



UNCLASSIFIED

(U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report** **13 August – 9 September 2020**



10 September 2020

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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. UKMTO ADVISORY NOTICE 002/SEP/2020 dated 9 Sep 2020. UKMTO is aware MVs are being hailed over VHF asking for vessels details in and around position 12:28N - 043:34E (near Bab el Mandeb). We have been made aware by industry that the Yemeni Coast Guard is coordinating increased patrols and VHF hailings with merchant vessels and we are working with the Yemeni coastguard to ascertain whether this incident is related to this routine activity. This information is being made available for company awareness. Vessels are requested to report any such contact to UKMTO at watchkeepers@ukmto.org or phone 0044 2392 222060.

B. IMB/PRC/Alert – 136-2020 - To all ships transiting in / off Cameroon / Equatorial Guinea / Nigeria / Gulf of Guinea dated 091300 UTC SEP 2020. The Centre has received information from authorities that an armed group from river state, Nigeria are planning a piracy attack against vessels in the waters in/off Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. Attack may occur at low tide, when many monitoring units are unavailable in some areas. Vessels transiting in the area are advised to exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant. Maintain strict anti-piracy watch and measures. All attacks and suspicious sightings should be reported to local authorities and to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre as per IMO CIR 1334. The above warning will remain valid until 20 September 2020 or when next update is received.

3. (U) Summary:

- A. (U) YEMEN: On 9 September, a fast craft approached an underway tanker southeast of Perim Island, Bab el Mandeb Strait.
- B. (U) NIGERIA: On 8 September, pirates kidnapped two crew of the Liberia-flagged reefer south-southwest of Lagos.
- C. (U) ANGOLA: On 8 September, robbers boarded a container vessel at the Luanda Anchorage.
- D. PAPUA NEW GUINEA: On 7 September, two suspected pirates were arrested by local authorities on Kanakota Island, Samarai-Murua District, Milne Bay province.
- E. (U) NIGERIA: On 5 September, a small boat approached a berthed tanker at Shorelink Jetty, Port Harcourt.
- F. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 4 September, robbers managed to board the Liberia-flagged vessel at the Manila OPL Anchorage.
- G. (U) LIBYA: On 4 September, a group of armed men under the command of the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) forced a Comoros-flagged ship into Ras Lanuf port.

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:

1. (U) COLOMBIA: On 23 August, authorities from the country's Anti-Narcotics Directorate of the National Police, in a joint operation with Colombia's Navy, intercepted a semi-submersible carrying more than a ton of cocaine off the coast of the southern state of Nariño and arrested three men. The drugs were reportedly bound for a drug cartel in Mexico. (www.borderlandbeat.com)

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:



Figure 1: Mediterranean Sea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) LIBYA: On 4 September at 0200LT, a group of armed men under the command of the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) – including foreign mercenaries – forced the Comoros-flagged ship MOHAMED BEY into Ras Lanuf port. The armed men fired live rounds and RPG shells to the vessel's flammable and dangerous area, which intimidated the crew into yielding to their demands. The vessel was scheduled to enter the commercial section of Ras Lanuf port at 1100LT on the same day to load scrap when commandeered. There were no casualties reported. (Libya Herald, BBC)

2. (U) SPAIN: On 25 August, four stowaways were found onboard Antigua and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship JANINA at Valencia. One of them claimed to be minor and he was taken ashore. The rest remained aboard. The ship left Valencia the same day, bound for Mostaganem, Algeria. (www.fleetmon.com)

3. (U) SPAIN: On 16 August, crew members discovered a stowaway hanging from the stern ramp of the Cyprus-flagged ferry NAPOLES. The ferry operates daily between Melilla and Malaga, Spain. The stowaway apparently had been perched on the stern ramp for the duration of the seven-hour trip. A boat full of Spanish Guardia Civil officers approached the stern ramp as the ferry began the docking maneuvers and apprehended the man. (www.euroweeklynews.com)

F. (U) WEST AFRICA:



Figure 2. Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) ANGOLA: On 8 September at 2254LT, robbers boarded a container vessel using the anchor chain at Luanda Anchorage near position 08:45S - 013:17E. When the crew spotted the robbers and raised the alarm, the robbers fled empty handed. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) NIGERIA: On 8 September at 0930 UTC, pirates boarded the Liberia-flagged reefer ship WATER PHOENIX approximately 31 NM south-southwest of Lagos near position 05:53N - 003:17E. At the time, the vessel was transiting to Lagos. The pirates kidnapped two Russian nationals, one of which was the Captain, while the rest of the crew (5 Russians and 11 Filipinos) took shelter in the citadel. The Nigerian Navy responded, conducted a search, and escorted the vessel to safe anchorage. The rest of the crew were reported safe. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global, FleetMon, Splash 247.com)

3. (U) NIGERIA: On 5 September at 0215LT, a small boat with unidentified individuals onboard approached a berthed tanker at Shorelink Jetty, Port Harcourt, at position 04:46N - 007:00E. The detailed naval security onboard directed the spotlight toward the approaching boat, but the boat continued its approach. The security detail fired three warning shots, which caused the boat to move away. The ship conducted a search and found no robbers onboard. The port authorities responded to the incident. (Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) TOGO: On 29 August at 0230 UTC, seven to eight pirates onboard a small craft using grappling hooks attempted to board the anchored Bahamas-flagged container vessel BAHMAS in Lome at position 06:01N -

001:31E. The crew on watch spotted the pirates, raised the alarm, and repelled those boarding with the use of fire hoses. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global)

4. (U) IVORY COAST: On 29 August, robbers were able to board a tugboat anchored at Abidjan at position 05:15N - 004:00W. The robbers managed to steal an outboard motor and some safety equipment before escaping undetected. (Clearwater Dynamics)

5. (U) GHANA: On 28 August at 0730LT, six to eight pirates in a speedboat attacked and boarded the underway Ghana-flagged fishing vessel AP703 110 NM southeast of Tema at position 04:34N - 001:31E. Pirates kidnapped the vessel's South Korean Captain and Chief Engineer. The remaining crew took the vessel to Tema, where local authorities are investigating the incident. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global, IMB)

6. (U) GHANA: (Late reporting) On 16 August at 0430 UTC, six to eight pirates onboard a 12-meter small craft with a metal ladder attempted to board the underway Marshall Island-flagged oil tanker PIKE approximately 114 NM southeast of Tema at position 04:03N - 001:04E. The pirates aborted the boarding after the vessel executed evasive maneuvers. The vessel subsequently continued safely to its destination. (Dryad Global)

7. (U) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: On 23 August, two robbers boarded a vessel anchored near position 06:01S - 012:20E, Banana Anchorage. The robbers were observed on the forecastle by a duty crewman who raised the alarm. Crew was mustered and ship was searched. One mooring rope was reported cut and stolen. (Clearwater Dynamics)

8. (U) SIERRA LEONE: On 21 August, seven armed robbers boarded the China-owned long liner SHANGHAI2 while anchored near position 08:25N - 013:07W, approximately 10 NM southeast of Freetown. The robbers were armed with machetes and a shotgun. The crew tried to defend their vessel but were assaulted. The captain was shot in the leg. The Sierra Leone Navy was tasked to assist but the robbers had escaped by the time they arrived on the scene. The robbers stole crew's money, computers and a large quantity of fish. (www.maritimebulliten.net; Clearwater Dynamics)

9. (U) SENEGAL: On 20 August, a fight broke out aboard the Spain-flagged LNG tanker MADRID SPIRIT. One crewman was stabbed repeatedly, in the head, back and chest areas. The ship was enroute from Bilbao, Spain, to Nigeria and stopped in Dakar, Senegal, to get the injured crewman to a local hospital. The crew managed to disarm and immobilize the attacker, locking him into a service compartment. On arrival to Dakar, the perpetrator was taken into custody. (www.fleetmon.com)

10. (U) GHANA: On 18 August, a robbery occurred on a drill ship anchored near position 04:35N - 001:35W, Takoradi Anchorage. The robbers boarded the vessel from a canoe using a rope. One duty crew member spotted the robbers and raised the alarm. This resulted in the robbers escaping with stolen ship's property. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMB)

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

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



Figure 3: Arabian Gulf Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) YEMEN: On 9 September at 0600LT, a fast craft with ten individuals onboard approached the underway Norway-flagged tanker BOW ORION 28 NM southeast of Perim Island, near the Bab el Mandeb Strait at position 12:22N - 043:48E. The individuals requested the vessel stop via VHF radio. The Captain increased speed and carried out lockdown procedures while the onboard armed security team took their positions on the bridge. The fast craft came to within 400 meters before breaking off its approach. The crew spotted weapons onboard the fast craft during the incident. A fast craft previously approached a bulk carrier in the vicinity communicating via VHF radio that they were Yemen Coast Guard requesting specific information about the vessel. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global)
2. (U) YEMEN: On 31 August, the Saudi-led military coalition intercepted and destroyed an unmanned, remotely-controlled, explosive laden boat in Hodeidah governorate in the Red Sea. In a press statement, the coalition said the bomb-laden boat was launched by the Iran-backed Houthi "terrorist" militia. (Dryad Global, Saudi Press Agency)
3. (U) YEMEN: on 31 August at 0810 LT, two skiffs approached an underway Singapore-flagged tanker 26.5 NM southeast of Perim Island, near the Bab el Mandeb Strait at position 12:26N - 043:46E. The skiffs with six persons onboard came to within 300 meters when the vessel sounded the alarm. The skiffs aborted their approach upon seeing the vessel's security team onboard. The vessel continued safely to its destination. (Clearwater Dynamics)
4. (U) MOZAMBIQUE: On 27 August, IS-affiliated terrorist organization Ansar al-Sunna moved units to the islands of 'Ilha Mionge/Nhonge' off the coast of Mozambique. The island is 12 miles southwest of the port of Mocimboa da Praia in the Mozambique Channel, which the Islamic affiliated group took control on August 12. There were unconfirmed reports that beheadings and acts of kidnapping may have taken place, as well as the seizure of fishing vessels in the vicinity. (Bloomberg, Marine Link, Dryad Global)

5. (U) RED SEA: During the week of 21 August, the same private armed security member who held the ship MV JAEGER hostage for 3 days in July 2020 has done it again, on a different ship; reportedly for the same reason – non-payment of wages owed. The latest incident occurred aboard Mongolia-flagged survey vessel GOLDEN PALM being used by a Spanish chartering firm. The vessel is used as a floating armory for armed security teams. Reportedly, the incident was short-lived and has been resolved. (www.splash247.com)

6. (U) SOMALIA: On the evening of 16 August, six individuals reportedly boarded the Panama-flagged chemical tanker AEGEAN II approximately 180 NM southwest of Socotra Island, Yemen. At the time the tanker was experiencing mechanical issues while transiting from the UAE to Mogadishu, Somalia. Following the boarding, AEGEAN II transited north to a location off Bereeda, Somalia, at 11:54.3N - 051:03.9E. The crew composition and their status are unknown. Authorities continue to investigate this incident. (Dryad Global, Marine Link, Newsweek, Splash 247)

I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:



Figure 4: Southeast Asia Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 4 September at 0345LT, robbers managed to board the Liberia-flagged vessel AAL NANJING at the Manila OPL Anchorage undetected. The crew discovered the robbery when they noticed the forecandle store was open and ship's properties were missing. The crew subsequently searched the vessel, but found no robbers. The crew notified a Philippines Coast Guard vessel patrolling in the area and the Philippine Port Authority. (Clearwater Dynamics, GISIS IMO)

2. (U) MALAYSIA: On 30 August at 0040LT, a robber boarded a Marshall Island-flagged bulk carrier SEA DIAMOND underway eastbound in the Singapore Traffic Separation Scheme 25 NM southeast of Singapore near position 01:16N - 104:15E. The crew subsequently conducted a search, but the robber had escaped. The crew's security checks revealed nothing was stolen. (Clearwater Dynamics, ReCAAP)

3. (U) MALAYSIA: On 29 August at 2348LT, six robbers boarded the Iran-flagged bulk carrier AMINA underway eastbound of the Singapore Traffic Separation Scheme north of Bintan near position 01:16N - 104:16E. The crew subsequently searched the vessel and conducted security checks, but the robbers had escaped empty-handed. The vessel and crew continued to their destination. (Clearwater Dynamics, ReCAAP)
4. (U) INDONESIA: On 29 August at 0305 UTC, four robbers boarded the chemical tanker anchored in Dumai Anchorage near position 01:42N - 101:26E. When the duty crew spotted the robbers armed with knives, they raised the alarm and the crew were mustered in the citadel. Upon hearing the alarm, the robbers fled empty-handed. After the crew reported the incident to the port control, local authorities responded and boarded the vessel to investigate. (IMB, Clearwater Dynamics)
5. (U) MALAYSIA: On 25 August at 0500LT, a robbery occurred on the anchored Singapore-flagged tanker GS FABULOUS in the Sandakan Inner Anchorage at position 05:49N - 18:07E. The crew discovered the deck store's padlock broken and eleven drums of paint missing. (Clearwater Dynamics, ReCAAP)
6. (U) MALAYSIA: On 25 August, an Indonesian boat skipper was killed in a botched attempt to smuggle out magpie-robins in the waters of Tanjong Kelisa. A senior member of the Johor Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) said the incident took place when four enforcement personnel on the boat KILAT 16 tried to stop one of two boats, which were smuggling out the birds. "Earlier, they stopped and inspected the first boat with two locals onboard and found 90 baskets of white rump shama and oriental magpie-robin which were believed bound for Indonesia. "When attempting to stop the second boat with three suspects onboard, the boat skipper tried to grab a firearm belonging to one of the enforcement personnel and was shot in the process and declared dead," the MMEA official told reporters. Four suspects comprising two locals and two Indonesians from the two boats were detained by MMEA while the body of the dead skipper was handed to the police for further action. (www.dailyexpress.com.my)
7. (U) TAIWAN: On 22 August, a 43-year-old Chinese citizen was arrest by local authorities when he arrived in Kaohsiung Port. The man is to be questioned as to his part in the killing of at least four men at sea seen in a video that went viral in 2014 and if the incident took place from a Taiwanese vessel. The case came to light after a 10-minute video was circulated on the internet in August 2014. In it, a man believed to be the captain is heard giving directions in Mandarin with a mainland Chinese accent over a loudspeaker to the crew as 40 rounds of live ammunition are fired, picking off four or five unarmed men in the water. No images of the shooters are seen. At the end of the video, the victims are seen floating face down, and the group of men filming the shootings from the deck of the boat pose for photos as their vessel continues on its course. The identity of the victims have not yet been identified. The Fiji police commissioner at the time said the victims were thought to be pirates after a confrontation with an Asian fishing crew, according to a Fijian Broadcasting Corporation report aired on 26 August 2014. Fijian police were involved in the investigation because the video is thought to have been uploaded on the internet before it was discovered on a mobile phone that was found in the back of a taxi in Fiji, international media reported. (www.focustaiwan.tw)
8. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 20 August, an attempted robbery occurred on a bulk carrier anchored near position 13:44N - 121:01E, Batangas Anchorage. A duty crew member on security rounds was attacked and injured by a robber armed with a knife. The duty crew member managed to escape and notify the duty officer. The alarm was raised, and crew was mustered. Hearing the alarm and seeing the alerted crew, the robber escaped. Incident was reported to the authorities and medical assistance requested. Doctors and coast guard officers boarded the vessel to treat the injured crew member and investigate the incident. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

9. (U) MALAYSIA: On 17 August, Malaysian Coast Guard forces tried to inspect two Vietnamese boats suspected of illegally fishing off Kelantan state. According to Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, the Vietnamese fishermen threw hard objects and flammable items at the enforcement ship before ramming it. The Malaysian Coast Guard officers responded by firing in self-defense, wounding one man who later died. The Malaysian authorities detained 18 other Vietnamese fishermen for various offences, including illegal fishing, illegal entry, and attempted murder. (www.marinelink.com)

10. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 14 August, two robbers in a boat approached a chemical tanker berthed near position 13:46N - 120:58E, BBTI Terminal, Batangas. One robber armed with a knife attempted to board the tanker via the stern mooring rope. Deck watchkeeper noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. Crew was mustered. Hearing the alarm and seeing the crew's alertness, the robbers aborted their attempt to board and escaped in their boat. Port authorities and Coast Guard informed. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

11. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 14 August, a robber armed with a long knife boarded a berthed tanker by climbing the mooring line in Bauan Port, Philippines near position 13:46N - 120:59E. The robber threatened a duty crew member inside a cabin and stole personal belongings including a mobile phone and cash before fleeing in a waiting small blue motorized boat. The incident was reported to the port authorities who later boarded the tanker for further investigation. (Clearwater Dynamics)

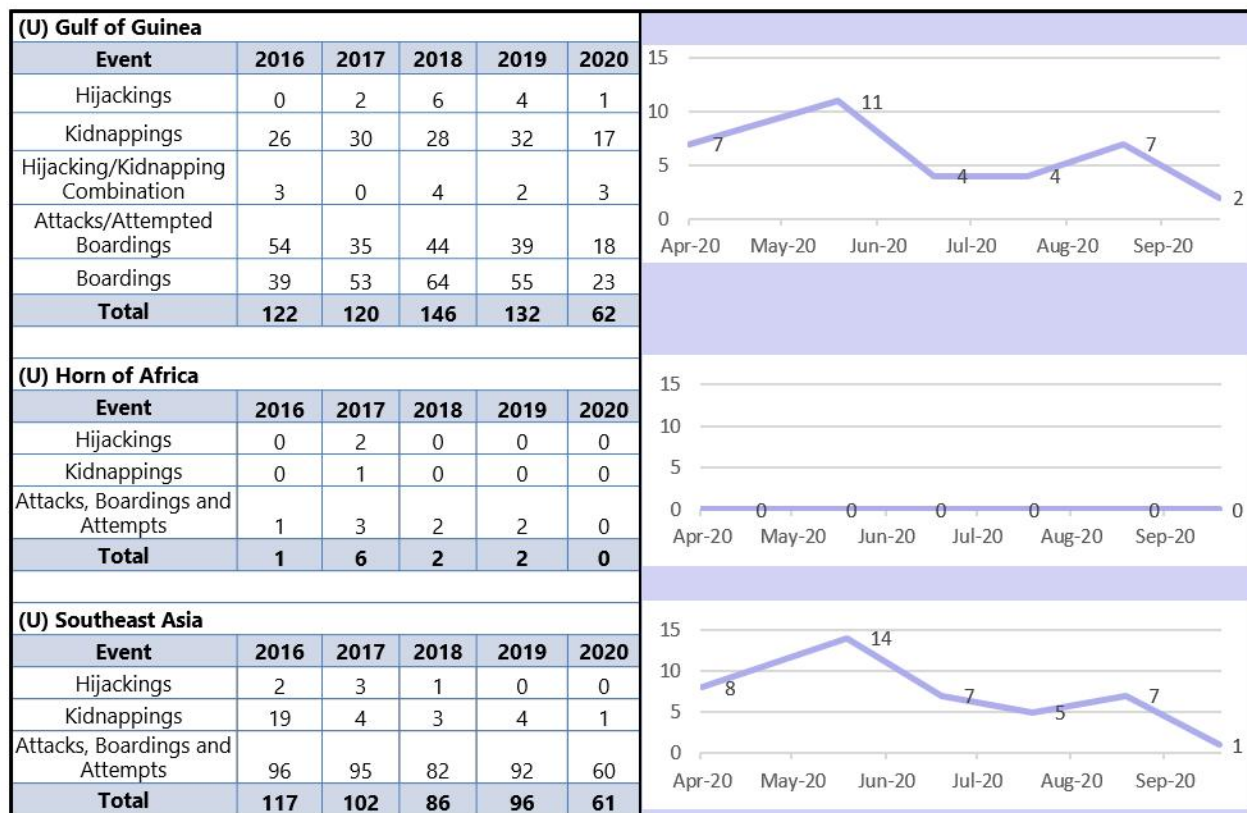
J. (U) **INDIAN SUBCONTINENT:** No current incidents to report.

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

1. (U) PAPUA NEW GUINEA: On 7 September, two suspected pirates were arrested by local authorities on Kanakota Island, Samarai-Murua District, Milne Bay province. Police following leads raided the village on the island and rounded up the pirates and confiscated two shotguns. They were suspected of belonging to a gang that attacked and robbed travelers at sea. (PNG-Post Courier)

2. (U) AUSTRALIA: On 15 August, Australian Border Force authorities boarded the Australian fishing trawler CORALYNNE after the vessel met up with a Chinese vessel a week earlier and followed a suspicious route back to Australia. During the search, the Australian Border Force discovered 1,900 bricks of cocaine worth up to \$600 million. (www.brisbanetimes.com.au, Maritime Executive)

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 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) **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:** 9 Sep 2020

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