



UNCLASSIFIED

(U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report** **3 September – 30 September 2020**



1 October 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. (U) **MARAD Advisory 2020-016-Various-GPS Interference - Issued 22 Sep 2020:** Multiple instances of significant GPS interference have been reported worldwide in the maritime domain. This interference is resulting in lost or inaccurate GPS signals affecting bridge navigation, GPS-based timing, and communications equipment. Satellite communications equipment may also be impacted. Over the last year, areas from which multiple instances have been reported include the eastern and central Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, and multiple Chinese ports. The U.S. Transportation Command "Message for Industry" at <https://go.usa.gov/xdSpq> provides additional GPS interference information. Guidance: Exercise caution when operating underway and prior to getting underway. For more information about U.S. Maritime Advisory see: <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci/2020-016-various-gps-interference>

3. (U) **Summary:**

- A. (U) **INDONESIA:** On 29 September, robbers boarded a tanker anchored 22 NM northeast of Tanjung Berakit, Pulau Bintan.
- B. (U) **GHANA:** On 26 September, the Ghana-flagged fishing vessel AGNES 1 was suspiciously approached approximately 102 NM south of Winneba.

- C. (U) ECUADOR: On 26 September, robbers armed with guns boarded a container vessel under pilotage near Guayaquil.
- D. (U) INDONESIA: On 23 September, robbers boarded a bulk carrier eastbound in the Traffic Separation Scheme.
- E. (U) CALIFORNIA: On 20 September, a crewmember onboard the Liberia-flagged container ship MSC REVENNA attacked another crewmember with a knife.
- F. (U) NIGERIA: On 17 September, four robbers boarded a passenger boat transiting between Okrika and Port Harcourt within the Bonny River.
- G. (U) PUERTO RICO: On 16 September, U.S. authorities arrested two U.S. citizens and seized a speedboat carrying 1,787 kilograms of cocaine near Vieques.
- H. (U) INDONESIA (Late Reporting): On 7 July, police arrested six boat captains on charges of stealing coal from a barge in Muara Pegah area, Kutai Kartanegara, East Kalimantan.

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:



Figure 1. North America Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) CALIFORNIA: On 20 September, a crewmember onboard the Liberia-flagged container ship MSC REVENNA attacked another crewmember with a knife. The second crewmember suffered stab wounds and subsequently died from his injuries. The Master of the ship persuaded attacker to surrender and locked him in a cabin. He was arrested upon the ship's arrival at Long Beach - Los Angeles on September 22. (www.fleetmon.com)

2. MEXICO: On 21 September at 0842LT, the Mexican Navy seized a Mexico-flagged product tanker BLUE COMMANDER at Veracruz Port for alleged transportation of stolen fuel. The vessel and 21 crew members were arrested for the crime of possessing hydrocarbons without the paperwork showing its source. According to the report, the illegal fuel-theft operation was part of a larger conspiracy run by the Jalisco Nueva Generación cartel and the Sangre Nueva Zeta cartel. (The Maritime Executive)

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

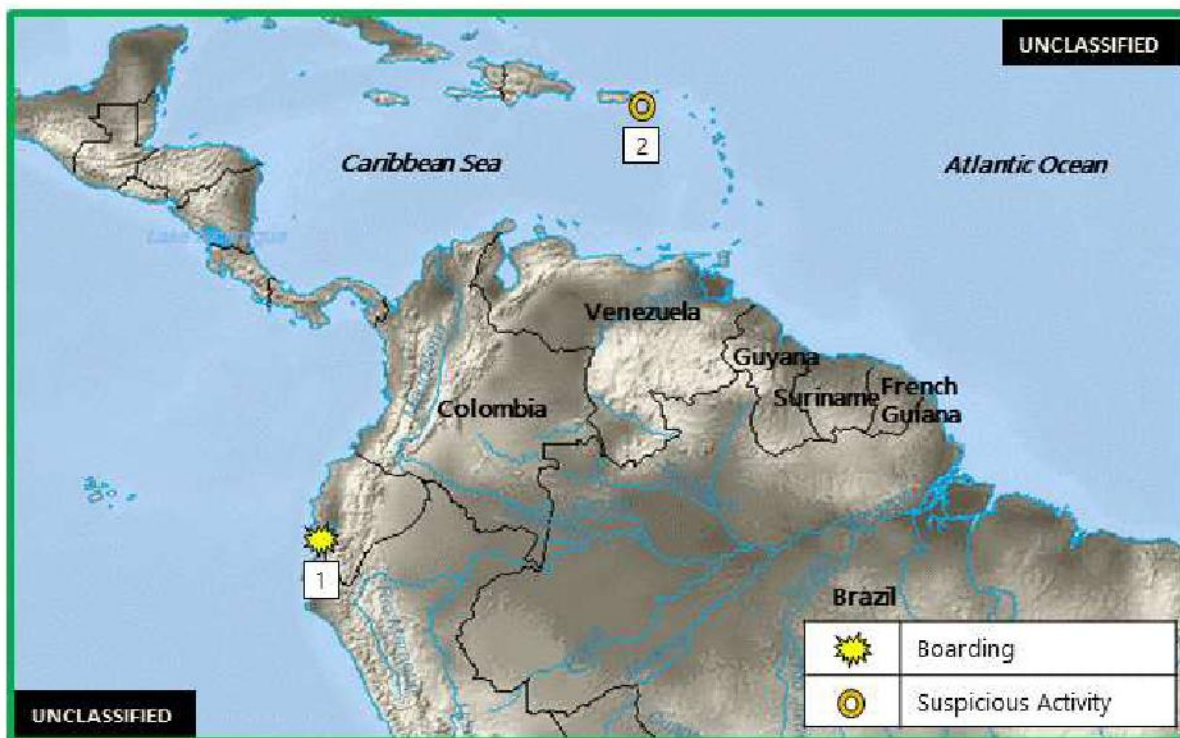


Figure 2. South America Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) ECUADOR: On 26 September, robbers armed with guns boarded a container vessel under pilotage near position 02:26S – 080:02W, Guayaquil. Ship's Master raised the alarm, activated the Ship Security Alert System and mustered the crew. Despite the continuous alarm and searchlights, the robbers stole cargo from the containers and departed. The Master reported the incident local authorities, who later boarded the vessel to investigate. Two containers were found open. (IMB)

2. (U) PUERTO RICO: On 16 September, U.S. personnel arrested two U.S. citizens and seized a speedboat carrying 1,787 kilograms of cocaine near Vieques, Puerto Rico. (www.cbp.gov)

3. (U) BRAZIL: On 20 September at 0410 UTC, a robbery occurred on a Denmark-flagged bulk carrier NORD NEPTUNE anchored at Macapa Anchorage near position 00:01N - 051:00W. Two robbers armed with knives were spotted near the forepeak store by a duty crew member on routine rounds. The duty officer was informed and the crew retreated into the accommodation. The alarm was raised, the crew mustered, and searchlights were directed

towards the forepeak, which resulted in the robbers making their escape into a waiting boat with a white hull. A full search was conducted, which confirmed that ship's property had been stolen. The incident was reported to the pilot station. (Clearwater Dynamics,IMO-GISIS)

4. (U) PERU: On 9 September, a duty crewman on routine rounds onboard a container ship anchored near position 12:01.49S - 077:12.65W, Callao Anchorage, saw a robber on the forecandle deck. Seeing the duty crewman, the machete-armed robber shouted and ran towards the crewman, resulting in the crewman retreating into the accommodation area. When the crew raised the alarm, the robber fled empty-handed. The crew notified VTS and a patrol boat responded and search the anchorage area. (IMB)

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) 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)

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

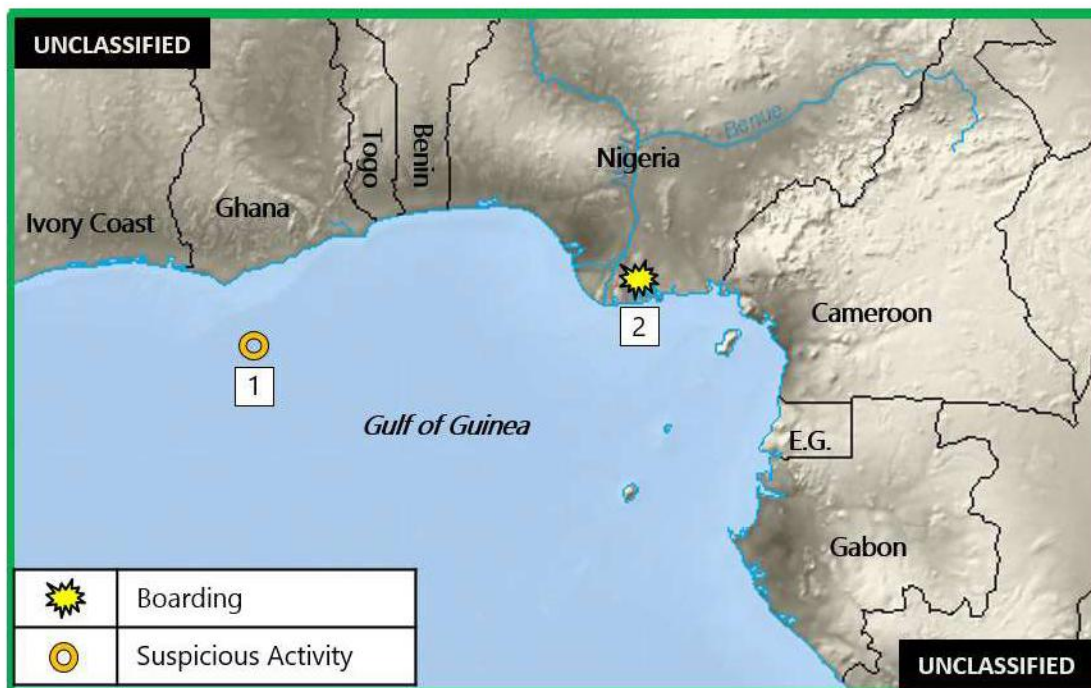


Figure 3. Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) GHANA: On 26 September, a skiff with 8-10 individuals approached the Ghana-flagged fishing vessel AGNES 1 near position 03:36N - 000:28W, approximately 102 NM south of Winneba. The skiff chased the vessel, but later abandoned its pursuit. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) NIGERIA: On 17 September, four robbers boarded a passenger boat near position 0443N – 007:34E, transiting between Okrika and Port Harcourt, within the Bonny river. The armed robbers, in a speedboat with an 85 HP engine, intercepted the passenger boat and held the pilot at gunpoint. The robbers removed the passenger boat engine and ordered the pilot to jump overboard. Marine Police were able to subsequently apprehend the robbers. (Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) GHANA: On 22 September, a skiff approached an underway Denmark-flagged tanker HAFNIA PHOENIX, 72 NM southeast of Takoradi near position 03:55N - 001:03W. The skiff came within half mile of the vessel and was seen with eight persons and a ladder onboard. The master carried out all anti-piracy measures, which resulted in the skiff aborting its approach. The vessel and crew were reported safe. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global)

4. (U) ANGOLA: On 8 September at 2254LT, robbers boarded a container ship 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)

5. (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, Splash247)

6. (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)

7. (U) TOGO: On 29 August at 0230 UTC, seven or 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)

8. (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)

9. (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 investigated the incident. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global, IMB)

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

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

1. (U) SOMALIA: On 21 September, Somalia pirates freed the last three of the 3,639 hostages held in captivity over the past five years. The three had been working on an Iranian fishing vessel SIRAJ, when it was hijacked off the coast of Hobyo, Somalia in March 2015. They are now undergoing medical check-ups, including tests for COVID-19, and will be on their way home after the clinical procedures. (ICC-CCS)

2. (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 armed embarked 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)
3. (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)
4. (U) YEMEN: on 31 August at 0810LT, 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)
5. (U) MOZAMBIQUE: On 27 August, the IS-affiliated terrorist organization Ansar al-Sunna moved units to the islands of 'Ilha Mionge/Nhonge' off the coast of Mozambique. The island is in the Mozambique Channel 12 miles southwest of the port of Mocimboa da Praia, which the Islamic affiliated group took control on 12 August. 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)

I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:

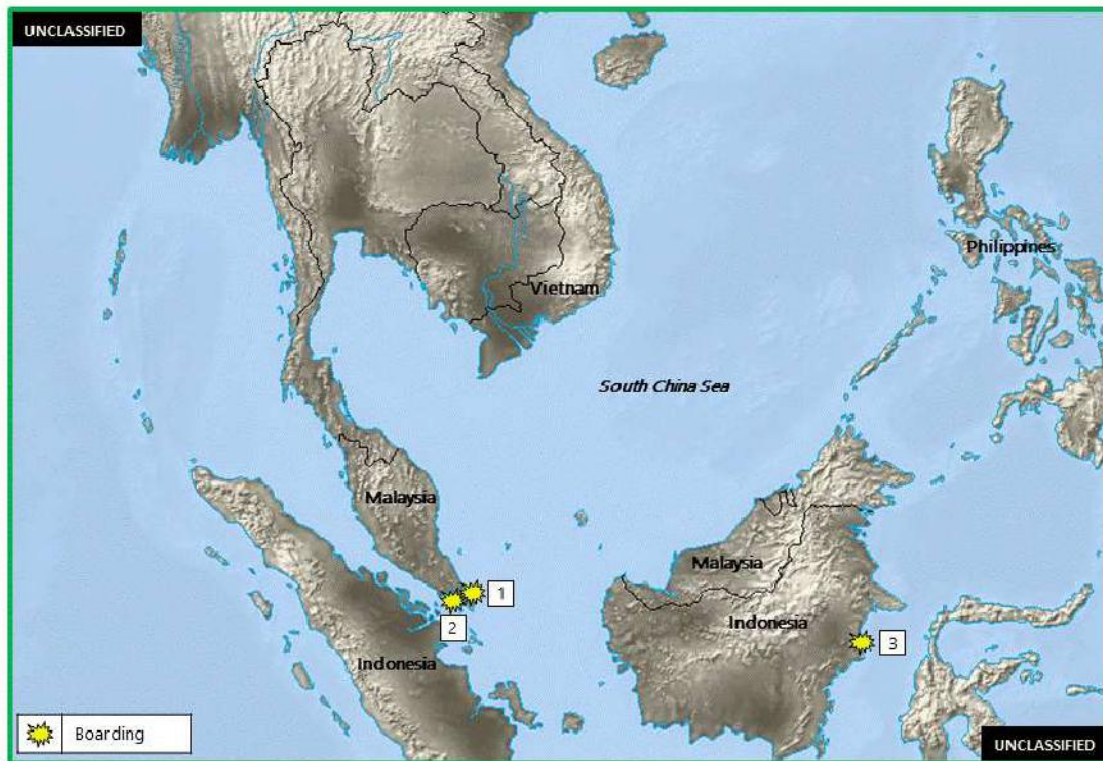


Figure 4. East Asia – Southeast Asia Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) INDONESIA: On 29 September, robbers boarded a tanker anchored near position 01:31N – 104:49E, 22 NM northeast of Tanjung Berakit, Pulau Bintan. The robbers were able to board undetected and steal ship's properties. The theft was discovered when the duty crew on routine rounds found the aft storeroom broken into and the spares missing. The incident was reported to both the Port Authority and local agent. (Clearwater Dynamics)
 2. (U) INDONESIA: On 23 September, robbers boarded the Hong Kong-flagged bulk carrier UNI BLOSSOM near position 01:05N – 104:05E, transiting eastbound in the Traffic Separation Scheme. The theft was discovered when the Chief Engineer noted a number of spare engine parts missing from a storeroom. The crew reported the incident to the Singapore Port Operations Control Center, who in turn notified the Republic of Singapore Navy Maritime Task Force, Singapore Police Coast Guard, and other Indonesian authorities. (Clearwater Dynamics)
 3. (U) (Late Reporting) INDONESIA: On 7 July, police arrested six boat captains on charges of stealing coal from a barge in Muara Pegah area, Kutai Kartanegara, East Kalimantan. The police also confiscated six boats with coal that were used by the suspects. Authorities subsequently identified the barge as the DEWI IRIANA 1, which was being towed by the INTAN MEGAH 3 tugboat belonging to PT Jembaran Muara Bara (JMB).
(www.news.detik.com)
 4. (U) CHINA: On 18 September at 0230 UTC, robbers boarded a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker TRF HORTEN at Rizhao Shelter Anchorage near position 35:04N - 120:06E. They stole ship's equipment and escaped unnoticed. The incident was reported to both the local agents and port authority. (Clearwater Dynamics, IMO-GISIS)
 5. (U) INDONESIA: On 12 September, the Cyprus-flagged dredger QUEEN OF THE NETHERLANDS was attacked by fishermen and activists as the ship moved to her new working site in the waters of Takalar Regency, southernmost Sulawesi. The protestors threw stones and Molotov cocktails, which ignited several fires onboard. Protesters also cut several pneumatic cables. QUEEN OF NETHERLANDS had to return to Makassar Port for repairs. Marine police intervened and arrested 12 protesters. (FleetMon)
 6. (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)
 7. (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)
 8. (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 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)
- 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)

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:** 30 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/>