

Monthly Piracy Report

Latest Assessment

Total Number of Attacks in March: **33**
Total Number of Attacks this year: **115**
Ships Released in March: **3**
Crew Released in March: **40**

New Ships Taken in March: **8**
New Crew Taken in March: **83**
Ships Held at end of March: **18***
Crew Held at end of March: **300**

Summary

Global pirate activity dropped slightly by three attacks from February's total of 36, but piracy increased off Somalia. Eight vessels were hijacked, the highest number in a single month since December 2010, ultimately resulting in the acquisition of four new motherships and one large commercial vessel to be ransomed. Activity increased across the HRA and intensified in the northern Arabian Sea for the third month running. Attacks dropped off West Africa, but a serious attempt launched from a mothership around 100NM from the coast highlighted the expanding offshore threat. Fewer attacks were recorded in Asia, although the drop is likely to be caused by under reporting, rather than an actual reduction in attacks. One attack was officially recorded in Latin America.

At least 300 crewmembers are currently being held, with many facing detention periods of over 300 days, at a current average of 181 days. No vessels were released for ransom from Somalia in March. Average ransom amounts are approximately US\$4.8m.

Near-term Forecast

East Africa: Risk of piracy heightened as pirates will be emboldened by latest hijackings and the acquisition of new motherships ahead of calmer seas expected during April. Attempted attacks and suspicious approaches likely in all areas, with highest risk expected in the northern Arabian Sea, and Gulf of Aden.

West Africa: Attacks expected to increase in frequency off Nigeria and Benin, possibly beyond 120NM from the Nigerian coast.

Asia: Mostly opportunistic attacks in anchorages and ports to continue.

Latin America: An increase in pirate activity may be seen in response to the pressure being placed on criminal activity on land.

**excludes various local dhows and fishing vessels*



Above: pirate incidents recorded in March (above)

Below: ongoing areas of piracy concern



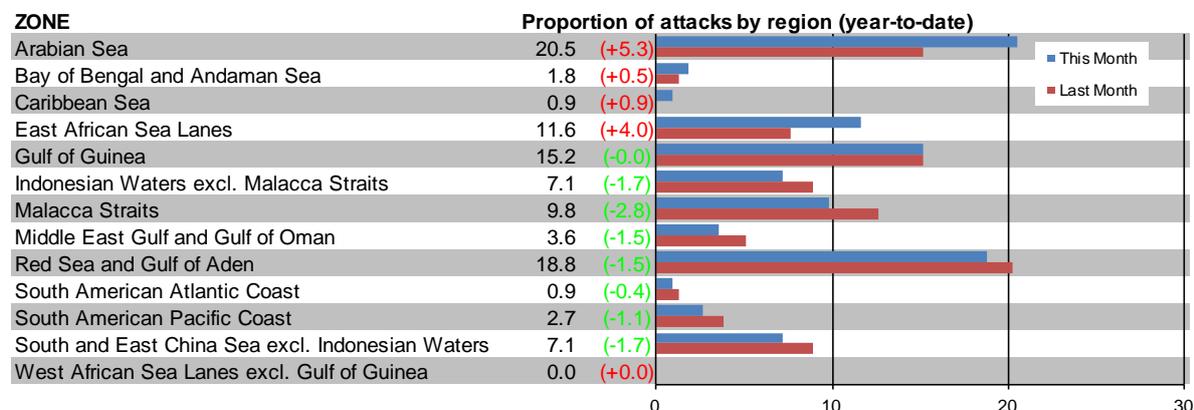
The GAC Protective Solutions team of experts has extensive experience and has dealt with many incidents of vessel hijacking and piracy from the South China Seas, to the Straits of Hormuz and East Africa. A subscription to this monthly security report including 'real time' security updates between each edition costs US\$800/6 months or US\$1,400/12 months. For further information or assistance please contact: ake@gac.com

For risk mitigation advice please visit Global Intake at <http://tinyurl.com/gipiracy>
For further information on maritime intelligence and security please contact us at ake@gac.com

Changes in regional pirate activity last month

MARINE PIRACY THREAT ASSESSMENT

April 2012

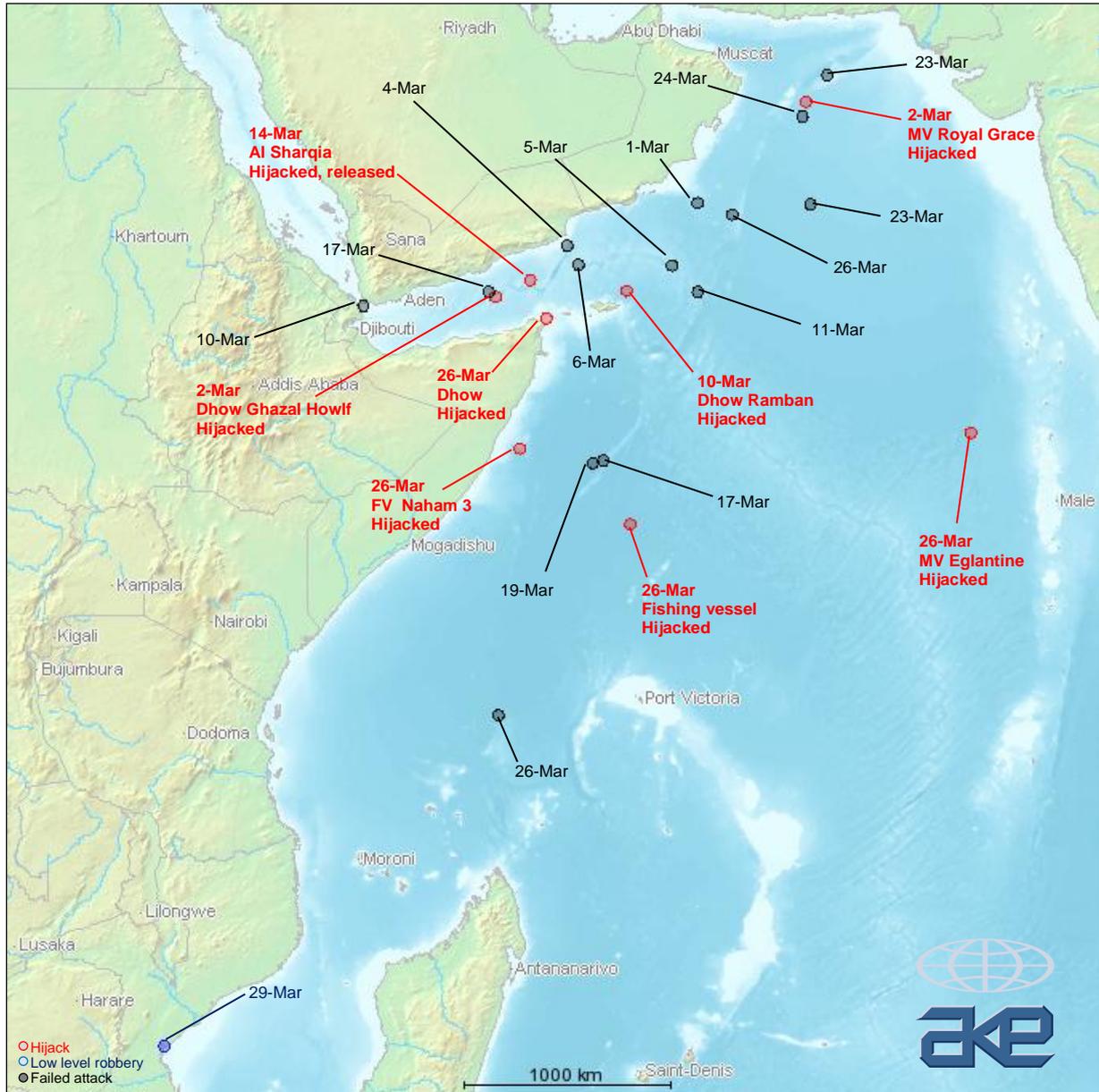


Regional piracy incidents over the past month

Zone	No. of Attacks	Change from previous month	Change from previous year
Arabian Sea	11	-4	-7
Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea	1	+1	-
Caribbean Sea	1	+1	+1
East Africa Sea Lanes	7	+4	+2
Gulf of Guinea	5	-3	+5
Indonesian Waters excl Malacca Straits	1	-	-1
Malacca Straits	1	-5	+1
Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman	0	-1	-
Red Sea and Gulf of Aden	5	-1	+2
South American Atlantic Coast	0	-	-
South American Pacific Coast	0	-	-
South and East China Sea	1	-	-9
West African Sea Lanes excl Gulf of Guinea	0	-	-

Current Regional Analysis

East Africa



Current Analysis

The total number of pirate incidents increased by five from February's total of 17. Of the 23 attacks that took place, eight incidents resulted in successful hijackings, the most recorded in a single month since December 2010. The monthly success rate increased for the fourth month running, to 38 per cent. However, only two of these were large commercial vessels likely to fetch a significant ransom payment, one of which was subsequently rescued by naval forces. The remainder were smaller fishing vessels or dhows likely to be used as motherships. Of these six smaller vessels, one was released by pirates following mechanical issues and one was rescued by naval forces.

During March, pirates ultimately captured one large commercial vessel and four smaller vessels likely to be used as motherships in the coming weeks.

The number of new motherships hijacked would suggest that attack groups are boosting operational capabilities in preparation for the calmer seas forecast during April and May. An increase in attacks is expected across the High Risk Area (HRA), with vessels transiting the northern Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden at highest risk due to numerous confirmed reports of pirate attack groups (PAGs) in those areas.

Notable incidents

On 2 March Panama-flagged chemical tanker MT Royal Grace, owned by Dubai-based Oyster Cargo and Shipping, was hijacked 150NM off the Omani coast. The vessel, with a crew of 22 on board, is the first tanker to be hijacked in 2012. No security measures were reported on the vessel, whose owners only confirmed the hijacking after receiving an email from the master after two days under pirate control.

On 14 March a Yemeni-flagged dhow, reportedly named Al Sharqia, was hijacked with six crew members on board, but later freed after suffering mechanical issues. Pirates have previously abandoned small dhows and fishing vessels shortly after hijacking once they have determined the vessel's unsuitability for pirate operations.

On 26 March Bolivian flagged, Iranian owned bulk carrier MV Eglantine was hijacked off Hoarafushi island 305NM northwest of Male, Maldives with 23 crew members on board, but was subsequently freed from pirate control by Iranian naval forces on 3 April. No injuries to hostages were reported. Successful hijackings have occurred further eastwards from this point (Bangladesh-flagged Jahan Moni was hijacked approximately 145NM east of Eglantine's position in 2010); however, the vessel is the first to be hijacked in Maldivian waters. The incident is a reminder that attacks should be anticipated across the HRA, particularly along busy shipping routes which provide potential targets.

Negotiations

No vessels were released for ransom during March.

Political/regulatory developments

Both EUNAVFOR's Operation Atalanta and NATO's Operation Ocean Shield were extended to the end of 2014. EUNAVFOR will increase its presence to nine vessels in the coming weeks, from its current level of 4-6. Significantly, the European Council agreed to allow EUNAVFOR to expand its operations to include attacks on land-based targets in Somali coastal territories and inland waterways. Whilst the UN Security Council anti-piracy resolutions which govern EUNAVFOR's mandate restrict anti-piracy operations to territorial waters, an agreement was reached with the TFG to allow for the expansion.

The change in military policy is reflective of the increased international political attention being focused on Somali piracy, but the precise geographical extent of the new mandate is unclear. Reports suggest that attacks will be on logistics bases up to 2km in land in order to disrupt or destroy fuel supplies, weapons, skiffs, and other pirate equipment. Attacks will likely be limited to air-to-land attacks; 'boots on the ground' is not an option at this stage.

Whilst the move will improve the efficiency of naval counter piracy operations initially, it is highly likely that pirate groups will simply adapt and overcome the shift in tactics in the medium to long term. Stores and logistics bases can feasibly be moved further in land, or located amongst coastal communities to prevent airborne attacks. Furthermore, the short term impact of the extended mandate may be balanced out by improved pirate capabilities thanks to several new motherships already operating at sea.

West Africa



Current Analysis

Attacks dropped by three in March compared to January, to a total of five. Three of these were incidents of opportunistic theft in various anchorages around the region. The remaining two were serious attacks or attempts at vessels up to 100NM off the Nigerian coast. As always, the actual number of attacks is likely to be higher due to under-reporting.

Notable incidents

On 22 March Nigerian-flagged tanker MT Pluto was attacked roughly 90NM south of Lagos. Reports suggest 10 armed men deployed in attack craft from a brown and white fishing vessel before chasing and boarding MT Pluto, looting the vessel and destroying the communication equipment before escaping. The attack confirmed AKE's previous warnings of pirates using fishing vessels to extend their operational range to significant distances from the coast. Attacks up to 110NM from the Nigerian coast have been recorded in recent weeks and should be anticipated off Nigeria and Benin in the short term. A layered defence system will prove highly effective in reducing the chances of a successful pirate attack. Due to the lack of a reliable emergency naval response capacity in the region, a citadel capable of sustaining life for up to three days should be installed as an effective last resort.

Political/regulatory developments

A joint maritime security agreement was signed by Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), again demonstrating the potential for regional cooperation on counter piracy issues. However, the lack of properly trained and equipped naval forces in the Gulf of Guinea will significantly hinder any political progress made. The agreement came as Benin's navy expected to receive the first of three new high speed coastal patrol boats in the coming weeks. The vessels add to two surveillance aircraft donated by France in 2011, and demonstrate tentative steps at increasing Benin's naval capacity. The expansion of pirate operations up to 110NM off the coast, however, is likely to strain regional navies for the foreseeable future.

For risk mitigation advice please visit Global Intake at <http://tinyurl.com/gipiracy>
For further information on maritime intelligence and security please contact us at ake@gac.com

GAC Protective Solutions

Powered by AKE



For risk mitigation advice please visit Global Intake at <http://tinyurl.com/gipiracy>
For further information on maritime intelligence and security please contact us at ake@gac.com

Asia



Current Analysis

Total attacks dropped significantly from nine last month to just four attacks recorded across the region. All of these were incidents of low level opportunistic theft, three of which were successful. The statistical drop is unlikely to reflect the reality of the situation due to under reporting of attacks. Traditional high risk ports and anchorages, such as Dumai, Adang Bay and Balikpapan in Indonesia and Manilla in the Philippines, are likely to have experienced unreported incidents and remain high risk. Robbers and criminals are usually equipped with knives and attacks occasionally involve assault and possibly brief periods of hostage taking.

Vessels entering these ports and anchorages should therefore have 24 hour watch rotas, alarm systems and bright deck lighting in place to ensure any attempted robberies are detected early and avoided, thereby minimising disruptions and ultimately saving time, operating costs and improving crew safety.

Political/regulatory developments

The Association of South East Asian States (Asean) again failed to reach consensus on how to negotiate with China in order to advance the proposed Code of Conduct for the South China Sea. The non-committal outcome of the bloc's two day summit on 3 April is telling of internal divides, particularly concerning Cambodia, a recipient of Chinese aid and current Asean chair. The South China Sea remains one of the region's largest sources of potential insecurity; clashes have occurred between Chinese, Philippines and Vietnamese vessels in recent years.

Americas



Current Analysis

Just one attack was officially recorded in the region. On 24 March two boats approached an anchored product tanker in Port Au Prince anchorage, Haiti. One of the robbers managed to board the vessel and steal stores before escaping after the watch officer raised the alarm.

It is highly unlikely that only one attack was made throughout the region during March; under reporting of incidents is common and operators should be advised that instances of opportunistic criminality, petty theft and armed robbery are likely to occur more frequently than is officially reported. In addition, attacks on local fishing vessels, particularly off the northern coast of Guyana, Venezuela and occasionally Suriname, occur with relative frequency but are unlikely to be officially reported. Such incidents are evidence of criminal activity spreading to water, which, in the longer term, could affect foreign vessels if left unchecked.

Currently Held Vessels

Name	Date Taken	Flag	Type	Crew
Naham 3	26 Mar 12	Oman	Fishing Vessel	15
Royal Grace	2 Mar 12	Panama	Cargo	23
Leila	16 Feb 12	Panama	Roll-On Roll-Off	15
Free Goddess	8 Feb 12	Liberia	Cargo	21
Enrico Ievoli	27 Dec 11	Italy	Tanker	18
Liquid Velvet	31 Oct 11	Marshall Island	Tanker	22
Aride*	30 Oct 11	Seychelles	Fishing Vessel	2
Fardous	13 Feb 11	Yemen	Fishing Vessel	8
Shiuh Fu No. 1	25 Dec 10	Taiwan	Fishing Vessel	26
Orna	20 Dec 10	Panama	Cargo Vessel	19
Albedo	26 Nov 10	Malaysia	Cargo Vessel	23
Choizil*	2 Nov 10	South Africa	Yacht	2
Prantalay 11, 12	20 Apr 10	Thai	Fishing Boats	57
Jih-Chun Tsai 68*	30 Mar 10	Taiwan	Fishing Vessel	11
Iceberg	29 Mar 10	Panama	Roll-On Roll-Off	24
Socotra 1	25 Dec 09	Yemen	Cargo Vessel	6

*Vessel abandoned or destroyed, crew still held

Released Vessels

Name	Vessel Type	Flag	Crew	Date Taken	Date Released	Days in Captivity	Ransom (US\$M)
No vessels released for ransom							

This communication contains information which is confidential and may also be privileged. It is for the exclusive use of the intended recipient(s) and is not intended to be relied upon by any person without subsequent written confirmation of its contents. Furthermore, the content of this e-mail is the personal view of the sender and does not represent the advice, views or opinion of GAC Protective Solutions or any part of the GAC Group. GAC Protective Solutions disclaim all responsibility and accept no liability (including in negligence) for the consequences of any person acting, or refraining from acting, on such information prior to the receipt by those persons of subsequent written confirmation. In particular (but not by way of limitation) GAC Protective Solutions disclaims all responsibility and accepts no liability for any e-mails which are defamatory, offensive, racist or in any other way are in breach of any third party's rights, including breach of confidence, privacy or other rights. If you have received this e-mail message in error, please notify us by e-mail at ake@gac.com. Please also destroy and delete the message from your computer. Any form of reproduction, dissemination, copying, disclosure, modification, distribution and/or publication of this e-mail message is strictly prohibited.

Copyright © GAC Protective Solutions 2012