



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 July 2020

Fifty-one Incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia reported to ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre from January to June 2020

Number of incidents is almost double compared to the same period in 2019

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) today released its [Half-Yearly Report 2020 \(January to June\)](#). Highlights of the Report, whose information is verified by the respective government agencies, also known as ReCAAP Focal Points, and regional authorities, are appended:

Overall Situation

- A total of **51 incidents** of piracy and armed robbery against ships (comprising **50 actual** incidents and **one attempted** incident) were reported in Asia during January-June 2020
- This represents **close to a two-fold increase in the total number of incidents** and a **two-fold increase in the number of actual incidents** reported in Asia, compared to 28 incidents (comprising 25 actual incidents and three attempted incidents) during January-June 2019.
- Of the 51 incidents, **49 were incidents of armed robbery against ships** and **two were piracy incidents**
- On the other hand, the **severity level of incidents has not worsened** during January-June 2020 compared to January-June 2019:
 - 1 incident of Category 1 (same as in 2019)
 - Decrease of Category 2 (from 2 to 1 which is the lowest among the past 14-year period of 2007-2020)
 - 74% of incidents were Category 4 (perpetrators not armed, crew not harmed)

Area of Improvement

- There was improvement at the **ports/anchorages in China** with **no incident** during January-June 2020, compared to three incidents during the same period in 2019
- There were also **arrests of perpetrators** at Chittagong Anchorage in **Bangladesh**, off Gujarat and Alang in **India**, off Pulau Batam, **Indonesia** and in the **Singapore Strait**

Increase of incidents

- The increase of incidents during January-June 2020 occurred in **Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, South China Sea** and **Singapore Strait**
- Of concern was the continued increase of incidents on board ships while underway in the **Singapore Strait** during January-June 2020 with **16 incidents**, compared to eight incidents during the same period in 2019.

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

- The situation of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah remains a **serious concern** as demonstrated by the **abduction incident** on a fishing trawler on 17 January 2020 off Lahad Datu, Sabah, Malaysia and information of **planned kidnapping** by members of the Abu Sayyaf Group in Sabah and Semporna, Malaysia targeting foreigners and crew of ships passing by the Tawi-Tawi and Sabah waters
- **Five of the crew** abducted from the fishing trawler on 17 January 2020 are still **held in captivity**
- Shipping companies are advised to follow the ReCAAP ISC's '[Guidance](#)' and maintain communication with the Operation Centres of the Philippines and Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) of Malaysia

“We are deeply concerned with the nearly two-fold increase in the number of incidents reported in Asia in the first half of 2020 compared to the same period last year, even though most of them are at low severity level. ‘Small’ crimes, if not addressed, can embolden criminals to commit more serious acts,” said Mr. Masafumi Kuroki, Executive Director of ReCAAP ISC.

“This spike has come during a time of enormous challenges for the whole world affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, we encourage the shipping community and maritime enforcement agencies to uphold vigilance, make timely reporting and conduct quick response to incidents, in order to protect the lives of seafarers and the safety of maritime transport.” continued Mr. Masafumi Kuroki.

– 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 4 September 2006. The Information Sharing Centre was established on 29 November 2006 with 14 Asian countries as Contracting Parties of the Agreement. To date, 20 States (14 Asian countries, 4 European countries, Australia, and the U.S.A) 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>

PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA

(JANUARY-JUNE 2020)

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

51 50 actual incidents
1 attempted incident

49 armed robbery
against ships

2 piracy

Compared to
January-June 2019,

Almost
2-Fold

Increase in total
number of incidents

Number of incidents (January-June of 2016-2020)



STATUS OF SHIP

61%

31 Incidents on board ships
at **anchor/berth**

39%

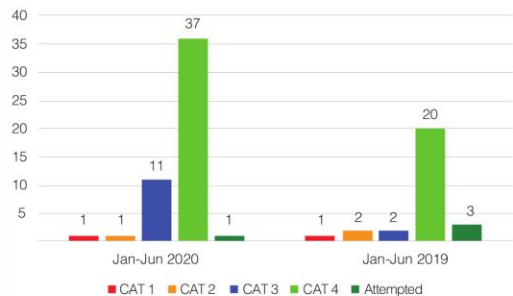
20 Incidents on board ships
while **underway**

SEVERITY OF INCIDENTS

- > 1 x CAT 1 incident (abduction of crew)
- > 1 x CAT 2 incident (lowest number among Jan-Jun of 2007-2020)
- > Increase in number of CAT 3 incidents
- > 74% are CAT 4 incidents

JANUARY-JUNE 2020 COMPARED TO JANUARY-JUNE 2019

Severity of Incidents



Increase of Incidents in

Mostly at ports/anchorage:
Bangladesh, India, Indonesia,
the Philippines and Vietnam

Mostly while underway:
Singapore Strait and
South China Sea

Improvement & Arrests

Improvement at ports/anchorage:
China

Arrests of perpetrators in
Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and
Singapore Strait

SITUATION IN THE SINGAPORE STRAIT



16
INCIDENTS

- 13 occurred in eastbound lane of Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS)
- 1 occurred in westbound lane of TSS
- 1 occurred just outside (south) of TSS
- 1 occurred in precautionary area

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement.
- Strengthen coordination and promote information sharing among littoral States.
- Ships to exercise enhanced vigilance and report all incidents to nearest coastal State immediately

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

- Abduction of crew from fishing trawler off Eastern Sabah, Malaysia on 17 Jan
- 5 crew held in captivity

EFFORTS BY AUTHORITIES

Status of abducted crew (as of 30 Jun 20)

86 Crew Abducted	71 Release/Rescued
Since Mar 2016	10 Killed/Died
	5 In captivity



Arrested 3 members of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Sabah by Malaysian authorities



Military operations against the ASG by the Philippine authorities

Warning & Advisory

The risk of abduction of crew is high

- Occurrence of abduction of crew on 17 Jan
- Information of planned kidnapping in Sabah and Semporna, Malaysia targeting foreigners and crew of ships passing by the Tawi-Tawi and Sabah waters.

ReCAAP ISC 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 (as shown on right)

Refer to *Guidance on the Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah*

CONTACT DETAILS OF REPORTING CENTRES

PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD DISTRICT
Southwestern Mindanao (CGDSW)
Tel: +63 998-585-7972 / +63 917-842-8446
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