

WEEKLY PIRATE ACTIVITY UPDATE

OCEANUSLive.org

INFORMATION,
SECURITY,
SAFETY;
SHARED.

2 - 8 Jun 2012

Free at last - Greek tanker released after several months; 21 Filipinos crew freed. Monsoon weather keeps activity at low level but on land Puntland forces carry out aerial attack on pirate leader. Two hijacked MTs reportedly sighted with the likelihood of being used as motherships remain unconfirmed. Guyana sees four arrested for piracy of a fishing vessel. UK and Mauritius sign agreement for holding and prosecuting pirates. Istanbul conference with the theme 'Preparing Somalia's Future: Goals for 2015' emphasises a new phase post-August 2012. Dutch minister for International Cooperation and European Affairs visited Garowe to discuss politics and security in Puntland. Nigeria launches its very first nation-built warship as analyst says the nexus of criminality, drug trafficking, weapons proliferation and state weakness frames our understanding and perceptions of the West African region. The issue of fishing activity off India and the continued illegal foreign fishing vessels off Somalia demonstrates the misunderstandings in the Horn of Africa region. Cyprus Parliament unanimously supports armed guards and weapons on ships. US Committees on Appropriations to submit a diplomacy and development counter-piracy strategy. International naval efforts fighting piracy involves complex command and control arrangements as well as innovative solutions; intelligence cooperation needs to evolve if avoidance is to play a larger role in deterring piracy. No clearer on situation where assistance of the Iranian Navy was not acknowledged by Maersk Line which said it had communicated with the Iranians but received no direct assistance. Analysis of the incidence of maritime piracy and the potential degree of violence that could be involved. Euro politician says that maritime piracy is "particularly worrying". Business is still booming for pirates. British couple, the Chandlers, to return to sea to finish their round-the-world trip. **MV Albedo** dilemma continues. Mariner, in Seafarer UK video, tells of his ordeal suffering from piracy.

Contents:

[Regional Activity](#); [Released by Pirates](#); [Pirates in Court](#); [Private Security](#); [International Response](#); [Piracy Cost](#); [Seafarers' Plight](#); [And Finally...](#); [Piracy Incidents](#); [Situational Map](#)

The OCEANUSLive website will transition to a subscription service for registered users in the coming months. Notification will be passed to all users. Early bird, company/group, and other discounts will be available upto that time. News and editorial webpages along with the Weekly Newsletter will remain free.

East Africa

Reports from sources close to the pirate gang run by Isse Yulux have today *informed Somalia Report* of an attempt made by the Puntland Marine Police Force (PMPF) to take the vessel by force from its hijackers, writes [Somalia Report](#).

sources suggest that **MT Smyrni**, a Liberian-flagged Suezmax tanker, which is managed by the Greek firm, Dynacom Tankers Management Ltd., was being held in Bina, near Bargaal. Sources on the ground have told *Somalia Report* that PMPF officers operating in speed boats attacked the hijacked vessel, which is home to some 26 crew members and an unknown number of pirate bodyguards or Ilaalo.

Despite the efforts of the PMPF to free the vessel, the pirates defended it, firing on the PMPF who were forced to withdraw and return to port. There are reports of casualties, but as yet no details as to whether they were members of the PMPF or Yulux's gang.

On Saturday evening, reports reached *Somalia Report* that the PMPF were intending to travel to Hul-Anod village, where Yulux was believed to be in hiding. Our sources suggest that the pirates holding **MT Smyrni** may now be preparing to move the vessel to another port.

MT Smyrni was hijacked on May 10th some 630km off the coast of Oman with a cargo of 135,000 tonnes of crude oil. The crew consists of 14 Filipinos, 11 Indians and one Romanian seafarer. Previously, the vessel had been held in Hurdio, a small village between Bargal and Hafun in Somalia's Bari region. Reports suggest that Looyan, the well known pirate negotiator, has been slotted in to liaise with the vessel's owners over the ransom which will likely bring in millions for its hijackers.

The commissioner of Bandar beyla district in Somalia's northeastern region of Puntland has echoed that foreign vessels are increasingly coming into Somalia waters and continue looting the fish as they also dump toxic wastes into the seas, [RBC Radio](#) reports.

"In the night we can see huge number of lights which are foreign fishing vessels operating in our coast." Eng. Sa'id Adam Ali told local media on Monday. "They use very sophisticated underwater lighting systems to lure the fish".

The commissioner of Bandar beyla district made clear that foreign fishing vessels operate with drift nets to steal large number of the seafood.

"Even those who claim of counter piracy forces are looting our seafood." the commissioner added.

Eng Adam blamed the NATO and EU's anti piracy forces in the Somali coast are closely watching the ongoing poaching in the Somali seas. [Read more](#).

The security minister of Somalia's semi-autonomous region of Puntland Khalif Isse Mudan has confirmed that recently arrested teenagers from Hafun district on the eastern region were local fishermen who were mistakenly apprehended by Puntland forces, [RBC Radio](#) reports.

On Sunday, May 27th the Puntland forces with Saracen's security team attacked Hafun district where local people fought against them after the locals rejected that Saracen security team to be based in their town.

"After we met with the local people we realized that the arrested people were not pirates, they were local fisher men. We have to release them soon." Puntland security minister Khalif Isse Mudan said on Thursday after speaking to local media.

Mr. Mudan added that there were misinformation between Puntland officials and the local people in Hafun town regarding the piracy activists but later they got understood that Hafun is a fishing hub on the Indian Ocean.

An earlier statement from the security minister of Puntland claimed that Puntland Maritime Police Forces (PMPF) had apprehended 11 pirates after carrying out operations in the coastal town of Hafun on May 27th. At least three locals were killed in the attack. [Read more.](#)

An official from the autonomous Somali region of Puntland says its forces launched an aerial attack targeting a pirate leader in Somalia - [Washington Post](#).

The official said Wednesday that forces in a helicopter fired on a house in the village of Bali Dhidid where the pirate was believed to be, possibly wounding him. The official asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the press.

The official said three vehicles were destroyed by the bombardment but the pirate boss identified as Issa Yuluh managed to escape.

The attack comes a day after the Puntland's troops launched a raid on the pirate infested town of the Bargal. [Read more.](#)

Suezmax tanker MT Smyrni (IMO 9493779) is reportedly engaged in mothership activity, reports [Horn News](#).

The tanker suezmax Smyrni was reportedly spotted at 05h30 UTC on June 7 2012 in position 12:02.8N - 050:41.1E and the vessel is possibly engaged in another piracy mission.

The **MT Smyrni** was hijacked by Somali pirates on May 10 2012 in position 15:58N - 061:03E, 250 nm off Oman coast, 440nm of Socotra Island's eastern tip, in the Arabian sea. Smyrni was transiting in the International Transit Corridor and reportedly, didn't have security team aboard. The oil-tanker is loaded with 135,000 mt of Azerbaijan crude oil of some \$130 million market value, destined for PT Pertamina Co. refineries in Balikpapan Indonesia,

The crew of 26 comprises 14 Indians, 11 Filipino and 1 Romanian.

Crude oil tanker **Smyrni**, dwt 156000, built 2011, flag Liberia, manager DYNACOM TANKERS MANAGEMENT LTD, Greece.

Also the tanker **MT Royal Grace** (IMO 8410407) is reportedly engaged in mothership activity.

MT Royal Grace was reportedly spotted at 05h50 UTC June 7 2012 in 11:59N - 050:37E, and the vessel possibly is engaged in piracy activity.

Tanker **Royal Grace** was hijacked by pirates on March 2 at around 12h30 GMT in position 16:34N - 059:48E, some 180nm off Oman coast, in the Arabian sea. After the hijack vessel was

immediately moving towards Somali coast. Tanker was sailing from Dubai with unknown cargo to an unknown destination.

The crew of 22 has Indian, Pakistani and Nigerian nationals. Chemical tanker Royal Grace, dwt 6813, built 1984, flag Panama, manager Oyster Cargo and Shipping LLC, UAE.

[OCEANUSLive - no official confirmation has been received to corroborate the sightings at the time of publishing].

West Africa

HMS Dauntless, a British Royal Navy war ship, on Tuesday berthed at the Western Naval Command in Sekondi for a three-day duty tour, says [Spy Ghana](#).

The ship, which is under the command of Captain William Warrender, has a crew of 210.

It was met on arrival by Mr Peter Jones, British High Commissioner in Ghana, who later paid courtesy calls on Commodore Tim Appiah, Flag Officer Commanding the Western Naval Command and Madam Emelia Arthur, Deputy Western Regional Minister.

Speaking during the courtesy call on the Deputy Minister, Mr Jones said the ship, which is on its first visit to the country had already been to the Eastern Naval Command.

He said the visit forms part of the links between the Royal Navy and the Ghana Navy to improve maritime security to ensure free trade and to protect the territorial waters and exclusive zones of Britain and Ghana.

Mr Jones said the crew of the ship and the Ghana Navy would conduct joint training programmes to improve the maritime skills of their personnel.

Madam Arthur spoke of the long standing cordial relations between Ghana and Britain and hoped the visit of the ship would further cement the bond of friendship between the two countries.

Justices of the High Courts and Courts of Appeal are brainstorming in Abuja at a 3-day maritime seminar jointly organized by the Nigerian Shippers Council and the National Judicial Institute - [AllAfrica](#).

The seminar which was declared open yesterday by the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Dahiru Musdapher, is aimed at discussing recent developments in international maritime law.

Musdapher said, "it is imperative to regularly organize seminars on a sustained basis for judicial officers, maritime law practitioners and other stakeholders in the maritime industry."

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, said most maritime laws are international in nature and directed the House Committee on Marine Transport to commence the process of domesticating international maritime laws with a view to getting them passed into law to enable the country's maritime laws to conform with international laws.

Kobus Naval Design (KND) has received the contract to supply two 24 metre P249 patrol craft to the Nigerian Customs Service, which will use them to combat smuggling and piracy - [Defence Web](#).

On May 9 Nigeria's Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved N3 billion for the procurement of two Customs Service patrol boats for the surveillance of Nigerian waters.

Kobus Potgieter, CEO of Kobus Naval Design (KND), confirmed that his company had received the order and would deliver the vessels in ten months' time. The aluminium vessels will be built in Cape Town.

Nigerian marine logistics and support service provider Portplus Limited will cover spares and training of 72 crewmembers over a three-year period, according to Nigeria's This Day.

KND said that its West Africa partner, Rear Admiral (ret.) Akpan has been working close with the Nigerian Authority to make sure that the vessels will be a perfect match for their required application. This will be the sixth KND designed vessel in the Nigerian waters delivered over the last couple of years. The company is also busy with a dive boat contract for the oil and gas industry in Nigeria.

Nigeria's Information Minister Labaran Maku last month said that the vessels were being procured in view of the "current security challenges" in the region, which were disrupting economic activity. "An effective patrolled water front will go a long way in curtailing the huge economic drain and threat the incidence of smuggling pose to the nation's manufacturing sector," Maku said. [Read more](#).

After nearly five years in the making, the Nigerian navy ship or NNS Andoni was launched with a colourful event - [BBC News](#).

At 31m (100ft) long, this is no giant of the seas, but the fact that it was designed and built in Nigeria, by Nigerian engineers, is a great source of pride.

"We are all happy and elated," said Commodore SI Alade, one of Nigeria's senior naval officers. "This is the first time this kind of thing is happening in Nigeria and even in the sub region."



The **NNS Andoni** could be key in the fight against militants operating near Nigeria's oil fields as well as the growing threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

With a speed of up to 25 knots (46km/h), this can quickly go to intercept the pirates " - Commanding Officer Adepegba.

Moments after stepping on board **NNS Andoni**, sailor FL Badmus said: "I feel on top of the world."

Much has been written about the rise of piracy in West Africa, comments Jessica Lincoln in [Current Intelligence](#) bulletin. The nexus of criminality, drug trafficking, weapons proliferation and state weakness frames our understanding and perceptions of the region. Maritime companies release updates of pirate attacks and suggested modus operandi of criminal operators. and their picture of West African piracy is bleak, incorporating illegal bunkering,

corruption, armed violence and hijacking. At least 33 attacks were reported in April and March 2012, and the hijacking of the **BW Rhine** in April 2012 underscored the very real threat to the shipping industry. Given the importance of the region – it is expected to provide the US with about one quarter of its crude imports by 2015 -- few solutions have been advanced to address this growing problem. There is a general consensus, mirroring Somalia, that the solution lies on land and that regional cooperation is pivotal. This essay explores the challenges of countering piracy in West Africa. It examines piracy within a wider economic and security dynamic, focusing on the regional oil industry in particular. The article will also look to the international response to piracy in East Africa, while has been narrowly focused on regional concerns while negating maritime safety and security in West Africa. [Read more](#).

Southeast Asia

The southwest coast of India has been a popular fishing zone where fishing seasons are subjected to two monsoons, namely the southwest monsoon and the northeast monsoon - [ReCAAP](#).

With the increase in incidents of piracy and attempted piracy reported in the Arabian Sea, merchant vessels are operating closer to the coast of western India.

The vessels preferred to plan their passage closer to the coast of India rather than the straight course across the Arabian Sea. This had resulted in situation where fishing boats would raise the alarm and sail towards the merchant vessels to warn them from transgressing over their fishing nets/gears.

Unfortunately, these fishermen and their boats were mistaken as pirates in skiffs, and resulted in unfortunate incidents where innocent fishermen were fired upon by the armed guards onboard the merchant vessels. Read the full Special Report [HERE](#).

South America

Four persons have been arrested and are in police custody following a brazen morning pirate attack on a fishing crew in the Pomeroon River - [Stabroek News](#) .

Police sources last evening told Stabroek News that a fishing crew was fishing in the mouth of the Pomeroon River when they saw a strange boat rapidly heading in their direction. Suspecting a pirate attack, the crew, they said, alerted their boss, an Essequibo Coast businessman, who in turn contacted Maritime officials, as the crew sped toward the bank of the river where they abandoned their boat and catch. On their return with the police it was found that the pirates had taken not only their catch but fuel that was in boat. Their losses are believed to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Guyana's minister of public works, Robeson Benn, during a media briefing on Sunday, said that that swift action by the authorities led to the capture of a vessel and crew who reportedly took part in pirate activities - [Caribbean News Now](#).

“Between 09:-09:30 hrs, this morning (Sunday), the Maritime Administration started receiving reports that a vessel was in pursuit of another on the Essequibo Coast, along the Pomeroon

river... they believed they were being attacked... they were informed that if we did not hear from them they would have been in trouble,” Benn said.

He added that the vessel named ‘**SAPNA**’ was run aground by its crew since it could not outrun the vessel pursuing it... the vessel that was said to be pursuing it, came alongside the abandoned vessel and removed materials such as fish and fuel.

“The maritime police routed the police in the area, who routed boats out... the authorities have been able to recover both the vessel which was under attack and the vessel which was alleged to have committed the act, with their crews... they are both at Charity Police Station, assisting police with investigations,” the public works minister said.

Benn said that the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) was activated, which in turn contacted the army’s coastguard, the commissioner of police, the divisional commander, and CGX and Repsol, which assisted readily by making available two helicopters for the law enforcement authority to visit the location and provide technical support.

“We are happy to have results within 4-5 hours of the incident in terms of people being brought to safety and apprehended... we want to remind the mariners and fisher folk to keep contact with the lighthouse and law enforcement bodies, when they see situations arising that cause them to feel threatened, so that they can solicit help,” Benn said.

Director of maritime safety, Stephen Thomas, said that the crew of the fishing vessel positively identified the crew and vessel of their pursuers, which led to the capture of the presumed pirate vessel.

“Police are currently taking statements from all the persons and are conducting their investigations,” Thomas said.

The five suspects in the recent pirate attack at Cozier, in the Pomeroun, have said that they are ordinary fishermen and that they want to clear their names on the issue -[Kaieteur News](#).

The men, Premal Singh, who was the boat captain, of **Sparta**; Trevor Moore, of Danielstown; Bharrat Bridgemohan, of Sparta;

Manniram Mohanroop and Khemraj Gildarie, were released on \$10,000 station bail ,on Wednesday, after spending the routine 72 hours in custody.



But while the men are clamoring about their innocence, the police are maintaining that the men did commit the offence. They have strong circumstantial evidence against the men and advice is been sought from the Director of Public Prosecution, a rank said.

Members of the boat “Sapna” that was attacked by pirates, on Sunday June 3, have reported that on the day in question, they were fishing in the Atlantic, when they observed a boat coming in their direction.

The report added that the fishermen who said that they were under attack, pulled up their seine and started to travel. As they continued on their journey, they said that they noticed a suspicious boat chasing after them.

According to the fishermen, they subsequently drove towards land and the boat that was in pursuit headed towards the shore.

The fishermen also said their boat got stuck and they came out and hid in some bushes. While they hid they observed the other men jumping into their boat and later left with gasoline and a coat.

RELEASED BY PIRATES

A Marhsall Island-flagged, Greek-owned chemical tanker, with 21 Filipino sailors onboard, was released from captivity by Somali pirates earlier this month, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said Friday - [OCEANUSLive](#).

Raul Hernandez, Foreign Affairs spokesman, said that **M/T Liquid Velvet** was released on June 4 after being held captive since October 31 last year.

The Marshall Islands-flagged, Greek-owned chemical and oil tanker has a full crew of 21 Filipino sailors on board.

"The families of the crew members were already informed by the local manning agency of this development," Hernandez said.



He added that the vessel was already sailing towards Salalah in Oman.

"The DFA has instructed our Philippine embassy in Muscat to meet and extend assistance to the crew members once the vessel docks at the Port of Salalah," the official said.

Currently, there are still 45 Filipino seafarers on board five vessels being held captive by the pirates in the Gulf of Aden.

PIRATES IN COURT

Mauritius has said it will receive and try suspected pirates captured by British forces patrolling the Indian Ocean under an agreement with the United Kingdom - [Reuters](#).

The Indian Ocean nation's Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam is expected to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in London this weekend, helping overcome one of the hurdles to cracking down on the wave of piracy that has hit international shipping.

Foreign navies trying to counter piracy off Somalia are often reluctant to take suspects to their own countries because they either lack the jurisdiction to put them on trial, or fear the pirates may seek asylum.

Suspected pirates detained on the high seas are released after only brief detention due to the governments' reluctance to bring them to trial.

"(The) Cabinet has agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding on the conditions of transfer of suspected pirates and seized property to Mauritius, being signed with the United Kingdom," said a statement of cabinet decisions seen by Reuters on Saturday.

The island nation said no transferred person would be charged with an offence that carries a death penalty or be sentenced to death. [Read more.](#)

[Number10.gov.uk](#) reports that following the signing, Prime Minister David Cameron said:

"I was delighted to meet with Prime Minister Ramgoolam this morning to sign an agreement which will allow the Royal Navy to transfer suspected pirates to Mauritius for prosecution.



"This is an important step forward following the London and Istanbul Conferences on Somalia this year and another sign that countries in the Indian Ocean region are stepping up their efforts against piracy. Piracy is a violent crime and pirates should be in no doubt that they will be arrested at sea, prosecuted in regional states and imprisoned."

PRIVATE SECURITY

Triggered by growing pirate threats endangering safety of merchant ships, the Members of Cyprus Parliament have unanimously supported a bill, enabling the ships to have armed guards and use weaponry in order to defend themselves in case of pirate attacks, ITAR-TASS announced - [World Maritime News](#).

This is the first bill of its kind in the EU legislative system, applicable to all Cypriot-flagged ships and its main objective is to provide legislative framework that will protect merchant ship crews from different types of illicit acts, including attempts of kidnapping crew members.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Several firsts in the past few days as the ongoing conflict with Somali hijackers continues. They include an initial conference in London, the first claim of assistance given by the Iranian Navy to a US flagged vessel and, perhaps most importantly, an indication in a shift in policy by the pirates with regard to their attacks on cargo and container shipping, writes [Handy Shipping Guide](#).

This week saw the initial meeting of the task force announced by the UK Prime Minister at the recent London conference on Somalia to look at the issue of ransom payments in piracy cases. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office tells us, 'discussions were informed by an independent analysis of the options prepared by Chatham House and by views presented by representatives from industry and the Somali diaspora.'

The taskforce is made up of 14 countries representing a range of Flag States, seafarer nations, countries with large merchant navies and those active in the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. It includes Australia, Denmark, France, Italy, Liberia, Malaysia, Norway, Panama, the Philippines, Spain, Ukraine, the UAE, the USA, and the UK.

The establishment of the task force reflects concerns around ransom payments fuelling the piracy business model and incentivising the criminal activity that is putting the lives of seafarers at risk. It will explore a wide range of options for avoiding, reducing or preventing the payment of piracy ransoms.

The first three meetings will consider options for preventing the payment or avoidance of payment of ransoms/alternative strategies to paying ransoms, and options for reducing the size/frequency of ransom payments. After considering the range of views on these issues, the task force will recommend a set of policy options that will be presented to the wider international community to take forward.

The other two 'firsts' concern the attack on the cargo vessel Maersk Texas which occurred in the Gulf of Oman on the 23rd May. We are not aware the tactics used by the would be hijackers have ever been seen in such a well managed manner before. It seems that the attack was launched using two hunting packs totalling over twenty skiffs working in harmony. By clumping together the small boats appear on radar as a larger target such as a fishing boat, single skiffs can represent nothing else than a potential threat to the searching international Naval patrols, and the two groups in question attacked the Maersk Texas from port and starboard simultaneously dividing the ship's defensive forces.

Despite this the 20,000 dwt multi purpose dry cargo ship was able to deploy water cannon and alert her on board security team, EU Navfor and the nearest warship, in this case an Iranian Naval vessel. One of the pirate skiffs launched a feint upon the Maersk ship causing her to turn away and increase speed when the remaining skiffs closed to attack presenting weapons. The onboard security teams opened fire and fire was returned and the exchange of shots continued until the attackers broke off.

The assistance of the Iranian Navy was not acknowledged by Maersk Line which said it had communicated with the Iranians but received no direct assistance from it however the official Iranian News Agency report stated that the US ship had been 'rescued' by their warship, the first time they claim a US flagged vessel has been saved by them. The incident in Iranian eyes must go some way to redressing the balance as US forces have assisted Iranian vessels when attacked on several previous occasions. [Read more](#).

While counter-piracy operations around the Horn of Africa have achieved recent successes, the threat to life and shipping remains constant - [Battle-technology.com](#)(Pages 22-25). The international naval effort against piracy, which includes the EU, NATO and multinational elements, involves complex command and control arrangements as well as innovative solutions.

The Horn of Africa is only one of a number of piracy hotspots around the world and there are now various products and solutions available to assist with situational awareness and tactical operations in the maritime security environment. [Read more](#).

Every day, merchant vessels are able to avoid pirate threats due to a mesh of intelligence support, comments [Risk Intelligence](#).

But civil-state intelligence cooperation needs to evolve if avoidance is to play a larger role compared to deterring or defending against an attack on a merchant vessel. [Read more](#) [PDF].

World leaders gathered in the past two-days at Istanbul II conference, made a declaration to Somali's future - [AllAfrica](#).

1. The Second Istanbul Conference on Somalia, under the theme "Preparing Somalia's Future: Goals for 2015," took place on 31st May and 1st June 2012.

Maintaining the multi-dimensional and multi-layered approach of the first Istanbul Conference in 2010 on Somalia, it was attended by high level representatives from 57 countries and 11 international and regional organizations, as well as by the TFG leadership, the regional administrations, and representatives from wide-ranging segments of Somali society, including youth, women, business community, elders, religious leaders and the Diaspora.

Introduction.

2. The Conference reaffirmed its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Somalia. It agreed that for genuine peace to take hold in Somalia, Somali people should seek dialogue, reconciliation and political cooperation including in establishing inclusive, accountable and legitimate governance.

The Conference is grateful for the wide-scale and strong Somali participation, including women, in this Conference, and the powerful and meaningful messages they have pronounced.

3. The Conference noted that at this critical period in Somalia's history, the security, political, social and economic achievements of the past year have given Somalis and the international community a renewed hope for the future.

Somalia has made considerable progress towards achieving stability, security and reconciliation: this opportunity should not be missed.

The Conference emphasized that August 2012 is the beginning of a new phase of peace-building, in which all Somalis would contribute to peace and have their voices heard. [Read more](#).

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Friday urged the international community to continue supporting Somalia as it enters a new political phase - [RTTNews](#). He noted the end of the political transition period and adoption of a new provisional constitution, will be a "historic starting point" for the East African country.

Ban made the remarks while addressing a two-day conference on Somalia in the Turkish city of Istanbul. The conference is aimed at helping the east African country to establish a stable government and elect a new president before the current transitional governing arrangements end on 20 August. The meeting is being attended by representatives of the private sector, donors, Somali authorities, the UN and civil society.

"My message to this conference and the world is this: Commit to long-term assistance for Somalia," Ban said, adding that financial resources as well as engagement with the country are

essential to help it tackle some of its major challenges, including terrorism, piracy and drought. [Read more.](#)

From 2008 to 2011 the development assistance provided by [USAID](#) to Somalia decreased from \$260 to \$80 million. Language has been inserted into the foreign appropriations bill that could indicate a change in this trend in order to address the root-causes of piracy, writes [Piracy Law](#).

Last week, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved S.3241, including the following provision:

(g) PIRACY.—Not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act, and following consultation with other relevant Federal agencies, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations a diplomacy and development counter-piracy strategy for the Horn of Africa region, including an assessment of the potential effectiveness of economic and security assistance for vulnerable Somali and Kenyan communities in providing gainful alternatives to piracy and encouraging collective action within such communities against groups and individuals involved in piracy. (emphasis added).



The language was inserted by Mark Kirk who has taken on maritime piracy as one of his policy initiatives. In April 2011, he compiled a report including recommendations to stem the rise of piracy: [Read more.](#)

Image - (Senator Kirk at the Shimo la Tewa Prison in Mombasa, Kenya, where five dozen Somali pirates are held, including Ahmed Abdulkadir Hersi.)

A high-speed catamaran operated by the United States Navy is visiting a number of South African ports on a maritime security cooperation initiative - [Defence Web](#).

HSV-2 Swift, a non-commissioned, hybrid catamaran chartered to the United States Navy Military Sealift Command, is primarily used for fleet support and humanitarian partnership missions and is currently in East London on her Africa Partnership Station mission. Prior to her arrival in East London she visited Simon's Town in Cape Town.



The Africa Partnership Station (APS) is the US Naval Forces Africa's (NAVAF) flagship maritime security cooperation program. The focus of APS is to build maritime safety and security by increasing maritime awareness, response capabilities and infrastructure.

Through APS, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) and NAVAf conduct engagement activities with international partners and governmental/non-governmental organisations. "2012 marks the fifth year that Africa Partnership Station has been working to improve maritime safety and security in Africa," explained Lieutenant Nathan Potter of the US Naval Forces Africa Public Affairs Office.

“The first official APS deployment took place during 2007-2008 in West and Central Africa. US Navy vessels participating in APS 2012 so far includes the guided-missile frigate **USS Simpson** (FFG 56) and the high-speed vessel **Swift (HSV 2)**,” Potter added.

To illustrate the increased importance of Africa to the US, the Swift recently made a port visit to Walvis Bay in Namibia, the first US Navy vessel port-of-call to Namibia in over a decade. The last time a US Navy vessel visited Namibia was in 1999. [Read more](#).

Researchers in Hong Kong have analyzed the incidence of maritime piracy during the last decade and have developed a way to predict whether or not a particular vessel, with a specific cargo, shipping in a given patch of water is likely to be a target for piracy and what degree of violence might be involved - [EurekAlert](#).

Mei Chi Wong and Tsz Leung Yip of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, in Kowloon, explain how maritime piracy is now high on the merchant shipping agenda as incidents become increasingly frequent across the globe. The team has analysed data for the period 2002 to 2009 from the ICC International Maritime Bureau to assess the type of criminal action that takes place, whether hijacking for ransom or direct theft and to report on the approach taken by the pirates in terms of arms and violence. As such, writing in the International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics they offer some suggestions to the authorities and to commercial shipping concerns.

The team showed that bulk carriers, general cargo ships, containerships, chemical tankers, and tankers were the most targeted vessels, accounting for more than three-quarters of all ships attacked during 2002-2009. Read full article [HERE](#).

The United Nations Security Council has repeatedly endorsed the naval operations, warning of the pirates’ threat to safe passage for the world’s maritime fleets and their “threat against international peace and security in the region.” - [Global Policy](#)

At the same time, however, Council members have failed to act on other serious maritime crimes in the same waters – foreign fishing vessels that have stolen Somalia’s rich marine resources, as well as foreign ships that have dumped toxic wastes off Somalia’s shores. As we shall see, by punishing one crime and turning a blind eye to another, the Council is deepening the very crisis it is supposedly trying to solve.

And by deploying a flotilla of the world’s most advanced – and lethal – naval vessels against lightly-armed pirates, the Council is adopting an unreasonably force-dependent response to the problem at hand. Read full article [HERE](#) [PDF].

The Dutch Minister for International Cooperation and European Affairs visited Garowe, the capital of Puntland, on Wednesday, [Radio Garowe](#) reports. he met with Vice President Abdisamad Ali Shire, Saeed Mohamed Ragge Minister of Ports and Counter Piracy and other Puntland officials.

Minister Knapen was accompanied and Dutch Major Gen. Leo Beulen and the director of operations of the Dutch Ministry of Defence.

The officials met behind close doors and discussed the political and security situation in Puntland. Minister Ben Knapen visited the newly built investigation headquarters, where he was

accompanied by Puntland officials, including State Minister of Planning Abdulkadir Abdi Hashi. [Read more.](#)

The persistent and growing scourge of piracy on the high seas - a problem that is costing billions of US dollars every year - was the focus of the first-ever seminar on available anti-piracy services and technology, hosted by the US embassy in Greece on Tuesday at the Posidonia international shipping exhibition, which is again taking place in Athens on June 4-8 - [EMG.RS](#).

In opening remarks, US Ambassador to Greece Daniel Bennett Smith noted that piracy at sea was a crime of global concern and that counter-piracy patrols – though supported by the United States – were not in themselves sufficient to guarantee ship safety.

He pointed out that pirates – from their originally ad hoc, disorganised beginnings - are now using increasingly advanced methods and venturing further and further offshore in what is now becoming a highly developed, transnational criminal enterprise.

While referring to cooperative efforts with other nations to investigate and prosecute these crimes and, especially, as he said “follow the money trail” that led to those financing the pirates, he noted they were too often simply let go when caught due to states’ reluctance to prosecute.

According to the US envoy, the “vast majority” of pirated ships had failed to employ best practice techniques and methods and protection services that had been shown efficient in deterring attacks and whose use will increase the safety of vessels. [Read more.](#)

Senior MEP Graham Watson told a parliamentary hearing that maritime piracy is "particularly worrying" - [The Parliament.com](#).

Watson, the president of the European Liberal Democrats' (ELDR), was addressing a conference about modern-day piracy in parliament on Thursday, co-hosted by the Brussels-based European Institute for Asian Studies.

He said, "Piracy has once again become a major problem with global impacts, just as it was in the 19th century.

"Events off the coast of Somalia and the Horn of Africa are particularly troubling."

In 2011 alone, piracy off the Somali coast was responsible for 28 ships being hijacked, 470 seafarers kidnapped and 15 deaths.

There are currently at least eight ships being held for ransom and about 235 seafarers hostage.

The estimated cost to the international community has been put at over €6bn per year and is expected to rise to €11bn by 2015, the meeting was told.

The economic and social impacts are immense, said Watson, a former leader of the ALDE group in parliament.

"We can no longer afford to ignore this." [Read more.](#)

International community appreciates considerable role of Russian Navy in counter-piracy campaign, said US state secretary's deputy assistant Tomas Kelly saying that "we very much value Russian participation in the coalition" - [Navaltoday.com](#).

According to official figures, in the last year Russian warships escorted over 30 convoys through the Gulf of Aden with 168 vessels flying flags of 27 countries including 62 Russian-crewed ships. Security of 448 Russian citizens was ensured. Currently, anti-piracy watch off Somalia is kept by Northern Fleet (NF) destroyer **Vice Admiral Kulakov**.

Experts say actions taken against Somali pirates bring certain results. According to French defense ministry, only 200 pirate attacks were registered in 2011 comparing to 700 ones in 2010. Pirates managed to hijack only 13 commercial ships while in 2010 they captured up to 30 vessels. [Read more](#).

PIRACY COSTS

Profits have quadrupled in the past four years, climbing from \$1.5 million to more than \$5 million, yet transactions are down. This criminal "business" is booming, comments [Fox Business](#).

These horrific Somali piracy attacks are occurring with less frequency, but drawing higher returns than ever. FoxNews.com reported 31 ransoms in 2011 brought in a record \$160 million for Somali pirates, and the trend is only increasing. Geopolicity estimates this number could reach \$400 million in the next three years.

Douglas Burnett, partner in the Maritime Practice Group at Squire Sanders U.S. LLP, said the model is succeeding because these ruthless pirates are hanging onto their captures for longer, and charging more money than ever before.

"They're getting better at their business, and the escalation is going up dramatically," Burnett said. "There are fewer successful hijacks, so when they get [a capture] they want to make back their investments."

Pirates operate in organized clans, Burnett said, with investors that fund them that demand significant return on investments (ROI). There are groups of pirates that carry out the crimes, and negotiators who speak English, both of whom get a cut of the ransom money.

Meanwhile, Navy units are decreasing their presence because governments don't have the money to fund them, Burnett said, and ships are taking matters into their own hands, hiring armed guards to journey with them and drive down their own insurance premiums. [Read more](#).

While much of the world's economy is in the doldrums, business is booming for Somalia's pirates, whose attacks on commercial ships sailing Africa's east coast are more frequent, violent and lucrative than ever - [Fox News](#).

Pirates took in an estimated \$160 million in ransoms last year, and one study predicts the number will climb to \$400 million by 2015, as the high seas thieves continue their brazen reign on the Indian Ocean. Efforts by shipping companies to beef up security, and by the European Union, which has mounted airstrikes on pirate ships, have so far been met with stepped-up

attacks. Chillingly, pirates are now chopping off the limbs of captives in extreme cases when the airdrop of cash isn't made quickly enough to suit them.

"It's an established, structured model, where you have Somalis who are leading and financing operations and then you have pirates who actually go out to sea and conduct the activity," Brian Green, chief of the counter-piracy branch of the Office of Naval Intelligence, told FoxNews.com of the piracy industry. "They are, more or less, foot soldiers. They find targets of opportunity, attack them with the goal of hijacking and bringing that vessel back to Somalia." [Read more.](#)

Appearing in Cargo Security International, [AKE Group](#) states that compared to 2011's bumper year; times are hard for Somali pirates. In the first three months of 2012, pirates captured four large merchant vessels capable of fetching a decent ransom; at current averages of \$4.7 million per ship, this might bring in less than £20 million. By this point last year, 14 vessels had been captured, which eventually netted a combined total of approximately \$69.9 million - [AKE Group](#).

Despite the odds being stacked against them, however, attack groups are still going to sea. Seemingly undeterred by the risks of getting shot at by private guards, arrested by foreign navies, or returning empty handed, 61 attacks were recorded in the first three months of 2012, just 10 less than in the same period last year and more than double than 2010. Why? Read full article [HERE](#).

Piracy is good for business. Insurers are already seeing significant profits as piracy has increased premiums on these deep pocket shippers - [Civilian Military Intelligence Group](#). Security firms are also quick to show they can, for a fee, restore order to the turbulent seas off the coast of Africa. The shipping industry has welcomed them with open arms. The business model works because the cost of security is lower than the increase in premiums. Also, one can imagine that people with the personal resources to have a wedding on a luxury yacht off the coast of Oman might be able to afford attorneys anywhere in the world. These trials have just started rippling into courtrooms across the globe. We can expect to see prosecutions from governments and the private sector. Read full article [HERE](#).

SEAFARERS' PLIGHT

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) said yesterday that there are still 30 Filipino seafarers being held hostage by pirates [ABS-CBN News](#).

POEA Administrator Hans Cacdac, however, could not immediately ascertain the period during which these Filipino mariners were captured.

Cacdac noted in an interview over radio station dzRH that it was highly probable that Filipinos are on board hijacked ships because they comprised 30 percent of the world's seafarers.

"There is really a big chance that there is a Filipino in the vessels that pass through Gulf of Aden in East Africa," he added.

Asked about the compensation of Filipino seafarers victimized by pirates, Cacdac said there is a POEA Memorandum Circular that requires all ship owners through their manning agencies to submit a "safety or anti-piracy plan" before recruiting and deploying seafarers.

"They also have to conduct anti-piracy sea training among seafarers before deployment. And if a vessel will sail outside the safety corridors, as prescribed by the international standards, they

have to notify the POEA, especially outside the internationally-recognized transit corridors," he said. [Read more](#).

The crew of MV Albedo, a merchant vessel, hijacked in November 2010, is still held hostage off the coast of Somalia, due to unmet commitments of donors other than Pakistanis, it was learnt here on Monday - [Safety4Sea](#).

Following negotiations with Somali pirates it was decided that \$2.85 million would be paid in lieu of expenses borne for keeping the hostages and vessel for the past 18 months.

The target of \$1.6 million seemed a distant destiny but under the support of President Asif Ali Zardari, noted Pakistani philanthropists came forward and offered their full cooperation. Considering all these efforts and after final collections, the Malaysian counterpart was requested to increase their amount from \$1.25 million to \$1.75 million. On May 15, the Malaysian counterpart confirmed that they had arranged a sum of \$1.1 million.



Pakistani crew, families after getting approval of their donors immediately confirmed the amount of \$1.1 million and conveyed to the Malaysian owners. The balance amount of \$2.85 million after confirmation of Pakistan side of \$1.1 million was the responsibility of the Malaysian side who committed that all other issues will be managed by themselves.

It has now been over two weeks since the Pakistani families fulfilled their commitment. However, the Malaysian owner cannot be contacted due to his serious illness. During this time the Pakistani civil society also approached Malaysian government to learn that the vessel's owner was also not in their contact.

The families of the crew being subjected to intense pressure by the pirates are extremely worried. The pirates have been threatening of dire consequences besides subjecting the crew to hard labour under scorching sun. [Read more](#).

[Seafarers UK](#), the leading charity for seafarers in need, funds support for victims of piracy when freed from captivity. Survivor Chirag Bahri tells his story... [Video](#)(YouTube/Seafarers UK).

AND FINALLY...

Can Google track ships — even Navy ships — better than the government can? - [Navy News](#).

No way, says Guy Thomas, a man who's in a position to know because he designed the satellite on which the information giant is renting space for its latest venture — a satellite that uses the same technology the Navy and the Coast Guard use.

It's called the Automated Identification System, which all commercial ships of more than 300 tons are required to carry onboard. Military ships use the same system, but only transmit locator signals when entering and exiting port.

“Anybody driving along the shore with a pair of binoculars can see that destroyer out there. That’s the only time those ships have AIS on,” said Thomas, the Coast Guard’s science and technology adviser for maritime domain awareness.

The controversy over AIS popped up after Michael Jones, chief technology advocate for Google Ventures, said in a May 17 speech to the U.S. Naval Institute’s annual Joint Warfighting Conference that his company was developing a system to track ships at sea globally — including naval vessels. In a comment that was widely reported, he added:

“It angers me as a citizen that I can easily do this and the entire DoD can’t do this,” he added. “The [National Reconnaissance Office] can’t do this. It’s crazy.”

But Eric Wertheim, a USNI naval expert, said the technology Google is developing is nothing new to the Navy or Coast Guard. In fact, the Coast Guard has contracted with Orbcomm, a commercial global satellite company, to use their satellites to do the same thing since 2004. [Read more.](#)

SAILING fanatics Rachel and Paul Chandler are heading off to finish the round-the-world trip disrupted by pirates who held them hostage for a year - [Mirror.co.uk](#).

Rachel said: “Some friends think we’re mad and our family are apprehensive, but sailing is our life.

“We feel guilty that people will worry, but they understand that if we weren’t able to sail we’d be defeated people. “What happened to us was extraordinary and the chances of it happening again are very, very small.

“More than anything we just want to be able to get on with living. We don’t want to be defined as former hostages for the rest of our lives.”



They will set sail on their original yacht Lynn Rival in the next few weeks heading to Morocco, the Canaries and South America – but steering clear of pirate waters.

It was in October 2009 that Rachel, 58, and Paul, 61, were snatched as they cruised off the coast of Somalia.

They were held for 388 days until friends and family raised a half million pound ransom.

The Chandlers offered to repay the money, but were told there was no need.

Rachel said: “They flatly refused. To us they’re the unsung heroes. Their lives were turned upside down too, but all the focus has been on us.”

Rachel, of Dartmouth, Devon, said she did not feel bitter towards the pirates – seven are now on trial – but it was “hard” to accept their leader was still at large.

The desire to return to sea came after their boat, which had been ransacked by the pirates, was returned to them.

“Seeing her again was a tonic,” said Rachel. “Here was the third person in our relationship.

“As the summer draws closer, I can feel myself getting more excited every day.

"In a month's time Paul and I will be heading back to the place where we belong – the sea.

"We'll continue our round the world journey. For us nothing beats the freedom of sailing.

"And this trip will be all the more significant because it will mean we've recovered from the ordeal that left us broken. [Read more](#).

PIRACY INCIDENTS

Hijacks:

- Malacca Strait - LATE Report | Armed pirates boarded a Malaysia-flagged fishing vessel, **PKFB 1340**, underway, took hostage six crewmembers and hijacked the vessel at 2200 LT: in position 04:50N – 099:04E, Malacca Straits. Upon receiving the information, the MMEA immediately sent a patrol boat to the location and rescued the vessel along with her crewmembers. All the crewmembers were reported safe. It was reported that the pirates had left the vessel before the arrival of the patrol boat. Originally reported (via IMB) 23 May.

Unsuccessful Attacks/Robberies (All regions):

- South China Sea - LATE Report | While at anchor at 0845 LT in position 07:09S - 112:40E Surabaya anchorage, Indonesia, the duty A/B on Norway-flagged tanker, **Bow Victor**, sighted wet foot prints and discovered a life raft was missing. No injury to crew. Port authorities were informed. Reported 22 May.
- N Atlantic - LATE Report | Four persons wielding long-knives and/or poles boarded Marshall Islands-flagged multi-purpose ship, **Faruk Kaan**, at 0300 UTC in position 08:34.90N - 013:25.50W, off Sierra Leone. The robbers were confronted by the onboard security watch, but having stolen ships' equipment, ropes and a rescue boat engine, escaped by jumping into the water. Sierra Leone Navy was informed. Reported 23 May.
- Gulf of Guinea - LATE Report - Three armed persons boarded Liberia-flagged, Greek tanker, **Ermar**, (with 23 crew) from a wooden boat 0145 UTC: in position 06:19.34N – 003:29.41E, Lagos Anchorage, Nigeria. The alarm was raised and all crew retreated into the citadel. After four hours the crew emerged from the citadel and discovered the pirates had departed. No damage was sustained and all crew were reported safe. MRCC Lagos and Lagos Port Control informed. Original report (via IMB) 1 Jun.
- Malacca Strait - Seven robbers armed with long knives boarded an anchored Panama-flagged bulk carrier, **DD Vanguard**, at the forecandle at 0230 LT: in position 03:57.44N - 098:46.57E, Belawan Outer Anchorage, Indonesia. Duty A/B and D/O noticed the robbers and raised the alarm. Upon seeing the crew alertness, the robbers threatened the crew with long knives and escaped empty handed in their waiting boat. Port control and vessels in the vicinity were informed. Also relayed to Bakorkamla, Indonesian Navy HQ & Indonesian Marine Police HQ. Originally reported (via IMB) 4 Jun.

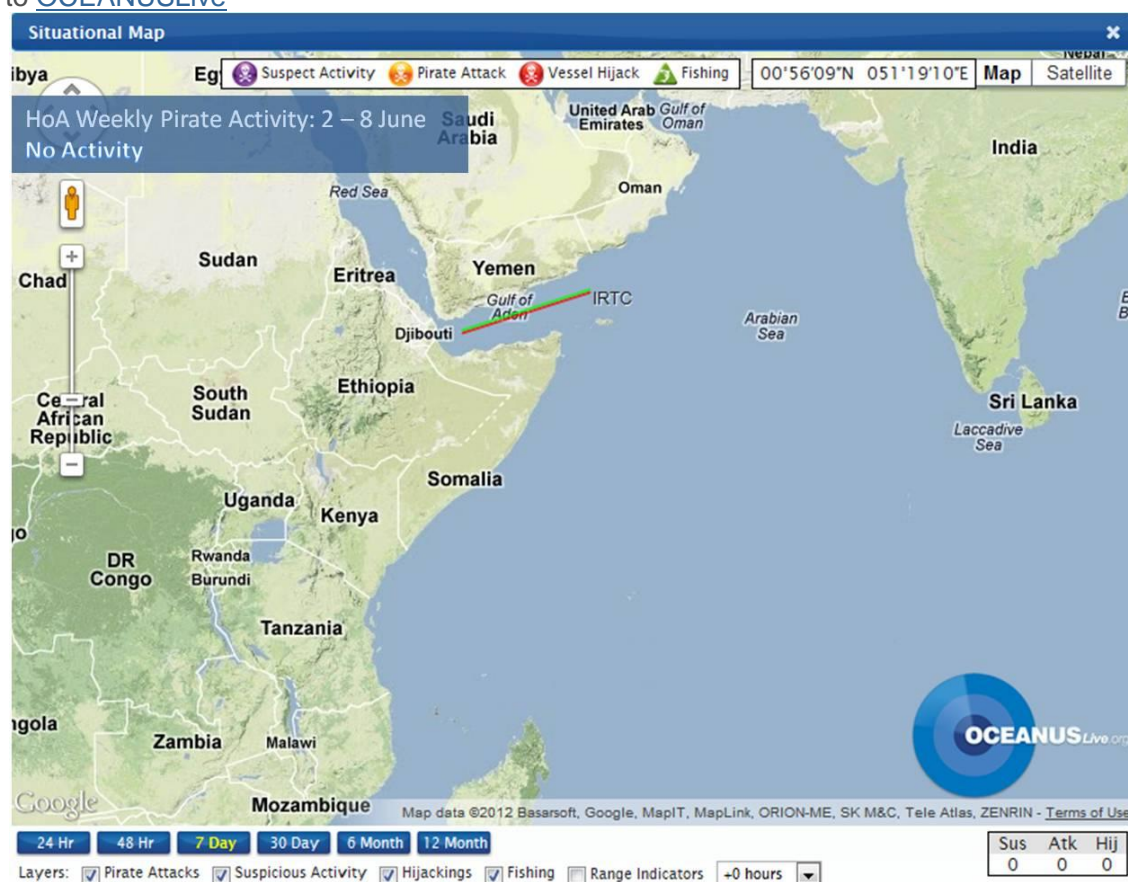
Somalia Report states 19 ships with 256 hostages and a further 25 hostages held on land bringing the number to 281 held. The [International Maritime Bureau](#) (IMB) figures at 7 June are: 12 vessels and 178 seafarers held hostage.

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

An interactive version of this situational map is available through registration of verified access to [OCEANUSLive](#)



[Horn of Africa Pirate Activity \(Click on Map for Larger View\)](#)

OCEANUSLive.org permits the reproduction of this image providing source and link are published (Map ToU)

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

