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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Pirates intensify attacks in new areas, with first Somali hijacking reported in Red Sea**

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Somali pirates intensified attacks away from their own coast and were responsible for 44% of the 289 piracy incidents on the world's seas in the first nine months of 2010, according to a report published today by the International Chamber of Commerce International Maritime Bureau (IMB).

Carrying out 35 of the 39 ship hijackings worldwide from January to September 2010, Somali pirates used ocean-going fishing vessels to reach as far as the southern Red Sea, where they hijacked a chemical tanker in July 2010, the first such hijacking recorded in the area. Pirates are heavily armed with automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades, IMB reported.

The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre's worldwide figures show that in the past nine months pirates boarded 128 ships and fired at 52. A total of 70 vessels reported thwarting attacks. Pirates used guns in 137 incidents and knives in 66, killing one crew member, injuring 27 and taking 773 hostages.

Globally, the number of vessels hijacked was higher than the 34 recorded in the same period last year, despite a slight fall in the number of piracy incidents, down from 306 in the first nine months of 2009.

IMB said navies from around the world helped prevent numerous attacks off the Horn of Africa, where their presence is vital in protecting merchant shipping against piracy. But despite a fall in the number of attacks in this piracy hotspot, the level of hijackings remained similar to that of last year.

"The actions of the navies in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali basin have to be once again commended", said Captain Pottengal Mukundan, IMB Director. "Increased intelligence gathering coupled with strategic placement of naval assets has resulted in the targeting of suspected Pirate Action Groups before they become operational.

"However, this is a vast area and the navies cannot realistically cover it. The naval presence does however remain vital to the control of piracy in this area."

Captain Mukundan added that more vessels had strengthened their anti-piracy measures thanks to awareness raised by the industry publication *Best Management Practices*.

In the Gulf of Aden attacks were greatly reduced, with only 45 reported this year compared with 100 for the same period in 2009. The monsoon weather that had been deterring piracy further out to sea ended in mid-September, opening the way for renewed attacks, warned IMB.

A new area of increased piracy is the South China Sea, which suffered 30 piracy attempts in the last nine months, resulting in 21 successful boardings. This is triple the number of incidents reported in the same period last year. Captain Mukundan said: "The pirates in this area use almost identical methods of attack,

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suggesting that a small number of groups is responsible. The fact that vulnerable vessels are boarded by pirates whilst steaming is a matter of concern.”

Other parts of the world to note a rise in piracy include Chittagong, Bangladesh, where IMB warned shipmasters to be particularly vigilant. Here an increasing number of thieves boarded vessels at anchor or approaching anchorage. Around Indonesia, 26 incidents were recorded, up from seven in 2009. In Nigeria 11 piracy incidents were reported, although real figures may be much higher in this particularly violent area.

The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) is the world’s only office to receive reports of pirate attacks 24-hours-a-day from across the globe.

IMB strongly urges all shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted or suspicious piracy, and armed robbery incidents to the IMB PRC. Captain Mukundan said this first step in the response chain is vital in ensuring that governments allocate adequate resources to tackling piracy. He said that transparent statistics from an independent, non-political, international organization act as a catalyst to achieve this goal.

IMB offers the latest piracy reports free of charge. To request a PDF version of the report by email, please visit: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/requestreport>

Latest attacks may also be viewed on the IMB Live Piracy Map at: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/livepiracymap>

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