

OVERVIEW

Two incidents of armed robbery against ships (one CAT 3¹ and one CAT 4²) in Asia were reported to ReCAAP ISC. The CAT 3 incident occurred onboard a bulk carrier while anchored at Panjang Anchorage, Indonesia on 20 Feb 2024; and the CAT 4 incident occurred onboard a bulk carrier while underway in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) on 4 Mar 2024. The details of incidents are shown in table below.



| Factors | Location | |
|------------------------|--|---|
| | Indonesia | SOMS |
| | Panjang Anchorage, Indonesia (1 incident) | Southeast of Pulau Iyu Kecil, Indonesia (1 incident) |
| Type of ship | Bulk carrier | Bulk carrier |
| Date/Time | 20 Feb at 0405 hrs | 4 Mar at 0250 hrs |
| Number of perpetrators | 2 men | 2 men / 1 boat |
| Weapons | Knives/Machetes | Not armed |
| Treatment of crew | No injuries | No injuries |
| Items stolen | Engine spares were stolen | Nothing was stolen. |
| Significance level | CAT 3 | CAT 4 |

AREA OF CONCERN

With the incident in SOMS, a total of seven incidents were reported in the area since January 2024. The ReCAAP ISC advises ships to exercise enhanced vigilance when transiting SOMS, and the littoral States to increase patrols and enforcement in these areas.

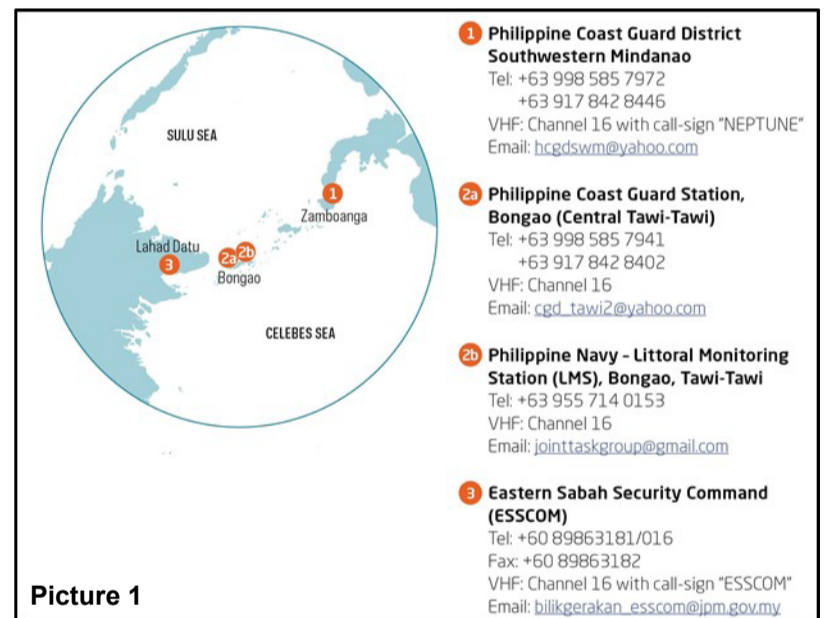
SITUATION OF ABDUCTION OF CREW IN THE SULU-CELEBES SEAS AND WATERS OFF EASTERN SABAH

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

¹ CAT (Category) 3 incident is 'less significant' in nature. The perpetrators are armed with knives/machetes or other items like sticks or rods. The crew although can be subjected to duress or threat during the incident, they are not harmed physically. In most CAT 3 cases, nothing is stolen, if losses reported, the commonly stolen items are stores and engine spares.

² CAT (Category) 4 incident is classified as "least significant" in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators are not armed, and the crew not injured.