This is the second report from the Maritime Piracy Event & Location data project. The purpose of these reports is to document trends in piracy in certain regions and or countries around the world. Each quarter a new report will be published and uploaded to the project website.

This report describes piracy in Southeast Asia, focusing specifically on the waters of Indonesia and the Philippines. Attacks against ships and armed robbery at port are commonplace in Southeast Asia. In fact, many of the clear drivers of maritime piracy and armed robbery are strong in Southeast Asian countries. Fragile governments, poverty, economic dislocation, large populations, and geographic opportunity all correlate strongly with pirate attacks in territorial waters and all these factors are present in SE Asia. Importantly, substantial seaborne trade traffics through or near Indonesian and Filipino waters. More than 50,000 vessels transit the Malacca Straits each year and Indonesia’s 43 ports service much of this shipping traffic. The Philippines, while north of the Malacca Straits, sits on the east side of the South China Sea and the country’s northernmost Island (Luzon)

Figure 1: Ports in Asia
Borders the Luzon Straits. This critical passage is used by thousands of ships each year that leave South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan to transit through the Malacca Straits on their way to South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Figure 1 above maps port locations in Southeast Asian countries as well as notes the two important maritime transit corridors.

Despite structural similarities, Indonesia and the Philippines experience significantly different levels of maritime piracy. From 1993-2013 Indonesia suffered over 1500 piracy-related incidents (over 73 incidents per year on average). In contrast, the Philippines only experienced 162 total incidents over the same 21 years. The stark difference shows up clearly in both 2013 and 2014 as well. Indonesia witnessed nearly 120 attacks in 2013 while the Philippines only saw 3. The two maps below plot the locations of attacks (Figures 2a & 2b). The 3 attacks in Philippines in 2013 all occurred in Manila Harbor while the ships were anchored. The heat map that follows Figures 2a and 2b for 1993-2013 illustrates where most of the SE Asian piracy is occurring during the 21 years between 1993-2013 (Figure 3). Through October of this year, Indonesia has experienced over 70 piracy attacks while the Philippines have faced only 5 (three ships were boarded and two fired upon).

Figure 3 clearly shows the southern (particularly off of Pualu Bintan) and northern (Belawan Port) tips of the Malacca Straits, as well as Jakarta and Samarinda anchorages are particularly dangerous. In the Philippines, the Luzon Strait, as well as Manila and Batangas anchorages, represents the only real hotspots.

**Country Characteristics**

It seems odd that Indonesia and the Philippines experience such different levels of maritime piracy. The two countries seem structurally similar in many ways. Both receive Polity scores of 8 in 2010 (OECD democracies such as the UK and Norway score 10s) and state fragility scores of 11 (Philippines) and 9 (Indonesia) respectively (out of 25 with 25 being a completely failed state). Income per capita is nearly identical: $5,200 in Indonesia and $4,700 in the Philippines in 2013. Indonesia’s coastline
is longer at nearly 55,000 kilometers compared to the Philippines’ 36,000 kilometers and Indonesia’s population at 253 million is over two times larger than its northern neighbor. Indonesia’s exports are valued at 179 billion US dollars (mostly oil and gas, plywood, and textiles). The Philippines exports goods worth only 47 billion US dollars (semiconductors, transports equipment, and garments). Table 1 illustrates the structural similarities of both countries.

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<th>Indonesia</th>
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<td>Population</td>
<td>253 m</td>
<td>107 m</td>
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<td>GDP PC</td>
<td>$5,200</td>
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<td>Coastline</td>
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<td>Exports 1</td>
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1 CIA World Factbook; 2 Polity Database; 3 State Fragility Index

Based on these country-level similarities our structural model of global piracy forecasts significant levels of maritime violence in both Indonesia and the Philippines. Both countries are predicted to be high risk for maritime attacks. In fact, our model predicts more than 20 piracy attacks in both Indonesian and Filipino waters for 2014. The Philippines is one of three countries that we over-predict piracy. Tanzania and Mozambique being the other two.

Both Indonesia and the Philippines also suffer from political unrest, armed insurgency, and terrorism (see Figure 4). The CIA World Factbook reports over 90,000 internally displaced people in Indonesia as a result of domestic conflict. Further, in the past several years Indonesia has experienced several riots and anti-government demonstrations as well as over 30 terrorist attacks each year many attributed to the Free Papua Movement located in Indonesian’s easternmost province, which is seeking independence from Jakarta.

The Philippines faces political unrest as well but perhaps at a somewhat elevated level. The CIA World Factbook reports 133,000 internally displaced people from violent conflict and another 7 million displaced due to natural disasters. The Filipino government confronts significant opposition from groups such as the Islamic Liberation Front and Abu Sayyaf (both of which reside on Mindanao Island as well as Basilan and Jolo in the southern Philippines and so far away from the center of Filipino power in Manila), as well as the New People’s Army (a Maoist group mostly located in rural Luzon). Although the Filipino government brokered a preliminary peace agreement with MILF in 2012, terror attacks have increased substantially since 2011 going from 149 to 652 in 2013. In March of this year Manila finalized the MILF peace agreement and so it is possible that attacks will begin to decline.

**Figure 4: Political Violence & Piracy**

**Piracy in Indonesia and the Philippines**

Despite significant decreases in global piracy over the past three years, Indonesia has witnessed a near doubling
the incidents in its territorial waters. In contrast, the Philippines has seen little variation in the maritime piracy confronted over the past 21 years. Figure 5 below illustrates monthly piracy counts from January 1995 to December 2013. Piracy in the Philippines remains low (0-2 per month) and relatively stable. Piracy in Indonesia is much more substantial and has seen fairly wide swings over time.

Figure 5: Monthly Piracy 1995-2013

Unlike piracy in the Greater Gulf of Aden and in the Gulf of Guinea where 50-60% of attacks occur while ships are steaming, most incidents in Indonesia would be classified as armed robbery (see Figure 6 below). The incidents generally occur while ships are berthed or anchored and involve theft of equipment from the ship and personal belongings of the sailors.

Figure 6: Pie Chart of Vessel Status when Attacked

Since 2012 this trend has only become stronger. Only 14% of piracy incidents in Indonesia waters in 2012 and 2013 occurred while ships were steaming. With oil bunkering in 2014, perhaps this trend is changing a bit.

The timing of attacks in SE Asia is similar to what is seen in both the Gulf of Aden and in the Gulf of Guinea. Midday is the least likely time for attacks while dawn and dusk are strategically chosen by pirates for the presence of sufficient light to navigate but also sufficient shadow for concealment.

Figure 7: Time of Day when Piracy Occurs

Maritime piracy also appears in some places to follow the weather. Attacks in the Greater Gulf of Aden drop substantially during the southwest monsoon during the summer months (especially July). Piracy incidents also seem to decline, although less significantly, in the Gulf of Guinea during the summer months as rainfall increases (see MPELD June 2014 report). Figure 8 below shows attacks by month from 1995-2013. In Indonesia, April represents the month with the highest number of attacks while in the Philippines February and June are the most dangerous months. There also does not appear to be much of a relationship between rainfall and piracy in Indonesia. In the Philippines, a modest correlation emerges. Rainfall is lower in
the first four months of the year and piracy is somewhat higher on average. As rainfall picks up during June, incidents seem to decrease.

The absence of maritime piracy in Filipino waters is interesting and requires further exploration. Structural factors that correlate with pirate attacks remain strong in the Philippines. Indeed, our analytical model of global piracy forecasts significantly more incidents in Indonesian waters than what is currently observed. There has been an increase in attacks in 2014 compared with 2013. Our model forecast may be an early warning signal for increasing piracy in Filipino waters.

**Conclusion**

Maritime piracy and armed robbery on ships have increased in Indonesian waters over the past five years. The dramatic increase (from 30 attacks in 2009 to nearly 120 in 2013 or nearly 300%) has occurred while piracy globally has been declining. Further, the increase in Indonesian waters has been matched by an equally significant decrease in the Greater Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. Still, if hijacking ships and kidnapping crews for ransom was the calling card of Somali piracy, attacks in Indonesian waters remain a bit more opportunistic. The vast majority of incidents occur while ships are at anchor or in port. There are worrying trends however. The number of ships in Indonesian waters attacked while steaming was up in 2013 from 2012. And, more worryingly, seizing ships and siphoning off oil and natural gas for resale on the black market appears on the rise.

![Figure 8: Weather and Piracy off Indonesia and the Philippines](image-url)