

For the attention of His Excellency António Guterres

United Nations Secretary General
United Nations Headquarters
E 46th St & 1st Ave
New York 10017
United States of America

Thursday 18 April 2024

Joint open letter following the seizure of the MSC Aries

Re: Shipping industry call for help following the seizure of the MSC Aries and its crew members

Your Excellency Secretary-General Guterres,

The maritime industry, represented by the organisations behind this letter, are grateful for the recognition that the UN Security Council and you personally have placed on the shipping industry and the importance of the free movement as set out in international law. We also thank and applaud IMO Secretary General Arsenio Dominguez for all the hard work raising the profile of shipping and our seafarers.

However, the incident this weekend, when the vessel MSC Aries was seized by Iranian forces at 06.37 UTC – 50 nautical miles north-east of Fujairah, United Arab Emirates on Saturday 13 April, has once again highlighted the intolerable situation where shipping has become a target. This is unacceptable.

We have seen a worrying increase in the attacks on shipping. Shipping is not a target with no victims. Innocent seafarers have been killed, seafarers are being held hostage. This would be unacceptable on land, and it is unacceptable at sea.

The world would be outraged if four airliners were seized and held hostage with innocent souls onboard. Regrettably, there does not seem to be the same response or concern for the four commercial vessels and their crews being held hostage.

Seafarers kept the world fed and warm during the pandemic with vital medicine, food and fuel delivered, irrespective of politics. Seafarers and the maritime sector are neutral and must not be politicised. It is the moral duty to protect seafarers.

Shipping is a resilient industry, throughout history it has delivered trade in the face of the most overwhelming threats and circumstances.

Given the continually evolving and severe threat profile within the area, we call on you for enhanced coordinated military presence, missions and patrols in the region, to protect our seafarers against any further possible aggression.

The industry associations ask that all member states be formally reminded of their responsibilities under international law. And we ask that all efforts possible are brought to bear to release the seafarers and protect the safe transit of ships.

Yours faithfully,



Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA)

Yuichi Sonoda, Secretary General



BIMCO

David Loosley, Secretary General & CEO



Cruise Lines international Association (CLIA)

**Donald Brown, Senior Vice President,
Maritime Policy**



European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA)

Sotiris Raptis, Secretary General



INTERMANAGER

Mark O'Neil, President



International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO)

Kostas G. Gkonis, Secretary General



International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO)

Phillip Belcher, Marine Director



International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH)

Patrick Verhoeven, Managing Director



International Chamber of Shipping
Shaping the Future of Shipping

International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)

Guy Platten, Secretary General



International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA)

Jim Scorer, Secretary General



International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA)

Iain Grainger, CEO



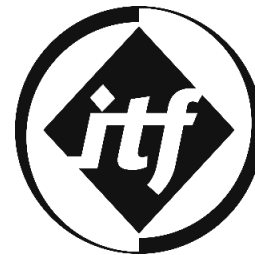
International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC)

Francesco Gargiulo, Chief Executive Officer



International Parcel Tankers Association (IPTA)

Manish Jain, Chairman



International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

Stephen Cotton, General Secretary



The Federation of National Associations of Ship Brokers and Agents (FONASBA)

Javier Dulce, President



World Shipping Council

World Shipping Council (WSC)

John Butler, President & CEO

CC: His Excellency Arsenio Dominguez
Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization
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United Kingdom