

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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107 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia reported to ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre in 2024

- Higher number of unsuccessful boarding attempts by perpetrators in 2024

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) issued its 2024 annual report on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia, today at the 16th Nautical Forum held in Singapore. The forum was attended by over 120 participants from shipping companies, shipping associations, government and law enforcement agencies, diplomatic missions and academia.

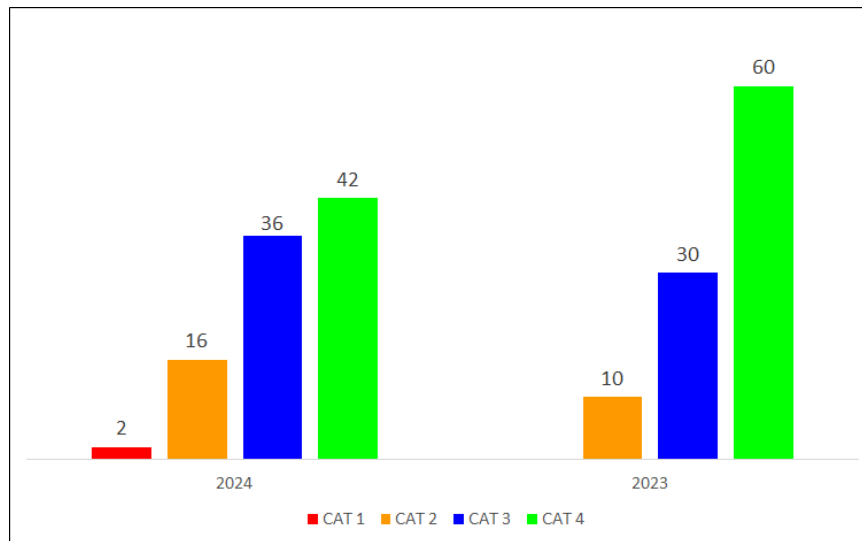
The key highlights of the annual report, for the period of January to December 2024, are as follows:

Situation of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia - 2024

- A total of 107 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships from January to December 2024, were reported to ReCAAP ISC, 6% higher than the 101 incidents reported in 2023. Of these 107 incidents, two were piracy incidents that occurred on the high seas, while 105 incidents were armed robbery against ships (in internal waters, territorial seas, and archipelagic waters under coastal States jurisdiction).
- Of these 107 incidents, 96 were actual while 11 were attempted¹ incidents. In 2023, there were 100 actual incidents and one attempted incident. The higher number of unsuccessful boarding attempts in 2024 is due to the heightened vigilance of ship crew when transiting in Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.
- Decrease in the number of incidents in ports and anchorages in India, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam compared to 2023. Higher number of incidents reported in Bangladesh and Indonesia ports and anchorages.

¹ Attempted incidents refer to incidents whereby the pirates/robbers tried but failed in their attempt to board the ship

- Increase in number of incidents involving armed perpetrators (CAT 1, CAT 2, CAT 3)
 - More incidents involving perpetrators carrying knives and gun-like objects, not used to harm crew, but to threaten them into submission
 - For the first time since 2020, two **CAT 1** incidents were reported, where armed perpetrators took hostage of the crew
 - More incidents involving larger group of 4-9 perpetrators
 - Engines spares are the most commonly stolen items



Severity level of incidents in Asia (CAT 1 – CAT 4)² in 2023 and 2024

- No incident of abduction of crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas was reported during January to December 2024. The last abduction of crew incident occurred in January 2020. However, the threat of abduction of crew for ransom remains due to the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Sulu and Tawi Tawi areas.

Area of Concern – Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS)

- The SOMS continues to be an area of concern. About 58% of the incidents in Asia (62 out of 107 incidents) occurred in the SOMS.
- In the majority (86%) of incidents which occurred in the SOMS, the crew was not injured. The incidents were mostly opportunistic, committed by perpetrators adopting a ‘hit-and-run’ approach. In most incidents, the criminals boarded ships that were ill-prepared with low freeboard, and manoeuvred at slow speeds in the restricted areas of the SOMS. The most commonly stolen items are ship stores, scrap metal and engine spares.

² Please refer to **Annex A** for classification of incidents used by ReCAAP ISC.

- Majority of the incidents (89%) occurred to bigger ships, namely bulk carriers and tankers (55 incidents). The other 7 incidents occurred on tug boats towing barges (6 incidents) and a general cargo ship (1 incident).
- Of the 62 incidents in the SOMS, 52 (84%) occurred during hours of darkness between 2300 to 0559 hrs. The other 10 incidents occurred during daylight hours.

ReCAAP ISC Executive Director, Mr Krishnaswamy Natarajan, said “ReCAAP ISC commends the proactive countermeasures taken by the law enforcement agencies over the past year, that resulted in more perpetrators being apprehended. The arrests made by the authorities send a strong message of deterrence to the would-be perpetrators.”

He added, “I would also like to commend the ship crew for enhanced vigilance, which led to more unsuccessful armed robbery attempts by perpetrators in 2024. To facilitate information sharing for the benefit of the larger maritime community, I would like to urge the shipping companies and crew to report all actual or attempted incidents using the ReCAAP mobile application. The timely reporting of incidents and response by authorities will further deter illegal acts by opportunistic criminals.”

– End of Release –

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About ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC)

The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) is the first regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The Agreement entered into force on September 4, 2006 with 14 Asian countries as Contracting Parties, and the Information Sharing Centre was established on November 29, 2006. To date, 21 States have become Contracting Parties to ReCAAP. To fulfil its vision as the Information Hub for combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, ReCAAP ISC enhances regional cooperation through information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements. At the 12th Governing Council Meeting in 2018, the Council announced that ReCAAP ISC has met the criteria to be a Centre of Excellence for information sharing in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships at sea. For more information about ReCAAP ISC, please visit <http://www.recaap.org>

ReCAAP INFORMATION SHARING CENTRE'S CLASSIFICATION OF PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY INCIDENTS

To provide perspective on incidents of piracy and armed robbery, ReCAAP ISC evaluates the significance of each incident based on two key factors – (i) Level of violence (ii) Economic loss incurred.

1. Level of violence

This factor refers to the intensity of violence in an incident, and the three indicators used to determine this are:

(1) Type of weapons used. Incidents of pirates/robbers who board a ship with no visible weapons are generally deemed as less violent compared to those equipped with pistols, knives, machetes, or other dangerous weapons. In cases where more sophisticated weapons are used, such incidents would be considered more violent.

(2) Treatment of the crew. Incidents where pirates/robbers kill or kidnap crew are deemed to be more violent compared to petty thieves who flee upon being noticed. Other cases could include threatening crew members, assault, or serious injury.

(3) Number of pirates/robbers engaged in an attack. As a rule, an incident where a larger number of pirates/robbers were involved would be considered more significant as having a large capacity (as well as probability) for use of force. A larger number of pirates/robbers may also indicate the involvement of gangs or organised syndicates rather than petty and opportunistic pirates who generally operate in small groups.

2. Economic loss

This factor takes into consideration the type of the property stolen from the ship. Cases of theft of cash or personal effects are generally less significant incidents compared to cases where the entire ship is hijacked either for the cargo on board or theft of the vessel.

Classification of incidents (CAT 1 – CAT 4)

Using the above indicators, the ReCAAP ISC, classifies all incidents into one of the four categories to determine their overall significance. **Please refer to the table below.**

Category	Description
CAT 1	The perpetrators were mostly armed with guns and knives, and the crew is likely to suffer some form of injury or physical violence such as being assaulted or tied up or threatened. In term of losses, the ship was either hijacked or the cargo on board was stolen, for example siphoning of cargo oil.
CAT 2	Majority of CAT 2 incidents involved 4-9 men who are likely to be armed with knives/machetes and in 1/4 of the incidents, armed with guns. The crew is likely to be threatened or held hostage temporarily to allow the perpetrators to steal the crew's cash and ship's property including engine spares. In a few cases, the crew suffered some form of injury or physical violence but less severe in nature compared to CAT 1 incidents.
CAT 3	CAT 3 incidents involved perpetrators who were armed, with either knives/ machetes or other items such as sticks, rods, bats etc. The crew was not harmed, although there were cases of crew subject to duress during the incident but not harmed physically. In almost half of the CAT 3 incidents, the perpetrators were unable to steal anything from the vessel, but in cases where losses were reported, stores and engine spares were the commonly targeted items.
CAT 4	The perpetrators are not armed and the crew not injured. More than half of CAT 4 incidents involved 1-3 men who escaped empty-handed upon sighted by the crew.

This classification of incidents allows the ReCAAP ISC to provide some perspective on the piracy and armed robbery situation in Asia, and to assist the maritime community to carry out risk assessment.