

Recommendations to the vessels involved into SAR operations

A number of Ingosstrakh clients were involved in rescuing refugees in distress at sea in the Mediterranean region during 2014 and 2015. In most of these cases ships are requested by the local Coast Guards to proceed to a certain position to perform a Search and Rescue (SAR) operation of small boats in distress, often overloaded with people, including women and children.

First of all it should be noted that in accordance with international legislation a certain request for salvage services cannot be denied or ignored by a vessel as far as lack of cooperation may be considered as a criminal action. The local Coast Guard will normally instruct the vessel to disembark refugees at a specific port.

Taking into account that involvement into salvage operations may be dangerous either for lives of crewmembers and the whole vessel due to unpredictable behavior of saved refugees it may be recommended to Masters to communicate with local Coast Guards Authority informing them that that the vessel will need a security assistance.

Below is a short guideline of how the vessel and her crew is supposed to act if involved into SAR operation taking into account combined experience of Ingosstrakh and other leading P&I clubs :

- **Ensure the ship's crew is prepared.** Consider and discuss various scenarios;
- Approach the refugees with a boat. Provide them with life vests, water/food;
- Try the best to establish trust. Assure the refugees that will not be returned back to shore;
- Maintain communication with the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre;
- **Secure the ship, lock dangerous areas** if embarking refugees;
- **Count the number of people.** Specify gender, children, and nationality if possible;
- Implement hygiene and infectious disease control measures for crew. **Use protective gear.**
- Keep refugees on deck in a 24/7 controlled environment. Wear uniforms, display authority.
- **Control what the refugees bring on board.** Confiscate knives, lighters etc.
- Ensure safety and supervision of children. Some may travel unaccompanied.
- Provide water and food/nutrition/shelter/medical aid as per your capabilities.
- After disembarking/ transferring to a safe port: **search for stowaways.** Hand over any remaining ID papers / belongings to the authorities.
- Disinfect decks / areas. Dispose of used personal protective equipment, properly.

If your vessel is requested to take part in a SAR operation we recommend that Ingosstrakh is notified immediately.