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IFSMA

NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice

LOW SEA ICE COVER AROUND SVALBARD, NORWAY

15 JUNE 2020

See page 17 for description

sea ice

clouds



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Readers are reminded that the opinions expressed in the IFSMA Newsletter are those of the various authors and providers of news and are not necessarily in accord with IFSMA policy.

Secretary General's Message

From us at IFSMA HQ, we hope you are all well.

On 25 June 2026 we celebrated the Day of the Seafarer. Our member associations in the Philippines held a joint Dinner Forum at the Manila Yacht Club, to celebrate the special day.

Leading the evening event were Vice Admiral Santos from AMOSUP* and Captain Victor del Prado from FILSCAPTS**. The event was attended by active seagoing Ship Masters who were on leave. I was asked to prepare a short IFSMA video where I was given the honour and opportunity to introduce IFSMA and explain how we represent the interest of Ship Masters in IMO meetings. The video was shown at the Dinner Forum as part of their Day of the Seafarer celebrations.

As celebrations were held in various parts of the world for the Day of the Seafarer, it is tragically ironic that seafarers continue to be killed around the Strait of Hormuz and in the Black Sea. A few days earlier, an Egyptian Chief Cook was killed in the Black Sea.

As the Middle East conflict moves forward, a number of States and organisations have worked hard to drive the peace process and support shipping and the seafarers. The IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez and his team have worked tirelessly to promote the safety of seafarers and the freedom of navigation. They have led the way in developing the Strait of Hormuz transit framework and negotiating with all governments to get ships moving safely.

Pakistan has taken on the difficult mediation role to attempt to get all parties to agree to a lasting peace. In addition, the Gulf States have supported all stranded ships and the seafarers in the region. They have found a way to provide medical support, stores, fresh water, bunkers and to facilitate crew changes when it was safe to do so.

These and other organisations and nations should be congratulated for their support and wholehearted commitment.

Since February, the conflict in and around the Strait of Hormuz has dominated the maritime news. It has also been regularly covered by the general media. In the last few years, the maritime news coverage seen by the general public is mainly bad news. I can think of seafarers stranded on ships during Covid, the container ship blocking the Suez Canal and now we have ships being attacked and seafarers killed. In parallel to this, the industry is suffering from a shortage of skilled seafarers and the average age of Ship Masters and other senior ranks is increasing. Over the coming years, the wider industry needs to

focus on making the maritime industry an attractive place to work in order to attract talented new recruits.

Related to this, let me finish on some better news. At the Technical Cooperation Committee (TC76) held at IMO during June, the Republic of Korea delegation provided an update on their Global Onboard Training Programme (GOBT). This programme trains cadets from many countries ashore and onboard and has been running for five years. A similar programme is being started by Saudi Arabia and the IMO Secretariat stated that other countries are also interested.

In short, 50% of the world's seafarers are from four or five countries and potential officer cadets from other developing countries cannot get training berths. IMO together with interested nations, wish to expand cadet opportunities to young people from other developing countries.

To get more information on these topics and all maritime news, please explore our website at www.ifsma.org and follow us on LinkedIn and Facebook, where we highlight our latest news, initiatives and updates.

We wish you the very best and safe sailing in these troubled times.

Andy Cook
Secretary General

* Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines.

** Society of Filipino Ship Captains

† see also the World Maritime University on this topic here: <https://tinyurl.com/785yyuhh>

From the News Editor

New York: America's 250th Anniversary celebration

Cunard's *Queen Mary 2* centre stage

On 4 July British luxury cruise line Cunard created a landmark moment as the world's only ocean liner, *Queen Mary 2*, took centre stage in New York Harbor for Sail4th 250, the centrepiece of the United States' 250th Independence Day celebrations.

Anchored in a prime position, *Queen Mary 2* gave guests front-row views of one of the most significant Fourth of July celebrations ever staged, featuring the largest gathering of tall ships and naval vessels ever seen in New York City.

The day featured the International Parade of Sail, with more than 100 vessels parading through the harbour, including 47 tall ships from 20 nations, sailing from the

Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge past the Statue of Liberty and up the Hudson River to the George Washington Bridge.

Guests also witnessed an International Naval Review, during which a Navy vessel formally acknowledged the anchored fleet of 37 US and allied naval ships. The celebrations continued with a military flypast led by the US Navy's Blue Angels featuring more than 150 aircraft, including the Red Arrows, and a spectacular fireworks display lighting up the iconic Manhattan skyline.

Celebrating an historic connection

The occasion held special significance for Cunard, as 4 July marks the anniversary of the company's very first crossing. On 4 July 1840, RMS *Britannia*, the line's first ship, departed Liverpool for Boston, launching the world's first regularly scheduled transatlantic steamship service, and forever transforming travel, trade and communication between Britain and the United States. That connection has never been broken, with Cunard ships crossing the Atlantic every year since.



Queen Mary 2 took her place among an historic fleet of vessels in New York Harbor as part of Sail4th 250 festivities honouring America's 250th anniversary, 4 July 2026.

For nearly two centuries, Cunard has been woven into the story of America's growth. Between 1840 and 1923, an estimated one in five immigrants arrived in North America aboard a Cunard ship, helping shape generations of American families and communities.

New York has always held a special place in Cunard's story as the gateway for generations crossing the Atlantic in pursuit of opportunity. Cunard first sailed into New York Harbour in December 1847, when the wooden paddle steamer *Hibernia* arrived to crowds lining the waterfront. Since then, the luxury cruise line has celebrated several defining moments in New York City. In 2008, three Cunard Queens – *Queen Mary 2*, *Queen Elizabeth 2* and *Queen Victoria* – came together in New York Harbour for a landmark rendezvous, which was repeated in 2011. Today,

Cunard's presence remains a defining part of the city's maritime history, with the line having called at the Port of New York every year since December 1847 – more than 178 years, and longer than any other port in its history.

Katie McAlister, President of Cunard, said: *'Queen Mary 2 is an iconic ship, and she represents the transatlantic story itself. To have her at the heart of Sail4th 250 on such a significant day felt incredibly special, with New York as the backdrop and our guests enjoying a front-row view of the celebrations.'*

'Over the years, our Queens have welcomed well-known names from film, music and the arts, and that sense of occasion is part of what makes sailing with Cunard so distinctive. From Elizabeth Taylor to Audrey Hepburn and Ed Sheeran, people have chosen Cunard for landmark journeys, and it felt fitting to see Queen Mary 2 taking centre stage in New York for this historic occasion.'

Chris O'Brien, President of Sail4th 250 New York, added: *'The participation of Queen Mary 2 in these festivities as the most elegant hostess for her guests made the commemoration of American independence most meaningful for our international partnerships.'*

'The sight of this magnificent ocean liner amidst all the pageantry and camaraderie in New York Harbor created indelible memories for a new generation of young sailors and families. She will always be welcome in our waters.'

The IMO Digest

Appearing below is a summary of some of the news received with grateful thanks from the excellent IMO Media service in recent weeks.

Illustrations per www.imo.org as a source and copy-right holder.

Material used here with grateful thanks IMO ©.

Attack on MT Settebello

IMO statement

IMO Secretary-General strongly condemns ship attack near the Strait of Hormuz, with three seafarers reported missing.

On 10 June IMO reported that the Secretary-General had expressed deep concern and strong condemnation of the attack on the tanker *Settebello*, sailing under the flag of Palau, off the coast of Oman.

The incident, which occurred near the Strait of Hormuz and is reported to have followed a projectile strike against the vessel, resulted in a fire on board and three seafarers reported missing.

Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez said: *'I strongly condemn any act from any party that endangers the lives of seafarers and the safety of international shipping. This is simply unacceptable. My thoughts are with the families of the three missing seafarers and with all those awaiting news of the crew members.'*

The Secretary-General recalled the conclusions of the IMO Council at its extraordinary session (19 March 2026), which underscored the need to protect seafarers, civilian shipping and the freedom of navigation at all times.

He added: *'All actions affecting international shipping must fully respect international law and the safety of life at sea. The protection of seafarers is a shared responsibility that must remain paramount.'*



To date, IMO has confirmed 43 attacks on international shipping since 28 February 2026 in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

IMO is monitoring the situation closely and has called for a full and transparent investigation into the circumstances of the incident.

Seafarer safety must remain the overriding priority at all times

On 9 June the Secretary-General issued the following statement:

'I am increasingly concerned by reports that vessels continue to attempt to transit the Strait of Hormuz without any credible security guarantees, despite well-established risks and the fact that seafarers have already been killed, injured and others detained in recent incidents.'

'My primary concern is for the safety and lives of the seafarers being placed in these situations. They must not be exposed to conditions where the risks are known, significant, and clearly beyond mitigation. The current situation remains highly volatile, with no reliable security assurances in place. Under such circumstances, safe passage cannot be considered to exist.'

'I recall in the strongest possible terms that the ship's master, and the company, bear the ultimate responsibility for voyage planning and for conducting thorough and realistic risk assessments, in accordance with their obligations under established safety and security management frameworks. These responsibilities are fundamental and must be exercised with the utmost rigour.'

Seafarer safety must remain the overriding priority at all times

'No commercial or operational consideration can justify exposing seafarers to such levels of danger. The protection of their lives must remain the overriding priority at all times.'

'I urge all stakeholders to act with the highest level of responsibility and reiterate my call on all parties to refrain from any actions that place innocent civilian seafarers at risk.'

For more information readers are invited to use the link to the IMO Middle East hub here:
<https://tinyurl.com/29crfdx6>

The US-Iran agreement

IMO and ICS comment

IMO Secretary-General welcomes

The Secretary-General of the IMO, Mr Arsenio Dominguez, welcomed with great satisfaction the peace agreement reached between the parties in the conflict affecting the Strait of Hormuz. This was reported by the IMO media service on 15 June,



This signals a crucial return to peace, dialogue, multilateralism and diplomacy, and in particular, an important step toward restoring safety in this vital maritime corridor for seafarers and ships, as well as safeguarding the fundamental principle of freedom of navigation.

The Secretary-General expresses his deepest sympathies for all victims of the conflict, paying particular tribute to the innocent seafarers affected and to their families. Their courage and resilience in the face of prolonged uncertainty deserve the highest recognition.

The agreement also allows IMO to advance its plan to evacuate the thousands of seafarers stranded in the area. At the time of writing, 16 June, the Organization was working in close collaboration with Member States and partners to implement this plan safely and effectively. However, its implementation will require time to ensure that all necessary safety and security guarantees are in place.

IMO reaffirms its commitment to maritime safety, the protection of seafarers, the freedom of navigation, and the continued free flow of global trade.

And the view from the ICS

What follows is a statement from the International Chamber of Shipping following the announcement of a peace agreement between the US and Iran.

International Chamber of Shipping Secretary General Thomas Kazakos commented: *'This announcement comes as a relief to the 20,000 seafarers who have been caught in the middle of this war. Their safe departure from the region must be a top priority but will take time.'*

'With around 500 ships needing to pass through the Strait to exit the area this will require coordination. The International Maritime Organization has a crucial role, working alongside industry and states in the region, to ensure this is done as safely and as quickly as possible.'

'The fundamental principle of freedom of navigation has been sidelined during the war, and many seafarers have regrettably been injured or lost their lives.'

'As we now hopefully move towards peace, we must see a permanent return to vessels being able to pass through the Strait of Hormuz unimpeded without paying a toll or other clearance mechanism.'

A footnote

For information related to shipping and seafarers - Strait of Hormuz and the Middle East readers are invited to use the link here:
<https://tinyurl.com/29crfdx6>

Additional text kindly provided by the International Chamber of Shipping, ICS;

With thanks ICS ©

IMO's NextWave initiative

Expanding opportunities for future seafarers

IMO reported on 12 June that the organization was advancing the following phase of its NextWave Seafarers initiative, expanding opportunities for aspiring seafarers from developing countries to gain

the sea-time experience required to enter the maritime profession.

Partnership with Saudi Arabia; access to onboard training; coordinated action

Launched as a pilot partnership between IMO, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Bahri, Saudi Arabia's national shipping line, this initiative is to address a longstanding barrier facing many maritime graduates: access to onboard training.

While cadets may complete their academic and certification requirements, many are unable to secure the sea-time needed to qualify as professional seafarers. The pilot demonstrated that this gap can be addressed through coordinated action between governments, industry and international organizations.

LLDCs', SIDSs' and LDCs' candidates

With renewed support from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, NextWave Phase 2 (2026–2027) will move from proof of concept to scale. The next phase aims to provide training opportunities for more than thirty cadets, while broadening eligibility to include candidates from developing countries including landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) alongside Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Training berths' offers

A key objective is to engage at least five shipping companies in offering training berths, creating a wider and more sustainable network of industry partners.

Target of 50% female participation; study to identify barriers

Gender equality remains a central priority. The programme has set a target of 50% female participation and will undertake a dedicated study to identify and address barriers faced by women seeking careers at sea.



An alumni network will also be established to foster mentorship and professional development among former participants.

Towards a global cooperative mechanism

Alongside the expansion of training placements, IMO is developing a global cooperative mechanism to support the long-term growth of the initiative.

Findings from an independent evaluation of the pilot, together with studies on barriers to entry, will inform a framework designed to help governments, shipping companies and other stakeholders contribute to this cooperative mechanism under a common set of standards.

A further workshop ahead

The framework is expected to be presented at a global workshop hosted by IMO in 2026 with a view to attract additional shipping companies and IMO Member Governments to join this global initiative under the IMO umbrella.

Connecting untapped talent with real opportunities

By connecting untapped talent with real opportunities at sea, this global movement catalysed by IMO seeks to strengthen the global maritime workforce while opening new pathways to employment, skills development and economic opportunity for developing countries in particular LLDCs, SIDS and LDCs.

Dalian Maritime University

Learning to put IMO policy into practice

In line with WMD theme

The next generation of maritime leaders is being trained to put IMO policy to practice and power maritime excellence – in line with IMO's World Maritime Day theme 2026-2027¹ – as seen during a visit to Dalian Maritime University (DMU), China.

Maritime educators, students and faculty staff – both in classrooms and on board – outlined how IMO rules and regulations are key to many of its undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes, including maritime law, navigation, maritime management, maritime English and marine engineering.

In the words of DMU President Dr. Shan Hongjun: *'IMO regulations set the course. The development of new regulations, such as the non-mandatory International Code of Safety for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS Code)², as well as the comprehensive review of the STCW Convention³, will profoundly impact our talent cultivation system.'*

He added: *'Technology determines the speed. Technologies for intelligent shipping, green and low-carbon innovations, and digital education are being gradually integrated into teaching systems, continuously transforming the modes of maritime education; Read the full interview with DMU President Dr. Shan⁴.*

Onboard training

Visits aboard the DMU Dual-Purpose Intelligent Training Ship *Xin Hong Zhuan* and DMU Training Ship *Yukun* provided an insight into onboard training and intelligent shipping technology.

Aboard the autonomous-ready vessel *Xin Hong Zhuan*, Captain Li Lianbo, Professor and Vice-Dean of the Navigation College, outlined that the training conducted on such an autonomous-ready vessel is highly practical, interactive, and technologically immersive.

Comments

Captain Li explained: *'The vessel employs digital twin technology to reconstruct real-world scenarios, enabling students to understand and operate the simulated ship from multiple perspectives, achieving immersive teaching and training that blends virtual and physical environments.'*

As a captain and a professor of nautical science major at DMU, Captain Li has closely followed the development of the MASS Code, describing it as a *'critical milestone for the safe, orderly development of MASS worldwide,'* and important for maritime education and training going forward.

Yukun Chief Engineer, Song Liguang said that onboard training *'helps students bring textbook knowledge to life and complete the process of making theoretical concepts tangible'* He reflected: *'At this stage, they have already acquired a fair amount of theoretical knowledge on campus, but it is only by stepping into the engine room, handling equipment with their own hands, and taking part in operations and maintenance that they can truly connect the principles learned in class to the actual machinery, piping systems, and operating conditions they see before them.'*

Tasked with teaching lifesaving and fire safety, *Yukun* Third Officer Lyu Wenyu puts IMO policy into practice by teaching IMO Conventions such as the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) in the classroom, before bringing it on deck with practical training exercises.

IMO-DMU cooperation

During the 22nd class of the joint World Maritime University (WMU)-DMU Master of Science (MSc) in Maritime Affairs, specialising in Maritime Safety and

Environmental Management (MSEM), Ms Zhao Lu, Program Coordinator, explained how the course focused on three parts: conventions, operation and management.

She highlighted: *'More than 900 students have graduated from the programme since its inception and have taken on careers at the China Maritime Safety Administration, shipping companies and maritime organizations from other countries.'*



DMU students attended a presentation by IMO officials introducing IMO, its regulatory processes, and opportunities within the UN system, emphasizing that international organizations are more accessible than they may seem.

To date, 41 DMU interns and externs have undertaken a placement at IMO, furthering the process of putting policy to practice, with many moving onto roles across the maritime sector.

Welcoming the students' early exposure to international maritime affairs, Professor Ma Mingfei, Director of the International Cooperation and Exchange Office, said the initiative: *'Helps the university stay closely connected to emerging maritime issues, such as green shipping, digitalization, and sustainability.'* He concluded: *'This is an important bridge connecting us with the international maritime community.'*

To learn more

In order to learn more about the World Maritime Day theme for 2026-2027: ***From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence*** readers are invited to use the link at footnote ⁵ below.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/ye237kwv>

² <https://tinyurl.com/4vbf2dd>

³ <https://tinyurl.com/d68az5r9>

⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/3jxs475s>

⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/ye237kwv>

IMO Strait of Hormuz Evacuation

Large scale operation to be carried out

Cooperation with States and industry

ICS advice

Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States, IMO Secretary-General Mr Arsenio Dominguez issued this statement on 23 June: *'After months of hardship and distress for thousands of innocent seafarers, and negative impact for the whole world, I welcome with deep satisfaction the peace agreement concluded between the United States and Iran, marking a decisive step towards restoring maritime security and bringing to an end the unacceptable attacks against civilian shipping.'*



'I want to pay tribute to the fourteen innocent seafarers who tragically lost their lives during this conflict. Their dedication in service of global trade will not be forgotten.'

'We will begin the implementation of the evacuation plan for over 11,000 seafarers still stranded in the region. This large-scale operation will be carried out in close cooperation with Iran, Oman, all other coastal States in the region, the United States and the maritime industry.'

'We have secured the necessary safety guarantees and have thoroughly verified the conditions for safe navigation to support these operations.'

'We remain fully committed to ensuring the safety of seafarers and the continuity of global trade.'

A wealth of information now available

Readers are invited to see the full two-page Notice to Mariners issued by Oman (NAVAREA IX) in connection with the operation here: <https://tinyurl.com/443jm9wv>

To read the Operational FAQs surrounding the IMO Strait of Hormuz Evacuation Plan readers are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/4zhw4x6e>

For more updates, see the IMO briefing on Middle East: <https://tinyurl.com/29crfdx6>

ICS advice

At the same time as the IMO material was being promulgated an International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) spokesman commented:

'The priority remains the safe evacuation of the 11,000 seafarers who have been stranded in the region since the end of February.'

'We have consistently said that this will require coordination between the International Maritime Organization (IMO), states in the region and crucially the industry.'



'The IMO evacuation plan is a welcome development to delivering this coordination and restoring freedom of navigation. It is vital this plan works in harmony, rather than conflicting, with existing mechanisms.'

'We will continue to work with the IMO and industry partners to ensure the safety and security of shipping seeking to exit the region.'

Additional text based on material kindly provided by The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS ©)

25 June - Day of the Seafarer:

Carrying world trade. Carrying the risks

Working together to evacuate 11,000 seafarers stranded in the Persian Gulf



Heightened geopolitical tensions, including the evolving situations in the Strait of Hormuz, the Black Sea and the Sea of Asov, and the Red Sea region, have highlighted the increasing complexity and risk seafarers endure every day.

The Day of the Seafarer, observed internationally each year on 25 June, provided an opportunity to recognise the essential role of seafarers in global trade and the risks they bear in sustaining it.

This year, IMO highlighted the challenges faced by mariners who navigate through regions affected by conflict and insecurity. This included the risks they take as well as the resilience they demonstrate in keeping world trade moving under difficult circumstances.

Theme

Under the theme ***Carrying world trade. Carrying the risks***, the #DayOfTheSeafarer campaign serves as a reminder that seafarers must never become collateral victims of geopolitical conflicts.

Putting seafarers first

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez underscored his appreciation for the 1.8 million men and women who work at sea.

In a video message*, he said: *'To all seafarers: thank you. Your work is essential to the functioning of the global economy and the daily lives of people around the world. While it may not always seem visible, your safety, security and welfare remain our highest priority.'*

The unseen contribution; risks, sacrifices, personal challenges

He invited the global maritime community and all online audiences to join IMO's campaign to spotlight the unseen contribution of seafarers, while acknowledging the risks, sacrifices and personal challenges that are part of the life at sea.

In his own message, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: *'When nations clash, seafarers are often caught in the crossfire. Recent events in the Strait of Hormuz have seen tens of thousands of seafarers stranded as they work far from home to keep the world fuelled and fed... Mariners must never be the victims or pawns of geopolitical conflict.'*

IMO is currently working alongside Member States and industry to evacuate seafarers and ships stuck in the Persian Gulf, following attacks on shipping in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

Join us in amplifying seafarer voices

At the heart of this year's campaign are the voices of seafarers themselves. Through a series of testimonials, seafarers are sharing their first-hand experiences of transiting high-risk and conflict-affected areas, including the Strait of Hormuz, offering personal insights into the challenges they faced and how they managed them while continuing to perform their duties.

It also features contributions from maritime content creators and influencers, who are encouraging audiences around the world to join the conversation through shared stories and messages of support.

IMO invited a world audience to show their appreciation for seafarers and take part using the hashtag #DayoftheSeafarer.

* <https://tinyurl.com/2ea88b8n>

Celebrating Day of the Seafarer in Philippines

Filipino Captains' Dinner and Forum:





Showing message from IFSMA Sec Gen

Guyana: Reinforcing regional cooperation

Senior maritime officials from thirteen Caribbean Member States met in Georgetown, Guyana, from 22 to 24 June for the Fifth Regional Meeting of Directors and Heads of Maritime Administrations (DIHMAR 5), reinforcing regional cooperation and advancing shared maritime priorities.



This meeting brought together Directors and Heads of Maritime Administrations, alongside representatives of regional organizations, development partners and the IMO Secretariat, to advance common priorities for the region's maritime sector. It was jointly organized by the IMO Regional Presence Office for the Caribbean and the Guyana Maritime Administration Department (MARAD)*.

Strengthening maritime legislation

A key outcome of the meeting was the launch of the Caribbean Smart Maritime Law Initiative (CARIBSMART-Law), a regional programme designed to strengthen national maritime legal frameworks and support the effective implementation

of IMO instruments and international maritime conventions.

This initiative will assist Member States in modernizing maritime legislation and strengthening national capacity to implement and enforce international maritime obligations.

Advancing regional cooperation

Participants reviewed progress on regional maritime initiatives and identified priorities to guide the future delivery of the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP)** in the Caribbean.

A broad range of topics discussed

Discussions focused on maritime safety, marine environmental protection, port State control, maritime security, facilitation, seafarer training and development, institutional capacity-building, and regional technical cooperation. The meeting concluded with recommendations to strengthen regional cooperation and guide future IMO technical assistance across the Caribbean.

Following the meeting, participants attended a workshop on advancing inclusive governance and leadership in maritime administrations. The workshop explored practical approaches to strengthening leadership, enhancing institutional effectiveness and fostering inclusive, resilient and sustainable maritime administrations.

IMO Regional Presence Office for the Caribbean

Based in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the IMO Regional Presence Office for the Caribbean supports governments and regional organizations in implementing the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP). The office is led by Regional Coordinator Ms Vivian Rambarath-Parasram.

*For more see here: <https://tinyurl.com/2t4wbwfk>

** <https://tinyurl.com/bdz3xpsn>

Forty-four seafarers held by pirates

IMO S-G calls for urgent release

The seafarers have endured months in captivity amid a surge in attacks on ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez has appealed for urgent international efforts to secure the safe release of forty-four seafarers held captive in Somali waters by pirates and armed robbers.

The seafarers are being held aboard three detained vessels: the MT *Honour 25*, *Eureka* and *Sward*, which were hijacked in separate incidents between April and May this year off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.

Secretary-General Dominguez highlighted the dire humanitarian situation facing the crews, who are running critically low on food and water while living under the constant threat of violence.

He commented: *‘These incidents are a stark reminder that the threat posed by piracy and armed robbery to seafarers has not receded and continues to warrant vigilance and support for coordinated action.’*

He spoke while addressing the IMO Council as it met in London over the period 6 to 10 July and concluded with: *‘I ask for your support in securing their safe release.’*

Secretary-General Dominguez reaffirmed his commitment to working alongside flag States, coastal States, regional bodies and industry to secure the seafarers’ release and end their ordeal.



Over the past three months alone, IMO has recorded twenty-four attempted and actual incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden region.

He urged shipowners and operators to take all necessary precautions to protect crews, including implementing the Best Management Practices for Maritime Security and conducting thorough risk assessments before transiting the region.

Tackling rising maritime security threats

The incidents have highlighted worsening trends in global maritime security, particularly for piracy and armed robbery in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

Over the past three months alone, IMO has recorded twenty-four attempted and actual incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region, involving increasingly dangerous weapons and escalating violence against innocent seafarers.

Globally, reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea increased by 17% between 2024 and 2025, rising from 146 incidents to 171.

IMO continues to monitor the situation closely and support regional anti-piracy efforts through the Djibouti Code of Conduct and its Jeddah Amendment, which brings together twenty-two coastal and island States across the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden to strengthen maritime security cooperation, and capacity-building initiatives such as the Red Sea Project.

About the IMO Council

The Council met for its 137th session at IMO HQ in London. It is the executive organ of IMO and is responsible, under the Assembly, for supervising the work of the Organization. The Council comprises forty Member States, elected by the Assembly for two-year term.

Its agenda includes a standing item on the protection of vital shipping lanes, under which Members discuss collective action on regional maritime security, anti-piracy operations, and safe-passage frameworks across strategic global chokepoints.

Don't try and fix it yourself

By Michael Grey, Honorary IFSMA Member

When things break on board ships, the natural inclination of seafarers is to “work around” the problem, seek alternatives and use their training and initiative to restore the situation. It is, one might think, in the seafaring genes and one only has to consult the maritime history books to find umpteen examples of heroic voyages when everything went wrong, but those aboard went to extraordinary lengths to get the ship to port. Every examination question in Mates’ Orals seemed to require an answer that began with “take three stout spars” and until the days when ships had no useful wood in them, and were far too large for human intervention – humans successfully would intervene.

Jury rigged steering systems were fashioned out of rope and wire, lost rudders replaced by hatchboards and spars, anchors carried out by lifeboats lashed together. The crew of a disabled cargo liner would dine out for the rest of their lives on the tale of how they managed to produce a full set of sails using hatch tarpaulins hung from the derricks, to sail half way across the Atlantic. Those were just the headline grabbers; all around the world seafarers on deck and in the engine room, were patiently fixing things when they broke, so that the job could be kept running, and the ship sail. But in contemporary times, there are very many cautions attached to doing what comes naturally to a seafarer as lawyers, regulators and worst of all, law enforcement, is quick to condemn seafarers who try and fix things, rather than stopping where they are and demanding assistance. There are a lot of hapless engineers rotting in US prisons, after they unwisely

took steps to “work around” oily water separators that were just so much non-functioning junk.

Subsequently, the official attitude assumes the convenient fiction that all equipment must be fully functional at all times and if something breaks, it will be somebody’s fault, with the enforcers scrutinising the circumstances to see if charges can be laid. The laws have been adjusted accordingly. Some people live in a perfect world, but few do so afloat, not that the regulators could ever admit this. These gloomy thoughts resurfaced last week with the case of the unfortunate high speed dash of the containership MSC Michigan VII, which, it might be recalled went berserk on leaving the Port of Charleston two years ago, after its engine controls stuck on full speed. As the engineers wrestled with the faulty mechanical linkages below, the bridge team led by the master and pilot managed to weave their way down the Cooper River at 15 knots. The ship had caused all manner of damage to berths and moored craft, including a large bulker being swept from its moorings. The harbour bridge was closed as a precaution, memories of the Baltimore catastrophe being very raw, and the ship was in the roadstead before proper control was established.

We now learn that the chief engineer of the ship has, through the plea-bargaining system beloved of US jurisprudence has admitted his guilt for a string of offences revolving around the maintenance of the vessel, with the governor mechanism and its linkages being worked on as the ship left for sea. Not unreasonably the authorities have concluded that with such known deficiencies, the vessel should have remained safely alongside until they had been fixed. One can only guess at the sort of pressures they were under to get off the berth, but the ship’s senior engineer looks to pay the penalty, facing five years and a \$250,000 fine on one count, and six years and another \$250,000 on another. He probably thought he was acting for the best. Meanwhile lawyers for just about everyone who was involved with those lively minutes on the Cooper River are having a field day with the lucrative litigation. We must therefore conclude that “working around” a mechanical problem is no longer a sensible strategy, especially in countries which have somewhat brutal sentencing policies.

One can hardly be aware of the myriad of possible charges that are expanding almost daily by those producing laws and byelaws applicable in their ports around the world. Best to stay safe, risk the wrath of a delay and demand external assistance, even though this does go against the grain. Meanwhile it appears that the UK authorities are about to toughen up the laws and penalties which could descend on anyone who damages undersea cables, with huge fines and lengthy prison sentences for those who have been found responsible. Understandable, of course, as just this sort of interference has become part of the hybrid

warfare attributed to the Russian state. It is a message to all to make sure their anchors are well secured and that the bottom trawler skippers are always sure of their positions. Sadly, these are the likely soft targets for these tougher laws, as the malicious parties will rarely face the music and our seas are increasingly criss-crossed by undersea obstructions.

Michael Grey is former editor of *Lloyd’s List*

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ITF and Gulf War

One hundred days in

At the time of writing in the second week of June one hundred days have passed since the US and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury against Iran. One hundred days of a war that civilian transport workers did not start, cannot end and have paid for – with their lives, their health and their freedom.

Resumption and intensification of the war

We are reminded of these circumstances in a news item received from the ITF on 9 June. The statement went on to show that one hundred days on, despite repeated moments of hope for de-escalation, the war has resumed and intensified – extending the suffering and exposing transport workers to renewed and unacceptable risks.

From day one, the ITF has unequivocally said that transport workers are not combatants. They are civilian workers – seafarers, pilots, cabin crew, ground handlers, air traffic controllers, truck drivers, port workers – who keep the world moving. They have no stake in this conflict. They have no power to stop it. But they continue, day after day, to absorb its consequences. ITF have indicated that they will not allow the world to look away from what is being done to such workers.

A war that targets civilian workers

This record of one hundred days has been marked by unceasing attacks on civilian transport workers. In recent days (up to 10 June), strikes on Kuwait International Airport and Bahrain International Airport claimed an innocent civilian life and put aviation workers in the line of fire. In the Persian Gulf, ships continue to be targeted. The most recent wave of attacks and seizures of civilian vessels near the Strait of Hormuz is not a departure from what has come before – it is the continuation of a pattern that has been playing out for one hundred days. Civilian workers have been deliberately placed in danger, and those responsible know exactly what they are doing.

In the first hours of this conflict ITF reminded the wider world that schools, airports and ports across the conflict region came under attack resulting in hundreds of civilian workers being killed and injured. Workers were injured at Kuwait International Airport, at Bahrain International Airport, at Dubai International Airport, at Zayed International Airport. One person was killed at Zayed (Abu Dhabi). These are not military targets, they are civilian workplaces. The people inside them were doing their jobs: checking in flights, directing aircraft, loading cargo, serving passengers. Aviation workers showed up for work and found themselves in a war zone.



In the days and weeks that followed, the attacks on civilian shipping intensified. Ships were struck near the Strait of Hormuz and across the Persian Gulf. Vessels have been seized by Iran and the US. Seafarers have been killed, injured and held hostage for they cannot sail.

Beyond the attacks themselves, transport workers across the region – including truck drivers carrying goods through conflict corridors, crossing closed borders, navigating disrupted routes – faced the daily reality of a war economy: danger, impossible conditions, and in too many cases, no protection at all.

The human cost

More than 20,000 seafarers remain stranded in the Persian Gulf. These seafarers are overwhelmingly from the Global South, far from their families, with no certainty about when they will see home again. In some cases, they are running low on fuel, water and food.

They watch missiles and drones in the skies above them, they sleep, if they are able to, knowing they are in a warzone. Since the war began, the ITF has received over 2,500 requests for assistance from seafarers and their families and assisted more than 600 seafarers to get home.

Psychological injuries

ITF warns that the mental health consequences are profound, and they are not being adequately acknowledged. There is sustained fear, isolation, uncertainty and separation from family. These are not abstract harms – they are serious, documented

psychological injuries that will outlast this conflict for many of the workers caught in it. Some employers have made this worse, seeking to use the war as cover: invoking force majeure to extend contracts without consent, restricting or cutting communications, denying repatriation.

In its *tour d'horizon* ITF warns that war must not be a blank cheque for employers to strip seafarers of their rights. The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) exists precisely to prevent this. Full implementation – now, not when the conflict is convenient – is non-negotiable. Crew changes must happen. Contracts must be honoured. Every seafarer in this region must be able to contact their family without restriction. Proposals for a humanitarian maritime corridor to restore flows through the Strait of Hormuz have attracted growing attention. The ITF understands the urgency, but is unequivocal on one point: any such corridor can only operate if there is a full, binding, verified guarantee from every party to this conflict that participating vessels and their crews will not be targeted.

Not forgetting civil aviation and the evacuation flights

Civil aviation workers have been carrying an impossible burden since day one. They kept airports operating under the threat of attack. They ran evacuation flights. They managed the cascading disruption of closed airspace, rerouted flights and maximum operational uncertainty. The knock-on effects extend worldwide: flight crews facing longer routes and extended duty times, ground staff and air traffic controllers managing complex operational chaos. This is a global aviation workforce absorbing a global shock. The ITF said from the outset that civilian aviation infrastructure and must never be military targets. That principle has been violated. Workers at Kuwait International Airport and Bahrain International Airport are the latest to pay the ultimate price.

The ITF's demands

In a statement of 9 June ITF indicated that its demands remain unchanged and included an immediate, permanent ceasefire and full de-escalation by all parties with full and unconditional protection of civilian transport workers and civilian infrastructure under international law as well as the immediate release of all detained seafarers and vessels.

The US-Iran accord

ITF's view

On 15 June the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) announced that it cautiously welcomed the US-Iran peace framework – but to quote the Federation: '*Words on paper must now*

translate into action for the transport workers who have paid the price of this conflict.'

For more than 100 days, seafarers, aviation workers, port workers and other transport workers have been killed, injured, detained and stranded in a war they have no part in.

No agreement seen

ITF indicates that it welcomes this framework as a potential turning point towards a sustainable peace – but given that the full text of the peace agreement had not been officially released by either government, it cannot yet fully assess what it means for transport workers. What can be said clearly is this: a signature on 19 June is not the end. It is, at best, the beginning.

On the Strait of Hormuz, the ITF does not expect an immediate return to normal, especially given the reported 30-day timeline on reopening. The backlog of stranded vessels and the need for crew changes and rest, mean a realistic return to normal shipping patterns is weeks, if not months, away.

To work closely with all parties

As it has done throughout this crisis, the ITF will work closely with shipowners and industry partners – including with the UN agency, the IMO, to advance plans to evacuate the thousands of seafarers stranded in the area and ensure that any process puts seafarers' safety first.

The ITF's demands are clear: whatever arrangements govern de-escalation, the commitment to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and other transport operations must come with absolute, binding and verifiable guarantees from all parties that civilian transport workers, vessels and infrastructure will not be targeted.

Confirmation of safe conditions awaited

Across maritime, aviation, ports, logistics and road transport sectors, workers must not be expected to return to operations until authorities confirm that conditions are safe and that routes, airspace, ports and transport corridors have been cleared of mines, military risks and any hazards that could endanger lives.

Masters, pilots and all transport workers must retain the authority to suspend, refuse or reroute operations where there are credible safety concerns, without retaliation, financial penalty or commercial pressure. Freedom of navigation, freedom of overflight and the safe movement of all transport must be fully restored in full accordance with international law and standards.

Immediate measures

Immediate measures must also be taken to:

- Facilitate crew changes, repatriation, and safe return of all transport workers.
- Secure the release of all detained civilian transport workers and civilian vessels, aircraft and cargo.
- Provide humanitarian access and emergency support to affected workers and their families.
- Establish coordinated plans to address operational backlogs, worker fatigue and staffing shortages created by the conflict.
- Ensure transport unions are involved in recovery and reopening arrangements at national, regional and international level.

The ITF also commits to working with governments across the Gulf region, employers, unions and workers' representatives, and international partners to support a just recovery for migrant transport workers whose lives and livelihoods have been disrupted by the conflict.

Guarantees expected

This must include protecting labour rights, ensuring access to wages and social protections, restoring freedom of movement, facilitating documentation and visa processes where disrupted, enabling safe return and re-entry where needed, and guaranteeing that no worker faces dismissal, detention, discrimination or recruitment-related debt as a consequence of the conflict.

Recovery cannot be measured only by reopened ports, restored airspace or resumed trade flows – it must also be measured by whether the workers who keep transport moving emerge safer, more protected and with stronger rights than before.

To close a recent statement ITF added: ***'No worker should bear the human or economic cost of restarting transport after a conflict they did not create.'***

Risks associated with GNSS spoofing and GNSS jamming

Guidance by IRClass

On 18 June the Indian Classification Society IRClass issued a technical circular (No 012/2026) on the above-mentioned topic.

The document was issued to raise awareness regarding the increasing occurrence of interference with Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and

to provide guidance on measures to mitigate the associated navigational risks.

We are privileged in being able to reproduce highlights below of the document with grateful thanks.

Background

- The maritime industry is heavily dependent on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS), such as the Global Positioning System (GPS), GLONASS, NavIC (IRNSS), BeiDou, and Galileo, for position fixing and timing information.
- Recent geopolitical developments have resulted in an increase in reported incidents involving intentional interference with GNSS signals. Such interference may adversely affect the accuracy and reliability of satellite-based navigation systems and consequently compromise the safety of navigation.

GNSS interference

GNSS interference generally occurs in the form of spoofing or jamming.

GNSS spoofing

GNSS spoofing is the act of deceiving a GNSS receiver into reporting an incorrect position by transmitting counterfeit signals that override legitimate satellite data. As a result, ships relying on satellite navigation may appear at incorrect locations on the ECDIS or on navigational charts when positions are plotted.

GNSS jamming

GNSS jamming involves the transmission of radio signals on the same frequency bands used by GNSS satellites. These signals overpower legitimate satellite transmissions, preventing receivers from acquiring valid signals and determining an accurate position.

Risks to safe navigation

The safety of navigation may be significantly compromised by GNSS spoofing or jamming. Such interference may be particularly hazardous when navigating:

- Coastal waters.
- Restricted or confined waters.
- Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS).
- Approaches to ports and harbours.
- Pilotage waters.

Failure to detect GNSS interference may result in navigational incidents including grounding, collision, contact damage, or deviation from the intended route.

Recommended actions:

Shipowners, managers, Masters, and bridge teams should ensure that navigational procedures adequately address the possibility of GNSS interference.

The following minimum measures are recommended:

a. Position-fixing procedures:

- Ensure company procedures clearly define the methods and frequency of position fixing under various navigational conditions.
- Increase the frequency of position fixing, particularly when navigating in coastal, confined, or pilotage waters.
- Avoid sole reliance on GNSS as the primary means of navigation in areas where positional accuracy is critical.

b. Alternative means of position fixing:

Bridge teams should make effective use of alternative navigation methods, including:

- Visual observations and bearings.
- Radar observations.
- Dead Reckoning (DR).
- Visual bearings combined with radar ranges/distances.
- Parallel indexing techniques.
- Other available terrestrial navigation aids.

c. Verification of GNSS information:

- Regularly cross-check GNSS-derived positions using independent navigational methods.
- Compare GNSS information with radar images, visual references, charted features, and other available sources of navigational data.
- Investigate any unexpected discrepancies between the vessel's observed position and GNSS-derived position.

d. Bridge team awareness:

Bridge teams should remain vigilant for indications of GNSS interference, including:

- Sudden and unexplained position shifts.
- Inconsistent speed or course information.
- Discrepancies between ECDIS, radar, AIS, and visual observations.
- Loss of GNSS signal or frequent receiver alarms.
- Abnormal behaviour of equipment dependent upon GNSS inputs.

Where GNSS spoofing or jamming is suspected, appropriate corrective actions should be taken immediately, and alternative navigation methods should be employed.

Masters and bridge teams should remain alert to the possibility of GNSS spoofing and jamming and exercise prudent seamanship at all times. Particular caution should be exercised in areas where GNSS interference has been reported or where geopolitical situations may increase the likelihood of such activities.

Shipowners and managers are encouraged to review their Safety Management System (SMS) procedures and provide appropriate guidance and training to ensure that navigational safety is maintained in the event of GNSS interference

Disclaimer:

The IREX Technical Circular No 012/2026 and the material contained in it is provided only for the purpose of supplying current information to the reader and not as an advice to be relied upon by any person.

While IREX has taken utmost care to be as factual as possible, readers / users are advised to verify the exact text and content of the Regulation from the original source/ issuing Authority.

Midsummer melange

By Michael Grey, Honorary IFSMA Member

Is the Strait of Hormuz really reverberating to the noise of several hundred mighty diesels springing into life after 107 days of idleness enforced by the respective blockades? A certain scepticism among the crews of the trapped ships would be forgivable, despite President Trump's enthusiastic endorsement of a "deal" between the warring parties. Memoranda of understanding are all very well, but when trust is in short supply, why should those who have spent these last months in fear of drones and missiles think that this so-called outbreak of peace will be anything other than a hiatus?

There are a lot of people with fingers on their triggers between the Gulf waters and the safety of the open

sea, not that anywhere in mid-east waters is without risk to mariners these days. And it will take a lot more than a few words in a treaty in Geneva this week to persuade any responsible ship operators to take up where they left off, when the war exploded over the region in February. There may be some bold souls, lured by freight rates and reckless crews, but it is hard to think of anything other than a slow and cautious resumption of trade. Nobody, whatever the pay is like, wants to be a target, and when you have seen the results of indiscriminate fire on slow-moving merchant vessels, such memories will not go away in a hurry. Both sides in this conflict have felt free to give conflicting orders to the hapless masters of ships and, when these are not obeyed, to recklessly fire drones and missiles into ships, regardless of the lives they are putting at risk. Those three Indian engineers killed in their machinery space by a US Hellfire missile should not be forgotten.

But that's just the Gulf; there is plenty more to make mariners miserable this week. Last year, we are told, is the worst year ever for abandonments, with the owners of 410 ships walking away from their responsibilities, with 6,233 seafarers left to fend for themselves, unpaid and supported, if they are lucky, only by the maritime charities. We surely cannot be surprised, with the cavalier attitude some sovereign states take of their duties to register ships. There are some truly awful, hopelessly incompetent, so-called administrations offering their flags to both the risky and unscrupulous owners. More of them, too, with the emergence of the "dark fleet" of sanctioned vessels, changing their flags as fast as their owners change their underwear. Whether a more robust approach to sanctioned tonnage surging past coasts will change anything, remains to be seen.

The first such seizure by the greatly depleted UK forces occasioned all manner of headlines and curious comments. Coming just a few days after the resignation of the Secretary of State for Defence over funding, the decision to make a spectacular statement of military capability, some suggested, was somewhat performative. The ship, judging by her state of apparent dereliction, would perhaps justify a detention, but quite what to do with the vessel and her cargo is something of a conundrum. The Indian and Georgian crew, we are told in an improbable footnote, will be ineligible for asylum. And the possible reaction from a wrathful Russian president is another uncertainty to be faced. A small morsel of good news is that the little cruise ship Hondius, scrubbed like a new pin, is back in operation after her worrying medical scare, with the courageous crew being released from their quarantine.

But in one last tweak from that episode, it is reported than a final remaining adventure-seeking passenger from that dispersed congregation had to be tracked down and rescued from, of all places – Pitcairn Island,

possibly the world's most inaccessible holiday destination, at an eye-watering cost. Finally in our tour around the maritime world this week, there was yet another report, this time from Antwerp, of containers falling onto a bunker barge which was innocently refuelling the vessel. Nobody was hurt, but the number of these incidents in recent months suggests that bunkering can be a riskier business than some might have thought. With some of the exciting new fuels that the net zero enthusiasts are encouraging, a more hard-headed look at the dangers might be needed. You need more than a hard hat.

This article first appeared in *The Maritime Advocate Online* Issue No 910 of 19 June 2026. It appears here by kind permission of the Editor and the Author ©

Michael Grey is former editor of *Lloyd's List*.

Partnership heralds sea change in crew care

Global maritime charity Sailors' Society has announced a landmark partnership with insurance giant NorthStandard to roll out its innovative Sea Mate training to the P&I club's Members.

The partnership prompts a sea change in seafarer care with a dramatic increase in the number of Wellbeing Officers on board ships.

Equipping seafarers with specialist skills

Sea Mate is an interactive training programme that equips seafarers with a specialist set of skills. They serve as key support figures, providing crew members with someone to talk to – someone trained in wellbeing expertise and directly connected to Sailors' Society's crisis response team for immediate assistance when needed. Support continues beyond the training with ongoing mentorship and a strong peer network.



Through NorthStandard's My Mind Matters at Sea initiative, its members are now eligible for one free

Sea Mate course each year for up to 16 seafarers and discounted rates for additional courses.

Comment

Sailors' Society CEO Sara Baade commented: *'This generous partnership with NorthStandard could see thousands of new Wellbeing Officers on board ships across the world, trained to give frontline help and support to fellow crewmates.'*

'Our Sea Mate training has been hugely popular with shipping companies who know that seafarers' wellbeing directly affects the safety of their colleagues, the cargo and the ship. We are looking forward to NorthStandard members benefitting from this programme and applaud NorthStandard for its commitment to crew wellbeing.'

Commenting on Sea Mate and the partnership, Colin Gilesie, Global Head of Loss Prevention at NorthStandard added: *'We are pleased to be partnering with Sailors' Society to deliver Sea Mate and further strengthen the support available to seafarers. Providing practical, accessible training that helps crews recognise and respond to wellbeing challenges is vital in today's operating environment.'*

'At NorthStandard, we are committed to helping our Members support their crew, recognising that strong wellbeing is fundamental to efficient operations. Through this programme, we are giving Members further tools to build more resilient crews and safer vessels.'

For more information on the charity's work readers are invited to use the link here: www.sailors-society.org

Sea ice around Svalbard

Playing an important role in the Arctic environment.

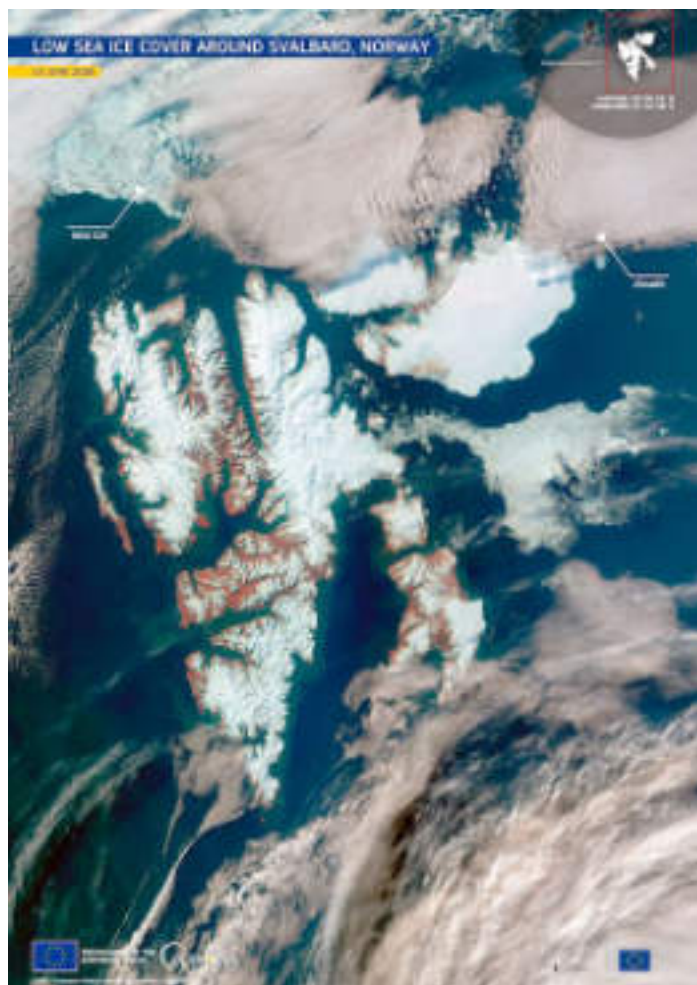
Sea ice around Svalbard plays an important role in the Arctic environment, influencing marine ecosystems, surface temperatures, and the ocean-atmosphere exchange.

According to the latest Copernicus Climate Change Service bulletin*, Arctic average sea ice extent ranked as fourth lowest on record for May 2026, with particularly low sea ice around Svalbard.

This image, acquired by Copernicus Sentinel-3 on 15 June 2026, shows the Svalbard archipelago, in Norway, shortly before the Arctic summer. Scarce sea ice remains visible around the archipelago, while turquoise plumes along the coast suggest sediment transported into fjords and surrounding waters by seasonal meltwater runoff.

Copernicus Satellite data supports the monitoring of Arctic coastal environments, sea ice conditions, and seasonal changes in snow cover and sediment transport.

* <https://tinyurl.com/yc3u6mam>



Picture credit: European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-3 imagery ©

EU©

Antarctica

Sea ice cover reducing: Bellingshausen Sea

Midwinter's Day

As we well know Antarctic sea ice plays an important role in the polar climate system, influencing not only Southern Ocean ecosystems but also global ocean circulation.

For this reason, sea ice conditions are closely monitored to better understand their impact. Recent media coverage has reported a deficit of around 650,000 km² in winter sea ice extent in the Bellingshausen Sea, which is located along Antarctica's western coast, *vis-à-vis* the reference level for this time of year.

The image shown, based on Copernicus Marine Service data for 10 June 2026, indicates sea ice

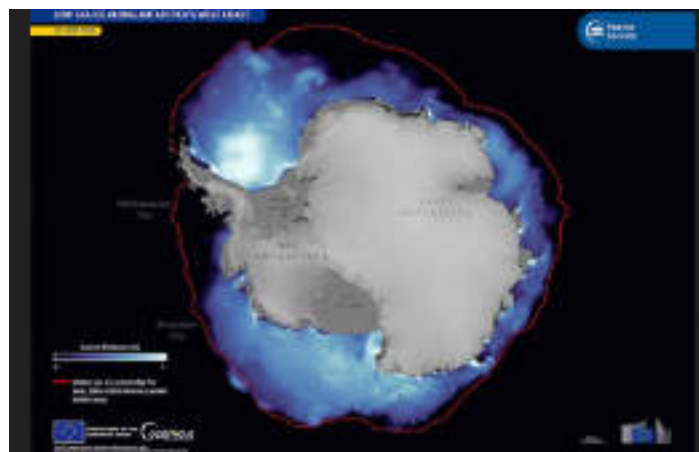
thickness around Antarctica, with the red line marking the 1981-2010 median ice edge, indicating the extent typically expected at this time of year.

Deviation from the June median reference extent is particularly evident in the Bellingshausen Sea, where sea ice extent is visibly reduced compared with the climatological median.

Copernicus Marine Service data supports the continuous monitoring of sea ice extent, thickness, and variability, informing climate assessments, maritime navigation, and polar environmental management.

Happy Midwinter's Day

The date of 21 June marked the shortest day of the year in Antarctica and where the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) celebrated the tradition of Midwinter's Day.



Picture credit: European Union, Copernicus Marine Service Data

EU©

With 24 hours of darkness across some of the continent and the landscape locked in frozen silence, this day is the halfway point of the long Antarctic winter, a symbolic turning point as the days slowly begin to stretch back toward light.

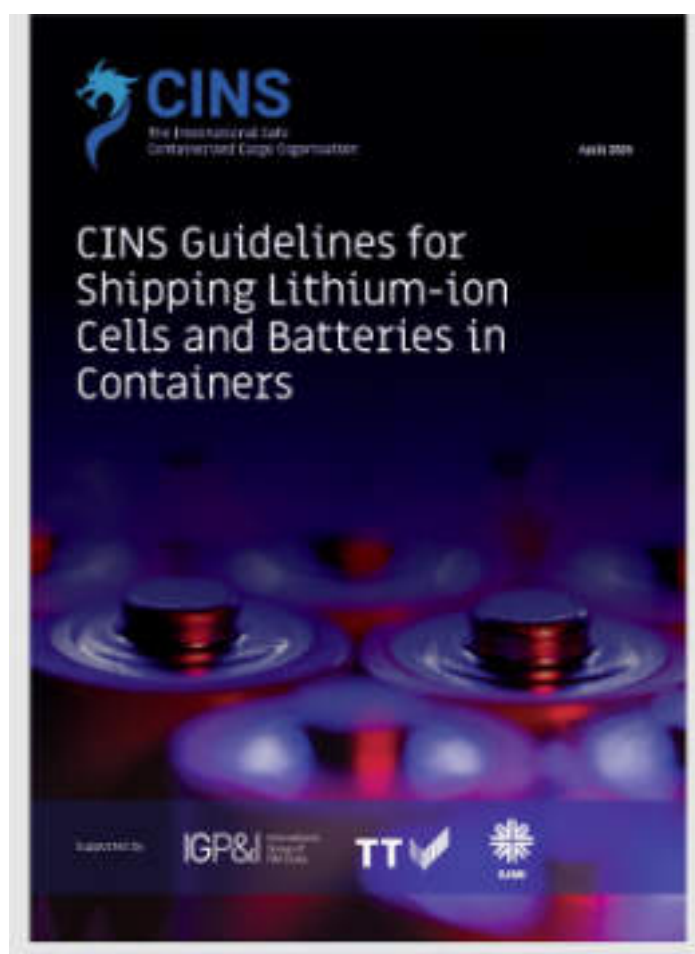
The tradition of celebration is thought to date back to 1902, when Robert Falcon Scott and his expedition team braved their first Antarctic winter. To boost morale in the harsh conditions, they transformed Midwinter's Day into a moment of joy, complete with decorations, gifts, and a feast. That first celebration set the tone for what would become a lasting tradition for teams working through the Antarctic winter, also known as 'winterers.'

Guidelines: Lithium-ion batteries

CINS Guidelines for Shipping Lithium-ion Cells and Batteries in Containers

In response to the growing risks associated with the maritime transport of lithium-ion cells and batteries, the Cargo Incident Notification System (CINS)* has released its latest guidance document (April 2026), titled: *Guidelines for Shipping Lithium-ion Cells and Batteries in Containers*.

These guidelines were developed with valuable input from a broad coalition of CINS members, including the International Group of P&I Clubs, ABS, CMA CGM, COSCO Shipping, Emirates Line, Evergreen, IUMI, National Cargo Bureau (NCB), Hazcheck, ONE, PIL, Port Supervisor, Seaspan, TT Club, Wan Hai, Waves, X-Press Feeders, Yang Ming, and ZIM.



The document provides shipping companies, operators, and carriers with safety guidance for the transport of lithium-ion cells and batteries, classified under UN Nos. 3480 and 3481, in Cargo Transport Units (CTUs). It specifically addresses the risks associated with the shipment of these cargoes and outlines recommended measures to mitigate them.

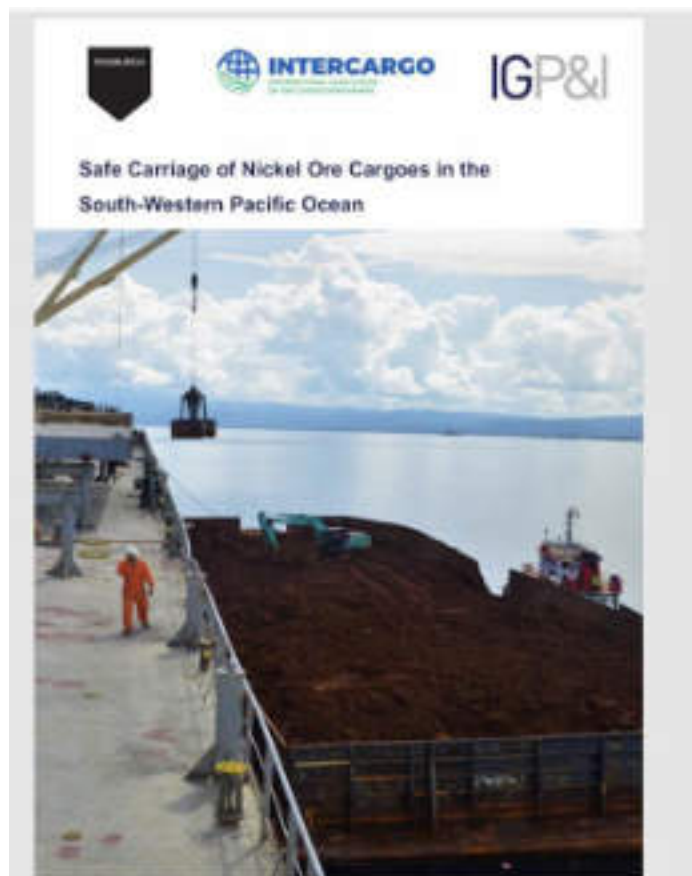
The document is available through the good offices of The International Group of P & I Clubs (IGPANDI) using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/4dh898ut>

*<https://www.cinsnet.com/>

Safe Carriage of Nickel Ore Cargoes in the South-Western Pacific Ocean

Circular by the International Group of P&I Clubs in conjunction with INTERCARGO and Roxburgh

Nickel ore cargoes from the Solomon Islands and the Philippines present significant hazards to the shipping industry. The risk of liquefaction associated with these cargoes has long been recognised as a major safety concern and requires constant vigilance and regular review.



Exports from both regions are expected to increase as investment is diverted towards alternative sources of nickel supply. Without improvements in cargo management and loading practices, incidents involving nickel ore cargoes are likely to continue to occur.

An industry circular has been prepared by the International Group of P&I Clubs in conjunction with INTERCARGO and Roxburgh. It aims to highlight the challenges associated with the export of nickel ore from these regions and to provide recommendations to assist in mitigating the associated risks.

The publication: *Safe Carriage of Nickel Ore Cargoes in the South-Western Pacific Ocean* is available using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/4whr6thz>

It is understood that this circular will replace the January 2011- IG Circular, *Indonesia and the Philippines – Safe Carriage of Nickel Ore Cargoes*.

CINS Guidelines for the Carriage of Cocoa Butter in Freight Containers

In May a Cargo Incident Notification System (CINS) Member Working Group, provided updated guidance building on the IMO/ILO/UNECE CTU Code and replacing the January 2018 edition of the CINS Guidelines.



The Guidelines, whose link is to be found below, reflect industry improvements over the past eight years, and they take into account recent cargo damage experience – and reflect a better understanding of container temperature behaviour.

New revised guidelines

The revised Guidelines also take into consideration feedback from cocoa butter shippers, with the aim of providing clear, practical, recommendations to support safe, high-quality cocoa butter transportation worldwide.

About cocoa butter

Cocoa butter is derived from whole cocoa beans which are fermented, roasted, and then separated from their hulls. About 54–58% of the residue is cocoa butter.

It contains various amounts of saturated fats (57-64%) and unsaturated fats (43-36%). Cocoa butter becomes soft and malleable at high temperatures and

can melt between 30°C and 37°C. Having become warm or molten, it can retain the latent heat and remain in such a condition down to as low as 17°C.



Likely damage

Upon heating, cocoa butter expands and may cause it to burst the packaging and seep out, staining adjacent cartons and possibly leaking outside of the container or causing damage to the container structure. There have been incidences of cocoa butter melting on board ships, resulting in the clogging of ships' bilges.

The Guidelines are to be found using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/46ex5e4w>

Illustration per www.cinssnet.com
CINS ©

Reopening of the Strait of Hormuz

Much-needed relief for many economies.

Reopening of the Strait of Hormuz would bring much-needed relief for many economies. This is a first step toward a progressive recovery of energy markets and international trade. However, during more than 100 days of shipping disruption, negative effects have already rippled through the global economy.

Vulnerable economies have been particularly exposed to oil and fertilizer price shocks.

Likelihood of persistent inflation

These shocks can result in persistent inflation. People suffer from inflation, especially the poor. It squeezes household budgets and makes necessities—such as food and healthcare—less affordable.

Reopening paves the way for recovery. But for vulnerable economies, the path can be longer, uneven and costly. International support is needed to improve their ability to cope.

UN S-G's comment

In the words of António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations: *'These shocks will be felt for*

many months – with developing countries bearing the heaviest impacts. I call on all parties to honour the ceasefire and redouble efforts.'

After 100+ days of disruption, trade through the Strait is set to resume. Trade shocks hit hardest where the ability to cope is limited.

Economic shocks faced

Tighter public finances mean less room to cushion shocks, especially when vulnerable countries face:

- Difficulties to mobilize resources, domestically or externally.
- A heavy debt servicing burden and exchange rate risks associated with high levels of external debt.
- A drop in remittances that could cut off a financial lifeline for some economies.
- Declining international aid.

Short-lived energy shocks can have long-term consequences.

Of the future

Issues for consideration:

- Normalization of trade will take time. International energy prices can adjust fast, but shipping and value chains need time to adapt.
- Impact of the energy shock will continue to be felt unevenly. Many vulnerable economies have limited ability to cope with soaring import bills. Countries dependent on oil imports face particularly strong domestic inflationary pressure.
- Food production risks remain. Input price hikes that may have persistent impacts on production and trade, coupled with an expected strong El Niño, increase concerns about food insecurity.
- International support is needed. Decreasing official development assistance and mounting debt servicing burdens risk slowing down recovery.
- Investment in resilience is key. This includes diversification of trade sources, as well as other domestic resilience measures, conditional on financial constraints.

Publication

The UNCTAD document *Strait of Hormuz Disruptions: Beyond reopening – lasting impacts on vulnerable economies* is available using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/24zh9nj8>

Türkiye Maritime Summit, Istanbul 2 July 2026

At the Türkiye Maritime Summit in Istanbul, senior leaders from the maritime sector discussed how geopolitical tensions, climate-related disruptions and other global crises are reshaping maritime trade and supply chains.



The session brought together representatives from UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), BIMCO, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and DP World.

Acting S-G UNCTAD's input

Opening the discussion, Pedro Manuel Moreno, Acting Secretary-General of UNCTAD, highlighted that maritime transport remains the backbone of the global economy, carrying more than 80% of world trade by volume. He warned that disruptions at critical maritime chokepoints can have consequences far beyond shipping, affecting energy prices, food security and inflation, with impacts that are often felt most acutely in developing economies.

Resilience is unevenly distributed

A central theme of the session was that resilience is unevenly distributed. While larger economies, major carriers and advanced ports are often better equipped to absorb disruptions, smaller economies and developing-country traders face higher costs and fewer alternatives. Speakers underscored that maritime vulnerability is not only a security issue but also a development challenge, particularly for least developed countries and small island developing States.

Importance of international cooperation

Participants also explored the growing importance of international cooperation in maintaining open and secure maritime trade routes. Discussions emphasized that many of the world's most important shipping passages are irreplaceable global assets whose stability depends on effective multilateral action. Speakers highlighted the need to strengthen

resilience while advancing the decarbonization and digital transformation of the maritime sector.



Closer collaboration called for

The session concluded with a call for closer collaboration among governments, regulators, ports, shipping companies and international organizations to ensure that maritime transport remains efficient, sustainable and accessible for all countries. UNCTAD reaffirmed its commitment to helping countries build resilient and smart ports, assess the impacts of shipping decarbonization, and strengthen the capacity of vulnerable economies to navigate future disruptions.

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The seafarer's appreciation society

By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

On the occasion of last month's "Day of the Seafarer", I wonder how many of them felt properly appreciated. As members of a largely invisible workforce, in most of their home countries, it would be forgivable if this annual event was greeted with no more than a shrug. Even those trapped behind the dire straits of Hormuz, watching the so-called cease-fire with apprehension would have been aware that most of the general public's concern revolved not around seafarers' safety, but the effects of the war upon their cost of living. But let us not get too cynical; there are some hopeful signs that there might be some sort of permanent accommodation, albeit with the freedom to navigate through these international waters being regulated in some way.

If the toll structure is no more than that of light dues (which ships are already supposed to pay, although many skip this obligation, the industry could probably live with this. But the celebratory day was notable this year for the publication of the five-yearly BIMCO/ICS Manpower Survey, which is an increasingly useful portrait of the global supply and demand situation. This has been running since the 1990s, when the first signs of a manpower crisis was officially recognised, although as far back as maritime history has been written, individual nations have faced up to shortages. These they dealt with in singular fashion, using the press gang or crimps to address the fact that seafaring was probably not an occupation of choice.

Only in more enlightened times has there been any serious attempt to make seafaring more attractive. Just about every survey that the partners have published has produced a consistent message of potential shortages down the line, and this is no exception. The current global shortfall of 39,100 officers, which somehow the industry manages to tolerate is likely to increase to 113,000 by 2030, with the global demand for qualified officers expected to be 1.16m. Ratings remain in surplus, as they have done for the last several surveys. And while there has been no dramatic breakthrough in the crew sizes aboard ships, the 14% growth in the world fleet to 85,148 ships has seen a 35% increase in demand since the last report in 2021. Wastage remains a worry as always, although one headline we should note is that according to recently published and extensive surveys of the workforce, a good half of those questioned said that they aimed to leave the sea in the next five years.

If you think of that in the context of a need for nearly 23,000 new recruits each year, there is a real challenge here. If there is any genuine good news, it is that the cadet situation seems to have improved, as it is easier to find cadet berths after a real struggle over many years. The two organisations also comment on the fact there is a better monitoring of recruitment and retention by maritime administrations. The first surveys sometimes found it like drawing teeth to get meaningful data from some administrations, probably because they did not actually collect it. Could there be any great external influences that throw these anticipated figures off course? It might be recalled that between the first and second reports in the 90s, the whole manpower situation changed on account of large numbers of well-trained officers arrived in the international workforce after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is not beyond the realms of probability that should the Russian/Ukraine war end, a considerable number of officers from each of these countries might elect to return home.

It is also important not to forget the increasing impatience of the current workforce with the conditions afloat today, with recent WMU data

revealing general unhappiness with working hours, the lack of shore leave, bad memories of treatment during the pandemic, and the last three months in the Gulf will not have helped to lessen the pain. There is general dissatisfaction with working hours and the “average” of 71 hour weeks, high stress levels and dangerous levels of fatigue. It is interesting to note in the BIMCO/ICS report comment on the need for better promotion prospects and the development of clearer pathways from ship to shore-side appointments, and a more attractive whole career. Nothing new there. “We believe that the industry would benefit from seeing that more of the most promising seafarers were trained to fill responsible posts ashore at a relatively early age.” That was the Rochdale Report into British Shipping from 1969. People needed to appreciate seafarers more then, too.

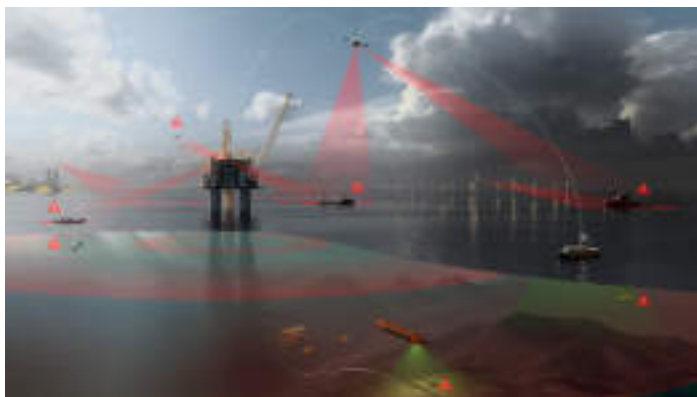
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(<https://themaritimeadvocate.com>)

Protecting critical infrastructure

KONGSBERG announces contract

KONGSBERG announced on 2 July that it had signed a new contract for the delivery of its market-leading technologies to protect critical infrastructure, highlighting the growing demand for equipment and services that safeguard high-value assets and resources.



The contract value for the project is not disclosed.

In the words of Eirik Lie, President and CEO of KONGSBERG: *‘Preventing and detecting threats and attacks are essential to protect people and critical infrastructure. KONGSBERG has the solutions and technology to support countries and industries in their efforts to build resilient systems and maintain operations. This is fundamental in today’s rapidly changing geopolitical landscape.’*

Critical infrastructure includes essential systems such as oil and gas installations, telecommunication cables, energy grids, ports, and transportation networks, which must be protected against a wide range of threats, from cyber-attacks to natural disasters and physical sabotage.



This project is for an unnamed international customer and will focus primarily on underwater surveillance and protection.

Camilla Kiss, President of Discovery, a division of KONGSBERG, added: *‘We are pleased to support this major project with robust protection systems that provide access to data and analysis for time-critical decisions...The contract underpins how the market for infrastructure protection is evolving from recognizing the need, to signing a firm order to implement the right solutions’*

Pirate attack on mv *Golden Arsenal*

Operation ATALANTA coordinates multi-national response

EUNAVFOR Operation ATALANTA* confirmed on 3 July the successful coordination and facilitation of the liberation of a Bulk Carrier *Golden Arsenal* that suffered a pirate attack at approximately 110 nautical miles NE of Bosaso, Somalia.

From the first report, Operation ATALANTA, through its Maritime Security Centre Indian Ocean (MSCIO), acted as the direct maritime-security point of contact for the vessel and her Company Security Officer, while coordinating the response with naval and regional partners operating in the area.

On 1 July, ATALANTA MSCIO received a report from the Company Security Officer of Bulk Carrier *Golden Arsenal* indicating that the vessel had been attacked by armed persons, reportedly equipped with assault rifles and RPGs.

The vessel's Master reported that the crew had implemented Best Management Practices for Maritime Security (BMP-MS), stopped the vessel, activated the distress alert, and mustered in the citadel.

Navies of India and Republic of Korea assist

Operation ATALANTA HQ immediately liaised with partners in the area, including Combined Maritime Forces, the Republic of Korea Navy, the Indian Navy, the IFC-IOR, and regional maritime authorities, to support a coordinated response. A Republic of Korea Navy warship proceeded towards the vessel, followed by Indian Navy warship INS *Trikand*, which deployed her helicopter and boarding team.

The Indian Navy boarding team subsequently secured mv *Golden Arsenal*, confirmed that no pirates were onboard, and enabled the crew to leave the citadel safely. No injuries were reported although some damages to equipment and structures were observed.

Operation ATALANTA commended the rapid and professional action of the Indian Navy, whose intervention was decisive in securing the vessel and ensuring the safety of the crew. This successful outcome also demonstrates the **value of timely reporting**, BMP-MS implementation, and coordinated maritime-security response through MSCIO and partner naval forces.



Throughout the event, Operation ATALANTA maintained constant contact with the Master of the vessel and the Company Security Officer (CSO).

Current piracy situation

Based on the current piracy situation, it is considered likely that a Pirate Action Group (PAG) is in the

Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC).

A second attempted pirate attack to another Merchant Vessel took place in the surrounding area. As at 3 July there were understood to be three ongoing piracy cases in the Somali Basin involving mt *Honour 25*, mt *Eureka* and mv *Sward*.

Recommendations

Operation ATALANTA strongly encourages merchant and other vulnerable vessels operating in the area to maintain heightened vigilance, adhere to BMP-MS, register in the MSCIO's Voluntary Registration Scheme, to provide the most effective monitoring and response by ATALANTA forces and their partners in countering maritime security threats.



EUNAVFOR ATALANTA remains fully committed to providing maritime security and ensuring the protection of vulnerable vessels in the region.

Further assessment and recommendations are provided through the appropriate channels with the shipping operators and updated on the MSCIO website here: <https://mscio.eu/>

* <https://eunavfor.eu/?s=atalanta> The current EUNAVFOR rotation is commanded by a Spanish Admiral, Rear Admiral Vázquez Sanz, and the Spanish ship, ESPS *Numancia* is the flagship of the Operation.

Italy was leading the Force Command in the previous rotation on board Italian ship ITS *Bianchi* as flagship of the Operation.

Picture credit

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