

DoD JOINT INTERMEDIATE FORCE CAPABILITIES OFFICE

| News & Information



To get the latest information, click icons below to follow JIFCO on social media and visit our website.



This news and information summary is a compilation of selected unclassified stories and information distributed by the Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office's Public Affairs team. It is for official program use only. The intent of this summary is to provide media-based context regarding intermediate force capabilities (IFCs)/non-lethal weapons (NLWs) in all environments as well as other related program information of interest to the IFC/NLW communities. This e-mail contains material copyrighted by original media sources; copying or disseminating for private use or gain is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners. The views expressed in the selected stories are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. (DoD 5230.29, August 13, 2014).

NEWS SUMMARY:

- The Finnish authorities have released an oil tanker seized in December 2024 over suspicions that it had deliberately cut vital undersea cables, but that a criminal investigation into the episode would continue.
- Taiwan's coast guard detained the Chinese crew of a Togolese-flagged vessel after an undersea communications cable linking Taiwan and its offshore Penghu islands was severed, heightening concerns over potential "gray zone" activity by China.
- Pakistani police resorted to tear gas shelling and baton-charging as two religious groups clashed with each other over the "possession" of a mosque in the city's Saddar area.
- Police in Athens have fired tear gas at demonstrators hurling rocks and petrol bombs during clashes outside Greece's Parliament on the second anniversary of a train crash that killed 57 people.
- The chairman of the Malaysian Crime Consciousness and Public Safety Society encouraged the use of non-lethal weapons, such as stun guns, by police, especially to -de-escalate threats from unarmed aggressors or those brandishing non-firearm weapons.

- Malaysian Crime Prevention and Community Safety Department director said he was working to acquire more non-lethal gear for police officers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

GRAY ZONE COMPETITION:..... 2

Finland lets ship leave 2 months after suspected sabotage..... 2

Taiwan Detains Chinese Crew After Undersea Cable Cut in ‘Gray Zone’ Incident..... 3

OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES: 4

Karachi police use tear gas as religious groups clash over mosque possession in Saddar 4

Greek police fire tear gas at protesters in Athens amid violent clashes on rail disaster anniversary..... 5

Stun guns for safer duties 7

Bukit Aman working to get more non-lethal gear 9

CONTACT INFORMATION: 10

GRAY ZONE COMPETITION:

Finland lets ship leave 2 months after suspected sabotage

(The Straits Times, March 3)

The Finnish authorities said on March 2 that they had released an oil tanker seized in December 2024 over suspicions that it had deliberately cut vital undersea cables, but that a criminal investigation into the episode would continue.

The authorities said in 2024 that the ship, the Eagle S, appeared to belong to Russia’s shadow fleet – older tankers that covertly transport Russian crude oil around the world – escalating concerns about a covert campaign to sabotage European infrastructure.

On March 2, the Finnish police said that since the criminal inquiry “has progressed”, the ageing tanker was free to leave and that border officials had escorted the ship out of the country’s territorial waters.

Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo said in an interview with Yle, the country’s public broadcaster, that “the criminal process and investigation will continue”.

Investigators were still examining materials gathered after an onboard “forensic investigation” and would continue to interview the crew, according to the police.

Eight crew members are suspected of criminal offences, including aggravated criminal mischief and aggravated interference with communications, the police said in a statement. Five were

allowed to leave Finland last week, while the other three were still barred from leaving, according to the statement.

The police said the authorities hoped to conclude the investigation by the end of April.

The Eagle S, registered in the Cook Islands in the South Pacific, had been sailing from St Petersburg, Russia, to Port Said, Egypt, when it was seized.

Western officials have long feared that Moscow's so-called shadow fleet could be used to circumvent sanctions imposed over the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The episodes of severed cables raised worries that the shadow fleet might also be used for sabotage.

The Kremlin has denied involvement in sabotage, and Russian officials have condemned the seizure of the Eagle S.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Taiwan Detains Chinese Crew After Undersea Cable Cut in 'Gray Zone' Incident (*Business Times, February 25*)

Taiwan's coast guard detained the Chinese crew of a Togolese-flagged vessel on Tuesday after an undersea communications cable linking Taiwan and its offshore Penghu islands was severed. The incident has heightened concerns over potential "gray zone" activity by China, a term used to describe hostile actions that fall short of direct military conflict.

The vessel, identified as Hong Tai 168, had been loitering within approximately 925 meters of the Taiwan-Penghu No. 3 fiber optic cable since February 22, according to Taiwan's coast guard (CGA). A patrol vessel was dispatched to intercept the ship at 2:30 a.m. on Tuesday, ordering it to leave the area. Less than an hour later, Taiwan's Ministry of Digital Affairs confirmed that the cable had been cut, prompting authorities to move swiftly to detain the crew.

The CGA reported that all eight crew members aboard the ship were Chinese nationals. In a statement, the coast guard said it was investigating whether the cable break was accidental or an act of deliberate interference but did not rule out the possibility of "gray zone" activity.

The Hong Tai 168 was intercepted and escorted to Anping port by Taiwanese authorities after failing to respond to multiple communication attempts via speaker and radio. Footage released by the coast guard showed officers boarding the vessel, which had dropped anchor near the severed cable before it began moving northward.

Taiwan's Chunghwa Telecom, which operates the cable, said service was not disrupted as communications were rerouted to backup infrastructure. However, the company confirmed that this is the latest in a string of undersea cable disruptions around Taiwan. In January, a Cameroon-registered vessel, Shunxing 39, was investigated for damaging a separate cable linking Taiwan to the United States.

Taiwanese authorities have identified more than 50 vessels, many registered under flags of convenience such as Togo, but suspected of being operated by Chinese companies. These ships have reportedly lingered in or near Taiwan's territorial waters for extended periods, raising concerns over espionage and covert operations.

The timing of the incident adds to mounting tensions in the Taiwan Strait, coming just days after Beijing criticized the Trump administration for altering U.S. State Department language regarding Taiwan's independence. Earlier this month, references to Washington's longstanding position of not supporting Taiwan's independence were quietly removed from the department's website.

Chinese officials called on the U.S. to "immediately correct its wrongdoing," arguing that the change "sends a wrong signal to the Taiwan independence forces." The State Department, however, insisted that U.S. policy on Taiwan had not changed.

Taiwan's coast guard has faced similar incidents in the past. In February 2023, two undersea cables near Taiwan's outlying Matsu islands-closer to China's mainland-were severed in separate incidents one week apart, cutting off internet access for local residents. Taiwan accused two Chinese ships of causing the damage but stopped short of labeling the incidents as deliberate acts by Beijing.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES:

Karachi police use tear gas as religious groups clash over mosque possession in Saddar

(Dawn, March 2)

The Karachi police on Sunday said it last night resorted to tear gas shelling and baton-charging as two religious groups clashed with each other over the "possession" of a mosque in the city's Saddar area.

"Members of two groups (Deobandis and Barelvis) clashed with each other over the possession of Jamia Masjid Allah Wali, located within the limits of Preedy police station," South Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Syed Asad Raza told Dawn.com.

Noting that the groups attacked each other with stones, DIG Raza said the police intervened to prevent the situation from deteriorating further by using tear gas shelling and baton-charging to disperse them.

However, no one was arrested, the officer added.

"The matter was resolved by the South district police and the district administration as well as the Auqaf Department on late Saturday night," the DIG said.

An agreement, a copy of which was seen by Dawn.com, was signed today to resolve the issue, with the Aukaf department being one signatory and three individuals representing the fighting groups listed as the second party.

According to the document, the conflict stemmed from disagreements between the groups over the venue for offering Taraweeh (night prayers) during Ramazan.

As per the agreement, one group (Deobandis) would perform Taraweeh at the ground of the mosque while the other (Barelvis) would offer their Taraweeh prayers on the upper portion of the same mosque.

It was also decided that after Eidul Fitr, the Auqaf Department would decide the fate of the incumbent Imam (prayer leader) of the mosque.

Moreover, both sides also agreed that whatever decision would be taken by the Auqaf Department, the groups would follow it in its letter and spirit.

The parties involved have also given assurances that they would maintain law and order and follow the law as per the agreement.

Last week, activists belonging to different Sindhi nationalist parties clashed with law enforcers on the city's Sharea Faisal after their rally towards the Karachi Press Club (KPC) was stopped near the FTC flyover, causing injuries to many policemen, officials said.

The rally had turned into a public meeting when it reached the KPC, where speakers demanded an end to the controversial canals project, corporate farming, religious extremism, forced conversion of Hindu girls and "enforced disappearances" of youths amid tight security.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Greek police fire tear gas at protesters in Athens amid violent clashes on rail disaster anniversary

(The Standard, February 28)

Police in Athens have fired tear gas at demonstrators hurling rocks and petrol bombs during clashes outside Greece's Parliament on the second anniversary of a train crash that killed 57 people.

Following hours of peaceful mass rallies in the Greek capital to mark two years since the Tempe rail disaster, youths with hammers smashed paving stones, throwing the rubble and makeshift firebombs at police.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters flooded the streets of cities across Greece on Friday in a mass mobilisation, led by relatives of those killed in the rail disaster.

The protests - among the largest since the country's debt crisis more than a decade ago - have been fuelled by public resentment against the conservative government's perceived inaction.

Critics say that politicians should be held accountable for failures that led up to the crash, but so far only rail officials have been charged with any crimes.

The disaster on February 28, 2023 in Tempe - where a passenger train collided head-on with an oncoming freight train - was Greece's worst railway accident.

The fiery crash also left dozens injured and exposed deficiencies in the country's transportation infrastructure.

Yannis Panagopoulos, president of the General Confederation of Greek Workers, the country's largest union, said: "The full truth must come to light, and those responsible, no matter how high their position, must be held accountable.

"Let us all take to the streets, expressing the outrage and demands of the overwhelming majority of the Greek people."

Flights and rail services have been cancelled, ferries halted and public transportation across the country has been severely disrupted.

Private businesses and public services have also been affected, with many stores in Athens closed, leaving messages of solidarity for the victims' families in front windows.

Tens of thousands gathered on Friday in front of parliament, while other demonstrations are planned in more than 300 cities and towns in Greece and abroad.

Protesters in Athens, chanting: "You count profits. We count lives," carried black balloons and anti-government banners and blared aerosol horns.

Athens municipal worker Costas Reintzopoulos said the rail crash had highlighted longstanding demands for safer working conditions. Eleven of the people who died at the Tempe disaster were railway employees.

"Every day, there is a demand to know the truth about what happened, and every day there is demand to for better safety measures in the workplace. That is a key reason why this remains relevant," he said.

"We don't want to mourn more dead people, who leave in the morning to go to work and we don't know if they'll come back."

More than 5,000 police officers were deployed in the capital to manage crowds and potential unrest.

Memorial services will be held at Orthodox churches in Athens for the victims, who included many university students returning from a long weekend.

Their families have urged protesters to keep the focus on remembrance, rather than politics.

"This day is one of remembrance, respect and reflection," an association representing the families said in a statement.

"It is dedicated to those who were unjustly lost, to the grieving families, and to the pursuit of justice that remains unresolved."

However, the protests have created a politically precarious moment for Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' government.

His conservatives maintain a strong lead in the polls, but public dissatisfaction over the Tempe disaster has led to surging support for anti-establishment parties on both the left and right.

Opposition leaders, who are struggling to gain traction, are weighing whether to put forward a censure motion.

Mr Mitsotakis promised to continue work to improve rail safety, adding: "Every Greek participates in this mourning, united under the common demand for truth."

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Stun guns for safer duties

(The Star, February 28)

The police force adopted the use of stun guns and tasers several years ago, but they are used sparingly despite the critical need to arm all men-in-blue with it.

The use of non-lethal weapons such as stun guns by police should be encouraged, especially to -de-escalate threats from unarmed aggressors or those brandishing non-firearm weapons, says Crime Consciousness and Public Safety Society chairman Datuk Mohamad Anil Shah Abdullah.

He said in situations where an aggressor is psychologically on edge, intoxicated or overcome by emotions, tasers can work well to incapacitate them without causing serious physical harm or death, which firearms may cause.

"When police first responders are summoned to a case of a person running amok and who is armed, speedy action is important.

"The aggressor, who might not be in the right state of mind, could turn out to be violent and unpredictable.

"The public wants such situations resolved promptly. However, there are strict procedures police personnel need to observe in ensuring the aggressor is subdued without getting hurt or killed," said the retired police senior assistant commissioner, who was a trainer for taser use during his tenure in the force.

On Feb 15, four policemen aged between 20 and 50 were injured during a standoff for several hours with a 32-year-old man at Taman Seri Astana in Sungai Petani.

Mohamad Anil said policemen cannot simply open fire unless the lives of bystanders and their own are under imminent threat.

"The last thing a policeman wants to do is kill. They are only human and have families of their own.

“This is where tasers can prove to be extremely useful in tackling an aggressor without fatal consequences.

“Non-lethal weapons can avoid or minimise fatalities in the process of apprehending a violent suspect,” he added.

Mohamad Anil said as the cost of tasers is high, arming every personnel would be expensive.

He said the police force should at least ensure those who go on duty at crime hotspots are equipped with tasers it currently has in its arsenal before gradually increasing the numbers.

He said there are also other equally effective non-lethal -weapons on the market that the police force should consider acquiring, such as the Bolawrap.

The hand-held device works by firing a bundle of cords that wraps around a person’s arms or legs and restrains them without causing serious injury.

Criminologist and former -senior police officer R. Balasubra-maniam, who was also a taser gun trainer during his days in the police force, said every personnel on active duty in the field should be equipped with both primary and secondary weapons, giving them a choice to use the best option against the threats they may face.

“Having all the necessary -weapons would not leave them in a dilemma on how to react in, say, a case of a man who runs amok.

“Training, risk assessment and other simulations are essential too in preparing personnel for emergencies.

“Inexperience and insufficient training can lead to casualties,” he said.

Tasers, according to Balasubra-ma-niam, are highly effective because they can subdue aggressors effectively, allowing for deten-tion with minimal physical force.

Several police personnel in the Klang Valley who spoke to The Star shared that while taser guns and pepper sprays are available, they are not carried by every personnel and are only brought out in certain situations.

One policeman said that currently, personnel on duty are issued only pistols, while those in patrol car units are equipped with submachine guns, namely the Heckler & Koch MP5.

When threats escalate, like -during police roadblocks, personnel can carry M-16 assault rifles and wear bulletproof vests, according to another policeman.

Police batons, or T-batons, and shields, though available, are rarely carried except in cases of riots or managing large crowds, he added.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Bukit Aman working to get more non-lethal gear

(The Star, February 28)

There are not enough non-lethal weapons such as tasers in the police's arsenal for more of its members to use, says Bukit Aman.

Bukit Aman Crime Prevention and Community Safety Department director Commissioner Datuk Wan Hassan Wan Ahmad, who agreed that tasers are highly effective in defusing a hostile situation with aggressors, said tasers are issued mainly to personnel who go on duty at crime hotspots as they are in limited quantities in police armouries.

He said to address the shortage, police will seek funds from the government next year to increase the supply of tasers and bullet--proof vests for the police force.

"I will be attending a meeting in Penang this week with other -senior police officers and will issue a directive that police personnel, especially those attached to the patrol car and motorcycle patrol units on duty at high-risk zones, be provided with bullet-proof vests to ensure their safety," he told The Star.

On Feb 15, four policemen aged between 20 and 50 were injured during a standoff for several hours with a 32-year-old man at Taman Seri Astana in Sungai Petani.

The suspect, a religious school teacher who was armed with two machetes he had used to attack the cops, had refused to give himself up despite police firing warning gunshots and firemen attempting to disarm him with water jets.

In self-defence, police opened gunfire to subdue the man. He was taken to hospital but died later.

On Sept 16 last year, a policeman was -seriously injured after being attacked by a 35-year-old man he was pursuing in a drug case in Kanowit, Sibu division, Sarawak.

The suspect, who was armed with a machete and a hook knife, was eventually arrested after being shot in the leg.

On Aug 31 last year, two policemen were injured after being slashed with a machete by a 43-year-old drug user at a house in Teluk Intan, Perak, during an anti-drug operation.

Three weeks later, a policeman was wounded after being attacked with a pair of shears by a man he tried to subdue at Kampung Kijang Badang, Kota Baru.

Three months earlier on May 17, two policemen, both aged 22, were killed and another was injured by an intruder at the Ulu Tiram police station they were manning.

The intruder initially slashed and killed a cop with a machete before grabbing his service pistol and opening fire at the two other policemen.

A shootout ensued and the suspect, who was involved in militancy, was gunned down by another policeman who went to the aid of his colleagues.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Approved by: Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office (JIFCO), Strategic Communication

E-mail: JIFCOInfo@usmc.mil

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DoDJIFCO>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/dod-jifco>

JIFCO's website: <https://jifco.defense.gov/>

[BACK TO TOP](#)