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CIRCULAR

Guinea-Bissau – Financial Security to ensure repatriation and Shipowner's liability.

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Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators / Surveyors

The Guinea-Bissau International Ship Registry (G-B I.S.R.) has issued Marine Circular Nr. 06/2024 which establishes that vessels below 500 GT falling within the scope of MLC 2006, as amended, must comply with mandatory financial security provisions in line with MLC 2006, as amended (Regulations 2.5, Standard A2.5.2 and Regulation 4.2), particularly for seafarer abandonment and contractual claims.

The Circular also introduces a new shipowner declaration format and encourages shipowners of vessels less than 500 GT to voluntarily apply for a Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (DMLC) Part I, as it enhances the credibility of compliance with MLC 2006 and mitigates potential issues during PSC inspections.

Financial Security Obligation:

The financial security system must:

- include certificates or other documentary evidence issued by approved providers, such as P&I Clubs or recognized insurers. A list of G-B I.S.R. P&I Clubs and Insurers can be found at <https://gbisr.com/approved-pi-clubs-insurers/>;
- ensure seafarers are entitled to adequate assistance in the event of abandonment. This includes unpaid wages for up to four months, food, accommodation, and repatriation to their home country or place of hire. The financial security provider must issue a certificate or other documentary proof (i.e. "Blue Cards"), which is to be carried onboard and made available to inspectors upon request;

- cover shipowners' liabilities for compensation related to seafarers' sickness, injury, or death arising from their employment. Certificates must confirm coverage for the duration of the seafarer's employment agreement and meet the specific standards outlined in the MLC 2006.

Shipowners are to submit copies of the financial security certificates to the Administration. These certificates will be verified for compliance with the MLC 2006 before confirmation of receipt is issued.

New Obligatory Declaration

- Shipowners are to sign a declaration assuming responsibility for meeting all obligations under the MLC 2006, as amended, including those related to financial security. The declaration must include the shipowner's details, the list of applicable ships, and an agreement to notify the Administration of any changes in the shipowner's status.
- This signed declaration must be submitted as part of the application for financial security documentation and/or a voluntary DMLC Part I.

Failure to Comply

Failure to meet the financial security requirements may result in administrative measures, including restrictions on vessel movements, registry suspension, or cancellation (withdrawal of flag registration), per the G-B I.S.R. Code of Operation and MLC 2006 enforcement provisions.

Act now

Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators / Surveyors should be guided by the Circular and ensure Guinea-Bissau flagged vessels of less than 500 GT obtain the required financial securities in a timely manner.