

PRESS RELEASE

The Fifth Governing Council Meeting of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC)

1 At the Fifth Annual Meeting of the ReCAAP ISC Governing Council held on 1-3 March 2011 in Singapore, Governors from the seventeen¹ ReCAAP countries commended the ReCAAP ISC on achieving further milestones in research and analysis, capacity building, engagement and co-operation with other organisations with interests in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships.

2 The Council welcomed the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Denmark joining ReCAAP on 3 July and 20 November 2010 respectively. The expansion of ReCAAP membership demonstrates ReCAAP's growing credibility and relevance in the international maritime community, and further underlines the international cooperation being a key element in combating piracy and armed robbery effectively. In this light, the Council recognised the importance of full participation of all countries listed in article 18(1) of the ReCAAP Agreement, and hoped that those who have yet to sign and ratify the Agreement would do so to collectively address the issue of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The Council also welcomed external participants² to attend part of its deliberation, including for the first time, the United Kingdom.

3 The Council applauded ReCAAP ISC's initiative to embark on a three-year workplan aimed at enhancing ReCAAP ISC's value propositions in information-sharing, capacity building and co-operation with the industry and partner organisations. The Council commended ReCAAP ISC's innovative approach to facilitating inter-agency co-operation and industry engagement at each Contracting Party.

4 The Council commended the ReCAAP ISC on the release of its Annual Report 2010 which detailed the findings on piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The Council further noted although there was an increase of 60% in the overall number of incidents from 2009 to 2010, this was largely due to an increase in Category 3 incidents involving ships in ports and anchorages. There was no increase in the number of Category 1 incidents, which entailed assault or serious injury to the crew. Part of the increase was also attributed to incidents occurring in Arabian Sea. The Council also noted the distinctive differences in the modus operandi of pirates/robbers in the Arabian Sea and those involved in incidents in South East Asia. The Council was especially encouraged to note the successful outcome of incidents involving the hijack of tug boats and a tanker³ which demonstrated the significance of the ReCAAP network of timely sharing of information with law enforcement agencies and shipping community, and good inter-ministry cooperation among the governmental agencies within the respective countries that led to the rescue of the crew, the recovery of the hijacked vessels and arrest of the culprits.

5 In the area of capacity building, the Council welcomed the successful conduct of various ReCAAP ISC capacity building activities including the one co-hosted with Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Royal Thai Navy at Phuket, Thailand in August 2010. With the continual conduct of activities at various venues, participants gained exposure to the best practices of the various focal points, and to observe/experience the unique settings applicable to its local context.

6 The Council noted that the contributions of the ReCAAP initiative in combating piracy have gained international recognition. The ReCAAP ISC's statistics and analyses are now frequently cited in media and industry publications. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has also held up the ReCAAP initiative as a model of inter-governmental co-operation against piracy that

¹ The seventeen ReCAAP countries are listed in Annexe 1.

² The list of external participants represented at the meeting is attached in Annexe 2.

³ Details of Case Study on incident involving *MT Chios* are attached in Annex 3.

other regions could emulate. In addition, the ReCAAP ISC participated in United Nations (UN) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meetings on piracy matters.

7 The Council reiterated its serious concern over the deterioration of the piracy situation in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. At the same time, the Council expressed its highest concern about the fate of the ships and their crew members which are still under captivity by Somalia pirates. In this regards, the Council commended the concrete efforts of the ReCAAP ISC, under its Cooperative Agreement with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in the implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct⁴ through sharing of its experiences and expertise. These included ReCAAP ISC's active contribution to the Expert Meeting and Open Forum for Capacity Building of Neighbouring States of Somalia in the field of maritime law enforcement activities which was organised by the Japan Coast Guard and the Ocean Policy Research Foundation in Tokyo in October 2010; and the planned workshop to be organised by the Japan Coast Guard in Singapore in March 2011.

8 Representatives from industry organisations who attended the meeting also expressed their support for the ReCAAP initiative, and reiterated their desire to partner and collaborate with the ReCAAP ISC. The signing of MoUs between the Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF) and the ReCAAP ISC, and between Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) and the ReCAAP ISC, in 2010 reinforces the ReCAAP ISC's cooperation with the industry organisations.

9 The Council was pleased to note the ReCAAP ISC's initiative in engaging the members of shipping community by conducting Nautical Forums in 2010 and 2011. The Council looked forward to the conduct of ReCAAP ISC Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference 2011, jointly organised with BIMCO, INTERTANKO, NATO Shipping Centre⁵ and RSIS⁶ on 14 April 2011 in Singapore, with the main objective of engaging the shipping community. To this end, the Council was unanimous in urging ship masters to immediately report incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships to the relevant authorities, to enable a more effective response and encourage multi-channel reporting, as advocated by the IMO MSC Circ. 1333/1334.

10 The Council welcomed the voluntary contributions pledged by the ReCAAP Contracting Parties towards the work of the ReCAAP ISC for FY 2011⁷ as follows:

People's Republic of China	USD	50,000	
Kingdom of Denmark (FY2010)	USD	50,000	
Republic of India	USD	50,000	
Japan	SGD	637,613	(estimate)
Republic of Korea	KRW	100 million	
Kingdom of the Netherlands	EUR	75,000	
Kingdom of Norway	USD	100,000	
Republic of Singapore	SGD	1,586,020	

This assistance is in addition to the secondment of staff from China, India, the Republic of Korea, Japan and the Philippines.

11 The Governing Council unanimously supported the nominations of the Chair to be held by the Philippines, and the Vice-Chair by Republic of Korea, with effect from 4 March 2011. The Council expressed appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, Thailand and

⁴ Fact sheet on The Djibouti Code of Conduct is attached in Annexe 4.

⁵ NATO Shipping Centre is the link between NATO military forces and the merchant shipping community manned by uniformed NATO members.

⁶ RSIS: S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies – a Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University of Singapore

⁷ FY 2011: 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012

China, respectively, for successfully steering the ReCAAP ISC in its workyear 2009-10 and 2010-11.

12 The Council reiterated the importance of the ReCAAP ISC being the conduit between the law enforcement agencies and the shipping agencies, called for greater cooperation among the like-minded agencies in suppressing piracy and armed robbery against ships, and having ReCAAP ISC continue to work with the IMO in their efforts to implement the Djibouti Code of Conduct to suppress piracy in the Gulf of Aden / Western Indian Ocean.

13 The Council discussed the enhancement of communication in accordance with Article 9.3 of ReCAAP Agreement and encouraged each Contracting Party to ensure the smooth and effective communication between its designated Focal Point, and other competent national authorities including rescue coordination centres, as well as relevant non-governmental organisations.

14 The Sixth Annual Meeting of the ReCAAP ISC Governing Council is scheduled for week of 5-9 March 2012 to be held in Singapore.

The ReCAAP ISC Governing Council
3 March 2011

(Please contact The ReCAAP ISC Secretariat, Ms Amy Fang at 6376 3091, for further enquiries.)

Further information on the ReCAAP and the ReCAAP ISC

FACT SHEET

About the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), and the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (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 in Asia. It was finalised on 11 November 2004 and entered into force on 4 September 2006. To date, 16 States have become Contracting Parties to ReCAAP.

The sixteen Contracting Parties to ReCAAP are the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC) was established under the Agreement, and was officially launched in Singapore on 29 November 2006. It was formally recognised as an international organisation on 30 January 2007.

The roles of the ReCAAP ISC are to:

- serve as a platform for information exchange with the ReCAAP Focal Points via the Information Network System (IFN); facilitate communications and information exchange among participating governments to improve incident response by member countries; analyse and provide accurate statistics of the piracy and armed robbery incidents to foster better understanding of the situation in Asia;
- facilitate capacity building efforts that help improve the capability of member countries in combating piracy and armed robbery in the region; and
- cooperate with organizations and like-minded parties on joint exercises, information sharing, capacity building programme, or other forms of cooperation, as appropriate, and agreed upon among the Contracting Parties.

The ReCAAP ISC facilitates exchange of information among the ReCAAP Focal Points through a secure web-based Information Network System (IFN). Through this network, the ReCAAP Focal Points are linked to each other as well as the ReCAAP ISC on a 24/7 basis, and are able to facilitate appropriate responses to incident. The agency receiving the incident report will manage the incident in accordance to its national policies and response procedures, and provide assistance to the victim ship where possible. The agency will in turn, inform their ReCAAP Focal Point which will submit an incident report to the ReCAAP ISC and its neighbouring Focal Points.

For more information about the ReCAAP and ReCAAP ISC, please visit <http://www.recaap.org>

Contracting Parties to the ReCAAP

1. People's Republic of Bangladesh
2. Brunei Darussalam
3. Kingdom of Cambodia
4. People's Republic of China
5. Kingdom of Denmark
6. Republic of India
7. Japan
8. Republic of Korea
9. Lao People's Democratic Republic
10. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
11. Kingdom of the Netherlands
12. Kingdom of Norway
13. Republic of the Philippines
14. Republic of Singapore
15. Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
16. Kingdom of Thailand
17. Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

External Participants Represented at the 4th Annual Meeting of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre Governing Council

States

1. Australia, and
2. United Kingdom

Partner Organisations (Inter-Governmental Agencies)

3. International Maritime Organisation (IMO)
4. Maritime Security Task Force – Information Fusion Centre (MSTF-IFC)

Partner Organisations (Non-Governmental Agencies)

5. Asian Shipowners' Forum (ASF)
6. Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO)
7. International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
8. Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Association (FASA)/Singapore Shipping Association (SSA)



Case Study

Piracy Attack on *MT Chios*

on 5 Feb 11

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*Prepared by:
The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre
Update on 28 Feb 2011*

Background

During October 2010 and February 2011, a total of 14 incidents of piracy (comprising five actual incidents and nine attempted incidents⁸) were reported. Of the 14 incidents, one vessel was successfully hijacked by pirates, believed to be east African pirates who have been attacking vessels off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. Of the five actual incidents, one was a Category 1 incident (*Johan Moni* which was hijacked by the pirates on 05 Dec 10) and four were Category 2 incidents (comprising *Starlight Venture* on 28 Oct 10, *NYK Altair* on 20 Nov 10, *Norna N* on 24 Nov 10 and *Guru Gobind Singh* on 25 Nov 10). Since October 10, the pirates had ventured farthest away from the coast of Somalia into the Arabian Sea which overlapped India's area of responsibility. Refer to map on the approximate location of the 14 incidents reported in the Arabian Sea in 2010.

In response to the surge in piracy attacks in the Arabian Sea, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) which is also the ReCAAP Focal Point (India) and the Indian Navy (IN) has enhanced their patrols in the western Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of India, and deployed a multi-ship anti-piracy force in the area (more than 500 nm from Mumbai) to sanitise the eastern Arabian Sea and undertake comprehensive anti-piracy measures.

The enhanced measures by the Indian authorities had resulted in the apprehension of two Pirate Action Groups (PAG) who operated on the fringes of India's EEZ. The ICG and the IN had successfully seized two motherships, fishing vessels *Prantalay 14* and *Prantalay 11* with their crew onboard on 28 Jan 11 and 06 Feb 11 respectively. Both fishing vessels were hijacked by the east African pirates in April 2010. A total of 43 pirates (15 from *Prantalay 14* and 28 from *Prantalay 11*) were apprehended and 44 crew (20 from *Prantalay 14* and 24 from *Prantalay 11*) were rescued.

⁸ An incident was classified as an 'actual incident' when the pirates/robbers boarded the vessel, or the pirates/robbers failed to board but fired at the vessel which resulting in damages or evidence of bullets holes on the vessel. On the other hand, an incident was classified as an 'attempted incident' when the pirates/robbers failed to board the vessel.

Description of Incident

On 05 Feb 11 at or about 1534 hrs⁹, a Greek registered crude oil tanker, *MT Chios* was underway at approximately 312 nm west of Kochi, India (10° 00.1' N, 070° 59'E) when one small skiff with about five pirates onboard approached *MT Chios*. Armed with automatic weapons, the pirates fired at the tanker several times. The ship master immediately raised the general alarm and adopted measures in accordance with the industry's BMP, namely increasing speed, carrying out evasive manoeuvres, pressurising fire hoses and discharging overboard; and using of red parachute flares. The skiff gave up the chase after several unsuccessful attempts to get close to the tanker. The skiff was seen heading back towards a mothership. The tanker did not suffer any damages and the crew was not injured. The master reported the incident to MSCHOA.



The skiff trying to approach *MT Chios*

⁹ All timings of incidents in this case study are expressed in local time.

Information Sharing Mechanism

On 05 Feb 11 at or about 1819 hrs, the ReCAAP ISC received information from the Ops Centre of the MSCHOA about the attack on *MT Chios*. The ReCAAP ISC alerted all ReCAAP Focal Points via its secured network system (IFN). In response to the alert, the ReCAAP Focal Point (India) which is the ICG contacted the vessel immediately to obtain an update of the situation. The ICG learned that the vessel was safe and heading towards its destination.

At or about 1845hrs, the ICG diverted its patrol vessel, *Samar* which was on routine patrol off Lakshdweep Islands to investigate the incident and look out for suspicious mothership and skiffs. At the same time, the master of *MT Chios* shared information on the description of the skiff and photographs taken during the attack to the ICG.

On 06 Feb 11 at or about 0510 hrs, *Samar* encountered an unlit contact operating in the area. Suspecting her to be the mothership, the patrol vessel shadowed her for confirmation. A small high speed contact approached the stern of *Samar*, which prompted the patrol vessel to fire warning shots at the high speed pirate boat which then broke its chase and fled to the mothership. Shortly an Indian Navy (IN) ship, *Tir* joined the operation. At or about 0630 hrs, an ICG Dornier (Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft) was launched in armed configuration for a sea-air coordinated operation. At daybreak *Samar* closed in on the mothership and identified it as Thai fishing vessel *Prantalay 11*, which was hijacked by pirates in April 2010. All calls on the radio by the ICG ship requesting the mothership to stop were not heeded. Instead the vessel picked up speed and headed westwards in an attempt to escape. The Indian authorities sighted persons with arms on the upper deck of *Prantalay 11*. *Samar* fired warning shots across the bows of the fishing vessel compelling her to stop. The ICG Dornier and the IN ship *Tir* also fired warning shots forcing the vessel to stop. Subsequently, the pirates surrendered by hoisting a white flag. The crew assembled at the forward portion of the pirated vessel and all the personnel onboard were directed to jump in the water for recovery by the ICG ship.

The ReCAAP Focal Point (India) shared the information with the ReCAAP ISC, and all the ReCAAP Focal Point via the submission of an Incident Alert on the IFN.



***Prantalay 11* stopped by Indian Law Enforcement Agencies**



Pirates and crew jumping off *Prantalay 11* for recovery

Initial Investigation Outcome

A total of 28 pirates were apprehended in the operation and 24 crew of *Prantalay 11* were rescued. Although, the pirates had dumped most of their weapons into the sea before the arrest, the enforcement agencies managed to recover some items.

The pirates were brought to Mumbai, India for investigation and trial. Meanwhile, investigations are still ongoing and the crew would be repatriated to their countries on completion of the investigation.

Contributing Factors towards the Successful Apprehension of the Pirates and Recovery of the Mothership

The successful apprehension of the pirates, recovery of *Prantalay 11* and rescue of the crew demonstrated the significance of information sharing network between the ReCAAP ISC, the ReCAAP Focal Points, the shipping community, and the good inter-ministry cooperation between the ICG, IN and Mumbai Police.

Network of Information Sharing

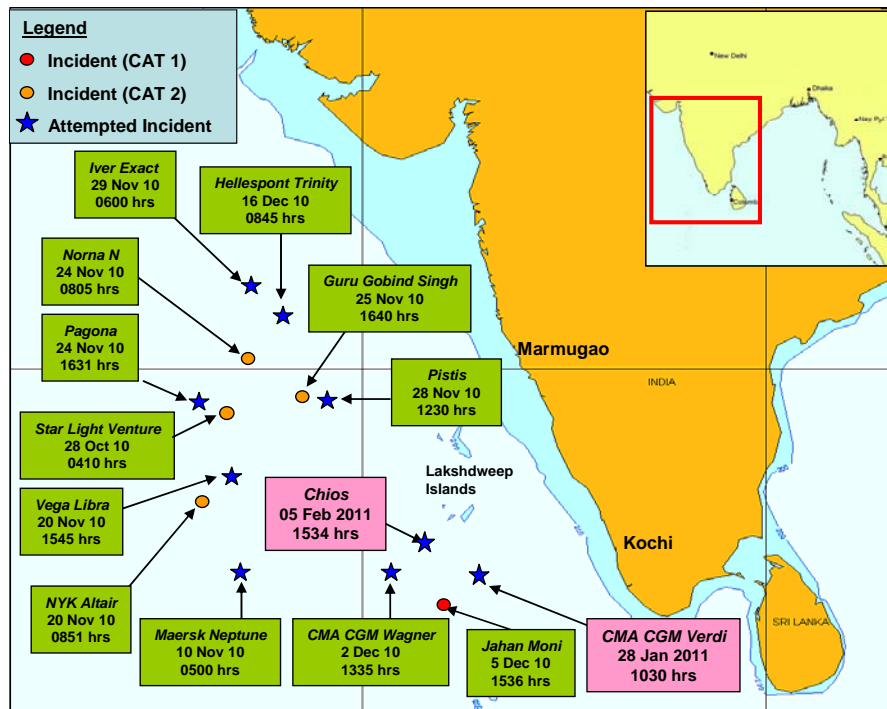
The ReCAAP ISC advocates timely reporting as evidenced in this incident where the ReCAAP ISC, on receipt of timely information from MSCHOA, informed all ReCAAP Focal Points via the Information Network System (IFN). The ship master also provided timely information to the ReCAAP Focal Point (India) which initiated relevant action. All this resulted in the apprehension of the pirates, recovery of the mothership and rescue of the crew.

Inter-ministry/inter-agency cooperation. This incident demonstrated good inter-ministry/inter-agency cooperation among law enforcement agencies. This is evidenced from the cooperation between the IN, ICG who is also the ReCAAP Focal Point (India) and the Mumbai Police.

Rapport with the Commercial Shipping Community. The sighting of *skiffs* by *MT Chios*, as reported to the ReCAAP Focal Point (India) has contributed towards the eventual apprehension of the mothership. The ReCAAP ISC and the ReCAAP Focal Points will continue to foster close cooperation and enhance confidence building with the shipping community. In this aspect, the ReCAAP ISC encourages timely reporting of an incident by ship master to the port/coastal States and the ship owner/operator to report the incident to the ReCAAP Focal Points (for incidents in Asia) as advocated in the MSC.1/Circular 1333 and MSC.1/Circular 1334.

Conclusion

The ReCAAP ISC will continue to promote information sharing via its network, confidence building through capacity building activities, and bridging of operational gaps through cooperative arrangements in its efforts in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.



Location of Incidents in Arabian Sea

Fact sheet on The Djibouti Code of Conduct

The Djibouti Code of Conduct (Code) is the first regional agreement between Arab and African countries against acts of piracy against ships in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean. It was adopted at the Sub-regional meeting on maritime security, piracy and armed robbery against ships for Western Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea States held in Djibouti on 26-29 January 2009 organised by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

At this meeting, also known as the Djibouti Meeting, attended by 17 States, adopted the following resolutions:

- Resolution 1, on Adoption of a code of conduct concerning the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden;
- Resolution 2, on Technical co-operation and assistance;
- Resolution 3, on Enhancing training in the region; and
- Resolution 4, on Expressions of appreciations.

The Code aims at ensuring co-operation among its signatories for the investigation, arrest and prosecution of pirates; the interdiction and seizure of suspect ships and property on board such ships; the rescue of ships, persons and property subject to piracy and armed robbery; and the conduct of shared operations – both between signatory States and also with navies from outside the region. Signatories to the Code have undertaken to review their national legislation to ensure they have laws in place to criminalize piracy and armed robbery against ships and adequate provisions for the exercise of jurisdiction, conduct of investigations and prosecution of alleged offenders. The Code also provides for the sharing of piracy information, through information-sharing centres to be established in Sana'a in Yemen, Mombasa in Kenya and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. A training centre is also to be established in Djibouti.

To-date, the Code has been signed by 17 countries, namely, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Yemen. It remains open for signature at IMO Headquarters by other countries in the region.

Source: <http://www.imo.org/ourwork/security/piu/pages/project-implementation-unit.aspx>