

# Troops foil piracy attack

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Government forces foiled a piracy attack off the waters of Sibago Island, Basilan province on Friday evening, involving gunmen who tried to board a bulk carrier passing through the area.

The Philippine Coast Guard said some crew members of the bulk carrier, MV Kudos, suffered minor cuts and bruises from broken glass when the attackers fired upon the steel-hulled vessel.

Coast Guard spokesperson Capt. Armand Balilo said the pirates failed to seize any of the ship's 27 crew members as the Coast Guard and Philippine Navy were able to respond quickly to the Kudos' distress call.

"The crew foiled the attempt of the gunmen to board their vessel by splashing boiling water on them as they attempted to climb up," Balilo said on Saturday.

## Maiden voyage

The foiled pirate attack happened on Friday night, as the Kudos was about 4.4 nautical miles southeast of Sibago Island in Basilan.

Lt. Cmdr. Alvin Dagalea, of the Coast Guard Zamboanga station, said the Kudos, a bulk carrier, was loaded with steel bars and was on its maiden voyage from Davao to Manila.

The ship captain noticed on the radar that two smaller vessels seemed to be tailing the Kudos, Dagalea said.

Armed men from two wooden-hulled boats tried to board the vessel, but the captain of the ship, in an attempt to deflect the attack, suddenly steered to the left.

The members of the Kudos crew splashed boiling water on their attackers, forcing the gunmen to jump back into their boats and fire at the Kudos.

## Flares

The ship captain lit flares five times as a distress call to authorities and help them easily locate the ship.

Dagalea said the Kudos suffered minor damage as some glass doors were hit by bullets.

Upon receiving the ship's distress call, the Coast Guard, Navy, the Philippine Air Force and the Philippine National Police conducted a joint operation to pursue the pirates. INQ

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