

NSA Security Update – Nigeria

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1. Political situation and security implications

The Gulf of Guinea, and particularly Nigeria, suffers from several types of maritime security threats and inadequate counter-piracy and anti-piracy measures. Safe and secure ship operations are however possible in the Gulf of Guinea and Nigeria. Good planning, sufficient situational awareness, contingency plans and protective measures are a prerequisite for safe operations throughout the region and particularly near and in the Niger Delta.

President Buhari took office in Nigeria nearly a year ago and has promised to crack down on terrorism, corruption and insurgency. Politically there is a north/south divide in Nigeria and the current president hails from the north. Reports suggest that Buhari lacks legitimacy in the Niger Delta region and this may aggravate the security situation over time. Arrest warrants have been issued for persons related to security of pipeline and coastal areas on charges of corruption, including Tompolo. There are speculations that this can explain the increased level of violence in this area over the last few months. Several oil pipelines have been attacked since January and there has been a reported increase in the number of attacks against commercial vessels in the Gulf of Guinea.

Another challenge for the President is that the Nigerian economy is heavily dependent on oil exports and has been affected by the drop in global oil price. The Nigerian economy’s growth rate was only 3% in 2015 and is estimated to be 3,8% in 2016. This has impacted public finances in Nigeria, some states have not been able to pay out salaries to state employees and there are cut backs on vocational training. The majority of the coastal states are oil dependent.

2. Incidents (attempted and “successful”) attacks – latest development

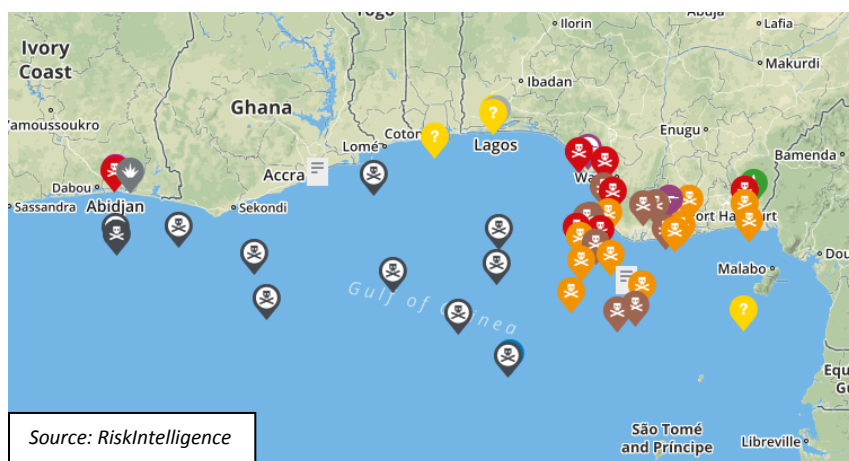
(Note! Perfect statistics do not exist regarding attacks in this area)

There was a reported decrease in the number of attempted and successful attacks from 2014 and 2015 but so far in 2016 it seems that this trend is not continuing. Recent reports point to an increase

in the number of attacks off Nigeria in the first three months of 2016 compared to the same period in 2015.

It is still unclear what has caused the increase but the political situation on land and a decrease in the oil price could be explanatory factors. There have been speculations that pirates have changed their tactics and are now increasingly targeting kidnapping of crew for ransom. This speculation may stem from the fact that different types of vessels have been targeted and few product tankers. Historically product tankers and oil siphoning have been main targets.

So far in 2015 there have been 62 attempted and successful attacks in the Gulf of Guinea. Two third of the attacks took place off Nigeria, particularly off the Niger Delta. Please see the clipping below from RiskIntelligence:

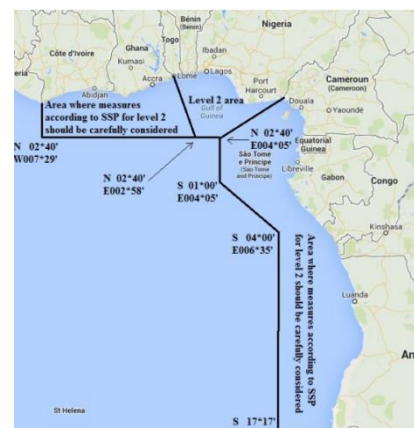


The freeing of the “Maximus”, a product tanker that was hijacked 11th February was freed through a coalition between naval forces during the Obangame exercise. This showed that maritime capacity building and cooperation between local maritime forces can have a direct impact on the maritime security situation.

3. ISPS level 2 off Nigeria, Benin and Togo, for NOR / NIS vessels

The Norwegian Maritime Directorate (NMD / Sjøfartsdirektoratet) requires Norwegian registered vessels to implement ISPS level 2 security measures in the waters off Nigeria, Benin and Togo. The rest of the Gulf of Guinea, is set at ISPS level 1. Please refer to the map or this [link](#) for more information.

As of early 2014, the NMD recommends Norwegian registered vessels to use “ISPS level 2 type” security measures, westwards all the way to and including Cote d’Ivoire, and east/south to and including Angola. The intention of this recommendation is to highlight the need for vigilance against piracy in the relevant ISPS1 areas.

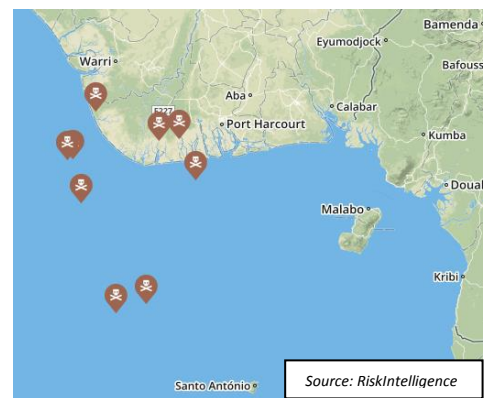


4. Kidnap for ransom.

Note that the kidnapping figures referred to below are related to kidnappings of crews on board merchant vessels at sea. Kidnappings against local passenger ships inside the Delta area and smaller fishing vessels are not included here, the reason for not including these instances below is that they are a softer target and have a different security set-up than a larger commercial vessel.

There have been 6 reported instances of kidnappings at sea so far in 2016, all crew members have been released. Please see the map from RiskIntelligence that shows where successful kidnappings have taken place. All have occurred in or around the Niger Delta:

Kidnappings in the Gulf of Guinea are not a new phenomenon but the frequency rate of attacks has been significantly higher so far in 2016. An incident off the Niger Delta on 3rd February 2015 stood out due to the level of violence used. A Malta-flagged crude oil tanker KALAMOS was attacked around 20 nm offshore, in the eastern part of the Niger delta. Two or three crew members (conflicting reports) were kidnapped and one was reportedly shot dead. There have been no reports of this level of violence until now in 2016.



Almost all such kidnap for ransom incidents are resolved after a relatively brief time period (3 days up to 2-3 weeks) and with the payment of ransom, in the range of 30 000 to 150 000 USD.

5. Restrictions on the use of private armed guards

The Norwegian regulations of 2011 on the use of private armed guards against piracy extend geographically to West African waters which are classified as ISPS level 2 by the Norwegian Maritime Directorate, i.e. off Nigeria, Benin and Togo.

However it is important to note that under coastal state laws in the region, the use of private armed guards and the carriage of their weapons to territorial waters is not permitted.

Several countries offer the possibility of hiring military protection teams on board merchant vessels, or protection/escort vessels. The relevance, quality, practicalities and liability/legal aspects (including flag state approval, command and control, and indemnity issues) of such measures should be considered carefully before possible use.

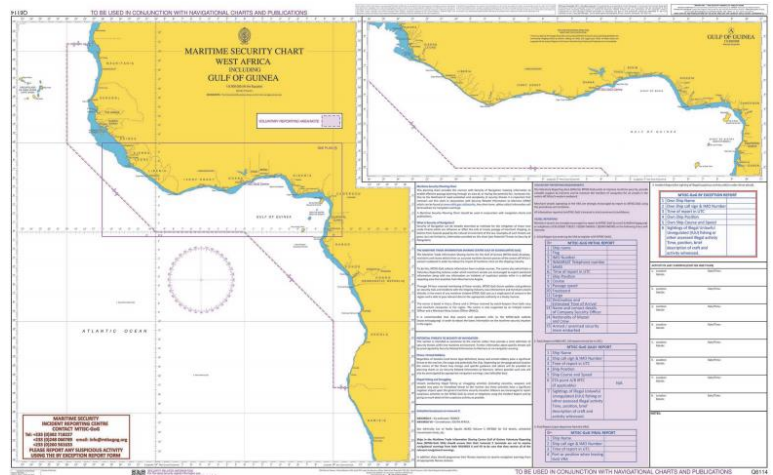
In January and February 2015, NIMASA detained at least five vessels and one expat advisor on the ground of making unauthorized use of private security. Although reports subsequently warned about the use of "armed and unarmed" security in Nigerian waters, the arrests were not made in the context of the use of unarmed security advisors, rather in the context of a foreign PMSC making use of armed government security forces in contravention of existing orders by the Flag Officer Western Naval Command.

There are reportedly signals that the current naval practice of not collaborating with private security may be reviewed by Nigerian authorities but this has not been confirmed.

6. MTISC: a new reporting center and crisis management support for shipping in the region

An important risk mitigation measure in the region is to keep in close contact with the Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre, in Accra. (www.mtisc-gog.org)

The centre has been operational since mid/late 2014. A “Voluntary Reporting Area” (see map) and maritime security chart for the Gulf of Guinea has been drawn up. MTISC liaises with several maritime authorities, navies, regional Rescue Coordination Centres and industry contacts in the region and has provided valuable assistance to vessels in various types of distress, since its inception. MTISC is being supported by several Western countries, including Norway and the UK.



MTISC (Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre) was recently subject to allegations of information leaks. The information, issued by the Danish Coastguard, has been investigated. In the investigation there have been challenges concerning the details and validation of the origins and validation of the information. Information security at MTISC has been reviewed and procedures have been found to be both comprehensive and complied with. ICS issued a circular as of 3 March 2016 recommending that ships in the region report to the centre as normal since the allegations seems to be unsubstantiated, and benefits of reporting outweigh the potential risks, a recommendation that NSA supports.

NSA will follow the future development closely and continues to recommend vessels operating in VRA to make use of the centre's services.

7. Risk mitigation measures against piracy / hijacking, for consideration.

We recommend ANY vessel in the Gulf of Guinea region to make use of the guidelines for safe shipping that are provided by MTISC. See their Maritime Security Guidance – Gulf of Guinea (MSG-GoG), [to be found here](#). Ship protection measures [can be found here](#).

In addition it is recommended to follow consider the security measures as described in the [BMP4](#), which should be see in conjunction with the Interim Guidelines for operations in the Gulf of Guinea ([link](#)).

Several Norwegian owned vessels operate over longer time periods in the region, including offshore vessels and cargo vessels waiting to berth in port (something which can take several weeks after arrival to port cities like Lagos).

Common to their security arrangements is the strong emphasis on good planning and preparations. It is advised to avoid sailing close to shore if possible and the area around the Niger Delta requires particular vigilance.

Useful contact details:

- Maritime and Trade Information Sharing Center (MTISC)
Phone number (24/7): + 233 (0) 302 718227/248 060789/260 561633
Email: info@mtisc-gog.org
Website: <http://www.mtisc-gog.org/>
- Lagos Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre (MRCC) - covers Benin, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, São Tomé & Príncipe and Togo.
Phone number (24hrs): +234 (1) 730 6618
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Operation Centre (24/7): + 47 2395130
- Norwegian Embassy:
 - **Abuja, Nigeria**
Phone number: +234 (0)9291 5429 and +234 (0)9291 5487.
E-mail: emb.abuja@mfa.no
Website: <http://www.emb-norway.com.ng/>
- **NSA Crisis Management Support: Phone number (24/7): +47 900 95 001 (no SMS)**

Your comments and questions are welcome.

With kind regards

Norwegian Shipowners' Association, Contingency Planning Department

beredskap@rederi.no

Crisis Management Support +47 90095001