

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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51 incidents of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia in First Half of 2024

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) today released its Half-Year Report (January – June 2024) on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships (ARAS) in Asia. The key highlights of the report are:

Overall Situation

- No incident of abduction of crew for ransom in Sulu-Celebes Seas for the fourth consecutive year since 2020.
- A total of 51 incidents, consisting of one piracy incident on the high seas and 50 incidents of Armed Robbery Against Ships (in internal, waters, territorial seas, and archipelagic waters under coastal States jurisdiction) in Asia were reported to ReCAAP ISC in the first half of 2024. This represents a 16% decrease compared to 61 incidents in the first half of 2023. The piracy incident occurred onboard a barge towing a tug boat loaded with steel scrap in the South China Sea.
- The majority of incidents are generally opportunistic theft committed by perpetrators who are non-confrontational and who adopt a ‘hit-and-run’ approach. In most incidents, the criminals board ships that are ill-prepared, have low freeboard, and manoeuvre at slow speed in restricted areas of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS). The most commonly stolen items are engine spares.
- Of the 51 incidents reported, 44 were actual¹ incidents while seven were attempted incidents. In eight of the incidents (CAT 2), the perpetrators were armed with knives and the crew was threatened or tied up. In 16 of the incidents (CAT 3), the crew was not injured, and perpetrators stole unsecured items. For

¹ Actual incidents are incidents where pirates/robbers boarded the ship, regardless of whether they stole items from the crew or took items onboard the ship.

the remaining 20 incidents (CAT 4), perpetrators were not armed and the crew was not injured, and nothing was taken in seven incidents.

Bangladesh and Indonesia

- A total of 10 incidents were reported in Bangladesh ports and anchorages from January to June 2024, compared to one incident reported in 2023.
- A total of 14 incidents took place in Indonesia ports and anchorages from January to June 2024, compared to six incidents in the first half of 2023.

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

- A total of 21 incidents were reported in the SOMS from January to June 2024, a 49% decrease compared to 41 incidents reported in January to June 2023.
- Of the 21 incidents reported in the SOMS,
 - Twelve incidents occurred on the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait, six incidents occurred in the precautionary area, and three incidents took place in the westbound lane of the Singapore Strait.
 - The crew was not injured in the majority of the cases (81%)
 - The majority of incidents (81%) occurred onboard bulk carriers while underway or sailing
- In 38% of the incidents in the SOMS, the perpetrators escaped empty handed. Items like engine spares were taken in 48% of the incidents, while ships store and unsecured items were taken in the remaining 14% of incidents.
- 86% of incidents occurred during hours of darkness between 1800 to 0559 hrs.

ReCAAP ISC Executive Director, Mr Krishnaswamy Natarajan, said “Overall, the piracy and sea robbery situation in Asia has improved in the first half of 2024, compared to the same period last year. I would like to commend the littoral States’ of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore for stepping up enforcement and making arrests, as these efforts have contributed to a 50% reduction in the number of incidents in the Straits in the first half of 2024.”

He added, “Notwithstanding the lower number of incidents, there has been a higher number of incidences of petty theft reported at some ports and anchorages in Asia. There is a need for port authorities to identify gaps in security measures, and enforce the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code more strictly. Ship crew also needs to be more vigilant when their vessels are anchored or berthed. In addition, coast guards need to look out for suspicious small boats loitering around port areas, and take action to prohibit barter trade of ship stores and equipment.”

Empowering shipmasters to report incidents

Over the past year, ReCAAP ISC has launched several products to assist the shipping industry in timely and accurate incident reporting and information sharing. This includes the enhanced “ReCAAP” mobile app, poster with updated contact details of Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres in Asia, poster with contact details of law enforcement agencies of the littoral States of the SOMS, and version 2 of ReCAAP ISC’s Guide Book on Identification of Fishing Boats in Asian Waters.

The Centre has also rolled out an interactive dashboard, the ReCAAP Data Visualisation Map & Panel (Re-VAMP), which makes it easier for the shipping industry and maritime stakeholders to access the latest data and analytics on piracy and sea robbery incidents in Asia for risk assessment and academic research.

The products can be accessed from ReCAAP ISC website at www.recaap.org.

– 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 (14 Asian countries, 5 European countries, Australia, the USA) 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 at sea. For more information about ReCAAP ISC, please visit <http://www.recaap.org>