



## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15 January 2020

### **Eighty-two Incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia reported to ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre in 2019**

*Annual Report (January to December 2019) released at the 11<sup>th</sup> Nautical Forum, ReCAAP ISC's annual dialogue with maritime, diplomatic and regulatory/law enforcement communities*

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) today released its Annual Report 2019 (January to December 2019). Highlights of the Report, whose information is verified by the respective government agencies, also known as ReCAAP Focal Points, and regional authorities, are as follows:

#### **Overall Situation**

- A total of **82 incidents** of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia were reported from January to December 2019, comprising **71 actual incidents and 11 attempted incidents**.
- This represents an **increase of 8% (6 incidents) in the total number of incidents** and an **increase of 15% (9 incidents) in actual incidents**, compared to 2018.
- Despite an increase from 2018, these numbers are still **the second lowest since 2007** when ReCAAP ISC started the report of incidents (2018 being the year of the lowest number of incidents).
- The **severity level** of incidents has **not worsened** in 2019 compared to 2018:
  - 2 incidents of Category 1 (same as in 2018)
  - Decrease of Category 2 (from 8 to 6)
  - 69% of incidents were Category 4 (perpetrators not armed, crew not harmed)

#### **Area of Improvement**

- There was a **decrease of incidents mainly at ports and anchorages in Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines**:
  - Bangladesh: zero incident from 11 in 2018
  - Indonesia: 23 incidents from 27 in 2018

- The Philippines: 6 incidents from 9 in 2018

### **Increase of incidents**

- There was an increase of incidents in two locations, compared to 2018:
  - The Singapore Strait: 31 incidents from 7 in 2018
  - Off Bandar Penawar, Johor, Malaysia: 5 incidents from zero in 2018

### **Situation in the Singapore Strait**

- In 2019, a total of **31 incidents** occurred in the **Singapore Strait**, of which 15 occurred **in westbound lane** of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) mostly from January to August, and 16 **in the eastbound lane** of the TSS from the end of September to December.
- 14 out of 15 incidents in the **westbound lane** of the TSS were on board barges towed by tug boats:
  - The stolen items were mainly scrap metals from barges (9 incidents)
  - Since barges were unmanned, there was no confrontation between the crew and perpetrators and no injury of the crew
- 16 ships boarded in the **eastbound lane** of the TSS were bulk carriers (8), tankers (4), barges towed by tug boats (3), and VLCC (1):
  - In 10 incidents, nothing was stolen since the perpetrators escaped empty-handed once an alarm was activated
  - In 6 incidents, items such as engine spares, scrap metals, locks and ropes and personal belongings were stolen
  - In 7 incidents, the perpetrators were discovered in the engine room; this may indicate that they targeted engine parts
  - There were confrontations between the crew and perpetrators; in one incident, two crew members received minor injuries and in three incidents, some crew members were tied up
- A medium-term trend in the Singapore Strait:
  - 99 incidents in 2015, 2 incidents in 2016, 8 incidents in 2017 and 7 incidents in 2018, 31 incidents in 2019
- ReCAAP ISC calls upon the littoral States to step up surveillance and patrol as well as to enhance their cooperation. The shipping industry is advised to exercise utmost vigilance, adopt preventive measures and report all incidents immediately to the nearest coastal State.

### **Situation in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah**

- In 2019, there were **two actual incidents of abduction of crew** in the **Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah** (2 actual and 1 attempted incidents in 2018).

- On 8 June 2019, nine crew were abducted from two fishing boats in the waters off Eastern Sabah, Malaysia; all crew were released on 21 June 2019.
- On 23 September 2019, three crew were abducted from a fishing boat in the waters off Eastern Sabah, Malaysia; two crew were rescued on 22 December 2019 and one crew still remains in captivity.
- As a medium-term trend, the number of incidents has been decreasing since 2016:
  - In 2016: 12 actual and 6 attempted incidents
  - In 2017: 3 actual and 4 attempted incidents
  - In 2018: 2 actual and 1 attempted incidents
  - In 2019: 2 actual incidents
- The risk of abduction of crew still remains in the area. Shipping companies are advised to refer to the Guidance on Abduction of Crew published by ReCAAP ISC in July 2019.

### **Incidents off Bandar Penawar, Johor, Malaysia**

- In 2019, **five incidents** occurred on board ships anchored **off Bandar Penawar**, outside the designated anchorage areas of the littoral States. Ship masters are advised to anchor the ships in the designated anchorage areas for better surveillance.

The Annual Report 2019 was released at the 11<sup>th</sup> Nautical Forum in Singapore which was attended by more than 120 participants from shipping companies, industry associations, government agencies, diplomatic missions as well as academic institutions.

“The 15% year-on-year increase in the actual number of incidents in 2019 as well as a spike of incidents in the Singapore Strait are a stark reminder that government agencies and the shipping industry should continuously uphold their respective efforts as a shared responsibility” said Mr. Masafumi Kuroki, Executive Director of ReCAAP ISC.

“Regional cooperation among coastal States and mutual cooperation between government agencies and the shipping industry are key to ensure the safety of seafarers and safe navigation of ships,” concluded Mr. Masafumi Kuroki.

– End of Release –

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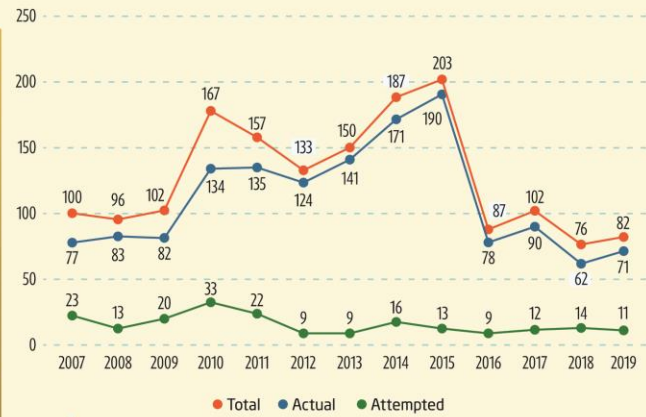
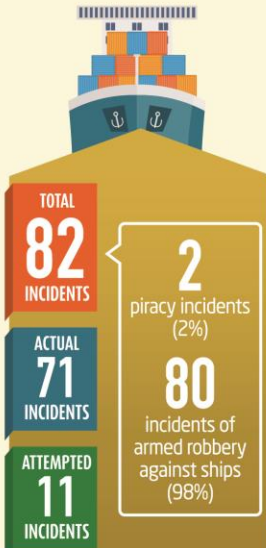
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### **About ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC)**

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, 20 States (14 Asian countries, 4 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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>

# PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA 2019

## NUMBER OF INCIDENTS (2007-2019)



### SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

- 2 x CAT 1 incidents (Abduction of crew)
- Decrease in number of CAT 2 incidents
- Majority are CAT 4 incidents



### IMPROVEMENT

- DECREASE OF INCIDENTS**
- Bangladesh
  - Indonesia

### OF CONCERN

**Risk** of abduction of crew for ransom

**2019** 2 INCIDENTS

**Increase** of incidents in Singapore Strait

**2018** 7 INCIDENTS

**2019** 31 INCIDENTS

# ABDUCTION OF CREW FOR RANSOM IN SULU-CELEBES SEAS AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

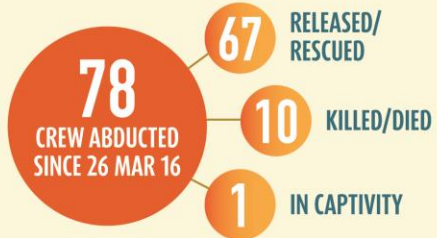
## 2 INCIDENTS IN 2019

**18 JUN 19** 9 crew abducted  
All crew released on 21 Jun

**23 SEP 19** 3 crew abducted  
2 crew rescued on 22 Dec  
1 crew still in captivity



**STATUS OF ABDUCTED CREW**  
(AS OF 31 DEC 19)

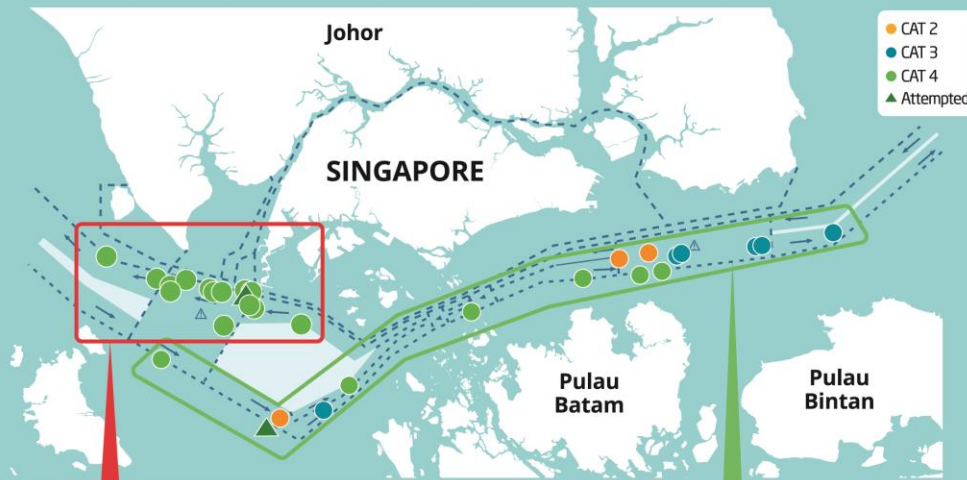


### WARNING AND ADVISORY

- Advisory to ships to re-route where possible, otherwise:
  - Exercise enhanced vigilance
  - Adopt piracy countermeasures to mitigate risk
  - Maintain comms with authorities
  - Make timely report to national reporting centres
- Refer to the "Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah"



## INCREASE OF INCIDENTS IN SINGAPORE STRAIT (2019)



**Westbound lane of Traffic Separation Scheme** **15** INCIDENTS

Ships boarded		Losses	
Tug boat & barge	14	Scrap metal	9
Tanker	1	Tools	2
		Nothing stolen	4

**Eastbound lane of Traffic Separation Scheme** **16** INCIDENTS

Ships boarded		Losses	
Bulk carrier	8	Engine spares	2
Tanker	4	Scrap metal	2
Tug boat & barge	3	Twist locks & ropes	1
VLCC	1	Personal gold chain	1
		Nothing stolen	10