

## Pirate Attacks in the Modern World

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There were 325 pirate attacks registered on the whole planet in 2004 and 445 attacks a year before. Experts explained the decline of cases with activation of patrolling of Malaysia and Indonesia coasts.

### **Pirate Attacks are Getting More Cruel**

Strait of Malacca between Indonesia and Malaysia is a long, narrow and very busy passage. It accounts for more than a quarter of the whole world's volume of cargo transportation and a quarter of all pirate attacks. Decisive actions are required from the governments of this region.

Then the cases of pirate attacks began to increase again. International Marine Bureau (IMB) reported that the number of ships attacked by pirates at blue water increased 10% in 2007 as compared with the previous year. 263 pirate attacks in 2007 were registered against 239 in 2006.

This is foremost due to incidents of pirate attacks near the shores of East central and Western Africa.

The number of pirate attacks by East Central Africa seashores grew from 10 to 31, by Western Africa - from 12 to 42. The all-time number of taken hostages was 154 people near Somali seashores.

IMB concludes that piracy became profitable business for the habitants of the poor African countries.

Other "hotbeds of tension" are west seashores of Asia and South China Sea. Reports about pirate attacks in the Middle East, East Africa, Indian waters, South America are more frequent lately.

Pirate attacks are accompanied by violence more frequently, specialists specify. Director of the IMB called most cases marine hooliganism. 64 people were killed or injured in 2007, while 17 people suffered in 2005.

International Marine Bureau warned especially the crews of ships which use routes along the seashores of Western Africa. They should be extremely cautious with fishing boats asking for help.

### **Pirates Attack Different Ships**

Pirates furrow the seas on the boats with powerful outboard motors and attack the first met decently looking ship as chance offers. Pirates board this ship by means of bamboo poles or ropes.

Small ships and yachts are also suffering from pirate attacks. 53-year-old Peter Blake, known yachtsman and Greenpeace activist, was killed in December, 2001, at Brazil seashores during a piratic attack.

Attacks of large merchant ships also happen, but rarer. They are the most attractive target for the pirates.

IMB director, Captain Mukundan, said: "These operations are enough difficult, three-four ships are involved in them. The attack is made out of them. Pirates are usually well prepared physically and quite merciless in achieving of their aims".

Responsibility for such attacks was laid on Indonesian rebels in the past, but they are not considered the main offenders now.

"Difficult pirate attacks are financed by the organized crime, with groupings which have enough resources, - Captain Pottengal Mukundan explains. - They have networks by which they sell captured goods, and places where they can hold stolen members of crew to ransom".

In a number of cases pirates killed crews with its full complement and took the management of ships upon themselves.

### **Pirates Attacked a Tanker**

In 1998 in the South China Sea they captured the Petro Ranger tanker and maid sailors to teach them how to steer the ship. Then they compelled one of hostages to write a new name on the side and changed the Singaporean flag to Honduranian one.

The tanker moved a little bit further from Chinese seashore, and the oil was dumped to another ship. And when the tanker was ready for over- registering (what would allow pirates to sell it for 16 million dollars), members of the crew succeeded to notify Chinese authorities.

### **Anti-pirate Laws**

Experts say that anti-pirate laws are good, the problem is that they are executed badly. A license to steer a ship costs not so much money in poor countries. Authorities in small ports quite often don't check registration documents as careful as they should. Stolen ships with new "passports" practically evaporate and become ships-ghosts.

Regional problems, politics and complicated relations often interfere in the business. As the director of IMB said, Indonesian and Malaysian border guards, for instance, do not operate in territorial waters of each other, even if they chase suspected. "It plays into the hands of pirates, - Captain Mukundan adds. - As the measures against pirates are not very effective, they feel safe, more and more sure about their forces. It's very important that the law machinery assume the measures to authenticate performers of pirate attacks and punish them by the law".

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