

# MEMBER ALERT



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## PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

There has been a rise in incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Mexico over recent months. Armed criminal groups have been reported to target and rob commercial vessels, oil platforms, and offshore supply vessels in the Bay of Campeche area in the southern Gulf of Mexico. The US Maritime Administration has recently issued an advisory, [2020-008-Southern Gulf of Mexico-Vessel Attacks](#), detailing such events, and actions to be taken in the event of piracy and armed robbery incidents in the region.

The US government is aware of at least 20 fishing vessels and 35 oil platforms and offshore supply vessels that have been targeted by pirates and armed robbers since January 2018 in the above-mentioned Bay of Campeche area of the southern Gulf of Mexico. Significant underreporting of attacks in this area is suspected. These attacks have involved the discharge of firearms, crew injuries, hostage taking, and theft. At least five of these attacks occurred in April 2020, details of which are provided in the Office of Naval Intelligence's April 30, 2020 Worldwide Threat to Shipping (WTS) report that is available at <https://go.usa.gov/xv7tF>. A current summary of recent attacks and threats in this region will be included in the most recent Office of Naval Intelligence weekly WTS report, which is available at <https://msi.nga.mil/Piracy>.

The pirates/robbers targeting offshore infrastructure and vessels in this area typically operate in small groups of between five and fifteen individuals aboard several boats. They usually employ small fiberglass hulled craft, similar in appearance to local artisanal fishing boats, equipped with multiple high-powered outboard motors that enable fast travel to the oil fields located between five and ninety-five nautical miles offshore. They typically carry out their raids under the cover of darkness so that their approach is hidden and so that they can use platform lights to navigate toward their target. The attackers are reportedly armed with an assortment of weapons including assault rifles, shotguns, pistols, machetes, knives and tools. They are known to use violence to ensure compliance and prevent resistance.

Members are encouraged to ensure they remain vigilant to this threat when transiting the region and ensure all relevant anti-piracy and armed robbery procedures and measures are in effect as part of the Vessel Security Plan. All suspicious activities and events involving US flagged vessels must be reported to the US Coast Guard National Response Center at 800-424-8802 in accordance with 33 CFR 101.305.

Suspicious activity and attacks in this region should be reported to the Mexican Navy's Third Naval Region Campeche at +52 981 812 0881 or [rn3@semar.gob.mx](mailto:rn3@semar.gob.mx). For any questions about the contents of this advisory, contact [GMCC@uscg.mil](mailto:GMCC@uscg.mil).

Members are also reminded that the Club maintains a designated site with relevant guidance on piracy and armed robbery at:

<https://www.american-club.com/page/piracy>

Your Managers recommend that Members take note of this information and be guided accordingly.