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MEDIA RELEASE

As world piracy hits new high, more ships are escaping Somali pirates, says IMB report

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Piracy on the world's seas has risen to record levels, with Somali pirates behind 56% of the 352 attacks reported this year, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Maritime Bureau (IMB) revealed today in its latest global piracy report. Meanwhile, more Somali hijack attempts are being thwarted by strengthened anti-piracy measures.

"Figures for piracy and armed robbery at sea in the past nine months are higher than we've ever recorded in the same period of any past year," said Pottengal Mukundan, Director of IMB, whose Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) has monitored piracy worldwide since 1991.

Demanding millions of dollars in ransom for captured ships and their crews, Somali pirates are intensifying operations not just off their own coastline, but further afield in the Red Sea – particularly during the monsoon season in the wider Indian Ocean. With unprecedented boldness, this August pirates also boarded and hijacked a chemical tanker at anchor in an Omani port, under the protection of coast state security.

But although Somali pirates are initiating more attacks – 199 this year, up from 126 for the first nine months of 2010 – they are managing to hijack fewer vessels. Only 24 vessels were hijacked this year compared with 35 for the same period in 2010. Hijackings were successful in just 12% of all attempts this year, down from 28% in 2011.

Naval action

IMB credits this reduction in hijackings to policing and interventions by international naval forces, correct application of the industry's latest *Best Management Practice* – including the careful consideration of the crews' retreat to a 'citadel' – and other onboard security measures.

"Somali pirates are finding it harder to hijack ships and get the ransom they ask for. The navies deserve to be complimented on their excellent work: they are a vital force in deterring and disrupting pirate activity," said Captain Mukundan. "The number of anti-piracy naval units must be maintained or increased."

Human cost

So far this year, pirates have taken 625 people hostage worldwide. They have killed eight people and injured 41. Pirates are often heavily armed, using automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades.

Benin a new hotspot

The West African coast off Benin is seeing a surge in violent piracy, with 19 attacks leading to eight tanker hijackings this year, up from zero incidents in 2010. A pattern has emerged where armed pirates board and hijack the ship – sometimes injuring crew – then force the Masters to sail to an unknown location where they steal the ship's properties and cargo, and let the vessel free.

In response, Benin has begun joint naval patrols with neighbouring Nigeria, another piracy hot spot.



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Captain Mukundan said: “Cooperation between the Nigeria and Benin navies to curb piracy is a positive step. However the real deterrent will be the capture and punishment of these criminals under law.”

Asia improves

Piracy and armed robberies in Asian waters, including the Indian subcontinent, are down from 106 in the first three quarters of 2010 to 87 in the same period this year.

The IMB Piracy Reporting Centre is the world’s only office to receive reports of pirate attacks 24-hours-a-day from across the globe. IMB strongly urges all shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted and suspected piracy and armed robbery incidents to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre. This first step in the response chain is vital to ensuring that adequate resources are allocated by authorities to tackle piracy. Transparent statistics from an independent, non-political, international organization can act as a catalyst to achieve this goal.

IMB offers the latest piracy reports free of charge. To request a PDF version of the report by email, please visit: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/requestreport>

Latest attacks may also be viewed on the IMB Live Piracy Map at: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/livepiracymap>

For further information please contact

Captain Pottengal Mukundan
IMB Director
Tel: +44 20 7423 6960
Email: pmukundan@icc-ccs.org

About the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

The International Chamber of Commerce is the largest, most representative business organization in the world. Its hundreds of thousands of member companies in over 120 countries have interests spanning every sector of private enterprise.

A world network of national committees keeps the ICC International Secretariat in Paris informed about national and regional business priorities. More than 2,000 experts drawn from ICC’s member companies feed their knowledge and experience into crafting the ICC stance on specific business issues.

The United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the G20 and many other intergovernmental bodies, both international and regional, are kept in touch with the views of international business through ICC.

For more information please visit: www.iccwbo.org

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38 Cours Albert 1er, 75008 Paris, France
Tel +33 (0)1 49 53 28 28 Fax +33 (0)1 49 53 29 42
E-mail icc@iccwbo.org Website www.iccwbo.org