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## Piracy in Somalia and its Root Causes on Land

Michael Ashkenazi and Edward Ceska

**B**ICC's interest in the piracy problem started over a year ago, sparked by the relationship between SALW flows and piracy. The study is currently self-financed by BICC, and its findings have been, and are to be published in scholarly publications on the basis of data collected from public sources. The major thrust of the study is to understand what creates and sustains modern forms of piracy, most importantly (but not only) in Somalia.

For the last twenty years, Somalia has experienced weak governments and an intermittent civil war. Warlord, clan, and territorial struggles have become the norm. Tensions between clans in Somalia have resulted in inter-clan warfare and in humanitarian and food supply catastrophes. The recent self-appointed government does not have sufficient power to deal with any major problems. The semi-autonomous regions of Puntland and Somaliland have been left to their own devices. The endless fighting between clans has exacerbated the issue of food scarcity. Resources such as charcoal, *qat* (a mildly narcotic, non-addictive leaf chewed by men in the region), livestock, and water are fought over by different clans.

Absence of government control off the territorial waters of Somalia has been an open invitation for foreign vessels to pillage marine resources. Fishing boats from Spain, India, Thailand, Russia, Korea and other nations have plundered the rich marine resources on the Somali continental shelf. Other foreign registry ships dump toxic waste into the waters. Dumping toxins in Somali waters costs about eight Euros per ton rather than thousands per ton for proper waste disposal in Europe.

Initially, piracy off the Somali coast was only a threat in the Mogadishu port area, where trading ships and humanitarian aid were looted. Since

late 2007, piracy has progressively spread into the Gulf of Aden where larger and wealthier ships are in transit. Twenty thousand ships pass through the pirate-infested waters off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden annually. As result of pirate activities, insurance rates have rocketed by an order of magnitude (from US \$900/day to US \$9000/day). Consequently, a coalition of navies has been attempting, with limited success, to put an end to the pirates' activities.

Over the past decade, Somali piracy operations have grown in scope, daring, range, and sophistication. Pirates have expanded their operations beyond the coast of Somalia, ranging up to 400NM (700 km) from the Somali coast. There are recorded cases of the use of larger 'mother' ships, to extend the ranges of the small speedboats used for actual attacks. The sale of pirated goods has brought the pirates into contact with brokers and financiers in the Persian Gulf and Europe. Recently there have been reports of the use of sophisticated intelligence and maritime monitoring by pirate agents in London.

Piracy provides attractive financial rewards (the pirates receive some 10 percent of the gains, captains, boat owners and financiers some 40 percent), and gives many young Somali men an escape from the impoverished conditions that have caused severe distress throughout the country. Estimates of the sums made by Somali pirates in 2008 range from a low of US \$30 to 40 million to a high of US \$150 million. Given the absence of other sources of income in Somalia, even the lower estimate is a substantial income for individuals and for the local economy as a whole. This income is spread widely: pirates invest in lavish homes, cars, entertainment, and marriage.

### **Conclusion: Solutions and Future Expectations**

The principal cause for piracy in Somalia has been the lack of effective governance. The absence of proper governance has meant that (a) there is no effective way of stopping pirates on land; (b) Somalia's marine resources are open to plunder

and degradation by ships from developed nations; (c) in the absence of development, piracy is one of the few sources of foreign cash (and thus economic growth) in the country. Lack of development locally also means that potential recruits for piracy are readily available.

A number of recommendations arise from our study.

1. The effectiveness of the purely naval response to piracy off Somalia is doubtful.
2. For anti-piracy actions to be effective, they must be matched by efforts to help stabilize the political, economic, and humanitarian situation in the country, though how this is to be done in the face of Somali bellicosity remains a puzzle.
3. In practice, this means that the anti-piracy coalition must also ensure that the plundering of Somalia's seas be brought to halt, and the maritime area be kept in trust for the people of Somalia until its own government can take over responsibility.
4. In the global view, anti-piracy efforts will succeed only if a Somali government manages to establish a sustainable peace, in which development assistance can make headway, thus both enhancing the ability to track, arrest, and deter pirates on the one hand, and offer them legal employment and livelihoods on the other.

## Staff Spotlight



Ruth Vollmer

Ruth Vollmer joined BICC in May 2006 as a student Assistant in Transboundary Waters and Crisis Prevention. Her initial interest in this field of work was driven by the recognition of the importance of environmental services such as fresh water for human livelihoods and the wish to learn more about how they could become an inducement to cooperation. During the two-and-a-half years of working with BICC, her main areas of work changed to encompass the security aspects of human-environment interactions in general. After completing her studies in linguistics, political science and psychology at the University of Bonn in the Summer of 2008, she returned to BICC as research assistant, where she supported the organization of the international conference "Migration and Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Security-Migration Nexus II", which took place in February 2009. Currently, she is still working on migration with a focus on the nexus between migration and the environment as well as responses to large-scale migration especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Besides her work at BICC, Ruth has been spokesperson of the local group on asylum of amnesty international for two years and still actively supports the work of this group. Furthermore, she volunteered in different roles for BIMUN/SINUB e.V. (Bonn International Model United Nations/ Simulation Internationale des Nations Unies de Bonn) for example through organizing the conference on Migration, Trafficking and Proliferation: Cross-border Issues as Aspects of International Security in 2005. Since September 2008, Ruth holds a part-time position with UNU-EHS in Bonn, where she examines questions pertaining to the potential of water-related conflicts in southern Africa.

She likes reading, movies, cooking and travelling.

→ For more information please contact Ruth Vollmer at [vollmer@bicc.de](mailto:vollmer@bicc.de)

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An der Elisabethkirche 25, 53113 Bonn, Germany.

Responsible for this issue: Susanne Heinke, Heike Webb (editing & publishing management), Kerstin Botsch (assistance), Katharina Moraht (layout).  
Photo page 3: Jan Grebe

Phone: +49-228-911960  
Fax: +49-228-241215  
E-mail: [bicc@bicc.de](mailto:bicc@bicc.de)  
Internet: [www.bicc.de](http://www.bicc.de)

## Friedensgutachten 2009

On 26 and 27 May, the *Friedensgutachten 2009* (Annual State of Peace Report) was presented to the Bundestag Committees of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Economic Cooperation as well as in the *Bundespressekonferenz*. Minister Wieczorek-Zeul personally was given a copy signed by the editors. The editors also met with representatives of the *Kanzleramt*.

The *Friedensgutachten* was also presented during a public panel discussion with Andreas Heinemann-Grueder (BICC), Prof. Thomas Jaeger (University Cologne), Anthony Seaboyer (German Council on Foreign Relations - DGAP) and Ute Lange (Women In International Security - WIIS.de) in the *Haus der Geschichte*, Bonn. ISIS Europe and the Madariaga European Foundation invited the European Security Contact Group for a meeting in Brussels to launch the Peace Report 2009.

The *Friedensgutachten 2009* focuses on opportunities, avenues and limits of putting an end to wars and violent conflict. The latest wars in the Middle East, the Caucasus and in Africa force researchers to systematically determine the pre-conditions for an end of a war or conflict. In this year's *Friedensgutachten*, the authors look at the concepts, the histories and at urgent cases, such as the 'war against terror' and pirates off the Somali coast.

In addition to this, the *Friedensgutachten* addresses strategies and tools of civilian conflict management.

The annual *Friedensgutachten* is a joined publication of the five major German peace research institutions and is funded by the German Foundation for Peace Research (DSF).

This year's editors are Jochen Hippler, Christiane Froehlich, Margret Johannsen, Bruno Schoch, and Andreas Heinemann-Grueder.

→ For more information please contact  
Andreas Heinemann-Grueder at  
hg@bicc.de  
www.friedensgutachten.de

## Traditional Conflict Resolution in Three Societies

Between November 2008 and May 2009, BICC conducted a project (generously funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ) on traditional conflict resolution (TCR) in three societies. The project aim

was (a) to provide an empirically-based assessment of TCR; (b) to lay theoretical and empirical foundations for examining how TCR functions in cases of major inter-ethnic and intra-state conflicts; and (c) to examine the mutual interaction of TCR and development at the community level.

For this purpose, the research team carried out three field studies in Ghana, Uganda and Timor-Leste with the help of a newly developed scenario-based approach. This new tool allows gathering data on specific categories from groups of participants, but at the same time is flexible and open to any new information presented by the informants.



General outcomes of TCR in all our sites consist of: (a) publicly admitting guilt by the parties involved; (b) compensating for loss or damage; and (c) ritualizing the settlement and end of a conflict. Community harmony was found to be the most important objective in TCR. Communication was found to be a *sine qua non* for all TCR. Informants viewed the lack of communication to be the primary cause of conflict, and communicative activities featured prominently in conflict resolution.

A major overall goal of this study is to support development workers who find themselves caught up in local conflicts or having to provide amelioration for recent conflicts. Development and TCR were thus a key category in this study. The data shows that development can be a cause of conflict and the development worker may easily be perceived by the community as a party in the conflict and thus also in the TCR process.

→ For more information please contact  
Michael Ashkenazi at ashkenazi@bicc.de

## New BICC Publications

BICC Annual Report 2008/ 2009

BICC Jahresbericht 2008/ 2009

[http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/publications/jahresbericht/2009/bicc\\_annual\\_report\\_2008\\_2009.pdf](http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/publications/jahresbericht/2009/bicc_annual_report_2008_2009.pdf)

[http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/publications/jahresbericht/2009/bicc\\_jahresbericht\\_2008\\_2009.pdf](http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/publications/jahresbericht/2009/bicc_jahresbericht_2008_2009.pdf)

BICC Newsletter Diaspora – Migration – Peacebuilding.  
Nr. 3 / No 3

Feature: "Neues Forschungsprojekt zu umweltbedingter Migration".

[http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/publications/other/diaspora\\_nl/BICC\\_Diaspora\\_NL\\_3\\_deutsch.pdf](http://www.bicc.de/uploads/pdf/publications/other/diaspora_nl/BICC_Diaspora_NL_3_deutsch.pdf)

Franke, Volker C. and Andrea Warnecke. 2009. "Building Peace: an Inventory of UN Peace Missions since the End of the Cold War." *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 16/3 (June), pp. 407–436.

## BICC Notes

On 11 June, Lars Wirkus participated in the inaugural meeting of the new German Marshall Fund (GMF) initiative on Climate Change-induced Migration. As part of an international, transatlantic expert team, BICC will link discourse on migration flows with its consequences for sending and receiving regions connect issues of global environmental change, in particular climate change, with migration and finally develop policy responses.

For more information please contact

→ Lars Wirkus at [wirkus@bicc.de](mailto:wirkus@bicc.de)

Peter J. Croll accompanied Armin Laschet, Minister for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women and Integration of the Land North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) as member of his delegation on his journey to the NRW-partner country Ghana. The cities of Tamale, where the delegation met with Archbishop Philip Naameh, and Cape Coast, where they visited the only Cardinal in Ghana, Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson were stops on the Minister's itinerary. In Accra, the delegation met with President Prof. Atta Mills. On the Legon Campus, University of Ghana, Minister Laschet gave a talk on "Migration, Integration and Development in a Globalized World", and Peter Croll presented the work of BICC.

For more information please contact

→ Peter J. Croll at [croll@bicc.de](mailto:croll@bicc.de)

In the framework of the 2nd Bonn Conference for Development Policy, which took place from 27–28 August 2009 in Bonn, BICC presented its work together with 20 other organizations of development cooperation. The conference was hosted by the Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women and Integration of the Land North Rhine-Westphalia in cooperation with the City of Bonn, the German Development Institute (GDI), the KfW Development Bank and the Association of German Development Non-governmental Organisations (VENRO). The main topic was sub-national development cooperation. On 28 August, Peter Croll moderated the discussion in Forum V, entitled: "Migration and Development: The role of migrants in sub-national development cooperation".

For more information please contact

→ Peter J. Croll at [croll@bicc.de](mailto:croll@bicc.de)



From 6–23 July 2009, Dr. Ananda S. Millard and Nathalie Gendre spent three weeks in Colombia conducting interviews on the history and implementation of reintegration of ex-combatants in Colombia since 2002. These interviews will be used to compile a historical memory of the reinsertion, reincorporation and reintegration process in Colombia since 2002.

For more information please contact:

→ Ananda Millard at [millard@bicc.de](mailto:millard@bicc.de)

On 22 June 2009, BICC celebrated its 15th anniversary at the Wissenschaftszentrum Bonn. One of the first to congratulate was the Chair of BICC's Supervisory Board, Dr. Michael Stueckradt, State Secretary at the Ministry for Innovation, Science, Research and Technology of the Land North Rhine-Westphalia, the Mayor of Bonn, Baerbel Dieckmann, the Rector's Representative of Bonn University, Prof. Dr. Armin B. Cremers and Prof. Dr. Herbert Wulf, first Director of BICC.

For more information please contact

→ Susanne Heinke at [pr@bicc.de](mailto:pr@bicc.de)