



REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
OFFICE OF THE
MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

VANUATU INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING REGISTRY

Circular #31

URGENT COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT NOTICE

**Zero-Tolerance Policy on Forged VISR Documents, False Flag Representation,
and Unauthorized Use of VISR Identity**

Date: February 26, 2026

From: Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry

Issued also in the exercise of delegated powers as Deputy Commissioner of Maritime Affairs

To: All Shipowners, Operators, Managers, Recognized Agents, Recognized Organizations, P&I Clubs, Insurers, Banks, Brokers, Charterers, Port State Control Authorities, and Stakeholders

Verification Contact: technical@register-vu.com

1. Authority

This Circular is issued:

- By the Maritime Administrator of the Republic of Vanuatu; and
- In the exercise of powers delegated to the undersigned as Deputy Commissioner of Maritime Affairs pursuant to the Maritime Act [CAP 131] (as amended), the VMSA Act, and the formal delegation of the Commissioner of Maritime Affairs dated 12 July 2022; and
- Consistent with the appointment approved by the Council of Ministers (Decision No. 217, 22 September 2021).

Accordingly, this Circular carries full statutory authority under the Maritime Act and related legislation.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Circular is to:

- Protect the sovereign integrity of the Vanuatu flag;
- Prevent the production, circulation, validation, or reliance upon forged or counterfeit VISR documents;
- Prohibit false representation of Vanuatu flag status;
- Prohibit impersonation of VISR through digital or physical means;
- Establish mandatory verification and reporting obligations; and
- Place all stakeholders on formal notice of enforcement consequences, including substantial financial penalties.

3. Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct is strictly prohibited and constitutes a serious regulatory and enforcement violation:

1. Creating, forging, altering, reproducing, counterfeiting, or modifying any Certificate of Registry, Provisional Certificate, endorsement, transcript, deletion letter, seafarer document, or any instrument purporting to be issued by VISR.
2. Presenting, circulating, using, relying upon, or attempting to validate forged VISR documentation for:
 - Port entry;
 - Insurance or P&I purposes;
 - Chartering;
 - Banking or financing;
 - Regulatory compliance;
 - Sanctions representation; or
 - Any commercial transaction.
3. Representing or declaring (including through AIS transmissions, painted markings, electronic records, websites, emails, QR codes, or other means) that a vessel is entitled to fly the Vanuatu flag when:
 - The vessel has been deleted;
 - The vessel has been suspended;
 - The vessel has never been registered; or
 - Registration is otherwise invalid.
4. Operating, commissioning, hosting, or promoting any website, portal, application, or digital system that impersonates VISR or simulates official validation of Vanuatu registry documentation.
5. Aiding, abetting, facilitating, or knowingly failing to report suspected forged documentation or false flag representation where reasonable suspicion exists.

4. Mandatory Verification Protocol

All stakeholders are hereby formally notified:

- The only official VISR domain is:
www.register-vu.com
- Any other domain, variation, or look-alike website must be treated as unauthorized and fraudulent unless expressly confirmed in writing by VISR.
- Verification requests and suspected fraud reports must be sent immediately to:
technical@register-vu.com

Any person or entity presented with VISR documentation is expected to conduct enhanced due diligence. Failure to verify where reasonable suspicion exists may expose the relying party to regulatory and legal consequences in their own jurisdiction.

5. Immediate Reporting Obligation

Any person or entity that becomes aware of suspected forged VISR documentation, unauthorized impersonation, or false flag representation must immediately notify:

technical@register-vu.com

Reports must include:

- Copies of the documents;
- Circumstances of presentation;
- Identity of the presenting party;
- Relevant correspondence;
- QR codes, hyperlinks, screenshots, or AIS extracts.

Failure to report suspected misuse may be treated as facilitation or complicity, subject to investigation.

6. Enforcement Powers

Pursuant to delegated statutory authority under the Maritime Act and VMSA Act, the Maritime Administrator / Deputy Commissioner may, where prohibited conduct is identified, take immediate enforcement action including but not limited to:

- Immediate deletion, suspension, or refusal of registration;
- Blacklisting of vessels, owners, operators, managers, beneficial owners, and associated entities;
- Suspension or revocation of recognized agent status;
- Termination of registry services;
- Referral for criminal investigation and prosecution;

- International law enforcement cooperation, including Interpol referral;
- Notification to foreign maritime administrations, Port State Control regimes, classification societies, insurers, banks, and sanctions authorities.

7. Monetary Penalties

7.1 Administrative Monetary Penalties

Where empowered under the Maritime Act (as amended) and applicable regulations, administrative monetary penalties may be imposed by the competent authority.

7.2 Criminal Liability

The production, use, or facilitation of forged VISR documents and false flag representation may constitute criminal offences under the laws of the Republic of Vanuatu.

Upon investigation and prosecution by competent authorities, offenders shall be liable to:

Fines of up to USD 5,000,000 (Five Million United States Dollars) per violation (or the vatu equivalent), or such maximum amount as prescribed under applicable law, in addition to any other penalties available under statute.

Each of the following may constitute a separate violation:

- Each forged document;
- Each act of presentation or reliance;
- Each port call supported by forged documentation;
- Each commercial transaction;
- Each vessel involved.

8. Sanctions and International Compliance Exposure

The conduct addressed in this Circular may involve:

- Forgery of official government instruments;
- Fraudulent misrepresentation of nationality;
- Deception of insurers, charterers, banks, and Port State Control authorities;
- Facilitation of sanctions evasion;
- Exposure to international regulatory enforcement.

VISR will cooperate fully with domestic and international law enforcement authorities in pursuing responsible parties.

9. Reservation of Rights

The Republic of Vanuatu expressly reserves all rights to pursue:

- Administrative remedies;
- Civil proceedings;
- Criminal prosecution;
- International cooperation measures; and
- Diplomatic engagement,

against any person or entity involved in the prohibited conduct, including facilitators or service providers acting knowingly or negligently.

10. Zero-Tolerance Declaration

The Republic of Vanuatu will not tolerate misuse of its sovereign maritime identity.

Enforcement action will be decisive, coordinated, and proportionate to the severity of the conduct.

Issued by authority of:



Saade Makhoul
Maritime Administrator
Vanuatu International Shipping Registry (VISR)

And in the exercise of delegated powers as
Deputy Commissioner of Maritime Affairs
Republic of Vanuatu