



**MARINA ADVISORY**

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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 :** INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) CIRCULAR LETTERS AS OF 28 FEBRUARY 2026

Notice is hereby given on the following attached IMO Circular Letters published as of 28 February 2026:

1. **Circular Letter No. 5120 – Communication from the Government of the Russian Federation** – this concerns the recent attacks on civilian vessels and port infrastructure in the Black Sea, carried out by the Armed Forces of Ukraine which includes the following incidents:
  - a. 28 November 2025 – in the exclusive economic zone of Turkiye, unmanned surface vehicle (USV) attacked and damaged the tankers “Kairos” (IMO 9236004) and “Virat” (IMO 9832559), under the flag of Gambia. The tanker “Virat” was attacked for the second time.
  - b. 02 December 2025 – the Russian-flagged chemical tanker “Midvolga-2” (IMO 9735139), carrying a cargo of sunflower oil was attacked by an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). None of the 13 crew members were injured.
  - c. 10 December 2025 – the Gambia-flagged crude oil tanker “Dashan” (IMO 9299666) was critically damaged by Ukrainian “Sea Baby” naval drones in the eastern Black Sea.
2. **Circular Letter No. 5118 - Amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974 (chapter II-2) adopted by resolution MSC.520(106)** - Adopted amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974 (chapter II-2) by resolution MSC.520(106), which entered into force on 1 January 2026. The following new paragraph 2.1.7 is added to SOLAS regulation II-2/4:

“.7 Contracting Governments undertake to ensure that appropriate authorities designated by them inform the Organization, for transmission to Contracting Governments and Member States thereof, of all confirmed

cases (flashpoint) where oil fuel suppliers have failed to meet the requirements specified in paragraph 2.1 of this regulation; and"

- 3. Circular Letter No. 5126 - Communication from the Government of Ukraine** - In reference to Circular Letter No. 5120, regarding alleged incidents involving civilian vessels in the Black Sea. Ukraine provides factual and legal clarifications, emphasizing that the primary cause of risks to international shipping in the Black Sea is the ongoing armed aggression by Russia, including the occupation of Ukrainian territories and attacks on civilian port and energy infrastructure. Ukraine highlights the significant damage caused by Russian strikes on civilian merchant vessels, port facilities, and maritime export corridors, which have disrupted global food supply chains and endangered seafarers and port personnel.

It also addresses concerns about Russian vessels allegedly involved in circumventing international restrictions and engaging in unsafe practices, which pose risks to navigation and the marine environment. Ukraine stresses that Russia's actions, including mining sea areas, declaring "danger zones," and militarizing occupied ports, have severely undermined freedom of navigation in the Black Sea.

Ukraine calls on IMO Member States to assess the situation in the Black Sea within the context of Russia's war of aggression and urges the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Russian forces to restore maritime safety and freedom of navigation.

- 4. Circular Letter No. 5125 - Communication from the Government of the Republic of Madagascar** - the Republic of Madagascar informing about the recent cases involving the use of forged certificates and false registrations claiming to be under the Malagasy flag.

The Republic of Madagascar, requests the IMO and the Port State Control to:

- a. Consider that the vessels mentioned in this circular are not registered in Madagascar and are not authorised to fly its flag.
- b. Regard as presumed fraudulent any document presented as an "International Maritime Register" issued by Madagascar.
- c. Verify with particular vigilance any certificate claiming the Malagasy flag which refers to organisations other than DBS, BV, INSB and IS.

Port States are invited, within the framework of their Port State Control activities, to request, in case of doubt, direct confirmation from APMF through official channels.

- 5. Circular Letter No. 5131 - Communication from the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe** - In reference to the inquiries regarding the vessel named "RANGE VALE" (IMO Number 9299898), identified as a crude oil tanker reportedly anchored at the Port of German.

The Embassy wishes to convey the following:

- a. The Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe categorically disassociates itself for the purported entity known as the "Registrar of ships, Zimbabwe Maritime Authority".
  - b. There is no such organization as a "Maritime Authority" in Zimbabwe.
  - c. All maritime and shipping issues in Zimbabwe are the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development.
  - d. The International Maritime Organisation and all other relevant parties are urged to disregard both the so-called "Zimbabwe Maritime Authority" and the purported Certificate of Registration issued in respect of the vessel RANGE VALE.
- 6. Circular Letter No. 5130 - Communication from the Government of the Republic of Palau** – to inform that the issued Marine Circular No. 01/2026, confirming that all marine regulations, circulars, notices, and statutory documents, including vessel and seafarer certificates, issued on behalf of the Republic of Palau prior to the commencement of the current operating arrangement on 21 January 2026, remain valid and in full force, subject to verification through online and/or QR code.

Copy of the Circular Letter may be viewed at or downloaded from <https://marina.gov.ph/marina-advisory-flag-state-administration-advisory/>.

Attention is therefore invited for all Philippine overseas shipping companies, shipowners, and other concerned maritime entities to observe any action/s you may deem appropriate.

For the information and guidance of all concerned.

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**SONIA B. MALALUAN**

Administrator

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