



Somali pirates are biding their time a major maritime security briefing has been told

“Somali pirates are ‘sleeping’, they have not gone away”, said Mary Harper, BBC Africa Editor, who has reported widely on events in the region.

Growing political instability in Somalia and increasing global demands on national navies will continue to be the major contributing factors to on-going piracy activity in the medium-longer term, according to independent experts speaking at a maritime security briefing in Hamburg for representatives from the shipping and maritime industries.

The event, which was organised by Gulf of Aden Group Transits (GoAGT), brought together specialists on the expected development of the maritime security situation with industry delegates with commercial assets exposed to this potential risk.

Mary Harper said: “The threat from pirates, which over the last few years has seen a number of major vessels seized, remains latent. Somali pirates are waiting for the west to relax its guard. If shipping organisations become complacent, it is likely the pirates will strike again.”

She added: “Somalia is becoming more politically fragmented with many different groups seeking to gain dominance over their area, which potentially creates a favourable environment for piracy.”

GoAGT Chairman Admiral Philip Wilcocks, said: “Growth in world economic output since the 1990s has driven an exponential expansion in maritime trade and this trend is set to continue.

He added: However, the main issue is that piracy in the Indian Ocean has not been eradicated, it has just been suppressed. Furthermore, economic pressures and wider global commitments may well constrain the world's navies from their ability to sustain a significant presence in anti-piracy operations in this region.”

Gerry Northwood OBE, Chief Operating Officer of GoAGT, said: “The briefing in Hamburg enabled those reliant on maritime activity to receive an independent assessment of the situation in Somalia and wider global maritime security issues, helping them to make informed decisions about their operations going forward.”

ENDS

Note to editors:

GoAGT will hold its next maritime security briefing on September 11th at HMS President in London during the London International Shipping Week (9-13 September 2013). If you would like to register your interest, please contact julian@barzilay.co.uk.

About Mary Harper

Mary Harper is the Africa Editor at the BBC World Service. She has reported on Africa for the past twenty years, and has a special interest in Somalia. She reports frequently from the country, covering conflict, piracy, Islamism and other subjects. She is the author of Getting Somalia Wrong? Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State published by Zed Books. She has reported from many other African conflict zones, including Sudan, South Sudan, Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Algeria. She contributes to academic journals and writes for publications including The Economist, Granta, The Guardian, The Times and The Washington Post.

Mary is a Fellow of the Rift Valley Institute and the Mogadishu-based Heritage Institute for Policy Studies.



About GoAGT

GoAGT Ltd. (Gulf of Aden Group Transits Ltd.) has been in continuous operation since 2008 and has achieved an enviable 100% success rate on over 1600 Armed Security Transits throughout the Indian Ocean. Annually GoAGT provides over 50,000 man days of protection at sea and since commencing operations we have protected in excess of 38,000 seafarers.

GoAGT now employs over 300 personnel and at any one time between 160-180 security personnel are deployed. GoAGT recruits from the UK Royal Marines, Parachute and other Army regiments with front line experience, as well as the Irish Navy, Estonian Army and Filipino Marines.

For further information please visit <http://goagt.org/>

Or contact:

David Barzilay - T: 0207 544 8980 | M: 078 6032 2333 | E: david@barzilay.co.uk

Julian Menendez - T: 0207 544 8831 | M: 078 3854 7531 E: julian@barzilay.co.uk