

### OVERVIEW

Over the past week, no incident of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia was reported to ReCAAP ISC. Since January 2023, a total of 92 incidents comprising 91 actual incidents<sup>1</sup> and one attempted incident<sup>2</sup> of armed robbery against ships were reported to the Centre.

### AREA OF CONCERN

The ReCAAP ISC advises ships to continue to exercise enhanced vigilance when transiting areas of concern, including the Straits of Malacca and Singapore; and littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in these areas.

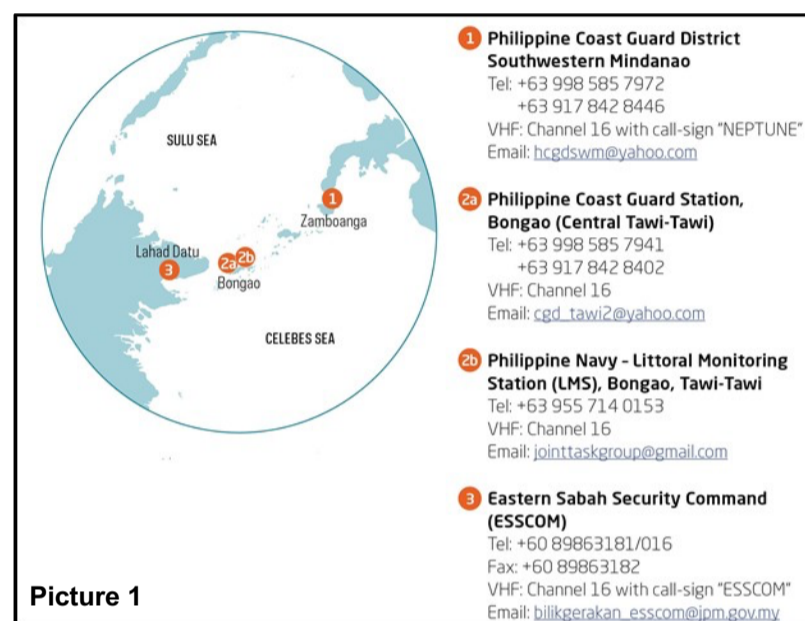
### SITUATION OF ABDUCTION OF CREW IN THE SULU-CELEBES SEAS AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

#### 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/2023/List%20of%20Incidents%20for%202023.pdf> for details of the incidents.

<sup>1</sup> **Actual incident** is incident where pirates/robbers boarded the ship; and regardless of whether they stole any items from the crew or took away any items found on board the ship.

<sup>2</sup> **Attempted incidents** are incidents where pirates/robbers tried but failed to board the ship.