



# HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MODERN PIRACY?

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**Skull and cross bones? Peg legs? Captain Jack Sparrow? No, these aren't the pirates that modern shipping has to deal with.**

Modern pirates have moved on since the time of Captain hook. Last year alone there were 179 pirate attacks. This is less than the 191 attacks in 2016, but the drop in piracy isn't happening fast. Modern piracy is a huge threat to the shipping industry, so what do we actually know about it?

## 1. Firearms and grenades are everyday weapons for the modern pirate.

Modern pirates now use heavy-duty firearms such as automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades- quite the improvement from cannons and swords.

Due to international laws around international waters, some ships cannot carry weapons on board, so they cannot defend themselves against this kind of attack. However, these vessels would implementing the best management practices for hardening their vessels against an attack. Outside of international waters and where vessels are allowed they can employ security patrol vessels and armed guards to help defend against an attack.

Naturally, you wouldn't want a foreign country coming into your waters heavily armed. Hence, the rule.

## 2. Dead or alive? A pirate will do his best to keep you alive.

You're worth a ransom if you're alive. If they kill you then how will they make money? They also prefer to keep hostages in good health as this means that governments are reluctant to hit back at them. Although this is obviously better than the alternative, this makes pirates a lot more difficult to retaliate against. Gone are the days where pirates may try to take a vessel and leave the crew- as technology increases it's becoming increasingly difficult to hide a stolen ship.

## 3. Piracy is profitable!

They earn an average of \$120,000 per crew they kidnap. Small time pirates earn in the low five figures, but bosses earn up to \$2 million. When dinner costs as little as \$1 in Somalia this is a lot of money.

## 4. Pirates are welcomed by some communities.

Often the district gets a cut of whatever profits pirates make, which they use for education and healthcare. Piracy often increases as poverty increases in a community. For the pirates this is a way to bring money back to put food on the table.

## 5. Estimated annual loss due to piracy is \$13 to \$16 billion.

This includes vessel costs if it's stolen, reroute vessels to avoid high risk areas, armed security, preventative measures on board, as well as ransoms and aftercare for hostages.

## 6. Most carriers don't report piracy incidents.

When a carrier reports a piracy incident their insurance rates skyrocket and they have to pay for an investigation- this can cost up to \$1,000 per day. This ultimately means that many carriers don't report piracy incidents as a way to prevent paying these costs. In turn, many pirates aren't persecuted, a lot of attacks aren't recorded and piracy data is lower than the actual

level of attacks.

## 7. Apparently Britney Spears songs have been used to deter pirates.

People speculate that music can deter pirates, so the British Navy decided to play music that represented the western culture that pirates hate. And who did they think was the epitome of Western culture, Britney Spears. So, it's been reported that her music has been used to deter pirates.

## 8. Are pirates taking their lead from Robin Hood?

The source of modern piracy is often rooted in the collapse of local governments. Take Somalia as an example, the rest of the world seized the chance to take advantage of Somalia's new unprotected and unenforced state after the collapse of their government. Neighbouring countries began illegally fishing and dumping waste in their waters and angry Somalian fishermen began to board these vessels and demand the fees that should have been collected by the government. Resulting in modern Somali pirates.

## 9. Sailors can't use traditional weaponry, but they've found other ways to fight back.

As we've already covered, commercial ships aren't allowed to carry weapons on board – however, they aren't letting that stop them! Many shipowners pay security companies to accompany them on their journeys along pirate-heavy routes. But other crews are using more inventive measures. In February this year, a cargo ship came under attack by pirates in the Basilan region. The crew members had no weapons to fight back, but threw hot water and oil at them and managed to stop them from boarding the ship. This is just one of the methods seafarers have had to resort to when under attack.

## 10. Ship Managers and Security officers can do more to help.

You don't just need guns to protect vessels Ship Managers and Owners are given best management practices and guidelines that help provide guidance and direction about how to harden and make commercial vessels more secure. These guidelines provide recommendations into different types of equipment and methods.

Interesting fact, even though razor wire is recommended it has never stopped a boarding from taking place!

ARX Maritime's anti-piracy barriers featured in the latest Best Management Practices 5 recently as one of the recommended methods for protecting your vessel from modern piracy. The barriers are easily attached to the guard rail by the crew on board the vessel. Each barrier is part of a plastic modular system that creates a wall around your vessel to prevent pirates from using grappling hooks, ladders or ropes to board. They're a cost-efficient and much more effective alternative to razor wire. And above all else they significantly increase the chances of your vessel and crew surviving a pirate attack.

If you'd like to know more about the anti-piracy barrier, or ARX's other products, visit [www.arxmaritime.com/products](http://www.arxmaritime.com/products) or get in touch with the ARX team at [enquiries@arxmaritime.com](mailto:enquiries@arxmaritime.com) or +44 1313170048.

