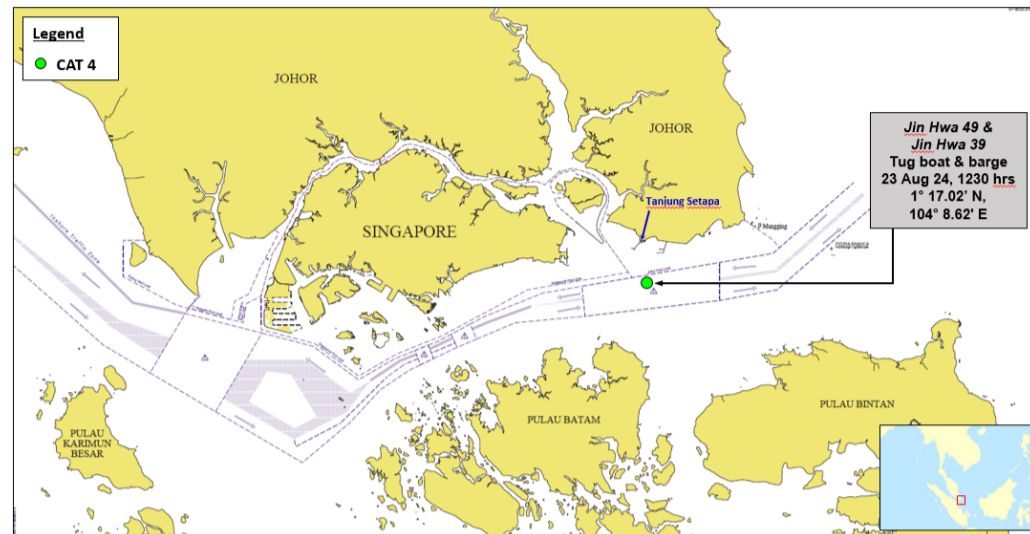


OVERVIEW

One CAT 4¹ incident of armed robbery against ships in Asia was reported to the ReCAAP ISC. The incident occurred onboard a barge while underway in the westbound lane of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) of the Singapore Straits (SS) on 23 Aug 2024. Details of the incident are shown in table (*).



Factors	Location
	SOMS
	About 3.6 nm south of Tanjung Setapa, Malaysia
Type of ship	Tug boat & barge
Date/Time	23 Aug at 1230 hrs
Number of perpetrators	7 men
Weapons	Not stated
Treatment of crew	No injuries
Significance level	CAT 4
Items stolen	Scrap metal

AREA OF CONCERN

With the incident in SS, a total of 31 incidents were reported in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) since January 2024. The ReCAAP ISC advises ships to exercise enhanced vigilance when transiting SOMS and the littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in these areas.

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

Re-Assessment and Downgrading of threat level

The efforts by the Philippine Government in Zamboanga, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi through the conduct of continuous military operations led to the dismantling of the support base and neutralising the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Sulu archipelago. Against this backdrop, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), coordinated with other stakeholders and counterparts that have vital involvement in the maritime security of the Sulu-Celebes Seas, reviewed the threat situation and recommended further downgrading the threat level of 'Abduction of crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas' from 'MODERATE' to '**MODERATE LOW**', which implies that '**Incidents are unlikely to occur due to perpetrators' perceived lack of capability to orchestrate an attack. Nevertheless, minimal damages are expected to the vessel and crew in case of an attack**'.

Update of ReCAAP ISC Advisory

- With downgrading of the threat on the 'Abduction of Crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes seas by the PCG, ReCAAP ISC have updated its Advisory for ships to "**exercise vigilance & adopt necessary preventive measures while transiting the area**".
- 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; both produced by the ReCAAP ISC.

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* Table at <https://www.recaap.org/resources/ck/files/Number%20of%20Incidents/2024/List%20of%20Incidents%20for%202024.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.