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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Al Zayani/Mr. Alrowaieci.....	(Bahrain)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Sun Lei
	Colombia	Ms. Solano Ramirez
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mrs. Kabengele Lukundula
	Denmark	Mr. Bay
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Greece.....	Ms. Diagouma
	Latvia.....	Mr. Klavinskis
	Liberia	Mr. Shilue
	Pakistan	Mr. Sarwani
	Panama	Ms. Caballero Martiz
	Russian Federation	Mrs. Gilmutdinova
	Somalia.....	Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Patel
	United States of America	Mr. Fogarty

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

The safety and protection of waterways in the maritime domain

Letter dated 20 April 2026 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2026/346)

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The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Johann Wadephul, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Wadephul (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union.

Kitchens stay cold because liquid gas does not flow. Rice stops growing because fertilizers cannot be applied. Assembly lines stop running because energy has become a scarce resource. This is what happens globally when maritime security is attacked.

Maritime security is not an abstract concept. It is the very foundation of our interconnected global economy. Every country, whether coastal or landlocked, is directly or indirectly dependent on the security of maritime routes and free and safe navigation. This creates not only prosperity but also vulnerability. Disruptions in only one strategic waterway have the potential to affect livelihoods, stability and economic resilience worldwide.

In the Persian Gulf, Iran has created an armed network of malign, malicious militias, destabilizing the whole region. We hear reports of attacks on commercial vessels, kidnappings and unlawful seizures. Such actions constitute clear violations of international law, including the law of the sea as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. And so does requesting toll payments. Continued escalation, including missile attacks against civilian targets in the Gulf States, risks further destabilization. The effects go far beyond the Gulf. Already now, the lack of fertilizer will lead to lower than usual rice harvests in Asia. Already now, food prices on markets in Africa are rising because of much higher transportation costs. Already now, humanitarian aid is becoming less available for the most vulnerable.

This vicious circle has to stop before it is too late and before more people suffer. Iran has to reopen the Strait of Hormuz now. At the same time, Germany supports the United Nations task force set up to mitigate these risks, as we hope that others can support the United Nations crucial and safe life-saving efforts.

Please allow me now to thank you, Mr. President, for the leadership you have shown in the past weeks by proposing two resolutions in the Security Council. Resolution 2817 (2026) is a crystal-clear testament to the global opposition to the reckless actions at hand. Germany regrets that the Security Council was unable to adopt the second draft resolution (S/2026/273). Germany is prepared to help ensure the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz once hostilities have ceased.

Our message, in coordination with all our partners, is this: Iran must stop attacking other countries. It must end its nuclear programme. The Strait of Hormuz must be open to free and safe maritime traffic to the benefit of all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Ochoa Martínez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this debate, which is particularly timely given the diplomatic efforts to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz. We underscore the importance of safeguarding this and other strategic waterways to ensure freedom of maritime transit and restore safe conditions for seafarers.

Maritime security must be grounded in prevention, constant vigilance, innovation and the continued strengthening of regional and international cooperation. With almost 2 million seafarers operating more than 100,000 merchant vessels, whose work is essential to global trade, it is vital to ensure their safe passage and well-being. In the current context of conflict, any reference to maritime security must be based on all parties' unrestricted respect for applicable international law, including the law

of the sea and international humanitarian law, strictly observing the principles of necessity and proportionality and the corresponding humanitarian safeguards. In this regard, Mexico reaffirms the need to respect the exercise of the rights and freedoms of navigation of merchant and commercial vessels, mitigate operational risks to navigation and safeguard the protection of the environment, in accordance with international law. Any action or threat intended to close, obstruct or otherwise impede navigation in the straits used for international navigation is simply unacceptable.

Mexico reiterates the importance of the role played by the specialized agencies of the United Nations system as suitable forums for the technical analysis of cross-cutting issues, including maritime, aviation, food and telecommunications security, while also underscoring that matters relating to international peace and security must be addressed by the Security Council. Within the technical bodies, Mexico has promoted approaches centred on the protection of the civilian population, the facilitation of safe corridors and the preservation of freedom of navigation, in line with humanitarian imperatives and the stability of the global economy, seeking to maintain their specialized nature and avoiding the politicization of their mandates.

Mexico rejects any unilateral coercive measure that prevents the provision of humanitarian assistance by sea, in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law. The Council is the only international body authorized to impose sanctions on countries, following exhaustive good-faith discussions and in accordance with its powers as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

Lastly, as a littoral State with coastlines along two oceans and a historic commitment to peace and international maritime cooperation, Mexico reiterates its commitment to multilateral and inclusive efforts based on international law to safeguard maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz. Maritime protection is a collective responsibility, and the Security Council must therefore assume its responsibility to safeguard it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mr. Salovaara (Finland): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland. We commend the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this high-level open debate and thank the briefers for their insights.

The Nordic countries are coastal countries with open, globally connected economies, deeply reliant on the ocean. The security of our seafarers and maritime infrastructure is of vital importance to us. The law of the sea, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is our legal compass for all activities in the ocean and the seas. In essence, maritime security is about freedom: the freedom of navigation, the freedom from piracy and other illicit activities at sea and beneath it and the freedom to use the ocean safely and sustainably, in accordance with international law. These freedoms are increasingly challenged today. The Nordic countries are concerned over conflicts that affect innocent passage, transit passage and the freedom of navigation, threatening not only maritime security but also the safety of seafarers.

The protection of merchant ships and their crews is a shared concern of flag, port and coastal States. Multilateral cooperation and information-sharing among States are vital to the maintenance of maritime security. The International Maritime Organization remains the appropriate technical lead for maritime safety and environmental protection. The Security Council, however, bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. When conflicts endanger the security and freedom of navigation, we expect the Council to take prompt action.

The Strait of Hormuz must be kept open and free for transit. The current situation has far-reaching consequences for the global economy, energy supply and food security and especially for people and countries already in vulnerable situations. We call on all parties to engage in diplomacy and to refrain from the use of force. In crises such as these, it is crucial that we lower tensions, allow time for negotiations and let cool headedness prevail. We stand ready to support efforts that can help ensure navigational rights and freedoms in the Strait, including efforts by the Secretary-General, as well as the Personal Envoy and task force he has designated for this purpose. Such efforts should be informed by close engagement with the Gulf countries. We underline the urgent needs of stranded seafarers and commend the efforts of the International Maritime Organization to enable their evacuation. In Europe, Russia is continuing its hybrid activities in the maritime space. Its shadow fleet and interference of satellite navigation systems have a direct impact on our national security. These irresponsible actions have led to a deterioration of the security situation in the Baltic Sea region as a whole.

While we need to address these urgent threats and challenges, we must not lose sight of the long-term strategic issues linked to maritime affairs: how the health of the ocean will affect future life conditions on this planet. As coastal States of the Baltic Sea and Arctic countries, the Nordic countries are firmly committed to the protection of the ocean and regional seas. We are delighted that the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction has entered into force and encourage all States to consider becoming parties to this important new instrument of international law.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Plepytė (Lithuania): At the outset, I would like to thank the Bahraini presidency for this timely debate.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to make a statement in my national capacity.

Maritime security is inseparable from international peace and security, resilient supply chains and the rules-based international order. Today, all three are under increasing strain. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has shown that insecurity at sea can produce consequences far beyond the immediate region. Russia's blockade of the Black Sea, attacks against Ukrainian ports and deliberate weaponization of food exports contributed to a global grain crisis that affected the most vulnerable countries most severely. These were not incidental consequences of war; they were deliberate actions that violated international law and undermined global stability.

We are now witnessing another serious disruption by Russia's ally Iran in the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most vital maritime corridors. Any interference with freedom of navigation through this waterway is unacceptable. The international community must act with urgency to ensure safe, orderly and predictable maritime transit. The freedom of navigation, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, must be respected by all States.

At the same time, this principle cannot be invoked to conceal conduct that threatens maritime safety or undermines international law. In that regard, Lithuania reiterates the importance of the declaration recently adopted by the Council of the International Maritime Organization, which condemns attacks on international shipping and the disruption of critical maritime routes.

We also welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish a task force aimed at ensuring safe, orderly and predictable maritime transit. We commend France and the United Kingdom for their efforts to build a broad maritime coalition in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Lithuania stands ready to contribute to those collective efforts, including by providing demining capabilities.

We are concerned that shadow fleets are still being used by certain countries, including by members of Security Council. To circumvent the sanctions regimes, they operate under false flags and violate international maritime law. These vessels pose a significant threat to the environment and critical maritime infrastructure. At the same time, this maritime infrastructure, including undersea cables, is being increasingly targeted by hybrid attacks, including sabotage, cyberattacks and deliberate signal interference. Lithuania calls for enhanced information-sharing, stronger coordination and sustained international cooperation to address those threats.

The safety of the maritime domain is a shared responsibility. We must ensure that the seas remain open, secure and governed by international law. Lithuania remains committed to working with partners to uphold those principles.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Ešťok (Slovakia): Slovakia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Maritime security is nowadays under severe strain, facing complex challenges with implications for international peace and security. The sea is rife with geopolitical tensions. For a landlocked country like Slovakia, these tensions heavily affect our energy security. With recent interruptions of the Druzhba pipeline, any prolonged disruption of maritime routes represents a major strategic challenge.

Cyberthreats against port infrastructure are growing, as are threats to critical undersea infrastructure. Illegal activities, including piracy and trafficking, remain a major concern, while new technologies, such as low-cost drones, pose new risks to vessels and civilian crews. These transnational maritime challenges require a coherent and coordinated multilateral response.

(spoke in French)

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea establishes the legal framework for all maritime activities. In that regard, we call for respect for the rights and freedoms of navigation guaranteed under the Convention.

Beyond its heavy human toll, the war in the Middle East has a direct impact on international maritime transport. We call on the Security Council to actively address the situation in the wider Persian Gulf region. It is essential to fully restore safe navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, as there are no immediate alternatives for transporting strategic commodities in volume without this vital waterway. We hope that the current ceasefires will be extended and replaced by genuine negotiations in order to prevent further escalations or physical blockades of the Strait, which must be avoided at all costs.

Slovakia expresses clear support for its partners of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. We stand in solidarity with those affected by attacks on energy and civilian infrastructure and are ready to offer our expertise in water management to mitigate the impact of the war on water and land once the conflict has ended.

Furthermore, we encourage the Security Council to deepen coordination with international partners in order to address threats to global maritime security. What matters most is the Security Council's ability to effectively exercise its primary

responsibility to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace. We join those calling for greater unity within the Council to address escalating global conflicts, including those in the Middle East, Ukraine and the Sudan.

Although Slovakia is a landlocked country, we are actively developing and modernizing our transport infrastructure in order to integrate into regional maritime networks. Slovak companies are becoming increasingly involved in maritime trade and international transport. My country has participated in the European Union naval operations IRINI and Aspides to ensure freedom of navigation. Furthermore, we are prepared to participate in preparatory planning and to contribute to the reopening of a safe passage through the Strait, in accordance with any specific requirements that may arise.

The bond between humanity and the sea runs deep. Let me conclude by emphasizing that the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 — conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources — remains a priority and a significant challenge.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Czechia.

Ms. Chatardová (Czechia): At the outset, the Czech Republic would like to thank Bahrain for its leadership in bringing this crucial issue to the Council's attention and for its engagement in upholding international peace and security at a time when instability in one region can rapidly translate into serious global consequences.

Today's discussion takes place against the backdrop of a difficult security and geopolitical situation, marked by heightened tensions and growing risks in the maritime domain.

The Czech Republic remains deeply concerned by the situation in the Strait of Hormuz. We recall the continued threat posed by Iran to its neighbours. Developments in this strategically vital waterway have a direct and significant impact on global energy markets, food security and economic stability worldwide.

We welcome the Secretary-General's decision to establish a task force led by the United Nations Office for Project Services, aimed at ensuring humanitarian flows through the Strait of Hormuz. We also welcome ongoing diplomatic efforts and express our readiness to continue close cooperation with Bahrain and like-minded partners in support of regional stabilization and the protection of the global maritime commons.

We wish to acknowledge the constructive role that the Gulf countries play in supporting security in the region. Their efforts to improve coordination and ensure safe navigation contribute meaningfully to de-escalation in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

The Czech Republic reaffirms its commitment to freedom of navigation and to respect for international law, including the law of the sea. Threats in the maritime domain, including the denial of the right of transit passage, endanger the flow of humanitarian assistance. They also disrupt global trade and energy supplies and undermine economic stability well beyond the areas directly affected.

In this context, we wish to underscore the growing risks posed by attacks on shipping and by the deliberate targeting of critical maritime infrastructure. Such actions threaten not only commercial activity and humanitarian lifelines but also the marine environment and the safety of coastal communities.

We are also concerned about the growing number of shadow fleet vessels operating outside and in violation of established international rules and standards.

These practices undermine maritime safety, pose serious risks and facilitate the circumvention of sanctions.

Building on Bahrain's initiative, our shared ambition should be to ensure that the seas, vital to global stability and economic resilience, remain a space of cooperation.

In conclusion, the Czech Republic underscores its readiness to cooperate closely with partners in ensuring that these principles, essential to international peace and security, are upheld.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Ms. Tinca (Romania): Romania thanks Bahrain for convening this open debate on maritime security, a topic we have consistently supported.

The link between maritime security and international peace and security is undeniable, and upholding international law, with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea at its core, must remain a shared priority in all oceans and seas.

Unfortunately, we are witnessing a serious deterioration of maritime security worldwide. Recent events in the Strait of Hormuz and earlier in the Black Sea, following Russia's aggression against Ukraine, illustrate this trend.

Romania speaks today with the authority of direct experience. For five years, we have lived next to a war that continues to affect security and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea. Civilian shipping is threatened by drifting mines, GPS jamming and repeated violations of neighbouring airspace.

Over the past days, three incidents occurred in Romania involving Russian drones, including one loaded with explosives that crashed into an ordinary household, produced material damages and caused the evacuation of more than 500 inhabitants. Romania firmly condemns these actions by the Russian Federation, which represent a blatant violation of international law. These incidents show that maritime and airspace insecurity have real consequences for civilian populations.

At the same time, we are fully aware that other regions face equally serious challenges, and Romania has acted responsibly and in solidarity. After the collapse of the Black Sea grain initiative, we enabled the safe transit of Ukrainian food exports. Together with Bulgaria and Türkiye, we are conducting demining operations, and under the European Union's strategy for the Black Sea, we are in the process of establishing a maritime security hub to strengthen monitoring and situational awareness in support of freedom of navigation. We support Ukraine's pursuit for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations and remain committed to the resilience of the Republic of Moldova.

We express our solidarity with our Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf partners and Jordan. Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz echo earlier challenges in the Black Sea. We commend the mediation efforts that led to a ceasefire agreement. The reopening of the Strait by Iran to unhindered maritime traffic must be a shared priority. Resolution 2817 (2026) should be fully implemented to restore predictability in global energy and food markets. Romania supports de-escalation and coordinated efforts to ensure freedom of navigation, including the Strait of Hormuz maritime freedom of navigation initiative. We stand ready to contribute constructively to efforts aimed at easing tensions and achieving sustainable peace.

The Council should maintain sustained attention on maritime security. We appreciate the recent work of Bahrain, Greece and Panama. The United Nations must continue to promote respect for international law, including the freedoms of navigation and overflight at all times, including during conflict. Unsafe and illicit

shipping practices, such as the use of substandard vessels, including Russia's so-called shadow fleet, require coordinated international action. The United Nations can also foster dialogue on protecting critical maritime infrastructure, including undersea cables and offshore energy platforms.

Last but not least, climate change, including rising sea levels, poses additional risks to maritime security. The United Nations is the natural platform to strengthen cooperation in addressing this challenge, drawing on recent legal developments such as the related International Court of Justice advisory opinion.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Mishchenko (Ukraine): Let me thank the Bahrain presidency for organizing today's important debate. We are also grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres and other briefers for their valuable insights.

Maritime security is becoming increasingly urgent. Ukraine, as a maritime nation, attaches the highest priority to safety at sea and remains committed to ensuring secure navigation in its waters. However, Russia's war of aggression has severely undermined maritime security in the Black Sea region and beyond. The Russian Federation continues to impose unlawful restrictions on navigation, carry out systematic attacks against port infrastructure and merchant vessels, disrupt maritime safety systems and create persistent threats through the mining of sea areas. As a result, the safety of navigation in the Black Sea remains severely compromised. Only this month, Russia has carried out several deliberate attacks against civilian vessels flying the flags of Liberia and Panama, which were either en route to Ukrainian ports to load grain or were already undergoing cargo operations at berths, as well as against port infrastructure, thereby creating enormous risk to the life and health of civilian crews and port workers.

Furthermore, Russian aggression has resulted in the illegal use of seaports located in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, which had been lawfully closed, about which the International Maritime Organization had been notified. Foreign-flagged vessels continue to unlawfully enter these ports to load and export goods, including Ukrainian agriculture products, in direct violation of international law. Such activities are enabled by the international deactivation or manipulation of the automatic identification system, constituting violations of international maritime safety obligations and facilitating the concealment of illegal cargo movement.

We call for strict adherence to international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and for coordinated international efforts to ensure safe and secure maritime navigation. Ukraine remains committed to working constructively with all partners to strengthen maritime security and uphold the rules-based order of the sea. Ukraine welcomes efforts aimed at de-escalation and the establishment of ceasefire in the Middle East and the Gulf region. It is a necessary step towards ending hostilities. It saves lives, prevents destruction and creates the conditions for diplomacy and delivering results.

Ukraine has consistently called for a ceasefire in Russia's ongoing war of aggression against our State and our people, and we equally support steps towards de-escalation in the Middle East and the Gulf as a pathway for diplomatic engagement.

At the same time, Ukraine expresses serious concern about the continuous threats to maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz. Attacks on merchant ships, intimidation of crew and any attempts to disrupt navigation are unacceptable and constitute clear violations of international law, including the principle of freedom of navigation. The situation in the region has global implications. Any threats to stability in the Gulf directly affect international trade, energy security and the cost of living

worldwide. In this context, ensuring freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz is of critical importance. Ukraine remains committed to working constructively with all partners to strengthen maritime security and uphold the rules-based order at sea.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Pinheiro Torres (Portugal): Let me start by thanking Bahrain for convening such a pressing debate and the briefers for their insights.

Portugal aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and wishes to add the following remarks.

As a maritime nation, Portugal's sovereignty and our economic and human security is closely tied to the security of our oceans. The sharp escalation in and around the Strait of Hormuz exposed the urgency of sustainable solutions to protect vital waterways. These disruptions are threats to trade and economic stability, which impact food and energy security, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, namely developing countries.

We welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a task force, led by Under-Secretary-General Jorge Moreira da Silva, to develop mechanisms designed to meet humanitarian needs in the Strait of Hormuz by facilitating the fertilizer trade, including the movement of related raw materials.

Portugal greatly values the central role of the International Maritime Organization in preserving the safety of navigation on strategic shipping routes. Upholding maritime rules, navigation rights and freedoms and ensuring the safety and welfare of seafarers are essential. Portugal will continue to engage diplomatically and to advocate for duly mandated responses to restore normalcy to the Strait of Hormuz. We urge all parties to choose diplomacy and dialogue and to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law and freedom of navigation.

More generally, allow me to highlight three priority areas.

First, international law must prevail at sea. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea remains the legal foundation for all maritime activities, yet implementation must follow. The Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions must translate into cooperation, capacity-building and accountability on the ground.

Secondly, regional cooperation and local ownership are crucial to maritime security. Effective maritime security begins ashore, with strong institutions, trained personnel, real-time coordination and trusted information-sharing among partners. The Atlantic Centre, established by Portugal and 28 member States from three continents, plays a pivotal role in expanding knowledge and implementing multilateral capacity-building projects. Its Atlantic Community of Interest fosters dialogue among States, international organizations, academia and industry. In March, with the Atlantic Centre and the Permanent Missions of Angola, Gabon and Uruguay, we organized an event on blue crime here in New York. Portugal contributes operationally, namely through European Union operations legitimized by Council resolutions, ranging from Operation Irini in the Mediterranean to Operation Atalanta off the Horn of Africa.

Thirdly, we must address emerging risks. It is essential to ensure the security of critical maritime infrastructure, including submarine cables, the backbone of our global digital economy. New technologies, including satellite-based services, can enhance maritime awareness and response. Portugal is actively contributing to those efforts through the Atlantic Constellation of satellites.

We must act strategically at the United Nations, moving from crisis response to preventive engagement. The Council must tackle maritime security in a cross-cutting, systematic manner, calling for thematic meetings that go beyond incident-based response and including maritime security in peace operation mandates, particularly in areas in which instability at sea and on land are mutually reinforcing. Ensuring that our seas remain open, safe and governed by the rule of law is at the heart of our multilateral engagement and of our candidature for the 2027–2028 term on the Security Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Thistlethwaite (Australia): This debate comes at a critical time for global maritime security. Navigational rights and freedoms matter to all States and must be respected in accordance with international law. The effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's threats and indiscriminate attacks on countries in the region, including against commercial vessels, have caused unprecedented global shocks and placed innocent civilians, including seafarers, at serious risk.

Global maritime security is directly linked to global economic stability. All States rely on open sea lanes and waterways for supply chain security. The disruption to maritime transit through the Strait of Hormuz is causing unprecedented shocks to global energy, fertilizer and petrochemical supplies. A prolonged disruption will have significant and far-reaching human and economic consequences.

Around 80 per cent of oil and oil product exports transiting the Strait of Hormuz were Asia-bound, making the Indo-Pacific highly susceptible to energy supply disruptions. Like Australia, Pacific countries import virtually all their fuel. Pacific island countries are acutely vulnerable to oil price fluctuations, as they rely on fuel imports for transport and electricity. Shortages threaten essential services and, indeed, food security. The uncertain trajectory of the conflict and its impact on international shipping make the scale and duration of this economic shock difficult to predict, but the risks are severe and growing.

Australia reiterates its call for all States to uphold navigational rights and freedoms, the lawful use of and activities on the sea and the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes in accordance with international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We reaffirm our strong support for the work of the International Maritime Organization and commend its efforts to help safeguard stranded civilian seafarers in the Strait of Hormuz. Coordinated diplomatic engagement is essential. Australia will continue to support United Nations and international diplomatic efforts to ensure safe and unhindered maritime transit and to safeguard seafarers.

We renew our call for Iran to act in accordance with resolution 2817 (2026). Navigational rights and freedoms should never be weaponized. Australia continues to call for the unconditional, unrestricted and immediate reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Finally, we repeat our call for the ceasefire to be maintained, for talks to resume and for an end to the conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia.

Mr. Sok (Cambodia): Cambodia commends Bahrain for convening this timely open debate and thanks the briefers for their valuable insights.

We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

As a firm proponent of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, Cambodia underscores that safe and secure waterways are essential to international peace and security, to global economic stability and to sustainable development. Our ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction reaffirms our commitment to the rules-based maritime order and the responsible management of ocean resources.

In light of growing threats to maritime security, Cambodia highlights three priorities.

First, disputes must be resolved peacefully through dialogue and diplomacy. The principles of freedom of navigation, lawful transit passage and the safety of seafarers, as enshrined in international law, including UNCLOS, must be fully respected.

Secondly, Cambodia stresses the importance of enhanced technical assistance for developing coastal States. Capacity-building in maritime law enforcement, port and vessel security, maritime domain awareness and timely information-sharing are essential to addressing emerging challenges effectively.

Thirdly, the Council should adopt a more integrated and preventive approach that strengthens long-term resilience. Such efforts must be inclusive, timely and consistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

(spoke in French)

Cambodia remains committed to defending international law, promoting peaceful dialogue and strengthening maritime security, in particular in fighting transnational crime. We reaffirm our commitment to transparency and regional cooperation and welcome friendly foreign ships in our modernized naval base in Ream for joint exercises, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and cooperation to combat terrorism.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Arbeiter (Canada): Allow me to thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this important debate and, indeed, for giving all Member States an opportunity to participate. The seas and oceans surrounding us connect our societies, economies and ecosystems. As developments in the Strait of Hormuz amply illustrate, threats in the maritime domain have specific local manifestation, but their impacts are global.

Canada expresses its full solidarity with the countries of the region that have borne the brunt of Iran's attacks. Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan are not bystanders, but direct stakeholders that have sustained unprovoked and unacceptable attacks on their territory, civilian infrastructure and economic assets. Over 4,000 drone and missile strikes have been launched against them since 28 February.

The disruption of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz has cascading impacts on many economies, particularly those of developing countries and, indeed, on the global economy as a whole. The questions posed earlier this morning by the Bahrain presidency are the right questions for us to be asking. I want to thank Bahrain and the other members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, which have been actively bringing this issue to the attention of the United Nations system as a whole, both here in New York, as well as in London, Rome, Geneva and elsewhere.

We note with concern the findings presented to the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), regarding the impact on global

food supply chains, including fertilizer exports. Food security must not be instrumentalized. Nor can we allow Iran to turn the Strait of Hormuz into a selective access corridor or toll booth system that would set a dangerous precedent for international navigation rights.

Participating in the 17 April Leaders' Summit on the Strait of Hormuz, convened by France and the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister of Canada stressed the importance of international cooperation to protect navigation rights and promote stability for commercial shipping through a defensive framework grounded in international law. Canada is prepared to play its part in such an international approach when conditions permit.

We are actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to build the broadest possible consensus to uphold respect for international navigation rights and for the safety of seafarers. Canada has also contributed 23.6 million barrels of oil to the International Energy Agency's coordinated release to stabilize global energy markets.

(spoke in French)

We note with concern the conclusions of the extraordinary session of the FAO Council. The traditional and emerging maritime threats extend to all seas, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the Caribbean to the Red Sea and everywhere in the Indo-Pacific. At the heart of its Group of Seven presidency in 2025, Canada made fighting these threats an absolute priority, articulated around three main action areas that are more relevant than ever in the current context.

First, we must ensure respect for freedom of navigation and fight against emerging threats, in particular by improving coordination to protect essential and extremely vulnerable maritime and submarine infrastructure, a vital component of global economy.

Secondly, we must promote the resilience of supply chains and the safety of maritime transport, in particular by creating a working group on the shadow fleet, in order to disrupt and dissuade the maritime activities of the shadow fleet, which are illegal, unsafe and harmful to the environment.

Thirdly, we must ensure the sustainable management of maritime resources, in particular by strengthening our fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, which significantly harms economies and damages fragile maritime ecosystems. This work requires the cooperation of a vast interregional group of relevant regional and international partners and organizations. We welcome the cooperation of the Security Council and of all parties concerned in support of these efforts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Ms. Kunimitsu (Japan): I wish to express Japan's gratitude to Bahrain for taking the initiative to hold this timely meeting.

The sea and the oceans connect us and allow us to live and prosper. As reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, safe passage must be ensured, and we cannot overemphasize the importance of the maritime legal order, now more than ever. I take this opportunity to call for full respect for the rule of law at sea as a common interest of all humanity and an essential foundation for world peace, stability and prosperity.

The situation in the Strait of Hormuz has served as a potent reminder to the international community that free, open and stable maritime routes are vitally important for our lives and economic activities. The Strait must remain open and safe

for international navigation as an international public good and as a crucial foundation for a global trade network that sustains billions of people.

Japan supported resolution 2817 (2026) to underscore that safe and free navigation of merchants and commercial vessels must be respected in accordance with international law. We also welcome the decision taken by the International Maritime Organization Council on 19 March to establish a framework to that end, such as the safe maritime corridor proposed by Japan. We call on the relevant parties to take the necessary immediate actions, in line with this decision, to facilitate the safe evacuation of merchant ships.

Furthermore, Japan welcomes the United Nations initiatives, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, to ensure safe navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, including the appointment of a special envoy and the establishment of a task force, in order to meet humanitarian needs.

The situation in the Strait of Hormuz should not obscure what is happening in the Indo-Pacific. We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. We reiterate our strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force and coercion, including the repeated obstruction of the freedoms of navigation and overflight, which escalate tensions and undermine regional stability.

Japan has been a strong advocate of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept for the past 10 years, through which we have provided capacity-building assistance for countries in need with a view to promoting the rule of law at sea. In this regard, we have been working closely with the United Nations system to provide capacity-building to maritime nations. For example, the Japan Coast Guard and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime have cooperated since 2018 in carrying out training programmes aimed at enhancing maritime law enforcement capabilities.

In closing, Japan is determined to closely work together with the United Nations and Member States to maintain and reinforce a free and open maritime order based on the rule of law to ensure the safety of navigation and to foster a stable and prosperous global maritime environment for generations to come.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Ms. Le (Viet Nam): Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

As a maritime nation with nearly 90 per cent of its trade volume carried by sea, secure and uninterrupted maritime routes are Viet Nam's economic lifeline. We express our deep concern about recent developments in key maritime chokepoints, but particularly in the Strait of Hormuz, which are a stark reminder that disruption to strategic waterways can quickly spread far beyond the region concerned, threatening international peace and stability, disrupting global supply chains and constraining the development prospects of many countries, particularly developing economies.

We are particularly concerned about the humanitarian impact of the detention of seafarers. At present, more than 20 Vietnamese vessels with more than 200 Vietnamese seafarers remain stranded in the Strait of Hormuz. We call on all parties concerned to ensure their safety and security and create favourable conditions for their safe and swift return in accordance with relevant international law and applicable international conventions.

Viet Nam reaffirms that freedom of navigation and overflight, including safe, continuous and unimpeded strategic passage through straits used for international

navigation, must be upheld in accordance with international law, as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). UNCLOS provides the comprehensive legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. All maritime claims, regulation and enforcement activities must be consistent with and shall not exceed what is provided for under the Convention. We call on all States to interpret and apply UNCLOS consistently and in good faith without selectivity. Rights and responsibilities must go hand in hand. We underscore that disputes and differences must be resolved by peaceful means in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

History has taught us an important lesson: lasting peace cannot be achieved through the threat or use of force. We therefore urge all parties concerned to exercise the utmost restraint, refrain from unilateral actions that may escalate tension, and engage in meaningful dialogue and diplomacy to build trust and pursue durable solutions.

It is Viet Nam's view that concerted efforts by the international community are much needed to address maritime security challenges. In this regard, we reaffirm the central role of the Council in maintaining international peace and security, including through promoting compliance with international law, supporting diplomacy and encouraging de-escalation measures to reduce tension in critical waterways. We also recognize the contribution of regional arrangements in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations to fostering dialogue, building trust and advancing peaceful solutions. At the same time, technical and specialized agencies, particularly the International Maritime Organization, should continue to play a vital role in strengthening maritime safety and security through international standards and practical cooperation.

The seas and oceans connect us all. The protection of vital waterways is a collective responsibility. Viet Nam stands firm in upholding international law and stands ready to work with all members of the international community to safeguard maritime security for peace, stability and prosperity for all.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. The flashing lights on the microphone will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Kössler (Austria): Austria thanks the Kingdom of Bahrain for organizing today's open debate. And we congratulate you, Jamal Alrowaieci, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council.

Austria has no direct access to the sea, as might be common knowledge. However, maritime security as a global concern affects all of us, regardless of geography. Every State, coastal or not, is a stakeholder in the security of the world's oceans.

I would like to make three points.

As a principled position, Austria firmly believes in the centrality of international law on land, in the sky or at sea. In particular, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea serves as a cornerstone of maritime governance. Its provisions reflect customary international law which is binding on all States. Only an international order based on international law can guarantee stability and peace. As Chair of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law, Austria will continue to advocate for respect for international norms.

Secondly, we are currently witnessing how disruptions at sea can reverberate across continents, threatening food and energy security, supply chains and environmental sustainability. The unilateral blockade and restrictions on the freedom of navigation of one of the most important maritime routes, namely the Strait of Hormuz, is leading to very real consequences affecting all of us. It risks pushing the most vulnerable countries to the brink of famine. Any unilateral action restricting freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz or, for that matter, other international straits, are therefore simply unacceptable. Austria therefore strongly calls for freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz to be swiftly restored. We welcome the Secretary-General's initiative on fertilizer exports as a pragmatic first step. But let us be clear: pragmatic workarounds are not a substitute for the rule of law.

Thirdly, a key threat to maritime security is transnational organized crime. Austria places great importance on combating human trafficking and human smuggling networks. In addition, attacks on merchant vessels lead to interruptions of global trade, and piracy and armed robbery increase the constant dangers ship crews live in. We advocate for comprehensive and preventive approaches based on strong partnerships. In this context, we also see the need to strengthen international cooperation with regard to the protection of maritime infrastructure. In this regard, we commend the valuable work of many United Nations agencies, particularly the Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Austria stands ready to shoulder its responsibility within this framework, as we do with active participation in the European Union military operation in the Mediterranean, Operation IRINI, off Libya's coast, and the Europe Union Naval Force Operation Aspides in the Red Sea.

Austria's candidacy for the Security Council for the term 2027–2028 is grounded in our commitment to international law, effective multilateralism and a holistic approach to peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain for its presidency of the Security Council during April 2026, and for its wise initiative in organizing this high-level debate dedicated to maritime security. This choice reflects a deep strategic awareness of the serious challenges facing international maritime routes, which require the concerted will of the entire international community to confront them. I would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, and commend his vision and firm resolve in steering the presidency.

It is evident that maritime security has become a central pillar of international peace and security. More than 90 per cent of global trade passes through seas and oceans, and any attack on the freedom of navigation or the security of international maritime routes constitutes a direct attack on the economies and the livelihoods of people. For this reason, we are united today by a clear moral and legal duty to safeguard the integrity of these vital arteries that connect the world's continents.

Morocco, by virtue of its exceptional geographical position at the crossroads of Africa and Europe and along the shores of the Strait of Gibraltar, one of the most strategic maritime passages in the world, fully understands the importance of this issue and its responsibilities. For us, freedom of navigation is not merely a diplomatic option; it is an existential imperative dictated by geography, history and the preservation of shared prosperity.

However, the current situation is deeply concerning. The instrumentalization of international straits and maritime routes as bargaining chips and tools for blackmail, including implicit threats to close the Strait of Hormuz, the very artery of global

energy supply, represents conduct that runs counter to international obligations and the spirit of responsibility mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. No State, regardless of the legitimacy it claims, has the right to hold the world hostage by controlling its maritime routes. The seas belong to all humankind; they are not bargaining chips to be wielded by those who have, for decades, pursued policies characterized by hostility and provocation.

Furthermore, the threats to international navigation in the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea through acts committed by armed groups operating as proxies for certain States constitute a clear violation of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The Kingdom of Morocco strongly condemns these attacks targeting commercial vessels indiscriminately. Such acts are unacceptable under any pretext and cannot be justified by any political or ideological position.

The international community now faces a historic responsibility: to ensure that geography does not become hostage to ideology. This is particularly imperative when vital maritime corridors are weaponized by certain States — States that, for decades, have pursued policies of destabilization, interference in the internal affairs of others and support for armed proxies across the region, while disregarding their international obligations and the appeals of the international community.

On a practical level, given its strategic location, the Kingdom of Morocco actively participates in maritime cooperation frameworks with international and regional partners to combat smuggling and to ensure the security of maritime routes adjacent to its coasts and those of its partners.

Based on Morocco's firm belief that seas and oceans are not barriers that separate peoples but bridges that connect them — spaces for cooperation, solidarity and shared prosperity — His Majesty King Mohammed VI has launched two pioneering initiatives. The first is the Royal Atlantic Initiative, which provides Sahel countries with access to the Atlantic Ocean, embodying the spirit of solidarity, economic integration and shared development, and transforming geography from a constraint into an opportunity serving the peoples of the region. The second is the Atlantic African States Process, which brings together more than 20 coastal countries along the African continent's Atlantic seaboard, placing maritime security at the core of its agenda, thus transforming the African Atlantic from a zone of instability into a space for solidarity and collective security and unlocking new horizons for stability and development, both for Africa and the world at large.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Martínez Belío (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain thanks the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this high-level debate on the security and protection of maritime routes, a global public good and a central issue for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Spain's strongest condemnation of Iran's unjustified attacks against Bahrain and other friendly countries in the Gulf and the region.

International law is the essential pillar upon which peaceful coexistence among States and, by extension, maritime security rests. The norms governing maritime spaces, freedom of navigation, environmental protection and the sustainable management of resources provide a framework that ensures international stability and predictability. Respect for those norms strengthens mutual trust and reduces the risk of escalation in a domain that is strategic for global trade and energy security. In the context of mounting tensions and transnational challenges, defending the validity of

international law is not only a legal obligation but also a commitment to international peace and security.

In the same vein, Spain reaffirms its conviction that multilateralism is the most effective tool for addressing the challenges affecting our seas and oceans. Piracy, illicit trafficking, illegal fishing and the protection of critical infrastructure are threats that no State can tackle alone. Multilateral forums enable the coordination of efforts, information sharing, harmonization of standards and the building of trust among diverse actors.

At a time when international cooperation is more necessary than ever, Spain considers it essential to strengthen these collective mechanisms to ensure open, safe and rules-based seas. Faced with the major challenges affecting our seas and oceans, respect for international law and international cooperation are the only instruments capable of guaranteeing and strengthening maritime security. There is no room for unilateral solutions.

Spain underscores that international law is the pillar guiding action in the maritime domain. We underline the centrality of the universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including the peaceful settlement of disputes and the prohibition of the use of force, which are also fully applicable to the maritime sphere.

Spain is a maritime nation with a global outlook. Our Maritime Security Strategy of 2024 identifies the maritime domain as a space of strategic global importance, in a context marked by disruption in the international system, increased geostrategic competition and growing vulnerabilities in supply chains and submarine infrastructure.

Spain is a country that is committed to maritime security governance. Evidence of this is its contribution to Operation Atalanta, the mandate of which includes protecting vessels of the World Food Programme and other vulnerable ships, and deterring and combating piracy. The Operation has fostered excellent security cooperation relationships with numerous countries in the region and beyond, serving as an example of the significant potential of working together with a multilateral focus. It has accumulated an extraordinary body of shared experience and mutually beneficial cooperation, which we must continue to develop collectively.

This approach is also applicable in other regions. We contribute vessels on a regular basis in the Gulf of Guinea through the Coordinated Maritime Presences approach of the European Union, which strengthens coordination and cooperation between coastal States and the Yaoundé Architecture in addressing maritime crime. This is an initiative of great importance for coastal States that benefits the security of all. In parallel, Spain supports sustainable solutions based on cooperation with all our partners and foresight, integration and resilience, through training and capacity-building for coastal States, the enhancement of capabilities, including port and digital capabilities, and environmental protection.

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea establishes the legal framework applicable to activities in the oceans and the protection of the rights and freedoms of navigation. This essential legal framework must be respected. The Security Council has reaffirmed that the exercise of the rights and freedoms of navigation by merchant and commercial vessels, in accordance with international law, must be respected, and that transit must continue unhindered, as recalled in resolution 2722 (2024) and, more recently, resolution 2817 (2026). We call for strict compliance with these resolutions.

In this context, we reaffirm our commitment to open, safe and resilient maritime routes. Threats to critical maritime routes have a direct and systemic impact on energy security and international supply chains, such as those for fertilizers, causing logistical disruption and hindering humanitarian access. Furthermore, the recurrence of incidents increases the risks of escalation and miscalculation, with clear consequences for economic security and international peace.

Our strategy identifies that hybrid strategies occupy a central position on the risk map, including economic coercion, pressure through dependencies, cyberattacks and influence campaigns, and that all this also manifests itself at sea. Spain therefore advocates responses based on an integrated approach. An essential component of this approach is the protection of critical infrastructure, including critical undersea infrastructure. In line with the European action plan on submarine cable security, Spain underscores its strategic importance and its vulnerability to disruption and sabotage in a context of hybrid threats and cyberthreats.

Multilateralism and dialogue among States is not an option but rather an indispensable requirement for the international community to address global challenges, including the strengthening of maritime security. Spain is firmly committed to effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, including its agencies, such as the International Maritime Organization, and with the active contribution of regional organizations, including the European Union, pooling capabilities and avoiding duplication. In this context, we welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to develop a mechanism to ensure safe, swift and predictable maritime transit for humanitarian purposes through the Strait of Hormuz, and we reiterate the need for the Strait to be reopened in order to guarantee free and safe passage, in line with international law.

In conclusion, as part of the international community's commitment to effective multilateralism and respect for international law, the Security Council can add value by systematically reaffirming international law, condemning attacks on shipping and catalysing coordination among international and regional frameworks through an integrated approach.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate your brotherly country, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdullatif Al Zayani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, who is presiding over this morning's meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and the Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies for their valuable briefings.

Our meeting today is taking place under very critical circumstances, as threats to the safety of international waterways and freedom of navigation that go beyond traditional challenges are increasing, threatening international peace and security and the global economy, particularly in vital sea lanes such as the Strait of Hormuz.

In this context, the State of Qatar affirms that freedom of navigation is a fundamental principle of international law, including as stipulated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982. The State of Qatar also underscores the importance of resolution 552 (1984), which emphasized the importance of the Gulf region to international peace and security and its vital role in the stability of the global economy. It also called on all States to respect international law, the freedom of navigation in international waters and sea routes of ships navigating to and from all ports and installations of coastal States that are not parties

to hostilities. It also called on all States to respect the territorial integrity of those States that are not parties to hostilities.

Accordingly, regarding the developments in the Strait of Hormuz, the State of Qatar stresses the importance of implementing resolution 2817 (2026), which was submitted by the Kingdom of Bahrain on behalf of the States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and Jordan. The resolution condemned the attacks launched by the Islamic Republic of Iran on the territories of the State of Qatar, the Arab States of the Gulf and Jordan, considering the attacks a violation of international law and a serious threat to international peace and security. The resolution also affirmed its support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the GCC States and Jordan and condemned any actions or threats by the Islamic Republic of Iran aimed at closing the Strait of Hormuz or disrupting international navigation therein. The resolution also emphasized that any attempt to impede legitimate transit passage or freedom of navigation in these international waterways is a serious threat to international peace and security. We reaffirm the importance of ensuring the security of sea lanes, freedom of navigation and international trade, in accordance with international law, in a way that helps to safeguard the region's stability and global supply chains.

We also welcome the ongoing mediation efforts led by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and all parties that have undertaken the mediation and good offices that have contributed to the ceasefire between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The State of Qatar underscores the importance of fully abiding by the declaration of the ceasefire in order to ensure the stabilization of the truce and the creation of conditions for dialogue, including ensuring freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates its unwavering support for all diplomatic efforts and peaceful endeavours and stresses that serious dialogue and adherence to the principles of international law and good neighbourliness are the main pillars for settling crises and avoiding their dangerous repercussions, thereby enhancing efforts to maintain international peace and security, including the safety and protection of waterways in the maritime sphere, in accordance with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Hadi (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

As the world's largest archipelagic State, Indonesia places maritime safety and security at the core of its national policy priorities. Therefore, Indonesia does not consider the current disruption in the Strait of Hormuz to be an isolated incident. It is the latest in a decade of systemic shocks that have pushed our maritime corridors to the breaking point. From the coronavirus disease pandemic, the Black Sea crisis to the Red Sea, our maritime corridors have proven to be far more fragile than we think. Left unchecked, this fragility may become an existential threat to humankind. For Indonesia, the path forward is clear: the law must prevail. We therefore urge the Security Council to uphold its responsibility to restore and reassert safe maritime routes, in accordance with international law, in particular the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Furthermore, Indonesia wishes to highlight three key points.

The first is international law, international law and international law. The regime of transit passage under the 1982 UNCLOS must be preserved. Furthermore, as a

major contributor of seafarers, Indonesia emphasizes that the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and International Maritime Organization standards must be fully upheld. International humanitarian law must also apply. We underscore the importance of its interplay with the law of naval warfare and the law of the sea. Indonesia, with Egypt and the International Committee of the Red Cross, is spearheading the global initiative on international humanitarian law through the naval warfare workstream to ensure these frameworks are consistently applied.

Secondly, in the shadow of the current crisis in the Strait of Hormuz, diplomacy is the only viable path. Indonesia calls on all parties to exercise restraint, cease hostilities and pursue a credible political pathway towards a durable peace.

Thirdly, with regard to international cooperation and confidence-building measures, we welcome the Secretary-General's task force for the Strait of Hormuz to ensure unhindered passage for humanitarian assistance and trade, as well as strategic commodities such as fertilizers. In South-East Asia, the three littoral States — Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore — advance the Malacca Strait Patrol and the Cooperative Mechanism on Safety of Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore to safeguard one of the world's most strategic maritime corridors.

It is worth bearing in mind that international cooperation always serves as a vital confidence-building measure. We therefore urge all littoral States and key partners to advance such confidence-building measures to ensure the sustained stability of maritime routes. Indonesia stands ready to work with all partners.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Mr. Abdullatif Al Zayani. We congratulate the Kingdom of Bahrain on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and commend the exceptional efforts of the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations in steering the Council's work, including devoting this meeting to discussing the security and safety of waterways and to ways to strengthen the protection of international navigation, at a time when the world is confronting the repercussions of an unprecedented political, economic and environmental crisis. I would also like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and Mr. Nick Childs for their valuable briefings.

This meeting convenes under delicate, indeed critical, circumstances. The rapidly unfolding developments in our region, the Arabian Gulf region, are marked by an unprecedented state of conflict surrounding the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait constitutes a vital waterway, not only for the countries of the region, but for the entire global economy. Any threat to the freedom of navigation in this strategic waterway directly affects the stability of energy markets, global supply chains and international economic security as a whole.

Furthermore, I must take this opportunity to highlight the firm and unequivocal stance affirmed today, outside this very Chamber, by dozens of nations. They emphasized that the security of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz must remain a collective priority and a shared responsibility, requiring strict adherence to the rules of international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to ensure freedom of transit and safeguard it against any threat or disruption.

At a time when challenges are escalating, we regret that the Security Council was unable to adopt a specific resolution regarding the protection of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, despite the gravity of the existing threats. This situation underscores

the urgent need to reinforce the unity of the Council and for it to fulfil its responsibility in maintaining international peace and security, including through adopting effective and deterrent measures.

We also reiterate our condemnation of any acts or threats by Iran aimed at obstructing international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz or jeopardizing maritime security in the Bab al-Mandab Strait. We emphasize that any infringement upon the freedom of navigation constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security. We underscore the necessity of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open for navigation without any restrictions, in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Kingdom supports all international and regional efforts aimed at de-escalation and bringing an end to the war. We commend the mediation efforts undertaken by brotherly and friendly nations, as well as the initiatives led by the United Nations, in pursuit of a peaceful resolution that resolves the crisis and spares the region and the world from further tension and instability.

Furthermore, the Kingdom full supports the mediation efforts undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to reach a lasting agreement that ensures security and stability and addresses the issues that have undermined security and stability over the course of decades. Indeed, dialogue and diplomacy remain the sole path towards achieving sustainable security and stability.

In that regard, we reiterate the need for Iran to fulfil its international obligations and comply with the provisions of resolution 2817 (2026), which condemns attacks that threaten the security and stability of the region and calls for the protection of international navigation and the safeguarding of maritime corridors.

Furthermore, we renew our call on the international community, and in particular the Security Council, to explicitly condemn the Iranian attacks against my country, including ballistic and cruise missile strikes launched from the onset of the regional crisis until the declaration of a ceasefire. We emphasize the imperative of respecting State sovereignty, refraining from the use or threat of force, upholding the principle of good neighbourliness, taking firm measures to counter Iranian violations and ensuring the security of waterways, particularly with regard to energy and food supplies.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Moustafa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain for organizing this debate on a subject directly related to the determinants of peace and security at the regional and international levels.

Indeed, ongoing developments have underscored the close link between maritime security and geopolitical crises and tensions. They have reaffirmed the critical importance of addressing security and freedom of navigation in maritime corridors and straits through a comprehensive lens that tackles the root causes of existing crises and tensions; upholds the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; and is consistent with the tenets of international law.

In that context, the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) established a governing system and framework to ensure the security and freedom of navigation in international waterways. This framework strikes a balance between the responsibilities incumbent upon coastal States, including the obligation not to impede the right of transit passage for commercial vessels, in accordance with articles 38 and 42 of UNCLOS, and the rights guaranteed to those coastal States regarding the adoption of laws and regulations to govern maritime traffic, pursuant to article 41 of UNCLOS.

In view of the foregoing, Egypt bears the responsibility of managing and maintaining one of the world's most vital commercial waterways, the Suez Canal, which serves the global community as a whole. Egypt is committed to preserving the role of this strategic waterway as a safety valve for the stability of the global economic order. Egypt continues to fulfil this role, guided by a set of principles and parameters that collectively constitute the governing framework for its vision regarding maritime security and freedom of navigation. Central to this is the inviolability of the security and freedom of navigation in international waterways, which Egypt regards as a steadfast and fundamental obligation.

First, such waterways must remain inviolable, in accordance with the relevant rules of international law, in particular UNCLOS, as well as applicable customary and treaty-based norms.

Secondly, we reject any measures or threats liable to impede or disrupt international navigation or to jeopardize the safety of commercial and civilian vessels, given that such acts constitute a direct threat to international peace and security.

Thirdly, primary responsibility for arrangements concerning international waterways rests with the littoral States bordering those waterways, in accordance with the provisions of international law. Consequently, we reject the involvement of non-littoral States in arrangements or measures related to those waterways in a manner that infringes upon the sovereignty of the littoral States.

Fourthly, it is imperative to preserve the peaceful character of maritime lanes and their role in supporting the stability of the global economy. We must guard against trends and endeavours aimed at militarizing international shipping lanes or subjecting them to international control in a manner that negatively affects regional stability, taking into account that such efforts could result in escalating tensions and undermining trust among nations. Such actions would run counter to the fundamental objective of UNCLOS, which is the use of oceans and seas for peaceful purposes.

Egypt reiterates that it is no longer possible to separate security and freedom of navigation from the surrounding regional geopolitical arrangements, which now requires a more comprehensive approach to addressing this issue in a manner that balances economic and security considerations. In this regard, in October 2025 Egypt launched the Suez Canal-Red Sea Economic and Maritime Development Initiative. This is an integrated vision for Red Sea governance that links four main themes in order to strengthen international cooperation, including through the blue economy, the development of maritime infrastructure and the establishment of the principle of regional governance for the economic and security affairs of waterways.

In conclusion, Egypt reaffirms its commitment to continuing its role as a reliable partner in enhancing international maritime security and upholding the sanctity of security and freedom of navigation in waterways, based on our belief that achieving stable security conditions creates a conducive environment for freedom of navigation in waterways, which in turn contributes to the sustainability of global trade.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Iravani (Islamic Republic of Iran): Since 28 February, the United States and the Israeli regime have waged an unwarranted large-scale war of aggression against Iran, in flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Article 2 — disrupting maritime security and freedom of navigation and threatening regional and international peace and security.

The Strait of Hormuz has been increasingly utilized to support military attacks in the region, including the transfer of military equipment intended for hostile action

against Iran. This militarization has exposed international shipping to heightened and unprecedented risk in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. In the meantime, the United States has continued its internationally wrongful acts by imposing a maritime blockade and unlawfully seizing Iranian commercial vessels and detaining their crews. These dangerous escalatory measures violate international law, breach the United Nations Charter, constitute piracy and amount to acts of aggression, as defined in article 3 of General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX).

As the principal coastal State containing the Strait of Hormuz within its territorial seas, Iran has taken all necessary and practical measures consistent with international law to address emerging threats for safe and secure navigation, maintain the continuous passage of vessels and prevent the misuse of this vital waterway for hostile or military purposes. These measures are grounded in Iran's right and obligation under the law of the sea and its national laws and regulations, with a view to striking an appropriate balance between the security interests of the coastal States and the continuous safe conduct of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz in a highly volatile environment. These practical measures will be carefully examined in light of the evolving circumstances.

Iran is not a party to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Accordingly, it is not bound by its treaty-based provisions except to the extent that the specific rules reflected therein are universally recognized as customary international law. Lasting stability and security in the Persian Gulf and the wider region can be achieved only through a durable and permanent cessation of aggression against Iran, supplemented by credible guarantees of non-recurrence and full respect for the legitimate sovereign rights and interests of Iran.

In conclusion, I categorically reject the allegation made against my country at today's meeting. Certain claims made by some delegations lack any legal basis and serve only to divert attention from realities on the ground and the commission of internationally wrongful acts by the United States and its allies. Those delegations have once again exposed their double standards, demonstrating that their concern for maritime safety and navigation is neither genuine nor consistent with their actions and positions. They assert that navigational rights must not be threatened but deliberately ignore the unlawful actions of the United States, including its imposition of a maritime blockade and its recent terrorist attack on Iran's commercial vessels — conduct that bears the hallmarks of piracy, hostage-taking and acting like a pirate and terrorist group. Certain delegations have also misused the Council by deviating from the agenda, aligning themselves with the aggressors and raising irrelevant and unrelated issues in today's discussion.

The responsibility for any disruption, obstruction or other interference with maritime transport in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz lies directly with the aggressors — the United States and its supporters, whose unlawful and destabilizing actions have heightened tensions and endangered maritime safety and freedom of navigation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Chaivaivid (Thailand): Thailand wishes to express our appreciation to the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this timely and critical debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Disruptions in critical choke points directly endanger seafarers, including the 23 members of the Thai flag vessel MV Mayuree Naree, while transiting through the

Strait of Hormuz. They also pose a serious risk to global security, energy markets and the world economy. This challenge is heightened by recent developments in key waterways and demands a firm and unified response.

The rules-based maritime order must be upheld and grounded in international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as the foundational legal framework governing all activities at sea. Freedom of navigation and navigational rights, including the right of safe, unimpeded and continuous transit passage, must be fully respected by all States. At the same time, practical cooperation through information-sharing, joint exercises and capacity-building is indeed indispensable in addressing transboundary maritime threats in a timely manner.

The Security Council must act with resolve. It must reinforce compliance with international law and call on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint. Dialogue and diplomacy must prevail over the use of force. Thailand supports intensified mediation efforts aimed at achieving sustained ceasefires and promoting good-faith negotiations to prevent escalation and disruption in critical waterways.

In this regard, we welcome the role of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy in facilitating dialogue and advancing political engagement among relevant parties regarding the situation in the Middle East, as well as the establishment of a task force by the Secretary-General to develop a proposed humanitarian technical mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz.

Maritime security is a central pillar in Thailand's comprehensive security strategy. The protection of vital waterways is not optional; it is a collective responsibility. We must ensure that our oceans remain open, secure and governed by the rule of law. Thailand remains committed to advancing this objective through multilateral frameworks, including the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as through ASEAN-led mechanisms.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. De Vink (Kingdom of the Netherlands): The Benelux countries — Belgium, Luxembourg and my own country, the Kingdom of the Netherlands — thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this open debate on maritime security. Earlier this month in The Hague, the International Court of Justice commemorated its eightieth anniversary. Marking the moment was not only an opportunity to express support to the Court; it was also a strong reminder of the importance of the rules that underpin our shared international order, especially in these challenging times.

Let me highlight three elements that are, in our view, essential when it comes to maritime security.

First, freedom of navigation and the right of passage cannot be compromised. These principles apply universally to all maritime routes from the North Sea to the Indo-Pacific. They are indispensable for global trade and energy security. Recent disruptions, including the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and earlier attacks on international shipping by the Houthis in the Red Sea demonstrate that it is both urgent and imperative that actions that could endanger safe passage or escalate instability be avoided at all costs. We need de-escalation, an end to hostilities and respect for international law.

Secondly, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as the overarching legal framework for the regulation of all activities at sea, guides responsible conduct at sea. We call on all States to act in accordance with these rules

and to resolve differences through dialogue and legal mechanisms, ensuring stability across all regions. Commitment to the implementation of the provisions of UNCLOS in national legislation is important in order to strengthen maritime stability and security.

The third element is the protection of critical maritime infrastructure. Sub-sea cables and energy pipelines are essential to the global economy and highly vulnerable to disruption. Implementing UNCLOS and strengthening cooperation across regions is crucial to mitigate risks and enhance resilience in this regard.

We also stress the importance of upholding sanctions regimes. Vessels violating sanctions regimes, including sanctions mandated by Security Council resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and European Union sanctions against Russia, often practice irregular and high-risk shipping practices, as outlined by the International Maritime Organization. This poses risks to environmental maritime safety and security. Efforts to evade sanctions undermine collective commitments and should be addressed with vigilance and cooperation, and we remain firmly committed to the International Maritime Organization.

All seas must remain open, secure and governed by law. UNCLOS should remain our compass. We reaffirm our commitment to a rules-based international order ensuring that maritime domains remain a source of connection and prosperity. We stand ready to contribute to defensive operations as part of a broad coalition and according to our respective capabilities once a sustainable ceasefire is in place and within a clear international framework.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Babo Soares (Timor-Leste): Timor-Leste warmly congratulates the Kingdom of Bahrain on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for April. We commend its leadership in convening this timely debate and thank the Secretary-General and all briefers for their valuable insights.

We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

As a small island developing State, Timor-Leste views maritime security as a matter of national survival. Our exclusive economic zone — vast in comparison to our land territory — sustains our food systems, supports our economy and anchors our future. The ocean is not merely our geography; it is our lifeline.

For countries such as ours, disruptions to maritime supply chains are not distant shocks; they are immediate and deeply human. When shipping routes are destabilized or access to maritime passage is restricted, the consequences are felt first and most severely by the most vulnerable. A rise in the cost of essential goods is not a statistic; it is a family forced to choose between food, fuel and education. These pressures reverberate across societies, eroding resilience and deepening inequality. This reality underscores a fundamental point: maritime security is inseparable from human security. When sea lanes are disrupted, whether by conflict, coercive measures or unlawful interference, the effects extend far beyond individual incidents, undermining economic stability and social cohesion on a global scale.

Recent developments in key maritime corridors, such as in the Strait of Hormuz, have demonstrated how fragile the stability of global supply chains can be. Actions that impede lawful navigation, including blockades, coercive restrictions and attacks on commercial vessels, not only threaten international peace and security but also risk normalizing practices that erode the integrity of international law.

In this regard, Timor-Leste reaffirms the centrality of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as the legal framework governing all maritime activities. Freedom of navigation and transit passage must be upheld fully and without discrimination. These are not negotiable principles; they are foundational to a stable and predictable international order. Failure to uphold these norms risks setting dangerous precedents. If left unaddressed, such actions may contribute to the fragmentation of the global maritime domain, with disproportionate consequences for those small and developing States that depend on open and secure sea lanes.

Addressing these challenges requires a coherent and action-oriented response from the Council.

First, the Council should strengthen its support for capacity-building initiatives that enable developing States to enhance maritime domain awareness, surveillance and enforcement. Without such capacity, many States remain unable to effectively safeguard their own waters.

Secondly, the Council should reinforce the protection of critical maritime routes, including the Strait of Hormuz, by promoting adherence to international law and condemning actions that unlawfully disrupt navigation, including blockades and other forms of coercion.

Thirdly, greater attention must also be given to non-traditional maritime threats.

Fourthly, multilateral cooperation must be deepened. Maritime security is, by nature, a shared responsibility. No State — particularly small and developing ones — can address these challenges alone.

For Timor-Leste, the ocean represents both vulnerability and opportunity, but above all, it represents our future. It must remain a space of cooperation, governed by law and open to all. If the freedom of our seas is compromised, so too is the promise of equitable development and lasting peace.

In closing, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to a rules-based international order grounded in full respect for international law. We call on the Council to act with unity and resolve to ensure that our oceans remain open, secure and sustainably managed for generations to come.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mrs. Patel (India): At the outset, I take this opportunity to congratulate Bahrain on assuming the Security Council presidency this month and thank it for convening today's open debate. We also thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their remarks.

A discussion on this crucial topic is indeed timely and appropriate. It is contextual to highlight that the first ever open debate on the theme "Enhancing maritime security: a case for international cooperation" under the item "Maintenance of international peace and security" was convened by India during its Security Council presidency in August 2021, which paved the way for addressing maritime security in a holistic manner.

India is committed to promoting a free, open and rules-based maritime order, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In this regard, India supports adherence to international law, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as a foundation for maintaining freedom of navigation while emphasizing unimpeded lawful commerce. Since the major share of global energy supplies and international trade is carried out through international waterways, any threat to critical waterways in the maritime domain has serious implications for international peace and security and global trade. As a major

trading nation, India strongly deplores the recent targeting of commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and the endangerment of innocent civilian crew members. Such actions have resulted in the tragic loss of Indian seafarers' precious lives and are unacceptable. India reiterates that freedom of navigation and global commerce through the Strait of Hormuz must be fully respected, in accordance with international law, and urges that safe and unimpeded maritime passage be restored at the earliest opportunity.

The main concerns to be immediately addressed are the safety of navigation; the continuity of supply chains, with specific emphasis on humanitarian supply chains; the enhancement of maritime situational awareness; and the facilitation of communication for seafarers, whether directly or indirectly. As a responsible maritime Power, India has the honour to submit certain recommendations to alleviate the situation and contribute to the safety of waterways and seafarers.

First, India's Directorate General of Shipping has set up a 24/7 helpline for seafarers, irrespective of their nationality. To date, we have received close to 7,500 calls and more than 15,000 emails.

Secondly, as highlighted in the updated best management practices by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), we encourage Member States to consider increasing reporting to the Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), located in India. This could assist in enabling safe navigation, facilitating indirect communication on the situation of seafarers and exploring avenues for maintaining humanitarian supply chains. It may be relevant to note that there are several international liaison officers in the IFC-IOR. They represent 36 countries, including the first multilateral officer and IMO Djibouti Code of Conduct officer, representing 22 States. Therefore, coordination with the Centre could accrue significant benefits.

Thirdly, we further note with concern the grave risk of maritime pollution arising from attacks on commercial vessels in those waters. In this context, the role of IFC-IOR assumes greater importance and should be further promoted by its inclusion in IMO resolution MSC.324(89) for effective maritime domain awareness, environmental monitoring and coordination with other significant information-sharing centres.

As a leading seafaring nation committed to global maritime safety and security, India would be honoured to have its recommendations considered by Member States, which may contribute to fulfilling specific mandates of the United Nations and IMO in these trying circumstances and beyond.

In conclusion, India sees maritime security and the protection of waterways as essential to global security and economic prosperity. As one of the top three seafarer-supplying nations, contributing approximately 13 per cent of the global seafaring workforce, India remains deeply concerned about the safety and welfare of its seafarers. Any disruption, obstruction or purported closure of vital waterways has direct consequences for the global economy, energy and humanitarian supply chains. The safety and welfare of seafarers, the security of international shipping, energy supply chains that sustain nations and humanitarian supply chains that ensure the survival and welfare of seafarers must remain paramount. India aims to maintain secure waterways for long-term global peace and inclusive growth.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Ms. Karadjova (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to make the following points in its national capacity.

Bulgaria highly values Bahrain's initiative to hold this timely Security Council open debate and supports its efforts to build on resolution 2817 (2026), co-sponsored by 136 Member States, including Bulgaria.

Today's debate is an opportunity to reaffirm solidarity with regional partners facing direct consequences from the military escalation in the Middle East. We are deeply concerned by recent developments in the Middle East. We welcome the continuing ceasefires between the United States and Iran and between Israel and Lebanon as necessary steps towards permanent agreements. We commend all facilitation efforts and urge full respect for the ceasefires across the region.

Bulgaria condemns growing threats to maritime security, including violations of international law, obstruction of commercial shipping, attacks on civilian vessels and using maritime spaces for geopolitical pressure. The situation in the Strait of Hormuz is becoming a global security and economic crisis, with maritime traffic nearly paralysed, leading to declining trade, food insecurity, rising inflation from surging oil prices and slower global growth, affecting people worldwide, especially the most vulnerable.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has clearly demonstrated that disruptions to maritime navigation in one waterway have far-reaching implications for supply chains, the normal functioning of the global economy and the integrity of the energy and digital connectivity maritime structure. A potential blockade by the Houthis of the Bab al-Mandab strait would further harm the global economy and energy security and must be prevented. Moreover, stepping up efforts to counter sanctions evasion by the shadow fleet and prevent related security and environmental risks remains a key priority.

Attacks on civilian infrastructure and commercial shipping, along with possible miscalculations, pose serious risks to the environment and civilians. All diplomatic channels should be used in a coordinated manner to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz, with no tolls or shipping restrictions. Bulgaria supports all initiatives aimed at normalizing maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz and commends the United Kingdom and France for their efforts to mobilize international partners towards diplomatic and effective solutions for safe passage through the Strait.

Bulgaria believes respect for international law is a non-negotiable prerequisite for lasting peace and calls for strict compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the legal framework for all ocean activities. We demand an immediate end to illegal restrictions and full restoration of freedom of navigation, as enshrined in article 87 of UNCLOS. We also recall that the right of transit passage through international straits is crucial for maritime security and connectivity and should not be unilaterally suspended or impeded.

As a strong advocate of international law for maritime security, Bulgaria also values related political commitments. As a Black Sea coastal State, Bulgaria prioritizes the swift and effective implementation of the European Union strategic approach to the Black Sea. Our active role will be key to strengthening maritime and environmental security and ensuring freedom of navigation in a waterway vital for Europe-Asia connectivity.

In closing, I would like to underscore the importance of safeguarding the freedom and safety of navigation and to stress the need for coherent multilateral and regional approaches to address the wide-ranging peace and security threats in the maritime domain.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 11 member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN welcomes the convening of this open debate. Threats to maritime security, including threats to maritime navigation in critical waterways, attacks on vessels, interference with lawful activities and risks to seafarers, have far-reaching implications for international peace and security and for the stability of global trade, energy flows and supply chains.

Recent developments in key maritime choke points underscore the need to safeguard navigational rights and freedoms. ASEAN calls for the maintenance of safe, unimpeded and continuous transit passage through straits used for international navigation, in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. We urge all parties to exercise utmost restraint and pursue peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy.

We call on all parties to ensure the safety of seafarers, noting that ASEAN member States provide a significant portion of the global maritime workforce. The safety of seafarers cannot be sidelined. It is essential that all parties safeguard crews and ships by fully implementing the standards of the International Maritime Organization and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea.

ASEAN reaffirms that the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions remain the foundation for maintaining international peace and security. In this regard, the Security Council plays an important role in reinforcing the need to uphold international law and safeguarding international navigational rights and freedoms. The Council needs to promote compliance with international legal frameworks, support preventive diplomacy and encourage confidence-building measures that reduce tensions in critical waterways.

Engagement with regional organizations, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter, should be strengthened. ASEAN underscores that the Council's approach should remain principled, balanced and focused on de-escalation, recognizing maritime security as a shared common interest. Sustainable solutions must be anchored in the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for sovereignty and sovereign rights and adherence to international law, including UNCLOS. Continued efforts remain essential to maintaining stability in key maritime domains.

Ultimately, the protection of vital waterways is a collective responsibility. As consistently emphasized in ASEAN statements, including recent calls for de-escalation, diplomacy remains the most viable pathway for stability across regions. Sustained cooperation and a shared commitment to international law, including the United Nations Charter, will be essential to ensuring that maritime domains remain peaceful, stable and secure.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): Brazil congratulates Bahrain for presiding over the Council this month and for convening this timely debate. We also thank the briefers for their valuable insights.

This is the third open debate on maritime security held by the Security Council in less than one year. It is a clear indication of the critical importance of safeguarding the maritime domain and its vital role in global economic activity, exemplifying the deep interconnection between geoeconomic issues and the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ensuring a safe and open maritime space based on international law, with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea at its centre, is a core national interest for Brazil. All countries should observe the principles enshrined in the Convention, which constitute customary law as well. On previous occasions, Brazil has expressed concern about the many issues affecting maritime security, including piracy, transnational crime, arms and narcotics trafficking, extrajudicial killings and other illegal activities. We also emphasize the importance of strengthening international cooperation to address these challenges and promote a safe and peaceful maritime environment accessible to all nations. More than ever, these considerations remain valid. Our aim continues to be to ensure a peaceful maritime environment.

The impacts of the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East on the maritime domain are deeply troubling. The escalation in the Persian Gulf, following the attacks by the United States and Israel against Iran, has led not only to a dangerous regional crisis, which has already claimed the lives of thousands of civilians, but also to a global shock, with the disruption of maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz at its centre. The negative impacts can already be felt across the globe. People who neither chose nor supported this war are paying the price.

We are particularly alarmed by the repercussions of this disruption on energy and food markets. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has warned about the impacts of this conflict on the energy and fertilizer trade and on food security. To have a conflict compromising this vital trade route and threatening the integrity of commercial vessels is unacceptable.

Freedom of navigation is a core principle of international law that all countries must respect. We echo the Secretary-General's call for a permanent cessation of hostilities in the Middle East and the opening of the Strait of Hormuz. We also take this opportunity to express our support for the United Nations task force, which is developing a mechanism to address humanitarian needs in the face of the Strait of Hormuz crisis.

Brazil reiterates its commitment to maritime security governed by law and cooperation. In this context, we believe that the principles and values of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, which establishes the South Atlantic as a zone of peace, free from weapons of mass destruction and preserved from foreign geopolitical disputes, send a relevant message and example to today's world. These principles were reiterated in the Rio de Janeiro declaration issued at the beginning of the month, marking the fortieth anniversary of the zone and the start of Brazil's presidency of the group.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Nweke (Nigeria): Nigeria congratulates your delegation on assuming the presidency of the Council and thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this vital open debate.

We meet today against the backdrop of a widening global maritime crisis, in which international waterways are increasingly under siege — from the strategic checkpoints of the Middle East to the vital corridors of the Gulf of Guinea. The recent disruptions and blockades in critical straits have sent shockwaves through the global economy, driving oil prices to a record high and causing a spike in the cost of essential fertilizers and food commodities. For developing countries like Nigeria, these are not just economic numbers. They represent a direct depletion of national reserves and a threat to the livelihoods of millions.

It is troubling that the maritime domain is now a theatre for hybrid warfare. The transition from traditional piracy to sophisticated cyberattacks on port logistics and

maritime digital infrastructure has introduced a layer of vulnerability that can paralyse regions' trade in hours. In our own region, while Nigeria, in collaboration with partners and countries, have successfully reduced piracy incidents through the Integrated National Security and Waterways Protection Infrastructure, the persistence of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing continues to rob the African continent of over \$10 billion annually, undermining our blue economy and fuelling local instability.

Our experience has shown that national efforts are most effective when nested within robust international frameworks. Nigeria remains a staunch advocate for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as the legal constitution of our oceans. We also highly value our collaborative partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and international maritime organizations whose technical assistance has been instrumental in enhancing our maritime domain awareness.

To strengthen the protection of international waterways, Nigeria wishes to highlight three areas for enhanced cooperation.

First, there must be zero tolerance for unlawful blockades. The Council must reinforce the principle of freedom of navigation. Any deliberate disruption of international shipping lanes for political leverage must be met with a united and swift international response in order to protect global food and energy security.

Secondly, we must sustain regional architecture. We call for deeper coordination between the United Nations and regional mechanism like the Yaoundé Architecture. The success of the Yaoundé Architecture proves that regional ownership works. However, to mitigate the evolving threats of 2026, it is essential that the international community provide predictable and sustainable support and institutionalized financing for regional maritime security centres in order to help coastal States mitigate threats before they escalate into global crises.

Thirdly, we emphasize the importance of resilience against hybrid threats. The Council must lead in developing norms to protect submarines, cables and maritime digital infrastructure from cyberinterference. We advocate for shared protocols to ensure that the digitalization of shipping does not become a backdoor for malicious actors.

In conclusion, Nigeria believes that a secure maritime domain is a shared responsibility. We must move towards a more integrated United Nations response that links maritime security with sustainable development. Nigeria remains ready to collaborate with the Council and all partners to ensure that our waterways remain conduits for peace rather than theatres of conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Marrapodi (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add some further remarks in its national capacity.

Let me start by quoting Secretary-General António Guterres, who stressed that “without maritime security, there can be no global security” (see S/PV.9919). It is essential for the Security Council to maintain a focus on the increasing threats to maritime security and freedom of navigation. In this spirit, we commend the presidency for convening today's timely debate.

Maritime threats, such as piracy, terrorism and various illicit activities, including migrant smuggling and the trafficking of arms and drugs, have wide-ranging implications for security, the economy and the environment. Furthermore,

today we are witnessing practices that weaken the very principle of freedom of navigation, putting it under enormous stress.

To stop and reverse this worrying spiral, we need to act collectively in some key aspects.

First, we must abide by international law. We take this opportunity to recall that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the legal framework within which all activities at sea must be carried out. States have the primary responsibility to comply and to ensure compliance with the obligations contained therein, including those related to maritime security.

Secondly, we must reaffirm the importance of the role of the Security Council in addressing maritime security in an integrated manner and across different regions. Building on the legal foundation provided by UNCLOS and other key conventions, such as the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, the Security Council can offer guidance to resolve any disputes or disagreements with regard to maritime security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Thirdly, every Member State must do its part to translate the Security Council's recommendations into concrete actions. Italy has been supporting international efforts against transnational organized crime at sea and shared best practices for preventing and combating terrorism and to safeguard the security and well-being of seafarers, while working closely with regional and subregional organizations. Within the Group of Seven Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, we support the development of the regulatory and capacity-building framework of the countries and the regional institutions that are part of the Yaoundé Architecture and contribute to the maritime security in the region through the periodic presence of units of the Italian Navy. In the Red Sea region, Italy is actively engaged in Operation Aspides, working to protect vital shipping lanes in accordance with UNCLOS and resolution 2722 (2024). In the same vein, we welcome a multilateral approach to ensure maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, where unilateral actions, such as the unlawful application of a toll system, threaten safe and free navigation, as well as the right of transit passage.

Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have direct implications for the security of maritime routes, global energy supplies and food security. Italy supports all negotiated solutions aimed at ensuring stability in the region and stands ready to contribute to efforts to safeguard the freedom of navigation and to preserve the stability of global markets. We believe that any international mission should be strictly defensive in nature, coordinated with regional and international partners and deployed only once hostilities have ceased. Italy reiterates its solidarity towards the Gulf countries affected by unacceptable retaliatory strikes.

Italy will remain steadfast in its commitment to upholding freedom of navigation globally and reinforcing the Law of the Sea.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Soberón Guzmán (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Maritime security is a crucial issue. Any threat in this domain has global repercussions, especially for developing countries and in particular for those that, like Cuba, are small island developing States.

Our country is well aware of the negative impact of the United States' actions restricting maritime transport. The executive order issued by President Donald Trump on 29 January hinders fuel supplies to Cuba with the aim of increasing collective punishment on Cubans and provoking discontent among the population and the stated

objective of overthrowing the Government. The energy blockade intimidates, pressures and extorts those who trade with Cuba in a sovereign manner, as it envisages threats of sanctions against third countries and foreign companies.

We reiterate our condemnation of the acts of piracy and terrorism carried out against oil tankers and their crews committed by United States forces in the Caribbean Sea, which violate international law, maritime law and the freedom of navigation and trade and threaten maritime security.

The recent actions by the Government of the United States, with their marked extraterritorial nature, are in addition to the extreme economic warfare measures imposed against Cuba since 2019, designed to prevent any supply of fuel to our country through sanctions and intimidation of producers and suppliers, as well as transportation providers and insurers.

Cuba has every right to trade in fuel with any country, without threats, obstacles, conditions or challenges to the sovereign right of every State to export fuel and establish trade relations with Cuba, in accordance with the principles governing free trade, without interference from a foreign Power.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States on Cuba affects the freedom of trade and navigation, not just of our country but also of other States, undermines their sovereignty and hinders economic progress and their aspirations for sustainable development, in flagrant violation of international law.

The Cuban Democracy Act, which forms part of the framework of laws and regulations underpinning the blockade, imposes sanctions on ships entering Cuban ports, prohibiting them from calling at ports in the United States for the following 180 days. These restrictions make it difficult to secure bids for shipping operations and lead to higher fees for Cuban port operations.

The grave escalation in the Middle East, triggered by the military aggression of the United States and Israel against Iran, has also brought with it new risks to maritime security. This war that was imposed on the region is the result of well-known interests of domination, which have, on more than one occasion, endangered regional and international peace, security and stability.

Urgent efforts are needed to halt the aggression and put an end to its consequences, including the repercussions it has caused in all States in the Middle East. We reiterate our call to respect national sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of all nations in the region, and for the preservation of the principles of good neighbourliness, restraint and dialogue.

The international community must act with determination and urgency to stop the proliferation of conflicts, coercion in international relations, the recurring threat and indiscriminate use of force and the application of the abhorrent doctrine that proclaims the supposed pursuit of peace through force.

We would like to highlight the important role of the International Maritime Organization in promoting the safety of navigation. Cuba is a member State of this Organization and attaches particular importance to it due to its efforts to develop maritime transport.

I conclude by reiterating Cuba's call to promote international cooperation and collective efforts to address common challenges in the field of international peace and security and to ensure a safe and sustainable maritime environment, based on respect for international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Schwalger (New Zealand): Maritime routes are critical enablers in our interconnected world. The fundamental navigational rights and freedoms that underpin them are cornerstones of our collective security and prosperity; rules which benefit every country. These rights have been violated.

The current crisis is a stark reminder of the grave security and economic impacts that result when international law is ignored and freedom of navigation is impeded. The Council must not only be seized of the international and peace and security dimensions of these issues but also take action.

New Zealand condemns in the strongest terms Iran's indiscriminate attacks on vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz. We reject Iran's interference with unimpeded transit passage guaranteed under international law. Iran's actions are having profound impacts across the globe. We are deeply concerned about the impacts in the Indo-Pacific, where the stability of global supply routes is essential. In the Pacific, supply chain disruptions are having a significant and adverse impact on vulnerable Pacific economies.

You have asked, Mr. President, what frameworks could be strengthened, and what role the Council could play. We already have a strong legal framework in place. Unimpeded navigation through international straits is one of the most fundamental principles of international law.

All vessels and aircraft enjoy the right of unimpeded transit passage through straits used for international navigation, including the Strait of Hormuz. Transit passage cannot be suspended. The right of vessels and aircraft to transit must be respected during peacetime and times of armed conflict. The right is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and in customary international law.

To fulfil its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, the Council must act to uphold these principles. Resolution 2817 (2026) was an important step in this context. We welcome the resolution's reaffirmation, together with that of the Council of the International Maritime Organization, that the exercise of navigational rights and freedoms by merchant and commercial vessels, in accordance with international law, must be respected.

New Zealand was deeply disappointed that the Council was blocked from taking action on this issue earlier this month (see S/PV.10130) due to the use of the veto — a mechanism that continues to cripple the Council's credibility and ability to fulfil its responsibilities.

While today the situation in the Strait of Hormuz necessarily captures our attention, our interests also go beyond the immediate. What happens and how we respond is relevant to other significant international straits, if free and unimpeded transit passage is not swiftly re-established. This could have very concerning implications for us all.

We therefore call on all States to uphold international law and permit the immediate unimpeded transit passage of all vessels and aircraft through the straits upon which global commerce and livelihoods rely.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti): Djibouti thanks Bahrain for convening this timely open debate and for its leadership on maritime security. We also thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for their valuable insights.

This discussion takes place at a moment of heightened tension in key waterways that are vital for our collective peace and prosperity. When security is weakened in any of those choke points, the effects are felt far beyond their shores. As a littoral

State at the entrance of the Red Sea, Djibouti is acutely aware that the security of international shipping lanes is not an abstract concept. It is a daily strategic imperative. The Bab al-Mandab strait and the wider Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are arteries of the global economy. Disruptions in those waters carry immediate consequences for international trade, energy security and food supply, especially for the most vulnerable.

Djibouti's position on maritime security is clear.

First, we reaffirm the centrality of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the relevant instruments of the International Maritime Organization. Freedom of navigation and overflight and the unimpeded transit of commercial shipping in straits used for international navigation are fundamental to international peace and security. They must be respected by all States and by all non-State actors.

Djibouti has a long-standing and firm commitment to those principles. The law of the sea has been of great importance to our people since time immemorial. Djibouti was among the original signatories of UNCLOS, also known as the Montego Bay Convention, and has consistently supported efforts to uphold a rules-based order at sea. We see clearly that rights over coastal waters come with the responsibility not to impede lawful transit passage, save in full conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

Secondly, we believe that durable maritime security can be achieved only through genuine international and regional cooperation. Djibouti has invested in such cooperation for many years. We are proud to have hosted and supported the development of the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. The Djibouti Code of Conduct has become a cornerstone of regional efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. This experience shows that shared ownership, information-sharing and capacity-building can deliver concrete results.

Djibouti today hosts multiple facilities that contribute to international counter-piracy and maritime security operations and serve as a humanitarian logistical hub for the wider region. We cooperate closely with regional and extraregional partners to help to ensure safe passage for shipping in and around Bab al-Mandab. Djibouti's President, His Excellency Mr. Ismaël Omar Guelleh, recently reiterated Djibouti's readiness to support concerted international efforts to keep vital sea lanes open, safe and accessible, consistent with international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Thirdly, we see the growing link between maritime security, environmental protection and climate change. Our waters face multiple overlapping pressures — from pollution and illegal activities at sea to rising temperatures and ecosystem degradation. Incidents involving shipwrecks and spills threaten fragile maritime environments, as well as coastal communities, whose livelihoods depend on the sea. Addressing those risks is both a security and a development priority.

The Security Council has an important role to play. It should continue to uphold the rules-based order at sea, reaffirm that no actor may threaten or use force to close and obstruct international shipping routes, contrary to the Charter, condemn attacks on commercial shipping and civilian seafarers and support efforts to de-escalate tensions in key choke points. It should encourage States to implement existing resolutions and international obligations and to cooperate with regional mechanisms that have proved their effectiveness.

At the same time, the Council should remain attentive to the root causes of instability that manifest themselves at sea, including poverty, governance deficits and the effects of climate change. Responses that focus solely on military instruments or narrow enforcement will not be sufficient. We need comprehensive approaches that integrate security, sustainable development and environmental resilience.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Paraguay.

Mr. Pereira Sosa (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Republic of Paraguay welcomes the opportunity to take the floor and congratulates Bahrain's presidency on convening this meeting. We believe that waterways and the law of the sea are matters of the utmost importance.

Maritime security is an essential pillar of economic security and a necessary condition for international trade, development and the prosperity of all Member States of the Organization. We therefore believe that both the General Assembly and the Security Council have specific roles to play in safeguarding freedom of navigation on international waterways.

This reality shows us that, now more than ever, nation States need a multilateral forum that can foster an environment of dialogue, respect and legal and sovereign equality and, most importantly, that can truly and effectively promote peace. The law of the sea must be respected and serve as the basis for joint actions that enable the free trade of goods and services, food products, energy and connectivity. Today strategic navigable routes must take into account the interests of all parties beyond the regions in which they are situated.

In particular, we would like to highlight resolution 2817 (2026), which Paraguay has co-sponsored, and which reaffirms that the rights and freedoms of navigation of commercial and civilian vessels, in accordance with international law, must be respected and upheld. These rights, which are reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, establish international maritime governance that govern oceans, sea lanes and other waterways, including navigation through strategic international waterways.

Today waterways form the usual route for the largest volumes of not only gas and oil, but also bulk commodities, agriculture and farming products, raw materials and manufactured goods, among others, making them indispensable to global production chains.

That is why the law of the sea and its impact on developing landlocked countries is especially vital to the Republic of Paraguay, a landlocked country that depends on predictable global trade for its development, trade and security. It is also an ongoing concern for the entire world, in general, that steers our interests towards ensuring freedom of navigation. For Paraguay, that interest is so strong that it is the only landlocked developing country with a judge on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

For these reasons, the Republic of Paraguay considers the closure of the Strait of Hormuz by means of attacks on and/or threats against vessels that continue to transit through the Strait to be illegitimate and illegal. Holding those vessels hostage at sea, for whatever reason, is an affront to international law and the human rights of their crews and undermines global safety and prosperity. We reiterate our call for the immediate reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, without any obstacles or conditions, and for respect for international law.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Ms. Männik (Estonia): We thank Bahrain for bringing this critical issue before the Security Council, and the briefers for their invaluable insight.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add the following in its national capacity.

Freedom at sea is not freedom from law. It is freedom anchored in law. Freedom of navigation can no longer be taken for granted. Estonia is acutely aware of these threats, not only in our Baltic Sea region, but globally. This issue demands increased focus, particularly from the Security Council. To defend international peace and security, we must ensure a united response.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the cornerstone of international maritime law. Today's challenges, including shadow fleets and threats to critical underwater infrastructure, call for responsible interpretation and enforcement. Where accountability weakens, substandard ships thrive, environmental and security risks rise, and our shared maritime space becomes more vulnerable.

First, I want to talk about shadow fleets. In our maritime area, these vessels predominately transport Russian goods, routinely evading the environmental and minimum safety standards set by the International Maritime Organization. This practice poses clear risks to maritime safety and the marine environment, while also eroding trust in the rules-based order. When a vessel belongs to no one, accountability quietly slips overboard.

Secondly, critical underwater infrastructure — submarine cables and pipelines — forms the nervous system of our modern world. Recent damage to the undersea cables in Estonian and Finnish waters underscores the urgency of stronger surveillance and protection.

Thirdly, blocking the Strait of Hormuz carries severe consequences for the global economy. Free and safe navigation must be upheld in line with international law. Estonia was proud to be among the historic 135 co-sponsors of resolution 2817 (2026). It is therefore deeply regrettable that the Security Council was subsequently unable to fulfil its Charter-mandated role and adopt a follow-on resolution on safeguarding international shipping in the Strait.

The answer lies in what we already have. UNCLOS gives us the tools. We must use them fully and apply the Convention as it was intended: a living, dynamic foundation for peace, security and cooperation at sea.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Lambridinis.

Mr. Lambridinis: I thank you personally, Mr. President, as well as Bahrain, for putting this critical issue on the agenda of the Security Council.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, as well as Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

Maritime security is under growing pressure worldwide. Our shared dependence on maritime routes for global trade, energy supply and economic and food stability makes the security of the seas a matter of collective responsibility. Today, 80 to 90 per cent of international trade is transported by sea. Any disruption has immediate and far-reaching global consequences, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Recent developments underline the urgency of our discussions. The situation in the Strait of Hormuz has demonstrated how quickly instability can disrupt global

shipping, affecting supply chains far beyond the region. We urge all involved to cease all military operations and fully ensure freedom of navigation, as well as free and safe passage, through the Strait of Hormuz. We cannot disregard maritime tensions in other areas, including the South China Sea, as they equally hinder critical shipping routes, while challenging the rules-based international order.

The European Union reaffirms its unwavering commitment to freedom of navigation and international law. The EU and its member States remain strongly committed to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the universal and unified legal framework within which all activities in oceans and seas must be carried out. Its provisions reflect customary international law and are thus binding on all States, irrespective of whether they have acceded to the Convention or not. Disputes must be resolved peacefully in accordance with international law.

The protection of critical maritime infrastructure is also an urgent priority. Recent incidents against submarine cables, including in the Baltic Sea, have highlighted their vulnerability. We must strengthen international cooperation to respond to threats and work together towards developing norms and practices to enhance the protection of this infrastructure.

The EU is deeply concerned by the risks shadow fleet vessels pose to the marine environment, critical maritime infrastructure, safe navigation and coastal communities, while also contributing to sustaining Russia's war, economy and sanctions evasion. Addressing this challenge requires coordinated international action, including ongoing work within the International Maritime Organization. In December, the European Union and member States adopted a declaration on making full use of the international law of the sea framework relating to threats from the shadow fleet and to the protection of critical undersea infrastructure.

Traditional maritime threats also persist. Piracy, trafficking and transnational organized crime continue to undermine security and development, notably in regions such as the Gulf of Guinea and the north-western Indian Ocean. The EU's engagement is comprehensive and operational. Through its naval operations in the Mediterranean, in the Red Sea, and in the Horn of Africa and the western Indian Ocean — Operation IRINI, Operation Aspides and Operation Atalanta, respectively — as well as through coordinated maritime presences in the Gulf of Guinea, the EU provides a predictable and cooperative framework that enhances maritime domain awareness, information-sharing and joint responses to threats.

We also invest significantly in capacity-building and partnerships. European Union-funded maritime security projects and initiatives, including the European Peace Facility, support regional maritime security architectures, improve coordination and strengthen the operational capacities of our partners. These efforts add up to over €100 million annually in Africa alone.

Resolutions 2817 (2026) and 2722 (2024) demonstrate the Security Council's key role in reinforcing global efforts towards ensuring maritime safety and security. It is essential that the Security Council remain seized of the matter.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Cha (Republic of Korea): I appreciate the Bahraini presidency for convening this important meeting on maritime security. My gratitude also goes to Secretary-General Guterres, International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General Domínguez and Mr. Childs for their insightful briefings.

Today, the escalating tensions in the Strait of Hormuz serve as a stark reminder of how maritime instability can trigger a global crisis, shaking the foundations of the global economy, including energy, industrial and food security. To address these complex challenges, the Republic of Korea calls for an agile and coordinated response based on three priorities.

First, we must uphold a maritime order anchored in international law, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea. We underscore that no State should be able to decide which vessels may pass through international waterways, where all ships and aircraft enjoy the right of transit passage. Nor should any State impose arbitrary charges. By the same token, the threats and attacks posed by non-State actors against sea lanes and commercial vessels are unacceptable.

Secondly, we must prioritize the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes through diplomacy. In this regard, we commend the mediation efforts of many countries in the region, as well as the tireless work of the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in facilitating dialogue and de-escalation.

Thirdly, the safety of seafarers and merchant vessels, the backbone of global commerce, must be protected. Attacks on civilians at sea would constitute a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. Seafarers must never be collateral victims of armed conflict. In this regard, the Republic of Korea fully supports the IMO's initiative to establish an evacuation and safe passage framework for vessels and seafarers.

As a major maritime nation whose prosperity is inextricably linked to the sea, the Republic of Korea is committed to playing its part in addressing threats to global maritime security. In this spirit, the Republic of Korea is actively participating in the maritime navigation initiative in the Strait of Hormuz led by the United Kingdom and France. We remain firm in our resolve to work with all Member States to ensure that our oceans remain safe, open and secure for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mauritania.

Mr. Mohamed Laghdaf (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country's delegation would like to congratulate the Kingdom of Bahrain on its successful presidency of the Council for the month of April.

Despite the many challenges and crises that the world is experiencing today, including the military actions witnessed in the Middle East in recent weeks, Bahrain's presidency of the Council has been notable for its proactive and continuous work to guide the Council towards the effective implementation of its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security. That is exemplified by this open debate on the safety and protection of waterways in the maritime domain.

Mauritania has a 750-kilometre Atlantic coastline and a 243,000 square-kilometre exclusive economic zone, and its maritime zones overlap with those of remote islands some 170 nautical miles into the Atlantic. That makes the security of navigation and the protection of the maritime domain a strategic issue for my country. We stress the pivotal role of the rules of international law and the international norms in force in that regard, and the importance of the Council continuing to exercise its authority in the field of international peace and security in the light of the risks and challenges facing the security of international navigation, specifically with regard to the rights of navigation and freedom of movement and the increase in the number of attacks on commercial ships on the high seas, which inhibits the flow of maritime traffic, and while passing through maritime straits.

All of these challenges make the role of the Security Council more crucial than ever. These challenges, alongside traditional challenges, such as smuggling, piracy and other illegal activities, affect not only the security and stability of the world, but also the economy, trade and energy supplies. International sea lanes are a key pillar of this process, with thousands of ships transporting commodities and energy supplies between continents. That makes this an appropriate opportunity to reaffirm the international legal rules that govern this sphere, and to unequivocally define the rights and duties of States, specifically coastal States, as well as the rights and obligations of the States to which ships belong, while transiting the high seas and shipping lanes. That applies to the Strait of Hormuz, which is one of the most sensitive sea lanes in the world due to the passage of a large proportion of global oil exports through it.

In that connection, it is worth recalling that the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affirms a broad range of rights for vessels transiting straits and sea lanes between coastal States. Article 38 of the Convention provides for the right of transit passage between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone. Coastal States retain the right to regulate maritime traffic, fishing and pollution control, with no right to obstruct or intercept ships. That is in addition to the right of innocent passage through territorial waters and contiguous zones provided for by the 1958 Geneva Conventions on the Law of the Sea and article 17 the 1982 Convention. Mauritania reiterates that it complies with — and calls on all Member States to comply with and respect — these rights and obligations, which are also an integral part of customary international law. We call on the members of the Council to give this matter the attention it deserves as a threat to global peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Obeidat (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this important meeting on the safety and protection of waterways in the maritime domain. I would also be remiss if I did not thank the Secretary-General for his intervention this morning and the briefers for their briefings.

We have recently witnessed a troubling increase in threats to maritime navigation. In that connection, we point out that any threat or obstruction to navigation in international sea lanes and straits not only has implications for a specific country or territory, but also profound knock-on effects on the global economy. We reiterate the importance of respecting the rules of international law and, in particular, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides for an integrated legal framework that regulates the use of the seas and oceans, as well as the rights and duties of States. That includes freedom of navigation and secure transit through straits used for international navigation.

We also recall the Council's affirmation, in resolution 552 (1984), of the importance of respecting freedom of navigation in international waterways, and of rejecting acts that threaten the safety of commercial vessels or hinder the flow of international trade. We also recall the provisions of resolution 2817 (2026), which stress the need to address Iranian threats targeting maritime navigation, including attacks against ships and maritime infrastructure.

In conclusion, we affirm that the protection of maritime waterways is a shared responsibility borne by the entire international community, and that ensuring their safety requires genuine political will, mutual respect among States and a firm commitment to the rules of international law. Jordan reaffirms its support for all efforts to enhance the security and safety of maritime navigation in a manner that contributes to international peace and stability and advances development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Ćurić Hrvatinić (Croatia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important and timely debate.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union (EU) on behalf of its member States, and I would like to add a few points in my national capacity.

As we are witnessing today, maritime security is not merely a segment of social, political and economic stability but a prerequisite for it, and, as such, a global imperative. Recent developments in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as threats concerning the Bab al-Mandab strait and the Red Sea, clearly illustrate this point.

As a coastal and maritime nation with an Adriatic coastline and whose ports provide the shortest sea route to the heart of Europe, Croatia is directly affected by disruptions in the maritime domain, which impact our national security, economic resilience and the stability of the wider Mediterranean. Such disruptions affect not only our ports and economy but also the safety of our seafarers.

More than 15,000 Croatian seafarers serve in international navigation, representing around 0.4 per cent of our total population, which places Croatia among Europe's leading maritime nations. This is especially relevant today, as tens of thousands of seafarers worldwide remain stranded in affected areas, highlighting the human dimension of the crisis. At present, 172 Croatian seafarers are in the Strait of Hormuz.

Improving the safety of waterways requires full respect for international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which remains the overarching legal framework for all activities at sea. Respect for UNCLOS, including the right to freedom of navigation, is essential for global trade, stability and security.

The International Maritime Organization plays a central role in setting global standards, and its capacity and authority should be further strengthened. Regional initiatives are also important. The Three Seas Initiative, linking the Baltic, Black and Adriatic Seas, adds a strategic layer to Europe's maritime security by strengthening connectivity, energy security and digital transformation. Croatia currently presides over the Initiative and will host its Summit and Business Forum in Dubrovnik tomorrow and the day after, on 28 and 29 April. Croatia also contributes to EU maritime operations, including EU Naval Force Operation Atalanta and the EU military operation in the Mediterranean.

Only a genuine multilateral approach can reduce risks to global shipping and the maritime environment. The Security Council has a critical role in supporting de-escalation, promoting respect for international law and safeguarding freedom of navigation. Croatia remains ready to work with partners to ensure secure and open maritime routes. Through cooperation, dialogue and consistent respect for international law, we can keep vital waterways open, safe and conducive to long-term peace and stability.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's timely debate on maritime security.

Poland aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of the European Union.

For Poland, maritime security starts with safe navigation, but today the very foundation of that is under attack. When freedom of navigation is compromised, the resilience of the global economy and the integrity of international law begin to crumble. From the Strait of Hormuz to the Baltic Sea, we are witnessing a dangerous shift. The world's most vital trade routes are being transformed into arenas of warfare. These are no longer regional issues. The consequences are global, with the most severe impact on the least developed countries and vulnerable societies.

Poland is concerned about the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, but there are no shortcuts here. Only sustained de-escalation and a diplomatic solution can ensure lasting security. As a maritime nation, we support all peaceful mechanisms aimed at protecting international shipping, global trade and the resilience of supply chains. We welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a task force to develop a diplomatic path for restoring the flow of fertilizers and humanitarian goods through the Strait of Hormuz. We express our readiness to support his work and remain open to other relevant international initiatives.

At the same time, Poland remains deeply alarmed by the activities of the Russian shadow fleet, or so-called clunker fleet. This is not just a fleet of old tankers; it is a floating financial lifeline for Putin's war machine and a deliberate tool for circumventing international sanctions. In the Baltic Sea, Russia has turned the seabed into a hybrid battlefield. Sabotaging undersea cables and energy pipelines has become a low-cost, high-impact instrument for Moscow, used to intimidate sovereign nations under the guise of plausible deniability.

The European Union has already sanctioned nearly 600 vessels and entities related to the shadow fleet. We encourage broader international alignment with these efforts and increased pressure. Enhanced coordination and information sharing, including within the United Nations framework, would be extremely useful in this regard.

We also stress the importance of supporting flag States in building adequate maritime oversight capacities, while recalling their responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Lastly, we see value in strengthening global maritime governance through the International Maritime Organization, particularly with regard to enhancing transparency in vessel registration and ensuring more effective compliance with existing rules.

Maritime security is about safeguarding the foundations of international stability. Accountability is non-negotiable. Those who weaponize the seas and undermine the law of the sea must face the consequences, including through restrictive measures.

The President: The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Japanese representative's unwarranted remarks on the situation in the East China Sea and the South China Sea grossly distort the facts. In reality, the situation in the East China Sea and the South China Sea remains stable overall, and the South China Sea stands as one of the freest shipping lanes in the world.

On the contrary, it is Japan that recently sent its Maritime Self-Defence Force vessels to flex their muscles and deliberately provoke tensions in the Taiwan Strait. This sends a gravely erroneous signal to the Taiwan independence separatists and exposes the ulterior motives of certain factions in Japan to intervene in the Strait by force and sabotage peace and stability across the Strait.

During the Second World War, Japan waged wars of aggression against countries adjacent to the East and South China Seas, subjecting them to colonial rule, for which it bears grave historical guilt. Japan must deeply reflect on its past and tread carefully in its words and deeds, rather than flaunting its military might and destabilizing the region. Historically, Japanese militarism has relied on a standard playbook — fabricating “external threats”, inciting nationalism and hijacking the State apparatus — to launch wars of aggression.

Today, rather than showing true remorse, Japanese right-wing forces are doubling down on reckless provocations regarding China’s Taiwan region, the history of the Second World War and military security, to name just a few. Erroneous remarks made last year by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Taiwan dealt a severe blow to China-Japan relations. Recently, Japanese politicians and officials have repeatedly visited the Yasukuni Shrine, which honours Class A war criminals of the Second World War, in a blatant attempt to whitewash Japan’s wars of aggression, overturn the verdicts on its war criminals and challenge both the Tokyo trials and the post-war international order.

Through constitutional amendments and other measures, Japanese right-wing forces are continuously steering Japan’s security policy towards an offensive and expansionist posture, vainly attempting to accelerate its remilitarization by reviving its military-industrial complex. In relaxing its restrictions on lethal weapon exports, deploying offensive missiles, vastly expanding its military expenditure and floating the idea of abandoning the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, Japan’s intent to pave the way for military expansion is abundantly clear.

This year marks the eightieth anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo trials, which adjudicated the crimes of Japanese militarism and militarist elements in launching and carrying out their war of aggression, thereby defending historical truth, international justice and human dignity. Today in Japan, 80 years later, a new militarism is resurging — a scourge that threatens world peace and stability. The international community must strike back resolutely and can never allow Japanese militarism to rise from the ashes.

I wish to remind the representative of the European Union to refrain from making unsubstantiated and irresponsible remarks on the South China Sea issue.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting.

I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until Wednesday, 29 April, at 10 a.m.

The meeting was suspended at 6.10 p.m.