



Oslo, 31.10.2020

DNK IOC MONTHLY THREAT ASSESSMENT – NOVEMBER 2020

Executive Summary

	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	CRITICAL
	LOW: *Hostility towards merchant vessels is UNLIKELY	MODERATE: *Hostility towards merchant vessels is LIKELY	HIGH: *Hostility towards merchant vessels is HIGHLY LIKELY	CRITICAL: *Hostility towards merchant vessels is EXPECTED IMMINENTLY
Gulf of Guinea Page 2	Pirates (*Cargo Theft) Gulf of Guinea →	Pirates (*K&R) Gulf of Guinea except the Central Part →	Pirates (*K&R) Central Part of the Gulf of Guinea →	
Arabian Gulf / Persian Gulf – Gulf of Oman Page 5		Regular Forces (Iran) (*Hybrid Attack) →		
Yemeni TTW & Southern Red Sea Page 7	Insurgents (Houthi) (*Attack) →			
	Terrorists (AQAP/IS-Y) (*Attack); Southern Red Sea ↓			
Western Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden & Western Arabian Sea Page 8	Insurgents (Houthi) / Regular Forces (Iran) (*Attack) Gulf of Aden- Western Arabian Sea →	Insurgents (STC) (*Attack) Gulf of Aden- Western Arabian Sea →		
	Terrorists (AQAP/IS-Y) (*Attack); Gulf of Aden- Western Arabian Sea ↓			
	Pirates (*K&R) →			
SOMS, Natuna Sea & Western Java Sea Page 12	Pirates (*Armed Robbery); Strait of Malacca →	Pirates (*Armed Robbery); Natuna Sea & Western Java Sea →	Pirates (*Armed Robbery); Strait of Singapore →	
Libyan TTW Page 14	Regular Forces / Insurgents (LNA/GNA) (*Kinetic Attack) ↓			

→ Indicates Threat Forecast in SHORT – MEDIUM term (>30 days)
Info Cut-Off DATE: 31 October 2020 1000 UTC

Threat Actor Category (Name) (*Hostility category): Terrorists (Kidnap for Ransom (K&R) / Attack), Pirates (Hijack / K&R / Cargo Theft / Armed Robbery / Theft), Insurgents (Attack), Regular Forces (Kinetic Attack (use of lethal force) / Hybrid Attack (combination of lethal and non-lethal force) / Seizure / Exercises / Harassment / Aggressive Approach), Activists (Disruption / Denial / Delay), Other Threat Actors (Hijack)

Changes from previous month:

- Threat from TERRORISTS (*Attack) in the Southern Red Sea has changed to a **DECREASING** forecast
- Threat from TERRORISTS (*Attack) in the Gulf of Aden-Western Arabian Sea has changed to a **DECREASING** forecast
- Threat from INSURGENTS (*Attack) in the Yemen TTW and Southern Res Sea has changed to **LOW** with a **STABLE** forecast
- Threat from PIRATES (*Armed Robbery) in the Singapore Strait has changed to a **STABLE** forecast
- Threat from REGULAR FORCES/INSURGENTS (*Kinetic Attack) in the Libya TTW has changed to **LOW** with a **DECREASING** forecast

Gulf of Guinea (GoG)

(Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation) On 5 October 2020, a statement was issued warning that the Nigerian navy would arrest any ship that was not compliant with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidelines, Article 21 of Resolution A.917 (22), detailing that the Automatic Identification System (AIS) is not to be switched off when ships are underway or at anchor, except in a situation where the continual operation of AIS might compromise the safety or security of the ship.

(Nigerian Defence Headquarters) On 6 October 2020 during early hours, the five crewmembers from RIO MITONG and DJIBLOHO were released in River State (Nigeria) after 150 days in captivity of Pirates (Kidnap-for-Ransom - K&R).

(DNK Source) On 17 October at an unknown time, the Master and the Chief engineer from the Ghana-flagged fishing trawler AP 703, both being of Korean nationality, were released in Bayelsa (Nigeria) after 45 days in captivity of Pirates (K&R).

(DNK Source) On 17 October 2020 between 04:35 and 04:50 LT, the Marshall Island-flagged LNG tanker METHANE PRINCESS was attacked by at least five perpetrators while at berth at the Punta Europa Terminal at Malabo (Equatorial Guinea). One crewmember of Philippine nationality, who was standing guard on the gangway was taken hostage together with two terminal employees. The two terminal employees later managed to escape with minor injuries. The remaining crew managed to muster safely into the citadel, and when the alarm was raised the perpetrators departed with the one kidnapped crew in a boat.

(Clearwater Dynamics/Risk Intelligence) On 17 October 2020 at 20:43 LT, the Hong Kong-flagged tanker PT NILE was attacked and boarded by several perpetrators 118 nm South of Lomé (Togo). The crew shut down the vessel and mustered in the citadel. Next morning around 08:00 LT the Togolese Navy boarded the vessel and the crew retreated from the citadel. The vessel later proceeded towards Lomé (Togo) with only a few portable items from the bridge missing.

(Open Sources) On 21 October 2020 around 11:00 LT, protesters of the #EndSars movement set fire to the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) headquarters on Marina Road, Lagos Island, (Nigeria).

(Clearwater Dynamics/Risk Intelligence) On 22 October 2020 at 08:58 LT, the Panama-flagged tanker ERRINA was attacked and boarded by numerous perpetrators 130 nm South of Lagos (Nigeria). All crew members were able to muster in the citadel and several naval vessels started searching for the vessel, as she had not been shining AIS for some days and the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) alert had an incorrect position putting her 183 nm West-Northwest of Sao Tome. Early morning on the 18 October 2020, the vessel was located by Italian naval and airborne assets, and the crew later retreated from the citadel after arrival of more security assets. Numerous items from the bridge and belongings from crew cabins had been stolen, combined with gunshot damages to the bridge area.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: The Nigerian Piracy problem (primarily K&R) in the Gulf of Guinea continues to be a huge security challenge in the marine environment globally. Two failed kidnappings post successful boarding's at sea and one successful K&R attack towards a LNG tanker while alongside a LNG facility in October 2020, indicate that Pirate Action Groups (PAG)s **LIKELY** continue to adapt to the presence and activity of numerous new naval vessels and a booming market for Security Escort Vessels (SEV) in the Nigerian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

SEVs based out of Nigeria and Cameroon, continue to display an operational pattern that indicates their **LIKELY** operational focus primarily is towards offshore oil installations and escort voyages in/out of Bonny and Lagos (Nigeria). The Nigerian navy and the SEVs inability to operate at weeks in the deep

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water of Gulf of Guinea, and outside Nigerian EEZ, open for Pirates seeking new hunting grounds also further away from the Niger Delta and outside the Nigerian EEZ.

The suspicious approach towards SPAR CANIS on 22 September 2020, indicated that the PAG was **LIKELY** being fed AIS information on targets by someone on land with access to open or commercial Maritime AIS services. The use of open AIS signals has also previously **LIKELY** been exploited by pirates searching for targets in the Gulf of Guinea, representing a dilemma in regards of safety versus security for merchant vessels operating in the Gulf of Guinea. Another similar safety-security dilemma is the routine to turn off ship radars during loading of tankers and during Ship-To-Ship (STS) transfer of bunkers making the crew more or less blind to incoming skiffs during darkness, also a security weakness **HIGHLY LIKELY** having been exploited successfully by PAGs on numerous occasions in the Gulf of Guinea.

The successful kidnap of one crew member at a LNG land-based export facility in Equatorial Guinea on 17 October 2020, also highlight that even patrolled waters and terminals in neighbouring countries face a Pirate (K&R) threat. This as PAGs operating out of Nigeria **HIGHLY LIKELY** also seek waters that have traffic density in order to succeed (target rich environments), areas where there have not been attacks for some time and where security **LIKELY** have become complacent, or attack targets of opportunity while transiting towards or from their primary hunting zones.

#EndSARS is a decentralized social movement against police brutality in Nigeria. The slogan calls for an end to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a controversial unit of the Nigerian Police Force with a long record of abuses. The online protests started in 2017 as a Twitter campaign. After a revitalization in October 2020, mass demonstrations and fire attacks towards police stations and governmental buildings, looting of storages of food and Covid-19 medical equipment, are now occurring throughout Nigeria. The Nigerian Government has responded by changing name from SARS into SWAT, and the Nigerian Army has been deployed to control the demonstrations. The ongoing riots are **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** to cause a direct threat towards merchant vessels, but any land-operations in the cities in Southern Nigeria will **LIKELY** be affected.

Several PAGs with supporting Pirate-networks in the Niger Delta are **HIGHLY LIKELY** still operational and at least one crew member kidnapped from a merchant vessel is currently held hostage. Pirate-networks remain committed for financial gains through ransom payments. Recruitment to Pirate-networks remains **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** a major challenge, as risk/reward will trump unemployment and poverty in a long term as Nigerians are now also facing difficulties due to the #EndSARS uprising and a less brutal Police resulting in increased crime. New K&R operations will therefore **HIGHLY LIKELY** occur out to 200 nm from the shore in the Central part of the Gulf of Guinea in November, and **LIKELY** occur outside the Central part of the Gulf of Guinea in November.

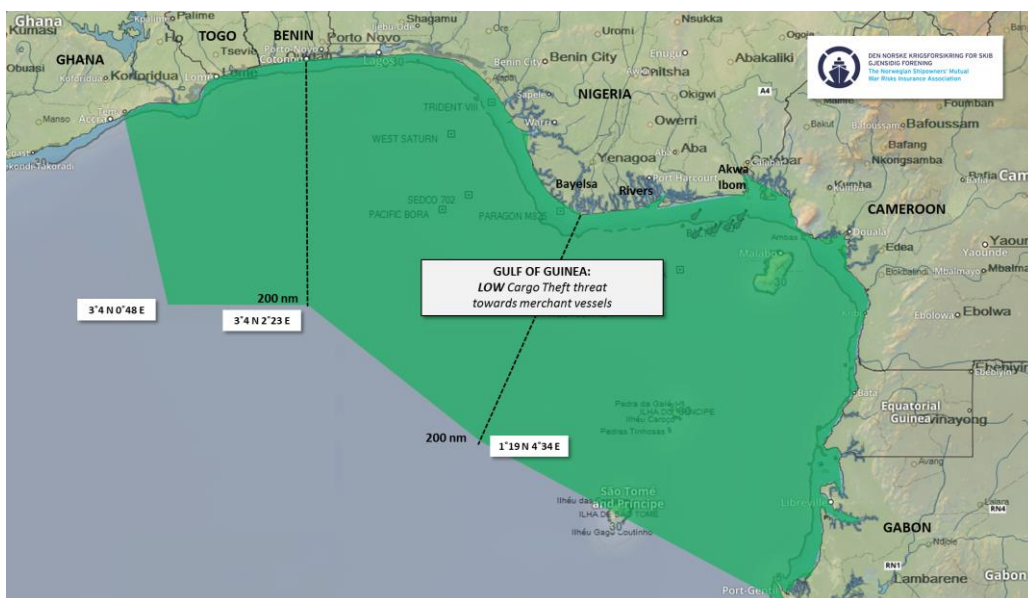
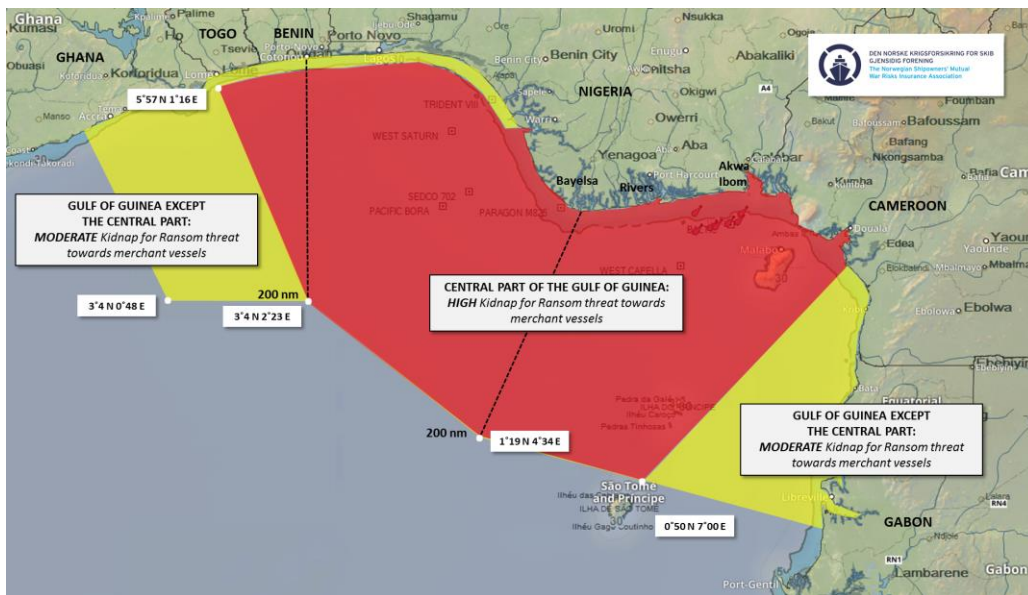
One of the operational Nigeria-based PAGs has extended operational reach as it has **LIKELY** still support from a smaller local tanker-barge acting as a support vessel with also capability to offload refined cargo. As the number of navy vessels and SEVs are increasing by the month in the coastal zones, the focus on land-operations by Nigerian security services are maintained, and K&R remain lucrative for the Nigerian pirate networks, logistical complex offshore cargo thefts are **UNLIKELY** to be the preferred method for a financial gain. It is therefore **UNLIKELY** that this PAG will aim to conduct Hijack for Cargo Theft attacks out to 200 nm off Tema (Ghana) or off Libreville (Gabon) in November.

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The threat from PIRATES (K&R) towards merchant vessels in the CENTRAL PART OF THE GULF OF GUINEA from out to 200 nm off Lome (Togo) to out to 200 nm off Douala (Cameroon) is HIGH – with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

The threat from PIRATES (K&R) towards merchant vessels in the GULF OF GUINEA except THE CENTRAL PART out to 200 nm off Tema (Ghana) and off Libreville (Gabon) is MODERATE - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

The threat from PIRATES (Cargo Theft) towards merchant vessels in the GULF OF GUINEA out to 200 nm off Tema (Ghana) and off Libreville (Gabon) is LOW - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.



Arabian Gulf / Persian Gulf (AG/PG) - Gulf of Oman (GoO)

There have been no reported security incidents related to merchant vessels in the Arabian Gulf/Persian Gulf (AG/PG) or the Gulf of Oman (GoO) during October 2020.

(Open Sources) On 23 September 2020, Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGC-N) opened a new military base, Shaheed Rahbari, in the port of Sirik (Iran). The navy base is located to the East of the Strait of Hormuz. IRGC General Salami inaugurated the base in a ceremony and stated that the base would give Iran full control of all traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. (Late reporting.)

(United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations - UKMTO) On 5 October 2020, the UKMTO released a warning to the shipping industry about a live military exercise to be conducted by Iranian forces in the Strait of Hormuz, off Sirik (Iran) between 5 and 6 October. And on 14 October 2020, UKMTO followed up with a warning pertaining another live military exercise to be conducted by Iranian forces off Sirik between 14-21 October 2020.

(Open Sources) on 13 October 2020, the United Nations (UN) weapons embargo against Iran expired. The United States' (US) administration claimed that the embargo remained and took action to implement sanction against the weapons industry's ability to commit to agreements with Iran.

(Open Sources) On 14 October 2020, Iran's Information Technology Organization (ITO) announced that two separate government institutions had been targeted in new cyber-attacks the same week. One of the institutions being the country's port infrastructure. As a result, some of Iran's government bodies shut down their internet services.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: The security situation in the maritime domain in the Arabian Gulf/Persian Gulf (AG/PG) and Gulf of Oman (GoO) has stabilized over the last months. With scattered reporting of intimidation and aggressive approaches by IRGC-N. There has however not been significant progress in the relationship between Iran, their proxies and the US with their allies, thus the threat of escalation **HIGHLY LIKELY** remains. The reported cyber-attacks against Iran in mid-October is one of the ways the conflict has, and **HIGHLY LIKELY** will continue to manifest itself. Albeit difficult to attribute some reports have indicated that this **LIKELY** is a continuation of the cyber-warfare seen in the spring and summer of 2020 with tit-for-tat attacks between Iran and Israel.

Further, the presidential election in the US on 3 November 2020 will **HIGHLY LIKELY** influence the security situation in AG/PG and GoO indirectly. In the short term after the election, tension is prone to increase as Iran **LIKELY** will take advantage of the interim period between the election and the inauguration of the elected President in January 2021, regardless of who wins. Albeit if Joe Biden wins the Iranians will in the longer run be **UNLIKELY** to risk a deterioration of the relationship with the US, given that they from their perspective, **LIKELY** would perceive the probability of an improved relationship with the US to be higher with Biden as the President of the US.

Another aspect of the strategic conflict which has been on the agenda during October, is the expiration of the UN conventional weapons embargo against Iran, which according to the US still remains, but unilaterally as the UN has not agreed to the US terms of the extension, and given the expiration of the embargo were one of the terms set in the nuclear deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - JCPOA) abandoned by the US administration in 2018. The lifting of the embargo will **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** have any implication on maritime security in the near future.

The inauguration of the new IRGC-N base, and the timing of it is **LIKELY** a strategic move by the Iranians, as the base has been in the making for several years. Moreover, the information campaign in Iran around the opening, and General Salamis statements are **LIKELY** meant as a message to the US and all others

that Iran now has the basing and the intent to close off the Strait of Hormuz if threatened. Additionally, IRGC-N has **LIKELY** also increased their capability to do so, not only within the Strait, but also on the Gulf of Oman side with the operationalization of the navy base in Sirik. The immediately followed exercises during October, with both **LIKELY** having a combined operational-test and show-of-force justification, should also be understood in this context. The opening of the base, albeit **UNLIKELY** to have an immediate effect on the threat towards merchant shipping, does therefore highlight Iran's **HIGHLY LIKELY** expanding capability and their continued use of the maritime domain in the ongoing haggling and to face for them perceived threats.

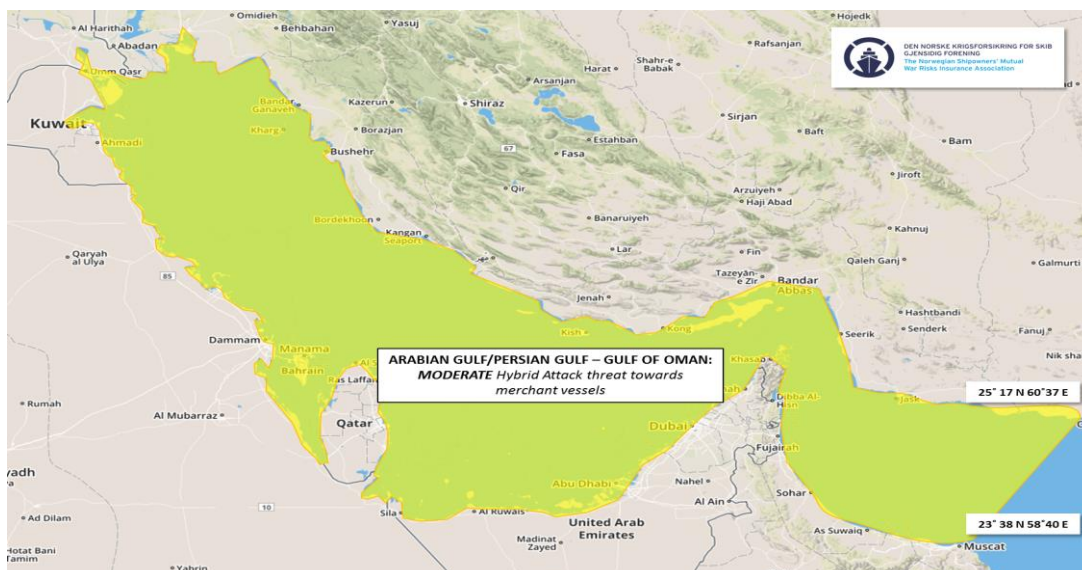
Exercises like the ones seen in October will **LIKELY** continue to occur regularly. They are **UNLIKELY** to pose a direct threat to merchant vessels, however it can **LIKELY** influence merchant vessels operating close to future exercise areas as sea through GPS interference and jamming, both towards specifically targeted merchant vessels but also towards merchant vessels in general steaming North of Abu Musa in AG/PG, through Strait of Hormuz and in Iranian territorial waters in the Gulf of Oman. As has been the case over the last 15 months, merchant vessels perceived as targets of opportunity will also **LIKELY** be harassed by the Iranians in November, and especially by the IRGC - Navy (IRGC-N). Harassment of merchant vessels in November will **LIKELY** include but not be limited to, confusing and threatening VHF traffic, aggressive approaches by Fast Attack Craft (FAC) and shorter detentions of vessels and crew.

As in previous reporting periods we also underscore the persistent threat in the cyber domain as assessed by Control Risks in the DNK – CR Monthly Cyber Threat Assessment November 2020;

- ***The threat from Iranian cyber espionage operations against the maritime sector is HIGH - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.***
- ***The threat from Iranian disruptive operations against the maritime sector is HIGH - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.***
- ***The threat from Iranian GNSS interference in the Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman is HIGH - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.***

DNK IOC assesses the physical threat to merchant vessels in November to be summarised as:

The threat from REGULAR FORCES (Iran) (Hybrid Attack) towards merchant vessels in the ARABIAN GULF/PERSIAN GULF and GULF OF OMAN is MODERATE - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.



Yemeni territorial waters & Southern Red Sea

There have been no reported security incidents related to merchant vessels in Yemeni territorial waters (TTW) along the Southern Red Sea coast during October 2020.

(Saudi Arabia's Press Agency - SPA) On 4 October 2020, a missile reportedly landed in a village close to Jizan (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - KSA). The missile was reportedly launched by the Houthi-Insurgents. No casualties were reported after the attack.

(Open Sources) On 6 October 2020, a KSA news agency claimed that the KSA led coalition had intercepted a Water Borne Improvised Explosive Device (WBIED) close to the port in Saleef (Yemen). The WBIED was reportedly launched by the Houthi-Insurgents.

(Open Sources) On 23 October 2020, a KSA news agency claimed that the KSA air force had intercepted two explosive laden drones launched by the Houthi-Insurgents towards KSA.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: October has seen a significant rise in clashes and violence between the Houthi-Insurgents and the pro-government forces supported by the KSA led coalition in Yemen, and specifically in Hudaydah. The fighting, mostly airstrikes and shelling **HIGHLY LIKELY** increase the threat towards anyone moving on land in and around Hudaydah. However, the threat towards merchant vessels is **UNLIKELY** to be affected by this activity.

The reports concerning maritime security in October has continued along the same lines as previously including KSA announcements of dismantling WBIEDs off the coast off Hudaydah and Saleef. Although difficult to verify, the threat from WBIEDs off the coast of Hudaydah **LIKELY** remains but these weapons will **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** be targeted towards civilian merchant vessels in November if they cannot be linked to the KSA led coalition, either by flag or by trade.

Houthi-Insurgents are **UNLIKELY** to launch any type of attack against international merchant vessels in November as the consequences of alienating the international community, and give rise to further negative attention, will have a further aggravate to their current standing. The Houthi-Insurgents have experienced increased pressure from the international community since the latest round of negotiations led by the UN faltered, but also as the status of FSO SAFER off the coast in Hudaydah has still not been solved. In addition, there is increased reporting of **LIKELY** infighting among the leadership of the Houthi-Insurgents. Adding this to the rise in kinetic attacks in the central and Western provinces of the country, it is **UNLIKELY** that the Houthi-Insurgents will open a new front in the maritime domain in November.

The reported aerial attacks against KSA, a continuation of the tactics employed by the Houthi-Insurgents, will however **HIGHLY LIKELY** continue in November. The aerial attacks regardless of type, missile or drone, will **LIKELY** target high value targets in KSA, and specifically the port city of Jizan will **LIKELY** remain a favoured target. Thus, albeit **UNLIKELY** to pose a direct threat towards merchant vessels, trade operating along the Southern coast of KSA could **LIKELY** indirectly be exposed to a threat of being hit by missiles by mistake.

The sea mine threat which has been reported on intermittently since the beginning of the conflict in Yemen, East of Harnish Islands, South of Hudaydah **LIKELY** remains, as there have been no major reported de-mining efforts conducted recently.

The terrorists operating out of Yemen, namely the UN terror-listed groups Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State-Yemen (IS-Y), are **UNLIKELY** to stage attacks against merchant vessels in the Southern Red Sea in November.

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The threat from INSURGENTS (Houthis) (Attack) towards merchant vessels in YEMENI TTW and SOUTHERN RED SEA is LOW - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER. Merchant vessels steaming East of the Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC) and merchant vessels linked to KSA are exposed to a higher threat.

The threat from TERRORISTS (Attack) against merchant vessels in the SOUTHERN RED SEA is LOW - with a DECREASING forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

Western Indian Ocean (WIO), Gulf of Aden (GoA) & Western Arabian Sea

Gulf of Aden (GoA) & Western Arabian Sea; Regular Forces, Insurgents & Terrorists

(DNK Sources) On 3 October 2020 at 23:00 LT, the Malta-flagged tanker SYRA experienced one or two explosions while loading crude-oil at Al-Nashima export terminal (Yemen). MT SYRA departed Al-Nashima export terminal subsequently and sailed towards Fujairah (United Arab Emirates - UAE) to evaluate her damages. Reportedly no crew were harmed, but at least some ballast-tanks were damaged below the waterline. Oil-spills from the vessel was observed post attack.

(Clearwater Dynamics/Risk Intelligence/DNK Source) On 4 October 2020 at 08:00 LT, the Malta-flagged tanker ANDROMEDA was approached by two black and green coloured skiffs with four people onboard each while steaming approximately 37 nm South-East of Mukalla (Yemen). The skiffs approached the tanker within 200 meters. The onboard security team shot warning shots against the skiffs upon which the skiffs aborted their approach. The vessel and crew were reported as safe.

(Open Sources) On 16 October 2020, reportedly the Southern Transitional Council (STC) was preventing the new Aden police chief from assuming his duties in Aden (Yemen). The police chief and a Governor had recently been appointed by the Internationally recognised Government of Yemen (GoY). This as STC and GoY had reached an understanding in August 2020 that GoY would return to Aden, the interim Capital of GoY, being a part of the framework of the Riyadh agreement signed in November 2019.

(Open Sources) On 25 October 2020, an attack was reportedly conducted against the oil pipeline running through from central Yemen to Al-Nashima export terminal in Shabwah province (Yemen). The attack reportedly occurred in the Habban district in the Shabwah province at the 91 km mark.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: The rise of incidents off the coast of Southern Yemen in October is **LIKELY** a manifestation of the conflict between STC and GoY which until recently has been land-based exclusively. Specifically, the rights and control of the oil, and the export of the oil has remained a contested subject. The escalation seen over the last months surrounds the oil export terminal in Al-Nashima and the LNG terminal in Belhaf. The terminal in Belhaf is closed, whilst the Al-Nashima terminal was opened earlier this year after undergoing repairs and is controlled by the GoY. The STC are opposed to any oil export, and control over the pipeline has therefore been challenged by them.

The attack against MT SYRA at the export terminal in Al-Nashima while loading oil, represented a sudden change to the exclusive land-based characteristics of the STC-GoY conflict. Although the information still not complete the attack on MT SYRA was **LIKELY** both deliberate and sophisticated and **LIKELY** aimed at sending a strong message to GoY and to hamper oil export. Drifting sea mines is **HIGHLY LIKELY** excluded as the weapon used, due to the damage being below the waterline and no known minefields in the area, but a more specific identification of the weapon is currently not possible to determine.

Additionally, the attack against the pipeline running from central Yemen to Al-Nashima occurred in an area with significant STC influence. Another group with **LIKELY** influence in that area is the Shabwani elites, a militia trained and funded by the UAE, operating in the Shabwah province, the home of both the

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Belhaf and Al-Nashima terminals. Al Qaida in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) have historically also held influence in these areas. However as has been reported previously, the terrorist affiliated networks have been stretched in operation against Houthi-Insurgents in Al-Bayda and is currently **UNLIKELY** to have neither the capability nor the intent to launch this type of attack in this area of the country at this time. Thus, the attack against the pipeline was **LIKELY** directly or indirectly through local tribal groups, also staged by the STC or their allies with the intent to temporarily disrupt the GoY's export of oil.

Further, the suspicious approach against MT ANDROMEDA off Mukallah on 4 October 2020, which was steaming from Shuhayr, East of Mukallah, was still in the Yemeni EEZ at the time of the approach which makes it **HIGHLY LIKELY** that the perpetrators came from Southern Yemen. Specifically, it is **LIKELY** that the skiffs approaching MT ANDROMEDA arrived from Mukallah, or the vicinity of the city, where there is a known presence of the type of skiffs involved, green and black in colour. Mukallah, the largest port city in this part of Yemen, although officially under the control of GoY, has been both economically and politically under the defacto influence of the UAE and the city **HIGHLY LIKELY** still remains under a certain influence of the UAE. Although the UAE is a part of the coalition led by KSA to support GoY in the fight against the Houthi-Insurgents, they are in the realm of Southern Yemen the closest ally of the STC and will **HIGHLY LIKELY** support and/or influence the STC in all matters concerning influence in the Southern Yemen. Other groups operating in Mukallah include GoY and AQAP. It is **UNLIKELY** that GoY would harass merchant vessels trading on Yemen, even if they have the capability to do so, as this **LIKELY** would have a negative effect on a needed economic development. AQAP on the other hand, would **LIKELY** have the intent, but it is questionable if they currently have the capability and harassment is **UNLIKELY** to be a part of AQAPs modus operandi when operating at sea in the Gulf of Aden.

The incidents involving MT SYRA and MT ANDROMEDA were **LIKELY** staged directly by STC or by locals loyal to STC, with **LIKELY** either direct or indirect external support, given both the capability to operate in these waters, the **LIKELY** sophistication of the attack, and that they are the actor with a stated intent to hamper GoY's oil and gas exports in Southern Yemen.

The incident in Aden, preventing the new Police Chief to assume his position is **LIKELY** an indication that the STC is actively thwarting any progress with the GoY not only economically, but also politically. The conflict between STC with support from UAE and the GoY supported by KSA on the other side will therefore **LIKELY** remain in November. It is **LIKELY** that the STC will continue harassing and hamper any efforts by GoY to resume a steady oil export which **LIKELY** could include new attacks on merchant vessels affiliated with the oil and gas industry in Southern Yemen. The threat towards merchant vessels is **LIKELY** limited to tankers trading with the GoY and would **LIKELY** include aggressive approaches, harassment as well as kinetic attacks.

Except for **LIKELY** STC operations at sea, it is **LIKELY** that the security situation in the maritime domain in general will remain relative calm in November. Attacks by Houthi-Insurgents, Iranian forces or terrorists on merchant vessels are **UNLIKELY** in the Gulf of Aden (GoA) and Western Arabian Sea in November.

For further details on the MT SYRA and MT ANDROMEDA incident see: *2020-10-06 DNK IOC INTREP New Threat Actor off Southern Yemen.*

The threat from INSURGENTS (Southern Transitional Council) (Attack) against merchant vessels in the GULF OF ADEN and WESTERN ARABIAN SEA is MODERATE - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

Threat summary to be continued on next page.

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The threat from INSURGENTS (Houthis) (Attack) against merchant vessels in the GULF OF ADEN and WESTERN ARABIAN SEA is LOW - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

The threat from REGULAR FORCES (Iran) (Attack) against merchant vessels in the GULF OF ADEN and WESTERN ARABIAN SEA is LOW - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

The threat from TERRORISTS (Attack) against merchant vessels in the GULF OF ADEN and WESTERN ARABIAN SEA is LOW- with a DECREASING forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

Western Indian Ocean (WIO), Gulf of Aden (GoA) & Western Arabian Sea; Pirates

(New York Times) On 11 October 2020, an advance copy of a UN Security Council (UNSC) report, claims that the UN terror-listed Al-Shabab is moving millions of dollars through local Somali banks. Funds which are reportedly collected as tariffs and payoffs, are being invested in real estate and businesses.

(Open Sources) On 13 October 2020, the President of the United States (POTUS) is allegedly urging his administration officials to draft a plan to pull American troops out of Somalia.

(Open Sources) On 15 October 2020, President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo tweeted that US military support has enabled Somalia to effectively combat Al-Shabab, and that victory can only be achieved through continued security partnership.

(DNK Source) On 29 October 2020, a merchant vessel was approached by a skiff 33 nm North-East of point Alpha of the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) while steaming. When the onboard Private Armed Security Team (PAST) displayed weapons, the skiff altered course and followed the vessel on a parallel course for 50 minutes before changing course again and headed South.

(Control Risks) On 30 October 2020, 59 security related incidents had been recorded during October on land in Somalia. 23 took place in or around Mogadishu. This represents a reduction from 104 in September.

(Open Sources) The South-West Summer Monsoon is now thru its final phase. November represents the transition phase before the North-East Winter Monsoon kicks off in December.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: In the transition phase between the South-West Summer Monsoon and the North-East Winter Monsoon which normally kicks off in December, conditions allowing small boat operations can **HIGHLY LIKELY** now be found throughout the Gulf of Aden and in the Western Indian Ocean. Hence, threat actors in general, with the capability to operate offshore, will **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** be hindered by weather conditions neither in the Gulf of Aden nor in the Western Indian Ocean in November.

The POTUS' stated desire to withdraw US troops from Somalia is **HIGHLY LIKELY** driven by an urge to fulfill his 2016 campaign promise, to bring US soldiers home. As President Farmajo pointed at in his tweet, following the reports of a possible withdrawal of US forces; any withdrawal of US forces from Somalia, without capabilities being replaced by other nations, would **HIGHLY LIKELY** mean a considerable reduction in the capabilities of the African Union Mission In Somalia (AMISOM) to continue with the effective targeting of high value targets in the Al-Shabab organization.

The reported reduction in security related incidents in Somalia for October represents a drop of 43%. There is currently insufficient data available to assess whether the drop can be linked to the ongoing operations by the AMISOM supported by the United States Africa Command (U.S AFRICOM) towards the UN terror-listed Al-Shabab. Even though these operations **HIGHLY LIKELY** have targeted key members of Al-Shabab, the terrorist organization **HIGHLY LIKELY** still intends to specifically target elements

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connected to the upcoming elections. As the recent UNSC report suggests, the terrorist organization is **LIKELY** generating considerable funds exploiting legitimate businesses and **HIGHLY LIKELY** also ports in areas where they operate. And although October saw a significant drop in security related incidents it is still **LIKELY** that there will be a further turn towards softer targets in November, specifically those that can be perceived as important for the preparations for the elections to come. It is, however, **UNLIKELY** that this targeting will have any direct impact on merchant vessels operating inside the Somali territorial waters in November, and security incidents have so far yet to disrupt operations in the main port areas (Mogadishu, Bergera and Bosaso). Bergera and Bosaso are both managed by the UAE-based DP World and Bergera will also include a notable military presence. Elsewhere, Al-Shabab carries out attacks frequently, and controls territories in Galmudug and areas to the North and South-West of Mogadishu. However, Al-Shabab remains largely an onshore threat, and have so far shown no intentions or capabilities to carry out attacks on merchant vessels and is **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** to do so in November.

The criminal networks in Puntland, having the Gulf of Aden and the Western Arabian Sea as their main area of operation, are **HIGHLY LIKELY** intact. They are currently **LIKELY** generating income through profitable smuggling of contraband. Thus, as they **LIKELY** are well funded through current operations, capabilities to conduct previously experienced attacks on merchant- and fishing vessels **HIGHLY LIKELY** persists. With capabilities to conduct operations both in the Gulf of Aden, the Western Arabian Sea and in the North-Western Indian Ocean, it will be their perception of the risk versus potential gain that decides what type of criminal operation they embark on. Therefore, monitoring of naval activity, primarily through locals at sea as their eyes and ears, will **LIKELY** continue through November. This activity will **LIKELY** also include approaches towards merchant vessels to check alertness and whether other security measures, such as armed guards, are still in place. Although other threat actors cannot be ruled out, given the area the incident took place in, this was **LIKELY** the case with the incidents involving ALLIANCE ST. LOUIS on 17 September 2020, and the merchant vessel on 29 October 2020.

The Eastern Somali criminal networks, with bases primarily in Hobyo and Haradheere, **LIKELY** do not have the same financial fundament, and therefore must secure funding on a broader basis to maintain their operational capability. Given the good weather conditions in the Western Indian Ocean it is **LIKELY** that these networks will conduct probing approaches towards merchant vessels passing the Eastern coast of Somalia out to 300 nm during November.

Even though there **HIGHLY LIKELY** are criminal networks with the capability to conduct piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, the Western Arabian Sea and the Western Indian Ocean from bases in Somalia, it is **UNLIKELY** that they will conduct such operations throughout November, given that there **LIKELY** are other means of income available, where the perceived risk for the criminal networks is considerably lower.

The threat from PIRATES (K&R) towards merchant vessels in the GULF OF ADEN-WESTERN ARABIAN SEA and WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN is LOW - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER. Merchant vessels trading to Somali ports or navigating waters close to the coastline are exposed to a higher threat.

Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS), Natuna Sea & Western Java Sea

(Risk Intelligence/Clearwater Dynamics/ReCAAP) On 11 October 2020 at 00:26 LT, the Iran-flagged bulk carrier GANJ was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), approximately 7 nm North-West of Bintan Island (Indonesia). Three perpetrators were spotted on board but escaped. Nothing was reported stolen. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre /ReCAAP) On 13 October 2020 at 23:30 LT, the Singapore-flagged oil/chemical tanker FSL NEW YORK was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 7 nm North-West of Bintan Island (Indonesia). Three perpetrators were spotted on board but escaped. Nothing was reported stolen. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre /ReCAAP) On 14 October 2020 at 00:40 LT, the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier IAN M was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 6 nm North of Bintan Island (Indonesia). Three perpetrators were spotted in the engine room and the alarm was raised. The perpetrators then escaped with a lifebuoy and some welding rods. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre /ReCAAP) On 25 October 2020 at 23:09 LT, the Marshall Island-flagged bulk carrier SEAJOURNEY was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 3 nm North of Batam Island (Indonesia). One perpetrator was caught onboard but managed to jump overboard. A sampan-boat was observed in the vicinity of the bulk carrier. Nothing was reported stolen. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre/ReCAAP) On 26 October 2020 between 00:46 and 00:55 LT, the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier A RACER was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 3 nm North of Batam Island (Indonesia). Four-five perpetrators were spotted onboard and the alarm was raised. The perpetrators then escaped. Nothing was reported stolen. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre /ReCAAP) On 26 October 2020 between 01:28 and 01:30 LT, the Cyprus-flagged bulk carrier EL MATADOR was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 3,5 nm North-East of Batam Island (Indonesia). Three perpetrators were spotted and subsequently locked in the engine room. Regardless, the perpetrators somehow managed to escape. The Indonesian Navy on request, searched the vessel but only discovered the perpetrators' footprints in the engine room. Nothing was reported stolen. No crew members were injured.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: The number of incidents involving armed robbery or theft onboard steaming merchant vessels in the Singapore Strait so far in 2020, is still at the highest level for the same period since 2015. And when September saw few incidents, the number of incidents in October is more in line with previous months. But also, June was a month with few incidents. The explanation for the monthly changes in pirate activity in both June and September is **UNLIKELY** to be related exclusively to increased focus from the security forces, as neither the Singaporean nor the Indonesian security forces have increased their patrolling in these waters significantly recently. At the same time, there has been no recent major arrests of criminal groups in Indonesia resulting in a decreased pirate capability either. The explanation is **LIKELY** rather more coincidental, but also **LIKELY** that the severely Covid-19 affected tourist industry at Batam and Bintan islands (Indonesia) has caused several part-time workers supporting this industry, also being part-time pirates, to return to their home villages. It can however not be ruled out that there also has been a Covid-19 outbreak among pirate groups as well, or that a fear for the pandemic has caused pirates to avoid contact with merchant vessels.

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It is **HIGHLY LIKELY** that less capable and sophisticated perpetrators originating from Karimun and Batam islands (both Indonesia) intend to board towed barges in the Singapore Strait primarily during day-hours aiming at petty theft in November. The same group of perpetrators will also **HIGHLY LIKELY** board anchored merchant vessels at Batam, Nipah and Karimun anchorages in the Singapore Strait primarily during dark-hours aiming at petty theft in November. These perpetrators are **UNLIKELY** to be armed or to confront or hurt the crew on the boarded vessels.

It is also **HIGHLY LIKELY** that more sophisticated perpetrators originating from Batam and Bintan islands (both Indonesia) intend to board steaming merchant vessels with lower freeboard (primarily but not exclusively tankers and bulk carriers) in the Singapore Strait primarily during dark-hours aiming at robbery in November. Even if the number of reported incidents in October is high, it does not necessarily imply that as many pirate groups have been active. For the reported incidents in October it is **LIKELY** that the same group was involved in the boarding of the bulk carriers and tanker GANJ, FSL NEW YORK and IAN M, while another group **LIKELY** was involved in the boarding of the bulk carriers SEAJOURNEY, A RACER and EL MATADOR. Timings, positions, number of reported perpetrators, their modus operandi and **LIKELY** motives all support this hypothesis. These perpetrators will **HIGHLY LIKELY** continue their criminal activity in November and will **LIKELY** operate in small gangs usually of four to six but also occasionally of one to three perpetrators in one or two sampan-boats and will **LIKELY** be armed with knives, crowbars or occasionally guns. Even if violence, short time hostage taking and confrontation with the crew have been involved in several of these incidents, it is still **LIKELY** that also these perpetrators will aim to avoid contact with and seriously hurting the crew on the boarded vessels.

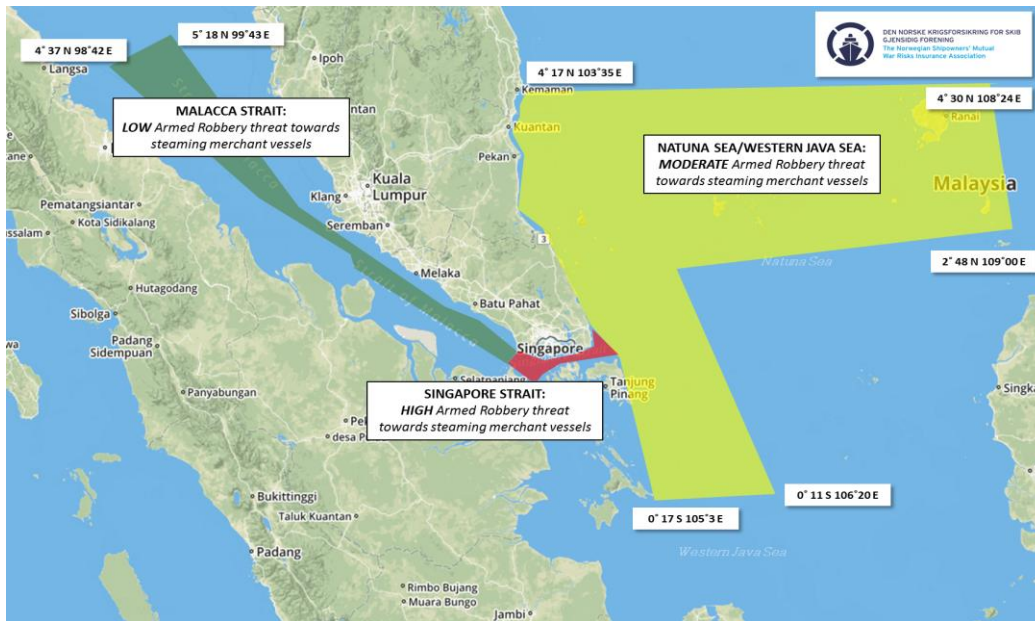
It is further **LIKELY** that more professional perpetrators originating from Bintan- and Natuna islands (both Indonesia) intend to board merchant vessels leaving or entering SOMS out in the Natuna Sea and Western Java Sea aiming at robbery in November. These perpetrators will **HIGHLY LIKELY** be armed and are **LIKELY** to be violent. During attacks, these groups will **LIKELY** operate with several attacks-boats and up to ten operators and aim at robbery of cash and crew belongings. The latest confirmed attack of this category occurred on 22 July 2019 when the bulk carrier CK BLUEBELL was boarded while underway 180 nm South-West of Natuna Island.

Perpetrators originating from Dumai (based on Rupert Island) and Belawan (both Indonesia) are primarily focusing on boarding of anchored vessels aiming at petty theft at respective anchorages. However, the possibility of a robbery attempt towards a steaming low-and-slow merchant vessel of opportunity out in the Malacca Strait should not be ruled out, even if assessed as **UNLIKELY** in November.

The threat from PIRATES (Armed Robbery) towards merchant vessels in the STRAIT OF SINGAPORE is HIGH - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

The threat from PIRATES (Armed Robbery) towards merchant vessels in the NATUNA SEA and the WESTERN JAVA SEA is MODERATE - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

The threat from PIRATES (Armed Robbery) towards merchant vessels in the STRAIT OF MALACCA is LOW - with a STABLE forecast throughout NOVEMBER.



Libyan territorial waters

There have been no reported security incidents related to merchant vessels in Libyan territorial waters (TTW) during October 2020.

(Open Sources) On 28-29 September 2020, members of the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA) met in Hurgada (Egypt) to discuss a comprehensive ceasefire. (Late reporting.)

(Open Sources) On 1 October 2020, the second round of Libyan dialogue in Morocco commenced. A delegation of the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) and the head of the Libyan Supreme Council of State, Khaled al-Mishri participated.

(Open Sources) On 3 October 2020, the governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir warned of a financial collapse due to the increased general debt of the state. Al-Kabir said the general debt of the state reached a record high of 270% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), adding that Libyan oil revenues dropped dramatically from 53,2 billion US Dollars in 2012 to almost zero in 2020.

(Open Sources) On 8 October 2020, the production at Libya's largest oil field, Sharara, restarted. The field has been shut almost continuously since early January 2020. The Sharara oil field can potentially contribute an additional 300.000 barrels a day to the country's total output.

(Open Sources) On 19 October 2020, the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) announced the start-up of the fourth round of the Libyan (5+5) Joint Military Commission (JMC) talks in Geneva (Switzerland).

(Open Sources) On 23 October 2020, the GNA and the LNA agreed to a ceasefire at the UN's office in Geneva (Switzerland). According to the acting UN's Libya envoy Stephanie Williams, who chaired the recent talks, the two sides agreed to a complete, countrywide and permanent agreement with immediate effect. She further stated that the agreement called for frontline forces to return to their bases and for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries within three months. This process is to be monitored by the UN.

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DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: With the continued talks between the parties in the Libyan conflict on several levels, and the agreement to the permanent ceasefire announced by the UN's Libya envoy, Stephanie Williams, the ceasefire is **LIKELY** to hold at least in the short term. However, as sub-committees **HIGHLY LIKELY** will be engaged with negotiating the steps needed to enact the agreement over the coming weeks, the ceasefire will **LIKELY** still be fragile. Although there **HIGHLY LIKELY** are considerable work remaining, the steps taken during October represent positive steps towards securing peace in Libya.

Even though larger military operations are **UNLIKELY** in the short term, smaller sporadic incidents between rival Insurgent groups will **LIKELY** continue to occur in November.

The statement from CBL underscores the **HIGHLY LIKELY** serious economic situation Libya currently finds herself in. The regular reports from the National Oil Corporation (NOC) over the past months have all pointed to the same fact, so the announced start-up at Sharara oil field will **HIGHLY LIKELY** represent a much-needed source of income.

Many of the security incidents reported over the last months are **HIGHLY LIKELY** related to the lack of necessities, and people demonstrating their dissatisfaction with the authorities. The reopening of oil production facilities at Sharara will **HIGHLY LIKELY** enable the providers of gas to commence with the much-needed gas deliveries throughout the Eastern and Southern parts of the country. Should the expected deliveries of power and gas again be obstructed, demonstrations and protests or civil unrest, is **LIKELY** to pick up again as the situation would continue to deteriorate throughout the country. However, these incidents will **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** have security implications for merchant vessel calling Libyan ports throughout November.

The current ceasefire should **LIKELY** be considered fragile and will **LIKELY** rest upon successful results of the continued negotiation over the coming weeks. Should this effort be unsuccessful, further military operations in the area around Sirte (Libya) would then potentially both directly and indirectly have repercussions for shipping in Libyan TTW. A heightened threat towards merchant vessels, both within the TTW, and in specific Libyan ports would then be **LIKELY**. Currently it is however **UNLIKELY** that merchant vessels will be targeted, intentionally or accidentally, inside Libyan TTW in general in November. The exception is vessels suspected of directly supporting either side of the conflict. These vessels will **HIGHLY LIKELY** be considered legitimate targets by the warring parties, their proxies (kinetic attacks or seizure) or by external powers operating outside Libyan TTW (interception) also in November.

Further details and specific port to port assessments are found in the DNK – NYA Libya Weekly Port and Terminals Threat Assessment.

The threat from REGULAR FORCES and INSURGENTS (Collateral Damage/Kinetic Attack) towards merchant vessels in LIBYAN TTW is LOW - with a DECREASING forecast throughout NOVEMBER.

Standardisation

The threat: The threat assessed by DNK IOC, is based on our understanding of known threat-actors' capabilities, hostile intentions and their opportunities to cause harm/hostility directly towards vessels/units and their crew today and in the future, limited to defined areas. The threat could also be of an indirect nature, caused as collateral damage when vessels/units plausibly could be affected by an attack by mistake or by coincidence.

Words of Estimative Probability (Confidence Levels): Words of estimative probability (WEP) are terms used to convey the likelihood/probability of a future event occurring. In this product, the following WEPs are used: **HIGHLY LIKELY - LIKELY – (EVEN CHANCE) - UNLIKELY - HIGHLY UNLIKELY**

Threat Levels: Threat levels are designed to conclude the assessment of each threat. In this product, the following Threat Levels are used (NATO and Norwegian standards) with the defined level of probability/confidence:

- **LOW** means attack against member vessel is **UNLIKELY**
- **MODERATE** means attack against member vessel is **LIKELY**
- **HIGH** means attack against member vessel is **HIGHLY LIKELY**
- **CRITICAL** means attack against member vessel is expected imminently

A Threat Assessment should not be mistaken as a Security Risk Assessment. DNK IOC does not consider each vessel and their vulnerabilities, nor risk mitigation measures taken or not taken by the member. The Threat Assessment should however, be understood as an input to our member's Security Risk Assessments processes.

The DNK IOC Threat Assessment is valid only from the date of dissemination and until a revised Threat Assessment is disseminated by DNK IOC. Out-dated Threat Assessments should never be used as inputs to Security Risk Assessments or as any kind of decision support on Security matters.

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Information Cut-Off: 31 October 2020 1000 UTC

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The DNK Intelligence and Operations Centre (IOC)

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