ST KITTS & NEVIS INTERNATIONALSHIP REGISTRY

MARITIME CIRCULAR - MC 157 - 26

VESSEL COMPLIANCE AND FLAG STATE MEASURES TO PREVENT IUU FISHING

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Marine Circular is to remind shipowners, operators, managers, masters, and recognized organizations that the Saint Kitts and Nevis International Ship Registry **does not register fishing vessels** and that vessels flying the flag of the Federation of Saint Christopher (Saint Kitts) and Nevis are prohibited from engaging in, supporting, facilitating, or assisting fishing operations without the appropriate authorizations and licenses issued by the competent authorities.

1.2 This Circular further emphasizes the Federation's commitment to preventing, deterring, and eliminating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities and ensuring compliance with applicable international conventions, agreements, and fisheries conservation measures.

2. Applicability

2.1 This Maritime Circular applies to:

- all vessels registered under the Saint Kitts and Nevis flag, particularly those that may be requested or otherwise seek to engage in fishing or fishing-related support activities. The Circular serves to prohibit such activities unless and until otherwise authorized by the Administration under an established legal and regulatory framework.

3. Legal References and Framework

This Circular should be read in conjunction with:
(a) The Merchant Shipping Act, Cap. 7.05, as amended;
(b) The Fisheries Aquaculture and Marine Resources Act, 2016 (Cap. 14.07), and regulations made thereunder, as amended;
(c) The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
(d) The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995);
(e) The FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU, 2001);
(f) The FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (FAO Compliance Agreement, 1993);
(g) The United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (1995);
(h) The FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA);

(i) The FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance (2014); and
(j) Applicable measures and requirements adopted by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) to which the Federation is party or with which it cooperates."

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this Circular:

"Fishing vessel" means any vessel used or intended for use for the commercial exploitation of living marine resources, including catching, harvesting, or processing at sea, as defined in applicable national fisheries legislation and international instruments.

"Fishing-related support activities" means any operation at sea in support of fishing or fishing vessels, including the supply of fuel, provisions, bait or gear, the embarkation or disembarkation of crew, the transshipment, carriage or storage of fish or fishery products, and any other logistical, transport or service activities associated with fishing operations.

"Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing" has the meaning given in the FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (IPOA-IUU), and includes IUU fishing-related activities.

"Competent authority" means the relevant coastal State, flag State, Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO), or any other national or international body legally empowered to issue licenses, permits or authorizations for fishing or fishing-related support activities.

"License, permit or authorization" means any written approval, consent or registration issued by a competent authority that expressly authorizes a vessel to engage in fishing or fishing-related support activities, subject to specified conditions.

5. Instructions

5.1 Non-Registration of Fishing Vessels:

The Saint Kitts and Nevis International Ship Registry does not register:

- Commercial fishing vessels;
- Fish processing vessels operating as fishing vessels;
- Fish harvesting vessels;
- Any vessel primarily intended to engage in fishing operations.

Accordingly, no vessel registered under the Saint Kitts and Nevis flag shall be authorized to conduct fishing activities unless expressly approved and duly licensed by the competent authorities of the Federation.

5.2 Provision of support to fishing vessels

Pending the establishment of an appropriate legal and regulatory framework governing fishing and fishing-related activities under the Saint Kitts and Nevis flag, vessels registered in the Saint Kitts and Nevis International Ship Registry shall not engage in, **undertake, or provide fishing-related** support activities to any fishing vessel.

For the purposes of this Circular, fishing-related support activities include, but are not limited to, the supply of fuel, provisions, bait or fishing gear, the embarkation or disembarkation of crew, transshipment, carriage or storage of fish or fishery products, refueling, logistical support, or any

other service that directly or indirectly facilitates fishing operations.

Any vessel found to have engaged in such activities may be subject to enforcement action by the Administration.

5.3. Prohibition of supporting fishing activities without valid licenses, permits and authorization

Owners, operators, managers, and masters of Saint Kitts and Nevis flagged vessels are reminded that vessels registered under the Saint Kitts and Nevis flag are prohibited from directly or indirectly supporting, facilitating, or assisting any fishing operation or fishing vessel, regardless of whether the fishing vessel holds valid licences, permits, or authorizations issued by another State or competent authority.

This prohibition shall remain in force until such time as the Federation establishes the necessary legislative, regulatory, and administrative framework governing fishing and fishing-related support activities and the Administration expressly authorizes such operations.

Any contravention of this requirement may result in administrative or enforcement action by the Administration, including suspension or withdrawal of the vessel's registration, where appropriate.

5.4 Due Diligence Obligations

Shipowners, operators, managers, and masters of Saint Kitts and Nevis-flagged vessels shall exercise appropriate due diligence to ensure compliance with the prohibitions set out in sections 5.2 and 5.3 of this Circular.

Such due diligence shall include, at a minimum:

- verifying that the vessel does not engage in or provide any fishing-related support activities to fishing vessels;
- ensuring that commercial arrangements, charter parties, operational instructions, and voyage plans do not involve the provision of services that directly or indirectly facilitate fishing operations;
- maintaining appropriate records demonstrating compliance with the requirements of this Circular, which shall be made available to the Administration upon request

Failure to exercise adequate due diligence or to comply with the requirements of this Circular may result in administrative or enforcement action by the Administration, including suspension or withdrawal of the vessel's registration, where appropriate.

5.5 Commitment to Combat IUU Fishing

The Government of the Federation of Saint Christopher (Saint Kitts) and Nevis and the Saint Kitts and Nevis International Ship Registry are firmly committed to supporting international efforts to prevent, deter, and eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The Federation recognizes that IUU fishing undermines:

- Sustainable fisheries management;
- Marine biodiversity conservation;
- Maritime security;
- The economic interests of coastal and developing States.

Accordingly, the Registry implements and enforces all reasonable and available measures within its authority to combat IUU fishing activities and to ensure that vessels flying the Saint Kitts and Nevis flag are not used, directly or indirectly, to facilitate such activities.

5.6 Enforcement Actions

Where evidence exists that a Saint Kitts and Nevis flagged vessel has engaged in or facilitated unauthorized fishing activities or supported vessels involved in IUU fishing, the Registry may take appropriate actions, including but not limited to:

- Investigation of the reported activity;
- Suspension of statutory services;
- Imposition of administrative sanctions;
- Detention recommendations where applicable;
- Removal of the vessel from the Registry;
- Reporting to relevant national authorities and international organizations.

6. Further information and assistance

6.1. The Administration expects full cooperation from all parties in maintaining the highest standards of to a rigorous assessment of operational compliance and reporting.

6.2. If you have general questions or require assistance regarding this circular, please contact this office at shipreg@skanregistry.com

7. Control of MC Changes

Document Version	Date	Details of Change
00	01/08/2026	Initial issue – Entry into force
01	26/11/2026	MC drafted in new format. No operational changes made.