

Peter Astbury

Maritime Mediator

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Professional summary

Accredited civil and commercial mediator with more than two decades of international frontline experience in the maritime sector. Since 2003, Peter has worked on the front line as a trusted intermediary for ship operators, P&I clubs, hull and war risk insurers and government agencies, helping to resolve commercially sensitive disputes, ship and crew detentions, and difficult situations where legal, political, commercial and humanitarian considerations overlap.

He combines this frontline experience with a strong commercial foundation in shipbroking, P&I claims and shipping operations, bringing an informed, independent and practical approach to complex maritime disputes.

Mediation and negotiation

Formal accreditation as a Civil & Commercial Mediator through the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Group in London in January 2026.

Frontline intermediary (2003 – present)

- Trusted frontline intermediary for ship operators, P&I Clubs, hull and war risk insurers and government agencies, negotiating and mediating complex maritime disputes and sensitive situations involving cargo, dock and coral reef damage, oil pollution, injury and death, customs claims, illicit cargoes and civil disorder.
- In Bangladesh, the Canary Islands, Denmark, Dubai, Djibouti, DR Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Germany, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Yemen.

Ship hijack and crew kidnap response

- Instructed by shipowners, P&I Clubs, war risk insurers and state agencies, as lead negotiation consultant and in various pirate liaison roles for twelve ship hijacks off Somalia, five crew kidnappings in West Africa and one Abu Sayyaf kidnapping in the southern Philippines.
- Lead ship and yacht contingency response negotiator for MAST Security.
- Instructed by the UN Development Program to join a team of technical experts briefing the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Somalia on Somali piracy in 2008, at the height of the Somali piracy crisis.

Maritime governance

- Retained to join and mentor the **Malagasy government** negotiating team for the renewal of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between Madagascar and the EU.
- Invited by the **Nigeria and São Tomé & Príncipe Joint Development Authority** to submit a study of governance options for deep sea fishing in their Joint Development Zone (JDA).

Maritime infrastructure and development

- Conducted frontline assessments of port and logistics infrastructure in Mogadishu and Kismayo (for the UN World Food Programme Somalia), in Hobyo (for the Somali Galmudug regional government), and in Um Qasr and the Basra hinterland in Iraq, and Pepel Port in Sierra Leone (for private commercial interests).

Lecturing

- Lecturing on negotiation including ship hijack and hostage negotiation for organisations including Freshfields.

Early career

Thomas Miller / UK P&I Club

Syndicate Manager and Area Director (Japan), with responsibility for casualty management, claims handling, contract review, chartering and operational support.

Wallem Philippines Shipping, Manila

Manager, Shipbroking & Ship Sale and Purchase Department.

Trafco UK, London

Shipbroker specialising in liquid chemical and LPG tankers.

Expertise

- Maritime disputes and claims
- Charterparties, bills of lading and shipping, logistics and agency contracts
- Liability claims relating to cargo, dock and coral reef damage, oil pollution, injury and death claims, and customs infringements
- Deadlock, delicate situations, crew intimidation and duress
- Protecting cargo liens in difficult jurisdictions
- Ship hijack and crew kidnap response and negotiation
- Special situation media management
- High-risk, frontier and post-conflict environments
- Negotiation and stakeholder management
- Cultural adaptability