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Updates on Piracy & Maritime Security - reg.**

For the attention of Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Shipping Agents, Ship Masters, Charterers, Ship Builders, Ship Breakers Association, Classification Societies recognized by Director General of Shipping, Non-exclusive Survey companies, Insurance Companies, Coastal State including Administrations of Union territories/Islands and Maritime Boards.

1. The 2018 Annual report published by [International Maritime Bureau - Piracy Reporting Centre](#) (IMB-PRC) indicate that there were a total of 201 (actual/attempted) attacks reported worldwide during the period from January to December 2018, with Nigeria (48), Indonesia (36), Bangladesh (12), Malaysia (11), Venezuela (11), Ghana (10) and Philippines (10) contributing to 69% of the reported attacks.
2. Additionally, as per the Annual Report 2018: ‘Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia’, published by the [Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia](#) (ReCAAP), a total of 76 incidents [piracy (4) and armed robbery (72)] occurred in 2018 with an overall decrease in incidents by 25% compared to the previous year (2017).
3. As per the ReCAAP report, the threat of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas has not been eliminated and remains a severe threat in the area. Until December, 2018, a total of 66 crew has been abducted in this region, of which 49 has been released/ rescued, 7 killed and 10 still in captivity. However, there is a decrease in the number of incidents of abduction of the crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah in 2018. Three episodes of abduction of crew (comprising two actual incidents and one attempted incident) were reported in 2018, compared to seven incidents (comprising three actual incidents and four attempted incidents) in 2017. As there is still a threat of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off eastern Sabah, ReCAAP maintains its advisory issued via the ReCAAP ISC Incident Alert dated 21.11.2016 to all ships to reroute from the area, where possible. Alternatively, ship masters and crew are strongly urged to exercise extra vigilance while transiting the area, and report immediately to the Operation Centres of the Philippines and Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) of Malaysia.
4. Though the 2018 IMB-PRC Report does not indicate the number of Indian seafarers effected by these security incidents; the report indicates that 1 Indian registered vessel as well as 8 vessels which were controlled /managed in India as a part of the statistics effected by these incidents.

5. Analysis of the said reports indicate the following aspects:-
 - 5.1. Numbers stated in the reports referred may be on the lower side as there are many incidents which may have gone unreported.
 - 5.2. In 2018, most of the incidents occurred on board either tankers followed by bulk carriers. The reasons for the same would be that these vessels are an easier target due to their low freeboard and slower speeds.
 - 5.3. Majority of the incidents occurred between 0000 hrs and 0559 hrs.
 - 5.4. Additionally, tankers being targeted for their cargo, with hijacking for cargo theft registered as an increasing trend in West Africa. However, there was no successful theft of oil cargo incidents in Asia.
 - 5.5. Vessels at anchorage were targeted more in comparison with vessels steaming.
6. Reports from other maritime security sources indicate that maritime crimes such as weapon smuggling, narcotics smuggling, cargo smuggling, illegal movement of people (both smuggling and trafficking) etc., are slowly gaining prominence, especially off the coast of Somalia and Gulf of Aden.
7. The aforesaid reports are available online (at the links stated) and may be circulated to all concerned.
8. The Contact Group on Piracy Off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) is a mechanism formulated under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1851 to facilitate the discussion and coordination of actions among states and organisations to suppress Somali piracy. The 21st Plenary Session Contact Group on Piracy Off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and the Working Group on Operations at Sea (WGOPS) meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 11.07.2018 to 13.07.2018. The [Communique of the CGPCS 21st Plenary Session](#) highlights the efforts put in by the various working group towards suppressing piracy off the coast of Somalia. Informatively, India is the Co-chair of Working Group 1: Operation at Sea (WGOPS) of CGPCS. The CGPCS in its 21st Plenary session has, however acknowledged that piracy remains a threat in the region and considering the rise in recent incidents (2017) in the western Indian Ocean has requested the shipping industry to ensure compliance with the [Best Management Practices to deter Piracy and enhance maritime safety in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea](#) (BMP5), which has been currently revised to version 5. The shipping industry has developed BMP5 with the aim of ensuring that comprehensive planning and self-protection measures (ship “hardening”) reduce the risk of a successful pirate attack.
9. Additionally, a publication titled ‘[Global Counter Piracy Guidance for Companies, Masters and Seafarers](#)’ has been published (authored by the shipping industry as in BMP5) with its purpose to protect seafarers, the ship and cargo and, to facilitate threat and risk assessment and to plan for voyages transiting areas where the threat of attack by pirates and armed robbers exists. BMP5 should, therefore, be read together with Global Counter Piracy Guidance for Companies, Masters and Seafarers, towards the achievement of the objective above.

10. A total of 3 attacks have been reported near the Nigerian Coast (South of Brass) in 2019. It has been reported about 7 armed pirates have been reported in this area in 2019 and using a small craft/skiff with outboard engines with a purpose to attack vessels in vicinity. The pirates are often well armed, violent and have attacked, hijacked and robbed vessels/kidnapped crew in these waters, with attacks having been reported up-to 170 nm from coast. Additionally, Benin has also been an incident hotspot in the past year (2018) with 5 vessels being hijacked from the anchorage. In many past incidents in the Gulf of Guinea, pirates have hijacked the vessels for several days, ransacked the vessels and stole part cargo, usually gas oil. A number of crewmembers have also been injured and kidnapped in past attacks. A revised version of '[Guidelines for Owners, Operators and Masters for Protection against Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea Region](#)' has been published (Version 3) in June 2018 and is to be read in conjunction with the Global Counter-Piracy Guidance for Companies, Masters and Seafarers. Vessels are advised to maintain continued vigil anti piracy watch and comply with this guidelines when positioned in the Gulf of Guinea.

11. Attention is also invited to '[Regional Guide To Counter Piracy And Armed Robbery Against Ships In Asia](#)' and '[Guide for Tankers Operating in Asia Against Piracy and Armed Robbery Involving Oil Cargo Theft](#)', which has been produced by the ReCAAP in collaboration with other organisations to promote safe and secure seas for the shipping community in this region.

12. A workshop on 'Maritime Security & Piracy' was conducted by the Directorate General of Shipping in December 2018 at Mumbai, with an objective to highlight the efforts of various International maritime security agencies and issues pertaining to maritime security from a regional perspective as well as to create a networking and information sharing opportunity between the various stakeholders (including seafarers). The soft copy of the presentations of this workshop is available at the link https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10E5sFtEtJiU8wk_ls7SLOs7qc9Qc9xqM and may be shared with all concerned.

13. All CSO's and Masters of vessels are advised to be extra cautious and follow the practices and take necessary precautionary measures as specified in the guidelines and publications mentioned above.

14. This is issued with the approval of the Director General of Shipping (I/c).

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Note - The underlined content in the circular indicates hyperlinks to the relevant online information, available on the respective websites.