

**THE NORTHWEST SEAPORT ALLIANCE**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**MANAGING MEMBERS**  
**ACTION ITEM**

**Item No.** 5F  
**Date of Meeting** October 6, 2020

**DATE:** September 30, 2020

**TO:** Managing Members

**FROM:** David Freiboth, Labor Relations Port of Seattle  
Pete Mills, Commission Staff, Port of Seattle

**Sponsors:** Sam Cho, Commissioner, Port of Seattle  
Dick Marzano, Commissioner, Port of Tacoma

**Project Manager:** David Freiboth, Labor Relations Port of Seattle

**SUBJECT:** **Seafarers' Crew Change Proclamation**

**A. ACTION REQUESTED**

Request Managing Members of the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA) and the Port of Seattle Commission, by dual action vote, proclaim support for seafarers stranded on vessels due to Covid-19-specific policies by nations around the globe.

**B. SYNOPSIS**

The proclamation proclaims support for the joint commitment made by the United States and over 20 countries, United Nations agencies, and international organizations at the July 9, 2020, International Maritime Summit recognizing seafarers as key workers and urges all countries with maritime ports of entry to recognize this

joint commitment and accommodate crew change movements and timely crew repatriations. This issue has been supported by organizations including:

- American Maritime Officers
- American Pilots' Association
- Association of Ship Brokers and Agents
- Chamber of Shipping of America
- International Longshore and Warehouse Union
- International Maritime Employers' Council
- International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots
- International Propeller Club
- International Transport Workers Federation, Seafarers Section
- Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association
- Maritime Information Service of North America
- The Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS)
- National Association of Maritime Organizations
- Nautilus International
- North Atlantic Ports Association
- North American Maritime Ministry Association
- Seafarers International Union of North America
- The Maritime Exchange of the Delaware River and Bay

**Speakers in support of this proclamation** include representatives from the International Transportation Workers Federation and the Mission to Seafarers.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

Jeff Engels of the International Transport Workers' Federation. Mr. Engels urged NWSA/PoS to publicly weigh in on an escalating humanitarian and safety crisis facing ship-board seafarers.

Due to COVID-related travel restrictions implemented by various countries throughout the world, over 300,000 seafarers have not been able to disembark vessels following their contracted service to repatriate to their home countries. Large numbers of workers have been stranded at sea for months beyond their contract terms.

This June the Secretary General of the United Nations expressed concern that numerous seafarers in need of immediate medical care ashore were not permitted to disembark at many ports around the world, while those waiting to return to sea were losing their source of income. In a bid to ensure that changeovers can safely take place, the Secretary-General called on all countries to "formally designate seafarers and other marine personnel as 'key workers'".

International Labor Organization Director-General Guy Ryder. Mr. Ryder said: Forcing exhausted seafarers to continue working more than four months beyond the end of their contract is unacceptable. It jeopardizes their health and endangers maritime safety. We call on governments to work together to make these crew changes happen in safety. Forcing exhausted seafarers to continue working more than four months beyond the end of their contract is unacceptable. (The situation jeopardizes their health and endangers maritime safety. We call on governments to work together to make these crew changes happen in safety

**D. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

o request for funds or anticipated fiscal impact

**E. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS**

- **Action Alternative:** Do not approve the proclamation.
- **Recommended Action:** Approve the proclamation.

**F. ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST**

- Seattle Times 6/3/2020: "Coronavirus strands merchant ship crews at sea for months"
- Congressional Letter of Concern for Seafarers 9/22/2020

**G. PREVIOUS ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

No Previous Actions.

Seattle Times

# Coronavirus strands merchant ship crews at sea for months

June 3, 2020 at 8:58 pm Updated June 4, 2020 at 8:26 pm

By

[ELENA BECATOROS](#)

and

[THEODORA TONGAS](#)

*The Associated Press*

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — For nearly four months, Capt. Andrei Kogankov and his oil tanker crew haven't set foot on dry land. With global travel at a virtual standstill due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Russian captain was forced to extend his normal contract. He still doesn't know when he'll be able to go home.

Countries across the world have imposed lockdowns, shut borders and suspended international flights to curb the spread of the new coronavirus. The move was deemed essential to prevent rampaging contagion, but merchant ship crews have become unintended collateral damage.

With more than 80% of global trade by volume transported by sea, the world's more than 2 million merchant seafarers play a vital role.

"In some ways, they've been the forgotten army of people," said Guy Platten, secretary general of the ICS. "They're out of sight and out of mind, and yet they're absolutely essential for moving the fuel, the food, the medical supplies and all the other vital goods to feed world trade."

About 150,000 seafarers are stranded at sea in need of crew changes, according to the International Chamber of Shipping. Roughly another 150,000 are stuck on shore, waiting to get back to work.

“It’s not a tenable position to keep on indefinitely. You can’t just keep extending people,” said Platten.

International shipping organizations, trade unions and shipping companies are urging countries to recognize merchant crews as essential workers and allow them to travel and carry out crew changes.

“Our challenge now is to get a very strong message to governments. You can’t expect people to move (personal protective equipment), drugs and all the issues that we need to respond to COVID, and keep cities and countries that are in lockdown fed, if you don’t move cargo on ships,” said Steve Cotton, General Secretary of the International Transport Workers’ Federation, or ITF. “They’ve got to recognize the sacrifice seafarers are making for our global society.”

Kogankov is seven months into a four-month contract and was supposed to be replaced in mid-March in Qatar. But a few days before he arrived, Qatar imposed a lockdown and banned international flights.

From there to South Korea, Japan, South Korea again and on to Singapore and Thailand, each time the same story: Lockdown. No flights. No going home.

The uncertainty and open-ended extension of his contract — and with it the responsibility for his 21-man crew and a ship carrying flammable cargo — is taking its toll.

“When you are seven months on board, you are becoming physically and mentally exhausted,”

Kogankov said by satellite phone from Thailand. “We are working 24/7. We don’t have, let’s say, Friday night or Saturday night or weekends. No, the vessel is running all the time.”

Officers sign on for three to four months, the rest of the crew for around seven months. But they always have an end date. Take that away, and suddenly the prospect of endless workdays becomes a strain.

“We’re gravely worried that there could be a higher increase of incidents and accidents. But we also are seeing a high level of what I would describe as anxiety and frustration,” Cotton said. “If you don’t know when you’re going to get off a ship, that adds to a high level of anxiety that really is quite demoralizing.”

Unless governments facilitate crew changes, Cotton warned, “it’s difficult for us to convince the seafarers not to take more dramatic action, and ... stop working.”

It’s not just crew changes that are problematic during the pandemic. Getting medical help for seafarers has also become difficult, as Capt. Stephan Berger discovered when one of his crew fell ill — not with coronavirus.

Lockdowns in successive ports made visiting a doctor impossible. It took multiple phone calls and the combined efforts of a Dubai paramedic, Berger and the German ship-owning company to eventually get the necessary care for the crewmember, who was hospitalized for three weeks.

Of the 23 people aboard Berger’s Berlin Express, 18 were due for a crew change when it moored in Valencia, Spain, in late May. The officers had extended

what were normally three-month contracts to four and five months, while the mostly Filipino crew had been on board for eight or nine months, instead of three or four.

Despite this, morale has been good, Berger said.

Nobody is particularly happy with the contract extensions, "but we have to take it as it is," he said. "It feels sometimes like a prison."

Ship-owning company Hapag-Lloyd was doing everything it could to arrange crew changes and managed to arrange for the seven European crew members to sign off in Barcelona on May 30, Berger said. But there are still no flights home for the Filipino crew.

"We are very much hidden. We are on board our vessels, and the people might see the big ships coming in and out of the ports, but very seldom they see the people who are operating the ships," Berger said. "We hope that people would recognize it a little bit more now."

On another Hapag-Lloyd container ship, apprentice Hannah Gerlach was to sign off in mid-March in Singapore. But even as her vessel headed to Asia, it was clear that wouldn't happen. Gerlach packed her bags for an earlier departure from Sri Lanka, but by the time she arrived, so had the lockdown.

"I definitely miss my family very much. ... And I miss just these moments of a normal life, to have the possibility to go out for a walk, to the forest, to ride the bicycle," Gerlach said. "You don't know any more when your contract will end, when you have the chance to see your family again."

David Hammond, founder of the Human Rights at Sea organization, said many seafarers “have really been at the end of their tether” due to contract extensions. “The reality is that until there is global cooperation among states and shipping entities .... then crew change is going to be very problematic.”



## *Concerned About Seafarers*

September 22, 2020

The Hon. Ron Johnson, Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security &  
Governmental Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
328 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2466 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Gary Peters, Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security &  
Governmental Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
724 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Mike Rogers, Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2184 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: **Seafarer Crew Changes**

Dear Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Peters, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Rogers;

The undersigned extend their sincere thanks for your leadership during the ongoing, unprecedented crisis in which we find ourselves.

You have numerous pressing issues to address, and it is our unfortunate duty to bring one more to your attention: seafarer physical and mental health. This letter seeks your assistance in resolving this global problem, which is all too apparent at many U.S. seaports.

### **Background**

When governments began ordering lockdowns and other restrictions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, ship owners largely kept crewmembers on board, desiring to keep them safe from harm. At the same time, airports closed, and nations restricted international travel, some closing their borders altogether. As a result, many mariners have been locked aboard their ships well beyond their contract expiration dates. About 300,000 seafarers have remained aboard their vessels, some for as long as 17 months. Now they are desperate to get home. An equal number has been waiting to join their ships, unable to earn a living to support their families.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is responsible to clear foreign seafarers upon arrival. Those with valid visas may move through the country for shore leave and to join or sign off from their vessels.

A May 24, 2020 presidential proclamation limited or restricted certain international travelers from entry into or through the U.S. but specifically exempted "any alien traveling as a nonimmigrant

pursuant to a C-1, D, or C-1/D nonimmigrant visa as a crewmember or any alien otherwise traveling to the United States as air or sea crew.”

In early July, the UK hosted an international summit on crew changes. The result was a statement pledging urgent resolution to seafarer issues that have arisen due to the pandemic. The International Maritime Organization strongly supports the statement, which 12 nations signed, including the U.S. Since that time, we have seen some improvement in crew repatriation processes. But much more is needed.

Enclosed is a more recent statement, dated September 10 2020, from United Nations organizations responsible to develop international regulations. It is clear that the highest levels of the international community recognize the critical problems, both humanitarian and operational, facing seafarers and shipping management. The major issue is implementation of effective practices nationally and locally.

### **The Issue**

In order to provide relief to anxious and increasingly distressed seafarers, vessel owners have been attempting to rotate their crews. Unfortunately their efforts have been hampered by two primary factors: 1) limited choices for airports and flights and 2) government policies which prevent departure of offsigning crew. These factors place human life and property in jeopardy as overworked, overtired mariners are more likely to make mistakes that can cause accidents. Until owners can safely and efficiently change out crewmembers, the risks to America's fragile supply chain, including critical relief supplies, and to seafarers' mental health will continue to grow.

The need to allow crewmembers who have so long been stranded aboard their ships to go home and to bring fresh workers aboard is increasingly pressing. Unfortunately, vessel owners and their agents find that some U. S. CBP officials are denying crew repatriation requests for reasons that sometimes seem arbitrary (e.g., the vessel's next port of call) and at other times providing no reason at all, contrary to federal regulations.

While senior executives at agencies charged with border protection may agree with the International Maritime Organization protocols for ensuring safe crew changes and travel during the pandemic, day-to-day decisions are often left to local port personnel.

Some CBP field offices have allowed certain deviations from normal procedures, such as allowing crew to depart from non-local airports. Yet often the attendant requirements (such as constant guarding and preventing ship departures until after the crewmembers' flights leave) are onerous, expensive, and sometimes unworkable due to flight schedule limitations. These requirements can also throw the remainder of the ship's voyage off schedule, jeopardizing the closely choreographed transportation and supply chains. CBP claims it must keep a ship in port in the event crewmembers miss their flights or flights are cancelled, after which they must rejoin their ships. This can create challenges for owners attempting to plan for the appropriate crew complement at each stage of the voyage.

CBP personnel cite security concerns as a primary rationale for denying repatriation requests. They have rejected proposed alternative solutions to processing crewmembers who miss outbound flights and requiring constant guarding. However, despite multiple requests over the

years, CBP will not provide data that supports treating every repatriating mariner as a threat to national security.

Further, by denying these beleaguered seafarers the ability to leave their ships at the earliest possible opportunity, these policies are at some level creating a security risk that did not previously exist. Depressed, exhausted, increasingly distressed, often frustrated, and sometimes angry mariners will be more likely bring about a marine accident, desert, abscond, or otherwise cause harm, including self-harm — up to and including suicide. Let them go home and the risk diminishes appreciably.

### **The Solution**

This issue needs top-down leadership. In recognition of the logistics difficulties ship owners and their agents must overcome to effect crew changes, CBP must direct its port personnel to grant all crew changes when and at any port requested, unless specific intelligence suggests an individual seafarer may pose a security threat. For the duration of the pandemic, and perhaps beyond if experience warrants it, CBP should allow repatriating crew to take flights with domestic connections so as to expand options for seafarers to return home as quickly as possible.

If CBP grants a repatriation request and the flight is missed or cancelled, CBP should allow overnight hotel stays so the crewmember can board the next available flight, the onsigning seafarer can join the ship, and the ship can continue on its voyage as scheduled.

Finally, CBP should allow for innovative solutions to the worsening problem, such as allowing seafarer welfare organizations or others to charter flights for groups of mariners without the normal restrictions mentioned above.

Industry recognizes the possibility that relaxing these requirements may result in a seafarer attempting to remain in the country illegally; however, CBP and other agencies have processes in place to respond to such incidents. These potential events should not hamper all crew changes any more than a security breach at one marine terminal should result in the closure of all ports. Further, it must be noted that the opportunity for deserting exists even under normal operating conditions.

Finally, CBP should issue national guidance to field personnel to give them the leeway to implement the suggestions above and to standardize procedures wherever possible. Currently, every crew repatriation request is considered — and approved or denied — on a case-by-case basis. CBP port personnel should formalize and publish their requirements and procedures so port stakeholders can plan accordingly. Without such information, it is impossible for vessel owners safely effect crew changes in any given port.

However, CBP field personnel are reluctant to implement the suggestions outlined above without specific approval from CBP Headquarters. CBP HQ has informed us that, while it will work with port personnel in an effort to address the issue, it will not change its policies and will continue to make decisions at the local level and on a case-by-case basis.

## In Closing

We recognize that, like the rest of us, CBP has faced unprecedented challenges resulting from the pandemic, and the agency has worked diligently to overcome its difficulties. We just ask CBP officials to take their efforts a few steps further.

In their statement following the international summit on crew changes, signatory governments agreed that “the inability of ship operators worldwide to conduct ship’s crew changes is the single most pressing maritime operational challenge to the safe and efficient movement of global trade.” Despite its agreement, U.S. CBP’s actions belie the spirit and intent of the statement.

We recognize that CBP must balance the safety and health of its own personnel and that of crewmembers against the need for border security and potential economic impacts. However, given the current humanitarian crises, governments that do not take all available measures to repatriate crewmembers when requested are causing prolonged misery for hundreds of thousands of people. This in no way justifies the cost of protecting against a future security event that may never happen.

If an agency is facing conflicting missions, it is well past time to place the greater value on human life and liberty. Seafarers are the lifeline of the vital maritime supply chain. They are in distress, and we must act now to resolve this humanitarian and economic crisis.

We would greatly appreciate your assistance in swiftly and urgently resolving this issue. Please feel free to contact Lisa Himber at 267-974-0488 or [lisa.himber@maritimedelriv.com](mailto:lisa.himber@maritimedelriv.com) with any questions you may have or if you need additional information.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

American Maritime Officers  
American Pilots’ Association  
Association of Ship Brokers and Agents  
Chamber of Shipping of America  
International Maritime Employers’ Council  
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots  
International Propeller Club  
International Transport Workers Federation, Seafarers Section  
Marine Engineers’ Beneficial Association  
Maritime Information Service of North America  
The Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS)  
National Association of Maritime Organizations  
Nautilus International  
North Atlantic Ports Association  
North American Maritime Ministry Association  
Seafarers International Union of North America

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International  
Labour  
Organization



INTERNATIONAL  
MARITIME  
ORGANIZATION



UNITED NATIONS  
UNCTAD



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
The UN Migration Agency



UNITED NATIONS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



ICAO - OACI - ICAO  
國際民航組織



United Nations  
Global Compact

**Joint Statement calling on all Governments to immediately recognize seafarers as key workers, and to take swift and effective action to eliminate obstacles to crew changes, so as to address the humanitarian crisis faced by the shipping sector, ensure maritime safety and facilitate economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**

**10 September 2020**

### **The maritime shipping sector faces a humanitarian crisis**

The maritime shipping sector moves more than 80 per cent of global trade and is a crucial component of the global economy. As a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic this sector, and in particular the seafarers who drive it, are facing severe challenges in making the necessary crew changes of seafarers. This is due, among other reasons, to restrictions on travel, embarkation and disembarkation in ports; quarantine measures; reductions in available flights; and limits on the issuing of visas and passports.

It is because of the sacrifices of seafarers, who have continued working after their contracts have expired, that ports have remained open for trade, so allowing cargo operations to be carried out in a timely manner and goods to continue to circulate smoothly. The world owes a great debt to seafarers for maintaining supply chains throughout the pandemic.

Actions taken by many governments that limit or prevent ship operators from conducting crew changes is the single most pressing maritime operational challenge to the safe and efficient movement of global trade. This has created a humanitarian crisis, with approximately 300,000 seafarers trapped working aboard ships who cannot be repatriated, and an equal number of unemployed seafarers ashore because they are unable to board ships. Those on board have had their contracts extended, sometimes beyond 17 months, and are facing fatigue and physical and mental health issues, leading to fears of self-harm and suicide. The International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) have received thousands of urgent calls for help from seafarers and their families.

The rights of seafarers, as enshrined in the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006), as amended, and other international instruments, have not been fully respected by all governments, notably their rights to shore leave, annual leave, a maximum period of service on board (11 months), repatriation, and access to medical care onboard and ashore.

The current rise in seafarer fatigue threatens the safety of maritime navigation. The efficient continuation of trade and the undisrupted functioning of supply chains will also be affected, because ships with fatigued seafarers cannot operate indefinitely. Commercial fishing, an important contributor to food security and livelihoods, is facing a similar crew change problem.

It is therefore essential that all governments urgently recognize seafarers as key workers and take immediate, concrete action to eliminate obstacles to crew changes, so addressing this humanitarian crisis, ensuring maritime safety and sustainable shipping, and facilitating economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Social dialogue and coordinated action**

Since the beginning of the crisis, ITF, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), and other key national and international actors have made unprecedented efforts to use collaboration and social dialogue, working continuously, creatively and tirelessly to address these issues. This has included the development of a framework of protocols for safe crew changes, as well as other guidance.

The United Nations specialized agencies have cooperated actively to address this situation. This has included endorsing the framework of protocols for safe crew changes and issuing a number of publications to ensure the protection of seafarers' rights during the pandemic. They have made individual and joint statements to draw attention to the urgency of the problem, and they have strategically approached key governments – including major flag States, port States and labour-supplying States – to eliminate obstacles to crew changes whilst ensuring public health and safety.

The urgent need to resolve the crew change crisis was highlighted in the Joint Statement of the International Maritime Virtual Summit on Crew Changes (9 July 2020)<sup>1</sup> and in the G7's statement on High-Level Transportation Principles in Response to COVID-19 (29 July 2020)<sup>2</sup>.

In its Resolution 44/15, adopted on 17 July 2020, the Human Rights Council recognized the relevance of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the context of global crises such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and the need for States to ensure responsible business conduct during the crisis and as part of a resilient recovery.

### **Urgent measures still to be taken**

While many States have responded to these statements and calls for action, the rate of crew changes continues to be far below what is needed to avert a humanitarian disaster that will also affect the safety of shipping, the protection of the marine environment, the continuation of efficient trade and the recovery of the world economy. The issue requires increased and immediate government attention.

All United Nations member States are therefore urgently requested to undertake the following actions:

- designate seafarers as "key workers" providing an essential service, to facilitate safe and unhindered embarkation and disembarkation from their ships;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-of-the-international-maritime-virtual-summit-on-crew-changes>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.state.gov/g7-high-level-transportation-principles-in-response-to-covid-19/>

- undertake national consultations involving all relevant ministries, agencies and departments, to identify obstacles to crew changes, and establish and implement measurable, time-bound plans to increase the rate of such crew changes;
- consult with representative shipowners' and seafarers' organizations when developing and implementing measures related to, or that have an impact upon, crew changes of seafarers; in particular - for those States who have ratified the MLC (2006) - in relation to achieving full compliance with the obligations enshrined in the Convention;
- implement protocols for crew changes, drawing upon the latest version of the Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic<sup>3</sup>;
- refrain from authorising any new extension of seafarers' employment agreements beyond the default maximum period of 11 months, in accordance with the MLC, 2006;
- facilitate the diversion of ships from their normal trading routes to ports where crew changes are permitted;
- accept internationally-recognized documentation as evidence of their status as key workers and that the purpose of their travel and movement is to undertake crew changes. Examples of such documentation include certificates issued in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers; seafarers' identity documents issued in accordance with the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108) and the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185). Letters issued by the seafarer's company or as part of the seafarer's employment agreement, (as carried by seafarers) should also be considered evidence that they are seafarers joining or leaving ships;
- provide seafarers with immediate access to medical facilities in the port State. When the required medical care cannot be provided in the port of call, facilitate the medical evacuation of seafarers in need of urgent medical attention. Address the situation of seafarers who, due to the unforeseen extension of their periods on board, are facing the expiration of essential medical prescriptions;
- review (working in conjunction with health, immigration and other relevant ministries, agencies and authorities) the necessity of any national and/or local restrictions that may continue to apply to the movement and travel of seafarers in relation to crew changes, including allowing exemptions from quarantine or similar restrictions in accordance with relevant international rules or health regulatory guidelines;

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<sup>3</sup>

Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic  
([http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/COVID%20CL%204204%20adds/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204-Add.14%20-%20Coronavirus%20\(Covid-19\)%20-%20Recommended%20Framework%20Of%20Protocols.pdf](http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/COVID%20CL%204204%20adds/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204-Add.14%20-%20Coronavirus%20(Covid-19)%20-%20Recommended%20Framework%20Of%20Protocols.pdf))

- increase access to commercial flights to and from the principal countries of origin of seafarers, and airports in reasonable proximity to seaports where crew changes are effected. Where scheduled commercial flights are not available, authorize landing slots for chartered flights, or include seafarers on other repatriation flights for citizens and permanent residents;
- permit seafarers to disembark from ships in port and transit through their territory (i.e. to an airport) for the purpose of crew changes and repatriation;
- allow seafarers who are their citizens or permanent residents to return home, and take all actions to expedite their return;
- facilitate the clearance of seafarers who are citizens or permanent residents of their State, so that they can travel to join ships;
- undertake bilateral and multilateral discussions between governments to eliminate obstacles to the movement of seafarers leaving or joining ships;
- implement guidance issued by the United Nations agencies and disseminate guidance developed by the maritime sector, aimed at ensuring safety and health of seafarers and the public;
- take any other actions deemed useful to address this issue.

We ask governments to bring the contents of this joint statement to the attention of the competent authorities and all others concerned.





Guy Ryder  
Director-General  
International Labour Organization  
(ILO)



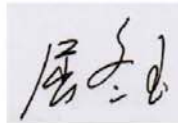
Kitack Lim  
Secretary-General  
International Maritime Organization  
(IMO)



Mukhisa Kituyi  
Secretary-General  
United Nations Conference on Trade  
and Development (UNCTAD)



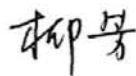
António Vitorino  
Director General  
International Organization for  
Migration (IOM)



Qu Dongyu  
Director-General  
Food and Agriculture Organization of  
the United Nations (FAO)



Michelle Bachelet,  
High Commissioner for  
Human Rights  
(OHCHR)



Fang Liu  
Secretary General  
International Civil Aviation  
Organization (ICAO)



Sanda Ojiambo  
CEO & Executive Director  
United Nations Global  
Compact

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**PROCLAMATION  
OF THE NORTHWEST SEAPORT ALLIANCE**

- WHEREAS**, the pandemic spread of the Covid-19 virus continues to deliver tragic losses to individuals, families and communities across the globe; and
- WHEREAS**, seafarers performing essential duties critical to our global economy have been overlooked and not well considered in policy aimed at reducing the virus spread; and
- WHEREAS**, in response to Covid-19 many jurisdictions have imposed policies forcing seafarers to remain onboard and work well beyond their contracted term of service and have further limited the movement of new crews to provide relief; and
- WHEREAS**, today more than 300,000 seafarers at ports across the globe are prohibited from leaving vessels; and
- WHEREAS**, it is cruel and inhumane to force workers to perform under circumstances where they do not know when, or if, they will be allowed to return home; and
- WHEREAS**, restricting crew movements and changes will inevitably create safety concerns that could disrupt the international flow of goods; and
- WHEREAS**, the Northwest Seaport Alliance stands in support of the fair, equitable and just treatment of all workers; and
- WHEREAS**, the Northwest Seaport Alliance is committed to working with governments, business and stakeholders to rapidly identify and implement viable solutions to bring our seafarers home.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Northwest Seaport Alliance hereby proclaims support for the joint commitment made by the United States and over 20 countries, United Nations agencies and international organizations at the 9 July 2020 International Maritime Summit recognizing seafarers as key workers.

AND FURTHERMORE, the Northwest Seaport Alliance urges all countries with maritime ports of entry to recognize this joint commitment and accomodate crew change movements and timely repatriations.

Proclaimed by the Northwest Seaport Alliance this 6<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2020.

Commissioners representing the Managing Members of the Northwest Seaport Alliance:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephanie Bowman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristin Ang

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ryan Calkins

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deanna Keller

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sam Cho

\_\_\_\_\_  
John McCarthy

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fred Felleman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dick Marzano

\_\_\_\_\_  
Peter Steinbrueck

\_\_\_\_\_  
Don Meyer

Port of Seattle Commissioners

Port of Tacoma Commissioners

**PROCLAMATION  
OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION**

- WHEREAS**, the pandemic spread of the Covid-19 virus continues to deliver tragic losses to individuals, families and communities across the globe; and
- WHEREAS**, seafarers performing essential duties critical to our global economy have been overlooked and not well considered in policy aimed at reducing the virus spread; and
- WHEREAS**, in response to Covid-19 many jurisdictions have imposed policies forcing seafarers to remain onboard and work well beyond their contracted term of service and have further limited the movement of new crews to provide relief; and
- WHEREAS**, today more than 300,000 seafarers at ports across the globe are prohibited from leaving vessels; and
- WHEREAS**, it is cruel and inhumane to force workers to perform under circumstances where they do not know when, or if, they will be allowed to return home; and
- WHEREAS**, restricting crew movements and changes will inevitably create safety concerns that could disrupt the international flow of goods; and
- WHEREAS**, the Port of Seattle Commission stands in support of the fair, equitable and just treatment of all workers; and
- WHEREAS**, the Port of Seattle Commission is committed to working with governments, business and stakeholders to rapidly identify and implement viable solutions to bring our seafarers home.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Port of Seattle Commission hereby proclaims support for the joint commitment made by the United States and over 20 countries, United Nations agencies and international organizations at the 9 July 2020 International Maritime Summit recognizing seafarers as key workers.

AND FURTHERMORE, the Port of Seattle Commission urges all countries with maritime ports of entry to recognize this joint commitment and accomodate crew change movements and timely repatriations.

Proclaimed by the Port of Seattle Commission this 6th day of October, 2020.

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Port of Seattle Commissioners