

Allmode Intelligence Section

Advisory: 038 (Somalia)

Advisory Type: Detention of illegal Fishing Vessels in Somali waters.

Date: 26/03/2015

Information Source: Allmode

Further investigation into media reports of an Iranian fishing vessel being hijacked off the Somali coast, has revealed that there are inconsistencies in the initial incident reporting. Therefore it is believed that on the 23rd March, an Iranian fishing vessel, was detained, by a group of armed Somali fishermen for allegedly illegally fishing in their waters¹. The fishermen had previously been actively campaigning for such operations to be halted². Only last week, it was reported that another Iranian vessel had recently been seized and fined by the Puntland authorities for illegally fishing³.

The local fishermen had staged a rally in the capital Mogadishu on the previous weekend, calling for the government to take steps and impose sanctions on the illegal trawlers⁴. The government's Fisheries and Marine resources revealed that new laws to fight against the illegal fishing are in progress⁵. However, the local fishermen feel that progress is too slow and would appear to have taken matters into their own hands.

The armed fishermen did indeed take part in a gun battle off Ceel Huur, Mudug Region, against the Iranian vessel (no one was reportedly hurt during this exchange) and they then took the crew from the vessel to the regional administration government in Himan and Heb for prosecution. Abdi Abshir Gedi, who spoke on the behalf of the fishermen, warned other illegal fishing boats in area to keep off Somali territorial water or face the consequence of the local fishermen initiative. Ceel-Huur district commissioner Mr. Mahamud Ali, has supposedly confirmed the incident and said that the crew of the FV will face the law.

Allmode Comment: Although there may be those who class this incident as piracy, the local fishermen are not detaining the crew of the fishing vessel for their own material gains, but are rather seeking a conclusion to their actions, through the courts (albeit in an illegal, vigilante style, manner). There is a growing feeling of frustration amongst the local Somali fishing community, that the seas off Somalia are being plundered of their fishing stocks on an industrial scale. It is exactly this situation that led to the supposed initial catalyst for the original Somali piracy situation. If the Somali fishermen do not see "justice" being meted out, and a change in this current situation (which is robbing them of their livelihood) they may be likely to, yet again, turn to piracy as a means to replace their lost means of survival.

This new development increases the tension in the region and as such, vessels transiting the region will need to be extra vigilant and cautious of any approaching fishing boats, who may be armed, and intent on enforcing their claim over Somali waters.

The information and opinions expressed in this report are the views of Allmode Intelligence section, part of Allmode Limited ("Allmode") and constitute a judgment as at the Report time and are subject to change without notice. The information and opinions expressed in this Report have been formed in good faith on the basis of the information and intelligence available at the time of writing, but no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to its accuracy, completeness or correctness. Allmode accepts no liability arising out of or in connection with the comments made or the information set out in this report and the reader is advised that any decision taken to act or not to act in reliance on this report is taken solely at the readers own risk. In particular, any comments in this report should not be construed as advice, legal or otherwise.

The information contained in this report is taken from open source and from sites or messages received from Allmode Teams, UKMTO, MARLO, MSCHOA, IMB ICC and other sources. Allmode will publish with each report what source the information was gathered from

¹ AllAfrica, "Somalia: Somali Fishermen Take Iranian Fishing Vessel", (24 Mar 2015)

² Horseed Media, "Decline of Piracy has led to the rise of Illegal Fishing in Somalia", (23 Mar 2015)

³ Horseed Media, "Somalia: Puntland fines illegal foreign fishing vessel", (18 Mar 2015)

⁴ Sahan Journal, "BBC Somali, AFP ignore to cover seizure of Iranian vessel illegally fishing in Somali waters", (27 Mar 2015)

⁵ Horseed Media, "Somalia: Fishermen protest against illegal fishing", (17 Mar 2015)

