

OUR VIEW

It is positive and necessary that the Danish counterpiracy resources maintain the pressure on the piracy in West Africa and off the coast of Somalia.

The Danish embassy and trade office in Nigeria and the maritime military adviser from the Danish Defence supports the efforts in West Africa, and have built up knowledge, network and competences in the region.

Danish Shipping wants the countries in West Africa to safeguard their territorial waters, and companies operating in the region should have the option to choose providers of private armed guards.

Denmark should actively - together with the countries in West Africa and partners like the USA, UK and France - build up the necessary regional security e.g. via capabilities, advice or training.

Piracy

Piracy continues to be a serious problem since a significant proportion of the world trade passes through waters where piracy is a threat. Piracy inflicts high costs on the shipping industry, creates insecurity for seafarers and hinders the affected countries' development.

Piracy is still a threat, especially off the Western coast of Africa, in East Africa and in Southeast Asia. To defeat piracy it is necessary to protect the commercial ships and include preventive actions on land.

Danish Shipping has provided input to the development of the Best Management Practices (BMP) and participates in the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. It is recommended that for the companies with ships passing through piracy threatened waters, bespoke risk assessments are completed, which in turn informs the implementation of appropriate measures to protect crews and the ships against potential attacks. Guidance can be found in the BMP or other area specific guidelines. Ships should also report to the international reporting centres.



WEST AFRICA

Piracy and other maritime threats are most dominant off the coast of West Africa, especially in the Gulf of Guinea. The situation is more complex than in the Horn of Africa. The piracy threat mainly stems from Nigeria, but spreads to many countries in the region. Nigeria has been among the top kidnapping countries in the world for the past decade. The pirates are primarily originating from Nigeria and are well organized, heavily armed and relentless in their efforts to board the vessel.

Ships are targeted both on their way in or out of harbours, in the deltas, and also in international waters further from the coast. The pirates target all types of ships, and actions range from petty

theft to armed robbery of entire cargos, typically refined oil - or kidnapping the crew. Danish companies have invested in intelligence, protecting their communication, escorts, and changing planned routes at short notice.

In 2016 Denmark reopened the embassy and trade office in Nigeria, in August 2017 a defense attaché took over the post, acting as maritime adviser for Danish shipping companies and assisting in maritime capacity building in the region. The piracy threat development in West Africa does not only affect the ship-owners, it also affects the West African countries, whose export to especially Europe is deeply dependent of seaborne trade.

OUR VIEW (continued)

The European Union has shown leadership with its extensive military Operation ATALANTA off the coast of Somalia. It is positive that the operation has been extended to the end of 2020.

EAST AFRICA

The piracy situation off the coast of Somalia has improved in the recent years. Coordinated international efforts have decreased the number of attacks and hijackings drastically. However, Somali pirates still possess the ability and willingness to attack merchant ships, as confirmed by the hijacking of a merchant ship on the 13th of March 2017 close to Somalia's coast and a number of failed attacks on larger merchant ships in the Gulf of Aden during 2017 and 2018. It stresses the importance of contin-

ued presence of military naval vessels, aircraft and helicopters, and companies still have to follow the guidance in the BMP and retain the use of armed guards whenever assessed necessary.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The threat of piracy in Southeast Asia has existed for many years. Local shipping has primarily been targeted, and crew members have been kidnapped. It is important that countries in the region are active and work together to fight piracy, so it does not develop.

FACTS

- There is at any given time app. 70 Danish controlled ships in the North-western part of the Indian Ocean including the Gulf of Aden, and around 30 ships in the Gulf of Guinea.
- Danish Shipping estimates that Danish companies use around one billion DKK annually to prevent and avoid attacks by pirates.
- From May 2012 till date, no merchant vessels were hijacked off the coast of Somalia except one incident in March 2017. However there have been reported hijackings of some cargo / fishing dhows during the above period.
- In 2018, the number of incidents recorded in West Africa more than doubled compared to 2017, accounting for all six hijackings worldwide, 13 of the 18 ships fired upon, 130 of the 141 hostages taken globally, and 78 of 83 seafarers kidnapped for ransom. Not all attacks are reported.
- A marked increase has been seen in Piracy related activities in the GoG during 2018 and 2019.
- A reporting centre for West Africa (Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade Gulf of Guinea - MDAT-GoG) was created in the summer of 2016. The centre provides a 24-hour manned service of military experts. The MDAT-GoG receives reports, shares important updates and provides guidance on ship operating patterns and security risks with the Gulf of Guinea maritime community. Ships trading in the Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) are encouraged to send regular reports to the MDAT-GoG as per the reporting format.
- The Information Fusion Centre (IFC) in Singapore, which is having international liaison officers from the navies and law enforcement agencies of more than 15 countries, works on early warning, information sharing and operational response.