



MONTHLY MARITIME SECURITY UPDATE

FEB 2023

**Information Fusion Centre
Indian Ocean Region**

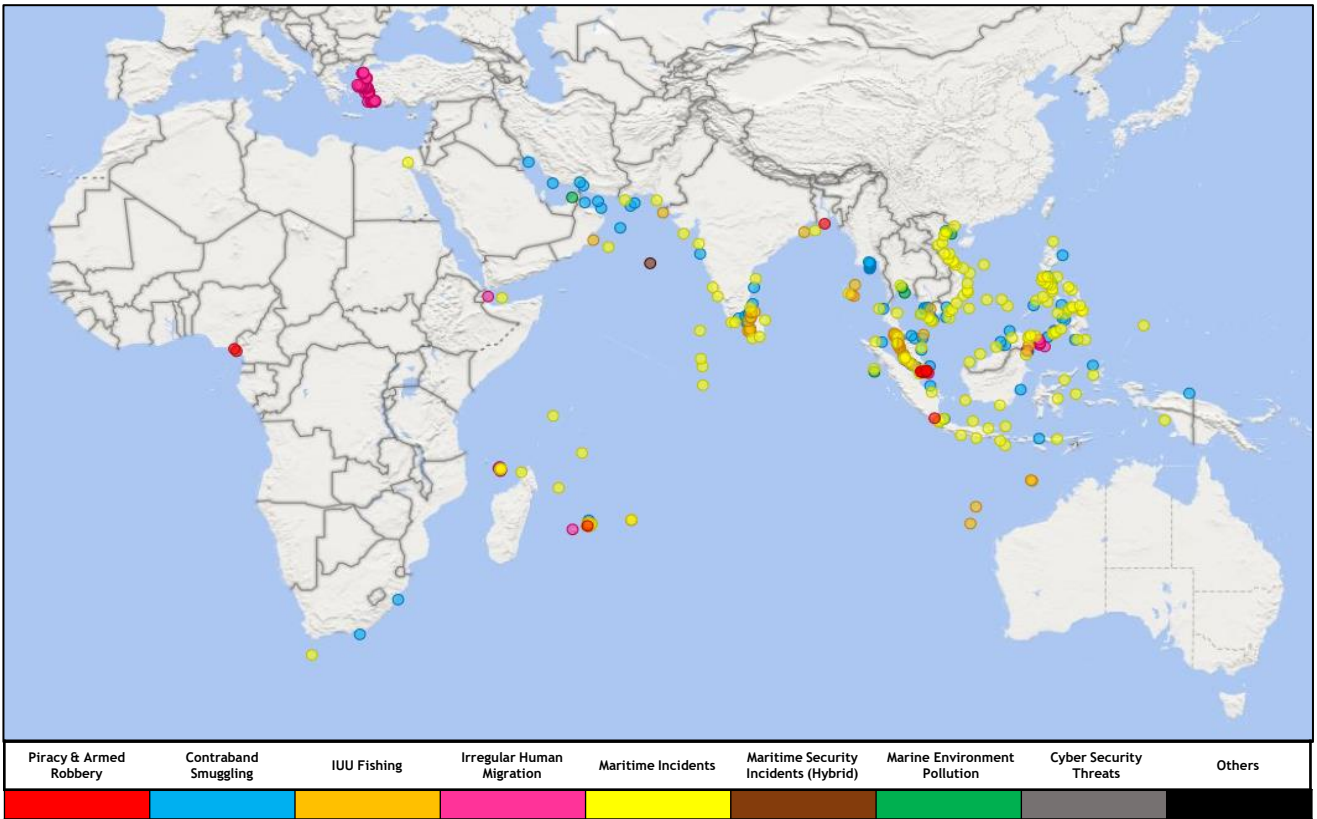


Collaboration for Safety and Security

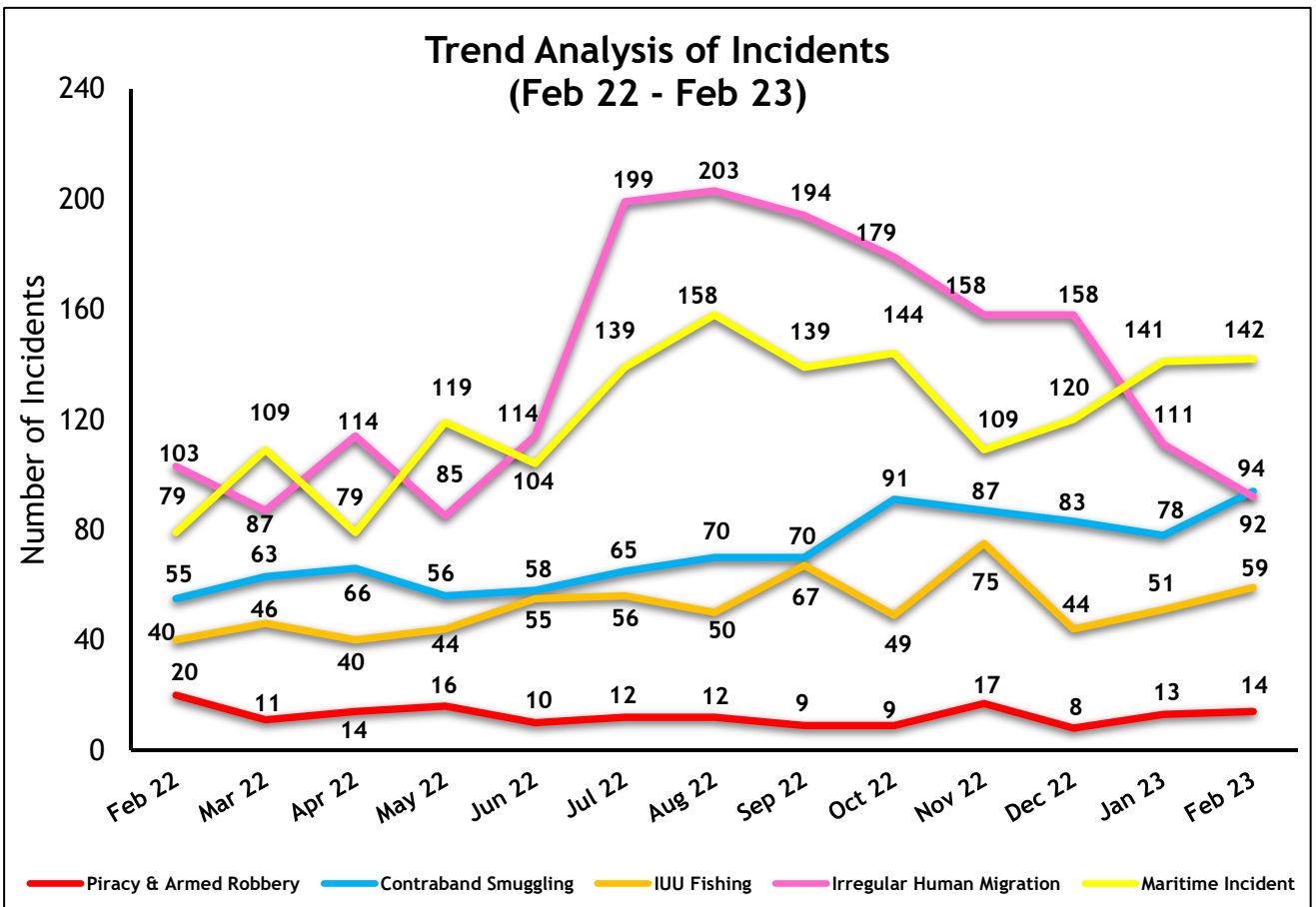
Disclaimer

Information collated in the IFC-IOR's reports have been derived from various internal and external linkages such as partner nations, other maritime stakeholders, agencies and open sources. The report aims to undertake analysis of incidents by establishing trends and anomalies to ensure safety and security of mariners and seafarers. While due care and effort has been taken to ensure veracity of data, due diligence may be exercised for subsequent usage of information contained therein. The positions of incidents depicted in some cases may be approximate or indicative. IFC-IOR requests and seeks assistance of all stakeholders to report incidents in the region to undertake accurate predictive and prescriptive analysis so as to build a comprehensive picture of existing threats in the maritime domain. The information contained in the report and the analysis thereon, is not reflective of the views of the Government of India or Indian Navy in any manner.

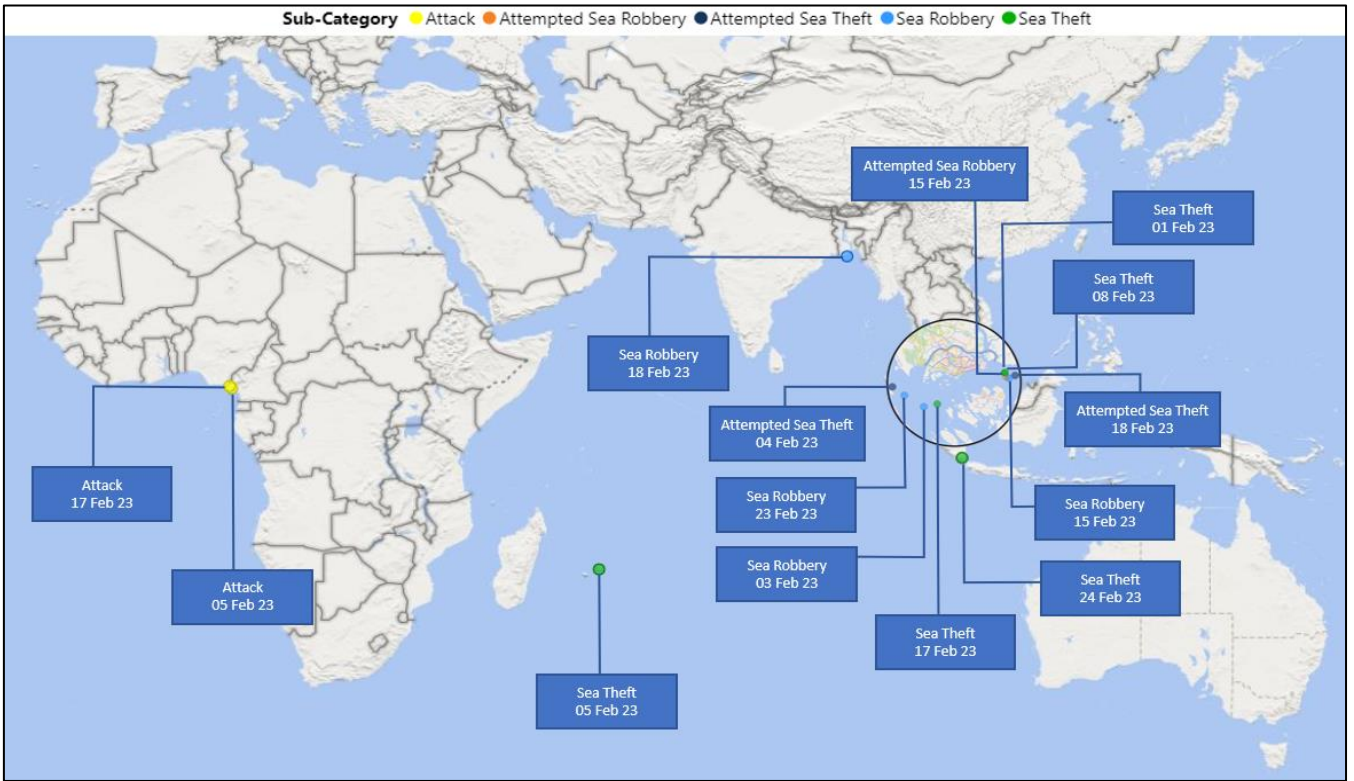
Overview



* GoG - Focus on only Piracy & Armed Robbery incidents; Mediterranean - Focus on only IHM incidents



PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY



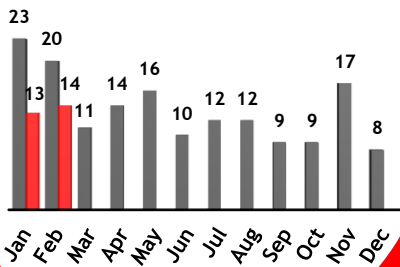
Gulf Of Guinea, 2

South Asia, 1

East Africa, 1

Comparison of Incidents

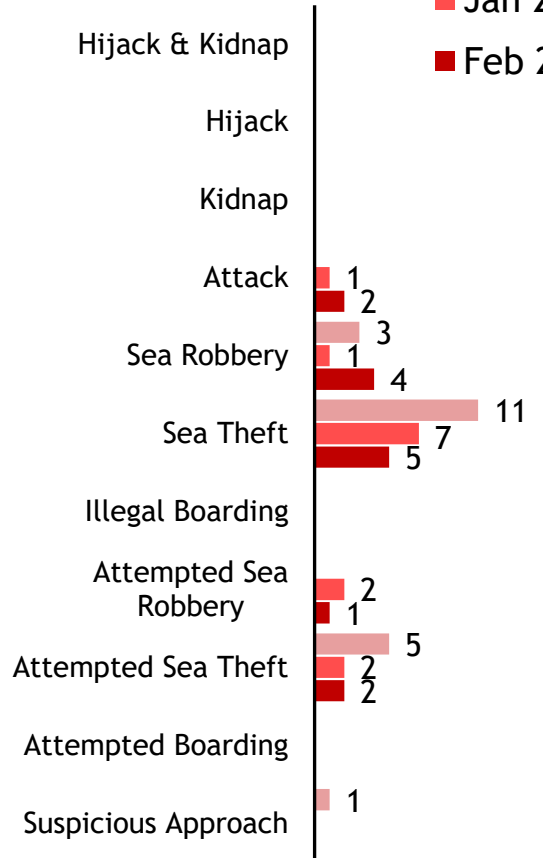
■ 2022 ■ 2023



SE Asia, 10



■ Feb 22
■ Jan 23
■ Feb 23



14 piracy and armed robbery incidents (actual as well as attempted) were recorded by the Centre in Feb 23, a slight increase from Jan 23 (13 incidents). A total of five incidents of sea theft, four incidents of sea robbery, two incidents each of attack, attempted sea theft and one incident of attempted sea robbery were recorded by the Centre. All incidents occurred during the night time. Bulk carriers, followed by tug boats, barges and a fishing trawler, were reported to be the most targeted vessels this month. The perpetrators were observed to be operating in small groups of three - four. However, during two incidents involvement of nine to ten perpetrators was reported. Six incidents involved the usage of guns and knives. A total of nine personnel were reported to be injured and two were reported to be dead. The regional analysis of Piracy and Armed Robbery is enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs.

SOMS - During Feb 23, three incidents each of sea robbery and sea theft, two incidents of attempted sea theft and one incident of attempted sea robbery were recorded in the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) of the Singapore Straits (05 in the Eastbound lane, 03 in the Precautionary Area and 01 in the Westbound lane of the TSS). Perpetrators armed with knives boarded the vessels whilst underway and escaped with scrap metal and engine spare parts. The number of perpetrators varied from a minimum of two to a maximum of nine. All crew members were reported to be safe.

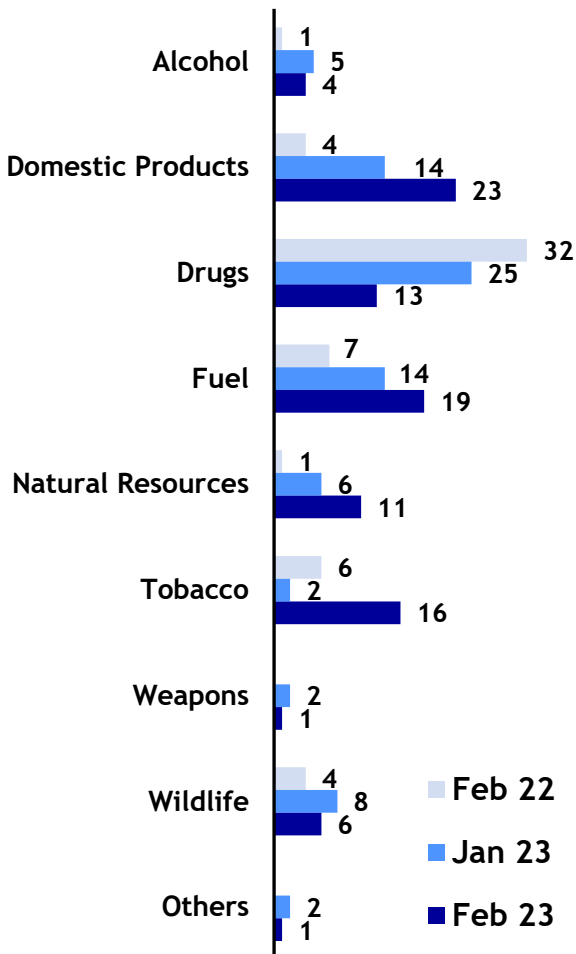
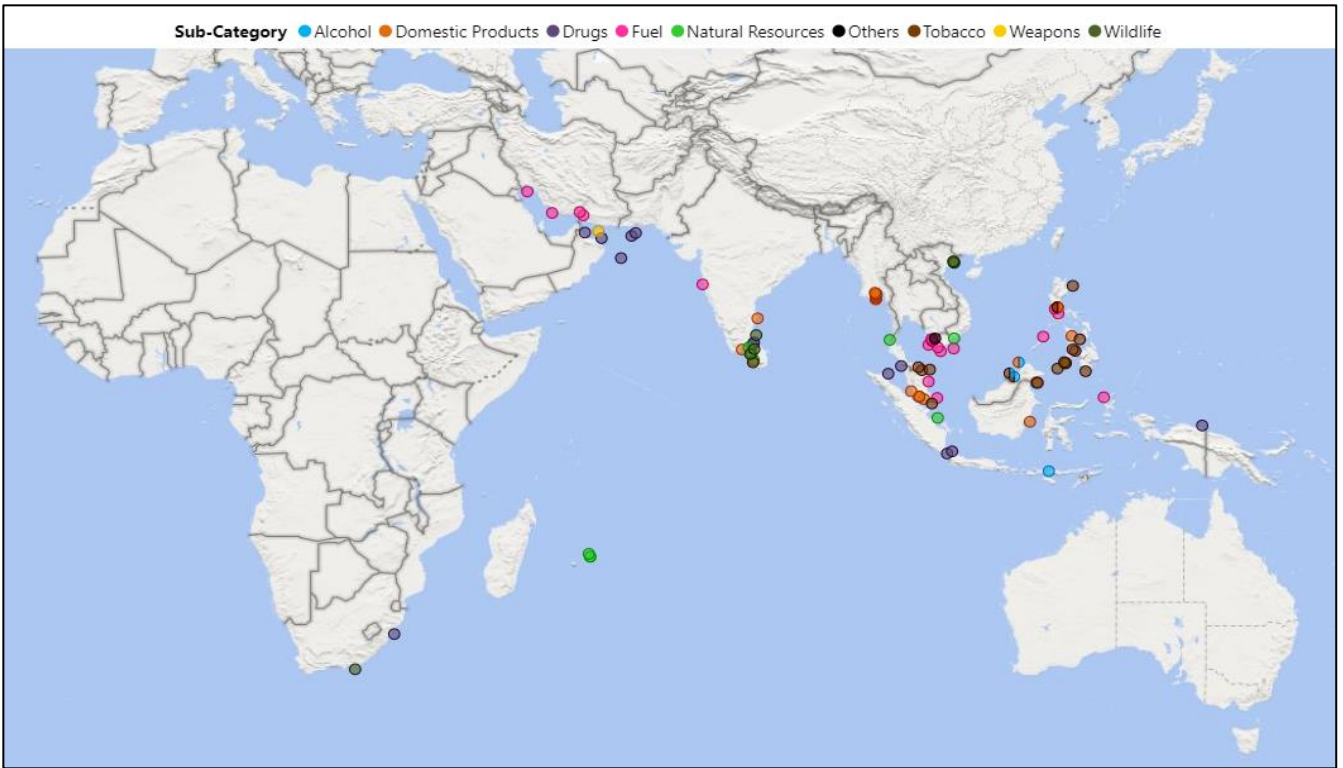
Gulf of Guinea - Two attack incidents were recorded in GoG in Feb 23. In the first incident, the oil tanker was attacked at anchor off Idabato, Bakassi Peninsula, Cameroon. An unknown number of perpetrators boarded the vessel and shot two crew members (armed escorts) dead. In the second incident, a vessel was attacked by an unknown number of perpetrators off Dendundasacha, Cameroon. The perpetrators attempted to board the vessel but could not succeed. The vessel and all crew members were reported to be safe.

Indian Ocean - One incident of sea theft was recorded off Mauritius in Feb 23, where perpetrators stole a crewless pleasure craft moored inside the lagoon off the coast of La Gaulette, Mauritius.

Bay of Bengal - One incident of sea robbery was recorded off Kuakata Coast, Patuakhali District, Bangladesh in Feb 23. Eight to ten armed perpetrators attacked a fishing trawler, 'FB BHAI BHAI', 45nm off Patharghata fishing harbour, Bangladesh. Nine fishermen were injured by stabbing and shooting while the remaining nine fishermen were temporarily held as hostages onboard. The perpetrators escaped after damaging the engine and stealing fishing nets, ropes and cargo held onboard worth 13,994 USD. The trawler drifted towards the coast and established communication with the "trawler owner association". The Bangladesh authorities rescued three fishermen, five were reported missing and one fisherman was reported dead.

Java Sea - One incident of sea theft was recorded off Indonesia in Feb 23. The incident involved a chemical tanker boarded by three perpetrators while at anchor. The perpetrators escaped with engine spares.

CONTRABAND SMUGGLING



Domestic Products, 23

Fuel, 19

Drugs, 13

Others, 1 Weapons, 1

Alcohol, 4

Wildlife, 6

Natural Resources, 11

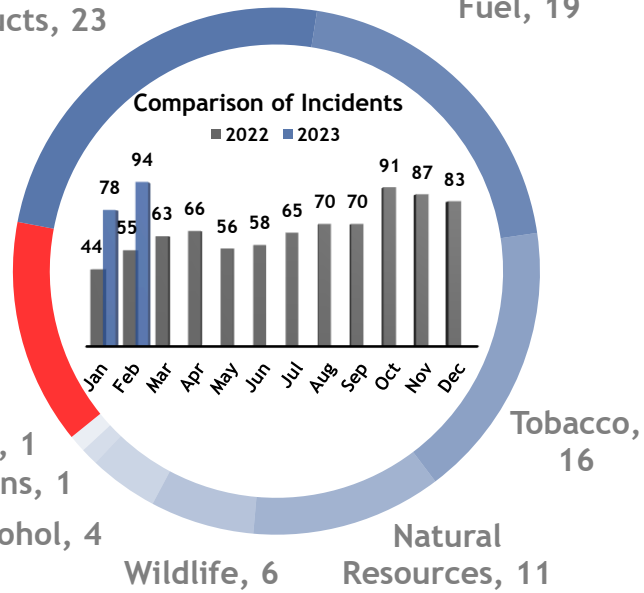
Cannabinoids, 7

Opioids, 1

Others, 2

6

Amphetamines, 7



94 contraband smuggling incidents were recorded by the Centre in the month of Feb 23, a 21% increase from Jan 23 (78 incidents). Domestic product smuggling constituted the highest reported incidents, followed by fuel, tobacco and drug smuggling.

Domestic Products - 23 incidents of domestic product smuggling were recorded in Feb 23, which comprised nine incidents off Myanmar, five incidents each off Philippines and Malaysia, two incidents off India and one incident each off Vietnam and Indonesia. The domestic products seized in these incidents involved red and white onions, dairy products, areca nuts, LPG cylinders, vehicle spare parts, electrical items, gas springs, e-cigarettes, pork meat, polyethene films, rice and sugar.

Fuel - 19 incidents of fuel smuggling involving the seizure of about 3,562,000 litres of fuel and 1,964,285 litres of diesel were recorded in Feb 23. These comprised eight incidents off Vietnam, four incidents off Iran, three incidents off Philippines, two incidents off Malaysia and one incident each off India and Indonesia.

Tobacco - 16 incidents of tobacco smuggling were recorded by the Centre in Feb 23, which comprised nine incidents off Philippines, four incidents off Malaysia and one incident each off Sri Lanka, Brunei and Indonesia. A total of 4,899 master cases, 225,500 reams, 8,110 cartons, 10,280 packs and 3,950,400 sticks of cigarettes were seized in these incidents.

Drugs - 13 drug seizure incidents were recorded in Feb 23. A total of five incidents of drug seizures were reported inside ports which included 630 kg of hashish, 380 kg of cocaine, 309 kg of methamphetamine, 277 kg of syabu and 117 packets of cannabis set to be smuggled via sea route.

Natural Resources - 11 incidents of natural resource smuggling were recorded by the Centre in Feb 23, which comprised three incidents off Mauritius, two incidents off Sri Lanka, Vietnam and one incident each off Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and India. The seizure involved in these incidents includes kendu leaves, timber logs, sandalwood, sand, rubber sheets and gold.

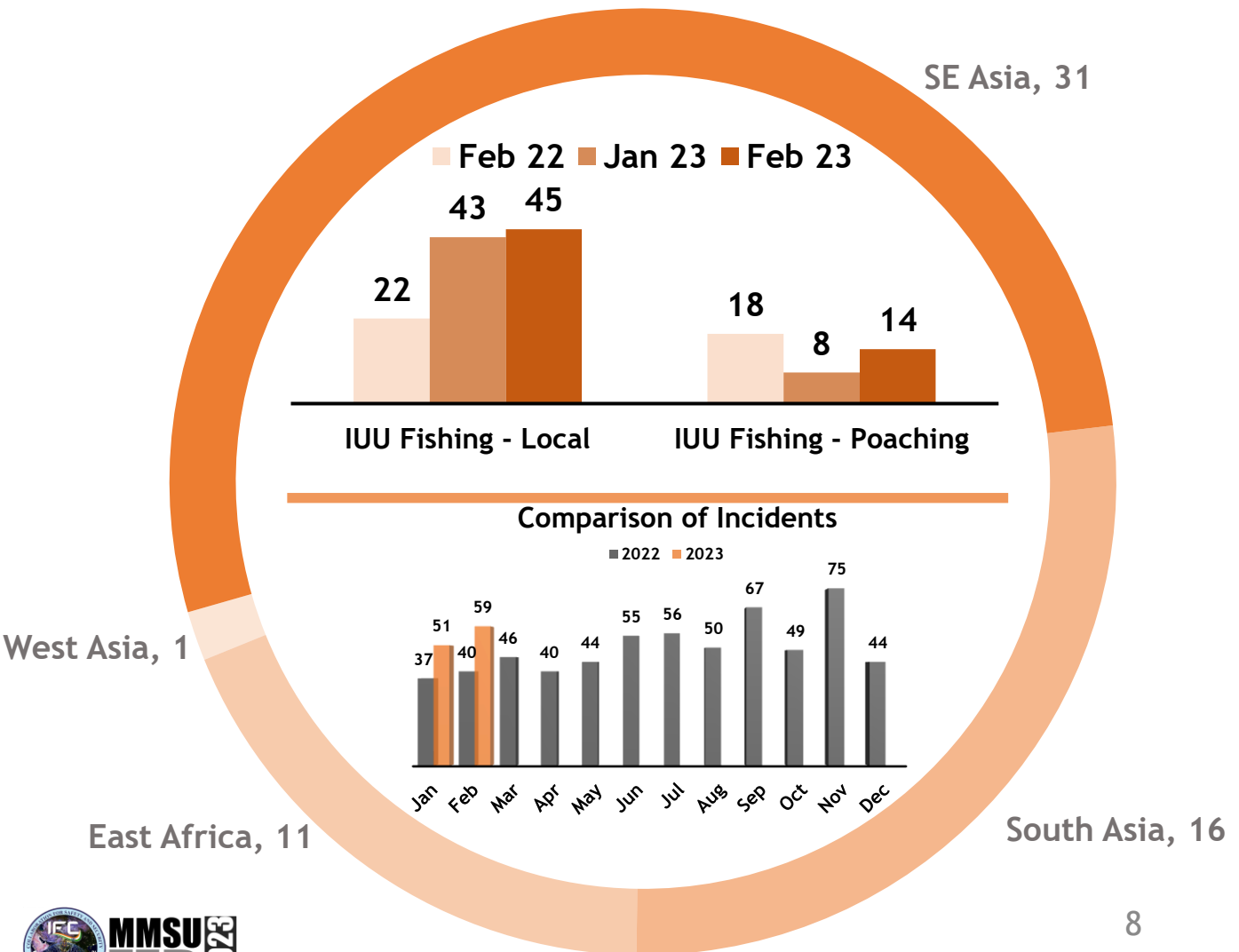
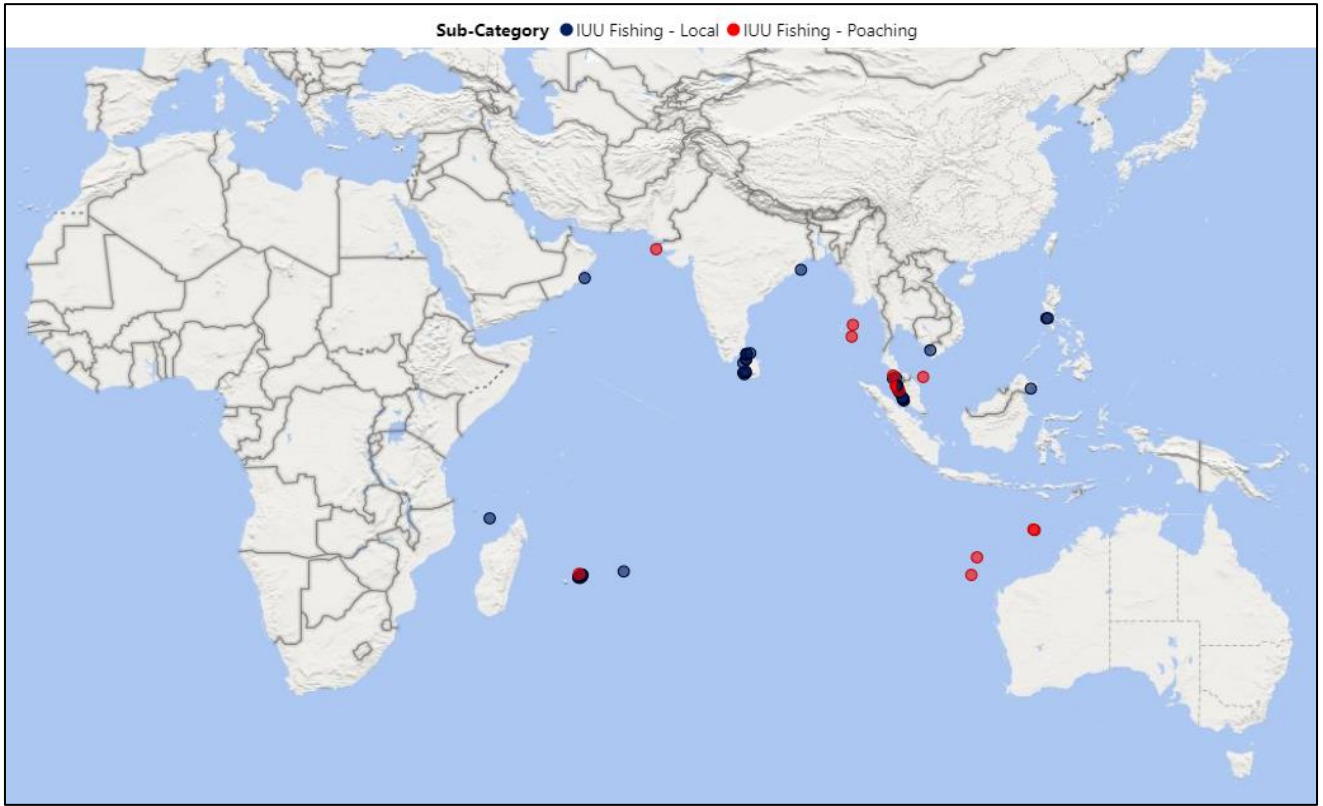
Wildlife - Six incidents of wildlife smuggling were recorded by the Centre in Feb 23, which comprised two incidents each off Sri Lanka and Vietnam and one incident each off South Africa and India. The species seized in these incidents were ivory, abalones, ornamental, shark fins and sea cucumber.

Alcohol - Four incidents of alcohol smuggling were recorded by the Centre in Feb 23, which comprised two incidents off the Philippines and one incident each off Malaysia and Brunei. A total of 1,164 bottles, 2,784 cans and 24,220 L of alcohol were seized in these incidents.

Weapons - One incident of weapon smuggling was recorded in the Gulf of Oman in Feb 23. The Royal Navy frigate *HMS LANCASTER (F229)* had seized anti-tank guided missiles and medium-range ballistic missile components from a boat in the Gulf of Oman.

Others - One incident involving the seizure of 20 tons of undocumented scrap off Ha Tien, Vietnam was reported in Feb 23.

ILLEGAL UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING



59 IUU fishing incidents were recorded by the Centre during Feb 23, a slight increase from Jan 23 (51 incidents). An increase of about 75% was observed in the number of poaching incidents as compared to Jan 23. A total of 59 fishing vessels and 300 fishers involved in IUU fishing were apprehended. The total quantity of fish catch recorded was 24,141 kg, out of which Thailand authorities seized 18,330 kg of fish. Seizures of banned nets accounting for approximately 322 m and 22 sets of fishing nets were also reported.

Local IUU Fishing - Out of 45 incidents of local IUU fishing, 18 incidents were reported off Malaysia, 12 incidents off Sri Lanka, nine incidents off Mauritius, two incidents off Philippines and one incident each off Vietnam, Oman, India and Mayotte. Reportedly, the fishers were fishing without valid documents and using banned fishing methods. A total of 214 fishers were apprehended and 44 fishing boats were seized by the local authorities. Some fishers were also apprehended for fishing in prohibited zones.

Poaching - 14 incidents of poaching by foreign fishing vessels were recorded in Feb 23 which comprised five incidents off Malaysia, four incidents off Australia, three incidents off India and one incident each off Mauritius and Thailand. A total of 86 fishers were apprehended in poaching incidents and 15 boats were seized by the respective authorities.

59



Fishing Vessels Involved

Fishers Involved

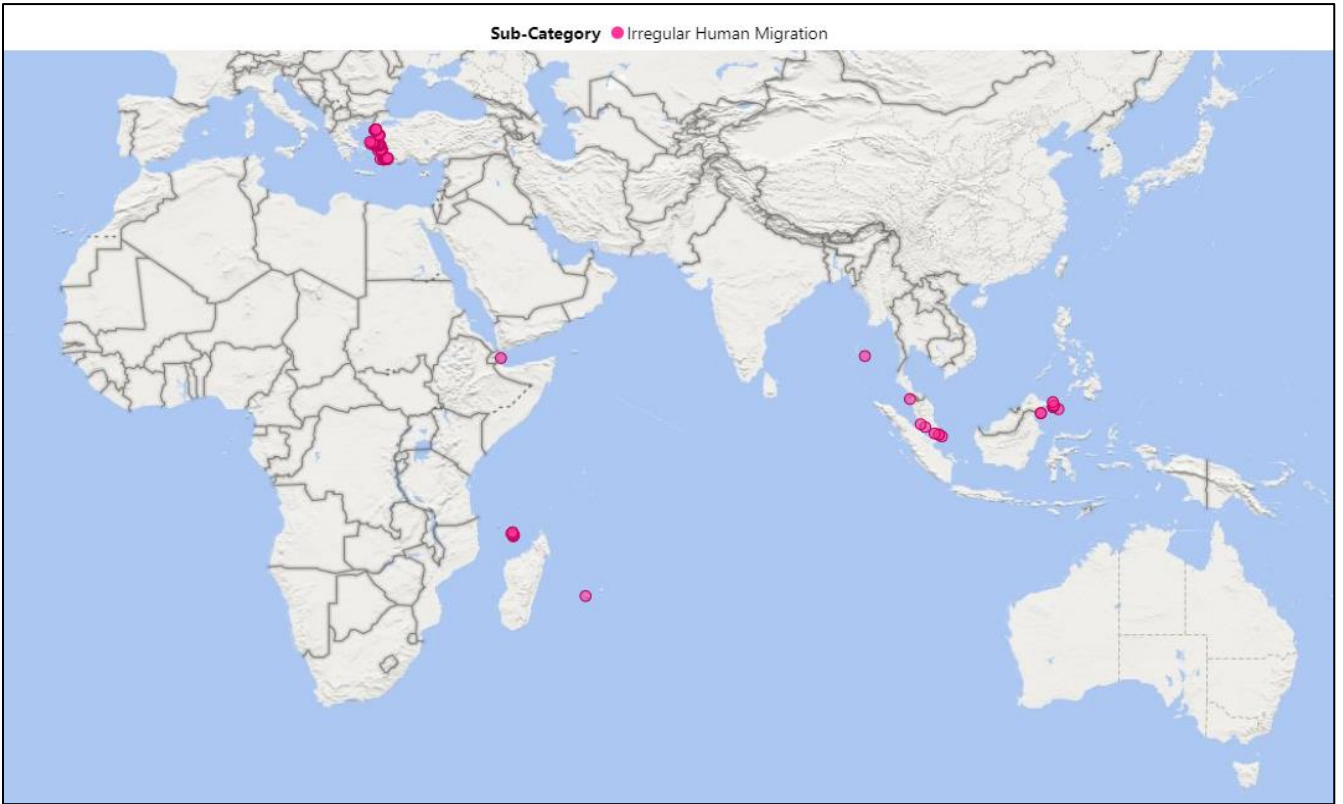


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Fishing Bans Monitored

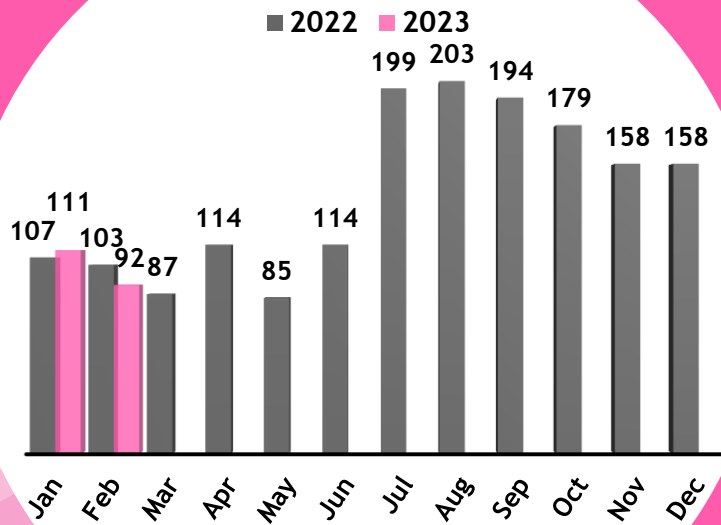
Region	Duration	Remarks
Thailand	13 Feb - 15 May 23	All Fishing
Seychelles	15 Oct 22 - 14 Jun 23	White Teat Fish
Philippines	15 Nov 22 - 15 Feb 23	Pelagic Species
India (East Coast)	01 Nov 22 - 31 May 23	Turtles
Oman	01 Dec 22 - 31 Aug 23	Shrimp

IRREGULAR HUMAN MIGRATION



Mediterranean Sea, 69

Comparison of Incidents



West Asia, 1
South Asia, 1

East Africa, 6

SE Asia, 15

92 IHM incidents were recorded by the Centre in Feb 23, a 15% decrease from Jan 23 (111 incidents). About 73% of the recorded incidents occurred in the Mediterranean region. The Centre also recorded six incidents off the Philippines, five incidents off Mayotte and Malaysia, four incidents off Indonesia and one each off Reunion, India and Djibouti. The migrants were observed using small boats, passenger vessels, ferries and motor boats.

Mayotte - The five incidents reported off Mayotte involved detaining of traditional local boats, “kwassa-kwassa”, along with suspected smugglers and irregular migrants. A total of 509 irregular migrants, 33 suspected smugglers were rescued/ apprehended and 43 boats were seized in these incidents.

Mediterranean - 69 incidents were recorded in the Mediterranean in Feb 23, accounting for a decrease of 29% as compared to Jan 23 (97 incidents). All incidents were recorded off Türkiye.

Significant Incident

On 09-11 Feb 23, Djibouti authorities rescued 220 irregular migrants (97 males and 123 females) and apprehended four suspected smugglers from two boats off Guéhéré, Djibouti.



Rescued/
Apprehended

2,787



Missing

Nil



Dead

Nil



Smugglers
Apprehended

44



Boats

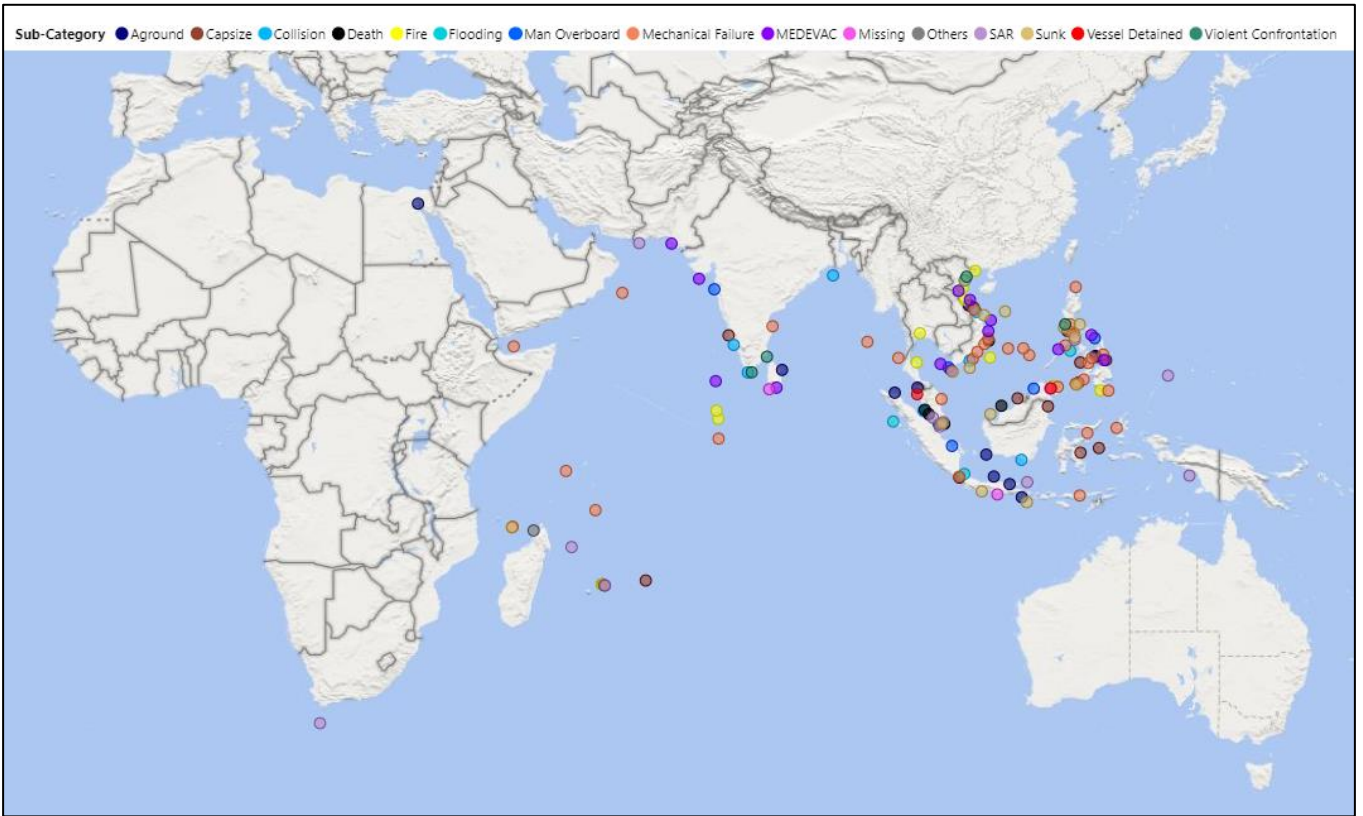
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Migration Trends

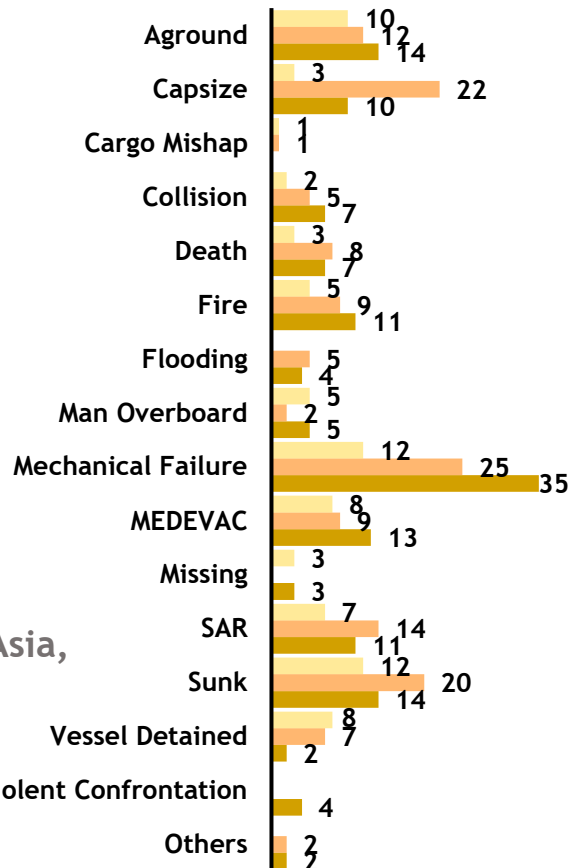
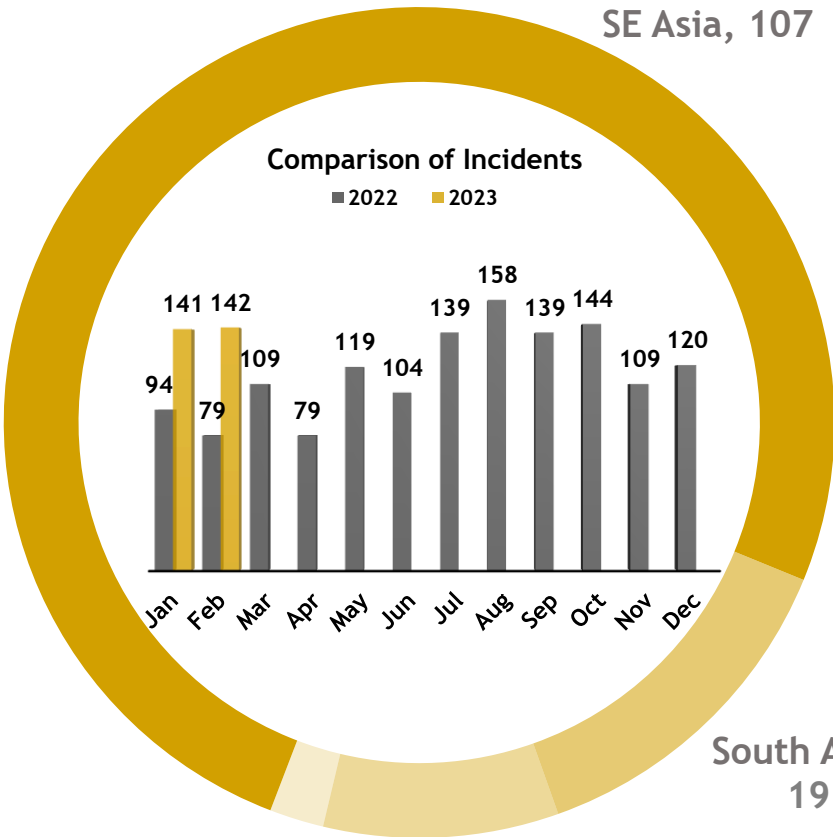
Region	Rescued/ Apprehended	Missing	Dead	Smugglers Apprehended	Boats Involved
East Africa	527	-	-	33	44
West Asia	220	-	-	04	02
South Asia	69	-	-	-	01
South East Asia	168	-	-	03	10
Mediterranean	1,803	-	-	04	74

MARITIME INCIDENTS



SE Asia, 107

Feb 22 Jan 23 Feb 23



South Asia, 19

West Asia, 3

East Africa, 13

142 maritime incidents were recorded by the Centre for Feb 23, almost similar to Jan 23 (141 incidents). Mechanical failure constituted the highest reported incidents, followed by SAR & MEDVAC and aground incidents. Two incidents of vessels detained were also recorded off Malaysia in Feb 23. Reportedly, the vessels were operating without valid documentation in both incidents.

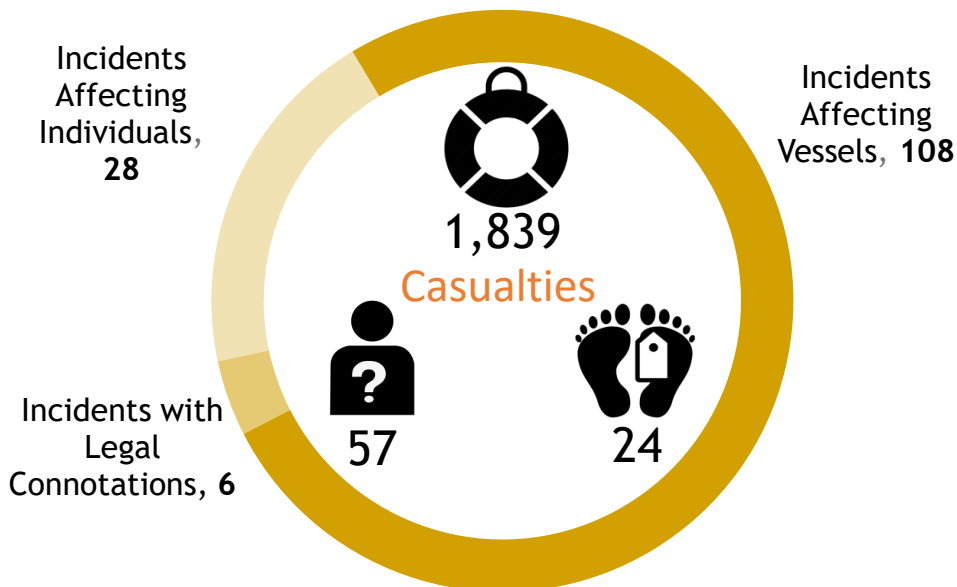
Aground - 14 incidents of vessels running aground were recorded in Feb 23, an increase of about 17% compared to Jan 23. The Centre recorded four incidents in the Java Sea, three incidents in the Malacca Straits, two incidents in the South China Sea and one each incident in the Bay of Bengal, Java Sea, Philippine Sea, Sulu Sea and Gulf of Suez.

Capsize and Sinking of Vessels - 10 incidents of capsizing and 14 incidents of vessels sinking at sea were recorded by the Centre during this month, a decrease of 43% from Feb 23. Small boats were involved in the majority of capsizing and vessel sinking incidents.

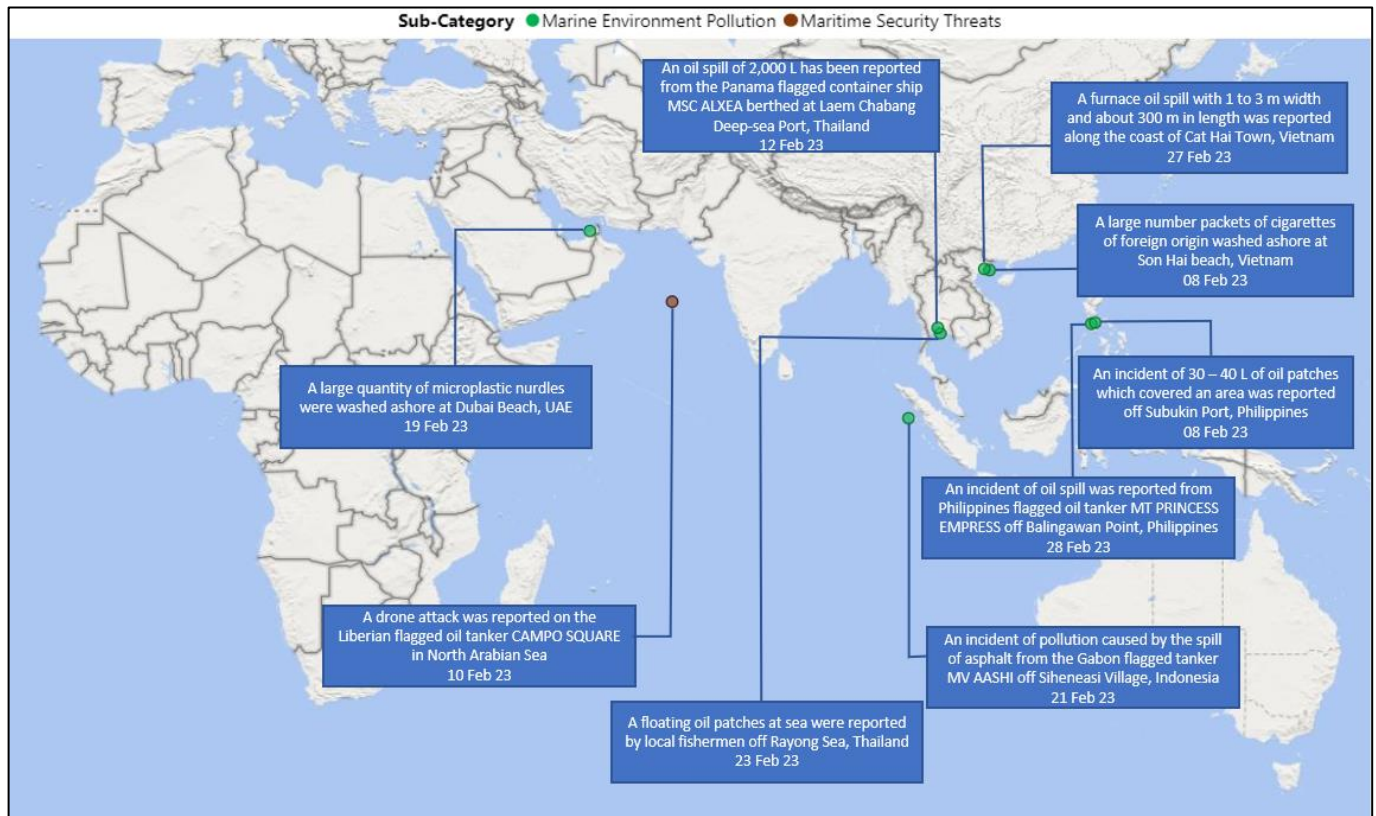
SAR Operations - The Centre monitored 13 incidents of MEDEVAC and 11 incidents of SAR operations undertaken by various maritime agencies during this month. The combined SAR and MEDEVAC saw a slight increase from Jan 23 (23 incidents).

Mechanical Failure - 35 incidents of mechanical failure were recorded by the Centre during this month, about a 40% increase from Jan 23 (25 incidents). 26 out of 35 incidents were recorded on small boats, fishing trawlers, pleasure craft and passenger boats. The majority of incidents during this month were reported due to engine failure. The incidents of mechanical failure may be attributable to sub-optimal maintenance of machinery.

Effect of Incidents



OTHER INCIDENTS



Maritime Security Threats (Hybrid)

01 incident recorded

- An incident of drone attack was reported on Liberia flagged oil tanker CAMPO SQUARE in the North Arabian Sea.

Others

No incidents recorded

Marine Environment Pollution 08 incidents recorded

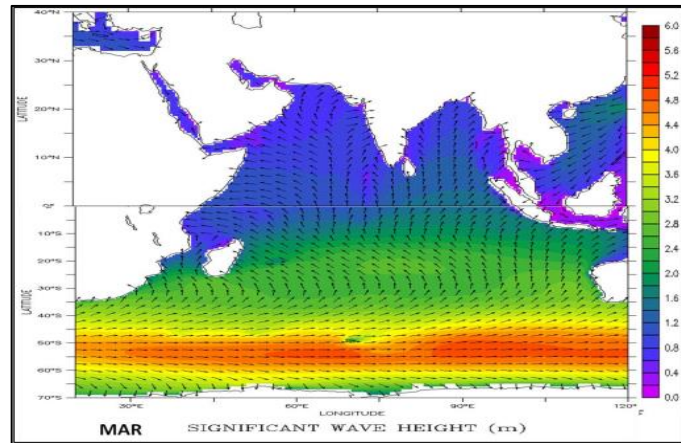
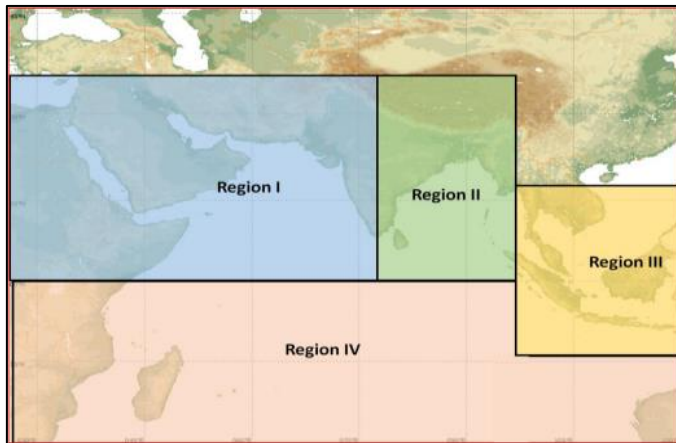
- One incident each of oil spill was reported off Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand.
- One Incident each of marine environment pollution was reported off Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand and UAE.

Cyber Security Incidents

No incidents recorded

WEATHER FORECAST

Weather Forecast. A monthly weather forecast for the month of Mar 23 in the IOR region has been uploaded on IFC-IOR website for reference.



Region I: Arabian Sea - March is the first month of the pre-monsoon season and fair weather prevails over most parts of the sea area. Semi-permanent high pressure cells over the Arabian Sea is a characteristic feature of the month. Thunderstorm activity over the sea area starts in the second half of the month and the occurrence increases gradually till the onset of South West Monsoon. Formation of the cyclonic storm over the Arabian sea in this month is rare.

Region II: Bay of Bengal - Fair weather generally prevails over most parts of the Bay of Bengal and during this month, the possibility of the formation of Tropical cyclones is very low. Due to the northward shifting of ITCZ, a few disturbances are generally seen south of Bay of Bengal. The mean SST in the Bay of Bengal reaches a minimum of 26 to 27^o in March. Calm to smooth sea prevails over most parts of Bay of Bengal region.

Region III: Southeast Asia - During March, the average pressure distribution at mean sea level varies to the order of 02 - 04 hpa from north to south. In general, isolated localised thunderstorms/showers over Sumatra island and Straits of Malacca occur due to convective activity over the region. The swell waves from NE direction with 0.5 - 1.5 m height and SST between 28^o - 29^o C can be observed during this month. Tropical cyclones are least frequent in the month of March but rarely originate as remnants from west Pacific systems.

Region IV: South Indian Ocean - During this month, the MSLP over central parts of the Southern IOR is about 1020 hpa and gradually decreases outwards. High pressure area shifts towards west and is generally seen in-between 30^o - 40^o S and 60^o -120^o E. Tropical disturbances are relatively rare during the autumn months in south IOR.

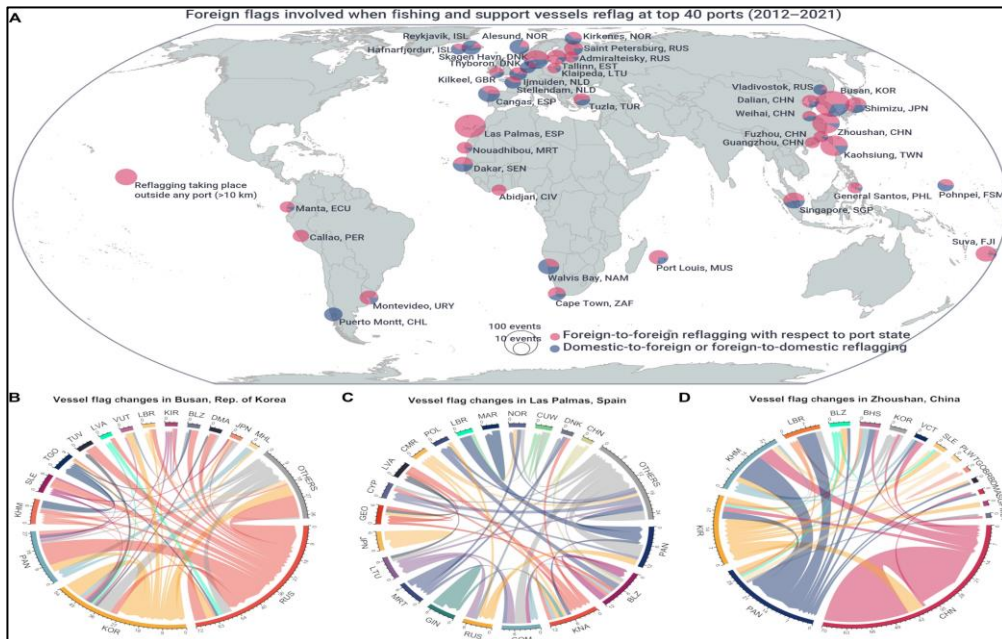
Supporting Opportunities For Green Shipping In South Africa

Biofuels from farmed algae and other hydrogen-based fuel production, making harbour vessels greener through low carbon fuels, are among proposals considered for support through IMO's GreenVoyage2050 accelerator programme. The programme aims to accelerate deployment of low and zero carbon solutions on-board ships and in ports. The next step in the process is to shortlist one to two pilot projects for consideration. These projects will be decided in consultation with the Government of South Africa.



Source: IMO

Tracking Elusive and Shifting Identities of the Global Fishing Watch - A Study By Science Advances



A new study published in Science Advances combines a decade's worth of satellite vessel tracking data with identification information from more than 40 public registries to determine where and when vessels responsible for most of the world's industrial fishing change their country of registration, a practice known as "reflagging" and identify hotspots of potential unauthorised fishing and activity of foreign-owned vessels. The study shows that close to 20 percent of high seas fishing is carried out by either internationally unregulated or not publicly authorised vessels, with large concentrations of these ships operating in the southwest Atlantic Ocean and the western Indian Ocean. By synthesizing more than 100 billion GPS positions with consolidated identity information from 200,000 vessels, the study revealed patterns in vessel activity from the past decade. This study represents a significant step towards enhancing monitoring efforts and helping authorities direct enforcement resources.

Source: Science Advances

- **Seychelles and Mauritius to explore Joint Management (JMA) Area for Sea Cucumber**

Seychelles and Mauritius have agreed to explore the Joint Management Area (JMA) to harvest sea cucumbers. The Joint Management Area (JMA) is the mechanism of joint jurisdiction between Seychelles and Mauritius over an area of the seabed and its underlying subsoil in the Mascarene Plateau region. It excludes the water and living organisms above the shelf. The treaty for the Joint Management Area was signed in 2012 and the two island nations secured rights to manage the seabed covering over 400,000 square KM in the Indian Ocean. The process involved the preparation of a joint continental shelf submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf under an internationally agreed process established by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.



Source: Seychelles New Agency

- **Ban Aims to Boost Mackerel Stocks**

For large-scale commercial fishing, Thailand will close the southwestern part of the Gulf of Thailand for three months (Feb 15 to May 15). A ban will be imposed on fishing gear that can potentially harm larvae and mature fish ready to reproduce. A second ban period will also be imposed from 16 May to 14 June 23 for Khao Ta Mong Lai Forest Park in Muang district to Hua Hin district of Prachuap Kiri Khan province.



Source: Department of Fisheries, Thailand

- **Marine Pollution Prevention Act**

A legal framework to protect the marine environment and ecosystem: Two hundred thirty rivers in Bangladesh carry billions of tons of sediment into the Bay of Bengal and Industrial units in Bangladesh's coastal region, which discharge enormous amounts of toxic substances containing solid and liquid waste. Bangladesh has passed legislation to safeguard and maintain the maritime environment like other nations and approved most international treaties and laws protecting marine pollution that is governed globally.



Source: Ministry of Environment and Forest, Bangladesh

INFORMATION/EVENTS OF INTEREST

• Temporary Suspension of Drifting Fish Aggregating Devices for Tuna in the Indian Ocean

Indian Ocean states, including Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Kenya and Indonesia, have agreed to temporarily suspend the use of drifting fish aggregating devices (FADs). According to a recent study by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the industrial fishing equipment is causing the world's tuna stocks to plummet by 80% over the past 50 years. FADs are now accompanied by GPS and satellite beacons that allow the position of each FAD to be tracked in real-time, along with depth sounders that allow fishermen to know the volume of fish around the device.



Source: World Wildlife Fund

VISITS



A delegation from Oman National Defence College led by HE Mohammed Abdulla Ali Al Qatabi, Strategic Instructor, NDC visited the Centre on 01 Feb 23.



A delegation from the UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) visited the Centre on 09 Feb 23.

VISITS



Shri Giridhar Aramane, Defence Secretary of India visited the Centre on 28 Feb 23.

EVENTS



The first International Liaison Officer (ILO) from Italy joined the Centre on 21 Feb 23.



The Centre signed an MoU with the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) on 21 Feb 23.



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Working Definitions
used for Maritime
Safety and Security
Incidents

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