GUIDELINE FOR MALAYSIAN SHIPOWNERS, SHIPMASTERS, AND CREWS FOR SHIPBOARD PREVENTIVE MEASURES AGAINST PIRACY AND ROBBERY AT SEA IN THE SULU-SULAWESI SEAS

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SECTION 1:   INTRODUCTION

General

1.1   Following the spate of abductions of crew from tug boats in the southern Sulu Seas,   Malaysian ship owners, ship masters, company security officers and crew plying the   Sulu   –   Sulawesi Seas are advised to adopt the following measures, a check-list as attached:

    1.1.1   Carry out risk assessment, including threats, defensive measures and routing.

    1.1.2   Plan, exercise and implement shipboard best management practice pre-transit, during transit, if pirate attacks, if pirate take control, and in the event of security forces actions.

1.1.3   Submit Vessel and Tug Boat Information Performa and passage way points to ESSCOM for ease of surveillance and protection.

1.1.4   Enhance vigilance and stringent watch keeping.

1.1.5   Enhance bridge protection

1.1.6   Control access to bridge, accommodation and machinery spaces

1.1.7   Contact ESSCOM periodically and maintain continuous communications with company/company security officer

1.1.8   **Remember to inform ESSCOM and implement shipboard protection measures.**

Aim

1.2   The aim of this guideline is to assist Malaysian ship owners, ship masters, company security officers, agents, and crew plying the Sulu – Sulawesi Seas:

1.2.1   To reduce the risk of such piratical attacks, possible responses in varying situations and vital need to report attacks; both failed and successful, to ESSCOM and relevant authorities.

1.2.2   To protect the crew and their vessels from piratical attacks.

1.3 Not all measures discussed in this guideline may be applicable to every ship type. More importantly, nothing in this guideline detracts from the Master's overriding authority to avoid, prevent and protect his crew, vessel and cargo from any attacks.

Definition of Piracy

1.4 For the purpose of this guideline, the term **piracy** includes all acts of violence against ships, her crew and cargo. The recent incidences of piratical attacks in the Sulu Seas were primarily targeted upon tug boats and crew were taken for ransom.

SECTION 2: PIRACY VULNERABLE AREA IN THE SULU SEA

Vulnerable Area in the Sulu Sea

2.1 Piratical attacks on low freeboard and slow moving vessels, based on recent spate of attacks on tug boats vary in approaches so it is difficult to predict the area a ship may fall victim to piratical attacks. Recent reported attacks have occurred in the waters shaded green as shown in **Figure 2.1.**

Figure 2.1: Recent Piratical Attacks Waters in the Sulu Sea

2.2 Vessels should be vigilant when operating in these vulnerable areas as in **Figure 2.2** and carry out shipboard piracy preventive measures as it enters the vulnerable area.

Figure 2.2: Vulnerable Areas for Piratical Attacks in the Sulu Sea

2.3 Malaysian Security Forces' vessels are deployed and pre-positioned all along the eastern Sabah waters. These vessels are not intended to provide escort duties but to shadow transiting vessels within Malaysian waters based on the prevailing threat environment. Should there be intelligence to suggest that there is an impending attack, these security forces' vessels would either advise vulnerable vessels in vicinity of possible attack area to re-route and transit safer waters or would escort the vessel (s) into safer waters until the threat ceases.

Figure 1

Modus Operandi

2.4 Based on the last 3 piratical attacks in the Sulu Sea in March-April 2016, attacks are usually carried in the following manner:

    2.4.1 Targeted vessels; tug boats (with empty barges or loaded).

    2.4.2 Use one or two speedboats or in combination of speedboat and pump boat. The use of mothership could not be discounted.

    2.4.3 Approach mainly from the stern of the ship using speedboats

    2.4.4 Heavily armed and use small arms fire to intimidate shipmaster to reduce speed and stop to allow the perpetrators to board. The use of these weapons is generally aimed at the bridge and accommodation area.

    2.4.4 Abduct crew members selectively. Abducted crew would then be transferred to militant groups for ransom.

    2.4.5 There is no specific time of the day for targeting but at opportunity.

SECTION 3: RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 In identifying suitable measures to prevent and mitigate piratical attacks, a ship and voyage specific risk assessment should be carried out prior

sailing into these vulnerable waters in the Sulu Sea as shown in the map in Section 2. This help to assess the likelihood and consequences of a piratical attack. It examines the current situation to identify possible threats likely to be encountered and balance it with the effectiveness of security measures in place and identify additional available self-protection measures.

3.2 The output of this risk assessment should identify measures to prevent, mitigate and combat piratical attacks. It is pertinent to note that a risk assessment is ship and voyage specific with the prevailing threat and not generic. The output of a risk assessment should include but not limited to the following:

3.2.1 **Crew safety**; measures to prevent boarding and access to accommodation and machinery spaces and lockdown compartment whilst ensuring that the crew would not be trapped inside should another emergency happens such as fire.

3.2.2 **Threat**; specific threats, modus operandi, possible location etc.

3.2.3 **Environmental factors**; weather, sea-state, traffic density, fishing concentration etc.

3.2.4 **Ship's characteristics;** capabilities and vulnerabilities.

3.2.5 **Shipboard procedures;** drills, watch systems, routines etc.

3.2.6 **Passage planning and procedures;** time and space, season of transit etc.

3.2.7 **Statutory requirements;** requirements by the flag state, port state, and other requirement as required such as by ESSCOM etc.

3.3 Ship owners, ship masters and company security officers should evaluate and review the effectiveness of measures already in place to prevent piratical attacks and subsequent kidnapping. Ship specific security hardening plan must also be developed and made available. This hardening plan details out access routes to the accommodation and machinery spaces, their securing arrangement and status.

3.4 Ship-board self-protection measures include:

3.4.1 **Pre-transit**

i. **Crew Safety**:
(1) Consider providing protection around the bridge areas as the attackers may fire their weapons at the bridge to force the ship to stop.
(2) Consider the hardening measures on the bridge, accommodation spaces and lock-down compartment/citadel would not entrap crew members should another emergency to occur. Lifesaving and firefighting equipment must be accessible to the crew.
(3) Ensure the safe muster point, citadel and or lock-down compartment is identified and known to all crew members.

ii. **Freeboard**. Additional protective measures should be considered to harden the stern or the lowest freeboard so as to prevent the attackers from boarding.
iii. **Evasive measures**. Evasive manoeuvring to be considered to evade or delay attacks.

SECTION 4:   SHIPBOARD ANTI-PIRACY PREVENTIVE MEASURES

4.1   **Pre-transit Planning and Implementation.**

4.1.1 Ship-owner/Company Planning:

i. Conduct joint risk assessment with the ship's master.

ii. Obtain latest updates/information from the relevant agencies.

iii. Review Ship Security Assessment (SSA) and implementation of Ship Security Plan (SSP) i.a.w ISPS Code

iv. Company Security Officer (CSO) is to discuss with the ship's master and put in place the SSP, briefed and exercised.

v. Ensure the ship crew are aware of the prevailing threats and braced.

vi. Routing advisory is provided to the master with regard to recommended routings through the vulnerable area.

vii. Update the crew with the anticipated threats.

viii. Plan and install ship protection measures; enhance bridge protection, access hardening, lock-down/citadel etc.

ix. Consider installing hidden position transmitting devises.

x. Conduct crew training including citadel/lock-down drills) with ship protection measures in place.

xi. Prepare emergency communications plan.

xii.	Submit Vessel and Tug Boat Information Performa and passage waypoints to ESSCOM.
xiii.	Obtain curfew permits from the respective Police District should the vessel transit curfew area in the ESSZONE.
xiv.	Be advised that privately contracted armed security guards are prohibited by law from operating inside territorial waters of coastal states in the region.

4.2   **During Transit:**

4.2.1   Master's and SSO planning:

i.	Conduct risk assessment.
ii.	Keep radio listening watch.
iii.	Obtain latest NAVTEXT, warnings and alerts.

iv. Brief crew, conduct drills and test ship's protection measures.
v. Test emergency communications plan.
vi. Define AIS policy.
vii. Upon entering vulnerable area:
  (1) Reduce maintenance and engineering work to minimum.
  (2) Enhance watch keeping and vigilance
    i. Provide additional lookouts and fully briefed.
    ii. Enhance radar/radio watch and ensure early detection. Treat every contact with suspicion.
    iii. Ensure sufficient binoculars and consider use of night vision goggles.
  (3) Enhance bridge protection.
  (4) Control access to bridge, accommodation and machinery spaces.
  (5) Deploy physical barriers.
  (6) CSO to monitor/track vessel regularly.
  (7) Contact ESSCOM at regular intervals.

4.3 If Being Approached and Or Under Attack.

4.3.1 Activate emergency communications plan
    i. Sound the emergency alarm including the sounding of the ship's whistle/foghorn

continuously to demonstrate that the ship is aware of the attack. Make announcement i.a.w Ship's Emergency Plan

ii. Activate Ship Security Alert System (SSAS). Make a Mayday call on Channel 16 (Malaysian Security Forces' vessels maintains listening watch on Channel 16), DSC/IMMARSAT – C as applicable.

iii. Report incident to ESSCOM via phone; state nature of emergency, ship's detail and location. Call the nearest security agency base as in the contact list if unable to contact ESSCOM.

iv. Switch on AIS

v. All crew except those required on the bridge or in the engine room should muster at the citadel or lock-down compartment.

vi. If possible alter course away from the approaching boats.

vii. Ensure all external doors and internal public rooms and cabins are fully secured.

viii. Activate self-defensive measures.

ix. Stop the vessel and lock down once boarded by attackers.

   x. Maintain contact with ESSCOM or the relevant authorities as long as it is safe to do so.

4.4 **If Hijacked or Taken Control by Attackers.** If there is no lock-down/citadel, and the attackers have gained access to the bridge:

  4.4.1 Remain calm.
  4.4.2 Do not resist.
  4.4.3 All crew should proceed to safe muster point with their hands visible.
  4.4.4 Cooperate fully.

4.5 **In the event of Security Forces' Action**

  4.5.1 All personnel keep low to the deck and cover your head with your hand. Do not make any movement.
  4.5.2 Do not attempt to take any photograph what more with flash photography.
  4.5.3 Cooperate fully.

4.6 **Post Incident Reporting.** Following a piratical attack or a suspicious activity, it is important that a detailed report of the incident is submitted to ESSCOM in the prescribed form as attached without any delay. Or in any event is encouraged to do so.

SECTION 5:   USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

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