

Incident Report: 02/2009

Date/Time of Incident: 07 April 2009 at 2035 hrs (local time)

Location of incident: 04° 48.43' N, 106° 34.03' E

Area Description: 60 nm north of Pulau Anambas

Name and Type of Ship: *Prospaq T1*/ tug boat towing *Prospaq B1*/barge



Courtesy of the company

Details of Incident

On 5 April 2009, a Singapore-registered tug boat, *Prospaq T1* towing an empty barge, the *Prospaq B1* departed Singapore for Vietnam. At 2035 hrs on 7 April 2009, the *Prospaq T1* was underway in the South China Sea when 12 pirates armed with two hand guns and knives boarded the tug boat from a motor boat with two outboard motors at about 60 nm north of Pulau Anambas. Please see map on the approximate location of the boarding.

The pirates tied and blindfolded the 10 crew (six Indonesians, three Myanmar nationals and one Malaysian) using masking tapes. The crew was held onboard the tug boat by the pirates for a week. At 0200 hrs on 13 April 2009, the pirates removed the masking tapes from the eyes of the crew and instructed them to board an inflated life raft without providing them any provisions. The pirates manned the tug boat towing the barge, and proceeded towards an unknown location.

At 2117 hrs on 14 April 2009, a United Kingdom-registered container ship, *MV ANL Explorer* while on transit to the port of Manila rescued the crew who were found drifting aboard the life raft at a location approximately 25 nm south-west off Balabac Island, Palawan. The crew was hungry and exhausted but not injured. Please see map below.



Courtesy of the Philippine Coast Guard

Photograph of the Crew

The owner of the tug boat has reported the incident to the Singapore authorities. The crew has returned to Singapore on 17 April 2009 and is assisting in the investigation of the incident.



Reported by

ReCAAP Focal Point (Philippines) and
ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)

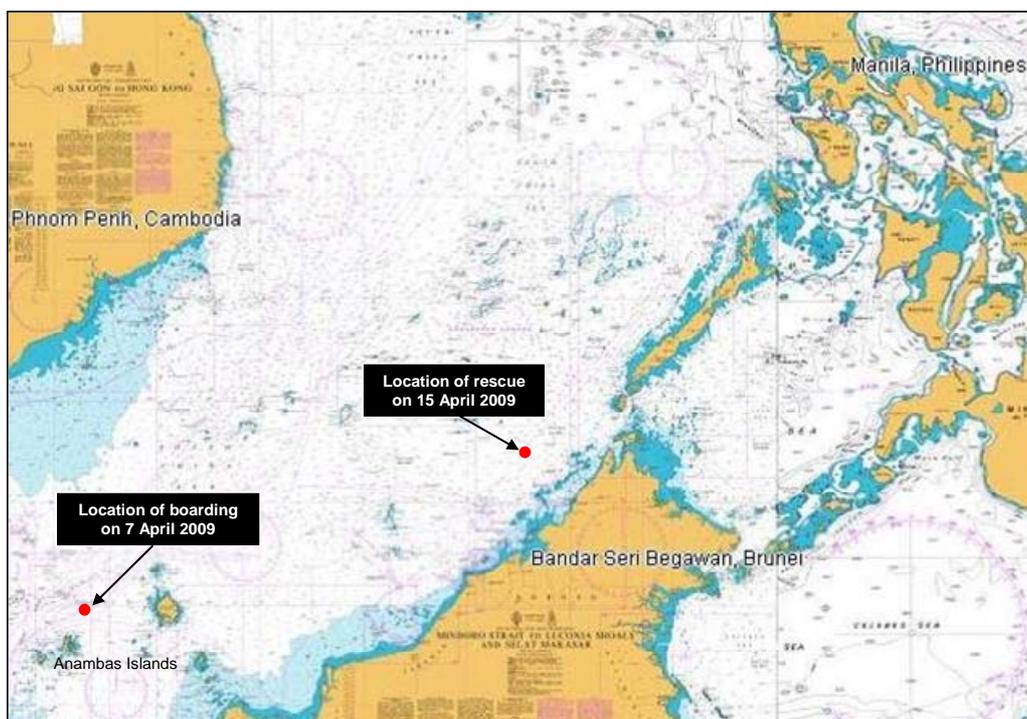
Comments by ReCAAP ISC

The Singapore's Port Operations Control Centre (POCC) who is also the ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore) reported the incident to the ReCAAP ISC and activated navigational broadcast to warn mariners of the incident. The ReCAAP Focal Point (Philippines) also reported the incident to the ReCAAP ISC.

The ReCAAP ISC classified this incident as a Category 1 (very significant) incident.

Investigation of the incident is currently ongoing and the ReCAAP ISC is working with the coastal state authorities on the incident.

The ReCAAP ISC notes that there has been an increase in the number of incidents involving tug boats reported in the vicinity off Pulau Tioman and the South China Sea. Since January 2009 till now, a total of three incidents involving tug boats were reported in this vicinity compared to four incidents reported in 2008. No incident involving tug boat was reported in the vicinity in 2007.



Approximate location of boarding and location of rescue

