



Ref. T1/13.01

## PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS

- 1 The Secretary-General wishes to refer to acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships and express concern that they seem to have increased in number and ferocity since the middle of 1994.
- 2 Against an average of 19 reports on such unlawful acts received quarterly, this number fell to 7 during the period following the IMO missions to the Malacca Strait Area (1993) and the South China Sea (1994) and this significant development was welcomed by the Maritime Safety Committee at its sixty-third session in May 1994.
- 3 However, the sixty-fourth session of the MSC in December 1994 noted with concern that acts of piracy and armed robbery continued to take place in various regions of the world and invited the Secretary-General to explore all ways by which the Organization could maintain pressure against all forms of unlawful acts at sea, including bringing details of incidents to the attention of the Governments of the countries in whose territories such acts had been reported to have occurred and, when appropriate, sending missions to those countries to discuss how the Organization could assist them in developing and implementing measures recommended in relevant IMO instruments.
- 4 At its sixty-fifth session in May 1995 the MSC received a report on the action taken by the Secretary-General to implement the Committee's requests referred to in the previous paragraph and, noting with concern that on the basis of recent information available, the piracy and armed robbery trend, which in the middle of 1994 was downwards, had by then reversed, in particular in South East Asia, South America and certain areas off the African coast and the Arabian Peninsula, invited all Governments concerned and the industry to intensify their efforts to eliminate such unlawful activities in all areas concerned.
- 5 Since then, there has been a sharp increase in the number of attacks reported to the Organization, with 28 reports on such unlawful acts having reached the Organization during the year's second quarter, thus bringing the number of such reports received by the Organization since statistics started being compiled in 1984 to 546.
- 6 Along with this development is a changing pattern in both the likely location and the severity of the attacks. The areas most affected now are the South China Sea, the coast of Somalia, the Arabian Peninsula and the north eastern part of South America. Most attacks reported to have taken place in the areas concerned involve the use of firearms by the pirates and a number of fatalities have been reported. The pirates in the South China Sea and the coast of Somalia at times use craft disguised as Government boats and pose as Government officials while approaching innocent ships and before launching their attacks.

7 The Secretary-General has noted with grave concern these developments and is worried, in particular, about the navigational hazards to ships often carrying dangerous cargoes and the potential danger to navigation and the marine environment these ships may pose if left unattended, while steaming at full speed and under attack by pirates in confined waters.

8 Having consulted the Chairman of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Secretary-General, therefore, wishes to reiterate the recommendations of the MSC in urging Governments, shipowners, shipmasters and crews to intensify their efforts until these illegal acts are eradicated. In doing so, they should endeavour to implement, as widely and effectively as possible, the measures promulgated in Assembly resolutions:

- A.461(XI) Barratry and unlawful seizure of ships and their cargoes (1979);
- A.504(XII) Barratry, unlawful seizure of ships and their cargoes and other forms of maritime fraud (1981);
- A.545(13) Measures to prevent acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships (1983);
- A.683(17) Prevention and suppression of acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships (1991); and
- A.738(18) Measures to prevent and suppress piracy and armed robbery against ships (1993);

and, in particular, the recommendations contained in:

- MSC/Circ.597 (recommending the use of search and rescue (SAR) services and mobilization, through the SAR services, of appropriate maritime authorities so that action could be taken to provide assistance to ships under attack or pursue the attackers with the minimum of delay); and
- MSC/Circs.622 and 623 (based on the recommendations of the IMO Working Group on the Malacca Strait and containing guidelines to assist Administrations and the shipping community respectively in preventing and dealing with acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships).