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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

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TO : All Shipowners, Bareboat Charterers, Ship Operators, Ship Managers, Shipmasters, Officers and Crew of Philippine-Registered Overseas Ships, Licensed Manning Agencies, Recognized Organizations, and Concerned Government Agencies

SUBJECT : UPDATES ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS

In view of the continuous crisis between Russia and Ukraine, this Authority respectfully provides the following updates in relation to the termination of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) in July 2023, as conveyed by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA):

- On 10 August 2023, Ukraine announced a "humanitarian corridor" in the Black Sea that aimed to release about sixty (60) cargo ships trapped in Ukrainian ports since the start of the Russian invasion against Ukraine in February 2022. Many of the ships' crews have been evacuated, leaving locally hired Ukrainian staff to help look after the vessels. The Ukrainian navy said the routes had already been proposed to the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Vessels whose owners/captains officially confirm that they are ready to sail in the current conditions will be allowed to pass through the routes. However, risks from mines and the military threat from Russia remain.

Shipping and insurance companies had expressed concerns about safety and viability, as well as the possibility of multiple seafarer deaths in the event of a ship being hit. They requested more details about the Ukrainian temporary shipping channel which cannot work unless Russia gives a concrete commitment not to attack the ships.

- On 16 August 2023, the first ship departed Odessa in a test of Ukraine's efforts to establish a new humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea. The vessel was reported to be carrying over 2,000 containers with a total of 30,000 tons of cargo including food items. On 27 August 2023, a second ship made its escape with its cargo of steel bound for Senegal in West Africa.

Other vessels were expected to follow but there were still discussions on a new insurance scheme in the event that the vessel is attacked by Russian missiles or sunk by Russian mines in Ukrainian waters. It was being proposed that the majority of the risk would be shouldered by the Ukrainian government in order that vessel operators could be compensated in case of an attack.

- On 19 September 2023, Ukraine announced that two Palau-flagged bulk carriers were the first commercial/civilian vessels to use the temporary corridor to sail towards Ukraine and to reach the port of Chornomorsk in order to load almost 20,000 tons of wheat for Africa and Asia. Their crew reportedly consisted of citizens of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Egypt and Ukraine.

As of 20 September 2023, the number of foreign ships blocked in Ukrainian ports are as follows: Mykolaiv (29 vessels), Kherson (14 vessels), Odesa (1 vessel), Chornomorsk (1 vessel), and Mariupol (5 vessels).

- On 01 October 2023, two cargo vessels arrived at the port of Odessa, two more reached the port of Chornomorsk, and the Liberian-flagged ship arrived at Pivdenny, loaded cargo and departed. Under the new route, ships hug the coast before entering the waters of Romania and then Bulgaria - both members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
- **Russia's Missile Attack in Odessa, 08 November 2023.** Ukrainian officials reported that a Russian missile damaged a Liberian-flagged civilian vessel entering a Black Sea port in the Odessa region on 08 November 2023, killing a Ukrainian pilot and injuring three Filipino crew members and one Ukrainian port employee. The affected Filipinos sustained minor injuries in their hands, back and face. One was brought to the hospital.

With regard to this incident, the Philippine Embassy in Warsaw, which has concurrent jurisdiction over Ukraine, coordinated with the Philippine Consulate in Kyiv to establish contact with Captain Arnel Gapaya Lopez of KMAX Ruler to check on the condition and well-being of the crew members. Captain Lopez confirmed that there were 25 Filipino crew of which they have attended to. The Embassy also requested Captain Lopez to inform immediately the Embassy or the Consulate should they require further assistance.

The Philippine Embassies in Warsaw and Moscow continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground as well as the developments in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. Recent events indicate that military tensions in the Black Sea show no signs of de-escalating.

For the information and guidance of all concerned.

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Atty. **HERNANI N. FABIA**
Administrator

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