



# Security Council

Eighty-first year

**10145**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 27 April 2026, 11 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Al Zayani .....	(Bahrain)
<i>Members:</i>	China .....	Mr. Fu Cong
	Colombia .....	Mrs. Zalabata Torres
	Democratic Republic of the Congo .....	Mr. Mukongo
	Denmark .....	Ms. Lassen
	France .....	Mr. Barrot
	Greece .....	Mrs. Balta
	Latvia .....	Mr. Viļumsons
	Liberia .....	Mr. Brown II
	Pakistan .....	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama .....	Mr. Hoyos
	Russian Federation .....	Mr. Nebenzia
	Somalia .....	Mr. Osman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland .....	Mr. Doughty
	United States of America .....	Mr. Waltz

## Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

The safety and protection of waterways in the maritime domain

Letter dated 20 April 2026 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2026/346)

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*The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Maintenance of international peace and security**

#### **The safety and protection of waterways in the maritime domain**

#### **Letter dated 20 April 2026 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2026/346)**

**The President:** I would like to warmly welcome the distinguished ministers and other high-level representatives present in the Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Paraguay, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Arsenio Domínguez, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization; and Mr. Nick Childs, Senior Fellow, Naval Forces and Maritime Security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edrees, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2026/346, which contains the text of a letter dated 20 April 2026 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

**The Secretary-General:** I thank the presidency of Bahrain for convening this open debate at a moment when the safety of the world's waterways has become a test of the international order itself. For centuries, maritime routes have been the arteries of global trade, carrying goods, energy and ideas across continents and connecting societies, economies and cultures. Today, those arteries are under strain. Piracy, armed robbery at sea and acts of terror against shipping and critical maritime infrastructure continue to threaten international peace and security. Geopolitical tensions are spilling over into the waters, merchant shipping is being used as a tool of pressure, and navigational rights and freedoms — bedrock principles of the law of the sea — are being undermined.

No country can address these challenges alone. Maritime security threats touch every port, every coastline and every country — even landlocked ones. They demand collective responses, yet war and deepening divisions are shaking the collective security system. Trust is eroding, international law is being violated in plain sight, and the institutions built to keep peace are being tested at their core.

Since early March, the disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has struck at global energy security, food supplies and trade. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints. It carries roughly one fifth of global oil trade, one fifth of global liquefied natural gas and nearly one third of internationally traded fertilizers. Safe, unimpeded passage is an economic and humanitarian imperative. The economic shock has been immediate, and everyone is paying the price: acute volatility in energy and commodity markets, surging transport and insurance costs and the worst supply chain disruption since the coronavirus disease pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

These pressures are cascading into empty fuel tanks, empty shelves and empty plates. The humanitarian toll is mounting. Delays and rising costs are slowing life-saving deliveries to people who cannot wait. And this crisis coincides with critical planting seasons. Prolonged disruption risks triggering a global food emergency, pushing millions, especially in Africa and South Asia, into hunger and poverty. The burden falls heaviest on the least developed countries and small island developing States — the nations most dependent on maritime imports and least able to absorb a shock they did nothing to cause.

Behind the cargo figures and the price surges are people: more than 20,000 seafarers remain stranded at sea and over 2,000 commercial vessels are caught in a web of risks and restrictions to navigation. Those men and women are not parties to any conflict; they are civilian workers keeping the world supplied. Their safety, well-being and rights must be protected at all times and in all waters. I urge Member States to support the emergency evacuation framework prepared by the International Maritime Organization, which is a coordinated plan to ensure the safe movement, assistance and protection of affected crews in full accordance with international law.

The prohibition of the threat or use of force enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations applies fully at sea. Navigational rights and freedoms through the Strait of Hormuz must be respected, as affirmed by resolution 2817 (2026). Those principles must be upheld in full and without delay. I appeal to the parties: open the Strait, let ships pass, impose no tolls, practise no discrimination, let trade resume and let the global economy breathe.

This moment calls for restraint, dialogue and confidence-building. The way forward is through peaceful settlement, drawing on Articles 33 and 34 of Chapter VI of the Charter. My good offices remain available to support Member States in finding common ground. My special representatives and envoys are working closely with national and regional partners to help resolve disputes. The Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports showed that, even amid conflict, practical cooperation can reopen a blocked corridor and keep ships and essential products moving. The United Nations can help to develop a similar effort, based on consent, by convening, coordinating and implementing arrangements between the parties. It is possible when there is political will.

*(spoke in French)*

Moments of crisis are moments of choice. Last year at the Security Council's open debate on maritime security (see S/PV.9977), I called for action around three pillars, and the current crisis makes these priorities more urgent than ever. First, we must respect international law. The Charter of the United Nations and law of the sea are only as strong

as the commitment of Member States to uphold them. At sea as on land, the force of law must always prevail over the law of force. Secondly, we must address root causes by investing in coastal livelihoods, governance, capacity-building and ocean health. Insecurity at sea begins on land. Thirdly, we must deepen dialogue and cooperation among States, regional organizations, the shipping industry, insurers, port operators and civil society, so as to enhance maritime domain awareness, protect seafarers and other maritime workers and keep international waterways open, secure and lawful.

The ocean must be a zone of peace and cooperation rather than confrontation or coercion. This is our moment to choose and act.

**The President:** I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Domínguez.

**Mr. Domínguez:** Since the 1980s, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has been addressing maritime security in the shipping and port sector and has in place the relevant mandatory standards to enhance global maritime security. Our regulatory process is constantly evolving to adapt to any new threats and make use of our experience and expertise.

The geopolitical conflict around the Strait of Hormuz is having a very negative effect on seafarers and shipping and on the global population and economy. Approximately 20,000 innocent seafarers and nearly 2,000 vessels remained trapped in the Persian Gulf. Any disruption to shipping represents a global interference to energy and food security.

The principle of freedom of navigation is not negotiable. Ships must be allowed to trade worldwide unhindered and in accordance with international law. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in customary international law, straits used for international navigation cannot be closed by bordering States. Equally, there is no legal basis for any country to introduce payments or impose tolls, fees or any discriminatory conditions on international straits. Any deviation from these well-established and recognized principles will set a negative precedent and severely undermine the integrity and stability of shipping operations worldwide.

Since 1968, the International Maritime Organization has established a traffic separation scheme or maritime corridor in the Strait of Hormuz. This maritime corridor, jointly operated between Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran, has ensured safe navigation for decades. This is a mandatory mechanism in accordance with the IMO International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea. Both countries are signatories to this Convention, which has governed the safety of ships at sea since 1974. Our main concern remains the safety and the well-being of the innocent seafarers trapped in the Gulf due to the conflict. Following the IMO Council decision, I have begun the development of an evacuation framework, using the existing traffic separation scheme to securely evacuate ships and seafarers from the conflict zone, provided it is safe to do so. The technical and operational developments are being carried out with the involvement of countries in the region, including Iran, and with the support from relevant countries assisting in the negotiations.

As an Organization, we are ready to implement this framework without delay, but only once it is safe to do so. In this respect, I call upon States to uphold the principle of freedom of navigation and reject the imposition of tolls, fees or discriminatory transit measures for the passage through a strait used for international navigation.

I would like to take this opportunity to further request States to support the IMO's plan to facilitate the evacuation of affected seafarers; at an appropriate time, to assist with the clearance of any hazards to the commercial ships navigating the Strait of Hormuz, including mines; to provide any technical and operational civilian assistance

to operationalize the evacuation framework; and to ensure practical assurances to the shipping sector, including access to insurance at reasonable costs to enable the resumption of normal operations as soon as practically possible.

I would like to reiterate my appreciation for the support provided by the countries in the region in delivering essential supplies to seafarers in the Persian Gulf, safeguarding their well-being, and request them to facilitate crew changes when safe and possible. Shipping and seafarers should never be used as leverage in geopolitical conflicts. I would like to join and reiterate the call for de-escalation to ensure safety for seafarers, freedom of navigation and stability of supply chains worldwide.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Dominguez for this briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Nick Childs.

**Mr. Childs:** I would like to thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this high-level open debate and for inviting me to address it.

The importance of maritime trade to the global economy is nothing new. Likewise, threats to the maritime ecosystem have also been with us down the ages. However, recent events have driven home in the starkest fashion that our critical dependencies on the maritime arteries of global trade have never been greater and that the threats to the free use of the seas are becoming more complex and challenging. They have been an abrupt reminder that more than 80 per cent of all global trade by volume is transported by sea. The fact that the world trading fleet has doubled in size in the past two decades is one measure of how our reliance on global trade has mushroomed.

Events in and around the Strait of Hormuz in recent weeks have underscored how disruption to the world's key waterways can produce global economic fallout which affects billions of our citizens and leaves no regions or member States untouched.

Moreover, we live in a suddenly more dangerous and unstable era in which it is not just the case that tensions and conflict on land are spilling over into the maritime domain. It is one in which threats to global peace and stability and therefore global economic well-being and prosperity, are increasingly manifesting themselves at sea.

The reawakening of the global consciousness to the criticality but also the fragility of the maritime domain and its ecosystem has been a double-edged sword. It has also shone a spotlight on some of the deficits in the international community's ability and capacity to respond. Above all, it has pointed to the need for a new approach, not just to the sharing of information, but also to the development of a shared strategic analysis of the character and implications of the challenges.

The Council has focused increased attention on the risks to maritime security. It has adopted resolutions on the recent disruptions in and around the Red Sea and the current crisis in the Strait of Hormuz and its adjacent waterways. The international community has responded to the various threats posed to international shipping in recent years. But those responses have been suboptimal.

Multiple maritime security agencies and maritime stakeholders, including in the industrial and commercial spheres, have developed cooperative frameworks and practices over years and decades to cope with certain levels of threats. But the increased scale and growing complexity of the current threats have revealed that there remains something of a gulf in understanding among the widening array of interested parties and stakeholders over what can and what needs to be done, and this has been playing out in the latest events.

There is a glaring requirement for a more integrated conversation and in-depth engagement over the realistic potential, but also the limitations, of cooperative military means, in what frameworks and under what auspices, for delivering the safety and

protection of waterways. What are the real dynamics that the maritime industry needs for reassurance in different situations. And what is the place for political and diplomatic engagement, the Black Sea Grain Initiative has already been mentioned. Perhaps in conjunction with collaborative protective measures in some form or regional capacity-building. These are surely important building blocks for future crisis prevention and management. All this has only been amplified and added urgency to the calls that the Council has heard for a more strategic, comprehensive and integrated approach to the more acute threats that are unfolding.

I will now outline three ways in which the evolving scale and complexity of the threats to critical waterways and good order at sea have raised the bar for those seeking to safeguard those waterways.

First, there is the added complexity of the maritime economy itself. This includes the increasingly patchwork character of international shipping which has been testing the limits of international regulation. Complicating matters still further, this is not just about shipping, sea lanes and maritime choke points. There is a new awareness of the connectivity of and dependency on critical maritime infrastructure and especially critical undersea infrastructure in the shape of communications cables and pipelines. Beyond cables and pipelines, it is about the protection of fixed infrastructure and wider resources. Beyond ports, it is about offshore energy installations and the migration of more economic activity out to sea, not just fishing but including seabed resources, and how more broadly to protect the maritime environment. These fixed elements of the maritime economy require their own safeguards distinct from those protecting ships and shipping lanes. In some cases, they involve stakeholders that have not traditionally been concerned with the maritime domains.

Secondly, the complexity of the threats to both security and safety at sea have grown markedly beyond those traditionally employed by organized criminality. An array of potent sea denial capabilities, of varying degrees of sophistication, including missiles and various types of uncrewed vehicles, is proliferating among an expanding array of actors. This is presenting a new set of asymmetric threats and imposing increasing costs and risks on those seeking to keep waterways open.

In terms of other emerging threats, the risks posed by cybervulnerabilities are clearly on the rise for a maritime ecosystem driving inexorably towards greater automation. The weaponization of maritime data in ways that were never originally intended, through manipulation and spoofing and even for target selection, is another growing threat. Paradoxically, the leveraging of data, supported by artificial intelligence-enabled analysis and perhaps also supported by increased satellite-based monitoring, may be a key asymmetric advantage in delivering the kind of strategic approach required and providing early warning of emerging threats. In this way, it will be critical to safeguarding future maritime security and global security more broadly. In this sense, the challenge is one that now stretches from the seabed to space.

Thirdly, recent events have underscored the criticality of waterways and choke points to global stability and the global economy. They have also highlighted that choke points are not all the same. A strategic approach to maritime security must be founded on universal norms, but it must also be informed by a critical understanding of particular circumstances in order to deliver effective policy.

The events in and around the Strait of Hormuz may be the most acute current concern as regards maritime security. But there are plenty of other potential regional maritime hotspots that will pose their own particular challenges, and these may only grow in number and volatility as the maritime environment continues to evolve.

In conclusion, all of these factors appear to reinforce the proposition that maritime security requires a more holistic and sustained approach, but one that builds on existing

frameworks and past experience with a more rigorous and robust treatment. The breadth of the challenges to safeguarding the global waterways and the maritime economy is only growing. Given that, the Council can provide the consistent forum for further comprehensive consultation in the context of threats to waterways and maritime security; they are no longer just a symptom of growing global instability but also increasingly becoming a driver of it.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Childs for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

I begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and the Senior Fellow for Naval Forces and Maritime Security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies for their valuable insights, which have underlined the critical importance of the topic under discussion today.

Today's open debate of the Security Council, with the valued participation of more than 80 countries, comes at a pivotal moment amid difficult global circumstances, given current international challenges and direct, escalating threats to maritime security. Those threats are characterized by deliberate actions aimed at obstructing freedom of navigation through international waterways, thereby endangering the global economy, international trade and international peace and security.

More than 90,000 vessels sail daily across oceans and seas, facilitating global trade valued in the trillions of dollars. The current situation therefore requires a collective response from the international community. The need for maritime security has never been more urgent than it is today.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the countries that have joined today's statement on maritime security. I call on other States to join the statement, which condemns Iran's aggression against the States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and Jordan and rejects Iran's actions in closing the Strait of Hormuz and exploiting it as a political tool and an economic resource by imposing fees on a natural international waterway. Freedom of navigation is a cornerstone of international law and peace. Therefore, it requires full compliance with, and adherence to, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which governs all maritime rights, including rights of transit and innocent passage through international straits.

The situation in the Strait of Hormuz highlights the risks we face, with Iran's actions endangering the global economy and threatening the safety of millions, particularly those in the global South. Those hostile acts, which some countries classify as terrorism, demonstrate the fragility of our critical trade routes, with consequences extending beyond commercial interests to affect the livelihoods of countless individuals who depend on safe maritime corridors.

Any restriction or obstruction of international navigation directly affects international trade, energy security and global economic stability, as well as the supply of food and medicine and the delivery of humanitarian aid. The silence of the international community in the face of those unlawful practices leads to them becoming entrenched, thereby undermining the existing international framework and weakening confidence in the maritime system. This trajectory, detrimental to the interests of nations all over the world, threatens global supply chains and exacerbates the challenges faced by already fragile economies.

In response to those pressing issues, it is vital to reaffirm the legitimacy of freedom of navigation, including the right of transit and innocent passage through international straits, while emphasizing the right of ships to navigate without discrimination, calling on all States to protect those rights and condemning any violations thereof.

It is therefore necessary to take practical, institutional measures to strengthen globally applicable maritime rules, in line with Security Council resolutions 552 (1984) and 2817 (2026) and Human Rights Council resolution 61/1, as well as the presidential statement of 2 April (S/PRST/2026/2), all of which underscore the importance of ensuring the safety of international navigation. Today, more than 40 years after the adoption of resolution 552 (1984), it remains critically important to reaffirm this global guarantee of maritime security. Maritime security is not the responsibility of a single State, but rather a shared responsibility that requires genuine international commitment, sustained cooperation and political will to ensure the free flow of international trade and the preservation of global stability. The security of international maritime corridors is a collective interest that cannot be addressed selectively.

Accordingly, the Kingdom of Bahrain urges the international community to recognize the grave repercussions of Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz — a violation of international law aimed at inflicting hardship on the peoples of the world and exploiting the situation in negotiations. This unlawful and irresponsible act has led to the boarding of nearly 800 cargo ships in the Arabian Gulf and has stranded thousands of commercial vessels, leaving some 20,000 seafarers facing distressing conditions on board vessels far away from their countries and families.

Therefore, we ask the following questions: Does any country have the right, under any circumstances, to close a strait used for international navigation? What economic losses have affected countries suffered as a result? How has the closure of the Strait of Hormuz affected the lives of their citizens? What measures can those countries take to resolve this crisis? Does navigation through international waters require the payment of transit fees, as Iran is demanding? Can those economies withstand the heavy losses they are currently incurring?

We are fully aware that the economic impact on countries around the world could reach hundreds of billions of dollars and that the world cannot afford further losses. We therefore call for an international response proportionate to the gravity of this act.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms that safeguarding maritime security is a shared and urgent responsibility that must not be overlooked. The international community must act collectively to prevent a dangerous downward spiral, in which threats to maritime corridors become common occurrences and violations are treated as normal despite constituting breaches of international law. Complacency and inaction in the face of such a situation will have grave consequences for international peace and security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on His Excellency Mr. Jean-Noël Barrot, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

**Mr. Barrot** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the President for taking the initiative to convene this meeting on a crucial issue and on an inalienable right protected by the Organization: maritime security and freedom of navigation.

This issue arises today with particular gravity, as the Strait of Hormuz is subject to a prolonged blockade. But what exactly are we talking about? What is happening in the Strait goes far beyond the 40 kilometres of that channel. Behind the immobilized fleet of vessels lies a broader question: the very idea of a rules-based international order.

It concerns our collective ability — or inability — to collectively manage global public goods.

Eighty per cent of global trade passes through the seas, including energy, food supplies and raw materials. International waters are a common good of humankind, whose use is protected by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Straits are the arteries of the world. They belong to no one. They are not for sale. They therefore cannot be obstructed or made subject to restrictions on the right of passage — neither blockade nor coercion nor tolls — not by Iran, nor by anyone, under any pretext.

For what would happen if we accepted even the slightest exception to these principles? We would set a dangerous precedent. Others would follow suit, and the exception would become the norm. Access to the sea would become a privilege reserved for a few. Straits would become militarized corridors. Global trade would be held hostage. Entire regions would be isolated. The world would find itself strangled — left at the mercy of arbitrary power and the law of the strongest. It would be less prosperous and more dangerous.

That is a world we refuse to accept. If the vast majority of us reject any challenge to maritime security and freedom of navigation, how have we arrived at this point? This blockade is the result of an accumulation of unilateral and illegal decisions by Iran. It is part of a broader military escalation whose origins lie in operations launched by the United States and Israel without clearly defined objectives and conducted outside the framework of international law.

However, the Iranian regime bears overwhelming responsibility for this situation, owing to its culpable persistence in seeking to acquire the means of destabilization and threat through its nuclear programme, its ballistic missiles and its sustained support for terrorist groups. By choosing to conduct massive large-scale strikes against the countries in the region, by allowing Hizbullah to engage Lebanon in a war against its will and by blocking the Strait of Hormuz, the Iranian regime has been flouting the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as those of the law of the sea, thereby exacerbating an already severely deteriorated situation. There will be no lasting solution to this crisis unless the Iranian regime engages in major concessions and adopts a radical change of posture to facilitate its peaceful coexistence with its regional environment and to enable the Iranian people to freely build their own future.

The Council cannot and must not turn a blind eye to the plight of civilian populations in the region, the primary victims of war, nor to the fate of the Iranian people caught between repression and the threat of renewed hostilities. Following the repression in January — the most violent in Iran's modern history — political prisoners must be released, executions must cease and freedom of communication must be restored.

The war has not resolved the underlying issues. It has created a new one: the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz — a blockade in which there are only losers. These include the riparian countries, to whom I wish to reiterate France's solidarity; the most vulnerable countries, which depend on essential goods and vital humanitarian aid transported by immobilized ships; and countries like my own, which, beyond the seas, are severely affected by the shockwaves of this crisis and are paying the price for a war they did not choose.

This has gone on long enough, and it must stop. At this moment, I wish to express my concern for the crews trapped in the Strait of Hormuz. In this regard, I would like to commend the essential work of the International Maritime Organization and the efforts of its Secretary-General to ensure their safety and to establish an evacuation plan. This will be key to resolving the crisis, and we fully support it.

Faced with the arbitrariness of this blockade, what must be done? Inaction is not an option. I welcome the adoption of resolution 2817 (2026) and the steps taken by Bahrain at the Council to achieve the reopening of the Strait. I also recall the historic initiative launched in Paris on 17 April by the President of the Republic of France, together with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, to enable maritime traffic to resume as soon as conditions permit through an independent and strictly defensive international mission. Its objective is to protect merchant vessels, reassure maritime transport operators and conduct mine-clearing operations in the Strait.

More than 50 non-belligerent countries from Europe, the Middle East and Asia have responded to this call. Together, they have set out three demands: the immediate, full and unconditional reopening of the Strait of Hormuz by all parties; the restoration of the conditions of free passage that existed before the war and full respect for the law of the sea; and the elimination of any restrictions or any arrangement that would, in practice, amount to an attempt to privatize the Strait, including any system of tolls. The ocean is a space of freedom, but it is not a lawless space. It is our responsibility to give it rules and ensure that they are respected.

This is what we did in Nice last summer when we hosted the third United Nations Ocean Conference. With the entry into force of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, the international community has demonstrated that it can agree to protect a global common good. This success should inspire us. We need not be condemned to accept the dismantling of international law, international humanitarian law or the law of the sea. Let us resist the resignation and discouragement that threaten us. Let us stand up and say no when the peace and security of the world are at stake. That is the Council's calling, so let us be worthy of the trust invested in us by the peoples of the world. Let us rise to this moment.

**Mr. Hoyos (Panama)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama is grateful to the Bahraini presidency for organizing this important open debate to address an issue of the greatest relevance to international peace and security, one with which our country fully identifies.

We appreciate the valuable interventions of Secretary-General António Guterres; the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr. Arsenio Dominguez; and the Senior Fellow in Naval Forces and Maritime Security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Mr. Nick Childs. We value the presence of the countries that honour us with their participation. We also take note of the continuation of efforts initiated by Greece and Panama in their respective flagship events on maritime security last year.

The past few years have dramatically highlighted the growing fragility of maritime navigation in all regions of the world. In this increasingly complex environment, piracy and armed robbery at sea and cyberattacks on navigation, ports and maritime logistics systems, alongside illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and drug trafficking combined with human trafficking, are persistent threats that continue to affect maritime activity and seafarers, putting their safety, working conditions and, in many cases, their lives at risk.

This reality has been compounded by the worrisome trend of blocking the use of critical shipping lanes in the context of various conflicts. As a result, uncertainty in international trade has increased, affecting the predictability and security of global supply chains that depend largely on its stability. In a deeply interconnected world, the disruption of critical shipping lanes such as the Strait of Hormuz or the Bab al-Mandab Strait in the Red Sea has immediate impacts on international trade and global energy security. Those impacts translate directly into the economies and daily lives of people in all countries, although it is the global South and the most vulnerable economies that are most affected.

Maritime security must be understood as a global public good whose preservation requires collective responsibility. We reiterate our firm and unwavering position: no critical sea route should ever be threatened or used as an instrument of pressure or coercion.

In the face of these current challenges, Panama considers it a priority, within the Council, to seek the reduction of tensions and the cessation of hostilities by all parties through dialogue and negotiated solutions. In addition, it is essential to strengthen respect for international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including freedom of navigation and safe transit through critical maritime routes. At the same time, it is essential that technical, regulatory or control measures in a maritime context be governed by objective, transparent and non-discriminatory criteria, in strict compliance with international law, and that they not constitute unjust and unsubstantiated political reprisals. That includes respect for sovereign decisions taken in relation to the management of strategic infrastructure, ports and commercial logistics activities.

In that connection, Panama notes with concern the increasing trend of inspections of vessels in a particular jurisdiction, including the significant increase in detentions of Panamanian-flagged vessels. We take note of the Secretary-General's call for merchant fleets not to be subjected to political or economic pressure. Any deviation from these principles introduces uncertainty, erodes confidence and creates additional risks to the stability of global supply chains.

We reiterate our support for the International Maritime Organization and its Secretary-General, Arsenio Domínguez. We acknowledge his work, as well as the decisions he has taken to address the impacts of the situation in the Strait of Hormuz on shipping and the well-being of seafarers as part of his essential work to promote maritime safety, protect the marine environment and foster sustainable maritime transport.

As sovereign owners and responsible stewards of the Panama Canal, one of the most important shipping lanes in the world, we fully recognize the challenges and risks facing maritime security in the current context. Panama has had to redouble its efforts to guarantee and facilitate the safe, continuous and efficient transit of ships, particularly those that depend on alternate routes such as ours. That responsibility compels us to insist on the need for collective and peaceful solutions based on dialogue, non-discrimination and negotiation to ensure a safe, predictable and rules-based maritime environment.

Panama condemns the attacks in the Strait of Hormuz against vessels flying the flag of Panama, Liberia or other places in the world. Since the beginning of March, several Panamanian-flagged vessels have been subject to actions that impinge on the safety of navigation. Among the affected vessels are two Panamanian-flagged merchant ships: the *Euphoria*, which was attacked by three unidentified vessels, fortunately without damage to the vessel or injury to its crew; and the *MSC Francesca*, which was intercepted by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and ordered to anchor off the Iranian coast. Its crew is safe, albeit unjustly detained. In view of this situation, Panama is following developments closely and coordinating the necessary actions to bring about a prompt resolution. In the meantime, we urge the Iranian authorities to immediately release all detained vessels.

These developments highlight the increasing vulnerability of seafarers to risks arising from geopolitical tensions. In that connection, Panama remains firmly committed to multilateralism and coordinated joint efforts, through the adoption of specific and effective measures to restore order and preserve the integrity of the international legal framework, thereby avoiding the creation of precedents that undermine respect for international law. The seas have always been spaces for meeting, exchange and connection between peoples. To preserve their security is also to preserve that spirit, so that they continue to be arteries that bring nations closer together rather than channels that deepen confrontation.

**Mr. Viļumsons** (Latvia): Allow me to begin by thanking Bahrain for convening this open debate to address the critical issue of maritime security. I thank Secretary-General

Guterres and International Maritime Organization Secretary-General Domínguez and Mr. Childs for their pertinent briefings.

Global waterways are the backbone of international commerce and global energy flows. Countries across the world depend on the supply of fertilizers, raw materials and other products, from microchips to medicines that are essential to the functioning of our societies. International law and norms have sustained maritime infrastructure and enabled livelihoods, prosperity and development. Yet, they are being increasingly challenged. We have experience addressing certain threats in the maritime domain, usually regional in nature, whether piracy, smuggling or organized crime, as well as environmental incidents such as oil spills. Now, we are increasingly facing a more direct challenge — deliberate actions from States, intent on crippling the global economy and threatening the right of transit and innocent passage, alongside efforts to circumvent sanctions.

The safety of critical maritime routes is essential. Any disruptions to this delicate system powering the global economy result in severe consequences for all of us, as seen with the Strait of Hormuz. With supply chains disrupted, global energy prices have risen sharply, and acute food insecurity around the globe has grown at an alarming rate. Effects on agriculture will be long-term and cascading in nature. These harmful consequences will continue, affecting the most vulnerable the worst.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea sets the international legal framework within which all activities in the sea are to be carried out in order to ensure lawful and safe maritime navigation. The global community must demonstrate resolve in addressing Iran's attempts to use an international waterway as a bargaining chip and to hold the global economy hostage. It is a dangerous and far-reaching precedent, which we cannot allow or normalize. The Council has been leading the way with resolution 2817 (2026), but we must continue to address maritime security as a paramount issue of global stability. Increasing coordination at international forums like the International Maritime Organization (IMO), as well as among coalitions of States willing to contribute resources ensuring free passage in international waterways is both timely and welcome. This moment calls for political resolve, strengthened multilateral cooperation and a renewed commitment to safeguarding the rules-based maritime order.

We also cannot ignore the deliberate campaign by malign State actors to use old and unsafe vessels to evade sanctions — the so-called shadow fleet. The reckless use of these vessels, including for hybrid activities, is not just a striking violation of international law but also creates de facto floating ecological time bombs, risking natural disasters wherever they go. When accidents strike, lack of proper documentation and insurance denies avenues for legal remedies. The Iranian regime and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are prominent guilty parties, but Russia is the undisputed champion of threatening the world's marine ecosystems, just as it endangers the European mainland and airspace.

Ongoing efforts are proof that evasion of lawful norms will not be tolerated. We must commend the IMO for its work to identify gaps and increase accountability. We also welcome the positive example of meaningful efforts undertaken by our Council colleagues Panama and Liberia in reforming their ship registries to purge these opaque vessels from their books. Coordination among countries is crucial, as are domain awareness, the sharing of intelligence and new reporting initiatives.

Other emerging risks include those to the subsea cable network connecting the globe, from communications to finance. While most damage still results from accidents and natural events, increasing attention must be paid to deliberate sabotage. The use of shadow-fleet vessels for such unlawful actions further complicates attribution. International coordination is needed for monitoring, the relevant regulatory frameworks

need to be reviewed, and partnerships with leading commercial actors would help increase the diversity and redundancy of subsea networks and expand industry capacity.

Finally, we should not forget about the other threats still disrupting local economies, costing lives and feeding the black market, from piracy to smuggling and trafficking. The Council has played a leading role in combating these threats and should continue to do so, as it broadens its scope on global maritime security. Latvia will remain a steadfast defender of maritime security and free and safe navigation, as maritime navigation remains the lifeblood of the global economy and stability. I also welcome the initiatives by France and the United Kingdom, and we stand ready to contribute our share to these efforts.

**Mr. Doughty** (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, Your Excellency Mr. Al-Zayani, and Bahrain for bringing us together. I also thank the Secretary-General for his leadership in the Council. That leadership is more important than ever in the face of the growing threats to maritime and, indeed, regional security from the Black Sea, to the Baltic, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and to the Strait of Hormuz — or, indeed, globally, as has been pointed out, from the Russian shadow fleet. With reckless attacks and actions putting security and prosperity at risk, we must step up efforts together to safeguard international waterways from disruption, protect mariners who find themselves in dangerous waters, denied passage and put at risk, and stand up for all of those most affected, including some of the world's most vulnerable people, particularly when it comes to food security or supplies of critical products and medicines.

The United Kingdom, with its long history as a seafaring nation, has long been committed to maritime security. I say that as a Member of Parliament for the diverse port city of Cardiff, which has a proud merchant marine tradition and heritage throughout history. I am particularly glad to join Bahrain and the Council in that effort today.

The most pressing issue before us is, of course, the Strait of Hormuz. This crisis is not just affecting international shipping — it is driving up costs and sending shockwaves throughout energy markets and supply chains far beyond the region, with impacts for all of our citizens and communities and their cost of living. We must get the Strait reopened fully and unconditionally. Freedom of navigation must be restored, in line with international law. Shipping and seafarers must not be used as leverage, and there is no place for tolls or permissions in international straits. Freedom of navigation means navigation must be free.

Throughout this crisis, the United Kingdom has been clear: Iran must not be able to hold the global economy hostage or indeed threaten regional or international security. That is why we need renewed action to protect supply chains and uphold freedom of navigation and the primacy of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We must also broaden collaboration within the International Maritime Organization, which the United Kingdom is proud to host.

That is exactly how the United Kingdom has been approaching these critical challenges. In early April, my colleague, the Foreign Secretary, convened more than 40 countries to coordinate action on the Strait of Hormuz. On 17 April, she supported Prime Minister Starmer and President Macron in convening over 50 nations to work on getting the Strait open and protecting vessels. In recent days, she has engaged in meetings across multiple countries with a dozen foreign ministers. Yesterday, our Prime Minister Keir Starmer and President Trump discussed the urgent need to get shipping moving again.

The United Kingdom will continue to play its part, and the Council has a vital role to play. That is why, with 135 others, we welcomed resolution 2817 (2026), led by Bahrain and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, condemning Iran's reckless and unacceptable attacks against regional neighbours and its disruption of

international trade, energy security and the economies of all of us. We are grateful for Bahrain's efforts to pass a further draft resolution underscoring the importance of protecting navigational rights and freedoms (S/2026/273). It is regrettable that Russia and China vetoed this draft resolution, protecting Iran. Therefore, the United Kingdom will continue to work with Bahrain, Council members and partners to uphold international law, defend freedom of navigation, protect innocent seafarers and keep our international sea lanes open and secure, because global stability and security depend on us stepping up, together, and we welcome this discussion.

**Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan): I wish to congratulate the Kingdom of Bahrain for its successful presidency this month and for organizing today's high-level open debate. Your presence, Mr. President, attests to the importance attached by the Kingdom of Bahrain to global maritime security, which is crucial for the twin objectives of international peace and security and development. Allow me to take this opportunity to express Pakistan's complete support for and solidarity with all brotherly countries of the Gulf region and their sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his insightful remarks, in particular the emphasis that he placed on respect for international law, dialogue and cooperation and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We also appreciate the briefing by Mr. Arsenio Domínguez, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, and thank Mr. Nick Childs for his expert views on the subject.

Global maritime spaces are a key geostrategic arena, where the challenges of the twenty-first century intersect. They are the lifeline of global commerce, bellwether of Earth's environment and home to a vast array of marine biological and mineral resources. Propelled by the onward march of economic globalization and rapid improvement in transportation and connectivity infrastructure, global commerce and trade are now more reliant on seaborne trade than ever before. Any disruptions to routine traffic at sea gravely affect international trade, with negative repercussions for the global economy, and breed volatility that imperils international peace and security. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and its cascading effects on food and energy security and supply chain disruption is a case in point. If this crisis persists, the first-order impacts — that is the issues related to the procurement of oil and gas and essential commodities, such as fertilizers, and their pricing trends — will increasingly translate into second- and third-order impacts on inflation, growth and current account and balance of payments issues. Developing countries will no doubt be the most affected. Most significantly, these developments have brought home the point that the resilience of the global governance architecture and strategic stability are now being tested by the safety and openness of maritime waterways.

As a littoral State of the Indian Ocean region, with proximity to global maritime choke points and overwhelming reliance on seaborne trade, Pakistan is fully cognizant of the paramount importance of the safety and protection of global waterways. Like many developing countries from the region and beyond, Pakistan is concerned about and directly affected by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. It is also particularly with this realization that Pakistan, supported by its partners and brotherly countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt, and others, has spearheaded constructive diplomatic efforts for de-escalation and the broader pursuit of stability between the United States and Iran. In its ongoing efforts to facilitate an enduring resolution of this crisis, Pakistan remains firm in its faith in diplomacy and dialogue and will continue to resolutely undertake all possible measures towards that end.

In today's interconnected world, the imperative of the safety of maritime spaces extends well beyond securing trade routes and combating piracy; it encompasses a plethora of challenges, including climate change and environmental preservation, the protection of critical coastal and underwater digital infrastructure and the safeguarding

of human rights at sea. Confronting these challenges necessitates collective and coordinated action, firmly anchored in international law, as well as dialogue and diplomacy. Since its adoption, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has served as one of the most important pillars of the international maritime order. The legal order established by UNCLOS and the larger body of the law of the sea must be protected and promoted universally.

Pakistan has also remained a committed and responsible partner in international efforts to strengthen maritime security. Earlier this year, Pakistan assumed the command of the Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 for conducting maritime security operations outside the Arabian Gulf to protect commercial shipping. Last year, Pakistan also commanded CTF 151, tasked to suppress piracy and ensure the free flow of maritime trade. We have also launched our own regional maritime security patrols to ensure a safe and secure environment in the seas.

The global governance order is coming under increasing strain, with wide-ranging consequences. Even international waterways have not been able to escape these impacts. The rules and norms that we had collectively and painstakingly put in place to precisely avoid such contestations and confrontations are being challenged or put aside. This is an untenable situation, the prolongation of which would only further undermine international peace and security and sustainable development to the detriment of us all, and most consequentially, it would erode trust in the rules-based order. As a maritime State with unwavering faith in international law and diplomacy, Pakistan would continue to engage with the Secretary-General, the Security Council and all like-minded countries to preserve the hard-won gains, both in the gentle tides of peace and amity and amid the rising storms of conflict and conflagration. This is a sacred trust that history has placed upon us all, and we cannot afford to fail. We must succeed, collectively.

**Mr. Waltz** (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's critical debate. I thank the Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization Secretary-General Domínguez and Mr. Childs for their briefings.

The world's critical waterways are not bargaining chips belonging to any one country. Now, maritime transit routes, which are truly the arteries of global commerce — roughly 80 per cent of global trade, by volume, moves through such waterways — are too vital and too important to all of us, collectively, as a global community to be choked off, mined, weaponized, attacked by two-bit pirates, because when they are, the entire world pays the price. And the world is indeed paying. Most countries are paying far more than the United States for Iran's hostage-taking gambit in the Strait of Hormuz.

Let us take a moment to look at the numbers. The Strait of Hormuz typically sees 20 million barrels of oil per day and 40,000 vessels per year, whether they are bound to heat homes in East Asia or to nourish crops in Central Africa. Some 20 per cent of global oil and liquefied natural gas and 15 per cent of the world's fertilizers all transit the Strait. Closer to home, it is responsible for 75 per cent of the economic output of our Gulf State partners and more than 50 per cent of the food of the broader region.

It is absolutely clear and unambiguous that, as a matter of international law and despite the claims of the Iranian Foreign Minister, this Strait is not Iran's to wield like its own moat and drawbridge. It is not Iran's hostage. It is not Iran's bargaining chip. It is not Iran's toll road. That is what more than 100 countries right outside this door have just testified to in one of the most supported press conferences in recent years. A hundred countries have just said what I said. The Strait is not for Iran to play with like some type of bargaining chip because of its illegal nuclear aspirations.

Less than three weeks ago, the world came together to counter that threat to maritime security. The Security Council adopted resolution 2817 (2016) with a record-

setting 136 sponsors demanding that Iran cease its egregious attacks against its neighbouring States. Regardless of what one feels about the ongoing conflict, Iran has chosen to shoot in all directions against its neighbours' civilian infrastructure. The entire world has condemned the obstruction of freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has done nothing but act in defiance of that resolution. For 40 days and counting, it has laid sea mines and fired on civilian ships. We have worked to clear the sea mines and protect those ships, but Iran has also used the Strait to launch thousands of missiles at Gulf capitals, their hospitals, airports, hotels and neighbourhoods. It has threatened to charge tolls — otherwise known as bribes — to allow ships to pass through the Strait. Moreover, true to form, it has still tried to kill even more Americans than it has in the past 47 years. This is why President Trump has directed that firm action be taken against Iran's threats in the maritime domain to safeguard the economic security and prosperity of the entire world.

Even while under that type of assault — under that type of fire, with thousands of drones and missiles pouring in — Bahrain and a coalition of Gulf States put forward another draft resolution to protect freedom of navigation and maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz. Unfortunately, two countries — China and Russia — vetoed that draft resolution, chose a radical religious regime as their partner and ignored not only the plight of our Gulf countries but also the global economy. They chose to shield the Iranian regime from a common-sense measure and to turn a blind eye to Iran's assault on freedom of navigation. That is hard to make sense of, given that it is the economies of East Asia, South-East Asia, South Asia and East Africa that are most affected by that illegal assault on shipping. Unfortunately, those two countries have put their own economic interests ahead of their international obligations. In addition, their companies and citizens supported the Iran-backed Houthis in waging a two-year campaign of terror against shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which, before this crisis, was one of the most disruptive assaults on maritime commerce in recent history.

Ultimately, the Council must hold the Iranian regime to account for its blatant and recurring violations of international law, of the Charter of the United Nations, of binding Security Council sanctions, of other measures that were snapped back into place in September, of its own non-proliferation obligations — and we just held a non-proliferation gathering here in the General Assembly, of its obligations under the law of the sea, of the law of war, of international humanitarian law and of international human rights law.

I want to take a moment to focus on sea mining — the indiscriminate planting of mines in international waterways. That makes Iran an international criminal and a pirate of the Strait. Tehran admits to those crimes, but it is so incompetent that it also admits to not knowing where the mines are. Thankfully, the United States military is stepping in to clear those mines and to make the Strait safe.

We must, however, broaden that effort. Now is the time for a coalition of like-minded partners to step up and step in with real capabilities and help. In addition to the military assets, we need for commercial shipping, maritime finance and insurance and humanitarian agencies — more than 80 of which move their humanitarian supplies through the Strait for life-saving aid — to come together in a coalition for maritime freedom.

As the Permanent Representative of Pakistan just mentioned, we have come together before. We came together in Combined Task Force 151 to deal with piracy in the Bab al-Mandab strait off the coast of East Africa. The United Nations was built for times like this. We have been here before. Yet we have also allowed unchecked regimes and non-State actors to loudly tiptoe towards horrors against their neighbours while

much of the rest of the world sat back and watched. Now is not the time for simple words; now is the time to act. We call upon the world to join us in maintaining and defending the freedom of navigation for the entire world's economy.

**Mr. Brown II** (Liberia): A few days ago, on 22 April, a Liberian-flagged ship was seized by Iran, causing damage to the vessel. As a result, we speak today with the clarity of an affected nation.

At the outset, we join others in thanking the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this debate at a moment when the map of global insecurity is increasingly being drawn at sea. What happens in narrow straits is now felt in distant markets, in fragile economies and at distant kitchen tables from the South to the North, and from the East to the West.

I welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain and President of the Security Council; His Excellency the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France; His Excellency the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama; His Excellency the State Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Latvia; and His Excellency the Minister of State of the United Kingdom. I also thank our briefers, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and the Senior Fellow of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. I thank them all for their invaluable insights.

The world does not experience maritime insecurity as a naval skirmish or a distant headline. It experiences it as empty shelves, higher fuel prices, delayed humanitarian aid and uncertainty in daily life. As we have heard, when shipping lanes are disrupted, global stability does not bend slowly, it fractures immediately.

The rise in threats to international waterways reflects a dangerous erosion of long-established norms. Navigational rights and freedoms are being openly challenged, attacks on merchant vessels are increasing and seafarers face growing risks along critical maritime routes. Even where States invoke the inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, the duties and obligations governing maritime security remain unassailable. Civilian shipping is not a lawful target, freedom of navigation cannot be suspended by convenience, and international law does not yield to expediency.

Let me be direct: today's maritime chokepoints are no longer just passages; they are pressure valves on the global economy. When they are squeezed, the world feels it; the innocent—men, women, children, babies—suffer. In the here and now, the growing interference with commercial shipping is not incidental; it is strategic. We are witnessing the creeping normalization of disruption as leverage. That is dangerous, because once obstruction becomes a tactic, stability becomes negotiable. And when stability is negotiable, the smallest economies, like that of my country, pay the highest price.

Given the current threats, international law must remain our anchor. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is not a suggestion; it is the operating system of the oceans. Freedom of navigation, transit passage and innocent passage are not privileges, they are rights, rights to which the entire world is entitled. And rights cannot be selectively respected without being collectively weakened. The same applies to the law of armed conflict at sea. Civilian vessels are not, must not and cannot be targets. Seafarers are not collateral. These are not grey areas.

We must confront the humanitarian dimension with greater honesty. Disruptions at sea do not stay at sea. They travel, faster than any ship, into food insecurity, into energy shocks, into delayed humanitarian relief. A blocked waterway, as we have heard,

can mean an empty market thousands of miles away. That is the human cost of maritime insecurity.

Liberia offers three practical points.

First, restraint must be restored. Attacks on commercial shipping and interference with lawful navigation must end. There is no strategic gain that justifies the systemic disruption of global lifelines.

Secondly, the Council must be consistent. Resolutions, such as 2722 (2024) and 2817 (2026), are clear. But clarity is not enough, credibility depends on even-handed implementation truly must be required, because selectivity erodes the Council's credibility and authority.

Thirdly, we should begin to treat major maritime chokepoints as shared responsibility zones, where transparency is not optional. We propose that the Council encourage the establishment of a standing, independent incident-tracking and verification mechanism, drawing on the expertise of the International Maritime Organization, to provide real-time, depoliticized reporting on disruptions to commercial shipping. In an environment clouded by competing narratives, verified facts are a form of de-escalation.

The oceans are to connect us, rather than divide us. Adherence to the laws governing the oceans guarantee our global unity and reinforce our interdependence. The oceans have always connected supply to demand and risk to responsibility. If we allow them to become theatres of unchecked disruptions, we, all of us, will inherit the consequences, a divided world rather than an interdependent one.

Liberia will continue to stand for a simple principle: that the world's waterways must remain open, governed by law and protected, not just because trade depends on it, but because humanity does.

**Mrs. Zalabata Torres (Colombia)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate your country, Mr. President, on convening this valuable debate on an issue of concern to us all. I would like to thank, in particular, the Secretary-General and Secretary-General Domínguez, as well as Mr. Childs, for their informative briefings.

Colombia recognizes the strategic importance of the straits for international trade and energy security. Any threat to maritime security has repercussions that often extend beyond the region in which they occur, disproportionately affecting developing countries. Colombia is a nation with a maritime vocation, with coastlines on two oceans and a strong commitment to the sustainable protection of natural resources. Given its geostrategic location, my country faces multiple challenges in the area of maritime security, including maritime drug trafficking, illegal fishing, irregular migration, illicit arms trafficking and the protection of our natural resources and marine ecosystems.

In that regard, although Colombia is not a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, we recognize that the Convention governs many human uses of maritime space, including those related to freedom of navigation. But unfortunately, the Convention does not provide all the answers regarding circumstances such as the recent closure of the Strait of Hormuz. One reason for this is that the Convention is designed to apply in times of peace, and when conflicts arise, it does not offer all the necessary tools.

In the face of those regulatory gaps or violations of the existing legal framework, the Security Council must fulfil the role for which it was established. The Council is in a position to send clear messages aimed at containing and preventing further escalation and to take measures to ensure respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

That said, the role of the Council is merely one part of confronting a multifaceted problem. Indeed, maritime security requires a cooperative approach involving naval forces, civilian agencies, regional organizations, multilateral actors and the private sector. The isolated action of a single country, agency or organization is insufficient to address the multiple and highly complex threats facing freedom of navigation. Furthermore, climate change and environmental degradation also have serious security implications for the maritime domain, requiring urgent international attention.

Colombia therefore advocates for promoting initiatives aimed at strengthening international cooperation to address threats in the maritime domain, including efforts to strengthen respect for the law of the sea, further develop naval capabilities among developing States and promote regional cooperation in areas such as Latin America and the Caribbean. In that regard, there is a need to train armed forces in maritime interdiction operations; enhance their naval capabilities, in particular for risk prevention; and transfer the knowledge and technology needed to combat emerging threats. Furthermore, Colombia believes stronger bilateral and multilateral instruments are needed to combat maritime drug trafficking and human trafficking, to protect the rights of migrants at sea and to better protect the marine environment.

Today's debate is part of recent efforts to involve the Security Council in deliberations relating to new United Nations mechanisms aimed at strengthening peace and security in the maritime domain. We welcome those efforts and support a more prominent role for the United Nations in that regard. A firm collective response to maritime threats is in the interest of us all. That is a key element in building peace and security, as well as promoting economic prosperity, the rule of law and sustainable development.

**Mr. Osman (Somalia):** I thank you, Mr. President, Your Excellency Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, for leading this important meeting today. Allow me to also express our appreciation to the presidency of the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this important and timely high-level open debate on a theme of paramount importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. We welcome and thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his remarks. We also thank International Maritime Organization Secretary-General Arsenio Domínguez and Mr. Nick Childs for their briefings. Their presence, contributions and insights highlight the multifaceted nature of the challenges at hand and underscore the profound urgency of addressing the evolving maritime security landscape through an enhanced collective response to ensure the safety and protection of international waterways.

For Somalia, a nation with the longest coastline on the African mainland and situated at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, the security and sustainable management of our maritime domain are not merely policy priorities — they are matters of deep significance for national and regional stability. The safety of international waterways is a cornerstone of international peace and security and a vital enabler of the global economy. Recent developments have brought renewed attention to the vulnerability of critical maritime chokepoints. These critical routes serve as major transit paths for global energy flows and the movement of goods, including bulk commodities, agricultural shipments and manufactured materials essential to global supply chains.

In that regard, I would like to offer the following points.

First, upholding international law remains fundamental and the bedrock of maritime governance. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other relevant instruments provide the definitive legal framework for maritime governance applicable to all activities in the oceans and seas, including the regulation of passage through waterways used for international navigation.

Somalia underscores the absolute necessity of reaffirming our commitment to this framework and upholding the freedom of navigation, while respecting the navigational rights and freedoms of merchant and commercial vessels, as emphasized in recent Council resolutions. We must ensure our maritime domain remains governed by the rule of law, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of coastal States, which is essential for building trust and ensuring effective action.

Secondly, we believe effective maritime security requires a coordinated, holistic approach to address root causes. It is imperative to recognize that maritime security is inextricably linked to sustainable development on land. Poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunity often serve as significant drivers pushing vulnerable populations towards criminal and illicit activities at sea. Among these, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing stands out as a devastating transnational crime that depletes vital marine resources, degrades ocean ecosystems and causes irreversible damage. Addressing those drivers through the African Union's blue economy initiative and the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy is vital for fostering the long-term stability required to eliminate those drivers.

Thirdly, capacity-building and technology transfer are paramount for effective enforcement. Efforts to address maritime threats are most effective when coastal States possess the necessary surveillance, law enforcement and judicial capacities, as they have primary responsibility. Strengthening international cooperation is essential to mitigate the impact of evolving threats, and we must build on existing national, regional and international initiatives to enhance Member States' capacity.

Many African countries continue to require sustained, tailored support to strengthen their processes. We underscore the importance of tailored training, access to advanced technologies and investment in human and institutional resources, as articulated in the Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa. Furthermore, we emphasize the role of the African Union in developing regional maritime components to respond to emerging threats.

Fourthly, promoting maritime security requires coherent and effective multilateral approaches. Given the transnational nature of these challenges, no single State can address them in isolation. We must strengthen existing frameworks such as the Yaoundé Architecture, which are essential for information sharing and joint operations. While the responsibility for maritime security rests first and foremost with littoral States, it must be supported by robust international cooperation and partnerships that respect the sovereignty and leadership of those States in the region. The Security Council plays a vital role in protecting freedom of navigation, reinforcing global efforts and pursuing an integrated and forward-looking approach to ensure the safety of critical maritime routes and the free flow of trade, food and connectivity.

In conclusion, Somalia is mindful of our shared responsibility for the security and stability of our oceans and seas. Addressing these challenges requires a unified and collective approach grounded in international cooperation and the rule of law. My delegation reaffirms its commitment to working constructively with the Security Council and the wider international community to realize the vision of safe, secure and prosperous seas for all — ensuring our waterways remain a bridge of peace and prosperity, connecting nations rather than dividing them.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have taken note of the decision by the delegation of Bahrain to organize an open debate on maritime security. We thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Arsenio Domínguez and Nick Childs for their briefings.

As is well known, Russia did not support the idea of discussing maritime security in the Security Council, as that issue is already being addressed at length and in detail

in the relevant specialized forums. However, the overall maritime security situation that has been unfolding across the world's waterways not only poses a serious threat to global trade, exacerbating the global economic crisis, but it could also trigger military escalation.

It is not pirates or other criminal elements that currently threaten maritime security: there are new twenty-first-century buccaneers — namely the European Union (EU) countries that have no qualms about seizing and detaining commercial vessels, in gross violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982. This, in turn, undermines energy and food security and creates humanitarian problems for developing countries.

At the same time, unlike pirates who flew the Jolly Roger — the black flag with a skull and crossbones — Western countries attempt to conceal their unlawful actions by invoking unilateral coercive measures. We would like to remind those who champion legal approaches in other contexts that, under the Charter of the United Nations, only sanctions imposed by the Security Council are legitimate. There is no concept of a “shadow fleet” in international law. All of this is nothing more than a fig leaf to obscure the fact that the EU is engaged in outright banditry at sea.

Today we are once again hearing about the so-called “rules-based order” that EU countries are presenting time and again as an international norm. We would like to recall the obvious: under the law of the sea, coastal States cannot arbitrarily detain a vessel under a foreign flag for inspection. Such actions, even in territorial waters, constitute a gross violation of the right to innocent passage and, in international waters, an infringement of freedom of navigation. These are fundamental principles of customary international law enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The inviolability of these norms, as well as the principle of the exclusive jurisdiction of flag States over their vessels, ensure the stable and predictable functioning of the international maritime trade system. The Convention therefore contains a limited list of grounds for which a State may detain a vessel for inspection when exercising these rights and freedoms.

The actions of EU countries that flout international maritime law could trigger a domino effect resulting in a total disruption of the global maritime trade system. The involvement of NATO naval forces in detaining vessels leads directly to military escalation.

Ukraine's armed attacks on civilian vessels flying the Russian flag or transporting Russian energy resources in the world's waterways warrant particular attention. Such attacks pose a direct threat to international peace and security, not to mention the fact that they affect seafarers from various countries around the world, including in Europe. Such attacks are occurring with increasing frequency in close proximity to the shores of States sympathetic to the Zelenskyy regime, which raises questions about their complicity in these attacks. The result is significant environmental damage, economic losses for coastal States and the disruption of trade links between countries.

From November 2025 to April 2026, 17 attacks were carried out in the waters of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea alone against commercial vessels flying the flags of various States, including the Russian Federation, Malta, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Gambia and the Comoros.

A particularly egregious violation of international law was the terrorist attack on 3 March by unmanned boats and drones operated by the Kyiv regime against the liquefied natural gas tanker *Arctic Metagas*, sailing under the Russian flag in the Mediterranean Sea. The attack resulted in an explosion and the vessel, carrying over 100,000 cubic metres of liquefied natural gas, was engulfed in flames. The tanker, which sustained significant damage, is now drifting in the Mediterranean Sea. Given the nature

of the cargo and the presence of bunker fuel, there is a risk of catastrophic consequences for the environment, human life and health and the coastal infrastructure of neighbouring States. Those coastal States, involuntarily drawn into this incident, have expressed only deep concern regarding the threat of environmental damage. However, they have not yet summoned the courage to give a proper assessment of the attack on a civilian vessel carried out in close proximity to their shores.

Another recent example is the marine drone attack on the tanker *Altura* on 26 March, which was located 15 nautical miles from the Bosphorus Strait. The vessel sustained serious damage, leading to flooding and loss of propulsion. At the time of the attack, the tanker was transporting approximately 140,000 tons of crude oil. One can only imagine the potential catastrophic consequences of a spill of this magnitude off the coast of Türkiye.

We call on all States that respect the 1982 Convention and seek to prevent escalation to adopt a principled position, condemn these acts and use all available means to prevent them.

It must also be noted that Western countries, which are detaining vessels in violation of international law and are tacitly supporting Kyiv's terrorist actions, take a completely different position regarding navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. There, they are lobbing vociferous and groundless accusations against Iran for what is unfolding. I find it rather amusing to hear how those seated before us — foreign ministers of EU member States, as well as other EU members who will speak later — shamefully sweep the root cause of the situation in the Strait of Hormuz under the rug. How could they possibly offend their suzerain? Never mind that the United States no longer cares about those countries.

We would like to remind Council members that the situation in the Strait of Hormuz is a consequence of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has resulted not only in immense suffering for the inhabitants of the entire region and a rapid collapse of stability in the Persian Gulf region, but also in far-reaching consequences for the global economy and for energy and food security. The countries of the Persian Gulf supply the global market with one fifth of all oil and more than one third of all liquefied natural gas, as well as providing significant volumes of ammonia, phosphates and sulfur.

When, as a result of a perfidious attack by West Jerusalem and Washington an entire region erupted in flames, attempts were made to pin the entire responsibility on Iran, as if it were Tehran that had attacked its neighbours and was deliberately obstructing navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. Yet, in a wartime environment, a coastal State subjected to aggression is entitled to restrict shipping within its territorial waters for the sake of security.

It bears recalling that prior to 28 February — before the decision by the United States and Israel to attack Iran — no serious disruptions to merchant shipping were observed in the Persian Gulf region. This naturally raises a pertinent question: Why was it necessary to start all this in the first place? The answers lie on the surface, including the desire to topple an undesirable regime and to fish in troubled waters. Yet today, we hear nothing but arguments regarding fabricated threats. It is the capitals and peoples of the Persian Gulf nations, countries friendly to us, who are being forced to pay the price for this reckless venture.

The Russian Federation firmly advocates for a ceasefire and a return to the political-diplomatic process with the aim of resolving existing differences, while safeguarding the security interests of all States in the region without exception. We support the relevant initiatives of our Pakistani friends. We trust that the parties will strictly adhere to the current truce and give diplomacy a chance to reach a final

settlement. We urge them to abandon warmongering rhetoric and the pursuit of hawkish plans to reignite a major regional war. Such a scenario would lead only to greater suffering and casualties among the civilian population, and would further undermine the stability and security of all regional actors, including Israel. That will certainly not help to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

**Mr. Mukongo** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): The Democratic Republic of the Congo extends its warm greetings to His Excellency Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain. We are honoured by your presence, Mr. President, which gives us yet another opportunity to congratulate the Kingdom of Bahrain on its leadership in steering the work of the Council, as well as its steadfast commitment to peace and the protection of the rights of civilian populations affected by armed conflict. In the same spirit, my delegation welcomes the presence of Their Excellencies the Foreign Ministers and Deputy Ministers at this meeting. We also wish to thank Mr. Arsenio Domínguez, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, and Mr. Nick Childs, Senior Fellow for Naval Forces and Maritime Security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, for their excellent briefings.

The seas and oceans are a shared heritage of humanity and a cornerstone of the global economy. They ensure the fluidity of international trade, support supply chains and forge lasting bonds between nations.

Today, strategic areas are facing a convergence of threats that hinder freedom of navigation, undermine economies, disrupt trade and energy flows and, more broadly, jeopardize international stability. What is at stake extends beyond maritime security; it also concerns the international community's ability to preserve a global space that is open, secure and governed by the rule of law.

Illicit migrant trafficking, piracy and transnational organized crime, along with new threats targeting port infrastructure, navigation systems and vessels, continue to proliferate in several regions, particularly in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Guinea. Those combined threats seriously threaten the security of coastal States and the lives of civilians and crews, while also disrupting supply chains.

For my delegation, those complex challenges can be addressed only through an integrated approach based on strengthened international and regional cooperation, prevention, innovation and strict adherence to the rule of law. This approach must be embedded within sustainable maritime governance frameworks that are capable of anticipating and responding effectively to the rapid development of those threats. It entails a conceptual and practical strengthening of maritime security that is inextricably linked to respect for international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the relevant instruments of the International Maritime Organization, which constitute the normative platform guaranteeing freedom of navigation, safety at sea and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Recognizing those challenges, Africa has adopted this approach at both the regional and subregional levels. At the regional level, the African Union adopted the Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa on 15 October 2016. This strategic framework is aimed at strengthening maritime security and safety, combat illicit activities and promote the development of the blue economy through cooperation, coordination and the exchange of information among its member States.

A few years earlier, on 25 June 2013, 25 States from the West and Central African subregions, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, adopted the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa with the aim of ensuring security in the Gulf of Guinea. The Code of Conduct is recognized for having fostered a culture of

unity and enhanced collaboration with respect to the Gulf of Guinea, including maritime security.

The news highlights threats to the security of maritime lanes and the principle of freedom of navigation, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz, which is a source of heightened tensions in the Middle East. As a strategic corridor for global trade, the Strait is of particular importance for transporting essential goods and energy resources. The mounting tensions in such a strategic area pose significant risks to both regional and international stability.

In that context, the Democratic Republic of the Congo believes that it is incumbent upon the Security Council to remain fully seized of this matter and to help to prevent, within the framework of its mandate, any further deterioration of the situation. The protection of civilians, crews and maritime infrastructure must remain a priority, in strict compliance with international humanitarian law and the rules applicable to armed conflict at sea, including the principles of distinction and proportionality.

In that regard, the Democratic Republic of the Congo further encourages ongoing mediation efforts, including those led by Pakistan, and calls upon all parties concerned to prioritize dialogue, restraint and de-escalation.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaffirms its commitment to working alongside members of the Council to strengthen maritime security. In this context, we propose five key areas on which the Council could base its action: strengthening cooperation and the coordination of international and regional efforts; integrating new and emerging technological threats; providing more substantial support for sustainable regional strategies; strengthening prevention and the resilience of coastal States; and promoting inclusive and preventive maritime governance based on respect for international law.

**Mr. Fu Cong** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would first like to welcome you, Mr. President, as you preside over this meeting, and I thank Secretary-General Guterres, Secretary-General Domínguez and Mr. Childs for their briefings.

The oceans are the cradle of life and connect the world, carrying more than 80 per cent of global trade. They have become the main arteries for the functioning of economies and human society. Ensuring the safety and security of international shipping routes is crucial to the stability of global industrial and supply chains and to people's livelihoods and well-being, serving the common interests of all nations. In recent years, owing to growing international instability, maritime security issues have heated up and have become increasingly intertwined with geopolitical conflicts, traditional and non-traditional security risks and global governance deficits. We must uphold the spirit of unity and cooperation, adopt a comprehensive and in-depth perspective on maritime security and seek solutions that address both the symptoms and the root causes.

I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, the political resolution of hotspot issues and the stability and smooth operation of international shipping lanes are closely linked to the peace and stability of neighbouring regions, particularly coastal States. Only through dialogue and consultation and working to de-escalate and mitigate hotspot issues can we create an enabling environment for the safety of shipping routes. Relying on military means cannot fundamentally resolve risks; rather, it will exacerbate tensions and confrontation, creating even greater security crises. The Strait of Hormuz is a vital corridor for the international trade of goods and energy, and maintaining security, stability and unimpeded passage in the region serves the common interests of the international community. The root cause of the blocked Strait lies in the illegal military actions launched by the United States and Israel against Iran.

Furthermore, despite the recently concluded temporary ceasefire arrangement, the United States has stepped up its military deployments and imposed a targeted blockade. This is highly dangerous and irresponsible behaviour. The solution to ending the blockade in the Strait lies in achieving a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire as soon as possible and promoting the restoration of peace and stability in the Gulf and the Middle East. China commends the mediation efforts of Pakistan and other countries, urges the relevant parties to resolve disputes and conflicts through political and diplomatic channels and opposes any moves that could undermine the ceasefire and escalate confrontation. China will continue to play a constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability, in the spirit of the four-point proposal put forward by President Xi Jinping, namely, upholding the principles of peaceful coexistence, national sovereignty, the international rule of law and balancing development and security.

Secondly, we must firmly uphold the international rule of law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the relevant international treaties and customary international law collectively form the foundation of today's international maritime order. All countries should interpret and apply the Convention fully, accurately and in good faith, refraining from selective application and double standards. They must exercise the right to freedom of navigation conferred by international law in good faith, earnestly respect the sovereignty, security and legitimate rights and interests of coastal States and ensure the smooth flow of normal maritime trade and navigation.

Thirdly, maritime and commercial crimes must be combated in accordance with the law. According to reports from the relevant agencies, there were as many as 137 incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea worldwide last year. This represents the highest level in the past five years. Criminal syndicates and terrorist forces are increasingly using the oceans as key channels for illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, arms smuggling and human trafficking. All countries should, within the framework of international law, combat maritime criminal activities in accordance with laws and regulations, respect the exclusive jurisdiction of coastal States over their territorial waters and at the same time actively support coastal States in developing their economies, improving people's livelihoods and eliminating the root causes of crime and instability.

Fourthly, we must continue to improve global governance. The oceans are the shared home of all humanity. Only by adhering to the principles of consultation, cooperation and shared benefits and by promoting the establishment of a more just and reasonable global ocean governance system can we truly realize the beautiful vision of maritime peace and security and a thriving maritime economy. All countries should support the United Nations in playing a central role, continue to advance the process of formulating international legislation and rules and actively address emerging challenges, including marine ecological conservation and sea level rise. We must uphold the principles of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, strengthen maritime connectivity and infrastructure development and promote the sustainable and rational use of marine resources.

China has always been a staunch defender of and contributor to the international maritime legal system and has taken concrete action to uphold the authority and integrity of UNCLOS. As the first country to sign and ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity, China has played an active role in areas such as maritime navigation safety, disaster risk reduction and prevention and ecological conservation and has dispatched 48 naval escort task forces to the waters of the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia to carry out routine escort missions. China actively participates in the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, has launched the Belt and Road Blue Cooperation Initiative and actively supports developing countries and small island developing States in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, providing high-

quality global public goods in the maritime domain to the international community. We are willing to continue working with the international community to make unremitting efforts to safeguard common maritime security and build a community with a shared future for the oceans.

**Mrs. Balta** (Greece): I thank you, Mr. President, for your presence today. I would also like to thank the presidency of Bahrain for convening this meeting on maritime security — an issue of critical importance for international peace and security. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and Mr. Nick Childs for their insightful and comprehensive briefings.

This high-level open debate takes place at a moment of escalating concern. Threats to maritime security are multiplying, while attacks on international shipping are growing not only more frequent but more sophisticated and disruptive in their impact. Global shipping faces sharper, evolving and more complex threats than ever: piracy, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, smuggling and hybrid attacks targeting vessels and critical maritime infrastructure. The crisis in the Strait of Hormuz underscores the fundamental importance of securing open, safe and unimpeded passage. Unjustified attacks on merchant vessels are clear violations of international law, with far-reaching and destabilizing consequences for all. They disrupt global supply chains, threaten food and energy security and carry profound consequences for the economic resilience of all our countries. They put seafarers directly in harm's way and lay bare the vulnerability of the system on which the global economy depends. Let us be clear: when maritime security is compromised, international peace and security are at risk.

Greece is a leading maritime nation with a rich seafaring history and the largest merchant maritime fleet. Greek shipping accounts for more than 20 per cent of the global fleet and 61 per cent of the European Union (EU) fleet. As an elected member of the Security Council, Greece is firmly committed to safeguarding maritime security and ensuring that international maritime routes stay open, secure and resilient under all circumstances.

Freedom of navigation is not only a long-standing principle of international law; it is the backbone of global stability. It must be upheld in full conformity with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. Its provisions reflect customary international law. In that context, our message is straightforward: transit should be safeguarded and should not be restricted or obstructed.

To that end, Greece contributes actively to collective efforts to enhance maritime security. We participate in the EU Operation Atalanta and the EU military operation in the Mediterranean, and we play a leading role in the EU Operation Aspides in the Red Sea region.

No single actor can meet those challenges alone. Effective responses require strengthened international cooperation, coordination and information-sharing, building on existing initiatives by States and international organizations. The International Maritime Organization remains central to those efforts. We welcome the outcomes of its extraordinary session, held on 18 March, on the impact of recent developments on shipping and seafarers, and we join its call for an immediate end to attacks affecting innocent seafarers. We also welcome the recent conference convened by France and the United Kingdom in Paris and the efforts to strengthen international cooperation to protect freedom of navigation and enhance the protection of maritime waterways.

Looking ahead, there is scope to further strengthen maritime domain awareness and information-sharing at the global level. In this regard, Greece sees merit in

exploring more structured and system-wide approaches within the United Nations, building on existing efforts to enhance coordination and support Member States in addressing maritime security threats. Emerging and new technologies, including artificial intelligence, can serve as force multipliers, provided that they are deployed with full respect for international law. Such technologies enhance monitoring, improve information-sharing and facilitate operational coordination. We stand ready to actively contribute to discussions and help chart a path towards developing — collectively — effective mechanisms to ensure that emerging technologies reinforce international peace, security and human dignity.

In conclusion, maritime security is not a peripheral issue; it is a core component of international peace and security. The Security Council cannot remain indifferent to developments that directly affect international peace and security, global trade, energy security and economic stability, which have far-reaching repercussions for humanity as a whole. Greece remains committed to working with all partners to ensure that the seas remain open, secure and governed by rules. Respect for international law is not optional; it is indispensable.

**Ms. Lassen** (Denmark): I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), as well as Mr. Childs, for their insightful remarks.

Peace and security do not end at our respective shorelines. Maritime security is not just a regional concern but a global imperative, underpinning international peace, as well as economic development and stability. Denmark therefore welcomes this open debate and thanks the President and the Kingdom of Bahrain for maintaining the attention of the Security Council on this critical topic.

In recent weeks, much of the Council's attention has been dedicated to the worrisome situation in the Strait of Hormuz. Denmark has continuously called for respect for freedom of navigation. That is a cornerstone of international law and is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The denial of the right of transit passage in the Strait has had dramatic consequences across the globe.

In concrete terms, seafarers have been left stranded on vessels for weeks. Regional countries have been unable to exercise their inalienable right of access to the high seas, which is essential for the trade that sustains their daily lives. The poorest across the globe have been hit hardest, as they now face a sharp increase in energy costs and lack access to critical fertilizers, making food insecurity a very real and imminent threat.

In light of this, Denmark welcomed and joined the French-British initiative for an international summit on the Strait of Hormuz on 17 April. We reconfirm our readiness to support transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz by a strictly defensive multinational mission to protect merchant vessels, reassure commercial shipping operators and conduct mine clearance operations as soon as conditions permit, following a sustainable ceasefire agreement.

From a broader perspective, Denmark's approach to maritime security has been consistent for decades. In the 1950s, we were among the first nations that recognized the need for a binding framework for all ocean activities and were among the first to sign the later and final United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We did so because we believed that maritime security begins with legal clarity. That belief remains just as firm today. Respect for international law must remain our compass at sea, including in stormy waters. In this context, the Convention remains the relevant legal framework that must be respected, implemented and defended.

As we heard this morning, we also need to recognize and respond to the emerging, complex and growing maritime security threats. Denmark is particularly concerned

about the risks that shadow fleets pose, both in our immediate neighbourhood — the Baltic Sea and the North Sea — and elsewhere in the world, by circumventing international sanctions. Those old, poorly maintained and insufficiently insured vessels are a huge risk to seafarers, maritime safety and navigation, the environment and coastal communities. It is clear that the relevant rules at sea are being deliberately undermined, and Denmark calls for urgent, coordinated international action. More cooperation is required to improve environmental protection, registry integrity and capacity-building and to counter unlawful operations. The IMO's work is essential in ensuring that necessary measures are taken to close loopholes.

Protecting critical undersea infrastructure is equally vital in our interconnected world. Recurring incidents involving underwater cables and pipelines, often by flagless vessels or clandestine actors, have underlined the need for a collective response to enhance the protection of this essential infrastructure.

In closing, recent events have demonstrated clearly that the challenges we face at sea transcend national borders and demand a coordinated response and sustained attention from the Council. Denmark will continue to support a comprehensive approach to maritime security and work in partnership with other countries to ensure that our oceans remain a source of connection and economic prosperity for all, rather than one of conflict and insecurity.

**The President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pablo Quirno Magrane, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina.

**Mr. Quirno Magrane (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*):** I would like to begin by congratulating the Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, on his presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I am grateful for the convening of this open debate at a time that calls for clarity, responsibility and steadfastness. I also extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and to the delegations here present.

We are gathered here to address an issue that is no longer merely a regional situation. When a strategic maritime route is under threat, it not only disrupts a commercial route but jeopardizes an essential principle of the international order. Freedom of navigation is a fundamental condition for peace, stability and prosperity among nations.

That is why the Charter holds such unique significance. The Charter of the United Nations entrusted the Council with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. That responsibility does not admit any ambiguities when a State seeks to forcefully impede the normal functioning of the international community.

As President Javier Milei has pointed out, Argentina's foreign policy has a clear moral compass. It is founded on the defence of life, liberty and prosperity. In line with these principles, Argentina firmly condemns the actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Within this same framework, we express our full support for the actions undertaken by the United States and by Israel in the face of that threat.

Argentina knows terrorism first-hand. It knows it from the attacks on the Embassy of Israel and the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association. It also knows it from the horror of 7 October 2023, when citizens of Argentina were murdered or kidnapped. Our justice system has held the Iranian regime responsible, and we stand by that quest for truth and justice.

That conviction translates into concrete decisions. Argentina stands with the people of Iran in their aspiration to live in freedom. At the same time, the State of Argentina has taken steps to designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Quds

Force, Hizbullah and Hamas as terrorist organizations, including through their inscription in our public register of persons and entities linked to acts of terrorism and their financing. More recently, it declared the Chargé d'affaires of Iran in Argentina as *persona non grata*, who left our country within 48 hours after being notified. In the face of terror, Argentina does not waver; it responds with determination.

I want to make absolutely clear that Argentina acts on the international stage consistently and without ambiguity. Our decisions are not dictated by short-term circumstances; they are underpinned by deep convictions that give direction and meaning to our foreign policy. This consistency guides each of our positions and defines the place we choose to occupy in the world — a place that does not allow for neutrality in the face of those who threaten freedom.

My country was one of the co-sponsors of resolution 2817 (2026), which condemned the attacks launched by Iran against Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar, and urged the regime in Tehran to refrain from any action affecting freedom of navigation and transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

It is essential to recall that, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the right of transit passage through international straits is part of the principle of freedom of navigation at sea. It follows clearly from this that Iran has an obligation to allow the passage of vessels through the Strait. The blocking of maritime transit by a coastal State constitutes a serious violation of international law.

Argentina strongly condemns the actions of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz. We do so in defence of our allies in the region and of the entire international community. A significant proportion of global trade passes through these routes. Energy, food, industrial supplies and raw materials sustain the flow of goods of markets. Disrupting this transit causes distortion, puts pressure on prices and jeopardizes energy and food security on a global scale.

Moreover, this impact goes beyond the economic sphere. It is not merely a matter of trade disruption. It is an act that undermines international economic security and affects the freedom of countries to trade, produce and prosper. Disrupting the normal functioning of a strategic waterway, such as the Strait of Hormuz, is illegal conduct that cannot be downplayed. Argentina makes this clear and stands with those who defend a predictable, rules-based international order.

The security of shipping lanes requires coordinated responses grounded in international law. The Council must act with determination. Argentina will support any initiative aimed at safeguarding peace, freedom, life, prosperity and international stability. Rest assured that Argentina will be present whenever those principles are at stake. It will be present to uphold them and to defend them. It will be present to stand firm against those who seek to impose terror, intimidation or lawlessness as a means of power. That is our commitment. That is the place we have chosen to occupy in the world, without doubt and without concessions.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

**Mr. Zhulkarnain** (Singapore): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this timely and important debate. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres, International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General Domínguez and Mr. Childs for their insightful briefings.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Fiji, Jamaica, Malta and my own country, Singapore. Our four countries played active roles in the negotiation, drafting and conclusion of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and remain committed to upholding it as the legal framework within which

all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. Although it has been more than 30 years since the Convention entered into force, we continue to face threats to the navigational rights and freedoms of vessels through international waterways.

The global energy and trade crisis stemming from disruptions in and around the Strait of Hormuz has brought these vulnerabilities into sharp relief. In our interconnected global economy, no country has been spared the economic and humanitarian impact of this crisis. In particular, the disruption to supply chains has had an outsized impact on many small island nations and developing States with import-dependent economies.

Over time, a crisis like this can also have far-reaching implications for global peace and security, increasing the risk of armed conflict and instability. The unlawful restriction on the flow of trade, energy and critical supplies imposes a cost that we cannot afford. It is therefore in our collective interest to uphold navigational rights and freedoms in order to ensure that critical sea lanes remain open, secure and accessible to all.

The Strait of Hormuz is a strait used for international navigation, through which the right of transit passage applies under UNCLOS. This right is also applicable as customary international law, which binds all States, even if they are not parties to UNCLOS. We therefore call on all concerned parties to uphold and respect the right of transit passage, comply with all other applicable obligations under international law, restore safe, continuous and unimpeded transit passage in the Strait of Hormuz and ensure the safety of seafarers and ships. International law, and UNCLOS in particular, already provides a comprehensive framework to strengthen maritime safety and security. What is required is the resolve of all States to uphold and apply it.

Allow me to offer some additional perspectives in my national capacity. Singapore aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). As a small island developing State whose lifeline runs through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, another critical maritime artery for the world economy, Singapore takes a clear and categorical position: transit passage in straits used for international navigation is a right under international law and not a discretionary privilege that can be paid for or negotiated. Any erosion of international law in one region of the world inevitably sets a dangerous precedent for all others.

The stakes are not theoretical. The Straits of Malacca and Singapore carry about 23.2 million barrels of oil per day, exceeding the 20.9 million barrels per day that used to flow through the Straits of Hormuz. At their narrowest point, the Straits of Malacca and Singapore stretch only two nautical miles in width. If the right of transit passage is not upheld, international navigation in the Straits could be completely disrupted.

For Singapore and the world, the transit passage regime in UNCLOS is not an abstract question of legal doctrine but one with real implications for global economic security and international stability. It is for this reason that Singapore strongly supported the declaration adopted by the IMO Council on 19 March 2026, which reaffirms that the exercise of navigational rights and freedoms by merchant and commercial vessels in accordance with international law must be respected.

It is clear that we all stand to benefit from the safety and protection of critical waterways. We must work together to this end, and there are opportunities to do so. For example, the traffic separation scheme in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore adopted by the IMO in 1977 on the joint proposal of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore continues to regulate the safe and orderly passage of more than 100,000 vessels a year. Building on this foundation, the cooperative mechanism on safety of navigation and environmental protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore was established in

2007 as the first practical implementation of article 43 of UNCLOS, which provides for cooperation between user States and States bordering a strait. It remains an essential platform to keep the straits safe, open and clean and includes not only the three littoral States but also user States, the shipping industry and other stakeholders. The cooperative mechanism reflects the commitment of the three littoral States to abide by international law, including UNCLOS, and to work together in consensus on the effective management of the Straits.

Singapore will continue to contribute to the efforts of the international community to uphold a free and open Strait of Hormuz, support the shipping industry and ensure the safety of all seafarers. Ultimately, we hope for a diplomatic solution to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East which will bring lasting peace and stability to our global commerce.

**The President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates.

**Mr. Al Marar** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Your Excellency Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, allow me at the outset to thank you for convening this open debate at this important juncture. I commend the Kingdom of Bahrain for its outstanding efforts in presiding over the Council during the month of April. I thank Secretary-General António Guterres, as well as His Excellency Mr. Arsenio Domínguez, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Mr. Nick Childs for their valuable briefings.

In recent years, the Council has taken important steps to address a number of developments that threaten maritime security. Perhaps the most notable has been its recent efforts in connection with the vicious Iranian attacks on the Gulf States and Jordan, and the threats posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran's deliberate obstruction of maritime navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. Those efforts resulted in the adoption of resolution 2817 (2026), which condemned any actions or threats by the Islamic Republic of Iran aimed at closing, obstructing or otherwise interfering with international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and called upon Iran to refrain immediately from any actions or threats, affirming that any attempt to impede lawful transit passage or freedom of navigation in these international waterways constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security.

Similarly, recent resolutions of the IMO Council and Legal Committee and of the United Nations Human Rights Council, concerning Iran's actions in the Strait once again reflect the international community's solidarity in demanding that Iran stop its illegal acts in and around the Strait of Hormuz and guarantee that the Strait remain open and that traffic can pass through it without restrictions in accordance with international law. However, Iran continues to block freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz in blatant defiance of those resolutions, as well as binding resolution 2817 (2026). It is imposing illegal fees on transiting vessels and unlawfully obstructing navigation by launching attacks, issuing threats and laying mines. It is also blocking traffic and practicing discrimination in both form and content between foreign ships in clear violation of international law. It is trying to establish permanent control over navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

In the light of this economic coercion and flagrant violation of international law, my country holds Iran responsible and stresses that Iran is obligated to provide compensation for all damages caused by its internationally illegal acts, including the impacts of such behaviour on the ocean and marine environment. Given the vital importance of that Strait, the consequences of its closure are starting to be felt globally. They will be profound and far-reaching in energy security, the supply chain and security

of food and fertilizers essential to agriculture, especially by countries of the global South. The consequences for the world economy will be serious.

There can be no doubt that to allow Iran to use the Strait as a tool for applying pressure to achieve political objectives would undermine the international peace and security needed for the international order and global trade on which the international community depends. If Iran is allowed to continue to close the Strait, that would set a dangerous precedent that would undermine freedom of navigation in vital international waterways around the world. Iran's actions underscore the need for collective action to reach a lasting solution that guarantees freedom of navigation and the right of transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz unconditionally and permanently.

Our position regarding the Strait is firmly grounded in international law. The United Arab Emirates is ready to take part in efforts to keep the Strait of Hormuz open and safeguard freedom of navigation and the right of transit passage. We call on Iran to fully and immediately comply with resolution 2817 (2026). We call on Iran to desist from all actions and threats against international navigation, and particularly the right of transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz. We urge the Council to adopt a position that safeguards the exercise by States of these freedoms and deters Iran's violations in this regard.

*The meeting was suspended at 1.50 p.m.*