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RESCUE FROM ILLEGAL ENTRY VESSEL NEAR CHRISTMAS ISLAND

NOTES TAKEN FROM AusSAR INCIDENT FILE - SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION BY VOICE RECORDINGS AND RELIANCE CAN ONLY BE PLACED ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS OR VOICE RECORDINGS

2.48 pm Saturday 25/8 (250448UTC) Coastwatch advised sighting of vessel 55 nautical miles west north-west of Christmas Island. Vessel appeared to have in excess of 80 people on board and seemed to be "dead in the water". The AFP at Christmas Island are involved. Report for information only.

6.34 pm Saturday 25/8 (250834UTC) Report from Coastwatch indicating one of their aircraft reported at 6pm Saturday (250800UTC) in position 09 35S 105 14E a vessel with approximately 200 plus people on board. People appeared to be in distress (waving lifejackets and paddling with planks). The vessel was described. [REDACTED]

6.45 pm Saturday 25/8 (250845UTC) AusSAR contacted Coastwatch and requested if vessel was in distress. Coastwatch advised that they had had an aircraft overhead for 2 hours but the vessel did not indicate that it was in distress. Coastwatch unable to communicate with vessel. Aircraft now at Christmas Island and will be tasked to investigate tomorrow.

7.00 pm Saturday 25/8 (250900UTC) Fax to Indonesian SAR Authority, copy to Coastwatch, advising vessel requiring assistance at location 09 35S 105 14E, unable to communicate with vessel and passing coordination to Indonesian SAR Authority. Requested confirmation of fax.

9.05 pm Saturday 25/8 (250905UTC) Fax from Coastwatch with details of Coastwatch sightings.

3.00 am Sunday 26/8 (251700UTC) Coastwatch advised that [REDACTED], the Head of AFP's people smuggling team was concerned about this vessel. AusSAR told him the vessel has the right of passage until there are signs of distress. In that situation, AusSAR would pass details to Coastwatch. Coastwatch advised location of vessel, that it seemed dead in the water and no signs of distress. It was still outside our Search and Rescue Region and in Indonesia's SRR, and if there was a distress, would advise Indonesia. (This telephone log appears at folio 2 of the file and at this stage, we have not been able to locate the voice recording - to be checked further).

10 am Sunday 26/8 (260000UTC) Called Coastwatch and discussed the availability of vessels via AUSREP and broadcasts if the vessel was in distress. Discussed issue of DFAT assistance.

10.15 am Sunday 26/8 (260015UTC) DFAT advised that they will contact Indonesia to get them to respond to incident.

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10.27 am Sunday 26/8 (260027UTC) Australian Embassy in Indonesia advised that RCC should talk to DIMA and AFP about incident.

11.17 am Sunday 26/8 (260117UTC) AusSAR contacted [REDACTED] (Defence Attaché, Indonesia) regarding vessel and seeking views on possible assistance.

11.21 am Sunday 26/8 (260121UTC) Contacted Coastwatch to request an update of the vessel position. Coastwatch indicated would inform us when they had a position.

12.26 pm Sunday 26/8 (260226UTC) AusSAR received advice from Coastwatch via Airservices Australia of vessel position (09 32.5S 104 44E) and that it was in distress with SOS and HELP written on roof, 80 persons on Board.

12.30 pm Sunday 26/8 (260230 UTC) AusSAR undertook surface picture (based on AUSREP data) although outside Australia's Search and Rescue Region and AUSREP area. Two ships were identified as possible rescue vessels. The Tampa and the Marivia.

12.32 pm Sunday 26/8 (260232UTC) Asked Coastwatch for further information on incident.

12.46 pm Sunday 26/8 (260246UTC) Call from DIMA, asked if those vessels that respond to AusSAR broadcast can tow the stranded vessel to Indonesia. RCC would get back to DIMA when have more information.

12.46 pm Sunday 26/8 (260246UTC) AusSAR provided details of incident to [REDACTED] Australian Defence Attaché, Indonesia) and asked for [REDACTED] to pass on details to Indonesian SAR Authority.

12.47 pm Sunday 26/8 (260247UTC) Advised Indonesian SAR Authority by fax of incident and sought to transfer coordination to Indonesia (within Indonesian Search and Rescue Region). Asked for acknowledgement.

~~12.48 pm Sunday 26/8 (260248UTC) Broadcast to shipping issued notifying of distressed vessel. Copied to Defence, Indonesian SAR Authority and Coastwatch.~~

1.05 pm Sunday 26/8 (260305UTC) Information provided by Coastwatch on vessel, 80 plus people on board and weather conditions.

1.12pm Sunday (260312UTC) Call from Coastwatch and discussed aircraft flights in that area. Coastwatch confirm vessel seems stable and that aircraft will relocate before returning.

1.45 pm Sunday 26/8 (260345UTC) M/V Tampa responded to broadcast and advised the vessel had altered course for position of incident. ETA 5.30 pm Sunday (260730UTC).

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2.05 pm Sunday 26/8 (260405UTC) Call to Indonesian SAR Authority to see if they got fax regarding incident. They acknowledge fax and accept coordination for incident. (Transcript provided).

2.09 pm Sunday 26/8 (260409UTC) Advice from Defence Maritime Headquarters that no assets close.

2.18pm Sunday 26/8 (260418UTC) Advice from Tampa that changing course and heading to incident, ETA 5.30pm (260730UTC).

2.22 pm Sunday 26/8 (260422UTC) Container ship Olivia responded to broadcast and advised they had altered course with an ETA of 6.20pm (260820UTC), (50 minutes after the ETA of the Tampa).

2.28 pm Sunday 26/8 (260428UTC) Advised both Tampa and Olivia and Indonesian Authority that Indonesian SAR Authority is coordinating and provided contact details to vessels and Indonesian SAR Authority.

3.42 pm Sunday 26/8 (260542UTC) Call from DIMA asking whether RCC can keep in contact with both vessels for situation reports. Advised yes.

4.59 pm Sunday 26/8 (260659UTC) Kagoshima Maru (Japanese fishing training vessel) responded to broadcast with an ETA of 7.30pm (260930UTC).

5.15 pm Sunday 26/8 (260715UTC) Advised Kagoshima Maru that Indonesian SAR Authority is coordinating and provided contact details to vessel and Indonesian SAR Authority.

5.18pm Sunday 26/8 (260718UTC) Asked Tampa to advise when on scene, also advised Kagoshima Maru responding and that Indonesian SAR Authority coordinating incident.

7.38 pm Sunday 26/8 (260938UTC) Advised DIMA that waiting on responding ships to get to incident scene.

~~8.40 pm Sunday 26/8 (261040UTC) Olivia arrived on scene and advised the Tampa was conducting the rescue, had picked up 434 persons. M/V Olivia released from scene by Tampa.~~

8.41 pm Sunday 26/8 (261041UTC) Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Stavanger (Norway) rang AusSAR and advised that Tampa had picked up 434 persons and that it was enroute to Merak with an ETA of 9 hours. Indicated to JRCC that Indonesia had coordination. (Transcript provided).

8.43 pm Sunday 26/8 (261043UTC) Voice call to Tampa. RCC asked Tampa what intentions are. Tampa advised that they talked to Indonesia SAR Authority and they indicated should proceed to Merak in Indonesia. Tampa given an ultimatum that survivors wished to go to Christmas Island. RCC

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