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# Piracy Analysis and Warning Weekly (Horn of Africa)

23-29 October 2009

The Piracy Analysis and Warning Weekly (PAWW) report is produced by the Counter-Piracy and Maritime Crime Team within the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). It provides a review of incidents, assessment and outlook on the threat to merchant shipping in or near the Gulf of Aden and off the East coast of Somalia from piracy and associated maritime crime. This publication is produced primarily to inform merchant mariners and naval forces operating in and near the Horn of Africa of recent pirate activity.<sup>1</sup>

## Advisory:

ONI assesses that vessels attacked off Somalia are randomly selected and not specifically targeted for any reason other than how easily the vessel can be boarded. Pirates simply patrol an area, wait for a target of opportunity, and attempt to board. ONI defines a high risk vessel as one that travels at a speed of less than 15 knots with low hook points. All vessels, especially vessels that fit this profile, are advised to proceed with extreme caution when transiting the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Somalia. Pirates have shown a new capability to operate in waters off the Omani coast (in the southern Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea). There have also been incidents reported in the southern Red Sea of aggressive small boat activity. Caution must be taken when transiting these waters. Pirates have achieved significant success in recent months and have shown their capability to operate for sustained periods in the Gulf of Aden and at a considerable distance (>900NM) off the coast of Somalia. Not all attacks were successful, and considerable caution is always required since the areas around failed hijackings remain at high risk for at least 48 hours after the incident. ONI releases Indications and Warning spot reports to assist mariners in avoiding these areas. It is strongly recommended that vessels transiting the region take such counter-piracy measures as: continuous anti-piracy shipboard drills, fixed barbed wire in high densities around the main deck rail and any low hook points, fixed fire hoses along the outside of the vessel—especially near potential boarding points, and consideration of employment of a pirate security team. (ONI Comment)

## Executive Summary

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- There are four incidents to report in this period.
- Somali pirates are currently holding eight merchant vessels for ransom.
- No vessels were released this week.

### *Projected Risk of Attack:*

Gulf of Aden: Over the next 72 hours conditions will be favorable for small boat activity in the Gulf of Aden with winds at 5-10 knots and associated wave heights of 2-5 feet. (UK Weather Online)

Indian Ocean: In the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Somalia, weather continues to be conducive to small boat operations. Forecasts indicate wind speeds of 5-15 knots with associated wave heights of 2-6 feet. (UK Weather Online)

## Piracy Events

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### **Overview**

This section provides information on threats to, and criminal action against merchant shipping in the vicinity of the Horn of Africa.



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## Summary of the week 23-29 October 2009

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There are four incidents to report in this period.

### Hijacked Vessels:

1. INDIAN OCEAN: Sailing vessel (LYNN RIVAL) hijacked 23 Oct 09 while underway approximately 60NM west of Port Victoria, Seychelles. The vessel was bound for Tanzania when it dispatched an emergency distress signal on 23 Oct, and then lost contact (AP, AFP).

2. INDIAN OCEAN: Fishing Vessel (THAI UNION 3) hijacked 29 Oct 09 while underway in position 01:55S - 055:53E (Approximately 183NM northeast of Seychelles) at 0247Z. Seven armed men boarded the vessel and have begun to direct it towards the Somali coastline. The vessel was last located at 0936Z on 29 October 2009 underway in position 01:33S - 055:17E making approximately 9 kts on course 315.

### Vessels Fired Upon:

1. INDIAN OCEAN: Fishing vessel (CAP ST. VINCENT) fired upon 27 Oct 09 at 1020 UTC while underway in position 01:25N – 050:41E, approximately 330NM east of Mogadishu, Somalia. The vessel reported being chased and fired upon by two skiffs with approximately six persons onboard. The visual presence and noise of warning shots fired by an armed security team onboard the vessel deterred the approach at 0.8 miles away. A German warship was dispatched to the scene and located the skiffs trying to flee the area. The men onboard the skiffs were later arrested (AFP, AP, IMB).

2. INDIAN OCEAN: Container ship fired upon 25 Oct 09 at 0845 UTC while underway in position 06:07.7S – 045:10E, approximately 350NM southeast of Mombassa, Kenya. Six men armed with machine guns in a white plastic hull speedboat chased the vessel. The master raised the alarm, conducted counter-piracy preventive measures, and increased to maximum speed. At a distance of about three cables, the men started firing at the vessel. The men eventually aborted the attack, and the vessel continued underway at maximum speed (IMB).

### Attempted Boarding's:

No attempted boardings to report during this period.

## Tabulated Data

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### PIRACY EVENTS

	This Week (Last)	October 09 (September09)	2009 (2008)
Vessels Fired Upon	2 (2)	9 (7)	105 (42)
Vessels Hijacked	2 (2)	6 (0)	39 (44)
Attempted Boarding *Data Set originates 22 May 2009	0 (0)	0 (1)	4 (N/A)



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## Incident Disposition

The incidents contained within this report were noted to have taken place, or reported, within the last week. The incidents illustrated in the following map and tables are depicted as:



Attempted Boarding's



Vessels fired upon



Vessels hijacked



Fig 1. HOA pirate activity 23-29 October (IMB)



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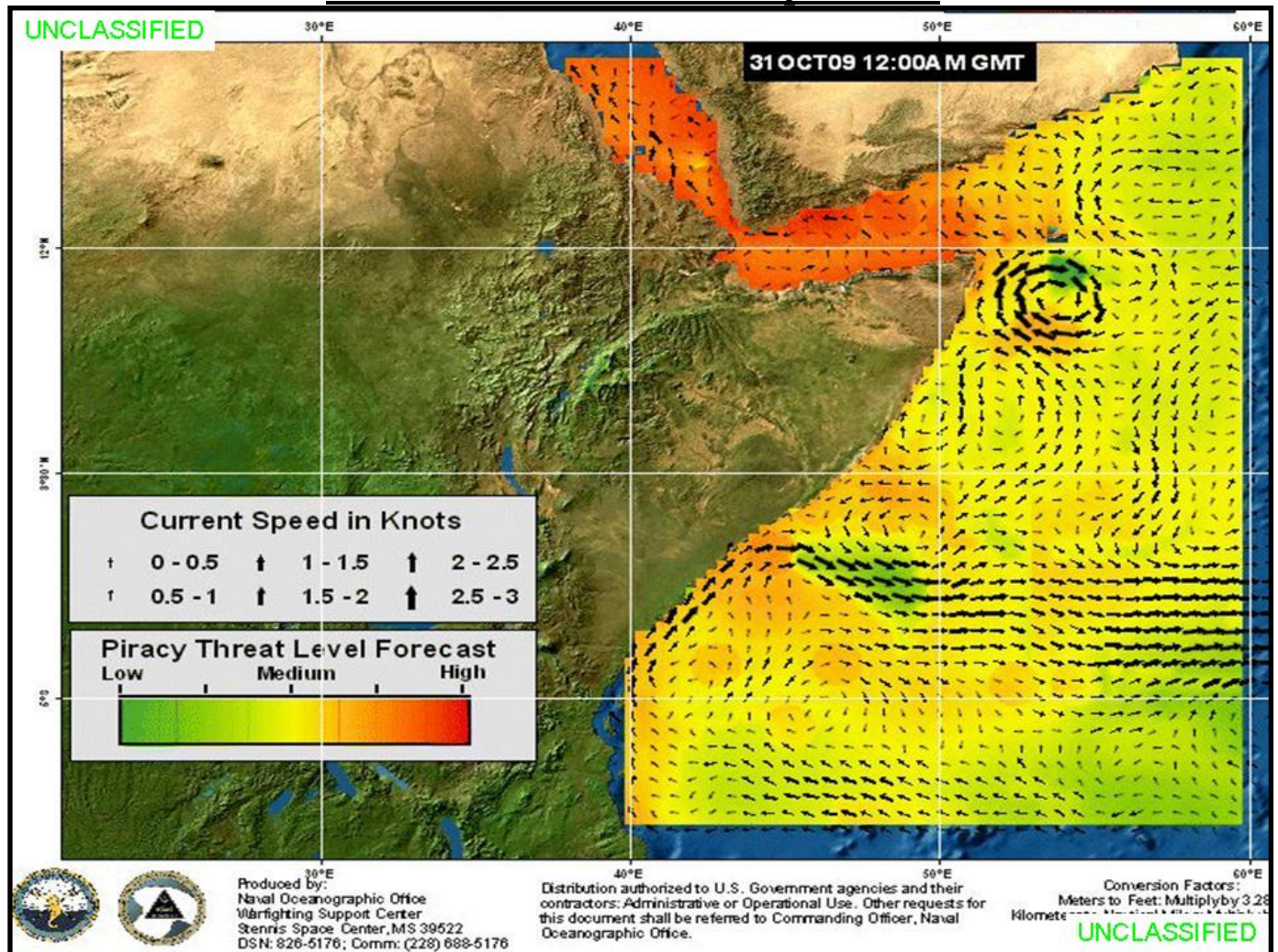
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## Forecast for Week of 30 October- 05 November 2009

Weather conditions continue to be conducive to small boat operations in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Somalia, and in the Gulf of Aden. Mariners are warned to remain vigilant in their counter-piracy measures as an increase in aggressive small boat activity is expected in the coming weeks. Somali pirates currently hold fewer vessels for ransom than they have shown recent capacity to hold. This week, ONI assesses the risk of pirate attacks is high in the Indian Ocean with increased risks in the areas in vicinity of the Seychelles (Port Victoria: 04:37S – 055:27E). Please note pirates south of the equator in the Indian Ocean have recently demonstrated the ability to operate in the capability range of Medium. Prevailing currents are significant between latitudes 1 and 5 degrees south and tend to flow in an easterly direction with speeds up to 3.5 kts. Therefore, increased risk of attack exists due east of the Somali coast out as far as 900NM between these latitudes. The Gulf of Aden remains a prime operating area for Somali pirates.

### Likelihood of Small Boat Operations



(Graphic courtesy of the Naval Oceanographic Office Warfighting Support Center)

In the graphic above, green represents a reduced risk for small boat activity while red signifies areas with a high likelihood of small boat activity. The waters marked in yellow through red may represent an increased risk to vessels



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**operating in the area and mariners are encouraged to maintain a strict watch at all times when transiting these high-risk waters.** (ONI Comment/Naval Oceanographic Office)

Comments on the PAWW, including suggested revisions to the distribution list, should be addressed to the Counter-Piracy and Maritime Crime Team at ONI:

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The Information Cut off Date (ICOD) is 29 October 2009.

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<sup>i</sup> ONI's goal is to provide the maritime community with relevant information concerning threats to safe commercial ship operation for use by maritime personnel in implementing security. In order to promote consistent use of accurate terms of reference, the following are adopted to describe the range of criminal anti-shipping activity and impediments to safe navigation in our worldwide reporting and analysis:

Boarding - Unauthorized presence on the ship whether in port or underway.  
Robbery - Theft from a vessel or from persons aboard the vessel.  
Kidnap - Unauthorized forcible removal of persons belonging to the vessel from it.  
Hijack - Unauthorized seizure and retention of a vessel by persons not part of its complement.



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Firing upon - Weapons discharged at or toward a vessel.

Attempted boarding - Close approach or hull-to-hull contact with report that boarding paraphernalia were employed or visible in the approaching boat.

Suspicious approach - All other unexplained close proximity of an unknown vessel.

Blocking - Hampering safe navigation, docking, or undocking of a vessel as a means of protest.

Note that these terms relate to observable activity and are independent of target vessel status and exclude actions by governmental authorities in lawful pursuit of their authority. ONI welcomes comment and suggestions for addition or amendment.