



Nigeria – use of foreign security guards

On 4 February 2015 the Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre Gulf of Guinea (MTISC-GoG) advised vessels transiting or going to any Nigerian ports not to have any form of security guards, armed or unarmed, onboard.

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The above advice from MTISC-GoG was issued following the detention on separate occasions of three vessels that had entered Nigerian waters with foreign security guards on board, at least one of these with unarmed foreign guards onboard. The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency ([NIMASA](#)) has issued a notice to operators, cargo owners, and shipping agents that any vessels calling at Nigerian ports with foreign security guards on board may be detained.

INTERTANKO's advice “ [Nigeria and foreign Guards](#) ” of 16 February 2015 confirms NIMASAS recent security notification and emphasises that this applies to vessels with foreign armed guards on board – but that the authorities may consider any foreign guard to be armed.

Nigeria has previously declared that the Nigerian Navy is the sole authority in the country's territorial waters and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and that the only legitimate method of security protection in Nigerian waters is the escort services provided by the Navy.

Recommendations

Members and clients are advised to note the enhanced risk of vessel detention when entering Nigerian waters with foreign security guards onboard and keep in close contact with the vessel's agent or Gard's local correspondent to obtain the most up to date and reliable information available at any given time.

For practical guidance on security measures, it is also recommended to consult:

- MTISC-GoG's website (www.mtisc-gog.org) which provides mariners with general maritime security guidelines for vessels operating in the region; and
- the [Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for Protection against Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea Region](#) , which were jointly developed by BIMCO, ICS, INTERTANKO and INTERCARGO. See also Gard Alert “ [West Africa - updated anti-piracy guidelines](#) ” from 3 October 2014.

Additional information about “Piracy - Robbery or Illegal Violence at Sea” is also available on Gard's website (www.gard.no) under the general topic “ [Trading area risks](#) ”.

Information received with thanks from INTERTANKO and from Gard's correspondent Africa Marine Services (Europe) in Lagos, Nigeria.

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