

GULF OF MEXICO: VESSEL ATTACKS | PIRACY

USA's Maritime Administration MARAD has issued alert 2020-004A over a maritime threat that has been reported in the vicinity of Cuidad Del Carmen and Dos Bocas, Mexico, in the Bay of Campeche area in the southern Gulf of Mexico. The nature of the report are four reported attacks that took place between April 4th and 14th, 2020, involving crew injuries and theft whilst a previous attack was reported in November 2019.

From cross checking this information with the information from the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Center (IMB PRC) we learn that IMBC PRC has recorded four incidents in the Southern Gulf of Mexico in the last 12 months whilst several media sources report a steep increase of incidents and attacks over the past 4 years. It appears that oil platforms, tankers and other offshore vessels are targeted. It is further reported that the attacks are aimed to obtain oil and diesel, but also equipment has great interest to the pirates which is then being sold on the black market. Next to that there are reports that crews are being robbed from their personal belongings. In November 2019, an Italian flagged offshore patrol vessel was attacked by pirates resulting in two crew members being injured in the attack and being transferred to a nearby hospital. IMB PRC reports that attackers use small, high speed vessels and that they are armed and tend to be violent.

It proves difficult to obtain confirmed numbers, but Shipowners should be aware that piracy attacks are a serious threat in the Gulf of Mexico and that caution is required when vessels are operated in or transiting the Gulf of Mexico, in particular the southern part.

Shipowners are therefore recommended to inform their crew and provide guidance in respect of the specific threat. Crews should be made aware of the security arrangements in the Ship Security plan and drills should be conducted how to counter piracy attacks. Although created for another area in the World it could be useful to apply parts of the advises and guidance contained in Section 5 of the Best Management Practices No. 5, which can be found at:

<https://eunavfor.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/BMP5-PP.pdf>

QUESTIONS?

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

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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.