



**MEDITERRANEAN ACTION PLAN (MAP)
REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE FOR THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA (REMPEC)**

Fourth Meeting of the Mediterranean Network of
Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL
within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS)

REMPEC/WG.48/INF.7
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Agenda Item 8

INTERPOL KEY FINDINGS REPORT: OPERATION 30 DAYS AT SEA 2.0 (2019)

Note by the General Secretariat of the International Criminal Police Organization-INTERPOL

SUMMARY

Executive Summary: This document provides the key findings of Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 (2019) coordinated by the International Criminal Police Organization-INTERPOL.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 4

Related document: REMPEC/WG.45/INF.18

Background

1 Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 (1-31 October 2019) was the second INTERPOL global enforcement operation targeting marine pollution crime. It aimed at enhancing the global law enforcement response to pollution crimes leading to marine pollution, with the ultimate objectives of improving sea quality and tackling criminal networks involved in these crimes.

2 It followed a first Operation 30 Days at Sea conducted in October 2018, which primarily targeted illicit pollution at sea (REMPEC/WG.45/INF.18).

3 The INTERPOL Key Findings Report: Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 (2019) is reproduced in the **Annex** to the present document.

Action requested by the Meeting

4 **The Meeting is invited to take note** of the information provided in the present document.

ANNEX

INTERPOL KEY FINDINGS REPORT: OPERATION 30 DAYS AT SEA 2.0 (2019)



INTERPOL

Key Findings Report

OPERATION 30 DAYS AT SEA 2.0 (2019)

A global enforcement operation targeting onshore and offshore offences leading to marine pollution

September 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTERPOL would like to thank the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation for its generous financial support to the INTERPOL Global Pollution Enforcement Programme. This allowed INTERPOL to promote the enforcement capacities and operational engagement of Official Development Assistance recipient countries in fighting marine pollution crimes.



INTERPOL also wishes to thank the European Union-funded LIFE SMART Waste project, led by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, who generously contributed to fund some activities of this operational project.



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A SERIES OF GLOBAL MARINE POLLUTION ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS SINCE 2018

Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 (1-31 October 2019) was the second INTERPOL global enforcement operation targeting marine pollution crime. It aimed at enhancing the global law enforcement response to pollution crimes leading to marine pollution, with the ultimate objectives of improving sea quality and tackling criminal networks involved in these crimes.

It followed a first Operation 30 Days at Sea conducted in October 2018, which primarily targeted illicit pollution at sea¹. Based on lessons learned from 2018, a broader tactical approach was adopted for Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 in 2019, targeting not only pollution offences committed at sea, but also on land, in rivers, along with waste trafficking through ports. An enhanced focus was also given to plastic pollution, with the establishment of an international Operational Coordination Center gathering investigators of key countries concerned by the illegal export or import of plastic waste.

The Operation was conducted by 62 countries worldwide and internationally coordinated by INTERPOL, in consultation with its Pollution Crime Working Group (PCWG), and in cooperation with the European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) in the European region.

Overall, 249 national government agencies participated in the Operation according to the following breakdown by type of agency.

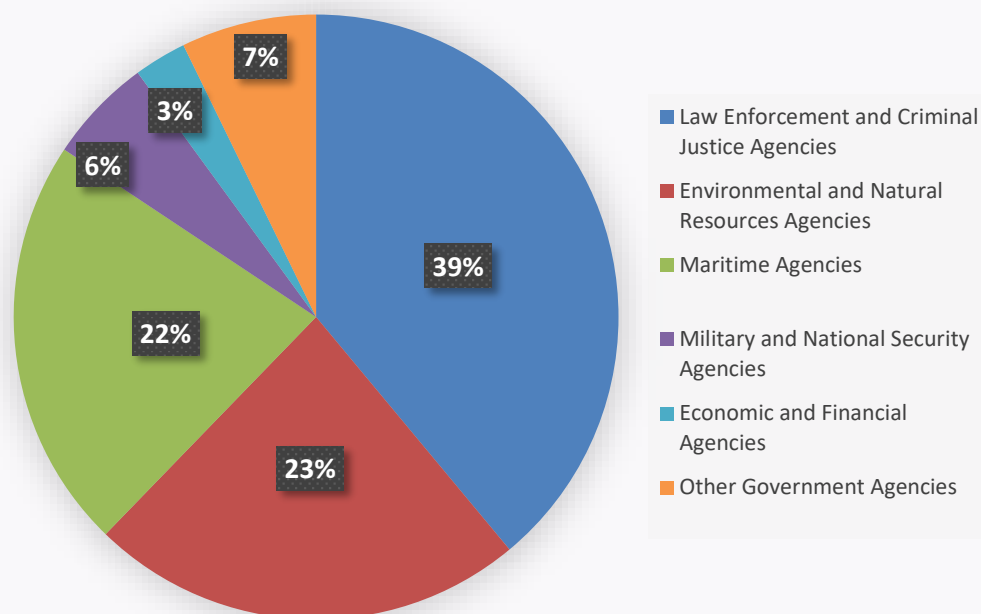


Figure 1: National government agencies participating in Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0

¹ The report of this Operation is available on the INTERPOL public website.

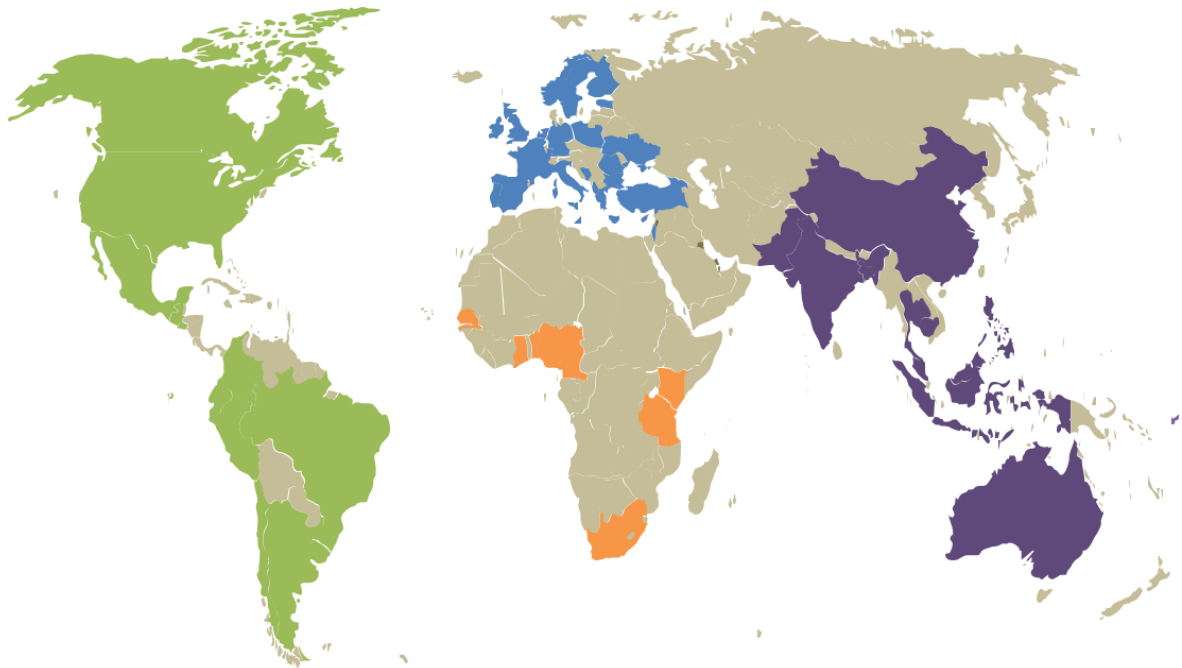


Figure 2: Participating countries in Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0

AMERICAS (12)	AFRICA (8)	MIDDLE EAST (4)	EUROPE (25)	ASIA – PACIFIC (13)
Argentina	Benin	Bahrein	Albania	Australia
Brazil	Cameroon	Kuwait	Belgium	Bangladesh
Canada	Ghana	Lebanon	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Cambodia
Chile	Kenya	Qatar	Bulgaria	China
Colombia	Nigeria		Cyprus	Fiji
Ecuador	Senegal		Estonia	India
El Salvador	South Africa		Finland	Indonesia
Guatemala	Tanzania		France	Malaysia
Mexico			Georgia	Pakistan
Peru			Germany	Philippines
United States of America			Greece	Republic of Korea
Uruguay			Ireland	Thailand
			Israel	Timor Leste
			Italy	
			Malta	
			Netherlands	
			Norway	
			Poland	
			Portugal	
			Romania	
			Spain	
			Sweden	
			Turkey	
			Ukraine	
			United Kingdom	

KEY RESULTS OF THE OPERATION

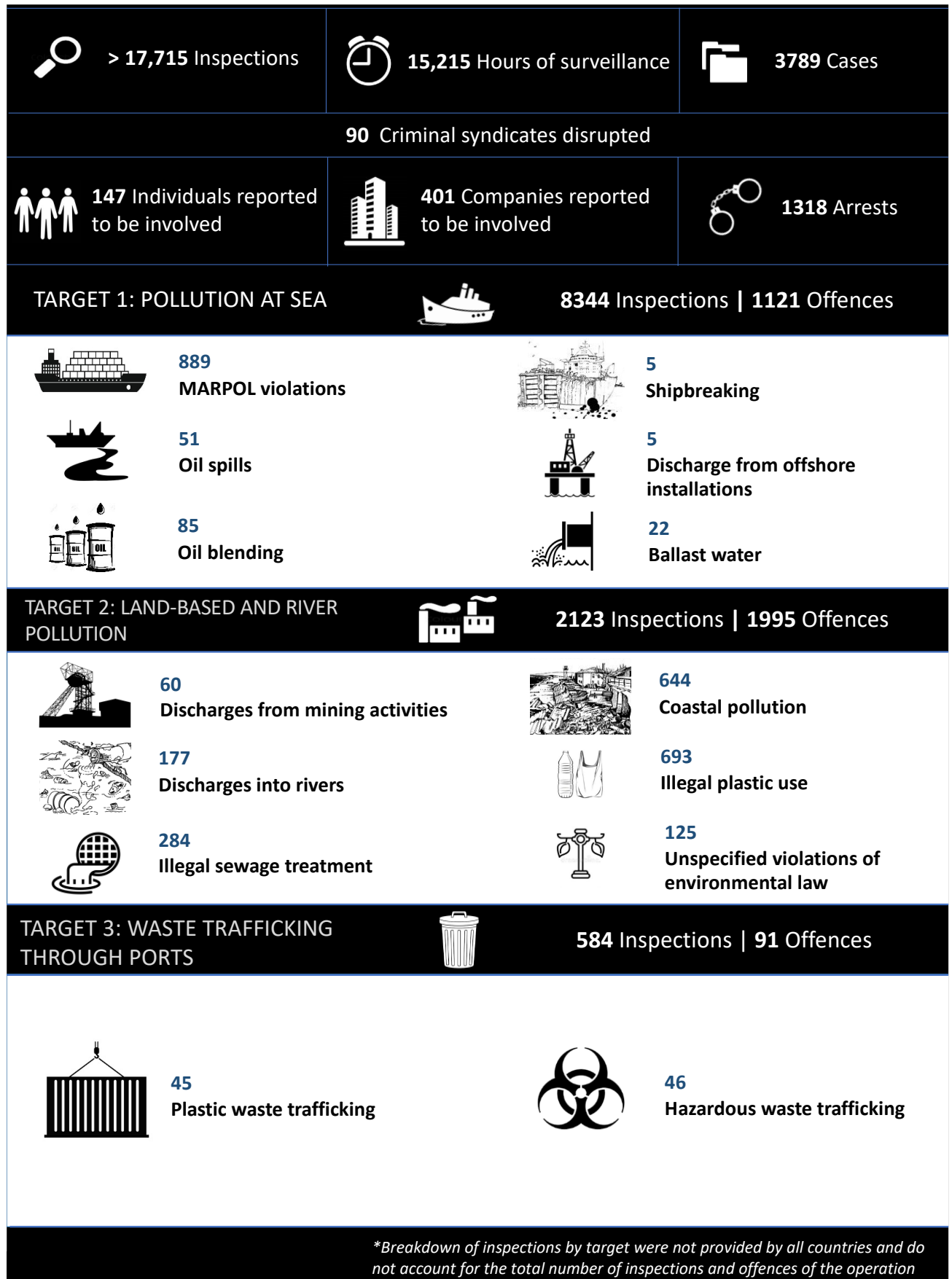


Figure 3: Key results of Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0

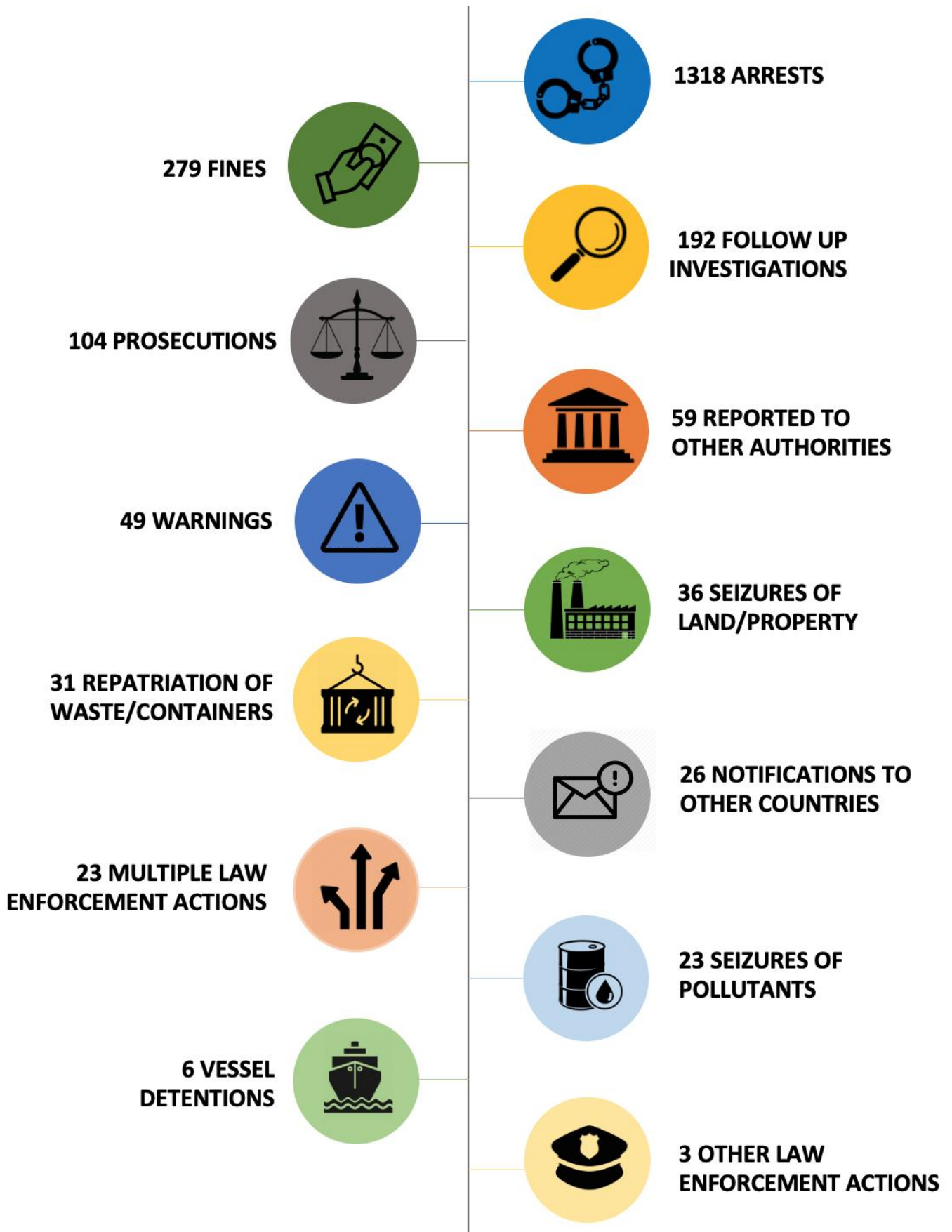


Figure 4: Law enforcement actions

Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 exposed 3,789 marine pollution-related offences through more than 17,715 inspections and over 15,215 hours of surveillance undertaken globally. The Operation was twice as effective as its first edition, with a more than a twofold increase in detection rates. It also resulted in 1,318 arrests, the disruption of 90 criminal networks, the issuance of over half a million USD in fines, and the detection of 401 suspect companies and 150 suspect vessels. Enforcement extended beyond the 30 operational days, with 192 follow up investigations launched and 104 cases prosecuted as of February 2020.

Violations of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) were the most commonly reported type of offence, especially oil discharges and oil spills. This result reflects that the majority of operational actions targeted pollution at sea, in terms of number of countries, number of inspections and hours of surveillance targeting this type of offences.

However, when combining offence types it appears that over half of all cases reported concerned land-based and river pollution, highlighting that a large share of marine pollution originates on land and runs off through rivers. In particular, river pollution was highly prevalent in all regions of the world, while the prioritization and incidence of all other offence types varied greatly across regions.

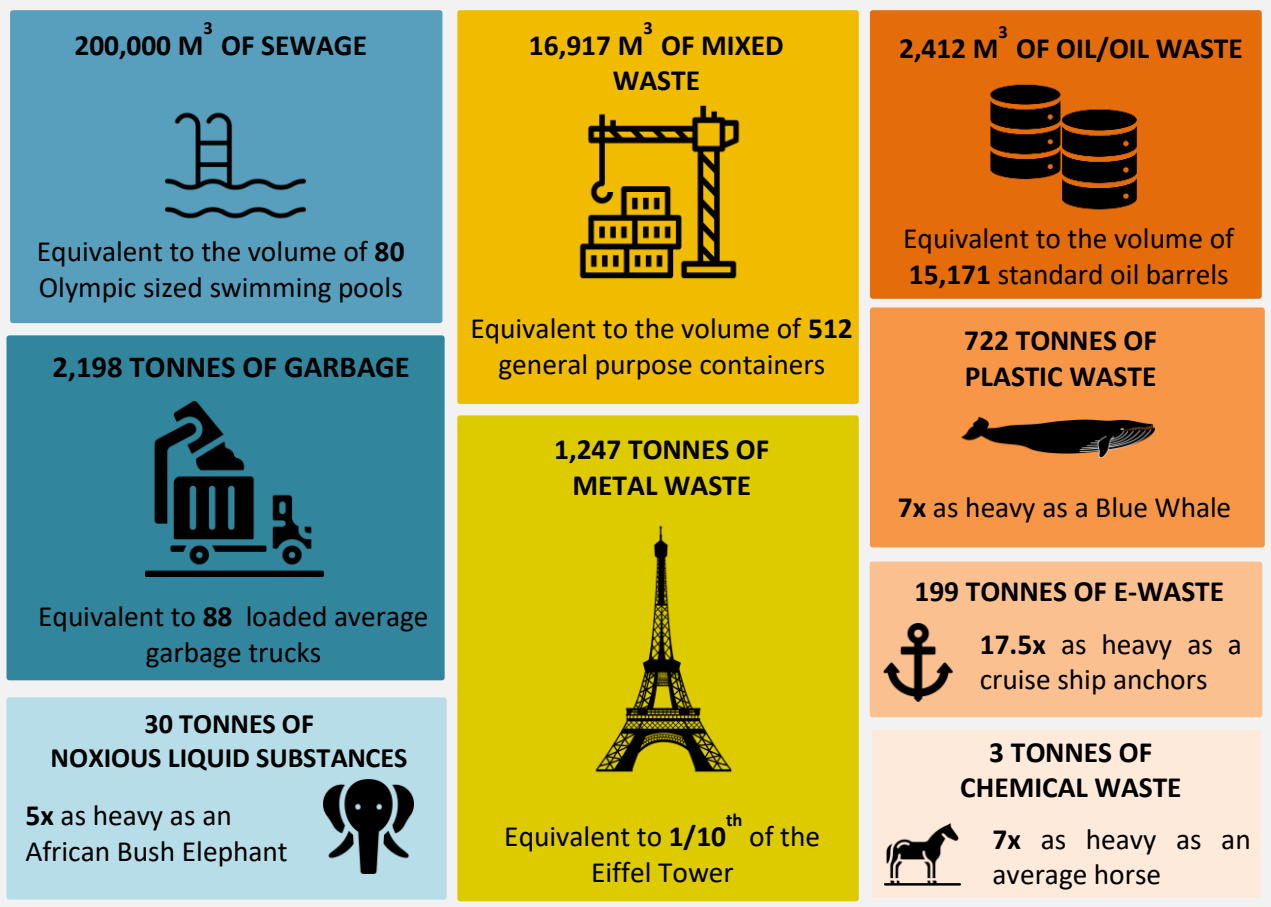
Results also showed that in many countries law enforcement has been reactive to emerging criminal threats related to marine pollution such as the illicit use of plastic, Sulphur emissions from vessels, and oil blending.

Consistent with previous INTERPOL findings, the most prevalent crime convergence concerned links with other waste crimes and document fraud. Links with illegal mining, corruption, piracy and fishery crimes were also identified in several instances.

Companies were responsible for 76 per cent of the offences detected during the Operation, further supporting the well-documented historical evidence that marine pollution crime is largely a corporate crime. Remarkably, commercial and tourism establishments accounted for a large share of them, while industries traditionally associated with pollution crimes (such as shipping firms, waste management companies and waste treatment plants) were less frequently reported. This suggests that new profiles of offenders may be emerging in pollution crime, and/or that law enforcement is now monitoring industries previously overlooked. Among the numerous non-compliant vessels reported, cargo ships were prevalent.

The involvement of organized crime was not consistently investigated and detected in Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0, largely due to the short time frame of the operation and the frequent shortage of criminal investigation mandates and capacities among environmental and maritime agencies. However, where indicators of organised crime were detected, they pointed to a very clear and consistent profile: organized criminal groups engaged in a few specific types of deliberate criminal offences (waste trafficking, artisanal oil refining and oil blending, illegal discharges into rivers and coastal pollution) involving mainly plastic and oil. All cases combined marine pollution with one or more additional offences, predominantly falsified documents and other waste crimes, and the high level of organization behind these cases was apparent.

An outstanding volume of pollutants was detected during the Operation²:



- Sewage-related offences were highly prevalent in Europe
- Oil-related offences were particularly frequent in Africa
- In Asia both sewage and oil were common
- No distinct prevalence was identified in the Americas and the Middle East

Figure 5: Pollutants detected during Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0

² Representation elaborated by INTERPOL based on information on the volume of pollutants provided in 148 cases only. This is therefore a partial result: considering that almost 4,000 cases were detected in this operation, the actual volume of pollutants involved could have been 25 times higher (estimate).

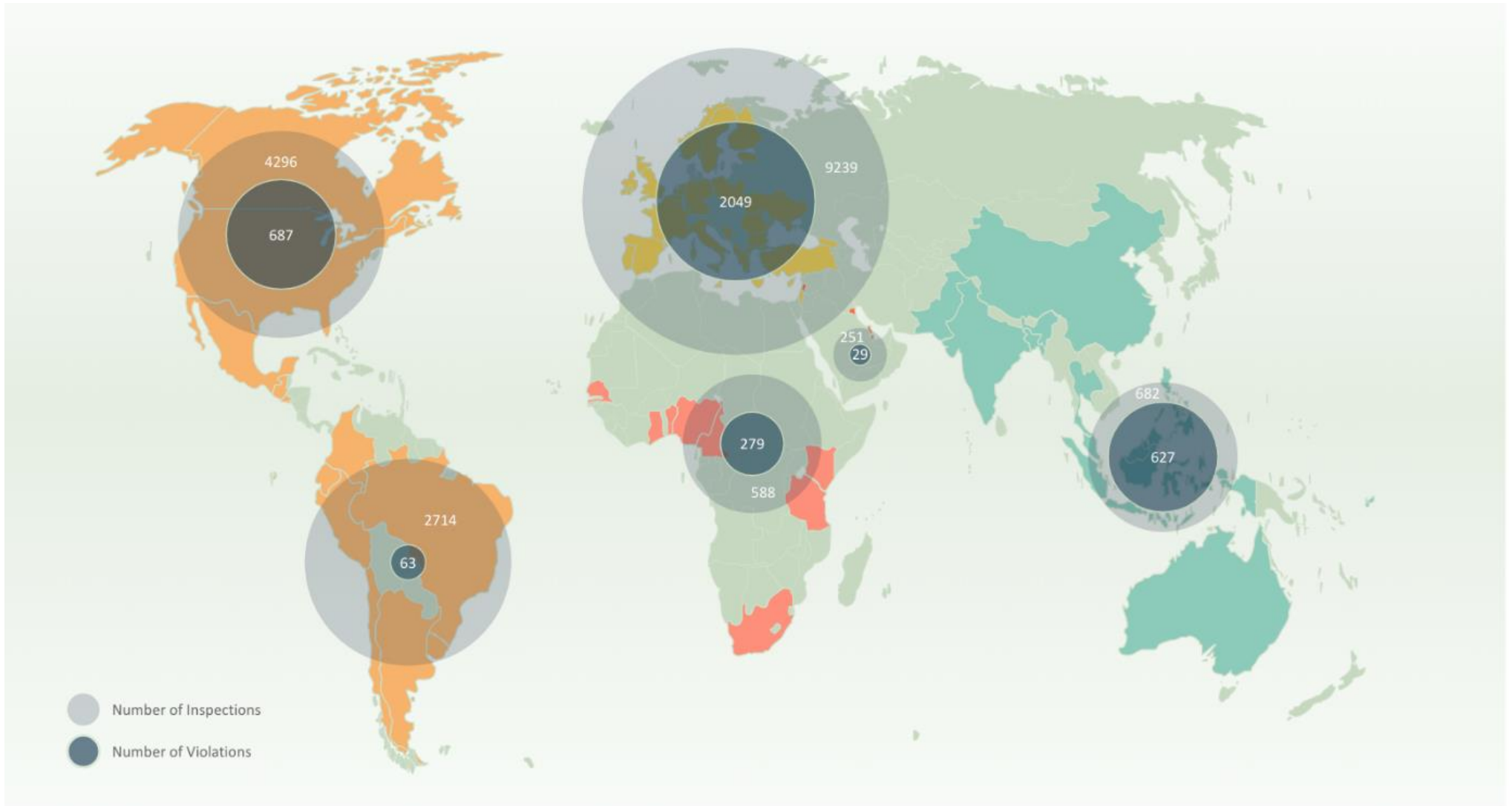


Figure 6: Global distribution of operational activities and results

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

Law enforcement strategies and operational results varied greatly across regions.

- Coastal and river pollution was prevalent in Africa and was tackled through large interagency task forces.
- North America reported a large number of MARPOL violations, while in Central and South America there was a strong focus on river pollution, including discharges related to illegal mining activities, which presented strong indicators of the involvement of armed groups.
- In the Asia-Pacific region, the common denominators among national operations was the strong intelligence component that characterized most case detections, including both human and geospatial intelligence, exposing numerous oil spills and cases of sewage discharges into rivers and trafficking in plastic waste.
- In the European region, Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 was jointly coordinated by INTERPOL, Europol and FRONTEX, with the proactive involvement of EFCA and EMSA, in the framework of the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT). European countries exhibited a holistic and innovative approach to marine pollution enforcement, and reported outstanding numbers of inspections and violations covering all offence types.
- In the Middle East, participating Gulf countries focused on oil related pollution, both at sea and along the coast, through the deployment of aerial and maritime assets, and forensic techniques for sample analysis.

The following table indicates which offences were most prevalent in each region based on the number of cases reported.

	Africa	Asia Pacific	Central and South America	Europe	Middle East	North America
Oil spills and MARPOL violations		•		•	•	•
Coastal pollution	•			•	•	
River pollution	•	•	•	•		•
Discharges into rivers from mining activities			•			
Illegal plastic use				•		
Illegal sewage treatment				•		

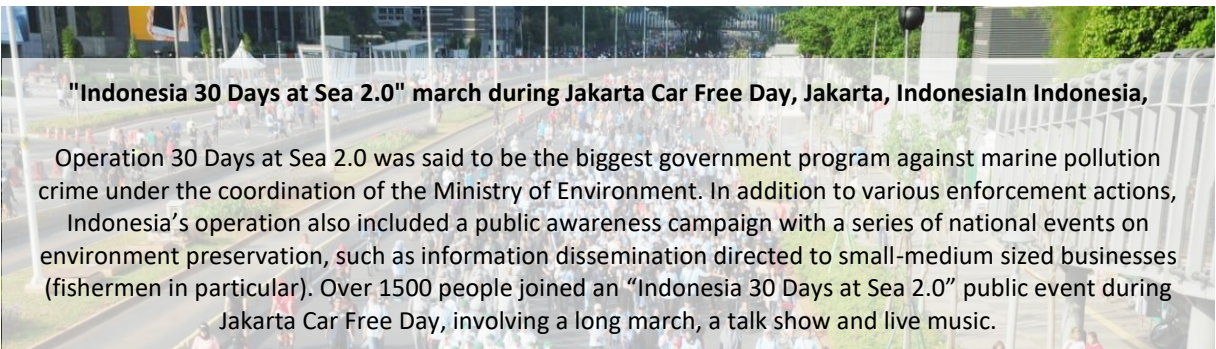
Table 1: Most prevalent offences in each region

As part of the Operation, some countries expanded their engagement from law enforcement to the public forum through awareness raising campaigns on tackling plastic pollution crime.



Plastic waste collection campaign, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador

In Ecuador, a campaign was carried out to clean up the beaches and areas bordering the sea of the Galápagos National Park and its docks, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which resulted in the collection of 655 kilograms of waste including fishing nets, plastic and glass bottles, and flex foam.



"Indonesia 30 Days at Sea 2.0" march during Jakarta Car Free Day, Jakarta, Indonesia

In Indonesia, Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 was said to be the biggest government program against marine pollution crime under the coordination of the Ministry of Environment. In addition to various enforcement actions, Indonesia's operation also included a public awareness campaign with a series of national events on environment preservation, such as information dissemination directed to small-medium sized businesses (fishermen in particular). Over 1500 people joined an "Indonesia 30 Days at Sea 2.0" public event during Jakarta Car Free Day, involving a long march, a talk show and live music.



LESSONS LEARNED ON INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OUTCOMES

These findings based on operational results highlight countries' remarkable commitment and efforts to combat marine pollution crimes. Nevertheless, some areas of improvement were also identified, firstly on investigative techniques, secondly on the relatively low level of criminalization of pollution offences.

Regarding investigative techniques, results revealed the need to enhance intelligence-led and remote sensing-informed policing of marine pollution. They were both proven to reach higher detection rates than other detection methods, however they were not frequently used during the operation. Furthermore, INTERPOL should engage a strategic dialogue with member countries around the value and accessibility of surveillance technologies and of channels for international intelligence sharing.

Results also suggested that it is important for participating countries to plan for an extended post-operational investigative phase, to unfold investigations into criminal groups and their illicit assets. Inter-agency cooperation is key at this stage to combine environmental, criminal and financial investigations.

Regarding the criminalization of pollution offences, fines were the most common action taken against offenders, while judicial measures including seizures, arrests and prosecutions applied only to a small share of cases. Reported fines issued in nearly 100 cases amounted to a cumulative value of USD 638,630. This value seemed to be largely outweighed by the economic impacts of the detected pollution incidents, both in terms of lost government revenues and decontamination costs. This relatively low level of sanction contrasts with the seriousness and pervasiveness of marine pollution offences detected during this operation. Such operational results suggest that, similar to other types of environmental crime, marine pollution-related crime is a high-profit, low-risk business model. These operational outcomes shall be considered at the policy level to raise the profile of marine pollution-related crime in legislative, law enforcement and criminal justice agendas.

THE POST-OPERATIONAL MEETING: MADRID, SPAIN 4-6 MARCH 2020

The debriefing of Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0 jointly with EMPACT OAP 2.5 was generously hosted by Spain, in Madrid from 4 to 6 March 2020, thanks to the organization of the *Guardia Civil* and European Union funding. Presided by the Spanish Ministry of Interior, the meeting gathered over 70 delegates from countries and regional/international organizations participating in the Operation, to review the results and lessons learned from Operation 2.0 and to consult countries on the next steps forward.



Figure 9: EMPACT 2.5 and Post Operational Meeting of Operation 30 Days at Sea 2.0, Madrid, March 2020

CONCLUSIONS TO ENHANCE FUTURE OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES

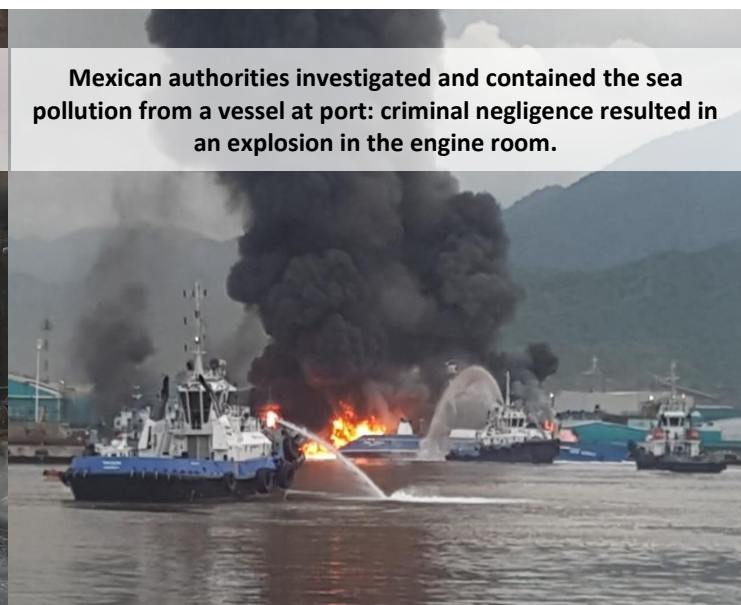
Since its first edition in 2018, Operation 30 Days at Sea has served as a strong global mechanism to mobilize law enforcement and build an understanding of the nature and prevalence of marine pollution-related crime, so that appropriate operational tactics and capacities could be identified and developed.

30 Days at Sea shall continue to invest in the assets that made it the leading global operation against marine pollution crime:

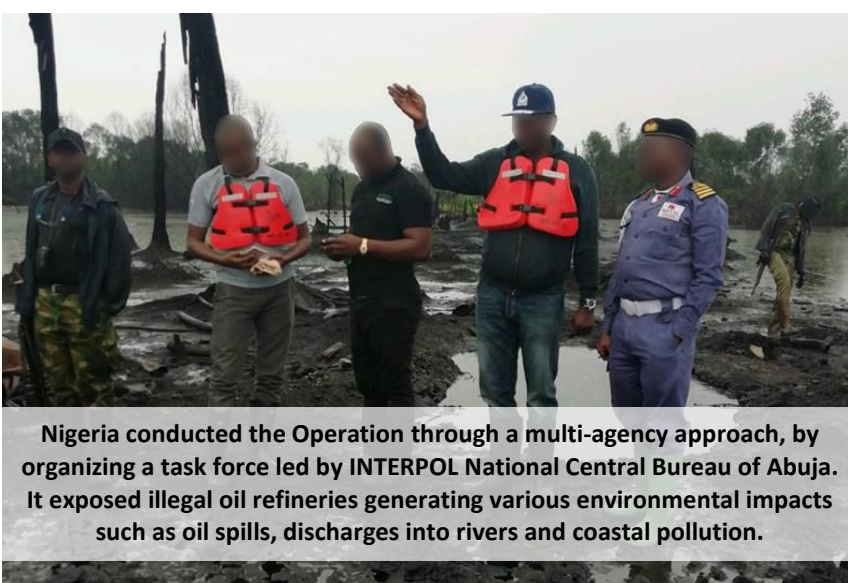
- The inclusion of both sea-based and land-based targets relevant to marine pollution;
- Continuous innovation by identifying emerging crimes and sharing new expertise on how to tackle them;
- Operational support through specialized investigative training;
- A growing global network of specialized national agencies and international partnerships holding regular strategic consultations and investigative meetings.



Inspections of land-based companies located near rivers revealed cases of illegal waste water discharges in Bosnia-Herzegovina.



Mexican authorities investigated and contained the sea pollution from a vessel at port: criminal negligence resulted in an explosion in the engine room.



Nigeria conducted the Operation through a multi-agency approach, by organizing a task force led by INTERPOL National Central Bureau of Abuja. It exposed illegal oil refineries generating various environmental impacts such as oil spills, discharges into rivers and coastal pollution.



A case of illegal export of plastic waste detected in Spain showed the involvement of a large network of companies and individuals.

List of Abbreviations

EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
EMPACT OAP	EMPACT Operational Action Plan
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
EU	European Union
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
PCWG	Pollution Crime Working Group

ABOUT INTERPOL

INTERPOL's role is to enable police in our 194 member countries to work together to fight transnational crime and make the world a safer place. We maintain global databases containing police information on criminals and crime, and we provide operational and forensic support, analysis services and training. These policing capabilities are delivered worldwide and support three global programmes: counter-terrorism, cybercrime, and organized and emerging crime.



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