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LIBERIA MARITIME AUTHORITY

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MARINE SECURITY ADVISORY – 03/2023

(This Security Advisory supersedes Security Advisory: 01/2022)

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

The following changes have been included:

1. **Operation at security level II for vessels transiting Gulf of Guinea and the waters near West Africa.**

- Ref:**
- (a) [U.S. Maritime Advisory 2023-001](#)
 - (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 \(Version 3, June 2018\)](#)
 - (d) [ICC International Maritime Bureau 2022 report](#)

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 2023-001](#), which describes that Piracy/Armed Robbery/Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR) continues to be significant threats to all vessels transiting or operating in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG).

According to the Office of Naval Intelligence's "[Shipping Threat Reports](#)", 26 reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea occurred in the GoG region for the year 2022. This is a 59 percent decrease in the total number of incidents from the same period in 2021, Whilst increased presence of international naval vessels and cooperation with regional authorities has had an impact, the threat to innocent seafarers still exists and 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. There have already been two reported cases of hijacking and one case of kidnapping as of 2023.

According to the International Chamber of Commerce International Maritime Bureau (IMB)2022 report "Trends, GoG" <https://www.icc-ccs.org/>, about 41 crew were taken hostage and 2 crew kidnapped in separate incidents. This report supports the findings of the "[Shipping Threat Reports](#)" related to incidents involving hijacking and/or kidnapping in the GoG. The IMB report further indicates that in 2022 pirates and armed robbers operated off thirteen countries in the Gulf of Guinea¹ (twelve countries in 2021) targeting a variety of vessels including tankers, container ships, general cargo vessels, fishing vessels, passenger vessels, and numerous vessels supporting oil drilling/production.

As of the end of 2022, Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR) groups have been of major concern regarding piracy incidents and armed robbery in the GoG mainly in the region of Nigeria. This group used motherships to support operations up to 600 nautical miles from the coast of Nigeria. Typically, these groups fire upon vessels during boardings and attempted boardings. KFR groups generally kidnap number of high-value

crewmembers including the master, chief engineer, and other officers, 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 of Liberian flagged ships operating in or through the GoG Voluntary Reporting Area should transit with extreme caution and vigilance. For the security of human life at sea, when transiting the Gulf of Guinea and the waters near West Africa including coastal areas of the thirteen countries¹ listed on the IMB report, all Liberian flagged vessels shall operate at security level II, continue to implement procedures in their approved Ship Security plan and be on the lookout for possible sightings of vessels engaged in piracy, or suspected to have engaged in piracy activities.

The Liberian Administration also recommend to continue to adhere to the security practices provided in these 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> and to adjust ETA for direct berthing or wait/drift/transit more than 250 NM from the coast, if appropriate and agreed by all in the venture.

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

¹ Angola, Guinea, The Congo, Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, San Tome and Principe, Gabon, and Sierra Leone.