



New maritime security firms emerge on the back of 'worrying' return of Somali pirates

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April 11, 2024



Similar to 15 years ago during the last Somalia piracy cycle, new maritime security companies are emerging.

A total of 33 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships were recorded around the world in the first three months of 2024, an increase from 27 incidents for

the same period in 2023, according to the International Maritime Bureau, part of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), including two hijackings by Somali pirates.

ICC secretary-general John Denton commented: "The resurgence of Somali pirate activity is worrying, and now more than ever it is crucial to protect trade, safeguard routes, and the safety of seafarers who keep commerce moving. All measures to ensure the uninterrupted free flow of goods throughout international supply chains must be taken."

The return of Somali pirates comes at a time when the Houthis from Yemen are also firing on merchant ships passing by their shores, with around 80 vessels targeted over the past six months.

As a result of the heightened security concerns for merchant shipping, prices for private maritime security guards onboard have shot up this year, according to [recent analysis from sister title *Splash Extra*](#) with many ex-soldiers looking to get in on the action.

London-based security specialists Subrosa Group yesterday launched a brand new maritime security division. The group's CEO, Niall Burns, commented: "The establishment of our maritime security division is a direct response to the critical need for elite armed protection for large vessels navigating increasingly perilous waters worldwide. Incidents of maritime attacks are alarmingly on the rise, endangering the security, safety, and welfare of mariners on a daily basis as they traverse the oceans."

The rise in demand for private maritime security companies (PMSCs) has once again brought calls for this industry to face greater regulation.

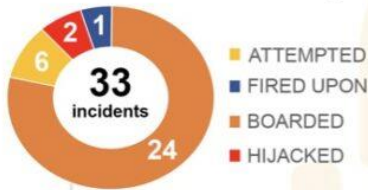
The number of PMSCs peaked in 2011, during the previous Somali piracy cycle, when 11 new PMSCs were applying every month for membership to the Security Association of the Maritime Industry, a body that disbanded in 2016.

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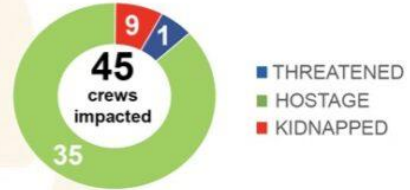
JANUARY - MARCH 2024



Number of incidents reported:



Impact on crew:



Waters off Somalia

Reported Incidents



79%

OF VESSELS ATTACKED
WERE BOARDED