

BULLETIN

13 March 2017

Philippines : beware invoices from the Province of Zambales

The International Group of P&I Clubs has been made aware of the continuing problem of invoices being raised in the Philippines' Province of Zambales. Members may remember the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) circular MC(15)64 dated 7 December 2015 on this subject. The circular dealt with the issue of charges levied by the Philippines' Province of Zambales for alleged environmental coastal surveillance. The December circular informed Members that following discussions with the Province of Zambales, it had been agreed that invoices raised against ships that transited the coastal waters of Zambales should not be paid.

However, despite this agreement, the ICS has been informed that recently the Province of Zambales (Philippines) has once again started making an environmental charge for ships on passage through the coastal region. This action is understood to be contrary to the official opinion issued by the Philippines Legal Department when this issue last arose in 2015.

The ICS has been advised by the Filipino Shipowners' Association (FSA) that companies should for the time being not pay any invoices received purporting to be from the Province of Zambales. The FSA further advises that deferment for 60 days will give sufficient time for the FSA and the Philippines Congress to investigate and to take action.

In order that the International Group can coordinate its response on this question and can pass all relevant information on to the ICS, we would ask any Members who have been issued with invoices from Zambales to inform the Club and we can pass this on to the International Group and to the ICS.

The Club's correspondents in the Philippines, Pandiman, have been in touch with their local contacts in the relevant government agencies and they have confirmed that the invoices are not official and that as far as they are aware, the situation is still under discussion. Pandiman have also advised that any notices or invoices from the province of Zambales should be ignored for the time being until there is more clarity from the authorities.