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ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report

5-11 May 2020

Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

OVERVIEW

During 5-11 May 20, two incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia were reported to the ReCAAP ISC. Of the two incidents, one was a CAT 2¹ 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 bulk carrier while anchored at Taboneo Anchorage, Indonesia.

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



Location of incidents

¹ The ReCAAP ISC classifies CAT (Category) 2 incident as moderately significant. Under this category, the perpetrators are likely to be armed with knives/machetes and in some incidents armed with guns. The crew is threatened or held hostage temporarily and, in some cases, the crew suffered injury and physical violence.

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, Bongao, and Zamboanga. 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
5-11 May 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. | Vega Aquarius Bulk carrier Liberia 33044 9429170 | 09/05/20 2345 hrs | 1° 15.1' N 104° 4.48' E Approximately 3 nm north of Pulau Nongsa, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait (Straits of Malacca & Singapore) | While the tanker was en route from Singapore to China, five perpetrators armed with knives were sighted at the stern deck of the ship. The perpetrators confronted the duty ordinary seaman and robbed his cellular phone. The ordinary seaman managed to escape and alerted the master at the wheelhouse. The alarm was raised and the crew mustered at the wheelhouse. A search on board the ship was conducted by the crew after the perpetrators escaped and two sets of breathing apparatus were reported stolen. The ordinary seaman sustained minor head injury. 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 ship required no assistance and resumed her voyage. (Category 2) | The duty ordinary seaman sustained minor head injury. A cellular phone and two sets of breathing apparatus were stolen. | The alarm was raised and the crew mustered at the wheelhouse. A search on board the ship was conducted by the crew. | 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. | |

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|----|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| 2. | Jasmine Bulk carrier Liberia 31756 9514327 | 12/04/20 0500 hrs | 3° 41.4' S 114° 27.1' E Taboneo Anchorage, Indonesia | While at anchor awaiting cargo operations to commence, the crew discovered that the forecastle store door's locking arrangement had been tampered with and the padlock was broken. Upon checking, three mooring ropes (220 m each) were found stolen and 100 m of another mooring rope had been cut off. The master reported the incident to the local authorities. The local port control, Navy and Police boarded the ship for investigation. The crew was not injured. (Category 4) | The crew was not injured. Forecastle store door's locking arrangement had been tampered with and the padlock was broken. Three mooring ropes (220 m each) were found stolen and 100 m of another mooring rope had been cut off. | No information available | Yes Local authorities | ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore) | The local port control, Navy and Police boarded the ship for investigation. |