(U) WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report 14 August–18 September 2019

19 September 2019

(U) Table of Contents

1. (U) Scope Note

2. (U) Warnings and Advisories

3. (U) Summary

4. (U) Counter-Piracy and Maritime Crime Announcements and Advisories

5. (U) Details: Monthly Incidents by Region

6. (U) Appendix A: Further Contact Information and Resources

7. (U) Appendix B: Terminology and References

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:

1. (U) **MSCHOA ALERT NUMBER 007/2019**: At 1538 UTC on 17 September 2019, a sailing yacht was possibly hijacked by six armed pirates on speedboat in position 16:30N - 040:08E (in proximity of uninhabited island of Harmil, Eritrea). Vessels are advised to keep well clear of this position and to exercise extreme caution if in vicinity. Report any suspected or actual pirate activity to UKMTO by phone: +44 (0)2392 222060 or e-mail: watchkeepers@ukmto.org. While navigating in the region vessels are urged to operate at a heightened state of readiness, implement self-protection measures in accordance with Best Management Practice version 5 (BMP5) dated June 2018.

2. (U) **MSCHOA AMENDED ALERT NUMBER 007/2019**: 1803 UTC on 18 September 2019. Pending a final classification of the incident, traffic in the area reported that the sailing yacht involved in the event seems to be safe and proceeding to her destination. Vessels are advised to report any suspected or actual pirate activity to UKMTO, by phone: +44 (0)2392 222060 or e-mail: watchkeepers@ukmto.org while navigating in the region. Vessels are urged to operate at a heightened state of readiness, implement self-protection measures in accordance with best management practice version 5 (BMP5) dated June 2018.

3. (U) **MARAD Advisory 2019-012-Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Red Sea-Threats to Commercial Vessels by Iran.** Description: This revised advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisories 2019-004 and 2019-008. References: U.S. Maritime Alerts 2019-004A, 2019-003A, 2019-002A, and 2019-001A. Issue: Heightened military activity and increased political tensions in this region continue to pose serious threats to commercial vessels. Associated with these threats is a potential for miscalculation or misidentification that could lead to aggressive actions. Vessels operating in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman may also encounter GPS interference, bridge-to-bridge communications spoofing, and/or other communications jamming with little to no warning.

   Since May 2019, the following maritime incidents have occurred in this region:

   Six attacks against commercial vessels (see U.S. Maritime Alerts 2019-002A and 2019-003A);

   Shoot-down of U.S. Navy remotely piloted aircraft over international waters;

   Attempted at-sea interdiction of Isle of Man-flagged M/V BRITISH HERITAGE;

   Seizure of ex-Panama-flagged M/V RIAH;

   Seizure of U.K.-flagged M/V STENA IMPERO (see U.S. Maritime Alert 2019-004A); and

   Detention and subsequent release of Liberia-flagged M/V MESDAR (see U.S. Maritime Alert 2019-004A).

   In at least two of these incidents, vessels reported GPS interference. One vessel reportedly shut off its Automatic Identification System (AIS) before it was seized, complicating response efforts. Vessels have also reported spoofed bridge-to-bridge communications from unknown entities falsely claiming to be U.S. or coalition warships. The United States is committed to safeguarding freedom of navigation, the free flow of commerce, and the protection of U.S. vessels and personnel in this region. Guidance: The international community, including the United States, continues maritime security operations within this region. Vessels operating in this area are advised to review security measures, ensure AIS is transmitting at all times, and monitor VHF Channel 16.

   a) To afford best protection in the region, U.S. flagged commercial vessels are encouraged to: - Simultaneously register with both the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) and U.S. Fifth Fleet Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) Watch when entering the Indian Ocean Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) by e-mailing them the Initial Report from Annex D of Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Safety in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea (BMP5). - Provide transit plans for the Strait of Hormuz (SoH) and Persian Gulf (PG) to UKMTO and U.S. Fifth Fleet NCAGS via a single e-mail, including the time of entering/exiting the SoH Traffic Separation Scheme, an outline of the navigation plan for operating in the SoH and PG, and speed restrictions or other constraints. - In the event of any incident or suspicious activity, call UKMTO or the U.S. Fifth Fleet Battle Watch and activate the Ship Security Alert System immediately. - Answer all VHF calls from coalition navies. - Utilize other reports included in Annex D of BMP5 (Best Management Practices, version 5) as necessary, including both UKMTO and Fifth Fleet NCAGS on each of these reports. b) All vessels should be aware that U.S. and other coalition naval forces may conduct maritime awareness calls, queries, and approaches to ensure the safety of vessels transiting the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, and Arabian Sea. If a U.S.-flagged commercial vessel suspects it is being hailed from a source falsely claiming to be a U.S. or coalition naval vessel, the U.S. Fifth Fleet Battle Watch should be immediately informed. c) If hailed by Iranian forces, U.S. flag commercial vessels should provide vessel name, flag state, and affirm that they are proceeding in accordance with international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. The master should immediately inform the U.S. Fifth Fleet Battle Watch. d) If Iranian forces seek to board a U.S.-flagged commercial vessel navigating these waters, the ship's Master should, if the safety of the ship and crew would not be compromised, decline permission to board, noting that the vessel is proceeding in accordance with international law, and immediately inform the U.S. Fifth Fleet Battle Watch. e) If Iranian forces board a U.S. flagged commercial vessel, the vessel should immediately contact the U.S. Fifth Fleet Battle Watch. The crew should not forcibly resist the boarding party. Refraining from forcible resistance does not imply consent or agreement to that boarding. f) The Maritime Global Security website at https://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org/ offers industry issued best practices,

including BMP5, and guidance to mariners by geographic region and provides contact and subscription information for regional maritime security reporting centers. g) Vessels operating in this area are advised to establish contact with both UKMTO and the U.S. Fifth Fleet NCAGS Watch, and to include both on all update or incident report emails, as detailed above. By including both as addressees on each email, awareness will be enhanced without creating an additional reporting burden. Contact Information: a) Fifth Fleet Battle Watch: + 973-1785-3879, and email details to: CUSNC.BWC@ME.NAVY.MIL. b) Fifth Fleet NCAGS: CUSNC.NCAGS_BW@ME.NAVY.MIL or +973-3904-9583 or +973-17850084. c) UKMTO: watchkeepers@ukmto.org or +44 (0) 2392 222060. UKMTO advisories and warnings are available at http://www.ukmto.org/.d) U.S. Coast Guard: Per 33 CFR 101.305, all suspicious activities, breaches of security, and transportation security incident events must also be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center at +1-800-424-8802. e) For maritime industry questions about this advisory, contact GMCC@uscg.mil. Supplemental information may also be found on the MARAD Office of Maritime Security website at: https://go.usa.gov/xUKsb. Cancellation of Prior Advisories: This message supersedes and cancels and U.S. Maritime Advisories 2019-004 and 2019-008. This advisory will automatically expire on 3 February 2020. For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, please visit http://www.marad.dot.gov/MSCI.

3. (U) Summary

1. (U) RUSSIA: On 17 September, Russian authorities announced that their Federal Security Service had seized two North Korean fishing ships and approximately 80 North Korean persons after the two ships were caught fishing illegally in Russian waters.
2. (U) GUINEA: On 16 September, four robbers armed with a gun and knives boarded an anchored tanker 5 NM south-southwest of Conakry.
3. (U) CAMEROON: On 13 September, eight persons in a speed boat boarded a fishing vessel conducting fishing operations 4.5 NM southwest of Idenao. The perpetrators kidnapped two crew members and escaped.
4. (U) CAMEROON: On 12 September, robbers boarded a berthed bulk carrier during cargo operations in the Port of Douala.
5. (U) AZORES: On 2 September, Spanish National Police intercepted the yacht SEASCAPE near the archipelago of the Azores, with 800 kilograms of cocaine found onboard.

4. (U) Counter-Piracy and Maritime Crime Announcements

1. (U) GULF OF ADEN: Government of Japan convoy schedule for September 2019. To apply for JMSDF escort, visit http://www.mlit.go.jp/en/maritime/maritime_fr2_000000.html, please contact directly the Anti-Piracy Contact and Coordination Office, Maritime Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MILT), Japan: Email: hqt-info-piracy@mlit.go.jp (MSCHOA)
2. (U) GULF OF ADEN: China Navy convoy schedule for September 2019. For further information, please email: planavy@navy.mil.cn (MSCHOA)
3. (U) GULF OF ADEN: South Korea Navy convoy schedule for September 2019. All merchant vessels wishing to join the convoy group must submit their application forms directly to the ROK naval warship carrying out the mission. The ROK MTG can be reached at the Escort Task Group CCC: Email: cheonghae29@navy.mil.kr or cheonghae29@gmail.com (MSCHOA)

5. (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 past 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.

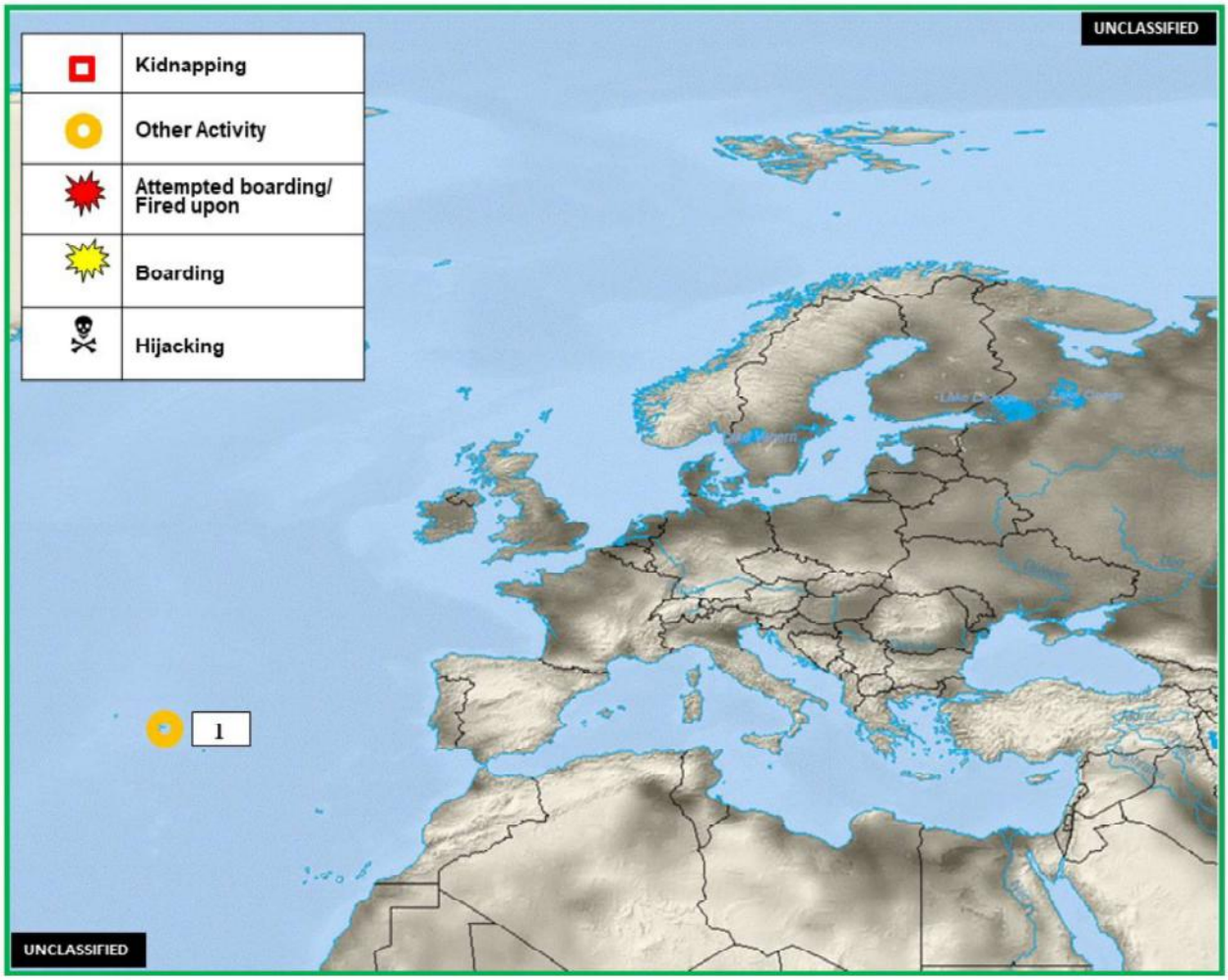
A. **(U) NORTH AMERICA**:

1. (U) MEXICO: On 7 September, Mexico Navy and customs officials released a statement about a drug bust aboard Cyprus-flagged bulk carrier UBC TOKYO in the Port of Altamira. Two large bags of drugs were found hidden among a cargo of iron ore. The ship had arrived from Barranquilla, Colombia. (www.fleetmon.com)

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

1. (U) ST EUSTATIUS ISLAND: On 5 September, a fight broke out in the mess hall of Italy-flagged tanker RBD GINO FERRETTI. Two Filipino crewmen were reportedly killed in the fight. Local authorities in Oranjestad were notified and the suspect was turned over to them on arrival. (www.fleetmon.com)
2. (U) PANAMA: On 28 August, authorities seized 1.5 tons of cocaine in two operations off the coast of Panama. In one of the seizures, authorities found the narcotics after capturing a speed boat with two Colombian nationals about 100 kilometers off Punta Coco Island. The other seizure took place near Punta Burrica, though no arrests were made. (www.pviltd.com)
3. (U) GRENADA: On 13 August, two robbers boarded a sailing yacht anchored in St. George's Inner Harbor. One intruder held a fishing knife to the owner's chest, advising him to be quiet while he communicated with an unseen accomplice who was in the main cabin. The cruiser complied, and the men departed a few minutes later. The victim went to the main cabin and found that the cables had been cut and the chart plotter removed, cash and cigarettes had also been taken. Incident reported to local police. (www.safetyandsecuritynet.org)

C. **(U) ATLANTIC OCEAN AREA**:



(U) Figure 1. Atlantic Ocean Area Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) AZORES: On 2 September, Spanish National Police intercepted the yacht SEASCAPE near the archipelago of the Azores, with 800 kilograms of cocaine found onboard, and three sailors arrested. (www.macaubusiness.com)

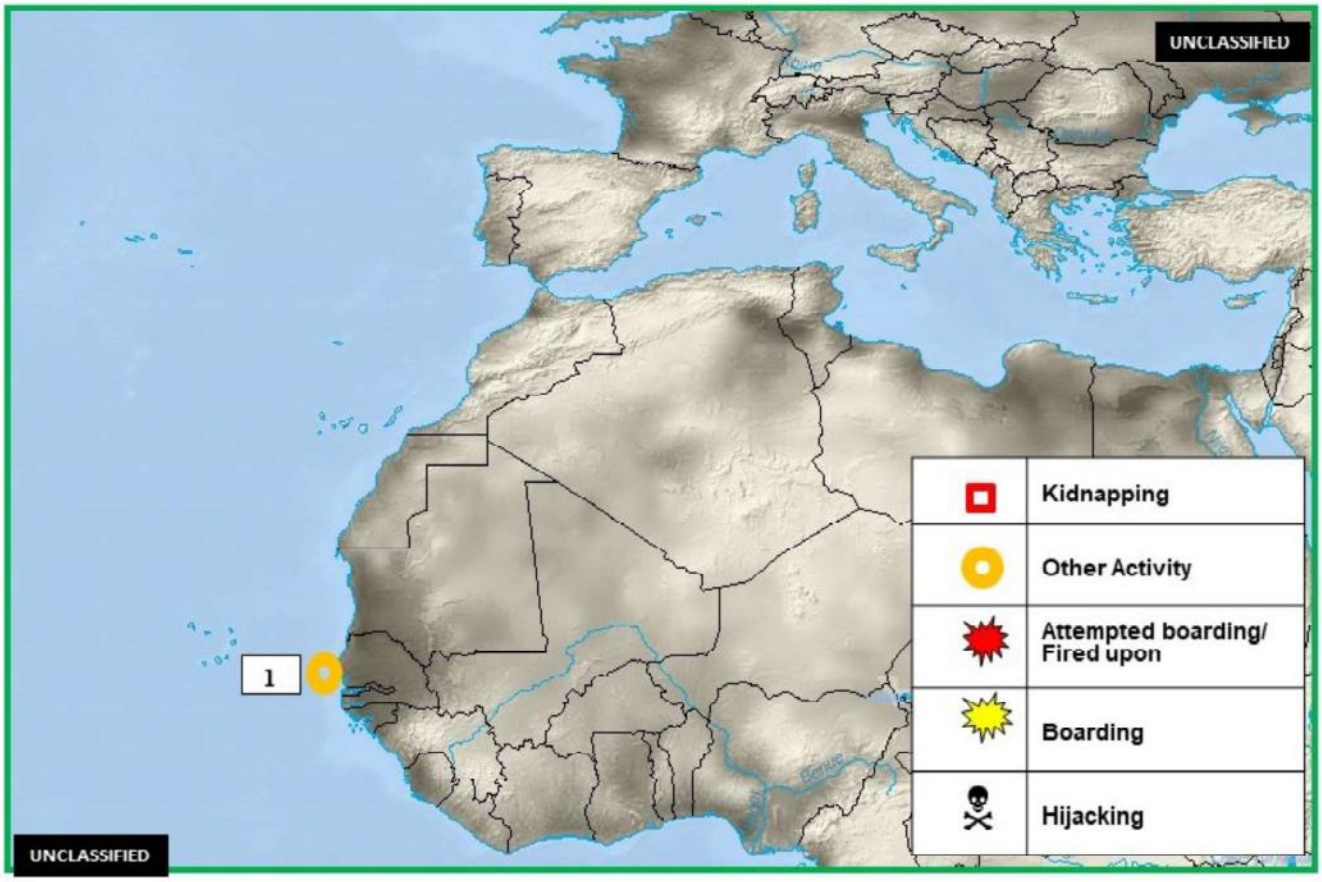
D. **(U) NORTHERN EUROPE - BALTIC**:

(U) No current incidents to report.

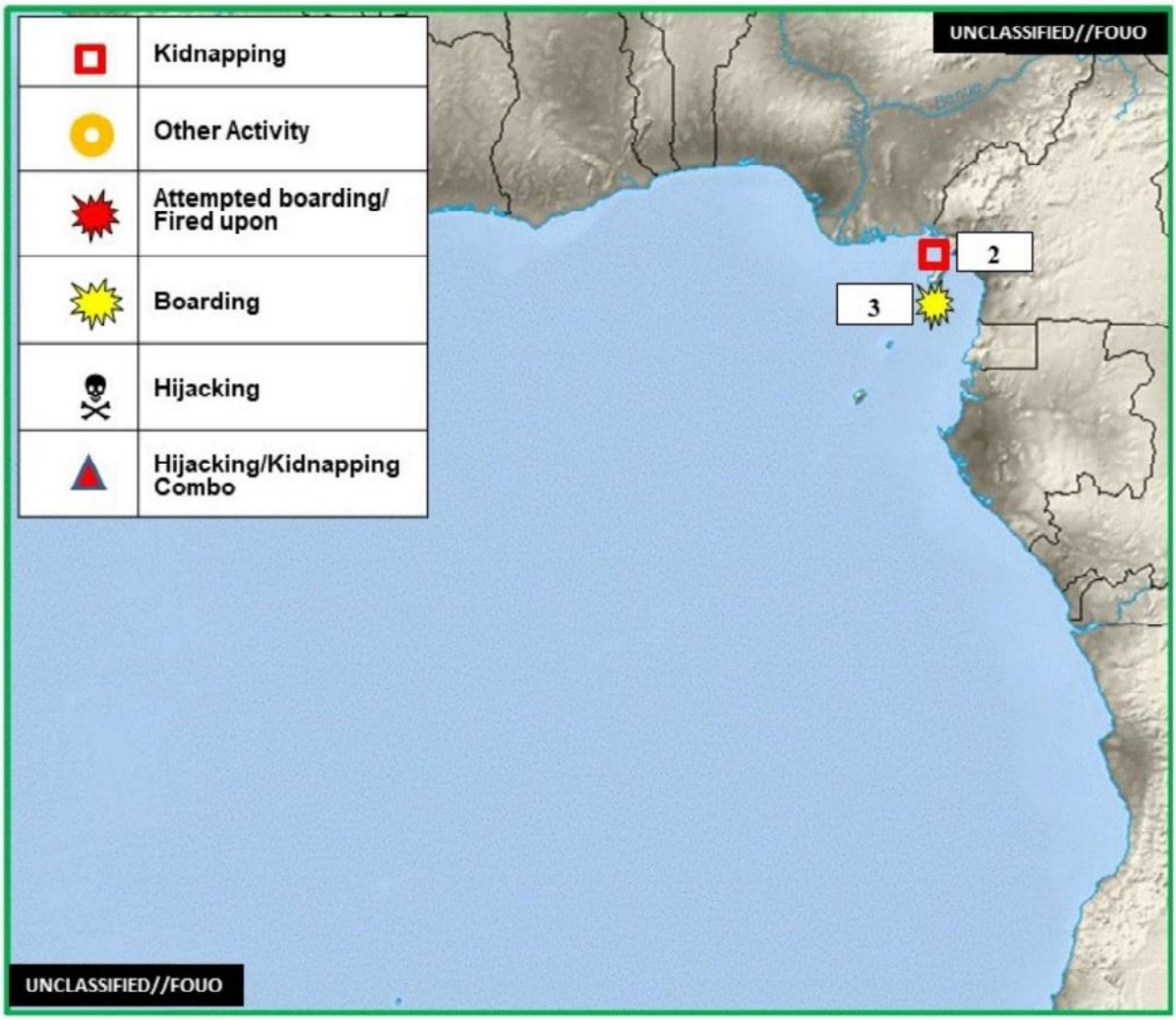
(U) **MEDITERRANEAN - BLACK SEA**:

(U) No current incidents to report.

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



(U) Figure 2. West Africa Piracy and Maritime Crime



(U) Figure 3. West Africa Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) GUINEA: On 16 September, four robbers armed with a gun and knives boarded an anchored tanker near position 09:25N - 013:44W, 5 NM south-southwest of Conakry. They took hostage a duty crewman, tied his hands and forced him to lead them to the bridge. Once inside the bridge, the robbers took hostage the duty officer and forced him to lead them to the captain, chief engineer, third officer, and bosun's cabins. After looting the cabins, the robbers locked the crew in a cabin and escaped. Crew personal belongings, cash, and ship's properties stolen. (IMB)
2. (U) CAMEROON: On 13 September, eight persons in a speed boat boarded a fishing vessel conducting fishing operations near position 04:10N - 008:55E, 4.5 NM southwest of Idenao. The perpetrators kidnapped two crew members and escaped. Cameroon Navy notified and investigations are ongoing. (IMB)
3. (U) CAMEROON: On 12 September, robbers boarded a berthed bulk carrier during cargo operations near position 04:03N - 009:41E, Port of Douala. During routine rounds in the morning, it was noticed that a storeroom padlock was broken and the door's hinge damaged and bent. After checking, ship's properties were reported stolen. Port authorities informed. (IMB)

4. (U) GUINEA BISSAU: On 2 September, police seized more than 1.8 tons of cocaine in Caio and Canchungo in what was reportedly the largest seizure in the country. The drugs, hidden in sacks of flour, arrived at the Port of Caio from Colombia. Authorities seized 264 kilograms of cocaine in Caio and seized the rest of the cocaine in Canchungo. Guineau-Bissau is considered a transit zone for drugs between Latin America and Europe. (www.pviltd.com)
5. (U) NIGERIA: On 14 August, a robber boarded a supply vessel berthed at Federal Ocean Terminal of Onne Port. The duty officer onboard the vessel noticed the robber stealing ship's properties via CCTV monitors and informed the master. The crew managed to lock the robber inside the pump room and an accomplice waiting in a canoe alongside the vessel escaped. Port authorities were notified of the attempted robbery and took the robber ashore for questioning. The crew members were reported safe. (www.pviltd.com)
6. (U) MOROCCO: On 12 August, Moroccan security services seized tons of cocaine on the Sidi Rahal beach, 123 kilometers south of Rabat in the province of Berrechid. Local news outlets reported that the origin and destination of the cocaine are still unknown. (www.moroccoworldnews.com)
7. (U) CAMEROON: On 15 August, robbers boarded a ship near position 03:52N - 009:31E, Douala Anchorage. (IMB)
8. (U) CAMEROON: On 15 August, pirates boarded the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship MARMALAITA near position near position 03:52N - 009:31E, Douala Anchorage. They kidnapped eight crewmen: four from the Philippines, three from Russia, and one from Ukraine. (IMB; www.fleetmon.com; Channel News Asia Online; www.pviltd.com)
9. (U) CAMEROON: On 15 August, pirates boarded the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier VICTORY C near position 03:52N - 009:31E, Douala Anchorage. They kidnapped nine crewmen, all from the Philippines. (IMB; www.fleetmon.com; Channel News Asia Online; www.pviltd.com)

G. **(U) ARABIAN GULF**:

1. (U) IRAN: On 7 September, Iran Coast Guard forces detained the Tanzania-flagged tug AL BURAQ 1 in the Strait of Hormuz, allegedly for fuel smuggling. (www.fleetmon.com)
2. (U) IRAN: On 4 September, Iranian authorities released 7 of 23 crewmen from the tanker STENA IMPERO, seized by Iranian authorities in the Strait of Hormuz on 19 July. (www.fleetmon.com)

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

(U) No current incidents to report.

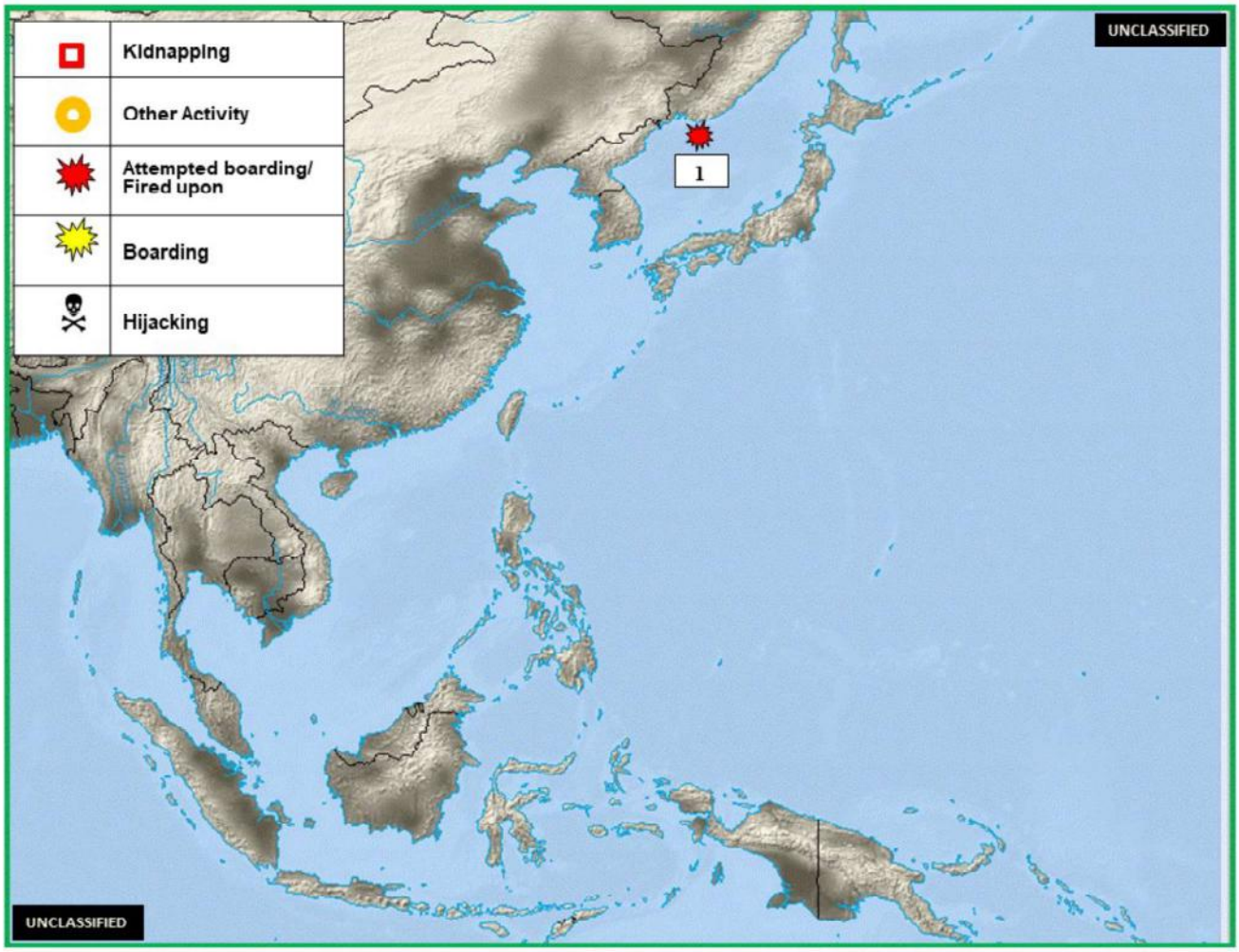
I. **(U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA - INDIAN SUBCONTINENT**:

1. (U) MALAYSIA: On 8 September, three persons boarded an anchored tanker via the anchor cable near position 01:34N - 104:30E, 15 NM east of Bandar Penawar, Johor. They stole the forward life raft and other ship's properties, and escaped. (IMB)
2. (U) MALAYSIA: On 27 August, a duty crewman on routine rounds onboard a bulk carrier berthed near position 05:54N - 118:30E, Sandakan Port, saw two robbers on the forecastle and raised the alarm. Seeing the alerted crew, the robbers jumped overboard and escaped in a boat with another robber. Upon investigation, the crew discovered ship's properties were stolen. The incident was reported to local police. (IMB)
3. (U) MALAYSIA: On 26 August, a duty crewman onboard an anchored Marshall Islands-flagged tanker near Bandar Penawar in Johor saw armed robbers on the forecastle and notified the duty officer. The tanker crew retreated to their accommodation area and alarms were sounded. The armed robbers escaped with a life raft and other properties from the tanker. No injuries were reported. (www.pviltd.com)
4. (U) INDONESIA: On 23 August, a Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier was boarded while the vessel was anchored at Belawan Anchorage. A duty crewman saw a small boat near the ship's anchor chain. He proceeded to instruct the vessel occupant to leave, as the ship was about to raise the anchor. He was about to raise the alarm when two armed robbers, who had already boarded the vessel, threatened him at knifepoint and tied him up. However, the remaining

crew members proceeded to the forecastle. Noticing them, the robbers stole the crewman's portable radio and escaped through the hawse pipe after opening the security cover. The incident was reported to the port control. Marine police proceeded to board the vessel and carry out a full investigation. (www.pviltd.com)

5. (U) BANGLADESH: On 26 August at 1200 local, pirates hijacked two Bangladeshi fishing vessels with 18 fishermen near Nijhum Dwip in Hatia upazila of Noakhali. (www.observerbd.com)
6. (U) INDONESIA: On 21 August, five robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored Singapore-flagged tug in Batam Anchorage. When the crew detected the boarding, they raised the alarm, mustered, and called the local authorities who came to investigate. The robbers stole deck and engine room spares. (www.pviltd.com)
7. (U) MALAYSIA: On 15 August, three robbers in two small boats boarded an underway Malaysia-flagged tug boat towing a barge, approximately 3.8 NM southeast of Tanjung Piai, Johor. The master raised the alarm and reported the incident to the Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System via VHF. However, the robbers managed to steal some scrap metal and escape. The tug boat and barge resumed their passage westbound. (www.pviltd.com)
8. (U) MALAYSIA: On 18 August, three masked men in a boat approached a small fishing boat near Tawau, Sabah. The owner of the fishing boat started to flee and one of the masked men shot the driver of the boat, hitting him in the arm. The fishermen were able to get to port and the injured man received medical attention. Local police are investigating the incident. (www.headtopics.com)

J. **(U) NORTHEAST ASIA**:



(U) Figure 5. Northeast Asia Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) RUSSIA: On 17 September, authorities announced that Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) had seized two North Korean fishing ships and approximately 80 North Korean persons after the two ships were caught fishing illegally in Russian waters. A Russian border patrol vessel discovered the two North Korean ships and detained the first vessel, prompting the second one to open fire on the Russian ship, the FSB was quoted as saying. Three Russian border guards were wounded in the incident. The detained vessels are being taken to Russia's Far East port of Nakhodka, a press report quoted the FSB as saying. (Reuters)

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

(U) PACIFIC OCEAN: On 19 August, the Taiwan-flagged long liner XING HUA SHENG NO. 616 was reportedly abandoned near position 40:10N - 163:05E, 810 NM east of Hokkaido, Japan. AIS is on and the vessel is drifting in a southerly direction. (www.fleetmon.com)

6. (U) Appendix A: Further Contact Information and Resources

(U) This appendix provides contact information for the author of the WTS as well as other entities that can be contacted with maritime crime reports. It also lists other resources where the WTS is posted and where piracy and maritime crime incident information can be found.

(U) Contact

(U) Originator of this WTS report requests consumer feedback. Originator will incorporate all anti-shipping events and violence against the maritime industry into this weekly message where appropriate. To aid in our reporting, please add the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) to your normal corporate and organizational reporting requirements. The 24-hour watch can be reached at +1 (301) 669-4053.

(U) Other Resources

(U) This Worldwide Threat to Shipping Report is posted at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's Maritime Safety site: http://msi.nga.mil/NGAPortal/MSI.portal. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) also publishes a live piracy report based on reporting from the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, listing all piracy and armed robbery incidents in the last ten days: http://www.icc-ccs.org/. The PAWW and WTS Reports are posted weekly on the ONI Intel Portal: http://www.oni.navy.mil/Intelligence_Community/piracy.htm.

7. (U) Appendix B: Terminology and References

(U) This appendix is provided to promote consistent use of accurate terms of reference in reporting and also identifies those references that were used to gather the information contained in this report. ONI welcomes comment and suggestions for addition or amendment.

(U) **Terminology**

(U) In order to promote consistent use of accurate terms of reference, the following have been adopted to describe the range of criminal anti-shipping activity and impediments to safe navigation in our worldwide reporting and analysis. Please note that these terms relate to observable activity and are independent of target vessel status and exclude actions by governmental powers in lawful pursuit of their authorities:

(U) The following terms have been adopted to describe the 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) **Robbery** - Theft from a vessel or from persons aboard the vessel.
- (U) **Suspicious Approach** - All other unexplained activity in close proximity by an unknown vessel.

(U) **Sourcing**

- Agence France Presse (AFP)
- Associated Press (AP)
- BBC News
- DNK Intelligence & Operations Centre (DNK IOC)

- EU Naval Forces (EU)
- International Maritime Bureau (IMB), London and Kuala Lumpur
- International Maritime Organization (IMO), London
- Lloyd's
- Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S.
- Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)
- Marine Domain Awareness for Trade - Gulf of Guinea (MDAT- GoG)
- Maritime Asset Security and Training (MAST) Ltd
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), Navigation Safety System
- Noonsite.com (Noonsite), website
- Norwegian Shipowners' Mutual War Risks Insurance Association
- Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)
- Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia, Information Sharing Center (ReCAAP ISC)
- Reuters
- Royal Australian Navy (RAN)
- Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN)
- The Maritime Executive (website)
- United Kingdom Maritime Trade Organization (UKMTO)
- United Press International (UPI)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

(U) The Weekly Piracy Update (WPU) and WTS Reports are posted each week on the ONI Intel Portal and can be found at: http://www.oni.navy.mil/News/Weekly-Piracy-Reports/

(U) ICOD: 18 September 2019