## PÁZMÁNY PÉTER CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

# UNLAWFUL ACTS AGAINST THE SAFETY OF MARITIME NAVIGATION IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

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#### I RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

'Navigare necesse est, vivere non est necesse.' The quote attributed by Plutarch to Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus is the quintessence why navigation matters. This suggests maritime piracy has always been a crime provoking universal contempt, a crime the international community could and had to take action against.

Currently, the seas provide nearly 90% of the world trade and most states, even if they have no access to the sea, have some sort of maritime interest. Due to the increasing maritime traffic, ensuring the freedom of navigation and maritime safety is of significant importance. Maritime piracy threatens both the freedom of navigation and maritime security, as an ever-shifting crime, it is constantly present in some form. If the number of incidents decreases in one region, it flares up in another. Since the outbreak of the Sars-Cov-2 pandemic, the number of incidents has increased, the epidemic has put the affected coastal states at a more disadvantageous situation when the rule of law genuinely did not function properly in these states.

Maritime piracy is often associated with some sort of romantic image, however, as the research proves, in reality the perpetrators are heavily armed professionals and do not shy away from using violence. It is hard to fight them back once they got into a blind sector and reached the ship. When approaching a ship, it is almost impossible to make sure of their intention, whether they are fishermen or pirates and these roles may reverse instantly.

The aim of this research is to examine a traditional area of international law and to prove that dilemmas related to maritime piracy have greatly contributed to the development of various fields of international law. The opposite, however, is also true, the reason for having numerous questions concerning piracy stems from the unique structure and nature of modern international law. Maritime piracy does not fit into the system based on the sovereignty of states. In the affected states where the perpetrators come from, piracy and armed robbery reinforce corruption and organized crimes, therefore, piracy can be considered as a symptom of this and thus these phenomena provoke each other back and forth.

The research is to examine the phenomenon and exploring sore points where there is legal uncertainty. To this end, I present the regions most affected by piracy and describe the characteristics of the attacks. For the research applies the approach of international law, its primary goal is to present the current international legislation, to analyse its development and

test its practical applicability. The dissertation intends to shed light on the different ways we can interpret the definition of piracy and armed robbery and also on the conceptual distinction between definitions by comparing the conventions applying different logic and the relevant Security Council resolutions. The latter also introduced cross-border law enforcement or shiprider agreements, which raises numerous, mainly jurisdictional and human rights concerns. Analysing the regulation, the problem of terrorism at sea comes into limelight, it raises questions like how we can classify and distinguish two similar conducts. We must face some actors intentionally blending piracy with terrorism, for example, the United States justified the war on terror using piracy as part of their legal reasoning. Therefore, the research also focuses on how to distinguish between piracy, armed robbery and terrorism.

Besides, the dissertation aims to evaluate the role of private actors in the process and to present the position of insurers and shipping companies. This adds another layer of interpretation to the existing rules from a practical point of view. The issue of private sector also emerges in the form of deploying private armed security personnel, which raises various questions related to international law. Private Maritime Security Companies mean a concern, therefore, the research analyses how to integrate them into the system of international law.

Problems caused by piracy and the attacks carried out are not only limited to the sea. One of the most critical phases is about bringing the perpetrators to justice, a series of problems arise here, mainly in connection with the seizure, the arrest and the detention on board. The research explores these problems focusing on the use of violence and on human rights concerns. Considering human rights issues, the research also presents the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights. There is, however, another important procedural issue that relates to universal jurisdiction. Accordingly, one of the research objectives is to examine the role of piracy in the development of universal jurisdiction and its current relation to it. The research also covers exciting questions concerning a potential judicial forum like the composition, funding etc. of such a court.

Besides analysing the approach of international law, another objective of the research is to explore how affected states respond to the challenges posed by piracy and how they adapt to the existing international legal regulation. The dissertation provides a comprehensive view through the lenses of states from the legislation to the application of the law, also taking law enforcement into account. This is necessary because a sole analysis of international legal sources alone is not sufficient to fully elaborate on the subject. Although international

conventions define piracy and the legal framework, states shall impose sanctions and prosecution is also based on the procedural mechanism of states. In addition to the analysis of the relevant national regulations of the states, I also considered it important to evaluate the efforts made by the European Union to combat piracy. This topic is relevant since 90% of the EU's external trade is carried out at sea, the European ship owners manage 30% of the world's ships, 35% of the world's maritime transport capacity and more than 40% of the world's fleet controlled by EU companies. The European Union also has a fishing interest in the affected regions and has concluded fisheries agreements with third countries that are threatened by piracy.

#### II METHODOLOGY

The research examines the regulations and practices related to piracy and armed robbery at sea. The root causes of piracy lead us to the mainland and we find that launching initiatives suppressing it depends on the intention of the international community. Therefore, although the research focuses on issues of legal nature, the efficient suppression of piracy is not possible without the will of states.

Taking all levels into account, the dissertation attempts to provide a comprehensive view, by examining the current international legal regulations, particular, interstate and intra-state legislation and practices. The research applies both descriptive and historical analysis, in addition, in case of the levels mentioned, I also applied analytical methods. In each chapter, the research highlights and analyses the critical points.

A significant amount of resources of various quality were available, I attempted to collect them, sort them and to present them in a systematic manner in the research. Besides many studies, I also analysed a large number of primary sources. In the dissertation I also examined an extensive amount of sources of soft law nature developing simultaneously with the flare-up of piracy. As far as international law is concerned, Chapter II explores the history of the current international regulation. Therefore, in this chapter the research focused on the analysis of the travaux préparatoires, as this is essential for the interpretation of the concept of piracy. The research follows the changes in the meaning of each conceptual element (e.g. private ends) and has the aim to present different proposals, the conflict of scientific positions in order to show how the concept of piracy was created. In Chapter III the research continues to apply the most important interpretative methods of international law. When analysing piracy, following the conduct and the interpretative attempts of states, it is essential to apply systematic interpretation besides the textual one. In case of certain sources, it is particularly important to apply historical and teleological interpretation. Chapter II and III draw the attention to the inappropriate application of these interpretative methods by the international community and, as a result, we still apply an archaic concept for the relations of the 21st century therefore, the current regulations need to be constantly fixed and amended.

The meaning of piracy also varied according to subject of the interpretation (states have different positions when it comes to private ends or the extent of territorial sea etc.), thus taking

subjects and the scope of the interpretation into consideration were also important in the exploration of the international legal regulation.

Besides the descriptive analysis of Chapter I, the thesis compares the nature of incidents in the region. The observations made in Chapter III are also projected on the procedural chapters, demonstrating the impact the international definition has on prosecutions. The research also covers national regulations in detail, where the comparison also has a prominent role. The thesis compares the concept of piracy analysed in Chapter III to the national legislation and it examines to what extent the states in question apply the rules of international law and how they can incorporate them into their own legal system. The research also compares national regulations by analysing questions like which national legislations show similarities, which ones accept the same concept as the one established in the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Moreover, it focuses on states having troubles with the distinction between piracy and armed robbery and also on questions how these states relate to the use of private maritime security companies or how they criminalize piracy. The relevant case law of states is also analysed. Thus, when examining national regulations, the thesis took the regulations into account in terms of law enforcement. To this end, I also intended to explore the relevant judicial practice. In my analysis, in addition to the continental traditions, I also analysed the relevant common law states and states with tribal traditions.

Besides the primary sources, the dissertation also relies on case law analysis. In addition to the relevant cases tried before national courts, the thesis also examined the relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights. The thesis is to explore the applicable law in a particular incident.

When analysing the legislation, I found it important to process the provisions in the original language. In particular cases, I had to work with the English translation. I indicated where the latter was not officially available or the translation may have been uncertain (e.g. Somalia).

The research therefore presents and evaluates the current regulatory environment, its origin and context, based on the available resources, using different approaches. It provides an insight into legislative and enforcement uncertainties, highlighting areas where current international law needs to be improved.

Beyond the sources mentioned above, I am grateful to *Hugues Eudeline*, former Navy commander, lecturer of the *Institut Catholique de Vendée* and Vice President of the *Institute Géopolitique et Culturel Jacques Cartier* for our conversations. These had a significant impact

on shaping my point of view. Thanks to Prof. Eudeline, I was provided an insight into the aspects of other disciplines affected by the topic, mainly security studies and geopolitics. I was provided a practical view of the process of the arrest, detention, prosecution, the reality of maritime terrorism and French national legislation. I also had the opportunity to teach the topic at other universities (Catholic University of Portugal, Lille Catholic University and University of West Bohemia) either in form of a single lecture or a complete course for undergraduate and master's students, as well as for practitioners and seafarers. Their feedback also contributed to the research, also students' questions indicated which questions were the most interesting and important to discuss.

#### III RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Piracy and armed robbery at sea threaten the economy, mainly affecting maritime trade, tourism and fisheries, but they also cause problems for shipping and for other activities like energy production on the high seas. They contribute to the increase in the price of certain services and products and, to a certain extent, they also raise environmental issues and cause problems related to the safety of maritime navigation.

Modern piracy is invoked by the vulnerability of ships, the increase in maritime traffic, globalization, weak states and the blending the borderline between maritime zones. This crime usually manifests as a symptom of a low functioning state, a by-product of the rapid and unequal economic and political changes taking place as a result of globalization. Due to its complex nature, the suppression of piracy is not easy, the root causes are often to be found on mainland and piracy, terrorism and organized crimes are often connected. Piracy usually stems from the fact that certain states are unable to control their area effectively. In addition, the international community has a hard time figuring out what to do with those states balancing on the edge of functioning.

Analysing initiatives to combat piracy, it soon reveals that numerous areas of international law are affected. Therefore, the research draws conclusions that could contribute to the development of particular areas of international law in general.

- 1. The research points out that piracy has an opportunistic nature, it is committed for economic gain and it reflects the balance of power in a given region and the social and economic situation in a state. The nature of piracy can vary greatly depending on where it is committed. Thus, the strategy for suppressing it, must also vary. In some cases, the fight against piracy should be left to the regional states, in other cases it must be the international community that takes action. Knowing the type of attacks and the characteristics of a particular region are essential in selecting the appropriate solution and subsequent procedure. Piracy is therefore a complex problem, so the responses to it must also be complex.
- 2. Analysing the historical regulation of piracy and the development of its concept over three stages reveals there had been various debates before the definition was born. The issue raised in the debates of legal scholars was the extent to which the basic nature of piracy should be preserved. The thesis states that certain conceptual elements of piracy have not changed over the centuries but the world has been transformed. The real problem was that the comments

made on the concept, which are relevant to the interpretation, were gradually abandoned and only the definition was lifted over without being aware of its original purpose. Thus, in formulating the concept of piracy, without a conscious strategy, the previous definition has always been copied without any particular changes. The result is an archaic concept that does not stand the test of modern times in all respect and the international community only faced this in the early 2000s.

- 3. Based on the process outlined in the paragraph above mentioned, the legislation in force is therefore partly obsolete. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea could not provide a definition that adapts to the political and social situation describing the end of the 20th century. In addition to the *locus delicti*, the research identifies two other problematic elements of the current regulation, the private ends, the intention to make a profit and the requirement of two ships. Recognizing this, new conventions, resolutions, and concepts partly outside the legal approach appeared. These, however, typically mean a remedy to the problem on an ad hoc basis. The relevant Security Council resolutions, for example, apply only to Somalia and their significance is greatly relativized by the fact that the former transitional government gave its consent. Thus, the current regulation shows a pattern reminiscent of a patchwork, where the seam between the various amendments and new regulations sometimes holds tightly and sometimes it loosens up. Therefore, one of the aims of the research was to compare the current rules and to find out how they fit. As a result, we conclude that we cannot talk about a legal gap in terms of conceptual approaches to piracy, but there is a legal uncertainty. Nevertheless, the creation of a new convention would be difficult, including legal obstacles and according to the current trends, it doesn't seem to be realistic. Therefore we keep on applying personalized, ad hoc solutions with all its benefits and disadvantages. The best may be to have a compromise and agree on a common conceptual ground on how to interpret existing conventions. The real problem, however, is not related to the concept itself. Undoubtedly, there are many dilemmas around the basics, but the actual problem is that the current regulation doesn't provide us any information about the procedure, the transit and it does not require states to harmonize their national laws properly and to adapt them to international law either.
- 4. The distinction between piracy and terrorism has a prominent role in the description of the current international legislation. There is indeed a version of terrorism specialized at sea and the potential perpetrators of it receive professional training. The two crimes, piracy and terrorism, however, do show similarities, both are characterized by a kind of extraterritoriality that does not respect state borders. Piracy is also a specific form of conflict between state and non-state actors. In practice, it is difficult to classify an act committed at sea in general. In order

to separate the two crimes, I applied the element of intention. The research attempts to doubt the dichotomy of private/political ends. Analysing the historical sources, the research concludes that there may be another interpretation of this question. According to this, the line between the motivations is based on the fact whether the conduct in question triggers the reaction of a state. The research reveals that the term 'private ends' only appears in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Considering that era, it had the practical purpose of separating piracy from the acts of insurgents typically not recognized by international law under the law of armed conflicts. Thus, if we assume that violence that does not invoke the reaction of a state or cannot be linked to the state in any way remains private, then the crime committed by the suspects is likely to be regulated under UNCLOS and thus constitutes piracy. This may even bring a change in the paradigm considering rigid and categorical separation of pirates and terrorists. This may be useful given that pirates can easily be radicalized or conspire with terrorists.

The research also points out that some historical facts and the work of certain authors mentioned in the thesis (e.g. Cicero, Vattel, Gentili etc.) were interpreted in such a way that the crimes of pirates and terrorists are blended. The purpose of this piracy analogy is to prove that terrorists, like pirates, can be pursued and prosecuted by anyone as common enemies of mankind, thus legitimating a state's particular political narrative or operation by international law.

- 5. The research put the perspective of shipping companies in the limelight since they established their own regulation, they have their own procedure how to take action and to deal with hostage-taking and ransoms, which can complicate the application of the existing international framework. This may cause a problem because the rules shipping companies follow may differ from the current international regulation. According to the research, the use of force may be problematic if piracy is interpreted in a different way by relevant actors, and the private sector extends its protocol to cases which are not classified as piracy under international law and which are not covered by the Convention on the Law of the Sea. This can be important because while insurance covers the risk of piracy, it no longer covers damages caused by, for example, terrorist acts.
- 6. The research reveals, despite the international cooperation in controlling shipping routes, pirate attacks cannot be suppressed without the use of private maritime security companies. The thesis distinguishes the institution of vessel detachment protection from private security companies. The latter performs efficiently indeed, however, cases such as the *Enrica Lexie* highlights the serious consequences of hiring private maritime security companies. Separating legal activities from illegal activities at sea and collecting evidence can be difficult,

not to mention questions related to the use of force, *ultra vires* actions and human rights violations. The deployment of armed security personnel is considered as a success story, but the research points out that these companies initially didn't represent an attractive alternative first, but a complementary solution. It soon became obvious, however, that all the operations initiated by states investing a lot of energy into them were less efficient than private maritime security companies and thus it started to become a popular solution. It has also been suggested that it may even be worth ensuring this type of military presence in the affected regions in the future. The thesis also explores the attitude and the regulation of the affected states towards armed security personnel.

International law has slowly begun to open up therefore, the analysis of soft law sources has an important role in this area. As the ban of armed security personnel has apparently failed, international law must embrace the idea of deploying an armed security personnel. Allowing private maritime security companies, however, is partly based on pressure. The International Maritime Organization, which has therefore begun to open up towards armed security personnel, is aware that the deployment of these would affect other areas. In this regard, the UN has already considered a draft seeking to harmonize the deployment of armed security personnel with other areas of international law, but due to its restrictive nature, it may not be accepted widely by states.

7. In addition to the above-mentioned, the aim of the research was also to analyse problems around the capture and subsequent procedure. As a result, it can be suggested that one shouldn't only think in territorial waters and high seas, but a reaction zone could be created where states can act and prosecute perpetrators.

The thesis states that one of the most important dilemmas in the process of capture is related to the use of force and its extent. As it turned out, when an operation is carried out at sea, violence may be used gradually, step by step, but we cannot invoke the UN Charter 2(4) here. In these actions using force is legitimate in order to protect the freedom of navigation and states applying their police powers, these operations are not covered by the Charter but the UNCLOS. Nevertheless, the Webster formula applies to these cases as well.

When identifying the main problems, it turned out, besides the use of force, the jurisdiction establishing the arrest and the procedure is also an important issue. One of the most important findings is that piracy is in fact nothing more than a special jurisdictional situation and the *hostes humani generis* principle establishing universal jurisdiction is based on a sentence taken out of context from Cicero's work. At the same time, as I prove it in the research, the historical concept of piracy played a fundamental role in the development of universal jurisdiction,

however, as a modern phenomenon, universal jurisdiction doesn't apply to it, for it is recalled only on the basis of special *locus delicti* and not to let perpetrators escape without prosecution. Universal jurisdiction is a compass, drawing attention to the global priorities of a certain era, presenting those universal values that, if violated, can result in a general outrage. Therefore, piracy is difficult to fit in this, as it doesn't fit in international criminal law either. As it was demonstrated above, piracy is occasionally used as a basis for legitimating certain state operations, to reinforce them in its legal title. The dissertation draws the attention to this and clarifies the relationship between piracy and universal jurisdiction because sometimes we can discover a subtle but deliberate blending of concepts.

- 8. The research also reveals that there are many difficulties when collecting evidence. For the success of the judicial procedure depends on this phase, it is crucial that collecting evidence to be efficient, which, given the special circumstances, is not an easy task. Since the moment of committing the crime it may take years for the trial to take place, so the evidence must remain in a satisfactory condition for a relatively long time. This can be achieved if communication between states, direct actors such as investigators, coastguards, maritime authorities and the institutions involved in prosecution and enforcement becomes more efficient. The human factor therefore has a prominent role in this segment.
- 9. The dissertation also focuses on transfer agreements, as it facilitates the collecting of evidence and prosecution. This is neither extradition nor transfer in the traditional sense. In conclusion, perpetrators do not have similar rights as in case of an extradition or a traditional transfer, these agreements are specifically fitted to piracy. Such agreements are concluded with a number of states and analysing them, we can conclude that transfers vary a lot, ranging from physical transfers not supported by a specific legal background to extradition-like procedures. It can also be noted that the cross-section of the interpretation is narrow, as only the pirate attacks are mentioned in the exchange letters, they don't refer to armed robbery at sea. In addition, certain regional states have indicated a series of problems mainly concerning their capacity, so the future of transit agreements is dubious.

10. The research also explores the question of bringing perpetrators to justice, which also serves to suppress piracy in the long run. The dissertation elaborates on the potential judicial options ranging from national courts to the international courts and those possibilities in between, taking aspects into account such as the structure, physical proximity, jurisdiction, costs of the court and the time it consumes to set up the court in question. It is important to indicate, these findings don't only fit for piracy proceedings but they sum up the required elements for setting up an international court or a judicial forum with an international element

in general, therefore, the research analyses its advantages and disadvantages at large. Consequently, it collects the general key aspects and considerations for setting up a judicial forum to prosecute international crimes or crimes that violate international law.

Despite the relevant UN Secretary-General's report examining the issue in-depth, the research concludes that we do not get answers to certain questions. These include, for example, what happens to those financing or assisting piracy from the mainland or, if we set a judicial forum up other than national courts, how it relates to national courts (questions of subsidiarity or priority), let alone the relation to sentencing and enforcement.

Analysing the options, the research finds that piracy and crimes with a similar profile will never fall within the competence of international judicial forums. In this regard, the dissertation explains why forums as the ICC or ITLOS could not be considered as possible options.

11. As piracy started to spread in Somalia, the violation of the human rights of the perpetrators also became an issue. In this regard, the case law of the European Court of Human Rights should be taken into account. Perpetrators' human rights activate when law enforcement officers take control of them, when the officers board the ship. The main problem is related to the length of detention. Most, mainly European states are strict in this sense, yet the regulations weren't designed for so special circumstances. As a result, judgments condemning states have already appeared in the practice of the ECtHR.

Besides, states are often afraid of asylum seekers, however, as the dissertation indicates, the principle of non-refoulement, as we use it in international law, is not legally binding in this situation.

Nevertheless, in connection with human rights issues, it must also be noticed that there is no follow-up in terms of long-term effects, for example, we do not know what happened to the perpetrators returned to Somalia afterwards.

12. Another important topic analysed in the research is the case law of states. The thesis compares states primarily on the basis of the concept of piracy, the jurisdiction established, the attitude towards private maritime security companies and the judicial practice, relevant cases. As a result, states generally adopt three approaches towards defining piracy and armed robbery:

1. States rely on the UNCLOS. They may simply refer to the Convention and do not apply a separate definition. The Convention may be transplanted into their own legal system or states create a definition in line with UNCLOS. There are only few states including the United States or the United Kingdom adopting this solution. 2. States which derogate from international law and establish their own definition. 3. There are also states that do not regulate piracy at all as an independent crime. We can also conclude the attitude of a state towards piracy from the

position of this crime, where it is located in the structure of the national regulation, in which act or chapter we find it, if regulated at all.

In terms of the recognition of jurisdiction, states can be divided into two groups, there is a group of states that explicitly associate universal jurisdiction with piracy (e.g., the United States), while others rely on extraterritorial jurisdiction (e.g., Hungary, Portugal, or Norway).

The research also focuses on the decisions made by the European Union on the subject, as it is important for the EU states to be able to harmonize their legislation.

The analysis of national case law related to piracy also helps to clarify various jurisdictional issues, dilemmas related to the status of seafarers, the use of VPDs, armed security personnel, and general issues concerning the law of the sea. This also proves that piracy is not only a security policy problem, but has an important role in the development of international law.

13. Another important outcome of the research is that the collaborations between different areas and between theory and practice are not smooth. In this regard, we can witness a number of promising initiatives, but the fight against piracy is still fragmented. Each field concerned, be it a theoretical or practical approach (state practice, insurance companies, law enforcement etc.), deals with its own part of the process and uses a unique terminology. It is often present in the form of programs running simultaneously, theoretical science still does not appreciate practice and practice does not exploit the results of science. We may regard to proposals developed by jurisprudence as a bridge in reconciling different interests.

According to current trends, the international community should focus more on capacity-building rather than military operations, and the rule of law should be ensured on mainland. In case of the EU, this shift in the paradigm is already visible, although the military presence is maintained. It is important since, due to the nature of piracy, it is feared that the number of incidents can increase again.

The research, however, also points out that the phenomenon of piracy holds numerous dilemmas and, as a result, certain areas of the existing international law need to be improved. It is necessary for states, for example, to adapt their regulations to the current regime of international law as far as it is possible. This makes the actions against piracy efficient, so that they do not consume more time, human and financial resources than it is absolutely necessary. Nevertheless, the international community agrees that it will be much more difficult to suppress piracy in West Africa.

It is unlikely that piracy will be suppressed and disappear once and for all, but it is possible to strengthen maritime security. Meanwhile, in view of the historical and cultural traditions of

a particular state, efforts must also be made to establish the rule of law. This requires coherence concerning political will, legal solutions and operational activities and the opportunity of an efficient dialogue.

### RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS

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Kiss, Amarilla, 'Maritime piracy in the modern era in Latin America: discrepancies in the regulation' (2020), Acta Hispanica, no. II, Szeged

Kiss, Amarilla, 'Maritime Piracy and International Law' (November 2019) European School of Political and Social Sciences (ESPOL), Université Catholique de Lille

Kiss, Amarilla, 'International courts as the protectors of the global legal order?' (2019), International Association for the Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy (IVR) W 46, Lucerne

Kiss, Amarilla, 'A nemzetközi jog különleges alanyai'/'Atypical Subjects and Special Entities in International Law' (2019), Internetes Jogtudományi Enciklopédia <a href="https://ijoten.hu/szocikk/a-nemzetkozi-jog-kulonleges-alanyai#block-1194">https://ijoten.hu/szocikk/a-nemzetkozi-jog-kulonleges-alanyai#block-1194</a>

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Relevant course taught by the author and related to the research

International Law of Conflicts (MA, 2017/18 -)