



1) Overview of Q1 2025 (Jan to Mar). Quarter-on-quarter, Q1 2025 (35 incidents) recorded the highest number of incidents per quarter in recent years. This is likely due to the combined effects of (a) Northeast Monsoon (Dec to Mar), which exacerbated the already challenging sea conditions in the South China Sea (SCS) and affected fishing activity/yield; and (b) increased financial burdens leading up to festivities (Feb and Mar), causing locals to resort to petty crime in coastal waters to supplement their income. *[Info: From past trends, Q1s typically record higher incident numbers due to factors listed above. However, Q1 2024 (10 incidents) was an exception, likely due to the successful enforcement operations by regional authorities on land and at sea, which achieved a strong deterrent effect; unfortunately, the deterrent effect appears to have waned in recent months.]*

2) Key Observations and Assessments.

- Based on incident reports, perpetrators' **modus operandi** remained largely consistent with petty crime, and were opportunistic in nature. In most of the incidents, there were no confrontation and/or injury reported. Items stolen, if any, were typically engine parts and scrap metals.
- Majority of the incidents continued to occur in the **Phillip Channel** (21 out of 35 incidents in Q1 2025). This suggests that perpetrators are exploiting predictable vessels' behaviour(s), such as reducing speed significantly when turning in the Phillip Channel, making them more susceptible to boarding.
- There was an **observed increase in unsuccessful attempts** in Q1 2025, where perpetrators fled upon being detected by ships' crew and/or sighting enforcement vessels in vicinity. *[Note: 18 unsuccessful attempts, out of 35 incidents in Q1 2025]*
- On two occasions [28 Feb, and 30 Mar], there were **three (3) incidents in one night**, particularly when the initial attempt(s) were unsuccessful. Given the proximity of incident locations, time intervals, and number of pax involved, it was likely that same group of perpetrators conducted multiple attempts on different vessels on the respective nights. *[Note: 28 Feb (nothing stolen in all three (3) incidents), and three (3) incidents on 30 Mar (nothing stolen in initial two (2) incidents, and items stolen in the third incident).]*
- Bulk Carrier, Tanker, and Tug and Barge remain the main **vessel types targeted** due to their ship characteristics (i.e. slow speed of 7 to 12 knots, low freeboard of up to 7m). *[Note: Based on trending, Tug and Barge activities in the Singapore Strait (SS) are expected to resume as the weather conditions and sea state in the SCS improve, and this creates more opportunities for perpetrators to target Tugs and Barges.]*
- For the first time in more than five years, **Container Vessels** were targeted in the SS. Four (4) incidents [19, 28, 29, and 30 Mar] involved this vessel type in Q1 2025. Based on trending, Container Vessels typically transit the SS with freeboards more than 10m, however we noticed that the four Container Vessels that were targeted had freeboards between 3 to 7m, thus making them easier to board.

3) Outlook for Q2 2025 (Apr to Jun). With the Monsoon abating, weather conditions in the SCS are expected to improve, enabling fishing activities to resume fully. Based on past trends, we can expect incident numbers to decline. However, with the rise in global economic uncertainties, and economic hardship faced by the coastal communities, sea robbery incidents are likely to continue. As such, IFC assesses that the **overall incident numbers in Q2 2025 are likely to remain high**. IFC will continue working with regional authorities to step up enforcement efforts on land and at sea.

Recommended Actions for All Transiting Vessels

- Always remain vigilant, particularly when transiting known areas of concern in the Phillip Channel, and waters off Bintan and Batam. Prompt reporting to local authorities is important to enable timely responses, and can help prevent subsequent boardings on other transiting vessels.
- Adopt Ship Protection Measures recommended in the Regional Guide 2 to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia, e.g., (1) turn on weather deck lighting around the accommodation block and rear facing lighting on the poop deck, (2) maintain an all-round lookout at an elevated position with focus on suspicious small craft(s) approaching or in proximity to the ship's aft, and (3) sound ship's alarm when suspicious small craft(s) sighted.
- To guard against successive boarding attempts by perpetrators, transiting vessels are encouraged to stay informed by participating in Voluntary Community Reporting as depicted in 1st Edition MARSEC Charts Q6112 and Q6113 (dated 14 Nov 2024). Upon sighting of suspicious activities or perpetrators onboard, immediately report to local authorities and inform the IFC; do not confront perpetrators.