

# AYSS International Newsletter Extra August 2010



## Maritime Security update on Somali Piracy

Once again the Royal Navy have amended their Best Management Practice guidelines for shipping which can be found on the Maritime Security Centre - Horn of Africa website ([www.mschoa.eu](http://www.mschoa.eu)). These are aimed primarily at the commercial industry; however they do serve as a good base document to aid a Master about to undertake a voyage through hostile waters.

Pirates are still managing to succeed in their quest to capture vessels for ransom even with the increased Naval presence and group transit scheme through the Gulf of Aden. Two vessels were hijacked in the Gulf of Aden in June, a vessel was hijacked in the Southern Red Sea area Bab Al Mandeb in July a first in the Red Sea and a further two vessels have been hijacked so far in August inside the Internationally Recognised Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden. All of these during the monsoon season where piracy is normally on hold until the wind and seas calm down towards the end of August.

Pirates have become more aggressive as they are getting fewer chances to strike again if their first attack fails. The number of Naval assets has risen however due to the vast area of the Indian Ocean they simply cannot be everywhere. Hence the Pirates tactics have changed adopting to sail much further from the Somali coast as their success rates have reduced. By utilising Mother ships often fishing dhows hijacked in order to provide greater reach away from the Somali coastline disguising the true intent of those onboard. We have also seen an increase in Pirate Attack Groups (PAGs) consisting of a very basic mother skiff filled with 45 gallon drums of fuel and additional fresh water capable of towing a couple of attack skiffs hundreds of miles over a period of days. These will once again wait in ambush for unsuspecting mariners to attack and hijack to add to their tally and once again bring potentially millions of dollars in ransom bounty for the attackers and months of misery to those poor unsuspecting mariners who were unaware of the lurking danger.

I believe that its simply a matter of numbers that have prevented a superyacht from being hijacked as very few transit the high risk waters in comparison to the commercial fleets of the world. The exception to this was the 88m luxury sail cruise ship Le Ponant in April 2008, technically not a superyacht. The British couple Paul and Rachel Chandler were kidnapped in October 2009 whilst sailing their 12m Lynn Rival from the Seychelles to Tanzania and to date are still held captive.

Somali pirates were held responsible for 217 acts of piracy in 2009, in which 47 vessels were hijacked and 867 crewmembers taken hostage. To date approximately 23 vessels have been hijacked since January 2010, by Somali Pirates.

I will be at the AGM and during the course of the MYS should any members require additional information I'll gladly oblige.

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Photo by EU Nav



Expansion of pirate operations

