New threats to peace and Security: Extent to which new security threats of Piracy have affected economic and human security in East Africa

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> **"**Security is taken to be about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile**.**

In recent years piracy and cyber security have emerged to represent new security threats to economic and human security like never before.

Security has been defined as protection from any kind of threat but in total departure from the orthodox view as perceived by the military and war professional. Experts such as Buzzan (1991) have defined security as freedom from fear or threat of social, economic, society, environmental and military concerns. Buzzan therefore expands the definition of security to include human and economic security dimensions to the concept of security.

Human security, as an approach gives understanding to national and international security by adding a dimension that gives primacy to the safety of human beings and their complex social and economic interactions. In this approach to security, the subjects are individuals and the end goal is the protection of people from traditional threats such as military concerns to nontraditional threats such as poverty and disease[1].

The UN has advanced this concept further by declaring that "Human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people" (General Assembly resolution 66/290[2]

Other organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross view security from an economic lens. The ICRC defines **economic security** as the ability of individuals, households or communities to cover their essential needs sustainably and with dignity. This

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[1] https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-security

[2] https://www.un.org/humansecurity/

can vary according to an individual's physical needs, the environment and prevailing cultural standards. Food, basic shelter, clothing and hygiene qualify as essential needs, as does the related expenditure; the essential assets needed to earn a living, and the costs associated with health care and education also qualify[3].

By understanding peace and security from such a broad lense, it is therefore possible to understand the nexus and extent to which new threats such as piracy and cybercrime have on human security.

Piracy as a security threat

> **Piracy has been defined as an act of robbery or criminal violence at sea. It includes acts committed on land, in the air, or other major bodies of water or on shore. It generally involves unlawful, boarding, kidnap and commandeering of marine or land vessels or convoys to undesignated locations or destinations for looting, ransom or other purposes.**

Although the term "piracy" may conjure up images of bearded men with eye patches, wooden legs and parrots who were convicted and buried centuries ago, pirate attacks are indeed posing a threat today's shipping lines (and human wellbeing) all over the world[4]. According to reports, the number of Pirate Attacks globally between 2009 and 2017 was 2717 with 180 attacks registered in 2017 alone[5].

Causes of an upsurge in piracy

There are many reasons to explain the increasing rise in piracy but some of these have been constantly made;

- *The disappearance of US naval forces fleets from major international water bodies after the end of the cold war. This has allowed pirates and criminal gangs to operate freely on the open high seas with minimal interference*

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[3] https://www.icrc.org/en/document/introduction-economic-security

[4] https://www.statista.com/statistics/266292/number-of-pirate-attacks-worldwide-since-2006/

[5] ibid

- *The improvement in maritime navigation and technology which has enabled launching and navigation of larger ships manned by smaller crew who are extremely vulnerable to pirate attacks*

- *Expansion of jurisdictional waters beyond those which are directly in effective control and patrol of their claimant states.*

- *Instability, state collapse and increasing harsh economic conditions in Countries such as Somalia and Yemen.*

- *Falling states and absence of centralized governments in Countries such as Somalia*

- *Lucrative ransoms paid which acted as incentives for more attacks*

- *Long uncompleted trials and deterrent punitive measures to convicts which motivated others to conduct attacks*

- *Radicalization and justification of piracy as tool in response to political interference, economic dominance and over exploitation of marine natural resources by global super powers such as America.*

Today, pirates' attacks pause a genuine threat to maritime transportation and security. Pirates are capable of cutting off important transit choke points such as the Strait of Bab al-Mandab between Arabia and Africa or the Strait of Malacca in South East Asian waters. In 2017, the trade routes around the Indonesian coast as well as in Bangladeshi and Nigerian waters were counted among the most perilous at sea paths globally.

The Horn of Africa, along the Somalian coastline, has become one of the most dangerous waters prone to piracy attacks. According to various reports maritime piracy off the Horn of Africa grew in frequency, range, aggression, and severity at an alarming rate covering more than 2.5 million square miles of ocean. Since 2007, Somali pirates attacked and harassed vessels transiting up to 450 miles offshore in the Indian Ocean and in the Gulf of Aden, a natural chokepoint providing access to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal[6]. The number of actual or attempted attacks in the Somalia's territorial waters off the East African coastal shore line was 462 with 5 attacks reported in 2017 alone[7]

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[7] https://www.statista.com/statistics/250867/number-of-actual-and-attempted-piracy-attacks-in-somalia/

For 2017, an International maritime organization, One Earth Future (OEF)'s Oceans Beyond Piracy (OBP) recorded a total of 54 incidents in the Western Indian Ocean region, marking an increase of 100 percent from 2016. Accordingly, 2017 saw an increase in the number of seafarers affected by incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea, from 545 in 2016 to 1,102 in 2017. For the first time in two years, OBP recorded incidents of hijacking and kidnapping at sea in the region. Suspicious activity continued to be the highest represented incident in the region in 2017 reporting a significant increase from 13 recorded incidents in 2016 to 32 in 2017[8].

The short surge in hijacking attacks in the first quarter of 2017 was attributed to several factors. These include the continued intent of pirate action groups to launch attacks and the opportunity to do so, due to lessened adherence to ship self-protection measures, including Best Management Practices (BMP). Independent deployers represented the primary naval presence in the region, but both coalition forces and independent deployers decreased days of operation, or days on station in the region, in 2017.

Effects of Piracy on human security

Piracy has led to significant decline in human security, by instilling fear, insecurity and fatalities along the East African coastal shoreline. According to OEF- OBP on the state of piracy, the number of piracy on the East African coastline tripled in 2016. There were 54 piracy incidents on the East African coast in 2017—more than triple the 16 incidents recorded in 2016. It states that the number of sailors affected increased from 306 in 2015 to 1,102 in 2017, with at least 79 of them injured or threatened in the attacks in which 41 per cent of the attackers were armed. The number of attacks as in previous years shows that the capability and intent of pirate networks has not decreased. This was witnessed with the increased number of hijackings, including of the Aris 13, the Asayr 2, and Al Kausar[9]. The number of hostages killed or injured by Somali pirates increased significantly in 2017, according to further maritime reports[10].

Nearly 4,000 seafarers were fired upon by Somali pirates, the report said. Of that number, 968 seafarers faced armed pirates who managed to board their vessels, while some 413 of those seafarers were rescued from secured rooms on their vessels by naval forces. At least 1,206

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[8] http://oceansbeyondpiracy.org/reports/sop/east-africa

[9] ibid

[10] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18548810

hostages were held by Somali pirates in 2011, including 555 seafarers attacked and taken hostage during the year, and 645 captured in 2010 who remained in pirate hands. Half of those held were subjected to punching and slapping and 10% suffered violent abuse such as being locked in freezers, burned with cigarettes and having their fingernails pulled out with pliers, the reports stated.

Effects of piracy on economic security

In 2017 the economic effect of piracy on East Africa was estimated at USD1.4billion. This was a slight decline from $1.7 billion in 2016, mainly due to a 13 per cent decrease in the use of privately contracted armed security personnel. The costs had stabilized over the past three years, after a decline between 2010 and 2015, from about $7 billion in 2010 to $1.3 billion in 2015[11].   None the less, these amounts are substantively high if measured in correlative development terms and represent a significant economic security risk to the region.

Piracy has increased administrative cost measures in counter piracy measures. It has led to increased military presence and diversion of vital resources to combat piracy. In 2011 the total costs in military counter piracy measures was estimated at USD 1.27bln. This was spent on administrative budgets, military vessels and unmanned aerial vehicles[12]. An additional USD 635 million was spent on insurance premiums[13]. The cost of prosecuting pirates in trials and imprisonment was USD5.3 million[14]. These figures have substantively increased in 2017.

These are vital resources which could have been used for other development activities such as social service provision and infrastructure development but have been switched towards addressing piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Effect on trade and commerce

Piracy has affected trade and commerce along the East African coastline. According to the South African Institute for Strategic studies (ISS), trade in sub-Saharan Africa was slowly

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[11] ibid

[12] https://www.statista.com/statistics/251671/cost-of-counter-piracy-military-efforts/

[13] https://www.statista.com/statistics/251677/total-cost-of-somali-piracy-by-factor/

[14] https://www.statista.com/statistics/251665/cost-of-prosecutions-of-somali-pirates-worldwide-by-region/

suffering from the consequences of piracy on major shipping liners along the Eastern African coast[15].

The resurgence of incidents of piracy has the potential to affect international trade and maritime movement of cargo around the East African coastline. In advertently this has collateral damage to East African economies and other Countries around the world. Shipping liners have to consider alternative routes which are perceived safer routes such the Suez Canal, the South African tip or even the Panama Canal.

Increased costs in freight and insurance charges.

One of the major consequences of piracy is the increase in insurance rates for the shipping industry and the need to purchase additional insurance to cover the risk associated with transiting a piracy prone region. For example, insurance companies now offer "kidnap for ransom" policies to ships that move through the Suez Canal. According to one insurance company, the U.K. based Hiscox, prices the policy at US$15,000 per trip through the Gulf of Aden and was reported to have increased dramatically. Also, because of the danger posed to shipping transiting the Gulf of Aden, insurance premiums had risen tenfold. For example, insurance companies had increased premiums for sending a cargo shipment through the Gulf of Aden to about US$9,000 from US$900 in a period of one year.

From an economic point of view, having Africa's access to internationally developed materials such as nuclear reactors, vehicles, tractors, imported and exported food, and other materials reduced will be devastating. More worrying is the impact of a decrease in exports of natural resources from African countries[16].

Piracy has changed the livelihoods of communities along the Somali coastline who have abandoned vital livelihoods such as agriculture and nomadic farming to join piracy. Fishing communities have also been forced to abandon fishing from fear of attacks at sea and hence changed the entire economic security of communities living along the coast of Somalia. According to the UNDP many Somali youth joined piracy as a source of employment and piracy is seen and proven to be a vital ready source of income and path to quick wealth and prosperity.

Piracy financing of money laundering and terrorism

The proceeds from piracy have found their linkages to finance money laundering and terrorism activities. According to the World Bank, the Somali pirate business model relies heavily on onshore support infrastructure to conduct ransom negotiations. Generically a pirate operation consists of armed offshore operations with onshore support that provides shelter for returning

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[15] Ben Coetzee, Senior Researcher, Arms Management Programme, ISS Pretoria Office

[16] https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-deadly-impact-of-piracy-on-trade

pirates and access to markets for stolen goods and for the goods, services, and manpower needed for pirate attacks[17]. The total amount of money paid in ransom fees by various companies was estimated billions of dollars. Most of this was invested in legitimate business such as real estate, forex bureaus and financing Alshabab terrorist activities.

There is risk of fueling war and further instability with deadly military hardware captured by pirates falling in the hands of militants. Although previously pirates targeted fishing vessels and smaller cargo ships, they later targeted larger vessels such as chemical tankers, bulk carriers and thus pausing a higher security risk than ever.

Amongst their high-profile targets included a Ukrainian vessel loaded with heavy weapons and a Saudi owned VLCC. The *MV Faina*, or "crown" in Russian, was a Ukrainian vessel loaded with rifles, heavy weapons and 33 Soviet made T-72 tanks that the pirates captured on 25 September 2008. The ship was initially thought to have been heading for Sudan or some other African country, possibly Kenya. The *MV Faina* was then surrounded by three warships from the Combined Task Force 150 during its hijack to prevent the ship's deadly cargo from ending up in the hands of Somalia's Islamic insurgents and other terrorists. The initial ransom demand was for US$35 million but it was finally released for a reported sum of US$3.2 million.

Piracy has affected Tourism and investment along the East African coast of Somalia. Piracy attacks on hotels and large deep-sea fishing vessels has significantly retarded invested in East African coastal economy, along the Somalian coastline.

There have been regional attempts to combat piracy. The US and EU Naval patrols and tracks pirates off the East African Coastline and the Gulf of Aden under the auspices of Joint Task Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 including troops from the US, EU and Canada. This has accounted for the declining numbers of attacks in the recent years. The downside of this effort is that the task force is externally funded and cannot be a long-term solution. This therefore demands that Eastern Africa states step up their capabilities to counter piracy along its long coastline.

In a nutshell, piracy represents one single new threat to human and economic security. Despite a reduction in reported cases of piracy in 2018, the disappearance of piracy in the 19th Century and its resurgence in the 1990s and increase between 2000 and 2017 shows that this security threat is not over. Perhaps the pirates and their benefactors are planning and waiting to strike their next target. Extra vigilance, collective military and civilian measures are required to contain this threat.

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