

Monthly Piracy Report

Latest Assessment

Total Number of Attacks in February: **36**

Total Number of Attacks this year: **82**

Ships Released in February: **1**

Crew Released in February: **18**

New Ships Taken in February: **4**

New Crew Taken in February: **45**

Ships Held at end of February: **18**

Crew Held at end of February: **263**

Summary

Global pirate activity dropped by ten attacks compared to January's total of 46, mainly due to a reduction in recorded attacks in Southeast Asia. Four fewer attacks were recorded off Somalia, although four vessels were hijacked following a spike in attacks off Oman's southern coastline, compared to two hijacks in January. The most northerly attack to date was recorded at the northern approach to the Strait of Hormuz. Attacks doubled off West Africa, where incidents are increasing in frequency and range, with corresponding levels of violence. Two crewmembers were killed and three were abducted to be held onshore. Fewer attacks were recorded in Asia, although the drop is likely to be caused by under reporting, rather than an actual reduction in attacks. No attacks on foreign vessels were officially recorded in Latin America, although five local fishing vessels were attacked off Guyana.

At least 263 crewmembers are currently being held, with many facing detention periods of over 300 days, at a current average of 169 days. No vessels were released for ransom from Somalia in February. Average ransom amounts are approximately US\$4.8m.

Near-term Forecast

East Africa: Risk of piracy remains high as pirates will be emboldened by latest hijackings. Attempted attacks and suspicious approaches likely in all areas, with heightened risk in the northern Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden.

West Africa: Attacks expected to increase in frequency off Nigeria and Benin, possibly beyond 120NM from the Nigerian coast.

Asia: Mostly opportunistic attacks in anchorages and ports to continue.

Latin America: An increase in pirate activity may be seen in response to the pressure being placed on criminal activity on land.



Above: pirate incidents recorded in December (above)

Below: ongoing areas of piracy concern



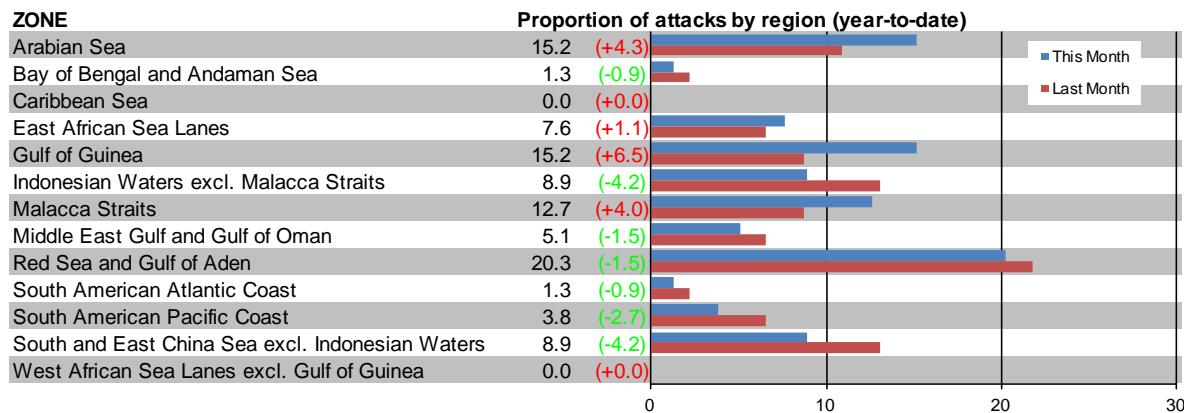
The GAC Protective Solutions team of experts has extensive experience and has dealt with many incidents of vessel hijacking and piracy from the South China Seas, to the Straits of Hormuz and East Africa. A subscription to this monthly security report including 'real time' security updates between each edition costs US\$800/6 months or US\$1,400/12 months. For further information or assistance please contact: ake@gac.com

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Changes in regional pirate activity last month

MARINE PIRACY THREAT ASSESSMENT

March 2012

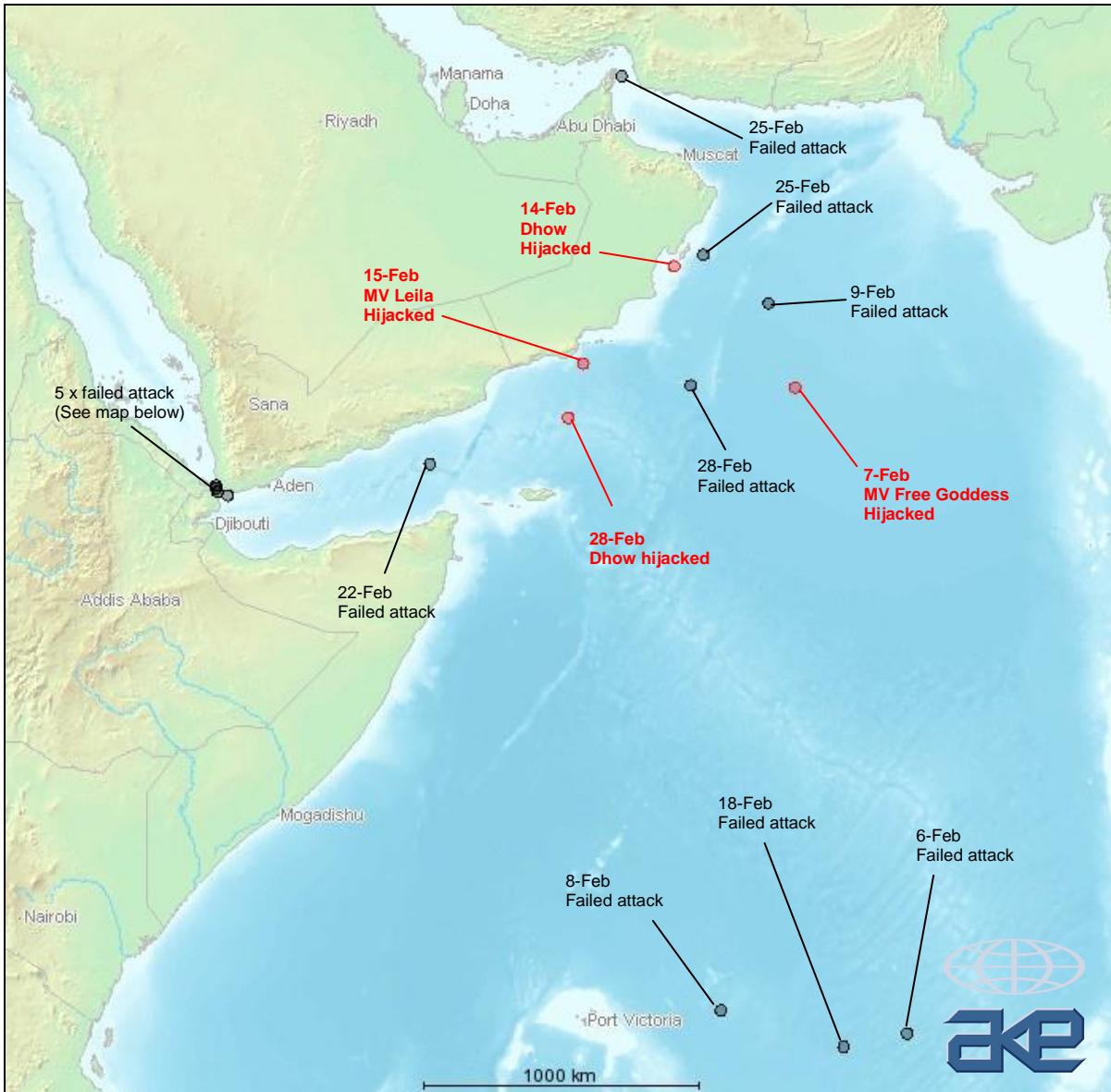


Regional piracy incidents over the past month

Zone	No. of Attacks	Change from previous month	Change from previous year
Arabian Sea	7	+2	-9
Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea	0	-1	-4
Caribbean Sea	0	-	-1
East Africa Sea Lanes	3	-	+2
Gulf of Guinea	8	+4	+7
Indonesian Waters excl Malacca Straits	1	-5	-1
Malacca Straits	6	+2	+2
Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman	1	-2	+2
Red Sea and Gulf of Aden	6	-4	-
South American Atlantic Coast	0	-1	-
South American Pacific Coast	0	-3	-1
South and East China Sea	1	-5	-2
West African Sea Lanes excl Gulf of Guinea	0	-	-1

Current Regional Analysis

East Africa



Current Analysis

The total number of pirate incidents fell by four compared to last January's total of 21; however, four successful hijackings took place, pushing the monthly success rate to around 24 per cent, compared to 9.5 in January. Two dhows and two merchant vessels were hijacked.

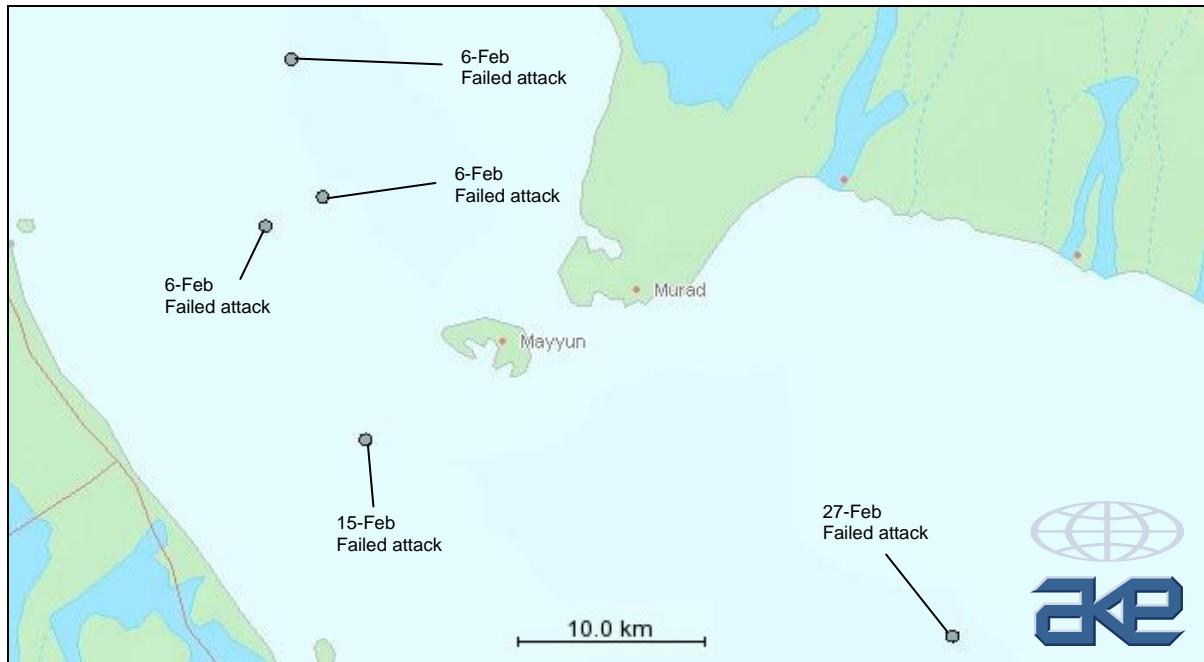
Activity was concentrated off Oman's southern coast, where all four hijackings took place along with four further attempts or approaches. On 7 February Liberian-flagged cargo vessel Free Goddess was hijacked with 21 Filipino crew members on board whilst transiting from Egypt to Singapore with a cargo of steel cable. The vessel had a freeboard of around 3.5 metres and top speed of 15 knots; the poor financial position of the owner, Freeseas, would suggest that security measures were unlikely on the vessel. On 15 February Panama-flagged RoRo vessel Leila carrying 24 crew was hijacked approximately 25NM southeast of Sadh, Oman. Although the vessel has a service speed of 13.5 knots, she was reportedly hijacked whilst travelling at 4 knots. Both attacks demonstrate that physically vulnerable and unprepared vessels will continue to be hijacked off Somalia, despite

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continued naval operations, and improved security and crew preparedness on most merchant vessels.

Attacks continued in the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el-Mandeb Straits where 5 attacks were recorded, three of which were in quick succession in close proximity on 6 February (see map below). Two vessels came under attack from groups of seven and nine skiffs on 15 and 27 February, although both attacks were deterred by on board security detachments. Vessels were first 'swarmed' by large groups of skiffs attempting to overpower vessels in the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el Mandeb Straits in 2011; the tactic is likely to be repeated as pirates attempt to overcome the low success rates achieved in recent months.

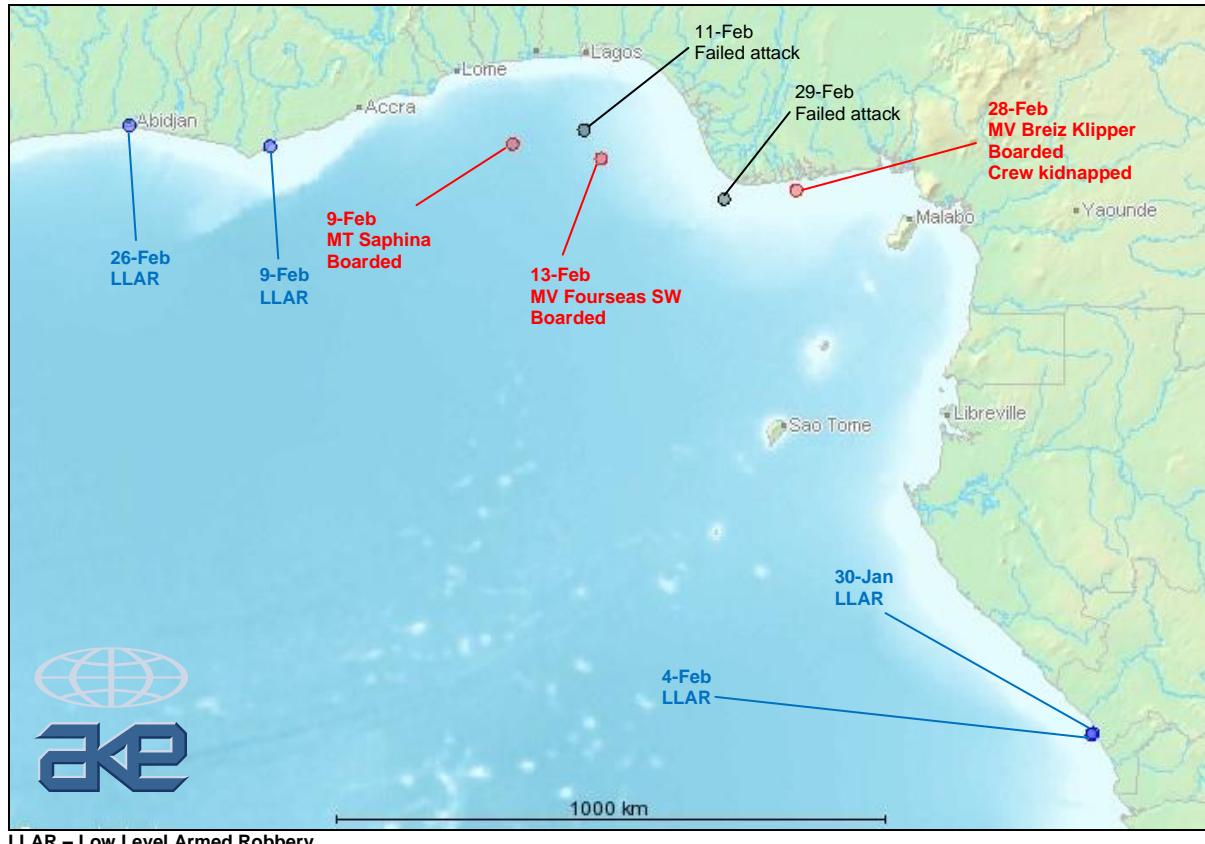
Bab el-Mandeb Strait detail



Attacks continue to occur in all extremities of the High Risk Area (HRA). Three attempted attacks were recorded up to 625NM east of the Seychelles. In the most northerly attack recorded to date, a merchant vessel came under at the northern approaches to the Strait of Hormuz on 25 February, which was aborted following warning shots fired from an on board security team. Attacks have been recorded further south in the strategic waterway; three attacks were recorded in the Gulf of Oman in January, the most northerly of which was around 40NM south of the latest attack. The attacks demonstrate the pirates will continue to push operations outside traditional high risk areas in an attempt to overcome the decline in success rates recorded over the past year, as previously warned by AKE.

No vessels were released for ransom in February, although two hostages died after Dutch naval forces opened fire on, and subsequently boarded, a pirated mothership on 27 February. 17 pirates and 18 hostages were reportedly found on the vessel; the operation demonstrated the severe risks involved with hostage rescue scenarios, once again highlighting the reality that payment of ransom remains the safest method of releasing crews unharmed.

West Africa



Current Analysis

Attacks doubled in February compared to January, to a total of eight. Three of these were incidents of opportunistic theft in various anchorages around the region. The remaining five were serious attacks or attempts at vessels up to 110NM off the Nigerian coast. As always, the actual number of attacks is likely to be higher due to under-reporting.

On 9 February a drifting product tanker, MT Saphina, was reportedly hijacked around 82NM south of Cotonou, but was subsequently rescued by a Nigerian naval operation. On 11 February a cargo vessel underway was chased and fired upon by armed men in two vessels for 25 minutes before aborting the attack. On 13 February a drifting bulk carrier, MV Fourseas SW, was boarded by pirates who shot the master, and caused the death of the chief engineer who died whilst attempting to escape from his cabin. The vessel was subsequently rescued by a French navy vessel; local naval forces were reportedly unable to launch a rescue due to poor weather conditions. On 28 February Curacao registered cargo vessel MV Breiz Klipper was attacked 3NM from the fairway buoy off Port Harcourt. Eight armed men boarded, stole cash and crew's possessions and kidnapped the Russian master and chief engineer and third Filipino crew member before escaping. The three men are currently being held on shore in River State; the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) released a statement claiming that the hostages had been handed over to them. They will likely be held for ransom for a period of weeks. Foreign crew members have been abducted from vessels off the coast to be held on land before; the final quarter of 2011 saw a spike in similar attacks on supply vessels.

The attacks demonstrate that the range and frequency of attacks in the Gulf of Guinea continues to increase. As previously advised by AKE, attacks up to and over 100NM from the coast will continue in the coming weeks; attacks are likely to involve high levels of violence directed at crew members, and possible abduction of small numbers of crew. Foreign vessels will face an increased risk of kidnap as

militancy increases in the Niger Delta, with political motives used as a justification to carry out criminal activity. The main incentive for offshore attacks, however, will continue to be financial.

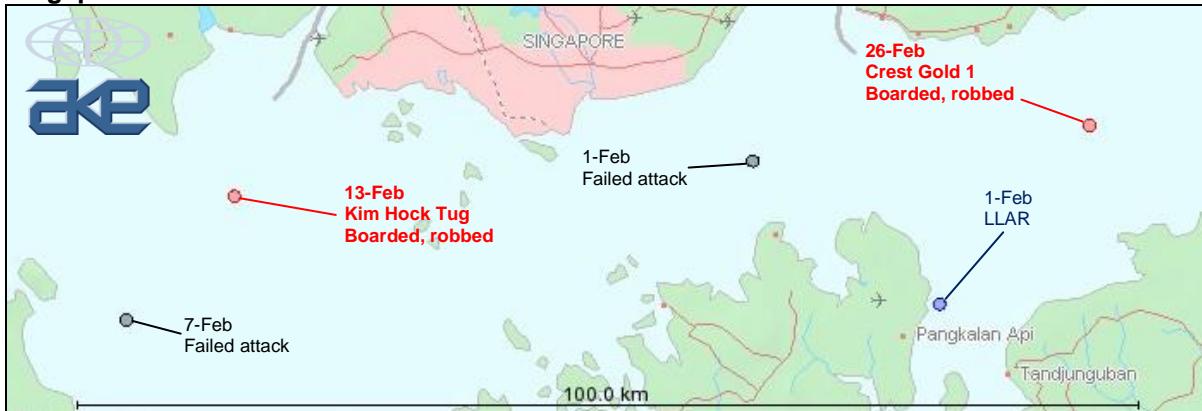
Serious attacks are expected to continue off Nigeria and Benin; vessels are advised that drifting or carrying out STS operations up to 150NM off the coast will increase the chances of being successfully hijacked as they will be unable to increase speed and carry out evasive manoeuvres. In the case of attack, a properly secured citadel capable of sustaining life and communication with the outside world for up to three days is highly recommended in the region, where the availability of reliable armed protection and naval response is highly limited.

Asia



LLAR – Low Level Armed Robbery

Singapore Strait detail



Current Analysis

Attacks dropped by over 50 per cent from 17 last month to nine recorded in February. It is unlikely that the statistical drop reflects a reduction in piracy risk in the region; problems associated with under reporting of incidents of low level armed robbery would suggest that opportunistic theft continues to occur in high risk anchorages, particularly in Indonesia and the Philippines.

In addition to the four instances of low level armed robbery reported, two more serious attacks occurred on vessels underway in the Singapore Strait. On 13 February, Singapore tug Kim Hock Tug

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3 was boarded underway by six men who stole scrap iron before escaping. On 26 February, Singapore tug Crest Gold 1 was boarded underway by four armed men who stole crew's valuables and a laptop before escaping. Both tugs were towing barges at the time of attack.

As previously advised by AKE, attacks on tugs in the Malacca and Singapore straits are expected to increase in 2012, as they are vulnerable 'low and slow' yet high value targets. 18 attacks on tugs were reported in 2011. Attackers are likely to carry small arms or knives; attacks can turn violent where crew have attempted to resist in the past. Crews are advised to show little resistance to reduce the risk of being assaulted.

In the short term, mostly opportunistic theft and armed robbery is expected to continue across the region. Vessels will face higher risks in anchorages and ports close to urban centres with high crime rates. Watch rotas and crew preparedness are highly effective in disrupting and deterring attacks, and will minimise the chances of cargo theft and associated delays.

Americas



Current Analysis

Although no attacks were officially recorded by international reporting centres, five Guyanese fishing vessels were reportedly attacked by pirates off the Corentyne River between 3-4 February. The attackers reportedly stole engines, fuel and any cash on board. Often unreported, attacks like this occur with relative frequency off the northern coast of Guyana, Venezuela and occasionally Suriname, and are evidence of criminal activity spreading to water. Low-level robberies and attacks on local fishermen or other tradesmen, usually in hit and run attacks, are most common; however, attackers have taken hostages in the past and fired on the Guyanese coastguard when a rescue was attempted. There have been no incidents involving foreign vessels or individuals, due to the lack of foreign vessels in the region and the low-level scale of the activity. Attacks are expected to continue and possibly increase as further pressure is exerted on criminal gangs on land.

Currently Held Vessels

Name	Date Taken	Flag	Type	Crew
MV Leila	16 Feb 12	Panama	Roll-On Roll-Off	15
MV Free Goddess	8 Feb 12	Liberia	Cargo	21
Enrico Ilevoli	27 Dec 11	Italy	Tanker	18
Liquid Velvet	31 Oct 11	Marshall Island	Tanker	22
Aride	30 Oct 11	Seychelles	Fishing Vessel	2
Fardous	13 Feb 11	Yemen	Fishing Vessel	8
Shiu Fu No. 1	25 Dec 10	Taiwan	Fishing Vessel	26
Orna	20 Dec 10	Panama	Cargo Vessel	19
Albedo	26 Nov 10	Malaysia	Cargo Vessel	23
Choizil*	2 Nov 10	South Africa	Yacht	2
Prantalay 11, 12	20 Apr 10	Thai	Fishing Boats	57
Jih-Chun Tsai 68*	30 Mar 10	Taiwan	Fishing Vessel	11
Iceberg	29 Mar 10	Panama	Roll-On Roll-Off	24
Socotra 1	25 Dec 09	Yemen	Cargo Vessel	6

*Vessel abandoned or destroyed, crew still held

Released Vessels

Name	Vessel Type	Flag	Crew	Date Taken	Date Released	Days in Captivity	Ransom (US\$M)
No vessels released for ransom							

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