



**MARINA ADVISORY**

**NO.:** 2026-27

Series of 2026

- 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 AND CIRCULAR LETTERS AS OF 31 MARCH 2026
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Notice is hereby given on the following attached IMO Circular and Circular Letters published as of 31 March 2026:

**A. IMO CIRCULAR**

1. **STCW.2/Circ.141 - International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978 (Communication received from the Government of the Hellenic Republic)**

This Circular details Greece's implementation of updated STCW basic training standards, including competencies, certification validity and training curriculum revisions effective from January 2026. The updates focus on personal safety, social responsibility, and response to violence and harassment. Certificates issued prior to January 1, 2026, remain valid until their expiration date. Seafarers joining vessels from this date will be trained under new standards. Existing Certificate holders will undergo refresher training covering new competencies before renewal. The updates ensure ongoing compliance with amended STCW requirements.

**B. IMO CIRCULAR LETTERS**

1. **Circular Letter No. 5140 - Communication from the Government of the Russian Federation regarding the issuance of electronic ship certificates**

The document discusses Russia's implementation of electronic ship certificates, their recognition, and the list of documents issued electronically under international agreements. The Russian Federation will accept electronic ship documents issued by Recognized Organizations acting on behalf of the Russian Federation from 01 March 2026 that shall comply with the "Guidelines for the use of electronic certificates" (FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2) by the International Maritime Organizations. Verification of electronic ship documents can be carried out on the website of the recognized organization or by scanning the QR code on the first page of the document.

Moreover, ship documents issued by Recognized Organizations on behalf of the Russian Federation may either be presented in electronic format or in original paper format. However, the Russian Federation encourages the use of electronic documents to enhance the efficiency of marine services and reduce the work load.

## **2. Circular Letter No. 5142 - Communication from the Government of the Cook Islands**

A communication from the Government of the Cook Islands which notified a number of vessels that have been falsely flagged as Cook Islands vessels. These include ships that are currently, previously, or have been registered from the Cook Islands Ship Registry but continue to operate under its flag without authorization.

Maritime Cook Islands has launched an online Vessel Verification Portal, that allows users to verify the registration status of vessels flying the Cook Islands flag, enhancing transparency and public access to registry information. They also provide monthly updates of the active fleet to S&P Global, which updates the IMO GISIS database.

## **3. Circular Letter No. 5096 - Implementation of resolution A.1215(34) – IMO integrated identification number scheme**

This document outlines the implementation of the IMO integrated identification number scheme, including procedures for allocating, managing, and verifying ship and company identifiers to enhance maritime safety, pollution prevention, and fraud reduction. The scheme, adopted in resolution A.1215 (34), comprises two main elements: the IMO Ship Identification Number and the IMO unique company and registered owner identification number. It aims to facilitate ship and company identification without affecting liability or legal matters.

This circular letter revokes Circular Letters Nos. 1886/Rev.7, 2554/Rev.4 and 3347.

## **4. Circular Letter No. 3144/Rev.1 - List of solid bulk materials possessing chemical hazards which are mentioned by name in the IMSBC Code in accordance with resolution MSC.575(110), and also in the IMDG Code in effect in 1996; and list of solid bulk materials possessing chemical hazards which are mentioned by name in the IMSBC Code in accordance with resolution MSC.575(110) but not in the IMDG Code in effect in 1996**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the revised list for the information of States that are currently Contracting Parties or are considering becoming Parties to the 2010 Protocol to amend the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 1996 (2010 HNS Protocol):

- .1 solid bulk materials possessing chemical hazards which are mentioned by name in the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code in

accordance with resolution MSC 575 (110) and which are also mentioned by name in the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code in effect in 1996; and

- .2 solid bulk materials possessing chemical hazards which are mentioned by name in the IMSBC Code in accordance with resolution MSC 575(110), but which are not mentioned by name in the IMDG Code in effect in 1996.

**5. Circular Letter No. 5149 - Communication from the Government of the Union of the Comoros**

This Circular formally communicates the sole official electronic portal: <http://portal.comorosmaritime.org> authorized for the verification of certificates, documents, and records issued under the authority of the Flag Administration, and to explicitly reject and disclaim any unauthorized or misleading websites purporting to offer similar verification services.

**6. Circular Letter No.5151 - Joint statement from Kingdom of Bahrain, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, State of Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates**

This is a joint statement and request from Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, expressing their rejection and condemnation in the strongest terms of the Islamic Republic of Iran's unprovoked, unjustifiable and wholly unlawful indiscriminate and reckless missile and drone attacks against their countries, which constitute a serious breach of sovereignty, and a flagrant violation of fundamental rules and principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. These heinous attacks have resulted in civilian fatalities, injuries, and material damage, threatening the security and safety of civilians and terrorizing the peaceful civilian population in the region.

**7. Circular Letter No.5152 - Communication from the Islamic Republic of Iran**

Iran condemns ongoing US-Israeli Military aggression that started on 28 February 2026, highlights maritime security risks, and urges IMO to prevent escalation and protect civilian ports.

Iran emphasizes that threats against civilian ports and infrastructure escalate risks and endanger lives. Reports attacks on Iranian maritime assets: rescue vessel sank, ambulance vessel destroyed, and VTS facilities targeted.

The attacks impair navigation safety and increase risk of maritime accidents, threaten the safety of merchant vessels, crew, and port communities.

Iran emphasizes that its commercial ports and port facilities operate for lawful civilian purposes, following international standards. Rejects hostile narratives and threats that blur civilian-military distinction. Calls for adherence to UN Charter principles, including sovereignty and non-use of force. Requests IMO to underscore the importance of preventing further escalation and protecting maritime trade and safety.

## **8. Circular Letter No.5153 - Communication from the Islamic Republic of Iran**

The communication underscores Iran's intention to inform international maritime authorities about recent incidents and ongoing safety issues and request IMO to note and publish these events for awareness.

Incidents involving Iranian vessels, on 01 March 2026, search and rescue vessel Naji sank after being struck at Jask Port: crew members were unharmed. On 11 March 2026, medical ambulance Soroush Tandorosti was destroyed at Hormuz Island dock; no personnel were onboard. Both incidents occurred amid broader disruptions to maritime safety infrastructure in the area.

Iranian authorities recorded 16 distress messages. Conducted 12 search rescue and 4 auxiliary rescue operations, rescuing 152 persons and providing medical aid to 7. Damage included 6 VTS radar relay stations, a maritime traffic control at Kish Port, and one tug.

These events highlight challenges to navigation safety and maritime emergency response in the Strait of Hormuz. The embassy emphasizes the importance of these events for maritime safety and regional stability.

## **9. Circular Letter No.5154 - Communication from the Russian Federation**

This communication from Russia to IMO discusses increased threats and unlawful action against civilian vessels in various sea regions.

Russian highlights increased threats to marine navigation safety, including attacks by Ukrainian unmanned vehicles on civilian vessels. Specific incidents include attacks on tankers and gas carriers in the Black Sea, Mediterranean, and Baltic Sea. An attack on LNG tanker Arctic Metagaz on 03 March 2026 is notably mentioned as a recent incident.

Multiple cases of vessel detentions by European authorities in 2024-2026 are detailed, citing suspicions of damage, false flag sailing, or smuggling. Russia condemns these actions as violations of international law and sanctions regimes.

Such action could lead to a catastrophic erosion of the fundamental norms of international law of the sea, trigger a "domino effect", and lead to an effective halt of the global maritime trade system.

Russia calls for broader international attention to maritime security issues beyond the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman, and the Gulf Region and in other areas of the World Ocean, such as the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean.

## **10. Circular Letter No. 5156/Rev.1- Communication from Ukraine**

In this communication, Ukraine raises concerns over Russian maritime attacks, disinformation, and violations of international law, urging caution and factual assessment by IMO.

Ukraine clarifies that Russian allegations of involvement in attacks are unsubstantiated and part of disinformation. Emphasizes the importance of verifying facts to prevent misuse of IMO procedures. Highlights broader pattern of Russian misinformation aimed at diverting attention from its aggression that continues to undermine maritime safety and freedom of navigation.

Details ongoing missile and UAV attacks on Ukraine's port infrastructure and merchant ships since 2022. Reports damage to 734 port facilities, sinking of 154 ships, and harm to 238 civilians. Lists merchant ships damaged since July 2025, with specific vessel detail provided in Annex 1.

Reaffirms Ukraine's dedication to IMO principles of maritime safety and environmental protection. Urges member states to approach Russian communications with caution and rely on verified information.

**11. Circular Letter No. 5158 - Communication from the Islamic Republic of Iran.**

This circular details Iran's position on maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz following recent US-Israeli aggression. Iran affirms its commitment to UN Charter principles and international law, emphasizing freedom and security of maritime navigation.

The Strait of Hormuz remains open, and maritime traffic has not been suspended. Navigation continues, subject to compliance with the necessary measures. Further, any vessels, equipment, and any assets belonging to the aggressor parties—namely, the United States and Israeli regime—as well as other participants in the aggression, do not qualify for innocent or non-hostile passage. Full respect for Iran's sovereignty and sovereign rights is essential for safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz. It also highlighted its longstanding efforts to safeguard regional maritime principles.

The recent US-Israeli military attack occurred on 28 February 2026, violating UN Charter Article 24 and norms against the use of force, destabilized the Persian Gulf region and compromised maritime safety and security, in view of this, Iran has exercised its right to self-defense, targeting US military bases and facilities in the region. And restricted passage of vessels associated with aggressors, in accordance with international law. Iran has implemented precautionary measures to ensure maritime safety and security, while keeping the Strait open, Navigation continues with compliance to safety regulations, despite ongoing conflict.

**12. Circular Letter No. 5157 - Communication from the Government of the Republic of Guinea.**

The Government of Guinea informed the International Maritime Organization (IMO) that several vessels are fraudulently operating under its flag using falsified registration documents. Guinea clarified that it has no international ship registry and does not recognize entities such as "ALFA Register of Shipping" or the appointment of any "maritime commissioner."

The Appointment letter of Mr. Sergel Ivanovich, a Ukrainian citizen, as a maritime commissioner representing the Maritime Authority of Guinea is not authentic.

The Embassy would appreciate any judicial action consistent with maritime law.

**13. Circular Letter No. 5161 - Communication from the Islamic Republic of Iran.**

This circular provides an overview of maritime incidents affecting vessels in the Middle East, specifically the /strait of Hormuz, reported by Iran to the IMO. Iran's embassy transmitted a list of 54 maritime incidents that includes vessel damages, total losses, grounded vessels and casualties. The report emphasizes the importance of accurate, official data for maritime safety.

Copy of the IMO Circular and Circular Letters 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.

Issued on MAY 14 2026 at Manila, Philippines.

**SONIA B. MALALUAN**

Administrator

Date of Publication: 20 May 2026  
Business Mirror