

## Statement

### **On Further Exacerbation of Threats for Human Rights in Ukrainian Maritime Sector 8th UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, 25-27 November 2019**

We, Ukrainian maritime business and trade unions, non-governmental organisations, express our deep concern on further ongoing aggravation of risks and threats in Ukrainian maritime sector, that have not economic significance only, but also make a huge influence on the human dimension for hundreds thousands of Ukrainian seafarers, fishermen, port workers and their families. Such risks and threats are connected as with the extremely poor level of Ukrainian state management in maritime and fishery sectors, quite far from modern standards established by ILO, IMO and FAO, so with the current situation of Russian aggression in Ukraine and relevant occupation the seaside territories of Sevastopol, Crimea, and Donetsk regions, with Russian effective control and militarisation over all the Azov Sea, Kerch Strait and Ukrainian executive economic zone in Black Sea. Today Ukrainian cargo and fishery fleet continue shrinking due to the discrimination of Ukrainian vessels in conditions of modern conflict. Russian illegal maritime activities in Crimea and relevant military pressure produce unemployment for the Ukrainian maritime workers, residing in Crimea and included to local and global maritime labor market. Russian active military presence at the captured Ukrainian gas-mining platforms in the Northern part of Black Sea threatens to the safety of shipping for all Ukrainian Black Sea ports.

Blockade of the Azov Sea and Kerch strait for cargo vessels, going to and from Ukrainian Mariupol and Berdyansk ports, organised by Russian militarised forces in 2018, deteriorated the situation for port workers significantly. Illegal mass detentions of Ukrainian fishermen in Azov and Black Seas by Russian armed vessel reduced the possibility of Ukrainian traditional maritime local fishery in own waters. Absence of attention on all those events from the international competent structures contributes for increasing the pointed treats in field of the human rights in the Ukrainian maritime sector.

Ukrainian maritime unions and activists reported repeatedly on coherent accruing threats since 2010, including statements to the ILO structures, to the UN Structures, including the Human Rights Committee, and UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine officers, to the Council of Europe, including European Court of Human Rights, to the OSCE Human Dimension events and OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine officers. Also we discussed this issue on the Third Annual United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights, 1-3 December 2014.

We welcome the modern origin of interest of the international structures, trade unions and business associations to the abovementioned dramatic events in the inland waters, territorial sea and executive economic zone of Ukraine in Azov and Black Seas, covered by this UN and OSCE Mission`s mandates. Alas, since beginning of this Missions` activities the effective mechanism of monitoring and fact-checking of maritime events in Ukrainian maritime spaces was not created.

So we ask the international bodies, also as governments, business associations and trade unions to participate in monitoring and reporting the situation with human rights of crew members of cargo and fishery vessels in waters of Azov and Black Sea, adjacent to Ukraine, including the Kerch Strait, in elaboration the actual mechanisms of such monitoring, including activities the UN and OSCE Missions to Ukraine, enforcement the relevant structures with qualified personnel and relevant equipment.

We demand from Russia to refrain from any further provocative actions against cargo and fishery vessels in conflict area, against Ukrainian Black and Azov Seas` ports, including blockade attempts, to demilitarise the Ukrainian maritime objects and structures, captured since 2014 and to execute demands of international maritime and humanitarian law in occupied Ukrainian territories and for maritime waters, adjoining to them.

We require Ukraine to recognise immediately all the standards of international maritime law for Azov Sea and Kerch Strait, to refuse from the relevant previous discriminative and corruptive bilateral agreements with Russia, to ratify the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 and join the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control.

**Trade Union of Ukrainian Water Industry Workers,**

**Ukrainian Independent Maritime Trade Union,**

**Ukrainian Trade Union of Transport Workers and Dockers,**

**Ukrainian Maritime Union,**

**Ukrainian Marine Trade Unions' Federation,**

**Maritime Friendship – charity foundation**