

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE UNIFICATION  
OF CERTAIN RULES RELATING TO THE ARREST OF  
SEAGOING SHIPS**

Brussels, May 10, 1952  
The High Contracting Parties

Having recognised the desirability of determining by agreement certain uniform rules of law relating to the arrest of seagoing ships, have decided to conclude a convention, for this purpose and thereto have agreed as follows :-

Article 1

In this Convention the following words shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them :

(1) "Maritime Claim" means a claim arising out of one or more of the following :

- (a) damage caused by any ship either in collision or otherwise;
- (b) loss of life or personal injury caused by any ship or occurring in connection with the operation of any ship;
- (c) salvage;
- (d) agreement relating to the use or hire of any ship whether by charterparty or otherwise;
- (e) agreement relating to the carriage of goods in any ship whether by charterparty or otherwise;
- (f) loss of or damage to goods including baggage carried in any ship;

- (g) general average;
  - (h) bottomry;
  - (i) towage;
  - (j) pilotage;
  - (k) goods or materials wherever supplied to a ship for her operation or maintenance;
  - (l) construction, repair or equipment of any ship or dock charges and dues;
  - (m) wages of Masters, Officers, or crew;
  - (n) Master's disbursements, including disbursements made by shippers, charterers or agents on behalf of a ship or her owner;
  - (o) disputes as to the title to or ownership of any ship;
  - (p) disputes between co-owners of any ship as to the ownership, possession employment or earnings of that ship;
  - (q) the mortgage or hypothecation of any ship.
- (2) "Arrest" means the detention of a ship by judicial process to secure a maritime claim, but does not include the seizure of a ship in execution or satisfaction of a judgment.
- (3) "Person" includes individuals, partnerships, and bodies corporate, Governments, their Departments and Public Authorities.
- (4) "Claimant" means a person who alleges that a maritime claim exists in his favour.

## Article 2

A ship flying the flag of one of the Contracting States may be arrested in the jurisdiction of any of the Contracting States in respect of any maritime claim, but in respect of no other claim; but nothing in this Convention shall be deemed to extend or restrict any right or powers vested in any Governments or other Departments, Public Authorities, or Dock or Harbour Authorities under their existing domestic laws or regulations to arrest, detain or otherwise prevent the sailing of vessels within their jurisdiction.

### Article 3

(1) Subject to the provisions of para (4) of this Article and of Article 10, a claimant may arrest either the particular ship in respect of which the maritime claim arose, or any other ship which is owned by the person who was, at the time when the maritime claim arose, the owner of the particular ship, even though the ship arrested be ready to sail; but no ship, other than the particular ship in respect of which the claim arose, may be arrested in respect of any of the maritime claims enumerated in Article 1 (1) (o), (p) or (q).

(2) Ships shall be deemed to be in the same ownership when all the shares therein are owned by the same person or persons.

(3) A ship shall not be arrested, nor shall bail or other security be given more than once in any one or more of the jurisdictions of any of the Contracting States in respect of the same maritime claim by the same claimant: and, if a ship has been arrested in any one of such jurisdictions, or bail or other security has been given in such jurisdiction either to release the ship or to avoid a threatened arrest, any subsequent arrest of the ship or of any ship in the same ownership by the same claimant for the same maritime claim shall be set aside, and the ship released by the Court or other appropriate judicial authority of that State, unless the claimant can satisfy the Court or other appropriate judicial authority that the bail or other security had been finally released before the subsequent arrest or that there is other good cause for maintaining that arrest.

(4) When in the case of a charter by demise of a ship the charterer and not the registered owner is liable in respect of a maritime claim relating to that ship, the claimant may arrest such ship or any other ship in the ownership of the charterer by demise, subject to the provisions of this Convention, but no other ship in the ownership of the registered owner shall be liable to arrest in respect of such maritime claims.

The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to any case in which a person other than the registered owner of a ship is liable in respect of a maritime claim relating to that ship.

#### Article 4

A ship may only be arrested under the authority of a Court or of the appropriate judicial authority of the Contracting State in which the arrest is made.

#### Article 5

The Court or other appropriate judicial authority within whose jurisdiction the ship has been arrested shall permit the release of the ship upon sufficient bail or other security being furnished, save in cases in which a ship has been arrested in respect of any of the maritime claims enumerated in Article 1(1)(o) and (p). In such cases the Court or other appropriate judicial authority may permit the person in possession of the ship to continue trading the ship, upon such person furnishing sufficient bail or other security, or may otherwise deal with the operation of the ship during the period of the arrest.

In default of agreement between the parties as to the sufficiency of the bail or other security, the Court or other appropriate judicial authority shall determine the nature and amount thereof.

The request to release the ship against such security shall not be construed as an acknowledgment of liability or as a waiver of the benefit of the legal limitation of liability of the owner of the ship.

#### Article 6

All questions whether in any case the claimant is liable in damages for the arrest of a ship or for the costs of the bail or other security furnished to release or prevent the arrest of a ship, shall be determined by the law of the Contracting State in whose jurisdiction the arrest was made or applied for.

The rules of procedure relating to the arrest of a ship, to the application for obtaining the authority referred to in Article 4, and to all matters of procedure which the arrest may entail, shall be governed by the law of the Contracting State in which the arrest was made or applied for.

#### Article 7

(1) The Courts of the country in which the arrest was made shall have jurisdiction to determine the case upon its merits if the domestic law of the country in which the arrest is made gives jurisdiction to such Courts, or in any of the following cases namely :

(a) if the claimant has his habitual residence or principle place of business in the country in which the arrest was made;

(b) if the claim arose in the country in which the arrest was made;

(c) if the claim concerns the voyage of the ship during which the arrest was made;

(d) if the claim arose out of a collision or in circumstances covered by Article 13 of the International Convention for the unification of certain rules of law

with respect to collisions between vessels, signed at Brussels on September 23, 1910;

(e) if the claim is for salvage;

(f) if the claim is upon a mortgage or hypothecation of the ship arrested.

(2) If the Court within whose jurisdiction the ship was arrested has no jurisdiction to decide upon the merits, the bail or other security given in accordance with Article 5 to procure the release of the ship shall specifically provide that it is given as security for the satisfaction of any judgment which may eventually be pronounced by a Court having jurisdiction so to decide; and the Court or other appropriate judicial authority of the country in which the arrest is made shall fix the time within which the claimant shall bring an action before a Court having such jurisdiction.

(3) If the parties have agreed to submit the dispute to the jurisdiction of a particular Court other than within whose jurisdiction the arrest was made or to arbitration, the Court or other appropriate judicial authority within whose jurisdiction the arrest was made may fix the time within which the claimant shall bring proceedings.

(4) If, in any of the cases mentioned in the two preceding paragraphs, the action or proceedings are not brought within the time so fixed, the defendant may apply for the release of the ship or of the bail or other security.

(5) This article shall not apply in cases covered by the provisions of the revised Rhine Navigation Convention of October 17, 1868.

#### Article 8

(1) The provisions of this Convention shall apply to any vessel flying the flag of a Contracting State in the jurisdiction of any Contracting State.

(2) A ship flying the flag of a non-Contracting State may be arrested in the jurisdiction of any Contracting State in respect of any of the maritime claims enumerated in Article 1 or of any other claim for which the law of the Contracting State permits arrest.

(3) Nevertheless any Contracting State shall be entitled wholly or partly to exclude from the benefits of this Convention any Government of a non-Contracting State or any person who has not, at the time of the arrest, his habitual residence or principal place of business in one of the Contracting States.

(4) Nothing in this Convention shall modify or affect the rules of law in force in the respective Contracting States relating to the arrest of any ship within the jurisdiction of the State of her flag by a person who has his habitual residence or principal place of business in that State.

(5) When a maritime claim is arrested by a third party other than the original claimant, whether by subrogation, assignment or otherwise, such third party shall for the purpose of this Convention, be deemed to have the same habitual residence or principal place of business as the original claimant.

#### Article 9

Nothing in this Convention shall be construed as creating a right of action, which, apart from the provisions of this Convention, would not arise under the law applied by the Court which had seisin of the case, nor as creating any maritime liens which do not exist under such law or under the Convention on Maritime Mortgages and Liens, if the latter is applicable.

#### Article 10

The High Contracting Parties may at the time of signature, deposit or ratification or accession, reserve

(a) the right not to apply this Convention to the arrest of a ship for any of the claims enumerated in paragraphs (o) and (p) of Article 1, but to apply their domestic laws to such claims;

(b) the right not to apply the first paragraph of Article 3 to the arrest of a ship, within their jurisdiction, for claims set out in Article 1, paragraph (1).

#### Article 11

The High Contracting Parties undertake to submit to arbitration any disputes between States arising out of the interpretation or application of this Convention, but this shall be without prejudice to the obligations of those High Contracting Parties who have agreed to submit their disputes to the International Court of Justice.

#### Article 12

This Convention shall be open for signature by the State represented at the Ninth Diplomatic Conference on Maritime Law. The protocol of signature shall be drawn up through the good offices of the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

#### Article 13

This Convention shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which shall notify all signatory and acceding States of the deposit of any such instruments.

#### Article 14

(a) This Convention shall come into force between the two States which first ratify it, six months after the date of the deposit of the second instrument of ratification.



(b) This Convention shall come into force in respect of each signatory State which ratifies it after the deposit of the second instrument of ratification six months after the date of the deposit of the instrument of ratification of that State.

#### Article 15

Any State not represented at the Ninth Diplomatic Conference on Maritime Law may accede to this Convention.

The accession of any State shall be notified to the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which shall inform through diplomatic channels all signatory and acceding States of such notification.

The Convention shall come into force in respect of the acceding State six months after the date of the receipt of such notification but not before the Convention has come into force in accordance with the provisions of Article 14(a).

#### Article 16

Any High Contracting Party may three years after the coming into force of this Convention in respect of such High Contracting Party or at any time thereafter request that a conference be convened in order to consider amendments to the Convention.

Any High Contracting Party proposing to avail itself of this right shall notify the Belgian Government which shall convene the conference within six months thereafter.

#### Article 17

Any High Contracting Party shall have the right to denounce this Convention at any time after the coming into force thereof in respect of such High

Contracting Party. This denunciation shall take effect one year after the date on which notification thereof has been received by the Belgian Government which shall inform through diplomatic channels all the other High Contracting Parties of such notification.

#### Article 18

(a) Any High Contracting Party may at the time of its ratification of or accession to this Convention or at any time thereafter declare by written notification to the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Convention shall extend to any of the territories for whose international relations it is responsible. The Convention shall six months after the date of the receipt of such notification by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs extend to the territories named therein, but not before the date of the coming into force of the Convention in respect of such High Contracting Party.

(b) A High Contracting Party which has made a declaration under paragraph (a) of this Article extending the Convention to any territory for whose international relations it is responsible may at any time thereafter declare by notification given to the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Convention shall cease to extend to such territory and the Convention shall one year after the receipt of the notification by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs cease to extend thereto.

(c) The Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall inform through diplomatic channels all signatory and acceding States of any notification received by it under this Article.

Done in Brussels, on May 10, 1952, in the French and English languages, the two texts being equally authentic.

Signatories : Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, Brazil, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Monaco, Nicaragua, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia.

82 Ad referendum

83 For later ratification

Private Maritime Law, Miscellaneous Conventions, etc.

Ratifications and Accessions as on January 1, 1981

#### RATIFICATION

Belgium April 10, 1961  
Egypt August 24, 1955  
France May 25, 1957  
Germany (F.R.) October 6, 1972  
Great Britain and Northern Ireland March 18, 1959  
Greece February 27, 1967  
Holy See August 10, 1956  
Italy November 9, 1979  
Portugal May 4, 1957  
Spain December 8, 1953  
Yugoslavia July 25, 1967

#### ACCESSION

Algeria August 18, 1964  
Bahamas<sup>85</sup> May 12, 1965  
Benin<sup>84</sup> April 23, 1958  
Cameroon<sup>84</sup> April 23, 1958  
Centrafica Republic<sup>84</sup> April 23, 1958  
Comore Isles<sup>84</sup> April 23, 1958  
Congo Popular Republic<sup>84</sup> April 23, 1958  
Costa Rica July 13, 1955  
Djibouti<sup>84</sup> April 23, 1958  
Dominican Republic<sup>85</sup> May 12, 1965  
Fiji October 10, 1970  
France  
Overseas Territories April 23, 1958  
Gabon<sup>84</sup> April 23, 1958  
Germany  
Land Berlin October 6, 1972  
Great Britain and Northern Ireland

(Overseas Territories)

Antigua, Cayman Islands, Motserrat  
St. Christopher Nevis, Anguilla May 12, 1965  
St. Helena, St. Lucia, Belize,  
Turk's Isles and Caecos September 21, 1965  
Bermuda May 30, 1963  
British Virgin Islands May 29, 1963  
Falkland Islands and dependencies October 17, 1969  
Gibraltar, Hong Kong March 29, 1963  
Guernsey December 8, 1965  
Grenada<sup>87</sup> May 12, 1965  
Guiana<sup>88</sup> March 29, 1963  
Guinea Republic<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Haiti November 4, 1954  
Haute - Volta<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Ivory Coast<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Khmer Republic November 12, 1956  
Kiribati<sup>88</sup> September 2, 1965  
Malgache Republic<sup>86, 87</sup> April 23, 1958  
Mauritania<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Mauritius<sup>88</sup> March 29, 1963  
Niger<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Nigeria November 7, 1963  
North Borneo<sup>88</sup> March 29, 1963  
Paraguay November 22, 1967  
Poland July 16, 1976  
Sarawak<sup>88</sup> September 28, 1962  
Senegal<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Seychelles<sup>88</sup> March 29, 1963  
Solomon Isles<sup>88</sup> September 21, 1965  
St. Lucia<sup>88</sup> May 12, 1965  
Sudan<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Switzerland May 28, 1954  
Syrian Arabic Republic February 3, 1972  
Tchad<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Togo<sup>86</sup> April 23, 1958  
Tonga June 13, 1978  
Tuvalu<sup>88</sup> September 21, 1965  
Zaire Republic July 17, 1967  
84 By the accession of France  
85 By the accession of Great Britain  
86 By the accession of France  
87 Formal confirmation by the Malgache Rep. registered 13.7.65  
88 By the accession of Great Britain.