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ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report

21-27 April 2020

Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

OVERVIEW

During 21-27 Apr 20, two incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia were reported to the ReCAAP ISC. Of the two incidents, one was a CAT 3¹ incident that occurred on board a bulk carrier while underway in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Singapore Strait; and the other was a CAT 4² incident that occurred on board a tanker while anchored at Vung Tau Anchorage, Vietnam.

The location of the incidents is shown in the map below; and detailed description of the incidents tabulated in the attachment.




Location of the incidents

¹ CAT (Category) 3 incident is 'less significant' in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators could be armed with knives/machetes or other items such as sticks or rods. The crew was not harmed although there remains a small possibility that the crew could be subjected to duress or threat during the incident but not harmed physically. In most CAT 3 cases, the perpetrators were unable to steal anything from the vessel, but in cases where losses were reported, stores and engine spares were commonly targeted items.

² CAT (Category) 4 incident is classified as "least significant" in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators were not armed, and the crew not harmed.

SITUATION OF ABDUCTION OF CREW IN THE SULU-CELEBES SEAS AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

As the risk of the abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah is high as demonstrated by the recurrence of the abduction incident on 17 Jan 20, the ReCAAP ISC reiterates its advisory issued via ReCAAP ISC Incident Alert dated 21 Nov 16 to all ships to reroute from the area, where possible. Otherwise, ship masters and crew are strongly urged to exercise extra vigilance while transiting the area, and report immediately to the Operation Centres of Philippines and Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) of Malaysia. The contact details of the Operation Centres of the Philippines and ESSCOM of Malaysia (updated by ReCAAP ISC on 3 Jan 19) are as follows:



The map shows the Sulu Sea to the north and the Celebes Sea to the south. Key locations marked include Lahad Datu, Zamboanga, and Bongao. Contact points are indicated by numbered circles: 1 (Philippine Coast Guard District Southwestern Mindanao), 2a (Philippine Coast Guard Station, Bongao), 2b (Philippine Navy - Littoral Monitoring Station (LMS), Bongao), and 3 (Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM)).

- 1 Philippine Coast Guard District Southwestern Mindanao**
Tel: +63 998 585 7972
+63 917 842 8446
VHF: Channel 16 with call-sign "NEPTUNE"
Email: hcgdswm@yahoo.com
- 2a Philippine Coast Guard Station, Bongao (Central Tawi-Tawi)**
Tel: +63 998 585 7941
+63 917 842 8402
VHF: Channel 16
Email: cgd_tawi2@yahoo.com
- 2b Philippine Navy - Littoral Monitoring Station (LMS), Bongao, Tawi-Tawi**
Tel: +63 955 714 0153
VHF: Channel 16
Email: jointtaskgroup@gmail.com
- 3 Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM)**
Tel: +60 89863181/016
Fax: +60 89863182
VHF: Channel 16 with call-sign "ESSCOM"
Email: bilikgerakan_esscom@jpm.gov.my

Contact details

In the event that the ship master is not able to establish contact with the Operation Centres of the Philippines as listed in the ReCAAP ISC Advisory, he can contact the **Philippine Coast Guard Command Centre** at the following contact details:

Tel: +632-8-527-8481 (ext: 6136/37)
+632-998-585-5327 (mobile)
+632-917-842-8249 (mobile)
+632-8-527-3877 (fax)

Email: pcgcomcen@coastguard.gov.ph

The ReCAAP ISC advises the shipping industry and ships to enhance their situation awareness by referring to the *Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah* produced by ReCAAP ISC in July 2019. The Guidance is available at www.recaap.org.

RECOMMENDATION

The ReCAAP ISC urges ship master and crew to report all incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships to the nearest coastal State and flag State, exercise vigilance and adopt relevant preventive measures taking reference from the *Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia*.

**Description of Incidents of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships
21-27 April 2020**

	Ship Name Type of Ship Flag Gross Tonnage IMO Number	Date Local Time of Incident (LT)	Position of the Incident	Details of the Incident	Consequences for crew, ship, cargo	Action taken by the master and crew	Was the incident reported to coastal authority? Which one?	Reporting State or International Organization	Coastal State Taken	State Action
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
INCIDENTS IN ASIA										
ACTUAL INCIDENTS										
1.	Horizon II Bulk carrier Panama 63993 9537563	22/04/20 2309 hrs	1° 15.11' N 104° 4.83' E Approximately 2.9 nm north of Pulau Nongsa, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait (Straits of Malacca & Singapore)	While the bulk carrier was en route from Singapore to Vietnam, two perpetrators were sighted at the stern deck of the ship. One of the perpetrators was armed with a knife. The general alarm was raised and the crew mustered at the bridge. The master reported the incident to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS). A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF), Singapore Police Coast Guard (PCG) and the Indonesian authorities were notified. The master deviated the ship back to the port of Singapore and requested assistance from the authorities to conduct search on board for the perpetrators. MSTF's <i>RSS Justice</i> escorted the bulk carrier back to the port of Singapore. Upon her arrival, the Singapore PCG officers boarded the ship and conducted a search. There was no sighting of the perpetrators on board. The crew was not injured and nothing was stolen. (Category 3)	The crew was not injured. Nothing was stolen.	The general alarm was raised and the crew mustered at the bridge. The master deviated the ship back to the port of Singapore and requested assistance from the authorities to conduct search on board for the perpetrators.	Yes Singapore VTIS	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The RSN's MSTF, Singapore PCG and the Indonesian authorities were notified. MSTF's <i>RSS Justice</i> escorted the bulk carrier back to the port of Singapore. Upon her arrival, the Singapore PCG officers boarded the ship and conducted a search. There was no sighting of the perpetrators on board.	

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2.	MT Masagana Tanker Bermuda 8627 9404895	20/04/20 0145 hrs	10° 21' N 107° 2' E Vung Tau Anchorage, Vietnam	While at anchor, four perpetrators boarded the tanker via the forecastle from a wooden boat. The watchman noticed the perpetrators, reported to the duty officer and raised the general alarm. The perpetrators jumped overboard and escaped in the wooden boat. The crew conducted a search on board the ship and discovered that the forward store was opened with either a hammer or bolt cutter. The perpetrators stole 80 litres of deck red paint from the forward store. The crew was not injured. The incident was reported to Vung Tau Port Control. (Category 4)	The crew was not injured. 80 litres of deck red paint were stolen from the forward store.	The general alarm was raised. The crew conducted a search on board the ship.	Yes Vung Tau Port Control	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Vietnam)	No information available