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## ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report 2-8 March 2021

### Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

#### OVERVIEW

During 2-8 Mar 21, an attempted incident of armed robbery against ships in Asia was reported to the ReCAAP ISC. The incident occurred on 3 Mar to a bulk carrier while underway at approximately 9.2 nautical mile southwest of Sicolan Island, Sibutu, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines. A speedboat with three unidentified persons was heading towards the ship but they didn't succeed in boarding the ship. The location of the incident is shown in the map; and detailed description of the incident tabulated in the attachment.

As the incident occurred in the area where the Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf Group/Kidnap-for-Ransom Group (ASG/KFRG) elements are based, the ReCAAP ISC is concerned with this incident and has issued a Warning (01-2021) on 5 Mar 21. The Warning urges ship master and crew to exercise extra vigilance when transiting the waters off Eastern Sabah, and in the Sulu-Celebes Seas, in particular waters off Sibutu Island.



Location of the incident

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

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, 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:



### 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: [pcqcomcen@coastguard.gov.ph](mailto:pcqcomcen@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*.

**Description of Incidents of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships  
2-8 March 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
<b>INCIDENT IN ASIA</b>									
<b>ATTEMPTED INCIDENT</b>									
1.	<b>MV Akij Pearl</b> Bulk carrier Bangladesh 31,260 9291080	03/03/21 1045 hrs	4.0° 29.7' S, 119.0° 36.91' E  Approximately 9.2 nm south- west of Sicolan Island, Sibutu, Tawi-Tawi, the Philippines.	While underway, a white/red single OBM speedboat with three unidentified persons was heading towards the ship and attempted to throw a line at her port side beam.  The crew noticed the speedboat and its activity; and immediately departed from the location. The ship master reported the incident via VHF radio to the Philippine Coast Guard Search and Rescue Base, Sibutu and the Philippine Navy Littoral Monitoring Station (LMS) – Bongao. The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) immediately coordinated with other law enforcement agencies and alerted all Coast Guard stations and sub- stations about the incident. The PCG and Philippine Navy advised the ship master to maintain its speed and be vigilant when transiting the area.	There was no confrontation between the unidentified persons and the crew. The crew was safe.  Nothing was stolen.	The crew noticed the speedboat and its activity, and immediately departed from the location. The ship master reported the incident via VHF radio to the Philippine Coast Guard Search and Rescue Base, Sibutu and the Philippines Navy LMS - Bongao.	Yes  Philippines Coast Guard Search and Rescue Base, Sibutu and Philippines Navy LMS - Bongao.	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Philippines)	The PCG immediately coordinated with other law enforcement agencies and alerted all Coast Guards stations and sub-stations about the said incident. The PCG and Philippines Navy advised the ship master to maintain its speed and be vigilant at all times when transiting the area.