

Two events highlight the impact of civil conflicts on international shipping. As 2006 drew to a close the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Somalia highlighted the threat to international shipping from any resulting rise in sea piracy.

In both cases well-armed and mobilized forces operating with 'official' sanction and logistical support from shore are the serious threat to international shipping in these regions.

Pirates operating off the coast of Somalia acted with approval of the clan warlords, facing tax by clan authorities when they landed their booty and assistance in brokering the ransom and release of hostages.

Tamil Sea Tigers, the naval element of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, are a highly organized and disciplined fighting force which has effectively protected the Tamil's smuggling routes and proved a capable adversary to the Sri Lankan navy.