



Yury Fedotov: Piracy on the high seas is "a specialised crime, but nonetheless it remains a serious crime" and is "at the core of the UNODC's new maritime crime programme"

UNODC

> **Comment:**

## UN broadens counter-piracy offensive

We aim to defeat piracy and crime by recognising how they operate at ground level, writes **Yury Fedotov**, executive director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime

Conventional counter-piracy activities are often focused on national navies pursuing pirate ships on the high seas, but other action is being taken to stop the pirates.

One key lesson from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC's) Counter-Piracy Programme (CPP) is that pirate attacks can be halted by promoting maritime law enforcement powers while also building capacity in basic maritime law enforcement processes.

Work on dry land is equally important to securing overall success: catching pirates means having the right laws, the right policies, and the right procedures in place. Such an approach is also governed by international law and operates in line with human rights.

Our recently launched East Africa and Indian Ocean Maritime Crime

Programme (MCP) does exactly this by expanding on our earlier and continuing CPP.

In following this path we are building closer connections with a wide range of UNODC expertise in other areas, including our Container Control Programme, which is co-managed with the World Customs Organization, and the new transnational organized crime at sea project.

This building of connectivity between our programmes acknowledges the interconnected and interdependent nature of crime, including piracy. In short, we are working to defeat piracy and crime by recognising how they operate at ground level.

This evolution has been carefully planned and benefits from a detailed evaluation of the successes achieved

under the CPP. Counter-piracy will continue to be at the core of the new MCP but we are now using our teams, networks, and expertise to assist states in the broader fight against maritime crime.

The MCP is also transferring knowledge gained from the CPP into other areas where nations have requested support against maritime crimes. Our first priority is to take the experience of the MCP to enhance our work in the Gulf of Guinea. This work has already begun, and UNODC will hold a major training, planning, and fact-finding workshop in the region at the end of this year.

Admittedly, piracy on the high seas is a specialised and serious crime. According to UNODC and the World Bank, pirates received up to

\$413M in ransoms between 2005 and 2012. That is an alarming figure, and, while attacks on shipping have decreased recently, piracy remains an issue of concern for the international community.

UNODC's experience, built over many years, is twofold: first, to help nations build capacity in their law enforcement activities; and second, to provide technical advice on aligning international and local legislation to successfully roll up the criminal networks and prosecute the criminals.

The move from the CPP to the MCP is part of our relationship with nations on piracy and crime issues and offers UNODC a welcome opportunity to learn from the past to help secure and protect the future. [▶](#)

## EU court lifts Iranian shipping sanctions

EU judged to lack evidence to maintain sanctions on Iranian shipping

The European Union's General Court, based in Luxembourg, has ruled that sanctions against Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and 17 other Iran-tied shipping companies should be annulled.

The court, the second-highest in Europe, ruled last week that the European Union had failed to provide sufficient evidence linking IRISL with Iranian nuclear

proliferation, so the evidence presented "does not justify the adoption and maintenance of restrictive measures".

IRISL legal representative Maryam Taher told Reuters the outcome was a "victory ... for the rule of law".

EU sanctions are intended to pressure Iran to curb the development of nuclear weapons, although Iran has said its development of nuclear facilities is entirely peaceful.

The Council of the European Union asserted that IRISL and other Iranian operators have been

involved in shipping military-related cargo, including goods proscribed by UN Security Council resolutions. IRISL was first sanctioned in 2008 by Washington, DC, which accused the group of aiding Iran's nuclear programme.

A two-month appeal period was initiated with yesterday's verdict to give EU members a chance to appeal the court's findings. Maja Kocijancic, speaking for the European Union's External Action Service, said the review process was already under way.

The 17 other shipping operators, whose application to annul was upheld by the

court, are Iranian-owned companies based in Iran, Europe, and Singapore. [▶](#)



Diemar Hasenpussen

IRISL could theoretically trade in Europe now, experts told Reuters