

### OVERVIEW

Three incidents of armed robbery against ships in Asia (two CAT 3<sup>1</sup> incidents and one CAT 4<sup>2</sup> incident) were reported to ReCAAP ISC. The two CAT 3 incidents occurred onboard ships while underway in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS), and one incident (CAT 4) occurred onboard ship while anchored at Manila Anchorage area, Manila, the Philippines. The crew members were not injured in all the three incidents. Details of incidents are shown in table (\*).



Factors	Locations		
	Philippines	SOMS	
	Manila Anchorage area, Manila (1 incident)	Off Pulau Iyu Kecil, Indonesia (1 incident)	Off Pulau Cula, (Indonesia) (1 incident)
Type of ship	Container ship	Bulk carrier	Bulk carrier
Date/Time	2 Feb at 0400 hrs	6 Feb at 0454 hrs	31 Jan at 0200 hrs
Number of perpetrators	6 men	4 men	6 men (1)
Weapons	Not known	Knives	Machetes
Treatment of crew	No injuries	No injuries	Three crew were tied up. No injuries
Significance level	CAT 4	CAT 3	CAT 3
Items stolen	Two sets of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) with cylinder	Nothing stolen	Engine spares and a crew's mobile phone

### AREA OF CONCERN

With the two incidents occurred in the SOMS, a total of five incidents were reported 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

#### Downgrading of threat level

- The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), after careful consideration of inputs from stakeholders and counterparts with vital involvement in securing the Sulu-Celebes Seas maritime security measure, recommends the downgrading of the threat on the 'Abduction of Crew for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas' from 'POTENTIALLY HIGH' to '**MODERATE**'. The MODERATE threat level implies that '*Incidents are possible to occur but are relatively less severe in nature*'.

#### Update of ReCAAP ISC Advisory

- As the threat of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas has diminished since January 2020 due to successful military operations and robust law enforcement initiatives, the ReCAAP ISC updates its Advisory to all ships to **consider re-route from the area as an option based on its prerogative**.
- 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 and flag State, referring to the Poster on the *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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Contact us at: E: [info@recaap.org](mailto:info@recaap.org) T: +65 6376 3063 F: +65 6376 3066

\* 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> CAT (Category) 3 incident is 'less significant' in nature. Under this category, the perpetrators are armed with knives/machetes or other items such as sticks or rods. Although the crew can be subjected to duress or threat during the incident, they are not harmed physically. In most CAT 3 cases, nothing is stolen. In cases where losses are reported, stores and engine spares are commonly stolen items.

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