

Box 3.10 Piracy off the Coast of Somalia

Concerted international efforts to combat piracy off Somalia's coast continued in 2010 with forty-nine UN member states working in some manner toward providing a measure of security from piracy. The states involved ranged from the United States and China to Russia and Iran, with participation also coming from seven international organizations and three multinational coalitions (led by the EU, NATO, and the United States). While the members of this diverse group of countries are united to counter piracy, their motivations for doing so range from protecting humanitarian-aid vessels and cargo ships supplying the African Union (AU) Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to providing security to the vital Gulf of Aden shipping lanes. There have been measurable successes over the past year; however, substantial concern about piracy emerging from Somalia continues, and coordinating the activities of this wide range of actors remains a primary operational challenge.

UN Security Council Resolution 1897, passed in November 2009, extended the legal authority to the international community to combat pirates in Somalia's territory and territorial waters and commended the work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia

(CGPCS). The CGPCS is 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—a vehicle for sharing best practices and informal discussions on combating piracy. While SHADE initially consisted only of the three multinational coalitions operating off Somalia, it rapidly expanded to involve bilateral deployments. This forum meets monthly at the expert level in Bahrain.

In 2010, China agreed to an increased coordination role in SHADE, boosting the profile of its antipiracy efforts. The International Maritime Bureau reported that increased international efforts contributed to a decrease in the number of pirate attacks in the first half of 2010, even as the capability of pirates

to mount attacks far from shore increased. This reality underscored the need for a further level of coordination in regard to addressing the root causes of piracy and ensuring a viable model for prosecution of detained pirate suspects. The justice and security sectors in Somalia lack the capability to adequately address either challenge, and the international community has yet to agree on a united approach.

UN Security Council Resolution 1918, adopted unanimously in April 2010, requested a report from the Secretary-General on possible approaches to prosecution of piracy suspects. The Secretary-General's response, delivered in August, outlined seven options, ranging from the enhancement of UN capacity-building activities to the establishment of an international tribunal under Chapter VII authority. As the Security Council considered these recommendations, Kenya announced in October 2010 that it was pulling out of a deal to try suspected pirates captured by the EU, accusing its European partners of failing to live up to their commitments. Balancing the sometimes conflicting interests of regional stakeholders and their international partners will doubtless be key to ensuring the viability of a future pirate-prosecution model.