

23 October 2019



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## Incident Alert

# Incidents involving ships while underway in the eastbound lane of Singapore Strait

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IA 05/2019

23 October 2019

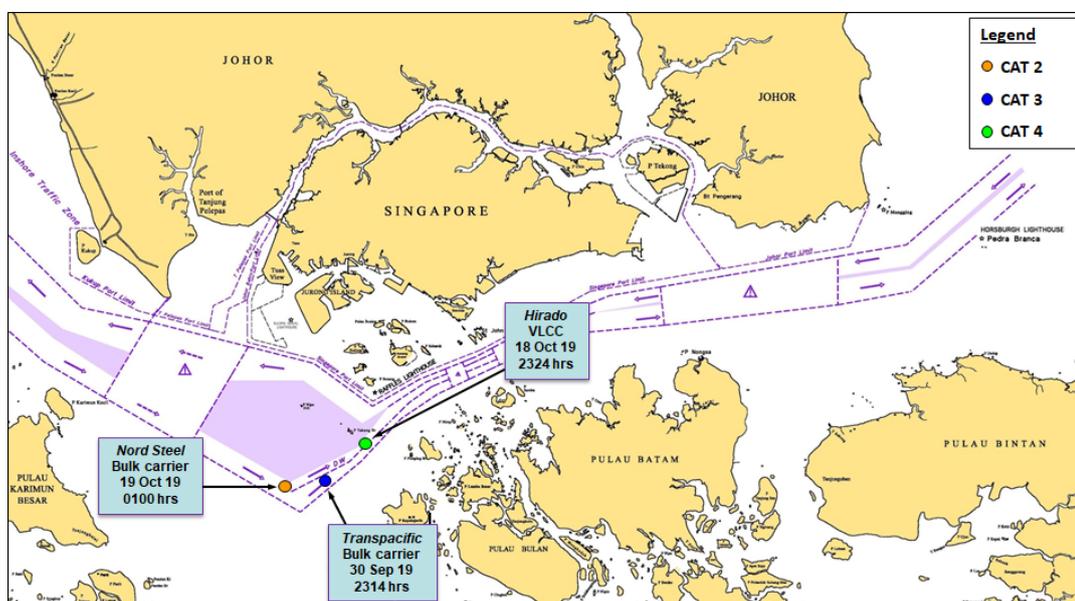
## Incidents involving ships while underway in the eastbound lane of Singapore Strait

During January-October 2019 (as of 19 Oct), three incidents of unauthorised boarding of ships in locations of close proximity to each other were reported in the western sector of Singapore Strait. All three incidents occurred to ships of Gross Tonnage between 43,000 and 160,000 while underway in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS). Of concern was the latest incident on 19 Oct 19 which involved perpetrators who were armed with gun and knife. The perpetrators threatened the crew, tied his hands and escaped with the ship engine spares. The gun was not discharged.

With the occurrence of three incidents in close proximity to each other within a period of 20 days (on 30 Sep, 18 Oct and 19 Oct), the ReCAAP ISC advises all ships to exercise enhanced vigilance, adopt extra precautionary measures and report all incidents immediately to the nearest coastal State. The ReCAAP ISC recommends to the law enforcement agencies of the littoral States to step up surveillance, increase patrols and respond promptly to incidents reported by ships.

### Detail of Incidents

The ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore) reported to ReCAAP ISC the occurrence of three incidents in locations of close proximity to each other in the Singapore Strait on 30 Sep 19, 18 Oct 19 and 19 Oct 19. All three incidents occurred to ships while underway in the eastbound lane of the Singapore Strait. Refer to the map below on the approximate location of the three incidents.



Map 1 - Approximate location of the incidents in Singapore Strait



The details of the incidents are described as follows:

- a. On 30 Sep 19 at about 2314 hrs, bulk carrier, *Transpacific* was underway in the Singapore Strait when five perpetrators armed with knives were sighted on the ship deck. The alarm was raised and the crew searched the accommodation area but the perpetrators already escaped. The master reported the incident to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS). The crew was safe and nothing was stolen. The Singapore VTIS initiated the safety navigational broadcast. The Singapore Police Coast Guard boarded the ship when she arrived in Singapore. A search for the perpetrators was conducted. The Indonesian authorities were notified.
- b. On 18 Oct 19 at about 2324 hrs, VLCC *Hirado* was underway in the Singapore Strait when five perpetrators were sighted at the engine room. The master raised the alarm and the perpetrators escaped. The master conducted a search of the ship. Nothing was stolen and there was no further sighting of the perpetrators on board the ship. The master reported the incident to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) via VHF. There is no information on the weapons carried by the perpetrators. There was no confrontation between the perpetrators and the crew. The crew was safe and the ship continued her passage to the next port of call at Yingkou, China. The Singapore VTIS initiated the safety navigational broadcast. The Indonesian authority, Singapore Navy and Singapore Police Coast Guard were notified.
- c. On 19 Oct 19 at about 0100 hrs, bulk carrier, *Nord Steel* was underway in the Singapore Strait when the duty oiler sighted five perpetrators armed with gun and jungle knife on deck. The perpetrators threatened the duty oiler and tied his hands. They stole engine spares (including piston rings, oil rings, valve seats, valve spindles, crankpin bearing shell etc.) and escaped through the steering room. The duty oiler subsequently informed the master who raised the general alarm and reported the incident to Singapore VTIS.

## Observations

Details of the three incidents and modus operandi of the perpetrators are summarized in table below; and the observations in the next page.

Ship name	<i>Transpacific</i>	<i>Hirado</i>	<i>Nord Steel</i>
Date/time (local time)	30 Sep at 2314 hrs	18 Oct at 2324 hrs	19 Oct at 0100 hrs
Type of ship	Bulk carrier	VLCC	Bulk carrier
Gross tonnage	43,721	159,806	90,086
No. of perpetrators	5	5	5
Weapons carried	Knives	Not stated	Gun & jungle knife
Treatment of crew	No confrontation	No confrontation	Threatened crew and tied his hands
Items stolen	Nothing stolen	Nothing stolen	Engine spares



- a. Time of incident. All three incidents occurred during hours of darkness between 2314 hrs and 0100 hrs.
- b. Type of ships. All three incidents involved bigger ships, namely bulk carriers and VLCC, while transiting the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait.
- c. Number of perpetrators. All three incidents involved five perpetrators. Though there is no substantiate evidence, it is possible that the same group of five perpetrators boarded *Hirado* and then *Nord Steel* as the two incidents occurred within an interval of two hours and in close proximity to each other.
- d. Type of weapons carried. Of the three incidents, the incident involved *Nord Steel* reported that the perpetrators were armed with gun and jungle knife. The last known incident in the same vicinity that involved perpetrators armed with gun was in Oct 2011. On 10 Oct 11, a Singapore-registered tug boat, *Britoil 71* towing a chemical tanker was underway in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait when perpetrators armed with a handgun and long knives boarded the tug boat.
- e. Treatment of crew. Two of the three incidents reported no confrontation between perpetrators and crew. In the incident on 19 Oct 19, the perpetrators threatened the duty oiler and tied up his hands.
- f. Items stolen. Two of the three incidents reported that nothing was stolen from the ships. One incident reported that engine spares were stolen.

