

MEDIA RELEASE

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Sea Shepherd vessels sabotage Nisshin Maru refueling again provoking collisions

On February 25 around 1200JST until about 1500JST during refueling operations, the Antarctic whale research (JARPAII) mother ship Nisshin Maru (NM) and her supply tanker were again subject to sabotage by the Sea Shepherd (SS) ships Steve Irwin (SI), Bob Barker (BB) and Sam Simon (SmS). The SI and BB are sailing under the flag of the Netherlands while the SmS has Australian registry.

1. As the NM was about to come alongside her supply tanker for refueling, the SS vessels SI, BB and SmS repeatedly forced their way between the NM and her supply tanker. During their obstruction to refueling operations the SS vessels rammed into, at the least: BB three times; SmS two times, with the NM and the supply tanker.
 2. There were no injuries to the NM and supply tanker crews. Damage suffered by both the NM and the supply tanker is being checked.
 3. During the attack, the NM used her water pump as a preventive measure to make SS vessels refrain from further approaching and repeatedly broadcasted a warning message to stop them. However, in order to secure safety, the NM decided to interrupt her refueling procedure due to the extremely dangerous and foolhardy behavior of SS vessels. The SS vessels perpetrated a similar obstructive attack last 20 February.
- On 17 December 2012 the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an Injunction Order enjoining Sea Shepherd, Paul Watson and anyone acting in concert with them from physically attacking the Japanese research vessels or any person on them and from navigating in a manner that is likely to endanger the safe navigation at sea of any such vessel. The Injunction Order also prohibits them from approaching any vessel engaged by the Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) or Kyodo Senpaku (KS) any closer than 500 yards (about 457 meters) when the research vessels are navigating on the open sea.

- The ICR and KS filed a Motion for Contempt against Sea Shepherd for approaching the research vessels last January in violation of the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Injunction Order. In addition to obstruction actions by SS on February 15 and 20, the ICR and KS will provide the Court with additional evidence concerning today's obstruction actions by Sea Shepherd.
- Japan's research whaling in the Antarctic (JARPAII) is a perfectly legal activity carried out under the International Whaling Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). This time, SS is sabotaging refueling operation, which is essential for the safe navigation of ships, and the sabotage is not only malicious but inconceivably obstructive actions. Thus it threatens safety of our research ships and lives of crews on them and is therefore completely unacceptable. Over and over again, we call on all related countries including the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand which are flag states and/or port State of SS vessels, and the United States in which headquarter of SS is based to take every measure available to restrain them and deal with their criminal actions in a strict and objective manner.
- SS's allegations that there was oil spillage during the research vessels refueling operations are unfounded. Refueling from the supply tanker to the research vessels is safely conducted through a hermetically sealed fuel transfer system, making leakage impossible. SS's allegations and rumors about the supply tanker hitting icebergs and oil spilling are equally unfounded.
- An International Treaty establishes specific standards regarding the type of fuel oils that can be used or carried in the Antarctic Ocean. The fuel being carried by the Antarctic research vessels' supply tanker fulfils those specific standards and there no breach of any international treaty regulations.

NOTE: Images to be attributed to THE INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH, TOKYO, JAPAN (<http://www.icrwhale.org/gpandsea.html>)

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