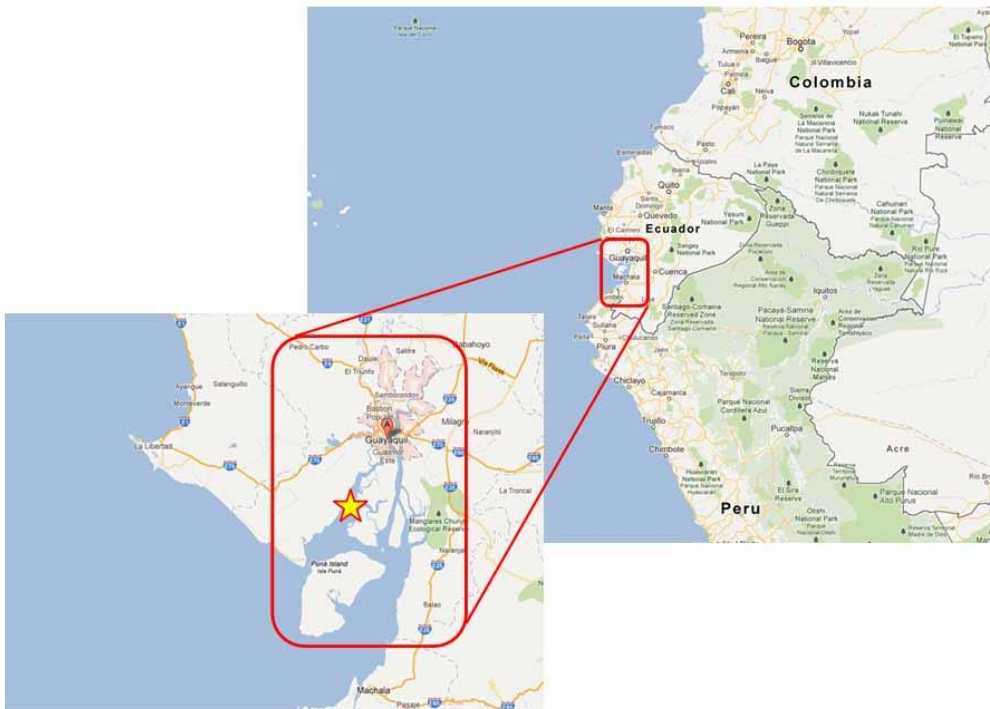




Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012

## Bulletin 842 - 08/12 - Armed Robbery - Ecuador

Recent acts of piracy and armed robberies in the Guayaquil channel, Ecuador, have been brought to the Club's attention. These attacks are increasing in numbers and pose a serious threat to maritime commerce in the area.



The pirates' modus operandi is simple. Usually, an unlit craft approaches the target vessel at high speed, the pirates then board the vessel using the pilot ladder or their own equipment (hooks attached with ropes and monkey ladders). Containers on the vessel are then opened randomly and goods removed. These attacks are very brief lasting between five and ten minutes and generally occur at night.

The long river distance down the Guayaquil channel is low lying and largely unlit making good ground for pirates to launch attacks from. The issue is compounded as local police do not have enough resources to cover this ground

As their boats are small the pirates' loot only a small amount of cargo. However, the value of the cargo stolen does not represent the value of potential claims that a member could face. Claims rise when a receiver becomes reluctant to take possession of affected containers due to broken seals or spoiled and damaged cargo or through other related issues that may or may not entitle the receivers to reject the cargo.

Security problems affecting all shipping lines calling Ecuador have been brought to the attention of local authorities at many levels. Monthly meetings are held between the Ecuadorian Maritime Chamber, shipping lines, and local police representatives in order to share information regarding security issues and to inform all parties involved of the outcomes of the police investigations.

The piracy situation in Ecuador is compounded by a lack of suitable deterrents. Police patrolling the area are few. The use of armed guards on board vessels is complicated by strict regulations in place regarding the use of force in Ecuadorian waters.

The Club advises Members to be prepared and exercise the utmost vigilance in this area particularly during hours of darkness. The Club recommends implementing the Best Management Practices (BMP 4) anti-piracy measures and to continue to report all attacks and suspicious sightings to local authorities as well as to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre at [piracy@icc-ccs.org](mailto:piracy@icc-ccs.org).

**Source of Information:**

Noe S. Hamra  
Thomas Miller (Americas) Inc.  
[noe.hamra@thomasmiller.com](mailto:noe.hamra@thomasmiller.com)