

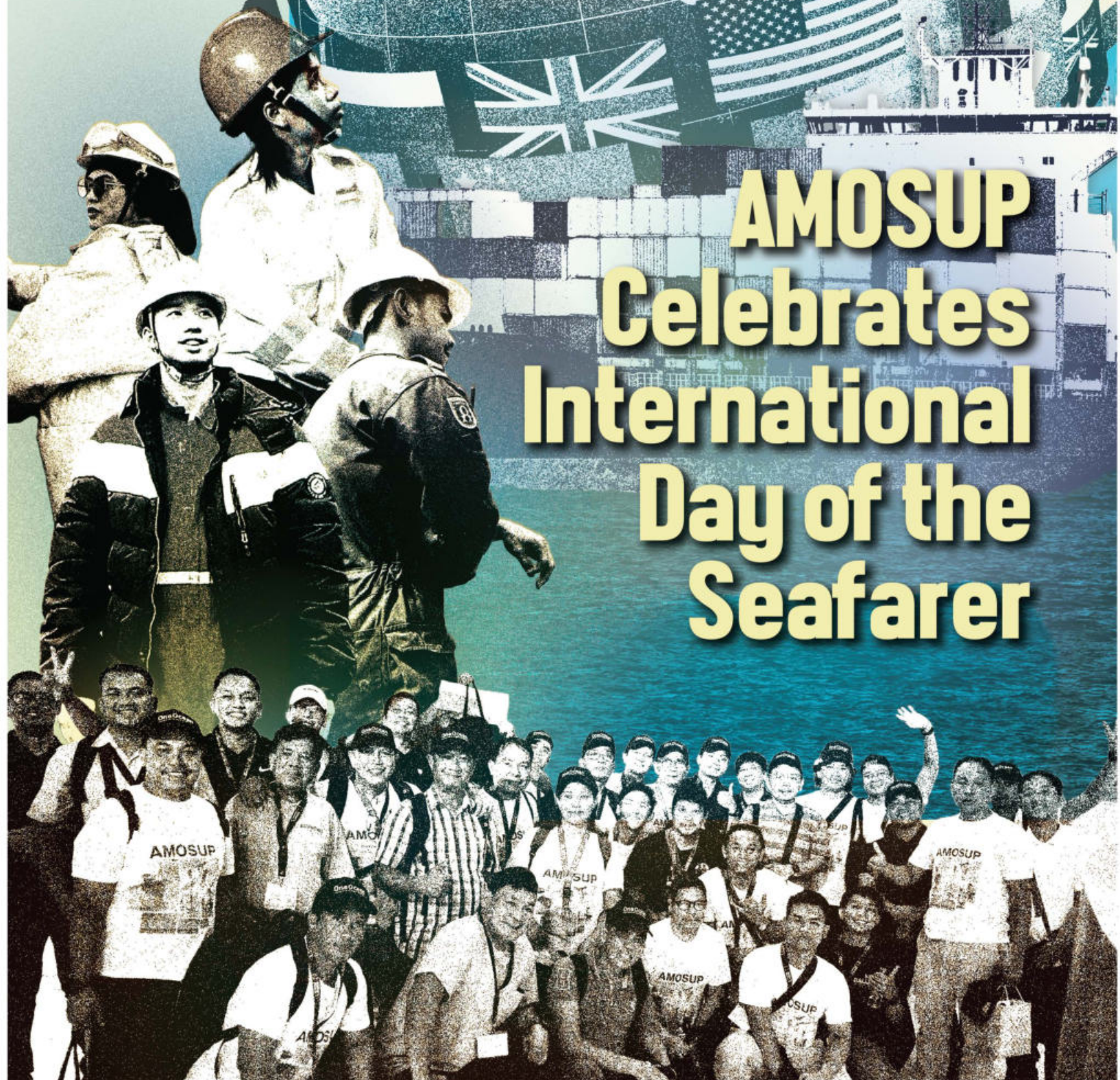
VOLUME 14 | ISSUE 49 | JULY 2026

SAILING FORWARD

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATED MARINE OFFICERS'
AND SEAMEN'S UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES



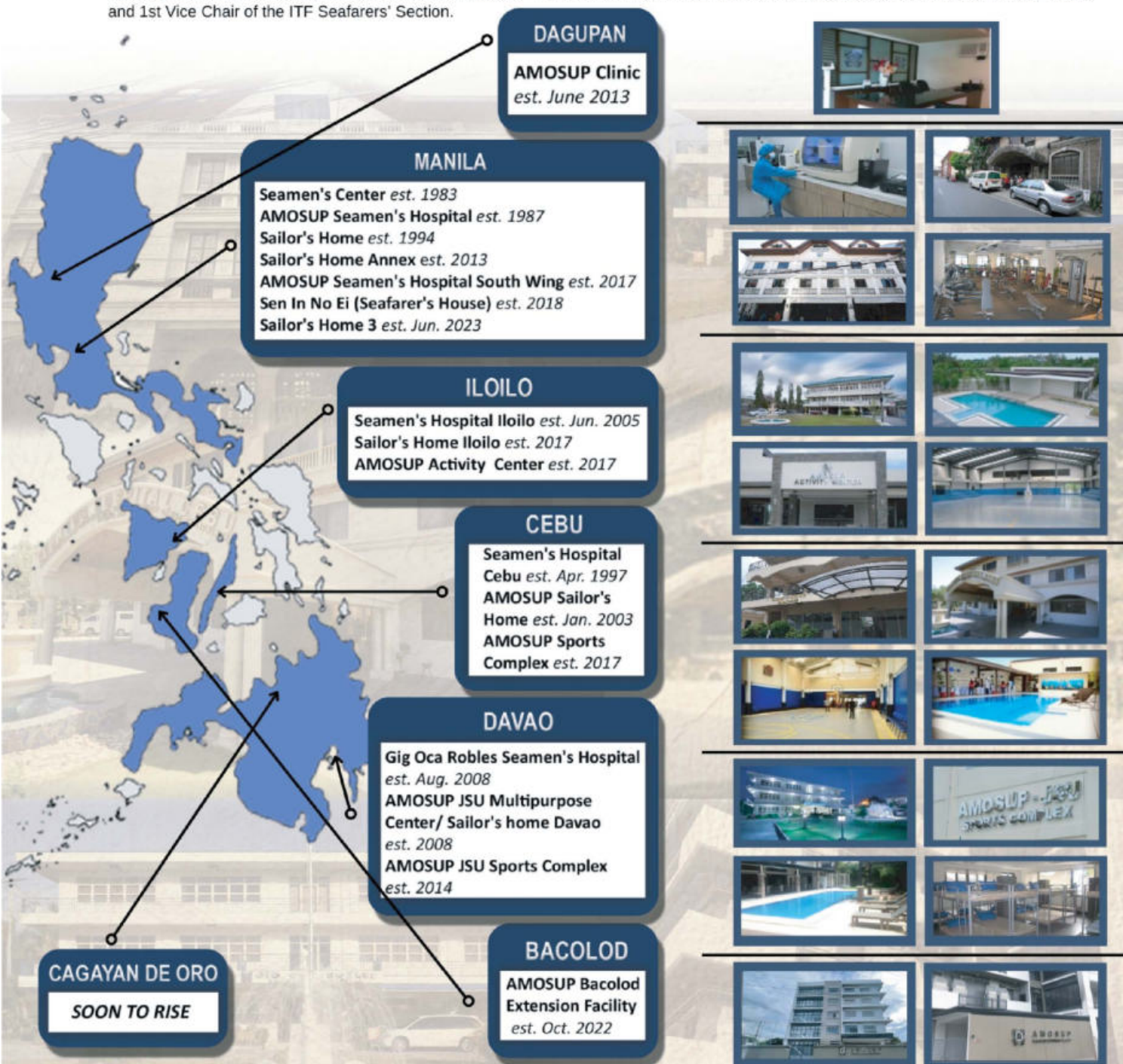
AMOSUP Celebrates International Day of the Seafarer



ASSOCIATED MARINE OFFICERS' AND SEAMEN'S UNION OF THE PHILIPPINES AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF

The Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF) was established in 1960 by Master Mariner Captain Gregorio S. Oca. He saw a bright future for Filipino Seafarers and to make his vision a reality, he pioneered the negotiation for welfare benefits and advocated the upgrading of seafarer education and training in the country. Captain Oca dedicated his life to championing the rights and welfare of Filipino Seafarers.

AMOSUP's strong partnership and collaboration with industry stakeholders bound by Collective Bargaining Agreements is at the core of the Union's extensive and holistic welfare programs and services. For over 60 years, AMOSUP has cultivated a harmonious and constructive synergy with ITF-affiliated unions, companies/shipowners and international maritime employer groups in ensuring that members are accorded with the best benefits they deserve for their vital role and contribution to the industry. AMOSUP also actively engages in national, regional and global forums to champion the protection and advancement of Filipino seafarers' rights and welfare, having the Union's leadership designated as International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Executive Board Member for Asia Pacific and 1st Vice Chair of the ITF Seafarers' Section.



From the President

Greetings of solidarity.

As we celebrate the International Day of the Seafarer on June 25 with the theme “Carrying World Trade, Carrying the Risks,” and the International Day for Women in Maritime on May 18, it is fitting that this issue shines a spotlight on the remarkable seafarers, women and men alike, whose dedication, leadership, resilience, and compassion continue to strengthen and inspire the next generation of Filipino seafarers. Our cover story honors the Filipino seafaring heritage, while the inspiring stories of maritime workers in this issue remind us that progress and success are built on courage, determination, and the pursuit of equal opportunities for all.

While we celebrate these accomplishments, we also recognize the challenges facing seafarers, and the global maritime industry as a whole. This edition highlights critical discussions on seafarers’ safety and security, including calls for stronger protections, improved benefits for the crew onboard vessels traversing high-risk environments, and urgent actions needed to address emerging concerns affecting seafarers and their families.

The evolving global situation continues to present uncertainties, particularly for those whose work takes them into regions affected by the geopolitical tensions. Our special features on developments in the Strait of Hormuz examine the realities facing seafarers operating in sensitive areas and the importance of preparedness, guidance, and collective support in ensuring their safety and wellbeing. These stories reinforce a simple but essential principle: no seafarer should face uncertainty without the protection and support they deserve.

This issue also celebrates personal growth and achievement. In From the Crow’s Nest, we share the journey of a seafarer that reflects the perseverance and dedication of the overseas Filipino worker. We likewise recognize the accomplishments of the midshipmen and women of MAAP Class of 2026, whose commitment to learning and professional development demonstrates the value of continuous growth and empowerment.

Our YOUNION Events and Updates section captures the spirit of engagement and collaboration through our AMOSUP Mini Info Caravan and our annual Cebu Cruise Seminar. These initiatives provide valuable opportunities to share knowledge, strengthen connections, and ensure that every AMOSUP member, as well as their dependents, remain informed and prepared for the challenges ahead.

You will also find insightful the Industry News covering global developments, workforce impact analyses, updates from government maritime agencies, and the ongoing fight for fair treatment and recognition of workers. We pay tribute to our friend, David Dearsley, whose work immensely helped champion seafarers’ rights, welfare and development.

Our Alagang AMOSUP initiatives continue to focus on what matters most— our people. Through programs promoting seafarers’ wellbeing, rights awareness, safety, and support during challenging times, we reaffirm our commitment to standing beside our maritime workers and their families wherever they are.

As you explore the stories in this issue of Sailing Forward, I invite you to reflect on the values that unite us: respect, equality, safety, resilience, and solidarity. Whether celebrating the achievements of women, supporting seafarers facing uncertainty, or recognizing those who dedicate their lives for positive change, we are reminded that our greatest strength lies in our people.

Together, we sail onward building a future where every seafarer is valued, respected, protected, empowered, and given the opportunity to succeed.

Mabuhay and Bawat Pilipino at Pilipinang Mandaragat!



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Conrado F. Oca".

Dr. Conrado F. Oca

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Volume 14 | Issue 49 | July 2026

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On the Cover



Photo by: *Lara San Juan*

AMOSUP Celebrates International Day of the Seafarer: **Honoring Those Who Keep the World Moving**

By: *Lara San Juan*

Laughter, learning, and camaraderie filled AMOSUP's celebration of the 2026 International Day of the Seafarer, as the union joined the global observance honoring the Filipino seafarers who keep world trade moving.

Inspired by this year's International Maritime Organization (IMO) theme, **"Carrying World Trade. Carrying the Risks,"** the celebration recognized not only the vital role of seafarers in the global supply chain but also the sacrifices they make while working far from home.

On June 22, AMOSUP members, together with faculty and cadets from the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP), joined maritime stakeholders globally at the Seafarer Social Summit held at the Museo del Galeón. The summit brought together government officials, industry leaders, maritime organizations, and seafarers for a series of keynote addresses and panel discussions that encouraged meaningful conversations on seafarer welfare, leadership, mental health, and the future of the maritime industry.

The discussions left a lasting impression on the audience, particularly the session on mental health. For Capt. Vincent Joseph Such Abadicio, an active Filipino seafarer, it became one of the day's most memorable takeaways.

"Perhaps the most touching topic for me was the discussion with Kuya Kim about mental health. Some people say this generation is weak, but it's definitely not. They're even stronger. I'm glad Kuya Kim highlighted that."

From the MAAP faculty's perspective, Capt. Mauro A. Balomaga offered this insight:

"When they finish their contract and continue their maritime career, they'll realize that what they went through was exactly what they needed to go through."

The summit also inspired MAAP cadets preparing to embark on their own maritime journeys.

"As seafarers, we're far from our families and even from doctors. That's why it's important to learn about mental health before we step on board and to keep talking about it," shared 1CL Renz Constantino.

"I believe that this Seafarers Summit is of great importance and should be conducted annually or from time to time so that our seafarers can get advice or tips on how we can allocate our money, or whether we should put it into investments," said 1CL Wayne Jacel Bugtong.

The AMOSUP celebration culminated on June 25, the official observance of the International Day of the Seafarer, with the Forum on Seafarers' Rights and Welfare at Senin no Ie.

The forum highlighted the importance of safeguarding the rights and welfare of Filipino seafarers through legal education, family-centered programs, and continued collaboration among maritime stakeholders. Participants attended sessions led by AMOSUP Legal Counsel

Atty. Alex Ragonjan and Atty. Mikki Escarrilla on seafarers' rights and legal protection, while Dr. Marge Acosta of the AMOSUP Pang-Pamilyang Marino Project emphasized the importance of strengthening family relationships and providing psychosocial support for seafarers and their loved ones.

In his welcome message, Dr. Conrado F. Oca, AMOSUP President, warmly greeted the seafarers and thanked them for their invaluable contribution to global trade. He shared that, beyond the forum, AMOSUP also prepared a special evening celebration where members could unwind, reconnect with fellow seafarers, and enjoy the occasion as a token of appreciation for their hard work and sacrifices.



Mr. George Hoyt, IMO Goodwill Maritime Ambassador and Founder of Adopt-A-Ship International, also shared words of encouragement:

“You are making a difference in people's lives every day—it's time the world sees and appreciates the importance of seafaring.”

Concluding the forum, AMOSUP Executive Vice President and MAAP President VAdm. Eduardo Ma. R. Santos reminded members of the strength of unity:

“Huwag kayo mag-alala, nandito tayo. Tulung-tulong po tayo lahat. At lalo natin palalakasin ang union, upang sa ganoon ay lumakas din ang inyong serbisyo at inyong trabaho.”

(Don't worry—we're here for you. Let us all work together. The stronger our union becomes, the stronger the support we can provide and the better we can protect your livelihoods.)



George Hoyt
IMO Goodwill Maritime Ambassador
Founder of Adopt-A-Ship International



VAdm. Eduardo Ma R. Santos AFP (Ret.)
Executive Vice President
AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF

The day's activities concluded with the Seafarers' Party, where AMOSUP members came together for an evening of music, entertainment, and fellowship. Live band performances, musical numbers by the Singing Queens, and exciting raffle prizes created an atmosphere filled with music, joy, and heartfelt appreciation for AMOSUP members.

More than just a festive gather-

ing, the evening was AMOSUP's way of expressing its heartfelt gratitude to the hard-working Filipino seafarers whose dedication and sacrifices keep ships sailing and global trade moving. As the celebration came to a close, the union once again reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to protecting seafarers' rights, advancing their welfare, and standing beside them and their families both at sea and ashore. 🌐

AMOSUP calls on the protection of seafarers' rights amid the Middle East conflict at ASSM 2026

By: Camille Simbulan

Photos courtesy of: Atty. Henry Zamora

AMOSUP has called upon maritime stakeholders, governments, labor unions and other maritime organizations to strengthen the collaboration to ensure the protection of seafarers' rights, safety, security and wellbeing amidst the ongoing situation in the Middle East.

In a resolution submitted by AMOSUP led by the President, Dr. Conrado F. Oca, at the Asian Seafarers' Summit Meeting (ASSM) and Norwegian Asian Seafarers' Cooperation (NASCO) meetings held in Bali, Indonesia on 26 May 2026, AMOSUP noted that over 20,000 seafarers have been affected in the ongoing conflict that has interrupting key maritime trade routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, as well as the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and other areas in the region.

To date, over 30 merchant vessels have been attacked in the region, which resulted in confirmed seafarer injuries and casualties, despite the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s strong condemnation of the threats and attacks against merchant and commercial vessels.

While AMOSUP acknowledged the efforts from governments, maritime employers and



Image: Dr. Conrado F. Oca (AMOSUP- PTGWO-ITF President) with Atty. Jesus P. Sale (AMOSUP- PTGWO-ITF Vice President of Internal Affairs)

seafarers' organizations to assist and support seafarers affected by the situation in the Middle East, including the provision of their needs, and the facilitation of their repatriation, the Union reiterated that seafarers' safety, security and

overall wellbeing must be the global maritime industry's top priority and called upon state actors and maritime stakeholders to act decisively, ramp up efforts, and strengthen collaboration to ensure the protection of all seafarers in the region.



AMOSUP's resolution further called upon the IMO, governments, and maritime employers and stakeholders to guarantee the safe and secure passage of merchant and commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and all the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) designated Warlike Operations Areas (WOA), High-Risk Areas (HRA), Extended Risk Zones (ERZ), to secure provisions of fuel, food and water for seafarers affected, to address and ensure seafarers' physical and mental wellbeing while onboard vessels traversing the conflict areas, to provide free and sufficient access to communication throughout their contract, to establish a clear and safe evacuation plan, to facilitate the safe and secure crew change, or repatriation of seafarers who

invoke their right to refuse to sail in the region, to provide efficient channels to expedite the processing or updating of seafarers' certifications while onboard, and to work collaboratively with maritime labor unions to keep track of relevant data on seafarers in the areas of conflict.

In 4 March 2026, AMOSUP also released an official statement as the Union closely monitors the developments in the region.

“ Once again, we are reminded of the **serious dangers faced by our seafarers** who brave these conflicts just to keep the global supply and value chains unhampered. **We honor their courage,**

resolve and resilience during these challenging times.

We call on maritime employers, ship owners and commercial charterers to fulfill their moral and legal responsibilities to ensure the highest level of safety and protection for all seafarers onboard vessels trading in high-risk and warlike maritime areas.

We reiterate our urgent appeal to both national and international authorities to address the perilous situation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and to intensify efforts to protect the lives and safety of all seafarers.





Designating the Strait as ‘high risk area’ *By: Andy Dalisay*

“Seafarers are civilian workers. They must never be exposed to military risk or used as leverage in geopolitical conflict. And their safety must come before all commercial considerations.”

Those compelling reasons provide the ITF and the JNG (Joint Negotiating Group) – as social partners of the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) – in designating the **Strait of Hormuz and surrounding waters as a “high-risk area”** following the sharp escalation of military tensions in the war between Iran and US/Israel coalition.

The ITF-JNG stressed in a statement that the designation reflects the rapidly deteriorating security environment, confirmed reports of attacks on commercial vessels, and the growing risk posed to seafarers. At the time, more than 200 vessels were anchored in or near the Strait amid significant uncertainty regarding safe transit. The IMO had urged maximum caution and advised vessels to avoid the area where possible.

The high-risk area designation activates enhanced protection measures for IBF-covered

seafarers operating or working in or near the affected waters. Shipowners and operators must:

- Conduct enhanced risk assessments prior to transit;
- Provide seafarers with clear, timely information regarding security conditions;
- Ensure all contractual, insurance and safety protections are fully implemented; and
- Engage with crews and their representatives regarding voyage planning and risk mitigation.

ITF-JNG added that the IBF Warlike Operations Area Committee (WOAC) “**agrees to include into the existing conditions for the designated High Risk Area, the seafarers’ right to refuse to sail into the area.**”

David Heindel, Chair of the ITF Seafarers’ Section and International President of the Seafarers’ International Union of North America, said the designation demonstrated the importance of cooperation between unions and shipowners when seafarers’ safety is at risk.



“

The actions taken by the social partners of the International Bargaining Forum show why **cooperation between shipowners and operators and seafarers’ unions is essential,**” said Heindel.

“Through constructive social dialogue, we can respond quickly to emerging risks and ensure that the safety, rights and wellbeing of the world’s mariners remain the first priority. **Seafarers are civilian workers, and together we must ensure they are protected from the consequences of geopolitical conflict.**”

”

The ITF stressed that while the WOA designation provides important protections, the only real solution is de-escalation. The designation will remain under regular review by the Warlike Operations Area Committee (WOAC). 🌐

IBF ‘warlike operations areas’ and ‘high-risk areas’ *By: Andy Dalisay*

Introduced in 2008 by the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) for maritime employers and seafarers, Warlike Operations Area and High-Risk Areas intend to define the rights and responsibilities for both parties sailing in the Gulf of Aden where piracy was rife.

Over the years, the list of areas has increased and these guidelines are now used to aid employer/employee interactions with defining terms and conditions applicable to areas that the IBF considers to pose a risk.

The IBF does not claim to be an authority in defining the risk that specific areas around the world pose but uses experts’ recommendations to assign an appropriate level of compensation applicable to each area.

The List of IBF Risk Areas is a negotiated outcome between employers and employees’ representatives. The authority to amend the agreed list is delegated to the IBF Warlike Operations Committee

which meets once a year or upon request of one of the constituent parties (JNG and ITF).

There are currently three levels of designation which depend on the nature and gravity of the risk:

Warlike Operations Areas (WOA) - This is the highest risk level and entails the seafarers' right to refuse to sail, bonus equal to basic wage, payable for five days minimum plus per day if longer.

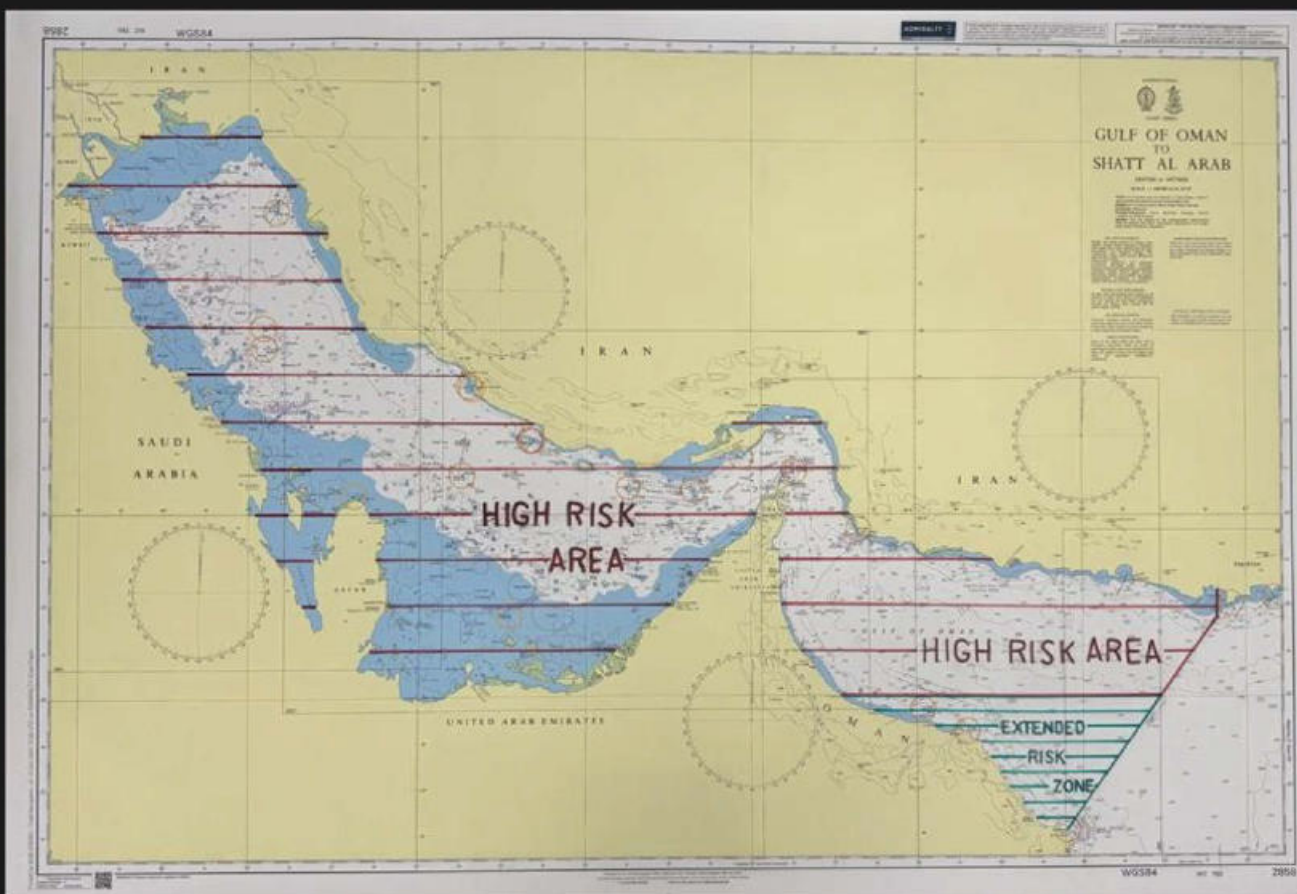
High Risk Areas - This is the next level down and the key difference from WOA is that the bonus is only payable for the actual duration of the stay/transit in the area.

Extended Risk Zone - This is the lowest and most used definition and benefits are more targeted, crucially there is no right to refuse sailing in this area:

Bonus equal to basic wage, payable only on the day the vessel is attacked

Doubled compensations for death and disability if it occurs on the day the vessel is attacked.

The ITF stressed that while the WOA designation provides important protections, the only real solution is de-escalation. The designation will remain under regular review by the Warlike Operations Area Committee (WOAC), it said. 🌐



Map: IBF-designated High Risk Area covering the Strait of Hormuz and surrounding waters.

ITF demands safe evac of seafarers

By: *Andy Dalisay*

“For the thousands of seafarers still trapped near the Strait of Hormuz – facing daily threats to their lives – words are not enough. What matters now is urgent, practical action that safeguards their safety, health and dignity.”

Their situation has prompted the ITF in calling governments to take immediate, concrete and concerted action to protect seafarers, following the 36th extraordinary session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council held in London on 19th March.

“The world has recognised the grave danger facing seafarers trapped near the Strait of Hormuz – now governments must act,”

said ITF General Secretary Stephen Cotton.

The extraordinary session was convened to address the escalating crisis in Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea, and particularly the Strait of Hormuz, where seafarers continue to face attacks on vessels, serious risks to safe



Photo courtesy of: Lyra Ranola

navigation, and worrying shortages of essential supplies.

Lydia Ferrad, ITF Permanent Representative to the IMO, warned in her intervention to the IMO Council that the situation remains perilous for crews in the area: “**This is not an abstract geopolitical crisis – it is a human crisis at sea.** Seafarers have been killed.

Others have been injured. Thousands remain stranded onboard vessels in conditions of fear, fatigue and uncertainty. We are receiving daily distress calls from crews who do not know if they will make it home.”

The ITF highlighted the reality facing seafarers in the region, including direct threats to life from attacks on ships, disrup-

tion to navigation systems, limited access to food, water, fuel and medical care, and severe restrictions on crew change and repatriation.

“**Seafarers are civilian workers. They are not parties to this conflict — and they must never be treated as expendable,**”

said Ferrad.

The ITF stressed that the commitments, demands and calls made during the IMO session must now be translated into concrete action that safeguards seafarers' lives, health and wellbeing.

While recognising the outcomes of the meeting, Cotton underlined that seafarers urgently need protection.

“We welcome the commitment from Gulf states to ensure the provision of essential supplies to vessels in the region, as well as their efforts to facilitate crew change and repatriation for seafarers. But let's be absolutely clear: **the focus of all governments must be the protection of innocent, civilian seafarers,**” Cotton explained.

He stressed that all flag states “must immediately issue clear and unambiguous notices to shipowners and operators to avoid sailing to, or transiting through, the war zone. No

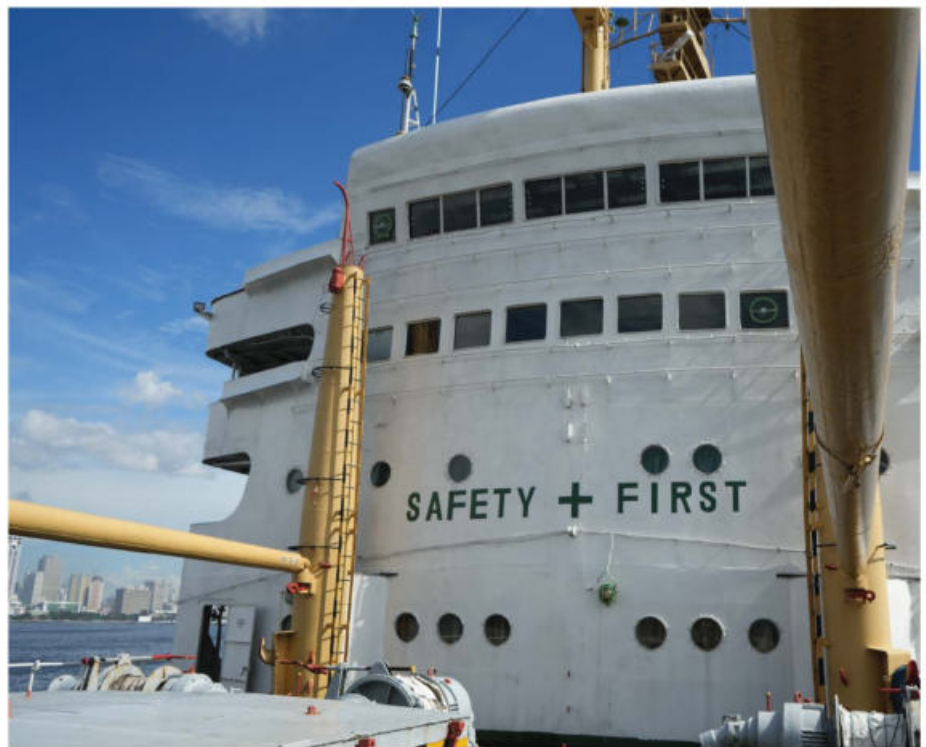


seafarer should be placed in a position where they are expected to navigate through active conflict.”

The IMO Council encouraged the establishment of a ‘maritime corridor’ to facilitate the safe evacuation of seafarers and vessels from the Gulf region as an urgent measure.

The IMO Secretary-General will now work with relevant parties to initiate this.

“The ITF supports the development of safe evacuation maritime corridors if they are guaranteed to be genuinely safe in practice, not just in principle,” said Cotton. 🌐



Navigating uncertainty: Turning guidance into action for safe transit in the Strait of Hormuz

As the maritime industry cautiously eyes a potential return to limited navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, the recently issued industry guidance led by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) provides a critical operational framework. Designed to support voyage-specific threat and risk assessment, the guidance goes beyond generic advisories – offering a structured, decision-oriented approach that aligns shipboard actions with shore-based planning.

At a time when traffic through the Strait remains far below pre-conflict levels and thousands of seafarers remain stranded in the Gulf, the stakes are clear: any resumption of transit must be deliberate, intelligence-led and continuously reassessed.

From static procedures to dynamic risk assessment

The core intent of the guidance is to move operators away from static compliance and toward

dynamic, voyage-specific risk modelling. It explicitly complements the Best Management Practices (BMP) framework but emphasizes that each transit must be assessed against real-time threat scenarios, including asymmetric attacks, naval activity and navigational hazards.

Central to this approach is the reaffirmation of the Master's overriding authority. While companies provide the risk framework, it is the Master who must interpret evolving threats and determine whether conditions remain safe for transit. This reflects a key principle: risk acceptance is operational, not theoretical.

Shipping associations underline that this is a "fast moving and unpredictable situation," requiring vigilance and reliance on verified intelligence sources rather than assumptions of safety following ceasefire announcements. Apart from ICS, other international shipping groups BIMCO, INTER-CARGO, INTERTANKO, IMCA and OCIMF have worked together to produce the 22-page guidance aimed at

assisting ships in transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

Pre-transit planning: Intelligence, coordination and contingencies

Before entering the Strait, the guidance stresses comprehensive pre-voyage planning, integrating both company and vessel-level inputs, companies are expected to:

- Conduct structured threat assessments considering latest naval advisories, intelligence feeds, and geopolitical developments
 - Establish clear communication protocols with vessels
 - Define abort criteria – conditions under which transit should be delayed or cancelled
- Onboard, Masters and crews must:
- Review and rehearse ship protection measures

- Ensure all navigation and communication equipment is fully operational
- Maintain updated contact with maritime security centers such as UKMTO and regional naval coordination bodies

The guidance also highlights the importance of traffic management awareness, particularly given the risk of congestion if transit windows reopen suddenly. Industry warnings suggest that bottlenecks could create additional navigational hazards in already constrained waters.

Heightened vigilance during transit

Once underway, the guidance calls for a state of enhanced readiness, effectively treating transit as a high-risk operation. Key shipboard measures include:

- Maintaining continuous AIS transmission, unless specific threat conditions justify otherwise
- Increasing bridge manning and ensuring heightened lookout protocols
- Operating at a speed and configuration that allows maximum maneuverability

Crews are also advised to prepare for non-traditional threats, including drones, fast attack craft, and possible mine presence – risks that have been repeatedly cited by maritime security analysts during existential crisis.

Importantly, the guidance encourages defensive navigation practices, such as avoiding predictable patterns and maintaining safe distances from other vessels, particularly in congested lanes.

Responding to escalation: Decision-making under pressure

A defining feature of the guidance is its focus on decision-making triggers – clear indicators that should prompt reassessment or immediate action. These may include:

- Reports of nearby incidents or attacks
- Sudden changes in naval posture or communications
- Loss of situational awareness due to equipment or intelligence gaps

In such cases, the Master is expected to re-evaluate the voyage plan in real time, including the possibility of aborting transit or seeking safe anchorage.

This structured decision-making model reflects a broader industry shift toward risk-based navigation, where safety is continuously recalibrated rather than assumed.

Ship-shore integration: Closing the operational gap

One of the most significant contributions of the guidance is

its emphasis on alignment between shipboard execution and shore-based oversight. Operators are urged to:

- Maintain real-time communication with vessels
- Provide updated intelligence and routing advice
- Support Masters in decision-making without undermining their authority

This integration is essential in a context where conditions can change within hours, and where fragmented information can lead to inconsistent or unsafe decisions.

The guidance effectively positions shore teams as decision-support hubs, rather than command centers – ensuring that operational control remains with the vessel while benefiting from broader situational awareness.

Preparing for a “new normal” in Hormuz

Even as isolated transits resume under fragile ceasefire conditions, industry consensus remains cautious. Traffic levels are still a fraction of normal volumes, and confidence in sustained safety is limited.

The guidance makes clear that a return to routine navigation is unlikely in the near term. Instead, operators must prepare for a “new normal” defined by persistent uncertainty, where every transit requires bespoke planning and execution. This includes:

- Accepting longer planning cycles
- Allocating additional resources for security and monitoring
- Embedding risk assessment into standard operating procedures

A framework for safer navigation

Ultimately, the industry guidance is less about prescriptive rules and more about structured thinking under uncertainty. By formalizing how threats are assessed, decisions are made, and actions are coordinated, it provides a practical toolkit for navigating one of the world's most volatile choke-points.

For Masters and crews, the message is clear: vigilance, preparedness and adaptability are no longer optional – they are operational imperatives.

For shipowners and managers, the challenge is equally significant: to ensure that every voyage through the Strait of

Hormuz is supported by robust intelligence, clear protocols and seamless ship-shore collaboration.

In a region where the margin for error is minimal, the guidance offers something essential – not certainty, but control over how uncertainty is managed. 🌐



Photo courtesy of: Amirhosein Khorgooi/ISNA via AP



Cargo and commercial vessels anchored in the Strait of Hormuz
Photo courtesy of: Amirhosein Khorgooi/ISNA via AP

Islamabad memorandum offers path to reopen Hormuz Strait, but shipping industry remains cautious

By: **Andy Dalisay**

The signing of the so-called "Islamabad Memorandum" between the United States and Iran may represent the most significant diplomatic breakthrough since the outbreak of hostilities that effectively shut down the Strait of Hormuz and plunged global shipping into one of its most serious security crises in decades.

For the maritime industry, the agreement offers something that has been in short supply since the conflict erupted: a potential roadmap toward restoring safe navigation through one of the world's most important maritime choke-points.

Yet while the memorandum has generated optimism across shipping markets, industry stakeholders are approaching the development with measured caution. The agreement may have ended the immediate confrontation, but the process of restoring confidence in the Strait of Hormuz is likely to take far longer than reopening the waterway itself.

The Strait of Hormuz remains one of the most strategically important shipping routes in the world. Roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural-gas trade normally passes through the narrow waterway linking the Persian Gulf to international markets.

Since the conflict began, attacks on merchant ships, threats against commercial shipping and military operations in the region have dramatically reduced vessel movements. Numerous ships were attacked and damaged, hundreds were delayed or stranded and seafarers found themselves operating in conditions comparable to a war zone.

The disruption sent shockwaves throughout global supply chains, energy markets and marine insurance sectors.

Key provisions affecting shipping

At the center of the Islamabad Memorandum are several provisions designed specifically to restore maritime commerce.

Among the most significant is Iran's commitment to restore safe commercial navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. According to details released from the agreement, Tehran is expected to reopen the waterway and facilitate the return of international shipping traffic. The memorandum reportedly requires the restoration of safe shipping within 30 days.

Equally important is the phased removal of the U.S. naval blockade that had been imposed during the conflict. The agreement provides for the immediate start of the blockade's dismantling, with full removal envisioned within 30 days.

Another provision drawing attention from shipowners is the temporary toll-free arrangement for merchant tonnage. Under the memorandum, commercial ships would be permitted to transit the Strait of Hormuz without charges for a period of 60 days. The measure is intended to accelerate the return of maritime trade and encourage shipping companies to resume operations in the region.

The agreement also establishes a 60-day negotiation period during which both sides are expected to work toward a broader and legally binding settlement. Implementation mechanisms and future maritime cooperation arrangements are expected to be discussed during this phase.

Human cost of the conflict

Beyond economics, the conflict's most painful legacy has been its impact on seafarers.

The IMO has repeatedly stressed that seafarers must never become targets in geopolitical conflicts. IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez expressed grave concern over attacks on merchant ships and the deaths and injuries suffered by maritime personnel. He has confirmed of at least 46 attacks against international shipping in and around the Strait of Hormuz since the conflict began on 28 February 2026.

The casualty toll among vessels has been more difficult to establish because different organizations use varying definitions of "casualty", "attack", "damage" and "security incident". However, available reports indicate that well over a dozen merchant ships sustained damage, were attacked or became involved in conflict-related maritime incidents during the crisis.

Of those attacks, reports indicated that at least seven seafarers had lost their lives in

“great satisfaction the peace agreement reached between the parties in the conflict.”

Welcoming the developments, it could improve maritime safety and facilitate humanitarian assistance for crews affected by the conflict. An immediate concern has been the welfare of thousands of seafarers who became trapped aboard vessels unable or unwilling to transit the strait due to security concerns. Industry reports indicate that the easing of tensions could support ongoing efforts to organize crew changes and evacuations where necessary.

For ship managers and crewing agents along with maritime unions, the humanitarian dimension remains every bit as important as the reopening of trade lanes. Extended contracts, delayed repatriations and psychological stress have all taken a significant toll on ship officers and crews operating in the region.

Why shipping remains cautious

Despite the memorandum's promise, many shipowners remain reluctant to declare victory. The agreement itself acknowledges that it is an interim arrangement rather than a

final peace settlement. Several provisions remain subject to future negotiations, and both parties retain the ability to withdraw if implementation falters.

Questions also remain about long-term security arrangements in the strait.

Industry observers continue to seek clarity regarding future transit procedures, military de-escalation measures and the possibility of navigation fees after the initial 60-day grace period expires.

Marine insurers, ship operators and other concerns are expected to maintain heightened risk assessments until they see sustained evidence that merchant ships can transit safely without interference.

For now, the Islamabad Memorandum offers the strongest indication yet that the Strait of Hormuz may gradually return to normal operations.

The removal of military restrictions, restoration of navigational access and temporary toll-free transit provisions are all significant steps toward reviving confidence in the route. If implemented successfully, the agreement could help restore stability to global energy markets, reduce freight disruptions and improve conditions for thousands of seafarers affected by the conflict.

However, shipping's experience over recent months serves as a reminder that reopening a waterway is far easier than rebuilding trust. 🌐

IMO Sec-Gen condemns new attacks on vessels in the Strait of Hormuz

Source: United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Centre

On 8 July 2026, International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez released a statement and renewed his call for maximum restraint and de-escalation in the Middle East:

I regret that once again I am compelled to speak out following attacks on commercial ships and innocent seafarers, due to geopolitical circumstances beyond their control.

I condemn the attacks over the past two days against several ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

These reckless attacks have again placed innocent seafarers in grave danger. **No seafarer should have to risk their life simply for doing their job.**

As long as the safety and security of crews cannot be assured, I urge flag States, shipowners, operators and all relevant authorities to avoid exposing seafarers to unnecessary danger by transiting the Strait.

The situation in the region remains volatile. These attacks further intensify the fear, uncertainty and psychological strain already being endured

by the nearly 6,000 seafarers who remain stranded on board vessels unable to depart the Persian Gulf safely.

I call on all States concerned to exercise maximum restraint, de-escalate the situation without delay, and facilitate the safe departure of the ships still trapped in the Gulf since the crisis began.

The safety of seafarers must remain our foremost priority.

BY THE NUMBERS:

Date	Vessel	Vessel Type	Event Type	Location	Summary
07 July 2026, UKMTO 082-26	Name withheld UFN	Tanker	Attack	8NM east of Limah, Oman	A LNG tanker reported being hit by an unknown projectile on the port side engine room causing a fire, whilst travelling southbound through the SOH
07 July 2026, UKMTO 082-26	Name withheld UFN	Tanker	Attack	16NM east of Khor Fakkan, UAE	A VLCC reported being hit by an unknown projectile on the port side upon exiting the SOH. Vessel was able to proceed to NPOC and no crew injuries were reported
07 July 2026, UKMTO 082-26	Name withheld UFN	Tanker	Attack	6NM east of Musandam Peninsula, Oman	A tanker reported being struck by an unknown projectile and has sustained minor structural damage. No casualties or environmental impact reported and vessel is proceeding to NPOC



*From the
Crow's Nest*

The seafarer with a song: Rey Paglinawan's life beyond the sea

By: **Andy Dalisay**

Photos courtesy of: **Rey Paglinawan**

Onboard ship, there was always one voice that could cut through the hum of engines and the crash of waves: Reynaldo “Rey” Paglinawan’s. A retired able seaman, Rey was more than just a steady hand on deck—he was the crew’s unofficial singer. Whether it was a birthday, a national holiday, or a simple gathering in the mess hall, the captain would call on him to sing Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdinck, or Frank Sinatra. His voice became a source of joy, a reminder of home and a way to stitch together moments of camaraderie in the long, often lonely stretches at sea.

Even ashore, his reputation followed him. Neighbors and friends would invite him to represent their barangay in town fiestas, urging him to “fight for the group” with his songs. “You’re always the star,” they told him. For Rey, music was more than entertainment—it was solidarity, a way to give back to the people around him. “If I don’t sing,” he recalled with a laugh, “our crew manager would insist: ‘Then there’s no line-up [for the next ship job].’”

But behind the melodies lies a lifetime of hard work, sacrifice and resilience.

A Career Born of Circumstance

Rey never set out to be a seafarer. In 1978, his father and a half-brother encouraged him to try his luck on an interisland ferry. He started humbly as a messman, serving meals and cleaning up after the crew. With his seaman’s book in hand, he trained and slowly worked his way up overseas. What began as chance became a career spanning decades, taking him across nearly all the world’s major ports.

For the last 15 years of his career, Rey sailed with the bulkers of Norwegian owner Ugland Shipping and Shipmanagement through its crewing agent Philippine Transmarine Carriers (PTC). He became known not just for his voice but for his reliability. “I didn’t have a bad record with the crewing manager,” he said proudly. “My performance was good. They



Image: Rey Paglinawan

even admired that I was the only one among the ratings who reached the age of 66 before retiring. Most retire at 60 or 63.”

That longevity was no accident. It was driven by a simple but powerful goal: to support his two children through their studies.

“Of course, saving money and helping my family—that was my major accomplishment,” Rey explained. **“I never let them down.”**

Life onboard was far from easy. Rey vividly remembers the dangers of bad weather, when as an able seaman had to position the ship according to the captain's orders, braving rough seas and strong winds. **"The most difficult or dangerous part,"** he recalled, **"was greasing cables on cranes."**

There were also the grueling tasks of scaling decks, painting and working in hot, confined spaces. Yet, despite the hardships, Rey found ways to endure. Afternoons offered brief respite, and the camaraderie of fellow crew members made the challenges bearable.

"I miss being with good officers onboard and my co-workers," he admitted. *"Especially yung mababait."*

Ports, Shore Leave and Memories

Over the years, Rey visited almost all the world's major ports. He remembers fondly the places where crews could go out freely, before the tough ISPS (International Ship and Port Facility Security) Code restrictions after the 9/11 tragedy that limits shore leave. Beaches, malls and local markets became treasured escapes from shipboard life.

"We'd buy food, provisions to take onboard," he said, recalling those simple pleasures.

Even now, retired since May 2025, he misses those ports—the quiet ones, the bustling ones, the ones where he could step off the gangway and feel, for a few hours, like part of the world again.

Today, Rey's life is quieter but no less disciplined. He cleans the house, tends the car, does laundry and helps his wife. When boredom strikes, he

rides his bike, jogs, or tends the garden. "That's how I entertain myself," he said. "So you don't get sick. I jog every morning."

Though he no longer sails, the sea remains in his heart. "Yes, I really miss it," he confessed. "It's been less than a year [this March] since I last saw them—my co-workers, the ship officers. I still miss it to this day."

A Voice that Endures

If the sea gave Rey discipline and resilience, music gave him joy. His voice was a gift that carried him through long nights and bonded him with shipmates. It was also a bridge to his community ashore, where he continues to sing at fiestas and gatherings.

In many ways, Rey's story is the story of countless seafarers: a career born of necessity, sustained by sacrifice and remembered with pride. But his voice—warm, familiar and enduring—sets him apart. It reminds us that even in the most demanding professions, there is room for song, laughter and the small joys that make life meaningful.

For Rey Paglinawan, retirement is not an end but a new stage. The sea may no longer call him to duty, but the music remains. And as long as there are gatherings, fiestas and friends who ask him to sing, his voice will continue to echo—like waves against the hull, steady and unforgettable. 🌊





Together in Solidarity: AMOSUP & ITF Empower Seafarers and Families through Mini Info Caravan

By: Lara San Juan

In a more intimate and engaging setting, the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP), in collaboration with the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), brought its services closer to members and their families through the **AMOSUP Mini Info Caravan 2026**, held on April 30, 2026, at the Sen'In No Ie (Seafarers' House).

The one-day activity gathered union members and seafarers' families—particularly seafarers' wives—for an informative and interactive session

designed to help them better understand and maximize the benefits and welfare programs of the union. The Mini Info Caravan also highlighted AMOSUP's strong collaboration with ITF in delivering support and protection to Filipino seafarers worldwide.

AMOSUP departments provided participants with valuable knowledge about the union's welfare programs and services. The Legal Department provided guidance on Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) and explained the union's free legal assistance for



members, while Seamen's Hospital Manila discussed the Family Medical and Dental Plan (FMDP). Guidelines on Sailor's Home online reservations (SHore), including policies and house rules, were also presented.

Further discussions covered Provident Fund online application and claims processes, issuance of AMOSUP IDs for members and dependents, and the Slop Chest privileges. The Welfare and Mutual Benefit Plan (WMBP) segment highlighted benefits, coverage, and assistance programs available to members.

ITF Manila Inspector Arvin Peralta shared vital information on seafarers' rights, welfare assistance, and the global support network available to Filipino seafarers under the ITF.

During the discussion, a seafarer asked, "*Kasama po ba sa pinaglalaman ninyo ang shore leave?*" ("Is shore leave included in what you are advocating for?")

C/E Arvin Peralta responded by explaining that the Department of Migrant Workers is seeking reports directly from seafarers and their families, rather than relying solely on union submissions. He emphasized the importance of speaking up, saying,



Dexter Gregorio
Slop Chest Representative



Frances Israel
Communications Officer
Seamen's Hospital Manila



C/E Arvin Peralta
ITF Manila Inspector

“Nandito po kami para gabayan kayo. Kung hindi po kayo magvo-voice out, lalabas na walang natatanggap na report—parang walang problema.”

("We are here to guide you. If you do not raise your concerns, it will appear that no reports are being received—making it seem as though there are no problems.")

A highlight of the event was the special message delivered by AMOSUP President Dr. Conrado F. Oca, who emphasized the importance of staying informed and actively engaging with union programs to fully benefit from the services provided.



Dr. Conrado F. Oca
President
AMOSUP-PTGWO-ITF

One seafarer's wife who attended the event expressed her appreciation, noting that the caravan helped her better understand the benefits available to members and dependents of AMOSUP. *"Maganda na maging member ng AMOSUP at ITF kasi sa mga seaman onboard, malaking bagay sa kanila na makita ang pamilya mo na secured in terms of medical, education, basic needs sa groceries, at libreng dorm. Malaking bagay na makatipid ang pamilya bilang asawa ng seafarer, lalo na mas kailangan natin gamitin ang pinapadalang pera sa atin wisely,"* (It's a big advantage to be a member of AMOSUP and ITF. For seafarers onboard, it gives peace of mind knowing their families are taken care of—from medical and education support to basic grocery needs and even free accommodation.

It also helps families, especially spouses, use the money sent home more wisely), Mrs. Gina Manaoat, (SeaFam International)

Through initiatives like the Mini Info Caravan, AMOSUP and ITF continue to strengthen its direct engagement with members, making vital services more accessible and responsive to their needs.

The program goes beyond providing information, aiming to make sure Filipino seafarers and their families are informed and supported both at sea and at home. 🌐

“

Ito pong Info Caravan ay para malaman ninyo, bilang miyembro ng AMOSUP, ang mga serbisyo ng unyon dahil marami pa rin ang hindi nakakaalam... halos lahat ng serbisyo ng AMOSUP tulad ng ospital, Slop Chest, Sailors' Home... ito ay para po sa inyo,”

”

(This Info Caravan is meant to help you, as members of AMOSUP, become aware of the union's services, as many are still unaware... including all AMOSUP services such as the hospital, Slop Chest, and Sailors' Home...these are for all of you), Dr. Oca shared.



Image: SeaFam representatives

Over a hundred seafarers join Cebu Cruise Seminar 2026

By: **Camille Simbulan**

Photos courtesy of: **AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital Cebu**



A lively atmosphere of enthusiasm and camaraderie filled the main function hall of Dusit Thani in Mactan, Cebu, as more than a hundred seafarers from twenty four international cruise lines gathered for the 2026 Trade Union Cruise Seminar.

The annual event organized by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) together with its affiliated maritime unions, including the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP), Norwegian Seafarers Union (NSU), Federazione Italiana Trasporti

(FIT-CISL), and Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (ver.di).

Now on its 13th run, the seminar, led by the dynamic ITF Cruise Team composed of representatives from each participating union, once again set out to inform and educate seafarers in the cruise sector about their rights. The team also conducted a series of interactive sessions aimed at building the capacity of participants in responding to various situations onboard.

Jessica Fenn, one of the organizers from NSU, shared that



Jessica Fenn
NSU representative

the main reason they regularly hold the cruise seminar is that most seafarers are not fully aware of their rights. “They don’t know that they are covered by a collective bargaining agreement and that means that they don’t know the rights that they have. It’s really important that we educate as many as we can and that they can share what they learn onboard with all the other seafarers that they meet,” she said.

The discussions throughout the four-day seminar included relevant topics, such as the ITF’s flags of convenience (FoC) campaign, collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), AMOSUP’s overview and service units, health and wellbeing, bullying and harassment, grievance, disciplinary and case handling and information-sharing and communication with the unions, among others.



Atty. Alexander Ragonjan
AMOSUP Administrative Secretary and Legal Counsel



Gysrell Jiloca
Administrative Director
Seamen’s Hospital Manila



There was also a question and answer segment, where AMOSUP representatives, including Atty. Alex Ragonjan, who is also Co-Chair of the ITF Cruise Ship Task Force, and Ms. Gysrell Jiloca of the Seamen’s Hospital Manila, answered questions and concerns from the crew.

One of the participants Jeffrey Martinez, said the seminar is very fun and informative. “My experience here at the cruise seminar is amazing... I have known AMOSUP even before because I have been a seafarer for almost 12 years now. My first ship was covered by AMOSUP. I was able to use the Seamen’s Hospital when my

father got hospitalized until he passed away... My father's condition was already very serious. He spent 4 months at the hospital ward and 2 months in the ICU. We did not have to pay for anything, everything was free... I wish that all of the companies can be covered by AMOSUP. It will be a big help for everyone, not just the seafarers but also the family," Jeffrey shared.

Participants were also thrilled to have their families enjoy the activities and themed nights throughout the week. According to AMOSUP Cebu Medical Director, Dr. Teody Alcantara, who leads the Cebu organizing team, their goal is to provide a unique experience for every seafarer and their families. "Their positive feedback gives us joyful satisfaction and inspires the AMOSUP team to make this experience more relevant through constant and close coordination with the unions organizers," he said.



On the sidelines of the ITF Cruise Seminar, members of the ITF Cruise Ship Task Force convened to discuss developments in the sector and critical issues faced by the crew especially in light of the volatile situation in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz.

The Cruise Ship Task Force meeting was led by its Chair, Lena Dyring of NSU, and was attended by task force members including AMOSUP President, Dr. Conrado Oca, who also serves as the 1st Vice Chair of the ITF Seafarers' Section. 🌐





Photo By: Jhaytom Pineda

As missiles, drones and explosive boats disrupt one of the world's most critical shipping corridors, the narrative of the war between Iran and the US/Israel coalition is often framed in geopolitical and military terms. Yet beneath the surface of strategic posturing lies a quieter, less visible reality: a civilian workforce – global, fragmented and largely unprotected – bearing the human cost of maritime conflict.

Since the outbreak of hostilities in late February 2026 to early July, between 16 and 23 merchant ships have been struck (see data), damaged or otherwise harassed in and around the Strait of Hormuz and adjacent Gulf waters. These incidents have resulted in at least seven confirmed seafarer fatalities, with estimates possi-

The invisible frontline: Seafarers in the crossfire of a maritime conflict

By: *Andy Dalisay*

bly reaching into the low teens when accounting for less verified cases. While the figures may appear limited relative to the scale of the conflict, they reveal a deeper structural issue within global shipping: the decoupling of ownership, control and human risk.

At first glance, the vessels affected appear diverse.

Attacks on ships in and around the Strait appears to be random and calibrated towards disruption rather than targeting specific profiles and national affiliation, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence. It says their "review of ownership, management and trading history behind each of the 16 vessels hit in the Middle East Gulf, Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz since the start of the conflict on February 28,

reveals no discernible pattern of targeting, so far.”

Oil tankers, bulk carriers, container ships and even port support vessels have all been targeted or caught in the cross-fire. They fly a wide array of flags—Marshall Islands, Malta, Panama, the United States, Japan and others – suggesting no clear pattern of national targeting. Ownership structures are equally dispersed, involving American-linked operators, Japanese shipping conglomerates, Gulf-based port authorities and shadowy networks associated with sanctioned trade.

But when attention shifts from *ships* to *people*, a pattern emerges with striking clarity.

The majority of those at risk are not citizens of the countries whose flags the vessels fly or whose companies own them. Instead, they are overwhelmingly drawn from a small number of labor-exporting nations, most notably the Philippines and India. Filipino seafarers alone comprise roughly a quarter of the global maritime workforce, a dominance reflected across nearly every vessel category involved in the incidents. Indian crews follow closely, particularly in tanker operations, where at least one confirmed fatality has already been reported.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez has been “very concerned with the particular situation of the seafarers” as



he called for the shipowners and operators not to sail to the strait and avoid the region. **“Merchant ships are *not* equipped to actual combat,”** Dominguez said in an interview with a TV news network overseas. He advised shipowners and operators to “de-escalate, cautious, carry out risk assessments and if possible, avoid the region.”

This crew imbalance is not incidental – it is structural. Modern shipping operates through a layered system in which beneficial ownership, ship management, flag registration and crewing are often distributed across multiple jurisdictions. A vessel may be owned by a European or Japanese firm, flagged in a country offering regulatory convenience, managed by a global shipping services company headquartered elsewhere and crewed by seafarers from Southeast Asia or Eastern Europe.

The result is a system optimized for efficiency and cost, but one that diffuses accountability when crises occur.

Recent incidents illustrate this dynamic. A U.S.-linked tanker struck by explosive boats resulted in the death of an Indian crewmember. A bulk carrier owned by a Thai company required emergency evacuation after sustaining damage, its multinational crew – likely including Filipinos – placed at immediate risk. A shadow fleet tanker, operating under opaque ownership, suffered multiple casualties following a missile strike. In each case, the individuals most directly exposed to danger were neither the shipowners nor the geopolitical actors driving the conflict, but civilian mariners with limited agency over their deployment.

Vessel type further influences the degree of risk. Oil and chemical tankers face the highest danger, not only because of their strategic importance but also due to the volatile nature of their cargo. Bulk carriers, while less strategically sensitive, are slower and less maneuverable, making them vulnerable during transit chokepoints.

Smaller vessels, such as tugs and port support craft, have demonstrated disproportionately high fatality rates when attacked, owing to their limited defensive capabilities and proximity to shore-based threats.

Despite the frequency of attacks, overall casualty numbers remain relatively contained. This suggests that many strikes are calibrated to disrupt rather than destroy – targeting propulsion systems, hull integrity or cargo operations rather than crew quarters. It also reflects the effectiveness of emergency protocols and evacuation procedures, often coordinated under extreme conditions. Yet this relative restraint does little to mitigate the psychological and operational strain on crews repeatedly transiting high-risk zones, the ITF-IBF median level of the risk nature and gravity.

The zonal designation, says the International Transport Workers Federation, activates enhanced protections and compensation for seafarers serving on vessels covered by employers-union agreements in wartime shipping.

“**The designation reflected the unacceptable reality that civilian seafarers are once again being exposed to,**”

says Stephen Cotton, the ITF general secretary. Too often in

recent years, Cotton points out in a statement that they've seen

“**civilian seafarers become the collateral damage of war – whether in the Black Sea, the Red Sea or now in the Strait of Hormuz. These are workers, often... far from home and with no connection to the conflicts unfolding around them.**”

Often overlooked, ship managers occupy a critical role in this landscape. Unlike shipowners, who bear financial exposure, managers are responsible for crewing decisions, safety compliance and sometimes route planning. Large third-party management firms, which oversee vast fleets staffed predominantly by Filipino and Indian seafarers, effectively concentrate human risk within their operational networks. Meanwhile, vessels linked to shadow or sanctioned fleets tend to exhibit higher casualty rates, reflecting weaker safety standards and limited oversight.

The broader implication is clear: maritime labor has become an invisible front-line in modern conflict. Seafarers are civilians, yet they operate in contested environments with exposure levels comparable to military personnel, without the protections afforded either.

Their presence is indispensable to the functioning of global trade – particularly energy flows through the Persian Gulf – yet their vulnerability is rarely central to policy discussions.

If the conflict persists, this imbalance is likely to intensify. Continued attacks will sustain pressure on shipping routes, while economic imperatives will compel operators to maintain voyages despite elevated risks. Insurance premiums are already rising sharply, but financial mechanisms alone cannot address the human dimension. There are early signs of potential labor resistance, with some crews expressing reluctance to enter high-risk areas, echoing patterns observed in previous maritime crises.

Ultimately, the story of this conflict at sea is not only about disrupted supply chains or strategic choke points. It is about the people who keep those systems running under increasingly dangerous conditions. Their exposure is shaped not by nationality or political alignment, but by the structural realities of a globalized industry – one in which responsibility is fragmented, and risk is unevenly distributed.

In that sense, the missiles striking ships in the Gulf are not only testing geopolitical resolve. They are exposing the human fault lines of global commerce itself. 🌐



IMO, MARINA reform global seafarer training standards

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) have finalized a roadmap to update certification frameworks, addressing technical risks of alternative fuels and the integration of automated ship systems.

IMO and Marina recently concluded the Regional Forum on the STCW Convention and established a roadmap to align global training with industry decarbonization and digitalization. Phase 2 of the comprehensive STCW review focused on mandatory standards for alternative fuels, artificial intelligence and automated systems.

Officials identified the safe handling of methanol, ammonia,

and hydrogen as a primary technical priority. Participants noted that current protocols do not fully address the toxicity and volatility of these fuels.

Ambassador Teodoro Locsin Jr. emphasized the need to synchronize technology with education, stating, **“If ships are to shift to cleaner energy, then training must shift with it.”** The forum recommended standardized faculty development and high-fidelity simulation to prepare crews for these emerging energy sources.

Technological updates to the STCW framework also involve a transition toward competency-based certification. Delegates examined the potential to replace certain seagoing service hours with advanced simulation to prioritize skills such as situational awareness and digital literacy.

Ambassador Teodoro Locsin Jr.
Philippine Ambassador to the United Kingdom



Marina Administrator Sonia Malaluan stated that these reforms are necessary to maintain global standards.

“ Together, we must confront the evolving challenges and opportunities within this dynamic sector, ”

Malaluan said.

Social welfare and workplace safety were identified as critical factors for workforce retention. IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez stated that technical proficiency must be paired with adequate living conditions, noting that shipping must "ensure that those onboard are treated with the same dignity and provided with the same facilities afforded to land-based workers, including access to internet connectivity." He noted that the industry must remain competitive to attract new talent.

The forum also addressed the enforcement of regulations regarding the prevention of violence and harassment at sea, which became effective on January 1, 2026.

Transportation Assistant Secretary Ventura Plan reiterated the government's stance on inclusive environments. **“We must ensure that every seafarer, women and men alike, can work in an environment that is safe, inclusive and respectful,”** he said.



Image: Arsenio Dominguez (IMO Secretary-General) (center) with Ambassador Teodoro Locsin Jr. (right)



These protocols are being integrated into the broader update of the STCW framework.

The event concluded with technical tours of Philippine training facilities, where foreign delegates observed practical applications of these reforms, including firefighting drills for alternative fuels.

STCW Office executive director Samuel Batalla concluded that compliance is about

“ cultivating a culture of professionalism, safety and continuous improvement. ”

As the supplier of 25% of the world's seafarers, **the Philippines' alignment with these IMO reforms is central to global maritime stability.** 🌐

DMW and OWWA launch flagship Seafarers' Welfare Center

Photos courtesy of: Wilmar Almeria / FAS Maritime



In a major leap forward for the maritime sector, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) have officially inaugurated the Seafarers' Welfare Center at the ground floor of the Monarch Parksuites, Bradco Avenue, Aseana Business Park.

This facility serves as the

nation's premier **"one-stop hub,"** centralizing essential government services and holistic support systems for Filipino seafarers and their families.

The welfare center at the Monarch Parksuites is designed to be more than just an administrative office; it is a dedicated home for maritime workers. The facility offers integrated access to:

- **Government Frontline Services:** Streamlined processing for the Social Security System (SSS), Pag-IBIG Fund, and Phil-Health.
- **Legal & Medical Support:** Dedicated desks for the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) and health services via the OWWA YAKAP Clinic and Pharmacy.



Department of Migrant Workers

- **Professional Development:** Modern training rooms for capacity-building and skills upgrading programs.
- **Wellness & Recreation:** Unique amenities including the Migrants' Brew café, OWWAoke recreational area, and a "Love Yourself" booth for health awareness.

Strengthening the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers

Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo J. Cacdac and OWWA Administrator Patricia Yvonne Caunan emphasized that the center's opening is a direct fulfillment of Republic Act No. 12021, or the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers.

“This is the 'red carpet' service our seafarers deserve,”
said Secretary Cacdac.



"Following the directive of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., **we are bringing government services directly to our seafarers** in an environment that respects their dignity and contribution to the global economy."

Nationwide Expansion

The Monarch Parksuites hub is the first of many. Under the new maritime welfare roadmap, the government has confirmed that similar centers are slated for construction in other major crew-change ports, including Pangasinan, Bulacan, Cavite, Batangas, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro, and Davao City.

Administrator Caunan highlighted that the center is built on inclusivity, offering a safe space for all maritime professionals, including women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. 🌐



Statement on the passing of David Dearsley, former Secretary General of the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC)



David Dearsley
IMEC Former Secretary General

We in the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUPPTGWO-ITF) express our sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of David Dearsley - a brilliant man who brought maritime employers and seafarers' trade unions together with focused resolve, abundant wisdom and integrity.

We deeply mourn the loss David, who was a pillar in global maritime industrial relations, and contributed significantly in the crafting of the Seafarers' Bill of Rights, or the Maritime Labor Convention, 2006. He was also instrumental in establishing the International Bargaining Forum (IBF).

To this day, the IBF remains to be the only international collective bargaining mechanism that has empowered the world's seafarers to negotiate for fair wages, benefits and

decent working conditions.

As then Secretary General of the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC), David played a key role in building the robust relationship between IMEC and the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP). He worked closely with AMOSUP Founder, Captain Gregorio Oca, and MAAP President, Admiral Eduardo Santos (AFP Ret.), to chart the course for the institution's cadetship program,

which trained, developed, and propelled thousands of IMEC scholars to embark on their careers as full-fledged maritime officers onboard the world's fleets.

Even after his retirement, David never stopped serving the seafaring community. He was a staunch advocate of seafarers' welfare, and spearheaded initiatives to support seafarers and their families affected by piracy and other security incidents at sea.

David always believed that negotiation was about cooperation and mutual respect. Because of his consistency and formidable reputation, he was profoundly revered across negotiating tables and all throughout the global shipping industry. His legacy will always be remembered in the spirit of productive discourse, fairness and unity. 🌐

World Labor Day: AMOSUP urges unity, tripartism to protect seafarers amid regional tensions

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As the nation observes Araw ng mga Manggagawa and the world celebrates International Labor Day this May 1, the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) is calling for a strengthened "tripartite" approach to protect maritime workers navigating increasingly volatile global waters.

In a statement, AMOSUP President Dr. Conrado Oca underscored the indispensable role of seafarers, particularly those moving critical oil supplies from the Middle East. He emphasized that the "indomitable strength" of these workers keeps the global economy running, mirroring the essential role they played during the COVID-19 crisis.

At the core of AMOSUP's mission is tripartism—the collaborative synergy between labor, government, and employers.

Dr. Oca described this three-pronged approach as a **"lifeline"** rather than just a policy.

"AMOSUP has always believed in tripartism, and it is in these moments that we must stand strong together to ensure the safety, welfare, and security of employment for our seafarers," Dr. Oca stated, highlighting the union's close coordination with the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) and international shipping companies.

Providing historical depth, AMOSUP Vice President for Internal Affairs Atty. Jesus P. Sale Jr. recalled how the late



Photo courtesy of: Lyra Ranola



Image (from left to right): **VAdm Eduardo Ma R. Santos AFP (Ret.)** (AMOSUP Executive Vice President), **Hans Leo Cacdac** (DMW Secretary), **Dr. Conrado F. Oca** (AMOSUP President)

Capt. Gregorio Oca championed tripartite engagement to resolve maritime issues.

Atty. Sale, a former social security commissioner representing workers who witnessed the development of the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) 2006 at the ILO, noted that tripartism is now institutionalized under Republic Act 10395.

Atty. Sale proposed that this concept should now evolve. Given the massive economic contributions of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), he argued that the tripartite model must be expanded to ensure that both sea-based and land-based workers are represented and consulted as a distinct group within government policy-making bodies and GOCCs to better address such workers' unique concerns and issues.

Reaffirming the global mantra that **"Seafarers Move the World,"** Dr. Oca pledged that the union remains committed to ensuring Filipino seafarers are protected amidst unpredictable regional tensions.

The union's message for Labor Day remains clear: the safety and dignity of the Filipino seafarer must remain a top global priority, supported by the collective strength of the government and the shipping industry. 🇵🇭

Swedish authorities attempt to board the suspected Russian "shadow fleet" cargo ship Caffa off the coast of Trelleborg, March 6, 2026. Photo courtesy of: Swedish Minister for Civil Defence Carol-Oskar Bohlin

IMO tightens ship registration rules as false flags surge

New transparency guidelines aim to curb fraud and abuse, but critics warn the flag-of-convenience system remains the industry's underlying fault line

By: *Andy Dalisay*

The global shipping industry is edging toward greater transparency – but not without confronting deeper structural tensions – following the latest move by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to tighten oversight of ship registration systems.

At its 113th session in London from April 13 to 17, the IMO's Legal Committee approved a

new set of non-binding guidelines aimed at strengthening due diligence, improving transparency and curbing the growing misuse of national ship registries. The move comes amid mounting concern over fraudulent registrations and the proliferation of vessels operating under false flags – an issue that has increasingly complicated maritime governance, safety enforcement and sanctions compliance.

A system under strain

The scale of the problem is no longer marginal. According to the Committee, at least 529 vessels were identified as falsely flying the flag of a country over the past year alone. Nearly 40 IMO Member States have reported instances where their registries were exploited without their knowledge or consent – often by criminal networks seeking anonymity or regulatory loopholes.

This surge highlights a long-standing vulnerability in global shipping: the absence of a binding international framework governing how ships are registered. In practice, flag states operate with wide discretion, creating uneven standards and, in some cases, opportunities for abuse.

The newly adopted guidelines attempt to close that gap by providing practical measures for both established and emerging registries. These include stricter verification of ship ownership, enhanced identity checks, improved quality assurance procedures and better information-sharing mechanisms between states.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez described the development as “**a welcome step,**” emphasizing its importance for maritime safety, environmental protection and seafarer welfare. He noted that robust registration systems are foundational to ensuring accountability across international shipping – a sector that carries more than 80% of global trade.

At a technical level, the guidelines are designed to bring greater discipline to registry operations. They encourage flag states to implement clearer governance structures, define who is authorized to register vessels and ensure that ownership records are accurate and verifiable.

Crucially, they also promote due diligence not just on paper ownership but on the true beneficial owners behind vessels –

a key factor in combating sanctions evasion, illicit trade and substandard shipping practices.

Yet, as with many IMO instruments, the guidelines stop short of being legally binding. Their effectiveness will depend heavily on voluntary adoption and enforcement by flag states – some of which have built their registries as commercial enterprises competing for shipowners.

Industry reaction: a deeper problem

For labor representatives and maritime stakeholders, the IMO's initiative is necessary – but insufficient.

David Heindel, Chair of the Seafarers' Section at the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and President of the Seafarers International Union of North America, offered a pointed assessment



of the new guidelines. While acknowledging their value, he framed them as addressing symptoms rather than root causes.

“The IMO is right to recognize that **the system is being abused** – and the numbers they cite should be a wake-up call,” Heindel wrote, commenting on an online Splash article. “But **let’s not kid ourselves about the root of the problem**,” he asserts.

Heindel argues that many flag states today function less as sovereign regulators and more as commercial service providers. In this “marketplace” model, he said, ship registries compete by offering lower costs, lighter regulation and faster processing – often at the expense of rigorous oversight.

“**A true flag state should represent national oversight, legal accountability, and a genuine link between the ship and the state,**”

he added.

“**Instead, what we often see is a system where flags are effectively sold, standards are negotiable, and enforcement is inconsistent.**”

This critique targets the widespread use of so-called “**flags of convenience**,” where vessels are registered in jurisdictions with little or no connection to their ownership or operations. The ITF currently lists dozens of such registries, which critics say enable opaque ownership structures

and weaken enforcement of labor and safety standards.

Structural vulnerabilities

Heindel’s argument cuts to the core of a longstanding debate in maritime governance: whether incremental regulatory improvements can meaningfully address systemic incentives that favor regulatory decree.

According to him, the very design of the current system creates vulnerabilities the IMO is now trying to mitigate. These include:

- Limited transparency in ownership structures
- Weak enforcement capacity in some registries
- Increased exposure to fraud, sanctions evasion and criminal activity

In this context, the new guidelines – while technically sound – may struggle to achieve transformative impact without broader reforms.

“You can’t regulate your way out of a system that is fundamentally built on regulatory arbitrage,” Heindel said. “If we are serious about safety, environmental protection, and welfare, we need more than guide-

lines – we need accountability.”

The road ahead

The IMO’s latest move represents a meaningful step toward harmonizing practices and raising baseline standards across flag states. It signals growing recognition within the international community that transparency in ship registration is no longer a niche administrative issue, but a central pillar of maritime security and governance.

However, the tension between commercial flexibility and regulatory integrity remains unresolved. As long as ship registries operate in a competitive global marketplace, the incentives that drive uneven standards are likely to persist.

For now, the new guidelines offer a framework – one that could improve oversight if widely adopted. But as industry voices like Heindel suggest, the real test lies in whether the global maritime community is willing to confront deeper structural questions about how ships are flagged, regulated and held accountable.

Until then, the system may continue to evolve – but not necessarily transform. 🌐



Women Making Waves: Celebrating Women Champions in Maritime

By: **Camille Simbulan**

As we celebrate the International Day for Women in Maritime, we honor the incredible SHE-farers who courageously started ripples of change to open more doors of opportunities for Filipino women maritime workers.

The First Filipina Master Mariner

Captain Maria Kristine “Che” Javellana of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) Batch 2005 is a trailblazer for women at sea. In 2017, Capt. Che became the first-ever Filipina Master Mariner to command an international an international chemical tanker, the BW Lara. She is also one of the pillars of AMOSUP Women when it was established in 2018.



Image (center): Capt. Maria Kristina Javellana
Photo courtesy of: Capt. Maria Kristina Javellana

“Life doesn’t end when you become a Master, or when you become a Chief Engineer – it is more than that,”

Captain Javellana shared at the Alagang AMOSUP radio program on Radyo Pilipinas World Service.

Throughout her career, Capt. Javellana has committed to advancing seafarers’ welfare and creating pathways for diversity in the maritime industry.

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LIVE IN STUDIO
CAPT. MARIA KRISTINA JAVELLANA
GENERAL MANAGER, HAFNIA MIDDLE EAST

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"It gives me memories on how we started, remember? When there were only a few of us with all the crazy ideas... and actually those ideas which were not popular, you know? But the journey (has brought us here), it's progressing very well and I have already seen a lot of women seafarers... across the globe," Capt. Javellana reflected on the early days when AMOSUP was just beginning to create its women and youth committee, which was eventually incorporated in the Union's Constitution and By-Laws.

Capt. Javellana attributes much of her success to the core values that MAAP has embedded in her. "You will be forged with your character to collaborate, be a team player and be a good leader also among the team. So that process in the academy, it's not only about the theory, the knowledge that you are training for, but the discipline and how it (molds) you from girl to a woman, and a woman that has

an impact in the society," she said.

In her transition from Master to a shore-based Maritime leader, Capt. Javellana has become a prominent figure empowering young women seafarers to overcome industry barriers and promoting a future where diversity is the norm in maritime.

“As long as you are genuinely passionate on what you are doing, you will see that people start to follow in your footsteps. They are becoming better than you are, and you are preparing them. At least you are a part of the solution to have a better and a safe environment onboard,”

The luminary captain also shared her insight on the weight of knowing that people rely on her for guidance and inspiration, "I was like 'oh my God', it comes with that responsibility na ang bigat kasi (that's heavy because) people look up to you, they will ask for your advice, and you have to guide them through so you always have to keep on checking yourself (that) I have to continue doing what is right and I have to continue helping because there's a lot of people not just depending on you but looking up to you," she shared.

As the Head of Fleet for Hafnia's technically outsourced fleet, Capt. Javellana has pioneered initiatives aimed at fostering a more inclusive and supportive culture for women at sea. Through the Hafnia culture lab, she oversees two vessels with a gender-diverse crew matrix, setting a new standard for inclusivity onboard by ensuring that at least 50% of crew members are female. This initiative is designed to gather insights that support creating a welcoming and supportive work environment, making a seafaring career more attractive to women.

Image: Capt. Maria Kristina Javellana
Photo courtesy of: Capt. Maria Kristina Javellana



“The journey of a seafarer actually is very transformative... I realized that the sea doesn’t discriminate because it requires competence, it requires the right skills especially the right attitude towards your job. We have these challenges, (but) we can move on. We can continue to stand up strong and be better versions of ourselves,” she said.

Capt. Javellana also acknowledged the people who have helped her along the way. “As I grew up in my journey in the seafaring career, not just only onboard, but since I started (at MAAP), I have met a lot of people who became my core support – these are the good leaders that supported me and helped me to mold a better character that opened my mind also that helped my grow. I’d also like to extend my appreciation to them and heartfelt thanks. I am at a loss (for) words to thank them so I’ll just pay it forward to the next generations,” she said.

Known for her advocacy for diversity in shipping, Capt. Javellana serves on Hafnia’s diversity, inclusion, belonging, and equity taskforce, where she has been a key contributor to policies that make the maritime industry more accessible for women. This includes her role in establishing a maternity leave policy for female seafarers—a landmark achievement for the sector.

“We do recognize women (who) want to continue their career, those who want to have a family. We prepare our women, we (have) our women essentials kit onboard that is provided for them because we know there are women who have difference conditions coming onboard of our vessels,”

she shared.

“We do recognize women (who) want to continue their career, those who want to have a family. We prepare our women, we (have) our women essentials kit onboard that is provided for them because we know there are women who have difference conditions coming onboard of our vessels,” she shared.

“I am always motivated because I have great leaders in the organization who have the initiative and the drive as well, and they have an open mind that we are doing this initiative not only for numbers, but we are doing this because it is the right thing to do.”

For Capt. Javellana, a supportive organization with shared values, a shared passion to push for this collaborative and engaging environment for all, develops

well-rounded seafarers. “That’s how a seafarer feels belongingness. For us that is very important: for you to feel that ‘Yes, I belong here.’ If they are happy, their loyalty shows on how they perform onboard,” she said.

The Next Generation of Women Making Waves

In another special episode of Alagang AMOSUP on Radyo Pilipinas World Service in celebration of the International day for Women in Maritime, the show featured 3/O Christine Reyes.



Image: 3/O Christine Reyes
Photo courtesy of: 3/O Christine Reyes

According to 3/O Reyes, Capt. Javellana is her role model. "Captain Javellana... She's the first captain from MAAP. I never thought that the first Filipina captain is from my institution. Because of her, I wanted to pursue this industry even more," she said.

As a young officer, 3/O Reyes shared that challenges do exist. "I think it's that feeling of stepping into a space where you're already seen as an exception. Because when people hear the word seafarer, they often think of a man... and rarely of a woman. So from the very beginning, there has been this quiet, constant pressure of trying to prove yourself, trying to belong, trying to show them that you're capable. But for the longest time, I've learned to understand that the sea doesn't really care whether you're a man or a woman. It only responds to whether you're capable.. that you're resilient

enough to do the things that are given to you onboard," she emphasized.

3/O Reyes believes that the maritime industry already has strong policies, but according to her, there can still be great improvements in consistent implementation on board.

"Leadership plays a key role... management level, meaning captain or, senior officers, should always ensure that there is fair treatment, equal opportunities and, respectful working environment onboard. In my company right now, we have from time to time, seminars for the crew on board wherein we would talk about, awareness of harassment and bullying, which is not only important for us women, but for also for other crews who are having a hard time... And maybe, last thing would be safe and clear reporting system onboard, wherein the crew

(would not have to) hold back on reporting if there's a problem," she said.

Her message to young women seafarers: "Always remind yourselves why you started in the first place. Keep on holding onto that dream no matter how hard it gets, because there will always be moments of doubt, but there will also be moments wherein you'll see how far you've come and how great you've become... you are stronger than you think, and you belong in this industry just like anyone else. So just keep on working hard and you'll never know (how far you can go.)," she concluded.

Today, Capt. Che Javellana and 3/O Christine Reyes continue to make roaring waves that put Filipina mariners at the forefront of the movement to make the global maritime sector a truly diverse, equitable and inclusive industry that leaves nobody behind.



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RadyoPilipinasWorldService

Bridging the Gap: A Woman Seafarer's Advocacy for Seafarer Families

By: Lara San Juan

Alagang AMOSUP once again delivered a meaningful and inspiring episode last December 18, 2025, featuring the special topic about **“Women Championing Seafarer Families.”** Hosted by Ms. Camille Simbulan and aired over Radyo Pilipinas World Service and Radyo Pilipinas Radyo Publiko 738 kHz, the episode highlighted the vital role of women—especially mothers—in strengthening Filipino seafarers and their families.

The episode's resource person, Ms. Ma. Cecilia Giron, is an entrepreneur with nearly 20 years of experience in the maritime industry, a former seafarer, and a devoted mother to a daughter who is now a female seafarer on a cruise ship. Through her personal journey, Ms. Giron shared how women can serve as anchors of strength, guidance, and inspiration amid the unique challenges of seafaring life.

Ms. Giron spoke candidly about what inspired her to enter the maritime industry and the challenges she faced in a field often dominated by men. Her story took on deeper meaning as she talked about supporting her daughter's decision to pursue a maritime



career despite questions and judgments from others.

When asked why she allowed her daughter to work at sea, Ms. Giron shared her firm belief in the values she instilled:

independence, discipline, and trust.

She recalled telling her daughter before her first contract, **“I'll let you spread your wings and fly,”** and encouraging her with the words,

“Show them what you've got.”

Ms. Simbulan noted how fortunate her daughter was to have a mentor with decades of maritime experience. Ms. Giron humbly responded that what matters most is guidance rooted in integrity and **as someone who will not lead her to the wrong direction.**

Beyond inspiring her own child, she emphasized that her journey is also meant to empower other women, wives and mothers of seafarers who quietly carry the emotional weight of life onshore.

A key part of the discussion focused on Ms. Giron's advocacy work with Women Championing Seafarer Families (WCSF). Her involvement began after **seeing a call for women empowerment on social media**. Through trainings and shared experiences with fellow seafarers' wives and mothers, **she realized that this advocacy was her calling**. By sharing real-life experiences from onboard, she helps bridge the gap in understand-

ing between seafarers and their families, fostering empathy, preparedness, and resilience.

Ms. Giron also highlighted **the importance of education, mentorship, and financial literacy** in helping seafarer families become more stable and future-ready. Drawing from her background as an entrepreneur, she stressed that

informed families are better equipped to face long separations, manage finances wisely, and support their loved ones at sea.

As the episode concluded, Ms. Simbulan thanked Ms. Giron for her inspiring insights and unwavering dedication to empowering seafarer families. Her story leaves a powerful message:

behind every strong seafarer is often a woman whose courage, trust, and love keep the family grounded. 🌊



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Photo courtesy of: DMW

DMW Holds Maritime Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar (MPES) for Women Cadets

By: Lara San Juan

In celebration of National Women's Month, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) successfully conducted the Maritime Pre-Employment Orientation Seminar (MPES) with the theme: "Empowering Future Women Seafarers" on March 26, 2026, at the DMW Central Office in Mandaluyong City. The activity gathered 64 aspiring female cadets from various maritime institutions, equipping them with valuable knowledge and guidance as they prepare to enter the global maritime workforce.

The program began with welcome remarks from DMW

Sea-Based Accreditation Bureau Director Augusto San Diego III, "*Sa bawat hakbang ninyo, dala ninyo ang diwa ng isang Pilipinang matatag, may dangal at may malasakit sa kapwa. **Kayo ay hindi lamang bahagi ng ating maritime industry, kayo ay magiging mahalagang pwersa sa patuloy nitong pagbabago.***" (With every step you take, you embody the strength, dignity, and compassion of a Filipina. You are not only part of our maritime industry—you will play a key role in its continued transformation.)

The Philippine Association of

Maritime Institutions (PAMI) President Sabino Czar Manglicmot II also graced the event and delivered his special message, "Your presence, your attendance this morning is a testimony that **the seafaring career is no longer soloistic in male-gender career.** And I am very happy for that because one the SGD's principle is the employment of females in all the industry."

The first session was delivered by Ms. Josephine Infante of the DMW Pre-employment and Government Placement Bureau, who discussed the topic "Handa ka na ba? Con-

siderations in Working as an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW).” She highlighted the realities of working overseas, including emotional preparedness, cultural adaptability, and the responsibilities of representing the Philippines abroad.

One of the key highlights of the seminar was the session delivered by C/E Elizsa Chomi, the first woman chief engineer in Unitankers who shared insights on risks and challenges at sea, particularly on gender equality and the prevention of harassment and bullying onboard.

“You are here because the maritime industry recognizes your potential, and it is up to you to seize this opportunity. Ships do not sail because of a single person or gender, but because of the skill, dedication, and determination of those onboard.... Equality does not mean special treatment—it means being equally capable, essential, and committed,” C/E Chomi said.

She concluded by reminding the cadets,

“You belong here not because you are a woman, but because you are capable.”



Image: C/E Elizsa Chomi
Photo courtesy of: C/E Elizsa Chomi

Another significant presentation was delivered by Ms. Camille Simbulan, Head of Communications and Special Projects of the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP). In her presentation titled "Women Making Waves: AMOSUP and ITF Programs for Women Seafarers," she introduced the various initiatives and welfare programs available to women seafarers through AMOSUP and its global partners. She shared initiatives like the Women Making Waves and Gender Sensitivity Trainings which are also incorporated to AMOSUP's Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar trainings (PDOS).

Ms. Simbulan also highlighted key institutional milestones, including the establishment of the AMOSUP Women and Youth Committee in 2018 and the 2020 amendment of the AMOSUP Constitution and By-Laws, which formally integrated the Committee on Women and Young Seafarers into the union's structure.

“Know that gender should not hinder you from achieving your goals as seafarers in the maritime industry... It's very encouraging to see that there's a lot of stakeholders who are also working actively to make the culture more inclusive and more equitable for women, Ms. Simbulan emphasized.”

Legal awareness was also a key component of the seminar, with Atty. RJ Cantos of the DMW Legal Service discussing the salient provisions of the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers. Meanwhile, Atty. Rajeen Jillian Biasca of the Migrant Workers Protection Bureau shared practical guidance on avoiding illegal recruitment and human trafficking.

Dir. San Diego also discussed the **Code of Conduct for Seafarers** and key provisions of the Standard Employment Contract, **reinforcing the importance of discipline, ethical conduct, and compliance with maritime regulations.**

The activity concluded with the awarding of certificates to the

participating cadets, followed by closing remarks from Assistant Secretary Julyn Ambito-Fermin of the DMW Pre-employment Services, who encouraged them to reflect on their key takeaways from the seminar and share what they have learned with their fellow cadets as they prepare to join the maritime workforce.

The seminar is part of the DMW's continuing efforts to empower women and promote equal opportunities in the maritime industry. Through initiatives such as the MPES, maritime stakeholders and AMOSUP continue to support women in pursuing maritime careers and strengthening their presence in the global seafaring community. 🌐



Compassion in Action: Helping Fire Victims Rebuild

By: *Riva Jan C. Caduhada*

Photo courtesy of: *AMOSUP Bacolod Extension Facility*



A resident from Brgy. 27 happily receiving our donation

On September 12, 2025, a fire swept through a residential area in Brgy. 27 in Bacolod City, leaving a devastating scene. In just a few hours after the fire had started, homes that had sheltered families were reduced to ashes. Several families were left homeless and in distress. It was an unimaginable loss that resulted in great uncertainty for the affected families in seeking shelter in schools, gymnasiums, or their relatives' houses.

In response to the incident,

AMOSUP employees swiftly organized the collection of donations from AMOSUP members and dependents. We extended in-kind donations to the affected community, providing hope and immediate relief to the victims. The distribution was held in coordination with the barangay captain to ensure that assistance reached those most in need.

On September 15, 2025, the distribution of donations pushed through despite the relentless rains.

Indeed, blessings come when you least expect it --- just like the pouring rain that came to wash away the ashes allowing space for new beginnings to grow.

AMOSUP Bacolod's initiative provided not only relief and comfort, but also hope and faith, as the community finds strength in each other in rebuilding their lives. 🌈



Left to right: Dr. George C. Pile (Hospital Director), Dr. Grace H. Padilla (City Health Officer), Dr. Conrado F. Oca (AMOSUP President), Ms. Niña Cataluña (Health Education and Promotion Officer II), Ms. Ma. Elena Gysrell V. Jiloca (Administrative Director), and Ms. Erika Camille Bonifacio, RN (Quality Assurance Nurse)

Manila City Health Department Donates Measles-Rubella (MR) Vaccines to AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital in Support of June 2026 MR Supplemental Immunization Activity

By: *Frances Ann Israel*

Photo courtesy of: *AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital Manila*

The Manila City Health Department (MCHD) recently donated Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccines to AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital in support of the nationwide Measles-Rubella Supplemental Immunization Activity (MR-SIA), conducted for the entire month of June 2026.

This initiative is part of the government's intensified campaign to strengthen immunity against measles and rubella, both highly contagious but vaccine-preventable diseases. The supplemental immunization activity aims to close

immunity gaps and ensure broader population protection, particularly among children and other vulnerable groups.

The donation was formally turned over by representatives of the Manila City Health Department, led by City Health Officer Grace H. Padilla, who is also the Director of Ospital ng Maynila. She was joined by Niña Cataluña, Health Education and Promotion Officer II; Dr. Pinky Herrera, Chief of the Division of RMNCAHN-OH; Ms. Maricar Anicete, Immunization Program Coordinator; Ms. Amor Becite, Maternal

Coordinator; and Ms. Mary Ann Ilagan, Newborn Screening Coordinator.

The vaccines were formally received by Dr. Conrado F. Oca, AMOSUP President, and Dr. George C. Pile, Hospital Director, underscoring the strong partnership between AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital and the Manila City Health Department in advancing public health initiatives.

Their collective presence highlighted the strong commitment of both institutions to ensuring the successful implementation

of immunization programs and strengthening preventive healthcare services.

AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital expressed its sincere gratitude to the Manila City Health Department for the generous donation and continued partnership. The additional supply of MR vaccines will significantly support the hospital's participation in the MR-SIA and reinforce its commitment to protecting the health of its patients and the wider community.

Through this collaboration, AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital continues to play an active role in national public health efforts, reinforcing its dedication to preventive care and disease prevention.

The MR-SIA for June 2026 serves as a vital reminder of the importance of collective action in achieving high immunization coverage and preventing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases across the country. 🇵🇭



Top, Left to Right: Ms. Ma. Cristina Abad (ASH-Manila Chief Pharmacist), Ms. Sherly Gerona (ASH-Manila Staff Pharmacist), Ms. Erika Camille Bonifacio, RN (ASH- Manila Quality Assurance Nurse), Dr. David F. Geollegue (ASH-Manila Chairman, Dept. of Surgery), Dr. George C. Pile (ASH Hospital Director), Dr. Teodisto Alcantara (ASH-Cebu Medical Director), Ms. Maichaia Alfonso, RN MAN (ASH-Manila Chief Nursing Officer),

Bottom, Left to Right: Ms. Ma. Elena Gysrell Jiloca (ASH Administrative Director), Ms. Maricar Aniciete (Immunization Program Coordinator), Ms. Niña Cataluña (Health Education and Promotion Officer II), Dr. Pinky Herrera (Chief, Division of RMNCAHN- OH), Dr. Grace H. Padilla (City Health Officer), Dr. Jan Godito (ASH-Manila Staff Pediatrician), Dr. Maria Elena Pile (ASH-Manila Chairman, Dept. of Pediatrics), Ms. Mary Ann Ilagan (Newborn Screening Coordinator), and Ms. Amor Becite (Maternal Coordinator).

CZERVAREONS Class of 2029 celebrates Recognition Ceremony, recognizes most number of midshipwomen in history

By: 3CL Ronald Sydney

Photos courtesy of: Kamaya Point

KAMAYA POINT

MARIVELES, BATAAN– The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) held its Recognition Rites for Cognizant Trailblazers Rising Valorously Amidst the Relentless Endeavors of the Oceans (CZERVAREONS) Class of 2029, highlighting the largest number of midshipwomen recognized in a single class, last March 6, 2026 at the New Parade Grounds.

From 8,772 aspirants who took the entrance examination across the country, 30 midshipwomen emerged among the 538 members of the Class of 2029 who were recognized.

The ceremony was graced by Major General Doroteo Jose M. Jalandoni PN(M), Commander of the Naval Reserve Command, who served as the

Guest of Honor, alongside MAAP president VADM. Eduardo Ma R. Santos AFP (RET) academy officials, distinguished guests, and members of the MAAP community.

Major General Doroteo Jose M. Jalandoni PN(M), Commander of the Naval Reserve Command, praised the determination of the midshipmen and encouraged them to remain steadfast in their journey.

He emphasized that discipline, integrity, and commitment to service are the foundations of effective leadership in naval profession, guiding officers to lead with honor, accountability, professionalism and unwavering commitment.

After the ceremonies, the recognized fourthclassmen

were given two-day visitation to reunite with their loved ones before facing new challenges as transitioning upperclassmen. 🇵🇭



“Do not fear the open seas”: Japan Ambassador Kazuya Endo urges zealous phoenicians of Class of 2026 to embrace the relentless oceans

By: 4CL Endaya, Kimberly

Photos courtesy of: Kamaya Point



The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) held its commencement ceremony marking the graduation of **200 cadets** from the **Zealous Phoenicians of the Relentless Unyielding Oceans (ZEPHYREONS)**, on 03 June 2026, despite persistent rain.

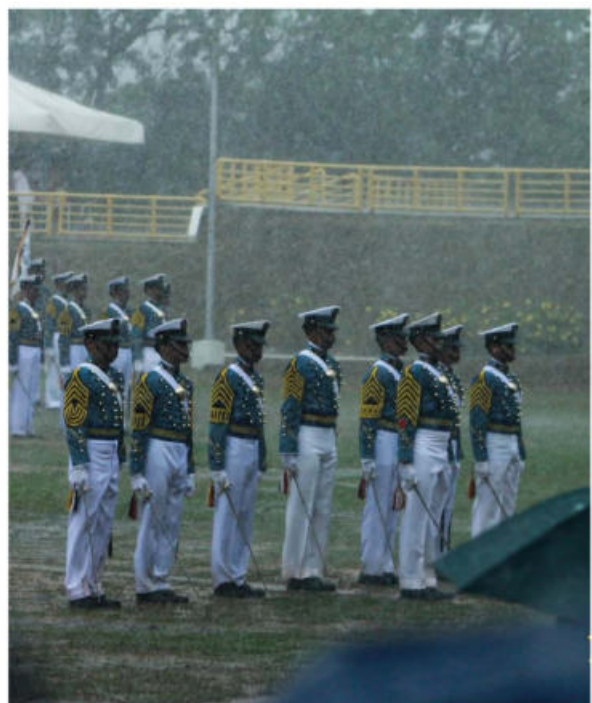
The ceremony continued under heavy downpour, reflecting the resilience expected of maritime professionals who must serve in all conditions at sea.

“Not every day at sea will bring fair winds,”

said His Excellency Kazuya Endo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of the Philippines, as he addressed the graduating class.

He further reminded the cadets to embrace uncertainty and challenges as part of their future life at sea.

“Do not fear the open seas,” he added, urging the graduates to move forward with courage and discipline.



Special Achievement Awards were presented to Ramiel Hernani Barroga, Peter Josh Olalia, and Ariel Villas for earning a perfect grade of 1.0 in Engine Watch Keeping 2.

The Exemplary Award was given to Noriel Palapar, Juan Miguel Estoesta, Elijah Joseph Geronimo, and John Richard III Sibayan for achieving a GPA of 1.4 with no grade lower than 2.0, qualifying them for Cum Laude distinction.

The Leadership Saber Award was conferred upon Franz Ajani Armada Angulo in recognition of his role as Fleet Commander of the Zephyreons Class of 2026.

As part of the tradition, the Cups and Streamers Awards highlighted the overall excellence of the different companies across academic, non-academic, athletic, and extracurricular fields.

Alfa Company dominated the awards, securing the Chairman's Cup (82.01%), President's Cup (88.64%), and Extracurricular Activities Streamer (95.75%), all received by Midn. 1CL Lorenz Cedrick Gloria.

Charlie Company earned the DMA Director's Cup for non-academic excellence with a 77.65% average, received by Midn. 1CL Renz Christian Cunanan.

Delta Company topped both academics and athletics, winning the Dean's Cup with an 88.92% average and the Athletic Streamer with a

93.40% intramurals score, received by Midn. 1CL Michael John Navarro.

The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific formally conferred degrees, continuing its mission to produce globally competitive maritime officers and engineers. 🌐



As global tensions continue to affect the maritime industry, safeguarding the mental and emotional wellbeing of seafarers has never been more urgent. In the 74th episode of Alagang AMOSUP aired over Radyo Pilipinas World Service and Radyo Pilipinas Radyo Publiko, the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) welcomed Dr. Asif Altaf, Global Wellbeing Program Coordinator of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), to discuss the timely topic, "Stronger at Sea: Seafarer Wellbeing in Challenging Times," highlighting the need to care for those who keep the world moving.



Stronger at Sea: Seafarer Wellbeing in Challenging Times

By: *Lara San Juan*

The program focused on the growing mental health challenges faced by seafarers amid global crises, particularly in conflict-prone regions such as the Middle East and the Strait of Hormuz.

During the interview, Dr. Altaf emphasized that seafaring has always been a demanding profession, but the challenges faced by modern seafarers have intensified significantly in recent years.

"Seafaring is a tough job, a challenging job, a demanding job. Mental health was always an issue, but things are changing very dramatically," he shared.

Episode 70 of Alagang AMOSUP once again demonstrated the importance of keeping seafarers informed and empowered through reliable information and expert guidance. By providing updates on global developments and strengthening awareness of seafarers' rights and available support systems, the program continues to serve as a vital platform for education and support.

He cited alarming data from the Protection and Indemnity (P&I) Club, noting that for the first time in maritime history, deaths by suicide onboard ships have surpassed accidental deaths

which is a concerning indication of the growing mental health crisis at sea.

According to Dr. Altaf, depression and anxiety remain among the most common mental health concerns affecting seafarers worldwide, with studies showing that one in four seafarers experiences symptoms related to these conditions.

"Stress is not a disease," he explained. **"But when stress becomes too much, it can become a disease."**

Dr. Altaf explained that beyond depression and anxiety, seafarers today also face increased emotional strain due to geopolitical conflicts, rising fuel and food prices, isolation onboard, limited shore leave opportunities, and concerns for their families back home.

“Safe ships depend on the wellbeing of seafarers. If a seafarer is struggling mentally, the safety of the ship can also be compromised,” he stressed.

The discussion also highlighted the proactive measures being undertaken by the ITF, AMOSUP, and other maritime stakeholders to support seafarers operating in high-risk areas. According to Dr. Altaf, the ITF, together with the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and maritime unions, successfully pushed for the designation of certain Middle Eastern waters as “high-risk areas,” giving seafarers the right to refuse assignments in dangerous zones.

In addition, the ITF has strengthened its support systems through dedicated coordinators, improved communication channels, welfare assistance, and emergency support for stranded crew members needing medical care and essential supplies.

One of the key messages emphasized during the program was the importance of connection and support onboard ships. Dr. Altaf encouraged seafarers not to

isolate themselves in their cabins after work and instead build strong support systems with fellow crew members.

He also reminded seafarers to focus on things they can control, such as staying connected with family, maintaining friendships onboard, exercising, listening to music, and seeking help when needed.

“In our life, there are things we can control and things we cannot control,” Dr. Altaf shared. **“Better to focus on the things we can control — our connections, our health, our routines, and how we support each other.”**

Dr. Altaf likewise highlighted the importance of emotional openness among crew members regardless of nationality or rank.

“Everyone onboard is going through challenges. Everyone misses their family. Everyone carries stress,” he said. **“Sometimes, simply talking to someone and sharing how you feel can already lighten the burden.”**

He further encouraged seafarers to avoid self-isolation after work.

“Don’t immediately go back to your cabin after duty. Spend time with your colleagues, have conversations, build friendships. Your work is already

isolated so don’t isolate yourself even more,” he advised.

The interview also highlighted the ITF’s ongoing collaboration with the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), AMOSUP, Associated Philippine Seafarers Union (APSU), Maritime Higher Education Institutions (MHEI’s) and seafarer welfare and seafarer welfare organizations such as Stella Maris, Sailor’s Society and International Seafarers’ Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) in promoting mental health education among seafarers through the **Training of Trainers** program held from April 22 to 24 at the Dr. Mario S. Oca Hall, AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital.

The three-day initiative gathered faculty members from various maritime schools across the Philippines to strengthen their understanding of stress management, resilience, and mental health awareness among cadets and future seafarers. The program aims to equip maritime educators with the tools and knowledge needed to prepare students for the emotional and psychological demands of life at sea.

Dr. Altaf explained that preparing future seafarers before deployment is essential in building a more resilient maritime workforce.

“It’s important that we prepare our future seafarers for this demanding job,” he said. **“Mental resilience is just as important as technical skills.”**



To further strengthen awareness campaigns, the ITF continues to utilize digital platforms through its ITF Well-being Facebook page, allowing seafarers worldwide to directly connect with support networks and welfare coordinators whenever assistance is needed.

As the interview concluded, Dr. Altaf delivered a heartfelt message to Filipino seafarers and their families:

“Bad days come, but bad days will also pass. Stay connected with your loved ones, support one another, and continue believing that good times will come again.”

He also reminded families of seafarers to become a source of encouragement and emotional strength for their loved ones working at sea.

“Your family member onboard is already carrying a heavy responsibility,” he shared. “Continue to encourage them, show them happy moments at home, and remind them that they are never alone.”

Through meaningful discussions and collaborative initiatives, AMOSUP and the ITF continue to uphold their shared commitment to promoting the holistic wellbeing of seafarers and advocating for a safer, healthier, and more supportive maritime industry worldwide. 🌊



Photo courtesy of: Joderic Casyao

Raising Awareness on Seafarers' Rights and Safety Amid Global Maritime Tensions

By: Lara San Juan

Filipino seafarers and their families received legal guidance and situation updates during the 70th episode of Alagang AMOSUP, aired over Radyo Pilipinas World Service and Radyo Pilipinas Radyo Publiko hosted by Ms. Camille Simbulan. The discussion focused on the rising tensions brought about by the ongoing conflict involving the United States and Iran, which has significantly affected maritime operations in the Middle East, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz. The situation has disrupted shipping activities and heightened risks for vessels transiting the strategic waterway, a major global route for oil and cargo shipments.



The episode, entitled “Seafarers’ Rights and Updates on the Situation in the Middle East,” featured esteemed resource persons Atty. Emmanuel “Noli” E. Partido, Head of the AMOSUP Legal Department, and Dr. Reno Bolivar, Founder of Marino PH and a maritime professional and educator. Both experts shared valuable insights on legal protections, safety concerns, and the collective efforts of stakeholders in safeguarding seafarers working in areas affected by geopolitical tensions.

From a legal standpoint, Atty. Partido emphasized the importance of maintaining clear and open communication with employers, especially when safety concerns arise onboard.

“Ang first contact ko syempre yung kumpanya—they should be open to the company because sila yung kakontrata at the same time nandun sila sa workplace,”

(The first point of contact, of course, should be the company. Seafarers should communicate openly with the company

because it is their contracting party and, at the same time, its workplace) he explained.

He further noted that the challenges currently faced by seafarers extend beyond nationality, highlighting the global impact of ongoing tensions.

“Sa pagkakataong ito, actually hindi lang Pilipinong mandaragat—lahat ng seafarers kung ano man nasyonalidad ay muling nailagay sa sitwasyon na napakahirap tulad ng COVID—beyond our control.

Hindi makababa ng barko, hindi makasakay ng barko, kulang ang provisions ng krudo, pagkain, tubig dahil sa kaguluhan,”

(At this time, it is not only Filipino seafarers—seafarers of all nationalities are once again placed in a very difficult situation similar to what we experienced during COVID, something beyond our control. They are unable to disembark from ships, unable to board vessels, and there are shortages of fuel, food, and water due to the conflict) Atty. Partido shared.

He also reminded listeners of the essential role seafarers play in sustaining the global economy, stating,

“The seafarers move the world.”

Dr. Bolivar, meanwhile, highlighted the emotional and psychological toll experienced by seafarers navigating conflict-prone regions, noting the importance of mental health support during such situations.

“Also yung support siguro—yung mental health support rin kasi nakikita nila yung mga missiles, drones,”(There is also a need for support, particularly mental health support, because they are witnessing missiles and drones) he said.

Drawing from feedback received through maritime networks and online platforms, he shared that many Filipino seafarers continue to demon-

strate strength and adaptability despite uncertainty, describing them as

“seafarers of resilience.”

Throughout the discussion, Atty. Partido emphasized the importance of collaboration among maritime stakeholders in ensuring the welfare and safety of seafarers.

“Lahat tayo involved; andiyan ang AMOSUP, nandiyan ang Marino (PH). Syempre nandiyan ang ating iba’t ibang sangay ng gobyerno. At huwag din nating kalimutan yung mga ibang NGO.”

(All of us are involved—AMOSUP is there, Marino (PH) is there, and of course, the various branches of government are present. We should also not forget the other NGOs)

Host Ms. Camille Simbulan reassured listeners of the Philippine maritime industry’s continued support for seafarers throughout their deployment and upon their return. *“But just know na yung buong industriya, buong maritime industry dito sa Pilipinas ay nakaantabay para tulungan kayo—even pagbalik niyo dito sa Pilipinas.”*

She also emphasized the availability of support services provided by AMOSUP, including the Sailor’s Home, the Seamen’s Hospital and Psychology Department, which are prepared to assist seafarers and their families whenever needed.

In his closing message, Dr. Bolivar likewise offered words of encouragement to Filipino seafarers:

“To our seafarers, especially to our Filipino seafarers, please know that you are not alone in this battle. Your company, the government, the union like AMOSUP, your families and friends are there to support you, praying for your safety, security, and also for your safe return here in the Philippines.”

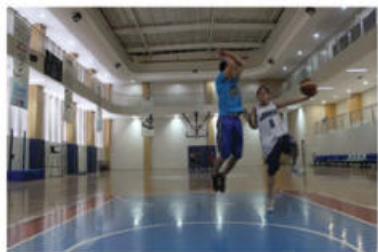
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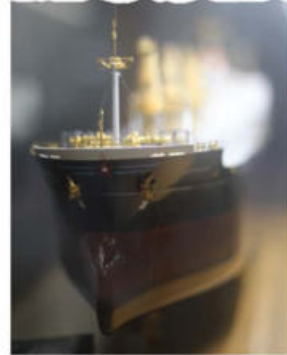
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“Looking back...”

Sailing forward.”

- Dr. Conrado F. Oca

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