









# Solace Global Maritime Summary

HIGH RISK AREA



MARITIME 	PIRACY 	ARMED CONFLICT 	TERRORISM 
HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH



DATE	MARITIME INCIDENTS IN HIGH RISK AREA AND EAST AFRICA
01 August 18	<b>Iranian Navy Exercises in the Straits of Hormuz.</b> The Iranian Navy, and maritime elements of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps conducted mass exercises demonstrating their capability to seal the Straits of Hormuz against international shipping. The likelihood of them conducting such an attack unprovoked remains unlikely, however regional tensions remain high.
02 August 12	<b>Mass Casualties in Al Hudaydah Airstrikes.</b> At least 60 civilians were killed by a Saudi-coalition airstrike in Houthi-held Al Hudaydah. There is a realistic probability that the Houthi will seek to target Saudi or coalition vessels in response to the attack.
04 August 18	<b>Saudi Arabia Renews Oil Shipments through Bab-el-Mandeb.</b> The Saudi state oil company, Aramco, announced



MARITIME SUMMARY • AUGUST 2018

	that it would resume oil shipments through the Bab-el-Mandeb after it suspended such shipments on 25 July. The initial suspension resulted from attacks against its vessels by Yemen’s Houthi rebel group.
<b>12 August 18</b>	<b>Mogadishu Port to Commence 24-hour Operation.</b> Somali authorities announced that Mogadishu port would commence 24-hour operations as part of an effort to compete against other regional hubs.
<b>August 18</b>	<b>Yemeni Government Issued Warning to Fishermen.</b> The Yemeni government issued a warning to fishermen operating in their waters advising to avoid approaching coalition warships. The warning followed Houthi threats to conduct further attacks against coalitions shipping, making it likely that warships would resort to force more rapidly when confronted by suspicious small craft.

August 2018 saw no significant attacks, however a number of notable developments occurred which are likely to impact the maritime domain.

The war in Yemen continued to make its effects felt, although no direct attacks against shipping were recorded. The internationally recognised (and Saudi-backed) Yemeni government issued a warning to fishermen regarding their behaviour in the vicinity of warships. The warning appears intended to reduce the risk of a warship mistaking fishermen for Houthi rebels seeking to conduct attacks. Small boats filled with explosives have been one of the group’s primary maritime weapons, and fishermen in the region have been known to aggressively manoeuvre near large vessels to defend their nets. In combination there was, and remains, a significant threat of warships opening fire upon otherwise harmless fishing vessels due to mistaken intent. Although this highlights a general maritime threat, it does not represent the development of an additional threat to commercial shipping.

Additionally, the Saudi state oil company, ARAMCO, recommenced shipments through the Bab-el-Mandeb. It is unclear what led to this decision, however it is likely based on a revised risk assessment concerning the threat posed to their vessels by the Houthi rebels. Considering the ongoing offensive operation in Al Hudaydah, it remains likely that the Houthi will maintain the intent to attack Saudi targets, although their capabilities may have become significantly degraded. This decision may be accompanied by an increase Saudi-coalition naval presence in the Bab-el-Mandeb and the southern Red Sea in order to provide additional security.

Somali authorities announced that Mogadishu port would commence 24/7 operation from August. This decision appears to have been made in response to the thawing of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which is likely to attract trade and investment to ports further north. By expanding Mogadishu’s port operations, it may increase its competitiveness despite the development of regional rivals. The change does not appear to be based upon a significant improvement in the security environment of the city, or Somalia as a whole. While there have been no significant attacks against the port since 2016, insurgents and organised criminal groups remain endemic throughout the city, with targeted killings or attacks against government personnel a constant menace. More widely, consistently poor living conditions throughout the country means that piracy remains a threat against unprotected vessels.





The Iranian Navy, and maritime elements of the Iranian Republican Guard Corps (IRGC), conducted an exercise simulating an operation to close the Straits of Hormuz. This exercise falls in line with previous threats made against the Iran’s regional and international rivals and may be seen as a response the US resuming sanctions. It remains unlikely that such an operation will be mounted in anger without the commencement of open war in the region.



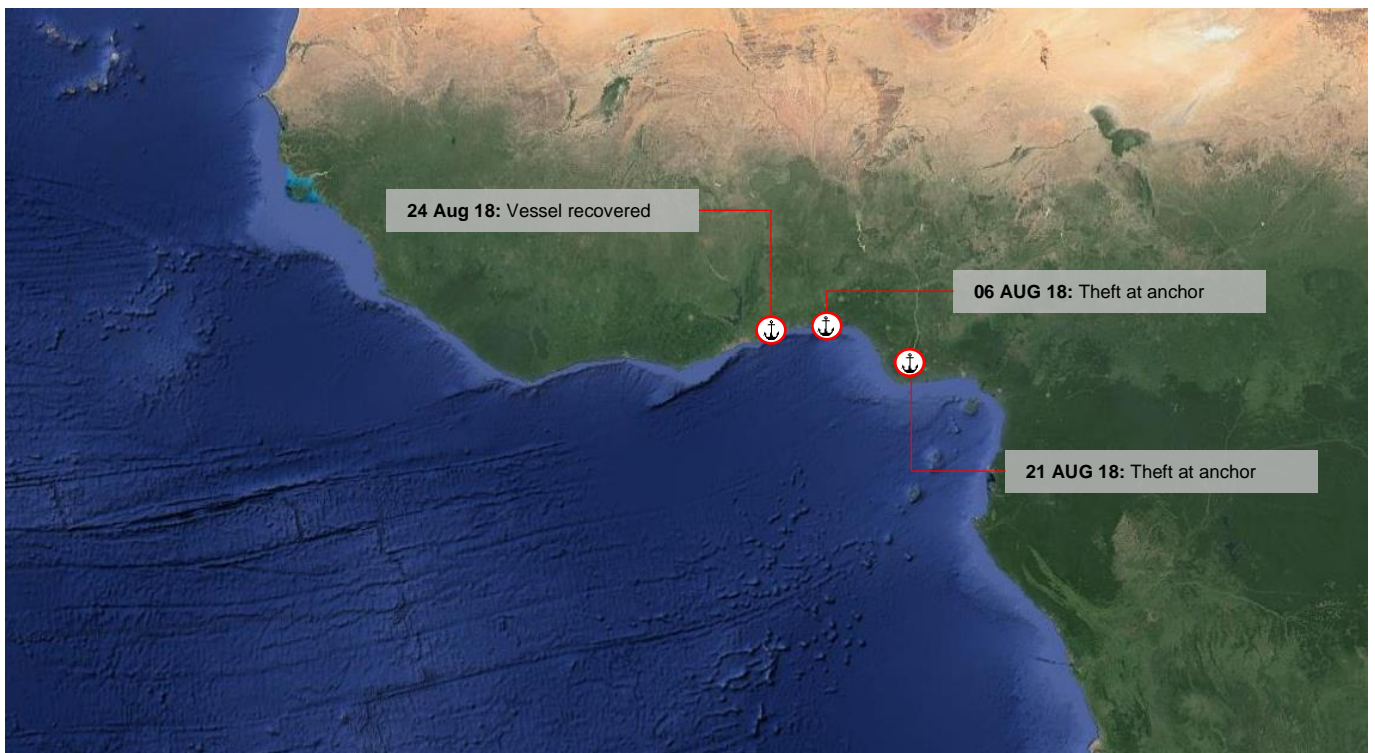
MARITIME SUMMARY • AUGUST 2018

GULF OF GUINEA AND WEST COAST OF AFRICA



MARITIME 	PIRACY 	ARMED CONFLICT 	TERRORISM 
HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH

DATE	MARITIME INCIDENTS IN GULF OF GUINEA AND WEST AFRICA
01 August 18	<b>NNRC Report Detailed Extent of Crude Theft.</b> The Nigerian National Resource Charter issued a report highlighting that crude oil thefts from the Delta region exceeded the value of the state's combined health and education budgets.
06 August 18	<b>Vessel Boarded in Apapa, Nigeria.</b> A lone robber boarded a vessel berthed in Apapa Port, Lagos, Nigeria. A duty crewman attempted to intervene with the attacker, however he was assaulted before the attacker fled.
14 August 18	<b><i>Pantelena</i> Reported Missing near Libreville.</b> The Merchant Vessel <i>Pantelena</i> lost communications with its owner on 14 August, in vicinity of Libreville. The vessel was later spotted near Pointe Noire, Congo, before berthing with all crew safe in Lome, Togo on 24 August. The vessel was held by pirates during the 10 day period. It remains unclear what led to their release.
21 August 18	<b>Theft from Vessel in Onne Anchorage, Nigeria.</b> A merchant vessel at 04°40'N 007°09'E was boarded by four armed men who stole a number of oil cans before escaping. No effort was made to enter the ship.





## MARITIME SUMMARY • AUGUST 2018

## SITUATIONAL SUMMARY

August saw a number of incidents off West Africa, most notably the hijacking of the *Pantelena*, as well as thefts from anchor, and the release of a report highlighting the extent of Nigerian oil thefts.

The *Pantelena's* owners reported their loss of contact with the vessel on 14 August, with the vessel's last known location reported as being near Libreville, Gabon. Unconfirmed reports suggested that some vessels in the area had received incomplete mayday transmissions, however no response was mounted. The vessel was then potentially spotted of Pointe Noire, Congo, before berthing in Lome, Togo, with all crew safe on 24 August. Interviews with the crew upon their arrival in Lome confirmed that the vessel had been held by pirates for the 10-day period, however no information has been made public regarding how their release was secured. Considering the lack of available information, the key consideration for seafarers in the region should be to maintain a rigorous 24/7 watch and undertake all practical vessel-hardening measures.

The two attacks against anchored vessels in Nigeria continue to follow established trends, that is opportunistic theft against easily portable items. The case in Apapa is more noteworthy due to the assault on a crewmember, however this occurred only when the crewman sought to intervene and was not the result of premeditated violence. It remains the case that attackers generally seek to flee when challenged. As such, the most effective countermeasure is likely to be a 24hr watch, and a method of making it clear to attackers that they have been spotted without physical intervention. This may effectively deter opportunistic thieves before they attempt to board.

A report released by the Nigerian National Resource Charter highlighted the extent of crude oil thefts in the Delta region. By their estimates, the value of stolen oil in 2016 and 2017 exceeded the value of the state's combined health and education budgets by a factor of 12. Whilst the security situation in the Delta has improved notably, the value of thefts is likely to remain at incredibly high levels, with organised criminal groups operating significant infrastructure to support their operations. This wider study of oil losses demonstrates that criminal activity on the ground significantly exceeds the reported instances of theft against vessels in the region, however the lack of reliable incident reporting makes building a complete and up-to-date picture challenging. The report suggests that most thefts are likely to target land-based infrastructure, rather than tankers. The threat against vessels may increase in future if the market value of crude rises significantly, to justifying the risk to the attackers.

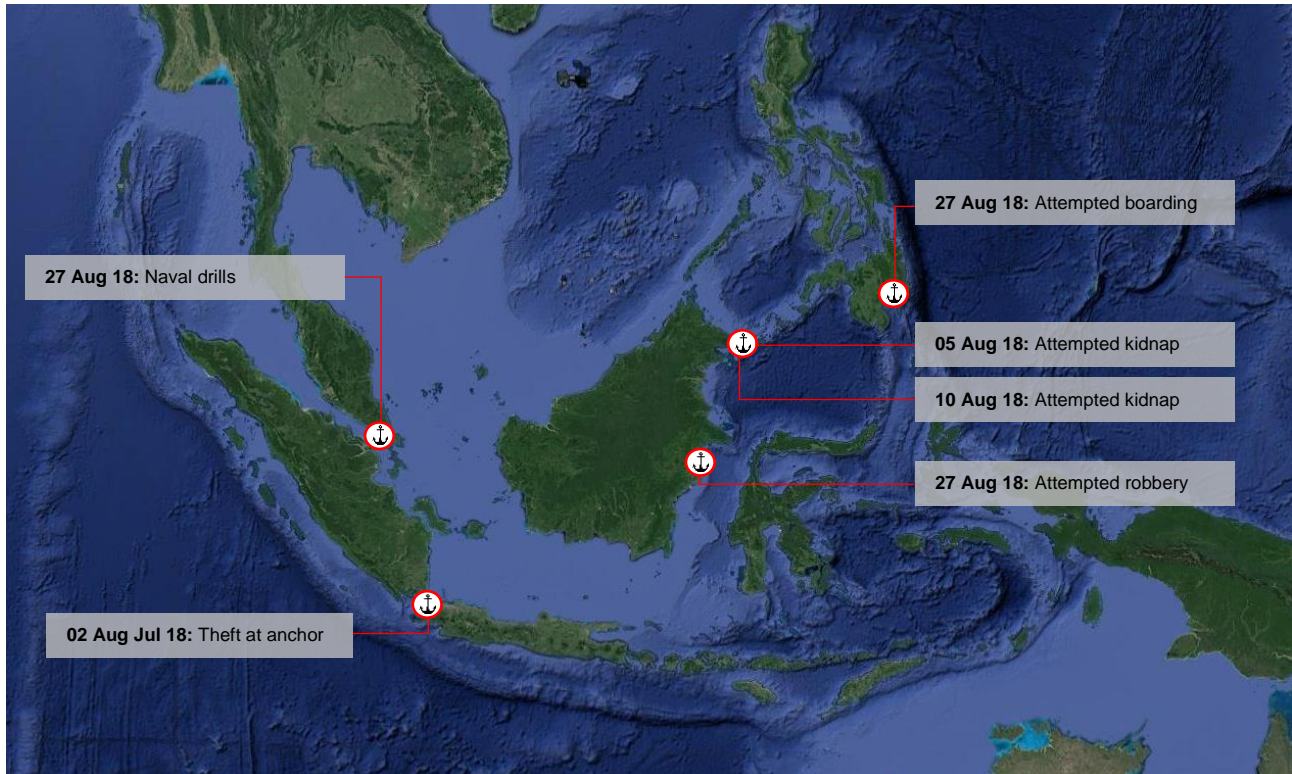


MARITIME SUMMARY • AUGUST 2018

SOUTH EAST ASIA



MARITIME	PIRACY	ARMED CONFLICT	TERRORISM
HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	HIGH





MARITIME SUMMARY • AUGUST 2018

DATE	MARITIME INCIDENTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA
02 August 18	<b>Abu Sayyaf Insurgents Surrender in Sulu, Philippines.</b> Up to eleven members of the Abu Sayyaf Islamist terror group surrendered to security forces in the Sulu area of the Philippines.
02 August 18	<b>Vessel Boarded in Tanjung Priok Anchorage, Indonesia.</b> Thieves boarded a vessel anchored at Tanjung Priok, near Jakarta, Indonesia. The thieves escaped with ships spares undetected, the stolen items were noted later during routine rounds.
02 August 18	<b>Vessel Boarded off Kutubdia, Bangladesh.</b> An anchored tanker in Kutubdia anchorage was boarded by robbers using a rope and hook. They escaped with ship's stores and property.
04 August 18	<b>Additional US Funding Announced.</b> US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, announced an additional \$300 million of funding towards maritime security cooperation and humanitarian support across ASEAN states.
05 August 18	<b>Attempted Kidnapping of Sabah, Malaysia.</b> Armed men aboard a small boat approached a fishing vessel off the coast of Felda Sahabat, Malaysia. Malaysian maritime police were notified and pursued the attackers, resulting in a firefight which killed four of the attackers. The group's motive was determined to be kidnap for ransom.
10 August 18	<b>Vessel Boarded near Sager Light, India.</b> Up to 12 robbers in a small boat came along side an anchored vessel near Sager Light. Two of the attackers boarded the ship, however they were compelled to flee empty handed when spotted by crew.
10 August 18	<b>Tug Boarded of Tambisan Island, Malaysia.</b> Attackers aboard a speedboat approached and boarded a tug underway and towing a barge off Tambisan Island, Sabah, Malaysia. The crew locked all access to their vessel's accommodation and contacted the local authorities. These measures prevented the attackers from access to the crew until they were forced to withdraw by the arrival of a patrol vessel.
16 August 18	<b>Theft at Anchor, Chittagong, Bangladesh.</b> Four robbers boarded a containership at 22°03'N 091°44'E. They escaped with a 70m mooring rope. The theft was noted during routine rounds.
20 August 18	<b>Impounded Vessels Sunk in Indonesia.</b> 125 vessels impounded for participating in illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing were sunk by Indonesia authorities at 11 locations around the country. The vast majority of these vessels were foreign flagged, and the sinkings were only announced afterwards in an effort to minimise the political repercussions. Further efforts to impose effective control of Indonesian waters are highly likely.
27 August 18	<b>US-ASEAN Naval Drills, Singapore.</b> Multilateral naval and marine drills involving personnel and assets from the USA and ASEAN nations began in Singapore. The exercise focused on enhancing small boat skills, interoperability, and Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) operations.
27 August 18	<b>Attempted Boarding, Muara Berau, Indonesia.</b> Two robbers attempted to board a bulk carrier at 00°15'S 117°41'E. The crew mustered, forcing them to flee empty handed.
27 August 18	<b>Attempted Boarding, Insular Oil, Indonesia.</b> Four robbers attempted to board a tanker berthed at 03°06'S 125°39'E. They detected the robbers, mustered, and forced them to flee.



## MARITIME SUMMARY • AUGUST 2018

## SITUATIONAL SUMMARY

Through August 2018, the primary threat to commercial traffic in South East Asia remained theft from vessels at anchor, however two incidents near Sabah highlight that kidnap remains a consideration, particularly on small, low, and slow vessels. At an international level, the United States has continued to actively support nations throughout the region, with financial and military support for maritime security exhibited throughout the month.

Two attacks, both apparently attempted kidnappings, occurred off the coast of Malaysia's Sabah, in the Sulu sea. In both cases, the vessels attacked were relatively small, a fishing boat on 05 August, and a tug boat on 10 August. During the 05 August incident the targeted vessel fled from attackers, permitting enough time for a Malaysian police vessel to respond. The police then pursued and engaged the attackers, which resulted in four fatalities among the pirates. The 10 August attack was defeated by the tug's crew securing themselves within the vessel's accommodation whilst, again, maritime police responded to the incident, forcing the attackers to flee. Reporting from the 05 August incident does not make it clear whether surviving members of the attacking group successfully fled, and therefore it remains unclear if a single group was responsible for both attacks. What is apparent, however, is that since the 10 August attackers were not reported to have been detained, at least one pirate action group continues to operate in the Sulu Sea off Sabah. Further attacks against small, low, and slow vessels are highly likely.

As in previous months, robbery at anchor has accounted for the majority of reported incidents throughout South East Asia, and the attack methodologies have not deviated from established trends. Thieves continue to depend upon stealth to close with, board, and steal from vessels; the thefts continue to target vessels' stores and spares, typically those stowed furthest from the crew. August has seen no reported incidents of violent robberies, and it remains likely that attackers would only use violence if surprised at close quarters, long-term reporting indicates they generally flee once detected.

Wider regional issues have continued to make themselves felt across the region's maritime environment. The movement towards further autonomy in Mindanao area of the Southern Philippines is likely to lead to a short-term deterioration in the security environment, and may have been a driving factor in the two attempted kidnaps reported through August. The government's decision to implement local autonomy is likely to significantly reduce public support for insurgent groups operating in the region. In response to a reduction their support, such groups may seek to conduct further piracy attacks in an effort to maintain themselves. However, as demonstrated by the surrender of a number of insurgents in early August, the loss of popular support for insurgent groups is likely to lead to them losing significant portions of their manpower. Along with the loss of funding, an overall improvement in the security environment is likely in the longer term.

International tensions, particularly between China and its maritime neighbours have also made themselves felt throughout the month. The US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, visited several states early in August, with a promise of further US funding for Asian maritime security a key pledge of his trip. It is likely that funding will be directed towards coastguard-type activities intended to strengthen ASEAN state's capabilities to physically support their territorial claims in the South China Sea. Additional funding and capabilities, however, are likely to be utilised more widely through the area, particularly where a risk of piracy or maritime criminality is more prevalent. The US also supported a multinational naval exercise out of Singapore, with an emphasis on visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) operations. Such skills are widely applicable across a variety of naval functions, however counter piracy and efforts to effectively impose sanctions upon North Korea are areas where such training would be particularly valuable.



Solace Global remains available to provide the full range of Maritime Security and Travel Risk Management Solutions.

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