

Continued piracy activity in Singapore Strait

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Gard has warned members that the majority of all piracy and armed robbery incidents in Asia during the first half of 2021 occurred in the eastbound lane of the traffic separation scheme in the Singapore Strait, with bulk carriers the most frequently targeted ship type, marine insurer Gard has informed its members.

Global piracy and armed robbery numbers decreased in the first half of 2021, according to the International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Centre (IMB PRC). Its latest Q2-2021 report listed a total of 68 actual and attempted attacks in 2021, down from 98 during the same period in 2020.

While the Gulf of Guinea continued to be particularly dangerous for seafarers, with 32% of all reported incidents taking place in the region, the IMB also highlighted the dangers of operating in the Singapore Strait.

Similar to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP) (see article below), it expressed concern at the rising number of armed robbery incidents onboard ships underway in the Singapore Strait.

Both the IMB PRC and ReCAAP have noted an increase in the use of knives among perpetrators in this region and expressed concerns about the safety of seafarers.

Gard said that the recent reports from the IMB PRC and ReCAAP confirmed a long-term, and rather grim, statistic for the Singapore Strait. ReCAAP issued its first warning in October 2019, indicating a sudden rise in the number of robbery incidents in the Strait, and has since voiced its concern in a series of 13 alerts, as well as in a Special Report on incidents against ships in the Singapore Strait.

Ships trading in the Singapore Strait, particularly those transiting eastbound in the Singapore Strait during the hours of darkness, would therefore "be well advised to take appropriate precautions as they approach and enter the Strait", said Gard.

Prior to entering the area, masters should review the ship security plan in light of the latest information received, conduct a voyage specific risk assessment, brief and train the crew and prepare and test the ship's emergency communication plans.

<https://www.gard.no/web/updates/content/32024736/continued-piracy-activity-in-singapore-strait>