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(U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report** 9 December 2020 – 6 January 2021



6 January 2021

(U) **Table of Contents:**

1. (U) **Scope Note**
2. (U) **Warnings and Advisories**
3. (U) **Summary**
4. (U) **Details: Monthly Incidents by Region**
5. (U) **Appendix A: Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea Statistics and Trends**
6. (U) **Appendix B: Definitions and Sourcing**

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) **2020-018-Global-Overview of the U.S. Maritime Advisory System**. **Effective Date: 22 Dec 2020**. This revised Advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2020-010. This Advisory provides updates to maritime security resources, websites, and information. The U.S. Maritime Advisory System website (www.maritime.dot.gov/msci), which contains all current and expired U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories is maintained by the Maritime Administration (MARAD). Upon U.S. Government (USG) clearance of Alerts and Advisories, they are broadcast by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and distributed via email. Feedback to MARADSecurity@dot.gov is always welcome. Those who desire to subscribe to U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories may do so at www.marad.dot.gov/MSCI. Questions regarding the U.S. Maritime Advisory System may be emailed to the Global Maritime Operational Threat Response Coordination Center at GMCC@uscg.mil. This message will automatically expire on 20 June 2021.

3. (U) **Summary:**

- A. (U) CONGO: On 4 January, robbers armed with knives boarded a container ship anchored at Pointe Noire North Anchorage.
- B. (U) IRAN: On 3 January, Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps seized the South Korea-flagged tanker HANKUK CHEMI in the Persian Gulf.
- C. (U) INDONESIA: On 3 January, three robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored bulk carrier at Muara Berau Anchorage.

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- D. (U) MEXICO: On 31 December 2020, one boat was destroyed during an attack on two vessels operated by a conservation NGO group, in a refuge for the endangered vaquita porpoise in the upper Gulf of California.
- E. (U) IRAQ: On 31 December 2020, Iraqi ordnance disposal personnel defused a large mine discovered on the hull an oil tanker in the Persian Gulf.

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:

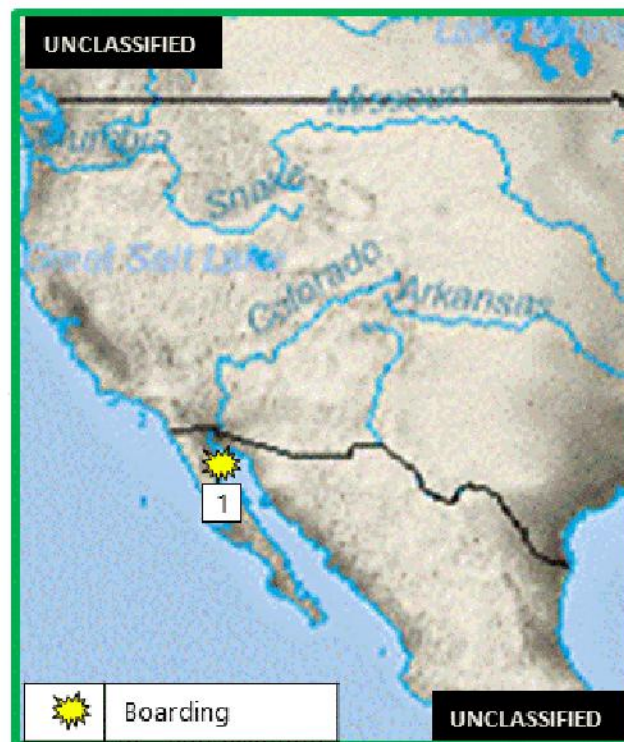


Figure 1. North America Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) MEXICO: On 31 December 2020, one boat was destroyed during an attack on vessels operated by a conservation NGO group, in a refuge for the endangered vaquita porpoise in the upper Gulf of California. The crew aboard one of the vessels were retrieving a gillnet from the water when fishermen aboard at least five pangas began throwing lead weights and Molotov cocktails at both crew and military officials who were onboard. According to the NGO group, as the vessel began to leave the scene, one of the pangas swerved in front of it and smashed into the hull. The smaller vessel broke in two and its two passengers were thrown into the sea. A second NGO vessel recovered the two men, who were given emergency first aid. Doctors with the Mexican Navy arrived and treated the two, one of whom wasn't breathing when he was brought aboard. While the men were being treated, the NGO group reported, two other fishermen boarded the NGO vessel, threatened the crew and officials

onboard, and smashed a camera that was filming the incident. One of the fishermen later died from his injuries. (www.mexiconewsdaily.com; www.bbc.com)

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:

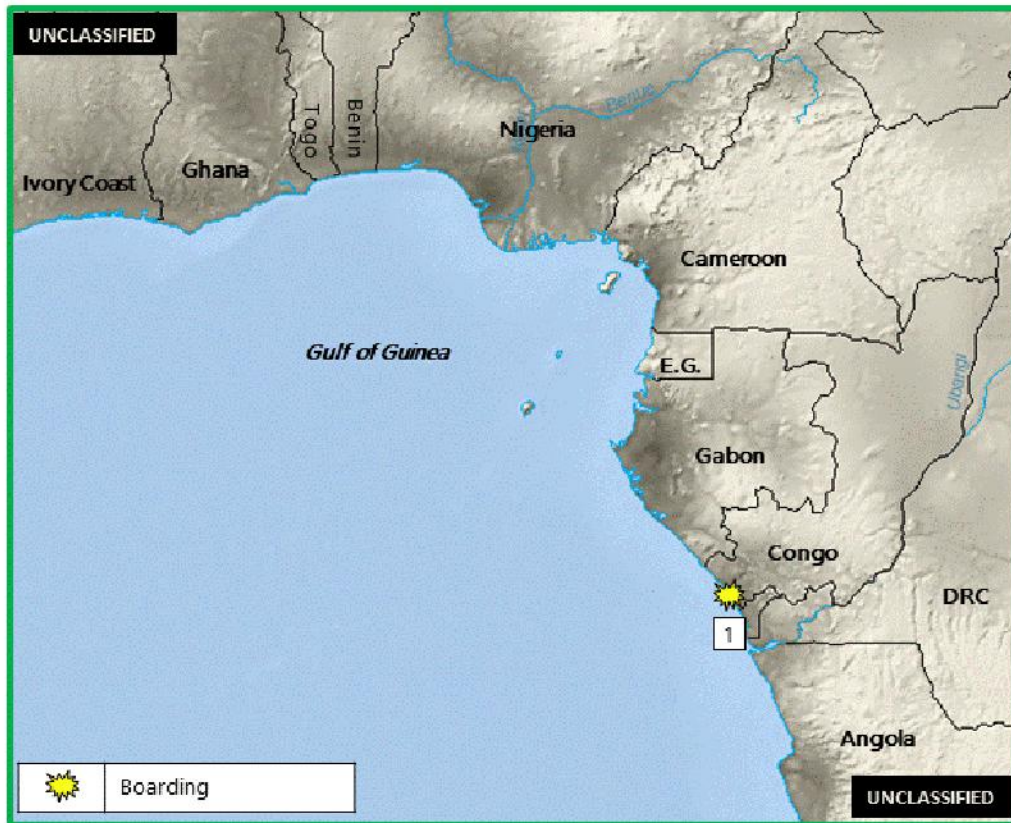


Figure 2. West Africa Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) CONGO: On 4 January, robbers armed with knives boarded a container ship anchored at Pointe Noire North Anchorage, position 04:42S - 011:44E. The alarm was sounded and all crew mustered in the citadel. The robbers stole ship's stores and escaped. The incident was reported to port control. All crew is reported safe. (IMB)

2. (U) NIGERIA: On 29 December, the crew on a tanker reported a suspicious approach by a speedboat approximately 94 NM southwest of Brass, Nigeria, near position 02:44N - 006:24E. The skiff, which had five armed men on board, approached within 50 meters of the tanker's starboard side. When the master carried out evasive maneuvers, the skiff departed the area. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) GHANA: On 26 December, a robber boarded a cargo vessel in Takoradi Anchorage, near position 04:53N - 001:41W. When the duty officer noticed the robber on the forecandle and raised the alarm, the robber fled with ship's property. (Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) ANGOLA: On 24 December, robbers boarded a research vessel in Luanda Anchorage, near position 08:44S - 013:17E. The robbers stole several mooring lines from the vessel forecastle without being spotted. (Clearwater Dynamics)
5. (U) NIGERIA: On 24 December, pirates released five Ghanaians kidnapped from the Ghana-flagged general cargo vessel AM DELTA. They were in good health and unharmed. (Clearwater Dynamics; www.splash247.com)
6. (U) NIGERIA: On 22 December, the crew of the Singapore-flagged tanker BW PAVILION LEEARA reported a suspicious approach by a speedboat approximately 121 NM southwest of Brass, Nigeria, near position 02:26N - 005:24E. When the speedboat approached the tanker on the port side, the captain increased speed, altered course, and notified his company. The speedboat subsequently changed course and increased speed to continue its pursuit of the tanker. During the incident, the crew mustered in the citadel, apart from the captain and two other crew members who remained on the bridge. The speed boat aborted the chase after 45 minutes. (Clearwater Dynamics)
7. (U) NIGERIA: On 21 December, Lebanon's Foreign Ministry announced that three of its citizens, along with two Egyptians, had been released after they were kidnapped on 26 November from the cargo ship MILANO I off the coast of Nigeria. (www.elnashra.com; www.middleeastmonitor.com)
8. (U) NIGERIA: On 21 December, pirates boarded the Malta-flagged container ship PORT GDYNIA approximately 100 NM south-southwest of Brass, near position 02:37N - 005:37E. The crew safely evacuated to the citadel, where they heard gunfire inside the ship at that time. The pirates eventually departed the ship and the crew was able to continue on its voyage to Bata, Equatorial Guinea. (Clearwater Dynamics)
9. (U) NIGERIA: On 19 December, pirates boarded the Singapore-flagged container ship MAERSK CADIZ approximately 85 NM south of Brass, near position 02:39N - 006:14E. Three security vessels responded to the incident but the pirates had departed the container ship. Crew is safe. (Clearwater Dynamics; Dryad Global; www.fleetmon.com)
10. (U) NIGERIA: On 18 December, pirates reportedly boarded the Bermuda-flagged LNG tanker LNG LAGOS II 170 NM southwest of Brass, near position 02:17N - 003:54E. (Dryad Global; www.fleetmon.com)
11. (U) NIGERIA: On 16 December, pirates boarded the Cameroon-flagged cargo vessel STEVIA while underway from Port Harcourt, Nigeria, to Abidjan, Ivory Coast. The boarding took place near position 03:50N - 006:09E, approximately 28 NM southwest of Brass, Nigeria. Eight crew members were kidnapped. (Dryad Global)
12. (U) NIGERIA: On 15 December, pirates boarded the Malta-flagged tanker NEW RANGER underway near position 02:00N - 004:45E, approximately 160 NM south-southwest of Brass, Nigeria. When the duty officer saw the perpetrators, he raised the alarm. All crew retreated into the citadel. Eventually, the pirates left the vessel and the crew emerged from the citadel. The crew and vessel are safe. (IMB; Dryad Global)
13. (U) NIGERIA: On 14 December, pirates released three crewmembers kidnapped from the tanker STELIOS K on 16 November after 28 days in captivity. (Clearwater Dynamics)
14. (U) NIGERIA: On 10 December, pirates boarded the Cameroon-flagged cargo vessel CAP SAINT GEORGES while underway 48 NM west of Bayelsa, near position 04:37N - 004:38E. Pirates kidnapped five crew members (3 Cameroonians, 1 Ghanaian, and 1 from Sierra Leone). The remaining crew sailed the ship to a safe port. (IMB; Dryad Global)

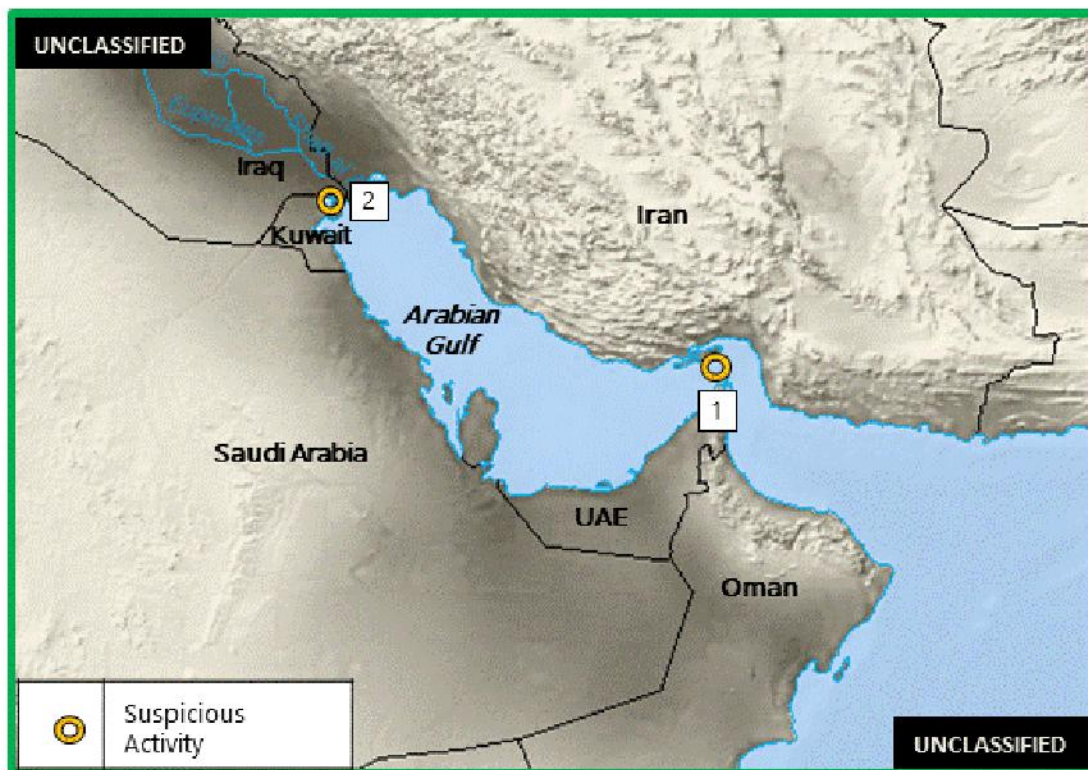
G. (U) ARABIAN GULF:

Figure 3. Arabian Gulf Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) IRAN: On 3 January, Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps seized a South Korea-flagged tanker in the Persian Gulf. Seoul confirmed the seizure of a South Korean chemical tanker by Iranian authorities in the waters off Oman, and demanded its immediate release. Several Iranian media outlets, including Iranian state TV, said the Guards navy captured the vessel for polluting the Gulf with chemicals. The semi-official Tasnim news agency published pictures showing what it identified as Guards speedboats escorting the tanker HANKUK CHEMI, which it said was carrying 7,200 tons of ethanol. They reported the vessel's crew members, including nationals of South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Myanmar, have been detained. The tanker is being held at Iran's Bandar Abbas Port. The tanker has 20 crew members, according to South Korea's foreign ministry. (www.gcaptain.com)

2. (U) IRAQ: On 31 December 2020, Iraqi ordnance disposal personnel defused a large mine discovered on the hull of an oil tanker in the Persian Gulf, and evacuated its crew. A statement came a day after two private security firms said sailors feared they had found the limpet mine on the Liberia-flagged tanker POLA in the waters off the Iraqi Port of Basra. (www.abcnews.go.com)

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

1. (U) SAUDI ARABIA: On 14 December, an explosion occurred near the Singapore-flagged tanker BW RHINE as the ship was conducting cargo operations near Jeddah Port. The explosion was external, causing an internal fire, which was extinguished within the hour. A survey for underwater damage is ongoing. No casualties were reported. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; www.gcaptain.com)

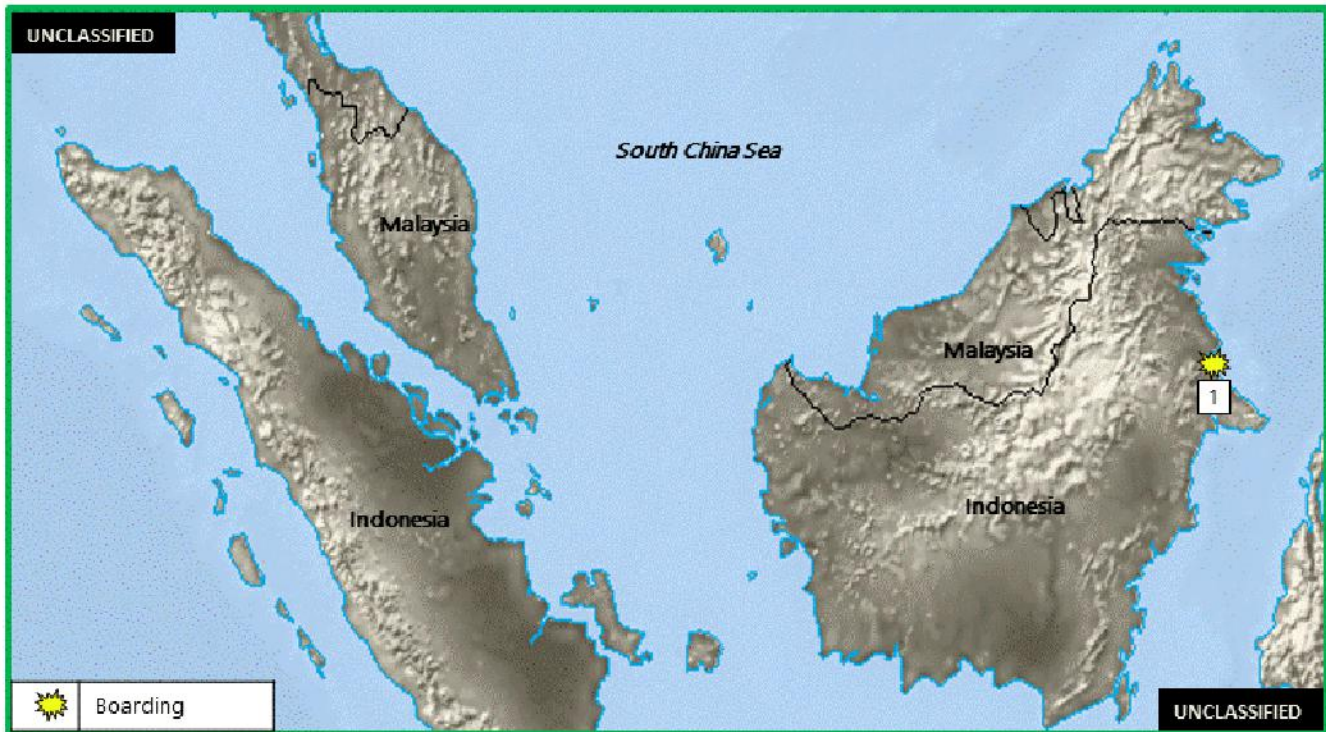
I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:

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

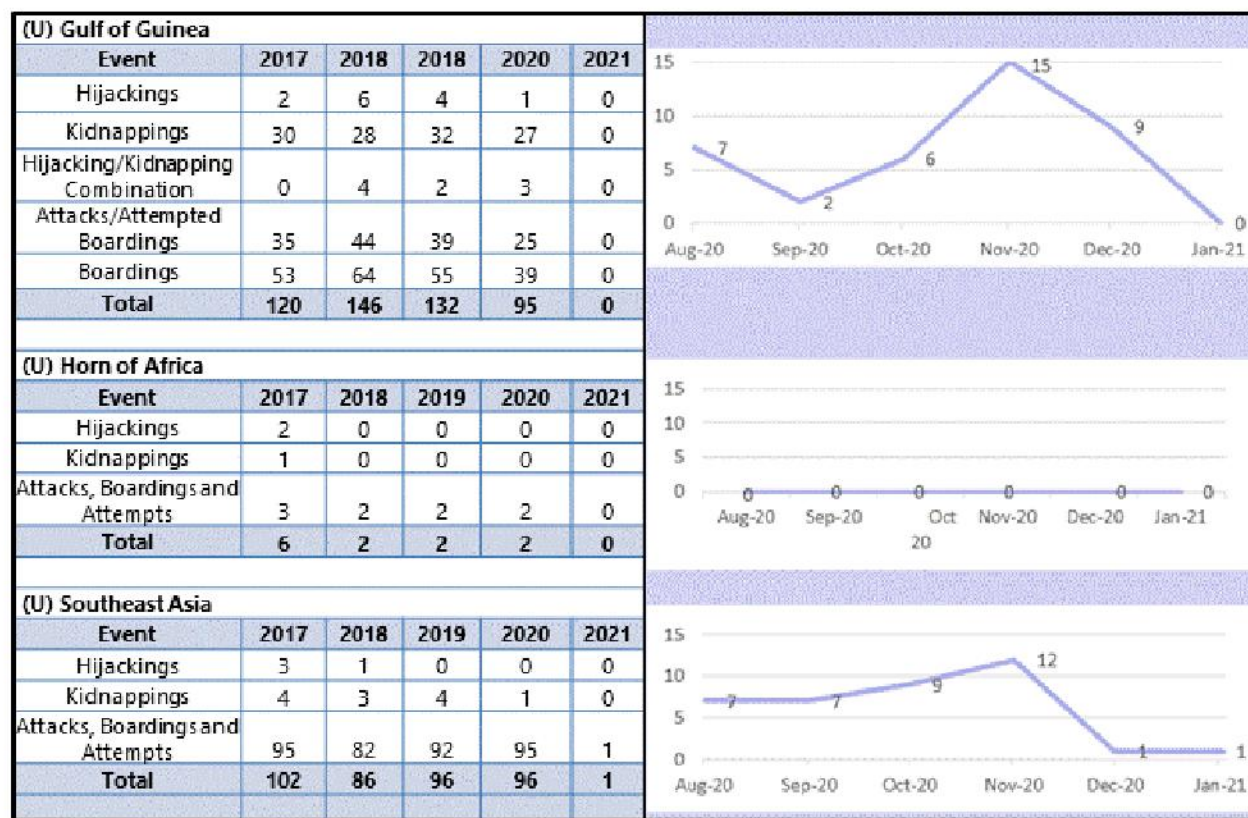
1. (U) INDONESIA: On 3 January, three robbers armed with knives boarded an anchored bulk carrier at Muara Berau Anchorage, near position 00:15S - 117:34E. The robbers were discovered by the duty crew at the forecastle store room. They stole ship's stores and escaped. The incident was reported to local authorities. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) INDONESIA: On 14 December, four robbers armed with knives boarded a bulk carrier berthed in Lubuk Guang Port, Dumai. They took the duty officer hostage and tied him up. The robbers stole ship's stores and spare parts, and released the duty officer before escaping. (IMB; 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 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:** 6 January 2021

(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/>