

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 7 August 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to underscore the United States' concern regarding the threat that Iran continues to pose to navigational rights and freedoms, international maritime security and international commerce.

Iran's continued attacks, seizures and harassment of commercial vessels engaged in lawful transit through critical waterways in the region consistently disrupt navigational rights and freedoms in and near the Strait of Hormuz – a waterway through which 20 per cent of the world's oil transits to market. Iran periodically threatens to close the Strait, which would not be permitted under international law. International law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, guarantees the right of ships and aircraft of all countries to transit passage through international straits. This means that Iran cannot legally block the lawful passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

Since 2021, Iran has interfered with the travel of at least 20 foreign-flagged commercial vessels, detaining 4 vessels this year alone. This includes attempts on 4 and 5 July 2023 by an Iranian Navy vessel to seize by force two oil tankers exercising freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Oman. One of these oil tankers, the Bahamian-flagged MT *Richmond Voyager*, which is managed by the United States company Chevron, was fired upon by Iranian personnel using both small arms and crew-served weapons, with several rounds striking the ship's hull near crew living spaces. This egregious incident is part of a continued pattern of reckless maritime behaviour that includes the utilization of live fire by Iranian personnel, endangering civilian crew members of commercial vessels as well as the marine environment.

Such actions by Iran constitute a clear threat to international peace and security, which this Council has the primary responsibility of maintaining. As such, it is our duty as members of the Security Council to condemn these actions. Further, it is in the shared interest of all Member States not to let such actions by Iran, which threaten the navigational rights and freedoms of all Member States, international maritime security and international commerce, go without condemnation.

I request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Linda **Thomas-Greenfield**  
Representative of the United States to the United Nations

