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MARITIME SECURITY ADVISORY – 10/2008

This Security Advisory updates “Maritime Security Advisory – 09/2008” and supersedes “Maritime Security Advisory – 05/2008”

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Vessels Transiting the Maritime Security Patrol Area

For The Information of Owners/Operators/Masters:

In an effort to bring attention and resolution to the piracy crisis in the Gulf of Aden, the Liberian Administration has engaged the IMO, US Department of State, The US Maritime Administration, The EU, UKMTO, IMB and other prominent stakeholders while also working diplomatically to urge an international armed force to protect this critical shipping lane. The situation in the region is complex and intricate and long term permanent solutions will require collective efforts, time and endurance.

The Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) was established Aug. 22, 2008 in support of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) call for international assistance to discourage attacks on commercial vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden. The establishment of the combined maritime efforts is designed to give the IMO time to work on international efforts that will ultimately lead to a long-term solution to the piracy activities in the Gulf of Aden.

Since the inception of the Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA), Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 has helped deter more than a dozen attacks in the Gulf of Aden, according to a report dated 27 September 2008. However, pirate criminals still have successfully targeted several vessels in the region, including vessels transiting within the MSPA.

The CTF-150 effort and the MSPA do not guarantee safety in the region. Masters should not assume any increased protection by CTF-150 due to their limited resources, and since these initiatives are only temporary in nature and not considered a solution to prevent further attacks. The vessel's Master and crew are the first line of defense. This fact has been highlighted by recent piracy attempts that were encountered by crews that were prepared, showed vigilance and took effective proactive measures. ICS reports indicate that many recent incidents have included vessels that failed to observe the most basic of passive defensive measures.

A recent CTF-150 review of incidents reported in the Gulf of Aden between 15 July 2008 to 15 September 2008 provides useful information that should be considered before transiting the region and used to calculate the risk and provisionally reduce the threat:

- No vessels have been fired upon or hijacked between the hours of 1800H and 0400H local time.
- Vessels most susceptible to hijacking are those with low freeboard and transit speeds of less than 20 knots.
- Vessels with low freeboard (6 meters or less) and/or low maximum speeds should consider themselves at extremely high risk of being hijacked by Somali pirates.

Among other counter-piracy precautions, operators of vessels with these characteristics should factor in the lack of pirate activity at night when planning a Gulf of Aden transit.

The Administration also recommends that the following proactive measures be implemented before and while transiting the MSPA in order to potentially prevent an attack or deter attackers and create the impression of a 'less attractive' target:

- Masters are to remain vigilant and question the intentions of all craft approaching their vessels.
- Emphasize extra security measures by adding more security personnel and roving watches as necessary.
- Keep a constant visual and radar watch and closely monitor all targets.
- Assure that lookouts are positioned to ensure 360° coverage
- Provide "refresher" training for the crew regarding all the anti piracy measures and access control as recommended by the ship security plan.
- Brief the crew regarding special security measures taken, before arrival to this region.
- Provided that navigational safety allows, make evasive maneuvers, and heavy wheel movements.
- Navigate the affected area at maximum possible speed.
- Rig all the equipment available to deter pirates from coming on board.
- Remove any equipment that is hanging over the side that could be used as a means to board/gain access.
- Master's are advised to keep in close coordination with the CSO, Coalition Authorities, and Administration.
- Ensure that ship's crew understands their anti-piracy duties, and have all the necessary security training required.

Further to the above advice and the efforts of the CTF 150, both the EU and NATO are in the process of assembling a naval force to be sent to the region that will ultimately be capable to escort shipping in the area. It is expected that other countries will also eventually take part in the operation and provide a significant deterrent to pirates. As indicated above, this Administration is engaged in discussions with various EU and other government representatives involved, and it is our understanding that the protection and escort provided by the EU naval force and NATO will be available to all vessels regardless of flag. The Administration will continue to participate in these discussions and will continue to release updated advisories when there are further developments.

Finally, the Administration's setting of mandatory SECURITY LEVEL 2 remains in effect for all Liberian flagged vessels when operating off the Somali coast or transiting the Gulf of Aden. All Liberian vessels are required to advise the Administration of implementing security level 2 upon arrival in the affected area via email to security@liscr.com.

Ships should contact the Coalition Navy via email prior to arrival at: ukmtodubai@eim.ae and via VHF in case of attack or attempted attack. Vessels are encouraged to contact the IMB Piracy Reporting Center Tel: +603 2078 5763 / +603 2031 0014 Email: piracy@icc-ccs.org / piracy@imbpiracy.org for advice or to report suspicious activity.

For more information please contact the Security Department at telephone + 1 703 251 2435 email security@liscr.com; LISCER Duty Officer + 1 703 963 6216 email: dutyofficer@liscr.com;

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