

HEROIC IDUN

Gard welcomes landmark judgment in M/T Heroic Idun case

Gard welcomes the judgment delivered on 27 May 2026 by the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in the M/T Heroic Idun case between the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Published 28 May 2026

The information provided in this article is intended for general information only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information at the time of publication, no warranty or representation is made regarding its completeness or timeliness. The content in this article does not constitute professional advice, and any reliance on such information is strictly at your own risk. Gard AS, including its affiliated companies, agents and employees, shall not be held liable for any loss, expense, or damage of any kind whatsoever arising from reliance on the information provided, irrespective of whether it is sourced from Gard AS, its shareholders, correspondents, or other contributors.

The judgment fully vindicates the positions advanced by the Republic of the Marshall Islands (MI) following the interception and subsequent detention of the MI-flagged VLCC M/T Heroic Idun and her crew in 2022. The vessel was intercepted on 12 August 2022 by the Republic of Equatorial Guinea (EG) navy in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Saõ Tomé and Príncipe, detained in EG until 11 November 2022, and then escorted out and transferred to Nigerian authorities.

In total, the crew endured more than nine months - 288 days - in detention before they were finally released.

At the time, the vessel was covered by Gard for P&I, FD&D and H&M risks. Gard has rendered financial and other support to the legal action before ITLOS.

Breach of international law

The Special Chamber unanimously held that the interception and detention breached fundamental principles of international law, including freedom of navigation and exclusive flag State jurisdiction, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Chamber found that the interception, and all the subsequent enforcement measures taken by EG, were contrary to international law and constituted “a continuing wrongful international act”.

The Chamber decisively rejected EG's contention that their actions were justified under the UNCLOS exception concerning repression of piracy. It emphasised that piracy constitutes a narrow and carefully circumscribed exception to the freedoms of the high seas and found that the evidence provided “no support for the suggestion that the M/T Heroic Idun was suspected of engaging in piracy”.

Crew will be compensated

The Tribunal awarded MI more than USD 14 million plus interest - to our knowledge the largest ever monetary award granted by ITLOS - including compensation for the unlawful detention and mistreatment of the vessel's crew. A substantial amount will be earmarked for compensating the crew when paid by the EG.

“This judgment sends a clear message that unlawful interference with freedom of navigation as well as detention of seafarers in contravention of UNCLOS will not be tolerated and that justice will be made when applying due process,” said Gard's Chief Claims Officer, Christen Guddal.

“Gard remains committed to support our shipowner Members and their crew where seafarer welfare is at stake and injustice occurs”, he added.

Related reading:

[*Gard statement on HEROIC IDUN - Company News | Gard*](#)

[*Heroic Idun: Crew and vessel released - Company News | Gard*](#)

The information provided in this article is intended for general information only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information at the time of publication, no warranty or representation is made regarding its completeness or timeliness. The content in this article does not constitute professional advice, and any reliance on such information is strictly at your own risk. Gard AS, including its affiliated companies, agents and employees, shall not be held liable for any loss, expense, or damage of any kind whatsoever arising from reliance on the information provided, irrespective of whether it is sourced from Gard AS, its shareholders, correspondents, or other contributors.