

Ratification of IMO convention boosts maritime security

Maritime security has been boosted with the latest ratification of the 2005 Protocol to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA).

The Republic of Nauru submitted its instrument of ratification of the 2005 Protocols on 29 April 2010, becoming the 12th country to ratify the 2005 SUA Protocol and the 10th to ratify the 2005 Fixed Platforms Protocol.

The 2005 Protocols revised the original SUA treaties of 1988 to ensure that the legal framework developed by IMO is kept up to date and provides an adequate basis for the arrest, detention and extradition of alleged terrorists acting against shipping or ports or when using ships to perpetrate acts of terrorism.

They substantially extend the list of criminal offences actionable under the 1988 treaties and include new rules on consensual boarding, which are of prime importance as they provide States with the necessary legal basis to intercept terrorist activities at sea that are planned or already in progress.

The 2005 Protocols were

adopted on 14 October 2005, at a Diplomatic Conference held in London at the Headquarters of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the regulation of international shipping from the points of view of safety, security and prevention of marine pollution by ships.

The Convention, as amended by its 2005 Protocol, enters into force ninety days after the date on which 12

member-states have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval, or have deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the IMO Secretary-General.

The 1988 Protocol, as amended by its 2005 Protocol, requires ratification from three States that are also party to the SUA Convention, but it cannot come into force unless the 2005 SUA Convention is itself already in force.

Welcoming the latest ratification, IMO Secretary-

General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos said the entry into force in three months time of the 2005 Protocols would provide a welcome boost to the fight against terrorism.

"In these uncertain times, when terrorism has tragically succeeded in shaping the political agenda worldwide, it is vital that the international community has in place a framework for legal action capable of ensuring that suspected terrorists are apprehended and brought to trial wherever in the world

they may seek to hide. In the maritime domain, we now have a much-strengthened framework with the imminent coming into force of these important IMO instruments" Mitropoulos aid.

He noted that the SUA treaties are complementary to the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, which aims at putting in place practical measures to make international shipping and port facilities safe from terrorist activity and is mandatory under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

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