

## SEA GUARDIAN GOA ADVISORY 14 MARCH 2017

Somali pirates are suspected of hijacking a Sri Lankan-flagged fuel freighter that sent a distress call on 13 March 17, turned off its tracking system and altered course for the Somali coast.

If above incident is confirmed, this would be the first hijacking of a commercial ship by Somali pirates since 2012.

The fuel freighter that is believed to have an eight person crew was being followed by two skiffs in the afternoon hours of 13<sup>th</sup> March 2107 before it disappeared.

Maritime patrol aircrafts from EUNAVFOR are flying overhead to track the ship's whereabouts and in order to assess the situation.

Officials from the semiautonomous state of Puntland stated that over two dozen men boarded the ship off Somalia's northern coast and the ship was being moved toward the coast.

### *Incidents in the South Red Sea, Bam-el-Mandeb from Oct 2016 to date.*



Following the above reported pirate attack of 13 March 17 on the Sri Lankan-flagged fuel freighter which resulted to vessel's hijacking, and the Mine Incident in the vicinity of Al Mocha, Yemen on 11 March 17, several organizations have gone ahead and issued Advisories and warnings for GOA area as follows:

### **MSCHOA:**

Information received by MSCHOA on 13 March 2017 indicates that communication was lost with a MV at 131154 UTC Mar 17 in position 1201N 05127E (in the Socotra gap). The MV at 140800 UTC was then in position 1159N 05045E (probably at anchor). Military Counter Piracy forces are currently investigating the situation.

## **UKMTO:**

ADVISORY NOTICE 004/MAR/2017

Category: IRREGULAR ACTIVITY

Description: Investigations are currently on-going following reports that at 131154 UTC MAR 17 communications were lost with an MV in position: 1201.67N 05127.25E.

Source: Reported to UKMTO by email from CSO call at 131412 UTC.

## **MARAD:**

2017-002B-Report of Mine Incident-Vicinity of Al Mocha, Yemen (Related to UKMTO's Advisory 003/MAR/2017 of 10 MAR 17)

A maritime incident has been reported in the vicinity of Al Mocha, Yemen. The U.S. Government has reason to believe this is associated with activities previously reported in U.S. Maritime Alert 2017-002A, as the event involves a mine detonation impacting a Yemeni Coast Guard vessel in Yemeni territorial waters in the Red Sea in the vicinity of Al Mocha.

Mariners are advised to exercise caution when transiting this area. This alert will automatically expire on March 17, 2017.

## **SEA GUARDIAN ASSESSMENT-ADVISORY:**

The last attack / possible hijack of the fuel freighter vessel is the third incident taking place in the Gulf of Aden in the last 10 days. The other two took place last week, where suspicious approaches ended due to the presence of the armed guards on board (showing weapons) causing the skiffs to alter course and flee away. Furthermore the recent incident with the mine explosion off Mocha Port Yemen shows that Houthi rebels possess the kind of weaponry that may cause a serious threat to merchant shipping in the Red Sea region. When the above along with the current geopolitical state in the region are taken in consideration together with the most recent trends/risk factors that Sea Guardian's Intel cell has stressed in the past such as 1) the developing famine in Somalia, 2) Departure of NATO Naval forces from the region, 3) The return of commercial fishing in the Somali coastline due to the perception by some that these waters are now safe, 4) Complacency by many in the Shipping Industry – then we have the elements in place for a very possible resurgence of Somali Piracy, evident by the most recent hijack.

**Sea Guardian urges all our client's Vessels to be extremely vigilant when transiting the HRA, with emphasis in the Gulf of Aden and near Yemen especially at South Red Sea & Bab-El-Mandeb as well. Vigilance needs to be also exercised at all South Yemen Ports (Gulf of Aden) for the threat of Islamist elements and AQAP (Al Qaeda Arabic Peninsula) or ISIS.**

**Overall Map of Incidents can be found at <http://www.sguardian.com/risk-map/> We would also like to encourage the recipients of this report, to follow Sea Guardian's Social networks for up to date and real time information**

