



**PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



**Security Council High Level Open Debate
on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security:
Strengthening maritime security through international cooperation for global stability
20 May 2025**

Greece's Statement delivered
by H.E. the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis

Secretary General,

Your Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for joining us here today for this open debate on maritime security.

Let me start by expressing my appreciation for the role of the United Nations in this very important issue. This is the right place to have a discussion on Maritime Security. The United Nations is at the center of international efforts to protect and preserve our oceans. It is, as the Secretary General pointed out, the custodian of the International Convention on the Law of the Sea. And it is the locus of international cooperation to address global challenges that affect us all. And I would like to personally commend Secretary General Guterres for his tireless efforts on the matter and thank him again for his presence with us here today.

Threats to maritime security are, indeed, of global dimension, they affect all nations, whether coastal or landlocked.

As Ms Travlou pointed out, maritime security is critical, for the safety of our global supply chains: more than 80% of the volume of international trade is carried by shipping. A secure maritime domain promotes global-political stability, economic stability, including price stability, sustainable development and the well-being of all people.

And we are increasingly encountering asymmetrical maritime threats, such as smuggling, terrorism, piracy, but also hybrid attacks which equally affect ships, connections but also ports.

At the same time, rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions may distort both port operations and shipping routes.

Global problems need global solutions and threats to maritime security are no different: We can only address some through international cooperation. Whether at state level, at the level of International Organizations, or at the level of the private sector. It is clear that we need to do more.

And such efforts should place emphasis on six key areas:

First, we need to have an increased maritime domain awareness: Effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could impact security, safety, the economy or the marine environment.

This requires that we improve global education and information-sharing mechanisms. That we integrate new technologies to improve our surveillance capabilities, communication and information sharing and artificial Intelligence should be part of this project, and having in mind the potential dangers that it may connote.

Second, we must tackle unsafe and illicit shipping practices that pose a serious threat to global trade but also to the marine environment. These include fraudulent activities related to registration in the maritime sector, substandard shipping, sanctions evasion but also, phenomena such as shadow fleets, to which Greece, my country, shows no tolerance. Once again, coordination and prevention are the key issues, in order to improve monitoring and enhance the effective implementation of relevant international instruments. And this macroscopic vision is the only effective one that we have in this respect.

Third, enhancing capacity building, including law enforcement capacities, in the fields of navigation, ports and connectivity, is key to combating security threats.

The Secretary General referred to the situation in the Red Sea. During the last years, it is a typical case of a serious maritime threat that may reasonably result in the increase of prices of essential goods, and this is something that affects all of us. And collective action in these cases is inevitable.

My country's strong engagement in the matter is demonstrated by the leading role Greece has assumed in EU Naval Operation "Aspides", but also in the operations "Atalanta" and "Iriní".

Capacity-building should equally focus on promoting safe and resilient ports, as well as on addressing cybersecurity issues. And this should include the development of digital skills in the wider range of the maritime cluster, including the supply chains.

And by all means, very important, freedom of electricity and data connectivity via submarine cables. This is something, Mr. Secretary General, to be non-negotiable, and for this is a prerequisite for a diversified, high-quality, affordable energy and data connectivity. This is a critical issue for the entire world.

Fourth, the reinforcement of the legal framework is again essential. In this respect, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS, sets out the basis for global governance at sea in order to address current but also emerging security threats. UNCLOS basically reflects international customary law and must be altogether respected. We also need to further enhance the work of the International Maritime Organization, the IMO, especially with reference to international rule-making and the protection of the seas.

More effective coordination is required for the various offices currently operating under the auspices of the United Nations, as Mr. Buerger pointed out.

Fifth, the environmental dimension, which is also a security challenge. The implications of climate change and environmental degradation multiply existing threats and have a wider effect on global stability. We must work to counter marine pollution and the environmental risks to our security posed by illegal dumping, discharges, anthropogenic emissions, in violation of international standards.

The salvage of the tanker “Sounion” in the Red Sea last year was a case in point, one which prevented a huge environmental but also humanitarian catastrophe, highlighting the global dimension of maritime security and its far-reaching repercussions.

And last year, we hosted in Athens the ninth Our Ocean Conference, whereby more than 100 delegations made over 400 pledges, exceeding \$10 billion in value.

And sixth, we should not disregard the need to enhance the protection and security of the two million seafarers who secure international maritime transport and uninterrupted operation of global trade. As an old maritime motto underlines, without them half of the world would freeze and half of the world would starve. Having in mind the recent extreme risks to which they have been exposed, from the pandemic to war hostilities to terrorist attacks, we must keep in mind that their well-being and their continuous training in new operational modes is necessary for maritime safety.

Dear colleagues,

Maritime security is directly and closely related to the core values of the free world. No one could really enjoy the well-established principles of the freedom of the seas, nor the related freedom to commerce and trade, ensuring economic and peaceful interconnection, without the prerequisite of maritime security. Today, I am happy to realize by the wide participation of Member States in this debate that we share the view of all this utmost importance.

Greece is a country with the largest merchant maritime fleet in the world. It is a maritime nation with a rich and deep seafaring history. Thousands of islands, one of the world's longest coastlines, a real cross-trading nation connecting and contributing to the supply of decades of third countries.

And for us Greeks, the sea has always been part of our identity, and I'm privileged to be able to participate in this discussion. And before you, I wish to make a firm commitment that the country I am honored to represent, Greece, will remain the guardian of the freedom of navigation. Hand in hand with all UN nations, we will work together for this very important cause during our Security Council tenure and beyond.

And thank you for your presence here today.