



Tug Boat, PU 2007
&
Barge PU 3316
Found !!!

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Incident Update

Date/Time of Incident: 19 Apr 2010 at 2328 hrs (local time)
Location of incident: 4° 25.51' N, 104° 18.92' E
Area Description: 57 nm northeast of Kuantan, Malaysia
Name and Type of Ship: *PU 2007*/tug boat towing
PU 3316/barge



Photograph courtesy of the ship owner

Details of Incident

Background

The ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) issued an Incident Alert on 20 April 2010 following a report by the ship owner that tugboat, *PU 2007* was suspected to have been hijacked.

The Singapore-registered tug boat, *PU 2007* whilst towing barge *PU 3316* activated the SSAS alert on 19 April 2010 at about 2328 hrs while underway at position 4° 25.51' N, 104° 18.92' E (approximately 57 nm northeast of Kuantan, Malaysia). The tug boat reportedly deviated from its planned course and headed easterly. The tug boat with nine crew onboard had departed Kintap port, South Kalimantan, Indonesia and was heading towards the Gulf of Thailand to Sriracha port to discharge its cargo.

Suspected that *PU 2007* had been hijacked, the ship owner reported the incident to Singapore's Port Operation and Control Centre (POCC) which is also the ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore), and the ReCAAP ISC. The assessed positions of *PU 2007* and *PU 3316* between 2238 hrs on 19 April 2010 and 1530 hrs on 20 April 2010 are depicted in the map below.

Actions by the ReCAAP ISC

The ReCAAP ISC immediately alerted the maritime authorities in the region and all ReCAAP Focal Points about the missing vessels. In particular, the Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and the authorities of Brunei, Philippines and Indonesia were alerted to lookout for the missing tug boat and barge.

Incident Update

Response by the Malaysian Authorities

Responding to the alert, the MMEA dispatched its ship and aircraft to the vicinity to locate the missing vessels. At about 1525 hrs on 20 April 2010, the missing vessels were positively identified by the MMEA, with the barge located at position 4° 29.9' N, 104° 56.8' E (approximately 105 nm east-northeast of Kuantan). There was indication that the barge had been detached to enable the tug boat to proceed at a faster speed. The tug boat was last assessed to be at about 91 nm east-northeast of Kuantan, and was heading easterly at about 3.8 knots towards the direction of Philippines/Kalimantan.

At about 2330 hrs on 20 April 2010, the tug boat was assessed to have proceeded into the Indonesian waters and was likely to be in vicinity of Pulau Mangkai and Pulau Siantan (Anambas area).

The MMEA also activated the Sarawak and Sabah Regional Commanders to station ships to be on a look-out for the tug boat.

Response by the Indonesian Authorities

Alerted by the ReCAAP ISC about the possible locations of the tug boat, the Indonesian authorities deployed assets to the vicinity to locate the vessel.

Recovery of Barge, *PU 3316*

On 21 April 2010, the barge that was set adrift was recovered by the Malaysian authorities and handed over to the owner along with its cargo onboard. The owner had deployed another tug boat to bring the barge to Thailand.

Missing tug boat, *PU2007* Found

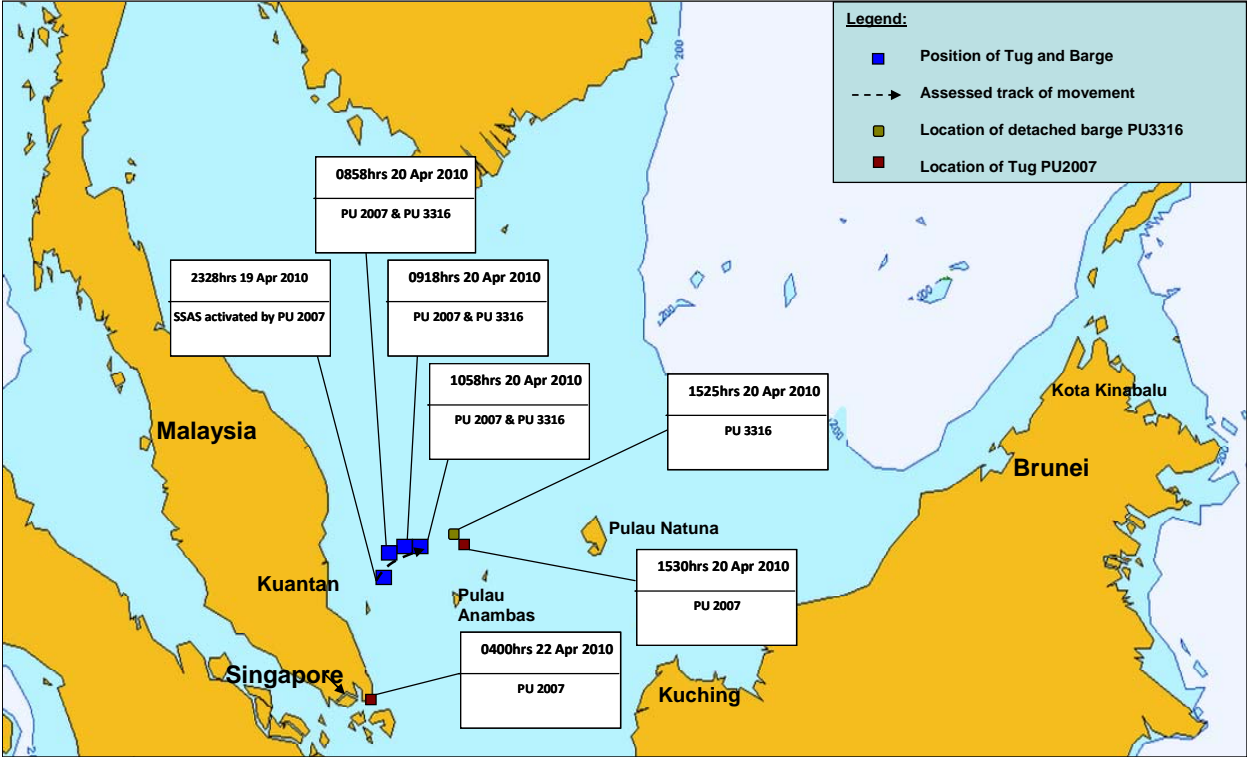
On 22 Apr 2010 at about 0400 hrs, tug boat *PU2007* transmitted position reports when she was about 6 nm north of Horsburgh Lighthouse. It is assessed that the pirates had abandoned *PU 2007*.

Incident Update

On receiving the position reports, the Singapore's POCC relayed the information to the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), Singapore's Police Coast Guard (PCG), MRCC Putra Jaya and the ship company.

The RSN dispatched a vessel to the location of *PU 2007*. At about 0600 hrs on 22 April 2010, the RSN vessel confirmed visual sighting of *PU 2007* whose name had been painted over and renamed *Mega 1*. At about 0715 hrs, the RSN reported that the RSN patrol vessel had linked up with the master of *PU 2007*, and the patrol vessel would escort *PU 2007* to Singapore Port Limits.

The ship company contacted the master of *PU 2007* and confirmed that the crew was safe and the pirates had left the tug boat.



Chronology of Events

Reported by

ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)
Ship owner

Comments by ReCAAP ISC

This is the second incident of hijacking of a tug boat in the vicinity since January 2010. The first incident involved the hijacking of tug boat *Asta* towing barge *Callista* on 6 February 2010. Similar to the incident involving *PU 2007*, the *Asta* also deviated from its planned course and headed northeasterly towards Philippines.

The successful recovery of barge, *PU3316* on 21 April 2010 was yet another incident which demonstrated the importance and value of operational cooperation between the ReCAAP ISC with the ReCAAP Focal Points; the ReCAAP ISC with the Malaysian authorities and the Indonesian authorities; and the ReCAAP ISC with the ship owner. Timely sharing of information on the missing vessels among these agencies was the main contributing factor leading to the recovery of *PU 3316* and locating of *PU 2007*.

Pending further investigations by the relevant authorities, the prompt response and presence of the law enforcement agencies from Malaysia, Indonesia and those in the region was possibly one of the key factors leading to the pirates in abandoning their attempt to bring the tug boat to their desired destination.