INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 119

Piracy & Armed Robbery Against Ships:
Procedures and Actions to be taken by Masters and ship Managers

Guidance and Instructions for Bahamas Recognised Organisations, Bahamas Approved Nautical Inspectors, Ship Owners, Managers and Masters

1.   Purpose

1.1.   This Bulletin provides guidance on the risks to vessels from piracy and armed robbery that continue to be a significant threat in the Gulf Of Aden, Arabian Sea, Somali Basin, Indian Ocean, Gulf of Guinea and the waters of the Malacca Straits, Indonesia and South China Sea.

1.2.   This Bulletin should be read in conjunction with BMA Information Bulletin Nos. 70 and 128; Anti-Piracy Planning charts[1]; IMO Assembly Resolutions A.1044(27) & A.1069(28); IMO Circulars MSC.1/Circ.1334, MSC.1/Circ.1339, MSC.1/Circ.1390, MSC.1/Circ.1405 Rev.2, MSC.1/Circ.1406 Rev.3, MSC.1/Circ.1506, SN.1/Circ.281, and IMO Circular Letter Nos. 3606 & 3684 and any subsequent amendments.

2.   Application

2.1.   This Bulletin applies to all Bahamian ships.

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[1] http://www.ukho.gov.uk/ProductsandServices/MartimeSafety/Pages/SRIM.aspx

3. Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean covered by Planning Chart Q6099[1].

3.1.   Companies[2] will be aware that there have been few recent attacks and the boundaries of the High Risk Area (HRA) have been amended to reflect the improved situation[3]. However, the assessment concludes that the risk of attack cannot be discounted. Guidance issued by Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) and other bodies should be regularly consulted and emergency plans updated as necessary.

3.2.   The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) requires that all Bahamian ships register with the naval coordinators at MSCHOA at least four (4) days prior to entry into the vessel registration area. It is important to note that The MSCHOA vessel registration area remains unchanged and is still bounded by the Strait of Hormuz and Suez to the North, 10°S and 78°E. All vessel movements must be registered with MSCHOA, even if the vessel does not enter the modified HRA.

3.3.   The HRA is an area within the UK Maritime Trade Operations Office (UKMTO) designated Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) where it is considered there is a higher risk of piracy and within which self-protective measures are most likely to be required. For the purpose of Best Management Practices (BMP) the HRA is an area bounded by:

In the Red Sea:	northern limit:	Latitude 15°N
In the Gulf of Oman:	northern limit:	Latitude 22°N
Eastern limit:		Longitude 065°E
Southern limit:		Latitude 5°S

3.4.   The registration form is found on the secure portion of the MSCHOA website at www.mschoa.org. UKMTO Dubai can also be contacted for advice at the addresses given at the end of this document.

3.5.   It should be noted that the MSCHOA registration form includes provision to advise the military forces of the presence of firearms on board. It is vital that the military forces understand what they may be faced with in the event of an intervention and therefore Bahamian ships **MUST** communicate this information to them.

3.6.   Companies are reminded that the correct procedure for ships is to register with the MSCHOA **and** provide an initial report to UKMTO, followed by daily

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[2]The "Company" is the entity responsible for the management of the ship in accordance with the ISM Code. For ships which the ISM Code is not applicable, the Company is the Managing Owner in accordance with Section 52 of the Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act.
[3] See http://www.mschoa.org/docs/default-source/public-documents/revisedbmp4_sec2_guidance_practical_measures_20151008.pdf?sfvrsn=2

position reports and intended movements to UKMTO only.   Routine position reports **must not** be sent to MSCHOA.

3.7.   To ensure that Bahamian ships are implementing Best Management Practice, the BMA and the military forces use Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) data to monitor compliance with the reporting scheme and verification of ship's position.

3.8.   LRIT data for the purposes of counter-piracy activities is transmitted automatically to nominated military recipients through the IMO data distribution facility.

3.9.   Companies are reminded that following the BMP in respect of vessel registration and reporting will assist the naval forces to efficiently target warning messages to ships and deploy their resources to provide the best possibility of protection against hijacking or post-attack intervention.

3.10.   It should be noted that the MSCHOA registration and UKMTO reporting regimes require more information about the ship and crew than can be provided by the LRIT system data. For this reason ships must continue to provide daily UKMTO reports as a critical part of the ship's anti-piracy strategy.

3.11.   The BMA is provided with a daily report of Bahamian ships operating inside the area of risk and will communicate with the CSO of any vessel which is identified to have failed to register with MSCHOA and/or failed to provide an initial or daily report to UKMTO.

4.   West Africa/Gulf of Guinea covered by Planning Chart Q6114[4]

4.1.   There have been an increase in the number of incidents in the area from Angola in the South to The Gambia in the North but concentrated in the territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones of Benin, Nigeria and Togo.   These incidents have included hijack, armed robbery and cargo theft. Many of these attacks are of an extremely violent nature with severe threat to the ship's crew.

4.2.   Companies operating ships in this High Risk Area must follow Best Management Practice applying appropriate anti-piracy measures, including enhanced anti-piracy visual and radar watches. Ships may raise their security level in accordance with the Ship Security Plan, as permitted by the ISPS Code, informing the BMA accordingly.

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[4]http://www.ukho.gov.uk/ProductsandServices/MartimeSafety/Pages/SRIM.aspx

5.   Gulf of Guinea Reporting mechanism

5.1.   A reporting mechanism has been set up for the mutual benefit of Masters and ship owners and is named The Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade-Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GOG) reporting system.

5.2.   The MDAT-GOG has been set up in cooperation with the Republic of France by the United Kingdom, in response to a request by the global shipping community. It is designed to contribute to maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea. It is intended to help build a common maritime picture between countries in the region and support actions and interventions by regional Navies in response to piracy attacks.

5.3.   MDAT-GOG operates in the following way: a ship will signal its position; alerts are then sent to ships within 50 nautical miles of suspect activity; a warning will be issued to a local/regional centre or national Maritime Operations Centre for the intervention of the local navy; and a weekly report is produced for industry. MDAT-GOG is a mechanism rather than a new centre - it is a phone and an e-mail address that goes to an existing French Marine Nationale maritime information centre. It learns the lessons of the MTISC pilot that came before it, but is not a continuation of that centre.

5.4.   This is a voluntary scheme and Masters and Owners are encouraged to report to MDAT-GOG when within the Voluntary Reporting Area. By doing so they will receive updates on activity within the area.

5.5.   Contact details for MDAT-GOG are provided in paragraph 11.5 of this Bulletin and full details of the scheme and reporting procedures are provided in IMO Circular Letter No. 3684.

6.   Malacca Straits, Indonesian Archipelago and South China Sea covered by Planning Chart Q6112[5]

6.1.   In recent years, piracy and armed robbery in this area has tended to be overshadowed by the more significant threat in the Indian Ocean. Despite the excellent work of local government agencies incidents of armed robbery and hijack do still occur and a threat remains. Masters and Companies should:

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[5] http://www.ukho.gov.uk/ProductsandServices/MartimeSafety/Pages/SRIM.aspx

i. Make use of information sources such as the *"Piracy & Armed Robbery Prone Areas and Warnings"* section of the International Chamber of Commerce's International Maritime Bureau (IMB) website;

ii. ensure that they maintain a high level of vigilance whilst in these waters; and

iii. make use of Best Management Practice and enhanced security levels, where considered necessary, in accordance with the SSP

iv. make use of the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) reporting systems implemented in the area;

7. Automatic Identification System (AIS) Policy

7.1. The guidelines for the on-board operational use of AIS (IMO Assembly Resolution A.917(22) as amended by A.956(23)) permits the Master to turn off this equipment in sea areas where there is a threat of piracy and armed robbery. However, in cases where an attack is expected, or suspicious activity is noticed, the AIS should be turned on as soon as possible. The BMA also requires Companies to take into account the current advice issued by the naval forces, as published on the MSCHOA website.

8. Long Range Identification & Tracking (LRIT) Policy

8.1. **LRIT equipment must not be switched off** either before entry into a High Risk Area or during transit of such an area.

8.2. In cases where it becomes necessary to switch off or deactivate the LRIT equipment (e.g. for maintenance or repair), the BMA must be informed at the earliest opportunity (lrit@bahamasmaritime.com).

9. Reporting Piracy/Armed Robbery Attacks

9.1. In all cases the ship must develop an emergency communication plan to be implemented in the event of an attack. The BMA authorises the use of the Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) programmed to alert the Company Security Officer, as set out in BMA Information Bulletin No. 70, as part of this plan.

9.2. Owners may wish to use commercial services which automatically transmit the SSAS signal directly to the Authorities (military forces in Gulf of Aden/Indian Ocean or the International Maritime Bureau for other areas). The BMA has no objection to the use of these services, provided that the

additional recipients of the signal are limited to UKMTO, MSCHOA or IMB as appropriate and that a suitable filter is applied to ensure that SSAS alerts which occur outside the piracy risk area are not sent to these recipients.

9.3. An important feature of the service provided by MSCHOA is the broadcasting of advice on suspected pirate "mother-ships" or other suspicious activities. In order to assist in this process, Masters of Bahamian ships are requested to provide UKMTO and the IMB with reports of any suspicious activity or vessels they may observe in or around the area of risk. The BMA must be copied in on any such communication.

9.4. In the event that a Master of a Bahamian ship operating in the **Gulf Of Aden/Indian Ocean** region feels a threat of piracy or armed robbery is developing, or if the vessel comes under attack, the primary 24 hour point of contact is the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) in Dubai.

9.5. Reports of threats or attacks using the standardised report form should also be forwarded to other recipients shown on the MSCHOA website, and the BMA, at the earliest practicable opportunity

9.6. For ships operating in other areas (e.g. **West Africa, Malacca Strait, Indonesia, South China Sea**) the report should be sent to the IMB (International Maritime Bureau) or through ReCAAP ISC (see below) as appropriate.

9.7. The BMA is required to make a report to IMO on any piracy activity. To assist the BMA in this task, reports of any piracy or armed robbery must be sent to casualty@bahamasmaritime.com.

9.8. At the times when BMA offices are closed and in the case of a genuine emergency, the Emergency Response Officer's mobile telephone number is:

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+44(0)7977 471 220

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10. Pre- and Post-Piracy Planning

10.1. Owners and operators of Bahamian ships are reminded of their obligation under the Merchant Shipping (Health and Safety – General Duties) Regulations 1984, *inter alia*, to provide and maintain an environment on board that is, so far as is reasonably practical, safe and without risk to health. Full implementation of BMP as they are appropriate to the ship in

question is therefore encouraged and must be fully considered in the light of the on-going risk to shipping in the regions specified in this Bulletin.

10.2.   In considering the overall health and welfare of crew members, The Bahamas also draws the attention of all owners and operators of Bahamian ships to the current development of post-piracy care guidelines by the Seaman's Church Institute[6] and the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Program[7]. The use of these guidelines is strongly recommended for contingency-planning when preparing crews for the possibility of piracy attacks, and dealing with their consequences.

11.   Sources of advice and information

11.1.   *The Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA)*

The EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Coordination Centre tasked to safeguard merchant shipping operating in the region by preventing and deterring acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden, off the Horn of Africa and in the Somali Basin. This site provides information and guidance for the shipping community.

Website: www.mschoa.org

Email: postmaster@mschoa.org

Tel: +44 (0) 1923 958545; +44 (0) 1923 958700

Fax: +44 (0) 1923 958520

11.2.   *The UK Maritime Trade Operations Office (UKMTO)*

The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Office in Dubai acts as the primary point of contract for merchant ships and liaison with military forces in the region. UKMTO Dubai also administers the voluntary reporting scheme, under which merchant ships are encouraged to provide their position, course and speed along with ETA at next port whilst transiting the region currently bounded by Suez, 78°E and 10°S.

UKMTO Dubai subsequently tracks ships and the positional information is passed to combined military forces and EU headquarters. Emerging and relevant information affecting commercial traffic can then be passed directly to ships, rather than company offices, improving responsiveness to any incident and saving time[8].

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[6] http://seamenschurch.org/law-advocacy/piracy-trauma-study
[7] http://www.mphrp.org
[8] Source:www.mschoa.org

Email: ukmto@eim.ae

Tel: +971 50 552 3215

Fax: +971 4 306 5710

11.3.   *The International Maritime Bureau (IMB)*

The main objective of the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) is to be the first point of contact for the shipmaster to report an actual or attempted attack or even suspicious movements thus initiating the process of response. The PRC raises awareness within the shipping industry, which includes the shipmaster, ship-owner, insurance companies, traders, etc., of the areas of high risk associated with piratical attacks or specific ports and anchorages associated with armed robberies on board ships. They work closely with various governments and law enforcement agencies, and are involved in information sharing in an attempt to reduce and ultimately eradicate piracy.

Website: www.icc-ccs.org

Email: piracy@icc-ccs.org / imbkl@icc-ccs.org

Tel: + 60 3 2078 5763

Fax: + 60 3 2078 5769

24 Hours Anti-Piracy helpline Tel: + 60 3 2031 0014

11.4.   *The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC)*

ReCAAP is a regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery in Asia. To date, 20 States have become Contracting Parties to ReCAAP.

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) was established under the ReCAAP Agreement. The roles of ReCAAP ISC include exchanging information among Contracting Parties on incidents of piracy and armed robbery, supports capacity building efforts of Contracting Parties, and for cooperative arrangements.

Website: http://www.recaap.org/

Incident reporting:
http://www.recaap.org/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2falertsreports%2fsubmissionofparincidents.aspx

11.5. *Gulf of Guinea reporting system MDAT-GOG.*

A voluntary system for mutual co-operation between vessels and shore based establishments to combat Piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea.

E-mail: watchkeepers@mdat-gog.org

Tel: +33(0)2 98 22 88 88

12.   Revision History

Rev.7 (20 June 2017) – Minor editorial changes; addition of paragraphs 5 on voluntary reporting scheme in Gulf of Guinea and subsequent renumbering; deletion of former para 10.3 on NATO shipping centre due to end of mission; new para 11.5

Rev.6 (10 Nov 2015) – Complete revision, update of HRA and incorporation of Bulletin 125

Rev.5 (13 May 2014) – Complete revision and inclusion of West Africa HRA

Rev.4 (30 September 2011) – General update

Rev.3 (11 February 2011)

Rev.2 (21 January 2010)

Rev.1 (17 December 2009)