

## **NEWS RELEASE – For Immediate Release**

18 January 2022

### **15% decrease in total number of piracy and sea robbery incidents in Asia for 2021**

1. The ReCAAP ISC has released its Annual Report on piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia in 2021 today, and here are the key highlights.

#### 2. Overview

- There was a total of 82 incidents of armed robbery against ships reported in Asia in 2021, comprising 77 actual incidents and 5 attempted incidents. This represents a decrease of 15% compared to 2020. There was no piracy incident in 2021.
- The improvement can be attributed to the decrease of incidents across many countries and locations, namely, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, South China Sea and Sulu-Celebes Seas.
- There was zero incident in Bangladesh, South China Sea as well as the Sulu-Celebes Seas. This is an encouraging development.
- However, there was an increase of 15 incidents in the Singapore Strait (49 incidents in 2021 compared to 34 incidents in 2020).

#### 3. Severity of incidents

- In terms of the severity of incidents, with the exception of Category 2 incidents that increased from 6 incidents in 2020 to 8 incidents in 2021, there was an overall decrease in the number of incidents for the other categories. In particular, there was no incident of Category 1 (most serious incident), which is the first time in the last 15 years.

#### 4. Areas of Concern in 2021

There were three areas of concern in 2021.

- An increase of number of incidents in the Singapore Strait from 34 incidents in 2020 to 49 incidents in 2021, although the level of severity was not high. As the perpetrators have not been arrested, there is a possibility that such incidents continue to occur.
- An increase of violence level towards crew at the Manila Anchorages. Out of 9 incidents, 4 incidents involved perpetrators armed with gun/knife and threatened the crew and tied them up. The Philippine authorities arrested the leader and members of a criminal group in September and November. No incident has been reported since September 2021.

- For the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah, there is no abduction of crew incident reported since January 2020. However, as the leaders of the Abu Sayyaf Group are still at large, the threat of the abduction of crew incidents remains high.

### Conclusion

5. “While the overall piracy and armed robbery situation in Asia has improved in 2021, continued vigilance and collective efforts of all stakeholders are the key to making further improvement. To the coastal States, we recommend increased patrols and effective law enforcement as well as close cooperation between littoral states. Arrest of perpetrators is important to send the message that coastal States take sea robberies seriously. On the part of ships, they are reminded to report any incidents to the coastal States in a timely manner,” said Mr. Masafumi Kuroki, Executive Director of ReCAAP ISC.

6. The key points of the Annual Report 2021 will be shared with the maritime community at the virtual Nautical Forum to be organised by the Centre this afternoon. Into its 13<sup>th</sup> run, the aim of the Nautical Forum is for the Centre to engage the 21 Contracting Parties of ReCAAP as well as the shipping industry, diplomatic community, government agencies and academia on the key trends of the piracy and sea robbery incidents in Asia.

# PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA 2021

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS  
2021

82  
INCIDENTS

77  
ACTUAL

5  
ATTEMPTED

ALL ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS, NO PIRACY INCIDENT

COMPARED TO 2020  
15%  
DECREASE in total number of incidents

STATUS OF SHIPS

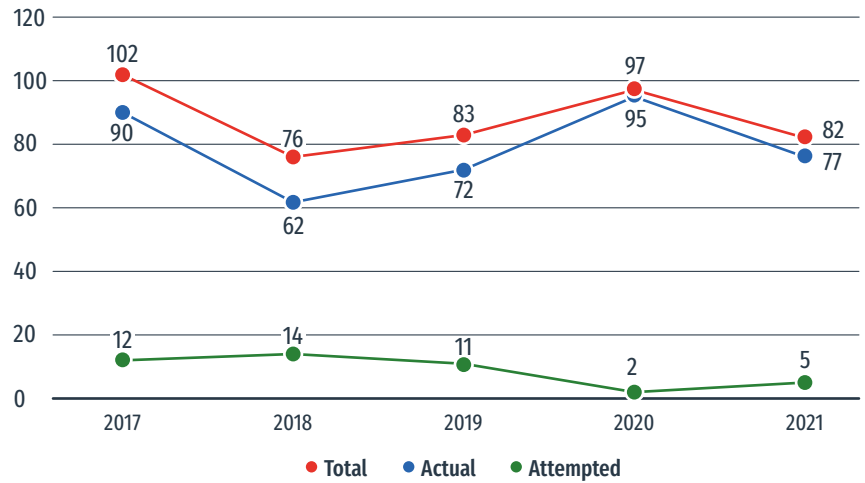
35%

29 incidents on board ships at anchor/berth

65%

53 incidents on board ships while underway

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS (2017-2021)



## 2021 COMPARED TO 2020

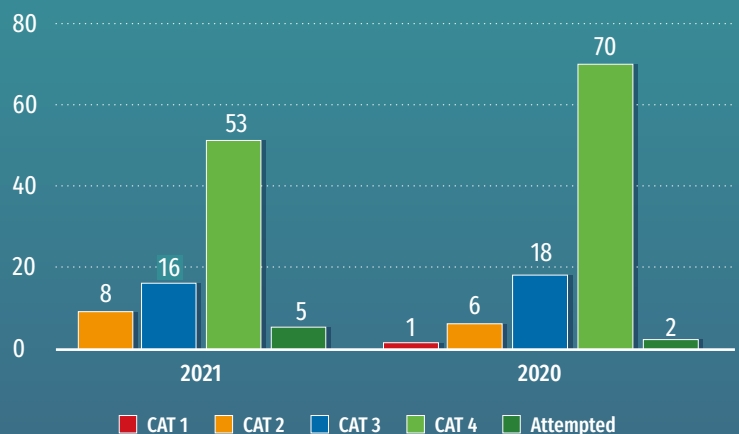
### OF CONCERN:

- Increase of incidents in Singapore Strait  
34 INCIDENTS → 49 INCIDENTS
- Increase of violence to crew in incidents at Manila Anchorages  
2 CAT 3 7 CAT 4 → 4 CAT 2 5 CAT 3
- Threat of abduction of crew incidents in Sulu-Celebes Seas remains high

### IMPROVEMENT

Bangladesh 5 incidents → 0 incident	The Philippines 13 incidents → 11 incidents
India 9 incidents → 5 incidents	Vietnam 6 incidents → 2 incidents
Indonesia 22 incidents → 13 incidents	South China Sea 4 incidents → 0 incident
Malaysia 3 incidents → 1 incident	Sulu-Celebes Seas 1 incident → 0 incident

### SEVERITY OF INCIDENTS



**CAT 1** Decrease: 1 incident 2020 → No incident 2021

**CAT 2** Increase: 6 incidents 2020 → 8 incidents 2021

**CAT 3** Decrease: 18 incidents 2020 → 16 incidents 2021

**CAT 4** Decrease: 70 incidents 2020 → 53 incidents 2021

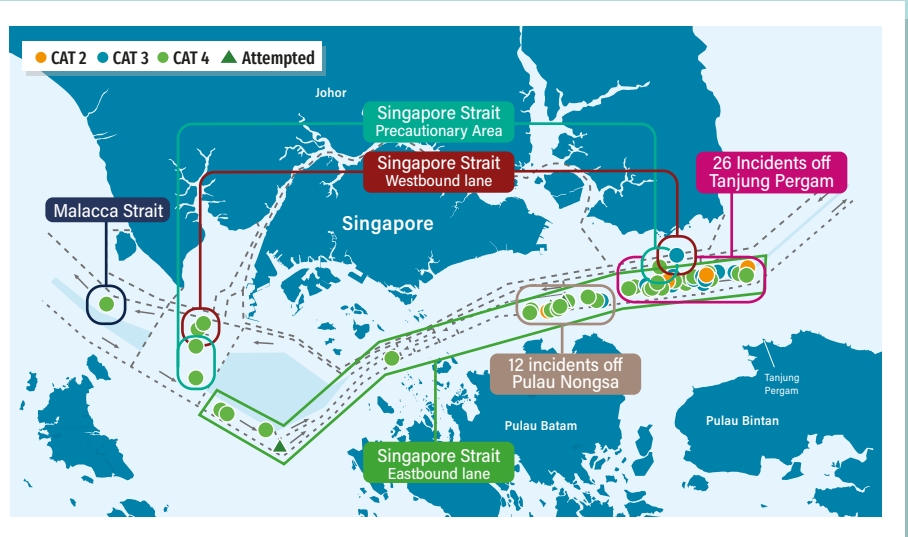
Majority were CAT 4 incidents in 2021 (69%)

# STRAITS OF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE

Of the **50** incidents reported in 2021

**49** incidents in the Singapore Strait

**1** incident in the Malacca Strait



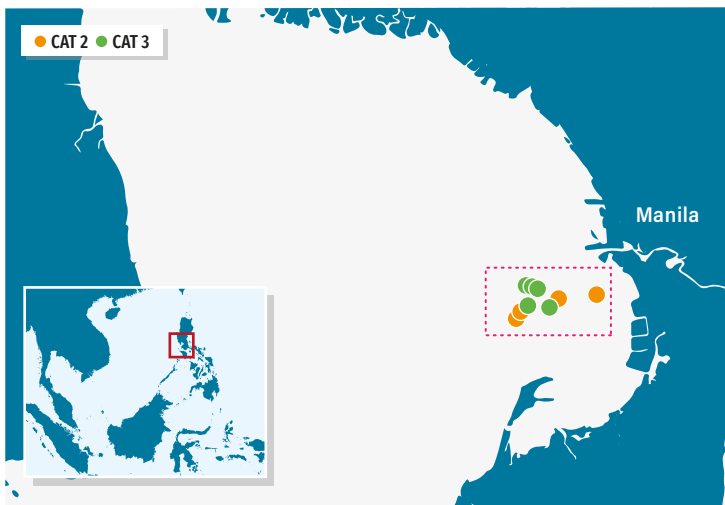
## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ■ Littoral States

- Increase patrols and enforcement
- Respond promptly to incidents
- Strengthen coordination and promote information sharing
- Arrest and prosecute perpetrators involved

### ■ Ship master and crew

- Maximise alertness of lookouts and increase watch keeping
- Report all incidents to nearest coastal State and flag State immediately
- Sound alarm when sighted unauthorised persons on board ship or suspicious boats in vicinity
- Keep abreast of latest situation ([www.recaap.org](http://www.recaap.org)), tune-in to advisories and navigational broadcasts

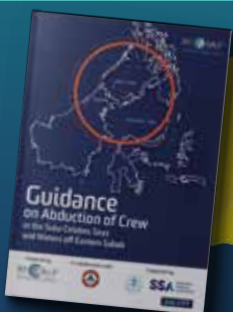


## MANILA ANCHORAGE AREAS, THE PHILIPPINES

- Arrest of the leader and two members of the criminal group responsible for the incidents in September and November
- No incident in the area since September
- Philippine authorities continued operations against other members of the group

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

- No abduction of crew incident reported in 2021
- Last known incident occurred in January 2020
- No crew is held in captivity (as of 31 Dec 21)



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

## WARNING AND ADVISORY

### ■ Threat of abduction of crew remains high

- 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

**For any further information, please contact:**

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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 (14 Asian countries, 5 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 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>