

Armed robbery incidents on ships in Asia down 35% year on year

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There were 37 Incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia reported to ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) from January to June 2021, down by 35% compared to H1 2020.

In ReCAAP ISC's just-released half-yearly report, it was noted that there were 35 actual incidents and two attempted incidents reported in Asia during H1 2021. No piracy incident was reported.

The fall was due to a decrease of incidents in several locations in Asia: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, South China Sea and the Sulu-Celebes Seas.

However, there was an increase of incidents in the Singapore Strait, where 20 incidents were reported during January-June 2021, up from 16 incidents reported during the same period in 2020.

On the plus side, the severity level of incidents fell. No Category 1 incident was reported. One incident was Category 2, 10 incidents were Category 3 and 24 incidents were Category 4 (where the perpetrators were unarmed and the crew were not harmed).

Elsewhere the last recorded incident in the Sulu-Celebes Sea and waters off Eastern Sabah was on January 17th, 2020.

The last four abducted crew who had been held in captivity by the Abu Sayyaf Group since then were rescued by the Philippines authorities in March 2021. No crew are currently held in captivity by Abu Sayyaf.

However, ReCAAP ISC warned that the Abu Sayyaf leaders responsible for the abduction of crew in the Sulu area were still at large, meaning that the threat of abduction of crew from ships remained high, particularly in the areas of Sulu and nearby waters off Tawi-Tawi