



## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **100 incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia reported to ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre in 2023**

*Annual Report (Jan – Dec 2023) released at 15<sup>th</sup> Nautical Forum, ReCAAP ISC's annual dialogue with maritime and law enforcement community*

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) today released its annual report on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia. The Annual Report 2023 was released at the 15<sup>th</sup> Nautical Forum held in Singapore, attended by over 200 participants from shipping companies, industry associations, government and law enforcement agencies, diplomatic missions and academic institutions.

The key highlights of the report, whose information is verified by regional authorities, are as follows:

#### **Overall Situation**

- No incident of piracy (on high seas) in Asia since 2021 and abduction of crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas for the third consecutive year since 2020. With the lower threat assessment, the Philippines Coast Guard has downgraded the threat level of 'Abduction of crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas' from 'MODERATE' to 'MODERATE LOW' in October 2023.
- A total of 100 incidents (99 actual, 1 attempted) of armed robbery against ships (in internal waters, territorial seas, and archipelagic waters under **coastal States jurisdiction**) were reported from Jan – Dec 2023. This represents a 19% increase compared to 84 incidents reported in 2022.
- Majority of the incidents were opportunistic and lower severity in nature, 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 **Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS)**. The most commonly stolen items are ship stores, scrap metal and machinery spares.

- There was an increase in incidents in ports and anchorages in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and the SOMS
- The severity level<sup>1</sup> of the incidents in Asia in 2023 are as follows:
  - No incident of CAT 1
  - Nine incidents of CAT 2
  - 30 incidents of CAT 3
  - 60 incidents of CAT 4 (perpetrators not armed, crew not harmed)

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

- The SOMS continues to be an area of concern, with 63 incidents reported in 2023 compared to 55 incidents in 2022.
- Of 63 incidents reported in the SOMS,
  - 58 incidents occurred in Singapore Strait, compared to 55 incidents in 2022.
  - Five incidents occurred in Malacca Strait compared to no incident in 2022.
  - In 53 out of 63 incidents, perpetrators did not harm the crew.
    - In eight other incidents, the perpetrators were reported to have been violent to the crew, and in one incident master was injured in the chest.
    - In two incidents, there was no information on the well-being of the crew
- The Centre is concerned with the cluster of 27 incidents off Pulau Cula (Indonesia), and involvement of armed perpetrators reported in 18 of 27 incidents.
- Majority of the incidents (81%) occurred to bigger ships, namely bulk carriers and tankers (51 incidents). The other 12 incidents occurred on board tug boats towing barges (11 incidents) and a supply vessel (1 incident).
- Of 63 incidents, 57 (90%) occurred during hours of darkness between 1800 to 0559 hrs. The other six incidents (10%) occurred during daylight hours, and all were onboard tug boats towing barges.

ReCAAP ISC Executive Director, Mr Krishnaswamy Natarajan, said “While the total number of incidents of armed robberies against ships in Asia has increased in 2023, I am heartened to note that there have been several arrests of the perpetrators. These arrests serve as a deterrence and send a strong signal to the organised criminal groups that any acts of armed robbery against ships in Asia will be severely dealt with.”

He added, “Notwithstanding, we continue to see a high number of incidents in the SOMS, one of the busiest shipping lines of maritime trade in the world. I urge the littoral States of the SOMS to do more to eradicate the organised criminal groups operating in this area by engaging the land and maritime agencies, as no incident at sea can occur without the connect with the criminals on land, and also to respond promptly to all reported incidents.”

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.recaap.org/classification\\_of\\_incidents](https://www.recaap.org/classification_of_incidents)

ReCAAP ISC encourages the shipping industry to effectively use the recently launched interactive dashboard [ReCAAP Data Visualisation Map and Panel \(Re-VAMP\)](#), which provides valuable data for making risk assessment and informed decision making, and instituting appropriate measures in preventing unauthorised boarding of ships when transiting the SOMS. Ship masters whose vessels have been boarded in the SOMS can make an incident report using the Centre's mobile application and [poster](#) containing updated contact details of law enforcement agencies of the littoral States of the SOMS, so as to seek timely assistance for the arrest of perpetrators.”

– 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>