# NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID

# ASSESSMENT REPORT
# PUNTLAND COUNTER-PIRACY SURVEY
# JUNE/JULY 2009

# (Final)

**By**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This the final report of a survey commissioned by Norwegian Church Aid on counter-piracy efforts in the Puntland State of Somalia. The survey was carried out on the basis of the annexed TORs. The key objective of the survey is to inform decision-making in proposed interventions to among others rehabilitate ex-pirates. NCA has been involved in Puntland since 2004, mostly in relief and humanitarian work but also in such areas as education and water and sanitation.

Piracy off the coast of Somalia is a major international issue, mostly because of the close proximity of Somalia lawless and un-policed coast to major shipping lanes. Somalia's civil war that has been ongoing since the 1990s and the lack of strong and effective authorities has made sea-piracy thrive. There has been a sharp escalation in piracy attacks with a 219% increase in reported seizures between 2007 and 2008. To protect vital maritime routes in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, the international community,- under the mandate of the UN – has deployed Naval forces to deter and arrest pirates although this is highly cost and has had only limited success. Increased piracy in the Coast of Somalia has had a negative impact on trade and shipping with some ships opting to take longer routes to avoid the long Somali coastline while relief efforts in Somalia has been hampered by their inability to deliver essential items to Somali ports

This survey targeted respondents in the Coastal villages like Eyl which is believed to be the breeding ground for pirates as well as interviews with key informants. The data collected was both qualitative and quantitative. The survey targeted a total of 250 respondents in a quantitative survey using administered questionnaires in Eyl, Qarhis and Garowe in a survey lasing 20 days. The key informant interviews included respondents from Bossasso. The key findings of the study are as follows:

- There is widespread acknowledgement of prevalence of piracy areas targeted by this study. Emergence of piracy was initially attributed to the unregulated exploitation of fishery resources within Somalia's territorial waters by foreign vessels and dumping of toxic wastes. Whenever Somalis tried to assert their sovereignty over their territorial water through self-help, the intrusive vessels resorted to the use of force. Thus, bands of Somalis started targeting foreign ships and enforced "taxation and penalties" for illegal fishing activities. These bands later metamorphosed into organized and deadly pirates' gangs. This continued prevalence of piracy is now attributed to joblessness, lack of income opportunities and poverty
- There are two types of pirates i.e the 'foot soldiers' who do the actual attacks and the shadowy 'investors' who put the seed money and provide food and equipment
- Piracy has had serious negative consequences in the community. The respondents identified some of these as:- drug abuse , pre-marital sex, theft (of fuel and other supplies by pirate gangs) and inflation (due to influx of dollars)
- On the flip-side, proceeds from piracy has seen a construction boom in parts of Puntland and boosted incomes for those involved in the trade
- 95% of the respondents, however , think piracy is *Haram* (forbidden) under Islamic teachings and leads to immoral lifestyles
- Religious leaders, with support from Somalis in the diaspora have been spearheading local

efforts against piracy. They use Koranic teachings to dissuade youth from piracy
- INGOs working in the area do not seem to have a clear anti-piracy strategy and effort
- IGA opportunities in the areas surveyed are extremely rare. The IGAs that are available do not offer sufficient income and are not widely available. Further, the youth lack skills and business training, capital and tools for self-employment
- The media was seen as having a general positive influence in the community and could serve as a useful tool in counter-piracy efforts. However , local media lacks reach and BBC Somali is the only medium with the requisite credibility and reach
-  Religious leaders retain strong credibility in Somalia. Although 13% of respondents believe the allure of instant wealth will still pull youth into piracy , many believe that with a planned and concerted effort religious leaders can successfully dissuade youth from piracy
- 87% believe that youth can abandon piracy if offered incentives and alternative income opportunities
- Anti-piracy efforts carry certain risks which include;- backlash by pirates and pirate 'investors', the international naval activity might fuel an arms race among pirates and the funders of pirates might try to destabilize the Puntland Authority
- International efforts must be focused on enhancing the capacity of the Puntland authorities to combat piracy
- Eyl seems to be the epicenter/staging point of piracy and anti-piracy efforts must focus on Eyl and the neighboring coastal districts
- The overall negative attitude to piracy is a strong entry point in the fight against piracy
- A viable anti-piracy effort must involve three key pillars:-  support to local efforts to dissuade youth from piracy (using the media and religious institutions), livelihood support to ex-pirates and potential pirate recruits to offer them an alternative to piracy and support to the state authorities in Puntland in their counter-piracy initiatives

The key recommendations of the survey are:-
- Focus of any intervention should be the Youths in and around Eyl, emphasis should be laid on the negative consequences of piracy so as to consolidate the prevailing anti-piracy perceptions.
- Empower religious leaders initiatives to dismantle the act of piracy (technically and financially)
- INGOs in livelihood support programming should co-programme with the Puntland Authorities.
- Possible livelihood alternative options in the target areas include fishery, artisanal crafts, small scale trading and livestock production.
- Approaches should be made to such influential media  as SBC local radios, VOA and BBC Somali service to explore the possibility of counter-piracy programming
- The income and business opportunities for youth in Eyl and surrounding areas should be expanded to offer an alternative to piracy
- A risk and mitigation strategy should be integrated into any intervention to underpin its success and sustainability

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Norwegian Church Aid –Puntland Programme (NCA) has been involved in humanitarian assistance and development projects in Puntland since 2004. The initial target groups of NCA consisted of Tsunami-affected communities residing along the coastal and inland towns, whose households were directly or indirectly affected by the disaster that occurred in 2004. The Agency has however expanded and deepened its operations in Puntland, addressing education, water & sanitation, emergency relief, gender and peace building priorities within the region.

In June 2009, NCA commissioned an assessment on the potential for initiatives that can address the piracy menace that has plagued the coastline of Puntland. The Assessment was conducted by a consultant from July 7th to 26th 2009. This is the final report of the Assessment of the NCAs proposed Counter Piracy Initiative in the Puntland State of Somalia. The report is based on the final approved *Terms of Reference for Evaluation/Assessment of the NCAs proposed Counter Piracy Initiative/Project in the Puntland State of Somalia.*(Annexture)*.* The report contains a background to the study, key findings, conclusion and recommendations as well as annexures. The report is intended to inform the programming decision of Norwegian Church Aid as to whether to initiate an intervention involving, inter alia, rehabilitation of ex-pirates in the coastal villages of Puntland.

# 2. BACKGROUND

Somalia lies in the  Horn of Africa. It borders  Ethiopia and Kenya to the west, Djibouti and the Gulf of Aden to the North and the Indian Ocean to the east.  It gained independence in 1960. In 1969  Colonel Siad Barre overthrew the civilian government. Colonel Barre ruled Somalia until his government was overthrown by an ethnic uprising in 1991 With the exit of Col. Barre  the country broke down  into small clan fiefdoms and civil war which continues up to date. Today, Somali a comprises the breakaway Republic of Somaliland the semi-autonomous State of Puntland and a largely lawless central-southern Somalia.

In recent times , piracy off the coast of Somalia has become an issue of urgent and ongoing concern both locally and for the international community. Somalia has a long coastline (2105nm) which , due to instability , civil war and lack of strong government is un-policed and unprotected.

Efforts to stem piracy began during ancient times in Crete, Athens, and the island of Rhodes, which were the first to include piracy in their maritime laws[1].  During the Middle Ages, pirates were one of several thorns in trade between countries.  To address this and other issues, northern cities in Germany and German merchants in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, England, and the Baltic banded together to form the Hanseatic League. Eventually, some countries established admiralty courts to enforce maritime laws.  To Sir Charles Hedges, a judge of the British Admiralty Court during the late 1600s, pirates were robbers who seized a ship and/or its cargo through violent means upon the sea.  In spite of these legal attempts to deal with piracy, though, an internationally accepted

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[1] Villar C, *Pirates & Privateers, A History of Maritime Laws*, 2000 accessed from www.cindyvallar.com on 4th July 2009

definition of piracy didn't exist prior to 1958.

Article 15 of the 1958 Geneva Convention of the High Seas and Article 101 of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea define piracy as "*a violent seizure on the high seas of a private ship or the illegal detainment of persons or property aboard said ship for the purpose of private gain*"[2]. Acts of piracy within territorial waters on the other hand falls under municipal law.

Acts of piracy in Puntland escalated following the collapse of the Said Barre government in 1991. The void of authority that was created was quickly taken up clans with armed rag tag groups. Lawlessness that ensued ever since was not confined to land but also on the sea. Of a total of some 440 acts of piracy and armed robbery reported to have taken place off the coast of Somalia since IMO started compiling relevant statistics in 1984. According to the International Maritime Bureau, in 2008 there were 184 pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia, whereas 59 incidences were reported in 2007, thus marking a 219% increase[3]. An estimated more than 120 attacks have been reported this year alone[4]. More than 35 ships have been seized by pirates and more than 600 seafarers have been kidnapped and held for ransom. Currently, 14 ships and some 280 seafarers from 25 nations are being held hostage in Somalia. Two seafarers have already lost their lives. The strategy adopted by the international community has been to intensify naval patrols off the coast of Somalia and prosecute captured pirates. The reported incidences of piracy attacks are largely concentrated in the Gulf of Aden and the coastline adjacent to Somalia's mainland, even though some attacks have occurred as far away in the Kenyan, Tanzanian and Seychellois territorial waters.

The strategic importance of the Somalia's coastline cannot be lost to many. The Gulf of Aden is located in Somalia's northern coastline, which is the gateway to the Suez Canal. It is estimated that 12% of all the world's oil transported by sea passes through Suez Canal, not to mention other finished goods and bulk materials[5]. The humanitarian crisis that is currently raging in Somalia due to prolonged drought and the fighting in Mogadishu has forced aid agencies (led by the WFP) to transport food and other relief supplies by sea. Somali coastline is 2,105nm or 3,898 kilometres long in total of which 659nm or 1,204km in the Gulf of Aden. This therefore presents a grave challenge for a state that has no functional central government to police the vital sea route. Already, insurance costs have gone up and ships using the longer Cape of Good Hope route are taking twice as long to reach their destination. The upshot is that the cost of shipping goods is rising, thus compounding the effects of the raging global financial crisis. Owing to the above, piracy is posing a great challenge which the international community cannot fail to take note of.

The escalation of piracy attacks in Somalia prompted the IMO to seek top-level intervention from the UN Security Council. IMO first brought the matter of piracy off Somalia to the attention of the Security Council in 2005. Subsequently, the Security Council issued a Presidential Statement on the subject in March 2006 and adopted resolutions 1816 and 1838, in June and October 2008 respectively[6]. The resolution allowed warships and aircrafts of foreign governments and regional bodies to enter into territorial waters of Somalia in pursuit of pirates. It also allowed for destruction of vessels used by

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[2] Seems simple, but in reality there are problems with this definition. First, it limits piracy to crimes committed against private property or citizens. Second, the act must occur in international waters. Third, greed must be the motivating factor behind the crime
[3] See http://www.shipping.nato.int/CounterPir/InfoonSoma/ accessed on 20th July 2009
[4] See www.imo.org
[5] Ibid
[6] Ibid

pirates. The effect of these two Resolutions was further extended for a period of 12 months by Resolution 1846 passed in December 2008 by the Security Council.

The problem of piracy however cannot be solely solved through police action or by naval means. Sorenson has argued that the Somali piracy is a form of organized and structured criminality which thrives on incentives accruing from ransom payments[7]. As such, piracy is sustained by existence of safe ports ashore, from where the pirates launch their attacks and stash proceeds of their illicit. The roots of the problem can be found in state failure and the prevailing state of underdevelopment in Somalia. Poverty, illiteracy and weak governance have made it possible for pirates to thrive in the impoverished coastal areas of Puntland. Besides maintaining police action, it is therefore important to ensure that Somalis who would otherwise be recruited into piracy are afforded alternative livelihood options. It is also important to educate the public on the hazards of piracy and the effect on local economy. It is also important to strengthen local governance systems to handle localized criminality that is likely to snow-ball into full-fledged piracy gangs.

The pirates are believed to be most active in the coastal district of Eyl, even though most come from other parts of the Somalia. Most of the pirates are youth who are lured into the illegal activity by the promise of riches from the multi-million dollar ransom payments.
Increasing attacks and hijacking of merchant vessels off the coast of Somalia , in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean has had severe consequences for the region including:-

- Disruption of the supply of goods to the region ( including urgently needed relief food to Somalia)[8]
- Disruption of maritime merchant shipping in one of the busiest and most important sea lanes
- Potential for a maritime disaster involving toxic cargo if a security incident occurs aboard a ship
- High cost of goods due to increased insurance costs and longer routes
- Money laundering in Somalia and neighbouring countries with weak proceeds of crime laws
- Potential for the proceeds of piracy to find its way into terrorist/international criminal gang activities

In addition , corruption within  local communities/authorities  through the proceeds of piracy has the potential of undermining the nascent institutions in places like Puntland which , though still weak, are relatively  stable bulwarks to the conflict prone areas of Southern Somalia.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The objectives of assessment are to:-

- Assess the <u>extent</u> of sea piracy activities in the Somalia and Puntland;

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[7] Sorensen K, *State Failure in High Seas- Review the Somali Piracy*, Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2008
[8] See for instance http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KKAA-7K28E7?OpenDocument accessed on 29th July 2009

- Assess the <u>effects</u> of sea piracy on local communities , the authorities , the region and internationally
- <u>Document and map</u> out any ongoing local, regional and international efforts to counter piracy and the actor(s) involved and particularly the recent initiative by local religious leaders to dissuade youths from piracy in Eyl (Puntland)
- Assess the <u>extent</u> to which these initiatives have been successful and how they can be replicated, scaled up and made more effective
- Assess the <u>viability</u> projects promoting alternative livelihoods for youths who wish to abandon piracy and make relevant recommendations and specifically identify vocational /skills transfer opportunities that are available in the region and the viability of a Small Grants Scheme targeting former pirates ;
- <u>Recommend an effective communication strategy</u> to be deployed in a media-based campaign targeting potential pirate recruits in the coastal villages of Puntland ;
- Identify and recommend <u>potential partnerships/collaboration</u> partners in the proposed project including the Media component ( broadcast media available and their reach, publics and influence)
- Give a brief <u>overview</u> of the <u>capacity</u> of the Puntland Authorities to counter piracy
  Recommend appropriate counter-piracy <u>methodologies & approaches</u>  and the extent to which they compliment other development initiatives on the ground and the extent to which these methodologies and approaches provide opportunities for <u>lesson learning and sharing</u>;
- Assess the <u>security , cultural, democracy and governance environment/risks</u> in the project area(s) and how this environment impacts on the proposed project activities and the desired results
- Recommend an appropriate <u>risk mitigation and phase out/handing over strategy</u> and possible linkages with ongoing NCA emergency/humanitarian/development in the project area
- Develop a strategy for effective <u>Stakeholder Management</u> and community ownership of the proposed project
- Draft a project funding proposal

## 4. METHODOLOGY

Good and accurate information is vital in any decision-making process. Persons charged with designing and running programme need 'good' information to in order make the 'right' interventions. Better information leads to better programming decisions. The methodology of this study was therefore designed to meet the following minimum conditions :-

- The need to arrive at the most inexpensive approximation of the truth
- The need to gain the required information at the shortest time
- The need to reduce and possibly eliminate bias and errors

A total of 250 (178 -71%-males and 72- 29%- females) respondents were reached for the quantitative survey in 3 locations i.e 100 in Eyl , 100 in Qarhis and 50 in Garowe. The sampling applied a non-probability method referred to as purposive sampling. In this method, the enumerators searched for

opinion leaders from varied sector of the society (both male and female) and interviewed the most knowledgeable about local issues. In most cases, these respondents were identified by reference, using contacts which NCA has built overtime in its humanitarian activities.

The questionnaires were designed by the researcher/consultant recruited by NCA and pre-tested in Garowe ( c.f Flow chart below). The consultant at his cost hired 1 Supervisors and 2 Enumerators were recruited and trained. The research field work period took 5 days. Coding, data entry and analysis report writing took 6 days. The analysis employed simple quantitative methods out of which basic inferences were made.

Concurrently, the research supervisors carried out Key informant or Indepth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD)s in the research locations.   The informants included police officers, judicial officers, Islamic clerics, civil society leaders and shipping business persons. One FGD in each location was held to obtain qualitative data and clarify some inconsistencies or gaps revealed in the preliminary analysis of the quantitative data. These interviews were guided by checklists developed by the consultant.

## 5.  RESEARCH DESIGN

The Research design therefore proceeded in a systematic manner as illustrated the Flow Chart below:-
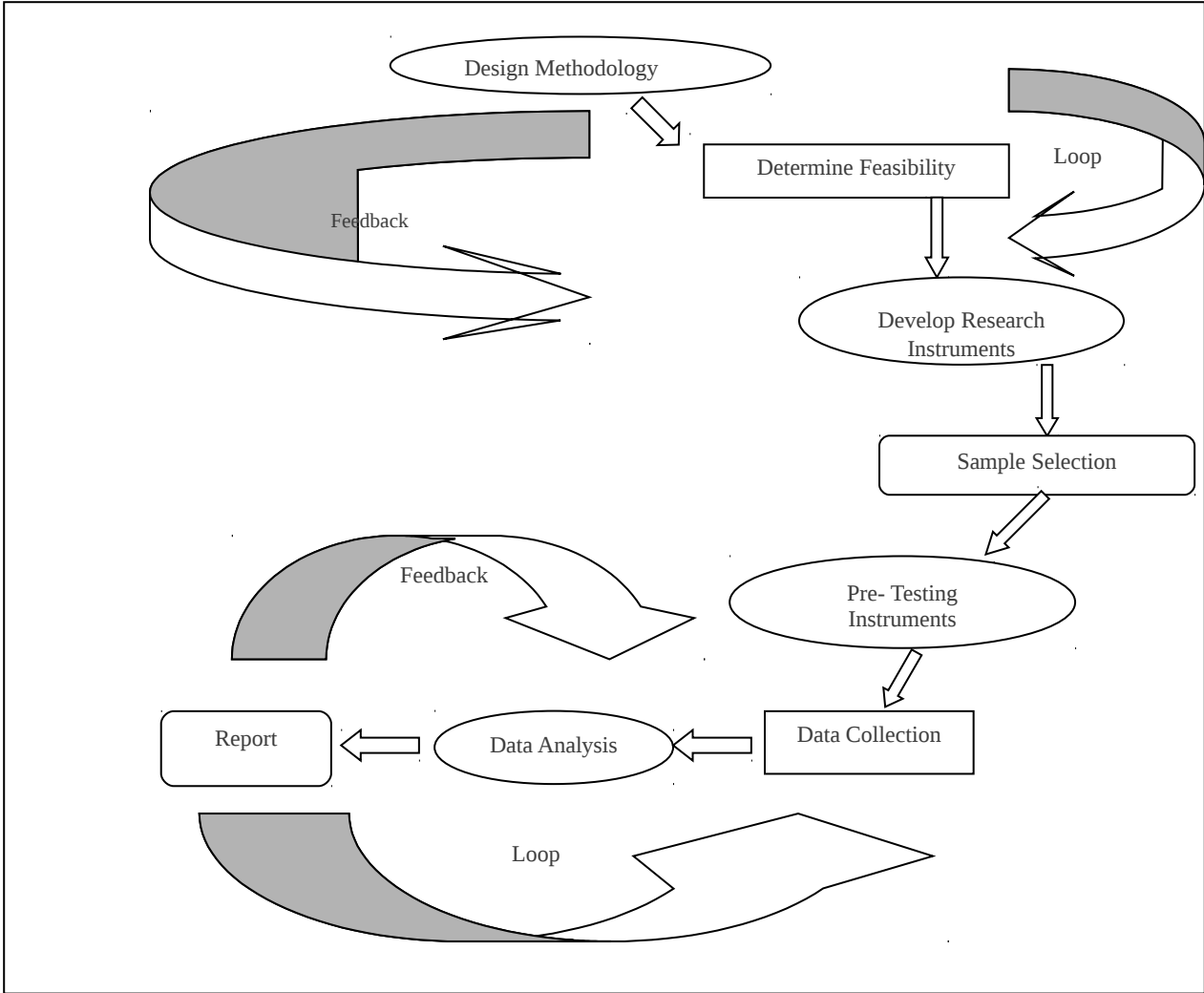
Fig 1

For quality control, two feedback loops were in-built to allow revisions and modifications.

## 6. TIME LINES

The period given for the task was 20 working days. The following timeline schedule was developed by the research team:-

Hours Duration
1. Goal clarification ................................................. 1
2. Overall study design .......................................... 1
3. Selecting the sample ........................................... 1
4. Designing the questionnaire and
   research instruments
   ................................................ 1
5. Conduct pre-testing ........................................... 1
6. Revise questionnaire/instruments (if necessary)   1
7. Printing time ...................................................... 1
8. Locating the sample (if necessary) .................... 1
9. Field response/research time                .......5
10. Attempts to get non-respondents ..................... n/a
11. Editing the data and
coding open-ended questions ........................... 1
12. Data entry and verification ............................. 1
13. Analyzing the data ........................................... 1
14. Preparing the report ........................................ 3
     15. Printing & distribution of the report ............... n/a

# 7. KEY FINDINGS

### 7.1    Extent and Prevalence of Piracy within the Target Areas

Majority of the respondents (80%) acknowledged the wide prevalence of piracy within their respective localities. The study found out that piracy emerged due to the illegal and unregulated exploitation of fishery resources within Somalia's territorial waters by unscrupulous foreign vessels following the collapse of the Somali central government in 1991. Illegal fishing led to noticeable depletion of fishery resources in areas that had been hitherto accessible to the Somali fishermen. There were incidences of violence visited upon local fishermen by foreign vessels. Majority of the respondents also attributed claims of illegal dumping of toxic waste along Somali coastal waters as another motivating factor that led to emergence of piracy.

Due to the above factors, groups of fishermen decided to confront (using arms) foreign vessels sighted within the territorial waters. With time, these groups began imposing penalties and taxes upon foreign vessels. These were the primordial piracy gangs that eventually evolved into organized and deadly groups that are currently reigning terror within and beyond Somali territorial waters.

The study also found out that the existing weak administrative structures, absence of coercive sanctions against pirates and the related prevalence of a culture of impunity, joblessness and widespread poverty & hunger constitute the key reasons why piracy flourishes to date. A significant minority denied the presence of pirates within their localities. They argued that the pirates only pass through the target locations to various rendezvous along the coastline and as such, they do not have permanent bases within the said locations.
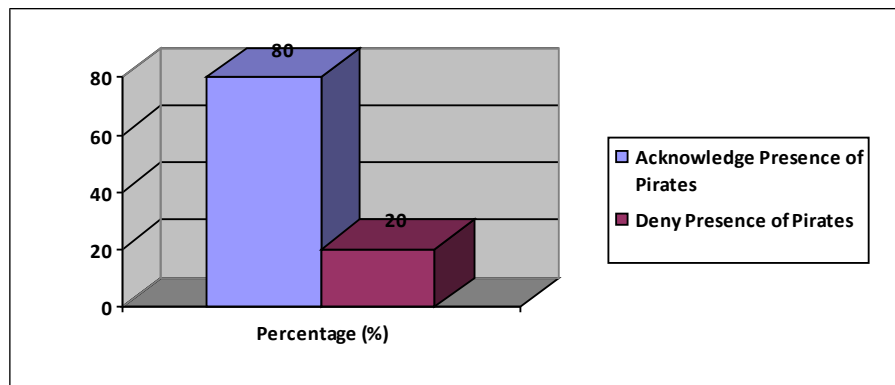


Fig 2: Prevalence of Piracy

Through key informant interviews, it emerged that the pirates are actually "foot soldiers" working for hire and at the behest of fairly wealthier masterminds living largely outside the target area. These masterminds who 'invest' equipment (skiffs, ladders , ropes, guns etc), source for intelligence (ship movements) and carry out the negotiations. Eyl is the main staging point for piracy although many pirates come from the surrounding villages. Piracy in Puntland is systematic and highly organized, thus

difficult to stamp without an effective state organization dedicated to this task. The Puntland Coastguard is weak and poorly resourced to fight piracy. Currently, it has only 3 boats available for policing the coastline.

## 7.2    Effects of Piracy

Through the focus group discussions, the following were identified as the key negative effects of piracy:
- Increased drug abuse among youth benefitting from piracy
- Emergence and rise in prostitution
- Increased localized inflation due to influx of dollars
- Increased insecurity (pirates rob local petrol stations for fuel)
- Bad influence on the youth leading to family tensions
- Deaths (some pirates drown in the sea)
- Arrests
- Few shipping companies were willing to dock their ships in Bossasso thereby denying Puntland revenue
- Declining fishery-based livelihoods- fishermen fear venturing into the sea for fear of being targeted wrongly by naval patrols.
- Negative publicity to Puntland which is struggling to distinguish itself as a stable region.
- Wasteful consumption by beneficiaries of proceeds of piracy

The following were identified as the key positive effects of piracy within the target regions:
- Construction boom fuelled by piracy proceeds in major towns (Garowe and Bossasso)
- Changes in fortunes for some of the pirates and their families.

The survey revealed that negative perceptions on piracy as beneficial preoccupation were more dominant, with 95% expressing this opinion.
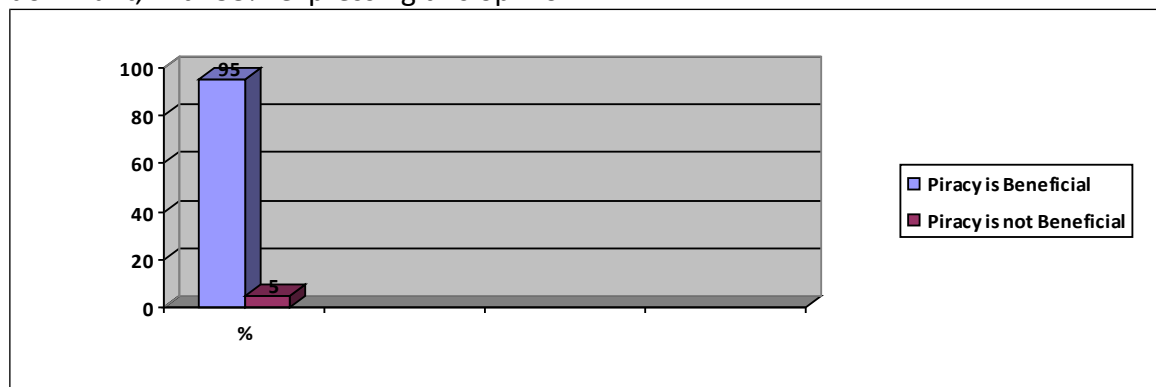


Fig 3:  Perceptions on benefits of piracy

This is a rather confounding finding, considering that a fraction of the multi-million dollar ransom payments received by pirates is injected into the local economy, and thus translate into increased domestic consumption with attendant trickle- down effect to local residents. With these outcomes,

one would therefore expect strong local support for piracy as a livelihood alternative. However, most residents perceive piracy as a vice that should be eradicated. One of the key reasons behind this dominant perception is that most people (i.e. 99%) rightly think that piracy goes against religious teachings (it is *Haram*). They argue that Islam strongly forbids robbery and abductions which are the key hallmarks of piracy.  A significant number think that pirates engage in immoral lifestyles (e.g. drug abuse, pre-marital sex, stealing) and therefore give local residents a bad name.

### 7.3    On Going Counter Piracy Efforts

Through key informant interviews, the study found that some religious leaders within the target areas had initiated a move to convince pirates from engaging in piracy. They hoped to use koranic teachings to achieve their aims. However, it also emerged that the religious leaders lacked resources to pursue their aims. The little support they were receiving from the diasporas was not sufficient to ensure a comprehensive campaign. For instance, a meeting organized by the local authorities , religious leaders and Somali      expatriates in Eyl in May 2009 saw at least 200 pirates renounce their activities. This could provide a model for engagement of religious leaders and CSOs in counterpiracy activities.

It also emerged that the Puntland Authorities were planning to launch an agency to counter piracy. A consultant had already developed a concept paper on the same and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Cooperation was yet to study and endorse the document. The proposed agency was supposed to coordinate policing efforts, raise awareness and provide youth with alternative livelihoods. The resources for the Agency would be sought from the international community.

There were few international NGOs providing livelihood support services along the target areas. these include NCA, Mercy Corps and CARE Somalia. Their activities are however severely restricted due to existing security and travel advisories. The INGOs lacked a coordination framework and a clear counter piracy strategy. However, the was potential for harnessing these efforts into a viable counter piracy strategy.

### 7.4    Viability of Promoting Alternative Livelihoods for the Youth

The survey revealed very low of access to to IGA opportunities for the youth in the target areas. Out of 200 respondents, only 6 (or 3%) affirmed that many youth engage in IGA opportunities whereas 194 (or 97%) polled in the negative.
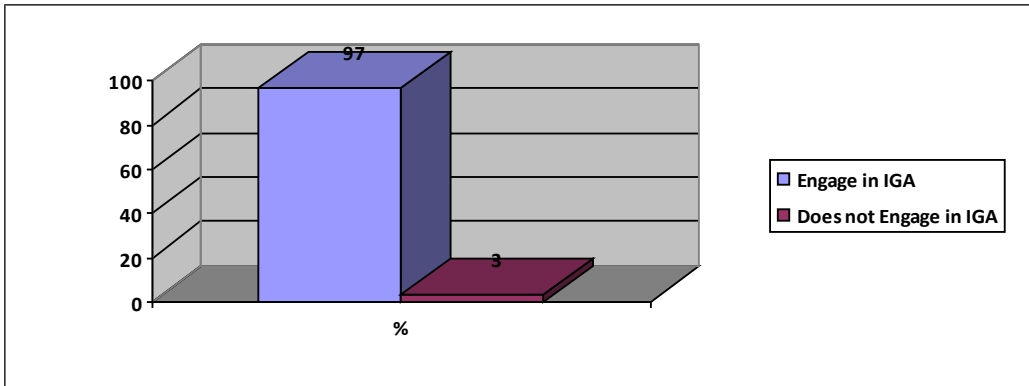
Fig 4: Level of engagement of youths in IGA

For those who polled in the affirmative reasoned that IGA opportunities were available to youths with skills such as masonry. As for those who polled in the negative, they gave the following reasons for their answers:

- Jobs not 'well paying'
- Not enough opportunities available
- Lack of skills and tools to engage in crafts
- Lack of capital to start IGAs

These responses point to lack of capital and skills as major constraints in successful carrying out of IGAs in the target sites.

Through key informant interviews, the following were identified as possible alternative livelihood options in the order of priority:

- Fisheries: provision of fishing gear and ensuring better security guarantees from Puntland State Authorities.
- Small scale trading: provision of micro-credit and training for traders willing to engage in petty trade. Traders can also be encouraged to provide links in the supply chain of fishery products into the mainland of Puntland
- Artisanal Crafts: these include metalwork, mechanical engineering (motor vehicle repairs) electrical works, carpentry and tailoring. Incidentally, the Garowe Technical Vocational Institute is willing to enter into cooperation with NGOs over provision of training for these crafts.
- Livestock production: provision of livestock (restocking programmes) and extension services to seasonal fishermen who engage in pastoralism during fishing off-season.

### 7.5   Role of Media in Counter Piracy Strategy

The consultant later inserted a question for key informant interviews on the role of media in a proposed counter piracy strategy. A significant majority of those interviewed saw the media playing a crucial and prominent role in propagating anti-piracy messages. However, a significant majority also questioned the viability of media due to its poor penetration in rural Puntland. The prospect of using the local influential radios such as Somali Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), the British Broadcasting

Corporation (BBC) Somali service and the VOA Somali branch in reaching rural areas was however underscored. The media in urban areas would also be useful in targeting the youth in these areas. To be effective, the media should collaborate with religious leaders and organize talk shows where preachers are allowed to talk directly to the youth over Islamic stand on piracy. This is borne out of the fact that the survey results indicate that many think that piracy is against Islamic teachings.
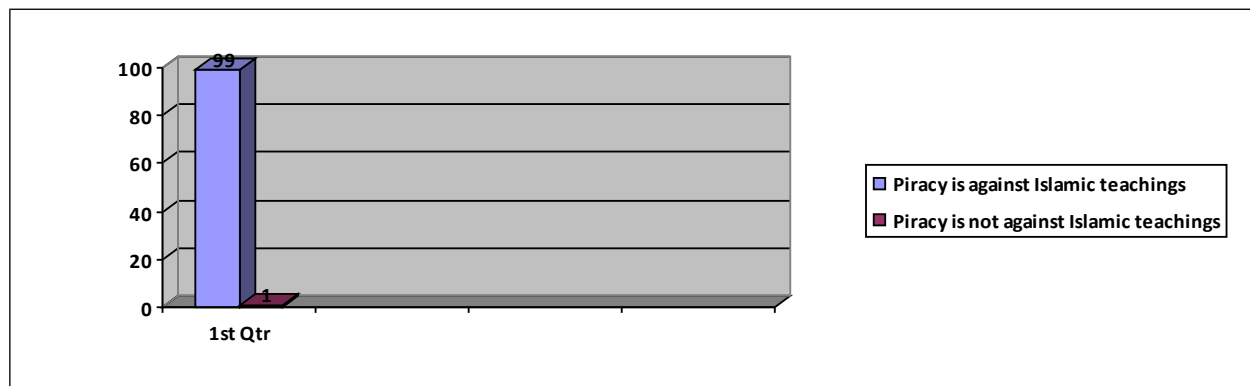


Fig 5: Piracy & Islam

A small minority (5%) supported the statement that "Piracy is a way for Somalis to protect their coast against illegal fishing and dumping of toxic waste by foreigners and pirates are the defenders of Somalia". They attributed this to the sighting of many foreign-flagged ships that were trawling within Somalia waters, ostensibly without any authorization. The majority (95%) of respondents who did not support the statement took the view that some of the pirates may have started off as patriots but later were consumed by selfish interest.
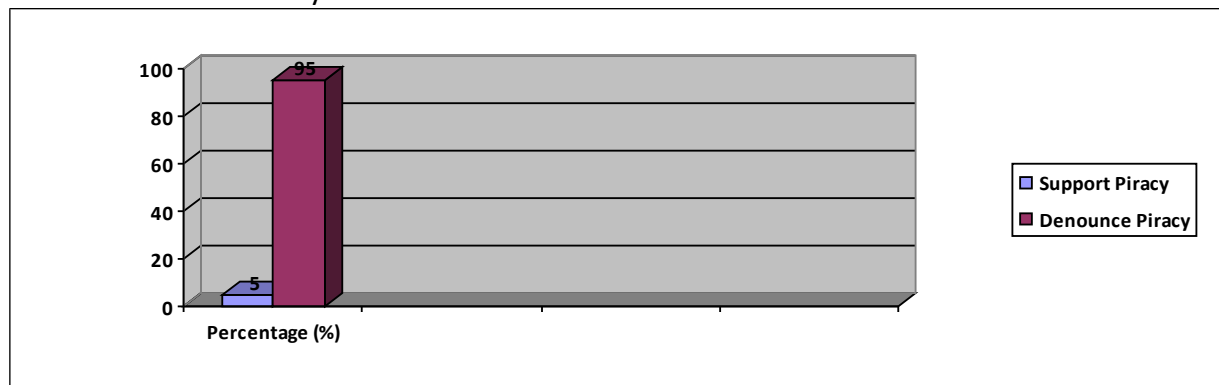


Fig 6: Level of community support for piracy activities

The above findings should inform the communication strategy by emphasizing the selfish interest that motivates piracy. The strategy should educate the public on available local and national mechanisms for securing Somalia's territorial waters and the role which the public can play in realizing this end.

### 7.6    Potential Role of Religious Leaders in Dissuading Youth from Engaging in Piracy

Majority of the respondents (86%) took the view that religious leaders are capable of persuading the youth to refrain from engaging in piracy. They attribute this to the fact that majority of Somalis are Muslims and that Imams are highly respected. The fact that also Islamic teachings forbid piracy gives

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the Imams the moral ground to command youths from engaging in piracy. However, a minority (13%) took the view that youths will tend to ignore Imams because of the allure of piracy proceeds.
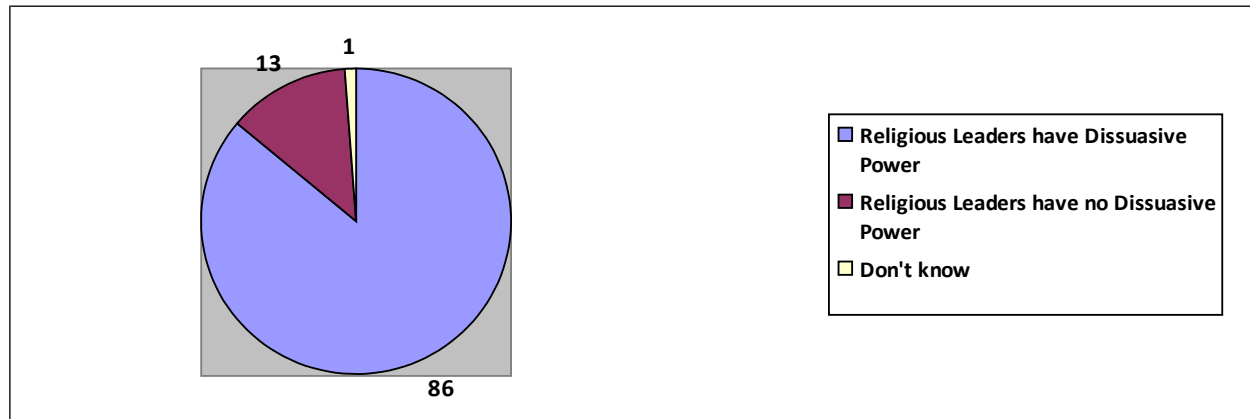


Fig 7: Power of Religious Leaders over pirates

### 7.7    Willingness of Youth to Abandon Piracy

Majority of the Respondents (87%) believe that the youth can abandon or refrain from piracy if offered adequate incentives. The reasons in support of this view were largely motivated by the promise of safe employment opportunities and poverty eradication schemes as more attractive than acts of piracy that are considered as dangerous (especially with the increased naval patrols by foreign forces). The opposing minority (10%) took the view that piracy provides easy money to desperate youth who will are likely to be more reluctant in giving up the lifestyle. However, 3% did not take any position on the matter.



Fig 8: Level of Willingness of youth in abandoning piracy activities

### 7.8    Risk Assessment

Through key informant interviews and FGDs, the following risks were identified:
- Backlash from the key movers of piracy activities in Puntland: the figures behind piracy may decide to target religious leaders and CSO officials for elimination or intimidation.
- Increased naval partrols may lead to arms build-up by pirates. These arms may be used against innocent citizens by the pirates thus increasing insecurity on the mainland.
- Increased naval patrols may also increase fear among genuine fishermen on concerns over

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their safety in the high seas thus discouraging them from going about with their livelihood activities. This will increase the level of poverty and fuel further the prevalence of piracy.

- In the absence of clear policing counter piracy efforts by the Puntland authorities, the public might resort to extra-judicial actions against pirates due to the evident low popularity of the illegal activity and perpetrators. This might escalate into a full-blown conflict with between pirates and locals.
- Pirate-backers may decide to hijack the weak Puntland State Authority, if they perceive it as a serious threat to piracy activities. This may entail acts of extortion, intimidation and bribery targeting the State Officials. Piracy money may also be used for political corruption i.e. financing corrupt politicians to win power and therefore secure the interests of pirates.
- Existing security travel advisories against international NGOs in coastal parts of Puntland is likely to dissuade INGOs from taking part in counter-piracy initiatives. Due to these advisories INGOs like Oxfam and Muslim Aid pulled out of the coastal regions in 2007.

The above-mentioned risks are critical to the success of any anti- or counter- piracy initiative. The respondents suggested the following as possible mitigation strategies:

- Undertake massive community mobilization and sensitization of the role of religious leaders in the counter-piracy initiative. The best security for the religious leaders can only be guaranteed by a vigiliant community. It is therefore important for the community to embrace the role of the religious leaders in order to provide them with the necessary security.
- Community-level intelligence systems should be developed to monitor arms' build-up by pirates. Communities should share widely this information especially with Puntland State Authorities in order to ensure better levels of preparedness for attacks by pirates.
- Naval patrol initiatives by western powers should be supplemented with on-shore counter piracy activities such as provision of livelihoods for the youth in order to dissuade them from engaging in the activity. For now, this is yet to be seen.
- The western governments should be lobbied to support Puntand State Authorities in establishing a fully-fledged anti-piracy agency.
- The Puntland State Authroities should be lobbied to establish courts along the coastlines to try pirates.
- Civil society should establish mechanisms of monitoring movement of piracy money to ensure that it is not used to hijack the state.
- INGOs could form partnerships with local NGOs to undertake counter piracy programs. Local NGOs have greater freedom and security guarantees to operate in areas where travel advisories against INGOs are still active.

8. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, it is apparent that the target areas are infested with pirates, with Eyl forming the epicenter of piracy activities. It is therefore accurate to say that counter-piracy interventions focus more on the coastal towns within Eyl district. The youth are most likely to join piracy out of desperation, poverty and high unemployment rates. This category is used as foot

soldiers by more wealthy masterminds who live outside the coastal areas and are highly influential.

The negative effects of piracy far outweigh the positives. For this reason, the low levels of public approval of piracy and pirates are understandable. Many also believe that piracy is not beneficial to the Puntlanders. The anti-piracy efforts can therefore ride on this public discontent to mobilize communities against the illegal activity.

The initiative of religious leaders to dissuade youths from engaging in piracy deserve external support. Puntland also requires support to start-up the proposed anti-piracy agency. However, absence of coordination mechanism for INGOs engaged in livelihood support programs is likely to deny opportunity for scaling up of ongoing initiatives into a viable counter piracy action.

The study presents strong support for alternative livelihood options as a strategy to dissuade youth from engaging in piracy.

The study identifies the media as a critical player in a communication strategy to counter piracy. There is a potential for twinning the religious leaders' initiative with the media for wider public appeal and reach. The religious leaders have authority over Puntlanders and the willingness of the youth to abandon the piracy threat are remarkable factors that can be used as a basis for establishing a counter piracy initiative.

However, the initiative is likely to be plagued by risks of security and governance nature. These risks need to be clearly anticipated and corresponding mitigation measures integrated into the design of the project intervention.

Having assessed the and analyzed our findings we have come to the following recommendations:-

- ✘ The youth in and around Eyl district should be the primary targets of this initiative

- ✘ The negative impacts of piracy should be disseminated with a view to building public support for a counter piracy measures.

- ✘ A coordination mechanism bringing together INGOs involved in livelihood support should be established and positioned to link up with initiatives by religious leaders and Puntland State Authorities.

- ✘ The widespread antipathy by the local community against pirates and piracy can provide a solid basis for short and medium term efforts to counter piracy in Puntland. In particular, a campaign can be initiated to tackle piracy through information and public education in a targeted intervention that uses available media and channels

- The SBC radio for the local network coverage areas and the VOA or BBC Somali Service should be approached to provide broadcasts to the otherwise unreachable rural populace.

- Religious leaders and institutions can provide a mechanism for dissuading youth from piracy. They have the respect and moral authority but their efforts so far has been episodic and inconsistent. There is a case to be made for a concerted and planned efforts to partner with these institutions in an intervention that will have as its core goal , the active reduction of number of youth involved in piracy

- There are limited opportunities available to youth in the coastal villages of Puntland. In any case most of them lack the skills, capital and tools to make a decent living. The villages are teeming with endemic poverty and piracy is often the only option for the unemployed youth. Many respondents expressed a willingness to pursue alternative avenues is these were available. We there recommend an intervention that will have as its goal the creation of alternative employment opportunities for youth in the coastal villages through skills transfer , provision of work tools and equipment, business skills training and start-up capital

- Prioritized alternative livelihood options for youths include:

  - Improvement of fishery through provision of fishing gear

  - Small scale business improvement through provision of micro credit and business training

  - Artisanal crafts' training and provision of capital

  - Livestock improvement programme for seasonal pastoralists/fishermen

- Puntland Authorities should provide better security guarantees for fishermen to ensure that fisheries provide sustainable alternative livelihoods.

- The information on risks and mitigation measures should be integrated as risks analysis framework into the design of the proposed counter piracy programme.

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# ANNEXES

## I. CASE STUDIES

### a. Testimony of Ahmed

Mr Ahmed, aged 19 years is one of the youth who abandoned piracy after being persuaded by a group of local Imams in Eyl, Puntland. Ahmed confesses that he joined pirates over a year ago after seeing his late elder brother bring home over $20,000/= worth of ransom payment. His brother had been engaging in the act for the last two years. His luck break came when they successfully hijacked a south Asian commercial liner off the coast of Puntland. After two months of negotiations, his brother's gang were paid $850,000/=. His elder brother was able to relocate his family to the town of Garowe, where he bought a house on the outskirts of the town and started a small business for his wife. Impressed by the exploits of his brother, Ahmed willingly joined the piracy gang last year though against the advice of his friends.

The gangs operate from their base in a village called Badey along the coastline of Eyl district. "Technically, we operated independently even though we our leader is answerable to a person called Boss whom we had never seen" said Ahmed. Boss is believed to reside in either Garowe or Bossasso, from where he communicates with the pirate leader using a satellite phone. "No one in our gang was allowed to listen to the conversations between our leader and the Boss" quips Ahmed, "But it did not bother us because we were all worried about getting our ransom payment".

After recruitment by his elder brother, Ahmed spent the first six months in training on how to handle guns and rocket launchers, how to ride a speed boat and a skiff and how to engage in hand-to-hand combat. After training, he spent time onshore, tending to guard duties in the gang's base. Occasionally he would be sent to buy fuel, groceries and other provisions for the pirates. Whenever he asked his brother when he would participate in a hijacking mission, he was always told to be patient. One day, his brother and part of the gang left by a speed boat in the middle of the night, after receiving a call that an unknown ship was headed near the coastline. When his brother failed to

return after six hours, they assumed that the gang had sighted the ship and successfully hijacked it. However, they were to learn later that the rough monsoon winds and tidal waves forced their boat to capsize, killing all those on board. No one was rescued. "I was sad that I had lost my brother" he said with a tone of regret, " But I sympathized more with his young wife and family of three".

For the next three months, the gang stayed onshore, waiting for new orders from the Boss. Frustrated by lack of money, the gang would occasionally drive 300Kms away from their base where they would lay ambush on vehicles and demand money. They would also raid petrol stations and make away with fuel. When finally the order to hijack a ship came, the gang leader chose a few of the pirates to do it. Ahmed was overlooked due to his inexperience. The gang managed to hijack a smaller Panamian ship and tugged it to the coastal waters of Eyl. The lengthy ransom negotiations began. Ahmed waited for the gang onshore as they negotiations went on. Eventually, the gang leader accepted $700,000/= ransom after consulting with Boss. When the money was delivered, the gang retreated to its hideout where they loot was shared. Ahmed only got $5,000/= due to his limited role in the whole exercise. He believes that the gang leader got 100,000/=, shared out 300,000/= among his crew of 25 and spirited the balance to the Boss. Soon, it came to the realization of Ahmed that the instant riches which young pirates were promised were not forthcoming. He also noticed that all the pirates who got their money spent it on Khat/Mirra and women. He also noticed that few of the pirates observed their religious obligations of praying as required.

On one of the Fridays he was sent to buy provisions, Ahmed visited the mosque near their village. He heard the local Imam preach against acts of piracy, condemning them as un-Islamic. He took some moment and reflected on his life and how his own brother had lost his life. After the prayers, he went to the Imam and confessed his actions. To avoid harsh retribution from the gang, he was given some money and escort back to his father's home. "Even though I am no longer in employment, I am happy with myself and I have found peace with Allah" says a calm Ahmed. "I would be happy to engage in a clean livelihood, such as fishing since now I know how to ride a boat and maneuver in rough seas" says Ahmed when asked about what he'd like to do for a living. "However, I do not have money to buy a boat and fishing gear. I would be happy if your organization could assist youth like us and help us stay away from the temptation of joining pirates because the proceeds of piracy benefit rich people

like Boss more than us" Ahmed emphatically pointed out.

### b.  Said Waberi- Village Elder from Eyl

Said believes that he is 55 years old. He is an elder of a fishing village in Eyl. He believes piracy started as a result of illegal exploitation of marine resources by foreign vessels. The local youth decided to hijack fishing vessels and demanded a form of tax to discourage the illegal practices. However, the youth were hijacked by rich people from Bossasso who now control the pirates.  "Piracy in our area is making it difficult for fishermen to venture out into deep sea for fear of being mistaken by naval patrol ships as pirates" he says mournfully "this will destroy our livelihood".

Said believes that the declining fortunes from fishing will encourage the youth to join pirates. "Without alternative livelihoods, our youth will not hesitate to join pirates, no matter what we tell them" he says.  He believes that piracy money is Haram and the activity is prohibited by Koran. He also thinks that religious leaders can play an important role in discouraging youth from joining piracy and converting those who have already joined piracy. "religious leaders should assist us otherwise we might lose a whole generation to these gangs of sea robbers" says Said with visible frustration.

### c.  Sadik Ali- Religious Leader

Sadik Ali is an Imam from a village called Qarhis, in Eyl district. He recently participated in preaching exercise meant to persuade youth not to engage in piracy. He believes that religious leaders have the moral authority to fight piracy. "These pirates started off as patriots protecting our sovereignty but now, they are a gang of thieves, stealing and killing for money in order to enrich themselves. They now threaten global marine security and pose a threat even to our own people" says Sadik.

He attributes poverty, lack of a strong government and poor education among the youth as key factors encouraging piracy in the area. "Piracy can be defeated if the government was to have a strong judiciary and if religious leaders could hold forums to debate and educate the youth on what

the Koran says about criminal acts such as piracy" he advises.          However, he acknowledges that preachers do not have enough resources to criss-cross the vast coastline, preaching to the youth. "We occasionally get some money from Somalis in the diasporas who do not want to see our area get a bad name, but this is not enough" laments Sadik. He also believes that the youth will have greater motivation to abandon piracy if offered alternative livelihoods.

*II.*      *Questionnaire*

*III.*      *Focus Group Discussion Checklist*

*IV.*      *Key Informant Interview Checklist*