



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 July 2021

Thirty-seven Incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia reported to ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre from January to June 2021

Number of incidents decreased by 35% compared to the same period in 2020

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) today released its [Half-Yearly Report 2021 \(January to June\)](#). Highlights of the Report are as follows. The information of incidents is verified by the respective government agencies (ReCAAP Focal Points), and regional authorities.

Overall Situation

- A total of **37 incidents** of armed robbery against ships (comprising **35 actual** incidents and **two attempted** incidents) were reported in Asia during January-June 2021. No piracy incident was reported.
- This represents a **35% decrease in the total number of incidents reported during January-June 2021**, compared to the same period in 2020.
- This was due to the decrease of incidents in several locations in Asia, namely; in **Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam** and **South China Sea**.
- However, there was an **increase** of incidents in **the Singapore Strait**. A total of **20 incidents** were reported during January-June 2021, compared to 16 incidents reported during the same period in 2020.
- The **severity level of incidents has reduced** during January-June 2021 compared to the same period in 2020:
 - No Category 1 incident was reported.
 - One incident was Category 2 (the lowest number, compared to the same period of 2007-2020)
 - 10 incidents were Category 3.
 - 24 incidents were Category 4 (perpetrators not armed, crew not harmed). (69% of the total number of actual incidents).

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

- There was **no incident** of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah during January-June 2021. The latest incident was on 17 Jan 2020.
- The remaining four abducted crew who had been held in captivity by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) since 17 Jan 20 were rescued by the Philippines authorities on 18 Mar 21 and 21 Mar 21. As a result, no crew is currently held in captivity by the ASG.
- As the ASG leaders responsible for the abduction of crew in the Sulu area are still at large, the threat of abduction of crew from ships remains high, particularly in the areas of Sulu and nearby waters off Tawi-Tawi
- Shipping companies are advised to follow the ReCAAP ISC's '[Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah](#)' and maintain communication with the Operation Centres of the Philippines and Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) of Malaysia.

"We have seen a 35% decrease of incidents during January-June 2021 compared to 57 incidents during the same period in 2020. Continued occurrence of incidents on board ships underway in the Singapore Strait remains a concern. 20 incidents were reported in the Singapore Strait during January-June 2021, which is an increase by 4 incidents compared to the same period of last year. Incidents are likely to continue to occur if the perpetrators are not arrested." said Mr. Masafumi Kuroki, Executive Director of ReCAAP ISC.

"Although the incidents are decreasing, the ReCAAP ISC encourages all the stakeholders to continue collaborative efforts such as upholding vigilance, making timely reporting by ships and conducting quick response by coastal States in order to ensure maritime safety for the shipping community and safety of the seafarers," concluded Mr. Masafumi Kuroki.

- End of Release -

Media Contact

Laurel Felicia Lee

E-mail: laurel_lee@recaap.org

Tel: +65 6376-3066

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 2021



NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

January-June 2021

37
INCIDENTS

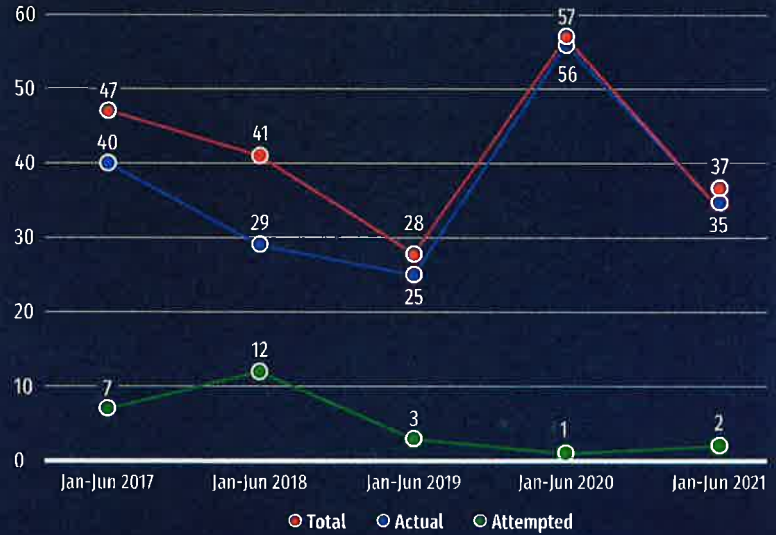
35
ACTUAL

2
ATTEMPTED



All armed robbery against ships,
no piracy incident

Compared to Jan-Jun 2020
35% Decrease
in total number
of incidents



41%

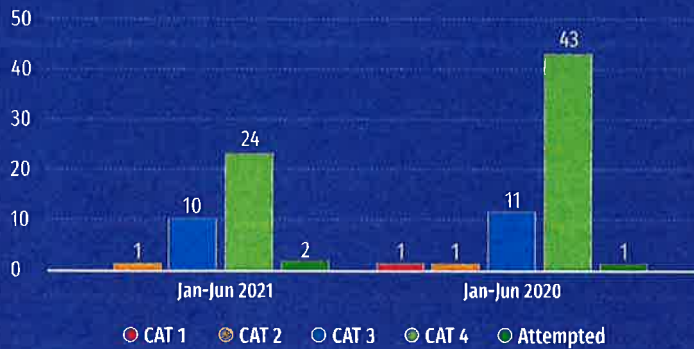
15 incidents
on board ships
at anchor/berth

59%

22 incidents
on board ships
while underway

JANUARY-JUNE 2021 COMPARED TO JANUARY-JUNE 2020

Severity of incidents



- CAT 1** Decrease: One incident (Jan-Jun 2020) → No incident (Jan-Jun 2021)
- CAT 2** Same number of incidents during (Jan-Jun 2020) and (Jan-Jun 2021)
- CAT 3** Decrease: 11 incidents (Jan-Jun 2020) → 10 incidents (Jan-Jun 2021)
- CAT 4** Decrease: 43 incidents (Jan-Jun 2020) → 24 incidents (Jan-Jun 2021)
Majority of incidents during Jan-Jun 2021 (69%)

✓ Improvement

- Bangladesh
3 incidents > 0 incident
- India
7 incidents > 2 incidents
- Indonesia
17 incidents > 6 incidents
- Philippines
7 incidents > 6 incidents
- South China Sea
2 incidents > 0 incident
- Sulu-Celebes Seas
1 incident > 0 incident
- Vietnam
3 incidents > 2 incidents

↑ Increase of number of incidents

- Singapore Strait
16 incidents > 20 incidents

SITUATION IN THE SINGAPORE STRAIT



Increase of
4 incidents
compared to Jan-Jun 2020

20 incidents

19 incidents
in eastbound
lane of Traffic
Separation
Scheme (TSS)

1 incident
in westbound
lane of Traffic
Separation
Scheme (TSS)

Of the **20 incidents**
reported during Jan-Jun 2021,
16 incidents occurred off
Tanjung Pergam.



RECOMMENDATIONS



- Littoral States of the Singapore Strait
 - Increase patrols and enforcement in their respective waters
 - Respond promptly to incidents
 - Strengthen coordination and promote information sharing on incidents and criminal groups involved
 - Arrest and prosecute perpetrators involved
- Ship master and crew
 - Maximise alertness of lookouts and increase watch keeping
 - Maintain constant communication with shipping company
 - Report all incidents to nearest coastal State immediately
 - Sound alarm when sighted unauthorised persons on board or suspicious boats loitering in the vicinity
 - Keep abreast of situation and tune-in to advisories and navigational broadcasts

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

- No abduction of crew incident reported during Jan-Jun 2021
- No crew is held in captivity (as of 30 Jun 21)

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



⚠ WARNING AND ADVISORY ⚠

- **The risk of abduction of crew is high**
 - The Philippine authorities foiled a kidnap-for-ransom plan by the ASG in an operation on 3 Nov 20
 - ASG leaders responsible for abduction of crew are still at large
- **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