PERMANENT MISSION
OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

Security Council Open Debate on Maintenance of International Peace and Security - "Emerging Technologies and Maritime Security: Implications for Peace and Security"

Joint Statement delivered by H.E. Excellency Edwin Tong Sc, Minister for Law and Second Minister for Home Affairs of The Republic of Singapore, on behalf of The Republic of Fiji, The Republic of Malta, Jamaica, and The Republic of Singapore

29 October 2026

I thank the Greek Presidency for convening this very timely briefing, and the briefers for their invaluable insights. We thank the Prime Minister of Greece for his leadership on this very important issue.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Fiji, Jamaica, Malta and my country, Singapore.

Mr President,

244 East 48th Street New York, NY 10017
T +1 (212) 725 2345 E malta-un.newyork@gov.mt

W missions.foreign.gov.mt

The oceans connect peoples and cultures, and vital maritime arteries facilitate trade and prosperity around the world. For small maritime nations, safety and security in the oceans and seas is critical. Our countries actively contributed to the negotiations and conclusion of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We remain committed to upholding it as the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

Today, emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and autonomous ships carry both great promise and challenges for maritime security. Allow me to make three points.

First, innovation, safety, and security should advance hand-in-hand. The international community must work together to harness new technologies to strengthen maritime safety and security, while at the same time upholding and respecting navigational rights and freedoms in accordance with UNCLOS.

For example, AI can enhance maritime domain awareness by improving navigational, communications, and early warning systems for all states. These benefits must, however, be underpinned by robust safeguards that promote accountability, transparency, and human oversight. Such safeguards will help to ensure that AI does not undermine maritime safety and security, or international law including UNCLOS. We therefore welcome the adoption of the IMO's non-mandatory Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) Code and support continued efforts towards the development of a mandatory framework, ensuring the safe integration of autonomous and remotely operated commercial ships into global shipping. We also support broader international efforts to advance responsible AI governance, including through the Global Dialogue on AI Governance and Global Digital Compact.

Second, we must collectively guard against the weaponisation of new technologies. They can be deployed to disrupt or damage critical underwater infrastructure, including subsea cable networks. Drones or autonomous vessels can be used to interfere with the safe passage of ships. Recent attacks against civilian vessels have further highlighted the risks to maritime safety and the protection of seafarers. Cyber-attacks pose real-world consequences for maritime security, including the disabling of critical board systems, compromising navigational safety and disrupting port operations. Such technologies could also be exploited to take control of vessels for unlawful purposes.

Third, the international community must guard against all actions that threaten international peace and security. We must reject unlawful restrictions on transit passage through straits used for international navigation. These include actions that deny, hamper, impede, impair or suspend the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation. Such actions would constitute violations of UNCLOS. The right of transit passage is also firmly entrenched in customary international law. It is therefore binding on all States regardless of whether they are parties to UNCLOS in times of peace and war. Therefore, developments in the Strait of Hormuz have wider implications for navigational rights and freedoms across the globe. When transit passage is disrupted, consequences reverberate across the global economy.

Mr President,

This is why shared rules like UNCLOS matter. In defending them, we defend our collective interests. We stand ready to work with the international community to uphold the safety and security of our oceans today and for future generations.

Thank you very much.