



WEBINAR

Scoping maritime crime, risks and responses in the Western Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic

Maritime Crime Off African Continent

FEBRUARY, 2025

GMCP Story

The programme was established in ROEA in 2009 – then as the Counter Piracy Programme to support the trials of suspected Somali pirates. The Piracy Prosecution Model developed by GMCP provided a regional solution to a regional problem effectively supporting the trial of 323 suspected Somali pirates in three piracy prosecution states namely, Kenya, Seychelles, and Mauritius.

The programme has since then expanded in the fight against all forms of maritime crime with a focus on regional cooperation, port security and legal finish.

TYPES OF MARITIME CRIME WE COUNTER



CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL,
RADIOLOGICAL AND
NUCLEAR THREATS



TERRORISM
AT SEA



DRUG
TRAFFICKING



HUMAN TRAFFICKING
AND SMUGGLING
OF MIGRANTS



CRIMES IN THE
FISHERIES SECTOR



FIREARMS
TRAFFICKING

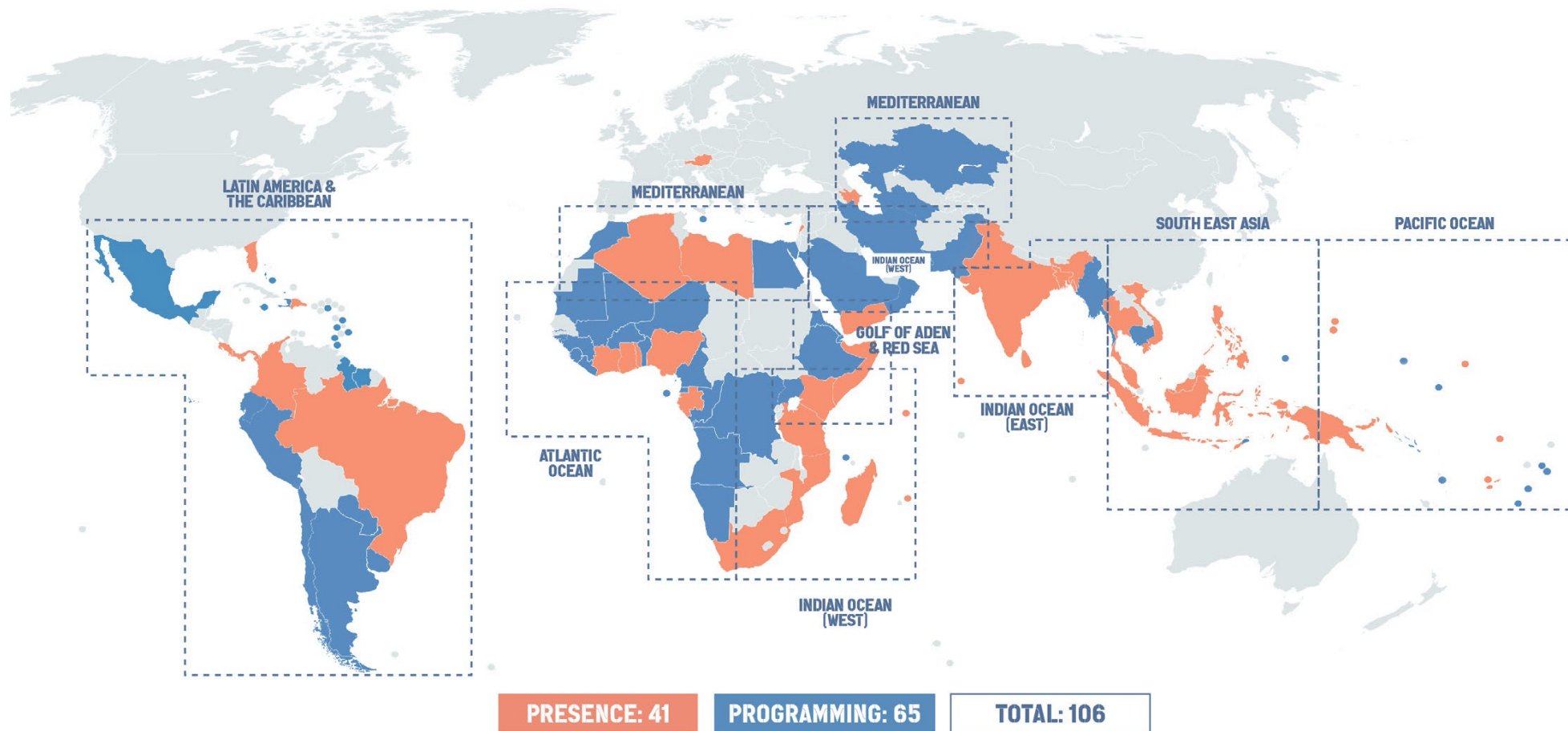


CRIMES THAT AFFECT
THE ENVIRONMENT



GMCP Headquarters

HEAD	Siri Bjune (Colombo, Sri Lanka)	OPERATIONS TEAM IN VIENNA	Olga Kogay
DEPUTY HEAD	Toral Vadgama (Mogadishu, Somalia)	IMPLEMENTING TEAMS	8 Regional Teams



Agenda

I. African Continent Challenges

II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

- Houthis' attacks
- Piracy and armed robbery
- Regional Response
- Impact

III. Indian Ocean West

- Maritime and Land Illegal Trafficking Routes
- Regional Seizures
- Regional Response

IV. Gulf of Guinea

- Taxonomy
- Causes
- Response “Yaoundé Architecture”
- Piracy and Armed Robbery
- Drugs Trafficking
- Illegal Unregulated Unreported Fishing
- Illegal Migration

V. Conclusions



I. African Continent Challenges

1. Regional instability
 - Conflicts
 - Efforts towards to the main issues
2. Countries in a developing process
 - Under development
 - Maritime law enforcement capacity
3. Political Instability
4. Natural resources
 - Opportunities
 - Challenges



II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

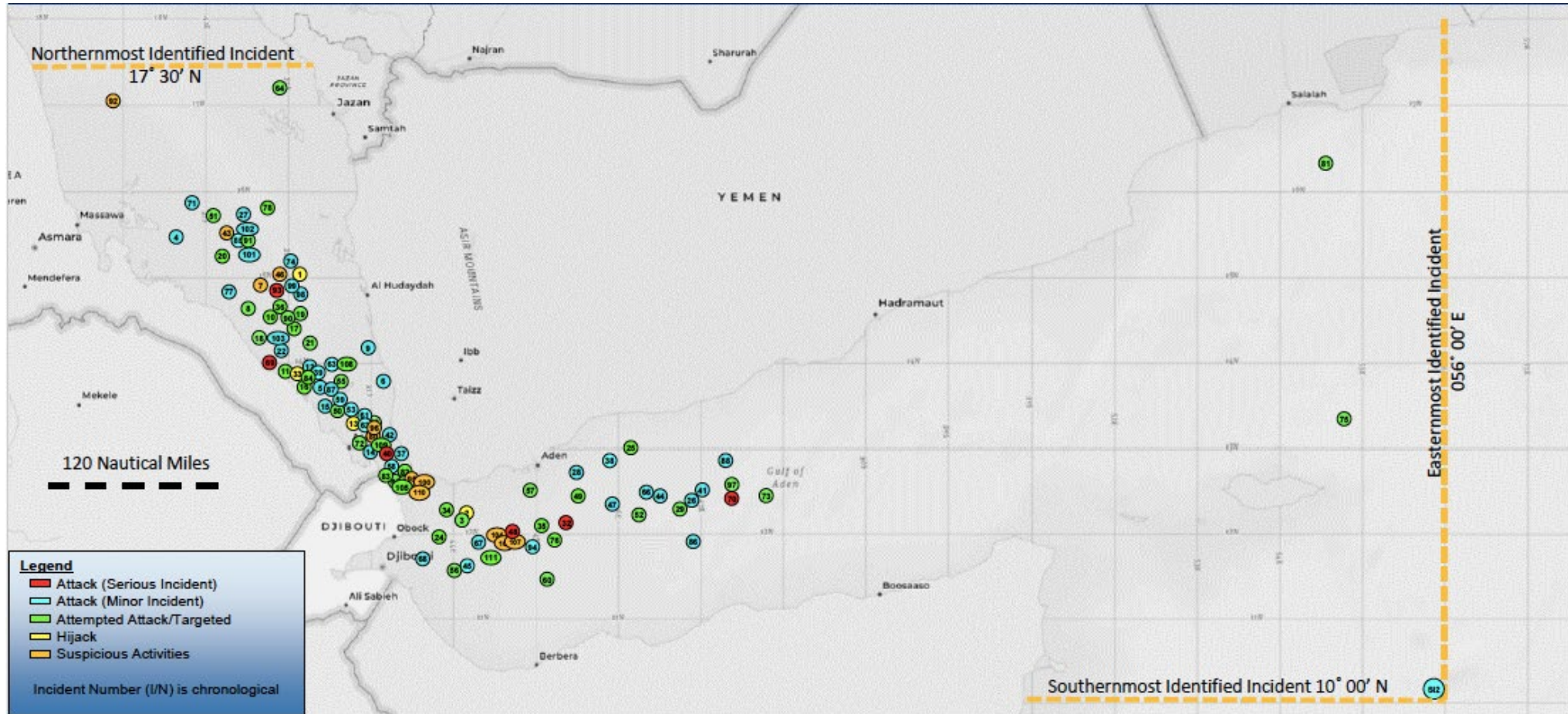
Incidents increased since 19 November 2023

1. Houthis' attacks
2. Piracy and armed robbery
3. Impact



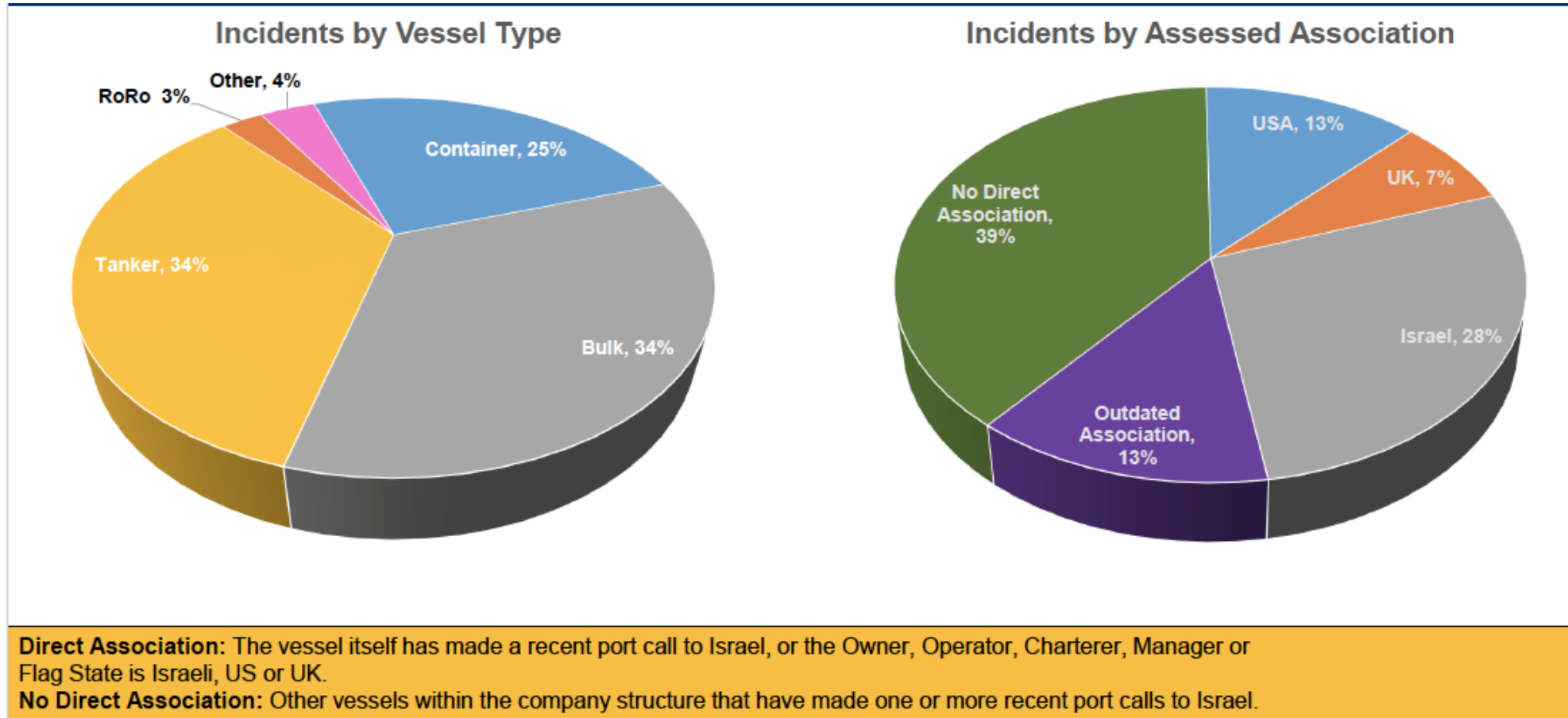
II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

1. Incidents and suspicious activities since November 2023 to January 2025
 - 107 recorded incidents, plus some suspicious reported activities



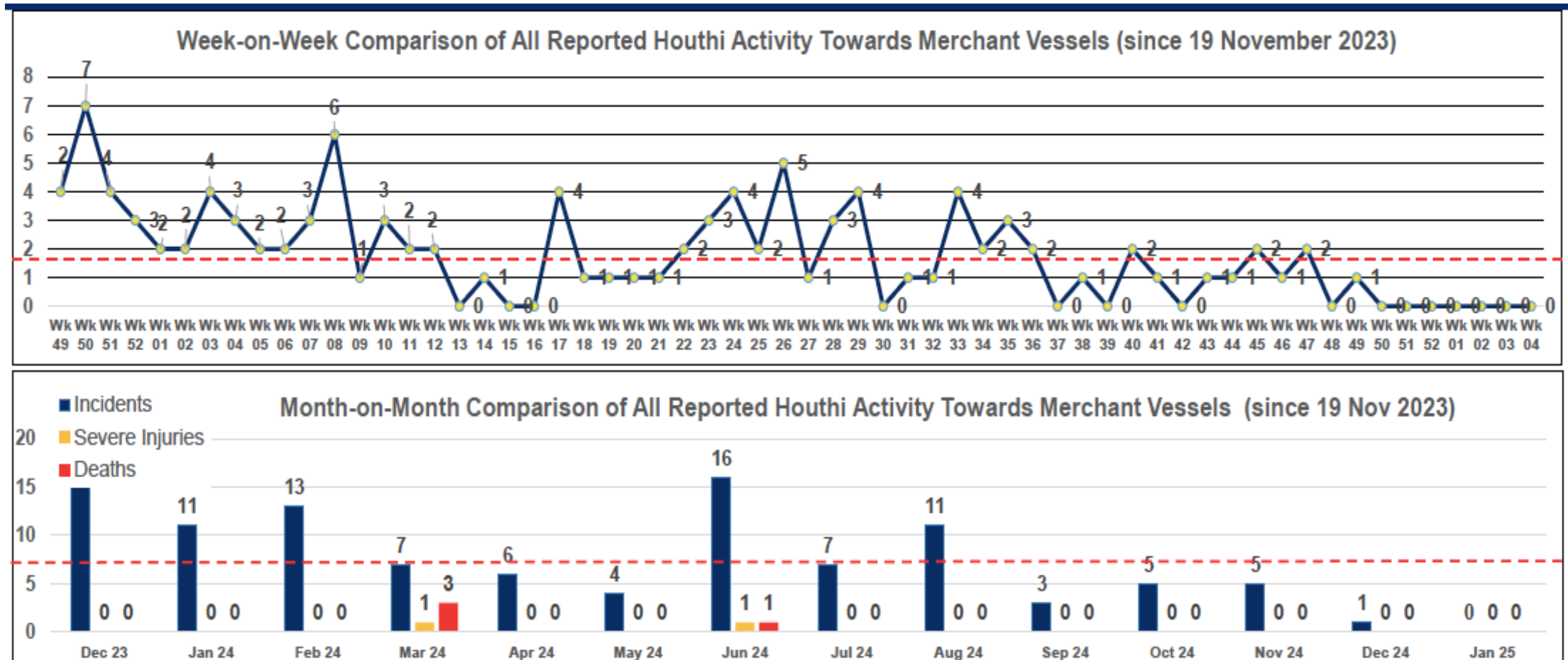
II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

1. Houthi related incidents involved merchant vessels since November 2023 to January 2025
 - 107 recorded incidents



II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

1. Houthi related incidents involved merchant vessels since November 2023 to January 2025

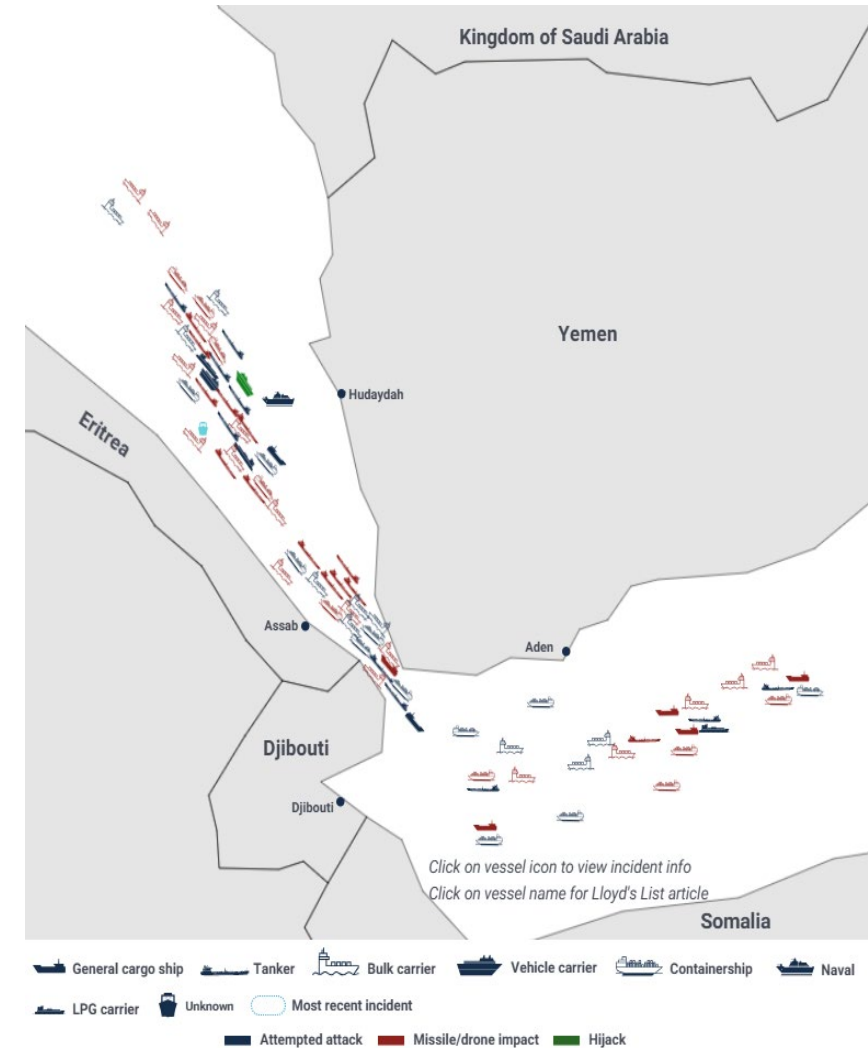


II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Read Sea

1. Houthi's attacks

- 90 attacks between 19 Nov 2023 and 12 Nov 2024
- Resulting in damages to 34 ships with various degrees of damages reported

VESSEL TYPE ATTACK IN RED SEA			
Serial (a)	Vsl Type (b)	Qty (c)	Percentage (d)
1	Bulk Carrier	26	29%
2	Container Ship	24	27%
3	Crude Oil Tanker	16	18%
4	Oil & Chemical Tanker	7	8%
5	General Cargo with Container Capacity	4	5%
6	General Cargo Ship	3	3%
7	LPG Carrier	3	3%
8	Pure Car & Truck Carrier	2	2%
9	Product Tanker	2	2%
10	Chemical Tanker	1	1%
11	Tanker	1	1%
12	Unknown	1	1%
Total		90	100%



Source: Operation Atalanta, UKMTO, Lloyd's List Intelligence/Seasearcher
Excludes suspicious approaches, incidents where location data is unavailable, and incidents not involving the Houthis

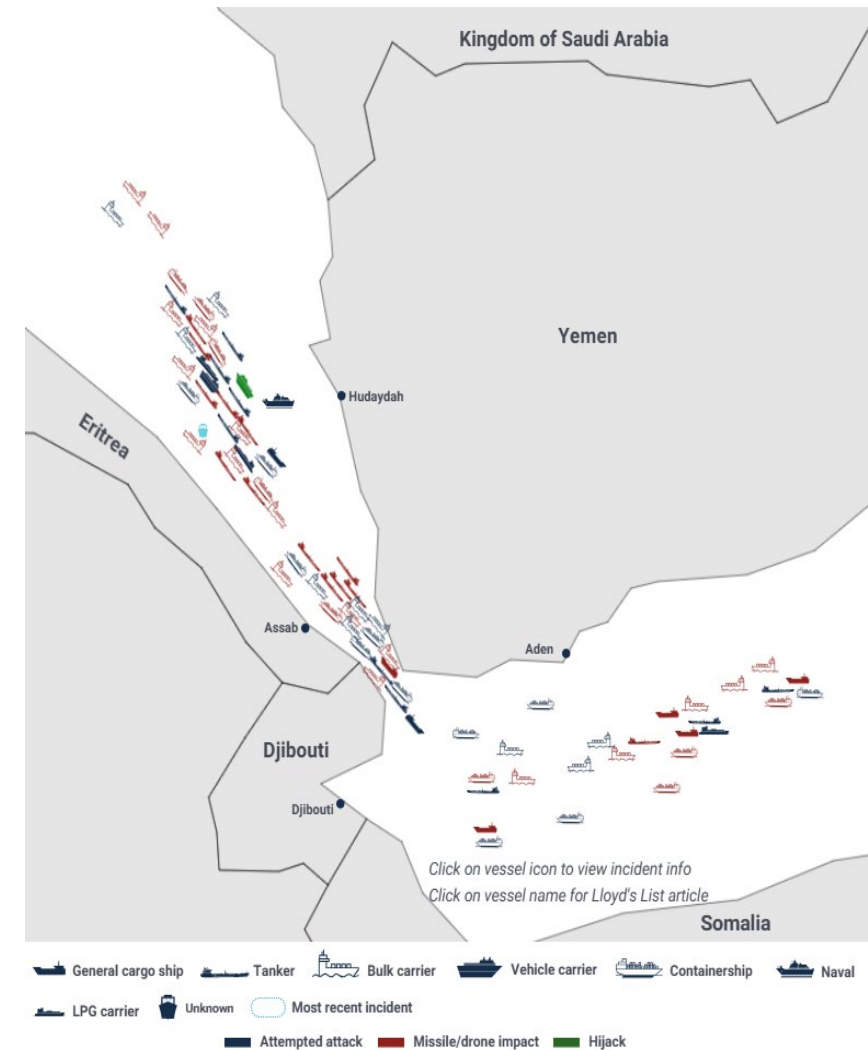


II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

1. Houthi's attacks

- 90 attacks between 19 Nov 2023 & 12 Nov 2024

WEAPON TYPE EMPLOYMENT IN RED SEA ATTACK			
Serial (a)	Weapon (b)	Qty (c)	Percentage (d)
1	Missiles	45	50%
2	Missiles/Drones	17	19%
3	Drones	7	8%
4	USV + Airborne Projectiles	4	5%
5	Projectiles	2	2%
6	Missiles/Other Projectiles	2	2%
7	Mine Explosion in Close Proximity	2	2%
8	Armed Approach + Missiles	2	2%
9	USV + Airborne Projectiles	2	2%
10	USV	1	1%
11	Hijack	1	1%
12	RPG	1	1%
13	Drones + Missiles + USV	1	1%
14	Missiles + Drones + Gunfire	1	1%
15	Missiles + Small Arms	1	1%
16	Complex Drones & Missiles Event	1	1%
17	Suspicious Approach	1	1%
Total		91	100%



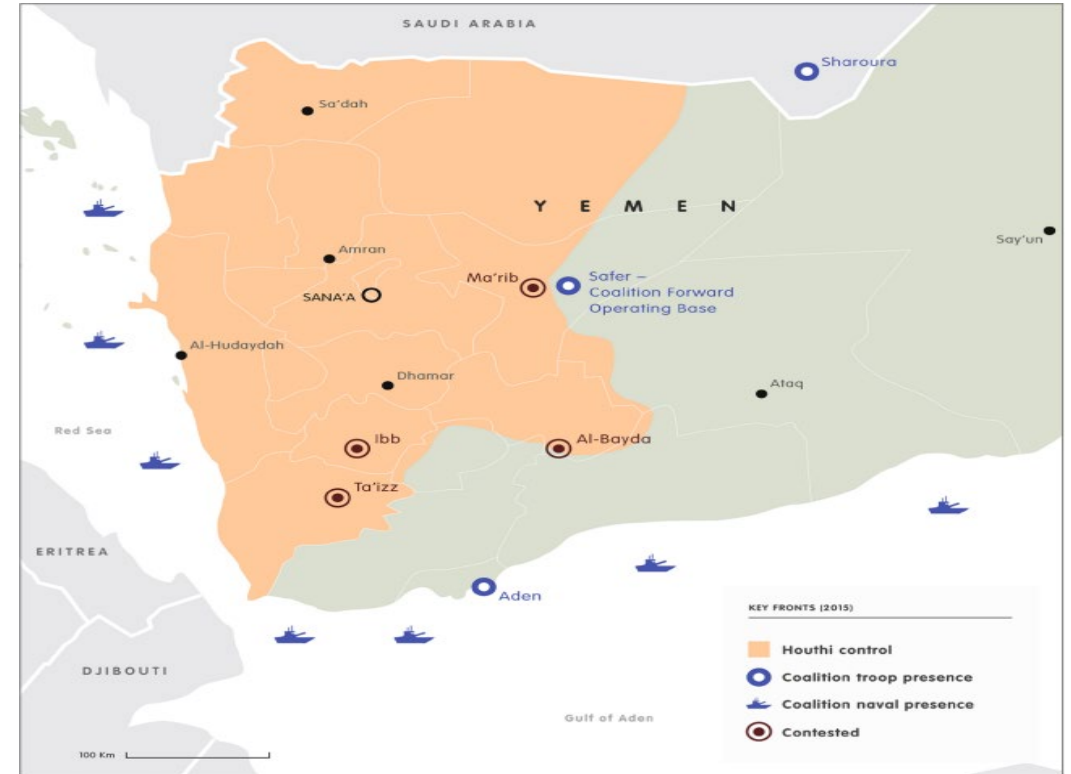
Source: Operation Atalanta, UKMTO, Lloyd's List Intelligence/Seasearcher
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II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Read Sea

1. Houthi's attacks - response

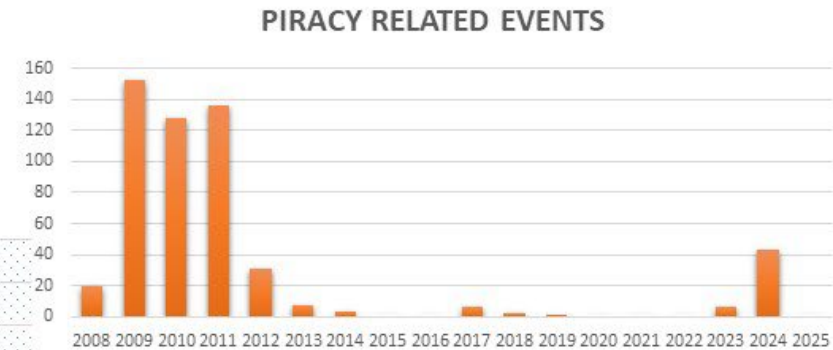
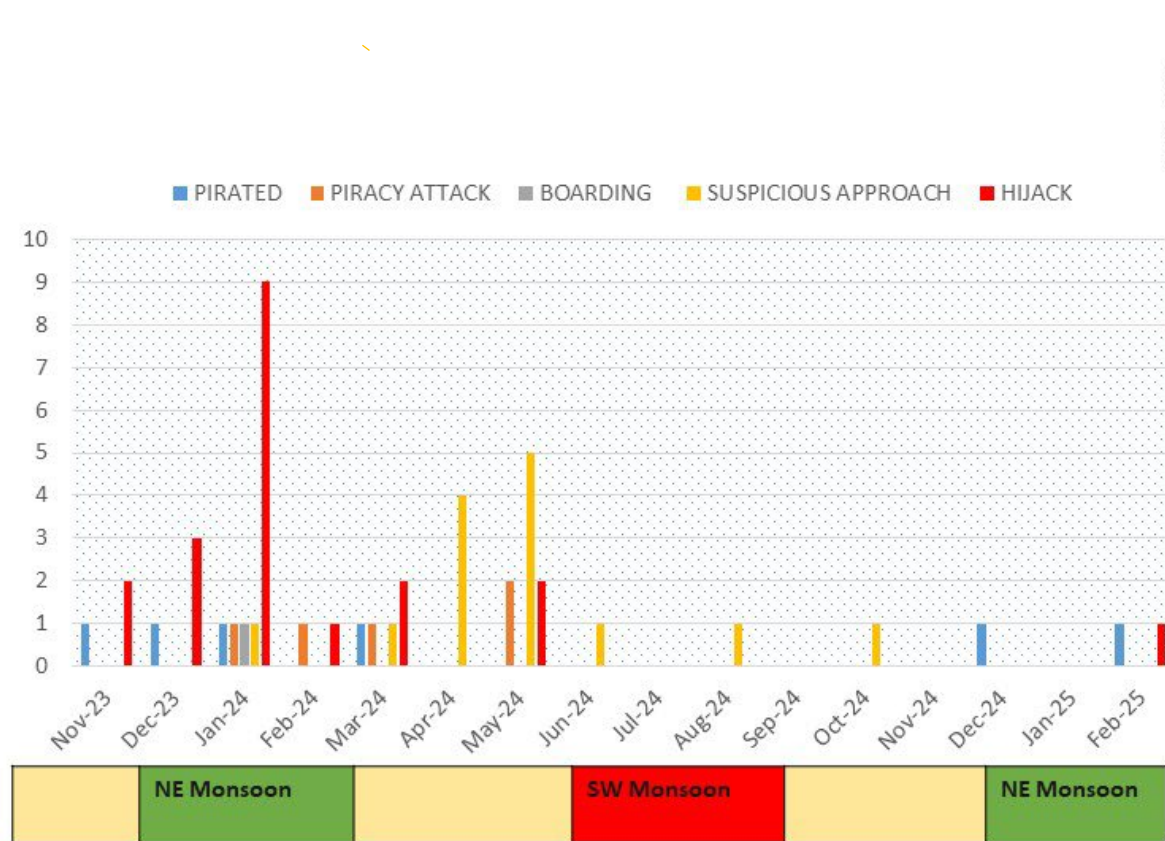
- UAE led Gulf states support southern movements to counter Houthis, despite quest for autonomy
- US led CMF Op Prosperity Guardian focuses on protecting commercial shipping in Red Sea & adjoining areas
- EUNAVFOR Op Aspides focuses on protecting commercial shipping
- US & UK forces shot down a barrage of Houthi launched drones (18) & missiles (03) over Red Sea on 9 Jan 24
- US & UK retaliatory strikes on targets in Houthi controlled areas in Yemen from 11 Jan 24 & several more strikes carried out since then (Op Poseidon Archer)
- Major shipping companies have stopped using the Red Sea, diverting traffic to much longer Cape of Good Hope



II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

2. Piracy cases

Piracy Statistics Nov 2023 – Feb 2025
46 events until Feb 2025



DEFINITIONS

PIRATED (OUTSIDE TTW) / ARMED ROBBERY AT SEA (INSIDE OF TTW)
PAG takes control of the ship and requests ransom.

PIRACY ATTACK
PAG unsuccessful attack on ship.

BOARDING
Successful attack but pirates do not take control.

SUSPICIOUS APPROACH
Suspicious maneuvering with clear intentions to attack. (weapons clearly displayed).

HIJACK
Attackers boarded and taken control of a ship against the crew's will.



II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

2. Piracy cases

- Key factors of reappearance

Horn of Africa Counter-Piracy Conference, 24 May 2024

Participation: Somali Government (both federal and federal member states), Kenya, Djibouti, Mauritius, Seychelles, UKMTO, EUNAVFOR, CMF, UNODC, US INL, US FBI, Indian Navy, and EUCAP.

Geopolitical Shifts: The conflict involving Yemeni-Houthi forces, marked by attacks on international shipping, has significantly influenced Somali piracy dynamics.

Somali pirates have taken advantage of the diverted international focus, operating with increased impunity along the Somali coast.

Economic Incentives: The substantial ransom payment of \$5 million for the MV Abdullah (March 2024) serves as a powerful motivator for pirates, incentivizing further attacks on vessels in transit.



II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

2. Piracy cases

- Response

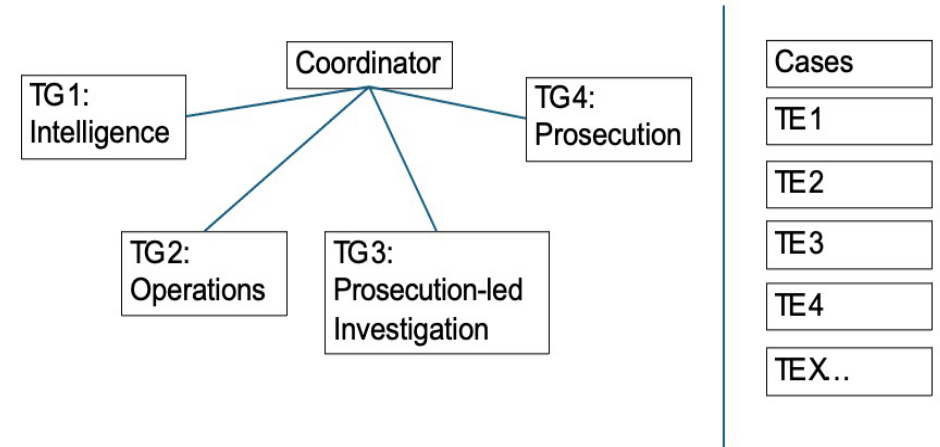
Horn of Africa Counter-Piracy Conference

Integration with Existing Frameworks: Creation of a Comprehensive Tactical Piracy Task Force. Ensuring the Task Force is aligned with existing frameworks like DCOC/CGIMA.

Administrative and Media Support: Enhancing administrative support and raising media awareness.

Operational Coordination: Improving coordination between operational and investigative efforts.

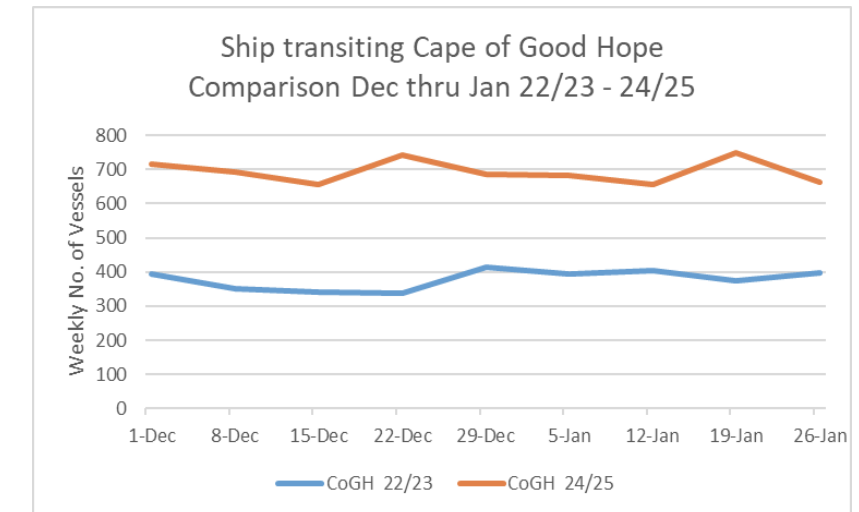
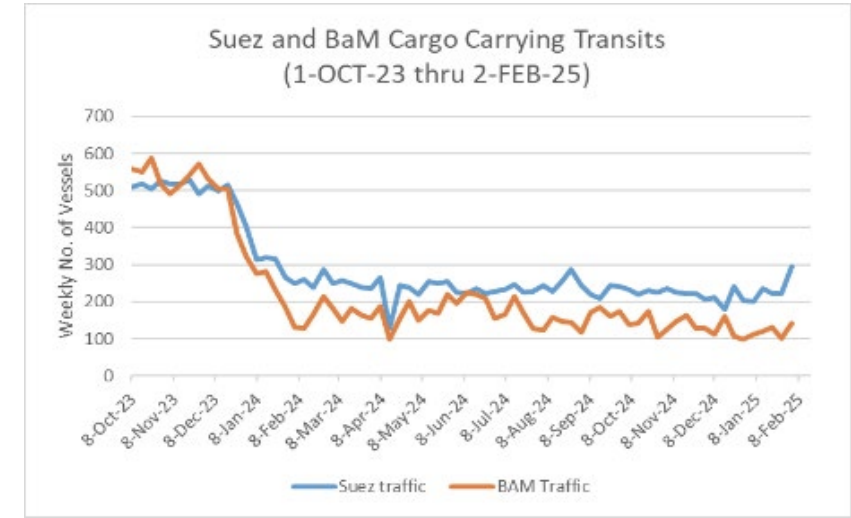
HOA Comprehensive Tactical Piracy Task Force



II. Gulf of Aden, Bab-al-Mandab Strait, and Red Sea

3. Impact: deterioration of the maritime security

- Increased **insurance premium rates** for shipping industry, rising to higher folds across the globe
- Purchase of **additional war risk insurance premiums** to cover risks associated with transiting high risks regions
- Increase in voyage trips (distance & time) of about 4,000 km (12 – 15 additional days) for ships making detour through **Cape of Good Hope**
- **Additional operations costs** (fuel, crew change & transit port charges) between US\$20,000 – US\$30,000 per day) for ships circumventing Gulf of Aden area.



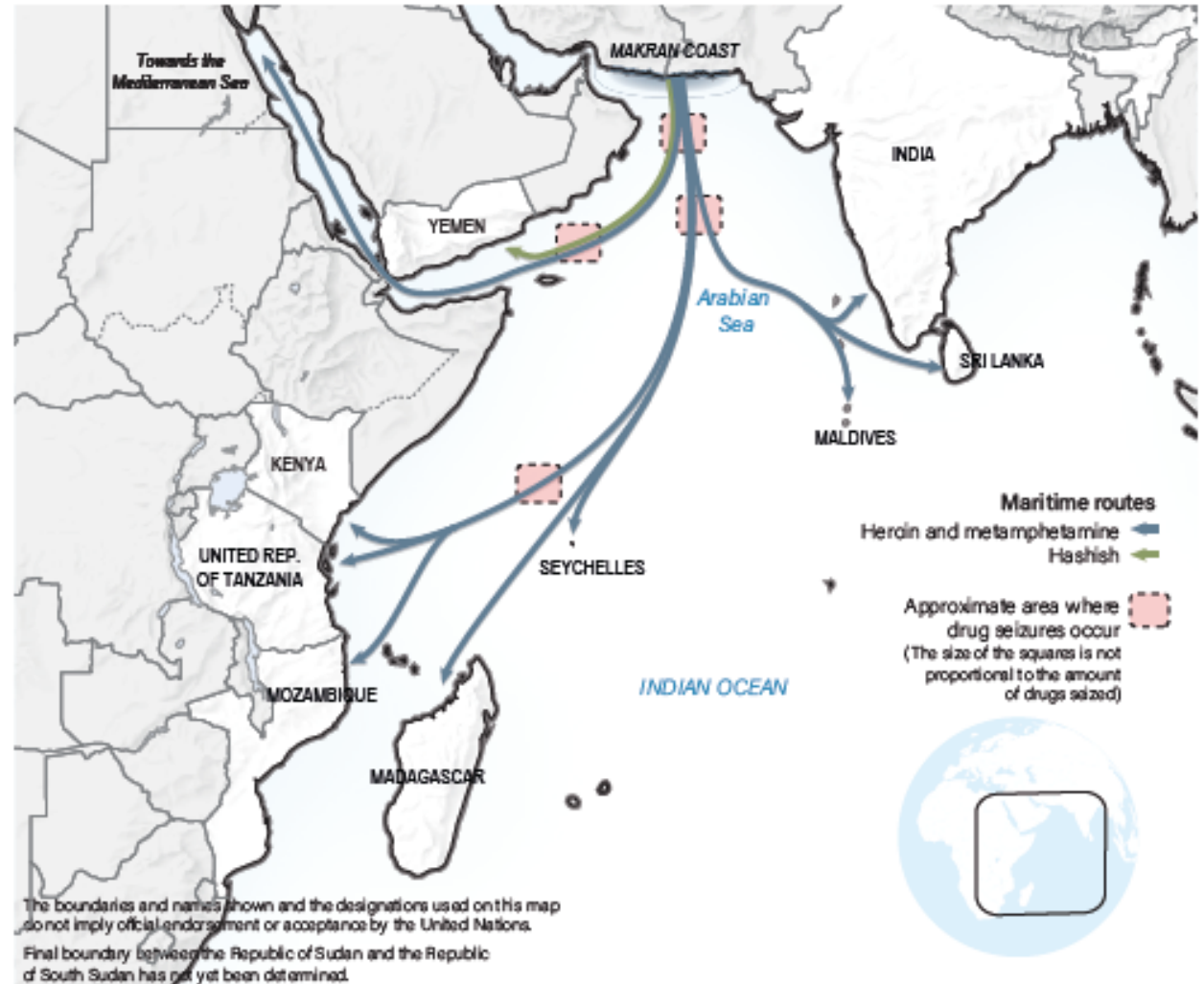
Source: S&P Global



III. Indian Ocean West

Maritime illegal trafficking routes

1. The Mediterranean sub-route route, from the Makran Coast, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.
2. The Eastern sub-route, towards Sri Lanka and onwards to Southeast Asia.
3. The Southwestern route from the Makran Coast onto Eastern and Southern Africa.
4. From the Makran Coast into Yemen. This route is mostly for hashish.



Source: Combined Maritime Force (CMF)

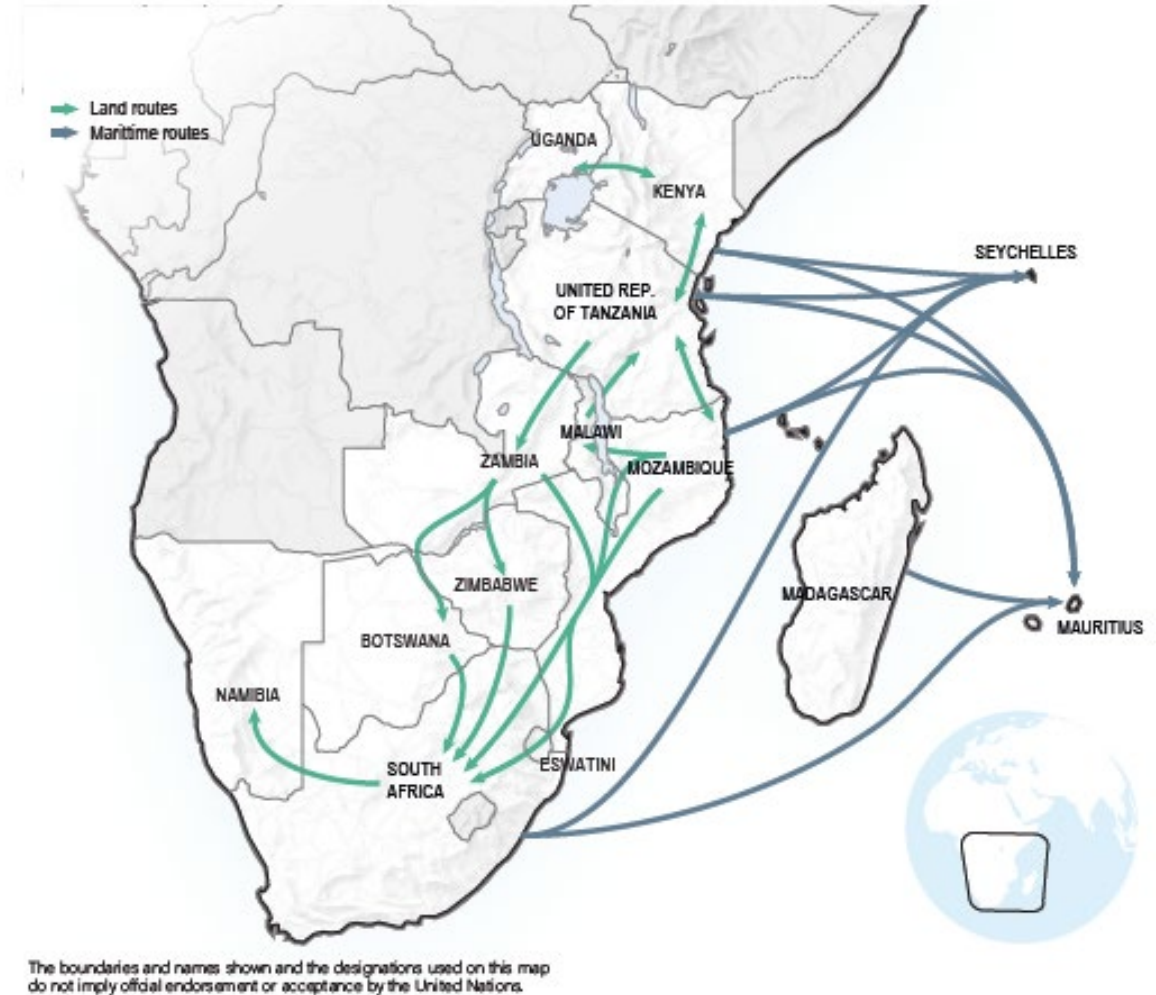
Source: Combined Maritime Force (CMF)



III. Indian Ocean West

Maritime and land illegal trafficking routes

1. Once the drugs land on the coast of eastern Africa, they take several routes within the region
2. Others are probably dispatched to Europe in containers using local cargo as an effort to divert authorities' attention



Source: Expert Working Group Presentations...

Source: Expert Working Group (EWG)



III. Indian Ocean West

Regional Seizures

Country	Type	Summary 2022, 2023 and 2024							
	Heroin	Methamphetamine	Hashish	Cocaine	Cannabis	Unidentified	Immigrants	Arms	IUU Fishing
Comoros	-	-	-	-	5.00	-	91.00	-	25.00
Djibouti	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,652.00	-	-
Kenya	138.00	2,529.00	-	603.00	20,009.00	1,640.00	-	-	1,600.00
Madagascar	-	-	-	133.50	600.00	297.00	105.00	-	2,854.30
Mauritius	-	-	3.00	-	436.00	-	-	-	443.50
Mozambique	-	472.00	30.00	628.00	-	-	-	-	450.00
Seychelles	655.90	391.65	956.30	-	153.65	50.00	-	-	1,814.00
Somalia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.00	-
South Africa	-	-	-	1,313.00	-	-	-	-	81,497.00
Pakistan	922.00	4,137.00	7,744.00	-	757.80	12,013.00	-	-	-
Tanzania	-	-	-	-	423.54	-	-	-	-
Total	1,715.90	7,529.65	8,733.30	2,677.50	22,384.99	14,000.00	1,848.00	4.00	88,683.80

Source: RMIFC and GMCP

*Tangible results related to maritime security



III. Indian Ocean West

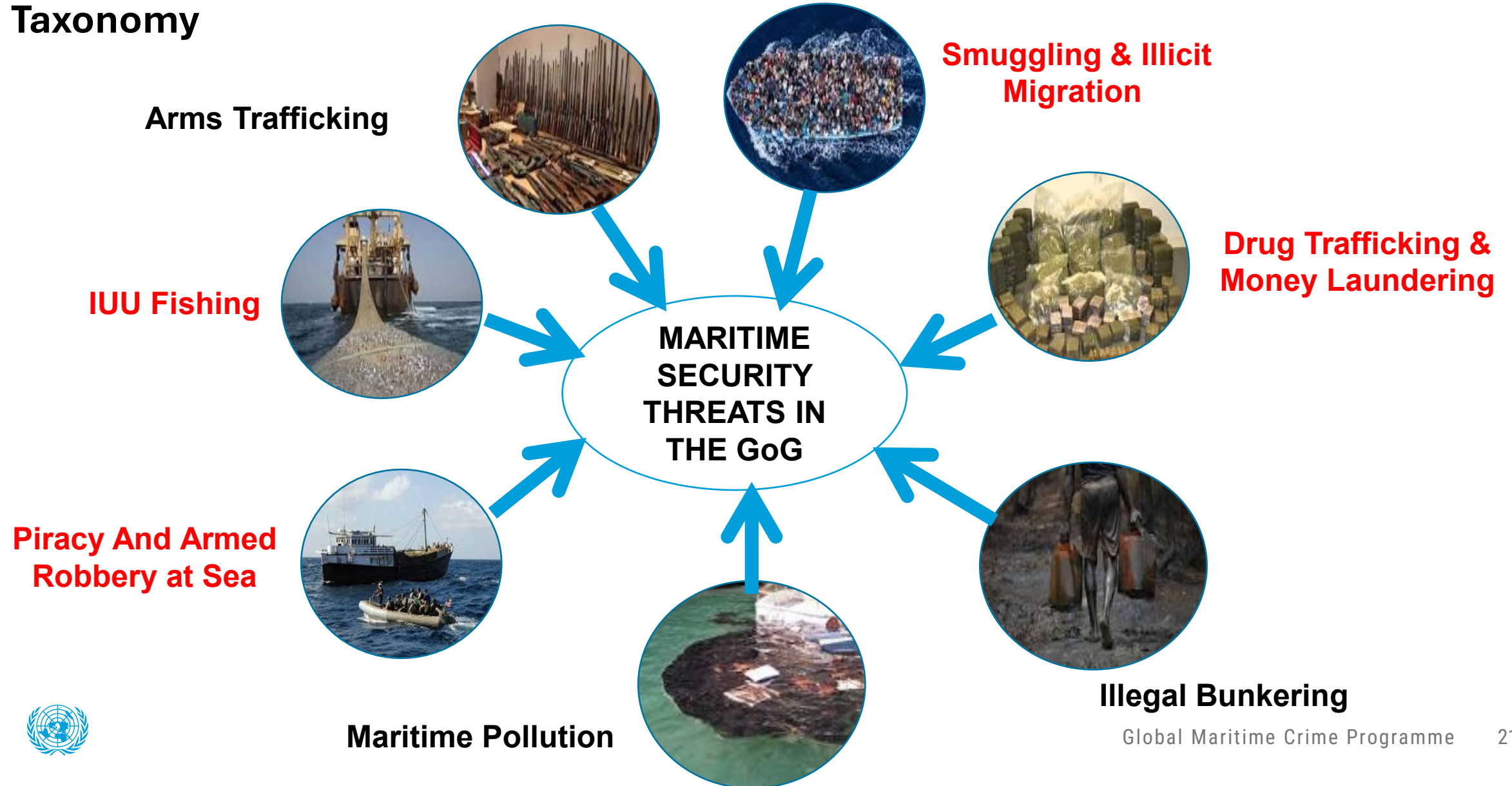
Regional Response

1. Regional cooperation
 - Through Joint Maritime Operations Centres
 - 2 main regional bodies to share information
 - Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar
 - Trilateral Planning Cell (TPC) in Maputo
2. Maritime and inland waters capacity building
3. Culture of maintenance
4. Legal finish



IV. Gulf of Guinea

Taxonomy

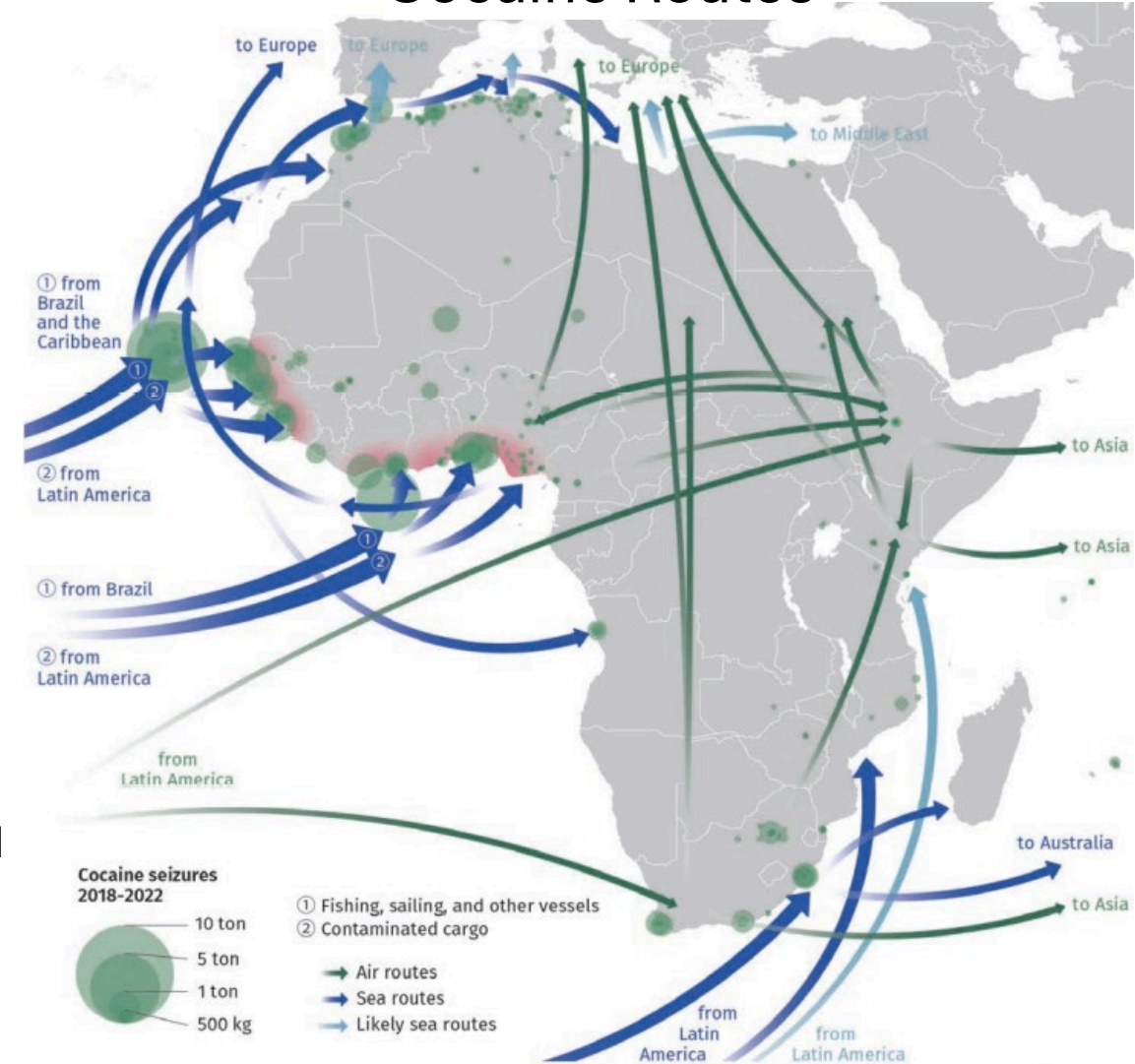


IV. Gulf of Guinea

Causes

1. **Inadequately protected massive maritime area** encompassing the EEZ of 19 littoral & insular countries extending from Cape Verde to Angola.
2. Most countries in the GOG **lack adequate capacity to effectively police and govern activities** within their maritime domain.
3. Several **non-state actors & TCOs facilitate maritime crime** threats occurring within the GOG.
4. The increase of Cocaine production in Latin America, and the Caribbean controls over the sea route to the US creates a necessity to find new routes to smuggle the drugs to Europe and Asia.

Cocaine Routes



Source: UNODC



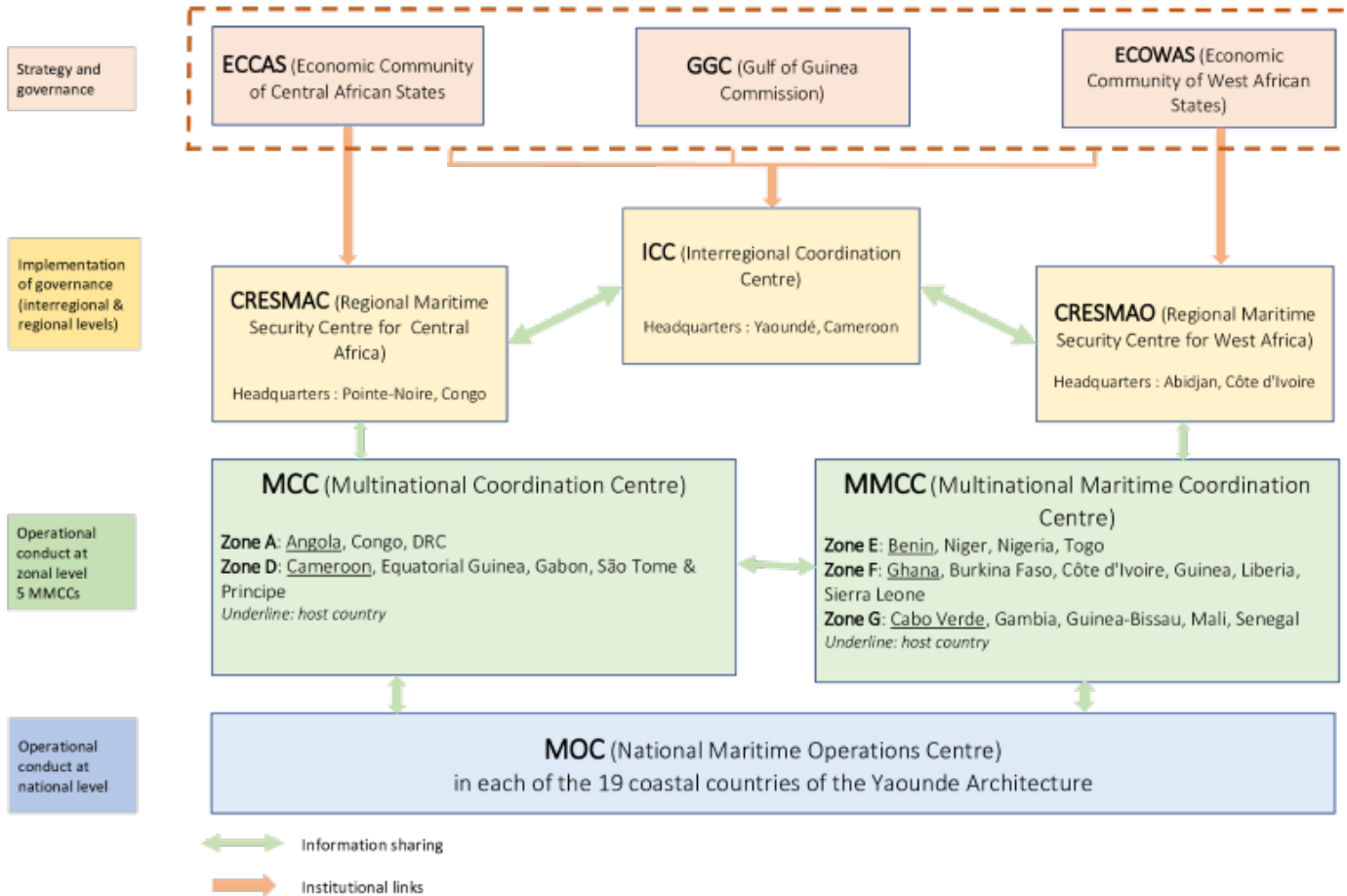
IV. Gulf of Guinea

Yaoundé Architecture

In June 2013, the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (**ECOWAS**), the Economic Community of Central African States (**ECCAS**) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (**GGC**) gathered in Yaoundé, Cameroon, to establish a common regional strategy to prevent and prosecute illicit activities in the waters of the Gulf of Guinea.

The Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCoC)

Maritime safety and security architecture in the Gulf of Guinea (Yaoundé Architecture)



Source: YARIS



IV. Gulf of Guinea

Yaoundé Architecture

Zone A encompasses the coastal states of Angola, Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with Angola serving as the host country.

Zone D includes the coastal states of Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and So Tomé and Príncipe, with Cameroon serving as the host.

Zone E includes the coastal states of Benin, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo, with Benin serving as the host country.

Zone F includes the coastal states of Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, with Ghana serving as the host country.

Zone G includes the coastal states of Cabo Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Senegal, with Cabo Verde serving as the host country



Source: YARIS

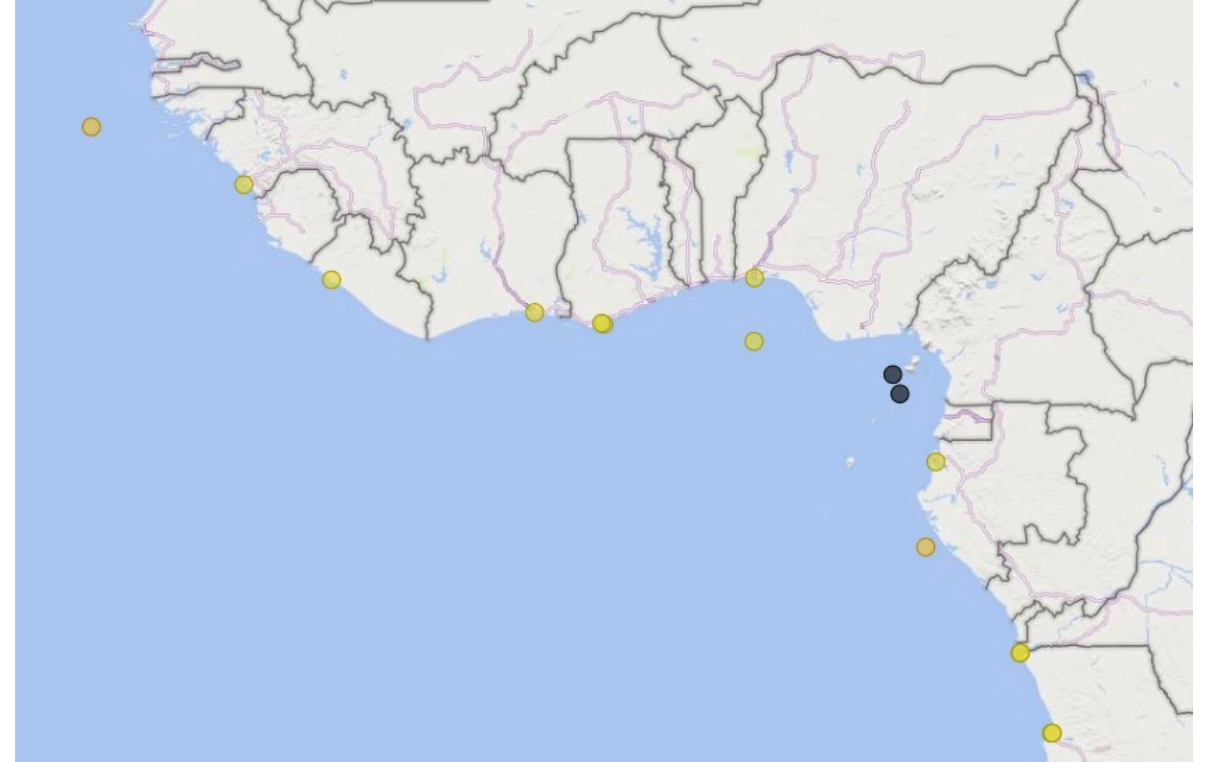


IV. Gulf of Guinea

Piracy and Armed Robbery

Maritime piracy is generally rooted in a combination of several factors, mainly the feeling of being despoiled of national resources, such as hydrocarbons but also, and above all, the exploitation of IUU fishing.

Another factor is the terrain, which is conducive to concealing pirates, having a vast network of canals, marshes, and lakes covering an area of 42,000 km²



Source: MICA Centre

The Gulf of Guinea, once seen as the epicentre of maritime instability, continues to be restrained.

1. 6 incidents during 2024
2. Maritime insecurity associated with piracy and robbery persists, with 26 incidents recorded this year

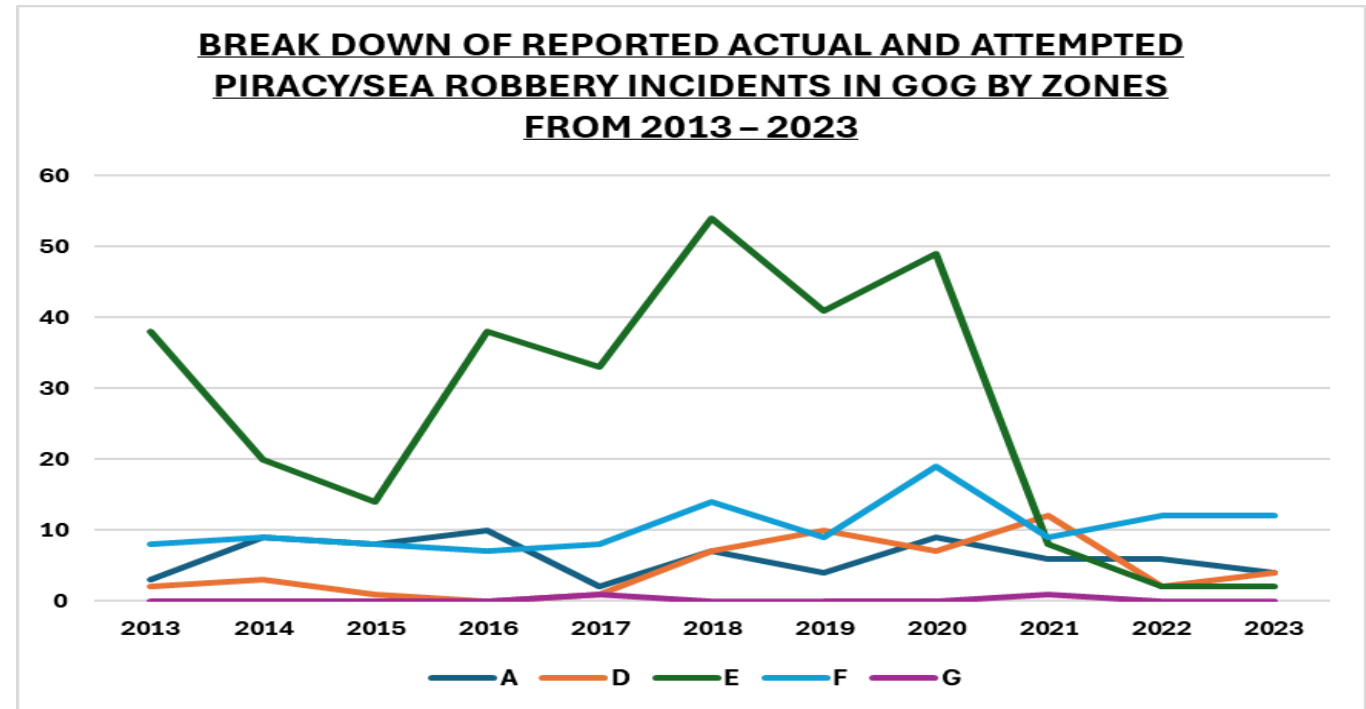


IV. Gulf of Guinea

Piracy Armed Robbery

From 2013 to 2023, Zone E recorded more than 50% of maritime incidents.

Followed by Zone F, while Zone A & D had fewer incidents & Zone G recorded the least



Source: ICC IMB PRC DATA



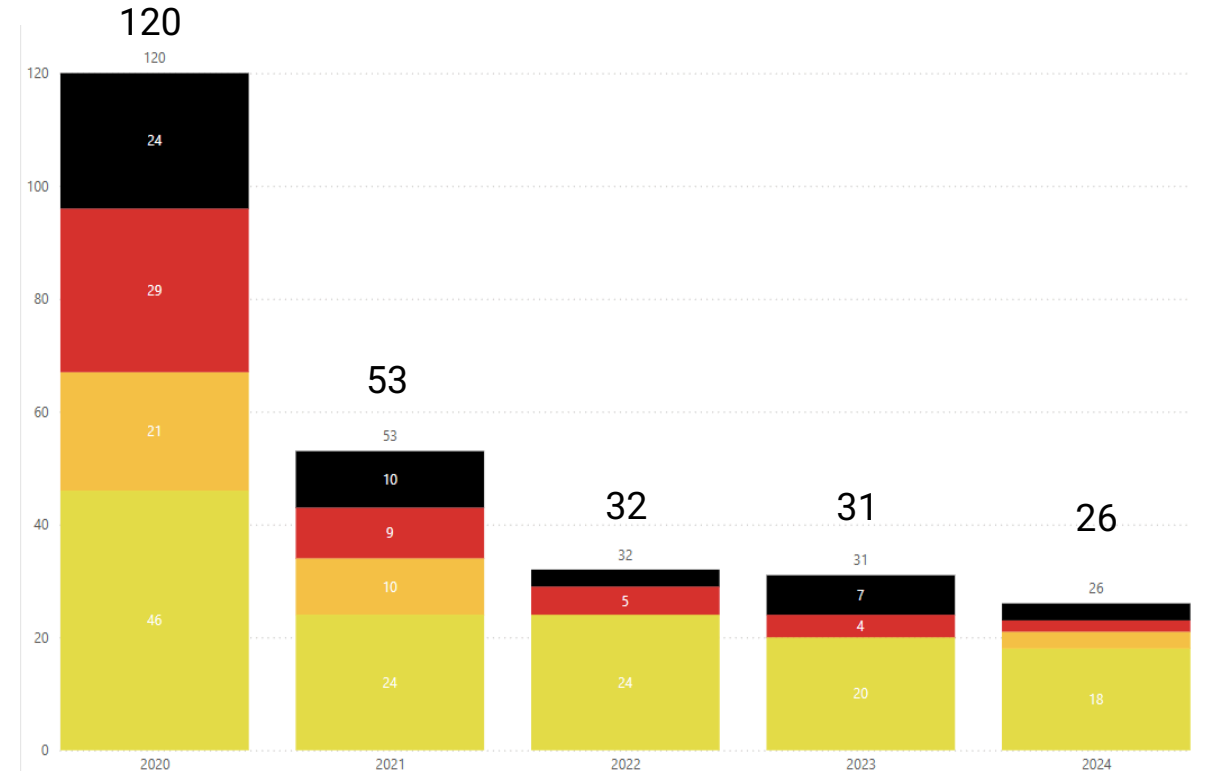
IV. Gulf of Guinea

Piracy and Armed Robbery

The general pattern remains on a downward trajectory, influenced by the initiatives spearheaded by the Yaoundé Architecture, along with French and allied naval support, as well as the repercussions of alternative illicit activities like illegal bunkering.

The increase of maritime presence at sea to respond to maritime crimes in Zone E, led by Nigeria to reduce ungoverned maritime spaces, is showing results.

Other port incidents were recorded, including opportunistic theft occurring at night, predominantly on **vessels with significant deficiencies in monitoring and security systems** (ISPS requirements).



Source: MICA Centre



IV. Gulf of Guinea

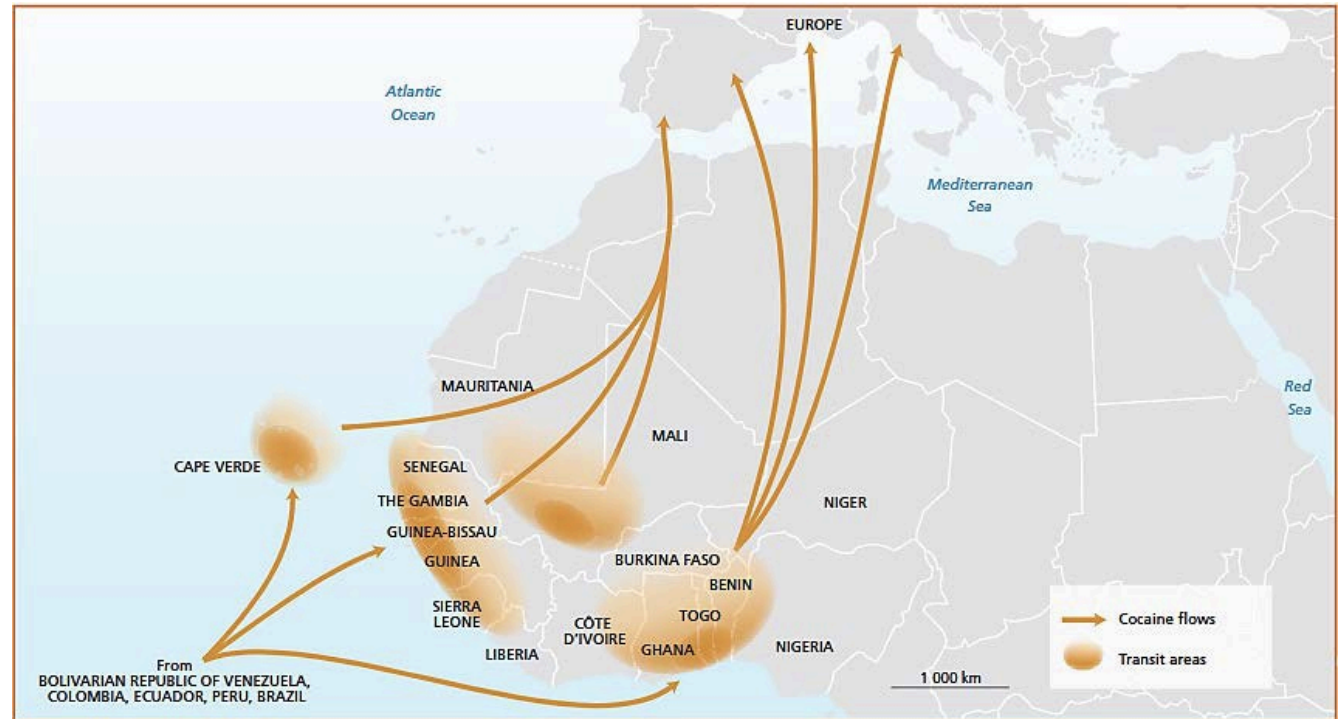
Drug Trafficking

West Africa has historically served as a gateway for Africa and the European drug markets due to its developing and poorly regulated smuggling routes.

The main ports have become key transshipment areas, mainly for transport to Europe.

Since 2018, illicit coca crops increased by several factors in Latin America, as a result more cocaine is available to be smuggled.

Cocaine Trafficking Flows in West Africa



Source: UNODC

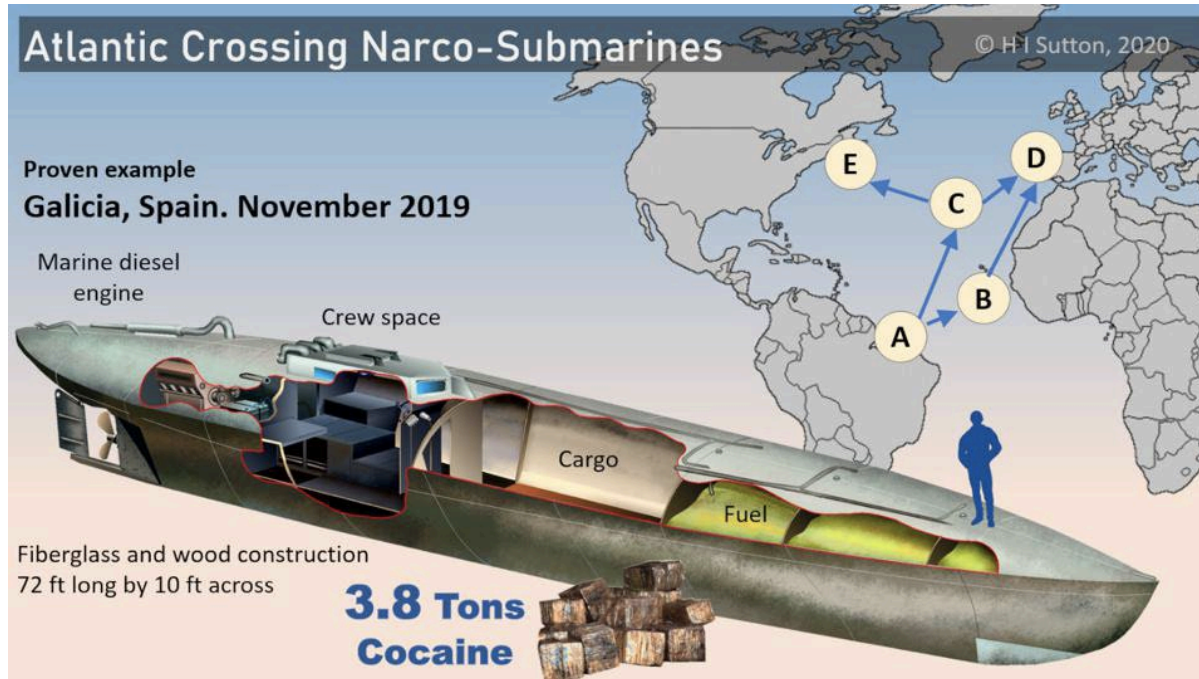


IV. Gulf of Guinea

Drug Trafficking

TCOs are improving their capability to deliver the drugs across the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean. West Africa has been identified as a viable entry point due to **inadequate law enforcement, relatively low bribe costs, and established smuggling routes**, whether by air travel, air cargo, or through deserts, potentially involving weapons and migrants/refugees heading north towards the Mediterranean.

Narco - Semisumersibles



Source: Sutton



IV. Gulf of Guinea

Illegal Migration

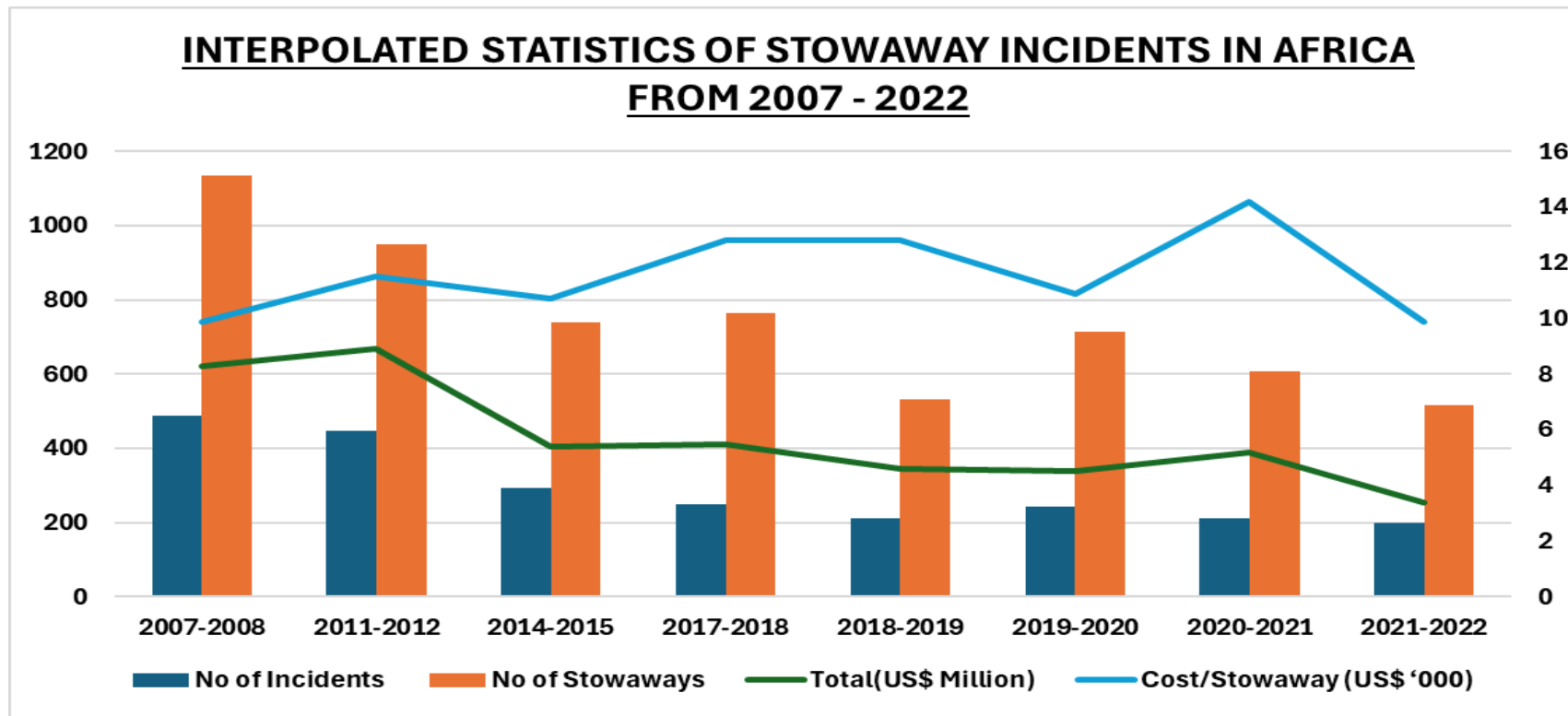
- Major cases of illegal migration in GoG includes stowaway cases and mass human smuggling by sea to Canary Island, Spain and other countries in Europe and other continents
- Stowaways sometimes face risks of annihilation by hostile ship's crew
- Stowaways rarely know their final destinations when embarked on ships with focus of leaving the region in search of envisaged greener pastures abroad
- Mass human smuggling by sea in locally built boats usually occur in Senegalese/Cape Verdean waters notwithstanding dangers often in bad weather and rough seas
- Illegal migrants face risks of suffocation in enclosed compartments onboard, hunger and starvation when inadequate log supplies get exhausted



IV. Gulf of Guinea

Illegal Migration

- Stowaway incidents mostly recorded in Nigeria within Zone E
- Two mass migration incidents with about 1,200 illegal migrants recorded in Senegal & Cabo Verdean waters



Source: IMO GISIS/
VANGUARD INC DATA



IV. Gulf of Guinea

Illegal Unreported Unregulated Fishing

- **Paucity of regional data** for IUU fishing .
- According to African Defence forum, GoG, especially **West Africa is considered the epicentre of IUU fishing** with an estimated annual loss of between \$2.3 - \$9.4 billion.
- **IUU fishing recorded mostly in Zone F & G** with **limited response capabilities**.
- There are cases of **IUU fishing related to other types of maritime crimes**. Narcotrafficking, pollution, bunkering and refining, piracy and sea robbery and illegal migration.

CASE STUDY OF FV BENJAMIN

Picture of 1,900kg of Cocaine seized by Ghana Authorities in Prampram, Ghana in May 2006



Source: ECOWAS



Conclusions

1. Continent affected by a variety of internal and external factors
 - Internal: Natural resources, poverty, political instability, under development
 - External: Affected by external conflicts
2. Despite the large coastal areas, some countries have not focused on blue economies. Which involves not only protection, but exploitation
3. Regional efforts are the best alternative to jointly protecting their economies and vast resources
4. Natural resources
 - Opportunities
 - Challenges





United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime

Thank you

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