Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea

Application: All shipowners, operators, masters and officers of merchant ships and authorised classification societies

Barbados Flag wishes to bring to the attention of all concerned the new publication for maritime security guidance for ships and seafarers operating off the coast of West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, replacing the previous guidelines for the area.

This publication is aimed to help mariners detect, deter and delay external threats to their safety. Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security off the Coast of West Africa including the Gulf of Guinea (BMP-WA) complements piracy guidance in the latest International Maritime Organisation Resolutions and Circulars (www.imo.org) in this region.

The maritime security situation off the West Coast of Africa is complex and dynamic. BMP (WA) has been developed to help ships and seafarers avoid becoming the victims of maritime security incidents in these waters. The publication aims to help ships plan their voyage and to detect, avoid, deter, delay and report attacks. BMP-WA also outlines risk assessment as an integral part of voyage planning in identifying measures for prevention, mitigation and recovery, combining statutory regulations with supplementary measures.

The consequences of not adopting effective security measures can be severe. The guidance contained in this publication mitigates the risk from piracy and armed robbery. To this effect, all concerned are strongly advised to apply the recommendations in this publication, which will make a significant difference to the safety of seafarers.

Barbados Flag also draws the attention of all concerned to the official website (https://www.gog-mdat.org)

of the Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade-Gulf of Guinea (MDAT- GoG), the co-ordination centre tasked to safeguard merchant ships operating in the region. MDAT- GoG is a cooperation centre between the Royal Navy (UKMTO) and the French Navy (MICA-Center) in support of Yaounde Process. The primary output from the MDAT- GoG is to contribute by maintaining coherent maritime situational awareness in the central and western African Maritime areas, with the ability to inform and support industry. It contributes to the safety and security of the Mariner in the regional maritime domain.

To do this effectively, MDAT- GoG needs to know about merchant ships approaching, transiting or operating in the region. The MDAT- GoG website offers ship-owners, ship masters and agents the facility to register their details securely with MDAT- GoG, update positions of their vessels and receive information and guidance designed to reduce the risk of pirate attacks. To this effect, masters and operators of Barbadian ships that operate or that may operate in this area are strongly advised to register on the website.

The publication may be downloaded from www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org, which also includes links to other maritime security information useful to mariners.

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