

## **KPI SECURITY INFORMATION NOTICE SeIN-January-2013**

### **(Problems with Saving Refugees at sea; IMO initiatives)**

Saving lives at sea is an unconditional rule even that of your enemies during a conflict or act of war. Today's world has changed in such a way that by saving lives of refugees afloat or those stowaways found on board ships; the ship staff & the owner get into a lot of problems.

Once a ship has been involved in the rescue of persons in distress at sea, problems can arise in securing the agreement of local authorities to the disembarkation of the migrants/refugees, especially if they are not in possession of proper documentation. This can be a deterrent for the humanitarian and mainly legislative obligations to help those in distress & need.

Recognizing this problem, member States of the IMO adopted amendments to the international maritime conventions (1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea; and 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue), which entered into force in July 2006. These aim to ensure that the obligation of the ship master to render assistance is complemented by a corresponding obligation of states to cooperate in rescue situations, thereby relieving the master of the responsibility to care for survivors, and allowing individuals who are rescued at sea in such circumstances to be delivered promptly to a place of safety.

The IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) also adopted related guidelines prepared jointly by the IMO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the treatment of

persons rescued at sea. The guidelines are intended to help Governments and masters better understand their obligations under international law and provide helpful guidance with regard to carrying out these obligations.

The guidelines include the following subjects:

- Legal Framework
- Summary of conventions and obligations to vessels, governments and RCCs
- Procedures
- Checklists and guidelines for vessels, governments and RCCs
- Useful contact information and international organizations

These guidelines are downloadable from the IMO web-site.

There are many areas that the refugees are found at sea. The Cambodian & Vietnamese have been there for a long time. There are many different nationalities which use the Indonesian Island for their flight towards the Australian territories.

Recently there are refugees reported at sea around Sri-Lanka & Indian Ocean.

The members are advised to contact their local correspondents in such cases & have due regards to the requirements as set out in their Ship Security Plans as well as the Safety Management System procedures.