



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
**SHIPPING DEPUTY MINISTRY**

SDM File No. 05.13.002

Circular No. 25/2022

22 June 2022

To All Registered owners, Registered bareboat charterers, Managers and Representatives of ships flying the Cyprus Flag

Subject: **Pledging for FSO SAFER**

1 The 409,000 dwt FSO SAFER is located approximately 4.8 nautical miles off the coast of Ras Isa, Yemen. It was originally built as an ultra-large crude carrier in Japan in 1976 and converted to an FSO in 1986. It has been moored at its current location since 1988, where it is used for storing and offloading crude oil from Yemen's Marib oil fields.

2 As a consequence of the civil conflict in Yemen and the Houthis taking control of the area, all production and export operations on FSO SAFER were suspended in 2015. An estimated 150,000 metric tonnes of crude oil remains onboard and no maintenance of the FSO has been carried out since then. Consequently, there are two significant risk scenarios: the deterioration of the unit that could result in a continuous leak, or catastrophic oil spill due to, for example, an explosion from the build-up of flammable gases in the tanks.

3 Following months of extensive discussions with relevant stakeholders, the United Nations (UN) has produced a new viable plan to address the threat. This plan includes an emergency phase, during which the crude oil will be transferred into a secure, temporary vessel, and arrangements for working towards a more permanent replacement for the FSO SAFER's storage and offloading capacity. This could take up to 18 months. For this purpose, the UN will collaborate closely with a leading maritime salvage company.

3. In addition, the relevant authorities, who control the area where the vessel is located, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN, which establishes a framework for cooperation and a commitment to facilitating the success of the project.

4 Implementation, however, requires urgent funding. The estimated cost of the full operation, including both the emergency phase and longer-term solution amounts to roughly USD145 million. This sum includes the USD79 million required for immediately transferring the oil from the FSO SAFER. Success is contingent on urgent action, as the oil transfer should ideally be completed as soon as possible in 2022, to prevent this looming catastrophe.

5 Through a recent Circular letter, the International Maritime Organization is strongly urging all interested parties and maritime industry stakeholders to pledge generously to support the emergency phase of the FSO SAFER operation. Details of the UN-coordinated FSO SAFER operation and related pledging process can be found at:  
<https://www.ye.undp.org/content/yemen/en/home/PSO/fso.html>.



Liana Charalambous Tanos  
Acting Permanent Secretary

- cc.
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport, Communication and Works
  - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment
  - Director, Department of Fisheries and Marine Research
  - Director, Department of Environment
  - Diplomatic and Consular Missions and Honorary Consular Officers of Cyprus
  - Maritime Offices of the Shipping Deputy Ministry abroad
  - Cyprus Ports Authority
  - Cyprus Bar Association
  - Cyprus Shipping Chamber
  - Cyprus Union of Shipowner
  - Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA) Cyprus
  - Association of Merchant Marine Officers
  - Cyprus Master Mariners Association
  - SEK Trade Union
  - PEO Trade Union
  - DEOK Trade Union