



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council High Level Open Debate  
on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security  
“The Safety and Protection of Waterways in the Maritime Domain”  
Monday 27 April 2026**

Greece’s Statement delivered  
by H.E. Ambassador Aglaia Balta  
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

---

Your Excellency Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, thank you for your presence today and I would also like to thank the Presidency of Bahrain for convening this meeting on maritime security, an issue of critical importance for international peace and security. I also wish to thank the Secretary General of UN, the Secretary General of IMO and Mr. Nick Childs for their insightful and comprehensive briefings.

Mr. President,

This High-Level Open Debate takes place at a moment of escalating concern. Threats to maritime security are multiplying, while attacks on international shipping are growing not only more frequent, but more sophisticated and disruptive in their impact. Global shipping faces sharper, evolving, more complex threats than ever: piracy, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, smuggling, and hybrid attacks targeting vessels and critical maritime infrastructure.

The crisis in the Strait of Hormuz underscored the fundamental importance of securing open, safe and unimpeded passage. Unjustified attacks on merchant vessels are a clear violation of international law, with far reaching and destabilizing consequences for all. They disrupt global supply chains, threatening food and energy security, and carry profound consequences for the economic resilience of all our countries. They put seafarers directly in harm’s way and lay bare the vulnerability of the system on which the global economy depends.

Let us be clear: when maritime security is compromised, international peace and security are at risk.

Mr. President,

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

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

To this end, Greece contributes actively to collective efforts to enhance maritime security. We participate in EU Operation ATALANTA and EU Operation IRINI, and we play a leading role in EU Operation ASPIDES in the Red Sea region.

Mr. President,

No single actor can meet these challenges alone. Effective responses require strengthened international cooperation, coordination and information-sharing, building on existing initiatives by States and international organizations.

The International Maritime Organization remains central to these efforts. We welcome the outcome of its extraordinary session of 18 March on the impact of recent developments on shipping and seafarers, and we join its call for an immediate end to attacks affecting innocent seafarers. We also welcome the recent conference convened by France and the UK in Paris, and the efforts to strengthen international cooperation, to protect freedom of navigation and enhance protection of maritime waterways.

Looking ahead, there is scope to further strengthen maritime domain awareness and information-sharing at the global level. In this regard, Greece sees merit in exploring more structured and system-wide approaches within the United Nations, building on existing efforts, to enhance coordination and support Member States in addressing maritime security threats.

Emerging and new technologies, including artificial intelligence, can serve as force multipliers, provided that they are deployed in full respect of international law. These technologies enhance monitoring, improve information-sharing and facilitate operational coordination.

We stand ready to actively contribute to discussions and help chart a path towards developing, collectively, effective mechanisms to ensure that emerging technologies reinforce international peace, security and human dignity.

In conclusion Mr. President,

Maritime security is not a peripheral issue - it is a core component of international peace and security. The Security Council cannot remain indifferent to developments that directly affect international peace and security, global trade, energy security and economic stability, which have far-reaching repercussions for humanity as a whole.

Greece remains committed to working with all partners to ensure that the seas remain open, secure and governed by rules. Respect for international law is not optional — it is indispensable.

I thank you.