



Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB) 002 (to IRTA 1 Dec 17¹)

Issued: 15 Dec 17

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1. **Foreword.** This IRTB has been written by EU NAVFOR and Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). It is intended to inform risk management decision making for shipping operators responsible for merchant vessels that are transiting through the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden (GoA), Gulf of Oman (GoO) and the Western Indian Ocean.
2. The purpose of an **Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB)** is to provide a specific update to industry on events that may require military assessment above and beyond the overarching Industry Releasable Threat Assessment. The information contained in the IRTBs will be incorporated into the IRTA at the next issue².
3. **Incident/identifier.** 17-18 Nov 2017 MV EVER DYNAMIC and FV GALERNA III.
4. **Date/time.** 170917Z Nov 17 (MV EVER DYNAMIC) and 180555Z Nov 17 (FV GALERNA III).
5. **Location.** Approximately 300nm off the coast of southern Somalia. The attack on MV EVER DYNAMIC took place in position 01 55.9S 047 56.8E. Less than 24 hours later, and 88nm east of this position, the incident involving FV GALERNA III occurred.



¹ The latest Industry Releasable Threat Assessment (IRTA) was issued 1 Dec 17 (with an information cut-off date 15 Nov 17).

² Date of next issue: 1 Mar 18.

6. **Vessel Description.**

- a. **MV EVER DYNAMIC**; Panama flagged container ship. LOA 294m x Breadth 32m, 52,090 GRT. Freeboard 6.2 metres.



- b. **FV GALERNA III**; Seychelles flagged fishing vessel.



7. **Event Description.**

a. 17 Nov 17; MV EVER DYNAMIC reported that she was under attack from a skiff. Five persons and a ladder were observed as the skiff came alongside and attempted to board at midships. The initial approach was unsuccessful as the pirates' ladder was too short; however they came very close to successfully boarding. The skiff then moved to the stern of the ship and the pirates attempted a second boarding which was thwarted by the ship's effective Best Management Practice (BMP) measures. Subsequently the skiff moved away from the ship and fired two RPGs (Rocket Propelled Grenade), one at the stern and one at the bridge, both of which missed their target. We assess that this was likely a final attempt to slow the ship. As the EVER DYNAMIC gradually increased speed to 20 knots the skiff could not keep up and subsequently withdrew towards a larger whaler that was approximately 1nm away, which is believed to have been operating as a supporting mother ship.

b. 18 Nov 17; FV GALERNA III reported a suspicious approach by a skiff. The skiff closed to within a distance of approximately 300m and did not move away until warning shots were fired by the embarked Private Armed Security Team (PAST). The skiff moved towards a whaler which was loitering approximately 7 nm away.

8. **Outcome.** Both incidents were ultimately unsuccessful and both the vessels and the crew were left unharmed.

9. **Follow up.** Following the incidents EU NAVFOR's Flagship, the Italian vessel ITS VIRGINIO FASAN located the whaler and skiff in conjunction with Maritime Patrol Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA) assets. Having located the craft the FASAN tracked the suspected pirates overnight 18/19 Nov 2017. Imagery taken by both the MPRA and the FASAN's organic helicopter was shared with the masters of the EVER DYNAMIC and GALERNA III who confirmed that it appeared to be the same craft that were involved in the respective attacks. As a result a team from the FASAN conducted a boarding on the morning of 19 Nov 2017, detaining six suspected pirates and seizing the skiff and whaler. The six suspected pirates have now been transferred to the authorities in the Seychelles for potential prosecution.



10. **Comment.**

a. These incidents serve as a timely reminder that through the effective implementation of BMP and PAST, and the continued presence of international naval forces, **piracy has been suppressed - not eradicated**. It is likely that criminal networks will continue to seek opportunistic targets and as such the importance of continued vigilance and adherence to BMP cannot be over emphasized.

b. The incidents highlight that the BMP measures put in place by industry **remain fit for purpose**, but only as long as they are fully employed. All partners are strongly encouraged to maintain a high speed whilst transiting in the High Risk Area. In this instance the speed at which skiffs closed with the MV did not give them the necessary time to get up to speed to outrun the small craft. In this instance the pirates generated an opportunity to board and it was fortunate that they were ultimately unsuccessful.

c. The attackers were not dissuaded by their first failure and the following day performed a second attempt which shows **determination and commitment**. The presence of EU Naval Forces in the area and the military response in locating the pirates enabled the swift apprehension of the suspected pirates, who otherwise may have continued to seek targets of opportunity.

d. The incident took place 300nm from the Somali coast, which represents the first identified long range pirate activity group (PAG) operating amongst trans Indian Ocean shipping traffic in the Somali Basin for over 4 years. This marks a change in tactics from the spike of piracy activity last March and April 2017 when attacks took place much closer to the Somali coast. Once again the importance of adherence to BMP is critical, in particular

vigilance and **the reporting of all suspicious incidents to UKMTO at the time they are observed** cannot be over emphasised.

e. In this instance the imagery captured by both the MV EVER DYNAMIC and the FV GALERNA III played a crucial part in linking the suspected pirates and craft to both incidents and is therefore likely to be pivotal in any subsequent legal process. We therefore suggest that during such incidents, **when feasible and without endangering the vessel or her crew**, imagery is taken of those involved and provided to MSCHOA.

11. **Assessment.** Since these incidents, we have seen no further pirate activity that would indicate that this event represents a newly active PAG or a new spike in activity. We assess that the successful detention and transfer to the Seychelles authorities for prosecution will likely have a deterrence effect on would-be pirates. We therefore assess that this event does not alter the overall assessed future trend for the area, and assess that piracy attacks will likely remain sporadic and at a low level. However these events clearly indicate that the threat of piracy is still present and strongly recommend that all ship security risk assessments take account of these incidents for vessels transiting the Somali Basin.

12. **Publication and feedback.**

- a. Prepared by CMF and EU NAVFOR.
- b. Distributed by the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSC HoA).
- c. All enquiries - in the first instance – should be referred to MSCHOA using:
 - (1) **Tel:** +44 (0) 1923 958545 / +44 (0) 1923 958700
 - (2) **Fax:** +44 (0) 1923 958520
 - (3) **Website:** www.mschoa.org