



KEY JUDGEMENT

COTE D'IVOIRE: While there is a significant probability of a resumption of hostilities ahead of scheduled elections before the end of 2011, risks to vessels are unlikely to increase substantially. Security at Abidjan Port is likely to be adequate to resist a direct attack, which is further mitigated by the presence of French troops and UN peacekeepers in the vicinity. The risk of piracy off Abidjan, including robbery, is low.

BENIN: While risks to vessels within the Port of Cotonou are moderate, cargo vessels are at increasing risk of piracy off the Beninese coast and Cotonou anchorage. The risks of piracy extend to at least 220 nm off the coast.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

COTE D'IVOIRE

While there is a significant probability of a resumption of hostilities around elections due before 2012, risks to vessels are unlikely to increase substantially. Security at Abidjan Port is likely to be adequate to resist a direct attack, which is further mitigated by the presence of French troops and UN peacekeepers in the vicinity. The risk of piracy off Abidjan, including robbery, is low.

While violent risks have fallen in Abidjan since April 2011, there is high risk of a resumption of hostilities between rival armed groups ahead of legislative elections, which are planned to be held by December 2011. Although this will raise risks of collateral property damage and criminal raids at the Port of Abidjan, most fighting within the city is likely to take place at least 10 kilometers from the port. EA sources have, however, warned that there is a high probability that the elections will be postponed until early or mid-2012. Such a delay would drag out such violent risks for several more months.

Levels of violence in the commercial capital of Abidjan have not increased since the arrest of former President Gbagbo in April 2011. Gbagbo had refused to leave office following a disputed election in November 2010 and was eventually removed following a military offensive by the northern Forces Nouvelles (FN) rebels, which backed Gbagbo's opponent Alassane Ouattara. The new government of President Ouattara enjoys international support, yet has been weakened by lack of cohesion between the various factions of the new armed forces, and lacks support from key pro-Gbagbo constituencies. Ouattara's refusal to include the pro-Gbagbo FPI party into his new government that was formed on 1 June 2011 is a strong indication that the relative peace in Abidjan will be unsustainable. The four main commanders of the FN rebel group, which constitutes the majority of the new armed forces, have each acquired control of a section of the city. The division of Abidjan is a strong indicator of President Ouattara's lack of control over rival militias, making it very likely that violence between rival FN commanders will resume in the three-month outlook.



Consequently, we expect pro-Gbagbo partisans and rival FN commanders to renew attacks on government forces in Abidjan, particularly in areas such as Adjame or Yopougon. However, collateral risks to the port are unlikely to increase substantially under this scenario. During fighting in Abidjan in March and April 2011, fighting did not approach the port, although it did spread to neighbourhoods near to the port. Such violence is, however, unlikely to increase the risk of a direct attack on the port.

Additionally, many of the trained police and Gendarmerie have not been able to resume their duties, with security provided solely by the notoriously ill-disciplined FN. This will increase the risk of looting and criminal attacks on the port. For example, in June 2011, seven gunmen forced their way into the administrative offices of Abidjan International Airport and stole banknotes. Such incidents are likely to increase in the three-month outlook. New government schemes to reward FN fighters who leave police and Army posts are unlikely to take effect until at least after the elections in late 2011.

However, the presence of UN peacekeepers and French troops is likely to mitigate significantly the risk of a direct attack on Abidjan Airport. Although general insecurity in the city is high, Abidjan seaport and the neighboring airport facilities are well-protected by some of the best new Army units. In addition, the airport receives protection from the United Nations Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), which operates from the airport, and the French Force Licorne, which is based at an airfield adjacent to Abidjan airport and numbers some 700 troops and several attack helicopters. The French military, especially, will secure the port, which is operated by France's Bolloré, as a French strategic interest. Meanwhile, on 13 May 2011, the UN Security Council approved the extension of the deployment of the 8,150 UN peacekeepers until 31 July 2011. The mandate is likely to be extended again until at least the end of 2011 (after elections), after which the mission is likely to start drawing down troops and revise its mandate to that of a peace-building force as the political environment stabilises.

Risks to vessels offshore the Ivorian coast is low. Although piracy is set to increase in the Gulf of Guinea region through 2011, Cote d'Ivoire is out of reach for criminal gangs which are mostly based out of Nigeria. Moreover, by regional standards, the port of Abidjan is one of the safest and hijacking of carriers at sea is unlikely.

BENIN

While risks to vessels within the Port of Cotonou are moderate, cargo vessels, particularly tankers, are at increasing risk of piracy off the Beninese coast and Cotonou anchorage. The risks of piracy extend to at least 220 nm off the coast.

The on-going crackdown by Nigerian security forces against Niger Delta militants and criminal gangs is likely to displace piracy to Benin, thus raising risk of hijacking over the next year. We also expect a shift from robbery by local gangs at Cotonou anchorage, to hijackings and ransom demands for hostages and cargo by Nigerian criminal groups. Nigerian pirate groups use faster and more powerful speed boats than local Beninese gangs. For example, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) stages attacks some 220 nm off the coast, which raises risk to oil tankers off Cotonou. On 24 July 2011, Italian oil tanker 'RBD Anema e Core' was hijacked some 23 nm off the Beninese coast. In August 2011, the International Maritime Bureau said 15 pirate attacks had been reported off Benin between January 2011 and June 2011. This compared to only one such attack in Beninese waters in 2009. EA sources state that the primary goal of the pirate gangs off the coast of



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Benin is to steal oil for sale on the black market. There is only a low risk of ransoming due to the lack of holding locations (as in Somalia). For this reason, the pirate gangs attack small tankers first and foremost, or anything that looks like a tanker. This is why chemical tankers are also attacked. Pirate gangs have also held a couple of ships previously, although they have always released these very quickly afterwards after a relatively small ransom is paid.

Consequently, while risks of piracy off Benin are still lower than off Nigeria, Cameroon or Guinea, risks of damage to vessels during fire-fights with pirates are likely to increase. Additionally, vessels are at increasing risk of armed robbery in Cotonou anchorage. Small boats carrying three to ten armed criminals frequently attempt to board vessels in the anchorage, which raises risks of damage to the vessel from fire-fights with assault rifles and rocket propelled grenades. Chemical and oil tankers are at highest risk, although vessels carrying other commodities such as cocoa and cotton are also likely targets. Three new small naval ships are unlikely to come into service until 2012, while security forces are unlikely to gain the capability to tackle the piracy threat over the next year at least.

Meanwhile, while the March 2011 elections were marred by minor incidents of unrest, there is generally low risk of disruption to the Port of Cotonou or to vessels within the port. Industrial unrest at the port, while frequent, is unlikely to pose significant violent risks to vessels within the port.

LOCAL MARINE REGULATIONS

There exists no specific Best Management Practice (BMP) for the Gulf of Guinea, although the basic practices covered by the BMP, such as vigilance and contact with local authorities should be followed as a precaution.

Masters should familiarise themselves with the BMP's latest version (BMP4):

http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/marlo/Guidance/BMP4_web.pdf

Changes from BMP3 are as follows:

<http://www.skuld.com/upload/INSIGHT/Piracy/Intercargo%20Comparison%20BMP3-BMP4.pdf>

Below is some more advice for masters (a lot of which is covered by the BMP): <http://www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre/advice-to-masters>

Below is an IMO slide pack on some of the issues concerned. The IMO is still working towards building up capacity and encourages information sharing and operational cooperation between the regional countries, but does not have any firm regulations as yet.

http://www.imo.org/OurWork/Security/PiracyArmedRobbery/Presentations_Piracy/IMO%20-%20Chris%20Trelawny.pdf

For general advice on piracy, these are the 2009 guidelines which still apply:

http://www.marad.dot.gov/documents/MSC1_Circ1334.pdf



RISK RELEVANT EVENTS FROM COUNTRY RISK EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT MODEL

COTE D'IVOIRE

13 Sep 11 A group of about 40 former FN fighters threatened violence after they said they were removed from the list of fighters to be integrated in the Army.

08 Sep 11 The FPI party of former President Gbagbo threatened to boycott the December legislative elections over concerns the elections would not be fair.

08 Sep 11 Media said that Prime Minister Soro had ordered that elections be held by 15 December 2011 at the latest.

06 Sep 11 The Defence Minister said arms caches comprising of aerial bombs and 20-30 tonnes of weapons had been discovered in three separate sites.

27 Aug 11 The UN accused the Army of continuing to commit summary executions, particularly in Sassandra, San Pedro and Yopougon-Yaossehi.

22 Aug 11 The Minister of Interior promised to compensate soldiers who leave illegally occupied police stations and transfer its control to police forces.

18 Aug 11 Public Prosecutor Kouadio Koffi formally indicted former President Gbagbo and his wife Simone, over charges of theft and embezzlement.

18 Aug 11 The ministers of defence and the interior said armed robberies in the district of Abidjan had risen to 180 cases over the month of July.

BENIN

20 Aug 11 At 05:38N-002:39E, off Cotonou, 12 attackers carrying guns hijacked Nigerian 'Emocean' chemical tanker; no further details were immediately available.

11 Aug 11 The International Maritime Bureau said 15 pirate attacks had been reported off Benin between January 2011 and June 2011; only five were successful.

02 Aug 2011 Media reports said recent pirate attacks on oil tankers off the Beninese coast were by a Nigeria criminal gang involved in oil bunkering.

31 Jul 11 At Cotonou anchorage, some 10 men carrying guns boarded a chemical tanker at anchor and fired shots but caused no injuries.



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31 Jul 11 Off the Beninese coast, the Beninese Navy rescued a Swedish fuel tanker from pirates; this was the third incident within a month in the Gulf of Guinea.

24 Jul 11 At 05:59.36N-02:24.11E, 23 nm off Cotonou, in the Gulf of Guinea, 3 pirates hijacked Italian oil tanker 'RBD Aenma e Core' along with its 23 crew.

18 Jul 11 Pirates released Greek-owned oil tanker 'Aegean Star' and its 20 crew, hijacked around 12.5 nm off Benin on 16 July; the ship sailed to Ghana.

16 Jul 11 At 06:08.08N-002:30.8E, OPL Cotonou, armed attackers boarded a product tanker, slightly wounded several crew, damaged equipment and stole property.

07 Jul 11 Off Cotonou, 10 armed robbers tried to board a tanker, but fled after the crew fired parachute flares.