

## **NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

27 April 2023

### **Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference 2023 - Ways to Forge Stronger Partnerships to Ensure Safe and Secure Seas**

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC), together with the three co-organisers BIMCO, INTERTANKO and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), held an annual Piracy and Sea Robbery Conference today in conjunction with Singapore Maritime Week 2023. This year's conference featured a two-part panel discussion where panellists deliberated on the importance of "Partnership" between the shipping industry and law enforcement agencies in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships, to ensure safe and secure seas for seafarers.

Dr Heike Deggim, Director of the Maritime Safety Division at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in her keynote address, provided an update on the global situation of piracy and armed robbery against ships. Dr Deggim expressed appreciation for the excellent work of ReCAAP ISC and the achievements of the organisation since 2006, in its mission to enhance regional cooperation through information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements. She urged the ReCAAP ISC to continue to organise the Piracy and Sea robbery conference aimed at building regional capacity to counter the menace of piracy and armed robbery against ships. In addition, she shared how States in Africa are working together and strengthening their capabilities to combat maritime crime and piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Gulf of Guinea.

Vice-Admiral (Indian Navy Retired) Pradeep Chauhan, Director of the National Maritime Foundation, India, shared how the Indian authorities work with stakeholders to combat maritime crimes.

CG Admiral Artemio M. Abu, Commandant of Philippine Coast Guard, and the Chairperson of ReCAAP ISC Governing Council, said “From January to March 2023, 25 incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia were reported to ReCAAP ISC. This is a 9% increase over the same period last year. Given the current inflationary pressures and uncertain economic outlook, many of the factors which drive individuals to commit piracy and sea robbery may return, and may lead to higher number of incidents this year. The shipping industry must continue to adopt best practices such as timely and accurate incident reporting and close collaboration with maritime authorities, to keep our sea lanes safe and protect crew and cargo.”

In the first panel discussion, representatives from BIMCO, INTERTANKO, Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) discussed the emerging trends and modus operandi of piracy and sea robbery incidents in Asia.

Mr Ashok Srinivasan, Manager of Maritime Safety and Security, BIMCO, said “Piracy and armed robbery in any form is a threat to seafarers and shipping. In the Gulf of Guinea, we are beginning to see attacks again after a lull of 12 to 18 months. In South-East Asia, we are witnessing attacks to ships' crew with the intention to steal cargo, stores or sometimes even the ship. Industry and authorities need to stay vigilant and not let their guard down. BIMCO will work tirelessly with relevant stakeholders to bring piracy problems under control.”

Mr Elfian Harun, Regional Manager (Southeast Asia) and Environment Manager, INTERTANKO, said “Piracy and armed robbery are crimes that no seafarer should have to face. Fortunately, the armed robbery taking place in the Singapore Strait has, thus far, not resulted in injury to crew, but the situation remains a real concern due to its potential impact upon the safety of navigation. ReCAAP ISC and its partners have taken tremendous steps to eradicate these crimes and this coordinated response is an example the other regions should consider emulating.”

The second panel discussion saw representatives from the Maritime Security Task Force (Republic of Singapore Navy), BAKAMLA (Indonesian Maritime Security Agency) and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) share best practices which ship masters should adopt to engage littoral states and law enforcement agencies. The panellists also highlighted individual country's initiatives and cooperative efforts undertaken to suppress piracy and sea robbery in their territorial waters.

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS, said, “The number of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region continues to be a reference point to which the international community assesses the safety and security of regional waters. This conference gathers stakeholders and serves as a reminder on the importance of sustaining collective efforts and to always remain vigilant.”

The Executive Director ReCAAP ISC, Mr Krishnaswamy Natarajan, in his closing remarks, said “Combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia is not the sole responsibility of the coastal States or the shipping industry, but a common responsibility shared by all stakeholders since it is a transnational maritime crime. Building trust and confidence among stakeholders is necessary to promote cooperation, collaboration and information sharing, and to reduce piracy and armed robbery incidents against ships in Asia.”

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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>

## **About BIMCO**

BIMCO is the world's largest international shipping association, with around 2,000 members in more than 120 countries, representing 56% of the world's tonnage. Our global membership includes shipowners, operators, managers, brokers and agents. BIMCO is a non-profit organisation.

## **About INTERTANKO**

INTERTANKO is the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners, a forum where the industry meets, policies are discussed and best practices developed. INTERTANKO has been the voice of independent tanker owners since 1970, ensuring that the liquid energy that keeps the world turning is shipped safely, responsibly and competitively. As of January 2019, the organisation has close to 200 members, whose combined fleet comprises some 3,931 tankers totalling nearly 346 million dwt. INTERTANKO's associate membership stands at some 244 companies and organisations related to the tanker industry. Visit [www.intertanko.com](http://www.intertanko.com) for more details.

## **About the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies**

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is a global think tank and professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. An autonomous school, RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. With the core functions of research, graduate education, and networking, it produces research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-traditional Security, Cybersecurity, Maritime Security and Terrorism Studies.