



Ship Type: All Trade Area: Morocco

Bulletin 241 - 04/02 - Stowaways - Ports of Safi and Casablanca, Morocco

The following report was issued by Thomas Miller (Hellas) Ltd in a recent edition of their Bulletin H1-Lights:

We have received reports of large numbers of individuals attempting to board ships at the ports of Safi and Casablanca with a view to becoming stowaways. While there may appear to be nothing unusual in the fact that people are attempting to board ships at these ports, it is the manner in which the attempts are being made which is rather disturbing.

At the port of Safi, which is an open port and security virtually non-existent, gangs of youths throw bottles, stones and bricks at the crew, while one or more of the gang try to board the ship. While crew try to repel boarders from one part of the ship, youths try to board at a different point.

Immigration and Police appear to be totally ineffective, and any requests for assistance from these authorities are ignored. If a stowaway is found on board and put off the ship, he is at liberty to try again simply because Immigration / Police take no action against the offenders.

At the port of Casablanca, attempts were made to board a ship, again using simultaneous attack tactics. Here the people attempting to stow away concealed themselves in a building about 50 metres from the ship and used dust clouds, which apparently reduced visibility locally to 20 metres, to hide their approach.

Again, representations by the master and the ship's managers to the appointed local agent for better protection with security guards and/or the Police passed without success. Numerous stowaways who were discovered were ejected from the ship, but were again at liberty to make further attempts to board.

This behaviour appears to be endemic at several ports throughout Morocco at the moment, with young Moroccans apparently prepared to go to any lengths to stow away in the hope of a passage to Europe where no doubt, their aim is to seek political asylum at their first port of arrival.

Source of Information: Thomas Miller (Hellas) Ltd.
Email: hellas1.ukclub@thomasmiller.com