



NATO's point of contact with the Maritime Community

Joint statement by UKMTO, NATO Shipping Centre and the Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa

There have been a number of incidents recently reported to Counter Piracy organisations in the High Risk Area involving small craft approaches to Merchant Vessels. Although these incidents may appear to be piracy related, the majority are not, and have been assessed as non-piracy related activity common to the pattern of life in the area. This can include fishing, small vessel trade, smuggling and other local traffic.

Please note that, if we assess an approach or incident to be piracy, then we will issue relevant warnings and alerts, keeping the merchant shipping community fully informed at all times.

During the South-West monsoon between June and September, sea conditions in much of the High Risk Area (HRA) are expected to be largely unfavourable to small boats such as skiffs. These may move to operate in less-exposed or coastal areas such as the Gulf of Aden or Bab-al-Mandeb.

Please remain vigilant at all times.

If an incident occurs, Masters are advised to report immediately to UKMTO via telephone at +971 50 55 23215, providing as much information as possible about the incident. This will ensure information is quickly passed to shipping in the area.

If Masters are able to take pictures and/or video of the suspicious activity safely, please provide these via email to UKMTO at ukmto@eim.ae, NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) at info@shipping.nato.int or the Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) at postmaster@mschoa.org. This information will be used by Counter Piracy forces to help combat piracy. Pictures supplied from a recent attack on a merchant vessel led to the rapid release of a pirated dhow.