

PRESS RELEASE

Malta International Shipowners' Association (MISA) statement on recent incidents affecting merchant shipping

Valletta, Malta – 17 January 2026 - The Malta International Shipowners' Association (MISA) expresses grave concern over recent attacks on commercial shipping and operations, which highlight the increasingly complex risk environment facing civilian vessels and seafarers.

MISA supports the position expressed by the Maltese authorities, underlining that such attacks pose a serious threat to the safety of civilian seafarers, international navigation and the free flow of legitimate global trade, and that the safety of all seafarers carrying out their duties remains paramount.

Malta has reaffirmed that it firmly upholds the principles of freedom of navigation and strict adherence to international law as cornerstones of its maritime policy, and MISA fully aligns itself with this position.

While shipowners continue to strengthen risk assessments and operational safeguards, the escalation of threats against merchant vessels demonstrates the limits of what the industry, acting alone, can address.

It is unacceptable and contrary to international law and fundamental maritime principles that civilian seafarers and merchant vessels are exposed to harm or treated as targets in the context of geopolitical or military developments. Seafarers should not be exposed to risks arising from geopolitical or military developments beyond their control.

For Malta-flagged vessels and operators, priorities remain clear: crew safety, environmental protection, freedom of navigation and of the seas, all within strict adherence to international maritime law.

Any disruption to lawful navigation carries wider implications for energy supply, food security and economic stability.

MISA supports enhanced international coordination and proportionate measures to safeguard civilian shipping in high-risk regions and will continue to work with its members, the Maltese authorities and international partners to promote maritime safety, protect seafarers and uphold the stability and integrity of global shipping.

For more information, please contact the MISA Secretariat:

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About: The Malta International Shipowners' Association (MISA) is a voluntary, non-profit organisation and the collective voice of shipowners of Maltese ships. Established in 2004, on the eve of Malta's accession to the European Union, MISA was created in recognition of the need for the largest registry in the EU to have an authoritative industry voice and a seat at the appropriate EU and international fora.

MISA brings together leading shipowners of Maltese ships from across the world to represent their interests in Malta, in Europe, and at the global level.

MISA is a full member of the European Shipowners | ECSA and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS). It is also a corporate member of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, the Malta Maritime Forum (MMF) and Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (Malta Branch).

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