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ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report 11-17 May 2021

Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

OVERVIEW


During 11-17 May 21, no incident of armed robbery against ship in Asia was reported to the ReCAAP ISC. However, the ReCAAP ISC would like to advise ships to continue to exercise utmost vigilance; and littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in areas of concern, including the Singapore Strait and at some ports and anchorages.

As of 17 May 21, a total of 25 incidents of armed robbery against ships were reported in Asia since January 2021. Of the 25 incidents, 13 incidents had occurred in the Singapore Strait. The ReCAAP ISC is concerned with the continued occurrence of incidents in the Singapore Strait; and advise all ships to exercise enhanced vigilance and adopt extra precautionary measures when transiting the area.

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

There is no incident of abduction of crew reported since the last incident in January 2020 up to today, and no crew is currently being held in captivity by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). However, on 3 Nov 20, the Philippines authorities had prevented a kidnap-for-ransom plan by the ASG. On 23 Apr 21, the Philippine Armed Forces had conducted the military operation against members of the ASG during which one of the ASG leaders responsible for the abduction of crew in the area of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi had managed to escape. Therefore, the threat of the abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah remains high.

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 all incidents immediately to the Operation Centres of the Philippines and Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) of Malaysia. The contact details of the Operation Centres of the Philippines and ESSCOM of Malaysia are as shown next page:



The map shows the Sulu Sea to the north and the Celebes Sea to the south. Three numbered red circles indicate contact points: 1 is near Zamboanga; 2a and 2b are near Bongao; and 3 is near Lahad Datu.

- 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*.