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ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report 19-25 April 2022

Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

OVERVIEW

During 19-25 Apr 22, two incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia (both CAT 4¹ incidents) were reported to the ReCAAP ISC. The first incident occurred to a container ship while berthed at Port of Makar, General Santos City, the Philippines. The second incident occurred to a barge towed by a tug boat while underway in the Singapore Strait. In both incidents, the crew was safe and nothing was stolen from the ships.

(1) On 18 Apr at about 0030 hrs, the OOW (2nd officer) was on roving when he sighted two perpetrators attempting to board the ship near the portside gangway. The perpetrators jumped into the water when realized that they had been spotted. At 0305 hrs on the same day, the duty AB on deck patrol sighted one perpetrator near the portside gangway of the ship. He immediately informed the 2nd officer who saw the perpetrator jumping into the water from the aft station area of the ship. The master and crew conducted a search in the engine room, accommodation and main deck; and found that the padlocks of the fire station locker and chemical locker were broken. However, nothing was stolen and the crew was not injured.

(2) On 19 Apr, the master of the tug boat reported to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) that two perpetrators were sighted escaping from the barge on tow. The Singapore Police Coast Guard intercepted the ships and arrested the remaining eight perpetrators on board the barge. The crew was safe during the incident. With this incident, a total of 20 incidents (comprising 19 actual incidents and one attempted incident) were reported in the Singapore Strait since January 2022.

The location of the two incidents are shown in the map on next page, and detailed description of the incidents are tabulated in the attachment.

¹ CAT (Category) 4 incident is classified as "least significant" in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators are 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).

On 23 Apr 21, the Philippine Armed Forces conducted a 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. The threat of the abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah remains potentially high particularly in the areas of Sulu and nearby waters off Tawi-Tawi.

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 on next page.



The map shows the Sulu Sea to the north and the Celebes Sea to the south. Contact point 1 is located near Zamboanga. Contact points 2a and 2b are located near Bongao. Contact point 3 is located 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*.

**Description of Incidents of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships
19-25 April 2022**

| | 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 INCIDENT | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. | Kota Hapas Container ship Singapore 13491 9238624 | 18/4/22 0030 hrs | 6° 5.5' N 125° 9.3' E Port of Makar, General Santos City, Philippines | <p>While at berth at about 0030 hrs, the OOW (2nd Officer) was on roving when he sighted two unidentified persons (wearing black suits with their faces painted black) attempted to board the ship at port side below the gangway ladder. Upon realizing that they had been spotted, the perpetrators immediately jumped into the water.</p> <p>Thereafter, the 2nd Officer informed the master and called for extra hand to increase security measures. During the inspection, all stores' padlocks were intact and no item was stolen. The master also informed Philippine General Santos agent to support the security perimeter.</p> <p>At about 0305 hrs on the same day, the duty AB sighted one unidentified person at the gangway area (port side) of the ship. He immediately informed the OOW and proceeded to the area. Upon seeing the duty AB, the perpetrator immediately jumped into the water. Thereafter, the master</p> | <p>The crew was not injured.</p> <p>Nothing was stolen. However, the padlocks of the fire station locker and chemical locker were broken.</p> | <p>The master ordered an increase in security measures and a search for any missing property.</p> <p>The master also informed Philippine General Santos agent to support the security perimeter.</p> <p>The crew conducted inspection on board the ship. A search was also carried out by the master and crew in the engine room, accommodation and main deck, where they found the padlocks of the fire station locker and chemical locker were broken.</p> | <p>The master informed the Philippine General Santos agent to support the security perimeter.</p> | <p>ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore) and ReCAAP Focal Point (Philippines)</p> | <p>The Philippine Coast Guard-Port State Control (PCG-PSC) boarded the ship and conducted verification of the incident. The master and crew were advised to be vigilant and strengthen their security measures while at the Port of General Santos City. The PCG-PSC also directed the PCG units within the area to conduct maritime patrol to prevent occurrence of such incidents.</p> |

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|--|--|---|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------|
| | | | | <p>and crew carried out a search in the engine room, accommodation and main deck. They found the padlocks of the fire station locker and chemical locker were broken. However, no item was missing or stolen. The crew was not injured during the two occurrences.</p> <p>Following the incidents, the Philippine Coast Guard-Port State Control (PCG-PSC) boarded the ship and conducted verification of the incidents. The master and crew were advised to be vigilant and strengthen their security measures while at the port of General Santos City. The PCG-PSC also directed the PCG units within the area to conduct maritime patrol to prevent occurrence of such incidents.</p> <p>[Category 4]</p> | | | | | |

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|----|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| 2. | Asia Jaya 28 Tug boat Malaysia 145 5338190 Sinar Asia 2912 Barge | 19/4/22 2240 hrs | 1° 12.51' N 103° 51.68' E Approximately 0.7 nm south of Kusu Island (Singapore), outside of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) in the Singapore Strait. | While underway, the master of the tug boat reported to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) that two unauthorised persons were sighted escaping from the barge on tow. The tug boat and barge were bound for Port Kelang, Malaysia. 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. The Singapore Police Coast Guard craft intercepted the tug boat and barge; and boarded the ships to conduct a search on board. Eight perpetrators and one crew (alleged to conspire with the perpetrators to steal the scrap metal on board the barge) were arrested. Two other perpetrators had escaped. The crew was safe with no injury. [Category 4] | The crew was not injured. Nothing was stolen. | The master reported the incident to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) | Yes. The master reported the incident to Singapore Vessel Traffic Information System (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 were notified. The Singapore Police Coast Guard craft intercepted the tug boat and barge; and boarded to conduct a search on board. Eight perpetrators and one crew (alleged to conspire with the perpetrators to steal the scrap metal on board the barge) were arrested. Two other perpetrators had escaped. |