# U.S. Navy Rescues Mariners Who Set Fire to Vessel Smuggling Drugs



Sailors aboard the coastal patrol ship USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) extinguish a fire aboard a fishing vessel in the Gulf of Oman, Oct. 29, 2022. The vessel, found to be smuggling illicit cargo, was set on fire by the fishing vessel's crew as U.S. forces approached. *U.S. NAVY*

MANAMA, Bahrain – U.S. Navy personnel rescued eight civilian mariners in the Gulf of Oman, Oct. 29, after they set their fishing vessel on fire prior to being boarded, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said in an Oct. 30 release..

U.S. Navy patrol coastal ship USS Sirocco (PC 6) was conducting a counter-smuggling patrol in international waters when the mariners set their fishing vessel ablaze. Sailors

from Sirocco rescued the mariners from the water and provided medical aide as USS Chinook (PC 9) and USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) extinguished the fire on the vessel.

“This was a superb effort by all of our crews,” said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. “I couldn’t be prouder of everyone involved in saving lives while carrying out our mission to disrupt destabilizing maritime activity.”

The mariners, who identified themselves as Iranian and Pakistani, admitted to smuggling hashish and methamphetamines. U.S. naval forces recovered 560 kilograms of hashish worth an estimated $1 million, about one-third of the total shipment. The remaining drugs were destroyed in the fire.

After the mariners received immediate medical care, all were transferred to a regional nation for additional treatment and repatriation. The fishing vessel, which sustained significant damage during the fire, sank.

The rescue comes three days after U.S. Navy personnel rescued three civilian mariners in the Gulf of Aden, Oct. 26, after their small motorboat caught fire while transiting international waters.

Guided-missile destroyer USS Nitze (DDG 94) and patrol coastal ship USS Monsoon (PC 4) responded after observing the mariners in distress and immediately rendered assistance. Sailors safely rescued the civilian mariners before their burning vessel sank approximately 50 miles off the coast of Yemen.

The U.S. 5th Fleet operating area includes 21 countries, the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb and Suez Canal.