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MARITIME LAWYERS

NEWSLETTER VENEZUELA

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TANKER ASSAULT IN VENEZUELA CAUSES MASTER'S DEATH

Venezuelan media reported that on the night of last Monday, February 24, 2020, six armed robbers, wearing ski masks, boarded a tanker (San Ramon) which was located in the anchorage area of Pozuelos Bay (Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela). It was said that the crew, made up of ten members, apparently resisted the assault and as a consequence, the criminals killed the vessel's master, wounded an officer from the Coast Guard who was on board at the time and also stole items in the ship. It was reported that it seemed that this vessel had been in Venezuela for several weeks, having been arrested by the authorities for the alleged crime of bunker smuggling.

The place where the incident occurred is an area where vessels bound to Guanta Port or Guaraguao oil terminal usually anchor, being just several kilometers away from the main Venezuelan oil terminal, Jose oil terminal.

As far as it is known, it is the first time that an incident of this type where a tanker's captain is killed by burglars, happens in Venezuela. An official statement from the authorities regarding the event, is yet to be announced.

As it is known, Venezuela has been suffering for some time, a severe economic crisis with a significant hyperinflation, which has strongly impacted the population, and has affected criminal acts.

On the eastern side of the country, in the maritime sector located in front of Anzoategui state, right where this incident took place, and also is located Jose oil terminal, there have been criminal offenses that have involved smaller vessels, such as fishing boats. There have also been criminal acts involving large ocean-going vessels, although quite occasionally. In any event, it is always advisable that vessels bound to Venezuelan ports in this area take appropriate safety precautions.



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