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(U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report** **10 September – 7 October 2020**



8 October 2020

(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:** No active Warnings or Advisories.

3. (U) **Summary:**

- A. (U) **KIDNAPPING UPDATE:** On 6 October, it was reported that the two Russians and one Equatorial Guinean kidnapped from DJIBLOHO in May were released from captivity.
- B. (U) **KIDNAPPING UPDATE:** On 6 October, it was reported that the Russian and Ukrainian kidnapped from RIO MITONG in May were released from captivity.
- C. (U) **YEMEN:** On 4 October, a tanker was approached 40 NM southeast of Al Mukalla.
- D. (U) **DR CONGO:** On 5 October, robbers boarded a container ship anchored in Pointe Noire Anchorage.
- E. (U) **INDIA:** On 4 October, robbers boarded a bulk carrier anchored in Kakinada Anchorage.
- F. (U) **YEMEN:** On 3 October, a merchant tanker at Rudum Terminal area reported suspicious floating objects, apparently drifting, that exploded nearby.
- G. (U) **NIGERIA:** On 3 October, armed pirates attacked and boarded a passenger boat as it transited between Oron and Calabar, Cross River State.

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- H. (U) BRAZIL: On 2 October, authorities searched the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship UNISPIRIT at Sao Sebastiao Port.
- I. (U) ECUADOR: On 1 October, a container ship under pilotage was boarded by robbers armed with guns.
- J. (U) IVORY COAST: On 1 October, a fishing vessel was approached approximately 170 NM south-southwest of Abidjan.
- K. (U) LIBERIA: On 1 October, one robber boarded a tanker berthed at BMC Pier, Monrovia.
- L. (U) MALAYSIA: On 30 September, it was reported that one of five hostages kidnapped from the Malaysia-flagged fishing vessel SSK-00543 died in a clash between kidnappers and Philippine military forces.

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:

1. (U) CALIFORNIA: On 20 September, a crew member onboard the Liberia-flagged container ship MSC REVENNA attacked another crew member with a knife. The second crew member 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 22 September. (FleetMon)
2. (U) 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. (Maritime Executive)

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

Figure 1. South America Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) BRAZIL: On 2 October, authorities searched the Antigua and Barbuda-flagged general cargo ship UNISPIRIT at Sao Sebastiao Port. During the search, 1.5 tons of cocaine were found hidden in big bags loaded with corn. The ship was destined for Cadiz, Spain. (FleetMon)

2. (U) ECUADOR: On 1 October, a container ship under pilotage near position 02:33S - 080:06W, Guayaquil river passage, was boarded by robbers armed with guns. A crew member saw the robbers opening the containers on deck. The alarm was raised and all crew instructed to stay inside the accommodation area. The robbers fired their weapons towards the accommodation area, and escaped with cargo stolen from the containers. Incident reported to port authorities. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) ECUADOR: On 26 September, robbers armed with guns boarded a container ship 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 containers and departed. The master reported the incident local authorities, who later boarded the vessel to investigate. Two containers were found open. (IMB)

4. (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)

5. 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)

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:**

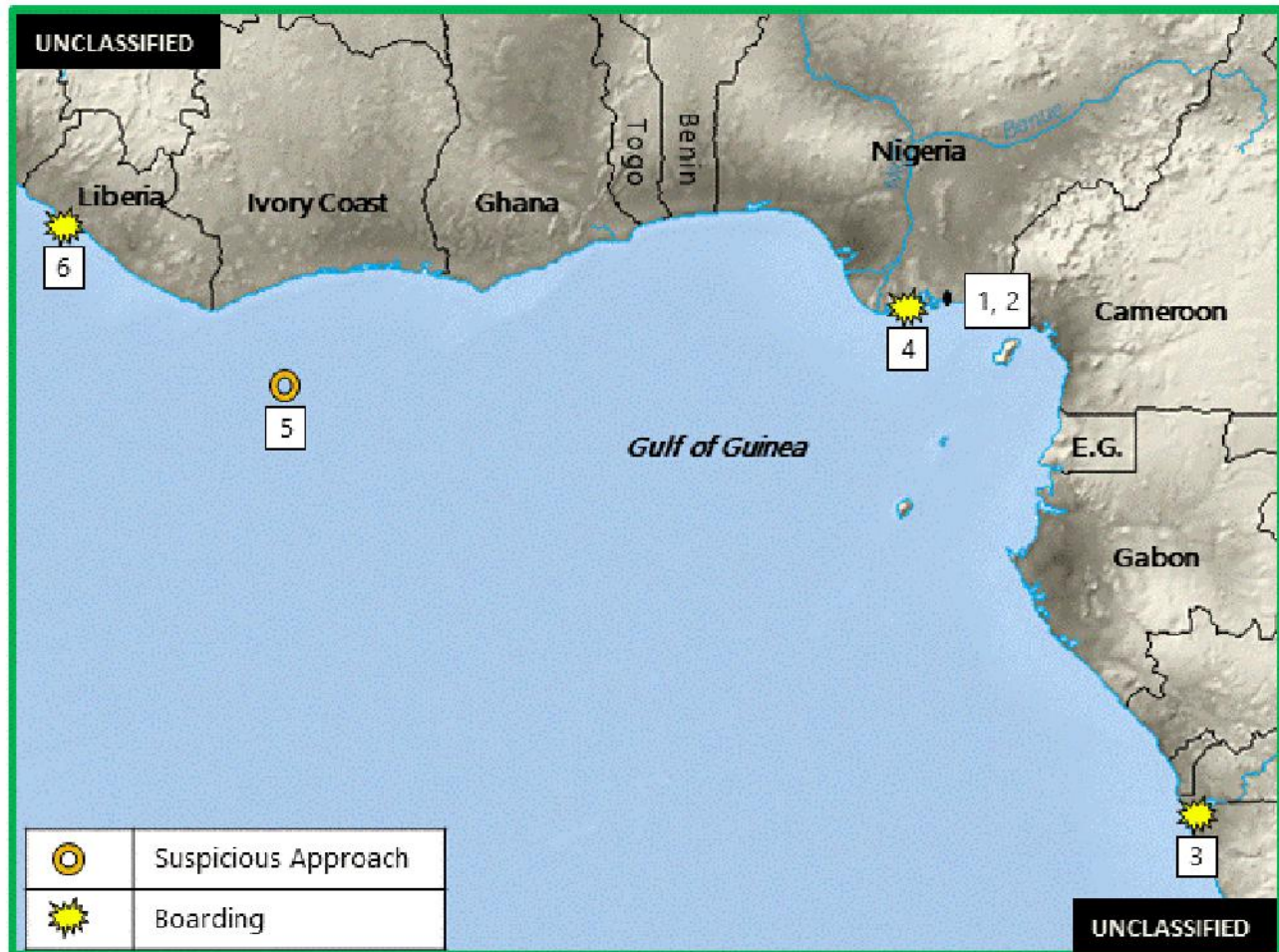


Figure 2. Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) **KIDNAPPING UPDATE:** On 6 October, it was reported that the two Russians and one Equatorial Guinean kidnapped on 9 May from the Equatorial Guinea-flagged research/survey vessel DJIBLOHO, while anchored at Luba Anchorage, Equatorial Guinea, were released from captivity after 150 days. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) **KIDNAPPING UPDATE:** On 6 October, it was reported that the Russian and Ukrainian kidnapped on 9 May from the Comoros-flagged general cargo ship RIO MITONG while off Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, were released from captivity after 150 days. (Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) **DR CONGO:** On 5 October, robbers boarded a container ship anchored near position 04:44S - 011:46E, Pointe Noire Anchorage. The robbers broke into a storeroom and stole 280 liters of paint. Local authorities were informed. (Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) NIGERIA: On 3 October, armed pirates attacked and boarded a passenger boat near position 04:54N - 008:15E, as the boat was transiting between Oron and Calabar, Cross River State. Reports state that during the incident the attackers injured several passengers and critically injured two with gunshot wounds, before robbing them of their belongings. (www.punchng.com; Clearwater Dynamics)
5. (U) IVORY COAST: On 1 October, a fishing vessel was approached near position 02:38N - 004:37W, approximately 170 NM south-southwest of Abidjan. The crew spotted a blue speedboat, with up to four persons on board, approaching to within 3 NM. The captain increased speed and the distance from the speedboat, which resulted in the approach being aborted. The vessel and crew are reported safe. (Clearwater Dynamics)
6. (U) LIBERIA: On 1 October, one robber boarded a tanker berthed near position 06:21N - 010:47W, BMC Pier, Monrovia. A duty crew member on routine rounds saw the person on the forecastle and immediately informed the duty officer. The alarm was raised and the local security guard was alerted. Seeing the crew's alertness, the robber escaped with stolen ship's stores. A search was made throughout the tanker. Incident reported to port authority and Coast Guard. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)
7. (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)
8. (U) NIGERIA: On 17 September, four robbers boarded a passenger boat near position 04:43N - 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)
9. (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)
- G. (U) ARABIAN GULF:** No current incidents to report.

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

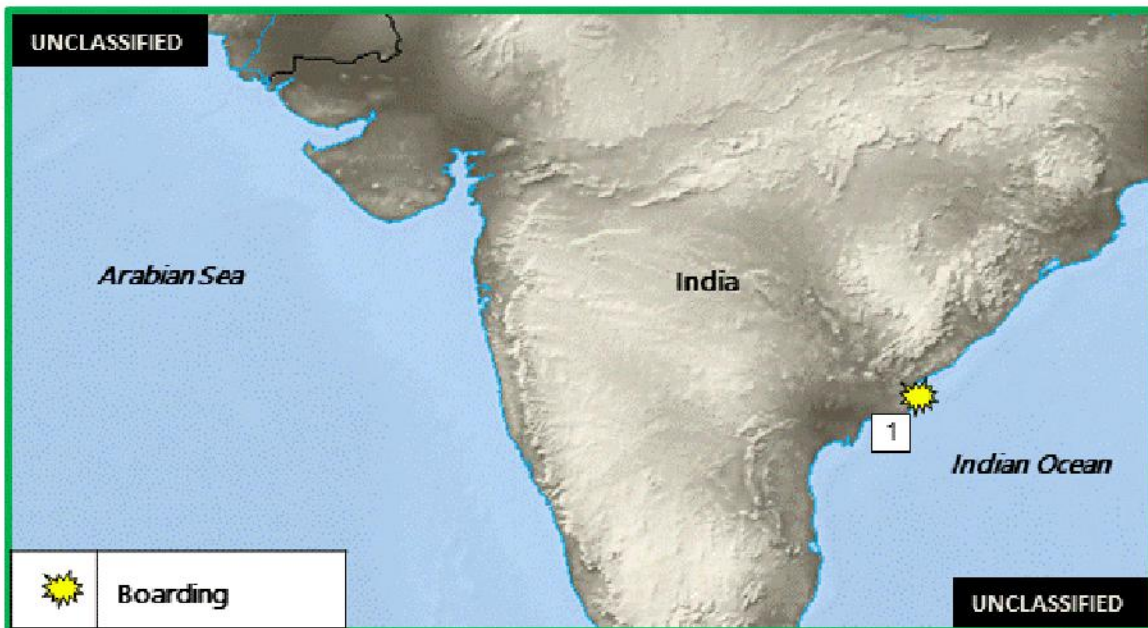


Figure 3. Indian Ocean – East Africa – Red Sea Piracy and Maritime Crime



Figure 4. Indian Ocean – East Africa – Red Sea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) INDIA: On 4 October, robbers boarded a bulk carrier anchored near position 17:05N - 082:38E, Kakinada Anchorage. A duty crewman saw one robber onboard the bulk carrier, and the alarm was raised. This resulted in the robber escaping. A search of the vessel was completed which confirmed that mooring ropes had been stolen. The incident was reported to the local authorities. (Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) YEMEN: On 4 October, a tanker was suspiciously approached near position 14:18N - 049:49E, 40 NM southeast of Al Mukalla, by two skiffs with 4 to 5 persons onboard each skiff. The skiffs were reportedly followed by a fishing vessel suspected to be the mothership. Weapons were sighted and the armed security team onboard the tanker fired a warning shot as the two craft came to within 300 meters, followed by a second shot at 200 meters, resulting in the craft aborting the approach and heading north. The vessel and crew are reported safe. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) YEMEN: On 3 October, a merchant tanker at Rudum Terminal area, near position 13:58N - 047:55E, reported suspicious floating objects, apparently drifting, that exploded nearby. Vessel and crew are safe. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (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 Hoby, 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. (IMB)

I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA:

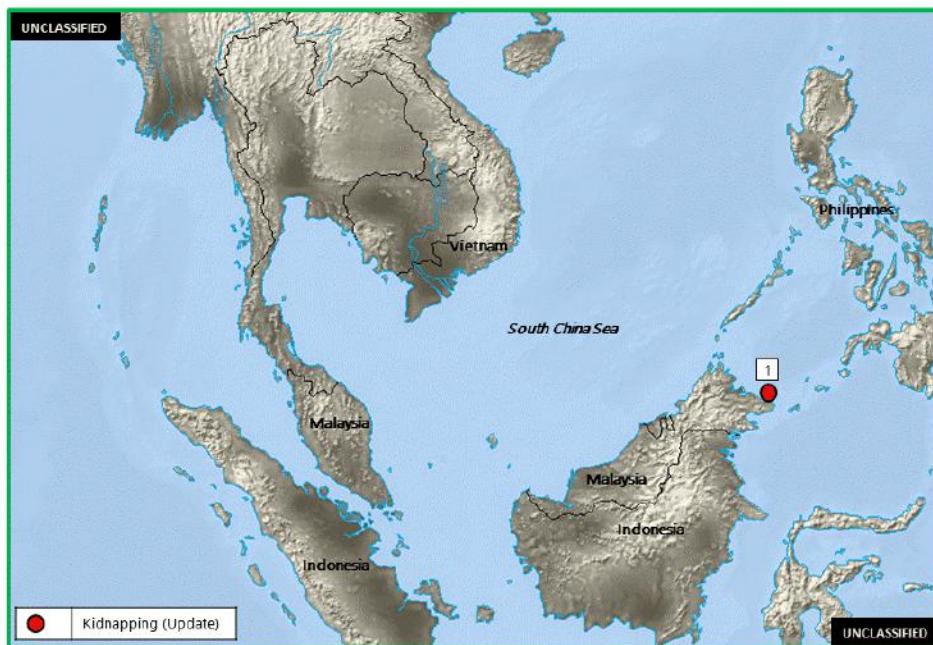


Figure 5. East Asia – Southeast Asia Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) MALAYSIA: On 30 September, it was reported that one of five hostages, kidnapped on 16 January 2020 from the Malaysia-flagged fishing vessel SSK-00543, died in a clash between kidnappers and Philippine military forces. (www.washingtontimes.com; Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (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)

3. (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)

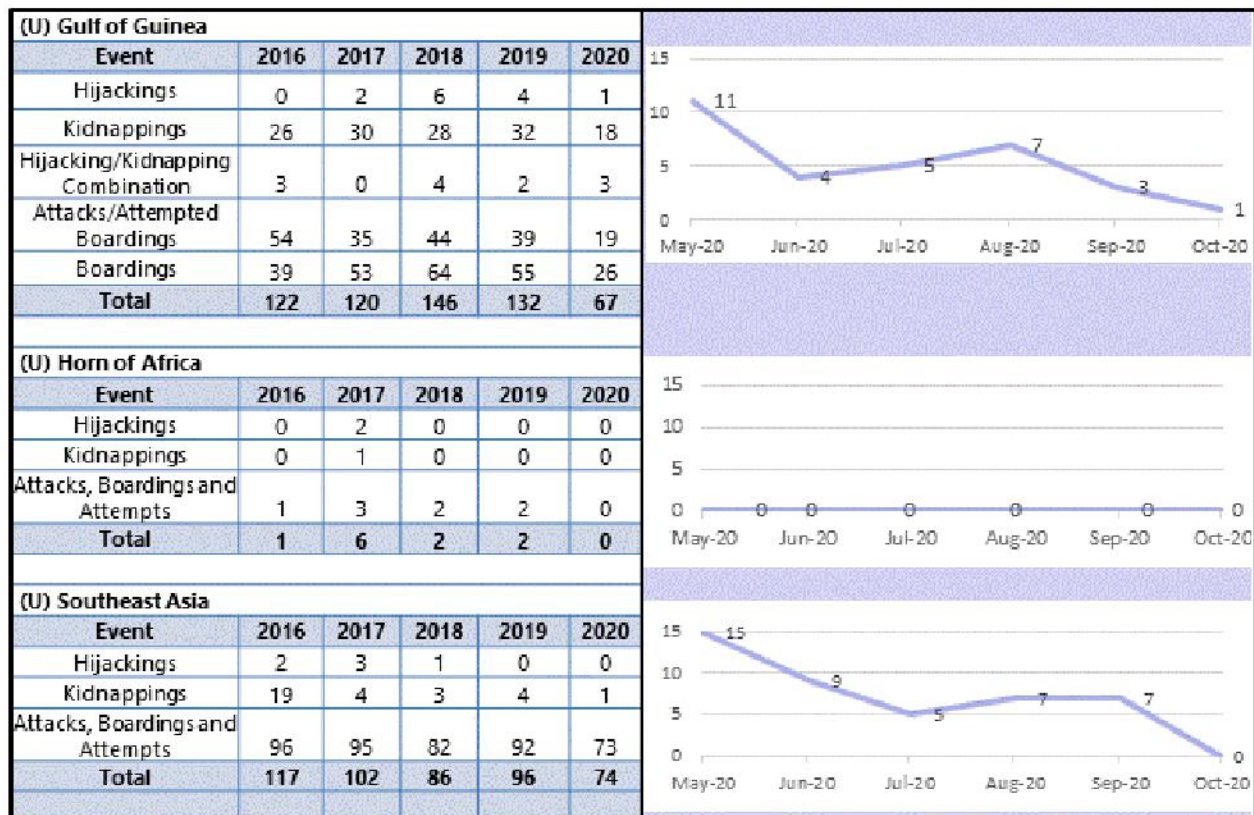
4. (U) CHINA: On 18 September at 0230 UTC, robbers boarded a Marshall Islands-flagged tanker TRF HORTEN at Rizhao Shelter Anchorage near position 35:04N - 120:06E. They stole ship's equipment and escaped unnoticed. The incident was reported to both the local agents and port authority. (Clearwater Dynamics, 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)

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:** 8 October 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/>