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1 November 2018

TO THE MEMBERS

Dear Sirs

SEASONAL PIRACY INCIDENTS IN THE GULF OF GUINEA

Trends

The Club notes that historically, there have been regular pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea area from about late October, as the rainy season subsides, through to about late January each year. Accordingly, Members are advised to take heightened precautions during this period.

Piracy attacks are generally focussed in “pirate alley” stretching about 115nm off the Nigerian Delta, though from 2016 to date, a slight westward concentration of attacks south of Port Harcourt can be seen. There have also been notable outliers.

Instability in the Nigerian Delta is likely to increase in the run up to the general election in Nigeria in February 2019. This could result in more pirate activity in the area, though the Managers have been informed that this could be concentrated in coastal and inshore areas.

Despite a recent uptick in oil cargo theft, kidnap and ransom is likely to remain the favoured approach by Nigerian pirates, as it takes less planning and resources and allows the pirates to be more opportunistic than oil cargo theft.

Mitigating Risk

As a minimum, Owners and Masters should familiarise themselves with and implement Global Counter Piracy Guidance measures. These are best detailed in “Global Counter Piracy Guidance for Companies, Masters and Seafarers” (June 2018) and available on the IMO website¹ amongst others and “Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for protection against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region –

¹ Weblink

http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/PiracyArmedRobbery/Documents/global-counter-piracy-guidance-bmp_low_17-07-18.pdf

version 3, June 2018” which is available on the Maritime Global Security website². Owners should also report to MDAT-GoG when sailing in the region. The guides contain practical advice on vigilance, ship hardening, navigating in a defensive manner and good practice on board such as keeping voyage details as confidential as realistically possible and crew response in the event of an attack.

In Nigerian waters (especially between Brass and Bonny out to 100nm), armed escort boats staffed by the Nigerian Navy remain the most effective and legally compliant method of protection. Armed guards should also be considered off Lomé, Togo and Cotonou (where the Managers understand that they may be deployed on board) – especially if undertaking STS operations. Owners will, of course, have to weigh up the benefits of employing guards in addition to having a well drilled crew and effective citadel arrangements on board.

The Managers would be pleased to answer any questions that may arise.

Yours faithfully

THOMAS MILLER WAR RISKS SERVICES LIMITED
Managers

Copies of this Circular and other publications, including the Association's Rules, can be viewed and/or downloaded from the Association's website at www.ukwarrisks.com

² Weblink <https://www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org/media/1026/gog-guidelines-v3.pdf>