



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2 August 2023

ReCAAP ISC Holds Dialogue with Shipping Industry to Strengthen Cooperation to Fight Sea Robbery in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore

Dialogue comes on the back of a 50% increase in sea robbery incidents in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore from January to July 2023

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) today held a dialogue with representatives of global and regional shipping associations, as well as shipping companies based in Singapore and Malaysia.

During the dialogue, ReCAAP ISC presented the situation of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia from Jan – Jul 2023. A total of 73 incidents¹ of armed robbery against ships in Asia were reported in the first seven months of the year, a 40% increase compared to 52 incidents from Jan – Jul 2022. No piracy incidents (on high seas) were reported. All were armed robbery against ships (in internal waters, territorial seas and archipelagic waters) falling under the coastal State jurisdiction. Fifty-one out of the 73 incidents occurred in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS). This represents a 50% increase compared to 34 incidents in the SOMS from Jan - Jul 2022.

Some of the issues raised during the dialogue include the need for tighter communication between the Singapore authorities and littoral States when fighting sea robbery, the adoption of technology onboard ships to detect and deter perpetrators, and the need to manage crew fatigue when transiting the Straits of Malacca and Singapore so as to maintain a high level of crew alertness and vigilance.

ReCAAP ISC Executive Director, Mr Krishnaswamy Natarajan, said “The increase in incidents of opportunistic theft in the SOMS, in particular the theft of scrap metal from barges, is of grave concern. While the criminals are mostly non-confrontational, the continued boarding of ships by perpetrators could lead to more serious consequences. To mitigate acts of sea robbery in the SOMS, shipping companies need to work closely with the law enforcement agencies of the littoral States, share information on suspicious looking vessels, and report actual or attempted boarding of their vessels in a timely and accurate manner to the nearest coastal State RCC.”

¹ 72 actual, 1 attempted

Mr Yuichi Sonoda, Secretary General of the Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA), said, "The dialogue has provided a platform for shipping companies to share their concerns on maritime security threats in the SOMS, and learn how to better protect their vessels against these threats. The shipping industry also learnt how to collaborate more closely with the authorities to detect and deter armed robbery against ships in the SOMS."

At the dialogue, representatives from the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, the Singapore Navy Information Fusion Centre and the Singapore Police Coast Guard spoke on their efforts towards addressing the situation in the SOMS.

Other organisations represented at the dialogue included the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA), Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA), the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO), the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO), the Sarawak Association of Maritime Industries (SAMIN), the Sarawak and Sabah Shipowners Association (SSSA), the World Shipping Council, and shipping companies based in Singapore and Malaysia.

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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>