Conflict Factsheet

Piracy off the Coast of Somalia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of conflict</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Locality</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
<td>2008 – ongoing</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Fish, Agricultural / Pastoral Land</td>
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Livelihood insecurity and migration

Conflict Summary

Piracy off the Somali coast significantly rose in the wake of severe drought and famine in 2008. Climatic changes attributed to global warming and shrinking fish stocks and the collapse of the state have led to illegal fishing off the Somali coast, which has enabled conflicts between pirates and foreign fishing vessels.
Conceptual Model

**Climate Change**
- Ocean Acidification
- More Frequent / Intense Extreme Weather Events

**Environmental Change**
- Extreme Weather Event
- Decline in Fish Stocks

**Intermediary Mechanisms**
- Change in Access / Availability of Natural Resources
- Livelihood Insecurity

**Fragility and Conflict Risks**
- Grievances between Societal Groups
- Crime / Violence / Extremism

**Social and Economic Drivers**
- Economic Development
- Change in Access / Availability of Natural Resources
- Livelihood Insecurity
- Grievances between Societal Groups
- Crime / Violence / Extremism

Context Factors

- Food Insecurity
- Lack of Alternative Livelihoods
- Low Level of Economic Development
- Unresponsive Government
- Weak Institutions

Fish, Agricultural / Pastoral Land
Conflict History

Following two seasonal rain failures in 2008, millions of Somalis lost their livelihoods and faced famine and poverty. Somali pirates have traditionally defended Somali fish stocks from illegal fishing by foreign commercial vessels, following the collapse of the Somali state in 1991 (ECC Platform, 2008). In the wake of the severe drought, many turned to piracy as a source of income. International cooperation to regulate the sea and prevent illegal fishing, in combination with aid to address food and water shortages and poverty in Somalia, are considered to have helped to reduce piracy. Although pirate attacks have reduced, threats of piracy still exist today.

Drought, degraded livelihoods and piracy

Somalia strongly depends on its agricultural sector with some 55% of households based on pastoralism or agro-pastoralism. It was estimated that some 60,000 pastoralists were facing a livelihood crisis following two seasonal rain failures in 2008, while 2.6 million people were facing famine (FAO, 2008). By July 2008, the number of pirate attacks increased by more than 50% in comparison to 2007 rates (Middleton, 2008). Piracy was not only a means to earn an income but also to defend food stocks, which had dramatically dwindled following drought and food import price hikes (Vogel, 2012).

Illegal fishing and depleted fish stocks

The increase in the number of pirate attacks on foreign vessels fishing in or near Somali waters can be traced back to the breakdown of the Somali state and its legal bodies responsible for monitoring and controlling fisheries in 1991 (United Nations Security Council, 2011). At the same time, dwindling fish stocks caused by over fishing, warming waters and water pollution were beginning to be regulated by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Somalia failed to claim their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) under the UNCLOS leaving the Somali coast and the greater Western Indian Ocean a target of illegal fishing from countries, where UNCLOS-restrictions are implemented. In 2011, it was estimated that foreign illegal fishing accounted more than 50% of produce in the West Indian Ocean (Schbley & Rosenau, 2013).

As a result of anti-piracy measures taken by the international community and the Somali authorities, including judicial and military policies, the number of pirate attacks has decreased considerably since 2011, attaining the lowest number of attacks over a six-year period (The World Bank, 2013). This has, however, been mainly attributed to increased security on vessels and their ability to defend cargo with better weaponry. Substantial links between development programmes and reduced piracy cannot yet be made. Climate change may continue to undermine social and political order, leading to further development and weaponry sophistication of the piracy trade, providing greater problems in the future. In 2014, UN ambassador to Somalia emphasised the importance of development to reduce fragile social conditions driving people to piracy (Carroll, 2014).
Resolution Efforts

In 2010, the international community took steps to prevent piracy in the west Indian Ocean by creating military task forces to patrol the region, including an international response group drawn from twenty-five countries, and the European Union’s Naval Force (Schbley & Rosenau, 2013). These international forces help to stop illegal fishing and to prevent pirate attacks on unarmed fishing vessels. In addition, the UN Security Council introduced resolutions, which criminalised piracy and has introduced punishment for states found to comply with or assist piracy (The World Bank, 2013). Under the leadership of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Development Program (UNDP), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), prosecution systems and infrastructures against piracy have been improved (The World Bank, 2013).

Targeting the root causes of piracy

Under the leadership of the UNDP, international aid has also targeted the root causes of Somali piracy by investing in development of Somali fisheries and coastal villages, providing local populations with skills and equipment to engage in employment in fisheries (The World Bank, 2013; UK Government, 2012). At a national level, the end of the transitional government in 2012 and introduction of a constitution has helped to centralise authority. This has improved judicial institutions and continues to ensure pirates are held accountable to the law. However, weak institutions and poor economic standards in Somalia continue to undermine livelihoods, opening the potential to drive people to piracy.
## Intensities & Influences

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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>International / Geopolitical Intensity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Suffering</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Influences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Influences</td>
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<td>Societal Influences</td>
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### Violent Conflict
- **Yes**

### Salience with nation
- **National**

### Cross Border Mass Displacement
- **No**

## Resolution Success

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<tr>
<td><strong>Reduction in Violence</strong></td>
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<td>Violence reduced significantly, but did not cede.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reduction in geographical scope</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>There has been no reduction in geographical scope.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Increased capacity to address grievance in the future</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no increased capacity to address grievances in the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grievance Resolution</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grievances have been completely ignored.</td>
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### Causal Attribution of Decrease in Conflict Intensity
- The decline in intensity can be explained purely by the suppression or killing of grievance holders.
Entry Points for Resilience and Peace Building

Humanitarian & Development aid
International aid has invested in the development of Somalian fisheries and coastal villages.

Improving state capacity & legitimacy
Somalian presidential elections and the introduction of a constitution in 2012 helped to consolidate authority. However, the country still suffers from weak institutions.

Strengthening legislation and law enforcement
The international community took steps to prevent piracy in the West Indian Ocean by creating military task forces to patrol the region, and introducing resolutions criminalising and punishing acts of piracy.

Resources and Materials

References with URL
Carroll, L. (2014). End Somali poverty to end piracy: UN ambassador. The National

Further information
https://factbook.ecc-platform.org/conflicts/piracy-coast-somalia