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(U) WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report 30 April–27 May 2020



28 May 2020

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1. (U) Scope Note

1. (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) **IMB/PRC/Alert – 063-2020: TO ALL SHIPS TRANSITING IN AND OFF EASTERN SABAH /CELEBES SEA/SULU SEA/TAWI TAWI.** This warning is an active warning broadcast transmitted since 151100 UTC May 2020. The IMB PRC received information on 15 May 2020 from Philippine Intel that the Sulu based Abu Sayyef Group (ASG) group is planning kidnapping operations in/off Sabah targeting foreigners/seafarers in the month of May. Information indicates ASG will depart from Sulu to Tawi-Tawi and thereafter to Sabah onboard a high-powered boat. **UPDATE: After reevaluation by Philippines Intel on 25 May 2020, this warning is still valid for another week. Latest information received on 23 May 2020 indicates that the ASG tried to enter Malaysian waters, but was repelled.** Vessels are advised to remain vigilant and maintain strict anti-piracy watch and measures. Early assessment/detection will allow ships to take evasive actions and prevent boarding and request for assistance. Citadel/safe room is important in certain areas. All attacks and suspicious sightings should be reported to local authorities and to the IMB PRC as per IMO Cir 1334. This warning will be re-evaluated on 25 May 2020. The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre 24-hour anti-piracy helpline can be reached at +603 2031 0014 fax: +603 2078 5769 or email: imbkl@icc-ccs.org / piracy@icc-ccs.org.
- B. (U) **ReCAAP Warning 01-2020 dated 22 May 2020:** On 22 May, the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) received information from the Philippine Coast Guard (ReCAAP Focal Point) that a group of approximately five Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members armed with assorted firearms are planning to conduct kidnappings in undisclosed areas in Sabah, Malaysia. They are targeting wealthy businessmen or the crew of fishing boats and

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other slow moving ships plying within the waters off Sabah, Malaysia. The group came from Sulu and was monitored landing at Omapoy Island, Sipangkot, Sitangkai, Tawi Tawi. Shipmasters and crew are strongly urged to exercise extra vigilance when transiting the waters off Eastern Sabah and in the Sulu-Celebes Seas. ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC), Email: info@recaap.org, Tel: +65 6376 3084

3. (U) Summary:

- A. (U) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: On 25 May, a robber boarded an anchored Hong Kong-flagged container ship MAERSK REGENSBURG at Banana Anchorage.
- B. (U) NIGERIA: On 23 May, 12 armed men in two speedboats ambushed a passenger vessel transiting from Bakana to Degema, River State in the Niger Delta
- C. (U) VIETNAM: On 22 May, a crew member discovered a theft had occurred on the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier BALTIC COVE while anchored in the Campha Anchorage.
- D. (U) HAITI: On 17 May, robbers armed with machetes boarded a tanker anchored off Port-au-Prince.

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. Caribbean Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) HAITI: On 17 May, up to 12 robbers armed with machetes boarded the anchored Liberia-flagged tanker TOSNA STAR off Port-au-Prince at 18:34N – 072:24W. During a thirty minute period, the robbers threatened the Argentine crew members before departing with stolen mobile phones and ropes. (Clearwater Dynamics, Maritime Executive)

2. (U) HAITI: On 10 May at approximately 0200LT, the crew noticed a missing aft mooring line on their berthed bulk carrier at Lafiteau Port at 18:41N - 072:21W. The crew searched the vessel, but were unable to locate the robber. The crew notified port control, agents, and terminal authorities, which resulted in a search of the port area around the vessel. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) ECUADOR: On 2 May at 2315LT, seven men in a skiff chased and fired on an underway container vessel 4 NM south of Posoria at 02:46S - 080:14W. The crew mustered and directed the search light toward the skiff. When Coast Guard officials onboard the vessel fired four warning shots, the skiff departed. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)

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

D. (U) NORTHERN EUROPE - BALTIC: No current incidents to report.

E. (U) MEDITERRANEAN - BLACK SEA:

1. (U) MALTA/ITALY: On 4 May, the crew of the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged container ship MARINA rescued 78 migrants in the Mediterranean. The vessel was "waiting for instructions" on where to drop off the migrants who allegedly are from Bangladesh, Morocco, Chad, Libya, and Sudan. The crew has reported that food and fresh water supplies are running low. Reports indicate the ship also suffered an engine failure on 6 May and was adrift on 7 May. (Maritime Bulletin, FleetMon)

F. (U) WEST AFRICA:

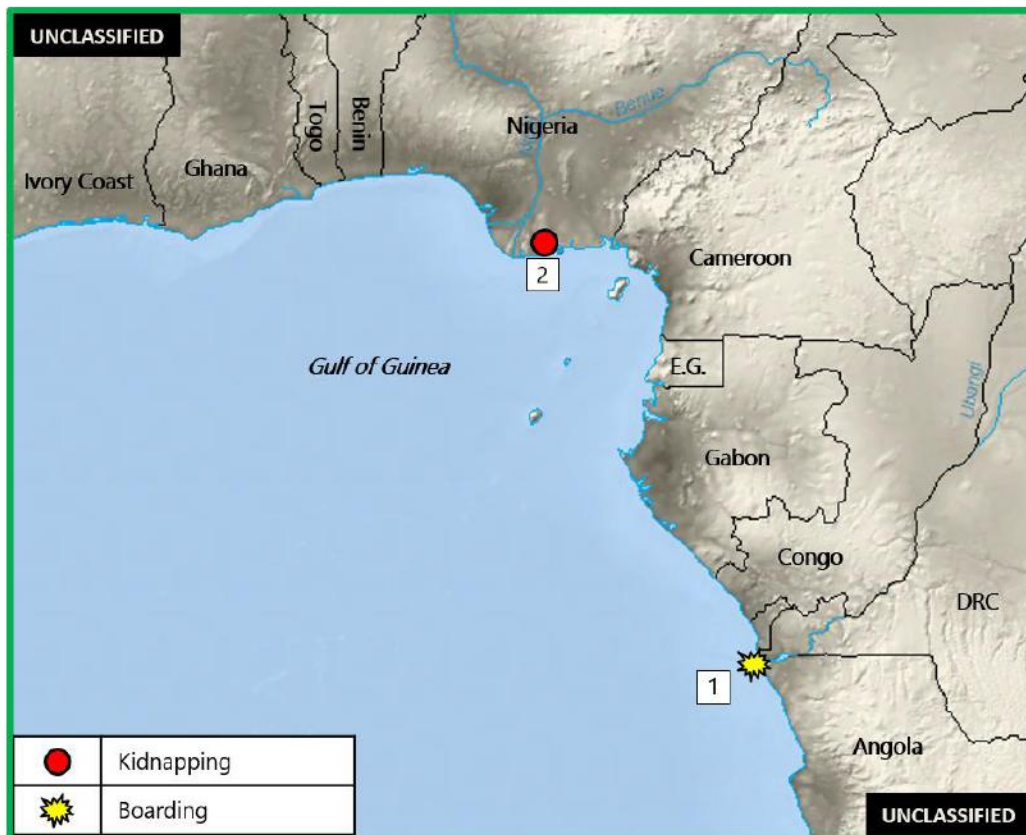


Figure 2. Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: On 25 May at 0545LT, a robber boarded the anchored Hong Kong-flagged container ship MAERSK REGENSBURG at Banana Anchorage at 06:01S - 012:20E. The duty crewmen raised the alarm when the robber was spotted removing a lashing from the deck. After being detected, the robber fled in a small boat, powered by an outboard motor. The crew subsequently searched the vessel and found nothing missing. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global)

2. (U) NIGERIA: On 23 May, 12 armed men in two speedboats ambushed a passenger vessel transiting from Bakana to Degema, River State in the Niger Delta at 04:44N - 006:54E. Four of the passengers were police officers. When the armed men opened fire on the vessel, the policemen initially returned fire. In the end, the boat driver and three of the policemen jumped into the water and swam to safety. The armed men subsequently attacked the remaining policeman and threw him into water before departing the area with two civilian hostages. (Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) NIGERIA: On 20 May at 1730UTC, seven heavily armed pirates attacked and boarded an underway general cargo vessel approximately 142 NM southwest of Brass, Nigeria near position 02:14N - 005:05E. The crew retreated into the citadel and contacted the owners and IMB PRC. The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre immediately started liaising with the Nigerian Authorities and requested for assistance. Two Nigerian naval vessels responded. By the time the naval vessels arrived on the scene, the pirates had departed the area. The crew emerged from the citadel and the naval vessels remained alongside the ship until daylight to ensure safety and security. The pirates stole ship's equipment before disembarking. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics, MDAT-GOG, Dryad Global)

4. (U) IVORY COAST: On 16 May at 0700LT, ten pirates hijacked the Ivory Coast-flagged fishing vessel HAI LU FENG 11 near position 04:09N - 003:56W, approximately 65 NM south of Abidjan. The Nigerian authorities subsequently deployed the Nigerian Navy Ship NGURU and Special Boat Service to intercept and rescue the hijacked fishing vessel. The vessel crew consisted of 8 Chinese, 7 Ivorians, and 3 Ghanaians. (Clearwater Dynamics; www.fcwc-fish.org, Maritime Executive)

5. (U) BENIN: On 14 May, individuals in two skiffs approached an underway Italy-flagged ro-ro vessel approximately 106 NM south of Cotonou near position 04:34N - 002:29E. The Master increased speed and altered course, which resulted in the two vessels moving away. One skiff came to within 2.5 NM of the vessel. (Clearwater Dynamics)

6. (U) GUINEA: On 13 May, four robbers boarded a bulk carrier anchored near position 09:16N - 013:46W, approximately 15 NM southwest of Conakry. The robbers stole money and valuables before departing. (Clearwater Dynamics)

7. (U) GHANA: On 11 May at 0345 UTC, robbers boarded a cargo vessel berthed at Takoradi Port at 04:53N - 001:44W and stole a life raft. (Clearwater Dynamics, MDAT-GOG)

8. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 9 May at 0300LT, armed individuals in a speedboat boarded the Equatorial Guinea-flagged research/survey vessel DJIBLOHO anchored at Luba anchorage at 03:28N - 008:33E. The armed individuals kidnapped three crew members, reportedly two Russians and one Equatorial Guinean. (Clearwater Dynamics, Seatrade Maritime News, defenceWeb)

9. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 9 May at 0300LT, armed individuals in a speedboat approached and boarded the Comoros-flagged general cargo vessel RIO MITONG off Malabo at 03:47N - 008:45E. The armed individuals kidnapped two crew members; unconfirmed reports indicate the hostages were a Russian and Ukrainian. Two crew members that were not kidnapped suffered gunshot wounds. Following the incident, the vessel moved into the Malabo Anchorage. (Clearwater Dynamics, Maritime Executive, defenceWeb)

10. (U) CAMEROON: On 9 May at 0045LT, individuals in a speedboat approached the underway China-flagged tanker YUAN QIU HU approximately 40 NM west of Limbe at 04:05N - 008:33E. The crew informed authorities who sent a patrol boat to assist the tanker. Upon seeing the patrol boat, the individuals in the speedboat aborted the pursuit. (Clearwater Dynamics, Splash 247)

11. (U) GABON/EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 3 May, 13 pirates in a three-engine skiff boarded the fishing trawlers AMERGER II and AMERGER VII northwest of Libreville, Gabon at 00:30N - 009:06E and 00:55N - 009:08E. The pirates kidnapped six fishermen, three from each trawler. Three of the hostages are reportedly Indonesian, two are Senegalese, and one is South Korean. (Dryad Global, Clearwater Dynamics)

12. (U) ANGOLA: On 1 May at 0015, the watch duty officer discovered a robber on the main deck of his supply vessel, which was anchored in the outer anchorage of Port Luanda at 08:44S - 013:17E. The robber was holding a sharp object and at one point rushed toward the duty officer before fleeing in a small motorboat with three other individuals. According to the crew, no one was injured and nothing was stolen. (ReCAAP)

13. (U) NIGERIA: On 30 April at 1940UTC, pirates in a speedboat approached and boarded the Panama-flagged product tanker VEMAHOPE 150 NM southwest of Brass at 03:30N - 003:49E. The pirates kidnapped 10 of the 14 crew members before escaping. A Nigerian Navy Security Vessel responded and provided assistance to the tanker. UPDATE: Ten hostages were released 21 days following the kidnapping. Nine of the hostages were Georgians who are now on their way home. (Clearwater Dynamics, Maritime Bulletin, Dryad Global, IMB, Maritime Executive)

14. (U) GHANA: On 30 April at 0015LT, a crew member spotted six robbers in a wooden boat approach and attempt to board anchored Malta-flagged LPG tanker EPIC BERMUDA at Takoradi anchorage at 04:54N - 001:42W. When the crew sounded the alarm, started the engines, and commenced maneuvers to prevent the boarding, the robbers departed the area. The crew notified the Port Authority who dispatched a patrol boat and apprehended six suspects. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global)

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

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

1. (U) ERITREA: On 20 May at 0430LT, the Captain of a tanker transiting north in the Red Sea spotted two high-speed skiffs approximately 48 NM southwest of Hodeidah Port, Yemen near position 14:24N - 042:11E. When the skiffs changed course to intercept the tanker, the Captain changed course and increased speed. The skiffs approached to within .5 NM during the incident. There were seven individuals onboard each skiff carrying objects, possibly weapons. The skiffs also had black flags with white Arabic letters. The skiffs passed the tanker's starboard side and continued clear of the vessel stern. The individuals in the skiffs made no attempt to board or chase the tanker. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) YEMEN: On 17 May, armed individuals in two skiffs approached and fired upon the British-flagged chemical tanker STOLT APAL 75 NM southeast of Mukalla near position 13:43N - 050:37E. "After multiple warning shots were fired by the armed guard team aboard STOLT APAL, the skiffs opened fire on the ship. The armed guard team returned fire, disabling one skiff and ending the pursuit," according to a company spokesman. (Maritime Executive, Clearwater Dynamics; gCaptain, Dryad Global)

1. (U) ERITREA: On 20 May at 0430LT, the Captain of a tanker transiting north in the Red Sea spotted two high-speed skiffs approximately 48 NM southwest of Hodeidah Port, Yemen near position 14:24N - 042:11E. When the skiffs changed course to intercept the tanker, the Captain changed course and increased speed. The skiffs approached to within .5 NM during the incident. There were seven individuals onboard each skiff carrying objects, possibly weapons. The skiffs also had black flags with white Arabic letters. The skiffs passed the tanker's starboard side and continued clear of the vessel stern. The individuals in the skiffs made no attempt to board or chase the tanker. (Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) MOZAMBIQUE: On 10 May at 2250LT, a robber boarded a tanker during cargo operations at Nacala Anchorage at 14:30S - 040:39E. When spotted by the crew, the robber fled empty handed to a waiting boat with two other individuals. The incident was reported to Port Control. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)

I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:



Figure 3. Southeast Asia Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) VIETNAM: On 22 May at 0130LT, a crew member following a cargo operation discovered a theft had occurred on the anchored Liberia-flagged bulk carrier BALTIC COVE in the Campha Anchorage at 20:57N - 107:18E. The crew member discovered some hose nozzles in a drum near the paint store. A subsequent inspection revealed a hoisting wire was also missing from the bosun store. The incident was reported to the local agent. (ReCAAP, Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) INDONESIA: On 18 May at 0225LT, three robbers in a small boat approached and boarded a tanker anchored in the Merak Anchorage near position 05:54S - 105:59E. The robbers were armed with long knives and climbed onboard using a ladder. Once onboard, they broke into the steering gear room. When the crew spotted the robbers, they raised the alarm and mustered. The robbers subsequently fled with stolen engine spares. The crew informed port authority of the incident. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMB)

3. (U) MALAYSIA: On 18 May at 0400LT, robbers in a wooden fishing boat approached and boarded an accommodation work barge under tow approximately 6 NM South of Batu Pahat Coast, Johor, Malaysia near position 01:38N - 102:57E. When the Duty Officer on the tug noticed the small boat approaching the barge, he raised the alarm and notified the Coastal Vessel Traffic Service. When three robbers from the boat boarded the barge, the crew directed a searchlight at the small boat resulting in the boat departing with the robbers still on board the barge. The small boat subsequently returned to collect the robbers before departing again. The crew has not determined if any items were stolen from the barge. The crew informed the Malaysian Coast Guard of the incident. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) INDONESIA: On 18 May at 2247LT, three robbers boarded the supply boat WINPOSH RESOLVE while under tow by the Indonesia-flagged tug boat SMS SANGATTA approximately 2.1 nm northeast of Pulau Nongsa, Indonesia, south of the TSS in the Singapore Strait near position 01:13N - 104:06E. The Master raised the alarm and reported the incident to the

Singapore VTIS. At 2358LT the Master updated authorities that the perpetrators had escaped empty handed. The tug boat and supply vessel subsequently resumed their voyage. (ReCAAP, IMB)

5. (U) INDONESIA: On 17 May at 0130LT, robbers boarded a tanker anchored in the Anyer Anchorage near position 06:01S - 105:55E. When an on-duty crew member spotted one of the robbers armed with a knife, he raised the alarm. While retreating to the accommodation block, the crew member spotted another robber exiting the emergency steering room. The robbers subsequently escaped in their boat. The robbers managed to steal engine spares during the boarding. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMB)

6. (U) INDONESIA: On 17 May at 0400LT, robbers boarded the Singapore-flagged tanker OCEAN LEADER anchored in the Tanjung Uban Anchorage near position 01:05N - 104:10E. When the duty crew spotted three robbers, they raised the alarm and the crew mustered. Upon hearing the alarm, the robbers escaped empty handed leaving behind a small knife. The local agent informed the port authorities and the Indonesian Navy. (ReCAAP, Clearwater Dynamics, IMB)

7. (U) INDONESIA: On 16 May, robbers boarded a tanker berthed at the Belawan Port, near position 03:47N - 098:42E. The crew did not realize there had been robbery until after cargo operations were completed. The crew reported the incident to the Port Authority at Belawan. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMB)

8. (U) MALAYSIA: On 15 May at 1850LT, two robbers boarded the underway COMOROS-flagged tug boat DOLPHIN 1 while towing the Singapore-flagged barge Kim Heng 191 in vicinity of Tanjung Piai near position 01:13N - 103:30E. When the tug master spotted two robbers, the robbers fled on a sampan with some stolen berthing ropes. (Clearwater Dynamics, ReCAAP)

9. (U) INDONESIA: On 9 May at 2345LT, five robbers armed with knives boarded a bulk carrier underway in the Traffic Separation Scheme in the Singapore Straits approximately 13 NM east of Singapore at 01:15.10N - 104:05.48E. The robbers confronted the duty ordinary seaman and stole his cellular phone. The ordinary seaman managed to escape and alert the crew. The crew subsequently searched the vessel and determined that the robbers had also stolen two breathing apparatuses. The ordinary seaman sustained a minor head injury during the incident. The master reported the incident to Singapore VTIS. (Clearwater Dynamics, ReCAAP)

10. (U) INDONESIA: On 5 May at 1950 UTC, four robbers in a wooden boat came alongside an anchored product tanker approximately 29 NM northeast of Pulau Bintan at 01:36N - 104:52E. Two of the robbers armed with knives managed to board the tanker using a hook attached with a rope. When the Duty AB on routine rounds encountered the robbers, he immediately informed the bridge. The crew raised the alarm and mustered. The robbers stole the crew members' UHF radio and fled. When the crew subsequently searched the vessel, they discovered padlocks to four storerooms were broken, but nothing was stolen. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)

11. (U) INDONESIA: On 30 April at 0515, the crew of a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker CHEM RANGER detected three robbers in the engine room. The tanker was en route from Singapore to Ulsan, Republic of Korea, in the Singapore Strait approximately 6.2 NM northwest of Tanjung Tondong, Pulau Bintan at 01:16N - 104:16E. Upon detecting the robbers, the crew raised the alarm, mustered, and reported the incident to Singapore VTIS. The master deviated the ship back to the port of Singapore and requested assistance from the authorities to conduct search on board for the robbers. Upon the tanker's arrival in Singapore, the Singapore PCG officers boarded the ship and conducted an unsuccessful search to locate the robbers. The crew determined nothing had been stolen during the boarding. (ReCAAP, IMB)

J. INDIAN SUBCONTINENT: No current incidents to report.

K. (U) AUSTRALIA - NEW ZEALAND - PACIFIC OCEAN AREA: No current incidents to report.

(U) Sourcing

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

(U) ICOD: 27 May 2020