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## ReCAAP ISC Weekly Report 26 January-1 February 2021

### Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia

#### OVERVIEW

During 26 Jan -1 Feb 2021, four incidents of armed robbery against ships were reported to the ReCAAP ISC. Of these, three were CAT 3<sup>1</sup> incidents and one was a CAT 4<sup>2</sup> (where the perpetrators are not armed and the crew not harmed).

Of the four incidents, two incidents occurred on board ships while they were underway in the Singapore Strait, one incident occurred to a ship while anchored at Belawan Anchorage, Indonesia and one incident occurred to a ship while berthed at Makar Wharf, General Santos City, Philippines.

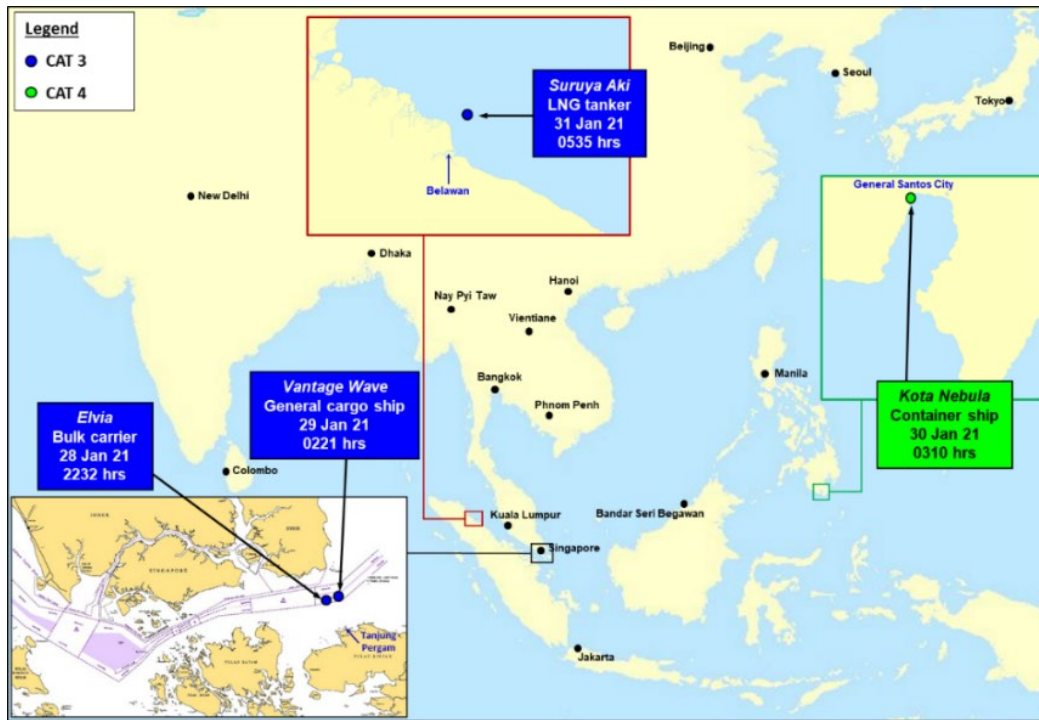
With the latest two incidents reported in the Singapore Strait, a total of three incidents occurred in January 2021. The ReCAAP ISC is concerned with the continued occurrence of incidents in the Singapore Strait; and had issued an Incident Alert (IA 01-2021) on 29 Jan 21.

The location of the four incidents are shown in the map next page; and detailed description of the incidents tabulated in the attachment.

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<sup>1</sup> CAT (Category) 3 incident is 'less significant' in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators could be armed with knives/machetes or other items such as sticks or rods. The crew was not harmed although there remains a small possibility that the crew could be subjected to duress or threat during the incident but not harmed physically. In most CAT 3 cases, the perpetrators were unable to steal anything from the vessel, but in cases where losses were reported, stores and engine spares were commonly targeted items.


<sup>2</sup> CAT (Category) 4 incident is classified as "least significant" in nature.



Location of incidents

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

The risk of the abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah is high as demonstrated by the abduction incident on 17 Jan 20, information of planned kidnapping in Sabah and Semporna, Malaysia (as reported in ReCAAP ISC's Warning issued on 2 Jul 20), and the operation on 3 Nov by the Philippine authorities in preventing a kidnap-for-ransom incident. The ReCAAP ISC reiterates its advisory issued via ReCAAP ISC Incident Alert dated 21 Nov 16 to all ships to reroute from the area, where possible. Otherwise, ship masters and crew are strongly urged to exercise enhanced vigilance while transiting the area, and report all incidents immediately to the Operation Centres of Philippines and Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) of Malaysia. The contact details of the Operation Centres of the Philippines and ESSCOM of Malaysia (updated by ReCAAP ISC on 3 Jan 19) are shown in next page.



The map shows the Sulu Sea to the north and the Celebes Sea to the south. Three numbered locations are marked: 1 near Zamboanga, 2a and 2b near Bongao, and 3 near Lahad Datu.

- 1 Philippine Coast Guard District Southwestern Mindanao**  
Tel: +63 998 585 7972  
+63 917 842 8446  
VHF: Channel 16 with call-sign "NEPTUNE"  
Email: [hcgdswm@yahoo.com](mailto:hcgdswm@yahoo.com)
- 2a Philippine Coast Guard Station, Bongao (Central Tawi-Tawi)**  
Tel: +63 998 585 7941  
+63 917 842 8402  
VHF: Channel 16  
Email: [cgd\\_tawi2@yahoo.com](mailto:cgd_tawi2@yahoo.com)
- 2b Philippine Navy - Littoral Monitoring Station (LMS), Bongao, Tawi-Tawi**  
Tel: +63 955 714 0153  
VHF: Channel 16  
Email: [jointtaskgroup@gmail.com](mailto:jointtaskgroup@gmail.com)
- 3 Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM)**  
Tel: +60 89863181/016  
Fax: +60 89863182  
VHF: Channel 16 with call-sign "ESSCOM"  
Email: [bilikgerakan\\_esscom@jpm.gov.my](mailto:bilikgerakan_esscom@jpm.gov.my)

### Contact details

In the event that the ship master is not able to establish contact with the Operation Centres of the Philippines as listed in the ReCAAP ISC Advisory, he can contact the **Philippine Coast Guard Command Centre** at the following contact details:

Tel: +632-8-527-8481 (ext: 6136/37)  
 +632-998-585-5327 (mobile)  
 +632-917-842-8249 (mobile)  
 +632-8-527-3877 (fax)  
 Email: [pcgcomcen@coastguard.gov.ph](mailto:pcgcomcen@coastguard.gov.ph)

The ReCAAP ISC advises the shipping industry and ships to enhance their situation awareness by referring to the *Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah* produced by ReCAAP ISC in July 2019. The Guidance is available at [www.recaap.org](http://www.recaap.org).

## RECOMMENDATION

The ReCAAP ISC urges ship master and crew to report all incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships to the nearest coastal State and flag State, exercise vigilance and adopt relevant preventive measures taking reference from the *Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia*.

**Description of Incidents of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships  
26 Jan-1 Feb 2021**

	Ship Name Type of Ship Flag Gross Tonnage IMO Number	Date Local Time of Incident (LT)	Position of the Incident	Details of the Incident	Consequences for crew, ship, cargo	Action taken by the master and crew	Was the incident reported to coastal authority? Which one?	Reporting State or International Organization	Coastal State Action Taken
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
<b>INCIDENTS IN ASIA</b>									
<b>ACTUAL INCIDENTS</b>									
1.	<b>Suruya Aki</b> LNG Bahamas 20519 9060534	31/01/21 0535 hrs	3.0° 56.2' N, 98.0° 45.6' E  Anchorage at Belawan, off North West of Sumatra, Indonesia	While at anchor, two perpetrators boarded the ship. One of them was armed with a knife. All the crew took refuge in the citadel, and reported the incident to Belawan VTS and their ship company. The Indonesian Marine Police boarded the ship and conducted a search. No perpetrator was found. The crew was safe and some of the ship's stores were stolen.  [Category 3]	The crew was not injured.  Ship stores were stolen, including ropes, cap of service valve, coupling of extinguishment and nozzle, wing nut and emergency hand light of life raft.	The crew alerted the SSAS when they sighted the two perpetrators on board the ship.  All crew took refuge in the citadel.	Yes  Incident was reported to Belawan VTS.	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Japan)	The Indonesian Marine Police boarded the ship and conducted a search.
2.	<b>Kota Nebula</b> Container ship Singapore 20902 9494632	30/01/21 0310 hrs	6.0° 5.6' N, 125° 9.4' E  Makar Wharf Berth No. 5 to 7, General Santos City, Philippines	While at berth, the watchkeeping crew sighted two perpetrators on the starboard lifeboat deck. The general alarm was raised. All crew was notified of the perpetrators and their location via the PA system. The crew proceeded to the starboard lifeboat deck.  The perpetrators jumped into the water and fled in a small motor banca upon discovered that they had been sighted.  The crew was not injured. A search was conducted, and two units each of the fire nozzles and the fire hydrant caps were reported missing.  The master reported the incident to	The crew was not injured.  Two fire hydrant caps and two fire nozzles were stolen.	The alarm was raised and all crew was informed of the unauthorized persons on board and their locations via the PA system.  A search was conducted on board the ship.	Yes  Reported to flag administration and local authorities.	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	Not known.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
				the flag administration and local authorities.  [Category 4]					
3.	<b>Vantage Wave</b> General cargo ship Liberia 22064 9506514	29/01/21 0221 hrs	1.0° 16.95' N, 104.0° 18.92' E  Approximately 5.8 nm southeast of Tanjung Pergam, Bintan Island, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait  (SOMS)	While underway, three unauthorised persons armed with knives were sighted in the engine room. The alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search on board the ship was conducted. At about 0322hrs, the master updated Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) East that the search was completed with no further sighting of the three unauthorised persons. All crew was safe and accounted for. The ship did not require assistance, and continued its voyage to China.  A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) and Singapore Police Coast Guard were informed, and the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities were notified.  [Category 3]	The crew was not injured.  Nothing was stolen.	The alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search on board the ship was conducted and no further sighting of the unauthorized persons.	Yes  Singapore VTIS East	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) and Singapore Police Coast Guard (PCG) were informed, and the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities were notified.

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
4.	<b>Elvia</b> Bulk carrier Liberia 50697 9570840	28/01/21 2232 hrs	1.0° 16.15' N, 104.0° 16.72' E  Approximately 6 nm northwest of Tanjung Pergam, Bintan Island, Indonesia in the eastbound lane of the TSS in the Singapore Strait  (SOMS)	While underway, 10 unauthorised persons armed with knives were sighted in the engine room. The alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search on board the ship was conducted. At about 2338hrs, the master updated VTIS East that the search on board was completed with no further sighting of unauthorised persons. All crew was safe and nothing was stolen. The ship did not require assistance and proceeded on its voyage.  A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) and Singapore Police Coast Guard were informed, and the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities were notified.  [Category 3]	The crew was not injured.  Nothing was stolen.	The alarm was raised and crew mustered. A search on board the ship was conducted with no sighting of the unauthorized persons.	Yes  Singapore VTIS East	ReCAAP ISC via ReCAAP Focal Point (Singapore)	A safety navigational broadcast was initiated. The Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) Maritime Security Task Force (MSTF) and Singapore Police Coast Guard (PCG) were informed, and the Malaysian and Indonesian authorities were notified.