

## Human Cost of Somali Piracy 2011 Report Released

A report highlighting human cost of Somali piracy was launched on Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June at a conference in London. The report is written jointly by Kaija Hurlburt of One Earth Future for its Oceans Beyond Piracy project and by the International Maritime Bureau.

Link to the report: <http://www.icc-ccs.org/news/745-human-cost-of-somali-piracy-updated-report-released>

The report shows that all of the captive crews were subject to treatments in violation of basic human rights and psychological abuse. At least half of the crews experienced physical abuse. In addition to those reported to have died in captivity, it says that three of the hostages died following release because of the abuse they experienced at pirate hands. A total of at least 1,206 hostages were held captive by Somali pirates in 2011, and 35 hostages died in 2011.



*"The pirates used to burn us with cigarette ends, used to tie us with chains and leave us on the deck in scorching heat—about 50 Celsius above zero. The company did not care for us at all and the pirates used to become furious about this fact and start torturing us."*  
—Anonymous Seafarer

*"There were some times when they would put all 18 people in chains and we were tied to the deck, and pirates brought some urine in bottles and poured it over all crew members. Then they brought a bucket of flour, and then threw that on our bodies. We had to be in this condition for 24 hours."*  
—Anonymous Seafarer

"Various analyses of the Somali piracy problem have so far ignored a meaningful study into the human cost upon the seafarers and their families," says Captain Pottengal Mukundan, Director of the IMB. Here flanked by the two authors Kaija Hurlburt (OBP) and Cyrus Mody(IMB)

"This report aims to fill this gap and highlight some of the shocking consequences of this crime upon merchant seafarers, who are in the main, silent, involuntary victims.

Seafarers kept as hostages are not the only victims of Somali Piracy.



Cyrus Mody (IMB)

In 2011, at least 3,863 seafarers were fired upon by Somali pirates armed with assault rifles and rocket propelled grenades in attacks, causing fear amongst the thousands of seafarers who transit through the Gulf of Aden each year.

In 2011, 968 seafarers faced armed pirates who managed to board their vessels. 413 of these seafarers were rescued from citadels (secured rooms) on their vessels by naval forces after waiting, terrified, for hours or even days while pirates tried to break into the citadels.

The family members of the captive crews have to live with the stress, fears, and the day-to-day deterioration in standards of living.

We are again reminded of those seafarers being held without the negotiating power of being on board a ship. Currently, the longest period for hostages in captivity is the crew of the M/V Iceberg 1 who are still being held after more than two years. The Iceberg 1 was pirated on 29 March 2010. It has since been abandoned by the owners and as the ship sailed under flag of convenience, no country is stepping forward to take responsibility. With a crew of various nationalities, the only parties left to negotiate are the crew themselves and the families of the crew members, both of whom are unable to raise money for ransom payments.