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Circular Letter No.4326
21 October 2020

To: IMO Member States
States which are not Members of IMO
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **2021 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea**

The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization has the honour to invite nominations for candidates for the 2021 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.

For this purpose, annex 1 to this circular letter contains guidelines defining the purpose of, and the criteria for granting the Award; the process by which nominations for the Award will be sought, considered, assessed, judged and decided; the form of the Award; and the manner in which it will be awarded. In this connection, following the Council's decision, at its 120th session in July 2018, the Award Guidelines were amended in order to widen the spectrum of the nomination criteria to **include exceptional acts of seamanship**, as well as bravery (annex 1, paragraph 3).

Nominations for the Award may be made by:

- United Nations Member States;
- intergovernmental organizations; and/or
- non-governmental international organizations in consultative status with IMO.

The recipient of the Award will be presented with a medal, which will be accompanied by a certificate citing the act of exceptional bravery performed. The presentation will take place at a special ceremony to be held in conjunction with the celebration of a major IMO occasion, as appropriate. A **list of previous recipients** of the Award is attached in annex 2 to this circular letter.

The Secretary-General would be most grateful if nominations of candidates to be considered for the 2021 Award (**for actions performed during the period 1 March 2020 to 28 February 2021**) could be sent as soon as possible, in order to reach IMO **no later than 15 April 2021**. It should be noted that actions performed outside the qualifying period and nominations received after the deadline has expired will not be eligible for consideration.

Nominations should indicate clearly the nominating Government (and need not be confined to its own nationals) or organization and bear an appropriate mark of authentication. To this end, the nomination form to be completed is attached in annex 3.

In addition, in order to ensure that adequate information is given to enable the Panel of Judges to assess the merits of the candidates concerned and to facilitate the task of the Panel of Judges in considering the nominations for the 2021 Award, the form entitled "Description of Circumstances and Events" (annex 4) should also be completed and submitted by nominating Governments/organizations, together with the nomination form, and a short narrative of events (not exceeding three pages). In this connection, it would be appreciated if Governments and organizations, when nominating candidates, **provide, in paragraph 7 of annex 4, sufficient information on the rescue act in the narrative**, most especially the reasons why the rescue act in question warrants the description of "exceptional bravery at sea", to enable a proper and fair assessment by the judging panels.

All nominations should be submitted to ero@imo.org and/or addressed to:

The Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

ANNEX 1

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMO AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL BRAVERY AT SEA

Introduction

1 The aim of these Guidelines is to define the purpose of, and the criteria for granting, the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea ("the Award"). They stipulate the process by which nominations for the Award will be sought, considered, assessed, judged and decided; the form of the Award; and the manner in which it will be awarded.

Purpose and criteria

2 The purpose of the Award is to provide a unique, international recognition for those who, at the risk of losing their own life, perform acts of exceptional bravery, displaying outstanding courage at sea.

3 The Award will be conferred on individuals or groups of individuals who, at the risk to their own life, perform acts of exceptional bravery in attempting to save life at sea or in attempting to prevent or mitigate damage to the marine environment. Such acts of bravery may also involve extraordinary seamanship skills in very difficult conditions or any other display of outstanding courage.

4 Except in the most extraordinary circumstances, the nominated rescues should occur at sea or those rescued should emanate from a vessel. The Award may also be granted posthumously.

Nominations

5 Nominations for the Award should be made by United Nations Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. Such nominations should be addressed to the Secretary-General (in accordance with procedures outlined in the circular inviting nominations) and should provide a full description of the circumstances and events giving rise to the nomination. They should, as appropriate, include such factors as:

- .1 location of the incident;
- .2 prevailing weather conditions;
- .3 skill displayed;
- .4 leadership demonstrated;
- .5 determination to conduct the rescue operation;
- .6 exceptional courage demonstrated;
- .7 degree of risk (to human lives and/or the marine environment) involved; as well as
- .8 any other information supporting the nomination.

Form of the Award

6 The Award will take the form of a medal which will be accompanied by a certificate citing the act of exceptional bravery performed.

Assessment Panel

7 Nominations for the Award will be scrutinized by an Assessment Panel composed of the Secretary-General or his nominee, as Chair, together with experts nominated by the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with IMO:

- the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS);
- the International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA);
- the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA);
- the International Salvage Union (ISU);
- the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF); and
- the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

8 When the circumstances of a nomination involve marine environmental protection, an expert nominated by relevant environmental NGOs will be included in the Panel.

9 The members of the Panel will be appointed by the Secretary-General and will serve for 1 year in their personal and expert capacity and not as representatives of the organizations nominating them.

10 The function of the Assessment Panel will be to review the nominations for the Award, taking into account the Award's purpose and criteria vis-à-vis the description of the factual circumstances giving rise to the nomination and the related supporting documentation. The Panel will submit to a Panel of Judges a shortlist ranking the nominees in order of preference, along with the rationale for their recommendation.

Panel of Judges

11 A Panel of Judges composed of the Chairs of the Maritime Safety Committee, the Marine Environment Protection Committee, the Legal Committee, the Technical Cooperation Committee and the Facilitation Committee and chaired by the Chair of the Council will consider the recommendations of the Assessment Panel and select the recipient of the Award.

12 In the event that one or more of the participating Chairs is not available to serve, the corresponding Vice-Chairs (or the first Vice-Chair of Committees which are served by more than one Vice-Chair) may serve in their place as members of the Panel.

13 In the event that the Chair of the Panel (i.e. the Chair of the Council) is not available, the Vice-Chair of the Council will serve as Chair.

14 No Award will be made in the event that the Panel of Judges decides that the acts performed by the shortlisted nominees do not merit the Award. In such cases, however, the Panel of Judges may, nevertheless, decide to recommend that one or more of the acts performed by such nominees should be recognized by the Organization through the award of an appropriate certificate.

15 The Council will be invited to endorse the outcome of the Panel of Judges.

Award ceremony

16 The IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea will be presented by the Secretary-General at IMO Headquarters on the occasion of World Maritime Day or another major IMO occasion, as appropriate, taking into account, inter alia, the availability of the recipient.

17 In exceptional circumstances the Award may be presented at an alternative location, possibly in conjunction with a World Maritime Day parallel event celebration.

Timetable

18 Every effort should be made to ensure that a timetable along the following lines, leading to the Award ceremony, be observed:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| - Circular letter inviting nominations | October |
| - Deadline for receipt of nominations | April (following year) |
| - Review by Assessment Panel | May |
| - Consideration by the Panel of Judges | June (Friday before Council week) |
| - Council invited to endorse outcome of Panel of Judges | June |
| - Notification of recipient and press release | June |
| - Award Ceremony – World Maritime Day/
another major IMO occasion | September/to be determined |

ANNEX 2

RECIPIENTS OF THE IMO AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL BRAVERY AT SEA

Year	Country/Organization	Recipient
2020	Brazil	Mr. Marcio Santos Teixeira and Mr. Fabio Rodrigues Alves de Abreu, members of the São Paulo Pilots
	Philippines	Petty Officer Second Class Ralph Ofalla Barajan of the Philippine Coast Guard
2019	United States of America	Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Michael W. Kelly, United States Coast Guard
2018	China	Mr. Zhong Haifeng, Senior Diver of the Engineering Team of Guangzhou Salvage
2017	International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA)	Captain Michael G. McGee and Captain Michael C. Phillips, members of the Houston Pilots
2016	India	Captain Radhika Menon, Master of the M/T Sampurna Swarajya
2015	United States of America	Aviation Survival Technician Christopher Leon, United States Coast Guard
2014	Denmark	Captain Andreas Kristensen and the crew of the M/V Britannia Seaways
2013	China	Mr. Jinguo Yang (posthumously), sailor on the ferry Tong Chang Qi Du 11
	United States of America	Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Randy J. Haba and Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Daniel J. Todd, United States Coast Guard
2012	Canada	Sergeant Janick Gilbert (posthumously), Master Corporal Max Lahaye-Lemay and Master Corporal Marco Journeyman, Royal Canadian Air Force
	Chile	Able Seaman César Flores Flores, Chilean Navy
2011	Republic of Korea	Captain Seog Hae-gyun of the M/V SAMHO Jewelry
2010	Australia	Fourth Engineer James Fanifau of the M/V Scarlett Lucy

Year	Country/Organization	Recipient
2009	New Zealand United States of America	Mr. Maurice Conti and Mrs. Sophie Conti of the sailing vessel Ocealys Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Abram A. Heller, United States Coast Guard
2008	Brazil	Mr. Rodolpho Fonseca da Silva Rigueira of the drill ship Noble Roger Eason
2007	Bahamas and the International Federation of Shipmasters' Association (IFSMA)	Second Officer Mustafa Topiwala of the oil/bulk ore carrier M/V Searose G and Captain Zvonimir Ostric (onboard trainer)

ANNEX 3

**NOMINATION OF CANDIDATE FOR
THE 2021 IMO AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL BRAVERY AT SEA**

The Government of
(Name of country)

or

The
(Name of organization)

hereby nominates (name, title and nationality of candidate (if an individual is nominated) to be inserted)

.....
.....
.....
.....

for the **2021 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.**

For, and on behalf of, **the Government of**

or **(name of organization)**

Signed: Date:

Name:

Designation:

Official seal (where appropriate):

ANNEX 4

DESCRIPTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND EVENTS

In accordance with the Guidelines for the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, the candidature of [nominee] is supported by the following description of the circumstances and events giving rise to the nomination. It is noted that not all of the information requested below may be available; nonetheless, as much information as possible should be provided to enable the Panel of Judges to make an informed decision.

1 Location of incident (latitude/longitude or distance/bearing from known geographic point of reference):

.....

2 On-scene weather (wind/sea state/precipitation/temperature):

.....

3 Details of incident (Please note that the intent of the Award is to recognize actions in response to a specific incident, rather than multiple incidents that may have occurred during the period of time under consideration, i.e. from 1 March 2020 to 28 February 2021):

.1 Nature of distress (sinking, fire, collision, etc.):

.....

.2 Date/time of incident:

.....

.3 Name/description of vessel (or person) in distress:

.....

.4 Total number of lives at risk:

.....

.5 Number of lives saved:

.....

.6 Name of Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) (or other shore-based organization involved that may have relevant records of incident):

.....

- 4 Details of individual/group nominated:
 - .1 Ship/unit to which nominee was attached at time of rescue:
.....
 - .2 Parent company/organization:
.....
 - .3 Nominee's name, nationality and position/assignment on board:
.....
 - .4 Nominee's role in rescue operation:
.....

- 5 Is nominee a SAR professional (or trained and/or experienced in Search and/or Rescue beyond fundamental level required of their regular non-SAR related position):
.....

- 6 If incident involved attempting to mitigate damage to the marine environment, please describe consequences to the environment if nominee's action was not taken:
.....

- 7 **Please provide a narrative description of not more than three pages of the exceptional act of bravery:**
.....
