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ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report 18-24 May 2021

Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

OVERVIEW

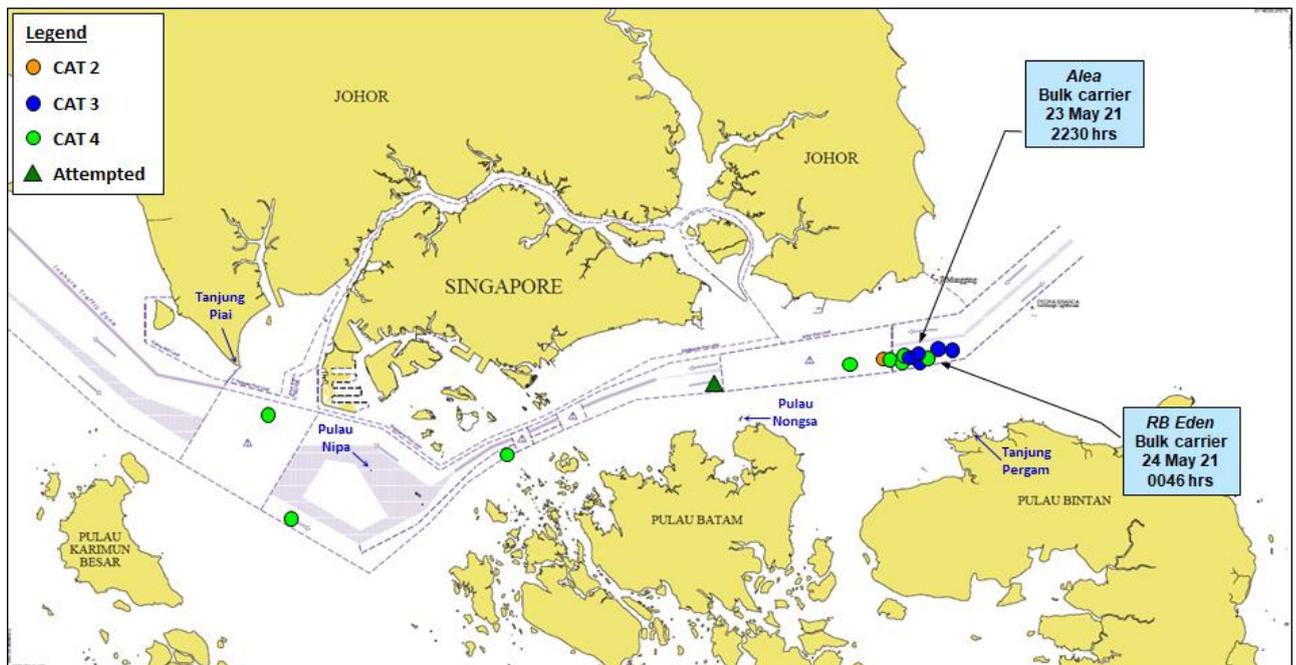
During 18-24 May 21, two incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia were reported to the ReCAAP ISC. One was a CAT 3¹ incident and the other was a CAT 4². Both incidents occurred to ships while underway off Tanjung Pergam, Bintan Island, Indonesia in the Singapore Strait (SS) on 23 May and 24 May within an interval of three hours. In both incidents, the perpetrators were sighted in the vicinity of the engine room of the ships. In one of the incidents, the perpetrator threatened a duty oiler with a knife but did not harm him. The perpetrators eventually escaped upon being sighted. The crew were safe and nothing was reported stolen in both incidents.

With these two incidents, a total of 15 incidents had occurred in the SS since January 2021. Of these 15 incidents, 11 incidents occurred off Tanjung Pergam, Bintan Island, Indonesia. The ReCAAP ISC is concerned with the continued occurrence of incidents in the SS and had issued an Incident Alert (IA 03/2021) on 23 Apr 21. The ReCAAP ISC advises all ships to exercise enhanced vigilance and adopt extra precautionary measures when transiting the area.

The location of the incidents in the SS since January 2021 is shown in the map (next page) and detailed description of the two incidents occurred on 23 May and 24 May are tabulated in the attachment.

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 is 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.



Location of incidents

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:



- 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: bilanggerakan_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
18-24 May 2021**

	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 Action Taken
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
INCIDENTS IN ASIA									
ACTUAL INCIDENTS									
1.	RB Eden Bulk carrier Marshall Islands 43278 9765718	24/05/21 0046 hrs	1° 16.48' N, 104° 17.28' E Approximately 6.3 nm north west of Tanjung Pergam, Bintan Island, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS)	While underway, three perpetrators were sighted in the vicinity of the engine room. The ship's alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search onboard was conducted and no further sighting of the perpetrators onboard. The master declared nothing was stolen. All crew are safe and accounted for. The ship had departed Singapore and bound for Songxia, China. A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) and Singapore Police Coast Guard were notified. Information of the incident was shared with the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities. [Category 4]	All crew are safe and accounted for. Nothing was stolen.	The ship's alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search onboard was conducted and no further sighting of the perpetrators onboard.	Yes Singapore VTIS	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The RSN's MSTF and Singapore Police Coast Guard were notified. Information of the incident was shared with the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2.	Alea Bulk carrier Bahamas 17009 9550266	23/05/21 2230 hrs	1° 16.7' N, 104° 16.6' E Approximately 6.7 nm north west of Tanjung Pergam, Bintan Island, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) SOMS	While underway, the duty oiler sighted four perpetrators in the engine room. One of the perpetrators threatened the duty oiler with a knife but did not harm him. The perpetrators eventually escaped upon being sighted. The ship's alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search onboard was conducted and no further sighting of the perpetrators onboard. The master declared nothing was stolen. All crew are safe and accounted for. The ship had departed Greece and was bound for Nanjing, China. A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The RSN's MSTF and Singapore Police Coast Guard were notified. Information of the incident was shared with the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities. [Category 3]	One of the perpetrators threatened the duty oiler with a knife but did not harm him. Nothing was stolen.	The ship's alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search onboard was conducted and no further sighting of the perpetrators onboard.	The incident was reported to the Company Security Officer.	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The RSN's MSTF and Singapore Police Coast Guard were notified. Information of the incident was shared with the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities.