

## WEEKLY PIRATE ACTIVITY UPDATE

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### 19 - 25 May 2012

**Rescued, or not rescued** - Iranian Navy rescue declared a false alarm in some quarters, others that they did not actually carry out a rescue. More attacks occurring in Gulf of Oman than any other area. North Korean gunmen release 29 Chinese fishermen after ransom demands. Six Somalis on trial in France for luxury yacht hijack; trial date set in US court for murders of US yacht crew; definition of piracy includes violent attempts to hijack a ship, even if unsuccessful, says US court. Italian marines case in India is reportedly having a negative effect on the international community's anti-piracy efforts. Standards, standards, standards - guidance from IMO, ISO certification and Belgium considers providing legislation for private security. Meanwhile, India is not so content with private armed guards at sea, preferring Naval guards. Lawyers rule the waves, but human rights stymies all. INTERTANKO signs MoU with ReCAAP to record a mutual understanding on joint cooperation in the area of information exchanges. EU French warship trains Djiboutian coast guard. Fears that crew members could pay with their lives if governments go ahead with plans to outlaw ransom payments when ships are hijacked is aired. Shipowners form a massive human SOS as a demonstration of their support for the international SOS SaveOurSeafarers campaign. Kenyan journalist's in-depth interviews with Somali pirates, shedding light on a lucrative industry that endangers international sea routes, is to receive an award. "It's crazy, or somewhat lamentable..." Google's Chief Technology Officer explains 200,000 ships a day on Google Earth that navies cannot see.

### REGIONAL ACTIVITY

#### East Africa

**The Maersk Texas**, a multi-purpose dry cargo ship, was attacked by pirates in the Gulf of Oman but guards repelled the attack, Maersk Line Ltd, a unit of Danish shipping and oil group A.P. Moller-Maersk, said on Wednesday - [Reuters](#).

The **Maersk Texas**, a U.S.-flagged 19,592 deadweight tonnes (dwt) vessel, 148 metres (486 feet) long, came under attack by pirates in skiffs at noon on Wednesday while transiting the Gulf of Oman, northeast of Fujairah, Maersk Line Ltd said.

Despite warnings, the pirates continued to approach the



vessel and then fired upon it, after which a security team returned fire in accordance with U.S. Coast Guard rules of engagement, Maersk Line Ltd said.

"All hands onboard are safe and unharmed, and the vessel is proceeding on its voyage," Maersk Line Ltd said.

**Iran's navy helped** a U.S.-flagged cargo ship that was attacked by pirates off the United Arab Emirates, according to the vessel's owner, Maersk Line Ltd [Safety4Sea](#).

The Iranian navy was the first to respond to the initial distress call from the **Maersk Texas**, Kevin Speers, senior director of marketing at Maersk Line, said by phone today. The vessel was attacked by several skiffs and armed guards on board returned fire, the company said in an earlier statement.

The incident happened at about noon northeast of Fujairah, the biggest port in the Middle East for refuelling oil tankers, Maersk said. Iran's navy provided guidance to the crew of the **Maersk Texas** by radio, Speers said, declining to comment further pending a debriefing.

U.S., U.K., Chinese, French, German and Russian negotiators -- the so-called P5+1 group -- are meeting with Iranian officials in Baghdad today over the Persian Gulf country's nuclear program. The West suspects Iran's goal is to develop a weapon, while Iran contends it is for civilian purposes.

The European Union's counter-piracy force said it had reviewed the incident and determined there was "no case of piracy and it's a false alarm," Timo Lange, a spokesman for Northwood, England-based EU Navfor, said by phone today. EU Navfor operates nine warships and five maritime patrol aircraft as part of an operation combating piracy in the region, according to data on its website. [Read more](#).

**Iran's navy said** Thursday it saved an American-flagged cargo ship that was being attacked by pirates in the Gulf of Oman - [AFP](#).

An Iranian warship responded to a distress signal from the US-flagged **Maersk Texas**, a cargo ship of 150 metres (500 feet) and 14,000 tonnes, which was besieged by "several pirate boats," the navy said in a statement reported by the official IRNA news agency.

The cargo vessel "was saved by the navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran" on Wednesday, IRNA added.

The pirates "fled the scene as soon as they spotted the presence" of the warship. **Maersk Texas** "thanked the Iranian navy and sailed towards its destination safely," it added.

It was the first time the Iranian navy protected a US ship from pirates.

Maersk Line told AFP that its vessel, **Maersk Texas**, had "thwarted an attack by multiple pirate skiffs at noon local while transiting the Gulf of Oman, northeast of Fujairah" but denied it had been helped by the Iranian navy.

"**Maersk Texas** heard from the Iranian navy over radio to the initial distress call, but our vessel received no assistance from the Iranian navy," spokesman Kevin Steers said in an email sent to AFP in Washington.

"All hands onboard are safe and unharmed, and the vessel is proceeding on its voyage," he added.

Iran's navy keeps a presence in Gulf of Oman to protect cargo ships and transiting oil tankers and also defend the country against potential threats.

According to Iranian commanders, Iran's navy have carried out hundreds of anti-piracy operations, engaging in hundreds of armed clashes with pirates in the past three years.

The US navy patrolling the area have on a number of occasions rescued Iranian ships. The latest incident was in January when a US warship secured the release of 13 Iranian fishermen near the entrance to the Gulf who had been held captive by pirates for 45 days.

**Somali fisherman pleaded** Friday for international navies protecting shipping to halt air strikes on coastal villages, after the EU Naval Force struck a pirate base for the first time - [Al Arabiya](#).

An attack helicopter staged a nighttime raid on the Somali coastline Tuesday, the first since the European Union authorized such strikes, destroying several small boats that the force said were part of pirate operations.

But fishermen on the impoverished coast said that their boats had also been destroyed, and that they feared being caught up in further attacks aimed to damage pirate operations.

"The pirates cannot be easily identified, as they mingle with the fishermen -- the boats are the same and the people look alike unless they are armed," said Mohamed Hassan, a local fisherman in the Harardhere region.

"The fishermen are also victims -- some of the boats destroyed by the international forces belonged to local fishermen, and we are very much worried that fishermen will die in such operations," he added. [Read more](#).

**Iran's Navy has** foiled a pirate attack on a Filipino-owned bulk carrier with 23 crew members on-board off the coast of Oman in the Arabian Sea - [Press TV](#).

The Norway-flagged **MV Rosita** came under attack on Sunday when a number of armed people on-board several skiffs approached the ship at high speed.

The Iranian warships patrolling the area rushed to assist the cargo vessel upon its distress call, which reported an unauthorized boarding attempt by unknown parties.

Iranian Navy marines managed to foil the pirate attack on the vessel after they reached the area. No fire fight was reported between the crews of the Iranian ships and the pirates.

The vessel with deadweight of 52,338 metric tons was en route from an Indian port to Qatar. [Read more](#).

## West Africa

In a bid to ensure that its fight against piracy has the backing of the law, Nigeria's apex maritime regulatory authority, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) has presented a bill to the National Assembly - [This Day Live](#).

The proposed law which is titled 'Bill on Piracy and Other Unlawful Acts at Sea' is aimed at fighting Piracy and armed robbery at sea.

The Director General, NIMASA, Mr. Ziakede Patrick Akpobolokemi, disclosed this in a welcome address he presented at a stakeholders' meeting in the Rivers State capital, Port Harcourt.

The NIMASA helmsman, represented by the agency Legal Adviser, Mr. Matthew Egbadon, said the bill is expected to provide legal backing to the fight against piracy and other sea criminality and curb the financial losses, which he claimed was in excess of \$3 billion.

He noted that the draft bill, put together by the agency's consultant, International Maritime Organisation (IMO) technical consultant and the legal team of the agency, entails the review of the UNCLOS 1982 and the SUA 1988 conventions and protocols as they relate to piracy. [Read more](#).

## Southeast Asia

**The Chinese state** news media said Thursday [May 17] that North Korean gunmen plying the Yellow Sea had seized three Chinese fishing boats with 29 sailors aboard and were demanding a ransom for their release, says [The New York Times](#).

Many of the details remained murky. The Beijing News said the boats were intercepted on May 8 in waters between China and North Korea. The report quoted one of the ships' owners, Zhang Dechang, as saying that he had spoken by phone to a kidnapped sailor and that the captors were demanding about \$189,000. Later reports said that had been reduced to about \$142,000.

Another newspaper, The Global Times, quoted Mr. Zhang as saying that the attackers had brandished weapons and that the Chinese sailors had not resisted. "The captured fishermen have been locked in a small house, with no food to eat," he said.

There were conflicting accounts about where the fishing boats originated. Most said they were from the city of Dalian in the northeast, but on Thursday an engineer from the Wenzhou Engineering Survey Institute, in the southern province of Zhejiang, sent messages on Twitter and on China's Sina Weibo microblog service saying the boats were from his institute and asking the public to pressure Beijing to take action. [Read more](#).

**The 29 Chinese** fishermen and three boats that were captured by unidentified North Koreans in the Yellow Sea have been released, according to state media - [Zee News](#).

The North Korean foreign ministry told the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang that the Chinese fishermen were freed, BBC reports.

Chinese Ambassador Liu Hongcai and other diplomats worked closely through negotiation with North Korea to get the fishermen released.

The fishermen did not suffer from any health problems, Jiang Yaxian, a counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang, said.

The captors had demanded ransom for the release of the fishermen, but it is not known whether any payment had been made.

It remains unclear if the boats were captured by North Korean authorities or kidnappers.

The fishermen were captured on May 8 in the Yellow Sea between China and North Korea.

## RELEASED BY PIRATES

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## PIRATES IN COURT

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**ix Somalis** go on trial in a Paris court on Tuesday charged with taking the 30 crew of luxury sailing ship **Le Ponant** hostage in the emerald, pirate-infested waters of the Gulf of Aden in 2008, reports [France 24](#).

The six men, aged 25 to 50, face life in prison if convicted of kidnapping and theft as part of a gang after they were arrested in a French airborne operation on land in Somalia after a ransom was paid.

Only one admits to being a pirate, two admit to having been aboard the elegant 88-metre three-master but only to sell goats, cigarettes and the mild narcotic khat. The other three deny ever having set foot on the boat.

**Le Ponant** left the Seychelles on March 30, 2008 with 30 crew and no passengers on board, headed for Yemen where they were to take on passengers for a cruise.

On entering the notorious Gulf of Aden on April 4, the ship was boarded by pirates armed with assault rifles who forced the crew to head for Somalia.

A week later, the ship's owner, shipping giant CMA-CGM, paid a \$2.15-million (1.7-million-euro) ransom, the crew was freed and the pirates fled into the lawless sands of Somalia.

France hunted the pirates through Somalia, eventually intercepting a 4x4 vehicle as it left a village, finding 200,000 dollars and weapons on board.

The car's six Somali passengers were arrested and **Le Ponant** crew members positively identified them as the pirates, although some crew have since said they are unsure of the hijackers' identities.

A total of 22 Somalis are being held by France in connection with four hostage-taking incidents.

Last year a Paris court jailed five pirates for between four and eight years for hijacking the **Carre d'As** in the Gulf of Aden in September 2008. A sixth alleged pirate was acquitted.

Prosecutors are appealing those sentences as being too lenient.

**A 2013 trial** date has been set for three Somali men charged with murdering four Americans aboard a yacht off the coast of Africa - [Mercury News](#).

Ahmed Muse Salad, Abukar Osman Beyle and Shani Nurani Shiekh Abrar could face the death penalty if they're convicted.

The **Quest's** owners, Jean and Scott Adam of Marina del Rey, Calif., and friends Bob Riggle and Phyllis Macay of Seattle, were shot to death in 2011 after being taken hostage several hundred miles south of Oman. They were the first U.S. citizens killed in a wave of pirate attacks.

Prosecutors said during a scheduling hearing in federal court in Virginia on Tuesday that the trial is expected to last five or six weeks. Jury selection begins June 3, 2013.

**A U.S. federal** appeals court made clear on Wednesday that the definition of piracy includes violent attempts to hijack a ship, even if unsuccessful, and upheld convictions against five Somali pirates - [Reuters \(Africa\)](#).

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Richmond, Virginia, upheld what federal prosecutors described as the first U.S. piracy convictions in 190 years, finding that an individual does not have to seize or rob a ship to commit piracy.

The court rejected a bid by five Somali men to overturn their convictions for attacking a U.S. Navy ship they mistook for a merchant vessel in 2010.

In April 2010, a small gang of Somali pirates fired on the **USS Nicholas**, which was lit to disguise itself as a merchant ship while combatting piracy off the coast of Africa.

Approaching on a skiff, the men fired AK-47s at the ship and launched rocket-propelled grenades into the air, but they never managed to board or seize the Navy frigate.

After a pursuit, naval forces captured the pirates and transported them back to the United States to face piracy and related charges. The men were found guilty and convicted to life in prison, the punishment for piracy, plus 80 years.

On appeal, the men argued that their actions did not meet the definition of piracy under the law. They pointed to the Supreme Court's 1820 decision in *United States v. Smith*, which defined piracy as robbery at sea.

But a unanimous three-judge panel of the 4th Circuit disagreed on Wednesday, citing two international treaties that define piracy to encompass acts of violence. [Read more](#).

**Amid the continued** row over the detention of two Italian marines by India, Italy's Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi said he expects New Delhi will arrive at a "quick" solution on the issue, which is having a negative effect on the international community's anti-piracy efforts - [Business Standard India](#).

Foreign Minister Terzi said any conflict between countries over jurisdiction and interpretation of the law of the sea in anti-piracy and counter-terrorism operations should be addressed through "mediation with honesty and clarity."



Addressing reporters here yesterday, Terzi said UN leader Ban Ki-moon also shared his "concerns" about the fallout from the diplomatic row between Italy and India over the detention of two Italian servicemen Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Girone, who have been charged with the murder of two Indian fishermen.

Terzi said a "very unfortunate situation" has developed with authorities of the Indian judiciary as well as with those in the state of Kerala over the issue.

"We expect a quick solution will be facilitated first of nationally by the Indian authorities on which we have been in contact constantly and there will be really a need to assure international community that we are placing a very strong effort on countering piracy."

"This episode is already having a very very negative effect on the anti-piracy efforts of the international community," Terzi said, adding that the killing of the two Indian fishermen is an "unfortunate loss". [Read more](#).

## PRIVATE SECURITY

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**The Belgian shipowners'** association KBR has pressed to be allowed to use private armed guards onboard their ships, but "trigger-happy-cowboys" need not apply - [Shiptalk](#).

The national government looks like accepting their demands, and an anti-piracy clause is expected to be added to Belgian legislation. This will require registration of armed guards and a formal reporting procedure.

It is expected that the legislation will be bolted on to existing rules for private security sector and the maritime element will be seen as a "special assignment". There will be a special security activity; protecting persons and goods on ships from acts of piracy.

The association also made it very clear, that trigger-happy cowboys will not be welcome on Belgian vessels. In order to safeguard the quality of the guards used there will be psychological checks, as well as an examination of the integrity, familiarity with the rule of law, ability to restrain oneself and communication skills of any guards used.

Another key issue that the legislation will clarify is the relationship between the captain of the vessel and the guards.

**The international community** is intensifying its efforts to combat maritime piracy in Somalia. While the U.S. and the EU take additional military measures to eliminate strongholds of the pirates on the coast, private companies are creating their own guards to protect their cargo - [Pravada](#). Under these conditions, Russia insists on taking more effective measures to prevent smuggling of weapons, allowing the sea robbers to be armed with the latest technology. Their arsenal includes machine guns, grenade launchers, "Stingers" and ship mines.

The problem of arms trafficking in Somalia has been acute for quite a long time. After the collapse of the dictatorial regime of Siad Barre in 1991, the country immersed in chaos. In 1992

the UN introduced an embargo on arms supplies to Somalia. However, it is impossible to control all possible ways of smuggling arms on the coast of the Horn of Africa.

Since 1990s, just about anyone has been supplying weapons into the country engulfed with a civil war. Islamists were actively assisted by Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Hezbollah. Some Western countries were also caught supplying arms to Somalia. For example, the UK signed a contract to sell a fairly large shipment of small arms. In 2009, after the lifting of the embargo, the U.S. began to actively arm the officially recognized government of Somalia. However, with a weak central government the weapons at any time can be sold to pirates or hijacked by extremists. [Read more](#).

**The International Maritime** Organization, IMO, is underway with a requirement that private security firms continue to be ISO certified - [Danish Maritime Magazine](#).

It seems to be the result of the efforts of IMO's efforts to clean up the market for private security companies selling protection to piracy threatened merchant ships in the area off Somalia.

Pirates' criminal activities have meant that the number of private security firms have grown over the past year. This has led to a situation where individual companies are responsible for the security of crews, ships and cargoes.

"We obviously support IMO's thoughts on an ISO standard. It is gratifying that the international community takes hold on this and moves quickly, rather than that the individual country authorities would have to make their own certification schemes," says Deputy Director of the Danish Shipowners' Association, Jan Fritz Hansen.

Source: Danish Shipowners

**Admiral Sir James** Burnell-Nugent KCB, CBE, formerly commander-in-chief Royal Navy and current director of Orchard Leadership [now also a [Senior Fellow of Oceans Beyond Piracy board](#)], has joined Risk Intelligence as a Strategic Advisor - [Risk Intelligence](#).

Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent commanded a range of warships including the aircraft carrier Invincible in the British Royal Navy after achieving a Master's Degree at Cambridge University, and concluded his career as full Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet. He was knighted in 2004. He is a graduate of the Greenwich Joint Services Defence College and an Honorary Fellow of Corpus Christi College Cambridge.

CEO of Risk Intelligence Hans Tino Hansen comments "I am very pleased with having Sir James onboard as Strategic Advisor. His experience in leadership and operational background will provide an important contribution to the strategic development of the company. An important role will be to chair the Advisory Board".

Sir James Burnell-Nugent comments "I am very pleased to be able to contribute to the exciting development of Risk Intelligence at a time of increasing global concerns with maritime security". [Read more](#).



**The private maritime** security industry has supported the IMO development of guidance and an international standard for the industry, but now they are demanding the right to be consulted and to have the process funded by shipping - [Shiptalk](#).

IMO Secretary General Koji Sekimizu had told the media that this week's debate would end with the decision to develop guidelines and a standard for PMSCs. However it has been stressed that the initiative would not be industry-led, and it looks like we are moving away from mandatory requirements to flag States being provided with a framework to apply.

The uncertainty and different standards have come at a bad time for PMSCs, as it seems like, for the first time, their business models are under threat and they are wrestling with over supply in the market. With that in mind, many feel that if the shipping industry wants a standard, then they should pay for it.

The issue of cost is something which is bound to cause further consternation, even before money was mentioned the whole issue was getting messy. With PMSCs believing the client should foot the bill for development and means of checking up on them, well that could be going too far.

PMSCs have also expressed a wish to be consulted on the terms of any international standard. One said that the IMO needed to understand the practicalities and implications of any such system and needed to listen to firms that operate off the coast of Somalia.

**Enrica Lexie**, the Italian vessel involved in the killing of two Indian fishermen left the Indian waters safely but the incident has left Indian shipping companies in a double whammy. Faced with the menace of pirates, shipping companies had made their peace with having armed guards on board after much debate - [Business Standard \(India\)](#). But, the companies are now not comfortable with the idea unless the armed guards are from the Indian Navy. Shipping companies feel that they would be left to fend for themselves against the might of a foreign country if the guards are from private parties in case of any untoward incident on high seas.

Although no immediate solution is in sight, shipping ministry is mulling to recruit guards from CRPF to be placed on Indian vessels. This option is being worked out after shipping companies faced problems hiring naval guards. "Naval personnel do not prefer to be under the command of a non-naval crew," a shipping company executive said.

After International Maritime Organization recommended having armed guards on ships, several private companies had sprung up offering such personnel for ships. "This matter has to be given very careful thought. There are safety implications and legal aspects to this matter. We have to reach a solution which will be amenable to all," said A R Ramakrishnan, managing director, Essar Shipping. [Read more](#).

**The International Maritime** Organization has tasked the International Standards Organisation with developing the first global standard for private maritime security companies - [Shiptalk](#). The latest feature from Lloyd's List covers the developments at the IMO. Speaking last week at an IMO maritime safety committee press conference, secretary-general Koji Sekimizu announced the decision to provide guidance and an international standard for PMSCs and said that IMO working groups would discuss the details this week.

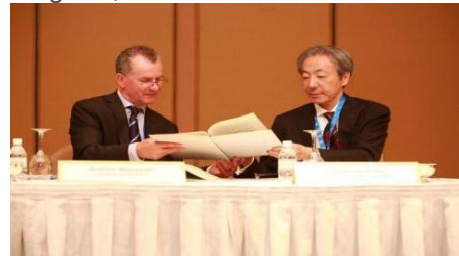
Lloyd's List now understands that in plenary the IMO working group recommended guidance to PMSCs and passed this to the ISO as its minimum requirement for setting the standard.

As a result, the ISO is said to be planning to invite initial input from all interested parties, before creating an expert drafting group to draft the standard and guidelines by the time the committee next meets in November. [Read more](#).

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

**ReCAAP (Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia)** and INTERTANKO formalised their co-operation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) last week at INTERTANKO's Annual Event in Singapore - [Safety4Sea](#). The MoU records a mutual understanding on joint cooperation in the area of information exchanges and establishes a platform for future collaboration. It was signed by Yoshihisa Endo, Executive Director of the ReCAAP ISC, and Capt Graham Westgarth, Chairman of INTERTANKO.

Signing this MoU marks yet another step forward in furthering the already close collaboration between on the one hand the Asian Initiatives to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, and on the other the international shipping associations representing the tanker community.



At the opening of the signing ceremony, Westgarth remarked, "With this MoU, INTERTANKO and ReCAAP establish a framework for working together in the future built on the strong and positive cooperation since ReCAAP's establishment in 2006".

"Such a Cooperative arrangement is one of the three pillars of ReCAAP," said Endo. "It allows a variety of organisations to collaborate and cooperate with the ReCAAP ISC in sharing information, and to participate in our capacity building programmes. We thank INTERTANKO for providing us with very strong and continuous support since 2009, as a co-organiser of the annual ReCAAP ISC Piracy and Sea Robbery Conferences for the past four years."

**The jokes about** peg legs, parrots and the Jolly Roger are long gone. Piracy is no laughing matter and these days it is the lawyers who would rule the waves [The National](#).

According to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), piracy is defined as "any illegal act of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship".

Further, UNCLOS states that "all states have an obligation to cooperate to the fullest possible extent in the repression of piracy and have universal jurisdiction on the high seas to seize pirate ships and aircraft, or a ship or aircraft taken by piracy and under the control of pirates, and arrest the persons and seize the property on board". The convention also allows states to "exercise a right of visit vis-a-vis ships suspected of being engaged in piracy".

What sounds relatively simple on paper is more complex in reality. An immediate difficulty is the phrase "high seas", which refers to international waters. Most attacks are carried out in Somali waters, but Somalia has no effective government on land, let alone at sea, though it is legally responsible for stopping pirate attacks.

In an attempt to resolve this, the UN Security Council has passed resolutions authorising certain nations, such as those involved in Operation Atalanta, to enter Somali waters to pursue suspected pirates.

The definition of piracy is also complicated by the law in individual countries. A US court last month convicted Mohammad Saaili Shibin, the hostage negotiator in a hijacking during which four Americans were killed. Because Shibin was operating on land, his lawyers argued - unsuccessfully - that he could not be a pirate, a question that still has to be tested on appeal.

Then there is the question of the pirates' human rights. British Royal Navy captains have been warned that captured Somalis might be able to claim asylum in Britain - even if convicted - because they could face torture or execution if sent home.

**Admiral Tanasak Patimapragorn**, Thailand's Chief of Defence Forces and Admiral Surasak Rounroengrom, Commander-in-Chief, Royal Thai Navy met with Commander, Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, Rear Adm. Tanin Likitawong, Royal Thai Navy, in Seychelles, May 20-21 [CMF](#).

Image - (Rear Adm. Tanin Likitawong, Royal Thai Navy, commander, Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, left, welcomes Admiral Tanasak Patimapragorn, Chief of Defence Forces, right.)



Thailand's military delegation met with Likitawong to discuss Thailand's contributions to Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), CTF 151 counter-piracy mission. This is the first time Thailand has been in command of the counter-piracy mission since joining CMF in 2010.

Likitawong stated, "This is the first time the Royal Thai Navy has been in command of CTF 151. This task force is comprised of a multi-national staff with the common ground of working towards security of sea lanes and communication in the region. Counter-piracy remains an important topic in the international community." [Read more](#).

*Image Rear Adm. Tanin Likitawong, Royal Thai Navy, commander, Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, left, welcomes Admiral Tanasak Patimapragorn, Chief of Defence Forces, right.)*

**EU Naval Force** Warship **FS NIVÔSE** welcomed ten Djiboutian coast guards on 16 May for training and discussion on skiff interception, vessel protection teams and online communication - [EUNAVFOR](#).

During a port visit in Djibouti, the crew of **Nivose** and members of the Djiboutian coast guard shared their experiences in the fight against piracy, and more broadly on the coast guards' role in the protection of Djiboutian waters.



The sailors of **Nivose** presented their skiff interception procedures, the implementation of a vessel protection team on board a merchant vessel, as well as the handling of suspected pirates once arrested. Training was both theoretical and practical. [Read more](#).

Image - *eunavfor*

**Interim guidance** to private maritime security companies (PMSCs) was agreed by IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), when it met at the Organization's London Headquarters for its 90th session from 16 to 25 May 2012 - [IMO.org](#).

The guidance covers:

- PMSC Professional Certification, including the recommendation that PMSC should seek certification with relevant national and international private maritime security service standards when these are established;
- PMSC Company requirements, including the recommendation that PMSC should establish procedures to provide maritime security services to ship owners and ship operators and comply with all relevant legal requirements;
- Management, including recommendations on selection, vetting and training of personnel for a PCASP team;
- Deployment considerations, addressing the specific aspects of PCASP deployment and the role of the PMSC in ensuring efficient and successful deployments, including communications with the ship owner or operator, and including recommendations relating to management of firearms and ammunition from embarkation to disembarkation and use of force. (The PMSC should recognize that laws governing the use of force may differ over time and according to location. The applicable national law, including any criminal laws, for an incident on a ship from which PCASP will be operating will be principally that of the flag State. It may also include the laws and regulations of coastal, port and other States.)

The MSC agreed that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) would be best placed to develop international standards for PMSCs based on the IMO-developed guidance and with relevant IMO liaison and participation in the ISO process for standards' development. [Read more](#).

## PIRACY COSTS

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**UK prime minister** David Cameron has failed to ease concerns that seafarers could suffer as a result of plans to restrict ransom payments to Somali pirates - [Nautilus International](#).

The maritime professionals' union Nautilus International wrote to Mr Cameron to highlight fears that crew members could pay with their lives if governments go ahead with plans to outlaw ransom payments when ships are hijacked.

In a letter to the union, Mr Cameron says the UK is seeking to establish an international task force to examine ways to 'bring about an end to the culture of ransom payments'. The PM said he hoped shipping industry partners would 'engage fully' with the task force and 'offer constructive advice' to it.

But Mr Dickinson said the PM's response had not succeeded in easing the union's concern that any moves to prevent payment of ransoms could jeopardise the safety of seafarers being held captive.

'Whilst no one wants to see large sums of money being paid to pirates, politicians have failed to provide any realistic alternative,' he added. 'Ransoms are the only way in which we can ensure the safe return of seafarers, and it is clear from a number of cases that any attempt to frustrate the payment can put crew members into even greater danger. [Read more](#).

## SEAFARERS' PLIGHT

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**Shipowners from all** over Asia gathered to form a massive human SOS as a demonstration of their support for the international SOS SaveOurSeafarers campaign. The shipowners meetings this week in Australia for the 21st Asian Shipowners Forum (ASF) which had piracy at the top of their agenda - [MarineLog](#).

In the last seven years, 62 seafarers have died as a result of pirate actions, and getting on for 4,000 have been held hostage on some 200 ships hijacked by Somali pirates. "These innocent seafarers, just doing their jobs to keep the world supplied with raw materials and finished goods, get hijacked and suffer extreme mental and physical torture. We

call on the world to take note that these people are working and putting themselves on the front line for you," says Alastair Evitt, Chairman of SOS SaveOurSeafarers.

Noel Hart, Chairman of the 21st ASF, says, "The operation carried out by EU Naval Forces on May 15, 2012 to disrupt pirate supplies and bases on the Somali shoreline is welcome and has sent a clear signal that piracy cannot be tolerated. Blatant attacks on innocent ships and seafarers must be stopped."



The Seafarers Committee of the ASF expressed its strong concern at the trauma, agony, suffering and lasting psychological and physical effects on seafarers and their families caused by pirate attacks. [Read more.](#)

**To coincide with** its Annual General Meeting, in Queensland Australia, on 24-25 May, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has published its latest Annual Review of maritime policy and regulatory developments - [Maritime Executive](#).

[Copies are being distributed free of charge](#) via ICS's 36 member national shipowners' associations which, through ICS, collectively represent all sectors and trades and over 80% of the world merchant fleet to the international regulatory bodies that impact on shipping, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

'Piracy Crisis in the Indian Ocean' available [HERE](#) (PDF).

Spyros M Polemis, who will be standing down at the AGM after six years as ICS Chairman. [Read more.](#)

## AND FINALLY...

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**A Kenyan journalist** investigating the Somali pirates and an Afghan broadcaster exposing violence against women will receive the 2012 Knight International Journalism Awards, the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) announced - [Marketwatch](#). The award recognizes excellent reporting that makes a difference in the lives of people around the world.

Kassim Mohamed is an investigative reporter covering Kenya and Somalia, a nation plagued by lawlessness and piracy. He has chronicled the ensuing chaos in great detail -and at great personal risk- for the Nairobi-based Star FM radio station and The Star newspaper.

His in-depth interviews with Somali pirates have shed light on a lucrative industry that endangers international sea routes. During one investigation, the pirates took him hostage. After they freed him, he wrote a groundbreaking story on the struggles of the pirates' wives. He has received death threats. [Read more.](#)

**Two men developing** two satellites for mapping 70 percent of the global maritime activity encompassing 200,000 ships a day. Google can watch them, but the navies of the world cannot. See Google's Chief Technology Officer, Michael Jones explain during a keynote speech on YouTube/USNI video [HERE](#) via Information Dissemination. "It's crazy, or somewhat lamentable..." Goto minute 23 to 31 for the Google Earth view.



## PIRACY INCIDENTS

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### Hijacks:

- NSTR

### Unsuccessful Attacks/Robberies (All regions):

- South China Sea - LATE Report | While a Malaysia-flagged tug boat, **Budget 19**, towing a barge **Budget 29**, at 0550 LT in position 01:11.73N - 103:30.17E, approximately 5.8 NM west-northwest of Raffles Lighthouse, off Singapore. Three robbers boarded the barge and escaped with some scrap metal and mooring ropes. No injuries to crew. Master informed POCC Singapore. Reported (via ReCAAP) 15 May.
- South China Sea - Duty A/B on roving deck patrol on a Singapore-flagged bulk carrier, **MP Panamax 4**, noticed five robbers in the forward store at 2240 LT: in position 03:42.7S – 144: 26.8E, Taboneo Anchorage, Banjarmasin, Indonesia. Two of the robbers threatened him with a knife and the A/B escaped and informed D/O who raised alarm and alerted all crew. By the time the crew members went forward the robbers had escaped with stolen ship stores. Reported (via IMB) 18 May.
- Gulf of Oman - Three skiffs chased a Panama-flagged crude tanker, **Aquarius Wing**, underway and approached close to the stern at 2000 LT in position 25:13N – 057:43E, around 25nm south of Ras e Jask, Iran. Alarm sounded, anti-piracy measures enforced, authorities and nearby warship contacted. Later the skiffs aborted the boarding and moved away. Reported (via IMB) 18 May.
- Gulf of Oman - Norway-flagged, Filipino-owned bulk carrier, **MV Rosita** (23 crew), came under attack by a number of armed people on-board several skiffs that approached the ship at high speed. Iranian warships patrolling the area rushed to assist the cargo vessel following distress call, which reported an unauthorized boarding attempt by unknown parties off Oman. Iranian Navy marines managed to foil the pirate attack on the vessel after they reached the area. No fire fight was reported between the crews of the Iranian ships and the pirates. The vessel, with deadweight of 52,338 metric tons, was en route from an Indian port to Qatar. Vessel last known posn at anchor was off Fujairah. Reported (via Iranian sources) 20 May.
- Gulf of Oman - D/O onboard a general cargo ship, **Maersk Texas**, underway noticed a group of 10 skiffs at a distance of 2nm from the ship on the stbd side at 0900 UTC in position 25:29.6N – 057:16.8E, around 28nm WSW of Bandar-e-Jask, Iran. The forward skiff broke off from the group and approached the ship at a speed of 20-25 knots. Master and security team informed. Alarm raised, fire hoses and SSAS activated. UKMTO and navies informed. The ship increased speed and commenced manoeuvring away from the skiffs. As the skiffs closed to 500meters the armed security team fired warning shots. The skiffs ignored the warning shots and continued to approach aggressively and weapons were sighted on the skiffs. As the skiffs closed to 300meters the security team once again fired at the skiffs and it was noticed that the skiffs returned fire towards the ship. Eleven additional skiffs were sighted on the port side advancing towards the ship. As the

security team fired warning shots these skiffs stopped and moved away. The skiffs on the stbd side continued to chase the ship and then after around 12 minutes from the initial approach the skiffs moved away towards a large dhow in the vicinity. No damages and no injuries to crew. Reported 23 May.

- Red Sea - Pirates in three skiffs approached an Italy-flagged bulk carrier, **MBA Rosaria**, underway at 1408 UTC in position 12:48N - 043:11E. 6 - 8 people were seen on board each skiff and weapons were sighted. The Master raised the alarm, informed UKMTO and alerted the armed security team onboard. Weapons sighted on the skiffs when they closed to 300 metres from the ship. The armed security team fired warning shots resulting in the pirates aborting the attempted attack and moving away. Reported 23 May.

**EUNAVFOR (latest) figures** state 8 vessels and an estimated 235 hostages held captive ([Updated 24 May](#)) - See image below. The [International Maritime Bureau](#) (IMB) figures at 18 May are: 13 vessels and 200 seafarers held hostage. UKMTO figures state 18 vessels and 245 hostages held.

EU Naval Force Somalia - Operation Atalanta				
		STATISTICS		
		UPDATED: 24/05/2012		
Currently held by pirates		Vessels <sup>1</sup>	Hostages <sup>2</sup>	
		8	235	
Since 2009				
WFP Escorts		157		
AMISOM Escorts		126		
Tonnes of food delivered		916 716		
Pirates transferred to competent authorities with a view to their prosecution		128 (68 prosecuted)		
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Attacks <sup>3</sup>	117	127	151	25
Pirated <sup>4</sup>	46	47	25	5
Total incidents	163	174	176	30
Disruptions <sup>5</sup>	14	65	28	11
Pirate Success Rate	28%	27%	14%	

<sup>1</sup> Plus an unknown number of unconfirmed Dhows and smaller vessels including their crew  
<sup>2</sup> Estimated  
<sup>3</sup> An event where suspected pirates have located and closed on a vessel in a positive attempt to gain control of it.  
<sup>4</sup> A ship successfully boarded by pirates who subsequently take full control of propulsion and steering.

1 Plus an unknown number of unconfirmed dhows and smaller vessels including their crew

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3 An event where suspected pirates have located and closed on a vessel in a positive attempt to gain control of it.

4 A ship successfully boarded by pirates who subsequently take full control of propulsion and steering.

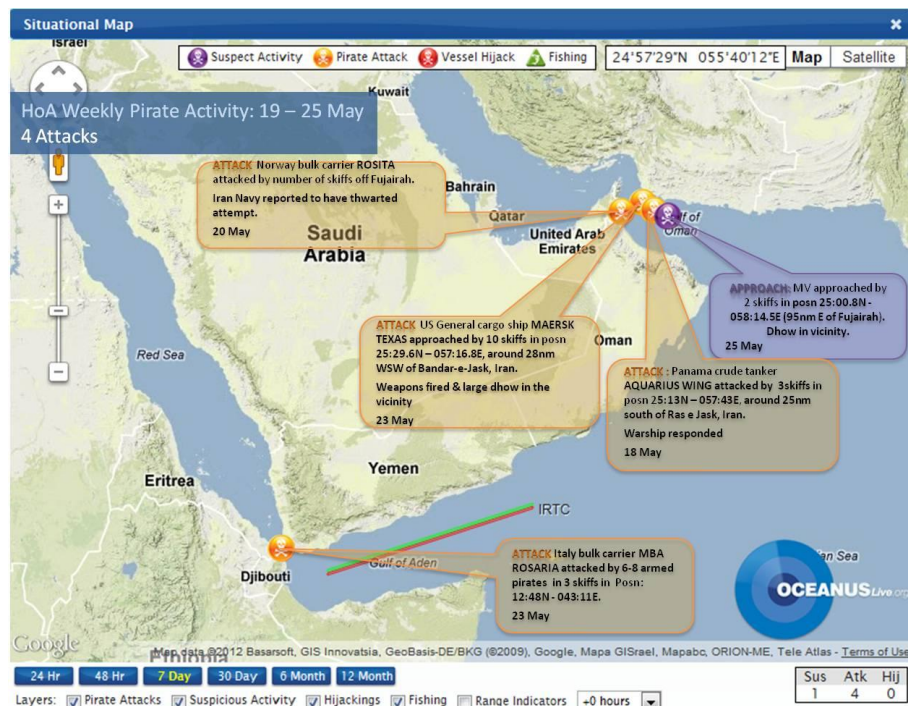
5 An action that renders a pirate group incapable of further pirate operations.

Courtesy of EUNAVFOR

**Vessels are reminded** that the coalition forces' warships may not be in the vicinity of a pirate attack, subsequently, it is emphasised that seafarers can greatly reduce their chances of being pirated if they follow precautions as recommended in the [Best Management Practices](#), increasing speed and carrying out evasive manoeuvres is a proven deterrent to piracy attacks. BMP version 4 is available at the link above; a high resolution version can be downloaded [here](#).

**Vessels are advised** to exercise extreme caution when navigating in the vicinity of any reported positions of attacks and maintain maximum CPA with any ship acting suspiciously. Additionally, registration of vessel movement with [MSC\(HOA\)](#) prior to transiting the region is recommended.

## SITUATIONAL MAP



Horn of Africa Pirate Activity (Click on Map for Larger View)

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Any suspicious activity should be reported to UKMTO in Dubai (Email [UKMTO](mailto:UKMTO) or Telephone+971 50 552 3215) and on entering the UKMTO Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) bound by Suez, 78E and 10S.

