

## Global piracy remains at lowest level in decades, says IMB

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Global piracy and armed robbery incidents in the maritime industry have fallen to their lowest level in three decades according to the report for the first nine months of 2022 from the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB).

The decline continued the patterns that have emerged over the past two years. The IMB nevertheless cautioned against complacency. The IMB called for regional and international players to sustain their efforts to prevent piracy incidents.

ICC IMB's latest global quarterly piracy report detailed 90 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the first nine months of 2022, which it said was the lowest level since 1992. Reported incidents were down a further 7% year on year for 9mo 2022.

The number of vessels boarded remained the same, at 85. Pirates were successful in gaining access to the vessels in 95% of reported incidents. The number of crew taken hostage increased to 27, from just eight in 2021. However, for the first nine months of last year an additional crew 51 crewmembers were also taken hostage, compared with none this year.

The danger for crew was nearly equal between ships at anchor (40 incidents) versus those underway (37 incidents). The fewest reports (13) came from berthed vessels.

Bulkers were the most vulnerable type of vessel, experiencing just under 50% of the reported attacks (40) this year. Tankers reported 23 attacks with container ships reporting 10 attacks.

Local initiatives in the Gulf of Guinea, combined with an increased international presence, contributed to a continuing decline of reports from the region, expanding on a two-year trend. The IMB reported a significant decline in the number of reported incidents in the region off West Africa, with just 13 reports from the region so far this year, compared to 27 in 2021 and 46 in 2020.

IMB Director Michael Howlett said that "we commend the efforts of the coastal authorities of the Gulf of Guinea. While the decline is welcome, sustained and

continued efforts of the coastal authorities and the presence of the international navies remain essential to safeguard seafarers and long-term regional and international shipping and trade”.

Incidents in the Singapore Strait were up by nearly 50% compared with 9mo 2021. There were 31 vessels reported as having been boarded, up from 21 last year. In at least 16 incidents the crew reported that the boarders had weapons but, in most cases, the boarders stole ship stores and property and departed when they were discovered.

“While these are so far considered low-level opportunistic crimes, with no crew kidnappings or vessel hijackings, littoral states are requested to increase patrols in what is a strategically important waterway for the shipping industry and for global trade,” said Howlett.

In other regions, the IMB reports a similar overall decline in attacks against vessels. At the anchorage in Callao, Peru incident reports were down by nearly half. They however highlighted five attacks at the Macapa Anchorage in Brazil, including one on August 30th where six security and duty crew were assaulted and tied up aboard a bulk carrier.