

# PIRACY BACK ON THE RADAR FOR EAST AFRICA

*Somali pirates have upped the stakes for those caught up in the middle of it all.*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Following five years of relative calm, recent events suggest that Somali pirates have returned to the coast of East Africa. While efforts to combat piracy in the region proved effective in the short-term, new tactics undertaken by the hostile groups - involving instances of kidnapping for ransom - have upped the stakes for those caught up in the middle of it all.



Jared Higgins

This is according to Jared Higgins, CEO of the [Arcfyre Group](#) - a leading protective and risk consulting firm with vast experience in unstable and challenging environments, who highlights that there has been a clear spike in piracy kidnappings off the East Coast of the African continent.

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*Jared Higgins*

“Pirates off the coast of Somalia took hold of an oil tanker in March this year, this is the first hijacking of a large commercial vessel in the region since 2012. The armed hijackers then demanded a ransom for the release of the tanker while also holding eight crew members hostage on board.”

Higgins adds that the shift in their approach - from maritime-based piracy to land-based kidnapping - is likely due to a realisation that collecting on kidnapping ransom can have a greater financial result than vessel hijacking or cargo theft – tactics commonly seen along the African West Coast.

“Previously, Somalian pirates’ modus operandi was to seize vessels and hold them to ransom. Now, holding human hostages, ensures they not only get a bigger pay-out but also that they are attended to far quicker by those negotiating the ransom.”

“It is also essential to consider that there have been changes in Somalia’s political leadership recently, an election which is widely believed to be one of the most corrupt political events in the country’s history. There are many who believe that high-ranking government officials have a hand in the recent

resurgence in piracy,” he says.

Higgins shares that discussing actual ransom amounts demanded in past cases is difficult because the negotiation process is highly confidential and - when hostages are involved - the ransom amount can vary quite drastically. “There have been reports of between \$400,000 and \$500,000 being paid to free a human hostage. The amount in this regard often depends on the hierarchy of the person. For instance, more money will be demanded for the ship’s captain.”

“What is most important to consider here is education. What pirates plan and attempt to do is out of anyone’s control. Companies do, however, have full control over getting to grips with the risks involved in the maritime industry and have measures in place to avoid any potential fall out,” he says.

To do this, Higgins suggests industry organisations operating in high-risk waters ensure they have an educational programme as well as a comprehensive crisis management programme in place.

“This will ensure that all known threats are avoided and any surprise ones can be managed quickly and effectively,” he concludes.

About the Arcfyre Group:

The Arcfyre Group is a leading, globally operational Protective and Risk Consulting firm. For over a decade, Arcfyre has provided professional, turnkey services to high net-worth individuals, philanthropic and Fortune 50 companies. The Arcfyre Group has successfully provided Protective, [Secure Drive](#) and risk consulting services to clientele in over forty countries on four continents

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