

Mexico says it is cracking down on piracy in GoM



30th June 2020

Mexico's Navy is cracking down on piracy in the Gulf of Mexico, the force said last week.

Ships and oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico have been subjected to piracy attacks in recent months, and a US State Department travel advisory was issued on June 17th about "armed criminal groups" in the GoM.



The Navy said that it had assigned 15 ships, 24 smaller patrol boats and five aircraft to police the southern Gulf, where most of the country's offshore oil wells are located.

Thieves travelling in boats have been known to rob vessels and oil platforms of equipment and workers' possessions.

The Mexican Navy said that it had seized four vessels and detained 13 people during the operation. It added that it had escorted 34 boats to shore after detecting "administrative violations."

American Club recently issued a statement to members about piracy and armed robbery in the GoM.

It noted that armed criminal groups had been reported to be targeting and robbing commercial vessels, oil platforms, and offshore supply vessels in the Bay of Campeche area.

The US government has said that it was aware of at least 20 fishing vessels and 35 oil platforms and offshore supply vessels that had been targeted by pirates and armed robbers since January 2018 in the Bay of Campeche area. It said that significant underreporting of attacks in the area was suspected. The attacks have involved the discharge of firearms, crew injuries, hostage taking, and theft. At least five of these attacks occurred in April 2020 (details at the Office of Naval Intelligence's April 30th Worldwide Threat to Shipping report at: <https://go.usa.gov/xv7tF>).

A current summary of recent attacks and threats in this region is available at the most recent Office of Naval Intelligence weekly WTS report at:

<https://msi.nga.mil/Piracy>

The pirates/robbers targeting offshore infrastructure and vessels in this area typically operate in small groups of between five and fifteen individuals aboard several boats. They usually employ small fiberglass hulled craft, similar in appearance to local artisanal fishing boats, equipped with multiple high-powered outboard motors that enable fast travel to the oil fields located between 5nm and 95nm offshore. They typically carry out their raids at night and use platform lights to navigate toward their target. Weapons wielded included assault rifles, shotguns, pistols, machetes, knives and tools. They were known to use violence to ensure compliance and prevent resistance.

<https://www.american-club.com/page/piracy>

[https://www.american-](https://www.american-club.com/files/files/MA_062620_Piracy_and_Armed_Robbery_in_the_Gulf_of_Mexico.pdf)

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