

OVERVIEW

Two incidents of armed robbery against ships (one CAT 2¹ and one attempted²) in Asia were reported to ReCAAP ISC. Both incidents occurred onboard bulk carriers on 4 Jan 2024. One incident occurred onboard the ship while anchored at Balikpapan Anchorage, Indonesia; and the other incident onboard the ship while underway in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS). The details of incidents are shown in table below.



Factors	Location	
	Indonesia	SOMS
	Balikpapan Anchorage (1 incident)	Off Pulau Cula, Indonesia (1 incident)
Type of ship	Bulk carrier	Bulk carrier
Date/Time	4 Jan at 0050 hrs	4 Jan at 0240 hrs
Number of perpetrators	2 men	5 men
Weapons	Not known	Long knives
Treatment of crew	No injuries	3 rd Engineer was tied and punched on the forehead by perpetrators
Items stolen	Nil	Engine spare parts
Significance level	Attempted	CAT 2

AREA OF CONCERN

As of today, a total of three incidents were reported in SOMS since January 2024. The ReCAAP ISC advises ships to continue to exercise enhanced vigilance when transiting SOMS; and the littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in the area.

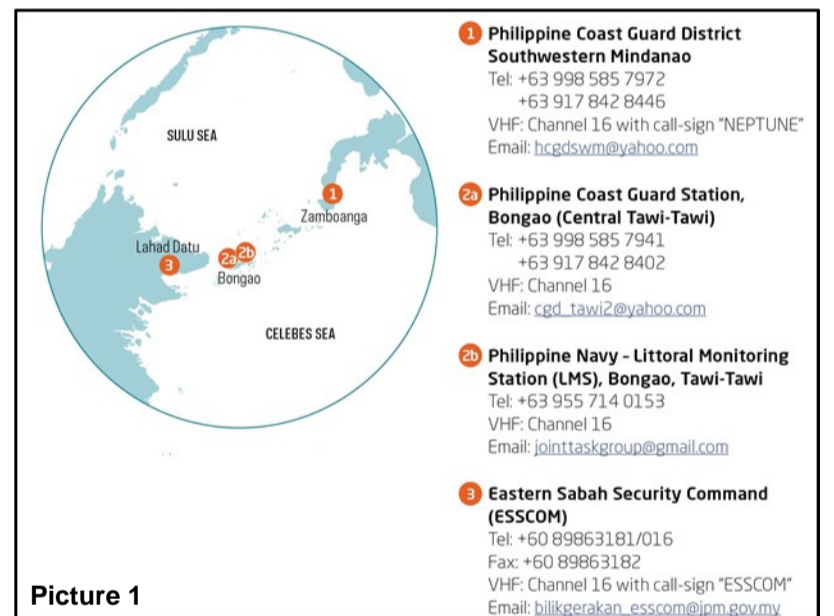
SITUATION OF ABDUCTION OF CREW IN THE SULU-CELEBES SEAS AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

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/2024/List%20of%20Incidents%20for%202024.pdf> for details of the incidents.

¹ **CAT (Category) 2** incident is classified as 'moderately significant' in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators are armed with knives/machetes and in some incidents, they are armed with guns. In such incidents, the crew is threatened or temporarily restrained and, in some cases, the crew experienced physical violence and suffered injury.

² Attempted incidents refer to incidents whereby the pirates/robbers tried but failed in their attempt to board the ship.