



Netherlands Shipmasters' Association point of view
on armed protection of merchant ships

1. Primarily, security of crew, ship and cargo is our highest priority;
2. Armed protection of any kind does not have our preference, because:
 - a. The ships' master has the responsibility and liability for everything that happens on board of his ship;
 - b. He is not competent in the use of armed force;
 - c. Armed violence on board of merchant vessels should be avoided;
 - d. The Netherlands Shipmasters' Association has preference for non-violent solutions.
3. If armed protection appears to be the **only** solution, then it should be under contract and supervision of Netherlands Government. In order of preference:
 - a. Military;
 - b. Military-Reserve;
 - c. Private armed guards contracted by or under **strict supervision and responsibility** of the ministry of Defence.
4. **Private Security Companies do not have our preference:**
 - a. There may be some reliable companies but still there are too many rogue teams. In spite of all measures, there is not any assurance what people the master will get on board;
 - b. Adequate monitoring of a team on board will not be feasible;
 - c. A great danger of escalation of violence;
 - d. Despite all that occurs, ultimately the master remains responsible, accountable and liable for the consequences.
5. The Netherlands Shipmasters' Association wishes to remain actively involved in all discussions that lead to better security on board.