



Malaysian Detentions – March 2021

Spica Services Malaysia reports that the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) has in the last few days launched an operation named 'Operation Jangkar Haram', which translates to operation anchoring illegally.

The MMEA is officially urging merchant ship owners to seek permission to anchor in the eastern waters of Johor (South China Sea). Failure to do so it is reported, will result in them being ordered out of the area. Johor Maritime Director, Nurul Hizam Zakaria, said the MMEA would not hesitate to take action against merchant ships which anchored illegally in the eastern waters of Johor and, since March 24th, 31 merchant ships anchored without the permission of the Director of the Marine Department have been detained through Op Jangkar Haram. The reasons for those ships being detained, as opposed to being warned, is unknown.

In support of these actions, the MMEA appears to be using territorial limits prescribed by a 1979 chart. In the waters of Southern Johore, often inaccurately referred to as Singapore OPL East, these territorial limits are as much as 60 Nautical Miles offshore.

Those vessels detained will in all likelihood be charged in Court and where found guilty, fines levied. Whilst the fines levied have historically been modest, typically in the region of MYR50,000 per offence (US\$12,000), release procedures typically take Weeks to conclude.

Should Owners and Operators require additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Spica Services Malaysia, or Spica Services Singapore, on the details shown below.

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