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Agenda item 3

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**IMPACTS ON SHIPPING AND SEAFARERS OF THE SITUATION IN THE ARABIAN SEA,  
SEA OF OMAN, AND THE GULF REGION, PARTICULARLY IN AND AROUND  
THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ**

**Concerns and issues for shipping industry**

**Submitted by**

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**SUMMARY**

*Executive summary:* The conflict in the Gulf region and the Gulf of Oman is impacting seafarers' safety, security and welfare. The co-sponsors have identified a series of concerns and developed pragmatic and practical solutions to the issues faced by seafarers in this conflict.

*Strategic direction,  
if applicable:* 5 and other work

*Output:* Strategic direction 5 aims to: Enhance global facilitation and security of international trade; however, the outputs are silent on warlike operations and their impact upon the security of shipping. Therefore, the output focuses on the overarching statement on security contained in the overarching principles for the Organization's Strategic Plan 2018 to 2023 of resolution A.1110(30), and OW 10.

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 13

*Related documents:* None

**Introduction**

1 The outbreak of conflict in the region has had and continues to have a significant impact upon the safety and security of seafarers, shipping operations, and port infrastructure. Multiple ships have been hit by munitions including missiles and drones. These attacks have resulted in seafarers being killed, others suffering life-changing injuries and several thousand being trapped within the area. The impact upon the seafarers and their families cannot be underestimated. The shipping industry views these attacks on innocent seafarers as totally unacceptable.

2 Attacks have occurred from the far north of the Gulf to the wider Gulf of Oman. Due to the fact that ships cannot have assurance for their safety, many remain trapped in the region.

Safe navigation has halted due to the overt threat to the safety of innocent civilian seafarers. There is a belief that changes to the insurance regime are what is preventing seafarers from being ordered to sail; however, insurance will only compensate for financial losses and will not mitigate the underlying risk nor prevent them from suffering.

3 The co-sponsors believe that freedom of safe navigation must be re-established so that seafarers can go about their jobs without fear as is their civilian right. This can only be achieved through a coordinated international approach to security.

### **Seafarer welfare**

4 The physical and mental welfare of seafarers is being greatly impacted by this conflict, with those seafarers who are affected needing to maintain contact with home and their families. To do this, many shipowners are allowing free access to satellite internet services and waiving any limits on its use to not only contact family but also to access counselling support services. The co-sponsors believe that satellite providers should work with the shipowners to facilitate this access at no cost to the seafarers.

5 Crew changes within the region and the wider world have been heavily impacted by the restrictions on flights from the region. Many States have recognized seafarers as key workers and so steps should be taken to ensure that seafarers are not stranded on board.

6 As imports into the Gulf are impacted by the conflict, seafarers must be assured of the availability of stores and provisions adequate for their needs.

### **Safety of navigation**

7 A coordinated approach should be taken to ensure that, at the same time as sufficiently reducing the threat in the region, all vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz through the Traffic Separation Scheme receive clarity and consistency on navigational advice to ensure compliance with the collision regulations.

8 Any such advice and messaging to ships must also take into account the fatigue and pressure of those on board, as well as the risks associated with transiting the area while Global Navigation Satellite Systems suffer extensive jamming and spoofing. Furthermore, any advice or transit measure must recognize that the master retains overriding authority, as stated in SOLAS chapter V regulation 34-1 in all matters of safety of the ship, passengers and crew.

### **Coordinated approach to security**

9 Firstly, all attacks on ships affecting innocent civilian seafarers must be halted immediately.

10 A coordinated approach to the security of civilian commercial vessels is necessary so that States can work together to ensure military support is not just for national priorities and that a response is internationally coordinated. This is a global crisis and requires a coordinated approach to resolve it.

### **Proposals**

11 The co-sponsors believe that a number of steps should be taken which will reduce some of the suffering of seafarers and their families. These steps are:

- .1 All attacks on ships affecting innocent civilian seafarers must be halted immediately.
- .2 Seafarer welfare must be taken into account, so that communications with home can be maintained, crew changes and disembarkation can be facilitated, and the stores and provisions are adequate for the needs of seafarers.
- .3 A coordinated international approach to safety of navigation must be agreed and take into account the fatigue and pressure of those on board, the master's overriding authority, as well as the risks associated with transiting the area while Global Navigation Satellite Systems suffer extensive jamming and spoofing.
- .4 A coordinated approach to security be adopted and a response be internationally coordinated.

### **Summary**

12 Seafarers within the conflict area are facing extreme levels of threat to their physical safety. The co-sponsors have proposed a series of practical and pragmatic proposals to mitigate the worst effects on the innocent seafarers.

### **Action requested of the Council**

13 The Council is urged to note the information in this document, consider the most effective way to promote the proposals contained within paragraph 11 and take action.

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