



TURKISH SHIPOWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Istanbul, 29-01-2020

To: IMO Secretary General, Kitack Lim
ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder
ASA Chairman, Mr Tadaaki Naito
ASA Secretary General, Yuichi Sonoda
ECSA President, Claes Berglund
ECSA Secretary General, Martin Dorsman
ICS Chair, Esben Poulson
ICS Secretary General, Guy Platten

Copied To: General Director of Turkish Maritime, Ünal Baylan
President of Turkish Chamber of Shipping, Tamer Kiran

Subject: Call for an international initiative for Gulf of Guinea Piracy Attacks

Dear Heads of Organizations,

The pirates attacked the container ship MV Mozart in the Gulf of Guinea off the coast of West Africa on 23rd of January. Pirates killed one Azerbaijani crew member, while 15 other Turkish crew were kidnapped. Three Turkish crew members as one injured were left on the ship.

According to ICS-CCS report globally, 135 crew were kidnapped from their vessels in 2020, with the Gulf of Guinea accounting for over 95% of crew numbers kidnapped. A record 130 crew members were kidnapped in 22 separate incidents. **Since 2019, the Gulf of Guinea has experienced an unprecedented rise in the number of multiple crew kidnappings.** In the last quarter of 2019 alone, the Gulf of Guinea recorded 39 crew kidnapped in two separate incidents.

Incidents in the Gulf of Guinea are particularly dangerous as over 80% of attackers were armed with guns, according to the latest IMB figures. All three vessel hijackings and nine of the 11 vessels fired upon in 2020 related to this region. Crew kidnappings were reported in 25% of vessel attacks in the Gulf of Guinea – more than any other region in the world.

On the other hand, the vessels operating in this region have some difficulties to manage their security risks. For example the government of Nigeria doesn't allow for armed guards on board while most of the countries act alike. Or ships sailing from Ghana to Cameroon must sail 250 NM from coast off Nigeria to secure themselves. Or as we heard from the region, Nigeria Coast Guard demands 30000-40000 USD to escort the vessels passing through to maintain security. So shipowners operating in this area have a security dilemma. And most of the shipowners and managers (Almost 90%) doesn't prefer operate in this area.

In other respects, many crews and their families are worried and follow the developments with deep concern.

In this context, we assess that this security problem as a major international problem at sea and these dangerous attacks to the ships and kidnapping incidents must prevent by using legally forces to these pirates or terrorists.

So Turkish Shipowner's Association would like to strongly call on international maritime and shipping organizations;

- To take an initiative in the presence of UN for a naval operation to start in this region at least maintaining security corridors for vessels operating,
- And to take other international measurements required to tackle.

Yours sincerely,



Hüseyin Çınar
Secretary General



Ahmet Bedri İnce
President