

MEMBER ALERT



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FIRST QUARTER 2017 MARITIME PIRACY UPDATE

The latest maritime piracy analysis as reported by the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) serves as a reminder to the shipping industry to remain vigilant in high risk areas and continue to implement best practices in combating violence against ships.

In its latest report, *Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships, Report for the Period: January-March 2017*, the IMB reveals that 43 incidents involving pirates and armed robbery against ships were reported to have taken place during the period in question. The reported incidents include 33 vessels boarded, four vessels fired upon, four attempted attacks and two hijackings. Additionally, 63 seafarers were targeted in these incidents including two reported killed, 31 taken hostage, 27 kidnapped, and three threatened.

The quarterly report gives detailed descriptions of all 43 attacks, and advice for mariners including a list of particularly high-risk areas where extra caution and precautionary measures are vital. In addition, it highlights persistent violence in piracy hotspots and notes three major concerns:

1. **Gulf of Guinea kidnappings-** There were three separate kidnapping incidents in Nigeria alone. A general cargo ship, a tanker and a bulk carrier were targeted while underway 30-60 nautical miles off the Bayelsa coast. The incidents resulted in a total of 17 crew members taken, an increase from 14 taken in the first quarter of 2016. Of the 27 seafarers kidnapped worldwide for ransom between January and March 2017, 63% took place in the Gulf of Guinea. Three more ships were fired upon at up to 110 nautical miles from land and many more attacks in the Gulf of Guinea region are believed to go unreported. The IMB urges vessels to report all incidents so that the true level of piracy activity can be assessed.
2. **Growing violence around the southern Philippines-** The number of reported incidents in the Philippines has increased from only two in the first period of 2016 to nine ships reporting attacks in the first quarter of 2017. An armed attack on a general cargo vessel resulted in two crew members killed and five crewmembers kidnapped for ransom. In another incident kidnappers captured five more people in attacks on a fishing trawler and a tug. The IMB suspects that militant activity may be behind the escalating violence in waters around the southern Philippines. These armed groups use speedboats to target seafarers and fishermen in slow-moving, low freeboard vessels. Areas such as the Sulu Sea and Sibutu Passage

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pose an increased risk. The IMB recommends that ships avoid these waters by transiting west of Kalimantan, if possible.

- 3. First Somali hijackings after five-year lull-** Two vessels, a small bunkering tanker and a traditional dhow, were hijacked by Somali pirates within territorial waters where no merchant ship had been hijacked since May 2012. A total of 28 members of the crew were taken hostage and subsequently released within a relatively short time. IMB suspects that these incidents were opportunistic and a consequence of the hijacked vessels not following the *Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy (BMP4)* recommendations.

The IMB posts updates of attacks on the internet at www.icc-ccs.org, Members are encouraged to access these updates regularly in order to properly assess the risks associated with transiting certain sea areas. Members are also recommended to follow industry guidance as recommended in [Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy \(BMP4\)](#) and [Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for Protection against Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea Region](#). As a reminder, Members are encouraged to visit the Club's new website section on piracy and armed robbery at <http://www.american-club.com/page/piracy> which provides updated information on frequently asked questions on this subject, guidance for Members on the hiring of private maritime security companies, as well as relevant industry links on piracy and armed robbery.

For any questions regarding piracy and armed robbery at sea, Members are requested to contact the Managers.