

# Designation of SAR regions and coordination with neighbouring states

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## Search and Rescue Regions (SRRs)

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- One of the objectives of the SAR Convention is to have a **global SAR Plan** covering all maritime areas.
- Internationally, maritime areas are divided into **Search and Rescue Regions (SRRs)**.
- **Definition of a SRR:** a Region of defined dimensions associated with a rescue coordination centre, within which search and rescue services are provided.
- Each SRR has its own **Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)**.
- **Search and rescue sub-regions (SRS)** can be created within SAR regions. Each sub-region has an associated MRSC (Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre).
- Maritime SRRs are published in the IMO SAR Plan (**communication to be made by States**) and are similar to, but not identical with, aeronautical SRRs.
- **Coordination with neighbouring States is strongly encouraged by the IMO** in the interests of efficiency.

## Purpose of SRRs

The purpose of SRRs is to **clearly define who has primary responsibility** for coordinating responses to distress situations, in all regions of the world.

This is particularly important for the automatic routing of distress alerts to the appropriate MRCC.



*OPS room MRCC Falmouth (UK)*

## The creation of SAR regions

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- Following the adoption of the 1979 SAR Convention, **the IMO Maritime Safety Committee divided the world's oceans into 13 SAR zones:**
  - North Pacific (2), South Pacific (2), Caribbean Sea, North Atlantic, Central Atlantic, South Atlantic, European waters, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, India and Asia
  
- This delimitation has helped States to **delimit their own SAR region** corresponding to their area of responsibility and to draw up SAR plans.
  
- The provisional SAR plans for all these areas were completed when the plans for the Indian Ocean were finalised, at a conference held in September 1998 in Fremantle (Western Australia).

## Main provisions of the 1979 SAR Convention concerning the creation of SRRs

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- A sufficient number of SAR regions in each sea area to help ensure :
  - provision of adequate shore-based communication infrastructure
  - efficient distress alerts routing
  - proper operational coordination
- SRR delimitations in line with government SAR services.
- Contiguous SRRs and, as far as possible, no overlap.
- SRR established by written agreement (with plans) between the interested Parties.
- If there is disagreement, efforts will be made to achieve equivalent overall coordination.
- Delimitation of SRRs not linked to existing borders between States and in no way prejudices these borders.
- The Parties communicate the limits of their SRRs. Notification to IMO.

Latest circular on Global SAR Plan published by IMO:  
[SAR.8/Circ.4 of 1 December 2012](#)

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SAR.8/Circ.4  
1 December 2012

**AVAILABILITY OF SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) SERVICES**

1 This circular contains the Global SAR Plan, holding information on the availability of Search and Rescue (SAR) Services, based on responses received from Member Governments in line with COMSAR.1/Circ.52.

ANNEX 1	-	LIST OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE PROVIDED INFORMATION IN LINE WITH COMSAR.1/Circ.52
ANNEX 2	-	INFORMATION ON THE AVAILABILITY OF SAR SERVICES
ANNEX 3	-	INFORMATION ON TELEMEDICAL MARITIME ADVICE SERVICES (TMAS)
ANNEX 4	-	MAPS ON THE WORLDS' MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE REGIONS
ANNEX 5	-	GUIDANCE FOR ENTERING AND UPDATING INFORMATION ON SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES INTO GIS AND ON HOW TO GET ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION FOR OPERATIONAL USE

# Informations about SRRs in Global SAR Plan



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## GISIS: Global SAR Plan

Public Area > Global SAR Plan

Overview National Authority RCCs TMAS

### Global SAR Plan

This module contains the Global SAR Plan, holding information on the availability of Search and Rescue (SAR) services, based on information provided by IMO Member States. The information provided by Member States has been reproduced as received. The designations employed do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the IMO Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or of its authorities.




The information is accessible by first selecting above 'National Authority'. When information for the specific Contracting Government / Territory is available, you could further select 'RCCs' or 'TMAS' to get also access to the information on Rescue Coordination Centres or Telemedical Maritime Advice Services, as required.

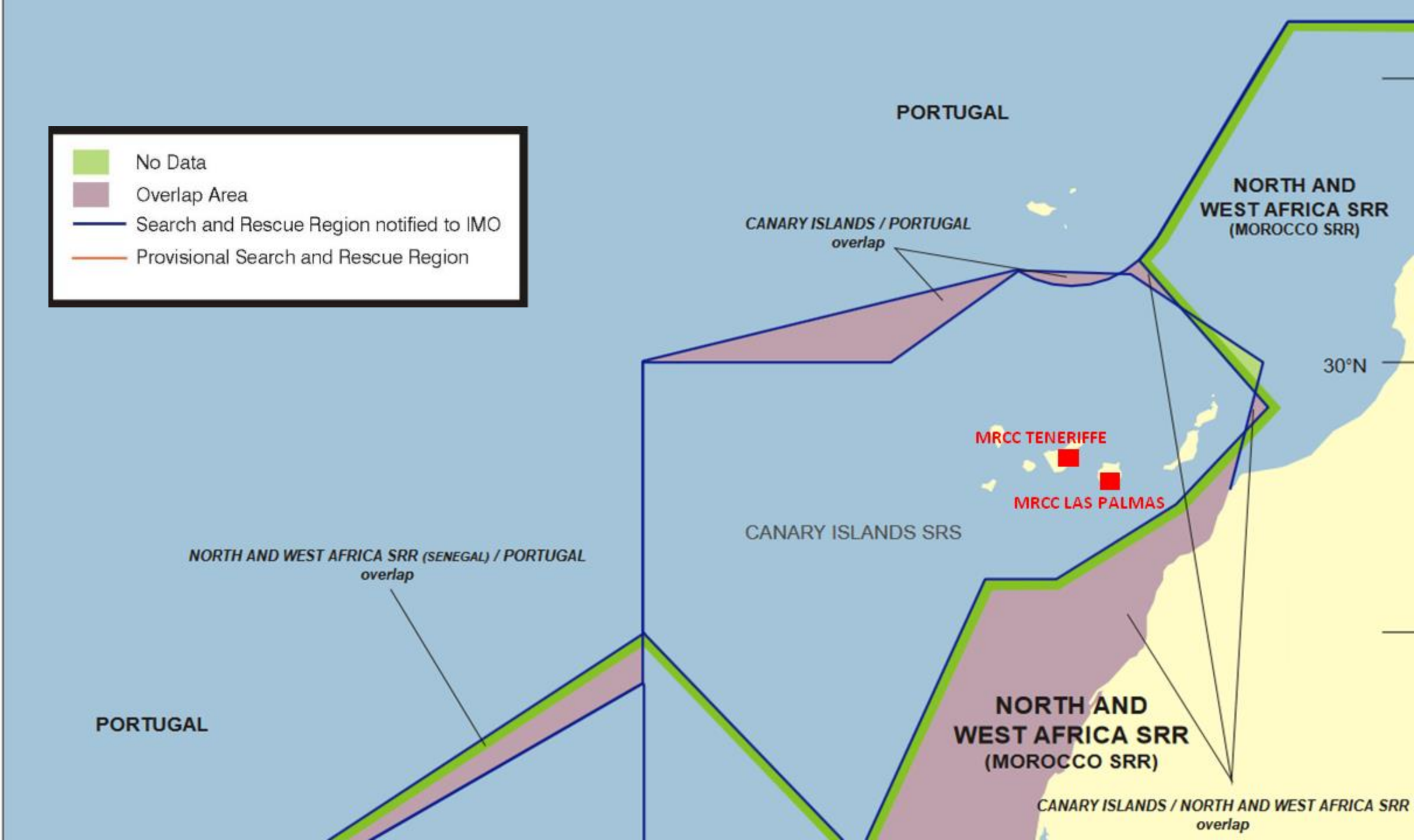
IMO Member States who have not yet provided information concerning the availability of SAR services in their country are invited to do so as soon as possible.





- **National Responsible Authority, Administration or Service Coordinator for Maritime SAR**
- **Rescue Co-ordination Centres**
- **Telemedical Maritime Advice Services**

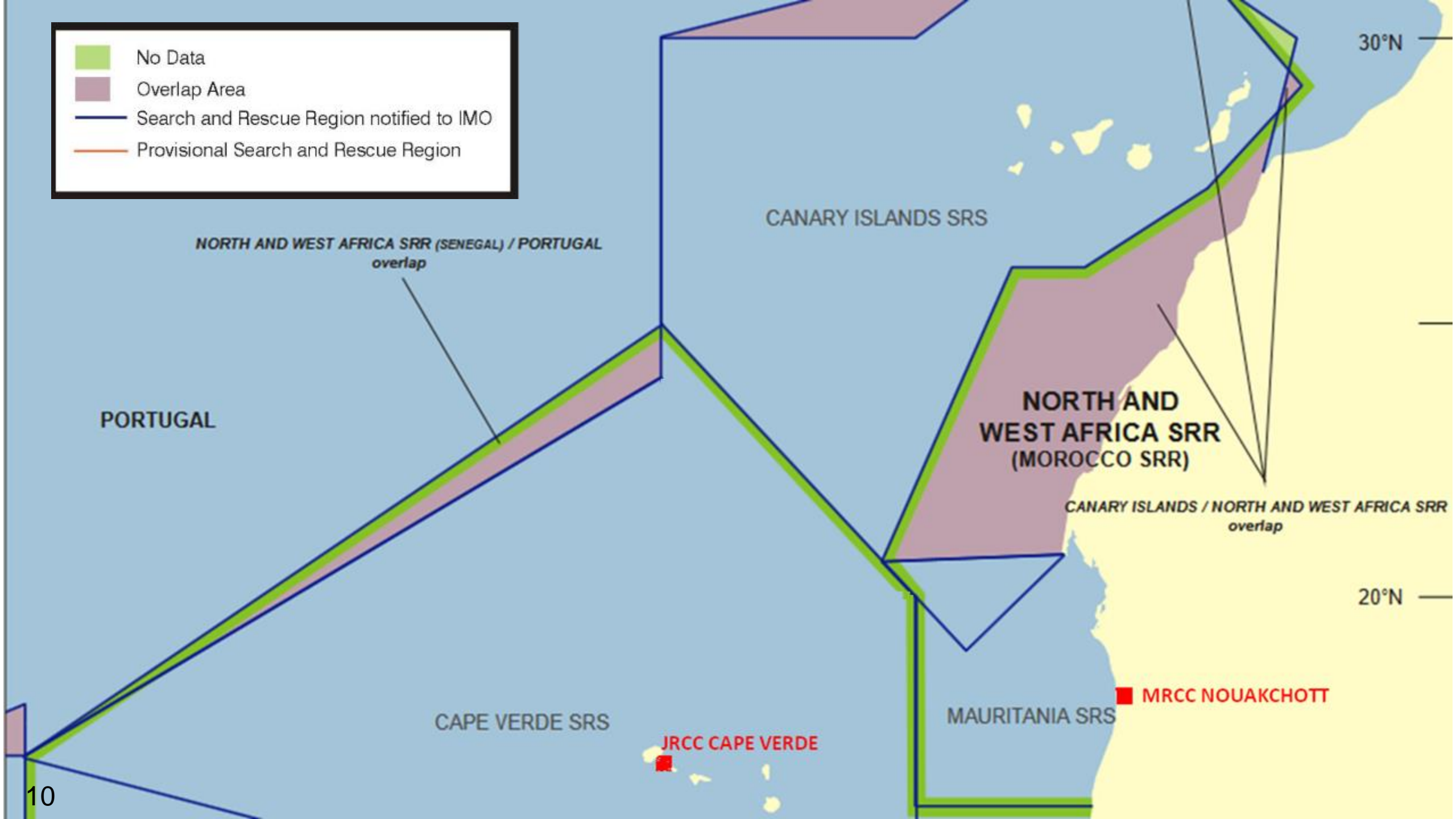


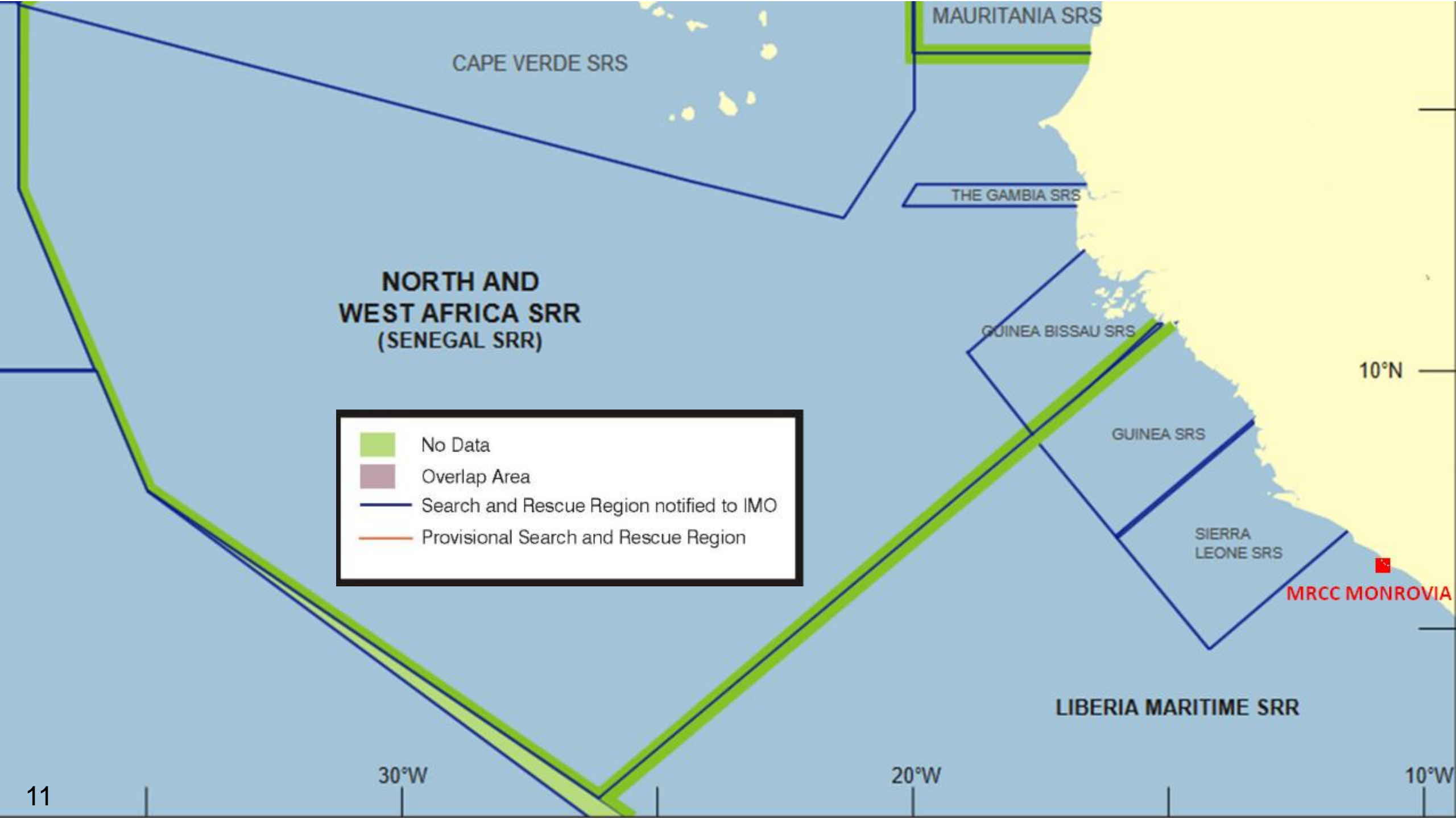


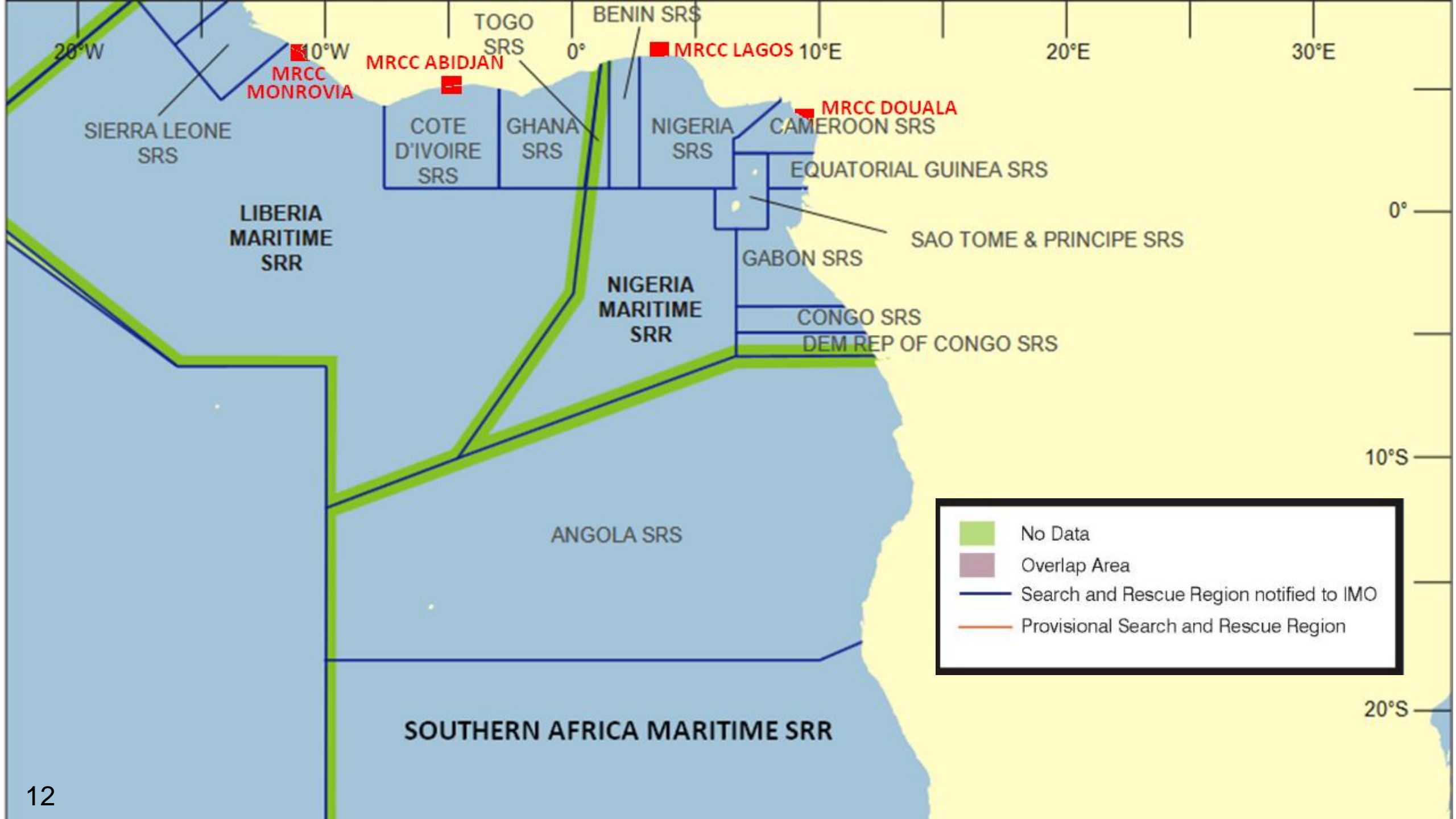
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	Overlap Area
	Search and Rescue Region notified to IMO
	Provisional Search and Rescue Region

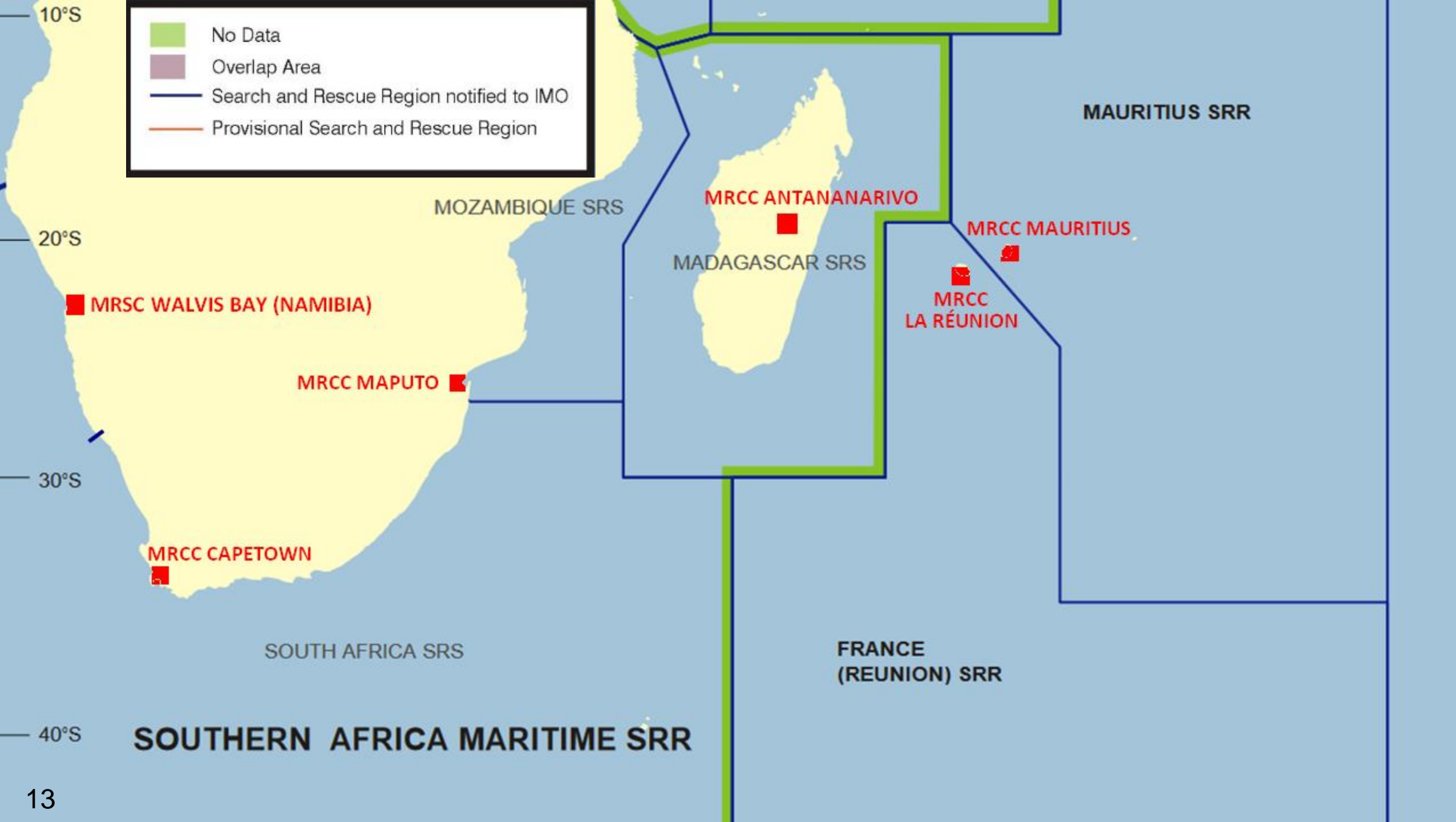


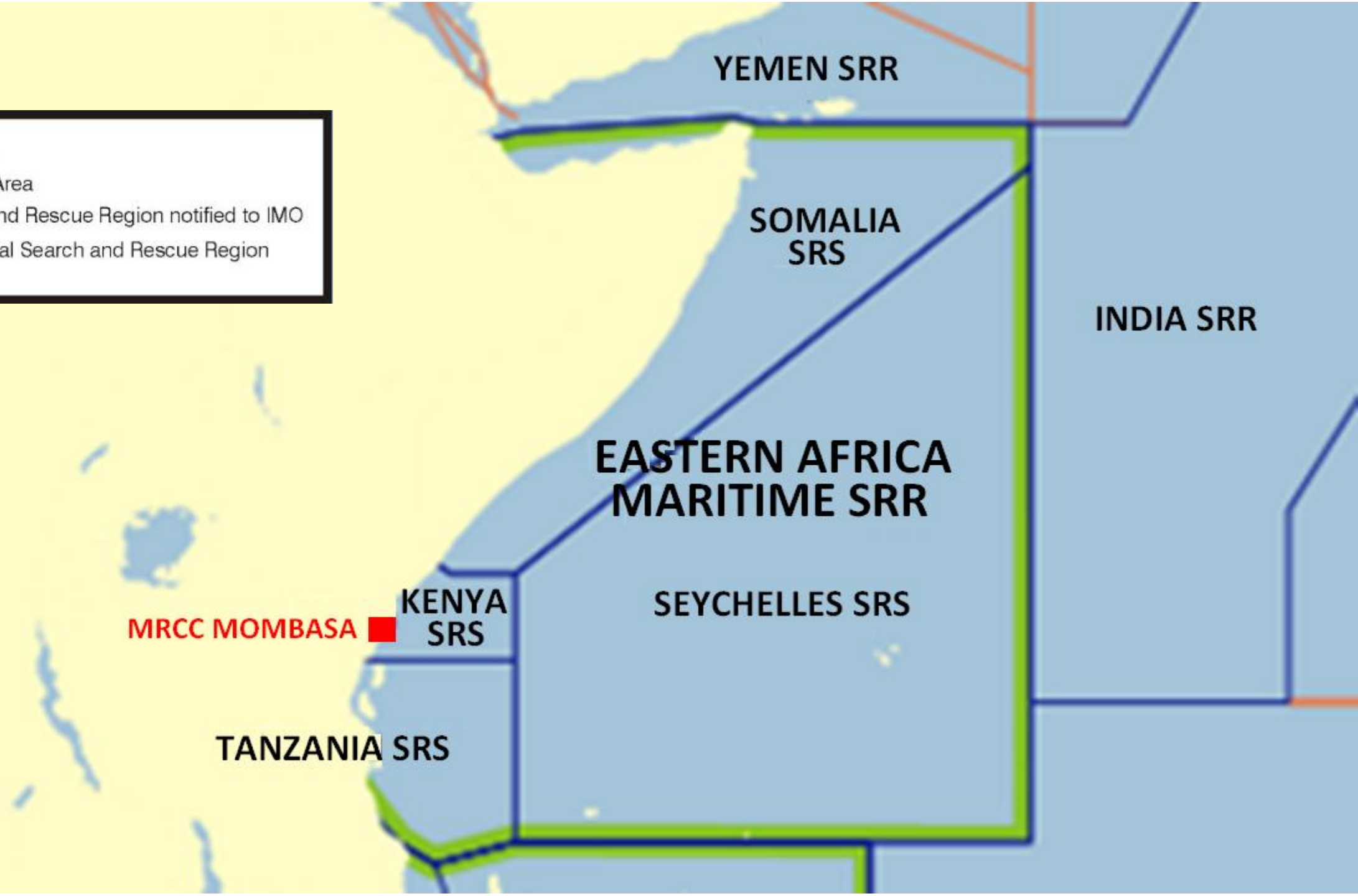
	No Data
	Overlap Area
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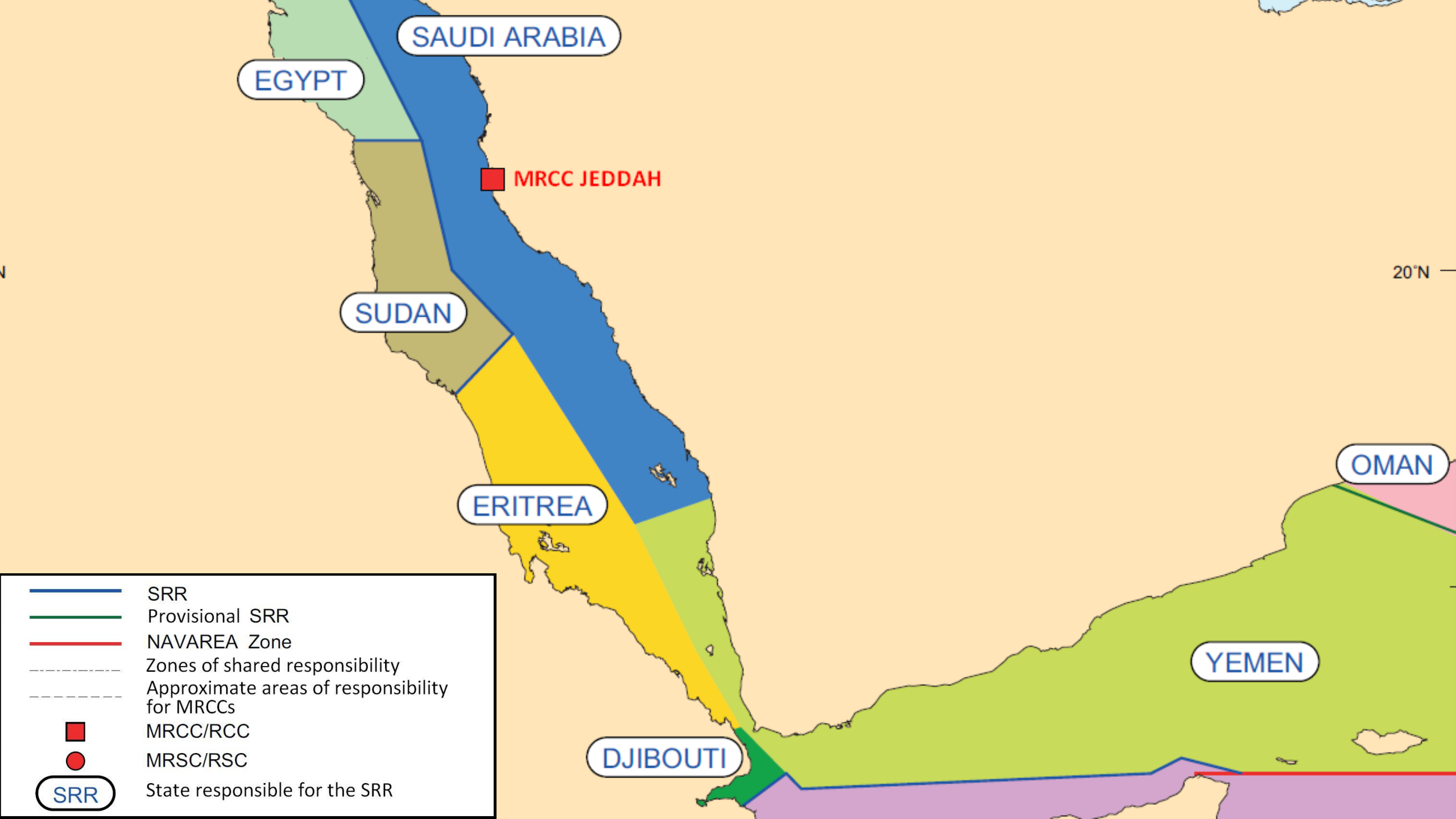












SAUDI ARABIA

EGYPT

MRCC JEDDAH

SUDAN

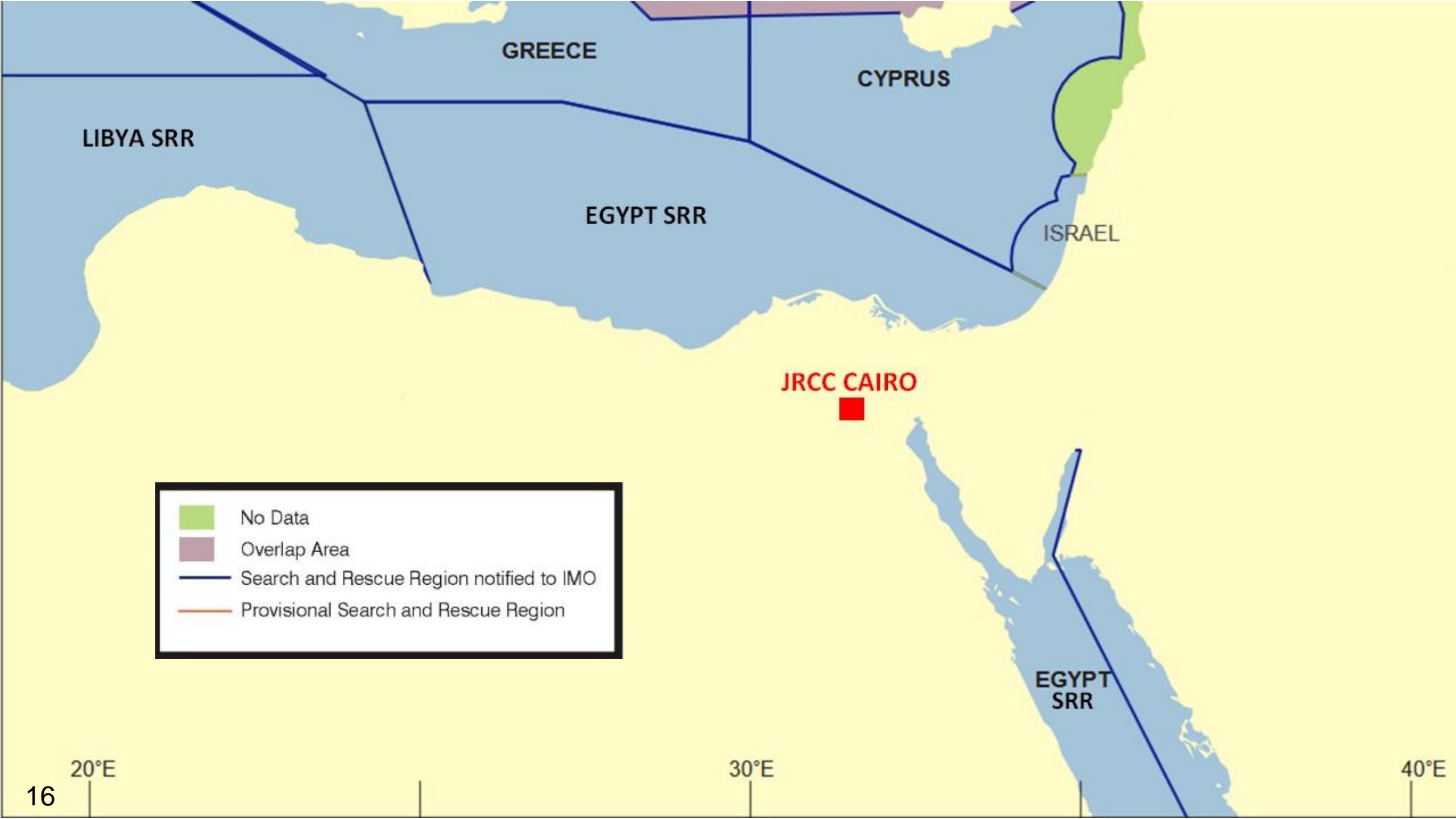
ERITREA

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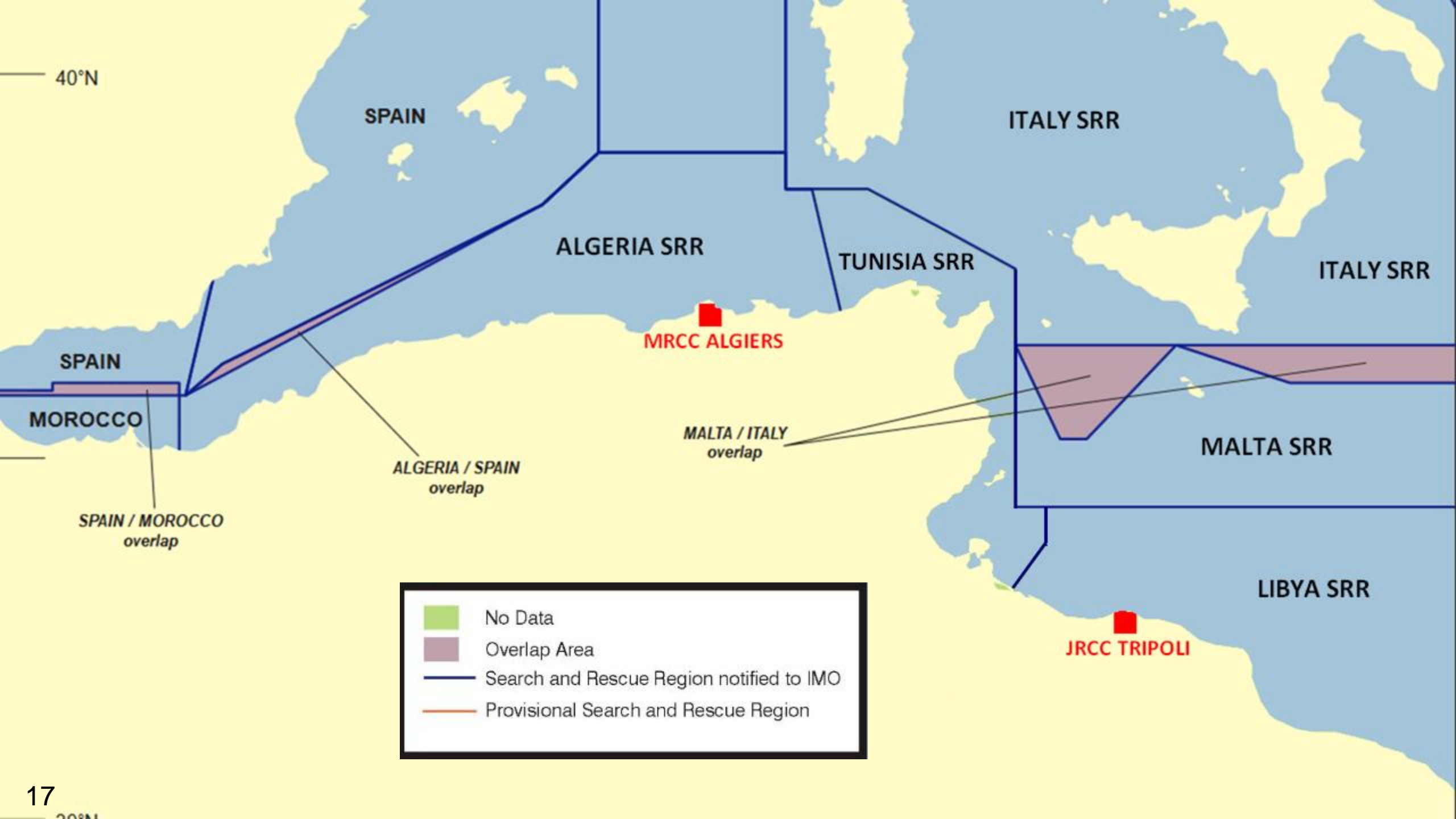
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## SAR Convention provisions / Co-operation between States

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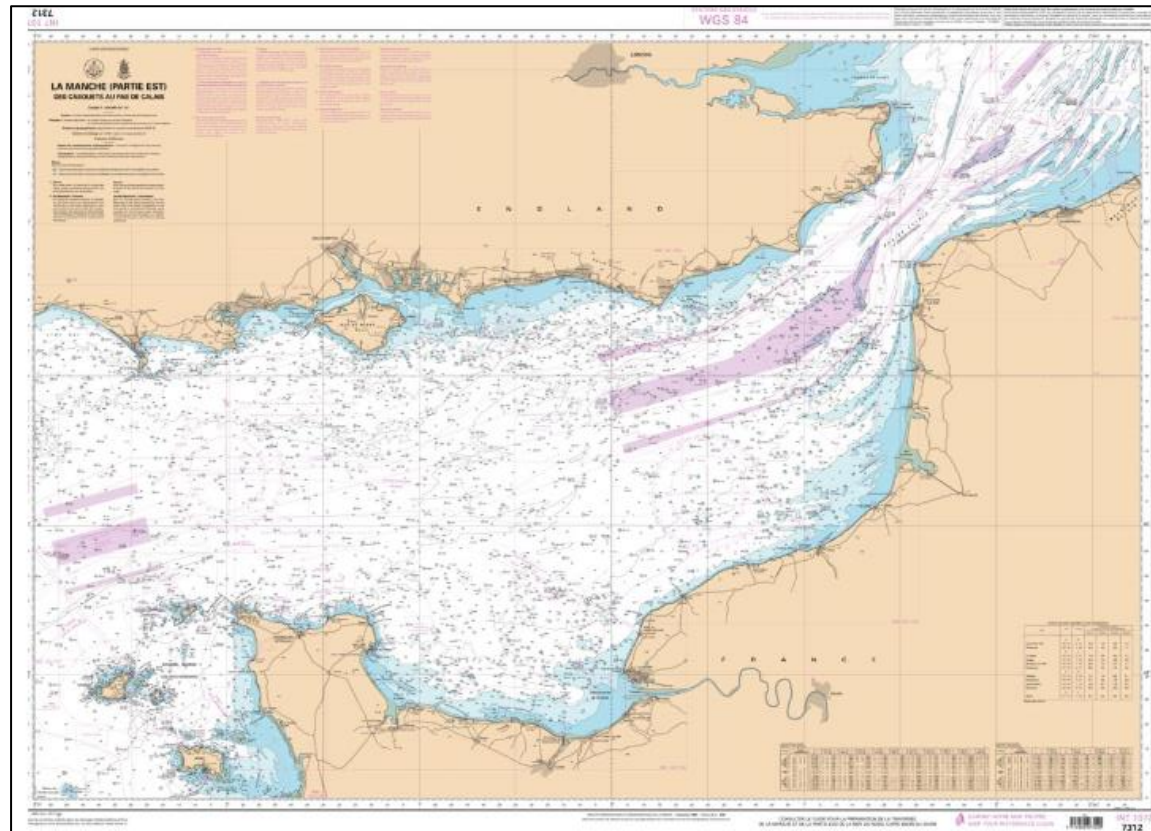
- **Whenever necessary**, the parties should **coordinate their SAR operations** with those of neighbouring States.
- Provisions for access by foreign SAR units operating in the territorial sea or overflying a Party. Conclusion of agreements encouraged.
- **MRCCs should be able to :**
  - **request from any other MRCC any** assistance they may require (ships, aircraft, personnel and equipment, etc.)
  - **be able to facilitate access to their territorial sea** or overflight of their territory for these ships, aircraft, personnel or equipment
- MRCCs should **provide assistance to other MRCCs on request**, including the provision of vessels, aircraft, personnel or equipment.
- Parties should **enter into agreements** with other States, as appropriate, to enhance SAR cooperation and coordination. A model agreement is contained in IAMSAR Vol. I Appendix I.
- The Parties should authorize their responsible authorities to make operational plans and arrangements for SAR co-operation and co-ordination with responsible authorities of other States..

# Illustration 1 : MANCHEPLAN (Anglo-French Joint Maritime Contingency Plan for the English Channel)

Entry into force: 15 May 1978

The purpose of this agreement is to define the arrangements for coordinating the management of maritime events in the Channel.

2 AFATG meetings + 1 MANCHEX exercise / year.



## INTRODUCTION

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# Illustration 1 : Mancheplan (Anglo-French Joint Maritime Contingency Plan for the English Channel) (cont.) - extracts

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## **Article 35** : Mobilisable assets.

- 35.1 All and any assets belonging to a State Party may be requested by the other State Party.
- 35.2 The assets for priority mobilisation are the designated SAR units directly available through the operational centres.
- 35.3 If the management of the maritime event so requires, the assets involved may be other than the designated SAR units. Use of those assets, depending on the national procedures specific to each State, may be subject to the agreement of authorities at a higher administrative level.

## **Article 36** : Procedures for the request of assistance.

- 36.1 Requests for assistance in the form of assets shall be made imperatively through the operational centres, including assets other than the designated SAR units, within the limits set by the provisions of Article 33.
- 36.2 Requests for assistance in the form of assets may be made by telephone, email or fax. Requests made by telephone shall be followed up with a brief confirmation by fax or email.

## **Article 38** : Free access of assets to areas under national sovereignty

- 38.1 The SAR unit of one State Party placed at the disposal of the other State Party shall be authorised, no specific request being required, to penetrate the territorial waters or the national territory of the other State Party or to overfly same and to use its ports and aerodromes as stopover points. The State Party in charge of the coordination of the operation shall seek to put in place the arrangements necessary to facilitate such stopovers.

## Illustration 2 : SAR cooperation agreement between France and South Africa



AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
AND  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
FRENCH REPUBLIC  
FOR  
THE CO-ORDINATION  
OF SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES

The Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the French Republic (hereinafter jointly referred to as “the Parties” and in the singular as “a Party”);

**RECOGNISING** the importance of co-operation in aeronautical and maritime search and rescue and the need to ensure expeditious and effective search and rescue services;

**NOTING** the relevant provisions of the standards and the recommended practices contained in the Annexure to the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979, the International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, and Article 98 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982;

**TAKING COGNISANCE** of the provisions contained in the Annexures to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, 1944; and

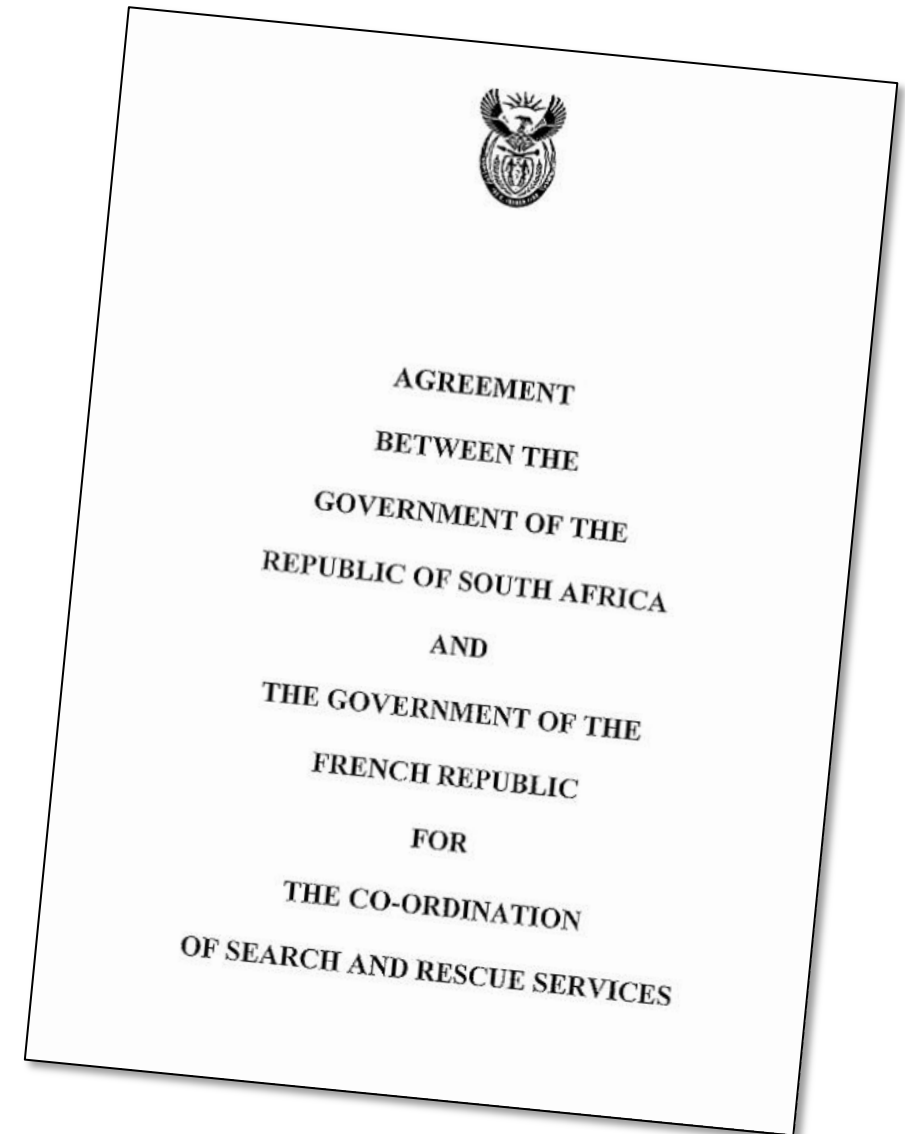
**CONSCIOUS** of the need to ensure good co-operation between the respective Search and Rescue organisations and also to ensure good co-operation between the South African aeronautical Search and Rescue organisation and the French (La Reunion) maritime Search and Rescue organisation, in the overlapping area described within this Agreement;

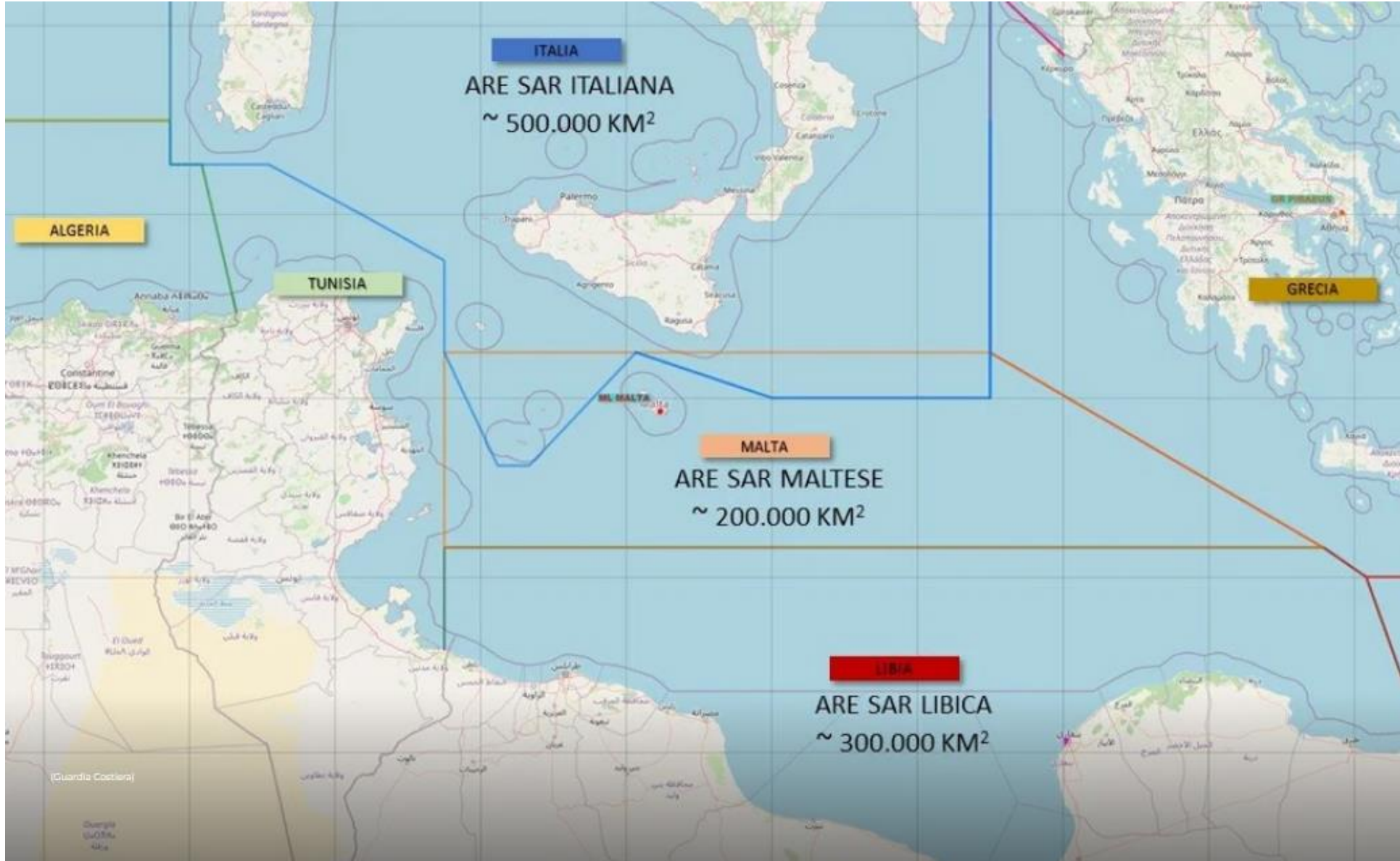
**HEREBY AGREE** as follows :

## Illustration 2 : SAR cooperation agreement between France and South Africa

### Content :

- Article 1 : Definitions
- Article 2 : Competent agencies
- Article 3 : Scope of the agreement
- Article 4 : Search and rescue regions
- Article 5 : Standard operating procedures for the RCCs
- Article 6 : Use of other Party's SAR units and facilities
- Article 7 : SAR operational expenses
- Article 8 : Recovery of supplies and equipment
- Article 9 : Amendments
- Article 10 : Settlement of disputes
- Article 11 : Entry into force and termination





Thank you for your  
attention