Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

OVERVIEW

During 22-28 Sep 20, two incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia were reported to the ReCAAP ISC. Both were CAT 4¹ incidents that occurred on board bulk carriers. Of the two incidents, one incident occurred on 23 Sep on board the ship while underway in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Singapore Strait. The other incident occurred on 14 Jun on board the ship while anchored at Vung Tau Anchorage, Vietnam. Both incidents were reported to ReCAAP ISC after verification by the ReCAAP Focal Point and Contact Point.

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

¹ 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 abduction incident on 17 Jan 20 and information of planned kidnapping in Sabah and Semporna, Malaysia (as reported in ReCAAP ISC’s Warning issued on 2 Jul 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:

1. **Philippine Coast Guard District Southwestern Mindanao**
   - Tel: +63 917 942 9445
   - VHF: Channel 15 with call-sign “NEPTUNE”
   - Email: pcgdswn@yahoo.com

2. **Philippine Coast Guard Station, Bongao (Central Tawi-Tawi)**
   - Tel: +63 998 585 7941
   - VHF: Channel 15
   - Email: cdg_tawi2@yahoo.com

3. **Philippine Navy - Littoral Monitoring Station (LMS), Bongao, Tawi-Tawi**
   - Tel: +63 955 714 0153
   - VHF: Channel 15
   - Email: jointtaskgroup@gmail.com

4. **Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM)**
   - Tel: +60 89863191/015
   - Fax: +60 89863182
   - VHF: Channel 15 with call-sign “ESSCOM”
   - Email: bilkipsiakan_esscom@pm.gov.my

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](http://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**.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ship Name</strong></th>
<th><strong>Type of Ship</strong></th>
<th><strong>Flag</strong></th>
<th><strong>Gross Tonnage</strong></th>
<th><strong>IMO Number</strong></th>
<th><strong>Date</strong></th>
<th><strong>Local Time of Incident (LT)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Position of the Incident</strong></th>
<th><strong>Details of the Incident</strong></th>
<th><strong>Consequences for crew, ship, cargo</strong></th>
<th><strong>Action taken by the master and crew</strong></th>
<th><strong>Was the incident reported to coastal authority? Which one?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Reporting State or International Organization</strong></th>
<th><strong>Coastal State Action Taken</strong></th>
<th><strong>Action</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uni Blossom</td>
<td>Bulk carrier</td>
<td>Hong Kong, China</td>
<td>23303</td>
<td>9816567</td>
<td>23/09/20</td>
<td>0001 hrs</td>
<td>1° 15.4' N, 104° 5.5' E</td>
<td>Approximately 3.5 nm northeast of Pulau Nongsa, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait (SOMS)</td>
<td>The Chief Engineer discovered some engine spare parts were stolen when he was conducting his round in the engine room at about 0200 hrs on 23 Sep. No perpetrator was sighted. The master could not determine when the actual boarding took place. As the engine room was manned till 0001 hrs on 23 Sep, the incident was assessed to have occurred between 0001 hrs and 0200 hrs. The crew was safe. The master reported the incident via email to Singapore Port Operations Control Centre (POCC) on 25 Sep. A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The Republic of Singapore Navy’s (RSN) Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF), Singapore Police Coast Guard, and the Indonesian authorities were notified. The ship was en-route to China.</td>
<td>The crew was safe. Two fuel injectors and some valves spares were stolen.</td>
<td>Crew were tasked to take inventory on the rest of the spares on board the ship.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Singapore POCC</td>
<td>ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka Bay</td>
<td>Bulk carrier</td>
<td>Hong Kong, China</td>
<td>31863</td>
<td>9789922</td>
<td>14/06/20</td>
<td>0001 hrs</td>
<td>10° 13.2' N, 107° 2.3' E</td>
<td>Vung Tau Anchorage, Vietnam</td>
<td>While at anchor, an unknown number of perpetrators boarded the ship unnoticed. They stole paint cans from the paint store (located in forecastle of ship) and escaped. The crew was not injured.</td>
<td>The crew was not injured. Paint cans were stolen.</td>
<td>No information available</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Contact Point (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>No information available</td>
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