



MONTHLY MARITIME SECURITY UPDATE

MAY 2023

**Information Fusion Centre
Indian Ocean Region**

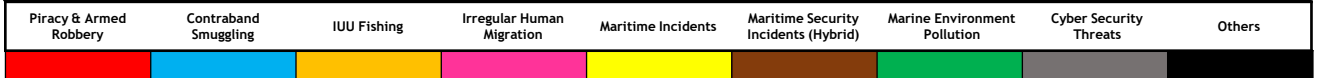
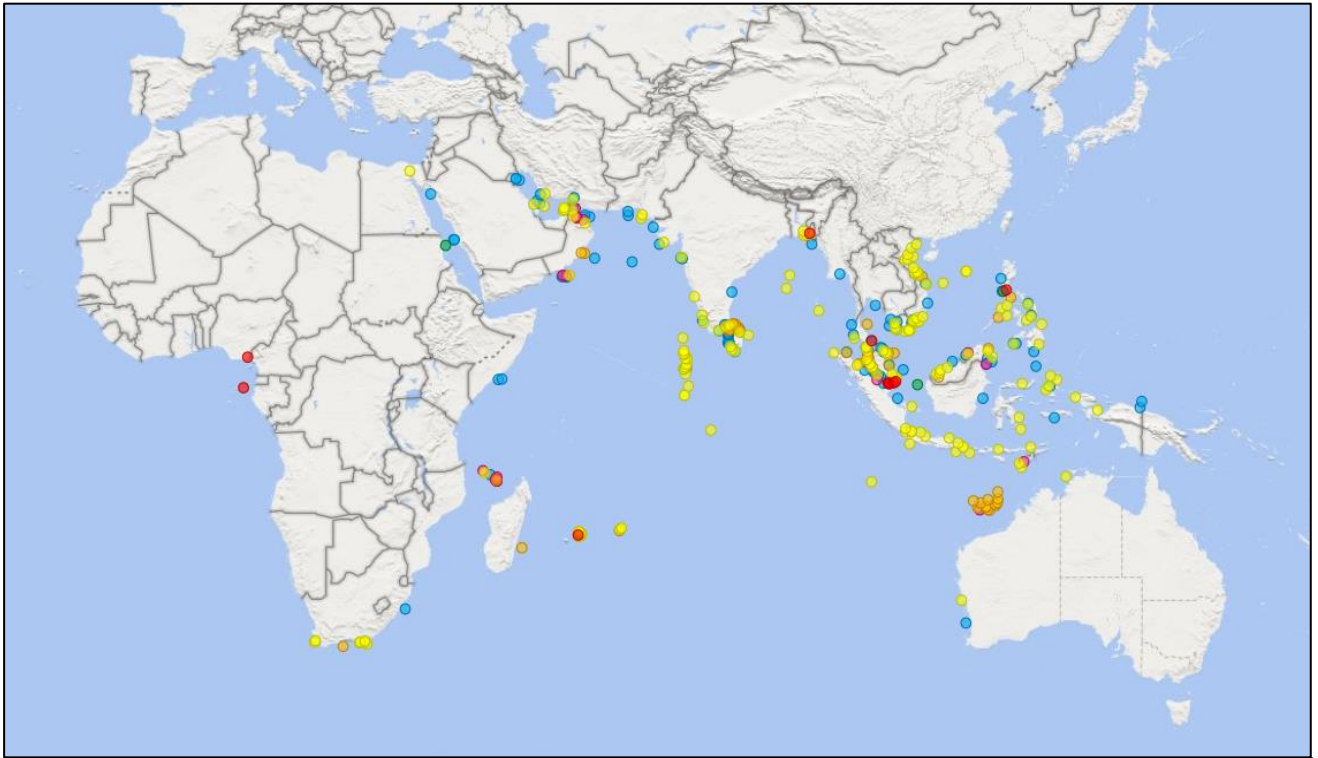


Collaboration for Safety and Security

Disclaimer

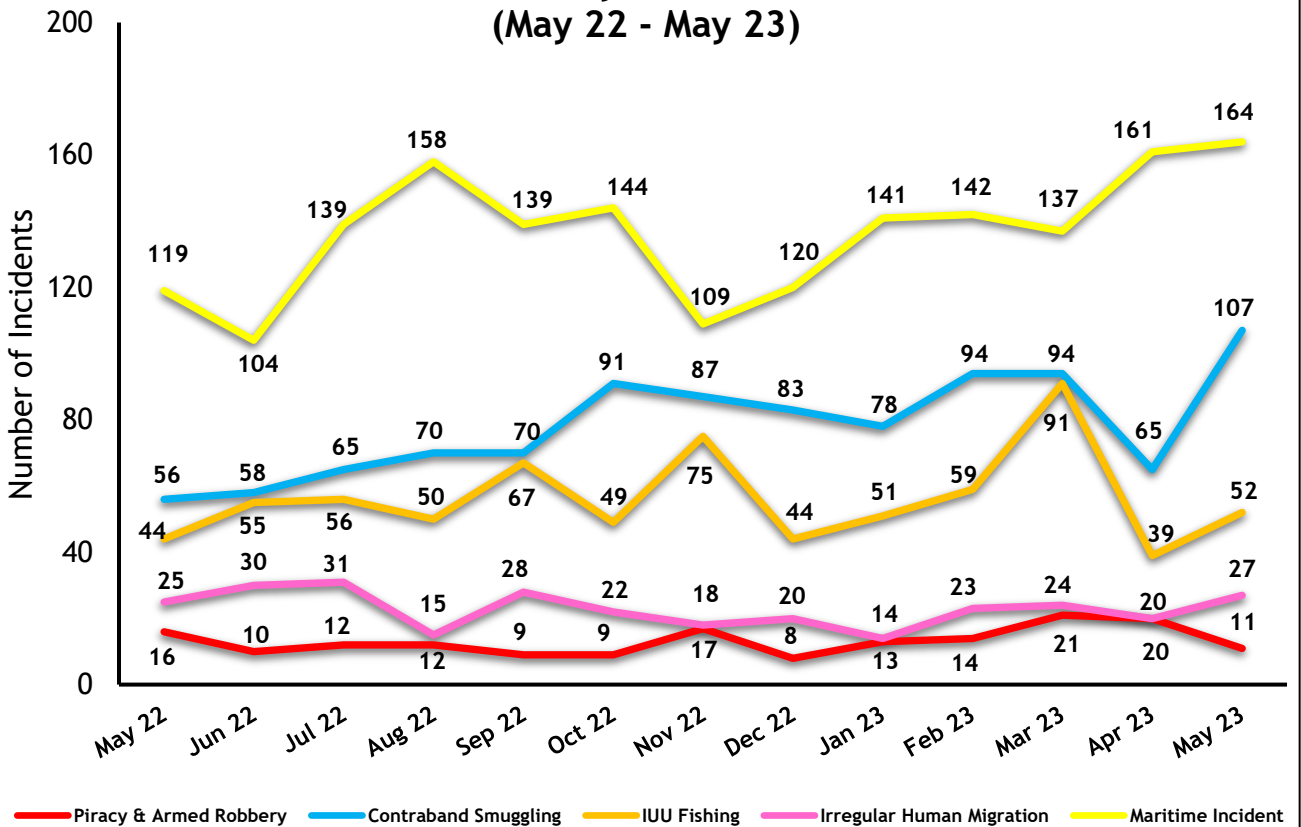
Information collated in the IFC-IOR's reports have been derived from various internal and external linkages such as partner nations, other maritime stakeholders, agencies and open sources. The report aims to undertake analysis of incidents by establishing trends and anomalies to ensure safety and security 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

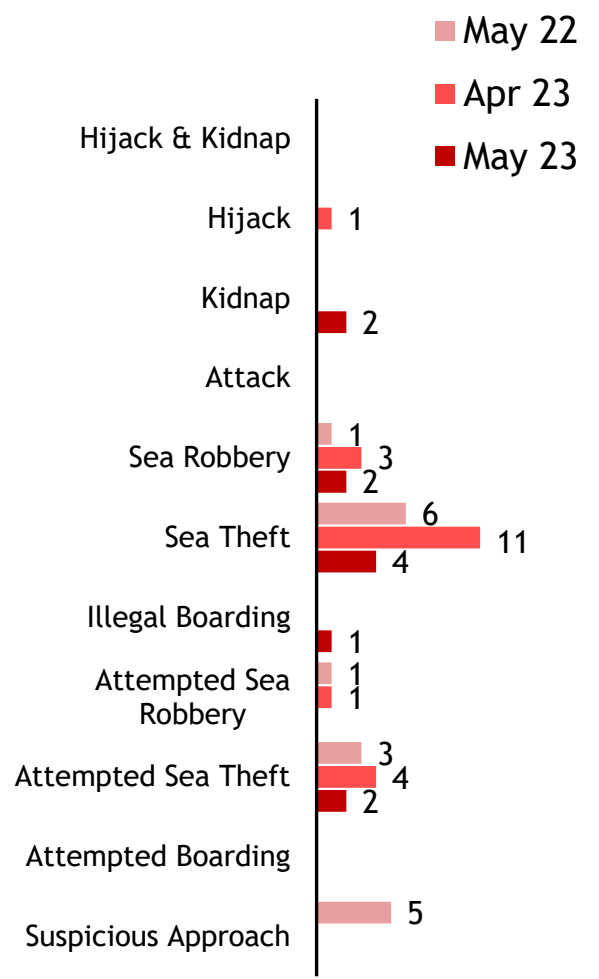
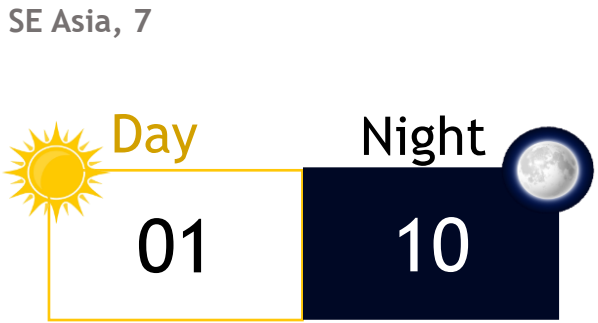
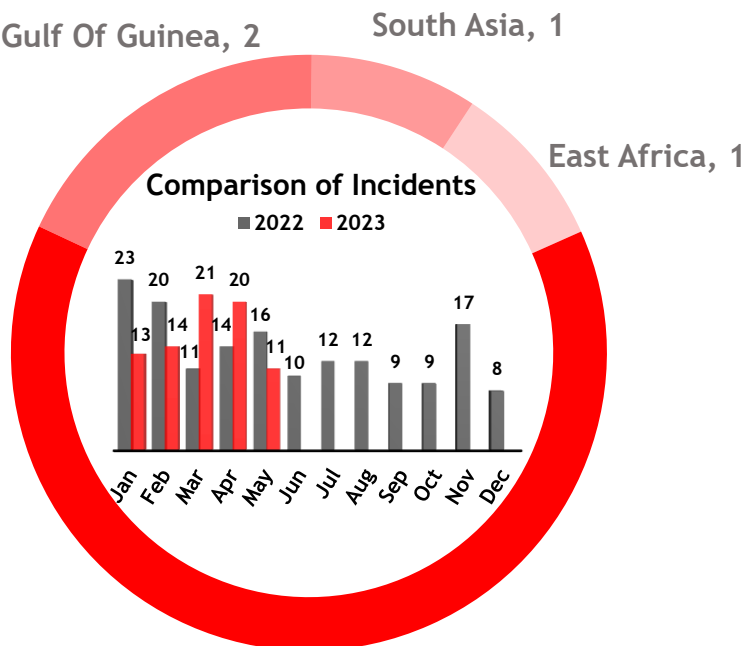
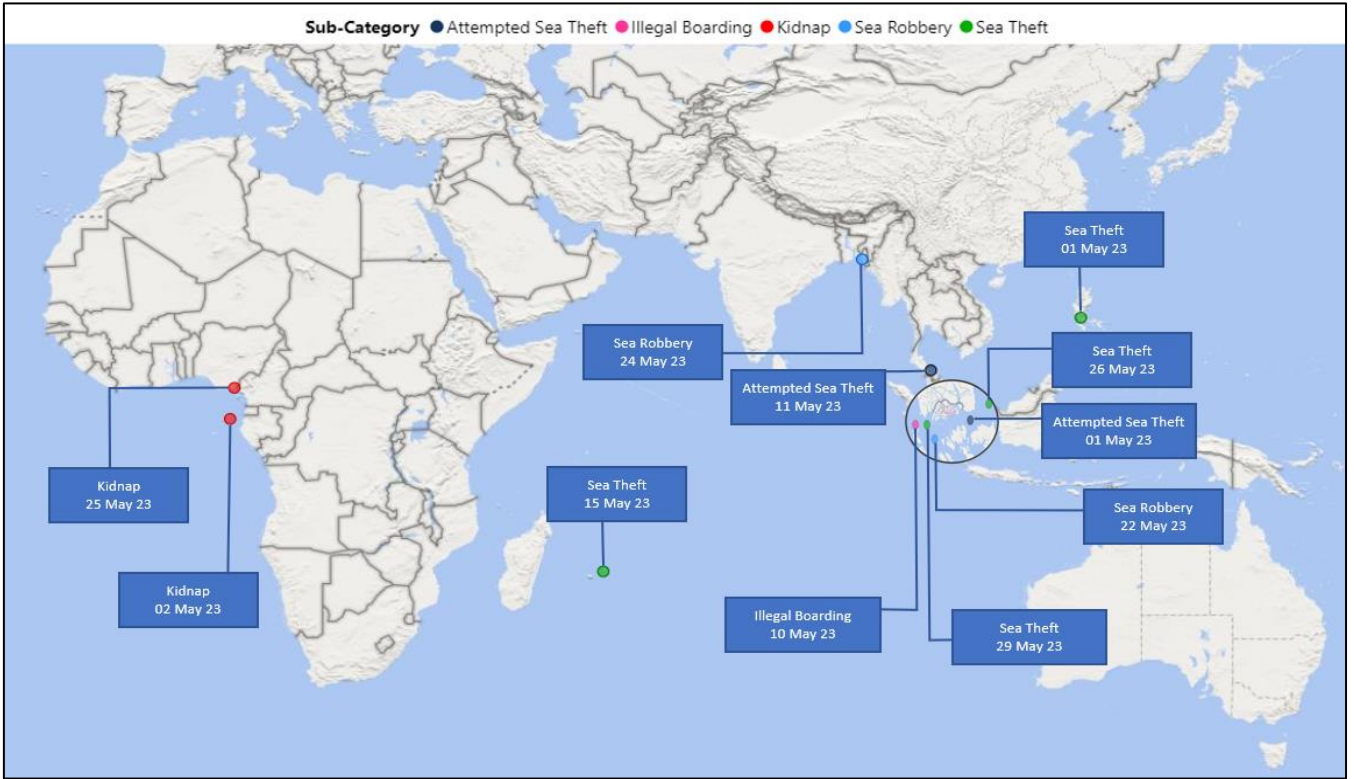


* GoG - Focus on only Piracy & Armed Robbery incidents

Trend Analysis of Incidents (May 22 - May 23)



PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY



11 piracy and armed robbery incidents (actual and attempted) were recorded by the Centre in May 23, a 45% decrease from Apr 23 (20 incidents). Bulk carriers followed by tankers, tugs & barges, container ships, passenger boats and pleasure craft were reported to be the targeted vessels this month. The number of perpetrators involved in these incidents varied from a minimum of two to a maximum of eight. The regional analysis of Piracy and Armed Robbery is enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs.

SOMS - Two incidents of sea theft, one incident each of illegal boarding, sea robbery and attempted sea theft were recorded in the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) of the Singapore Strait. Perpetrators were observed operating in groups of three-five. Knives have been observed to be the weapon of choice of the perpetrators in this region during this month. In most incidents, the perpetrators were found stealing ship properties, scrap metal and engine spare parts. All crew members and vessels were reported to be safe.

Gulf of Guinea - Two incidents of kidnap were reported in the Gulf of Guinea. The perpetrators were observed operating in small groups. The first incident occurred on 02 May 23 onboard *GREBE BULKER*, a Marshall Islands flagged bulk carrier, about 4.7 nm off Owendo Inner Anchorage, Gabon. In this incident, the perpetrators boarded the vessel while at anchor and kidnapped three crew members (one master and two crew members) and escaped unnoticed. All three crew members were reportedly released on 20 May 23 in the coastal border between Nigeria and Cameroon. The second incident was reported off Calabar River, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria on a passenger boat with an unknown number of passengers onboard. In this incident, an unknown number of armed perpetrators boarded the vessel from a speedboat and kidnapped 15 passengers.

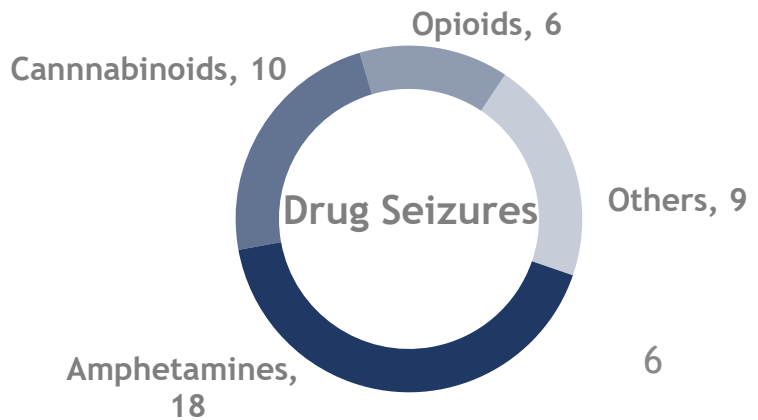
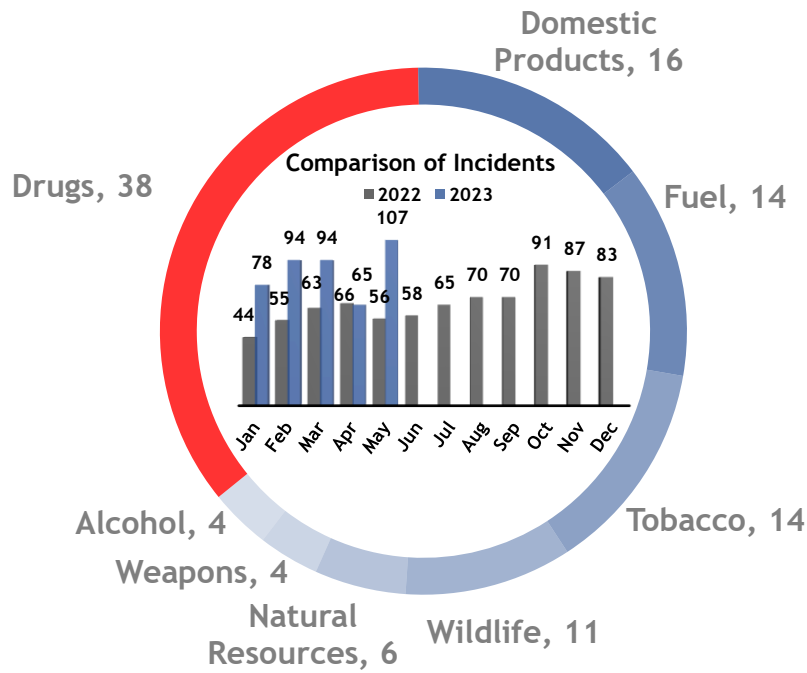
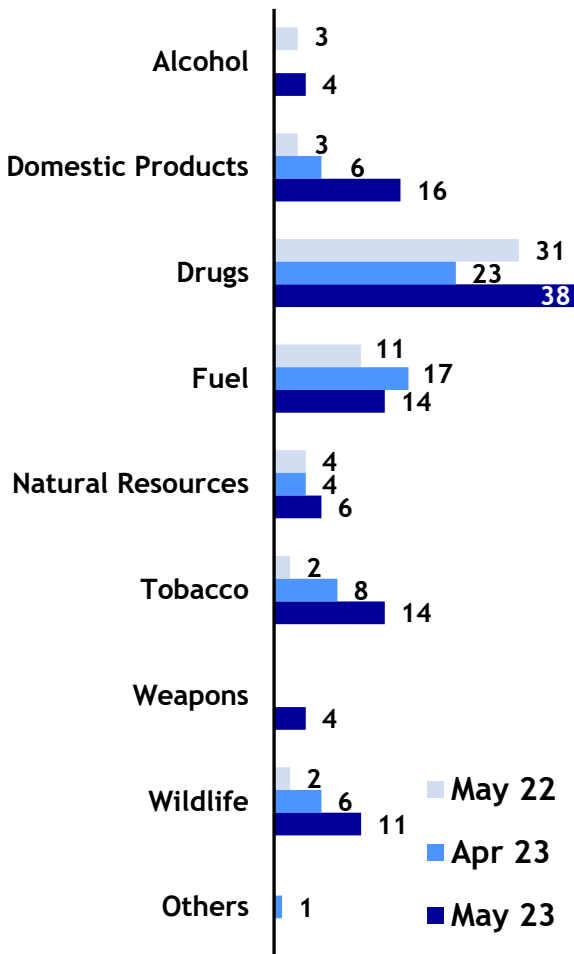
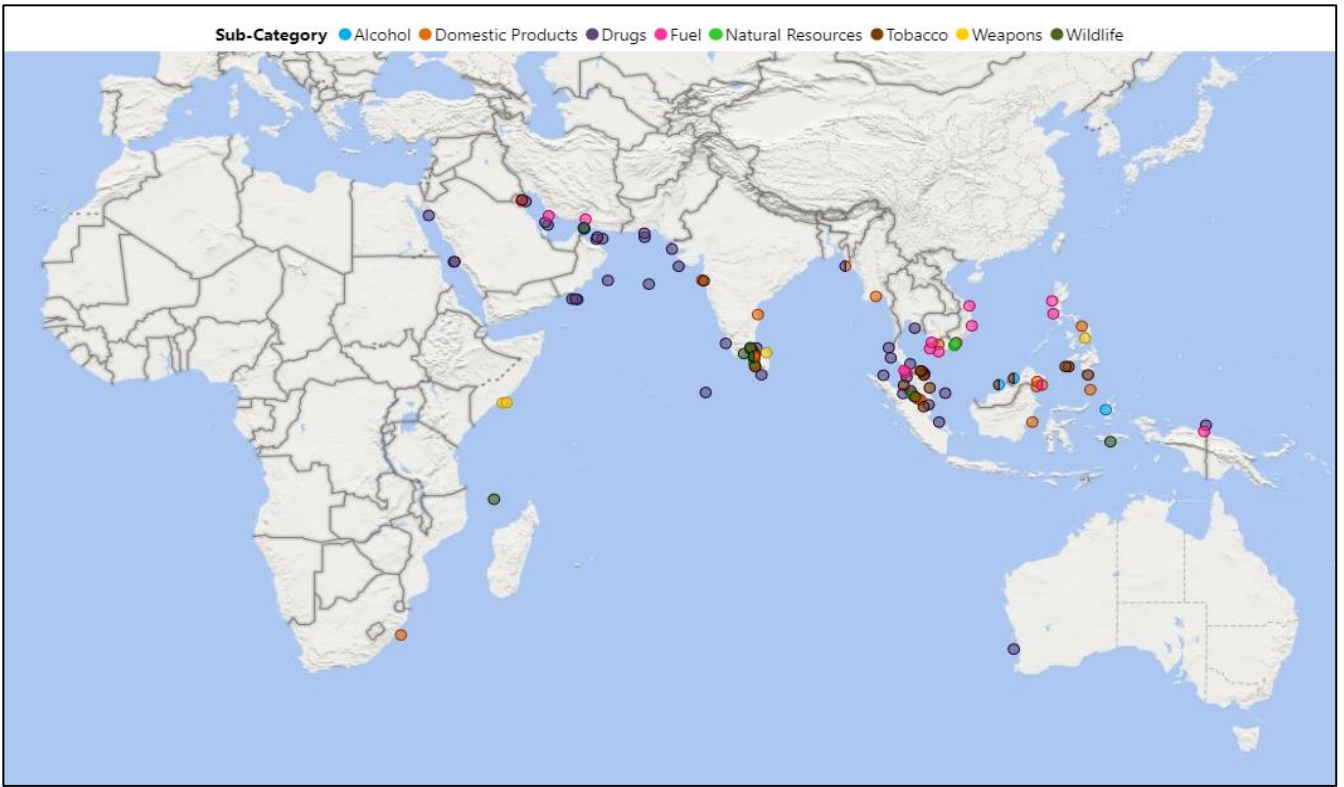
South China Sea - One incident of sea theft was reported onboard the Panama-flagged container ship *SOL STRIDE* in Manila Bay Anchorage, Philippines. The duty personnel sighted two perpetrators who jumped overboard into the sea and escaped with ship properties and stores while at anchor. All crew members and the vessel were reported to be safe.

Gulf of Thailand - One incident of attempted sea theft was reported onboard the fishing trawler *S.KITTICHAJ 1* off Sri Songkhla Dockyard, Thailand. A perpetrator was sighted by police trying to steal scrap metal from an unmanned trawler at anchor. Two perpetrators were also found in the engine room, cutting and trying to pull off a metal sheet. The authorities apprehended all three perpetrators.

Bay of Bengal - One incident of sea robbery was reported onboard the India-flagged oil tanker, *SUCCESS*, at Chittagong Berth DOJ-3, Bangladesh. Six to eight perpetrators armed with knives boarded the vessel and escaped with the ship's stores. All crew members and the vessel were reported to be safe.

East Africa - One incident of sea theft was recorded off La Mivoie, Mauritius in which an unknown number of perpetrators boarded the unmanned pleasure craft moored inside the lagoon and stole engine parts.

CONTRABAND SMUGGLING



107 contraband smuggling incidents were recorded by the Centre in the month of May 23, a 65% increase from Apr 23 (65 incidents). Drug smuggling constituted the highest reported incidents, followed by domestic products, fuel and tobacco smuggling. The detailed analysis of sub-categories of Contraband Smuggling is enumerated in succeeding paragraphs.

Drugs - 38 drug seizure incidents were recorded, with 15 incidents reported inside ports and harbours. The estimated seizures included 10,232.9 kg of hashish, 8,100 kg of methamphetamine, 2186.2 kg of heroin, 1063.21 kg along with 58,626 ecstasy pills, 903.1 kg along with 3 packets of cocaine, 85.6 kg of cannabis, 8.7 kg of marijuana, 1 kg of opium, 5.28 million amphetamine pills, 1.76 million captagon pills, 3,000 yaba pills and 1711 packages of khat set to be smuggled via sea route.

Domestic Products - 16 domestic product smuggling incidents were recorded this month. These comprised four incidents off Indonesia, three incidents off Malaysia, two incidents each off India and Sri Lanka, and one incident each off Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and South Africa. The domestic products seized in these incidents involved cosmetics, cooking oil, silicon sealant gasket, areca nuts, used clothes, e-cigarettes, disassembled vehicles, frozen pork, electric bicycles and various kinds of goods. A significant portion of the incidents involving the smuggling of domestic products involved small vessels.

Fuel - 14 incidents of fuel smuggling involving the seizure of about 1,672,753 L of diesel, 840 L of pentalite, 200 L of pexnghxfrol and 3,142,000 L of unspecified fuel were recorded. These comprised six incidents off Vietnam, two incidents each off Iran, Malaysia and Philippines and one incident each off Kuwait and Indonesia.

Tobacco - 14 incidents of tobacco smuggling were recorded, comprising four incidents off Malaysia, three incidents each off Indonesia, Philippines and one incident each off India, Brunei, Sri Lanka and Kuwait. A total of 280 master cases, 3,433 cartons, 33.3 million sticks of cigarettes, 8000 kg of hookah tobacco and 5,850 kg of unspecified tobacco were seized in these incidents.

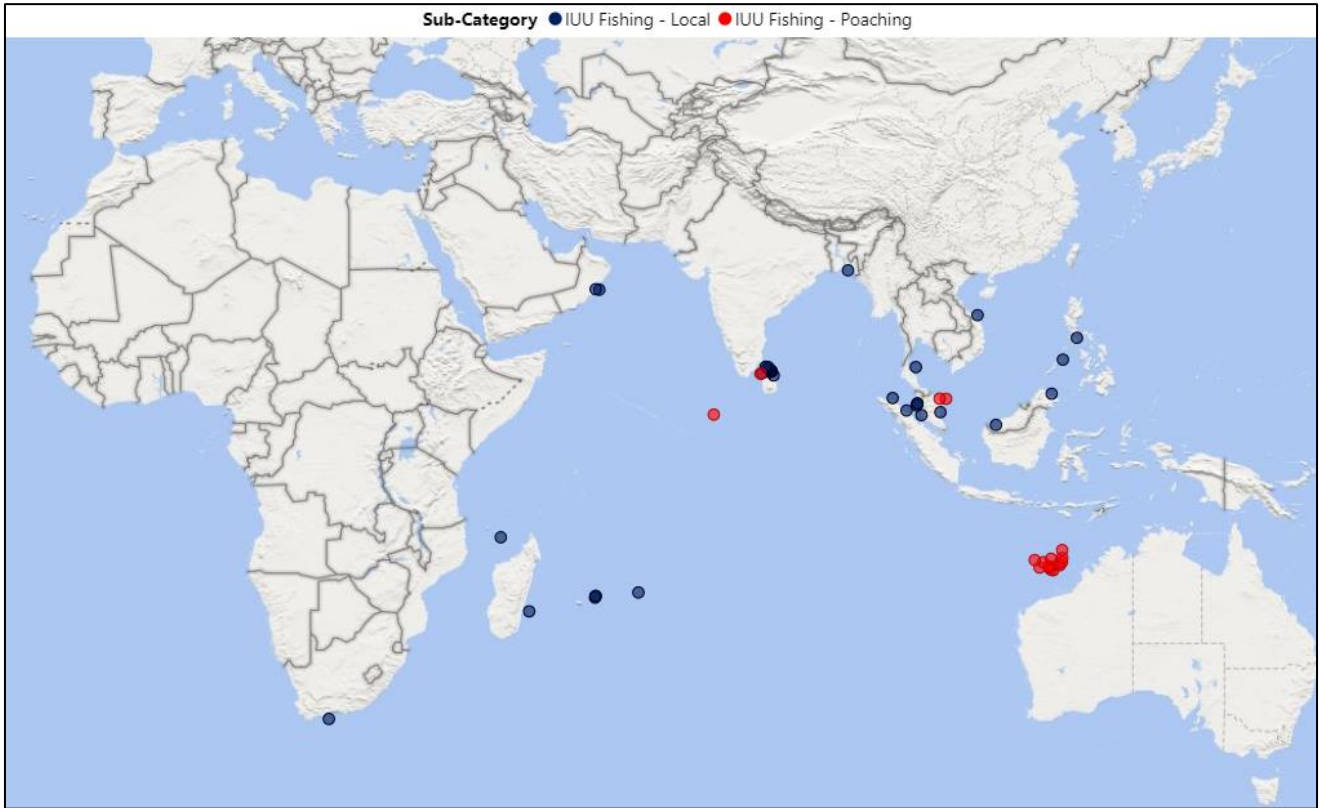
Wildlife - 11 incidents of wildlife smuggling were recorded by the Centre, comprising five incidents off India, three incidents off Sri Lanka and one each off Indonesia, Comoros and Oman. The species seized in these incidents were sea cucumber, sea turtles, kangaroos, ambergris and turtle flesh.

Natural Resources - Six incidents of natural resource smuggling were recorded, comprising three incidents off Sri Lanka, two incidents off Vietnam and one incident off Malaysia. The seizures involved in these incidents included kendu leaves and sand.

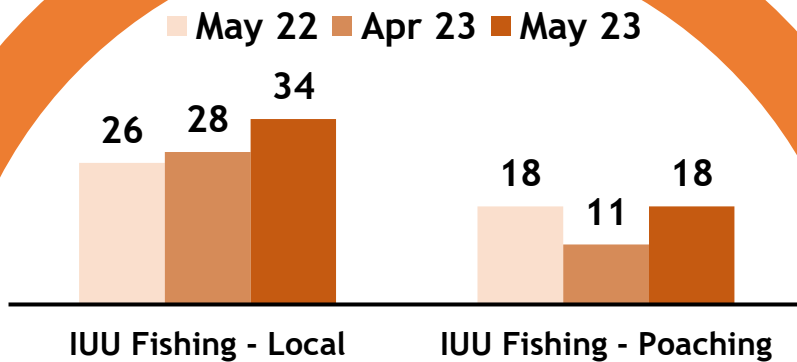
Weapons - Four incidents of weapon smuggling were recorded, comprising two incidents off Somalia and one incident each off Sri Lanka and Philippines. The seizures involved in these incidents included military equipment, pistols, ammunition, non-electric detonators and water gel sticks.

Alcohol - Four incidents of alcohol smuggling were recorded, comprising two incidents off Oman and one incident each off Indonesia and Malaysia. The seizures in these incidents included 5,025 bottles and cans of alcohol and 95 cartons of liquor.

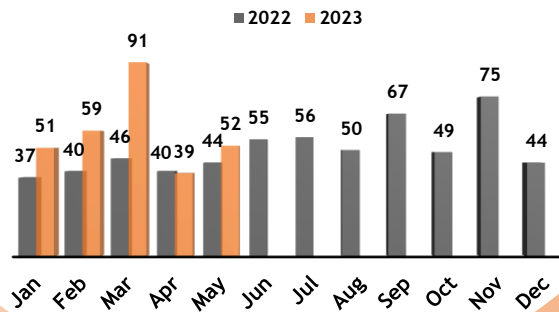
ILLEGAL UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING



SE Asia, 29



Comparison of Incidents



West Asia, 2

East Africa, 8

South Asia, 13

52 IUU fishing incidents were recorded by the Centre during May 23, an increase of 33% compared to Apr 23 (39 incidents). 34 incidents were of Local IUU fishing and 18 incidents were of poaching. 78 fishing vessels and 330 fishers involved in IUU fishing were apprehended this month. The total fish catch recorded was 900 kg, of which Malaysian authorities seized 650 kg. Seizures of approximately 16,20,103 m banned nets were also reported.

Local IUU Fishing - Out of 34 incidents of local IUU fishing, 10 incidents were reported off Sri Lanka, seven off Malaysia, five off Mauritius, two each off Oman, Indonesia, Mayotte and Philippines, one each off Bangladesh, South Africa, Thailand and Vietnam. Most of these incidents were related to license violations by local and foreign fishermen, illegal fishing techniques and fishing of banned species.

Poaching - 18 incidents involving foreign fishing vessels were recorded, comprising 14 incidents off Australia, two off Malaysia and one incident each off India and Maldives. The poaching incidents reported off Australia involved the seizure of fishing vessels and fish catch. The Australian authorities released the fishermen and fishing vessels in many such instances. The interdiction of foreign fishing trawlers by authorities across the region was observed due to robust surveillance, timely information sharing, coordinated patrols and adequate focus on the pertinent issue of poaching. 140 fishers were apprehended in poaching incidents and 06 boats were seized by the authorities.

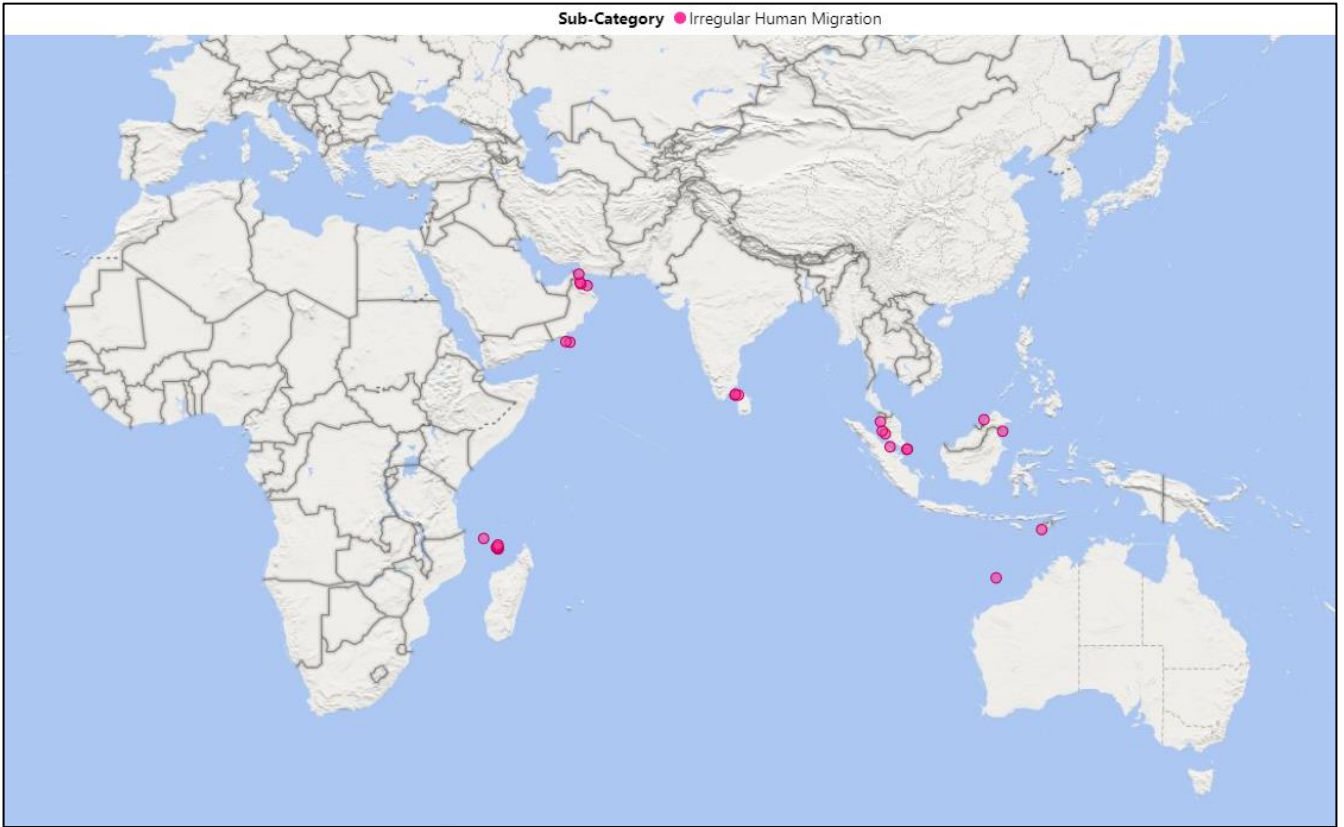
78  Fishing Vessels Involved

Fishers Involved  **330**

Fishing Bans Monitored

Region	Duration	Remarks
Thailand	13 Feb - 15 May 23	All Fishing
Seychelles	15 Oct 22 - 14 Jun 23	White Teat Fish
India (East Coast)	01 Nov 22 - 31 May 23	Turtles
Oman	01 Dec 22 - 31 Aug 23	Shrimp
India (East/ West Coast)	15 Apr - 14 Jun 23	All Fishing
Bangladesh	01 Jun - 31 Jul 23 20 May - 23 Jul 23	All Fishing

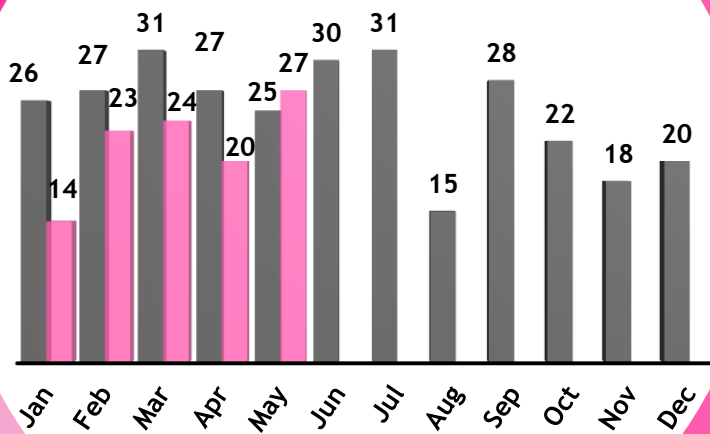
IRREGULAR HUMAN MIGRATION



SE Asia, 10

Comparison of Incidents

■ 2022 ■ 2023



East Africa, 8

West Asia, 6

South Asia, 3

27 IHM incidents were recorded by the Centre in May 23, a slight increase from Apr 23 (20 incidents). These comprised seven incidents off Mayotte, three incidents off Indonesia two incidents off India, six incidents off Malaysia and Oman and one incident each off Comoros, Sri Lanka and Australia. Migrants were observed using small boats, passenger vessels, ferries and motor boats.

Mayotte - The incidents reported off Mayotte involved detaining of traditional local boats, “kwassa-kwassa”, along with suspected smugglers and irregular migrants. A total of 455 irregular migrants, 28 suspected smugglers were rescued/ apprehended. No migrants were reported missing and 38 boats were seized in these incidents.

Significant Incident

On 13 May 23, the Indonesian authorities apprehended 85 irregular migrants (workers) at Tenau Port, Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. This apprehension resulted from thorough monitoring of passenger departures as a preventive measure to prevent the trafficking of migrants and illegal shipments of migrant workers.



Rescued/
Apprehended

851



Missing

Nil



Dead

Nil



Smugglers
Apprehended

39



Boats

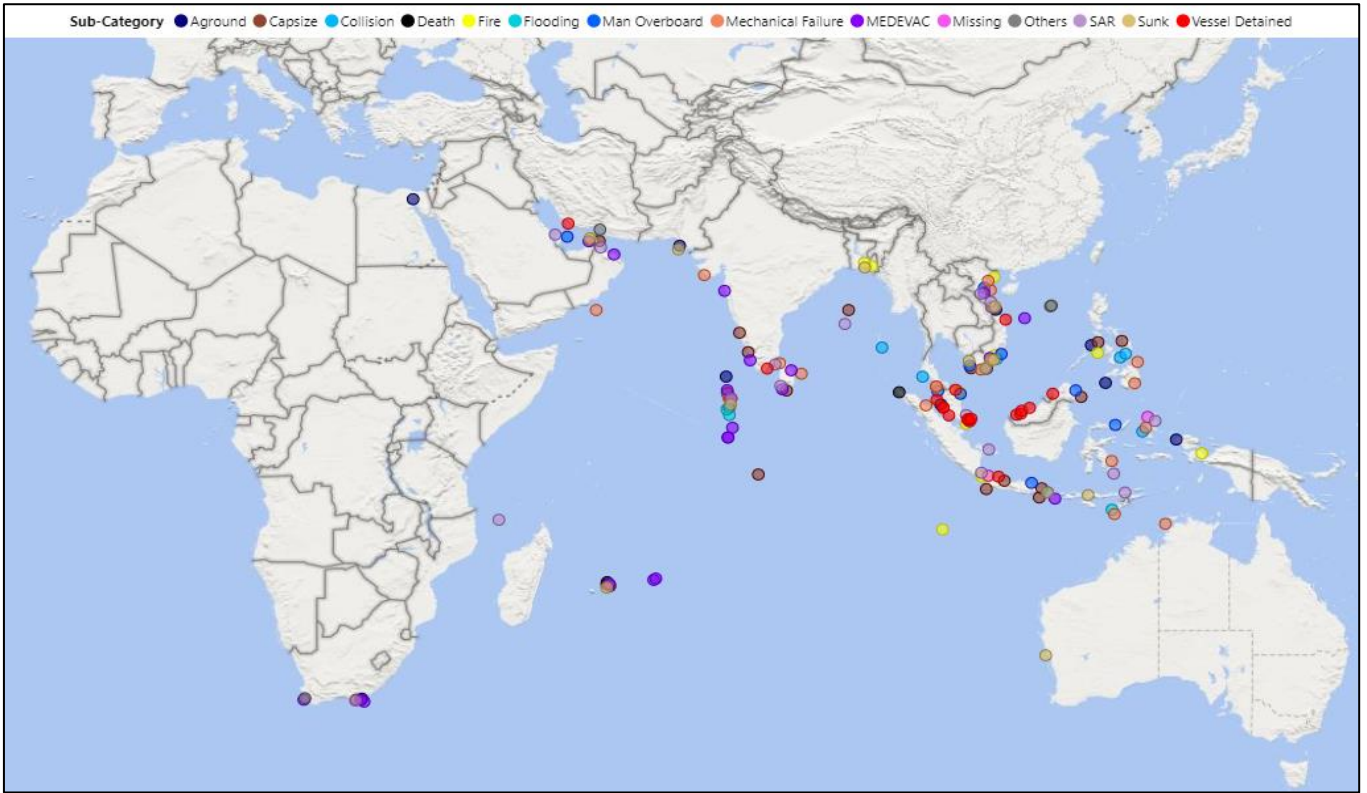
52



Migration Trends

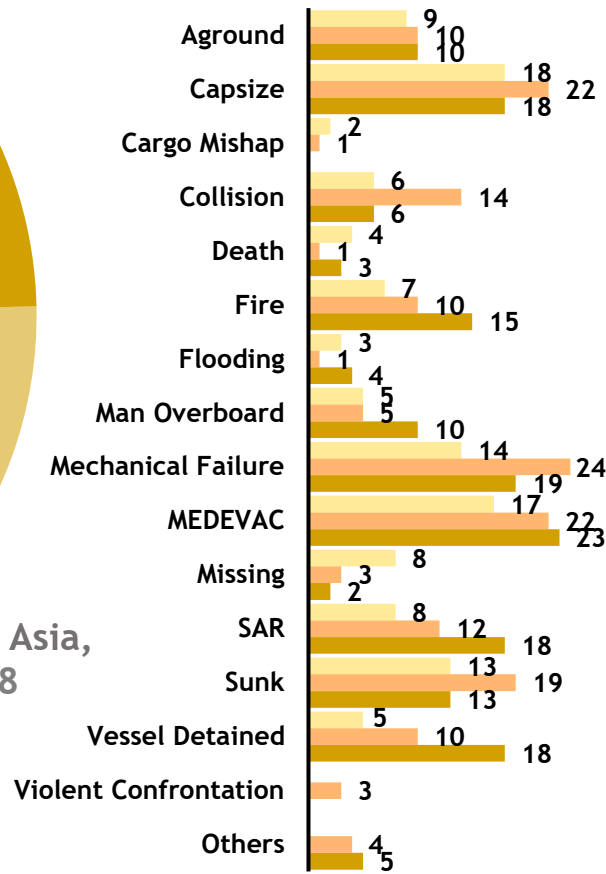
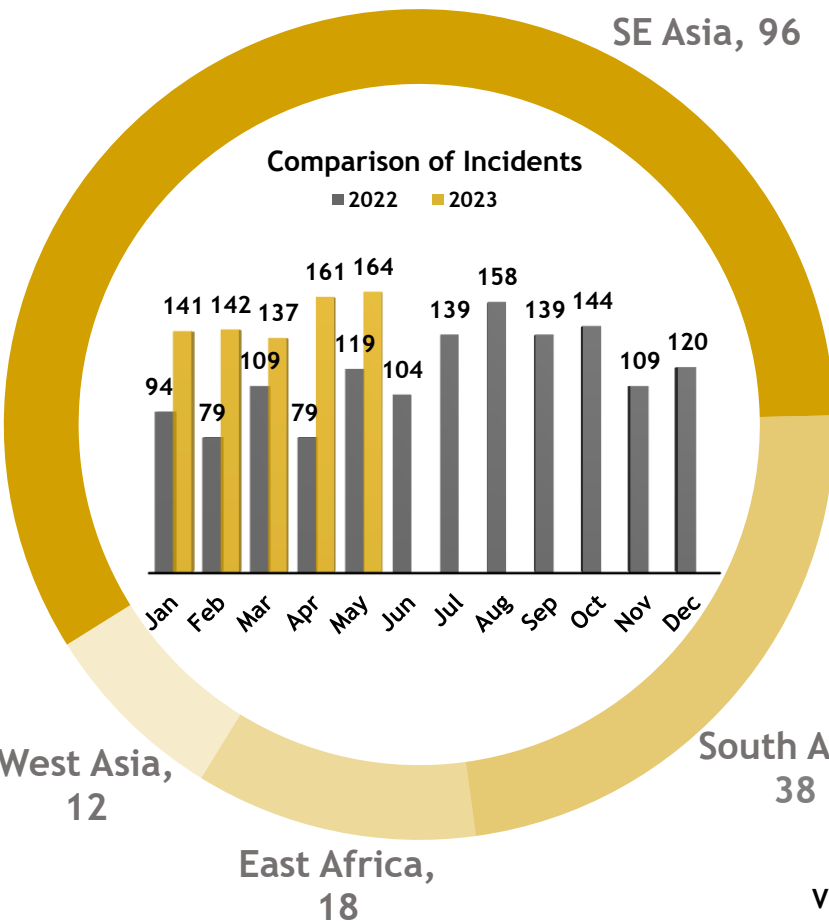
Region	No. Of Incidents	Rescued/ Apprehended	Missing	Dead	Smugglers Apprehended	Boats Involved
East Africa	08	514	-	-	28	39
West Asia	06	77	-	-	-	04
South Asia	03	19	-	-	-	02
South East Asia	10	241	-	-	11	07

MARITIME INCIDENTS



SE Asia, 96

May 22 Apr 23 May 23



MARITIME INCIDENTS

164 maritime incidents were recorded by the Centre for May 23, a miniscule increase from Apr 23 (161 incidents). MEDEVAC constituted the highest number of reported incidents, followed by mechanical failure, capsized and vessel detained incidents. 15 out of 18 incidents of vessel detention were recorded off Malaysia in May 23. Reportedly, all these vessels were operating without valid documentation.

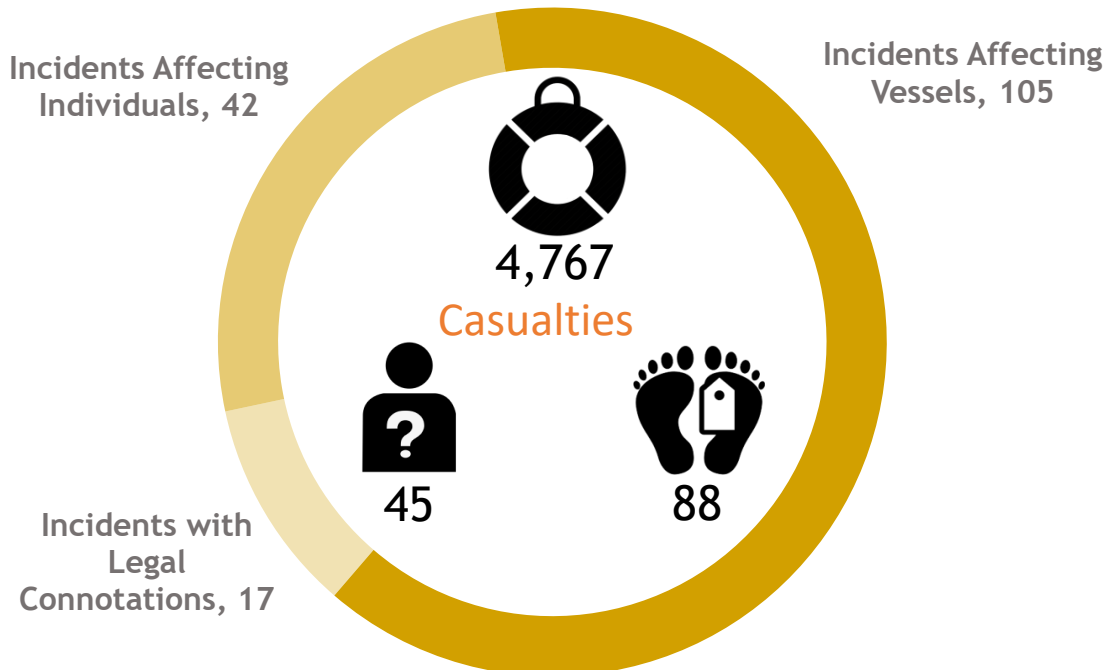
Aground - 10 incidents of vessels running aground (two each incidents in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Sulu Sea and one incident each in the Suez Canal, Celebes Sea, Malacca Strait, South China Sea) a slight increase compared to Apr 23 were recorded. The vessels were subsequently re-floated, no damage or oil leak was reported in any of these incidents and all crew members were safe.

Capsized and Sinking of Vessels - 18 incidents of capsized and 13 incidents of vessels sinking at sea were recorded during this month, a decrease of 24% from Apr 23. Most of the capsizing and sinking of vessels involved fishing boats, motor boats, small boats, passenger and local cargo vessels. A total of 68 lives were lost in these incidents.

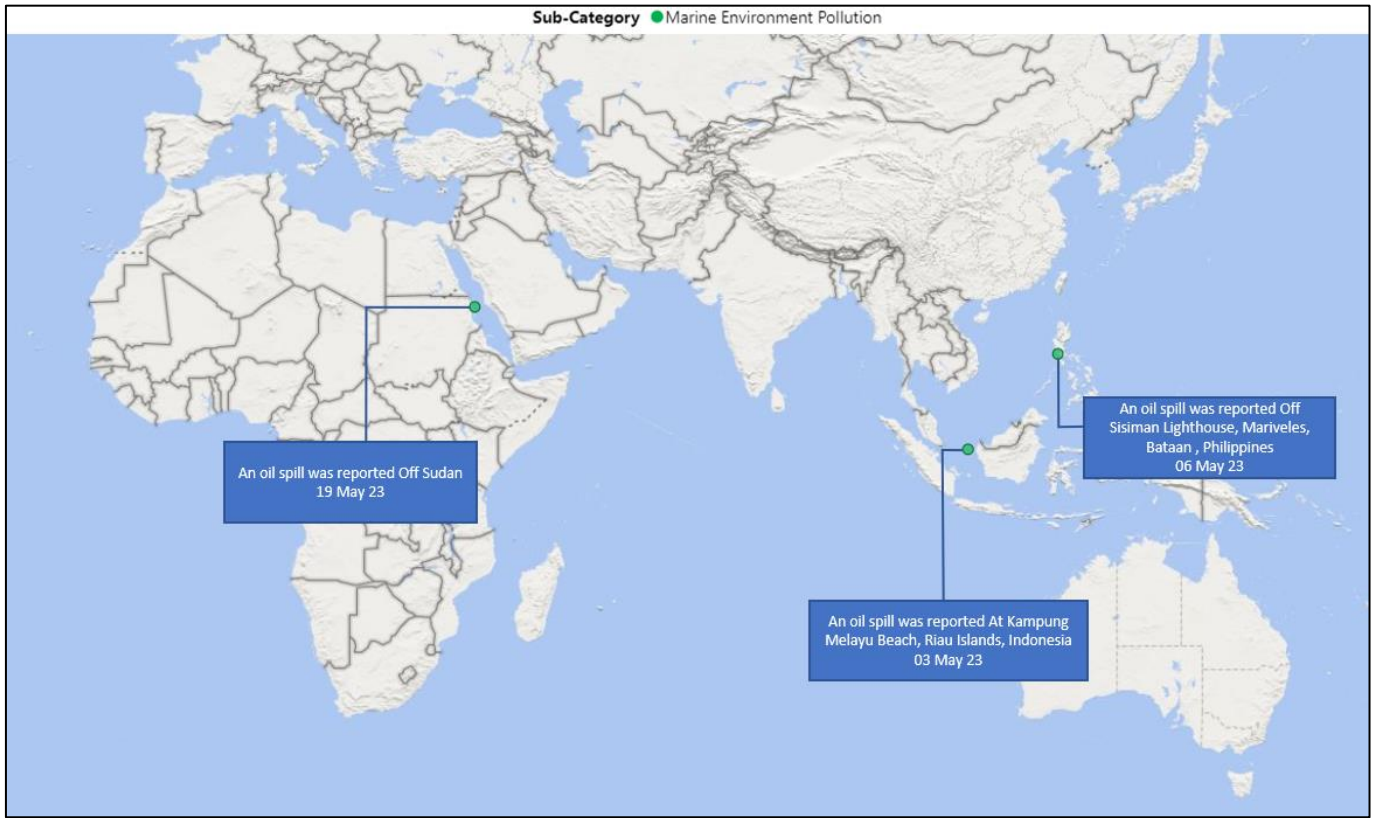
MEDEVAC and SAR Operations - The Centre monitored 23 incidents of MEDEVAC and 18 incidents of SAR operations undertaken by various maritime agencies. The combined SAR and MEDEVAC saw a 21% increase from Apr 23 (34 incidents).

Mechanical Failure - 19 incidents were recorded on fishing vessels, ferry, passenger boats and passenger ships, a 21% decrease from Apr 23 (24 incidents). 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. The defects were mostly rectified by the ship's crew. However, in some incidents, the assistance of local authorities was also sought by vessels.

Effect of Incidents



OTHER INCIDENTS



Maritime Security Threats (Hybrid)

No incidents recorded

Others

No incidents recorded

Marine Environment Pollution 03 incidents

- An incident of pollution was caused by oil waste originating from an oil tanker off the coast of Malaysia.
- An oil spill of 30 to 50 L of fuel and mixed substances from a capsized dredger was reported off Philippines.
- A 250 km long oil slick was reported off Sudan on 19 May 23.

Cyber Security Incidents

02 incidents

- A ransomware attack by hackers was reported on U.S. Navy infrastructure in Guam, USA on 27 May 23.
- Damage to a undersea cable was reported off Solomon Islands on 10 May 23, due to fouling of anchor with the submarine cable.

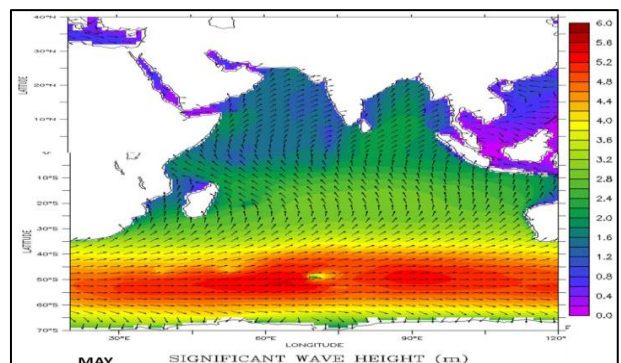
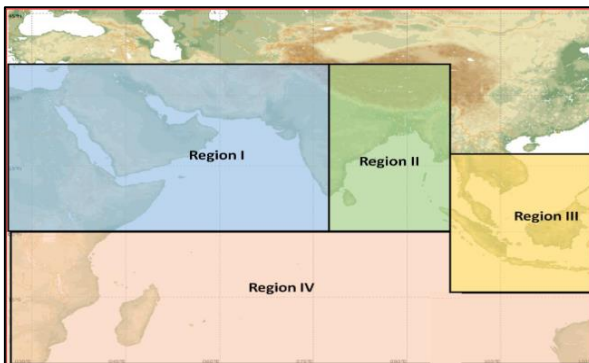
TROPICAL CYCLONE MOCHA

Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm Mocha was the strongest tropical cyclone on earth so far in 2023. Mocha originated on 08 May 23 from a low-pressure area in the SE Bay of Bengal, tracked slowly north-northwestward in the North Indian Ocean and reached extremely severe cyclonic storm intensity affecting Myanmar and parts of Bangladesh. The maximum wind speed monitored was 280 kmph on 14 May 23. Tropical cyclone MOCHA made landfall N of Sittwe, Myanmar, on 14 May 23. On 15 May 23, the cyclone weakened into a depression, further weakened over land and dissipated. Tropical cyclone MOCHA injured 712 and killed 32 people in Myanmar and Bangladesh.



WEATHER FORECAST

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



Region I: Arabian Sea (AS) - Surface pressure of 1008 hPa is seen over south Arabian Sea and gradually decreases towards higher latitudes to about 1000-998 hpa over north Arabian Sea off Pakistan coast. The average sea surface temperature (SST) is about 28-30°C over most parts of AS. Most of the cyclonic disturbances during this month originate between 100 N and 150 N and move in North Westerly direction towards Oman coast and only few moves in Northerly direction and subsequently recurve towards West coast of India. The number of cyclonic disturbances in 30 years from 1989 - 2018 are 17 in Arabian Sea. Surface current is around 0.5-1.0 m/s over most of central Arabian Sea.

Region II: Bay of Bengal - The weather over Bay of Bengal (BOB) is generally cloudy and tends to be cloudy in the south and southern parts of central Bay. In general, weather systems form in BOB between latitudes 100 to 150 North, east of longitudes 850 East. These systems tend to move initially in the NNW-NW'ly direction and are less likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm. The swell conditions over the Bay of Bengal during the month are mainly SW - SSW/ 1.5 - 2.0m (Sea State 3-4) unless affected by weather systems. Over most parts of the Bay of Bengal, significant wave height is about 1.25 to 2.25 m. However, along the coastal regions, the wave height is about 1.0 - 1.5 m.

WEATHER FORECAST

Region III: Southeast Asia - Mean sea level pressure over the area is 1008 - 1010 hpa. The average pressure gradient varies from 04 - 06 hpa from north to south. SW monsoon over the southern half of the South China Sea begins at the end of May. Thunderstorms/ showers over Sumatra Island and the Straits of Malacca generally occur due to active monsoon conditions over the region. The Swell waves are SW'ly over most parts of the open sea, with a mean height of 1.5- 2.0 m in the North & 2.0 - 3.0 m in the South and SST between 28° - 29°C can be observed during this month. A NE'ly current is generally seen along the west of the South China Sea for most of the month.

Region IV: South Indian Ocean - During June, the sea level pressure over central parts of the Southern IOR is 1020 hPa and gradually decreases northwards. The pressure gradient over south IOR is of the order of 8-10 HPa. High pressure cell shift towards the west and is generally seen between 30°- 40°S and 60°- 110°E. The mean sea level pressure value decreases to less than 990 hPa below 55°S latitudes. Temperatures are around 27- 29°C over South Indian Ocean up to 20°S and reduce drastically to 05-10°C beyond 50°S. The swell waves are from SE over most parts of the open sea, with a mean height of 1.5-2.5 m in the North and 2.5 - 3.5 m in South IOR.

INFORMATION/EVENTS OF INTEREST

• UN group urged to focus on migrant smuggling along the Western Indian Ocean

The UN Contact Group on Piracy along the Western Indian Ocean will concentrate on the rising cases of migrant smuggling and illegal fishing as it ventures into new focus areas following a decline in piracy activities in the region. The Western Indian Ocean stretches along the coast of the mainland countries of Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa and vast oceanic areas surrounding the Island States of Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros, Mauritius and French territories. The economic hardships, political instability and climate change effects leads to migrant smuggling in the region. It has grown significantly in the past two decades due to the ever-increasing demand for individuals who wish to migrate and leave their home country. The proceeds of these activities have been linked to wider criminal networks allowing them to gain access to various illicit resources in both the marine and land criminal arena.



IFC-IOR Comments: *IFC-IOR participated in the first Plenary Session of the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities (CGIMA) at the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) Karen, Nairobi, on 24 May 23. The discussions during the plenary session focused on combatting illicit maritime activities in the Western Indian Ocean Region.*

- **Increase in Piracy and Armed Robbery incidents in South East Asia.**

The recent surge in Piracy and Armed Robbery Incidents in South East Asia has raised concerns for the safety and security of the Sea Lanes of Communication in the region. The region's busy, narrow shipping lanes, large anchorage spaces and high shipping density lead to slowing down of vessels, which makes them vulnerable to pirates. It has been observed that the perpetrators are using small boats resembling fishing vessels, exploiting the legal gaps, attacking opportune targets and focusing their attention on stealing low-value items from ships. The increase in these events may be primarily due to the lack of capacity to enforce laws in the region and differences in local laws. Despite several initiatives like coordinated patrol and information sharing among the Southeast Asian navies, practical maritime cooperation has proven inadequate in addressing the persistent issue of piracy in the SOMS. As piracy and armed robbery incidents are on an upward trend, it is crucial for Southeast Asian nations to put joint measures in place in order to stem such activities in the region. The region's governments may also consider forming a regional agency solely chartered with anti-piracy and anti-robbery roles by developing uniform, strict, and enforceable laws for the region and reducing the overlap between existing state organs that operate independently.

- **'Harit Sagar Guidelines 2023' envisages Ecosystem Dynamics in port development, operation and maintenance.**

'Harit Sagar' the Green Port Guidelines 2023 were promulgated on 11 May 23 by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, India. The guidelines aim to minimise waste through reducing, reusing, repurposing and recycling to attain zero waste discharge from port operations and promote monitoring, based on Environmental Performance Indicators. It lays emphasis on the use of clean/green energy in port operation, developing port capabilities for storage, handling and bunkering greener fuels viz. green hydrogen, green ammonia, green methanol/ethanol etc. These guidelines provide a framework for the major ports to draw out a comprehensive action plan for achieving targeted outcomes in terms of quantified reduction in carbon emission over defined timelines, through focused implementation and close monitoring of green initiatives and to achieve Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDG).

- **Fishing boats to get tracking device.**

In an effort to enhance maritime security and support the interest of the fishermen, the Indian Government has taken a significant initiative by providing free of cost AIS transponders to fishermen, enabling tracking of their positions. To support this endeavour, the transponders will be manufactured by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) as part of the Make in India initiative. Government entities, including state and central fisheries departments and the National Security Council, are collaborating to execute the project in the coastal areas. This step is expected to significantly enhance the security and safety of fishermen.



Maritime Incidents

Trend analysis reveals a surge in the maritime incidents (mechanical failure, collision, grounding and capsizing) during the monsoon season (Jun - Sep) due to rough weather and high sea states prevalent in the region. A total of 1173 incidents which includes 185 incidents involving capsizing of vessels, 143 incidents of mechanical failure, 119 incidents of MEDEVAC and 125 incidents of SAR were monitored in the IOR during the monsoon season in last three years. The following is advised :-

- Seafarers monitor weather warnings prior putting out to sea.
- Vessels to constantly monitor relevant warnings/ broadcasts whilst at sea and to seek shelter (if feasible)/ steer a safe course during periods of heavy weather.
- Proactive and timely reporting to relevant coastal agencies to facilitate immediate response in the event of any distress situation .

VISITS



Cmde Adil Hamood Al Busaidi, Director, Oman Maritime Security Centre visited the Centre on 05 May 23.



Journalists from Maldives visited the Centre on 09 May 23.

VISITS



Mr. Teraoka Mitsuhiro, Dy Director General, Budget Bureau, MoF visited the Centre on 17 May 23.



VADM Priyantha Perera, Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy visited the Centre on 25 May 23.



Mr Trinh Duc Hai, Vice Chairman, National Boundary Commission, Vietnam visited the Centre on 30 May 23.



*** End of Report ***



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Working Definitions used
for Maritime Safety and
Security Incidents

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