



Incident Update

Product Tanker, *Ai Maru*

ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre
456, Alexandra Road, #11-02
Singapore 119962
Tel : (65) 6376 3091
Fax : (65) 6376 3066
Web : <http://www.recaap.org>

Brief extracts from the report may be reproduced for non-commercial use provided the source is acknowledged. Request for extensive reproduction should be made to ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC), who owns the copyright of this document.

Incident Update

Name of vessel : *Ai Maru*
Type of vessel : Product tanker
Flag of vessel : Honduras
IMO number : 7727504
GT : 1007



Photograph courtesy of shipping company

Background

1. On 14 Jun 14, the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) issued an Incident Alert 05/2014 (as attached) following a report from the shipping company that an unknown number of pirates had boarded the product tanker *Ai Maru* from three speed boats at 02° 06.90' E, 104° 39.80' E (South China Sea) at or about 2030 hrs (local time). The Honduras-registered product tanker with 1520 metric tonne of MGO onboard departed western Singapore OPL for the Gulf of Thailand when the incident occurred.

Action by the ReCAAP ISC

2. On receiving the information that *Ai Maru* was boarded by an unknown number of personnel on 14 Jun 14 at 2030 hrs, the ReCAAP ISC immediately worked with the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and alerted the regional maritime authorities in the area. Whilst the vessel continued to head south-easterly at a speed of about 4.5 knots, the maritime authorities from Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia responded to the incident and deployed their assets to the location. With continuous updates from the onset of the incident, the ReCAAP ISC worked with the IFC to the wee hours of the morning to maintain the surface plot as maritime assets converged to the victim ship. At about 0050 hrs, *Ai Maru* was observed to be drifting with its shipboard lighting turned on, as the maritime authorities closed in.

Responses by the Regional Enforcement Agencies

3. Deployed to the location were six vessels: one ship from the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN), two ships from the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), two ships from the Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) and one ship from the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). The first ship on scene was patrol vessel, *RSS Gallant* deployed by the RSN. (See photographs next page).

4. Initial investigation revealed that seven pirates armed with pistols and knives boarded the product tanker, tied the crew and locked them in a room. They damaged the ship's communication equipment, reportedly siphoned 620 metric tonne of the MGO, stole the crew's personal belongings including laptops, cash and mobile phones; and fled after seeing the enforcement agencies' vessels closing in. The crew was not injured.



Photograph courtesy of RSS Gallant

Product tanker, *Ai Maru* at sea



Photograph courtesy of RSS Gallant

Ai Maru* seen from *RSS Gallant

Comments by the ReCAAP ISC

5. The ReCAAP ISC commends the timely reporting of the incident by the shipping company. This enables the Centre to immediately alert the ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore) which is MPA's Port Operations Control and Command (POCC), the IFC and its enforcement agency (RSN) as well as the regional maritime authorities of Malaysia and Indonesia. Worth commending was the quick responses of the three regional maritime authorities of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia who worked together in responding to the incident. This demonstrated the cooperative mechanisms of the littoral States in information sharing and close operational cooperation in responding to transnational maritime incidents.

6. The ReCAAP ISC will continue to work with its partner organizations and the shipping industry, to serve as the conduit between the industry and the enforcement agencies to maintain confidentiality of joint efforts towards orchestrating an effective response in clamping down incidents of siphoning in the region and apprehension of the perpetrators.

Incident Alert

Incident Report : 05/2014
Name and Type of Ship : *Ai Maru* / product tanker
Date/Time of Incident : 14 Jun 14 at or about 2030 hrs (local time)
Location of incident : 02° 06.90' N, 104° 39.80' E

Details of Incident

1. On 14 Jun 14, the shipping company reported to the ReCAAP ISC that the Honduras registered product tanker *Ai Maru*, IMO no. 7727504 with 1520 metric tonne of MGO departed western OPL Singapore for the Gulf of Thailand. At or about 2030 hrs she was boarded by an unknown number of robbers from three speed boats at 02° 06.90' E, 104° 39.80' E (South China Sea). The vessel then turned and headed on a south-easterly course at about 6.5 knots. See estimated location below.



Approximate location

2. The ReCAAP ISC immediately worked with the IFC and alerted the regional maritime authorities in the area. Whilst the vessel continued to head south-easterly at a speed of about 4.5 knots. (See tracked locations in map below), maritime assets were deployed in response. At about 0050 hrs, *Ai Maru* stopped with its shipboard lighting turned on, and it was assessed that the unauthorized personnel had left the vessels as they have been alerted that the maritime authorities were closing in.

3. Malaysian maritime enforcements vessel had proceeded alongside the *Ai Maru* for investigation.



Tracking locations of *Ai Maru*

Reported by

Shipping company

Comments by ReCAAP ISC

4. The same vessel, *Ai Maru* had been boarded by pirates in 2012 in the South China Sea with the same intention of siphoning. However, the pirates' plan was foiled when the authorities were in the vicinity. This time round, the pirates' plan was again foiled owing to the quick response from regional maritime authorities. The ReCAAP ISC commends the shipping company for the timely reporting and the region authorities from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia for the cooperation and coordinated operation responses and would once again emphasized the need for timely information sharing as well as proper information management. Such collaborative effort between the industry and enforcement agencies has prevented a possible case of piracy / fuel siphoning crime at sea.