

GULF OF GUINEA: PIRACY

NUMBERS DOWN, STILL VERY MUCH A HIGH-RISK AREA

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea affects a number of countries in West Africa as well as the wider international community. By 2011, it had become an issue of global concern. Pirates in the Gulf of Guinea are often part of heavily armed criminal enterprises, who employ violent methods to steal oil cargo. In 2012, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), Oceans Beyond Piracy and the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Program reported that the number of vessels attacks by West African pirates had reached a world high, with 966 seafarers attacked during the year.

A recent report by the IMB shows a reduced number of incidents in the area, from 156 incidents in 2018 to 119 incidents for the same period and area. These figures are based on notifications provided to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre. The 2019 incidents include 95 vessels boarded, 10 vessels fired upon, 10 attempted attacks and four vessels hijacked. The number of crew taken hostage through the first nine months declined from 112 in 2018 to 49 in 2019. Despite the reduction in numbers of the overall incidents, incidents involving guns and knives remain consistent. Reportedly there have been 24 knife-related and 35 gun-related incidents in 2019 thus far, compared to 25 and 37 for the first nine months of 2018.

“Although incidents are down, the Gulf of Guinea continues to be a concern for piracy and armed robbery-related activities with kidnappings of crew members increasing in both scale and frequency,” said Pottengal Mukundan, Director, ICC IMB. “It is important that shipmasters and owners continue to report all actual, attempted, and suspected incidents to ensure that an accurate picture of these attacks emerge, and action is taken against these criminals before the incidents further escalate.”

Lagos recorded 11 incidents in 2019 - the highest number of any port in the world. Despite reporting more attacks than any other country, Nigeria has reduced Q3 piracy attacks from 41 in 2018 to 29 in 2019.

RECOMMENDATION

The Gulf of Guinea very much remains a high-risk area for piracy and armed robbery. The region accounts for 86% of crew taken hostage and nearly 82% of crew kidnappings globally.

Shipowners and seafarers are required to stay extremely cautious and vigilant when their ship enters a piracy sensitive area.

Shipowners and crew are strongly recommended to apply the latest Best Management Practice Guide (BMP). The current latest version is BMP5 and further consideration should be given to other guidance such as Global Counter Piracy Guidance for Companies, Master

Free security related guidance, together with access to best practice guides, including BMP5, can be found at

www.maritimelglobalsecurity.org

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Specific guidance for the Gulf of Guinea can be found at <https://www.maritimelobalsecurity.org/media/1026/gog-guidelines-v3.pdf>

QUESTIONS?

Should you have any questions following this information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

ABOUT EF MARINE

EF Marine provides Fixed Premium P&I solutions to Shipowners, Charterers and MultiModal operators.

EF Marine has a global client base and offices in Singapore and Rotterdam. EF Marine provides 'AA-' rated security from Swiss Re Corporate Solutions with limits up to USD 500m. Through our partnership with Swiss Re Corporate Solutions we provide our clients with first class security combined with EF Marine's extensive knowledge of the P&I market.

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