

# Incident Alert

**Incident Report:** 21/2009

**Date/Time of Incident:** 28 December 2009 at 2030 hrs (local time)

**Location of incident:** 01° 04.7' N, 103° 38.50' E

**Area Description:** Phillip Channel, Straits of Malacca and Singapore

**Name and Type of Ship:** **Gulf Coral / Product tanker**

## Details of Incident

On 28 December 2009, at about 2030 hrs (LT) while the Bahamas-registered product tanker *Gulf Coral* was sailing and at position 01° 04.7' N, 103° 38.5' E (Phillip Channel, Straits of Malacca and Singapore) was attempted to be boarded by persons from unlit boats. About 5 to 6 small unlit boats of approximately 7 to 8 meters in length approached the tanker's bow on both sides. One by one at intervals of 3 to 4 minutes, one boat approached the vessel from starboard bow then crossed to port bow and chased along the bow for about 2 to 3 minutes. A couple of suspects from the boat tried to board the vessel unsuccessfully.

The ship security alarm and general alarm was activated followed by announcement through the public address system to alert the crew. The crew was mustered on the bridge and immediately put into action anti-piracy measures: the master maneuvered the ship to evade the boats, continuous shining of search lights and Aldis lamp accompanied by sounding of ship's horn were carried out, fire hoses which were already rigged around the ship's quarter and poop deck were charged up by starting the fire pump from the bridge, forward facing deck lights were switched on. The authority in charge of the Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) was informed on VHF channel 73 about the attempt. After 30 minutes of failing to board the tanker, the boats aborted the attack. The tanker continued to proceed to her destination with extreme caution.

Upon receipt of the information from the Master of the *Gulf Coral*, the Port Operation Control Centre (POCC) who is also the ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore) promulgated NAVTEX broadcast to warn all vessels in the vicinity of Phillip Channel, Straits of Malacca and Singapore to maintain a good anti-piracy watch when passing the area.

## Reported by

ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)



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## Comments by ReCAAP ISC

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre would like to commend the crew of *Gulf Coral* for their vigilance in detecting the small boats and for implementation of anti-piracy measures which successfully prevented the robbers from boarding their vessel.

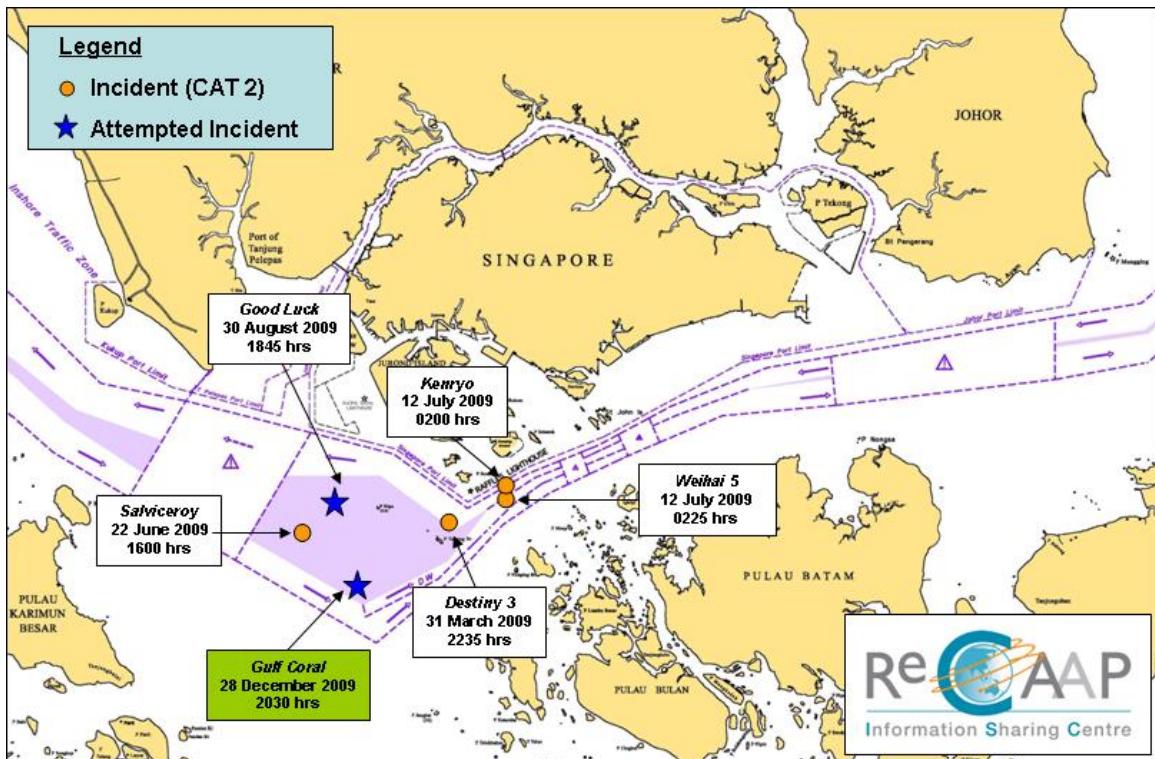
From January 2009 to date, a total of six incidents have occurred along the Phillip Channel. Four of these incidents are Category 2 (moderately significant) incidents and two are attempted incidents. In the other attempted incident involving bulk carrier *Good Luck*, the master raised the alarm when a zodiac type rubber boat which fitted the description of a craft that earlier attempted to board tug boat *Tsaviliris Unity* off Pulau Nipa. Upon hearing the alarm, the robbers aborted their attempt to board and fled.

The ReCAAP ISC advices ship masters to be alert and take precautionary measures when transiting the area, especially during hours of darkness. When underway, ship master should monitor all maritime safety information broadcasts for the area, and maintain radar and visual watch for boats trailing the ship. Early detection of approaching boats is the best deterrent, as demonstrated in the incident involving *Gulf Coral*.

The ReCAAP ISC encourages ship masters, ship owners and ship operators to remain vigilant and to report all incidents of piracy and armed robbery immediately after an actual or attempted attack to the nearest RCC, coastal or port State authorities, as appropriate. This is to facilitate follow-up action and investigation by the law enforcement agencies in response to the incident, issue of precautionary warnings to ships operating in the vicinity to be on lookout for suspicious boats.



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## Location of incidents

