

Pirates attack of U.S. cargo ship repelled

by UPI

MOGADISHU, Somalia -- Pirates armed with grenade launchers and automatic weapons attempted to hijack a U.S.-flagged cargo ship off the Somali coast, officials said.

While the ship, Liberty Sun, sustained some damage in Tuesday's assault, the crew was unharmed and the vessel was able to continue with its shipment of humanitarian aid to its destination port in Mombasa, Kenya, The New York Times reported Wednesday.

Liberty Maritime Corp., which owns the vessel, issued a statement from its New York offices, saying, "The pirates fired rocket propelled grenades and automatic weapons at the vessel, which sustained damage," CNN reported.

A U.S. Navy spokesman said the Liberty Sun sent a distress call and by the time the USS Bainbridge arrived five hours later, the pirates had fled.

The Bainbridge, the destroyer involved in the rescue last week of another American cargo ship's captain, dispatched a security team to the Liberty Sun and was escorting the cargo ship toward Mombasa Wednesday, said U.S. Navy Lt. Nathan Christensen, a U.S. Fifth Fleet public affairs officer.

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