



MEDIA RELEASE

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New IMB report reveals concerning rise in maritime piracy incidents in 2023

Released today, the annual Piracy and Armed Robbery Report of the ICC International Maritime Bureau (IMB) raises concern over the first successful Somali based hijacking since 2017.

The IMB annual report recorded 120 incidents of maritime piracy and armed robbery against ships in 2023 compared to 115 in 2022.

The 2023 annual report reveals that 105 vessels were boarded, nine attempted attacks, four vessels hijacked and two fired upon.

Where the number of 2023 reported incidents has slightly increased compared to 2022, the IMB urges caution for crew safety as the number of crew taken hostage and kidnapped increased from 41 to 73 and from two to 14 in 2022 and 2023 respectively. A further 10 crew were threatened, four injured and one assaulted in 2023.

Alarming first successful hijacking off Somalia since 2017

On 14 December 2023 the report recorded the first successful hijacking of a vessel off the coast of Somalia since 2017.

A handymax bulk carrier was boarded and hijacked by alleged Somali pirates. The incident took place around 700 nautical miles (nm) East of Bosaso in Somalia. Reports also suggest two dhows were subsequently hijacked, a type of vessel with potential use as mother ships for further attacks.

IMB Director Michael Howlett said: "This is a cause for concern and the IMB is once again calling for all masters and vessel owners to continue following the recommendations and reporting procedures as per the latest version of the Best Management Practices," adding that the incident demonstrates the continued capabilities of the Somali pirates.

Three of four reported vessel hijackings in Gulf of Guinea

Despite the continued restraint in the number of reported incidents in the Gulf of Guinea, with 22 in 2023 compared to 19 in 2022, 35 in 2021 and 81 in 2020, these waters accounted for three of the four globally reported hijackings, all 14 crew kidnappings, and 75% of reported crew hostages and two injured crew in 2023 – continuing to be dangerous waters for seafarers.

Concerns for crew safety in Singapore Straits, Malacca Straits and Indonesian archipelago

The Singapore Straits remain an area of concern due to the high number of incidents. While considered low level opportunistic crimes, 95% of reported incidents were successful, with 37 reported incidents overall in 2023 compared to 38 in 2022. Crew continue to be harmed with nine taken hostage and two threatened. Guns were reported in three recorded incidents and knives in 15.

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“We are concerned due to the late reporting and under reporting by vessels. The IMB continues to encourage timely reporting of all incidents, as it contributes to a more accurate understanding of risk,” said IMB Director Michael Howlett.

One crew member was injured and required medical attention after a bulk carrier was boarded in the Malacca Straits in October 2023. The last reported incident of crew injured by pirates in the area was in 2015.

A year-on-year increase in reported incidents has been observed in the Indonesian archipelago, up from 10 in 2022 to 18 in 2023. Weapons were reported in 50% of the incidents. Seven crew were threatened and two taken hostage in 2023.

Looming threats in South America

Fourteen incidents were reported from vessels at Callao anchorage in Peru. Seven crew were taken hostage and one each assaulted and threatened. Guns and knives were reported in nine incidents. Other ports affected in South America were Macapa anchorage in Brazil, and Cartagena and Puerto Bolivar anchorages in Colombia.

Request a copy of the 2023 Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships report [here](#).

About IMB Piracy Reporting Centre

Since its founding in 1991, IMB’s Piracy Reporting Centre serves as a crucial, 24-hour point of contact to report crimes of piracy and lend support to ships under threat. Quick reactions and a focus on coordinating with response agencies, sending out warning broadcasts and email alerts to ships have all helped bolster security on the high seas. The data gathered by the Centre also provides key insights on the nature and state of modern piracy.

IMB encourages all shipmasters and owners to report all actual, attempted and suspected global piracy and armed robbery incidents to the Piracy Reporting Centre as a vital first step to ensuring adequate resources are allocated by authorities to tackle maritime piracy.

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About the International Chamber of Commerce

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 170 countries. ICC’s core mission is to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere. Through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions and standard setting, we promote international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing market-leading dispute resolution services. Our members include many of the world’s leading companies, SMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce.

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