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## (U) WORLDWIDE: Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) Report 14 November–18 December 2019

19 December 2019



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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:

1. (U) **IMB/PRC/Alert – 196-2019**: 180600 UTC DEC 2019 TO: ALL SHIPS TRANSITING IN AND OFF EASTERN SABAH, MALAYSIA/CELEBES SEA/SULU SEA/TAWI TAWI – WARNING. Sulu based Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) planned a kidnapping for ransom (KFR) operation. After re-evaluation by Philippine intelligence on 16 December the warning is still valid for another week. Next evaluation will be on 23 December. Initially the IMB PRC received information from Philippines Intelligence that on 9 Dec 2019, the Sulu based ASG – KFR group was monitored planning to conduct kidnapping activity in Sabah. The group primary target is kidnapping of foreign nationals in Sabah resorts, seafarers and vessels are also at risk. The group is preparing to go out to sea using one speedboat painted with grey and green color and powered by two 40-hp Yamaha engines. The group was seen purchasing fuel. Vessels are advised to remain vigilant and maintain strict anti-piracy watch and measures. The group may have already departed out to sea. Early assessment / detection will allow ships to take evasive actions and other anti-piracy measures to prevent boarding and request for assistance. Citadel/safe room is important. All attacks and suspicious sightings should be reported to local authorities and to the IMB PRC as per IMO Cir 1334. IMB piracy reporting centre 24 hour anti-piracy helpline +603 2031 0014 fax: +603 2078 5769 email: imbkl@icc-ccs.org / piracy@icc-ccs.org

2. (U) **MARAD Advisory 2019-012-Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Red Sea-Threats to Commercial Vessels.** Description: This revised advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisories 2019-004 and 2019-008. References: U.S. Maritime Alerts 2019-004A, 2019-003A, 2019-002A, and 2019-001A. Issue: Heightened military activity and increased political tensions in this region continue to pose serious threats to commercial vessels. Associated with these threats is a potential for miscalculation or mis-identification that could lead to aggressive actions. Vessels operating in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman may also encounter GPS interference, bridge-to-bridge communications spoofing, and/or other communications jamming with little to no warning. For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, please visit <http://www.marad.dot.gov/MSCI>

### 3. (U) Summary

1. (U) TOGO: On 15 December, six heavily armed pirates boarded the Marshall Islands-flagged product tanker DUKE underway 113 NM southeast of Lome, Togo, and kidnapped 20 crewmen.
2. (U) PAPUA NEW GUINEA: On 14 December, four pirates boarded a passenger boat, disguised as passengers and then robbed eight passengers and crew, stealing cash and valuables before escaping.
3. (U) INDONESIA: On 14 December, police arrested two men after discovering an illegal cargo of smuggled animals in the port of Dumai.
4. (U) ALGERIA: On 13 December, several persons attempted to board the Singapore-flagged LPG tanker NIKINSKY near position 36:45N - 003:04E, Port of Algiers.
5. (U) PERU: On 12 December, authorities announced the arrest of four suspects and the seizure of a submarine carrying two tons of cocaine near the border with Ecuador.
6. (U) TOGO: On 12 December, authorities in Lome announced the release of three seafarers kidnapped on 4 November from the Greece-flagged tanker ELKA ARISTOTLE.
7. (U) JAPAN: On 11 December authorities arrested 11 suspects attempting to smuggle 600 kilograms of meth amphetamines into the country by boat offshore of Kumamoto Prefecture, in southern Japan.
8. (U) RED SEA: On 3 December, a merchant vessel reported a suspicious approach by one skiff near position 12:32N - 04326E, Bab el Mandeb Strait.
9. (U) EAST CHINA SEA: On 13 November, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer escort SENDAI witnessed and photographed two vessels conducting a prohibited ship-to-ship transfer of petroleum products banned under UN Security Council economic sanctions.

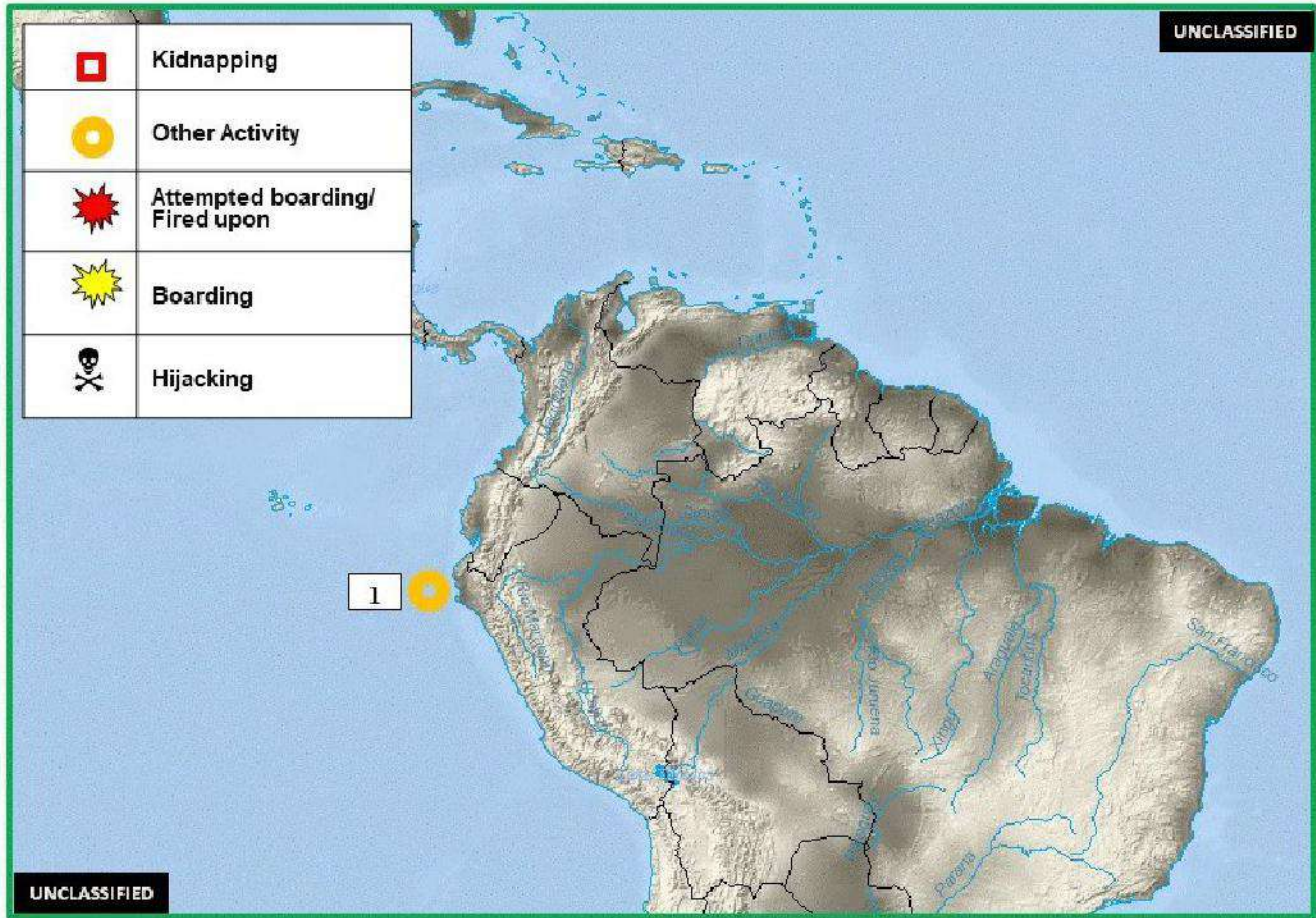
### 4. (U) Details: Monthly Incidents by Region

(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 past 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) MEXICO: On 21 November, authorities in the Port of Altamira found 134 packages of cocaine hidden among a cargo of ore onboard the Bahamas-flagged bulk carrier DELPHI RANGER. ([www.fleetmon.com](http://www.fleetmon.com))

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



(U) Figure 1. South America Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) PERU: On 12 December, authorities announced the arrest of four suspects and the seizure of a submarine carrying two tons of cocaine near the border with Ecuador. ([www.novinite.com](http://www.novinite.com))
2. (U) PERU: On 7 December, three robbers boarded, via the hawse pipe, an anchored bulk carrier anchored in Callao. The robbers tied up a duty crewman, took his radio, watch, and flashlight, and entered the forecandle storeroom. The duty crewman managed to escape and raise the alarm resulting in the crew mustering. Upon hearing the alarm, the robbers fled to a waiting motorboat. Upon investigation, ship's properties were reported stolen. Incident reported to port control. (IMB)
3. (U) BRAZIL: On 26 November, customs authorities in the Port of Santos seized 1,347 kilograms of cocaine hidden in a cargo of sugar going to Morocco. ([www.morocoworldnews.com](http://www.morocoworldnews.com))
4. (U) PERU: On 3 December, watchkeepers onboard Malta-flagged bulk carrier CANO near position 12:01S - 077:13E, Callao Anchorage observed movement on the forecandle and notified the duty officer. The duty officer observed two robbers stealing a mooring line. When the duty officer raised the alarm, the robbers fled. The incident was reported to VTS. (IMB)
5. (U) PERU: On 23 November, during routine rounds, a duty crewman aboard Panama-flagged vehicle carrier GALVESTON HIGHWAY, anchored near position 12:01S - 077:11W, Callao Anchorage, found the forecandle store room entrance door and a forward hatch cover open. Upon investigating, the crew discovered three mooring lines missing. Incident reported to Callao port authority. (IMB, [www.arxmaritime.com](http://www.arxmaritime.com))

- 6. (U) GUATEMALA: On 15 November, robbers stole an 8-HP outboard motor from the secured dinghy onboard a sailing yacht anchored in Livingston. ([www.safetyandsecuritynet.org](http://www.safetyandsecuritynet.org))
- 7. (U) BAHAMAS: On 14 November, 10 Haitian men armed with knives hijacked a Bahamas-flagged fishing boat south of Great Inagua. The Haitian men forced the three Bahamian crew members from the fishing vessel. The crew members had to swim several hours to make it ashore to report the incident. ([www.bahamaspress.com](http://www.bahamaspress.com))

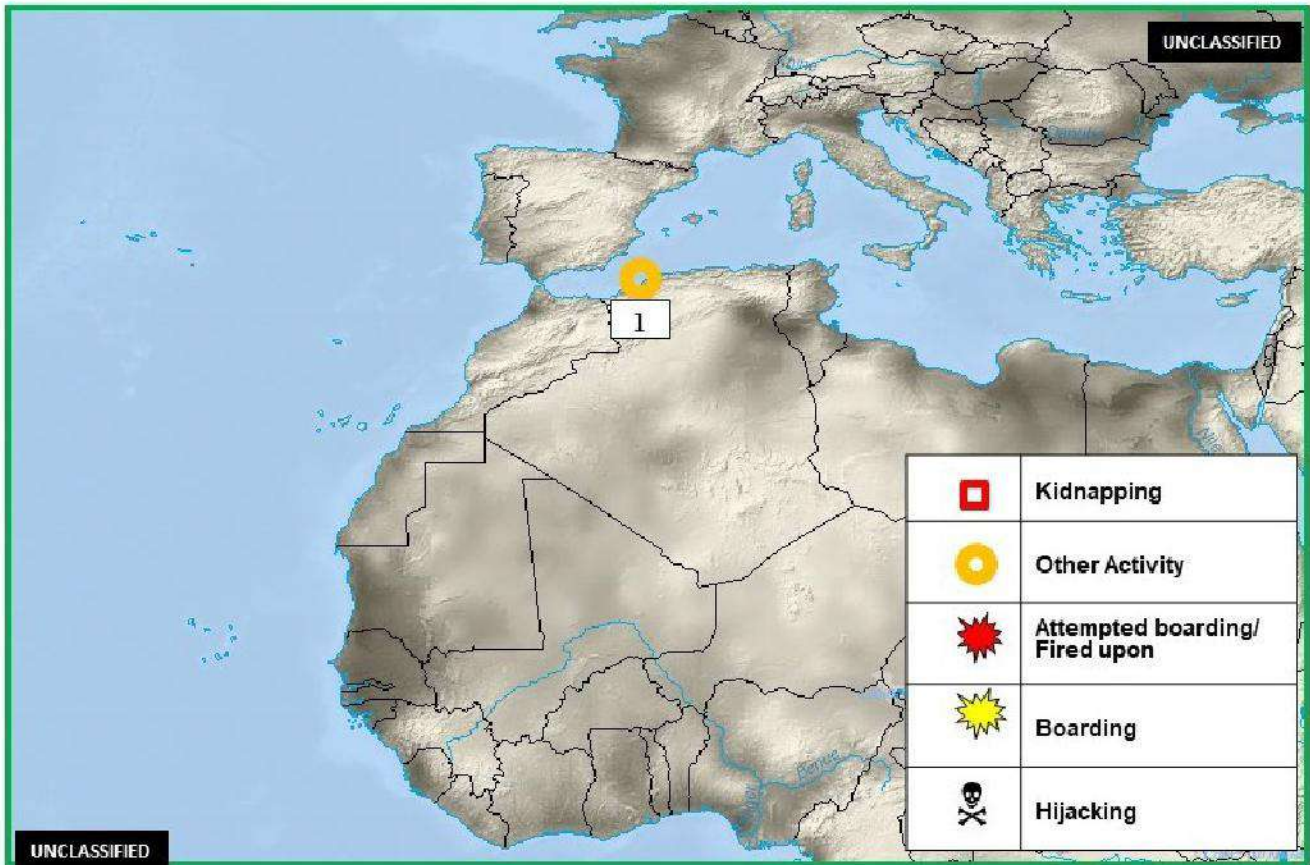
C. (U) ATLANTIC OCEAN AREA:

- 1. (U) IRELAND: On 4 December, eight Albanian stowaways were discovered onboard a bulk cargo vessel arriving at Waterford’s Container Port, Belview, from a port in France. ([www.arxmaritime.com](http://www.arxmaritime.com))
- 2. (U) SPAIN: On 24 November, Spanish police intercepted a 22-meter long “submarine” carrying 3,000 kilograms of cocaine on the country’s northwest coast of Galicia. Police arrested two men from Ecuador, while a third escaped. ([www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com); [www.elpais.com](http://www.elpais.com))

D. (U) NORTHERN EUROPE - BALTIC:

(U) No current incidents to report.

(U) MEDITERRANEAN - BLACK SEA:

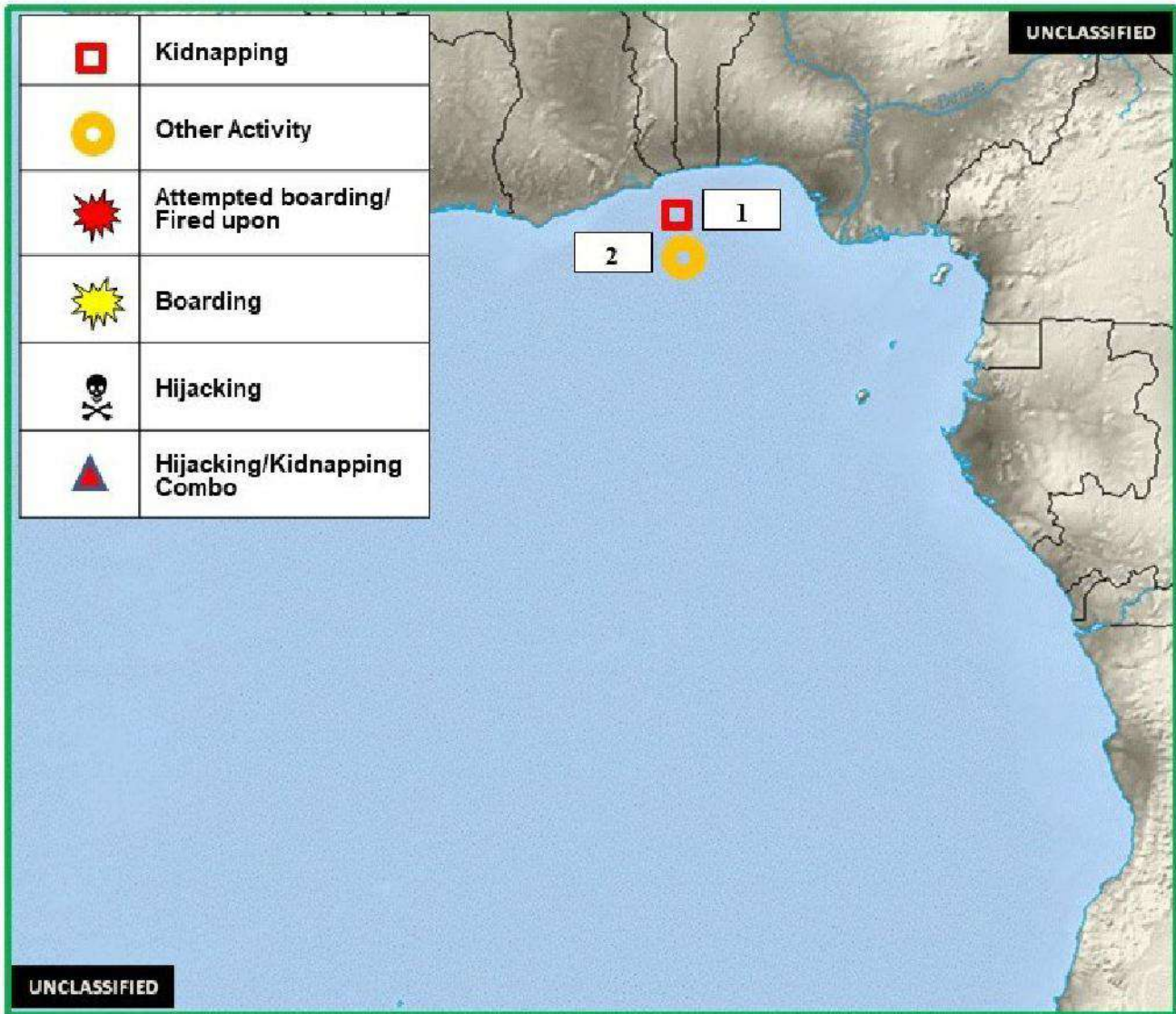


(U) Figure 2. Mediterranean - Black Sea Piracy and Maritime Crime

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1. (U) ALGERIA: On 13 December, several persons attempted to board the Singapore-flagged LPG tanker NIKINSKY near position 36:45N - 003:04E, Port of Algiers. The vessel was undergoing cargo operations when the duty officer onboard the ship noticed three individuals attempting to board the vessel by using the forward mooring lines. When the ship alarm was activated, the individuals fled. The crew then conducted a stowaway search through the vessel and confirmed that there was no presence of any unauthorized individuals on board the ship. The incident was then reported to the local port authorities, who boarded the vessel in order to conduct their own investigation. ([www.arxmatime.com](http://www.arxmatime.com))
2. (U) GREECE: On 18 November, three crew of Panama-flagged general cargo ship ARMONIA were detained by Kavala port authority officials when they were found to be in possession of fake seaman certificates. The ship was detained for investigation. ([www.fleetmon.com](http://www.fleetmon.com))
3. (U) ITALY: On 14 November, authorities in the Port of Gioia Tauro seized a ton of cocaine hidden in a cargo of bananas going to Germany. ([www.ansa.it](http://www.ansa.it))

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



(U) Figure 3. West Africa Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) TOGO: On 15 December, six heavily armed pirates boarded the Marshall Islands-flagged product tanker DUKE underway near position 04:23.59N - 002:03.15E, 113 NM southeast of Lome, Togo. They kidnapped 20 of the 21 crew members and destroyed some equipment resulting in the tanker going into a blackout condition. The remaining crewman sent a distress signal and requested to be towed to a safe area. Upon receiving the information, the IMB Piracy Reporting Center liaised with regional authorities to provide assistance to the tanker. A Togo Navy ship was dispatched to the location of the tanker and made arrangements to tow the tanker. The 20 kidnapped crewmen were all Indian nationals. (IMB; [www.gcaptain.com](http://www.gcaptain.com); [www.maritime-executive.com](http://www.maritime-executive.com); [www.arxmaritime.com](http://www.arxmaritime.com))
2. (U) TOGO: On 12 December, authorities in Lome announced the release of three seafarers kidnapped on 4 November from the Greece-flagged tanker ELKA ARISTOTLE. The crewmen, one from the Philippines, one from Greece, and one from Georgia, were reportedly being checked at a local hospital before being released to go home. An additional crewman from the Philippines reportedly died during captivity from an illness. ([www.safety4sea.com](http://www.safety4sea.com))

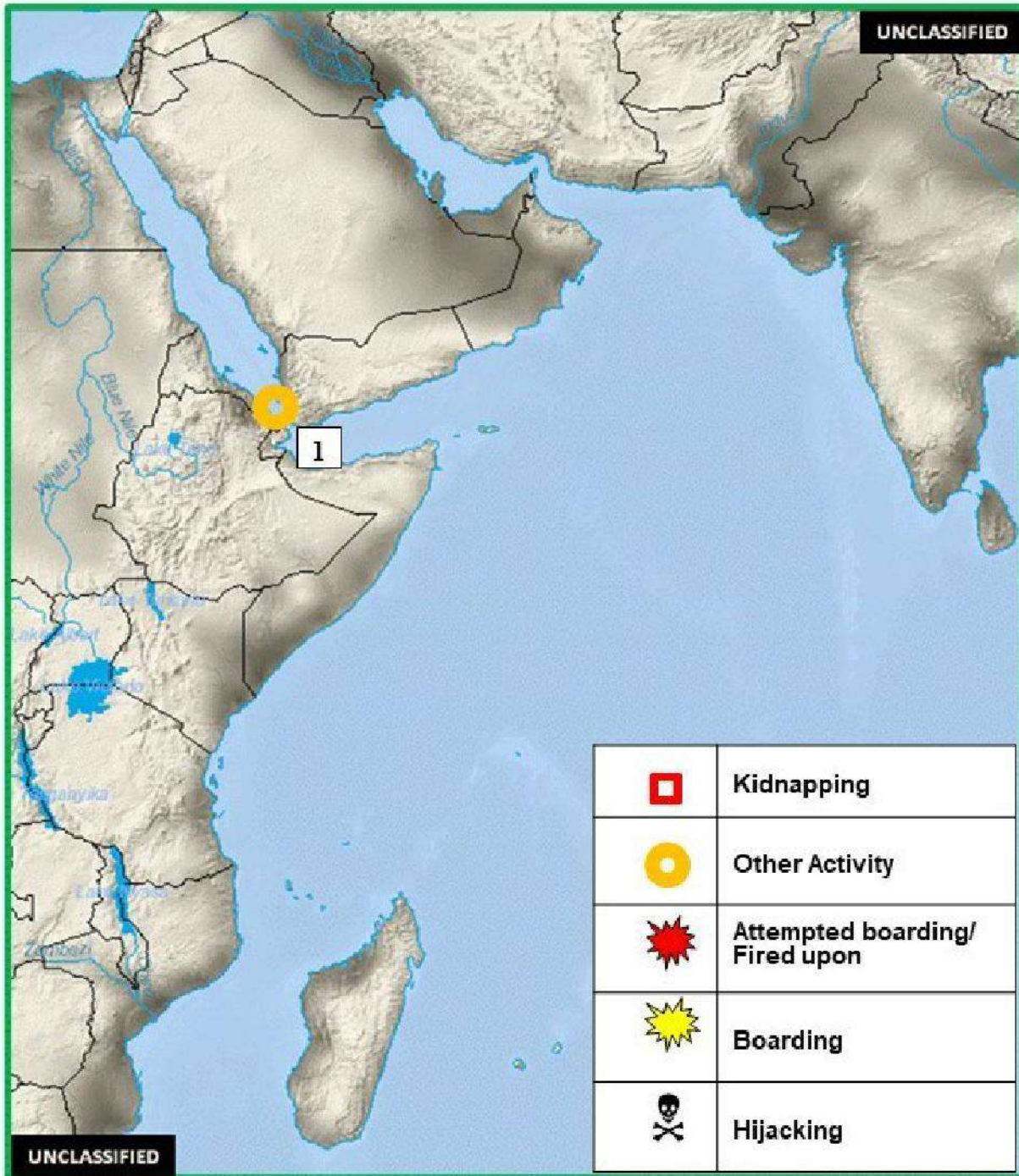
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3. (U) NIGERIA: On 8 December, authorities announced the seizure of M/V TIM GBEGELE and 11 crewmen for illegally transporting 369 metric tons of diesel fuel. The ship was intercepted 77 NM southwest of Lagos. ([www.thenationonline.net](http://www.thenationonline.net))
4. (U) NIGERIA: On 6 December, nine sailors from the Philippines who were kidnapped from Norway-flagged bulk carrier M/V BONITA on 2 November were released and are on their way home. ([www.safety4sea.com](http://www.safety4sea.com))
5. (U) NIGERIA: On 3 December, pirates kidnapped 19 crew members (18 Indian and 1 Turkish) from the Hong Kong-flagged very large crude carrier NAVE CONSTELLATION approximately 77 NM south of Bonny Offshore Terminal. ([www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com))
6. (U) GUINEA: On 21 November, five robbers boarded a merchant vessel anchored near position 09:31N - 013:43W, Conakry Anchorage. Local authorities opened an investigation into the event. ([www.arxmaritime.com](http://www.arxmaritime.com))
7. (U) EQUATORIAL GUINEA: On 20 November, pirates attacked the Singapore-flagged tug PACIFIC WARDEN near position 03:45N - 008:14E, approximately 33 NM west of Malabo. The pirates disembarked the ship. An Equatorial Guinea Navy ship is in the vicinity of the vessel. Investigations are ongoing. (IMB)

**G. (U) ARABIAN GULF:**

(U) No current incidents to report.

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



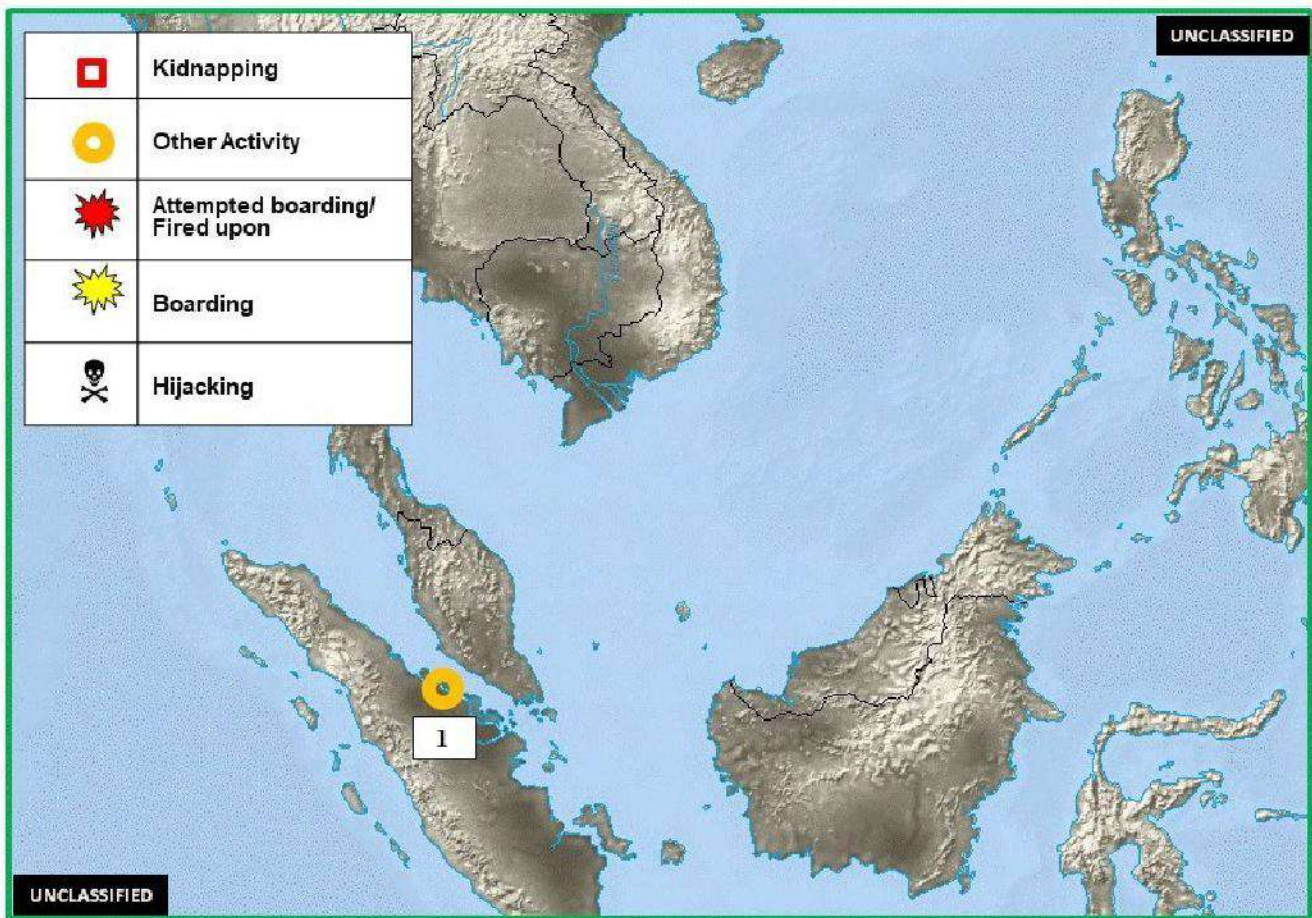
(U) Figure 4. Indian Ocean - East Africa - Red Sea Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) RED SEA: On 3 December, a merchant vessel reported a suspicious approach by one skiff near position 12:32N - 04326E, Bab el Mandeb Strait. (UKMTO)
2. (U) RED SEA: On 19 November, unidentified assailants fired on a survey vessel from the shore at 1845 local time during an operation off Mayyun Island in the Bab el Mandeb Strait. ([www.pvilttd.com](http://www.pvilttd.com))



3. (U) MALDIVES: On 22 November, one man was injured when he was repeatedly stabbed during an argument onboard a fishing boat. Authorities stated that an argument broke out on a sea cucumber fishing boat from Madduvari island in Raa atoll. ([www.raajje.mv](http://www.raajje.mv))
4. (U) MOZAMBIQUE: On 19 November, an alert duty crewman onboard a bulk carrier anchored near position 14:22S - 040:42E, Nacala Outer Anchorage, noticed an unauthorized person on the forecastle deck and raised the alarm. Crew mustered and a search was carried out. Seeing the alerted crew, the person escaped. Nothing reported stolen. All crew safe. Incident reported to Port Control. (IMB)
5. (U) RED SEA: On 17 November, Saudi Arabia-flagged tug RABIGH 3 and another tug were seized by Houthi militia near position 15:25N - 042:18E, 14 NM northwest of Kamaran Island, Yemen. The tug was taken to Al Qaryah, Yemeni waters, off Kamaran Island. A number of sources said the tugs were towing a South Korean dredge, which was also seized. Sixteen people, including two South Koreans, were on the three vessels. Press reporting indicates that the ships and crews were released on 20 November. (IMB; [www.fleetmon.dom](http://www.fleetmon.dom); [www.sguardina.com](http://www.sguardina.com); Reuters; [www.koreatimes.co.kr](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr))

I. (U) EAST ASIA - SOUTHEAST ASIA - INDIAN SUBCONTINENT:



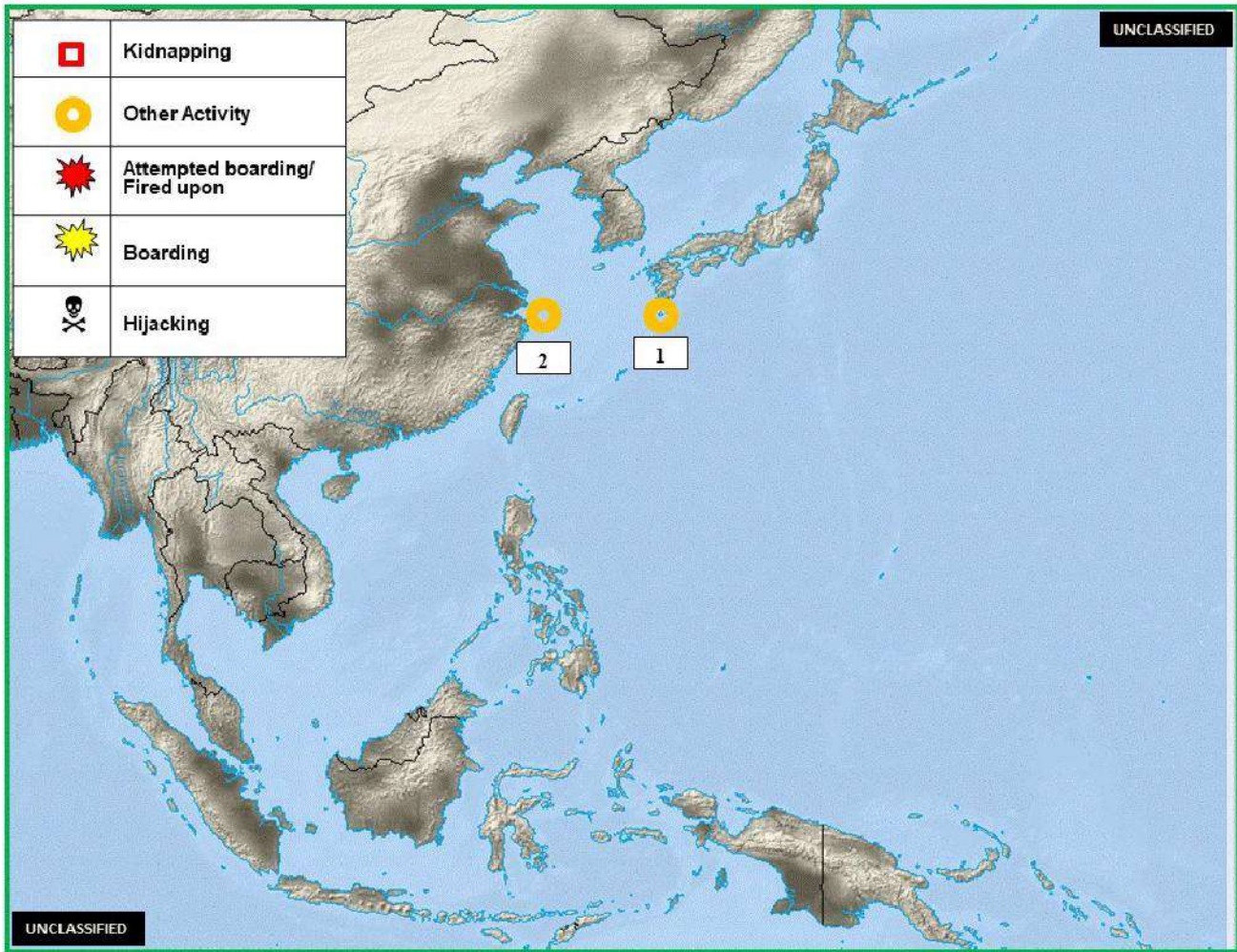
(U) Figure 5. Philippines Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) INDONESIA: On 14 December, police arrested two men after discovering an illegal cargo of smuggled animals in the Port of Dumai. During a search, they found four lion cubs, a leopard cub, and a box containing 58 turtles. ([www.home.bt.com](http://www.home.bt.com))

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2. (U) INDONESIA: On 6 December, robbers attempted to board the Singapore-flagged tug, BW LOYALTY near position 011N -10356E, near Batam Island. The vessel was underway when a suspicious boat with seven individuals approached it from the side. One of the robbers attempted to secure a rope at the ship's port side, but failed due to the adverse weather conditions. The duty officer onboard the vessel sounded the general alarm and the boat departed the area. (www.arxmaritime.com)
3. (U) MALAYSIA: On 5 December, the Panama-flagged tanker SILVANA III was spotted by Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) forces as the tanker was illegally anchored in Kuala Kuaru waters, south of Penang Island, Malaysia. When an MMEA patrol boat approached the ship with the intention of boarding, the ladder wasn't lowered and tanker left the anchorage, in violation of Malaysian regulations and laws. (www.fleetmon.com)
4. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 1 December, robbers boarded and robbed the anchored Malta-flagged container ship CMA CGM NEW JERSEY, near position 14:32N - 120:52E, within Manila Anchorage via the anchor cable and hawse pipe. The robbers broke the lock to Bosun stores and stole ship's property. The incident was reported to port authorities. (IMB)
5. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 30 November, two robbers boarded the anchored Marshall Islands-flagged tanker RIO DAYTONA via the hawse pipe, near 13:43N - 121:02E, in Alpha Anchorage, Tabangao, Batangas, Phillipines. When the duty officer raised the alarm, the robbers fled. (IMB)
6. (U) INDONESIA: On 29 November, four robbers, one armed with a 50-cm knife, boarded the underway Hong Kong-flagged bulk carrier CHINA PIONEER, near position 01:16N - 104:13E, 7.6 NM northwest of Paluau Tanjung Bntung Besar, Indonesia. When the crew activated the ship's alarm and deck lighting, the robbers fled. A subsequent investigation by the crew revealed nothing was stolen. (IMB)
7. (U) SINGAPORE: On 27 November, robbers armed with knives boarded the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier KMAX EVDOKIA near position 01:18N - 104:20E, 7 NM southeast of Sungai Rengit. The robbers fled after the crew raised the alarm. The crew conducted a full search, nothing was stolen, and the vessel and crew are safe. (www.arxmaritime.com)
8. (U) INDONESIA: On 24 November, two robbers boarded a barge loaded with containers being towed by Malaysia-flagged tug HARBOUR LIBRA, near position 01:14N - 104:04E, 2.2 NM northwest of Pulau Nongsa, Indonesia, in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) of the Singapore Strait. The robbers fled after the crew raised the alarm. Some twist locks and ropes had been stolen during the attack. (www.arxmaritime.com)
9. (U) MALAYSIA: On 24 November, five robbers armed with long knives boarded the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier FAYE near position 01:16N - 104:14E, 2.2 NM northwest of Pulau Nongsa, Indonesia, in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) of the Singapore Strait. When the crew noticed the robbers entering the ship's engine room, they raised the alarm which resulted in the robbers fleeing. (www.pvilttd.com; www.arxmaritime.com)
10. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 25 November, authorities in Manila announced the rescue of a UK citizen and his Filipino wife after they were kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf group fighters on 4 October. They are safe and unharmed. (www.thenational.ae)
11. (U) PHILIPPINES: On 22 November, authorities in the Port of Cabangan in the province of Zambales, detained the Liberia-flagged bulk carrier DAYANG CENTURY. The ship was carrying a cargo of 57,000 tons of phosphogypsum, which was found to be slightly radioactive. The ship was detained and the crew arrested. The ship's papers did not reflect the carriage of radioactive cargo. (www.fleetmon.com)two

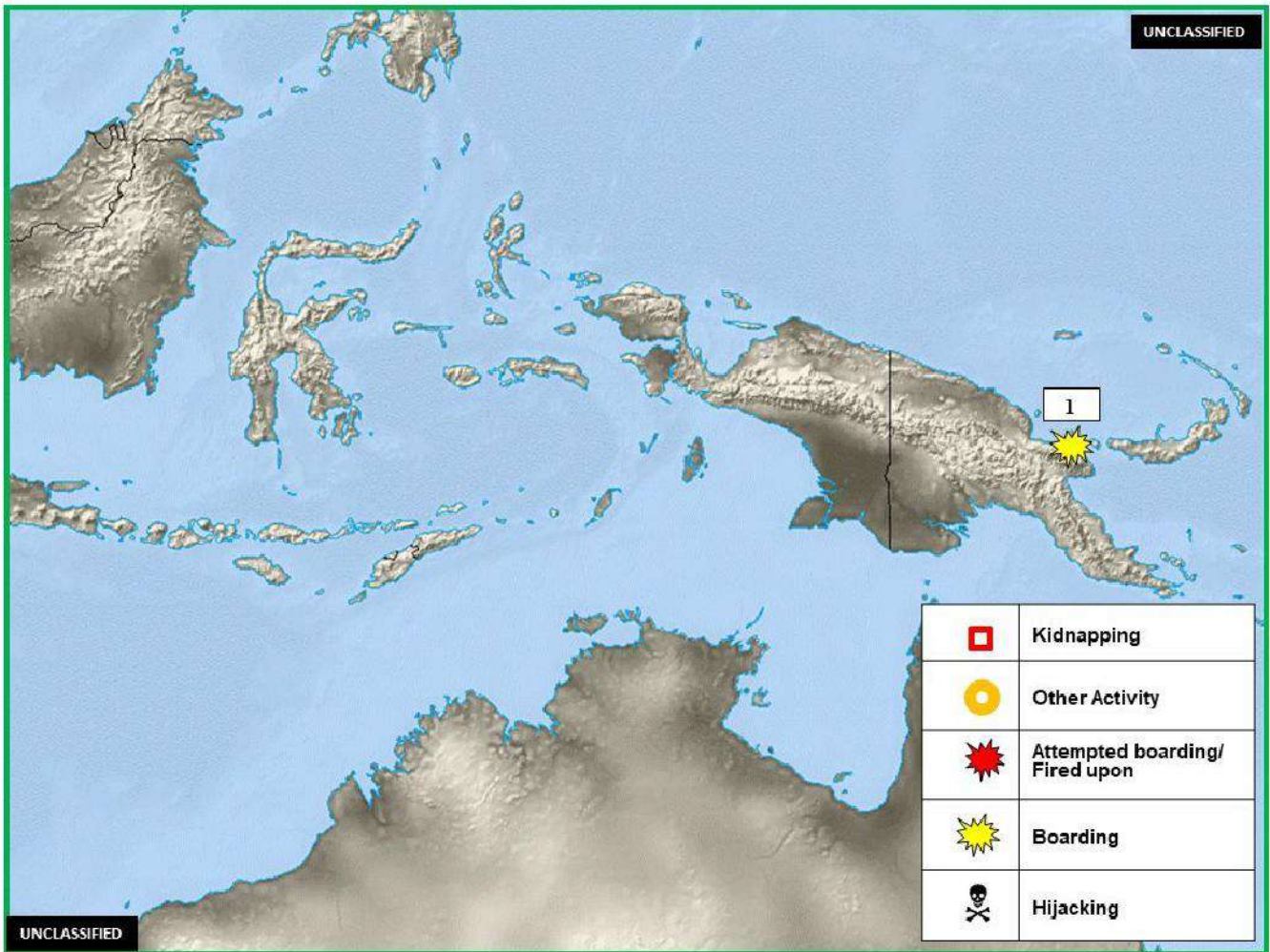
**J. (U) NORTHEAST ASIA:**



(U) Figure 6. Northeast Asia Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) JAPAN: On 11 December authorities arrested 11 suspects attempting to smuggle 600 kilograms of methamphetamines into the country by boat off Kumamoto Prefecture, in southern Japan. ([www.taiwannews.com](http://www.taiwannews.com))
2. (U) EAST CHINA SEA: On 13 November, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer escort SENDAI witnessed and photographed two vessels conducting a prohibited ship-to-ship transfer of petroleum products banned under UN Security Council economic sanctions. One of the vessels was North Korea-flagged MU BONG 1 alongside another vessel which was concealing its identity approximately 150 NM east of Shanghai, China. ([www.maritime-executive.com](http://www.maritime-executive.com))
3. (U) CHINA: On 29 November, authorities seized 540 tons of illegally imported frozen meat in Hong Kong. Authorities seized the meat from a suspicious fishing vessel which was bound for mainland China. Six individuals were arrested at the scene. ([www.pvilt.com](http://www.pvilt.com))

K. (U) AUSTRALIA - NEW ZEALAND - PACIFIC OCEAN AREA:



(U) Figure 7. Australia - New Zealand - Pacific Ocean Area Piracy and Maritime Crime

1. (U) PAPUA NEW GUINEA: On 14 December, four pirates boarded a passenger boat, disguised as passengers and then robbed eight passengers and crew, stealing cash and valuables before escaping in a waiting boat. The passenger boat was transiting from Karkar to Madang. Four persons were rescued by a passing boat, pulling them from the sea. Four others are missing and one man was found dead. ([www.thenational.com.pg](http://www.thenational.com.pg))

## 5. (U) Appendix A: Further Contact Information and Resources

(U) This appendix provides contact information for the author of the WTS as well as other entities that can be contacted with maritime crime reports. It also lists other resources where the WTS is posted and where piracy and maritime crime incident information can be found.

### (U) Contact

(U) Originator of this WTS report requests consumer feedback. Originator will incorporate all anti-shipping events and violence against the maritime industry into this weekly message where appropriate. To aid in our reporting, please add the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) to your normal corporate and organizational reporting requirements. The 24-hour watch can be reached at +1 (301) 669-4053.

**(U) Other Resources**

(U) This Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) report is posted at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's Maritime Safety site: <http://msi.nga.mil/NGAPortal/MSI.portal>. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) also publishes a live piracy report based on reporting from the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, listing all piracy and armed robbery incidents in the last ten days: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/>. The Weekly Piracy Update and WTS reports are posted weekly on the ONI Intel Portal: [http://www.oni.navy.mil/Intelligence\\_Community/piracy.htm](http://www.oni.navy.mil/Intelligence_Community/piracy.htm).

**6. (U) Appendix B: Terminology and References**

(U) This appendix is provided to promote consistent use of accurate terms of reference in reporting and also identifies those references that were used to gather the information contained in this report. ONI welcomes comment and suggestions for addition or amendment.

**(U) Terminology**

(U) In order to promote consistent use of accurate terms of reference, the following have been adopted to describe the range of criminal anti-shipping activity and impediments to safe navigation in our worldwide reporting and analysis. Please note that these terms relate to observable activity and are independent of target vessel status and exclude actions by governmental powers in lawful pursuit of their authorities:

(U) The following terms have been adopted to describe the 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) **Robbery** - Theft from a vessel or from persons aboard the vessel.
- (U) **Suspicious Approach** - All other unexplained activity in close proximity by an unknown vessel.

**(U) Sourcing**

- Agence France Presse (AFP)
- Associated Press (AP)
- BBC News
- DNK Intelligence & Operations Centre (DNK IOC)
- EU Naval Forces (EU)
- International Maritime Bureau (IMB), London and Kuala Lumpur
- International Maritime Organization (IMO), London
- Lloyd's
- Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S.

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- Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)
- Marine Domain Awareness for Trade - Gulf of Guinea (MDAT- GoG)
- Maritime Asset Security and Training (MAST) Ltd
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), Navigation Safety System
- Noonsite.com (Noonsite), website
- Norwegian Shipowners' Mutual War Risks Insurance Association
- Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia, Information Sharing Center (ReCAAP ISC)
- Reuters
- Royal Australian Navy (RAN)
- Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN)
- The Maritime Executive (website)
- United Kingdom Maritime Trade Organization (UKMTO)
- United Press International (UPI)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)

(U) The Weekly Piracy Update (WPU) and WTS reports are posted each week on the ONI Intel Portal and can be found at: <http://www.oni.navy.mil/News/Weekly-Piracy-Reports/>

(U) ICOD: 18 December 2019

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