



Gulf of Aden: pirates took a sanctioned tanker

Six armed men boarded the product tanker Sibü 1 in the Gulf of Aden and turned her toward Somalia. She was the thirteenth vessel attacked in the region this year; against five in all of 2025, and the sixth hijacked since April.

INCIDENT DETAILS • 5WH

Who Six armed individuals per UKMTO, described as Somali pirates. No state involvement alleged; the motive is ransom. The vessel is the Eritrea-flagged Sibü 1, formerly Seamull, managed from the UAE.

What The boarding and hijacking of a 32,200 dwt product tanker and her diversion toward Somalia. She was sanctioned by the US Treasury in December 2025 as part of Iran's shadow fleet.

Where The Gulf of Aden, about 136 nautical miles east of al-Mukalla, Hadramawt, Yemen.

When Thursday 20 Aug 2026. She entered the Somalia high risk area at 17:18 UTC on 19 Aug.

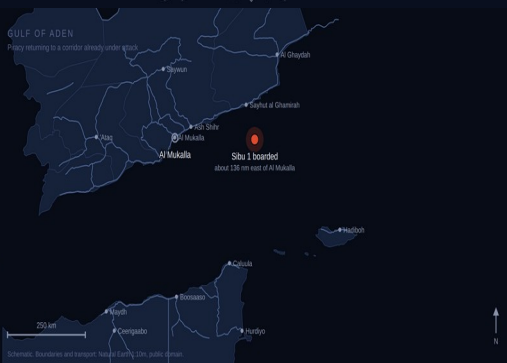
Why Ransom. The sixth vessel hijacked since 21 April, three days after eight armed men seized the Lutuf off Puntland.

How Armed boarding at sea and diversion toward Somalia. Her own transponder broadcast a distress message before she altered course.

IMPACT

- Human: the crew are held. Hostage cases at sea have historically run for months.
- Regional: the sharpest resurgence of Somali piracy in over a decade - thirteen attacks this year against five in all of 2025.
- Commercial: insurance and rerouting pressure on a corridor already degraded by missile attacks on shipping.
- Sanctions: a shadow-fleet tanker as a piracy victim, with a cargo whose ownership complicates any ransom.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS



2005-2013 Over 1,000 attacks, then suppressed

21 Apr 2026 The resurgence begins

11 Aug 2026 The Tihamah struck nearby

- 1 19 Aug: enters the Somalia high risk area
- 2 20 Aug: six armed men board her
- 3 Her transponder sends a distress message
- 4 Diverted toward the Puntland coast
- 5 The sixth hijacking since April

ASSESSMENT, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The sanctioned trade puts a vessel outside the arrangements that protect shipping.
- The resurgence is enabled by where the warships went - drawn to the Red Sea and Hormuz.
- Two unrelated threats now share one corridor, and no single decision mitigates both.
- A sanctioned Iranian-linked cargo in pirate hands is an untested situation.