



Pirate attacks growing around South America and Caribbean

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Pirate attacks around South American and Caribbean waters are growing and violence is increasingly being used during robberies on vessels at anchor, according to a report from the Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP) group.

OBP recorded 71 incidents in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2017, up 163% year on year.

OBP said the majority of the attacks occurred in territorial waters, with around 59% of incidents involving robbery on yachts. Anchorages in Venezuela, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Colombia and St. Lucia were the “hot spots” during 2017. Lead author Maisie Pigeon said that “we have observed a significant increase in violent incidents and anchorage crime, particularly in the anchorages of Venezuela and the recent violent incidents off Suriname in the first part of this year”.

In late April a pirate attack off the coast of Suriname left at least a dozen fishermen from neighbouring Guyana missing and feared dead with three separate bodies found. In a separate incident in May a fishing boat captain was shot dead after his vessel was attacked off Suriname; the rest of the crew survived.

OBP said ship stores and crew belongings reported stolen were estimated to have totalled nearly \$1m in 2017.