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Israeli Security Academy Offers Maritime Protection Training

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An Israeli security academy is teaching counter-piracy and maritime protection to an international class of students.

The International Security Academy (ISA), is led by former soldiers in the Israeli security forces, and is known around the world for its expertise in training bodyguards and securing money transfers and convoys.

One hundred and twenty students from all over the world, including two women, participated on Thursday in the final drill of the six-week ISA course.

The training is focused on prevent pirates from taking over ships. A wave of piracy at sea has cost the insurance business at least 80 million dollars in the past year.

[David Mirza, Founder, International Security Academy]:
"Today is the final exercise of the maritime protection course, in which we simulate attacks on the ship, and in case of escalation, that we meet the pirates on board."

Cadets are trained in the use of several types of weapons, shooting towards small targets such as dinghies, and in face to face combat, in the event that pirates manage to get on board.

[Russ, Australian Student]:

"The training has been very unique, from my perspective coming from Australia and ex-military background. This sort of training, I haven't been exposed to before from an Israeli point of view. It's a new concept, as far as using combat to deter, they take a very offensive role comparing with a lot of other courses that are available."

[Ivana, Female Student from Serbia]:

"It is very important to make this team professional in what they are doing, because once the pirates attack the ship it takes them no more than 5 to 15 minutes to take over the ship, so the team has to be very quick, and very efficient in what they are doing."

Ivana says that it has not been easy to keep up with the boys' physical abilities, but she and her other female friend, Tamara from Switzerland, are doing just fine.

Piracy has flourished in recent years off the Somalian shores, with seaborne gangs seizing cargo ships for millions of dollars in ransom.

In an effort to prevent piracy in shipping lanes, international war ships under NATO, the EU and U.S. command, have been deployed off the coast of Somalia since the beginning of 2009.

The ISA course organizers say they have been flooded with requests from security companies, who are eagerly waiting to employ the new trainees.



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