



UNCLASSIFIED

## (U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report, 6 December 2023–3 January 2024**



3 January 2024

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#### 1. (U) **Scope Note**

(U) The Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) report 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, Advisories and Alerts:** See Appendix C for active advisories.

#### **A. (U) U.S. Maritime Advisory 2023-016: Gulf of Guinea – Piracy/Armed Robbery/Kidnapping for Ransom**

Issued on: 27 December 2023. This advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2023-008. Piracy, armed robbery at sea, and kidnapping for ransom (KFR) pose significant threats to vessels transiting or operating in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) as well as mariners onboard a vessel or transiting to or from a vessel in the GoG. Details of incidents in the GoG can be found in the Office of Naval Intelligence Worldwide Threat to Shipping reports, posted at <https://www.oni.navy.mil/ONI-Reports/Shipping-Threat-Reports/Worldwide-Threat-to-Shipping/>. For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, please visit <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci/maritime-security-communications-industry-msci-web-portal>. This advisory will automatically expire on 24 June 2024.

#### 3. (U) **Summary:**

**A. (U) RED SEA:** On 2 January, the master of a vessel approximately 33 NM east of Assab, Eritrea, reported three explosions within 5 NM of the vessel.

**B. (U) SOMALIA:** On 2 January in the morning hours, pirates hijacked a fishing dhow in the Gulf of Aden near Quandala.

**C. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA:** On 1 January, pirates boarded a tanker approximately 46 NM southwest of Bioko Island and kidnapped nine crew members.

**D. (U) RED SEA:** On 31 December, four small boats approached the container ship MAERSK HANGZHOU and exchanged gun fire with the armed security team onboard approximately 60 NM northwest of Hodeida, Yemen.

**E. (U) RED SEA:** On 30 December, two possible unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) fired on an underway vessel 48 NM southwest of Hodeida, Yemen.

**F. (U) RED SEA:** On 30 December, a missile struck the underway container ship MAERSK HANGZHOU approximately 55 NM southwest of Hodeida, Yemen.

**G. (U) SOMALIA:** On 30 December, a fishing dhow was hijacked near Hafun, off Somalia's northeastern coast.

**H. (U) INDONESIA:** (Late Reporting) On 27 December, robbers armed with long knives boarded a tanker at Dumai Anchorage in the Malacca Strait.

#### **4. (U) 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 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:** No current incidents to report.

**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.

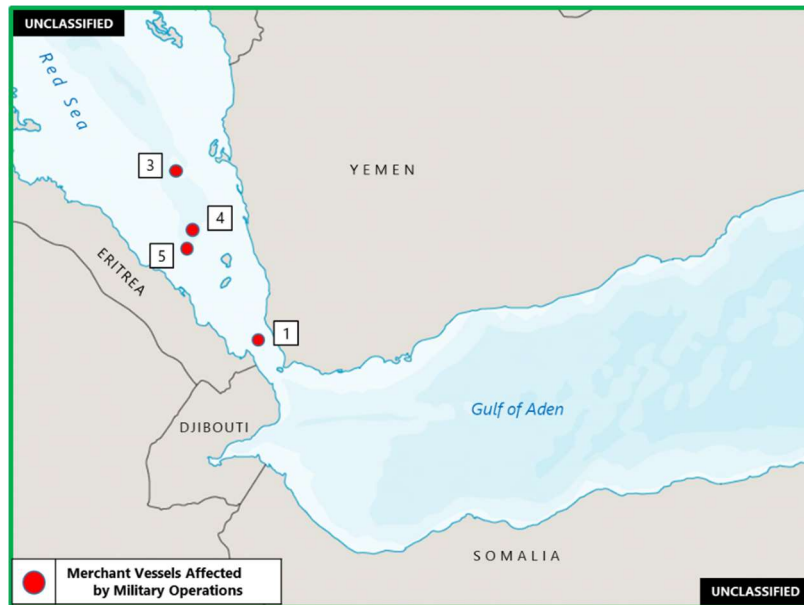
**F. (U) WEST AFRICA – GULF OF GUINEA:**

(U) Figure 1. West Africa – Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea

1. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 1 January at 1930 UTC, pirates boarded the Tuvalu-flagged product tanker HANA I approximately 46 NM southwest of Bioko Island near position 02:33N – 008:13E on its voyage from Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, to Douala, Cameroon. The perpetrators abducted the master, chief engineer, and possibly seven other crew members. There has been no contact from the crew or their captors since they were kidnapped. The tanker arrived at Douala on 2 January. (Clearwater Dynamics; vesseltracker.com; Maritime Executive)

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

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



(U) Figure 1. Red Sea – Gulf of Aden Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea



(U) Figure 2. Indian Ocean – East Africa Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea

1. (U) RED SEA: On 2 January at 1850 UTC, approximately 33 NM east of Assab, Eritrea, the master of the Malta-flagged container ship CMA CGM TAGE reported three explosions within 5 NM of the vessel, near position 12:57N – 043:11E. The Houthi military spokesman said in a televised speech that the group had targeted the container ship after it ignored warnings. He did not say when or where the incident took place. CENTCOM said in a

statement late on 2 January that there were no reports of any damage caused by the two missiles fired by Houthis into the southern Red Sea. The crew are safe and no damage to the vessel has been reported. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; Reuters; gCaptain; U.S. Central Command)

2. (U) SOMALIA: On 2 January in the morning hours, pirates hijacked a fishing dhow in the Gulf of Aden near Quandala. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) RED SEA: On 31 December at 0247 UTC, four small boats approached the Singapore-flagged container ship MAERSK HANGZHOU and exchanged gunfire with the armed security team onboard, approximately 60 NM northwest of Hodeida, Yemen (exact location not specified). The attackers, heavily armed with crew-served weapons and small arms, approached to within 20 meters. Helicopters from the USS EISENHOWER and USS GRAVELY responded to the distress call from MAERSK HANGZHOU and in self-defense returned fire sinking three of the four attacking boats and killing the crews. The fourth boat fled the area. The vessel and crew were reported safe from the attack. There was no damage to U.S. personnel or equipment. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; gCaptain; U.S. Central Command)

4. (U) RED SEA: On 30 December at 2017 UTC, two possible unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) fired on an underway vessel 48 NM southwest of Hodeida, Yemen, near position 14:21N – 042:15E. The UAVs were not detected by the vessel's radar, were flying at low altitude, and were identified visually prior to rounds being fired approximately 3 NM from the vessel's location. The vessel was not hit by any rounds and continued its voyage. (Clearwater Dynamics)

5. (U) RED SEA: On 30 December at 1655 UTC, a missile struck the underway Singapore-flagged container ship MAERSK HANGZHOU approximately 55 NM southwest of Hodeida, Yemen (exact position not specified). Maersk confirmed the crew were safe and that the vessel was fully maneuverable and able to clear the area at full speed. The container ship was en route to Port Suez, Egypt, from Singapore. While responding to the missile attack on MAERSK HANGZHOU at 1730 UTC on 30 December, USS GRAVELY shot down two anti-ship ballistic missiles fired into the southern Red Sea from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; gCaptain; U.S. Central Command)

6. (U) SOMALIA: On 30 December at 1058 UTC, the fishing dhow AL SAQAR was hijacked near Hafun, off the northeastern coast of Somalia (exact position not specified). Later reporting stated that the dhow was headed southward and spotted near Afbarwaaqo, an anchorage between Eyl and Hobyo. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

7. (U) RED SEA: On 26 December at 0940 UTC, a Liberia-flagged container ship MSC UNITED VIII spotted missiles flying over the Red Sea approximately 74 NM northwest of Hodeida, Yemen (exact location not specified). An explosion was heard several nautical miles from the vessel. The vessel and crew are safe with no reported injuries. Crewmembers on the tanker subsequently saw a second explosion approximately 0.5 NM from the vessel at 1240 UTC. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; Bloomberg; MSC.com)

8. (U) RED SEA: On 26 December at 0320 UTC, a vessel reported seeing two unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), followed by two explosions within 5 NM of the vessel, which was underway approximately 50 NM west of Hodeida, Yemen (exact location not specified). The vessel communicated with coalition forces in the area and

reported that the vessel did not sustain any damage and that crew all crew members were safe. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

9. (U) RED SEA: On 25 December at 1800 UTC, an entity declaring itself to be the Yemeni Navy ordered a vessel underway approximately 77 NM northwest of Hodeida, Yemen, near position 15:23N – 041:46E, to alter course to a port in Yemen. (Clearwater Dynamics)

10. (U) ARABIAN SEA: On 25 December at 0631 UTC, two small craft approached a vessel 65 NM southeast of Duqm, Oman, near position 18:38N – 058:11E. The two white-hulled craft deployed from a dhow approximately 2 NM away from the vessel. The crew and vessel are reported safe. (Clearwater Dynamics)

11. (U) RED SEA: On 23 December at 1651 UTC, a UAV passed above the Norway-flagged product tanker BLAAMANEN before exploding 1.5 NM away from the vessel approximately 50 NM west of Hodeida, Yemen (exact location not specified). (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; U.S. Central Command)

12. (U) RED SEA: On 23 December, two anti-ship ballistic missiles were fired from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen into the Southern Red Sea (locations not specified). No ships reported being impacted by the ballistic missiles. (U.S. Central Command; Clearwater Dynamics)

13. (U) RED SEA: On 23 December at 1630 UTC, a UAV detonated near the Gabon-flagged crude oil tanker SAI BABA approximately 54 NM southwest of Saleef, Yemen (exact location not specified). The vessel reported no damage, and all crew were reported safe. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; U.S. Central Command)

14. (U) ARABIAN SEA: On 23 December at 0600 UTC, a UAV attacked the Liberia-flagged product tanker CHEM PLUTO approximately 200 NM south of Veraval, India (exact location not specified). According to the Pentagon, a one-way attack drone from Iran struck the tanker. There were no casualties from the attack and the crew extinguished a brief fire onboard the vessel. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; Reuters)

15. (U) SOMALIA: On 22 December at 1222 UTC, 20 heavily armed persons hijacked the Yemeni fishing dhow EMARAT-2, approximately 7 NM north of Eyl (exact location not specified). The dhow's color is white and it is 17.7 meters in length. A second fishing dhow FATA AL KHAIR was subsequently reported hijacked in the same area. At least one of the dhows was proceeding north toward the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor in the Gulf of Aden. Military authorities assess that one or both of the dhows may be used for future piracy attacks. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; IMB)

16. (U) RED SEA: On 19 December at 0530 UTC, four small boats with as many as five persons onboard each boat approached a vessel 80 NM northeast of Djibouti (exact location not specified). The master described the boats as blue and grey in color. The closest small boat approached to within 0.5 NM of the vessel before moving away. The vessel's crew did not observe any weapons and the vessel was not hailed. The vessel cleared the area and reported both crew and vessel as safe. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

17. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 18 December at 1650 UTC, two unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) approached a vessel near position 12:08N – 044:18E, approximately 84 NM east of Djibouti. The UAVs came within 50 meters of the vessel and circled several times before disappearing, (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

18. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 18 December at 1028 UTC, armed personnel on five small boats approached a vessel approximately 63 NM northeast of Djibouti (exact location not specified). The approach was likely deterred by nearby coalition forces. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)
19. (U) RED SEA: On 18 December at 0645 UTC, armed persons on one small craft approached a vessel near position 13:09N – 043:03E, approximately 14 NM southwest of Mokha, Yemen. The vessel's armed security team fired warning shots to the side of the approaching craft, resulting in the craft changing course away from the vessel. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)
20. (U) RED SEA: On 18 December at 0600 UTC, the Cayman Islands-flagged tanker SWAN ATLANTIC experienced an explosion on its port side approximately 24 NM northwest of Mokha, Yemen (exact location not specified). U.S. CENTCOM subsequently reported that the tanker was attacked by a one-way attack drone and an anti-ship ballistic missile launched from Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen. Through a spokesperson, Houthi forces claimed responsibility for attacking SWAN ATLANTIC and stated that the attack was carried out after the tanker failed to respond to calls from the group. Crew and vessel reported safe. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; U.S. CENTCOM; Maritime Executive; Reuters)
21. (U) RED SEA: On 18 December at 0435 UTC, the master of a vessel reported a possible explosion 2 NM off one of the vessel's quarters approximately 30 NM south of Mokha, Yemen, in the vicinity of the Bab el Mandeb Strait (exact location not specified). (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)
22. (U) RED SEA: On 15 December at 1000 UTC, a ballistic missile fired by Houthi forces struck the Liberia-flagged container ship MSC PALATIUM III, in the vicinity of the Bab el Mandeb Strait, approximately 30 NM southwest of Mokha, Yemen (exact location not specified). The explosion resulted in a fire that has been extinguished. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; U.S. CENTCOM; BBC News)
23. (U) RED SEA: On 15 December at 0618 UTC, a UAV launched from Houthi-controlled territory struck the port side of the Liberia-flagged container ship AL JASRAH approximately 60 NM southwest of Hodeida, Yemen (exact location not specified). The impact resulted in a fire onboard and the loss of one container. Following the incident, the fire was extinguished and the crew and vessel were reported safe. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; U.S. CENTCOM; BBC News)
24. (U) RED SEA: On 15 December at 0440 UTC, a small craft with 10 persons onboard claiming to be Yemeni authorities approached a vessel, approximately 50 NM northwest of Mokha, Yemen (exact location not specified). The craft was described as small with a white hull and black top. The persons onboard the craft ordered the vessel to alter course toward Yemen. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)
25. (U) ARABIAN SEA: On 14 December at 1200 UTC, unknown assailants hijacked the Malta-flagged bulk carrier RUEN near position 12:03N – 061:20E, approximately 700 NM east of Bossaso, Somalia. Initially, the crew secured themselves in the citadel, but the hijackers subsequently managed to break into the citadel and take the crew hostage. By 17 December, RUEN was 9 miles off Puntland, Somalia, and, as of 19 December, the bulk carrier remained in the vicinity of Puntland. On 18 December, an injured crew member requiring medical attention was released by the hijackers and evacuated to the Indian Navy ship INS KOCHI for initial treatment. Efforts to resolve



the incident are being coordinated among partners from Japan, Spain, India, the European Union Naval Force, as well as with local Somali authorities. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; IMB; vesseltracker.com; gCaptain; Maritime Executive; Reuters; US Maritime Administration)

26. (U) RED SEA: On 14 December at 1146 UTC, a vessel reported an explosion 50 meters off its port quarter while underway near position 13:41N – 042:38E. Authorities are investigating. Vessels are advised to transit with caution and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

27. (U) RED SEA: On 14 December at 1145 UTC, an entity claiming to be the Yemeni Navy ordered a vessel underway in the Red Sea to alter course to Yemen, near position 14:54N – 042:01E. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

28. (U) OMAN: On 13 December at 0500 UTC, between five or six small boats followed a vessel underway approximately 90 NM south of Al Duqm, Oman, near position 18:30N – 058:44E. Each boat had up to three persons onboard, a machine gun mounted on the bow, and powerful outboard engines. The boats followed the vessel for 90 minutes and approached to within 0.7 NM of the vessel before leaving the area. (Clearwater Dynamics; UKMTO)

29. (U) RED SEA: On 13 December at 0400 UTC, a Malta-flagged bulk carrier was approached while underway 50 NM west of Hodeidah, Yemen, near position 14:48N – 042:04E. AIS data indicates that the vessel continued its voyage north through the Red Sea. (Clearwater Dynamics)

30. (U) RED SEA: On 13 December at 0343 UTC, a speedboat with three armed persons onboard approached and fired upon the Marshall Islands-flagged tanker ARDMORE ENCOUNTER underway approximately 50 NM from Hodeidah, Yemen, near position 14:48N – 041:57E. The speedboat had two outboard engines and approached the vessel at 20 knots. The embarked armed security team fired warning shots and the perpetrators fired up to 10 rounds at the tanker from a distance of 300 meters before departing the area. Following the small craft's departure, an entity declaring itself as the Yemeni authorities directed the vessel to alter course to Yemen. At least two missiles were subsequently launched from Yemen in the direction of the tanker. One missile was intercepted and the second exploded 200 meters from the vessel's stern. Crew mustered in the emergency station after the explosion. The vessel and crew were reported as safe following the incident. (Clearwater Dynamics; UKMTO; gCaptain; vesseltracker.com)

31. (U) RED SEA: On 11 December at 2245 UTC, an entity claiming to be the Yemeni Navy ordered a vessel underway in the Red Sea to alter course to a port in Yemen (exact location not specified). (Clearwater Dynamics; UKMTO)

32. (U) RED SEA: On 11 December at 2100 UTC, an anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM) struck the Norway-flagged tanker STRINDA while underway 15 NM west of Mokha, Yemen, near position 13:17N – 042:59E. The ASCM was launched from a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen. The vessel reported a fire and damage onboard resulting from the attack. The fire was subsequently brought under control and no injuries were reported. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; gCaptain; Maritime Executive)



33. (U) RED SEA: On 6 December at 0718 UTC, UKMTO received a report of a drone loitering 49 NM southwest of Hodeida, Yemen, near position 14:25N – 042:12E. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

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



(U) Figure 3. East Asia – Southeast Asia Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea

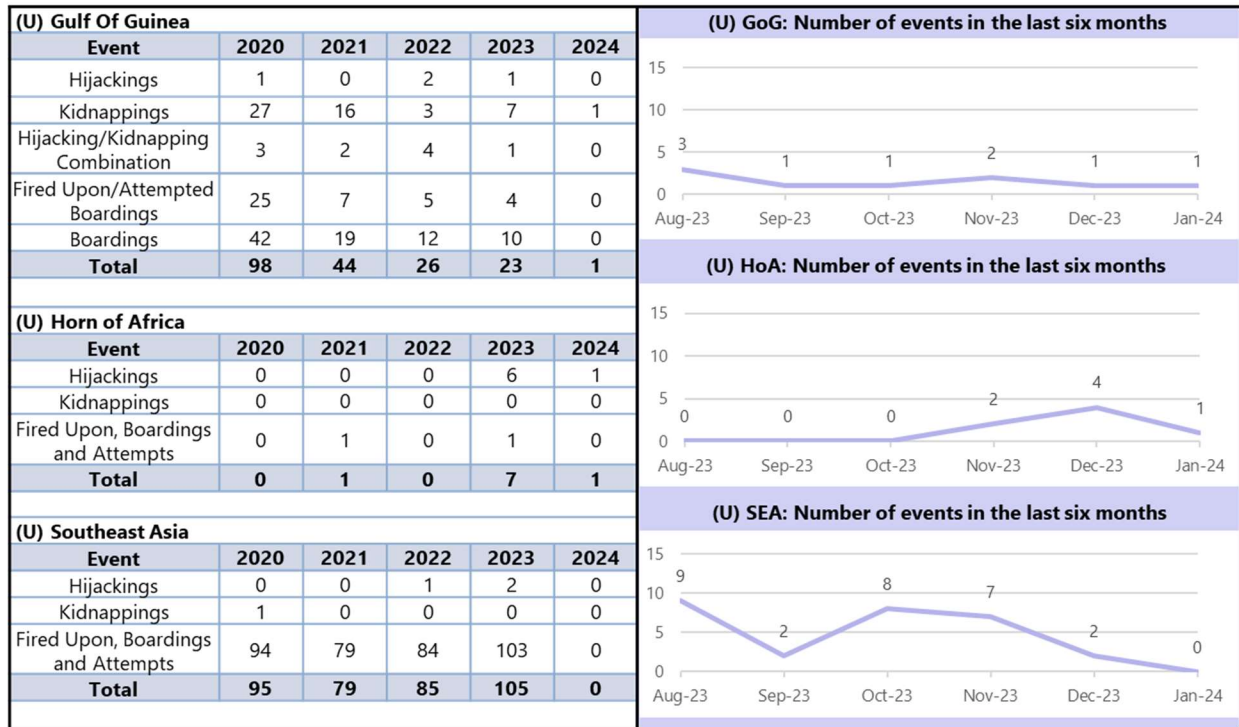
1. (U) INDONESIA: (Late Reporting) On 27 December at 0200 local time, four robbers armed with long knives boarded a tanker anchored at Dumai Anchorage near position 01:43N – 101:26E. The robbers took a duty crewman hostage and tied him up. The onboard shore security watchman deserted his post upon being threatened by the armed perpetrators. The duty engineer on routine rounds noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. Following the raising of the alarm, the robbers escaped with stolen engine parts. The vessel reported the incident to port authorities through the local agent. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) INDONESIA: On 7 December at an unspecified time, the 3<sup>rd</sup> engineer of the Singapore-flagged bulk carrier KONRAD SCHULTE discovered engine spares missing while underway in the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait Traffic Separation Scheme, near position 01:00N – 103:31E. The chief engineer notified the master of the incident and, upon further investigation, it was determined that perpetrators might have entered the steering gear room through the poop deck manhole. The crew conducted a thorough search and no perpetrators were located. All crew were reported safe. (ReCAAP; Clearwater Dynamics)

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

**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



## 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.

**7. (U) Appendix C: Active U.S. Maritime Advisories**

Title	Effective Date	Expiration Date
<a href="#">2023-016-Gulf of Guinea – Piracy/Armed Robbery/Kidnapping for Ransom</a>	27 DEC 2023	24 JUN 24
<a href="#">2023-015-Global – Overview of the U.S. Maritime Advisory System</a>	22 DEC 23	19 JUN 24
<a href="#">2023-014-Eastern Mediterranean Sea – Regional Conflict</a>	26 OCT 23	23 APR 24
<a href="#">2023-013-Various – GPS Interference &amp; AIS Spoofing</a>	2 OCT 23	30 MAR 24
<a href="#">2023-012-Global – New U.S. Maritime Alert and Advisory Subscription Process</a>	22 SEP 23	24 MAR 24
<a href="#">2023-011-Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Bab al Mandeb, Red Sea, and Somali Basin – Threats to Commercial Vessels</a>	6 SEP 23	4 MAR 24
<a href="#">2023-010-Black Sea and Sea of Azov – Military Combat Operations</a>	1 SEP 23	28 FEB 24
<a href="#">2023-009-Worldwide – Foreign Adversarial Technological, Physical, And Cyber Influence</a>	23 AUG 23	19 FEB 24

(U) **ICOD:** 3 January 2024

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