

## Piracy

We tend to think of piracy on the high seas as an archaic crime, but in fact, according to the **International Maritime Bureau**, it is very much still with us:

There were 234 actual and attempted attacks in the period, against 171 in the first half of 2002 and just 79 in 1992 when the centre began collating data.

Six areas accounted for two-thirds of the incidents: Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, India, the Malacca Strait and the Gulf of Aden. Some areas are so dangerous that the IMB advises vessels simply to avoid them.

Ships' masters should keep 50 or 100 miles off Somalia and avoid anchoring off the Indonesian coast in the Malacca Strait, the IMB says in a report published on Thursday.

Ships are attacked when they are berthed, at anchorage and steaming. Attacks are frequently violent. In the first six months of the year 16 seafarers were killed, 20 are missing, 116 were injured, assaulted or threatened and 193 held hostage.

One can hardly trade with the people of a country when it is inadvisable for ships to get within a hundred miles of their shores. As long as there are places in the world where the rule of law is absent, trade **will not be entirely free**, which is one of the reasons why it is important for the West to promote the ideals of the Open Society in other areas of the world.

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