



WEEKLY SECURITY BRIEFING · 2026-W35

Weekly Security Briefing

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Executive Summary — This Week's Key Global Developments

- 1. Ukraine again pushed the war into Russia's energy depth.** Reuters reported on 11 August that Ukrainian forces had stepped up strikes on Russian energy sites, and Bloomberg reported on 20 August that Ukraine said it hit Russia's Taneco refinery and a Black Sea oil terminal as Moscow faced another wave of fuel shortages. The individual strikes still need separate damage verification, but the pattern is now clear enough: Kyiv is using long-range systems to make Russian rear-area energy infrastructure part of the active war economy. For companies, the issue is not a single refinery fire. It is the effect on fuel supply, sanctions screening, cargo routing, insurance assumptions and Russian retaliation against Ukrainian ports or power infrastructure.
- 2. The Gulf of Aden produced the week's clearest maritime shock.** UKMTO Warning 118-26 on 20 August reported that a tanker broadcast a distress call around 136 nautical miles east of Al Mukalla, Yemen, after being approached by an unauthorised vessel while travelling west. Subsequent Reuters-linked and regional reporting said armed men boarded the tanker and diverted it toward Somalia. This moved the maritime picture beyond missile and drone exposure. Operators now have to treat piracy-style boarding, crew security, war-risk routing and Red Sea conflict spillover as overlapping problems in the same operating corridor.
- 3. Middle East escalation risk remained active around Iran, Lebanon and Gaza, but attribution still needs discipline.** ISW's Iran Update Special Report of 18 August assessed that Iran reportedly used Russian-enhanced Shahed drones and Russian targeting intelligence to attack U.S. forces and assets during the war, citing U.S. intelligence officials. Al Jazeera's 18 and 19 August live coverage tracked continuing U.S.-Israel-Iran confrontation claims, Iranian denials and Israeli strikes in Gaza. The operating picture is therefore serious, but not clean. The briefing treats official claims, battlefield incidents and attribution separately instead of compressing them into one escalation narrative.
- 4. Southern Lebanon is becoming a transition risk before UNIFIL's current mandate ends.** Global Issues/IPS reporting from the United Nations on 18 August warned that an impending UNIFIL exit could push Lebanon toward uncertainty after renewed fighting and worsening humanitarian conditions. This does not mean the mission disappears tomorrow. It does mean clients should treat peacekeeping capacity, ceasefire monitoring, Israeli-Hezbollah incidents and aid access as connected watch items through the rest of 2026.
- 5. Africa's main risk signal was state capacity under pressure in Somalia, Sudan, the Sahel and eastern Congo.** Reuters reported on 17 August that Somali federal troops pushed armed opposition fighters out of Baidoa after fierce fighting. UN News reported on 24 August that fighting, displacement and funding shortages continued to deepen needs in Sudan. Critical Threats' Congo War Security Review of 21 August assessed continuing M23 and Rwanda-linked military pressure in eastern Congo. These are separate crises, but they share one mechanism: armed actors can force local authorities into reactive security operations while civilian movement, aid delivery and commercial continuity deteriorate.

6. **Asia tightened around the Korean Peninsula exercise cycle and Taiwan Strait pressure.** Reuters reported on 18 and 19 August that U.S. and South Korean annual drills would be shortened and scaled back after a Trump administration order, while North Korea denounced the exercises. ISW and AEI's Korean Peninsula Update of 19 August assessed recent North Korean missile activity, including an August 12 launch profile that differed from standard short-range ballistic missile patterns. The immediate risk is not a forecast of war. It is a compressed signalling cycle in which exercises, missile launches and alliance politics can change aviation, diplomatic and cyber posture with little notice.
7. **Latin America and the Caribbean remained exposed to organised-crime convergence, not only local violence.** The U.S. State Department announced sanctions on 19 August against an Ecuador-based cocaine network linked to violent gangs and Mexican cartels, describing deeper convergence between Ecuadorian groups and major Mexico-based cartels. InSight Crime's August regional work also tracked criminal dynamics from Mexico to the Caribbean. The practical point for companies is that cartel risk is becoming more networked. A disruption in one country can affect port exposure, extortion pressure, trucking routes, local partners and executive travel planning elsewhere.
8. **Cyber risk stayed tied to ordinary business infrastructure.** CISA, FBI and international partners released advisory AA26-222A on Gunra ransomware, and CISA separately updated its Medusa ransomware advisory on 18 August with additional FBI investigative information. These are not abstract technical bulletins. They point to familiar exposure: internet-facing systems, remote access, credentials, backups and provider networks. A physical crisis and a ransomware incident can compound quickly if the same company depends on fragile logistics and weak recovery systems.

Key Developments & Intelligence Assessment

Europe

HIGH

Ukraine's rear-area energy campaign is now part of the war economy

Ukraine is making Russian energy infrastructure a recurring pressure point. Reuters reported that Ukraine has increased strikes on Russian energy sites, and Bloomberg reported on 20 August that Ukraine said it hit the Taneco refinery and a Black Sea oil terminal as fuel shortages worsened in Russia. Ukrainian and Russian accounts still need incident-by-incident verification, especially for damage totals and downstream fuel effects. The stronger assessment is about the pattern. Kyiv is no longer treating Russian energy infrastructure as a distant economic backdrop; it is treating selected refineries, terminals and logistics nodes as part of Russia's war-support system.

The effect is broader than one refinery. A strike on a refinery or terminal can force rerouting, repairs, temporary fuel rationing, tighter internal security and additional air-defence allocation. It can also create political pressure inside Russia because rear-area civilians and regional authorities see the war directly. For European companies, the exposure sits around sanctions compliance, energy-linked contracts, shipping documentation, insurance clauses, rail and port dependency, and the risk that Moscow answers by striking Ukrainian energy or port infrastructure. The main shift this week is that the energy fight looks less episodic and more systematic.

Intelligence Assessment

High Europe remains high risk. Confidence is high that Ukraine is pursuing a sustained campaign against Russian energy and logistics targets, supported by Reuters, Bloomberg and Ukrainian official statements. Confidence is lower for precise damage and fuel-shortage attribution because Russian domestic reporting is controlled and individual strike effects can be hard to isolate. The client judgment is firm: the war is still widening through energy, ports, air defence and retaliation cycles rather than narrowing into a stable ceasefire track.

Russian pressure on Ukraine's economy remains a separate commercial risk. The Economist reported on 18 August that Russian attacks were causing severe harm to Ukraine's economy and highlighted attacks on civilian cargo ships using Ukrainian Black Sea ports. That matters because Ukraine's export capacity is not only a battlefield issue. It affects grain flows, shipping costs, political pressure on insurers, and the resilience of companies that still rely on Ukrainian suppliers or transit routes. Even if a specific vessel attack is geographically narrow, the risk premium can spread through a wider trade corridor.

Peace diplomacy remains weak because the coercive tools remain active. Earlier Reuters reporting described Ukraine's idea of a limited halt to strikes against civilian maritime targets in the Black Sea, but open reporting reviewed this week does not show a durable mechanism accepted by Moscow. The useful reading is not that diplomacy is absent. It is that diplomatic signals are running behind the strike cycle. Until both sides accept a verification path, civilian maritime restraint remains an idea rather than a usable operating condition.

ALSO MONITORED THIS WEEK

- **Fuel-shortage reporting inside Russia needs cautious use.** Russian shortages may reflect Ukrainian strikes, seasonal demand, refinery maintenance, sanctions and distribution issues at the same time. The operational conclusion is exposure to disruption, not a precise one-cause diagnosis.
- **Black Sea shipping remains sensitive to single incidents.** Cargo insurers and charterers can react to one credible attack or warning even before governments change formal advice.
- **Air-defence supply remains a European political constraint.** Any new Russian strike wave against Ukrainian cities, ports or power infrastructure will put interceptor stocks and procurement schedules back into the weekly risk picture.

Middle East

HIGH

Maritime boarding risk joined missile and drone exposure

The Gulf of Aden hijack report changed the week's maritime risk profile. UKMTO Warning 118-26 reported on 20 August that a tanker sent a distress call after being approached by an unauthorised vessel around 136 nautical miles east of Al Mukalla, Yemen. Reuters-linked reporting carried by regional outlets said six armed people boarded the tanker and that the vessel was diverted toward Somalia. UKMTO remains the best primary attribution for the incident itself. Later commercial and media reporting adds detail, but crew status and final control should stay caveated unless confirmed by the company, flag state or recognised maritime authority.

The mechanism is corridor layering. The Gulf of Aden and Red Sea are not exposed to one threat category. Houthi missiles and drones, piracy-style boarding, spoofed distress narratives, naval warnings, war-risk premiums and crew-security decisions now sit in the same planning space. A vessel operator does not need to resolve every actor's motive to adjust routing. It needs to know whether the ship's profile, flag, owner, cargo, speed, freeboard and security posture increase exposure in a corridor where both conflict and criminal opportunism can operate.

Intelligence Assessment

High Middle East maritime risk is high this week. Confidence is high for the UKMTO-reported incident location and warning number. Confidence is medium for later details on diversion and boarding control until direct company or flag-state confirmation is public. The client judgment is that the Gulf of Aden has moved into a more complex threat picture: vessel operators must plan for boarding and hijack exposure alongside drone, missile and regional-war spillover risks.

Iran-related escalation claims require separate attribution. ISW's Iran Update Special Report of 18 August assessed, citing U.S. intelligence officials, that Iran reportedly used Russian-enhanced Shahed drones and Russian targeting intelligence to attack U.S. forces and assets during the war. Al Jazeera's live coverage on 18 and 19 August tracked Iranian denials, U.S. claims, Gaza strikes and regional diplomacy. The evidence supports a serious escalation environment, but it does not support treating every claim as confirmed fact. This briefing therefore separates official statements, analytical assessments and independently verified incidents.

Lebanon's peacekeeping transition is becoming a live risk before the mandate expires. Global Issues/IPS reporting from the United Nations on 18 August warned that an impending UNIFIL exit could push Lebanon toward uncertainty as fighting and humanitarian pressure persist. The issue is not only troop numbers. Reduced monitoring would affect incident verification, access to border communities, diplomatic movement and the speed at which small clashes are understood. For organisations with Lebanon exposure, southern Lebanon should remain a watch item even if headline attention moves back to Iran or Gaza.

ALSO MONITORED THIS WEEK

- **Gaza remains a humanitarian and political pressure point.** Al Jazeera's live coverage tracked continued Israeli strikes and diplomatic claims. Client use should stay anchored to verified humanitarian, UN and wire reporting rather than liveblog claims alone.
- **Hormuz remains exposed even when the week's clearest incident is in the Gulf of Aden.** Any official warning involving UAVs, missiles, boardings or naval interference in Hormuz would change shipping assumptions quickly.
- **Syria remains politically sensitive.** Accountability, sanctions and local security fragmentation continue to affect due diligence and partner screening even when no single Syrian event leads the week.

Africa

HIGH

State authority remained contested across several operating environments

Somalia showed how quickly a political-security dispute can become an urban operating problem. Reuters reported on 17 August that Somali federal troops pushed armed opposition fighters out of Baidoa after fierce fighting. The reporting described civilians gathering as smoke rose from a shop hit by artillery, a reminder that the distinction between political dispute and urban security incident can collapse fast. Baidoa is not only a local battlefield. It is a humanitarian, administrative and transport node in a country where al-Shabaab pressure, clan politics and federal-state tensions already stretch security capacity.

Sudan's crisis remained severe even without one clean tactical headline. UN News reported on 24 August that fighting, displacement and funding shortages continued to deepen humanitarian needs in Sudan, citing OCHA's warning about civilian protection and access. For companies and NGOs, Sudan is not a normal market with a security overlay. It is a fragmented conflict environment where access, medical care, evacuation timing, cash movement, fuel availability and counterpart reliability can fail at the same time. The absence of one decisive weekly battle does not reduce the operating risk.

Intelligence Assessment

High Africa risk is high across the Sahel, Somalia, Sudan and eastern Congo. Confidence is high for the Reuters-reported Baidoa fighting and UN-reported Sudan humanitarian deterioration. Confidence is medium for near-term control dynamics in eastern Congo and Sahel subregions because armed actors and state forces both use information operations. The practical assessment is clear: movement corridors, aid access, local partner continuity and emergency support remain vulnerable across several African theatres at once.

Eastern Congo remained a military and humanitarian risk corridor. Critical Threats' Congo War Security Review of 21 August assessed that M23 and Rwanda reportedly conducted a targeted airstrike using a Turkish-made medium-altitude drone and continued pressure in eastern DRC. The exact chain of command and platform details should be treated with care unless confirmed by official or independent technical reporting. The operational implication is still relevant. Airstrike claims, rebel movement and regional-state involvement can alter road access, border planning, evacuation routes and the security of local staff in North Kivu and surrounding areas.

The Sahel remained uncovered by high-confidence public reporting, but not quiet. The preflight inputs and ACLED-linked monitoring point to continuing jihadist pressure in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, while public web coverage remains thinner than the level of operational risk. This is a source limitation, not a reason to downgrade the threat. In practical terms, armed groups retain mobility, states rely heavily on reactive force, and transport corridors can become unsafe before international reporting catches up.

ALSO MONITORED THIS WEEK

- **Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger remain exposed to convoy and base attacks.** Treat X-only casualty claims as unverified, but use them as triggers for ACLED, official and reputable local-media checks.
- **Mozambique's Cabo Delgado remains a lower-visibility watch item.** Islamic State Mozambique activity and state pressure continue to matter for extractives, logistics and contractor movement even when global coverage is sparse.
- **Nigeria's northwest remains structurally violent.** Armed groups retain mobility and manpower despite periodic rescue or interdiction claims by security forces.

Asia

ELEVATED

Exercise politics and missile signalling compressed the warning cycle

The U.S.-South Korea exercise cycle became a strategic signal in its own right. Reuters reported on 18 and 19 August that the annual Ulchi Freedom Shield drills would be shortened and scaled back after President Trump ordered reductions, reviving a contentious alliance issue. North Korea denounced the exercises, while allied officials framed the changes around scope and timing rather than abandonment. For companies, this does not translate into a direct movement trigger by itself. It does change the signalling environment around Seoul, U.S. facilities, aviation posture and diplomatic messaging.

North Korean missile activity kept the pressure on the exercise window. ISW and AEI's Korean Peninsula Update of 19 August assessed that an August 12 North Korean launch reportedly reached an apogee of about 90 kilometres, higher than recent short-range ballistic missile launches and standard profiles. The technical detail matters because Pyongyang often uses test profiles to message capability, not only intent. The immediate risk is a cycle of exercises, launch claims, allied responses and cyber or information activity that can escalate attention even without a decision for major conflict.

Intelligence Assessment

Medium Asia risk is elevated. Confidence is high for the Reuters-reported exercise changes and North Korean denunciation. Confidence is medium for the operational meaning of the missile profile because open sources do not provide the full technical picture. The client relevance is that Korean Peninsula and Taiwan Strait watch indicators are now tied to political decisions in Washington, military signalling by Pyongyang and maritime-administration pressure from Beijing.

Taiwan remains in the same pressure family even when Korea leads the week. Recent ISW-AEI China and Taiwan reporting continued to track PRC maritime-administration and coast guard pressure, while Taiwan's civil-resilience emphasis remains relevant after Han Kuang drills. The risk is not that a single administrative notice causes a crisis. It is that China can normalise jurisdiction claims, civil aviation or maritime instructions, coast guard presence and information pressure around routes that international actors still treat as open. That raises the cost of operating in a grey-zone environment.

South and Southeast Asia stayed relevant through instability rather than one headline escalation. Myanmar remains exposed to airstrikes, detention, sanctions and displacement pressures documented by UN mechanisms in recent reporting. Pakistan and Afghanistan remain watch items through militancy, border tension and pressure on diplomatic or aid activity. These theatres did not displace Korea or Taiwan this week, but they remain within the primary focus regions of SF Custos Global because local security deterioration can affect travel, contractors and supply chains quickly.

ALSO MONITORED THIS WEEK

- **Exercise reductions can produce mixed signals.** Pyongyang may treat reduced drills as pressure success, while Seoul may need to reassure domestic and allied audiences that readiness remains intact.
- **Taiwan Strait administrative pressure remains commercially relevant.** Traffic-control instructions, coast guard activity and military drills can affect insurance, routing and aviation assumptions even before a crisis.
- **Myanmar remains a sanctions and partner-screening risk.** Companies with exposure should treat local counterpart checks as a security issue, not only a compliance exercise.

Latin America / Caribbean

ELEVATED

Criminal networks are increasingly regional operating risks

Ecuador's cartel-linked sanctions signal matters beyond one network. The U.S. State Department announced on 19 August that it was sanctioning an Ecuador-based cocaine network linked to violent gangs and Mexican cartels. The department described deeper convergence between Ecuador's most violent organisations and major Mexico-based cartels, including the Sinaloa Cartel and *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación*. Sanctions are not a local incident report, but they are useful because they show how U.S. authorities now read Ecuadorian violence: not as a closed national problem, but as part of a regional trafficking and cartel system.

That convergence changes business exposure. A company does not need to be in the drug trade to be affected by cartel networks. Port delays, extortion pressure, trucking disruptions, corrupt facilitation demands, local protest manipulation and sudden violence near hotels or industrial zones can all touch legitimate business. The risk is most acute where gangs, port logistics, prisons, police corruption and transnational cartels overlap. Ecuador, Mexico, Colombia and parts of the Caribbean sit inside that map in different ways.

Intelligence Assessment

Medium Latin America and Caribbean risk is elevated. Confidence is high for the U.S. sanctions announcement and the official description of cartel convergence. Confidence is medium for near-term local effects because sanctions can disrupt some networks while pushing others to adapt. The business exposure sits around port operations, executive movement, road security, local partner reliability, extortion risk and emergency-response bandwidth.

Mexico remains the regional benchmark for cartel operating reach. InSight Crime's Mexico coverage continues to describe some of the hemisphere's largest and most violent organised criminal groups, with influence that extends beyond local violence. Mexican cartel links now appear in U.S. sanctions language on Ecuador and in broader regional organised-crime analysis. The direct risk varies sharply by state and city. National labels are not enough. The practical question is whether a route, port, hotel district, industrial site or local partner sits near a dispute between armed groups or a state pressure campaign.

Haiti remains the Caribbean's clearest severe operating environment. UN and humanitarian reporting through August continued to point to gang violence, displacement and weak access around Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas. Election planning, international support and police operations remain exposed to gang territorial control. The issue for organisations is not only violent crime. It is whether staff movement, airport access, local accommodation, medical evacuation and communications can still be guaranteed if gangs shift pressure suddenly.

ALSO MONITORED THIS WEEK

- **Colombia remains sensitive after a harder security-policy turn.** U.S. assistance intent and the new Colombian government's stance can change local risk before security outcomes are visible.
- **Venezuela remains a political and migration watch item.** The week did not produce a stronger high-confidence security lead, but cross-border movement and political pressure remain relevant.
- **Kidnapping and extortion claims from social media require corroboration.** Use X posts as early warning only, then verify against official, wire, InSight Crime or reputable local reporting.

Global Intelligence Assessment

This week was defined by pressure on corridors and institutions, not by one single war. Ukraine targeted Russian energy depth. The Gulf of Aden produced a tanker hijack report. Lebanon's peacekeeping future looked less certain. Somalia, Sudan and eastern Congo showed state capacity under pressure. Korea moved through exercises and missile signalling. Latin America showed cartel convergence through official sanctions language. These are different theatres, but the commercial mechanism is similar: routes, ports, airports, border areas, local partners and emergency services can change faster than formal country-risk labels.

The strongest risk pattern is shorter warning time. In several regions, the first visible sign for companies will not be a strategic announcement. It may be a UKMTO warning, a port delay, a road closure near a city, an insurance exclusion, a partner cancelling travel, a telecoms outage, a police redeployment or a ransomware notice from a provider. That is why this briefing focuses on watch indicators rather than broad recommendations. The useful trigger is the practical signal that changes movement, routing or continuity planning.

Attribution discipline remains a client-protection issue. Iran-related claims, drone technology transfers, eastern Congo airstrike details, Sahel casualty totals and cartel responsibility for specific incidents all carry uneven evidence. The right approach is to separate confirmed event, official accusation, analytical assessment and unverified signal. That may sound slower than headline language, but it protects decision-making. A false certainty can move staff, vessels or money in the wrong direction.

Cyber exposure belongs in the same operational picture. Gunra and Medusa ransomware advisories are not separate from physical security if the affected company depends on remote access, logistics platforms, ports, hotel systems, fuel suppliers or outsourced IT. A ransomware incident during a regional crisis can block travel approvals, freeze communications, delay shipments or disable incident response. Security leaders should therefore treat cyber advisories as part of continuity planning, not as background technical reading.

The source picture is uneven but usable. Maritime, cyber, Korea and Ukraine had strong official, wire or established analytical sources this week. Sahel tactical detail and some Latin America incident claims remained thinner, with several signals coming first through social media or broad regional analysis. Those weaker items are still useful as watch triggers, but not as stand-alone facts. Where corroboration is not available, this briefing states the limitation in the relevant section rather than filling the gap with unsupported detail.

Watch Indicators

- New UKMTO, EUNAVFOR, MARAD, JMIC or IMO reporting of further Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb or Hormuz incidents involving boardings, hijack attempts, UAVs, missiles, crew casualties or vessel diversion.
- Company, flag-state or recognised maritime confirmation on the 20 August Gulf of Aden tanker incident, especially crew status, final vessel location and actor attribution.
- Russian retaliatory strikes against Ukrainian ports, power infrastructure, rail nodes or urban areas after Ukrainian attacks on Russian refineries and oil terminals.
- New reporting on Russian domestic fuel shortages that links local rationing or distribution pressure to confirmed refinery damage rather than broader market conditions.
- UN Security Council or troop-contributing-country movement on UNIFIL's future size, mandate or replacement arrangement.
- Further North Korean missile launches, cyber activity or military statements during or immediately after the shortened U.S.-South Korea exercise window.
- PRC maritime-administration, coast guard or military instructions around Taiwan Strait routes that Taiwan or partners reject as jurisdictional overreach.
- U.S., EU or regional sanctions linking Ecuadorian, Mexican or Colombian criminal networks to ports, prisons, trucking routes or named commercial facilitators.
- CISA, FBI or partner updates that add exploited vulnerabilities, victim sectors or defensive priorities for Gunra or Medusa ransomware.

Glossary of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
CJNG	Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISW	Institute for the Study of War
JMIC	Joint Maritime Information Center
UKMTO	United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UAV	Uncrewed aerial vehicle

Selected Sources

- Reuters, 11 August 2026, "What has been hit in Ukraine's attacks on Russian energy sites?"
- Bloomberg, 20 August 2026, on Ukraine's stated strike against Russia's Taneco refinery and a Black Sea oil terminal.
- The Economist, 18 August 2026, on Russian attacks affecting Ukraine's economy and civilian cargo shipping.
- UKMTO, Warning 118-26, 20 August 2026, on the Gulf of Aden tanker incident east of Al Mukalla, Yemen.
- Reuters-linked regional reporting, 20 August 2026, on armed men boarding a tanker off Yemen and diversion toward Somalia.
- Institute for the Study of War, Iran Update Special Report, 18 August 2026.
- Global Issues / IPS, 18 August 2026, on the impending UNIFIL exit and uncertainty in Lebanon.
- Reuters, 17 August 2026, on fighting in Baidoa, Somalia.
- UN News, 24 August 2026, on Sudan fighting, displacement and humanitarian needs.
- Critical Threats Project, Congo War Security Review, 21 August 2026.
- Reuters, 18 and 19 August 2026, on U.S.-South Korea exercise changes and North Korean denunciation.
- American Enterprise Institute and Institute for the Study of War, Korean Peninsula Update, 19 August 2026.
- U.S. Department of State, 19 August 2026, on sanctions against an Ecuador-based cocaine network linked to violent gangs and Mexican cartels.
- InSight Crime, August 2026, regional organised-crime coverage, including Mexico and Summer InSights 2026.
- CISA, FBI and partner agencies, Cybersecurity Advisory AA26-222A, "Gunra Ransomware"; CISA updated Medusa ransomware advisory AA25-071A on 18 August 2026.

Method Note

This Weekly Security Briefing was prepared for S.F. Custos Global Reach Ltd. using open reporting available through 24 August 2026. Official, wire, United Nations, maritime-advisory, recognised analytical and reputable media sources were prioritised. Social-media and single-source claims were treated as signals unless corroborated by official, wire or established analytical reporting. Assessments use calibrated confidence language and may change as additional reporting becomes available.