



*Crew Rescued,
Tug Boat Woodman 38 &
Barge Woodman 39
Found!!!*

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Incident Update

Name and Type of Vessels : *Woodman 38* / Tug boat (registration no: 329376)
Woodman 39 / Deck cargo barge (registration no: 329387)

Date/Time of Last Communications : 27 Jul 12 at 1238 hrs (local time)

Last known Location of Vessels : 07° 56.33' N, 117° 17.05' E

Area Description : Off Balabac Island, Philippines

Background

1. On 31 Jul 12, the ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre (ISC) issued an Incident Alert 07/2012 following a report from the shipping company that he lost contact with his tug boat, *Woodman 38* towing barge *Woodman 39*. The Malaysian-registered tug boat, *Woodman 38* towing *Woodman 39* departed Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia on 25 Jul 12 at or about 1600 hrs (local time), scheduled to arrive at Samarinda, Indonesia on the morning of 31 Jul 12 for loading of coal to be delivered to Davao City, Philippines.

Last Communication with *Woodman 38*

2. The company last communicated with *Woodman 38* on 27 Jul 12, at or about 1238 hrs (local time) when the vessels were located off Balabac Island, Philippines (07° 56.33' N, 117° 17.05' E). The company reported that she was not able to establish contact with the vessel since then. The vessel with 12 crew onboard (comprising seven Indonesians, four Malaysians and one Myanmar national) travelled at a speed of 7.02 knots and had its tracking system switched off after the last contact on 27 Jul 12.

Shipping company reported to the ReCAAP ISC

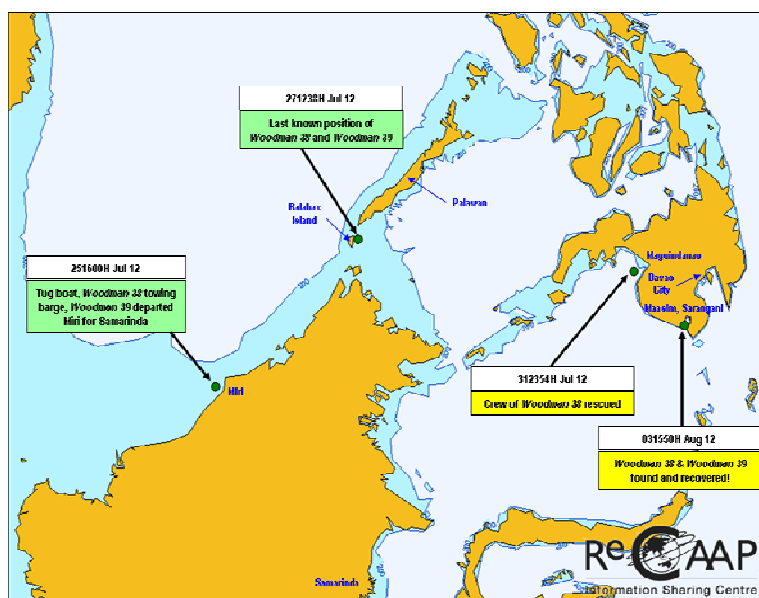
3. On the morning of 31 Jul 12, an interval of four days after the last contact between the shipping company and *Woodman 38*; the shipping company reported to the ReCAAP ISC that she lost communication with *Woodman 38* and *Woodman 39*, and suspected that the vessels might had been hijacked. The ReCAAP ISC immediately informed all ReCAAP Focal Points, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and the maritime authorities of Indonesia to alert them about the missing vessels. On the same day, with permission of the shipping company, an Incident Alert 07/2012 with photographs of the missing vessels was published and posted on the ReCAAP ISC website. Both local and international shipping associations, and shipping companies were alerted and requested to look out for *Woodman 38* and *Woodman 39*. Attached in Annex A is the Incident Alert 07/2012 dated 31 Jul 12.

Rescue of the Crew of *Woodman 38*

4. On 31 Jul 12 at or about 2354 hrs (local time), all 12 crew of *Woodman 38* was rescued by the Philippine authorities in Datu Blah Sinsuat, Maguindanao, Philippines. Report from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) which is also the ReCAAP Focal Point (Philippines) revealed that on 31 Jul 12 at or about 1700 hrs (local time), the crew onboard two inflatable rafts were sighted by the barangay residents of Brgy Pura, Datu Blah Sinsuat, Maguindanao who immediately reported the incident to the 51st Marine Company. A joint team from 51st Marine Company and Pura Detachment of Echo Company, 38th Company Battalion, Philippine Army (PA) were dispatched to bring the crew ashore. The rescued crew was later transferred to Cotabato City via a motorboat. Upon arrival at Cotabato City, the crew was brought to the hospital for medical check-up and debrief. The crew was reported to be in a state of fatigue but overall in good physical condition. On 2 Aug 12 at or about 1253 hrs (local time), the crew met with the Malaysian Consul and representative of the Bureau of Immigration, Davao City and processed for deportation to Sabah, Malaysia.

Woodman 38 and *Woodman 39* found!

5. On 4 Aug 12, the PCG reported to the ReCAAP ISC that two vessels matching the description of tug boat *Woodman 38* and barge *Woodman 39* were berthed at Gensan Shipyard in Bawing, Siguil, Maasim, Sarangani Province, Philippines (refer to map). The shipyard manager reported that *Woodman 38* and *Woodman 39* were in distress and drifting off Gensan shipyard on 31 Jul 12 at or about 1700hrs (local time). A team from the shipyard rendered assistance and towed *Woodman 38* and *Woodman 39* safely inside the docking facility of the shipyard. During the operation, the six 'crew' onboard *Woodman 38* fled when the vessels were secured inside the shipyard at or about 2200 hrs (local time) on 31 Jul 12.



Approximate locations of the incident involving *Woodman 38* & *Woodman 39*

6. The vessels are currently taken into custody by the PCG and investigation is ongoing while the shipping company has engaged an agent with the necessary documents to proceed to Philippines to recover the vessels. Below are the photographs of *Woodman 38* and *Woodman 39* after they were found by the PCG. From the photograph of *Woodman 38*, it appears that the name had been changed to *Odi* (with the removal of some of the original alphabets of *Woodman* and 38) and that the IMO number had also been changed from “9257307” to “0257307”.



Photographs courtesy of ReCAAP Focal Point (Philippines)

Recovered *Woodman 38* (left) and *Woodman 39* (right)

What happened to *Woodman 38* and *Woodman 39*?

7. Initial debrief of the crew revealed that on 27 Jul 12, *Woodman 38* towing *Woodman 39* while in the vicinity of waters of Bangui island, Balabac, Palawan was approached from behind by an unknown number of men clad in civilian attire wearing black bonnets in an unmarked speed boat. They boarded the tug boat, tied the crew and directly controlled and commanded the vessels and move her towards an unknown location.

8. After four days in captivity, the crew accompanied by six men boarded the speed boat. They were blindfolded and asked to jump overboard. The men reportedly threw two inflatable life rafts towards the crew. The crew was later sighted and rescued by fishermen in the waters of Brgy Pura, Datu Blah Sinsuat, Maguindanao province.

Comments and Observations by the ReCAAP ISC

9. The safe rescue of the crew and successful recovery of tug boat *Woodman 38* and barge *Woodman 39* demonstrated the importance and value of timely information sharing between the ReCAAP ISC and the ReCAAP Focal Points, with special mention of the PCG in taking prompt actions to alert their inter-ministry agencies. The reporting by the shipping company and cooperation in furnishing the ReCAAP ISC with the technical specifications of the vessels, photographs and the crew manifest were

commendable as this immediately triggered the processes of information sharing, operational responses and locating of the missing crew and the vessels via the ReCAAP network.

10. Timely sharing of information about the missing vessels among the ReCAAP Focal Points and the relevant agencies in the region was the key contributing factor leading to the rescue of the crew and recovery of tug boat *Woodman 38* and barge *Woodman 39*. However, it was noted that it had been a good four-day interval between the lost of communication between the vessel and the shipping company before the company reported the incident to the ReCAAP ISC. The shipping company agreed that he should have informed the ReCAAP ISC earlier. Further investigation by the relevant authorities is ongoing although it is deemed relatively more difficult now especially when the 'crew' onboard had fled. There were several possible speculations to suggest the current state of the hijacked vessels, including the possibilities that the deal between the potential buyer and the hijackers had gone wrong, or the bad weather condition that caused the vessels to be in distress and drifting, or the crew had encountered some technical problems in their attempt to bring the tug boat to their desired destination.

Incident Report: 07/2012

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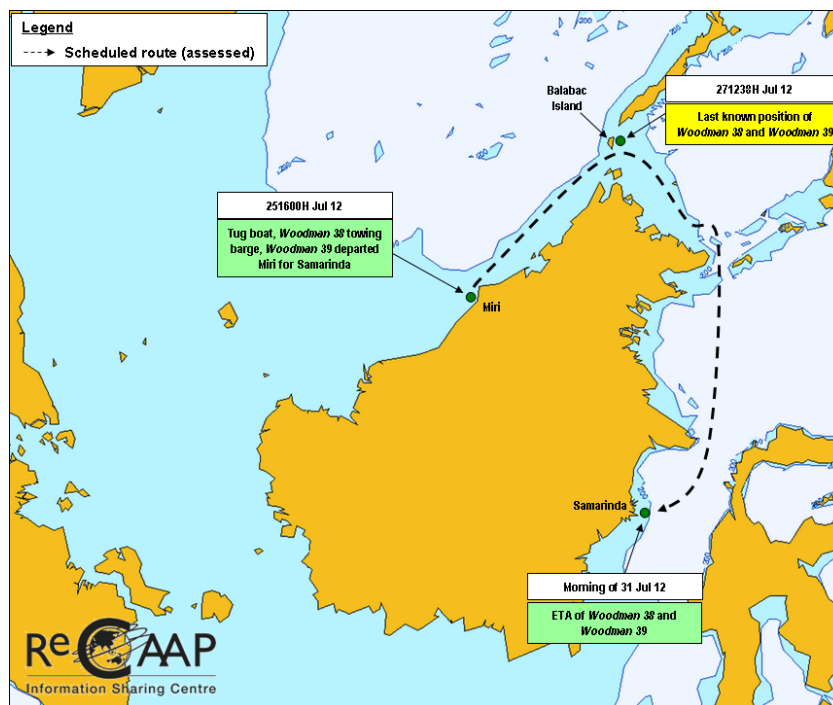
Location of Vessels: 07° 56.33' N, 117° 17.05' E

Area Description: Off Balabac Island, Philippines

Details of Incident

On 25 Jul 12 at about 1600 hrs (local time), a Malaysian-registered tug boat, *Woodman 38* towing barge *Woodman 39* departed Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia enroute to Samarinda, Indonesia scheduled to arrive on the morning of 31 Jul 12 for loading of coal. The company last contacted *Woodman 38* on 27 Jul 12 at 1238 hrs (local time) off Balabac Island, Philippines (07° 56.33' N, 117° 17.05' E). Refer to map below.

Since then, the company was not able to establish contact with the vessel which has a total of 12 crew (comprising seven Indonesians, four Malaysians & one Myanmar national). The vessel travelled at a speed of 7.02 knots had its tracking system switched off after the last contact.



Approximate location of the missing vessels

The shipping company reported the incident to the ReCAAP ISC, and seeking assistance to locate the missing vessels. The ReCAAP ISC had alerted all its ReCAAP Focal Points and the maritime authorities in the region, including the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and the Indonesian authorities to assist in locating the missing tug boat and barge (which was unladen).



Photographs courtesy of shipping company

Missing Tug Boat *Woodman 38* (left) & Barge *Woodman 39* (right)

Reported by

Shipping company

Comments by ReCAAP ISC

The ReCAAP ISC requests all vessels transiting the area to look out for *Woodman 38* and *Woodman 39* and to report sightings of the vessels to the nearest coastal State. The tug boat, *Woodman 38* originally painted blue may have been repainted and renamed.