

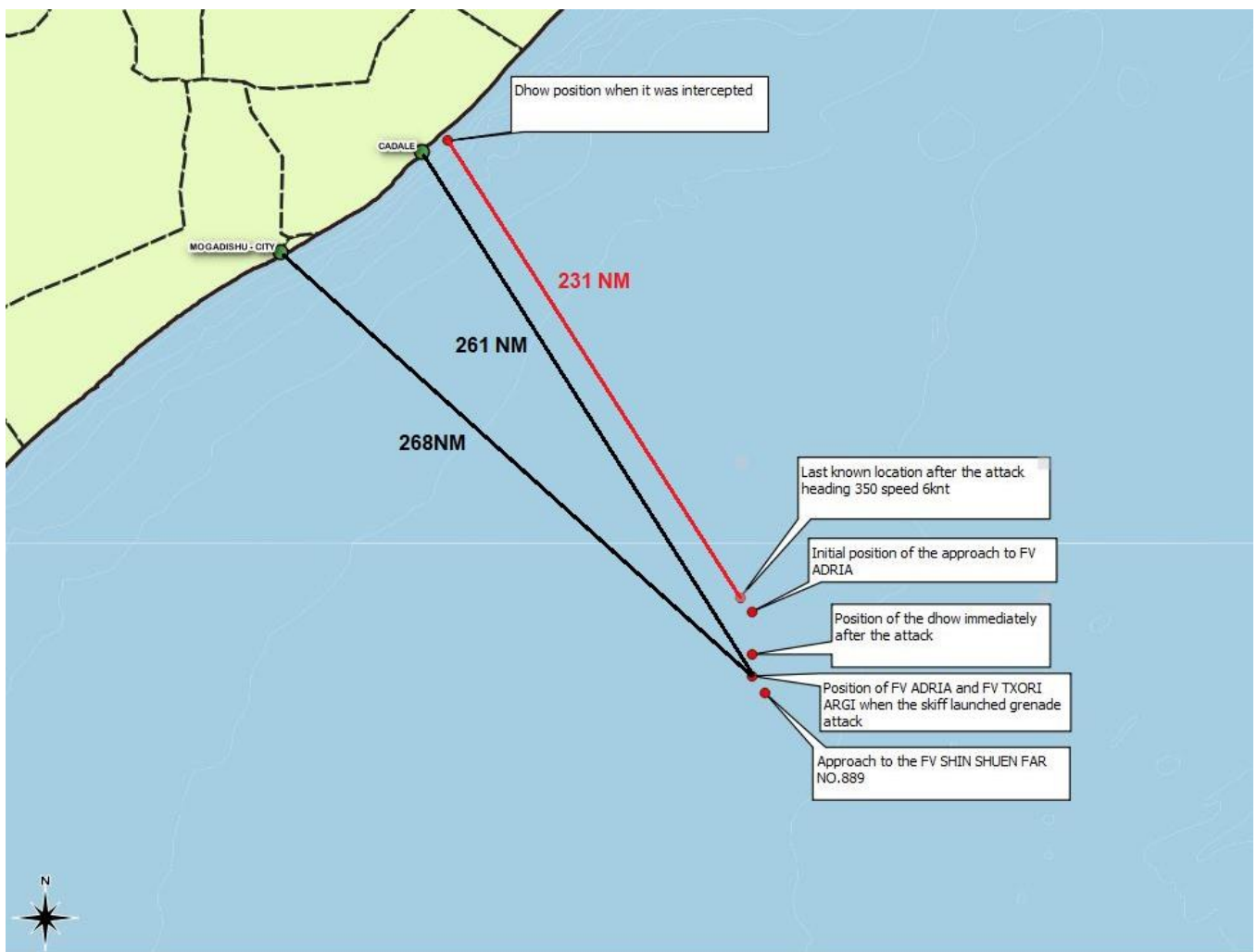


Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB) 013 (to IRTA 1 Mar 19)¹

Issued: 26 Apr 19

For official use only. This Threat Bulletin has been released to the Shipping Industry in confidence. It should not be disseminated further without permission.

- 1. Foreword.** This IRTB has been written by European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) and Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). It is intended to inform risk management decision making for shipping operators responsible for merchant and fishing vessels that are transiting through or operating in the Somali Basin, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden (GOA) and the Western Indian Ocean.
- 2. Purpose.** The purpose of an **Industry Releasable Threat Bulletin (IRTB)** is to provide a specific update to industry on events that may require an interim update to the most recent Industry Releasable Threat Assessment. The information contained in the IRTBs will be incorporated into the IRTA at the next issue.
- 3. Incident/identifier.** Fishing Vessels (FV) unsuccessfully attacked by pirates with RPG.
- 4. Date/time.** 21 0715Z APR 19.
- 5. Location.** Somali basin, approximately 260NM southeast of Mogadishu, Somalia, in position 00°52"S, 048°39"E inside the High Risk Area (HRA).

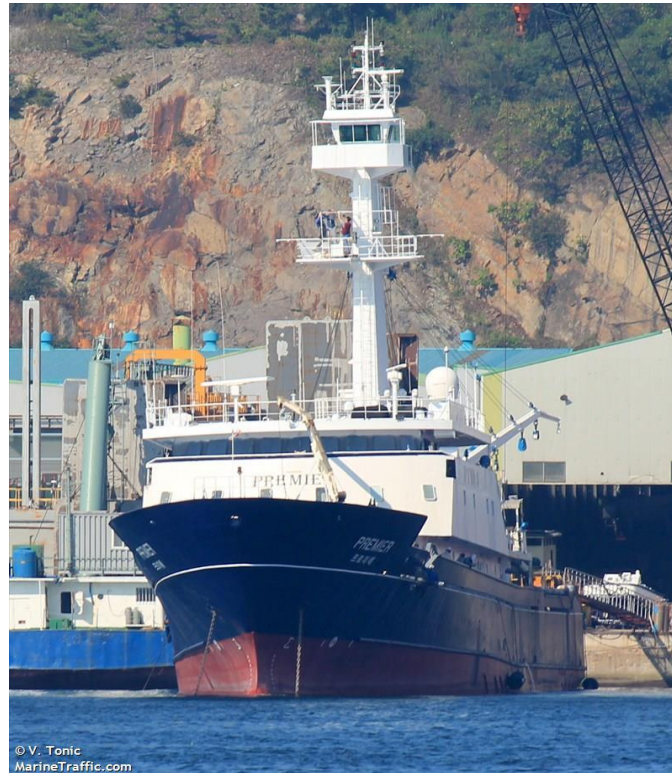


Approximate location of incident.

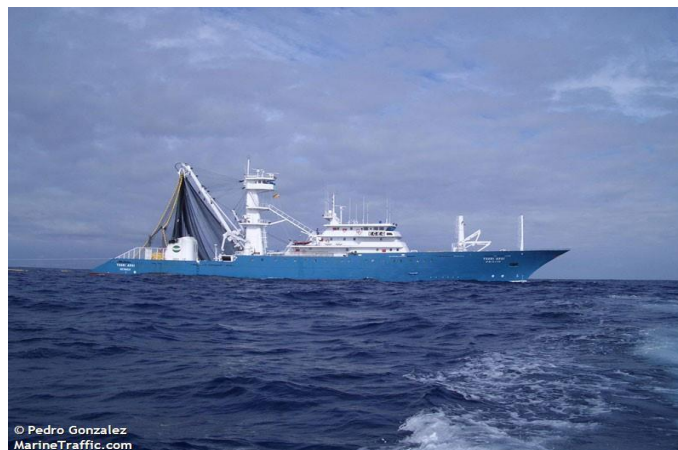
¹The next Industry Releasable Threat Assessment (IRTA) will be issued 1 June 19 (with an information cut-off date 15 May 19).

6. Vessel Description

- a. FV ADRIA, Republic of Korea flagged Fishing Vessel.



- b. FV TXORI ARGI. Spanish flagged Fishing Vessel.

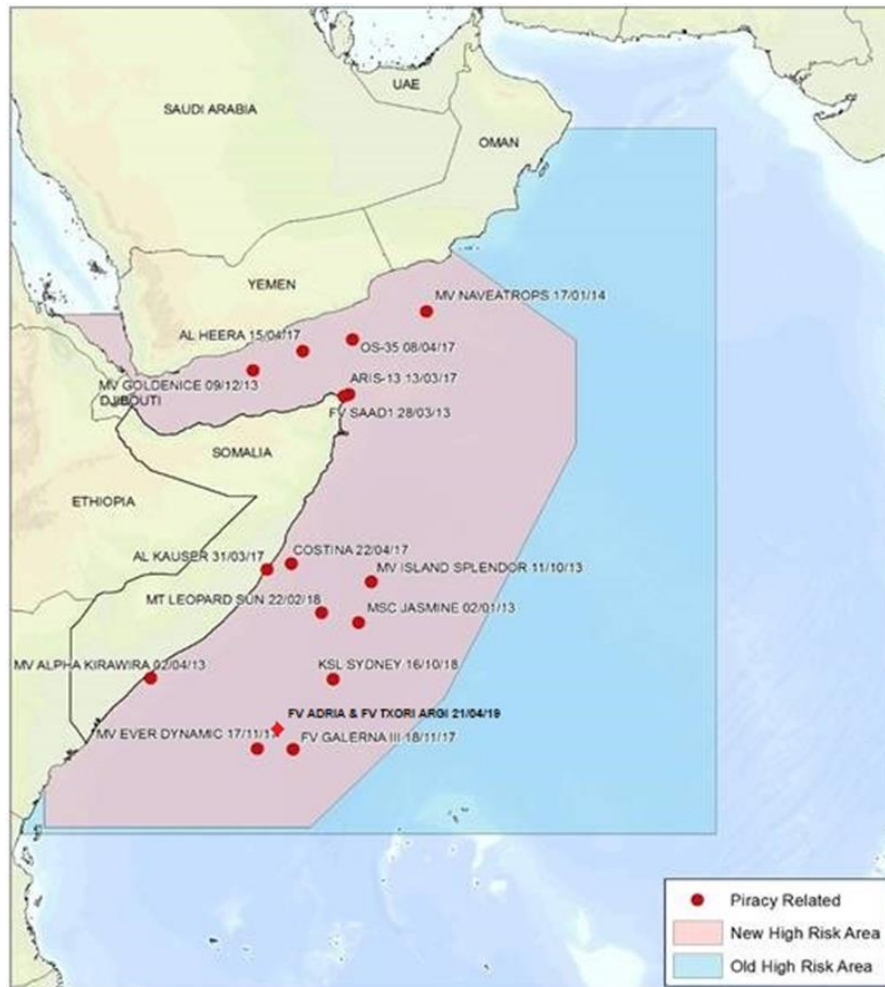


- c. FV SHIN SHUEN FAR NO.889, Taiwan flagged Fishing Vessel.

No picture available

7. **Incident Description.** On 21 April 2019, Republic of Korea (ROK) flagged FV ADRIA master spotted a dhow, which he could not identify, with two skiffs connected. Sometime later, he reported being approached by two skiffs with 5-10 Persons on Board (POB) each. Weapons were sighted on the two skiffs. The fishing

vessel started maneuvering towards south and increased speed. Of the two skiffs that were approaching, one continued following the vessel for the next hour. After distress calls from FV ADRIA, the closest vessel, a Spanish (ESP) flagged FV TXORI ARGI, proceeded to assist FV ADRIA. Both FV managed to meet some 25 NM south of the initial approach position, with at first one skiff following them, and then two. During the approach to the FV, one of the skiffs launched an RPG towards the vessels. The rocket missed and Private Armed Security Teams (PAST) on board FVs opened fire towards the skiffs. According to the master of FV TXORI ARGI the POB skiffs started throwing weapons over board and raising hands in surrender. The FVs moved away from the location without being threatened while the skiffs retreated. Shortly after, some 8-10 NM from the attack position, the TW flagged FV SHIN SHUEN FAR NO.889 reported being approached by two skiffs. The skiffs approached to 1.5NM. When PAST on board showed their presence the skiffs retreated.



Location of the incident in relation to the High Risk Area and previous piracy events

7. **Outcome.** The incident was ultimately unsuccessful and both the vessels and the crew were left unharmed. EU NAVFOR forces later managed to track a Yemen (YE) flag dhow AL AHZAM, towing three skiffs some 10 NM from the attack position. It was the only dhow with skiffs operating in the area some 250 NM from the coast of Somalia. AL AHZAM was captured by an unknown group off the coast of CADALE village in Somalia on 19th April 19. After the incident, EU NAVFOR forces tracked the dhow while it was moving towards the Somali coast, where the dhow was eventually intercepted on 23rd April 19.

8. **Follow up.** Upon interception of the dhow AL AHZAM, EU NAVFOR captured five suspected pirates, three of whom were apparently wounded in the firefight with the FVs. Furthermore 25 crew members (including two Somalis) held as hostages were freed. At the moment of the approach to the dhow, a skiff with five suspected pirates departed towards the Somali coast and managed to flee the scene.



9. **Comments.**

- a. This incident emphasizes that piracy has not been eliminated, only suppressed and that while there is the intent and capability, opportunity will be found to attack a perceived “soft” target.
- b. This incident highlights that the BMP measures put in place by industry remain fit for purpose, but only as long as they are fully employed. This attack was ultimately unsuccessful thanks to the presence of PAST onboard.
- c. Military presence in the HRA is still critical to locate pirates, disable their ability to seek other targets, and arrest the pirates for following action.
- d. A follow on assessment will be provided in the next IRTA.

10. **Assessment.** EU NAVFOR and CMF are further investigating the incident but assess this event is ALMOST CERTAINLY a “Piracy Attack”. Although it is rare for piracy attempts to take place against fishing vessels at such distance from the coast of Somalia, the lack of profitable opportunities (e.g. larger merchant vessels without BMP5 measures, sailing closer to the coast) has potentially forced the hand of pirates and made them choose a perceived softer target further from the coast. This event does not alter the overall assessed future trend for the area, that piracy attacks will likely remain sporadic and at a low level.

11. **Recommendations.**

- a. The threat to shipping and fishing remains present in Somali waters. Therefore, vessels are strongly recommended to adopt BMP5 self-defense measures and the embarkation of PAST on board as and when required. The registration with MSCHOA and UKMTO is also strongly recommended.
- b. The requirement for vigilance when transiting this area, together with the timely reporting of all suspicious incidents, remains crucial. We request that during an incident, **when feasible and without endangering the vessel or her crew**, imagery is taken of the persons and vessels involved and provided to MSCHOA. Whenever possible, please follow radar contacts of suspected vessels and report positions to MSCHOA. A detailed description of vessels, objects, and behaviors observed are vital contributors to the analysis and assessment of the threat environment. Reports should endeavor to provide as much factual detail as possible and it is requested that reports avoid speculation. A consolidated report will be issued if necessary with follow on assessments included in the next issue of the IRTA.

12. **Publication and feedback.**

- a. Prepared by EU NAVFOR and CMF.
- b. Distributed by the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA).
- c. All enquiries – in the first instance – should be referred to MSCHOA using:
 - (1) **Tel:** 0033 (0) 298 220 220 // 0033 (0) 298 220 170.
 - (2) **Fax:** 0033 (0) 298 220 171.
 - (3) **Website:** www.mschoa.org.