

Joint-Industry Alert on Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

Two tankers have been hijacked in the last 4 weeks in the Gulf of Guinea. This, coupled with the number of attacks and kidnappings of seafarers in this region has alarmed the international shipping industry. The Round Table of Shipping Associations and OCIMF are working with the International Coordination Centre (ICC) and navies to address the security considerations. However, in response to this increased threat of hijack and kidnap in the Gulf of Guinea the international shipping industry reminds all ship owners and managers, and the seafarers operating in the area that they have a responsibility to ensure that their ships are adequately protected.

Regional Guidance produced by industry organisations is available and should be read. This guidance can be found at:

<http://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/Piracy-Docs/011014-gog-guidelines-revised-version-for-release-2432EF577EBB.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

Ships operating in the area are also strongly urged to report to the FR/UK operated, Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade – Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG) which is a secure and trusted agency. The MDAT-GoG will liaise directly with the navies in the region in the event of an attack. If a ship does not report to the centre then there is likely to be a delay in the response from the regional navy. The reporting details are shown on Admiralty Maritime Security Chart Q6114. Alerts and warnings will issued by MDAT-GoG to those that have reported on entering the VRA and they will also contact vessels in the immediate vicinity of an incident. CSO's/Masters can contact the MDAT-GoG 24/7 at:

watchkeepers@mdat-gog.org
Emergency Tel: +33(0) 298 22 88 88

As a minimum CSOs and, Masters of ships operating in the area should plan according to the following:

- Arrive at the Pilot Station, Port, Anchorage or STS Area “**Just in Time.**” Time transit with consideration to safe speed and maintaining distance offshore or use an offshore waiting area. Consider higher transit speeds where risk/threat assessment is high.
- Rendezvous - Where possible, avoid waiting and slow steaming. Consider offering several alternative rendezvous points and advise rendezvous points at the last minute. If waiting, keep well off the coast (up to 200nm). Do not give away waiting positions. Do not drift and keep engines ready for immediate maneuvers.
- Vessels should proceed within the 200'nm range at Full Speed.
- Anchoring - Where practicable, a prolonged stay at anchorage is to be avoided.
- Minimize use of VHF and use e-mail or secure satellite telephone instead. Where possible only answer known or legitimate callers on the VHF, bearing in mind that imposters are likely and may even appear in uniform.
- The greatest risks of piracy are at night and these need to be factored into all planning. Where possible, operations should start and end during daylight hours.

- The use of Privately Contracted Armed Guards on board is banned in Nigerian waters.
- If using an armed escort, due diligence on the company providing this service must be conducted to ensure strict adherence to the MOU issued by the Nigerian Navy and NIMASA.
- Ship owners and managers must have a means of verification that hardening measures are available and in place on vessels prior to entering the GoG area.
- Spot checks for verification at ports within the GoG area is an additional option to consider.
- Nigerian Naval armed guards can protect merchant ships utilising patrol boats to escort ships in the region.
- Maintain all-round visual lookouts & good radar watch.
- Report to MDAT-GoG:
 - watchkeepers@mdat-gog.org
 - Emergency Tel: +33(0) 298 22 88 88

The international shipping community remains alert to the insecurity and will continue to work with regional partners to achieve safe and secure shipping.