



UNCLASSIFIED

(U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report** **16 April–13 May 2020**



14 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) **MARAD 2020-008-Southern Gulf of Mexico-Vessel Attacks issued 11 May 2020.** The U.S. Government is aware of at least 20 fishing vessels and 35 oil platforms and offshore supply vessels that have been targeted by pirates and armed robbers since January 2018 in the Bay of Campeche area of the southern Gulf of Mexico. Significant underreporting of attacks in this area is suspected. These attacks have involved the discharge of firearms, crew injuries, hostage taking, and theft. At least five of these attacks occurred in April 2020. For additional details see advisory at <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/content/2020-008-southern-gulf-mexico-vessel-attacks>. Guidance: U.S. mariners and United States-flagged vessels are advised to remain vigilant and to ensure familiarity with and adherence to their approved Vessel Security Plan when operating in this area. The Department of State's Mexico Travel Advisory (available at <https://go.usa.gov/xvVcB>) should also be thoroughly reviewed prior to operating in this area. In addition, all suspicious activities and events involving United States-flagged vessels must be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center at 800-424-8802 in accordance with 33 CFR 101.305.

3. (U) **Summary:**

- A. (U) GHANA: On 11 May, robbers boarded a cargo vessel berthed at Takoradi Port and stole a life raft.
- B. (U) HAITI: On 10 May, robbers stole an aft mooring line from a berthed bulk carrier in Lafiteau Port.
- C. (U) MOZAMBIQUE: On 10 May, a robber boarded a tanker during cargo operations at Nacala Anchorage.

- D. (U) INDONESIA: On 9 May, five robbers boarded an underway bulk carrier and injured a crew member in the Singapore Straits approximately 13 NM east of Singapore.
- E. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 9 May, armed individuals kidnapped three crew members from the Equatorial Guinea-flagged research/survey vessel DJIBLOHO anchored at Luba anchorage.
- F. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 9 May, armed individuals kidnapped two crew members from the Comoros-flagged general cargo vessel RIO MITONG off Malabo.
- G. (U) CAMEROON: On 9 May, individuals in a speedboat made a suspicious approach on the China-flagged tanker YUAN QIU HU approximately 40 NM west of Limbe.

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 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)

2. (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) 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)

2. (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)

3. (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)

4. (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)

5. (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)

6. (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)

7. (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. (Clearwater Dynamics, Maritime Bulletin, Dryad Global, IMB)

8. (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)

9. (U) BENIN: On 19 April, armed men in a speedboat approached and boarded the Portugal-flagged container ship TOMMI RITSCHER in Cotonou Anchorage at 06:16N - 002:32E. Eleven of the 19 crewmembers managed to secure themselves in the citadel; the armed men kidnapped the other eight crew members. On 20 April, Nigerian Special Forces conducted an unopposed boarding and freed the 11 crew members in the citadel. Reports indicate the TOMMI RITSCHER had Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, and Filipino crew members. (MDAT-GoG, Clearwater Dynamics, IMB, Dryad Global)

10. (U) NIGERIA: On 18 April at 0850LT, armed men attacked a passenger boat while underway in Bayelsa State along Okoroma Creek in the Niger Delta. The attackers injured one passenger, but the other passengers and boat driver managed to escape. Authorities rescued the injured passenger approximately 45 minutes later and took him to a hospital in Yenagoa with two gunshot wounds. (Nigerian Pilot)

11. (U) GHANA: On 16 April at 0105 UTC, seven individuals in a canoe came alongside an anchored supply vessel in the Takoradi Anchorage at 04:52N - 001:41W. Two of the men managed to board the vessel and were subsequently discovered by the deck officer in the paint store. When the crew raised the alarm, the two robbers jumped overboard and fled in the canoe. Five buckets of paint were stolen during the boarding. The crew notified the local authorities, who dispatched two patrol boats to secure the area. (MDAT-GoG, Clearwater Dynamics)

G. (U) ARABIAN GULF:

1. (U) IRAQ: On 27 April at 0200LT, robbers disguised as stevedores boarded a container ship berthed at Umm Qasr Port at 30:03N - 047:56E. The robbers broke into the forepeak store and started stealing ship's properties by passing them to their

accomplices on the jetty. The robbers fled after the crew spotted the robbers activities and raised the alarm. The crew notified the port authorities who were able to recover the stolen items. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMB)

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



Figure 3. East Africa Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (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)

2. (U) YEMEN: On 23 April, skiffs approached two tankers southwest of Aden. The first incident occurred at 0804 GMT when a skiff traveling at 19 knots approached a Hong Kong-flagged LPG carrier transiting eastbound in the Gulf of Aden at 13.5 knots. The embarked security team fired several warning shots causing the skiff to distance itself from the tanker. A short time later, a skiff approached a Panama-flagged medium-range tanker approximately 12 NM from the first incident and had a similar encounter. (LSS, Dryad Global)

I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:



Figure 4. Southeast Asia Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (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)

2. (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)

3. (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)

4. (U) INDONESIA: On 22 April at 2310LT, crew members on the Panama-flagged bulk carrier HORIZON II detected two robbers armed with knives on their vessel. At the time, the vessel was approximately 20 NM east southeast of Singapore at 01:15N - 104:04E. The vessel was transiting in the eastbound lane of the traffic separation scheme (TSS) in the Singapore Strait at the time. The captain altered course and began to return to Singapore and request assistance. The Singapore Coast Guard responded, carried out a search of the vessel, and determined the robbers had fled empty-handed. (Clearwater Dynamics)

5. (U) VIETNAM: On 20 April at 0145LT, four robbers in a wooden boat approached and boarded the anchored Bermuda-flagged tanker MASAGANA in Vung Tau Anchorage at 10:21N - 107:02E. When the robbers were detected, the crew raised the alarm and sounded the ship's whistle. The robbers then jumped overboard and escaped in their wooden boat. The

crew subsequently searched the tanker and discovered the robbers had managed to steal 80 liters of red deck paint from the forward store. The crew reported the incident to Vung Tau Port Control. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMB)

6. (U) INDONESIA: On 16 April at 0800LT, the crew of the Belgium-flagged VLCC ARAFURA discovered padlocks to restricted spaces had been cut. At the time, the tanker was approximately 40 NM southwest of the Anambas Island at 02:29N - 105:50E en route from the port of Sungai Linggi, Malaysia, to Qingdao, China. Sometime earlier, the robbers had managed to board the tanker undetected and steal a breathing apparatus air compressor unit and various spare parts. The master subsequently notified ReCAAP and other regional authorities. The exact location of the robbery remains unknown. (ReCAAP)

7. (U) INDONESIA: On 16 April at 0100LT, the crew of the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier PALAIS detected three robbers on the stern of the vessel. At the time, the vessel was approximately 3.2 NM north of Nongsa Point, Pulau Batam in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait at 01:14N - 104:06E. The master raised the alarm and a search of the vessel was conducted to locate the robbers. No robbers were found, but some engine spares were discovered stolen. The crew notified the Singaporean and Indonesian authorities. (ReCAAP)

J. INDIAN SUBCONTINENT:

1. (U) INDIA: On 18 April at 2354LT, robbers using a dinghy boarded the unmanned Liberia-flagged tanker SEAFROST in-tow by the tugboat ATLANTIS off Alang Anchorage at 21:25N - 072:19E. SEAFROST was awaiting dismantling. The crew informed the local Vessel Traffic Service at Khambhat, who in turn relayed the incident to the Indian Coast Guard. Coast Guard Station Pipavav requested the Marine Police Alang and Customs Bhavnagar to investigate. The robbers managed to steal some ship's property. (IMB)

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

5. (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) 669-4141.

(U) Other Resources

(U) This Worldwide Threat to Shipping Report (WTS) 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 Weekly Piracy Update (WPU) and WTS reports are posted weekly on the ONI Intel Portal: <https://www.oni.navy.mil/News/Shipping-Threat-Reports/>

6. (U) Appendix B: Terminology and Sourcing

(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) 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 of an unknown vessel.

(U) Sourcing

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

(U) ICOD: 13 May 2020