

**For the attention of His Excellency António Guterres**

United Nations Secretary General  
United Nations Headquarters  
E 46<sup>th</sup> St & 1<sup>st</sup> 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,



**ASA**  
Asian Shipowners' Association

**Asian Shipowners' Association (ASA)**

**Yuichi Sonoda, Secretary General**

**BIMCO**

**BIMCO**

**David Loosley, Secretary General & CEO**



**Cruise Lines international Association (CLIA)**

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



**ECSCA**  
European Community Shipowners' Associations

**European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSCA)**

**Sotiris Raptis, Secretary General**



**InterManager**

**INTERMANAGER**

**Mark O'Neil, President**



**INTERCARGO**  
International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners

**International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO)**

**Kostas G. Gkonis, Secretary General**



**INTERTANKO**

**International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO)**

**Phillip Belcher, Marine Director**



international association  
of ports and harbors

**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**



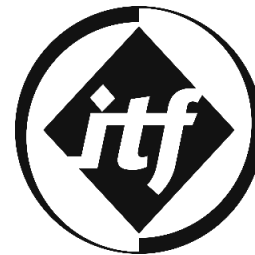
**International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC)**

**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  
4 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7SR  
United Kingdom