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## Britons throw deck chairs at pirates attempting to board Pensioners on cruise fight off Somali pirates



No-one was injured in the incident, which came amid a surge in piracy (File)

LONDON (AFP)

Feisty pensioners from Britain used deck chairs to fight off Somali pirates who tried to hijack their cruise ship on the Indian Ocean, passengers and the vessel's owners said Friday.

They sprang into action when pirates tried to board the MSC Melody off the Seychelles on April 25.

"Some passengers saw the pirates approaching and sounded the alarm. But the security guard had seen them already. The passengers were taken to their cabins, with lights off," Sarah Longbottom of MSC Cruises told AFP.

"Mr. and Mrs. Rowlands were on the deck. Beryl Rowlands threw deck chairs at them," she said, adding that the ship had about 1,200 passengers and 520 crew members on board.

No-one was injured in the incident, which came amid a surge in piracy off the coast of Somalia where ransom-seeking pirates attacked more than 120 ships in 2008 and another 114 so far this year.

The owner of MSC Cruises, Gianluigi Aponte, praised the way the ship's crew and passengers dealt with the attack. "We are very proud that our crew proved to be able to promptly tackle the emergency," he said in a statement.

"At the moment of the attack, the ship was 620 nautical miles from the Somalian coast, in an area that is not considered dangerous, and 180 nautical miles from Seychelles."