REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

MARINA ADVISORY
NO.: 2026-37
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 LETTERS AS OF 31 MAY 2026**

Notice is hereby given on the following attached IMO Circular Letters published as of 31 May 2026:

1. **Circular Letter No. 5196 - Communication from the Kingdom of Bahrain –** The Kingdom of Bahrain reports Iran's unlawful attacks on its maritime infrastructure, causing damage and safety risks, including to seafarers. Bahrain, formally records that its maritime infrastructure, including Khalifa Bin Salman Port, has been subjected to numerous unlawful attacks originating for the Islamic Republic of Iran since 28 February 2026, causing material, operational and economic damage. It emphasizes that these unlawful attacks have targeted not only the safety of maritime operations, but also vital maritime services, tragically resulting in the loss of life and injuries that occurred at the Arab Shipbuilding and Repair Yard (ASRY). These actions have gravely impacted the safety and welfare of seafarers and posed serious risks to maritime navigation. Port operations have declined drastically, with significant reduction in cargo flows affecting the financial stability of the port operator, APM Terminal Bahrain. It urges IMO to support safe maritime corridors, emphasizes legal rights for reparations, and affirms port operations and measures to ensure essential supplies and crew changes amid regional tensions. Bahrain seeks international cooperation to safeguard navigation and maritime security.

2. **Circular Letter No. 5199 - Communication from the Islamic Republic of Iran** - The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns United States maritime seizures of the Iranian commercial vessels, M/T TIFANI and M/T MAJESTIC, as well as the theft and confiscation of their cargoes. These actions are unlawful which violate international law, including piracy and use of force, threatening maritime safety and security. Iran emphasizes these actions as breach of UN charter and IMO principles, undermining lawful international trade.

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3. **Circular Letter No. 5202 - Communication from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran** - This Circular is a communication from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, protesting regional aggression and actions by the United Arab Emirates and other aggressor. Emphasizes that attacks violate international law and threaten regional stability. Iran also highlights damages to its infrastructure and civilian casualties caused by attacks, and asserts its right to control the Strait of Hormuz amid security threats. It states that it is not party to the 1982 UN Convention on Law of Sea.

   Further, Iran claims that the Strait remains open for navigation under its self-defense measures, and criticizes the United Arab Emirate's stance on maritime security.

4. **Circular Letter No. 5203 - Communication from the Government of the Republic of Botswana** - This Circular pertains to the communication from the Government of the Republic of Botswana's request to disseminate the list of vessels purported to be registered under the Botswana flag. It likewise states that Botswana does not operate either a domestic or an international ship registry. Furthermore, Mr. Johannes Otlaadisa Tsimako, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Botswana is the authorized Government official responsible for matters pertaining to the registration of ships.

5. **Circular Letter No. 5205 - Communication from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran** - Iran's Ports Maritime Organization informs IMO of humanitarian measures allowing ships in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Oman Sea access to port services including provisions, fuel, and medical aid, to support maritime safety and seafarer welfare. Ships can contact the Vessel Traffic Services (**VTS**) centre of the nearest Iranian ports via VHF Channel 16 or local representatives to convey their requirements accordingly.

   Moreover, the embassy regards to emphasize that this communication is of a strictly humanitarian, safety-oriented and technical nature and is issued within the framework of the responsibilities of the coastal State with respect to maritime safety, support for commercial shipping, protection of life and health of seafarers, and the provision of port and maritime services.

6. **Circular Letter No. 5208 -. Joint communication from the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates** - This Circular communicates a joint statement from the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, rejecting Iran's Notice to Mariners (S.09/2026) and the establishment of a the "Persian Gulf Strait Authority" (PGSA), which Iran claims as a sovereign entity to manage vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

   It highlights that Iran's threats and attacks on commercial vessels, including a recent attack on a UAE-owned vessel, have made passage through the Strait

unsafe. The countries contend that Iran cannot be trusted to guarantee vessel safety via its proposed alternative route.

Furthermore, the countries are emphasizing safety and legal rights, and urging to instruct their commercial and merchant vessels not to use Iran's route or engage with the PGSA.

In response to the situation, the Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) reaffirm their commitment to seafarer safety and support for the IMO's evacuation plan for merchant ships in high-risk areas, emphasizing the use of the internationally recognized Strait of Hormuz Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) whenever it is safe to do so.

7. **Circular Letter No. 5211 - Communication from the Government of Belize regarding the issuance of electronic ship certificates** - The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE), in its capacity as Belize's Flag State Administration under the Registration of Merchant Ships Act, Revised Edition 2020, will commence the issuance of electronic statutory certificates starting May 20, 2026, aligned with IMO Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Certificates (FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2) and, where applicable, the Guidelines on the Use of Electronic Certificates of Seafarers (MSC.1/Cir.1665).

   Each e-certificate includes the IMMARBE logo, a digital seal, a unique tracking number (UTN), certificate number, and a QR code. These features are designed to prevent unauthorized alteration and facilitate secure, electronic verification via IMMARBE's website https://immarbe.com/v2/verification/app/search.php or official contact: verify@immarbe.com.

   To facilitate smooth transition, paper-based certificates bearing digital signatures and, where applicable, QR-code verification features issued on serialized paper, will remain valid and continue to be accepted in parallel with electronic certificates until 31 December 2026.

8. **Circular Letter No. 5193 - Amendments to MARPOL Annex VI** - This Circular contains the MEPC 84 (27 April to 1 May 2026) considered and approved draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI on the installation of pressure-vacuum devices on tankers carrying crude oil, with a view to adoption at MEPC 85 (30 November to 3 December 2026).

9. **Circular Letter No. 5191 - Draft consolidated revised annex to the Ballast Water Management Convention** - The communication refers to the MEPC 84 (27 April to 1 May 2026) considered and approved package of draft amendments to the BMW Convention, as prepared by the Correspondence Group on Review of the BMW Convention with a view for adoption at MEPC 85 (30 November to 3 December 2026).

10. **Circular Letter No. 5192 - AMENDMENTS TO MARPOL ANNEX I** - The MEPC 84 (27 April to 1 May 2026) considered and approved draft amendments to

MARPOL Annex I (new regulation 12B, and amendments to appendix III – Form of the IOPP certificate and Supplements and appendix III – Form of the Oil Record Book). With a view to adoption at MEPC 85 (30 November to 3 December 2026).

11. **Circular Letter No. 5194 - Amendments to the NOx Technical Code 2008 -** This Circular details amendments to the NOx Technical Code 2008, including new fuel and emission measurement definitions, procedures for certifying engines operating on non-carbon fuels, and updated analytical methods.
It introduces fuel composition parameters, gas analyzers, and measurement techniques for NOx, NH3, N2O, H2O, and other gases, emphasizing accuracy, interference checks, and calculation methods for exhaust gas flow, with a focus on dual fuel and non-carbon fuels.

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.

Issued on JUL 03 2026 at Manila, Philippines.

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Administrator

Date of Publication: 10 July 2026
Business Mirror