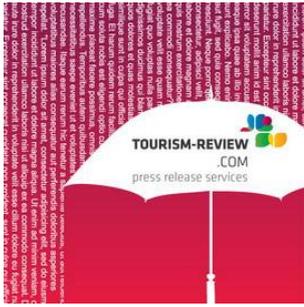


# Seychelles and USA Sign Piracy Agreement



VICTORIA, Mahé - The government of Seychelles has signed a Transfer of Suspected Pirates Agreement with the United States of America at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, today - July 14, as part of Seychelles' regional leadership in the fight against piracy.

**The memorandum of understanding (MOU) concerning the conditions of transfer of suspected pirates and seized property in the Western Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden, and the Red Sea is a result of ongoing cooperation between the two governments to ensure regional security** and was signed by Minister for Home Affairs, Environment, and Transport and chairman of the High Level Committee on Piracy, Mr. Joel Morgan, and the US Ambassador to Seychelles, HE Mrs. Mary Jo Wills.

"Piracy is a scourge. It is a challenge that cannot be addressed without cooperation in the region and indeed in the international community. We believe that countries who are being victimized by piracy should prosecute them and in the case that they don't prosecute them we are very grateful to countries like Seychelles and Kenya who take upon themselves the responsibility to prosecute pirates. We look forward to ongoing cooperation with the government of Seychelles on maritime security," said Ambassador Wills.

Minister Morgan explained that this MOU was the valuable culmination of many months of work and that it was evidence of the excellent cooperation between Seychelles and the United States of America on combating piracy, as well as strengthening broader maritime security.

"The ability to prosecute pirates and to make them pay for the crimes they commit on the high seas... and specifically against the economic interests of the citizens of Seychelles is something that we have all along been very active in promoting. We have always taken a very proactive role in pushing forward the agenda in combating piracy, not only in our interest, but also in the interest of stability in the whole region," said Minister Morgan.

Minister Morgan went on to explain that **Seychelles' leadership on the prosecution of suspected pirates does not mean that Seychelles will permanently bear the burden of the convicted prisoners but that mechanisms were in place to eventually repatriate the said pirates to their home country.**

The minister added that the recently-concluded Symposium on Maritime Security called for an enhancement of the regional approach against piracy, and that the signing of this agreement was one of many similar initiatives being discussed with countries such as Mauritius, Kenya, and Tanzania.

Date: 2010-07-15

Article link:

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