

Report on Somalia

Detailed Weekly Piracy Report and On-the-Ground Analysis



Piracy - At Sea - On Land - Domestic News - International Developments

Report on Somalia ~ SUMMARY

February 25 – March 3, 2013 (Week 9)



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At Sea:

- During this reporting period, there was one piracy related incident that was reported in the High Risk Area (HRA). Merchant vessels transiting the region are reminded to remain vigilant in the area and to ensure that self protection measures are in place as Pirate Action Groups (PAG's) are likely to operating.
- **25 February 2013** - A merchant ship has reported a suspicious pass by one skiff in an area approximately 15 nautical miles north of Masirah Island, Oman.
- **22 February 2013** (Late Reporting) - An unnamed cargo ship reported being under fire at 2218 UTC in position 23:08N - 060:49E, approximately 130 nautical miles southeast of Muscat, Oman.
 - (Late Reporting) - Dhow and skiff in position 24:29N - 061:39E shadowed a MV for approximately 2 hours.

Key Statistics

- Hijacks: 0
- Attacks: 0
- Sightings: 1
- Releases: 0

Updates:

- **25 February 2013** - The European Union's Naval Force frigate HNLMS De Ruyter has transferred nine suspected pirates to the Seychelles authorities where they will be prosecuted.

Piracy Related News:

- **28 February 2013** - A court in the Seychelles has convicted four pirates who have been accused of taking Pakistani fishermen as hostages.
- **27 February 2013** - Seven Somali pirates who reportedly opened fire at the Malaysian navy in an attempt to hijack a tanker in international waters more than a year ago, have pleaded not guilty at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur.
 - Meanwhile, a court in the United States has sentenced five Somali men of piracy in the 2010 attack on a US naval vessel in the waters off the Horn of Africa.
 - Meanwhile in Japan, the Tokyo District Court has sentenced an 18-year-old Somali man to 5-9 years in prison for the attempted hijacking of a Bahamas-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden in March 2011.

Weather Analysis:

- The weather forecast throughout the following week will remain to be relatively good for pirate activities to occur. Throughout the week, small skiffs and boats will be able to move relatively freely in the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Oman as well as off the coast of Somalia. Conditions further out to sea will be harsh, subsequently it is likely that motherships will be operating in that area.

On Land:

- **1 March 2013** - At least three people have been killed and several others left wounded in twin attacks that occurred at a restaurant on the popular beachfront of Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu.

- **27 February 2013** - African Union (AU) troops and Somali government forces have taken control of the town of Burhakaba, a former al-Shabaab stronghold.
- **25 February 2013** - Suspected al-Shabaab militants have shot and killed two government officials in Busar, which is a small town in Somalia's Gedo region.
 - Meanwhile security officials have confirmed that police in Somaliland have carried out security operations in Hargeisa and Las Anod over the past few nights in order to assuage fears of threats against Westerners.
 - Authorities in Puntland have confirmed that they have arrested more than fifty militants, including a number of foreign fighters, after completing a series of security operations in Galkayo, Garowe, and Bosasso.
 - Somali government forces, with the support of AMISOM troops, have captured the towns of Dardan and Jirada-Kullow in the Bay region after dawn operations were simultaneously carried out.

Domestic News:

- **28 February 2013** - Somalia's president has announced that he is offering amnesty to young pirates in a bid to end attacks on vessels as transiting the waters of the Horn of Africa.
- **25 February 2013** - A delegation of Somali government officials, led by Interior and National Security Minister Abdikarim Hussein Guled, visited Kismayo on Monday.

International Developments:

- **1 March 2013** - The UK Government has set out the priorities and aims of the Somalia Conference which is scheduled to be held in London on 7 May 2013.
- **27 February 2013** - A proposal to lift the United Nations arms embargo on the Somali government for a year, with restrictions on weapons like surface-to-air missiles remaining in place, has been floated amongst the split fifteen member UN Security Council.
 - Meanwhile Somalia has accredited ambassadors from five European nations on Tuesday, a move which has been hailed by the President as a sign that the war-ravaged nation was "becoming a normal country."
- **26 February 2013** - British Ambassador to Somalia, Matt Baugh has led a delegation of officials to meet with Puntland President Abdirahman Mohamed Farole in Garowe.

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- **22 February 2013** (Late Reporting) - An unnamed cargo ship reported being under fire at 2218 UTC in position 23:08N - 060:49E, approximately 130 nautical miles southeast of Muscat, Oman. No further details have been provided.
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Updates:

- **25 February 2013** - The European Union's Naval Force frigate HNLMS De Ruyter has transferred nine suspected pirates to the Seychelles authorities where they will be prosecuted. The transfer occurred just days after the HNLMS De Ruyter, which at the time was conducting counter piracy patrols, stopped two skiffs 120 nautical miles off the Somali Coast on 19 February. The operation resulted in the apprehension of nine suspected pirates on board. During the operation, helicopters from both the HNLMS De Ruyter and EU Naval Force flagship ESPS Mende Nunez, along with the Spanish EU NAVFOR Maritime Patrol Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA), were able to locate the two skiffs in waters 200 nautical miles northeast of Eyl. Since the operation, the nine men were held on board the HNLMS De Ruyter awaiting further investigations and evidence collection in order to fully assess the possibility of prosecution. The two skiffs were amongst the items that were seized. After the Republic of the Seychelles agreed to take the nine suspected pirates for prosecution, the HNLMS De Ruyter transferred the men to the Seychelles' Authorities. Speaking about the second successful transfer of suspected pirates by the EU Naval Force within the past five weeks, Operation Commander of the European Naval Force Rear Admiral Bob Tarrant stated that "I welcome the decision of the Republic of the Seychelles to once again prosecute those suspected of attacking ships at sea. The Seychelles are a steadfast partner of the EU, determined and committed in the fight against piracy. Once more we have sent a clear message to pirates that the EU Naval Force will always seek, whenever possible, a legal finish." The first EU Naval Force transfer occurred on 25 January 2013, when twelve suspected pirates were transferred to Mauritius for prosecution.

Piracy Related News:

- **28 February 2013** - A court in the Seychelles has convicted four pirates who have been accused of taking Pakistani fishermen as hostages. The pirates were captured by Denmark and delivered to the Seychelles for prosecution last year. Denmark had also succeeded in getting some Pakistani fishermen, who had been held hostage by the pirates, to act as witnesses during the trial. The four men are amongst a total group of sixteen pirates who were detained by the Danish Navy vessel Absalon during an anti-piracy raid in April 2012. The raid resulted in twelve Pakistani and Iranian hostages being rescued. The court in the Seychelles sentenced three of the pirates to twenty-four years each while a fourth pirate received a sentence of sixteen years in prison. The Danish Foreign Minister, Villy Soevndal expressed great satisfaction after the verdicts were read out, stating that "it is great news that the four pirates have now been sentenced. By this, we have once again

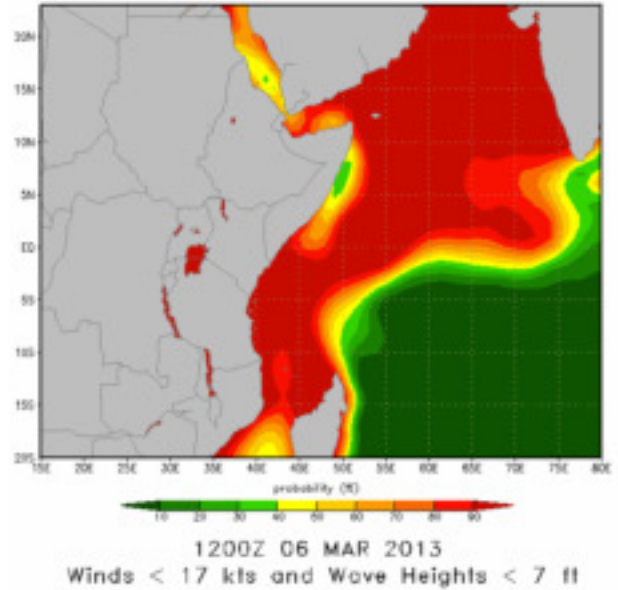
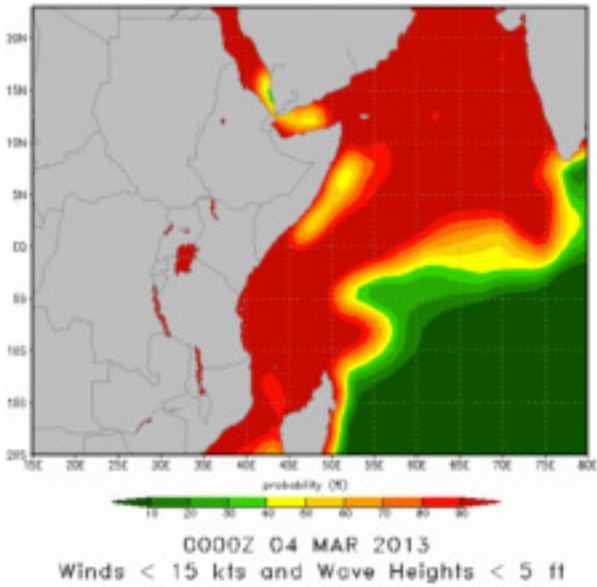
proved that the Danish contribution in the Horn of Africa is effective - and that pirates can be prosecuted and convicted, if the evidence is in place. In this particular case, we have benefitted from a great collaboration with Pakistan by securing the required witnesses. The next step to focus on will be to transfer the convicted pirates to serve their sentences in their home country, Somalia." The Foreign Minister however declined to comment on when the pirates will be transferred back to Somalia.

- **27 February 2013** - Seven Somali pirates who reportedly opened fire at the Malaysian navy in an attempt to hijack a tanker in international waters more than a year ago, have pleaded not guilty at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur. They denied the charges of firing at commandos with the intention of causing death or harm in an attempted robbery. If found guilty, the seven men face a possible death penalty charge. The accused - Ahmed Othman Jamal (26), Abdil Eid Hasan (21), along with five juveniles - are suspected of committing the offense on board the Bungalow Laurel vessel, 250 nautical miles from Omani territorial waters on 20 January 2011. Although initially they were charged under Section 3 of the Firearms Act 1971, in October of last year the prosecution offered the seven men an alternative charge of discharging their firearms on Royal Malaysian Navy commandos in order to prevent lawful detention. The men had pleaded guilty to the charge before High Court judge Kamardin Hashim. However the judge eventually rejected the guilty plea after the defence team had brought up the discrepancy in the facts of the case over the exact location the offence was alleged to have taken place. The seven men allegedly boarded the MT Bunga Laurel armed with guns with the intention of hijacking the tanker. The vessel had twenty three Filipino crew members on board at the time of the incident. The siege of the tanker was brought to an end when commandos from a Malaysian Navy auxiliary ship stormed the vessel where a shoot out between the hostage takers and the commandos occurred. The pirates were later overpowered by the commandos who brought them to face trial.
 - Meanwhile, a court in the United States has sentenced five Somali men of piracy in the 2010 attack on a US naval vessel in the waters off the Horn of Africa. At the time of the attack, the men were on a skiff and fired AK-47's at the USS Ashland, a dock-landing vessel that fired back with a 25mm machine gun, which set the pirates' skiff on fire, killing one of them on board. The US vessel then deployed inflatable boats in order to rescue those pirates who had jumped into the water. The USS Ashland suffered no damage and none of its crew members on board sustained injury. Three of the pirates who were arrested had been alleged of having gone out to sea on a separate raid in February 2010 before being intercepted by Britain's Royal Navy. In November 2010, a court in Virginia sentenced the alleged ringleader of the group to thirty years in prison in a plea bargain under which he admitted to having attacked the USS Ashland with a firearm. The five men that were convicted on Wednesday will be sentenced between July 1-2 on a number of charges that carry maximum punishments of ten years to life in prison. US attorney Neil MacBride indicated that "these men were pirates, plain and simple. They attacked a ship hoping to hold it ransom for millions of dollars. Few crimes are older than piracy on the high seas, and today's verdict shoes that the United States takes it very seriously."
 - Meanwhile in Japan, the Tokyo District Court has sentenced an 18-year-old Somali man to 5-9 years in prison for the attempted hijacking of a Bahamas-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden in March 2011. The defendant, whose name has not been released as under Japanese law he is classified as a minor, is one of four men to be tried under Japan's 2009 anti-piracy law. His sentencing comes three weeks after the Tokyo District Court sentenced two pirates to ten-year jail terms for the same hijacking attempt. The defendant admitted to participating in the attack however he denied any responsibility for organising the attempted hijacking. Nonetheless judge Katsunori Ono ruled that he was a full accomplice and that because he was the only one who could speak English, he was expected to play a large role by communicating with the hostages. The fourth suspect, who was also a minor at the time of the incident, is due to stand trial next week.

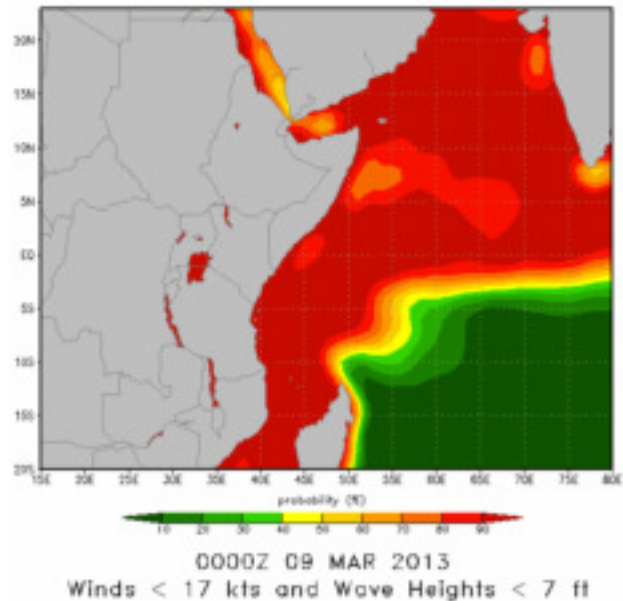
Weather Analysis:

- **Gulf of Aden** - East-northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the western portion of the Gulf; in the eastern portion, winds will be east-northeast at 15 - 20 knots and seas of 4 - 6 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Easterly winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the western portion of the Gulf; with easterly winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the eastern portion.
- **Gulf of Oman** - Variable winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Easterly winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet.
- **Somali Coast** - Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 4 - 6 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Northeast winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 2 - 4 feet.
- **Arabian Sea** - Northeast winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 2 - 4 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Northeast winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet.
- **Central African Coast/Indian Ocean** - Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Northeast winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 2 - 4 feet.
- **Mozambique Channel** - Variable winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the northern Channel; in the southern Channel, winds will be variable at 10 - 15 knots and seas of 4 - 6 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Southeast winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 2 - 4 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 2 - 4 feet in the southern Channel.
- **Surface Currents** - The northern Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden and the Mozambique Channel currents are variable with most areas having average speeds of 2 - 3 knots. Current speeds along the Somali Basin average between 1 - 2 knots.

Sea Conditions For This Week:



*** In this graphic, the green shading represents a reduced likelihood of small boats and skiffs operating in the area due to harsh sea conditions, while the red indicates a higher likelihood of favorable sea conditions for skiffs and smaller boats ***



On Land:

- **1 March 2013** - At least three people have been killed and several others left wounded in twin attacks that occurred at a restaurant on the popular beachfront of Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu. The blasts, which are the latest in a string of attacks that have targeted the city, were reportedly caused by a suicide attacker wearing a vest packed with explosives, followed by a car bomb. According to Hersi Adan, a security official who was near the scene of the attack, "the man blew himself up when guards at the restaurant entrance tried to stop him...at least three people including the bomber died. A few minutes later a car parked outside of the building exploded, killing another and wounding seven." The explosion took place near Mogadishu's Lido beach, which is usually crowded on weekends. Last month, one person was killed in a similar car bomb blast the occurred in the area. Although no group has claimed responsibility for the blast, al-Shabaab insurgents have in recent months launched a series of guerrilla-style attacks in Mogadishu. The insurgents have vowed to topple President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who took office last September. Although the once powerful al-Shabaab is currently on the back foot inside Somalia, having fled a number of key towns, the group remains to be a potent threat as it still controls a number of rural areas and has the capabilities of carrying out guerrilla attacks in areas that are under government control.
- **27 February 2013** - African Union (AU) troops and Somali government forces have taken control of the town of Burhakaba, a former al-Shabaab stronghold. Somalia's Deputy Army Commander Abdikarin Yusuf Dhegobadan confirmed that "our forces took control of Burhakaba... and we are clearing any bombs that might have been planted." He further added that "a road stretch of only 30 kilometers remains out of our control...We are going to flush them (Al-Shabab militants) out." The strategic town is located 190 km (120 miles) south of the capital city of Mogadishu.
- **25 February 2013** - Suspected al-Shabaab militants have shot and killed two government officials in Busar, which is a small town in Somalia's Gedo region. According to regional army spokesman Colonel Warfa Sheikh Adan, heavily armed militants shot dead Busar deputy administration officer Osman Abdinoor Abdirahman and shot dead head of social affairs Mohammed Hussein Ibrahim inside a restaurant on Monday evening. Mr. Adan has also confirmed that the Chief of Busar's police was also at the restaurant during the attack however he managed to escape unhurt. Government troops in the region are currently pursuing the assailants who escaped after the incident. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.
 - Meanwhile security officials have confirmed that police in Somaliland have carried out security operations in Hargeisa and Las Anod over the past few nights in order to assuage fears of threats against Westerners. Somaliland Minister of Interior Mohamed Nur Arrale indicated during a press conference held in Hargeisa that "we are ensuring that the security of Somaliland is stable and everything is okay." Although Mr. Arrale did not specify the exact figures, he did indicate that many individuals had been arrested. The operation follows a warning from the British government on January 27 of a "specific threat to Westerners" in Somaliland. According to Mr. Arrale, "that fear is no longer in existence," adding that police were conducting a thorough investigation of the suspects and will release all found to be innocent. Somaliland police chief Abdullahi Fadal Iman said anyone found culpable would be immediately taken to court. He apologized for any inconvenience resulting from the security operations and asked for the public's co-operation in maintaining peace in the region. The handling of the security operations evoked some concerns, however, and complaints that members of the Rapid Reaction Unit damaged private property during the raids, according to director of the Hargeisa-based Horn Human Rights Umbrella Ahmed Yusuf Hussein. "We will be investigating the complaints that resulted [from the operations] this week," Hussein told Sabahi, adding that about 250 people were arrested.
 - Authorities in Puntland have confirmed that they have arrested more than fifty militants, including a number of foreign fighters, after completing a series of security operations in Galkayo, Garowe, and Bosasso. Officials in Puntland have indicated that these operations have disrupted terrorist cells in the region, further indicating that these actions had apprehended what they have called "principal terrorists and their terror networks" who have been behind past and recent attacks, including the assassination of Sheikh Abdiqadir Nuur Farah and the attempted assassination of the Deputy Police Commissioner, General Musse. General Musse had received minor injuries after a suicide car bomber attacked his convoy in Galkayo on February 12th; three days later the prominent Islamic scholar Sheikh Abdikadir Nuur Farah was assassinated inside a mosque in Garowe. The killer was later arrested after angry residents overpowered him. Thousands of Garowe residents took to the streets today to denounce Al-Shabaab for

the killing of Sheikh Abdikadir Nuur Farah, amongst them were women, children and religious leaders, together with Puntland President Abdirahman Farole and other top officials.

- Somali government forces, with the support of AMISOM troops, have captured the towns of Dardan and Jirada-Kullow in the Bay region after dawn operations were simultaneously carried out. In the last ten days, the allied forces have secured six key towns. This renewed offensive also follows last week's recovery of the towns of Aw-dheegle, Jannale and Barrire in lower Shabelle and the Jowhar airfield in the Middle Shabelle region. The allied forces are currently moving to secure other towns along the Afgooye-Baidoa corridor, as militants from the Al Qaeda-linked terror group flee without putting up resistance.

Domestic News:

- **28 February 2013** - Somalia's president has announced that he is offering amnesty to young pirates in a bid to end attacks on vessels transiting the waters of the Horn of Africa. President Mohamud, who was elected six months ago, has indicated that he wants to offer an "alternative means of earning a living" to those Somalis who have resorted to taking up guns and joining pirate gangs. However the President has stipulated that the amnesty is not being offered to pirate kingpins - in essence those who take the vast majority of the profits from the attacks, some of whom are also wanted by Interpol. A number of the most notorious pirates, who have launched attacks far across the Indian Ocean earning millions of dollars in international ransoms, are based along the northern coastline of the semi-autonomous Puntland region. The President's amnesty comes amidst a sharp drop in the number of pirate attacks in Somalia, which are at a three-year low, in part due to increased naval patrols and teams of armed security guards on board vessels transiting through the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Although the pirates have lost ground, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) still warns that Somalia's waters remain to be extremely high risk. However for the President, piracy is only one of many challenges that he faces in seeking to rebuild his devastated nation, with al-Shabaab insurgents continuing to vow to topple his government. He has played down an assassination attempt that was made just two days after his election, stating that millions of Somalis died during the country's two-decade civil war.
- **25 February 2013** - A delegation of Somali government officials, led by Interior and National Security Minister Abdikarim Hussein Guled, visited Kismayo on Monday. Although the purpose of the officials' visit has not been made public, it comes just two days after clashes occurred between two feuding clan militias. The incident, which occurred in the city, resulted in the deaths of eleven people. It also comes one day after the Somali government invited Jubbaland stakeholders to meet in the capital city in order to discuss the formation of a regional administration. The delegates are expected to meet with local administrators and officials from the African Union Mission in Somalia. A postponed community-led conference on the state formation process was due to begin on Tuesday in Kismayo however no further details have been released.

International Developments:

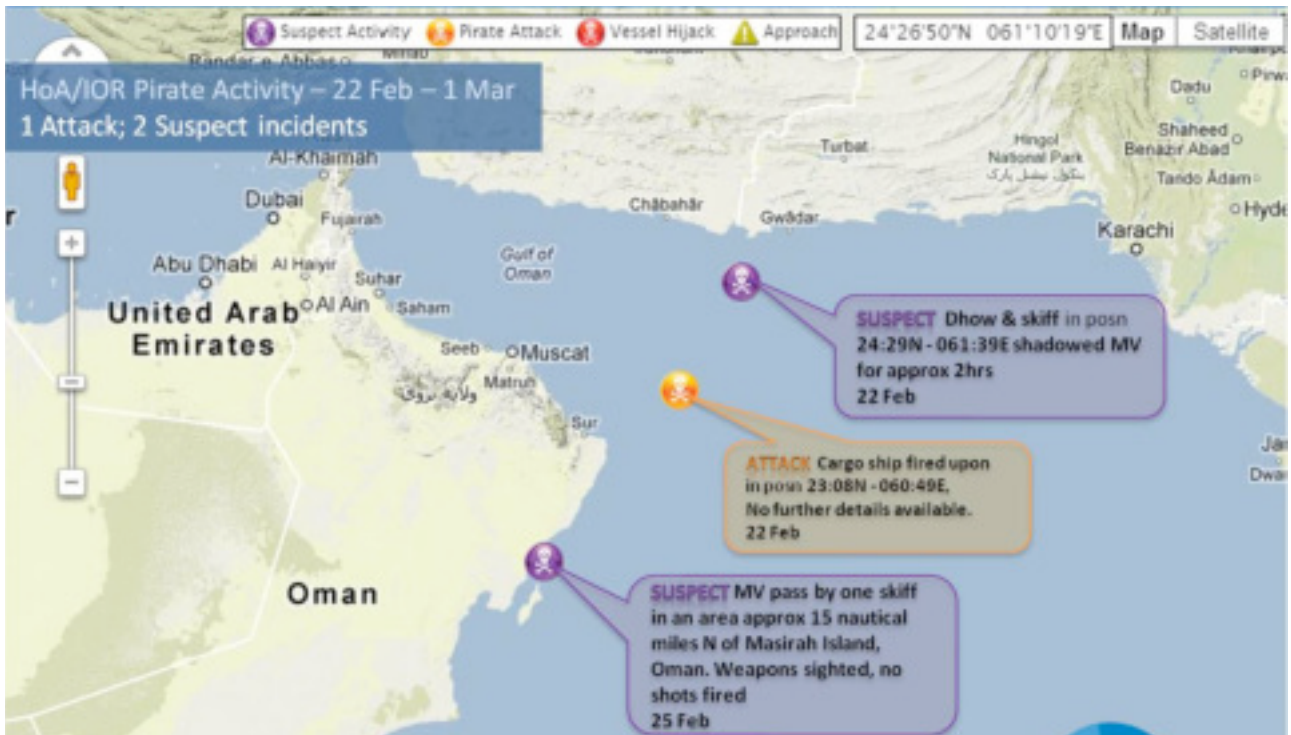
- **1 March 2013** - The UK Government has set out the priorities and aims of the Somalia Conference which is scheduled to be held in London on 7 May 2013. According to the press release, the conference will focus on how the international community can work in partnership with the new Federal Government of Somalia on its priorities: rebuilding its armed forces, police, coastguard, justice and public financial management systems; and helping create political stability. The conference will also mark the new spirit of partnership between Somalia and the international community. The conference will be co-hosted by the UK and Somali governments.
- **27 February 2013** - A proposal to lift the United Nations arms embargo on the Somali government for a year, with restrictions on weapons like surface-to-air missiles remaining in place, has been floated amongst the split fifteen member UN Security Council. The decision comes amidst requests made by the Somali government to lift the twenty-one year old arms embargo so that it can strengthen its poorly equipped, ill-disciplined military in order to battle al-Shabaab militants. UN diplomats have also indicated that a draft resolution to renew a UN-mandated African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia, which will reconfigure the UN mission and decide on the arms embargo request, is likely to



be circulated amongst the Security Council members this week. The Security Council is scheduled to vote on the resolution next Wednesday before the mandate of the 17,600-strong AU peacekeeping force expires on 7 March. A council diplomat has indicated that "what we may see is a lifting for a defined period ... as far as the government itself is concerned with some caveats." He further noted that the proposed defined period could be a year. The United States has been urging council members to agree to the demands made by the government in Mogadishu for the embargo to be lifted. However France and Britain have been reluctant in agreeing to the demands, resulting in continued negotiations. They indicate that the "current embargo provides sufficient exemptions for the Somali security forces to be properly equipped." Some council diplomats have indicated that "this move would come with significant security risks and would set a deplorable precedent as the situation is still extremely volatile." The embargo was imposed by the Security Council in 1992 in an attempt to cut the flow of arms to feuding warlords who a year later ousted dictator Mohamed Siad Barre and effectively plunged the country into a civil war. The decision to lift the embargo also comes at a time when the Security Council's Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, an independent panel that reports on compliance with UN sanctions, had reported that some al-Qaeda linked al-Shabaab militants had infiltrated the units of the Somali security forces. UN monitors have also warned that the al-Shabaab militants in the Horn of Africa nation are receiving weapons from distribution networks linked to Yemen and Iran.

- Meanwhile Somalia has accredited ambassadors from five European nations on Tuesday, a move which has been hailed by the President as a sign that the war-ravaged nation was "becoming a normal country." Ambassadors from Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, and Finland presented their credentials to Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud who stated that he hoped Somalia would "soon see many international flags flying over Mogadishu." At the moment, all the ambassadors are based in Nairobi, Kenya due to the security concerns in Somalia. Few countries have an ambassador that is based in Mogadishu. Amongst them are the ambassadors for Ethiopia, Iran, Turkey and Yemen. From Europe, ambassadors from Britain and Italy are also accredited however they are based in Nairobi.
- **26 February 2013** - British Ambassador to Somalia, Matt Baugh has led a delegation of officials to meet with Puntland President Abdirahman Mohamed Farole in Garowe. After landing at Garowe International airport, Ambassador Baugh led a delegation, which included Head of UK's Department for International Development (DFID) for Somalia Joanna Reid, to meet with Puntland President Farole along with Vice President Abdisamad Ali Shire, Minister of Security Khalif Isse Mudan, Minister of Education Abdi Farah Juha and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Daud Mohamed Omar. After the ambassador met with President Farole, the two officials gave a brief press conference, detailing that they had discussed the ongoing democratization process in Puntland and how the British government supports this process. During the press conference, ambassador Baugh thanked the Puntland government for their welcome and issued his condolences to the family of Sheikh Abdiqadir, who was recently assassinated in Garowe. The ambassador also stated that the British government would give its support to the counter-terrorism projects that are occurring in Puntland.

Map:





About MS Risk

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More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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