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IMLI *e*-NEWS

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THE IMLI COURSE ON SEAFARERS' RIGHTS

The Institute delivered its annual specialized Course on Seafarers' Rights between 3 and 19 February 2026.

Numerous lectures within the Course raised awareness on the importance of uniform application of maritime labour law standards which guarantee the rights of men and women manning ships plying international waters.



Recognizing that seafarers' fundamental rights have not always been considered a priority, thereby often not respected, this IMLI Course reiterated the Institute's commitment to the protection of seafarers in line with the international efforts spearheaded by ILO and IMO.

In addition to the IMLI master students, the Course was attended by persons directly involved with maritime labour law issues, such as policy makers and legal drafters, as well as maritime administrations' and port authorities' officers. The Course also attracted private practitioners who handle seafarers' rights infringements and advocate for the upholding of seafarers' rights.



Professor Dr. Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Director, IMLI) delivered the Welcoming Address at opening the 7th edition of the IMLI Course on Seafarers' Rights.

He noted that during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, when everybody was trying to be safe at home, seafarers continued to render valuable services, despite adversities. It was at this time that the international community finally realized that seafarers are essential workers, faciliating trade that moves 80 to 90% of the world's commodities by sea.

The Director recognized that the International Labour Organization (ILO) has been at the forefront of promoting the rights of seafarers, culminating with the adoption of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). He noted that much work still needs to be done for the adequate implementation of this Convention. He highlighted the role of the Institute and its training activities, including this important Course, in ensuring that labour standards, as encapsulated in the Convention, are adequately and uniformly applied. The Director concluded by thanking all the distinguished speakers addressing the students and participants and supporting the Institute in advancing its mission of enhancing capacity-building in the full spectrum of international maritime law.

The Director then proceeded to introduce Ms. Beatriz Vacotto (Head of the Maritime Unit, International Labour Standards Department, International Labour Organization) to the IMLI Class of 2025-2026 and the external participants attending this Course. Ms. Vacotto delivered once again the Inaugural Lecture of this specialized Course.



Ms. Vacotto's Inaugural Lecture of the IMLI Course on Seafarers' Rights was entitled *"Seafarers' Rights MLC, 2006: Background and Current Developments"*. This was followed by a second lecture entitled *"The Protection of Seafarers' Rights"*.



Mr. Douglas B. Stevenson (Director Emeritus, Center for Mariner Advocacy, the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey) delivered a set of lectures entitled *"Seafarers' Rights and Maritime Labour Convention, 2006"* and *"Seafarers' Rights under the MLC".*

Dr. Iliana Christodoulou Varotsi (Senior Legal Consultant & Lead Trainer) delivered a set of lectures entitled "*Seafarers and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)*" and "*Challenges for Multi-Flagged Fleets in Ensuring Regulatory Compliance with MLC: The Role of Maritime Administrations*".





Ms. Federica Ninni (Lawyer, International Labour Organization) delivered a lecture entitled *"The MLC, 2006 in Practice".*

Mr. Paul Falzon (ITF Contact General Workers Union - Malta) delivered a lecture entitled *"Abandonment- A Stark Reality".*





Mr. Jonathan Warring (Head of Legal Department, ITF) delivered a lecture entitled "*ITF: Supporting Seafarers Rights".*



Professor Laura Carballo Piñeiro (Professor, Dean of the Faculty of International Relations, University of Vigo) delivered a set of lectures entitled "*The Relevance of Port States in Upholding Labour Standards*".



Dr. Khanssa Lagdami (Associate Professor of Maritime Labour Law and Policy, ITF Seafarers Trust, World Maritime University [WMU]) delivered a set of lectures entitled "*Seafarers' Work: Challenges and Opportunities in an era of Emerging Technologies and Green Shipping*" .

EMERGING VOICES FOR SEAFARERS WEBINAR

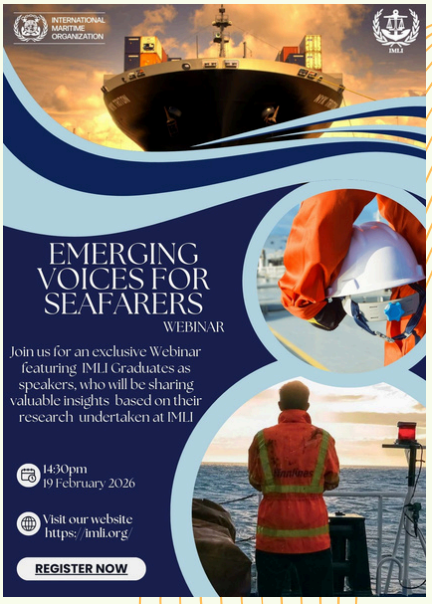
The IMLI Course on Seafarers' Rights concluded on 19 February 2026 with a Webinar entitled "*Emerging Voices for Seafarers*".

This event, the first of its kind, served as a platform to amplify the voices of emerging leaders in the maritime industry, who offered their diverse perspectives on the evolving landscape of seafaring.

As the maritime sector continues to navigate complex global challenges—from sustainability and digitalization to workforce development and geopolitical shifts—the insights of the next generation are more valuable than ever.

IMLI is proud to note that the speakers were all IMLI Graduates who, through their Dissertations / Research Projects and Maritime Legislation Drafting Projects, are contributing to the ongoing legal reforms of their countries and the maritime world at large.

They delivered individual presentations based on these projects, focusing on topics within the Institute's syllabi which remain relevant to their country or region and address a pressing area within the maritime field. These insightful discussions, which demonstrated the proficiency and skills the speakers have gained during their training at the Institute, inspired a thought-provoking dialogue amongst all participants.



Moderators and Coordinators of the Course



Ms. Ramat Jalloh
(Lecturer in International Maritime Law, IMLI)



Ms. Nour Nohra
(ITF Seafarers' Trust Research Associate in Seafarers' Rights, IMLI)

Speakers



Ms. Christine Jesang Chongwo
(Port State Control Officer, Kenya Maritime Authority; Class of 2025)
"Promoting Women in Seafaring: A Kenyan Road Map to Equality and Equal Opportunities"



Ms. Nana Ama Gyamfua Marfo
(Assistant Maritime Administration Officer, Ghana Maritime Authority; Class of 2025)
"Effective implementation of the Occupational Safety, Health and Accident Prevention Regulations into the Legal Framework of Ghana"



Mr. O.A. Sheran Madhawa Perera
(Attorney-at-Law; Head of Research - Danmar Law Chambers, Sri Lanka; Class of 2024)
"The Human Element within the Process of Criminalisation of Seafarers"



Mr. Kunal Suresh Gaikwad
(Lawyer and Legal Advisor, National Union of Seafarers of India; Class of 2025)
"A Critical Legal Analysis of the Existing Regimes for the Preservation of Seafarers' Mental Health"