

# COPING WITH CAPTURE

## HOSTAGE HANDBOOK ON SOMALI PIRATES

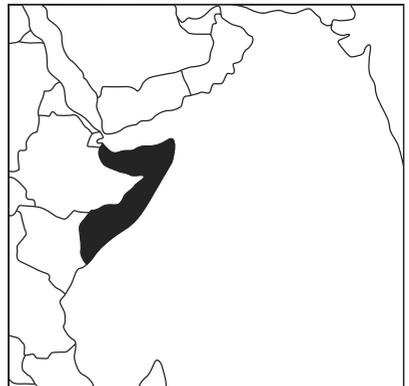
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Danish  
Maritime  
Officers



Citadel Solutions



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# INTRODUCTION

The aim of this handbook is to better prepare seafarers for encounters with Somali pirates and to assist them through a hostage situation with as little mental and physical injury as possible.

In general, seafarers have only a limited knowledge of pirates, their ways of attacking and boarding and their breaching strategies for the citadels. Many seafarers are uncertain about their general situation should they become hostages, and the treatment they will receive from their captors.

This handbook contains information about pirate tactics and the general behaviour of the pirates. It also provides the seafarer with a set of behavioural guidelines, to assist him in the event of boarding and especially during captivity. The guidelines correspond with (and is an expansion of) the UN Guidance on Surviving as a Hostage, Surviving Piracy by EU NAVFOR, and the recommendations on conduct during boarding from BMP4.

Being mentally prepared to handle an attack or hostage taking

reduces the general level of stress and the fear of capture.

This handbook has been produced by Citadel Solutions. Citadel Solutions has experience from counter-piracy missions dating from the World Food Programme in 2008, to the most recent deployments in 2011. The contributors include a military linguist and instructor in hostage survival, specialized in counter-piracy, with experience from several counter-piracy missions; a cultural expert from Somalia, specialized in counter-piracy; a crisis psychologist; Navy Special Forces; and hostage survival instructors trained in primitive first aid and basic survival.

The information in this handbook is based on open sources, such as accounts from released hostages and from local Somalis, hostages' video statements, interviews with pirates, analysis of pirate attacks and boarding, and IMO-approved hostage survival strategies.

The guide contains Hostage Guidelines that advise the seafarer on how to respond to the follow-

ing specific situations relating to piracy:

- Facing armed pirates
- Conduct in the event of a citadel break-in
- Dealing with the stress of captivity
- Coping with threats and torture
- Psychological first aid and group dynamics
- Basic first aid, natural remedies and basic survival

This handbook does not contain information on how to guard against pirate attacks or on company policy. It does not conflict with the Ship Security Plan. The handbook corresponds with industry guidelines on piracy as laid down by NATO, EU NAVFOR, IMO and in BMP4. The chapters relating to issues not described in the industry guidelines are based on officially approved hostage survival training and approved by certified hostage survival instructors.

Disclaimer: The behavioural guidelines are recommendations on how to act in different situations, based on former hostages' experience and valid principles on

conduct during captivity. But they cannot provide the hostage with any guarantees. Following the guidelines is done at the reader's own responsibility and risk. Neither Citadel Solutions, nor their partners, nor any of the authors or contributors can be held responsible for any injuries or damage sustained by following the recommendations contained herein.

The aim of this handbook is to increase the seafarer's knowledge of Somali pirates and conditions as a hostage, and to provide increased cultural and situational awareness.

It is our hope that this will help reduce the level of stress caused by fear of pirate attack and captivity and enhance the seafarer's ability to cope in event of such a crisis.

We hope this handbook will help the seafarer through captivity with as little mental and physical injury as possible, and that, after rehabilitation, he will wish to return to his work at sea.

*Citadel Solutions  
Copenhagen, 2012*

# FOREWORDS

**W**hen you embark on a seafaring career, you should be prepared for additional risks from the start. At sea, you need to be aware that you are able to turn to others for help, but essentially the only things you can really rely on are your own strengths, capabilities, skills and knowledge.

What should you do and how should you behave if it actually happens and you find yourself staring down the barrel of a machine gun?

We, civilian sailors, do not have any specialist military training. From my own experience I can tell you that a million thoughts fly through your head. At moments like these, a person is prone to stress above everything else. In such a situation, the main thing is to not lose your self-control, not give in to panic, and suppress your feelings of fear and even horror. You must never forget what your face might be giving away. Control your

breathing, think about your family and friends ... distract your brain. Displaying signs of weakness is no advantage, as pirates especially are far from sentimental.

Nobody is immune to misfortune.

We live in the real world and need to be prepared for any eventuality. Piracy has risen up from the depths of history, but it lacks any air of romanticism, especially for us, ordinary sailors. Who could have believed, ten years ago, that this problem would be so serious today, that we would have to attend lectures on piracy, read reports on work undertaken by various international organizations, request escorts, scan the horizon anxiously ... and know that the solution is still a long way off?

*Captain Andrey Nozhkin  
Hostage for 68 days on CEC Future,  
hijacked by somali pirates  
on 7 November 2008.*

For a number of years now, the world's shipping fleets and sailors have been threatened by Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Many sailors have been taken hostage, either together with their ships or alone, and held captive for months while the pirates have extorted shipping companies, authorities, insurance companies and families for ransom money. Experience shows that the hostage situation often comes as a sudden surprise and is extremely difficult to get through. Many sailors sustain lasting injuries to both body and soul.

Still more sailors and their families live with the fear of being captured and taken hostage while their ships – their places of work – sail through the threatened waters.

At Danish Maritime Officers we believe that being adequately prepared for the risk of being taken hostage and knowing how to survive an uncertain time in captivity can help many sailors to better survive this traumatic experience. Proper preparation and an understanding of the piracy threat create the framework for sailors to make the right decisions – should I

sail with my ship through the area or not?

As with any other serious threat, it is important to be aware of the risks and facts and to approach the situation with openness. We at Danish Maritime Officers were therefore in no doubt when we decided to be part of the project “Coping with Capture – Handbook on Somali Pirates”.

Our support of and participation in the project does not, however, reflect an acceptance of the situation. We remain hopeful that the international community can put an end to the havoc wreaked by pirates; but until that happens, it is ‘Best Management Practice’ to be as well prepared as possible.

With this handbook for all sailors, their shipping companies and their families, we are proud to have provided the international maritime community with the first completely open, practical and fact-based advice and guidance on how one best survives being taken hostage – should all security measures fail and the unthinkable happen.

*Fritz Ganzhorn*  
*General Secretary*  
*Danish Maritime Officers*