Socotra, whereas United Arab Emirates forces operate largely in Aden, Abyan, Hadramawt, Hudaydah, Shabwah and Ta‘izz Governorates, excluding Ta‘izz city.

Map 1
Deployment of coalition forces in Yemen

44. The Panel continued to observe the pattern of emerging geographical centres of influence belonging to specific actors, as illustrated in map 1 above.

D. Maritime security

45. In 2018, the level of threat to maritime security in the Red Sea remained very high. Although the overall number of incidents was not higher than in the previous year, the threat for commercial shipping increased, as the Houthi forces were using increasingly sophisticated weapons systems to attack oil tankers flying the flag of Saudi Arabia. Map 2 illustrates the number the distribution of maritime security incidents in the region, including:

(a) Attacks using anti-ship missiles against very large crude carrier *Abqaiq* flying the flag of Saudi Arabia, on 3 April 2018, and against Turkish-flagged bulk carrier *Ince Inebolu*, on 10 May (see para. 80 below);

(b) An attempted attack against very large crude carrier *Nihan* on 6 January and a successful attack against very large crude carrier *Arsan* on 24 July 2018 using a combination of skiffs and waterborne improvised explosive devices. Both vessels were flying the flag of Saudi Arabia (see para. 92 below);

(c) An attempted attack on 3 June by three skiffs carrying armed men against the Gibraltar-flagged offshore supply vessel *VOS Theia* operating a charter on behalf of the World Food Programme;
(d) An attempted attack against a coalition warship on 24 March allegedly through use of a rocket and a successful attack against a coalition warship using two waterborne improvised explosive devices on 30 September in Jazan port in Saudi Arabia;

(e) Two attempted attacks, as well as numerous suspicious approaches, involving skiffs carrying armed men, which were possibly not related to the conflict in Yemen.

Map 2
Maritime security incidents, 2018

46. There have been repeated attacks by Houthi forces against oil tankers carrying up to 2.2 million barrels of crude oil. Any of those attacks could have led to an environmental and economic disaster for Yemen and the region. Furthermore, attacks against commercial vessels carrying humanitarian workers of food could seriously impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Yemen. The Panel considered those attacks to be violations of international humanitarian law.45

III. Military units and armed groups

47. Pursuant to paragraph 17 of resolution 2140 (2014), as reaffirmed by the Security Council in its resolution 2216 (2015), the Panel continued to investigate

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45 See International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Customary International Humanitarian Law database, attack against civilian object (rules 7–10) and attack against object indispensable to the survival of the civilian population (rule 54). Available at https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl. See also article 14 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts (Protocol II), of 8 June 1977.
4. On 28 August 2018, the dhow was intercepted by the *Jason Dunham* at 0614 local time (0314 Zulu time) in the vicinity 12°07' N and 047°44' E. A United States Navy boarding party searched the dhow, which had a crew of five and carried no cargo, other than a bag of flour. According to information provided by the United States Navy, the dhow was stateless and its name was given as *Al Shibouti*. Even though the crew was interviewed and navigation and communication devices (mobile and satellite phones) onboard the vessels analysed by authorities of the United States, no information regarding the home port of the dhow, the nationality of its crew or its journey prior to the intercept were released to the Panel. According to the United States Navy, the crew denied the transloading of goods to a skiff on the previous day. The crew was released after the interview and the whereabouts of the vessel and its crew are unknown.

5. Following the inspection of the dhow, the *Jason Dunham*, using its helicopter, searched for the skiff and intercepted it on 28 August 2018 at 1020 local time (1320 Zulu time) in the vicinity of 13°21.5' N and 047°22.7' E, close to Yemeni territorial waters. The skiff was heavily overloaded and sat very low in the water. When its crew noted the approach of the helicopter, they tried to accelerate, but suffered a failure of their outboard motors. A boarding party from the *Jason Dunham* hailed the skiff, performed a flag verification boarding and discovered a large quantity of weapons. The three crew members of the skiff were then taken onboard the *Jason Dunham* and the boarding party began transferring the weapons, a process which had to be interrupted when the skiff continued to take on water and was no longer safe for the boarding party. The *Jason Dunham* then scuttled the skiff to avoid it becoming a hazard to navigation. The boarding party estimated that between 100 and 200 weapons could not be retrieved from the vessel.