



CIRCULAR NO.2-2026/MARITIME SECURITY

MAY 2026

These Circular serves to provide regular information from the Maritime Security Committee established by law about maritime security and security information of interest in Solomon Islands.

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1974 have force of law in Solomon Islands as per the Shipping Act 1998 as amended. The Chapter XI-2 of SOLAS on Special Measures to Enhance Maritime Security and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code contain detailed security-related requirements for governments, port authorities and shipping companies visited by, or operating vessels engaged in international voyages. The Maritime Safety Administration (Ship and Port Security) Regulations 2011 provide for maritime security management and responsibilities in Solomon Islands.

SECURITY LEVEL

Solomon Islands is currently at the **Security Level 1**. Section 2.1 of the ISPS Code Part A defines **Security Level 1** as: *“the level for which minimum appropriate protective security measures shall be maintained at all times.”*

Security Level 2 *“means the level for which appropriate additional protective security measures shall be maintained for a period of time as a result of heightened risk of a security incident.”*

Security Level 3 *“means the level for which further specific protective security measures shall be maintained for a limited period of time when a security incident is probable or imminent, although it may not be possible to identify the specific target.”*

FROM THE MARITIME SECURITY COMMITTEE

The Maritime Security Committee held its first meeting in February this year (2026). The Committee agreed on the Guidelines on Maritime Security Incident (MSI) that will be published as mandatory security requirements.

The Maritime Security Committee also agreed to establish working relationships and communication between the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority (SIMA), the Solomon Islands Ports Authority (SIPA), the Customs and Excise division and other border security agencies to support the Comptroller of Customs in overseeing the clearance of international ships and cargoes for the duration of extension work of Honiara Port international wharf 1 to avoid port congestion.

DID YOU KNOW?

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF SECTION 38 (1) & (2) OF THE 2011 REGULATIONS 2011?

These provisions give power to member of the police force to instruct any person within ports and on-board ships to give assistance when police respond to a threat to maritime security.

For all government officers performing functions and exercising lawful powers within ports or on-board vessels must do so in a manner which complies with these 2011 Regulations and approved safety plans.

These provisions are very important as they allow the border security agencies to take any measures to minimize the threat and respond to security incidents using approved plans and equipment and instructing persons in ports or on-board ships.

TONGA, COOK ISLANDS FALSE FLAGS COMMON AMONG RUSSIA'S SHADOW FLEET – ANALYST

Pacific island countries flags are being used to fly false flags and are flying high amongst sanctioned oil tankers potentially carrying Russian, Iranian, or Venezuelan crude oil.

Ten sanctioned vessels were tracked at the East China and South China seas and were falsely flying under the flag of Tonga, according to Wellington-based Starboard Maritime Intelligence. However, according to the starboard analyst, it would be highly unusual for Tonga to flag oil tankers since their ship registry closed all the way back in 2002.

Vessels were tracked through a Malaysian port at East Johor and were reported by Bloomberg last year that it was a famous place for Iranian crude oil to be rebranded as Malaysian, before being exported to China. Also were tracked to Norwegian Sea headed for Russia.

Source: [Tonga, Cook Islands false flags common among Russia's shadow fleet - Analyst | RNZ News](#)

SEAFARERS IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ CRISIS: IMO CALLS FOR SAFE-PASSAGE FRAMEWORK

As tensions increase across the Middle East region, the IMO Council met on 18-19 March 2026 to discuss the situation in the Middle East and its impact on shipping and seafarers. Seafarers continue to navigate high-risk waters to ensure that essential goods, fuel, and raw materials reach global markets. They are not just part of the supply chain; they are the people who keep global trade moving forward. Despite facing immediate and tangible risks, their role and wellbeing are rarely acknowledged in mainstream coverage.

Countering this backdrop, the IMO convened an extraordinary session of its Council to examine developments in the Arabian Sea, Sea of Oman, and Gulf region, and to address the worsening impact on shipping and seafarers. The Council strongly condemned threats and attacks against merchant vessels, as well as the reported closure of the Strait of Hormuz. It emphasized that such actions undermine international law, particularly the principle of freedom of navigation.

Crucially, the IMO highlighted the direct consequences for seafarers. It called for an immediate halt to all attacks on civilian crews and stressed the need for coordinated international action to protect both shipping and those onboard.

Source : [IMO Council calls for safe-passage framework](#)

CONTACT

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