

Pirates seize boat with 21 Americans

by UPI

MOGADISHU, Somalia -- Pirates off the coast of Somalia hijacked a ship with 21 Americans on board Wednesday, the U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet said.

The latest hijacking comes after a British-owned cargo ship and a fishing trawler were seized Monday, prompting the U.S. military to issue an alert to mariners that warned of increased dangers in the region, CNN reported.

The attacks, which occurred out of the Gulf of Aden sea lanes patrolled by U.S. and coalition ships, indicate pirates are changing tactics and looking for ships in the tens of thousands of square miles of open water that lack military patrol vessels, U.S. military officials said.

"They (pirates) are going where we are not, they are looking for targets where there is limited coalition presence," a military briefing document shown to CNN read.

The new warning said recent attacks occurred further away from shore, indicating pirates are using boats with a longer range from which they launch smaller vessels to chase down their quarry, Pentagon officials said.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Liaison Office also issued a warning to mariners April 1, suggesting that ships traveling along the coast of Somalia and Kenya move hundreds of miles away to the east side of the Seychelles Islands and Madagascar.

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