



## NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15 January 2021

### **Ninety-seven Incidents Reported to ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre in Asia in 2020, Marking 17% Year-on-Year Increase in Total Incidents and 32% Increase in Actual Incidents**

*Annual Report 2020 released at the 12<sup>th</sup> Nautical Forum, ReCAAP ISC's annual forum with the maritime community*

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) today released its Annual Report 2020. Highlights of the report are:

#### Overall Summary

- There was a total of **97 incidents** of piracy and armed robbery reported in Asia in 2020, comprising 95 actual incidents and 2 attempted incidents.
- This represents an **increase of 17% in the total number of incidents** and a **32% increase in actual incidents**, compared to 2019.
- The increase of incidents occurred in Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, Vietnam, South China Sea and Singapore Strait.
- Of the 97 incidents, **93 were armed robbery against ships, while 4 were piracy.**
- Despite the increase of incidents, the severity level of incidents (violence to crew, stolen items) remained moderate. There was one CAT1 (the most severe) incident, while 74% of incidents were CAT4 (perpetrators not armed and crew not harmed).

#### Areas of Concern

##### **Singapore Strait**

- A total of **34 incidents** (compared to 31 in 2019) occurred in the **Singapore Strait**, of which 30 occurred in eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS).

##### **Sulu-Celebes Seas**

- There was one incident of abduction of crew from ships in 2020. However, the **threat of abduction of crew still remains in the area.** Since March 2016, a total of 86 crew were abducted in the area. As of today, 4 of them still remain in captivity.

## Areas of Improvement

- There was some **improvement at anchorages** in China (no incident in 2020 compared to three in 2019) and Malaysia (three incidents in 2020 compared to eight in 2019)
- Some perpetrators were arrested in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and the Singapore Strait.

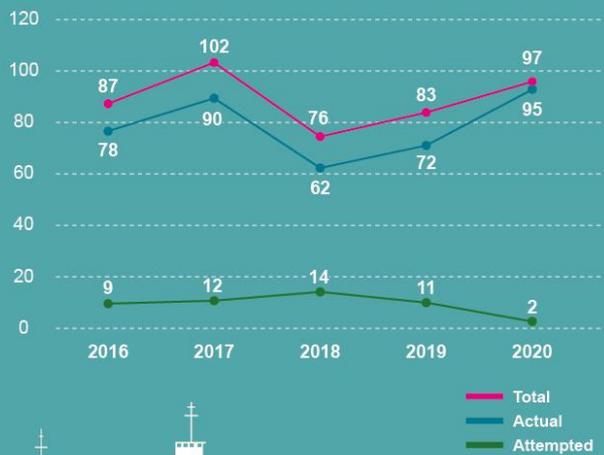
The Annual Report 2020 was released at the 12<sup>th</sup> Nautical Forum which was attended by about 100 participants from shipping companies, shipping associations, government/regulatory agencies, diplomatic missions as well as academic institutions.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of shipping for global trade. The 32% year-on-year increase in the actual incidents in 2020 is a stark reminder that more needs to be done to enhance the safety of maritime transport and safeguard the well-being of crew,” said Mr. Masafumi Kuroki, Executive Director of ReCAAP ISC.

“Beyond vigilance, timely reporting by ships, enhanced patrol by enforcement agencies, as well as cooperation between littoral States, we believe that arrest and bringing perpetrators to justice is an essential deterrent to stop the increase of incidents. We urge the littoral States to take seriously petty theft and sea robbery because leaving criminals to continue their crime with impunity will only embolden them to escalate their acts,” concluded Mr. Masafumi Kuroki.

# PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN ASIA (2020)

## NUMBER OF INCIDENTS (2016-2020)



**17% INCREASE**  
in total number of incidents, compared to 2019

**32% INCREASE**  
of actual incidents, compared to 2019

## SEVERITY OF INCIDENTS

**1X CAT 1**

- abduction of crew
- 1 incident decrease from 2019

**6X CAT 2**

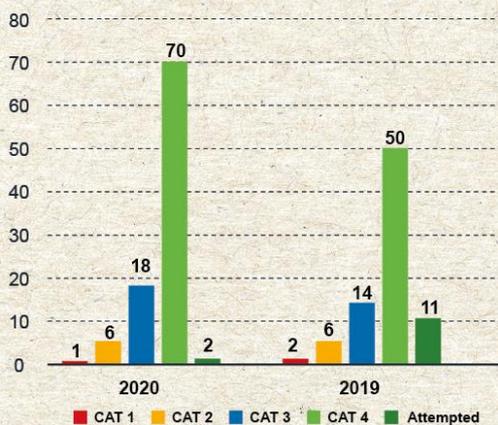
- same as 2019 and lowest number during 2007-2020

**18X CAT 3**

- increase of 4 incidents from 2019

**70X CAT 4**

- 74% of the total incidents



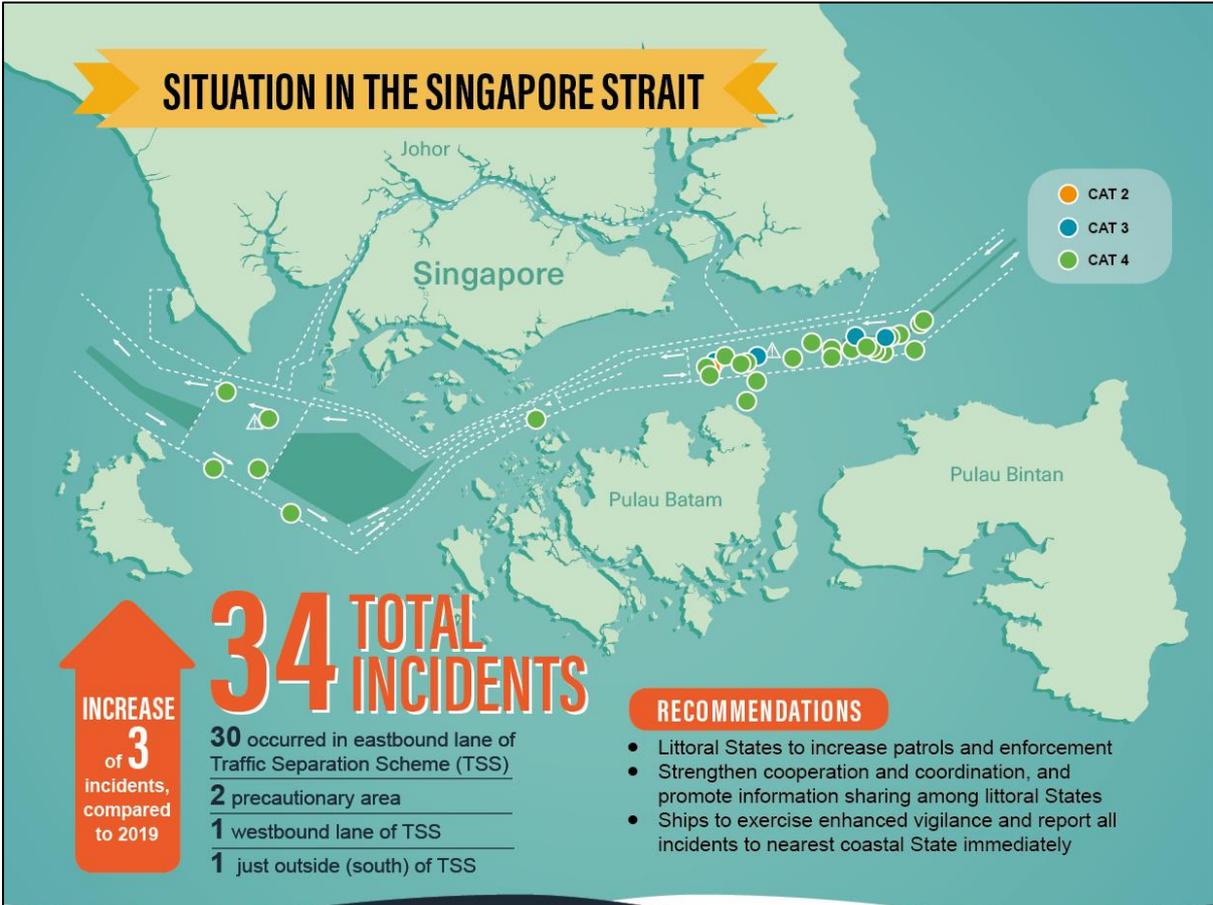
### INCREASE IN INCIDENTS

- Mostly at anchorages/ports in **Bangladesh, India, the Philippines and Vietnam**
- Mostly while underway in the **South China Sea and Singapore Strait**

### IMPROVEMENTS

- Anchorages in **China and Malaysia**
- Abduction of crew incident (1 incident in 2020 vs 2 incidents in 2019)





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

- On 17 Jan, 1 incident of abduction of crew from fishing trawler (5 crew abducted)
- On 29 Sep, the body of one of the abducted crew was found, 4 crew still held in captivity

Status of abducted crew (as of 31 Dec 20)

## 4

Crew still in captivity

(as of 31 Dec 2020)

86

total abducted crew (since Mar 2016 to 2020)

71

released/rescued

11

killed/died

Efforts by authorities

- Military operations and neutralisation of ASG members by Philippine authorities
- Arrest of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members by Malaysian authorities

WARNING AND ADVISORY

Risk of abduction of crew is high

Information of planned kidnapping in Sabah and Semporna, Malaysia targeting crew of ships passing by Tawi-Tawi and Sabah waters

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

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

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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, 20 States (14 Asian countries, 4 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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>