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ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report 23-29 Mar 2021

Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

OVERVIEW

During 23-29 Mar 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.

The CAT 3 incident occurred to a bulk carrier while underway in the eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Singapore Strait (SS). With this latest incident, a total of six incidents had occurred in the SS since January 2021. The ReCAAP ISC is concerned with the continued occurrence of incidents in the SS, and advise all ships to exercise enhanced vigilance and adopt extra precautionary measures when transiting the area. The Centre also urges the littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in their respective waters, strengthen coordination among them and promote information sharing on the latest situation and the criminal groups involved in order to make arrests of the perpetrators.

The CAT 4 incident occurred to a bulk carrier while anchored at Cam Pha Port, Vietnam.

The location of the two incidents are shown in the map (see next page); and detailed description of the incidents 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

INCIDENT OUTSIDE ASIA

During 23-29 Mar 21, one attempted incident outside Asia was reported to the ReCAAP ISC by ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore). The incident occurred on 22 Mar on board a bulk carrier while underway in the Persian Gulf, off Harf Ghabi Peninsula, Oman. The detailed description of the incident is tabulated in the attachment.

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:



The map shows the Sulu Sea to the north and the Celebes Sea to the south. Four contact points are marked: 1 (Zamboanga), 2a and 2b (Bongao), and 3 (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*.

**Description of Incidents of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships
23-29 Mar 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.	African Queen Bulk carrier Marshall Islands 30936 9389930	25/03/21 0325 hrs	1° 17' N 104° 18' E Approximately 6.1 nm north west of Tanjung Pergam, Bintan Island, Indonesia in eastbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Singapore Strait (SOMS)	While underway, the master reported to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) that five perpetrators were sighted in the engine room. The duty oiler spotted one of the perpetrators with a knife, who ordered him to keep quiet before the perpetrators left the engine room. The ship's alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search onboard was conducted. At 0405 hrs, the master updated Singapore VTIS that the search was completed with no further sighting of the perpetrators onboard. Engine spares including valve rotator, valve seat exhaust, valve seat suction, valve guide, suction valve, exhaust valve chrome plating and plunger assembly were stolen. The crew was safe. The master did not require any assistance, and continued the voyage. 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 3]	The crew was not injured. Engine spares comprising valve rotator, valve seat exhaust, valve seat suction, valve guide, suction valve, exhaust valve chrome plating, and plunger assembly were stolen. The alarm was raised and a search onboard was conducted.	The master reported the incident to VTIS. The ship alarm was raised and a search onboard was conducted.	Yes Singapore VTIS	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) and Singapore Police Coast Guard (PCG) were notified. Information of the incident was shared with Malaysian and Indonesian authorities.

	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
2.	Name withheld Bulk carrier Liberia	16/03/21 Between 0001 hrs and 0600 hrs	20° 54.9' N 107° 16.7' E Cam Pha Port, Vietnam	While at anchor, the master 's and 2 nd officer's cabins were damaged and some cash was stolen. A search was conducted and no perpetrator was found. The crew was safe. The incident was assessed to have occurred between 0001 hrs and 0600 hrs. The master reported the incident to the local authorities and the Company Security Officer (CSO). The local immigration police boarded the ship and investigated the incident. [Category 4]	The crew was not injured. Some cash was stolen.	The master conducted a search and no perpetrator was found. The master also reported the incident to the local authorities and the CSO.	Yes Local authorities and CSO	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Vietnam)	The local immigration police boarded the ship and investigated the incident.

INCIDENT OUTSIDE ASIA

ATTEMPTED INCIDENT

1.	Nord Peak Bulk carrier Singapore 34060 9566564	22/03/21 1300 hrs	26° 20' N, 56° 1' E Persian Gulf, off Harf Ghabi Peninsula, Oman	While underway, the 2 nd officer observed a 17m grey-hulled skiff with three armed perpetrators onboard approaching from the vessel's port side. The general alarm was raised. An emergency broadcast via Ch 16 was made. The ship horn was blown continuously and evasive measures were taken. The skiff then steered away at about 1320 hrs. The emergency broadcast was picked up by a nearby European Missionary Warship which escorted the ship safely to Mina Saqr Anchorage, UAE.	The crew was not injured.	The general alarm was raised and emergency broadcast via Ch 16 was made. The ship horn was blown continuously and evasive measures were taken. The vessel's CSO was informed.	Yes Flag state, UKMTO, European Missionary Warship.	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	No information available.
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