

## **"SARNIA NEWS" CIRCULAR**

(Ref: 303 /16/ GP)

TO ALL SHIPOWNER CLIENTS

19<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**Re: \*\*\*IMPORTANT NOTICE\*\*\* - Suezmax tanker boarded by pirates Gulf of Guinea**

Please find below a new **ALERT** from Gray Page, a specialist maritime consulting group, which provides information regarding an attack on a Suezmax tanker in the Gulf of Guinea. As you will note, based on the available information, it has been suggested that the purpose of the pirates was likely to kidnap the crew.

You will also note that, although this particular attack took place at just over 75 nm from the nearest landfall, vessels have been targeted at distances of up to 200 nm offshore, and owners/operators should be aware that vessels are being attacked and boarded at significant distances from shore whatever the purpose of the attack.

In this case, thankfully, the crew were able to secure themselves in the citadel, and no injuries occurred and the pirates were unable to kidnap the crew.

As these attacks are still occurring, we would strongly suggest to owners/managers that when travelling these areas, that a Kidnap & Ransom policy be purchased, as your P&I, Hull, War and Cargo insurers **will not cover a ransom payment and its associated costs.**

Best regards,

The Loss Prevention Team

**From:** Gray Page [<mailto:theresa.canning@graypage.com>]  
**Sent:** 11 July 2016 15:39  
**To:** Amgad Wanis  
**Subject:** A new alert from Gray Page

## **Suezmax tanker boarded by pirates**

### **Background**

The Suezmax tanker BOUBOULINA (IMO 9298753) was reportedly boarded by pirates at 07:30 UTC on the 7 July 2016 following cargo operations at the Agbami Terminal in the Gulf of Guinea. The attack reportedly occurred at position Lat 03 20N Long 005 10E, approximately 70 nm west-south-west of the terminal, and 130 nm west-south west of Port Harcourt whilst the vessel was heading to Tramandai, Brazil.

The entire crew are reported to have successfully retreated to the citadel, and the pirates to have then departed the vessel some hours later having ransacked the ship. Bridge windows are reported to have been broken due to gunfire, but no injuries are reported and the vessel was able to continue her voyage.

### **Assessment and Analysis**

As at 05:45 UTC on the 7 July, just under 2 hours before the reported attack at 07:30, the BOUBOULINA was underway heading due west at 13 knots at position Lat 3° 32' 57.6N Long 5° 31' 2.34E 24 nm further to the east of the reported position of the attack. S-AIS data sources indicate that there was a gap in position reports for the next three hours from 05:45 until 09:08 UTC when the vessel was at position Lat 3° 4' 52.26"N 4° 53' 52.26"E, a further 23 nm further south and west of the attack. Movement data would therefore suggest the vessel maintained an approximate heading of 236° throughout the incident, and to have near-enough maintained her original speed of 13 knots during the attack. Given the regular reporting intervals prior to the incident, the gap in S-AIS data reports between 05:45 and 09:08 would suggest that the pirates disconnected the AIS.

There is no information presently available that would indicate whether the original intention of the attack was to kidnap crew or to target theft of the cargo. However, on balance of available information, we would assess that it seems more likely the purpose was to kidnap crew.

Pirate and hijack gangs have long shown the capacity to attack and board vessels deep offshore in the Gulf of Guinea. In past cases of hijack for cargo theft, vessels have been targeted distances up to 200nm offshore evidencing the technical capability of such gangs. In this instance, the attack was just over 75 nm from the nearest landfall, so much closer to shore than previous successful incidents of boarding. Although there have been few such incidents as far offshore in recent times, owners and operators should consider that vessels targeted for attack can be boarded at significant distances from shore whatever the ultimate purpose of the attack.

That aside, the incident continues to show that appropriate surveillance and a citadel can be an effective counter-measure for piracy incidents.

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