

IMB says that piracy and robbery are at their lowest level for nearly 30 years

By admin On October 18, 2021 In Insurance Marine News, Keep, Political Risk, Credit & Finance

Piracy and armed robberies of ships and their crews fell to a near-30-year low during the first nine months of 2021, according to the latest update from the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB).

However, the IMB cautioned against complacency. It said that efforts should continue to combat crime.

The Gulf of Guinea, which took over from the sea off Somalia and, to a lesser extent, the Sulu-Celebes area of the Philippines, when the GoG become the hot spot of piracy, has been showing statistically significant decreases in all forms of crime. The IMB reported just 28 incidents of piracy and armed robbery during the first nine months of 2021, down from 46 for the same period in 2020.

The IMB said that Nigeria reported just four incidents during the first nine months of 2021, down from 17 in 2020 and 41 in 2018 – signs that Nigeria's campaign to stop piracy in its own waters has been a success. However, the decline in Nigerian waters to a certain extent has been shifted sideways to other parts of the Gulf of Guinea.

Reports of crew kidnappings in the Gulf of Guinea have also dropped, with only one crew member kidnapped in Q3 2021. This compared to 31 crew members taken in five separate incidents during Q3 2020.

The IMB also reported that all Q3 incidents in 2021 were also against vessels at port anchorages, compared to Q3 2020 when the average successful kidnapping was approximately 100 nautical miles from land.

Michael Howlett, Director, ICC International Maritime Bureau, said that “we welcome the decrease of piracy and armed robbery attacks in the Gulf of Guinea and the efforts taken by maritime authorities in the region”, while adding that “however, there needs to be sustained efforts to ensure the continued safety of seafarers as they transport essential goods throughout the region. Coastal

States must redouble their coordination and security measures to ensure that piracy and armed robbery incidents continue to decline.”

Elsewhere in the world, the IMB reported a reduction in the number of incidents in Indonesian waters. There were only six low-level incidents reported during the first nine months of 2021, compared to 23 incidents during the same period in 2020. IMB noted that this was the lowest total of reported piracy and armed robbery incidents in Indonesian waters since 1993. It praised the proactive response measures implemented by the Indonesian Marine Police.

Meanwhile the IMB noted worrying portents in the Singapore Straits and off the coast of Peru. There were 20 reported incidents of armed robbery in the Singapore Strait, the highest number recorded since 1991, and up from 15 in 2020 and just one incident in 2019. The attacks have been low-level and opportunistic, but the IMB said that the perpetrators still posed a direct threat to seafarers and vessels. In four of the incidents the crew were either threatened, assaulted, or injured.

At the Callao Anchorage in Peru there were 15 reported incidents in 2021, the highest number since 1991. The incidents have been low-level thefts with knives being reported in 60% of the incidents. Three crew were taken hostage and one each was assaulted or threatened during the period under review.

Globally there were 97 incidents of piracy and armed robbery for the first nine months of 2021, down from 132 a year ago. This year to date has also been the lowest number of reported incidents since 1994.

Only one vessel was hijacked during the first nine months of 2021.

There were 51 crew kidnapped, eight taken hostage, five threatened, three injured, two assaulted and one killed, IMB said.

<https://www.icc-ccs.org/index.php/1312-piracy-and-armed-robbery-incidents-at-lowest-level-in-decades-but-imb-cautions-against-complacency>