



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

Marine Guideline

No. 2-11-14

Rev. May/2019

TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF
MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS

SUBJECT: West Africa High Risk Area: Maritime Domain Awareness for Trade – Gulf of
Guinea Voluntary Reporting Area

References: (a) IMO Circular [MSC.1/Circ.1339](#), *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Waters off the Coast of Somalia - Best Management Practices for Protection against Somali Based Piracy*, issued 14 September 2011
(b) RMI Maritime Regulations ([MI-108](#))
(c) RMI Marine Notice [2-011-39](#), *Piracy, Armed Robbery, and the Use of Armed Security*
(d) [Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for protection against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Version 3](#) (June 2018)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Guideline is to provide information to Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) registered vessels operating in the waters off West Africa, particularly the Gulf of Guinea (GoG), in order to mitigate the risk of piracy, kidnapping, and armed robbery in this region.

This revision supersedes Rev. May/2017, and now includes updated references and BMP hyperlinks.

APPLICABILITY

This Guideline should be taken into consideration by all RMI-flagged vessels operating in or near West Africa and the GoG.

GUIDANCE

1.0 The RMI Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) has revised its previously-defined West Africa HRA to bring it in line with the recently established voluntary reporting area (VRA) depicted within the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office’s [Maritime Security Chart for West Africa including the Gulf of Guinea \(Q6114\)](#).

1.1 The coordinates of the revised West Africa HRA / MDAT-GoG VRA chart are:

- 21°N - African coastline (proximity of Cape Blanc, Western Sahara)
- 21°N - 029°W
- 14°N - 029°W
- 17°S - 008°E
- 17°S - African coastline (proximity of the Angola/Namibia border)

Coordinates have been rounded to the nearest whole degree of latitude or longitude.

2.0 The MDAT-GoG is a virtual reporting mechanism supporting the interregional architecture defined by the Yaoundé Code of Conduct. Run under the direction of the British and French Navy with staff based in Portsmouth, United Kingdom and Brest, France, MDAT-GoG replicates the same functions of the former Maritime Trade and Information Sharing Centre – Gulf of Guinea (MTISC-GoG). The MDAT-GoG VRA exists to improve security, provide valuable support to mariners and to maintain the freedom of navigation for all vessels in the waters off Africa's western seaboard.

3.0 The British Navy team also brings expertise from managing the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) VRA in the Indian Ocean. The information supplied by vessels will be treated as commercially confidential. The primary output from the MDAT-GoG is to contribute by maintaining coherent maritime situational awareness in the Central and Western African maritime space, with the ability to inform and support industry, contributing to the safety and security of the mariner in the regional maritime domain.

4.0 The Navtex receivers on ships should be programed to receive navigation warnings from all appropriate Navtex stations. With respect to Navigational Areas (NAVAREAs), Masters of vessels operating inside the West Africa HRA should ensure that their Inmarsat C terminals are set to receive navigational warnings from both NAVAREA II (France) and NAVAREA VII (South Africa) so that they receive all relevant navigational warnings.

5.0 It is **strongly recommended** that all RMI registered vessels transiting the West Africa HRA maintain a setting of **Security Level II** (or equivalent security measures). For a current and comprehensive list of areas with a required or recommended setting of Security Level II, refer to the Administrator's [Security Level webpage](#).

6.0 Reporting of a GoG Piracy or Armed Robbery Incident

6.1 In accordance with the provisions of RMI Maritime Regulations, MI-108, §6.35.7 and §6.36, in the event of a GoG piracy or armed robbery incident, the [Administrator](#) shall be informed

of the incident by submitting form [MI-109-2](#). Such report shall be made by the fastest means possible to:

Email: shipsecurity@register-iri.com
dutyofficer@register-iri.com

Fax: +1 703 860 2284; or

Tel: +1 571 441 1885

6.2 The [International Maritime Bureau Piracy Reporting Centre \(IMB PRC\)](#) should be notified by submitting a [Piracy & Armed Robbery Attack Report](#).

6.3 Masters are requested to call MDAT-GoG (+33 298 228888) at the time of any incident occurrence. This phone number is monitored permanently (24/7). It is requested that Masters contact MDAT-GoG as soon as possible to facilitate quick actions by the MDAT-GoG and their regional contacts. Masters or CSOs may also report incident details by using the MDAT-GoG Incident Report form and submitting via email to [MDAT-GoG](#):

Email: watchkeepers@mdat-gog.org

Tel: +33 (0) 2 98 22 88 88 (**emergency**)

Tel: +33 (0) 2 98 22 13 02 (**exercise**)

Upon submission, a copy of this report should also be sent to the [RMI Ship Security Department](#) per the contact information listed above in §6.1.

7.0 Company / Ship Security Exercises

7.1 MDAT-GOG invites Companies / CSOs to include them in Company-led security exercises/drills. Please do not hesitate to contact the MDAT-GOG in advance of the exercise. The exercise telephone number is **+33 298 221302**. This dedicated exercise telephone number helps to keep the Live Emergency Line free.

8.0 Voluntary Reporting within the MDAT-GoG VRA

- 8.1 While operating within the MDAT-GoG VRA, merchant vessels are **strongly encouraged** to report to MDAT-GoG by email or telephone at the times indicated in the table below. The four (4) MDAT-GoG reporting forms are hyperlinked below.

TYPE OF REPORT	TO BE SUBMITTED WHEN:
MDAT-GoG Initial Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entering the VRA• Leaving a Port within the VRA
MDAT-GoG Daily Position Report (at 1200 UTC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Underway with in the VRA
MDAT-GoG Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arriving at a Port within the VRA• Exiting the VRA
MDAT-GoG Incident Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suspicious or Irregular Activity and/or when under Direct Attack

- 8.2 MDAT-GoG has stated that it treats all information reported to it in strict commercial confidence by French and British Navy personnel. **It is not necessary to copy the Administrator when voluntarily reporting to the MDAT-GoG while operating in the VRA.**

9.0 Risk Assessment Checklist

- 9.1 The following table is a risk assessment checklist that may be used as guidance in preparation for operating within the MDAT-GoG VRA:

RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS	
Automatic Identification System (AIS) to be left on through VRA?	Extra Lookouts
Anti-threat measures in place?	Fire Pump Ready
Crew Briefing	Locked Doors
Fire Hoses Rigged	Outboard Ladders Stowed
Barbed/Razor Wire	Dummies Posted
External Communication Plan	Manned Engine Room
Citadel	Crew Drills Completed
Night Vision Optics	Armed Security Team on board?
Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV)	Doctor on board?

RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS	
Unarmed Security Team on board	Weapons held on board?
Helicopter Winch Area? Helicopter Landing Area? Additional Measures	Any other information which may assist authorities?

10.0 Additional Sources of Information

[Best Management Practice \(BMP\)](#)

[Combined Maritime Forces \(CMF\)](#)

[IMB Live Piracy Reports](#)

[Middle East Navigation Aids Service \(MENAS\)](#)

[NATO Maritime Command \(MARCOM\)](#)

[NATO Shipping Centre – Alert Details](#)

[NATO Shipping Centre – Piracy Update](#)

[Naval Oceanic and Hydrographic Service \(SHOM\)](#)

[United Kingdom Hydrographic Office \(UKHO\)](#)

Please direct any questions or concerns to shipsecurity@register-iri.com.