

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

May 13 – 19, 2013 (Week 20)



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At Sea:

- The Operation Commander of the European Union Naval Force, Rear Admiral Bob Tarrant, has issued a renewed warning that despite low activity in the Gulf of Aden and surrounding regions, Somali pirates are still determined to go out to sea, and if presented with an easy target, they will attack.
- **16 May 2013** - At a distance of 6 nautical miles, a suspected pirate mother vessel towing two skiffs was spotted by the armed security team on board an MV at 1136 UTC while in position 12:03.5N - 045:42.1E, IRTC, in the Gulf of Aden.
- **14 May 2013** - Early last week, EU Naval Force warship ESPS Rayo intercepted a skiff with six men onboard approximately 320 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia.
- **11 May 2013 (Late Reporting)** - A merchant ship experienced a suspicious approach by seven skiffs at 13:30N - 050:01E, approximately 78 nautical miles southeast of Al Mukalla, Yemen. Each skiff had approximately 5 - 6 pirates on board.

Key Statistics

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

Updates:

- **14 May 2013** - The Saudi owner of an Algerian cargo ship that was hijacked by Somali pirates has admitted that he paid a US \$2.6 million ransom for the release of the vessel and its crew members.

Piracy Related News:

- **14 May 2013** - As part of continuing efforts to return Somalis who have been convicted of piracy in the Seychelles back to Somalia, where they will carry out their sentences, another group of eight convicted Somali pirates were repatriated to Puntland on 6 May.

Weather Analysis:

- The weather forecast throughout the following week will continue to deteriorate as the Southwest Monsoon season begins to set in. Throughout this week, small skiffs and boats will experience increased difficulty in moving in waters off the coast of Somalia. Water conditions in the Gulf of Aden and in the Gulf of Oman will remain favorable for small skiffs and boats however the water conditions can worsen at any moment.

On Land:

- **17 May 2013** - Fierce fighting occurred last night in El Barde, a town located in the Bakool region. According to reports, the fighting began when al-Shabaab militants launched an assault on government bases located in the region.

- **14 May 2013** - At least five people were killed and another ten were injured after al-Shabaab militants ambushed Somali and AMISOM bases in Gof Gadud, which is located near Baidoa in the Bay region of Somalia.

Domestic News:

- **15 May 2013** - Following weeks of tense negotiations between rival factions, officials indicated on Wednesday that former Islamist warlord Ahmed Madobe had been elected “president” of Somalia’s volatile southern Jubbaland region.
- **14 May 2013** - In an effort to align foreign relations with the new Somali federal government, Somalia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation is working to re-open embassies and diplomatic missions that have been closed since 1991.
- **13 May 2013** - The minister of information, posts, telecommunications and transportation has confirmed that Somalia’s government has announced that it is preparing to take over the control of its airspace by the end of this year.

International Developments:

- **15 May 2013** - Four men have received prison sentences in Minnesota in the United States in connection to the recruitment of fighters for a Somali militant group.
- **14 May 2013** - Canada has announced that it is restoring diplomatic relations with Somalia after severing ties with the war-torn nation more than two decades ago.

About MS Risk

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May 13 – 19, 2013 (Week 20)

At Sea:

- The Operation Commander of the European Union Naval Force, Rear Admiral Bob Tarrant, has issued a renewed warning that despite low activity in the Gulf of Aden and surrounding regions, Somali pirates are still determined to go out to sea, and if presented with an easy target, they will attack. The Admiral has indicated that “I am very concerned that seafarers and nations will lower their guard and support for counter piracy operations in the belief that the piracy threat is over. It is not; it is merely contained. We should remember that at its height in January 2011, 32 ships were pirated by Somali pirates and 736 hostages were held. It is crucial that we remain vigilant or the number of attacks will once again rise.” The Admiral’s warning comes just days after a EU Naval Force warship, the ESPS Rayo, located a skiff with six men on board, 320 nautical miles off the Somali coast. Due to the fact that it is highly unusual to see such small, open top boats so far out to sea, the team on board the Rayo went across to investigate. The six men on board the boat could not explain why they had sailed so far from land. While there was no evidence of trade or legal activity, the Rayo’s crew found equipment on board that is commonly related to piracy. Although there was not enough evidence on this occasion that would have guaranteed a legal prosecution, the decision was taken to return the men to the Somali coast so that they would not be able to pose any potential risk to passing vessels. Speaking about the incident, EU Naval Force Spokesperson Lieutenant Commander Jacqueline Sheriff stated that “whilst not possible this time, when suspect pirates are apprehended by the EU Naval Force, every effort is made to achieve a prosecution, as demonstrated in recent months by the legal transfers by the European Union of suspected pirates to Mauritius and The Seychelles authorities.” The Rayo incident comes exactly one year since the last ship, chemical tanker MV Smyrni, was hijacked by pirates off the Somali coast. The crew members of the MV Smyrni were released two months ago, after ten months in captivity.
- **16 May 2013** - At a distance of 6 nautical miles, a suspected pirate mother vessel towing two skiffs was spotted by the armed security team on board an MV at 1136 UTC while in position 12:03.5N - 045:42.1E, IRTC, in the Gulf of Aden. The suspect vessel increased speed and moved closer to the MV. At 1200 UTC, at 3 nautical miles, two skiffs with a number of pirates on board left the mother ship and headed towards the MV. The alarm was sounded and all non-essential crew retreated into the citadel. The MV commenced maneuvering while the Master contacted a warship. At 1220 UTC, the suspected pirate vessels approached the MV within 2 nautical miles. Embarked armed security teams on board the MV demonstrated their presence, resulting in the skiffs changing course and moving away, crossing the stern at a distance of 1.5 nautical miles. Due to poor visibility conditions, there was limited vision to detect the number of people on board the skiffs or whether there were any piracy-related equipment. The MV continued to transit to her destination.
- **14 May 2013** - Early last week, EU Naval Force warship ESPS Rayo intercepted a skiff with six men onboard approximately 320 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia. The six Somali men had no fishing gear and could not explain why they were so far from land. However Rayo’s crew did find pirate paraphernalia onboard the small boat, but there was not enough evidence in order to turn the men over for prosecution. The men were returned to the Somali coast where they would not pose any further potential risk to passing vessels.

Key Statistics

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

- **11 May 2013 (Late Reporting)** - A merchant ship experienced a suspicious approach by seven skiffs at 13:30N - 050:01E, approximately 78 nautical miles southeast of Al Mukalla, Yemen. Each skiff had approximately 5 - 6 pirates on board. In addition, there was a possible mothership nearby which was towing an additional three skiffs. When the group of skiffs saw the armed embarked security team, they stopped pursuing the merchant ship. The vessel reportedly observed ladders in four of the skiffs.

Updates:

- **14 May 2013** - The Saudi owner of an Algerian cargo ship that was hijacked by Somali pirates has admitted that he paid a US \$2.6 million ransom for the release of the vessel and its crew members. The MV Blida, which was carrying seventeen Algerians, six Ukrainians, two Filipinos, one Jordanian and one Indonesian, was captured by a group of heavily armed pirates on 1 January 2011 while on its way from Oman to Tanzania. Although two of the hostages were released for health reasons in October of that year, the rest of the crew were held hostage for ten months and were released in November 2011 after the ship's owner, Ghaith Rashad Feraoun, made a ransom payment. According to Mr. Feraoun, "the pirates demanded a ransom of \$2.6 million to free the sailors and the ship. The Algerian government refused to negotiate or pay a ransom." He further indicated that "I negotiated through a man called Abu Ali or Abu Ahmed. After agreeing with the pirates on the amount, I paid a one off payment in cash." Mr. Feraoun indicated that he withdrew the money from Lebanon, because it was the only country where you could retrieve such a large amount without encountering any obstacles, further stating that "we took a small plane and threw the money on to the ship...Algeria didn't pay a single dinar (Algerian currency)." Algeria has a policy of not negotiating with hostage-takers. When the MV Blida's crew members were released, the foreign ministry confirmed that Algiers had not provided any money to free them. It also requested that the United Nations General Assembly try to criminalize ransom payments to pirates. After the ordeal, some crew members claimed suffering "psychological torture," enduring death threats and being deprived of food and clean drinking water as they watched their Somali captors getting drunk.

Piracy Related News:

- **14 May 2013** - As part of continuing efforts to return Somalis who have been convicted of piracy in the Seychelles back to Somalia, where they will carry out their sentences, another group of eight convicted Somali pirates were repatriated to Puntland on 6 May. Departing from Mahe, Seychelles to Puntland, the transferred prisoners were flown aboard an IDC chartered plane under escort that was provided by specially trained police officers. The prisoners were successfully handed over to authorities in Puntland where they will serve out the remainder of their sentences at the Basaso Prison. The operation to repatriate the prisoners was made possible by extensive diplomatic efforts between the Seychelles Government and the Puntland Authorities. It was carried out without incident. Speaking to reporters in the Seychelles, Minister Joel Morgan indicated that this latest transfer "occurred at the very moment that I was in London delivering a message to the second London Conference on Somalia on behalf of President Michel. We expressed a desire to see peace and stability throughout Somalia, with Seychelles pledging to help Somalia by offering assistance in the domain of fisheries management. Returning those prisoners who have been under our custody following their conviction, under a United Nations sponsored programme for repatriation, demonstrates clearly our resolve that Somalis that have been convicted of piracy charges here must return to Somalia to continue to serve the remainder of their sentences." It is expected that another group of Somali pirates, who are currently incarcerated at the Montagne Possee Prison, will be transferred back to Somalia at the end of this month.

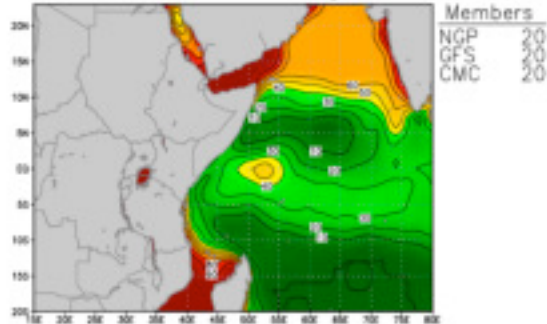
Weather Analysis:

- **Gulf of Aden** - Southwest winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the western portion of the Gulf; in the eastern portion of the Gulf, winds will be southwest at 5 - 10 knot with seas of 1 - 3 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - East-northeast winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the western portion of the Gulf; with east-northeast winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the eastern portion of the Gulf.
- **Gulf of Oman** - West-northwest winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the western portion of the Gulf; with west-northwest winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the eastern portion of the Gulf.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Westerly winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the western portion of the Gulf; with westerly winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 1 - 3 feet in the eastern portion of the Gulf.
- **Somali Coast** - Southwest winds of 20 - 25 knots and seas of 7 - 9 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Southwest winds of 15 - 20 knots and seas of 6 - 7 feet.
- **Arabian Sea** - Southwest winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 4 - 6 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Southwest winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet.
- **Central African Coast/Indian Ocean** - Southerly winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 5 - 7 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - South-southwest winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 5 - 7 feet.
- **Mozambique Channel** - Variable winds of 5 - 10 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet in the northern Channel; in the southern Channel, winds will be variable at 5 - 10 knots with seas of 4 - 6 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Southerly winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 6 - 8 feet in the northern Channel; with southeast winds of 10 - 15 knots and seas of 6 - 8 feet in the southern Channel.
- **Surface Currents** - The Northern Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden currents are northeasterly with most areas having average speeds of 1 - 2 knots. The Mozambique Channel currents are variable, having average speeds of 2 - 3 knots. Current speeds in the Somali Basin average between 1 - 2 knots.
- **Synoptic Discussion** - The northern and western Indian Ocean areas are under the influence of the onset of the Southwest Monsoon season. The Mozambique Channel will be under the influence of a low pressure system. Expect cloudy to mostly cloudy conditions with thunderstorms and rain showers throughout the eastern African coastal areas.

Sea Conditions For This Week:

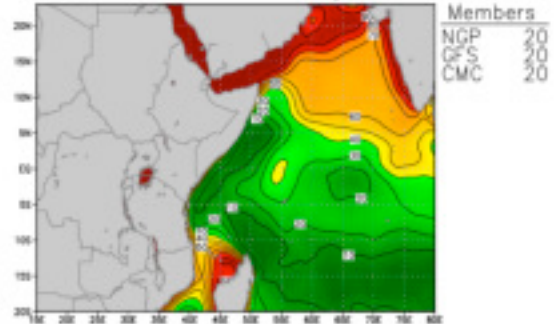
10-Day Piracy Small Boat Operations Weather Forecast, DTG: 2013051500

Winds < 15.0 kts and Wave Heights < 5.0 ft



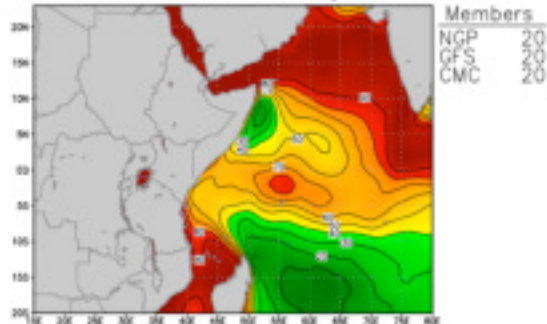
Valid Time: 1200Z 17 MAY 2013

Winds < 15.0 kts and Wave Heights < 5.0 ft



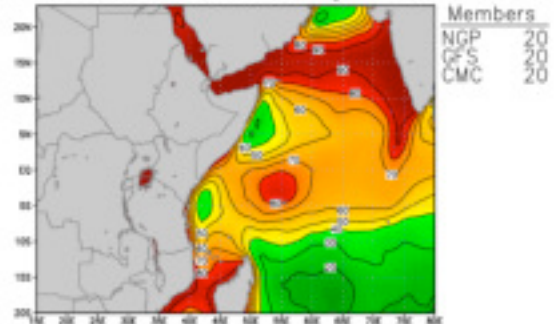
Valid Time: 0000Z 20 MAY 2013

Winds < 17.0 kts and Wave Heights < 7.0 ft

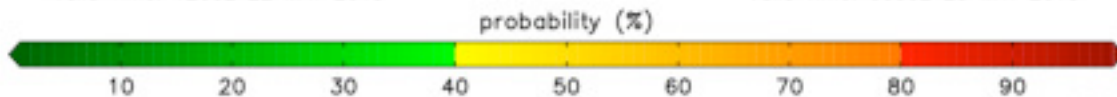


Valid Time: 1200Z 22 MAY 2013

Winds < 17.0 kts and Wave Heights < 7.0 ft



Valid Time: 0000Z 25 MAY 2013



*** 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:

- **17 May 2013** - Fierce fighting occurred last night in El Barde, a town located in the Bakool region. According to reports, the fighting began when al-Shabaab militants launched an assault on government bases located in the region. On the ground sources have indicated that at least four civilians have been confirmed dead while three others have been injured.
- **14 May 2013** - At least five people were killed and another ten were injured after al-Shabaab militants ambushed Somali and AMISOM bases in Gof Gadud, which is located near Baidoa in the Bay region of Somalia. According to on the ground sources, two of the dead and nine of the wounded are reported to be civilians. Somali military commander Mohamud Mohmaed Jirey has confirmed that the joint forces were able to stave off the attack by al-Shabaab militants.

Domestic News:

- **15 May 2013** - Following weeks of tense negotiations between rival factions, officials indicated on Wednesday that former Islamist warlord Ahmed Madobe had been elected “president” of Somalia’s volatile southern Jubbaland region. The vote, which occurred in the southern port city of Kismayo, has been opposed by Somalia’s central government which has been keen to place its authority on the lawless and war-ravaged nation and to avoid further regional splits. According to local reports, all other candidates had pulled out of the running ahead of the vote, meaning that Mr. Madobe was unopposed. Delegates have further noted that while ten votes were still cast for the other candidates, 485 voted in favor of Mr. Madobe. Mr. Madobe is a key ally of Kenya and reportedly enjoys strong ties with senior Kenyan military officials. Consequently his appointment has raised concerns that a rift may develop between Mogadishu and Nairobi. Furthermore, the election raises questions as to how far, if at all, Mr. Madobe will obey the still-weakened Mogadishu government. In turn, it also remains unclear how widely accepted Mr. Madobe will be locally, as several Somali clans have been vying to gain power in the south which was once an al-Shabaab stronghold until they were pushed out late last year. Mr. Madobe was once governor of Kismayo and a key member of the Islamic Courts Union that was toppled by Ethiopia’s 2006 US-backed invasion of Somalia. During the invasion, he was wounded in a bombing raid in southern Somalia and was later captured and taken to Ethiopia where he spent at least two years in jail. After his release in late 2011, he switched allegiance, and began to battle his former Islamist comrades by fighting alongside Kenya’s forces. He comes from Somalia’s Ogadeni clan, which is powerful in the wider region. However both the Marehan and Majerteen clans are also strong and as such, there has been much political infighting. Kenyan troops, which are now incorporated into the African Union (AU) force in Somalia, were mandated to support the government in Mogadishu and were responsible for the capture Kismayo in October 2012. The region of Jubbaland joins other semi-autonomous regions in Somalia, including Puntland in the northeast, which wants autonomy within a federation of states, and Somaliland in the northwest which fiercely defends its self-declared independence. In light of the recent elections, Puntland’s government stated that it “warmly” welcomed Madobe’s election. There has been no immediate reaction from the government in Mogadishu. Kenya, whose troops remain based across the southern region of Somalia, has been accused of attempting to carve out a buffer zone in Somalia that would protect its porous border. Control of southern Somalia remains to be split between multiple forces, including a number of clan forces, as well as Ethiopian and Kenyan troops. **UPDATE** - Shortly after the election of Ahmed Madobe, another militia commander has claimed victory of the post. On Wednesday, former Islamist warlord Ahmed Madobe was elected Jubbaland’s “president” through a conference which included some 500 elders and local leaders. However shortly afterwards, former Somali defence minister and warlord Barre Hirale, who comes from a rival clan, also declared himself president after a separate conference. Speaking to reporters, Mr. Hirale indicated that ‘I was nominated president of Jubbaland by the elders...I call on the people to support my presidency to assist me in bringing peace.’ He added that “the

conference where I was nominated was organized and belonged to the people...while the other conference was organized and pushed by Kenya.” Mr. Hirale, a veteran militia commander from the Marehan clan, has in recent years been backed by Ethiopia to battle al-Shabaab militants in the region. Both elections are understood to be opposed by the central government in Mogadishu, which is keen on placing its own authority throughout Somalia and to prevent any further regional splits from occurring. Somalia’s interior minister Abdikarin Hussein Guled told reporters in Mogadishu that “we are very much concerned about the latest developments in Kismayo...it can lead to clashes that will give chances to the al-Qaeda militants.” He further noted that the new political situation that emerged in Kismayo on Wednesday is deluded, it could impact the stability of the region.” However one of the elected “presidents,” Mr. Madobe, blames Mogadishu’s government for stirring up the tensions, indicating that “if fighting breaks out in Kismayo, it will be the Somali government that will take responsibility for the bloodshed, because they are creating instability between brotherly clans.” Since the elections, residents in Kismayo have stated that they now have two leaders.

- **14 May 2013** - In an effort to align foreign relations with the new Somali federal government, Somalia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation is working to re-open embassies and diplomatic missions that have been closed since 1991. The ministry’s Permanent Secretary Mohamed Sharif Mohamud has indicated that Somalia currently has plans to re-open embassies around the world, namely in Algeria, France, Iraq, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. In turn, with the election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed in September 2012 coupled with improving security conditions in Somalia, countries have begun to re-open their embassies in Mogadishu. Embassies currently based in Somalia include Egypt, Kenya, Iran, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. Most other countries, which have diplomatic relations with Somalia, have missions that are based in Nairobi, Kenya. The Permanent Secretary further indicated that the ministry would also be replacing some ambassadors with appointments that are better aligned with the government’s economic and human development policies. The new administration began implementing changes in March 2013 when the Somali embassy was re-opened in Brussels, effectively offering services for Somalis located throughout the European Union (EU). On 18 April, the Somali government appointed Abdullahi Mohamed Ali as its diplomatic envoy to London; he is expected to formally present his credentials to the British government in the coming weeks.
- **13 May 2013** - The minister of information, posts, telecommunications and transportation has confirmed that Somalia’s government has announced that it is preparing to take over the control of its airspace by the end of this year. According to the minister, he along with other government officials met on Sunday with officials from the United Nations Development Programme and representatives from the Civil Aviation Caretaker Authority of Somalia (CACAS) which is based in Nairobi. The meeting officially declared the transfer of supervision of the country’s airspace to the Somali federal government in Mogadishu. Abdullahi Elmoge Hersi told reporters in Mogadishu shortly after Sunday’s meeting that “we have agreed that the federal government of Somalia be prepared to take over its responsibilities of the control of its airspace by the 31 December 2013.” The minister further noted that before the end of the year, the government will relocate more than one hundred airspace management staff, who are currently based in Nairobi, to Mogadishu. Furthermore, “during the time of preparation, we will train our national staff and the capacity to handle such services.” Government officials also indicated that the airspace control office, which will be based at Mogadishu’s main airport, will continue to have close collaborations with Nairobi’s civil aviation in order to exchange important aviation information during the relocation of the airspace control center to Somalia. Somalia’s airspace control has been under the Civil Aviation Caretaker Authority of Somalia (CACAS), which is a civil aviation authority programme that was created by the United Nations in 1996 with a mandate in Somalia. CACAS has served as a caretaker for Somalia’s airspace since the collapse of the central government in the early 1990’s. The organization has collected over-flight revenues on behalf of the country. Several attempts by previous Somali

transitional government to take over the service failed because of a lack of skilled and trained staff coupled with the long-lasting war that the country had plunged into.

International Developments:

- 15 May 2013** - Four men have received prison sentences in Minnesota in the United States in connection to the recruitment of fighters for a Somali militant group. Three of the men, Abdifatah Isse; Salah Ahmed and Ahmed Mahamud, received three years imprisonment by a federal judge after they pleaded guilty to providing material to support al-Shabaab. Isse and Ahmed had admitted to travelling to Somalia in December 2007, where they attended a training camp. However they ended up leaving the East African country in the spring of 2008 after having second thoughts.

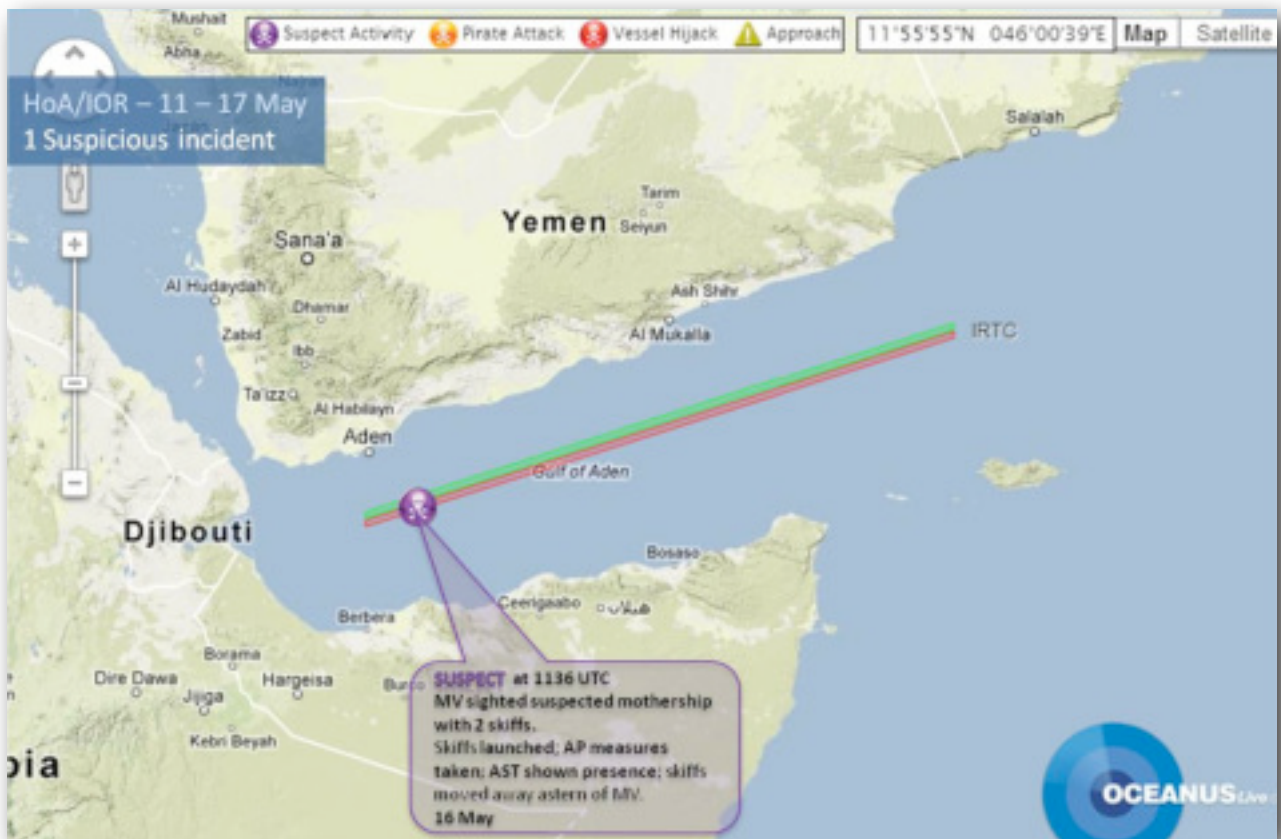
Mahamud had indicated that he had helped raise money so that the others could travel to Somalia. The fourth, Omer Mohamed, received a twelve year prison



sentence for conspiracy to provide material support. Although he was not accused of travelling to Somalia, he did admit that he had helped some of the recruits get plane tickets. Prosecutors characterized him as a local leader while witnesses at the trial of another defendant indicated that he had used his knowledge of the Koran in order to convince young men to fight. Mohamed's lawyer has denied that he played any role in recruitment.

- 14 May 2013** - Canada has announced that it is restoring diplomatic relations with Somalia after severing ties with the war-torn nation more than two decades ago. Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird made the announcement shortly after meeting with Augustine Mahiga, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Somalia. The Canadian government also released a statement indicating that David Agnell, Canada's High Commissioner in Kenya, would now also be accredited as ambassador to Somalia. The statement also indicated that Baird and Mahiga "discussed the progress made by the Somali government over the past year," as well as the creation of a "more representative and accountable government" which it called "a critical step toward rebuilding Somalia." Further adding that the troubled African state "faces enormous challenges and will need the support of the international community for some time." The move by the Canadian government to resume relations comes less than a month after Britain opened a new embassy in Mogadishu. It also follows a major conference, attended by representatives from more than fifty countries and organizations, which was held in London last week and which focused on the future of Somalia. The Canadian government ended diplomatic relations with Somalia in 1990. The country is now home to one of the world's largest communities of Somalis in exile, numbered at around 170,000 people.

Map:





About MS Risk

MS Risk is a privately owned company domiciled in the Isle of Man. It is underwritten by syndicate 2525 of Lloyd's of London for special risks case management in all jurisdictions. It also acts as retained advisors to syndicates in the Lloyd's of London specialty risk insurance markets: kidnap for ransom, extortion, hijack, illegal detention, illegal war tax, malicious product tamper, terrorism, political and war risk.

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References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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