

Covering period 11 - 17 Jul 2015



The release of a group of Somali pirates from Kenyan prisons has sparked concerns about where they are likely to go next

Fourteen of the 164 Somali pirates currently serving time in Kenya prisons are to be released and repatriated next month. They follow 64 others recently sent back to Somalia.



Top Story This Week...

Egypt's Islamic State affiliate said on Thursday it fired a rocket at an Egyptian naval vessel in the Mediterranean Sea near the coast of Israel and the Gaza Strip.



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IN an effort to address the reported cases of militancy and sea pirates attacks in the South-South region, the Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG), Zone 6 Command, Mr. Tunde Ogunsakin, in collaboration with three states, the Navy, Airforce and Department of State Security (DSS) is to set up a special taskforce to combat this scourge - [The Guardian Nigeria](#)

Meanwhile, the Flag Officer Commanding (FOC) Eastern Naval Command, Rear Admiral Henry Babalola, has declared the Gulf Guinea safe for business.

To achieve this, the AIG at the weekend in Calabar hosted three deputy governors and security chiefs within his jurisdiction to plan the new strategy.

Present at the meeting were the deputy governors of Akwa Ibom State, Mr. Moses Ekpo; Cross River, Prof. Ivara Esu and a representative of the Rivers State deputy governor, Mrs. Ipalibo Harry-Banigo. Also in attendance were the three commissioners of police in the states, representatives of DSS, Navy and the Airforce.

It is recalled that recently unknown militants attacked the police marine base in Calabar carting away arms and ammunition before they were repelled. Ogunsakin, who used the forum to demand logistics support from the police high command, said the meeting aims at forming a zonal taskforce to combat militant attacks on persons and government facilities along the waterways.

He said, "there is the need for the establishment of the zonal joint taskforce as a crack squad to effectively combat the menace of maritime piracy and other violent crimes along the waterways."

President Muhammadu Buhari has sacked his military high command including the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Alex Badeh, sources with knowledge of the development told The Will on Monday morning - [The Will Nigeria](#).

The National Security Adviser (NSA), retired Colonel Sambo Dasuki, was not relieved of his post and will continue in his position, the sources said.

The Will gathered that the President this morning placed calls to all the military chiefs informing them of their removal and thanked them for their service to the nation.

The military chiefs are: Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Kenneth Minimah; Chief of Air Staff, Vice Marshall Adesola Amosu; and Chief of Naval Staff, Rear admiral Usman Jibrin.

Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari has appointed new army, navy and air force chiefs, replacing the ones he sacked earlier this afternoon [BBC News](#).

Both the new head of the army Maj-Gen TY Buratai, and national security adviser, Maj Gen Babagana Monguno, hail from Borno state - the epicentre of Boko Haram insurgency.

A statement for the president's office said the new military chiefs will hold their appointments in an acting capacity until confirmed by the Senate.

- Maj Gen Abayomi Gabriel Olonishakin - chief of defence Staff
- Maj Gen TY Buratai - chief of army staff
- Rear Adm Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas - chief of naval staff
- AVM Sadique Abubakar - chief of air staff
- AVM Monday Riku morgan - chief of defence intelligence
- Maj Gen Babagana Monguno (retired) - national security adviser



The Nigeria Navy has arrested one of the suspected kingpins involved in oil theft or bunkering along the creeks of the oil producing territory of Akwa Ibom State - [AllAfrica](#).

Although the identity of the suspect was not disclosed, the Commander of NNS Jubilee, Ikot Abasi local government area of Akwa Ibom State, Commodore David Adeniran told newsmen that the oil theft would be subjected to further probe.

“We got information that they were dealing with illegal refined product, so we went there and we were able to arrest somebody suspected to be the owner of the product, jetty and seize some products”, he said.

According to him, the suspect would be handed over to the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) for further investigation and prosecution.

Besides checking the activities of the oil theft, Commodore Adeniran revealed that recently the Nigerian Navy also had a fierce gun battle with some sea pirates in Mbo water ways of the state. He said the Navy with sophisticated gun boats was able to contain the sea pirates who later escaped saying no life was lost in the encounter.

"We decided to send our gun boats to Mbo waterways on routine patrol; but when we got there, sea pirate open fire on our men, fortunately enough our men conquer them and they ran away.

President Muhammadu Buhari is said to have directed the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) to stop payments to Global West Vessel Specialists Nigeria Limited (GWVSNL) for providing security on the nation's waterways - [Naij](#).

Ships and Ports Daily quoted a source at the Federal Ministry of Transport who authoritatively confirmed that the payment to GWVSNL, which is supposedly owned by a former Niger Delta militant, Government Ekpomupolo (Tompolo), was stopped in June.

The source also said the permanent secretary of the ministry, Mohammed Bashir, has directed the director general of NIMASA, Patrick Akpobolokemi, not to make further payments.

Experts and stakeholders in the industry have criticised the concessioning of the nation's maritime security to a private company linked to a former militant. Rather than leaving the security of the Nigerian waterways at the mercy of a private firm, they feel the task is better handled by the navy and marine police if given the chance and the right support.

NIMASA has rubbished reports that the federal government has broken off its relationship with Tompolo's company which is in charge of pipeline security in parts of the country - [Nigerian Bulletin](#).

Isichie Osangbi, Deputy Director of Public relations for the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) denied receiving any directive from the presidency to discontinue payment to Global West Vessel Specialists Nigeria Limited (GWVSNL) for the provision of platforms for security of the nation's waterways, which is owned by the ex-militant leader.

"NIMASA is a government agency and would always implement government policy or reform in the maritime sector and not to be seen doing the opposite. Also, as a government agency, NIMASA ought to be in the know if there was any such directive or change in policy, since the alleged directive, according to those peddling the rumour, was meant for the agency to put an end to all payments to Global West Vessel.

"I tell you with due sense of responsibility that there is no such directive. If there is, nothing would have stopped NIMASA from informing members of the public or issuing statement to that effect," he said.

"We are aware of our core mandate and we will do everything to enforce the federal government law as it affects the maritime sector. No rumor or falsehood will distract us," he said.

The maritime security contract was approved by former President Goodluck Jonathan and awarded by NIMASA in 2011.

Nigerian Navy on Friday restated its commitment to fight sea pirates and other criminal violence in Akwa Ibom waterways - [News Express](#)

The Commander of NNS Jubilee, Commodore David Adeniran, stated this while interacting with newsmen in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom, saying the Navy would ensure effective policing on the waterways.

Adeniran also promised that the Navy would put an end to the incessant piracy and continue to sustain their presence on the waterways in the state.

He said the Navy was recently involved in serious gun battle with some sea pirates at Mbo, adding, however, that no life was lost in the battle.

The commander added that the Navy had sophisticated gun boats to fight sea pirates in Akwa Ibom creeks.

“We decided to send in our gun boats to Mbo but when we got there, sea pirates opened fire on our men, fortunately enough, our men conquered them and they ran away.

“Sea pirates have been harassing people in the creeks, they thought there were all and all but when they saw our boats and the fire power we had, they ran to the creeks.

He noted that the waterways in Mbo were calm due to the gun battle between them and the sea pirates in the area.

Meanwhile, he said, one suspected bunkerer was arrested in Akwa Ibom.

Officials of the United States government have for the first time in months presented an explanation on the sudden termination of oil imports from Nigeria since July, an action which spurred concerns whether there were any possible political connotation especially because of the current strain in Nigeria-US diplomatic relations - [African Globe](#)

Answering a question on the issue from The Guardian, during the week, White House Director of the US National Economic Council, Mr. Jeff Zients, said the cessation of oil imports from Nigeria had to do with the significant rise in US oil production.

Zients, US Labor Secretary, Thomas Perez, and White House Policy Council Director, Cecelia Munoz, were addressing a few US journalists on Thursday afternoon on the state of the American economy when The Guardian raised the question wondering why the US brought oil imports from Nigeria to a complete zero, while still importing oil from Saudi Arabia and other major oil producing countries.

According to the White House Economic Council Director, “across the last several years, US oil production has ramped up significantly by more than 50 percent to now over eight and a half million barrels per day.”

He explained that such a high turn up in local US oil production “has now dramatically reduced our dependency on imports,” Zients noted, adding that “in fact, we now produce more here than we import.”

Oil and shipping sources reacted cautiously Thursday to a document that said that state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation has banned 113 oil tankers from entering Nigerian oil facilities and territorial waters - [Platts Oil](#).

The document was signed by Gbenga O. Komolafe, the group general manager of NNPC's crude oil marketing division.

It stated that NNPC has prohibited 113 tankers "from engaging in crude oil/gas loading activities in any of the terminals within the Nigerian territorial waters until further notice."

The letter dated July 15 was addressed to terminal operators in Nigeria. The tankers were listed in an attached spreadsheet.

"The affected vessels have also been barred from movements within the Nigerian territorial waters forthwith," it said. "Finally, enforcement of the above directives takes immediate effect pending a notice to the contrary by Government, please."

Sources at NNPC did not respond when approached for comment.

There was initial skepticism from some quarters about the veracity of the document, and oil and shipping companies were gathering information throughout the afternoon to try and verify it.

"We have been informed about [the ban] and it seems terminal operators will have to take that into account," said an active buyer and seller of Nigerian crude oil.

Shipping and trading sources said the NNPC's grievance with the shipping companies stems from issues surrounding outturns figures related to the crude oil exports at the port of discharge.

Nigeria will stick with costly fuel subsidies for now as new President Muhammadu Buhari says investigating corruption is a bigger priority than scrapping price caps on domestic fuel - [*Reuters*](#).

Buhari was advised by his transition committee to end the subsidy programme, which critics say is expensive, inefficient and open to abuse from corrupt operators.

Some say scrapping it is more pressing than ever, given a cash crunch that has forced the government to bail out state and local entities that could not cover debt payments and salaries. But the country has issued a list of companies allowed to import under the scheme for the third quarter, with almost no changes to the firms or volumes of fuel involved, which will be just over 1.5 million tonnes of gasoline.

"I have received ... literature on the need to remove subsidies, but much of it has no depth,"

Buhari, who was elected in March, said in a statement.

Poor security, sabotage, vandalism, corruption and mismanagement - not necessarily subsidies - are the most serious problems of Nigeria's oil sector, he added.

Pan-African lender Ecobank estimates the cost of fuel subsidies for the coming quarter will exceed the 100 billion naira (\$503 million) allocated for the full year, hitting 103 billion naira, based on oil prices near \$57 a barrel.

President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the dissolution of the governing boards of a number of federal agencies and institutions with immediate effect, his spokesman said on Thursday - [*Reuters*](#).

It was not immediately clear which bodies were affected by the move.

Until the boards are reconstituted, chief executives of the affected bodies will "refer all matters requiring the attention of their boards to the president" through senior civil servants, said Buhari's spokesman Femi Adesina.

Buhari, who is yet to appoint ministers, was sworn in as president of Africa's most populous country on May 29 after being elected on an anti-corruption ticket.

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Piracy at sea figured prominently during a two-panel event on Pan-African Maritime Goals for 2050 hosted by New York-based International Peace Institute (IPI) on Thursday, where one of the questions, although discussed peripherally, pertained to the possible resurgence of piracy in other regions, including Southeast Asia, particularly the Straits of Melaka. [*sic: Malacca*]
The IPI event, following the 18th Plenary Meeting of the UN Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), served as a prelude to the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Security and Development for Africa, being jointly organised by the African Union and Togo in Lome, Togo, from Nov 2 to 7, 2015 - ***Malaysian Digest***.

The event, invariably, made comparisons between the piracy situation in and around the waters of Somalia and other regions, including Southeast Asia.

Prominent participants representing NGOs and non-NGOs, including Togo's foreign minister Robert Dussey, highlighted not just the losses incurred in terms of ransom money and lives but also the huge impact on the economies of countries in the region.

The decline in Somali piracy has turned attention to other regions, including the Straits of Melaka. Oceans Beyond Piracy, a Colorado based organisation which annually assesses the cost of maritime piracy - both economic and human - to the international community, released a couple of weeks back its latest report called The State of Maritime Piracy 2014, highlighting that 2014 was a "year of improvement in the Western Indian Ocean".

The incidents of piracy attacks in the Western Indian Ocean have apparently come down drastically because of higher surveillance, deterrent factors as strong naval presence in the waters of the region, private armed guards on board the ships, etc.

The report also includes this year, for the first time, a section on the human cost of piracy in Southeast Asia.

Deepak Shetty, an Indian expert on mercantile shipping, who is the director general of shipping

and an additional secretary in India's Ministry of Shipping, told Bernama that Somalia was the epicentre of piracy until three years ago.

"Somalia no longer dominate piracy which is migrating to other regions," he said.

Indian seafarers had also been kidnapped in the past but they were released; the last abducted Indian seafarer was released in November 2013, after spending a staggering four years and one month in captivity.

Shetty emphasised that the Indian Government maintains a strict policy of not negotiating with pirates, terrorists, etc.

Commenting on piracy in Southeast Asia, Shetty said that the region was largely safe.

"Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are responsible nations, and they are capable of reacting effectively (to combat piracy).

African nations are asked to pay attention to enforcement and bring to justice the pirates and their kingpins.

In recent years, the international community has successfully come together to address the threat of criminal gangs operating from Somalia's ungoverned coastline to target commercial vessels along one of the world's busiest shipping corridors, the Gulf of Aden - ***US DoS Blog***. Today, there has not been a successful pirate seizure against a commercial ship off the eastern African coast in more than three years, thanks to this concerted international counter-piracy effort. But nobody is declaring victory yet: our shared counter piracy success is the result of prompt, comprehensive, and ongoing efforts by a unique international coalition of nations and organizations.

I recently returned from the United Nations in New York, where I led the U.S. delegation at a meeting of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, and saw how this unique international partnership continues working toward a long-term solution building the maritime capabilities of Somalia and other countries in East Africa to better counter the piracy threat.

The 2008 rise in piracy spurred the creation and passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1851, providing states the ability to work more closely together in the fight against piracy off its Somalia. Following this resolution, the United States was instrumental in forming the Contact Group, whose founding mission was to bring coherence to the many efforts then ongoing to counter the emerging piracy crisis.

The Contact Group has helped galvanize action and coordinate the counterpiracy efforts of states as well as regional and international organizations. A number of specialized working groups were established within the Contact Group to address a variety of subjects, including: naval coordination at sea, judicial and legal issues related to counter piracy efforts, disposition of captured pirates, disruption of pirates' land-based networks and financing, self-protection measures by commercial ships, and public diplomacy programs in Somalia to discourage piracy.

The release of a group of Somali pirates from Kenyan prisons has sparked concerns about where they are likely to go next - IHS Maritime 360

Fourteen of the 164 Somali pirates currently serving time in Kenya prisons are to be released and repatriated next month.

They follow 64 others recently sent back to Somalia after completing their terms in Shimo la Tewa maximum security prison.

There are fears, however, that the released pirates might not go back to Somalia but may settle with other Somalis in Kenya instead.

Mombasa-based maritime consultant Mwinyi Jahazi told IHS Maritime that "releasing them with no clear rehabilitation plan raises concern. We are likely to see them going back to sea in the near future. Pirates find it hard to retire because of the debts they accrued."

Somali pirate gangs in search of new sources of revenue are now providing armed protection for ships illegally fishing Somali waters, Jahazi said.

Local fishermen there report that the pirates join 'private security teams', often co-ordinated by a ring of pirate leaders and associated businessmen operating in Iran, Kenya, Oman, Puntland, Somaliland, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen.

These teams then help vessels cast nets and open fire on local fishermen in order to drive away competition.

From 1 February 2006 to 12 October 2013 a total of 227 suspected pirates of Somali origin have been handed over to Kenyan authorities. All were arrested by foreign naval ships operating along the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

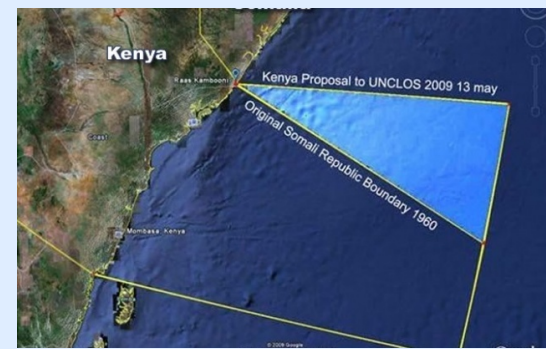
The Kenya justice system is already overburdened. Its backlog of cases stands at 875,000.

As Kenya gears up for offshore oil and gas exploration, Somalia has officially submitted maritime lawsuit case to United Nations International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Monday, Garowe Online reports

The oil-rich territorial waters have been a bone of contention, with Somalia seeking Hague court to

have a final say on the matter after at least three years of hearings from March, 2016. Accompanied by international and Somali experts, Dahir Sunday told VOA Somali Service that he will hand over a 150-page document to ICJ, dashing hopes of bilateral consensus by Somalia and Kenya on maritime dispute. Foreign Affairs cabinet secretary Amina Mohamed told Kenyan MPs a few months ago that Somalia will withdraw maritime boundary lawsuit. However, in a cabinet meeting Somalia government stressed that they are instead confident of Hague court ruling.

Kenya claims that ocean stretch where over five companies are prospecting for oil and gas lies in international waters-something Somalia denies groundless.



The more than 30-year-old ship was en route from Somali Regions to the United Arab Emirates when it sank in rough seas. It was believed to be carrying more than 3,000 animals. A nearby vessel was able to rescue 29 crewmembers and the search for the missing two seafarers is ongoing - ***Somaliland News***.

Livestock is the mainstay of the Somali economy, contributing 40 percent to the Somali Community Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Every year, Millions of animals are exported through the ports of Berbera in Somaliland and Bossaso in Puntland. The majority of the livestock heads for Middle Eastern markets.

Somaliland Animals vastly outnumber people in Somaliland Around three and a half million people live in the region as compared to an estimated 8 million goats and more than one million camels.



Italian maritime security policies have recently undergone major transformations. As announced by the Minister of Defence Pinotti before the Parliament last April, the detachment of Italian Navy personnel onboard Italian-flagged vessels crossing pirate-ridden waters has now been suspended. Consequently, the only option now available to Italian vessels transiting offshore the Horn of Africa now consists in the hiring of Private Security Companies (PSCs) - ***Venus in Arms***. The penetration of the private sector into Italian maritime security was already envisaged by law 130/2011, which established a dual approach to vessel protection. Until last spring, however, the use of PSCs remained to a large degree a residual measure. Armed contractors could only if VPDs are not available, and ship owners asking for the authorization to embark armed contractors needed to include written proof that a previous request for VPD personnel had been rejected by the Italian Navy due to the unavailability of military teams during that period. Moreover, the use of PSCs was de facto impossible before October 2013 because of an incomplete legal framework, which still required additional provisions on regulating the use, type, quantity and storage of weapons and clarifying the relationship between the PCASP and the Ship Master.

Due to these limitations, between 2012 and the autumn of 2015, the large majority of vessel protective missions were conducted by the Italian military. Italian Vessel Protection Detachments, consisting of teams of 6 to 9 personnel from the Italian Navy Infantry Fusiliers Brigade San Marco, conducted over 300 escorting missions, as opposed to the around 50 transits protected by PSCs. As the use of VPDs has now been suspended, however, the use of armed guards for the protection of Italian-flagged shipped is set to increase. As of June 2015, PSCs have already conducted between 120 and 150 escorting missions.

Academic research has yet to fully unravel the drivers and implications of this policy change. While the minister explained the choice to refrain from using VPDs based on the decreased likelihood of piracy attacks and the full establishment of the norms allowing for a safe use of PSCs, other factors may have also played a role. The shifting priorities of the Italian Navy – now focused on the Mediterranean – and the problematic implications of detaching military personnel onboard merchant vessels – epitomized by the ongoing detention of two Italian Navy ‘marò’ in India – may be especially important to fully explain the decision.

Galle chief magistrate Nilupuli Lankapura today (17) granted permission to Ceylon Shipping, owner of the floating armoury owned by Avant Garde, to transfer its weapons to another ship in the Galle port - Lanka News Web

The company sought the court’s permission to transfer the weapons to ‘Mahaweli’ ship, as ‘Mahanuwara’, the ship presently being used has had its insurance period expired, and because

that ship being very old, any harm could cause great loss to the company.
The CID informed the court that Avant Garde would not be put on trial under the firearms ordinance, explosives ordinance or the PTA. The CID also told the court that investigations were still underway into whether action can be filed against Avant Garde over the prevention of money laundering act.
The magistrate ordered that a copy of the written order by the attorney general to the CID in this regard be submitted to courts on August 27.

The Supreme Court on Monday allowed one of two Italian marines facing murder charges to further extend his stay in his home country following heart surgery, again delaying the start of a trial that has strained diplomatic relations - [Reuters India](#)

Massimiliano Latorre was granted permission by the court to remain in Italy for a further six months on medical grounds.

Latorre and Salvatore Girone, part of a military team protecting a cargo ship, say they mistook Indian fishermen for pirates and fired warning shots during the incident in 2012 off the southern Indian coast. Two fishermen were killed.

The marines' arrest opened a diplomatic rift between Rome and New Delhi, and led to the collapse of a European Union-India summit planned during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France and Germany this spring.

The Supreme Court bench hearing the case requested that the Indian government provide a detailed reply by Aug. 26 to an Italian request for the pair to be tried under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and by arbitration.

For Europe, the sea has been one of the main sources of livelihood and prosperity for centuries, mostly thanks to fishing and international trade. In the modern times, we have become dependent on naval traffic, which keeps our economies up and running. Therefore, the ***European Union must deal with a number of various security threats such as rising tension among superpowers, piracy in Somalia and Western Africa, illegal migration through the Mediterranean, terrorism or illegal trade with arms, and human trafficking***. The list moreover includes pollution and illegal fishing - [EU Bulletin](#).

In June 2014, the European Union took an important step in the fight against these threats by introducing the European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS). This strategy has four main principles. The first one transcends all areas and focuses on the coordination and cooperation between civil, military, research and industrial players and EU agencies. The second principle is the maintenance of functional integrity of the "ecosystem", using existing structures, tools, policies, mandates and powers both on the national and European level. The third principle is respect for human rights, democracy and international law in line with UN conventions. The fourth principle is the compliance with naval multilateralism via cooperation with international partners as well as organization and coordination of international forums. In order to ensure the efficiency of these principles, the EUMSS suggests strengthening EU's actions also in other areas related to naval security.

According to the EUMSS, the EU should be a global player that would guarantee naval security in international waters. Although the strategy does not precisely specify regional priorities, one can expect that the EU is unlikely to interfere in the Asia-Pacific, where the United States and China are key players. On the other hand, there is a room for an increasing activity for example in the Indian Ocean and on the shores of Africa where a number of successful anti-piracy actions took place in the past. However, since the EUMSS does not introduce any mechanisms that would force EU Member States to implement that strategy, its success only depends on the Member States' willingness to cooperate.

(The study can be downloaded [HERE](#))

CGPCS 18th Plenary [Full Official Communiqué](#)

The Chinese navy's 19th escort group has returned home after spending 221 days patrolling for pirates off the East African coast and conducting goodwill visits to foreign countries - [DefenceWeb](#).

The flotilla returned to a military port in Qingdao on 10 July after setting sail in December last year. During their time at sea, the missile frigates Linyi and Weifang and supply ship Weishanhu escorted 109 ships in the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters, reports Xinhua.

The vessels also assisted in the evacuation of 897 Chinese and foreign nationals from Yemen earlier this year, and participated in China-Russia naval drills in the Mediterranean, the fourth such exercise between the two navies since 2012.

The flotilla also visited Croatia, Turkey and Italy. The vessels paid a goodwill visit to Croatia from 1 to 5 June and then spent five days in Italy from 7 June. They also stopped for replenishment in Malaysia on 29 June.

On Wednesday 15 July Major General Martin Smith MBE welcomed Ambassadors from European Union countries to the EU Naval Force HQ in London. The Ambassadors were given an update on 'Atalanta', the code name for the European Union's counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia - **EUNAVFOR**.

With warships and military patrol aircraft from European Union Member States and other nations on station in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, together with the self-protection measures by merchant ships that carry consumer goods, such as vehicles, IT equipment, TVs and clothes etc into and from Europe, the number of pirate attacks has reduced significantly over the past four years. In January 2011, 736 hostages and 32 merchant ships were being held by armed pirates, with large ransoms being demanded from the ships' owners for their release. Today 26 hostages remain in pirate hands, with no ships being held.

The Ambassadors were given a briefing on the successful cooperation between the different EU missions, counter-piracy task forces and regional states, which together, are working hard to strengthen economic development and maritime security in Somalia and at sea.



The Vietnamese authorities are extracting information from 27 mobile phones used by eight perpetrators who hijacked the oil tanker MT Orkim Harmony to facilitate investigations - Malaysian Digest.

Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) deputy director-general (operations) Datuk Ahmad Puzi Ab Kahar said the information extracted from the phones would be compared with the agency's data to determine whether they were involved in other sea robberies.

"The Vietnamese government is investigating the content of communication from the gadgets to track down the kingpins.

"We have also sent five senior officers to Hanoi to expedite the extradition process so that the eight hijackers can be prosecuted as soon as possible," he said.

Ahmad Puzi said MMEA would seek cooperation from Vietnamese government to be witness for the prosecution of the MT Orkim Harmony hijacking case when the criminals were extradited.

He said before the hijackers could be extradited, the Vietnamese government needed to look into their backgrounds and check their thumbprints to see if they were connected with previous robbery cases.

He added the Indonesian authorities were still hunting for the remaining five hijackers who were

still at large.

As Nguyen Phu Trong, the general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party, wrapped up an historic visit to the United States, reports emerged in the Vietnamese press that a Vietnamese fishing boat was pursued and sunk by two Chinese vessels - The Diplomat.

According to Vietnam's Tuoi Tre News, a fishing boat operated by 11 Vietnamese fishermen off the coast of Quang Ngai was intercepted, harassed, and sunk by two Chinese ships in waters off the Paracel archipelago. China and Vietnam dispute the sovereignty of the Paracel Islands. The sinking of this fishing boat comes weeks after China redeployed its Haiyang Shiyou 981 (HD-981) oil rig near disputed waters. That oil rig was at the center of a major dispute between the two South China Sea claimant states last summer.

According to Vietnamese press reports, the Chinese vessels approached the Vietnamese fishing boat and initially used "high-powered lights" and loudspeakers, demanding that the fishermen leave the area. According to Tuoi Tre, the owner of the fishing boat "ran his ship away, fearing a possible attack, but was run after by the [Chinese] ships, which eventually rammed the fishing boat to sink [sic] at 11:00 p.m." on Thursday, July 9. According to the report, the fishermen were left "floating at sea while clinging to the lifebuoys," and were later "rescued and taken ashore after several other Vietnamese fishing boats found them at about 2:00 am on Friday."

Marine Police are attempting to rescue the 10 crewmen who have abandoned a Cambodian cargo ship that struck rocks and sank off Koh Hei (Coral Island), about five kilometres directly offshore from Phuket's Rawai beach, about 10:30am today (July 8) - The Phuket News

The container cargo ship Sinaran Andaman, registered in Phnom Penh, struck rocks off Koh Hei and began taking on water, Marine Police told The Phuket News.

As compartments in the 65-metre-long ship began flooding, the vessel suffered engine failure.

The 10 crew have abandoned ship and boarded a lifeboat.

Efforts by Marine Police patrol boat Tor 814 to reach the lifeboat were unsuccessful as it tossed dangerously close to rocks.

Two Cambodian crewmen have since been airlifted to safety by a Royal Thai Navy helicopter.



Robbers abducted at least 15 fishermen along with two fishing trawlers in the River Meghna near Nijhum Dwip under Hatiya upazila of the district on Sunday - The Daily Star.

Of the abductees, ten were identified as Dulal Majhi, Khokan Majhi, Nasir Sareng, Bahar Sareng, Arshed Ali, Hasem, Sakhawat Majhi, Ali Azgor, Manu Mia and Md Seraj.

Amzad Hossain, in-charge of Hatiya Coastguards, said a gang swooped on the fishermen in Jahajmara area while they were returning from the deep sea on Sunday evening.

The gang abducted 15 fishermen and took away two fishing trawlers, he added.

Singapore-headquartered anti-piracy organisation ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC) has recorded 106 piracy incidents in Southeast Asia in the first half of 2015 (1H15), an increase of 18% year on year.

Out of the 106 incidents, six cases were classified as attempted incidents, while the remaining 100 cases were actual incidents. The bulk in this period was petty thefts, although there were 10 severe, or Category 1 incidents, involving fuel/oil siphoning and hijacking.

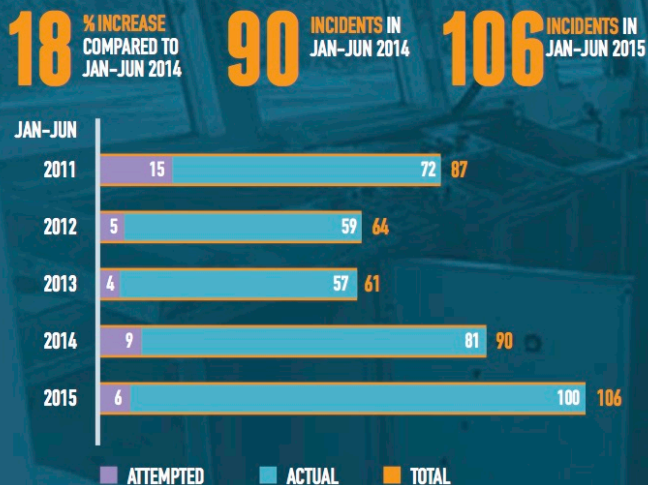
"At least one incident was reported each month in January-June 2015," said ReCAAP ISC in its 2015 half-yearly report.

ReCAAP ISC noted that the perpetrators usually targeted smaller tankers carrying fuel and then fled the vessel after siphoning was completed.

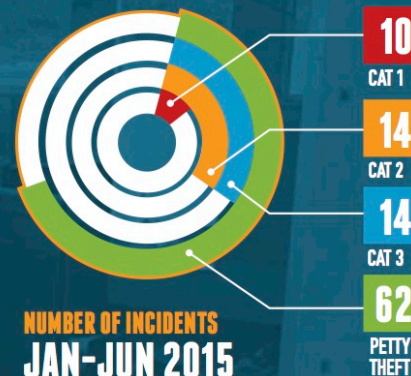
Seventeen hijackers have been arrested and prosecuted for maritime crimes from January-June.

PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA (JANUARY - JUNE 2015)

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF INCIDENTS



SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL OF ACTUAL INCIDENTS



NUMBER OF INCIDENTS JAN-JUN 2015

BULK ARE PETTY THEFTS, 56% IN STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE

10 VERY SEVERE INCIDENTS OF SHIP FUEL/OIL SIPHONING & HIJACKING

SHIP FUEL/OIL SIPHONING AND HIJACKING

MODUS OPERANDI

At least one incident reported each month of January-June 2015. A total of 11 incidents of siphoning & hijacking.

TYPE OF VESSELS

Product tankers (7), chemical tanker (2), tanker (1), supply vessel (1).

KEY TARGET

Cargo of ship fuel/oil carried onboard. Perpetrators left after siphoning is completed.

SIZE OF VESSELS (GT)	NUMBER OF PERPETRATORS	TYPE OF WEAPONS USED	TREATMENT OF CREW	COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT DAMAGED?
< 1000: 2 1001-5000: 5 > 5000: 3 No info: 1	4-6 men: 2 7-9 men: 6 > 9 men: 2 No info: 1	Guns & knives: 7 Knives/machetes only: 2 Not armed/no info: 2	Discarded: 1 Taken hostage: 2 Injured: 1 No injuries/no info: 7	Yes: 5 No: 4 Turned off: 1 No info: 1

ARREST AND PROSECUTION OF HIJACKERS - SERVE AS DETERRENCE

A welcome move and much waited for...

- Nine hijackers of *Sun Birdie* charged for armed gang robbery which carries a maximum of 20 years' jail and canning
- Arrest of the eight hijackers of *Orkim Harmony*

Japan's top military commander, Admiral Katsutoshi Kawano, said on Thursday he expected China to become increasingly assertive in the South China Sea and it was possible Japan would conduct patrols and surveillance activities there in the future - *The Guardian*

Speaking in Washington, Kawano said there had been "talk" of Japan conducting such patrols in the South China Sea, including anti-submarine activities.

"But our position on this is that we consider this as a potential future issue to be considered depending on how things pan out," he told the Center for Strategic and International Studies thinktank.

Kawano earlier met with his US counterpart, General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and discussed implementation of updated bilateral defense guidelines agreed this year, a joint statement said.

Tensions have been rising in the South China Sea, home to important international shipping lanes, due to overlapping territorial claims and rapid building of artificial islands by China that has been criticized by Tokyo and Washington.

China claims most of the South China Sea and has territorial rivalries there with several south-east Asian states. It also has competing claims with Japan in the East China Sea, further to the north.

Kawano said he expected China to become more assertive and seek to expand its reach.

The United States moved to reassure its jittery allies in the Asia-Pacific that it has enough firepower to maintain stability in the region that has seen increased Chinese muscle-flexing in recent years - ***The Telegraph***

Admiral Scott Swift, the commander of the US Pacific Fleet, said that the US could increase deployment of combat ships, if necessary, and ramp up training exercises with its regional allies, including China's historical enemy, Japan

Adm Swift said his 200-vessel US Pacific Fleet, by far the world's strongest, "was ready and prepared to respond to any contingency that the president may suggest would be necessary."

His remarks to reporters in Manila came a month after President Barack Obama called for an end to China's "aggressive actions" in the South China Sea, saying that the coming superpower must not establish its claims by "throwing elbows and pushing people out of the way".

Territorial disputes involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei have flared on and off for years, fuelling fears that the South China Sea could spark Asia's next major armed conflict.



On 1 June, three fishermen set out from their hometown of Cabo de San Lorenzo, Ecuador. Jamil Caicedo (from Colombia) and Carlos Meza and Jorge Ayosa (both from Ecuador) are all in their twenties. The trio had done the trip a few times before and their skiff was carrying enough fuel, water and food for the return journey to Malpelo - ***Maersk Line***.

Two days into their journey, disaster struck. Late in the evening on 3 June the little group was attacked by a gang of heavily armed pirates who callously robbed them of both outboard motors and all fuel supplies.

Left with no means to navigate or communicate, it was a hopeless situation as the skiff drifted farther and farther into the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. In the days that followed, Jamil, Carlos and Jorge tried to ration their limited provisions. They kept fishing and eating their catch, but with no rain to replenish their lifesaving water supplies, they knew that time was running out.



Twelve days had passed since the pirate attack, and the skiff had drifted nearly 570 nautical miles in open sea. Not a single vessel had been sighted, and water supplies were running disastrously low. On the Maersk Batur, 15 June was a typical Monday morning. The container vessel was just north of the Galapagos Islands, having departed Balboa, Panama two days earlier for its southbound voyage to Auckland, New Zealand.

At 11.10 am, Captain R. Morrison received a call from the bridge; the officer on watch had spotted a small boat apparently in difficulty.

Other Maritime Matters

Migrants at Sea:

The UN high commissioner for refugees has warned that the world is standing on the precipice of a global humanitarian crisis, one that the international community is unprepared and ill-equipped to face - ***The Guardian***.

Speaking on Monday at the annual forum of InterAction, an alliance of NGOs based in Washington DC, António Guterres painted a bleak picture of the decades ahead.

"As humanitarian actors we are going to find the next two to three decades ones of unparalleled challenges and we are unprepared for what is to come," he said.

"We are facing increasing humanitarian challenges because ... the international community has lost its ability to stop conflict ... power relations have become unclear and unpredictability has

become the name of the game.

"We are not coming up with any collective answers to emerging global mega-trends, such as climate change, population growth, urbanisation and food security ... with dramatic human consequences."

This, he told an audience of more than 1,000 NGO workers, policymakers and political analysts, will inevitably have serious repercussions for humanitarian aid operations. "Humanitarian aid budgets are not growing proportionally to humanitarian needs," Guterres said. "We are seeing how difficult it is to mobilise resources to address the dramatic impact of the Syrian crisis. We will be called to do more and more with less."

Guterres pointed to increasing problems with access to crisis areas, and the issue of national sovereignty being used to deny people their rights.

Thousands of migrants and asylum seekers on Greece's Aegean islands face appalling reception and detention conditions as the humanitarian crisis for people reaching the islands by sea intensifies, Human Rights Watch said today. Despite considerable efforts by local authorities on the islands, debt-stricken Greece is unable to meet its most basic obligations toward the people who arrive there, the vast majority of whom are fleeing violence and repression - [HRW](#)

"Greek authorities are simply unable to cope with the large numbers given the country's ever-deepening economic crisis, and there's a real risk that the situation will only get worse in the days to come," said Eva Cossé, Greece specialist at Human Rights Watch. "The EU's response to the overall crisis in Greece should include consideration both for Greece's outsized share of responsibility for asylum seekers, and for the rights and well-being of the asylum seekers themselves."

In May 2015, Human Rights Watch interviewed over 100 newly arrived asylum seekers and migrants on the Greek Aegean islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Leros, and Kos. All had traveled by boat from Turkey within the previous month. Most of the people interviewed, including women and children, were from Syria and Afghanistan. Twenty-four of the children, mainly boys between 15 and 17, were traveling without family members. Since May, the situation for migrants and asylum seekers has deteriorated significantly, with more than 1,000 people arriving every day.



Dozens of migrants have volunteered to help rebuild homes in Italy's Veneto region following a freak tornado, telling authorities they want to repay the kindness shown to them after they arrived in boats across the Mediterranean - [The Telegraph](#)

Winds of more than 180mph ripped through the outskirts of the city of Venice last Wednesday killing one person, injuring 30 others and destroying dozens of homes.

Two days later, around 40 migrants living in hostels in the towns of Mirano and Padua turned up to help firefighters re-lay bricks and clean up the streets amid scores of uprooted trees.

One 23-year-old migrant from the Ivory Coast, who gave his name as Kostant, said he "did not have to think for more than a second" when the community asked him to help.

"Some people have lost everything, we have to give them a hand," he told Italian daily Il Fatto Quotidiano. "They did it with us when we arrived, I do not see why we should not do it with them." Another migrant, Dominic, 23, who escaped from Nigeria after he witnessed the murder of his entire family by Boko Haram, said he had come to help because "these people have lost everything and I understand what that means".

He is now waiting to see if his asylum claim will be accepted by Italian authorities.



[Swedish] Coastguard vessel KBV 001 Poseidon has rescued another 600 migrants from a small fishing boat off the Libyan coast - [Sjöfarts Tidningen](#)

It was early on Sunday morning KBV 001 received the alarm about a little fishing boat laden with migrants needed help. Three hours later, they reached the spot, about 24 miles off the Libyan coast.

Another four hours after they had taken aboard 611 migrants and began the journey to the port of Taranto Italian. Of those who were on board were 24 women and 58 children. Those who did were given rehydration of the staff on board KBV 001.

The fishing boat that the migrants were traveling in was handed over to the Italian fleet.

KBV 001 has served in the EU border agency Frontex Operation Triton since June 1 this year. And with

Sunday's rescue operation they have saved close to 2,600 distressed migrants as they desperately tried to cross the Mediterranean to flee from war and conflict.



Some 117 migrants were rescued by a cruise ship after they launched a May Day on

Saturday night, 93km off the Ionian island of Zakynthos - [Migrant Report](#)

The group ran into trouble when their vessel lost power. The Hellenic Coastguard said it launched a rescue operation after receiving a distress call from the boat late on Saturday night.

The vessel was eventually spotted by a military plane and the MV Island Princess, which was passing by, launched a lifeboat which then brought the migrants on board. They will be temporarily be housed at an indoor sports arena in the Western mainland town of Pyrgos, no details were given in respect to the the nationality of the people rescued.



The current unrest in large areas of Africa, Asia and the Middle East has led to a recent and marked increase in the number of people attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea in search of better opportunities - [Standard P&I Club](#).

According to the UN High Commission for Refugees, it is estimated that...

- 90,000 refugees/migrants have crossed the Mediterranean so far in 2015 and up to 1,850 are feared to have died trying to do so this year alone.
- 219,000 refugees/migrants are estimated to have crossed the Mediterranean in 2014
- 137,000 refugees/migrants have crossed the Mediterranean so far in 2015

It is a long-established tradition that ships should provide assistance to those in peril.

Failure to do so can result in a fine or up to two years' imprisonment.

A master is therefore under a general duty to answer any distress call, whether received from a ship directly or via an order from a regional or local authority.

The following steps are a guide only and the master should always respond in a safe and sensible manner, considering the specific circumstances.

1. Urgently contact the nearest or responsible maritime authority/coast guard and, if needed, nearby ships that may also be able to assist.
2. Establish a clear plan for the safe rescue of the distressed persons prior to its commencement.
3. Provide assistance and rescue the distressed persons.
4. Note the number of distressed persons rescued. Specify name, gender, age and nationality.
5. Identify whether any of the rescued persons have any special medical needs.
6. Maintain open dialogue with the responsible maritime authority/coast guard at all times. Maintain good internal communication among the crew.
7. Inform all the interested parties, including managers, charterers, as well as the club, of the situation as soon as possible. In particular, appointment of the club's local correspondent at the designated port of disembarkation can assist in minimising disruption and delay to the ship.
8. Keep a very careful and detailed record of the entire event (the use of photographs, videos and written reports can assist).

As many as 100 bodies believed to be sub-saharan migrants have been found in the sea and the shores of the Tajoura, a coastal town about 10kms east of Tripoli, according to spokesman for the capital's anti-immigration department - [Migrant Report](#)

The spokesman said there were women and children among the dead but could not confirm their numbers or indicate their nationality. They are believed to be the victims of a shipwreck off Tajoura, which is known as a sending spot for migrants heading for Europe on boats. The bodies recovered in Tajoura are being transferred to a hospital in the capital. More details throughout the day. If the number of dead is confirmed it would be the biggest tragedy by far since April 18 when 850 migrants are believed to have lost their lives in a single shipwreck off Libya.



A record 1,780 migrants had lost their lives in the Mediterranean up to that point but the deaths slowed down after EU leaders reacted by expanding the search and rescue effort to unprecedented levels. In a statement on Friday, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) put the number of migrant deaths in the Mediterranean up to that point at 1,900.

On the same day the statement was issued, however, 12 migrants were recovered dead after the boat they were on capsized off Libya. Earlier in the week, Turkish and Greek coastguard mounted a search for 19 people believed to have drowned while crossing between the two countries.

Migrants Offshore Aid Station has rescued 8,595 people from the Mediterranean since it began operations - [EuroNews](#).

Around 414 mainly sub-Saharan Africans were brought ashore in the Sicilian port of Messina on Wednesday (July 15), in the organisation's latest effort to stem what Pope Francis has labelled the "globalisation of indifference."

Founded in 2013 MOAS is the first privately-funded rescue service of its kind.

The Malta-based Catrambone family have spent millions of euros on a rescue ship, dinghies, drones and a professional crew.

In this dust-caked desert outpost 200 miles from the nearest city, Idriss Mohammad spent his 20s scratching out a living driving tourists into the Sahara - [***Wall Street Journal***](#).

Now he ***brings the desert a much more profitable group of travelers: migrants hoping to reach the shores of Europe.***

Each Monday, he squeezes some 30 Africans—from Senegal, Gambia, Nigeria and elsewhere—onto a white Toyota pickup and drives for four days over dunes and rocky lava fields before slipping into Libya, where his passengers hope to board speedboats to cross the Mediterranean.



The thousand-mile journey is as treacherous as it is lucrative: Mr. Mohammad says he has been shot at and repeatedly robbed. But in five years, he has made enough money to buy a five-bedroom home and a convenience store. Now, he is expanding his trafficking business by investing in new vehicles.

“Libya is profitable,” he said after parking his recently purchased Toyota Land Cruiser. A satellite phone dangled from his shirt pocket.

“We help the poor reach places of opportunity,” he added. “That’s the new tourism.”

Mr. Mohammad’s metamorphosis from struggling tour guide to driver in a massive smuggling cooperative has tracked the explosion of a global business that amounts to tens of billions of dollars a year: sneaking poor people into rich countries.

A senior police union official told Der Spiegel up to 300 people were crossing the border with Austria every day without being properly registered. It is estimated that 45,000 dodged the system in 2014 alone - [***Migrant Report***](#)

Migrants crossing the Bavarian border from Austria would be travelling the Western Balkan route, which sees migrants cross over from Greece to northern Europe via Albania or the FYROM, Bosnia and Herzegovina Serbia, Hungary or Slovenia and eventually Austria.

Federal Police chief Dieter Romann was quick to move in with a denial, saying police do question migrants entering German borders and take their pictures, details and fingerprints which are then put in a database.

However, he was forced to admit to reporters in Berlin on Monday that officers are not always able to fingerprint new arrivals within the 48-hour maximum time limit allowed by law. The migrants are told to report to the next reception centre, where they can be processed. The problem is that there is no way of knowing if they actually do.

A German diplomat told Migrant Report Berlin was aware of the problem and was actively working to tackle it.

“In the long run, we believe all migrants go through the system because the vast majority of those going through Germany want to apply asylum there, however, there are problems because the system is struggling in certain states,” the diplomat said.

Around 2,700 migrants were rescued from 13 boats near the coast of Libya on Wednesday, Italy's coastguard said - [***Reuters***](#).

A German navy vessel and a search and rescue ship deployed by medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres participated in the rescues along with the Italian navy and coastguard.

A spokeswoman for the Italian coastguard said the rescues had all been carried out in an area around 35 miles (55 km) from the coast of Libya.

An estimated 150,000 migrants have reached Europe by sea so far in 2015, most of them in Greece and Italy, the International Organization for Migration said. More than 1,900 migrants have drowned in the Mediterranean, twice the toll during the same period last year, said spokesman Joel Millman

Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) search and rescue vessel Bourbon Argos is currently navigating the northern coast of Sicily with about 700 people on board, towards the port of Reggio Calabria, where it should land Saturday early morning. Despite lengthy discussions with Italian authorities and efforts by the Italian Coastguards, the Bourbon Argos was not authorised to disembark the 700 migrants in Sicily due to lack of capacity of the reception system.

On Wednesday 15 July the ***Bourbon Argos rescued 678 people from six different boats and received one more patient transferred for medical reasons from an Italian Coastguards vessel.*** Among the migrants rescued were people from Bangladesh, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Somalia - [***MSF***](#).

“The MSF team has worked round the clock and has provided care to those needing medical attention. The vessel is completely overcrowded and the migrants are staying on the deck in a very limited space,” says Alexander Buchman, MSF coordinator on the Bourbon Argos. “For the last 24 hours this has caused tensions between the people and posed serious security concerns aboard the vessel.”

Despite good coordination with the Italian Coastguards and all the efforts done by the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Italian authorities did not authorise the Bourbon Argos to disembark in any of the Sicilian ports due to lack of capacity of the reception system. On Thursday

evening, MSF was finally given permission to disembark 150 migrants out of the 700 in the port of Trapani, on the Western coast of Sicily. However, MSF decided not to proceed with a partial disembarkation as in such an overcrowded environment it could pose serious security risks. Many of the people on board expressed their fear of being “brought back to Libya” and the situation on board was already extremely tense.

Only seven patients who needed urgent medical attention were disembarked, together with their family relatives.

“For two days, we have been trying to understand where we would be allowed to land, coordinating and working round the clock with the Italian Coastguards, while having to maintain an acceptable level of security on board,” adds Buchman. “This caused serious security risks aboard the vessel and forced 700 people in distress to spend two entire nights on the deck in very difficult conditions.”

On Friday morning, after lengthy negotiations, the Bourbon Argos was directed to the port of Messina, Eastern Sicily. This decision was eventually changed a few hours later and the final destination is now Reggio Calabria.

The exodus from Eritrea is complicating Europe's efforts to tackle the Mediterranean migrant crisis - [BBC News](#)

Eritreans - struggling ashore or picked up at sea - form the second-largest group of migrants risking their lives to reach Italy, after Syrians.

Eritrea, in the Horn of Africa, is not in the grip of war or famine. Yet around 5,000 Eritreans flee every month. Why?

A damning United Nations Commission of Inquiry report blames the country's "gross human rights violations".

"Faced with a seemingly hopeless situation they feel powerless to change, hundreds of thousands of Eritreans are fleeing their country," the UN says.

Yemen

Thousands of Ethiopians and other migrants are flooding into war-torn Yemen, the United Nations said Tuesday, with many of them tricked by smugglers into believing the fighting there is over - [Yahoo News](#)

Johannes Van Der Klaauw, the UN's Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, said 37,000 migrants had arrived in the impoverished country this year -- 10,500 of whom came after a Saudi-led coalition launched air strikes on March 26 in a bid to halt the advance of Iranian-backed militants who drove President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi into exile.

"The large majority are Ethiopians," Van Der Klaauw told journalists in Geneva, adding that Somalis, Eritreans and migrants of other nationalities were also among those heading to Yemen. Many were economic migrants intending to travel to Saudi Arabia, he said, having crossed the Gulf of Aden by boat.

"Many are tricked into making the journey by smugglers who tell them that the conflict is over and all is safe in Yemen," the UN's refugee agency, the UNHCR, said in a statement.

Some Somalis, however, make the journey knowing how violence-racked Yemen is, judging it worth risking the danger to escape a country where Shebab militants are fighting to overthrow the internationally-backed government.

The U.N. refugee agency is warning refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa not to make the perilous journey across the Red Sea to Yemen. The UNHCR says thousands of people continue to arrive in the country despite the dangers - [VOA News](#)

The latest United Nations figures put the number of civilians killed in Yemen since Saudi Arabia began its bombing campaign on March 26 at 1,670, with more than 3,800 wounded.

Aid agencies report the escalation of the war has caused a sharp deterioration in the humanitarian situation, with four out of five Yemenis or 21 out of 25 million people now in need of assistance.

Notwithstanding this dire situation, the U.N. refugee agency reports Somalis and Ethiopians continue to arrive in this war torn country. Of the 37,000 who have come to Yemen this year, UNHCR representative in Yemen Johannes van der Klaauw says 10,000 have arrived since the end of March.

Yemeni forces battling the Shiite rebels in the country's south said they took control Tuesday of the airport in the strategic port city of Aden, driving the rebels there into a part of the city jutting out into the sea - [Daily Star Lebanon](#)

The advance is a major blow for the rebels, known as Houthis, basically trapping them on the small peninsula that is part of Aden. Residents elsewhere in this city on the Arabian Sea took to the streets later Tuesday to celebrate the advances by the anti-rebel forces.

Tuesday's operation was assisted by "preparatory airstrikes" by the Saudi-led coalition that targeted the Houthi positions over the past few days, according to a statement by Ali al-Ahmadi,

the spokesman for the Aden Resistance Leadership Council, which leads the city's anti-rebel forces.
Independent security officials confirmed the advancement but rebel officials refused to comment on the developments.

Saudi-backed Yemeni militiamen captured Aden's main port and a neighbouring district on Wednesday, a big prize in their battle to drive Houthi forces from the southern city, residents and fighters said - [Reuters](#)

Coming a day after the fighters wrested the city's airport and another district from the Houthis, the advance has dealt the biggest setback yet to the Iran-allied Houthis in more than three months of war that has killed more than 3,000 people.

Houthi forces withdrew from the port and the neighboring Mualla district. On Wednesday afternoon they were locked in heavy clashes with militiamen trying to seize an area called Crater, residents said, using intense sniper fire from volcanic crags which overlook the seaside metropolis.

Medics said dozens of combatants and civilians had been killed in the last two days of fighting and the main hospital made an urgent appeal for blood donations.

The vice president of Yemen's exiled government in Riyadh declared on Friday that the southern port city of Aden was now under the control of Saudi-backed fighters after days of battling with the country's dominant Houthi militia - [Reuters](#)

Residents and local fighters said low-level clashes were continuing in the Tawahi district in the west of the city to sweep the Houthis from one of their last redoubts.

"We congratulate the people of Aden and the Republic of Yemen as whole for what has been achieved in the last two days ... The government announces the liberation of Aden province," Khaled Bahah said on his official Facebook page.

Aden has been a focus of fighting since the Houthis first laid siege to it in March when it was home to the government which subsequently fled to Saudi Arabia.

Once one of the world's busiest ports, Aden sits near the Bab al-Mandab shipping lane, a major energy gateway for Europe, Asia and the United States via the Red Sea and the Suez Canal.

The Shi'ite Muslim Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, in September and pushed into Yemen's south and east in March and April in what they say is a revolution against a corrupt government and hardline Sunni Muslim militants.

Egypt

Egypt's Islamic State affiliate said on Thursday it fired a rocket at an Egyptian naval vessel in the Mediterranean Sea near the coast of Israel and the Gaza Strip - [Reuters](#)

The militant group Sinai Province has focussed mainly on attacking Egyptian soldiers and police in the Sinai peninsula, killing hundreds since the army toppled Islamist President Mohamed Mursi in 2013 after mass protests against his rule.

Photographs distributed online by the group appeared to show a rocket heading towards a ship and setting it ablaze on impact. Reuters could not verify the militants' version of events.

The Egyptian military said in a statement that a coastguard launch had exchanged shots with "terrorist elements", causing the vessel to catch fire. It said there was no loss of life.

Such incidents at sea are rare, though Egypt is battling an increasingly brazen Islamist insurgency in the peninsula that lies between Israel, the Gaza Strip and the Suez Canal.

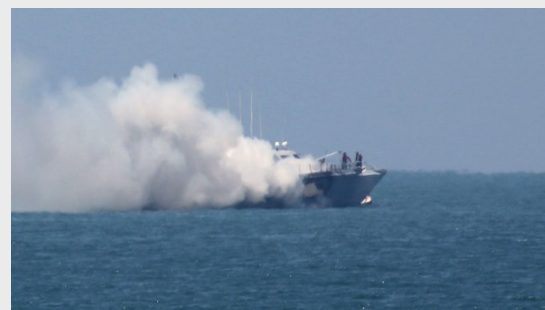


The Islamic State's affiliate in Egypt's Sinai says it has destroyed an Egyptian navy vessel with a rocket off the strategic peninsula's Mediterranean coast [Huffington Post](#).

The claim of responsibility by the Sinai Province of the Islamic State, as the group calls itself, was made in a brief statement posted on Twitter accounts known to be linked to the group.

The authenticity of the statement could not be immediately verified, but it was accompanied by photos purporting to show what appears to be a rocket flying toward the vessel, a large explosion engulfing most of the boat and then black smoke rising up from the vessel.

Egypt's military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Mohammed Samir, said in a statement earlier that the vessel caught fire in an exchange of gunshots on Thursday with "terrorists" on the shore.



Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry asserted a role played by Egypt's diplomacy to brief the international community on the importance of the New Suez Canal Project for global trade - [AllAfrica](#)

The remarks were made during a meeting held with the editors-in-chief of MENA and newspapers on Monday 13/7/2015.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry has reiterated that the project represents a starting point towards a new era of stability and prosperity, Shoukry said.

The enthusiasm of Egyptians to finance this major project has given a hand to the Egyptians diplomacy to send a message to the world that the Egyptian public will back the national leadership led by President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, Shoukry said. Shoukry said the Foreign Ministry makes its best to help in the planned historic inauguration of the project. He praised efforts exerted by the Armed Forces in executing the project and in bringing about stability into Sinai.

Launched in August 2014, the New Suez Canal project aims to add a new 72-kilometer-long shipping lane to the existing canal linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and to develop the zone around it into an industrial and commercial hub. The project will increase the daily average of transiting vessels to 97 ships by the year 2023, up from 49 ships at present. It will also achieve direct unstopped transit for 45 ships in the two directions.

It will increase the Suez Canal revenues from \$ 5.3 billion to \$ 13.226 billion in 2023; an increase equal to 259% that shall positively contribute to Egypt's national income of hard currencies, according to the website of the Suez Canal Authority.

A ceremony to inaugurate the new canal is to be held on August 6.

Egypt's Suez Canal revenues declined four percent in June to LE431.6 million compared to LE449.6 million in the previous month, according to Egypt's Information Portal (EIP) - ***Ahram Online***.

The artificial waterway, which connects the Mediterranean and Red Sea, is the shortest marine route between Asia and Europe. It is one of Egypt's main sources of foreign currency, along with tourism and remittances from Egyptian expatriates.

Egypt's net foreign currency reserves stood at \$20.1 billion in June, according to Central Bank data.

A new shipping route in the Suez Canal, that aims to boost its revenues, will be inaugurated on 8 August.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator has received from Dominion Shipping Agencies (Egypt) a translated circular (see [here](#)) ***issued by the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) regarding the submission of a commitment letter by the Master of the vessel declaring that there are no weapons on board during the canal transit.***

This [circular](#) will take effect on 8 July 2015.

Please click below to find the proper format for the declaration required by the Master to submit for strict compliance.

Egypt completed dredging for the new shipping route in the Suez Canal, which will be inaugurated on August 6th, according to a report from the armed forces published by Aswat Masriya on Thursday - ***Ahram Online***.

This marks the dredging of a total of 250 million square metres and the digging of 70 million square metres in the expansion of the Ballah Bypass. The Bypass's width is now 312 metres, compared to the previous 61 metres.

The flagship project of President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi's economic programme is set to open in August and will be attended by world leaders.

The government will fund the opening ceremony of the new waterway through donations from the public and contributions from participating dredging companies to avoid any burdens on the state budget, the head of the Suez Canal Authority, Mohab Mamesh, said last month.

And Finally...

For the first time in the cruise industry an American female will take the helm of a cruise ship - ***Cruise Industry News***.

At 37 years of age, San Francisco native Kate McCue will command Celebrity Summit starting this August.

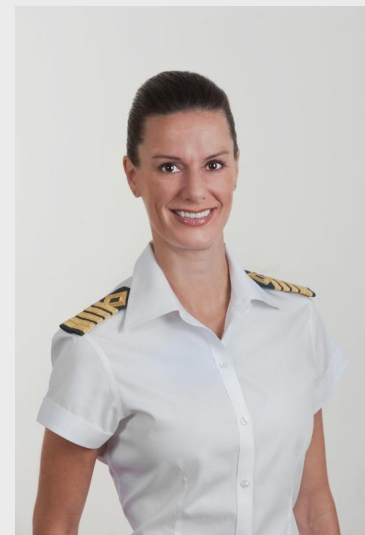
Celebrity said it has elevated McCue to the position of Captain based on her 15 years of successful experience and leadership in the maritime industry.

During her tenure, McCue has managed ship logistics while sailing worldwide itineraries, including Europe, Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, and along the Panama Canal.

Captain McCue has also served as a maritime leader while sailing several transatlantic and repositioning cruises, and played a notable role in the revitalization of ships in Singapore.

Continuing Celebrity Cruises' dedication to advancing the role of women in leadership, Kate McCue's appointment follows that of Lisa Lutoff-Perlo, who was named President and CEO of Celebrity Cruises in December 2014.

McCue will begin her new role onboard Celebrity Summit in August 2015.



Piracy/Robbery at Sea (including Attempts/Suspicious Activity)

Hijack:

- **NSTR**

Attack/Robbery Attempt:

- **SE Asia** - Eight robbers in two wooden boats approached and boarded a berthed Panama-flagged bulk carrier, **King Sugar**, at 0340 LT in position 10:45.8N – 106:42.6E, Fertilizer Terminal, Ho Chi Minh City Port, Vietnam. Duty crew on routine rounds noticed the robbers and immediately informed the duty officer who raised the alarm. The duty crew proceeded towards the robbers but aborted when they saw the robbers were armed with long knives. Upon hearing the alarm and seeing the alerted crew, the robbers escaped with the stolen ship's properties in their boats. Reported (IMB) 15 Jul.
- **Gulf of Guinea** - Deck watch of an anchored container ship noticed a slim, long wooden boat crewed by 5 persons with no lights, circling the vessel at very close distance with the intention of climbing on board at 0130 UTC in position 06:02N - 001:18E, approx 6nm off Lome, Togo. Seeing the alertness of the crew and ship's protection measures, the occupants of the boat aborted their approach and moved away. No visible weapons sighted. Togo Navy informed. Reported (MTISC) 14 Jul.
- **SE Asia** - Unnoticed, robber(s) boarded an anchored France-flagged product tanker, **Adara**, at 1230 LT in position 10:10N - 107:05E, Vung Tau Anchorage, Vietnam. They stole ship's stores and escaped. The incident was noticed later in the day and reported to the Authorities. Reported (IMB) 11 Jul.
- **W Africa** - LATE Unverified Report | Whilst at anchor, a tanker boarded at 2000 LT in position 09:30.29N - 013:44.57W, off Conakry, Guinea. Six armed suspects boarded. No further details available. Reported 5 Jul.
- **W Africa** - LATE Unverified Report | Four speed boats suspected to be carrying armed persons sighted at 1840 LT in position 04:21N - 008:14E around 11nm South of Nigeria. The speed boats headed towards Isobo platform. Reported 29 Jun.
- **W Africa** - LATE Unverified Report | Fishing trawler reported attacked at 1230 in position 04:26.21N - 008:19.16E, approx 6nm South of Nigeria coast. Captain and chief mate alleged to have been kidnapped. Reported 23 Jun.
- **SE Asia** - LATE Report | While sailing, Liberia-flagged bulk carrier, **Ocean Trader 1**, crew spotted five unauthorised persons on the ship deck at 0325 LT in position 01:05N - 103:34.81E, appraise 6nm Southwest of Pulau Nipah, SOMS. The crew attempted to approach the trespassers but they fled. All crew members safe and nothing stolen. Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia authorities notified. Reported (ReCAAP) 22 Jun.
- **SE Asia** - LATE Report | While sailing, Singapore-Flagged chemical tanker, **Theresa Aries**, crew spotted two unauthorised persons on the deck at 0230 LT in position 01:05.25N - 103:34.83E, approx 6nm Southwest of Pulau Nipa, SOMS. Alarm was raised in response, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia authorities informed. Crew safe and nothing stolen. Reported (ReCAAP) 19 Jun.
- **SE Asia** - LATE Report | While sailing, Hong Kong, China-flagged bulk carrier, **Great Hope**, crew spotted an unknown number of unauthorised persons in the after deck at 0538 LT in position 01:08.26N - 103:28.78E, approx 4nm East of Pulau Karimun Kecil, SOMS. The alarm was raised, the Master assembled the crew and a search was conducted on board. Crew safe and nothing stolen. Reported (ReCAAP) 18 Jun.

- **SE Asia** - LATE Report | While at anchor, an unknown number of robbers boarded Marshall Islands-flagged container ship, **Balsa**, at 2150 LT in position 10:11N - 107:03E, Vung Tau Buoy, Vietnam. They opened the paint store and fled with some paint store items. No injury to the crew and no damage to the ship. Reported (ReCAAP) 16 May.

Suspicious Activity/Advisory:

- **NSTR**



Maritime Situation Map for HoA/IOR 11 – 17 Jul 2015



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