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ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report 13-19 April 2021

Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

OVERVIEW

During 13-19 Apr 21, no incident of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia was reported to the ReCAAP ISC. However, the ReCAAP ISC would like to advise ships to continue to exercise enhanced vigilance; and littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in areas of concern, including the Singapore Strait (SS), the Sulu-Celebes Seas and at ports and anchorages. The ReCAAP ISC is concerned with the continued occurrence of incidents in the SS; and issued an Incident Alert (IA 02/2021) on 11 Apr 21. A total of 10 incidents had occurred in the SS since January 2021.

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

There is no incident of abduction of crew reported in 2021 so far, and no crew is currently being held in captivity by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). However, the risk of the abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah remains high as demonstrated by information of planned kidnapping in Sabah and Semporna, Malaysia (as reported in ReCAAP ISC's Warning issued on 2 Jul 20), and the operation on 3 Nov 20 by the Philippine authorities in preventing a kidnap-for-ransom incident. 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 (updated by ReCAAP ISC on 3 Jan 19) 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*.