

APRIL 2019

MONTHLY REPORT

PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY
AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA



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INCIDENTS OF PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA IN APRIL 2019

OVERVIEW

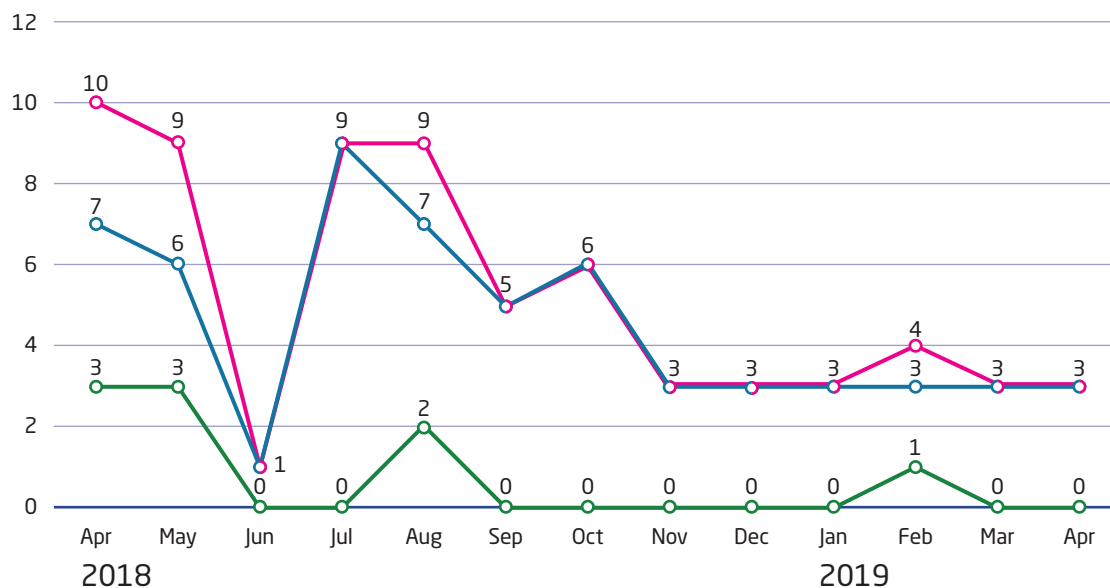
A total of three incidents of armed robbery against ships¹ were reported in Asia in April 2019. There was no report of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah; and no hijacking of ships for theft of oil cargo reported in April 2019. However, the abduction of crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah remains a serious concern.

APRIL 2019

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

In April 2019, three actual incidents² of armed robbery against ships were reported. The incidents have been verified and reported to ReCAAP ISC by ReCAAP Focal Points. Refer to the Appendix on page 15-16 for the description of the incidents.

Compared to April 2018, there was a 70% decrease in the number of incidents reported in April 2019. A total of 10 incidents were reported in April 2018 compared to three incidents in April 2019. The total number of incidents has remained fairly constant between three to four incidents for the past six months (November 2018 to April 2019). Graph 1 shows the number of incidents reported each month from April 2018 to April 2019.



Graph 1 - Number of incidents (April 2018 to April 2019)

█ Total █ Actual █ Attempted

1 Definition of armed robbery against ships is in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.1025 (26). Refer to Appendix for detailed definition.

2 Actual incidents are incidents where pirates/robbers boarded the ship; and regardless of whether they stole any items from the crew or took away any items found on board the ship.

STATUS OF SHIPS

Of the three incidents reported in April 2019, two incidents occurred on board tug boats while on towing operations in the Singapore Strait, and one incident on board a tanker anchored at Visakhapatnam SPM anchorage, India.

SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL OF INCIDENTS

All three incidents reported in April 2019 were CAT 4 incidents. Chart 1 shows the significance level of incidents reported in April of 2007-2019.

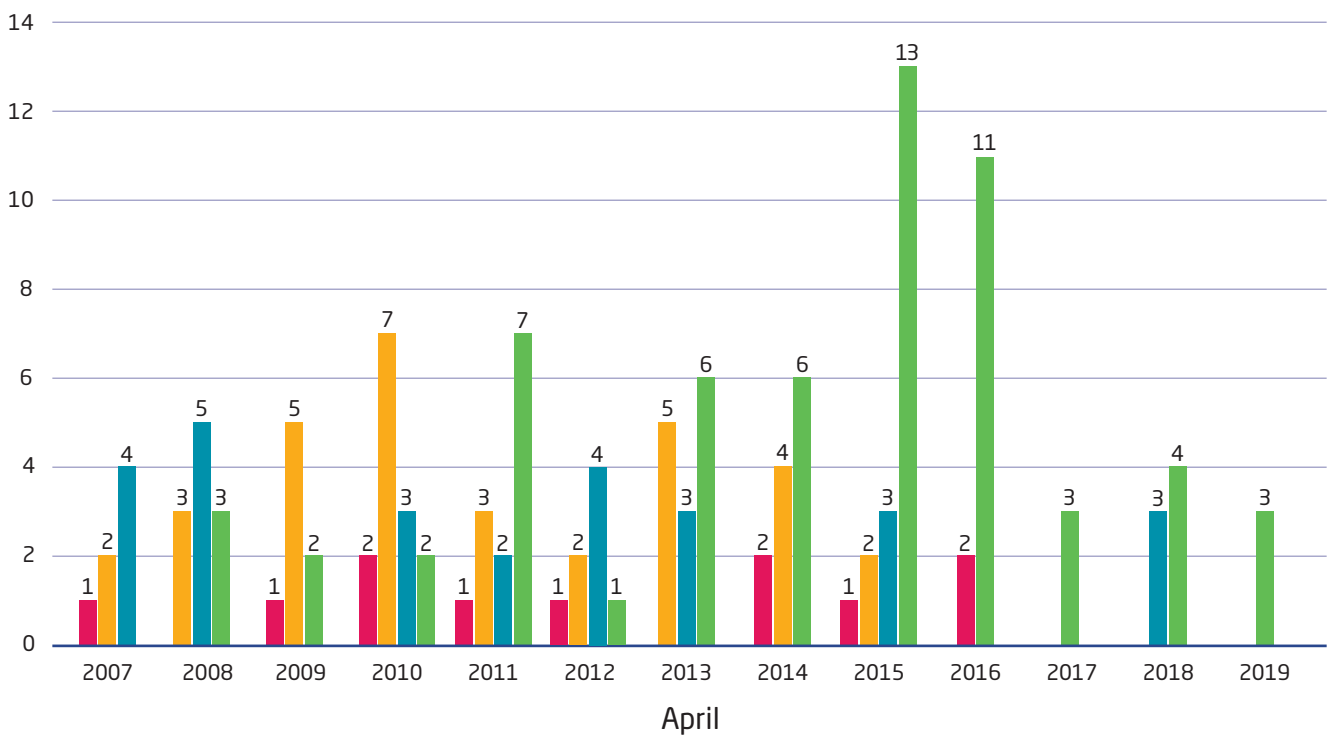
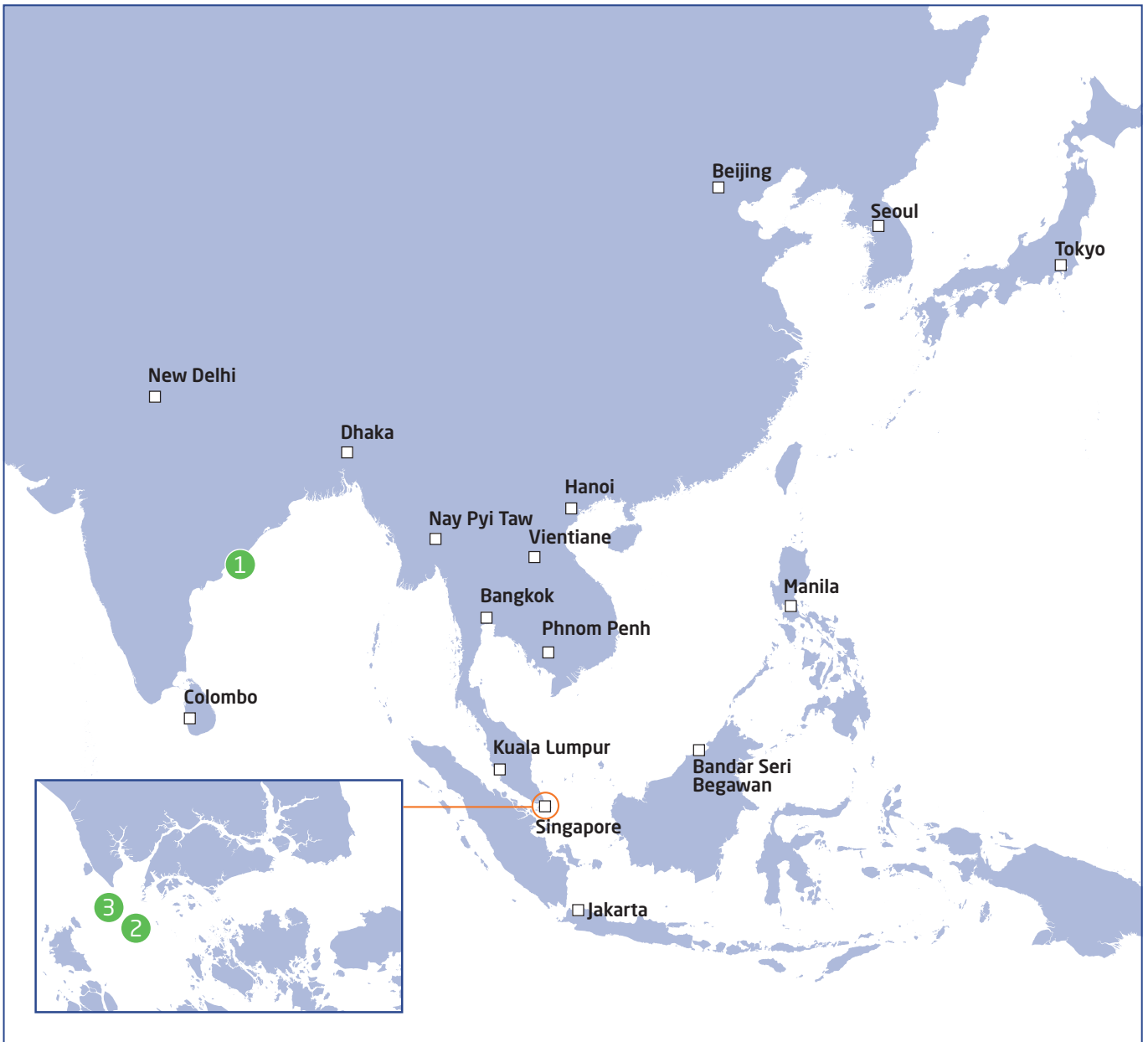


Chart 1 - Significance level of incidents (April of 2007-2019)

■ CAT 1 ■ CAT 2 ■ CAT 3 ■ CAT 4

LOCATION OF INCIDENTS

The location of the incidents reported in April 2019 is shown in Map 1.



Map 1 - Location of incidents in April 2019

● CAT 4

① **Sonangol Namibe**
Tanker
13 Apr 19
1536 hrs

② **Union Topaz & Magnor**
Tug boat & dredger
24 Apr 19
0510 hrs

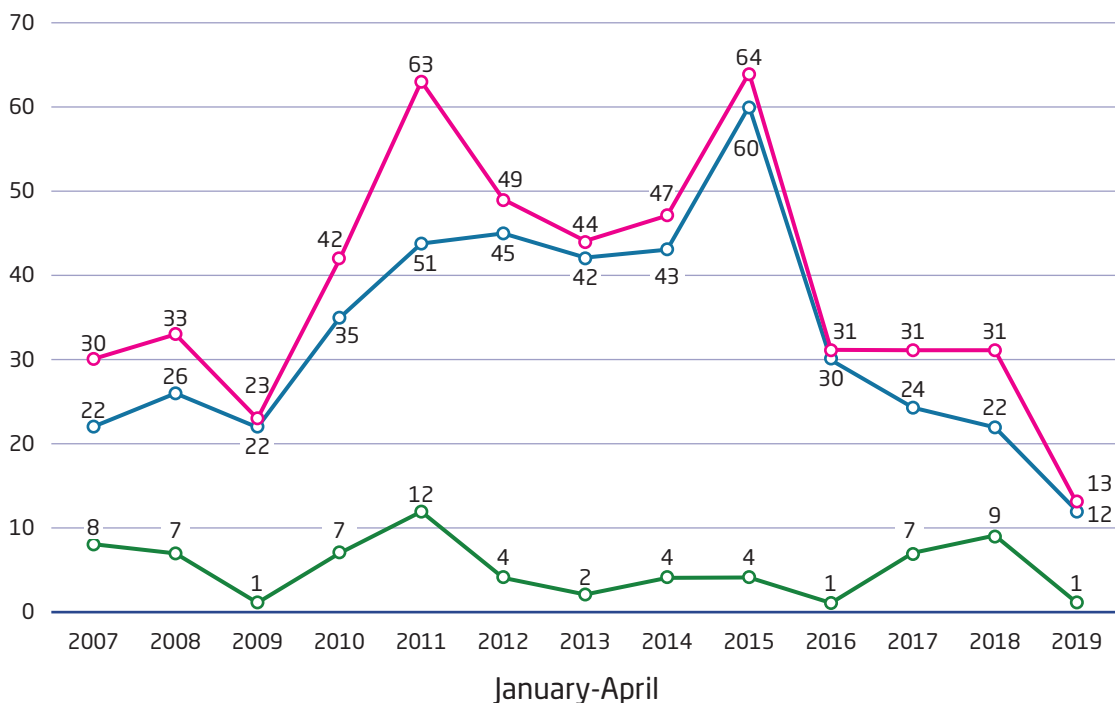
③ **Vector 1 & Yong Tat 319**
Tug boat & barge
25 Apr 19
0530 hrs

JANUARY-APRIL 2019

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

During January-April 2019, a total of 13 incidents (12 actual incidents and one attempted incident³) were reported in Asia. All were incidents of armed robbery against ships. No incident of piracy⁴ was reported. Compared to January-April 2018, there was a 58% decrease in the total number of incidents reported during January-April 2019. The number of actual incidents has also decreased by 45%. A total of 31 incidents (22 actual incidents and nine attempted incidents) were reported during January-April 2018. The improvement was most apparent at the ports and anchorages in Indonesia where three incidents were reported during January-April 2019 compared to 14 incidents during the same period in 2018. There were also improvements at the ports and anchorages in Bangladesh and Vietnam. No incidents were reported at these ports and anchorages during January-April 2019 compared to four incidents reported in Bangladesh and two incidents in Vietnam during January-April 2018.

Both the total number of incidents and the number of actual incidents reported during January-April 2019 are the **lowest** among the 13-year period of January-April of 2007-2019. Graph 2 shows the total number of incidents reported during January-April of 2007-2019.



Graph 2 - Number of incidents (January-April of 2007-2019)

█ Total █ Actual █ Attempted

³ Attempted incidents are incidents where pirates/robbers tried but failed to board the ship.

⁴ Definition of piracy is in accordance with Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Refer to Appendix for detailed definition.

SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL OF INCIDENTS

Chart 2 shows the significance level of incidents reported during January-April of 2007-2019. Of the 12 actual incidents reported during January-April 2019, one was a CAT 3 incident and 11 were CAT 4 incidents. No CAT 1 or CAT 2 incident was reported during January-April 2019.

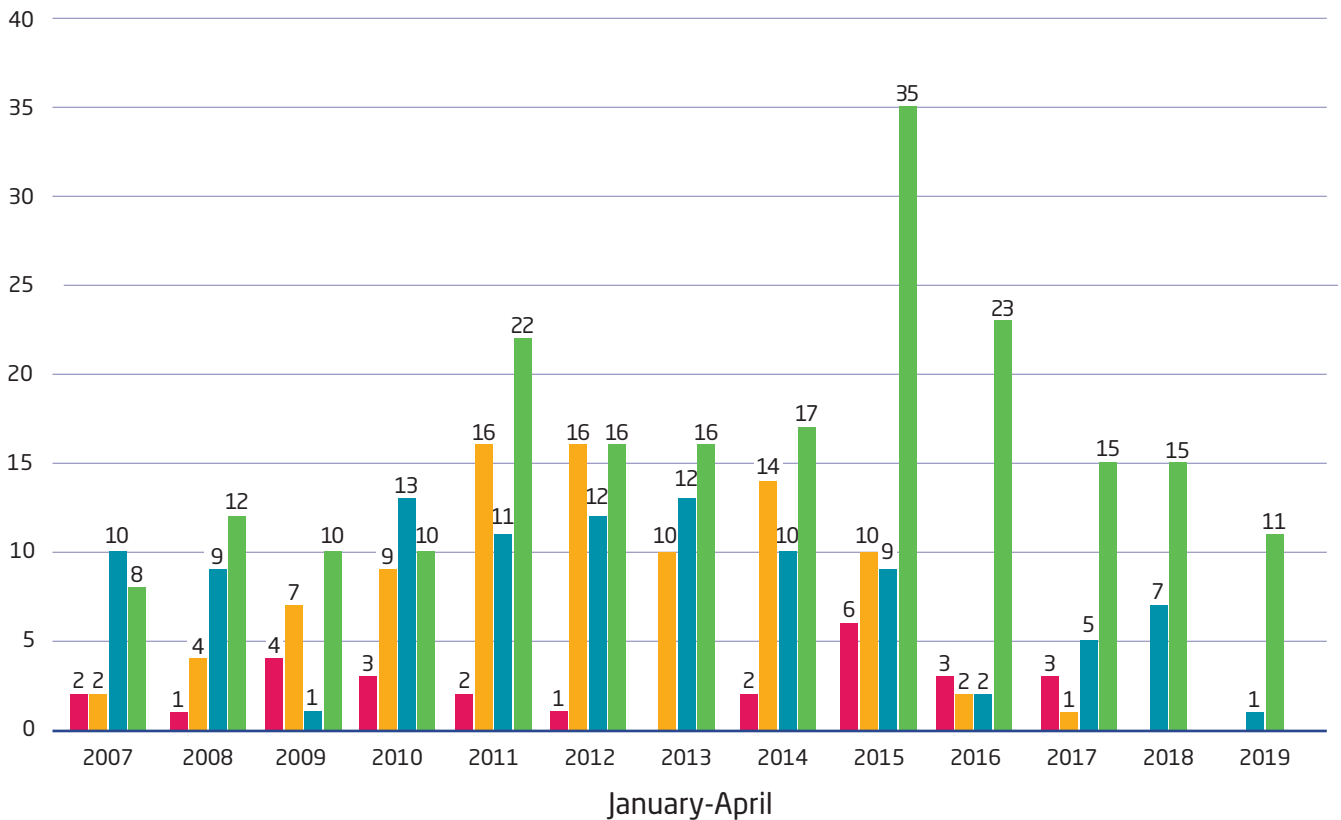


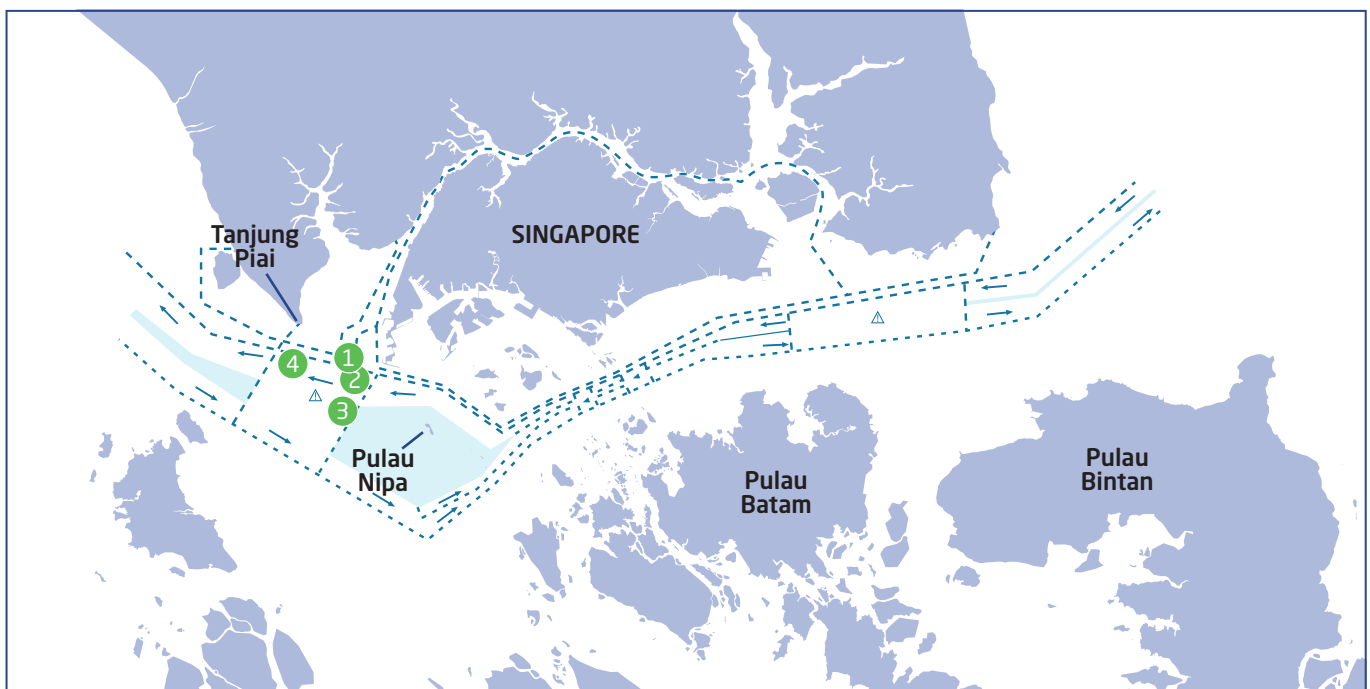
Chart 2 - Significance level of incidents (January-April of 2007-2019)

■ CAT 1 ■ CAT 2 ■ CAT 3 ■ CAT 4

INCIDENTS IN THE SINGAPORE STRAIT

SITUATION UPDATE

During January-April 2019, four incidents of armed robbery against ships were reported in close proximity to each other in the western sector of the Singapore Strait. The incidents occurred when the ships while underway in the westbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS). Of the four incidents, two incidents reported loss of scrap metal and nothing was reported stolen in the other two incidents. Refer to the map below on the approximate location of the four incidents.



Map 2 - Approximate location of incidents in Singapore Strait (January-April 2019)

● CAT 4

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>① <i>Jin Hwa 43 & Jin Hwa 44</i>
Tug boat & barge
5 Feb 19
1709 hrs</p> | <p>② <i>Sung Fatt 31 & Sung Fatt 36</i>
Tug boat & barge
5 Mar 19
1110 hrs</p> |
| <p>③ <i>Union Topaz & Magnor</i>
Tug boat & dredger
24 Apr 19
0510 hrs</p> | <p>③ <i>Vector 1 & Yong Tat 319</i>
Tug boat & barge
25 Apr 19
0530 hrs</p> |

MODUS OPERANDI OF THE PERPETRATORS

The modus operandi of the perpetrators involved in the four incidents are summarised in table below:

Name of ship	<i>Jin Hwa 43 & Jin Hwa 44</i>	<i>Sung Fatt 31 & Sung Fatt 36</i>	<i>Union Topaz & Magnor</i>	<i>Vector 1 & Yong Tat 319</i>
Date & Time of incident	5 Feb 19 at 1709 hrs	5 Mar 19 at 1110 hrs	24 Apr 19 at 0510 hrs	25 Apr 19 at 0530 hrs
Type of ship	Tug boat towing barge	Tug boat towing barge	Tug boat towing backhoe dredger	Tug boat towing barge
Number of perpetrators	Not known	11	2	3-4
Type of weapons used	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
Treatment of crew	No injuries	No injuries	No injuries	No injuries
Type of losses	Scrap metal	Scrap metal	Nothing stolen	Nothing stolen

From the above, the following observations are made:

- a. Time of incident.
Of the four incidents, two incidents with the theft of scrap metal occurred during daylight hours (1110 hrs and 1709 hrs) and two occurred during hours of darkness (0510 hrs and 0530 hrs). Majority of the incidents involving the theft of scrap metal from barges in the Singapore Strait usually occur during daylight hours. This deviates from the usual trend of incidents in Asia where majority of incidents occur during hours of darkness.
- b. Number of perpetrators.
The number of perpetrators in the four incidents varied from 2 men to 11 men.

c. Weapons used by perpetrators.

All four incidents had no information on whether the perpetrators were armed. This was because the perpetrators boarded the barges and dredger which were being towed and not manned, and the distance between the tug boats and the barges/dredger has made it difficult for the crew in the tug boats to ascertain if the perpetrators were armed.

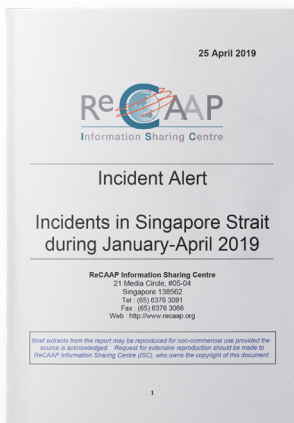
e. Treatment of crew.

The crew was not injured in all four incidents; as they were in the tug boats towing the barges and dredger.

d. Economic Loss.

Of the four incidents, two incidents reported the losses of scrap metal and nothing was stolen in the other two incidents.

EFFORTS AND RECOMMENDATION BY RECAAP ISC



With four incidents occurred in close proximity to each other within a period of three months, ReCAAP ISC issued an Incident Alert on 25 April 2019 to alert all ships in the Singapore Strait, particularly tug boats to exercise enhance vigilance, adopt extra precautionary measures and report all incidents to the nearest coastal State. The ReCAAP ISC urges the relevant littoral States to step up surveillance, increase patrols and respond promptly to all reports of incidents.

UPDATE ON SITUATION OF ABDUCTION OF CREW IN THE SULU-CELEBES SEAS AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

SITUATION UPDATE

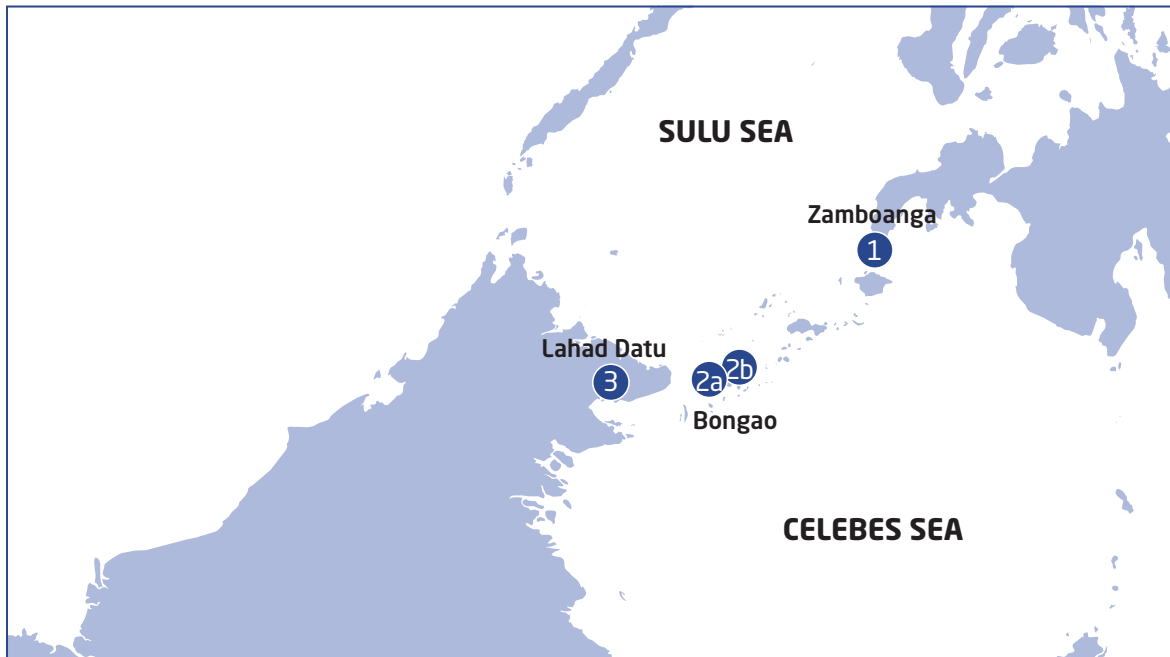
During January-April 2019, there was no report of actual or attempted incident of abduction of crew from ships while underway in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah. The last actual incident occurred on 5 Dec 18. It involved the abduction of three crew (comprising one Malaysian and two Indonesians) from a fishing boat. On 4 and 5 Apr 19, the three abducted crew were rescued by the Philippine military authorities. During the rescue process, one crew died from a gun wound during the firefight between the military forces and the abductors, and another crew drowned.

As of 30 Apr 19, six crew is still held in captivity⁵. The Philippine authorities continue to conduct pursuit operations and intensify its military operations to rescue the abducted crew and neutralise the militant group.

ReCAAP ISC ADVISORY

As the threat of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah remains, ReCAAP ISC maintains its advisory issued via the *ReCAAP ISC Incident Alert* dated 21 Nov 16 to all ships to reroute from the area, 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. The contact details of the Operation Centres of Philippines and ESSCOM of Malaysia (updated by ReCAAP ISC on 3 Jan 19) are as follows:

⁵ Between March 2016 and April 2019, a total of 66 crew had been abducted. Of these, 34 had been released, 17 rescued, nine fatalities and six still held in captivity.



Map 3 - Contact details of the centres

1 Philippine Coast Guard District Southwestern Mindanao

Tel: +63 998 585 7972
+63 917 842 8446

VHF: Channel 16 with call-sign
"NEPTUNE"

Email: hcgdswm@yahoo.com

2b Philippine Navy - Littoral Monitoring Station (LMS), Bongao, Tawi-Tawi

Tel: +63 955 714 0153
VHF: Channel 16

Email: jointtaskgroup@gmail.com

2a Philippine Coast Guard Station, Bongao (Central Tawi-Tawi)

Tel: +63 998 585 7941
+63 917 842 8402

VHF: Channel 16

Email: cgd_tawi2@yahoo.com

3 Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM)

Tel: +60 89863181/016
Fax: +60 89863182

VHF: Channel 16 with call-sign
"ESSCOM"

Email: bilikgerakan_esscom@jpm.gov.my

CONCLUSION

The total number of incidents of armed robbery against ships reported during January-April 2019 decreased by 58% compared to January-April 2018. The number of actual incidents decreased by 45%. Both the total number of incidents and number of actual incidents during January-April 2019 are the **lowest** among the 13-year period of January-April of 2007-2019. There was no piracy incident. The 12 actual incidents reported during January-April 2019 were less severe incidents with one CAT 3 incident and 11 CAT 4 incidents.

The improvement was most apparent at the ports and anchorages in Indonesia. Other improvements occurred at the ports and anchorages in Bangladesh and Vietnam. However, the situation involving tug boats towing barges while underway in the Singapore Strait needs further improvement. With the occurrence of four incidents in close proximity to each other within a period of three months, the ReCAAP ISC recommends that all ships, particularly tug boats to exercise enhanced vigilance when transiting the area, and the law enforcement agencies to enhance surveillance and increase patrols.

Although there was no incident of abduction of crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah during January-April 2019, the threat of abduction of crew remains. The ReCAAP ISC advises the shipping industry to exercise extra vigilance when transiting the area, and report immediately to the reporting centres.

The ReCAAP ISC urges law enforcement agencies to continue to enhance surveillance, increase patrols and respond promptly to reports of incidents. Ships transiting areas of concern are to exercise enhanced vigilance, maintain all round lookout for suspicious boats, report all incidents to the nearest coastal State and flag State immediately, and implement preventive measures recommended in the *Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*.

APPENDICES

Definitions & Methodology in Classifying Incidents

Definitions

Piracy, in accordance with Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is defined as:

1. "Piracy" means any of the following acts:
 - (a) any illegal act of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:
 - (i) on the high seas, against another ship, or against persons or property on board such ship;
 - (ii) against a ship, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;
 - (b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;
 - (c) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).

Armed Robbery Against Ships, in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.1025(26), is defined as:

2. "Armed robbery against ships" means any of the following acts:
 - (a) any illegal act of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of "piracy", committed for private ends and directed against a ship, or against persons or property on board such ship, within a State's internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea;
 - (b) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described above.

Methodology in classifying incidents

To provide some perspective on incidents of piracy and armed robbery, the ReCAAP ISC evaluates the significance of each incident in terms of two factors - the level of violence and the economic loss incurred. The indicators for these two factors are as follows:

- A. **Violence Factor.** This factor refers to the intensity of violence in an incident, and the three indicators used to determine this are:
 - (1) Type of weapons used. Incidents of pirates/robbers who board a ship with no visible weapons are generally deemed as less violent compared to those equipped with pistols, knives, machetes, or other dangerous weapons. In cases where more sophisticated weapons are used, such incidents would be considered more violent.
 - (2) Treatment of the crew. Incidents where pirates/robbers kill or kidnap crew are deemed to be more violent compared to petty thieves who flee upon being noticed. Other cases could include threatening crew members, assault, or serious injury.

(3) Number of pirates/robbers engaged in an attack. As a rule, an incident where a larger number of pirates/robbers were involved would be considered more significant as having a large capacity (as well as probability) for use of force. A larger number of pirates/robbers may also indicate the involvement of gangs or organised syndicates rather than petty and opportunistic pirates who generally operate in small groups.

B. **Economic Factor.** This factor takes into consideration the type of the property taken from the ship. Cases of theft of cash or personal effects are generally less significant incidents compared to cases where the entire ship is hijacked either for the cargo onboard or theft of the vessel.

Using these indicators, the ReCAAP ISC classifies all incidents into one of the four categories to determine their overall significance.

Category	Description
● CAT 1	CAT 1 incidents involved large number of perpetrators; more than 9 men in four out every 10 incidents and 4-9 men in the other six incidents. The perpetrators were mostly armed with guns and knives, and the crew is likely to suffer some form of injury or physical violence such as being assaulted or tied up or threatened. In term of losses, the ship was either hijacked or the cargo on board was stolen, for example siphoning of cargo oil.
● CAT 2	Majority of CAT 2 incidents involved 4-9 men who are likely to be armed with knives/machetes and in 1/4 of the incidents, armed with guns. The crew is likely to be threatened or held hostage temporarily to allow the perpetrators to steal the crew's cash and ship's property including engine spares. In a few cases, the crew suffered some form of injury or physical violence but less severe in nature compared to CAT 1 incidents.
● CAT 3	The number of perpetrators involved in CAT 3 incidents usually involved groups of between 1-6 men. At times, the perpetrators were armed with knives/machetes/others or other items such as sticks, rods, bats etc. The crew was not harmed, although there remains a small possibility that the crew could be subject to duress during the incident but not harmed physically. In almost half of the CAT 3 incidents, the perpetrators were unable to steal anything from the vessel, but in cases where losses were reported, stores and engine spares were the commonly targeted items.
● CAT 4	The perpetrators were not armed and the crew not harmed. More than half of CAT 4 incidents involved 1-3 men who escaped empty-handed upon sighted by the crew.

This classification of incidents allows the ReCAAP ISC to provide some perspective of the piracy and armed robbery situation in Asia.

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENTS

Actual Incidents of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

● CAT 4

S/No.	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date Time	Location of Incident	Details of Incident
1	<i>Sonangol Namibe</i> Tanker Bahamas 83469 9325049	13/04/19 1536 hrs	17° 37.1' N, 83° 19.2' E Visakhapatnam SPM anchorage	<p>While proceeding to anchor at Visakhapatnam SPM anchorage, the ship was approached by 11 perpetrators in five country boats. The master sounded the ship's whistle, raised the alarm and made an announcement on the PA system. The accommodation and other spaces of the ship were secured and guarded by the crew. The master reported the incident to Vizag Port Control and Indian Coast Guard (ICG), requesting for assistance. The perpetrators subsequently boarded the ship via the main deck. The crew did not offer resistance but monitored the perpetrators and managed to restrict their movement to deck.</p> <p>Upon receiving the information from the master, the Port Control informed Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) / Vizag Port Trust (VPT), Coastal Security Police (CSP) and ICG along with the Port Facility Security Officer (PFSO) and Dy PFSO. CISF / VPT and ICG crafts were despatched to the location. Upon seeing the authorities' crafts approaching, the perpetrators escaped in their boats. The crew was not injured and nothing was stolen.</p> <p>The Director General of Shipping (India) has requested the Port Authorities and Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) of Visakhapatnam to conduct investigation and provide details of action taken to prevent recurrence of such incident.</p> <p>ReCAAP Focal Point (India)]</p>

S/No.	Ship Name, Type of Ship, Flag, GT, IMO No.	Date Time	Location of Incident	Details of Incident
2	<p>Union Topaz Tug boat Cyprus 2312 9406427</p> <p>Magnor Backhoe dredger Cyprus</p>	24/04/19 0510 hrs	<p>1° 10.63' N, 103° 34.3' E</p> <p>Approximately 5 nm west- north-west of Nipa island, Indonesia (westbound lane of TSS in Singapore Strait)</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing a backhoe dredger was underway, two perpetrators boarded the dredger. Two wooden boats were sighted alongside the backhoe dredger. The master shone light at the backhoe dredger, and the two perpetrators escaped via the wooden boats. The crew was safe and no items were reported stolen.</p> <p>The pilot on board the tug boat reported the incident to Singapore VTIS. Singapore VTIS initiated the safety navigational broadcast and notified the Singapore Police Coast Guard, the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) and the Indonesian authority.</p> <p>[ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)]</p>
3	<p>Vector 1 Tug boat Malaysia 106 5330005</p> <p>Yong Tat 319 Barge</p>	25/04/19 0530 hrs	<p>1° 13.33' N, 103° 31.02' E</p> <p>Off Tanjung Piai, Malaysia (westbound lane of TSS in Singapore Strait)</p>	<p>While the tug boat towing barge was underway, three to four perpetrators boarded the barge. The master reported the incident to Singapore VTIS who informed the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA). The crew was safe and no items were reported stolen.</p> <p>[ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)]</p>

CONTACT DETAILS OF ReCAAP FOCAL POINTS/CONTACT POINT

Country & Agency In Charge	Point of Contact	
	Phone No	Fax Number
Australia		
Australian Maritime Border Operations Centre (AMBOC) Maritime Border Command (MBC) E-mail: mbcengagement@abf.gov.au	+61-2-6275-6000	+61-2-6275-6275
Bangladesh		
Department of Shipping E-mail: cns@dos.gov.bd	+88-02-9554206	+88-02-9587301
Brunei		
Marine Police Royal Brunei Police Force Email: marine@police.gov.bn	+673-2773548	+673-2770549
Cambodia		
Merchant Marine Department E-mail: mmd@mpwt.gov.kh	+85-5-2386-4110	+85-5-2386-4110
China		
China Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Centre (Beijing) Email: cnmrcc@mot.gov.cn	+86-10-6529-2218 +86-10-6529-2219 +86-10-6529-2221	+86-10-6529-2245
Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Hong Kong) Email: hkmrcc@mardep.gov.hk	+85-2-2233-7999	+85-2-2541-7714
Brunei		
Danish Maritime Authority (DMA) Email: ReCAAP-FP-DK@dma.dk	+45-9137-6000	+45-9137-6001
India		
MRCC (Mumbai) Coast Guard Region (West) Mumbai - India Email: indsar@vsnl.net mrcc-west@indiancoastguard.nic.in	+91-22-2431-6558 +91-22-2438-8065	+91-22-2433-3727 +91-22-2431-6558

Country & Agency In Charge	Point of Contact	
	Phone No	Fax Number
Japan		
Japan Coast Guard (JCG) Ops Centre Email : jcg-op@mlit.go.jp	+81-3-3591-9812 +81-3-3591-6361	+81-3-3581-2853
Republic of Korea		
Situation Room (Operation Centre) Email: mof5896@korea.kr	+82-44-200-5895 to 98	+82-44-200-5886 to 88
Laos		
International Organisations Department UN Political and Security Affairs Division Ministry of Foreign Affairs Email: unpolsec.mfalaos@gmail.com	+856-21-414025	+856-21-414025
Myanmar		
MRCC Ayeyarwaddy (Myanmar Navy) Email: mrcc.yangon@mptmail.com.mm mrcc.myanmar2012@gmail.com	+95-313-1651	+95-1202-417
Netherlands		
Dutch Coast Guard Maritime Information Centre (MIK-NL) Email: mik-nl@kustwacht.nl	+31-223-658-101	+31-223-658-358
Norway		
Norwegian Maritime Authority Email: morten.alsaker.lossius@sjofartsdirektoratet.no	+47-5274-5000 +47-5274-5130	+47-5274-5001
Philippines		
Philippine Coast Guard PCG Action Centre-MRCC (Manila) Email: cgac@coastguard.gov.ph	+63-2-527-8481 to 89 (ext: 6136/37) +63-917-724-3682 +63-929-825-3207 (mobile)	+63-2-310-2097
Coast Guard District South Western Mindanao (CGDSWM) Email: hcgdswm@yahoo.com	+63 998 585 7972 +63 917 842 8446 VHF: Channel 16 with call sign "NEPTUNE"	

Country & Agency In Charge	Point of Contact	
	Phone No	Fax Number
Singapore		
Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore Port Operations Control Centre (POCC) Email: pocc@mpa.gov.sg	+65-6226-5539 +65-6325-2493	+65-6227-9971 +65-6224-5776
Sri Lanka		
Sri Lanka Navy Operations Room / MRCC (Colombo) Email: nhqдно@yahoo.com nhqдно@navy.lk	+94-11-244 5368 +94-11-221 2230/31	+94-11-244 1454 +94-11-244 9718
Thailand		
Royal Thai Navy Maritime Information Sharing Centre (MISC) Email: miscdutyofficer@misc.go.th sornchon2558@gmail.com	+66-2475-4532	+66-2475-4577
United Kingdom		
National Maritime Information Centre Operations Centre Email: NMIC-OPS@mod.gov.uk	+44 2392-211941	+44 2392-212024 Please indicate "FAO NMIC - A leg"
United States		
USCG Rescue Coordination Center Alameda (RCCAlameda) Email: rccalameda@uscg.mil	+1-510-437-3701	
Vietnam		
Vietnam Coast Guard Email: vietnamcoastguard@gmail.com	+84-4-3355-4378	+84-4-3355-4363

Correct as at 4 March 2019



**Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating
Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia**

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