

UNCLASSIFIED



(U) **WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report, 21 February–20 March 2024**



20 March 2024

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1. (U) **Scope Note**

(U) The Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) report 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, Advisories and Alerts:** See Appendix C for active advisories.

A. (U) U.S. Maritime advisory 2024-004: Southern Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean, Somali Basin, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Strait of Hormuz, and Persian Gulf – Threats to Commercial Vessels

Issued on 18 March 2024. This advisory supersedes and cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2024-001, incorporates new advice to U.S.-flagged vessels to turn off their AIS transponders when transiting the Southern Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb Strait, and Gulf of Aden; highlights Houthi deceptive communications; provides information on the new Joint Maritime Information Center; and updates other threat information. For maritime industry questions about this advisory, contact the Global Maritime Operational Threat Response Coordination Center at GMCC@uscg.mil. This advisory will automatically expire on 14 September 2024.

3. (U) **Summary:**

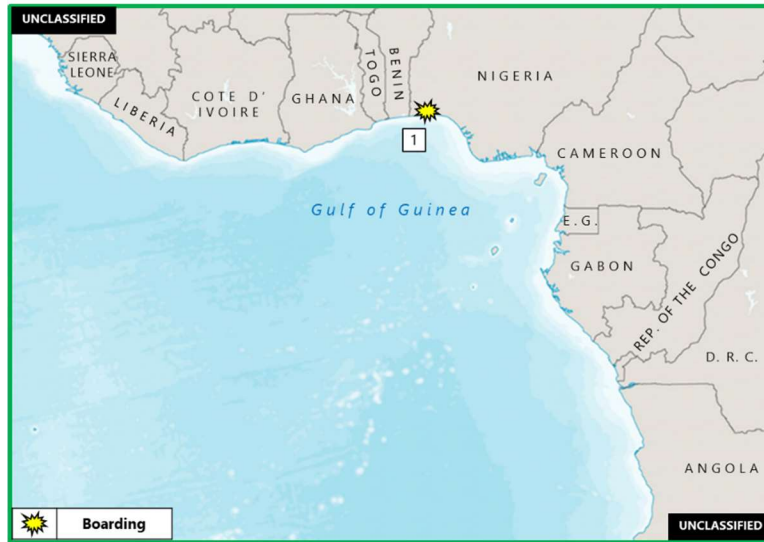
A. (U) ARABIAN SEA: On 20 March, one small craft approached an underway Liberia-flagged bulk carrier approximately 104 NM north-northeast of Socotra Island, Yemen.

- B. (U) GULF OF ADEN:** On 17 March, an explosion occurred in close proximity to an underway Marshall Islands-flagged LPG tanker approximately 85 NM east of Aden, Yemen.
- C. (U) INDIAN OCEAN:** On 16 March, a small craft approached a merchant vessel approximately 681 NM east-southeast of Mogadishu, Somalia.
- D. (U) RED SEA:** On 15 March, an explosion occurred near an underway Marshall Islands-flagged LPG tanker approximately 65 NM west of Hodeida, Yemen.
- E. (U) RED SEA:** On 15 March, two missiles targeted an underway Marshall Islands-flagged LPG tanker approximately 89 NM northwest of Hodeida, Yemen.
- F. (U) RED SEA:** On 15 March, a missile targeted an underway merchant vessel approximately 76 NM northwest of Hodeida, Yemen.
- G. (U) RED SEA:** On 14 March, two missiles targeted an underway merchant vessel approximately 50 NM southwest of Hodeida, Yemen.
- H. (U) SOMALIA:** On 14 March, four possible pirate attack groups consisting of as many as 36 armed pirates departed the northern coast along the Northwest Indian Ocean.
- I. (U) GULF OF ADEN:** On 14 March, an underway China-flagged container ship reported an explosion approximately 50 NM southeast of Aden, Yemen.
- J. (U) NIGERIA:** On 14 March, an unspecified number of perpetrators boarded a merchant vessel anchored at Tin Can Island Lagos.

4. (U) 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 past 30 days. Every effort is made to ensure that incidents are not double-counted. In the event that 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:** 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 – GULF OF GUINEA:

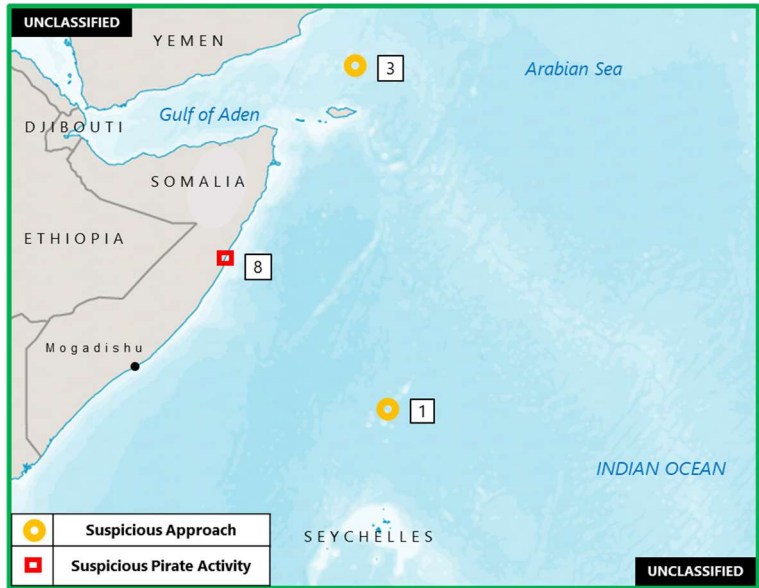
(U) Figure 1. West Africa – Gulf of Guinea Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea

1. (U) NIGERIA: On 14 March at 0550 local time, an unspecified number of perpetrators boarded a merchant vessel anchored at Tin Can Island Lagos, near position 06:25N – 003:20E. The perpetrators escaped after being discovered by the duty crew. One crew member suffered an injury during the incident. After the incident, the master notified the local authorities. (MDAT-GoG; Clearwater Dynamics)

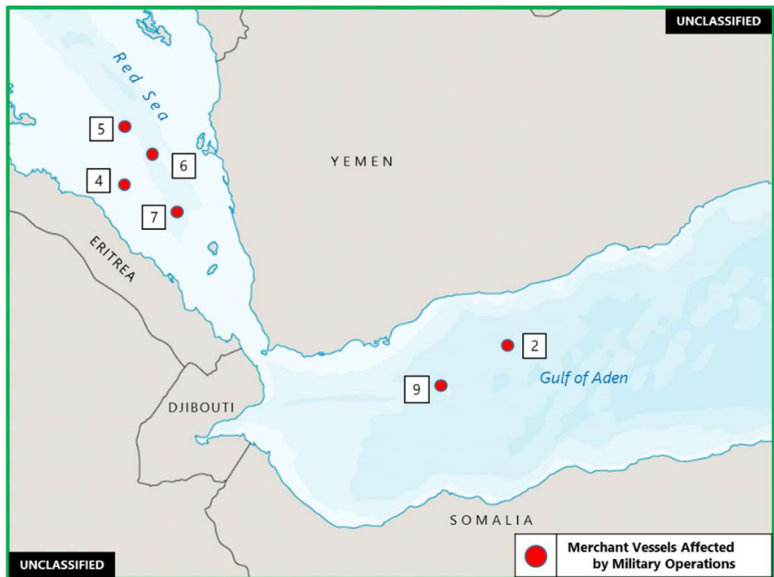
2. (U) DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of CONGO: On 10 March between 0050 and 0850 local time, as many as eight perpetrators boarded a berthed container ship at Banana Port. While on routine security rounds, duty crew spotted evidence of an attempted forced entry into the stores locker. A search by the crew revealed no unauthorized persons onboard. The master reported nothing was stolen and that all crew were safe. (Clearwater Dynamics)

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

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



(U) Figure 2. Indian Ocean Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea



(U) Figure 3. East Africa – Red Sea Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea

1. (U) ARABIAN SEA: On 20 March at 0200 UTC, one small craft approached from astern and came within 0.3 NM of an underway Liberia-flagged bulk carrier approximately 104 NM north-northeast of Socotra Island. There were seven persons onboard the craft and a ladder was sighted. The craft followed the bulk carrier for about 20 minutes, until the armed security team onboard the vessel fired a warning shot, causing the small craft to depart

the area. The master reported the incident was over, and the crew and vessel were safe. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

2. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 17 March at 0024 UTC, an explosion occurred in close proximity to an underway Marshall Islands-flagged LPG tanker approximately 85 NM east of Aden, Yemen (exact position not specified). (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

3. (U) INDIAN OCEAN: On 16 March at 1930 UTC, a small craft approached a merchant vessel approximately 681 NM east-southeast of Mogadishu, Somalia, near position 00:44N – 056:37E. The craft made several attempts to approach the vessel with changes to its speed and course, but the vessel maneuvered and increased speed and the small craft eventually aborted its approach. (Clearwater Dynamics)

4. (U) RED SEA: On 15 March at 1945 UTC, an explosion occurred off an underway Marshall Islands-flagged LPG tanker's starboard beam approximately 65 NM west of Hodeida, Yemen (exact position not specified). The vessel reported no damage and the crew was safe. The vessel continued to its next port of call. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

5. (U) RED SEA: On 15 March at 1730 UTC, two missiles targeted an underway Marshall Islands-flagged LPG tanker approximately 89 NM northwest of Hodeida, Yemen, near position 15:30N – 041:35E. The missiles impacted the water within 0.5 NM of the port side of the tanker. The vessel did not sustain any damage, and the crew was reported safe. The tanker proceeded to its next port of call. (Clearwater Dynamics)

6. (U) RED SEA: On 15 March at 0205 UTC, a missile targeted an underway merchant vessel approximately 76 NM northwest of Hodeida, Yemen (exact position not specified). An inspection during daylight hours revealed the vessel was not hit and had sustained no damage. The crew was reported safe and the vessel continued its voyage. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

7. (U) RED SEA: On 14 March at 2210 UTC, two missiles targeted an underway merchant vessel approximately 50 NM southwest of Hodeida, Yemen (exact position not specified). After two missiles passed over the vessel, two explosions followed in the distance. The master reported the vessel had not been hit and had sustained no damage. The crew were reported safe and the vessel proceeded to its next port of call. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

8. (U) SOMALIA: On 14 March at 0616 UTC, four possible pirate attack groups consisting of as many as 36 armed pirates departed onboard four skiffs from the north-central coastline of Somalia near Hobyo. The pirates may be looking for ships to target. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

9. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 14 March at 0418 UTC, an underway China-flagged container ship reported an explosion near its position approximately 50 NM southeast of Aden, Yemen, near position 12:10N – 045:44E. The vessel did not sustain any damage and the crew were reported safe. The vessel continued its transit. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

10. (U) INDIAN OCEAN: On 12 March at 0810 UTC, armed Somali pirates from a small boat boarded the underway Bangladesh-flagged bulk carrier ABDULLAH approximately 600 NM east of Mogadishu, Somalia, near position

01:27N – 054:53E. Later more pirates arrived in a fishing dhow. ABDULLAH's shipping company reported there are at least 22 armed persons onboard. The pirates hijacked the vessel, which is carrying 58,000 metric tons of coal from Mozambique to the United Arab Emirates, and hold 23 unharmed Bangladeshi crew members hostage. The vessel, under pirate control, was proceeding to the coast toward the vicinity of Eyl, Somalia. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; IMB; indiatvnews.com)

11. (U) RED SEA: On 11 March at 0550 and again at 0950 UTC, two anti-ship ballistic missiles fired from Houthi-controlled territory targeted the underway Liberia-flagged container ship PINOCCHIO approximately 70 NM southwest of Saleef, Yemen, near position 14:52N – 041:31E. Neither missile hit the vessel. There were no crew injuries or ship damage reported, and the container ship continued its voyage. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; Maritime Executive; U.S. Central Command)

12. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 8 March at 1315 UTC, two anti-ship ballistic missiles fired from Houthi-controlled territory targeted the underway Singapore-flagged bulk carrier PROPEL FORTUNE approximately 50 NM southeast of Aden, Yemen, near position 12:05N – 045:25E. The missiles did not impact the bulker, and there were no crew injuries or ship damage reported. The vessel proceeded to its next port of call. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; Maritime Executive; U.S. Central Command)

13. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 6 March at 0840 UTC, a missile fired from Houthi-controlled territory struck the underway Barbados-flagged bulk carrier TRUE CONFIDENCE approximately 50 NM southwest of Aden, Yemen, near position 11:58N – 044:31E. Following the missile strike, crew members took to the lifeboats, and the bulk carrier is reported to be abandoned and drifting with a fire still burning onboard. Three crew members are reported as dead, with at least four additional crew members injured, three of whom are in critical condition. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; gCaptain; Maritime Executive; U.S. Central Command)

14. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 6 March at 0001 UTC, an entity declaring itself to be the Yemeni Navy hailed an underway merchant vessel and ordered the vessel to alter course approximately 50 NM southwest of Aden, Yemen (exact position not specified). (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

15. (U) ARABIAN SEA: On 5 March at 1420 UTC, a small boat approached and followed a merchant vessel underway approximately 250 NM northeast of Duqm, Oman, near position 21:02N – 061:54E. Despite the merchant vessel increasing to maximum speed, the small boat continued to follow for nearly an hour, ending its pursuit after nightfall. (Clearwater Dynamics)

16. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 4 March, between 1250 UTC and 1315 UTC, two anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) targeted the Liberia-flagged container ship MSC SKY II approximately 91 NM southeast of Aden, Yemen (exact position not specified). The first missile went into the water off the vessel's port quarter. The second missile struck the vessel and caused damage resulting in fire and smoke onboard. The crew subsequently extinguished the fire. The crew is reported safe with no injuries. The ship did not request assistance and continued on its voyage. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; Maritime Executive; U.S. Central Command)

17. (U) SOMALIA: On 2 March at 1800 UTC, 11 armed men hijacked an Iranian dhow in Jiifle, near position 07:27N – 049:41E, approximately 32 NM southwest of Eyl. According to Somali authorities, the hijacked dhow was headed

in an easterly direction, with the likely intention to seize a merchant vessel in the western Indian Ocean. (UKMTO; IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

18. (U) RED SEA: On 27 February at 1915 UTC, a missile impacted the water within 3 NM of a Panama-flagged tanker approximately 60 NM west of Hodeida, Yemen, near position 15:00N – 041:57E. No damage or injuries have been reported. The tanker continued to its next port of call. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

19. (U) ARABIAN GULF: On 27 February at 0453 UTC, three small boats with two persons onboard each boat suspiciously approached and followed a merchant vessel approximately 90 NM east of Ras Al Misham, Saudi Arabia, near position 28:01N – 050:17E. The small boats followed the reporting vessel at a distance of less than 1 NM for one hour. No weapons or uniforms were visible. The crew and vessel were reported safe. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

20. (U) GULF OF OMAN: On 25 February at 1420 UTC, a small fast boat suspiciously approached and followed a merchant vessel for more than a half hour approximately 20 NM east of Khor Fakkan, United Arab Emirates, near position 25:20N – 056:44E. The boat was white with an open top and was powered by a single outboard motor and the two people onboard wore military-style, camouflage-type uniforms. The small boat remained between 20 to 40 meters astern of the merchant vessel for the duration. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

21. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 24 February between 1400 and 2200 UTC, two ASBM attacks targeted the U.S.-flagged product tanker TORM THOR approximately 70 NM east of port of Djibouti (exact position not specified). The first ASBM was shot down by USS MASON, while the second missile missed the tanker and impacted the water. Neither USS MASON nor TORM THOR were damaged and there were no injuries reported. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; U.S. Central Command)

22. (U) ARABIAN SEA: On 23 February at 1200 UTC, a merchant vessel observed three small boats with three persons onboard each boat operating near a larger boat, approximately 175 NM east of Qalhat Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal, Oman, near position 22:12N – 063:00E. The reporting merchant vessel assessed the activity as suspicious. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

23. (U) GULF OF ADEN: On 22 February between 0530 and 0645 UTC, two ASBMs launched from Houthi-controlled territory struck the Palau-flagged general cargo ship ISLANDER approximately 70 NM east of Aden, Yemen (exact position not specified). The incident resulted in a minor injury to one crew member and minor damage to the ship. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics; U.S. Central Command)

24. (U) RED SEA: On 21 February at 0027 UTC, merchant vessels reported an explosion approximately 40 NM west of Hodeida, Yemen. Vessels and crew in the area were reported safe. There was no mention of a specific vessel having been targeted. (UKMTO; Clearwater Dynamics)

I. (U) EAST ASIA – SOUTHEAST ASIA:

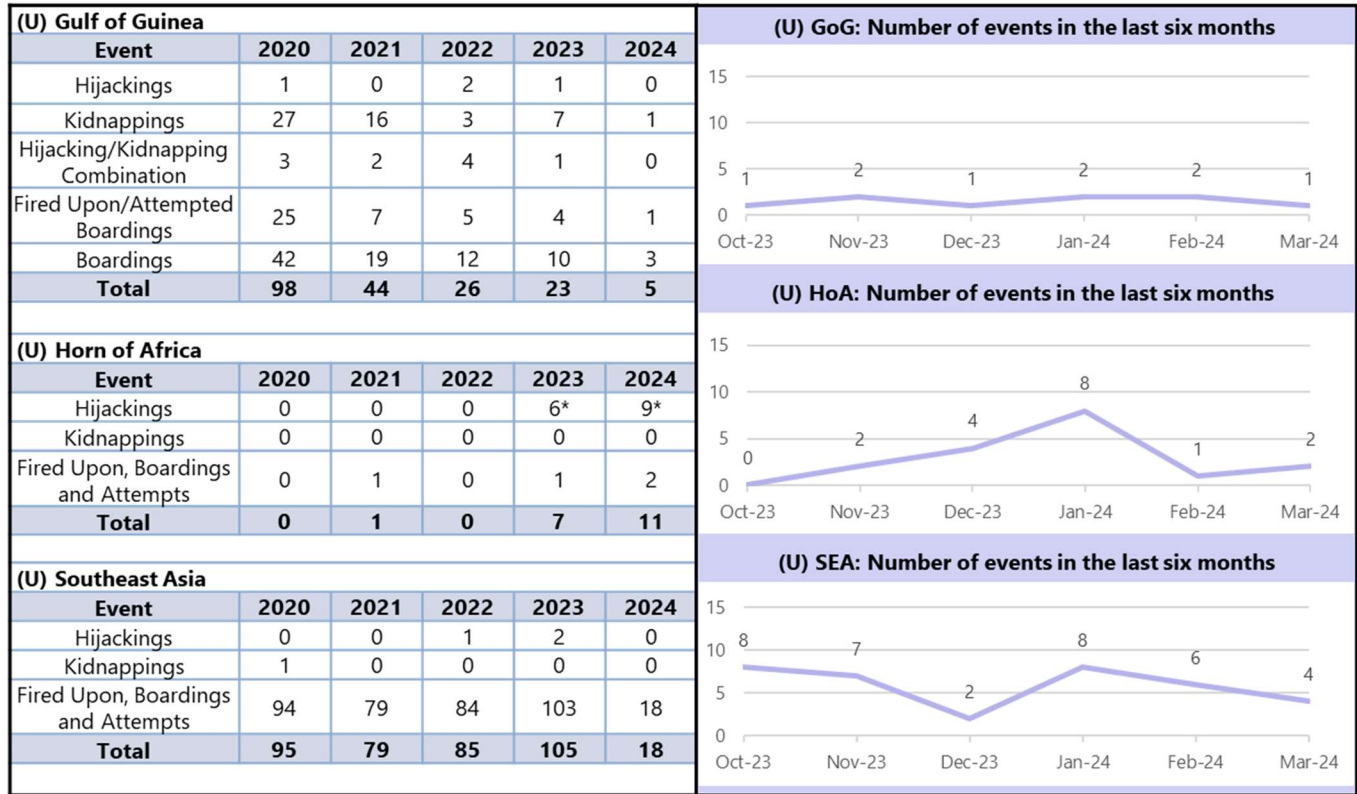
1. (U) INDONESIA: On 6 March at 0030 local time, three perpetrators armed with metal rods boarded the underway Singapore-flagged bulk carrier APIRADEE NAREE in the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), near position 01:06N – 103:44E. The crew sighted the perpetrators in the engine room and notified the bridge of the perpetrators' presence. After the general alarm was activated, the perpetrators escaped via the starboard quarter of the ship. After the incident, the master reported crew and vessel safe, and that nothing had been stolen. The vessel did not require any assistance and continued its voyage to China. (ReCAAP; vesseltracker.com; Clearwater Dynamics)
2. (U) INDONESIA: On 6 March at 0035 local time, three robbers boarded the underway Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier YANGTZE CROWN in the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, near position 01:03N – 103:40E. Crew observed the robbers in the engine room and raised the alarm. The perpetrators escaped with spare engine parts. All crew are reported safe. The vessel did not require any assistance and continued its voyage to Singapore. (Clearwater Dynamics; ReCAAP)
3. (U) INDONEISA: On 4 March at 0250 local time, two perpetrators boarded the underway Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier ALPHA HOPE in the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait TSS, near position 01:07N – 103:31E. After the duty crew saw the perpetrators on the aft deck, the general alarm was raised and the perpetrators escaped in a boat. The crew conducted a search and found no unauthorized persons onboard and nothing missing. The master reported that no assistance was required and the vessel continued its voyage to Singapore. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics; ReCAAP)
4. (U) INDONESIA: On 1 March at 0210 local time, three robbers armed with knives boarded the anchored Curacao-flagged heavy load carrier BOKA VANGUARD at Batam Anchorage, near position 01:11N – 103:59E. Duty watchmen discovered the robbers and informed the duty officer, who raised the alarm. The robbers threatened the duty watchmen and then fled the vessel with stolen ship's properties. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics; ReCAAP)
5. (U) INDONESIA: On 29 February at an unspecified time, four perpetrators boarded the anchored Bahamas-flagged general cargo ship AFRICAN HALCYON at Dumai Anchorage (exact position not specified). The crew sounded the alarm and a quick response team from the Dumai naval base arrived to assist the crew. The perpetrators escaped empty-handed in a speedboat. (Clearwater Dynamics; vesseltracker.com)

J. (U) INDIAN SUBCONTINENT:

1. (U) BANGLADESH: On 3 March at 0345 local time, eight robbers armed with knives boarded a tanker anchored at Mongla Anchorage, near position 21:50N – 089:31E. The ship's horn was sounded, the alerted crew mustered, and a search was conducted. The robbers escaped with ship's stores. All crew were reported safe. (IMB; Clearwater Dynamics)

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**



*Horn of Africa hijacking numbers include Dhows and Fishing Vessels

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 antishipping 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.

7. (U) Appendix C: Active U.S. Maritime Advisories

Title	Effective Date	Expiration Date
2024-004: Southern Red Sea , Bab el Mandeb Strait, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean, Somali Basin, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Strait of Hormuz, and Persian Gulf – Threats to Commercial Vessels	18 MAR 24	14 SEP 24
2024-003: Black Sea and Sea of Azov – Military Combat Operations	26 FEB 24	25 AUG 24
2024-002: Worldwide – Foreign Adversarial Technological, Physical, and Cyber Influence	21 FEB 24	19 AUG 24
2023-016: Gulf of Guinea – Piracy/Armed Robbery/ Kidnapping for Ransom	27 DEC 23	24 JUN 24
2023-015: Global – Overview of the U.S. Maritime Advisory System	22 DEC 23	19 JUN 24
2023-014: Eastern Mediterranean Sea – Regional Conflict	26 OCT 23	23 APR 24
2023-013: Various – GPS Interference & AIS Spoofing	2 OCT 23	30 MAR 24
2023-012: Global – New U.S. Maritime Alert and Advisory Subscription Process	22 SEP 23	24 MAR 24

(U) **ICOD:** 20 March 2024

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