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**SOMALI PIRATE PLEADS GUILTY IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT
TO MARITIME HIJACKINGS, KIDNAPPINGS, AND
HOSTAGE TAKINGS**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ABDUWALI ABDUKHADIR MUSÉ, the Somali pirate who led the hijacking of the Maersk Alabama container ship in the Indian Ocean, pleaded guilty today in Manhattan federal court to two felony counts of hijacking maritime vessels, two felony counts of kidnapping, and two felony counts of hostage taking. MUSÉ's guilty plea arose from his participation in the April 8, 2009, hijacking of the Maersk Alabama container ship in the Indian Ocean, and the subsequent taking of the captain of the ship as a hostage, as well as his participation in the hijacking of two other vessels in late March and early April of 2009 and related hostage-taking.

According to the Superseding Indictment to which MUSÉ pleaded guilty, the criminal Complaint previously filed against MUSÉ on April 21, 2009, and statements made today during the guilty plea proceeding before United States District Judge LORETTA A. PRESKA:

In March 2009, MUSÉ, and others armed with firearms, boarded a ship ("Ship-1") as it was navigating in the Indian Ocean. After boarding Ship-1, MUSÉ and others threatened the captain of Ship-1 with a firearm; seized control of Ship-1; and held the captain and the crew of Ship-1 hostage on board.

While on board Ship-1, MUSÉ pointed a gun at one of the Ship-1 hostages and threatened to kill him. In addition, MUSÉ showed one of the hostages what appeared to be an improvised explosive device ("IED"). MUSÉ placed the IED in the vicinity of the hostage, and indicated that if the authorities came the IED would explode and the hostage would be killed.

In April 2009, MUSÉ and others left Ship-1 on a small boat ("Skiff"). When the Skiff returned to Ship-1, Ship-1 and

the Skiff were made to rendezvous with another ship ("Ship-2") that was then navigating in the Indian Ocean. After Ship-1 and the Skiff arrived in the vicinity of Ship-2, the captain of Ship-1 was ordered to pull Ship-1 up to Ship-2. Ship-1 was then attached to Ship-2. Beginning in or about April 2009, MUSÉ and others held hostage, on board Ship-2, both the captain and the crew of Ship-1 and the captain and the crew of Ship-2.

In April 2009, MUSÉ and three other pirates left Ship-2, and boarded the Maersk Alabama after shooting at the ship from their own boat. Each of the four pirates who boarded the Maersk Alabama, including MUSÉ, was armed with a gun. Once on board the Maersk Alabama, MUSÉ, who conducted himself as the leader of the pirates, demanded, among other things, that the ship be stopped. Several hours after boarding the Maersk Alabama, the pirates took a life boat from the ship, on which they held the captain of the ship as a hostage.

MUSÉ and the other three pirates then held the captain hostage on the life boat from April 8 to April 12, 2009. During this period, in radio communications between the pirates and the United States Navy, the pirates threatened to kill the captain if they were not provided with safe passage away from the scene. On April 12, 2009, MUSÉ requested and was permitted to board the USS Bainbridge, a United States Navy missile destroyer that had arrived on the scene. On the USS Bainbridge, MUSÉ continued to demand for himself and the other pirates safe passage from the scene in exchange for the captain's release. On April 12, 2009, MUSÉ was taken into custody by the United States Navy.

The charges to which MUSÉ pleaded guilty, and their maximum penalties, are as follows:

Count	Charge	Maximum Prison Term
2	Seizing a ship by force	20 years
3	Conspiracy to seize a ship by force	20 years
5	Hostage taking	Life
6	Conspiracy to commit hostage taking	Life
8	Kidnapping	Life
9	Conspiracy to commit kidnapping	Life

MUSÉ is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge PRESKA on October 19, 2010.

U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "Today, Abduwali Abdukhadir Musé admitted his leadership role in the armed hijacking of an American-flagged vessel and two international ships in the Indian Ocean. The five-day Maersk hijacking and the events leading up to it make clear that modern-day piracy is a crime against the international community and a form of terrorism on the high seas. Pirates who attack U.S. ships overseas and take American hostages should know that they will face stiff justice in an American courtroom. I would like to recognize the extraordinary collective efforts of local, federal, and international law enforcement and pay special thanks to the men and women of the U.S. Navy without whose bravery today's result would not have been possible."

Mr. BHARARA praised the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force -- which principally consists of agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") and detectives of the New York City Police Department -- and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service for their extraordinary efforts in the investigation of this case. Mr. BHARARA thanked the United States Navy for its cooperation throughout the case, and particularly the Office of the Judge Advocate General for its invaluable assistance. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the Counterterrorism Section of the National Security Division of the Department of Justice, the Department of State, specifically the United States Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, the FBI's Legal Attaché Office in Nairobi, and the Department of Defense. Mr. BHARARA also expressed his gratitude to the Government of Kenya and Maersk Line, Limited, for their cooperation and assistance.

The case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys BRENDAN R. McGUIRE and JEFFREY BROWN are in charge of the prosecution.

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