

## 'Q Card' BMP West Africa – 3

# The Threat: Kidnapping of Crew, Hijacking of Vessels, Armed Robbery and Cargo Theft

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**The likelihood of attack further offshore West Africa is higher during the inter-monsoon season (October-May).**

**Attacks can take place at any time – day or night. However, the risk of an Undetected Approach is Higher at Night. More seafarers have been kidnapped during the hours of darkness.**

**Attacks have been reported over 200Nm from the coast.**

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Attackers may use **small arms fire** during attacks; the bridge tends to be the main target for these weapons. Attackers may use **long lightweight ladders, knotted climbing ropes or long hooked poles** to climb up the side of the ship. Once onboard they will make their way to the bridge to try to **take control of the ship**. When on the bridge they will demand the ship slows/stops to enable others to board. They will also try by all means to gain access to the accommodation to capture crew members before completion of the citadel retreat process.

Experience has shown the crew of a vessel targeted for armed robbery at sea or cargo theft are likely to be **treated badly** by perpetrators during an attack. **Injuries are common** and any resistance shown to the attackers may lead to an escalation of violence.

**Boarding risk will be higher if vessels are drifting, at anchor, conducting ship-to-ship (STS) operations or at slow speed.** A vigilant watch is paramount in order to activate the vessels security procedures as early as possible. If because of the nature of the navigation or of the operations the citadel process is not possible in case of attack, then additional security measures should be considered (secured anchorage, security escort vessels). Attacks against vessels underway occasionally involve some form of deception to force the vessel to stop. **Attacks on vessels vary significantly in their form.**

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**Ships and their operators should submit vessel position reporting forms to MDAT-GoG.**

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