UNCLASSIFIED

(U) WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report 30 July – 26 August 2020

27 August 2020

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1. (U) **Scope Note**

(U) The Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) message provides information on threats to merchant vessels, the shipping industry, and other maritime stakeholders worldwide in the last 30 days. This report is produced primarily to inform merchant mariners and naval forces.

2. (U) **Warnings and Advisories:**

A. (U) **MARAD ADVISORY 2020-015-Eastern Mediterranean Sea Southeast of Rhodes and West of Cyprus-Risks Due to Regional Tensions and Increased Naval Activities.** Issued 21 August 2020. Recent disputes among countries over maritime boundaries and offshore resources have increased regional tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Also, NATO's Operation Sea Guardian has resumed focused NATO patrols in the Eastern Mediterranean with naval forces of multiple nations operating near each other. These developments could pose an indirect risk to commercial vessels operating in the area. Vessels operating in this area are advised to review security measures, ensure AIS is transmitting at all times (except when transmitting creates a threat to the safety or security of the ship or where a security incident is imminent, consistent with provisions of SOLAS and U.S. regulations), and monitor VHF Channel 16. For additional information regarding this advisory see: https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci/2020-015-eastern-mediterranean-sea-southeast-rhodes-and-west-cyprus-risks-due-regional

3. (U) **Summary:**

A. (U) MALAYSIA: On 25 August, an Indonesian boat skipper was killed in a botched smuggling event in the waters of Tanjong Kelisa.

B. (U) SPAIN: On 25 August, four stowaways were found onboard Antigua and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship JANINA at Valencia.

C. (U) COLOMBIA: On 23 August, Colombian authorities intercepted a semi-submersible carrying cocaine off the state of Nariño.

D. (U) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: On 23 August, two robbers boarded a vessel anchored in Banana Anchorage.

E. (U) TAIWAN: On 22 August, a Chinese citizen suspected of murder was arrest by local authorities when he arrived in Kaohsiung Port.

F. (U) RED SEA: During the week of 21 August, a private armed security member took control of the Mongolia-flagged survey vessel GOLDEN PALM.

G. (U) SIERRA LEONE: On 21 August, seven armed robbers boarded the China-owned long liner SHANGHAI2 while anchored approximately 10 NM southeast of Freetown.

H. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 20 August, robbers boarded a bulk carrier anchored in Batangas Anchorage.

I. (U). SENEGAL: On 20 August, a fight broke out aboard the Spain-flagged LNG tanker MADRID SPIRIT that resulted in a crewman being stabbed repeatedly.

J. (U) GHANA: On 18 August, a number of robbers boarded a drill ship anchored in Takoradi Anchorage.

K. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 14 August, two robbers in a boat approached a chemical tanker berthed in BBTI Terminal, Batangas.

4. (U) **Details: Monthly Incidents by Region**

(U) This section lists reports of active violence against shipping, credible threats to shipping, or the potential for a situation to develop into a direct threat to shipping over the last 30 days. Every effort is made to ensure that incidents are not double-counted. In the event double-counting is detected, or an incident is later found to be different than initially reported, an explanation of the cancellation of the inaccurate report will be made in at least one message prior to dropping the erroneous report.

A. (U) **NORTH AMERICA:** No current incidents to report.

B. (U) **CENTRAL AMERICA - CARIBBEAN - SOUTH AMERICA:**

Figure 1. Central America – Caribbean – South America Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) COLOMBIA: On 23 August, authorities from the country's Anti-Narcotics Directorate of the National Police, in a joint operation with Colombia's Navy, intercepted a semi-submersible carrying more than a ton of cocaine off the coast of the southern state of Nariño and arrested three men. The drugs were reportedly bound for a drug cartel in Mexico. (www.borderlandbeat.com)

2. (U) ECUADOR: On 10 August, the Ecuador Navy detected a large number of Chinese fishing vessels near Galapagos Islands. The fishing fleet of 340 fishing vessels, mostly China-flagged, was operating in international waters just outside the exclusive economic zone around the Galapagos Islands. The Ecuadorian officials raised their concerns about the environmental impact of such a large Chinese fishing fleet operating near the protected and ecologically sensitive waters of the Galapagos Islands. (Reuters, gCaptain)

C. (U) **ATLANTIC OCEAN AREA:** No current incidents to report.

D. (U) **NORTHERN EUROPE - BALTIC:**

1. (U) NETHERLANDS: On 4 August, authorities in Rotterdam intercepted a shipping container carrying bananas from Ecuador and 743 kilograms of cocaine. Local Dutch media outlets claimed this was the fifth time this year that drugs were discovered in banana containers arriving in Rotterdam. (www.maritime-executive.com)

E. (U) **MEDITERRANEAN - BLACK SEA:**

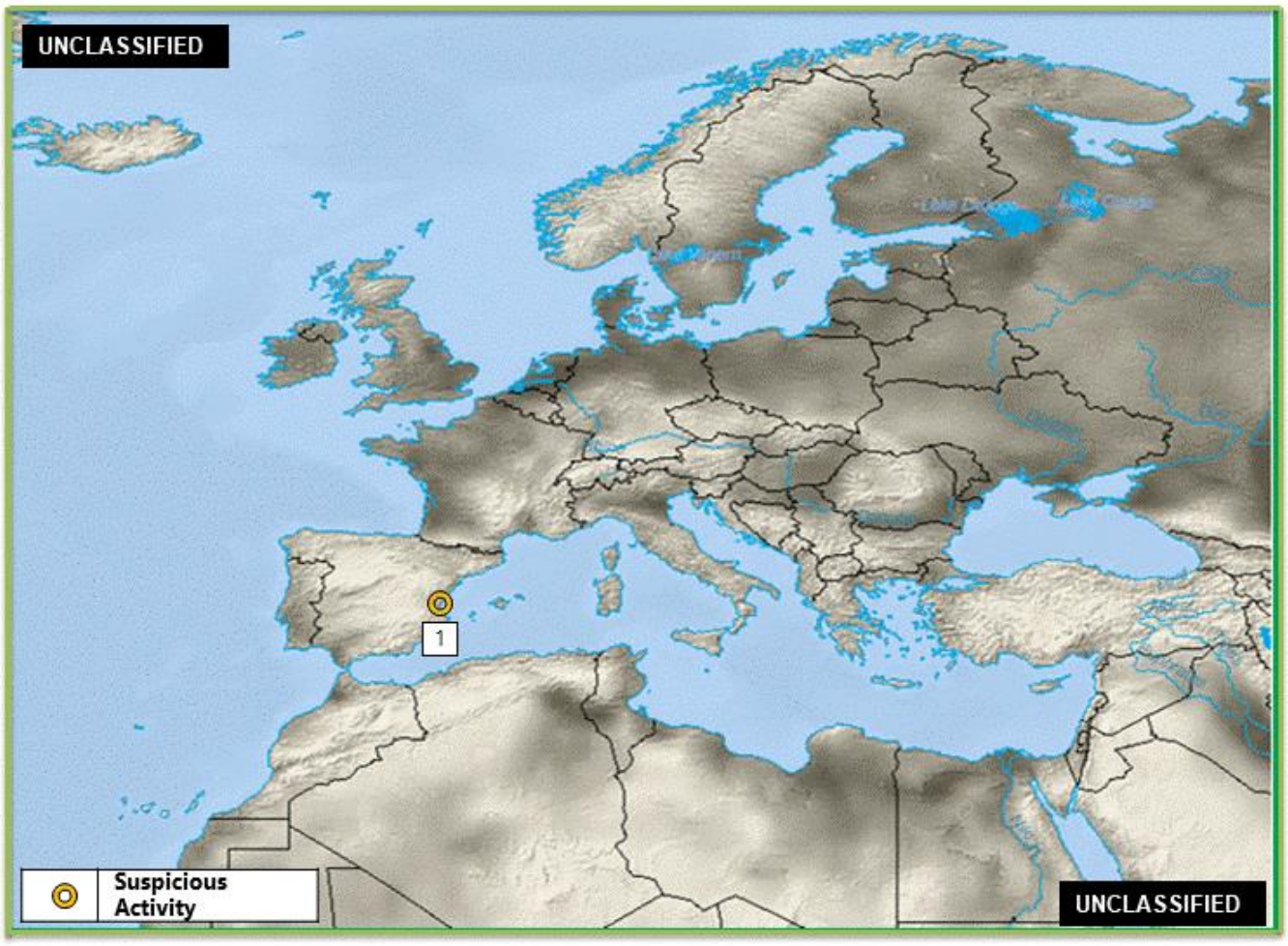


Figure 2. Mediterranean Sea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) SPAIN: On 25 August, four stowaways were found onboard Antigua and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship JANINA at Valencia. One of them claimed to be minor and he was taken ashore. The rest remained aboard. The ship left Valencia the same day, bound for Mostaganem, Algeria. (www.fleetmon.com)

2. (U) SPAIN: On 16 August, crew members discovered a stowaway hanging from the stern ramp of the Cyprus-flagged ferry NAPOLES. The ferry operates daily between Melilla and Malaga, Spain. The stowaway apparently had been perched on the stern ramp for the duration of the seven-hour trip. A boat full of Spanish Guardia Civil officers approached the stern ramp as the ferry began the docking maneuvers and apprehended the man. (www.euroweeklynews.com)

3. (U) LEBANON: On 4 August at 1800LT, an explosion took place at the Beirut Port Complex in vicinity of 33:54.03N - 035:30.82E. The blast, which shook the whole city, killed at least 113 people and injured more than 4,000 others. Four vessels in the vicinity of the blast likely incurred damage. Of note, the Sierra Leone-flagged MERO STAR reported its hull being breached and crew members injured. The Bangladesh-flagged BNS BIJOY also reported being damaged with 21 injured crew members. Lebanese President Michel Aoun said the blast was caused by 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate stored unsafely in a warehouse. The ammonium nitrate was originally confiscated in 2013 from the Moldova-flagged cargo vessel RHOSUS, which failed Port State Control Inspections. (Dryad Global, BBC, CNN)

F. (U) **WEST AFRICA:**

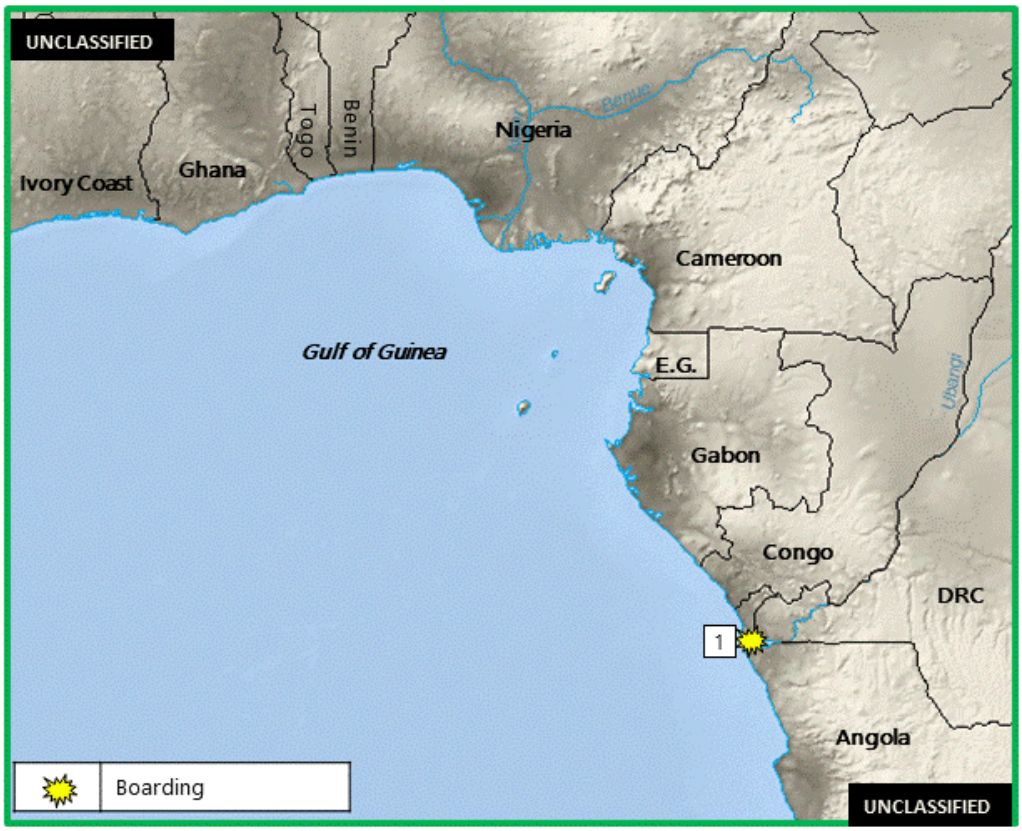


Figure 3. West Africa Piracy and Maritime Crime

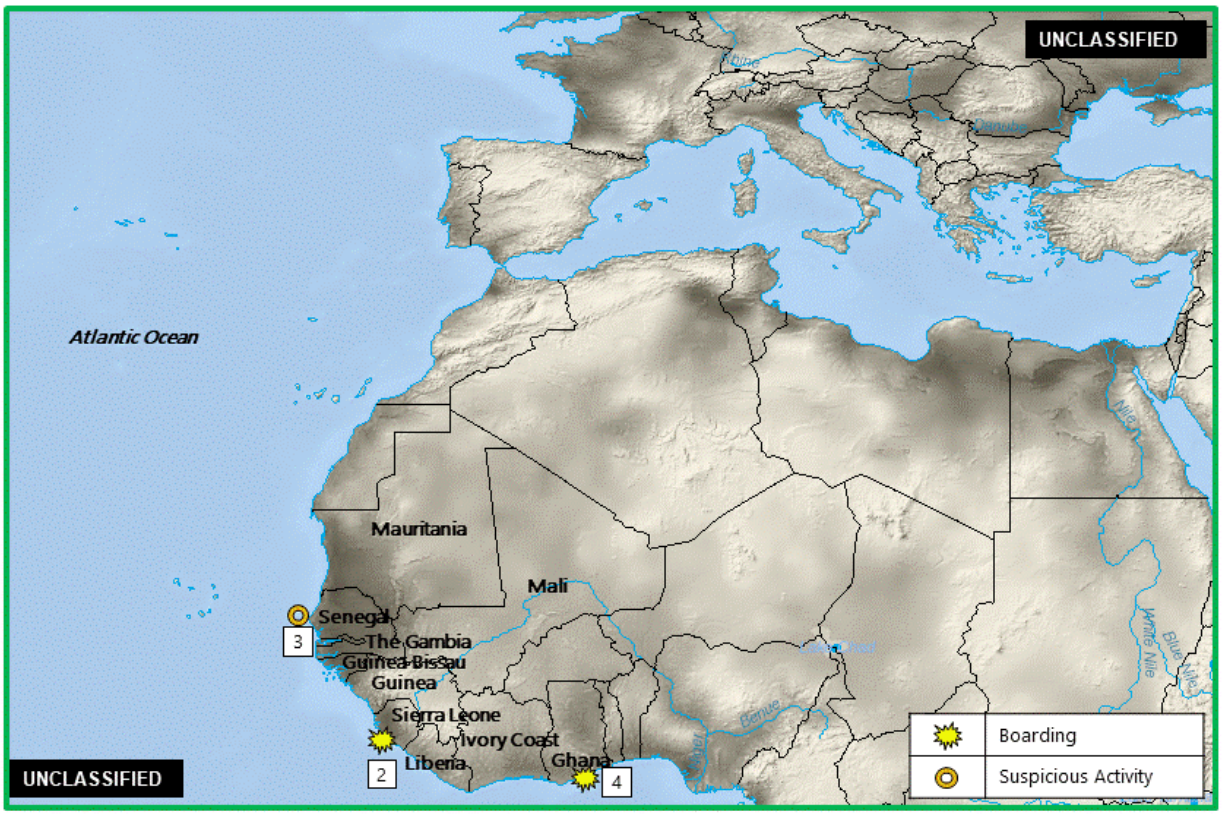


Figure 4. West Africa Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: On 23 August, two robbers boarded a vessel anchored near position 06:01S - 012:20E, Banana Anchorage. The robbers were observed on the forecastle by a duty crewman who raised the alarm. Crew was mustered and ship was searched. One mooring rope was reported cut and stolen. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2 (U) SIERRA LEONE: On 21 August, seven armed robbers boarded the China-owned long liner SHANGHAI2 while anchored near position 08:25N - 013:07W, approximately 10 NM southeast of Freetown. The robbers were armed with machetes and a shotgun. The crew tried to defend their vessel but were assaulted. The captain was shot in the leg. The Sierra Leone Navy was tasked to assist but the robbers had escaped by the time they arrived on the scene. The robbers stole crew's money, computers and a large quantity of fish. (www.maritimebulliten.net; Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) SENEGAL: On 20 August, a fight broke out aboard the Spain-flagged LNG tanker MADRID SPIRIT. One crewman was stabbed repeatedly, in the head, back and chest areas. The ship was enroute from Bilbao, Spain, to Nigeria and stopped in Dakar, Senegal, to get the injured crewman to a local hospital. The crew managed to disarm and immobilize the attacker, locking him into a service compartment. On arrival to Dakar, the perpetrator was taken into custody. (www.fleetmon.com)

4. (U) GHANA: On 18 August, a robbery occurred on a drill ship anchored near position 04:35N - 001:35W, Takoradi Anchorage. The robbers boarded the vessel from a canoe using a rope. One duty crew member spotted the robbers and raised the alarm. This resulted in the robbers escaping with stolen ship's property. (Clearwater Dynamics)

6. (U) NIGERIA: On 7 August, authorities announced that pirates had released five Chinese crew members kidnapped from the Singapore-flagged general cargo ship KOTA BUDI on 2 July approximately 29 NM south-southwest of Bonny, Nigeria. (Clearwater Dynamics)

7. (U) NIGERIA: On 10 August, pirates released nine Nigerian crew members, kidnapped from the Singapore-flagged FPSO SENDJE BERGE in the Okwori field on 2 July. Pirates held the crew members hostage for 39 days before releasing them. The vessel's operator, BW OFFSHORE, reported that the nine Nigerian offshore workers were safe. (www.splash247.com, The Maritime Executive)

8. (U) NIGERIA: On 11 August, the Federal High Court in Port Harcourt convicted three of the nine accused of hijacking MV ELOBEY VI off the Equatorial Guinea coast in March. This was the first conviction under the new Nigerian Anti-Piracy Act 2019. The Nigerian Navy arrested the nine pirates, and Justice Ishaq Sani ordered each of the convicted parties to pay a fine of N10 Million Nigerian Naira (26,000 USD). (Maritime Review Africa)

9. (U) ANGOLA: On 10 August, three robbers boarded an anchored general cargo ship at the Luanda Anchorage. When a crew member doing his deck rounds failed to return, the officer of the watch raised the alarm. The crew mustered and discovered the crew member tied up on the forward part of the deck. The robbers had escaped with stolen ship's properties. (IMB)

10. (U) NIGERIA: On 4 August, armed men in a speedboat fired upon and boarded a passenger boat transiting between Kula and Port Harcourt in the Rivers state waterways in vicinity of 04:26N - 006:50E. The armed men stole passenger belongings and departed the area. One passenger was injured during the incident. (Clearwater Dynamics)

11. (U) NIGERIA: On 1 August, robbers attempted to board a tanker berthed at the Apapa new oil jetty in Lagos at 06:27.3N - 003:22.3E. A duty crew member raised the alarm after spotting five robbers attempting to board by

pushing the barbed wire up on the seaward side of the tanker. When the alarm was raised, Nigerian naval personnel onboard responded, causing the robbers to flee in a small boat. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global)

G. (U) **ARABIAN GULF:** No current incidents to report.

1. (U) UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: On 12 August at 1632 UTC, Iranian naval forces boarded the Liberia-flagged product tanker WILA 23 NM northeast of the UAE port of Khor Fakkan near position 25:37N - 056:37E. The Iranian naval forces boarded the tanker in international waters from a helicopter. Press reports indicate the Iranians targeted the vessel because its company cancelled a contract to carry oil from Iran. The vessel was at anchor off Khor Fakkan on 13 August. (Dryad Global, The Maritime Executive)

H. (U) **INDIAN OCEAN - EAST AFRICA - RED SEA:**

Figure 5. Arabian Gulf Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) RED SEA: During the week of 21 August, the same private armed security member who held the ship MV JAEGER hostage for 3 days in July 2020 has done it again, on a different ship; reportedly for the same reason – non-payment of wages owed. The latest incident occurred aboard Mongolia-flagged survey vessel GOLDEN PALM being used by a Spanish chartering firm. The vessel is used as a floating armory for armed security teams. Reportedly, the incident was short-lived and has been resolved. (www.splash247.com)

2.(U) SOMALIA: On the evening of 16 August, six individuals reportedly boarded the Panama-flagged chemical tanker AEGEAN II approximately 180 NM southwest of Socotra Island, Yemen. At the time the tanker was experiencing mechanical issues while transiting from the UAE to Mogadishu, Somalia. Following the boarding, AEGEAN II transited north to a location off Bereeda, Somalia, at 11:54.3N - 051:03.9E. The crew composition and their status are unknown. Authorities continue to investigate this incident. (Dryad Global, Marine Link, Newsweek, Splash 247)

3. (U) MOZAMBIQUE: On 12 August, Islamic insurgents with links to Islamic State took control of the heavily defended port in the town of Mocimboa da Praia at 11:20S - 040:21E after government naval forces ran out of ammunition. The port is 37 miles from where the French company Total is developing a $60 billion liquid natural gas plant. (Bloomberg, Marine Link, Dryad Global)

I. (U) **EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:**

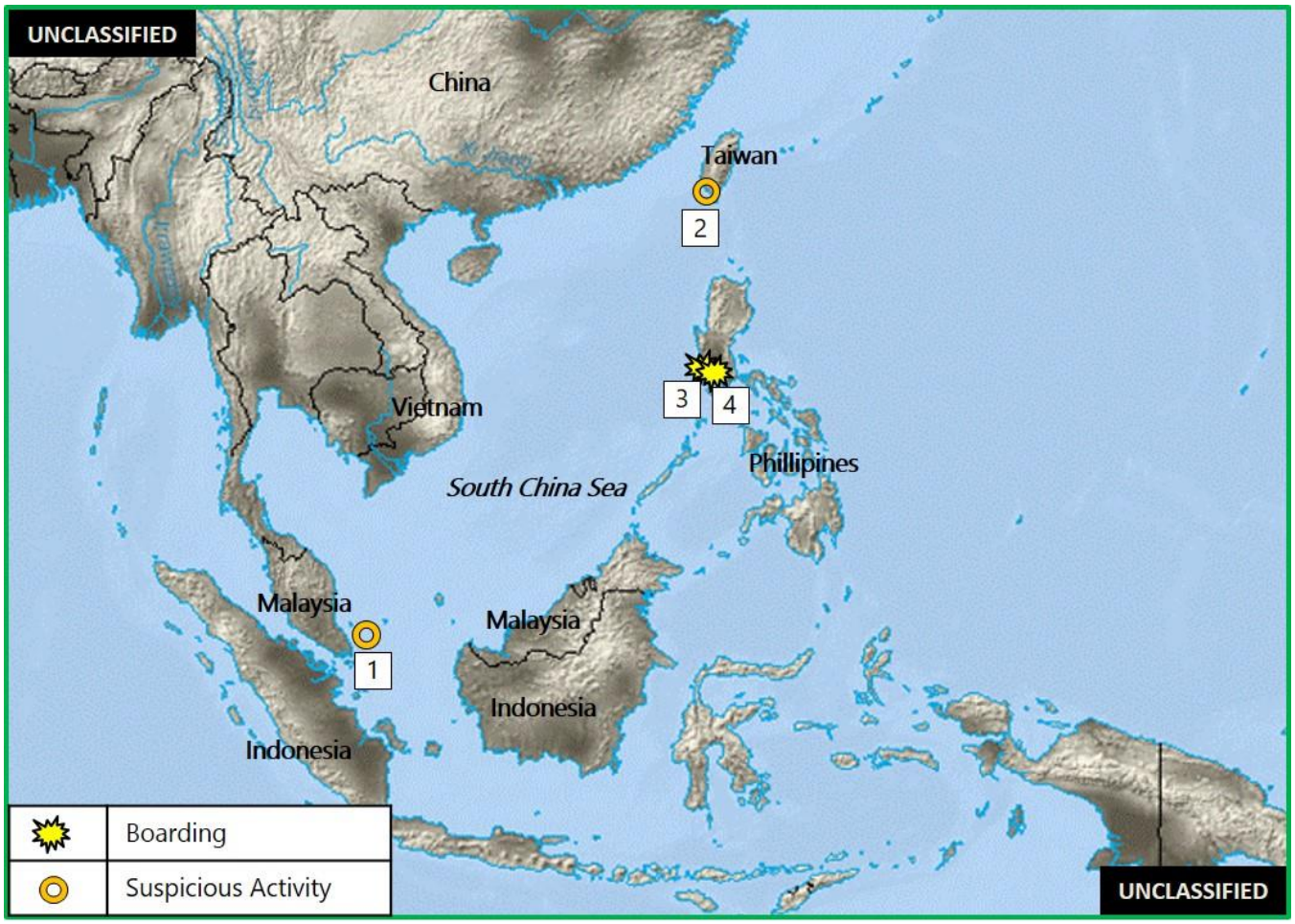


Figure 6. East Asia and Southeast Asia Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) MALAYSIA: On 25 August, an Indonesian boat skipper was killed in a botched attempt to smuggle out magpie-robins in the waters of Tanjong Kelisa. A senior member of the Johor Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) said the incident took place when four enforcement personnel on the boat KILAT 16 tried to stop one of two boats, which were smuggling out the birds. ''Earlier, they stopped and inspected the first boat with two locals onboard and found 90 baskets of white rump shama and oriental magpie-robin which were believed bound for Indonesia. ''When attempting to stop the second boat with three suspects onboard, the boat skipper tried to grab a firearm belonging to one of the enforcement personnel and was shot in the process and declared dead,'' the MMEA official told reporters. Four suspects comprising two locals and two Indonesians from the two boats were detained by MMEA while the body of the dead skipper was handed to the police for further action. (www.dailyexpress.com.my)

2. (U) TAIWAN: On 22 August, a 43-year-old Chinese citizen was arrest by local authorities when he arrived in Kaohsiung Port. The man is to be questioned as to his part in the killing of at least four men at sea seen in a video that went viral in 2014 and if the incident took place from a Taiwanese vessel. The case came to light after a 10-

minute video was circulated on the internet in August 2014. In it, a man believed to be the captain is heard giving directions in Mandarin with a mainland Chinese accent over a loudspeaker to the crew as 40 rounds of live ammunition are fired, picking off four or five unarmed men in the water. No images of the shooters are seen. At the end of the video, the victims are seen floating face down, and the group of men filming the shootings from the deck of the boat pose for photos as their vessel continues on its course. The identity of the victims have not yet been identified. The Fiji police commissioner at the time said the victims were thought to be pirates after a confrontation with an Asian fishing crew, according to a Fijian Broadcasting Corporation report aired on 26 August 2014. Fijian police were involved in the investigation because the video is thought to have been uploaded on the internet before it was discovered on a mobile phone that was found in the back of a taxi in Fiji, international media reported. (www.focustaiwan.tw)

3. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 20 August, an attempted robbery occurred on a bulk carrier anchored near position 13:44N - 121:01E, Batangas Anchorage. A duty crew member on security rounds was attacked and injured by a robber armed with a knife. The duty crew member managed to escape and notify the duty officer. The alarm was raised, and crew was mustered. Hearing the alarm and seeing the alerted crew, the robber escaped. Incident was reported to the authorities and medical assistance requested. Doctors and coast guard officers boarded the vessel to treat the injured crew member and investigate the incident. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 14 August, two robbers in a boat approached a chemical tanker berthed near position 13:46N - 120:58E, BBTI Terminal, Batangas. One robber armed with a knife attempted to board the tanker via the stern mooring rope. Deck watchkeeper noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. Crew was mustered. Hearing the alarm and seeing the crew's alertness, the robbers aborted their attempt to board and escaped in their boat. Port authorities and Coast Guard informed. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

5. (U) MALAYSIA: On 17 August, Malaysian Coast Guard forces tried to inspect two Vietnamese boats suspected of illegally fishing off Kelantan state. According to Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, the Vietnamese fishermen threw hard objects and flammable items at the enforcement ship before ramming it. The Malaysian Coast Guard officers responded by firing in self-defense, wounding one man who later died. The Malaysian authorities detained 18 other Vietnamese fishermen for various offences, including illegal fishing, illegal entry, and attempted murder. (www.marinelink.com)

6. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 14 August, a robber armed with a long knife boarded a berthed tanker by climbing the mooring line in Bauan Port, Philippines near position 13:46N - 120:59E, The robber threatened a duty crew member inside a cabin and stole personal belongings including a mobile phone and cash before fleeing in a waiting small blue motorized boat. The incident was reported to the port authorities who later boarded the tanker for further investigation. (Clearwater Dynamics)

7. (U) INDONESIA: On 12 August, a robber using a hook and rope boarded a tanker anchored in Dumai Inner Anchorage near position 01:42N - 101:27E. When a crew member spotted the robber and raised the alarm, the robber fled with two accomplices in a small wooden boat. The crew reported nothing was stolen. This boarding was reported to the port authorities. (Clearwater Dynamics)

J. (U) **INDIAN SUBCONTINENT:** No current incidents to report.

K. (U) **AUSTRALIA - NEW ZEALAND - PACIFIC OCEAN AREA:**

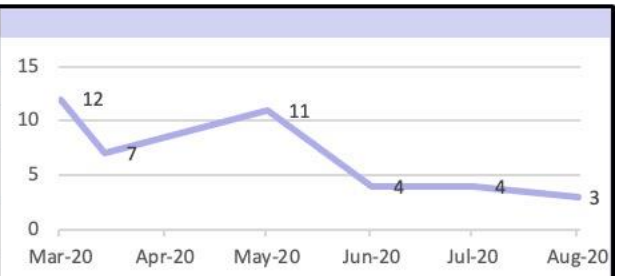
1. (U) AUSTRALIA: On 15 August, Australian Border Force authorities boarded the Australian fishing trawler CORALYNNE after the vessel met up with a Chinese vessel a week earlier and followed a suspicious route back to Australia. During the search, the Australian Border Force discovered 1,900 bricks of cocaine worth up to $600 million. (www.brisbanetimes.com.au, Maritime Executive)

2. (U) PAPUA NEW GUINEA: On 31 July at 0300LT, four robbers boarded a passenger vessel underway in the Kanakope Passage in Milne Bay. The boat captain was able to call for help. An eight-man police unit arrived on scene and was able to arrest three of the men. The alleged ringleader was able to escape. (www.thenational.com.pg)

5. (U) **Appendix A: Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea Statistics and Trends**:

(U) Gulf of Guinea

Event	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Hijackings	0	2	6	4	1
Kidnappings	26	30	28	32	17
Hijacking/Kidnapping Combination	3	0	4	2	2
Attacks/Attempted Boardings	54	35	44	39	16
Boardings	39	53	64	55	23
Total	**122**	**120**	**146**	**132**	**59**

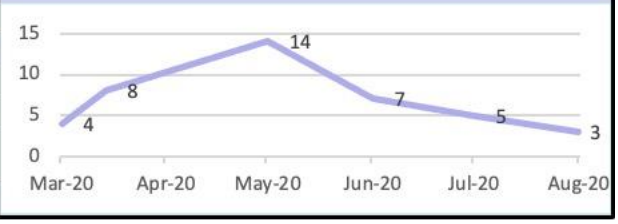


(U) Horn of Africa

Event	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Hijackings	0	2	0	0	0
Kidnappings	0	1	0	0	0
Attacks, Boardings and Attempts	1	3	2	2	0
Total	**1**	**6**	**2**	**2**	**0**

(U) Southeast Asia

Event	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Hijackings	2	3	1	0	0
Kidnappings	19	4	3	4	1
Attacks, Boardings and Attempts	96	95	82	92	52
Total	**117**	**102**	**86**	**96**	**57**



6. (U) **Appendix B: Definitions and Sourcing:**

A. (U) **Definitions:** In order to promote consistent use of accurate terms of reference, we use the following definitions to describe a range of criminal anti-shipping activity and impediments to safe navigation in our worldwide reporting and analysis:

- (U) **Attempted Boarding** – Close approach or hull-to-hull contact with report that boarding paraphernalia were employed or visible in the approaching boat.

- (U) **Blocking** – Hampering safe navigation, docking, or undocking of a vessel as a means of protest.

- (U) **Boarding** – Unauthorized embarkation of a vessel by persons not part of its complement without successfully taking control of the vessel.

- (U) **Fired Upon** – Weapons discharged at or toward a vessel.

- (U) **Hijacking** – Unauthorized seizure and retention of a vessel by persons not part of its complement.

- (U) **Kidnapping** – Unauthorized forcible removal of persons belonging to the vessel from it.

- (U) **Hijacking/Kidnapping Combination** – Unauthorized seizure and retention of a vessel by persons not part of its complement who forcefully remove crew members from vessel when disembarking.

- (U) **Robbery** – Theft from a vessel or from persons aboard the vessel.

- (U) **Suspicious Approach** – All other unexplained activity in close proximity of an unknown vessel.

B. (U) **Sourcing:** ONI derives information in this report primarily from government agencies, piracy reporting centers, maritime security companies, and open press.

(U) **ICOD:** 26 Aug 2020

(U) The Weekly Piracy Update (WPU) and Worldwide Threat to Shipping reports are posted weekly on the ONI Intelligence Portal: https://www.oni.navy.mil/News/Shipping-Threat-Reports/