



STUDY FINDS RISING KIDNAP MENACE IN GULF OF GUINEA, WHILE PIRACY ATTACKS IN OTHER HIGH RISK AREAS ARE HELD IN CHECK

- **Gulf of Guinea most dangerous region for seafarers as a rise in violence and kidnap-for-ransom was observed in 2015.**
- **Despite reduced spending, international efforts in the Indian Ocean continued to suppress major attacks. However, several recent hijackings of regional vessels could signal an increased threat.**
- **Cooperative regional measures in Southeast Asia resulted in steep declines in piracy attacks in the second half of 2015.**

London, Tuesday 3rd May 2016: The Gulf of Guinea has become increasingly dangerous to seafarers, as pirates increasingly employ “kidnap-for-ransom” tactics. The shift towards kidnapping and away from the once prevalent oil theft seems to be in response to increased naval patrols coupled with lower oil prices.

This is a key finding of ***State of Maritime Piracy 2015***, the latest report published today by Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP), which analyzes the human and economic impacts of piracy and robbery against ships, focusing on those crimes taking place in the western Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Guinea, and Southeast Asia.

In the Gulf of Guinea the study also notes an absence of piracy prosecutions. Giles Noakes, Chief Security Officer for BIMCO, says *“Unfortunately, the complete lack of prosecutions of suspected pirates undermines regional efforts to deter pirate gangs.”*

In the Western Indian Ocean, the low number of attacks on merchant vessels has led to a reduction in counterpiracy efforts by the international community, which can be measured by a reduced naval presence, and a reduced adherence to self-protection measures by merchant vessels. However, a number of attacks against small regional vessels has many experts cautioning against complacency for vessels transiting the region. *“Somali pirates still possess both the intent and capability to carry out attacks. We may now be witnessing greater opportunity for pirates to attack vessels,”* says Captain William Nault, Chief of Staff of the Combined Maritime Forces in the Western Indian Ocean.

In Southeast Asia, increased cooperation between nations for operational patrolling and response, effective prosecution of criminal gangs and industry vigilance appear to have successfully reduced piracy incidents. *“There was clearly an increase of cooperative maritime patrols and a renewed emphasis on arresting and prosecuting suspected pirates. These actions by regional governments had a measurable impact starting in August and were critical in reducing the number of incidents,”* says Matthew Walje, of Oceans Beyond Piracy.

Drawing on common themes across maritime regions, the report indicates that cooperative deterrence across the maritime sector is the most cost-effective way of suppressing piracy. Speaking specifically of the Somali experience, Peter Hinchliffe, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping states that *“Piracy was reduced through a close partnership between international shipping and navies. However, the threat of piracy remains high and we must remain vigilant and maintain deterrent measures.”*

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