Beat: News

U.S. jury sentences Somali pirates to life in prison for deadly hijacking

-, 03.08.2013, 05:14 Time

USPA News - A U.S. jury has sentenced three more Somali pirates to life in prison for their part in the 2011 hijacking of the American yacht S/V Quest, which resulted in the killings of four U.S. citizens who were on an "around-the-world" trip, prosecutors said on Friday. The men, identified as 25-year-old Ahmed Muse Salad, 20-year-old Abukar Osman Beyle and 29-year-old Shani Nurani Shiekh Abrar, were among 19 Somalis who, after several days of sailing at sea in search of a vessel to pirate and hold for ransom, attacked the 58-foot (17.6 meters) American yacht S/V Quest in February 2011 and held hostage its four passengers south of Oman.

The U.S military initially offered the pirates to take the vessel as long as they released the hostages unharmed, but the leaders of the group rejected the deal because they believed they would receive little money for just the boat. Abrar later fired a shot over the head of one of the hostages and instructed him to tell the U.S. Navy that, if they came any closer, all hostages would be killed. But on February 22, 2011, the Somali pirates unexpectedly fired a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) in the general direction of the USS Sterett, which was not damaged. The hostage-takers then used small arms such as AK-47 rifles to fire at the warship, and witnesses testified seeing Salad, Beyle and Abrar shooting the hostages. United States Navy SEALs were sent to board the yacht after the gun fire died down, but four of the hostage-takers were killed when a gunfight erupted between the Navy SEALs and a group of pirates that refused to surrender. Fifteen other Somalis, including a juvenile who has not been charged in the case, surrendered after some were seen throwing their AK-47 rifles into the water. Prosecutors had demanded the death penalty for Salad, Beyle and Abrar, but a jury recommended life sentences on Friday after two days of deliberations. The life sentences were accepted by Chief U.S. District Court Judge Rebecca Beach Smith, who will formally sentence the men in November. "Four Americans were taken hostage, terrorized, and then murdered," said Neil MacBride, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. "Life in prison is reserved for those who commit heinous crimes - and the jury today decided the execution of four innocent Americans on the high seas meets that high bar." The eleven other defendants in the case, including 34-year-old former Somali police officer Mohamud Hirs Issa, were previously convicted and also sentenced to life in prison. Salad, Beyle and Abrar were convicted of all 26 counts against them, which included piracy, conspiracy to commit kidnapping and hostage taking resulting in death. The two owners of the American yacht were on an "around-the-world" trip that began in mid-December 2004. "This is planned to be an eight or ten year voyage," the website of the couple, Scott Underwood Adam and Jean Savage Adam, explained in February 2011. Their friends Phyllis Patricia Macay and Robert Campbell Riggle were the other victims. "Scott Adam, Jean Adam, Phyllis Macay, and Robert Riggle lost their lives, and their families lost their loved ones," MacBride said on Friday. "Nothing can make this right; nothing can make their families whole again - but we hope today`s verdict and sentences will bring some closure to their nightmare that began two years ago on the Indian Ocean." Royce Curtin, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI`s Field Office in Norfolk, Virginia, said the case exemplifies the "ongoing, outstanding cooperation" between federal law enforcement and federal prosecutors. "Today`s sentencings should send a clear message to anyone committing acts of criminal violence against American citizens at sea that they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," he said.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1322/us-jury-sentences-somali-pirates-to-life-in-prison-for-deadly-hijacking.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement):

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report.

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com