



PERMANENT MISSION  
OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK

# UN Security Council High-Level Open Debate on “The Safety and Protection of Waterways in the Maritime Domain”

## 27 April 2026

Malta Statement delivered by Permanent Representative Natasha Meli

Madam President,

Malta thanks the Kingdom of Bahrain for convening this timely debate. We are also grateful to the United Nations Secretary-General, the IMO Secretary-General, and Mr Nick Childs for their insightful briefings. Malta aligns with the statements delivered by the European Union and Singapore and is making this statement in its national capacity.

Malta is a maritime nation with a history inextricably linked to the sea. As an island state, we are acutely aware that maritime security is not an abstract concern, nor is it a challenge confined solely to coastal regions. Disruptions to shipping routes and waterways, carry wider implications for global stability, trade, and socio-economic well-being.

We observe with growing concern the developments that challenge the legal framework established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which codifies customary international law. We recall that the Convention sets as a central objective the realisation of a just and equitable international economic order for the benefit of all. Upholding its principles is inseparable from the maintenance of international peace and security

Situations affecting key maritime waterways, including in the Black Sea, Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz, underscore how disruptions in the maritime domain carry broader consequences for both regional and international stability.

President,

At the humanitarian level, we must address the impact of actions affecting commercial shipping and those who depend on it. We reiterate our concern at incidents involving commercial vessels and the risks faced by seafarers and fishers. Let us not forget that Seafarers and fishers are civilians whose service underpins global supply chains and food security.

We must insist also on the protection of commercial shipping as the bedrock of the global economy.



The maritime domain is also facing evolving challenges that require our collective attention. Vessels operating outside established regulatory frameworks, risks to critical underwater infrastructure, and the growing use of technologies that may interfere with navigation systems all call for increased vigilance and international cooperation.

President,

Maritime security should continue to be approached through cooperation and respect for international law. Recent milestones, including the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement and the Beijing Convention on the Judicial Sale of Ships, demonstrate that a multilateral approach to ocean governance is key in addressing shared challenges to our common uses of the seas.

At the same time, it is evident that much remains to be done. The scale and complexity of current risks highlight the importance of sustained international engagement.

First, we must reaffirm UNCLOS as the constitution of the seas. Preserving and upholding its principles is essential for maintaining global peace and security. The international community can ill afford to relinquish the stability and predictability that this framework guarantees, otherwise we risk a return to an era of maritime uncertainty, reversing decades of hard-won progress and cooperation.

Second, Malta underlines that maritime security is a matter of direct relevance to the United Nations Security Council in the context of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly where maritime threats affect global and regional stability. The Security Council's attention is therefore essential to address evolving risks and to promote coordinated responses.

President

In conclusion, we reaffirm that safety and security of the maritime domain underpin global trade and economic resilience. Ultimately, maritime security is global security. Without one, we cannot have the other.

Thank you.