

Loss Prevention Bulletin

Ship Type: All Ships Trade Area: Gabon

Bulletin 114 - 10/99 - Customs Fines - Owendo - Gabon

Further to **LP Bulletin 67 - Customs Fines - Port Gentil - Gabon** we are now aware of another incident in that country where a crew member has been caught selling his television and hi fi equipment to one of the port's (Owendo) stevedores. In order to try and resolve the situation, the Master unfortunately complicated the matter by allegedly offering the custom's official FF 50,000 (approx US\$ 8,000) to settle it on the spot.

A fine was initially levied in respect of this incident for FF 680,000 (approx US\$ 110,000). This has been reduced to FF 500,000 (approx US\$80,000) but is still completely unacceptable. Whilst attempts are being made to have the fine waived or reduced we are still concerned that the practice of rewarding the Customs officers involved with 10% of any fine is leaving Members open to exaggerated fines for any abuse of the country's customs laws whether minor or otherwise. It also leaves the system open to abuse by unscrupulous parties who may stage incidents as in **Bulletin 67**. Members should ensure their crews are fully aware of these practices.

Source of Information : *Felix Lai (Hong Kong)*