

U.S. MARITIME ADVISORY 2023-001
Threat Type: Piracy/Armed Robbery/Kidnapping for Ransom
Geographic Area: Gulf of Guinea

This revised advisory cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2022-007

1. Reference: None.
2. Issue: Piracy, Armed Robbery, and Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR) pose significant threats to U.S. flagged vessels transiting or operating in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) as well as U.S. mariners onboard a vessel or transiting to or from a vessel in the GoG.
3. Pirates, armed robbers, and KFR groups continue to operate off Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sao Tome and Principe, and Togo, targeting a variety of vessels to include tankers, container ships, general cargo vessels, fishing vessels, passenger vessels, and vessels supporting oil drilling/production. These groups have boarded vessels up to 275 nautical miles from shore, and it is not uncommon for these groups to fire upon vessels during boardings and attempted boardings. KFR groups generally kidnap senior crew members, including the master and chief engineer, and any Western or foreign crew members. Kidnapped crew members are normally taken ashore in the Niger Delta region where KFR groups demand ransom payments in exchange for the safe return of the crew members. Details of incidents in the GoG can be found in the Office of Naval Intelligence Worldwide Threat to Shipping reports, posted at <https://www.oni.navy.mil/ONI-Reports/Shipping-Threat-Reports/Worldwide-Threat-to-Shipping/>.
4. Guidance: Mariners transiting this area should visit the Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade-Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG) website at <https://gog-mdat.org/home> and the NATO Shipping Centre website at <https://shipping.nato.int/nsc/operations/global-maritime-risk/west-africa-gulf-of-guinea> for additional information on threats and specific recommendations for their vessels. U.S. flagged vessels anchoring, transiting, or operating in this region must comply with their approved Vessel Security Plans. Additionally, the Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security Off the Coast of West Africa including the Gulf of Guinea (available under the Geography – Gulf of Guinea pull-down menu at <https://www.maritimeworldsecurity.org/>) provides additional guidance and resources for operating in this area.
5. U.S. flagged ships operating in or through the GoG Voluntary Reporting Area designated on Maritime Security Chart Q6114 (chart info available at <https://www.admiralty.co.uk/maritime-safety-information/security-related-information-to-mariners>) should transit with extreme caution and vigilance. Mariners operating near this area are also advised to consult the Department of State Travel Advisories for this area at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>.
6. All suspicious activities and events involving U.S. vessels or persons must be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard National Response Center at 800-424-8802 in accordance with 33 CFR 101.305.

7. Contact Information: MDAT-GoG is operated by the navies of France and the United Kingdom. This center receives reports, shares important updates, provides guidance on vessel operating patterns, and reviews security risks with the Gulf of Guinea maritime community. Note that MDAT-GoG does not coordinate responses to vessels under attack. MDAT-GoG can be contacted via email at watchkeepers@mdat-gog.org or telephone at +33(0)2 98 22 88 88. For any maritime industry questions about this advisory, contact GMCC@uscg.mil. Supplemental information may also be found on the MARAD Office of Maritime Security website at <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/ports/office-security/office-maritime-security>.

8. U.S. flag vessels operating in this area should consult Revision 8 to Maritime Security (MARSEC) Directive 104–6 (See paragraph 5 of U.S. Maritime Advisory 2022-011).

9. Cancellation of Prior Advisories: This message cancels U.S. Maritime Advisory 2022-007 and will automatically expire on July 2, 2023.

For more information about U.S. Maritime Alerts and Advisories, including subscription details, please visit <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci/maritime-security-communications-industry-msci-web-portal>.