REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MARITIME INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

MARINA ADVISORY
NO.: 2026-48
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 JULY 2026**

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

1. **Circular Letter No. 5237 - Communication from the Government of the Russian Federation -** The communication from the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation, forwards the address of participants from the International Scientific and Practical Conference titled "Modern Threats to Industrial Commercial Shipping and Options for Responding to Them within the Framework of International Maritime Law" held on 17 June 2026, which focuses on the protection and safety of international commercial shipping based on maritime law.

   The main focus of the letter and its annex is to highlight concerns about threats to the safety of international commercial shipping, the undermining of established principles of international maritime law (such as freedom of navigation and the safety of seafarers), and the need to uphold and strengthen these principles. The letter calls for:

   - The adoption of an IMO Assembly resolution defending key maritime law principles.
   - The development of universal measures to ensure freedom of navigation.
   - Ensuring the responsibilities of flag States are fulfilled.
   - Excluding private operators from critical maritime safety decision-making chains.
   - Ensuring maritime tracking, Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system and identification systems, AIS are used only for their intended safety purposes.

   The Russian Federation advocates for stronger adherence to and effectiveness of international maritime law as a means of protecting the safety, security, and continuity of international commercial shipping.

2. **Circular Letter No. 5236 – Communication from the United Arab Emirates -** The written communication from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) concerns the continuing developments arising from the Islamic Republic of Iran's alleged illegal actions in and around the Strait of Hormuz. The UAE denounces Iran's continued attempts to assert control over the Strait, including the establishment of the so-called "Persian

Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA)," which the UAE considers illegitimate and contrary to the role of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the established Traffic Separation Scheme for safe navigation. The UAE further objects to Iran's reported requirement for vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz to obtain permits issued by the PGSA, asserting that such a measure obstructs the right of transit passage and freedom of navigation and is inconsistent with international law, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026), and relevant decisions and declarations of the IMO Council, Legal Committee, and Maritime Safety Committee. The UAE likewise maintains that the imposition of tolls, fees, or other charges on vessels transiting the Strait would be contrary to established international maritime rights and principles.

3. **Circular Letter No. 5242 - Communication from the Government of the Gabonese Republic -** This communication informs of the cancellation of the agreement for the operation of the Gabonese International Register of Ships between the Gabonese Government and International Intershipping Services LLC, based in Dubai, UAE, following the sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United Kingdom on 18 and 21 July 2026, respectively. It further advises that, on a temporary basis, the operation of the Register will be undertaken by the Gabonese National Maritime Administration, through the Merchant Marine Directorate and the Libreville Ship Registration Bureau, with the relevant contact details provided for coordination and inquiries.

4. **Circular Letter No. 5234 - Amendment to the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL), 1965** – This communication transmits, the text of the proposed draft amendment to the annex of the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, 1965, approved by The Facilitation Committee, at its fiftieth session (23 to 27 March 2026), for consideration with a view to adoption at its fifty-first session (12 to 16 April 2026).

5. **Circular Letter No. 5244 - Communication from the United Republic of Tanzania -** The United Republic of Tanzania reported the attack on the Tanzania-flagged general cargo vessel ATLAS BEY (IMO No. 8302404) near Odesa, Ukraine, on 14 July 2026. The vessel, operated by Turkish company Okean Maritime, had 11 Azerbaijani crew members. Ten were evacuated to Odesa, with three sustained injuries, while the Master, also an Azerbaijani national, was killed.

   Tanzania also expressed concern over two other attacks in the same area: a Togolese-flagged merchant vessel struck on 13 July 2026 while unloading mineral fertilizers, resulting in three crew deaths and ten injuries, and a Liberian-flagged merchant vessel struck on 14 July 2026.

   Tanzania expressed solidarity with affected flag Administrations and seafarers, supported the IMO Secretary-General's condemnation of attacks on civilian merchant vessels, and called for the de-escalation of tensions affecting international shipping. It urged all parties to refrain from actions endangering merchant vessels, seafarers, and the marine environment, and reaffirmed its readiness to cooperate with the IMO on the matter.

6. **Circular Letter No. 5248 - Communication from the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea -** The Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in the United Kingdom, on behalf of H.E. Honorato Evita Oma, Minister of State for

Transport, Telecommunications and Civil Aviation, informed the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of the reopening of the Equatorial Guinea International Ship Registry under a new registration framework.

The Embassy requested the IMO to disseminate the information to all relevant Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to ensure that concerned maritime authorities and organizations are properly informed of the Registry's reopening and its new registration framework.

7. **Circular Letter No. 5245 - Communication from the Islamic Republic of Iran** - The Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran reported alleged U.S. military attacks that caused damage and fatalities to Iran's maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) infrastructure, including SAR vessels (NAJI 10, NAJI 12, and NAJI 23) and MRCCs in Bandar Abbas and Chabahar.

   Iran stated that these civilian and humanitarian assets are protected under international law and the SAR Convention, and alleged that the attacks violated relevant international obligations.

   Iran called on the IMO to urge an immediate cessation of attacks or threats against SAR vessels, facilities, personnel, and equipment; reaffirm their protection; and ensure the uninterrupted provision of SAR services in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Oman.

8. **Circular Letter No. 5246 – Communication from the Islamic Republic of Iran** - The communication urges the IMO to give urgent attention to the alleged renewed U.S. naval blockade affecting vessels entering and departing Iranian ports, oil terminals, and maritime approaches.

   It reports that U.S. maritime advisories announced the resumption of the blockade on 14 July 2026, applicable to vessels of all flags, with unauthorized vessels allegedly subject to interception, diversion, capture, or use of force. On 15 July 2026, the U.S. forces subsequently used force against the Curaçao-flagged tanker M/T Bela, two other commercial vessels were reportedly redirected and one vessel disabled.

   Iran argues that the measures are inconsistent with the purposes of the IMO Convention, particularly maritime safety, freedom and efficiency of navigation, environmental protection, and the avoidance of unnecessary restrictions on international shipping.

9. **Circular Letter No. 5249 - Communication from the Government of the Republic Kazakhstan** - The Embassy of Kazakhstan transmitted a 19 July 2026 statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemning attacks on civilian vessels in the Black Sea involved in the lawful transportation of oil through Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) infrastructure.

   Kazakhstan called for the immediate cessation of attacks against civilian vessels and critical export infrastructure and urged the international community to condemn such incidents and develop measures to prevent their recurrence. Kazakhstan is conducting a comprehensive damage assessment and intends to seek protection of its legitimate interests, including full compensation under international law.

10. **Circular Letter No. 5251 - Communication from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran** - The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran brought an urgent attention on the intolerable and unlawful armed attack by the Ukrainian forces

against the Iranian-flagged commercial vessel ANA, IMO No. 8934491 on 25 July 2026, while transiting the Volga Canal en route to Bandar Anzali in Iran. The attack resulted in the killing of one crew member and injury to two others.

The Embassy requested that this communication be circulated and brought to the urgent attention of Member States and relevant IMO organs, The Embassy further requests the Organization to duly reflect the Ukrainian attack against the Iranian vessel ANA as a serious threat to maritime safety, commercial shipping and the safety of seafarers.

11. **Circular Letter No. 5252 - Communication from the Government of Ukraine -** The communication drew attention to the continued terrorist attacks by the Russian Federation against civilian cargo ships and Ukraine's port infrastructure in the Black Sea, as well as to the official Russian warning concerning the alleged dangers of navigation in its exclusive economic zone. These actions are said to violate international law and the principle of freedom of navigation, and they pose a direct threat to global food security.

Ukraine is particularly concerned that these warnings may signal preparations for further provocations or attacks targeting vessels bound for Russian ports.

For safety reasons, Ukraine calls on shipowning companies to temporarily suspend service to Russian ports in the Black Sea until the situation stabilizes. It further states, that under the current circumstances, it is impossible to guarantee the protection of vessels and their crews. Moreover, Ukraine. invokes its inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

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 SEP 07 2026 at Manila, Philippines.

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Administrator

Date of Publication: 16 September 2026
Business Mirror