

# International Cruise Victims



## New York Times Exposes Lack of Effective Regulations to Control Crimes on the High Seas

For nearly a decade now, International Cruise Victims (ICV) has been committed to improving cruise ship passenger safety on the high seas. In the past, this steadfast determination led to the passing of the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act of 2010. Last year, additional measures regarding the reporting of cruise ship crimes were successfully included in the Congressional Coast Guard Reauthorization Act. And now, just last month both the House and the Senate have introduced additional legislation to regulate the cruise line industry.

Clearly the cruise line industry will do everything possible to avoid this legislation using the customary PR argument that they are already highly regulated. With a compelling argument disputing that recurring cruise industry claim, the July 19<sup>th</sup> issue of the [New York Times](#) featured on the front page, the first of a four part series entitled "The Outlaw Ocean". The counterclaim is initiated in the exposition saying... *"In this series on lawlessness on the high seas, (the author) reveals that crime and violence in international waters often goes unpunished."*

The first article develops that premise further in the headline stating, *"Few places on Earth are as free from legal oversight as the high seas."* Now, if any reader is still in doubt about the laws that do or rather, do not, regulate vessels on the high seas, the author restates the position once again in the opening sentence of the article asserting that ...

*"Few places on the planet are as lawless as the high seas, where egregious crimes are routinely committed with impunity."*

Furthermore, the article declares...

**"Vessels that disappear over the horizon tend to vanish not just from sight but from oversight.** Countries have signed dozens of maritime pacts, the shipping industry has published reams of guidelines and the United Nations maritime agency has written hundreds of rules, all aimed at regulating ships, crews and safety. **But those laws are also often weak, contradictory and easily skirted by criminals. National and international agencies usually have neither the inclination nor resources to enforce**



*International Cruise Victims (ICV) is an international organization with members throughout the world, currently represented by over 20 countries. Under the ICV International News Section, many stories will be found in the original language. Google can be used to translate many of these articles into English or whatever you use.*



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them.

The modern flagging system, which allows ships to buy the right to fly the flag of a country as long as it promises to follow its laws, provides good cover for the unscrupulous.

When wrongdoing occurs, no single agency within a country or specific international organization typically has a sufficient stake in the matter to pursue it." **"Prosecutions for crimes at sea are rare — one former United States Coast Guard official put it at “less than 1 percent” — because many ships lack insurance and captains are averse to the delays and prying that can come with a police investigation.** The few military and law enforcement ships that patrol international waters are usually forbidden from boarding ships flying another country's flag unless given permission. Witnesses willing to speak up are scarce; so is physical evidence."

A [continuation of this article](#), the second in the series followed on July 20<sup>th</sup> again on the front page. Since these laws apply to all maritime ships, **including cruise vessels**, it should be indisputably obvious that a major problem exists.

The cruise line industry, in its single-minded determination to prevent new regulatory legislation which would increase the safety of their passengers, continues to hire former government regulators to sit behind their executive desks. They in turn, then hire professional lobbyists to represent the industry in congress as they make significant contributions to many of the members. Millions of dollars are spent each year, in hopes that the industry will be able to maintain their laissez-faire regulatory and economic status quo. The July issue of Security Management Magazine addresses this issue in an article titled [Cruise Ship Safety](#).

Clearly, the ICV mission stands in direct opposition to that. Our mission is to improve safety and security for all passengers and crew. Even with very limited funds, our goal is to move legislation forward beginning here in the United States, with an eye toward global reform given the **international** regulatory vacuum that currently exists on the high seas.

Ken Carver – Chairman  
602-852-5896

Jamie Barnett – President  
818-355-6462

**The International Cruise Victims Association, Inc.**

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