(U) WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report, 21 April – 19 May 2021

19 May 2021

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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 2021-005 - Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, and Indian Ocean - Violence Due to Regional Conflict and Piracy.** Issued on: 17 May 2021. Conflict in Yemen continues to pose a risk to U.S.-flagged commercial vessels in the Red Sea, Bab al Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden. Threats may come from a variety of different sources including, but not limited to, missiles, rockets, projectiles, mines, small arms, unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned surface vessels, or waterborne improvised explosive devices. These threat vectors continue to pose a direct or collateral risk to U.S.-flagged commercial vessels transiting in international shipping lanes, or otherwise operating in the region. Additionally, piracy poses a threat in the Gulf of Aden, western Arabian Sea, and western Indian Ocean. Specific case details are available at the Office of Naval Intelligence's "Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS)" website at https://go.usa.gov/x7J7R. Guidance: The international community, including the United States, continues to conduct maritime security operations within this region. Vessels operating in this area are advised to review security measures, ensure AIS is transmitting at all times (except in extraordinary circumstances), consistent with provisions of the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), and monitor VHF Channel 16. Contact Information: 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. This advisory will automatically expire on 13 November 2021.

3. (U) **Summary:**

A. (U) GHANA: On 19 May, five armed pirates boarded a Ghana-flagged fishing trawler approximately 66 NM south of Tema, and later kidnapped five crew.

B. (U) RED SEA: On 18 May, a vessel reported a suspicious approach approximately 50 NM west-northwest of Hudaydah, Yemen.

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 that 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:**

1. (U) PERU: On 3 May, four robbers boarded an anchored product tanker at Callao Anchorage, near position 11:59S – 077:12W at 19:30 local time. The robbers were armed with knives and took a duty crewman hostage, tying him up before stealing the crew member's personal belongings and ship's properties. The robbers then made their escape. The tied-up crew member was later found and the alarm was raised. The owners and port authorities were informed of the incident. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) SAINT MARTIN: On 26 April, a robber boarded an unlocked yacht in Marigot Bay and stole a variety of personal electronics. It is not known if a police report was made. (www.safetyandsecuritynet.org)

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:** No current incidents to report.

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

Figure 1. West Africa Piracy and maritime Crime

1. (U) GHANA: On 19 May, eight armed perpetrators in a skiff initially approached and fired upon a Ghana-flagged fishing trawler at 18:30 local time in position 04:33N – 000:15E, approximately 66 NM south of Tema. The trawler stopped, and five armed pirates boarded and remained onboard for about six hours. The pirates kidnapped five crew members (four Chinese nationals and one Russian), and removed personal crew belongings and other valuables. No injuries were reported to the remaining crew. The trawler's crew identified the pirates as Nigerian. After the kidnapping, the trawler headed back towards Tema port. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) LIBERIA: On 2 May, at least one robber boarded a container ship moored in Monrovia Port, near position 06:20N – 010:48W at 03:30 local time. A duty crewman discovered one intruder jumping overboard. A search revealed that some ship's properties had been stolen. (Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) ANGOLA: On 29 April, two robbers boarded a container ship anchored in Luanda Anchorage, near position 08:41S – 013:17E at 02:00 local time. Ship's horn was sounded, crew was mustered and a search of the ship was conducted. The incident was reported to port authorities and a patrol boat was dispatched to investigate. Nothing reported stolen. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE: On 23 April, pirates boarded a container ship underway approximately 132 NM northwest of Neves, near position 01:27N – 004:38E. The alarm was raised and all crew mustered in the citadel. Owners and authorities were notified and an Italian Navy frigate proceeded to intervene. The pirates boarded the ship but left after a few hours as they were unable to gain access to any crew. The Italian Navy frigate escorted the ship towards its destination. All crew are safe. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

5. (U) NIGERIA: On 21 April, a tanker reported a suspicious approach by a small vessel approximately 202 NM southwest of Brass Port, near position 01:10N – 004:57E at 12:05 local time. (Clearwater Dynamics)

6. (U) NIGERIA: On 21 April, MDAT-GoG reported that a suspicious vessel was sighted 165 NM south of Lagos, near position 03:41N – 003:33E at 09:39 local time. Naval assets in the area reported that one small boat with eight persons and ladders onboard is suspected of being involved in piracy operations. (Clearwater Dynamics)

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

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

Figure 2. Indian Ocean – East Africa – Red Sea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) RED SEA: On 18 May, four persons onboard a small-sized boat suspiciously approached a non-government organization research vessel and fired shots into the air while in a position approximately 50 NM west-northwest of Hudaydah, Yemen, near 14:57N – 042:05E. No injuries have been reported. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) ARABIAN SEA: On 7 May, a U.S. Navy cruiser stopped and searched a stateless dhow in the northern Arabian Sea. According to a U.S. Navy 5th Fleet spokesperson, a large weapons cache was found during the search. "The cache of weapons included dozens of advanced Russian-made anti-tank guided missiles, thousands of Chinese Type 56 assault rifles, and hundreds of PKM machine guns, sniper rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. Other weapon components included advanced optical sights," according to the spokesperson. (Reuters)

3. (U) RED SEA: On 3 May, a vessel reported a suspicious approach approximately 60 NM west of Al Hudaydah, Yemen, near position 15:04N – 041:56E. The vessel was approached by two small crafts with six people onboard and came to within 15 meters of the vessel. All crew are reported as safe. (Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) RED SEA: On 27 April, Saudi forces reported that a bomb boat had been intercepted and destroyed near the port of Yanbu. A spokesman for the Saudi Ministry of Defense said that Saudi marine units had destroyed a

"remotely piloted and booby-trapped boat" in the Red Sea near Yanbu. United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said in a brief statement that it was aware of reports of an incident about two nautical miles off Yanbu and was investigating, but did not provide further details. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; www.maritime-executive.com; www.english.alaraby.co.uk/english)

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

1. (U) INDONESIA: On 9 May, five robbers attempted to board the underway Greece-flagged tanker ASTRO PERSEUS in the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait Traffic Separation Scheme, near position 01:14N – 104:02E. A search of the ship was conducted, which confirmed that there were no perpetrators onboard and nothing was stolen. A hook attached to a rope was found on the stern of the vessel. (IMB: Clearwater Dynamics)

J. (U) **INDIAN SUBCONTINENT:**

1. (U) BANGLADESH: On 27 April, Bangladesh Coast Guard personnel rescued 30 Rohingya refugees adrift in the Bay of Bengal for two days following a pirate attack. A Bangladesh Coast Guard spokesman stated that the boat departed from near the camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district on 23 April, carrying 20 women, 5 men and 5 children. According to the spokesman, pirates attacked the boat on 25 April, taking all valuables from the refugees and crippling the boat's engine before leaving. (www.channelnewsasia.com)

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

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

(U) Gulf of Guinea

Event	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hijackings	2	6	4	1	0
Kidnappings	30	28	32	27	4
Hijacking/Kidnapping Combination	0	4	2	3	2
Attacks/Attempted Boardings	35	44	39	25	3
Boardings	53	64	55	42	9
Total	**120**	**146**	**132**	**98**	**18**

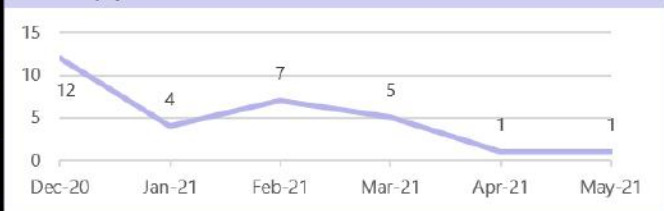
(U) Horn of Africa

Event	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hijackings	2	0	0	0	0
Kidnappings	1	0	0	0	0
Attacks, Boardings and Attempts	3	2	2	2	0
Total	**6**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**0**

(U) Southeast Asia

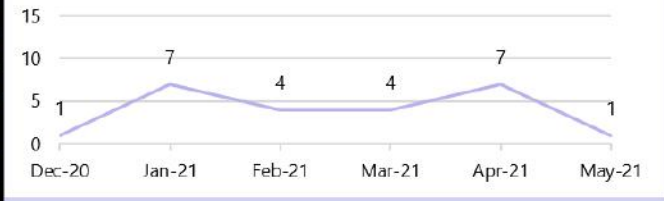
Event	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Hijackings	3	1	0	0	0
Kidnappings	4	3	4	1	0
Attacks, Boardings and Attempts	95	80	92	94	23
Total	**102**	**84**	**96**	**95**	**23**

(U) GOG: Number of events in the last six months



(U) HOA: Number of events in the last six months

(U) SEA: Number of events in the last six months



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 antishipping 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:** 19 May 2021

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