



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council Arrria-Formula Meeting on
Safe Seas, Shared Security: Protecting Freedom of Navigation
in an Evolving Security Environment
Thursday 17 September 2026**

Greece's Statement delivered
by H.E. Ambassador Aglaia Balta
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations, New York

Thank you Mr. President,

I thank Bahrain for convening this important meeting on an issue of critical importance to international peace and security and I welcome the presence of H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain in today's meeting. For Greece, maritime security remains a strategic topic of fundamental and enduring importance, and I would like to thank the briefers for their insightful contributions, which help shed light to the importance of our topic.

In recent months, the international community is witnessing an escalation in attacks against international shipping, both in frequency and intensity, by state and non-state actors. These threats are expanding in scope and nature, including through the growing use of emerging technologies and the proliferation of advanced weaponry, such as ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

The rapidly deteriorating security environment across the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait underscores a direct threat to the civilian populations, jeopardizing safety, livelihoods, and freedom of movement. The human cost of this escalation, therefore, needs to remain at the center of our response.

I will make four points:

First, freedom of navigation and the right to safe, open and unimpeded passage are fundamental non-negotiable principles. The international law of the sea is essential to the maintenance of international peace and security, and global trade. We do not lack established rules. What is required of us is the full, consistent and effective implementation of the rules that already exist. They cannot be selectively applied, circumvented, or subject to conditionality upon unilateral demands, or arbitrary restrictions, including unjustified tolls or other financial exactions.

The existing international legal framework, with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) at its core, provides the essential legal foundation for the security and stability of the maritime domain. UNCLOS sets out the universal and unified legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

Second, equal attention should be given to the maritime governance architecture and the institutions that underpin it. Addressing today's complex maritime security challenges calls for a coordinated, multi-pronged response. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is central to this architecture. At the same time, maritime security spans multiple institutional mandates. This calls for closer coordination and complementarity among the mandates, capabilities and efforts of relevant UN entities, international and regional organizations.

The Security Council has its own part to play here, particularly where threats to maritime security bear directly on international peace and security. Dedicated and regular discussions on maritime security are important to coherently address threats, strengthen coordination, and reinforce the implementation of existing obligations and relevant UNSC resolutions.

Third, we must engage substantively with and listen closely to the private sector, including shipping companies, shipowners, operators, port authorities, insurers, seafarers and seafarers' unions. Seafarers in particular must be at the heart of this work. They are directly exposed to attacks and disruptions to maritime navigation. Their safety, security and welfare should be woven into international efforts to strengthen maritime security.

Finally, effective maritime security depends on closer operational cooperation and complementarity among existing mechanisms and actions. We should strengthen maritime domain awareness through timely information and intelligence-sharing among flag States, coastal States, the private sector, and relevant international and regional organizations.

Mr. President,

Greece, a leading maritime nation, whose history, economy and identity are closely linked to the seas, has an abiding stake in the respect of the freedom of navigation and the safe and unimpeded passage of commercial vessels. We remain committed to keeping this vital issue on the Council's agenda.

I thank you.