



Office of
Deputy Commissioner
of Maritime Affairs

THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA LIBERIA MARITIME AUTHORITY

22980 Indian Creek Drive
Suite 200
Dulles, Virginia 20166 USA
Tel: +1 703 790 3434
Fax: +1 703 790 5655
Email: security@liscr.com
Web: www.liscr.com

January 14, 2021

MARINE SECURITY ADVISORY – 01/2021

(This Security Advisory supersedes Security Advisories: 05/2016 and 04/2017)

Subject: Gulf of Guinea-Piracy/Armed Robbery/Kidnapping for Ransom, and Reporting of Incidents

Ref:

- (a) **U.S. Maritime Advisory 2021-002.**
- (b) **Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security Off the Coast of West Africa including the Gulf of Guinea (BMP West Africa).**
- (c) **Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for protection against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region (Version 2, June 2016).**

Dear Owners/Operators/Company Security Officers/Masters:

The purpose of this Advisory is to inform Liberian shipowners, operators, and Masters of the referenced U.S. Maritime Advisory 2021-002, that Piracy/Armed Robbery/Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR) continues to occur as a significant threat to all vessels transiting or operating in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG).

According to the Office of Naval Intelligence's "Shipping Threat Reports" website at <https://www.oni.navy.mil/News/Shipping-Threat-Reports>, 97 reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea occurred in the GoG region for the year 2020. This is a 24 percent decrease in the total number of incidents from the same period in 2019, with the number of kidnappings and hijackings declining 16 percent. While boardings and attempted boardings to steal valuables from ships and crews are the most common types of incidents, almost a third of all incidents involve a hijacking and/or kidnapping.

Approximately 51 percent of all incidents of piracy and armed robbery are taking place off Nigeria, which is a decrease from the 71 percent in 2019 and indication pirates are traveling further, and operating offshore to target vessels. So far in 2020, there have been 27 kidnappings, three hijackings/kidnapping combinations, and two hijackings in the GoG.

As further in 2020, pirates and armed robbers operated off nine countries in the Gulf of Guinea (Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, San Tome and Principe, and Gabon) targeting a variety of vessels to include tankers, container ships, general cargo vessels, fishing vessels, passenger vessels, and numerous vessels supporting oil drilling/production.

Criminals/armed KFR groups have used motherships to support operations up to 200 nautical miles from shore. Typically these groups fire upon vessels during boardings and attempted boardings. KFR groups generally kidnap number of high-value crewmembers to include the master, chief engineer, and crewmembers, but there were several incidents where ten or more crewmembers were kidnapped at one time. Kidnapped crewmembers are normally taken ashore in the Niger Delta region where KFR groups demand ransom payments in exchange for the safe return of the crewmembers.

All Owners, operators and Masters with Liberian flagged ships operating in or through the GoG Voluntary Reporting Area should transit with extreme caution and vigilance. For the safety of human life at sea, Liberian Administration is requesting ships transiting the Gulf of Guinea and the waters near West Africa including coastal areas off Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, San Tome and Pirncipe, and Gabon to be on the lookout for possible sightings of vessels engaged in piracy, or suspected to have engaged in piracy activities.

Liberian ships, anchoring, transiting, or operating in this region must continue to implement the procedures in their approved Ship Security Plan. The Liberian Administration also recommend to continue to adhere to the security practices provided in thee recently issued “*Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security Off the Coast of West Africa including the Gulf of Guinea*” and also the “*Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for protection against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region (Version 2, June 2016)*” which are available for download at <https://www.liscr.com/maritime/Piracy>.

Owners, operators and Masters are urged to register with Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade-Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG) upon their vessel entering its voluntary reporting area and to report suspicious activity and incidents of piracy and armed robbery in a timely manner by contacting the MDAT-GoG by phone at +33 (02) 98 22 88 88, or by email to watchkeepers@mdat-gog.org.

All details for registration and reporting are contained on UKHO security chart Q 6114 and CS Carte de sûreté maritime 8801. As further, Owners, operators and Masters are encouraged to visit the new MDAT-GoG website at <https://gog-mdat.org> for more information.

Owners, operators and Masters of vessels operating in the Gulf of Guinea are urged to also report incidents of piracy and armed robbery or threats thereof and suspicious activity to:

- (i) the nearest RCC,
- (ii) the flag State – Email: security@liscr.com; Phone: + 1 703 251-2490, ask for Maritime Security; AOH Phone: + 1 703 963 6216 to contact the Duty Officer; AOH Email: dutyofficer@liscr.com
- (iii) the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre - by phone +60 3 2031 0014 or by email to: imbkl@icc-ccs.org.

For more information, please contact the Security Department at telephone + 1 703 251 2490; email security@liscr.com; or visit <https://www.liscr.com/maritime/Piracy>.

All reports are kept confidential

* * * * *