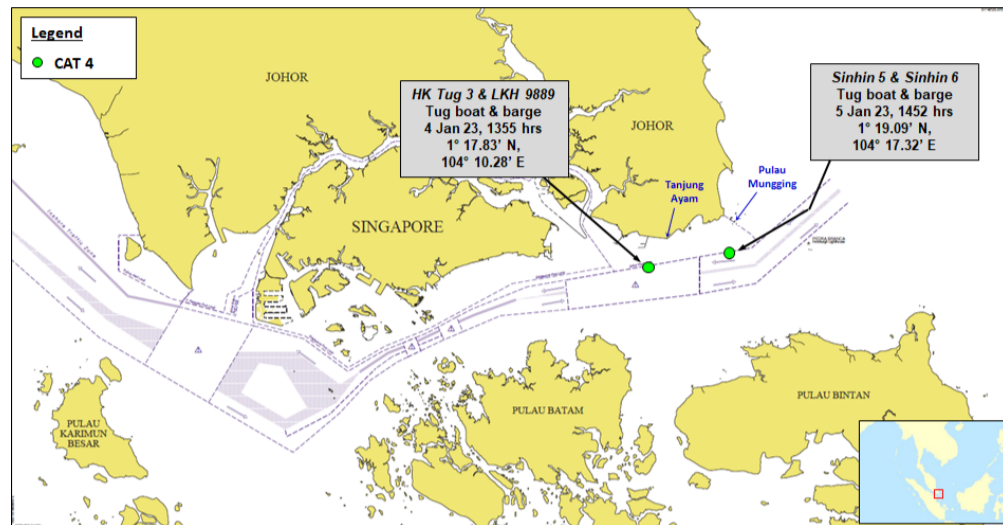


OVERVIEW

Two incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia (both CAT 4¹ incidents) were reported to ReCAAP ISC. The incidents occurred on board barges that were towed by tug boats while underway in the Singapore Strait. Scrap metals were stolen from the barges in both incidents, and the crew members were not injured. Details of incidents are shown in table (*).



Factors	Location	
	Singapore Strait	
	Off Tanjung Ayam, Malaysia (1 incident)	Off Pulau Mungging, Malaysia (1 incident)
Type of ship	Tug boat and barge	Tug boat and barge
Date/Time	4 Jan at 1355 hrs	5 Jan at 1452 hrs
Number of perpetrators	3-4 perpetrators in 2-3 small boats	10 perpetrators in 3 sampans
Weapons	Not stated	Not stated
Treatment of crew	No injuries	No injuries
Significance level	CAT 4	CAT 4
Items stolen	Scrap metals	Scrap metals

AREA OF CONCERN

The ReCAAP ISC is concerned with the continued occurrence of incidents in the Singapore Strait. These incidents were the first two incidents reported in the Singapore Strait in 2023 as of now. The Centre advises ships to continue to exercise enhanced vigilance when transiting the Singapore Strait; 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, 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/2022/List%20of%20Incidents%20for%202023.pdf> for details of the incidents.

¹ CAT (Category) 4 incident is classified as "least significant" in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators are not armed, and the crew not injured.