

### OVERVIEW

**Two** incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships (one CAT 1<sup>1</sup> and one CAT 4<sup>2</sup>) in Asia were reported to ReCAAP ISC. The piracy incident occurred onboard a fishing vessel that was hijacked on 27 Jan 2024 in the Indian Ocean. The fishing vessel was subsequently recovered by the authorities, perpetrators arrested and crew rescued on 29 Jan 2024. The incident of armed robbery against ships occurred onboard a tanker while anchored at Kakinada Anchorage, India on 27 Jan 2024. The details of incidents are shown in table below.



Factors	Location	
	Indian Ocean	India
	Off Colombo Lighthouse, Sri Lanka (1 incident)	Kakinada Anchorage (1 incident)
Type of ship	Fishing vessel	Oil/chemical/gas tanker
Date/Time	27 Jan at 1623 hrs	27 Jan at 0130 hrs
Number of perpetrators	3 men	4 men
Weapons	Not stated	Not stated
Treatment of crew	Not stated	No injuries
Items stolen	Hijacked	Two mooring ropes
Significance level	CAT 1	CAT 4

### AREA OF CONCERN

This is the first piracy incident, since September 2022, involving a fishing vessel with crew onboard. The ReCAAP ISC advises ships to exercise enhanced vigilance and adopt necessary preventive measures when transiting the Indian Ocean.

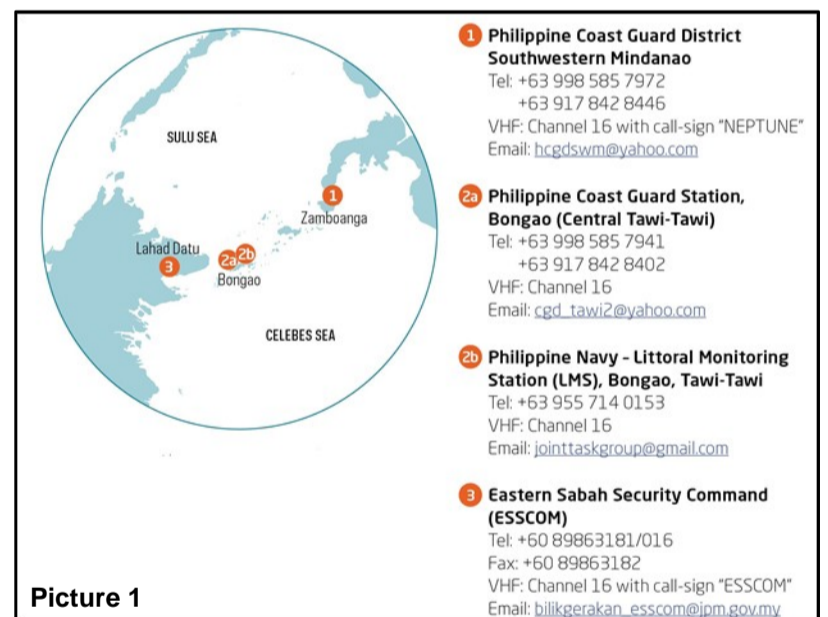
### SITUATION OF ABDUCTION OF CREW IN THE SULU-CELEBES SEAS AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

#### 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 RCC and flag State, referring to the Poster on *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/2024/List%20of%20Incidents%20for%202024.pdf> for details of the incidents.

<sup>1</sup> **CAT (Category) 1** incident is classified as 'very significant' in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators are mostly armed with guns and/or knives, and the crew suffered injury and/or were subjected to physical violence. This include cases of the crew being abandoned, kidnapped or killed. The CAT 1 cases include the ship being hijacked for resale purposes, or the perpetrators took over control of the ship to carry out siphoning of the cargo oil carried onboard.

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