

Eastern Indian Ocean

The geopolitical environment in the Indian Ocean, including the eastern Indian Ocean, is changing and becoming more contested than it has been for many decades.

These developments are being paralleled by significant environmental changes that aggravate existing natural hazards in the Indian Ocean.

Climate change and other human interactions with the environment also create an additional series of environmentally related threats.

Environmental and geopolitical threats also have the potential to negatively interact, leading to the further deterioration of the security environment.

Both Australia and France are important maritime powers in the Indian Ocean. As the region becomes more multipolar, they are likely to find themselves playing an increasingly active role in addressing a range of traditional and non-traditional threats.

The risk assessment matrix for the eastern Indian Ocean (below) details identified threats and challenges.

Risk assessment matrix for the Eastern Indian Ocean

Issue/disruption	A Negligible (no disruptive effects; 'business as usual')	B Minor (regional tensions increase temporarily; situation is manageable within existing processes)	C Significant (conflict is temporary and generally constrained by existing arrangements)	D Major (significant disruption; limited to areas)	E Catastrophic (significant widespread disruptions)
1 Rare (most unlikely but might occur in exceptional circumstances)					
2 Unlikely (unlikely to occur without significant change in current circumstances)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of seabed mining 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdiction of maritime trade by state actors
3 Possible (can occur in most circumstances in the foreseeable future)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terrorist attacks on shipping, maritime infrastructure or the marine environment Disruption of / illicit access to undersea cables 		
4 Likely (will occur in current circumstances)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shipping accidents Marine pollution Piracy Significant declines in marine-based tourism Human trafficking / unregulated population movements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural disasters/ extreme weather events
5 Almost certain (already occurs regularly)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maritime smuggling of goods 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declining marine living resources Growing competition for fish resources 	