

## Somalia Cracks Down on Al-Shabab Pirates

Contributed by Tom McGregor  
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The Somali army has launched a crackdown on al-Shabab Muslim militants and pirates, causing them to lose control of the Port of Merca.

The BBC News reports that, "Somali pro-government forces say they have taken control of the port of Merca from al-Shabab militants. The port is some 45 miles south of Mogadishu, which the Islamists were forced to leave last year."

A spokesman for the African Union Mission said, "there was some fighting, but not so heavy." He added that most al-Shabab pirates had already departed from the port. The military campaign occurred a week after a new parliament had been sworn in.

According to the BBC, "Merca is the third largest port in southern Somalia and the African Union says its seizure will help in the operation to take Kismayo — the biggest town still in al-Shabab's hands."

The new group of MPs is expected to elect a president in the upcoming weeks, as part of a UN process intended to halt two decades of anarchy in the country.

To read the entire article from the BBC News, link here: [Tmcgregordallas@yahoo.com](mailto:Tmcgregordallas@yahoo.com)