
Policy paper

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OUR VIEW

It is positive and necessary that the Danish counterpiracy priorities maintain the pressure on the piracy at 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 can support the efforts in West Africa, and have build up knowledge, network and competences in the region.

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

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



Piracy and other maritime threats are most dominant off the coast of West Africa Here, the pirates are organized, heavily armed and stops at nothing in their efforts to board the vessel.

Piracy

Piracy continues to be a serious problem since a significant proportion of the world trade passes through waters with piracy 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 western coast of Africa, and at East Africa and in Southeast Asia. To defeat piracy it is necessary to protect the ships and include preventive actions on land.

Danish Shipping has provided input to the development of Best Management Practices (BMP) and participates in the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. Companies that have ships passing through waters with a known threat is recommended to conduct an indi-

vidually-based of specific risk assessment, and implement 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 at the Horn

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 to March 2017 no merchant vessels were hijacked off the coast of Somalia.
- In 2017, 36 incidents were recorded in West Africa, in which a total of 65 crew members were kidnapped at ten different incidents. Not all attacks are reported.



It is important with continued 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.

of Africa, because the problem is spread out on several countries, with Nigeria as the epicentre. The pirates are organized, heavily armed and stops at nothing in their efforts to board the vessel.

The attacks happen to ships on their way in or out of harbours and in the deltas, sometimes the attacks also happen in international waters far from the coast. The pirates

are targeting everything from petty theft to robbing 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, and in August 2017 a defense attaché arrived, who acts

OUR VIEW (continued)

EU 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.

- 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 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.



The piracy situation off the coast of Somalia has improved in the recent years, however, the Somali pirates still possess the ability and willingness to attack merchant ships. Photo: Mohamed Dahir

as maritime adviser, point of contact for Danish shipping companies and assists in maritime capacity building in the region. The development in West Africa does not only affect the shipowners, it also affects the West African countries, whose export to especially Europe is deeply dependent of seaborne trade.

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, the 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 continued 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

In Southeast Asian pirates have harassed for many years, but they have primarily targeted local shipping, 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.

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