



DJIBOUTI

Statement by

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to the United Nations**

**Before the Security Council
High Level Open Debate “The Safety and Protection
of Waterways in the Maritime Domain”
on**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

1. Djibouti thanks Bahrain for convening this timely open debate and for its leadership on maritime security. We also thank the Secretary General and the briefers for their valuable insights. This discussion takes place at a moment of heightened tension in key waterways that are vital for our collective peace and prosperity. When security is weakened in any of these chokepoints, the effects are felt far beyond their shores.
2. As a littoral State at the entrance of the Red Sea, Djibouti is acutely aware that the security of international shipping lanes is not an abstract concept. It is a daily strategic imperative. The Babel Mandeb Strait and the wider Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are arteries of the global economy. Disruption in these waters carries immediate consequences for international trade, energy security and food supply, especially for the most vulnerable.
3. Djibouti's position on maritime security is clear. **First**, we reaffirm the centrality of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and relevant instruments of the International Maritime Organization. Freedom of navigation and overflight, and the unimpeded transit of commercial shipping in straits used for international navigation, are fundamental to international peace and security. They must be respected by all States and by all non-State actors.
4. Djibouti has a longstanding and firm commitment to these principles. The law of the sea has been of great importance to our people since time immemorial. Djibouti was among the original signatories of the Montego Bay Convention and has consistently supported efforts to uphold a rules-based order at sea. We see clearly that rights over coastal waters come with responsibilities not to impede lawful transit passage, save in full conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
5. **Second**, we believe that durable maritime security can only be achieved through genuine international and regional cooperation. Djibouti has invested in such cooperation for many years. We are proud to have hosted and supported the development of the Djibouti Code of Conduct, which has become a cornerstone of regional efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. This

experience shows that shared ownership, information sharing and capacity building can deliver concrete results.

6. Djibouti today hosts multiple facilities that contribute to international counter piracy and maritime security operations and serves as a humanitarian and logistical hub for the wider region. We cooperate closely with regional and extra-regional partners to help ensure safe passage for shipping in and around the Bab el Mandeb. Our President, His Excellency Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, has recently reiterated Djibouti's readiness to support concerted international efforts to keep vital sea lanes open, safe and accessible, consistent with international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes.
7. **Third**, we see the growing link between maritime security, environmental protection and climate change. Our waters face multiple, overlapping pressures, from pollution and illegal activities at sea to rising temperatures and ecosystem degradation. Incidents involving shipwrecks and spills threaten fragile maritime environments as well as coastal communities whose livelihoods depend on the sea. Addressing these risks is both a security and a development priority.
8. Djibouti has therefore committed to strengthening its institutions, enhancing marine data collection and deepening technical cooperation with partners to safeguard our marine environment. Better knowledge of our seas, and better coordination among coastal states, can improve prevention, preparedness and response to maritime incidents. We welcome the support that international organizations and financial institutions are providing to these efforts, and we encourage further investment in resilience and capacity.
9. The Security Council has an important role to play. It should continue to uphold the rules-based order at sea, reaffirm that no actor may threaten or use force to close or obstruct international shipping routes contrary to the Charter, condemn attacks on commercial shipping and civilian seafarers, and support efforts to de-escalate tensions in key chokepoints. It should encourage States to implement existing resolutions and international obligations and to cooperate with regional mechanisms that have proven their effectiveness.

10. At the same time, the Council should remain attentive to the root causes of instability that manifest themselves at sea, including poverty, governance deficits and the effects of climate change. Responses that focus solely on military instruments or narrow enforcement will not be sufficient. We need comprehensive approaches that integrate security, sustainable development and environmental resilience.

11. In this spirit, Djibouti encourages closer partnerships between coastal States, regional organizations, naval coalitions and the private sector. We also support initiatives that enhance maritime domain awareness, improve information sharing and build the capacity of national coast guards and port authorities. These investments are more modest than the costs of crisis, yet they yield far greater returns for collective security.

12. Djibouti stands ready to work with all members of the Council and the wider membership to promote safe, secure, and environmentally sound seas. Our experience has taught us that when states act in solidarity and in accordance with international law, it is possible to turn even the most challenging maritime spaces into zones of cooperation rather than confrontation.

Mr. President,

13. In closing, allow me to reiterate Djibouti's conviction that the oceans and seas are a shared responsibility. The choice before us is clear. Either we allow narrow interests and short-term calculations to dominate, or we reaffirm together that freedom of navigation, respect for international law, and protection of our marine environment are in the common interest of all. Djibouti chooses the path of cooperation, restraint and responsibility, and invites others to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. President