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Circular Letter No.4293  
20 May 2020

To: All IMO Members  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communication from the Government of the Gabonese Republic**

The Government of the Gabonese Republic has sent the attached communications, dated 12 May, 28 and 11 March 2020, with the request that they are circulated by the Organization.

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**INTERNATIONAL SHIP REGISTRY OF GABON  
COMMISSIONAIRE OF MARITIME AFFAIRS**

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**MARCIR: 10/2020**

**DATE: 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020**

**To :** Representatives of Gabon flagged vessels, Deputy Commissioners, Ship-owners & Ship-operators. Masters, Flag State Surveyors and Recognized Organizations.

**Subject:** I.M.O. Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14, 5 May 2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommended Framework of Protocols for Ensuring Safe Ship Crew Changes and Travel during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.

**Scope:** This Merchant Marine Circular aims to inform all interested parties upon an I.M.O. recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, proposed by a broad cross-section of global industry associations in consultative status with the Organization representing the maritime transportation sector.

**References:**

- a. I.M.O. Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 of 5 May 2020.
  - b. I.M.O. Circular Letter No. IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.6 of 27 March 2020.
  - c. International Ship Registry of Gabon: COVID-19 – Implementation and enforcement of relevant IMO instruments / IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.1, 19 February 2020  
MARCIR 05/2020 dated 25th February 2020.
1. IMO issued a Circular Letter No.4204-Add.14 (as per attachment) on 5 May 2020, informing maritime administrations, national authorities, and shipping companies of the recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19).
  2. Further to IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.6 of 27 March 2020 which contains, inter alia, recommendations to IMO Member States about measures to facilitate ship crew changes in seaports during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and expanding on these recommendations, the Secretary-General has received a “*Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-*



19) *pandemic*”, proposed by a broad cross section of global industry associations in consultative status with the Organization representing the maritime transportation sector.

3. The protocols with a 12-step solution set out the responsibility of governments, shipowners, transport providers, and seafarers. The 12-step solution provides governments with the global framework to facilitate changeovers of ships’ crews, including the lack of available flights and to assist governments to put in place coordinated procedures to facilitate the safe movement of seafarers. The detailed document is a roadmap to free to the extent possible seafarers from their COVID-19 lockdown and allow appropriate exemptions for them to join or leave ships. It has been advanced by a broad coalition of seafarer unions, and international shipping industry associations, with input from airline industry representatives, international organisations, and the insurance sector, to provide a comprehensive blueprint of how governments can facilitate crew changeovers and resolve safety concerns throughout the entire process.
4. This protocol is a necessary and important step in ensuring the safety of the seafarers at sea, the goods they carry, and the environment in which they sail. Like most of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unimaginable disruption, and the seafarers at sea have been incredibly impacted by this. The challenges facing the shipping industry are numerous at this time, and this issue is amongst the most urgent in need of an international solution.
5. The International Ship Registry of Gabon supports the careful facilitation’s of the world’s seafarers conducting safe crew changes and is expressing its appreciation for the support of the international community in their efforts to facilitate the causes facing the world seafarers and the respective work put into this among others by IMO, ICS & ITF

To be read in conjunction with this Circular (Please click on the link)

[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)



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**MARCIR: 08/2020**

**DATE:28<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**To :** Representatives of Gabon flagged vessels, Deputy Commissioners, Ship-owners & Ship-operators. Masters, Flag State Surveyors and Recognized Organizations.

**Subject:** “I.M.O. Circular Letter No.4221, 18 March 2020: Communication from the Government of the People's Republic of China, Guidance on the prevention and control of COVID-19 on board (Version 1.0)”.

**Scope:** This Marine Notice communicates to all interested parties related to the International Ship Register of Gabon a comprehensive manual issued by the Peoples Republic of China on the COVID-19 outbreak providing “Guidance on the prevention and control of COVID-19 on board (Version 1.0)”.

**References:**

- a. [IMO Circular Letter No.4221, 18 March 2020.](#)
- b. COVID-19-Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers MARCIR 07/2020 dated 11th Mar 2020.

1. Further to previous IMO Circular Letters and MARCIR 07/2020-11.03.2020 on the COVID-19 outbreak this Marine Notice aims to communicate to all interested parties a comprehensive manual issued by the Peoples Republic of China on the COVID-19 outbreak providing “Guidance on the prevention and control of COVID-19 on board (Version 1.0)”.
2. The Embassy of the People's Republic of China sent to the IMO Secretariat the attached communication, together with the translation, dated 11 March 2020, with the request that it is circulated by the Organization. The document provides recommendations and guidance, based on relevant documents developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), together with the experience gained by shipping companies, on the prevention and control of COVID-19 onboard ships, and on personal protection of crew members.

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3. IMO together with industry partners and the World Health Organization, has been developing and issuing *practical advice and guidance on a variety of technical and operational matters related to the coronavirus*. Emphasis is attributed by the IMO to the seafarers on ships. They are, unwittingly, on the front line of this global calamity.

**To be read in conjunction with this Circular**

[IMO Circular Letter No.4221, 18 March 2020](#) *(Please click on the link)*



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**MARCIR: 07/2020**

**DATE:11<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**To** :Representatives of Gabon flagged vessels, Deputy Commissioners, Ship-owners & Ship-operators. Masters, Flag State Surveyors and Recognized Organizations.

**Scope:** The purpose of this “Merchant Marine Circular” is to inform all interested parties on the attached Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers, prepared by the International Chamber of Shipping in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

**References:**

[IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.4, 5 March 2020](#)

1. The IMO Secretary-General has received the attached Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers, prepared by the International Chamber of Shipping in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Gabon International Register interested parties are invited to make use of the Guidance, as they see fit.
2. In response to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the concrete Guidance has been produced by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) to support all types of ships which operate in international waters. The purpose is to help shipping companies follow advice provided by United Nations agencies including the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), as well as the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).
3. The Guidance among others points out that many governments have now introduced national and local restrictions including: Delayed port clearance; Prevention of crew or passengers from embarking or disembarking (preventing shore leave and crew changes); Prevention of discharging or loading cargo or stores, or taking on fuel, water, food and supplies; and Imposition of quarantine or refusal of port entry to ships (in extreme cases).

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4. While such measures can severely disrupt maritime traffic – and may well be in breach of the IHR, the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention) and other maritime principles regarding the rights and treatment of seafarers and passengers – the reality is that shipping companies may have little choice but to adhere to these national and local restrictions due to the serious concern about COVID-19 and the potential risk to public health.

5. The International Ship Registry of Gabon strongly urges all interested parties of the International Ship Registry of Gabon to follow the guidance provided in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

**Applicability:** The Notice applies to all commercial vessels registered in the International Ship Registry of Gabon, as well as to other interested parties related to the International Ship Registry of Gabon.

To be read in conjunction with this Circular

[IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.4, 5 March 2020](#) *(Please click on the link)*