



## PIRACY REPORT OCTOBER 2017

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### Piracy and Acts of Armed Robbery of Ships

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## Analysis

- ❑ Nigeria, the Strait of Malacca and the Philippines currently have the highest concentration of incidents of piracy and robbery of vessels. Venezuela also recorded high incidents in 2017.
- ❑ 61 crew members and passengers of vessels were kidnapped on the coast of Nigeria during ten reported incidents from January to end of October 2017. Six crew members were kidnapped from the Container Vessel, *Demeter* in Nigeria in October 2017. Maritime kidnap risk off Nigeria is currently high and will remain so in the following months.
- ❑ The trial of the pirates involved in the *MT Maximus* hijacking in February 2016 began at the Federal High Court in Lagos on 10 October 2017.
- ❑ Sixteen crew members were kidnapped during four incidents in the Sulu and Celebes Seas off Malaysia and the Philippines from beginning of 2017 to end of October 2017. Five fishermen from the fishing vessel, *FB Danvil 8* were kidnapped in October 2017. The last successful kidnapping from a vessel was the kidnapping of two crew members from the tug, *Super Shuttle Tugboat 1* in March 2017. 57 crew members were abducted in the Philippines and Malaysia in 2016. Kidnapping incidents are down from 2016 mainly as a result of continued military operations against Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Sulu, Philippines and trilateral maritime patrols between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Crew should remain vigilant in this area.
- ❑ Although no hijackings were reported off Somalia and the Gulf of Aden in the last five months, crew should remain vigilant and implement *Best Management Practices* at all times. The risk of piracy will remain as long as the root causes for piracy exist in Somalia.
- ❑ Twelve 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 October 2017. An attempted robbery on the LPG tanker, *Nashwan* was reported at Puerto Jose Anchorage, Venezuela in October 2017.

## 2016 Incidents



## 2017 Incidents

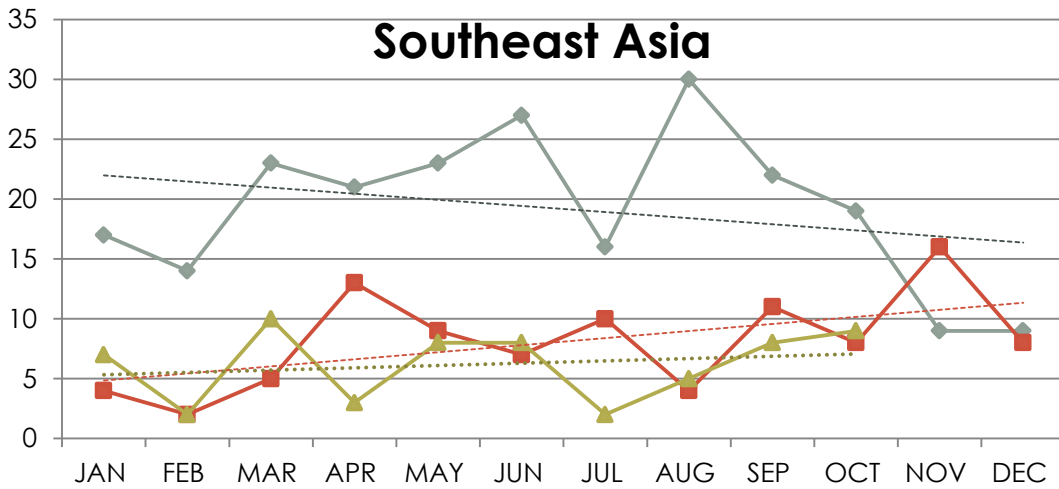


## October 2017 Incidents

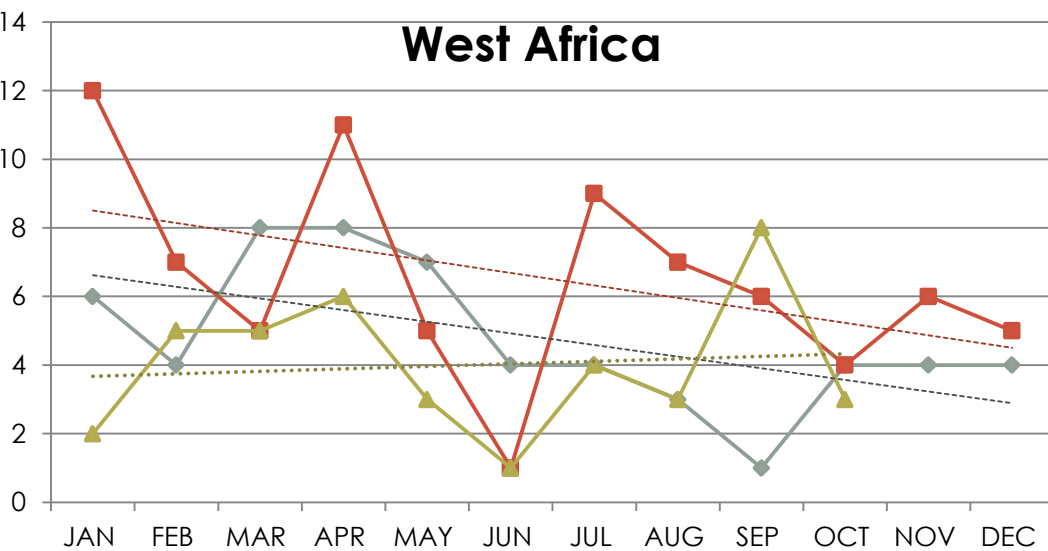


## Incidents of Piracy and Robbery of Vessels: 2015 to 2017

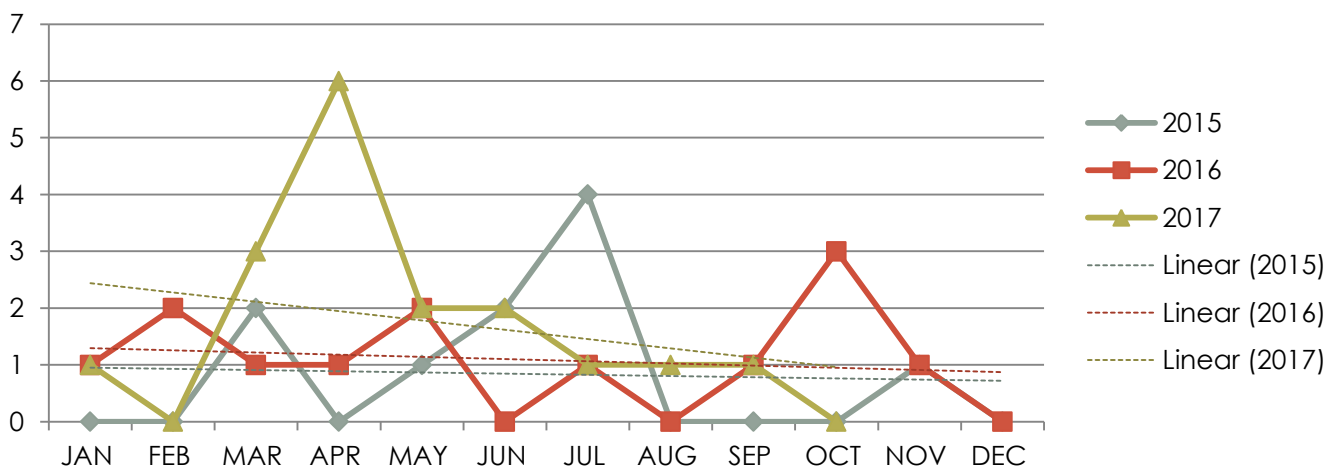
### Southeast Asia



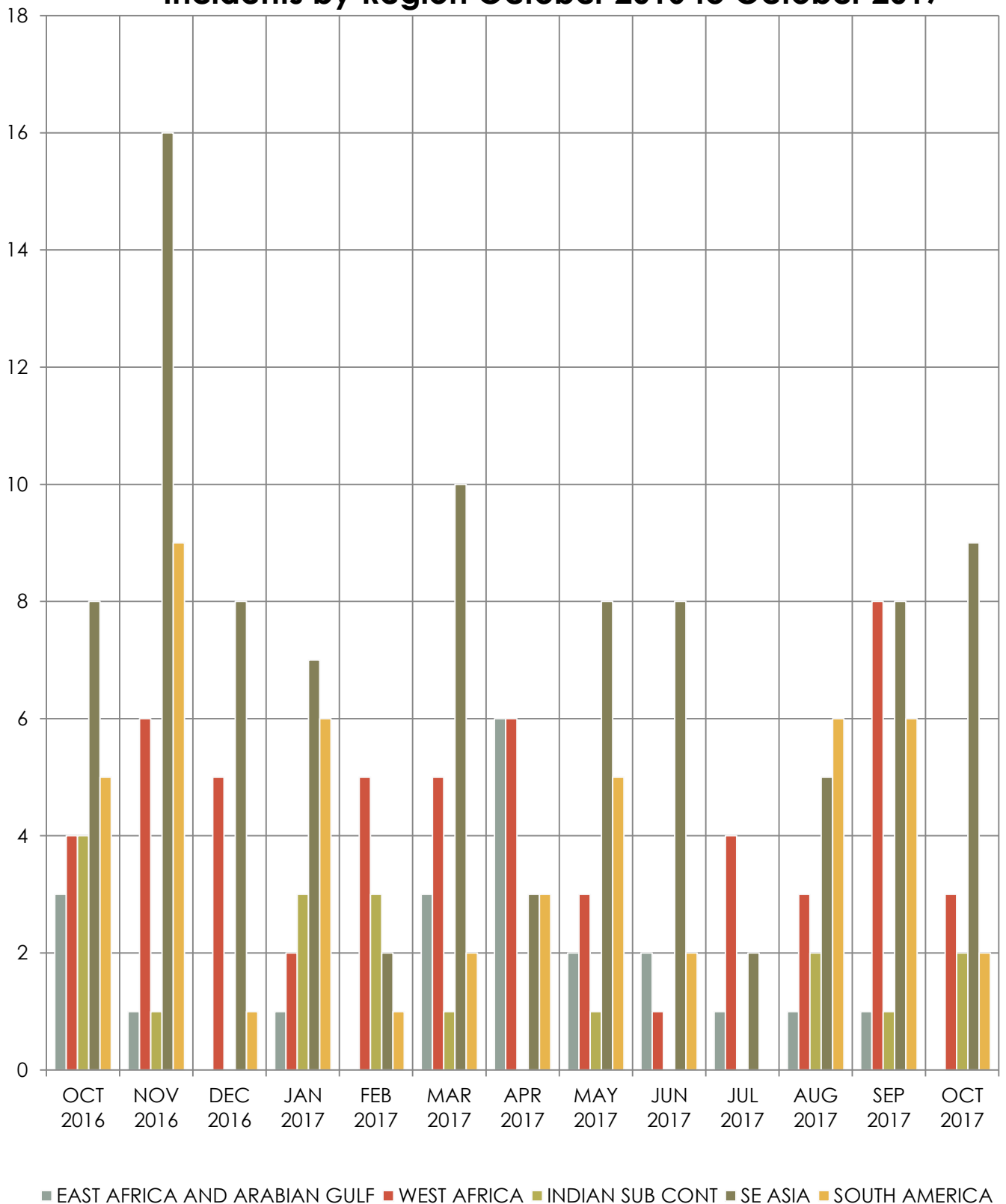
### West Africa



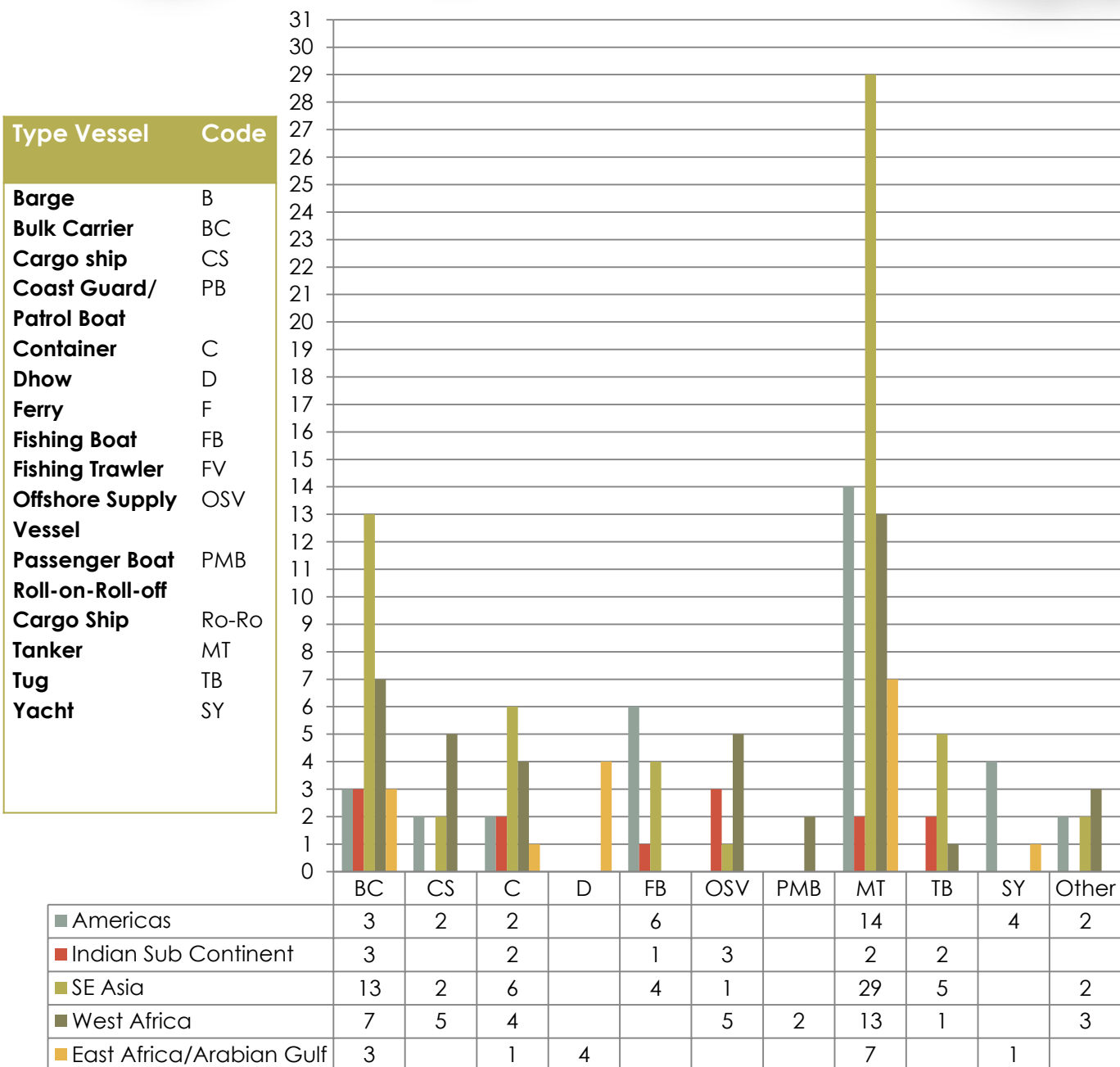
### East Africa, Red Sea & Gulf of Aden



## Incidents by Region October 2016 to October 2017



# Incidents 2017: Type of Ship Attacked



# Southeast Asia



Nine incidents of piracy and robbery of vessels and a suspicious approach were reported in Southeast Asia in October 2017. Five fishermen were kidnapped from a trawler in Sulu, Philippines. Three robberies, an attempted robbery and a suspicious approach were reported in the Singapore Straits and its approaches. Three robberies and an attempted robbery were reported at anchorages – one at Muara Berau Anchorage, Samarinda, Indonesia, a robbery and an attempted robbery at Cilacap Anchorage, Indonesia and one at Manila South Harbour Anchorage, Philippines.

## Kidnapping

**14 October 2017** – The two fishing trawlers *FB Danvil 2* and *FB Danvil 8* took shelter from bad weather at Port Poblacion, Pangutaran, Sulu, Philippines. At around 20:15LT armed men in two motorized pump boats approached and kidnapped five of the fishermen from the *FB Danvil 8*. The kidnapped crew members are Cipriano Sardido, Imo Fausto, Jonald Minalang, Joshua Ybañez and Vergel Arquino.<sup>1</sup>





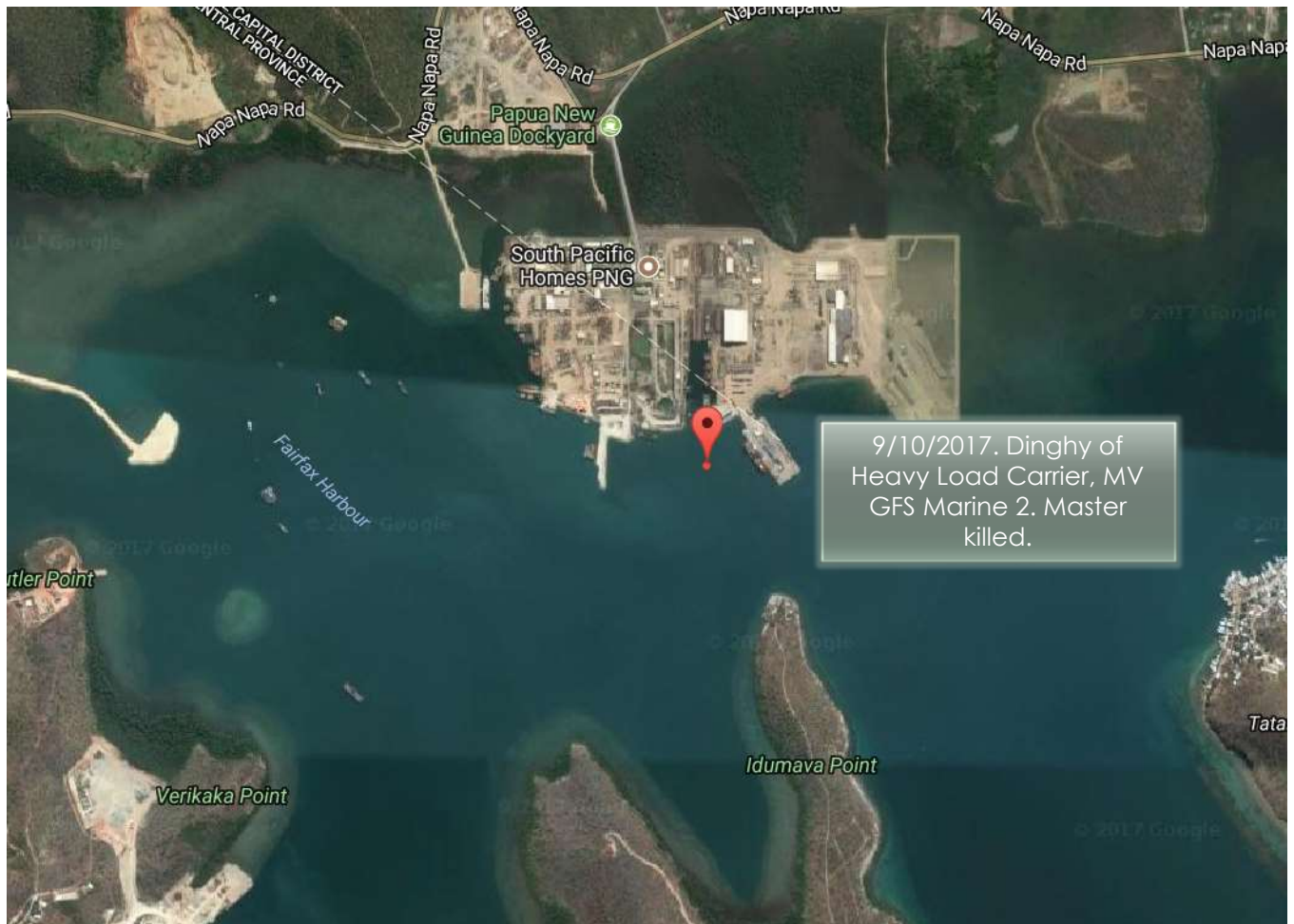
## Incidents October 2017: Singapore Straits

### Robberies of vessels in the Singapore Straits and Approaches

Five incidents were reported in the Singapore Straits and approaches. During four incidents vessels were underway when the boarding or suspicious approach occurred.

- ❑ **12 October 2017** – The unmanned rig, *Energy 1* undertow by the tug, *MMA Crystal* was boarded by five to six robbers in the Singapore Strait. They were underway from Bintan, Indonesia to Chittagong, Bangladesh. The master raised the alarm and the robbers escaped with a few ropes.<sup>2</sup>
- ❑ **17 October 2017** – The Bulk Carrier, *Jutta* was boarded by two robbers 8.9nm NW of Tanjung Sebong, Pulau Bintan, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) of the Singapore Strait. Engine spares were stolen.<sup>3</sup>
- ❑ **26 October 2017** – Three or four robbers in a small wooden boat came alongside the general cargo ship, *HR Endeavour* approximately 1.8nm NW of Pulau Cula, Indonesia. They moved away when spotted by the crew.<sup>4</sup>
- ❑ **28 October 2017** – The Chemical Tanker, *BW Myna* was boarded by five men armed with long knives while at anchor approximately 13nm NNE of Tanjung Berakit, Pulau Bintan, Indonesia. They escaped in a small boat when the alarm was raised. Nothing was stolen.<sup>5</sup>
- ❑ **30 October 2017** – Five robbers armed with knives boarded the Crude Oil tanker, *GP T2*, 6.5nm NE of Terumbu Betata, Batam Island, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the TSS of the Singapore Strait. Engine spares were stolen.<sup>6</sup>

# The Coral Sea



On 9 October 2017, the Heavy Load Carrier, *MV GFS Marine 2* was anchored at AES Anchorage off Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. At 13:00LT Captain Malachi Sijou and a few crew members took the dinghy to Motukea Shipyard. They were attacked by five robbers with knives while underway. The captain died as a result of the attack. The robbers stole the 30HP outboard motor. Two suspect from Tatana Village were arrested on 11 October 2017 in connection with the incident. The outboard motor was also recovered.<sup>7</sup>



# Indian Subcontinent



A robbery was reported at Kandla Anchorage India. An attempted boarding and a suspicious approach were also recorded off India and in the Arabian Sea.

- ❑ **5 October 2017** – The unmanned motor tanker, *Iron Mong* under tow by the tug, *Lady Sandra* was approached by the fishing boat *Makhdoom* 11nm south of Pipavav LT, India. Five to six robbers from the fishing boat tried to board the tanker. They managed to grab the grab line and the Norwegian buoy attached to the ETA (emergency towing arrangement) of *Iron Mong*. The robbers were unable to board due to anti-piracy measures initiated by the master and crew.<sup>8</sup>
- ❑ **19 October 2017** – While sailing 180nm SW off Porbander LT, India, two vessels followed the tanker, *Pacific Sky* at a distance of 50m. As it was dark nothing on the boats could be seen.<sup>9</sup>

# East Africa and the Arabian Sea



A suspicious approach was reported in the Gulf of Aden and an Iranian fishing dhow was detained off Socotra Island. The last incident is not related to piracy.

## Suspicious Approach. MV Jag Amar

- ❑ At 10:00LT on 6 October 2017 two white skiffs approached the Indian flagged *MV Jag Amar*, a cargo vessel to a distance of 1.2nm. The cargo ship mustered and initiated evasive manoeuvres. The skiffs turned away. Ladders were allegedly sighted on the skiffs.<sup>10</sup>
- ❑ At 12:30LT the Indian Navy intercepted a dhow with 12 suspects onboard. One AK-47 with 27 rounds were recovered. It was also reported that a grapnel and ladders have been recovered.<sup>11</sup> It seems that the dhow and the crew were later released by the navy.



Intercepted dhow. Source Twitter @indiannavy



### Iranian Dhow

- ❑ On 15 October 2017 the Iranian Press reported that an Iranian fishing boat captain reported that his boat had broken down and that two fast boats were approaching. They had 20 crew onboard. Communication was lost at that point.<sup>12</sup>
- ❑ On 21 October the Yemeni Ministry of the Interior reported that fishermen on the Island of Abd Al-Kuri south of Socotra Island, Yemen detained an Iranian smuggling ship with a crew of 19 off Hadiboh, Socotra. They reported that an investigation is underway on the details of the cargo and the origins of the supply. No further mention of the incident was made in the following days.<sup>13</sup>

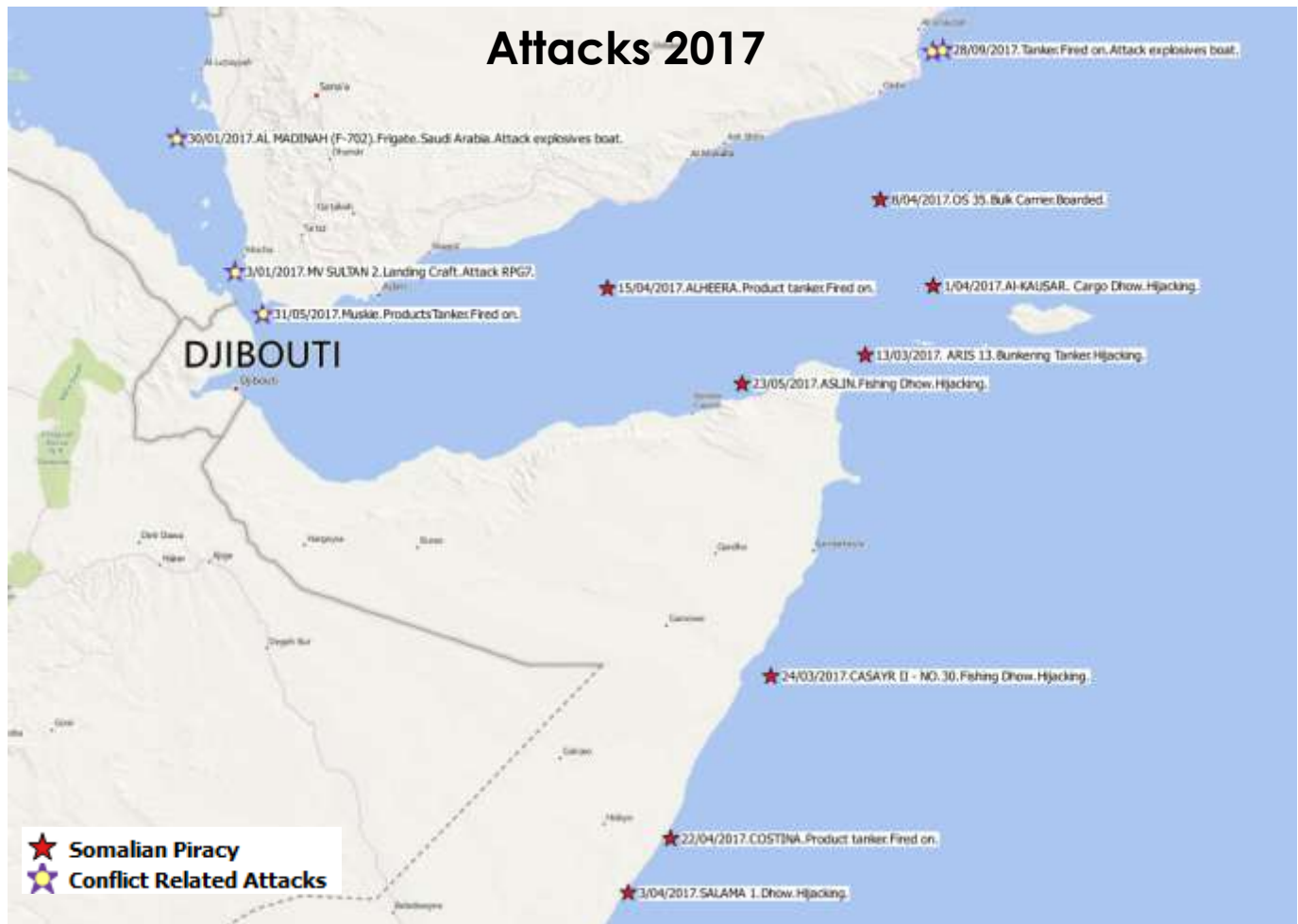


USS Howard's boarding team approaching dhow.  
Source: <https://news.usni.org>



- ❑ It was reported that the *USS Howard* and Japanese destroyer *JS Amagiri* rescued the crew of an Iranian fishing dhow on 24 October 2017 that came under pirate attack south of Socotra. This came in reaction to an Iranian coast guard distress call on 14 October of an Iranian fishing dhow under pirate attack. No details of the incident was given, but the *USS Howard's* boarding team assisted the crew with food and water, made repairs and gave medical aid to three injured crew.<sup>14</sup>

**Analysis:** Although this was reported as three separate incidents there seems to be a common thread and it is likely that this is the same incident reported from different sides of the political spectrum. It is unlikely that the incident is piracy related and it is most likely linked to the conflict in Yemen.



The root causes for piracy off Somalia - the socio economic situation and political instability in Somalia - still exist today. The threat is offset by the improvement of local security and the development of marine forces; capacity building by several international role-players; and a changing attitude of elders and local authorities not willing to let their territories serve as a safe base for pirates keeping hostages anymore. The prosecution of pirates and the building of a legal capability in Somalia also had a positive effect on piracy prevention. Although there is still room for improvement.

Several organizations such as the Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNODC, Oceans beyond Piracy, EUCAP Somalia and INTERPOL support Somalian law enforcement at the ports of Berbera, Bosasso and Mogadishu with construction, communication improvement, maritime equipment, training and maintenance. One of these projects was the construction of the Bosasso Port Police Headquarters.<sup>15</sup>

On the sea side the presence of foreign navies; the successful arrests of pirates by these navies as well as onboard security measures such as *Best Management Practises* and private security teams made a invaluable contribution in keeping piracy in check. It is also important that these entities remain.

The arrest of pirates in the attempted hijacking of the bulk carrier, OS 35 on 8 April 2017 by the Chinese Navy<sup>16</sup> had an positive effect on the piracy risk–reward spectrum in 2017. As pirate groups are opportunistic and key players of these pirate networks are still active in other criminal activities such as weapon smuggling, the potential for pirate attacks remain. Piracy will resurge if any factor in this situation changes.

Dhows and vessels operating close to the Somali coast were at high risk in 2017. Of the four recorded successful hijackings in 2017, three were on dhows. A further three unconfirmed hijackings of dhows were also recorded. None of the confirmed hijackings led to any ransom demands being paid, but reports indicated that the unconfirmed hijacking of two Yemeni fishing boats in February 2017 led to payment of a relative low ransom amount. Only one commercial vessel a tanker, *Aris 13* was hijacked in 2017 on 13 March 2017 close to the Somali coast.<sup>17</sup> The Puntland Marine Force cut access of supplies to the vessel. Sources also reported that the pirates received a hostile reception from local elders in Puntland. The ship was released without any ransom payment.

Hijackings of dhows continued when hijackings on commercial vessels ceased in 2012. It is most likely also underreported at times. In 2014 two hijackings of dhows were reported and four in 2015. The remaining eight crew of the Iranian fishing vessel, *Siraj* hijacked off Ceel Huur on 23 March 2015 still remain in pirate custody in Somalia today.<sup>18</sup>

Several suspicious approaches were reported in 2017. It is not clear why, keeping the Somali piracy business model in mind, pirate financiers will keep financing pirate operations without any return on their investment. With a high volume of unprotected vessels there is a lack of aggressive attacks on vessels with some vessels reporting being approached on more than a nautical mile. If the intent was hijacking we should have seen more aggressive boarding attempts on unprotected vessels.

On the other hand several sightings of ladders are reported. It stand to reason what possible other use ladders can have than the boarding of vessels with a high freeboard.

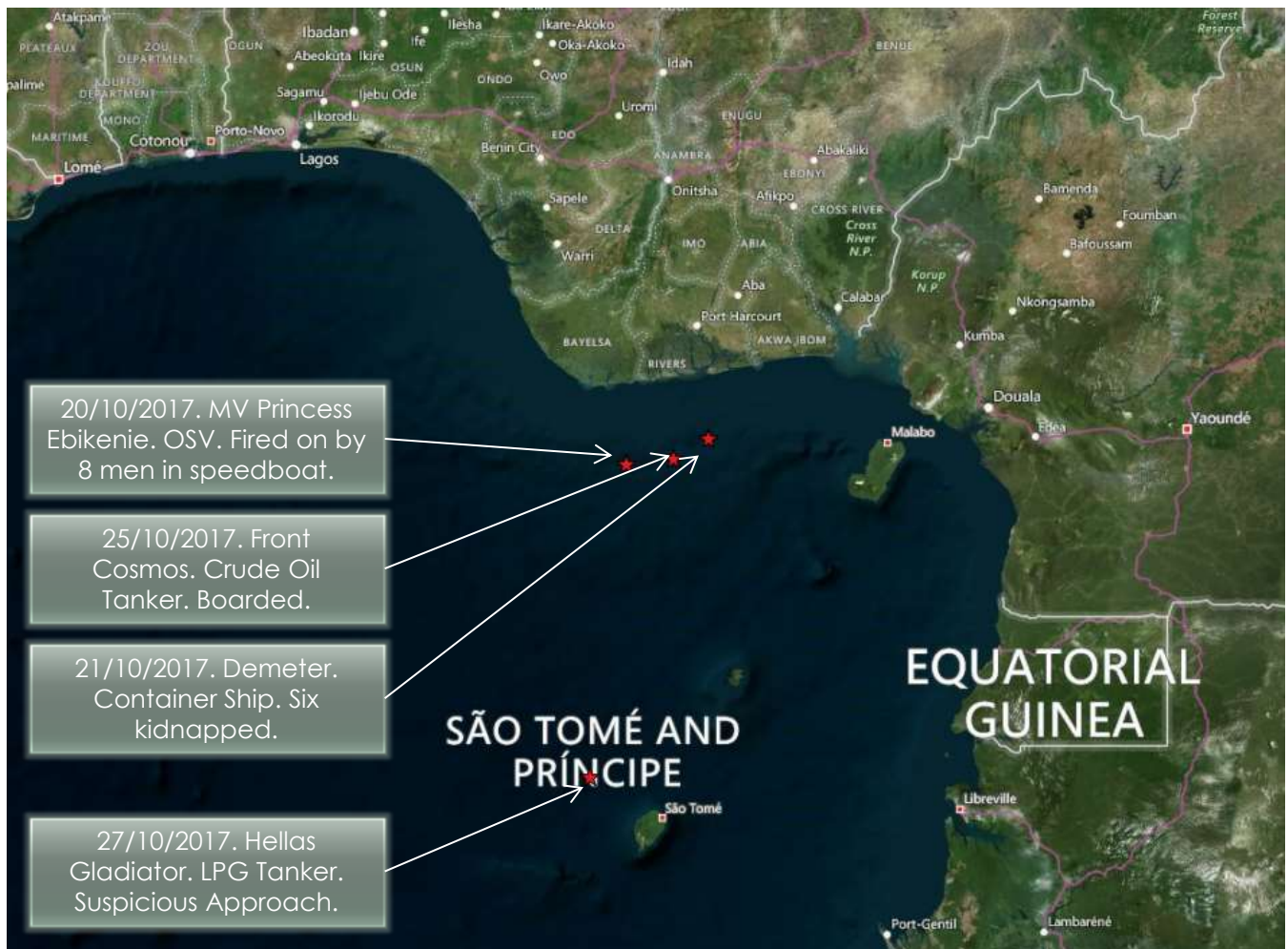
With regard to the Yemeni conflict it seems that ships with a military profile or with a sailing pattern associated with logistical support to either party in the conflict are more likely to be targeted. Vessels loitering around strategic located islands in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea can be seen as suspicious and targeted by forces occupying the islands. Although there is no direct threat to passing commercial traffic in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and off the Yemeni coast by parties in the conflict, coincidental attacks are possible and have been reported in 2017.

## West Africa

Three piracy incidents were reported off Nigeria and one suspicious approach off Sao Tome and Principe. One incident off Nigeria resulted in the kidnapping of six crew members.

- ❑ **20 October 2017** – The OSV, *MV Princess Ebikenie* was attacked by eight men in a black speedboat approximately 50nm south of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The speedboat approached at 25 to 27 knots and fired on the vessel. The onboard Navy team returned fire. The boat moved away after 25 minutes.<sup>19</sup> The same vessel was attacked in the same vicinity on 26 September 2017. The attackers fired on the vessel with AK 47s during that attack. The attackers moved away when they could not breach the security measures.<sup>20</sup>





- ❑ **21 October 2017** – Eight armed men in speedboats attacked the Container Vessel, *Demeter*, 40nm south of Bonny, Nigeria. They kidnapped six crew members.<sup>21</sup>
- ❑ **25 October 2017** – The Crude oil tanker, *Front Cosmos* was boarded by armed men from a speed boat while underway 51nm SSW of Bonny, Nigeria. The crew retreated to the citadel. They contacted the owners of the vessel. The owners informed the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre which contacted the Nigerian Navy. The navy dispatched a warship to assist the vessel. The pirates had left when the navy arrived.<sup>22</sup>
- ❑ **27 October 2017** – The LPG tanker, *Hellas Gladiator* was approached by five speed boats while underway 35nm NW of Sao Tome & Principe Coast. The alarm was raised, the crew mustered and evasive manoeuvres was initiated. Due to this actions and bad weather the speed boats moved away.

## MT Maximus Hijacking

The trial of the pirates involved in the *MT Maximus* hijacking proceeded at the Federal High Court in Lagos on 10 October 2017. The defendants are Umarama Ovuiro (aka Capt Mike Ogboroma), Adesola Peter (aka Marcus Adesoji), Collins Harrison (aka Collins Friday), Paul Adeyemi, Adedeji Joshua (aka Ayo Joshua), Samuel Oluwafemi and Abdulrahman Kabir (aka Tunde). They are charged of the offence of conspiracy, dealing in petroleum products without authority and transferring it to another vessel according to sections 1 (17), 3 (6) of the Miscellaneous Offences Act 2004 and Section 15 of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2011, as well as the unlawful possession of firearms under sections 3 and 8 punishable under Section 27 (1) (a) of the Firearms Act of 2004. The defendants pleaded not guilty.<sup>23</sup>

On 11 February 2016 *MT Maximus* was hijacked off Abidjan, Ivory Coast. After ten days the vessel was intercepted by the Nigerian Navy in Sao Tome. The Nigerian Navy arrested six pirates. Satellite phone communications as well as the pirate vessel *Dejikon* let back to Charles Ekpemefumor. He was declared wanted. The owner of the *Dejikon*, Mustapha Gani, was arrested on the Same border in June 2016.

## South America



An attempted robbery was reported at Puerto Jose Anchorage, Venezuela and a robbery at Cartagena Inner Anchorage, Colombia.

## End Notes

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