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SRSG condemns continuing piracy scourge

Nairobi, 14 April 2009: The UN Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, has called piracy an “international scourge” which is damaging to ordinary Somalis, the region and the world.

“I strongly believe that concrete efforts, such as the international maritime presence off the Somali coast, should be increased to help marginalize and suppress piracy,” said Mr Ould-Abdallah.

“Without the maritime presence, the pandemic would have been far worse. Those contributing to the international presence are doing an excellent job, but they have a huge area to cover. The recent self defensive actions by the Governments of the US and France are sending a strong message to the pirates and, more importantly, to their backers who are exploiting the poverty and desperation of their young, unemployed compatriots.”

The SRSG said that today some 300 hostages and 17 vessels are being held by a small group who are only interested in maximizing their illegal profits. Therefore a military solution, while essential, should be complemented by credible development activity.

“To ensure stability in Somalia and the region, as well as the freedom of navigation, the financial backers of the pirates should be identified quickly and held accountable,” said Mr Ould-Abdallah.

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