

**Forum:** International Maritime Organization (IMO)

**Issue:** Enhancing Maritime Security and Anti-Piracy Measures in Major Shipping Lanes



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**Position:** Deputy President

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## Personal Introduction

Dear delegates,

My name is Katerina Makrymichalou and I'm a year 11 student at St Catherines British School. This year, I'm honored and overjoyed to serve as one of your Deputy President in the International Maritime Organization (IMO)!

My journey with MUN has been one of the most transformative experiences of my academic life. Through countless debates and conferences, MUN has not only made my public speaking skills sharper, but also deepened my understanding of global issues that happen in our everyday lives. It has taught me the importance of diplomacy and collaboration, and on a basic note, it shaped my worldview by reminding me that behind every policy and statistics, there are real people's lives who are affected by the decisions we make.

As a co-chair, my main goal is to create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for all delegates. I wholeheartedly want every delegate to feel valued and seen because whether it's your first conference or your third, every delegate deserves to be heard, recognized, and most importantly enjoy themselves.

The second topic of this committee, namely "Enhancing Maritime Security and Anti-Piracy Measures in Major Shipping Lanes", involves multiple ethical considerations. This guide will provide you with an overview of the topic at hand. However, I suggest conducting your own research to gain a deeper understanding of your country's policy and stance on the issue. If you have any questions leading up to the conference, or on the specific topic, feel free to email me [katerinamakrymichalou@gmail.com](mailto:katerinamakrymichalou@gmail.com)

## Topic Introduction

Maritime trade has become a large part of today's global economy, with over 80% of world trade by volume<sup>1</sup> and approximately 70% by value is transported by sea each year<sup>2</sup>. According to international shipping and trade organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), global ocean trade exceeds 11 billion tons annually, which provide essential needs to citizens across all nations such as crude oil, food products, raw materials and manufactured goods. Many developing countries depend on transit routes, and small islands rely on maritime transport for imports and exports, making secure shipping lanes a need for economic survival. As supply chains around the world have become very interconnected through globalization, even small disruptions at sea can affect global markets, which leads to shortages and delays across continents.

### Rising threats in maritime trade

Even though many international efforts are done to reduce maritime crime, piracy and related illicit activities continue to create serious threats in major shipping lanes, particularly in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Western Indian Ocean, and coastal regions across Africa. International monitoring agencies have consistently reported over 100 incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea per year, and "119 incidents in the first nine months of 2025"<sup>3</sup>, including attempted boardings, kidnappings of crew members and hijackings. Criminal networks have adapted to naval patrols by expanding their range by using mother ships and more sophisticated equipment to target vessels hundreds of nautical miles from shore. In addition to piracy, these maritime coordinators are frequently exploited for drug trafficking, smuggling, human trafficking, the illicit movement of migrants and several other ways of exploitation which worsens regional instability and undermining state authority.

### Economic consequences

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<sup>1</sup> UNCTAD. "Review of Maritime Transport 2024." *UNCTAD*, 22 Oct. 2024, [unctad.org/publication/review-maritime-transport-2024](https://unctad.org/publication/review-maritime-transport-2024).

<sup>2</sup> "Economy of the Sea Conference: The Sea – an Area to Manage, to Exploit and Protect." *Www.imo.org*, 22 Apr. 2023, [www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/SecretaryGeneral/Pages/Economysea-conf.aspx](https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/SecretaryGeneral/Pages/Economysea-conf.aspx).

<sup>3</sup> Team, The Editorial. "ReCAAP ISC Q3: 119 Incidents in the First Nine Months of 2025." *SAFETY4SEA*, 13 Oct. 2025, [safety4sea.com/recaap-isc-q3-119-incidents-in-the-first-nine-months-of-2025/](https://safety4sea.com/recaap-isc-q3-119-incidents-in-the-first-nine-months-of-2025/).

Maritime insecurity has severe economic consequences that extend beyond the immediate loss of cargo or damage to vessels. As intensified piracy and attacks in major maritime regions force shipping companies to reroute vessels thousands of nautical miles away from shipping lanes which adds to voyage time and operational costs which contributes to higher greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, insurance is more expensive for ships which operate in high-risk zones which can rise drastically, which then increases transport costs by up to 30-50%<sup>4</sup>, leading to congestion and reduces access to essential goods. Because maritime threats are typically happening in international waters or in areas with unclear jurisdiction, so single state can address them alone which makes international cooperation essential with frameworks such as UNCLOS and the SUA convention, though their effectiveness varies due to differences in naval capacity and weak judicial systems.

## Shaping Tomorrow

Enhancing maritime security and anti-piracy measures supports the conference theme of “Shaping Tomorrow”, because the decisions made today will affect how global trade functions the future. The ocean connects nations and carries over 80%<sup>5</sup> of the world’s trade making millions of people dependent on these routes for food and daily goods. When shipping lanes are unsafe, it’s not only economies which suffer and rather its entire communities around the world. By the global community choosing shared responsibility, countries can move further away from short-term reactions and create long-term solutions. So, investing in secure and efficient maritime systems today helps ensure that international waters remain open and fair so that the global community can shape a future where progress is protected and shared across generations.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Piracy<sup>6</sup>

“The act of attacking ships in order to steal from them”

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<sup>4</sup> Saul, Jonathan. “Insurance Costs of Shipping through Black Sea Soar.” *Reuters*, 25 Feb. 2022, [www.reuters.com/business/insurance-costs-shipping-through-black-sea-soar-2022-02-25/](http://www.reuters.com/business/insurance-costs-shipping-through-black-sea-soar-2022-02-25/).

<sup>5</sup> “United Nations Ocean Conference 2025.” *UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*, 11 June 2025, [unctad.org/osgstatement/united-nations-ocean-conference-2025-ocean-action-panel-6](http://unctad.org/osgstatement/united-nations-ocean-conference-2025-ocean-action-panel-6). Accessed 25 Dec. 2025.

<sup>6</sup> ---. “Piracy.” @*CambridgeWords*, 5 Jan. 2022, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/piracy](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/piracy).

### **Armed robbery at sea<sup>7</sup>**

“Any illegal act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, with a State’s internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea”

### **Maritime Security<sup>8</sup>**

“The measures and strategies implemented to protect vessels, ports, and maritime infrastructure from threats. It encompasses a range of activities aimed at safeguarding maritime assets, ensuring the safety and security of trade routes, and preventing illicit activities at sea”

### **Shipping lanes<sup>9</sup>**

“Shipping lanes, also known as shipping routes, are the parts of the ocean that shipping vessels use to travel between ports. The specific route that the ship takes is called a trade lane”

### **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)<sup>10</sup>**

“An area where coastal states assume jurisdiction over the exploration and exploitation of marine resources in its adjacent section of the continental shelf, taken to be band extending 200 nautical miles (370.4 km) from shore.”

### **Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs)<sup>11</sup>**

“Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) are business entities that offer specialized military services, according to the Montreux Document, regardless of how they define themselves. These services include combat support; intelligence collection; operational and logistical support; the training of public security forces; the protection of goods, infrastructure and individuals; and the maintenance of weapon systems.”

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<sup>7</sup> International Maritime Organization. “Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships.” *Www.imo.org*, [www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/PiracyArmedRobberydefault.aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/PiracyArmedRobberydefault.aspx).

<sup>8</sup> “Maritime Security.” *Windward*, 11 Apr. 2024, [windward.ai/glossary/what-is-maritime-security/](http://windward.ai/glossary/what-is-maritime-security/).

<sup>9</sup> “What Are Shipping Lanes and Why Do They Matter?” *Hillebrand*, Hillebrand Gori, 13 Feb. 2025, [www.hillebrandgori.com/media/publication/shipping-lanes-and-state-of-maritime-traffic](http://www.hillebrandgori.com/media/publication/shipping-lanes-and-state-of-maritime-traffic).

<sup>10</sup> “Glossary:Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) - Statistics Explained - Eurostat.” *Europa.eu*, 2025, [ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Exclusive\\_economic\\_zone\\_\(EEZ\)](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Exclusive_economic_zone_(EEZ)).

<sup>11</sup> Backgrounder, Ssr. *PRIVATE MILITARY and SECURITY COMPANIES (PMSCS)*.

## Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)<sup>12</sup>

“Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) is the effective understanding if anything associated with the maritime domain that could impact security, safety, the economy or the marine environment”

## International Waters<sup>13</sup>

“The terms international waters or trans-boundary waters apply where any of the following types of bodies of water (or their drainage basins) transcend international boundaries: oceans, large marine ecosystems, enclosed or semi-enclosed regional seas and waters outside of national jurisdiction are also referred to as the high seas or, in Latin, mare liberum meaning of free sea)”

## Background Information

### Historical background

Piracy has been recognized under international law as a crime of universal jurisdiction, meaning, any state may act against pirates at sea, regardless of the nationality of the attackers or victims. The International Maritime Organization in collaboration with the United Nations has helped to promote these legal actions to ensure global consistency in maritime security. Major conventions such as the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has provided the legal basis for prosecuting piracy and enabling international naval cooperation by defining the rights and responsibilities of states in international waters. Historical incidents like the 2008 hijacking of the MV Faina off the Somali coast<sup>14</sup>, has showed both legal issues and the necessity of multilateral coordination and navies from several countries had to address similar issues. Similarly, the 2009 attack on the Maersk Alabama<sup>15</sup> highlighted the gaps in existing maritime laws which showed the importance of treaties and agreements that allow states to detain pirates. The IMO work in creating reports such as the “International Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships”<sup>16</sup> reports has allowed states to track

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<sup>12</sup> “Maritime Domain Awareness.” *Imo.org*, 2025, [www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/Maritime-Domain-Awareness.aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/Maritime-Domain-Awareness.aspx).

<sup>13</sup> “International Waters.” *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia*, 6 Oct. 2015, [archive.unescwa.org/international-waters](http://archive.unescwa.org/international-waters).

<sup>14</sup> ---. “MV Faina.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Jan. 2026.

<sup>15</sup> ---. “Maersk Alabama Hijacking.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 21 Dec. 2019, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maersk\\_Alabama\\_hijacking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maersk_Alabama_hijacking).

<sup>16</sup> “Figure 1 - International Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships: 1995-2001 | Bureau of Transportation Statistics.” *Bts.gov*, 2026, [www.bts.gov/archive/publications/transportation\\_statistics\\_annual\\_report/2001/chapter\\_05\\_figure\\_01\\_116\\_table](http://www.bts.gov/archive/publications/transportation_statistics_annual_report/2001/chapter_05_figure_01_116_table). Accessed 1 Feb. 2026.

incidents accurately and implement measures. Over time these efforts have led to the development of guides including the IMO guideline on the use of force which says how maritime security can respond to piracy.

### **Increase in piracy hotspots**

Over the past two decades, piracy has increased drastically as a serious threat in several important maritime regions which include the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Guinea, the Strait of Malacca and some areas across Africa as mentioned earlier, all of which are very important shipping routes for global trade. These areas are very important because they connect many major markets and are transit points for manufactured goods, raw materials, and more. In recent years, piracy has not disappeared but has changed location. While attacks off the coast of Somalia declined after 2012, incidents in the Gulf of Guinea increased largely and has now become the region accountable for the most global crew kidnappings between 2018 and 2022<sup>17</sup> which shows that piracy hotspots change depending on levels of security and governance rather than being permanently removed.

Piracy and other maritime crimes are often started by wider social and economic issues instead of personal choice alone. Some of these causes include weak governance in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), an increase in poverty, corruption in some coastal regions, and a limited amount of law enforcement. Going back to governance, in many regions, governments lack the resources to effectively patrol their waters or provide economic opportunities for the coastal population such as job opportunities, or access to healthcare. The lack of strong coastal security such as radar systems or patrol vessels allows criminals to operate with minimal risk of punishment, worsening the issue.

In addition, illegal fishing by foreign vessels has reduced fish stocks in many coastal areas, removing the main source of income for local communities. This economic pressure has pushed some individuals towards piracy as an alternative livelihood. Cultural normalization of piracy in certain regions has also occurred as where criminal activity becomes socially acceptable due to lack of legal economic opportunities. Also, the economic impact of piracy is not limited to shipping companies. Coastal states often suffer losses in port revenue and tourism while global supply chains face delays and increased costs.

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<sup>17</sup> ---. "Unprecedented Number of Crew Kidnappings in the Gulf of Guinea despite Drop in Overall Global Numbers – ICC – Commercial Crime Services." *Icc-Ccs.org*, 2020, [icc-ccs.org/unprecedented-number-of-crew-kidnappings-in-the-gulf-of-guinea-despite-drop-in-overall-global-numbers/](https://www.icc-ccs.org/unprecedented-number-of-crew-kidnappings-in-the-gulf-of-guinea-despite-drop-in-overall-global-numbers/). Accessed 1 Feb. 2026.

### The role of the IMO in key piracy incidents

The six-year period between 2005 and 2011 was a peak point in global piracy, particularly off the coast of Somalia and some small parts of West Africa such as Nigeria and Cape Verde. During this time, hundreds and thousands of vessels were attacked and hijacked, and thousands of crew members were taken hostage. Piracy that's based in Somalia had gained large international attention due to the mass scale and organization of attacks, which often occurred far from shore and targeted large commercial vessels (oil tankers and cargo ships) of which these incidents highlighted the limitations of naval responses and undermined the need for international naval operations.

The International Maritime Organization has done a lot of hard work is addressing maritime security challenges because as a specialized agency of the United Nations, the IMO is responsible for developing and adopting international conventions related to maritime safety and security. Key actions such as the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code<sup>18</sup> aim to enhance the protection of ships and ports worldwide. In addition, the IMO facilitates cooperation between member states by promoting information sharing and agreements across regions to reduce piracy and robbery at sea.

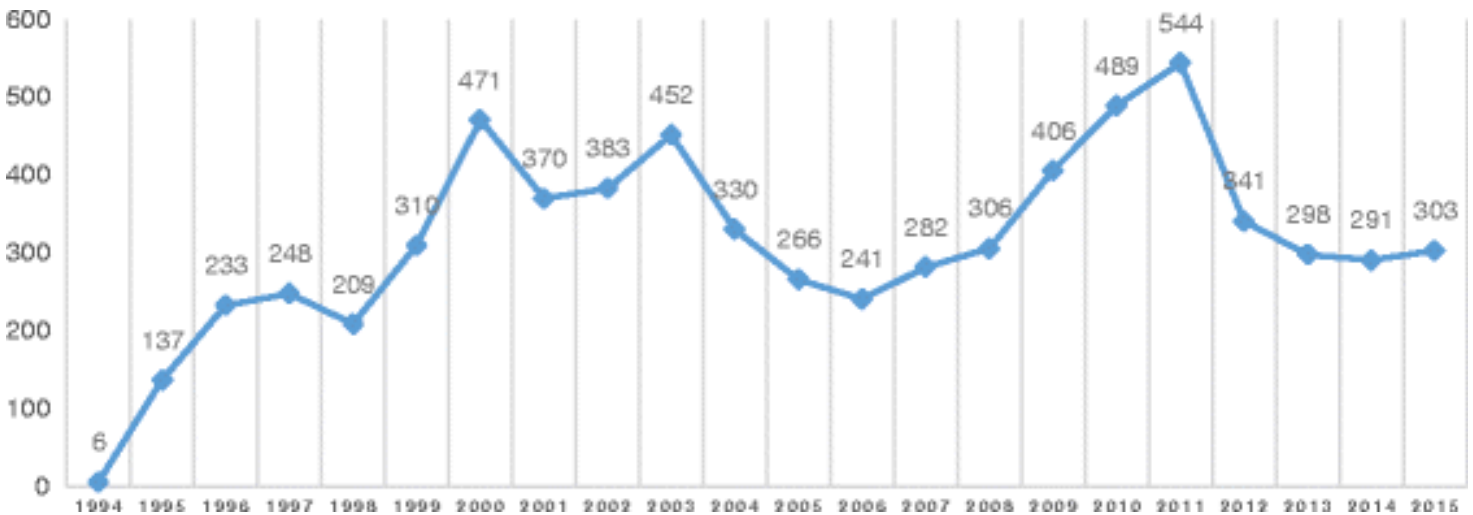


Figure 1<sup>19</sup>: depicting a graph of the Evolution of piracy in the world from 1994-2015

<sup>18</sup> ---. "SOLAS XI-2 and the ISPS Code." *Imo.org*, 2020, [www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/SOLAS-XI-2%20ISPS%20Code.aspx](http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/SOLAS-XI-2%20ISPS%20Code.aspx).

<sup>19</sup> Ali, Mohammed . "Evolution of Piracy (1994-2015)." [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Evolution-of-Acts-of-Sea-Piracy-In-The-World-1994-2015-The-Above-Graph-Has-Been\\_fig1\\_324361960](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Evolution-of-Acts-of-Sea-Piracy-In-The-World-1994-2015-The-Above-Graph-Has-Been_fig1_324361960), 20 Mar. 2015, Accessed 2 Jan. 2026.

## Operational responses

Other than legal actions, the IMO has been very helpful in developing operational strategies to reduce piracy. One of the most widely recognized tools is Best Management practices (BMP) for ship operators which provides detailed guidance on reducing the vulnerability to attacks. This includes recommended ship routing and alarm systems. Case studies show the real-world impact of these measures such as during the 2011 Maersk Alabama hijacking, the crew knowing how to implement the BMP procedures allowed them to survive a high-risk hostage situation until the US navy was able to respond and it saved lives and minimized damage. Additionally, the IMO has facilitated regional cooperation through agreements such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct which brought together states in East Africa and the western Indian Ocean to train law enforcement people. All these actions have proven the effectiveness in reducing attacks and ensure quick responses.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### China

China has expanded its involvement in maritime security due to its heavy reliance on sea-based trade, with over 70% of its international trade by volume transported by sea.<sup>20</sup> as part of its boarder Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)<sup>21</sup>, China has come strong economic interests in maintaining secure shipping lanes across the Indian Ocean and far Beyond. The Chinese Navy has participated in international anti-piracy actions in the Gulf of Aden since 2008<sup>22</sup> and helped escort thousands of commercial vessels.

### India

India is the main power when it comes to the Indian Ocean, India is a region through around “80% of global oil”<sup>23</sup> trade passes. Due to its geographic position and dependance on maritime trade, India helps a lot when it comes to regional maritime security efforts. The Indian Navy regularly conducts patrols and participates in multinational actions which are aimed at addressing piracy. India has also

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<sup>20</sup> Denamiel, Thibault, and Evan Brown. “The State of Maritime Supply-Chain Threats.” *Csis.org*, 4 Nov. 2024, [www.csis.org/analysis/state-maritime-supply-chain-threats](http://www.csis.org/analysis/state-maritime-supply-chain-threats).

<sup>21</sup> Wikipedia Contributors. “Belt and Road Initiative.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 4 Apr. 2019, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belt\\_and\\_Road\\_Initiative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belt_and_Road_Initiative).

<sup>22</sup> ---. “Chinese Anti-Piracy Operations in the Gulf of Aden.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 19 May 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Singh, Anil Jai. “INDIA’S MARITIME ECONOMY: DRIVING INDIA’S GROWTH.” *India Foundation*, 27 Feb. 2021, [indiafoundation.in/articles-and-commentaries/indias-maritime-economy-driving-indias-growth/](http://indiafoundation.in/articles-and-commentaries/indias-maritime-economy-driving-indias-growth/).

been active in responding to piracy incidents in the Arabian Sea and as emphasized the importance of multinational cooperation.

## **Nigeria**

Nigeria is currently one of the most affected countries by maritime crime, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea which is currently accountable for over 90% of global kidnapping incidents at sea in recent years<sup>24</sup>. Piracy in this region often involves armed robbery and abduction of crew members rather than vessel hijacking, which is most common across the Red Sea. Nigeria has a vast coastline and a lot of offshore oil infrastructure which makes it a frequent target for criminal groups to attack there. In response, the Nigerian government has increased naval patrols and adopted new maritime strategies. a few examples include technology like the Falcon eye which is a radar surveillance system to protect the Nigerian coastline.

## **Somalia**

Somalia was the primary global piracy hotspot during peak years between 2005 and 2011, when countless ships were attacked and thousands of crew members were abducted and taken hostage for ransom. At its peak, Somali piracy caused billions of dollars in global economic losses each year, which included ransom payments from the ship hijackings and many rerouting expenses. The rise of piracy was mainly linked to political instability and poverty and although international naval operations significantly reduced attacks after 2012, Somalia remains one of the world's biggest contributors of piracy as of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and has additionally helped a lot in maintaining maritime security and anti-piracy efforts. The UK has led and contributed to multinational naval operations and supported international coordination through institutions such as NATO and the IMO, which are headquartered in London. British naval forces have escorted commercial vessels and helped reduce piracy in high-risk zones. Overall, the United Kingdom views piracy as a direct threat to international trade and global maritime law. Throughout many diplomatic engagements,

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<sup>24</sup> ISSAfrica.org. "Gulf of Guinea Piracy: A Symptom, Not a Cause, of Insecurity." *ISS Africa*, 10 Feb. 2021, [issafrika.org/iss-today/gulf-of-guinea-piracy-a-symptom-not-a-cause-of-insecurity](https://issafrika.org/iss-today/gulf-of-guinea-piracy-a-symptom-not-a-cause-of-insecurity).

the UK supports short-term and long-term international cooperation to ensure freedom of navigation. Its role as a global maritime hub further reinforces its interest in sustaining secure and stable sea routes.

### **United States of America**

The United States of America, much like The United Kingdom is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a global contributor to when it comes to maritime security as it has one of the world's largest naval forces and is highly skilled to operate in multinational operations. The US navy has helped largely, particularly in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Given that over 80% of global trade travels by sea<sup>25</sup>, the United States views secure shipping lanes as essential to global economic stability and international security. So, as a result, the United States continues to prioritize anti-piracy operations as part of its broader maritime security strategy. It strongly supports international cooperation and burden sharing among naval forces to maintain secure sea lanes. Lastly, the US also emphasizes the importance of creating international law and maintaining it, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in combating piracy.

### **International Maritime Bureau (IMB)**

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has a large role in monitoring and reporting piracy and armed robbery at sea worldwide. Through its piracy reporting center, the IMB collects real-time data on maritime crime and sends alerts to shipping companies and naval forces. Each year, the IMB records over 100 piracy and armed robbery incidents globally<sup>26</sup>, making its reports a key source of information for policy making and maritime stakeholders. other than data collecting, the IMB operates a 24-hour piracy reporting center<sup>27</sup> that allows ship and crew to immediately report attacks or suspicious activity which allows faster responses from nearby naval forces. Its warnings help vessels avoid high-risk areas and take measures to prevent this issue and also reduce the likelihood of successful attacks.

### **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

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<sup>25</sup> World Bank Group. "Sustainable Development in Shipping and Ports." *World Bank*, 22 Nov. 2023, [www.worldbank.org/en/topic/transport/brief/sustainable-development-in-shipping-and-ports](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/transport/brief/sustainable-development-in-shipping-and-ports).

<sup>26</sup> "Main Piracy Map Full – ICC – Commercial Crime Services." *Icc-Ccs.org*, 2025, [icc-ccs.org/map/](http://icc-ccs.org/map/).

<sup>27</sup> "IMB Piracy Reporting Centre – ICC – Commercial Crime Services." *Icc-Ccs.org*, 2025, [icc-ccs.org/imb-piracy-reporting-centre-2/](http://icc-ccs.org/imb-piracy-reporting-centre-2/).

The International Maritime Organization is the main United Nations body responsible for maritime safety and security, with 176 total member states<sup>28</sup>. The IMO develops international efforts and regulations that help shipping which include actions that aim to prevent piracy and enhance port and vessel security. One of its main actions is the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code which has set global standards for protecting ships and ports from security threats. Other than just making rules, the IMO also supports cooperation between states and information sharing to help improve governance.

### **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supports global efforts to stop maritime crime by strengthening already existing frameworks. UNODC assists coastal states in drafting and creating maritime laws and improves prison systems to handle piracy and related causes. The organization has supported piracy prosecutions in multiple countries. In addition, UNODC provides training for judges and law enforcement officials to ensure maritime crimes are properly investigated and prosecuted. It also helps countries improve cooperation between national and regional authorities so suspects can be transferred and trialed more effectively.

## **Blocs Expected**

### **Alliance 1: coastal/regional states in affected areas**

This alliance includes Somalia, Nigeria, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Kenya, Ghana. Moreover, this alliance consists of mainly coastal and regional states that are directly affected by piracy and maritime crime. These countries experience the immediate impact of insecurity at sea which include attacks on vessels, hijackings, kidnappings of crew for ransom, manslaughter, threat to/ livelihoods and more. Their policy focus is to emphasize capacity building such as strengthening coast guards and improving port and coastal surveillance. Many of these states also advocate for international assistance and funding, as limited resources and weak enforcement capacity often prevent them from fully securing their waters. In debate, this bloc may state the importance of addressing the root causes such as poverty and unemployment.

### **Alliance 2: Major maritime and trading powers**

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<sup>28</sup> ---. "International Maritime Organization." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 24 Feb. 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\_Maritime\_Organization.

This alliance includes Greece, United Kingdom, United States, France, China, India, Japan, Australia and others. This alliance is made up of major maritime nations and global trading powers with strong naval capabilities. Their primary concern is ensuring the free flow of global trade and the disruptions of major shipping lanes and how they have serious economic consequences. These states generally support multinational naval patrols and intelligence sharing. They also like to push for stronger international legal frameworks and clearer rules. In the committee, this bloc can emphasize efficiency and security for safeguarding international waters.

### Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
10 <sup>th</sup> December 1982	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted which created many international legal frameworks and navigation rights.
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2005	Piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia began increasing significantly due to the state collapsing because of poverty and lack of governance which marked the beginning of a global piracy crisis.
8 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	The European Union launched Operation Atlanta to protect the World Food Program (WFP) shipments and commercial vessels in the Gulf of Aden.
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010	Global piracy reached its highest recorded levels, with more than 440 incidents reported worldwide <sup>29</sup> which were mostly linked to Somali pirate groups.
31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	By the end of 2011, ransom payments related to piracy were estimated at approximately 160

<sup>29</sup> admin. "Sustained Efforts Needed as Global Piracy Incidents Hit Lowest Levels in Decades – ICC – Commercial Crime Services." *Icc-Ccs.org*, 2023, [icc-ccs.org/sustained-efforts-needed-as-global-piracy-incident-hit-lowest-levels-in-decades/](https://www.icc-ccs.org/sustained-efforts-needed-as-global-piracy-incident-hit-lowest-levels-in-decades/).

	million USD <sup>30</sup> , which highlighted the economic impact of maritime crime.
3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2018	The Gulf of Guinea overtook other regions as the World’s most dangerous area for maritime crime, especially kidnappings for ransom.
14 <sup>th</sup> August 2020	The Gulf of Guinea was held responsible for more than “90% of global crew kidnappings” <sup>31</sup> at sea and hijackings which created high international concern.
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023	Increased attacks and instability near major shipping routes which included the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. New international discussions arose on how to prevent piracy.

## Relevant UN Resolutions, Treaties & Events

### [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\), 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1982](#)

This international treaty created legal orders for the sea, including navigation rights, maritime zones and rules on piracy which was entered into force on the 16th of November 1994. It defines maritime zones such as territorial waters and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and it forms the legal foundation for international cooperation against maritime crime. UNCLOS has had a strong long-term impact because it provides a legal definition of piracy that most countries recognize, which then makes cooperation possible to address the cause. However, its effectiveness is limited because it does not include strong enforcement mechanisms, meaning states are not forced to act against piracy. Many countries also lack the resources and finance to fully apply UNCLOS rules which reduces its impact, especially in regions with weak governance.

### [International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea \(SOLAS\), 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1980](#)

<sup>30</sup> Ueno, Hideshi. “Somali Piracy’s Impact on the Global Economy Various Cost Estimates of Anti-Piracy Efforts from U.S. Think Tank Report | Intelligence Analysis.” 笹川平和財団 海洋情報 from the OCEANS, Mar. 2012, [www.spf.org/oceans/analysis\\_en/c1203.html](http://www.spf.org/oceans/analysis_en/c1203.html).

<sup>31</sup> Adamopoulos, Anastassios. “Gulf of Guinea Accounts for More than 90% of Crew Kidnappings.” *Lloyd’s List*, 2020, [www.lloydslist.com/LL1130653/Gulf-of-Guinea-accounts-for-more-than-90-of-crew-kidnappings](http://www.lloydslist.com/LL1130653/Gulf-of-Guinea-accounts-for-more-than-90-of-crew-kidnappings). Accessed 2 Jan. 2026.

SOLAS is one of the most important international maritime treaties which set the minimum safety standards a ship requires sailing which includes construction, equipment and navigation. Amendments to SOLAS later introduced actions related to security such as International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) which strengthened the protection against threats including piracy and terrorism. The ISPS code required ships and ports to carry out security assessments and install surveillance which really reduced the vulnerability of ships to pirate attacks, especially in areas which are known to be at high risk. Statistics from the International Maritime Organization show that vessels which have implemented the ISPS code were far less likely to be successfully hijacked. However, SOLAS has been less effective in developing countries because ports lack funds and infrastructure to fully implement the security standards which then as a result, protection levels remain uneven which limits the treaties effectiveness.

#### [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1816, 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2008 \(S/RES/1816\)](#)

This resolution authorized states cooperating with Somalia's transnational government to enter Somali territorial waters to reduce acts of piracy and armed robbery. It marked a major step in allowing international naval forces to take direct action against piracy under Chapter VII and of the UN Charter. This resolution enabled large multinational naval missions such as Operation Atlanta (EU) and Combined Task Force 151 which has helped reduce Somali piracy at a large amount, from over 200 attacks per year in 2008 – 2011 to fewer than 20 by 2013<sup>32</sup>. This had improved the livelihood of captains at sea and further helped improve the general economy. But despite these successes, the resolution was criticized for focusing mainly on naval patrols which are expensive and temporary, which therefore means it's not a long-term solution. Once naval presence was reduced, concerns were created from the public that piracy could return showing that the resolution did not fully solve the cause.

#### [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1851, 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 \(S/RES/1851\)](#)

Similarly, like (S/RES/1816), this resolution further strengthens international anti-piracy efforts by allowing states to act not only at sea but also on land in Somalia, with consent given by the Somali government. It also encouraged cooperation on prosecution and legal frameworks to prevent pirates from escaping justice. In theory, this resolution addressed earlier weaknesses by targeting pirate networks on land and improving legal cooperation. When it was in action, its impact was extremely limited because land operations were very rare due to political risks and security concerns. Additionally,

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<sup>32</sup> "Combined Task Force 151." *Wikipedia*, 19 Mar. 2022, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combined\_Task\_Force\_151.

many states remained unwilling or unable to prosecute captured pirates, leading to something like a catch and release problem. So, this resolution did expand on legal authority, but it was also ineffective.

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

### International naval patrols and multinational operations

One of the earliest and best-known responses to rising piracy was the deployment of international naval patrols in high-risk maritime zones. Operations such as EU NAVFOR Operation Atlanta, which was launched in 2008 aimed to protect commercial vessels and ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian aid, particularly shipments from the World Food Program. These patrols involved coordinated efforts including the European Union, NATO, and other maritime forces which significantly increased the presence of warships in piracy prone areas. While naval patrols proved effective in reducing piracy incidents, especially off the coast of Somalia, they also faced a few limitations. Maintaining continuous naval deployments is extremely costly and requires long-term political commitment from participating states. Additionally, naval forces can only cover limited areas of vast oceans which allow pirates to adapt by shifting operations to less patrolled regions. As piracy declined in one area, it often reemerges elsewhere, which shows that naval patrols alone cannot provide a permanent solution without broader regional and legal support.

### Regional coordination centers and information sharing mechanisms

Regional coordination centers were established to improve cooperation among coastal states. actions such as ReCAAP in Asia, MASE in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Guinea Interregional Coordination Center (GOG ICC)<sup>33</sup> were designed to strengthen communication and coordinate responses to maritime threats. These centers allow states to exchange information of events occurring then and now on vessel movements and suspicious activity and improve early warning systems. Again, despite these benefits, regional coordination mechanisms face ongoing issues. Many participating member states have uneven levels of funding and technology which affect the effectiveness of joint responses. Differences in national laws and political priorities make it hard to address the issues.

### Use of private maritime security personnel (PMSPs)

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<sup>33</sup> "ICC – for the Implementation of Regional Strategy for Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa." *Icc-Gog.org*, 2026, [icc-gog.org](http://icc-gog.org). Accessed 2 Jan. 2026.

The use of private maritime security personnel became a widely used action as piracy intensified, particularly across the high-risk zones and routes such as the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. Armed guards onboard commercial vessels proved to be a strong solution, as ships protected by professional security teams were rarely successfully hijacked. This approach was widely used in reducing Somali piracy after 2011 and was seen by shipping companies as a cost-effective way to protect crew and cargo. But we need to also take into account that reliance on private sector security has raised several concerns. The presence of armed personnel introduces risks of escalation and accidental violence, especially in crowded sea lanes. Legal uncertainty also exists as different countries have varying laws on the use of firearms at sea and the jurisdiction over private guards.

## Possible Solutions

### Strengthening Maritime Security

One of the most effective measures to improve maritime security has been the establishment of coordinated regional patrols, which is where neighboring states work together to monitor and protect shared waters. For example, joint naval operations and patrols in areas like the Gulf of Guinea and the Strait of Malacca have increased surveillance over critical shipping routes that see “over 80% of global trade”<sup>34</sup> pass through major chokepoints. When coastguards and navies from multiple countries operate together, they create a larger and more persistent security presence that is harder for pirate groups to avoid. Countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Benin have participated in coordinated patrols which were supported by regional frameworks like the Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Coordination Center (GOG – ICC) which helped reduce attacks by improving response time. For the short term, the effectiveness of these patrols is the best when ships and coastal members can immediately notify nearby coastguards during an incident. Emergency reporting systems such as the maritime distress hotline allow attacks to be reported in real time, which allows patrol vessels to respond quickly.

Also, strengthening regional patrols also allows states to share their financial and logistical burden of maritime security. Naval patrol operations can be extremely expensive, especially considering that deploying a singular large patrol vessel can cost several millions of dollars per year, which is often too expensive for many states. participating nations can sustain long-term security

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<sup>34</sup> ---. “Suez and Panama Canal Disruptions Threaten Global Trade and Development.” *UNCTAD*, 22 Oct. 2024, [unctad.org/news/suez-and-panama-canal-disruptions-threaten-global-trade-and-development](https://unctad.org/news/suez-and-panama-canal-disruptions-threaten-global-trade-and-development).

without having to pay the full cost themselves with these actions. Coordinated patrols in the Gulf of Guinea have corresponded with periods where attacks dropped by as much as 25 – 40%<sup>35</sup> year on year which shows that long term collaboration can make major shipping lanes safer.

### Expanding Information sharing systems

Expanding and modernizing maritime information sharing systems is very essential in preventing piracy and armed robbery at sea as real time data on vessel movement and suspicious activity can be detected and prevent them from escalating using surveillance systems. Programs like the RECAAP Information Sharing Center in Asia has enabled more than 20 countries<sup>36</sup> to exchange alerts and operate under a framework that everyone follows which helps reduce incidents across the Strait of Malacca and South China Sea. Similarly in the Gulf of Guinea, the GOG-ICC provides a platform for coastal states to share information about piracy attacks and suspend movements of criminal vessels. As a short-term solution, these systems allow instant alerts from ships and ports and sometimes even fishermen to be shared directly with coastguards and naval forces which enables authority to react immediately, sometimes disrupting attacks before pirates gain control over a vessel. However, these systems have been less successful in areas where communication infrastructure is weak or where crews fear reporting incidents which reduces immediate impact.

However, the effectiveness of these systems depends on timely and accurate reporting by all participating states and when communication is slow or inconsistent, the chance for successful work shrinks. Improved information sharing can help shift maritime security rather than responding after an attack; they respond right in the moment. Technology like coastal radars and satellite tracking have become more used and in some regions these systems have increased vessel tracking accuracy by over 50%<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> “Vessel Analytics & Maritime Analytics | Gatehouse Maritime.” *Gatehouse Maritime*, 2025, [gatehousemaritime.com/maritime-vessel-analytics/?gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=21040040289&gbraid=0AAAAApauMF\\_ZmUvO0flKIGthKfZ36V4BJ&gclid=Cj0KCQiA9t3KBhCQARIsAJOcR7z3PtoZdsnCihtUXuDAEG-titOOFY5C60KIhNUnf\\_EsXKvDZb1jdU8aAijwEALw\\_wcB](https://gatehousemaritime.com/maritime-vessel-analytics/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=21040040289&gbraid=0AAAAApauMF_ZmUvO0flKIGthKfZ36V4BJ&gclid=Cj0KCQiA9t3KBhCQARIsAJOcR7z3PtoZdsnCihtUXuDAEG-titOOFY5C60KIhNUnf_EsXKvDZb1jdU8aAijwEALw_wcB). Accessed 2 Jan. 2026.

<sup>36</sup> “Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia.” *Wikipedia*, 21 June 2022, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional\\_Cooperation\\_Agreement\\_on\\_Combating\\_Piracy\\_and\\_Armed\\_Robbery\\_against\\_Ships\\_in\\_Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regional_Cooperation_Agreement_on_Combating_Piracy_and_Armed_Robbery_against_Ships_in_Asia).

<sup>37</sup> Bakirci, Murat. “Advanced Ship Detection and Ocean Monitoring with Satellite Imagery and Deep Learning for Marine Science Applications.” *Regional Studies in Marine Science*, vol. 81, Jan. 2025, p. 103975, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rsma.2024.103975>.

## Addressing the root causes

Long term solutions to maritime crime must focus on the conditions that push individuals towards illegal activity. In many piracy hotspots, coastal communities face high unemployment rates which is often above 40%<sup>38</sup> with very limited access to education or economic opportunities. Without stable livelihoods, young people in these regions may turn to piracy or smuggling as a source of income. Strengthening governance is also very important. Weak institutions or corruption create environments where criminal networks can operate. Improved anti-corruption measures and stronger judicial systems help restore public trust. International development assistance and when coordinated with priorities of citizens can support infrastructure projects such as ports and coastal security.

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<sup>38</sup> Küçük, Neslihan, et al. "Hotspot Analysis of Global Piracy and Armed Robbery Incidents at Sea: A Decadal Review of Regional Vulnerabilities and Security Strategies." *Ocean & Coastal Management*, vol. 260, 20 Nov. 2024, p. 107480, [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0964569124004654](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0964569124004654), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2024.107480>.

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