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Anti-Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference 2025 - Adapting To Emerging Maritime Threats Amidst Geopolitical Uncertainty

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC), together with co-organisers, the Maritime & Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), held the annual Anti-Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference today in conjunction with Singapore Maritime Week 2025. This year's conference focused on the growing risks to shipping caused by global geopolitical tensions, emerging maritime threats and their impact on commercial shipping, and how the global maritime system can remain resilient.

In his keynote address, Mr Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), shared that geopolitical tension and the rapid rise of evolving technology present both opportunities and challenges for the shipping industry. He also highlighted that the persistent threat of piracy and armed robbery at sea remains a serious concern which requires constant vigilance and strengthened regional cooperation.

Leaders from shipping associations, namely ASA, BIMCO and INTERTANKO, emphasised the importance of close collaboration among shipping stakeholders to

address the evolving piracy and sea robbery situation in Asia, and protect the safety and welfare of seafarers.

Over 150 participants from the shipping industry, academia, Navy, Coast Guard, Law Enforcement Agencies and diplomatic organisations attended the conference, with two panel discussions; Panel 1 - *Global Situation and Maritime Issues*, and Panel 2 - *Exploring New ways to Adapt to the Evolving Maritime Landscape in Asia*.

Dr Sinderpal Singh, Assistant Director, Institute of Defence & Strategic Studies, RSIS moderated the first panel discussion on “*Global Situation and Maritime Issues*.” Panellists examined recent maritime threats arising from geopolitical developments, and how they impact maritime trade and the well-being of seafarers. Panellists highlighted the importance of the ship crew adopting robust vessel hardening measures, and to voluntarily report their voyage transit details to the coastal State authority for timely response by the enforcement agencies.

The second panel discussion on “*Exploring New ways to Adapt to the Evolving Maritime Landscape in Asia*” was moderated by Ms Jane Chan, Senior Fellow and Coordinator of the Maritime Security Programme, RSIS. Panellists discussed the threat of piracy and sea robbery in Asia, challenges faced by the ship crew in watchkeeping and deterring sea robbery incidents, and cooperative efforts by littoral State authorities to combat armed robbery against ships.

Incidents of armed robbery against ships remain a concern for international shipping transiting the Singapore Strait. Many of these incidents occur in the Phillip Channel, where ships typically reduce speed to navigate the narrow channel, leaving the vessels vulnerable to unauthorised boarding by perpetrators. ReCAAP ISC had issued three [Incident alerts](#) from January to March 2025 to warn the shipping community of the continued occurrence of robbery incidents onboard ships in the wee hours, and recently, increasing number of boarding of barges while underway in the strait.

In his closing address, ReCAAP ISC Executive Director, Mr Krishnaswamy Natarajan, underscored the need for a multifaceted approach, focusing on international collaboration, strengthening naval patrols and involvement of shipping corporations, insurance companies and national governments, in devising strategies

to mitigate piracy risks and ensuring the safe passage of goods through the international waterways. He also called on all stakeholders to work together to share information, synergise efforts and protect global shipping against piracy, sea robbery and other maritime crimes.

“ReCAAP ISC will continue to facilitate timely information sharing between our member States and maritime authorities in the region, to more effectively combat sea robbery and other maritime crimes. I urge the shipping industry to continue to stay vigilant and implement robust security measures when transiting areas of concern, and submit detailed reports to regional authorities when incidents occur, so as to assist with follow up investigations and the timely arrest of perpetrators,” said Mr Natarajan.

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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, 4 European countries, UK, 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>