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Circular Letter No.4441
6 August 2021

To: All IMO Members
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communication from the Governments of the Republic of Liberia,
Romania and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

The Governments of the Republic of Liberia, Romania and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have sent the attached communication, dated 6 August 2021, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.



Note No. SecPol/001/2021

The United Kingdom, Romania, and Liberia present their compliments to the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and has the honour to draw the attention of the latter to a serious incident which not only poses a threat to maritime safety and security but also falls under the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence against the Safety of Maritime Navigation of 1988.

On the night of 29 to 30 July 2021 the Liberia flagged, Singapore owned, UK operated, Merchant Vessel, Mercer Street was attacked in waters off the coast of Oman. This unlawful attack sadly resulted in the death of one British and one Romanian national and damaged the vessel. Our thoughts are now with their loved ones.

Initial assessments by the UK and international partners, shared by Romania and Liberia, concluded that it was highly likely that the attack was undertaken by Iran using one or more Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

A major concern is that the organised nature of this attack risks rendering the region as an unsafe route for international trade. The continued occurrence of any such attacks will jeopardise the efficiency of maritime activities in the region.

We are particularly concerned by the actions taken by Iran given their commitment to the IMO in their letter of 13 January 2021 (*IMO Circular Letter No.4369 dated 14th January 2021*) that "The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran reassures the international community that all endeavours will be made to protect commercial shipping and maritime traffic".

The United Kingdom, Romania and Liberia, along with regional and international partners, are conducting a thorough investigation of this attack. We remain deeply concerned by such attacks that risk regional and international peace and security. Vessels must be allowed to navigate freely in accordance with international law and seafarers must be safe from violence in carrying out their duties.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this letter to be circulated to the Member States of the Organization.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) the assurances of its highest consideration.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
LONDON SW1A 2AH

6 August 2021


