

# General Assembly Fourth Committee

(SPECPOL)

Research Reports



**Forum:** General Assembly Fourth Committee (SPECPOL)

**Issue:** Addressing the threat posed by international piracy

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## **Introduction**

International Piracy is a grave issue that has endangered ships and disrupted international trade for centuries. During the Golden Age of Piracy in the 17th and 18th centuries, pirates tormented the seas, more specifically the Indian and Caribbean Oceans. Today, piracy is a significant problem once again, particularly off the coast of Somalia, in the Gulf of Guinea, and in Southeast Asia. These modern pirates hijack ships, kidnap crew members, and demand ransom, creating major challenges for international security and trade.

The main challenge in combating piracy today is the oceans being vast and incredibly hard to patrol. Furthermore, there is weak maritime law enforcement in some regions and poor economic conditions that drive people to piracy in poorer nations. Additionally, international laws can be complicated, and countries must work together despite their different interests, making coordinated efforts difficult. Effective solutions require strong international cooperation and strategic policies.

Key stakeholders in addressing piracy include countries with affected shipping routes, international organizations like the United Nations and the International Maritime Organization, private shipping companies, and non-governmental organizations. Collaboration among these groups is essential to develop and enforce measures to reduce the threat of piracy.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

### **Piracy**

The act of attacking and robbing ships at sea. Modern piracy often involves hijacking vessels, kidnapping crew members, and demanding ransom.

### **Maritime Law**

A body of laws, conventions, and treaties that govern private maritime business and other nautical matters, such as shipping or offenses occurring on open water.

### **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**

A sea zone prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea over which a state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources.

## **Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

### **Somalia**

Somalia's coast is notorious for piracy, especially between 2008 and 2011. The country's instability and lack of a strong government have made it a hotspot for pirate activity.

### **Nigeria**

Nigeria's waters in the Gulf of Guinea have seen numerous incidents of piracy and armed robbery. The country's economic conditions and the presence of oil industries make its waters attractive to pirates.

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

The IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping. It plays a crucial role in developing international maritime security protocols and promoting cooperation among member states.

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

The UNODC assists nations in implementing anti-piracy measures, providing legal and technical support, and enhancing the capacity of affected regions to combat piracy.

## **Timeline of Events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
1991	The collapse of the Somali government, leading to increased piracy in the region
2008	The international community forms Combined Task Force 151 to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia.
2009	The Maersk Alabama hijacking brings global attention to Somali piracy.
2011	Piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia peak, with 237 attacks reported.
2013	Implementation of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).
2020	The Gulf of Guinea surpasses Somalia as the world's piracy hotspot, accounting for over 90% of global kidnappings at sea.

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

### 1. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS): UNCLOS

provides the foundational legal framework for maritime activities, including the definition of piracy and the rights of states to combat it on the high seas. It establishes the legal basis for international cooperation against piracy, enabling states to seize pirate ships and prosecute those involved. This framework is crucial for coordinating global anti-piracy efforts and ensuring that actions taken against piracy are consistent with international law.

2. **UN Security Council Resolutions 1816, 1846, and 1851:** These resolutions expanded the legal framework for combating piracy, specifically targeting the threat off the coast of Somalia. Resolution 1816 was the first to authorize international forces to enter Somali territorial waters, breaking the traditional restrictions on sovereignty to address the crisis. Resolutions 1846 and 1851 further strengthened these measures, with Resolution 1851 also permitting land-based operations to dismantle pirate networks, demonstrating the international community's commitment to combating piracy through both maritime and onshore strategies.

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

**June 2, 2008:** The UNSC adopted Resolution 1816, authorizing foreign naval forces to enter Somali waters to combat piracy, a departure from traditional international law. This was done at the request of Somalia's government, allowing foreign vessels to take "all necessary means" to pursue pirates within Somali territory.

**December 16, 2008:** Resolution 1851 expanded international authority to combat piracy by permitting land-based operations in Somalia, aiming to dismantle pirate networks. It also promoted the creation of a coordination center to enhance global anti-piracy efforts.

**2011:** The CGPCS was established to enhance global cooperation against Somali piracy, bringing together states, international organizations, and the private sector. The group focused on coordinating actions, sharing information, and strengthening regional capacity to address piracy comprehensively.

## **Possible Solutions**

### **Strengthening International Cooperation**

Enhanced collaboration among nations, international organizations, and private entities is crucial. Joint naval patrols, intelligence sharing, and coordinated legal frameworks can help create a unified front against piracy.

### **Economic Development in Affected Regions**

Improving economic conditions and stability in regions like Somalia and the Gulf of Guinea can address the root causes of piracy. International aid and development programs can provide alternative livelihoods and reduce the incentive for piracy.

### **Enhancing Maritime Security**

Increasing the presence of naval forces in piracy-prone areas, along with equipping commercial vessels with advanced security measures, can deter pirate attacks. The use of armed guards, safe rooms, and tracking systems can enhance ship security.

### **Legal and Judicial Reforms**

Strengthening legal frameworks to prosecute pirates effectively is essential. International support in building judicial capacities in affected countries can ensure that captured pirates face justice and deter future acts of piracy.

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