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NIGERIA AND ICC ANNOUNCE GROUND-BREAKING ANTIPIRACY FORUM

Overview

In an unprecedented move, Nigeria and the Interregional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of Regional Strategy for Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa (ICC) have announced the formation of a Maritime Collaboration Forum to provide shared awareness and deconfliction of activities in the Gulf of Guinea (GOG-MCF/SHADE). The forum is for all stakeholders, both regional and international.

The announcement comes at a time when pirates continue to wreak havoc in the busy waters of Gulf of Guinea at distances more than 200 nautical miles from Nigeria. The situation has led several EU countries including France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, and Denmark to announce an interest in contributing to maritime security in the region to suppress the threat posed by Nigerian pirates. Recently the Italian Navy has, on more than one occasion, disrupted pirate attacks and the Danish government has committed to send a frigate on a five-month antipiracy patrol in the Gulf of Guinea from November 2021.

The SHADE model has already demonstrated its worth as a model for exchange of information between regional and non-regional military forces in countering the Somali piracy threat.

"The establishment of GOG-MCF/SHADE will enable working-level stakeholders from the GoG region and from outside the region to connect and discuss how best to suppress Nigerian piracy. We think this can be a catalyst for non-regional navies to step up and initiate effective maritime law enforcement operations to support regional efforts. Such operations should of course respect Nigeria's sovereign rights as defined under UNCLOS; in respect of piracy, this is within Nigeria's territorial waters," says David Loosley, Secretary General and CEO of BIMCO.

According to Jakob Larsen, BIMCO's Head of Maritime Safety & Security, even relatively small initiatives could make a big difference in improving security in the region.

"We repeat our call for non-regional stakeholders to actively engage in antipiracy law enforcement in the Gulf of Guinea in support of this important regional initiative. The area in the Gulf of Guinea where pirates operate is small compared to the area dominated by Somali pirates a few years ago. It would only take a small, effective force (estimated two frigates and one maritime patrol aircraft) to provide a credible deterrent as well as an enhanced response capability," Larsen says.

In the past, BIMCO and other stakeholders have raised concerns certain Nigerian stakeholders have so far not fully committed to the fight against piracy because of the significant moneys flowing from the booming commercial asset protection industry. Commenting on the risk of the GOG-MCF/SHADE becoming just an instrument to restrict international navies' antipiracy operations and further bolstering the Nigerian protection industry, Larsen says:

"At BIMCO we are confident this initiative really is a paradigm shift in Nigeria's approach to piracy, but of course the proof is in the pudding. I must say, we are very optimistic."

"The GOG-MCF/SHADE has great potential and will hopefully also stimulate new solutions like embarkation of law enforcement officials from the GoG region in non-regional naval ships, establishment of mechanisms for handover to regional jurisdictions of suspected pirates, utilisation of available radar data from offshore installations, and so on. There are so many low-hanging fruits just waiting to be picked," says Larsen.

BIMCO- By [Jakob Paaske](#)

[Larsen](#) in Copenhagen, DK

SHIPS ARE ADVISED TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTION WHEN ANCHORING IN MALAYSIAN WATERS

Overview

During a 10-day operation called “Jangkar Haram”, Malaysia clamped on illegal anchoring in its waters. The ships involved have either been warned and ordered to leave or detained and fined. BIMCO recommends Masters to take extra precaution and obtain prior permission from relevant authorities before anchoring.

When anchoring in waters off Singapore, Malaysia or Indonesia, it is recommended that

ships take extra precaution to check their exact location, contact the relevant authority of these countries and obtain permission before carrying out their intended act. Malaysia has communicated this information in [Malaysian shipping notice 05/2014](#).

Anchoring in non-designated anchorage areas or laying up without a prior permit is illegal in Malaysian waters, and the country has incorporated these rules into its [Merchant Shipping Ordinance 1952](#). Section 491B of the ordinance requires ships to notify the director of marine or port office regarding its planned actions within the territorial waters. Ships may be required to pay a fee for conducting such activities. It should be noted that the ordinance has recently been amended to include “anchoring in non-anchorage areas”.

Recently, Malaysia conducted an operation called “Jangkar Haram” which translates to “Illegal anchors”. It was a 10-day operation conducted by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) from 24 March 2021. The aim was to crack down on those vessels that were in breach of Section 491(B) of Malaysian Merchant Shipping Ordinance 1952 and either direct them to leave Malaysian waters or detain and penalise them. During this operation, the MMEA reportedly found 105 vessels anchored illegally within its waters. Of those, 71 were ordered to move out, while 18 were detained. [See more info here](#).

While it can be said that this operation is partly to clamp down on illegal immigrants, it highlights that some merchant ships are not in compliance with Malaysian law.

This operation mainly happened in east Johor waters and at times may have exceeded the 12-mile territorial limit. However, it should be noted that the maritime boundaries between Malaysia and Singapore have been debated for quite some time and even now confusion exists at certain areas of the boundaries.

Please read [Singapore port marine circular 06/2019](#), [03/2019](#) and [Singapore Indonesia boundary issue](#).

Singapore has these requirements incorporated into its Merchant Shipping Act and hands out specific information in various circulars. In its port marine circular 08/2019, Singapore specifically prohibits anchoring outside designated anchorages and offenders may be penalised.

[BIMCO has communicated on this topic previously on 09 July 2020](#).

By [Ashok](#)

[Srinivasan](#) in

Copenhagen, DK