NSC Weekly Unclassified Update

Overview

During the reporting period of 21 to 27 June 2012 one merchant vessel was attacked by pirates and two dhows were released from pirate control. Details of all alerts can be found on NSC Alert details webpage: http://www.shipping.nato.int/Pages/AllAlerts.aspx

Due to the South-West monsoon between June and September, sea conditions in the HRA are expected to be generally unfavourable for small boats. Activity over the past two weeks shows that pirate activity can still take place during the South-West Monsoon and that pirates are operating closer to shore to avoid severe conditions further out to sea. PAGs (Pirate Attack Groups) will likely continue to focus their efforts in the Northern Arabian Sea (NAS), Gulf of Oman (GOO) as well as in the Gulf of Aden (GOA), Southern Red Sea (SRS), and coastal waters.

Specific areas of suspected and known PAG locations can be found on our PAG map: http://www.shipping.nato.int/operations/OS/Pages/PAGmap.aspx

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

A suspected PAG is currently operating in this area.
On 25 June 2012 the dhow pirated on 21 April 2012 was released from pirate control near Mukalla, Yemen.

Fishing activity is expected to continue and likely to increase in this area during the Southwest monsoon season. Masters are reminded to remain vigilant in order distinguish between fishing vessels and potential pirates.

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

A dhow PAG is currently operating in this area.

On 1015Z 27 June 2012 a merchant vessel was attacked at position 1423N 054 38E by pirates aboard a brown coloured dhow with a white superstructure.

A dhow was pirated at position 20 29N 059 03E on 20 June 2012 by 8 pirates aboard 1 skiff working with a mothership. This dhow was released from pirate control on 26 June 2012. Reports also indicate that after the capture on 20 June 2012 the pirates may have left this dhow to hunt for other vessels.

Counter Piracy Guidance Update

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 are currently impeded by the South-West Monsoon. Somali pirates are in search of vessels of opportunity, such as those who are not readily employing BMP4 recommended Ship Protection Measures.

Both dhows and whalers are being used as motherships. In the northern SB and AS the preferred motherships are local dhows, whereas in the southern SB, 8-metre whalers are preferred. Information and photographs regarding known pirate motherships is 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.

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 the pirates. For more information, please read the Let your Yacht take the ferry document located in the "Important Messages" section on the NSC website main page.

It has been observed recently that some Masters are choosing to phone their Company Security Officer (CSO) first in the event of a piracy incident. One of the fundamental requirements of BMP4 states that UKMTO is the primary point of contact for merchant vessels during piracy incidents in the High Risk

Area (HRA) which should avoid unnecessary delay and possible inaccurate or incomplete information reaching military commanders. CSOs should ensure their ships' security plan reinforces the BMP4 recommendation that UKMTO should be telephoned on +971 50 55 23215 in the event of any piracy activity. UKMTO will then make every effort to contact the CSO as a matter of priority with any information received, whilst ensuring the relevant information reaches the military commanders with the minimum of delay.

When navigating throughout the entire region of the HRA, masters are reminded of the need for continued adherence to Best Management Practices 4 (BMP4). As per Section 5 of BMP4, early registration with MSCHOA before entering the HRA and regular reporting to UKMTO are highly recommended.

Masters are advised that the threat of piracy against merchant shipping is always present throughout the entire HRA, and are advised to ensure all necessary Self Protection Measures are implemented as recommended in BMP4. Prudent and timely implementation of all recommended actions and ship hardening measures in BMP4 can make the important difference of being approached, attacked, or pirated. NSC would like to remind masters that BMP4 highly recommends maintaining maximum vessel speed when transiting the High Risk Area (HRA) to prevent pirate boardings.

Masters are also reminded that a large number of fishing vessels operate in the Southern Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb 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 by mechanized or single hull boats with outboard motor carrying 4-5 crew using long lines. Masters are requested to ensure they distinguish between fishing vessels and potential pirates; fishermen may carry small arms.

As noted above, if an incident occurs, Masters are to report immediately to UKMTO via telephone and provide as much information as possible and as accurate regarding the incident. 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, NSC (NATO Shipping Centre) at info@shipping.nato.int and Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) at postmaster@mschoa.org. This information will be used by Counter Piracy forces to combat piracy activity.