



NSC Weekly Piracy Update

Overview

During the reporting period of 12 September to 18 September 2012 there have been no piracy related incidents in the High Risk Area (HRA). However, there have been continued reports of suspicious activity in the Southern Red Sea (SRS), Bab-al-Mandeb (BAM) and the Gulf of Aden (GOA) during the past few weeks.

The Southwest Monsoon season is in transition during the coming weeks. Improving weather conditions will likely allow pirates to operate further out from shore. Note that pirate activity can still take place during the monsoon season. During this time, pirates are likely to operate closer to shore to avoid severe conditions further out to sea. Pirate Attack Groups (PAGs) will likely continue to focus their efforts in the Northern Arabian Sea (NAS), Gulf of Oman (GOO) as well as in the GOA, the SRS, the BAM and in coastal waters.

Specific areas of suspected and known PAG locations can be found on our PAG map. PAG map is also available on the NSC website:

<http://www.shipping.nato.int/>

Southern Red Sea (SRS)/Bab Al Mandeb (BAM)/Gulf of Aden (GOA)/Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC)

During the past month there have been continued reports concerning suspicious activity in the SRS, BAM and GOA. Due to weather conditions in the area, PAGs may move to operate in these less-exposed or coastal areas.

Fishing activity is expected to continue in this area. Fishermen may carry small arms. Masters are reminded to remain vigilant in order to distinguish between fishing vessels and potential pirates.

Arabian Sea (AS)/Greater Somali Basin (SB)/Gulf of Oman (GOO)/Mozambique Channel (MC)

There have been no significant changes over the past week.

Counter Piracy Guidance Update

Masters are advised that the threat of piracy against merchant shipping is always present throughout the entire HRA and vessels are advised to ensure all necessary Self Protection Measures are implemented as recommended in BMP4. As per Section 5 of BMP4, early registration with MSCHOA before entering the HRA and regular reporting to UKMTO are highly recommended. Prudent and timely implementation of all recommended actions and ship hardening measures in BMP4 can make the critical difference of being approached, attacked, or pirated. NSC would like to remind masters that BMP4 highly recommends maintaining best possible vessel speed when transiting the HRA to deter pirate boardings.

Successful disruptions by naval forces over the past few months, in conjunction with masters' adherence and implementation of BMP4, have significantly reduced the pirates' ability to capture vessels. Somali pirates have shown the ability to act far off the coast of Somalia and in darkness, though they are still impeded by tail end of the Southwest Monsoon season. Somali pirates are in search of vessels of opportunity, such as those who are not employing BMP4 recommended Ship Protection Measures.

Information and photographs regarding known pirate motherships are available at <http://www.shipping.nato.int/pages/motherships2.aspx>. If you have any information regarding pirate motherships please e-mail info@shipping.nato.int.

There have been a number of incidents recently reported to Counter Piracy organisations in the HRA involving small craft approaches to merchant vessels. Although these incidents may appear to be piracy related, the majority actually are not and have been assessed as non-piracy related activity common to the pattern of life in the area. This can include fishing, small vessel trade, smuggling and other local traffic. Please note that, if we assess an approach or incident to be piracy, we will issue relevant warnings and alerts, keeping the merchant shipping community fully informed at all times.

It has been observed that some Masters are choosing to phone their Company

Security Officer (CSO) first in the event of a piracy incident. However, one of the fundamental requirements of BMP4 is that UKMTO is the primary point of contact for merchant vessels during piracy incidents in the HRA. This aims to avoid unnecessary delay and prevent inaccurate or incomplete information from reaching military commanders. CSOs should ensure their ships' security plans reinforce the BMP4 recommendation that UKMTO be immediately telephoned at +971 50 55 23215 in the event of any piracy activity. UKMTO will then make it a priority to contact the CSO with any information received whilst ensuring the relevant information reaches the military commanders with the minimum of delay.

Masters are also reminded that a large number of fishing vessels operate in the SRS, the BAM and up to 50 nm off the west coast of India. Fishing vessels may approach a merchant ship in order to maximise fishing opportunities or to safeguard fishing nets. Fishing off India is generally carried out using long lines by mechanized or single-hull boats which typically have outboard motors and carry 4-6 crew members. Masters are requested to ensure they distinguish between fishing vessels and potential pirates; fishermen may carry small arms.

Somali pirates operating in this area are looking to pirate merchant ships, yet past activity has shown that pirates will also attack both large and small yachts passing their way. Larger yachts with more people onboard, or a group of yachts, could be seen as a valuable and easy target for pirates. For more information, please read the "Let Your Yacht Take the Ferry" document located in the "Important Messages" section of the NSC website main page.

As noted above, if an incident occurs, Masters are to report immediately to UKMTO via telephone at +971 50 55 23215 and provide as much accurate information as possible. This will ensure the information is quickly provided to other ships in the area for their awareness and vigilance. If Masters are safely able to take pictures and/or video of the suspicious activity, please provide these via email to UKMTO at ukmto@eim.ae, to the NSC (NATO Shipping Centre) at info@shipping.nato.int and to the Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) at postmaster@mschoa.org. This information will be used by Counter Piracy forces to combat piracy activity.

Weekly Pirated Vessels Update

NUMBER OF SHIPS: 7
(This includes vessels known to be taken for ransom)

**COMBINED TOTAL NUMBER OF
 HOSTAGES: 177**

Name	Flag	Date Pirated	Hostages
1) ICEBERG 1	Panama	29-Mar-10	22
2) ALBEDO	Malaysia	25-Nov-10	15
3) ORNA	Panama	20-Dec-10	19
4) FREE GODDESS	Liberia	07-Feb-12	21
5) ROYAL GRACE	Panama	02-Mar-12	22
6) NAHAM 3	Oman	26-Mar-12	29
7) SMYRNI	Liberia	10-May-12	26
TOTAL:			154
HOSTAGES WITHOUT VESSEL		Date Pirated	Hostages
Ex FV PRANTALAY		18-Apr-10	4
Ex MV LEOPARD		12-Jan-11	6
Ex MV ASPHALT		16-Apr-11	7
Ex MV Gemini		30-Apr-11	4
Ex FV Aride		29-Oct-11	2
TOTAL:			23