

Chronology Of Hijacking Of MT Orkim Harmony Bernama June 19, 2015

KUALA LUMPUR, June 19 (Bernama) -- The nation was recently rocked by the news of the disappearance of tanker MT Orkim Harmony east of Tanjung Sedili, Kota Tinggi last Thursday.

The tanker, owned by Syarikat Magna Meridian Sdn Bhd, was carrying 22 crew members comprising 16 Malaysians, five Indonesians and one Myanmar national.

Following the incident, the Royal Malaysian Navy and the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) as well as several other agencies involving several countries conducted a search-and-rescue operation.

The following is the chronology of the loss of MT Orkim Harmony:

*June 11, 2015 - MT Orkim Harmony lost communications with base at 8.57 pm east of Tanjung Sedili, Kota Tinggi, in Johor. No emergency calls were received from the vessel.

*June 14, 2015 - The Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) confirmed receiving a report of a tanker carrying 6,000 metric tonnes of RON95 petrol travelling from Melaka to Kuantan Port going missing 30 nautical miles east of Tanjung Sedili, Kota Tinggi .

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak ordered all assets and facilities to be mobilised to track down the tanker.

*June 15, 2015 - The Navy and MMEA extend the search for the tanker to cover 4,000 square nautical miles.

At the same time, MMEA Deputy Director-General (Operations) Maritime Vice-Admiral Datuk Ahmad Puzi Ab Kahar declared the loss of the ship was due to piracy.

*June 16, 2015 - Two Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) and an MMEA aircraft were ordered to track down the tanker.

*June 17 2015 - Malaysia heats up the search by using satellite technology assistance from several neighbouring countries to determine the last-known location of the tanker.

At 3.45 pm, a P3C Orion belonging to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) located the tanker at 210 nautical miles off Redang Island.

*June 18 2015 - The missing MT Orkim Harmony was located in Cambodian waters and shadowed by RMAF, MMEA and RAAF aircraft.

The tanker was found safe, with its name changed to 'Kim Harmon' and its chimney painted black.

Malaysia's Navy then took over the SAR and contacted the hijackers via radio, instructing them to release the 22 crew members.

The Navy also confirmed that there were eight hijackers armed with pistols and parangs on the tanker and it was holding talks with the hijackers to release the crew and to surrender.

At 11 pm, the hijackers changed the tanker's course towards Natuna Island, Indonesia.

*June 19, 2015 - MMEA confirmed that all 22 crew of the MT Orkim Harmony were released at about 2.30 am and the tanker was being taken to Kuantan Port, escorted by KD Handalan and due to arrive at 2 am tomorrow (June 20).

The Navy also confirmed the tanker's cook, an Indonesian, was shot in his left thigh when the tanker was seized, and was taken to the Universiti Sains Malaysia Hospital (HUSM) in Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, at 10.15 am today. His condition is reported to be stable.

Three aircraft - a P-3C Orion, a C130 and a Beechcraft were sent to track down the hijackers who escaped from the MT Orkim Harmony.

Eight Indonesian men believed to be the hijackers were detained by the Vietnamese authorities near Tho Chu Island, south Vietnam while trying to escape the hunt at 6.30 am.

The Navy and MMEA are still seeking confirmation from the Vietnamese authorities whether the eight men were the hijackers of the Malaysian tanker.

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