



MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE
86th session
Agenda item 18

MSC 86/18/4
3 March 2009
Original: ENGLISH

PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS

Comprehensive review of guidance for preventing and suppressing piracy and armed robbery against ships

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

Executive summary:	For the benefit of seafarers, fishermen and other mariners who have been kidnapped or held hostages for ransom, this document offers the current United Nations guidance on “surviving as a hostage” which may be of use in the context of the review and updating of MSC/Circ.623/Rev.3
Strategic direction:	6.2
High-level action:	6.2.1
Planned output:	6.2.1.1
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 5
Related documents:	Resolution A.1002(25); MSC/Circ.623/Rev.3; C/ES.24/12(a)/2, paragraph 19; C/ES.24/D/Add.1, paragraphs 12(a).3 and 12(a).5; MSC 84/24, paragraph 17.24.1.4 and MSC 85/26, paragraph 18.23

Introduction

1 During the twenty-fourth extraordinary session of the Council, the Secretary-General proposed a new Assembly resolution on Piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia and suggested, *inter alia*, that this should include provisions requesting the Committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the existing guidance¹ provided by the Organization for preventing and suppressing piracy and armed robbery against ships, *inter alia*:

¹ MSC/Circ.622/Rev.1, MSC/Circ.623/Rev.3 and resolution A.922(22).

For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly asked to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.



- .1 taking into account the current trends and practices of the perpetrators;
- .2 with a view to providing advice in cases where seafarers, fishermen and other mariners are kidnapped or held hostage for ransom; and
- .3 with a view to providing advice in cases where naval vessels and military aircraft seek to provide assistance or protection.

2 As a result, the Assembly, at its twenty-fifth regular session, adopted resolution A.1002(25) on Piracy and armed robbery against ships in waters off the coast of Somalia through which, *inter alia*, it requested the Committee to review and update, as a matter of urgency, MSC/Circ.622/Rev.1, MSC/Circ.623/Rev.3 and resolution A.922(22). On that basis MSC 84 approved the establishment of a correspondence group to undertake the aforesaid review and instructed it, *inter alia*, to consider the need for guidance to seafarers, fishermen and other mariners in case they are attacked, fired upon, kidnapped or held hostage by pirates and armed robbers (MSC 84/24, paragraph 17.24.1.4).

3 MSC 85 noted (MSC 85/26, paragraph 18.23) that, in relation to the work of the correspondence group with respect to developing advice in cases where seafarers, fishermen and other mariners are kidnapped or held hostage for ransom, the Secretariat was prepared to make available to the correspondence group the advice and material provided to the staff of the United Nations system by the United Nations Department on Safety and Security on Surviving as a hostage and Coping with stress, which is also available in the public domain.

4 In view of the humanitarian dimensions of the issues involved and with a view to assisting the Committee to consider the matter further, the current United Nations guidance on “surviving as a hostage” which is an extract from “Security in the Field – Information for staff members of the United Nations system” issued by the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, is attached in the annex.

Action requested of the Committee

5 The Committee is invited to take the information set out in the annex into account in the review and updating of MSC/Circ.623/Rev.3.
