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Call for action against Gulf of Guinea piracy gains support in Asia

Support for eradicating piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is gaining strength both in Asia and world-wide. Organisations including Japan's NYK Line and the Asian Shipowners' Association are among the latest to join in the call for action.

Signatures for the Gulf of Guinea Declaration on Suppression of Piracy are approaching 450 and close to 60 organisations based in Asia have joined since its launch in May 2021. To BIMCO's President, Ms Sabrina Chao, the call for the safety of seafarers in the Gulf of Guinea is not only necessary but it is also about doing the right thing.

"We are grateful for every declaration signature. Each signature represents much more than support on a piece of paper, it represents one more step in the right direction," Ms Chao says.

"Each time a company, authority and organisation decide to sign the declaration, it takes our industry one step closer to a point where seafarers do not have to fear for their lives when entering the Gulf of Guinea. It is about solidarity and about doing the right thing," says Ms Chao.

Spike in piracy anticipated as dry season begins

Entering the dry season in the area – lasting from October to March – traditionally brings a spike in piracy attacks, and while the aim of pirates in the early 2000s was theft of oil cargoes by hijacking ships, this has changed to kidnapping seafarers for ransom. With the inauguration of the Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure project (Deep Blue) and international warships deploying to Gulf of Guinea on antipiracy missions, Nigeria now faces a defining moment: a golden opportunity to take action and suppress the pirates.

In addition to posing a threat to the safety of seafarers, piracy poses a threat to the global supply chain, according to the President of NYK Line, Mr Hitoshi Nagasawa.

"The Gulf of Guinea declaration is important for all of us, even if your ship is not going to that area. Piracy is "hostis humani generis", a threat to every citizen around the globe. It is not just a threat to the life of seafarers but a threat to the global supply chain which we all depend on in living our everyday lives," says Mr Nagasawa.

"The Gulf of Guinea also occupies an important location for energy security of the world and therefore, piracy is not just a concern for the coastal countries. It is a global issue," says Mr Nagasawa.

Ms Chao's call for solidarity across the industry in prioritizing action on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is echoed at the Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA).

“The Asian Shipowners’ Association supports the Declaration to proclaim the unity and determination of the shipping community to suppress piracy in the Gulf of Guinea,” says Mr Yuichi Sonoda, ASA’s Secretary General.

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About BIMCO

BIMCO is the world's largest international shipping association, with around 1,900 members in more than 130 countries, representing 59% of the world’s tonnage. Our global membership includes shipowners, operators, managers, brokers and agents. BIMCO is a non-profit organisation.