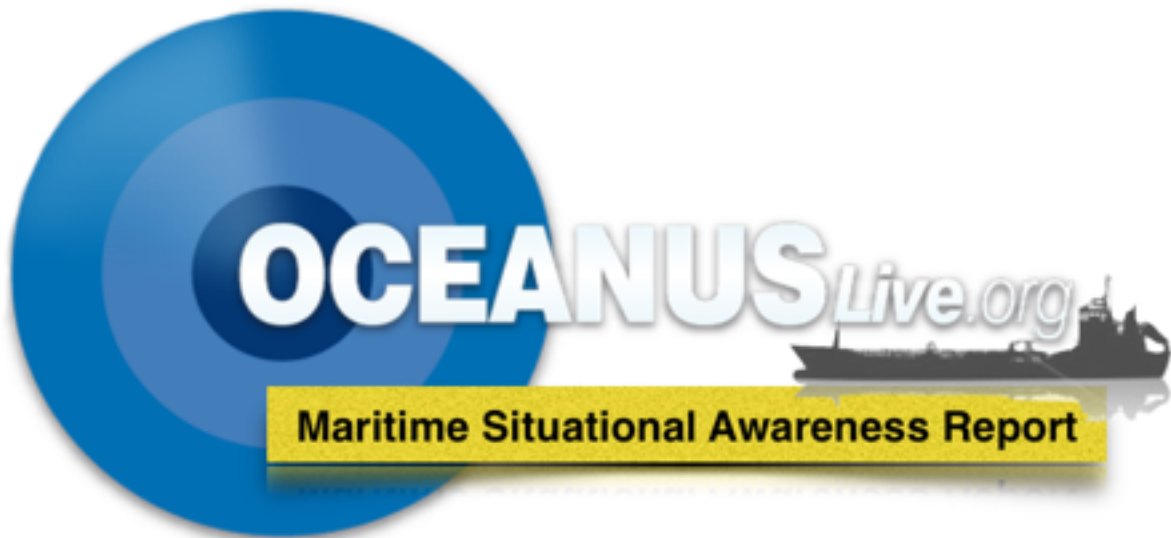


Weekly Maritime Situation Awareness Report: 21 - 27 Feb 2015

Our Weekly Roundup of Maritime Situation Awareness for Global HRA. Feel free to comment. Enjoy the read.

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Covering period 21 - 27 Feb 2015



Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)...

accused foreign insurance companies otherwise known as Protection and Indemnity (P&I) clubs, of sabotaging Nigeria's economy especially in the report of piracy activities in the sub-region.



Top Story This Week...

Four Thai fishermen held hostage by Somali pirates for nearly five years have been released. The four fishermen were among 24 crew members seized in April 2010 when pirates hijacked the Taiwan-flagged fishing vessel FV Prantalay 12. Their nearly five-year captivity is the longest suffered by any victims of Somali piracy.



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West Africa

Three seafarers kidnapped from a Greek VLCC off West Africa earlier this month have been released - [Seatrade Global](#).

Aeolos Management said the men had been held since 3 February by a criminal gang in Nigeria.

Embiricos interests have reportedly paid \$400,000 ransom to secure the release of three seafarers kidnapped from the Greek VLCC Kalamos off West Africa 3 February.

Though the group would not comment on the ransom, it is said to have been paid to a criminal gang in Nigeria.

Embiricos' Athens-based Aeolos Management-run 281,000 dwt tanker, flagged in Malta, was awaiting loading off Bonny with 23 crew when it came under attack. The 2000-built vessel's chief officer was killed in the incident.

The two Greeks and one Pakistani now freed were taken to hospital after their ordeal ended. "Following this examination and depending upon medical advice they will be flown home to be reunited with their families," the manager said. "Further support will be provided to the seafarers and their families when they return home and begin the recovery process from their traumatic experience."

Aeolos said it was greatly relieved the men were free, adding there was still great sadness over the chief officer who lost his life.

Strong indications emerged yesterday that a group of pirates collected 400,000 US dollars (about N88 million) as ransom before they freed the three foreigners kidnapped off the coast of Nigeria on February 3 - [AllAfrica](#).

Until they were kidnapped, the two Greeks and a Pakistani worked on board a Greek oil tanker, VLCC Kalamos.

They were kidnapped three weeks ago off the coast of Nigeria in a bloody attack on the tanker.

A reliable source told Daily Trust that the management of the vessel paid \$400,000 as ransom to secure the release of the three seafarers.

Aeolus Management, owner of the Maltese-flagged VLCC Kalamos, in a statement, said the seafarers had been flown to their countries to recover from their “traumatic experiences”.

The firm said no details would be released on how they were freed since it might encourage further attacks and hostage taking off the coast of Nigeria.

Chairman of Bayelsa State Council of traditional rulers, King Alfred Diete Spiff, has said that strangers are responsible for oil theft and vandalism on Brass Island - [AllAfrica](#).

Spiff, who is also the Amanyabo of Twon Brass, said this when he received Commander of the Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation Pulo Shield, Maj.-Gen. Emmanuel Atewe. He said the community will work with the JTF to fish out vandals in the area.

Addressing the community later at Twon Brass town hall, Atewe, said the JTF has recommended legalization of modular refineries in the Niger Delta to provide gainful employment to the teeming youths.

He said under the plan, operators of artisanal refineries would procure crude legally and refine for local use in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The commander noted that oil theft deprives government of revenue, distorts the ecosystem and exposes the environment to toxic materials that negatively affect the health of residents.

Atewe solicited the support of communities and urged them to volunteer relevant information to the JTF.

Despite earning the inauspicious title in recent years as the shipping corridor with the highest number of piracy attacks in the world, regional responses to piracy and maritime security threats in the Gulf of Guinea, have been fragmentary.

Maritime domain awareness remains low, interagency coordination is limited, and intra-regional coordination mechanisms that have been established are often underfunded - [Africa Centre for Strategic Studies](#).

The highly fungible nature of maritime threats means that this challenge cannot be addressed solely by individual states but requires cohesive regional security cooperation. While progress has been made, stronger political commitments are needed at the national, regional, and international levels if the worsening trend of maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea is to be reversed.

Download [the brief](#)

With massive investment in maritime security in the recent past, resulting in satellite capabilities and increased operational platforms, the removal of the country from war risk zone is not in sight, a situation that keeps insurance premium ships coming to the area, to pay on the high side, in what has been described as an international conspiracy against Nigeria. ANDREW AIRAHUOBHOR reports - [AllAfrica](#)

Is there a justification for additional cost imposed on goods coming to Nigeria because the country was included in the list of war risk zones which attract high insurance premium? Many argue that the many security challenges being reported along the territorial waters is enough reason. But some others think otherwise, insinuating that the security challenges could have been premeditated to achieve certain goals.

The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) accused foreign insurance companies otherwise known as Protection and Indemnity (P&I) clubs, of sabotaging Nigeria's economy especially in the report of piracy activities in the sub-region.

Director General of NIMASA, Ziakede Patrick Akpobolokemi, said that P&I clubs deliberately raise the red flag on vessel operating in sub-Saharan African region in order to milk them of more insurance money, lamenting that a lot of losses are being incurred through the marine insurance sector.

To him, most of the reported piracy attacks are untrue and a deliberate sabotage from foreign insurance companies. He observed that the P&I clubs have made so much out of Nigeria and other African countries, saying that there is need for Nigeria to have an equivalent of such in the country in order to make better gains.

The waterways are the most dangerous place to be in Bayelsa State, which by its topography, has so many rivers, rivulets, creeks, tributaries and large swathe of mangrove swamps, making it more deltaic than Delta and Rivers state respectively - [Vanguard Nigeria](#)

Investigations by Niger Delta Voice showed that pirates and oil thieves in Southern Ijaw area have made the waterways of the state unsafe.

The Joint Task Force, JTF, Bayelsa State Police Command, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC, Bayelsa state and other security agencies have been locked in a battle with the armed gangs.

Southern Ijaw is most notorious

Public Relations Officer, NSCDC, Bayelsa, Dauzuo Izonfate, said: "Almost the whole of Southern Ijaw local government area, not only Azuzuama and Lobia, are notorious for criminal activities, especially bunkering, pipeline vandalism, sea piracy and illegal petroleum refineries.

"These criminal activities are common and widespread in these areas and have gradually become a part of life of the people and in some cases a means of livelihood."

"Because of the rampant cases of these criminal acts, we have permanently positioned our men in areas we consider as major flash points and we are collaborating with the Joint Task Force.

He said: "In no distant time, we will be deploying aircraft on aerial surveillance of these areas," he added.

The Western Naval Command, WNC, has arrested five citizens of Benin Republic and four others for crude oil theft - post-nigeria.com

Confirming the arrests, the Commanding Officer, CO, Nigerian Navy Ship, NNS Beecroft, Commodore Tekumo Ikoli, said the suspects were arrested at different times and places.

The arrests were in line with the zero tolerance of the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Jibrin to crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism.

He said "The Nigerian Navy Ship, NNS Ikot-Abasi, intercepted a Cotonou wooden boat carrying a large number of drums with six men.

"Preliminary investigations revealed that the six men were involved in illegal activities, including one Mr. Francis Olusegun, who claimed to be the owner of the suspected stolen products.

"The other five persons claimed to be from Benin Republic. Further investigations revealed that there were a total of 78 drums of 250 litres capacity each in the boat.



The Nigerian Navy on Wednesday handed seven stowaways to the authorities of Nigerian Immigration Service in Apapa after they illegally boarded a vessel enroute Spain from Tin Can port, Lagos - [National Daily Nigeria](http://NationalDailyNigeria.com).

Handing the stowaways over at the NNS BEECROFT parade ground were 4 Nigerians, two Ghanaians and one Liberian, the Flag Officer Commanding, (FOC) Western Naval Command, Rear Admiral Jonathan Ango said they were arrested by a patrol boat NNS IKOT-ABASI while on routine patrol.

Admiral Ango explained that on Sunday, 22nd February, 2015, the stowaways illegally boarded a vessel MT ELECTRA BARI who had come to discharge petroleum products at the Apapa tank farm.

He said they boarded the vessel while discharging products with the intention of going to Holland but unawares that the vessel was heading to Spain.

Ango said, "On completion of its operations, MT ELECTRA BARI with IMO Number: 941682 left for Lome, Togo. The Captain discovered some strange people while in Togo and established communication with Nigeria Navy who promptly arrested them."

The increasing incidence of abandonment of vessels on Lagos waters is generating concerns in the maritime industry. This is because; criminals and miscreants have started using some of the vessels as base for their nefarious activities, putting the port terminals under risk - [Daily Independent Nigeria](#).

Terminal operators in the ports in Lagos state are worried about the development, because cargoes being discharged at the terminals as well as other equipments and personnel are not safe. Regulatory agencies and security operatives have not been able to address the threat.

This is coming shortly after the Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA) donated two boats to the Nigeria Navy, which stakeholders said, should have been given to the Nigeria Port Police to patrol the western waters.

But Western Port Police Commissioner, Mrs Hilda Ibifuro Harrison has promised to meet with the director general of NIMASA, Patrick Akpobolokemi for assistance in addressing the threat posed by the abandoned vessels littering Nigerian water ways. She said the marine police will further strengthen the synergy with other maritime agencies to protect and secure the ports and terminals under her watch, and added that port police will raid the miscreants out of their hide out.

This is coming after operators of terminals 'C' and 'D' at the Lagos Ports Complex (LPC); ENL Consortium Limited raised alarm over the threat posed by abandoned vessels which criminals now use as a base to access the terminal and vandalise cargoes.

According to him, the miscreants use smaller crafts like canoes to ferry themselves back to the wreck on Lagos waters after unleashing terror at the terminals. He said at night, the abandoned vessels are illuminated by torch lights; which further authenticate the presence of criminals on board the wrecked vessels

Personnel of the United States of America (USA) Navy have expressed their readiness to always collaborate with their counterparts from Ghana to fight maritime crime under the Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) - [Modern Ghana](#)

This came to light at the closing ceremony of the 2015 Ghana Armed Forces and U.S Maritime Forces AMLEP operations at the Sekondi Naval Base, last Tuesday.

AMLEP is an international security cooperation that is conducted by U.S Naval Forces Africa in collaboration with the Ghana Navy, Marine Police and the Fisheries Commission to improve maritime safety and security.

The one month exercise was conducted within Ghana's economic exclusive zone.

It involved the detection and response to illegal transnational maritime activities such as fisheries offences, illicit drug trafficking and illegal migration.

The focus of this year's exercise was on vessel boarding, search and seizure as well as communications familiarisation between maritime operation centres and the ships at sea.

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Horn of Africa/Indian Ocean

Four Thai fishermen held hostage by Somali pirates for nearly five years have been released, local officials said Friday - [Zee News](#)

"We collected the four Thailand men from a remote area," said Omar Sheikh Ali, an official in Somalia's central Galmudug administration.

The four fishermen were among 24 crew members seized in April 2010 when pirates hijacked the Taiwan-flagged fishing vessel FV Prantalay 12.

Their nearly five-year captivity is the longest suffered by any victims of Somali piracy. Ali said the relieved men were able to contact family members soon after their release on Wednesday.

"They called their families by phone and cried and cried and cried," he said.

Residents of Galkayo, where the Galmudug administration is based, said a \$150,000 ransom was paid but the information could not be independently verified.

"The pirates were fed up of feeding and taking care of the hostages, they had borrowed huge sums of money," said Mohamed Abdi, a businessman in Galkayo, who was close to the negotiations.

After its capture the FV Prantalay was used as a pirate mother ship to launch attacks far out to sea before it capsized in July 2011 and the crew was taken ashore.

Of the original 24 crew members, six died from sickness at various stages during their captivity.

Another 14 crew from Myanmar were released to the government in the Somalia's northern Puntland region in May 2011 and repatriated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Hostage Support Programme.

A further 26 hostages are still being held by Somali pirates.



MPHRP has welcomed the news that after 4 years, 10 months and 9 days held in captivity by Somali pirates the four Thai crew of the fishing vessel Prantalay 12 have been released and are on their way home - [OCEANUSLive](#)

Assistant Programme Director of MPHRP, Hennie la Grange, pointed out that the Prantalay 12 release, coming after almost 5 years, significantly occurs in the same week as the release of piracy's latest victims. Three seafarers kidnapped only three weeks ago by Nigerian pirates were released on Wednesday after an attack on a super tanker which resulted in the death of its deputy captain. Seafarers clearly continue to face the real and present danger posed by piracy.

The vessel was taken on 18 April 2010 and, according to the International Maritime Bureau, at 1776 days makes them the longest held hostages. Originally there were 25 crew. Fourteen Burmese crew were released in August 2011 leaving behind eleven, but it is believed that seven have been either killed or have died through illness.

MPHRP chair Peter Swift said, "we are relieved to learn of their safe return. We are grateful to the team that has made this possible whilst putting themselves in danger. We continue to hope that the remaining 26 hostages that are still being held there will be released soon."

Roy Paul, Programme Director for MPHRP, said that, "whilst the crew were being held hostage on board their families have been held hostage at home. The owner paid some small monies to the families originally but stopped after some time. The families were sustained by MPHRP using its families' Fund (MPHRF). The Fund collected donations from MPHRP's industry partners and will continue to support the families and the crew. Anyone who wishes to support these crew members and their families and also other crew members who are affected by piracy should email fund@mphrp.org



Shipping corridors used by Gulf energy exporters are not at risk from violence and political volatility in Yemen and the seizure of swathes of territory in the region by Islamic State militants, a senior U.S. naval officer said on Monday - [Reuters](#).

Vice Admiral John Miller, Commander of U.S. Naval Central Command, told a conference in Abu Dhabi that a “robust” U.S. and international maritime presence was helping to minimize threats to oil-producing countries in the region.

“As dynamic as the region is today, what we have seen over the past years is the maritime atmosphere has been safe, the free flow of commerce has been stable and secure,” said Miller, Commander of U.S. 5th Fleet/Combined Maritime Forces.

He was referring to the Bab el Mandab, a narrow channel between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, the Suez Canal, one of the world’s busiest waterways which connects the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, and the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Oman, the world’s most important oil export route.

The fight against piracy in the Gulf of Aden faces tough challenges because countries still refuse to share intelligence, a senior ranking British naval officer has said on Monday - [Al Arabiya News](#)

Commodore Keith Blount told the International Defense Exhibition and Conference (IDEX), in Abu Dhabi, that while counter-piracy operations had seen significant advancement, some countries were still withholding intelligence for political reasons - even when they were operating in the same areas as other states.

“The Russians, the Chinese, the Iranians, they are all conducting counter piracy in a perfectly effective way but the information flow between us is not as good as it could be because there are other factors preventing it from being the case,” he said during a panel session at this year’s IDEX conference.

But he said an increase in “quantity and quality” of data collected by modern technology may act as a double-edged sword.

“I think there are plenty of opportunities - probably more opportunities than threats... but I do worry a little simply about the availability of information,” he said.

He said as the amount of information relayed to naval vessels increased each day with technological advancements, it became harder to separate the important intelligence from less important data.

“In my experience the number of times we missed an important piece of information actually went up rather than down,” Blount said explaining: “because the really important stuff was getting buried, in the unimportant stuff.”

Asked to define maritime situational awareness, he said: “true maritime situational awareness depends on your understanding of the region.”



President Obama, today, nominated Katherine S. Dhanani to serve as the first United States Ambassador to Somalia since 1991 - US Dept of State

This historic nomination signals the deepening relationship between the United States and Somalia. It also allows us to mark the progress of the Somali people toward emerging from decades of conflict. Somalia has considerable work ahead to complete its transition to a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous nation. The United States is committed to supporting Somalia on this journey as a steadfast partner. If confirmed, the Ambassador will lead the U.S. Mission to Somalia, currently based at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya.

The death toll in Friday's bombing of a hotel in the Somali capital has risen to 25, including two lawmakers and workers from the prime minister's office, the government said on Saturday - Reuters

Police previously said at least 10 people had been killed in the attack on Central Hotel, near the presidential palace in the centre of Mogadishu.

Islamist al Shabaab rebels set off a car bomb inside the Central Hotel compound which also houses a mosque popular with government officials. After the car blast, a suicide bomber ran into the mosque during Friday prayers and blew himself up.

"The confirmed death toll is 25 civilians and officials, including two lawmakers and deputy Mogadishu mayor," the government said. "Among the dead are also officials and workers from the prime minister's office."

The al Qaeda branch in Somalia released a video Saturday celebrating the September 2013 attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, that killed 60 people in a four-day siege. In the 66-minute video, unleashed on Twitter in both English and Arabic, al-Shabab called for attacks on specific targets in the U.S., Canada and Britain - IB Times

"If just a handful of mujahedeen [militant jihadists] fighters could bring Kenya to a complete standstill for nearly a week, just imagine what the dedicated mujahedeen could do in the West to American or Jewish shopping centers across the world," a masked gunman says toward the end of the video. "What if such an attack were to occur in the Mall of America in Minnesota? Or the West Edmonton Mall in Canada? Or in London's Oxford Street?"

The video raises concern it could help inspire lone-wolf attacks by radicalized individuals in these countries who are teetering on committing violent acts in the name of Allah. Online social media has helped widen the audience for Islamist propaganda despite efforts by Facebook and Twitter to weed out troubling broadcasts.



Kenya Defence Forces will be in Somalia for longer after the United Nations Security Council extended the mandate of AMISOM for a further one year - [Harar24 News](#)

Defence Cabinet Secretary Raychell Omamo on Thursday said Kenya welcomed the extension of the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia.

“The presence of KDF men in Somalia has helped not only weaken the Al-Shabaab but the liberation of key towns,” she said.

Ms Omamo appealed for more assistance in defeating Al-Shabaab even as it focuses on intelligence gathering rather than military might in crushing the faceless and deadly enemy.

This comes even as the militants reportedly issued a new video on their website threatening to carry out attacks on towns and other targets inside Kenya.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard launched a large-scale naval and air defense drill Wednesday near a strategic Gulf waterway, using a replica of a US aircraft carrier as a target. Video of the drill appeared on Iranian state television. - AP News

[Video Link](#)

Raw: Iran Launches Large Scale Military Drills



Referrals still waiting for the two Marines who are awaiting trial for killing two fishermen in India, mistaken for pirates - [Il Tempo Italy](#)

The special court of India in New Delhi which must examine the incident involving the riflemen of Marina Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Girone postponed the hearing to March 12. Noting that the case is still pending before the Supreme Court, which ordered the suspension of all other legal action, the judge Neena Bansal Krishna ordered the postponement. The magistrate, who was not in court, has agreed by phone with the lawyers of the two riflemen on the time of referral. The new hearing was scheduled three days after another appointment in the Supreme Court, scheduled for March 9. That day a judge of the Chancery must 'determine whether the relevant ministries and the Indian police detective Nia responded to a request for an opinion Italian instance of eliminating Nia same process.

The story of the two Marines may be called the most serious diplomatic crisis between Italy and the Asian nation. Lately, even Europe has put us in the middle, trying to meet the two sides to reach an immediate solution. Meanwhile, the case has had more shadows, and within three years, have left many inconsistencies that suggest a process very opaque and full of secrets.

Two Royal Swedish Navy CB90 Fast Assault craft that are currently embarked in the EU Naval Force flagship, HNLMS Johan de Witt, have carried out their first tasking since joining the EU Naval Force Operation Atalanta in February - [EUNAVFOR](#).

One of their key roles is to conduct surveillance operations along the Somali coastline where pirates have previously been known to operate. The craft will also be used to conduct friendly approaches with local fishermen and if required, boarding operations against vessels suspected of being involved in piracy.

Extensively used by Swedish Forces in their own waters, this is the first time that the CB90 Fast Assault Craft has been used as part of Operation Atalanta.



SE Asia

The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) handled 14 sea robbery cases last year with many taking place in southern Johor (the Straits of Singapore), eastern Johor and the South China Sea - ***The Sun Daily***.

While saying that they managed to nab six groups of sea robbers, some of whom are serving jail terms of 10 to 15 years, MMEA director-general Admiral Maritime Datuk Mohd Amdan Kurish said the Straits of Malacca reported no cases.

All of them were detained in southern Johor which is the Straits of Singapore," he added. "Many sea robberies happen in the Straits of Singapore and the eastern part of Johor," he said after the launch of the Asean Seminar on Piracy, Sea Robbery and Maritime Terrorism – Sharing of Information and Best Practices at Istana Hotel today.

Mohd Amdan revealed that a lot of people do not have a clear view of where these sea robberies occurred.

"Many reports indicated that this (sea robberies) happened in the Straits of Malacca, though it actually happened in the Straits of Singapore," he said.

The three-day seminar is a platform for Asean countries to share their knowledge and experience to formulate connectivity among them.

In a move towards strengthening its defence ties with Bangladesh, India will be exploring new avenues for naval cooperation towards achieving comprehensive maritime security in the Bay of Bengal - ***The Dollar Business***.

To this effect, Admiral R K Dhowan, Chief of Naval Staff will be on a State visit in Bangladesh from February 23-26, 2015. According to a government release on Monday, the Navy Chief was intending to further consolidate the defence relations between the two countries.

Dhowan paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Sangsad Bhaban office on Monday. At the meeting, he observed that the partnership between Bangladesh Navy and Indian Navy is excellent and there are many things to learn from this partnership.

The Chief of Naval Staff is scheduled to hold bilateral discussions with the three Service Chiefs at Dhaka as well as call on the President during his stay at Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Navy has been invited to attend the prestigious International Fleet Review, to be organized by the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam in February next year.

Bangladeshi rescuers have pulled 30 ferry passengers from the river Padma after the vessel capsized 70km north of the capital with more than 100 people aboard, police said - [Al Jazeera](#)



In Sunday's incident, rescuers pulled the body of a baby from the water and are searching for survivors.

"The ferry capsized as it was hit by a cargo vessel," regional police official Bidhan Tripura told Reuters, adding that police had seized the trawler and arrested two of its crew.

Survivors said the twin-deck MV Mostofa was carrying between 70-150 passengers when it capsized in the middle of the Padma river, local

police chief Rakibuz Zaman told AFP news agency.

The death toll in Bangladesh's passenger ferry tragedy on the river Padma in Manikganj, near Dhaka, has risen to 72 - [IHS Maritime 360](#)

Two more dead bodies were unofficially claimed, soon after official announcement of the recovery of 70 bodies on 23 February.

At least five passengers remain missing, Bangladesh Department of Shipping's (DoS's) chief nautical surveyor Jashim Uddin Sarker told IHS Maritime.

He said around 120 passengers were saved by local rescuers and other vessels from Padma, which is the Bangladesh part of the river Ganges.

However, family members of at least 30 missing passengers are still searching for bodies in the disaster area, according to the reports published today (24 February) in local media. The exact number of those on board has not yet been determined.



Malaysia has invited Myanmar to be an observer in the Malacca Strait Patrols (MSP) initiative to combat piracy in the busy strait - [The Sun Daily](#)

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammudin Tun Hussein said the MSP was a coordination of marine and air patrols between the littoral states to combat the threat.

"The move will hopefully help Myanmar further develop its knowledge of maritime security, as well as enhance the existing MSP cooperation," he told a press conference in conjunction with the visit of the Indonesian Defence Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu to Wisma Perwira Angkatan Tentera Malaysia (Malaysian Armed Forces headquarters) here today.

Hishammuddin said he had informed Indonesia of Malaysia's offer to Myanmar to be an observer in the MSP.

The MSP which was launched on April 21, 2006, comprises the Malacca Strait Sea Patrol (MSSP), Eyes in the Sky (EiS) and the MSP Intelligence Exchange Group (MSP IEG).

So far, only four nations are involved in the MSP – Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia.

Australian Federal Police working undercover have arrested two men, after customs found 100 kg of methamphetamine with an estimated street value of USD50 million hidden in a container from China - *IHS Maritime 360*



The container was declared to hold "kid's toys". Customs officers, however, located a false floor concealing 100 kg of the white crystallised substance.

The police working undercover delivered the consignment as addressed, arresting and charging a Malaysian national and a Hong Kong national in a Sydney car park for drug trafficking when they accepted the delivery.

The two appeared at the Central Local Court yesterday.

"This was a complex concealment clearly designed to evade law enforcement detection," Australian Customs Commander NSW, Tim Fitzgerald, said in a 26 February press release. "However, our expert X-ray image analysis and enforcement officers have once again proven that crime doesn't pay."

Investigations are ongoing and police have not ruled out further arrests.

Americas/Caribbean

Dutch Yachtsman Murdered Off Sao Luis, Brazil Coast

A Dutchman, identified as Ronal Francois Wolbeek, 60, from Edam, Holland, was fatally shot in the chest in the early hours on Sunday, 15 Feb near the Yacht Club of Sao Luis, off Maranhao coast, Northeast Brazil - [OCEANUSLive](#).

According to preliminary information of the Independent Tourism Company (CPTur), the victim was with his partner, Maria Rawie, 69, in their Netherlands-flagged sailboat, Lios Alvar, on 14 Feb. According to the victim's partner, at around midnight Sat/Sun, the boat's alarm was set off and Ronald went to check. He encountered two men on the deck of the yacht. Following a brief argument, one of the men fired two shots, one of which hit Ronald Wolbeek in the chest. Maria Rawie stated that she attempted to clean the chest injury that Ronald sustained, but considering his distressed stated, took a lifeboat and jumped into the water but did not have the strength to paddle to shore, therefore swam towards the Yacht Cub. Once ashore, she met a CPTur car and was able to report the incident.

Maria informed the local police that after the shooting, the suspected robbers fled without taking anything from the vessel. There was a third accomplice waiting in a small motor boat for their escape.

the police did not find the perpetrators, however on Friday, 20 Feb, it was reported in Brazil media that the police had arrested two suspects in Sao Luis. They are still searching for a third suspect.



Ecuador army and police seized about a ton of cocaine en route to Galapagos Islands, the country's Minister of the Interior Jose Serrano said - [Sputnik News](#)

The minister commended the National Police of Ecuador performance on his official Twitter page on Saturday.

Galapagos Islands are located in about 603 miles from the mainland.

Ecuador has become a transit territory for drug trafficking because of its location between two major countries-producers of cocaine, Colombia and Peru. Drugs from those countries are generally headed to north, mostly to the United States.



Other Maritime Matters

The Republic of Cyprus will allow Russian vessels taking part in the fight against terrorism and piracy to call at its ports, Russian President Vladimir Putin said

Wednesday after talks with his Cypriot counterpart Nicos Anastasiades - [TASS](#)
The foreign ministers of Russia and Cyprus, Sergey Lavrov and Ioannis Kasoulides, have signed a memorandum on naval cooperation between the two countries' Defense Ministries. The ceremony took place in the presence of the presidents of both countries. The sides also signed a memorandum of understanding between the Russian news agency "Invest in Russia" and the Cypriot investment promotion agency, a memorandum of understanding between the Bank of Russia and Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission.

In addition, the parties signed a memorandum of understanding between Russia's Education Ministry and Ministry of Finance of Cyprus on scientific and technical cooperation, a programme of cooperation between Russia and Cyprus in the field of science, education and culture for 2015-2018, a military cooperation agreement between the governments of Russia and Cyprus, as well as intergovernmental agreements on cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism. The sides also signed a protocol of the eighth meeting of the Russian-Cypriot intergovernmental commission for economic cooperation.

France deployed an aircraft carrier in the Gulf on Monday as part of the US-led military campaign against the Islamic State jihadist group in Iraq, a defence ministry official said - [AFP/Yahoo News](#)

"The integration of the Charles de Gaulle in the operation... (in Iraq) begins this

morning," a member of Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian's staff told AFP as his entourage made its way to the carrier.

The first Rafale fighter jet took off in the morning from the Charles de Gaulle as it sailed about 200 kilometres (120 miles) off the coast north of Bahrain in the direction of Iraq.

The warship's deployment will cut in half the time it takes for the planes to reach Iraq for strikes against IS from their base in the United Arab Emirates.



Cambodia has rescued 17 Cambodian labourers, who were trafficked to work as illegal fishermen on Thai fishing boats in Indonesia, Foreign Ministry's spokesman Koy Kuong said Wednesday - [*Cihan*](#)

"With the cooperation from the Indonesian authorities, the Cambodian Embassy to Indonesia has saved 17 Cambodian labourers, who had been cheated by ringleaders to work illegally on Thai fishing boats," he said in a press statement. "The victims had been rescued when the boats illegally fished over Indonesian maritime territory."

He said the victims will be repatriated to Cambodia soon.

Trafficked fishermen are frequently forced to work long hours and physically and psychologically abused. They are often unpaid and forced to serve on voyages for months or even years.

As they have no documentation, they are often unable to seek protection from the authorities in Thailand or abroad.

THAILAND'S fishing sector has a long line of troubles. The country is the world's third-largest seafood exporter, yet its waters are almost out of fish - [*The Straits Times*](#)

Its fleet is facing strong criticism for using slave labour and it is at risk of getting a "yellow card" from the European Union (EU). The government is scrambling to correct this.

A long-overdue update of a law dating back to 1948 covering its fisheries sector may signal a turning point.

Under the new law, the Department of Fisheries will have the power to board and inspect fishing vessels in Thai territory - something it did not have before.



Migrants at Sea:

Sekou Balde is living testimony to the increasing chaos and brutality that is sweeping Libya, as fears grow that the Islamic State terrorist group is seeking to establish a caliphate on the shores of the Mediterranean - [The Telegraph](#)

Lifting up his sweatshirt, he reveals the six stab wounds he received when he was attacked by a gang of four Libyan soldiers who demanded money after they raided the house near Tripoli where he was living rough with other African immigrants.

"They said 'where is your money?'. I said that I didn't have any. Then they attacked me. It was four of them against me. They came to where we were living at one in the morning. My brother was shot dead in front of me – boom, boom – as well as two of my friends," he said.

The 20-year-old recounted his experiences on a bare patch of rocky land outside the refugee reception centre on Lampedusa, the Italian island that represents the promised land for hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing persecution and war in Syria, Iraq, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

Libya, a country devoid of a functioning government and awash with weapons from the civil war, is now also the major take-off point for people-smuggling vessels across the Mediterranean, with boats full of hundreds of people departing almost daily.

Nearly 8,000 refugees and asylum seekers who have reached Italy so far this year, in what is normally supposed to be a quiet period for boat crossings because of rough winter weather.



Children as young as seven are travelling thousands of miles alone, across land and sea - some are sent by their parents who don't want them to grow up in repressive countries such as Eritrea. Others end up being turned into inexperienced captains of rickety boats crossing the Mediterranean - **BBC News**

This barren landscape is, for some, the start of a journey that will take them 4,000 miles, across desert and sea, along the world's most dangerous migration route.

Behind a metal gate, where security guards are checking people in, is a group of around 70 children sitting on benches in the shade. What's remarkable is that these children have travelled to Shagarab Camp alone. No parents, no family. And some are as young as seven years old.

They sit and listen as UNHCR official, Sarah Elliot, explains the dangers of the route they're travelling.

"How many of you walked here?" she asks.

One hand goes up, then another, there's some giggling, then everyone raises a hand.

"OK, where are you trying to get to?"

The children look at each other. Some of the girls are wearing colourful headscarves which they've wrapped across their mouths against the dust.

"Go on, where? Don't be shy," smiles Elliot. She's asked the same question many times before, and already knows the answer.

"Europe," a little boy finally shouts out.

"England," shouts another.

Elliot nods and smiles some more. "OK, I understand, but do you know how long it will take?"

None of the children respond, they just fidget and wait for an answer.

"It can take many months," says Elliot, "and do you know how dangerous it is?"

Some of the children stare at the floor, others whisper to each other.

"Because that's what I'm going to explain to you today," continues Elliot, "just how dangerous this route is."

When Rudi arrived on the Libyan coast, he'd run out of money. He describes fighting, and the sound of gunfire, and being terrified, as anyone of his age would be.

In the past, migrants would find work in the warehouses and meat factories of Tripoli to help pay their passage, but now there's none of that. Rudi pleaded with the people smugglers to take him for free, but they wouldn't. The only way he could get across, they told him, was if he captained the boat himself.



The statistics and stories are so extreme they barely register any more. In just five days, 4,200 migrants were plucked from rickety boats packed nightmarishly full as they made the perilous trip across the Mediterranean - the equivalent of one person every two minutes - **The Independent**

Many had spent dangerous months crossing deserts, dodging lethal militias and then trusting lives to rapacious traffickers. But as they slept outside in soggy clothes on a mid-winter night having made the promised lands of Europe, they were the lucky ones. For whatever their futures, at least they were alive. Dozens more drowned in those rough, icy waters, lonely deaths on the world's most lethal route for migrants. Their bodies lined an Italian harbour as hearses queued to take them to an old airport converted into a temporary morgue.

Another 29 people lost their lives after they had been rescued, dying of hypothermia on the decks of small coastguard vessels fighting valiantly to save them in extreme weather conditions.

But they are only Arabs and Africans, so their lives seem not to count for much in Europe. For that is the only conclusion that can be drawn from the cloud of silence over these ceaseless deaths as human beings risk everything in their search for the sort of stable lives taken for granted by people in Manchester, Milan or Munich. Yet many of these unfortunates might still be alive today were it not for crass political expediency in a climate of fear over immigration.

Four months ago Foreign Office minister Baroness Anelay announced Britain would not support search and rescue missions to stop migrants drowning in the Mediterranean.

The justification was simple: such services only encourage desperate people to make the treacherous trip. "We believe that they create an unintended pull factor, encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing and thereby leading to more tragic and unnecessary deaths," she told the House of Lords.

number of confirmed deaths, which soared from 12 over this same period last year to 373 this year - a rise of more than thirtyfold.

As the men knelt in the courtyard, stripped to their underwear, one of the people smugglers doused them with cold water while an armed guard looked on - [The Telegraph](#).

In another scene refugees, desperate to get to Europe, were beaten across the back with a long stick as they entered a building.

These scenes, recorded on the smart phones of other migrants, show the desperation of the thousands fleeing through Libya to Europe in recent days.

For the people smugglers, the exodus is increasingly lucrative. The casual violence recorded in the videos was intended to wring every last bit of money out of their human cargo, or out of their relatives.

The footage was taken by a 16-year-old Syrian who said he would have been killed had the smugglers discovered that he was filming their actions.

The victims are also thought to have been Syrian, escaping the war.

It is not known what became of them or whether they are still in Libya.

The violence appeared routine – in the foreground of the frame, another man appeared to be sweeping the yard with a broom.

The footage was given to the Telegraph by Tarek, a Syrian teenager who fled fighting in his home country.



A group of immigrants explain how they were tied up by Libyan captors before being sent to Lampedusa by boat (Chris Warde-Jones for the Telegraph)

Frontex has extended Joint Operation Triton in the Central Mediterranean until the end of 2015 to continue supporting Italy at its maritime borders and help save the lives of migrants stranded at sea - [Frontex Europa](#)

“All vessels and aircraft taking part in operation Triton actively contribute to the detection and rescue of people in distress and will now continue to do so for the rest of this year,” said Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri.

Since the launch of Joint Operation Triton on 1 November 2014, nearly 22,300 migrants have been saved, including more than 7,000 with the direct participation of vessels and aircraft taking part in the operation. Most of the search and rescue takes place in the international waters some 40 NM off the Libyan coast.

Although the possibility of extremists arriving in Malta as irregular immigrants by boat could not be excluded, the possibility was somewhat farfetched as these people had means to get to their destination without risking their life in the process, Home Affairs Minister Carmelo Abela said this evening - [Times of Malta](#)

Speaking on Times Talk, the minister said extremists were taking the opportunity of the lack of uncertainty in Libya to set up base in the country.

However, although one could not exclude the possibility of such extremists coming to Malta on boats with irregular migrants, this possibility was a bit farfetched as these people had better means of getting where they wanted to go without risking their lives on a dinghy.

Mr Abela said that although the possibility could not be excluded, it was very remote.

More than 3000 people are estimated to have died in the Mediterranean Sea last year. So what could European countries do to stop these deaths? The Inquiry hears evidence about the people smugglers described as the most ruthless travel agents on the planet, the Italian Navy rescue mission that’s been dramatically down-sized, and the claims that saving migrants at sea creates a “pull factor”.
Presenter: Neal Razzell. [Download Link](#)

The UN's refugee agency has told IHS Maritime that it supports continued sea rescues but that the safety of seafarers should be an equal priority for Europe - *IHS Maritime 360*.

A spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that the agency recognised the considerable "strain" that the current situation in the Mediterranean is placing on the international shipping, and "urged" that the "first priority must be to save lives and protect the safety of migrants, refugees, and the seafarers who are coming to their aid".

The agency said it did not have the expertise to comment on maritime security measures, but recognised the "commendable" actions of seafarers and coastguard personnel "often in very difficult and dangerous circumstances".

The spokesman emphasised that the agency called for a "continued respect for international law", and for ships and coastguards to continue to "assist anyone in distress at sea".

Asked about significant terror threats from organisations such as Islamic State, which has threatened to infiltrate migrant boats, the spokesman said that security requirements should be stepped up.

He said that the EU needed to upgrade migrant reception facilities to include "robust screening" measures as well as adequate welfare provision.

"The SAR (search-and-rescue) operations must be complemented by adequate arrangements for screening, which means [the ability to] identify the categories of people you are dealing with, where you can differentiate between and identify those seeking international protection and those who are not," said the spokesman. He said this is a "legitimate security concern" for states, but that it should not come at the expense of meeting the "health and welfare needs and human rights of those arriving by boats".



Islamic State militants in Libya have vowed to attack Europe. Meanwhile, boatloads of migrants flee the collapsing state for European shores. Could the Mediterranean migration mask an influx of militants? - [BBC News](#)

Italy and Egypt have warned that Islamic State (IS) militants could hide among thousands of migrants rescued by European patrols.

Both countries are troubled by the situation in Libya and have an interest in influencing it. However, neither has given any evidence to support its warnings.

The migrants are mostly from Syria and sub-Saharan Africa. The idea that they pose a threat evokes a vicious logic at odds with humanitarian imperatives: refugees bring conflict, as conflict breeds refugees.

What threat do the migrant boats pose? And what - if anything - can be done about it?

"The southern Crusader states... can be reached with ease by even a rudimentary boat," says the document, widely quoted in the British press after it was translated by the Quilliam Foundation, a counter-extremism think tank.

However, the Foundation says the authenticity of the document cannot be confirmed and its claims must be treated with caution - at most as propaganda rather than mission statement.

Islamic State may already be using migrant routes from Turkey, according to a BuzzFeed report last month. The report cites traffickers as saying that the fighters travel among asylum seekers aboard cargo ships.

Last week, Egypt's ambassador to the UK, Nasser Kamel, told the BBC it could be just a matter of time before the militants struck Europe by sea.

Egypt shares a porous border with Libya, and is fighting a homegrown Islamist insurgency. It has backed an anti-Islamist faction in Libya's civil conflict, launching air strikes against what it says are Islamic State targets there.

"Egypt is particularly keen to amplify the threat of Islamic State in Libya as it is desperately seeking approval for international intervention in the country," says Alison Pargeter, an analyst focusing on Libya for the Royal United Services Institute, a British defence think tank.

Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni was quoted by Ansa news agency last month as saying that there was a "considerable risk of terrorists infiltrating immigration flows".

In its latest statements, the Italian government has sought a middle ground: emphasising that the boats represent a humanitarian crisis while admitting that the terror threat cannot be ruled out.

According to veteran Italian journalist Andrea Purgatori, the migrant boats are not so much a terror threat as pawns in "a sort of game" - a means for Libyan forces to steer Italian involvement in their country.

Ms Pargeter says the claims of militants using migrant boats "seem rather overblown and exaggerated". Islamic State is a growing threat in Libya - but, she says, "its operational capacity is limited".

"It is a relatively small group... and is up against an array of other competing militias and armed groups, including those of a militant Islamist bent that are far more powerful."

Most people fleeing conflicts don't have legal channels of entering the EU for protection. They are therefore forced to risk their lives on makeshift boats - [*The Africa News*](#)

Last year more than 3,500 boat people lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea trying to cross to Europe.

Mr Micucci said it was wrong to think of managing immigration by simply reinforcing security on Europe's borders through Operation Triton and other activities of Frontex, the European border agency.

Apart from making it easier for migrants and refugees to come to Europe legally and safely, Mr Micucci urged the EU authorities to strengthen cooperation with immigrants' countries of origin.

Mr Micucci heads the Italian branch of Amref Health Africa, the biggest African health NGO. The organization which was founded 57 years ago in Kenya, promotes the right to health for all. It also fights against inequalities and helps poor children in Africa obtain basic education.

Amref Health Africa (formerly the African Medical and Research Foundation – AMREF) recently unveiled its new name and logo in Nairobi.

The number of asylum seekers in Germany is rising dramatically as thousands of refugees continue to make the perilous sea voyage from Africa to Europe.

Germany has proposed setting up asylum centers in North Africa - [*Die Welt*](#)

In view of the recurring refugee tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea, Germany's Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere has suggested setting up asylum centers in North Africa.

"In the long run, that solution would make sense," he told the daily Die Welt in an interview Thursday. He suggested creating an option in the North African countries for people to "come to Europe legally," which would at the same time put an end to the illegal transit to the continent. He added it might make sense to start with a pilot project of just one such center, adding that asylum applications could then be vetted and decided on the spot at in North Africa.

It's certainly not a new idea, says Germany's Pro Asyl refugee organization: it's been floated from time to time over the past ten years.

A rescue expert operating in the Mediterranean Sea told IHS Maritime that commercial ship rescues were essential but identified safety concerns, and said private search and rescue (SAR) operations could ease the burden - [***IHS Maritime 360***](#) Regina Catrambone, founder of and rescuer with the Malta-based Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS), said that on a scale of 10, "If coastguard rescue lies around the 5-10 mark [depending on the vessel/equipment used and from where they are deployed], commercial rescues probably lie around the 1-5 scale."

She added, "If a boat has a different purpose than that of rescuing, its equipment and crew are not optimised for saving lives. All seafarers have a duty to assist as best they can when a vessel is in distress, but when you're facing a boatload of 300 dehydrated men, women and children, none of whom are used to being at sea, it's a much more complicated matter."

MOAS currently has a 40 m expedition vessel, Phoenix, two remote piloted aircraft (drones), two rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIBs), and an experienced team of rescuers and paramedics. The team claims to be able to "locate, monitor, and assist vessels in distress".

The Phoenix, said Catrambone, is equipped for safe rescues: the RHIBs enable efficient transfer and the ship itself offers shelter; her equipment includes "enough" life-jackets so people that fall in the water during the rescue operation do not drown, a clinic "with all the necessary equipment", paramedics and doctors to treat vulnerable people, food, water and blankets.

Catrambone, who emphasised that commercial vessels should not be left "out of the equation" and "must be utilised to save lives" as a "moral and a legal obligation", said she has had positive experiences of collaborating with merchant ships during rescues.

Libya

Libya has resumed pumping crude from its southeastern Sarir and Messla fields to Hariga port at a rate of around 30,000 barrels a day, an industry source said on Monday, bolstering a potential recovery in exports after Zueitina port opened at the weekend - [***Marine Link***](#)

Higher oil exports, which had fallen to a trickle as violent conflict between two rival governments and parliaments disrupted supplies, may bring in badly needed revenues for the OPEC member as it faces a growing public finance crisis.

"So far small volumes are flowing," said Omran Zwei, spokesman for state oil firm operator AGOCO. "The pipeline is holding."

An industry source said volumes had reached 30,000 barrels on Monday, slightly down from 40,000 barrels hit on Sunday due to a failure of a power turbine station on Monday at the Messla field connected to the Sarir field. The turbine was being fixed, the source said.

Libyan authorities are unable to halt the illicit trade in oil or the flow of weapons in and out of the country, and they need an international maritime force to help, United Nations sanctions monitors said in a new report - [***Reuters***](#)

The confidential report by the U.N. Security Council's Panel of Experts on Libya, first seen by Reuters on Thursday, will likely increase pressure on major world powers to consider intervention to stop the North African state from spinning further out of control.

"The capacity of Libya to physically prevent (arms) transfers is almost nonexistent and there is no authorization to enforce the arms embargo on the high seas or in the air as there were during the 2011 revolution," the panel wrote in the report.

The 15-nation Security Council imposed an arms embargo on Libya in 2011 to stop delivery of weapons to the government of former leader Muammar Gaddafi during his crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations. Under the embargo, the government can import munitions with approval of a council committee.

"The absence of universal enforcement of the embargo, the very high demand for (arms) materiel and the resources and support available to fighting parties to procure materiel indicate that continuing large scale illicit trafficking is inevitable," the report said.

Egypt

The infrastructure cost of the Suez Canal Development Project in Egypt is likely to reach US\$15 billion - Port Technology

PTI previously reported that the Suez Canal had reached 67.5% completion, and a comprehensive plan for the project will be announced within the next two weeks.

The Suez Canal project will include the development of 7.6m ha of land around the canal into an international and industrial logistics hub to attract more ships and generate more income, according to Trade Arabia.

It is hoped that the new canal will expand trade along what is the fastest shipping route between Europe and Asia.



Egypt is funding new dam in South Sudan with 2bn cubic metres of water storage capacity, a first of several dams to follow, according to state-owned Al-Ahram - Daily News Egypt

In spite of disputes over Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam over claims of affecting its water share, Egypt is building the dam in Wau, the capital of the Western Bahr el-Ghazal State in South Sudan.

The dams will be small, not affecting Egypt's water share at all, said head of the Sudan and Nile Basin Studies Program at Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies Hany Raslan. The dam is being built to help with the infrastructure and developmental bases of South Sudan, providing drinking water to about 500,000 people in Wau, as well as enough irrigation water to grow 30,000 feddans. The Wau dam will also contribute to the regularity of river navigation throughout the year, reported Al-Ahram.

South Sudan has a huge amount of excess water, 500bn cubic meters per year. The water is usually wasted in the formation of swamps, forests, and the Nile flower. Egypt is helping South Sudan utilise this water through building dams and marines, Raslan said.

And Finally...

Boarding a tugboat in search of a new life, four-year-old Tan Le's mother was clutching one precious possession: a vial of poison - [*Daily Mail*](#).

In the highly possible circumstance of a pirate boarding the vessel, she would feed it to her two daughters and her mother, before taking it herself.

It was a precaution so many had taken before her as they fled squalor in Vietnam for hope in Australia.

Little did they know, as the family huddled together crashing over the China Sea, that one of the little girls would become one of the science world's most successful CEOs with a home in San Francisco.

Tan Le is the founder and chief executive of EMOTIV, a bioinformatics company that studies the brain and teaches computers to think for themselves.

It is a world, a life, a career she could not have imagined growing up as an Asian outcast in Footscray, a working-class suburb of Melbourne.

Speaking to family history enthusiasts at the RootsTech conference in Salt Lake City on Thursday, Le described her ascension from life as an immigrant with nothing - and taunts of 'slit-eye'; graffiti screaming 'go home Asian'.

She told the Deseret News her success is thanks to 'humility with daring' - traits she accrued growing up.

The journey, both physical and psychological, that she went through with her mother, grandmother, and younger sister gave her the strength and confidence to push boundaries.

Describing the start of that journey, aboard the boat, she told a Ted conference: 'I don't remember the pirates who came many times, but were bluffed by the bravado of the men on our boat, or the engine dying and failing to start for six hours.

'But I do remember the lights on the oil rig off the Malaysian coast and the young man who collapsed and died, the journey's end too much for him, and the first apple I tasted, given to me by the men on the rig. No apple has ever tasted the same.'



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

Hijack:

- **SE Asia** - Seven pirates armed with guns and knives in a small boat boarded and hijacked a Thailand-flagged chemical tanker, *Phubai Pattra 1*, underway at 2130 LT in position 02:08.6N - 104:39.2E, around 18nm SE of Pulau Aur, Malaysia. All crew taken hostage. The pirates transferred all the fuel oil cargo into another vessel. They stole crew properties and ship's cash and escaped on 21 Feb. SSAS alert activated, all crew safe. Tanker boarded by MMEA patrol craft for investigation. Reported (IMB) 20 Feb
- **SE Asia** - At around 2313 LT on 23 Feb, Philippines CG received information that there was a ship that had ran aground in Barangay Cabuaya, Mati City, Davao Oriental, Philippines. The Coast Guard Station Mati, Field Station South Eastern Mindanao and Naval Intelligence Security Group (NISG) proceeded to the location of the grounded ship on 24 Feb at about 0830 LT. Around 1127 LT, the Philippine authorities verified that the grounded ship was indeed the missing *MT Rehobot*. Initial investigation revealed that there was sign of spillage of unknown substance found onboard the ship. The events leading up to this point are undetermined.

Attack/Robbery Attempt:

- **SE Asia** - Three robbers boarded a Malta-flagged bulk carrier, *LBC Earth*, underway at 0430 LT on position, around 3nm East of Pulau Karimun Kecil, Indonesia. Alarm raised and crew mustered. Seeing the crew alertness, the robbers escaped empty handed. Reported (IMB) 25 Feb.
- **SE Asia** - Duty engine crew onboard a Hong Kong, China-flagged bulk carrier, *Amber Beverly*, underway noticed two robbers in the engine room at 0515 LT in position, off Pulau Karimun Kecil, Indonesia. He immediately informed the bridge. Alarm raised and crew mustered. Seeing the crew alertness, the robbers escaped without stealing anything. Reported (IMB) 21 Feb.
- **SE Asia** - LATE Report | While sailing, seven perpetrators boarded starboard side of Panama-flagged bulk carrier, *Sunny Eternity*, at 0515 LT in position, approx 1.9nm Northeast of Pulau Karimun Kecil, Indonesia. The alarm was raised and all 20 crew mustered inside the accommodation. Authorities informed. Reported (ReCAAP) 16 Feb.
- **S Amer (A)** - [Boarding/Shooting] Two armed robbers boarded an anchored Netherlands-flagged sailing yacht, *Lios Alvar*, near position, off the Sao Luis Yacht Club in northeast Brazil. During the course of the robbery two shots were fired with the Dutch owner of the yacht shot in the chest and reported to have died on the scene. His wife jumped overboard and escaped reaching shore to report the incident to local police. The robbers left the yacht, without taking anything, leaving in a small motor boat with one other robber onboard. No arrests made to date. Reported 15 Feb.

Suspicious Activity/Advisory:

- **Red Sea** - Master reported being approached by 2 white hulled skiffs containing 2 POB and 3 POB wearing yellow rain coats at 0846 UTC in position 12:52N - 043:11E, approx 7nm off Eritrea coast, S Red Sea. Initially both skiffs were parallel to the vessel on their stbd side at a distance of 2nm. One skiff closed the vessel's stbd bow at speeds of 15kts to within 0.5nm. AST showed weapons, alarm was sounded, skiffs followed for 5 mins and discontinued their approach. No weapons or ladders sighted. Vessel is Safe. Reported 27 Feb.
- **Red Sea** - MV reported 2 white skiffs with 5 POB in each skiff wearing yellow raincoats on the port side at 300 metres at 1035 UTC in position 13:03N - 043:06E, Southern Red Sea. Conditions saw visibility reduced to 2nm. Skiffs came towards the vessel at speed, embarked AST fired 5 warning shots. Immediately the skiffs turned away into the mist then reappeared 30 mins later on the stbd side at a distance of 2nm. Both skiffs then moved ahead of the vessel and continued outbound from the vessel. Possible sighting of ladders on one skiff but unable to confirm due to poor vis. Vessel is Safe. Reported 25 Feb.
- **Gulf of Guinea** - Tanker reportedly boarded at 0515 LT in position 04:16N - 007:56E, close to Idaho Field, approx 17nm South of Akwa Ibom. Reportedly suffered engine problems. Possible boarding resulting in theft of some equipment on deck prior to escaping in anticipation of security vessels arriving. Reported 22 Feb.
- **Gulf of Aden** - Yacht master reported sighting 2 dhows, 4 POB on each, at 1nm astern of vessel at 1410 UTC in position 11:53N - 043:41E, approx 36nm Northeast of Djibouti, Gulf of Aden. Dhow POB were trying to get vessels attention, shouting to indicate something was wrong with their main engine. Master responded could not help. Both dhows started to move, master increased his vessel's speed. After following the vessel for 20 minutes, the dhows stopped in the water. No ladders or weapons sighted. Vessel is Safe. Reported 21 Feb.
- **Arabian Sea** - MV reported approached at speed by 3 white hulled skiffs containing 4 POB at 0340 UTC in position 20:26.56N - 059:05.8E, approx 9nm off Masirah Island, Oman, Arabian Sea. A brown mother vessel also sighted covered by canvas at a distance of 2.5 nm. One skiff approached MV at speed to within 1.1 cables on port quarter. MV took evasive measures, AST showed weapons and lead skiff slowed, then skiffs ceased approach. No ladders or weapons sighted. Vessel is Safe. Reported 21 Feb



Maritime Situation Map for HoA/IOR 21 – 27 Feb 2015



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