

### OVERVIEW

One incident of piracy and one incident of armed robbery against ships in Asia were reported to ReCAAP ISC. The incident (CAT 4<sup>1</sup>) occurred onboard a barge towed by a tug boat in the South China Sea on its approach to Singapore Strait. No injury to crew, only Scrap metals were stolen from the barge. The incident of armed robbery against ships (CAT 2<sup>2</sup>) occurred onboard a bulk carrier while underway in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS). An oiler was restrained in the steering gear room by the perpetrators and some engine spare parts were stolen. Details of incidents are shown in table (\*).



Factors	Locations	
	SOMS West of Pulau Cula, Indonesia (1 incident)	South China Sea Off Tompok Utara Beacon, Malaysia (1 incident)
Type of ship	Bulk carrier	Tug boat & barge
Date/Time	21 May at 0512 hrs	21 May at 1613 hrs
Number of perpetrators	5 men	Not known, 5 small boats
Weapons	Knives	Not known
Treatment of crew	Oiler being restrained	No injuries
Significance level	<b>CAT 2</b>	<b>CAT 4</b>
Items stolen	Engine spare parts	Scrap metals

### AREA OF CONCERN

With the incident in SOMS, a total of 15 incidents were reported in the area since January 2024. The ReCAAP ISC advises ships to exercise enhanced vigilance and maintain lookout when transiting SOMS; and the coastal States to increase patrols and enforcement in the area and at ports and anchorages.

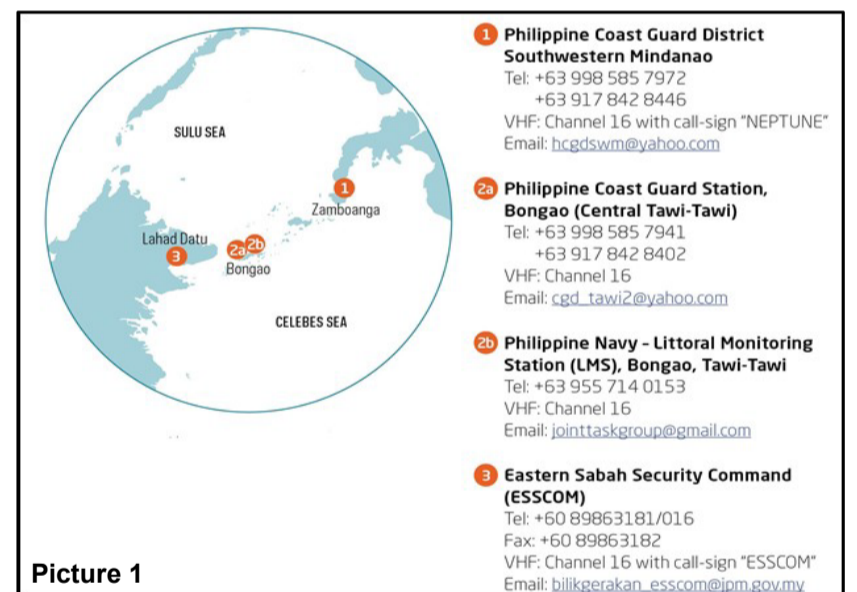
### SITUATION OF ABDUCTION OF CREW IN THE SULU-CELEBES SEAS AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

#### 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*.

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

<sup>2</sup> **CAT (Category) 2** incident is moderately significant. Under this category, the perpetrators are likely to be armed with knives/machetes and in some incidents armed with guns. The crew is threatened or held hostage temporarily and, in some cases, the crew suffered injury and physical violence.