

MEDIA RELEASE

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Second quarter report reveals 87 incidents of maritime piracy in first half of year

London, 4 July 2017 – Continuing decline in the number of reported incidents of maritime piracy and armed robbery against ships has been revealed in the second quarter piracy report of the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB), published today. According to the report, the first half of 2017 saw a total of 87 incidents reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre compared with 97 for the same period of the previous year.

Recording some of the lowest figures seen in the last five-year period, the latest piracy report shows that in the first six-months of 2017, 63 vessels were boarded, 12 fired upon, four were hijacked and attacks were attempted on another eight vessels. A total of 63 crew have been taken hostage so far, this year while 41 have been kidnapped from their vessels, three injured and two killed.

The encouraging downward trend has been marred however by the hijacking of a small Thai product tanker en route from Singapore to Songkhla, Thailand. The hijacking, at the end of June, was conducted by six heavily armed pirates who transferred 1,500 MT of gas oil to another vessel. The incident followed a similar pattern to a series of product tanker hijackings in the region which occurred approximately every two weeks between April 2014 and August 2015.

“To prevent criminal gangs carrying out attacks on other product tankers, the IMB PRC is calling on Malaysian and Indonesian authorities to take robust action, in the same vein as their response which brought perpetrators of the previous spate of attacks to justice”, said Mr Mukundan, Director, IMB.

Cooperation between Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines has been recognised as the fundamental reason for the overall decline in the number of reported incidents in and around the Philippines – from nine cases recorded in the first quarter of the year to just four cases in the second quarter. Overall, the number of mainly low-level attacks off Indonesia has also decreased from 24 in 2016 to 19 in 2017.

Somali pirates remain threat to merchant ships

The hijacking of an Indian dhow in early April was one of five incidents off Somalia reported in the second quarter of 2017. Added to a further three reports of vessels coming under fire and a bulk carrier being boarded by pirates in the Gulf of Aden, the incident reveals that Somali pirates still retain the skills and capacity to attack merchant ships far from coastal waters. The piracy report urges ship masters to maintain high levels of vigilance when transiting the high-risk area and to adhere to the latest version of best management practices.

Pirates in Nigeria continue to dominate when it comes to reports of kidnappings. So far, this year they have been responsible for the abduction of 31 crew in five reported incidents. The numbers include 14 crew members taken from two separate vessels in the second quarter of the year.

Violence against crews continues with half of all reports of vessels being fired upon coming from Nigeria.

Recognizing the need to get a clearer understanding of the depth of under reporting in the Gulf of Guinea region the IMB, in association with Oceans Beyond Piracy, has proposed the idea of a 'Community of Reporting' – a project aimed at encouraging all stakeholders to share reports of piracy and armed robbery with the IMB.

Piracy and armed robbery

Since 1991 the IMB 24-hour-manned Piracy Reporting Centre, has provided the maritime industry, governments and response agencies with timely and transparent data on piracy and armed robbery incidents – received directly from the vessel masters or owners.

The Centre's prompt forwarding of reports and liaison with response agencies, its broadcasts to shipping via Inmarsat Safety Net Services and email alerts to CSO's – all provided cost free – have contributed to response efforts against piracy and armed robbery and to improved security for seafarers worldwide.

IMB strongly urges all shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted and suspected piracy and armed robbery incidents to the Piracy Reporting Centre. This first step in the response chain is vital to ensuring that adequate resources are allocated by authorities to tackle piracy. Transparent statistics from an independent, non-political, international organization can act as a catalyst to achieve this goal.

Follow the @IMB_Piracy via #IMBPiracy

IMB offers the latest piracy reports free of charge. To request a PDF version of the report by email, visit: <https://www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre/request-piracy-report>

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