

### Box 2.5.1 Confronting Piracy off Somalia: The Challenge of Coordination

Piracy off Somalia's coast has struck a chord of common security across a diverse group of international actors. By the end of 2009, nearly fifty UN member states—ranging from the United States and China to Russia and Iran—seven international organizations, and three multinational coalitions (EU-, NATO-, and US-led) were all working in some manner toward providing a measure of security from this piracy and armed robbery. This activity emerges from a range of motivations, from protecting humanitarian aid vessels and cargo ships supplying the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), to providing security to the vital Gulf of Aden shipping lanes. This unprecedented level of activity has yielded some positive results. Nevertheless, piracy emerging from Somalia continues to remain a substantial concern, and coordinating the activities of this wide range of actors remains a primary operational challenge.

As stipulated in UN Security Council Resolution 1851 (2008), which extended the legal authority to the international

community to combat Somalia's pirates on the high seas and Somalia's territory, in January 2009 the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was established. The CGPCS serves as an international cooperation mechanism, a common point of contact on all aspects of combating piracy for the international community through quarterly meetings with stakeholders at UN headquarters. The CGPCS is composed of four working groups: operational coordination, chaired by the United Kingdom; legal matters, chaired by Denmark; strengthening shipping self-awareness, headed by the United States; and communications and media strategy, chaired by Egypt.

Similarly, the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) group, established in 2008, is a voluntary international military group that serves as a vehicle for sharing best practices and informal discussions on combating piracy. While SHADE initially only consisted of the three multinational coalitions operating off Somalia, it rapidly expanded to involve bilateral

deployments. This forum meets on a monthly basis at the expert level in Bahrain. During 2009, SHADE meetings contributed to coordinated and focused anti-piracy operations and an increased sharing of command and communications assets across SHADE participants.

While these innovative coordination efforts, combined with the deployment of naval vessels and aircraft, served to thwart a number of successful pirate attacks during the year, the frequency of attempted pirate activity remained high. This reality underscored the need for a further level of coordination in regard to addressing the root causes of Somalia's piracy problem ashore. The justice and security sectors in Somalia are far from capable of both addressing the source of piracy and dealing with captured pirates. Nevertheless, a similarly diverse constellation of bilateral and multilateral actors are involved in building these structures, and their success will rest significantly on harmonizing their individual approaches.