

# PIRACY & SECURITY

TradeWinds  
Business  
Report



DANGER ZONE: A warship of the EU Navfor fleet escorting a vessel in the Indian Ocean

Photo: EU Navfor

Defensive measures taken by shipowners and the impact of the combined naval force is beginning to take effect as Somalia-based pirates find it harder to capture vessels. Hijackings are down but the problem has not gone away as the number of attacks remains high and pirates are as well equipped as ever. There are also unresolved issues over the quality and regulation of private armed security guards who have been credited with helping shipping's strengthening resilience to the pirate problem. Correspondent **Adam Corbett** reports on the state of play on pages 18 to 24.



## Maritime Security Solutions

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## PIRACY & SECURITY



Shipping's fight against Somali piracy is gaining ground, at least for the time being, with all figures showing that hijackings are decreasing rapidly, more pirates are being prosecuted and ransom payments are set to plummet.

The widespread use of self-defence measures under the industry's Best Management Practice (BMP) guidelines, the establishment of a private armed-security force and the capture of pirates all appear to have played their part in reining in the threat.

This time last year, the number of ships and seafarers held hostage in Somalia peaked at 33 and 670, respectively.

As of this week, figures from counter-piracy naval force EU Navfor stand at just five ships and 155 hostages, including 51 who were held after the release of the ships they worked on.

Figures from counter-piracy organisation IMB suggest that pirates are less effective than they were in the past and ships are becoming better at repelling attacks.

In 2010, 219 attacks resulted in 49 hijackings, while last year 237 attacks resulted in 28 hijackings.

Figures for 2009 were similar to 2010, with 215 attacks and 47 hijackings. But last year's improvement is even more dramatic when compared to earlier years. In 2008, the success rate was at its highest with only 111 attacks resulting in 42 hijackings, while in 2007, there were 44 attacks claiming 12 ships.

International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) secretary-general Peter Hinchliffe acknowledges the decline but cautions against complacency,

as he has seen evidence that pirates are still more than capable.

"The military has been forecasting a big increase in attacks but we have not seen this. We have been told that the pirates' capability is bigger than before but has not been deployed yet and we have to ask why that is.

"The level of attempted attacks remains high and there is no cause for complacency. On the contrary, the need for compliance with BMP and for governments to at least maintain the current warship deployment levels are both essential if the failure rate of pirate attacks is to be driven down."

Hinchliffe credits the improved use of BMP, private security and a more effective naval response for the decline but insists the battle is not over. He says shipping should not rely too heavily on private security.

"Armed guards are necessary at the shipowners' discretion where the risk is assessed as high. But we reject the argument that they should become routine or an established part of operating in the Gulf of Aden or Indian Ocean. It is important not to institutionalise the use of armed guards," he stated.

The high hijacking rate in 2010 meant that 2011 was a record year for ransoms, according to figures collated for the UK Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC), with some \$135m paid out. This compared to \$80m in 2010, \$76m in 2009 and \$25m in 2008. But few expect the 2011 level to be maintained given the lower level of hijackings and ships held.

One notable development has been the recent decline in attacks since mid-2011 in the Indian Ocean, an area that once provided some of



SOMALILAND: A local coastguard returns from patrol. Right, ICS secretary-general Peter Hinchliffe says shipping should not rely too heavily on private security companies.

Photos: Scanpix and ICS



**MILITARY IN ACTION:** UK and US commandos during the raid of a hijacked Italian vessel off the coast of Somalia last October, capturing the pirates and freeing the ship's crew of 23.

Photo: Scanpix

the richest pickings for pirates. One reason put forward is that many of Somalia's most experienced pirates may have already been arrested or killed at sea.

The UK FAC report into piracy estimates that at any given time there are between 1,500 and 3,000 Somalian men, typically aged between 15 and 30 and from rural backgrounds, engaged in piracy.

But the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates there are currently 983 pirates held by 20 different states representing nearly one-third of the total number of pirates at sea.

And all nations are playing a part in prosecuting pirates. Despite being a failed state, Somalia has been putting hundreds through its judicial system. The UN figures show that of 290 suspected pirates

held in the Puntland region of the country, 240 have been successfully convicted. Somaliland has convicted 30, while 18 are held awaiting trial in the south-central region of the country.

Neighbouring countries are also chipping in. Yemen has prosecuted 220 pirates, while Kenya holds 143 and has so far convicted 50.

In the developed world, the US holds 28, convicting eight so far, and the Netherlands holds 29, five of whom have been convicted.

Yet these figures are a fraction of what could be achieved if the combined naval force was more proactive in arresting pirates, concluded the UK FAC report published this month.

"When pirates are observed with boats and guns, ladders and even hostages, it beggars belief that they cannot be prosecuted," it said.

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## PIRACY & SECURITY

# Navy disruptions 'effective' but piracy danger continues

EU Navfor, the primary allied navy force operating in the Gulf of Aden and Somalia, says the perception that piracy is on the retreat is "misleading".

Commander Harrie Harrison, spokesperson for the Northwood, UK-based operation, challenges the view that figures show the threat to shipping has decreased.

"The perceptions which have emanated mostly from public sources and in the media domain is that piracy off the coast of Somalia is decreasing and this has been highlighted by several media reports attesting to the reduction of successful pirating statistics in 2011, which is half of those in 2010. The concern we have at EU Navfor is that such perceptions and the conclusions being drawn from them are that the piracy threat is contracting. This perception is misleading and does not accurately reflect the continuing and existing threat," he said.

EU Navfor's figures show a startlingly high number of attacks with 151 recorded in 2011, up from 127 in 2010 and 117 in 2009.

And contradicting the view that the navy has tackled more pirates,

EU Navfor made only 27 disruptions to attacks last year, as compared with 64 in 2010.

But Commander Harrison says the recent disruptions have been effective. "This season the number of disruptions are having a bigger impact than previous years and compared to last year the majority of mothership dhows have been disrupted after the first attack."

Commander Harrison adds that although there is a view the navy has taken a more "robust" approach to piracy recently, he states that in principle it is still "policing" the area and cannot take direct action without due cause. "This is not a war situation," he pointed out.

He explains that the responsibility of the naval forces is to "disrupt piracy", explaining that spotting a dhow or motherships carrying 30-foot ladders, AK-47 rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) will be enough to intercept, disarm and relocate pirates. Although arrests of suspicious vessels can be made, sufficient evidence is required and that often means catching pirates in the act of hijacking.



COMMANDER HARRIE HARRISON

Photo: EU Navfor



INTERCEPTED: Crew members of a Spanish navy ship capture a group of suspected pirates in the Indian Ocean.

Photo: Scanpix

**Piracy attacks: The EU Navfor figures are lower than those compiled by counter-piracy organisation IMB (see page 18) because they do not include attacks thwarted by the Combined Maritime Forces or NATO naval forces, which also operate against piracy in the region.**

### PIRATED VESSELS

SOURCE: EU NAVFOR

EU Navfor's list of currently held vessels

Vessel	Flag	Pirated	Crew
Iceberg I	Panama	29 March 2010	22
Albedo	Malaysia	25 November 2010	23
Orna	Panama	20 December 2010	19
Liquid Velvet	Marshall Islands	30 October 2011	22
Enrico levoli	Italy	27 December 2011	18

## West Africa threat linked to Nigeria bunkering trade

Nigeria's unique brand of piracy continues to be a major threat to shipping and oil companies operating off the west coast of Africa.

In contrast to the hijack and ransom-driven piracy of Somalia, West African piracy has been focussed more directly on cargo theft and robbery. But it often involves extreme levels of violence against crew, while pirates have recently shifted their activity from Nigeria to Cotonou in Benin.

Denmark-based security company Risk Intelligence says there were 70 Nigerian-backed attacks against oil and maritime facilities last year, as compared with 58 in 2010. Some 30 oil tankers were attacked in 2011, mainly in Lagos, Lome, Cotonou and the Niger Delta.

Of the 30 tankers, 14 were hijacked and taken away to transfer

their cargo to smaller tankers.

Risk Intelligence director of consultancy Dirk Steffen says the theft is thought to be linked to Nigeria's bunkering industry.

"Evidence provided by ships' crews and the Nigerian Navy suggest that several of the receiving vessels were operating for Nigerian interests out of Lagos and the Niger Delta. Those appear to have close links to the long-standing illegal bunkering business in Nigeria," he said.

Counter-piracy organisation IMB reports that hijacking of ships for cargo theft in West Africa typically lasts for 10 days.

Figures from Bergen Risk Solutions (BRS), which collates detailed information on threats to shipping and along with Jepsen supplies it to vessels as a

live digital map, has similar figures registering 44 attacks off Nigeria but another 30 off neighbouring Benin.

BRS chief executive Arild Nodland says reporting of incidents in the region is low and BRS has had to use extensive sources to uncover attacks and threats.

IMB admits that it had been told of only 10 incidents, including two hijackings in the region, but was told of another 34 incidents by BRS.

BRS points out that increased patrols by the Benin and Nigerian navies have seen chemical and products-tanker hijackings fall in the last quarter of last year and that security is improving in the Bight of Benin.

BRS says one developing factor ships in the area should be wary of is the increased range of pirates. Although the majority of attacks are near shore, one was recorded on the 43,000-dwt bulker *Desert*

*Voyager* (built 1983), some 100 nautical miles south of Lagos in October.

There was also an armed-robbery attack on a chemical tanker some 135 nautical miles southwest of Lagos in the same month.

BRS also says that pirates are demonstrating a "low threshold for the use of violence" with guns and other weapons.

Another factor is that in most cases the attacks are driven by criminal organisations rather than by militant group the Movement for the Emancipation of the Nigerian Delta (Mend).

"Attacks on the Bight of Benin were mostly on chemical/oil products tankers in 2011. They fall into two categories: local banditry in port and, more significantly, the organised hijacking of ships for the purpose of stealing their cargoes — or the cash payments that sometimes result from the sale of these cargoes. Attacks are virtually all carried out during hours of darkness. The old rule of thumb that attacks seldom takes place more than 20 nautical miles from land is no longer valid. Many attacks in 2011 were carried out at distances up to 140 nautical miles off shore," BRS reported.

**Bergen Risk Solutions (BRS): One developing factor ships in the area should be wary of is the increased range of pirates.**

**Industry guidance on the use of force is key for the future development of professionalism in marine security.**

Adam Corbett

London

Calls are growing for the closer monitoring and regulation of armed guards operating in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean as there is no official record of their numbers in the region and the nature of engagements with pirates frequently go unreported.

The boom in the use of armed security guards was triggered by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) circular 1406 in May last year, which in effect legitimated the practice.

A number of "guesstimates" by security firms and industry bodies put the figure at between 2,000 and 3,000 security guards, roughly matching the number of active pirates.

A UK Foreign Affairs Select Committee (FAC) report into piracy suggests that between 15% and 25% of vessels operating in the region now have armed guards and that roughly 50% are former UK military personnel.

A typical one-way trip across the Indian Ocean to the Gulf of Aden involving three or four guards costs around \$50,000.

There are around 140 security firms bidding for business in the area. While there are many unfamiliar names, a so-called "Big Five" are emerging as leading players within a sector primed for consolidation.

The largest operators include the likes of Protection Vessels International, Secure West, Drum Cussak, MAST and Solace.

While the presence of armed guards in the region has soared over the past year, conflict between pirates and armed guards is

## Vetting aims

Shipowners are being encouraged to vet private security firms before employing them and two fresh initiatives are leading the way in trying to keep a check on standards in the industry.

There are up to 140 private security firms currently trying to break into the market and while there are some well-regarded organisations among them, there are others that have little experience in the marine business.

The increased monitoring has been prompted by problems encountered by some owners with the professionalism of some security firms and, as has been previously reported in TradeWinds, instances where money has been paid only for the guards not to turn up.

A recommendation for vetting in International Maritime Organisation (IMO) guidelines 1406 released last May has now seen owners take due diligence more seriously.

Oxfordshire-based specialist marine-intelligence company Gray Page has developed its own



WEST AFRICA: A ship of the Nigerian Navy, one of three taking part in a joint counter-piracy campaign by the Nigerian and Benin navies, patrols the sea off the coast of Cotonou.

Photo: Scanpix

# Calls for regulation of private security



**COUNTERMEASURE:** An Italian sailor watches a Hong Kong-flag vessel use fire hoses against a possible pirate attack in the Gulf of Aden.

Photo: Scanpix

routinely going unreported. There are uncorroborated accounts that exchanges have gone beyond warning shots and have led to pirate deaths.

Jim Mainstone, head of intelligence at specialist marine-intelligence company Gray Page, said: "There is some anecdotal evidence that a number of pirates have been killed and the circumstances under which they have been killed needs to be known."

Evidence provided by law firm Ince & Co to the FAC investigation suggests "there has undoubtedly been one incident where an armed security team has engaged a fishing boat with devastating effect".

Peter Cook, head of Security Association for the Maritime Industry (Sami), agrees that the exact

nature of engagements is often unknown. He believes the conduct of private security firms has been good but they need more guidance.

He said: "It is very difficult to deduce whether there is any fact at all in these stories. But as the recent FAC report points out, clear guidelines for the use of force are needed so everyone knows what can and cannot be done. That is important for everyone — it is important for the shipowner, the master, the crew and the security guards on the ship."

Leading operators in the region insist they have their own rules of engagement that are aimed at warding off attacks rather than engaging in a fire fight and that warning shots are almost always

more than sufficient to deter attackers.

Protection Vessels International head Dom Mee says his policy is to give pirates every opportunity to turn around. He adds that in the 36 confrontational situations, his personnel have been involved in none have resulted to injury to pirates, security guards or crew.

"We are very strict on that," he said. "We are there to prevent attacks rather than to shoot at pirates. Our own procedures are robust enough that we do not have to shoot at pirates."

The FAC report says the argument for the use of private securi-

ty guards is "compelling" but it wants rules on the use of force to be established. "Guidance on the use of force, particularly lethal force, is very limited and there is little to help a master make a judgement on when force can be used," it recommended.

Lack of incident reporting is also a problem because it means no investigation is carried out by the flag state.

The IMO's newly appointed head of piracy prevention, Hartmut Hesse, says masters may feel pressure not to report the use of armed guards or report exchanges with pirates when arms are involved. "We see cases where

ships will not declare that there are military personnel on board because they do not want to forgo navy protection," he said.

"We also see that ships that have been involved in an incident do not want to reveal the attack because they may be detained at the next port for investigation."

The personal safety of crew is another factor that has to be considered.

Dr McAfferty, head of terrorism at the UK Ministry of Defence, told the FAC that the increasing number of arms on ships ups the likelihood of an accident. "The more guns there are around, although there is a deterrent effect, you also have an increased opportunity or potential for the wrong people to get shot," he said.



**PETER COOK**

Photo: Sami

## to lay down and maintain standards for private security providers

vetting procedure, recently teaming up with the North of England protection-and-indemnity (P&I) club to help shipowners conduct due diligence on security firms.

The company has already put a number of firms through the process and Gray Page's James Wilkes says the results prove there is still progress to be made to meet the expected standards.

"Since we started this vetting process, we have become even more convinced of its necessity," he said.

"There are some security companies that are in a more parlous state than many people would assume and the gulf between the professionally well-run companies and the others is quite large," he added.

For many the problem is that as land-based security they have not been able to grasp the problems specific to the marine business, he believes. "One of the biggest issues is that they don't understand the clients they are serving," said Wilkes.

"Shipping is often about liability

and you have a shipowner with huge assets being serviced by small security firms with very few assets and they don't seem to understand that if things go wrong it is the shipowner who will cop it."

Gray Page's own vetting process draws on a variety of sources. These include the IMO, the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers (ICOC), the UK Department of Transport and the International Group of P&I clubs.

The key areas of investigation are insurance, financial probity, weapons and licensing, accountability, safety and compliance and indemnification against liability.

A company is vetted on an individual basis on request rather than a single inspection being taken as blanket approval.

"It's a question of whether at any given time a company meets

generally accepted standards," said Wilkes.

Despite the problems Gray Page has uncovered, it says it is in favour of armed security but it has a duty is to make an independent assessment and protect the interests of the shipowner client.

"We did not go into this to trip people up or for people to fail. We are in favour of shipowners using private security firms and a lot of security firms are only too pleased for this process to help them develop their business," he said.

Another approach has been adopted by Security Association for the Maritime Industry (Sami), which hopes to offer and accreditation system for its members.

Sami has already developed its own process and five of its 112 members have been put through their paces in a pilot scheme.



**JAMES WILKES**

Photo: Gray Page

From February, the process will be available to other members.

The idea is that the accreditation would be akin to a Corgi certification, which acts as a guarantee of the working standards of gas workers in the UK, or the Kitemark, which is a quality sign for products and services.

The criticism is that Sami as an association will have a natural bias to protect the interests of its members, from which it receives a fee, which could compromise its impartiality.

Sami head Peter Cook acknowledges the concern but says the association has addressed it by outsourcing the vetting to a third-party auditor, the National Security Inspectorate (NSI).

And he is realistic that accreditation might not fulfil all the shipowners needs.

"If shipowners want to do their own vetting as well, then that is fine," he said.

Sami's accreditation involves an initial due diligence, an audit of the headquarters and then uniquely a spot check to test that

what is being preached at the head office is applied on the ground.

Companies will pay to go through the auditing process and failure will mean no longer being entitled to membership of Sami.

Cook is confident the private security industry is moving in the right direction. "Because of the way things have been going, the demands placed on security firms are growing and standards are being raised all the time. By and large, the majority of reports we have seen on how security firms conduct themselves is good. But inevitably there are extremes at both ends of the industry," he said.

The key for the future development of professionalism in the marine security will be clearer guidelines on the rules of engagement.

"There needs to be guidance on what is possible and what is not. We need laws of engagement that are robust and clear and support each other well enough to stand up in a court of law," he said.

## PIRACY & SECURITY

# Logistics bases formed in Sri Lanka and Oman

Adam Corbett

London

A whole new logistics operation is emerging to support the movement of arms and men around the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden to match the ever-increasing demand for private security guards.

Arms stores have been set up at the main regional boarding points with the backing of supportive governments like Sri Lanka.

One of the main players in developing the arms-logistics business in the region is marine-services company GAC. It has seen its business take off over the past year with the number of security clients increasing from five to 50 in the past six months.

GAC group vice-president for the Indian subcontinent Lars Bergstrom tells TradeWinds that “demand for security services by shipowners and insurance companies has grown tremendously as the incidence of pirate attacks and hostage-taking increased. We expect to see continued growth in demand for the services of security companies in the region”.

The company has set up a network of agreements with governments on arms licensing and storage and also provides accommodation and travel services that allows security companies a door into the market chiefly through Oman and Sri Lanka.

Guards are taken from the airport to their accommodations and then to arms stores by GAC. Fi-

nally a fleet of 11 high-speed launches all fitted with emergency and recovery kits and meeting international safety codes brings the men to ships.

Three key hubs are now developing for the storage of arms. The Sri Lanka government has allowed naval bases in Galle to be employed as a storage point for arms and equipment. In Oman, the Security and Safety Services (SSS) LLC, a company affiliated to the Royal Oman Police, stores arms in Muscat and Salalah.

While the facilities are available to store arms, it is by no means an easy process for a security firm to get approval and checks are in place to make sure companies have the right credentials.

Bergstrom said: “In Sri Lanka, security companies may only use arms and equipment if they have secured the necessary licenses from the defence ministry and navy. Applying for such licenses is a lengthy process, involving thorough checks on the companies and personnel hired as guards.”

“In Oman, security companies must be registered and directly inform SSS whenever they have security equipment moving in and out of the country by sea or air.”

“Once all the necessary legal formalities are fulfilled, we do not encounter any problems,” he added.

The nature of the business means that GAC’s own workers also go through crisis-manage-



**LARS BERGSTROM:** GAC group vice-president for the Indian subcontinent

Photo: GAC

ment training and go through regular drills.

Galle is being used as a suitable location for the embarkation and disembarkation of guards for the main east-west route across the Indian Ocean.

Bergstrom said: “This is based on its strategic position at the southern tip of the island, halfway between Aden and Singapore, on the main east-west sea route across the Indian Ocean.”

He adds that for eastbound traffic from the Persian Gulf, Muscat is the main port in Oman for the embarkation and disembarkation of guards but Salalah in the south or Sohar, north of Muscat, are also used.

Dom Mee, head of leading security firm in the region Protection Vessels International (*see story below*), says some countries have been welcoming but others such as South Africa obstructive.

“Sri Lanka is huge in the movement of security guards and it has been very forward thinking,” he said, adding that “the nemesis is South Africa”.

“Sri Lanka recognised this is an international problem and that private security is part of the solution.

“The result is it has had a real input to the local economy with 400 to 600 vessels calling a month that would not normally have called. It is a great example of how

it can be done legally and properly,” he said.

The growth of private security firms has led to the development of an online system that aims to match up shipowners security needs with pre-vetted security firms and improve the efficiency of the business.

The system, known as Flag Victor, is not limited to piracy and allows owners to register their security requirements online, which are then matched up with suitable security companies. For example, security men left in, say, Oman without a return leg voyage could be matched up online with a shipowner looking for protection going east.

**Lars Bergstrom: “The result is it has had a real input to the local [Sri Lankan] economy with 400 to 600 vessels calling a month that would not normally have called. It is a great example of how it can be done legally and properly.”**

# Growing business with former British Royal Marines at the ready

Adam Corbett

London

Protection Vessels International (PVI) has developed to become one of the more established names in the marine-security business protecting merchant shipping from Somali piracy.

Company founder Dom Mee is a former British Royal Marine and special-forces officer.

He started in the business offering protection services to the luxury super-yachts segment in 2003 and the move to merchant shipping was a natural one once the piracy problem took off five years later and he established PVI.

His background led him to use former Royal Marines as security guards. “It has been very easy for me to employ ex-Royal Marines because we feel like part of the same family,” he said.

Now he claims his firm is the biggest operator in the region and can have up to 900 armed security men ready at any one time. It is conducting around 70 transits a month through the danger zone off Somalia, as well as more frequent short-haul escort transits in the



**DOM MEE:** Former British Royal Marine and special-forces officer

Photo: PVI

Red Sea using the company’s own vessels. PVI has already clocked more than 1,000 transits.

He says the boom in the use of private security guards has played its part in the current downturn in hijackings but looking at Somalia’s internal troubles, he says it is not the whole story.

“We have the Kenyan kidnappings and the backlash of the fam-

ine and a big boost to troops in Africa,” he explained of the factors affecting pirates this year.

The Al Shabab terrorist group has also face distractions. “Al Shabab is now fighting on three fronts with involvement of Kenyan and Ethiopian forces and it has left a power vacuum,” he said. “We have also heard of infighting among pirate groups.”

Mee believes these factors could make the current lull a temporary one and that it is too early to suggest that the piracy problem has been contained despite the drop in hijackings.

Having armed security guards on board has proved to be what he describes as a “show stopper” for the pirates with a demonstration of force in almost all cases more than enough to persuade pirates to retreat with no blood spilled.

Professionalism is the key to avoiding bloodshed, he believes. “With the appropriate resources, intelligence and preparation most threats can be avoided. An uneventful mission is a successful mission,” he said.

However, what has surprised Mee is that there has been no hint of a change in tactics by pirates to counter the defence of private security guards.

“One thing we have noticed is that pirates are drifting toward vessels to test the force and then show their weapons at the last minute. But they are not showing the flexibility we thought they would,” he said.

He is concerned, however, that vessels without security guards may face more aggressive attacks.

“They may start going after ships under flags that do not allow armed guards but when they realise there are no armed guards, the level of violence may go up because they realise they have a chance,” he said.

He adds that armed security guards are only part of the anti-piracy solution and that it is still vital for shipowners to stick to the guidelines of the industry recommended Best Management Practice fourth edition (BMP 4).

“Ignore BMP 4 at your peril,” he advised. “We are complimentary to BMP 4 and we always check that it is being implemented because we feel we are there to enhance it rather than replace it. We are only part of the solution.”

Mee believes that the sort of security services offered by PVI will be increasingly sought after by marine-related firms and that he wants to grow the business. “The biggest challenge for us will be to keep investing in the business,” he said.

**Dom Mee: “One thing we have noticed is that pirates are drifting toward vessels to test the force and then show their weapons at the last minute but they are not showing the flexibility we thought they would.”**

# IMO to counter piracy on land

A new antipiracy team aims to help the failed state of Somalia to recover.

Adam Corbett

London

A newly formed team at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is hoping to give its campaign against piracy a fresh direction by helping the failed state of Somalia to recover.

One of the first moves of secretary-general Koji Sekimizu was to appoint Hartmut Hesse as special representative for maritime security and antipiracy programmes. Working along with Hesse is Maritime Safety Division deputy director Chris Trelawny.

Hesse's newly created role was made to take forward the work of last year's successful IMO campaign "Piracy, Orchestrating the Response", which was the brainchild of former secretary-general Efthimios Mitropoulos.

Hesse said: "The secretary-general took the step because if we are to continue the [antipiracy] exercise the country [Somalia] primarily needs more resources and his main idea is to add another layer to the high-level work we have been doing within the United Nations system."

Hesse points out that last year much of the IMO's work was directed toward defending ships at sea through such initiatives as establishing guidelines on security guards and self-defence measures and working with the navy. But he admitted: "We are coming to the point where we cannot do much more at sea." Instead the IMO is more focussed on developing land capabilities to counter piracy.

A key vehicle for developing the IMO's initiative rests with the Djibouti Code of Conduct, an agreement between West African and Red Sea states on stopping piracy.

The IMO has helped develop coastguard capabilities and has worked with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

(UNODC) on developing a judicial and penal system for Somalia's neighbouring states to prosecute pirates. The next move is to make similar efforts in Somalia itself.

Hesse said: "We now realise much more needs to be implemented and we want to put the focus on Somalia."

An agreement with Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), known as the Kampala Process, has put a system in place that will help the IMO develop its initiatives in the country.

Trelawny said: "As a state Somalia is fragile but it works. The TFG is in power but it has little authority. It is the regional authorities in Puntland that are making progress."

He points out that the police in Puntland have been active in taking action against pirates and estimates there are hundreds of pirates awaiting trial in the region.

The IMO's roadmap for Somalia is based on developing the maritime sector and in the long run it hopes the support will lead to the state developing economically and being more capable of containing piracy and providing alternatives for the young who are inevitably attracted to crime.

The initiative also involves improving the coastguard and search-and-rescue capabilities and in the long term, developing the fishing industry, ports sector and setting up customs procedures that should help the economy grow. The IMO is even working with Somalia for it to sign up to the Safety of Life at Sea (Solas) convention.

Hesse admits it is a long-term and strategic approach that may not bring immediate results in terms of defeating piracy. But his experience has shown that unless the root cause is solved, the problem will never go away.



**ANTIPIRACY CHIEF:** Hartmut Hesse is special representative for maritime security and antipiracy programmes at the IMO

Photo: IMO

**Hartmut Hesse: Says the police in Puntland have been active in taking action against pirates and estimates there are hundreds of pirates awaiting trial in the region**



**KOJI SEKIMIZU:** IMO secretary-general

Photo: DMA



**SOMALIA:** A soldier on patrol of the border town of Dhobley, Somalia

Photo: Scanpix

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## PIRACY & SECURITY

# Save our Seafarers puts awareness at top of list

Adam Corbett

London

Save our Seafarers (SOS) kicked off a co-ordinated industry-awareness campaign to prompt government action against piracy almost a year ago today, with high-profile advertising highlighting the plight of seafarers.

The rallying call is for an end to piracy and the suffering of seafarers caught up in it.

SOS secretariat head Giles Heimann is challenged with sustaining the initial momentum of the campaign despite the downturn in the number of successful hijackings.

He believes, if anything, there is greater cause for concern for the welfare of seafarers because of the desperation of pirates.

"At the end of the day the figures are lower than they were this time last year but the problem has not gone away. What is worrying now is cases where Indian and [South] Korean seafarers have been held after ships have been released and taken ashore, and nobody knows where they are." (See story below.)

He added: "Seafarers are not just being held but tortured and kept in squalid conditions with no fresh water or sanitation and minimum rations. It is barbaric.

"And it is worth remembering that it is not just the seafarers but the worry it causes their families back home too. For every seafarer held there is another 10 back home who are worried sick about them."

SOS started off with the six main trade bodies that make up the round table of industry associations but today it has mustered

the 30 different shipping-related organisations in support of the cause.

"It represents the biggest single shipping-industry gathering behind a single cause," commented Intertanko communications manager Bill Box, who works closely with SOS.

So far the campaign has generated more than 31,000 Internet-generated e-mail letters to key government ministers across the world in a bid to highlight the piracy problem.

While the organisers concede that ministers may change their e-mail address or simply filter the letters out, the method is still effective, Box contends.

"Some have complained and said 'stop sending the letters' or have set up a spam filter but it is not necessarily important that they read every letter but that we can remind them of the letters and attest that each one has been sent," he said.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most enthusiastic response has come from the major labour-supply countries, India and the Philippines, where awareness of the piracy issue is more widely known and strikes closer to home. The UK ranks as the third most active in sending e-mails.

In a bid to drum up wider support among the general public, SOS has turned to social media like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, where, Box says, the level of interaction and debate on the issue has been high.

Next on the list is a campaign targeting Fortune 500 companies, informing them of the cost of piracy to the world economy.



GILES HEIMANN: 'For every seafarer held there is another 10 back home who are worried sick about them.'

Photo: IMEC

**Giles Heimann: "Seafarers are not just being held but tortured and kept in squalid conditions with no fresh water or sanitation and minimum rations. It is barbaric."**

## Concern mounts for hostages held on land

Adam Corbett

London

The biggest cause for humanitarian concern among hostages comes from the 51 men held in Somalia who have been left behind on land after their ships were released or abandoned with nothing known of their whereabouts or well being.

Indian seafarers have been targeted in particular in what appears to be petty reprisal for the action taken by the Indian Navy

against pirates at sea. Seven Indians were held following the release of the 3,900-dwt *Asphalt Venture* (built 1991), which was originally taken in September 2010.

A further four South Koreans have been held following the release of the 30,000-dwt tanker *Gemini* (built 1986), again in reprisal for attacks by the Korean navy on the 19,900-dwt chemical tanker *Samho Jewelry* (built 2001).

Two Danes and Six Filipinos are also captive on land from the 1,066-teu *Leopard* (built 1989), seized in January 2011. Others held onshore come from fishing vessels such as the four kept behind following the release of the *Prantalay 12*.

Then there are three vessels that have now been held for well over a year with seemingly little prospect of release. These include the 1,062-teu *Albedo* (built 1993), held since November 2010 with

23 crew, 27,000-dwt bulker *Orna* (built 1984), taken in December 2010 with 19 crew, and 5,900-dwt, Panama-flag *Iceberg 1* (built 1977), which has been held since March 2010 with 22 crew. Its 20 months in captivity makes it the longest-held vessel in Somalia.

But these seafarers may take heart from the release of the Georgian-controlled, 6,400-dwt *Olib G* (built 1988), recently set free after 18 months despite appearing to have been abandoned.

**THE "ICEBERG 1": The Panama-flag vessel holds the unenviable record of being the longest-held ship in Somalia.**

Photo: EU Navfor



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## SALES

### BULKERS

••• Italian owner B Navi is said to have sold its two panamax bulkers, the Hyundai-built, 70,000-dwt **B Asia** and **B Indonesia** (both built 1990).

The **B Indonesia** went for \$7.85m last month and the **B Asia** is now said to have gone to a Chinese buyer for \$7.3m.

They were the newest ships in the fleet, which after the sale will comprise 15 bulkers built in the 1980s, either handymaxes or smaller.

B Navi bought the vessels for a reported \$44m en bloc from Spar Shipping of Bergen in 2006 as **Spar Capella** and **Spar Carina**.

Last July, B Navi sold the 39,000-dwt **Bulk Pacific** (built 1981) for a firm \$6.1m.

••• Greek owner Golden Union appears to have found a trading buyer for its 69,000-dwt **SD Victory** (built 1986). The Hashima-built vessel is said to have fetched just \$5m, which is roughly a demolition-related price. The company bought it in 1997 for \$15.8m.

Last month, Golden Union sold the 68,000-dwt bulker **SD Epos** (built 1987) for \$5.8m. The Sumitomo-built vessel went to Hong Kong buyer Asian Union Shipping and is now trading as **Rui Fu Fa**.

Both ships were put up for sale by Golden Union in October last year.

••• The 12,000-dwt bulker **Kopalnia Borynia** (built 1989) is said to have been sold for an undisclosed price.

### BOXSHIPS

••• Brokers say the 700-teu containership **Werder Bremen** (built 1999) has been sold to an undisclosed buyer for \$3.2m.

### TANKERS

••• Singapore-based Wilmar Tankers is said to have bought the Miura-built, 12,900-dwt products/chemical tanker **Golden Willing** (built 2009) from Dorval Kaiun for \$12.4m.

••• The 12,700-dwt stainless steel carrier **Chemical Star** (built 2000) has been sold for \$8m, according to brokers.

••• Last week's reported sale of the 321,000-dwt VLCC **Elektra Glory** (built 2009) by Greece's Gulf Marine to Si-nokor of South Korea for close to \$80m has reportedly failed.

Gulf is said to have agreed in November to buy the 305,000-dwt **Eagle Valencia** (built 2005) from Malaysia's AET for \$53m but that deal also collapsed.

••• Brokers say EA Bunkering has sold the single-hull, 39,000-dwt products tanker **Nautica Muar** (built 1992) for further trading to an Indonesian owner for \$5m. The vessel last changed hands in 2007 for \$16m.

••• Troubled Cypriot owner Ocean Tankers has lost two more vessels at auction. The 15,400-dwt sisters **Hartzi** and **Skledros** (both built 1999) fetched \$7.3m each in Denmark.