

SEMINAR
PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPPING:
To Prevent, Deter, Protect and Fight against an ACTUAL Threat
21 JANUARY 2009

Presentation by Captain R MacDonald, Secretary General IFSMA

I would like to express our thoughts of positive measures to stop the piracy activeness especially in Gulf of Aden and inside and off Somalia and especially the Puntland region.

We are fully aware of the situation and we are also very grateful for all the efforts which have been done so far by different countries, intergovernmental and other organisations within and outside the shipping industry. We know that the area that has to be protected is very huge like three North Sea it has been said. The pirates can return freely into Somalia and also bring the ships with the hostage still onboard without any risks to be caught by the Somalian government or authorities. I think, here we have the fundamental problem. Something has to be done to install a Somalian government which can establish law and order into the country. All of what I has been said this morning regarding piracy indicates this.

A lot has already been done recently and it is hard to keep up with all the developments but IFSMA believes that much more has to be done. Here I would also want to confirm that IFSMA fully supports the comments we have just heard from Alfons Guinier of ECSA.

IFSMA is very pleased that IMO Council decided on the 16th of October 2008 to emphasise on the subjects to be brought forward to UN:

- The possibilities to take captured pirates to court
- To establish rules of engagement for participating naval units
- The assistance to ships should be regardless of flag of the ship and nationality of the crew to the benefits of all ships and seafarers.

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution on November 20, 2008 that was proposed by UK to introduce tougher sanctions against Somalia over the country's failure to prevent a surge in sea piracy. The US circulated the draft resolution that called upon countries having naval capacities to deploy vessels and aircrafts to defend ships against piracy in the region. The resolution also welcomed the initiatives of the European Union, NATO and other countries to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia. US Alternate Representative for Security Council Affairs Rosemary said that the draft resolution "calls on the secretary-general to look at a long-term solution to escorting the safe passage of World Food Programme ships."

As the pirates are considered heroes by there countrymen, the only way to solve this, as we see it, is to create prerequisites to get law and order into the country including a strong government, before this is done I think it will be almost impossible to stop the piracy and armed robbery activities in the region.

The International Conference on Piracy around Somalia was convened in Nairobi at a ministerial level on the 11th of December 2008 and made declarations on key points in the region and IFSMA is standing behind this declaration and wholeheartedly supports it.

We welcome therefore that on December 17th, 2008, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a tougher resolution, allowing for the first time international land and sea occupations in the pursuit of pirates. We think this together with measures that should be taken onboard in line with IMO guidelines, the guidelines issued by EU, by industry organisations and companies will have effect.

So what preventive measures do our members suggest?

- Shipmasters must be kept updated on the piracy situation of the area of trading and they should maintain clear communications with appropriate naval defence vessels.
- In piracy infested areas, be vigilant and maintain a 24-hour watch.
- The ship security plan should also focus on piracy risks and clearly state crew responses, radio procedures and reporting procedures.
- Set up an emergency area on board – possibly with separate communications – into which the crew could retreat if attackers board the ship.
- The shipmaster must remain legally permitted to switch off AIS and Long Range Tracking devices if the threat of its use assists pirates to locate and target the ship.
- Provide strongest possible lighting, over side, bow and stern area but be careful not to interfere with safe navigation rules at steam. Use search light to probe for suspect crafts using guidance of radar.
- Seal off means of access to ship. Access doors, holds and storages should be locked when not in use.
- Keep water hoses ready for use and fire main pressurised.
- Delay anchoring by slow steaming or longer routing.
- Use of anti-piracy detection and boarding systems and non-lethal crowd dispersion technologies.
- Introduce a convoy system for the slow, low manning, most vulnerable ships with low decks and also with safe assembly points.

- Equip ships with long range acoustic device (LRAD) like Seabourn Spirit SADA. And ensure the users of these devices are properly trained in their use.
- If we can not stop the piracy activities, we must recommend the shipowners to sail south of Africa and also urge the seafarers to consider refusing to sail on ships entering the high-risks zones.

But our shipmasters strongly oppose the idea of arming the ships either with weapons for seafarers to use or having an armed force on board.

Finally I hope all these efforts from all parties will take and have effect on the piracy activities in this area as well as in other areas so that seafarers can do their important job without any threats to their lives or property. I am of the opinion that we must be considered as all other people and should therefore have the full protection as anyone else in the world community.