

UK P&I CLUB



LP Bulletin

Friday 9th March 2012

Bulletin 815 - 03/12 - Cargo theft at anchor - Suez, Egypt

The Club has recently dealt with a case of attempted cargo theft from containers whilst a Member's vessel was lying in wait in Suez anchorage prior to her North bound canal transit.

Fortunately this case saw the suspects leave empty handed as they were disturbed during the attempted theft and escaped down the anchor cable. At least eight containers were opened and cargo tampered with but nothing was stolen.

Further enquiry by the Club's investigative arm Signum Services has shown that this is not an isolated incident. The circumstances are that while ships are held at anchor at Suez a number of suspects approach the vessel in small boats. The suspects then climb the anchor chain and gain entry to the deck via the hawsepipe. The seals are removed from a number of containers which are opened and their cargo stolen. The intruders systematically open a number of containers until they find suitable cargo to steal closing the container doors before they leave.

In this recent case the small boats that were seen leaving from the bow of the ship displayed red and white lights similar to those used to identify a Pilot boat. It is suspected that the thieves may be disguising their boats with these lights so as not to raise any suspicion. There are a large number of movements by small craft to each of the ships whilst at anchor.

Signum Services Investigator Michael Carroll comments further;

"I am convinced that these are random opportunist thieves taking advantage of the situation in Egypt and lack of marine police activity in the anchorage area. In my opinion there is a danger of these type of incidents increasing.

Also of concern is that if suspects are able to gain access to the ships they could just as easy put illegal or dangerous articles onto the vessels. With the current climate

there is also possibility of stowaways using this method to get on board to try and escape the uncertainty in the Country.

I recommend an increased state of vigilance at this location and extra patrols of the deck and use of watchmen”.

The Club recommends that any anti-piracy measures that have been in place during the vessels transit into high risk areas south of the Gulf of Suez be maintained throughout the vessels stay in Egyptian waters until final departure from Port Said into the Mediterranean sea.

Particular attention should be paid to maintaining a proper security watch whilst at anchor, tending of gangways and to the forecastle arrangements particularly the hawsepipes.

Source of Information:

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