

### OVERVIEW

**Two** incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia (one CAT 3<sup>1</sup> incident and one CAT 4<sup>2</sup> incident) were reported to ReCAAP ISC. The CAT 3 incident occurred on board a container ship while anchored at MICT, Anchorage Area, Manila, the Philippines. One crew was threatened with a metal bar; and his hands were tied by the perpetrators. Several items including breathing apparatus and flashlights were stolen. The CAT 4 incident occurred on board a tanker while underway in the Singapore Strait (SS). In this incident, the crew members were safe and nothing was stolen. Details of incidents are shown in table (\*).



Factors	Location	
	Philippines	Singapore Strait
	MICT, Anchorage Area (1 incident)	Off Pulau Cula, Indonesia (1 incident)
Type of ship	Container ship	Tanker
Date/Time	5 April at 0214 hrs	13 April at 2332 hrs
Number of perpetrators	6-8 perpetrators	4 perpetrators
Weapons carried by perpetrators	Metal bars	Not armed
Treatment of crew	One crew was threatened and his hands tied	No Injuries
Significance level	CAT 3	CAT 4
Items stolen	Several breathing apparatus and flash lights.	Nothing stolen

### AREA OF CONCERN

The ReCAAP ISC is concerned with the continued occurrence of incidents in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS). With this incident, a total of 23 incidents were reported in the SOMS since January 2023. Of these, 22 incidents occurred in the SS, and one incident in the Malacca Strait (MS). The Centre advises ships to continue to exercise enhanced vigilance when transiting SOMS; and the littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in the area.

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

#### Downgrading of threat level

- The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), after careful consideration of inputs from stakeholders and counterparts with vital involvement in securing the Sulu-Celebes Seas maritime security measure, recommends the downgrading of the threat on the 'Abduction of Crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas' from 'POTENTIALLY HIGH' to 'MODERATE'. The MODERATE threat level implies that '**Incidents are possible to occur but are relatively less severe in nature**'.

#### Update of ReCAAP ISC Advisory

- As the threat of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas has diminished since January 2020 due to successful military operations and robust law enforcement initiatives, the ReCAAP ISC updates its Advisory to all ships to **consider re-route from the area as an option based on its prerogative**.
- For ships transiting the area, the **ship masters and crew are strongly encouraged to exercise extra vigilance 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 in Picture 1.



Picture 1

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Ship master and crew are to report all incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships to the nearest coastal State and flag State, referring to the Poster on the *Contact Details for Reporting of Incidents of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*, exercise vigilance and adopt appropriate preventive measures taking reference from the *Regional Guide 2 to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia*.

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\* Table at <https://www.recaap.org/resources/ck/files/Number%20of%20Incidents/2023/List%20of%20Incidents%20for%202023.pdf> for details of the incidents.

<sup>1</sup> CAT (Category) 3 incident is 'less significant' in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators are armed with knives/machetes or other items such as sticks or rods. Although the crew can be subjected to duress or threat during the incident, they are not harmed physically. In most CAT 3 cases, nothing is stolen. In cases where losses are reported, stores and engine spares are commonly stolen items.

<sup>2</sup> CAT (Category) 4 incident is classified as "least significant" in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators are not armed, and the crew not injured.