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Circular Letter No.4522
2 March 2022

To: All IMO Members
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communication from the Government of Ukraine**

The Government of Ukraine has sent the attached communication, dated 2 March 2022, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.



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The Embassy of Ukraine in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the International Maritime Organisation and has the honour to inform of the following.

On 24 February 2022 Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which represents an act of war, a gross violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the UN Charter and the fundamental norms and principles of international law.

Russian aggression is already bringing extremely dire consequences for international maritime shipping. In the Black Sea, several merchant ships have already suffered from the illegal actions of the Russian naval forces. Global supply chains have been disrupted. Thousands of Ukrainian seafarers cannot safely and quickly return home to their families.

Ukraine closed shipping in the north-western part of the Black Sea to ensure the safety of civilian seafarers and ships. However, the competent authorities we received confirmation that Russian Navy vessels threatened the civilian m/v "HELT" (IMO 8402589, registered in Panama) and demanded it to enter the zone dangerous for navigation in order to further use this civilian ship as a shield for Russian Navy's marine infantry deployment. Such actions of the Russian Navy are a clear breach of the international humanitarian law, violation of commercial vessels neutral status, safeguarded under Hague and Geneva conventions, as well as UNCLOS, and can be described as XXI century piracy.

The Embassy of Ukraine would appreciate if this Note Verbal is urgently circulated among IMO Member States to all IMO Member States, international organizations which have concluded agreements of cooperation with the IMO and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the IMO.

The Embassy of Ukraine to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the International Maritime Organisation the assurances of its highest consideration.

London, 02 March 2022

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