



**Guidance**  
**on Abduction of Crew**  
**in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and**  
**Waters off Eastern Sabah**

**Produced by:**  
**ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre**

**In collaboration with:**  
**Philippine Coast Guard**

**Supported by:**  
**Asian Shipowners' Association**  
**Singapore Shipping Association**

**(July 2019)**

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# Contents

Introduction.....	1
Advisory by ReCAAP ISC.....	2
Measures adopted by the littoral States in the area .....	4
Modus operandi of past incidents of abduction of crew.....	8
Case studies of past incidents .....	12
Information on the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) .....	14
Annex 1 – Notice to Mariners issued by the Philippines (NOTAM 148-2017 by Philippine Coast Guard).....	15
Annex 2 – Notice to Mariners issued by Malaysia (NOTAM 14 of 2017 by Marine Department of Malaysia, Sabah Region).....	17
Annex 3 – Establishment of Recommended Transit Corridor at Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait issued by the Philippine’s Department of Transportation (Memorandum Circular Number 2017-002 dated 31 March 2017).....	23

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## <Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas>

### Introduction

This guidance focuses on the incidents of abduction of crew from ships for ransom in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and in the waters off Eastern Sabah. It provides the guidance and analysis based on the information collected from past incidents in order to assist the shipping industry and ships to enhance their situation awareness and avoid such incidents. This guidance complements the general guidance contained in the “*Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*” [available at [www.recaap.org](http://www.recaap.org)].

The Sulu-Celebes Seas region covers the tri-boundary area of the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. It is strategically located and most international shipping passes through its maritime sea lanes. In the Sibutu passage alone, an average of 14,000 ships passes yearly. Prior to 2016, there were kidnaps for ransom on land in the region carried out by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), an Islamic extremist group based in Southern Philippines. On 26 March 2016, the first abduction of crew from ship was reported. It involved the tug boat, *Brahma 12* and 10 of the Indonesian crew on board the boat were abducted. Since then, a spate of abduction of crew incidents were reported in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.



Map of Sulu-Celebes Seas and off Eastern Sabah

During the period of 2016 to June 2019, a total of 29 incidents of abduction of crew (comprising 18 actual incidents and 11 attempted incidents) were reported by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to ReCAAP ISC. In 2016, a total of 18 incidents of abduction of crew (comprising 12 actual incidents and 6 attempted incidents) were reported. In 2017, the

number of incidents reduced to 7 (3 actual incidents and 4 attempted incidents), and in 2018, the number of incidents further reduced to 3 (2 actual incidents and 1 attempted incident). There was one actual incident reported in 2019 (as of June 2019). In the 18 actual incidents, 75 crew were abducted in total. Among them, 65 crew were released or rescued and 10 crew were killed or died. There is no crew held in captivity.

Despite the decrease in the number of incidents and military and law enforcement efforts by the Philippine authorities, the perpetrators of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) are still active in the region and looking for any opportunity to abduct crew from ships.

### Advisory by ReCAAP ISC

Considering the continued existence of the threat of abduction of crew, and violent nature of the perpetrators causing fatality of 10 seafarers, the ReCAAP ISC maintains its advisory issued via the *ReCAAP ISC Incident Alert* dated 21 Nov 16 as follows:

- Reroute from the area, where possible
- Otherwise, ship masters and crew are strongly urged to exercise extra vigilance
- Report the incident 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 follows.

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

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

Phone numbers:

+63-2-5273877 (direct)  
+63-2-527-8481 to 89 (ext: 6136/37)  
+63-917-724-3682 (mobile)  
+63-929-825-3207 (mobile)

Email address:

[pcgcomcen@coastguard.gov.ph](mailto:pcgcomcen@coastguard.gov.ph)

The ship masters and crew are further advised to take the following measures:

- Enhance vigilance, maximise alertness of lookouts and increase watch keeping
- Control the access to bridge, accommodation and machinery spaces
- Maintain continuous communication with shipping company and enforcement agencies for monitoring and immediate responses in any eventualities
- Look out for advisories on NAVTEX
- Refer to the latest information available at ReCAAP ISC website ([www.recaap.org](http://www.recaap.org)) and other organisations
- Sound alarm when sighted suspicious boats in the vicinity or suspicious persons on board ship
- Avoid confrontation with perpetrators
- Report all incidents to the nearest coastal States and flag States in accordance with the IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ. 1334

The shipping companies and ship masters are also advised to adopt precautionary measures from general guidance contained in the '*Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia*' such as risk assessment, company planning, master's planning, ship protection measures, measures when ships are under attack, etc.

## Measures adopted by the littoral States in the area

### Transit Corridors and Notice to Mariners (NOTAM) by the Philippines and Malaysia

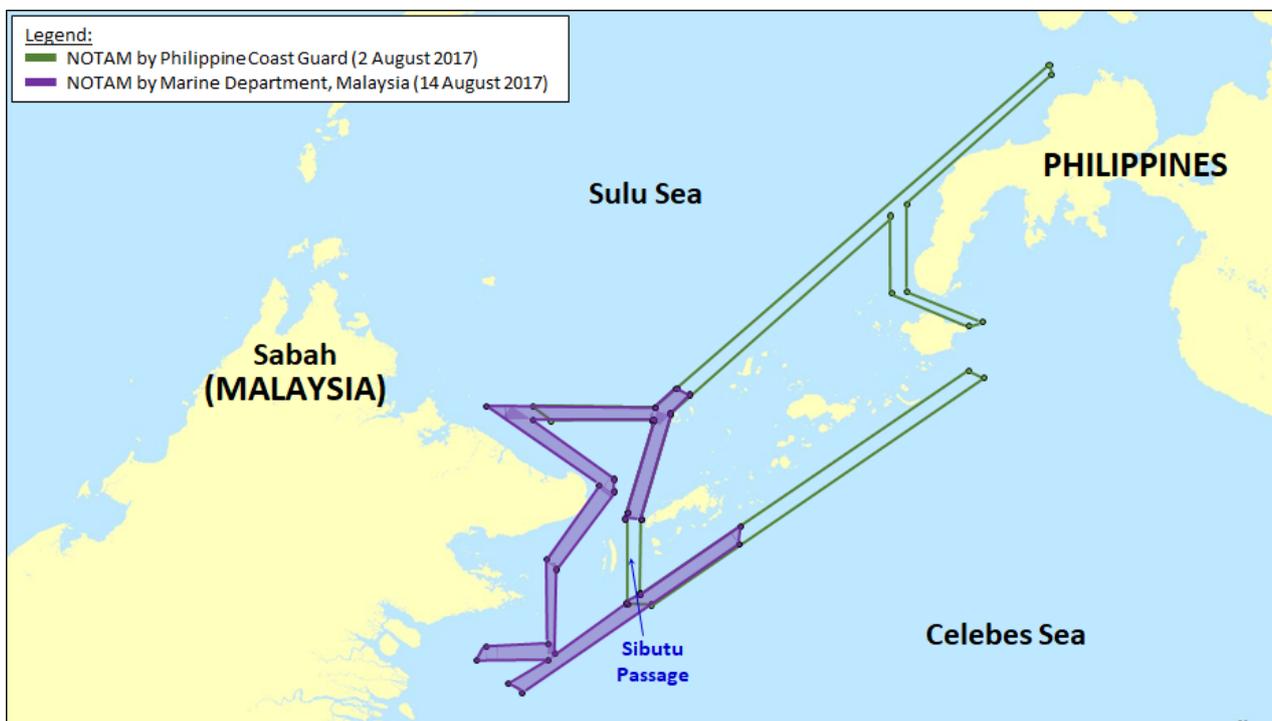
On 14 July 2016, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines signed the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) to address the security challenges in the maritime areas of common concern. The three countries agreed to encourage the operationalization of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for maritime patrol, and the operating guidelines on information and intelligence sharing; and combined communication plan. For this purpose, the three countries established the Maritime Command Centres (MCCs) in Tarakan (Indonesia), Tawau (Malaysia) and Bongao (Philippines). The MCCs serve as the operational command and monitoring stations for the respective countries.

Under the TCA, the Philippines and Malaysia established the transit corridors within the Area of Maritime Interest (AMI) which covers the common maritime areas. The transit corridors serve as safety areas to passage by commercial ships and they are patrolled by the three countries.

The transit corridor established by the Philippines is in the “Notice to Mariners (NOTAM) 148-2017” issued by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on 12 September 2017 (Annex 1).

The transit corridor established by Malaysia is in the “Notice to Mariners (NOTAM) 14 of 2017” issued by the Marine Department of Malaysia on 14 August 2017 (Annex 2).

The areas of transit corridors of these two NOTAMs are shown in the map below.



**Transit Corridors for Commercial Shipping**

## Before entering the designated transit corridors

- Commercial ships are encouraged to pass through the designated transit corridors and sea lanes, as specified in the Notice to Mariners (NOTAMs) issued by the Philippines and Malaysia.
- All ships transiting the areas are required to report to the Centres whose contact details are enumerated below **at least 24 hours before arrival at the designated maritime areas of common concern**, with complete ship's routing information:

a. While transiting the Philippines' area of responsibility:

S/No.	Centre	Contact no.	Email address
1.	National Coast Watch Centre (NCWC)	+63 (2) 2413140	<a href="mailto:ncwatchcenter@gmail.com">ncwatchcenter@gmail.com</a>
2.	Coast Guard Command Centre, Philippine Coast Guard**	+63 (917) 7243682 +63 (2) 5273877	<a href="mailto:pcgcomcen@coastguard.gov.ph">pcgcomcen@coastguard.gov.ph</a>
3.	Maritime Research Information Centre (MRIC)	+63 (917) 7085248 +63 (2) 8431833	<a href="mailto:mric@nav.ph">mric@nav.ph</a>
4.	Naval Operation Centre (NOC), Philippine Navy	+63 (917)8512708 +63 (2) 5244981	<a href="mailto:noc@nav.ph">noc@nav.ph</a> <a href="mailto:hpn.noc@navy.mil.ph">hpn.noc@navy.mil.ph</a>
5.	Naval Forces Western Mindanao Operations Centre	+63 (917)8512708	<a href="mailto:nfwm.nfoc@navy.mil.ph">nfwm.nfoc@navy.mil.ph</a>

**Note:** 1 to 3 are listed in both Philippine and Malaysia issued NOTAMs; while 4-5 are listed in Malaysia's NOTAM 14 of 2017 issued by Marine Department of Malaysia

\*\* Previously known as 'Coast Guard Action Centre (CGAC), Philippine Coast Guard'. The email address is updated, and the contact no. remains the same.

b. While transiting Malaysia's area of responsibility

S/No.	Centre	Contact no.	Email address
1.	Maritime Command Centre (MCC), Tawau	+6089 775600 +6089 779777 +6089 982623 (5:00 pm – 8:00 am)	<a href="mailto:mcctawau2@gmail.com">mcctawau2@gmail.com</a>
2.	Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM)	+6089 863181	<a href="mailto:bilikgerakan_esscom@jpm.gov.my">bilikgerakan_esscom@jpm.gov.my</a>
3.	Marine Department Malaysia, Sabah Region	+6088 401111	<a href="mailto:aisjlsbh@marine.gov.my">aisjlsbh@marine.gov.my</a>

**Note:** Listed in Malaysia's NOTAM 14 of 2017 issued by Marine Department of Malaysia.

c. While transiting Indonesia's area of responsibility

S/No.	Centre	Contact no.	Email address
1.	Maritime Command Centre (MCC), Tarakan	+625513806288 +625513806289	<a href="mailto:mcctarakan2@gmail.com">mcctarakan2@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:mcc_tarakan@tnial.mid.id">mcc_tarakan@tnial.mid.id</a>

**Note:** Listed in Malaysia's NOTAM 14 of 2017 issued by Marine Department of Malaysia.

3. The ships should comply to the following reporting procedure upon entering the maritime areas of common concern by establishing voice radio contact at Channel 16 with the monitoring station:

***“SECURITY, SECURITY... THIS IS (NAME OF VESSEL).***

***I AM ENTERING (NAME OF SEA LANE, EX: SIBUTU PASSAGE, ALICE CHANNEL, ETC.)***

***WITH A SPEED OF \_\_\_\_\_ AND COURSE \_\_\_\_\_.***

***PRESENT POSITION: (LATITUDE/LONGITUDE) OR AT A VICINITY (NEAREST POINT OF REFERENCE)***

***STATUS: (I.E. UNDERWAY, ALL IS WELL, UNDER ATTACK OR IN DISTRESS)”***

***IF UNDER ATTACK, REQUEST IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE/RESCUE***

4. All ships are required to render Position Report (POSREP) and Situation Report (SITREP) as they enter the maritime areas of common concern every hour or as necessary.

### **Recommended Transit Corridor (RTC) in the Moro Gulf and Basilan by the Philippines**

To address an increasing threat to shipping in the areas of Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait, Recommended Transit Corridor (RTC) was established to prevent and suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships transiting the areas.

The RTC provides PCG and other law enforcement units' awareness over the operating environment in and around the areas of Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait by designating transit areas where ships can be easily monitored and law enforcement units are deployed nearby.

The RTC between the Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait was established by the “Memorandum Circular 2017-002” issued by the Philippine’s Department of Transportation on 31 March 2017 (Annex 3).

The inbound and outbound lanes of the RTC are shown in the map next page.



### RTC between Moro Gulf and Basilan

The contact details of Philippine Coast Guard Operation Centres at 1 (Zamboanga) and 2 (Davao) are as follows:

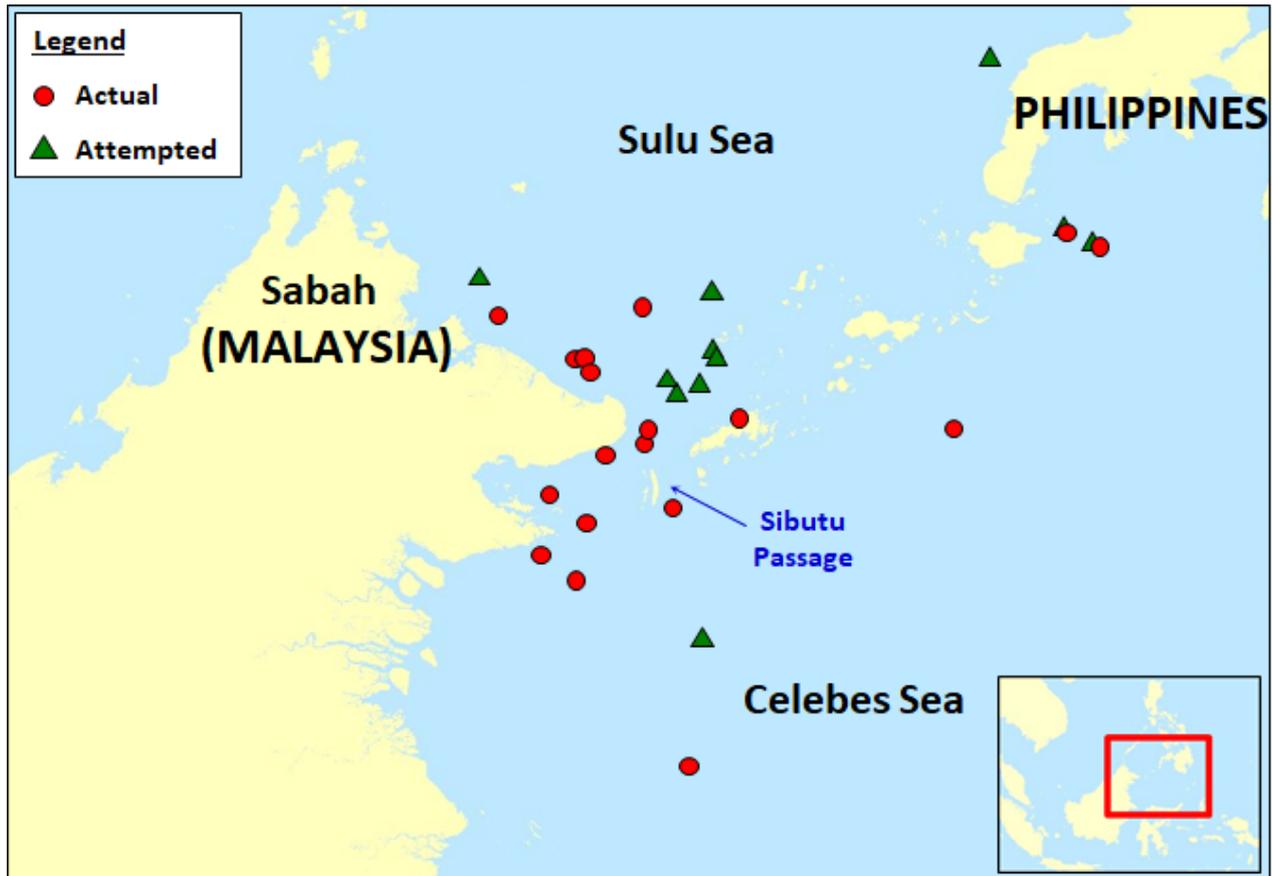
1. Philippine Coast Guard District Southwestern Mindanao (CGDSWM)  
Email: [hcgdswm@yahoo.com](mailto:hcgdswm@yahoo.com)  
Tel: +63 09985857972  
+63 0917842 8446
2. Philippine Coast Guard District Southeastern Mindanao (CGDSEM)  
Email: [cgdsem@coastguard.gov.ph](mailto:cgdsem@coastguard.gov.ph) / [coastguardsem@yahoo.com](mailto:coastguardsem@yahoo.com)  
Tel: +63 0917813197  
+63 09985858479

## Modus operandi of past incidents of abduction of crew

### In the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah (2016 – June 2019)

#### Location of incidents

The location of the 29 incidents (18 actual incidents and 11 attempted incidents) from 2016 to June 2019 is shown in the map below. All incidents occurred to the ships while underway (except the incident of fishing boat *Sri Dewi 1*).



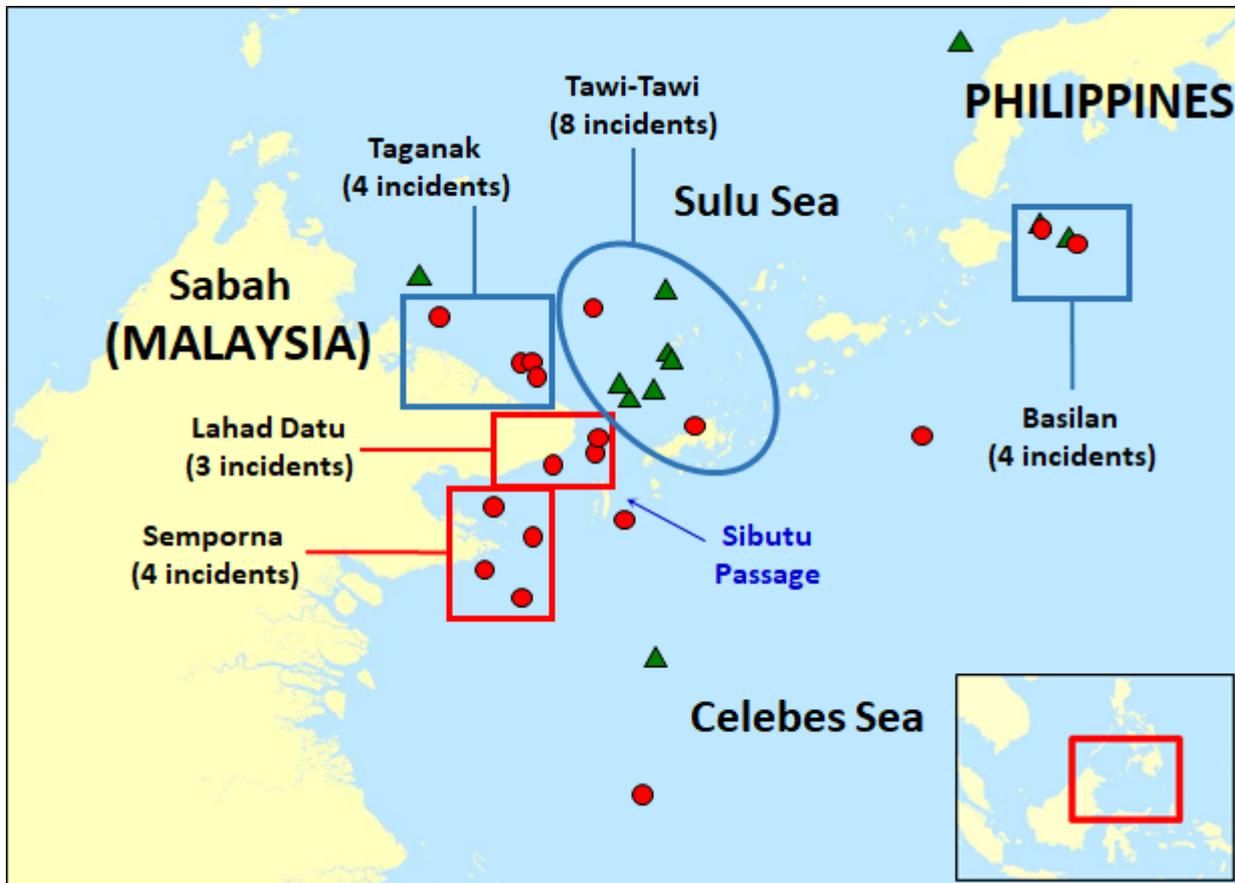
Location of incidents

#### Cluster of Incidents

Of the 29 incidents, there were incidents which occurred in close proximity to each other. The incidents are grouped in the following clusters (map below):

- off Tawi-Tawi, Philippines (8 incidents; 2 actual, 6 attempted)
- off Taganak, Philippines (4 incidents; 3 actual, 1 attempted)
- off Basilan, Philippines (4 incidents; 2 actuals, 2 attempted)
- off Semporna, East Malaysia (4 incidents; all actual)
- off Lahad Datu, East Malaysia (3 incidents; all actual)

Although the number of incidents in the cluster off Tawi-Tawi is the highest with eight incidents, six of these incidents were attempted incidents where the perpetrators were not successful in boarding the ships. Most of the attempted incidents occurred further away from the coast, and involved bigger ships who adopted evasive manoeuvres and successfully escaped away from the pursuing perpetrators' boats.



Cluster of Incidents

### Type of ships targeted

#### <Actual incidents>

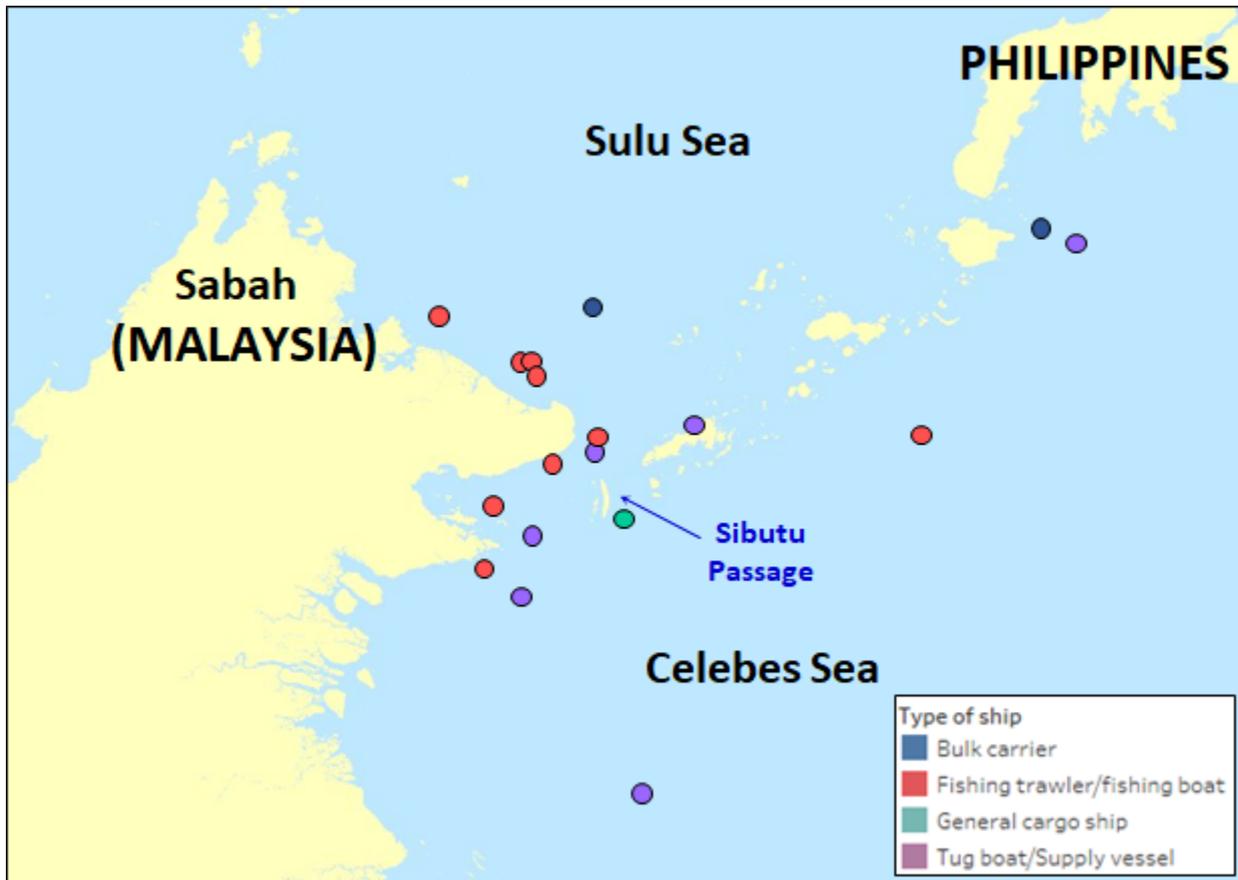
Tug boats and fishing boats were the main victims of abduction of crew, due to their slow speed and low freeboard. Of the 18 actual incidents, 15 tug boats and fishing boats were boarded by the perpetrators who abducted the crew. Among them, 9 incidents involved fishing trawlers/fishing boats and 6 incidents involved tug boats between 60 to 363 GT. The other 3 ships of actual incidents were 2 bulk carriers (less than 300 GT) and 1 general cargo ship (11,391GT).

#### <Attempted incidents>

There were 11 attempted incidents, involving bigger ships. These included 6 bulk carriers of 18,000-93,200 DT, 2 container ships, 1 product tanker (5,600 GT), 1 general cargo ship (1,600 GT) and 1 ferry boat.

### Type of ships vs Location of actual incidents

Of the 18 actual incidents, incidents involving tug boats (9) and fishing boats (6) mostly occurred in the northwest and southwest of the Sibutu Passage. Majority of these incidents occurred close to shore. The other 3 actual incidents involved 2 bulk carriers and 1 general cargo ship which took place further away from the shore. The map below shows the locations of abduction of crew of the 18 actual incidents.

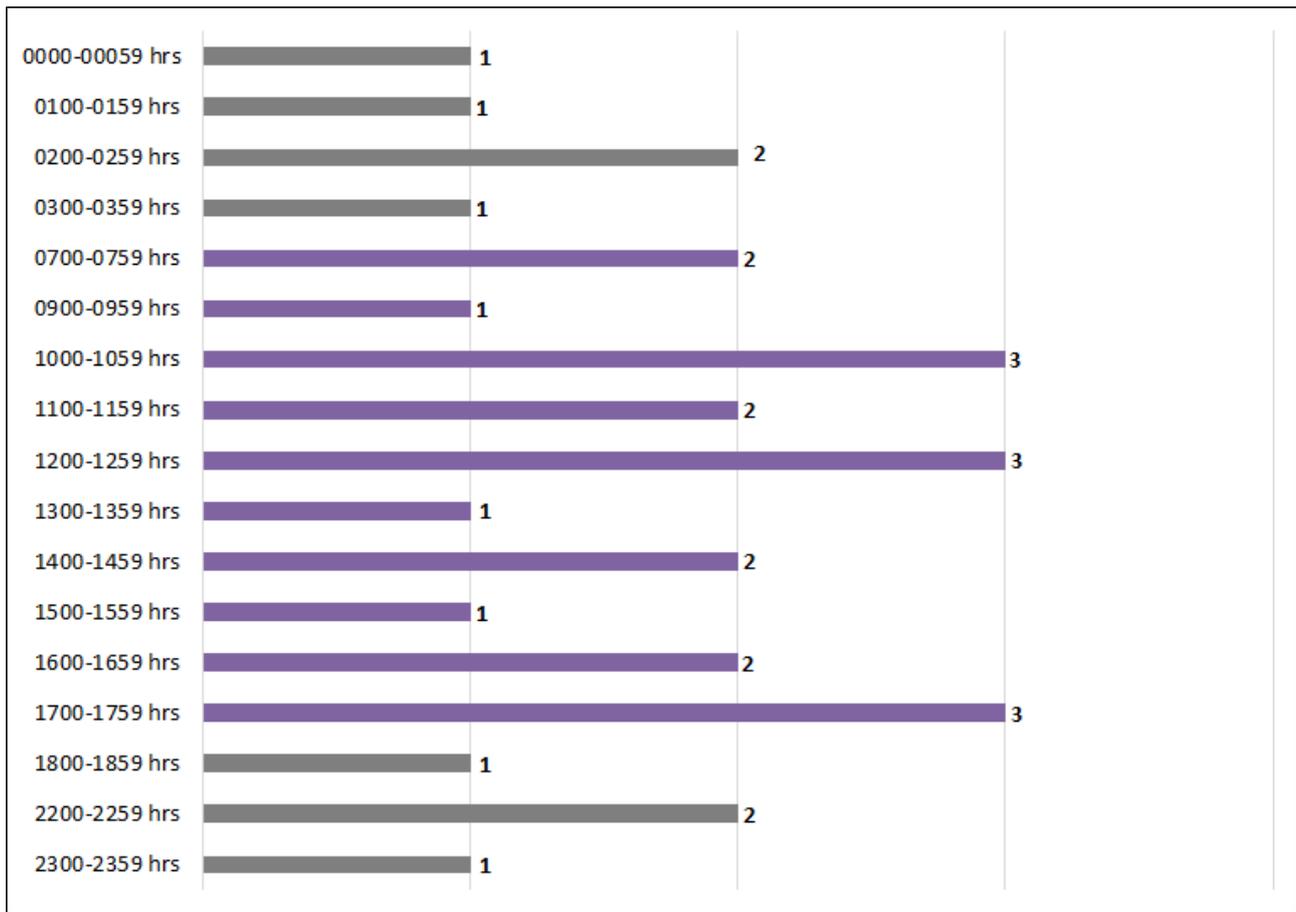


### Time of incidents

Of the 29 incidents reported, 20 incidents occurred during daylight hours (69%) and 9 incidents occurred during hours of darkness (31%). Among the 20 incidents reported during daylight hours, the frequently targeted hours were **1000-1059 hrs** (3 incidents), **1200-1259 hrs** (3 incidents) and **1700-1759 hrs** (3 incidents).

Contrary to the other incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia which take place mostly during hours of darkness, most of the incidents of abduction of crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and waters off Eastern Sabah have occurred during daylight hours.

The time of all the incidents are shown in chart next page.



**Time of incidents**

Motive of perpetrators

In the 18 actual incidents, the perpetrators abducted crew for ransom money. Three incidents reported that, in addition to abducting crew, perpetrators stole crew’s cash and personal belongings, ship GPS, VHF radio, navigational equipment and ship compass. It is clear that the main motive of the perpetrators is to abduct crew to demand ransom money.

Treatment of crew

In the 18 actual incidents, 75 crew were abducted in total. Among them, 65 crew were already released or rescued by the Philippine authorities and 10 crew were either killed or died. No crew was held in captivity.

Number of perpetrators and type of weapons

Of the 29 incidents, eight incidents involved groups of 5 men. The number of perpetrators in the other 20 incidents varied between 2 and 20 men. Most of the incidents involved perpetrators armed with firearms (26 incidents). The firearms were not discharged in most of the incidents except for three incidents where shots were fired; to force the victim ships to stop or to open the cabin doors or during a shoot-out between the perpetrators and the Philippine authorities.

## Type of boats used by perpetrators

In most incidents, the perpetrators used speed boats to chase after the victim ships. In the 18 actual incidents, 13 incidents reported that the perpetrators used speed boats, three incidents used jungkong pump boats, one used a motor banca and one with no information available. The speed boats used were of different colours such as grey, white, blue, green with white stripes, green and grey, white and blue, and orange and white.

[For latest update of the situation, refer to ReCAAP ISC website at [www.recaap.org](http://www.recaap.org).]

## **Case studies of past incidents**

To understand the modus operandi of the perpetrators, we share the following 4 cases of past incidents (2 actual incidents and 2 attempted incidents) that occurred during 2016-2018.

### Actual incidents

#### **General Cargo ship, *Dong Bang Giant No. 2* (20 Oct 16)**

On 20 Oct 16 at or about 1400 hrs, six armed perpetrators wearing black shirt boarded *Dong Bang Giant No.2* from a speed boat (green with white stripes) with 2 outboard motors. The perpetrators abducted the ship master (Korean) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> officer (Filipino) at approximately 7.7 nm southeast of Sibutu Island, Philippines, and headed towards Sibutu. The remaining crew were left on board the ship. A total of 20 crew comprising four Koreans and 16 Filipinos were on board the ship. The ship's last port of call was Australia and she was underway to the Republic of Korea at a speed of 8 knots when the incident occurred.

Upon notified about the incident, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) directed the Coast Guard District Southwestern Mindanao (CGDSWM) to take immediate action. The CGDSWM dispatched a PCG patrol craft DF-316 to proceed to the location of the incident; and coordinated with the Naval Forces of the Western Mindanao who immediately deployed one high-speed multipurpose attack craft with the Philippine Marines (PMAR) from Task Force Tawi-tawi on board to locate the abducted crew. At about 1830 hrs on 20 Oct 16, another PMAR team located *Dong Bang Giant No. 2* with the remaining crew on board, and escorted her back to Manila. The ship subsequently departed Manila for the Republic of Korea on 27 Oct 16. The two abducted crew was released on 14 Jan 17.

#### **Fishing boat *Sri Dewi 1* (11 Sep 18)**

While underway off Gaya Island, Semporna, Sabah, Malaysia, two masked perpetrators armed with M16 armalite rifles boarded *Sri Dewi 1* from a motor banca and abducted two crew on board. The perpetrators took the two crew in their boat and headed towards the vicinity waters of Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi, in the Philippines. One of the crew of F/B *Dwi Jaya 1*, sister boat of F/B *Sri Dewi 1*, reported the incident to Eastern Security Command (ESSCOM) in Malaysia. He reported that while he was resting inside the room of F/B *Dwi Jaya 1*, he noticed that the light of F/B *Sri Dewi 1* suddenly went off. When he was finding out what happened to the sister boat, he noticed some perpetrators equipped with M16 rifles on board. He hurriedly went into hiding and an hour later, he discovered that two Indonesian crew of F/B *Sri Dewi 1* were missing.

Fishing boats *Sri Dewi 1* and *Dwi Jaya 1* were manned by 15 crew/fishermen and had been on fishing venture in the seawaters of Pulau Gaya, Sabah for three days. At the time of the incident, there were only four crew left on board the two fishing boats while the other 11 crew went to mainland Semporna using light boats to deliver/dispose their fish catch. The two abducted crew was rescued by the Philippine authorities on 5 Dec 18 and 15 Jan 19 respectively.

### Attempted incidents

#### **Ferry boat *Doña Annabel* (18 Apr 17)**

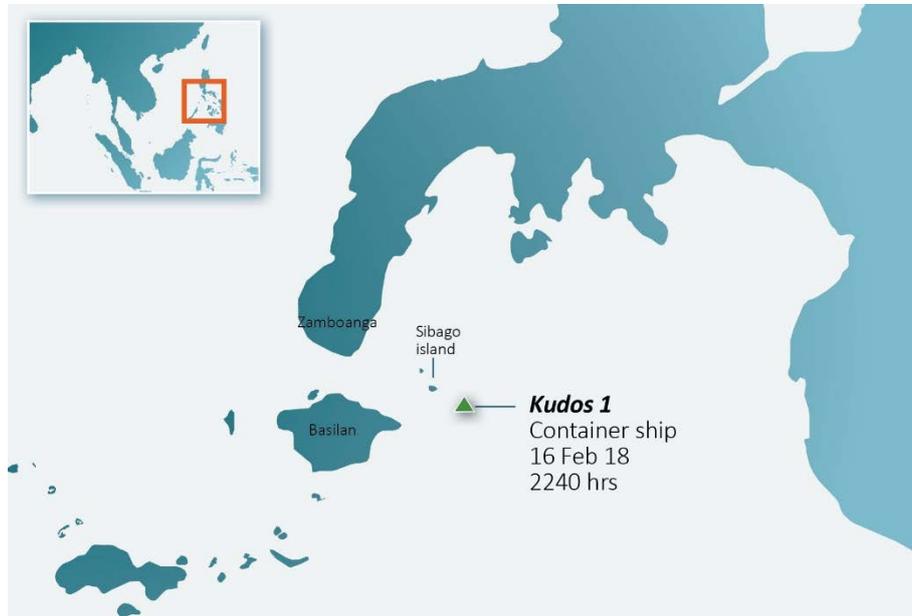
On 18 Apr 17, *Doña Annabel* was underway at approximately 14 nm northwest of Port Santa Maria, Siocon, Zamboanga Peninsula, Philippines when three fast boats surrounded and tried to approach the ferry. An unknown number of perpetrators wearing bonnets and armed with guns were on board the boats. The ship captain reported the incident to the PCG. Upon receipt of the distress call, the PCG immediately coordinated with the local authorities, and deployed its assets to conduct maritime patrol in the area. The Philippine Navy also deployed its assets and the Philippine Air Force deployed two Huey helicopters to the location of the incident. The authorities located the ship and rendered assistance to her until she arrived safely at the port of Zamboanga City, Philippines.



#### **Container ship *Kudos 1* (16 Feb 18)**

On 16 Feb 18, container ship, *Kudos 1* was underway at approximately 4.4 nm southeast of Sibago Island, province of Basilan, Philippines, when three motorized bancas with three perpetrators on board each banca manoeuvred to the portside amidship of *Kudos 1*. Armed with firearms, the perpetrators attempted to board the ship using ropes and hooks. The master and crew splashed hot water onto the perpetrators who opened fire at the ship for about two minutes and re-positioned themselves at about 400 to 500 meters away from the ship. The master also activated two flares. The perpetrators escaped quickly in the motorized bancas and sped heading towards Basilan. Three crew suffered minor injuries on their hands due to the glass debris from the ship's porthole mirror which was broken by the gun shots.

The Philippine authorities were alerted to the distress signal and immediately responded by deploying assets to the location of the incident. The PCG boarded the ship and provided medical treatment to the injured crew. The PCG and Philippine Navy escorted the ship safely towards the port of Zamboanga City.



### Information on the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

Most of the incidents of the abduction of crew from ships were claimed by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), an Islamic extremist Group based in southern Philippines. The ASG is responsible for the spate of said incidents wherein most of the kidnap victims were held in captivity in the inter lands of Sulu for ransom. The said group is known to utilize jungkong type of boats to prey on low freeboard and slow-moving ships.

In particular, the group operates within Sulu and Tawi tawi areas which are considered to be their lair. Allegedly, the ASG has strong networking with other lawless elements based in Malaysia and Indonesia. Recently, members of the group had pledged allegiance to Abu Bakar Baghdadi (ISIS).

### Annexes:

1. Notice to Mariners issued by the Philippines (NOTAM 148-2017 by Philippine Coast Guard)
2. Notice to Mariners issued by Malaysia (NOTAM 14 of 2017 by Marine Department of Malaysia, Sabah Region).
3. Establishment of Recommended Transit Corridor at Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait issued by the Philippine's Department of Transportation (Memorandum Circular Number 2017-002 dated 31 March 2017)



Department of Transportation and Communications  
**PUNONGHIMPILAN TANOD BAYBAYIN NG PILIPINAS**  
 (HEADQUARTERS PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD)  
 139 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Port Area  
 1018 Manila

12 September 2017

## NOTICE TO MARINERS NUMBER 148-2017

Notice is hereby given to all mariners and other parties concerned that:

1. Addendum to NOTAM NR 148-2017..
2. To read as, The Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) among Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines dated 14 July 2016 and the 3rd Joint Working Group Meeting (JWG) on TCA held in Jakarta, Indonesia on March 8-10, 2017, the three signatories to the TCA, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines agreed for the establishment of transit Corridors within the Area of Maritime Interest (AMI), which covers the common maritime areas. The transit corridors will serve as safety areas which will be patrolled by the three Countries to allow commercial traffic safe passage. The limit of the areas bounded by the following coordinates:

POINT ID	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	REMARKS
1	08 50 40 N	123 00 00 E	
2	05 59 36 N	119 48 59 E	SIBUTU CHANNEL
5	05 52 36 N	119 47 06 E	
6	05 07 45 N	119 35 02 E	
7	04 23 00 N	119 35 00 E	
11	04 28 08 N	119 42 00 E	
12	05 04 35 N	119 42 00 E	
13	05 56 30 N	119 56 00 E	
3	06 00 00 N	118 50 00 E	
4	05 52 36 N	118 57 34 E	
8	04 23 00 N	119 46 54 E	
9	06 13 33 N	122 27 00 E	
10	06 17 14 N	122 20 00 E	
14	07 32 43 N	121 43 00 E	
15	06 55 00 N	121 43 00 E	
16	06 40 00 N	122 20 00 E	
17	06 41 28 N	122 27 00 E	

18	06 56 28 N	121 50 00 E	
19	07 38 58 N	121 50 00 E	
20	08 41 16 N	123 00 00 E	

3. All vessels are required to render report to the following agencies at least 24 hours before entering the designated transit corridors and provide the complete ship's routing information:

AGENCY	EMAIL ADDRESS/CONTACT
National Coast Watch Center( NCWC)	<a href="mailto:ncwatchcenter@gmail.com">ncwatchcenter@gmail.com</a>
Coast Guard Action Center (CGAC), Philippine Coast Guard	<a href="mailto:cqac@coastguard.gov.ph">cqac@coastguard.gov.ph</a> +63 (917) 7243682 +63 (2) 5273877
Maritime Research Information Center (MRIC)	<a href="mailto:mric@nav.ph">mric@nav.ph</a> +63 (917) 7085248 +63 (2) 8431833

4. Before entering the transit corridors, the following reporting procedure shall be rendered to the nearest littoral monitoring station (lms):

"SECURITY, SECURITY... THIS IS (NAME OF VESSEL).

I AM ENTERING (NAME OF SEA LANE, EX: SIBUTU PASSAGE, BASILAN STRAIT, ETC.)

WITH A SPEED OF \_\_\_\_ AND COURSE \_\_\_\_.

PRESENT POSITION: (LATITUDE/LONGITUDE) OR AT VICINITY (NEAREST POINT OF REFERENCE)".

STATUS: (I.E. UNDERWAY, ALL IS WELL, UNDER ATTACK OR IN DISTRESS)

\* If under attack, request immediate assistance/rescue.

5. All vessels are also required to render posrep and sitrep as they enter the transit corridors, and every hour or as necessary.

6. For strict compliance

**FOR THE OFFICER - IN - CHARGE, PCG:**

*LLM*  
**DONETTE A DOLINA**  
**CDR PCG (LL.M.)**  
 Deputy Chief of Coast Guard Staff  
 for Maritime Safety Services (CG-8)



1. All vessels are required to render report to National Coast Watch Center (NCWC), LMS Bongao, MCC Philippines, CGAC, NOC, MCC Malaysia and MCC Indonesia at least 24 hours before arrival at the designated maritime areas of common concern, with complete ship's routing information.

AGENCY	EMAIL ADDRESS/CONTACT
National Coast Watch Center (NCWC)	<a href="mailto:ncwatchcenter@gmail.com">ncwatchcenter@gmail.com</a> +63 (2) 2413104
Naval Operation Center (NOC), Philippine Navy	<a href="mailto:noc@nav.ph">noc@nav.ph</a> <a href="mailto:hpn.noc@navy.mil.ph">hpn.noc@navy.mil.ph</a> +63 (917) 8512708 +63 (2) 5244981
Coast Guard Action Center (CGAC), Philippine Coast Guard	<a href="mailto:cgac@coastguard.gov.ph">cgac@coastguard.gov.ph</a> +63 (917) 7243682 +63 (2) 5273877
Naval Forces Western Mindanao Operation Center	<a href="mailto:nfwm.nfoc@navy.mil.ph">nfwm.nfoc@navy.mil.ph</a> <a href="mailto:nfoc.wm@gmail.com">nfoc.wm@gmail.com</a> +63 (917) 6860681
Maritime Research Information Center (MRIC)	<a href="mailto:mric@nav.ph">mric@nav.ph</a> +63 (917)7085248 +63 (2) 8431833
Maritime Command Center (MCC), Tawau MALAYSIA	<a href="mailto:mcctawau2@gmail.com">mcctawau2@gmail.com</a> +6089 775600 +6089 779777 +6089 982623 (5.00 pm-8.00am)
Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM) Malaysia	<a href="mailto:bilikgerakan_esscom@jpm.gov.my">bilikgerakan_esscom@jpm.gov.my</a> +6089 863181
Marine Department Malaysia, Sabah Region	<a href="mailto:aisjlsbh@marine.gov.my">aisjlsbh@marine.gov.my</a> +6088 401111
Maritime Command Center (MCC), Tarakan INDONESIA	<a href="mailto:mcctarakan2@gmail.com">mcctarakan2@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:mcc_tarakan@tnial.mid.id">mcc_tarakan@tnial.mid.id</a> +625513806288 +625513806289



2. The following reporting procedure shall be rendered upon entering the maritime areas of common concern upon establishment of voice radio contact with the monitoring station:

*“SECURITY, SECURITY... THIS IS (NAME OF VESSEL).*

*I AM ENTERING (NAME OF SEA LANE, EX: SIBUTU PASSAGE, ALICE CHANNEL, ETC.)*

*WITH A SPEED OF \_\_\_\_ AND COURSE \_\_\_\_.*

*PRESENT POSITION: (LATITUDE/LONGITUDE) OR AT VICINITY (NEAREST POINT OF REFERENCE)”*

*STATUS: (I.E. UNDERWAY, ALL IS WELL, UNDER ATTACK OR IN DISTRESS)*

*\* IF UNDER ATTACK, REQUEST IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE/RESCUE.*

3. All vessels are further required to pass through the designated transit corridors/sea lanes, with the following coordinates:

Point ID	Latitude	Longitude
1	06 09 15.8 N	119 59 46.0 E
2	05 59 36.0 N	119 48 59.0 E
3	05 59 36.0 N	118 27 08.3 E
4	05 21 00.0 N	119 21 30.0 E
5	04 44 59.0 N	118 56 30.0 E
6	04 03 30.0 N	118 56 30.0 E
9	03 56 30.0 N	118 56 30.0 E
16	03 59 14.0 N	119 00 30.0 E
17	04 39 43.0 N	119 00 30.0 E
7	04 03 00.0 N	118 27 21.5 E
8	03 56 00.0 N	118 22 30.0 E
10	03 44 12.5 N	118 38 46.8 E
11	03 39 48.6 N	118 44 51.1 E
12	04 52 45.7 N	120 30 00.0 E
13	05 01 16.7 N	120 30 00.0 E
14	04 28 08.0 N	119 42 00.0 E

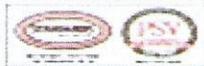


15	04 23 16.0 N	119 35 00.0 E
23	05 04 35.0 N	119 35 02.0 E
24	05 04 35.0 N	119 42 00.0 E
18	05 19 00.0 N	119 28 37.0 E
19	05 25 04.0 N	119 28 37.0 E
20	05 52 36.0 N	118 49 51.9 E
21	05 52 36.0 N	119 47 06.0 E
22	05 07 45.0 N	119 35 02.0 E
25	05 56 30.0 N	119 56 00.0 E
26	06 05 08.0 N	120 05 38.5 E

4. All vessels are also required to render POSREP and SITREP as they enter the maritime areas of common concern, and every hour or as necessary.

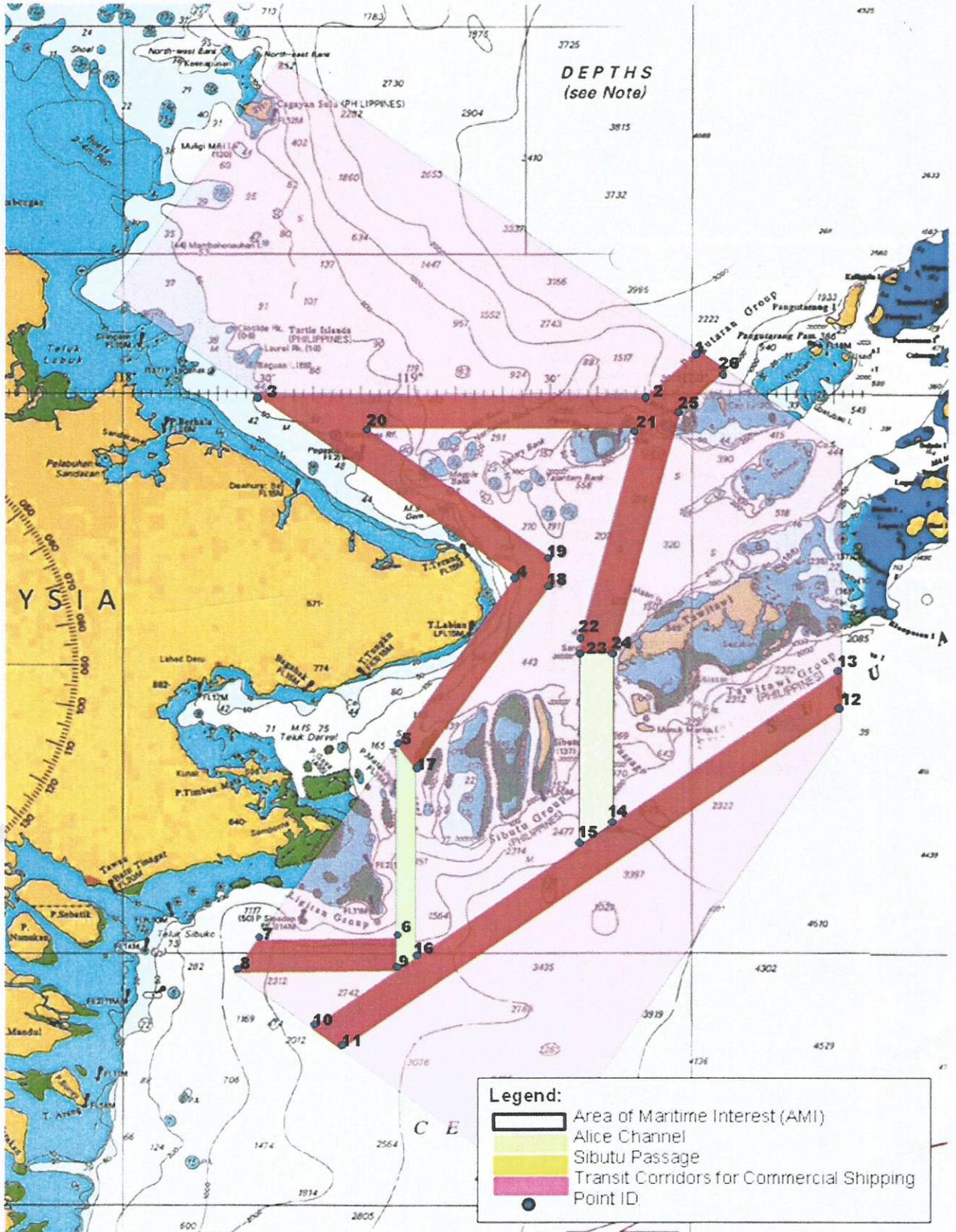


**(NORJIPIN BIN SAIDI)**  
For Director of Marine, Sabah Region  
Marine Department of Malaysia  
Dated : 14<sup>th</sup> August 2017



# ENCLOSURE

## Transit Corridor for Commercial Shipping







31 March 2017

Department  
**MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR**  
Number 2017-002

**ESTABLISHMENT OF RECOMMENDED TRANSIT CORRIDOR  
AT MORO GULF AND BASILAN STRAIT**

**I. AUTHORITY:**

- a. R.A. 9993 (The Philippine Coast Guard of 2009)
- b. Rule 3(K) of the Implementing Rules and Regulation of RA 9993
- c. Section 2 (iii) of Memorandum Order No 4, s. 2016

**II. REFERENCES:**

- a. Philippine Coast Pilot, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 1995.
- b. Regulation V/8 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974/1978
- c. Convention on the International Regulation for preventing Collision at Sea, 1972 as amended
- d. IMO SN.1/Circ.281 dated 03 August 2009
- e. UNCLOS 82
- f. SUA Convention

**III. PURPOSE:**

This circular aims to address the increasing threats to shipping in the areas of Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait by providing a recommended transit corridor and measures to prevent or suppress acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships transiting said maritime areas.

**IV. SCOPE:**

This circular shall apply to all vessels including fishing boats, sailing vessels, and motorized bancas, transiting Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait, except government vessels utilized for maritime law enforcement.

**V. DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

- A. Recommended Transit Corridor – a route which has been designated for transiting of vessels to reduce the risk of collision, provide a measure of traffic separation, and minimize threats such as piracy/ armed robbery.
- B. Transit Lane - an area within defined limits in which one-way traffic is established.

- C. Recommended Track - a route, which has been specially examined to ensure as far as possible that it is free of dangers and along which are advised to navigate.
- D. Precautionary Area - an area within defined limits where ships must navigate with particular caution.
- E. High Risk Area – an area within defined limits in which enemies and lawless elements proliferate and which should be avoided by all ships.
- F. Established Direction of traffic flow - A traffic pattern indicating the directional movement of traffic as established within a traffic separation scheme.
- G. Armed robbery against ships – means any unlawful act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against any persons or property on board such a ship, within a State's internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea.
- H. Piracy at sea - any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a ship.

**VI. CONCEPT:**

- A. The Recommended Transit Corridor (RTC) is not a Traffic Separation Scheme, nor is it marked with navigational aids that vessels are to comply with the requirements of the International Regulations for the Preventions of Collisions at Sea at all times. The premise behind the RTC is to provide PCG and other law enforcement units' awareness over the operating environment in and around areas of Moro Gulf and Basilan Strait by designating transit areas where vessels can be easily monitored and law enforcement units are deployed nearby.
- B. The RTC shall be reflected on the NAMRIA Chart 4511 and Chart 4708.
- C. The corridor includes the creation of separate inbound and outbound transit lanes. Each lane will be 1 nm wide and will be separated by a 0.50 nm buffer zone.
- D. The Inbound Transit Lane of the Basilan Strait and Moro Gulf shall be established by connecting the following geographical position:

**INBOUND TRANSIT LANE:**

Point (A)	Lat 6° 51' 2.00"N	Long 122° 12' 54.51"E
Point (B)	Lat 6° 42' 5.93"N	Long 122° 23' 54.15"E
Point (C)	Lat 5° 54' 46.76"N	Long 124° 29' 42.18"E
Point (D)	Lat 5° 54' 2.54"N	Long 124° 29' 19.18"E
Point (E)	Lat 6° 41' 15.56"N	Long 122° 23' 34.72"E

Point (F) Lat 6° 50' 32.79"N Long 122° 12' 10.27"E

- E. The Outbound Transit Lane of the Basilan Strait and Moro Gulf shall be established by connecting the following geographical position:

**OUTBOUND TRANSIT LANE:**

Point (G)	Lat 6° 50' 17.18"N	Long 122° 11' 44.76"E
Point (H)	Lat 6° 40' 42.56"N	Long 122° 23' 31.19"E
Point (I)	Lat 5° 53' 39.11"N	Long 124° 29' 6.46"E
Point (J)	Lat 5° 52' 58.10"N	Long 124° 28' 42.20"E
Point (K)	Lat 6° 39' 54.05"N	Long 122° 23' 15.07"E
Point (L)	Lat 6° 49' 44.95"N	Long 122° 10' 56.47"E

**VII. RULES OF PASSAGE:**

**A vessel navigating in the Recommended Transit Corridor (RTC) shall:**

1. Notify the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) thru radio communications at least six (6) hours before entering the RTC (See Annex 1 for the reporting format).
2. Proceed within the appropriate transit lane in the general established direction of traffic flow for that lane;
3. Keep clear of the buffer zone;
4. Not engage in fishing or other recreational activities;
5. Not impede the passage of any vessel following the traffic lane;
6. Switch on the Automatic Identification System (AIS) onboard for monitoring.
7. Acknowledge the Radio challenges by authorities.
8. Report all observed suspicious activities to the authorities and to other vessels transiting the area.
9. If less than 20 meters in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the safe passage of a power driven following the traffic lane;
10. If restricted her ability to maneuver and engaged in the maintenance of safety of navigation in the TSS, be exempted from complying with this rule to the extent necessary to carry out the operation;
11. If restricted in her ability to maneuver and engaged in laying, servicing, or picking up of a submarine cable within the TSS, be exempted from complying with this rule to the extent necessary to

carry out the operation upon giving report or prior notice to PCG monitoring the TSS.

12. Steer toward safe area and out of RTC and display the necessary lights during night time and shapes during daytime if the vessel encounters defective propulsion, defective steering, inoperative navigation running lights, impaired maneuverability, defective navigational equipment and other similar condition, that may impair its navigation, reduce its capabilities or affect the safety of other vessels.
13. Proceed at full or maximum speed while navigating along the RTC or as recommended by PCG authorities.
14. Secure all access doors to avoid entry of armed robbers or pirates.

### **VIII. PROTOCOL IN THE RTC IN CASES OF EMERGENCY:**

**A.** In cases of piracy or armed robbery following are the recommended actions:

#### **1. Suspicious Vessel in the Vicinity:**

- a) If not in full speed, increase to maximum speed to open the Closest Point of Approach (CPA);
- b) Contact the PCG that an attack might be about to take place; and
- c) Alert other ships in the vicinity

#### **2. Approach Stage:**

- a) Sound the general alarm and make a "Pirate Attack" announcement;
- b) Report the attack to the PCG;
- c) Activate the Ship Security Alarm System;
- d) Send a distress message via DSC and INMARSAT C as applicable to alert other ships in the vicinity;
- e) Ensure AIS is switched ON;
- f) Muster the crew except those that are required on the bridge or engine room, at either the Safe Muster Point or in the Citadel (if available);
- g) If possible, alter course to open the CPA. Consider a course to increase the effect of the wind or waves on the approaching vessel;
- h) Activate self-defensive measures; and
- i) Ensure all external doors are fully secured

#### **3. Attack Stage:**

- a) Reconfirm all personnel are in a position of safety;
- b) Manuever as practicable with small helm alteration to make it difficult for the pirates/armed robbers to board; and

- c) Activate fire hoses and water cannons to deflect the pirates/armed robbers.

**4. Pirates/Armed Robbers on Board:**

- a) Try to maintain calm;
- b) Before pirates/armed robbers reach the bridge, inform the PCG, ensure that Ship Security Alert System has been activated and AIS turned ON;
- c) Offer no resistance to the pirates once they reach the bridge;
- d) Leave the CCTV running; and
- e) If the bridge/engine is to be evacuated, the main engine should be stopped. All remaining crew should proceed to the designated Safe Muster Point with their hands visible

**5. If PCG Law Enforcers or Military Forces Intervene:**

- a) All personnel should keep low to the deck and cover their heads with both hands and ensure hands are clearly visible. Make no movements that could be interpreted as being aggressive;
- b) Do not use flash photography;
- c) Be prepared to prove your identity;
- d) Cooperate fully during PCG/military action onboard

- B.** In case of engine or machinery breakdown, immediately notify the nearest PCG stations or the Coast Guard Action Center.

**IX. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**A.** Master of the vessel shall:

1. Ensure the safety and security of the crew and vessel;
2. Conduct regular security drills and exercise at least once in every 3 months;
3. Ensure that all crew members are aware of the ship security plans or emergency response procedures;
4. Ensure that the ship to shore communication methods are tested and report to the PCG prior entering the high risk area;
5. Double up bridge watches, look outs and maintain vigilance when entering RTC; and
6. Undertake evasive manoeuvre or initiate other response procedures in case of piracy or armed robbery attack.

**B.** Ship owner shall:

1. Report attempted, piracy or armed robbery attacks to the PCG; and
2. Provide ship security plan and written procedures on how to prevent or suppress attacks of pirates and armed robbers.

C. Commander, Coast Guard District South Western Mindanao (CGDSWM) and Commander, Coast Guard District South Eastern Mindanao (CGDSEM) shall:

1. Dispatch PCG vessels for constant maritime patrol in the RTC;
2. Immediately inform Headquarters PCG of any piracy attacks/ armed robbery or attempts of piracy/ armed robbery;
3. Coordinate with other law enforcement agency for security augmentation in the area; and
4. Investigate all piracy and armed robbery incidents and submit necessary reports and recommendations.

D. Station Commanders under CGDSWM shall:

1. Monitor movement of vessels and maintain constant communication to the Master of the vessel while transiting the RTC;
2. Immediately inform Commander, CGDSWM of any of piracy attacks or attempts of piracy;
3. Provide security and maritime patrol within the RTC;
4. Alert all substations in case of piracy attacks or any unusual incidents; and
5. Immediately respond to any reported piracy or armed robbery attacks.

E. Deputy Chief of Coast Guard Staff for Operations, CG-3/Coast Guard Action Center (CGAC) shall:

1. Inform and update the Secretary of Department of Transportation (SOTr) of any piracy and armed robbery attacks;
2. Alert all available PCG air and floating assets for dispatch; and
3. Coordinate with the other law enforcement agencies.

**X. EFFECTIVITY:**

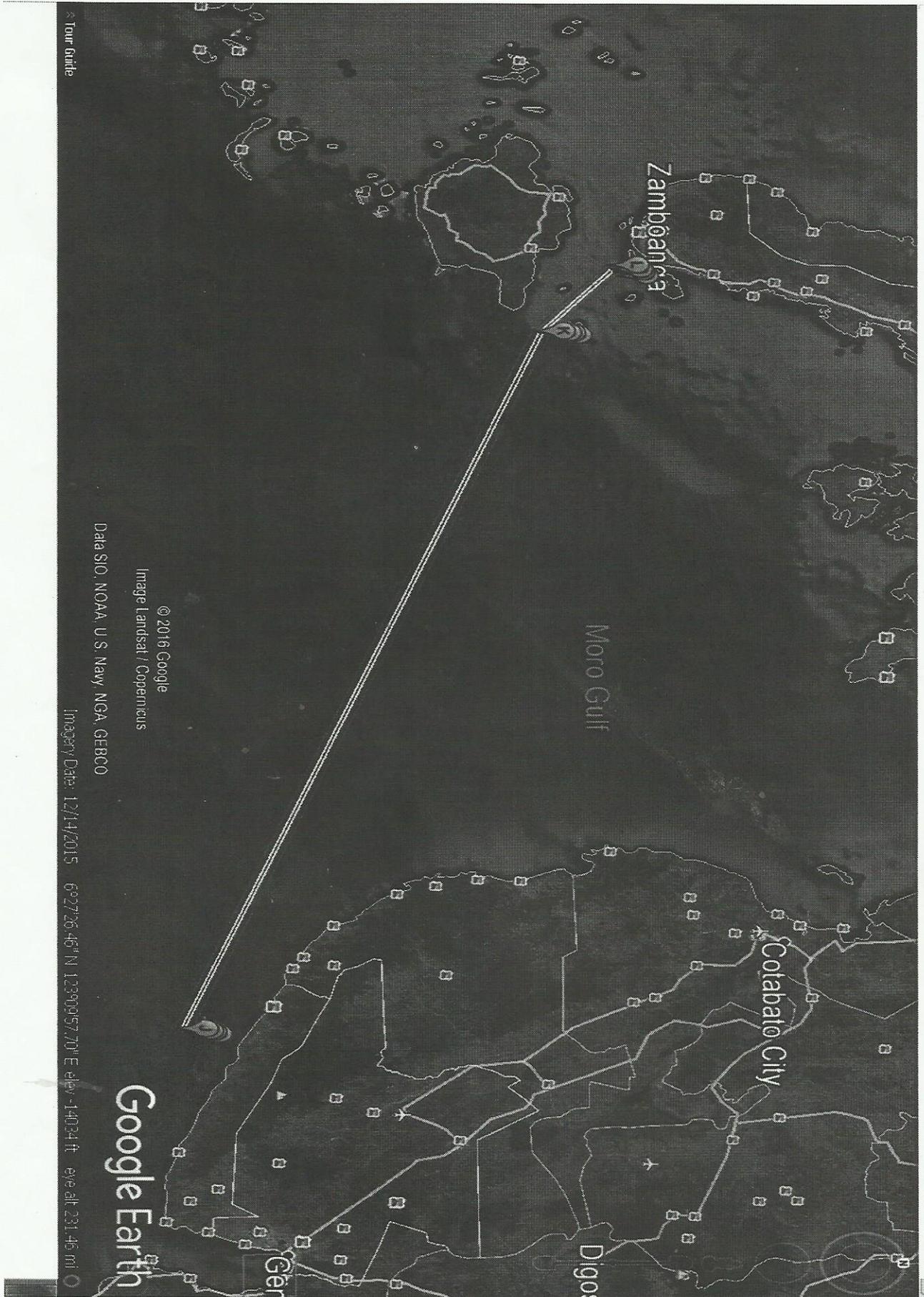
This circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation and upon filing of three (3) certified copies thereof with the University of the Philippines Law Center.

**ARTHUR P. TUGADE**

Secretary, DOTr



DOTC-OSEC OUTGOING 17-00618



Annex 2