

ATALANTA

**UPDATE ON THE PIRACY THREAT OFF THE  
COAST OF SOMALIA**

14 MARCH  
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**Ships sailing off the Somalian coasts, in the Somali basin are urged to maintain a heightened state of vigilance in light of the recent escalation in piracy threats. It is strongly recommended that all vessels adhere to the Best Management Practices Version 5 (BMP5), paying a special attention to the drill of security measures before sailing off Somali coasts.**

**Situation:** Since the end of November 2023, multiple incidents involving piracy and hijacking have taken place in the Somali basin. Recently, there has been a notable surge in reported events that could potentially escalate into piracy attacks off the Somali coast. Additionally, the conclusion of the monsoon period is expected to further facilitate piracy activities in the region.

- Three merchant vessels have been assaulted, two of which are still under pirate control (M/V Rouen IMO 9754903 and M/V Abdullah IMO 9745598). Additionally, several vessels have reported suspicious approaches.
- Furthermore, up to 18 dhows have been hijacked. A number of them have been released, but up to seven may still be in the hands of their captors.
- ATALANTA's has identified several possible pirate camps on the Somali Coasts situated between Cape Hafun and the village of Garacad.
- It is estimated that four pirate action groups (PAGs) at least could be sailing off the Somali coast.

**Pirates' modus operandi.** The typical pirate strategy involves the seizure and hijacking of a dhow, which is subsequently utilized as their mother ship. They then dissimulate in with usual traffic and deploy skiffs from the mother ship to attack vessels navigating as far as 600 nautical miles or more, off the East Somali coast. If the targeted vessel cannot repel the attack, pirates may opt to board the ship. After a vessel is seized, it is taken to the Somali coast and held there while ransom negotiations are ongoing. After its capture, the hijacked vessel RUEN did not remain stationary but instead moved along the Somali coast. Now that it is sailing away from the coast, the possibility that it could be used as a mother ship for a future assault cannot be ruled out.

**Threat evaluation.** Significant attacks on merchant vessels occurred within 12 days after reports of dhow hijackings. Additionally, the departure of multiple skiffs, each carrying armed individuals with the intent to capture dhows to facilitate attacks on larger vessels, was reported to ATALANTA on March 13th. Therefore, utmost vigilance is advised when navigating off the Somali coast, and monitoring alerts posted on the MSCHOA website is recommended. For instance, alert 039/2024 highlighted the potential departure of pirate groups.

**Registration and reporting.** It is crucial that vessels operating in the Western Indian Ocean, particularly those within 700 NM of the Somali coast, adhere to the BMP5 recommendations. Any incidents should be promptly reported to MSCHOA and the UKMTO. Additionally, it is also worth highlighting that MSCHOA-registered ships receive near real-time information on security incidents in their vicinity.