

SOMALIA

Piracy and politics

Ever bolder pirate attacks have—out of nowhere, it has seemed—put Somalia on the front pages and screens of international media. This world attention has a bitter aftertaste, for it comes after a long period of neglect by this selfsame media of persistent internecine warfare and humanitarian crisis in the country.

The current phase of attention was triggered by the seizure on 15 November 2008 of the giant Saudi oil-tanker *Sirius Star*, carrying a \$110-million cargo of crude oil on its way to the United States. The *Sirius Star*, 330 m in length, is the biggest ship ever hijacked. But if this was the most spectacular of a series of such attacks, it was far from the first. From the hijacking of a French yacht in April 2008 to that of a Ukrainian tank-carrying freighter in September, the crisis that is now drawing the attention of Western navies and policymakers has been long brewing.

The involvement of Somalis in piracy is rooted in the

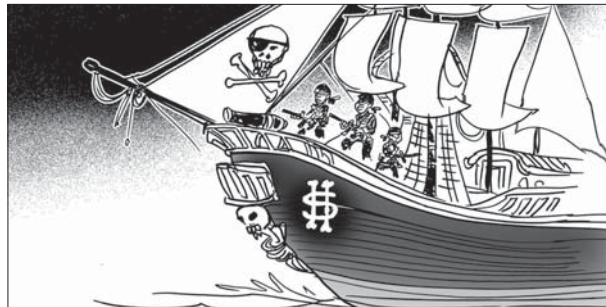
circumstances of an internal conflict that has lasted since the early 1990s. There has for years been no authority to enforce and regulate Somalia's fishing area along its coast—itsself the most extensive in the whole of Africa. The result has been that local Somali fishing-fleets have no protection or

with foreign fishing-crews being held to ransom.

The story of poor Somali fishermen trying to survive by engaging in piracy may never have told the whole story—and today, for sure, it no longer holds true. For the situation now is also one of heavily armed pirates operating from

Most of the current pirate attacks are organized in port towns like Eyl in the semi-autonomous Puntland region. After several years of relative stability in Puntland, in 2008 the general security situation there has deteriorated. An increase in criminality and violence means that the regional authorities are ever less able to control their own territory.

—Georg-Sebastian Holzer in *openDemocracy.net*
www.opendemocracy.net/article/somalia-piracy-and-politics



rights over the country's seas, and that international fleets have been able to command the waters and Hoover up the country's fishing-stocks. The grievances over this issue led local Somalis to seek to extract "licence-fees" from the international fishermen. Over time the situation escalated,

larger mother-ships in the open sea, far away from the Somali coast. In 2008 alone, they have extracted an estimated \$150 million in ransoms, which have allowed them in turn to purchase more sophisticated equipment used to capture large merchant vessels.

KENYA

Save mangroves or perish

According to James Kairo an environmentalist and researcher at the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute and the National Research Institute in Mombasa, Kenya, the Western Indian Ocean region has embarked on a programme to restore mangrove forests, following years of destruction fuelled by economic motives.

Kairo told journalists during a recent forum in Zanzibar that programmes were currently on for replanting mangrove forests through afforestation programmes. Not restoring mangrove forests could be potentially dangerous for coastal communities, he said, considering the predictions on rising sea levels. He pointed out that mangroves have long contributed directly to rural livelihoods along the Kenya coast by providing 70 per cent of the wood requirement for building and fuel. Mangrove forests are also home to many fish species. Mangroves also protect the coastal region from erosion and the impact of tides and waves. Kairo pointed to the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, whose effects were felt as far as East Africa. The presence of mangrove forests could have reduced the intensity of the waves before they hit land.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA) is by far the largest and most politically active trade association of commercial fishermen on the west coast of the United States (US). For nearly the last 30 years, it has been leading the industry in assuring the rights of individual fishermen, and fighting for the long-term survival of commercial fishing as a productive livelihood and way of life.

PCFFA is an 'umbrella' group made up of diverse associations along the west coast.

It is a federation of many different port and fishermen's marketing associations, with members spanning the United States west coast, from San Diego to Alaska. It is funded principally through assessments on catches, collected at

the local port level. It is a 'bottom-up', rather than 'top-down' organization; it begins with the individual fishing man or woman.

More than any other fishery organization on the US west coast, PCFFA has come to embody the working family fisherman. It focuses on small and medium-sized family businesses, conducted from vessels fishing distant grounds, to small

boats fishing in nearshore waters. PCFFA provides individual fishermen a vehicle to protect themselves and their industry, to

assure the sustainable protection of the fragile resources they depend on, and a vehicle for empowerment. PCFFA attempts to give fishermen a say in their future. For more information, please visit www.pcffa.org



EXCERPTS

Rights-based management approaches

It is frequently helpful to put the topic of rights-based systems into a bit of perspective. Contrary to much of the media coverage of the use of property rights in fisheries management, rights-based fisheries systems are not limited to individual transferable quota (ITQ) systems. Indeed, it is possible to say that all fisheries management systems are based on user rights. It is simply the degree to which the four characteristics (exclusivity, durability, security and transferability) are defined—that is, the strength of the total bundle of rights—that distinguish fisheries management systems and the incentives they create for fishermen.

Systems based on licences (or some other definition of participants), whether they limit access or not, somehow determine who may participate in a fishery. However, when used alone, the generally competitive nature of individual fishermen (regardless of whether their boats are large or small) will cause them to invest in technologies (better paddles, sails, fishing gear, etc.) that help them increase their catches and revenues. As a result, these systems set up incentives to overinvest and overfish, resulting in conflicts and overcapacity. To avoid this, licensing and limited-access systems, in general, need to be accompanied by regulations to allocate sustainable units of catch or effort amongst the different rights holders.

Customary access/tenure programmes, as well as various types of territorial and group user rights in fisheries, define many of the questions of authority, rights and rules and thereby set up positive incentive structures for participants. These systems encourage participants to take care of the resources, but only for the duration and the

exclusivity of these rights. Moreover, if not supported by contemporary laws, customary programmes are not always respected by people outside the customary system and are weakened when national, regional and global forces are brought to bear on the fishery, causing conflict and competition.

The category of most clearly defined rights-based systems is comprised of catch

the problem of discarding, motivated by 'high-grading' as well as possible concentration of shares to a small number of the rich at the exclusion of the poor.

Not surprisingly, there are common issues that are crucial and applicable for all of these different systems. One is the ability to monitor and to enforce catches effectively. Another is whether the system readily encourages fishers to

create the conditions and incentives for fishermen to work to maximize their profits on limited amounts of catch—and they do this by minimizing their costs, catching fewer fish, and becoming stewards of the resources they have the rights to use. Indeed, with the new demands for the ecosystem approach to fisheries, clear and secure fishing rights are essential because they create the environment in

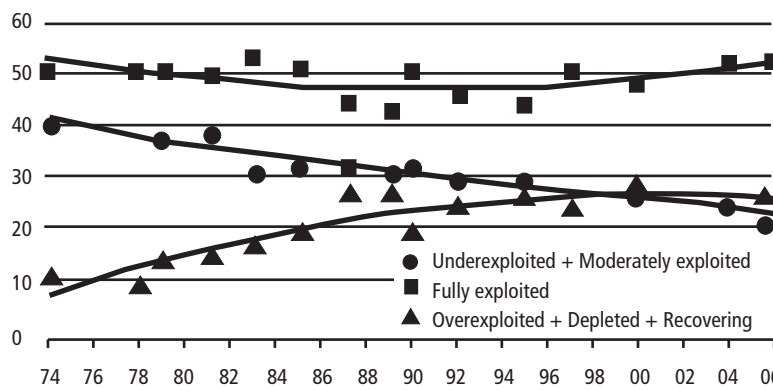
which fishing behaviour, conservation objectives, and commercial forces reinforce each other.

Nonetheless, the challenge is that there is not one style of rights-based system, to fit all fisheries. Rights-based management systems need to be designed to reflect and build upon the norms and governance structures that the participants and their communities consider legitimate and acceptable. Moreover, when rights-based systems are applied

to fisheries where there is overcapacity and overfishing, it is critical to address the impacts of transitioning to rationalized fisheries, the impacts on livelihoods, and the consolidation that will occur. In doing so, fishers and their communities will be able to sustainably generate the wealth that fisheries have to offer.

—from *Fisheries Management: Status and Challenges* by Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO

Percentage of fish stocks assessed



share systems for groups or communities (for example, community fishing quotas) or individuals (for example, individual share quota systems). In fisheries where determining total allowable catches may be problematic, the shares can be in the form of individual transferable effort units—sometimes described in terms of a particular part of the fishing gear or other technological units—as a proxy for shares of a total allowable catch (TAC). The drawback of this effort-based share-system is that it will create incentives for the fishermen to invest in technology ('technology creep') and require constant readjustment of the units to compensate for this. In fisheries where quantitative TACs are set, it is possible to develop ITQ and share quota systems, where the individual participants have clearly defined percentage-based shares. In this case, the system still needs to address

address bycatch concerns in a cost-effective manner. Finally, there is always the question of whether or not the system will encourage or discourage consolidation, particularly in fisheries where overcapacity is a problem.

For fisheries to be both biologically and commercially viable, it is necessary to promote fisheries management systems that are not only implemented transparently and collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders, but are also based on clearly defined and legally defensible user rights. Such systems are the only ones that

VERBATIM

But if we see, as marine scientists, boaters, tourists, fishermen, aquaculturists, petroleum geologists and wind farmers do, that the oceans are a complex mosaic of places, each a distinctive composite of natural processes and human activities, we realize that a "one-size-fits-all" placeless approach doesn't make sense.

—ELLIOTT A NORSE
MARINE CONSERVATION BIOLOGY INSTITUTE, REDMOND, WASHINGTON, US

WEBSITE

Arrest and Detention of Fishers

arrest-fishers.icsf.net

Many coastal communities around the world have to constantly deal with the problem of arrest and detention of fishworkers by States for unauthorized presence of small-scale fishing vessels in the territorial waters and exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of non-flag States. Such presence arises from a number of factors, ranging from a desire to access fishing grounds traditionally fished by non-flag State vessels, to depletion of fish stocks in waters of flag States, to enhanced capacities of the artisanal small-scale fishing fleets that spill over into waters of other coastal States. This problem, however, needs

context-specific solutions that will protect the human rights of fishworkers.

This site collates information resources for 18 different countries on the arrest and detention of fishers. It draws from the SAMUDRA News Alerts, articles from SAMUDRA Report and Yemaya newsletter, books and journal articles, and from other audio-visual material. The site also provides details of important bilateral agreements between countries on traditional fishing grounds.

For more, please visit <http://arrest-fishers.icsf.net/icsf2006/jspFiles/arrest-fishers/index.jsp>

FLASHBACK

Fishermen's Rights

Filipino fishermen have suffered a great deal on Taiwanese boats. Living conditions on those boats were denounced at the international seminar held in Manila last February. All over the world, unknown fishermen undergo the same or worse treatment and have no way to defend their basic rights. International agencies and governments do little or nothing to solve these problems.

Industrial fleets have hurt small artisanal fishermen in numerous countries, either directly by fishing in their waters, or indirectly, by negotiating with governments to obtain larger fishing quotas. Many national organizations aspire to have a zone reserved for artisanal fishermen, and we can see the day when that right will be universally accepted as a norm.

We can see some signs on the horizon that allow us to hope for a better day for fishworkers who lack basic rights. Chile has promulgated a law for fishing and aquaculture, which provides for the participation of representatives



of fishermen's organizations in fishing councils. It also establishes a five-mile zone reserved for artisanal fishing, a fisheries development fund, and priority access to aquacultural concessions. Fishermen from Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Senegal, the Philippines, India, Norway, France and other countries are active in their organizations to achieve better living and working conditions.

This progress marks the beginning of a long and difficult road that fishermen's organizations will have to travel to ensure that their members are respected as human beings and can defend their sources of work threatened by pollution and plunder. Fishermen and fishworkers of the entire world should raise their voices to make room for the participation of women and demand from their governments reserved fishing areas. Credit and technical assistance should be channelled through projects that are elaborated with the active participation of fishermen themselves at every step of the process.

—from the Editorial in SAMUDRA Report No. 4, May 1991

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BOOKSHELF

Trading in the Arabian Seas

THE ARABIAN SEAS: THE INDIAN OCEAN WORLD OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. R J Barendse, Vision Books, New Delhi, India. pp 588. 2002. ISBN 81-7094-518-6

This book, which began as a doctoral dissertation, focuses on the trading centres of the Arabian Sea, which Barendse designates "an archipelago of towns" populated by traders, mariners and fishermen living within autonomous communities that linked the various coastal areas." He

sees this maritime region as constituting an "Indian Ocean World". His time period is 1640–1700, "the age of Dutch predominance in the waters of the Indian Ocean, and in a broader sense the era of the great monopoly companies." Two of the book's major themes are the competition among the great European trading enterprises and the eventual emerging superiority in trade of the Europeans over the indigenous traders.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEETING

**COFI 28th Session
Committee on Fisheries
(COFI), 2-6 March 2009
Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
Nations (FAO), Rome, Italy**

COFI, a subsidiary body of the FAO Council, was established by the FAO Conference at its Thirteenth Session in 1965.

The Committee presently constitutes the only global inter-governmental forum where major international fisheries and aquaculture problems

and issues are examined and recommendations addressed to governments, regional fishery bodies, NGOs, fishworkers, FAO and international community, periodically on a world-wide basis.

COFI has also been used as a forum in which global agreements and non-binding instruments were negotiated.

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JOURNALS

Development, Vol. 51, No. 2. June 2008: Gender and Fisheries

Development is the flagship journal of the Society for International Development (SID, www.sidint.org). This issue focuses on the gender dimensions of fisheries, which provide rich ground for perspectives on development policy and community-based strategies for livelihoods, gender and social justice. The issue focuses on gender and fisheries in relation to inland and coastal resource management and aquaculture; and models for successful fishing/fish farming families/communities.

CONFERENCE

Poznan Climate Change Conference, 1-12 December 2008, Poznan, Poland

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznan will bring together representatives of more than 180 countries, as well as observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the media, for a series of UN events. These formal events will deliberate on a wide range of topics and agenda items, with a major focus being the post-2012 period, when the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period expires.