



Oslo, 30.11.2020

DNK IOC MONTHLY THREAT ASSESSMENT – DECEMBER 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 6		Regular Forces (Iran) (*Hybrid Attack) ↑		
Yemeni TTW & Southern Red Sea Page 8	Terrorists (AQAP/IS-Y) (*Attack); Southern Red Sea ↓	Insurgents (Houthi) (*Attack) →		
Western Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden & Western Arabian Sea Page 10	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 15	Regular Forces / Insurgents (LNA/GNA) (*Kinetic Attack) ↓			

↔ Indicates Threat Forecast in SHORT – MEDIUM term (>30 days)
Info Cut-Off DATE: 30 November 2020 1200 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 REGULAR FORCES (Iran) (*Kinetic Attack) in the Arabian Gulf/Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman has changed to an **INCREASING** forecast
- Threat from INSURGENTS (Houthi) (*Attack) in the Yemen TTW and Southern Red Sea has changed to **MODERATE** with a **STABLE** forecast
- Threat from PIRATES (*K&R) in the Western Indian Ocean- Gulf of Aden - Western Arabian Sea has changed to a **DECREASING** forecast

Gulf of Guinea (GoG)

(Risk Intelligence/Clearwater Dynamics/MDAT-GoG) On 4 November 2020 at 05:55 LT, the Panama-flagged product tanker NEFELI II was attacked 92 nm South of Brass (Nigeria). The crew activated the Ship Security Alerting System (SSAS) and all crew members mustered in citadel. The perpetrators that had embarked later abandoned the tanker after destroying bridge equipment. The vessel later resumed voyage towards Douala (Cameroon).

(MDAT-GoG/Risk Intelligence/IMB) On 7 November 2020 at 07:30 LT, the Singapore-flagged tanker TORM ALEXANDRA was attacked 170 nm South of Cotonou (Benin). At least Nine perpetrators in a black skiff with two 200 bhp Yamaha engines approached the vessel and an unknown number of them boarded the tanker. All crew members mustered in citadel and an Italian naval vessel in coordination with Benin Navy responded to the incident. A helicopter attached to the Italian naval vessel detected the fleeing skiff and fired warning shots. The perpetrators in the skiff returned fire and subsequently threw the aluminum ladder overboard during the escape from their failed attack.

(Risk Intelligence/Clearwater Dynamics/MDAT-GoG) On 7 November 2020 at 17:20 LT, the Marshall Islands-flagged product tanker WESLEY was attacked 108 nm West of Brass (Nigeria). Seven armed perpetrators in one skiff approached the tanker and came to within 250 m. While non-essential personnel mustered in citadel, the onboard armed guards displayed their weapons and fired three warning shots. The skiff broke off the attack and the vessel continued her voyage.

(Clearwater Dynamics/Risk Intelligence) On 9 November 2020 at 06:30 LT, the Netherlands-flagged Sea Shepperd fishing protection vessel BOB BAKER was approached 120 nm South of Cotonou. One speedboat with eight or nine armed perpetrators approached the vessel in to 0,7 nm. The crew mustered in citadel and the onboard Beninese naval guards fired warning shots. After ten minutes the perpetrators left the scene.

(MDAT-GoG/Risk Intelligence) On 9 November 2020 at 21:30 LT, the Marshall Islands-flagged product tanker LA BOHEME was attacked 100 nm South off Cotonou (Benin). An unknown number of armed perpetrators in one skiff approached the tanker and non-essential personnel mustered in citadel. The perpetrators in the skiff opened fire at the vessel resulting in damage to the bridge while the tanker was conducting evasive manoeuvres. The skiff later aborted the attack.

(Risk Intelligence/Clearwater Dynamics) On 11 November 2020 at 02:19 LT, the Marshall Islands-flagged product tanker JANE was attacked 70 nm South of Cotonou (Benin). One skiff with up to eight armed perpetrators approached and fired shots at the bridge and the accommodation. The attack was later aborted, and a Nigerian naval patrol vessel escorted the tanker to a safe port.

(Risk Intelligence/Clearwater Dynamics/MDAT-GoG) On 13 November 2020 at 14:55 LT, the Liberia-flagged Heavy lift vessel ZHEN HUA 7 was attacked 77 nm North-West of Sao Tome. An unknown number of armed perpetrators boarded the vessel and kidnapped 14 of the 27 crew members, all being Chinese nationals. One crew member was shot in the leg and later received medical care onboard a responding Italian naval vessel. Also, a Portuguese naval vessel responded to the incident and later escorted the vessel to a safe location off Luba (Equatorial Guinea).

(Risk Intelligence/Clearwater Dynamics/MDAT-GoG) On 16 November 2020 at 05:00 LT, the Ghana-flagged general cargo vessel AM DELTA was attacked 45 nm South of Brass (Nigeria). Seven or eight armed perpetrators from a skiff boarded the vessel and kidnapped four of the seven crew members. All crew members were Ghanaian nationals. The perpetrators also destroyed communication and navigation equipment onboard the vessel. The vessel later resumed voyage to Takoradi (Ghana).

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(DNK Source/MDAT-GoG) On 16 November 2020 at 05:40 LT, the Togo-flagged bunkering tanker STELIOS K was reported missing 41 nm South of Lomé (Togo). On 17 November 2020 it was confirmed that the tanker had been hijacked by an unknown number of perpetrators and that the tanker was moving in a Southerly direction at slow speed. It was further confirmed that there were negotiations ongoing between the perpetrators and the Greek managers to release the tanker. On 23 November 2020 it was confirmed that the perpetrators had departed the vessel about 68 nm South of Lagos (Nigeria) having kidnapped three crew members of Greek nationality.

(DNK source) On 17 November 2020 at 04:18 LT, the Bahamas-flagged product tanker SKS DONGGANG experienced a suspicious approach 63 nm South of Lomé (Togo). A radar echo was detected at 2 nm port beam and later increased speed to 20 knots and started chasing the tanker closing in to 0,2 nm. The tanker raised the alarm and non-essential crew mustered in citadel while essential crew conducted evasive manoeuvres and activated passive barriers. Due to darkness the numbers of perpetrators in the chasing speedboat could not be obtained, but the speedboat was visually classed as a skiff. About 45 min after having started the chase, the skiff was observed on radar as aborting the approach and headed in an Easterly direction.

(DNK Source/MDAT-GoG/IMB) On 25 November 2020 around 23:30 LT, the St Kitts and Nevis-flagged general cargo ship MILAN was attacked 17 nm South of Pennington Oil Terminal off Bayelsa (Nigeria) inside Nigerian Territorial waters (TTW). An unknown number of perpetrators boarded the vessel and kidnapped ten of the 12 crew members. The kidnapped crew members consisted of four Indians, three Lebanese, two Egyptians and one Cameroonian. The two remaining Cameroonians onboard were unable to get the engine running, and later dropped the anchor 6,5 nm from the shoreline as the vessel was in danger of grounding. The vessel remains in this position.

(Danish Ministry of Defence-MOD) On 20 November 2020, the Danish Defence minister met with the CEO of the Danish Shipping company TORM, post the attack towards TORM ALEXANDRA. Danish MOD stated that the situation in GoG is serious and that action is needed. Danish MOD further informed that Danish authorities are seeking support for an International force.

(DNK Source/Risk Intelligence) On 29 November 2020 at 21:30 LT, the Marshall Islands-flagged product tanker AGISILAOS was boarded 75 nm South of Lomé (Togo). Four crew members, one Russian, one Romanian and two Philippine nationals were kidnapped by an unknown number of perpetrators. The tanker later arrived at Lomé anchorage.

(Risk Intelligence/Clearwater Dynamics) On 30 November 2020 at 00:50 LT, the fishing vessel KELLY DANIEL was attacked 30 nm South-West of Douala (Cameroon) inside Cameroonian TTW. One skiff with an unknown number of armed perpetrators opened fire on the fishing vessel. An embarked security team from Cameroon military returned fire resulting in a number of the perpetrators being wounded. One security guard also sustained wounds due to the fire-fight. The perpetrators subsequently broke off the attack.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: Nigerian Kidnap-for-Ransom (K&R) Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) is increasingly becoming a huge security challenge in the marine environment. 13 incidents in November resulting in the kidnap of 34 crew members is the highest numbers for GoG to date. And during November there have been at least three different Pirate Action Groups (PAGs) operating in the GoG hunting for targets.

On two occasions recently, a change in engine configuration into two 200 bhp V-6 engines compared to the normal one straight 3-cyl and a V-6 has been observed on skiffs used. This means that PAGs have more speed available during attack and extraction. The fuel consumption during operations is as a consequence increasing, and more fuel containers than normal were therefore also seen in the skiff

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involved in both the SENDJE BERGE (July 2020) and the METHANE PRINCESS (October 2020) incidents compared to previous K&R attacks (it was **LIKELY** the same PAG behind both those incidents). This **LIKELY** marks an increase in capability with respect to speed/endurance/range for Nigerian PAGs.

Even if the number of piracy related incidents and kidnapped victims in November is very high, the majority of the incidents followed what should be understood as normal modus operandi for maritime K&R operations in GoG. One incident however, followed a different path initially, the STELIOS K incident being confirmed as a K&R incident after seven days. At the time of the attack, the STELIOS K had steamed directly from Athens (Greece) without refuelling, so diesel cargo was **LIKELY** in the cargo tanks of this 36 m long bunkering tanker. Even if all details behind the STELIOS K incident currently is unclear, a failed Hijack-for-Cargo-theft attack developing into a K&R operation cannot be ruled out. This scenario was also seen during the ANUKET AMBER incident in October 2018 which started as a Hijack-for-Cargo-theft but developed into a K&R incident as the pirates experienced challenges to unload the cargo from ANUKET AMBER. Regardless of what the intention of the STELIOS K perpetrators were during the first days of the hijack, the incident is **LIKELY** a good example of highly adaptable perpetrators in regards of approaches, modus operandi and method used to achieve their financial aim.

One of the operational Nigeria-based PAGs has extended operational reach as it **LIKELY** still has support from a smaller local tanker-barge acting as a support vessel with also capability to offload refined cargo. A Hijack-for-Cargo-theft attack out to 200 nm off Tema (Ghana) or off Libreville (Gabon) conducted by this PAG should not be ruled out, even if assessed as **UNLIKELY** in December.

During November at least two foreign naval assets from Italy and Portugal were directly involved and acted as an Immediate Interdiction Force (IIF) to ongoing attacks. No Nigerian navy assets took part as an IIF during November 2020. The Nigerian navy is currently providing armed guards to Security Escort Vessels (SEV). There are at least 100 SEVs operational in the Nigerian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Each vessel charges USD 8-10.000 per day for their duties. If one budget with a SEV being operational 75 % of the time, this revenue is equivalent to at least USD 219 000 000 for these SEVs per annum. The Nigerian navy gets paid for their Armed Guards embarked onboard these vessels, making this a lucrative business for the Nigerian navy as well and thereof tempting to prioritize compared to more offensive but also more effective counter-piracy operations.

The Dep Blue project is currently scheduled to be operational during the last part of 2021 with respect to training and equipment. This paid-for-initiative is however, focused towards the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), which is not to be seen as the Nigerian navy.

Choke-points and global freedom of navigation have been on the agenda for global navies through decades. As GoG is not to be understood as a choke point for vessels not trading directly to the region (innocent passage), this area has so far lost in the competition for global attention towards areas as the Gulf of Aden and Straits of Hormuz with a few exceptions of countries having a naval presence in the GoG. The traditional naval approach of counter-piracy operations at sea is by establishing Sea-Denial (can be understood as targeting the attempts or aspirations by the pirates to exploit the sea space) or by the higher ambition of establishing Sea-Control (can be understood as a complete elimination of pirates' freedom of navigation in the sea space). As the GoG basin affected by Piracy (K&R) consist of approximately 480 000 nm², both ambitions are **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** within reach for any of the local navies capability wise.

And as the Nigerian navy assets and SEVs **LIKELY** are intending to maintain their focus on the highly profitable escorting services in and out of the main rivers in the Niger Delta, security will be limited to the escorted vessels exclusively. So, beyond the scope of these escorts, pirates will **HIGHLY LIKELY** continue to have freedom of navigation at sea in the GoG in the foreseeable future.

Also, the Nigerian counter-piracy effort on land has so far been very insufficient as well and to a minor degree been focused on removing pirate capabilities, through arrests of pirates. Unless also this approach is changed, pirates will **HIGHLY LIKELY** continue to have freedom of navigation also within the Niger delta in the foreseeable future as well.

Nigerian PAGs will therefore **HIGHLY LIKELY** continue to adapt to the booming market for SEVs limited to the Nigerian EEZ, Nigerian insufficient counter-piracy approach on both land and in the EEZ and the lack of sufficient international naval presence in GoG also in December.

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 DECEMBER.

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 DECEMBER.

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 DECEMBER .



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

(Open Sources) On 11 November 2020, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a report stating that Iran had built up their stockpile on low-enriched Uranium to a level 12 times above the provisions of the nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action-JCPOA) signed in 2015.

(Open Sources) On 12 November 2020, the President of the United States Donald Trump allegedly sought advice from his administration, for actions to be taken against Iran's main nuclear site.

(Open Sources) On 19 November 2020, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) unveiled a new warship named SHAHID ROUDAKI in Bandar Abbas (Iran). The vessel reportedly carries helicopter, drones and Fast Attack Crafts (FAC). The vessel is a former roll on/roll off vessel that has been adapted to fit military purposes.

(Open Sources) On 20 November 2020, the IRGC Navy (IRGC-N) allegedly seized a Panama-flagged merchant vessel in the Arabian Gulf/Persian Gulf (AG/PG). The detention came on charges of transporting 300 tons illegal oil. The vessel and ten international crew members were reportedly brought to Parsian, on the coast of Iran, North off Lavan Island.

(Open Sources) On 27 November 2020, the Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was assassinated in Tehran (Iran). Fakhrizadeh is believed to have been the mastermind behind the Iranian nuclear program when it was first set up and was considered one of Iran's top nuclear scientists. The Iranian regime claims Israel was behind the assassination.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: November has been a quiet month in the Arabian Gulf/Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. The only incident reported was against the Panama-flagged tanker which reportedly was detained by IRGC-N on accusations of smuggling. The incident has not been verified by other sources than the press release made by Iran in conjunction with the seizure but was **LIKELY** a lawful interdiction based on smuggling and **UNLIKELY** a security incident and should **UNLIKELY** be considered as part of the wider threat picture in the region.

Whilst the maritime domain remains quiet, there is still a concern that the situation can shift and escalate. Specifically, the assassination of the nuclear scientist Fakhrizadeh will **LIKELY** involve an escalation in the strategic conflict, and albeit not necessarily have a maritime dimension it cannot be ruled out.

The Iranian regime has accused the Israelis of staging the assassination and although no one has taken on the responsibility it is **LIKELY** that Iran's strategic adversaries were involved either directly or indirectly in the assassination. Israel has a history of assassinating Iranian scientists and **LIKELY** both have the capability and intent to stage such an attack. The timing of the attack underscores the likelihood of linking the attack to the global stage, where the IAEA have accused the Iranians of again breaking the provisions of the nuclear deal, and the Trump administration looking at options on how to target the Iranian nuclear program. Hence the Iranians will **HIGHLY LIKELY** link the attack to the strategic conflict regardless of the actual perpetrators. Further, the Iranians, as expected have stated that the attack will be retaliated. Thus, the threat of counter attacks conducted by the Iranians will **LIKELY** rise in December.

This will **LIKELY** also include the threat of escalation in the maritime domain, where Iran continue to expose increased capability as with the new capability launched in November. Which, albeit is **LIKELY** overrated, is an increase in capability within the IRGC-N. Warships have until this launch mainly been affiliated to the conventional navy (Artesh) in Iran. Thus, this latest addition signifies a change and increase in the capability for the IRGC-N and **LIKELY** indicates an intention to increase the Area of Operation (AO) for the IRGC-N beyond the Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman which has been their

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traditional AO. This is **UNLIKELY** to have implications for the maritime security in the short term but underscores the continued focus on the maritime domain for the Iranian regime's overall strategic security.

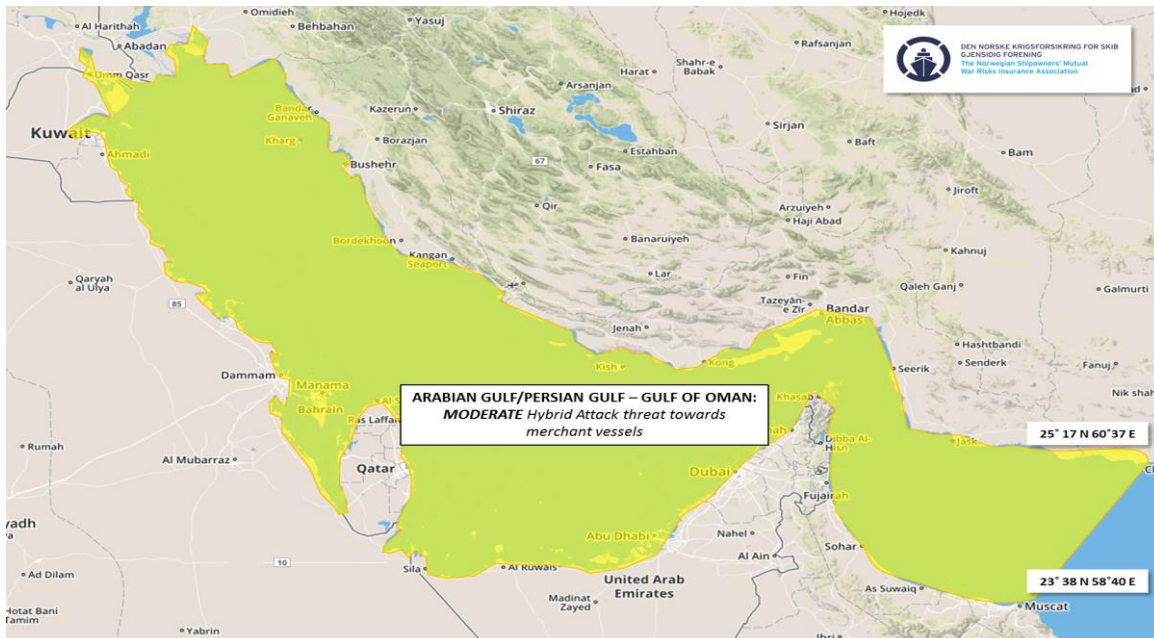
And as has been the case over the last 15 months, merchant vessels perceived as targets of opportunity will **LIKELY** still be harassed by the Iranians in December, and especially by the IRGC-N. Harassment of merchant vessels in December will **LIKELY** include but not be limited to, confusing and threatening VHF traffic, aggressive approaches by FACs and shorter detentions of vessels and crew. Finally, the overall threat against specifically oil and gas related trade due to the heightened tension in the strategic conflict between Iran and the US with their allies will **LIKELY** increase in December.

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 December 2020;

- ***The threat from Iranian cyber espionage operations against the maritime sector is HIGH - with a STABLE forecast throughout DECEMBER.***
- ***The threat from Iranian disruptive operations against the maritime sector is HIGH - with a STABLE forecast throughout DECEMBER.***
- ***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 DECEMBER.***

DNK IOC assesses the physical threat to merchant vessels in December 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 an INCREASING forecast throughout DECEMBER.



Yemeni territorial waters & Southern Red Sea

(Open Sources) On 8 November 2020, the US administration allegedly considered designating the Houthi-Insurgents on the US Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list.

(Open Sources) On 11 November 2020 at an unknown time in the afternoon, two Remote-Controlled Water Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (RC-WBIED) were launched against the oil and gas terminal in Jizan (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia-KSA). According to statements from the KSA they had thwarted the attack, whilst other sources stated the attack inflicted harm on the port area and ignited a fire to the floating hoses at one of the offloading platforms. No people were reported as harmed during the incident.

(Open Sources) On 14 November 2020, the KSA led coalition announced they had removed 157 Houthi-Insurgent naval mines from the Southern Red Sea. No specific details on the areas or time of the disarming was reported.

(Open Sources) On 23 November 2020, a Houthi-Insurgent spokesman claimed they had made a successful attack against the KSA state oil company's ARAMCO facilities in the port city Jeddah (KSA). The attack was reportedly done by use of so-called Quds-2 cruise missiles. Pictures circulating after the attack showed damage to one tank at the ARAMCO North Jeddah Bulk Plant. The KSA confirmed the attack and claimed it did not affect national supply, nor did the attack inflict any harm on personnel.

(Open Sources) On 24 November 2020, the KSA led coalition stated they had disarmed another five naval mines in an unknown area of the Southern Red Sea. No further details about location and time of disarming were given this time either.

(Open Sources) On 25 November 2020 at an unknown time during the night, the Malta-flagged oil tanker AGRARI was attacked while at berth at Al-Shuqaiq (KSA). The attack, conducted by unknown perpetrators, had occurred after the vessel had finished discharging and was preparing to leave. No injuries on crew or environment had occurred. The vessel suffered a hole in the hull approximately one meter above the waterline due to the attack.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: The fighting between the Houthi-Insurgents and the KSA led coalition supporting the Hadi government has continued to escalate in November, and the fighting has unexpectedly moved into the maritime domain again.

The Houthi-Insurgents are **LIKELY** the perpetrators behind the attacks launched against KSA port cities along the Red Sea in November. All which signifies a deterioration in the security and **LIKELY** includes a launch of new capabilities.

The RC-WBIED attack in Jizan on 11 November 2020 did **LIKELY** cause some damage to the oil and gas terminal in spite of the KSA claims of failure. It **LIKELY** signifies a shift in intentions and strategy from the Houthi-Insurgents, who despite allegations from the KSA of maritime operations, have mainly focused their fighting against KSA via air operations over the last months.

An example of the kinetic activity in the air domain was also seen in the attack against ARAMCO in Jeddah on 23 November 2020. The Houthi-Insurgents claimed the attack and were **LIKELY** the perpetrators. The attack was reportedly conducted by use of the so-called cruise missile Quds-2. The Quds-2 would signify a new capability if it was the weapon involved. However, this has not been verified, but the Houthi-Insurgents do **LIKELY** have the capability to launch cruise missiles with the reach and accuracy needed to stage the Jeddah attack in their arsenal, and a Quds-2 missile could possibly be a modified version of the Quds-1 missile which was originally presented by the Houthi-Insurgents in 2019.

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It is also **LIKELY** that the Houthi-Insurgents could have received direct or indirect support in the launching of the attack. The timing of the attack could **LIKELY** be attributed to the G20 meeting hosted by KSA which concluded on 22 November 2020. As well as unconfirmed reports of Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel visiting KSA during US Secretary of State Pompeo visit to the country in the days prior to the attack. The precise targeting and the limited disruption caused by the attack strengthens the intention as being symbolic and an attempt to send a message to the coalition in general and KSA and the US specifically. The development of the Israeli and American relations with the Gulf countries is **LIKELY** considered as a threat by the Houthi-Insurgents. Additionally, the US threats of putting them on the FTO-list **LIKELY** further exacerbate Houthi-Insurgents considerations vis-a vis KSA as the spearhead of US influence in the Gulf. The attack had similarity to the attack on 14 September 2019, which was attributed to Iran, further underscoring the symbolism and potential strategic component in this latest attack. Albeit missile attacks like these are not a direct maritime threat, merchant vessels trading to KSA's Red Sea ports should be aware of the potential indirect threat posed by aerial attacks targeting the oil and gas facilities.

The attack against the MT AGRARI on the other hand signifies a definite deterioration of security in the maritime domain. The attack was **LIKELY** launched by the Houthi-Insurgents, who **LIKELY** have the capability and opportunity to launch attacks against merchant vessels along the Red Sea, as was also seen in the RC-WBIED attack earlier in the month. The type of explosives involved in the attack against MT AGRARI has not been revealed but based on the location of the damage to the vessel it is **LIKELY** that a WBIED of some sort was used.

The attacks against the port in Jizan and MT AGRARI in Al-Shuqaiq, although not unprecedented, **LIKELY** signifies an increased capability and potentially a shift in intention as attacks with the use of WBIEDs by the Houthi-Insurgents have not been reported since 2018. Rather the threat of WBIEDs have mainly been reported by KSA and then as being thwarted or disrupted and have been difficult to verify.

Reports of disruptions of threats in the maritime domain has also increased significantly in November. The reported de-mining conducted by the KSA are significant, but also difficult to verify. It is however **UNLIKELY** that the number of mines destructed have been conducted in a short time frame, but as no time frame has been given for the demining, it is difficult to evaluate the credibility of the information. A further complication is that no accurate location has been given to the de-mining efforts. Regardless, it is **LIKELY** that there is a mine threat in the Southern Red Sea. However, it is also **LIKELY** that the threat and reports of de-mining is exaggerated by the KSA-coalition as part of their information campaign in the fight against the Houthi-insurgents. This is underscored by the timing of the press-releases coinciding with the attacks against KSA, **LIKELY** conducted by the Houthi-Insurgents. Thus, playing into the narrative of the threat posed by the Houthi-Insurgents. Notwithstanding, 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. Further it is **LIKELY** that the Houthi-Insurgents in the short term have the intention to conduct attacks in the maritime domain by the use of WBIEDs. The threat will **LIKELY** be geographically limited to the coastal areas North of Hudaydah and Saleef, and into KSA territorial waters.

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 December.

The threat from INSURGENTS (Houthis) (Attack) towards merchant vessels in YEMENI TTW and SOUTHERN RED SEA is MODERATE - with a STABLE forecast throughout DECEMBER. 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 DECEMBER.

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

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

There have been no reported security incidents related to Regular Forces, Insurgents or Terrorists towards merchant vessels in the Gulf of Aden and Western Arabian Sea during November 2020.

(Open Sources) On 16 November 2020, the Southern Transitional Council (STC) were reportedly sending military reinforcements to the Abyan province (Yemen).

(Open Sources) On 17 November 2020, heavy casualties were reported in fights between pro-Hadi government forces and STC forces in Zinjibar, Abyan Province (Yemen). Reportedly 47 fighters were killed and approximately 90 had been wounded. Casualties were inflicted to both warring parties.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: November saw the one-year mark of the signing of the Riyadh agreement on 5 November 2019, between the STC and the Hadi government, and also saw the worst fighting between the two since the signing of the agreement.

The reported build-up of forces in Abyan province and the subsequent reported casualties is **LIKELY** to continue in December, as there are no indications on the two parties getting closer to a cease fire and actually implementing the various parts of the 2019 agreement. Although the kinetic activity focused on land in November have seen little spill over to the maritime domain, it is still **LIKELY** that merchant vessels operating in Southern Yemen can be targets of opportunity if considered as trading in favour of one of the parties in the specific conflict between the STC and the pro-Hadi government forces. Further, the maritime domain South of Yemen, the Gulf of Aden and Western Arabian Sea, will **LIKELY** remain an area of opportunity for all parties in the conflict in Yemen.

However, with the build-up in the Red Sea, it is **UNLIKELY** that Houthi-Insurgents and their proxy Iran will stretch their resources to stage attacks in the Gulf of Aden and Western Arabian Sea in December.

Finally, the terrorist organizations operating out of Yemen is **UNLIKELY** to target the maritime domain in December. Whilst they **LIKELY** still have the intent to, they are **UNLIKELY** have the capability to mount significant attacks at this stage in the maritime domain.

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 DECEMBER.

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 DECEMBER.

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 DECEMBER.

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

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

(European Union Naval Force Somalia-EU NAVFOR) On 29 October 2020, the Jubbaland President Ahmed Mohamed Islam (Madobe) reportedly communicated to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) that Jubbaland will abstain from Somalia's upcoming elections until the withdrawal of the Somali National Army (SNA) from the Gedo region (Somalia) is effective. (Late reporting.)

(Open Sources) On 3 November 2020, a Remote Controlled Improvised Explosive Device (RCIED) was used to target the convoy of the Somali National Army (SNA) staff and its Commander-in-Chief General Odawa Yusuf Rage between Guri'eel and Dhusamareb (both in Somalia).

(Control Risks) On 5 November 2020, in Mogadishu (Somalia) an IED exploded close to a car carrying the Somali Minister of labour and social affairs Duran Farah. Duran Farah survived the attack.

(Control Risks) On 12 November 2020, in Waberi, Banadir in Mogadishu, two people were killed in an IED explosion, which apparently targeted the Commissioner of the Hodan district, Abdihakim Dhagajuun, who was injured in the attack.

(Open Sources) On 12 November 2020, in Kismayo (Somalia) the Jubbaland regional tourism and environment Minister, Aidid Suleyman, survived a bomb attack on his residence. The bomb killed two security guards and one civilian.

(DNK Source) On 12 November 2020, a merchant vessel was approached by five skiffs in the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden while steaming. One skiff came as close as 0,2 nm before all five skiffs moved away.

(Bloomberg) On 13 November 2020, Ethiopia announced that 3000 troops will be withdrawn from Somalia to help fight off the Tigray offensive in the Northern part of Ethiopia.

(Control Risks) On 22 November 2020, 14 opposition candidates for the February 2021 presidential election called for allies of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" to be removed as election officials.

(Control Risks) On 30 November 2020, 87 security related incidents had been recorded during November on land in Somalia. This represents an increase from 59 in October. 31 of the reported security related incidents took place in or around Mogadishu. Most of the reported incidents are being attributed to the UN terror-listed Al-Shabab.

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: Both the statement from the Jubbaland President Madobe and the call for removal of Farmajo-allied election officials serves as examples of the ongoing disputes about the upcoming elections in 2021. The lack of regulations for the electoral process means that regulations of polls **HIGHLY LIKELY** rest upon negotiations and agreements between politicians. The ongoing power struggle between President Farmajo and some of the regional leaders **HIGHLY LIKELY** makes agreements on election procedures hard to accomplish and will **LIKELY** in turn fuel the distrust both among opposition politicians and to the electoral process itself.

The announced Ethiopian withdrawal of 3000 troops from Somalia adds to US President Donald Trump's earlier reported desire to withdraw American troops from the country, **LIKELY** as part of his desire to fulfill his 2016 campaign promise, to bring US soldiers home. The additional reduction of foreign forces in support of the Somalian security forces will **HIGHLY LIKELY** further strain both Somalian security forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in their struggle to counter the UN terror-listed Al-Shabab in the country.

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Security related incidents for November is back on level with previous months. Several of the incidents underline that al-Shabab **HIGHLY LIKELY** continues to target both federal and provincial officials. Although November numbers bring the level back up from October, it is **UNLIKELY** that the targeting of Somali officials or targeting connected to the upcoming elections, will have any direct impact on merchant vessels operating inside Somali TTW in December. 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 United Arab Emirates (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 December.

The different criminal networks in Somalia (operating out of Puntland, Hobyo and Haradheere) which previously have been known to be involved in piracy operations towards merchant vessels, **HIGHLY LIKELY** still hold capabilities to conduct such operations. As there currently **HIGHLY LIKELY** are other means of income which hold less risk versus gain to them, they are **UNLIKELY** to embark on hijack or K&R operations in December. However, the previously reported monitoring of naval activity will **LIKELY** continue also in December, as **LIKELY** seen in the case of the suspicious approach on the merchant vessel, **LIKELY** being the Marshall Island-flagged bulk carrier PORT IMABARI, on 12 November 2020.

Any change in the factors affecting the perceived risk involved in piracy operations against merchant vessels, such as military patrol frequency, vessel hardening, application of Private Armed Security Teams (PAST), or other risk mitigating measures, could **LIKELY** result in a different perception of risk on the part of the pirates, and consequently impact the threat assessment moving forward.

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 December, 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 WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN-GULF OF ADEN-WESTERN ARABIAN SEA and is LOW - with a DECREASING forecast throughout DECEMBER.

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

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre/ReCAAP) On 8 November 2020 at 21:29 LT, the Liberia-flagged crude oil tanker ZENO was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), approximately 7 nm North-East of Batam Island (Indonesia). Three perpetrators were sighted in the engine room and later escaped with some ship equipment including a sounding rod, an oil sampling rod, a portable breathing apparatus, portable instruments for measuring ullage and a portable spray painter. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre/ReCAAP) On 9 November 2020 at 02:20 LT, the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier LEFKADA was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 6 nm North of Bintan Island (Indonesia). Two perpetrators were spotted in the vicinity of the engine room locker and later escaped with a lifebuoy. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre/ReCAAP) On 9 November 2020 at 03:08 LT, the Panama-flagged bulk carrier ATLANTIC DIANA was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 6 nm North of Bintan Island (Indonesia). One perpetrator armed with

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a knife was spotted in the vicinity of the steering gear room and later escaped. Nothing was reported stolen. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre) On 17 November 2020 at 22:55 LT, the Panama-flagged bulk carrier ASIA SPRING was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 3,6 nm North of Batam Island (Indonesia). Three perpetrators were spotted on the vessel before disembarking from the stern of the vessel after ten minutes. Nothing was reported stolen. No crew members were injured.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre) On 19 November 2020 at 05:12 LT, the Singapore-flagged oil/chemical tanker MTM AMSTERDAM was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 7,2 nm North-West of Bintan Island (Indonesia). Two to three perpetrators armed with a knife were spotted on the vessel and later escaped. Nothing was reported stolen. No crew members were injured.

(ReCAAP) On 23 November 2020, Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) informed in a Special Report that incidents in the Singapore Strait decreased from 99 incidents in 2015 to two incidents in 2016, thanks to the arrests of perpetrators. On 16 March 2020, there was an arrest of three perpetrators onboard a boarded vessel by the crew, but there has been no further arrest since then. ReCAAP is now urging the littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in their respective waters and to strengthen cooperation to arrest perpetrators.

(Risk Intelligence/Information Fusion Centre) On 30 November 2020 at 06:20 LT, the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier SEMIRIO was boarded while underway in the Eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, approximately 7,3 nm North of Bintan Island (Indonesia). Undetected by the crew, an unknown number of perpetrators had been onboard and later escaped. Some engine parts were 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 without the arrest of perpetrators, incidents are **HIGHLY LIKELY** to continue to occur.

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 December. 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 December. 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 bulk carriers and tankers) in the Singapore Strait primarily during dark-hours aiming at robbery in December. Their primary focus is **HIGHLY LIKELY** to target vessel's engine parts and stores. All the reported incidents in November are examples of attacks originating from this category of perpetrators. These perpetrators will **HIGHLY LIKELY** continue their criminal activity in December and will **LIKELY** operate in small gangs from usually one to three perpetrators in one or two sampan-boats and will **LIKELY** be armed with knives, crowbars or occasionally guns. If boarding of a merchant vessel is not perceived as successful, they will **LIKELY** attempt to subsequently target another vessel of opportunity in the same night. 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.

Libyan territorial waters

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

(Open Sources) On 30 October 2020, the Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze al-Sarraj stated that he withdrew his decision to resign at the end of October 2020. Sarraj further stated that he will remain in office until the ongoing intra-Libyan political dialogue talks come to an end. (Late reporting.)

(Open Sources) On 2 November 2020, the 5+5 Joint Military Committee (JMC) met in Ghadames (Libya) for the first face-to-face talks inside Libya, following the permanent ceasefire deal struck on 23 October 2020 in Geneva. The purpose of the meeting was to negotiate the next steps in implementing the ceasefire agreement. The discussions were led by the acting United Nations' (UN) Libya envoy Stephanie Williams. The JMC, which is made up of members of both the warring parties LNA and GNA, agreed to create a sub-committee to oversee the withdrawal of foreign forces from the frontlines, and to continue talks in the city of Sirte (Libya) later in November 2020.

(Open Sources) On 8 November 2020, the Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced that the country's oil production has surpassed the one million barrels per day milestone for the first time since January 2020.

(Control Risks) On 10-13 November 2020, the 5+5 JMC met in its new headquarters in Sirte and agreed to reopen the coastal road from Misrata district to Benghazi district (both Libya) and have all foreign military forces retreat to Tripoli district (GNA aligned) and Benghazi district (LNA aligned), respectively.

(Open Sources) On 12 November 2020, Qatar signed a military agreement with the GNA to train and build military capacities.

(Open Sources) On 23 November 2020, UN acting envoy for Libya, Stephanie Williams, headed the online meeting of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), aimed at achieving a cooperation agreement on national elections in Libya. By the end of the meeting the forum had reached an agreement to hold presidential and parliamentary elections on 24 December 2021. It also agreed to name a volunteer legal committee to work on the "constitutional basis for the election".

DNK IOC ASSESSMENT: The Libyan Prime Minister Fayeze al-Sarraj's decision to postpone his withdrawal is **HIGHLY LIKELY** a result of calls from both Libyan and international bodies for him to stay in position for the duration of the ongoing deliberation for a peace agreement between the warring parties in the country. His resignation amid the negotiations would **LIKELY** cause a political vacuum and could **LIKELY** be disruptive to the negotiations.

The follow-up-meetings such as the reported 5+5 JMC meetings are **HIGHLY LIKELY** both indications of negotiations moving forward, and at the same time, **HIGHLY LIKELY** necessary steps, to demonstrate both will and ability to work through the difficult details of the ceasefire deal, for the agreed ceasefire to hold.

Although these agreements and the recent announcement from NOC, that the oil production is coming back to levels not seen since the shutdown, all represent welcomed development **LIKELY** indicating that Libya is taking small but vital steps towards improving both the security situation and the economic situation, significant challenges are **HIGHLY LIKELY** still ahead. Especially as one major feature of the ceasefire agreement is a freeze on military agreements with foreign parties. It is **HIGHLY UNLIKELY** that the GNA will be willing to set aside the newly signed security agreement with Qatar, or the established joint training program with the Turkish military. Consequently, this is **LIKELY** a potential showstopper for

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the talks moving further forward. It is, however, **UNLIKELY** that any problems in the negotiations to come will have any direct security implications in the maritime domain in the short term.

With continued talks between the parties in the conflict on several levels, and agreements made going forward, the ceasefire is **LIKELY** to hold in the short term. The agreed withdrawal of foreign military forces from the frontline will **HIGHLY LIKELY** contribute to this, if or when such withdrawal commences. However, as negotiations approaches challenging topics, the ceasefire could **LIKELY** still prove to be fragile.

Even though larger military operations are **UNLIKELY** in the short term, smaller sporadic incidents between rival insurgent groups will **LIKELY** occur in December.

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 continued rise in oil production **HIGHLY LIKELY** contributes to mend on the shortages of gas 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 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 December.

The current ceasefire should **LIKELY** be considered fragile and **LIKELY** rests upon continued successful results in the negotiations to come over the next weeks. As foreign military forces retreat to Tripoli and Benghazi districts, the possibility of larger military operations is **HIGHLY LIKELY** reduced. There is however still **LIKELY** to see operations involving remaining GNA and LNA forces in the Sirte area, if the continued progress in the negotiations not turn out as expected. Currently it is however **UNLIKELY** that merchant vessels will be targeted, intentionally or accidentally, inside Libyan TTW in general in December. 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 December.

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 DECEMBER.

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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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The DNK Intelligence and Operations Centre (IOC)

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