

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2020

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

For information sharing in combating piracy
and armed robbery against ships at sea



VISION

To be the information hub for combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

MISSION

To enhance regional cooperation through information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships.

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PREFACE



The year 2020 was a year without parallel. Like many organisations around the world, the activities of the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (the Centre) were severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this unprecedented time, the Centre remained committed to its mission of protecting crew, vessels and cargo from piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, as we saw maritime transportation being increasingly counted on to deliver the goods and supplies vital for people and industries. At the same time, maritime law enforcement agencies were stretched due to added pandemic management responsibilities along coast lines, and seafarers were subjected to prolonged periods at sea due to delays in crew changes as a result of pandemic control measures.

In this regard, the role of ReCAAP in promoting the safety of maritime transport in Asia, through its three pillars of information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements, remains more relevant than ever. The Centre continued its activities normally in January but the Centre

shifted to conducting its activities by virtual platform starting in February, due to widespread border controls and public health restrictions.

This Report presents the main activities of the Centre in 2020 with particular consideration to the following areas.

Strengthening the Core Function of Timely and Accurate Information Sharing

The Centre has made efforts to continuously improve the timeliness and accuracy of information sharing as its main function.

The Information Network System (IFN) is the core infrastructure of the Centre that enables timely and accurate information sharing between the Centre and ReCAAP Focal Points (FPs) in a secure environment. The Centre embarked on the renewal of the IFN in 2019 and completed it in February 2020. The renewed IFN has enhanced the user interface and introduced new features such as a training mode for self-learning by FPs on incident reporting as well as upgraded the system's security.

The Centre has been also improving the quality of analysis it is sharing with the maritime community. Since 2017, the Centre has been using data analytics to further add value to its reports by identifying trends and correlations among key factors of incidents based on the accumulated data of past incidents (comprising more than 1,700 incidents reported to the Centre from 2007 to 2020). The data analytics use data on such factors as number of perpetrators, types of weapons, treatment of crew, items stolen, types of ships boarded, and time of incident. In 2020, the Centre has continued to improve performance of data analytics system to provide visible patterns and identify trend of incidents.

Building the Capacity and Capabilities of ReCAAP Focal Points

Recognising that the maritime law enforcement

and regulatory agencies of Asia are at different stages of development, capacity building of FPs is another important pillar to effectively address the maritime crimes, particularly in information sharing.

The Centre began 2020 with the Focal Point Training Programme (FPTP) in January to initiate new FP staff on the role of FP and operation of incident reporting through the IFN.

After the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre switched to the virtual platform to conduct its capacity building activities. The Centre organised a virtual Capacity Building Workshop in August, its first Capacity Building virtual lecture in November and a virtual FPTP for new FP staff in November.

That said, capacity building is not merely about the transmission of knowledge and skills, but also about building confidence and solidarity among FPs, which can be more effectively achieved in physical meetings. The Centre intends to resume in-person capacity building activities complemented by virtual lectures when conditions will allow safe arrangement.

Establishing Closer Ties with the Maritime Community

The safety of maritime transport is a shared responsibility, and the Centre organised its annual Nautical Forum on 15 January 2020 to engage its diverse stakeholders including the shipping industry, diplomatic community, government agencies and academia on the occasion of the release of Annual Report 2019.

The Centre organised a virtual dialogue in July with the shipping industry (international and Asian shipping associations, shipping companies) to raise maritime situation awareness and exchange views on areas of concern such as the Singapore Strait and the Sulu-Celebes Seas.

Profiling and Branding ReCAAP ISC

Since the Centre has made a Blueprint for Profiling and Branding, it has been making intensive efforts to enhance its communications by accelerating its

move into the digital space while continuing its engagement with the mainstream and maritime media.

As one of these efforts, the Centre launched the renewed ReCAAP ISC website (www.recaap.org) in February 2020. The website is the centrepiece of the Centre's digital presence and the most convenient means of information sharing especially when the usual physical means of dissemination has become disrupted due to COVID-19. The renewed website highlights the most useful and frequently accessed information on the front page. The front page provides useful information such as a "live" tally of incidents of the current year, full lists of incidents of the current year and the previous year, and rolling scrollers to display the latest incident as well as Warning/Alert. The investment on the renewal of the website has borne fruit. In 2020, the Centre's website had an average of 2,626 unique visitors per month (compared to 1,900 monthly unique visitors in 2019). The user analytics suggest that the Centre's stakeholders are using it as a means to access updated information on the situation in Asia.

The Centre also continued its engagement with mainstream and maritime media through the Executive Director's half-yearly briefings, in January and July 2020. The Centre also continued to regularly update journalists on key announcements through its media advisories and news releases. In 2020, the Centre earned 2,012 traditional media hits (compared to 1,524 in 2019). Despite a year dominated by COVID-19 related news even in the maritime industry, the Centre garnered its highest number of media mentions on record.

The Situation of Piracy and Sea Robbery in Asia

A total of 97 incidents (comprising 95 actual incidents and two attempted incidents) were reported in Asia in 2020, compared to 83 incidents (comprising 72 actual incidents and 11 attempted incidents) in 2019. This represents a 17% increase in the total number of incidents and a 32% increase in the number of actual incidents. It is the highest

number of incidents reported in the last three years (2018-2020). The Centre is concerned with this significant rise of actual incidents in 2020, though the severity level of incidents remained mostly at a low level.

The increase was reported in several countries such as Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, Vietnam, the Singapore Strait and the South China Sea.

The biggest number of incidents occurred in the Singapore Strait with 34 incidents in 2020 (31 incidents in 2019). There was a decrease in the incidents of abduction of crew for ransom in Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Sabah in 2020 with one incident in January. However, the risk of abduction of crew in the area remains high.

Continuity amid Change

The year 2021 will mark a special milestone for the Centre because ReCAAP turns 15 years. While relatively young as an International Organization, the Centre has, nonetheless, made achievements over the last 15 years, thanks to the continued efforts of the Contracting Parties and their Focal Points.

Yet, it is not the time to be complacent and lower our guards. The incidents of piracy and sea robbery are increasing in recent years while new maritime threats such as cyber-security are emerging. Combating piracy and armed robbery requires a long-term effort.

Continuing endeavours and sustaining capability are indispensable for addressing these maritime crimes especially amid a changing external environment. The Centre will continue to encourage the efforts of all the stakeholders of the maritime community, while fully assuming its role.

Masafumi Kuroki
Executive Director
ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre

THE 14TH GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING OF THE ReCAAP ISC

1 OVERVIEW

The 14th Governing Council Meeting of the ReCAAP ISC was held on 13 and 15 October 2020 by virtual modality, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Meeting was attended by the Governors/Representatives of the 20 ReCAAP Contracting Parties.

The Council reviewed the activities of the Centre in FY2019 and deliberated on its activities for FY2020 and FY2021. The Council commended the Centre for conducting its mission actively and producing positive results in FY2019 under the three pillars of its mission, i.e., information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements.

The Council encouraged the Centre to continue its mission stipulated in the ReCAAP Agreement and its activities based on its Roadmap, by working together with the ReCAAP Contracting Parties, Focal Points, the maritime community and other stakeholders.

The Council reviewed the implementation of the Workplan and the Budget for FY2020. The Council noted that, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre's core function of information sharing continued uninterrupted through the ReCAAP Information Network (IFN) system and other digital platforms.

The Council appreciated the Centre's efforts to conduct capacity building activities for ReCAAP

Focal Points as well as engagement with the shipping industry by virtual modality. This included a Capacity Building Workshop in August and a dialogue with shipping companies and associations in July. The Council encouraged the Centre to continue to use virtual modality as much as possible, due to travel restrictions and border controls.

The Council affirmed the importance of keeping the Centre relevant in the midst of a fast-changing maritime environment. In this regard, the Council supported the activities proposed by the Centre to raise awareness on the threat of maritime terrorism and maritime cybersecurity and collect information in order to identify the nexus of these crimes with piracy and armed robbery against ships.

The Council was updated by the Secretariat on the accession process of France and Germany to the Agreement. The Council supported the intention of both countries to join the ReCAAP and expected their smooth accession process.

The Council welcomed the events proposed by the Secretariat to commemorate the 15th anniversary of ReCAAP in 2021. The main event will be the 15th anniversary symposium with the theme "Enhancing Regional Cooperation: 15 years and Beyond", which is planned on the occasion of the 15th Governing Council Meeting in March 2021.

2 VOLUNTARY FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The Centre welcomed the voluntary contributions pledged/paid by ReCAAP Contracting Parties for FY2020 (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021) as follows:

Income	Singapore Dollars (SGD)	Foreign Currency
Singapore	\$1,911,336.00	NA
Japan	\$540,295.00	NA
Korea (ROK)	\$170,745.03	KRW 150 million
India	\$138,863.20	USD 100,000
Kingdom of Norway	\$133,980.00	USD 100,000
Australia	\$99,450.00	AUD 100,000
China	\$97,768.80	USD 72,000
United States of America	\$69,450.00	USD 50,000
Kingdom of Denmark	\$65,875.00	USD 50,000
Kingdom of the Netherlands	\$30,096.00	EUR 20,000
Total :	\$3,257,859.03	

The financial contribution was in addition to the secondment of staff from India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Thailand to the Centre.

SITUATION OF PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA IN 2020

1 OVERALL SITUATION

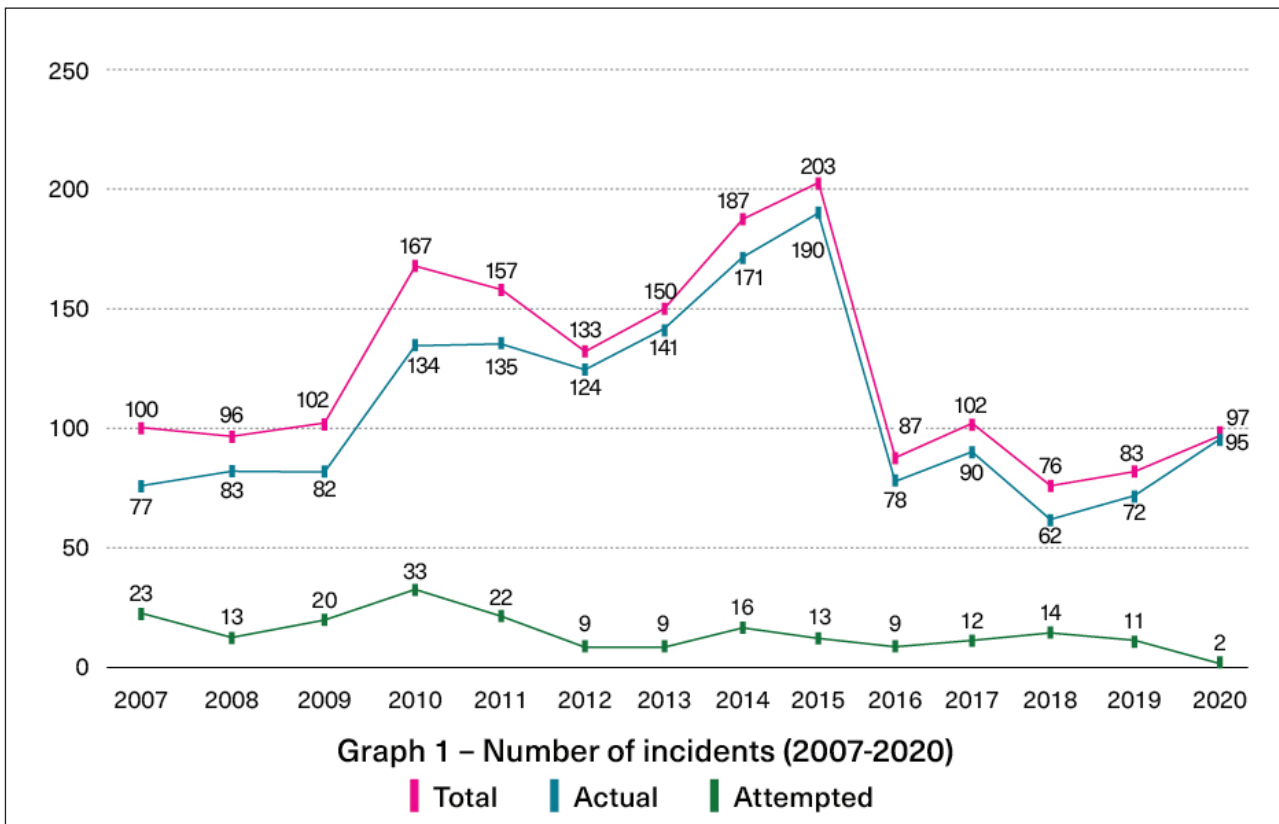
A total of 97 incidents (comprising 95 actual incidents and two attempted incidents) were reported in Asia in 2020, compared to 83 incidents (comprising 72 actual incidents and 11 attempted incidents) in 2019. This accounts for a 17% increase in total number and 32% increase in actual number of incidents, compared to 2019. This is also the highest number of incidents reported among the past three years (2018-2020). Incidents increased in several locations such as Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, Vietnam, the Singapore Strait and the South China Sea.

The Centre is concerned with the increase of incidents, particularly in the actual incidents. (Graph 1 shows the number of incidents reported during 2007-2020.)

Piracy vs Armed Robbery against Ships

Of the 97 incidents reported in 2019, four were incidents of piracy (4%) and 93 were armed robbery against ships (96%). Over the 14-year period, the number of piracy incidents fluctuates each year, with an average of 13% for piracy against 87% for armed robbery against ships. The majority of the incidents of piracy in Asia occurred in the South China Sea.

(Chart 1 shows the number of incidents of piracy vs armed robbery against ships from 2007-2020).



Graph 1: Number of incidents reported during 2007-2020

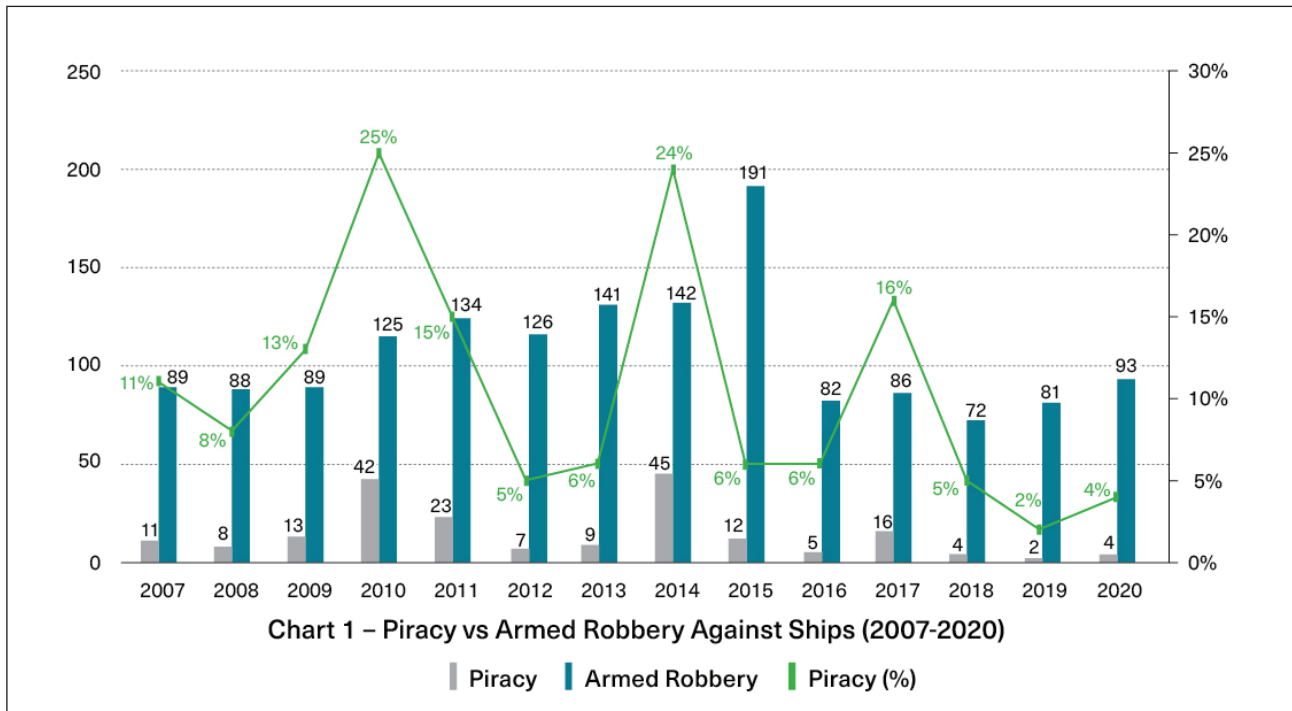


Chart 1: Incidents of piracy vs armed robbery against ships from 2007-2020

Significance Level of incidents

Of the 95 actual incidents reported in 2020, one was CAT 1, six were CAT 2, 18 were CAT 3 and 70 were CAT 4. The CAT 1 incident was an incident of abduction of crew for ransom. The number of CAT 2 incidents in 2020 was the lowest among the 14-year reporting period, while the number of CAT 3 incidents has increased. As in the past, the majority of the incidents (74%) were CAT 4 incidents, with perpetrators not armed and with no injury to the crew.

Despite an increase of incidents in 2020, the severity level of incidents such as violence to the crew has remained mostly at a low level. There was one incident of abduction of 5 crew, three incidents where crew was assaulted, one incident where crew was temporarily taken hostage and one incident where crew was threatened.

(Chart 2 shows the significance level of incidents from 2007-2020.)

Ships at Berth/Anchorage

Of the 97 incidents reported in 2020, 57% (55 incidents) occurred on board ships while anchored or berthed. Most of them occurred during hours of darkness. Among the incidents at ports/

anchorage were: Manila, Philippines (9), Kakinada, India (5), Dumai, Indonesia (5), Taboneo, Indonesia (4), Vung Tau, Vietnam (3) and Chittagong, Bangladesh (4).

Ships while Underway

In 2020, 43% (42 incidents) occurred on board ships while underway. The majority of the incidents took place during hours of darkness.

Situation in the Singapore Strait

The biggest number of incidents occurred on board ships while underway in the Singapore Strait with 34 incidents. Among them 30 incidents took place in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme of the Strait. The Centre urged the littoral States to strengthen patrols and arrest the perpetrators.

Situation on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah

There was one actual incident of abduction of crew for ransom in 2020. This is the lowest number since 2016 when the recent abduction of crew had started in the area.

In 2020, the incident occurred on 17 Jan off Lahad Datu, Sabah (Malaysia) where eight crew were

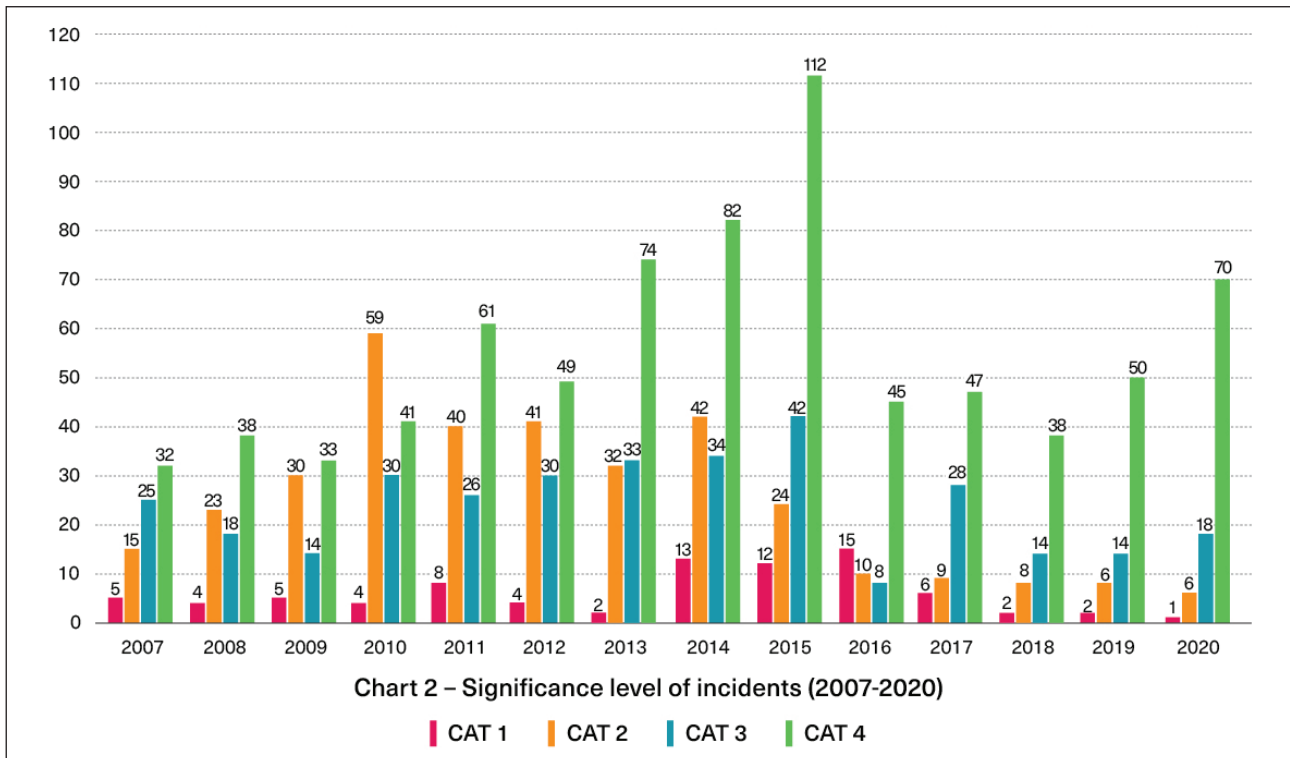


Chart 2: Significance level of incidents from 2007-2020

abducted from a fishing trawler. On 18 Jan , the Malaysian authorities recovered three of the eight crew, but five crew were held in captivity by the perpetrators. On 29 Sep, one of the five abducted crew was found dead during a military operation in Sulu, the Philippines. The remaining four crew are still held in captivity.

Despite the decrease in the number of incidents, the Centre has received information of planned kidnapping of Abu Sayyaf Group and issued Warning in July and November. The risk of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah remains high.

The Centre maintains its advisory issued via Incident Alert dated 21 Nov 16 to all ships to re-route from the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah, where possible. Otherwise ship masters and crew are strongly urged to exercise extra vigilance while transiting the area, and report immediately to the Operation Centres of Philippines and Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) of Malaysia.

For more information on the situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia in 2020,

please refer to the Annual Report 2020 of ReCAAP ISC at www.recaap.org.

2 DATA ANALYTICS

The Centre embarked on a data analytics project in 2017 to analyse the trends of piracy and sea robbery in Asia by using the accumulated data of past incidents reported to the Centre since 2007. The Phase 1 of the project is to automate the extraction of information of past incidents from the Centre’s database to facilitate visualisation of trends to analyse the modus operandi of perpetrators in various locations in Asia. The analysis focuses on factors such as the ‘number of perpetrators’, ‘type of weapons carried by perpetrators’, ‘treatment of crew by perpetrators’, ‘items stolen from ships’, ‘type of ships boarded’ and ‘time of incident’. In 2020, the Centre has improved the system reliability and performance to provide better visualisation. In 2021, the Centre will study the feasibility of the Phase 2 project to identify the external factors such as economic factors, meteorological conditions etc. which might have linkage with piracy and sea robbery incidents.

Examples of the analytical dashboards are appended:

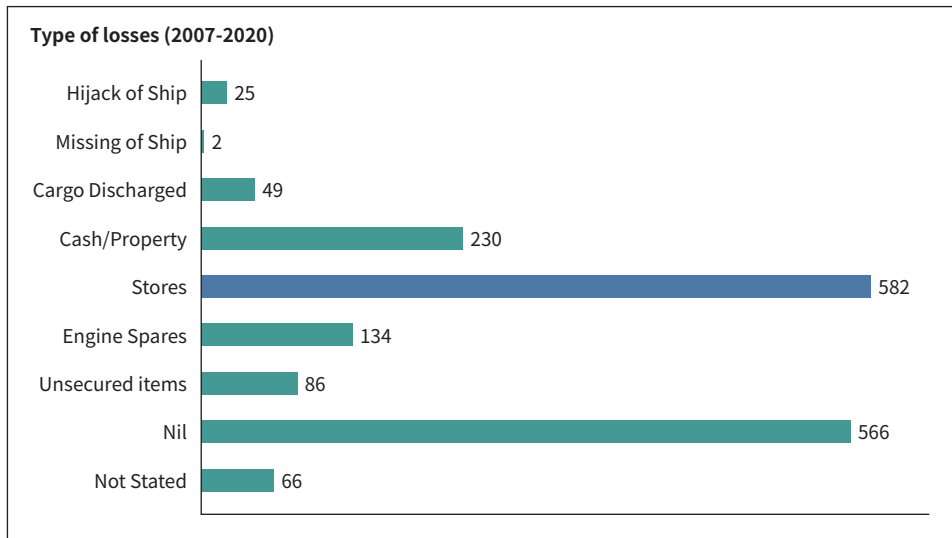


Image 1: Type of losses - Asia (2007-2020)

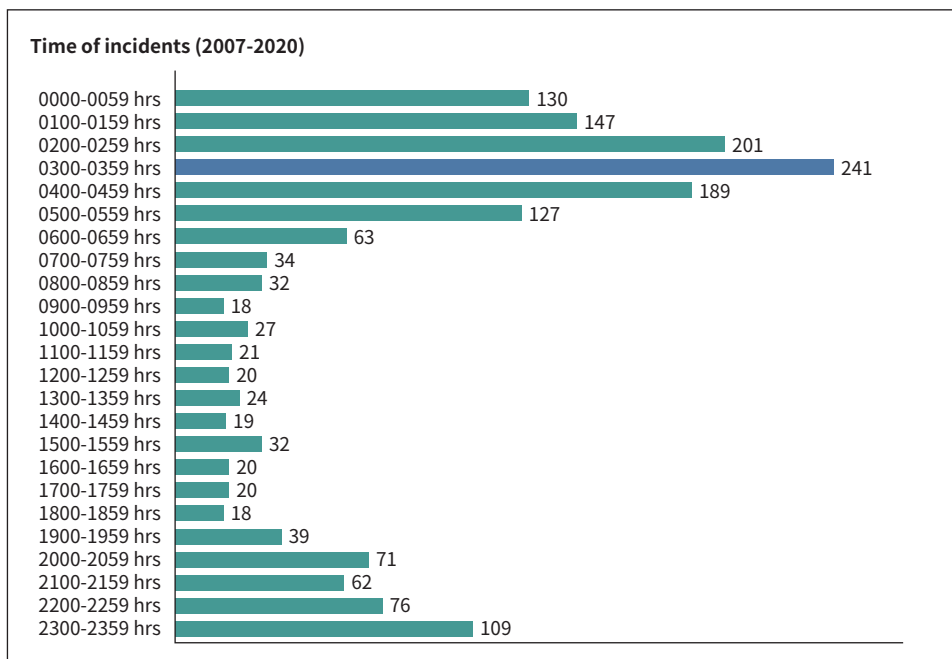


Image 2: Time of incidents - Asia (2007-2020)

The visual dashboard display enables the Centre to compare the trends of incidents in past years with incidents in 2020 and also to establish the correlation between factors of incidents. For example, Image 3 shows the number of

perpetrators involved in past 14 years' incidents compared with incidents in 2020. Image 4 shows the correlation between “bigger ships vs. location of incident” in Singapore Strait.

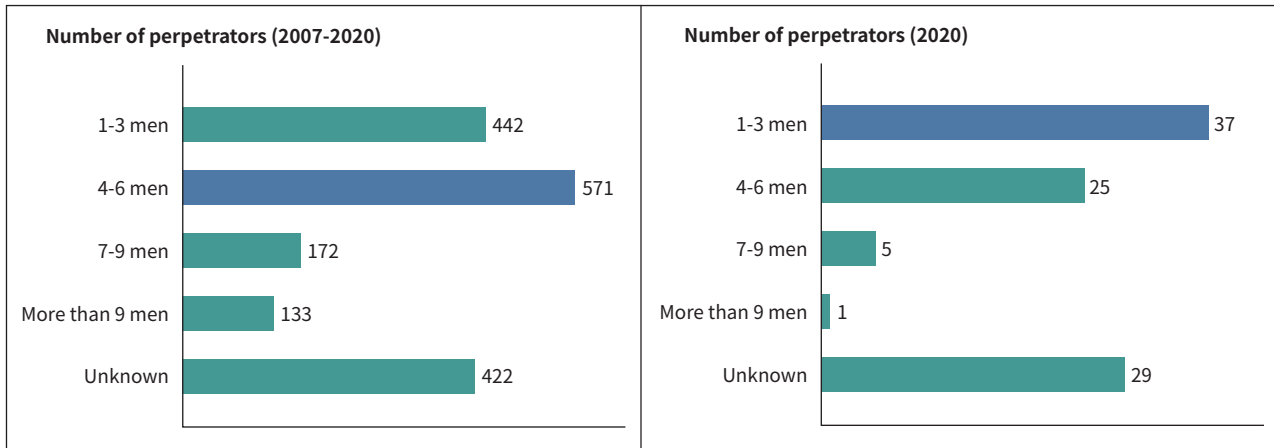


Image 3 – Number of perpetrators - Asia (2007- 2020 vis-à-vis 2020)

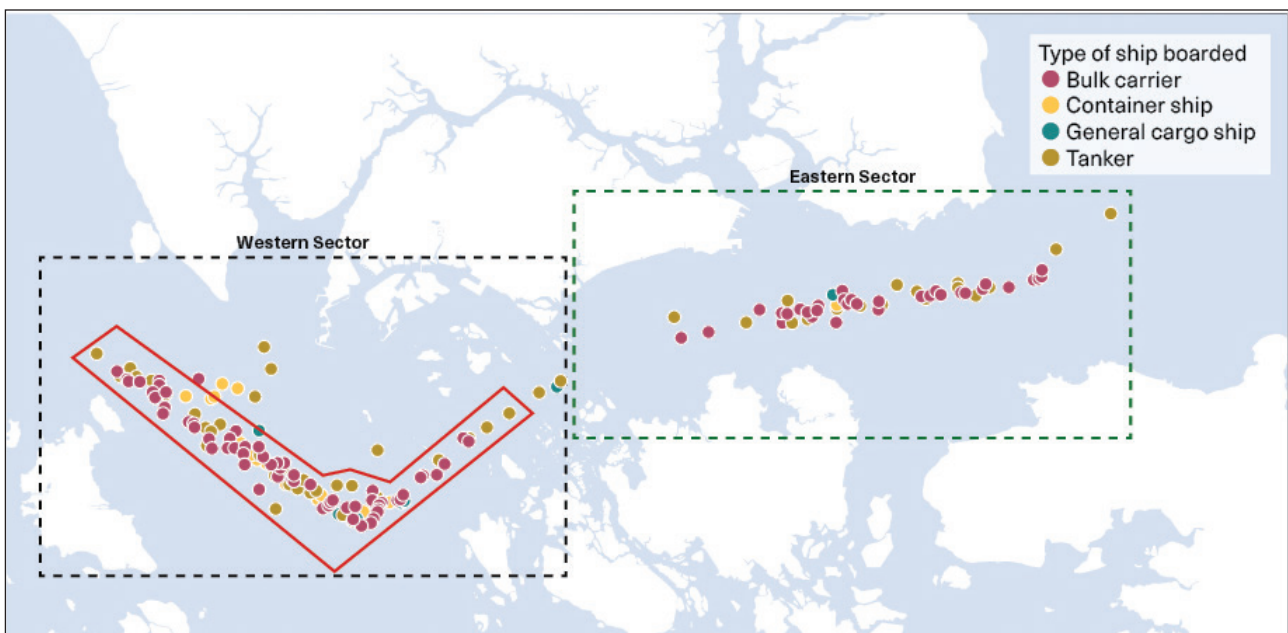


Image 4 – Correlation between bigger ships vs location of incident (Singapore Strait)

General trend of 2007 - 2020

Based on the data analytics with the data of 1,700 incidents of the past 14 years (2007-2020), the general trends of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia can be summarised as follows:

- The majority of incidents involved groups of 4-6 perpetrators (33% of all incidents) or 1-3 perpetrators (25%).
- 48% of incidents had no information on the type of weapons, 33% reported perpetrators armed with knives/machetes and 10% armed with guns/knives.
- 80% of the incidents reported no injury to the crew or no information on the treatment of the crew.
- In 33% of the incidents, nothing was stolen as the perpetrators escaped empty-handed when sighted by the crew.
- Ship stores were mostly stolen items.
- Boarded ships were tankers (36%), bulk carriers (27%), tug boats/supply vessels (14%), container ships (13%).
- 81% of incidents occurred during hours of darkness (18:00-06:00).

3 IMPROVING ACCURACY AND TIMELINESS OF INFORMATION SHARING

Accurate information

The primary source of information of the Centre is the Incidents Reports (IR) sent by the 20 Focal Points (FPs) of ReCAAP, via IFN (Information Sharing Network). FPs send the IR on all incidents within and outside their territorial waters, based on reporting mainly by the ships and shipping companies. The FPs are also required to verify the details of incidents for accurate information before sending IR.

In addition to the IRs, the information sources of the Centre are IMO and other regional authorities. Chart 3 shows the number of reports submitted by FPs compared to other sources from 2007-2020. The percentage of the reports by FPs has increased from 93% in 2019 to 95% in 2020.

This indicates that there has been further improvement in the competency and effectiveness of FPs in collecting information, verifying incidents and reporting through IFN. It also demonstrates the confidence between the sources of information and FPs in sharing information.

Timeliness of Reporting

Chart 4 shows the timeliness of IRs submitted by FPs to the Centre during 2007-2020. The timeliness of reporting can be measured by the duration between the time of the incident and the time of the IR submitted by FPs. Of a total of 1,370 IRs submitted by FPs to the Centre during 2007 - 2020, 29% were submitted within 24 hours, 26% submitted between 1 to 5 days and 45% took more than 5 days.

Although there has been improvement in the timeliness of reporting in 2020 compared to the previous 13 years, there is room for further improvement.

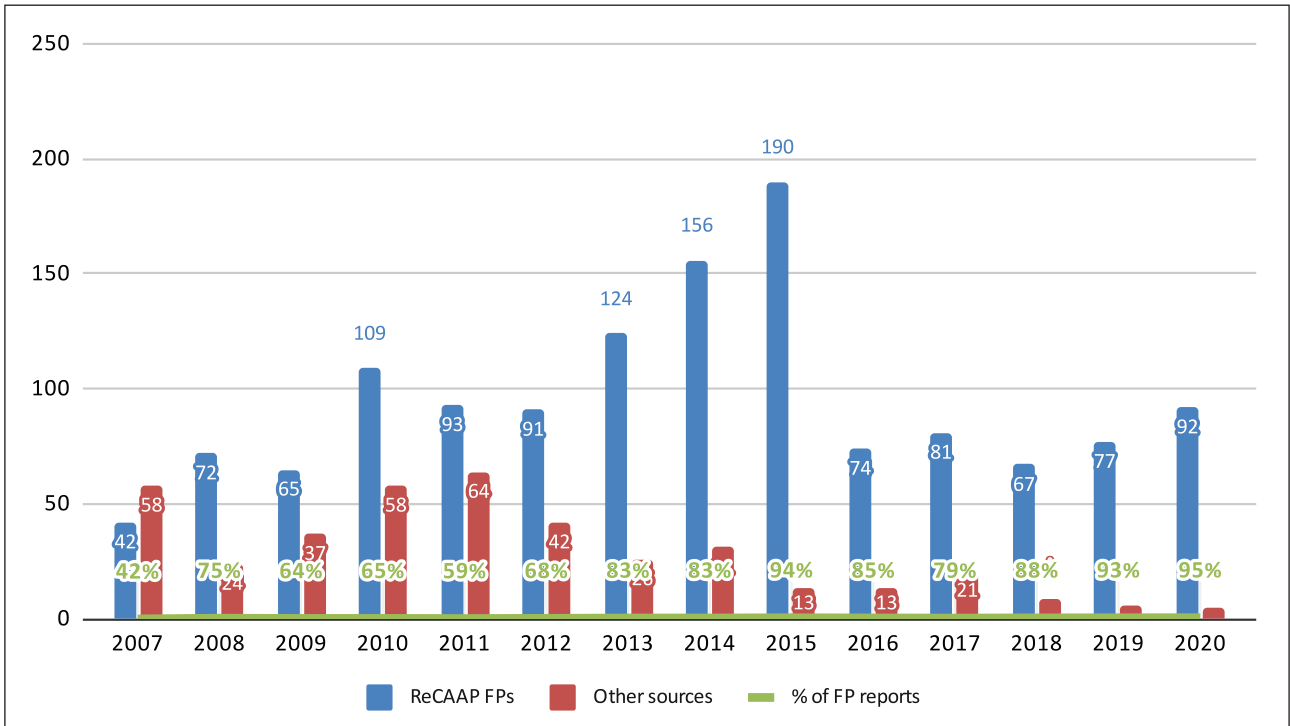


Chart 3: Number of reports submitted by FPs and other sources of information during 2007-2020

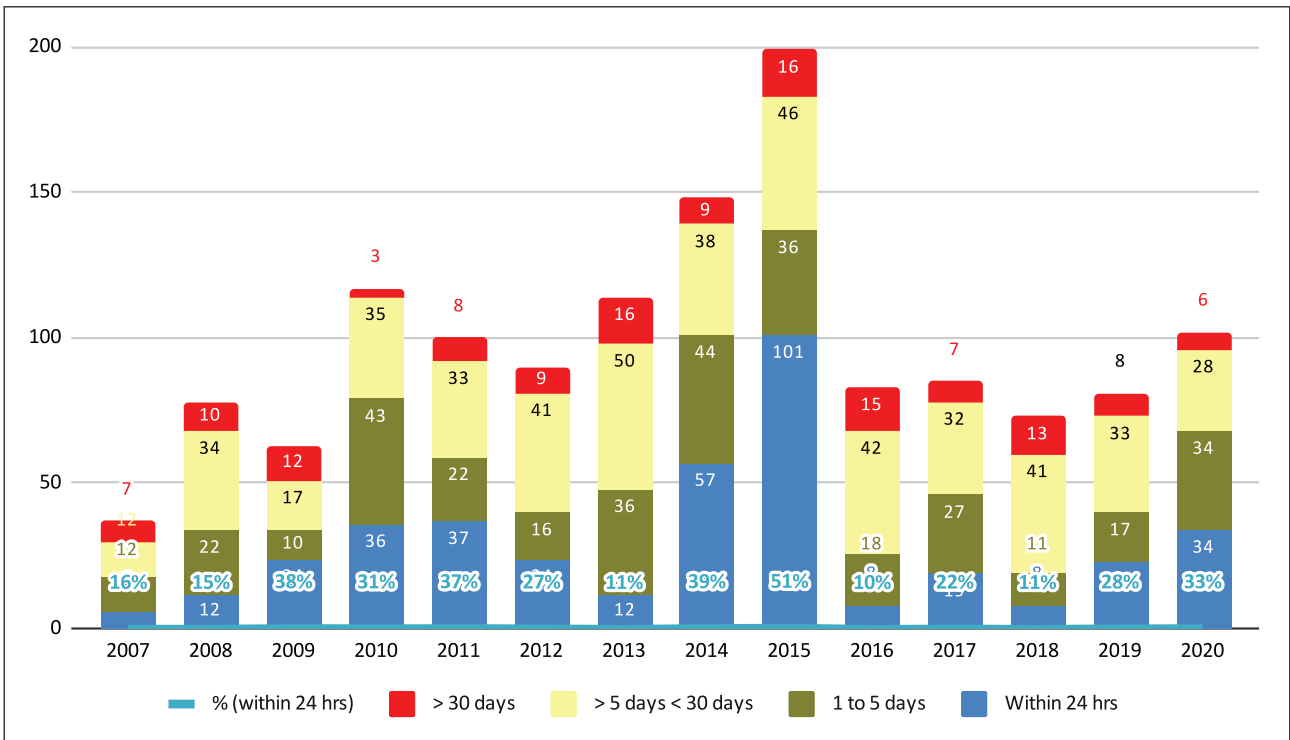


Chart 4: Timeliness of submission of Incident Reports (2007-2020)

4 PRODUCTS OF RECAAP ISC

The key information sharing products of the Centre are its ad hoc and periodic reports. When the situation warrants, in particular for serious incidents or a series of incidents, the Centre issues Warnings, Incident Alerts and Special Reports. The Centre also produces periodic reports with statistics and analysis on a weekly and monthly basis. All the products are disseminated by e-mail to the relevant stakeholders, and by the Centre’s digital platforms such as its website, Mobile App, and social media channels.

Since 2017, the Centre has been sending printed copies of the Annual Report and Half-Yearly Report to maritime universities, training centres and research institutes for their reading and retention in libraries.

Warning


The Centre issues a Warning when the situation warrants to provide timely information and advice. A Warning is issued with validated information of FPs, pending the formal Incident Report of FPs.

In 2020, the Centre issued two Warnings on 22 May and 2 July upon receiving validated information from the Philippine FP. The first Warning on 22 May provided information on Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)’s planned kidnapping in undisclosed areas in Sabah, Malaysia. The second Warning on 2 July provided information on the sighting of ASG’s Kidnap-for-Ransom Group (KFRG), with detailed description of their boat and planned kidnapping in Sabah and Semporna, Malaysia.

WARNING 01-2020

22 MAY 2020

- On 22 May, the ReCAAP ISC has received information from the Philippine Coast Guard (ReCAAP Focal Point) that a group of approximately five ASG (Abu Sayyaf Group) members armed with assorted firearms is planning to conduct kidnapping activities in undisclosed areas in Sabah, Malaysia. They are targeting wealthy businessmen or crew of fishing boats and other slow moving ships plying within the waters off Sabah, Malaysia. The group came from Sulu and was monitored to have landed at Omapoy Island, Sipangkot, Sitangkai, Tawi Tawi.
- Ship masters and crew are strongly urged to exercise extra vigilance when transiting the waters off Eastern Sabah and in the Sulu-Celebes Seas.
- Source: Philippine Coast Guard
- This information is to provide maritime situational awareness for mariners operating in the area.




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WARNING 02-2020

2 JULY 2020

- Reference the Warning disseminated by the ReCAAP ISC on 22 May 2020 (Warning 01-2020) about a group of five Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members planning to conduct kidnapping activities in undisclosed areas in Sabah, Malaysia (as attached).
- On 2 July 2020, the ReCAAP ISC has received information from the Philippine Coast Guard (ReCAAP Focal Point) that on 21 June 2020, five members of the Abu Sayyaf Group/Kidnap-for-Ransom Group (ASG/KFRG) were sighted in Barangay Sipangkot, Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi on board a **white with yellow and orange stripes speedboat** powered by 250HP Yamaha engine. The Philippine Coast Guard added that as of 30 June 2020, the plan to carry out kidnapping in Sabah and Semporna, Malaysia targeting foreigners and the abduction of crew from ships passing by the Tawi-Tawi and Sabah waters still stands.
- Ship masters and crew are strongly urged to exercise extra vigilance when transiting the waters off Eastern Sabah and in the Sulu-Celebes Seas.
- Source: Philippine Coast Guard
- This information is to provide maritime situational awareness for mariners operating in the area.



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Image 5: Warnings issued on 22 May 2020 (left) and 2 July 2020 (right)

Incident Alert

Incident Alert is issued on a serious incident or a series of incidents, based on the verified information of Incident Report by FP.

In 2020, the Centre issued one Incident Alert on the Abduction of Crew from a fishing boat in January, one Incident Alert on the incidents in Batangas, Philippines in August and five Incident Alerts on the increasing incidents in the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait respectively in January, February, April, October and November.

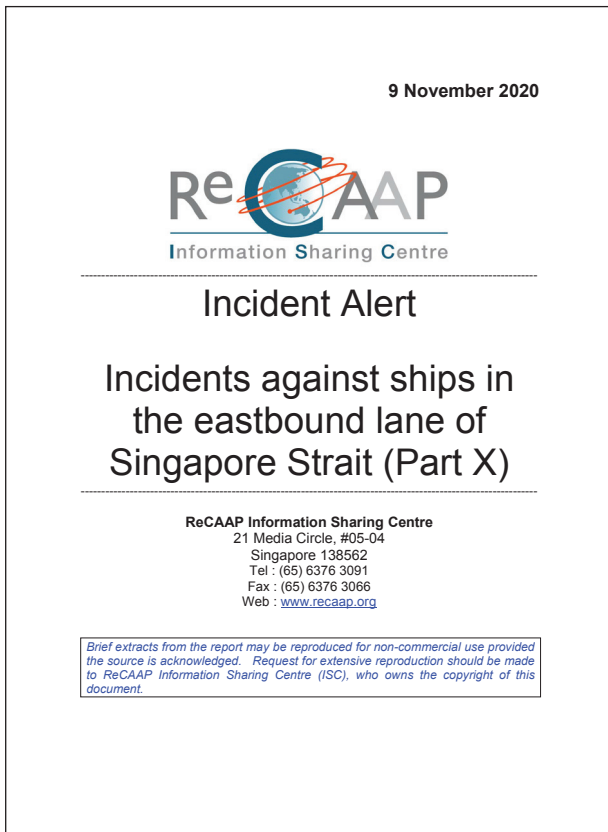


Image 6: Latest Incident Alert issued on 9 November 2020

Periodic Reports

The Centre issues Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Half-Yearly and Annual Reports. These reports provide an updated situation including statistics, analysis on the modus operandi of perpetrators and recommendations. Information of incidents in weekly report is reported to IMO to be included in GISIS.



Image 7: Design of ReCAAP ISC Periodic Reports in 2020

Single-Sheet Summary

Single-sheet summary is produced for Centre's reports on a quarterly basis. This summary adopts info-graphics design of the graphs, charts and maps for quick overview of the situation.

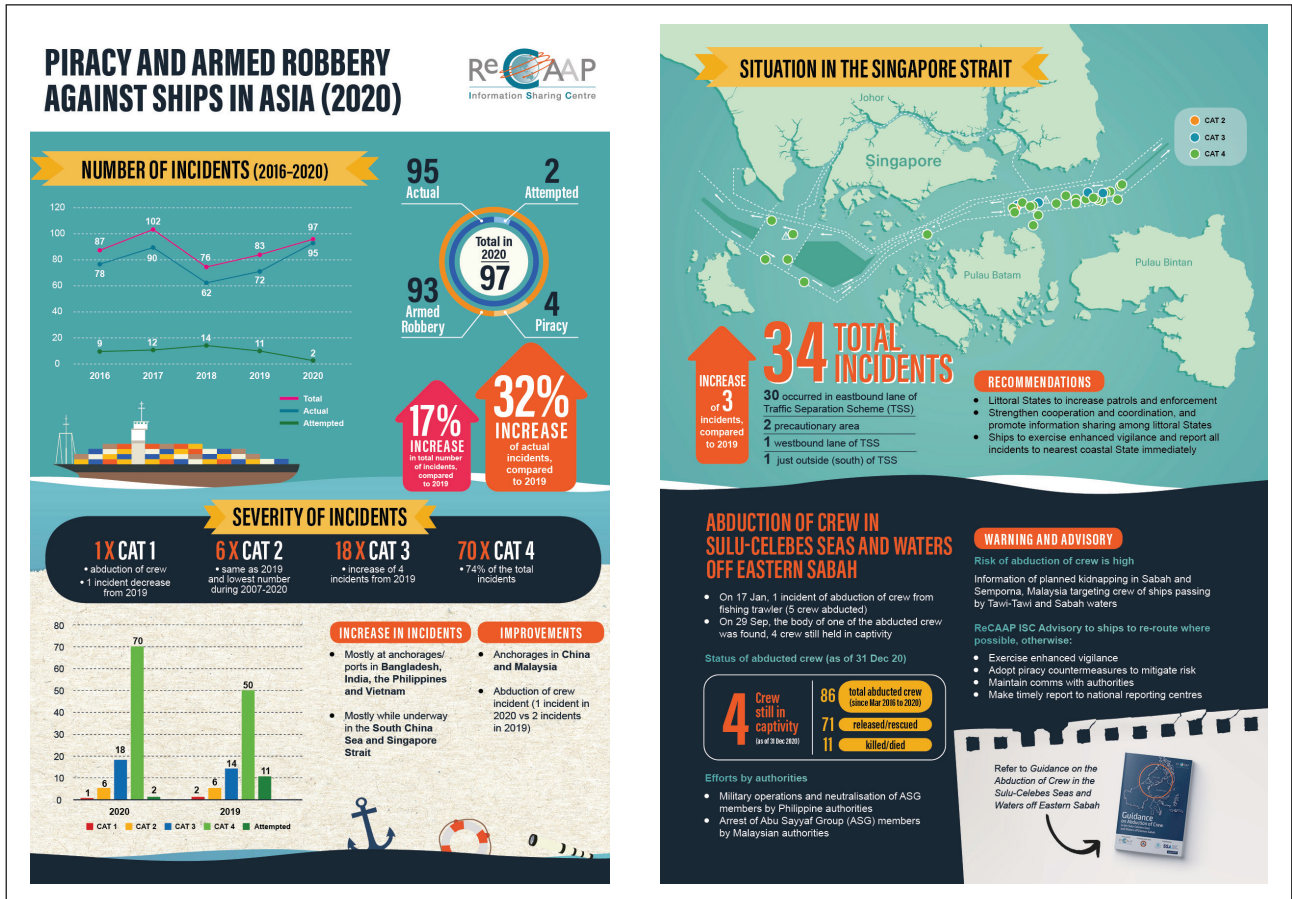


Image 8: The Single-sheet summary of Annual Report 2020

1 OVERVIEW

While the Centre was not able to carry out in-person capacity building activities in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it nonetheless leveraged on virtual platforms to organise a series of virtual meetings designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of ReCAAP FPs.

Recognising that ReCAAP FPs—many of whom are maritime regulatory and law enforcement agencies—play an indispensable role in combating piracy and sea robbery, the Centre continues to place emphasis in building the capabilities of Member States.

With virtual lectures being proven as an efficient way of sharing knowledge, the Centre expects to continue a series of virtual lectures to supplement physical meetings even when in-person gatherings can resume.

In 2020, the Centre organised the following programmes, in accordance with the “Guidelines on Capacity Building Activities” adopted at the 13th GC Meeting in March 2019.

2 VIRTUAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP (26 AUGUST)

The Centre held its annual Capacity Building Workshop (CBW) virtually on 26 August for 25 FP officers from 17 Contracting Parties across Asia, Australia and Europe.

The participants shared the latest information and assessment of the situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, as well as explored ways to further improve the accuracy and timeliness of incident reporting by FPs.



Maritime regulatory and law enforcement authorities convene to enhance measures to combat piracy and sea robbery in Asia at the virtual Capacity Building Workshop in August 2020

3 CAPACITY BUILDING VIRTUAL LECTURE (4 NOVEMBER)

The Centre organised its first Capacity Building virtual lecture for ReCAAP FPs on 4 November, featuring Professor Stuart Kaye of the University of Wollongong, Australia who gave a lecture on “Maritime Zones” and “Piracy & Armed Robbery at Sea”, based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Eighteen ReCAAP FPs/Contact Point and Malaysia (Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency) attended the lecture.

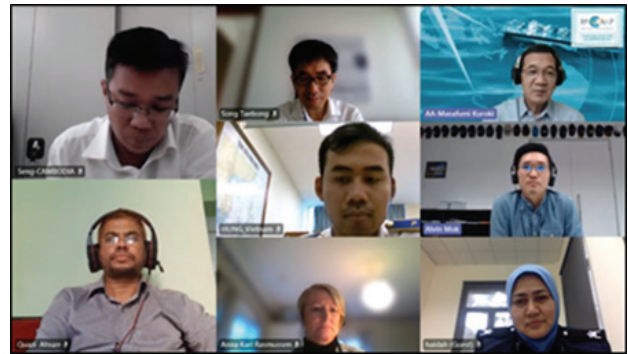
4 FOCAL POINT TRAINING PROGRAMME (13 TO 15 JANUARY & 19 NOVEMBER)

The Centre conducted Focal Point Training Programme (FPTP) twice in 2020 to initiate new FP staff who are responsible for the operation of information sharing.

The first FPTP, conducted in-person from 13 to 15 January in Singapore, was attended by FP staff from Brunei, Cambodia, India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The programme included the learning of the role and functions of FP and training of the incident reporting via the IFN System. The participants also attended the Nautical Forum organised by the Centre on 15 January and visited the Port Operations Control Centre of Singapore.

The second FPTP was conducted virtually on 19 November. A total of seven Focal Points, namely Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway and Vietnam participated in the virtual FPTP.



A total of seven ReCAAP FPs participated in the virtual FPTP held on 19 November 2020

5 IFN EXERCISE WITH FOCALPOINTS/CONTACT POINT (1 TO 12 JUNE)

The Centre conducted an exercise via the IFN system from 1 to 12 June 2020 with the ReCAAP FPs and Contact Point (CP). In this exercise, the FPs/CP were required to submit Incident Report (IR) and Amplifying Report (AR) through the IFN using the Training Mode, based on the prepared scenarios. A total of 14 FPs/CP participated in the exercise, which familiarized them with the process of submitting reports.

6 BILATERAL VISITS TO FOCAL POINTS

The Centre has continued visits to ReCAAP FPs to better understand their specific challenges, with two bilateral visits in January. The rest of the planned visits in 2020 had to be postponed due to the COVID-19.

Bilateral Visit to Bangladesh FP (19-20 January)

The Centre visited the Bangladesh FP (Department of Shipping) from 19 to 20 January to understand the measures undertaken by the Bangladesh authorities that resulted in no incident in 2019. The Centre also had a meeting with various maritime stakeholders of Bangladesh to present the latest situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.



The Centre met the Bangladesh FP and maritime stakeholders to reaffirm cooperation and share the latest situation in Asia

Bilateral Visit to Thailand FP (21 January)

On 21 January, the Centre visited the Thai FP, Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC). The Centre received useful information on the policies, organisation, and anti-piracy measures in Thailand and enhanced networking with the FP as well as other stakeholders.



The bilateral visit to Thai-MECC allowed the Centre and Thai FP to confirm cooperation in the shared mission to combat piracy and sea robbery in Asia

COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

1 OVERVIEW

The Centre is continuing efforts in building cooperative arrangements across government agencies and the maritime community in the shared responsibility to keep Asian waters safe for maritime transport.

Building links with external stakeholders allows the Centre to disseminate accurate information and advisories, and reinforce ReCAAP as a successful model of regional cooperation.

The cooperative arrangement activities include organising and participating in regional and international conferences, and partnering with international organisations/associations that share common purpose.

2 ENGAGEMENTS WITH INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

Indonesia

The Centre continued engagements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and maritime agencies of Indonesia in 2020. The specific engagements area as follows:

- On 15 January, Indonesia sent one officer from BAKAMLA to make presentation at the Nautical Forum 2020.
- On 3 February, the Executive Director of the Centre called on the Director for Legal Affairs and Territorial Treaties, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They discussed on the way to enhance operational cooperation by inviting Indonesia maritime agencies to the capacity building activities and conferences organised by the Centre. The Executive Director shared information on the situation of piracy and sea robbery in Asia in 2019. He expressed concern on the recent increase of incidents in the Singapore Strait and requested the cooperation of Indonesian maritime agencies.

- On 3 February, the Executive Director met officers of the Indonesian Marine Police (IMP) to better understand their operation and to establish contacts for information sharing.
- On 4 February, the Executive Director called on the Director of Policy, International Relations of BAKAMLA. The Executive Director encouraged the participation of BAKAMLA in the capacity building activities and conferences of the Centre. The Executive Director provided information on the incidents at Indonesian ports/anchorages and in the Singapore Strait and requested the cooperation of BAKAMLA.

Malaysia

The Centre continued to maintain good cooperation at operational level with Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) on information exchange and verification of incidents. Malaysia sent officers from MMEA to attend the virtual capacity building activities organised by the Centre in 2020. The specific engagements are as follows:

- On 15 January, Malaysia sent one officer from MMEA to participate in the Nautical Forum.
- On 4 November, one officer from MMEA attended the virtual capacity building lecture conducted by an external expert.

3 ENGAGEMENTS WITH MULTILATERAL REGIMES INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

4th meeting of UNODC Contact Group on Maritime Crime in the Sulu and Celebes Sea, Manila, Philippines (27 October)

The 4th meeting of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Contact Group on maritime crime in the Sulu and Celebes Seas was held virtually on 27 October. The national

delegates of the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia attended the meeting and presented the latest maritime crime trends in Sulu-Celebes Seas and updated on the progress of the action items that had been discussed at the 3rd meeting. The Centre made a presentation on the assessment of the abduction of crew incidents in the Sulu-Celebes Seas.

4 **ENGAGEMENT WITH SHIPPING INDUSTRY**

11th Nautical Forum, Singapore (15 January)

The Centre organised the 11th Nautical Forum, supported by Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore and the Singapore Shipping Association, on 15 January in Singapore. The Centre presented the situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia in 2019, based on its Annual Report. A total of 150 participants from the shipping industry, international and regional shipping associations, diplomatic community (ReCAAP Contracting Parties and other countries), regional authorities and academia attended the Forum.



The Annual Report 2019 was released at the 11th 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.

Dialogue with the Shipping Industry (30 July)

The Centre held its first virtual dialogue with representatives of the shipping associations and companies based in Singapore and Malaysia on 30 July. The Centre presented the Half-Yearly Report 2020, and exchanged views with the industry on three areas of concern: (1) the increase of incidents in the Singapore Strait, (2) the threat of abduction of crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas, and (3) the negative impact of COVID-19 on the shipping industry.

PROFILING AND BRANDING RECAAP ISC

The Centre's investment in building its digital communications capabilities and strengthening its media relations bore fruits in 2020 even though physical means of dissemination of its products were severely disrupted.

1 DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

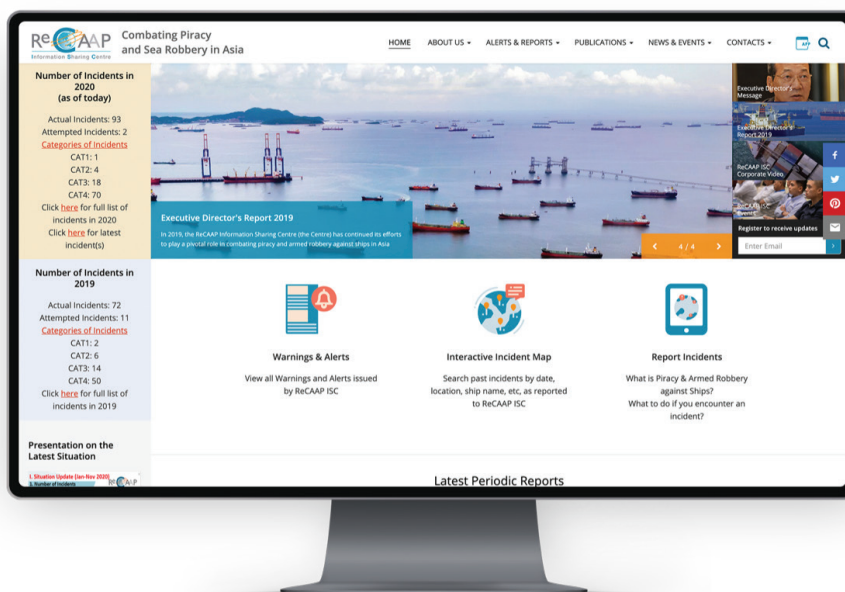
Recognising that the public website (www.recaap.org) is a prime platform for the immediate dissemination of its information, the Centre began in the last quarter of 2019 a major enhancement of the website. The most visible enhancement is a design of the front page to make information more easily accessible for the wide stakeholders. The Centre's public website now features new functions such as:

- A "live" counter of the number of incidents (actual, attempted, and categories of severity)
- A constantly updated list of incidents with their descriptions (e.g. date and time, location, ship type, incident type, mode of attack, etc)

of the current year and the list of incidents in the previous year

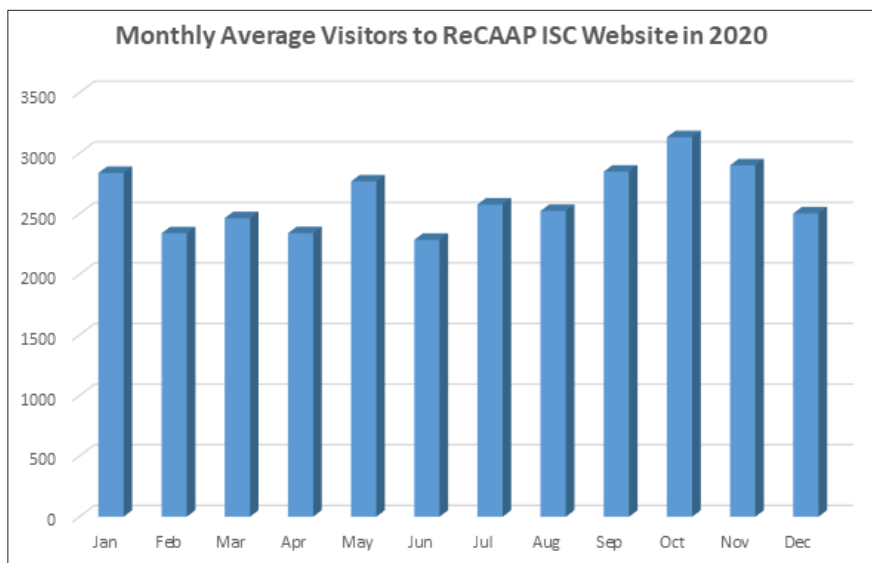
- Scrolling alerts on the latest incident and on the latest Incident Alert
- Presentation deck with slides summarising the latest situation, updated on a monthly basis
- Immediate access to all the latest periodic reports and guides of the Centre
- Explanation on the categories of severity of incidents
- Explanation on the definition of piracy and armed robbery against ships, and the reporting framework of incidents

The enhanced website was previewed to the shipping industry at the Nautical Forum on 15 January 2020, and officially launched in February.



In 2020, the Centre has significantly enhanced the accessibility and presentation of its information and products

Since the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a trend towards digital tools, the average unique visitors per month increased to 2,626 in 2020, compared to 1,900 monthly unique visitors in 2019.



On average, approximately 2,626 unique visitors use the ReCAAP ISC website each month in 2020

As of December 2020, the Centre’s public website now consistently ranks within the top five organic (non-paid) search results for some keywords.

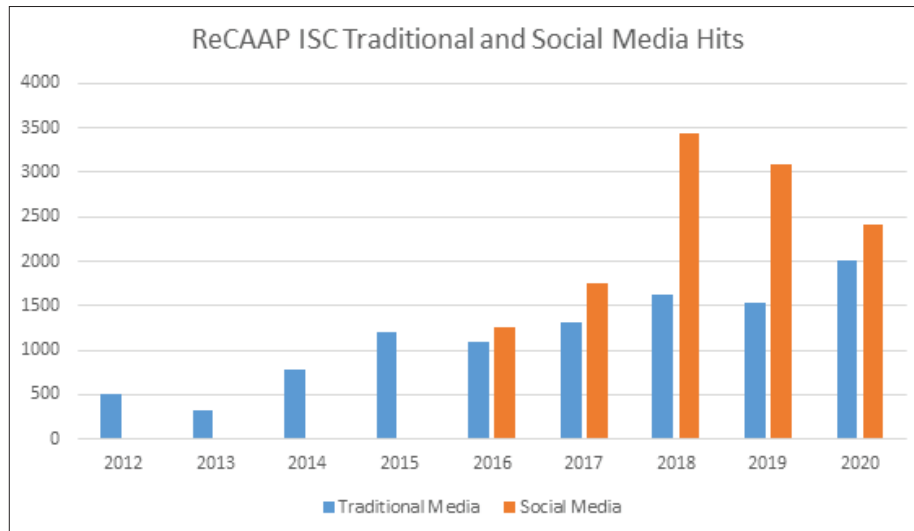
2 MEDIA REPORTS

Despite 2020 being dominated by COVID-19 related news even in the shipping industry, the information and publication of the Centre continued to be featured extensively in the media, particularly in the maritime media.

In 2020, the Executive Director continued engagement with the media, including an in-person media briefing in January, and a virtual media briefing in July. Both were well-attended by local and international journalists based in Singapore from *Bloomberg*, *Reuters*, *Channel NewsAsia*, *Lloyd’s List*, *Platts*, *Jane’s*, *Safety4Sea*,

Seatrade Maritime, *Tradewind News*, and more. For example, the *BBC Asia* bureau in Singapore picked up the Centre’s news release on the half-yearly statistics in July, and ran an extensive article on the situation in Asia.

The Centre earned a total of 2,012 media mentions on traditional media in 2020, compared to 1,524 in 2019. This is the highest number of earned media articles on record. A nine-year comparison of the Centre’s traditional and social media hits is appended.



Nine-year comparison of traditional and social media mentions of ReCAAP ISC

The extensive citation of the Centre’s data by the media has reinforced the ReCAAP ISC as a centre of excellence in information sharing.

Going forward, the Centre will continue to implement its branding and profiling blueprint, particularly in digital communications.

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre

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www.recaap.org

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