OCNOL

A treaty for the Blue Pacific Continent

White Paper

Understanding the treaty, its origins, its aims and how it works in real situations.

Contents

The essentials on one page

1. Why a treaty?

A vast ocean, limited means

The maritime border, a weak point in protection

2. Origins of the Treaty: the continuity of Oceanian agreements

The stages of regional cooperation

What was still missing

The idea of a “marine continent”

3. What the Treaty seeks to achieve

A dual purpose: security and solidarity

Three concrete objectives

Protection of persons, not only of resources

4. How the Treaty works

The actors and their roles

OCNOL’s assets: observing, measuring, transmitting

What OCNOL does and what it never does

Safeguards

5. Practical cases

Case 1. Shipwreck of a cruise ship: locating the survivors

Case 2. A tsunami strikes an area comprising several islands

Case 3. Illegal fishing in an exclusive economic zone

Case 4. Legal continuity: a warrant that follows the vessel

6. What the Treaty does not do

7. From signature to implementation

Glossary

The essentials on one page

Reference text: Multilateral International Treaty on Maritime Cooperation and the Protection of the Blue Pacific Continent, version 29.6, final text of 2 October 2026. Opening for signature is subject to the adoption of a Final Act by a diplomatic conference (Article 177). The practical cases in this document are fictitious. States are designated by letters.

Oceania is, first and foremost, an ocean. The island States and territories of the Pacific administer around one-fifth of the world's exclusive economic zones, with means that bear no relation to this expanse. The Treaty takes this observation as its starting point and derives from it a simple principle: matters that exceed the capacity of any single State must be managed jointly, without any State relinquishing its sovereignty.

The Treaty establishes the **Organisation of the Charter of Free Oceanic Nations (OCNOL)**, an intergovernmental organisation for regional cooperation. It observes the sea, issues alerts, assists rescue services in locating persons in distress, assembles reliable evidence and transmits it to the judges of the States. It commands no vessel, arrests no one and adjudicates nothing.

Four principles summarise the Treaty:

Principle	Practical meaning
Human life first	Rescue takes precedence over any other operation. No police action may be taken to the detriment of rescue efforts.
Permanent cooperation	It applies as of right between the States Parties, without fresh negotiation in each crisis.
OCNOL establishes the facts; the State decides	The Organisation establishes the facts. The national judge legally characterises them, decides and fixes penalties in accordance with national law.
Borders are no longer a refuge	A recognised judicial decision follows the vessel from one maritime area to another, and the alert is halted by no boundary.

The text comprises 192 articles (plus Article 143 bis), divided into five parts and twenty-eight titles, and 23 technical annexes.

1. Why a treaty?

A vast ocean, limited means

The preamble to the Treaty describes a “structural disproportion” between the extent of the maritime areas and the means of the authorities responsible for them. It specifies that this disproportion “stems not from any lack of will, but from a geography that none of these States has chosen”.

This geography has well-known consequences:

- **Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing** takes volumes that escape all management, depletes stocks and deprives coastal States of revenue.
- **Trafficking** (in narcotics, arms and human beings), deliberate pollution and damage to marine protected areas follow the same routes.
- **Natural disasters** (earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones, sea-level rise) strike isolated populations faster than diplomatic procedures allow a response.

The maritime border, a weak point in protection

The region has forty-eight shared maritime borders, of which only thirty-six are delimited by treaty. Several States have not yet declared their boundaries with the high seas.

The preamble identifies the principal consequence: a vessel pursued in one maritime area ordinarily escapes pursuit by entering the neighbouring area. This discontinuity is, according to the text, “the principal guarantee of impunity” enjoyed by the perpetrators. To this is added the reluctance of neighbouring States to share their maritime intelligence.

The Treaty answers these two weaknesses: the legal rupture at the border and the lack of shared information.

2. Origins of the Treaty: the continuity of Oceanian agreements

The Treaty does not arise in a vacuum. The States of the region have cooperated at sea for more than forty years. The preamble affirms that the Treaty “extends these achievements without replacing them”.

The stages of regional cooperation

Year	Instrument	Contribution
1982	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Montego Bay)	Universal framework: territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, right of hot pursuit. The Treaty falls within this framework and derogates from it in no respect.
1982	Nauru Agreement	Joint management of fisheries of common interest.
1986	Nouméa Convention (in force in 1990)	Protection of the natural resources and the environment of the South Pacific.
1992	Niue Treaty (Honiara, in force in 1993), supplemented in 2012	First instrument allowing a State, with the consent of another, to extend its fisheries surveillance activities into the latter’s territorial sea and archipelagic waters.
1995	New York Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks	Conservation of highly migratory fish stocks.
2000	Honolulu Convention (in force in 2004)	Management of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific.
2009	Rome Agreement on Port State Measures	Port controls to combat illegal fishing.
2022	2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (Suva)	Regional vision advanced by the Pacific Islands Forum.
2023	Falepili Treaty (Australia and Tuvalu) and Forum Declaration on State Continuity	Affirmation that the State and its maritime zones survive sea-level rise.
2025	Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change (23 July)	The Court considers that States parties to the law of the sea are not required to update their charts and baselines, once duly established, as a result of sea-level rise (§ 362). It considers that an established State does not necessarily lose its statehood if one of its constituent elements ceases to exist (§ 363).

What was still missing

Each of these instruments has advanced cooperation in its own field. Experience has nevertheless revealed four gaps, which the preamble lists precisely:

1. **The establishment of evidence admissible before a judge**, and not merely of a report.
2. **The round-the-clock availability of judicial decision-making**, by day and by night, within time limits compatible with operations at sea.
3. **The continuity of pursuit** from one maritime area to another.
4. **The automatic coordination of rescue operations** in disasters.

The sole purpose of the Treaty is to fill these gaps. It alters neither the competences of the Forum Fisheries Agency nor those of the regional fisheries management organisations.

The idea of a “marine continent”

The Treaty opens with a fundamental declaration: “Oceania is a marine continent”. This phrase takes up the vision of the “Blue Pacific Continent” advanced by the leaders of the region.

It means that the unity of Oceania rests on the continuity of oceanic spaces, ecosystems, sea routes, risks and communities that live from the sea, and not on the continuity of land. The official commentary specifies that this is neither a new geographical category nor a territorial claim. This characterisation alters no border, no baseline and no sovereign right. It founds permanent cooperation without making OCNOL a supranational authority.

3. What the Treaty seeks to achieve

A dual purpose: security and solidarity

According to Article 1, the purpose of the Treaty is “the protection of human life, of indigenous peoples and of oceanic populations, the sustainable conservation of marine resources and the reduction of major risks”. The preamble adds that each provision is to be interpreted in the light of this dual purpose of security and solidarity.

The Treaty organises permanent cooperation in seven areas: maritime observation, scientific and environmental monitoring, early warning, assistance, search and rescue, evidence, and judicial cooperation.

Three concrete objectives

Article 1, paragraph 9, sets out the ambition of the Treaty in three objectives:

> ***“that no exposed population should remain without warning, that no person in distress should remain without assistance, and that no offence should go unpunished.”***

This cooperation applies as of right. A State need not request it anew for each event. In judicial matters, it remains sovereign: it may refuse its mutual legal assistance on a case-by-case basis, by express and reasoned notification, on the sole grounds provided for in the Treaty. However, no State may refuse the transmission of an alert or of information necessary for rescue.

Protection of persons, not only of resources

The Treaty recalls that the persons on board vessels are “for the most part seafarers and fishers of the region”. It declines to place upon those who live from the sea “the weight of a repression designed against those who plunder it”. Subsistence fishing and customary fishing, practised in accordance with the law of the coastal State, are excluded from the scope of coercive measures.

4. How the Treaty works

The actors and their roles

Actor	Who is it?	What it does
The States Parties	The States that have ratified the Treaty	They decide, act, adjudicate and retain command of their own assets.
The Conference of the States Parties	The assembly of all the States Parties	It adopts the budget and the common rules, and supervises the Organisation.
The Secretariat and the Secretary-General	The administration of OCNOL	It operates the Organisation, keeps the registers and ensures secure communications.
The OMIFC Department	The Observation, Monitoring and Investigation Service	It observes, establishes the facts, assembles the evidence and refers matters to the judges.
The Oceanian Emergency Committee (COU)	One representative and one alternate per State	It coordinates information, needs and offers of assistance during crises.
The duty judges	National magistrates entered in a common register	They decide, under their own law, whether or not to issue a maritime warrant.
The independent supervisor	An eminent person appointed for five years, non-renewable	The supervisor verifies compliance with the Treaty, has unrestricted access to all information and publishes an annual report.
The Fund	A single support and solidarity fund (Annex IX)	It advances urgent expenditure and organises financial solidarity.

The Treaty also provides for a network of possible local branches (*antennes*), one per State Party with its consent, to host communication stations, data backups and liaison points with local stakeholders.

OCNOL's assets: observing, measuring, transmitting

OCNOL's own assets are exclusively technical and unarmed: surface marine drones, autonomous buoys, underwater devices and associated aerial drones. They serve to observe, measure, locate, transmit and alert.

None of these assets may stop, immobilise, board, pursue or compel a vessel or a person. As soon as a situation requires physical intervention, OCNOL immediately transmits the information to the competent national authority.

What OCNOL does and what it never does

OCNOL does	OCNOL never
Observe the sea and detect abnormal situations	Command a vessel, an aircraft or a rescue team
Transmit alerts without delay	Modify, delay or withdraw a national alert
Help to locate persons in distress	Direct a rescue operation
Establish the facts and assemble evidence	Legally characterise an offence
Refer the matter to the duty judge of the State concerned	Issue, sign or validate a warrant
Give evidence or be appointed as an expert in accordance with the law applicable before the judge	Prosecute, arrest, try or detain a person

Safeguards

The Treaty accompanies every power with a limit. The preamble sets out the undertakings that the States impose upon themselves:

- no organ of OCNOL possesses an armed vessel or personnel vested with a power of coercion;
- no coercive measure is taken without prior judicial authorisation, except where the law of the sea already permits it;
- every power is limited in time, confined in space, supported by written reasons and open to appeal;
- compliance with the Treaty is monitored by an independent authority and made public.

Data transmitted by a State remain its property. Persons on board enjoy an effective remedy, information in a language they understand and a right to reparation. No one may be surrendered to a State where he or she would risk torture, persecution or a serious threat to life.

5. Practical cases

The four cases below are fictitious. They show how the Treaty applies, step by step, and who decides at each stage.

Case 1. Shipwreck of a cruise ship: locating the survivors

The situation. One night, a fire breaks out on board a cruise ship carrying several thousand passengers and crew members. The master orders the ship to be abandoned. Lifeboats and life rafts are launched. Wind and current rapidly scatter them over several tens of nautical miles. The shipwreck occurs in the exclusive economic zone of State A, close to the search and rescue region of State B.

Course of events.

Step	Course of events	Decision-maker
The alert	OCNOL receives or detects the distress signal and transmits it without delay to the competent rescue coordination centre and to the national contact point. Transmission may not wait until it is known which State is competent.	The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) of the competent State
Localisation	The aerial drones associated with OCNOL's buoys are deployed over the area. Their thermal cameras detect lifeboats, life rafts and persons in the water, by day or night, over a vast expanse. If the lifeboats carry beacons of the regional SLOM-OCNOL system, the drones and buoys pick up their signals and calculate a position by triangulation. If they do not, the drone drops a SLOM-OCNOL device onto the life raft sighted, which then makes it possible to track its drift. OCNOL estimates the drift from currents, wind and swell, and transmits these estimates together with their margin of uncertainty.	The MRCC, which directs the search
Mass rescue	The competent centre declares a mass rescue operation. OCNOL provides a common operational picture: persons located, assets committed, areas already searched, available ports, medical capacity.	The rescue authority designates the On-Scene Coordinator and fixes the search sectors
Reinforcements	The Oceanian Emergency Committee lists the vessels and aircraft that the other States can send and forwards these offers to State A. A foreign asset enters territorial waters only with express authorisation or under an advance authorisation lodged beforehand.	State A, which accepts or declines each offer
Disembarkation	Consultation on the place of disembarkation begins as soon as the need is foreseeable. The place of safety is chosen having regard to safety, medical care, reception capacity and family unity. The Committee may not impose any port.	The States concerned
The persons	Medical triage is carried out by professionals. Minors, pregnant women and persons with disabilities receive appropriate safeguards. No family is separated without documented necessity. The families of missing persons are informed.	The national authorities
Funding	The Fund's emergency relief compartment may advance the costs. Final apportionment follows and delays neither relief nor disembarkation.	The States Parties, according to the common scale

What the Treaty changes. The system for locating survival craft has "the sole purpose of reducing the area and duration of searches". The hours gained translate into lives saved. They also lighten the cost of searches: every flight hour of a patrol aircraft and every sailing hour of a State vessel weighs on the budgets of the States. OCNOL's drones cover a vast expanse at no cost to the States, and searches concentrate on positions already identified instead of combing the ocean. Offers of assistance from neighbouring States arrive through a single channel, and entry authorisations may be given in advance.

The national rescue centre always retains direction of operations.

A clarification. The SLOM-OCNOL system is offered to vessels on a voluntary basis. It complements international distress arrangements and does not replace them. OCNOL provides technical assistance: a detection, or an absence of detection, does not constitute a guarantee of rescue.

References in the Treaty: Article 104; Title XVII; Annexes XI, XVIII and XX.

Case 2. A tsunami strikes an area comprising several islands

The situation. A high-magnitude undersea earthquake occurs offshore. A tsunami wave may reach the coasts of States A and B in less than an hour. An atoll of State A is the most exposed: its population lives a few metres above sea level.

Before the impact: the alert.

OCNOL maintains regional monitoring of tsunamis, earthquakes, eruptions and cyclones. Upon detection, it issues an alert stating the phenomenon, the area, the time, the degree of confidence, the corroborating sources and the uncertainties. This alert is sent simultaneously to the national contact point and to the competent technical centre of each State concerned. If no acknowledgement of receipt arrives, OCNOL uses an independent backup channel and keeps a record of each attempt.

Dissemination to the public is the exclusive responsibility of the national authority. OCNOL does not modify, delay or withdraw any national alert. If its analysis differs, it says so, giving its reasons and sources.

The alert creates no obligation for the State: it decides sovereignly on protective measures. If an alert has not been followed by measures, the Secretary-General addresses to the government concerned an official and confidential report. This report sets out the risks signalled and the damage that could have been avoided. It allows the State to draw lessons from the event without public exposure.

After the impact: coordination.

Step	Course of events	Decision-maker
Activation	The Oceanian Emergency Committee is activated. Its chairmanship falls as of right to the representative of State A. As State B is also affected, the chairmanship becomes collegial.	The affected States
State continuity	Communications from State A are cut off and its officials cannot be reached. The certificate of continuity lodged in advance by State A designates the next authority, then the next, down to the lowest-ranking public official empowered to represent the State.	State A, through its certificate
In the meantime	As long as no authority of State A can be reached, the Secretary-General provides only technical secretariat services: alert, information, collection of offers. The Secretary-General may neither consent on behalf of the State, nor authorise the entry of foreign assets, nor commit its finances.	No one decides in the place of the State
Aid	Offers of assistance are recorded and forwarded. Each State adopts expedited procedures for the entry of the teams and equipment that it authorises. Foreign military assets benefit from no automatic authorisation. The affected State may withdraw its authorisation at any time.	The affected State
Evacuation	The inhabitants of the atoll are evacuated to State C. This evacuation does not constitute irregular entry. State C provides shelter, medical care and subsistence.	State C, the State of first reception

Step	Course of events	Decision-maker
Solidarity	The principle of shared solidarity applies. Each State Party takes part in the form of its choice: reception, provision of assets or financial contribution. Costs are met in the following order: advance from the Fund's emergency relief compartment; indemnities under the catastrophe insurance taken out by the Organisation; solidarity donations and voluntary contributions; then a call for the balance upon the States according to a common scale, payable in no more than five annual instalments. Until the apportionment plan is adopted, the costs of the State of first reception are covered in full.	Each State chooses its form of participation
The end	The affected State decides when the state of emergency ends. A post-crisis report records results, incidents, costs and necessary corrections.	The affected State

If the atoll becomes uninhabitable. The Treaty answers an existential question for several States of the region. The submersion or uninhabitability of all or part of a territory, following a natural or accidental event, affects neither statehood, nor sovereignty, nor the maritime zones established in accordance with international law.

At the request of the State, OCNOL preserves, in time-stamped and unalterable form, the coordinates of its baselines and maritime zones, its civil status and nationality registers, its cadastral records and its public archives. These items remain its exclusive property. The lasting displacement of populations is a matter for agreements between States: the Committee facilitates introductions without being a party to those agreements. Such displacement entails neither loss of nationality nor statelessness.

This protection does not apply to political situations (change of government, armed conflict, internal unrest). In observance of the principle of non-intervention, OCNOL never pronounces on the legitimacy of a State's authorities.

References in the Treaty: Article 1, paragraph 10; Articles 41, 93 and 94; Title XVII; Annexes IX, XIII and XXIII.

Case 3. Illegal fishing in an exclusive economic zone

The situation. An OCNOL marine drone sights, in the exclusive economic zone of State A, a foreign fishing vessel whose automatic identification system is switched off. The vessel is deploying longlines. The registers of State A record no licence for this vessel.

Step 1. Establishing the facts and gathering evidence. The OMIFC Department verifies the sighting against a second source, for example a satellite image. It establishes the facts: position, course, speed, observed activity, absence of any known licence, switching off of the identification system. It does not say whether an offence is involved.

Each item is time-stamped, bears a digital fingerprint (hash) and is accompanied by its chain of custody, which records every access and every operation. The file also states the limits of reliability and any exculpatory elements. Evidence so assembled may be verified by any expert whom the judge appoints.

Step 2. Referral to the judge. OMIFC refers the matter directly, through a secure channel and at any hour, to the duty judge of State A. The national contact point of State A is informed at the same time. No department, national or of OCNOL, may withhold, filter or defer this referral.

Step 3. The judge decides. State A has undertaken to ensure that its judge rules within six hours. The judge legally characterises the facts under the judge's own law and decides, in the exercise of sovereign discretion, whether or not to issue a maritime warrant. If a warrant is issued, the judge fixes the authorised measure, the area and the duration. Should a final decision not be possible in time, an interim decision may authorise, for twelve hours at most, strictly conservatory measures, excluding

boarding. The sole result of automated processing may never suffice for a warrant to be issued.

Step 4. The intervention. A patrol vessel of State A, a clearly identifiable State ship, orders the vessel to stop. Boarding and inspection follow a precise procedure: information of the master, rights of the persons on board, inventory drawn up in the presence of the master, recording of the intervention. Warning shots may be fired only if the warrant so authorises. Self-defence remains permitted at all times.

Step 5. The vessel flees into the neighbouring zone. Before boarding, the vessel heads for the exclusive economic zone of State B. This is where the Treaty changes the position.

Course of events	Rule laid down by the Treaty
The patrol vessel of State A continues to follow the vessel into the zone of State B.	Each State Party consents in advance to this continuation in its exclusive economic zone, unless it has declared its objection.
State A immediately notifies the continuation to State B.	The notification states the vessel, the alleged offence, the position and the time at which the pursuit began.
The patrol vessel confines itself to following the vessel and maintaining contact.	In the zone of State B, it may neither order a stop, nor board, nor seize, nor use force.
State B boards the vessel with its own assets, in execution of the warrant.	Boarding is the responsibility of State B. It may also request State A in writing to carry it out on its behalf.
The vessel is taken to the nearest safe port in State B.	The judge of State A designates that port. State B is responsible for the custody of the vessel and of the persons.
The judge of State A rules under the law of State A.	Penalties are governed by the law of State A.

The pursuit ceases if the vessel enters the territorial sea of its flag State or of a third State, or if State B objects to it. The territorial sea and archipelagic waters remain closed to pursuit, save with the express agreement of the State concerned.

Safeguards. The crew enjoy information, interpretation and an effective remedy. Perishable catch may be sold with the authorisation of the judge; the proceeds are held in escrow and returned in the event of acquittal. The owner retains the possibility of requesting the prompt release of the vessel provided for by the law of the sea.

What the Treaty changes. Until now, crossing an invisible line often sufficed to end the pursuit. Under the Treaty, evidence is admissible, the judicial decision is handed down within a few hours and action continues from one zone to the next, each State acting within its own waters.

References in the Treaty: Article 1, paragraph 9; Articles 135, 136 and 140; Titles XIV, XXI, XXII and XXIII; Annexes II (items A-1 and F-3), III and IV.

Case 4. Legal continuity: a warrant that follows the vessel

The situation. An OCNOL satellite and buoy observe a merchant vessel, flying the flag of State C, discharging oil into the exclusive economic zone of State A. Seised of the matter, the duty judge of State A issues a maritime warrant, valid for the period the judge fixes. Before any intervention, the vessel leaves the area and disappears from the screens: it has switched off its identification system.

Step 1. Judicial watch. The judge of State A notifies the warrant to OCNOL. The vessel is entered in a confidential register of maritime judicial watch. OCNOL monitors its reappearance within the limits fixed by the judge. This entry creates no new warrant and gives OCNOL no power of coercion.

Step 2. Re-identification. Several weeks later, a vessel under another name enters a port of State D. OCNOL cross-checks several elements: navigation characteristics, acoustic signature, visual observations and positioning data. No single element suffices; it is their concordance that allows identification. OCNOL immediately informs the judge of State A, the flag State C and State D. This information constitutes an authenticated alert and does not prejudge the decision of the authorities.

Step 3. Enforcement by State D. The movement of the vessel does not interrupt the effects of the warrant during its period of validity. State D becomes the State of enforcement:

- it implements the warrant through its own authorities, under its own law;
- it may not refuse on the sole ground that the warrant originates from a foreign judge or that the vessel has entered its waters;
- if its law does not permit direct enforcement of a measure, it takes the judicial or administrative measures that ensure the continuity of the proceedings;
- refusal is possible only on the grounds provided for in the Treaty. It must be in writing and reasoned, and State D consults State A to allow rectification.

The judge of State A remains competent to rule. State D merely ensures custody. The warrant is recognised without any additional validation procedure, operation by operation.

Step 4. The limits. The Treaty does not apply on the high seas, except in three cases: a stateless vessel, express authorisation of the flag State, or a lawfully commenced pursuit that continues there. Nor does it apply to facts prior to its entry into force. Warships and other State ships used for non-commercial purposes retain their immunity.

Two continuities, one and the same logic.

Continuity of the legal area	Continuity of the State
A recognised judicial decision follows the vessel from one State Party to another.	A State retains its statehood, its sovereignty and its maritime zones, even if its territory becomes uninhabitable.
Enforcement always falls to the State where the vessel is located.	The State acts through the authorities of its certificate of continuity, wherever they may be.
The rule applies to all, without distinction of flag, power or contribution.	Its essential archives are preserved in unalterable form and remain its property.

In both cases, the Treaty removes a rupture: the border for justice, the catastrophe for the State. It does so without transferring the slightest competence to OCNOL.

References in the Treaty: Articles 8, 94, 142, 143, 143 bis and 144; Annexes II (item D-1) and VII.

6. What the Treaty does not do

The credibility of the Treaty rests as much on what it forbids itself as on what it permits.

- It creates no international jurisdiction, no offence and no penalty. Law and penalties are a matter for each State.
- It transfers no sovereignty. It alters neither borders, nor baselines, nor maritime zones.
- It gives OCNOL no power of policing, prosecution or adjudication. OCNOL possesses no armed assets.
- It does not rewrite the law of the sea. It applies within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, without derogating from it.
- It does not apply to the delimitation of maritime zones, to military activities (other than rescue operations to which the States concerned consent), to innocent passage, or to authorised scientific research.
- It does not target migrants being transported, seafarers who are victims of trafficking or abandonment, subsistence and customary fishing, or acts performed to save lives.
- It creates no obligation for a State not Party.

7. From signature to implementation

The Treaty enters into force on the thirtieth day following the deposit of the fifth instrument of ratification. For each State that joins it thereafter, it enters into force thirty days after the deposit of its own instrument.

Its implementation proceeds in stages:

- **judicial cooperation** (Titles XVIII to XXV) applies between the States that have notified their national implementing measures and designated their duty judge;
- **the Oceanian Emergency Committee** becomes operational on a date notified by the depositary, after a preparatory period: exercises, lodging of certificates of continuity, testing of communication channels and constitution of financial resources.

Each State remains free to join the Treaty at its own pace. States in free association may accede to it in their own name. Territories may be associated with it by a declaration of the State on which they depend.

OCNOL presently exists in the form of an entity under English law, incorporated on 7 July 2026 to carry the preparatory work. This entity safeguards the independence of the drafting process. Its mission ends when the Treaty and the headquarters agreement enter into force and the intergovernmental organisation succeeds it.

Glossary

Boarding. Immobilisation of a vessel, boarding and inspection, carried out by the authorities of a State in execution of a warrant.

Certificate of continuity. Confidential document lodged by each State, which fixes the order of the authorities empowered to represent it should the first be unreachable.

Chain of custody. Unalterable record of every access and every operation performed on an item of evidence since it was obtained.

Convention. In the Treaty, this term denotes solely the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Duty judge. A national magistrate on duty, entered in a common register, who rules in the name of his or her State and under its law.

Establishment of the facts. A technical and objective description of what has been observed. It falls within the remit of OCNOL. Legal characterisation, which states whether the facts constitute an offence, falls to the judge.

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). A maritime area extending up to 200 nautical miles from the coast, in which the coastal State exercises sovereign rights over resources.

Legal characterisation. The determination, by the judge and under the applicable law, of whether established facts constitute an offence.

Maritime warrant. A decision of a national judge authorising a specified measure against an identified vessel, for a fixed area and duration. The other States Parties recognise it.

MRCC. Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre. It directs search and rescue operations.

Oceanian Emergency Committee (COU). A body in which each State is represented, responsible for coordinating information, needs and offers of assistance in the event of a crisis. The acronym is retained from the French original (*Comité des urgences océaniennes*).

OMIFC. The OCNOL department responsible for observation, monitoring and investigation. The acronym is retained from the French original.

Place of safety. A place where rescued persons can be disembarked in safety, with access to care and protection.

SLOM-OCNOL. A voluntary regional system for locating lifeboats and life rafts, based on autonomous beacons. The acronym is retained from the French original.