

Report on Somalia

Detailed Weekly Piracy Report and On-the-Ground Analysis



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

Report on Somalia ~ SUMMARY

June 11 – 17, 2012 (week 23)

At Sea:

- During this reporting period, the number of piracy incidents in the High Risk Area (HRA) has remained low with no successful hijackings being reported. Due to the South-west monsoon season, which takes place between June and September, sea conditions are expected to continue to remain unfavorable for smaller boats and skiffs. There was one report of suspicious activity and one confirmed attack which had taken place on 9 June (*Page 3; Map page 12*).

Key Statistics

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

Updates:

- **MV ALBEDO** - Reports have indicated that Somali pirates have moved the 23 hostages off the Malaysian-flagged container ship to land (*Page 3*).

Piracy Related News:

- **15 June 2012** - A court in Paris, France has sentenced four of the six Somali pirates charged with holding the crew of a luxury ship hostage in the Gulf of Aden in 2008 (*Page 3*).
- **13 June 2012** - Dutch Defense Minister Hans Hillen told parliament on Monday evening that there will be no armed private security guards onboard Dutch ships sailing the coast of east Africa where piracy is rife (*Page 4*).

Weather Analysis

- As the South-west monsoon season continues to develop, the weather forecast throughout the following week will continue to be less favorable for pirate activity. Water conditions will be unfavorable for small skiffs and boats along the coast of Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania. Further out into the ocean, water conditions will also be less favorable for smaller vessels and will remain unfavorable throughout the week. Therefore any pirate attacks or hijacking to occur further out in the ocean will likely be done so by motherships. Water conditions in the Gulf of Aden will remain to be favorable for smaller craft to maneuver in the area. It has been assessed that pirates operating in skiffs or small boats will likely remain within the Gulf of Aden; any vessels traveling through the area are advised to exercise extreme caution as it is likely that attacks or hijackings will be concentrated in the area (*Page 5*).

On Land:

- Insecurity across Somalia has continued to occur throughout this reporting period as allied forces have continued to fight al-Shabaab in a bid to gain further control of the southern region of Somalia (*Pages 6 - 8*).

Domestic News:

- **13 June 2012** - Officials from Somalia's semi-autonomous region of Puntland are presently traveling to those areas where Puntland forces recently conducted anti piracy operations so as to work with the local officials in order to determine ways to maintain security and to improve governance (*Page 8*).

International Developments:

- **12 June 2012** - Kenya's Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, has requested troops from the United States and from Europe so as to aid the allied troops in Somalia in a final onslaught on the Somali port of Kismayo (*Page 8*).
- **11 June 2012** - The United States has threatened to impose sanctions on those Somalis who stand in the way of a UN-supervised roadmap for peace in Somalia (*Pages 8 - 9*).

Special Report: Piracy in West Africa (Page 9 – 11)

Report on Somalia

June 11 – 17, 2012 (week 23)

At Sea:

- During the reporting period, the number of piracy incidents in the High Risk Area (HRA) has continued to remain low with no successful hijacking being reported. There was one report of suspicious activity and one confirmed attack which had taken place on 9 June.
 - **12 June 2012** - An MV in position 14:27.5N - 042:10.6E reported being followed by two skiffs with 5 pirates in one and 7 in the other. The vessel also indicated that a possible mothership might be operating nearby. Vessels are advised to exercise extreme caution when navigating in the vicinity (*Map Page 12*).
 - **9 June 2012** - An attack on the HOJIN, a Vanuatu vehicle carrier has been confirmed. The vessel was attacking in position 12:22.9N - 043:49.7E off the coast of Yemen in the Gulf of Aden. The vessel was chased by pirates in a trawler with 4 skiffs traveling along side it. The vessel has been reported to be safe (*Map Page 12*).
 - Pirate attacks have continued to drop for the second consecutive month has activity in the region over the past two months has amounted to sixteen attacks in which only one vessel was hijacked, the Liberia-flagged MT SMYRNI. The reported attacks have been mainly concentrated off the coast of Oman. This drop in attacks is the result of poor weather conditions in the Somali basin, Indian Ocean and southern Arabian Sea which have gradually been worsening over the course of May. In the coming weeks, attacks are likely to occur in sheltered locations such as the northern Gulf of Oman, and the Bab al-Mandab straits.

Key Statistics

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

Updates:

- **MV ALBEDO** - Reports have indicated that Somali pirates have moved the 23 hostages off the Malaysian-flagged container ship onto land. Pirate sources close to the gang in Handulle have stated that Guushaye, the pirates leader, along with his gang, landed the crew late on Wednesday. Due to the fact that the negotiation process for the release of the vessel has failed since the end of May, the pirate group has decided to take the crew off the vessel and to hold them on land. Other pirate sources in Handulle have also confirmed that the crew has been brought ashore, stating that the pirates had become angry that the ransom was not paid on time despite several extensions that were given. The cargo on the vessel, which is believed to be consisting mainly of building materials, has also been taken off the vessel and transferred to Mogadishu and Galkayo for sale. Other reports have suggested that the pirates took the crew to a forest area in Eastern Handulle, near the Camaara area, which is located 100km east of Handulle and that the crew is being held by dozens of armed men from Guushaye's gang in order to prevent the crew to be taken by rival pirate gangs. The MV ALBEDO, IMO number 9041162, was built in 1993 with a dry weight of 15566t. It is owned by Malaysia-based Enrich Shipping and was hijacked by pirates on 26 November 2010 while underway from Mombasa to Jebel Ali, 293 miles west of the Maldives in the Indian Ocean. In recent months, the vessel has been the subject of numerous false stories. The 23 crew member are comprised of Bangladeshi, Iranian, Pakistan and Sri Lankan nationals.

Piracy Related News:

- **15 June 2012** - A court in Paris, France has sentenced four of the six Somali pirates charged with holding the crew of a luxury ship hostage in the Gulf of Aden in 2008. They have been sentenced to terms ranging between four and ten years in jail. Two other accused were released in a surprise decision after the prosecution had called for sentences of up to fifteen years for the men. The pirates seized thirty crew members of the luxury yacht, Le Ponant, in April 2008 and held them for ransom. French special forces arrested the six men, aged 25 to 50, during an airborne operation after the ransom had been paid. Only one

of the six men captured, 31-year-old Ismael Ali Samatar, admitted to being a pirate. He also received the heaviest ten-year sentence. Two others who had admitted to having been aboard the elegant 88-meter yacht, however only to sell cigarettes and khat, received seven-year prison terms. The other three deny ever having set foot on the boat. The driver of a pick-up truck which was used to flee the scene was given a four-year term for complicity. The two youngest men were released after having already spent four years in a French jail. Presently, there are a total of twenty-two Somalis who are being held by France in connection to four hostage-taking incidents. Last year, a Paris court jailed five pirates for terms ranging 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, which sparked outrage amongst prosecutors who appeared to the Court, stating that the sentences were too lenient.

- **13 June 2012** - Dutch Defense Minister Hans Hillen told parliament on Monday evening that there will be no armed private security guards onboard Dutch ships sailing the coast of east Africa where piracy is rife. Hillen's statement was in reaction to calls by both insurers and ship owners who say that if they cannot hire armed guards then the vessels will be registered under the flags of those countries that will allow the presence of such guards. This could be detrimental to the government as ship owners would pay taxes to the country under whose flag they sail. Presently, the Dutch government does not allow ship owners to have armed guards on board however it does provide marines as protection. Despite this, many ship owners and insurers say that there are not enough of them to ensure the safety of all the Dutch vessels that are crossing in the region. Hillen has stated that the reason behind the ship owners protesting this is due to the costs of marines, who cost twice as much as private security guards. He indicated that there will be attempts to reduce the costs however no guarantees can be given.

Merchant Vessels Presently Held by Somali Pirates:

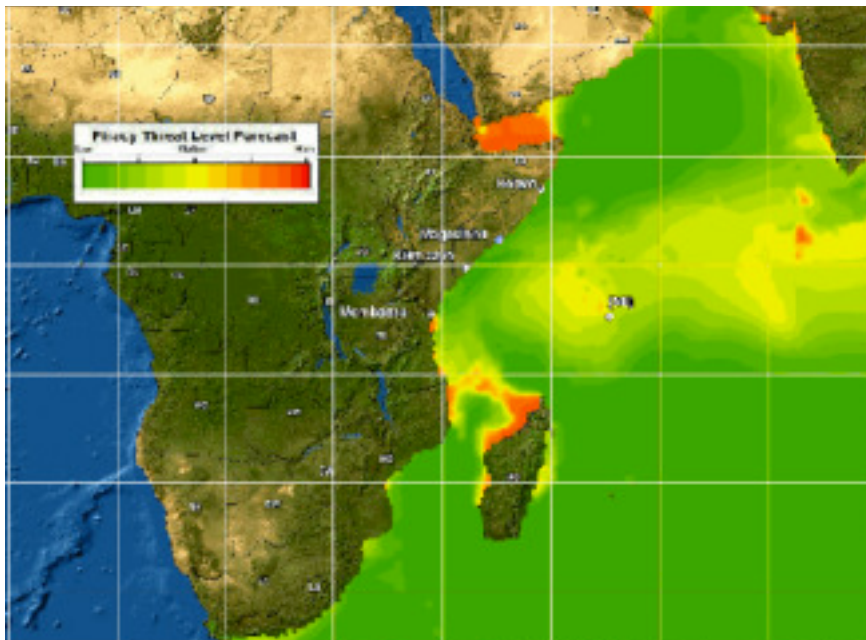
NAME	FLAG	TYPE	HIJACKED DATE
Iceberg I	Panama	Ro/Ro	29 March 2010
MV Albedo	Malaysia	Container Cargo	25 November 2010
MV Orna	Panama	Bulk Cargo	20 December 2010
Shiuh Fu No. 1	Taiwan	Fishing Vessel	25 December 2010
Free Goddess	Liberia	Bulk Cargo	7 February 2012
MT Royal Grace	Panama	Chemical Tanker	2 March 2012
FV Naham 3	Taiwan	Fishing Vessel	26 March 2012
Al Abass	Yemen	Fishing Vessel	21 April 2012
MT Smyrni	Liberia	Tanker	10 May 2012

*** With the release of the *MT Liquid Velvet* on 4 June of this year, all the vessels which were hijacked in 2011 have been released. The vessels which remain in hostage have either been hijacked in 2010 or this year. For those vessels that were hijacked in 2010, it has been assessed that either ransom negotiations have broken down, as is the present case for the *MV Albedo*, or the pirates want a large sum of money which the owners cannot afford to pay. It is also possible that some of the owners of these vessels have simply walked away from negotiations and the vessels, along with their crew members, have been abandoned. The current average length of time in which a vessel remains in hostage is 6 months, the *MT Liquid Velvet* was released after 7 months. ***

Weather Analysis:

- **Gulf of Aden** - West-southwesterly winds of 5 - 10 knots with seas of 2 - 4 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - West-southwesterly winds of 5 - 10 knots are expected to continue during the beginning of the week and will become variable at 4 - 6 knots with seas of 2 - 4 feet by the end of the week.
- **Somali Coast** - The Somali Coastal area remains under the influence of the Southwest Monsoon, with south-southwesterly winds of 25 - 30 knots and seas of 9 - 12 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - south-southwesterly winds of 25 - 30 knots, gusting to 35 knots in or near thunderstorms with seas of 9 - 12 feet.
- **Arabian Sea** - Westerly winds of 8 - 12 knots and seas of 5 - 7 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - Winds will be west-southwesterly at 20 - 25 knots with seas of 9 - 12 feet throughout the week.
- **Central African Coast/Indian Ocean** - The coast regions along Kenya and Tanzania will remain under the influence of the Southwest Monsoon pattern, with south-southeasterly winds of 15 - 20 knots, gusting to 35 knots in or near thunderstorms, with seas of 5 - 7 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - South - southeasterly winds of 25 - 30 knots, gusting to 35 knots in or near thunderstorms with seas of 5 - 7 feet with occasional swells of 7 - 9 feet.
- **Mozambique Channel** - South-southeast winds of 8 - 12 knots in the northern channel with seas of 6 - 8 feet. In the southern channel, winds will be south-southeasterly of 24 - 28 knots with seas of 10 - 14 feet.
 - **Extended Forecast** - In the northern channel, south-southeastern winds of 15 - 20 knots with seas of 5 - 7 feet, decreasing to 3 - 5 feet by the end of the week. In the southern channel, expect southeastern winds of 15 - 20 knots and seas of 3 - 5 feet.
- **Surface Currents** - Currents within the Somalia Basin, and the Gulf of Aden average approximately - 1.5 knots. Currents speeds along the Somali coast, continuing south off the northern Kenya coastline until about 10 degrees south will average 2 - 3 knots. The Mozambique Channel has an average current of 1 - 2 knots, though the current speed along the northwestern portion of the channel will average 2 - 3 knots.

Sea Conditions For This Week:



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

On Land:

- 16 June 2012** - A suicide bomber in Afgoye rammed a vehicle that was loaded with explosives into the gate

of a government base. Al-Shabaab has confirmed that it was one of its fighters that carried out the attack. Several casualties have been reported however details are still unclear. The town, which was captured by government troops and African Union forces from al-Shabaab in May of this year, has been one of the terrorist group's major strongholds. Due to its strategic location, just 30 km (18.5 miles) from the capital city, and the existence of a road that links the city with rebel-held areas in the south of Somalia, Afgoye has been a popular safe-ground for al-Shabaab militants who have employed hit and run attacks in the capital city.

- 15 June 2012** - According to local residents and government soldiers stationed in Lafoole, one

civilian has been killed while three others have been injured after a TFG soldier opened fire on a van ferrying khat between Lafoole and Afgoye in the **Lower-Shabelle** region. The soldier demanded that the vehicle stop however the driver ignored the demand upon which the TFG soldier shot at the vehicle. Although TFG forces arrived on the scene and attempted to arrest the soldier, he managed to escape.

- In the port of **Kismayo**, a ship carrying goods for Somali businessmen sank after hitting a rock just near the entrance to the port in Somalia's Lower Jubba region, which has effectively blocked entrance to the port. Shirar Aflow, a worker at the port, has confirmed that the ship sank near the entrance to the port but that all the crew members were saved. At the time, the ship was laden with 500 - 50kg bags of sugar, 2000 - 20 litre oil cans and an undetermined amount of petrol, all of which was lost when the ship sank. Prior to reaching Kismayo, the ship had off loaded a portion of its good at the port of Mogadishu.



Presently, there are efforts underway to send divers in order to determine the best way of moving the vessel in order to allow for other ships to pass. Although this is not the first incident where a ship has sunk near the port, it is the first time that such an incident has effectively blocked the entire port, preventing any ships from coming in and out. The port of Kismayo remains to be a stronghold for al-Shabaab who use the port in order to bring weapons and fighters into the southern region of Somalia. What the effect of this incident will have on the fighting in the region remains unknown, however al-Shabaab fighters will presently be unable to supply their forces with numbers and weaponry through the port of Kismayo and will subsequently have to find alternate means. The allied forces are presently making their way to Kismayo in an attempt to seize the town in the coming weeks.

- Meanwhile reports from Ebon have indicated that an unknown gunmen shot and killed a local trader in the village which is located in the **Bakool** region in south-western Somalia. The victim, Aden Yarow, was killed inside his business. Security forces in the region reached the scene however they did not make any arrests as the perpetrators had already fled.
- **14 June 2012** - At least two people have been killed while three other fighters of the rival group were injured in heavy fighting between the allied forces of ASWJ and TFG against al-Shabaab fighters in Yurkud village in the **Gedo** region. The battle lasted more than one hour and has resulted many of the locals to flee from the village.
- **13 June 2012** - In the capital city of **Mogadishu**, gunmen shot and killed a local TFG official on Wednesday night in the Shibis district. The victim, Abdurahman Jowle Jima'ale was killed by two gunmen with pistols who fled from the scene before the arrival of Somali Police Forces. It is not yet known who exactly is responsible for the crime.
 - An accidental explosion in Shanta Geed village of Hawl Wadaag district of **Mogadishu** has killed at least two men, who were reportedly al-Shabaab militants, as they were assembling an improvised explosive device (IED) inside the house around 5:30PM local time. Two others, including a man and a woman who were passing by the home at the time of the blast were injured and taken to a local hospital for treatment. TFG forces and other security officials arrived on the scene in order to disperse the growing crowd and to start investigations. The district commissioner has stated that the village will double their security operations in the district and has urged the people to remain calm and to allow police forces to investigate the matter. He has also asked residents to assist the TFG forces in order to maintain peace and order in the district. Although it has been confirmed that the two men who were behind the explosion were members of al-Shabaab, the terrorist group has yet to comment on the incident. Furthermore, this is not the first time that such an incident has occurred as last month, a female bomber and her instructor were killed in Galgaduud region after she accidentally detonated a bomb that she was assembling.
- **12 June 2012** - As allied forces are continually gaining territory from al-Shabaab in central Somalia, tensions are beginning to rise amongst Ethiopian, Somali and pro-government militia forces over the control of those areas which have already been seized. Additionally, local residents worry as to how this rising tension may affect them and whether or not the areas will remain stable despite this issue. Ceel Buur, in Somalia's Galgaduud region is one such example. Although Ethiopian and ASWJ forces took control of the city on 26 March this year, after al-Shabaab militants had fled the city two days earlier, the allied forces were forced to abandon the city by the weekend. ASWJ fighters also abandoned Mahas district of Hiran region and Wabho district, which is located 40 kilometers from Ceel-Buur. Subsequently, an unspecified number of al-Shabaab fighters then entered Ceel-Buur, shortly after the Ethiopian and ASWJ forces had fled. Fears in central Somalia are growing amongst residents that despite efforts made by the allied forces to gain control of the region from al-Shabaab militants, a lack of properly securing villages in the region will only further destabilize it as al-Shabaab fighters will seek to return to those areas that they have previously vacated.
 - In **Qoqani**, three people have died while two others have been critically injured after heavy fighting broke out between TFG forces and al-Shabaab fighters on the outskirts of Qoqani village in the Lower-Jubba region. The battle occurred after al-Shabaab militants launched hit and run attacks against a TFG base located near Qoqani.
- **11 June 2012** - Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and African Union Forces (AMISOM) are preparing to launch an attack on Bal'ad which is located 36 kilometers northeast of the capital city of **Mogadishu**. This marks the second major operation as part of Operation Free Shabelle which began after the forces removed al-Shabaab from Afgoye on 25 May of this year. The military operation to take over Bal'ad will continue over the next few days and is seen to be a key step in further insuring security in the capital city as preventing al-Shabaab militants from being stationed in the villages around Mogadishu will decrease their abilities to enter the city and to employ hit and run attacks.

- Meanwhile reports from **Hiiraan** region in central Somalia have indicated that al-Shabaab insurgents seized the second district in Mahas as a large number of fighters entered the district shortly after troops from Somalia's TFG and pro-government Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa (ASWJ) forces retreated. A TFG officer in the Hiiraan region has confirmed that TFG troops have vacated Mahas, citing military strategy for the reason. According to the officer, TFG forces are presently stationed on the outskirts of Mahas as they were forced to desert the city for tactical reasons however they will re-take the town within the next several days. Reports have also indicated that on Sunday morning, al-Shabaab fighters seized Elbur district in Galgaduud region after Ethiopian and ASWJ forces vacated the district. Eyewitnesses in Elbur stated that the insurgents have based themselves in the police station, the Elbur administration building and other main military bases in the area. Reports have also indicated that al-Shabaab have killed at least four people in the district. Subsequently tensions in the area are high as the militant group has accused many who live in the area of siding with the allied forces. Losing Elbur and Mahas districts is a huge setback for the TFG and the allied forces who are attempting to eradicate al-Shabaab from Somalia.
- In **Beledweyne**, TFG officials have confirmed that gunmen with pistols shot and killed a businessman in central Somalia. The victim, Abdi Ibrahim Idris, was killed in Hawlwadaag village. Although TFG security forces in Beledweyne arrested several locals shortly after the incident occurred, those responsible fled the scene. At present, no one has claimed responsibility for the incident.

Domestic News:

- **13 June 2012** - Officials from Somalia's semi-autonomous region of Puntland are presently traveling to areas where Puntland forces recently conducted anti piracy operations so as to work with the local officials in order to determine ways to maintain security and to improve governance. The Puntland Marine Police Force (PMPF) recently conducted operations in the Bari, Karkar and Nugal regions of Puntland, including the villages of Eyl, Hafun, Bargal, Hal Anod and Bali-Dhidin, which forced the pirates in those areas to flee. Led by the governor of Bari region, Abdi Samad Mohamed Galan, the delegation traveled from the port city of Bosaso to areas around Qandala district in Bari region in order to meet with the local community elders as well as with officials. The locals have welcomed the delegation and have agreed to work with officials in order to keep the pirates away. Qandala district is also strategically located as directly across the Gulf of Aden lies Yemen. As such, the location makes it ideal for pirates, smugglers and terrorists to congregate. From June 6 - 9, the delegation traveled to the villages around Bargal and are presently in Bali-Dhidin where the PMPF recently targeted pirates gathered in two houses in Bali-Dhidin. Security officials in the area have confirmed that one pirate died in the attack while another was wounded. The delegation plans to travel to Xiriro in order to continue discussions with locals there. During their meetings, the delegation succeeded in establishing a new administration in Bali-Dhidin by creating a new police force so as to defend the village against pirates.

International Developments:

- **12 June 2012** - Kenya's Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, has requested troops from the United States and from Europe so as to aid the allied troops in Somalia in a final onslaught on the Somali port of Kismayo. The Prime Minister has stated that Kenyan forces will get to Kismayo before August however in order to completely rid of al-Shabaab, the operation must be carried out by land, sea and air. However EU foreign policy spokesman Michael Mann has stated that this is beyond the EU's mandate. Despite the mandate's recent expansion to allow for land attacks against Somalia-based pirates, the EU has been reluctant to commit to the capture of Kismayo as it is an al-Shabaab and not a pirate stronghold. EU warships have been in the area since 2008 in a bid to tackle piracy in the Horn of Africa. Presently, there are up to ten warships on patrol as part of the EU's Operation Atalanta which was launched to protect commercial shipping against pirate attacks. Michael Mann has stated that the EU has to be very careful to operate within the bounds of international law. The present mandate of the mission specifically focuses fighting pirates at sea and destroying their armament stations up to 2km on land, however no mention was made of possible operations against the al-Shabaab militants. If the mandate were to change, the EU would need its twenty-seven members to agree on the matter. African Union soldiers, Ethiopian forces and Somali government troops have in recent months succeeded in driving al-Shabaab from several of the towns in central Somalia. Since last October, Kenyan forces have moved into Somalia and have been slowly moving closer towards the port of Kismayo which is considered strategically important as not only do al-Shabaab militants who control the port accumulate

significant portions of the funds by levying taxes on the port, it also allows for the entrance of weapons and militants. Consequently, without gaining control of Kismayo, it will be very difficult to completely neutralize al-Shabaab.

- **11 June 2012** - The United States has threatened to impose sanctions on those Somalis who stand in the way of a UN-supervised roadmap for peace in Somalia. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson made these remarks during the first visit by a top US official to the country in two decades, a symbolic trip which has also signaled improving security in a country which has long been considered to be a failed state. The official trip to Mogadishu was to acknowledge the significant progress which has been made over the past few months in order to combat al-Shabaab militants, which still controls large portions of the country. The US envoy was in and out of the Somali capital within a few hours on Sunday however during the visit, Carson met with key individuals, including the Somali president, prime minister and other members of the Transitional Federal Government. He stated that the US would impose sanctions on anyone who stands in the way of the political process which is underway in the country, such actions range from visa sanctions to travel sanctions as well as asset freezes. Carson also indicated that the US may consider permanently stationing officials in the capital when they believe it will be appropriate and safe to do so. According to the UN-backed roadmap, a new parliament must be appointed and a new constitution adopted before 20 August of this year however the process is fraught with potential pitfalls including the fact that there are a number of warlords who remain in the country and who have financial and political interests in maintaining instability. However Carson states that Somalia is now closer to establishing some sort of a meaningful central government which has been absent in the country for more than 20 years. Carson went on to praise the African Union (AU) troops who helped to push al-Shabaab out of Mogadishu last August. Last month, AU troops also took the al-Shabaab stronghold of Afgoye while Kenyan troops are continuing to apply pressure on al-Shabaab from the south and Ethiopian troops are being deployed in the west.

Special Report: Piracy in West Africa

Although much of the focus remains on piracy in Somalia and the threat it poses to the international shipping industry, it must be highlighted that a similar piracy problem is growing on the other side of the African continent, in the Gulf of Guinea. For the last decade, piracy in African waters has been concentrated in two main regions, namely the Somali coast and the Gulf of Aden, along the East African Coast; and Nigeria's territorial waters in West Africa. Since 2007, when African waters overtook the waters of Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines) as the traditional dangerous hotspot of global piracy, much of the international focus and efforts to counter piracy in Africa have focused on the Somali coast. This has been due to the fact that piracy off the Somali coast has accounted for more than half of the pirate attacks recorded annually in Africa. In 2011, there were 439 piracy attacks worldwide in which more than half were attributed to Somali pirates operating in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and off the coast of Oman. Over the years, the spike in attacks prompted the deployment in 2008 of an ongoing international coalition of navies in order to fight Somali piracy. However a spark of violence in Western Africa has forced many in the international community to focus on the rise of piracy that is brewing in the Gulf of Guinea. According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), 2011 was a peak year for pirate activity in the region as 64 attacks on vessels were reported, an overall 28 percent increase from 2010. This increase, coupled with the fear that attacks in the region will rise again throughout 2012, has prompted many in the maritime security community to question whether foreign navies will intervene and provide similar maritime security in the region as has been done in the waters off the coast of Somalia. Subsequently it is necessary to examine the dynamics of piracy that is occurring in the Gulf of Guinea by highlighting the trends in piracy in the regions, the contributing factors, the implications of piracy in the region and the efforts that are being put forth in order to suppress the violence at sea.

Geostrategic and Maritime Perspectives

The Gulf of Guinea encompasses over a dozen countries from West and Central Africa, namely Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Furthermore, the region's geostrategic and maritime potentials are quite attractive as countries within the Gulf of Guinea are endowed with enormous mineral and marine resources including

diamond, gold, oil and fishes, among others. The region is also home to large hydrocarbon deposits. Nearly 70 percent of Africa's oil production is concentrated in the West African coast. In 1999, experts forecasted that Western oil companies would invest between \$40 and \$60 billion in the Gulf of Guinea alone over the next twenty years. It has also been estimated that deepwater drilling will account for 25 percent of offshore oil production by 2015, compared to just 9 percent in 2007. By 2020, oil production in the Gulf of Guinea is expected to surpass the total production of the Persian Gulf nations: reaching 25 percent of the global production, compared to 22 percent from the Persian Gulf. Among the oil-producing countries in the region are Nigeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, the Republic of



Congo and Gabon. Subsequently, the region holds the prospects of supplying a significant quantity of oil to the global economy as the 21st century progresses. The region's proximity to Europe and the United States further raises its strategic importance in global energy supply.

However despite the region's maritime affluence, there co-exists a number of afflictions which will affect stability within the region over the coming years. It's maritime afflictions can be broadly categorized as economic, political and environmental. Amongst the economic threats are drug trafficking, illegal oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism, piracy, poaching and sea robbery. The environmental issues include coastal erosion and maritime pollution which is caused by the dumping of toxic wastes and accidents from the oil industry. Resource-insurgency is a major political threat in the region and there is also a rising threat of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and possible threat of maritime terrorism.

Trends of Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

Despite growing national, regional and international efforts to improve maritime security along these routes, for the past several years, maritime piracy has been on the increase around Africa. Based on statistics from the IMB's *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Annual Report*, there was a global total of 1434 incidents of piracy in Africa between 2003 and 2011, in which 427 of those attacks occurred in African waters. Since 2007, the number of attacks has been on the rise and attacks off the coast of Gulf of Guinea constitute a fair share of the high incidents of piracy which have been recorded in Africa. Although the frequency of attacks that occur in the Gulf of Guinea are not as high as those that occur in the Somali coast, it is on the rise. Furthermore, pirates operating in the West African region are known to be violent, with the traditional modus operandi largely involving the use of speedboats to attack and dispossess shipping crew of cash, cargo and valuables when the vessel is at anchor or in harbor. Pirates in West Africa, like those in Somalia, are increasingly modifying their tactics by hijacking fishing vessels, particularly within the Nigerian waters, and using those vessels to operate off the coasts of neighboring countries such as Cameroon and Benin. Recent attacks have also extended further out at sea and have focused largely on oil-lade vessels in order to steal the petroleum product. Subsequently although these tactics may appear new to pirates in the Gulf of Guinea, they are tactics which have already

been used throughout the coast of Somalia. Subsequently it can be seen that piracy trends off the West African coast can, to a certain extent, mirror those trends which have either occurred or are still utilized in East Africa.

The waters off Nigeria are particularly dangerous as it is Africa's most populous country and top oil producer. It is also home to a strong network of criminal organizations that have increasingly targeted ships that carry valuable cargo. It has been estimated that in the coming years, shipping traffic off the coast of Nigeria will increase due to rising demands for its oil. However the risk of hijacking could discourage international shipping vessels from approaching ports in Nigeria. As with the case of Somalia, protecting and improving security in the waters off the Nigerian coast will not be a simple task and it will require coordinated action amongst naval and coast guard fleets in order to fend off any pirate attacks. It will also require increased action against land-based criminal groups along with the corruption within the government that enables such groups to thrive in the West African country. Additionally, a long-term strategy against the rising threat of piracy and organized crime must include measures that will effectively address the extreme poverty and inequality that has driven many Nigerians to pursue illicit activities as a means of survival. As with Somalia, piracy in Nigeria is a symptom of deeper economic, political and environmental issues all of which must be examined in order to put a permanent end to piracy and oil theft.

The Cost of Piracy

The cost of piracy in the region occurs in various ways as the loss of human lives and valuable property as well as the infliction of bodily injuries and trauma to innocent crews and their families are the most obvious direct impacts of pirate activities. Piracy also makes it more risky and expensive for much needed trade and investment to occur in the region. Given the high risks involved in transporting good through the region, insurance premiums have been escalating as shippers factor in higher risks into their operating costs. The cost of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, both from stolen cargos and higher insurance premiums and security costs, are estimated to reach \$2 billion this year, compared with \$7 billion from Somali piracy. For those economies that depend upon oil from the Gulf of Guinea, this will translate to increased prices of gasoline. Therefore as the scale and frequency of maritime threats grow in the Gulf of Aden, there is an increasing desire amongst the countries surrounding the Gulf to promote and preserve a level of security at sea. The desire to improve maritime security is a necessary step towards stamping out piracy and other maritime crimes in the area however, as has been the experience in Somalia, such efforts will take time.



Map: Throughout the past several weeks, as the monsoon season has continued in the waters off the coast of Somalia, it has been assessed that any attacks or hijackings to take place would occur in region of the Gulf of Aden as this area provides a degree of shelter from the monsoon and therefore enables pirates to operate.