



# Security Council

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## The situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 29 of Security Council resolution [2554 \(2020\)](#), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report within 11 months on the implementation of the resolution and the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, including an assessment of national coast guard capabilities.

2. The report covers the period 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021 and highlights major developments since the Secretary-General's previous such report ([S/2020/1072](#)). The report is based on information provided by the United Nations system, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as well as Member States and regional organizations, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Indian Ocean Commission, the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia, the European Union Naval Force Operation Atalanta and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

#### II. Main developments, trends and considerations regarding piracy off the coast of Somalia

3. Efforts to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia continued throughout the reporting period, thanks to the concerted engagement of the Federal Government of Somalia and the international community, including the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, individual Member States (see annex I) and international naval forces, such as the European Union Naval Force Operation Atalanta and the Combined Maritime Forces. The efforts of the international community to combat piracy continued to be affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Nevertheless, shipping traffic levels returned to pre-pandemic activity, as did ship protection measures.

4. During the reporting period, once again, no incidents of piracy were reported in the regional waters around the Somali coastline (see annex II). However, an armed attack against a vessel occurred approximately three nautical miles off the coast of



Middle Shabelle on 13 August 2021. Suspicious approaches towards merchant vessels in the region were observed by some Member States, indicating that progress achieved in combating piracy could be reversed if not consolidated.

5. In their industry releasable threat assessment<sup>1</sup> of 1 September 2021, the European Union Naval Force Somalia and the Combined Maritime Forces concluded that piracy off the coast of Somalia continued to be largely suppressed owing to the combined efforts of naval forces and the shipping industries' continued implementation of *Best Management Practices*.<sup>2</sup> They further indicated that there was a low risk of piracy attacks as Somali pirate action groups<sup>3</sup> had diversified their activities and refocused their efforts on less risky enterprises. Nonetheless, they retained the capability to seize opportunities and launch attacks with little to no notice.

6. The reduction of the high-risk area on 1 September 2021 further demonstrated the effectiveness of regional naval escorts and counter-piracy measures.

7. The incident on 23 March 2021 involving the ship *Ever Given* served as a reminder to Member States and the shipping industry of the extent to which trade and supplies depend on open sea lanes. The European Union Naval Force Somalia conducted a full risk assessment of the potential impacts in the Western Indian Ocean in line with recommendations issued by the shipping industry.

### III. Development of counter-piracy efforts in Somalia

#### A. National legal and policy frameworks

8. The Somali Maritime Administration Department continued to receive technical support and training on legal maritime compliance, ship registration, safety and crew certification and safety from IMO, UNSOM, the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia and UNODC.

9. The Somali Maritime Administration Department technical working group, composed of representatives of the Ministry of Ports and Marine Transport and international partners – including UNSOM, IMO, UNODC, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Food Programme (WFP), FAO and the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia – continued to work towards the attainment of initial operational capability in the four identified areas of legal compliance, ship registration, maritime search and rescue coordination and crew certification. On 10 May 2021, the working group endorsed an action plan that would measure progress towards declaring initial operational capabilities in 2022.

10. The Maritime Directorate within the Office of the President of Somalia, supported by UNSOM and international partners, initiated a revision of the Somali maritime resource and security strategy in August 2021. The ongoing work on the strategy is intended to create a new national framework, the “Somalia national maritime strategy”, reflecting a broader strategy of governance that includes cross-cutting issues, such as security, the environment and gender.

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<sup>1</sup> Written by the Combined Maritime Forces and European Union Naval Force Somalia to inform risk management decision-making for merchant and large commercial fishing shipping operators that are transiting through the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean.

<sup>2</sup> BIMCO and others, *Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea*, 5th edition (Witherby Publishing Group, Ltd., 2018).

<sup>3</sup> A pirate action group is a group organized by its members to conduct acts of piracy and robbery at sea, usually within a specific geographic maritime area.

11. The Office of the Special Envoy of the President of Somalia for the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden continued its efforts, supported by UNSOM, to reactivate the National Maritime Coordination Committee, which includes a new international coordination component.

12. The Technical Committee of the National Maritime Coordination Committee held one meeting during the reporting period, on 30 December 2020. Significant progress was made in reviewing coordination mechanisms to enhance delivery of maritime governance structures linked to the goals of the Somali maritime resource and security strategy, the priorities of the National Development Plan and the commitments under the Mutual Accountability Framework, with new terms of reference for the National Maritime Coordination Committee finalized in April 2021 and awaiting endorsement.

13. In June 2021, IMO conducted initial briefings and virtual assessment meetings with the Federal Government of Somalia to develop a maritime security framework, including a whole-of-government approach to maritime security governance that would be linked to the above-mentioned Somalia National Maritime Strategy. The framework would enable Somalia to achieve sustainable solutions to its maritime security and incorporated the establishment of a national maritime security risk register, a security strategy and a formative plan to improve maritime domain awareness. The plan was funded by the European Union under the project to enhance port security and regional dialogue in the Red Sea region and included IMO capacity-building support to enhance port security and compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, through both the project and the Djibouti Code of Conduct framework.

14. UNSOM and the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia supported the strengthening of collaboration between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states representatives on the representation of women in the maritime sector through the “women in the maritime sector” focal points network. Several meetings were held to consolidate an action plan aimed at enhancing women’s employment, education and economic opportunities.

15. The Federal Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources issued and renewed licenses for over 30 vessels to fish for migratory tuna in the exclusive economic zone of Somalia during the reporting period, which generated over \$1.6 million for Somalia.

16. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the coastal and exclusive economic zone of Somalia remained prevalent and hindered multilateral efforts towards sustainable fisheries, with the fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance systems of Somalia still in their infancy. To combat such practices, the Federal Government of Somalia continued to collaborate with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, the FISH-i Africa task force and international partners through the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. The European Union Naval Force Somalia, through the European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, continued to share quarterly sightings and analyses of fishing vessels off the Somali coast with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission.

17. The UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, under its Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime, commenced a demonstrator programme to provide Somalia with a seagoing fishery protection and enforcement project in its economic exclusive zone. As part of the project, Somali fishery protection officers, boarding parties and prosecutors will be will trained and equipped. Any vessels caught fishing illegally will be brought to Somali courts for prosecution.

18. FAO continued to support the Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts to monitor, interpret, report and act on information obtained from vessel monitoring systems and automatic identification systems regarding the movements of licensed and unlicensed fishing vessels in the exclusive economic zone.

## **B. Capacity-building**

19. During the reporting period, efforts by the United Nations, the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia and international partners continued towards building the capacity of the Somali maritime civilian law enforcement. At the time of the present report, the coast guard capabilities remained limited, with some coast guard activities undertaken at the State level. On 15 September 2021, an agreement was reached to assess current coast guard capabilities, with UNSOM and the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia initiating a Somali Navy and Coast Guard mapping exercise in coordination with other international partners, and in close cooperation with national authorities. Coast guard capabilities, infrastructure, legal and institutional frameworks were being reviewed in order to identify overlaps and gaps and to provide guidance on the way forward. The outcomes of the mapping exercise would further strengthen coordination between the international maritime actors and the Ministry of Defence, as well as the maritime police and law enforcement services at the federal and state levels.

20. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs completed the implementation of a capacity-building programme aimed at assisting the Federal Government of Somalia to develop an effective legal framework for ocean governance, in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and funded by the trust fund to support initiatives of States countering piracy off the coast of Somalia. From 10 to 15 November, a technical training programme in ocean affairs and the law of the sea for maritime law enforcement authorities was delivered to 33 maritime law enforcement officials from the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states, with support from UNSOM. A second training session in the form of online modules to address specific areas of ocean affairs and the law of the sea was requested by the Federal Government and delivered from 15 May to 30 June 2021 to selected federal government officials.

21. An additional virtual training on article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to address a need identified through the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea training programme, was delivered from 19 to 27 April 2021, with a view to strengthening the ocean economy of Somalia and addressing the root causes of piracy through the full and effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention. In total, 20 representatives of the Federal Government of Somalia, federal member states and academia took part.

22. UNODC and UNSOM, along with the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia, continued capacity-building efforts by training and equipping the maritime police units at the federal and state levels. The support included the delivery of training and mentoring programmes to enhance the operational capability of the maritime police units in several major Somali ports and to equip maritime law enforcement authorities to counter threats and effectively police and patrol Somali coastal waters.

23. Under the Global Maritime Crime Programme, UNODC provided support to the “Somaliland” coast guard through the procurement of additional communications equipment, spare parts and a containerized engineering workshop to enhance their operational capability. UNODC conducted one “visit, board, search and seizure” course, a maritime law enforcement course and an engineering assessment, with some

engineering training and on-site repair of seagoing assets. The Global Maritime Crime Programme procured one patrol boat and a support vehicle for the Bosaso Maritime Police Unit and one patrol boat for the Galmudug Maritime Police Unit, thereby extending operational capability and shore support. In Bosaso, additional communications equipment was procured and installed to enhance the operations room capacity and to lead to greater maritime domain awareness. A programme of engineering training and routine repair to seagoing assets extended the operational availability of seagoing assets. In addition, “visit, board, search and seizure” training for the Galmudug Maritime Police Unit, including two women police officers, was conducted in May 2021 in Seychelles. The same training was conducted for the Mogadishu Maritime Police Unit in Seychelles in October 2021, as part of the enforcement pillar of the fishery protection project. In Mogadishu, the Maritime Police Unit was provided with a new headquarters constructed under the UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme by UNOPS, with funding from the European Union and support from the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia. The UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme also provided additional communications equipment to the Maritime Police Unit, as well as a spare parts package to support operational availability.

24. The European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia continued to provide capacity-building activities on national legal frameworks and policy development in Mogadishu, Garowe and Hargeisa. The Mission further supported the development of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Mogadishu. The Mission also facilitated training and delivered equipment at the federal and state levels, including to the Puntland authorities, to support its Anti-Piracy Law. In addition, the Mission continued to provide support to increase the capacity of the “Somaliland” coast guard to perform maritime operations, counter-piracy and other criminal maritime activities, including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

25. From 13 to 15 September 2021, UNSOM and UNEP delivered a virtual training session on climate and inclusive security for the Somali maritime authorities, focusing on the interlinkages between climate change, maritime security and gender equality. In total, 30 participants from the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states attended the training.

### **C. Community issues**

26. Fishing community empowerment along the Somali coast continued through support from international and regional organizations, working in tandem with Somali authorities. While the direct and indirect impact of piracy has lessened in recent years, illegal and destructive fishing – in particular from trawling in coastal waters – had been shown to be increasingly devastating to fishing community livelihoods. The actions described below continue to improve livelihoods and income-generating opportunities for communities, but for the envisaged long-term development to take place, they must be accompanied by a renewed commitment from all parties to eradicate destructive fishing activities and other illegal undertakings detailed elsewhere in the present report.

27. FAO, together with the Federal Government and federal member states, completed the implementation of the Coastal Communities against Piracy project during the reporting period and made significant headway in building skills and capacity in coastal fishing and post-harvest subsectors. Key highlights included the distribution of cold chain assets, such as refrigerated fish transport vehicles and solar powered ice flake making units, and the delivery of new fishing vessels to partners, such as fishing cooperatives or small fishing companies.

28. In March 2021, FAO completed a feasibility study for a new fish market in Mogadishu and recommended that a new fisheries “hub” and two satellite retail markets be established in the capital as a long-term strategy for the development of the fisheries sector in Somalia. FAO, with support from the European Union, continued to provide financial support to the sector, in particular to women and young people in coastal fisheries value chains, through the Resilient Fisheries and Livestock Value Chain for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Somalia project. FAO, through the above-mentioned trust fund, has initiated consultations in preparation for a national fisheries master plan – charting the way forward for the fisheries sector, which is expected to play a more prominent role in the country’s development through shared priorities and an agenda for action between the public and private sector, as well as national and international partners.

29. In July, the IGAD Executive Secretary signed a \$5 million project, funded by Sweden, to promote the blue economy in four IGAD coastal member countries, namely, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and the Sudan. The three-year project will focus on improving blue economy governance, by conducting marine biodiversity situation analyses, carrying out an inventory of chemical and plastic pollutants from source to sea and developing and applying tools to monitor and mitigate chemical and plastic pollutions in the concerned coastal member countries.

## **IV. International cooperation**

### **A. Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia**

30. During the reporting period, the Contact Group held its twenty-third plenary session on 17 and 18 December 2020 in a virtual format. Chaired by Kenya, the meeting brought together 132 participants from 27 States and 48 regional and international organizations.

31. One of the key outcomes of the plenary was the validation of the terms of reference for the strategic planning steering group. The adoption of those terms of reference was compliant with decision 19 contained in the communiqué issued by the Contact Group at its twenty-first plenary session, in 2019, in which the Contact Group outlined the need to develop a new strategic plan in order for it to remain an agile mechanism embedded in a long-term strategy for the region. The Indian Ocean Commission, as secretariat of the Contact Group, also provided secretarial support to the working group.

32. The strategic planning steering group worked towards preparing a strategic plan for the Contact Group to address the root causes of piracy and maritime insecurity. Six virtual meetings of the steering group were convened. The first meeting, held virtually on 11 February 2021, saw the nomination of Seychelles as Chair of the steering group. Initial meetings enabled the formulation of a framework for the development of the strategic plan and agreement on the key strategic themes for the overall plan of work, which included: (a) positioning the Contact Group within the maritime security architecture of the Western Indian Ocean; (b) dealing with piracy kingpins through criminal prosecutions; and (c) revisiting the focus of the Contact Group. At its upcoming twenty-fourth plenary session, scheduled to take place before the end of 2021, the Contact Group will be briefed on the progress on the preparation of the strategic plan.

33. While there was consensus that piracy had been successfully suppressed but not eradicated off the coast of Somalia, the Contact Group noted that other transnational maritime crimes were on the increase in the Western Indian Ocean region. These crimes at times involved criminal networks associated with piracy whose leadership

remained relatively untouched despite the prosecutions of the pirates who conducted the operations.

34. On 9 December 2020, the Federal Government of Somalia announced the withdrawal of its membership from the Contact Group with immediate effect.

## **B. United Nations trust fund to support initiatives of States countering piracy off the coast of Somalia**

35. During the reporting period, the trust fund to support initiatives of States countering piracy off the coast of Somalia continued to support projects in the areas of capacity-building, regional prosecution, maritime law enforcement and maritime governance until the operational closure of all projects on 30 June 2021. In accordance with the agreement reached among Board members on 19 June 2019, the trust fund was set to close on 31 December 2021. Since 31 December 2012, the trust fund had received a total of \$15,224,488 from 18 donors. As at 31 August 2021, the balance of the trust fund was \$294,809. A virtual trust fund board meeting was held in the margins of the Contact Group plenary session on 15 December. The next trust fund Board meeting will take place in the margins of the annual plenary session of the Contact Group.

## **V. Strategic maritime security activities**

### **A. International capacity-building**

36. Following the signing of the Jeddah Amendment in January 2017, IMO continued to provide secretariat support to the Djibouti Code of Conduct signatory States. That support focused on broader measures to combat piracy and transnational organized crime in the maritime domain and to build capacity to counter piracy and other illicit activities, including emerging new threats to maritime security in the region. The framework of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Jeddah Amendment comprises a steering committee, a working group on information-sharing and a working group on capacity-building coordination.

37. On 18 May 2021, participating Djibouti Code of Conduct signatory States formed a special committee to develop a regional strategy for information-sharing, with IMO providing technical assistance to develop a road map for strategy implementation. The initiative aims to enhance the safety and security of navigation by supporting enhanced regional maritime domain awareness. Participating States also agreed to establish a Djibouti Code of Conduct governance framework, consisting of the above-mentioned steering committee and working groups on information-sharing and capacity-building coordination.

38. The IMO maritime security programme continued to support regional States in coordinating activities in support of the implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct between departments, agencies, control authorities, port operators and other State organizations, including regional courses and conferences. With the support of IMO, the States in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden continued to build capacity to counter piracy and other illicit activities that threatened navigation and maritime safety and security in the region, in support of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Jeddah Amendment. Increasingly, human trafficking and smuggling operations were at the forefront of concerns for the region, which signatories addressed as transnational crimes under the cooperation agreement.

## B. Naval activities off the coast of Somalia

39. During the reporting period, the European Union Naval Force Somalia and the Combined Maritime Forces maintained their presence off the coast of Somalia. Individual Member States operated as independent deployers, protecting and escorting commercial vessels through the Gulf of Aden in coordination with both Forces. Other States also contributed to the fight against piracy by deploying naval fleets to the region on a national basis.

40. The European Union Naval Force Somalia, through Operation Atalanta, continued to deter, prevent and repress piracy off the coast of Somalia by protecting and escorting vessels vulnerable to piracy attacks, including vessels of the World Food Programme. Operationally, the Force remained one of the main counter-piracy actors operating off the central coast of Somalia, providing a visible deterrence and conducting focused operations in areas where criminal networks associated with piracy were present. The European Union had extended the mandate of Operation Atalanta until 31 December 2022 and expanded its mandate effective from 1 January 2021. Additional tasks related to weapons and drug trafficking, as well as monitoring illicit activities. The Operation provided a platform for European Union instruments and United Nations agencies to promote development programmes to inaccessible coastal communities. As a secondary task, the Force continued to support other actors in the area, including the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia and UNODC.

41. Through the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa, based in Brest, France, the European Union Naval Force Somalia continued to facilitate the scheduling of convoys conducted by independent deployers through the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor. The Centre remained integral to Operation Atalanta, providing regional maritime domain awareness and receiving voluntary registration details of transiting vessels, as recommended in the fifth edition of *Best Management Practices*, together with the Maritime Trade Operations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

42. The Combined Maritime Forces, a multinational naval coalition comprising 34 Member States, continued to conduct counter-piracy operations in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, the Somali Basin and the Northern Indian Ocean, through its counter-piracy Combined Task Force 151. In the reporting period, Combined Task Force 151 comprised surface ships provided by Japan and the Republic of Korea, with additional ships from Pakistan, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, among others. These surface units were further supported by maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft from Japan, Pakistan and the United States. In addition, Brazil, Pakistan and Turkey provided the leadership teams for Combined Task Force 151 on a rotational basis during the reporting period.

43. The Combined Maritime Forces continued to work closely with the European Union Naval Force Somalia in collaboration with the Contact Group, the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations and other regional naval operations centres and regional rescue coordination centres. While focusing on counter-piracy operations, both Forces also provided threat assessments and incident-related threat bulletins to the global shipping industry and collaboration on wider maritime incidents in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, such as assistance to stranded and missing vessels, investigations into suspicious approaches and responses to maritime safety incidents.

44. NATO retained maritime situational awareness off the coast of Somalia and continued to monitor the situation with respect to piracy, including through the NATO Shipping Centre in the United Kingdom, which regularly interfaces with the global



shipping community. NATO continued its valuable partnerships with relevant counter-piracy stakeholders and remained active in counter-piracy forums, such as the Contact Group.

45. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the forty-seventh and forty-eighth Shared Awareness and Deconfliction conferences took place virtually on 3 and 4 November 2020 and 26 and 27 May 2021, respectively. Three working groups convened on 3 November 2020 to address both piracy and maritime security issues, as well as information fusion and sharing across the wider Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman. The working groups addressed a broad range of issues affecting both the shipping industry and military stakeholders. The shipping industry stressed the importance of continuing to receive the high standard of joint military analysis on all maritime security threats, as seen in the industry releasable threat assessments. The next Shared Awareness and Deconfliction conference was scheduled for 17 and 18 November 2021, to be hosted by the Combined Maritime Forces.

## **VI. International legal and judicial issues, including human rights considerations**

### **A. Legal frameworks and cooperation**

46. The second session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group to elaborate the content of an international regulatory framework, without prejudging the nature thereof, relating to the activities of private military and security companies took place from 26 to 29 April 2021. During that period, Member States and other stakeholders continued to discuss elements for an international regulatory framework and the way forward, which included the convening of informal intersessional consultations on the basis of a zero draft document, as well as the circulation of a revised zero draft before the third session in the second quarter of 2022.

47. In line with the cooperation framework signed on 15 June 2018, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Indian Ocean Commission continued discussions on activities to help build the capacity of the Indian Ocean Commission to promote and consolidate peace and security in the region.

48. On 13 July 2021, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Indian Ocean Commission organized a virtual meeting on peace and security challenges in the Western Indian Ocean region covering COVID-19, the risk of radicalization, violent extremism and maritime security in the region. The importance of having an overarching approach to address those issues, both on land and at sea, was well noted by all participants, as well as the need for greater coordination among relevant regional initiatives. In that context, the Indian Ocean Commission informed the meeting of its continued role in strengthening the nascent maritime security architecture in the region by engaging in campaigns and broadening awareness of maritime domain capacities through regular conferences, meetings and inputs to regional forums.

49. During the reporting period, the foundations of the Western Indian Ocean architecture for maritime security, developed by the Indian Ocean Commission and funded by the European Union, were considerably strengthened by fostering strategic cooperation among the signatories of the Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security in the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region, as well as with State partners and other regional and international organizations, both in maritime information-sharing and joint operations at sea. The architecture remained an unprecedented cooperation experience in the field of maritime governance and security in the region.

50. The Western Indian Ocean architecture for maritime security achieved its initial operational phase with the deployment of international liaison officers from signatory States for both the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre and the Regional Coordination of Operations Centre and the establishment of adapted monitoring and communication equipment for the Centres. Overcoming gaps to attain full operational capability and structuring responses to specific maritime crimes, in accordance with the regional agreements on the Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security, remains a priority. The architecture also forms part of the responses formulated in the Indian Ocean Commission's newly developed regional blue economy action plan.

51. Through the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre and the Regional Coordination of Operations Centre, the focus remained on the monitoring, identification and analysis of vessels susceptible of transboundary maritime crimes, including illegal unreported and unregulated fishing, maritime pollution and trafficking. The active participation of the two Centres at various field exercises and operations and in their own organized actions on key themes made it possible to test in real time the interoperability between the structures.

52. The regional information-sharing centres established in 2019 under the Djibouti Code of Conduct continued to play a key role in the regional information-sharing networks, alongside the two above-mentioned regional Centres. The Indian Ocean Commission, through the Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security, whose overall coordination is under IGAD, supported those two regional Centres, as well as the national centres of the seven signatory States to the Programme's two regional agreements, for the exchange and sharing of maritime information and for the coordination of joint actions at sea, by reviewing national structures and systems in support of the operationalization of the regional information-sharing and coordination centres.

53. Similarly, a first meeting was held on 29 September 2021 between the information fusion centres and information-sharing centres from the wider Indian Ocean and Pacific. Given the transnational nature of maritime crimes and the associated challenges regarding monitoring and information-sharing, the meeting was a first step towards developing a network of actors specialized in maritime domain awareness of the wider Indian Ocean, identifying avenues of cooperation and formalizing collaboration where necessary.

54. In May 2021, to enhance cooperation, a regional consultation meeting focused on maritime pollution risks was organized by the Indian Ocean Commission under the aegis of the Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security. Participants agreed to establish a regional technical committee to review and adapt the existing contingency planning to enable a more effective regional response for preparedness and prevention against maritime pollution in the region.

## **B. Hostage release and support efforts**

55. The International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network, an international charity based in the United Kingdom, continued to provide emotional support to the three Iranian crew of the *Siraj* vessel who had been held by a Somali pirate action group before being released in August 2020. The charity continued to provide psychological and social support to crew affected by piracy via the Piracy Survivor Family Fund of the Chair of the Contact Group. The Network also continued to support piracy-affected released hostages worldwide.

56. The Hostage Support Partnership reported that, while there were no maritime hostages remaining in Somalia, there were international hostages in Somalia who were held by groups with links to former Somali pirates and kingpins.

### C. Cooperation on piracy-related prosecutions

57. The UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, in its capacity as the secretariat of the Contact Group's Law Enforcement Task Force, did not hold a meeting during the reporting period owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Programme continued to coordinate the Law Enforcement Task Force with member States, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the European Union Naval Force Somalia.

58. The Law Enforcement Task Force, chaired by the United States, is composed of international prosecutors whose countries have an interest in prosecuting the piracy kingpins, who have benefitted from piracy and still pose a threat in the region. The Task Force assessed that there were four remaining piracy kingpins and several other junior actors from the height of the piracy period in Somalia. As in previous reporting periods, UNODC, with funding from Denmark, provided a focused report on one of the key kingpins, to support the work of member States in bringing forward prosecutions against those individuals or seizing their assets. Prosecutions of former Somali pirates were under way in several member States. Prosecuting piracy kingpins remains a key target of the Contact Group member States in the ongoing strategic planning steering group review of the Contact Group.

59. Since the beginning of the Global Maritime Crime Programme in 2009, UNODC had repatriated a total of 189 piracy prisoners from Kenya, Mauritius and Seychelles. As a result of those efforts, there were currently no piracy prisoners in Kenyan or Mauritian prisons. The Programme continued to support States in the region in their efforts to conduct fair trials of suspected pirates and ensure prison conditions are in line with international human rights standards.

60. At the time of writing, there were 28 convicted pirates serving their sentences in Somalia, 21 of whom in Mogadishu Prison and Court Complex (including 14 who had been transferred from Garowe) and 7 in Garowe Central Prison. One Somali prisoner convicted of piracy remained in Seychelles. During the reporting period, there were no early releases for convicted pirates serving out the remainder of their sentence in Somalia. To date, 171 pirates, from arrests made by the European Union Naval Force, had been transferred to Seychelles to await trial, of whom 145 had been convicted and imprisoned and 26 acquitted.

61. On 16 July 2021, the Supreme Court of Seychelles acquitted, owing to a lack of evidence, the five individuals on trial for piracy whose cases had been associated with suspected attempts of piracy off the coast of Somalia in 2019. UNODC provided the interpreters for the trial and took charge of the welfare of the detainees during their detention, with support from the trust fund to support initiatives of States countering piracy off the coast of Somalia. After the acquittal, the Global Maritime Crime Programme facilitated the repatriation of the five individuals to Somalia in August 2021. With the imminent closure of the trust fund, future funding for repatriations is yet to be identified.

62. Under the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime, a prosecutors' forum was held from 24 to 26 March 2021, including prosecutors from regional States such as Seychelles, Mauritius and Kenya, as well as the European Union Naval Force Somalia. From 7 to 9 April 2021, the Force attended the independent expert group meeting on the agreement for the transfer of persons suspected of having committed acts of piracy and the presentation of its associated evidence among members of the Economic Community of West African States.

63. On 4 March 2021, Al-Shabaab fighters conducted a large-scale complex attack at Bossaso Central Prison. All 334 prisoners were freed from their cells, including

4 prisoners convicted of piracy and several terrorism offenders. Under the Joint Corrections Service Support Programme, UNODC conducted an emergency assessment of the Bossaso Central Prison in coordination with UNSOM. In addition, a joint UNODC, UNSOM and UNICEF needs assessment of Garowe Central Prison was performed on 8 April to identify existing gaps and the assistance needed, with a focus on human rights. Through the Joint Corrections Programme, extensive repairs of the Bossaso Prison had been completed by October 2021.

64. During the reporting period, UNODC also provided infrastructure support, including to the new Mogadishu Prison and Court Complex, and rehabilitation for the Mogadishu Central Prison and Garowe Central Prison. It collaborated with Swedish prison and probation services to place mentors within the Somali Custodial Corps to support it in better managing violent extremist prisoners, under prison programming to counter and prevent violent extremism, alongside a rehabilitation and reintegration post-prison transition programme.

## **VII. Observations**

65. The continued absence of successful piracy attacks off the coast of Somalia demonstrates the effectiveness of the measures applied by the Federal Government of Somalia, the shipping industry and the international community, including the Security Council and military and naval forces, to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia. Nevertheless, the continued presence of pirate action groups and networks remains of concern and highlight that piracy has yet to be fully eradicated. Therefore, it remains essential to continue to address the root causes of piracy. I call upon the Federal Government of Somalia and the international community to redouble their efforts in that regard.

66. Multiple threats to maritime security remain, with piracy networks having shifted their focus on less risky activities, such as smuggling, which also requires the ongoing attention of the Federal Government of Somalia and the international community. I reiterate my previous calls on Member States to abide by international fishing instruments and strengthen their cooperation on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the exclusive economic zone of Somalia, which remains of concern.

67. The efforts and progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia, supported by the international community, to develop maritime policies and legal frameworks are commendable. I encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to expedite the submission to Parliament and approval of the Somali shipping code, which constitutes a critical step towards establishing a robust maritime legal framework in accordance with international instruments. I call upon the Somali authorities to advance the introduction into domestic law of the International Conventions for the Safety of Life at Sea and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, which will pave the way for enhanced regulation and jurisdiction in Somali waters.

68. The progress on revitalizing maritime coordination mechanisms is welcome, as they constitute an important platform for Somali maritime stakeholders to formulate collective objectives towards developing a sustainable maritime sector. I further encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to advance discussions on the delineation of the Somali maritime forces and establish clear roles and responsibilities of the maritime forces.

69. I am grateful to the Government of Kenya for its leadership as Chair of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and the Indian Ocean Commission for its work as the secretariat of the Contact Group. The contributions by international

partners to the trust fund to support the initiatives of States countering piracy off the coast of Somalia are noted with appreciation, and I encourage continued financial support to counter-piracy efforts, following the closure of the trust fund on 31 December 2021.

70. I commend the work of the Hostage Support Partnership and the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network undertaken in support of former hostages and their families and I reiterate my call to all partners to contribute to the Piracy Survivor Family Fund, which remains vital for survivors of Somali piracy and their families.

71. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Member States, the Contact Group, non-governmental organizations, military and naval forces, the shipping industry and the private sector for the contributions they have made to countering piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia over the past decade. Without that commitment and those contributions, the successes achieved to date in reducing and combating piracy would not have been attainable.

## Annex I

### **Contributions of Member States, observers, non-governmental organizations and private sector to countering piracy off the coast of Somalia**

1. The following statements have been provided by Member States in response to the relevant operative paragraphs of Security Council resolution [2554 \(2020\)](#):
2. Bahrain plays a pivotal role in combating piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia, through cooperation with Combined Task Force 151, which has its command centre in Bahrain. Bahrain has contributed to joint international efforts to combat piracy that have brought about a decrease in the number of pirate attacks, in coordination with the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and within the legal framework set forth in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation. The Royal Bahrain Naval Force of the Bahrain Defence Force contributes direct and indirect support on an ongoing basis for focused operations in the areas of operation of Combined Task Force 151 in the form of qualified and technically trained human resources.
3. On 9 June 2021, Brazil assumed the command of Combined Task Force 151, which operates in the Gulf of Aden, in collaboration with international partners. The military of Brazil contributes to Combined Task Force 151 with a Rear Admiral (Commander) and 10 staff officers. The Ministry of Defence of Brazil considers that piracy within the area of operations of Combined Task Force 151 has been suppressed owing to seasonal weather conditions, as well as the presence of multiple international forces. However, the Ministry considers that the root causes of piracy have not been eliminated, as illustrated by one reported attempt of armed robbery at sea on 13 August 2021, seven nautical miles off the coast of Somalia, when the vessel *MV Anatolian* was approached by a group of four to five suspects.
4. The Government of China pays high attention to maritime security and combating piracy and organized crimes at sea off the coast of Somalia. Since December 2008, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, the Chinese Navy has routinely sent vessels to the waters for escort missions. Over the past 13 years, the Chinese Navy has sent 131 vessels in 39 batches for escort operations, protecting the safety of nearly 7,000 Chinese and foreign ships, including 12 of the World Food Programme, contributing to the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.
5. Denmark contributes to countering piracy in the Horn of Africa region by supporting governance institutions, including efforts to maintain and strengthen local and regional maritime security capacities, and by undertaking efforts to address the socioeconomic root causes of piracy. Denmark has engaged in capacity-building of maritime police in Mogadishu and Bosaso, as well as the “Somaliland” coast guard. Denmark deploys staff officers to the Combined Maritime Forces to support regional maritime security efforts. Denmark also continues to work closely with the international community as a major contributor to efforts by UNODC to strengthen the exercise of government authority at sea. Denmark has also supported research and analysis on the disruption of maritime smuggling routes and countering illicit financing, in furtherance of the UNODC mandate under Security Council resolution [2498 \(2019\)](#), and through the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of prisons that hold convicted pirates in Somalia.
6. Egypt implements Security Council resolution [2554 \(2020\)](#) in accordance with its international obligations. It does so pursuant to the resolutions adopted by the

Council and in keeping with its desire to maintain stability in the Red Sea region, secure maritime routes and ensure the smooth flow of traffic and international trade in the Red Sea, support stability in Somalia and secure the safety of the country's citizens and maintain regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa. Egypt exchanges information on illegal activities with the countries that make up the Combined Task Force, with a view to developing the database on maritime piracy and armed robbery in the southern Red Sea and off the coast of Somalia. Egypt provides logistical support through its Red Sea naval bases to friendly countries that are taking part in anti-piracy operations. In addition, it conducts ad hoc exercises with those countries' forces before they set out to conduct anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia within their respective areas of responsibility. Egypt signed the charter of the Council of Arab and African Coastal States of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in January 2020 in Riyadh, with a view to maintaining security and stability in the Red Sea region and helping to reduce piracy and armed robbery. Egypt supports international and regional efforts to counter illegal activities off the coast of Somalia by helping to build the capacities of the coastal States of the Red Sea and of the States of the Horn of Africa, with a view to strengthening their maritime security capabilities. In addition, Egypt supports efforts to achieve political stability and security in Somalia and to build the institutions of the State at the national level, with a view to curbing illegal activities, including piracy and armed robbery.

7. The activities of France off the coast of Somalia are mainly undertaken within the European framework. France is one of the main contributors to Operation Atalanta, conducted by the European Union Naval Force Somalia. Maritime security has been identified as a priority in the new European Union strategy for the Horn of Africa, which was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 10 May 2021 and includes references to Operation Atalanta. Since March 2019, the headquarters of the Operation have been in Rota, Spain. The Operation's Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa, which is the first point of contact for the various maritime actors – in particular the shipping industry – is co-located with the Maritime Information Cooperation and Awareness Centre in Brest, France, and is primarily operated by French petty officers. In addition to addressing piracy, which remains its core mandate, the Operation also carries out executive tasks related to drug and arms control. It cooperates with, and transmits information on those security issues to, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol). France regularly supports the Operation directly or as a partner, by providing it with naval air assets, most recently in May and June 2021, when the Jeanne d'Arc mission passed through the Atalanta area of operations. France contributed to the 2020 strategic review of Atalanta, which expanded the mandate to include new tasks concerning drug and arms trafficking and extended the area of operations to the southern half of the Red Sea. The purpose of the new tasks is to enable the Operation to address maritime security issues in a comprehensive manner, given that illicit trafficking and piracy are usually linked. The next strategic review of the Operation, scheduled for the second half of 2022, could be brought forward to the first half of the year and begin during the French presidency of the European Union, as France is keen to safeguard the achievements of this successful European operation, in the context of the increased focus of the Union on the Indo-Pacific region. The French base and forces in Djibouti also provide essential logistical support to the Operation, including for the deployment of its air assets. Onshore, the European Union is contributing to the capacity-building efforts of the States of the Horn of Africa, with a view to mitigating the root causes of piracy and eradicating piracy networks. The Union has launched two missions in Somalia under the Common Security and Defence Policy. One is a military mission that provides direct support to the Somali Armed Forces through advice, mentoring and the training of trainers (the European Union Training Mission in Somalia, the seventh mandate of

which covers the period 2021–2022), while the other is a civilian mission intended to support maritime governance and build the capacity of coastguards, maritime police in the main Somali ports and maritime law enforcement (the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia, the new mandate of which began on 1 January 2020). The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly slowed down the activities of the European Union missions in Somalia. France has no personnel deployed in the European Union Training Mission and nine deployed in the European Union Capacity-Building Mission. More generally, at the regional level, the European Union is helping to build a maritime security architecture in the western Indian Ocean through the following programmes: the Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security, with a budget of €37.5 million, covering the period 2013–2020 (programme completed); the Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean I project, with a budget of €5.5 million, covering the period 2015–2019, which is a closed programme implemented by Expertise France, the French agency for international technical assistance; and the Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean II project, with a budget of €7.5 million, covering the period 2020–2023, which is also implemented by Expertise France. The security architecture was strengthened by the establishment, in 2018, of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre in Madagascar and, in 2016, of the Regional Maritime Centre for Operational Coordination in Seychelles. France has had liaison officers based at these two centres since their establishment. In addition, since 2013, the Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security and the Critical Maritime Routes Indian Ocean programmes have successively contributed their expertise in order to strengthen the capacity of officials in coastal States in the region to combat illicit maritime activities, in particular piracy, and are developing the Indian Ocean Regional Information-Sharing and Incident Management web platform. The French presidency of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, which began in June 2021, is an opportunity to highlight the actions of the European Union as a provider of maritime security in the region, particularly through Operation Atalanta. France also plays an active role at the national level in supporting maritime security off the coast of Somalia. France, a State on the Indian Ocean rim and a member of the Indian Ocean Commission, of which it has assumed the presidency for one year, continues to advocate regional ownership of maritime security issues. France supports the implementation of the regional maritime security strategy of the Commission, and the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden (the Djibouti Code of Conduct), which was signed by 21 States in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula with a view to creating interconnected maritime information fusion centres.

8. The Islamic Republic of Iran contributes to the fight against piracy by dispatching combat and logistical fleets to the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden. In this regard, the Iranian Navy fleets continued to prevent and repress piracy off the coast of Somalia by protecting and escorting 355 Iranian shipping fleets and oil tankers vulnerable to piracy attacks in the region during the reporting period. In addition, extra protection and escorts was provided to 55 Iranian shipping fleets and oil tankers. The Islamic Republic of Iran also equipped and deployed the vessel *BEHSHAD* in the Bab-al-Mandab Strait to counter pirates' attacks and provide logistical support to troops stationed on oil tankers and commercial ships. In addition to these operational measures, and in line with Security Council resolutions in which the Council called upon all States to criminalize piracy under domestic law, steps have been taken towards the criminalization and prosecution of maritime piracy under the domestic law of the Islamic Republic of Iran. An anti-maritime piracy bill has been prepared and currently awaits signature by the respective authorities. The bill recognizes universal jurisdiction for piracy and provides a legislative framework for the prosecution of those suspected of, and punishment of those convicted of,



committing piracy and confiscation of property. The bill also encourages the conclusion of multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements with other States and international organizations to enhance regional and global cooperation to prevent and combat piracy. The Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no effort in combating maritime piracy and will continue to maintain security at sea, including by dispatching further navy fleets, escorting ships and providing for safe passage off the coast of Somalia.

9. Since 2009, Japan has been conducting counter-piracy operations, without interruption, by deploying Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers (with coast guard officers on board) and P-3C patrol aircraft to the Gulf of Aden. With a view to promoting stability in Somalia, Japan has provided over \$4 million of financial assistance for improvement of the humanitarian and security situations in Somalia from November 2020 until October 2021, bringing the total amount of Japanese assistance for Somalia to \$520 million since 2007.

10. Oman is making substantial efforts against maritime security threats in ports and facilities, off of coasts and across the Omani maritime region, through the available means of ships, boats and maritime reconnaissance aircrafts. Oman has harnessed all means to ensure the safety and security of the Omani maritime region, in cooperation with all the relevant security, military and civil authorities in the country. Thus, Oman has not recorded any incidents of piracy or armed robbery in the Omani maritime region since 1 November 2020. Oman is working to maintain joint coordination between the concerned authorities and maritime security centres in other countries, as well as regional and international centres.

11. Pakistan remains committed to upholding international law and shouldering responsibilities for maritime security and stability in the region and beyond. Pursuing these goals, Pakistan has been contributing ships, aircraft and manpower in counter-piracy-related initiatives and task forces. Pakistan has a strategic stake in peaceful navigation and security of the Indian Ocean region, emanating from its more than 1,000 kilometres-long coastline, an exclusive economic zone of 290,000 square kilometres, the port of Karachi and the newly built deep-sea port of Gwadar. Pakistan is an important stakeholder in the Indian Ocean security framework, which works to combat piracy, human trafficking and narcotics smuggling. The salient contributions of Pakistan in pursuance of resolution [2554 \(2020\)](#) since 1 November include the Pakistan Navy's continued robust security posture along the country's coast and in regional seas, in order to prevent criminal elements from conducting illicit activities in the maritime domain. Pakistan has also been actively participating in Combined Task Forces 150 and 151 in the larger interest of the international community and regional maritime security. Pakistan's Navy has provided valuable assistance to seafarers and vessels in distress on the high seas, including during anti-piracy operations, and has extended humanitarian assistance to regional countries on several occasions. Pakistan remains one of the most prominent members of the Combined Maritime Forces and has been contributing to their counter-piracy efforts since 2009. Pakistan has commanded the multinational Combined Task Force 151 nine times and has participated in providing direct and associated support to it to augment counter-piracy operations. Pakistan also instituted the regional maritime security patrols to counter other threats to maritime security. A total of nine Pakistan naval ships have participated in counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden as part of the regional maritime security patrols. Pakistan's Navy has planned and executed focused operations to develop regional counter-piracy capabilities, and its long-range maritime aircraft have flown 52 sorties in support of Combined Task Force 151-led counter-piracy operations. Pakistan's Gwadar Port occupies a strategic position overlooking the Strait of Hormuz and North Arabian Sea. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor places Pakistan at a point of convergence, linking active sea lanes

to landlocked Central Asian countries, for the importing and shipment of oil, coal and agricultural products. The success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in regional trade is linked to a safe and secure maritime environment in the Indian Ocean region in general, and the Arabian Sea in particular. Therefore, keeping the sea lanes of communication open and protecting the coast of Pakistan as well as the key ports of Krachi, Bin-Qasim, Ormara and Gwadar are of utmost importance for Pakistan. Accordingly, a special organization known as Task Force 88 has been created and assigned the duties for managing seaward security for Gwadar Port and the protection of associated sea lanes, against both conventional and non-conventional threats. Pakistan recognizes the importance of safeguarding the world's oceans and international trade through enhanced maritime security. It stands ready to cooperate and collaborate with other friendly nations and partners in the region and around the world to realize this goal for the mutual benefit of all of humanity.

12. With regard to the actions taken by the Maritime Authority of Panama, which acts as the appropriate entity to exercise the rights and fulfil the responsibilities of the State within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other international laws and regulations in force relating to international maritime piracy, piracy is defined in Panama as a crime under title IX, on crimes against collective security, chapter VI, on piracy, of the Criminal Code of Panama, adopted by Act No. 14 of 18 May 2007. By Act No. 21 of 9 May 2002, Panama adopted the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation of 10 March 1988 and the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf of 10 March 1988. The additional 2005 Protocols were adopted by Act No. 78 of 15 November 2010. Those international instruments provide that parties may create criminal offences, establish jurisdiction and accept delivery of persons responsible for or suspected of seizing or exercising control over a ship or fixed platforms by force or threat thereof, or any other form of intimidation. The Maritime Authority of Panama and the National Central Bureau of the International Criminal Police Organization in Panama are also working closely to track the origin of the money used to pay ransoms in cases of Panama-flagged vessels that have been released. In the event that pirates are captured in international waters and are on board a Panama-flagged vessel, we consider that on grounds of jurisdiction and preservation of evidence, the case should be dealt with by specialized courts that have the legal and technical tools to ensure the prosecution of pirates. With regard to the implementation of bilateral and multilateral agreements related to the scourge of piracy, Panama has signed an agreement with the European Union on the protection of Panama-flagged vessels within the framework of the World Food Programme, in compliance with the provisions of previous resolutions on the situation in Somalia. In addition, since 2011 the Maritime Authority of Panama has been working in coordination with the International Maritime Bureau and the international maritime industry to adopt protective measures to deter pirate attacks and to establish recommendations for vessels registered in Panama that transit through high-risk areas. All of the above demonstrate the commitment of the Maritime Authority of Panama to fight maritime piracy, including through its active participation in the meetings of the International Maritime Organization, in conjunction with the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, and the adoption of recommendations and/or resolutions that regulate issues, including the use of private security companies and the monitoring of ships in high-risk areas. Lastly, given that maritime crime represents a serious threat to the safety of seafarers, international trade and regional stability, and that more than 90 per cent of world trade is conducted by sea, Panama reaffirms its commitment and remains committed to combating this scourge.

13. Portugal subscribes to a holistic approach to maritime security issues, namely, piracy and armed robbery at sea. Portuguese authorities take part in many efforts in

different areas of expertise to understand and assess the many origins and consequences of these crimes. Portugal has been deeply committed to the ongoing work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, co-chairing the virtual legal forum together with Mauritius, for more than a decade. Portugal participated in the twenty-third plenary session of the Contact Group, held virtually on 17 and 18 December 2020, together with 131 other participants. Portugal has regularly participated in NATO and European Union anti-piracy missions and operations off the coast of Somalia, monitoring fishing activities and escorting WFP vessels. This has included command of the European Union Naval Force in the region using national military and aircraft, and employing more than 100 military personnel for several months a year. In the reporting period up to August 2021, Portugal had nine military staff, including one woman, at the Operation Atalanta operational headquarters in Rota, at the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa in France and on board the admiral ship of Operation Atalanta. On 2 December 2020, Portugal took command of the thirty-sixth rotation of Operation Atalanta. Commodore Diogo Arroiteia was responsible for this important mission aboard a ship of Spain, along with five other Portuguese military staff, including one woman. On 17 March 2021, when the command ended, the Portuguese presence at Atalanta was reduced to four military staff, including one woman, at the Operation Atalanta operational headquarters, the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa and aboard the force commander's ship. Since 2019, the Portuguese gendarmerie, the Guarda Nacional Republicana, has been actively contributing to the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia, which aims to support the development of Somali maritime security and wider police capacity, in three pillars: (a) reinforcement of the maritime police units in and around the four main Somali ports of Mogadishu, Berbera, Bosaso and Kismayo; and (b) contribution to the development of the Somali Coast Guard functions and continued advocacy for the importance of maritime security for the development of the blue economy. The participation of Portugal occurs through the deployment of gendarmerie officers, both as seconded and as seconded-contracted officials. The current Head of Operations is Colonel Jorge Humberto Marques Caseiro.

14. The Russian Federation has continued its activities to ensure the security of Russian maritime navigation, combat piracy and armed robbery in the Horn of Africa region and strengthen international anti-piracy cooperation. Since 1 November 2020, Russian naval forces have made two visits to the region. The Federal Agency for Maritime and River Transport and the State-financed Maritime Security Service have carried out the following activities, with respect to Security Council resolution [2554 \(2020\)](#): monitoring the situation with respect to maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia; disseminating to Russian companies the recommendations of the Russian Navy, the Federal Agency for Maritime and River Transport and the International Maritime Organization, including the fifth edition of the *Best Management Practices* in the context of countering piracy in the region; the formation of ship convoys flying the flag of any country that are escorted by Russian naval ships through the Gulf of Aden; consulting with foreign shipping companies and ship captains regarding the formation of Russian convoys; exchanging regular information with vessels registered under the Russian flag crossing the Gulf of Aden on current navigation conditions in the high-risk area; and maintaining continuous contact with major anti-piracy information centres on a wide range of issues.

15. Spain has kept a strong and permanent presence in the structures of the European Union Naval Force Somalia Operation Atalanta since its origins in 2008, becoming one of its main pillars on the occasion of the relocation of its operational headquarters from Northwood, United Kingdom, to Rota on 29 March 2019. During the inter-monsoon periods – operational months – Spain alternates with Italy and Portugal in the tactical command of the Operation on board one of its navy flagships, consisting of a vessel with maritime security capacities. This naval component counts

also on a naval special warfare team (special operations maritime task unit) and a security operative team on board. Besides the naval component, Spain contributes to the Operation with a permanent military structure at the Rota operational headquarters, currently composed of 13 members of the different Spanish services and one political advisor from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. Spain also contributes with up to 30 other military personnel on a rotation basis at the operational headquarters in Rota. Spain has an operation tactical air detachment permanently assigned to the Operation, which performs air surveillance of the zone of operations; the ORION detachment is stationed in Djibouti. This air detachment is complemented by two embarked air units with, respectively, fixed and rotary wings, which allow a comprehensive surveillance of the vast zone of operations. Spain also contributes to the support element of Operation Atalanta, stationed in Djibouti, providing part of its staff. Spain is also committed to the security in the region through its participation with the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia and the European Union Training Mission, providing 7 and 24 members of their respective staffs. The participation in these capacity-building tools highlights Spain's engagement to the final goal of creating a permanent regional security structure held by the regional countries' own capacities. Spain also collaborates with the Combined Maritime Forces providing an Air Coordinator Element, stationed in Bahrain.

16. Since May 2009, Sweden has deployed five naval units to European Union Operation Atalanta in the Gulf of Aden, off the Somali coast, which protects vulnerable shipping and deters, prevents and represses piracy and armed robbery at sea and in the region. In July 2019, Sweden increased its personnel contribution to Operation Atalanta headquarters in Rota from two staff officers to three. Sweden, with the engagement of the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia, also played an important part in the development of the "Somaliland" coast guard, through the provision of maritime training courses held during 2018 and 2019. During the second training course, in 2019, 23 men and 2 women from the "Somaliland" coast guard completed a five week "Swedish boat project" training in Berbera, led by Swedish coast guard experts and advisers from the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia. The focus of the course was on effective search and rescue operations, seamanship, boat handling and global positioning systems navigation, as well as engine repair and mechanics. A third training course, currently on hold owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, aims to update previously trained participants with further development of their skills.

17. The United Kingdom is committed to countering piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Horn of Africa region in order to keep crucial global trade routes open. Over the reporting period, the United Kingdom has: (a) provided the deputy force commander and naval assets to the Combined Maritime Forces Task Force 151 operating in the Indian Ocean; (b) participated in the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia; and (c) continued as a major donor to the trust fund, contributing over \$2.2 million since 2013. The United Kingdom has played a leading role in supporting the development of regional maritime security architecture, including the two information fusion centres, through the IMO Djibouti Code of Conduct mechanism and bilaterally with East African nations, as well as providing funding to support the development of the new website, launched in June 2021. The United Kingdom also continues to lead on maritime domain awareness, including by installing Royal Navy international liaison officers to support regional and national maritime domain awareness activities in Seychelles, to support the Indian Ocean Commission; and through working with the India-based international fusion centre. The Royal Navy United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operation has served the West Indian Ocean since the early 2000s and is the global model for a "see and avoid" early warning system for information and advisory services to the shipping industry. The

United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operation is the primary point of contact for all merchant vessels, regardless of flag, in case of a pirate attack in the region, issuing notices, warnings and advisories in the case of such events. It is the key information conduit between industry and military authorities operating within the region (the European Union Naval Force Somalia, Combined Task Force 151, the Combined Maritime Forces and the independent deployers). The United Kingdom has ensured its Maritime Trade Operation capability is maintained throughout the region, including when transiting through the piracy High-Risk Area and the Indian Ocean Voluntary Reporting Area.

## Annex II

### Map of incidents of piracy, 2017–2021

