall. At least one is known to the Permauli family. On 22 May 2017 the stolen engine was also recovered by Berbice police.¹⁷



Eight incidents were reported at Puerto La Cruz anchorages in Venezuela in the part year. Incidents were reported at Puerto Jose, Barcelona and Puerta La Cruz anchorages. Tankers were attacked in five cases. Attacks took place between 22:00LT and 4:30LT. Ship stores are stolen.

Venezuela is facing a economic, social and political crisis. The population is struggling with an acute shortage of food, medicine and basic needs.¹⁸ Crime is out of hand. Since April the Maduro government, which holds a high concentration of political power, is faced with daily protests.¹⁹ This instability spills over to the maritime domain where fishermen get involved in maritime robbery and piracy as well as smuggling activities.

End Notes

1. <https://gisis.imo.org/Public/PAR/Incident.aspx?Action=View&ID=7545> viewed 29/05/2017
2. <https://icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-report/details/169/1418> viewed 29/05/2017
3. <https://gisis.imo.org/Public/PAR/Incident.aspx?Action=View&ID=7552> viewed 31/05/2017
4. <https://icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-report/details/169/1423> viewed 29/05/2017
5. <https://gisis.imo.org/Public/PAR/Incident.aspx?Action=View&ID=7542> viewed 11/05/2017
6. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-05-24-afp-pirates-seize-iranian-fishing-boat-off-somalia/#.WSVgw9wIHRY> viewed 29/05/2017; UKMTO Weekly report 20-26 May 2017; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-piracy-idUSKBN18J292>
7. <http://www.tradewindsnews.com/tankers/1271127/pirates-fire-rpg-on-greek-tanker> viewed 31/05/2017
8. <http://www.voanews.com/a/chinese-navy-hands-over-notorious-pirate-leader/3839997.html> viewed 8/05/2017
9. <http://somaliamediamonitoring.org/may-17-2017-morning-headlines/> viewed 30/05/2017
10. <http://somaliamediamonitoring.org/may-17-2017-morning-headlines/> viewed 30/05/2017
11. Maritime Information Exchange Vessel Operators' Meeting (Mievom) Held On 18 May 2017 At The Dubai International Seafarers' Centre (Disc), Enclosure 1 to W/13/1.01/2017/May dated 27 May 17.
12. <https://icc-ccs.org/index.php/piracy-reporting-centre/live-piracy-report/details/169/1408> viewed 4/05/2017
13. <http://time.com/4810280/venezuela-caracas-protest-teenager/> viewed 8/06/2017
14. <https://gisis.imo.org/Public/PAR/Incident.aspx?Action=View&ID=7544> viewed 29/05/2017
15. <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2017/06/01/jtf-kills-pirates-destroys-kidnappers/> viewed 5/06/2017
16. [http://www.recaap.org/Portals/0/docs/Reports/Weekly/ReCAAP%20ISC%20Weekly%20Report%20\(2-8%20May%2017\).pdf](http://www.recaap.org/Portals/0/docs/Reports/Weekly/ReCAAP%20ISC%20Weekly%20Report%20(2-8%20May%2017).pdf)
17. <https://www.weekend-mirror> viewed 30/05/2017;
<http://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2017/05/24/fishermen-implicated-in-deadly-pirate-attack/> viewed 30/05/2017
18. <http://time.com/4810280/venezuela-caracas-protest-teenager/> viewed 8/06/2017
19. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36319877> viewed 8/06/2017