



UNCLASSIFIED

(U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report** **21 October – 18 November 2020**



19 November 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:** None

3. (U) **Summary:**

- A. (U) MALAYSIA: On 19 November, robbers boarded an underway tanker in the Singapore Strait.
- B. (U) GHANA: On 17 November, a skiff approached an underway tanker approximately 47 NM south of Tegbi.
- C. (U) INDONESIA: On 17 November, robbers boarded the Panama-flagged bulk carrier ASIA SPRING while underway in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme.
- D. (U) MALAYSIA: On 17 November, authorities announced a new task force to combat robbery in the waters of the East Sabah Safe Zone after a number of recent robberies at sea.
- E. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 16 November, pirates released one hostage kidnapped from the Marshall Islands-flagged LNG tanker METHANE PRINCESS.
- F. (U) TOGO: On 16 November, pirates hijacked the Togo-flagged tanker STELIOS K approximately 40 NM south of Lome while transiting to Lagos, Nigeria. (Dryad Global, Clearwater Dynamics)

- G. (U) NIGERIA: On 16 November, pirates kidnapped five Ghanaian crewmembers from the Ghana-flagged general cargo vessel AM DELTA while underway approximately 44 NM south of Brass, Nigeria.
- H. (U) GHANA: On 13 November, robbers boarded a container ship anchored in Takoradi Port Anchorage.
- I. (U) SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES: On 12 November, two fishermen were robbed in waters off Mustique by 10 Spanish-speaking men armed with AK-47 rifles.
- J. (U) BELGIUM: On 5 November, authorities at the port of Antwerp seized 11.5 tons of cocaine hidden among a cargo of scrap metal that arrived in five shipping containers from South America.

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. Central America – Caribbean – South America Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES: On 12 November, two fishermen were robbed in waters off Mustique by ten Spanish-speaking robbers with AK-47 rifles. The fisherman had left in the early morning in their 24-foot wooden pirogue with a 75 horsepower Yamaha engine. When the fishermen were approximately 46 miles off the mainland of St. Vincent, robbers in a 30-foot-long blue pirogue with several outboard engines approached them and demanded money. The fishermen were detained for several hours before the robbers departed with the fishermen's GPS, cell phones, food, water, and money. (www.noonsite.com; www.searchlite.vc)

2. (U) BRAZIL: On 4 November, robbers boarded a bulk carrier berthed near position 00:03S – 051:10W, Santana Port, broke into the forecastle storeroom, stole ship's property and escaped unseen. The incident was noticed later during routine rounds. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

C. (U) **ATLANTIC OCEAN AREA:** No current incidents to report.

D. (U) **NORTHERN EUROPE - BALTIC:**



Figure 2. Northern Europe Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) BELGIUM: On 5 November, authorities in the port of Antwerp seized 11.5 tons of cocaine hidden among a cargo of scrap metal that arrived in five shipping containers from South America. (www.euractiv.com)

2. (U) UNITED KINGDOM: On 26 October, members of Britain's elite Special Boat Service boarded the Liberia-flagged tanker NAVE ANDROMEDA near the Isle of Wight and took custody of seven Nigerian stowaways after they made threats against the crew. (www.gcaptain.com)

E. (U) **MEDITERRANEAN - BLACK SEA:** No current incidents to report.

F. (U) WEST AFRICA:

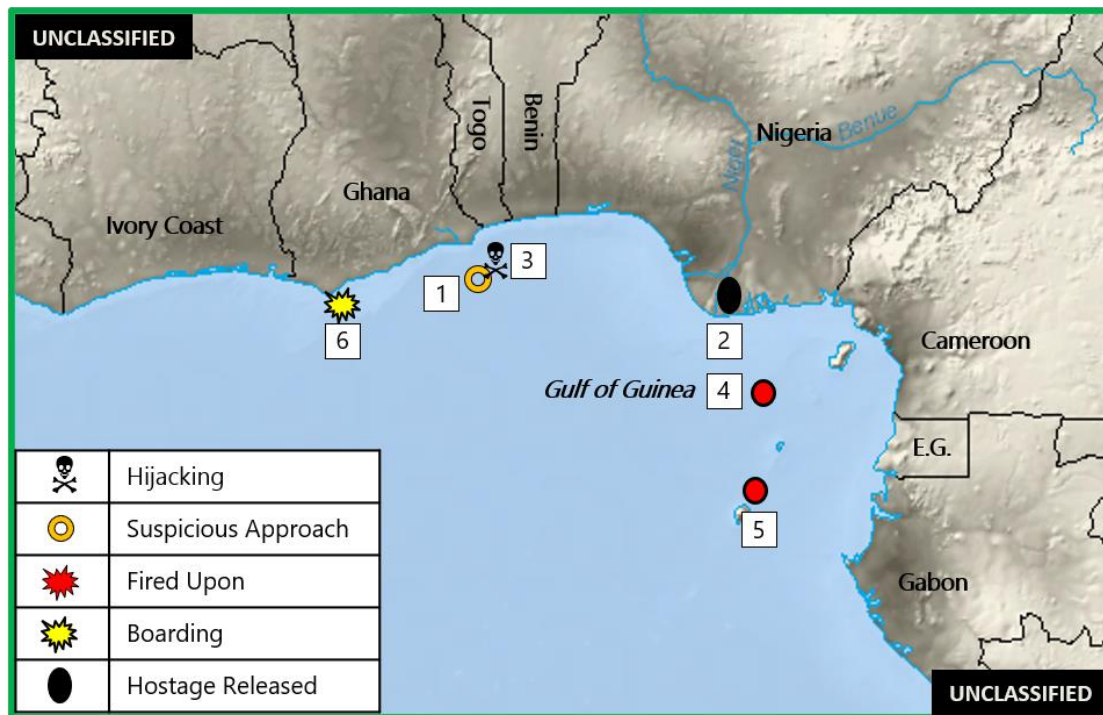


Figure 3. Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) GHANA: On 17 November, a suspicious skiff approached an unidentified tanker within .5 NM approximately 47 NM south of Tegbi near position 05:04N – 001:07E. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 16 November, pirates released a hostage taken from the Marshall Islands-flagged LNG tanker METHANE PRINCESS. (Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) TOGO: On 16 November, pirates hijacked the Togo-flagged tanker STELIOS K approximately 40 NM south of Lome at 05:28N – 001:25E while transiting to Lagos, Nigeria. (Dryad Global, Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) NIGERIA: On 16 November, pirates kidnapped five Ghanaian crewmembers from the underway Ghana-flagged general cargo vessel AM DELTA approximately 44 NM south of Brass, Nigeria near position 03:32N – 003:38E. The pirates also destroyed navigation and communication equipment before departing the vessel, leaving two crewmembers onboard. (Clearwater Dynamics; Dryad Global)

5. (U) SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE: On 13 November, pirates kidnapped 14 Chinese crewmembers from the Liberia-flagged heavy lift ship ZHEN HUA 7 approximately 80 NM northeast of Sao Tome near position 01:11N – 005:33E. The ship was drifting at the time of the boarding. The pirates left 13 crewmembers on the vessel when they disembarked. After the pirate attack, the Italian Navy ship MARTINENGO, which was patrolling in the region, was informed that a crewmember of the Zhen Hua 7 had sustained leg injuries and responded to assist. Upon arriving on scene, a boarding team from the MARTINENGO boarded the heavy lift ship to ensure the safety of the remaining crew and provide medical assistance to the injured seafarer. The frigate's helicopter ended up airlifting the victim to a hospital in Sao Tome to receive additional medical treatment. (Clearwater Dynamics; www.gcaptain.com; Dryad Global; www.maritime-executive.com)

6. (U) GHANA: On 13 November, robbers boarded a container ship anchored near position 04:53N – 001:42W, Takoradi Port Anchorage. The robbers broke into the forecandle storeroom and stole ship's stores before

departing undetected. The crew noticed the theft during routine rounds and reported the incident to port authorities. (IMB)

7. (U) BENIN: On 11 November, the Marshall Islands-flagged tanker JANE was attacked by a single skiff near position 05:12N – 002:23E, 70 NM southeast of Cotonou. (Dryad Global; Clearwater Dynamics)

8. (U) BENIN: On 9 November, the environmental NGO ship BOB BARKER was approached by a skiff with 7-8 armed persons on board near position 04:26N – 002:42E, 116 NM south of Cotonou. The skiff closed to within 0.7 nautical mile. The crew mustered in the citadel and the Beninese Navy guards on board fired warning shots. After 10 minutes, the skiff left the vicinity. (Dryad Global; www.oilprice.com)

9. (U) BENIN: On 9 November, the Marshall Island-flagged LA BOHEME was approached by two skiffs while underway near position 04:45N - 002:26E, 95 NM south of Cotonou. Alarm was raised and all non-essential crew mustered in the citadel. The Master increased speed, commenced evasive maneuvers, activated the fire pump and notified the regional authorities. The skiffs attempted to close and fired upon the vessel, resulting in damage to both the bridge and port side. The vessel hardening and evasive maneuvers resulted in the skiff aborting the attack and moving away. Vessel and crew reported safe. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics; Dryad Global; www.oilprice.com)

10. (U) NIGERIA: On 7 November, seven armed pirates chased a product tanker underway near position 03:35N – 004:36E, 87 NM southwest of Bayelsa. The pirates approached the tanker and came to within 250 meters. The Master undertook all security measures and the crew retreated to the citadel. The armed guards onboard displayed their weapons and fired three shots at the speed boat which resulted in the pirates aborting their pursuit and heading away. Vessel and crew are safe. The Incident was reported to local agent. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

11. (U) BENIN: On 7 November, pirates armed with rifles boarded the Singapore-flagged tanker TORM ALEXANDRA underway near position 03:31N – 002:34E, 172 NM south of Cotonou, Benin. Alarm was raised, main engine was stopped, Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) was activated, Company informed and all crew mustered in the citadel. Benin Navy dispatched a patrol boat. An Italian Navy frigate and its helicopter responded. A naval boarding team boarded the tanker and once clearance was given, the crew emerged from the citadel and regained control of the tanker. All crew members are reported safe. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics; www.safety4sea.com; www.oilprice.com)

12. (U) NIGERIA: On 4 November, five persons boarded a Panama-flagged product tanker NAFELI II approximately 95 NM south of Brass, near position 02:43N - 006:03E. Reporting stated the vessel was drifting. The shipping Company Security Officer and regional organizations were unable to communicate with the vessel. Local authorities have been informed of this incident. An updated report indicated pirates boarded the tanker and crew members were able to retreat to the citadel. The pirates disembarked the tanker after destroying bridge equipment. The tanker is continuing to her next port of call. (Clearwater Dynamics, Dryad Global)

13. (U) NIGERIA: On 31 October, two Russian sailors, captured by pirates from the reefer WATER PHOENIX off the coast of Nigeria in early September 2020, were released, a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said. The captain and the chief officer were abducted in the Gulf of Guinea on 8 September. "They have been brought to the city of Lagos, where they will undergo a medical evaluation," according to the spokesperson. (Analyst comment: two crew were held 53 days in captivity.) (Interfax)

14. (U) ANGOLA: On 26 October, five robbers in a wooden boat came alongside an offshore supply vessel anchored in the Luanda Anchorage at position 08:44S - 013:17E and attempted to board the vessel. When the duty officer noticed one of the robbers attempting to board the ship, he raised the alarm. The robbers

subsequently departed the area in their boat. The crew reported the incident to port authorities. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

15. (U) NIGERIA: On 22 October, pirates boarded a tanker 105 NM south of Lagos near position 04:38N - 003:28E. Once onboard, the pirates ransacked crew cabins and destroyed bridge equipment while the crew sheltered in the citadel. The Nigeria Navy responded to the call for assistance and escorted the tanker to Lagos following the boarding. (Clearwater Dynamics)

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

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

1. (U) MOZAMBIQUE: On 2 November, five robbers armed with long knives boarded an anchored bulk carrier near position 14:22S - 040:42E, Nacala Anchorage. They boarded the ship using hooks attached with ropes and broke into the paint locker. Duty crewman on routine rounds saw the robbers and alerted the duty officer and retreated into the accommodation area. The alarm was raised and crew was mustered. The robbers stole ship's stores and escaped. Local agents informed. (IMB)

2. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 29 October, a skiff approached a commercial vessel approximately 33 NM northeast of Point Alpha, International Recommended Transit Corridor near position 12:00N - 045:32E. When the skiff approached to within 0.8 NM of the vessel, the onboard armed security team showed their weapons. The skiff altered course and continued on a parallel course 1 NM from the vessel for 50 minutes before changing course to the south and heading towards Somalia. (Clearwater Dynamics)

I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:



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

1. (U) MALAYSIA: On 19 November, three robbers boarded an underway tanker in the Singapore Strait near position 01:16N – 0104:15E. Nothing was stolen during the boarding. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) INDONESIA: On 17 November, three robbers boarded the Panama-flagged bulk carrier ASIA SPRING underway in the Singapore Strait near position 01:15N – 104:04E. A subsequent search by the crew revealed

nothing was stolen. The master notified the Vessel Traffic Information Service of the incident. (ReCAAP; Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) MALAYSIA: On 17 November, authorities announced they had set up a task force to combat robbery in the waters of the East Sabah Safe Zone (ESS Zone) following recent robberies in the area. (www.bernama.com)

4. (U) INDONESIA: On 9 November, at least one robber boarded the Panama-flagged bulk carrier ATLANTIC DIANA while underway near position 01:67N – 014:18E, the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme. The Master reported to the Vessel Traffic Information Service that one robber, armed with a knife, was spotted in the engine room. A full search was conducted which confirmed the robber had escaped and nothing had been reported stolen. (ReCAAP; Clearwater Dynamics)

5. (U) INDONESIA: On 9 November, robbers boarded the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier LEFKADA while underway near position 01:17N – 014:20E, the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme. It was reported to the Vessel Traffic Information Service that a number of robbers had been spotted in the engine room. A full search was conducted which confirmed the robbers had escaped and one life buoy was missing. (ReCAAP; Clearwater Dynamics)

6. (U) INDONESIA: On 8 November, robbers boarded the Liberia-flagged tanker ZENO while underway near position 01:16N – 014:12E, the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme. The Master reported to the Vessel Traffic Information Service that three robbers has been sighted in the engine room. A full search was conducted which confirmed that the robbers had escaped with items of ship's property. (ReCAAP; Clearwater Dynamics)

7. (U) VIETNAM: On 3 November, eight robbers boarded a container ship anchored near position 10:14N – 107:00E, Vung Tau Anchorage. The alarm was raised which resulted in the robbers escaping into a small boat after jumping overboard. A full search of the vessel was conducted which confirmed twelve cans of paint had been stolen from the paint storeroom. The incident was reported to Vung Tau Port Control who notified both the Vietnam Coast Guard and local authorities. (Clearwater Dynamics)

8. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 3 November, seven alleged members of Abu Sayyaf Group in a speedboat were intercepted by Joint Task Force Sulu and killed during a clash with government troops in the Sulu Sea. The Western Mindanao Command said the group was conducting kidnap-for-ransom activities under the watch of Sawadjaan and Abu Sayyaf leader Radullan Sahiron. (CNN)

9. (U) VIETNAM: On 30 October, the bosun onboard the Singapore-flagged bulk carrier HANYANG discovered that the padlock of masthouse No. 1 was broken while underway near position 10:45N - 106:43E, Ho Chi Minh City. Upon investigation, spares for the ship anchor were missing. No perpetrators were found. The ship's Company Security Officer was informed. (ReCAAP)

10. (U) MALAYSIA: On 28 October, a robber using a bamboo pole boarded the Panama-flagged tanker SG FRIENDSHIP anchored in the Dumai Anchorage at position 01:42N - 101:28E. The robber fled in a waiting boat with three individuals after being detected by a duty crewman. The crew reported the incident to the local agent. (Clearwater Dynamics)

11. (U) INDONESIA: On 26 October, a speedboat attempted to come alongside a bulk carrier in the Singapore Strait near position 01:14N - 104:07E. When the crew raised the alarm and turned on the deck lights, the speedboat departed the area. (IMB)

12. (U) INDONESIA: On 26 October, five robbers boarded the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier A RACER underway in the Singapore Strait near position 01:14N - 104:04E. The robbers disembarked empty-handed. (ReCAAP, Clearwater Dynamics)

13. (U) INDONESIA: On 26 October, three robbers boarded the Cyprus-flagged bulk carrier EL MATADOR in the Singapore Strait near position 01:14N - 114:10E. The crew managed to lock the robbers in the engine room and notify the Indonesian Navy. However, when the Indonesian Navy boarding team arrived, they discovered the robbers had managed to escape. Nothing was stolen during the boarding. (ReCAAP, Clearwater Dynamics)

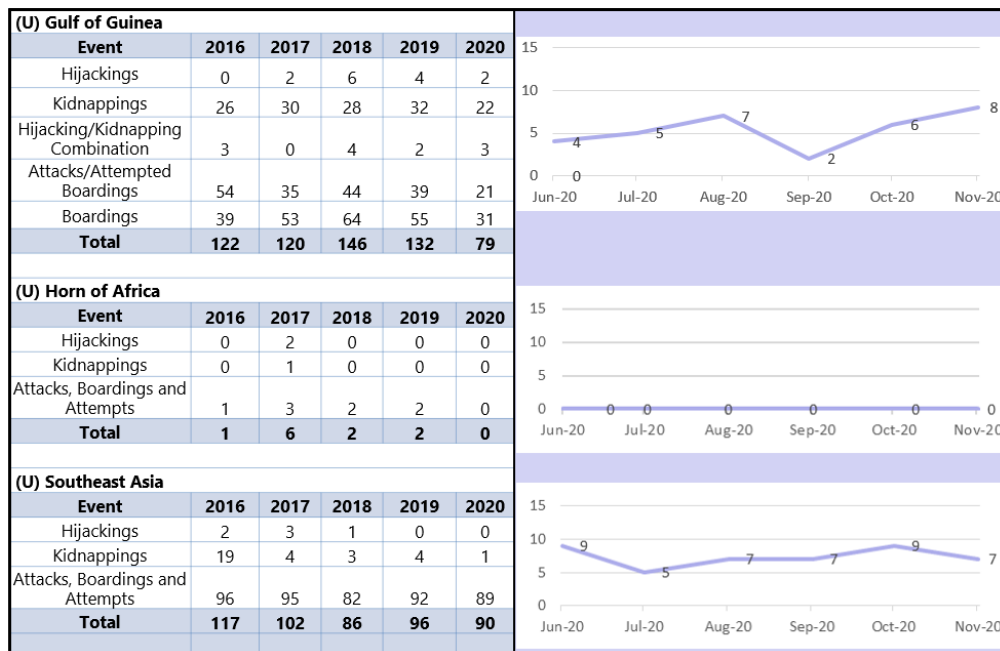
14. (U) INDONESIA: On 25 October, five robbers armed with knives boarded the underway Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier SEAJOURNEY in the Singapore Strait near position 01:15N – 104:05.8E. The duty crewman raised the alarm after noticing the robbers in the engine storeroom. The robbers fled with engine spares after seeing the crew response. The crew notified the Singapore VTS. (IMB; ReCAAP, Clearwater Dynamics)

15. (U) INDONESIA: On 25 October, the master onboard a bulk carrier underway received a call from the Vessel Traffic Information System which indicated that the vessel may have been boarded by armed robbers near position 01:15N - 104:08E. Master immediately raised the alarm and made an announcement on the speaker system. As the crew searched the accommodation and engine room areas, the 4th engineer was confronted by the perpetrators and managed to escape. The crew secured the accommodation and engine room areas. The master was advised to drop anchor off Pulau Batam where the Indonesian Navy boarded the vessel to investigate. The vessel was searched but no perpetrators were found onboard, after which the vessel resumed its voyage. (IMB)

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 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:** 19 November 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/>