

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)



The Iranian frigate **IRIS Dena** was reportedly sunk off the south-western coast of Sri Lanka after a torpedo strike by a United States Navy submarine.



INTRODUCTION



It is a comprehensive international treaty that establishes the legal framework for governance of oceans and seas.



Adopted in 1982 at Montego Bay, Jamaica and entered into force in 1994.

UNCLOS DEFINES

1. Maritime boundaries of coastal states
2. Rights and duties of states in maritime zones
3. Rules for navigation, resource exploitation, and environmental protection



Because of its extensive scope, it is commonly referred to as the "Constitution of the Oceans."

MEMBERSHIP



168 parties, including the **European Union**.

Countries such as **India, Japan, and China** are parties.

Note The United States has signed but not ratified the convention.



Territorial Sea:



Extends up to **12 nautical miles** from a coastal state's baseline. The coastal state has full sovereignty over these waters. Foreign ships enjoy the right of innocent passage.



Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):



Extends up to **200 nautical miles**. The coastal state has exclusive rights over natural resources. However, other states retain freedom of navigation and overflight.



High Seas (International Waters):



Areas beyond the EEZ of any state. No country has sovereignty over them. Governed by international and UNCLOS principles.

