

15 February 2019

Detention of vessels by Indonesian Authorities in Singapore Straits

The Association has been informed that a number of vessels, anchored near Batam (on the Southern side of the Singapore Strait), have recently been detained by the Indonesian Navy, Customs and/or Coast Guard on the grounds that the vessels were allegedly anchored without the consent of the Indonesian Authorities.

The Indonesian Authorities have reportedly told media sources that the detentions are part of efforts to combat smuggling. An [English](#) translation of the legislation (and [Bahasa Indonesia explanation](#)), on which authority for the detentions is allegedly based, is available to view on our website. This legislation has apparently been in force since May 2008 but has not generally been enforced until now.

Several observers have commented that the detentions may actually be related to a territorial dispute regarding port limits at the eastern Tuas port area of Singapore.

Recommendation

Releasing a ship detained in these circumstances may be a difficult and time consuming process and therefore, to avoid the risk of detention, we recommend that Members should avoid waiting at Eastern Outside Port Limits (EOPL) Singapore or anchoring at other customary non-designated anchorages in Indonesian territorial waters within the Malacca straits, without having first gained express approval from the relevant Indonesian Authorities.