

MONTHLY MARITIME SECURITY UPDATE

Dec 2024



**INFORMATION FUSION CENTRE
INDIAN OCEAN REGION**

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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



IUU FISHING

40

CYBER SECURITY
THREATS

NIL

PIRACY AND ARMED
ROBBERY

22

CONTRABAND
SMUGGLING

81

IRREGULAR HUMAN
MIGRATION

09

MARITIME INCIDENTS

140

MARITIME SECURITY
THREATS (HYBRID)

02

MARINE ENVIROMENT
POLLUTION

01

PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY

CONTRABAND SMUGGLING

IUU FISHING

IRREGULAR HUMAN MIGRATION

MARITIME INCIDENTS

Maritime Security Threats (Hybrid)

Marine Environment Pollution

Cyber Security Threats

Overview

295 incidents comprising piracy and armed robbery (22), contraband smuggling (81), illegal unreported and unregulated fishing (40), irregular human migration (09), maritime incidents (140), maritime security threats (hybrid) (02), and marine environment pollution (01) were monitored in Dec 24.

Piracy and Armed Robbery 22 incidents of piracy and armed robbery (actual and attempted) were monitored in Dec 24, compared to 18 in the previous month. Only one incident recorded injury to one crew member. *The incidents of piracy and armed robbery remained low in the IOR except in South East Asia.*

Contraband Smuggling 81 incidents of contraband smuggling were monitored in Dec 24, compared to 80 in Nov 24. *In Dec 24, incidents highlighted the increasing ingenuity of smugglers in concealing drugs within legal products to bypass customs checks, likely a response to the heightened vigilance of law enforcement agencies.*

IUU Fishing 40 IUU fishing incidents were recorded in Dec 24, compared to 79 in Nov 24. 60 fishing vessels were seized and 273 fishermen were apprehended.

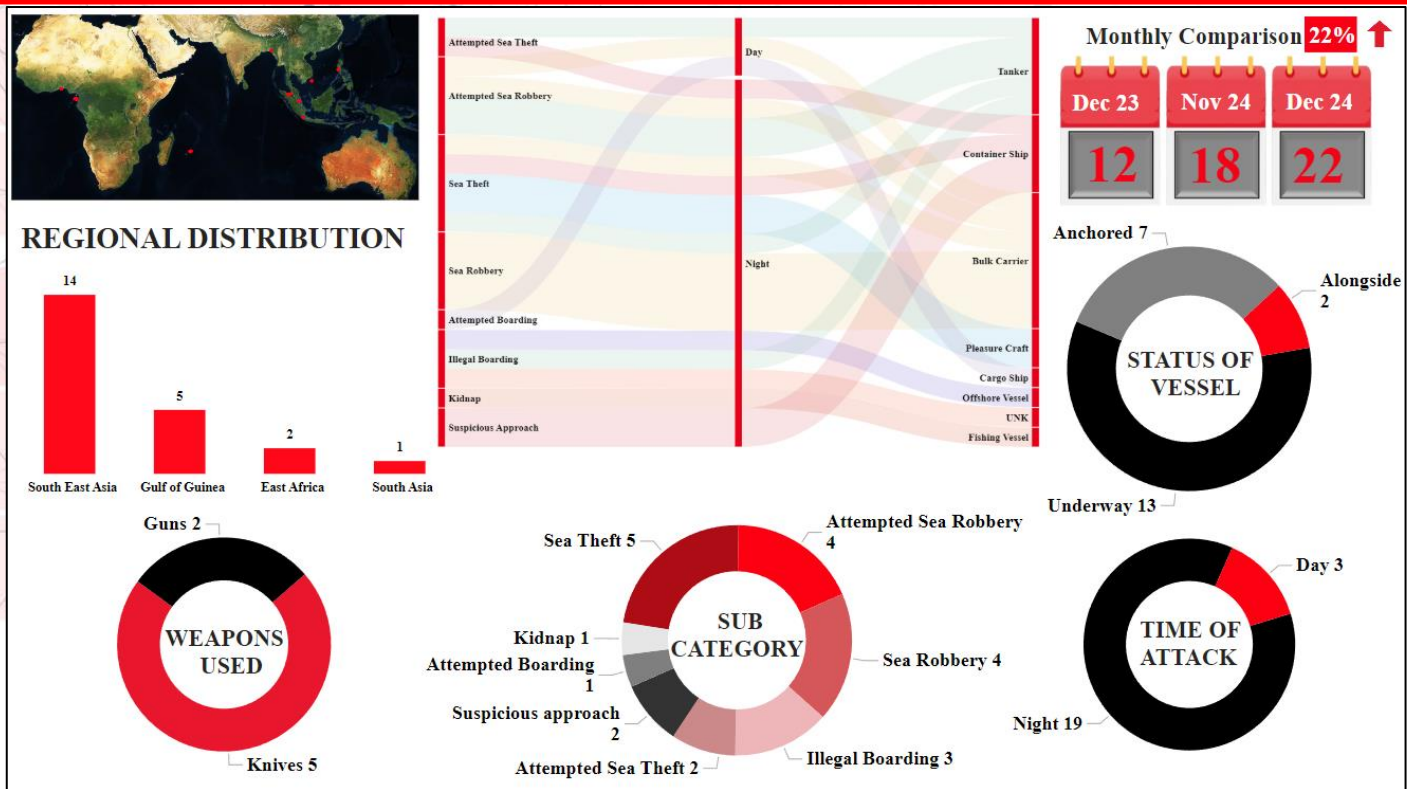
Irregular Human Migration Nine incidents were recorded in Dec 24, compared to 15 in Nov 24. *Illegal migration through maritime routes maintained a consistent low.*

Maritime Incidents 140 maritime incidents were recorded by the Centre in Dec 24, compared to 103 in Nov 24. Incidents involving mechanical failures, sinking, grounding, MEDEVAC, flooding and fire were the most frequently reported incidents.

Maritime Security Threats (Hybrid) Two incidents were recorded in Dec 24, compared to four in Nov 24. This month witnessed the lowest number of attacks in 2024.

Marine Environment Pollution One incident of oil spill was reported in Dec 24.

PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY



Overview

22 incidents of piracy and armed robbery (actual and attempted) were monitored in Dec 24, a 22% increase compared to 18 incidents in Nov 24. 19 incidents were reported during dark hours, and three during the day.

Analysis of Incidents

Sea Thefts/ Robberies Sea thefts and robberies 15 (actual/attempted) accounted for the majority of incidents. Most of the incidents were reported on vessels underway (09) followed by vessels at anchor (05) and vessels alongside (01). 13 incidents were reported during dark hours and two incidents were reported during daylight hours. The number of perpetrators involved in these incidents ranged from groups of two to eight. The stolen items included engine spares, and ship and boat items. No harm to crew members of affected vessels was reported. However, in one of the incidents, one crew member sustained a minor injury.

Suspicious Approach In Dec 24, two incidents of suspicious approaches were observed, compared to one incident in Nov 24. On 21 Dec, a small

craft approached the Liberia-flagged **LETO** and opened fire. The craft aborted the approach and retreated after the crew raised an alarm. On 20 Dec 24, a small skiff opened fire on another Liberia-flagged container ship. However, the crew raised the alarm and successfully evaded the attack by increasing speed. Both vessels and their crews remained safe.

Illegal Boarding In Dec 24, four incidents of illegal boardings (both actual and attempted) were reported. Three incidents were reported while the vessels were underway and one at anchor. The perpetrators involved ranged from groups of three to six individuals. In each case, the crew's swift response and use of security protocols, such as retreating to the citadel, prevented further escalation. No injuries to crew members were reported, and no items were stolen in any of the incidents.

Kidnap On 05 Dec 24, a kidnapping incident was reported involving the fishing vessel **FAYALI 2** off Cotonou, Benin. Five armed perpetrators boarded the vessel, took seven crew members hostage, stole two mobile phones, and abducted the master before fleeing the scene.

Regional Analysis

Gulf of Guinea recorded five incidents in Dec 24, a significant rise from the two incidents in Nov 24. The incidents included two cases of illegal boarding, two suspicious approaches and one kidnapping. Three of these incidents occurred near Bata, Equatorial Guinea, while the remaining two were off the coast of Benin, Nigeria. All incidents took place during dark hours, with four occurring while vessels were underway and one at anchor involving armed perpetrators in small crafts or speedboats. In the illegal boarding cases, the crew successfully retreated to the citadel, and no injuries were reported. Most of the perpetrators were unsuccessful in their attempts, demonstrating the effectiveness of the crew's swift response and security measures.

East Africa witnessed a total of two incidents during this month, compared to four in Nov 24. Both incidents were of sea theft. On 03 Dec, the unmanned pleasure craft TICOU TICOU moored in the lagoon off Flic en Flac was boarded by unknown perpetrators who escaped with boat items. On 15 Dec 24, another unmanned pleasure craft moored off Trou Aux Biches was similarly boarded by unidentified individuals who stole boat items. Both incidents took place during dark hours, and no injuries were reported.

Southeast Asia witnessed a total of 14 incidents in Dec 24, including 7 sea robberies, 5 sea thefts (both actual and attempted), 1 attempted boarding, and 1 illegal boarding. The affected vessels included bulk carriers, tankers, cargo vessels, and container ships. Of these incidents, 11 were reported during dark hours, while 3 occurred during the day. The stolen items primarily consisted of engine spares. No injuries to crew members were reported, except for one incident in which a crew member sustained a minor injury. The modus operandi of the perpetrators continues to align with the previous month, wherein the *perpetrators targeted opportune low-freeboard*

vessels. All vessels transiting through the Phillip Channel, Singapore Strait and those at anchor are advised to remain vigilant and follow BMP5 practices.

South Asia witnessed an incident of attempted sea robbery which was reported onboard a Marshall Islands flagged tanker *ORIOLE*, off Chattogram anchorage, Bangladesh. Reportedly, three perpetrators armed with knives and iron bars boarded the vessel at anchor and were sighted near the forecastle store. The crew raised the alarm, and the perpetrators escaped. No items were reported stolen. All crew members are safe.

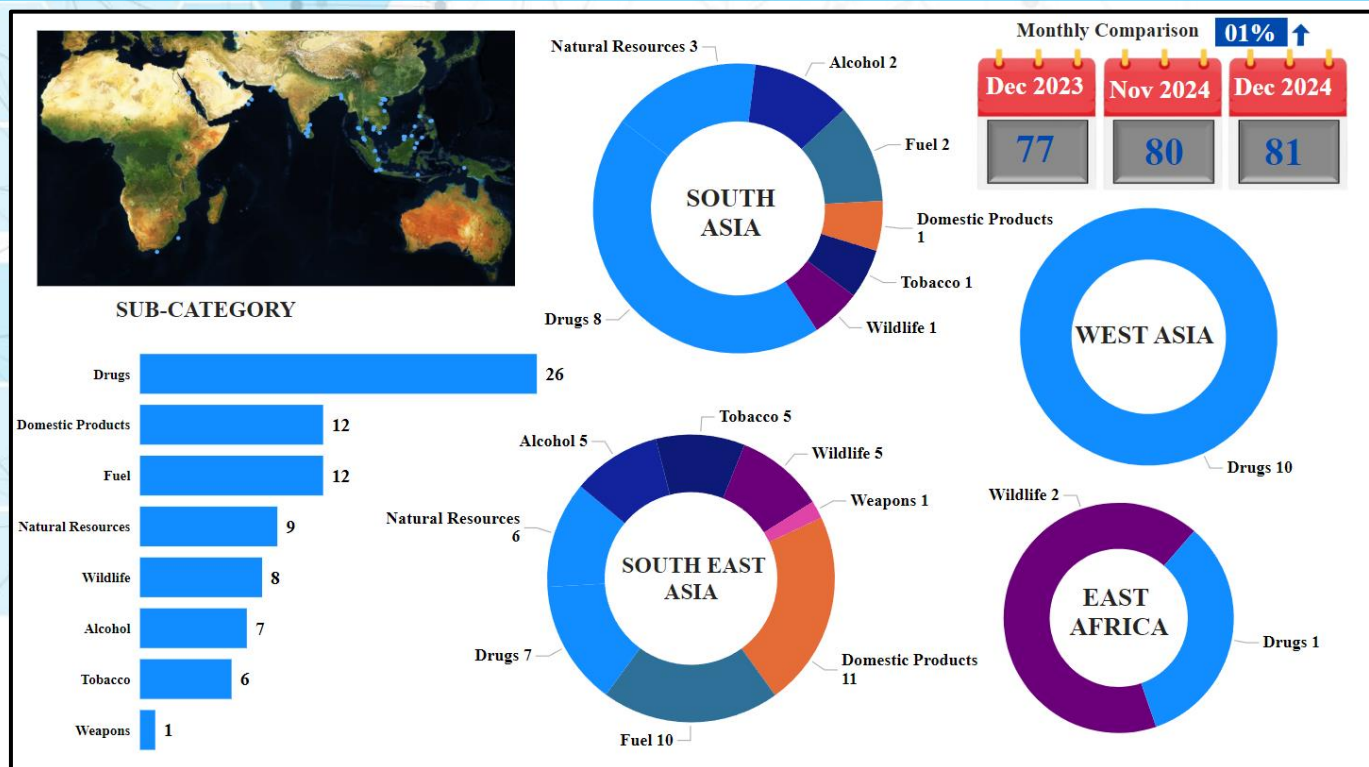
IFC - IOR Comment

While there was a conspicuous decline in incidents of Piracy in the GoA and off Somalia since Jul 24, the same was attributed to the prevalence of SW Monsoons in the region.

Reportedly, pirates have issued a ransom demand for 18 hostages aboard a Chinese fishing vessel hijacked in Nov 24 off the coast of Somalia. The pirates are reportedly demanding \$10 million for the release of the crew, claiming the ship was operating illegally in Somali territorial waters. While no other major incidents have been reported in the Somali basin, HoA and East Africa region, the possibility of PAGs hijacking dhows operating in the vicinity of the Somali coast to acquire them as mother ships still exists. These mother ships may then be used for mounting attacks on merchant traffic.

Vessels transiting through the Somalia Coast, Gulf of Guinea, Singapore Strait and Phillip Channel are advised to maintain heightened vigilance, follow BMP5 practices and maintain contact with regional authorities for risk mitigation and report any suspicious activities to ifc-ior.gurugram@nic.in.

CONTRABAND SMUGGLING



Overview

81 incidents of contraband smuggling were monitored in Dec 24, compared to 80 incidents in Nov 24 .

Analysis of Incidents

Drugs. A total of 26 drug seizures were recorded in Dec 24, compared to 29 incidents in Nov 24. The seizures included methamphetamine (both in brick form as dry ice and in pill form as ecstasy and yaba), cannabis, hashish, cocaine, ketamine and khat. In addition, drugs used for medicinal purposes, such as 140 litres of cough syrup, 5 kg of ketamine and 250,000 pieces of Lyrica capsules, were also seized by the authorities in Indonesia, Vietnam and Kuwait. Of all the seizures, 13 incidents specifically involved activities at sea, such as the apprehension of suspect vessels transporting drugs and one incident involved the recovery of drugs washed ashore. The seizures were carried out by the national authorities of Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Vietnam and Sri Lanka

Domestic Products 12 incidents of domestic products smuggling were recorded this month, compared to six in Nov 24. The products seized included rubber, frozen meat, processed frozen food, electric equipment such as air conditioners, and e-cigarettes.

Wildlife Eight incidents of wildlife smuggling were recorded in Dec 24, compared to seven in Nov 24. The incidents involved the smuggling of abalone, shellfish, parrots, turtles and lobster seeds. *In a significant incident, Indonesia authorities seized 2,475 birds (protected species category) at a port area.*

Tobacco Six incidents of tobacco smuggling were recorded in Dec 24, compared to 10 incidents in Nov 24. *The most significant incident in Nov 24 included the seizure of 2,639 kg of cigarettes (valued at USD 371,988) from a motorboat off Manila by Philippine authorities.*

CONTRABAND SMUGGLING

Fuel 12 incidents of fuel smuggling were recorded in Dec 24, compared to 16 in the previous month. These incidents amounted to a total seizure of 3,383,375 liters of various fuels, especially diesel.

Alcohol and weapon Seven incidents of alcohol smuggling and one incident of weapon smuggling were recorded in Dec 24. *Although the number of alcohol seizure incidents was similar to the previous month, the seizure amount was drastically reduced.* The seizures in Dec 24 amounted to a total of 2,293 liters, 2,500 cartons, and 50 cans of liquor, compared to 34,660 liters of liquor, including 1,300 bottles and 36 cans, in Nov 24. The only weapon smuggling incident involved the apprehension of a suspect along with a fishing boat, 5 kg of explosives, 170 detonators, and 9.75 meters of slow-burning wire by Vietnam authorities.

Natural Resources Nine incidents of natural resources smuggling were recorded in Dec 24, compared to six incidents in Nov 24. The seizures included 4,900 m³ of sand, 3,417 kg of kendu leaves, and 600 m³ of wood.

Regional Distribution

East Africa East Africa accounted for three incidents in Dec 24, compared to four incidents during the previous month. South African authorities seized 8 kg of cocaine (worth USD 4,492,000) and 1,000 abalone. 766 turtles (protected species) were seized by Madagascar authorities.

West Asia West Asia accounted for 10 incidents of contraband smuggling in Dec 24, up from five incidents in Nov 24. *The seizure of 1,800,000 Captagon pills by Kuwaiti authorities was the key highlight. Additionally, the seizure of hydro drugs, along with two suspects and one fishing boat by Egyptian authorities, was another significant incident.*

This type of drug often refers to hydroponic marijuana, which is cannabis grown using a hydroponic system. This method involves growing plants in a nutrient-rich water solution instead of soil.

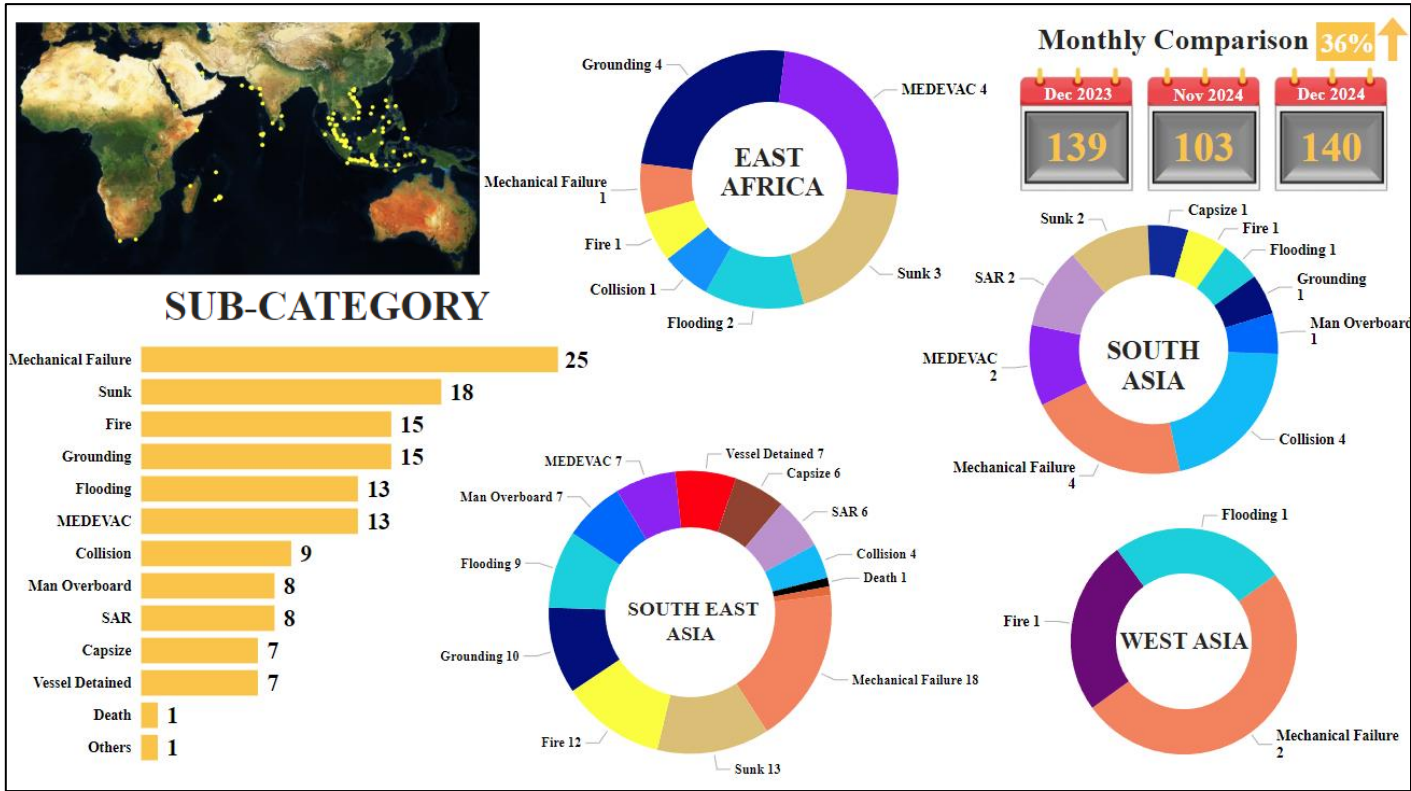
Southeast Asia Southeast Asia recorded 50 incidents of contraband smuggling in Dec 24, comparable to 49 incidents in Nov 24. These incidents included 11 domestic products smuggling cases, 10 fuel smuggling cases, seven drug smuggling cases, six natural resources smuggling cases, five each of alcohol & tobacco & wildlife smuggling cases and one weapons smuggling case. *Following the previous trend, in Dec 24 there were two incidents of rubber seizure totaling 2,510 kg of rubber. In one significant incident, Thailand authorities seized 47,495 pieces of electronic cigarettes in a container at a port area without valid documents.*

South Asia South Asia accounted for 18 incidents of contraband smuggling in Dec 24, compared to 22 in Nov 24. Although the number of drug smuggling incidents and the total seizure amount decreased compared to last month, the amount seized is still significant. *Out of four drug seizure incidents, in one incident, Pakistan authorities apprehended a suspect and seized 700 kg of methamphetamine mixed in 854 bags of calcium carbonate. In another incident, Bangladesh authorities apprehended seven suspects and seized 35,000 pills of methamphetamine.*

IFC-IOR Comment

Dec 24 witnessed unusual types and methods of drug smuggling in both West Asia and South Asia. Notably, Egypt authorities seized hydro drugs, while Pakistan authorities intercepted a significant amount of methamphetamine concealed within bags of calcium carbonate. These incidents highlight the increasing ingenuity of smugglers in concealing drugs within legal products to bypass customs checks, likely a response to the heightened vigilance of law enforcement agencies.

MARITIME INCIDENTS



Overview

140 maritime incidents were observed in Dec 24, compared to 103 in Nov 24. Mechanical failures (25) constituted the highest number of reported incidents, followed by sunk (18), fire and grounding (15 each), MEDEVAC and flooding (13 each), collision (09), SAR and man overboard (08 each), capsized and vessel detained (07 each), death and other (01 each).

Analysis of Incidents

Vessel Detained The Centre monitored seven incidents of vessel detentions in Dec 24. All detentions were made in Southeast Asia. Major reasons for these detentions were operating without valid documents, illegal ship-to-ship transfer at sea and illegal anchoring.

Man Overboard, Death, SAR, and MEDEVAC A total of 30 incidents were recorded in Dec 24, compared to 29 in Nov 24. A total of 20 individuals were rescued wherein 13 individuals were missing and two lives were lost. Southeast Asia (21) accounted for the highest number of incidents, followed by South Asia (05) and East Africa (04). The analysis indicates that 50% of incidents involved fishing vessels (15 incidents).

Capsized and Sinking of Vessels In Dec 24, 18 incidents of vessel sinking and seven incidents of vessel capsizing were recorded, compared to 10 and 09 in Nov 24. South East Asia accounted for most of these incidents (19 incidents) followed by East Africa and South Asia (03 each). Concerned authorities rescued 213 individuals in these incidents. 14 lives were lost and 24 individuals were reported missing.

MARITIME INCIDENTS

Fire and Flooding. 15 incidents of fire and 13 incidents of flooding were recorded in Dec 24, compared to five and six in Nov 24. All fire incidents involved fishing vessels, cargo ships, passenger boats and other small vessel categories operating in South East Asia (21), East Africa (03), West Asia and South Asia (02 each). Cumulatively, a total number of 439 people were rescued and 02 lives were reported lost.

Grounding and Collision 15 incidents of grounding and nine incidents of collision were recorded in Dec 24 compared to 11 and six in Nov 24. Ten incidents of groundings were recorded in Southeast Asia. Barges, fishing vessels, tug boats, passenger vessels and cargo vessels comprised the affected categories.

Mechanical Failure The Centre monitored 25 incidents of mechanical failures in Dec 24, a 67% increase compared to Nov 24 (15 incidents). Majority of the incidents (18) were reported in South East Asia.

Regional Distribution

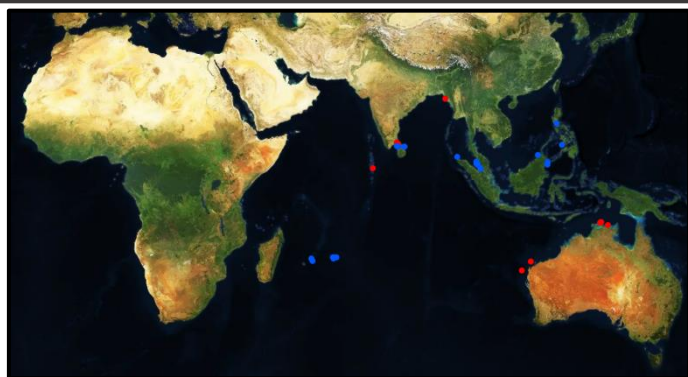
East Africa A total of 16 incidents were reported in East Africa, compared to 22 in Nov 24. These included MEDEVAC & groundings (04 each), sunk (03), flooding (02), collision, fire and mechanical failures (01 each).

West Asia accounted for four incidents in Dec 24, which included two incidents of mechanical failures and one each incident of flooding and fire.

South Asia accounted for 19 incidents in Dec 24, similar to Nov 24. These included collision & mechanical failure (04 Each), SAR and sunk & MEDEVAC (02 Each), man overboard, grounding, flooding, capsized & fire (01 Each).

Southeast Asia accounted for 101 incidents compared to 58 in Nov 24. These included mechanical failure (18), fire (13), sunk (12), grounding (10), flooding (09), man overboard & MEDEVAC & vessel detained (07 each), capsized & SAR (06 each), collision (04), others and death (01 each).

ILLEGAL UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING



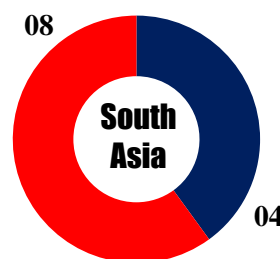
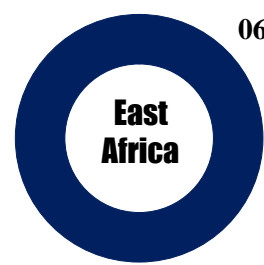
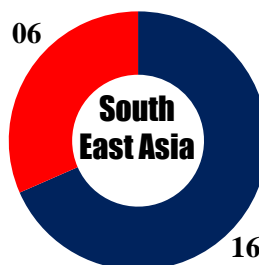
Sub-Category



● IUU Fishing-Local ● IUU Fishing-Poaching

Monthly Comparison

49% ↓



Overview

40 IUU fishing incidents were recorded in Dec 24, compared to 79 in Nov 24. Among these, 14 incidents were poaching and 26 incidents were local.

Analysis of Incidents

Local IUU Fishing. 26 incidents of local IUU fishing were recorded in Dec 24, compared to 30 in Nov 24. These incidents involved violations of fishing licenses by local fishermen, illegal fishing (use of blast fishing and light coarse fishing, etc.). **64 fishermen were apprehended and 31 boats were seized by the authorities.**

Poaching IUU Fishing. 14 incidents of poaching were recorded in Dec 24 compared to 49 in Nov 24. **209 fishermen were apprehended and 29 boats were seized by the authorities.**

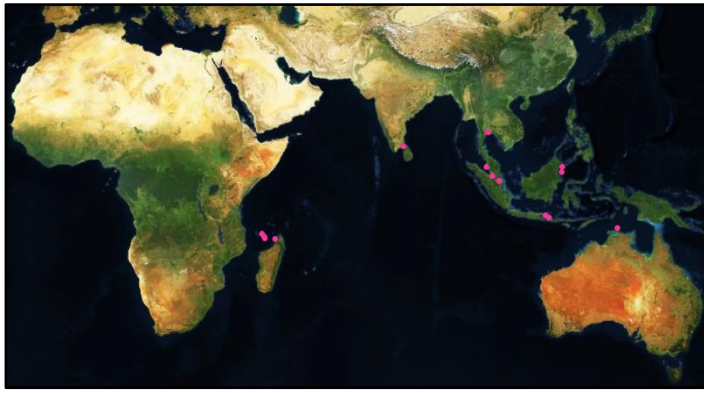
Regional Distribution

Southeast Asia. 22 incidents of IUU fishing were reported in this region in Dec 24, compared to 63 in Nov 24. 16 incidents of local IUU fishing and 06 of poaching were monitored. These were recorded in the waters of Malaysia (12), Australia (06), [the] Philippines (02), and Indonesia (02). **A total of 37 boats were seized and 88 fishermen were apprehended.**

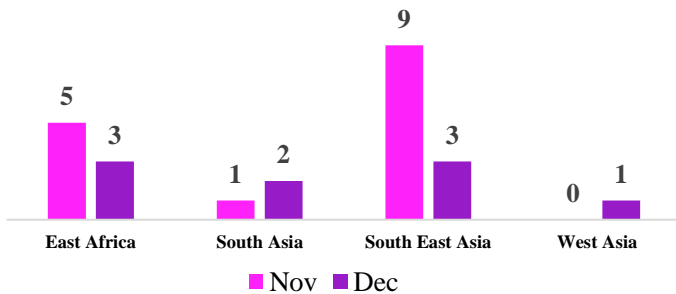
South Asia. 12 incidents of IUU fishing were reported during Dec 24 compared to nine in Nov 24. Four incidents of local IUU fishing and eight incidents of poaching were monitored. These were recorded in the waters of Sri Lanka (09), India (02) and the Maldives (01). **A total of 23 boats were seized and 185 fishermen were apprehended.**

East Africa. Six incidents of local IUU fishing were reported, all in the waters of the Mauritius during Dec 24, compared to three in Nov 24. **No boats were seized, and no fishermen were apprehended.**

IRREGULAR HUMAN MIGRATION



Regional Distribution



Monthly Comparison

40% ↓

Dec 2023

21

Nov 2024

15

Dec 2024

09

20



Smugglers
Apprehended

Nil



Missing

524



Rescued/
Apprehended

32



Boats

Nil



Dead

Overview

In Dec 24, there were nine irregular human migration incidents reported, down from 15 in Nov 24. Authorities apprehended 524 migrants and 20 suspected smugglers/ traffickers and seized 32 boats. Importantly, no fatalities were reported this month.

Regional Distribution

East Africa. In Dec 24, the region saw three incidents, down from five in Nov 24. These involved stowaways from Comoros who were turned over to Mauritian authorities and migrants from Comoros attempting to reach Mayotte, a French island. Authorities apprehended 381 migrants and 20 smugglers/ traffickers and seized 29 boats. There were no reported fatalities in Dec 24 in the region.

West Asia. In Dec 24, West Asia experienced one incident of irregular human migration, compared to none in Nov 24. The authorities apprehended 10 migrants and seized one boat.

South Asia. The region reported two irregular human migration incidents, involving Sri Lanka and Maldives in Dec 24, compared to one in Nov 24. The authorities apprehended/ rescued 105 migrants and seized one boat.

Southeast Asia. In Dec 24, the region reported three incidents, a decrease from the nine incidents recorded in Nov 24. Australia, Thailand and Indonesia remain the preferred destination countries for migrants. Authorities apprehended 28 migrants and seized one boat, with these apprehensions occurring both at sea and on land.

Migration Trends

	No. Of Incidents	Rescued/ Apprehended	Smugglers Apprehended	Boats Involved
East Africa	03	381	20	29
West Asia	01	10	00	01
South East Asia	03	28	00	01
South Asia	02	105	00	01

MARITIME SECURITY THREATS (HYBRID)



Gulf of Aden (02)

Monthly Comparison 50% ↓

Dec 2023

Nov 2024

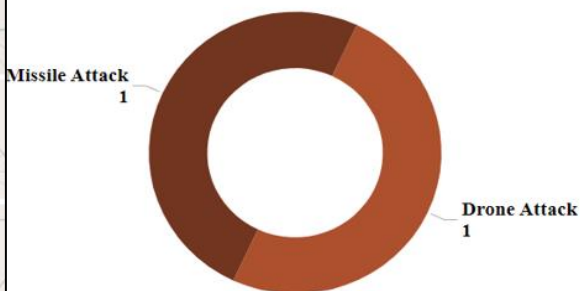
Dec 2024

32

04

02

SUB-CATEGORY



Drone Attack

1



Attack
Unsuccessful
Day

Missile Attack

1



Attack
Unsuccessful
Day

Overview

Two maritime security threats (hybrid) incidents were recorded by the Centre in Dec 24, compared to four in Nov 24.

Location of Incidents

Missile and drone attack incidents were monitored in the Gulf of Aden. The positional analysis of the attacks indicates that the area between 12°10'48.0"N 46°33'36.0"E and 12°10'48.0"N 46°33'36.0"E witnessed these attacks in Dec 24.

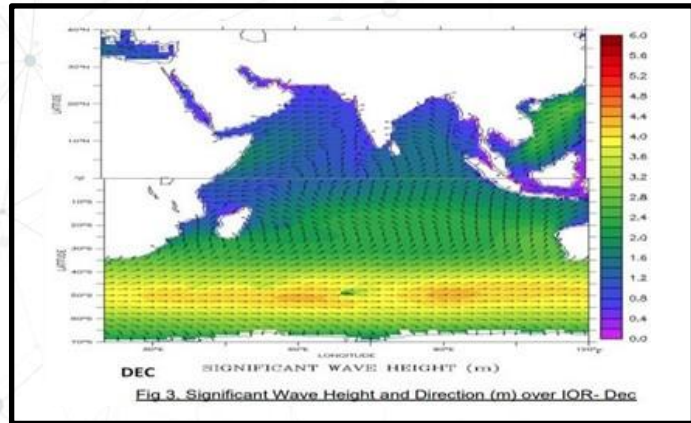
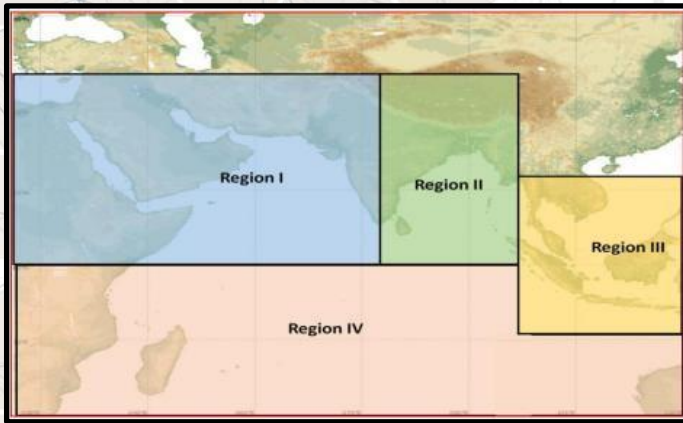
Drone / Unmanned Aerial Systems Attacks

One drone attack was monitored during this month. The attack was unsuccessful in inflicting damage to the targeted vessel, as it was shot down by US CENTCOM forces.

Missile Attacks

One missile attack was monitored this month. The attack occurred during daylight hours, which was unsuccessful in inflicting damage to the targeted vessel, as it was shot down by US CENTCOM forces.

WEATHER FORECAST – DEC 24



Region I: Arabian Sea (AS) - The Mean Sea Level Pressure (MSLP) is likely to be of the order of 1011 -12 hPa over the South Arabian Sea (AS) and gradually likely to increase to about 1017-18 hPa over the North AS. There is a considerable reduction in the frequency of storms during this month. The average Sea Surface Temperature (SST) is likely to be about 24°- 26°C over most parts of AS. The sea conditions are relatively smooth over the North AS and slight to moderate over the South AS. The significant wave height is likely to be of the order of 1.0 - 1.5 m over south AS and likely to decrease northwards to about 0.5 - 1.0 m over North AS.

Region II: Bay of Bengal - The seasonal low pressure area is likely to shift southwards this month and is seen to the south of Latitude 5°N. During this month, most of the cyclonic storms are likely to originate between Latitudes 5°N - 10°N. The sea state during this month over the Bay of Bengal (BOB) is likely to be 2, which may deteriorate under the influence of weather systems. The swell is likely to be NE – Ely and with a height of 0.8 to 1.5 m over most parts of the Bay except South BoB where it is likely to be 1.5 to 2.0 m.

Region III: Southeast Asia - During the month of December, the mean sea level pressure is likely to be of the order of 1019 - 1020 hPa in area north of 15°N. NEly surface winds are likely to be of the order of 15 - 20 Knots gusting upto 30 knots in open sea. Significant waves from NEly direction with a height of about 1.5 - 2.5 m are likely to prevail over the South China Sea and decrease to around 0.5 m over the Malacca Strait.

Region IV: South Indian Ocean - During this month, peak summer is likely to be experienced over the Southern Hemisphere with sea level pressure of about 1020 hPa, decreasing Northwards to 1010 hPa near the equatorial Indian Ocean. The occurrence of tropical disturbance is more common during this month and they usually originate between 10°S to 15°S Latitudes & between 90°E and 120°E Longitudes. These systems track is likely to be towards W-SW and may re-curve towards S-SE after crossing 15°S Latitude. Average minimum air temperatures are likely to vary between 18°- 24°C in the South Indian Ocean.

EVENTS – DEC 2024



Towards strengthening regional maritime security in the IOR, the maiden Table Top Exercise jointly conducted by the IFC-IOR and the UNODC-GMCP was held from 05-07 Dec 24 at IFC-IOR, Gurugram. 30 participants from four countries namely India, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka participated in the TTX which involved three representatives per country from national IFCs/ law enforcement agencies and two representatives per country from prosecution agencies with experience in prosecuting maritime crimes, besides IFC-IOR staff (including ILOs from 14 countries).



IFC-IOR participated in the 52nd SHADE Meeting at Bahrain – (16-17 Dec 24)

EVENTS – DEC 2024



Visit of Participants of the 79th Know India Programme – 09 Dec 24



Visit of Cdr Thomas Scalabre, Director, MICA Centre, France - 11 Dec 24



Visit of Members of Parliament, Germany, led by Mr Andreas Schwarz, Head of the Budget Committee – 11 Dec 24

EVENTS – DEC 2024








Visit of Gen Tharapong Malakam, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Defence, Thailand – 12 Dec 24



Visit of RAdm MDK Wijewardhana, DG Training, Sri Lanka Navy - 20 Dec 24



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INDIAN OCEAN REGION**