

## **Piracy attacks almost doubled in 2009 first quarter**

London, 21 April 2009

A dramatic increase in activity by Somali pirates led to a near doubling in the number of ships attacked during the year's first quarter compared with the same period in 2008, according to a report issued today by the International Chamber of Commerce's International Maritime Bureau (IMB).

A total of 102 incidents were reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) in the first three months of 2009 compared to 53 incidents in the first quarter of 2008. The quarterly report also said attacks increased by almost 20% over last quarter of 2008.

The increase in the first quarter of 2009 is due almost entirely to increased Somali pirate activity off the Gulf of Aden and the east coast of Somalia. The two areas accounted for 61 of the 102 attacks during the first quarter compared to six incidents for the same period in 2008.

IMB reported that worldwide a total of 34 vessels were boarded, 29 vessels fired upon, and nine vessels hijacked. A total of 178 crew members were taken hostage, nine were injured, five kidnapped, and two killed. In the majority of incidents, the attackers were heavily armed with guns or knives. In addition, violence against crew members continued to increase.

"The navies have played a key role in controlling piracy in the Gulf of Aden," IMB Director Pottengal Mukundan said. "It is vital that these naval operations continue."

Forty-one incidents were reported in the Gulf of Aden region, including the hijacking of five vessels. In January 2009, one in every six vessels attacked was successfully hijacked, with the rate decreasing to one in eight for February 2009 and one in 13 for the month of March. On average, one in eight vessels attacked was hijacked during the first quarter.

The last quarter of 2008 saw a total of 41 incidents in which the ratio was one in three vessels attacked being hijacked, IMB reported.

The east coast of Somalia recorded 20 attacks in the first quarter of the year, with 18 of the incidents reported in March alone – including four hijackings. This compares to the last quarter of 2008 in which seven incidents were reported including two hijackings for this area.

In addition to Somalia, Nigeria continues to be a high risk area. In the first quarter of 2009 IMB received reports of only seven incidents, although unconfirmed reports would suggest that at least a further 13 attacks had occurred in the same period. Nearly all incidents have taken place on vessels supporting and connected to the oil industry.

"It is important that all incidents off Nigeria are reported to the PRC," Captain Mukundan said. "This will enable a more complete picture to be presented by the international community to Nigerian authorities so that they can better prioritize and resource their law enforcement agencies to respond."

The report said that Peru has seen an increased level of incidents in its waters, with seven attacks reported to the PRC, all of them successful. The last quarter of 2008 saw four incidents reported.

In the report, IMB praised Indonesian authorities for their efforts in curbing piracy and armed robbery in their waters. The first quarter of 2009 saw only one incident reported compared to five incidents in the corresponding period in 2008.

Only one incident has been reported in the Malacca Straits this quarter, and IMB complimented the littoral states for their continued efforts in maintaining and securing the safety of the strategic trade route. The drop in attacks is due to increased vigilance and patrolling by the littoral states and the continued precautionary measures on board ships.

The situation has also improved in Bangladesh (Chittagong) and Tanzania (Dar es Salaam), with a slight decrease in the number of incidents reported in the first quarter as compared to the corresponding period last year. In the first three months of 2009 only one incident was reported for Bangladesh compared to three during the same period last year. Vessels calling at Tanzania reported two incidents as compared to four during the same period last year.

IMB urged all ship masters, owners and others in and outside the shipping industry to report all incidents of actual and attempted piracy and armed robbery to the PRC. These reports are collated by the PRC and promptly relayed to law enforcement agencies and governments in order to evaluate the severity of the problem in their waters and trigger appropriate action.

To request a PDF version of the report by email, please visit the following link where the 2009 attacks may also be viewed on the IMB Live Piracy Map  
[http://www.icc-ccs.org.uk/prc/piracy\\_rep\\_app.php](http://www.icc-ccs.org.uk/prc/piracy_rep_app.php)

The IMB is part of ICC Commercial Crime Services, which is a specialized division of the International Chamber of Commerce, the world business organization.

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