



# The Porthole

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The newsletter of  
the South Australian Branch of the Company of Master Mariners  
of Australia,  
PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015  
Branch Patron: His Excellency the Honorable Hieu Van Le AC



## Branch Master's Comments

Good Day to all,

I trust you all had a peaceful and happy Christmas and New Year, and you are feeling suitably refreshed to face another year of the same sort of stuff as last year provided. To those who are retired, this sometimes seems in name only, and in fact you become busier than ever. For myself, as a "Gentleman Farmer", my week consists of six Saturdays and a Sunday, with an occasional blip when bushfires threaten (not that the sheep have left much uneaten to burn, and if they have an iota of sense between them, will find a dam to sit in if fire does invade).

As for us in COMMA, very little has happened as far as the Federal Court is concerned, except that our Federal Secretary, Stuart, has resigned from Fremantle Ports, to take up a position elsewhere, which will eventuate in a change of address but should change little else for the foreseeable future.

A phone hook-up is on the cards for next month but has yet to be finalised. A couple from the West is interested in taking on the editorship of the "Master Mariner", but this is still under negotiation.

As for SA, our AGM is to be held this month (29th Jan 2020) at our usual monthly meeting, and we still don't have anybody willing to take on the position of Branch Secretary. We are fairly desperate to fill this situation on the Branch Court, and we will try our best to assist any aspirant to the position.

Hoping to see as many of you as possible at the Largs Pier Hotel on Wednesday.

Happy Sailing  
Bob W (BM)

**The Branch AGM will be held immediately after the Branch Meeting, and there will be no speaker.**

**The next Branch meeting will be held at the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay, on Wednesday, 29th January 2020, at 1145 for 1200. Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology before 1200 on Monday, 27th January 2020 with Bob Westley (0427 644 947) or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)**

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The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd. is a Company established to promote and further the efficiency of the Sea Service generally, and uphold the Status, Dignity and Prestige of Master Mariners in particular.

## An Introduction to Protection and Indemnity (P&I) Assurance

A summary by David Holmes of a talk given by Fiona Clowes on 27 November 2019 to the SA Branch of the Company of Master Mariners

Fiona began her presentation by outlining two incidents she was involved in early in her career. The first was the sinking of the single hulled tanker *m.v. Prestige*, loaded with 77,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil. In 2002, in heavy weather, while off the coast of northern Spain, one of the ship's tanks ruptured and the ship was rendered unstable. The Master sent out a distress call and sought to enter La Coruna as a port of refuge where the leak could be contained and pollution minimised. However, the Spanish authority refused access to Spanish ports. The French and Portuguese authorities similarly refused access to their ports. Most of the crew were taken off the ship by helicopter and the ship was then towed away from the coast. The ship then broke in two and sank, releasing thousands of tonnes of oil, which



severely impacted the coasts of Spain, France and Portugal. The 78 year old Master was arrested, accused of disobeying Spanish authorities, recklessness and causing environmental damage and given a 9 months prison term, which was suspended. The final clean-up cost was calculated to be in excess of €4 billion. (See footnote below.)

The second incident, which Fiona described as a "grave train for lawyers", was the collision and foundering of the *m.v. Tricolor*. On 14 December 2002, the *Tricolor* was proceeding down the English Channel and overtaking the *m.v. Kariba* which was on a parallel course. However, the *Kariba* suddenly turned hard to starboard and collided with the *Tricolor*.

The *Tricolor* capsized and lay on its side presenting a huge danger in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. Salvors were engaged to remove bunker oil and guard the vessel. Two further guard vessels were engaged by the P&I Club to watch operations and protect the position. Despite the protection and broadcast warnings of the danger to navigation, one day later, in heavy fog, the *m.v. Nicola* ran down the sunken vessel and had to be pulled free by two tugs. Two weeks later, and despite further protection measures, including the positioning of light buoys around the *Tricolor*, the *m.v. Vicky*, laden with kerosene, struck the wreckage. Fortunately, the *Vicky* was able to free itself on the rising tide. The owners of the *Tricolor* and the P&I Club then reached an agreement for the removal of the wreck, starting with the removal of bunker oil and concluding with the lifting of the wreck sections and their safe disposal.



Continuing her talk, Fiona then went on to discuss the development of marine insurance and the P&I Club arrangements. The most famous medieval sea laws are the Rolls of Oléron, put together around 1286 by Eleanor of Aquitaine. The Rolls were based on medieval customary sea law, and were used to regulate the wine trade from Brittany and Normandy to England, Scotland and Flanders. One of the key provisions of the Rolls was that "If any ship, or other vessel, by any casualty or misfortune happens to be wrecked and perish, in that case, the pieces of the hulk of the vessel, as well as the lading thereof, ought to be reserved and kept in safety for them to whom it belonged before such disaster happened, not withstanding any custom to the contrary."

The first formal marine insurance policy, which attempted to codify maritime laws, dates back to 1350.

Another milestone in marine insurance history was the establishment of Edward Lloyd's Coffee House in the 1680s. Lloyds was a popular meeting place for shipowners, sailors, brokers and merchants and specialised in all things shipping, including underwriting and shipping news.

In 1720 Parliament passed the so-called Bubble Act, which incorporated the Royal Exchange Assurance Company and the London Assurance Corporation and forbade the formation of other joint stock companies, unless approved by Royal Charter. These companies were the only incorporated bodies able to write marine insurance, although private underwriters such as Lloyds of London could remain. However, by the early 19th Century owners became frustrated by the limited shipping insurance market provided by Lloyds, the Royal Exchange Assurance and the London Assurance Corporation, and the first English mutual protection club was founded in 1855 - Shipowners' Mutual Protection Society.

In the ensuing years, further mutual protection clubs were established and six clubs formed the London group of P&I Clubs, which, in 1899, entered into a pooling agreement to share the cost of major claims. This became the forerunner of the International Group of P&I Clubs, comprising of thirteen clubs with pooled resources to share losses of US\$10M to US\$100M.

Fiona then detailed the three main types of cover provided by P&I Clubs:

1. Cargo loss/damage, death/injury to passengers, oil pollution, stowaways, wreck removal;
2. Damage/repairs for total loss, collision either with a vessel or fixed/floating objects, salvage, general average;
3. Additional cover for Freight Defence Demurrage (typically including time/voyage charter party disputes or ship sale/purchase contracts and related matters), kidnap and ransom (piracy attacks and captures), charterer's liability and bunker insurance.

Finally, Fiona covered matters relating to ship arrest, which she described as the "nuclear option for obtaining security". Fiona touched on the nineteen types of marine claims in respect of which a vessel could be arrested, including damage done by a ship, loss of or damage to goods carried on a ship, use or hire of a ship and claims for salvage, towage, pilotage etc. As an example of the arrest procedure, Fiona set out the arrangements for ship arrest in England and Wales. It starts with the issue of a Warrant of Arrest in Admiralty Court, and the placing of the Warrant on the vessel by a Customs officer. The process then awaits agreement on security which can be provided by a P&I Club IOU. A request for release is lodged with the Admiralty Marshall after security is agreed. Provision is made for counterclaims for wrongful arrest, e.g. bad faith or negligence. Fiona noted that ship arrest procedures varied in different countries and arrest-friendly jurisdictions were a factor taken into consideration.

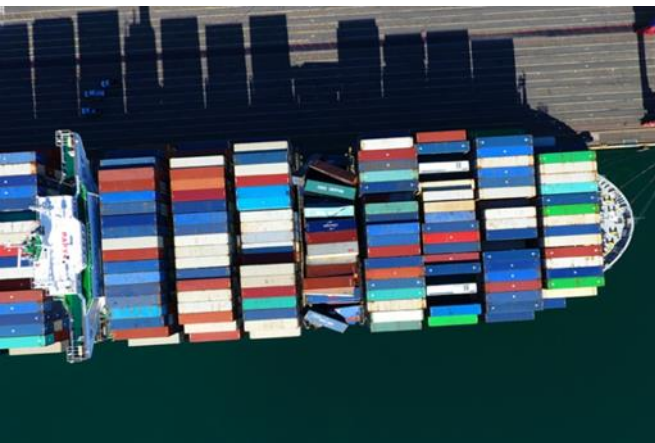
*Writer's footnote: It is questionable whether the Spanish Supreme Court's judgement on the P&I Club's US\$1 billion liability for the m.v. Prestige pollution damage will be enforceable in the UK. Prior to the Spanish Court's findings, an arbitration process, supported by the English Court of Appeal judgement, had determined the P&I Club's liability at US\$26.7 million (i.e. the shipowner's maximum liability under the International Convention on Civil Liability from Oil Pollution). This amount was paid into the Spanish Court in 2003. Spain has also sought compensation through the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPCF). However, the IOPCF 2018 Annual Report noted that the pollution damage assessed by the Spanish Court was far in excess of the amount assessed by the Fund. As of 31 December 2018, the IOPCF had paid out €120.7million and the matter was still open.*

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## MAIB Issues Report on Loss of 137 Containers from CMA CGM Containership

January 16, 2020 by Mike Schuler

Inaccurate container weight declarations were partially to blame for the loss of 137 containers overboard from a CMA CGM containership underway in the North Pacific Ocean back in January 2018, the UK Maritime Accident Investigation Branch said in its investigation report into the incident.



Collapsed containers on the deck of the *CMA CGM G. Washington*.  
Photo courtesy MAIB

The incident took place early on 20 January 2018 when the UK-flagged containership, *CMA CGM G. Washington*, experienced very heavy seas in the North Pacific Ocean while on passage from Xiamen, China, to Los Angeles, USA. At about 0127, the ship unexpectedly rolled 20° to starboard, paused for several seconds, then rolled 20° to port, initiating the collapse.

The following morning, the crew found that three container bays had collapsed, with 137 containers lost overboard and another 85 damaged.

The MAIB's investigation into the incident identified a number of safety issues, including that the reduced structural strength of the non-standard 53ft containers, inaccurate container weight

declarations, mis-stowed containers, and loose lashings, contributed to the cargo loss.

"The amplitude of the ship's rolling exceeded the limits set by CMA Ships for the class of vessel, displayed by the loading computer and calculated by Bureau Veritas after the accident," the MAIB said in its conclusion.

The MAIB has made a recommendation to CMA Ships, manager of the *CMA CGM G. Washington* to ensure that, where container terminals routinely weigh containers prior to loading, the cargo plan is updated to reflect these weights. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is also recommended (2020/104) to promote UK container owners' involvement in Bureau Internationale des Containers databases.

Classification society Bureau Veritas, meanwhile, is recommended to amend its rules to require on board lashing software to display maximum pitch and roll angles for the vessel's condition, and to review its rules and approval procedures.

Source: *gCaptain 200117*

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## Marine insurer lifts the lid on botched bunkering operation

by Terry Gangcuangco 29 Nov 2019

“Poorly planned” – that’s how UK P&I Club loss prevention director, Stuart Edmonston, described a botched bunkering operation that resulted in a bunker spill, and here we bring you his insights into what went wrong.



In the highlighted incident, a bulk carrier was to bunker 215 metric tons of intermediate fuel oil from a supply barge, with the bunkers set to be received in two empty topside tanks, the capacity of which is 200 cubic metres each.

Citing the safety management system (SMS) procedures for the bunkering operation, Edmonston noted that bunker tanks were not to be filled in excess of 85% capacity, which corresponded to a minimum ullage of 55cm.

“The task of performing the bunkering operation was delegated by the chief engineer to the third engineer,” said the loss prevention director. “Once the bunker transfer hose was connected, the operation started at 3:20pm filling only the starboard side tank. At 4:30pm, the third engineer recorded the ullage of the tank at 51cm, and yet bunkering operations continued.

“At 4:35pm he saw the ullage had reduced to 35cm. He rushed to the engine room to divert the bunkers into the empty port side tank, but by the time he reached the valve station, the starboard side tank was already overflowing on deck with oil spilling overboard.”

In Edmonston’s view, a “serious neglect” of the company SMS procedures caused the mishap.

He added: “The chief engineer completed the bunkering checklist on his office PC instead of doing it with the participation of the third engineer at the site of the job, resulting in some checks being overlooked.

“The failure of the third engineer to closely monitor the filling of the tank and his lack of awareness of the minimum ullage figure led to a critical loss of control. This was compounded by his lack of support and radio communication with other crew or bunker barge personnel during the operation.”

It’s also worth noting that the drain plug had not been fitted, allowing oil to escape at the forward ventilator. For UK P&I Club, unfitted drain plugs means a save-all isn’t a save-all.

Meanwhile, the marine insurer stressed that SMS procedures should be followed at all times when performing bunkering operations, and that the checklist completion, which should be done on-site, must not be treated as a ‘tick box’ exercise.

UK P&I Club also cited teamwork and good communication with ship and barge personnel as necessary elements in bunkering, with the chief engineer carefully considering bunkering plans and discussing them with the team.

Source: *Insurance Business Australia* 191129

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## Shipping industry tussling with potential risks from new IMO rules

by Duffie Osentel 13 Dec 2019

The global container shipping industry is grappling with potential risks from new rules that aim to reduce marine pollution.

New rules from the International Marine Organisation (IMO) have given shipowners a 1 January 2020 deadline to either switch to low-sulphur fuel or install devices known as “scrubbers” in a bid to reduce global sulphur emissions.



However, industry figures have voiced concerns about the potential risks of both options – including sudden fires or collisions due to engine failure and liability for inadvertently breaching the rules. And with the industry needing to invest an estimated US\$10 billion to adhere to the new rules, analysts say there may be reason for the concern.

Several large ship owners have told *Reuters* that handling the new fuels correctly and making sure the scrubbers are properly deployed would minimise danger, but that if care was not taken, problems could arise.

“The big guys are going to be serviced by the right people... there is bigger risk for the smaller ships,” Hugo De Stoop, chief executive of Belgian tanker operator Euronav, told *Reuters*.

Problems linked to certain types of scrubbers in particular have alarmed some shipowners, and insurers have reported cases of fires and corrosion with these devices. What’s more, if corrosion was legally deemed to be inevitable, underwriters might try to deny related claims, according to Stephen Harris, senior vice president with insurance broker Marsh.

“Whether underwriters adopt this line or not could depend on how frequent and how big the problem becomes next year,” Harris told *Reuters*.

Harris also said that the problems made assessing cover a challenge.

“Is it non-compliance? The question marks are bigger than the answers,” he told *Reuters*.

Source: *Insurance Business Australia* 191216

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## UK P&I Club looks at lessons from cargo damage in flooded hold

by Terry Ganguangco 26 Jan 2018

Following a recent incident which led to a substantial cargo damage claim, marine insurer UK P&I Club has shared its analysis and the major takeaways.



The case relates to a bulk carrier whose water ingress alarm for no.2 cargo hold was activated a few days after it left the loading port. This despite the successful conduct of tests for watertight integrity, as well as the cargo holds having been cleaned, before a full cargo of bulk minerals was loaded onto the vessel. It had also been verified that the cargo hold bilge pumping system and water ingress alarms were operating efficiently.

“However, when the hold bilges were sounded by the crew, they appeared to be dry, and it was therefore assumed that the ingress alarm system was defective,” explained Captain David Nichol, senior loss prevention executive at UK P&I Club.

“Daily hold bilge soundings continued to give no cause for concern. At the discharge port, wet cargo was revealed at a depth of up to two metres above the tank top, and, upon completion of discharge, it was discovered that sea water had entered the hold due to back-flow via the port side bilge well.”

Nichol said subsequent examination and testing of the cargo hold bilge system revealed that the non-return valve in the port side bilge well was not tight. This was attributed to the presence of previous cargo residue and scale around the valve seat.

According to the Club, pre-loading checks did not include the inspection and testing of cargo hold non-return valves. “It was also established that other valves in the system between the engine room fire and G.S. pumps and the bilge line had been left open by the engine room crew, allowing water to flow into the line and enter the hold by way of the defective non-return valve,” continued the senior loss prevention executive. “Investigations also revealed that no.2 port bilge sounding pipe was blocked about 20cm from the bottom, explaining why the well appeared dry when sounded. “Had the crew compared the maximum height of the pipe with the sounding tape measurement, this defect may have been noticed prior to flooding of the hold.”

As for the lessons learnt from the incident, among them is the need to periodically check and maintain bilge system valves and pipework, as part of the planned maintenance system. Ideally, inspection and testing of cargo hold bilge system non-return valves should also be included in routine pre-loading checks of the holds.

In addition, rigorous procedures should be in place to avoid leaving valves open when not being used. “Hold bilge sounding pipes should be positively proven to be unobstructed and comparisons made between the documented maximum pipe height and actual measurement at the deck datum point,” noted Nichol. “The activation of hold ingress alarms requires to be thoroughly investigated, which in this case should have included checking all related systems and pumping of the bilges to observe for any discharge.”

Source: *Insurance Business Australia* 180126

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## Lithium batteries identified as cause of fire onboard Cosco boxship

January 8th, 2020 Jason Jiang

China Cosco Shipping has identified the self-ignition of misreported lithium batteries as the cause of fire onboard its mega boxship *Cosco Pacific*.



The vessel caught fire while it was *en route* to Nhava Sheva, India, from Port Klang last weekend, and had to divert to Colombo for inspections.

According to a Cosco update on the incident, the fire started from a container operated by Wan Hai Lines, and the burnt lithium batteries in the container, loaded from Nansha and destined for Nhava Sheva, were falsely declared as spare parts and accessories.

All three containers from the same shipper, along with several containers around the burnt container, have been unloaded from the ship.

The company may declare general average for all the financial losses caused by the fire.

Currently, the ship is waiting for a final assessment before it can continue its voyage.

Source: *splash247* 200108

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## How to privatise ports, the Australian way

December 20th, 2019 Kris Kosmala

Every country in the world views their ports as critical to their ability to trade with other nations. This is especially true of Australia, an island country with no land bridges to other nations. Port infrastructure was always considered to be of utmost strategic importance to the wellbeing of the nation. However, building and maintaining large strategic assets like ports has a downside – it is expensive, and unlike the roads, hospitals, schools, airports, or even rail, the value of ports investments doesn't register highly with the voters.



Lo and behold, as pressure on the government budgets increased, the state governments chose various paths to monetise their port assets. What is currently happening in many Australian ports provides some interesting lessons on port privatisation strategies, port regulation, port authority landlord models, terminal concessions, and service pricing strategies.

Lo and behold, as pressure on the government budgets increased, the state governments chose various paths to monetise their port assets. What is currently happening in many Australian ports provides some interesting lessons on port privatisation strategies, port regulation, port authority landlord models, terminal concessions, and service pricing strategies.

### How much money did they offer?

No government will debate an offer of money in exchange for an asset that it isn't their priority. In the bidding frenzy for Australian port assets, nobody considered why the bidders were offering unreal sums of money. Every additional billion dollars above the "estimated" value of the asset was seen as a bonus to the state treasuries. Instead of looking at the overall logistics situation of getting goods in and out of the country, each port sale or concession was viewed only in the context of each particular port. The port privatization scenarios described below will play out in many countries considering getting out of public ownership of port assets. It is worthwhile to know what could happen if the details of those deals are not thought through.

### After you sell it, can the new owners behave any way they want?

There is nuance to every decision that a government takes to privatising public assets. That nuance lies in the balance between too much or too little regulation after the deal has been signed. The most likely area of regulation or oversight is the pricing of access to that asset to prevent the new owner from potentially gouging the market for the benefit of its shareholders. Regulate too much, and you disincentivise the owner from investing into properly maintaining and/or improving the asset. Regulate too little or not at all, and you risk monopolistic market behaviour from the new owner.

### Whose channel is it after all?

One look at the map of eastern Australia shows two principal centres of economic activity benefiting from ports – Sydney (state of New South Wales) and Brisbane (state of Queensland). Between the two lies the city of Newcastle (state of New South Wales). The Newcastle port is primarily a bulk port serving coal exporters located in the region to the west of the port. Container ship calls produce an annual volume 40,000 TEUs, mostly serving break bulk agricultural exports. Unlike the container trade, there is no other viable bulk port alternative to Newcastle. Not viewed as strategically important as the container ports of Sydney and Brisbane, the port was offered for sale in 2014. The price of AUD 1.75 billion (over 20 P/E) offered for the port was breathtaking. Whoever estimated the ROI from operating this port, probably assumed that any increase of prices to use the port would be borne by the rich mining companies, not by the consumer population of Newcastle and surroundings. Just in case the new owners wanted to expand the container operations, a little trick in the contract ensured that they would have to pay a penalty for "loss of business" to the owners of container terminals in Sydney, 160 km to the south.

Fast forward to 2018-2019. The need for financial returns from the excessive investment drove the new owners to announce plans to remake Newcastle into a 1 million TEU p.a. port, theoretically to handle volume spill-over from Sydney, but practically, a competitor with lower lift charges than those demanded by the Sydney terminal operators. Along with the announcement came a request to the government to change the terms of the contract to eliminate the penalty of about AUD 100 that Newcastle port would have to pay to the port of Sydney for every container above the 30,000 p.a. threshold.

The government had none of it, so it was coal exporters turn to improve the owner's rate of return. For every ship sailing between coal terminals and the open sea, the port established new "channel access" fees to recoup the cost of maintaining the channel. One regulator, and there are many, deemed the channel access fees to be fair at AUD 0.61 per gross tonne. Another regulator believes AUD 1.04 is fairer. The port believes in the price north of AUD 1.2. Who is to say that port owners are making too much money to operate and maintain the port to the highest standards?

Lesson for other governments privatising their ports? Be very clear in the sale contract on the regulatory regime you will apply, so that the owner can't play one regulator against another when disputes, like that of price for port access, arise.

### My costs are up, and so are yours

Most port landlords opt for competition when it comes to selling terminal operating concessions. Sometimes, not all concessions are as viable as others, but the higher good of 'competition' will always take precedence. In the case of port of Melbourne, having 3 concessionaires was viewed as more competitive than having 2 concessionaires. Presumably, the government performed detailed analysis of the demand from the container carriers calling on Melbourne, and decided that there would be enough volume to make all three terminals financially viable. With the successful auctioning of the first two concessions, the price fetched

by the third concession didn't raise any eyebrows.

If only the carriers were as cooperative. Facing three terminals vying for their business, the carriers gained incredible leverage in price negotiations, effectively restricting the terminals in their ability to generate sufficient profits to pay the rent, the dividends to their shareholders, and to invest into much needed terminal modernisation. Interestingly, with the larger ships cascading down and calling on ports the size of Melbourne, the carriers also gained the flexibility of calling less frequently, one more factor that would play in lift and service rate negotiations with the terminals.

Hemmed in by the carriers, the three terminal operators turned their attention to other ways of increasing their revenues and margins. One by one, they discovered an "infrastructure access charge" which they promptly applied to trucking and rail companies delivering and evacuating containers in port of Melbourne. The terms of the concessions are most likely too vague to allow the government to intervene. The operators can easily explain that the surcharges will be used to fund some major capital works in a few years, so who is to tell them that they can't charge it now and save the money for later projects.

The process of annual increases of that charge is quite familiar to observers of some other industries where the number of competitors in the market is constrained by the government. Every year, one of the competitors jacks up the price attracting the wrath of the logistics companies. The other two then follow saying that they have no choice, but to cover their increasing costs. The following year, another operator takes the heat, and the whole process repeats itself. Interestingly, it appears that all three operators have the same cost base, similarly efficient infrastructure, and the same productivity, as their infrastructure charges are more or less in line with each other. Understandably, the logistics companies operating in port of Melbourne are not amused. On one hand, they are appealing to the state government for regulation of the prices the terminal operators can pass on to them in lieu of negotiating them with the sea carriers. On the other hand, no doubt, they are working hard to figure out the way to push that surcharge down the supply chain, where ultimately it will be picked up by consumers and exporters.

A lesson for other governments privatizing their terminals? Think about the form of competition you want to have in your port and how you expect all terminal operators to make money on the assets they paid well in excess of what's rational.

#### A few parting words

This article is not judging whether privatisation of maritime ports and terminals is right or wrong. It merely points out some consequences of focusing on maximising the price of those assets, without consideration of the excess or deficit of regulatory levers that can be applied for the life of the concessions.

Source: Splash247 191220

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## 57 crew kidnapped off West Africa in just one month

January 2nd, 2020 Sam Chambers

A total of 57 crew were kidnapped last month in and around the Gulf of Guinea, a similar figure to November with shipping now on high alert as the security situation in West Africa has spun out of control.



The most recent kidnapping took place on December 30 with security consultants, Ambrey, reporting eight men were kidnapped from Eastern Mediterranean's *Happy Lady* tanker, which has been at anchor for a number of weeks off Limbe in Cameroon. A Greek national was taken to hospital following the attack, having been shot.

In a note to clients following the attack, maritime security firm, Dryad Global, reported that 57 crew members had been abducted in the Gulf of Guinea in December alone.

"The rapid increase in incidents is believed to be perpetuated in part by a confluence of factors including favourable conditions and reinforced successes. Lengthy turn-around times at terminal locations present considerable security challenges for vessels seeking to reduce exposure to the risk of incident. In addition to this, a lack of

coherent and coordinated security response means that pirates are able to operate between national maritime boundaries without restriction," Dryad noted.

Dryad Global in partnership with TankerTrackers.com has identified a mothership being operated in the region, the *Determination 2*, a chemical tanker, which has an orange hull.

In a joint statement issued last month, Roger Harris, executive director of the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network, and the Rev'd Canon Andrew Wright, chairman of the International Christian Maritime Association, said: "It is our hope that all parties will work together to break up the gangs working in the area, and that those responsible for such criminal acts will be brought to justice. Seafarers are justifiably worried about working in these areas and the stress of just thinking one might be attacked can be overwhelming."

BIMCO advice for ships heading to the troubled area can be found at <http://maritimeglobalsecurity.org>.

Source: Splash247 200102

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## IMB: 2019 Saw Unprecedented Rise in Gulf of Guinea Crew Kidnappings

January 14, 2020 by Mike Schuler

Despite declining maritime piracy trends worldwide in 2019, the Gulf of Guinea saw an unprecedented rise in the number of crew kidnappings, the IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre said in its annual report.



In total, the IMB received reports of 162 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships worldwide, down from the 201 reported incidents in 2018. The incidents included four hijacked vessels, 11 vessels fired upon, 17 attempted attacks, and 130 vessels boarded, according to the latest IMB figures.

While the overall decline in piracy incidents is an encouraging development, vessels remain at risk in several regions, especially the Gulf of Guinea, according to the IMB.

The number of crew kidnapped in the Gulf of Guinea increased more than 50 percent from 78 in 2018 to 121 in 2019, representing 90 percent crew kidnappings globally in 2019, according to the IMB. In the last quarter alone, 64 crew members were kidnapped across six separate incidents. The region also accounted for 64 total incidents, including all four vessel hijackings that occurred in 2019, as well as 10 out of 11 vessels that reported coming under fire.

"We remain concerned that this region has recorded an unprecedented rise in crew kidnaps. These latest statistics confirm the importance of increased information exchange and coordination between vessels, reporting and response agencies in the Gulf of Guinea Region. Without the necessary reporting structures in place, we will be unable to accurately highlight the high-risk areas for seafarers, and address the rise of piracy incidents in these persistently vulnerable waters." – Michael Howlett, Director of the ICC International Maritime Bureau.

The Singapore Straits experienced a similar rise in armed robbery attacks with 12 reported incidents in 2019, including 11 in the last quarter of 2019, the IMB said. The same region accounted for just three incidents in all of 2018. IMB's latest figures also show that vessels were successfully boarded in 10 incidents across the region last year. Despite this rise, however, IMB considers the intensity of the attacks in the Singapore Straits to be 'low level' and usually limited to armed robbery from the vessel.

"This is a distraction and potentially dangerous for the crew in control of the vessel whilst navigating through these congested waters", continued Howlett. "The IMB PRC is grateful to Singapore law enforcement agencies for responding promptly to some of these incidents."

In Indonesian ports, armed robbery attacks fell to 25 in 2019, down from 36 incidents the year before. Dialogue and coordination between the Indonesian Marine Police (IMP) and the IMB PRC has led to a decrease in regional incidents, according to the report.

For the first time since 2015, no piracy or armed robbery incidents were reported around Bangladesh.

As for Somali piracy, 2019 was another quiet year, but risks remain, the IMB warns.

"Across the Indian Ocean, Somalia reported zero piracy incidents, yet the IMB PRC advises that vessels and crews remain cautious when traveling through the region," the IMB said. In particular, the report warns that "Somali pirates continue to possess the capacity to carry out attacks in the Somali basin and wider Indian Ocean."

Source: *gCaptain 200115*

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### Burial at sea.

The best mate of a pair of a novice sailors died, and, in his will, specified that he wanted them to bury him at sea.

So, the pair set out from shore in a rowboat with the body. They had rowed out a little way when one got out of the boat and stood knee deep in water.

"We need to go out further," he told the other. So, they rowed out another fifty yards, and the same sailor jumped out again to find the water reached his chin.

"We need to go out further," he said again.

About 150 yards from shore, he jumped out of the rowboat again and disappeared under water. After five minutes, he reappeared coughing and spluttering, and said to the other. "That's far enough. Hand me the shovel."

Source: *Flashlight 204*

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