

Risk Alert



Gulf of Guinea – Expansion of Piracy Area

Introduction

This Risk Alert outlines the apparently expanding area of concern beyond the Gulf of Guinea and offers practical ways of mitigating the threat.

Maritime crime, including piracy, is not new in the Gulf of Guinea. The region has a long history of crimes against seafarers, from simple low-level robbery to complex hijack with cargo theft and the kidnap of crew for ransom. Any one of these criminal practices can bring with it the threat of, or in some cases actual violence against the seafarers involved. Experience has shown that restraint is not a general feature of the attacks and there have been some tragic instances of crew being killed for little gain.

In recent days reports have been received stating that a product tanker has been reported missing off the coast of Angola. The vessel was last sighted 7NM north northwest of Luanda and, if a piracy attack is confirmed, reinforces

warnings of a suspect pirate vessel operating off the Angolan coast. Dryad Maritime's Weekly Intelligence Forecast 03-14 also warned of the heightened risk of attacks against vessels from Nigerian based maritime criminals operating several hundred miles south of the Niger Delta. It is possible that the vessel has been taken by Nigerian based pirates making use of a 200 ton tug boat, intent on stealing the vessel's cargo of gas oil. Latest reports indicate that the tug suspected of involvement is tracking in a northerly direction and towards the Niger Delta.

If confirmed, this incident has taken place over 800 NM from the Nigerian mainland while the previous furthest range was when a vessel was taken from Port Gentil, Gabon in July 2013.

Recommendation

It is recommended that all anti-piracy security measures that are normally in place, including those in accordance with BMP 4, are adopted whenever

vessels are within 200 NM of the Gulf of Guinea coastline, should also be considered when in waters offshore of Gabon, The Congo, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Angola. Use may be made of professional advice, products and services to ensure safe passage. Vessels should be encouraged to pay attention to information security, thereby denying criminal groups intelligence on vessels, cargoes and movements.

Our thanks go to Dryad Maritime Intelligence Services Ltd for kind permission to use material within this Risk Alert.

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