



## **ASIAN SHIPOWNERS FORUM SHIP INSURANCE AND LIABILITY COMMITTEE**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011

#### **ASIAN SHIPOWNERS DEMAND FAIR TREATMENT FOR SEAFARERS**

At the 16<sup>th</sup> Interim meeting of the Asian Shipowners Forum (ASF) Ship Insurance and Liability Committee (SILC), held in Hong Kong on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011, representatives of Asian shipowners expressed their strong concern about the lack of fair treatment by an increasing number of Government agencies given to seafarers following a maritime incident.

“Seafarers deserve our deep respect”, said the Chairman of the meeting, Robert A. Ho, “as it is through their experience and professionalism that the safe and environmentally friendly transport of world trade is ensured. It would appear that it is a lack of understanding of ship operations and a lack of respect for seafarers that seems to result in their unfair treatment when something goes wrong.”

The meeting discussed incidents where seafarers had effectively been held hostage while the authorities carried out lengthy investigations, and other incidents where seafarers had been held until impossibly high bail amounts had been set, justified by the authorities as being commensurate with the environmental and economic damage resulting from the incident.

The Committee urges all Governments to follow both the Joint IMO/ILO Guidelines on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the Event of a Maritime Accident and the IMO Casualty Investigation Code. The Committee further demands that all Governments treat seafarers as professional global workers, giving them the respect that such an essential job deserves.

In a related issue, the Committee fully endorses the content of the Press Statement resulting from the meeting of the ASF Safe Navigation and Environment Committee (SNEC), which met on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

“It is unacceptable, in this day and age, that 587 seafarers<sup>1</sup> are currently being held hostage by pirates”, said Robert A. Ho. The Committee urges Governments through the United Nations to increase their efforts to protect shipping and find a permanent resolution to the problem.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Interim meeting of the ASF Ship Insurance and Liability Committee was hosted by the Hong Kong Shipowners Association, and held in Hong Kong under the chairmanship of Robert A. Ho, Fairmont Shipping (HK) Ltd. The Chairman of the SILC, Mr. George Chao, was unable

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<sup>1</sup> IMB Piracy Reporting Centre figures, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011

to attend due to illness, and members sent their best wishes for his speedy recovery. Attending the meeting were the ASF Secretary-General and delegates from the shipowner associations in China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Korea, The Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. The Committee expressed their deep sympathy to the delegates from Japan, who were not able to attend the meeting. During the meeting, the Committee also discussed other issues of concern to the Committee.

*The Asian Shipowners' Forum is a voluntary organization of the shipowner associations of Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea and the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners' Associations comprising shipping associations of ASEAN countries. The aims of the ASF are to promote the interests of the Asian shipowning industries. Between annual ASF meetings, the ongoing work is carried out by the five Standing Committees; the Shipping Economics Review Committee, the Seafarers Committee, the Ship Recycling Committee, the Safe Navigation and Environment Committee, and the Ship Insurance and Liability Committee. It has been estimated that ASF owners and managers control and operate nearly 50% of the world's cargo carrying fleet.*

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