

20 March 2021



Incident Update – Rescue of Crew [Abducted from fishing trawler on 17 January 2020]

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Incident Update

Incident Update : Rescue of crew abducted from fishing trawler, *SSK 00543* (occurred on 17 January 2020)

Date/Time of incident : 18 March 2021

Area Description : Vicinity waters off Pasigan Laut Island, South Ubian, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines

Detail of Incident

1. According to the Philippine Coast Guard (ReCAAP Focal Point), on 18 March 2021 at about 2230 hrs, four victims of a sea mishap were rescued from a Jungkong-type watercraft that had capsized in the vicinity waters off Pasigan Laut Island, South Ubian, Tawi-Tawi, the Philippines. The rescued passengers were brought to the Tandubas Municipal Police Station (MPS). Upon investigation, three of them were identified as the crew of fishing trawler *SSK 00543* who were abducted by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) on 17 January 2020¹. The other rescued passenger was a member of the ASG. A search and rescue operation is being carried out to locate other missing passengers, including one of the four abducted crew of *SSK 00543*.



Location of the rescued victims

¹ On 17 January 2020, six gunmen dressed in black suits with masks abducted eight crew from fishing trawler, *SSK 00543* at approximately 4.24 nm off Pulau Tambisan, Lahad Datu, Sabah, Malaysia. On 18 January 2020, the Malaysian authorities recovered three of the eight missing crew in the vicinity of Lahad Datu, Sabah. On 29 September 2020, the body of one of the five abducted crew was found during a military operation in Patikul, Sulu, the Philippines. The remaining four crew were held in captivity since then.

Reported by: Philippine Coast Guard (PCG)

Comments

The ASG members were reportedly ferrying the four abducted crew of *SSK 00543* towards Tawi-Tawi province to avoid the intensified military operation in the province when their watercraft capsized in bad weather. Of the four abducted crew, one is still missing. The authorities are conducting search and rescue operation to locate the missing crew.