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ASKET and PCA Maritime Press Release

## ASKET and PCA Maritime are Collaborating in the Fight Against Illegal Weapons Sharing in the Indian Ocean

London / UAE January 2017

### **ASKET and PCA Maritime are collaborating in a new venture to further support Legal Compliance amongst Private Maritime Security Companies by the Monitoring of Weapons in the Indian Ocean**

The unprecedented success of armed guards embarked in ships transiting the waters of the north-west Indian Ocean over the last 5 years has resulted in no commercial ship being hijacked by pirates and the crew held for ransom since May 2012. The significant reduction in attacks has also caused a consolidation of the private maritime security industry and fierce competition between private maritime security companies (PMSC) for work.



*ASKET Ltd: Floating Armouries just outside UAE Territorial Waters in the Gulf of Oman*

However, there continues to be a significant proportion of ships embarking privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) to travel through the High Risk Area (HRA). In a desire to reduce costs, some ship operators have, either knowingly or not, contracted PMSCs that are willing to compromise compliance with those standards laid down in the international standard, ISO 28007, and the requirements specified in BIMCO's GUARDCON, to offer a cheaper service and consequently undercut their compliant competitors. One of the principle ways for a PMSC to reduce costs is to share resources and "rent" or "borrow" weapons from other PMSCs, which is illegal.

In BIMCO's updated GUARDCON guidance notes issued on 1st November 2016 the emphasis for validating End User Certificates (EUC) is placed on flag States:

"ship's flag state needs to see the EUC and verify its authenticity prior to issuing letters of authority (to allow the ship to have the weapons on board). Owners should be aware that this is a legal obligation on flag states and that they should be sighting and verifying EUCs as a matter of routine. The consequences for owners whose flag state fails to verify the authenticity of firearms EUCs before issuing letters of authority could mean significant delays to the ship or even detentions."



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Working together, ASKET and PCA Maritime have developed a process that provides much greater certainty that a PMSC is using only weapons licenced to that company, with appropriate EUCs in place, thus ensuring compliance and eradicating liability for the ship operator and flag State. The ASKET and PCA Maritime procedure allows flag States to ensure the validity of the a PMSCs EUCs prior to contractual agreement via our newly developed database.

ASKET has been at the forefront in the fight against illegal “renting” and “borrowing” of weapons & equipment since its inception nearly four years ago, and confirming weapon ownership has been an element of their standard service to shipping clients since they first began to broker transits in 2013. By developing additional procedures and increasing the information captured we can provide an enhanced service free of charge to our clients.

### ASKET Ltd Weapons, Licence and End User Certificate Tracking Database

The screenshot displays the ASKET Ltd Weapon Tracker interface. The main window shows a detailed record for a rifle with the following fields:

- ID: 684
- Item: Rifle Semi Auto
- Serial Number: AS 10023
- Wpn Model: FN FAL A1 (SLR)
- Manufacturer: FN FAL
- Calibre: 7.62mm / 308 Win
- Owner: PMSC 4
- Location: Floating Armoury
- Local ID: Kit 002
- EUC No: GBSE2016/06191
- Licence No: GBOGE2012/0035353
- Licence Type: OITCL
- EUC Date: 12/12/2016
- Licence Date: 12/11/2016
- EUC Location: Oman
- Remarks: Records Complete

Below the main record is a table listing other weapons in the database:

| ID  | Item             | Serial Num | Wpn Model       | Manufactur     | Calibre         | Ownr   | Location      | Licence No        | Licence Dat | Licence |
|-----|------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|---------|
| 683 | Rifle Semi Aut   | AS 10024   | FN FAL A1 (SLR) | FN FAL         | 7.62mm / 308 W  | PMSC 4 | Embarked      | GBOGE2012/0035353 | 12/11/2016  | OITCL   |
| 684 | Rifle Semi Aut   | AS 10023   | FN FAL A1 (SLR) | FN FAL         | 7.62mm / 308 W  | PMSC 4 | Floating Armo | GBOGE2012/0035353 | 12/11/2016  | OITCL   |
| 685 | Rifle Semi Aut   | AU 146522  | M4              | Armalite       | 5.56mm / .223   | PMSC 4 | Floating Armo | GBOGE2012/0035353 | 12/11/2016  | OITCL   |
| 686 | Rifle Bolt Actic | STB98772   | Styer Rifle     | Styer          | 7.62mm / .308 V | PMSC 5 | Floating Armo | GBOGE2015/01012   | 01/01/2016  | OITCL   |
| 687 | Rifle Bolt Actic | STB96554   | Styer Rifle     | Styer          | 7.62mm / .308 V | PMSC 5 | Floating Armo | GBOGE2015/01012   | 01/01/2016  | OITCL   |
| 688 | Rifle Semi Aut   | D6251      | H&K G3          | Heckler & Koch | 7.62mm / .308 V | PMSC 5 | Floating Armo | GBOGE2015/01012   | 01/01/2016  | OITCL   |

Two UK Export Control documents are shown to the right, with red arrows indicating the flow of information from the database to the physical certificates. The top document is a 'Certificate of Export' for the rifle, issued on 27 June 2016, with licence number GBOGE2012/0035353. The bottom document is an 'AMENDMENT APPROVAL' for the same licence, dated 12 November 2016.

### ASKET Ltd: Weapons, Licence and End User Certificate database

Through the improved secure data base, the ASKET Compliance team not only monitors Weapons and Equipment movements on a transit by transit basis, but also provides oversight on other issues such as Floating Armouries usage, equipment suitability and the competency of individual PCASP.

As a case study; on one occasion in 2016 a PMSC was intending to knowingly enter a UN Embargoed port with UK Registered Weapons, thus breaking the legal terms of the licence and putting the vessel crew, PCASP and cargo in danger and at risk of subsequent detention. Through ASKET’s rigorous checks the Compliance Team could



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inform all parties before any laws were broken avoiding costly consequences. The PMSC was also removed from the ASKET list of providers.

Emma Mitchell, Director of ASKET said “ASKET’s considerable experience and diligence in checking the veracity of information provided by PMSCs to our shipping clients has eliminated the illegal sharing of weapons by PMSCs contracted via ASKET. Our collaboration with PCA Maritime means we are taking an evolutionary leap forward in shaping and refining our systems because of their extensive understanding of how and why the standards were developed. We welcome this new requirement, as it will make it almost impossible for PMSCs contracted via ASKET Security Brokerage to use unauthorised weapons. It will also allow the industry to take another important step by eradicating unscrupulous PMSCs that are undercutting the costs of legitimate security providers, thereby raising standards and further professionalising this industry.

Peter Cook, Director of PCA Maritime added; “We have been aware of the excellent service provided by ASKET to their clients for some years and PCA Maritime believe the new processes and procedures, we have worked on together, satisfy the need to ensure that the ship operator or flag State is not put at risk by the hidden illegal actions of a PMSC. We are delighted to be collaborating with ASKET so together we can support ship operators, flag States and marine insurers to make well informed decisions when selecting professional PMSCs and protecting seafarers from the ravages of piracy.”

#### **ASKET Free services provide;**

- Quality assurance** of PMSCs – reducing reputational risk;
- Additional layer of **Due Diligence** - reducing the potential for financial and legal exposure for flag and owner;
- Cost free process** for flag and shipping clients – saving operating costs;
- Clear, swift process with competitive pricing** - maintaining high levels of quality and compliance;
- Constant monitoring** of service by ASKET – reducing admin burden on safety & security management teams;
- Access to unparalleled information** and advice on specific concerns – enabling rapid risk management decisions;

**ASKET Broking Services are free to our Shipping Clients; a full range of services and free resources, such as our Maritime Security App, can be found on our web site ([www.asket.co.uk](http://www.asket.co.uk)).**

For more information please contact one of the team at [broker@asket.co.uk](mailto:broker@asket.co.uk) +44 7827 012 195

#### **Notes to Editor:**

ASKET Ltd is the worlds leading maritime security brokerage, established in 2013 to provide a professional and fully independent service working in direct support to ship owners, managers, charterers and underwriters.



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Driving quality and compliance we are working hard to reduce many of the risk, time and cost pressures associated with the contracting of Security Providers, Security Services and Private Maritime Security Companies in the Indian Ocean and West Africa.

Our aim is to help ensure that vessels and crew remain safe whilst transiting the HRA or West Africa, protecting the company's assets and reputation and at the same time saving time, costs and protecting reputations.

PCA Maritime Ltd is an independent, strategic level global maritime security consultancy that has an unparalleled understanding of working closely with International Government Organisations (IGOs), NGOs, flag and coastal States, international shipping and port associations and the maritime industry to provide effective maritime security solutions.

The Directors, Peter Cook and Chris Ashcroft, have a unique and unequalled wealth of experience drawn from being at the epicentre of designing and implementing innovative maritime security concepts both in the UK armed forces and the maritime industry. As former CEO and Director of the Security Association for the Maritime Industry (SAMI) Peter Cook and Chris Ashcroft have been in the vanguard of formulating and successfully implementing pragmatic, relevant and cost effective international standards that deliver professional solutions to a range of security threats, safeguarding the supply chain, unhindered maritime operations and the movement of commerce.

Any questions should be directed to:

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