

GULF OF GUINEA

MMCC ZONE F MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY REPORT  
JANUARY - DECEMBER 2021

**ECOWAS MULTINATIONAL  
MARITIME COORDINATION CENTRE**

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## **OVERVIEW**

The ECOWAS Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre (MMCC) Zone F is one of the 3 Maritime Centres within the ECOWAS Region established as part of the implementation of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (YCC) to coordinate and share maritime safety and security information with member states.

The Centre is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase cooperation among navies of the littoral States in maritime Zone F and beyond as well as other international navies operating within the Region by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of relevant maritime issues. Operationally the MMCC Zone F conducts monitoring and surveillance of Maritime Zone F which stretches from Guinea to Ghana. The Centre also follows events in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) that are likely to impact activities within Maritime Zone F. The focus of our monitoring covers Maritime Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships, Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, maritime pollution, and other illicit activities such as illegal bunkering, smuggling, trafficking drugs and persons among others. In line with this, the Centre provides the following key services:

- Provide maritime safety and security threats assessment for ships, ports, harbours, offshore installations, and facilities.
- Coordination and sharing of actionable and time-relevant maritime information with maritime law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders.
- Offers updates, advice, and warnings impacting the freedom of navigation at sea.
- Provides post-incidents analysis and feedback to relevant stakeholders.
- Engagement with maritime stakeholders on best practices, research, and related issues affecting the maritime domain.
- Collection and analysis of data on fishing activities to support the fight against IUU fishing activities.
- Publishing of comprehensive quarterly, half-yearly, and annual maritime incident reports detailing statistics.
- Support capacity building of staff of maritime law enforcement agencies and organizations.

The services provided are free of charge to all vessels and other maritime stakeholders. The MMCC Zone F maintains a 24-hour operations centre. Shipowners and other maritime stakeholders can contact the Centre via hotlines **+233 547976523/+233 302736804** and **[zonefmmcc@gmail.com](mailto:zonefmmcc@gmail.com)/**[zonefmoc@gmail.com](mailto:zonefmoc@gmail.com)** to access our services or report and incidents. The information received from vessels, shipping agents,**

Company Security Officers (CSOs) and other partners is treated with the utmost confidentiality and shared promptly on a need-to-know basis to coordinate responses.

This Annual Report provides a summary of the maritime situational awareness picture for the period January to December 2021. The report provides highlights on piracy and related incidents against ships, observable trends in the maritime security incidents and the outlook for the year 2022.

The MMCC Zone F salutes the untiring support from various organizations, agencies and individuals in ensuring that our mandate is achieved. We wish to appreciate the immense efforts of the ECOWAS Commission, Member States of Maritime Zone F, and International Partners for their continuous faith and support to the Centre. Finally, our sincerest appreciation goes to the Government and people of Ghana for hosting and supporting the Centre.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **Piracy**

(A) Any illegal acts of Violence or Detention, or any act of Depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed: (i) on the High Seas, against another Ship or Aircraft, or persons or property on board such ship or aircraft. (ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons, or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State.

(B) Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft.

(C) Any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).

### **Armed Robbery at Sea**

Any unlawful act of Violence or Detention, or any act of Depredation or Threat other than an act of Piracy, directed against a Ship, Persons or Property onboard such Ships, within a state's jurisdiction over such offences.

### **Hijack**

Vessels taken by an attacker, and no longer under the control of the Master.

### **Fired Upon/Attack**

Use of weapon(s) by assailants at vessel or boarding with intent to take control of the vessel.

### **Boarding**

Unauthorized boarding of a vessel by persons, not part of its complement without taking control of the vessel.

### **Robbery**

Theft realized in territorial waters with threat or violence to the crew.

### **Theft**

Theft is realized in territorial waters with no violence.

### **Suspicious Approach**

All other unexplained activity in close proximity of an unknown vessel.

### **Illegal Unreported Unregulated Fishing.**

Illegal fishing is conducted by national or foreign vessels in contravention of laws and regulations. Fishing is conducted by vessels flying the flag of States that are parties to a regional fisheries management organization but operate in contravention of the conservation and management measures. Fishing in violation of national laws or international obligations. Fishing activities that have not been reported or have been misreported. Fishing in the area of application of a regional fisheries management organization that is conducted by vessels without nationality. Fishing in areas or for fish stocks about which there are no

applicable conservation or management measures. Where not expressly permitted, transshipment of fish at sea, often to avoid landing and reporting catch.

**Maritime Migration.**

**Stowaway:** A person who hides on a ship, aircraft, or other vehicle. Someone who hides on a ship or aircraft to travel without having to pay.

**Illicit Bunkering:**

Bunkering is a term used to describe the process of filling a ship with oil (or coal). Illegal oil bunkering is a euphemism for theft.

## **CONTENT**

- Piracy and Related Incidents against Ships.
  - Maritime Zone F.
  - Gulf of Guinea.
- Observable Trends.
- Outlook for 2022.

## **OVERVIEW OF MARITIME SITUATION IN THE GULF OF GUINEA - 2021**

1. The GoG continued to grapple with issues of maritime insecurity however with a significant reduction in the number of incidents in 2021. The GoG recorded a total of 74 actual and attempted maritime insecurity incidents in the year 2021 as compared to 139 in 2020. This represents about 47% decline as compared to 2020. Out of the 74 incidents recorded in 2021, 14 incidents occurred in Maritime Zone F, 31 in Maritime Zone E, 14 in Maritime Zone D, and 9 in Maritime Zone A. No incident was recorded in maritime Zone G. Six incidents were also recorded within the Joint Development Zone and beyond the EEZs of GoG states.

2. The reporting year also recorded an increase in the number of incidents in territorial waters, anchorages, and internal waters as compared to 2020. About 65% of all incidents recorded in 2021 occurred in the territorial, anchorages, ports, and internal waters as compared to 54% in 2020. This may be due to the increased presence of coastal and foreign naval vessels operating offshore the region.

3. Cargo and tanker vessels remained the main targets of Pirates Action Groups (PAGs) in 2021 accounting for 43% and 18% of all vessels attacked in the GoG. These vessels tend to have a lot of foreign crew who are the main targets of PAGs for kidnapping for ransom (KFR). Pirates also continue to target fishing vessels to be used as mother ships to attack other vessels or kidnap the foreign crew on board. In 2021, attacks on fishing vessels accounted for about 11% of all incidents.

4. For 2021, the main issues of concern against shipping in the GoG are the mass kidnapping for ransom, violence against ships and crew, and widespread suspicious approaches on vessels across the region. The phenomenon of hijacking of vessels remained fairly consistent with 2020 with one hijacking incident recorded. About 26% of all incidents against ships recorded in 2021 resulted in the kidnapping of crew members representing about a 7% increase as compared to 2020. Armed Robbery and Attempted Boarding incidents increased from 6% to 15% and 9% to 11% respectively while Boarding and Fired Upon incidents decreased from 14% to 11% and 8% to 5% respectively. The majority of the attacks against ships in the region occurred between 2359-0600 hours.

5. The security situation within Maritime Zone F improved in 2021 as compared to 2020. Maritime Zone F recorded 14 incidents in 2021 as compared to 32 in 2020 representing a 56% decline. Similarly, the Zone also recorded a reduction in all types of maritime incidents except Armed Robbery incidents which recorded a slight increase from 3 incidents in 2020 to 4 in 2021. Maritime Zone F also recorded one kidnapping incident in 2021 as compared to 2020. However, the ports and anchorages continue to record more incidents than offshore with thefts, armed robberies, illegal boarding and stowaway in ports and anchorages accounting for more than 75% of all maritime incidents in maritime Zone F. The ports and anchorages of Conakry, Monrovia and Tema recorded theft and armed robberies incidents in 2021 while Abidjan and Tema ports recorded stowaway incidents.

6. The year 2021 witnessed the launch of an unprecedented number of maritime security initiatives aimed at strengthening and complementing the Yaounde Architecture for Maritime Safety and Security. These initiatives include the EU Coordinated Maritime Presence (EU CMP), the Yaounde Architecture Regional Information Sharing System (YARIS), ICC/NIMASA Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) Declaration, Gulf of Guinea

Declaration and the Deep Blue project by Nigeria. The contributions of these initiatives especially the EU CMP and other foreign naval vessels operating deep offshore in the GoG in the overall decline in the number of piracy incidents recorded in 2021 cannot be downplayed. However, there is the need for effective collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders as well as the harmonisation of the various initiatives to prevent duplicity to ensure optimal benefits. There is also the need for the development of MoUs as well as bilateral cooperations between the EU CMP participating countries and the GoG states to ensure full involvement and participation by the GoG states.



# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – ZONE F

Figure 1. Disposition of Incidents January to December 2021 - Zone F

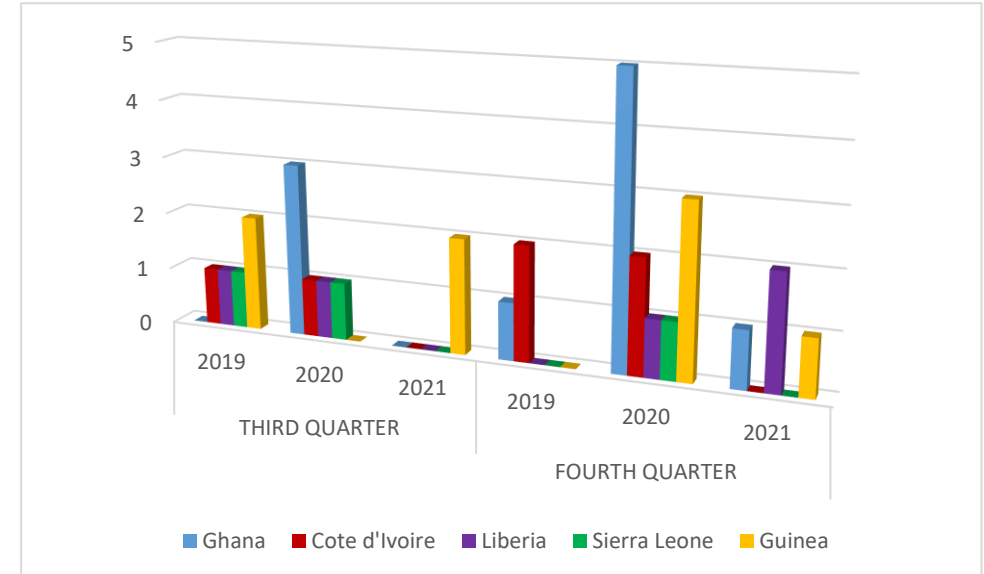
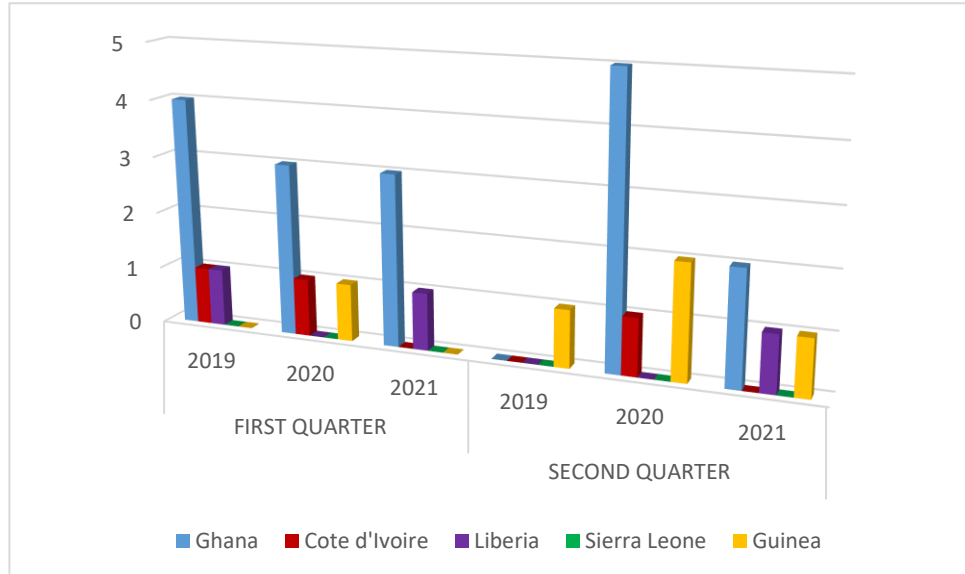


# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – ZONE F

Table 1. Number of Incidents Per Country Per Quarter January to December (2019 – 2021) – Zone F

Country	First Quarter			Second Quarter			Third Quarter			Fourth Quarter		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
Ghana	4	3	3	0	5	2	0	3	0	1	5	1
Cote d'Ivoire	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	0
Liberia	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Guinea	0	1	0	1	2	1	2	0	2	0	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>

Figure 2. Number of Incidents per Country per Quarter January to December (2019 – 2021) – Zone F

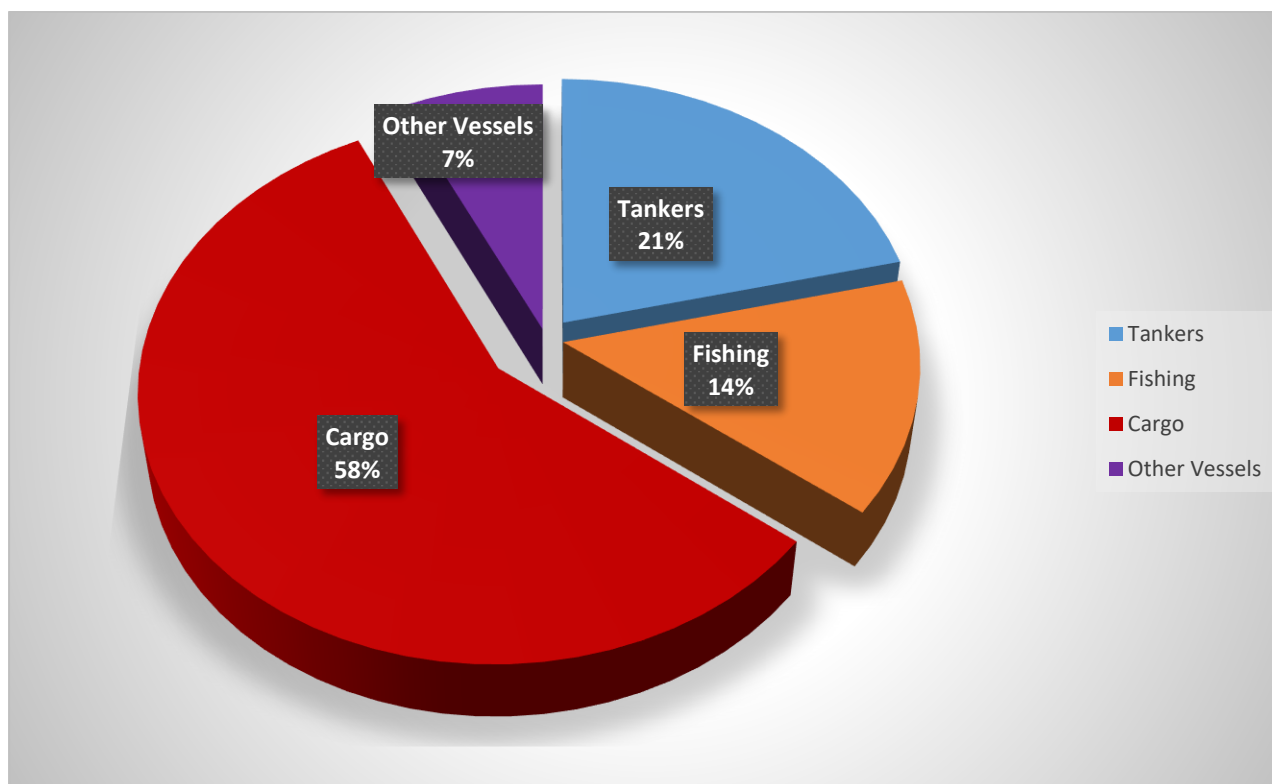


# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – ZONE F

Table 2. Types of Vessels Targeted January to December 2021 - Zone F

Type of Vessel	No. of Incidents	Remarks
Tankers	3	Robbery
Fishing	2	Kidnapping, Fired Upon
Cargo	8	Theft/Robberies
Other Vessels	1	Attempted boarding
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	

Figure 3. Types of Vessels Targetted January to December 2021 - Zone F



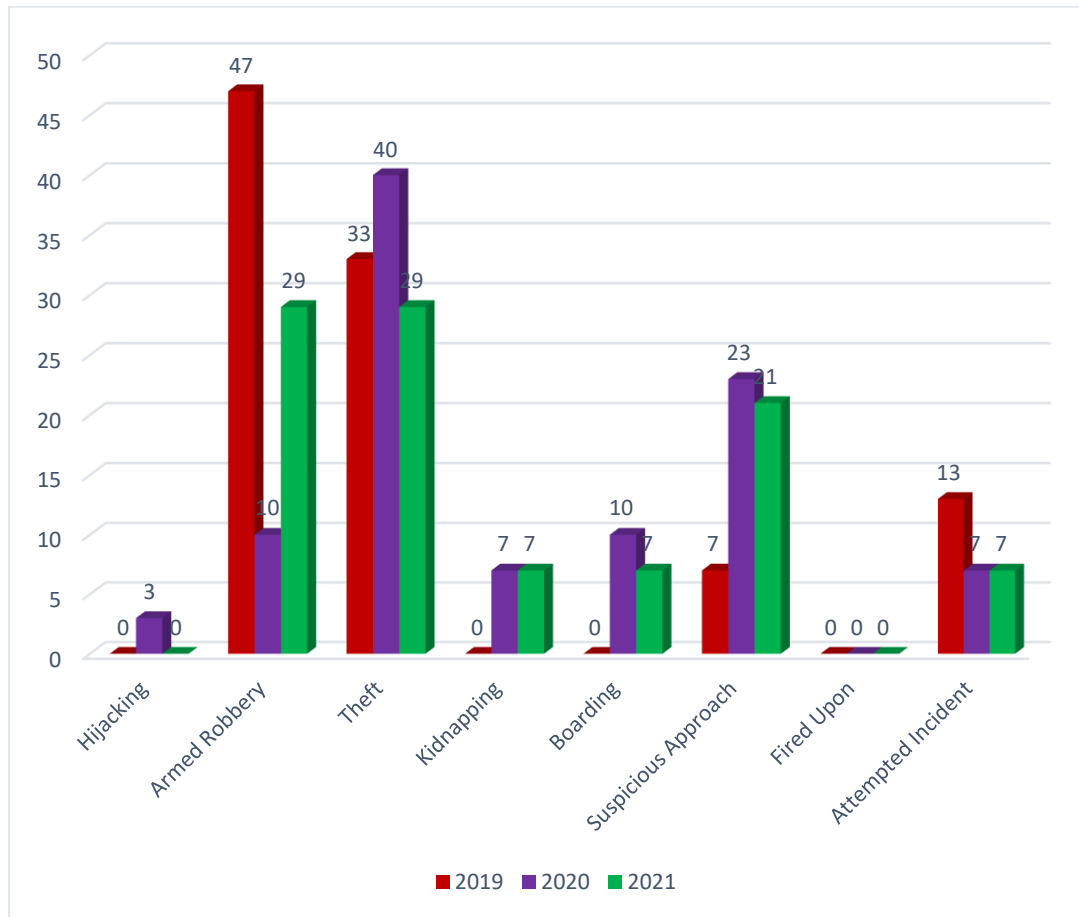
# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – ZONE F

Table 3. Types of Incidents Recorded January to December (2019 – 2021) - Zone F

Type of Incident	2019	2020	2021	Remarks
Hijacking	0	1	0	
Armed Robbery	7	3	4	A slight increase as compared to 2020.
Theft	5	12	4	Significant reduction (about 67%) as compared to 2022.
Kidnapping	0	2	1	Slight reduction.
Boarding	0	3	1	About 66% reduction as compared to the previous year
Suspicious Approach	1	7	3	About 53% reduction as compared to 2020.
Fired Upon	0	0	0	
Attempted Incident	2	2	1	Slight reduction.
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14</b>	

# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – ZONE F

Figure 4. Percentage on Types of Incidents Recorded January to December (2019 – 2021) - Zone F



From Figure 4 which is a representation of the types of incidents recorded in Maritime Zone F from 2019 – 2021, it is clear that more attacks take place within the ports and anchorages. Theft and armed robberies in ports and anchorages accounted for an average of 34% and 29% of all incidents respectively.

Kidnapping for ransom has been fairly consistent accounting for about 7% of all maritime incidents in 2020 and 2021.

Boarding incidents have recorded a 3% reduction as compared to 2020 with no fired upon incident recorded in Zone F since 2019.

Vessels at ports and anchorages are advised to remain vigilant and rotate crew regularly especially at night.

Port authorities and law enforcement agencies are encouraged to increase security patrols within ports and anchorage areas especially at night.

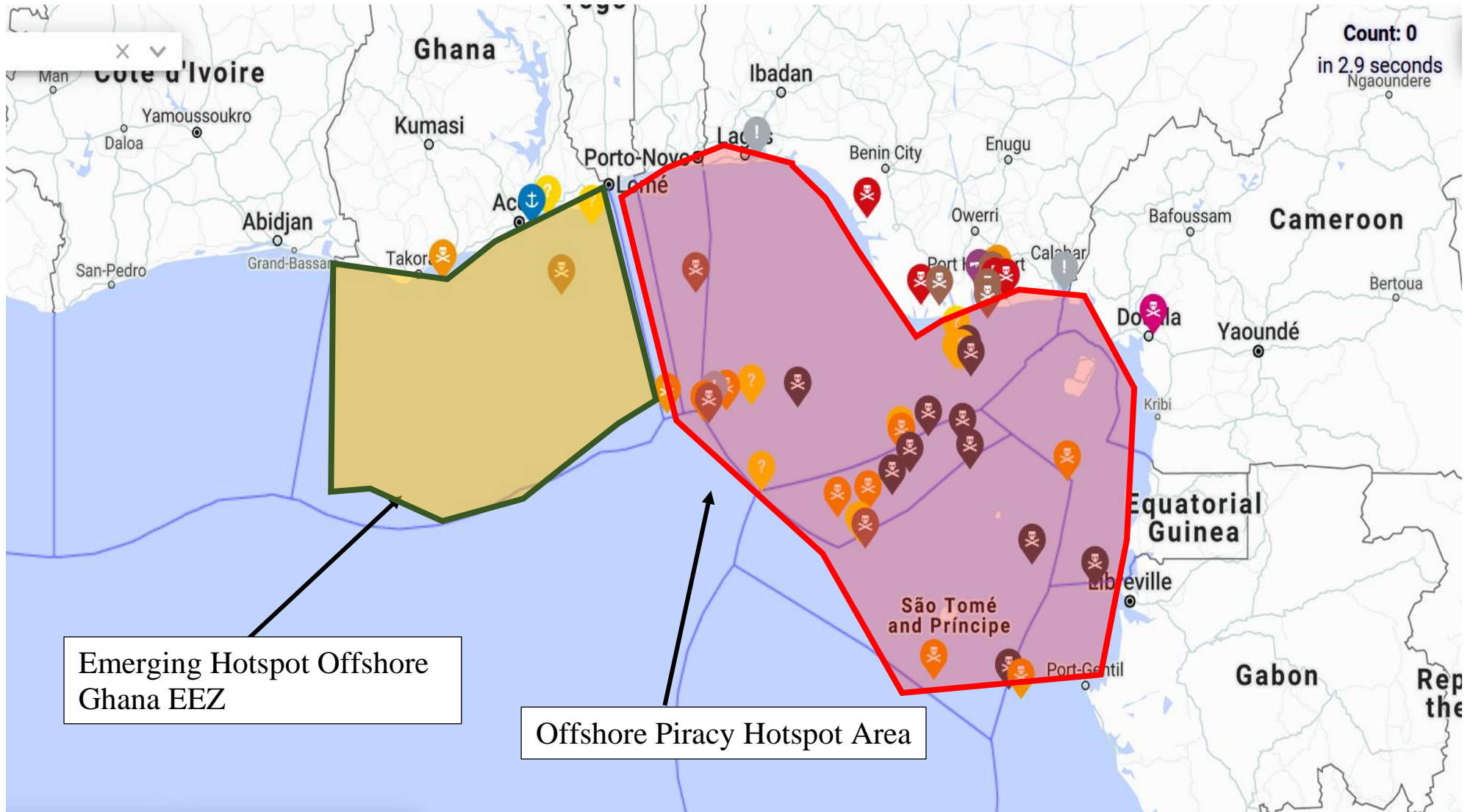
# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – ZONE F

Table 4. Number of crew kidnapped January to December (2018 – 2021) - Zone F

Country	No. of Crew Kidnapped				Remarks
	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Ghana	5	0	6	5	Against fishing vessels in Ghanaian eastern waters. However, only one kidnapping incident was recorded in 2021 as compared to 2 incidents in 2020.
Cote d'Ivoire	0	0	0	0	
Liberia	0	0	0	0	
Sierra leone	0	0	0	0	
Guinea	0	0	0	0	

# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – GoG

Figure 5. Disposition of Offshore Incidents January to December 2021 - GoG



# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – GoG

Table 5. Location of Incidents in EEZs Vrs Ports/Anchorages/TTW – January to December (2018 - 2021) – GoG

Year	Ports/Anchorages/TTW	EEZs	Total
2018	87	46	<b>133</b>
2019	101	26	<b>127</b>
2020	75	64	<b>139</b>
2021	49	25	<b>74</b>

Figure 6. Percentage on Location of Incidents in EEZs Vrs Ports/Anchorages /TTW – January to December (2018 - 2021) – GoG

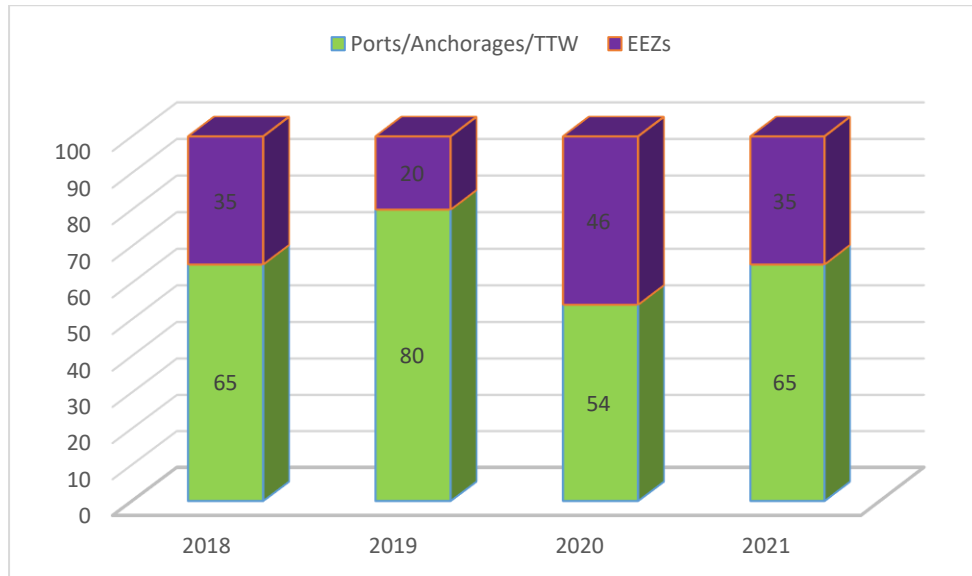


Figure 6 is the percentage representation of Table 5 which shows the locations of incidents in the EEZ, ports and anchorages of GoG states.

From Figure 6, it is clear that there have been a reduction in the number of offshore incidents in the EEZs from 46% in 2020 to 35% in 2021.

Similarly, there have been an increase in the number of incidents in the territorial and internal waters of GoG states with Nigeria recording about 70% of the incidents.

This phenomena can be explained by the increased presence of security vessels offshore supported by foreign vessels and the increased vigilance and adoption of best management practices by vessels.

Coastal law enforcement agencies and port authorities are however encouraged to step up security efforts within the territorial waters, ports, anchorages and internal waters.

Vessels transiting deep offshore the GoG and within ports and anchorages are advised to exercise extreme vigilance and adopt appropriate security measures to prevent pirate attacks.



# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – GoG

Table 6. Number of Incidents Per Country January to December (2019 – 2021) – GoG

COUNTRY	2019	2020	2021	Remarks
Cape Verde	0	0	0	
Senegal	1	0	0	
The Gambia	0	0	0	
Guinea Bissau	0	0	0	
Guinea	6	6	4	Decrease in the number of incidents from 6 in 2020 to 4 in 2021 representing a 33% decline.
Sierra Leone	1	2	0	No incident was recorded in 2021 as compared to 2.
Liberia	2	1	4	A significant increase from 1 in 2020 to 4 in 2021 involving theft and armed robberies at the ports and anchorages.
Cote D'Ivoire	2	3	0	No incident was recorded in 2021 as compared to 3 in 2020.
Ghana	6	19	7	About 63% decline in incidents was recorded in 2021 as compared to 2020 but the threat of piracy remains relatively high in the eastern waters.
Togo	7	4	0	No incident was recorded in 2021 as compared to 4 incidents in 2020. This is due to increase presence at sea and the provision of escorts arriving or departing the Lome Port/anchorage.
Benin	2	10	1	Significant reduction from 10 in 2020 to one offshore incident in 2021. This is due to increase presence at sea and the provision of escorts arriving or departing the Cotonou Port/anchorage.
Nigeria	77	50	29	Nigeria has consistently recorded a decline in the number of incidents in its waters since 2019. About 58% decline in 2021 as compared to 2020.
Cameroun	13	5	1	Significant decline in the number of incidents from 5 in 2020 to one in 2021.
Equatorial Guinea	1	4	3	A slight decline from 4 incidents in 2020 to 3 in 2021.
Sao Tome	2	3	6	100% increase in maritime incidents in 2021 as compared to 2020.
Gabon	3	4	4	Fairly consistent.
Congo	0	4	2	About 50% reduction as compared to 2020.
DRC	6	2	2	Fairly Consistent with the 2020 number of incidents.
Angola	0	10	5	About 50% reduction as compared to 2020.
Beyond EEZ/JDZ	2	5	6	3 incidents were recorded beyond the EEZ and 3 within the JDZ.

# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – GoG

Figure 7. Percentage of Number of Incidents per Country January to December (2019 – 2021) - GoG

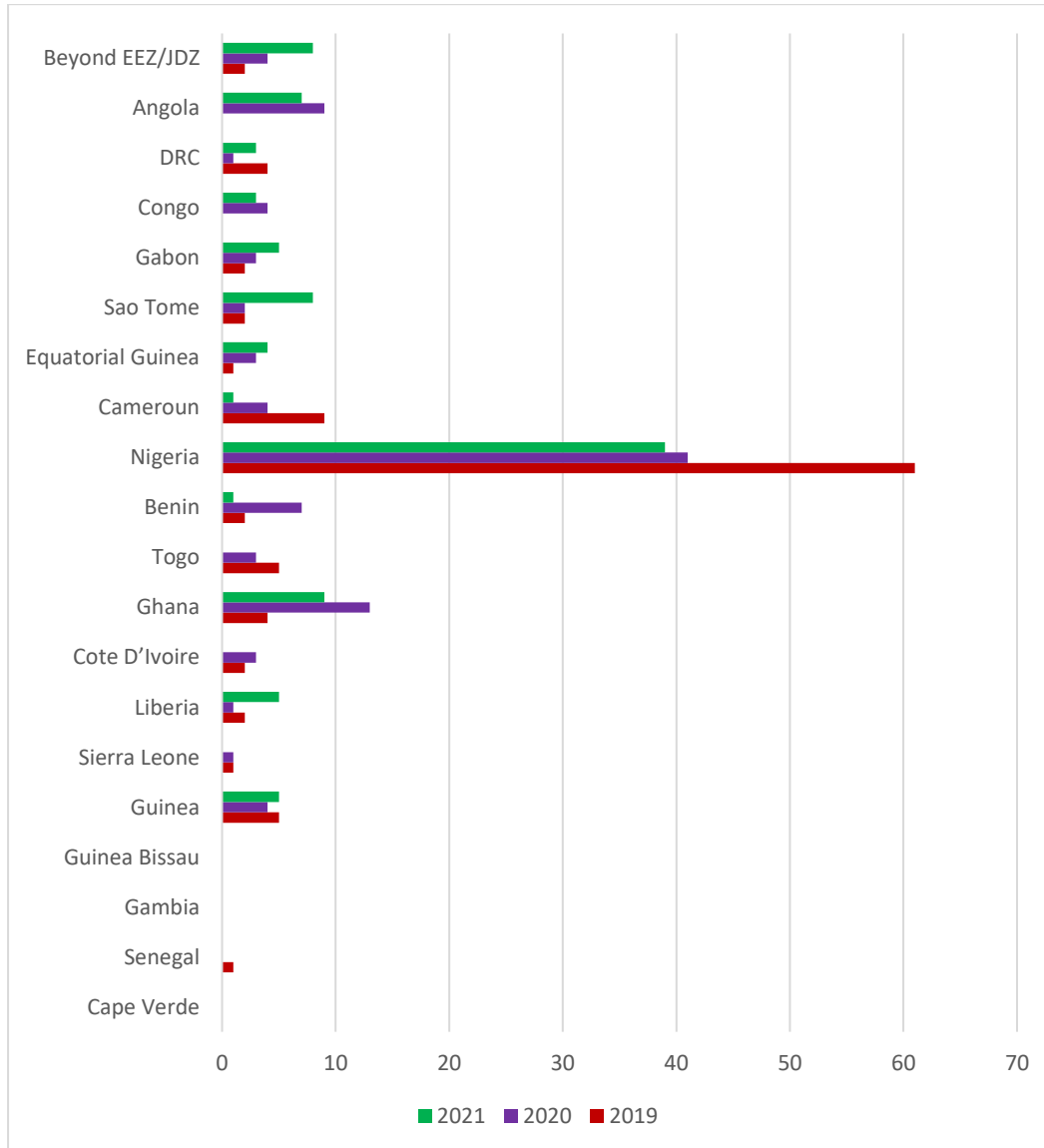


Figure 7 shows the spread of piracy activities from the epicentre in Nigeria to other areas.

Although Nigerian maritime domain continue to record the highest number of incidents in GoG, there has been a consistent decline in percentage terms from 83% of all incidents in the GoG in 2018 to about 39% in 2021.

This consistent decline may be due to a combination of factors including increased collaboration between the Nigerian Navy and private maritime security teams providing escort services for vessels calling on or departing the ports as well as the successful prosecution of the pirates arrested onboard HAI LU FENG II in 2020.

This has resulted in the displacement of pirate action groups further deep offshore and to other areas such as the Joint Development Zone (JDZ) , Sao Tome and Gabon to the South and Ghana to the West of the Niger Delta Region.

The launch of the Deep Blue Project has helped to strengthen the Nigerian Navy ability to dominate and deter pirate activities in the Nigerian EEZ. This has further compelled PAGs to extend their range and depth of operations targeting vessels within less patrolled areas and gaps.

The rest of the GoG states especially from Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana to the West and Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon to the South need to step presence at sea to deter pirate action groups from gaining foothold of their EEZs.

# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – GoG

Table 7. Types of Vessels Targetted January to December (2018 – 2021) – GoG

ZONE	2018	2019	2020	2021
Zone A	9	8	18	9
Zone D	7	17	13	14
Zone E	97	84	69	31
Zone F	15	15	34	14
Zone G	0	1	0	0
Beyond EEZ/ JDZ	5	2	5	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>74</b>

Figure 8. Percentage of Number of Incidents per Zone 2018 - 2021 – GoG

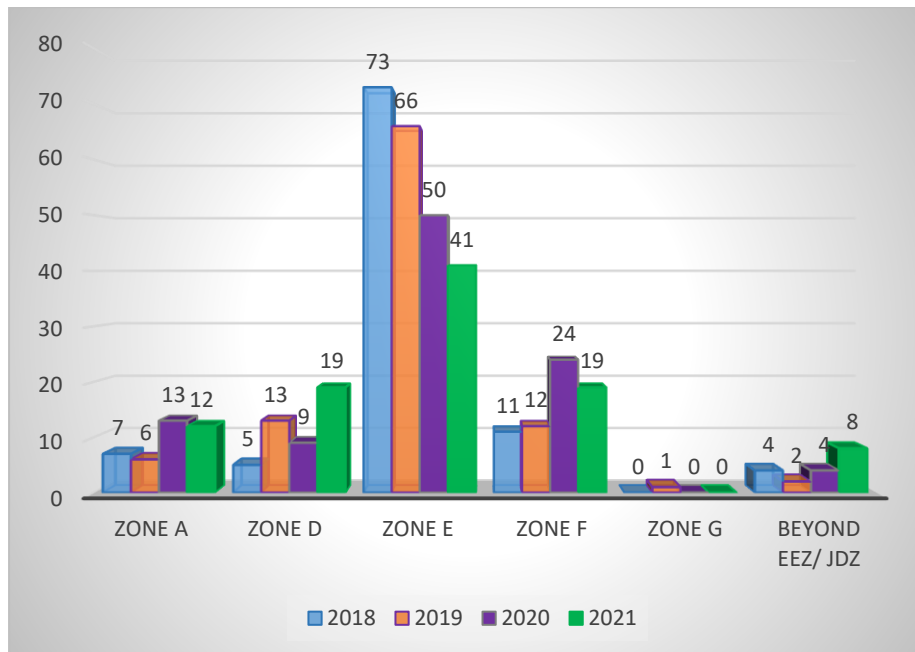


Figure 8 shows the reduction in the number of piracy incidents in maritime Zone E and the subsequent spread to other Zones especially Zones D and F.

From Figure 8, it can be observed that there has been a consistent decline in the percentage of incidents recorded in maritime Zone E from 73% in 2018 to 41% in 2021.

Consequently, maritime Zone D has recorded an increase in maritime incidents from 5% in 2018 to 19% in 2021. Similarly, maritime Zone F has recorded an increase in maritime incidents from 11% in 2018 to 24% in 2020 and a decline to 19% in 2021. However, more than 65% of all maritime incidents recorded in Zone F are within the ports and anchorages as indicated in Figure 4 above.

This consistent decline in maritime incidents in maritime Zone E may be due to a combination of factors including increased patrols of maritime Zone E EEZ, provision of armed guards onboard vessels, escorts of vessels calling on or departing ports and other offensive actions by the coastal states.

With the launch of the Deep Blue Project by Nigeria, the increased collaboration among Zone E states and the increased offensive action, PAGs will continue to seek soft and less patrolled areas to conduct their operations.

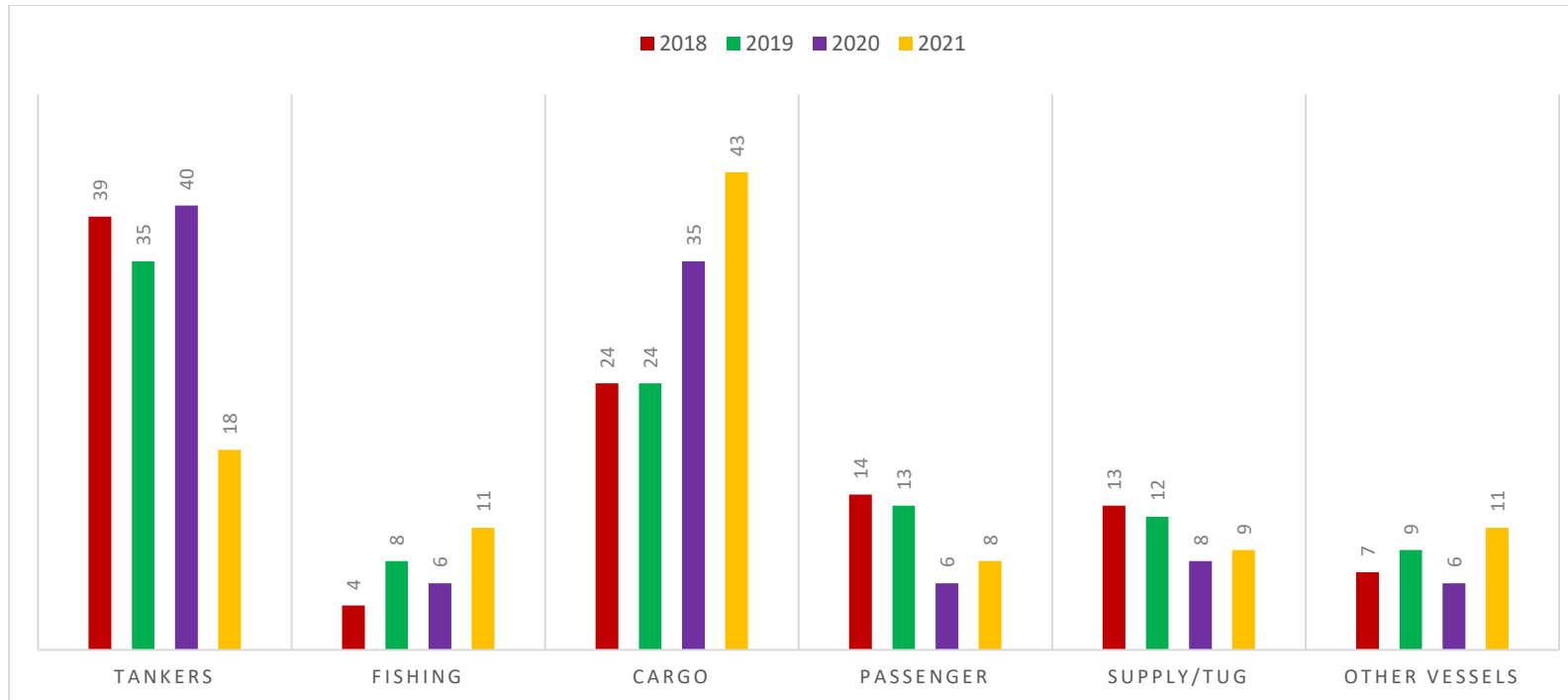
Hence, the PAGs will continue to conduct snap attacks within maritime Zone D and extend westwards into Ghana's eastern waters where possible. The rest of the GoG states especially from Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana to the West and Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon to the South therefore need to step their presence at sea to deter pirate action groups.

# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – GoG

Table 8. Number of Types of Vessels Targetted January to December (2018 – 2021) – GoG

Types of Vessels	2018	2019	2020	2021
Tankers	52	44	55	13
Fishing	5	10	8	8
Cargo	32	30	48	32
Passenger	18	16	9	6
Supply/Tug	17	15	11	7
Other Vessels	9	12	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>74</b>

Figure 9. Percentage of Types of Vessels Targetted January to December (2018 – 2021) – GoG



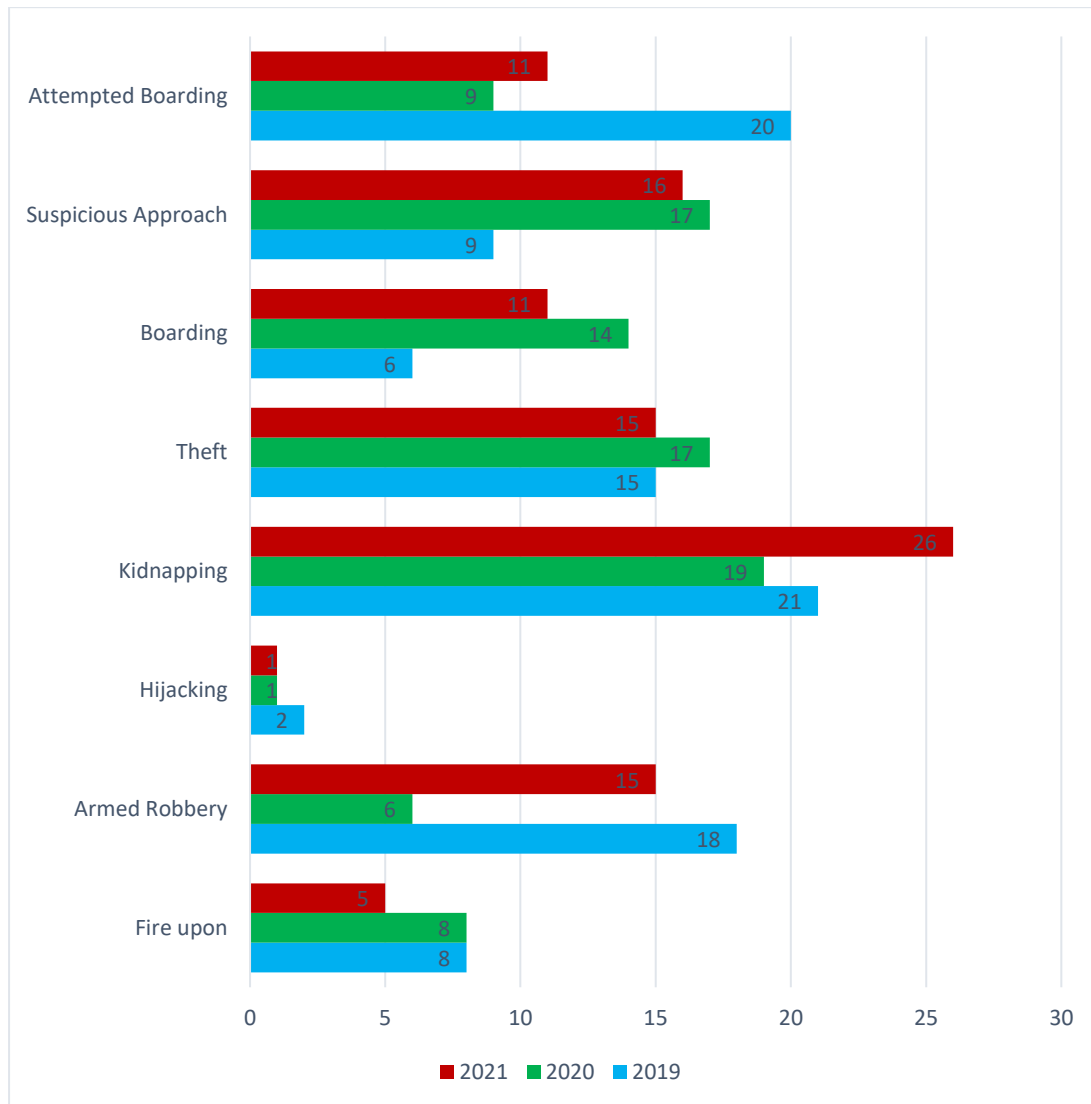
## PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – GoG

Table 9. Types of Incidents Recorded January to December (2019 – 2021) - GoG

NAME	2019	2020	2021	Remarks
Fire upon	11	11	4	Fairly consistent.
Armed Robbery	23	8	11	A significant increase from 8 in 2020 to 11 in 2021 represents a 27% rise.
Hijacking	3	1	1	Fairly consistent. This involves the hijacking of fishing vessel LIAN PENG YU 809 and being used to attack other vessels for about 5 days.
Kidnapping	27	27	20	About 30% decline in terms of the number of incidents in 2021 as compared to 2020. However, out of the total number of all kidnappings, only 7 incidents representing 37% occurred within the EEZs of GoG states while 63% occurred within territorial waters, ports, anchorages and internal waters especially in Nigeria. This can be explained by the increased presence of foreign vessels deep offshore the GoG.
Theft	19	24	11	Significant reduction from 24 in 2020 to 11 in 2021 representing a 55% decline.
Boarding	7	20	8	A significant decrease from 20 in 2020 to 8 in 2021 representing about a 60% decline.
Suspicious Approach	12	24	12	Decrease from 24 in 2020 to 12 in 2021 representing a 50% decline.
Attempted Boarding	25	12	8	Reduction from 12 in 2020 to 8 in 2021 representing a 33% decline.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>74</b>	

# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – OTHER AREAS

Figure 10. Percentage of Types of Incidents Recorded January to December (2019 – 2021) – GoG



From Figure 10, it can be observed that there has been a general decline in terms of numbers in various types of incidents.

Despite the general decline, there is an increase in the percentage of kidnapping incidents from 19% in 2020 to 26% in 2021. Armed robbery incidents also increased from 6% in 2020 to 15% in 2021 with a slight decline in percentage of theft in 2021 as compared to 2020.

However, since most of these incidents occurred within the territorial waters, ports, anchorages and internal waters, coastal states are encouraged to adopt measures to dominate these areas.

Failed or attempted boarding incidents also recorded a slight increase from 9% in 2020 to 11% in 2021. This is a reflection of increased level of vigilance and quick reaction by vessels through evasive manoeuvres and enhanced vessel protective measures as contained in BMP West Africa. Vessels are advised to continue to maintain heightened vigilance and quick reaction to help reduce the number of boarding and possible kidnapping of crew.

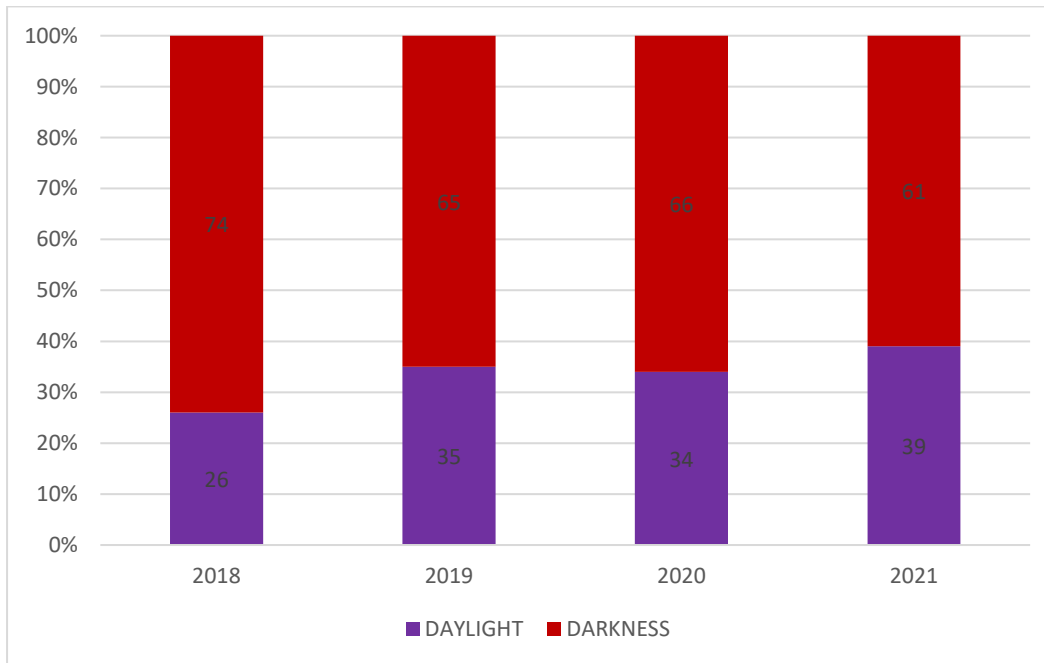
Vessels are further encouraged to report suspicious and unusual sightings to the MMCC Zone F or the nearest coastal authorities for necessary assistance.

# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – OTHER AREAS

Table 10. Number of Attacks Daylight vs Darkness January to December (2018 - 2021) – GoG

TIME	DAYLIGHT	DARKNESS
2018	29	83
2019	39	74
2020	44	84
2021	23	36

Figure 11. Percentage of Attacks Daylight vs Darkness January to December (2018 - 2021) – GoG



From Figure 11, it can be observed that more incidents are occurring during the dark hours than the daylight.

From January to December 2018 – 2021, an average of about 67% of all maritime incidents occur during dark hours.

Vessels are advised to be extra vigilant during the dark hours when transiting the GoG or as much as practicable, plan their voyage to reach their destination before night falls.

Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to increase presence at sea in the night in order to deter and foil pirates operations.

# PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS – OTHER AREAS

Table 11. Number of Attacks During Various Time of the Day January to December 2018 – 2021

TIME	2018	2019	2020	2021
0001 – 0600	59	55	63	29
0601 – 1200	19	23	29	13
1201 – 1800	10	16	15	8
1801 – 2359	24	19	21	9

Figure 12. Percentage of Attacks During Various Times of the Day 2018 - 2021 – GoG

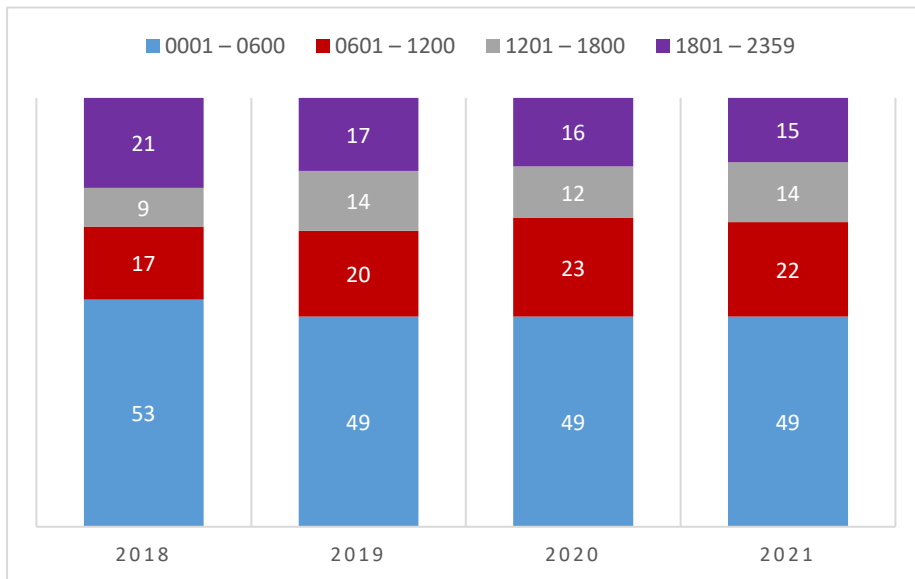


Figure 12 represents the percentage of attacks within various windows of the 24 hour period.

Generally, the highest and the lowest number of attacks in the GoG occur between 0001 – 0600 UTC and 1200 – 1800 UTC respectively.

From January to December 2018 – 2021, an average of 50% and 12% of all incidents in GoG occur between 0001 – 0600 UTC and 1200 – 1800 UTC respectively.

The time window 0001 – 0600 UTC coincides with the period where there is a natural dip in crew vigilance and reaction allowing pirates to attack vessels unaware of their approach.

Captains of vessels are advised to use their most experienced crew during this period and also employ all navigational aids and alarm systems to help see and avoid risk.

Maritime reporting Centres are encouraged to increase monitoring and tracking of vessels to detect unusual pattern of vessel movemnets and report to law enforcement agencies for prompt response.

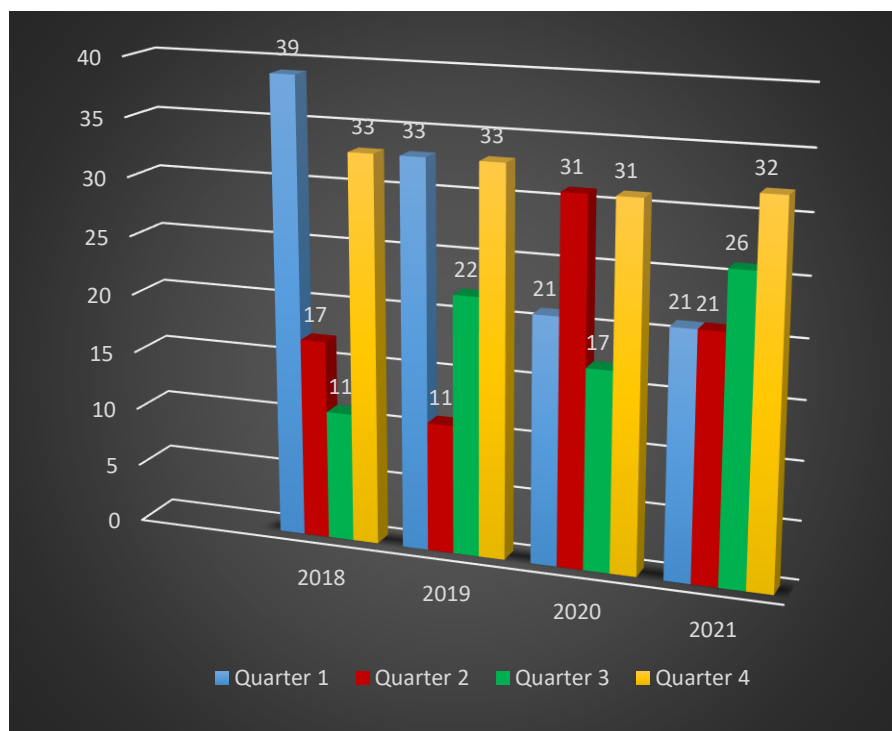


# SUMMARY OF PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS

Table 12. Number of Crew kidnapped Per Quarter January to December (2018 – 2021) – GoG

YEAR	QUARTER 1		QUARTER 2		QUARTER 3		QUARTER 4	
	No. of Incidents	No. of Crew Kidnapped	No. of Incidents	No. of Crew Kidnapped	No. of Incidents	No. of Crew Kidnapped	No. of Incidents	No. of Crew Kidnapped
2018	6	22	9	17	5	10	7	45
2019	9	40	2	12	6	26	9	43
2020	7	24	3	42	1	31	5	53
2021	4	46	4	12	5	23	7	31

Figure 13. Percentage of Crew kidnapped Per Quarter – 2018 to 2021



From Figure 13, it can be observed that more kidnapping incidents are recorded in the first and last quarters of the year as compared to the second and third quarters.

From January to December 2018 – 2021, the first and fourth quarters accounted for an average of about 29% and 32% respectively of all kidnapping incidents as compared to 20% and 19% for the second and third quarters respectively.

Similarly, more crew member were also kidnapped within the first and last quarters of the year than the second and the third quarters. From 2018 to 2021, the first and last quarters accounted for an averaged of 28% and 37% of all crew kidnapped respectively as compared to 17% and 19% for the second and third quarters respectively.

This phenomena is partly due to poor visibility (harmattan) and relatively calm seas during the first and last quarters which are favourable for pirate operations coupled with relative increase in maritime traffic during these periods.

All vessels and mariners are cautioned to be extra vigilant during these periods and adopt appropriate security measures to avoid attack or reduce risk of kidnapping.

Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to increase presence at sea in the night in order to deter and fowl pirates operations.

# SUMMARY OF PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS

Table 13. Nationality of Crew Kidnapped January to December (2019 – 2021) – GoG

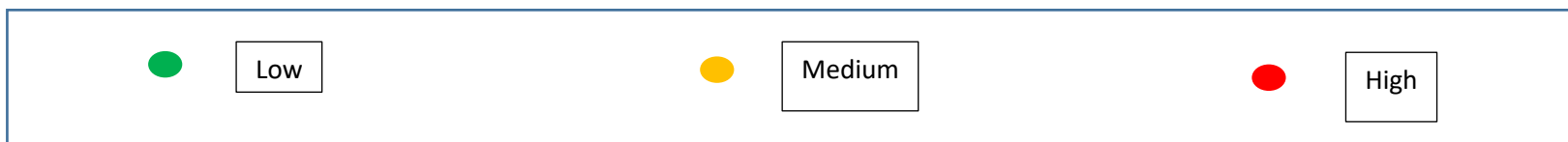
Nationality	No. of crew kidnapped – 2019	No. of crew kidnapped – 2020	No. of crew kidnapped – 2021
Cameroonians	5	4	0
Chinese	8	19	12
Egyptians	0	2	0
Equatorial Guineans	0	1	0
Filipinos	23	1	11
Gabonese	0	0	1
Georgian	1	0	0
Ghanaians	2	7	8
Greece	7	3	0
Indians	26	4	0
Indonesians	0	3	3
Koreans	0	8	5
Lebanese	0	3	0
Moroccans	0	2	0
Nigerians	2	9	1
Polish	0	0	1
Romanians	3	0	5
Russians	4	2	1
Senegalese	0	2	0
Sierra Leoneans	0	1	0
South Africans	3	0	0
Togolese	1	0	0
Turkish	10	0	15
Ukrainians	7	15	5
Unspecified	20	36	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>90</b>

NB: 27 and 32 crew members/passengers were kidnapped in countries' internal waters in 2020 and 2021 respectively.

# SUMMARY OF PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS

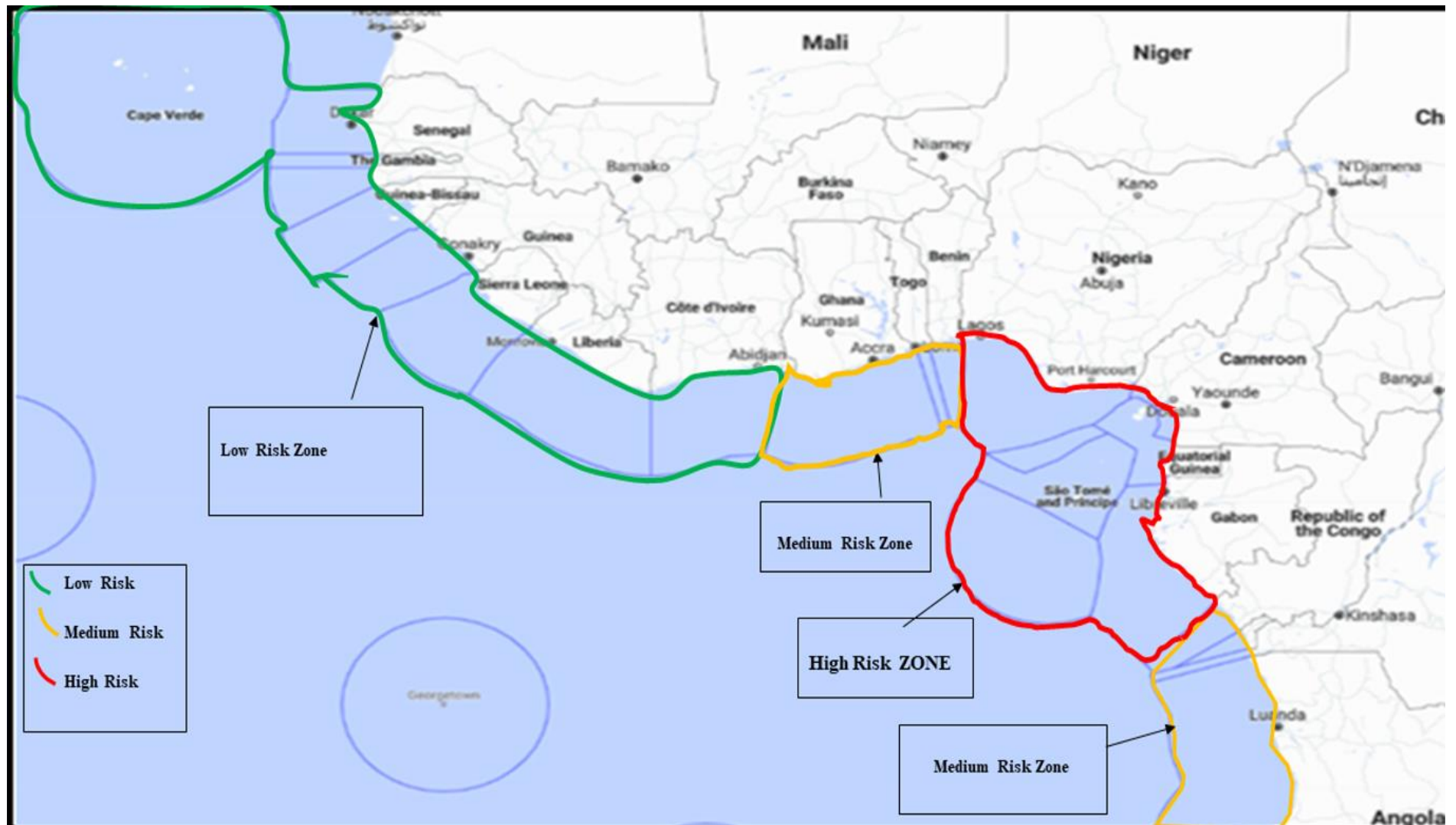
Table 14. Risk and Threat Profile January to December 2021 - Zone F

Port/Anchorage/EEZ	Armed Robbery	Hijacking	Kidnapping	Theft	Boarding	Suspicious Approach
Conakry Port	●	●	●	●	●	●
Freetown Port	●	●	●	●	●	●
Monrovia Port	●	●	●	●	●	●
San Pedro Port	●	●	●	●	●	●
Abidjan Port	●	●	●	●	●	●
Takoradi Port	●	●	●	●	●	●
Tema Port	●	●	●	●	●	●
Guinea EEZ	-	●	●	●	●	●
Sierra Leone EEZ	-	●	●	●	●	●
Liberia EEZ	-	●	●	●	●	●
Cote d'Ivoire EEZ	-	●	●	●	●	●
Ghana EEZ	-	●	●	●	●	●



# SUMMARY OF PIRACY AND RELATED INCIDENTS AGAINST SHIPS

Figure 14. Risk Profile for Offshore Incidents January to December 2021 - GoG

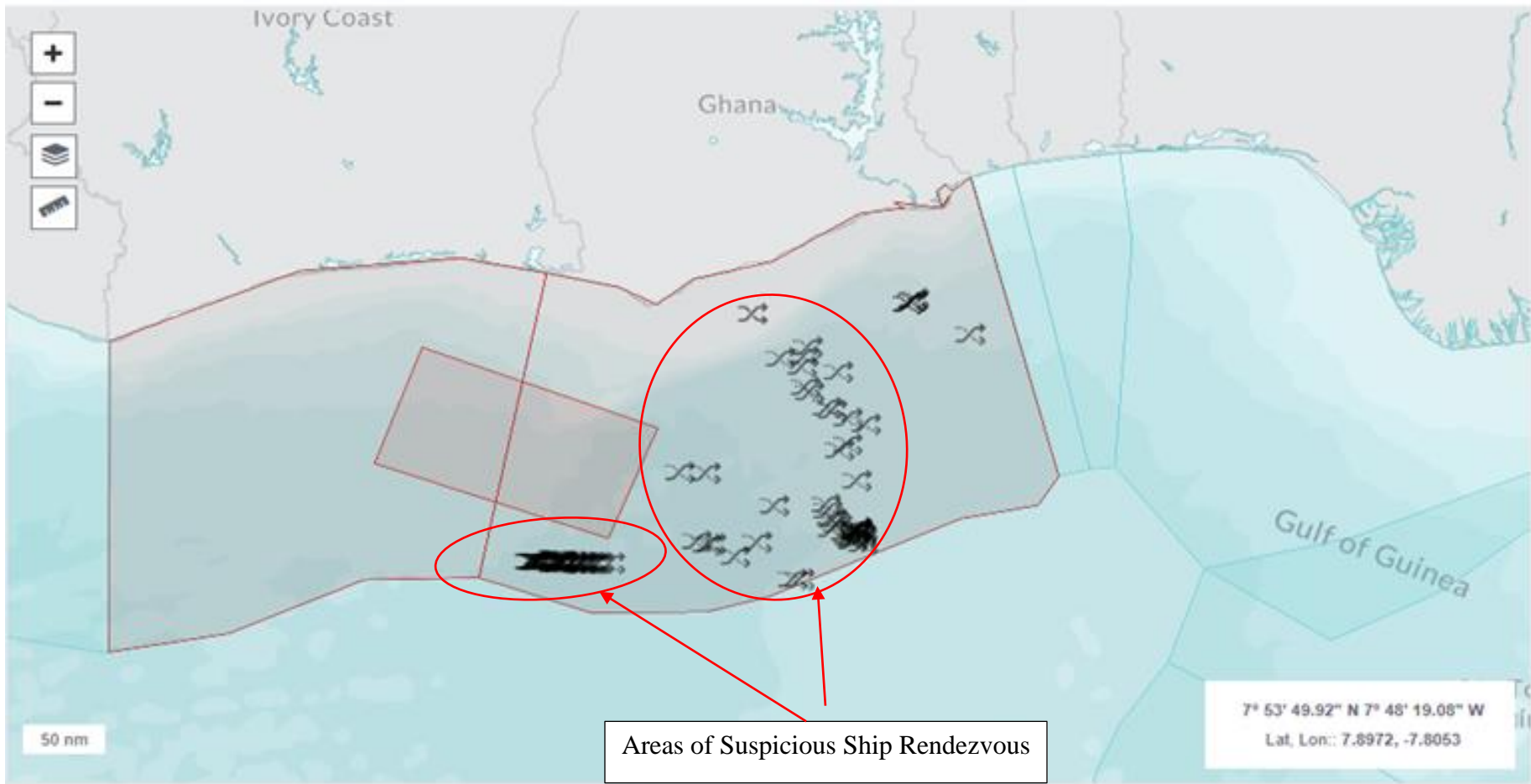


# ILLEGAL UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING

- Illegal Unreported unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to be a matter of concern in maritime Zone F and the West African subregion as a whole. It is estimated that the subregion loses about \$7.15 billion per year due to IUU fishing activities. The main concerns of IUU fishing in Maritime Zone F border on issues of illegal transshipment, illegal dumping of catch, under declaration of catch, falsification of documents, unapproved fishing methods, fishing in prohibited zones as well as the lack of transparency in the fishing sector.
- The increasing rate of IUU fishing within Maritime Zone F Zone has been a growing concern to many maritime stakeholders. Maritime Zone F member states have therefore received various support and in some cases warnings from various stakeholders including the European Union in tackling the IUU fishing menace. For example, the European Union has over the years issued various warnings to some member states of maritime Zone F for not doing enough to tackle IUU fishing. In 2013 and 2017, Ghana and Liberia were shown the EU yellow cards for non-compliance and non-enforcement of anti IUU fishing measures in their waters. In June 2021, the EU again issued a yellow card to Ghana for IUU fishing in its waters. Areas of concern included lack of transparency in the fishing sector, illegal transfer of fish at sea (saako), overfishing, ineffective and inadequate sanctions to vessels engaged in IUU fishing among others.
- Although Ghana and Liberia are the two countries to have received the EU yellow cards, the problem of IUU fishing is fairly consistent across the entire Zone F AoR and mostly found along the common maritime border areas of the member states and deep offshore. Revenues worth billions of dollars are lost due to various forms of IUU fishing in Zone F. For example, it is estimated that Ghana loses about 40 – 50 million dollars annually as a result of illegal transfer of fish at sea ‘saako’.
- The MMCC Zone F has been working in collaboration with member states and the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO) such as the Fisheries Committee for West Central Africa (FCWC) to provide fisheries intelligence to support the work of law enforcement agencies.
- Maritime Zone F member states law enforcement agencies and the fishing industry are encouraged to put in appropriate measures to satisfactorily tackle the menace of IUU fishing within the Zone.

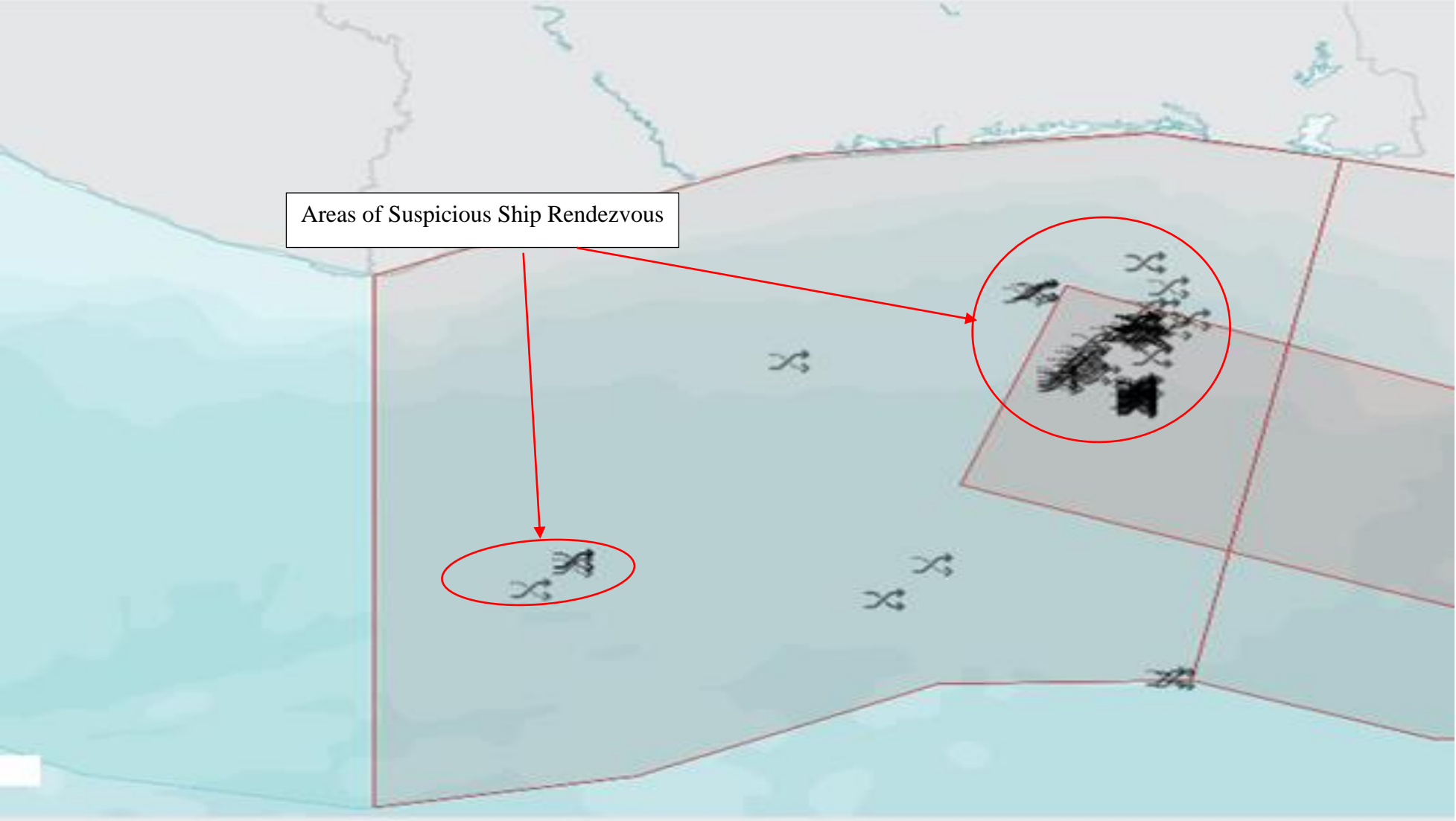
# ILLEGAL ACTIVITY AT SEA – SUSPICIOUS SHIP RENDEZVOUS

Figure 15. Location of Suspicious Ship Rendezvous Jan to Dec 2021 - Ghana EEZ



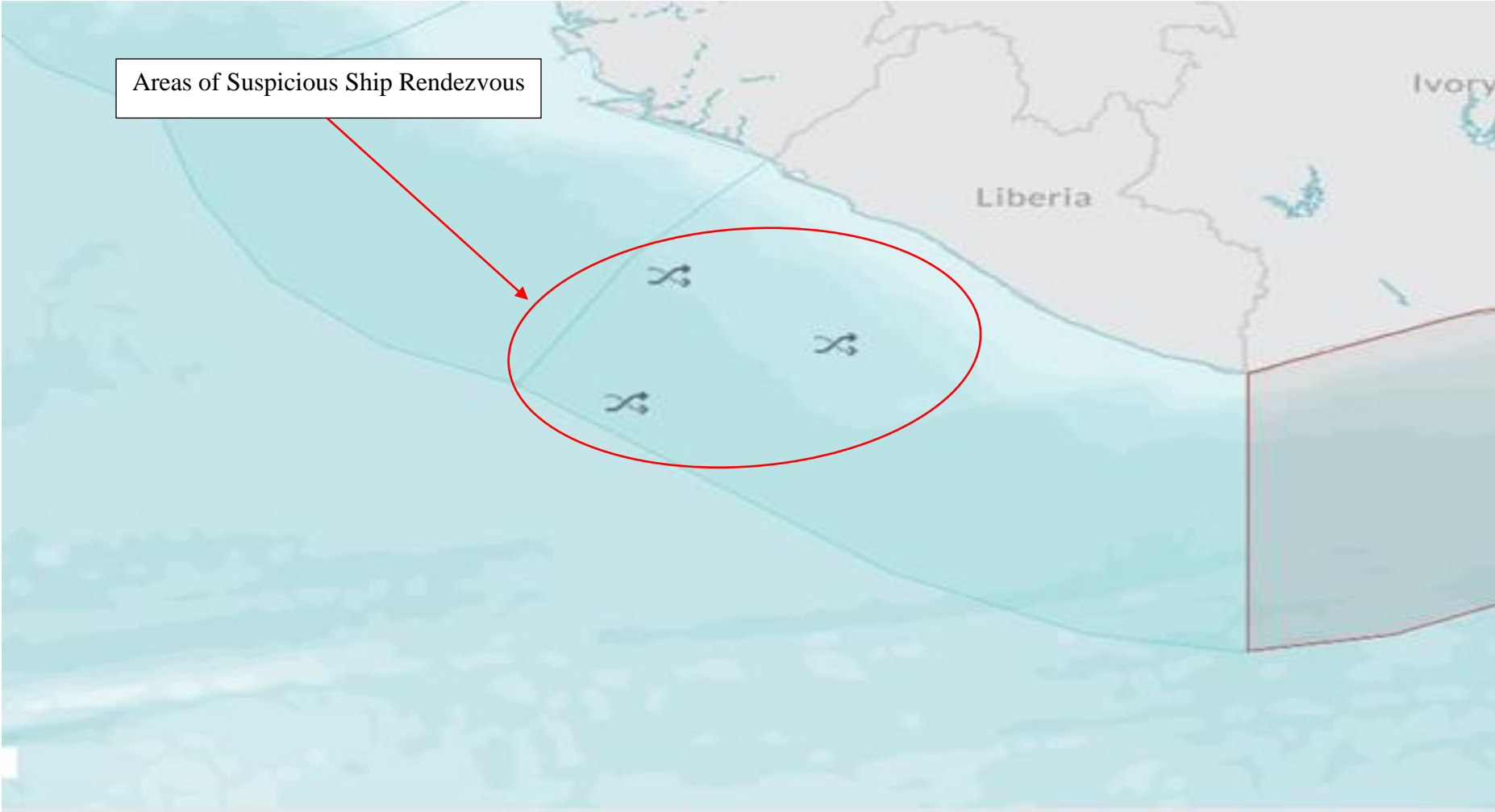
# ILLEGAL ACTIVITY AT SEA – SUSPICIOUS SHIP RENDEZVOUS

Figure 16. Location of Suspicious Ship Rendezvous Jan to Dec 2021 - Cote d'Ivoire EEZ



# ILLEGAL ACTIVITY AT SEA – SUSPICIOUS SHIP RENDEZVOUS

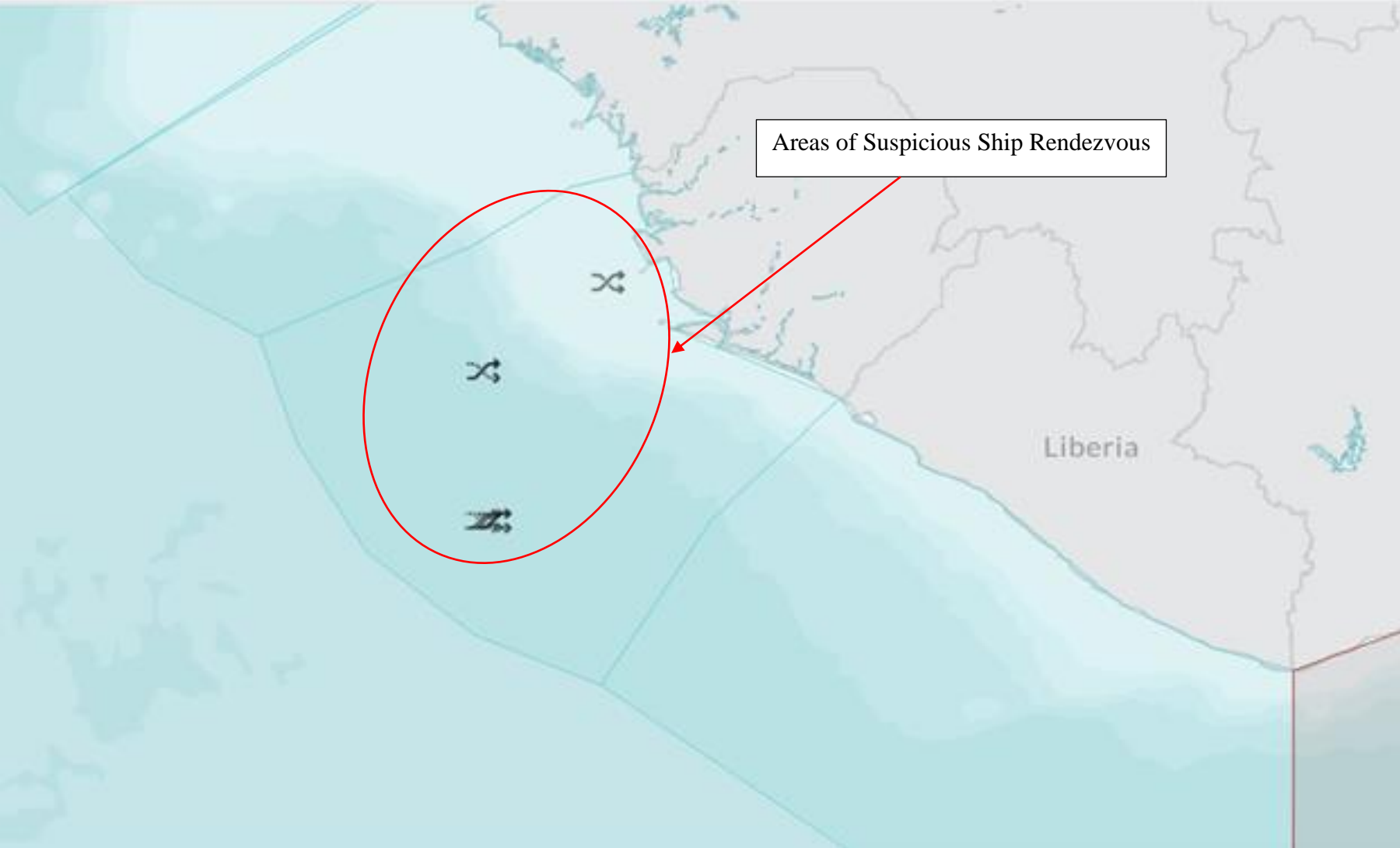
Figure 17. Location of Suspicious Ship Rendezvous Jan to Dec 2020 - Liberia EEZ





# ILLEGAL ACTIVITY AT SEA – SUSPICIOUS SHIP RENDEZVOUS

Figure 18. Location of Suspicious Ship Rendezvous Jan to Dec 2021 - Sierra Leone EEZ



# ILLEGAL ACTIVITY AT SEA – SUSPICIOUS SHIP RENDEZVOUS

Figure 19. Location of Suspicious Ship Rendezvous Jan to Dec 2021 - Guinea EEZ



## **SUSPICIOUS SHIP RENDEZVOUS**

Suspicious ship rendezvous (RV) at sea has become a common phenomenon within maritime Zone F. In 2021, the concentration of these activities are located along the maritime border areas of member states and deep offshore as depicted above. The trend of rendezvous was fairly consistent previous years. Ghana recorded the highest number of rendezvous between vessels. Most of the suspicious RV involved tanker vessels meeting with fishing vessels, cargo and other types of vessels at sea. Fishing vessels, especially industrial fishing vessels were also observed to RV with other fishing vessels, Reefers or refrigerated vessels at sea.

The most likely reason why 2 vessels would RV at sea is to engage in the exchange/transfer of goods and or persons in some cases. Analysis of most suspicious ship RV within Zone F in recent past points to illegal bunkering and transshipment of fish at sea. The possibility of weapon and drug trafficking through such suspicious ship RV remains likely. In the past, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire EEZs were the most favourable locations, but the phenomenon of illegal bunkering and transshipment is spreading across Zone F. Checks with relevant authorities further revealed that most of the few licensed bunkering at sea were not properly supervised to ensure the activities comply with national regulations and international conventions governing these activities. In effect, most of the bunkering and transshipment activities are illegal, with serious environmental, security and economic fallouts on the states.

It is estimated that maritime Zone F loses about \$7 million of tax revenue through illegal bunkering activities at sea annually. The Ivorian and Ghanaian EEZs accounted for over 85% of the suspicious ship RV involving cargo, tanker and fishing vessels. Tanker vessels were the worse offenders accounting for more than 70% of dark rendezvous. Liberian flag tanker vessels accounted for over 75% of the suspicious ship RV. The growing incidents of illegal bunkering in Maritime Zone F has the tendency to attract pirates into Zone F. Typically, vessels engaged in unsupervised bunkering activities at sea are vulnerable and attractive targets for pirate attacks. The way forward is for the states to cooperate to track, arrest and prosecute offenders as exemplified in the arrest of ANUKET AMBER and MSC MARIA by Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire in 2018 along their common maritime border through a joint operation.

# ILLEGAL MIGRATION

## **Stowaway**

The GoG continue to record a number of illegal migration cases involving stowaway incidents in ports and anchorages onboard commercial vessels destined for Europe. These migration cases usually involve young men who capitalize on security gaps within ports and anchorages and onboard vessels to seek greener pastures in other countries. For 2021, maritime Zone F recorded two stowaway incidents as compared to 3 and 10 incidents in 2020 and 2019 respectively. These incidents were recorded in the Ports of Tema and Abidjan. The continued decline in the number of stowaway incidents in maritime Zone F can be explained by the enhanced and effective implementation of the IMO ISPS regulations by port authorities and commercial vessels across Maritime Zone F. However, the occurrence of the two incidents in the last quarter of the year may be due to relaxation of security measures creating some gaps for the perpetrators to exploit. Port Authorities and ship security officers are encouraged to tighten security protocols to prevent perpetrators from taking advantage.

# OBSERVABLE TRENDS

## Maritime Incidents and illegalities

- The GoG recorded a significant reduction in maritime incidents in 2021 as compared to 2020. A total of 74 incidents were recorded in 2021 as compared to 139 in 2020 representing a 47% decline.
- Out of the total number of incidents, 25 incidents (representing 35%) occurred within the EEZ of GoG States as compared to 64 incidents (representing 46%) in 2020. Out of the 25 incidents, 14 successful Boarding incidents were recorded with 7 (50%) ending in the kidnapping of the crew. Three Attempted Boarding and 7 Suspicious Approach incidents were also recorded.
- Notwithstanding the general decline in the number of incidents, the impact of pirate activities in terms of mass kidnapping of crew, destruction to vessels, violent attacks on crew and robbing of crew belongings remained fairly consistent. A total of 91 crew members were kidnapped in 12 incidents within the EEZs and territorial waters (average 8 crew per kidnap incident) as compared to 123 crew kidnapped in 2020. The average duration of captivity for kidnapped crew was 33 days in 2021 as compared to 40 days for 2020.
- All kidnapped crew across the region were held in captivity in Nigeria and released after payment of an undisclosed amount of ransom. Identified hotspots for captivity and release of kidnapped crew, included Port Harcourt, Bayelsa, Brass and Bonny Island.
- Nine fishing vessels suffered attacks during the year with five ending in kidnapping as compared to 8 fishing vessels attacked in 2020 with 4 ending in kidnapping. A total of 30 crew members were kidnapped from the 5 fishing vessels in 2021 as compared to 14 crew members kidnapped in 4 incidents in 2020. This represents more than a 100% increase in the number of crew kidnapped from fishing vessels in 2020.
- Attacks and kidnapping of crew onboard fishing vessels offshore have spread from Ghana to Gabon in 2021. This has significantly hampered fishing activities, especially the Tuna fishing sector thereby affecting the livelihoods of the coastal communities and loss of revenue to the States.
- The first and last quarters of the year recorded the highest number of incidents by recording 30 and 20 incidents each representing 41% and 27% respectively. The second and third quarters accounted for 20% and 12% respectively. This is fairly consistent with previous trends. The high number of incidents in the first and last quarters are likely due to poor visibility (harmattan) and relatively calm seas which are favourable for pirate operations. In addition, there is relatively high maritime traffic in ports, anchorages and across the region leading to the Christmas seasons which usually spill over into the first quarter of the preceding year.
- Pirate action groups continued to mete out violence to vessels and crew and this is evident by the consistent use of weapons during attacks resulting in deaths and injuries to crew. For the year 2021, about 7 crew members, security guards and passengers were killed with more than 10 others sustaining various degrees of injuries. Equally disturbing is the increasing levels of destruction to vessels' properties and equipment during the attacks. Three vessels including MT MOZART and MT CONTSHIP NEW suffered significant damages due to pirate attacks.

- The pirates have become increasingly daring and sophisticated with the ability to conduct sustained attacks deep offshore up to the limits of the EEZ and beyond notwithstanding the increased presence of foreign naval vessels operating deep offshore the GoG. This has significantly heightened the risk and continue to disrupt fishing and shipping activities across the Region.
- The PAGs tend to attack vessels within less patrolled areas or along the common maritime border areas. Three incidents against MT MARIA E, MT CONTSHIP and MT MAERSK CARDIFF were recorded in the Joint Development Zone between Nigeria, Sao Tome and Equatorial Guinea. Additionally, the PAGs demonstrated the extent of their operational reach by kidnapping crew onboard DAVIDE B, attempting to board CP TIANJIN and suspiciously approached SEA FRONTIER outside the EEZs of GoG states.
- PAGs have identified maritime Zone D EEZ except for the Cameroonian EZZ as a less patrolled area. Maritime Zone D recorded 7 incidents each in the first and last quarters of the year 2021. A total of 6 kidnapping incidents were recorded in Maritime Zone D with 41 crew members kidnapped.
- In the first quarter of 2021, PAGs demonstrated their ability to hijack vessels for use as mothership by hijacking LIAN PENG YU 809 on 7 February 2021. The vessel was used as a mothership to attack other vessels within maritime Zone D for 5 days. However, following the pursuit of suspected pirate skiffs by ITS RIZZO, the fouling of pirate attack on MT LUCIA by Russian destroyer VICE ADMIRAL KULAKOV and the crossfire exchange between PAG and the Danish Frigate ESBERN SNARE, the hijacking of vessels to be used as mother ship may be unattractive to PAGs.
- The pirates' modus operandi continues to point to more attacks during dark hours as compared to daylight capitalising on the cover of darkness and the dip in crew vigilance. Specifically, within the 24-hour cycle, the period 0001 to 0600 UTC records the highest number of attacks with an average of 50% of all attacks from January to December 2018 – 2021.
- The general decline in the number of incidents recorded in 2021 can partly be attributed to various measures undertaken by the GoG states and the maritime industry. These include increased use of private maritime security companies to provide escorts and armed guards especially within the Nigerian maritime domain and other high-risk areas, provision of naval guards onboard Ghanaian fishing vessels by the Ghana Navy and others. Additionally, the increasing levels of alertness and reaction by commercial vessels have also contributed to the reduction of successful boardings and kidnapping of crew.
- The increased presence of foreign naval vessels under the EU Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) and other Western countries operating deep offshore beyond the footprints of the GoG coastal states has also contributed significantly to limiting the freedom of action of the pirates deep offshore.
- The year 2021 witnessed the launch of an unprecedented number of maritime initiatives aimed at strengthening and complementing the Yaounde Architecture for Maritime Safety and Security. These initiatives include the EU CMP, the YARIS, ICC/NIMASA SHADE Declaration, the Gulf of Guinea Declaration and the Deep Blue Project by Nigeria.
- Notwithstanding the success chalked by some of these initiatives, most of them have not reached their optimal objective due to gaps in information sharing and coordination, non-

inclusiveness of the beneficiaries or main actors in the project initiatives. Launched in the GoG as a pilot project, the EU naval vessels have operated in the GoG for one year under the EU CMP. There is therefore the urgent need to develop MoUs to ensure total inclusiveness of the GoG states.

## **Regional Responses**

- Implementation of Zonal MoUs on joint maritime operations at sea through the conduct of joint maritime operations by GoG member states to dominate their EEZs and deter PAGs and other criminal elements within the maritime space. In this regard, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire conducted OPERATION ANOUANZE in August 2021 in maritime Zone F, while maritime Zone E member states conducted Operation SEA DOMAIN I in November 2021.
- Togo and Nigeria successfully convicted pirates that were arrested on board MT G-DONA 1 on 12 May 2019 and fishing vessel HAI LU FENG II on 17 May 2020 using their national laws. Other GoG states are at various stages of legal reforms and domestication of international laws and conventions for the successful prosecution of pirates and other criminal elements in the region.
- Improved interagency collaboration at national levels across the Region.
- Improved information sharing and collaboration between the MMCC Zone F and the international piracy reporting Centres (MDAT, IMB, PNSC, COVAM etc).
- Increased interaction between the MMCC Zone F and international naval vessels patrolling at sea.
- Increased provision of security escort vessels and armed guards on board vessels by States' maritime law enforcement agencies on request.
- Increased foreign naval presence in GoG through the Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) initiative.

## **Maritime Governance and Capacity Building**

- The year 2021 saw an improvement in the development of legal frameworks and legislation to ensure comprehensive laws to prosecute piracy and other maritime crimes.
- There was an increased capacity building for staff of maritime prosecution agencies.
- There was continuous capacity building of staff of the MMCCs on the Yaounde Architecture Regional Information System (YARIS).
- Capacity building in Maritime Security Operational Training for staff of the MMCCs was conducted in 2021.
- Multinational maritime exercises were conducted to improve cooperation, collaboration, coordination and capacity building of regional navies (GRAND NEMO, OE 2021).

## OUTLOOK FOR THE YEAR 2022

With the launch of the various initiatives in 2021, it is expected that the initiatives will mature and take shape fully in 2022 to help address implementation gaps and provide an operational capability to the Architecture. In this regard, the maritime security situation for the year 2022 is expected to be as follows:

- GoG states are encouraged not to be complacent with the decline in the number of maritime incidents in 2021. GoG states are therefore expected to invest more in maritime security measures including the acquisition of more platforms and the adoption of legal reforms to domesticate piracy and other maritime security laws to facilitate the successful prosecution of maritime criminals.
- Deep offshore attacks outside the EEZs of coastal states are expected to continue but with a decline in numbers. These attacks are expected to be swift to prevent interdiction by law enforcement agencies.
- The spread of attacks further away from the Nigerian EEZ to less patrolled areas is expected to continue as Nigeria continues to build operational capacity to dominate its maritime domain following the launch of the Deep Blue Project.
- Mass kidnapping for ransom directed against commercial and fishing vessels outside the Nigerian maritime domain is expected to continue.
- Kidnapping onboard fishing vessels is expected to continue considering the over 100% increase in the number of crew kidnapped from these vessels in 2021. GoG states and the fishing industry are therefore encouraged to provide appropriate security measures for fishing vessels operating in their waters. The Ghana Navy since the second half of 2021 has provided security guards onboard Ghanaian registered fishing vessels operating in Ghana.
- Pirates will continue to adopt innovative strategies including the use of high-speed endurance boats with the infusion of technology to track and pinpoint vessels for attack at unexpected locations.
- The violent posture of PAGs is expected to continue in 2022 due to increased offensive action by GoG states and their international partners. Law enforcement agencies on patrols and security guards onboard commercial vessels are encouraged to prepare in all respect to respond to possible PAGs counter attacks.
- Vessels transiting the GoG are advised not to be complacent with the decreased number of piracy incidents in the region in 2021. Vessels and mariners are expected to continue to adopt improved maritime security measures and conduct regular drills to prevent attacks or respond timely in case of a piracy attack.
- Increased conduct of joint maritime operations among GoG member states to further reduce the activities of PAGs. In this regard, the MMCC Zone F requests the support of maritime stakeholders for the full implementation of the Zone F MoU for joint action at sea involving all Zone F member states.
- The positive impacts of the foreign naval vessels operating deep offshore in the GoG is expected to continue. There is however the urgent need for effective information sharing



and coordination of efforts between the GoG coastal states and foreign naval vessels for better Regional outcomes.

## **APPRECIATION**

The MMCC Zone F wish to acknowledge the continuous support and cooperation from all member states' MOCs. Specifically, we appreciate the prompt response and information sharing relating to shipping safety and security as well as the safety of mariners in Zone F and across the region. The continued cooperation has contributed to ensuring vital maritime trade and fishing activities continued amidst the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. Additionally, we wish to sincerely appreciate our International partners and the private maritime industry for their continued collaboration.

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