

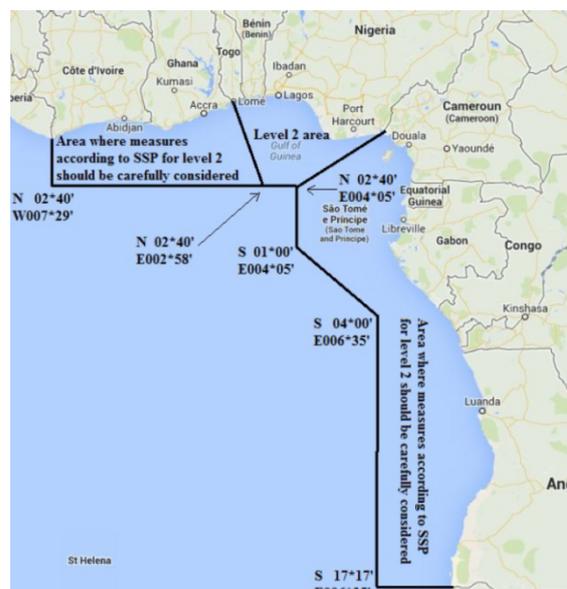
14 February 2014

## West African piracy awareness areas expand

A recent hijacking in Angolan waters marks the southernmost incident of piracy in West Africa and represents a threat to shipping in areas that were previously thought safe. According to the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) “a crude oil tanker was reported missing from Luanda anchorage on 18 Jan 2014 and suspected to be hijacked by pirates. All communications with the tanker had been lost. On 26 Jan 2014 the Master made contact with the owners reporting that the tanker had been released and that the pirates had stolen a large amount of cargo. One crew was reported injured during the hijacking”. (See IMB’s [live piracy map](#) for details of all piracy incidents registered to date.)

Although worldwide piracy incidents declined during 2013, the number of vessel hijackings, attacks and attempted boardings in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) region remains high and continues to be of considerable concern to the maritime industry. IMB’s annual report for 2013 indicates that the GoG region accounted for almost 20% of the registered piracy incidents in 2013 with 48 of a total of 264 incidents. The IMB also warns that Nigerian pirates seem to be the main culprits in the GoG region and that they were apparently responsible for approximately 65% - or some 31 incidents, of a total of 48 reported incidents in the region. Nigerian connections were reported in the majority of the hijackings in the region, from the Ivory Coast to Gabon, indicating the Nigerian pirates’ ability to carry out successful attacks a considerable distance from the Nigerian coast. Various media reports have suggested that the recent hijacking in Angolan waters was also carried out by Nigerian pirates, which shows that they are increasing their reach even further.

On the basis of recent reports of Nigerian piracy activity off the coast of Angola, the Norwegian Maritime Authorities’ (NMA) advice to Norwegian flagged vessels concerning implementation of relevant security measures in waters west and east/south of Nigeria has now been extended to include the waters off Angola. The NMA has previously expanded the West African areas for security level 2 to include the waters off Togo and Benin in addition Nigeria, and is emphasising that the required security level for the said areas west and east/south of Nigeria is still level 1, although additional security measures should be carefully considered.



Source: The Norwegian Maritime Authority’s ISPS Security Notification dated 31.01.2014 (click [here](#) for details)

Gard’s Members and clients are recommended to implement relevant security measures prior to and during any operation in the GoG region between (and including) Cote d’Ivoire and Angola, with particular emphasis on maintaining an alert lookout for the movements of local traffic. In addition:

- Shipowners/Masters are encouraged to maintain a high state of readiness at all times and take note of and follow the recommendations submitted by the industry in the “[Interim Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for protection against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region](#)”.
- Voyage specific risk assessments (ref. Interim Guidelines, paragraph 3) should be based on all available information about the current situation and the characteristics of current threats in the relevant areas as obtained from reliable sources, e.g. the IMB, maritime security companies, commercial intelligence providers and ship’s agents.
- The parts of the current Best Management Practices (BMP) which are relevant to piracy in West Africa should be implemented when considered appropriate; compliance with the principles of BMPs should be the “default” position. The employment of (armed) security personnel may be in addition to, but not instead of, compliance with the principles of BMPs.
- Masters are urged to report all suspicious activity to the local authorities and to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre.
  - Local authorities: Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (RMRCC) in Lagos (manned on a 24/7 basis): **Mobile: +234 (0) 803 068 5167 / Land line: +234 (1) 730 6618.**
  - IMB Piracy Reporting Centre: 24 Hours Anti Piracy HELPLINE **Tel: + 60 3 2031 0014.**

A collection of additional information and advice concerning piracy can be found in Gard’s Spotlight: “[PIRACY – Robbery or Illegal Violence at Sea](#)” - available on Gard’s website ([www.gard.no](http://www.gard.no)) under the tab “Preventing Losses”.

The information is provided for general information purposes only and is not intended as legal advice. Whilst we have taken care to ensure the accuracy and quality of the information provided at the time of original publication, Gard AS cannot accept any responsibility in respect of any loss or damage of any kind whatsoever which may arise from reliance on this information.

Gard Alerts not distributed to Members and clients by e-mail are marked with “Web only” in the heading and are available on [www.gard.no](http://www.gard.no).