

Negotiator says talks with pirates slow

by UPI

MOGADISHU, Somalia -- The French government said negotiations with pirate who seized a French luxury yacht en route to Malta may take a while. French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner said negotiators are hoping to avoid bloodshed, but the pirates have not come up with demands for ransom or other issues, MaltaMedia.com reported. Pirates are holding all 30 members of the crew hostage. There have been no reports of mistreatment. The luxury yacht is a 288-foot Le Ponant. It was sailing near Somalia's coast when it was hijacked. About a dozen pirates stormed the vessel as crew members were sailing from the Seychelles to the Mediterranean, EuroNet.net reported. No passengers were on board when Le Ponant was seajacked. France has troops stationed nearby, with special squads trained to deal with seajackings.

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