



**Thousands of seafarers** have been subjected to gunfire, beatings, confinement, and in some cases torture, in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. In spite of the violent nature of these crimes, the human cost of piracy is underreported and misunderstood by the public. The Oceans Beyond Piracy Working Group, deeply concerned with reports of escalating violence against seafarers and a lack of public concern, called for a study into this subject—the **Human Cost of Somali Piracy**.

## THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE AT SEA (2010 NUMBERS)

**SEAFARERS ATTACKED**  
**4,185**

**CITADEL SURVIVORS**  
**342**

**SEAFARERS HELD HOSTAGE**  
**1,090**

**SEAFARERS USED AS HUMAN SHIELDS**  
**516**

### SEAFARERS ATTACKED IN 2010: 4,185

Numerous ships and crews have suffered attacks, some multiple times. Increasingly, pirates are not intimidated by armed security guards.

“The pirate action group (PAG) fired RPG’s and other automatic weapons at the Tanker and attempted to board her... their armed security team engaged in a firefight that eventually led the PAG to break off their attack. Three crew members were injured by pirate gun fire, one seriously and the vessel sustained damage from the RPG’s and automatic gun fire.”

“UAE Tanker Fought Off Pirates in a Severe Gunfight, 3 Crew Wounded,” *Sea News Turkey*, March 23, 2011, <http://www.seanews.com.tr/article/PIRACY/57379/Al-Nouf-Somalia-Pirates/>.



MT AL NOUF. CREDIT: TRADEWINDS



CITADEL SURVIVORS POSE ONBOARD THE MV ARILAH-I AFTER RELEASE. CREDIT: EMIRATES NEWS AGENCY (WAM)

### SEAFARERS THAT SURVIVED IN CITADELS IN 2010: 342

Seafarers have endured hours or days of persistent attacks while sheltering in ships’ citadels (fortified safe rooms). There have been reports that pirates have fired RPGs at citadel doors at close range, used plastic explosives, and even set fire to three ships while terrified crews huddled below decks.

“They started fires, they burned ropes, and they put burning wood on the fans that were bringing in air. They wanted to suffocate us; they wanted to murder us and take control of the ship and take it. They went crazy.”

“Ship’s Crew Describe 30-hour Ordeal in Pirate Hijack Seize,” *United Filipino Seafarers*, April 6, 2011, <http://www.ufs.ph/2011-12/node/196>.

### SEAFARERS HELD HOSTAGE IN 2010: 1,090

Many hostages are held for months without proper nutrition, access to medical care, or interaction with their families. This is reported to have led to the deaths of some hostages, both by suicide and from malnutrition.

“Diseases have appeared among crew members, some have hemorrhoids, one has lost his eyesight and another has serious stomach problems... The water we have is unclean and we have only one meal a day, boiled rice, that’s it. The crew is suffering physically and mentally.”

“Piracy’s 600 Hostages are the ‘Wretched of the Seas,’” *Neptune Maritime Security*, December 17, 2010, <http://neptunemaritimemsecurity.posterous.com/?tag=mvicebergi>.



HOSTAGES HELD ON BOARD MV ICEBERG I. CREDIT: CNN/IBN



FV GOLDEN WAVE 305 CAPTAIN KIM DAE-GEUN. CREDIT: SOMALIA REPORT

### SEAFARERS USED AS HUMAN SHIELDS IN 2010: 516

The crews of some captured ships are forced to continue to operate these ships as the pirates use them, as “motherships,” to capture others. Even more terrifying, some crewmembers are used as human shields in attacks on other vessels.

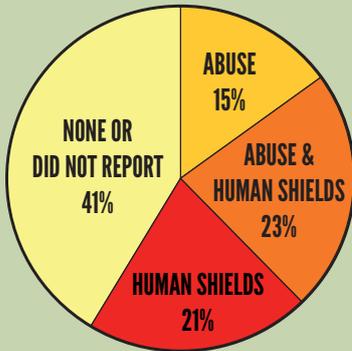
“Steering the boat to capture other innocent vessels was really more painful than death because I myself was experiencing hell under the pirates. But I had no choice because they threatened to kill me instantly if I didn’t do what I was told.”

Mwangura, Andrew, “Pirated Golden Wave 305 Arrives in Kenya,” *SomaliaReport*, February 15, 2011, [http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/106/Pirated\\_Golden\\_Wave\\_305\\_Arrives\\_in\\_Kenya:PHPSESSID=7ed4e31e3e049732ead394908f1561a4](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/106/Pirated_Golden_Wave_305_Arrives_in_Kenya:PHPSESSID=7ed4e31e3e049732ead394908f1561a4).



## ARE PIRATES TORTURING SEAFARERS?

### MISTREATMENT OF HOSTAGES BY SOMALI PIRATES (2010 NUMBERS)



There is **no systematic reporting** on how seafarers are treated while in captivity. However, press accounts indicate that up to 21 of the 53 vessels hijacked in 2010 reported as many as 488 seafarers suffered significant psychological or physical abuse. In the worst cases, torture has been alleged.

**“THERE ARE REGULAR MANIFESTATIONS OF TORTURE.”**

— Major General Buster Howes, OBE, Operation Commander EU NAVFOR

**“THE ATTACKS ARE MORE RUTHLESS, MORE VIOLENT, AND WIDER RANGING. HOSTAGES HAVE BEEN TORTURED AND USED AS HUMAN SHIELDS.”**

— Andrew J. Shapiro, US Assistant Secretary of State

## COMPARISON OF CRIME RATES ASHORE TO SOMALI PIRACY

The crimes at sea faced by seafarers can be compared to similar crimes on shore using United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) categorizations. The rates of kidnapping and major assault (where life is put at risk) are the highest in the world in the waters off the coast of Somalia. While the murder rate at sea was below the world median in 2010, it is expected to rise precipitously in 2011.

\*Determination for crime rates at sea: sample base is derived from 2010 numbers. Using an average yearly number of ships transits through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (30,000) and assuming an average crew of 20 for each vessel, this calculation yields an affected population of 600,000.

CRIME RATES AT SEA * IN WATERS OFF SOMALIA (PER 100,000)		HIGHEST NATIONAL CRIME RATES OF EQUIVALENT CRIME ASHORE (PER 100,000)	
Seafarers Subjected to Armed Attack on Vessels	697.5	Major Assault	576 (South Africa)
Seafarers Taken Hostage	181.7	Kidnapping	~15 (Turkey)
Seafarers Killed	1.3	Murder	~58 (Jamaica)

## THE COST TO SOMALIA

While there is little international sympathy for the hardcore criminal elements involved in piracy, our study found that piracy takes a heavy toll on perpetrators who make up the lowest rung of the piracy enterprise.

- According to the UNODC, between 200 and 300 pirates have not returned from their expeditions since the resurgence of piracy off the Horn of Africa.  
(SOURCE: Lang, Jack, Report of the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Issues Related to Piracy Off the Coast of Somalia, United Nations Security Council, January 24, 2011.)
- There is evidence of coercion and exploitation of Somali youth. For example, the Indian Navy captured a ship with 61 suspected pirates, 25 of whom were suspected to be under 15 years old. At least 4 were as young as 11.  
(SOURCE: Pandit, Rajat, "25 of 61 Pirates Arrested by Navy at Sea are Children Below 15 Years," The Times of India, March 17, 2011.)



CREDIT: THE HINDU

## PRIMARY FINDINGS

- Violence at sea is currently underreported; greater detail in the reporting of crime would allow seafarers to make better informed decisions regarding the risks of piracy. Stakeholders should consider designating a single point, such as the International Maritime Bureau, for the release of information related to violence at sea.
- Seafarers do not have adequate protection under the rule of law because piracy has been criminalized without creating effective enforcement institutions. Civil authority is fragmented in international waters; there is no lead agency designated to protect seafarers and coordinate rule of law efforts.
- The economic cost of piracy is now well-known. This study makes clear that the human cost is less known, and staggering.

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