Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Malaysia

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Publication details

Carolin Liss
Published online on: 28 Oct 2014

How to cite: - Carolin Liss. 28 Oct 2014, Contemporary maritime piracy in Malaysia from: Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Malaysia Routledge
Accessed on: 24 Aug 2023

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Contemporary maritime piracy in Malaysia

Carolin Liss

Underway from Thailand to Indonesia, a Singaporean tugboat pulling a barge was attacked by six armed robbers in Malaysian waters on 9 June 2013. The pirates climbed aboard and forced the crew to pump fuel from the tug into a fishing boat. The perpetrators then tied up the crew, stole their belongings and other valuables and escaped in a white speedboat (ReCAAP 2013b: 47). As this incident demonstrates, pirates still ply Malaysian waters today, even though – or perhaps because – international attention is focused firmly on Somali piracy. This chapter overviews contemporary piracy in Malaysia. It first looks briefly at the changing nature of piracy in Malaysia and Southeast Asia, before discussing developments from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s. It explains why piracy emerged as a security concern in Malaysia in this period, and considers the nature of attacks, the perpetrators and the Malaysian, regional and international responses to the piracy threat. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the period from the mid-2000s to the present, examining changes and continuities in contemporary piracy in Malaysia and beyond.

Piracy: past and present

Piracy in Malaysia and the wider Southeast Asian region has a long history. Long before the arrival of the Europeans in the sixteenth century, opportunistic attacks by maritime people such as fishers and petty traders were common throughout the region, but particularly in the waters adjacent to the kingdoms and entrepôts of Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Malacca and Johor. Furthermore, certain maritime ethnic groups conducted more sophisticated and well-organised attacks and slave raids against coastal communities, which intensified with the arrival of the European powers in Southeast Asia and the ensuing transformation of the global and regional economy. The raiding vessels originated from places such as the Riau-Lingga archipelago and south-eastern Sumatra. They were sponsored and supported by sultans and the local elite of Johor between the mid-seventeenth and the early nineteenth centuries (Warren 2001: 8; Teitler 2002: 69). The scale and severity of piracy in Southeast Asia eventually prompted anti-piracy countermeasures by all European powers present in the region, which brought an end to organised pirate raids in Southeast Asia by 1880 (Warren 2001: 40–47; Andaya and Andaya 2001: 134–36).
Even though piracy has a long history in Southeast Asia, its nature has changed over time, as ‘piracy’ has been associated with a variety of economic and political activities. Colonial powers ascribed the term ‘pirates’ to local ‘marauders’ – whether individuals or ethnic groups – to characterise as criminal and barbaric those activities that thwarted European interests, but that local inhabitants generally considered legitimate political or commercial endeavours (Trocki 1988). Contemporary piracy in Southeast Asia differs in scope, character and nature from the long-distance maritime raids of the past. Today, the booty sought by the perpetrators is no longer slaves, but cash, valuables, cargo or vessels themselves. Most important, however, is that now piracy is an act of either opportunistic pirates or organised criminal gangs, conducted for private ends. Piracy is no longer a political or economic instrument to strengthen or support the structure of states.

Piracy in Malaysia: the late 1990s to the mid-2000s

While the anti-piracy efforts of the colonial powers proved successful in fighting sophisticated organised pirate attacks and slave raids, piracy never disappeared entirely from Southeast Asian waters, and opportunistic attacks on merchant vessels and small craft continued. Large numbers of attacks in Southeast Asia were reported again only from the mid-1970s onwards, however, when the Vietnamese ‘boat people’ suffered horrendously at the hands of pirates in the Gulf of Thailand (Boulanger 1989; Eklöf 2006: 17–34). Yet, it was not until the 1990s that piracy in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, re-emerged as a serious security concern in the region.

The period between the 1990s and the mid-2000s is significant because, at the time, Southeast Asia was the most pirate-prone region in the world. The level of attacks and the serious nature of some incidents triggered international concern about the safety of international shipping in the region’s waters and led to the establishment of organisations and initiation of cooperative measures that have shaped the fight against piracy ever since. Malaysia played a central role, particularly because international concern focused largely on the safety of ships passing through the Malacca Strait, a strategic waterway consisting mainly of Malaysian and Indonesian waters.

For the period from the late 1990s to 2007, piracy data from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) are the most comprehensive, even though IMB representatives themselves estimate that more than 50 percent of all pirate attacks remained unreported. The IMB included in its data for this period any ‘act of boarding any vessel with the intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the intent or capability to use force in the furtherance of that act’ (ICC 1998: 2). The IMB data show that in this period between three (2004) and seventeen (2000 and 2001) actual attacks were reported in Malaysian waters. Additionally, some attacks reported in the Malacca Strait, the Singapore Strait and the South China Sea may also have been conducted in Malaysian waters (Table 35.1).

Pirates active in Malaysian waters attacked vessels of any nationality, type and size, with the exception of very large vessels. Smaller or medium-sized cargo vessels were preferred targets. Fishing boats were also attacked, but these incidents were rarely reported to the IMB or local authorities. The perpetrators were not necessarily Malaysian and did not always operate from Malaysian territory. Indeed, piracy is often a transnational activity, with pirates from countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines able to cross into Malaysian waters to attack ships. Regardless of their origin, the perpetrators can be divided into two types: opportunistic sea-robbers and sophisticated, organised pirate gangs.

Between the 1990s and mid-2000s, the vast majority of pirate attacks in Malaysian waters were simple hit-and-run robberies, committed by what can best be described as common
Table 35.1 IMB statistics: actual and (attempted) attacks

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Note:

*a Southeast Asia here includes: Indonesia, Malacca Strait, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore Strait, Thailand, Vietnam and South China Sea.
sea-robbins. The perpetrators operated in small groups of men who most likely had known each other for some time. They attacked ships at sea, at anchor or in ports and usually did not share their booty with anyone outside the pirate gang, except for bribes paid to outsiders to ensure their silence or cooperation. The attacks were often brief affairs, lasting no longer then fifteen to thirty minutes, and required little organisation or planning. When merchant ships were targeted, the sea-robbins skilfully slipped aboard, usually under cover of darkness, and took anything of value before leaving the vessel. Violence was limited mostly to occasions when the perpetrators’ escape route was blocked or when they were confronted or threatened in some other way (ICC 1998: 3, 7). Hit-and-run incidents on small vessels such as fishing boats or yachts were often violent. In such attacks, the pirates invariably confronted their victims directly and had to be prepared to use violence and intimidation.

The second group – organised pirate gangs, or syndicates – is characterised by greater organisation and sophistication. These gangs predominantly attacked medium-sized vessels, including cargo ships, bulk carriers and tankers, and were responsible for ‘long-term seizures’ and hijackings. For attacks far from shore, pirate gangs employ a mother-ship. The mother-ship serves as a forward base for the pirates at sea and carries technical equipment to locate targeted vessels, fuel stores, and other logistical equipment and weapons necessary for attacks (Stewart 2002: 158). An example of an attack by an organised gang was the seizure of the MT *Petchem* in the early hours of 25 September 2000 while on its way from Port Dickson, in peninsular Malaysia, to Kuching, in the western part of Sarawak. Armed with guns and *parang* (machetes), twenty-one Indonesian pirates overpowered the crew and changed the vessel’s name to *ETC*. The following day, the crew members, incarcerated in the cabin, felt the tremor of a second vessel coming alongside the *Petchem* and heard pumps siphoning off the cargo. The pirates left the hijacked vessel via the second ship, and the crew were able to free themselves and alert the owner of the vessel and the Singaporean and Malaysian authorities. 2

**Piracy hot spots**

While pirate attacks were reported from different parts of Malaysia, two areas were particularly associated with pirate activities: the waters off Sabah and the Malacca Strait. Sabah borders Kalimantan, Indonesia, and is only a short distance across the Sulu Sea from the southern Philippines. A large number of small vessels, including fishing boats and both passenger and trading ships, ply the waters between Sabah, Kalimantan and the southern Philippines. Assaults on these vessels were common. Attacks in this area were often shaped by the conflict in the southern Philippines between the government and various separatist and terrorist groups. Some of these groups were believed to be involved in piracy, and both the lawlessness created by the conflict and the availability of firearms facilitated piracy. Indeed, many of the attacks in this area were conducted by perpetrators originally from the southern Philippines. Attacks off Sabah were characterised by a comparatively high level of violence, with the perpetrators often carrying firearms. Exemplifying the ruthless nature of attacks was an incident in the late 1990s, when three fishermen were shot dead in the strait between Basilan and Zamboanga. The armed pirates approached their victims in a motorboat, opened fire, and stole the fishing boat’s engine and fishing gear (Associated Press Newswire 1999). Fishing boats were arguably most affected by piracy in these waters, but boats used for inter-island trade or smuggling, and other small transport vessels were also targeted. The actual number of attacks in this area is difficult to estimate as they were seldom reported to local authorities or the IMB (see Liss 2011).
More attacks were reported from the Malacca Strait area. The Strait connects the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea and is one of the busiest waterways in the world. Concern about piracy in the Strait was triggered by a sudden rise in the number of attacks in 2000, with reported incidents jumping from two actual and attempted attacks in the area in 1999 to seventy-five the following year (Table 35.1). While the number of incidents declined again in 2001, numbers remained comparatively high until 2005. Prevalence aside, the serious nature of some of the incidents and the fear of possible collusion between pirates and terrorists caused concern. One serious incident was the hijacking of the MT Selayang on 20 June 2001 in the Malacca Straits. The ship was travelling from Port Dickson to Labuan when nineteen pirates climbed on board, overpowered the crew and held them captive. The hijacking was first noticed on 21 June, but despite the ship’s tracking system, the Selayang was not intercepted by the Indonesian authorities until 27 June, when anchoring near Samarinda, north of Balikpapan, Borneo.3

Beyond the attacks recorded by the IMB, fishing boats and their crew were frequently targeted in the Malacca Strait, particularly in the northern part. These attacks were often not reported because the fishermen saw no advantage in reporting the incident, were concerned about revenge by pirates, or were attacked while fishing illegally and therefore could not ask for help from authorities. Many attacks on fishing boats were serious and included hijacking vessels, kidnapping crew for ransom and killing fishermen. Examples are two attacks on the same fishing boat from Kuala Perlis in 2002 and 2004. In the first incident, the vessel, with thirty-five Thai crewmembers on board, was attacked by eight Indonesian pirates. The perpetrators stole the catch, cash and diesel oil from the vessel, and tragically, shot dead a Thai child on board the fishing boat. Two years later, the same vessel was hijacked and two crewmembers were taken hostage.4 Also common in the Malacca Strait area was the collection of up-front protection money from boat owners to ensure their boats were not attacked. As well as opportunistic and organised pirates, members of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian armed forces were believed to be responsible for attacks on both merchant and fishing boats in the Malacca Strait (see Liss 2011).

Responses to piracy

Even at the height of attacks in the Malacca Strait, piracy remained only one of several, often much more pressing, security concerns in Malaysia (and Southeast Asia). This becomes clear when the number of pirate attacks is compared with the number of crimes committed on land. In 2000, for instance, the Malaysian police recorded 167,173 attempted and committed crimes (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2004). The total of twenty-one actual and attempted pirate attacks reported to the IMB in the same year in Malaysian waters and ports seems insignificant in comparison. Even if the seventy-five attacks recorded that year in the Malacca Strait are included, the statistical impression that the vast majority of crimes are committed on land remains uncontested.5 Yet, piracy – especially in the Malacca Strait area – drew international attention and significant efforts were made to fight it.

International concern over the safety of ships in the Malacca Strait was a major driving force behind efforts to curb piracy. Internationally, commercial organisations and governments showed concern and contributed to the introduction of new anti-piracy measures. On the commercial side, the marine underwriters Lloyds played a noteworthy, albeit controversial, role in focusing attention on piracy in the Malacca Strait. In June 2005, Lloyds Joint War Committee decided to include the Strait in its Hull War, Strikes, Terrorism and Related Perils Listed Areas, which raised insurance premiums for ships transiting the Strait and was
challenged by both representatives of the shipping sector and regional governments. In August 2006, Lloyd’s removed the Malacca Strait from the list, stating security in the waterway had improved (Insurance Journal 2006). Nevertheless, Lloyd’s initial decision to list the Malacca Strait prompted local governments to act against piracy.

Governments around the globe also expressed concerns about the safety of ships in the Malacca Strait. Some, such as the Japanese and the United States governments, offered assistance to increase maritime security in the area. Offers included active involvement of foreign powers in providing security, such as the suggestion that foreign naval vessels should patrol the Malacca Strait, and more indirect foreign assistance in the form of training for regional maritime agencies or donations of funds or military hardware to local government agencies. While indirect assistance has generally been accepted, direct foreign involvement has been viewed with suspicion in the region and refused. Sensitivities about sovereignty are often cited as the main reason behind the refusal (Storey 2006: 4; Bradford 2010). Instead, Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia, have taken it largely into their own hands to combat piracy, individually or jointly. Malaysia, for example, has increased patrols in piracy-prone waters such as the Malaysian waters of the Malacca Strait. To improve coordination and cooperation among the seven agencies responsible for maritime security in Malaysia, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) was established and became operational in November 2005 (MMEA 2013). In Sabah, the large-scale abduction of foreign tourists and resort workers from the Malaysian island of Sipadan in 2000 by the Philippines-based Abu Sayyaf prompted the Malaysian government to significantly increase maritime security in the area. While the hostages were still being held in the Philippines, Malaysian government representatives announced that additional navy personal would be stationed in Sabah, and that it would build a new naval base in Semporna, the town closest to the island of Sipadan; the base officially opened in July 2005 (Daily Express 2005).

Given that piracy is often a transnational crime, local governments have made efforts to combat piracy jointly; however, close and meaningful cooperation is often hampered by concerns about sovereignty, contending national interests, and contested claims of ownership of islands or water areas (Mak 2006). While a range of bilateral and multilateral efforts were made to combat piracy in Southeast Asia, three are particularly significant in the Malaysian context: ASEAN’s efforts; the Malacca Straits Patrol Network; and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). ASEAN (and the ASEAN Regional Forum, ARF), has made various efforts over the years to address piracy. For example, member states’ commitment to forming an ‘ASEAN Community’ by 2015 (Roberts 2010: 1) includes more extensive maritime cooperation in addressing transnational crime, including piracy. ASEAN’s efforts to increase security have so far, however, been limited by its policy of non-interference in domestic affairs and have seldom, if ever, resulted in any direct action (Emmers 2003: 430; Emmers and Tan 2009). MALSINDO, in contrast, a trilateral agreement among Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia to combat piracy in the Malacca Strait, included active anti-piracy measures from the outset. It started with coordinated maritime patrols in 2004; two years later, with the introduction of coordinated air patrols over the Malacca Straits, named ‘Eyes in the Sky’ (EiS), the initiative was renamed Malacca Straits Patrol Network. Although the initiative has shown some success and all three states clearly cooperate in the network, the depth of their collaboration remains limited. Significantly, while surveillance planes are allowed to fly up to three nautical miles into the territorial seas of the participating states, naval patrols remain coordinated rather than joint, meaning that hot pursuit into, and patrolling of, waters of neighbouring countries is not permitted (Raymond 2010).
ReCAAP, the first regional government-to-government agreement to combat piracy, was finalised in 2004 and came into force two years later. The initiative focuses on the Asian region and most signatories are Asian countries. ReCAAP was initially proposed by Japan and aimed to facilitate the sharing of information related to piracy, especially through establishing an information-sharing centre. While the centre was set up in Singapore in 2006, the agreement does not ‘oblige members to any specific action other than sharing information that they deem pertinent to imminent piracy attacks’ (Bradford 2005: 69). Furthermore, even though a large percentage of pirate attacks in Southeast Asia are conducted in Malaysian and Indonesian waters, neither country is party to the agreement. Nevertheless, both Malaysia and Indonesia cooperate with the organisation, and ReCAAP reports cover incidents in the two countries’ waters.

Piracy in Malaysia 2007–13: change and continuity

After the introduction of anti-piracy measures such as the Malacca Straits Patrol Network and the establishment of ReCAAP, international attention on piracy in Asian waters began to fade, for two reasons. First, the number of reported incidents in the Malacca Strait declined significantly and, second, the Gulf of Aden area became the focus of international concern after the number of serious pirate attacks began to increase sharply off the east African coast.

The decline in the number of attacks reported in the Malacca Strait area from 2007 to 2012 is clearly apparent in IMB data (Table 35.1). ReCAAP data, first published in 2006, combine attacks conducted in the Malacca and Singapore Straits and confirm that the number of reported incidents in this area remained low, at least until 2011 (Table 35.2). The drop in reported incidents in the Malacca Strait can be explained partly by the introduction of the Malacca Straits Patrol Network and individual efforts by the Malaysian and Indonesian governments to increase patrols and arrest perpetrators. The 2005 peace agreement in

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Notes:
<sup>a</sup> Southeast Asia here includes: Gulf of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, South China Sea, Straits of Malacca and Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

<sup>b</sup> Asia here includes: Southeast Asia plus China, Arabian Sea, Bangladesh, Bay of Bengal, India (and Sri Lanka until 2011).
Aceh also contributed to the decline in incidents, including the drop in hijackings and kidnappings of crew. Also, many ship-owners are likely to be reluctant to report minor incidents in the Malacca Strait to avoid a renewed rise in insurance premiums, as occurred in 2005 after Lloyds classified the Strait as a risk area.

A further reason for the decline is that pirates shifted their operations to less-patrolled waters, especially the waters east of the Malacca Strait. As Tables 35.1 and 35.2 demonstrate, incidents in the Singapore Strait and the South China Sea (particularly the waters between the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia and Indonesia’s Anambas Islands) increased around 2009. Indonesian pirate gangs based in the Riau Archipelago and the Anambas Islands are believed to be responsible for the attacks, with some groups also involved in other illegal activities, especially smuggling. Even though these pirates are mostly Indonesians operating from Indonesian territory, Malaysian vessels and other ships travelling from and to Malaysian ports are among those attacked (Hoeslins 2012). An example is the hijacking of the Malaysian tanker Zafi rah on 19 November 2012 in the South China Sea on its way from Johor to Sarawak. The vessel was captured by Vietnamese authorities three days later and all eleven pirates were arrested (ReCAAP 2013a: 66).

While the number of reported incidents in the Malacca Strait has declined, piracy has not been eradicated in the Strait – or in other piracy hot spots in Malaysia. ReCAAP and IMB statistics demonstrate that, since 2005, usually between ten and twenty pirate attacks have been reported annually in the country’s waters. As earlier, these include hit-and-run robberies conducted by opportunistic pirates and more serious attacks such as hijackings for which organised gangs are responsible. In Malaysian waters, the Malacca Strait and the South China Sea, however, pirates have changed their modus operandi to some extent in recent years. Most importantly, hijacking of merchant ships is less common, with pirates’ increasingly targeting smaller vessels, such as tugs and barges. Such vessels are particularly vulnerable; they are easier to board because they have a low freeboard, travel slowly (8–10 knots) and carry a small crew. An example is a tug and barge travelling between Sarawak and Port Klang, Kuala Lumpur, attacked by twelve masked men on 25 May 2011. As usual for such incidents, the crewmembers were stripped of their belongings and set adrift. Fortunately, the crew was rescued by Vietnamese fishermen, while the tug was discovered on 2 June by the Royal Malaysian Navy in the Spratly Islands. The barge was not found until early December 2011, when it was discovered abandoned and run aground in the Philippines (ReCAAP 2012: 82–83). In such incidents, it appears the pirates had prior knowledge of the targeted vessels. Once the ships were hijacked, they were taken to a shipyard for refurbishment before being delivered to a pre-arranged buyer (see ReCAAP ISC and the Information Fusion Centre n.d.).

Arguably less has changed in the waters off Sabah, despite substantial efforts to increase maritime and border security in the area. Today, naval bases operate in Sandakan, Lahad Datu, Semporna and Tawau, and additional units from agencies such as the General Operations Force, the Marine Operations Force and the Maritime Enforcement Agency have been deployed to the area. Despite this, pirate attacks on merchant ships and smaller vessels, including fishing boats, remain a concern in the waters off Sabah. In August 2013, for example, a group of armed men held nine fishermen hostage for several hours in the waters off Semporna. Following the incident, Sabah police stated that they had identified two foreign-based pirate gangs responsible for attacks on fishers in Malaysian waters (Borneo Insider 2013).

In addition to attacks on vessels, armed men travelling by boat have been responsible for a spate of raids on villages, estates and plantations in Sabah. In 2010, for example, two employees of a seaweed plantation off the coast of Semporna were abducted by armed men and released.
after a ransom was paid. In November 2012, heavily armed men turned up in Kampung Indra Sabah and took off with ‘a few hundred ringgit worth of anchovies’, while a few days earlier, two hostages had been taken from an estate near Lahad Datu (Queville 2012). The most serious incident, however, occurred in 2013. In early February, an estimated two hundred men from the Royal Security Forces of the Sulu Sultanate arrived by boat near Lahad Datu and settled in the area. They were sent by Jamalul Kiram, one of several claimants to be sultan of Sulu, and led by his brother, Abgimuddin Kiram. The group’s aim was to reinforce the Philippines’ claim to Sabah. The situation remained stable for several weeks while negotiations ensued between the group and the Malaysian government. When negotiations failed and the militants refused to leave, however, violence broke out in several towns along the coast, with casualties on both sides. The Malaysian government deemed the conflict so serious that it bombed the area where the militants were hiding and increased efforts to secure the maritime border between the Philippines and Sabah. While the so-called stand-off was eventually resolved, details about the incident remain hazy (Felongco 2013); however, it demonstrated clearly the prevalence of unresolved political issues and tensions in the area and focused attention once again on the porous maritime borders there. While this incident was not a pirate attack (even though several newspapers referred to it as such or likened the perpetrators to pirates), it generated insecurity and uncertainty, which are conducive to the occurrence of criminal activities such as piracy.

Conclusion

Piracy in Malaysia and other Southeast Asian waters claimed international attention in the early 2000s, mainly because of a rise in reported attacks in the busy Malacca Strait. After regional states increased their efforts to combat piracy – with some assistance from countries beyond the region – and the number of attacks in the Malacca Strait began to decline, international concern about piracy shifted away from Southeast Asia to a new piracy hot spot in the Gulf of Aden area.

Malaysia has played an important role in combating piracy in Southeast Asia, not simply because it is partly responsible for maritime security in the Malacca Strait. Naval bases have been opened in piracy hot spots, especially Sabah, new equipment and boats suitable for pursuing pirates have been purchased, and cooperation between Malaysian agencies has been enhanced by the establishment of the MMEA. Malaysia has also cooperated closely with neighbouring states, as reflected in the introduction of the Malacca Straits Patrol Network. These efforts have shown some success, as demonstrated by the drop in reported attacks in the Malacca Strait and the capture of perpetrators by Malaysian authorities. One recent example is the arrest of eight Indonesian pirates by the MMEA in December 2012. The perpetrators were apprehended while attacking a ship off the coast of Pengerang, facing the Singapore Strait (Gasper 2012). These efforts by the Malaysian authorities signal that Malaysia is interested in, and committed to, combating piracy. Indeed, Malaysia is even using its experience to contribute to anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden area. Malaysia not only sent warships to patrol the pirate-prone waters off Somalia, but also arrested perpetrators and brought them to trial in Malaysia. In September 2013, for example, a Malaysian court sentenced seven Somali pirates to between eight and ten years in jail for attacking a Malaysian-operated chemical tanker and shooting at Malaysian troops (International Transport Workers’ Federation 2013).

Yet despite these efforts, piracy persists. Attacks are still reported in Malaysian waters, including serious incidents such as hijackings. This can be explained in part by the limits in
cooperation between Malaysia and its neighbours. For example, sensitivities about sovereignty have so far prevented states in Southeast Asia from allowing hot pursuit of pirates into other countries’ waters. Similarly, multiparty maritime patrols still remain coordinated, rather than joint patrols, and Malaysia and Indonesia are still not members of ReCAAP. Even more important in explaining the persistence of piracy, however, is that Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries mostly focus on addressing the symptoms, but not the root causes of piracy. Combating piracy is a difficult and complex task, requiring more than patrolling piracy-prone waters. Indeed, so long as the root causes of piracy – including poverty, overfishing, lax maritime regulations, corruption of law enforcement agencies and the presence of radical politically motivated groups in the region – are not addressed, piracy will not be eliminated.

Notes

1 Author’s interview with Noel Choong, Regional Manager, International Maritime Bureau, Piracy Reporting Centre, 23 October 2002, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
2 Documents provided by Petrojaya Marine Sdn Bhd, Singapore, 21 October 2003.
3 Documents provided by Petrojaya Marine Sdn Bhd, Singapore, 21 October 2003.
4 Author’s interview with local fishers and Shamsul bin Chin, Pengurus Besar, Persatuan Nelayan Kawasan Kuala Perlis, 29 October 2004 and 10 November 2004, Kuala Perlis, Malaysia.
5 Many of the attacks recorded in the Malacca Straits, however, most likely occurred in Indonesian waters.
6 One example is Japan’s decade-old programme to build up regional coastguards (Fackler 2012).
7 The official launch occurred in March the following year.
8 ReCAAP data is included here because the organisation offers at present the most comprehensive data collection on piracy in Southeast Asia. Although both ReCAAP and the IMB now make a distinction between piracy and armed robbery against ships, both crimes are included in the statistics. For piracy (on the high seas), the definition in Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is used; armed robbery against ships is defined in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly Resolution A.1025(26).
9 Author’s interviews with people from the area, Sabah, October 2013.

Bibliography

Contemporary maritime piracy in Malaysia


Carolin Liss


